At ADL conference, a focus on schools, reactions by students and teachers to antisemitism

BY FAYGIE HOLT

(JNS) – For many of the attendees at the recent “Never Is Now” conference in New York sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League, the global and geopolitical impacts of the uptick in antisemitism were front and center of the discussions. And for a significant number, the concern was also about antisemitism and anti-Zionism on college campuses, as well as its creep into the middle- and high school spheres—a fact that was acknowledged by the presence of 300 high school students who attended the conference. As Jonathan Greenblatt, ADL’s CEO and national director, noted in his opening remarks, troubling reports have included high-schoolers who think it’s amusing to “sling ‘Heil Hitler’ salutes at one another.”

In 2018, the ADL recorded 344 incidents of antisemitism at kindergarten through 12th grade non-Jewish schools. Among this year’s reported incidents were swastikas at schools in Connecticut, California and a number of other states; a “Kill the Jews” page on social media created by middle-school students in Massachusetts; and a threatening note left on the desk of the daughter of a Las Vegas rabbi. High school students were a “significant part” of the audience in two morning panels: “Anti-Israel vs. Anti-Semitism: An Interactive Workshop Examining Their Distinctions and Where They Overlap,” which highlighted various scenarios and asked participants to vote via an app on their feelings of whether the act was antisemitic, anti-Zionist, both or neither; and “Voices From Campus: Exploring Anti-Semitism and Its Impact on College University Communities.”

For high school senior Thomas Bocian, 17, attending the ADL program was important as a Jew, a student leader and as someone who is currently applying to colleges. “The level of awareness about antisemitism is a lot lower than it should be, and to be able to come here and learn how to handle these situations is very important for me as a student leader,” said Bocian, who attended the conference on behalf of his high school, Princeton Day School, a private school in New Jersey. He added that he is proud of his heritage and religion, and has already ruled out attending at least one top-tier college because he was disappointed by the way the administration handled an incident regarding the BDS movement.

Bocian, who spoke to JNS as he was getting ready to enter the “Voices From Campus” panel, was accompanied by teacher David Freedholm and guidance counselor Alex Portale, who were there to gain tips for an upcoming school workshop on antisemitism.

Judaic-studies teacher Yaël Weil brought a group of 10 seniors from the Ma’ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls in Teaneck, NJ, to offer them a sense of what to expect when they go on to college and beyond. “I think it’s an important issue that kids are aware of,” she said. “Our group of seniors will be graduating and going outside of their bubble, and need to see what’s out there and how to deal with it. They are seeing how the larger Jewish community outside of the Orthodox community is addressing the issue.”

Attendees at the conference included people of different races and faith. Several speakers noted that if the Jewish community is to succeed in battling antisemitism and anti-Zionism, it will need support from other groups and people who are willing to denounce hate in all its forms. Perhaps in an odd bit of irony, however, some public discussions centered on how diversity in books and media tend to exclude Jewish groups from “minority” concerns. That may be why several people interviewed at the conference suggested they need to “build” as one participant put it. Perhaps that can happen through collaboration with the Jewish community. 

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Jerusalem’s “Tomb of the Kings” opens to the public for the first time in a decade

BY MOSHE HILL (JNS) – All the enemies of the state of Israel, only one often harms more non-Israelis than Israelis: the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. The BDS movement is so ineffective at damaging the Israeli economy that it is accurately categorized as an anti-association-with-Israel-group, not an anti-Israel-group. Every day, Israel-supporting Americans, non-Israelis, including singer Demi Lovato and the Portland Trailblazers basketball team, become the targets of the BDS movement, which is trying to make Israel feel guilty and register with a passport or ID card.

Lovato, a Christian with Jewish ancestry, traveled to Israel in early October, where she was baptized in the Jordan River, visited the Western Wall, met with special-needs children and toured Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. She posted pictures about these experiences to her 74 million Instagram followers. She did not take a political position, meet with Israeli leaders or discuss regional issues. There are unconfirmed reports that she was paid approximately $150,000, partly by the Israeli Foreign Ministry, for taking part in the “Hometown Hero” program. The partnership was widely criticized by BDS activists, who have taken over multiple times by Antifa protesters.

The Trailblazers deny that the disassociation was related to BDS, but they said in a statement that “Leulpold & Stevens made the decision not to renew.” It is the American organization or individual that is targeted. This is the danger of BDS, which claims to be tolerant, it is antisemitic. It is the American organization or individual that is targeted.

The BDS movement takes any association with Israel as a sure-fire way to show up on the radar of the militant anti-Israel BDS movement. Visitors to Israel are extremely well known. By association, as well as with the potential backlash you could face if you the potential backlash you could face if...
SHDS celebrates the milestone birthdays of two “special” members of its community

At a recent school assembly marking the yahrzeit of the biblical matriarch Rachel (Rochel Imeinu), Scranton Hebrew Day School members of the community were in attendance. Syvia Eisenberg (102) and Nettie Pinkus (100), both longtime friends and supporters of the day school, recently celebrated milestone birthdays and SHDS invited them to join in the festivities in honor of the occasion.

The G.O. (student council) organized a program under the direction of Henny Prizker, eighth grade teacher and G.O. supervisor, who is also an SHDS alumna. “Gratitude was appropriately the theme of the day, encouraging the girls to appreciate and express gratitude for all of the good things we have in our lives,” said organizers of the assembly.

The event brought the two generations together, with the special guests enjoying the liveliness of the young girls, and the students being inspired by the unbelievable spritely centenarians. The story told by Mrs. Eisenberg only served to heighten the girls’ appreciation of the two women,” said organizers.

The girls performed a skit on the theme of “Hakarat Hatov—Gratitude” and everyone watched a video lecture by Rabbi Paysach Krohn.

Both Pinkus and Eisenberg were presented with a hand-decorated birthday card signed by all of the girls, which was accompanied by a small gift and balloons to commemorate the day.

“It was truly a day to remember for all in attendance,” organizers added.

Temple Israel of Scranton hosted programs for all ages

During November, Temple Israel of Scranton hosted programs for all segments of the congregation. On November 16, young families, and those “young at heart,” gathered at Temple Israel for Maariv and a family-friendly Havdalah service with visiting Rabbi Robert Judd and the temple’s Cantor Vladamir Aronzon. Families received laminated copies of the Havdalah service to encourage them to perform the ritual at home. Following the service, participants were treated to pizza, stories and entertainment by Judd, and then ice cream for dessert.

