

The Scranton Hebrew Day School Chumashim party



Second-graders gave a performance during the Chumashim party.



Second-graders received Chumashim.



Shown is the performance at the siddur party.



Aliza Malka Fink received her new siddur, sponsored by the Arcus family in memory of their late son, Phillip. Joining her were (l-r) Rabbi Shmuel Goldberg, the first grade Rebbe; Aliza; her father and Scranton Hebrew Day School president and alumnus, Natan Fink; her brothers, Yaakov Aryeh and Yosef Aharon, sixth grade students; and her grandfather, Moshe Fink, former board chairman and day school alumnus.

Beth Shalom Academy

Evelyn Laude once said, “We all have the power to make a positive impact on the world. It starts with small acts of kindness and compassion.” At Beth Shalom Academy, we have a variety of classes outside of a typical curriculum. Some of those are bridge class, life skills, meeting members of the community and *chesed*. Our aim with these classes at BSA is to provide a well-rounded education, along with providing our students with skills to become contributing members of the Jewish community and society at large.

Our *chesed* classes give students various opportunities to give. See “Academy” on page 6



CANDLE LIGHTING

February 2	5:02 pm
February 9	5:10 pm
February 16	5:19 pm
February 23	5:28 pm
March 1	5:36 pm
March 8	5:44 pm
March 15	6:52 pm

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Jewish Fellowship celebrated Tu B'Shevat



An Intergenerational Tu B'Shvat Seder was celebrated at the Jewish Fellowship of Hemlock Farms in January.

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Cultivated beef

Israel's Health Ministry gives regulatory approval to the world's first cultivated beef steaks.

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South Africa

Members of Congress denounce South Africa's accusations of genocide against Israel.

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Stolen art

A U.S. appeals court has ruled against a family seeking Nazi-looted art from a Spanish museum.

Story on page 9



Jewish Family Service Board of Directors for the 2023/2024 fiscal year

At right: Jewish Family Service Board of Directors for the 2023/2024 fiscal year.

Seated (l-r): Vice President Dr. Margaret Sheldon, Secretary Susan Blum Connors, President Dr. Daniel Ginsberg, Natalie Gelb and Daniel A. Bubnis.

Standing (l-r): Dr. Nancy Willis, Leah Laury, Gary Beckhorn, Treasurer Louis Nivert, Michael Mardo, Jamy Rosenstein, Dovid Yehudah Fink, Elliot Schoenberg, Dale K. Miller and Vice President Nancy Johnson.

Established in 1915, Jewish Family Service is a human service organization, which reflects the Jewish tradition of caring and compassion for all people in need. Through professional counseling, advocacy and educational programming, our services seek to enhance and strengthen the quality of individual, family, and community life. It is this agency's mission that drives all services and activities of Jewish Family Service.



Israel gives world's first regulatory approval to cultivated beef

BY SVETA LISTRATOV

(JNS) – Israel's Health Ministry recently gave regulatory approval to the world's first cultivated beef steaks, which a leading culinary expert said places Israel at the forefront of foodtech. The approval was given to Aleph Farms, a Rehovot-based startup.

"This news holds paramount economic meaning as it revolves around leading companies in the field of food tech, with Israel taking the forefront on a global scale," Eli Helman, a culinary expert told JNS. Helman founded Datilishes, an online community of more than 80,000 that promotes kosher food.

"Of course, for those who abstain from meat, this is going to be a convenient solution. Think of a gathering of friends cooking over barbecue, including vegetarians, who can come together and share the pleasant culinary experience," Helman added.

Aleph Farms also received the blessing of Israeli Chief Rabbi David Lau. He issued a religious ruling recognizing the cultured beef as "pareve," which means food not considered either meat or dairy. Observant Jews do not mix meat and dairy, and wait a period between eating the two.

"This innovation now en-



Barbecue meat prepared for Israel's 74th Independence Day celebrations in Ben Shemen Forest on May 5, 2022. (Photo by Flash90)

ables those adhering to Jewish tradition to enjoy a cheeseburger, an experience previously forbidden for them," Helman explained.

But the Chief Rabbi's ruling comes with caveats. "One might not be able to tell the difference between the real meat and the cultured one. For this reason, the chief rabbi prohibits advertising the cultured meat by Aleph Cuts with dairy products," said Helman.

Israel has one of the highest rates of vegetarianism and veganism in the world. An estimated 13 percent of Israel's population is vegetarian, meaning they don't eat meat, fowl, fish or the byproducts of animals killed for food. Around 5 percent of Israelis are vegans, who maintain a stricter diet – refraining from all animal byproducts, such as dairy, eggs and honey.

Cultured meat, also known as lab-grown meat, is produced through a process called cellular agriculture or cell-based meat production. A small sample of animal cells, typically muscle cells, are taken from a live animal through

a biopsy. These cells serve as the starting point for the production of cultured meat. The isolated cells are then placed in a controlled environment, such as a culture medium containing nutrients, growth factors and a scaffold to mimic the natural conditions within an animal's body.

When the cells become more distinct, they are differentiated into specific cell types, such as muscle cells, fat cells and connective tissue cells. The differentiated cells are then assembled into three-dimensional structures resembling the composition of meat. The cells are then left to grow before being harvested.

Cultured meat is touted as environmentally friendly, more efficient to produce, and offering greater food security.

"This approval makes Israel the first country in the world to approve beef cell culture as food and a world leader in the field, while protecting public health," said Dr. Ziva Hama, head of the ministry's Department of Food Risk Management. She said the cultured beefsteaks passed after being examined for allergens, toxicology, nutritional composition and microbiological and chemical safety, among other factors.

