



Chung Sung-Jun/Getty Images

South Korea is hosting the 2018 Winter Olympics in PyeongChang, which begin tonight, Feb. 9, and end on Sunday, Feb. 25. Please see an article about the Jewish Olympians participating in the Games on page 16A.

Kosher food and Shabbat at the Olympics thanks to Chabad

By Josefin Dolsten

(JTA)—Though the Jewish community in South Korea is small, Jews visiting the country to compete in or watch the Winter Olympic Games won't have to skimp on kosher food or Shabbat programming.

The country's Chabad emissary is setting up a pop-up restaurant in PyeongChang County, the site of the 2018 Winter Olympics. During the Olympics, which start tonight (Feb. 9), the temporary eatery will serve three meals daily, including Korean-style bulgogi beef, schnitzel, hot dogs and vegetarian items.

Chabad, a Hasidic Orthodox outreach movement that sends emissaries to countries around the world, will also teach Torah classes and put on Shabbat programming for tourists, journalists and other visitors, as well as deliver food to athletes inside the Olympic Village.

"We have big events that we host at Chabad with hundreds of guests, but this is our first time to be able to cater for so many Jews all at once," Rabbi Osher Litzman, told JTA from Seoul, where he has served as Chabad's emissary since 2008.

There are about 1,000 Jews living in

South Korea, according to Litzman. Most are U.S. service members, English teachers, diplomats or students from the United States or Canada who come to the east Asian country for a year or two. Litzman and his family hosts Shabbat dinners at the Chabad house in Seoul, drawing some 40-50 attendees weekly, and High Holidays programming, which attracts over 200 participants. Chabad also operates a kosher store and restaurant in Seoul and ships kosher food all over the country via an online shop.

Chabad on page 14A

Central Florida Jewish Book Festival hosts award-winning authors

Learn and laugh with four award-winning Jewish authors at the literary event of the year. On Feb. 25, Writer's



Shown here (l-r): Authors Paul Goldberg, Pam Jenoff, Michelle Edwards and Justin Loeber headline Central Florida Jewish Book Festival.

Block Bookstore is partnering with The Roth Family Jewish Community Center of Greater Orlando and the Jewish Book Council to host authors Michelle Edwards, Paul Goldberg, Pam Jenoff and Justin Loeber at the Central

Florida Jewish Book Festival from 11:15 a.m. to 3 p.m. The event will be held at The Roth Family JCC.

Michelle Edwards is the author of numerous picture books, including "Chicken Man," winner of the National

Jewish Book Award; "Max Makes a Cake," illustrated by Charles Santoso; and "Room for the Baby," illustrated by Jana Christy. A lifelong knitter, Michelle has also written

Authors on page 14A

Choices 2018 is coming this spring



The Jewish Federation of Greater Orlando's annual Women's Philanthropy event will be held Monday, March 26, on the Maitland Jewish Community Campus. This year's theme is "Women Transforming Lives." Invitations will be hitting mailboxes soon, but event organizers and ambassadors have been busy sending "Save the Date" cards to women in the community. Choices 2018 co-chair Judy Kahan Davis, left, and Event coordinator Leslie Collin were among the women who personalized hundreds of the cards recently on the Maitland campus. (Not pictured is co-chair Shira Spector). For more information on Choices 2018, visit www.jfgo.org/choices.

Poles: 'We did not kill Jews'



Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

The main gate of the former Auschwitz extermination camp in Oswiecim, Poland.

By Katarzyna Markusz

WARSAW, Poland (JTA)—The Polish Senate passed legislation that criminalizes accusing the Polish state of the crimes committed by the Germans during World War II.

The amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance was adopted early Thursday morning by a vote of 57-23, with two abstentions.

The legislation, designed to make it clear that Nazi Germany is responsible for the crimes against humanity that took place in the camps, was approved last week by the lower house of the Polish Parliament, or Sejm. The legislation must still be signed by the country's president.

The law would make it illegal to use terms such as "Polish death camps" to describe the camps set up by the Nazis in Poland. Violation of the law

could result in up to three years in prison. It contains a provision to exclude scholarly or academic works.

Israeli lawmakers, Yad Vashem, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and scholars have criticized the law.

On Sunday, Poland's president, Andrzej Duda, said in a statement that he would carefully review the legislation.

"Everyone whose personal memory or historical research speaks the truth about the crimes and shameful behavior that occurred in the past with the participation of Poles has full right to this truth," he said.

The same day, Israel and Poland announced that they

Poles on page 15A



Mega Shabbat meal at UCF to give nod to the undefeated UCF Knights



Students attending last year's "Mega Shabbat," which is traditionally known as Shabbat 1000.

Hundreds of students, faculty and community members, along with players from the Undefeated UCF Knights will partake in a "Shabbat of Champions," in the Pegasus Ballroom on Feb. 23 in what is expected to be the largest Shabbat dinner ever held at UCF.

During the event, the students will celebrate the traditional Sabbath ceremonies and meal, which are observed weekly by Jews around the

world as a symbol of Jewish faith and unity. According to Rabbi Chaim Lipskier, director of Chabad at UCF, there will be appetizers, introductory speeches and a chance to mix and mingle at 5:30 p.m. and a candle-lighting ceremony at 6 p.m. followed by a catered Kosher meal, with singing and dancing beginning at 6:30 p.m.

Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath is celebrated weekly by Jews worldwide, beginning at

sundown on Friday night, and concluding after nightfall on Saturday evening. Shabbat, a day of rest, is a spiritual oasis and often serves as an island of calm at the end of a busy week of school and work. Throughout the 25-hour period, Jewish people gather at synagogues and homes for prayers and festive meals of wine and challah, gefilte fish, and chicken soup.

"Shabbat is one of the centerpieces of Jewish life, and has been so since the infancy of our nation," said Rabbi Lipskier. "Shabbat of Champions will be a chance for Jews from across campus to connect with each other in a meaningful way."

"It's thrilling to see so many students proud of their Jewish identity with a willingness to show it," said Rivkie Lipskier, co-director of Chabad. "It was also very moving to see the

dozens of students and organization that have dedicated hundreds of hours to make the event possible.

"Shabbat of Champions is an opportunity for the entire UCF Jewish community to come together. It is a chance to make new friends, experience Jewish culture and of course, eat amazing food—hundreds

of students coming together to celebrate an undefeated experience at our undefeated University—what could be better than that?" Becca Coven, president of the Chabad Jewish Student Group.

Shabbat of Champions is co-sponsored by Student Government Association, Judaic Studies at UCF, UCF

Hillel, Alpha Epsilon Pi, Alpha Epsilon Phi, Zeta Beta Tau, Gamma Phi Beta, and Knights for Israel.

The event is open to the entire community and sponsorship opportunities are still available. Please contact rabbi@jewishucf.com or call 407-310-8876. To RSVP visit jewishucf.com/shabbat.

Hear 'A Soldier's Story' at JOIN Orlando

On Feb. 25, 7 p.m., JOIN Orlando is hosting David Sussman, a former IDF soldier, who will tell his first-hand account of the Second Lebanon War in 2006.

During this war, Sussman almost lost his life in the cross-hairs of Hezbollah. This was a wake-up call for Sussman and led him on a path of personal self-identity, in which he discovered the true meaning of roots, family, community and Israel.

Since then he has immersed himself in the land and culture. Sussman realized

the importance of educating people about Israel. He graduated from the Archeological Seminar's two-year course in 2009 and became a licensed tour guide from the Israel Ministry of Tourism. Sussman has his own TV show on the cable network Daystar called "Land of the Bible."

This event is open to the community and free of charge. The JOIN House is located at 109 Water Oak Lane in Altamonte Springs. Desserts and drinks will be served. To RSVP, visit davidussman.eventbrite.com



David Sussman

Special celebrations of Purim at CRJ

On Saturday, Feb. 24, Congregation of Reform Judaism will celebrate Purim with a night of music and fun as they host "Esther: A Persian Musical," by Cantor Jamie Marx, music (by based on the music of the Broadway hit "Hamilton") Lin-Manuel Miranda and directed by Cantor Jacqueline Rawiszser. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. and the show starts at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$8, seniors; \$10 CRJ members; \$18 general admission; \$25, reserved seating

and pre-show reception, and may be purchased online at www.crojorlando.org.

Purim Carnival

Congregation of Reform Judaism is hosting a Purim Carnival on Sunday, Feb. 25 from 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at the synagogue. The event, which is open to the community, will include Bounce Houses, rides, carnival games, prizes, a dunk tank, photo booth and costume parade.

There will be Hamantashen (of course), popcorn, cotton candy and snow cones for sale.

The cost is \$22 for CRJ members; \$25 for community members. Tickets include all rides, interactive entertainment, games, Purim crafts and a meal ticket for a hotdog, hamburger or veggie burger, chips and a drink (additional meal tickets are \$6)

CRJ is located at 928 Malone Drive in Orlando. Proceeds will benefit CRJ youth engagement and temple programming.

For more information, visit crojorlando.org or call 407-645-0444.

Ongoing events at Congregation Beth Am

New 'Mommy and Me' class

Join Cantor Nina Fine as she leads a Mommy and Me class at Congregation Beth Am, Monday mornings, 10 to 11:30 a.m. K'tanim, as the class is also called, is only \$7 per family and free for CBA members.

Contact the CBA office at 407-862-3505 or shalom@congbetham.org for more information.

First time attendees who mention they read about K'tanim in the Heritage can attend their first class for free.

Pages & Pastries Book Club

Congregation Beth Am has begun a Pages & Pastries Book Club. The group meets at 7 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month at Panera Bread on 434 across from the Publix at Springs Plaza.

The club got off to a strong start last month with numerous attendees both young and young at heart. Their next event is Tuesday, Feb. 20, and the subject book is The Other Einstein by Marie Benedict. Dinner is at 6:30 p.m. followed by discussion at 7.

Contact the CBA office at 407-862-3505 or shalom@congbetham.org for more information.

Scout Shabbat celebration

The Children of Abraham Foundation, Inc., the charter organization for the local Jewish Boy Scout Units Troop 641, Pack 641 and Crew 641, is holding the celebration of Scout Shabbat at the The Roth Family Jewish Community Center in Maitland of Feb. 16, at 7 p.m.

There are many exciting events coming up during the year for the Troop and Pack.

Troop 641 and Pack 641 will be celebrating its 40th year of being part of Scouting in the Orlando area. All past alumni of the Troop and Pack are invited to celebrate an event that is being planned for the fall.

This coming August, the Cub Scout Pak will be inviting and recruiting girls to join the Pack.

"We look forward to bringing more families together

enjoying family camping and programs with lots of fun," said Ed Calish, executive director of The Children of Abraham Foundation, Inc.

All Jewish Scouts, families and friends of Scouting in Central Florida are invited to celebrate this Scout Shabbat.

To RSVP to the Scout Shabbat, email info@childrenofabrahamfoundation.com or call 407-389-9272.

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CARDINAL MONUMENTS

In the State of the Union, Trump vows to punish countries that criticized his Jerusalem decision

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA)—President Donald Trump called on Congress to pass a law that would extend foreign assistance only to “friendly” nations, a dig at the countries that voted in the United Nations to censure the United States for recognizing Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.

“Last month, I also took an action endorsed unanimously by the Senate just months before: I recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel,” Trump said Tuesday in his State of the Union address to Congress to a standing ovation from Republicans, as well as his Jewish daughter, Ivanka, and her husband, Jared Kushner.

“Shortly afterwards, dozens of countries voted in the United Nations General Assembly against America’s sovereign right to make this recognition,” he said. “In 2016, American taxpayers generously sent those same

countries more than 20 billions of dollars in aid every year. That is why, tonight, I am asking the Congress to pass legislation to help ensure American foreign-assistance dollars always serve American interests, and only go to friends of America, not enemies of America.”

In the General Assembly vote last month, 128 countries voted to censure the United States, nine voted against and 35 abstained.

Among the majority were many U.S. allies, including some—like Egypt and Jordan—that the Trump administration has cultivated to combat terrorism and which receive substantial U.S. assistance.

Trump also repeated his call on Congress to amend the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which he has reviled as one of the worst deals in history.

“When the people of Iran rose up against the crimes of their corrupt dictatorship, I did not stay silent,” he said,

referring to ongoing Iranian anti-government protests. “America stands with the people of Iran in their courageous struggle for freedom. I am asking the Congress to address the fundamental flaws in the terrible Iran nuclear deal.”

Trump wants the deal, which swaps sanctions relief for Iran’s rollback of its nuclear program, to be expanded to include restrictions on missile development, as well as to remove “sunset” clauses allowing Iran to lift some restrictions on the enrichment of fissile materials in a decade or so.

Among those on hand at the State of the Union as guests of Trump were the parents, brother and sister of Otto Warmbier, a Jewish American student imprisoned by North Korea who was returned to his family last year as he was dying.

“After a shameful trial, the dictatorship sentenced Otto to 15 years of hard la-

bor before returning him to America last June—horribly injured and on the verge of death. He passed away just days after his return,” Trump said.

“We need only look at the depraved character of the North Korean regime to understand the nature of the nuclear threat it could pose to America and our allies. Tonight, we pledge to honor Otto’s memory with total American resolve.”

The applause extended by Congress to the Warmbier family was among the lengthiest of the evening.

Delivering the response

was Rep. Joseph Kennedy III, D-Mass., a scion of the Kennedy clan. He addressed the divisions that Democrats say Trump has sown among Americans with fraught attacks on minorities and by not robustly repudiating the support of white supremacists.

“Many have spent the past year anxious, angry, afraid,” he said. “We all feel the fault lines of a fractured country.”

Among the “fault lines” Kennedy described, he listed “Hatred and supremacy proudly marching in our streets, bullets tearing through our classrooms,

concerts and congregations.”

Also delivering remarks was Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., the first Jewish candidate to win major party nominating contests when he ran last year in the Democratic primaries.

Much of Sanders’ speech was focused on income equality, but he also addressed the divisiveness.

“I want to offer a vision of where we should go as a nation which is far different than the divisiveness, dishonesty and racism coming from the Trump administration over the past year,” he said.

Shira Goodman steps down as CEO of Staples

(JTA)—Staples CEO Shira Goodman abruptly departed as head of the retailer after a year and a half on the job.

The company announced Friday that Goodman was stepping down. Her successor was later announced as former Coca-Cola executive Alexander Douglas.

Staples went private less than a year ago after it was acquired by Sycamore Partners for \$7 billion.

Goodman worked for the company in various executive roles for 26 years. She was named CEO in September 2016 after serving three months as interim CEO.

“Shira has played a critical role in the evolution of North American Delivery, from its earliest days as just an idea to its current market leadership,” Mark Cautela, a spokesman for Staples, said Friday in a statement. “We are immensely grateful for the contributions she has made to Staples over the



Staples CEO
Shira Goodman

last 26 years and she departs having led this organization with the highest level of integrity.”

The company’s corporate headquarters are located in Framingham, a suburb west of Boston.

Goodman is a leader in the Boston Jewish com-

munity. She is a member of the board of directors of Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston and past president and ex-officio trustee of the Solomon Schechter Day School. A mother of three, she has been active in promoting Boston-area day schools for more than a decade.

She is married to Rabbi Wes Gardenswartz of Temple Emanuel, a Conservative synagogue in Newton, a Boston suburb.

Prior to Staples, she worked at Bain Capital, a private venture capital firm based in Boston that was founded by Mitt Romney, the Republican presidential candidate in 2012 and a former Massachusetts governor.

Goodman is a graduate of Princeton University and Harvard Law School. She also earned a master’s degree in management science from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Obama defends 2016 absence on anti-Israel UN resolution

By JNS.org

Former President Barack Obama this week defended his controversial decision to allow a December 2016 United Nations Security Council resolution condemning Israel’s presence in eastern Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria to pass in the waning days of his administration, blaming the “skyrocketing” pace of Israeli construction.

“The pace of settlement construction skyrocketed, making it almost impossible to make any kind of Palestinian state,” Obama said during a talk at Temple Emanu-El in New York City on Wednesday, the Daily Mail reported.

“Voting against the resolution would have damaged our credibility on affirming human rights only when it’s convenient, not when it has to do with ourselves and our friends,” the former president said.

At the time, the Obama administration refused to use US veto power in the Security Council to block Resolution 2334, breaking with decades of American policy of defending Israel against one-sided UN measures targeting the Jewish state.

Obama also downplayed America’s relatively strained relationship with Israel under his administration, arguing

that his decisions on the Jewish state were reflective of the strong bonds between the countries.

“To be a true friend of Israel it is important to be honest about it, and the politics of this country sometimes do not allow for it,” Obama said.

Obama pointed to the September 2016 signing of a historically large \$38 billion US military aid package to Israel as a sign that he is a staunch supporter of the country.

“It is not a subject for dispute,” Obama said, explaining that his staff joked often that he was “basically a liberal Jew.”

Polish Holocaust bill may have ‘repercussions’

(JTA)—The U.S. Embassy in Poland said it was “concerned about the repercussions” for bilateral relations after the Polish Senate passed legislation that criminalizes accusing the Polish state of the crimes committed by the Germans during World War II.

The bill passed Wednesday in the upper house of the Polish parliament days after passing in the lower one, the Sejm. To become law, the president must sign the measure, which prescribes up to three years in prison for “whoever claims, publicly and contrary to the facts that the Polish Nation is responsible” for Nazi crimes or “grossly diminishes the responsibility of the true perpetrators.”

Among its critics are Israeli lawmakers, Yad Vashem, the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and scholars.

The embassy statement is unusual in that it suggests the United States would sanction Poland for the bill if it becomes law.