“It was heartwarming to see the pajama-clad children gather around the bima by the light of the Havdalah candle, and later gather around Rabbi Judd for stories and entertainment,” said organizers of the event.

Judd also spoke on Friday evening to those who came for Kabbalat Shabbat services and dinner, and during the Shabbat morning service. He also conducted a study session early Saturday afternoon after a kiddush luncheon and Mincha.

A few weeks earlier, Temple Israel’s newly formed Men’s Club and some of the temple women participated in a lesson on baking challah. Men’s Club Chairman Steve Dershowitz said, “On November 3, Temple Israel’s newly formed Men’s Club held its first event. It was truly an uplifting experience. Fifteen participants came together on a Sunday morning to learn how to make challah from See “Programs” on page 6

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DEADLINES

The following are deadlines for all articles and photos for upcoming Reporter issues.

DEADLINE
Thursday, December 26 .......................... January 9
Thursday, January 9 .............................. January 23
Thursday, January 23 ............................. February 6
Thursday, February 6 ............................ February 20
BY ELIANA RUDEE

(AJS) AZERBAIJAN – Affectionately called “Mountain Jews,” the Jewish community of the Red Village in the Quba district of Azerbaijan is home to nearly half the Jews living in this Muslim-majority country. Believed to be the world’s only all-Jewish village outside of Israel and the United States – and the last surviving shtetl – the Red Village is situated in the northeast of the country, close to the border with Russia.

It is also historically one of the few places in the world unaffected by antisemitism. According to the Jews of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the country is an “oasis of tolerance,” protecting all religious minorities (Jews included) in a world where persecution has become a norm.

A visit to the “Six Dome Synagogue” (“The Grand Synagogue,” designed by architect Hillel Ben Haim in 1888), one of three synagogues in Quba, illustrated such freedom. Invited by the Caucasus Muslims Office and ahead of the second World Religious Leaders’ Summit in Baku, a group of Jewish leaders recently visited the Red Village and Six Dome Synagogue.

Unlike synagogues throughout Europe, the United States and Muslim-majority countries in the Islamic world, there is no need for armed guards or high-tech security measures. Unlike many synagogues where, before entering, guests are asked a barrage of questions to verify their Jewish identity, the only request at Six Dome is that guests remove their shoes before entering. With no women’s section (women do not usually attend services at the synagogue outside of the Jewish holidays, explained a worshipper at the synagogue), the women entering were simply asked to cover their heads, whether married or unmarried, and prayed with the congregation.

Approximately 25 men were present at recent Wednesday afternoon and evening services, with at least 10 boys lining up following the prayer services to be blessed by visiting Rabbi Yitzhak Ehrenberg of the Central Orthodox Synagogue of Berlin.

“If we see children here, it’s a sign of the future,” Ehrenberg told worshippers in Hebrew. “Follow in the steps of Abraham,” he said. “Follow his tradition to be Hebrew.”

It seems that’s exactly what the Mountain Jews are doing. “For a Jew in Azerbaijan, spending Shabbat in the Red Village is like returning to your most essential home… for over 2,000 years, Azerbaijan has been the kind of homeland essential home… for over 2,000 years,” said Rabbi Yitshak Ehrenberg. “Historically, Jews that settled here in Azerbaijan have been far better off than those that were eventually able to return to Israel; those that were massacred by Romans, pushed in and out of Spain, to eventually suffer Hitler’s atrocities in Europe in the 1930s and 40s,” he added.

The history of Jewish settlement in the Red Village, named for the red tiling used on many of the roofs, is believed to date back at least 2,600 years, though many claim that it dates back 2,800 years – 150 years before the destruction of Jerusalem and the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, in 586 B.C.E.

Following this wave of Jewish settlement, others came with the Persian Empire, and throughout the Mongolian and Islamic conquest of the region. The Red Village was officially established in 1742 when the Azerbaijani Muslim leader of Quba gave permission for the Jewish community to establish its own town there without fear of persecution. Today, approximately 8,000 Jews live in Quba.

The community is comprised of Mountain Jews, as well as Georgian Jews who arrived in the early 20th century, and Ashkenazi Jews who arrived in the late 19th century and during World War II.

All of Azerbaijan is home to 30,000 Jews in eight Jewish communities with seven synagogues. Outside of the Red Village, Jews have largely settled in the eastern city of Baku, the nearby city of Sumgayit and the Oguz district in the north.

According to Yevdayev, in the context of a region with extremist violence and the rise of antisemitism around the globe, the unusual story of Jews in Azerbaijan is a rare blessing that becomes, in this context, that much more important.

Azerbaijan’s history of intercultural and interreligious dialogue dates back centuries, including its early exchange with the Jewish kingdom of the Khazars in the north, from the eighth to 13th century. The country is known to be an island of religious multiculturalism and interreligious dialogue, with radical Shia Islam on its southern border with Iran and radical Sunni Islam on its western border with Turkey.

Azerbaijan’s Constitution (Item No. 3 of Article No. 25) ensures equality of rights and freedom, irrespective of race, nationality, religion, language and gender. Under Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, the nation has offered substantial financial assistance to promote religious acceptance, protection and interreligious dialogue. This has resulted in flourishing Jewish life in the Red Village and beyond.

“We are a nation of tolerance, living in peace and dignity with all in our area,” said Mubariz Gurbanli, chairman to the State Committee on Religious Associations of the Republic of Azerbaijan, at a meeting with the Jewish delegation in Azerbaijan on November 13.

“There are no religious conflicts in Azerbaijan, and it is a priority of the state to promote tolerance,” he said. “Here, people refer to people’s humanity, not their religion, so Jews can wear a kippah in the street and nobody will ask or bother them. Azerbaijani Jews say that other than Israel, Baku is their second home where they feel safe and free.”
Jewish Life are Enhancing JDC in Europe and How UJA Dollars Build Coalitions with Strategic Partners Who Ultimately Assume Responsibility for the Programs

Commonly known as the Joint and the JDC, its official name is the American Joint Distribution Committee. Whatever the name, this organization’s life-saving mission is the same: to serve the needs of Jews throughout the world, particularly where their lives as Jews are threatened or made more difficult.

