



A portrait of the Weiss family taken at Congregation B'nai Israel in St. Petersburg for son Ari's Bar Mitzvah in November 2014. (L-R) Dr. Leslie Weiss, Dr. Mitchell Weiss, daughter Hannah and Ari.

Community mourns Weiss family

By BOB FRYER
Jewish Press

With gentle nudging by their mothers, Mitch Weiss and Leslie Levin met as medical school students, fell in love and got married. They raised two bright and talented children, Hannah and Ari, who achieved much at young ages and held promise for even greater things in the coming years. The Pinellas County family was close knit and all were smart, made strong and lasting friendships and were deeply ingrained in their Jewish faith and heritage.

The wonderful, vibrant nature of their characters, their smiles and laughter, their generous hearts, strong faith and deep bonds with family, friends and colleagues made their sudden deaths in a plane crash on New Year's Eve both shocking and nearly unbearable for the many people touched by their lives.

The raw emotions and deep sorrow of those left behind have been expressed at grief counseling sessions, at a sunset gathering of friends at a local beach and during three memorial services – in the Philadelphia area where the family has roots, at Shorecrest Preparatory in St. Petersburg where Hannah and Ari attended, and at Congregation B'nai Israel in St. Petersburg which drew a crowd of 1,000 to the family's spiritual home on Wednesday, Jan. 10.

A number at the Jan. 10 service were classmates of Hannah and Ari and about 100, from near and far, had known the siblings at Camp Ramah Darom, a Jewish summer camp in north Georgia.

So many wanted to attend that the service was livestreamed to Morton Plant Hospital in Clearwater, where Mitch and Leslie practiced medicine; to Temple Ahavat Shalom in Palm Harbor, where Mitch's

mother Bibby is a member, and to Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater.

More than 700 also took to Facebook, posting photos and words expressing their grief and sharing memories on a page titled "Loving the Weiss Family."

Mitch and Leslie grew up in the Philadelphia area and in 2005 moved their young family to Belleair.

Hannah and Ari attended the Pinellas County Jewish Day School until it closed, then Shorecrest Prep. Ari was still a student there, known for his musical and acting talents as well as his sharp mind. Hannah was a sophomore in a joint undergraduate program between Columbia University and List College at the Jewish Theological Seminary. She was studying sustainable development and Jewish ethics – two of her passions.

WEISS FAMILY continued on PAGE 6

2 to receive honor for devotion to profession, local Jewish community

Barry Kanner of Pinellas County will receive the Cardozo Society's Leadership Award and Sam Linsky of Tampa will be presented with the Montefiore Society's Leadership Award when the two Tampa Bay area professional organizations host their second annual collaborative program.

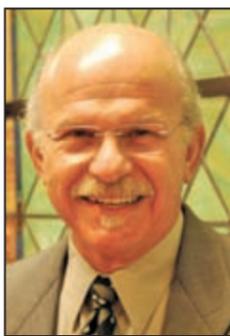
The event will be held Thursday, Feb. 8, beginning at 6:30 p.m. at the Bryan Glazer Family JCC, 522 N. Howard Ave., Tampa.

Each award recipient will be honored for their professional contributions and their commitment to the Tampa Bay Jewish community throughout their career.

Barry Kanner

Kanner is an attorney of counsel at the law firm of Englander Fischer in St. Petersburg and has specialized in community litigation, personal injury and insurance disputes for more than 40 years. He is AV® peer review rated by Martindale-Hubbell for his strong legal ability and high ethical standards.

PROFESSION continued on PAGE 3



Barry Kanner



Sam Linsky

Museum names 4 local survivors 'humanitarians'

Four local Holocaust survivors – John and Toni Rinde, Lisl Schick, all of Largo, and Mary Wygodski of St. Petersburg – will be recipients of the Florida Holocaust Museum's highest honor: the To Life Loeberberg Humanitarian Award.

All four have been part of the museum since its beginnings, assisting in its creation. As representatives of the survivor community, they continue to serve the museum on its board, the advisory committee, and the History Heritage and Hope investment board, helping to ensure the museum's long-term stability and growth.

The awards will be presented at the sold-out annual To Life gala on Saturday evening, Feb. 10.

HUMANITARIAN continued on PAGE 11

Just a nosh..

Compiled from JTA news service

Backlash forces Lebanese designer to take Gadot photo off Instagram

The fashion studio of the Lebanese designer Elie Saab deleted from Instagram a picture of Gal Gadot amid rebuke over its ties to the Israeli actress.

The image of Gadot, who starred in last year's action thriller *Wonder Woman*, in a blue sash dress by Saab was accompanied by a description of the former Israel Defense Forces combat trainer as "flawless," the BBC reported.

Gadot was wearing the dress to the National Board of Review awards in New York Thursday, Jan. 11, where she and director Patty Jenkins received the Spotlight Award for their work on "Wonder Woman."

Saab's Instagram post saw some people share their frustration that a former member of the Israeli army would be promoted by the designer. The deleting of Gadot's picture has drawn a mixed reaction on social media.

"I love and respect Elie Saab, but is he really happy an Israeli actress wore a dress he designed?" asked Lebanese journalist Heba Bitar, on Twitter.

Another post, however, called the whole debacle "shameful."

In 2017, Gadot's superhero blockbuster was banned from cinemas in Lebanon, among several other Arab countries amid protests partly over her casting as the title character.



Gal Gadot

Missouri governor probed on ex-lover's blackmail allegations

A St. Louis prosecutor will investigate allegations that Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens threatened to blackmail a woman with whom he was having an affair.

Greitens, 43, a Republican, became the first Jewish governor of Missouri when he was elected in November 2016. He is a former Navy SEAL whose seven military awards include the Bronze Star.

Circuit Attorney Kimberly Gardner announced the probe a day after Greitens admitted to having an extramarital affair, but denied that he blackmailed the woman to keep it under wraps.

"The serious allegations against" Greitens "are very troubling," Gardner said in a statement.

The affair, which happened in March 2015, before Greitens became governor, was first reported by St. Louis TV station KMOV.

The woman, who met Greitens when she cut his hair, said that Greitens took a photo of her in a compromising position to use if she ever came forward about the affair.

Greitens and his wife, Sheena, issued a statement, calling the affair a "deeply personal mistake," which the couple dealt with "honestly and privately." Greitens called the blackmail claims "outrageous" and "false."



Gov. Eric Greitens

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SAVE THESE DATES!

- Jan 16.** AIPAC/Temple Ahavat Shalom Event with Robert Ford
- Jan 27-29.** Temple Beth El Art Festival

- Feb 8.** Cardozo & Montefiore Societies Event
- Feb 10.** Florida Holocaust Museum's Annual "To Life" Gala
- Feb 25.** Tampa Bay Jewish Food Festival & Purim Carnival
- Mar 11.** Congregation B'nai Israel Chaivana Nights Gala
- Mar 13.** Community Women's Seder

- Mar 20-25.** Tampa Bay Jewish Film Festival
- Mar 24.** Gulf Coast Golf Like a Rock Star
- Apr 15.** Jewish Heritage Festival Israel@70
- Apr 29.** Sonya Miller Women of Distinction

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- FEBRUARY 23**
JEWISH WEDDING GUIDE
Press Release Feb 9
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P.O. BOX 6970, CLEARWATER, FL 33758-6970
(6416 Central Ave., St. Petersburg, FL 33707)
Telephone: (727) 535-4400 • Fax: (727) 440-6037
E-mail: jewishpress@aol.com

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The most difficult piece to write

PERSPECTIVE

Emilie Socash
Executive Director, Jewish Federation
of Pinellas & Pasco Counties



I haven't experienced a great amount of loss in my life, for which I'm grateful. This, however, makes what I must write in this edition that much more difficult.

From time to time, I have known someone whose time came far too quickly, abruptly, and unexpectedly. The one that hit closest to home was Melissa, a family friend, who as an early teenager was hit by a train in a truck she and a friend were riding in. I remember Melissa's mother bemoaning her last conversation with her daughter, nagging her to finish emptying the dishwasher when she returned home. Such a mundane last moment, yet unpredictably their final conversation.

Now, with a family of my own, the sting of loss feels particularly acute as I consider the dark reality that even as we go about our daily lives, we face potential final moments at every turn.

This column is the most difficult piece I've ever had to craft, and I hope to never write on this theme again. As I write this, it has not yet been 48 hours since our community lost an entire family in a tragic and incomprehensible accident. Mitch and Leslie Weiss, together with their two children Ari and Hannah, boarded a plane in Costa Rica which crashed just 10 minutes into the flight. By the time you're reading this, we will likely have more answers, will likely have had an opportunity to mourn our loss as a community, and have made a semblance of sense of what happened.

But what happens from now on will take much more time to get our minds around.

In 1989, Rabbi Kenneth Berger, together with his wife Aviva and daughter Avigail, boarded a plane in Denver that would ultimately crash-land in Sioux City, killing 112 people aboard, including the rabbi and his wife. Rabbi Berger served Tampa's Congregation Rodeph Sholom and had just three years earlier given a High Holiday sermon titled "5 Minutes to Live," reflecting on the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion. An analysis of the accident later revealed that some of the astronauts lived through their 65,000-foot fall to earth. Rabbi Berger asked, "What would we think of if, God forbid, you and I were in such circumstances?" He pressed those present to imagine where our minds, our hearts, our spirits would travel if we knew our end was imminent.

Following the tragic loss of the Bergers, the Tampa community named its post-b'nai mitzvah community program Berger High School, cementing the legacy of this family and keeping the name alive. A fund was established at the Tampa Orlando Pinellas

Jewish Foundation by the congregation to continue the family's leadership presence in the community.

Nearly 30 years since the tragic loss of some of the Berger family, the South Tampa community still feels a void. From that moment forward, the congregation and the community would be one that had lost a rabbi, inked with a shadow-like shape of what was and what could have been.

And this is the most difficult thing about loss: once it happens, it has always been. It's a permanent, absolute truth, regardless of the depth of information, of the amount of grief expressed, of the stages that are progressed through. It's a state of permanent separation of body and soul for the ones we lost, assuredly, but it's also an unchangeable, immutable new existence for those of us left behind.

We are a now a community that has lost an entire family, tragically, and will feel their void forever.

I did not know the Weiss family. I had spoken a handful of times with Leslie at a couple of Federation Women's Philanthropy events. I have a photo of her on my phone, sandwiched between two other ladies at a recent Main Event, smiling broadly, wearing a funky dress and cheerfully holding a drink in the stylishly lit room at Ruth Eckerd Hall. I recall that she had a warm and lively spirit in conversation, and I admired her sense of generosity as she not only gave of her treasure to the Federation, but also gave of her time in improving synagogue life for families at Congregation B'nai Israel as well as professionally contributing to the well being of children and families as a pediatrician.

I'm reminded of the lyrics to a song called "Glorious," in which the artist sings "I've heard you die twice: once when they bury you in the grave, and the second time is the last time somebody mentions your name." In our tradition, we continually repeat the names of those we lost as we grieve, and we also memorialize them in ways that share their best qualities and contributions to Jewish life. Together we say, "Baruch atah Hashem Elokeinu melech haolam, dayan ha'emet," meaning, blessed are you, Lord our God, ruler of the universe, the true judge.

If you knew the Weiss family or not, please join with me in embracing our communal grieving process, in remembering their names and the community that they helped create. May their memory be a blessing, and their commitment to Jewish life comfort all of those who they left behind.

Liked it? Loathed it? Want to react? I would welcome your feedback and can be reached at emilie@jewishpinellas.org.

Economic, Social and Cultural Issues."

The Cardozo Society is an honorary society for Jewish attorneys in the Tampa Bay area that aims to celebrate the legal profession's commitment to the principles of the Federation. The Montefiore Society serves a similar purpose with a mission to strengthen relationships among Jewish financial service professionals in the community through education and leadership.

The Montefiore Society was created to augment the reach of the existing professional societies and provide an opportunity for community members to foster and grow professional relationships within the financial industry. Montefiore Society membership is open to all Jewish accountants, stock brokers, bankers, financial planners and advisors, insurance brokers, investment consultants, wealth management advisors and others in financial services in the Tampa Bay area who contribute a minimum of \$1,000 to a local Federation's annual campaign. Financial service representatives age 35 and under must contribute a minimum of \$360 to the annual campaign. Events sponsored by the Montefiore Society are open to all members and their guests.

The objective of each society is to support the activities of the Tampa Jewish Federation and the Jewish Federation of Pinellas & Pasco Counties, assisting to maximize Federation gifts to preserve and enhance Jewish life in Tampa Bay, the U.S. and worldwide.

The Jewish Federation of Pinellas & Pasco Counties and the Tampa Jewish Community Centers & Federation are jointly presenting the event, which is sponsored by the Bank of Tampa. It is open to the community and free for all Federation donors; \$25 per person for all non-donors. Tampa community members may visit www.jewishtampa.com or call (813) 739-1687 to register. Pinellas/Pasco community members may RSVP by visiting www.jewishpinellas.org or by calling (727) 530-3223. The Glazer JCC is located at 522 N. Howard Ave., Tampa.

Jewish Community Camp announces 2nd year

The Jewish Community Camp, a project of the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties, will once again offer a full summer of community-oriented day camp experiences for children across the region with some new features including a camp-within-a-camp for middle schoolers.

