

The Jewish Federation joins tens of thousands celebrating Israel's 75th birthday

On Sunday, June 4, a luxurious charter bus transported members of the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania to New York City to participate in the Annual Celebrate Israel Parade, walking down famed Fifth Avenue along with tens of thousands other schools, synagogues and social organizations who all are proud to know that the modern state of Israel is here, and who support and celebrate its 75th year.

Holding banners and waving flags, our group was made up of young and old, Scranton and the Poconos. The weather was perfect for the walk, as well, and the music in the streets along with the many many well-wishers along the sidewalks encouraged our walkers to keep the energetic pace.

After the parade, we stopped in Teaneck, NJ, a favorite part of the trip for many, and enjoyed the delights of various kosher dining establishments.

The participants of the parade from Scranton were Michele Ackerman; Cantor Vladimir, Mila and Elizabeth Aronzon; Marion Bed-



doe; Jason and Nofar Flesher and children; Gilda Franceze; Victoria and David Geyfman; Marge Hartnett; Marie Hopkins; Mendel and Jasmine Kornfeld; Mary Malia; Chana Manarchuk; Brian Masters; Mary Warnock; and Barbara Zilla. Our participants from the Poconos were Eric Bernbaum, Glenda Deutsche, Susan Jonas, Roberta Paniero, John Sanoki, Jonathan Spinner and Irene Solzenberg. All who participated thank the Jewish Federation and Dr. Daniel Chejfec, executive director, for sponsoring this exciting event.



Recent celebrations at the Jewish Fellowship

BY GAIL NELDON

Life-cycle events marked lately by the Jewish Fellowship (JFHF) have taken many forms. Despite solemn gatherings in memory of past Presidents David Malinov and Steve Natt, among others, JFHF

was able to celebrate a plethora of joyous occasions.

One May Shabbat, Rabbi Shoshana Mitrani Knapp and JFHF celebrated longtime members Marilyn and Vern Schlamowitz for their 66th wedding

anniversary. The next was not only Shabbat, but also Shavuot, the festival marking the Jewish people's receiving the Ten Commandments. In addition, a separate, but special, Jewish custom called an *aufruf* was observed for new members Shari and Michael Stopler when Rav Shoshana called them and their daughter, Erika, and her fiance, Brandon Drucker, to lead Torah blessings during Saturday morning services. The family received warm blessings from the rabbi in preparation for the couple's upcoming marriage. See "Fellowship" on page 6



CANDLE LIGHTING

July 7	8:21 pm
July 14	8:17 pm
July 21	8:12 pm
July 28	8:06 pm
August 4	7:58 pm
August 11	7:50 pm

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SHDS celebrates annual Author's Tea and kindergarten graduation; dogs can help kids learn to read.

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JFS raised more than \$20,000 at its Fifth Annual Community Matters event.

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New museum

The Capitol Jewish Museum has opened its doors in Washington, DC.

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Scranton Hebrew Day School held annual second grade Author's Tea and kindergarten graduation



The Scranton Hebrew Day School held its annual second grade Author's Tea for parents and friends at the school. Students display their original stories accompanied by artwork coordinated by the second grade teacher, Kathy Police.



Above and below: The Scranton Hebrew Day School held its kindergarten graduation.



Study shows dogs aid kids' reading

BY NAAMA BARAK

(Israel 21c) – Practicing their reading is probably not on the top of any fourth-grader's to-do list. But when you add a cute dog or two to the task, it becomes much more enjoyable and, according to the findings of a recent study, more effective.

“Studies show that reading fluently is key to a child's learning process and independent learning, and that it helps them integrate into society, not to mention the social and emotional aspects of reading and the self-fulfillment that it provides,” explains Shirley Har-Zvi, head of the special-education track and senior lecturer at the Talpiot College of Education in Holon.

“We sought to find an original way that would motivate students to want to practice their reading,” she adds. “And to create that motivation, we decided to use dogs.”

In the study, which was led by master's student Ortal Levi, a teacher herself, and supervised by Har-Zvi, 29 fourth-graders from a school in central Israel were divided into two groups that were instructed to dedicate time and effort to 10 reading sessions. Children from one group read out loud to themselves, while the kids from the other group read out loud to their four-legged friends.

The results, Har-Zvi says, were conclusive. “Both groups improved immensely, but the group that read out loud to the dogs significantly improved in terms of reading accuracy. We assume that if we'd conduct the same study on a group for a longer period, then maybe there'd also be an impact on reading speed and not only accuracy,” she says.

“Lots of children today have more reading difficulties because they didn't go through second and third grade because of Covid,” she notes. “They didn't have the chance to practice reading, and that's why we're seeing a lot of children with reading difficulties. This program, which worked on reading fluency, See “Reading” on page 4

The Reporter

Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

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Jewish online resources

BY REPORTER STAFF

◆ Unpacked, a division of Open-Dor Media, and the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, offers the podcast “Soulful Jewish Living: Mindful Practices For Every Day” with Rabbi Josh Feigelson. He offers “ancient wisdom and modern mindfulness practices to help center your soul and ease you into your week.” For more information or to listen to the podcast, visit <https://jewishunpacked.com/podcast-series/soulful-jewish-living-mindful-practices-for-every-day/>.