Since 1914, JDC has served as the overseas arm of the American Jewish community. The JDC sponsors programs of relief, rescue, and renewal, and helps Israel address its most urgent social challenges. It is “committed to the idea that all Jews are responsible for one another.”

In addition, in times of crisis – natural disasters, war or famine – JDC offers aid to non-Jews to fulfill the Jewish tenet of tikkun olam, the moral responsibility to repair the world and alleviate suffering wherever it exists.

JDC adheres to three operating principles:

- It remains non-partisan and apolitical.
- It seeks to empower local communities by creating model programs and training local leadership to run the programs.
- It builds coalitions with strategic partners who ultimately assume responsibility for the programs.

The Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania splits its overseas allocation dollars between the Jewish Agency for Israel and the JDC.

JDC in Europe and How UJA Dollars Are Enhancing Jewish Life

JDC has been a presence in Europe from the outset of the First World War, helping to rebuild shattered lives and fragile communities. JDC provided aid during World War I, rescued Jews during World War II, cared for survivors and strengthened communities toward self-sufficiency in all aspects of communal life in countries that lived under communist rule until the late 1980s.

Today, working in partnership with local communities, JDC strives to serve pressing welfare needs, particularly those of Holocaust survivors and Jewish children, and strengthens communities through innovative programming concepts, networking and exchange. Helping communities toward self-sufficiency in all aspects of communal life is JDC’s overarching aim. Jewish values and Jewish solidarity are its guiding principles; technical assistance and the transfer of know-how and leadership and professional development are its modus operandi in this new Europe.

Connections to Jewish Life

JDC supports Jewish life programs and opportunities throughout Europe. Considered of critical importance are the many unaffiliated Jews in the region, particularly those in the middle generation who grew up in an era when organized Jewish community life was either dormant or suppressed. Regional or inter-community programming is a hallmark of JDC’s work in the region, and this focus will continue to play an increasingly important role in the years to come. JDC currently supports:

- Jewish Community Centers in Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary.

The Iron Curtain that once separated European Jews is becoming a memory and the general movement is toward regional reunification. A new spirit of openness, cooperation and a sharing of resources and experiences is taking hold. This presents new opportunities and challenges alongside the continued need to care for the needy. Today, European Jewry comprises the world’s third largest concentration of Jews, after Israel and the U.S., and is a major player in the Jewish world. Over the last few years, the European Jewish reality, in both Western and Eastern Europe, has changed dramatically, affecting both the external and internal environments of the continent’s Jewish communities.

Externally, the European Union has expanded and now includes 28 members from Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, with Croatia joining in 2013 and Turkey readying to become members within the next two years. On January 1, 2007, Bulgaria and Romania joined the European Union. Internally, there is a generational change in Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. Now, more than 25 years after the collapse of Communism, a new generation that has tasted democracy is coming of age and taking the lead in community life. The opportunity for developing communal leadership is supported by potential benefits of property restitution and the prospect of eventual financial independence. And although the road ahead presents some difficult hurdles, which each community will need tackle at its own pace, the conditions in today’s Europe offer enormous possibilities for the future of the continent’s Jewish communities.

To complement these changes, particularly significant in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, JDC is working to redefine its operations. Since the post-World War II period, JDC’s role in Western Europe has focused solely on providing technical assistance and community development, building leadership and maintaining self-sufficient Jewish communities. However, in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic States, JDC’s focus has been on providing services to the needy – primarily Holocaust survivors – while maintaining the overall mission to help revive Jewish communal life in countries that lived under communist rule until the late 1980s.

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What is JDC? – Three Names, One Mission

A total of $335,677 (or 13.7%) from last year’s UJA Campaign of $2,689,637 was directed to the efforts of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which conducts ongoing Jewish-identity programs, provides free medical services and food to the Jewish needy, and funds sponsors Jewish-oriented innovative programs for Jews from Sri Lanka to Santiago to the isolated communities of Eastern Europe through UJA-funded Hesed Centers.

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JDC IN EUROPE AND HOW UJA DOLLARS ARE ENHANCING JEWISH LIFE

JDC has been a presence in Europe from the outset of the First World War, helping to rebuild shattered lives and fragile communities. JDC provided aid during World War I, rescued Jews during World War II, cared for survivors in European Displaced Persons camps in the post-war period and has continued to support Jewish life until today – even during the communist years.

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**DONUTS WITH SWEET AND SAVORY TOPPINGS**

**BY NAOMI NACHMAN, KOSHER.COM**

A Chanukah donut mix is used for the Donuts with Sweet and Savory Toppings.

1 box Manischewitz Chanukah donut mix
1 cup milk (or water)
Vegetable oil (enough for frying)
Large bowl and small bowl
Pour cooking oil into a deep frying pan or large pot. Heat oil over medium heat. Do not bring to a boil.
Large bowl, add donut mix. Stir in milk or water. Stir until uniform.
Coat hands with oil or flour. Scooping 1 Tbsp. at a time, form batter into desired donut shapes.
Carefully place formed donuts, one at a time, into heated oil. Fry about 2 minutes on one side or until golden brown.
Drain and cool completely on a cooking rack.
Sweet toppings: icing and sprinkles, crushed cookie pieces, jam.
Savory toppings: marinara sauce and cheese, goat cheese and balsamic glaze, pesto and sun-dried tomato.

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**PULLED BRISKET TACO LATKES**

**BY ESTY WOLBE**

Part One: Latkes

1 box Manischewitz latke/pancake mix
2 eggs
2¼ cup cold water
One package Manischewitz pancake/latke mix
¼-inch hot vegetable oil
In a medium bowl beat two eggs until blended. Add 2¼ cup cold water and mix well. Stir in contents of pancake/latke package. Allow batter to thicken 3-4 minutes. In large skillet, drop tablespoons of batter into ¼-inch hot vegetable oil and brown both sides. Makes 45-60 latke pancakes.

Part Two: Pulled Brisket

3 lbs. marbled second cut brisket
1 18 oz. bottle Gefen BBQ Sauce
1 large onion, thinly sliced
3-5 garlic cloves, sliced
1 batch (about ½ cup) coffee garlic rub:
Mix together 1 Tbsp. ground coffee beans, 1 Tbsp. dark brown sugar, ½ Tbsp. smoked paprika, 1 tsp. regular paprika, 1 tsp. coarse salt, 1 tsp. onion flakes and 1 tsp. granulated garlic.