“We are also concerned about the repercussions this draft legislation, if enacted, could have on Poland’s strategic interests and relationships—including with the United States and Israel,” it said. “The resulting divisions that may arise among our allies benefit only our rivals.”

Polish officials have cited use of the term “Polish death camps” as a major reason for the legislation by a member of the ruling Law and Justice party. The Nazis built several death camps in Poland, which they occupied and whose sovereignty they dismantled during World War II.

“The history of the Holocaust is painful and complex. We understand that phrases such as ‘Polish death camps’ are inaccurate, misleading, and hurtful,” the statement read. “We are concerned, however, that if enacted this draft legislation could undermine free speech and academic discourse. Open debate, scholarship, and

education are the best means of countering inaccurate and hurtful speech.”

Separately on Wednesday, 85 Jews and non-Jews of Polish descent, including prominent Holocaust researchers, published an open letter condemning the bill.

“This unfortunate bill has made major news in Poland and internationally, raising logical, moral and legal concerns,” wrote the co-signatories, including the American journalist Anne Applebaum, Holocaust researcher Jan Tomasz Gross, poet Ryszard Krynicki and Sergiusz Kowalski, head of Poland’s B’nai B’rith Jewish organization.

“The intention behind this bill was to defend the good name of Poland,” they added, but it “goes further than that—it assumes the Poles’ complete innocence, framing them as the only guiltless nation in Europe. This is not the way to reclaim Poland’s collective dignity.”



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Why the Reconstructionist movement is rebranding

By Deborah Waxman

PHILADELPHIA (JTA)—“I don’t know any Jews who go to temple.”

The line is from a remarkably poignant scene in the 2004 film “Garden State,” in which Zach Braff’s character explains to his love interest, played by Natalie Portman, a few things that most non-Orthodox American Jews know about large suburban synagogues.

“The Jews I know,” Braff continues, “they go on one day, on Yom Kippur, the day of repentance. Did you know that most temples are built with moveable walls so that on the one day of the year, when everyone comes to repent, they can actually make the room big enough to hold everyone?”

The Pew Research Center’s 2013 Portrait of Jewish Americans, which was issued the same week that I was appointed leader of the Reconstructionist movement, was seen by many in the American Jewish community as evidence that the sky was falling, for precisely the reasons articulated by Braff’s character. Many American Jews proudly identified as Jews but did not meaningfully take part in most expressions of organized Jewish life, except for once or twice a year on holidays.

Today, I am reminded of that evocative scene as the organization I lead adopts a new name and doubles down on its mission to empower North American Jews with a very different understanding of Jewish life. The new name, Reconstructing Judaism, is, on a practical level, a welcome change from the cumbersome Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and Jewish Reconstructionist Communities, which we created after our seminary and congregational union merged in 2012.

Far more important, Reconstructing Judaism reflects a subtle but profound evolution in Reconstructionist thinking about how and why to be Jewish in the 21st century.

With our name change, we are saying to Braff’s fictional characters—and to so many real people like them—that we have the tremendous opportunity to reconstruct Jewish life to create the Jewish community of today and tomorrow, so that we inspire people and help them find meaning. This is ongoing work and, hopefully, as much about joy and connection as it is about repentance, struggle and soul-searching.

A critical path forward is shifting from a focus on “being” Jewish—important but insufficient for providing substance and structure—to a focus on “doing” Jewish.

In the 1930s, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the founding thinker of Reconstructionism, famously introduced the metaphor of Judaism as a “civilization.” It was, in part, a response to the ongoing debate about whether Jews constituted a nation, a religion or a culture. The civilizational concept resonated most deeply in scholarly circles, and among educators and ideological Reconstructionists.

It was the related idea of peoplehood articulated by Kaplan and his disciples in the 1940s that seemed to speak to the North American Jewish imagination. Peoplehood—the sense of being part of a diverse people spanning geography, history and practice—dovetailed neatly with how North American Jews came to see themselves as a group in the postwar years. The concept provided a particularly Jewish way of combining religion, culture and ethnicity into one identity.

Many people have idealized the postwar period as the “golden years” of American Jewish life. In the 1950s and 1960s, Jews moved to the suburbs, leaving behind the dense urban neighborhoods of the immigrant generations where they expressed their identities through a rich ethnic tapestry of Jewish religious, cultural and organizational life. In the suburbs, they built and joined large houses of worship. They belonged—to the synagogue, to the Jewish people—but as the years went by, they engaged less and less. Indeed, according to Pew, 94 percent of those they surveyed said they were proud to be Jewish, but only one-third say they belong to a synagogue, and only one in five belongs to other kinds of Jewish organizations.

The decline of ethnicity and the increasingly unclear sense of Jewish peoplehood represent a challenge of our times, in addition to opportunities. As the Pew study confirmed, Jews today are less obligated to join, less moved by the traumas of the past and less likely to think of themselves as part of an ethnic group defined by food, culture and common values—with a smattering of religion.

We are moving from the ethnic moment in North American Jewish life—powerfully articulated by the concept of peoplehood—into a post-ethnic moment. North American Jews,

especially the non-Orthodox, are moving away from being a community of descent (that is, defined by biology) to a community of consent. Jews today have countless opportunities to seek meaning and define their identities. Anyone who identifies as Jewish today chooses to be Jewish, regardless of their parentage or background.

There are two imperatives that emerge from this unprecedented reality. First, Jewish organizations must convince anyone who encounters them that being Jewish is a means to being deeply human, not simply an end in and of itself. The point of being Jewish is that we are here on earth to live lives of meaning and connection to each other, Jews and non-Jews alike.

To do this, we need to shift our preoccupations away from being Jewish, which is significantly a conversation about boundaries and authority, and which leads us to infighting and name-calling.

Instead, we need to focus our energy toward doing Jewish.

Reconstructionist Judaism has always held an expansive view of what it means to be and to do Jewish. Doing Jewish may mean observing Jewish law, attending synagogue or sharing a Shabbat meal. Doing Jewish may mean studying texts or history, learning Hebrew or Yiddish. Doing Jewish may mean immersing oneself in social action and political engagement or preparing ecologically conscious meals according to eco-kashrut principles. Each person will find their path, their community and, hopefully, their sense of purpose.

This conceptual shift from being to doing must prompt a change not only across the breadth of North American Jewish life, but also within the Reconstructionist movement itself. Rabbi Ira Eisenstein, Kaplan’s son-in-law and protege, and one of my predecessors, explained the Reconstructionist commitment to peoplehood by saying that belonging to the Jewish people preceded believing (that is, dogma or doctrine) or behaving. Speaking in a moment defined by ethnicity, Eisenstein insisted that the diverse experiences of the Jewish people took precedence over strict halachic—ritual and legal -- expressions. In our post-ethnic moment, we are reclaiming all affirmative expressions of Jewish behavior as generative and full of promise.

By adopting the name Reconstructing Judaism, the organization I lead is crystallizing

our commitment to Jewish life that is deeply rooted and boldly relevant. (To be clear, we have renamed the central organization of the Reconstructionist movement, but not the movement as a whole.) We remain anchored in the sweep of Jewish texts, observance, liturgy, history and culture. At the same time, we are continually reconstructing Judaism by training rabbis to be entrepreneurs and changemakers, cultivating Jewish experiences in existing congregations and new venues. They are deploying digital networks to tackle the pressing challenges of Jewish life, investing in startup projects, and taking our values and approach to the public square through podcasting and other mediums.

With our new identity, we are shifting the emphasis from Reconstructionist, a way of being, to Reconstructing, with its focus on doing.

The Reconstructionist movement prides itself on being the research and development arm of North American Judaism. We’ve introduced countless innovations in North American Jewish life and show no signs of slowing down. But we know we are not alone. Actors within the other non-Orthodox denominations—as well as those outside of any denominational structure—are opening doorways to new Jewish experiences and widening the tent of participation in Jewish life. All of our efforts are welcomed and needed.

For the sake of our children and the Jewish future, all of us must find ways to be relevant.

Let’s make sure that in the coming-of-age stories of the future, Jewish protagonists recount a very different kind of Jewish childhood, one in which Judaism was not a once-a-year commitment but a year-round source of sustenance.

Let’s make sure our children can tell their non-Jewish friends, family members and life partners how Jewish organizations opened pathways to engagement.

Let’s create lasting memories of spirited prayer, inspired social action, intimate meals and sustaining communities.

Or, better yet, let us empower the next generation to create experiences and expressions we have not yet imagined.

Rabbi Deborah Waxman, Ph.D., is president of Reconstructing Judaism.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.

Does the Obama-Farrakhan photo matter? Does anything?

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

(JTA)—“Nothing matters.” You hear that a lot these days.

You hear it when The Wall Street Journal reports that the president’s personal lawyer paid a porn actress \$130,000, at the height of the presidential campaign, so she would stay silent about an alleged affair she’d had with Donald Trump. Or when the president uses a vulgarity to refer to African countries. Or when the president is credibly reported to have demanded the firing of the man investigating obstruction of justice claims concerning the president’s firing of another man investigating obstruction of justice claims.

That was the premise of a “Saturday Night Live” skit last week in which Jessica Chastain hosted a putative game show called “What Even Matters Anymore?” When a contestant suggests that Trump’s Africa comment must matter, an exasperated Chastain responds: “Actually, it does not matter. Zero consequences and everyone moves on.”

I bring this up not to vilify Trump, but to remember with wistfulness a faraway time—2005—when things still mattered. When a U.S.

senator from Illinois could be photographed with a wildly anti-Semitic black nationalist, and other members of the Congressional Black Caucus would suppress the photo so as not to sink his presidential chances.

That photograph, of Barack Obama and Louis Farrakhan, surfaced last week when the photographer who took the shot released it to Politico. Many agree that had the photo seen the light of day before the 2008 election, there would have been no President Obama. It may have cemented later accusations that he had consorted with radicals, including his own pastor, who was a Farrakhan apologist and a racist in his own right. Although Obama the candidate was eloquent in distancing himself both from the Rev. Jeremiah Wright and Farrakhan, a picture is worth, as the saying goes, thousands of beautifully crafted words.

Of course, there is plenty we don’t know about the circumstances of the photo. Although reportedly taken at a Congressional Black Caucus event in Chicago, we don’t know who else attended, and whether the room was filled with other clergy and African-American power brokers, or if it was some sort of tete-a-tete. Is Obama smiling with Farrakhan, or was

he caught on camera smiling near Farrakhan?

If you are inclined to exculpate Obama, you might ask what the Congressional Black Caucus was doing hosting Farrakhan at all. The New Yorker’s Vinson Cunningham notes that “it’s a sign of Farrakhan’s oddly lasting hold on popular influence that he was even invited to clink drinks with the members” of the caucus. Like Wright, the obscenely flawed Farrakhan represented a constituency that politicians felt could not be ignored.

Or you might be inclined to reject the photo as mere guilt by association. There is a style of gotcha journalism and opposition research that turns dumb gestures or sloppy planning into political felonies. Last week, Rep. Lou Barletta, R-Pa., took heat when it was learned that in 2006, he gave an interview to a publication that peddles in Holocaust denial, and that a year later he headlined a rally that also heard from a musician with his own interesting theories about the Shoah. Barletta was a small-town mayor at the time, and last week he blamed his staff for bad vetting. I’d want to know a lot more before dismissing Barletta as soft on Holocaust denial.

Whether events like these do, or should, sink a politician’s career depends on a number of things. Fairly or unfairly, bad things stick to politicians if they somehow reflect something that the public has suspected all along. When Mitt Romney griped about a parasitic “47 percent,” it matched his image as an out-of-touch one-percenter. When John Kerry flip-flopped on his support for the use of force in Iraq, it sealed an impression, pushed by his opponent, that he’d say anything to win. And when George H.W. Bush checked his watch during a debate with Bill Clinton, it provided an unfortunate—and unfair—contrast between the sturdy if unexciting Washington insider and the energetic if sometimes undisciplined challenger.

Trump, it has been noted time and again, has obliterated the whole idea of the political gaffe. Starting with his “Mexican rapists” campaign launch, gaffes have become his brand. He’s

shown that if you flood the zone with enough gaffes, distractions and downright lies, they all but cancel each other out. Twitter users love to use the “Can you imagine if” construction to point how any one of the daily outrages associated with Trump would have sunk a normal politician. Can you imagine if it were a Democratic president attacking the FBI? Can you imagine if Hillary had won the election and there were unmistakable signs that the Russians had gamed Facebook in her favor? (It works the other way, too: Can you imagine, ask Trump’s defenders, if Hillary had protected a campaign adviser accused of sexual harassment—oh wait, that actually happened.)

Had the Farrakhan photo come out before the election, it just might have ended Obama’s presidential ambitions, and there’s a strong case to be made that it should have: Even if he shared none of Farrakhan’s ideas, Obama would have lent the Nation of Islam leader—and by extension his penchant for anti-Semitic scapegoating—a senatorial hehsher. It may have confirmed an impression of Obama as opportunistic, transactional and, perhaps worst of all, hypocritical.

Yet had one photo done him in, America may have been denied a gifted leader who was able to embody, on the largest possible stage, a daily rebuke to Farrakhan’s hateful, racially polarized version of minority empowerment.

There has to be a way of thinking about our leaders that falls somewhere between overreacting to an inexpedient gaffe and ignoring a pattern of disqualifying behavior—the middle of a scale between, let’s say, Howard Dean’s “Scream” and James Traficant’s “Entire Career” (look it up). One can only hope that Trump hasn’t inured us to outrage, or lowered the bar to a degree that a politician’s bad, boorish or unethical behavior just doesn’t matter.

Andrew Silow-Carroll is the editor in chief of JTA.

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media.

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Why polls on a Palestinian state are a mirage

By Stephen M. Flatow

(JNS)—Ever wonder why polls consistently show that a large portion of the Israeli public supports creating a Palestinian state?

How can it be that despite the Palestinian Authority's support for terrorism, violations of the Oslo Accords and non-stop anti-Israel incitement, so many Israelis seem to be in favor of establishing a Palestinian state next door? Could it be that the answer is found in the asking?

Just last week, newspaper headlines announced that according to a new poll, 47 percent of Israeli Jews still support Palestinian statehood. The poll was carried out by the Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, at Tel Aviv University.

But as with most news about Israel, you need to dig behind the headlines to find

out the real story. In this case, the real story is the wording that the Steinmetz Center used. The question that got the 47 percent figure was loaded with false assumptions and completely unrealistic expectations. In other words, the poll offered a fantasy.

The Steinmetz Center asked respondents if they supported a "two-state solution" that would include:

1. It would be a "permanent settlement." In reality, of course, nobody can guarantee that any settlement would be "permanent." The Palestinian leader who signs an agreement could be overthrown the next day. Arab leaders are constantly being ousted and replaced by arch-rivals.

2. The agreement would include "demilitarization of the Palestinian state." This, despite the fact that every Palestinian leader

has rejected the idea of demilitarization. Even if they signed an agreement saying it would be demilitarized, what's the likelihood they would abide by that? If a "demilitarized" Palestinian state started importing tanks that it claimed were needed for self-defense, Israel would face international condemnation and sanctions if it tried to intervene.

3. There would be "family unification in Israel of 100,000 Palestinian refugees." Notice the use of the sympathetic term "family unification." What cruel person would oppose unifying families? More important, the PA's position has always been that millions of Palestinian "refugees"—not a mere 100,000—must be allowed to settle in Israel. The 100,000 figure is an illusion that Jewish supporters of the Palestinians trot out to try to sell their imaginary deal.

4. "The Palestinian state will fight terror against Israelis." What a joke. The heart and soul of the Oslo Accords was that the PA would stamp out terrorist groups. Yet here we are, 25 years later, and the PA has never disarmed or outlawed any of the terrorist groups, never extradited any terrorists to Israel, never even expelled terror factions from the PLO. But now, when they have a state, they will suddenly "fight terror"?

So there you have it: The "Palestinian state" that 47 percent of Israeli Jews would favor is a creature of the Steinmetz Center's imagination. A permanently peaceful, totally demilitarized, terror-fighting Palestinian state that won't insist on flooding Israel with "refugees." Who wouldn't want such a neighbor? Frankly, I'm surprised only 47 percent of Israeli Jews voiced their support.

It's not hard to understand why advocates of the Palestinian cause are so enamored of the Steinmetz Center. The center's website reports that its polls of Israeli public opinion are undertaken "with funding from the European Union and the Netherlands Representative Office in Ramallah." I guess the EU and the Dutch government, both of which are passionately pro-Palestinian, see the center's work as helpful to the Palestinian cause.

You can bet the EU and the Dutch would be mighty unhappy if the Steinmetz Center asked questions that included factual statements about Palestinian statehood. How about questions such as these:

1. If a Palestinian state is established, Israel will be nine miles wide at its midsection. Is that a risk you are willing to take?

2. If a Palestinian state is established, a terrorist with a shoulder-fired missile, standing inside the borders of "Palestine," will be able to shoot down a plane taking off from Ben Gurion Airport. Do you believe the PA can be relied upon to stop such attacks?

3. The PA has never honored its Oslo obligations to disarm or outlaw terrorist groups. Do you believe that a Palestinian state would take those actions?

Any chance of the Steinmetz Center ever asking such questions? I'm not holding my breath, and you shouldn't either.

Stephen M. Flatow, a vice president of the Religious Zionists of America, is an attorney in New Jersey. He is the father of Alisa Flatow, who was murdered in an Iranian-sponsored Palestinian terrorist attack in 1995.

The heroic legacy of the 35

By Jonathan Feldstein

This past week Israel commemorated the 70th anniversary of one of its most heroic, sad, and yet pivotal battles in its early struggle for independence, among ongoing battles to defend itself until today. I was reminded of the anniversary when I drove by a pristine Judean mountain location known as "Battle Hill." But had I forgotten that it was the anniversary, I'd have been reminded with the weekend newspapers recounting the story of heroism then, and reminding us today how pivotal the battle was 70 years earlier.

