

BSA goes full S.T.E.A.M ahead with upcycling event and Science Day

BY RUTH LEITER-ITZKOWITZ, PH.D.

In true Beth Shalom Academy style, the January schedule has been jam-packed with hands-on learning experiences and is featuring two

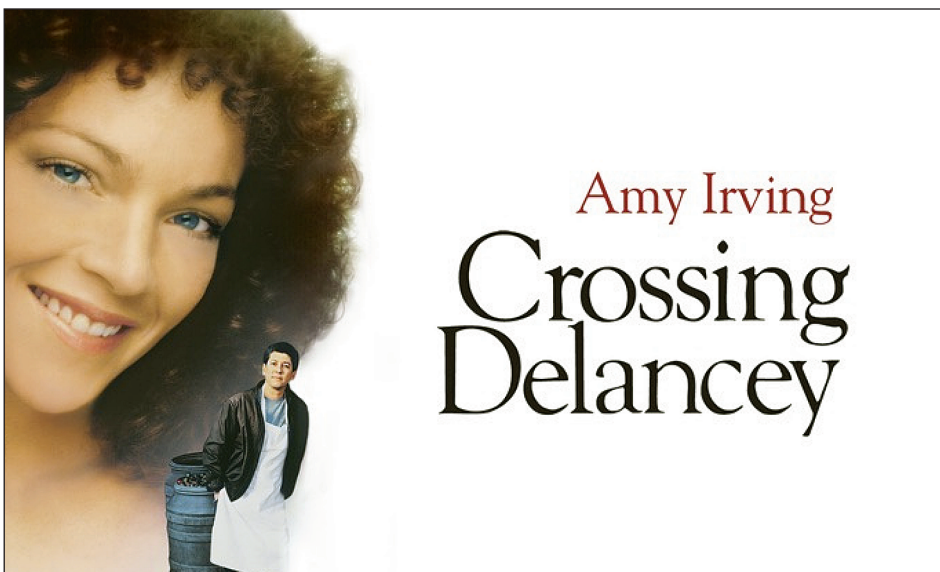
S.T.E.A.M. programs: “All About Upcycling” and preparation for February’s Science Day.

S.T.E.A.M, an initiative that focuses on science, technology, engineering, art and math, is an integral part of BSA’s general studies curriculum. On Wednesday, January 24, Lex Belluzzi, director of general studies, was scheduled to host an event about upcycling – a term coined to describe the process of taking junk items, such as empty tomato sauce cans, plastic bottles, old T-shirts or other items a person might throw away and transforming them into something useful and beautiful.

All About Upcycling is part of a cross-curricular program within BSA. Other related events include “Birds to Biomes: An Animal Hab-

itat Study” under the direction of K-one general studies headteacher Christina Wilson. Kindergarten and

level one students will construct birdhouses out of popsicle sticks See “BSA” on page 3



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February 17	5:21 pm
February 24	5:29 pm
March 3	5:37 pm

PLUS

Schedule of Services 8

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Medical research

Israeli researchers work with a ‘bionic micro-kidney’; wearing *tefillin* may help with heart attacks.

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Elan Gardens Senior Living again earns Gold among NEPA Best Places to Work

CLARKS SUMMIT, PA – Elan Gardens Senior Living, A Jewish Senior Life Community, was again named a Gold Winner of the NEPA Best Places to Work for 2022.

“We are thankful for this recognition and are also very proud of all who contribute to our achieving the award: our staff, board, supporters and, of course, the voters,” said Executive Director Brittany Elko, M.S.W., NHA, PCHA, CDP. “Every effort makes a positive difference in the lives of our residents, who remain the most

According to the awardees, 2022 marks the sixth annual Best Places to Work *Times Leader* reader contest. The selection process took place over a four-week period and hundreds of votes were cast for local companies, large and small.

Elko pointed out that Elan Gardens has won this award in four consecutive years, beginning in 2019.

In addition, the facility was named Best of the Abingtons – Best Senior Living Center this past summer for a third consecutive year.

Elan Gardens Senior Living is a non-profit community focused on

providing quality care for residents in personal care and memory care. All of our goals are focused on accomplishing our mission: to offer a supportive residential environment

dedicated to maintaining each individual's strengths, abilities, and autonomy while providing the resources to further enhance the quality of their lives. We bring our

mission to life with the support of our sister community, Elan Skilled Nursing and Rehab in Scranton, PA. Visit elanguardens.org for more information.

Jerusalem's Pool of Siloam to be excavated, opened to the public

BY ETGAR LEFKOVITS

(JNS) – An ancient Jerusalem pool that was used by millions of Jewish pilgrims during the time of the Second Temple two millennia ago as a ritual bath before ascending the Temple Mount, and revered by Christians as the site where Jesus cured a blind man, will be fully excavated and then opened to the public, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced recently.

The Pool of Siloam, located in the southern portion of the City of David, the ancient epicenter of Jerusalem, and just outside the Old City walls is expected to become one of the most important historic and tourist sites in the city.

The pool has been a focal point for archaeologists and scholars for the last 150 years. The excavations are set to begin early in 2023 and will continue for at least several months, while the site is expected to open to the public in about a year.