◆ The HUC-JIR Jewish Language Project will hold the lecture series “Jewish Language on TV,” featuring the lectures “Language Mixing in Netflix's ‘Rough Diamonds’” on Sunday, July 16, from 1-2:30 pm; “Jewish Language on TV,” including “Language in ‘History of the World Part II’” on Sunday, August 13, from 6-7:30 pm; and “Language in ‘Jewish Matchmaking’” on Sunday, August 20, from 1-2:30 pm. For more information or to register, visit www.jewishlanguages.org/events.

◆ The Jewish Literary Journal, <https://jewishliteraryjournal.com/>, offers an “online magazine/review/venue that publishes all genres of Jewish, creative writing on a monthly basis. Jewish Literature, Jewish Writing, and Jewish Expression are at the forefront of everything the JLJ does.” It also offers a podcast, which can be found at <https://jewishliteraryjournal.com/media/>.

◆ The Women's Initiative of the Orthodox Union will hold a “Virtual Summer Beit Midrash” from July 10-20 with morning and evening classes. There will be classes in halachah, Jewish history, Tanach and tikkun hamiddot. For more information or to register, visit www.ou.org/women/alit2023/.

◆ The Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning will hold “Sacred Numbers” on Wednesday, August 23, from 8-9 pm. The cost to attend is \$18. The class will explore the Hebrew language focusing “around hidden meanings, rabbinic interpretations, and more. One of the most intriguing areas of exploration is Gematria, the study of how Hebrew letters correspond to numbers, unlocking codes that teach us something deeper than our surface understanding of words.” For more information or to register, visit <https://marketplace.jewishtgether.org/event/1689>.

◆ The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy will hold the virtual talk “Hollywood's Jewish New Wave” on Monday, July 10, from 7-8:30 pm. The presenters from FilmShul will discuss a time “when Jewish cultural visibility was making major inroads into public consciousness and popular culture via literature, music and especially cinema.” For more information or to register, See “Resources” on page 8

COMMUNITY NEWS

The strength of our tradition

Throughout history, many cultures spread through the force of arms and imperial domination. Yet many of these empires eventually fell and were replaced by others. Mark Twain said it best in his essay “Concerning the Jews”:

“The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian, rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?”

As a people, we always encouraged diversity of ideas and the attachment to the ethical prin-

ciples of the Torah and of our relationship with the Almighty. Even those among us who hold strong doubts about God or religion, consciously or unconsciously still adhere to the principles of our social contract embodied in the Torah. It was also in the time of King Josiah that we

that I remember it to this day: the answer was a poem that started with the phrase “I love to be a Jew, because Judaism allows me to fly...” It went on in a series of stanzas praising the intellectual freedom Judaism affords those who embrace it, as well as the strong sense of history and tradition that it provides. It is that attachment to our heritage combined with the curiosity our culture encourages that gives us the flexibility to survive as a people. In a world increasingly spinning out of control, I think of the words we recite during the Torah service: “It is a tree of life for those who hold to it, and brings joy to those who embrace it. Her path is one of kindness, and those who follow it will know peace.”

And the force of the Torah, in many ways, conquered the world. For all the religions that see themselves as connected to the spiritual line of Abraham, the Torah is a reference of ethical and moral principles, a blueprint to live an ethical life. We didn’t need the weapons nor the empires to leave our mark in history, as well as the present and the future of humanity. Mr. Twain, answering your question: the secret of our immortality can be learned from our history.



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

became among the first people in history for whom literacy became commonplace. Recent archeological finds in Jerusalem prove that literacy was widespread as far back as the time of the Babylonians. Among others, being able to read and write gave those who could power and prestige. Among us, the ability to write and read meant access to the Torah.

A number of years back, in a congregation in the community I lived at the time, I asked a group of teenagers to explain in their own words what it meant for them to be a Jew. Many of the answers followed the traditional patterns. One of the answers, however, was so original

More than \$20,000 raised for JFS at Fifth Annual Community Matters event

On June 1, Jewish Family Service held its Fifth Annual Community Matters event at the Scranton Cultural Center. Because of the COVID pandemic, this marked the first time since 2019 the event was held. Prior to COVID, Natalie Gelb was selected as the next honoree. Although she would have to wait three years to be honored, it was well worth the wait!

The event, which was sponsored in part by Toyota Scranton, was attended by more than 140 people and raised \$20,118 for JFS programs and services, both record amounts for the event. Sara E. Solfanelli was the guest speaker and spoke about her mother’s years of impact on our community.

For more than 100 years, Jewish Family



Service of Northeastern Pennsylvania has been helping individuals and families in our region achieve well-being, health and stability. The Annual Community Matters community recog-

niton event is our major event fund-raiser each year. The event helps support JFS programs and services including Mental Health Services, Financial Assistance, Case Management, Guardianship of Person Service and the Mae S. Gelb Kosher Food Pantry.

DEADLINES

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

DEADLINE	ISSUE
Monday, July 17	August
Monday, August 14.....	September
Friday, September 8.....	October
Monday, October 16.....	November

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Managing caregiver stress is an important factor addressed by Elan Skilled Nursing and Rehab

Today, more than one in five Americans (21.3 percent) are caregivers, having provided care to an adult or child with special needs at some time in the past 12 months.

Caregivers play a crucial role in the lives of people unable to care for themselves. While caring for others can be very rewarding, it can also be extremely stressful.

