

Sigal Kanotopsky mesmerizes Federation audiences at Campaign Opening Events

Sigal Kanotopsky, director of the Jewish Agency for Israel's North-east region in the United States, shared the harrowing story her family's journey from Ethiopia to Israel in 1986 and her rise in Israeli society, including an elite position in the Israeli Defense Force and being named among the most influential Israeli women in recent years.

The dream to live in Israel was very real for Sigal's parents and so many others in her community. "Jerusalem" was always on their lips and when the opportunity arose to go, on foot, they took very few belongings and started the five-week

trek to Sudan where they waited, hiding their Jewishness from the locals, until the plane came for them.

Sigal then told of some of the discrimination she felt as an Ethiopian during her years in school and the army, and how she felt the need to be the best – for herself and for all Ethiopians.

In the third part of her presentation, she told us how she took her daughter back to her Ethiopian village as a bat mitzvah mother-daughter time to reflect on their roots.

Finally, Sigal encouraged everyone to visit Israel, support the Jewish Agency and, maybe, make *aliyah!*

Daniel Chejfec, executive director of the Jewish Federation, followed up on Sigal's powerful remarks by aptly reminding the assembled of the role the Jewish Federation plays locally and globally to enhance the lives of Jewish people everywhere.

Cantor Vladimir and Mila Aronzon are this year's UJA- Federation chairs and they look forward to your support. Donations can be made directly on the Federation website, jewishnepa.org.



CANDLE LIGHTING	
November 4.....	5:36 pm
November 11.....	4:28 pm
November 18.....	4:22 pm
November 25.....	4:18 pm
December 2.....	4:16 pm
December 9.....	4:15 pm
December 16.....	4:16 pm
December 23.....	4:19 pm
December 30.....	4:24 pm

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Israel to grant up to 45 million shekels to bring foreign filmmakers to the country

BY MAAYAN HOFFMAN

(JNS) – The Israeli government is aiming to positively brand the country and improve the economy through a rebate project that could grant up to 45 million shekels (\$13.9 million) toward the production of foreign films and TV series in the country over the next two years. The move was initiated earlier this summer by five Israeli ministries. The deadline for application to participate was August 22.

“Sadly, the way that the world often learns about Israel is through war,” Culture and Sports Minister Yehiel Tropper told JNS. “We just had this operation with Hamas and the terrorists launched more than 1,000 rockets at Israeli civilians while the IDF aimed only at terrorists, but the world does not necessarily see it this way. “We want them to see the beauty of Israel, our beautiful places, our cultural life, our theaters – there are so many wonderful things happening here and this is our chance to show them off.”

The program is officially a project of the ministries of economy, culture and sports, finance, foreign

affairs and tourism. The money will be granted through a special track of the Investments and Development Authority for Industry and the Economy at the Economy and Industry Ministry.

Qualified filmmakers—including in the field of animation and those working on TV series—can receive reimbursement for production expenses of up to 30 percent. The amount of financial support will be provided based on documentation provided by the recipients at various milestones throughout the production process. Up to 80 percent can be received during production and 20 percent when the film is completed. Reimbursement amounts can range between 500,000 shekels (\$154,347) to 16.6 million shekels (\$5.1 million).

Tropper said that the investment is expected to increase in value thanks to the “domino effect” of commercial activity. He said when productions are in town, they will spend money in hotels, use public transportation, order catering, hire professional support staff and more.

Any applicant who wins a reimbursement grant has to agree to include mention in their film credits that their production was made with the support of the state of Israel and to allow Israel to share information about the film’s connection to the Holy Land “in any manner it sees fit,” according to the program’s official documentation.

Tropper said that the program is fully funded for another two years and then will be up for renewal. He noted that despite the government turnover due to another round of elections, he believes that “if this works, there are movies being made in Israel, it helps the economy and puts Israel in a positive light,” the program will be re-funded.

Israel is an ideal place for making films, the minister said, because of its history and geography, generally comfortable weather, strong infrastructure, skilled professionals and an available pool of film-school alumni, explained Tzvi Gottlieb, CEO of the Israeli TV and Film Producers Association. However, he said that people typically opt to go to Greece, Italy or even Jordan, where it is cheaper to produce films. Jordan is a “big player” in the rebate system, he said, and enjoys many millions of dollars infused into the country by filmmakers. “There is no reason why Israel cannot do the same thing,” he said.

Already, without the grant program, many well-known films have been made in Israel or developed



Israelis attended a movie at the Cinema City theater on the official reopening night after 14 months of closure during the coronavirus pandemic, on May 27, 2021, in Jerusalem. (Photo by Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90)

by Israeli talent, such as Netflix’s “Hit and Run,” “Fauda,” “Yellow Peppers,” “Tehran” and others. On the animation side, “the industry is booming right now in Israel,” Ben Molina, who runs the Animation Union in Israel, told JNS. “Israel is both an animation service provider and Israel is the creator of original IP.”