Helman told JNS the ministry's approval will help normalize cultured meat and vegetarian lifestyles. "I don't foresee cultured meat entirely replacing traditional meat, but I believe it will gradually become part of the broader culinary landscape," he said.

The Reporter

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The Reporter
Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

COMMUNITY NEWS

The situation in Israel and at home

At no time since World War II had the situation of our global Jewish family been as complicated as it is today. Make no mistake – we are being pushed against the wall. Let me try to describe some of the issues:



a) Israel was attacked on October 7, 2023, by Hamas terrorists who left 1,200 Israelis dead and kidnapped

about another 240. As a result, Israel defended itself by attacking Hamas. Fighting a terrorist organization is fundamentally different from fighting another state actor. Hamas terrorists hide behind civilians, so for Israel to be able to get them, they need to fight in the urban environment of the Gaza Strip; and this brings, unavoidably, a high number of civilian casualties, even as the IDF takes precautions to avoid them. These civilian casualties are in turn used to accuse Israel of “disproportionality” and even “genocide.” What alternatives does Israel have? If they continue the fight, more civilians will die and the effect will be a waning of support for Israel in the West, maybe even a “cooling” of U.S. support. If, on the other hand, Israel stops its offensive, it means giving Hamas the breather they need to rebuild and reorganize, getting them to a position to repeat the attacks down the road. We can argue about Israel’s government responsibility or lack thereof when it comes to the security of the state in this instance, but that is water under the bridge... Israel is now faced with what is, apparently, a no-

win scenario.

b) For a couple of decades, the organized Jewish community has been warning about the growth of antisemitism on U.S. campuses – but done very little about it other

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

DANIEL CHEJFEC, PH.D.

than increasing security measures for Hillel and Campus Chabad centers. Not acting on the root of the problem, along with a withdrawal from a number of social justice coalitions prepared the ground for the current situation. While the anti-Israel activism that erupted since October 7 exacerbated the problem, it did not create it.

c) The emergence of a generation that appears to believe that their actions and their words have no consequences is also leading to the mainstream acceptance of antisemitism as part of the American landscape. Expressions and comments that just five years ago would have been considered offensive by most Americans are being today ignored as just one more colloquialism.

d) Growing segments of the U.S. population are no longer seeing Jews as a minority. For many, Jews are considered part of the “White oppressors.” This, on the one hand, closes the doors of some progressive coalitions to Jews because in the current understanding of these coalitions, if you are an oppressor, you cannot be progressive. This move is also erasing the genetic

and cultural heritage of Jews and their self-perception as an ethno-religious group.

e) A consequence of the prior paragraph is that it becomes acceptable to exclude Jews when mentioning minorities, as the Hollywood Academy did recently. This exclusionary trend will not end in Holly-

wood, nor is it new. It became part of the news because of the recent implementation of the new rules to judge entries for the Oscars.

f) The climate described so far generates fear and anxiety in many in the Jewish community. Some Jews (especially young ones) decide to pay the “price of admission” to the progressive camp prevalent on campuses by ditching their Jewish particularism, avoiding any external identifier as Jews and even joining the ranks of the anti-Israel crowd.

What can we do? On an individual level, many of us are rededicating ourselves to our Jewish heritage and culture; trying to learn more about who we are; and participating more in organized Jewish life. We are also openly expressing ourselves against antisemitism and in support of Israel, writing letters to

the paper and even becoming “internet warriors” to make sure our case is heard.

On a collective level, the Federation recently granted over \$60,000 in grants for organizations to improve their security; to make sure that people feel safer attending Jewish organizations; we also organized a bus to participate in the November 14 March for Israel in Washington, DC; we work with local Law enforcement to ensure protection to the community; we are finalizing our contract to establish our community as a “Live Secure community” – that means a partner with the Secure Community Network (SCN); we lobby on the state and federal level to ensure funding for the protection of our community organizations. We also continue our long-term efforts to educate the general population on the lessons of the Shoah through our Annual Teen Symposium on the Holocaust. Can we do more? Probably. I invite all members of the community to contact me, or any of the members of the Federation Board with any ideas you might have that can help us be more effective in this area.

None of our work would be possible without the Annual Campaign. Please keep that in mind when you are asked to be a part of it.

For information on advertising, please contact Kathy Brown at 1-800-779-7896, ext. 244, or advertising@thereportergroup.org

The Reporter
Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania

DEADLINES

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

DEADLINE	ISSUE
Monday, February 12	March
Monday, March 11	April
Monday, April 8	May
Monday, May 13	June

Introduction to Judaism

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New year, new you: Healthy resolutions for seniors

FROM THE ELAN GARDENS BLOG

As we age, it becomes increasingly important to prioritize our health and wellness. This means taking care of our bodies through exercise, healthy eating habits and regular check-ups with our doctors. It also means prioritizing our mental health by finding ways to manage stress and practicing self-care. If you're considering making changes to improve your health and wellness, the start of a new year is the perfect time to set goals and make resolutions that will improve your quality of life and help you maintain independence for years to come.

Here are a few ways seniors can resolve to get healthier in 2024:

◆ **Get Moving:** Exercise is essential for maintaining physical and mental health. Seniors can aim to incorporate low-impact activities like walking, swimming or yoga into their daily routine. Setting a goal to exercise for 30 minutes a day, three to five times a week can improve strength, balance and flexibility. Exercise can also help to reduce the risk of chronic illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity, as well as improve mental health and well-being.