Caring for a spouse, adult child, elderly parents or others is a big and important responsibility. You may be related by blood, marriage or adoption, but regardless of your connection, you stepped in and opened your heart and in some cases, your home to provide care for another in need.

If you've been taking care of a chronically ill spouse or elderly parent, you may be feeling the effects of caregiver stress. If you're feeling frustrated or overwhelmed or are experiencing increased stress symptoms, you're not alone. Providing this type of care can also create additional challenges.

Facing the reality of shifting roles, fear and uncertainty of your loved one's future, guilt and financial strains, along with the constant

demands of meeting another's daily needs all contribute to caregiver stress.

Caregiver stress, also known as caregiver stress syndrome, is a state of mental, emotional, and physical exhaustion caregivers experience. They may also experience fatigue, stress, anxiety and depression.

Caregivers often manage the physical and emotional needs of people unable to care for themselves. The exhaustion caregivers feel is amplified by the fact that they often don't have the time necessary to care for themselves. This leaves the caregiver feeling depleted and at risk for burnout, anxiety and depression. The good news is that there are many strategies that caregivers can use to manage and reduce their stress levels.

1. **Prioritize Self-Care:** Caring for someone else can be an incredibly demanding job, and it's important to make sure that you're taking care of yourself as well. Make sure that you're eating healthy meals, exercising regularly, getting enough sleep and taking time for hobbies or activities that bring you joy.

2. **Ask for Help:** Many caregivers

hesitate to ask for help because of feelings of guilt or a fear of burdening others. However, it's important to remember that asking for help is not a sign of weakness: it's a sign of strength. Reach out to family and friends or consider enlisting the help of a professional caregiver if you need additional support.

3. **Practice Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is a powerful tool for managing stress. Taking even a few moments each day to focus on your breathing and be present in the moment can help reduce stress and increase your sense of well-being.

4. **Make Time for Fun:** Caregiving can be an incredibly rewarding experience, but it's important to make sure that you're making time for fun, as well. Schedule regular breaks and outings with friends or family or carve out some time each day to do something that you enjoy.

5. **Find a Support Group:** Connecting with other caregivers can be a great way to relieve stress and feel supported. Look for local support groups or online forums to connect with other caregivers who understand what you're going through.

By taking the time to prioritize self-care and ask for help, practice mindfulness, make time for fun and connect with other caregivers, you can effectively manage your stress and enjoy the rewards of caregiving.

Elan Skilled Nursing and Rehab Center welcomes individuals of all faiths and religious affiliations. At Elan Skilled, we understand how complicated caring for loved ones can be. We're here to simplify the process, listen to your concerns and help you make decisions with confidence.

We can provide temporary short-term care for your dependent loved one through our respite care program, which is designed to give personal caregivers a short-term break.

Whether this break involves weeks or months, respite care can help caregivers attend to personal commitments and responsibilities, work outside the home, or simply take some time to relax and recharge.

To learn more about the respite care program and the services provided at Elan Skilled Nursing and Rehab Center, contact Melissa Bednar at 570-344-6177.

Reading..... Continued from page 2

really helped them advance.”

The dogs that accompanied the study were made available by Ita Merla, a veteran teacher who works at the school where it was conducted. She also specializes in animal therapy and training. “When people hear about this, they're a bit skeptical and ask, ‘Well, wouldn't children also improve if they read out to a friend? Or to their parents or teacher?’

“The answer to that is yes, they

would improve if they'd read out to friends, parents or teachers, but the problem is that they don't, for a variety of reasons. Children are very busy with a lot of other things, and parents are also far less available nowadays. Not to mention that children worry about being judged and criticized – something they won't get from dogs,” she explains.

Merla notes that even when children are given dedicated reading slots at school, there's no guarantee

that they'd actually use it to read. “Kids can hold the book open, but they don't necessarily end up reading. They might stare at it, or daydream – you can't technically force them to read. But with the dogs they're really motivated to do it, even the kids who didn't initially want to,” she says.

“The dogs provide the motivation and never-ending excitement, and this has results, which I'm happy also came through in the study. The dogs provide the children with a non-judgmental environment, and they sit calmly and attentively next to the children while they read out loud – and there's no one to laugh at you or correct you,” Merla adds. “They exercise self-criticism when they read out loud, and are able

to fix their own mistakes, without worrying about keeping up with anyone else's pace.”

Moreover, she notes, “Children who you couldn't get to read, however creatively you tried, have become reading champs.”

She was also surprised that even children who already read well wanted to read out loud to the dogs. “In the study, there was a group that read to the dogs and a control group. When the study ended, we let the control group read to the dogs as well,” she tells ISRAEL21c.

“There's something about animals, and dogs in particular, that is very accepting of children. This feeling that they give them – that they're loved and accepted as they are — it comes through.”





In its bat mitzvah year, Sefaria executive reflects on the online Jewish library's ubiquity

BY BRADLEY MARTIN

(JNS) – It started as an online digital copy of the Hebrew Bible. Today, Sefaria has thousands of biblical and rabbinic texts, which 700,000 people access monthly, according to Sara Wolkenfeld, the nonprofit's chief learning officer.