He highlighted shows like Nickelodeon’s “Zack and Quack,” which started in Israel, but moved abroad for economic reasons. Israel’s Snowball Studios helped make “Muppet Babies” and is behind “CoComelon.” Most recently, Ari Folman brought the story of Anne Frank to life through animation. That film has so far made more than \$160 million at the box office.

“This is happening now and it would not have been possible 10 years ago,” Molina said. “This rebate program will make even more options possible.”

Gottlieb said he believes it will serve to improve Israel’s image when producers and actors take to social media to share their travels and experiences. Dani Shahar, di-

rector general of the Tourism Ministry, said it will also bring travelers. “People from all over the world travel to destinations they have seen in movies, following favorite series and following admired stars,” said Shahar. “Investing in promoting international productions to film here in Israel is part of our marketing activity as the Tourism Ministry, to expose and brand Israel as an attractive destination in the world. Besides Israel being an ideal setting for filming international productions, offering a very wide variety of landscape types, the charm of Israel will surely also appear in the series and films that will be produced here and will improve the status of our country among other countries of the world.”

Tropper was a social worker before he was a politician. He said that culture “is like cold water on a hot day on the hearts of people.” Tropper added that while Israel hopes to share its land, film technology and innovation with the international film industry, it hopes to “fill the souls” of its own people through the project.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Google launches Israeli local cloud computing region

Alphabet Inc.’s Google launched a local cloud computing region for Israel on Oct. 20, delivering cloud services to the country’s government and military in a move expected to enhance job creation and economic growth. Billions of shekels will be invested in local infrastructure as part of the initiative, Israel’s Finance Ministry said on Oct. 20. In May 2021, Israel agreed to the \$1 billion, four-phase Nimbus initiative with Google and Amazon Web Services. According to the government, the economic impact of Google’s Israeli cloud region alone will add an estimated \$7.6 billion to Israel’s GDP by 2030 as well as more than 21,000 jobs in the high-tech sector and others that support cloud activities. According to the ministry, AWS will also activate a local cloud region in the first half of 2023. The cloud zones in Israel will make it possible to move important government computer systems there, improving services’ effectiveness, reducing the time it takes to activate digital services, and saving operational expenses.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

Torah and ethics

The Torah (Pentateuch) is, undoubtedly, the central text in Jewish culture. We might disagree over whether the text is divinely revealed or inspired, but we will all agree about its centrality. What is then “Torah”?

The correct and full name is “*Sefer HaTorah*,” and that is important because “*HaTorah*” is a modifier of “*sefer*” (book or scroll). “*HaTorah*,” like all Hebrew words, comes from a three-letter root; in this case, the ones implying “light.” By

the structure of the words, the best interpretation in English would be “(the book) that brings light.” The Torah gives us a “blueprint” for life; it tells us what is expected from us in our relationship with both the Divine and the human. In short, it gives us an ethical standard on how to conduct our affairs. That is precisely the meaning of the revolution the Torah brought to the children of Israel “from the mouth of God through the hand of Moses,” and it became the single most important contribution of the Jewish people to human civilization.

Why was this so revolutionary? Even Judaism, before the Sinaitic experience, was at best a monolatry: that is the worshipping of a unique, single Divine Being. The Torah created a contract between the people and God; spelling out the Divine expectations for human behavior. And those expectations became the standard



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

against which the actions of each one of us is measured. No human being, regardless of his or her station in life, is above those standards – they apply to all, and by doing so they define human expectations on how others ought to behave toward us as well. In short – it sets the rules of the game of life. It transformed monolatry into ethical monotheism.

It is said that in trying to sum up the content of the Torah, Rabbi Hillel once said, “Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself

– the rest is commentary; go and study.” The central meaning of the Torah is indeed to treat each other with compassion, respect and kindness; once we do that, everything else falls into place. Caring for those in danger or in need is a central element of Torah ethics, and it is also central to our efforts at the Federation. Through the Annual Campaign, the community comes together to make that central ethical mandate a reality, and we help our brothers and sisters at home, in Israel and around the globe. It sounds

overwhelming, but in the words of another one of our ancient sages (Rabbi Tarphon): “Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world’s grief. Do justly, now. Walk humbly, now. You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to abandon it.”

May we be, in this new year, capable of doing our part in improving the world.

DEADLINES

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

DEADLINE	ISSUE
Friday, November 11	December
Monday, December 12	January
Monday, January 16	February
Monday, February 13	March

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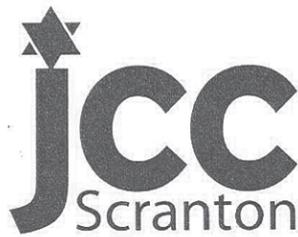
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SCRANTON JCC PROJECT JOY 2022

Dear Friends,

I would like to once again thank you for your generous response to past year’s Project Joy. During the Christmas/Chanukah holiday time, Project Joy gives toys, clothing, socks, books and stuffed animals to many needy children in our area. Many agencies submit their wish lists to me which are accommodated to the best of our ability. Last year, over 125 children from the Catherine McAuley Center, St. Josephs Center, Jewish Family Services, and Lackawanna Children & Youth had better holidays because of your generosity. Also, if there are children in our local hospital pediatric departments toys will be distributed there as well.