Place the brisket in a crock pot, top with onions and garlic. (Alternatively, this may be prepared in the oven at 275°F for 4-6 hours, until it shreds easily when pulled.) Pour barbecue sauce over the top. Add ½ cup of water

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**CHILDREN IN NEED**

As part of its Global Children’s Initiative, JDC is assisting Eastern European communities to extricate children in need from the cycle of poverty and allow them to fully integrate into society. In partnership with local communities, JDC has identified more than 1,200 Jewish children in need in the region. In 2014, JDC supported social services to nearly 800 Jewish children in need, providing individual case management, food, clothing and medical support. In addition to basic services, JDC has supported the participation of Jewish children in need in Jewish educational programming. JDC is also providing technical assistance and creating exchange opportunities for communal professionals who work with children and families.

**JDC**

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**Programs**

Continued from page 3

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The following apprentices participated: Dershowitz, Louis Nivert, Cantor Vladamir Aronzon, and Kathy Litvak, Geordee Grable Pollack, Daniel Ginsberg, Daniel Weinberg, Victoria Geyfman, Shelly Garber, Miriam Erroll Goldstein, Rick Bishop, David Fallk, Phyllis Weinberg, and Kathy Raffi Plat...
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The Ethiopian women arrive separate to take part in the prayer service. Early in the morning, a delegation of kessim (Ethiopian Jewish religious leaders) makes their way to the Western Wall to give thanks. The figures cut a path through their shoulders, the kessim are accompanied by an entourage that includes escorts who hold colorful umbrellas over their heads. In 2008, the Knesset recognized Sigd as a national holiday, raising awareness of both the festival and of Jews of Ethiopian origin.

For the 120,000 who emigrated from Ethiopia to Israel since the early 1980s, the 29th of Cheshvan is a combination fast day, day of thanksgiving and clan gathering. Known as Sigd – “prostration” in Ge’ez, the Ethiopian liturgical language – it’s a day of rededication to God and the Torah, a celebration of the connection of the community to Jerusalem and a commitment to Jewish unity. In other words, it’s the ultimate Zionist festival.

In 2008, the Knesset recognized Sigd as a national holiday, raising awareness of both the festival and of Jews of Ethiopian origin. For the 120,000 who emigrated from Ethiopia to Israel since the early 1980s, the 29th of Cheshvan is a combination fast day, day of thanksgiving and clan gathering. Celebrated today in Jerusalem both at the Western Wall and on the Haas-Sherover Promenade that overlooks the Old City, the event is a multi-generational gathering that attracts thousands from all over the country.

Early in the morning, a delegation of kessim (Ethiopian Jewish religious leaders) makes their way to the Western Wall to give thanks. The figures cut a path through the Kotel plaza. Swathed in simple white robes, tallitot draped over their narrow shoulders, the kessim are accompanied by an entourage that includes escorts who hold colorful umbrellas over their heads. The Ethiopian women arrive separately, clothed in distinctive white dresses and orange. Shoulders cloaked in white scarves, the women advance shyly toward the Kotel to take part in the prayer service.

The holiday has its origins in the time of the prophets Ezra and Nehemiah, following the return of the Jews from Babylonian exile and the rebuilding of the Second Temple. Tradition holds that the entire Jewish community assembled in Jerusalem then for a day of fasting and confession. “Ezra blessed the Lord, God, and the entire people responded ‘Amen, Amen,’ and they… bowed down and prostrated themselves” (Nehemiah 8:6). Sigd as observed today in Israel is led by the kessim, and many of the elders prostrate themselves in response to the readings.

On the promenade, one kess – a diminutive man with a silver beard wearing a white knitted kippah – tells visitors about his life story and explains where Sigd fits into the life of Ethiopian Jews. He describes how men and women would separately observe the ritual of ascending the mountain for the great Sigd gathering. He points out that the tradition of Sigd was handed down by oral tradition. “Many Jews believe that we didn’t know from the oral tradition,” he says. The kess explains the Ethiopian Jewish engagement and wedding ceremonies, and asserts that their practice conforms to the mishnaic description in Tractate Kiddushin (part of the Oral Law) of what constitutes proper Jewish betrothal.

He finishes his story by noting that Sigd was essentially a way of remembering Jerusalem and strengthening Jews in a difficult Diaspora situation. But the holiday is just as relevant today. “We missed Jerusalem for thousands of years,” he notes. “Today, in Jerusalem, we celebrate… but just as we say ‘Next year in Jerusalem’ at the Passover seder, so, too, at Sigd, we pray for a rebuilt Jerusalem.”

Just behind him, two young men preside over a table full of information about the rebuilding of the Temple and the festival. Millions of Ethiopian Jews yearned for Zion and expressed their longing in the annual Sigd festival. Jews would walk for days to arrive at a mountain top, where thousands would join in prayer and listen to Torah readings. Following afternoon prayers and the blowing of the shofar, the community would descend from the mountain to partake of a festive meal.

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Manischewitz Chanukah Candles - 44 count

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Kosher Boneless & Skinless Chicken Breast Fillet - per pound

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Fresh Kosher Whole or Cut Up Fresh Chickens - per pound

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Joyva Marble or Chocolate King Size Halvah Bars 3.3 ounce

4 FOR $5

Osem Falafel Mix 6.3 ounce

2 FOR $5

Selected Streit’s Egg noodles 12 ounce

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Lipton Kosher Onion Soup Mix 1.9 ounce

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Savion Fruit Slices 6 ounce

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BY RABBI EVAN SHORE, SHAAREI TORAH

Increasing our Torah knowledge

D’VAR TORAH

BY RABBI EVAN SHORE, SHAAREI TORAH

Orthodox Congregation of Syracuse
Vayishlach, Genesis 32:4-36:43

For many years, Jacob lived outside the land of Is-rael. He left Israel fearing for his life. Jacob was told by his mother, Rebecca, that Esau, his brother, wanted to kill him. After more than 20 years, the brothers will once again meet, but before they do so, Jacob sent the following note through a messenger: “For 20 years I lived with Laban (Jacob’s father-in-law) but did not learn from his evil ways.” This is a very strange mes-sage indeed. However, I would like to dwell on the concept of not learning from others. Rabbi Baruch Sorotzkin, in his book, “Eitz HaDaas,” pointed out that it is true Jacob did not learn from Laban, but why didn’t Laban learn from Jacob? Jacob, one of the three patriarchs, seems to have no effect whatsoever on his conniving father-in-law. Why didn’t Laban take note of the positive actions of his son-in-law? Today the same question may be asked. Why are so many unwilling to learn from the exemplary and positive actions of others? The answer is simple. People think they know better, have the answers or are just happy with their own ignorance.