In reading the newspaper, I was proud and excited to see that my 12-year-old son recognized the picture of Danny Mass, the commander of that battle, while standing next to me looking at the paper upside down. It was a yet another reminder of what a blessing it is to raise my children in the Land not just of our biblical forefathers, but of brave and inspirational heroes in the modern era who paved the way for us to be here today.

Making this battle all the more poignant for us is that we live in Gush Etzion, the Judean mountain region in which battle took place, where the brave Jewish soldiers

fought and lost their lives. We have them to thank for the fact that the Jewish communities of this region were able to hold on as long as they did defending themselves then, and as a southern line of defense to prevent Jordanian and other Arab forces from entering Jerusalem in 1947-48.

Underscoring the significance of this battle, every year Israeli teens from across the country gather to reenact the overnight march from the valley below to the site of the battle dozens of kilometers away. My five oldest children have done this and understand the bravery and the challenges of carrying supplies weighing

70 kg up a rocky mountainous terrain in the cold and sometimes rainy January night.

Long before the 1947 partition plan where the UN voted to create a Jewish and Arab state in the Land of Israel, early pioneers established four thriving Jewish communities. The communities lived by in large at peace with neighbors in the Arab villages nearby, conducting business together, and even invited one another to their community celebrations. After the Holocaust, many survivors joined these communities. Yet in 1947, following the Arab rejection of any Jewish state in the Land of Israel, Arab armies

invaded, and local Arab tribes were rallied into rudimentary combat forces to fight against their Jewish neighbors.

Where weeks earlier Jews were inviting Arabs to share in community celebrations, suddenly Arab neighbors were galvanized by anti-Semitic incitement and profound hate, and the Arabs with whom the Jews once had cordial relations willingly joined the battle against the Jews, under promise of the opportunity to loot the Jewish communities following their destruction.

Because of the siege that prevented the delivery of weapons to defend themselves and basic food to

sustain themselves, a valiant operation was undertaken in January 1948 to provide reinforcements. Thirty-five young men among the most elite of Israel's early combat forces, set out in the middle of the night for a hike under cover of darkness carrying bags with weapons, plasma, and other supplies that were critically needed. At daylight they were spotted by two Arab women gathering wood who ran to the nearest Arab village galvanizing a massive military response. The 35 men sought high ground to defend themselves.

The 35 on page 15A

Donald Trump and Team Kushner sure sound like they want to make a Mideast deal

By Ami Eden

(JTA)—Donald Trump is just the man to get an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal done.

Just ask Benjamin Netanyahu.

The Israeli prime minister was gushing last week about Trump's negotiating team, which is led by his son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

"The thing the people don't realize is that these people have made their mark in the markets, in real estate," Netanyahu said in an interview in Davos, Switzerland, with CNN's Fareed Zakaria. "Now this is not only a real estate deal, it's fundamentally not a real estate deal but a problem recognizing Israel's existence, the problem of not recognizing a Jewish state in any boundary. But it also has its real estate elements and they are, I have to say, very creative."

Odds are you're snickering—because you think Trump's recent decision to move the embassy to Jerusalem shows the president is only interested in doing right by Israel, not getting the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations back on track. The only question is if you think that's a good thing or a bad thing.

Just one problem: Donald Trump and Team Kushner

sure sound like they want to get a deal done.

At his joint news conference with Netanyahu in Davos, Trump made clear that the embassy decision was not a freebie but an advance payment for future Israeli concessions.

"You win one point," Trump said to Netanyahu. "And you'll give up some points later on in the negotiation if it ever takes place. I don't know that it ever will take place."

Trump coupled that comment with a promise to slash U.S. aid to the Palestinians unless they come back to the negotiating table.

The president isn't looking to kill the peace process; he's looking to get the negotiations started. And that shouldn't be surprising.

When he showed up for the Republican Jewish Coalition's candidate forum in December 2015, Trump could have hit a grand slam by sticking to bash-Obama talking points, declaring Jerusalem the eternal, undivided capital of Israel and telling the Palestinians to take a hike. But he demurred when asked about Jerusalem's status and stressed the need for the United States to be seen as evenhanded. And he talked about his desire to get a deal done.

"The hardest deal in history

to put together," he said. "If I can do that, it would make me so happy"

Since then, Trump has gotten in step with key constituencies (like Jewish Republican donors and evangelical Christian voters) by dropping the neutral talk in favor of unabashedly pro-Israel talking points. But he hasn't backed off the push for Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and a final deal.

In fact, he signaled just how important it is to him by putting Kushner in charge and adding Trump Organization lawyer Jason Greenblatt to the team. Sources on all sides have praised Greenblatt for his tireless efforts and willingness to listen.

Just days before Trump's Jerusalem announcement in December, Kushner—who almost never speaks publicly—appeared at the Brookings Institution's Saban Forum in Washington, D.C. His message: "If we're going to try and create more stability in the region as a whole, you have to solve [the Israeli-Palestinian] issue."

As Kushner acknowledged, none of this means a deal is close, or even possible.

These days, Mahmoud Abbas would throw shade on the idea that Trump is serious about getting a deal done. The

Palestinian leader says he's had it with U.S.-led talks, claiming Trump's embassy decision proves Washington is incapable of serving as an honest broker.

But blaming Trump's Jerusalem move for the lack of Israeli-Palestinian talks is like saying today's rainstorm is responsible for the ocean.

Abbas has been signaling

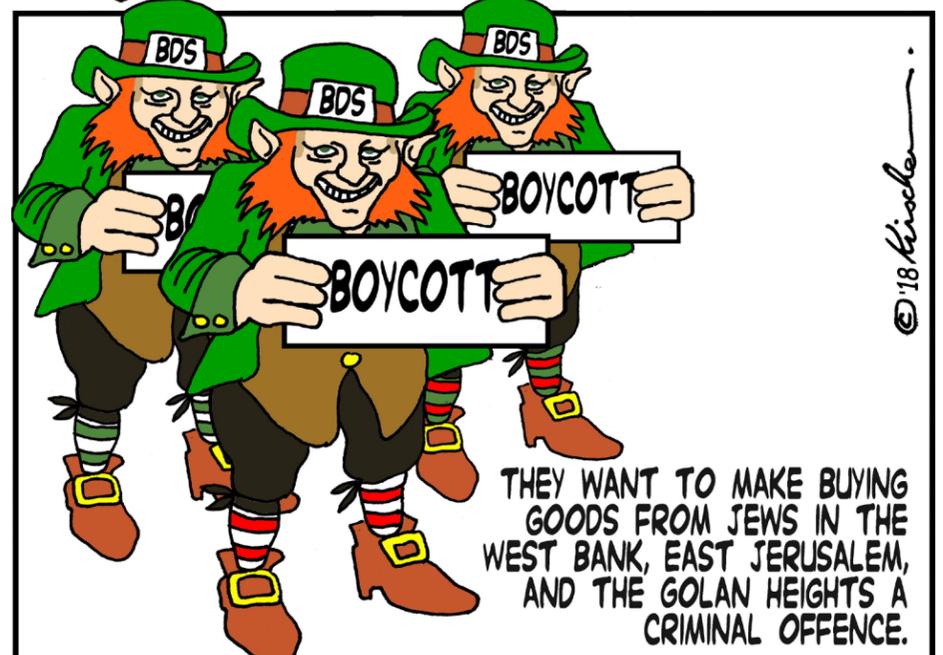
for years that he thinks his best play is to sidestep U.S.-sponsored bilateral talks with Israel in favor of some sort of international forum. He halted direct, public negotiations with Israel since 2014, back when Barack Obama was in the White House and Trump was still on "The Apprentice."

Whatever you think of the

embassy decision, it doesn't mean Trump is trying to fire the Palestinians. You could just as easily point to signs that he's still itching to host a Mideast version of "Let's Make a Deal."

Ami Eden is the CEO and executive editor of 70 Faces Media, the parent company of JTA.

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MORNING AND EVENING MINYANS (Call synagogue to confirm time.)

Chabad of South Orlando—Monday - Friday, 8 a.m. and 10 minutes before sunset; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday, 8:15 a.m., 407-354-3660.
 Congregation Ahavas Yisrael—Monday - Friday, 7:30 a.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday, 9 a.m., 407-644-2500.
 Congregation Chabad Lubavitch of Greater Daytona—Monday, 8 a.m.; Thursday, 8 a.m., 904-672-9300.
 Congregation Ohev Shalom—Sunday, 9 a.m., 407-298-4650.
 GOBOR Community Minyan at Jewish Academy of Orlando—Monday—Friday, 7:45 a.m.—8:30 a.m.
 Temple Israel—Sunday, 9 a.m., 407-647-3055.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

Ahavas Yisrael—Kabbalat, 30 minutes before sundown.
 Congregation Beth Sholom—Celebrate Shabbat with Rabbi Karen Allen, 7 p.m. The synagogue is located at 315 North 13th St., Leesburg.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

Kehillah: A History of Jewish Life in Greater Orlando—Ongoing exhibit at the Orange County Regional History Center, 65 E. Central Blvd., Orlando, and will continue through Feb. 20, 2018.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 12

Israeli Folk Dancing—7:30-8:15 p.m. instruction, 8:15-10 p.m., requests. Cost: Free for JCC members, \$5 nonmembers. Info: 407-645-5933.
 Congregation Beth Am—Mommy and Me class with Cantor Nina Fine, 10 a.m.-11:30 a.m. \$7 per family; free for CBA members Info: 407-862-3505.
 Legal Lunch and Learn—With Rabbi David Kay, noon, at Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz, PC SunTrust Center, 200 S. Orange Ave., Orlando, Suite 2900. Cost: \$25.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13

JLI Teens—Course on 'Living your Dreams,' 7 p.m.—8 p.m. at the Roth Family JCC Youth Room. Second session: Well-being. Info: Rabbi Eddy, 407-435-6950.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14

Temple Israel—Lunch & Learn with Rabbi Neely, noon—1 p.m. A parashat discussion class. Open to the public, no RSVP needed. Info: 407-647-3055.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15

Congregation Beth Sholom—The Rabbi's Torah Roundtable discussion group with Rabbi Karen Allen, 11 a.m. The synagogue is located at 315 North 13th St., Leesburg. Info: 352-326-3692.
 Congregation Ohev Shalom Sisterhood—Dinner at Sakura Sushi in Winter Park Village, 6:30 p.m. RSVP to Nancy Faracchio at nancy@financialgroup.com

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16

Ahavas Yisrael—Kabbalat, 30 minutes before sundown.
 Scout Shabbat—Troop 641, Pack 641 and Crew 641 will celebrate Scout Shabbat at The Roth Family JCC, 7 p.m. All Jewish Scouts, families and friends of Scouting in Central Florida are welcome to attend.

Quote of the Week

"We should never forget that everything Adolf Hitler did in Germany was 'legal'... It was 'illegal' to aid and comfort a Jew in Hitler's Germany. Even so, I am sure that, had I lived in Germany at the time, I would have aided and comforted my Jewish brothers."
 — *The Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., from Birmingham Jail, April 16, 1963*

Manageable puzzle "Children's Literature" by Yoni Glatt koshercrosswords@gmail.com

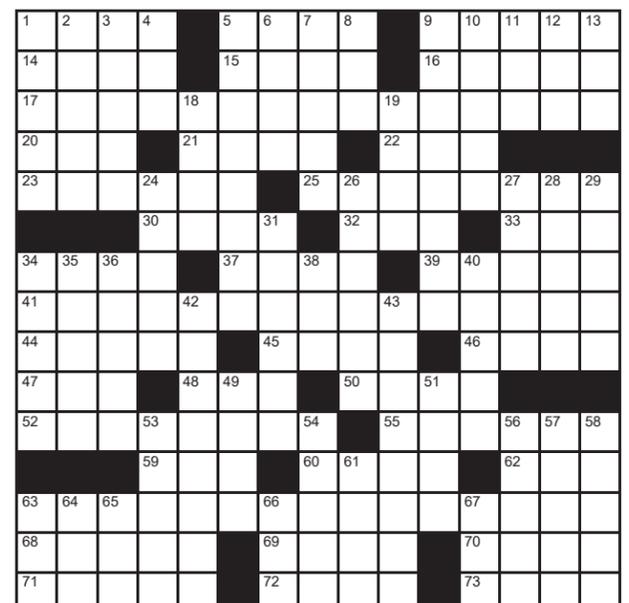
Across

1. Not tznit, perhaps
5. "See My ___" ("The Simpsons" parody of "Be My Guest")
9. Illegal job
14. City in Israel that's a piece of land?
15. Home to Honolulu
16. First name in cosmetics
17. Book about Eden's whereabouts?
20. Green of "Casino Royale"
21. Rooftop rooster, e.g.
22. Benet's "___ to Walt Whitman"
23. One "in distress"
25. Book about a macher?
30. Birthright, e.g.
32. Hebron to Ein Gedi dir.
33. Phrase at a less-traditional Jewish wedding
34. Modern day award Koufax would probably win
37. One often seen swimming around San Francisco
39. Sacha Baron Cohen does it very well live
41. Book about young Solomon?
44. Detractor
45. "There ___ there there" (Gertrude Stein)
46. Gangsters' guns
47. Possible cry at an IFA match
48. Granola bit
50. Fanning in Abrams' "Super 8"
52. Book about one the Torah says to be especially nice to (with "The")
55. AKA yontif
59. No-win situation
60. Disney bird voiced by Gilbert Gottfried
62. Org. for Dershowitz
63. Book about breakfast for one of Noah's sons?
68. Gaunt guy
69. Alternative to "Slichah b'vakasha"
70. Ceremonial splendor
71. Microwaves, perhaps
72. "...and ye shall ___ no longer" (Exodus 9:28)

73. Dead and Red

Down

1. Given a G, e.g.
2. Big name in Halva
3. Clapton band with the album "Disraeli Gears"
4. "Amen!"
5. Adam Levine or David Lee Roth, e.g.
6. Bring home (inedible) bacon
7. Kind of music or lightning
8. Young relative of Israelite enslavers
9. Certain orthodontic device
10. Shemoneh ___
11. "___ be an honor"
12. What Stan Lee's Daredevil can't do
13. Minyan men
18. Perpetually
19. "Here ___ nothing!"
24. Isaac Mizrahi is known for it
26. Moon of Saturn with a Troy-like name
27. City of a famous Gaon
28. ___ of Expulsion (when the Jews were thrown out of England)
29. Some priestly garb
31. Opposite of plus, at Bloomingdale's
34. Cultural values
35. Will, Biblically
36. Book in the Bible (but not the Torah)
38. Capone and Michaels
40. Mascot of Kellogg's Honey Smacks
42. Pressings
43. Practice that often led to family problems in the Bible
49. Tommie of the Miracle Mets
51. Meshuganeh
53. First-stringers
54. Israel has one to exist
56. California/Nevada lake
57. Iran deal participant
58. Anne Rice creatures, for short
61. On the Mediterranean
63. NBA team owned by Joe Lacob, on the scoreboard
64. Chabad org.
65. Eat the forbidden fruit, e.g.
66. Petrol
67. MLB rally killers



See answers on page 14.

A Trump nominee makes Jewish groups choose between Israel and sexual harassment



Kenneth Marcus

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA)—If there's overlap between Hillel and the National Council of Jewish Women, it's in two areas: defending Israel and combating violence against women on campus.

Leaders of the campus Jewish organization took a look at the record of Kenneth Marcus, President Donald Trump's nominee to run civil rights at the Department of Education, and liked what they saw. NCJW leaders decidedly did not.

Now the groups are on the opposite sides of a nomination that has set off a quiet intra-Jewish argument over what matters more: the hostilities that some Jewish students on campuses say they face for their pro-Israel activity, or the Trump administration rollbacks of Obama-era protections for female students who allege sexual harassment.

Kenneth Marcus, the founder and president of the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, has been at the forefront of efforts to counter pro-BDS activity on campus. He led efforts to get states and federal governments and universities to recognize a definition of anti-Semitism that includes hostility toward Israel.

"Hillel has worked closely with Kenneth Marcus on issues related to anti-Semitic activity and anti-Israel activity on college campuses," Hillel International said in a statement to JTA. "He has been an excellent partner and collaborative leader on these issues of critical importance to Jewish students. In our experience, he has been a supporter of Hillel's pluralistic, inclusive values and a leader in fighting discrimination in an analytical and impartial manner"

Hillel would not address Marcus' views on federal policy and sexual harassment. Marcus endorses the decision by Education Secretary Betsy DeVos to remove the Obama-era guidelines that advocates said made it easier for victims to level sexual assault charges on campus. The guidelines discouraged universities from allowing an alleged assaulter to directly cross-examine his accuser, and discouraged what until then was the common practice of requiring that the accused and the accuser first attempt to resolve the issue face to face or through mediation.

As leverage, the Obama administration made the rules under Title IX, a law that prohibits federal funding for schools that allow discrimination against women.

Feminists said that before the Obama guidelines, the process revictimized assault victims. DeVos has said that Obama's rules instead made victims of the accused.

That was the nomination killer for the NCJW, said Faith Williams, the group's senior legislative associate.

"In light of growing number of #MeToo moments and the scandal at Michigan State University, we need these Title IX protections," she said, referring to the explosion of sexual assault allegations by women and the recent conviction of a sports therapist at the university who was accused of

assaulting nearly 200 women in his care.

Also opposing the Marcus nomination is Jewish Women International, which has developed programs in partnership with Jewish fraternities and sororities to counter sexual assault on campus.