Sefaria traces its origins back to 2011, when author Joshua Foer and Brett Lockspeiser, formerly of Google, developed its initial concept. As Sefaria celebrates its “bat mitzvah” year and looks ahead to its “bar mitzvah,” Wolkenfeld told JNS that “Sefaria is everywhere.”

“We have several people in California, one person in Berlin and a few in Israel,” said Wolkenfeld, who lives in Chicago’s Lakeview neighborhood.

Prior to joining Sefaria in 2013, when it incorporated as a nonprofit, Wolkenfeld and her husband, Rabbi David Wolkenfeld of Chicago’s Modern Orthodox synagogue Anshe Sholom B’nai Israel, co-directed the Orthodox Union’s Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus at

Princeton University for five years.

Following a lecture she delivered on May 2 at a Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning conference in Chicago, she told JNS that during the 2009-10 school year, a Princeton student asked her a question about Jewish views of the afterlife. She organized a course on the matter focused on primary sources, and while teaching the class at the Princeton Hillel, she decided that there had to be a way to make Jewish texts more accessible to the public.

“These were extremely smart young people,” she said of the students. “But the problem was they could not access the physical texts themselves because they weren’t fluent enough in Hebrew.”

Lockspeiser and Foer approached her in 2013, and she agreed to join. “Sefaria existed as an idea,” she said of the concept at the time.

Wolkenfeld came aboard as director of education, focusing on outreach to Jewish educators, whom she and the co-founders assumed would be Sefaria’s earliest adopt-

ers. She also identified Jewish religious texts to add to the site and secured the permissions necessary to republish the texts that weren’t already in the public domain. Her responsibilities later broadened to include helping learners of all levels.

In 2013, an average of about 3,000 people visited the site, which had 9.3 million words, monthly. In 2023, monthly visitors climbed to nearly 675,000, and as of March, Sefaria’s library has 322 million words—nearly 76.5 million translated words, 3.3 million intertextual links and nearly 450,000 source sheets.

Wolkenfeld has found it fulfilling to see how much Sefaria has grown. “It is incredible to see the adoption of Sefaria throughout the Jewish world. Almost everywhere I go, I see how much it is being used and also expanded upon,” she said.

Sefaria plans to continue expanding its library, while emphasizing accessibility to Jewish texts that speaks to users’ unique needs and questions.

This year, Sefaria debuted a “Word-by-Word” writing project,

which will support the Jewish textual research of a cohort of up to 20 Jewish women who are preparing manuscripts for publication. Another recent development is that Sefaria’s database directly links to the National Library of Israel’s RAMBI repository of articles on Jewish subjects.

Sefaria has also added three kabbalistic works—all connected to the central Aramaic kabbalistic text “Zohar”—to its holdings: a Hebrew translation of “Zohar,” a 20th-century commentary on the work by Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag (known as the Baal Ha-Sulam) and an 18th-century “Zohar” commentary by Moroccan kabbalist Rabbi Shalom Buzaglo.

“In the years to come,” said Wolkenfeld, “we are very excited to experiment with new products of Torah learning in the digital age.”



Sara Wolkenfeld (center), chief learning officer of Sefaria (Photo courtesy of Sefaria)



At left: Sefaria’s database directly links to the National Library of Israel’s RAMBI repository of articles on Jewish subjects. (Photo courtesy of Sefaria)

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Israeli defense minister hails “powerful ties” with U.S. during meeting with FEMA chief

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant met recently with U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency Director Deanne Criswell to discuss issues related to disaster response and preparedness. “The partnership between FEMA and the IDF’s Homefront Command reflects another layer in the powerful ties between the U.S. and Israel’s security establishments,” said Gallant. In March, Israel hosted a four-day international exercise simulating the reception of foreign aid in the event of a major earthquake. Some 120 people from 18 countries participated, with the teams also simulating scenarios related to search and rescue operations, evacuation drills and damage assessment processes.

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Jerusalem burial cave yields 1,800-year-old gold amulet against evil eye

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – Jerusalem, it appears, was the city of gold even after death. That conclusion comes to mind as scholars ponder why young girls buried in Jerusalem in the Roman period were adorned with fine gold jewelry.

The jewelry found in a burial cave in Jerusalem was worn as amulets against the evil eye 1,800 years ago, the Israel Antiquities Authority recently announced. The jewelry was to be presented to the public for the first time in Jerusalem in April at the 48th Annual Archaeological Congress in Israel.

The jewels were originally discovered in 1971, in an excavation whose finds were not previously published. The remains of a lead coffin were found on Mount Scopus in Jerusalem containing jewels including gold earrings, a hairpin, a gold pendant and gold beads, carnelian beads and a glass bead.

The jewels were recently located in the context of the Israel Antiquities Authority’s Publication of Past Excavations Project, whereby old excavations that were not fully published are now being publicized.

“The location of the original reports that gathered dust over the years in the Israel Antiquities



The assemblage of fine gold jewelry. (Photo by Emil Aladjem/Israel Antiquities Authority)

Authority archives, and physically tracing the whereabouts of the items themselves, has shed light on long-forgotten treasures,” says Ayelet Dayan, who heads this project. “The beautiful jewelry that we researched is an example of such treasures.”