We will be wrapping the gifts in the JCC auditorium with our incredible team of devoted volunteers on Thursday, December 8th, starting at 9:00 am. All vaccinated wrappers are welcome. Masks are optional.

I ask that you continue to help out by sending your generous contributions to the JCC with your donation made out to JCC Project Joy. As in the past we will also accept all unwrapped new toys. This year’s deadline will be December 1st since the agencies require the gifts early.

Thank you for your continued support for this extremely worthwhile project. These agencies count on us every year and it is very much appreciated by all.
Sincerely,

Carol Leventhal, Chairperson

Phone 570-587-2931/ or email jeff@graphicsart.net
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➔ Check out the Federation’s new, updated website at www.jewishnepa.org or find it on Facebook

Jewish online resources

BY REPORTER STAFF

A variety of Jewish groups are offering educational and recreational online resources. Below is a sampling of those. *The Reporter* will publish additional listings as they become available.

◆ Maven will hold the virtual class “Five Powerful Responses to Zionist Critics” with Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin on Mondays, November 7 and 14, from 3-4 pm. The cost to attend is \$36. For more information or to register, visit <https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/five-powerful-responses-to-zionist-critics>.

◆ Maven will hold the virtual program “Music and the Holocaust” with Emanuel Abramovits on Wednesday, November 30, from 5-6 pm. The cost to attend is \$21. The program looks at the way “the role that music played in the struggle for hope in the darkest of times.” For more information or to register, visit <https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/music-and-the-holocaust1>.

◆ The Shalom Hartman Institute will hold a three-part virtual class “Three Aspects of an Ethic of Friendship” with Gordon Tucker on Thursdays, December 1, 8 and 15, from 7:30-8:30 pm. Tucker explores Jewish texts, traditions and practices that seek to define people’s obligations to one another and allow them to live more meaningful Jewish lives. For more information or to register, visit www.hartman.org.il/event/ethics-of-friendship-session-1/.

◆ The Center for Jewish History will hold the virtual program “Family History Today: Clued In – Case Studies from Sherlock Cohn, the Photo Genealogist” on Thursday, November 10, at 5 pm. Ava “Sherlock” Cohn, the photo genealogy sleuth, will explore how to find the clues ancestors left in family photos. For more information or to register, visit <https://programs.cjh.org/event/family-history-today-2022-11-10>.

◆ The Institute for Jewish Spirituality and Or HaLev will hold a virtual class “Yesod: Foundations for Deepening Jewish Mindful Meditation,” a 10-month program, which will begin in January 2023. According to the website, the program will offer “anyone with an established meditation practice a new, systematic, stage-by-stage approach to deepen your mindfulness meditation skills within an authentic Jewish spiritual framework.” For more information or to register, visit www.jewishspirituality.org/go-deeper/yesod-foundations-for-deepening-jewish-mindfulness-meditation/.

◆ Living Smarter Jewish, <https://livingsmarter-jewish.org/>, calls itself “the all-in-one financial resource for Orthodox Jewish families.” The site, which is a non-profit, was launched with the support of the Orthodox Union. It offers a variety of podcasts and blogs about finances from a Jewish point-of-view.

◆ Sefaria, a website that offers free access to Jewish texts, translations and commentaries, now has an English translation of “Mishneh Torah”

by Rambam. The translation includes links to the Bible, Talmud and more. The translation can be found at www.sefaria.org/texts/Halakhah/Mishneh%20Torah.

◆ Hadassah Magazine will hold a “Magazine Discussion: Michael Twitty,” with Adeena Sussman on Thursday, November 3, at 6 pm. Twitty is the author of “Koshersoul: The Faith and Food Journey of an African American Jew” (www.hadassahmagazine.org/2022/09/09/magazine-discussion-koshersoul-with-adeena-sussman/). The event is free and open to the public.

◆ Siegal Lifelong Learning will hold “Kristallnacht: Visual Responses” on Thursday, November 10, from 7-8:30 pm. The talk will look at examples of artwork by European and American artists, Jews and non-Jews. The non-member cost is \$5. For more information or to register, visit <https://case.edu/lifelonglearning/lectures/kristallnacht-visual-responses-remote>.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold the virtual book talk “Fear and Other Stories,” with translator Anita Norich, on Tuesday, December 13, at 7 pm. Norich will talk about translating the collected stories of Chana Blankshteyn (~1860-1939) from Yiddish to English. For more information or to register, visit https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_XW-c70zkUQ7Ga13dEE7fiYw.

◆ Jewish Women’s Archive will hold several book talks: Thursday, November 3, at 8 pm, Liana Finck on “Let There Be Light: The Real Story of Her Creation”; Thursday, November 17, at 8 pm, “One Hundred Saturdays” by Michael Frank; and Thursday, December 1, at 8 pm, Alicia Jo Rabins on “Even God Had Bad Parenting Days.” For more information or to register, visit <https://jwa.org/events>.