A recent Pew study revealed how weak the knowl-edge of Torah is throughout portions of the American Jewish community. It is time we realize the timeliness of Rabbi Sorotzkin’s insights and ask ourselves the question, “If so much Torah is available to us through books, apps, social media and the Internet, why aren’t we increasing our knowledge?” Now is the time to do something about it and increase our Torah knowledge, for if not now, when?

Halukkah news briefs

From JNS.org

Jack Black, Flaming Lips and Haim among those to join Hanukkah album

A holiday-inspired music album titled “Hanukkah+” was to be released on Nov. 22. It features a collection of Jewish classics and originals from various artists, including Haim, the Flaming Lips, Jack Black and Yo La Tengo, The Rolling Stone reported. The album, produced by Grammy-winning producer Randall Poster, will be released via Verve Forecast, with a vinyl release following on Dec. 13. Among the songs with a rendition of Leonard Cohen’s 1984 track “If It Be Your Will” by Haim and Woody Guthrie’s “Hanukkah Dance” sung by Watkins Family Hour. Other artists wrote and recorded original songs for the album. The collection is inspired by Yo La Tengo’s annual eight-night concert series “Hanukkah Run.” “When our old friend Randy Poster asked us to contribute to an album of Hanukkah songs we thought maybe another friend, Sam Elwitt, could crack the code, and we think he did a fantastic job with his composition ‘Eight Candles.’”

Hallmark Channel set to premiere movies featuring Hanukkah for first time

The Hallmark Channel will premiere its first two Hanukkah-themed movies in December in honor of the eight-day Jewish holiday, which this year starts on Dec. 22, the New York Post reported. “Our audience is very vocal and they tell us when they’d like to see more of something,” said Michelle Vicary, Crown Media’s executive vice president of programming. “We’ve heard over the years that they would like to see [a Hanukkah movie] if a script came in that we liked. And that happened this year – twice.” The first film, “Holiday Date,” will air on Dec. 14 and follows Brooke, a woman who experiences a breakup shortly before a trip to introduce her boyfriend to her family for Christmas. She instead goes home with Joel, a Jewish actor who will pose as her boyfriend Since he has never celebrated Christmas, drama, of course, ensues. “Unfortunately, they have not discussed if he knows all the traditions,” said Vicary. “As the family becomes more suspicious whether he knows how to celebrate, our two leads begin to fall for each other.” The second movie, “Double Holiday,” will air on Dec. 22. It’s about a Jewish woman named Rebecca whose Hanukkah plans are disrupted when her boss asks her to team up with her rival to plan their office holiday party. Drama, of course, ensues. Vicary said about the characters, “They learn that while the traditions and celebrations are different, the feelings of holiday and celebration and family and togetherness are the same.”

Warm Hanukkah wishes

Hanukkah special on the Food Network

The Food Network will premiere the “Ultimate Hanukkah Challenge” on Saturday, December 21, at 9 pm. The host is Molly Yeh. Four chefs will be asked to put a creative spin on classic Hanukkah dishes, such as latkes, brisket and sufganiyot. Judging the dishes will be Duff Goldman, the star of Food Network’s “Cupcake Wars.”

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Warm Hanukkah wishes
“GOODNIGHT BUBBALA”

The delightful “Goodnight Bubbala: A Joyful Parody” by Sheryl Haft and illustrated by Jill Weber is a Jewish take-off on the picture book “Goodnight Moon.” Although the young rabbit featured (known by the term of endearment bubbala) is in bed when the tale opens, the whole mishpacha (family) arrives in order to celebrate Hanukkah before he goes to sleep. There are bobbies and zaydes, and the eating of bagels and knishes. There are also toys and dreidel games, along with singing and dancing and a zayde who falls asleep before bubbala.

“Goodnight Bubbala” made me laugh and I could easily see reading it to little ones all eight nights of Hanukkah. There is a Yiddish-English glossary, although I only had to look up one word (and I don’t know a lot of Yiddish). As an added treat, it features an “Easy Latkes” recipe by Ina Garten, one of the stars of the Food Network. The book is so adorable you might even be tempted to buy it for older folks who love Yiddish.

“THEODORE BIKEL’S THE CITY OF LIGHT”

Aimee Ginsburg Bikels’ “Theodore Bikels’ The City of Light” (MomentBooks/Mandel Vilar Press), with illustrations by Noah Phillips, is a far more serious story of a young boy living in Austria when the Nazis took over. Sure, he was a prophet, and he got to wear the urim and thummin, the special breastplate through which God’s light he thought was extinguished by the war remains lit in his own heart.

Aimee, Theodore’s wife, places the story in context and writes movingly of her husband’s return to Austria after he was invited to perform by a former president of the Austrian government. In addition, she includes a two-page Yiddish dictionary, a recipe for “Oma’s Honey Cake (Lekach)” and the words to a Hanukkah song, “Little Candles Fires,” that was written when her husband was a young boy, along with two links where readers can hear the song sung by Theodore.

“Theodore Bikels’ The City of Light” would serve as a beautiful gift for middle grade or older children. I can also see it as a perfect gift for adults, especially those who are fans of the singer. With its celebration of the light found in human hearts, it makes a perfect gift for Hanukkah.