Three sessions of three weeks apiece will be offered as well as a "Taste of Camp" session spanning from May 29 through June 1. The Jewish Community Camp home base is at 1685 S. Belcher Road in Clearwater, on the campus of Temple B'nai Israel.

Campers enrolled at the Jewish Community Camp are grouped according to the grade they are entering in the Fall of 2018; campers must be 5 years old by Sept. 1, 2018 to register.

"We're taking all that was great and loved about our first year of camp and making it even better," said Maxine Kaufman, the Federation's director of Arts, Culture, and Education. "Campers will enjoy all of the *ruach* (spirit) of Color War, challah baking, family Shabbat, and Israeli dancing while still getting the campy experiences like swimming, flagpole, rock climbing, archery, arts and crafts, and best of all: friendship."

In 2017, campers enjoyed nine different field trips that included cheering on the Rays at a baseball game, ziplining, experiencing a dolphin-watching cruise, and participating in a luau at a water park. Campers also cheered on Israel's team at the world championships of women's fast-pitch softball and spent a day with the Friendship Caravan, a special performance group of Israeli young people who build bridges through person-to-person relationships.

Campers challenged themselves personally to earn "fandanas" (stretch bandanas) that represented each of the camp's six core values: compassion, community, tenacity, courage, integrity, and responsibility.

In 2018, the camp will have an Israel Ambassador on staff, Yael Mor, who is visiting the community for one year as part of the Federation's Schlichah (emissary) program. Mor will offer a personal

perspective on the arts, customs, slang, and culture of Israel as she leads campers on amazing activities.

Also new to the 2018 year will be the introduction of the Middle School Mitzvah Makers program, a week-long camp targeting middle school campers seeking more than the traditional day camp. This one-week program will be offered three times during the summer, and in each week middle school students will enjoy teen-targeted experiences such as an escape room, theme park, and water sports while also exploring a self-improvement theme (purpose, gratitude, and compassion) and completing up to 20 hours of documented service at local nonprofits.

This camp-within-a-camp will offer an age-appropriate option for the ages that may have outgrown traditional day camp, or need the flexibility to allow for summer travels and enrollment at sleep-away camp, Kaufman said.

"It's right at the center of our name: community. We designed this camp to be for the entire community, and we've done our best to make this fun and convenient for families," said Emilie Socash, Federation executive director.

Camp dates are:

- Session 1: Monday, June 4 - Friday, June 22
- Session 2: Monday, June 26 - Friday, July 13
- Session 3: Monday, July 16 - Friday, Aug. 3

The camp will again offer transportation to and from camp with pick-up locations in Saint Petersburg and Palm Harbor for a fee.

Discounts are available for early registrations, saving families \$100 per camper per session until January 15 and \$50 per camper per session until Feb. 15. Additional discounts for siblings (10 percent) and full-summer registrations (one week free) are available with no deadlines.

Scholarships applications are available on the Federation website.

For full information, including dates, rates, and ongoing updates to the activity schedule, visit www.jewishcommunitycamp.org or call (727) 530-3223.

PROFESSION

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

Kanner is involved in Jewish causes across Tampa Bay and currently serves at Menorah Manor as chairman of the board of trustees and chair of the environment committee. He was the Menorah Manor board's vice chair from 2012-2014.

Sam Linsky

Linsky is the president of RFLP Group, a private family investment company with a focus on commercial real estate located throughout the Southeast. He is responsible for developing and executing the company's overall strategic direction while managing all aspects of their investment activities. Linsky also serves as a director of RFLP Group's corporate general partner.

Prior to his employment with RFLP Group, Linsky served as an executive director at the J.P. Morgan Private Bank, leading a multidisciplinary team in advising ultra-high net worth families throughout the state.

Linsky will be recognized not only for his professional achievements, but also for his unwavering commitment to the Jewish community. He previously served as a board member of the Tampa JCCs and Federation and was co-chair of the capital committee responsible for the development of the Bryan Glazer Family JCC. He has also served on various committees in support of the Tampa Museum of Art, the Tampa Bay History Center and All Children's Hospital. He and his wife Stacie support various organizations both inside and outside of the Jewish community.

The event

The event, chaired by Bonnie Wise and Hal Hershkowitz, will begin with a dessert reception with heavy hors d'oeuvres at 6:30 p.m., followed by the program at 7:15 p.m. In addition to the presentation of awards, the evening will include a panel discussion featuring local legal and financial leaders on the topic: "Ethical Behavior Through a Jewish Lens: Contending with

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Congregations

Cong. Beth Sholom Gulfport

B'nai mitzvah for survivors: The congregation will host a B'nai Mitzvah ceremony for Holocaust survivors who never had a chance to have a Bar or Bat Mitzvah celebration. This will be a group ceremony on Saturday, Jan. 27 at 9:30 a.m. during which each Holocaust survivor will read or chant one line of their Haftarah. The ceremony will take place in conjunction with International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Holocaust survivors wishing to participate in the ceremony should contact the synagogue at (727) 321-3380. This event is free to all with a kiddush lunch after the ceremony, sponsored by **Dr. Bernie Wolfson**.

Seeking donations: The congregation's annual flea market is not until the spring, but donations are being sought for the event now. Those who have items to give should call the synagogue at (727) 321-3380.

Cong. B'nai Israel St. Petersburg

Torah Fund Dinner: The Sisterhood's annual Torah Fund Dinner will be held on Tuesday, Jan. 30 at 6 p.m. The event will support the Jewish Theological Seminary of America as **Joanne Luski** is honored with the 2018 Jackie Jacobs Woman of Achievement Award. Featured speaker will be **Rabbi Jacob Luski**. RSVP by Tuesday, Jan. 23 to **Anita Helfand** at anita1121@msn.com or (727) 347-2300. Admission is \$20, plus suggested donation. Your check is your reservation, made payable to CBI Sisterhood.

Women's discussion: The Rosh Hodesh women's group will discuss "Relationships in the Torah" in a women-only monthly get together on Sunday, Jan. 21 at 10:30 a.m. The group meets in a different congregant's homes each month. For details, contact the synagogue office at (727) 381-4900.

Craft Night: Beautify a mitzvah at MakeMe Studio on Tuesday, Jan. 23 at 7 p.m. and make your own challah board or serving platter while learning the arts of resin dipping and woodworking. The class is \$45 per person. MakeMe Studio is at 3028 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. St. N., St. Petersburg. RSVP is required at www.tinyurl.com/cbicraft. Contact **Maureen Sechan** at dll@cbistpete.org or (727) 381-4900 ext. 1011 for more information.

Shabbat Shirah: In honor of the "Sabbath of Song," **Cantor Jonathan Schultz** and the synagogue choir will present special musical selections during the service on Saturday, Jan. 27 at 9 a.m.

Sunday Music Soiree: Learn the Jewish story behind *West Side Story* on Sunday, Jan. 28 at 10 a.m. as Professor **Joan Epstein**, chair of Eckerd College of Music, leads a discussion on the Jewish connections behind Leonard Bernstein's symphonic dances – a featured work of the Florida Orchestra's 2017-2018 season.

To RSVP for this free program, contact

Maureen Sechan at dll@cbistpete.org or call the synagogue office.

World Wide Wrap: Celebrate the mitzvah of tefillin at a World Wide Wrap on Sunday, Feb. 4, at 8:30 a.m. at the synagogue. Learn how to lay tefillin before davening at 9 a.m. as men, women and children unite in prayer. Stay for Sunday brunch sponsored by the Mitzvah Men's Club.

Talmud Made Easy: On Tuesday, Jan. 23 at 5 p.m., **Steve Wein** will lead a study of Talmudic text and selected commentaries. All materials will be provided. The class involves textual analysis, lively discussion, and is open to all. The class is free; no previous knowledge is needed.

Torah study: Join in a monthly Torah discussion led by members of the congregation on Saturday, Jan. 27 following Shabbat morning services. The group will search for insights in the Torah over lunch and discover new ways of making Torah relevant.

Chabad of St. Petersburg

Pickle University: Make your own jar of kosher pickles, and enjoy a variety of pickles and appetizers on Monday, Jan. 22 at 7 p.m. when nationally traveled "Rabbi Pickle" – **Rabbi Shmuel Marcus** of Cypress, CA. – shares the secrets of making a great kosher pickle at his traveling kosher pickle factory. This will be a hands-on experience. The cost is \$10 for those who register before Jan. 7 and \$15 after that date. RSVPs are required and can be made at info@ChabadSP.com.

Kids in the kitchen: Kids will be running the show at Shabbat dinner on Friday Jan. 26 at 5:30 p.m. Join in a worldwide unity event, as CKids groups around the world celebrate family, community, and the power of children to make a difference. The cost is \$18 per family. RSVP to Chaya@ChabadSP.com.

Exploring Israel's survival: A six-session Rohr Jewish Learning Institute course titled "Survival of a Nation: Exploring Israel Through the Lens of the Six-Day War" will be taught on Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. Classes started on Jan. 10. The cost is \$65 per person or \$110 for couples. Fees include 6 classes, class materials and recorded lessons (for sessions missed). For more information, call (727) 344-4900 or www.ChabadSP.com.

Women's Book Club: Get a weekly social and spiritual boost with friends every Tuesday from 10:30-11:30 a.m. during a round-table discussion led by **Chaya Korf**. Delve into the book for this year, *Towards a Meaningful Life*, by Simon Jacobson. The group will share strategies, tips and suggestions for not only discovering where your true meaning lies, but also in actually making it a part of your daily life. Enjoy coffee, fruit and homemade pastries during these free sessions. Walk-ins are welcome. RSVP to Chaya@ChabadSP.com.

Lunch and learn: Women are invited to share an hour of camaraderie, inspiration and lunch at a Lunch and Learn session at the Chabad Jewish Center on Tuesday, Jan.

16 at noon. There is no charge for the event. RSVPs are appreciated but not necessary. To RSVP, email Chaya@ChabadSP.com or call (727) 344-4900.

Temple Beth-El St. Petersburg

Brotherhood schmooze: Families are invited to hang out and relax while children attend religious school classes on Sundays from 9 a.m. to noon in the social hall. Enjoy a bagel and a cup of coffee and read the newspaper.

Temple B'nai Israel Clearwater

Pollution presentation: Everyone is invited to hear a real story about how environmental pollutants affect your health and shorten your life. **Herman Koren**, professor emeritus, founder and former director of the Environmental Health Science program at Indiana State University, will speak on Sunday, Jan. 21 at 10 a.m. in the social hall. Koren is a temple member and is the author of the *Histories of the Jewish People of Pinellas County, 1881-2005*. For information, call **Bill Sefekar** (727) 492-5444.

Cinema café: Come watch a movie at the temple on Sunday, Jan. 21 at 1 p.m. The film, *The Kindergarten Teacher*, is an Israeli psychological thriller about poetry and obsession. Popcorn and non-alcoholic beverages will be provided. There is no charge for members and friends.

Shabbat Shira: Join **Rabbi Daniel Treiser**, Cantorial soloist **Laura Berkson** and the congregation's Kol Rina Choir for a musical night full of ruach and inspiration on Friday Jan. 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Super Bowl Party: Enjoy the big game, along with the commercials and the half-time show with other congregants at Temple B'nai Israel on Sunday, Feb. 4 at 4 p.m. There will be food on hand for those watching the game. Contact **Polly Kraus** at kraushouse5@gmail.com or call the temple at (727) 531-5829.

Bible study: Explore the Second Book of Samuel and discover a unique period of Jewish history. **Rabbi Daniel Treiser** leads the classes on Wednesdays from 7-8 p.m. There is no fee for members; \$30 for non-members for the year.

Sunday funday: Preschoolers and their parents can enjoy playtime on Sunday, Jan. 28 from 10 a.m. to noon. This is an opportunity for families with young children to meet one another and engage in fun activities with their tots. Non-members are welcome. Call the temple office for full schedule and pricing information at (727) 531-5829.

Adult playtime: Play mah jongg, Mexican Train Dominoes or Bridge on Thursdays at 1 p.m. Join active seniors and play the game of your choice. Coffee and cake is served. For more information, contact **Linda White** at linda33217@gmail.com or (727) 688-0626.

Save the date: Temple B'nai Israel will hold the second annual Tampa Bay Jewish

Shabbat Candle Lighting Times

Jan. 19 • 5:43 pm
Jan. 26 • 5:48 pm
Feb. 2 • 5:54 pm
Feb. 9 • 5:59 pm



Food Festival on Sunday, Feb. 25 beginning at 10:30 a.m. The festival will feature Carnegie Deli corned beef and pastrami sandwiches, homemade matzoh ball soup, falafel, kugel, knishes, rugelach and more for purchase. There will be a wine tasting room, kids play area, live entertainment and local arts and crafts vendors. Admission is free.

Cong. B'nai Emmunah Tarpon Springs

Hebrew Marathon: Learn to read Hebrew in one day at a Hebrew Marathon on Saturday, Jan. 21 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Those interested should call **Rabbi Lynn Goldstein** at the synagogue, (727) 938-9000, as books will need to be ordered for the class.

Super Bowl party: Congregation B'nai Emmunah is working with the Unitarian Universalist Church of Tarpon Springs, another small church and possibly a mosque to throw a Super Bowl party for the homeless and indigent on Sunday, Feb. 4. The party will include dinner, snacks, football trivia, give-away prizes, personal hygiene items, and more. Planners hope to have a player from the Tampa Buccaneers, and perhaps other special visitors. A team is being assembled to coordinate the event, with members from each of the participating religious institutions. To join the planning team, email bnaieemunah@gmail.com or call (727) 938-9000.