◆ The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute will hold the virtual program “Studio Israel: Singer Aveva Dese in conversation with Shula Mola” on Thursday, December 1, at noon. Aveva Dese, an Ethiopian-Israeli singer-songwriter, will be in conversation with Shula Mola, scholar-in-residence at the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute. For more information or to register, visit <https://jartsboston.secure.force.com/ticket/#/instances/a0F8Z00000iK8M4UAK>.

◆ YIVO Yiddish Club will hold virtual meetings in November and December: “Yiddish Songwriting Today” with Adah Hetko on Sunday, November 20, at 2 pm (to register, visit yivo.org/YiddishClub14); and “Yiddish in Rio with Sonia Kramer” on Sunday, December 11, at 2 pm (register at yivo.org/YiddishClub15). There is no cost to attend either meeting.

◆ The Center for Jewish History will hold the virtual program “Jewish Paths to Emancipation: Struggles for Citizenship Across Revolutionary Europe,” featuring David Sorkin, Marsha Rozenblit, Daniel Schwartz and Ivy Weingram, on Thursday, November 17, at 7 pm. For more

information or to register, visit <https://programs.cjh.org/tickets/jewish-paths-2022-11-17>.

◆ Ruth Gruber, who saved nearly 1,000 Jews from the Holocaust, will be inducted into the Jewish-American Hall of Fame on Sunday, November 13, starting at 12:30 pm. There is no charge to watch the induction ceremony on Zoom. To register, visit https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/wn_gh-ftq4xrwmxacx7ohneda.

◆ Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion announced its virtual programs for November, including “Prophetic Leadership in a Time of Democratic Crisis” on Wednesday, November 16, at 1 pm; “Polarization or Authoritarianism? Diagnosing the Threats to our Fragile Democracy” on Tuesday, November 22, at 1:30 pm; and “New Angles on Los Angeles: The LA Jewish Community” on Wednesday, November 30, at 4 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://huc.edu/huc-connect/huc-connect-webinar-calendar-view#february>.

◆ Maven will hold the virtual tour “Cape Town” as part of its “Tour Global Jewish Life” series on Thursday, December 1, from 3-4 pm. Craig Nudelman will offer photos and stories from the Jewish community of Cape Town. For more information or to register, visit <https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/tour-global-jewish-life-cape-town>.

◆ The Museum of Jewish Heritage will hold the virtual book talk “The Disappearance of Josef Mengele” on Thursday, November 10, from 7-8 pm. Olivier Guez will talk about his novel “The Disappearance of Josef Mengele,” which traces Mengele’s travels during his years in hiding. For more information or to register, visit <https://898a.blackbaudhosting.com/898a/tickets?tab=2&txobjid=e3730f26-005c-45f7-bc57-10d6fe8a964f&>.

◆ The Museum of Jewish Heritage will hold a series of virtual talks on “The Holocaust: What Hate Can Do,” which will meet on every other Monday from November 7-September 18, from 12:30-1:30 pm. The cost per talk is \$18 for museum members and \$36 for nonmembers. For more information or to register for individual talks, visit <https://mjhnyc.org/events/core-focus-special-topics-raised-in-the-holocaust-what-hate-can-do/>.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Mobileye settles on \$16 billion IPO valuation

Jerusalem-based Mobileye’s initial public offering will be the largest on Wall Street this year, but it will fall far short of the \$50 billion valuation the Intel subsidiary had hoped for before the tech rout earlier this year. It is now set for an IPO valuing the firm’s total value at around \$16 billion and for fewer shares than initially planned. The driving technologies company is offering 41 million shares of common stock priced between \$18 and \$20 per share, aiming to raise up to \$820 million. Intel acquired the Israeli company in 2017 for \$15.3 billion. While most companies scheduled for 2022 IPOs delayed their public offerings until next year, Mobileye is one of the most notable exceptions. Intel will keep “significant ownership” in Mobileye.



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Beth Shalom Academy Shofar Factory

Rabbi Mendel Raices, Beth Shalom Academy's rebbe, engaged students of all ages in a special "Shofar Factory" program on September 21. With the approach of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, students at BSA have participated in a variety of activities representing the significance of the *Yomim Nora'im* (Days of Awe), such as baking honey cakes to share with family, understanding the important laws of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and the importance of giving *tzedakah* at this time.

The Shofar Factory program focused on the creation of the shofar and Rabbi Raices brought in an array of antlers and horns to pass around in order to explain what may and may not be used in the creation of a shofar.

"Where did you get these antlers?" asked Adina Ringler, 8.

"From the store!" laughed Rabbi Raices in reply. "You can buy your own!"

Students were fascinated to examine a deer skull and other types of horns that the rebbe brought in for the program.