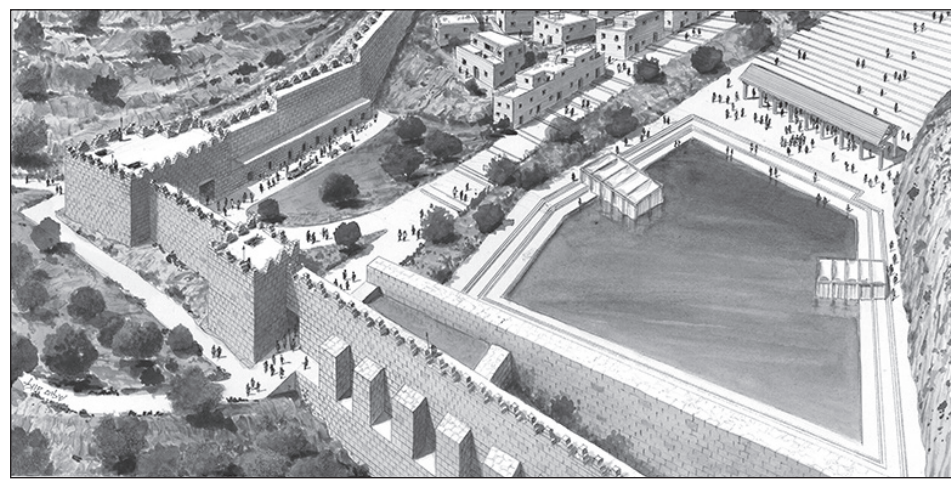
The City of David, a top tourist attraction in the capital, is adjacent to the eastern Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan.

The Pool of Siloam was uncovered at the end of the 19th century, when British and American archaeologists led by Frederick Jones Bliss and Archibald Campbell Dickie exposed some of the steps of the Pool, followed by some work in the 1960s by the British archaeologist Kathleen Kenyon.

The site's scope was more fully uncovered only in 2004, when the city Gihon water company was carrying out infrastructure work and a tractor accidentally laid bare more of the location, leading to a partial excavation at the time, said Dr. Amit Re'em, the Jerusalem district archaeologist for the Israel Antiquities Authority.

The well-preserved pool covered with ashlar carved stone was a monumental site, and the consensus in the archaeological community was that this was indeed the Siloam Pool, he said.

Moreover, the recently uncovered



A rendering of the Pool of Siloam in the Second Temple Period. (Drawing by Shalom Kveller/City of David Archives)

adjacent stone path, dubbed “the Pilgrimage Road,” which Jewish pilgrims used to ascend the Temple Mount during the Second Temple Period after purifying themselves in water and donning white robes, leads from the Pool to the Mount, the Israeli archaeologist said.

This pool was in use during the time of Jesus, he noted. According to the Gospel of John, it was at the Siloam Pool that Jesus healed the blind man. “There is no doubt that this is one of the most important historic sites in Jerusalem, and as such, it should be fully exposed,” Re'em said.

It remains to be seen what lies underneath the pool, and whether an earlier stage of the pool dating back to the First Temple will be found as well, the archaeologist said.

The Pool of Siloam was constructed as part of Jerusalem's water system during the reign of King Hezekiah (715-687/6 B.C.E.), as described in 2 Kings 20:20. It served as the reservoir for the waters of the Gihon Spring, which were diverted through an underground water tunnel, and was one of the most important areas in Jerusalem in the First Temple period, the Antiquities Authority said. Due to its location and importance, the Pool of Siloam was renovated and expanded some 2,000 years ago, at the end of the Second Temple period.

The planned excavation of the five-dunam site (about 1.25 acres) is getting underway after a

14-year legal battle culminated in June when Israel's Supreme Court found no reason to challenge the validity of the Ateret Cohanim organization's purchase of 99-year leases, renewable for an additional 99 years, from the Greek Orthodox Church, the largest landowner in Jerusalem.

One of Ateret Cohanim's goals is to purchase land in the history-rich area for public viewing, said Doron Spielman, vice president of the City of David Foundation. Previously, the area, which was off limits to everybody, lay barren for decades and was littered with garbage, he said.

“It is not every day that we find an icon in Jerusalem,” Spielman said. “This is not just a huge find, it is a mega-find.”

Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Lion said in a statement, “The Pool of Siloam in the City of David National Park in Jerusalem is a site of historic, national and international significance. After many years of anticipation, we will soon merit being able to uncover this important site and make it accessible to the millions of visitors visiting Jerusalem each year.”

One million visitors visited the City Of David in 2019, before the outbreak of the coronavirus, and a record three million are expected next year with the launch of a cable car, said Oriya Dasberg, head of physical development at the City of David Foundation. “The same way that this pool drew pilgrims thousands of years ago – on the path of our ancestors – it will now attract millions of tourists,” she said.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

When the world is upside-down

Lately, there is no shortage of news letting us know that the world is not what it used to be. War, pestilence, violence are just part of the picture. It seems as many people are forgetting what it means to be human. And truth is also suffering, as it is constantly redefined by ignoring facts. The Internet, a potentially wonderful tool to connect people, is becoming a war zone of conflicting realities; fact and fiction coexist with no regard to hierarchy.



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

mother in my parents' house watching TV the day of the Apollo 11 moon landing. Keep in mind she was born in the latter part of the XIX century in a small shtetl in Ukraine. When the broadcast ended, I asked her, "Nu Bubbe, what do you think?"; she said, "Mashiach is com-

ing." Since I did not understand the meaning, I asked her why she said that. She answered: "The world is turning upside down and people

are walking on the moon – of course this is the time for Mashiach to come!"

We are now living at a time when, as an old Argentine Tango says, "the bird swims and the Judge steals"; a time when the basic rules for human interaction are subverted, and reality has become a changing picture that depends of the eye of the beholder, rather than an objective fact. Holocaust denial is gaining academic acceptance, and terrorists are defining the International Court of Justice's agenda. What would my great-grandmother say to this?