In addition, strength training exercises such as weightlifting or resistance bands can increase muscle mass and improve bone density, reducing the risk of injury and improving overall physical function. Balance exercises, such as standing on one leg or walking heel-to-toe, can help to prevent falls and im-



prove stability. Finally, flexibility exercises such as stretching can improve range of motion, reducing the risk of injury and improving overall mobility.

◆ **Eat Well:** A balanced diet is crucial for maintaining a healthy weight, keeping energy levels up, and reducing the risk of chronic diseases. It is beneficial for seniors to consume more nutrient-dense foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains and lean proteins. Avoiding processed and sugary foods can also improve overall health.

However, eating well doesn't mean you have to give up all your favorite foods. It's important to enjoy the foods you love in moderation and find healthier alternatives when possible. Making small changes to your diet, such as swapping out sugary drinks for water or adding more vegetables to your meals, can make a big difference in your overall health.

◆ **Stay Social:** Socializing is an essential part of human interaction and can have a positive impact on mental health and well-being. In today's fast-paced world, it can be easy to isolate oneself and rely on technology for social connections. However, face-to-face interactions

with others can provide a sense of support, belonging and community that cannot be replicated through virtual communication.

Even if socializing doesn't come naturally to you, it's important to make an effort to connect with others. Consider joining a club or organization that interests you, volunteering in your community or attending social events. These activities can help you meet new people and develop meaningful relationships.

Remember that socializing doesn't have to be a big ordeal. Simple acts of kindness, like striking up a conversation with a stranger or reaching out to an old friend, can go a long way in fostering connections with others.

◆ **Prioritize Sleep:** Sleep is often undervalued in today's busy world, but getting enough sleep is important for cognitive function, mood and overall health. It's recommended that adults get seven-nine hours of sleep each night, but many of us fall short of this goal. Prioritizing sleep can help improve our overall quality of life by improving memory, boosting mood and even aiding in weight management.

If you struggle with getting enough sleep, there are several strategies you can try to improve your sleep habits. Establishing a

consistent sleep schedule, creating a relaxing bedtime routine and avoiding screens before bed are just a few examples.

◆ **Get Regular Check-ups:** One of the most important steps seniors can take to maintain good health is to get regular check-ups. Even if you feel perfectly healthy, it's important to have a trained medical professional examine you and perform any necessary tests to ensure that there aren't any underlying health issues that you may not know about. Additionally, check-ups provide an opportunity to discuss any health concerns or questions you may have with your healthcare provider.

While you are at your check-up, it's important to take advantage of preventive screenings and vaccines, such as the flu vaccine and pneumonia vaccine. These vaccines are especially important for individuals who are at higher risk of developing complications from these illnesses, such as seniors and those with compromised immune systems. By getting vaccinated, we not only protect ourselves but also those around us who may not be able to receive vaccines for medical reasons.

By adopting these healthy resolutions, seniors can improve their physical and mental health, maintain independence and enjoy a better quality of life in the year ahead.

Jewish online resources

BY REPORTER STAFF

◆ **Ayin Press** offers digital columns at <https://ayinpress.org/columns/>, including "Moabet," a column on Sephardi culture, history and thought, edited by Devin Naar; "Speaking from Experience," on emergent spiritualities, edited by Madison Margolin; "Teiku," on Jewish texts and thought, edited by Shaul Magid; and "Otiyot," a literary column, featuring a range of editors including Reut Ben-Yaacov and Moriel Zecher-Rothman.

◆ **The Yiddish Book Center** will hold several virtual events: "Inside the Peretz Salon: The Engine Room of Modern Yiddish Culture" with David Mazower on Thursday, February 8, at 7 pm (www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/inside-peretz-salon-engine-room-modern-yiddish-culture-david-mazower); and "A Revolution in Type: Gender and the Making of the American Yiddish Press" with Ayelet Brinn on Thursday, February 22, at 7 pm (www.yiddishbookcenter.org/events/revolution-type-gender-and-making-american-yiddish-press-ayelet-brinn).

◆ **The Yiddish Book Center** will

hold the five-part class "The Global Journey of Yiddish Literature" on Wednesdays, March 27, April 3, 10 and 17, from 7-8:30 pm. Professor Ilan Stavans of Amherst College will speak about Yiddish literature from Argentina to Zimbabwe, and Mexico to Melbourne. The cost to attend is \$75 for Yiddish Book Center members and \$100 for non-members. For more information or to register, visit www.yiddishbookcenter.org/educational-programs/online-culture-courses/global-journey-yiddish-literature.

◆ **Tablet** is offering a new podcast "Israel Update," featuring Gadi Taub and Michael Doran. To listen to the podcast, visit www.tabletmag.com/tags/israel-update-podcast.

◆ **The Temple Emmanuel Streicker Cultural Center** will hold the hybrid program "Antisemitism Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow" on Thursday, February 29, at 6:30 pm. Mark Weitzman and Dr. Robert J. Williams, co-editors of "The Routledge History of Antisemitism," and contributor Professor Magda Teter will discuss the book and antisemitism today. The discussion

See "Online" on page 10

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Two hundred ten Congress members denounce South Africa's genocide charge

BY DAVID ISAAC

(JNS) – Two hundred and ten members of the U.S. Congress sent an open letter to U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on January 23 condemning South Africa for filing “a grossly unfounded case against Israel at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).”

“South Africa’s accusation of genocide against Israel exposes how far Israel’s enemies will go in their attempts to demonize the Jewish state,” the signatories wrote.