Temple Ahavat Shalom Palm Harbor

Torah study: Congregant **Susan Segal** teaches a Torah study class on Thursdays from noon to 1:15 p.m. Bring a lunch, and of course, opinions. No prior knowledge or attendance is required. The class will use the book *The Torah: A Woman's Commentary*.

Adult education class: Tuesday morning adult education class will begin on Jan. 23 at 11 a.m. and meet on subsequent Tuesdays at 11 a.m. in the social hall. The first five sessions will have Professor **Alan Gorlick** teaching his course, "Science and Religion," focusing on the aspects of our universe too tiny to imagine, as we investigate quantum physics. When Gorlick concludes his course, **Rabbi Gary Klein** will begin a course on dealing with misfortune and grief. Call the temple office to join.

Judaism basics: An Introduction to Judaism class is offered on Sundays at 10:30 a.m. This class, taught by Rabbi Klein, is appropriate for non-Jewish spouses and significant others; those considering adopting

• CONTINUED on NEXT PAGE

Religious Directory

PINELLAS COUNTY Reform

Temple AHAVAT SHALOM — 1575 Curlew Rd., Palm Harbor, 34683 • Rabbi Gary Klein • Services: Friday: 7:30 p.m., First Friday: 6 p.m., Saturday: traditional service third week of the month. 9 a.m., call for other service times • Telephone: (727) 785-8811 • Website: www.ahavatshalom.org • Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism

Temple BETH-EL — 400 S. Pasadena Ave., St. Petersburg 33707 • Rabbi Michael Torop • Services: Friday 7:30 p.m., Saturday, service and Torah study, 10 a.m. • Telephone: (727) 347-6136 • Website: www.templebeth-el.com • Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism

Congregation B'NAI EMMUNAH — 57 Read St., Tarpon Springs, 34689 • Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1312, Tarpon Springs, 34688 • Rabbi Lynn Goldstein • Services: Friday: 7:30 p.m. • Torah study Saturday, 10:30 a.m. • Telephone: (727) 938-9000 • Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism

Temple B'NAI ISRAEL — 1685 S. Belcher Road, Clearwater, 33764 • Rabbi Daniel Treiser • cantorial soloist, Laura Berkson • Services: Friday, 7:30 p.m. • Telephone: (727) 531-5829 • Website: www.TBclearwater.org • Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism

Conservative

Congregation BETH SHALOM — 1325 S. Belcher Road, Clearwater 33764 • Rabbi David Weizman • Rabbi Danielle Upbin, associate • Services: Friday: 6:30 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m., Sunday 9 a.m., Mon. & Thurs 8:30 a.m.

• Telephone: (727) 531-1418 • Website: www.cbclearwater.org • Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Congregation BETH SHOLOM — 1844 54th St. S., Gulfport 33707 • Cantor David Wicentowski • Services: Saturdays, 9:30 a.m. • Telephone: (727) 321-3380 • Website: sholomgulfport.org • Unaffiliated.

Congregation B'NAI ISRAEL — 300 58th St. N., St. Petersburg 33710 • Rabbi Jacob Luski • Cantor Jonathan Schultz • Services: Friday 7:30 p.m., Saturday 9 a.m., Mon. - Fri. 7:45 a.m., Sun. 9 a.m.; evening minyan, 6:30 p.m. • Telephone: (727) 381-4900 • Website: www.cbistpete.org • Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Orthodox

CHABAD of CLEARWATER — 2280 Belleair Road, Clearwater, 33764 • Rabbi Levi Hodakov • Services: Call for information on Friday service times, Sunday, 9:30 a.m., men only • Telephone: (727) 265-2770 • Website: www.JewishClearwater.com • email: rabi18@gmail.com.

CHABAD JEWISH CENTER OF GREATER ST. PETERSBURG — 4010 Park St. N., St. Petersburg 33709 • Rabbi Alter Korf • Services: Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; Shacharit, Mon.-Thurs., 7:15 a.m., Torah study at 10:30 a.m. on Sturday, Sun., 8 a.m.; • Telephone: (727) 344-4900 • Website: www.chabadsp.com.

CHABAD of PINELLAS COUNTY — 3696 Fisher Road, Palm Harbor, 34683 • Rabbi Pinchas Adler • Services: Friday, 5:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. • Telephone: (727) 789-0408 • Website: Yichabad.com.

PASCO COUNTY Conservative

BETH TEFILLAH/JCC OF WEST PASCO — 9841 Scenic Drive, Port Richey, 34668 • Ron Becker and Elliot Shapiro, spiritual leaders • Services: Friday, 7:30 p.m., Saturday, 9:30 a.m. • Telephone: (727) 847-3814 • website: jewishcommunitycenterofwestpasco.com • Email at: Eileenhochstadt13005@gmail.com • Unaffiliated

Orthodox

CHABAD OF WEST PASCO — Rabbi Yossi Eber • 10733 Maple Creek Dr., Suite 101, Trinity, FL 34655 • Services: Saturday, 9:30 a.m.; class: 10 a.m., • Telephone: (727) 376-3366 • Website: www.ChabadWP.org • email: info@chabadwp.org

HERNANDO COUNTY Reform

Temple BETH DAVID — 13158 Antelope St., Spring Hill • Rabbi Paul Schreiber • Shabbat Services: Friday, 7:30 p.m., third Friday traditional service, 7:30 p.m. • Saturday, 10 a.m. • Telephone: (352) 686-7034 • Website: www.tbdf.org. Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism.

Orthodox

CHABAD SPRING HILL — 13576 Hunters Point St, Spring Hill, 34609 • Rabbi Chaim Lipszyc • Services: Monthly First Friday call for times Telephone: (352) 600-2779 • Website: chabadsspringhill.com

In Israel, celebration of New Year's Eve is different

This was the first New Year's Eve I celebrated outside of Israel.

I had heard a lot about the celebrations happening in the U.S. and obviously saw the ball drop on TV quite a few times before arriving here.

In Israel, we celebrate New Year's Eve, but it's not as big as it is here. To begin with, New Year's Day is not considered to be a national holiday so there is no day off from work or school and businesses are open like regularly on Jan. 1 (unless of course it falls on Shabbat).

The main difference is that in Israel it is considered a Christian holiday or a civil New Year's, since we already celebrated the Jewish New Year's (Rosh Hashana). It also has a Christian name – Sylvester.

The name Sylvester is kind of controversial, due to its source. It is named after Pope Sylvester I, who died on Dec. 31, 335, and in time Christians designated that as a "holy" day, celebrating St. Sylvester's feast on that day. Because Dec. 31 is the last day of the Christian (Gregorian) calendar, that day is celebrated by a number of nations every year as Saint Sylvester Day. But that's not why it is controversial. Sylvester I was reportedly one of the most anti-Semitic popes and is blamed for ushering in a dark period for the Jewish people in exile, a period culminating in cruel persecutions and blood libels that lasted more than a thousand years.

Mor About Israel

Yael Mor

Israel Shlichah (Emissary)



There is an opposing argument that Sylvester I was not anti-Semitic. For most of his life, Sylvester served as the leader of an insignificant minority group that was still trying to formulate its principles. Therefore, when he was appointed pope, he devoted most of his time to dealing with internal Catholic matters, such as the establishment of the principles of Christianity first defined in the year 325 at a meeting of church leaders from the entire Mediterranean basin.

Other than that, in Israel we have a lot of former citizens of the Soviet Union, they brought their customs to Israel and exposed us to the importance of New Year's Eve to them. Their holiday is called Novy-God.

In Russia and other former Soviet Union countries, Novy-God is also considered to be a civil holiday, not a religious one, the same as New Year's Eve in Israel. Nevertheless it has a lot of custom similarities to Christmas, such as the decoration of a Julka tree (similar to the Christmas tree), placing presents under the tree and the figure of Ded Moroz (grandfather of the frost) as a parallel to the figure of Santa Claus. According to the



Ushering in 2018 American-style, (L-R) Yael Mor, Jordyn Schwersky and Jordan Rodnizki.

story of Novy-God, Ded Moroz gives gifts secretly on New Year's Eve with the help of his granddaughter, Sangorochka (snow girl). Most, if not all, former Soviet Union citizens ask on the last week of the year for a holiday from their workplace, and most places grant it.

Israel is a Jewish state, but there is a good amount of cultural influence coming from outside. There is a lot of acceptance to other cultures and other customs that do not necessarily have anything to do with Judaism. New Year's Eve – or as I call it, Sylvester – is just one of the examples of that.

Yael Mor's yearlong visit to the community is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties. She can be reached at (727) 530-3223 or by email at yael@jewishpinellas.org

Congregations

• CONTINUED from PREVIOUS PAGE

Judaism as their faith, and those who are already Jewish who wish to review and enhance their knowledge of Judaism. New students are welcome anytime. The course fee is \$100 per person or couple, for non-members. There is no fee for temple members.

Cong. Beth Shalom Clearwater

Sisterhood Shabbat: A special Sisterhood Shabbat program will be held on Saturday, Jan. 20 at 9 a.m. with a kiddush luncheon to follow. Everybody is welcome.

Book talk: Join in a discussion of the book *The Marriage of Opposites* by Alice Hoffman on Sunday, Jan. 21 at 10:30 a.m. The book is about the mother of Camille Pissaro and their life as a Jewish family in St. Thomas and his art career and life in Paris. **Roxanna Levin** will be the discussion leader. All are welcome.

Talmud classes: On Mondays and most Wednesdays, explore ancient legal tradition with **Dr. Priscilla Nathanson**. The class is open to all levels of knowledge. The Monday class is held after minyan from 10-11:15 a.m. and the Wednesday class is at 7 p.m. Contact the synagogue office to confirm when classes will be held.

Lox & Learn: Led by **Rabbi David Weizman**, explore the weekly Torah portion every Thursday following minyan. Breakfast begins at 9:45 a.m. and the study session at 10 a.m.

Torah study: On Saturday, Jan. 27 at 12:30 p.m., **Jason Palmer** will lead a Torah study following a kiddush lunch.

Jewish spirituality: **Rabbi Danielle Upbin** will continue a series of lectures on Jewish spirituality, on Thursdays, Feb. 1, March 15 and 22 and April 5 from 12:30 - 2 p.m. The course is exploring

the foundations of Mussar as it relates to the weekly Torah portion and one's own inner development. Each session will incorporate time for meditation and other mindfulness practices. Call the synagogue office at (727) 531-1418 to RSVP.

Chabad of Clearwater

Torah and tea: Rebbetzin Miriam Hodakov leads a "Torah and Tea" exclusively for women on Wednesdays at 11:15 a.m. There is no charge to attend. RSVP to MiriamHodakov@gmail.com or (727) 265-2770.

Cong. Beth Tefillah/JCC of West Pasco Port Richey

Understanding prayer: A class to study the history, meaning, and relevance of the prayers in Shabbat services beginning with Kabbalat Shabbat and continuing with the Maariv service on Friday night and all of the parts of the Saturday morning service. Knowledge of the Hebrew language is not required. It is anticipated that the class will help participants make services more meaningful, relevant and enjoyable. The class meets every Wednesday at 7 p.m. through May. There is no fee and all are welcome.

Purim: There will be an ice cream social followed by the reading of the Megillah interspersed with the congregation's annual original spiel and merriment beginning at 6:30 p.m. on erev Purim, Wednesday, Feb. 28. Costumes are welcome, but optional. All are welcome. There is no charge to attend.

Chabad of West Pasco Trinity

Pray, eat, watch video: On Sundays from 9-10 a.m., feed your body and soul with bagel and lox plus tefillin. Afterward there

will be a short video presentation. There is no charge and everyone is welcome.

Study group: Probe the ideas and issues presented in each week's Torah portion on Mondays from 7 - 8 p.m. The Torah Studies classes offer timely lessons for living. The class is free.

Tanya class: A new weekly Tanya class, A Tale of Two Souls, meets on Saturdays from 10:15-11 a.m. The Tanya offers a roadmap for emotional healthy living. The indepth study will ask the questions: What is a soul? How many do we have? What is our purpose here on earth? How are we to battle our evil inclination? The class is free.

Cong. Beth David Spring Hill

Torah study: Rabbi Paul Schreiber will conduct Torah study classes on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. The classes are free for members and \$5 per class for non-members.

Judaism class: A free Jewish conversion class will be held on Saturdays at 1 p.m., conducted by Rabbi Schreiber.

Talmud for beginners: This class, already under way, is held every Wednesday at 8 p.m., except for the third Wednesday of the month. It is free for members and \$5 per class for non-members.

Chabad of Spring Hill

Torah studies: The Jewish community is invited to attend Torah study classes, with bagels, on Wednesdays from noon to 1 p.m. The classes, taught by **Rabbi Chaim Lipszyc**, are not sequential, so folks can drop in for any class. The first class is free then the fee is \$7 per class.

For more information, call **Ro Kerschner** at (352) 746-6258.

Talk on Jewish humor set for Jan. 28 in Tampa

Barry Silber, a public speaker, local actor, playwright and former associate professor at Hillsborough Community College, will give a talk on Jewish humor on Sunday, Jan. 28 at 2 p.m. at the Jimmie B. Keel Regional Library, 2902 W. Bearss Ave., Tampa.

