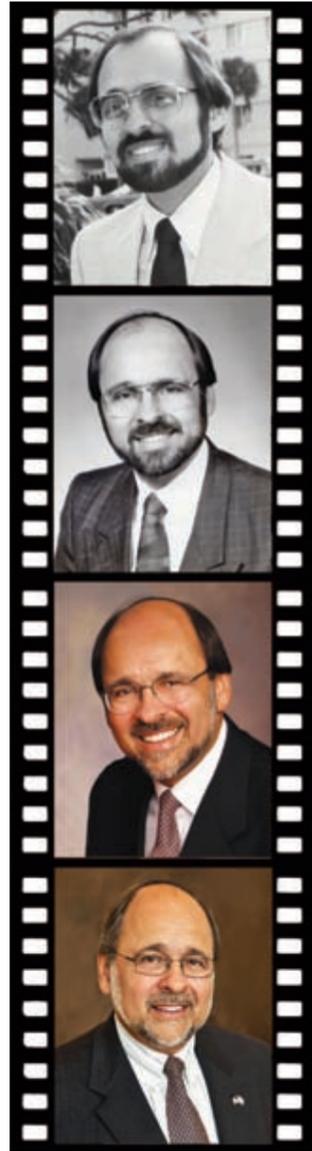


After 41 years at one and only shul, Rabbi Luski bows out



■ Related column, Page 4

By BRUCE LOWITT
Jewish Press

As a young man, Jacob Luski had no desire to follow his father into the real estate business. Nor did he plan on a rabbinical career. He enrolled at Georgia Tech.

"When I finished high school I thought I wanted to be an engineer," he said. "So, I became a rabbinic engineer instead of a mechanical or different type of engineer."

And 41 years later he is retiring from the only pulpit he ever occupied, as rabbi at Congregation B'nai Israel in St. Petersburg.

"I know, as a rabbi's daughter that it's highly unusual for a rabbi to have only one pulpit for his entire career," said Reva Pearlstein, a former president of the synagogue and chair of the search committee that selected Luski's successor. "It's pretty impressive that he forged such a strong posture in this community as other rabbis came and went. He went from being the young kid on the block to suddenly being the senior rabbi in town."

"In a way it's a sense of loss we're going to feel," Pearlstein said. "We're so used to Rabbi Luski. We're used to the way he deals with problems. We're used to the way he preaches. He's a story teller, he teaches you by telling stories. Now everyone has their own style so it's going to be a real adjustment for all of us, both for people who felt it was time for him to leave and also for those who dearly loved him."

Rabbi Luski was 27 when he came to the Conservative Congregation B'nai Israel.

"I always had an interest in Jewish life and it sparked during those college years,"

said the Havana-born Luski. His family fled Cuba for the United States in 1960, when he was 11, first briefly to Miami Beach, then to Charlotte, N.C., where he stayed through high school.

LUSKI continued on PAGE 8

New local grant program for special needs community

Tikvah Suncoast Inc. a million-dollar-plus Jewish-inspired non-profit, began issuing its first grants early this month and is seeking more grant applications from individuals and families to help enhance the quality of life for the special needs population throughout Tampa Bay and West Central Florida.

The organization, founded by Beatrice Mehl, has a mission to "Open Doors to Special Lives," and has recently partnered with the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties in administering the grant program.

Ron Yogman, chair of Tikvah Suncoast, said Mehl, who died in 2011 at age 95, was a resident of St. Petersburg for more than half a century who "was very keen on anything Jewish and special needs," Yogman said.

"She got to know a child with special needs and she adopted those with special needs as a cause," Yogman said, explaining that the child she got to know years ago was Yogman's daughter Kandice, who is now 39 and has autism at a high functioning level. He said Mehl had no children but became concerned as to what happens to those with special needs when their parents die or can no longer care for them.

Tikvah Suncoast was founded in 2008 with the mission to better the lives of individuals with special needs and varying exceptionalities in our greater community, including but not limited to those living with autism, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, Down Syndrome, and physical challenges.

The inaugural grant program was

SPECIAL NEEDS on PAGE 12



An Israeli holds a "terror kite" and the incendiary materials attached to it.

'Terror kites' shake residents in Israel, but not their resolve

By SAM SOKOL
JTA news service

NAHAL OZ, Israel – Dani Ben David fiddles with his radio, switching between it and his cellphone as he drives through the Beeri Forest, a nature reserve located on the border of Israel and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.

As his Jeep jolts over the dirt road, he quickly and calmly jumps between multiple conversations, coordinating efforts to extinguish the multiple fires that have sprung up across his territory. As regional director for the Western Negev for Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael-Jewish National Fund, Ben David is responsible for maintaining the forest's tens of thousands of acres in the face of Palestinian efforts to torch them and the surrounding farmland.

Since April, more than 450 open-air fires have been set along the border region by kites and balloons carrying incendiary materials launched from Gaza. Flying aimlessly over the kibbutzim, they have turned large swatches of what was once an oasis of green in a dry and dusty south into a charred landscape.

Many of those kites have landed in the wheat fields of farmers, causing millions of shekels in damage to the local agricultural sector as well as in the area's vast nature reserves.