But as a community, we still uphold our values – the idea that every human being is worth of respect, that life is sacred and that nobody is above the law. We also believe that it is our obligation to make the world a better place and to help our family, disperse as it is around the globe. These ideas are central to what it means to be a Jew. At the Federation, we take these ideas to heart, and we work every day to live by them. Nevertheless, would it be so bad if my great-grandmother was right and Maschiach comes?

Jewish Federations grant nearly \$5.5 million for Holocaust survivor care

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS)—Nearly \$5.5 million has been allocated to Holocaust survivors and older adults dealing with trauma, courtesy of the Jewish Federations of North America's Center on Holocaust Survivor Care and Institute on Aging and Trauma. The announcement came ahead of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27.

"Caring for our survivors is not only a privilege but a duty, and is a core value and deep commitment of our Jewish Federations," said Jewish Federations of North America board Chair Julie Platt. "It is thanks to the generosity of so many in our communities, together with our government partners, that we are able to provide our survivors with these critical services to help them live in comfort and dignity."

The grants will assist dozens of agencies – Jewish and non-Jewish – that deliver social services to tens of thousands of Holocaust survivors along with older adults with a history of trauma, and the caregivers that help them. The

grant amount totals \$5.4 million over two years.

Approximately one-third of the Holocaust survivors in the U.S. are estimated to be living in poverty, subject to increased risk of depression and social isolation, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Holocaust survivors are our teachers and our heroes," said Shelley Rood Wernick, granddaughter of Holocaust survivors and managing director of the Center on Holocaust Survivor Care and Institute on Aging and Trauma. "Widespread trauma means we need a better approach to care, See "Care" on page 11

DEADLINES

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

DEADLINE	ISSUE
Monday, February 13	March
Monday, March 13	April
Monday, April 10.....	May
Friday, May 12.....	June

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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.

◆ The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute has announced upcoming programs in its Studio Israel series: Gil Yefman on Thursday, February 9, from noon-1 pm; and Zoya Cherkassky on Thursday, March 30, from noon-1 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://www.brandeis.edu/hbi/events/index.html>.

◆ Maven will hold several programs in February: Joseph Sassoon will discuss his book “The Sassoons: The Rise and Fall of a Jewish Dynasty” on Thursday, February 9, from 3-3:45 pm (<https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/the-sassoons-the-rise-and-fall-of-a-jewish-dynasty>); “The Diary Keepers: Untold Stories of WWII in the Netherlands” on Tuesday, February 21, from 3-3:45 (<https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/the-diary-keepers-untold-stories-of-wwii-in-the-netherlands>); and “Confronting Antisemitism in the Entertainment Industry” with Ari Ingel, president of Creative Community for Peace, on Thursday, February 23, from 3-3:45 pm, to learn how his organization is making strides to combat antisemitism in the entertainment industry today (<https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/confronting-antisemitism-in-the-entertainment-industry>).

◆ The Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning will hold several virtual classes: “What Makes Jewish Art Jewish?” on Tuesday, February 21, from 7-8:30 pm or Wednesday, February 22, from 11 am-12:30 pm (<https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=8064c654-19b9-4b10-b997-b10055f445da>); “The Music and Teachings of Our Exodus,” a four-part course on Thursday, March 9-30, from 1-2:30 pm (<https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=2e-c8ae27-2c32-4f08-a290-2f2658f3cdd1>); “Pew-ish Studies: National Surveys, Jewish Identity, and Community Responses,” a two-session class on Mondays, March 14 and 21, from 1-2:15 pm (<https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=300843db-5441-4647-b3b8-316cdd326a8c>); and “Binding Isaac: Blind Obedience vs. Thoughtful Choice,” a two-session class on Wednesdays, March 22 and 29, from 1-2:15 pm (<https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=dbec054e-f9d7-40d9-830b-79ce805e66f6>). There is a cost to attend.

◆ Maven will hold the virtual program “A Taste of AJU’s Global Jewish Life Tours: Caesarea” on Thursday, February 16, from 3-4 pm. For more information, visit <https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/a-taste-of-ajus-global-jewish-life-tours-caesarea>.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold the online course “Shakespeare & Yiddish” on Wednesday, March 8-29, at 7 pm. The course will focus how the Yiddish theater performed and adapted Shakespeare’s works. For more information or to register, visit www.yiddishbookcenter.org/educational-programs/adult-learners/shakespeare-yiddish-online-course.

◆ The Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning will hold the virtual class “The Perfect Pitch: Music’s Role in Jewish History” on Thursdays, February 9-March 2, from 1-2:30 pm. This is a sliding scale cost to attend. Participants will learn about song and music throughout different historical periods, in the synagogue, Jewish homes and other Jewish communal settings. For more information or to register, visit <https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=9679637d-1ce5-4e98-bf0d-4731f0361183>.

◆ The Yiddish Book Center will hold a variety of programs, including “The Sassoons: The Great Global Merchants and the Making of an Empire,” with Joseph Sassoon, on Thursday, February 16, at 7 pm; “The Global Reach of the Yiddish Theater – The Vilna Troupe, God of Vengeance, and Yiddish Performance the World Over,” on Thursday, March 2, at 7 pm; and “Have I Got a Story for You,” with editor Ezra Gliner, on Thursday, March 16, at 7 pm. For more information or to register, visit <https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events-and-store/virtual-public-programs-calendar>.