Since everyone knows if you have two Jews you will get three opinions. Silber will sort them out, tell a few jokes and discuss what's uniquely Jewish about Jewish humor – and what it tells us about Jews. He has

lectured frequently outside the classroom on humor as therapy, and is an actor, director and playwright, as well as a teacher.

Among his plays is *A World to Carry On*, a tribute to Laura Nyro.

Silber's talk is sponsored by Humanistic Jews of Tampa Bay (hj-tb.org). For more information, call (813) 701-9685 or email humanisticjewsoftampabay@gmail.com.

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A portion of the estimated crowd of 1,000 mourners at the 3 1/2-hour long memorial service Wednesday, Jan. 10, for the Weiss family. The crowd stood as Cantor Jonathan Schultz sang the El Maleh Rachamim - Prayer for the Soul of the Departed - four times for the four victims: Dr. Mitchell Weiss, Dr. Leslie Weiss, Hannah Weiss and Ari Weiss. The memorial service, livestreamed and archived at webeamtv.com/weissfuneral, was held in lieu of a funeral since the bodies had not yet been returned from the crash site.

Live streaming via webeamtv.com

WEISS FAMILY

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

Mitch, 52, Leslie, 50, Hannah, 19, and Ari, 16, were finishing up a weeklong vacation in Costa Rica on Dec. 31 when a small plane they were aboard crashed enroute from Punto Islita to the capital, San Jose. The fiery crash of the Nature Air Cessna 208 claimed the lives of all 12 aboard: four members of the Weiss family, five members of a Jewish family from Scarsdale, NY, a tour guide from California and two members of the crew.

News reports indicated that there were strong winds in the area at the time and that weather conditions and possible mechanical failure were all factors investigators would be looking into. It took more than a day for forensic officials to reach the crash and as of the day of the memorial service their remains had still not been sent home for burial.

"Words are most difficult today This is a time of unbelievable and penetrating shock because death came so quickly and so unexpectedly," said Congregation B'nai Israel Rabbi Jacob Luski as he opened the memorial service. "It is a tragic time because all four of our beloved friends left us at such young and vibrant ages. There was so much undone, un-lived and unsaid, yet words are our only vehicle to communicate with each other."

Time and again the profound loss felt by those who knew and loved the family was expressed at the memorial service, sometimes with cracking voices and flowing tears, sometimes with sad smiles.

Through the many shared memories, profiles of the family and individual members of what one mourner called "Team Weiss" emerged:

The family

Many spoke of the strong bonds between Mitch and Leslie and between parents and children.

"The nature of the Weiss family has emerged today - they are amazing people and the world is a worse place without them. ... The whole family accepted you and made you feel welcome and comfortable and like you were their best friend," said Michael Harrad, who had known Mitch since childhood.

A local friend, Audrey Schechter, told the *Jewish Press* that her family hosted the Weiss family for Thanksgiving dinner last year and that each family felt they were part of the other.

"I just want to make sure that those who did not know them know that they were, all four of them, the smartest, kindest, most wonderful caring, compassionate people. They were the definition of good and of what this world needs," Schechter said.

Rabbi Gary Klein of Temple Ahavat Shalom and several others spoke of the love all four Weisses showed Mitch's mom Bibby and of the comfort they gave to Mitch's late father, Sid, as his health was failing.

Rabbi Klein last saw Mitch and Leslie in December at the Straz Center during intermission of a play, *Love Never Dies*. "The title of the play reminds us of an important truth - love never dies," he said. "The love that any of you gave Mitch, Leslie, Hannah or Ari and the love that they gave you will not die. It will live on in you to inspire and to strengthen and, we pray, to comfort you."

Another family friend wrote that Mitch and Leslie taught their children not to focus on the material things in life and to live by the example their parents set - of doing good deeds.

Mitch

Friends and family members spoke of Mitch's unique sense of humor and how he sometimes told jokes that only he got. "He really did think he was funny," said his sister-in-law Marci Hackel, while family friend Debbie Berner quipped, "No one could crack up Mitch better than Mitch."

Whether they got his jokes or not, Mitch's intent was not lost on one friend who said Mitch's jokes could break tensions, and that Mitch was always quick to offer a comforting embrace.

"I'll be the first one to admit, his jokes didn't always land. They could be off or a little prickly, but to me Uncle Mitch could be the sweetest - a real softie," said his niece, Jess Hackel.

As a child Mitch was fascinated with math and how things worked, often taking things apart - sometimes put back together by his sister Rhonda. That followed him into adulthood with an interest in inventing medical devices to improve patient care.

While growing up, he was a competitive gymnast, and after marrying Leslie he was a very proud and giving father who loved his wife and children deeply and was a good handyman around the house.

He was a smart, compassionate doctor who practiced vascular and interventional radiology. He took extra steps to check on patients, even when off duty. Audrey Schechter credited Mitch with twice saving the life of her father-in-law in surgery.

Mitch was also an avid skier and had an outgoing personality. Like his wife Leslie, he formed friendships in childhood and at Jefferson Medical College in Philadelphia that lasted a lifetime.

Leslie

Leslie was known for her generosity and infectious laughter and her sister Marci Hackel described her as "super smart, always inquisitive, and above all loved life in a big way."

She was among the first invited to join an honors program at Penn State University.

A pediatrician and hospitalist, "Leslie loved kids and babies and her patients and parents loved her back," her sister said. Leslie would tell patients her name was Dr. Weiss and it rhymed with nice, "so you can call me Dr. Nice."

"Being Jewish was a key part of who my sister was," Hackel said.

Leslie was active at her synagogue in Philadelphia and continued that involvement, reading Torah and serving on committees at Congregation B'nai Israel including one searching for a new spiritual leader to replace retiring Rabbi Luski. As the rabbinic search committee wrote to congregants after her death, they continued their Skype interviews, asking Leslie's question: "What would you do for a congregation suffering a loss?"

Among things Leslie enjoyed were Purim parties, watching Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert on TV, reading and talking about books, buying shoes and shopping for gifts for others. She was generous with contributions to Camp Ramah, Israel Bonds and Planned Parenthood.

Mitch's sister Debbie Picker praised Leslie for caring for Mitch's parents not like

a daughter-in-law, but like a true daughter. Niece Jess Hackel recalled a time when she took her Aunt Leslie to check out a venue for a planned party and the place had karaoke. She said she will always remember how her aunt took the mic and sang "Fat Bottom Girls" by Queen.

Nephew Greg Picker said his Aunt Leslie "loved to laugh more than anyone I know."

Dr. Lori Berkowitz, a friend of Leslie's from medical school days, spoke about their longtime friendship. "Some things that Leslie taught me: choose to see the best in people ... buy expensive shoes ... join a temple ... choose your spouse wisely, love unconditionally."

Hannah

Hannah was known for her support of environmental causes, sustainability, social justice, her passion for Judaism and her sharing nature.

"She was my closest and oldest friend," said Peninah Benjamin. They shared times at each other's homes and at Jewish Day School and Shorecrest. Fighting back tears in a halting voice, she told mourners, "We were supposed to save the world together, but my world will never be the same."

Hannah took on a composting project, was a vegan and in college she was studying sustainable development and Jewish ethics - both right in line with her passions. She was a go-getter from a young age.

One aunt, Rhonda Weiss, called Hannah her buddy and sweetheart. "We planted her first flower garden together. She loved digging in the dirt, watching the flowers grow," she said. "We both loved animals, gardening, music, kindness and our brothers." Multiple pictures on Facebook show the siblings hugging each other lovingly.

Through high school and college, Hannah was active in USY (United Synagogue Youth). She was president of her synagogue USY chapter and went on to leadership roles on the regional and international boards. At Camp Ramah Darom she was the one who loved to walk the goats and milk them, and last summer she worked on a kibbutz in Israel where she again tended to the goats and weeded vegetable beds.

Steven Resnick, a youth director at a synagogue in Georgia who knew Hannah through USY, posted on Facebook a message Hannah wrote in 2014: "Bring out the good in your friends. If you see something that reminds you of them, let them know. ... if they look upset, see if they need help. Always offer your assistance. Offer to carry stuff, host things, buy whatever needs to be bought, come early to set up, stay late to cleanup. You're only a memory to some people. Try your best to be a good one."

Ari

He was only 16 yet already friends and family affectionately called him a "rock star" for his musical and acting talents, the deep friendships he formed, and his outgoing nature.

He acted in plays at Shorecrest and other venues and his guitar and vocal skills made him a favorite as he fronted a band at Camp Ramah Darom and performed at school. He was beginning to write and play his

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Photos from Facebook, Camp Ramah Darom and Shorecrest Preparatory School. In the center, the Weiss Family is shown as they prepare to go whitewater rafting in Costa Rica. The photo was posted by a California woman who said she and her family were privileged to have met the Weiss family and shared the rafting adventure with them. At top right, Hannah shows her love for the environment as a kid and young adult. Bottom right, Leslie Weiss celebrates her recent shoe-themed 50th birthday. At bottom and left, Ari demonstrates his talents on stage at school and at Camp Ramah Darom. He left the message (top left) scrawled in Sharpie on his bunk bed at camp.

• CONTINUED from PREVIOUS PAGE
 own songs and one of them, “Only Girl,” – a haunting love story – is not only on the memorial Facebook page, but also has more than 7,000 listens since Ari uploaded the song to SoundCloud two months ago.
 Ari was tall, handsome, funny and “had the greatest smile that spread all the way up to his eyebrows,” his aunt Marci said. “He was definitely the smartest one. Even in a family of smarties, Leslie and Mitch agreed he was off-the-charts smart.”
 His cousin Jess said he “was at the center of everything” and made people feel special. Friend Benjamin Berner spoke of Ari’s “astounding stage presence.” He and others, from Camp Ramah and locally, emphasized his strong emphasis on maintaining friendships – not superficial ones that teens often have, but ones with depth.
 Ethan Pine, a friend from Camp Ramah, said he knew from camp experiences that Ari had a fear of heights, but he got texts from him on Dec. 27, telling about rappelling down a waterfall in Costa Rica. “He had conquered his fear ... and I was very proud of him,” Ethan said.

multiple ways to stay connected. But his tears were real - he was genuinely mourning the end of a sacred time in his life. If only I had known the value and importance of those tears. If only I had known the depth of mourning that was to come, then I would have shared those tears with him instead of shedding them now – alone,” Paskin wrote.
 Jeffery Minkowitz, director of Camp Ramah, said the camp staff tries to wipe out graffiti left by campers, but a message Ari wrote in Sharpie on his bunk bed passed under the radar. It spoke to Ari’s character:
 “Make memories. More importantly, make connections,” Ari wrote. “Take every moment and be active and present in all things you do. Be nice to everyone, for we are all part of a beautiful community. Talk to someone new every day. Have a positive attitude, even if you hate the activity. Make Memories. Make Memories that count. By the end all you will have are memories.”

Survivors include: Bibby Weiss, mother of Dr. Mitchell Weiss and grandmother of Hannah and Ari Weiss; Ed and Sandy Levin, parents of Dr. Leslie Weiss and grandparents of Hannah and Ari Weiss; Dr. Rhonda Weiss and Debbie (Michael) Picker, sisters of Dr. Mitchell Weiss, and Marci (Bob) Hackel, sister of Dr. Leslie Weiss.

David Paskin, a staff member at Camp Ramah, remembered seeing Ari sobbing on the last day of camp this past summer as he said goodbye to friends. “As an adult, the tears shed at the end of a camp session often seem excessive. After all, we’ll be back here before too long and in between we have

Memorial donation information

The Weiss family’s impact surpassed local boundaries. Several organizations have opened scholarship funds in their memory.

Congregation B’nai Israel Weiss Family Memorial Fund
 The Weiss family – Dr. Mitchell, Dr. Leslie, Hannah and Ari – were long-time members of Congregation B’nai Israel. The Weiss and Levin families have given their blessings to the creation of this memorial to fund a hands-on play and environmental learning area to continue their cherished work of sustainability, child health and social justice. www.cbistpete.org.

Camp Ramah Darom Weiss Family Scholarship Fund
 A Conservative summer camp in Clayton, GA, Camp Ramah Darom established a fund in memory of the Weiss family. Hannah and Ari Weiss attended Camp Ramah Darom for 10 years. Leslie Weiss and her sisters also attended Ramah camps as children. The scholarship fund was created at the request of relatives of the Weiss family. It will be used “to enable other campers to experience the magic of Ramah,” the camp website said. www.ramahdarom.org/donate/

United Synagogue Youth Designate Scholarship Fund
 Hannah was a past USY International SATO (social action/tikkun olam) Vice President and Ari was currently serving as his USY Chapter president. Hannah was also a USY intern in the Metropolitan New York Region. www.uscj.org/donate or call Michelle Rich at (212) 533-7800.

Jewish Theological Seminary
 Hannah was a Jewish Theological Seminary List College sophomore in the Joint Program with Columbia University. “She was a wonderful student, great friend, strong leader, and a beloved member of our community. Above all, she was deeply passionate about the environment. Hannah worked tirelessly to secure composting and other initiatives at JTS and inspired us all to intensify our individual efforts to protect our planet,” JTS wrote on its website www.jtsa.edu/give or (212) 678-8870.