Dayan, Ayelet Gruber and Yuval Baruch of the Israel Antiquities Authority, who carried out the research on the jewelry, believe that the “very valuable” items that bear the symbols of See “Amulet” on page 10

Fellowship. Continued from page 1

That same Friday, Rav Shoshana and the Fellowship had invited its members and the Hemlock community to welcome the Sabbath together in a unique way. With Elm Lake as a backdrop, Rav Shoshana, accompanied by musicians Sandy Simon and Gal Gershowitz, led the gathering with songs and meditations amidst the beauty of nature. Participants then enjoyed a copious smorgasbord at the Elm Beach picnic tables.

Finally, on June 23, the Fellowship’s Sabbath joy was heightened by the installation of Rav

Shoshana as spiritual leader and the honoring of new members. A delicious meal catered by Hills Homestead followed the service.

As the Fellowship’s 50th anniversary approaches, many more exciting events and interesting programs are planned, so stay tuned for more JFHF news and photos.

JFHF also invites everyone for two more Fridays at 6 pm, July 21 and September 1, to recapture the special experience of the Elm Beach Shabbat and potluck picnic. Also, on Saturday morning, June 24, JFHF congregants were scheduled to take our first Soul Stroll with the Torah this summer season on a path through the Hemlock Farms forest. It promised to be a truly inspiring experience led by Rav Shoshana Mitrani Knapp. All were welcome.



P A C E

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For more information contact Daniel Chejfec at Daniel.Chejfec@jewishnepa.org or call 570-961-2300, ext. 1.)

Scholars expound on Mount Ebal curse tablet with oldest Hebrew text

BY ETGAR LEFKOVITS

(JNS) – A lead tablet found at a site where millions of Jews and Christians believe the Israelite leader Joshua built an altar contains the oldest Hebrew text ever found in the land of Israel as well as the name of God, a recent academic article concluded. The peer review of the small 3,200-year-old curse tablet discovered at Mount Ebal in Samaria more than two years ago is expected to reignite the debate in the archaeological community over the find. It could prove the Israelites were literate at the time, as well as shed light on the date of the Exodus from Egypt.

“The text... is the oldest Hebrew text found within the borders of ancient Israel... by at least two centuries,” the article published in Heritage Science states.

“The big point here is that we have evidence of Hebrew writing in Israel earlier than has previously been established, as well as mention of two of names of the Hebrew God, all from the site where the Bible said Joshua built an altar,” Scott Stripling, the provost at the Bible Seminary in Katy, TX, who uncovered the tablet, said in a telephone interview with JNS.

The folded, 2×2-centimeter square lead tablet was found in December 2019, during an examination of discarded materials from an excavation at the site that had been led by University of Haifa Professor Adam Zertal (1936-2015) more than three decades earlier.

Zertal carried out the dig where the ruins of ancient Shechem lie between 1982 and 1989, at the site of what he concluded were two altars dating to the Late Bronze Age II and Iron Age I.

The Book of Joshua relates that Moses’ successor as leader built an altar on Mount Ebal as part of a covenant renewal ceremony soon after the Israelites returned to Canaan from Egypt. The site is known from the book of Deuteronomy as



The curse tablet found on Mount Ebal. (Photo by Jaroslav Valach)

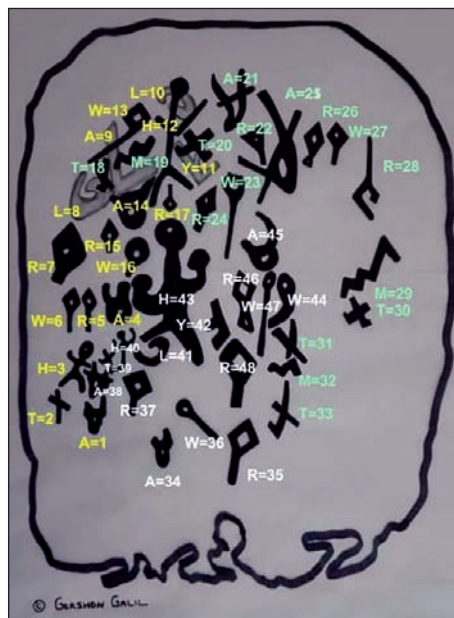
a place of curses.

The tablet emerged from a dump pile left behind from the original dig – common after excavations – in a process known as “wet sifting” whereby ancient stones covered in dirt are washed. The method, which was first used in Jerusalem for finds removed from the Temple Mount, is not considered as scientific as an actual dig, although in this case the item was found in situ.

Stripling, who had previously participated in the Temple Mount Sifting Project in Jerusalem, said in the interview that when he began the sifting project at Mount Ebal, he only expected to write a “boring methodical paper” about embracing the new technology offered by wet sifting the rubble of excavations.

“The tablet would not have been found without wet sifting,” he said. “At first, it looked like a piece of stone covered in dirt. Only when we washed it, it popped out.”

The tablet, which the researchers date to 1400-1200 B.C.E., could not be opened without damaging it, so a team of experts performed X-ray tomography scanning in Prague as well as detailed photography, revealing an ancient curse written in a proto-alphabetic script, the article, titled “You are Cursed by the God YHW: An Early Hebrew Inscription from Mt. Ebal,” states. The article includes images and scans of the



Line-drawing of the inscription on “Inner B” and annotated line-drawing. (Drawing and annotations by Gershon Galil)

inscriptions for other academics to weigh in on.