The highlight of the event was Rabbi Raices using his power drill with special drill bits to hollow out a real ram's horn. After a demonstration of the sounds and tones of the shofar, the students were thrilled to take turns practicing their newly learned skills. The room filled with giggles, chatter and many insights about Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and the shofar. As students raised their hands to share questions and comments, it was apparent from their smiling faces that the program was a big hit!

The interactive program is just one of many ways students at BSA learn through hands-on experiences, and it's always a wonderful time.



NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Israel, Bahrain sign accord on agricultural cooperation

Israel and Bahrain on Oct. 19 signed an agricultural cooperation declaration on the sidelines of the first-ever International Summit on Food Technologies from the Dead Sea and Desert that took place in Eilat. The conference, an initiative of Israel's Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, was attended by some 70 senior officials, who focused on promoting coordination and innovation in aquaculture, in particular, and the overall battle to combat food security. The declaration calls for the promotion and expansion of cooperation between Jerusalem and Manama in the fields of agriculture, livestock and food security, and the sharing of related knowledge, technology and diverse products. Representatives at the conference also came from countries such as the United States, Chile, Ghana, Singapore, Romania, Malta, the Netherlands and Iceland.

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Temple Israel of the Poconos holiday events

Temple Israel of the Poconos began 5783 filled with congregants engaged in unity, singing prayers led by its interim rabbi, Cantor/Rabbi Johanan Bickhardt. The pews were filled as were several of the “extra” chairs with both long-term members and new congregants. Children participated during parts of both the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services helping to open the ark, carrying a “stuffed Torah” during the Torah procession as well as holding the wine and *Havdalah* candle.

TIPOC’s renewed educational programs are redesigned for children to encourage direct involvement in Shabbat and holiday services. Torah study of the weekly *parashot* (readings), holiday preparations, etc. for adults are now scheduled. Many adult members were called upon with English readings, ark openings, prayers before and after the reading of the Torah, holding the Torah scrolls and chanting the *haftorah* for the High Holidays. Temple Israel of the Poconos long term member Charlie Cahn was Baal Tekiya, supported by his two grandsons, Maximus and Finnley Cahn, to call the blasts of the shofar in their proper order. This loving preparation will culminate in another generation sounding the shofar for years to come in the sanctuary of Temple Israel of the Poconos.

Rosh Hashanah luncheon meals and break-the-fast buffet, prepared by Executive Administrator Lucinda Laliberte, were shared and enjoyed by those attending High Holiday services. A few days later, members came together to construct a sukkah followed by a Bar B Que social event. TIPOC’s sukkah was shaking the lulav and smelling the etrog in its Pizza in the Hut on October 9 with long-term members and new members together. Meals eaten in the sukkah were delightful, as were the shared comradery and companionship while performing a mitzvah. Preparations for a joyous Simchat Torah were underway for current and new members alike. Membership is financially reasonable for all new Jewish families; for more information, call 570-421-8781.





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Dassy.ganz@jewishnepa.org



Podcast series “The Forgotten Exodus” tells overlooked stories of Jews from Arab lands

BY SHIRYN GHERMEZIAN

(JNS) – A new limited podcast series from the American Jewish Committee features interviews with Jews whose families left or were forced to flee from Arab lands and Iran in the mid-20th century. “The Forgotten Exodus,” premiering on

August 1, consists of at least six episodes, each focusing on a different tale about a Jewish family from Yemen, Iraq, Egypt, Libya, Morocco and Iran. According to AJC, it’s the first narrative podcast series to exclusively focus on the stories of the 800,000 Jews who left or were

driven out of their centuries-old communities throughout the Middle East and North Africa.

See “Podcast” on page 11

At right: The family of Rabbi Ezra Dangoor, Baghdad, in 1910. (Photo courtesy of JNS)



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An orchestra for musicians with and without disabilities

BY ABIGAIL KLEIN LEICHMAN

(Israel 21c via JNS) – Ahuvi Kenigsbuch, 35, confidently stepped on stage to sing her own song, “Ten Li Ktzat Zman” (“Give Me a Little Time”), during the third annual concert of the Israel Integrative Orchestra on June 14. She composed the words and melody, and the song was scored and arranged for violins, wind instruments and piano by the orchestra’s conductor, Ido Marco, and some of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance students who comprise this unique group.

“Give me a little time to change myself,” she sang, “to refresh, to be with you only. Give me a sign that you are only mine because there is nobody else but you.”

Formed three years ago to provide a place where musicians with and without disabilities could create music together, the Israel Integrative Orchestra is a joint project of the nonprofit SHEKEL–Inclusion for People with Disabilities and the Yizhak Navon Community Unit of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance.

Sponsors include Perach, which provides scholarships to academy students who volunteer as mentors for the project, and the American Center of the United States embassy.

Some 40 musicians and vocalists – about half from the academy and half from SHEKEL – rehearse once a week at the academy on Hebrew University’s Givat Ram campus.