Shorecrest Preparatory School
 Ari was a sophomore at Shorecrest Preparatory School and was active in singing and acting in productions at the school. His most recent performance was as the character of Jim in *Lincoln Park Zoo* in August. Hannah was a Shorecrest alumna who participated in extracurricular activities such as Relay for Life and Shorecrest Upper School’s Global Scholars Initiative. www.shorecrest.myschoolapp.com and click “Support Shorecrest.”

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Jewish Heritage Night



Tampa Bay Buccaneers Co-Chairman Bryan Glazer lights the menorah pre-game at the Hanukkah tailgate, as event sponsor Jason Levy, and event coordinator Rabbi Mendy Dubrowski look on. The Hanukkah festivities were part of the first Jewish Heritage Night on Dec. 18 when the Bucs faced the Atlanta Falcons on Monday Night Football.

The menorah lighting is shown on the big screen during the game.



Tampa Bay Buccaneers offensive lineman Ali Marpet poses with (L-R) Rabbis Mendy and Yossie Dubrowski, along with Chana and Runya Dubrowski on the sideline prior to the game. Marpet, who is Jewish, was placed on injured reserve earlier in the season.



Night of 100 Menorahs



Temple Beth David in Spring Hill celebrated its annual light festival, "Night of 100 Menorahs" in December. The celebration included a catered meal, singing, Hanukkah gelt, dreidels and presents for the children.

A look back at Hanukkah



Local dignitaries were among those who attended the Hanukkah in the City celebration, sponsored by (L-R) Council member Darden Rice, State Rep. Ben Diamond, St. Petersburg City Council member elect Gina Driscoll, Council member elect Brandi Gabbard, Chaya Korf, Mayor Rick Kriseman, Andrew Pozin, Rabbi Alter Korf, Dr. Michael Zimmer and Noah Royak. In back at left is guitarist Lazer Lloyd, Israel's King of the Blues.

Chabad of St. Petersburg

Children and adults participated in a variety of activities geared for folks of all ages during Hanukkah celebrations hosted by the Chabad Jewish Center of Greater St. Petersburg.

There were latke wars for C-teens as the youngsters competed to create the best latke. They also held a dreidel tournament and enjoyed refreshments. For the younger kids, a menorah making workshop was held at a local Home Depot. The event was sold out as 50 children and their parents or grandparents learned how to make a menorah from scratch, then took home their creation. During the workshop folks enjoyed jelly doughnuts and watching a strolling Judah the Macabee.

During yet another event, the 15th annual Hanukkah in the City, a crowd of more than 500 showed up to watch a menorah lighting ceremony at the Sundial in downtown St. Petersburg and enjoy music and Hanukkah gelt.

And still the celebrations were not over. The festivities continued with celebrations at senior residence homes and a chocolate gelt workshop for children at the Chabad center.

(L-R) Aaron and Noah Wein assemble a menorah during a menorah making workshop at a Home Depot, sponsored by Chabad of St. Petersburg.



Mascots for local sports teams attended the Hanukkah in the City festivities. From left are the Tampa Bay Lightning's Thunder Bug; Paige Conroy; Pete the Pelican, the mascot of the Tampa Bay Rowdies; Jack and his dad Will Conroy and Tampa Bay Rays' mascot Raymond.



(L-R) Jake Weiss, Amy Singh, Rabbi Alter Korf, Max Baker, Erin Singh, Ilan Kohan and Moshe Korf participate in C-teen latke wars.

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Bay area cantors' concert to raise funds for scholarships



At the Tampa Bay Area Cantors Association's recent annual meeting, (L-R): Jonathan Schultz, Riselle Bain, Beth Schlossberg, Tanya Greenberg, Laura Berkson, Deborah Cannizzaro, Joy Katzen-Guthrie, Jodi Sered-Lever, and Marci Vitkus. Also shown are Greenberg's three children – possible future members of BACA.

The Bay Area Cantorial Association (BACA) will present its 15th annual concert, American Jewish Voices, on Sunday, Feb. 11 at 3 p.m. at Congregation Beth Am in Tampa.

The event will feature cantors and cantorial soloists serving the Tampa Bay and Bradenton/Sarasota regions.

Founded in 2002 by members of the Tampa Bay cantorial community, BACA's annual concert celebrates Jewish life with musical solos and ensembles covering a global range of writers, eras, styles, languages, genres and cultures. This year's concert features liturgical, cabaret, stage, and film selections by American Jewish writers.

BACA's annual concert is always scheduled on or near Shabbat Shira (Sabbath of Song), when it is customary to present special musical worship services, concerts, and programs. Additionally, BACA presents smaller concerts in other regions of Florida and contributes music to local events such as the U.N. International Holocaust Day Commemoration Event held each January in Ybor City.

Participants in the annual concert at Congregation Beth Am include Riselle Bain (Temple Israel of Highlands County, Sebring), Laura Berkson (Temple B'nai Israel, Clearwater), Rick Berlin (Temple Beth El of North Port), Deborah Cannizzaro (Congregation Schaarai Zedek), Tanya Greenblatt (Temple Beth Orr, Coral Springs), Joy Katzen-Guthrie (Congregation Beth Am, Tampa), Andres Kornworcel (Congregation Rodeph Sholom, Tampa), Diane Becker Krasnick (Cantor Emerita, Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas), Beth Schlossberg (Congregation Kol Ami, Tampa), Jonathan Schultz (Congregation B'nai Israel, St. Petersburg), Jodi Sered-Lever (Congregation Mekor

Shalom, Tampa), Vikki Silverman (Cantor Emerita, Congregation Beth Am of Tampa), Marci Vitkus (Jewish Congregation of Venice), with pianist Tara Richards Swartzbaugh (University of Tampa).

Tickets are available at the door for a suggested donation of \$18 each. All donations are gratefully accepted and no one will be turned away. Beth Am is located at 2030 W. Fletcher Ave.

Proceeds benefit scholarships for cantorial students of Reform and Conservative Sacred Music Study and publication of sacred Jewish music.

To date, BACA has raised more than \$59,000 that it has gifted to cantorial scholarships for students of the H. L. Miller Cantorial School of the Jewish Theological Seminary of Judaism (Conservative), and the Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music of Hebrew Union College Jewish Institute of Religion (Reform), both in New York. Additionally, BACA has twice provided significant donations to new publications of liturgical Jewish sheet music as a means of supporting Jewish music and further serving cantorial students, professional cantors and cantorial soloists.

In December 2017, BACA made a \$10,000 gift to the Cantors Assembly establishing the Bay Area Cantorial Association Scholarship Fund in support of cantorial student scholarships at the Jewish Theological Seminary.

BACA continues to work toward establishing a named fund at Hebrew Union College as well – for which a seed donation of \$25,000 is required. Toward that goal, BACA seeks donors for this fund whom it will acknowledge at its concerts and in its concert programs.

For more information, call Congregation Beth Am at (813) 968-8511.

BDS, 'new anti-Semitism' on campus topic of Jan. 31 lecture

Middle East historian Asaf Romirowsky will speak this month at Temple A h a v a t Shalom in Palm Harbor on "BDS and the New anti-Semitism: What's Happening in Academia and on American College Campuses?"



Asaf Romirowsky

Romirowsky, executive director of Scholars for Peace and the Middle East, will speak on Wednesday, Jan. 31 at 7:30 p.m. as part of the temple's annual speaker's event. He is a fellow at the Middle East

Forum and is co-author of Religion, Politics and the Origins of Palestine Refugee Relief.

Romirowsky got his start in the policy world as a research fellow at the Middle East Forum, a Philadelphia-based think tank. He is a former Israel Defense Forces international relations liaison officer in the West Bank and to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. He is an adjunct professor at Haifa University.

This event is open to the public and general admission tickets range from \$18 to \$250, with sponsorship levels from \$500 to \$2,000. For more information or to purchase tickets, call (727) 785-8811, ext. 2. The temple is at 1575 Curlew Road in Palm Harbor.



(L-R): Ari Elul, Eve Landman and Lauren Patrusky enjoy the party.



Vodka Latke 2017 event chairs Thomas Stanton and Dori Marlin.

Vodka Latke draws big crowd to downtown Tampa

More than 175 young adults attended this year's Vodka Latke event on Sunday, Dec. 24 at the Franklin Manor, a popular bar in downtown Tampa. It was one of the largest turnouts for the event in the past decade.

The event was co-hosted by the Tampa Jewish Federation and the Jewish Federation of Pinellas & Pasco Counties. It was co-chaired by Thomas Stanton and Dori Marlin and host committee members were Rebecca Berger, Allison Fox, Ben Gersten, Jamie Gray Light, Alissa Myers and Jonathan Singer.

Find more photos from Vodka Latke 2017 on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JewishTampa>.



(L-R): Louie Mozas, Dori Marlin, Kevin Sarchi, Brian Overbye, Alissa Myers, Matt Branson, and Allison Fox were among the large crowd at the Vodka Latke.



45th Annual Art Festival Beth-El

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Monday, January 29 / 10am-5pm

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11:00am: Entertainment in the Sanctuary

12:30pm: Gourmet Luncheon - \$20 reservation required

2:00pm: Docent Tour

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The new, familiar faces of Art Festival Beth-El

By **THAIS LEON-MILLER**
Jewish Press

Art Festival Beth-El enters its 45th year of showcasing more than 170 artists from around the world and bringing their work to a local stage.

The event, Jan. 27-29, is expected to draw upwards of 8,000 art lovers to the grounds of the St. Petersburg Reform congregation.

This year, six chairpersons are joined by four associate-chairs, who are learning the ropes of coordinating what has been called one of the “premier shows in the Southeast.”

“I don’t think any of us are going anywhere anytime soon,” said one of the longtime co-chairpersons, Ann Soble, “but it’s great because it gives us a succession for the future.”

Soble is joined by other longtime co-chairs Jan Sher, Nan Bugatch, Donna Berman, Barbara Sterensis and Pam Sekeres.

Becky Weiss, an associate chair whose main duties include the packing and unpacking of artwork sent in by artists, has been working with the festival since 2009 and became an associate chair last year. Though she said packing and unpacking the artists’ work is something she “kind of fell into,” she loves it.

“It’s a lot of fun because you get to see what’s coming in, from returning and new artists,” said Weiss. “Every time you get a box you never know what they are going to send. You’re excited to see what’s in the next one.”

All things digital, print and marketing fall into the hands of associate chair Abby Sterensis.

Because her mother, Barbara, has been part of the festival for “longer than she can remember,” Abby Sterensis has been a frequent observer of the art show over the years. She has volunteered for the past four years and is debuting as an associate chair for the 2018 festival. She is most excited to see all of the artwork in person.

“I get to see [the artwork] from a different perspective,” said Sterensis. “I interact with the artists digitally for months and only see their work online. In person, it’s completely different and after so many months of speaking to the artists, it’s exciting.”

Michele Greene coordinates the boutique gallery, fine art listed at moderate pricing. Having been an associate chair for the past three years and a volunteer for the past 14, Greene has learned a lot about the festival. Her strength as one of the youngest associate chairs is curating local talent, she says.

“I focus on meeting new people and adding new artists,” said Greene. “I network and make contacts in St. Pete to find new and local artists.”

Nine of the 49 boutique artists (43 mixed

media and 6 jewelry) are from St. Petersburg. Greene is excited about all of the artists, both new and returning, but is especially excited to show the mixed media wall hangings of local artist, Adria Bernstein.

Associate co-chair Laura Horwitz has worked as the Art Festival Beth-El’s volunteer coordinator for many years. With over 200 volunteers involved in the planning and production of the festival, Horwitz has her hands full. She recruits and trains the volunteers, who are almost exclusively responsible for the day-to-day running of the festival.

“Volunteers bring enthusiasm, their enjoyment of the event and their love of art. They also bring a sense of community; that’s important,” said Horwitz in an interview with *Jewish Press* last year. “We have people whose parents fly in specifically to volunteer for the event. It is a lot of fun.”

One of the differences from years past is the temple social hall, where the main gallery is housed, is currently being renovated. The “big unveiling” of the updated hall will be the art show, said Soble.

A yearly tradition will continue as students from local public and private high schools are featured at the show with the festival awarding six \$200 scholarships to the schools of the winning emerging young artists.

In all, this year’s judge, Director of the Orlando Museum of Art Glen Gentele will award more than \$8,000 in prize money, endowed by the Sonya and Irwin Miller Art Fund.

Along with the main gallery, boutique, emerging artist high school student gallery, the festival features an outdoor sculpture garden of unusual pieces for gardens, offices and large buildings and the Syd Entel gallery of signed, framed prints. Works include paintings, wood, sculpture, ceramics, glass, photography and jewelry.

A preview cocktail reception will be held on Saturday, Jan. 27, from 7-10 p.m. with a \$25 admission that can be purchased at the door.

Art Festival Beth-El is free and open to the public on Sunday, Jan. 28 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with light lunches and snacks available for purchase.

The Avenue of the Shops, a two-day sale of art, jewelry and crafts is on Sunday and Monday, Jan. 29, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

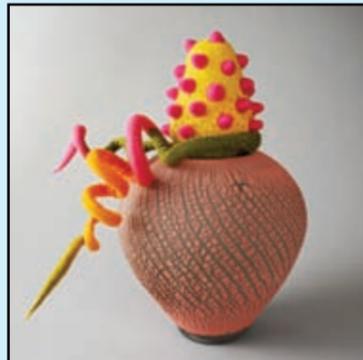
Also on Monday, there will be free entertainment provided by Alison Burns singing Broadway hits at 11 a.m., a gourmet luncheon for \$20 with reservation at 12:30 p.m. and a docent tour at 2 p.m.