The inscription contains as many as 48 letters and the curse appears on the inside and outside of the tablet. “You are cursed by the god, yhw, cursed. You will die cursed – cursed


you will surely die. Cursed you are by yhw-cursed,” a translation of the inner inscription reads, according to the article.

“What we thought over a year ago, we now have substantiated through our research,” said Stripling.

The earliest Hebrew writing previously found – the Khirbet Qeiyafa ostracon found in the dig at the ancient fortress city near the central Israeli city of Beit Shemesh – was dated from 1000 B.C.E., making the inscription on this tablet 200 to 400 years older, Stripling said. Its use of the Hebrew word for God also predates the oldest previously found in Israel by 500 to 600 years, he added. Scholars date the Exodus from Egypt to the 13th or 12th century B.C.E., said Stripling, although their dating on this tablet could suggest it was earlier.

“We have a Hebrew inscription of a curse found on the mountain of curses,” said Peter van der Veen, associate professor at Johannes See “Tablet” on page 8

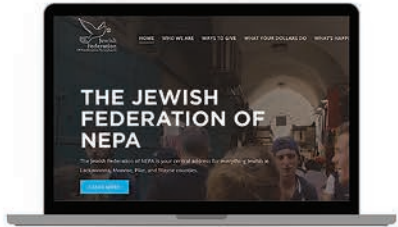
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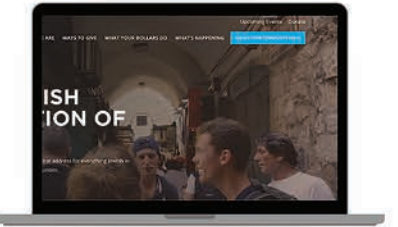
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Contemporary art meets ancient stones in Jerusalem

BY JUDY LASH BALINT

(JNS)—Contemporary art might not be the first thing on the minds of visitors to the remnants of ancient Jerusalem, but a ground-breaking exhibit brought art and archaeology together 20 feet under the Western Wall.

“Arteology: The Power of the Ancients in Contemporary Form,” features 27 ceramic pieces by Israeli Canadian artist Nicole Kornberg Jacobovici. The unique exhibition is the first to be displayed in an active, subterranean Israeli archaeological site.

Visitors enter via the City of David, walking underground through the excavated streets and drainage channel of Second Temple Jerusalem and exiting via the Davidson Center to find themselves viewing colorful and symbolic vases, plates, disks and seals artfully displayed in a historic cistern next to the monumental, 2,000-year-old foundation stones of the Western Wall.

The exhibition was made possible by a partnership between the Israel Antiquities Authority, the City of David, the Company for the Reconstruction and Development of the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem and the Jerusalem Biennale.



Some of the ceramic pieces by Israeli Canadian artist Nicole Kornberg Jacobovici that make up “Arteology: The Power of the Ancients in Contemporary Form.” (Photo by Eric Sultan)

While the ceramics were only on view in Jerusalem during Sukkot, the exhibition is designed to go on tour internationally. Renowned photographer Eric Sultan has captured the exhibition in situ with the intention to use these images as massive backdrops to the traveling exhibition, to help recreate the unique site in which it was first displayed.

Talks are underway to take the exhibition overseas, including to Greece, Japan and Italy. The project is under the framework of the Jerusalem Biennale, whose goal is to showcase the city’s rich history and culture through the prism of contemporary art.

At the opening, Jerusalem Biennale founder and director Rami Ozeri told visitors, “Art in Jerusalem is always site-specific. Every place in the city carries with it, for good and for bad, hundreds and thousands of years of history and traditions. We have this amazing opportunity to

See “Art” on page 10

TabletContinued from page 7
 Gutenberg University Mainz in Germany and an epigrapher who reviewed the inscription for the study. “I think the conclusion we reached last year is now confirmed by more in-depth study,” he said.

A second peer review of the outer inscription is expected to come out next year, followed by an international conference on the find.

ResourcesContinued from page 2
 visit www.nycjewishtours.org/event-log/holly-woods-jewish-new-wave-terf6.

- ◆ The Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning will hold the virtual course “Abraham on Trial” on four Thursdays, August 17-September 7, from 1-2:30 pm. There is a sliding scale cost to attend. The class will explore the Akedah (binding), or near sacrifice of Isaac, along with the continuing reverberations of the controversial biblical story. For more information or to attend, visit <https://events.org/events/calendarcourse?tid=b63e9820-b8fc-433b-a6d8-6bfdad8b4ada>.
- ◆ The Lower East Side Jewish Conservancy will hold the virtual tour “The Conservancy at the Museum: A Virtual Tour of ‘The Sassoons’” on Monday, July 17, from 7-8:30 pm. Dr. Sharon Keller will discuss the exhibit, which is at the Jewish Museum and features more than 120 works from paintings to illuminated manuscripts, Chinese art and Judaica collected by Sassoon family members. For more information or to

- register, visit www.nycjewishtours.org/event-log/zoom-tour-sassoon-exhibit.
- ◆ Tikvah is offering the online course “The Book of Samuel: Religion, Politics, and the Longing for Order” taught by Dr. Micah Goodman. In the five episode, Goodman will talk about “Samuel’s dramatic narrative, showing how it provides answers to some of humanity’s most enduring challenges and comments powerfully on the meaning of religion and sacrifice.” For more information or to watch the classes, visit <https://tikvahfund.org/course/the-book-of-samuel-religion-power-and-the-longing-for-order/>.
- ◆ Tikvah offers the podcast “Building the Impossible Dream: The History of Zionism” with Shalem College’s Dr. Daniel Polisar. Polisar’s podcast offers “a tour of the big ideas and the heroic figures that defined the rise of Jewish nationalism.” For more information or to listen to the podcast, visit <https://zionism.tikvahfund.org/>.