The letter notes that while South Africa barely acknowledged the Hamas terrorists “who gleefully massacred, mutilated, raped, and kidnapped innocent civilians” on October 7, it made “grossly unfounded and defamatory charges against Israel on the world stage.”

Calling it an abuse of the judicial process to delegitimize Israel, the letter goes on to state that to charge the Jewish state with genocide is “particularly cynical given that the term ‘genocide’ was coined following the murder of six million Jews in the Holocaust.”

“We vigorously denounce South Africa’s deeply hostile stance towards Israel and thoroughly reject its charge of genocide,” it continues, urging the Biden administration to continue to oppose the trial.

In early January, the Biden administration criticized South Africa for filing the genocide suit. “We find this submission meritless, counterproductive, completely without any basis in fact whatsoever,” said

U.S. National Security Council Spokesperson John Kirby at a press conference on January 3.

South Africa asked the ICJ on December 29 to declare Israel in breach of its obligations under the 1948 Genocide Convention over its war against Hamas in Gaza. Hamas praised the move. Hearings were held at the ICJ headquarters in The Hague on January 11 and 12. The court is currently deliberating the case.

The Genocide Convention was drafted in the wake of the Holocaust to prevent the destruction, or intent to destroy, “in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group.”

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, responding to the move, said, “No, South Africa, it is not we who have come to perpetrate genocide, it is Hamas. It would murder all of us if it could. In contrast, the IDF is acting as morally as possible; it is doing everything to avoid harming civilians while Hamas is doing everything to harm them and is using them as human shields.”

Israel’s Foreign Ministry said that South Africa was participating in a “blood libel” against the Jewish state.

Israel, which in the past has ignored similar attempts to use international legal bodies to isolate it on the world stage, decided to participate in the trial as it is a signatory to the Genocide Convention and the court’s ruling will be binding, although in the past, countries including the United States have ignored ICJ rulings as the court lacks enforcement mechanisms.

The ICJ is an international legal body that operates under the auspices of the United Nations.

The South African suit is not the only case involving Israel currently before the ICJ. On December 30, 2022, the U.N. General Assembly formally requested an “advisory opinion” from the ICJ on the matter of “Legal Consequences arising from the Policies and Practices of Israel in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.”

Israeli officials sharply criticized the resolution as disgraceful. “The Jewish people is not occupying its land and is not occupying its eternal capital Jerusalem. No U.N. resolution can distort this historical truth,” said Netanyahu.

Indonesia, which voiced support for South Africa in the genocide

case, announced recently it will take an active part in the second case and will deliver an oral statement before the court on February 19. Slovenia also announced in January that it would take part against Israel. It will take part in the hearings on February 23.

“This is a very broad spectrum of alleged violations that have been committed in the region for decades and whose horrific consequences are still visible today,” said Tanja Fajon, Slovenia’s Minister of Foreign and European Affairs.

“Slovenia, as one of the few E.U. countries, has decided to actively participate and present its views in these proceedings before the International Court of Justice, which has been asked to give an advisory opinion,” she said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Latvia, Estonia to join Holocaust memorial program in Los Angeles

The Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia have chosen to join a memorial to address their countries’ history against Jews during World War II and the Holocaust. The two nations planned to show the documentary “Baltic Truth,” rejecting previous governments’ obfuscation of their respective historical records, as part of a program on Jan. 28 in Los Angeles, timed to International Holocaust Remembrance Day, which takes place annually on Jan. 27.




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

Academy Continued from page 1

back to the community. Weekly, our students visit Elan Skilled Nursing to create a kinship with the residents. Students have participated in intergenerational arts, played board games, brought their musical instruments and learned quite a lot about the residents. Students enjoyed singing songs to residents at Webster Towers and Elan Gardens on Veteran's Day and Chanukah, and look forward to singing more during the upcoming holidays.

Writing letters, baking cookies and creating drives have also been

a big part of our *chesed* classes. Students wrote letters to veterans in the community and created packages for individuals who are a part of the guardianship program at Jewish Family Service. Recently, we sent two huge boxes of clothing to Israel as a result of a clothing drive. Currently, we are running a food drive for the month of January for the Mae S. Gelb food pantry. A huge thank you to the Jewish Community Center for always being so welcoming to host our food and clothing drives, and to the broad Scranton community


for helping us fill our boxes.

We hope that giving our students these intergenerational and intercommunity opportunities helps them view the world from a different and broader perspective.

We welcome any and all *chesed* opportunities. To collaborate on any *chesed* projects throughout the community, please reach out to Miriam Raven at mraven@bethshalomacademy.com.



The Jewish Federation of NEPA is excited to offer local, community organizations the opportunity to post events to our Community Calendar. Published events will be included in our weekly Ma Nishma NEPA email.



How to Submit a Community Event

Step 1

Visit www.jewishnepa.org

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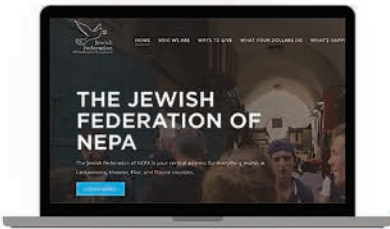



Step 3


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Step 4

Include your event details and submit the form. Events will be published once approved.

We reserve the right to edit the content of the event submissions and approve or deny publication of events.



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Reflection

BY ARI LEITER, ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL AT BETH SHALOM ACADEMY

Presentations at Beth Shalom Academy continue without end. *parasha* stories continue to be an important part of the weekly curriculum at BSA. Our Hebrew Presentations event enabled students to act out what they learned in the weekly portions of the last few months and entertain their family and community members with laughter, smiles and pride.