"We are deeply concerned by the answers given during his confirmation hearing last week supporting Secretary DeVos' rescission of important guidance clarifying the responsibilities of colleges and universities in cases of sexual assault," Jewish Women International said in a statement last month.

"It is very troubling that he will not commit to continuing to publish the list of colleges and universities currently under investigation regarding sexual assault," the statement said. "These actions demonstrate a lack of commitment to protecting students from sex discrimination as is required under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as well as turn back the clock on the advances made during the previous administration to ensure greater transparency and accountability on this issue."

Hillel has been at the forefront within the community of advancing protections for women on campuses. The group recently made headlines when it backed a Hillel director in Portland, Oregon, who reported that a donor had

harassed her; Hillel cut off the donor. In 2016, it suspended a U.S. tour by Israeli author Ari Shavit when he was accused of sexual assault.

Announcing a review last month aimed at enhancing its sexual harassment and assault policies, the group said that "Hillel has long stood up against rape culture on campus, partnering with It's On Us nationally, and supporting students through incidents of sexual harassment and assault."

It's On Us, a national campaign combating campus sexual assault, ran an ad that featured former Vice President Joe Biden speaking out against DeVos' proposed changes.

In fact, most of the Democratic opposition to Marcus was focused on the sexual assault issue. Some pro-Palestinian groups have made an issue of his anti-BDS activity, but the issue did not come up once in hours of hearings on Dec. 5. The Health and Education Committee's chairman, Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., did read from a letter from Hillel endorsing Marcus at the hearing's outset.

Among the other issues raised by Democrats were Marcus' view that the department should only target bias when intent is in evidence, and his past comments opposing LGBTQ rights. (He said he has "evolved" on the LGBTQ issue.)

The committee approved Marcus on party lines, and he is likely to be approved by the full Senate, also on party lines.

The American Jewish Committee also has recommended Marcus, despite whatever differences it may have with him on an array of other issues. Its general counsel, Marc Stern, said in an interview that even if Marcus' pro-Israel record did not come up in the hearing, it has become enough of an issue—The New York Times made pro-Palestinian opposition to Marcus a focus of a story on his nomination—that it is incumbent on pro-Israel groups to rally to his defense.

"It's our perception that this has become a fight over Israel," Stern said. "If you take the view that Israel criticism is sometimes anti-Semitic and that's disqualifying, pro-Israel groups have a hard interest in seeing that it is not disqualifying."

AJC's endorsement of Marcus came in the wake of opposition to the nomination by an umbrella body AJC helped found, the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. Among its objections to Marcus, the Leadership Conference included an allusion to his anti-BDS activism, which civil libertarians say infringes on free speech.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the associate dean of the

Nominee on page 15A

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The best vegetarian matzah ball soup recipe

By Vicky Cohen and Ruth Fox

(The Noshers via JTA)—Let's face it: There's just something wonderfully soothing about seeing a steaming bowl of matzah ball soup with its pillowy-plump dumplings swimming in a bath of golden broth.

This healing vegetarian matzah ball soup delivers all the "ah" of its traditional cousin with precisely the right amount of goodness (and good-for-you-ness) thanks to a clever use of shiitake mushrooms, tomato paste and a pot full of seasonal vegetables. Whether you add our healthy matzah ball soup to your Friday night dinner routine or prepare a large pot for lazy Sunday afternoons for the family, this soup is certain to satisfy the stomach and soul.

When we first considered a vegetarian alternative to chicken soup, we knew that we didn't want to use bouillon cubes, powders or vegetable broth. The question was, how could we create a deep, rich taste that would satisfy our family? The first thing we did was caramelize some tomato paste with olive oil in order to enhance the flavors of the tomatoes and oil; then we added fresh shiitake mushroom tops for their chicken-like texture and rich almost-smoky flavor.

Additional depth came from a cheesecloth bag filled with delicious ingredients—red and yellow onions (skins still on to create a rich-colored broth), carrot, parsnip and celery, dill, parsley and a whole head of garlic. We also cooked the matzah balls in the vegetable broth instead of cooking them separately, so they could absorb the flavor of the broth. The result was a rich, deep-flavored broth where the chicken was not missed.

This soup is easy to make and can be dressed up or down. Try serving it in an elegant china bowl with a steamed bundle of julienned carrots, zucchini and yellow squash for a sophisticated first course to a formal dinner. You can also cut plenty of root vegetables (sweet potato, turnips, butternut squash) into a large dice and cook together in the soup for a delicious more rustic soup.

Ingredients:
For the soup:
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
4 tablespoons tomato paste
16 fresh shiitake mushrooms, thoroughly washed, stems and caps separated and caps sliced
1 to 1 1/2 teaspoons salt (adjust to taste)
1/2 teaspoon turmeric
1/4 teaspoon black pepper
3 medium carrots, cut into chunks
1 large parsnip, cut into chunks
1 yellow onion, unpeeled, quartered
1 red onion, unpeeled, quartered
3 celery stalks, cut into chunks
1 head of garlic, unpeeled, cut in half width-wise
1 bunch of fresh dill
1 bunch of parsley
For the matzah balls:
1 pack of matzah ball mix, prepared according to directions (or make homemade)

Directions:
1. Heat the olive oil in a large soup pot.
2. Add the tomato paste and cook for 2 minutes over medium high heat, stirring constantly. Add the sliced shiitake mushroom caps, stir well and cook for another minute.
3. Add 10 cups water, salt, turmeric and pepper (don't add all the salt at once here, you can adjust to taste later).
4. Place the shiitake stems, carrots, parsnip, onions, celery, garlic, dill and parsley in a cheese cloth. Tie it well with kitchen twine and place it in the soup pot. Bring to a boil and let it cook for 5 minutes.
5. Cover, reduce heat to medium low and simmer for an hour. The broth should be ready and should be flavorful. If it's not, continue cooking for another 15-20 minutes.
6. While soup cooks, prepare the matzah balls following the package instructions.
7. Remove cheesecloth from the soup and place it in a col-



ander with a bowl underneath. Squeeze as much liquid as you can from the cheesecloth and pour it into the soup pot (the liquid will be hot, so use a wooden spoon or another utensil). Discard vegetables.

8. Prepare matzah ball according to directions on the box, and chill in fridge for 30 minutes. Or, you can make a homemade version.

9. Place the matzah balls directly into the broth and cook, covered, for 20 minutes. Serves 6.

Vicky Cohen and Ruth Fox are sisters who were raised in Barcelona, Spain. Their parents are Syrian-Lebanese Jews but now they live, cook and blog from the East Coast of the U.S. about their family recipes and healthy eating at MayI-HaveThatRecipe.com.

The Noshers food blog offers a dazzling array of new and classic Jewish recipes and food news, from Europe to Yemen, from challah to shakshuka and beyond. Check it out at www.TheNoshers.com.

Louvre puts Nazi-looted art on display in bid to find owners

(JTA)—The Louvre Museum in Paris has put 31 Nazi-looted paintings on permanent display in an attempt to find their rightful owners.

The works were installed in two showrooms last month,

The Associated Press reported.

Some 296 Nazi-looted paintings are stored at the Louvre and remain unclaimed.

Sebastien Allard, the head of the paintings department at the Louvre, told AP on

Tuesday that most of the artworks were stolen from Jewish families during World War II.

"Beneficiaries can see these artworks, declare that these artworks belong to them and officially ask for their return," he said

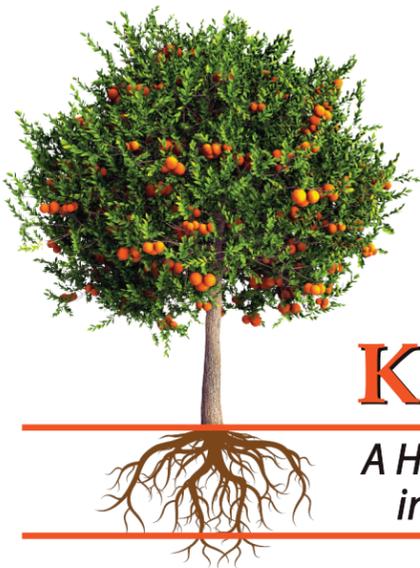
Ways to prove ownership include old family photos, receipts or testimonies.

The Louvre initiative is the latest effort by French authorities to find heirs of families who lost their art-

work during World War II. The French Culture Ministry has formed a committee in charge of locating the original owners of the paintings. Only about 50 artworks have been returned since 1951.

French authorities have also designed a National Museums Recovery catalog that is available online. The catalog can help owners identify their items without traveling to the Louvre.

Celebrating Community & Continuity



Ohav Shalom synagogue cornerstone, 1926

KEHILLAH

A History of Jewish Life in Greater Orlando



Kanner Store, 1905



Al Morrell, grove owner 1941

Exhibition of 150 Years
Nov 12, 2017 - Feb 20, 2018



ORANGE COUNTY REGIONAL
HISTORY CENTER

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Orlando, FL

Photos courtesy of Jewish Museum of Florida-FIU, originated by Marcia Jo Zentiz, LHD, Founding Executive Director

Jewish Academy of Orlando—40 years and counting



Shown here (l-r): Samantha Keimach, Paige Keiner, Livia Smith, Tony Moreno, Samantha Trattner, and Eric Levine.

On Sunday, Dec. 17, the Jewish Academy of Orlando celebrated its 40th anniversary in style. Its annual gala honored both Dr. Jordan and Nathalie Steinberg and gave a lifetime achievement award to Dr. Edward Zissman.

All of the attendees enjoyed the evening at the Dr. Phillips Center for the Performing Arts.

"It was a great move to this location. The feel of the event

was dramatic and the program was fantastic," says Robyn Eichenholz, parent.

Five alumni were invited to sing as part of the program. Each alumnus selected and performed a song, accompanied by Eric Levine, the music director of the school. The audience proudly watched Samantha Trattner, Livia Smith, Paige Keiner, Samantha Keimach and Tony Moreno.

The Gala is the school's

biggest annual fundraiser, the proceeds from which have enriched curriculum advances, provided scholarship funds for students and most recently contributed to the creation of the Innovation Lab.

For more information about the Jewish Academy of Orlando or to arrange a visit to the school, please contact Amy Polacek, admissions coordinator, at apolacet@myjao.org or 407-647-0713.



Scene Around

By Gloria Yousha—Call 407-657-9405 or gloriayousha@gmail.com

Not “fake news”...

Recently, I watched the movie “Fiddler on the Roof” (for the third time) on television. This time was particularly strange as I felt that I was in Russia and Ukraine while watching. It just happens that my ancestry comes from Russia and Ukraine. (Could it be a sign?)

New Director-General...

“World Jewish Congress (WJC) CEO AND Executive Vice President ROBERT SINGER congratulated former French Culture Minister, AUDREY AZOULAY on her recent appointment as Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and expressed hope that she would push for much-needed reforms to address the ongoing politicization of UNESCO.



Gay Harrison

tion for the sake of justice, rule of law, and human rights and freedoms. We do not expect any miracles among UNESCO voting states overnight, but we are confident that change is indeed possible.”

Donors of \$500 will receive an 18-inch strand. (I really want my cookies. Oh wrong event!)

JCC 39ers...

The next Meet and Mingle Monday will be presented by Dr. TERRIE FINE, PhD on Feb. 12th in the JCC Senior Lounge. The subject is “The informal powers of Congress.” The program starts at 1 p.m. and is followed by refreshments. (I really want my cookies. Again, wrong event!)

Shout-Outs...

Once again, I passed out after performing at a memorial. This time it was for the fabulous clarinetist, Syl LaFata. I was taken by ambulance to Florida Hospital Altamonte.

My first stop was the ER where I was wonderfully cared for by TOM SHAUGHNESSY of the Emergency Department staff.

Then I was assigned a room on the third floor where the nursing staff was fabulous, especially RN POLINARUBABNOVA. She was so kind and very beautiful! (I can't handle competition!!!!)

One for the road...

Izzy has taken to flying kites, but he's not very good at it. In fact, today he's having trouble controlling his kite—it's bobbing and weaving all over the sky.

His wife Sarah, observing the scene from the window, calls out to him, “Izzy, I think it would be better if you had a piece of tail.” Izzy replies, “I told you that a while ago, but you told me to go fly a kite.”

tion for the sake of justice, rule of law, and human rights and freedoms. We do not expect any miracles among UNESCO voting states overnight, but we are confident that change is indeed possible.”

Jewish Pavilion news...

A very special event has been planned for women who contribute a minimum of \$500 to the Jewish Pavilion.

GAY HARRISON will be opening up her home for a tea on Tuesday, Feb. 20. She will discuss new trends in jewelry. Participants will receive a sneak preview of her Spring Collection.

All donors of \$1000 will receive a 35-inch strand of blue-black pearls that can be doubled.



Audrey Azoulay

UNESCO, as too many other international bodies, has been hijacked by the political agendas of some of its member states, resulting in the adoption of egregious decisions, including the attempts to rewrite history and deny the historic Jewish link to its ancient homeland. This relentless bias and double standard against Israel must come to an end.

Singer said, “We are hopeful that Ms Azoulay will maximize her position to address the issues of concern for Israel and the Jewish world, and push for the reforms so deeply needed to return UNESCO to its core mandate of contributing to peace and security in the world by promoting collaboration among nations through education, science, culture and communica-

Polish TV host mocks Jewish critics of new law by suggesting use of term ‘Jewish death camps’

WARSAW, Poland (JTA)—The debate over a Polish law that would criminalize the use of the term “Polish death camps” in referring to Auschwitz and other sites took a nasty turn when a television host joked that they should be called “Jewish camps.”

The comment comes amid tensions between Poland and Israel over the legislation, which is meant to assign sole responsibility for atrocities on Polish soil to the German Nazis who occupied the country.

Author Rafal Aleksander Ziemkiewicz, during the TVP2 show TVP Info, mocked critics of the legislation during a discussion with show host Marcin Wolski, who is also the director of TVP2.

“If we look at the percentage of involvement of countries

that took part [in the Holocaust], Jews also were part of their own destruction,” Ziemkiewicz said.

Wolski responded: “Using this terminology, linguistically, we could say these were not German or Polish camps, but were Jewish camps. After all, who dealt with the crematoria?”

Wolski was apparently referring to Jewish inmates who were forced to dispose of gas chamber victims at the death camps.

Krzysztof Czapanski, chairman of the National Media Council in Poland, on Wednesday called for an explanation from the president of Polish Television, or TVP, Jacek Kurski.

Meanwhile, the public broadcaster Polish Radio has launched the german-

deathcamps.info website in Polish, German and English, which includes documentary evidence that death camps on Polish soil were operated by Nazi Germany. The website had been in the works for several months.

The legislation passed on Friday by the Polish parliament's lower house, or Sejm, calls for prison sentences of up to three years for the use of the banned term. It now will be taken up by the Senate and also must be approved by the president.

Earlier, Ziemkiewicz on Twitter called Jews opposed to the changes in Polish law “scabs,” a term often used in anti-Semitic slurs in Poland.

“For many years I have convinced my people that we must support Israel. Today,

because of a few scabby or greedy people, I feel like an idiot,” he wrote in his tweet, which was later deleted.

He was criticized by David Wildstein, deputy director of TVP1.

“Using the term scab is extremely nasty,” Wildstein tweeted. “This word is disgusting.”

Ziemkiewicz replied: “You are right David, a nasty word associated with all the negative traits attributed to the stereotype Jews, which is precisely why (I used it).”

Ziemkiewicz and Wolski also discussed a scandal in Germany in which car companies tested the effects of exhaust fumes on monkeys and humans.

“It's an old German tradition,” Ziemkiewicz said.

Democratic-Republican split on Israel

WASHINGTON (JTA)—The gap between how Republicans and Democrats view Israel is widening, a Pew Research Center poll found.

The poll posted Tuesday showed 79 percent of Republicans sympathize with Israel over the Palestinians whereas 27 percent of Democrats sympathize with Israel over the Palestinians. Pew said this was the widest divide since 1978. The poll showed that 42 percent of Independents sympathize

with Israel more than Palestinians.

The drop among Democrats was especially sharp in recent years; in April 2016, 43 percent of Democrats said they were likelier to sympathize with Israel. The rise among Republicans has also been sharp since 2001: In that year, 50 percent of Republicans said they sympathize more with Israel.

This year's poll showed 6 percent of Republicans sympathize with Palestin-

ians more and 25 percent of Democrats sympathize with the Palestinians more. Overall, 46 percent of Americans sympathize more with Israel, about the same amount it has been since 1978.

Differences were also sharp in how the respondents view Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Among Republicans, 52 percent view the Israeli leader favorably and 15 percent view him unfavorably. Among Democrats, it was 18 percent favorable

and 39 percent unfavorable. With Independents, it was 31 percent favorable and 28 percent unfavorable.

Netanyahu openly clashed with President Barack Obama, a Democrat, and has warmly welcomed the presidency of Donald Trump, a Republican.

The telephone poll reached 1,503 adults between Jan. 10 and 15. The margins of error were 2.9 percentage points overall, 5.7 points for Republicans, 5.1 points for Democrats and 5 points for Independents.



can be purchased at the following locations:

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Sudoku (see page 14 for solution)

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Jewish Pavilion's Gems & Jeans Gala shines light on seniors



The Bromberg Family (l-r) Deborah Bromberg Seltzer; Rachel Leibowitz; Gala honoree, Marian Bromberg; Edward Bromberg, and Sharon Bromberg.



The Jewish Pavilion's Nancy Ludin (3rd from left) flanked by Sponsors and Supporters from Brookdale Senior Living—Mark Pulaski, Susie Goebeler, Ludin, Annie Lee, Joe Germain, Chad Ballard and Courtney South.