The initiative reflects SHEKEL CEO Clara



A concert of the Israel Orchestra of Inclusion (Photo courtesy of SHEKEL)

Feldman’s strong belief that in addition to employment, housing and social activities, “cultural inclusion is a major key to the inclusion of people with disabilities in society.” Whether these disabilities are physical, developmental or emotional, “the orchestra provides the opportunity to develop their musical talents in a professional atmosphere and benefit from professional training, while at the same time changing societal attitudes,” says Feldman. “Students at the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance will be the musical leaders of the next generation, and this gives them a firsthand understanding of the true significance and impact of cultural inclusion.”

The orchestra was founded just before the COVID-19 pandemic.

“It was very difficult to do rehearsals via Zoom, but we felt it was important for continuity,” See “Orchestra” on page 10

CHANUKAH Greetings

Deadline: November 17 (December issue)

Once again this year, *The Reporter* is inviting its readers and medical professionals to place personal Chanukah greetings to the community. These Chanukah greeting ads will appear in our December issue.

You may choose from the designs, messages and sizes shown here - more are available. You may also choose your own message, as long as it fits into the space of the greeting you select. (Custom designs available upon request.) The price of the small greeting is \$20 (styles E and F), the medium one is \$38 (style A and D) and the largest one (style G) is \$74.

To ensure that your greeting is published or for more information on additional styles, sizes & designs, contact Kathy Brown at 1-800-779-7896, ext. 244; or e-mail advertising@thereporter.org. Checks can be made payable to *The Reporter* and sent to: *The Reporter*, 500 Clubhouse Rd., Vestal, NY 13850.

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Unique, colorful, kinetic: Yaacov Agam Museum in Rishon Lezion

BY JUDY LASH BALINT

(JNS) – There’s only one museum in Israel dedicated to a sole living artist – the Yaacov Agam Museum in Rishon Lezion. Agam is so prolific and his work so striking that it’s not surprising that he merits a display space all his own.

Recently reopened after more than a year of pandemic closure, the airy museum space is filled with examples of Agam’s unique and colorful kinetic art created over the past six decades. It’s one of only a few museums in the world dedicated to kinetic art.

The museum is a good spot for tourists who might want to take a brief respite from nearby Tel Aviv, “the city that never sleeps,” or for Israelis who might want to get to know the artist behind the iconic “Fire and Water Fountain” that graced Dizengoff Square in Tel Aviv for more than three decades.

Agam, who celebrated his 94th birthday on May 11, was born in Rishon LeZion and partnered with the Rishon LeZion municipality in the creation of the museum, which opened in 2018.

While it’s best to book ahead and reserve a guide for a one-and-a-half-hour tour, visitors who arrive independently can download an app and enjoy a self-guided tour of the various colorful pieces in the collection, which are full of movement and symbolism.

Agam is considered to be the father of the Kinetic Movement in modern art, and a lead-

ing artist of the 20th century. At the museum, we learn that Agam was the son of a Kabbalist rabbi, imbibed Jewish spiritual values and loved nature. The kinetic, abstract style allowed Agam to remain true to the biblical commandment, “You shall not make any graven images.”

The sand dunes of Rishon LeZion apparently inspired him to trace drawings that would change constantly with the blowing wind and led him into the style that would be the hallmark of his long career.

At the entrance of the building are 29 intricately designed, brightly colored hexagonal columns called “Pillars of Clila,” after his late wife. The towering works, that tell a different visual story from each side, provide an inkling of the colorful treasures to be found inside the building.

In the lower gallery, the first work we encounter is the only non-abstract piece in the museum. “Portrait of the Artist with Heart in Motion” was created by a technique that layers six images of Agam himself behind a heart shape that gives the appearance of movement. It’s as if he is greeting visitors and inviting them to enjoy the rest of his more abstract and colorful creations.

One of the most striking pieces, in the center of the gallery is the blue, red and white “Jacob’s Ladder.” Based on the biblical story, its theme of dream and reality and the connection between the spiritual and the physical comes across clearly. The effect is multiplied as we see it reflected in

the mirrors at the base and the top. It’s one of several pieces that include the Star of David, which comes into focus as we circle the ladder.

Many of the works on display are polymorphic, they change form depending on where they are viewed from. Due to that and their size, kids are attracted to them, too.

On the lower level of the museum, several posters are on display that used his style to create interest in various exhibits and causes. My favorite is one Agam designed to draw attention to the plight of Soviet Jews on the occasion of the 1976 Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry in Brussels. I’ve had a print of it hanging on my wall since then.

The building’s central ramp displays the exquisitely colored “Panoramagam,” a 22-meter-long relief painting originally exhibited on the famous spiral of the Guggenheim Museum in New York. Walking along the curved walls, the vivid, rhythmically punctuated color fades in and out of the white background like a rainbow springing from light.

In the upper gallery, visitors can enjoy “Hearing the Colors” a temporary exhibit that’s set in the space of the permanent exhibit known as “Visual Music Orchestration.”