Every day I look at our beautiful staff and children and I am simply amazed at how wonderful *Klal Yisroel* continues to grow! A mere 75 years ago my father escaped by the skin of his teeth, and with Hashem's help, the Gestapo in the streets of Vienna looking to shoot any Jewish boy or girl they could. Fast forward three quarters of a century and the products of *almost* a total decimation are bow singing proudly – *so proudly* – that our offspring are showing the world that We Jews are stronger than ever! *Am Yisroel chai*.



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

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

• Regular Schedule of Services •

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Rabbi Alex Hecht
President: Asher Grossman
1025 Vine St., Scranton, PA 18510 (corner of Vine & Clay Ave.)
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Hollywood stars join new campaign against Jew-hatred

BY INBAL CHIAT AND JNS STAFF

(*Israel Hayom* via JNS) – In the wake of the global rise of antisemitism, a new campaign against Jew-hatred launched on January 23 with the participation of influential Jewish and non-Jewish celebrities, athletes and opinion makers. The project, named “New Year, New Voices,” which has already launched several videos on social media, includes model Cindy Crawford, actresses Connie Britton, Ginnifer Goodwin, Debra Messing, Jennifer Morrison, Jaimie Alexander, Rebecca Gayheart and Emmanuelle Chriqui, singers Lance Bass and Montana Tucker, actors David Arquette, Brett Gelman and Kevin Weisman, TV personality Colton Underwood, actor and singer Bryan Greenberg; gymnast Nia Dennis, former basketball player Zach Randolph, entrepreneur Scooter Braun, DJ Caroline D’Amore and others.

In a video posted on Instagram, uploaded with the description “We have a powerful flow of new influential voices joining us in solidarity,” the celebrities say, “It’s a new year with new voices joining us every day” to stand against antisemitism.

Campaign founder Samantha Ettus told CNN, “We have to stop antisemitism in its tracks and the only way to do that is to show people that it’s not just the same Jewish influencers over and over again; We’re not the only ones speaking out.

“Propaganda has made people think that standing up to antisemitism is political – and it’s not. It is just as acceptable to stand up against antisemitism as it is any form of hate toward any ethnic group. There is a lack of comfort or advocacy in the Hollywood community for the Jews. We have become this population that people are afraid to stand up for, and this campaign is trying to change that.”

In October, hundreds of Hollywood celebrities called on President Joe Biden to “not rest” until all the Israeli hostages held by the Hamas terrorist organization are free. The signatories include Madonna, Chris Rock, Gwyneth Paltrow, Gal Gadot, Jack Black, Isla Fisher, Jerry Seinfeld, Bradley Cooper, Tyler Perry, Justin Timberlake, Katy Perry, Courtney Cox, Jessica Biel, Orlando Bloom, Tiffany Haddish, Will Ferrell, Brooke Shields and Chelsea Handler.

In an open letter, the stars praised Biden for his “unshakable moral conviction, leadership, and support for the Jewish people, who have been terrorized by Hamas since the group’s founding over 35 years ago, and for the Palestinians, who have also been terrorized, oppressed and victimized by Hamas for the last 17 years that the group has been governing Gaza.

“We all want the same thing: Freedom for Israelis and Palestinians to live side by side

in peace,” the letter reads. “Freedom from the brutal violence spread by Hamas. And most urgently, in this moment, freedom for the hostages.”

In a separate initiative, more than 300 musicians from across the globe will record a rendition of Madonna’s “Like A Prayer,” in a show of solidarity with Israel, including artists from the United States, Japan, China, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Chile, Germany and the Netherlands. The project, titled “Bring Them Home,” is led by Israel’s Koolulam social-musical initiative that works to foster unity through mass-singing events.

Some 700 Hollywood entertainment professionals previously signed an open letter expressing unconditional backing for Israel’s war against terrorists in the Gaza Strip.

Comedian Jerry Seinfeld, actor and film producer Michael Douglas and actress Gal Gadot are just a few of those behind the missive, posted by the Creative Community for Peace, a California-based organization founded in 2011 that works to counter antisemitism and anti-Israel sentiment in the entertainment industry.

“This is terrorism. This is evil. There is no justification or rationalization for Hamas’s actions. These are barbaric acts of terrorism that must be called out by everyone. They are a terrorist organization whose leaders call for the murder of Jews everywhere,” said that letter of Hamas.

Originally published by Israel Hayom.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Bar mitzvah boy forgoes party, treats 200 IDF soldiers to dinner

Amichai Jackson, a bar mitzvah boy from the Gush Etzion community of Elazar, decided that in lieu of a party to mark the milestone event his parents should use the money to treat Israeli soldiers to dinner. Amichai was slated to celebrate his bar mitzvah a month after the breakout of Israel’s war with Hamas in Gaza. He was called to the Torah and received his *aliyah*, but decided to push off his party to quieter times. “After deliberating, Amichai decided to do something meaningful for the soldiers. Instead of having a party with family members and friends, the caterers prepared a huge meal, including a hamburger bar with all the trimmings, for 200 very happy soldiers,” said his mother Ilana. Added Amichai: “I felt that it wasn’t appropriate to have a party now. When I saw the soldiers eating and enjoying themselves, that was 1,000 times more meaningful.”



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U.S. federal appeals court: Spanish museum may keep art it knows Nazis stole

BY MENACHEM WECKER

(JNS) – In 1897, Jewish Impressionist painter Jacob Abraham Camille Pissarro wrote that he was delighted to paint Parisian streets, which he allowed were considered ugly, because they are “silvery, luminous, animated” and “totally different from the boulevards – it is absolute modernity.”