◆ Maven will hold “Origins of Antisemitism in Visual Art” on Tuesday, February 7, from 3-3:45 pm. The cost to attend is \$21. Artist and guide Claudia Hercman will look at why Jews have been portrayed as monsters, animals and demons in visual art since the Middle Ages. For more information or to register, visit <https://maven.aju.edu/events-classes/program/origins-of-antisemitism-in-visual-art>.

◆ The Jewish Theological Seminary will hold the virtual program “Sephardic Food and Culture: A Culinary-Historical Perspective” with H el ene Jawhara Pi ner and Dr. Benjamin Gampel as part of it “Between the Lines: Author Conversations from The Library of JTS” on Wednesday, March 8, from 1-2 pm. Pi ner and Gampel will discuss “how the mass conversion of Iberian Jews in the late 14th and 15th centuries, initially triggered by the anti-Jewish riots that swept Castile and Aragon in 1391, led to distinctive and identifiable food and eating practices among those Jews who were compelled to embrace the Christian faith.” For more information or to register, visit www.jtsa.edu/event/between-the-lines-sephardic-food-and-culture/.

◆ The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy will

hold several virtual programs in February: “The Jews of Long Island 1705-1918,” a book with author Brad Kolodny on Tuesday, February 7, from 7-8:30 pm (www.nycjewishtours.org/event-log/jews-of-li-zoom); “Seeking Sanctuary: 125 Years of Synagogues on LI,” a book talk with author Brad Kolodny on Wednesday, February 15, from 7-8:15 pm (www.nycjewishtours.org/event-log/seeking-sanctuary-book-talk-zoom); and “Gangsters, Goniffs & Goons,” a talk about Jewish hoods in the cinema on Wednesday, February 27, from 7-8:15 pm (<https://www.nycjewishtours.org/event-log/gangsters-goniffs-goons-zoom>).

◆ Qesher will hold the following virtual tours: “The Jews of Egypt: From the Bible to the Golden Age and the Abraham Accords” on Thursday, February 9, at 3 pm; “Jewish Denmark and a Virtual Tour of Copenhagen” on Sunday, February 12, at 3 pm; “The Jews of Crimea and the story of the Karaites” on Thursday, February 16, at 3 pm; “From the Inquisition to the Caribbean: Jews of Jamaica” on Sunday, February 19, at 3 pm; “Jewish Lisbon and Portugal: a community reconnecting with its past” on Thursday, February 23, at 3 pm; “The Jews of Georgia: A Diverse and Ancient Community in the Caucasus” on Sunday, February 26, at 3 pm; and “Growing up Jewish in Uganda” on Thursday, March 2, at 3 pm. For more information or to register, visit www.qesher.com/upcoming-events/.

◆ The Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion will offer a Spring 2023 Library Lecture Series. Some of the lectures will be available on Zoom, including “A New Look at an Old Book: Rethinking the Purpose of Pirke Avot” on Wednesday, February 15, at 5 pm; “Good Samaritans? Jewish-Samaritan Relations in the Roman World” on Monday, March 13, at 7 pm; “‘He Showed Him the Likeness of the Tabernacle’: The Biblical Tabernacle in Samaritan Literature and Art” on Tuesday, March 14, at noon; “Tzafun: The Behind the Scenes Work of Repairing the 1526 Prague Haggadah” on Monday, April 10, at 11 am; and “The Histories of the Hebrew Language and its Script” on Wednesday, May 10, at 1 pm. For more information or to register, visit <http://huc.edu/libraryseries/spring>.

◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold the virtual book talk “Summer Camp and Jewish Culture in Postwar America” on Monday February 27, at 1 pm. Sandra Fox will discuss her new book, “The Jews of Summer: Summer Camp and Jewish Culture in Postwar America,” which explores “how a cultural crisis birthed a rite of passage that remains a significant influence in American Jewish life.” For more information or to register, visit www.yivo.org/Summer-Camp.

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Experiential Chanukah learning at BSA!

BY RUTH LEITER-ITZKOWITZ, PH.D.

When John Dewey said, “We learn from experience,” it is doubtful he had Chanukah festivities at school in mind. However, students at Beth Shalom Academy learned the true meaning of Chanukah from Rabbi Mendel Raices. Rabbi Raices or “Rebbi” as BSA students affectionately call him, came in to BSA on the third day of Chanukah to present his “olive press workshop.” Students from K-six had the opportunity to learn all about making “olive juice” from hands on experience by pressing an assortment of olives and using the oil to light their own menorahs!

The theme of learning from experience carried through to many other classes such as beeswax candle making with Morah Bracha Levi and the creation of beautiful and functional menorahs with Morah Chany Goldstein. Singing, dancing and chamber music were also on the Chanukah Class menu and BSA students shared their special Chanukah routines at the annual Jewish Community Center Chanukah festival, as well as at the Jewish Home/Elan Skilled Nursing facility.



Community Chesed volunteering for the week included the three-six grade girls creating a giant donation box, which was placed at the JCC until full of canned goods and non-perishables and then delivered to Jewish Family Service of Northeastern Pennsylvania to help feed families in need.

Finally, our fun Chanukah week would not have been complete without our Chanukah *chagiga* (party), which included carnival games, face painting, school made donuts and a delicious dairy buffet from Yankelovitch catering in Kingstonton. For more info about Beth Shalom Academy, contact us at info@bethshalomacademy.com.



BSA Continued from page 1 and hang them from the school’s dogwood tree in a special ceremony.

These exciting programs function as precursors to the main event, Science Day, which will be held on Thursday, February 16. Science Day is open to the community and will provide opportunities for students, parents and community members to learn about chain reactions, the human heart, conservation strategies and much more!