By Pamela Ruben

On Sunday, Jan. 28, honorees and guests of The Jewish Pavilion's Gems & Jeans Gala demonstrated the impact that just one person can make on an entire community. Co-chairs Marci Gaeser, Sharon Littman, and Susie Stone delivered opening remarks and warmly welcomed the more than 200 guests who had gathered at the Sheraton Orlando North in Maitland to celebrate gala honorees, and to make a difference in the lives of residents of senior living communities served by the Pavilion. Littman commended the evening's honorees, Marian Bromberg and Alan 'A.J.' Kronenberg, for helping the Jewish Pavilion maintain a caring and cultural connection with seniors in elder-care.

Both honorees sent audience members reaching for tissues during their heartfelt presentations. Bromberg remarked that both she and husband, Edward, were strong believers in the community of Israel. For that reason, the couple supports just about all the Jewish organizations in town including their local synagogue, SOJC, and of course, the Pavilion. Bromberg shared that her mother-in-law, who lived to the age of 106, received volunteer visitors while a resident of a senior home in Rockville, Maryland.

"While I could not give back directly to the group in Rockville, I could give

back to the Pavilion here in Orlando," she said, adding, "One of the first residents I visited at Solaris Health was Roslyn Stenzler, who looked so much like my mother, it was uncanny. Visiting her substituted for the fact that I could no longer visit with my own mother, was extremely comforting me."

Bromberg has continued to visit elderly residents for almost a decade.

A.J. Kronenberg credited the Bornstein Leadership course through the Jewish Federation of Greater Orlando for introducing him to the Jewish Pavilion. Placed at the Jewish Pavilion as a Board intern, he now continues to serve in his fifth year as a full Board member. Kronenberg shared while he has always supported the Pavilion's mission, it wasn't until his first visit to a senior facility that the good works of the agency really hit home. On his first room visit with a resident, he and wife, Olivia, brought along their dog to bring an extra bit of cheer. In this case, dog was truly man's best friend, as the senior resident was having a difficult start to his day, until the pup bounded into the room (with permission). The resident quickly brightened, welcoming the dog with an affectionate squeeze, and began reaching for his breakfast and interacting with his company. Kronenberg reported that as they left the room, the hall was suddenly filled with seniors, wanting to share in the connection.



Gala keynote speakers Susan and Pearl Bernstein, with Nancy Ludin, Jewish Pavilion executive director.

Keynote speaker and Brookdale Island Lake resident, Pearl Bernstein, concurred with the honorees sentiments, agreeing that visits by the Jewish Pavilion hold a special place in her heart. Energetic and spritely at 92 years of age, Bernstein shared how the Pavilion has touched her life, creating a Jewish connection year-round for herself and her neighbors. Though she no longer drives to synagogue, Bernstein eagerly joins in a weekly Shabbat service brought right into her social hall by the Jewish Pavilion.

Bernstein's daughter, Susan, lauded the nonprofit's staff and volunteers for bringing smiles, holidays, special programs, as well as a connection to the traditions and community that have been a part of her mother's life for almost a century.

The festive evening featured a silent auction, a gourmet meal, and toe-tapping musical numbers by Paul Stenzler and his band, Rhythm Release. A rollicking version of the hora pulled guests from their seats, as they grasped hands and twirled into the evening.



Gala honoree, Alan 'A.J.' Kronenberg with wife, Olivia.

"The Jewish Pavilion's 2018 Gems & Jeans Gala was a huge success because of each person who came out to make a difference in the life of a senior. Everyone present, as well as those behind the scenes, contributed to an evening that will help us remain the Jewish connection for the elder-care residents for many years to come. Presenting sponsor, the Harper Family Foundation, was integral in our efforts to bring 'Arts to our Elders,'" stated Nancy

Ludin, Jewish Pavilion executive director.

You can personally make a difference in the life of a senior. Become a fan www.facebook.com/jewishpavilion or visit www.jewishpavilion.org or call 407-678-9363 for volunteer opportunities or to make a donation.

Connecting elder-care community residents and their families with a caring Jewish community that provides life-enhancing resources and experiences.

A present-day Shabbos goy in Kissimmee

By Marilyn Shapiro

As I settled into my chair at the Shalom Club table at Solivita Club Expo, I put my pocketbook on the empty chair from the Bellissimo Hair Salon which was next us. A few minutes later, a young Hispanic man asked me to move it so he could sit down. "Hope you don't mind," he said.

"No problem!" I said, "it's your chair." And I put the bag on the floor.

"It would be a 'shanda' to put that nice bag on the floor!" he exclaimed.

I took a closer look at the speaker. He certainly looked Hispanic, not someone who is familiar with the Jewish word for shame or disgrace!

"Shandal!" I said. "Are you... errrr... are you Jewish?"

"No," he said. "Better than that! I was a Shabbos goy on Long Island!"

For those who are not familiar with the term, a "Shabbos goy" is the Yiddish term for a non-Jew who performs certain types of work which Jewish religious law prohibits the Jew from doing on the Sabbath. And Ruben Vazquez, the son of Puerto Rican parents who came to New York in the 1960s, is a self-acclaimed proud Shabbos goy!

Vazquez's parents were born in Yabucoa Puerto Rico, and came to the Bronx in 1952. Their only child, Vazquez was born in 1972. His father, Ruben Vazquez Baez, was a professor of Administration

at City College in New York as well as a high school teacher at Park West on 50th St. Manhattan. His mother, Gilda Vazquez, was a supervisor at the Bank of America at the World Trade Center.

When Ruben was six, his family moved to Bayswater in Far Rockaway, Queens, on the border line of Long Island. At first, the Vasquez family was apprehensive when they realized they were the only Hispanics—the only non-Jews—in a modern Orthodox neighborhood. The first week they lived there, however, Mrs. Weiss brought them a pie. "Welcome to the neighborhood," the rabbi's wife exclaimed.

Vazquez became friends with many of the children

in the neighborhood. He remembers his friends and him using the yarmulkes as Frisbees. "The adults would not have been happy if they realized our game," he said.

Vazquez also began learning the complexities of the dietary laws. One day, he wandered into a friend's garage while munching on a roast beef and cheese sandwich.

"Do you want half my sandwich?" Vazquez asked his friend.

"No thanks," his friend replied. "We don't mix milk with meat."

Vazquez took the cheese off half the sandwich and offered the revised snack to his friend.

"Err...no thanks, Ruben," said his friend. "I'll pass."

In order to earn money,

Vazquez started mowing lawns for his neighbors. He made more friendships and learned more about the "black hats." And they began to rely on him.

One Saturday, one of his friend's mothers knocked on the Vasquez' door. "Ruben, Moishe left the television set on in the upstairs bedroom. Do you think you could take care of it for me?"

Vazquez gladly went over to turn off the set. Soon after, other Jews in the neighborhood were knocking on his door, discreetly hinting at some task that Vazquez could "remedy." His reputation as the Shabbos goy was set.

Meanwhile, Vazquez was picking up many of the Yiddish expressions that pep-

pered the conversations of his neighbors. They flowed off his tongue as easily as those who spoke the language of the "Old Country" regularly. He not only avoided sharing his sandwiches, but also understood the traditions that governed his community.

When Vazquez was going into his senior year of high school, his father asked him what he would like to study after graduation.

"Cosmetology," was Vazquez's quick reply. He had a great uncle and an aunt who were in the business, and Vazquez had spent a great deal of time in their shops. "You can do anything you

Shabbos on page 15A

OBITUARIES

HERMAN M. DISLER

Written by the family

Herman Milton Disler, age 88, of Lake Mary, passed away peacefully at his home on Tuesday, Jan. 23, 2018, surrounded by his family and friends. One of four children, he was born on Feb. 18, 1929, in Chelsea, Massachusetts, to Myer and Mary Forman Disler, of blessed memory. An educator for many years, Herman served in the US Army, attaining the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the Reserves. He earned his bachelor's degree from Providence College. On June 23, 1955, in Boston, he married the former Elaine Palman, his wife of over 62 years, who survives him.

A resident of Lake Mary for two years, Herman and Elaine lived in the Boston area for many years, before a sojourn in Southern California for six years. Herman also leaves behind his devoted children—Michael (Dorothy) of Lake Mary, Richard of Ipswich, Mass., David (Robin) of Richmond, Va., Mark of Lake Mary, and Gregory (Carolyn) of Avondale, Penn. He was the very proud grandfather of Jennifer (Matthew), Kelly (Stephen), Matthew, Emily and Michelle; and great-grandfather of Bradley. He was predeceased by his siblings—Henry, Blanche and George.

A funeral service, with full military honors, was held on Friday, Jan. 26, 2018, in the pavilion at Cape Canaveral National Cemetery with Rabbi Arnold Siegel of Jewish Family Services officiating. In memory of Herman M. Disler, the family requests contributions to the American Cancer Society, PO Box 22718, Oklahoma City OK 73123-2718.

Arrangements entrusted to Beth Shalom Memorial Chapel, 640 Lee Road, Orlando 32810, 407-599-1180.

JACK BERNARD GOLDMAN

Jack B. Goldman, age 84, of Altamonte Springs, passed away at Hospice of the Com-

forter in Altamonte Springs on Sunday, Jan. 28, 2018. Born in Queens, New York, he was one of two children born to the late Herman and Bertha Davis Goldman.

Following high school, Jack attended technical schools earning several certifications. He was married to the late Barbara Goldman who passed away in 1990. The family lived for many years in South Florida where Jack owned and operated a telecom business, Unitel of South Florida. He relocated to the Orlando area in 2015, due to illness.

Jack is survived by his daughters—Felicia (Mitch) Baum of Orlando, Jodi (Jeff) Marin of Sunrise and Robin (Ron) Barber of Davie. He is also survived by his grandchildren—Brooke, Gavin, Aimee, Robert, Ilise, Erica, Cheryl, Robert and Evan; and his great-grandchildren—Riley, Jordyn and Joshua. He was predeceased by his sister, Beverly.

A graveside service was held at Lakeside Memorial Gardens in Doral, Florida. In memory of Jack B. Goldman, the family requests contributions to Hospice of the Comforter, 480 W Central Parkway, Altamonte Springs FL 32714. Arrangements entrusted to Beth Shalom Memorial Chapel, 640 Lee Road, Orlando 32810. 407-599-1180.

GERALD WILLIAM STEINFELD

Gerald William Steinfeld, of Orlando, Florida, passed away on Jan. 28, 2018, following a short illness. He was born on March 11, 1937 in Jersey City, N.J., to the late Ruben and Rose Steinfeld.

Jerry graduated from Snyder High School in Jersey City, N.J., and received his bachelor's degree from New Jersey State Teachers College and his master's degree from Lehigh University. Jerry began a long and rewarding career in education as a teacher in Rockaway Township Public Schools where he met the love of his life, Ruby. Jerry

was also a guidance counselor, principal and a school psychologist for the Newton Township Public Schools until his retirement in 1992. He and Ruby then moved to Orlando, Florida, where they enjoyed their retirement.

Jerry was a true entrepreneur and was involved in starting many businesses, including a Dunkin' Donuts in Ledgewood, N.J.

Jerry loved to travel and was most excited about the many cruises that he and Ruby were able to sail on, as well as their trip to Israel. In addition to traveling, Jerry loved history, geography, photography, telling jokes and attending temple services. Jerry was also a big fan of the Orlando Magic and his social life revolved around when the Magic played.

Jerry was preceded in death by his beautiful wife Ruby of 55 years; as well as his three sisters—Mildred Myron, Muriel Rosberger and Janet Rosenbloom.

He is survived by three sons—Scott (Hildy Winter) of Orlando, Florida, Allen (Loreen) of Sarasota, Florida, and Robert (Dean Hanson) of Tampa, Florida. Jerry is also survived by his four grandsons whom he adored: Richard, Connor, Kevin and Westin.

Services were conducted on Thursday, Feb. 1, at Family Funeral Care, 13001 S. John Young Parkway, Orlando, FL 32837. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that you donate to planting a tree in Jerry's Memory at usa.jnf.org/jnf-tree-planting-center.



JFS seeks committee and board members for the 2018

JFS Orlando Executive Director Eric Geboff, announced that the nearly 40-year-old social service agency is seeking volunteers to serve on its committees and Board of Directors for the 2018 program year.

Annually, JFS Orlando replenishes its committees and Board of Directors with new members who bring knowledge, expertise, passion and experience to help the agency attain its mission of providing services to stabilize and enhance the quality of life for individuals and families in crisis, available to all people in the Central Florida community.

"The purpose of the committees is to investigate current trends and evaluate services and programs that are provided by JFS Orlando, making recommendations to the JFS Orlando Board of Directors of the direction it takes for the 2018 year," said Geboff. "The board is looking for committee and

board members who care about the clients served by JFS Orlando and are willing to make a commitment of time, treasures and talents to help the agency grow to serve more in need in the Central Florida community."

Committees in need of volunteers include: Program Services, Development and Marketing, and Finance. For more information about the committees including member responsibilities and volunteer application, please go to the volunteer section of

the JFS website—<http://www.jfsorlando.org/volunteer/>. "Volunteers are at the heart of JFS Orlando's work in the community. They work in cooperation with the professional staff and help serve over 10,000 individuals, families and children that utilize JFS Orlando services each year," added Geboff.

For more information, please go to the JFS Orlando website (www.jfsorlando.org) or contact Eric Geboff at 407-644-7593 or eric.geboff@jfsorlando.org.

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Central Florida Synagogues

Orlando Weekday Morning Minyan (Conservative/Egalitarian), services Monday-Friday 7:45 a.m. (9 a.m.—national holidays); 2nd floor Chapel—Jewish Academy of Orlando; 851 N. Maitland Ave., Maitland. For information call 407-298-4650.

Celebration Jewish Congregation (R), services and holiday schedules shown at www.JewishCelebration.org; 407-566-9792.

Chabad Lubavitch of North Orlando (O), 1701 Markham Woods Road, Longwood, 407-636-5994, www.jewishorlando.com; services: Friday 7:00 p.m.; Saturday at 9:30 a.m.

Chabad of Altamonte Springs (O), 414 Spring Valley Lane, Altamonte Springs, 407-280-0535; www.jewishaltamonte.com.

Chabad of South Orlando (O), 7347 Sand Lake Road, Orlando, 407-354-3660; www.jewishorlando.com; Shabbat services: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. and 10 minutes before sunset; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday, 8:15 a.m.

Chabad of the Space & Treasure Coasts (O), 1190 Highway A1A, Satellite Beach, 321-777-2770.

Congregation Ahavas Yisrael/Chabad (O), 708 Lake Howell Rd., Maitland, 407-644-2500; www.chabadorlando.org; services: Sunday, 9 a.m.; Monday-Friday, 7:30 a.m.; Shabbat services: Friday, 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Family service, 4th Friday of the month.

Congregation Bet Chaim (R), 181 E. Mitchell Hammock, Oviedo, 407-830-7211; www.betchaim.org; Shabbat services: Friday, 8 p.m.

Congregation Beth Am (C), 3899 Sand Lake Road, Longwood, 407-862-3505; www.congbetham.org; Shabbat services: Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.

Congregation Beth El (C), 2185 Meadowlane Ave., West Melbourne, 321-779-0740; Shabbat services, 1st & 3rd Friday, 8 p.m.; 2nd & 4th Saturdays, 9:30 a.m.

Congregation Beth Emeth (R), 2205 Blue Sapphire Circle, Orlando, 407-222-6393; Shabbat service: monthly, 8 p.m.

Congregation Beth Israel (Rec), Collins Resource Center, Suite 303, 9401 S.R. 200, Ocala, 352-237-8277; bethisraelocala.org; Shabbat service, second Friday of the month, 8 p.m.

Congregation Beth Shalom (R-C), 315 North 13th St., Leesburg, 352-326-3692; www.bethshalomflorida.org; schedule of services on website.

Congregation Beth Shalom (Progressive Conservative), Orange City congregation holds services at 1308 E. Normandy Blvd., Deltona; 386-804-8283; www.mybethshalom.com; Shabbat services: Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.

Congregation B'nai Torah (C), 403 N. Nova Rd., Ormond Beach, 32174, 386-672-1174; www.mybnaitorah.com; Shabbat services: Friday, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.

Congregation Chabad Lubavitch of Greater Daytona (O), 1079 W. Granada Blvd., Ormond Beach, 386-672-9300; Shabbat services Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.

Congregation of Reform Judaism (R), 928 Malone Dr., Orlando, 407-645-0444; www.crjorlando.org; Shabbat services, 7 p.m. 1st, 2nd and 3rd Fridays; 6 p.m., 4th and 5th Fridays; Saturday: 10 a.m.

Congregation Mateh Chaim (R), P.O. Box 060847, Palm Bay, 32906, 321-768-6722.

Congregation Ohev Shalom (C), 613 Concourse Parkway South, Maitland, 407-298-4650; www.ohvshalom.org; Shabbat service, Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.

Congregation Or Chayim (Rec), Leesburg, 352-326-8745; egrae@hotmail.com; services 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month at Providence Independence of Wildwood.

Congregation Shalom Aleichem (R), 3501 Oak Pointe Blvd., Kissimmee, 407-935-0064; www.shalomaleichem.com; Shabbat service, 1st and 3rd Fridays of the month, 8 p.m.

Congregation Shomer Yisrael (C), 5382 Hoffner Ave., Orlando, 407-227-1258, call for services and holiday schedules.

Congregation Sinai (C/R), 303A N. S.R. 27, Minneola; 352-243-5353; congregation-sinai.org; services: every Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Shabbat Service every Saturday, 10 a.m.