Temple Beth-El is located at 400 S. Pasadena Ave., St. Petersburg. For more information, call (727) 347-6136.

Examples of work by artists featured in this year’s show



3 round dotted bowls from Kliss Glass (Bob and Laurie Kliss)



Mixed media -ceramic and felt, by Ellen Silberlicht



Sculpture by Linda Lewis

2 states alter primary dates to avoid High Holiday conflict

BOSTON (JTA) – Massachusetts and Rhode Island have changed their primary dates this year to avoid a conflict with the Jewish High Holidays.

In Massachusetts, the secretary of state, William Galvin, announced that the voting would be moved up to Sept. 4, the day after Labor Day and two weeks earlier than the original date, which was the eve of Yom Kippur.

In Rhode Island, the election scheduled for

Sept. 11, the second day of Rosh Hashanah, was moved to the following day, as per a state law mandating the vote be held the next business day available. It will be the first time since 1988 that an election will be held on a Wednesday, according to WPRI.com.

New York, New Hampshire and Delaware are holding statewide primary elections on Sept. 11, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. In Florida, the primary is Aug. 28.

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One of the youngest Schindler survivors to speak in St. Petersburg

Rena Finder, one of perhaps less than 50 of the 1,200 Jews on the so-called "Schindler's List" still alive, will share her story on Monday, Feb. 12 at 7:30 p.m. in St. Petersburg.

The Chabad of Greater St. Petersburg will be hosting Finder at the Palladium Theater in downtown St. Petersburg.

Finder, 88, was born in Krakow, Poland, to a well-to-do family. An only child, she lived with her parents in a brand-new apartment next to Wawel Royal Castle. A good student in school, Finder often was chosen for parts in the school's play. On Sundays, her father would take her to soccer games, or her aunt and uncle would take her to see children's plays or movies.

In September 1939, everything changed. Forced to leave their home, the family moved into the ghetto. There her father was

arrested and later killed at the death camp Auschwitz.

Finder and her mother worked in a printing shop in the ghetto and one day, Finder and her mother were put on a list to work in Schindler's factory.

"It was like going from hell to heaven," she said. "I expected [Schindler] to grow wings. He treated us like human beings."

"You didn't have to dread every day you were going to be killed because you knew Oskar Schindler was there, and he was going to protect you," Finder said. She and her mother were sent to work at Emalia, Oskar Schindler's enamel and ammunition factory.

After Schindler was forced to dismantle the camp, Finder, her mother and 298 other women were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau. They were in imminent danger of being

sent to the gas chambers when once again Schindler stepped in and was able to secure the women's release to go work in his factory in Czechoslovakia.

After the war ended and Rena and her mother were liberated, they spent time in a displaced persons camps, finally emigrating to the United States in 1948.

"It's so special and important to hear a Holocaust survivor's story firsthand. The Holocaust becomes more real when they share their stories, especially with the younger generation," said Rabbi Alter Korf, director of the Chabad Jewish Center of Greater St. Petersburg.

And he added, Finder's story is especially unique. Her riveting first-hand account of life as a Schindler child is a story of strength, courage and determination.



Rena Finder as a young woman and today

Tickets to the program are \$18 with Early Bird (before Jan. 25), \$12. Cost to become a sponsor (which includes two VIP seats and private cocktail reception at 6:30 p.m.), \$180.

Doors open at 7 p.m. at the theater, located at 253 5th Ave. N., St. Petersburg.

For more information or to reserve your seats, go to www.ChabadSP.com or call (727) 344-4900.

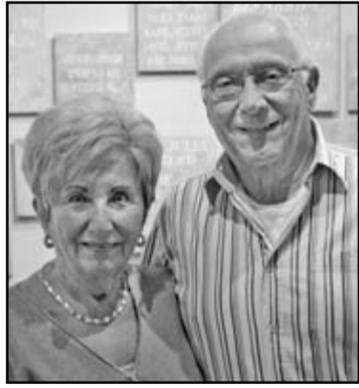


Photo courtesy of The Florida Holocaust Museum
Holocaust Survivors Toni and John Rinde at The Florida Holocaust Museum in 2015



Photo from The Florida Holocaust Museum, courtesy of Toni Rinde

Toni Rinde with the cat of her rescuers during the Holocaust in Poland



Photo from The Florida Holocaust Museum, courtesy of Lisel Schick

Lisel Schick and her brother, Walter Porges, in April 1939



Photo courtesy of The Florida Holocaust Museum

Lisel Schick speaking to students at The Florida Holocaust Museum in 2015.

HUMANITARIAN

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

The honorees are all prominent ambassadors for the museum, sharing their stories with student and adult groups inside the museum and throughout the state, in person, and through virtual appearances. In addition, they have encouraged their families to be involved with the museum, and many of their children and grandchildren have also begun to share their families' stories with students and visitors, shining examples of the next generations taking up the mantle of responsibility to pass on the important lessons of the Holocaust to future generations.

"I feel the most important aspect of the Florida Holocaust Museum's mission is education. It is vital to teach both children and adults the horrific consequences of hatred, prejudice and racism. It is also important that a Holocaust survivor tells his/her story. It is one thing to read about history in a book, but a first-hand account from somebody who has lived through this horror is much more effective. I will continue to share my story as long as I possibly can," said Schick.

Added fellow honoree, Toni Rinde, "The Florida Holocaust Museum is dedicated to teaching the inherent worth and dignity of life. Acceptance, tolerance, and coexistence within the global society should be the goal of every human being and within our walls we educate to remember the past in order to ensure a better future."

In 2003, the Loebenberg Humanitarian Award was established and named for Edith (of blessed memory) and Walter Loebenberg whose dream to establish The Florida Holocaust Museum became a reality through their vision and philanthropy as well as the support and generosity of local community leaders such as this year's honorees.

About the honorees

John and Toni Rinde were both born in Przemysl, Poland, although they did not meet each until 1957 in New York City. John came from an upper class Orthodox Jewish family. He was only 4½ years old



Photo from The Florida Holocaust Museum, courtesy of John Rinde

Pre-war photograph of John Rinde taken between 1936-1939



Photo from The Florida Holocaust Museum, courtesy of Mary Wygodski

Mary Wygodski at a displaced persons camp after she was liberated in 1945

when the war began. In 1941 when war broke out between Russia and Germany, he and his family were herded into the Lvov ghetto. They escaped and moved to Lublin. There, he survived the war using an assumed name, masquerading as a Catholic. His family was liberated in 1945 by the Russian Army and remained in Poland for two years. He lived in France from 1946 to 1952 and emigrated to the United States in January 1952. He went on to become a physician, setting up a practice in Clearwater.

As a toddler, she was hidden by a Polish family from 1941 to 1945. Provided with false papers and the name Marisha, Toni was raised as a Catholic. After the war, she was reunited with her parents and attended school in the United States. A nurse, she assisted in her husband's medical practice for many years.

Lisel Schick was born in Vienna, Austria, and came from an assimilated Jewish home. She was raised with one brother. Her family was aware of anti-Semitism in Vienna and anticipated trouble after Kristallnacht. Her parents sent her with her younger brother to England on the Kindertransport in April 1939. There, she attended boarding school assisted by B'nai

B'rith. Due to German shelling, they were evacuated from the east coast of England to Wales. She moved several times and arrived in the United States in December 1944 via convoy to Halifax and then a train to New York. Lisel was one of only 10 percent of Kindertransport children to be reunited with their parents.

Mary Wygodski was born in Vilna, Poland, the eldest of three sisters and one brother raised in a traditional middle class Jewish family. After the Nazi occupation, her family was sent to the Vilna ghetto. In 1943, she was separated from her mother and two sisters at a boxcar and never saw them again. Mary was transported to the Kaiserwald Labor Camp in Riga, Latvia, and then to the Stutthof Camp in Germany. From there she was transferred to Magdeburg Labor Camp where she made artillery shells in the Polte factory. After the war, she learned that her father and brother had been executed in a concentration camp in Klooga, Estonia.

* * *

Although the museum gala is sold out, written tributes to the honorees may be purchased in advance to be shared during the program.



Photo courtesy of Eckerd College

Mary Wygodski with Eckerd College students at The Florida Holocaust Museum in 2017

Additionally the "To Life" dinner will feature a conversation with Avner Avraham, career Mossad agent and curator of the traveling exhibit, "Operation Finale: The Capture & Trial of Adolf Eichman," which opens at the museum the same day. The exhibit includes 60 original artifacts, 70 photographic images, video inter-

views and the original bullet-proof glass booth where the accused Nazi war criminal sat during court proceedings in Israel.

For additional information, contact the museum at (727) 820-0100.

The Florida Holocaust Museum is located at 55 Fifth St. S., St. Petersburg.

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Organizations

Hadassah

New officers: The Lylah Chapter of Hadassah recently elected a new slate of officers for 2018. They are: Co-Presidents **Sally Laufer and Jody Sherman**; Vice President of Advocacy **Cheryl Schwartz**; Vice President of Zionism **Evelyn Steckler**; Vice President of Education **Claire Stiglitz**; Treasurer **Ilene Turker**; Recording Secretary **Barbara Baccari** (also past president); Communication Administrator **Linda Wexler**; Corresponding Secretary **Nancy Bomstein** and Associate's Chair **Terri Tankel**.

Genealogical Society

Immigration research: The Jewish Genealogical Society of Tampa Bay will offer a two-session seminar titled: "The JGSTB 2018 Guide to Immigration Research: 'Why You Can't Find Your Bubbe's Immigration Record'" on Sunday, Feb. 11 and Sunday, March 11 at 2 p.m. at Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, 14041 Icot Blvd., Clearwater. Registration will be at 1:30 p.m. on both dates. This seminar will enable participants to discover their family's

immigration records. The presentations will concentrate on both traditional and recently available Internet resources of interest to beginning and experienced genealogists. **Dr. Emil H. Isaacson**, who will lead the seminar, has more than 33 years of experience in genealogy. The seminar is free to members. Nonmembers will be charged \$25 for individuals or \$35 for a family, which will include an annual membership. A seminar booklet summarizing the presentation and containing updated references will be available for \$10. It is available only to seminar attendees. To pre-register for the class, for more information, or for directions, call **Bruce Hadburg** at (727) 796-7981.

Young Adults

Grown-up game night: #Gather will host an evening playing games such as Exploding Kittens, Joking Hazard and Cards Against Humanity. Bring your own games to play, too. Snacks, beer and more will be offered. The event is Wednesday, Jan. 24 from 7-9 p.m. at the Bryan Glazer Family JCC, 522 N Howard, Tampa. This is free for members and \$5 for guests.

Gather offers a mix of social and interactive activities designed to help young adults connect. It is open to young adults of all faiths

and backgrounds. For more information or to RSVP for any #Gather events, visit: <https://www.bryanglazerfamilyjcc.com/gather> or contact **Lisa Robbins** at lisa.robbins@jewishtampa.com or (813) 769-4723.

Bark in the Park: Bring your pup for a relaxing afternoon at the Davis Islands Dog Park, 1002 Severn Ave, Tampa, hanging with other pooches and dog owners on Sunday, Feb. 11 from noon to 2 p.m. as part of a #Gather event. Don't have a dog? Come out and play anyway.

#Gather Art Night: Create a self-portrait at the private art studio of local artist **Sara Scher** on Monday, Feb. 26 from 7-9 p.m. The cost is \$15 for #Gather members and \$20 for guests (includes art materials, snacks and wine). This event is limited to 14 people. No skill is needed.

Job-Links

Monday Morning Links: On Monday, Jan. 22, the topic for the Monday Morning Links program is "Interview tips and techniques that work." The topic for the Monday Jan. 29 program is "Get real time feedback on your 30-second commercial" and on Feb. 5 the topic is "What's in your job search toolbox." These free sessions are held from 9:30 - 11 a.m. at the Jack Roth Center

for Career Development at TampaBay-Job-Links, 4100 W. Kennedy Blvd., Suite 206, Tampa. Monday Morning Links is supported by the Vinik Family Foundation.

Job-search aids: There are also Success workshops on select Thursdays to aid with job-search skills. On Jan. 25, from 9:30 a.m. to noon, the topic will be "Getting organized and staying on track during your job search" and on Feb. 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. the topic is "Is your brand helping you land a job?" The workshops are free for TampaBay Job-Links full program participants and \$15 for guests. Reservations required for all programs.

Career transitioning: The next series of "Switching Gears" workshops will be on Wednesdays, Jan. 24 and 31 and Feb. 7 from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m. These are targeted to those in career transition. To RSVP, call (813) 344-0200, email RSVP@TBJL.org.

Support groups

Alzheimer's caregiver group: Menorah Manor offers a support group meeting in the Samson Nursing Center at Menorah Manor, 255 59th St. N., St. Petersburg, on the first Thursday of the month from 3:30-5 p.m. For more information, call **Gwen Kaldenberg** at (727) 302-3750.

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YOUTH ADVISOR POSITION AVAILABLE: 6- 12 grade, Temple B'nai Israel. Salary commensurate with experience contact Danig@tbclearwater.org

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Anti-Israeli activists celebrate New Orleans investment boycott

(JTA) – The City of New Orleans approved a resolution to boycott investments with human rights violators, which anti-Israel activists celebrated as an achievement for their cause.