For further info about Beth Shalom Academy please check out our website www.BethShalomAcademy.com or e-mail info@bethshalomacademy.com.

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Temple Israel of the Poconos events and programs

◆ The 2022 Chanukah celebration at Temple Israel of the Poconos was filled with fun, music, great food, wonderful company and entertainment. The temple members who participated had a terrific time singing Chanukah songs and eating delicious latkes and sufganiyot.

◆ Temple Israel of the Poconos Tuesday Lunch and Learn program, which is held weekly, is led by Rabbi Bickhardt who teaches about the weekly Torah reading as it pertains to our lifestyle today.

◆ Planning for Tu B'Shevat is un-

derway for a Shabbat seder filled with nuts, dried and fresh fruits and assorted grains. Discussions with the participating membership and Shabbat school students will be based around our obligation to care for our world, environment and humanity at large.

◆ Planning for Purim is next on our agenda for a delightful Purim celebration filled with hamantashen and groggers.

◆ Temple Israel of the Poconos is open to new members and their families. As an egalitarian Con-

servative Synagogue, respect and recognition of women is evident in all services and rituals. Temple Israel of the Poconos welcomes interfaith families with an empha-

sis of educating the children of this family in the Shabbat/Sunday school program. Call 570-421-8781 for information and/or visit our website and Facebook page.



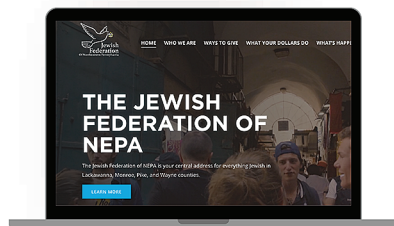
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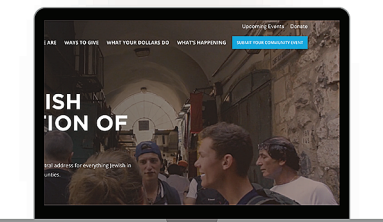
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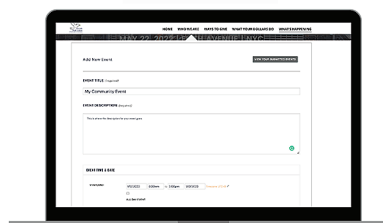
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Step 4

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Meet the man whose challah will make you holla

BY ALAN ZEITLIN

(JNS)—Growing up in New York state, Freddie Feldman never made a challah. But the Skokie, IL, resident is on a hot streak, having made a challah or matzah every Friday for the past 138 weeks. And he isn't cooking up any regular kind.

The 48-year-old, who calls himself a “challah artist,” has made the breads in the shape of everything from George Jetson to the Targaryen symbol from “Game of Thrones” to the mask from “Black Panther” (as the sequel is currently in theaters).

So, why did Feldman feel the “knead” to do this?

“The pandemic hit, we were locked in, and people were baking everything,” Feldman told JNS. “It was funny that I realized I somehow never made a challah. I first made a honey challah. Then I made a Jewish star and a Hamsa. And I got more creative, and people would ask how I did it.”

Feldman explained that he uses food coloring and fingerpaints the dough, using pumpkin powder for orange or activated charcoal (which can be unhealthy in large amounts) for the “Black Panther” challah.

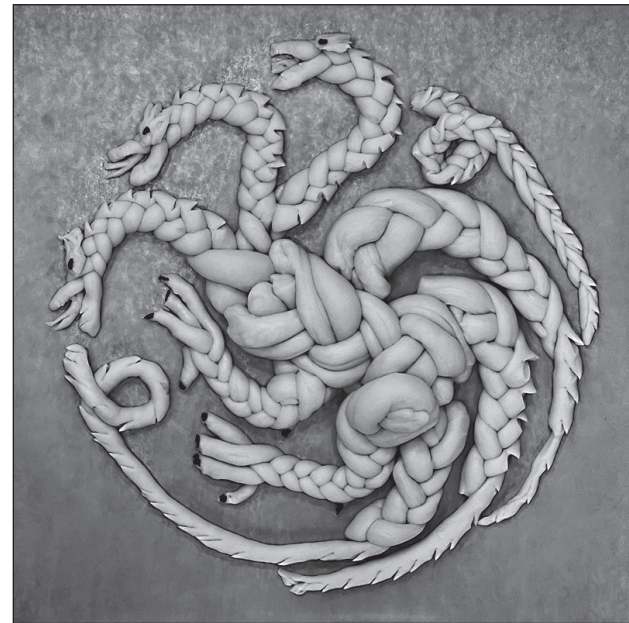
He said his mother was known as “The Hamantaschen Lady” and sent him tins of the Purim pastries when he left Rockland County in New York state and attended Northwestern University near Chicago. He moved to Skokie with his wife 14 years ago.

Feldman, who attended Jewish day school, has been a member of the Jewish *a cappella* group “Listen Up!” for nine years; his favorite tune to perform is the solo to The Beatles’ “I Feel Fine” in Yiddish, which has garnered 52,000 views on YouTube. He runs Vocomotion Studios, an award-winning a cappella recording studio, and Vocomotion Labs, which makes products for singers and studios.

Feldman also beatboxes and invented “The Thumper,” a special microphone for vocal percussionists strapped around the throat. His mics have been used by performers on shows such as “America’s Got Talent” and “The Sing-Off” on NBC. He said he has a patent for another microphone, yet to be released, designed to help those who have vocal difficulty due to Parkinson’s disease, ALS or multiple sclerosis. Feldman said that when praying the silent devotion as part of the *Amidah* as an elementary school student, he would call upon God to heal his grandmother Mimi, who suffered from Parkinson’s.