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Capital Jewish Museum opens in Washington, DC

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS) – The Capital Jewish Museum opened in June in the Washington, DC, neighborhood of Judiciary Square—blocks from the U.S. Capitol, the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian museums on the National Mall, and near what was a center of Jewish life in the district a century ago. The museum “explores the Jewish experience in the national capital region and inspires visitors to connect, reflect and act,” per its site, <https://capitaljewishmuseum.org>, which cites an “experimental spirit.”

Among the collections objects are a matchbox signed by President Jimmy Carter and used in 1979 to light the White House Chanukah me-



Artist's rendering of the now completed Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, DC. (Photo by Capital Jewish Museum)

norah; *Washington Post* press badges (spanning 1966-1982) of Judith Martin (“Miss Manners”); and a white lace collar that Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the former Supreme Court associate justice, wore on the bench.

The museum owns 24,000 photographs, 1,050 artifacts and 800 linear feet of archival material dating back to 1850, according to a release. The 32,500-square-foot museum consists of four floors and admission is free, except for special exhibits. One current exhibit centers on Ginsburg which the museum calls “visually rich, entertaining, yet rigorous.” The collection also includes the restored, 1876 Adas Israel synagogue building, which has been moved on wheels.

Study: healthy lifestyle, green diet could slow brain aging

BY YULIA KARRA

(Israel21c) – A new study by researchers from Ben-Gurion University of the Negev found that a healthy lifestyle based on a green Mediterranean diet could slow the aging process in the brain. The green Mediterranean diet differs from the regular Mediterranean diet due to high amounts of dietary polyphenols (phytochemicals, secondary metabolites of plant compounds that offer various health benefits) and lower quantities of red and processed meat.

The researchers examined 102 individuals who met the criteria for obesity, which is believed to

age the brain faster than normal. The researchers calculated the subjects’ “brain age” before the start of the study using detailed scans and repeated the process after the individuals had undergone a series of lifestyle changes over the next 18 months. The results suggest that lifestyle interventions that promote weight loss can have a beneficial impact on the aging process of the brain. A 1 percent reduction in body weight rejuvenated the participants’ brain age by almost nine months.

Weight loss-related reduction in liver fat also appears to be a contributing factor since high levels of liver fat and production of specific liver

enzymes were previously shown to negatively affect brain health.

The research was part of a wider Direct Plus study. The findings were published in the *eLife* scientific journal. The sub-study was conducted by Prof. Galia Avidan of the Department of Psychology and Gidon Levakov, a former graduate student at the Department of Cognitive and Brain Sciences.

“Our study highlights the importance of a healthy lifestyle, including lower consumption of processed food, sweets and [sweet] beverages, in maintaining brain health,” said Levakov.

The Reporter

Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania



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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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Amulet.....Continued from page 6

Luna, the Roman moon goddess, accompanied the girls in their lifetime, and were buried with them to continue to protect them in the afterlife. According to their research, two similar gold earrings were discovered in another excavation carried out on the Mount of Olives in 1975.

“It seems that the girl was buried with an expensive set of gold jewelry that included earrings, a chain with a lunula pendant (named after the goddess), and a hairpin,” say the researchers. “These items of jewelry are known in the Roman world, and are characteristic of young girl burials, possibly providing evidence

of the people who were buried at these sites.”

Late Roman Jerusalem—renamed Aelia Capitolina—had a mixed population that reached the city after the destruction of the Second Temple and the evacuation of the Jewish residents. People from different parts of the Roman Empire settled in the city, bringing with them a different set of values, beliefs and rituals. The pagan cult of the city’s new population was rich and varied, including gods and goddesses, among them the cult of Luna.

According to Eli Escusido, director of the Antiquities Authority: “The interring of the

jewelry together with the young girl is touching. One can imagine that their parents or relatives parted from the girl, either adorned with the jewelry, or [with it] possibly lying by her side, and thinking of the protection that the jewelry provided in the world to come. This is a very human situation, and all can identify with the need to protect one’s offspring, whatever the culture or the period.”

The Archaeological Congress is organized by the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Israel Exploration Society and the Israel Archaeological Association.

Art.....Continued from page 8

connect the magnificent ceramic art by Nicole with the foundations of the most important ancient structure of this part of the world. This connection is magical both aesthetically and symbolically.”

Renowned archaeologist Yuval Baruch, director of the Jerusalem District of the IAA, has been excavating at the City of David and Temple Mount since 1997. “We’re very proud to provide this special space for Nicole’s ceramics exhibition. This space was part of the water system of Jerusalem, some 2,700 years ago. It’s the first time in Jerusalem we’ve had an art exhibit in an active archaeological site. I sincerely hope it’s not the last time. In many respects, archaeology’s “language” is based on pottery. That’s why we decided to deal with ceramics. It’s an ancient raw material that has accompanied human civilization since its beginning,” he said.