The resolution, which passed the council unanimously with all five members present voting in support, mentions neither Israel nor the Palestinian territories.

Nevertheless, following its passage, the New Orleans Palestinian Solidarity Committee wrote on Facebook: “WE WON!!!” The resolution was drafted by the committee, according to *The Intercept*, and brought to a vote on Thursday.

“Even though it doesn’t have all the teeth,” the passage of the resolution “proves the city recognizes what is happening in Israel,” Tabitha Mustafa, co-founder and core organizer of New Orleans Palestinian Solidarity Committee, told *The Intercept*.

The Jewish Community Relations Council of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans opposed the measure, saying it was voted on “without the opportunity for dissenting voices to be heard for a broader discussion.”

“While the Jewish Federation fully supports the values of human rights expressed in the resolution,

we are deeply concerned about its unintended consequences relating to Israel and in bolstering the divisive BDS movement,” the federation said in a statement, referring to the movement to Boycott, Divest from and Sanction Israel. “The BDS movement, which has inherently anti-Semitic components, is designed to challenge Israel’s economic viability and very right to exist.”

The adopted text “encourages the creation of a process to ... avoid contracting with or investing in corporations whose practices consistently violate human rights.”

Five of seven city council members, including the mayor-elect, co-sponsored the resolution.

“This resolution specifically recognizes the city’s social and ethical obligations to take steps to avoid contracting with or investing in certain corporations, namely those that consistently violate human rights, civil rights, or labor rights,” said City Council President Jason Williams just ahead of the vote.

At the start of the Jan. 11 New Orleans City Council meeting, the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans was honored with “a special proclamation for their tremendous philanthropic work and positive impact on the entire New Orleans community.”

Obituaries

ELIHU H. BERMAN, 95, of Clearwater, died Jan. 8. He was born in Hartford, CT and had served in the United States Navy. An active member of the Jewish community, he served on the board of directors of the Jewish Federation of Pinellas County for many years and was a member of Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater. An attorney, he was a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard College of Law. He started his career as an associate for Abraham Ribicoff. He practiced law in Hartford from 1948 through 1971, where he also served as editor-in-chief of the Connecticut Bar Journal. He was president of the Connecticut Zionist Region and of the Jewish National Fund counsel of Greater Hartford. In 1972, he moved to Tel Aviv, where he passed the bar. He worked as general counsel for the Eisenberg Group of companies through 1973. Upon returning from Israel, he relocated to Clearwater, where he practiced law until 2013. During this time, he was a member of Clearwater and Florida Bar Associations. In addition to being Board Certified by the Florida Bar as a specialist in civil trial law, he was also an associate professor at Stetson Law School. Survivors include his wife of 42 years Susan; son and daughter-in-law Jonathan and Myra Berman; daughter Rachel Rabinovitz; stepson and daughter-in-law Adam and Tiffanie Lopatin; stepdaughter and son-in-law Heidi and Curtis Kitzmiller; five grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. The family suggests memorials to Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

JOSEPH BOKHOR BITRAN, 92, of Seminole, died Jan. 10. He was born in Cairo, Egypt and had worked for many years as a purchasing manager in the mining industry. Survivors include his wife, Deborah. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

ALLAN ROY BONILLA, 78, of South Pasadena, died Jan. 6. Survivors include his wife of 52 years Pat; two sons and daughters-in-law; Scott and Trisha Bonilla, and Jeff and Lisa Bonilla; and three grandchildren. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg)

JEAN BRASEL, 83, of Clearwater, died Dec. 23. She was originally from Wilkes-Barre, PA and was a certified arbitrator. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

MUSSIE EIDELMAN, 96, of St. Petersburg, died Jan. 9. She was born in Romania and emigrated to the United States as an infant with her parents. She won scholarships to the Juilliard School of Music as well as the Eastman School of Music. Later, she earned a bachelor’s degree in music education. She was a cellist for many years in the Youngstown Symphony before moving to St. Petersburg. While living in St. Petersburg, she taught at Gibbs High School as well as Eckerd College. Survivors include her sons and daughters-in-law, Dr. Michael and Leila Eidelman, and Sylvan and Julie Eidelman; daughter and son-in-law Diane Eidelman and Nathan Baum; five grandchildren and one great-grandchild. The family suggests memorials to Congregation B'nai Israel in St. Petersburg. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

ARLENE EDYTHE FIEL, 85, of Largo, died Dec. 15. Born in Philadelphia, PA, she was the owner of a candy store. Survivors include her daughters and sons-in-law, Sheryl and Larry Feinman, Robyn Fiel, and Kathi and Steven Kauffman; along with grandchildren and great-grandchildren. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

MORTON FLAX, 97, of Clearwater, died Dec. 20. He was born in Washington, D.C. and served in the United States Army. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

ELAINE HIRSHFIELD GOTLER, 82, of Clearwater, died Dec. 18. Born in Brooklyn, she grew up in Hillside, NJ and moved to Jacksonville, and then later to Tampa. She was a real estate broker for many years, then returned to college, receiving her bachelor’s and master’s degrees, both from the University of South Florida. She then worked as an educator with children with special needs in the Tampa public school system and with college students at Hillsborough Community College. She was a long-time member of Hadassah and of Congregation Rodeph Sholom in Tampa, active in its Sisterhood and as part of the Hillel School of Tampa in its early years. Later she was a member of Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater. Survivors include her husband of 46 years Leonard; daughter and son-in-law Tara and Richard Rogachefsky; son Steven Gotler and son and daughter-in-law Ross and Rachel Gotler; sister Barbara Margol; and four grandchildren. The family suggests memorials to Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater or to Cedars-Sinai in Los Angeles. (Segal Funeral Home, Beth David Chapel)

ALBERT GRINBERG, 87, of St. Petersburg, died Jan. 4. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

LILLIAN KLEIN, 93, of Clearwater, died Dec. 17. She was originally from Brooklyn, NY. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

SHEILA KNAPP, 87, died Dec. 20. She was born in New York and had owned a title company. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

AUDREY MAE WHITMAN LEDERMAN, died Jan. 6. Prior to moving here, she lived in Pittsburgh and Miami. She volunteered with many organizations including Hospice/Empath where she was recognized as Volunteer of the Year. She was a clown known as “Ladybug,” visiting patients in hospitals and nursing homes. She had been a teacher of gifted students and teachers and wrote manuals for gifted education and she was a camp counselor. Survivors include her children Jan Craig, Don Barry and Donna Riley, Sue Lederman LaNeve and Don LaNeve; sister and brother-in-law Barb Whitman Cohn and Larry Grand of Atlanta; six grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. The family suggests memorials be sent to organizations that benefit children. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

DAVINA RIFE, 70, died Dec. 31. She was born in Philadelphia and worked as a human resources officer for many years. (David C. Gross funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

HARRY S. ROSEN, 90, of Treasure Island, died Dec. 12. He was born in Memphis, TN, and served in the United States Navy. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

ELLA SCHLANGER, of South Pasadena, died Dec. 14. Born in Czechoslovakia, she worked for many years as a registered nurse and apartment manager. Survivors include her son David Schlender of St. Petersburg; son and daughter-in-law Tom and Inez Schlangler; and two grandchildren. The family suggests memorials to the American Heart Association. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

EDWIN HAROLD SHAPIRO, 92, of St. Petersburg, died Jan. 8. Born in Baltimore, he was a United States Marine Corps veteran of World War II, fighting in the Battle of Iwo Jima. After the war, he and his late wife Janet settled in Annapolis, MD, where he owned and operated a popular tavern and a dry cleaner. He and his family moved to St. Petersburg in 1974, where he was a contractor, building affordable homes. He was an active member of Congregation B'nai Israel, where he was a Minyanaire for his regular attendance daily morning and/or evening services. Survivors include his son and daughter-in-law David and Robin Shapiro; daughters and son-in-law, Lauren and Scott Zimmerman, and Susan Haskel; sister and brother-in-law Janet and Sheldon Leibowitz; eight grandchildren and one great-grandson. The family suggests memorials to the Veterans of Foreign Wars Family Funds at www.vfw.com or Wounded Warrior Family Support at www.wvfw.org. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

The Jewish Press publishes obituaries as a public service at no charge in the Jewish Press of Pinellas County based on information supplied by the family to the funeral home. However, the information contained in the free obituary is at the discretion of the Jewish Press.

Welcome to the world...

Sue and Jon Rosenbluth of Largo are proud to announce the birth of granddaughter: **Charlotte Gwen Glazer**, born on Dec. 1 to Shanna and Bryan Glazer of Tampa. Big brother is 15-month-old Sawyer. Also *kvelling* is grandmother **Linda Glazer** of Palm Beach and great grandma **Dotty Feinberg** of St. Petersburg.

Sally and Erel Laufer of Palm Harbor are *kvelling* over the Dec. 7 birth of grandson **Aidan Runner Vagley** of Venice, CA. Proud parents are

Sincerely yours,

Judy Ludin



Sharon and Adam Vagley. “After three daughters and three granddaughters we have a grandson,” Sally said.

P.S. As always, I’m looking forward to hearing about all your family simchas. Photos are welcome, too. Send information to: Sincerely Yours, P.O. Box 6970, Clearwater, FL 33758, or e-mail jewishpress@aol.com.

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Bar Mitzvah

Ari Lawrence Katz

Ari Lawrence Katz, son of Angela and David Katz of Palm Harbor, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, Feb. 3 at Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater.

A seventh grade Principal's List student at Palm Harbor Middle School, Ari is in the Gifted Program, and enjoys engineering and building projects. He has participated in NASA's Summer Space Camp for four years in a row and most recently learned how to pilot a plane while participating in Embry Riddle University's summer program. He is a Black Belt in Ishin-

ryu Karate, a certified scuba diver and a Boy Scout. He also enjoys fishing, reading and cooking.

Special guests will include grandmother Libby Lawrence, along with family and friends from Milan, Italy; California, Texas, Illinois, Wisconsin, Massachusetts, Ohio and Washington, D.C.



Gavin Simon-Gardin petting the sloth.



Day school gets talk on the wild side

Hillel Academy students got a visit from an educator from Busch Gardens recently who brought along a sloth and a bird to show

students in transitional kindergarten through fifth grade. The kids learned about animals and their habitats.

Open house set at Hillel Academy

Hillel Academy will host an open house on Tuesday, Jan. 30 for the community, beginning at 8:30 a.m. at the north Tampa campus.

The private Jewish community day school offers classes from transitional kindergarten through eighth grade. As the only accredited Jewish day school in Tampa, the school is "rooted in and guided by Jewish values." There will be a brief presentation and tour.

Known for its top scores nationally in academics, and its award-winning MakerLab, the school also excels in fine arts. Performing arts education is provided by the Patel Conservatory at the Straz Center for the Performing Arts Center including workshops from

visiting professional artists and students are treated to field trips to experience performances at the Straz.

The 10-year Hillel Academy students' journey culminates in a trip to Israel for eighth graders.

Accredited by the Florida Council of Independent Schools and the Florida Kindergarten Council, Hillel is a member of the Jewish Community Day School Network and the National Association of Independent Schools.

The school is located at 2020 W. Fletcher Ave. in Tampa. More information is available by contacting admissions@hillelacademytampa.com or by calling (813) 963-2242.

Play ball: Tampa JCCs annual softball tournament to be held March 18 at Westchase area fields

The Tampa JCCs invite the Tampa Bay community to "play ball" at the 12th annual co-ed softball tournament on Sunday, March 18 at the Ed Radice Park in Tampa.

Last year more than 200 people from throughout the Bay area participated in the tournament with teams enjoying a day of competition, fun-in-the-sun family time and an afternoon of community building.

The park is located in the Westchase area at 14720 Ed Radice

Drive. Registration begins at the park at 11:45 a.m. and games start at 12:30 p.m. There will be a playoff game for the tournament championship at 4 p.m.

Any single player, or an entire team wishing to sign up can register as a team with their synagogue, sisterhood, brotherhood, book club, family or just a group of friends. Single players will be randomly placed on a team.

There must be a minimum of 10 people per team and a maximum

of 14. There also must be three females on each team. Additional rules and details about the day will be posted on www.jewishtampa.com.

The cost is \$45 for individuals and \$425 to sign up an entire team. The fee includes a team shirt and snacks for the day. Register online at www.jewishtampa.com or call the Tampa JCC at (813) 264-9000. The deadline to register is Friday, March 9. The deadline to submit the entire team roster is Wednesday, March 14.

Israeli youth tennis players to display talents in Tampa

The Tampa JCCs & Federation has the privilege to again host the Israel Tennis Centers Foundation team thanks to Maureen and Doug Cohn, who are chairing this event.

An exhibition will be held at the Sandra W. Freedman Tennis Complex on Davis Islands, on Thursday, March 1 from noon to 1:30 p.m. A complimentary lunch will be served for spectators.

Following the exhibition, there also will be an opportunity for community members to play with team members. Anyone interested, should contact Doug Cohn at dcohn@trane.com.

The Israel Tennis Centers (ITC)

is an organization that works tirelessly through the medium of sport to enhance the development of Israeli youth. Since opening its first center in Ramat Hasharon in 1976, the ITC has helped over a half million children, including at-risk youth and those with special needs with many coming from outlying and underserved towns.

The ITC's 14 centers stretch from Kiryat Shmona on the Lebanese border in the north to Beer Sheva bordering the Negev Desert in the south.