Much beauty and ugliness surrounds Pissarro’s canvas “Rue Saint-Honoré in the Afternoon: Effect of Rain” in the collection of the Thyssen-Bornemisza National Museum in Madrid, Spain, which connects the picture and the Pissarro quote in its English language collections guide. In the catalog, the renowned museum with one of the world’s great art collections does not discuss the provenance, or ownership history, of the work. But the Thyssen

explains on its website that Lilly Cassirer sold it “for below its market value” in 1939 to the art dealer Jakob Scheidwimmer, who was part of the Nazi Party, “in order to obtain a visa to escape from Germany and avoid a concentration camp.”

Per the museum, Cassirer received compensation from Germany after the war for the painting’s market value, well before it was purchased in 1976 by Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza, a baron whose family long refuted charges that it abetted the Nazis.



Jacob Abraham Camille Pissarro’s 1897 painting “Rue Saint-Honoré in the Afternoon. Effect of Rain,” in Lilly Cassirer’s parlor before the work’s forced sale to the Nazis. (Photo courtesy of the Cassirer family)

Heirs of the painting’s former owner dispute the claim that Germany fully reimbursed Cassirer and have since sued to recover the work, which Spain has fought.

In 2022, the U.S. Supreme Court returned a case to the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals, which ruled on January 9 that the Madrid museum may keep the painting due essentially the opposite of the judicial principle *ignorantia juris non excusat* – that ignorance

is no excuse of the law.

Though the Thyssen now knows that the Nazis stole the Pissarro picture, Spanish law allows for it to retain ownership because it didn’t know the work was stolen when it purchased it.

“Sometimes our oaths of office and an appreciation of our proper roles as appellate judges require that we concur in a result at odds with our moral compass. For me, this is such a situation,” wrote the circuit judge Consuelo Callahan, in her concurrence. “Spain, having reaffirmed its commitment to the Washington Principles on Nazi-Confiscate Art when it signed the Terezin Declaration on Holocaust Era Assets and Related Issues, should have voluntarily relinquished the painting.

“However, as we previously held, ‘We cannot order compliance with the Washington Principles or the Terezin Declaration,’” she wrote. “Our opinion is compelled by the district court’s findings of fact and the applicable law, but I wish that it were otherwise.”

The Los Angeles Times Editorial Board wrote that the legal issues of the case – the culmination of the Cassirer family’s efforts for two decades to reclaim the painting – might be complex, “but the moral issue is clear and simple.”

See “Museum” on page 11

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

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Tree of Life demolition begins, prosecutors slam Bowers’s appeal request

The man convicted of the mass shooting at Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life*Or L’Simcha Synagogue that left 11 Jewish worshippers dead has filed a request for a new trial. Robert Bowers, who was convicted on 63 federal charges and sentenced to death, has instructed his lawyers to call for an appeal on the grounds that the jury did not understand the argument that anti-immigration sentiment had driven the killings, not antisemitism. “The jury considered the defendant’s argument at the close of the guilt phase and squarely rejected it,” prosecutors wrote in a filing. On Jan. 17, the demolition of the Tree of Life synagogue began. Plans call for the removal of approximately 80 percent of the building, to be replaced by a memorial for Joyce Fienberg, Richard Gottfried, Rose Mallinger, Jerry Rabinowitz, Cecil and David Rosenthal, Bernice and Sylvan Simon, Dan Stein, Melvin Wax and Irving Younger. Congregation President Alan Hausman stated that “this is just another chapter in our evolution of what the Tree of Life congregation should look like, where we can do so much more than just be a synagogue.”

Philly man dumps trash at Holocaust memorial days after swastika vandalism

Eszter Kutas, the executive director of the Philadelphia Holocaust Remembrance Foundation, suspects that the man who dumped four bags of garbage on Jan. 16 at around 11:30 am at the foot of the statue in the Horowitz-Wasserman Holocaust Memorial Plaza is a repeat offender. “We may have seen this person before causing similar incidents at the Holocaust Memorial Plaza,” she said. Video shows a man believed to be homeless wearing a brown jacket, red shirt and jeans dragging bags of trash, which he then dumps around the statue in the memorial plaza. The incident comes three days after police discovered green swastika vandalism, sprayed by a masked individual. The two crimes are not believed to be related beyond the broader “context in which we see rising antisemitism affecting the American community,” Kutas said. Ted Deutch, CEO of the American Jewish Committee, wrote that he is disgusted by the vandalism of the Holocaust memorial: “Dumping trash on the nation’s oldest Holocaust memorial—just days after a Nazi swastika was discovered and a string of recent incidents in the Philadelphia area—is a disgraceful display of hate and a reflection of the rising antisemitism that is being felt across the American Jewish community.”

Online Continued from page 4

will be moderated by Dr. Shuly Rubin Schwartz, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary. For more information or to register, visit <https://streicker.nyc/events/history-of-antisemitism>.

◆ The Jewish Theological Seminary will hold the four-part course “Deepening Your Personal Prayer” on Tuesdays, February 13-27 and March 5, from 7-8:15 pm. The cost to attend is \$120. The course “explores a range of rabbinic, halachic, mystical, and Hasidic texts that invite participants into that process of spiritual development.” For more information or to register, www.jtsa.edu/event/deepening-your-personal-prayer/.