Feldman is the director of Voice and Conversational Interfaces for Wolters Kluwer, a health-tech company. Four years ago, he gave a TEDx Talk in Vienna, Austria, about the need to help people who have a terminal illness.

“We sometimes forget about them, but they still might have things they’d like to say,” Feld-



Freddie Feldman created this challah in the form of House Targaryen’s coat of arms from “Game of Thrones.” (Photo courtesy of Freddie Feldman)

man said.

As for his challahs, his Instagram page – @thedorkyJewish – has more than 3,800 followers. He has collaborated with actor Joshua Malina to raise \$5,000 for World Central Kitchen and was commissioned to make a challah of character Sam Manson for Nickelodeon. He said he never runs out of ideas for challahs.

“People are always busy, and I certainly am, but it’s fun to challenge yourself with creative things,” Feldman said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Iowa to test United Hatzalah EMS model in rural areas

Iowa will fund a pilot program to test the efficacy of the United Hatzalah emergency response model in rural parts of the state, according to Iowa Lt. Gov. Adam Gregg. Gregg, who was sworn in for a second term on Jan. 10, along with Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds, said they had learned about the model during a trade mission to Israel last year when they visited the organization’s headquarters in Jerusalem. “When an emergency occurs and 911 is called, nearby trained volunteers are alerted through an app on their phone, allowing them to respond quickly and stabilize the patient until an ambulance arrives,” said Gregg during his inaugural speech. “This Israeli model has driven down response times in Jerusalem to 90 seconds on average.” He described it as Uber for emergency medical services, and said, “We believe this concept can be adapted to help us address our EMS challenges in rural Iowa. And we’ll be funding a pilot program to do just that.”



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Lessons from Colleyville, TX: How to survive a hostage situation

BY FAYGIE HOLT

(JNS) – Recounting his experiences on January 15, 2022, when an ordinary Shabbat service turned into an 11-hour hostage situation at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, TX, Jeff Cohen said it was ongoing training that helped him and the others at the synagogue that day know what to do.

“Our survival was not a miracle, and it’s a little frustrating when people say that,” said Cohen, who now serves as the synagogue president. “Our escape was due to training, planning and actually executing some of the things we had prepared for.”

He spoke during a 90-minute webinar on surviving hostage situations, which was offered by the Secure Community Network in collaboration with Jewish Federations of North America and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Leading the discussion of just what to do should you find yourself in such a situation were Shawn Brokos, director of community security at the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh, and Beth LaManna, regional security adviser for Jewish Nevada. Both women are certified crisis negotiators and former FBI agents who have worked in actual hostage situations.

LaManna noted that surviving isn’t just about being physically safe it’s about hostages being able to “return [to] their best and most productive lives.”

There are two types of hostage situations, according to LaManna. First, there is a “non-hostage crisis,” in which the hostage-taker has a relationship of some kind with the person he has taken hostage, such as in a workplace incident or domestic situation.

Second, and much rarer, is a true hostage situation such as that which occurred at Beth Israel. Such attacks, said LaManna, are “goal-oriented”; the hostage-taker wants something from law enforcement and uses the hostages to try to get it.

Brokos explained that there are three unique phases of a hostage situation: the initial phase, middle phase and resolution phase. Each one, she said, comes with unique fears and concerns.

During the initial phase, which can run up to 45 minutes after an incident begins, there is a great deal of “panic and confusion for everyone.” It is important at this time to stay calm, which, Brokos said, sounds simple but is easier said than done. “We recommend slow and deep breathing,” as that can help you think rationally and lead to better decision-making.

“Calm is contagious,” she said.

At this point it is important to recognize that the hostage-taker is in control. Don’t threaten or challenge him, said Brokos. “Don’t act belligerent...don’t stand out. Be vanilla and meld into the background.”

She also advised against cowering or whining too much as that aggravates the situation, as well.

The middle phase is the “meat and potatoes” period where most of the work is being done and negotiations handled between the hostage-taker and law enforcement officials. While the hostages want a quick resolution, the crisis negotiator’s goal is to slow things down and buy time.



The rededication ceremony at Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, TX, on April 10, 2022, four months after a hostage standoff there. (Photo courtesy of Twitter)

During this phase, hostages should, as much as possible, humanize themselves to the attacker. Engage the attacker if possible, tell him your name and use his name, the security experts advised. If the hostage-taker is willing to talk, encourage him to do so. The more he’s talking, “the less time he has to hurt you or anyone else.”

At the same time, it is vital at this stage that

you are “situationally aware.” Study what the attacker looks like, what the weapon or weapons look like. Make a mental note of where the hostages are. Are they all together or in separate areas?

Also, you should be looking around and considering what you can use as a weapon to defend yourself if things “deteriorate.”

As for the final phase, the resolution, there are three possible outcomes: a release and surrender by the hostage-taker; escape by the hostages; and “tactical intervention.”

Each possible resolution comes with inherent risks and, in all cases, hostages are advised to have their hands up and open to show that they don’t have any weapons on them. Law enforcement officials will have just a second to figure out if you are “friend or foe” before acting.

Overall, said LaManna, it is of “critical importance” that you develop a “survival mindset” so that you can get out alive.

Cohen said by keeping yourself sane as much as you can during the incident, “no matter how hard your heart is beating... you can keep yourself alive and safe.”