It includes a series of two-dimensional works that illustrate the connection Agam finds between plastic art and music. Modern interpretations of

See “Museum” on page 10

The Reporter

Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania



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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Greek synagogue restored to its former glory after 82 years

A synagogue in Trikala, Greece that had fallen into disrepair was rededicated the week of Oct. 21 after being renovated in part with donations from the German government, the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, and other donors. The Kahal Kadosh Yavanim synagogue's rededication was part of a three-day celebration, which included a concert, an inauguration ceremony and an exhibit at a local museum on the restoration project. The large Romaniote synagogue had been dismantled in 1930 due to its poor condition. Noam Katz, Israel's ambassador to Greece, joined in the festivities. He called it an "exciting ceremony." On Twitter, Katz wrote, "At the event I said: Since the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, the synagogues have served as the centers of Jewish life. In Trikala, it symbolizes the glorious presence and history of the Jewish people in Greece for many hundreds of years in Greece. Let us wish and pray all together that this synagogue will be a place to remember and cherish the history of the community," the ambassador continued. "And more than that, a home for a rich and thriving community and Jewish life here in Trikala, now [a] days and in the future." Trikala is located in northwestern Thessaly, in central Greece. Around 500 Jews lived there before World War II. Today, several dozen Jews call the city home, according to the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece. An estimated 87 percent of Greece's Jews were killed during the Holocaust.

Israeli start-ups raised \$800 million in September

Israeli companies raised \$800 million dollars in September and \$13.5 billion since the start of 2022, Israeli business daily *Globes* reported on Oct. 2. The report added that the figures may be higher since some companies do not publicize their investment figures. Citing figures

from the Israeli Venture Capital business data center, the report said that local privately-held tech companies raised a record \$25.6 billion in 2021 – more than double the \$10 billion raised in 2020. Israeli entrepreneurs raised \$10.9 billion in the first half of 2022, according to the *Globes* report. This includes \$1.1 billion raised in August alone. Despite falling short of last year's record, the companies have already raised more capital than in all of 2020. The major fund-raising rounds that were completed in September were reportedly led by cloud optimization company Zesty, which raised \$75 million. Cymulate, a cybersecurity firm, raised \$70 million; Deep Instinct, a cybersecurity company, \$62 million; AccessFintech, a fintech company, \$60 million; and Mesh Payments, another fintech company, also \$60 million. Carbyne, an emergency contact firm, raised \$56 million, and Taranis, an artificial-intelligence-fueled agricultural intelligence startup, raised \$40 million.

Israel budgets NIS 90 million for Russian Jews fleeing war

The Israeli government on Oct. 2 approved a NIS 90 million (nearly \$25 million) budget for helping Russian Jews immigrating to Israel. "Following recent events in Russia and Ukraine, Finance Minister Avigdor Liberman and Aliyah and Integration Minister Pnina Tamano-Shata will submit today a decision that adds NIS 90 million for immigration absorption," said Prime Minister Yair Lapid at the start of the weekly Cabinet meeting. "We expect tens of thousands of *olim* in the coming months. We are preparing for this and welcome this. ... Immediately after the Cabinet meeting, the *aliyah* and integration minister will convene the Ministerial Committee [on Aliyah and Integration] to map out the needs and government preparations for this wave of *aliyah* that is due to reach Israel." But there are "significant barriers" to getting these immigrants to Israel, in part because of the dramatic rise in the cost of airfares out of Russia and the paucity of flights between Moscow and Tel Aviv.

Museum . . .Continued from page 9

classical music created by artist Aviad Zinemanas play in the background, and the effect is mesmerizing. It allows the viewer to reflect on how Agam created the process of visual orchestration. According to one panel on display, Agam "views his work as a form of visual music," and it's easy to see that in action in this part of the museum.

The museum building, which fits in with the surrounding apartment buildings of a pleasant residential neighborhood, was designed by architect David Nofar and includes a café with outdoor seating in the shade of the Sculpture Garden.

Address: 1 Mayshar Street, Kiryat Ha'Leom, Rishon Lezion; Museum hours: Monday – Saturday, 10 am-2:30 pm; and Thursday 4-8 pm. Admission fee: Adults 40 NIS, children 20 NIS.

Orchestra . . .Continued from page 8

Feldman says. "Many SHEKEL participants felt isolated during the pandemic, having lost jobs, while finding themselves cut off from their usual social activities. The orchestra provided an anchor and purpose that helped reconnect members with the outside world."

The group works cohesively, accommodating the varying special needs and musical levels of its members from SHEKEL. "I think the orchestra has changed all of us who work with the musicians who have disabilities," said Marco. "We are more open today and understand the significance of inclusion. On the way, we have learned to use music as a means with which to connect and communicate with people in an entirely different way."

"A true connection has been forged between the academy students and SHEKEL musicians that is very moving," said Shoham Peled, director of the Yitzhak Navon Community Unit of the Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance. "It has created an opportunity for both sides to experience significant musical creativity together, expanding the horizons of the academy students involved and giving SHEKEL musicians a supportive place to express themselves and participate as equals in a quality professional orchestra."