◆ My Jewish Learning is holding the eight-part course “Journey Into Jewish Spirituality” that can be taken on one’s own pace. The course offers insights into the fundamentals of Jewish spirituality through video lessons, weekly exercises, guided meditations and more. For additional information or to register, visit <https://my-jewish-learning.teachable.com/p/journey-into-jewish-spirituality-012311>.

◆ The Tikvah Fund is offering the eight-part course “Explore Nationhood, Holiness, and the Founding of the Jewish People,” which will offer discussion between Dr. Leon Kass and Warren R. Stern Senior Fellow of Jewish Civilization Jonathan Silver about the book of Exodus. For more information or to register, visit <https://exodus.tikvahfund.org/>.

◆ The Institute for Jewish Spirituality will hold a virtual conversation between IJS President/CEO Rabbi Josh Feigelson with Rabbi Toba Spitzer about her book “God is Here: Reimagining the Divine” on Tuesday, February 13, from 8-9 pm. To register for the event, visit <https://ijs.regfox.com/josh-in-conversation-with-toba-spitzer>.

◆ Roundtable at the 92nd Street Y will hold the four-part virtual course “The Jewish Composers Banned by the Nazis” on Wednesdays, February 21-March 13, from noon-1 pm. The cost to attend is \$176. “Musical historian and author Michael Haas will examine the Jewish composers and musicians banned by the Third Reich and the consequences for music throughout the rest of the twentieth century.” For more information or to register, visit <https://roundtable.org/live-courses/arts/the-jewish-composers-banned-by-the-nazis>.

◆ The Jewish Theological Seminary has launched a website about the life and influence of Abraham Joshua Heschel at <https://heschel.jtsa.edu/>. It features “a collection of testimonials, audio-visual materials, and writings exploring Heschel’s work and his impact.”

◆ The Jewish Grandparents Network will hold the virtual event “How to Communicate in Writing with Grandchildren” on Tuesday, March 5, from 7-8 pm. For more information or to register visit, <https://jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org/event/how-to-communicate-in-writing-with-grandchildren/>.

◆ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research will hold a three-part webinar series, “The Origins and Ideology of Hamas,” with historian Jeffrey Herf on three Mondays: “Hamas and the Origins of Islamic Antisemitism” on Monday, February 26, at 1 pm (yivo.org/IdeologySeries1); “Colonialism, Racism, and the Arab Israeli War of 1948” on Monday, March 25, at 1 pm (yivo.org/IdeologySeries2); and “Responses to October 7th” on Tuesday, April 16, at 1 pm (yivo.org/IdeologySeries3).



Quick Reference Guide to Planned Giving

Use this planned giving quick reference guide to help determine the best strategy for achieving your philanthropic and financial goals.

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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Avoid the two-fold taxation on IRA or other employee benefit plans	Name a charity as the beneficiary of the remainder of the retirement assets after your lifetime	Tax relief to your family on inherited assets
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Make a revocable gift during your lifetime	Name a charity as the beneficiary of assets in a living trust	Full control of the trust terms during your lifetime

Museum. Continued from page 9

“The painting belongs to the Cassirer heirs. It’s outrageous that it still hangs on the wall of the Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza, a museum in Madrid,” the *Times* board wrote. “The museum knows it was looted by the Nazis. The whole world knows. And yet there it hangs for all the world to see – a stolen masterpiece.”

“The baron, a sophisticated art collector, should have known that the painting had been looted,” it added. “And the museum should have done a better job of researching the painting’s provenance—its journey through various hands.”

The *Times* board noted that the case pits California law, under which a thief never gains the title to stolen property, against Spanish law, under which “the latest holder has a right to it after a certain amount of time passes and no one has come forward to claim it as theirs.” Under California law, the prior owner has six years to file suit, and the Cassirer family did so five years after learning that the Spanish museum possessed its property, per the paper’s Editorial Board.

“This fight should have been resolved years ago. It is shameful that the museum and the Spanish government refuse to do what is just and moral, which is to return the painting that Lilly Cassirer hung on the wall of her apartment in Berlin,” it concluded.

Sam Dubbin, an attorney for Cassirer’s great-grandson David Cassirer, 69, told JNS that California laws “strongly support the rights of its residents to recover stolen works of art in the hands of museums. ... We believe the decision is incorrect in its application of California’s choice of law framework, and Mr. Cassirer will

definitely seek en banc review,” he said. (The latter refers to a comprehensive panel of judges hearing a case, in this case, it would be 11 judges, including one who heard the prior case.)

“Among the important issues, the court’s decision fails to explain how Spain has any interest in applying its laws to launder ownership of the spoils of war, a practice outlawed in The Hague Convention of 1907, and a series of other international agreements joined by Spain for over a century,” Dubbin told JNS. “Nor does it explain how a national museum owned by the Spanish government justifies holding onto a painting that it knows was looted by the Nazis from a Jewish family in the Holocaust.”

The Cassirer family bought the painting directly from an agent of Pissarro’s in 1900, and it was looted from Lilly Cassirer in 1939, Dubbin told JNS. “David Cassirer and his late father, Claude, fought honestly and vigorously since learning that Spain held the Cassirers’ Pissarro painting, for the principle that artworks looted by the Nazis, or in any similar atrocities, must be returned to their rightful owners,” he said.

“The Cassirers believe that, especially in light of the explosion of antisemitism in this country and around the world today, they must challenge Spain’s continuing insistence on harboring Nazi-looted art,” Dubbin said. “This decision also gives a green light to looters around the world.”