“The NEWISH JEWISH ENCYCLOPEDIA”

My first reaction to hearing about this book was, “Do I really want a new encyclopedia?” After all, I have a hard copy of the latest edition of the Encyclopedia Judaica at home.” Then I noticed the writers were connected to the online magazine Tablet and remembered how much I enjoyed its recently published work, “The 100 Most Jewish Foods: A Highly Debatable List” edited by Alana Newhouse with Stephanie Butnick (which, by the way, would make a perfect holiday gift for your Jewish foodie friends). You can find The Reporter’s review at http://thereportergroup.org/article.aspx?id=5263. This latest book is definitely not your grandparents’ Jewish encyclopedia. Instead, “The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia: From Abraham to Zabar’s and Everything in Between” by Liel Leibovitz, Mark Oppenheimer and Stephanie Butnick (Artisan/Workman Publishing Company) is an irreverent romp and guide to almost everything Jewish.

The humor starts with the very first entry. None of my Hebrew school (or rabbinical school) teachers ever described Aaron this way: “Like a biblical Rodney Dangerfield, our first high priest couldn’t get no respect. Sure, he was a prophet, and he got to wear the urim and thummin, the special breastplate through which God’s Will could be divined. But his brother, Moses, was still way cooler.” The entries are definitely not objective and should not be the starting place for someone interested in halachah (Jewish law), but that doesn’t make them any less amusing.

The book is also beautifully designed. In clever, modern-looking graphic spreads, the writers look at “Banking and Jews,” “Booze and Jews,” “Jewish Greetings: What to say and when,” “Shabbat in Seven Easy Steps” and “Notable Jews in Sports,” just to name a few. There are large color photos and interestingly arranged entries about individual writers, musicians and film makers.

A few entries are so good I can’t resist quoting from them:

♣ “‘But is it good for the Jews?’ The ultimate question about anything.”
♣ Comic books: “Next to Scripture, it’s the second greatest literary gift Jews have given the world.”
♣ Long Island: “The other Promised Land.”
♣ Nachman of Breslov: “Since the passing of the saucy, saucy sages of the Talmud, most of the rabbinic greats have been, well, not so much fun. Too much yeshiva, not enough corner pub. Not so with Reb Nachman, as he was known. If you’re looking for a good time with a soulful man, for a stiff drink with someone who will really listen, this is the Hasidic master for you.”
♣ The New York Times: “According to some critics, a pro-Israel rag run by unrepentant Zionists. According to other critics, an anti-Israel rag run by self-hating Jews. Both sets of critics are this close to cancelling their subscriptions.”
♣ Yachting: “No clue.” [This is the complete entry.]

By now it should be clear that “The Newish Jewish Encyclopedia” is definitely not for everyone. However, those with a Jewish funny bone will get a kick out of its approach to our heritage, if only to groan when the entries are flip and ridiculous. Or maybe you’ll learn something like I did. Who knew that Bugs Bunny was “one kosher rabbit” and said to be inspired by Groucho Marx? That certainly explains why I loved his cartoons when I was a kid.

See “Books” on page 12
to the barbecue sauce bottle, swish and pour into crock pot. Sprinkle on the coffee garlic rub and cook on low 8 hours.

Remove brisket from sauce and pull apart with two forks until shredded. Add a few tablespoons of cooking liquid to shredded brisket.

Place a mound of pulled brisket onto the center of each latke, gently fold like you would a soft tortilla, and enjoy!

**CHANUKAH STAINED GLASS COOKIES BY KOSHER.COM STAFF**

½ tsp. Hadder Baking Powder
½ cup softened butter
½ cup crushed hard candy
1 large egg
⅓ cups all-purpose flour
½ tsp. salt
⅔ cup sugar
⅓ tsp. Gefen Vanilla Extract

Use a mixer, cream together butter and sugar until fluffy. Add egg and vanilla extract. In a separate bowl, stir together flour, baking powder and salt. Gradually add dry ingredients to the butter, and cream the mixture. Wrap tightly with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least an hour. Preheat oven to 350°F. On a lightly-floured surface, roll out batter about ⅛ inch thick. Use cookie cutters to cut out shapes. Cut a small circle in the middle of each shape with a butter knife or smaller cookie cutter. Place shapes on a parchment-lined baking sheet and bake for five minutes. Remove the baking sheet, and carefully spoon ½ teaspoon of crushed hard candy into the center of each cookie. Bake for four to five more minutes, or until the candy has melted completely.

Cool, first for 15 minutes on baking sheet, then move to cooling rack.

**Tip:** Short on time? Use premade dough instead.

**CHURROS BY GIDEON BEN EZRA FOR KOSHER.COM**

½ cup lowfat milk or milk substitute, such as Gefen Soy Milk or rice milk
6 Tbsp. canola oil
Pinch of salt
2 Tbsp. sugar
⅔ tsp. cinnamon
⅔ tsp. ground cloves
¼ tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. Gefen Vanilla Extract
1 cup all purpose flour
3 eggs
Canola oil for frying

Topping: ½ cup white sugar mixed with ⅔ tsp. cin-
namon, set aside in a shallow bowl

Heat the milk, canola oil, salt, sugar and spices in a small pot on high heat and bring to a boil. Add the flour and mix well using a wooden spoon. You are creating a roux. Keep stirring until the roux is uniform and a thick skin forms on the bottom of the pot. Turn off the flame and continue stirring the roux. Add the eggs one at a time, stirring vigorously after each addition, until all the ingredients are well blended. You can use a hand mixer or continue to stir well with the wooden spoon. Affix a wide (one-inch) star tip to a pastry bag and fill the bag with the hot dough. Set it aside in a mug with the tip folded over so that the dough doesn’t escape from the bag. (If you don’t have a pastry bag, this recipe will also work with a cookie press.) Heat the oil in a frying pan or a deep fryer to a depth of three to four inches, until it reaches 350°F. Stick the bag in the oil and add a “bunch” of churros to the oil. (Longer churros may look more authentic, but smaller ones are easier to make.) The churros tend to stick together in the oil, so only fry a few at a time, depending on how large your pan is. When they float to the top, fry them for one to two minutes longer, or until they are golden brown.

Remove the churros with a slotted spoon and drain them on paper towels. While the churros are still hot, roll each one in the sugar and cinnamon mixture. Serve immediately.