“Nicole’s ceramics are particularly appropriate because it’s contemporary art that echoes ancient forms and methods. This dialogue between past and present shouldn’t just be a matter for archaeologists. It should involve the general population and that’s what we’re trying to promote,” Baruch said.

Standing in front of the multi-layered display of her work, Kornberg Jacobovici said the inspiration for her pieces on display leans on biblical, cultural and historical themes and motifs, from sources as varied as cultures present 5,000 years ago along the Aegean Sea to the Israelites in Egypt and the Etruscans in ancient Rome.

“Throughout history, clay has been used to contain the objects of our lives—food, water, coins, jewelry, scrolls – the objects that sustain us. It is through our continued relationship with clay that we can connect to ourselves, our history,

and cultures of the past,” she noted.

“Ceramics carry the energy, aesthetics and the hand of the maker – sometimes preserving the actual fingerprint of the artist. Ceramics reflect a moment in time. Placing my pieces within an active archaeological site allows me to have a dialogue with the ancients and, in a sense, with people of the future, since this site reminds us that these pieces too will one day be archaeology,” Kornberg Jacobovici said.

Baruch told JNS he is optimistic that the juxtaposition of contemporary art and archaeology will be a bridge that brings people to a greater understanding of the meaning of the ruins and the multiple layers of Jerusalem. “Archaeology is part of the cultural environment of the city. It’s important to develop new ways to bring that to the public. This is a kind of pilot project,” he said.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Kandinsky's "Colorful Life" to return to Jewish heirs

Wassily Kandinsky's 1907 semi-abstract painting "Colorful Life," which depicts a large outdoor celebration, should return to heirs of the Dutch Jewish collector who owned the work prior to the Holocaust, a German government panel ruled. Emanuel Albert Lewenstein, who directed a sewing-machine factory, developed an art collection. He had loaned the Kandinsky to the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam when Hitler's armies invaded. It was later auctioned off. "There are numerous indications that this was a case of a seizure as a result of Nazi persecution," ruled the commission, which investigated the case. Its rulings aren't legally binding, but are almost always adhered to. A Russian painter, Kandinsky was not Jewish, but his work was included in the notorious Nazi "degenerate art" exhibit. In 2021, the Stedelijk returned another Kandinsky picture, "Painting with Houses" (1909), to the Lewenstein family. It had belonged to Lewenstein's son Robert and the latter's wife, Irma Klein.

Ohio police receive a "Judaism 101" course

Rabbi Yossi Greenberg, director of Chabad at Miami University in Ohio, said of his 25 police pupils that "when they interact with the Jewish community, they should understand a basic level of knowledge." On June 6, alongside police chaplain Mendy Kalmanson, Greenberg taught a course to Ohio's Oxford Police Department and the Miami University Police Department about the core teachings of Judaism. Instruction also included potential police interactions related to Jewish Sabbath observance, which starts at sundown on Fridays and ends after sundown on Saturdays. That's when many synagogues hold services and other programs for individuals and families. "Conversation flowed about what to look out for and how to be the best resource for the Jewish residents and students," Greenberg said of the class. Greenberg had previously consulted with the Oxford police when they had questions on Judaism and proposed a course in 2022 in

response to rising antisemitism. One officer, Lt. Lara Fening said of the rabbi: "He understands that we don't know, and he's very accommodating to our questions." As a takeaway from the session, Fening described learning that she "could see situations on the Sabbath where they [Jews] would have limitations or restrictions."

Israeli researchers convert human skin cells into placenta cells

In a breakthrough for understanding fertility and pregnancy issues, Israeli scientists have converted human skin cells into functional human placenta cells. Professor Yossi Buganim and his research team at the Faculty of Medicine at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem published their study in the peer-reviewed journal Nature Communications. The placenta is an organ that develops in the uterus during pregnancy and provides nutrients and oxygen to a baby. The umbilical cord is attached to the placenta. The breakthrough research provides an unlimited supply of cells for studying the function of the placenta. This breakthrough could open up new avenues to solving pregnancy problems by using skin cells from women with pregnancy complications that contain the same genetic makeup as their placenta cells. The project was led by

Dr. Moriyah Naama, an M.D./Ph.D. program participant at the Hebrew University, in collaboration with Moran Rahamim, a Ph.D. student, and other members of the Buganim lab. "The findings of this study hold significant promise for advancing our understanding of pregnancy development, infertility and pregnancy-related diseases," the Hebrew University said in a statement. "They have the potential to revolutionize research on placental pathologies and genetic causes, leading to improved diagnostic tools and therapeutic interventions."

Jewish infielder makes Major League Baseball debut

Jewish infielder Spencer Horwitz, 25, made his Major League Baseball debut on June 18 for the Blue Jays and hit a single in his first at bat. In his second, he batted in a run on a sacrifice to put Toronto ahead 6-0, and he got walked in his other two at bats. The Texas Rangers went on to win 11-7. Last March, Horwitz played for Team Israel at the World Baseball Classic, batting in a run in Israel's 3-1 win over Nicaragua. He said of his Jewish identity: "I've been around the Jewish culture my whole life, and I've grown to love it and just appreciate it and respect it."



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CANTOR VLADIMIR ARONZON AND MILA ARONZON, CO-CHAIRS OF THE 2022-2023 UJA CAMPAIGN, THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!