At the annual concert, Nadav Frankel, 27, played guitar and sang the jaunty show tune "Feeling Good" from "The Roar of the Greasepaint, the Smell of the Crowd."

"It's a new dawn, it's a new day, it's a new life for me and I'm feeling good," Frankel crooned, as Shilav Ron from the academy accompanied him with gusto on the double bass.

A Jerusalem resident who lives in a SHEKEL apartment in the community and works at Yad Vashem, Frankel says music is his passion, from pop to rock to blues to country and jazz. "I've been singing since kindergarten," says Frankel. He learned to play guitar about 10 years ago. Until he successfully auditioned for the orchestra three years ago, he had no other opportunities to perform for the public because of his special needs.

Frankel tells ISRAEL21c that he loves being part of the Israel Integrative Orchestra community and dreams of starting his own band one day. "Nadav sings and plays with all his heart," says Ron, who has formed a strong personal connection with Frankel over the past three years. "People with disabilities are sometimes referred to as 'limited,' but the truth is that they give their best without limitation."

This article was originally published by ISRAEL21c.

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Podcast..... Continued from page 7

Each episode will also include a scholar that will give some historical background about the region listeners are going to hear about. The podcast aims to educate about a part of Jewish history that is not well-known, while intriguing listeners to ask questions about what happened to Jews and why their stories are overlooked.

“These are all very powerful, very poignant and emotional stories. They are stories that are largely unknown to the larger world, including many in the Jewish community,”

AJC CEO David Harris told JNS. Harris’s wife, Giulietta, talks in one

of the podcast episodes about how her family sought refuge in Italy after being forced to leave Libya, where they had lived for generations.

In the first episode, Carol Isaacs – author of the graphic memoir “The Wolf of Baghdad” – shares details about her family and their life in Iraq until the 1941 pogrom and expulsion of Jews, called the “Farhud.”

“It’s been interesting. A lot of people didn’t even know there were Jews living in Arab lands,” she said. “Nobody knows about what happened to them – that they were ethnically cleansed, removed from their homes and dispersed across the world... It’s our truth and it’s our history.”

Harris noted that the history of Jews from Arab regions is not widely known since the Jewish community in the United States is “overwhelmingly European and Ashkenazi.” He also noted that their stories are not always taught in Jewish establishments like schools, synagogues and JCCs.

“There’s a very rich history here that should become part of the totality of our collective Jewish history,” he added. “Looking beyond the Jewish world, there are very few people in the world of politics, diplomacy and academics who know that there were hundreds of thousands of Jews who lived for centuries, if not millennia, in what is today the Arab world.”

The podcast’s host, Manya Brachear Pashman, who also hosts AJC’s flagship podcast, “People of the Pod,” explained to JNS that not every story featured in “The Forgotten Exodus” is a tale about refugees.

“Because that is the truth of some of these communities – they fled and were made refugees. But there were other situations where they were following the calling of Zionism,” she said. “They wanted to be part of this project called Israel and they left to make that a reality.”

Upcoming episodes of “The Forgotten Exodus,” airing on Mondays, will include Pashman’s interview with Egyptian-born, Sephardic Jewish author André Aciman, 71, author of the 1995 memoir “Out of Egypt.”

Also featured in the podcast is Pashman’s interview with Israeli windsurfer and Olympic medalist Shahar Tzubari and his father. The family left Yemen as part of “Operation Magic Carpet,” when nearly 50,000 Yemenite Jews were brought to Israel between June 1949 and September 1950.

Iranian poet Roya Hakakian moved to the United States in 1984 with her parents when they felt it was no longer safe to stay in Iran.



The Isaacs family, Baghdad, 1927. (Photo courtesy of JNS)

The author of the memoir “Journey From the Land of No” talks in the podcast about Iran’s Jewish community during the country’s Islamic revolution.

Pashman told JNS that she wanted to interview Ruth Pearl, the mother of murdered American journalist Daniel Pearl, about her experience witnessing the Farhud in Iraq, but she passed away before Pashman could conduct the interview. The podcast’s host also revealed that “The Forgotten Exodus” might feature some “bonus episodes” if other Jews from the Arab

region reach out about wanting to share the stories of their families.

“I’m hoping this series will encourage people to ask, ask for people to share their stories, so they don’t get lost,” she said. “People don’t realize that these Arab nations had such an incredibly rich Jewish heritage. Jews for thousands of years lived across the region and built these incredibly vibrant communities.”

She also talked about the importance of sharing such stories before they’re lost forever. She said these testimonies are just as important as Holocaust history and efforts to

preserve the first-hand accounts of Holocaust survivors while they are still alive. “We’re losing these survivors too and we’ve really got to preserve these stories,” she said. “It’s not just an Ashkenazi story. It’s a Mizrahi and Sephardic story. Judaism is so diverse, and these stories cannot be lost.”

“The Forgotten Exodus” is the latest AJC initiative to raise awareness and advocacy for Jews from Arab lands and Iran. For more information and resources about Jews from Arab lands and Iran, visit www.ajc.org/forgotten-exodus.

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