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Israeli discovery: “Bionic micro-kidney” blocks antibiotic toxicity

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – Using a “bionic micro-kidney,” researchers at Hebrew University say they have identified a new mechanism of antibiotics-induced kidney damage.

Antibiotics of the commonly-used aminoglycoside type cause kidney damage in up to a quarter of hospitalized patients, posing a major problem for the more than 37 million Americans estimated to suffer from chronic kidney disease, according to the Center for Disease Control, the university said in a statement. So much so that the U.S. Federal Drug Administration considers the development of antibiotics for patients with chronic kidney

disease to be a national priority.

The team of researchers, led by Professor Yaakov Nahmias, director of HU’s Grass Center for Bioengineering and founder of HU spin-off biotechnology startup Tissue Dynamics, developed a biochip with electro-optical sensors – roughly half the width of a single human hair – that are embedded in human kidney tissue. This “bionic micro-kidney” emulates normal human physiology far better than animal models, according Nahmias.

“Most work in the drug development field is being carried out in mice,” said Nahmias, “and the mechanism we found is human-specific.”

The biochip, developed in partnership with

Tissue Dynamics, allowed the team to measure the accumulation of glucose accumulation, which led to rapid lipid accumulation and kidney damage. “Humans make lipids from sugar, while rodents mostly make lipids from dietary lipids,” explained Nahmias.

By blocking glucose reabsorption in the kidney using the diabetes drug empagliflozin, the team was able to also block the antibiotic toxicity.

The research, which was published in the Royal Society of Chemistry’s Lab on a Chip journal, was a “dramatic demonstration” that bionics blending sensors with human tissue have the potential to “rapidly propel” drug development, said Nahmias.

Wearing tefillin may prevent damage from heart attacks

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – Wearing *tefillin* may have life-saving cardiovascular benefits for both men and women, according to University of Cincinnati researchers.

Tefillin, or phylacteries, are small leather boxes containing biblical passages on parchment scrolls. There are two in a set, one for the head and one for the arm. Both are secured via leather straps.

“*Tefillin* is used for morning prayers for Jewish men over the age of 13 on an almost daily basis. It is placed on the non-dominant arm around the bicep and the forearm in a fairly tight manner,”

said Jack Rubinstein, MD, of the Division of Cardiovascular Health at the University of Cincinnati’s College of Medicine.

However, he noted, it is never worn so tight that it occludes blood flow. “[*Tefillin* are] traditionally worn for about 30 minutes continuously during prayers which involve sitting and standing, resulting in occasional retightening of the strap around your arm,” he said.

This binding of the arm, and the accompanying discomfort users often report, may serve as a form of preconditioning, offering a substantial degree of protection against the damage that can be caused by a sudden loss of blood flow (acute

ischemia) or after the blood supply is restored to a tissue or organ after an ischemic event (reperfusion), according to Rubenstein. Such injuries occur during heart attacks, when parts of the heart are deprived of oxygen and then damaged further when blood flow is reestablished.

For their study, researchers measured baseline information on 30 participants for 10 minutes in the morning, and then collected another round of data during and after 30 minutes of wearing the *tefillin*. The participants, all healthy individuals between the ages of 18 to 40, had their heart rate measured before, during and after the wearing of *tefillin*.

See “Heart” on page 11

The Reporter

Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania



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 monthly 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.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

MyHeritage publishes 1.7 million-record Israeli immigration list

Online genealogy platform MyHeritage announced on Jan. 8 the publication of a database comprising 1.7 million records, covering immigration to Israel from 1919. The company called it “the Israeli equivalent of the famous ‘Ellis Island’ immigration database for the United States.” For more than a year, MyHeritage indexed thousands of public-domain images from the Israel State Archives, linking them to surviving records of those who immigrated to Israel by ship and by plane starting in 1919. MyHeritage said it’s the first organization to create a searchable index for the collection and link it with the scanned images. The collection is available to search for free and without having to sign up to the company’s website, to make it easily accessible for those researching their Jewish roots in Israel. The records in the collection include the name of the immigrant, the names of relatives who immigrated with them, the country of origin, the name of the ship they arrived on, the date of arrival, the names of parents, the names of relatives who were expecting them in Israel, and their destination city in Israel.

Care Continued from page 3

and with these grants, Jewish Federations are revolutionizing aging services.” This year’s grant recipients include the Jewish Federations of Broward County, Greater Atlanta, Metropolitan Detroit, Greater Los Angeles and Greater MetroWest NJ, along with the Greater Miami Jewish Federation, the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago, UJA-Federation of New York and the Network of Jewish Human Service Agencies.

Jewish Federations launched its Holocaust Survivor Care initiative in 2015. Since its inception, Jewish Federations has provided for approximately 35,000 Holocaust survivors, 16,000 professional caregivers, 6,000 family caregivers and 5,000 older adults with a history of trauma. The funds come from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Community Living, and from philanthropists. Last year, the U.S. federal government budgeted a record \$8.5 million for its Holocaust Survivor Assistance Program.



The seven Holocaust survivors who attended the 2022 International March of the Living on April 28, 2022. (Photo by Yossi Zeliger)

Historians have defined several waves of *aliyah* between 1882 and the beginning of World War II. The collection starts with the Third Aliyah period (1919-23). The first two waves took place from 1882 to 1918 under Ottoman rule, and are not covered in this collection. The collection was created from scanned books stored by the Israel State Archives, with lists of immigrants arranged in chronological order according to the arrival dates of the ships or planes. The records also included the arrival of tourists to Israel, or the return of Israeli residents from trips abroad. Pedestrian arrivals are also listed; those who came in through border crossings in the north or south.