Orlando Torah Center (O), 8591 Banyan Blvd., Orlando; 347-456-6485; Shacharis-Shabbos 9 a.m.; Mon.—Thurs. 6:45 a.m.; Sun. and Legal Holidays 8 a.m.; Mincha/Maariv Please call for times.

Southwest Orlando Jewish Congregation/Ohalei Rivka (C), 11200 S. Apopka-Vineland Rd., Orlando, 407-239-5444; Shabbat service, Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.

Temple Beth El (R), 579 N. Nova Rd., Ormond Beach, 386-677-2484.

Temple Beth Shalom (R), P.O. Box 031233, Winter Haven, 813-324-2882.

Temple Beth Shalom (C), 40 Wellington Drive, Palm Coast, 386-445-3006; Shabbat service, Friday, 8 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.

Temple Beth Shalom (C), 5995 N. Wickham Rd. Melbourne, 321-254-6333; www.mytbs.org; Shabbat services: Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday: 9:30 a.m. Minyan, Tuesday, 7:30 p.m.; Thursday, 10:00 a.m.

Temple Beth Shalom (R), 1109 N.E. 8th Ave., Ocala, 352-629-3587; Shabbat services: Friday, 8 p.m.; Torah study: Saturday, 10:00 a.m.

Temple B'nai Darom (R), 49 Banyan Course, Ocala, 352-624-0380; Friday Services 8 p.m.

Temple Israel (C), 50 S. Moss Rd., Winter Springs, 407-647-3055; www.tiflorida.org; Shabbat services: Friday, 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Sunday 9:00 a.m.

Temple Israel (R), 7350 Lake Andrew Drive, Melbourne, 321-631-9494.

Temple Israel (C), 579 N. Nova Road, Ormond Beach, 386-252-3097; Shabbat service, Friday, 7 p.m.; Saturday: 10:30 a.m.

Temple Israel of DeLand (R), 1001 E. New York Ave., DeLand, 386-736-1646; www.templeisraelofdeland.org; Friday Shabbat service, 7 p.m.; Saturday, 10:00 a.m. followed by Torah study.

Temple Shalom (formerly New Jewish Congregation) (R), 13563 Country Road 101, Oxford, 352-748-1800; www.templeshalomcentralfl.org; Shabbat services: Friday, 7 p.m.; last Saturday of the month, 9:30 a.m.

Temple Shalom of Deltona (R/C), 1785 Elkcam Blvd., Deltona, 386-789-2202; www.shalomdeltona.org; Shabbat service; Saturday: 10 a.m.

Temple Shir Shalom (R) Services held at Temple Israel, 50 S. Moss Rd., Winter Springs, 407-366-3556, www.templeshirshalom.org; Shabbat services: three Fridays each month, 7:30 p.m.

Traditional Congregation of Mount Dora (T) Mount Dora, 352-735-4774; www.tcomd.org; Shabbat services: Saturday, 9:30 a.m. sharp.

(R) Reform (C) Conservative (O) Orthodox (Rec) Reconstructionist (T) Mehitsa

Nevada welcomed this Israeli marijuana scientist— US immigration threw him out of the country



Shimon Abta and his wife, who asked not to be named, visiting the Western Wall in Jerusalem in happier times.

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA)—It shouldn't have been complicated. Shimon Abta, an expert Israeli cannabis agronomist, was sent by his employer to consult with American companies in states where medical marijuana is legal. He was living in Las Vegas and met an American Jewish woman on JDate. They married last year and together started becoming more religious. Both in their 30s, they are eager to start a family.

But on Jan. 8, U.S. immigration officials told Abta to withdraw his application for permanent residency status and leave for Israel that very day or face arrest on felony charges of illicit drug trafficking. He was given two hours to pack and say goodbye to his wife, who did not want her name used in this article.

Though he left voluntarily, if under pressure, when he landed in San Francisco to change planes, uniformed border patrol agents boarded his flight and escorted him off, handcuffing him in full view of other passengers, Abta told JTA. They confiscated his passport, cellphone and cigarettes, and refused to tell him where they were taking him, Abta said. They wouldn't

let him answer the phone as his wife called repeatedly—"frantically," she told JTA.

Eventually they walked Abta through the airport to his connecting flight. Other passengers stared as the bearded Israeli, surrounded by uniformed officers, was ushered to the gate.

Now Abta is in Israel while his wife remains in Las Vegas finishing a master's degree that will, ironically, equip her to counsel opioid addicts. They desperately want to be reunited, both told JTA in separate interviews.

Abta appears to be the lone cannabis industry worker expelled from the United States due to a gap between federal and state law. Federal U.S. law deems any involvement in the marijuana industry illegal, while Nevada is one of 29 states and the District of Columbia where credentialed doctors can prescribe cannabis. Israel is a worldwide leader in research on its medical uses and Abta's former employer, Tikun Olam Ltd., is one of Israel's largest suppliers of medical cannabis and a major presence in the U.S. market, providing its technology and expertise to growers and manufacturers here.

Specialists in immigration law and in the U.S. and Israeli cannabis industries say Abta

is the only person they know of who has been caught in the breach between federal and state law.

"I haven't heard of anyone being deported for that," said Saul Kaye, founder and CEO of iCan: Israel-Cannabis, which promotes Israel's industry overseas.

Abta's "voluntary" removal comes at a time when the Trump administration has demonstrated great zeal for deporting foreign citizens.

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service, or USCIS—the Department of Homeland Security arm tasked with processing Green Cards—sent Abta a letter dated Dec. 20 denying his application for a Green Card. According to the letter, the "USCIS has determined that you are an illicit trafficker of controlled substances. Therefore, you are inadmissible to the United States. There is no waiver for this inadmissibility."

His wife, who asked not to be named to preserve her privacy, said she nor her husband want him arrested, "and definitely not on false charges."

"Everything he was doing was legal," she said. "He was basically defamed, calling him a drug trafficker. He's a scientist."

"Part of what made me fall

in love with him is a real desire to improve people's quality of life when they have chronic illnesses."

Asked about Abta's case, USCIS spokeswoman Maria Elena Upson said, "While many states have changed their laws to make the sale and possession of marijuana legal under certain circumstances, immigration law requires the agency to apply federal law in adjudicating these cases... [A]s a federal agency, we are legally unable to make special considerations in these cases unless or until federal law is changed."

Abta's immigration lawyer, Ed Prudhomme, told JTA that "to threaten to file a trafficking felony charge against this guy was just unconscionable," adding that "having the charge of felony trafficking would be a forever bar" to Abta's returning to the United States. Prudhomme has filed an appeal and asked that Abta's case be reopened.

That, experts say, will be an uphill battle.

"Now that he has left the U.S., it becomes much more difficult for him to get permission to return," said Angie Junck, supervising attorney at the Immigrant Legal Resource Center, which advises lawmakers and attorneys on immigration policy. "It concerns me that he accepted his own removal. ... You're held to higher standards once you leave."

Abta's case illustrates "overreach and overcriminalization [of marijuana] at the federal level, using it as leverage against individuals," Junck said. This is "a very difficult case. He has many hurdles to overcome."

U.S. Customs and Border Protection spokesman Jaime Ruiz said that Abta can file a complaint online about his treatment by CBP officers or at the U.S. Embassy in Israel.

CBP "officers treat all travelers with integrity, respect and professionalism. CBP officers follow strict national standards regarding the transport and detention of travelers deemed inadmissible in the U.S.," Ruiz wrote in a statement. "The use of restraints on detainees during transport is conducted in a manner that is safe, secure, humane, and professional. Without compromising their safety, CBP officers remain cognizant of an individual's religious beliefs while accomplishing an enforcement action in a dignified and respectful manner. If a traveler believes that CBP officers acted unprofessionally, they can file a complaint. CPB tracks and records all complaints and resolves them if possible."

Another CPB employee told JTA that handcuffing foreign nationals deemed inadmissible is "standard operating procedure. You don't know how they're going to react. They might try to flee. Use of restraints does not mean that you have committed a crime. It is a preventative measure."

Abta -- whose name in Hebrew is pronounced Avta and is occasionally spelled that way by family members -- first came to the U.S. in

April 2016 and lived in an apartment rented by Tikun Olam. Between then and January 2017, when he married, Abta made seven or eight round trips between Las Vegas and Israel on behalf of his employer, he told JTA. Each time he entered the United States on a B-1 visa, issued for work purposes, he told border patrol agents he was an agronomist for an Israeli medical cannabis company.

"It was never a problem," Abta said.

A few months into his life in the U.S., one client, CW Nevada, which has licensed Tikun Olam's cultivation technologies and intellectual property, told Abta he needed a Nevada state medical marijuana staff identification card to be able to come into their facilities. About a month after filling out a simple form, Abta received a state-issued medical marijuana staff ID. CW Nevada is listed as a cultivation facility and his employer, though he was never an employee there.

Abta and Prudhomme are trying to get a letter from CW and one from Tikun Olam making clear his relationship with each, they told JTA in separate interviews. But both companies are worried about legal trouble and thus far have left Abta out to dry, Prudhomme said.

Abta said he quit Tikun Olam in August. According to Prudhomme, the company said he was fired.

No official from CW Nevada, Tikun Olam Israel or Tikun Olam USA responded to multiple requests for comment sent over 10 days by email, direct message and phone message.

Once Abta married and knew he would apply for a green card, he returned to Israel to close his apartment because once individuals apply, they cannot leave the U.S. until they are issued travel documents.

Abta also claims he received legally compromising counsel from a woman he thought was an immigration lawyer. Abta heard about Eugenia Schall from an Israeli he met at a Las Vegas restaurant, he told JTA, and entrusted her to submit his Green Card application. Public records list Schall as president of Coast to Coast Visa & Immigration Service in Valley Village, California.

Abta said Schall told him he needed to submit a government-issued ID with the paperwork. The only one he had was the Nevada state medical marijuana staff ID. She submitted it.

But Schall is no attorney. The company website, which is mostly in Cyrillic, says it gets people visas to Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Armenia.

"We are not attorneys and are not a law firm. We do not give legal advice," the website says.

The company did not respond to several phone and email inquiries from JTA.

Had Abta "been working with immigration attorneys of good standing, they would have advised him to provide proof of status other than a medical marijuana ID card,"

said cannabis industry analyst John Kagia, executive vice president of industry analytics at New Frontier Data. "Given that it's not recognized at the federal level would raise eyebrows and additional scrutiny."

On Sept. 30, Abta had his U.S.-issued travel document, called an advance parole, stolen from a Las Vegas hotel. He filed a police report.

In December, his brother-in-law contracted a life-threatening neurological disease and Abta rushed to Israel to be with his family. He wasn't supposed to leave the country without the advance parole card. He had a police report but had not replaced the card.

Upon returning to the United States on Dec. 14, Abta was questioned for several hours by officials at the San Francisco airport but eventually released. The next day was his first Green Card interview. Five days later the government issued its letter of denial.

"I haven't heard of another case like this," Kagia said. "The lack of familiarity with legal cannabis within immigration enforcement agencies coupled with the proactively aggressive approach that the Department of Justice is taking means that participation in this industry will be looked at with greater scrutiny than under previous administrations."

Eitan Weiss, deputy chief of mission at Israel's Los Angeles consulate, said the consulate cannot help Abta.

"This entire story is something we have no jurisdiction over," Weiss told JTA. "I can't come to the American administration and say they have mistreated him."

He added: "The only thing Israeli consulates can do is help Israelis in case of emergencies. We can't help them more than that."

Now Abta is stuck in Israel rather than living with his wife of just a year. Both say they want only to be reunited. Last year they bought a five-bedroom Las Vegas house hoping to fill it with children. But that doesn't seem likely anytime soon. Neither understands why.

His wife said she has started the process for making aliyah with Nefesh B'Nefesh, an agency that facilitates moves to Israel, but doesn't really want to go.

"I have to finish my studies here," she told JTA. "And this is my country."

She has started a Change.org petition addressed to President Donald Trump and other elected officials. More than 850 people signed the petition in its first four days online.

At his immigration interviews, Abta "kept saying he worked for a company in Israel, didn't do anything in America," his wife said. "He was an expert witness on multiple cases for the police in Israel cracking down on illegal marijuana."

"If my husband is being labeled a drug trafficker because he had a marijuana staff card, then what is everyone in the state of Nevada?"



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Weekly roundup of world briefs from JTA

Republican Party in Illinois rejects Holocaust denier nominee for Congress

(JTA)—A Holocaust denier, anti-Semite and white supremacist is about to become the Republican nominee for an Illinois congressional seat.

Arthur Jones, a perennial candidate since the 1990s for the 3rd Congressional District representing parts of Chicago and its southwestern suburbs, in a political fluke is the only Republican candidate on the ballot, the Chicago Sun-Times reported Sunday. The primary will be held on March 20.

Jones, 70, is a retired insurance salesman. His website for this congressional run, Art Jones for Congressman, says by way of introduction: "I am not now, nor have I ever been a follower of any political party, though I am a registered Republican."

A section of the site headed "Holocaust?" says that "The idea that 'Six Million Jews' were killed by the Nationalist Socialist government of Germany in World War II is the biggest blackest lie in history." It also calls the Holocaust a "racket" designed to "bleed, blackmail, extort and terrorize the enemies of organized world Jewry into silence or submissiveness to Zionism and communism—both movements founded, financed and led by Jews."

Jones is a former leader of the American Nazi Party and now heads a group called the America First Committee, which he told the Sun-Times is "open to any white American citizen of European, non-Jewish descent."

Tim Schneider, chairman of the Illinois Republican Party, said in a statement to the Sun-Times: "The Illinois Republican Party and our country have no place for Nazis like Arthur Jones. We strongly oppose his racist views and his candidacy for any public office, including the 3rd Congressional District."

In 2016, Jones was removed from the district's GOP ballot in legal actions engineered by the Illinois Republican Party, which determined that his nominating petitions had too many faulty signatures, according to the Sun-Times. This time, Jones was more careful to have valid signatures and could not be thrown off the ballot.

The district is one of the most heavily Democratic in the state, and Jones will most likely be defeated in the November race. The Republican Party does not invest heavily in fielding a candidate for the district since he or she likely will lose, which is how Jones came to be the only candidate.

Jones said last spring in a speech to a National Socialist Movement gathering that he was sorry he voted for President Donald Trump, who has "surrounded himself with hordes of Jews," including his Jewish son-in-law Jared Kushner, the Sun-Times reported, citing a YouTube recording of the speech.

Blaze Bernstein's high school classmate pleads not guilty to murder

(JTA)—A former high school classmate of Blaze Bernstein, 19, the Jewish college student found dead in a park near his parents' Southern

California home, pleaded not guilty to murder charges.

Samuel Woodward, 20, of Newport Beach, California, was ordered held on \$5 million bail, after he issued his plea on Friday in Orange County Superior Court. It was raised from \$2 million after the judge determined that the teen was a flight risk. If he makes bail he will be under several restrictions, including GPS monitoring, a curfew and a protective order for the Bernstein family.

He will return to court on March 2, according to reports.

Woodward was charged last month with murder. The felony murder charge included a sentence enhancement for using a knife.

The Orange County Register, citing a search warrant affidavit obtained by the newspaper, reported that Bernstein had been stabbed more than 20 times, leading authorities to investigate whether the teen was killed in an act of rage. Bernstein was gay and is believed to have been pursuing a romantic relationship with Woodward.

Woodward was arrested after crime lab technicians determined that blood found on a sleeping bag in his possession belonged to Bernstein, the Register reported. The murder weapon reportedly has not been found. Woodward could face a maximum sentence of 26 years to life in state prison.

Woodward is an "avowed Nazi" and a member of Atomwaffen Division, an extremist neo-Nazi group, the ProPublica news website reported.

There was no evidence that the two were friends at the Orange County School of the Arts, where they attended high school.

Bernstein had been visiting his parents' home in Lake Forest while on winter break from the University of Pennsylvania. His body was discovered in a shallow grave in Borrego Park on Jan. 9, a week after he went missing from there. Hundreds attended a candlelight vigil in his memory after the discovery was announced.

The family announced on a website established in Blaze's memory that it will hold later this month "#BlazeIt-Forward: A Tribute to Blaze Bernstein and a Communal Call for Kindness." The event scheduled for Feb. 25 in Costa Mesa, California, will include recognition of police and volunteers who helped in the search for the teen; and readings of selected writings by Blaze.

Blaze's mother Jeanne Pepper wrote in a first-person article last week that in the face of Blaze's murder, she and her husband "realized that we had an opportunity to set an example for people everywhere. To show them how even in the face of tragedy and loss, there is something better to concentrate on rather than bitterness, revenge, self-pity, and regret. We wanted people to embrace love, tolerance, and kindness; to do good. Our goal was to repair our broken world one child at a time, one kind act at a time, one day at a time. For us specifically, we decided to use the platform we were given as Blaze's parents to fulfill his destiny to make the world a better place."

Janet Yellen: I would have liked to serve another term as head of Federal Reserve

(JTA)—Janet Yellen said she was disappointed that President Donald Trump did not keep her on for a second term as Federal Reserve chairwoman.

"I would have liked to serve an additional term and I did make that clear, so I will say I was disappointed not to be reappointed," Yellen told "PBS NewsHour" on Friday.

Yellen officially ended her four-year term on Saturday. She had submitted her resignation from the board of governors of the Federal Reserve in November after Trump, in a break with tradition, did not reappoint her. Trump instead nominated current Federal Reserve Governor Jerome Powell to take over as head of the central bank.

Yellen, 71, could have chosen to remain a governor, since she was appointed to the board by President Barack Obama for an unexpired term ending in 2024. However, The Wall Street Journal reported that she chose to leave for a position at a fiscal think tank. Starting Monday, Yellen will become a distinguished fellow in residence in economic studies at the Hutchins Center on Fiscal and Monetary Policy at the Brookings Institution.