More Chanukah recipes, including gluten-free recipes, can be found on Kosher.com, including:

- www.kosher.com/recipe/gluten-free-sufganiyot-4350
- www.kosher.com/recipe/savory-potato-latke-cookies-4322
- www.kosher.com/recipe/hanukkah-recipe-oven-fried-zucchini-sticks-6179
- www.kosher.com/recipe/matzoh-ball-stuffed-onion-rings-6948
- www.kosher.com/shows/video/400/two-ingredi-
- fried-brownies

Kosher.com is a free, searchable online community for kosher food, lifestyle and conversation featuring recipes, videos, articles and more by hundreds of chefs, food writers, wine experts and other professionals.

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**Books... Continued from page 11**

I haven’t had a chance to read “The Posen Library of Jewish Culture and Civilization Volume Six: Confronting Modernity, 1750-1880” edited Elisheva Carlebach (Yale University Press/The Posen Foundation), but wanted to mention it as a potential gift book. Its more than 500 pages include short biographies of writers, food writers, wine experts and other professionals. It also features almost 100 pages of photographs of “materiel culture, synagogue architecture, and fine art.” The work would be of interest to literary scholars or those wanting to know more about Jewish culture from this period.

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**Friends of The Reporter make big news!**

The Federation is asking members of its communities to support its “Friends of The Reporter” Campaign which seeks to raise $5,000 to assist in funding the newspaper.

The newspaper is delivered twice of month (except for December and July which are single issue months) to each and every identifiable Jewish home in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

The Reporter is the primary intercommunal newspaper of the Jewish communities of Lackawanna, Monroe, Pike and Wayne counties. Supplementing synagogue newsletters, bulletins and e-mails, The Reporter is issued to hundreds of Jewish households throughout our region. Over the past several years, the publishing cost of the newspaper has increased dramatically although the newspaper continues to be provided at no charge to members of our Jewish communities in northeastern Pennsylvania. The Federation has assumed the financial responsibility of funding the newspaper at a cost of $23,990 per year and asks only that its readers assist it in raising $5,000 as part of its “Friends of The Reporter” Campaign to offset a small share of these expenses.

Your gift to fund our regional Jewish newspaper matters a great deal to our readers and we would be very grateful for your financial support.

As always, your comments, opinions & suggestions are always welcome.

With best wishes,
Mark Silverberg, Executive Director
Jewish Federation of NE Pennsylvania
601 Jefferson Ave.
Scranton, PA 18510
Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

2020 UJA Campaign

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TOGETHER

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2020 UJA Campaign
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601 Jefferson Avenue, Scranton, PA 18510
Telephone: 570-961-2300 (ext. 3)

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ERIC & ANGELA WEINBERG, CO-CHAIRS OF THE 2020 UJA CAMPAIGN THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT.
Scientists discover molecule that destroys pancreatic cancer cells

BY ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN (Israel21c via JNS) – A little molecule named PJ34 can cause cancer cells to self-destruct, according to an Israeli study published recently in the biomedical journal Oncotarget.

Professor Malka Cohen-Armon and her team at Tel Aviv University’s Sackler Faculty of Medicine conducted an experiment using xenografts – human cancer cells transplanted into mice – to self-destruct, according to an article published in the journal Oncotarget. PJ34 originally was developed to target molecules linked with BRCA mutations.

In collaboration with Dr. Talia Golan’s team at the Cancer Research Central Sheba Medical Center, the scientists then injected PJ34 into the mice for 14 days in a row.

A month after the molecule was administered, the number of cancer cells in the mice’s tumors were found to be reduced by 80 percent to 90 percent. One mouse’s tumor completely disappeared.

Cohen-Armon noted that the treated mice suffered no adverse effects from the PJ34 molecule regimen, nor did they experience changes in weight or behavior. Also significant is that the PJ34 molecule exclusively interrupted the duplication of human cancer cells, leaving normal cells alone.

Although PJ34 could work on other types of cancer cells, pancreatic cancer presents a pressing need. It’s the 12th most common cancer worldwide and the fourth leading cause of cancer death. This type of cancer is often resistant to existing treatments.

Early diagnosis of pancreatic cancer is difficult, as many are asymptomatic until the disease is advanced, and fewer than 3 percent of patients at that stage survive for more than five years after diagnosis.

Therefore, the Israeli research holds “great potential” for the development of a new, effective therapy to treat this aggressive cancer in humans. It could also prove effective against aggressive forms of breast, lung, brain and ovarian cancer.

PJ34 is now being tested in pre-clinical trials according to FDA regulations before larger animal trials and then human clinical trials can begin.

Last June, Israel21c reported on a multinational research study led by Golan demonstrating the effectiveness of a new drug regimen for pancreatic cancer in people with BRCA mutations.

Festival . . . . Continued from page 8

A large picture of a dozen kessins standing in front of a reconstructed Temple.

Over the past few days, various members of the Ethiopian Jewish community have used the Sigd holiday to speak out in the media about their experiences and concerns.

Danny Adino Abebe, a journalist who came to Israel in 1994 at age 9 with his parents as part of “Operation Moses,” explains how deeply the lengthy, dangerous trek through the Sudan affected him and his family. “Sudan is ingrained in us. We never left Sudan, in some sense,” he says.

Similar to many Holocaust survivors, it’s taken decades for the older generation, who suffered the physical and emotional trials of leaving a hostile Third World country to arrive in modern Israel, to start to open up about their painful experiences.

While noting that Ethiopian Jews of his generation have become successful in many fields, “nevertheless we have a problematic, complicated past,” says Abebe. “We’ll only ever overcome it if we make this part of Israeli culture.”

Sharon Shalom immigrated to Israel alone at the age of 9. Today, he is an ordained rabbi and serves as a captain in the IDF reserves. He is also a senior lecturer at Ono Academic College, teaches at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan, and serves as rabbi of the “Kdoshet Israel” community in Kiryat Gat. In a short Hebrew video titled “Ten Facts You Didn’t Know About the Sigd Festival,” Shalom points out that in addition to the religious significance of the day, one of the main themes of Sigd activities is reconciliation and the breaking down of barriers between people.