This year's team members include: Daniel Dudockin (20 years old); Jessica Bekkerman (18 years

old); Jennifer Ibeto (16 years old) and Orel Adga (14 years old).

In 2016, more than 75 people from the community came out to watch these accomplished athletes, ages 12 to 18, and to hear their personal stories about how this organization has made such a positive impact in their childhood. The Tampa Bay area community raised \$20,000 to help the Israel Tennis Centers continue their efforts and dedication to the children of Israel.

If you are interested in housing a member of the team for the evening, contact Pam Cotner at pam.cotner@jewishtampa.com.

How Sholom Rubashkin's supporters got Trump to commute ex-kosher slaughterhouse owner's sentence

By RON KAMPEAS
JTA news service

WASHINGTON — Why did President Donald Trump commute the sentence of Sholom Rubashkin, the former CEO of an Iowa kosher meat plant sentenced to 27 years in prison for bank fraud?

The official line is that the bipartisan support for Rubashkin's cause made cutting short his sentence a no-brainer. The first sentence of the White House statement calls the commutation "an action encouraged by bipartisan leaders from across the political spectrum, from Nancy Pelosi to Orrin Hatch," referring respectively to the Democratic leader in the U.S. House of Representatives and the conservative Republican senator from Utah.

Uncharacteristically, the announcement is pronouncedly hedged and goes out of its way to note that others wanted Rubashkin freed. One of those others is Alan Dershowitz, the constitutional lawyer from whom Trump has solicited advice since becoming president. Dershowitz directly counseled Trump to free Rubashkin, the attorney told various media outlets.

Dershowitz, who previously raised the issue with President Obama, may have reached the president at a time when he is inclined to think favorably about Orthodox Jews. His son-in-law Jared Kushner and daughter, Ivanka Trump, are Orthodox Jews, as are some of his closest advisers. A majority of Orthodox Jews voted for Trump, compared to the non-Orthodox majority who voted for Hillary Clinton.

"During the course of the campaign, he identified the Orthodox as the segment of the Jewish community most likely to be supportive of him," said David Zweibel, the executive vice president of Agudath Israel of America. "We proceeded over the last year with the assumption that this change in the administration could make a difference in the Rubashkin case because he would be more likely to have an open ear to things that are open to us."

Kushner has longstanding ties to the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, of which Rubashkin is a member.

"My impression is that Donald Trump is much more receptive to the interests and concerns of the Orthodox Jewish community, maybe because of the association with his son-in-law," said Nathan Lewin, a top Washington lawyer involved in Jewish causes.

Lewin, who for a number of years represented Rubashkin, said prosecutorial and judicial misconduct made Rubashkin's case an easy sell when he and Paul Clement, a former U.S. solicitor general, did the rounds of Congress seeking support for Rubashkin.

Whatever the circumstance, Rubashkin's release led to a rapturous reception in the Chabad enclave of Borough Park, Brooklyn, where his family now lives.

The commutation was exceptional. Trump has used his executive power to free someone from a prison

sentence only one other time: In August, he pardoned Joe Arpaio, the former sheriff of Maricopa County, AZ. Arpaio, who had been convicted of criminal contempt, had yet to begin his one-year sentence. Arpaio was a prominent Trump backer in the 2016 presidential race and the White House was unapologetic in its pardon statement.

The Rubashkin decision seemed to be based more on its merits than on Trump's loyalty to an ally.

Trump in the statement said Rubashkin's sentence was one "many have called excessive in light of its disparity with sentences imposed for similar crimes."

Rubashkin's plant, Agriprocessors, was targeted by a major immigration raid in 2008 that led to the arrest of nearly 400 undocumented Guatemalans and Mexican workers. Facing charges for employing the undocumented workers, including children, he tried to sell the company.

Federal prosecutors warned potential buyers that the government would seize the company if anyone in Rubashkin's family retained a stake in it. That scared away buyers, and when Rubashkin declared bankruptcy, banks were in a \$27 million hole.

Rubashkin was convicted for masking the company's declining fortunes from the banks that had lent money to the company. His advocates claim that prosecutors effectively set up Rubashkin by taking steps that drove him to take illegal actions that concealed his company's true debt.

Rubashkin was sentenced to 27 years for bank fraud. Federal guidelines provide for sentencing of up to 30 years. Mitigating factors included that Rubashkin had no prior record, and was known for his charitable contributions to Jewish causes.

In 2008, federal prosecutors convinced a magistrate to deny Rubashkin bail, arguing that because he was Jewish, he posed a flight risk — he could immigrate to Israel. The prosecutors did not provide any evidence that Rubashkin had any plans to move to Israel, claiming only that he had "de facto dual citizenship."

That sparked widespread outrage among his supporters. Reade overturned the ruling, and Rubashkin was free on bail during his trial. Still, Zweibel said, a bad aftertaste lingered.

Some Jewish observers of the case agreed that Rubashkin's sentence was excessive and the commutation fair, but also insisted that he didn't deserve a hero's homecoming. Rubashkin's business model "was built on the exploitation of his immigrant labor force, indifference to the environmental damage caused by his plant, and unnecessary pain and suffering for the animals that he slaughtered," Rabbi Morris Allen, an advocate for ethical values in kosher slaughter, wrote in the *Forward*. "Indeed, as many inside his piece of the Jewish community celebrate his release, many others are wondering when the Jewish community as a whole will come to grips with the ethics demanded of us in the production of kosher food."

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Art and nature mix at Tu B'Shevat event

The Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties invites families to celebrate the "New Year of the Trees" – Tu B'Shevat – on Sunday, Feb 4, from 2 - 4 p.m. at Lake Seminole Park, Shelter 5, 10015 Park Blvd. N., Seminole.

Local artist, Adria Bernstein, will demonstrate and facilitate the art of rock painting for the group.

"I love taking natural resources and bringing them to life with color and paint. The possibilities are endless," said Bernstein who has been active in this craft since 2008.

The rocks will be decorated to celebrate nature and can be taken home and enjoyed for yourself or to give to others.

Light snacks will be served.

Tu B'Shevat is a Jewish holiday that falls on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Shevat. This year the actual holiday is Wednesday, Jan. 31. This holiday is known as the New Year for Trees. The word

"Tu" is not really a word; it is the number 15 in Hebrew, as if you were to call the Fourth of July "4 July."

Tu B'Shevat is the new year for the purpose of calculating the age of trees for tithing. See Lev. 19:23-25, which states that fruit from trees may not be eaten during the first three years; the fourth year's fruit is for G-d, and after that, you can eat the fruit.

There are few customs or observances related to this holiday. One custom is to eat a new fruit on this day, or to eat from the Seven Species (*shivat haminim*) described in the Bible as being abundant in the land of Israel. Another custom is to plant a tree or begin a garden.

"The goal of this event is to bring families together in our community to enjoy nature and enjoy each other's company while learning about the holiday of Tu B'Shevat and some of the customs we have in Israel" says Yael Mor,



An example of Adria Bernstein's rock art.

Federation's community shlichah. "In Israel, the holiday has become one of ecological awareness and is celebrated outside in nature with focus on renewing the world with trees and other greenery."

The cost of the event is \$8 per participant. RSVP to Yael Mor at yael@jewishpinellas.org or (727) 238-6975.

A diverse group gather for PJ Library family Hanukkah party



Serious game of dreidel being played.



Aliza and Keith Norstein

The Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties once again hosted a Hanukkah event for all families, putting an emphasis on the *all*.

Spearheaded by the PJ Library Community Council, the party included a festive dairy lunch in the Margarete Heye Great Room of Ruth Eckerd Hall where attendees enjoyed holiday favorites like potato pancakes, jelly doughnuts, menorah making crafts, Chanukah songs and stories, a magician, balloon artist and a family photo booth.

The Federation hoped to attract unaffiliated and intermarried families, trying a new tactic that really paid off, said Elana Gootson of the Jewish Federation.

"We often assume that people know that everyone is welcome. We decided to be very clear and specifically state on the invitation that all family types are invited. We then listed those family types: interfaith, one Jewish parent, Jewish grandparents, LGBTQ, adopted families, blended families, culturally Jewish, observant and even those who just love the beauty of Jewish culture and traditions," said Gootson. "We had a great turnout of new diverse families that we haven't met before."

Committee member Kara Tanner described an exchange on Facebook, "In a Jewish Moms of Tampa Bay Facebook group we were posting about the various Hanukkah events around Tampa Bay. When I posted about Federation's inclusive Hanukkah party and toy drive, it created an interesting thread where one mom expressed excitement that this was the only event that self-identified as inclusive. Many moms responded that all events are inclusive, but those with interfaith families said they 'love



Beth Gelman entertains the crowd with Hanukkah stories and songs.

that Federation went out of its way to make the message clear and their events welcoming.' This really made me feel good about our event."

Sarah Dinehart Wible, daughter of committee member Vicky Dinehart, also posted, "I love that about the Federation, they make sure to let people know all are welcome and I think that is important."

Beth Gelman, Florida Holocaust Museum executive director and a classically trained singer, played guitar and delighted the audience with Hanukkah stories

and songs. Community volunteer and magician, David Fletcher, entertained families with his humor and sleight-of-hand magic tricks. Families took silly photos together and played dreidel.

The event also featured a community initiative in partnership with Toys for Tots, teaching young guests the spirit of *tzedakah* (charity).

Attendees were encouraged to bring a new, unwrapped gift to donate. The guests filled two large donation boxes provided by Toys for Tots.

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Photo by Shahar Azran

Israeli ambassador to the United Nations, Danny Danon, and Israel Bonds President and CEO Israel Maimon join members of the Israel Bonds Women's Division on Dec. 4 including six from the Tampa Bay area. (L-R): Stephanie Stein of Largo; Dr. Vivian Benci of Clearwater; Linda Goldfarb of Seminole; Monica DiGiovanni, Israel Bonds' Representative of North, West and Central Florida; Ambassador Danon, Maimon, Debbie Taub of Tampa and Diana Sager of Seminole.

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6 area women attend Israel Bonds event in New York

The Israel Bonds Women's Division held a series of exclusive events for 60 Prime Minister's Circle members including six from the Tampa Bay area in New York City on Dec. 3-4. The gathering was open only to those making a new investment of a minimum of \$25,000 in Israel Bonds.

The event included a private tour and briefing at the United Nations by Talie Danon and her husband, Israel's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Ambassador Danny Danon.

Talie Danon, a clinical dietitian with over 18 years of experience in the Israeli public health sector, spoke on her role as the spouse of the ambassador and its evolution over time. She said she takes pride in hosting events at local art galleries in which she invites wives of other UN ambassadors to view art reflecting on Judaism, art in the Holocaust, and to learn more

about Israeli culture. She is focused on educating others on the history of the Jewish nation, and once held a Seder for the ambassadors to experience a Pesach meal and prayers.

Danny Danon underscored the fact that Israeli culture and the Jewish religion are making progress on a daily basis at the UN, noting that Yom Kippur is now recognized as a national holiday and kosher food is served in the UN cafeteria. Danon continued, "Our challenge is to close the gap, and we must work to eliminate the fears that supporters of Israel have of freely stating their desire to represent the strong Jewish nation."

The Danons both expressed admiration for U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, with Danny Danon describing her as being "fearless on the notion of creating change."



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Trump waives Iran sanctions, he says for the last time under the current deal

By RON KAMPEAS
 JTA news service

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump waived nuclear sanctions against Iran for what the White House said was the final time under the current deal.

By the time the next waiver signing rolls around in 120 days, Trump wants a new deal in place that removes "sunset clauses" allowing Iran to resume enhanced enrichment of fissile material within a decade, three senior administration officials said Friday, Jan. 12.

Trump wants the bans to be permanent. "He wants to deny Iran access to nuclear weapons forever and not just for 10 years," one of the officials said. The officials spoke in a conference call for journalists on the condition they not be named.

The officials said Trump expected America's European allies who are also parties to the 2015 accord,

which swapped sanctions relief for a rollback of Iran's nuclear program, to join with him in reworking the deal. He is also demanding a permanent end to Iran's enrichment of fissile material at a grade sufficient for weapons use. As it stands, Iran is currently allowed to enrich uranium to low grades unsuitable for weapons use.

In a statement later Jan. 12, Trump said those who do not work with him to amend the deal are effectively siding with Iran.

"I hereby call on key European countries to join with the United States in fixing significant flaws in the deal, countering Iranian aggression, and supporting the Iranian people," he said. "If other nations fail to act during this time, I will terminate our deal with Iran. Officials notably did not say that Trump expected two of the nations party to the deal — Russia and China — to join in the revision of the agreement. Both countries are adamantly opposed to renegotiating the deal, as is Iran.

The three European nations that are party to the deal, France, Germany and Britain, have said that they do not want to reopen the deal unless all parties are agreed. The Europeans have said they are willing to consider enhancing sanctions outside the nuclear deal, for instance targeting Iran's missile program and human rights abuses.

Trump, the same day he waived the nuclear sanctions, imposed new sanctions on Iran for its human rights abuses and its military adventurism.

Most prominent among the 14 individuals and entities named in the new sanctions was Sadeq Amoli Larijani, who heads Iran's judiciary and who is brother to the speaker of the Iranian parliament. Other sanctions target suppliers of Iran's military and Iran's cybersecurity sector, which the administration officials said plays a central role in censorship in Iran.

Congress has so far shown little interest in using legislation to undercut or change the current Iran nuclear deal.



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