Ben Bernanke, Yellen's predecessor, also is a fellow at the Washington, D.C., center.

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump alleged that Yellen kept interest rates low for political reasons to benefit Obama.

Yellen was the first woman and the fourth Jew to serve as Fed chair. She and her husband, George Akerlof, a 2001 Nobel economics laureate, were active in the Bay Area Jewish community when Akerlof taught at the University of California, Berkeley.

Israel begins distributing deportation notices to African migrants

JERUSALEM (JTA)—Israel began the process of serving deportation notices to African refugees from Eritrea and Sudan.

The notices started being distributed on Sunday, according to reports.

The first notices will be issued to single men without children, a total of about 20,000 men. The men, who have to renew their residence visas every two months, are receiving the deportation notices with their visa renewal. They have been threatened with indefinite incarceration if they do not leave.

Israel's Cabinet last month approved a plan and the budget to deport thousands of migrants from Sudan and Eritrea.

Prior to that, the Population and Immigration Authority notified migrants from Sudan and Eritrea that as of Jan. 1, they must return to their own countries or to a third nation, or be sent to jail until they are deported. According to the government plan, migrants who choose to leave by March 31 will receive a payment of \$3,500 as well as free airfare and other incentives, according to reports.

For now, deportation notices will not be issued to women, children, fathers of children, anyone recognized

as a victim of slavery or human trafficking, and those who had requested asylum by the end of 2017 but haven't gotten a response, Haaretz reported.

There currently are up to 40,000 Eritreans and Sudanese living in Israel, including 5,000 children.

Human rights activists in Israel and major U.S. Jewish organizations have urged the government not to go ahead with the plan to force the migrants to choose between jail and deportation.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday reportedly told government ministers from his party that Jewish billionaire George Soros is funding a protest campaign against Israel's deportation plan.

"George Soros is also funding the protests. Obama deported two million infiltrators and they didn't say anything," Haaretz reported.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban last year ran a government campaign against Soros, accusing him of lobbying to settle millions of migrants in Hungary and other European countries.

Israel woos Walmart with a promise of eased 'regulatory burdens'

JERUSALEM (JTA)—Israel appears to be wooing Walmart.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu spoke to senior Walmart Inc. executive John Furner at a meeting on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum last month in Davos, Switzerland, Bloomberg reported, citing Netanyahu's economic adviser Avi Simhon.

Netanyahu and Furner reportedly discussed the idea of Walmart opening a retail branch in Israel and also of the company investing in Israeli technologies, Simhon told Bloomberg.

Simhon, who was present at the meeting, said Netanyahu offered to "ease regulatory burdens wherever possible to make the market more accessible to them."

In November, reports surfaced that Amazon was in talks to lease at least 270,000 square feet of warehouses to set up a retail shipping center in Israel, and also had plans to launch a targeted website for Israeli consumers.

Otto Warmbier's father will attend Olympics opening with Vice President Mike Pence

(JTA)—The father of Otto Warmbier, the University of Virginia student imprisoned by North Korea who died after being sent back comatose to the United States, will attend the Winter Olympics opening ceremonies in South Korea as a guest of Vice President Mike Pence.

Pence will lead the U.S. delegation at the ceremonies on Friday in Pyeongchang following his five-day trip to Japan and South Korea. The Washington Post first reported that Warmbier will accompany the vice president at the Olympics.

The vice president's trip is part of a U.S. pressure campaign on North Korea against its nuclear ambitions, according to the newspaper.

Warmbier, 22, a Cincinnati native, was traveling on a student tour of North Korea in early 2016 when he was

arrested and sentenced to 15 years of hard labor for stealing a propaganda poster. After international outrage and over a year of imprisonment, North Korea released Warmbier in June, saying his health had deteriorated after a bout of botulism. Warmbier's doctors said he suffered extensive brain damage. He died on June 19, 2017, in Cincinnati.

The family had hidden Warmbier's Jewishness during negotiations for his return. Warmbier, whose mother is Jewish, became active at the University of Virginia campus Hillele following a 2014 Birthright trip to Israel.

Fred and Cindy Warmbier attended President Donald Trump's State of the Union address last week as guests of the president and first lady Melania Trump, where they received a standing ovation during the speech

Palestinian stabs Israeli father of 4 to death in West Bank

JERUSALEM (JTA)—An Israeli father of four was fatally stabbed in the West Bank settlement of Ariel.

Israeli security forces are searching the area for the Palestinian assailant in the Monday afternoon attack, the Israel Defense Forces spokesman said. An IDF officer who identified the attacker began to pursue him in his vehicle and hit him, but the attacker still was able to flee, according to the IDF.

The attacker's backpack was found on the scene containing a change of clothes and his identification card, as well as personal items. Hebrew-language media later reported that the attacker, Ais Abed El-Hakim, 19, is an Israeli citizen and resident of Jaffa, the son of an Israeli mother from Haifa and a Palestinian father from Nablus.

The victim, identified as Rabbi Itamar Ben Gal, 29, from the nearby settlement of Har Bracha, was stabbed multiple times on his upper body at a bus stop near the entrance to Ariel. Paramedics worked to resuscitate him on the way to a hospital in central Israel, where he was pronounced dead.

The mayor of Ariel, Eli Shaviro, called on the Israeli government to impose sovereignty over Jewish settlements in the West Bank, calling it the "answer to Palestinian terrorism."

Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon, calls on the Security Council to "unequivocally condemn" the attack. "Instead of inviting Mahmoud Abbas to address the Security Council to disseminate lies and hate, the Council should unequivocally condemn this attack and demand that he stop paying stipends to terrorists," he said in a statement. Abbas, the president of the Palestinian Authority, is scheduled to deliver a speech to the council later this month, addressing the United States' recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

Hamas reportedly praised the deadly stabbing attack, calling it "proof that the al-Quds intifada continues."

Colombia extradites Israeli for drug and human trafficking

RIO DE JANEIRO (JTA)—An Israeli citizen accused of

belonging to an international crime organization was captured and extradited from Colombia.

Binyamin Cohen, 35, was extradited on Sunday and will face trial in Israel on drug trafficking charges. He had been arrested in Medellin, Colombia's second largest city, on crimes including arms trafficking, car robbery, home burglary, human trafficking and smuggling cocaine from the South American country to the Jewish state, the local news website El Caracol reported.

In 2013, Cohen was sentenced to 392 days in prison for attempted homicide but he reportedly did not serve the term.

In November, another Israeli was expelled from Colombia accused of running illegal sex tourism. Assi Ben-Mosh, 43, allegedly led a network that offered trips with drugs and underage prostitutes. He is banned from returning to Colombia for 10 years.

Colombia is home to some 3,500 Jews in a population of about 49 million.

Sam Bloch, a leader of the Holocaust survivor community, dies at 94

(JTA)—Sam Bloch, a Holocaust survivor who committed much of his life to ensuring that the murder of millions of Jews would not be denied and the lives they led would not be forgotten, has died.

Bloch, who was an executive of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency for 50 years, died Sunday. He was 94.

He was one of the principal organizers of historic survivor gatherings in Jerusalem, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and New York. The New York Times published a lengthy article about Bloch and his family in 1981 as they prepared to attend the World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Jerusalem.

"Memory strengthens our humanity, makes us better persons to one another, to our children," Bloch told The Times. "Maybe we don't smile or laugh as others do, but we cherish our lives; they were so hard won."

Bloch was a founder of Beit Hatfutsot: The Museum of the Jewish People (then known as the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora) and served as chairman of the American Friends of Beit Hatfutsot and a member of its Board of Governors. For many years he was also a member of the board of directors of the American Section of the World Jewish Congress.

In addition, Bloch was a founding member of the International Society for Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust remembrance authority, and a founder of the American Friends of the IDF.

Bloch was born in Ivie, Poland, in what today is Belarus. He attended high school in Vilna, and was home on a school break when World War II broke out, according to information provided by his family. His father was murdered by the Einsatzgruppen Nazi mobile killing unit, and Bloch, his mother and brother escaped from the Jewish ghetto and hid first with Christian farmers and then in the woods.

Meet the 90-year-old great-grandmother who is the new face of JDate



Bea Slater in front of some ads in which she is featured.

By Elaine Durbach

WHIPPANY, N.J. (New Jersey Jewish News via JTA)—If Bea Slater had ever been a shrinking violet, her sudden celebrity might be uncomfortable. At 90, the great-grandmother has her image plastered on billboards and bus shelters up and down Manhattan and in Brooklyn. There's even one on the roof above Junior's, the famous cheesecake place.

Along with three other women nearly as old as she, she has become the face of JDate, the Jewish matchmaking site. They're not poster

girls for senior dating. Rather, JDate is promoting their images to suggest that it is "yentas" like them who are working out the site's algorithms to find that perfect match. One ad, featuring Slater hard at work on a laptop, reads "Her dreidel game is filthy. But her code is clean." (Translation: She's a great dreidel player, and even better at writing computer code.)

The "Powered by Yentas" concept came from copywriter and standup comedian David Roth, who produced the campaign with Hogarth Worldwide for JDate's parent company, Spark Networks

SE. Roth said grandmothers have labored forever to ensure that young Jews meet and procreate in order to sustain the tribe.

"Bea was an instant star," he said. "She has one of the most expressive and comedic faces I've ever seen. We had an embarrassment of riches—so many funny photos of Bea to choose from. She was hilarious on set and an absolute delight to work with."

Slater, not a coder though a savvy computer-literate social media user, is taking her celebrity status in stride, loving every aspect and eager for more. Chatting in her home in

Springfield, New Jersey, where she has lived for 65 years, she talked more readily about her family (two sons, Mitch and Jeff Slater; a daughter, Diane Bedrin; four grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren), but was content to answer questions about how she is enjoying her newfound fame.

"When my picture is up in the subway, then I'll really be a star," she said.

Though she has never modeled professionally—and the last time she did any acting was in eighth grade—posing came easily. Slater, who grew up in West Philadelphia, was a much-pictured daughter of a photographer. She became a photographer herself when she grew up, at least until she turned her focus to raising her kids. Almost every wall in her home is adorned with family photos, assembled and collaged by her father and, after he passed away, by her husband Jack, who died in 2009.

In November, a friend mentioned to her son Mitch that JDate was trying to find older women for a marketing campaign. He told his older brother, Jeff, a marketing executive, who initially dismissed the idea, sure their mom wouldn't be up for it. But the younger brother, a financial adviser, called back Jeff within minutes to let him know that not only did he decide to broach the subject with their mother, but Bea had agreed on the spot.

"I said, 'You never

know...'"—which happens to be her response to virtually every question.

It's a principle she applies to herself as well as those around her. A few years ago, Slater persuaded her granddaughter Fanny Slater to enter TV personality and celebrity cook Rachael Ray's "Great American Cookbook Competition." Slater was in the audience when Fanny was named the winner, and in February, both grandmother and granddaughter will appear on "The Best Thing I Ever Ate," a show on the Cooking Channel.

A few months ago Mitch, who has a wide circle of friends in showbiz, including Bruce Springsteen and his cohort, arranged for his mother to introduce Steve Van Zandt (of the Boss's E Street Band) and his band, Little Steven and the Disciples of Soul, at a concert on Staten Island. She admitted to being nervous standing alone in the spotlight (with the protective Mitch hovering nearby).

"I didn't want to disappoint Steve," she recalled. Later, to her astonishment, Slater was mobbed by fans who wanted to take selfies with her.

Slater was chosen by the Donna Grossman Casting Agency. Speaking for Grossman and her team, Paul Bernstein said they auditioned approximately 40 women, though many more applied. They were looking for "authentic Jewish grandmothers in their late 80s to 90s," Bernstein said, and Slater and

her co-stars stood out because of "their heart, their humor, style. They all had their own chutzpah and heimische feel."

The photographs for JDate were taken by Randal Ford, a sought-after commercial photographer.

Some 60 years ago, Slater and her husband helped co-found their synagogue, Temple Shaarey Shalom, the Reform congregation near her home. It was a big part of their and their children's lives. Going on without Jack was a challenge, Bea acknowledged, and many of her friends are gone, too, or not as youthful as she is. Still, she attends the temple's Renaissance Club, drives (though not at night) and keeps up an active social life. And now she's auditioning for other advertising campaigns.

Asked what Jack would make of her celebrity, Slater laughed.

"He'd have said, 'Do you know what you're getting yourself into?' He was much more conservative than me," she said.

As for using JDate herself, she is adamant that she has "absolutely no interest in meeting anyone. I'd never find anyone as good as what I had."

But like so many Jewish grandmothers, Slater is eager to help others find love.

"There should be more money next time, though," she added, with exactly the kind of twinkle in her eyes that got her the JDate gig in the first place.

Chabad

From page 1A

For Litzman, the Olympics serve as a way to reach more people and expand Chabad's work in the country.

"It's a great pleasure," he said. "This is something that we have been waiting for. It's a great opportunity for us to expand our services and to grow and

to learn how to be able to host many people."

Until the Chabad house opened in 2008, the only Jewish services were at the U.S. Army base in the capital, according to a website for expats. Today, the Chabad house serves as a resource not only to Jews but non-Jews as well. "There are many Koreans coming here on a daily basis. They want to learn about Judaism, to buy kosher food, ask questions, [receive] guidance," Litzman said. "We invite them to come whenever they want during the weekdays."

Non-Jewish South Koreans have various reasons for wanting to learn about Judaism, he said.

"Some are just astonished by the fact that we have so many enemies and we still survive and we thrive,"

Litzman said, "and others are thinking about the fact that many Jews are successful and in monetary areas they are trying to figure out how to do it."

Others, he added, want to learn about the Torah or Talmud, or come because they love Israel or have had positive experiences with Jewish people.

South Koreans who want to learn about Hebrew and Israel have another place to go as well: the Israel Culture Center in Seoul. The venue teaches Hebrew and promotes Israeli culture, sometimes holding events with the Israeli Embassy. Founded in 2000, some 3,000 students have studied Hebrew—both modern and biblical—at the center, a representative told JTA in an email. The center also has a Jewish studies

library that is open to the public.

"Israel Culture Center will continuously work hard to be a place where Israel's unique culture is introduced to Koreans and significant friendship is being birthed between Koreans and Israelis," the representative said.

South Koreans' fascination with Judaism has been widely documented.

"Each Korean family has at least one copy of the Talmud," the country's then-ambassador to Israel, Young-sam Ma, told an Israeli TV host in 2011. "Korean mothers want to know how so many Jewish people became geniuses." (A New Yorker reporter who followed up on the claim suggested that he meant a one-volume popularization of the vast, multi-volume compendium of Jewish law and lore,

and, indeed, found it at most of the bookstores he visited.)

Many South Koreans have a positive view of Israel. Some 800 South Koreans live in the Jewish state, with many more going there to study Hebrew and the Bible. Most of these enthusiasts are drawn to Israel because of their religious beliefs as evangelical Christians. Christianity is the largest organized religion in South Korea, with nearly 30 percent of the population identifying as Christians.

Unlike many Chabad emissaries, Litzman said he and his family do not have to deal with safety concerns and anti-Semitism.

"We feel blessed to be in such a country that there is admiration to Jews and especially to Israel," he said, "and in general Korea is a very safe country."

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Authors

From page 1A

an adult title, "A Knitter's Home Companion."

Pam Jenoff is the author of several novels, including the international bestseller "The Kommandant's Girl," which also earned her a Quill Award nomination.

Paul Goldberg is the author of "The Yid" and two books on the Soviet human rights movement, and has co-authored (with Otis Brawley) the book "How We Do Harm." He is the editor and publisher of The Cancer Letter, a publication focused on the business and politics of cancer.

Justin Loeber is a self-made entrepreneur with a true American spirit. an SVP, Executive Marketing

and publicity director at Judith Regan's imprint, ReganMedia/HarperCollins. Loeber has spearheaded publicity campaigns for a ton of bold face names: Michael Jordan, Lawrence Taylor, Cindy Crawford, Olympia Dukakis, Tommy Lee, Pamela Anderson, Anthony Bourdain, Ewan McGregor, Gloria Allred, Marlo Thomas, Wanda Sykes, LeRoy Neiman, Blair Underwood, Jon Gruden, Leon Uris, Celia Cruz, Bill Blass, and Dr. Andrew Weil. Promoted key health and wellness programs at The Kripalu Center for Yoga & Health, the largest retreat center in North America. He was also instrumental in brokering book deals for many, including John Leguizamo's

Pimps, Hos, Playa Hatas, and All the Rest of My Hollywood Friends (Ecco) and Kenny Loggins' Footloose (Quarto).

The day will feature the four Jewish authors in three time slots: PJ Library children's book author, Michelle Edwards (11:15 a.m.—12:15 p.m.). This is a free event featuring kid-friendly story time; a panel discussion with award-winning fiction authors Pam Jenoff and Paul Goldberg (1 p.m.—2 p.m.), who will give a behind-the-scenes look into a few of their best sellers and a look into the lives of an author; and a discussion with self-management expert and veteran publisher Justin Loeber (2 p.m.—3 p.m.), who's recent book, "Get out of Your Own

Way Guide to Life," helps readers to overcome personal obstacles, fear and stereotypes and reach their goals.

General admission tickets are \$10 per talk (open seating), with a VIP reserved seating in the first two rows ticket option of \$30 for all three talks. Package price of \$15 for two sessions.

Tickets can be purchased at www.orlandojcc.org/book-fest. Any media questions can be directed to Leah Sandler, Cultural Arts coordinator for The Roth Family JCC of Greater Orlando.

There will be complimentary babysitting at the JCC for children ages 2-12; advanced registration is required and is done at the time of ticket purchase.