Of the Madrid museum’s claim that the family has already been adequately compensated by Germany, Dubbin told JNS that it’s “analytically dishonest” to conflate Germany’s payment after

the war and one’s ability to do what one wants with one’s property. “That is a grotesque distortion of the morality of the situation, and that is what the German supreme court has said,” he said. “It’s apples to oranges.”

If need be down the road, Dubbin said the case could go back to the U.S. Supreme Court. “Disappointment would be an understatement,” he said of the outcome of the recent case.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Jerusalem library gets 45,000 Yemenite Jewish manuscripts

The National Library of Israel in Jerusalem has received the world’s most extensive collection of Yemenite Jewish manuscripts. The 60,000 items in the collection include pieces such as Judeo-Yemenite renditions of works by Maimonides (1138-1204) and Rabbi Yihya Saleh (1713-1805), known by the acronym Maharitz, who has been called one of the greatest exponents of Jewish law in Yemen, as well as centuries-old marriage certificates. The items were endowed to the museum on Jan. 18 by the family of the late Yehuda Levi Nahum (1915-98), a Yemenite Jew who immigrated to pre-state Israel in 1929 at the age of 14. Over six decades, Nahum assembled the world’s most extensive collection of Yemenite-Jewish manuscripts. About 70 percent of the collection has been scanned and added to the library’s digital preservation project.

The Reporter
Published by the Jewish Federation of Northeastern Pennsylvania



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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.

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Hellenistic burial cave with rare mirror unearthed in Jerusalem

BY JNS STAFF

(JNS)—A 2,300-year-old tomb of a courtesan, including among other things a well-preserved bronze mirror, has been uncovered on a major Jerusalem thoroughfare, offering rare evidence of the Hellenistic period in the city, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced last fall. The burial cave, which was discovered on a rocky slope aside Hebron Road and near Kibbutz Ramat Rachel, included the cremated remains of a young woman alongside a box mirror in



The ancient bronze folding mirror found in a Jerusalem tomb. (Photo by Yoli Schwartz/Israel Antiquities Authority)

a perfect state of preservation, the state-run archaeological body said.

“This is, in fact, the earliest evidence in Israel of cremation in the Hellenistic period,” according to Guy Stiebel from the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near East Cultures at Tel Aviv University. A number of bent iron nails and the rare folding bronze mirror box were discovered next to the woman’s charred bones.

“This is only the second mirror of this type that has been discovered to date in Israel, and in total, only 63 mirrors of this type are known around the Hellenistic world,” said Liat Oz, who is directing the excavation on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority. “The quality of the production of the mirror was so high that it was preserved in excellent condition, and it looked as if it was made yesterday.”

“Bronze mirrors like the one that was found were considered an expensive luxury item, and they could come into the possession of Greek women in two ways: as part of their dowry ahead of a wedding, or as a gift given by men,” the researchers said.

The researchers suggest that the mirror belonged to the deceased, who was a companion



Workers in the burial cave. (Photo by Shai Halevi/Israel Antiquities Authority)

of a senior Hellenistic military staff member or a Hellenistic governmental official during a campaign in the Land of Israel. The box mirrors were usually decorated with engravings or magnificent reliefs of idealized female figures and goddess figures – particularly that of Aphrodite, the goddess of love.

“The most stimulating question arising from this discovery was: What is the tomb of a Greek woman doing on the highway leading to Jerusalem, far from any site or settlement of the period,” Stiebel said.

“This is an example of the combination of archaeology and research at its best,” said Eli Escusido, director general of the Israel Antiquities Authority. “The study of a seemingly simple object leads us to a new understanding and a narrative that opens a window for us to a forgotten and vanished ancient world.”

The results of the study were presented and the mirror shown at a conference on “New Studies in the Archaeology of Jerusalem and Its Region” on October 11-12, which was held via Zoom and the Israel Antiquities Authority website in conjunction with Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

NEWS IN BRIEF

From JNS.org

Rutgers reinstates Students for Justice in Palestine chapter

The Rutgers University chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine has regained its status as a sanctioned campus group, though received punishment for what the school described as “protesting in nonpublic forums, causing disruption to classes and university functioning, which are violations of university policy.” One of many chapters that have led pro-Hamas demonstrations across the country, it received an interim suspension due to multiple conduct complaints, which is a standard procedure at Rutgers. University spokesperson Megan Schumann Florance announced the findings of a review of SJP’s activities. “The conduct case involving the Students for Justice in Palestine chapter at Rutgers-New Brunswick has been resolved, and the interim suspension of organizational activity is over,” she said, noting that the group would receive a year’s probation and educational sanctions. Protest actions that led to the interim suspension included unapproved protests at the business school and library. The school’s failure to handle campus antisemitism has led some to withhold donations to the state academic institution.



WHAT CAN I DO TO STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE HOSTAGES?

1. [Wear](#) a blue ribbon.
2. [Plan](#) an Empty Shabbat Table event.
3. [Save](#) an empty seat at your own Shabbat table.
4. [Call](#) your representatives and urge them to demand the release of hostages.

WHAT CAN I DO TO SUPPORT ISRAEL?

5. [Tell](#) your members of Congress that the majority of Americans remain pro-Israel.
6. [Send](#) a message of love and support to Israel.
7. Donate to a charity of your choice that is supporting the war effort, displaced families, survivors, etc.

WHAT CAN I DO TO COMBAT ANTISEMITISM?

8. [Report](#) on-campus antisemitic incidents to the Campus Antisemitism Legal Line.
9. [Contact](#) your alma mater and urge them to protect Jewish students.
10. [Support](#) Jewish employees in your workplace.