It’s a message echoed by Ofer Berkovitch, former deputy mayor of Jerusalem and head of the Hitorerut (Jerusalem Municipality) party, who is also a member of the Jerusalem municipality. The Beta Yisrael community is part of the rich diversity that makes up Israel,” Berkovitch tells JNS. “As a representative of the Jerusalem municipality, I’m here to express the wish to see all Jews join together. Jews of Ethiopian origin yearned for centuries for Jerusalem. They have a unique and special culture, and we need to make efforts to ensure their integration while maintaining their identity.”
Israel signs deal to sell Iron Dome radars to Czech Republic

Palestinian officials slammed a report from the International Criminal Court that includes a warning that rewarding terrorists and their families could be a war crime. Palestinian Authority Foreign Affairs Minister Riad Malki said the report was “based on misleading narratives of a political nature … rather than an objective and accurate description of the relevant facts.” The United States in March 2018 defendied most of its assistance to the Palestinian Authority for rewarding terrorists and their families, known as “pay to play.” The Palestinians have sought to use the ICC to prosecute alleged Israeli war crimes. The report, released on Dec. 5, included alleged crimes by Israel and the Palestinian Authority under investigation, including Israel’s defense against rioters at its border with Gaza and Palestinian terrorists launching rockets from Gaza into the Jewish state, in addition to using civilians as human shields. Finally, at the Palestinians’ request, ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda opened in 2015 a preliminary probe into possible international law violations, following the 2014 war between Hamas and Israel. Bensouda believes that “it is time to take the necessary steps to bring the preliminary examination to a conclusion,” stated the report.

Racist graffiti found at New York Holocaust museum

Racist graffiti was discovered at a New York Holocaust museum for the second time in two weeks. The Holocaust Memorial and Tolerance Center of Nassau County in Glen Cove was defaced with swastikas and other vandalism. “It’s shocking because we’re a museum and education center,” Deborah Lom, acting director of development at the museum, told Patch on Dec. 5. “And now, we’re faced with this incident right here,” she said. “That makes it even more shocking to us.” In a statement on Dec. 5, the Center said, “We are shocked and saddened about the appearance of hate appearing here on the same day we hosted a major public event on antisemitism.” The vandalism occurred 10 days after graffiti, including a racial smear, was discovered on the museum. Glen Cove police are investigating the vandalism.

Israel signs deal to sell Iron Dome radars to Czech Republic

Israel signed an agreement on Dec. 5 to sell the Czech Republic eight Iron Dome air-defense systems in a contract worth $125 million, announced Israel’s Defense Ministry. The Israeli Aerospace Industries subsidiary ELTA will provide eight ELM-2084 Iron Dome multi-mission radars, which have air-surveillance, air-defense and artillery capabilities. The radar systems assist in the monitoring, tracking and interception of several airborne projectiles simultaneously at an altitude between 330 feet and 10,000 feet, and cover a wide area of about 155 miles, according to The Times of Israel. They are expected to be delivered to the Czech Republic during 2021-23, to 10,000 feet, and cover a wide area of about 155 miles, according to The Times of Israel. They are expected to be delivered to the Czech Republic during 2021-23, and will be compatible with Czech and NATO command and control systems. Both countries will work on the production of the systems, with 70 percent being made in Israel and the other 30 percent by Czech industries, working on design, manufacturing, assembly, integration, testing and life-time maintenance. Certain security components will be manufactured locally, The Times of Israel reported. The deal was signed at the Ministry of Defense headquarters in Prague by Czech Defense Minister Lubomir Metnar; Deputy Minister of Defense Filip Oltla; and Brig. Gen. (res.) Yair Kulas the head of SIBAT, Israel’s ministry of defense export and defense cooperation division.

UK, France, Germany: Iran has nuclear-capable ballistic missiles

In a joint letter addressed to U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres that was released by the world body on Dec. 4, ambassadors from the United Kingdom, Germany and France reiterated that Iran has developed nuclear-capable ballistic missiles. The countries, all parties to the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, formally the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (or JCPOA), listed four examples of the alleged activity, adding that “Iran’s developments of nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and related technologies is inconsistent” with U.N. Security Council Resolution 2231, which restricts the regime from doing so. “Iran is believed to possess the largest and most diverse ballistic-missile arsenal in the Middle East, according to U.S. intelligence assessments, with a substantial inventory of close, short and medium range missiles that can strike targets throughout the region,” reported CNN. “The Shahab-3 booster used in the test is a Missile Technology Control Regime category-1 system and as such is technically capable of delivering a nuclear weapon,” stated the letter. In July, Iran test-fired a medium-range Shahab-3 missile in violation of a U.N. Security Council resolution. It was launched from southern Iran and traveled some 680 miles, coming down east of Tehran, according to reports. The liquid-fueled Shahab-3 can reportedly deliver a nuclear weapon and has been referred to by Iranian officials as one of the country’s “Israel-hitting” missiles. Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif slammed the letter from the European countries, or E. “Latest E3 letter to UNSG on missiles is a desperate falsehood to cover up their miserable incompetence in fulfilling bare minimum of their own #JCPOA obligations. If E3 want a modicum of global credibility, they can begin by exerting sovereignty rather than bowing to US bullying,” Zarif tweeted on Dec. 5. The letter came as there has been recent alarm from U.S. defense and administration officials of Iranian weapons and forces being moved to potentially attack U.S. forces.

Dickinson College student gov’t mandate to ban Sabra hummus

The student government at Dickinson College—a small liberal-arts school in Carlisle, PA, outside Harrisburg—passed a resolution on Dec. 3 to ban Sabra hummus, an Israeli product, as part of a campaign on campus to boycott the Jewish state. The person leading the charge has been Henry Cohen, whose father, Jeremiah Cohen, owns Bullfrog Bagels in Washington, DC, and is also a supporter of the BDS movement. An ensuing petition has been launched calling for a boycott of Bullfrog Bagels; it currently has 90 signatures. Bullfrog Bagels did not respond to a request for comment. The college administration, however, did note that it rejects the student move to ban hummus. In a statement, it said “Dickinson encourages students to voice their opinions and affect change through our governance structure. We are pleased that the discussion about this issue at the Student Senate meeting was civil, and that competing opinions were articulated. As an institution that deeply values global diversity and civil discussion and debate, Dickinson opposes this boycott.”
FIND YOUR LIGHT

And share it with those who need it most. You have the capacity. Just like the candles you add to the menorah, you can bring light, warmth and comfort to those who are struggling without them. * Your gift to Jewish Federation delivers relief and brightens the lives of thousands of people at home, in Israel and in more than 70 countries worldwide. * Find your light. Federation will help it shine.