Israeli delegation in UAE to prep for Negev Forum parley

Israeli officials recently visited the United Arab Emirates for three days of meetings to prepare for the next installment of the Negev Forum, slated for the spring in Morocco. The forum held its first major event last March in Sde Boker in Israel’s Negev Desert, which was attended by the foreign ministers of the UAE, Morocco, Bahrain, Egypt and the United States. Since then, members of the forum’s steering committee have met in Bahrain in July and convened over Zoom in October. Now they will meet in Abu Dhabi. The Negev Forum aims to build on the successes of the Abraham Accords.

Heart Continued from page 10

“What we found is that wearing *tefillin* in both male and females caused changes to the heart rate associated with lowering of the metabolism as measured via heart rate variability,” said Rubinstein, who explained that heart rate variability is the degree of variability between one heartbeat and the next.

“We can measure all kinds of different things from heart rate variability including probably the most important, which is parasympathetic tone. Does it relax you and does it cause your

metabolism [to] come down?” he said.

The findings, he continued, were a potential “game changer” with regard to how cardiovascular disease prevention is approached. “We are showing a path through which anyone can precondition themselves to decrease the amount of damage that they suffer from a heart attack by wearing a very simple device,” he said. “Decreasing the amount of heart attack damage by even just two-fold is something that will change outcomes for millions of people.”

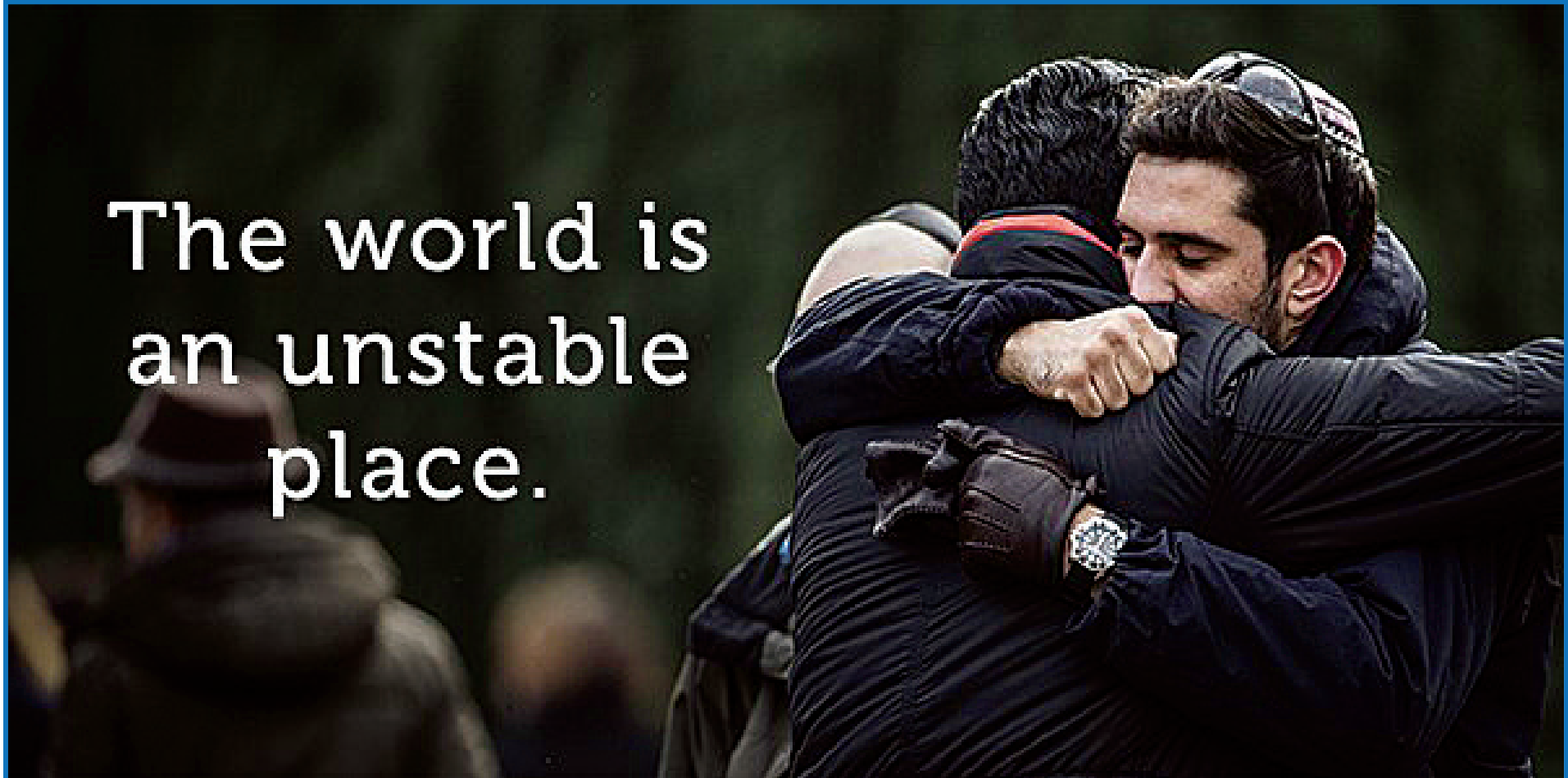
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For more information or to discuss these planned giving options, please contact Daniel Chejfec, Executive Director, Jewish Federation of NEPA, 570-961-2300 (x1) or daniel.chejfec@jewishnepa.org.

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