Poles

From page 1A

would open an “immediate dialogue” over the legislation.

Eight U.S. members of Congress signed a joint letter on the legislation to Duda. The American lawmakers point out that Poland was one of the countries that suffered the most during World War II, and recall the merits of many Poles who, despite the threat of the death, saved Jews.

“However, many cases have also been documented where Poles—directly or indirectly—assisted the Nazis in murdering innocent Jews. Punishing anyone for talking about these facts would be an injustice,” the lawmakers wrote.

Patryk Jaki, the author of the legislation, said during debate in the Polish Senate that “Poland was the only occupied country in which no local SS group was active, there was no institutional cooperation with Hitler, which there was in stronger countries.”

Jaki said that Polish citizens tried to sue German newspapers for use of the term “Polish death camps,” but the courts refused because citizens did not have the right to appear on behalf of the state.

In January, a German court in Koblenz issued a verdict ordering ZDF television to apologize for using the term “Polish death camps.” The station had been sued by former Auschwitz inmate Karol Tendera. The court in Koblenz found that there had been a violation of Tendera’s personal rights and ordered publication of the apology. ZDF may appeal the judgment.

Jaki wants the Poles to show their successes in saving Jews and talk about heroes, such as Witold Pilecki, who informed the world about Auschwitz, and publicize the Righteous Among the Nations who saved Jews and the Polish people who helped in deciphering Nazi code.

Jaki said that no one could have predicted Israel’s reaction to the legislation.

“No one was aware that Israel would protest at all,” he said. “There was no signal over that last year that there would be a protest against this law. How could we know? The ambassador’s task was to signal if she has any comments. Let us assume that if there is a dispute, Poland is not always guilty. Let’s look at what words Israeli politicians are using towards Poland now.”

Jaki said he was meeting intensively with Israeli Ambassador Anna Azari, but they were mainly talking about reprivatization of Jewish property and assets.

Jan Dziejczak, secretary of state in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said the new law is part of a struggle for Poland’s reputation on the international stage.

“Our country always stood on the side of the weaker: We first said ‘no’ to Hitler and did not collaborate,” he said. The Polish Underground State unambiguously decided to save Jews. We know it, but now the world has a different picture.”

Dziejczak dismissed comments by Israeli lawmaker Yair Lapid, the son of a Holocaust survivor, who said there was complicity by Poles in the Holocaust.

“This is the proof that this law is essential,” said the Polish official.

The deputy speaker of the Senate, Bogdan Borusewicz, filed a proposal to reject the new law. He said that Jewish organizations in the U.S. supported Polish efforts to join NATO and “fought with the term ‘Polish camps’ with us.”

“This is our most important ally. Now we are entering into conflict with the United States,” he said. “This law makes the seams of anti-Semitism that are in the Polish nation come to the surface. The Polish government is responsible for this.”

Senate Speaker Stanisław Karczewski said the legislation was written “to look after the good name of Poland.”

“We want the Jews to be our friends. We will meet, debate, talk,” he said.

The U.S. State Department on Wednesday criticized the Polish legislation, which it said “could undermine free speech and academic discourse.” According to the State Department’s statement, the bill “could have [repercussions] on Poland’s strategic interests and relationships—including with the United States and Israel. The resulting divisions that may arise among our allies benefit only our rivals.”

Meanwhile, a demonstration of Polish national organizations planned Wednesday in front of the Israeli Embassy in Warsaw did not take place. The organizers canceled the event after officials issued a ban on closing streets near the embassy. The ban is valid until Feb. 5. Nationalists said they would meet on social media instead of at the embassy.

Lawmaker Robert Winnicki, who heads an ultranationalist organization in Poland, in a news conference in the Sejm on Wednesday said that “Poland has been

subject of attack by the Israeli elite and Jewish circles in the world for many days.” He said making it impossible to organize a demonstration next to the Israeli Embassy is to limit the “voice of citizens who wanted to defend Polish dignity.” Winnicki called the decision “scandalous and unacceptable.”

“It’s false that we had an excellent relationship with Israel,” he said. “We really had a unilateral unrequited love of the Polish political class to Israel.” The lawmaker urged the Polish government to “rise from its knees in its relations with Israel.”

Winnicki also said he resents that an amendment to the Act on the Institute of National Remembrance was reviewed with the Israeli ambassador. He also called Poland a “hostage” to the United States.

“We have a lot to do with Arab countries,” he said. “It is not our business to stand by Israel’s side. We must behave with dignity.”

The 35

From page 5A

The battle lasted all day and it’s believed that the Jewish soldiers were trying to hold out until night when the Arabs would have to retreat for reinforcements. But they ran out of ammunition and were outnumbered by the hundreds, so much so that they took to defending themselves with stones.

The following day, when the bodies were recovered by then-occupying British forces, they noted that some of the Jewish soldiers died

even with rocks in their hand. Many of the men’s bodies were mutilated beyond recognition as part of the Arab “celebration” of their victory.

Eulogizing the 35 brave soldiers, David Ben-Gurion who would become Israel’s first prime minister said, “If there exists a Jewish Jerusalem, our foremost thanks go to the defenders of Gush Etzion.” Even Sheikh Ibrihim from the Arab village of Jab’a who took part in the battle praised the 35, “If I am to die, I want to die like these heroes.”

While the battle was a tremendous physical loss and diminished morale, the battle had a tremendous psychological effect on the Arabs. They resisted attacking the Jewish communities further citing fear that more Jewish soldiers would be coming to provide reinforcements, and noting that based on how heroically the 35 men fought, the Arabs would never be able to win.

The Israeli communities were able to hang on until they were overrun by well-trained Jordanian forces along

with the Arab irregulars. On May 13, the day before Israel declared independence, all but a handful of the final defenders of these communities were viciously slaughtered.

After the 1967 Six Day War, Israel was able to reclaim Gush Etzion where these communities had thrived, and have now been rebuilt and thrive again.

Recently, after a long case, Israel’s Supreme Court affirmed that the land on which these communities were founded and reestablished are privately owned Jewish land,

undermining claims that they are somehow “occupied” or Jews have no historical presence there.

It’s incredible to live in this part of the Land of Israel where literally we follow in the footsteps of our biblical ancestors and modern day heroes. There’s a wonderful book that chronicles much of the history of the life and, ultimately, destruction of these communities called “Siege in the Hills of Hebron.”

Please be in touch and come visit and be inspired yourself.

Jonathan Feldstein was born and educated in the U.S. and immigrated to Israel in 2004. He is married and the father of six. He has a three-decade career in nonprofit fundraising and marketing and throughout his life and career, he has become a respected bridge between Jews and Christians. He writes regularly on major Christian web sites about Israel and shares experiences of living as an Orthodox Jew in Israel. He can be reached at FirstPersonIsrael@gmail.com.

Nominee

From page 7A

Simon Wiesenthal Center, said his group might also oppose Marcus on discrete issues, but his position at the forefront of a signature issue for the center—advancing a definition of anti-Semitism that includes some anti-Israel postures—made endorsing him a no-brainer.

“The problems that we have with the history of the [Education Department’s] civil rights division is its failure to in any way, shape or form take seriously kids when

they come with complaints of anti-Semitism,” Cooper said in an interview. “Ken Marcus is uniquely qualified to fill that gap.”

Marcus’ extensive experience combating anti-Semitism also led to his endorsement by B’nai B’rith International.

“We’ve communicated with Education Department officials in recent years and had to spend a certain amount of time explaining the problem, identifying manifestations of anti-Semitism and explaining that some things they

see as political dispute” are anti-Semitism, said Eric Fusfield, the group’s director of legislative affairs. “With Ken Marcus, there’s no need to have that discussion because he authored the book on anti-Semitism.”

(Notably, Jewish Women International, which is an offshoot of B’nai B’rith, has joined with another offshoot, BBYO, in developing anti-harassment programs.)

Marcus is a conservative; he worked in similar civil rights capacities for the George W. Bush administra-

tion. An array of right-wing Jewish groups wrote to the committee urging his nomination, among them the Zionist Organization of America, Americans for a Safe Israel and CAMERA.

Decades ago, conservative or liberal credentials would not be a barrier to bipartisan approval. Lawmakers once agreed that a Democratic or a Republican president’s choices should be considered based on their qualifications and only in rare instances ideology. In those days, the AJC’s Stern said, opposition

to school integration might disqualify a candidate, but little short of that.

The officials at centrist groups that have endorsed Marcus, like the AJC, the Wiesenthal Center and B’nai B’rith, decried the polarization that frustrated their efforts to increase bipartisan support for Marcus. (The Anti-Defamation League declined multiple requests for comment on the Marcus nomination.) Stern likened liberal opposition to Marcus to a conservative swell against Trump’s decision to extend

the appointment of Chai Feldblum to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Feldblum, who is gay, angered the right by backing LGBTQ anti-discrimination measures.

The NCJW’s Williams said coalitions matter and sometimes one heeded allies in decrying what they see as an assault on basic rights.

“As a civil rights community we stand together,” she said. “It is not enough that Marcus would protect the civil rights of one community and not another.”

Shabbos

From page 10A

want—after college, his father told him.

His first two years at Queens Borough Community College, Vazquez studied liberal arts with a self-admitted minor in “looking for girls.” By his junior year, however, Vazquez realized that he was interested in religion. A Catholic raised in a community of Jews, he completed a bachelor’s in theology. Over the next few years, he was involved in missionary work and even did some Pentecostal tent revival meetings. In between all of this, he got his certificate in Cosmetology from the State of New York under an apprenticeship program.

He soon met Cindy Peguero, a transplant from Florida who also had a cosmetology degree. The two of them opened two salons in Five Towns, Woodmere and Bensonhurst (Ragtime Brooklyn). They were

also professors at Academy of Career Training and used their expertise to become platform artists and educators around the world—including Paris, England, Italy, Japan Thailand, South and Central America.

In their shops in Woodmere, Vazquez and Peguero catered to their modern Orthodox clientele. Vazquez became an expert at cutting the hair and beards of the Orthodox men. He knew how to follow the Jewish rules on shaving, which were based on Leviticus: “You shall not round the corners of your head, neither shall you mar the corners of your beard” (19:27). This involved very specific guidelines on how to shave the back of the neck and under the chin. Although most of the men didn’t wear payot, the long sidelocks, the hair could not be cut above a certain spot on the cheekbone. Vazquez could not work on the women’s hair (“That

was a shanda!” he said). That job fell to Peguero, worked with the women to cut their natural hair and fix their wigs.

Ten years ago, Vazquez’s parents retired and moved to Kissimmee, Florida. Ruben, and Cindy and their two children were spending more and more time in Florida. The visits increased when Ruben’s mother was diagnosed with cancer. The Vasquez’ decided to move south to be close to both their families. Ruben’s mother passed away in 2010. Ruben’s father has since remarried.

In 2016, Cindy and Ruben opened up Bellissimo’s, a salon down the street from a 55+ community. They no longer are taking care of the modern Orthodox, but people from Solivita—many of them Jewish—have become their customers.

“Baruch HaShem!” said Ruben Vazquez. With G-d’s help, my business will continue to grow!”

JTA

From page 13A

They later joined the Bielski partisan brigade and were able to survive the war.

He was the youngest leader of the Jewish Committee that governed the Bergen-Belsen Displaced Persons Camp, the largest Jewish DP camp in Germany and a major center for the rehabilitation of 50,000 survivors of the Holocaust, as well as the flight and rescue operations in Europe that brought survivors to then-Palestine.

He met and married his wife of 69 years, Lilly Czaban, in the DP camp, from where they immigrated to the United States.

Bloch served as president of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and Their Descendants; president of the World Federation of Bergen-Belsen Survivors Associations; chairman of the Advisory Council of the Foundation for World War

II Memorial Sites in Lower Saxony, Germany, and served as a member of its board.

In 1981, Elie Wiesel, then-chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, appointed him as chairman of the council’s Board of Advisers as well as a member of its Development, Days of Remembrance, and Content committees.

Bloch was appointed by then-New York Mayor Ed Koch to the commission that created the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust. As chair of the Jewish section of the Swiss Humanitarian Fund, he assisted in distributing \$180 million to needy survivors. He continued to serve on the board of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany until his death.

He published 30 volumes of Holocaust memoirs, history and poetry, in English, Hebrew and Yiddish editions,

as editor of the Bergen-Belsen Memorial Press, and edited numerous significant documentary volumes.

“Sam was a giant, one of the last of what was truly the ‘Greatest Generation’ who emerged from the devastation of the Shoah not with bitterness and hatred, but with a determination to create new families, and rebuild Jewish life, all the while devoting his energies to perpetuating Holocaust memory and strengthening Jewish identity,” said Menachem Rosensaft, Bloch’s son-in-law, who himself was born in the Bergen-Belsen DP camp and was the founding chairman of the International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors. “He was a lifelong Zionist who dedicated himself to the unity of the Jewish people with the State of Israel at its core.”

He is survived by his wife, two daughters, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Winter Olympics 2018: 5 Jewish storylines to watch



Adam Pretty/Bongarts/Getty Images

A.J. Edelman of Israel competing at the IBSF World Championships in Innsbruck, Austria, Feb. 28, 2016.



Matthew Stockman/Getty Images

Jason Brown competing at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships in San Jose, Calif., Jan. 6, 2018.

By Gabe Friedman

(JTA)—The world is about to revolve around PyeongChang, a mountainous county in the northern half of South Korea, for the upcoming Winter Olympics.

Jewish fans won't have quite as many standout athletes to cheer for this year as they did in 2016, when multiple American members of the tribe won medals at the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro. But there are several compelling Jewish stories to catch up on before the action starts.

Israel is sending its largest team ever.

Before this year, the largest Israeli delegation at a Winter Olympics was five. That shouldn't sound too surprising, given that over 60 percent of the country's landscape is desert, and it isn't the best place for winter sports training.

This year, however, the record will double.

Seven of Israel's 10 representatives will compete in figure skating. That group is anchored by Alexei Bychenko, who in 2016 became the first skater to earn a medal for Israel at a European Championships event. Bychenko, 29, who skated for Ukraine until 2009 and has been ranked as one of the top 10 male skaters in the world, is likely Israel's

best chance to win a medal (and like U.S. Jewish gymnast Aly Raisman, Bychenko has been known to perform to "Hava Nagila").

The Jewish state is sending another kind of skater, too—the faster kind. Vladislav Bykanov, who won a bronze medal earlier this month at the European Championships, will compete in speed skating. Itamar Biran, a 19-year-old born in London, will represent Israel in alpine skiing.

This American never thought she'd do pairs skating—or compete for Israel.

Paige Conners is having her Olympic dream come true in about the last way she expected.

According to a video by 13WHAM, the ABC affiliate in Rochester, New York, the 17-year-old Conners was ill when she was supposed to try out for the U.S. figure skating team. With her hopes of competing in peril, her mother, who has Israeli citizenship, pointed out another opportunity: skating for the Israeli team.

Conners jumped at the opportunity, but Israel offered her a spot only if she competed in the pairs competition. She had never tried it before and figured she never would. But she quickly connected

with Evgeni Krasnopolski, a 29-year-old pairs veteran, and in barely six months after Conners adopted the new style, the duo performed well enough at the Olympic qualifiers in September to make the cut.

"No one really believes it," she told 13WHAM.

Israel's first skeleton Olympian calls himself the "Hebrew Hammer."

A few years ago, A.J. Edelman was an MIT graduate who worked as a product manager for Oracle. Now the Brookline, Massachusetts, native will get a chance to make history for Israel as he becomes the country's first skeleton Olympian next week, steering a flimsy sled down the track at the Pyeongchang Sliding Center.

"I want to challenge the perception of what Jews and Israelis can do in sports," he told the Forward.

He is also clearly a fan of the comedy film "The Hebrew Hammer," since he goes by the protagonist's nickname. While his teammates and friends love it, his mother apparently doesn't.

A former NHL player gets another chance to play for the U.S.

Jonathon Blum probably longs for the time he spent playing in the NHL. These days, the Jewish 29-year-old plays for a team in Vladivo-



Frederick Breedon/Getty Images

Jonathon Blum playing for the Nashville Predators at the Tennessee city's Bridgestone Arena, Feb. 19, 2013.



Josep Martinson/ISU/ISU via Getty Images

Paige Conners skating with Evgeni Krasnopolski in Oberstdorf, Germany, Sept. 28, 2017.



Quinn Rooney/Getty Images

Short track speed skater Vladislav Bykanov, lower left, leading the Israeli Olympic team at the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, Feb. 7, 2014.

stok, Russia—a city so remote that flights of six hours or more are required to play 24 of its 26 opponents. It is closer to Alaska than it is to St. Petersburg.

Blum, a former first-round NHL draft pick, played for the Nashville Predators from 2010 to 2012, again in 2012-13, and for the Minnesota Wild for stints in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 seasons. Those cities are just a little closer to where he grew up in Southern California.

This year, the NHL decided that it would not let

its players participate in the Olympics to protect them from injuries. That opened the door for non-NHL players like Blum, a 6-foot-2 defenseman who has played on the U.S. team before, to represent his native country in South Korea.

Israel isn't the only country sending Jewish skaters.

On the U.S. squad, look out for Jason Brown if he gets a chance to skate. After a disappointing performance at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships this month, Brown is

the U.S. team's first alternate. But on the ice, the 23-year-old is known for skating to music from "Riverdance" and "Hamilton."

And who would have thought that a certified Krav Maga instructor would skate for Canada and not Israel? Dylan Moscovitch helped Canada win a team silver medal in Sochi four years ago, and he's back competing in the pairs contest with partner Liubov Ilyushechkina.

The 2018 Winter Olympics figure skating will be held on Feb. 8.