"Look over there," Ben David says, pointing to a pillar of smoke in the distance. His finger sweeps across the horizon, noting the locations of several other fires in the distance. "We see three, four, five fires. There are eight fires now."

"It's like this every day," he continues, describing how more than 4,000 dunams, or nearly 490 acres, have already gone up in smoke over the past two months. "It's

KITES continued on PAGE 12



Raymond Reijnen, an emigre from the Netherlands, joined the fire fighting team on his kibbutz.



Compiled from news wires

New York City councilman to provide day of gender-segregated beach

A New York City councilman is renting a city beach on Coney Island in order to host gender-segregated swim days for his Jewish and Muslim constituents.

Brooklyn Democrat Chaim Deutsch announced on his Facebook page: "For many New Yorkers, including religious Jews and Muslims who observe modesty laws, there isn't an opportunity to utilize our City's beautiful beaches. I'm excited to offer the chance for EVERYONE to enjoy!"

Men and boys will be able to swim at the southern Brooklyn beach on Friday, June 29. Women and girls will be invited on Friday, July 27.

Religious Jewish and Muslim women adhere to stringent laws of modesty that do not allow them to wear bathing suits in front of men.

Deutsch has raised \$400 per day to cover the cost of lifeguards and other staff, the *New York Post* reported. The beach at Kingsborough Community College, next to the popular Manhattan Beach in south Brooklyn, is usually closed on those Fridays.

Deutsch told the *Post*, he has a lot of Orthodox Jewish and Muslim constituents who have "never been able to smell the beach, to walk in the sand. Everyone should be able to enjoy the beach."

'The Band's Visit' wins 10 Tony Awards, including for best musical

The Band's Visit, a musical based on an Israeli film about an Egyptian band stranded in a hardscrabble Negev town, won the 2018 Tony Award for best musical, and dominating its categories at the awards ceremony.

Ari'el Stachel, the California-born son of an Israeli-Yemeni father and an Ashkenazi mother from New York, won the award for best featured actor in a musical for his performance as a romantic Egyptian trumpeter in the musical. Tony Shalhoub ("Monk") won for best actor in a musical and Katrina Lenk for best actress in a musical for their roles as, respectively, the leader of the band and the Israeli cafe owner who takes him in.

The Band's Visit also won awards for best book (by Itamar Moses), best direction of a musical, best original score (by David Yazbek), best lighting design, best orchestration and best sound design.

The play is based on the 2007 award-winning Israeli movie.

In his acceptance speech, Stachel, 26, acknowledged his parents, who were in the audience, saying the musical led him to embrace an identity he had long avoided. "Both my parents are here tonight. I have avoided so many events with them because for so many years of my life I pretended I was not a Middle Eastern person," he said. "And after 9/11 it was very, very difficult for me, and so I concealed and I missed so many special events with them. And they're looking at me right now and I can't believe it."

He also thanked producer Orin Wolf "for telling a small story about Arabs and Israelis getting along at a time where we need that more than ever."

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Since July 1, 2017 we have raised \$1,580,521 plus an additional \$288,134 in contributions to endowment funds at TOP benefiting our Federation.

Did you know?

This year, the Federation will fund a new Jewish music therapy program through Empath to provide even more comfort and meaning to their important work.

www.JewishPinellas.org



The Jewish Federation

OF PINELLAS & PASCO COUNTIES, FL

www.JewishPinellas.org

Check Out These Events!

Save These Dates!

- June 22.** YAD Shabbat Dinner
- July 5.** Iran: A Threat to Peace and Human Rights
- July 17.** Happy Hour at Jimmy B's with YAD

Young Adult Division (YAD) Events: See facebook.com/pinellasyad for full details

Pride Events

- June 22.** Temple Beth El – Pride Shabbat & Oneg
- June 22.** Congregation B'nai Israel – Pride Shabbat

Want More Events?

Visit us online at jewishpinellas.org/calendar for all of the Jewish events happening in our community!

IRAN: A THREAT TO PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Thursday, July 5 • 7 pm

Featuring Bob Feferman from the National Organization United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI)

In the Federation's Community Room

The event is free and open to all, but reservations are strongly suggested.

More information on our Community Calendar



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- AUG 24**
HIGH HOLIDAY EDITION
Press Release Aug 10
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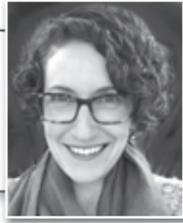
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Can 'Bad Jews' be good for our community?

PERSPECTIVE

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



"And so now, when it's easier to be Jewish than it has ever been in the history of the world, now when it's safest, now we should all stop?"

Daphna (nee Diana Feygelbaum) bursts forth with this morsel of truth that has played on all of our lips in the play, *Bad Jews*, set to open at American Stage in St. Petersburg on July 11. She's in a veritable tangle with her two cousins, Liam and Jonah, on the night of her grandfather's funeral, as they fight over who will inherit Poppy's cherished chai necklace. The necklace bears family heirloom status as it was passed from Poppy's father to Poppy in the early days of the Holocaust and was preserved through the darkest of times.

The play hits on all of our communal hot buttons: the continuation of a people, the generational carrying forth of the memory of the Holocaust, intermarriage and the question of "How to teach your kids to be Jewish," and the ever-present Jew-fro ebulliently sported by Daphna herself.

I admit: reading through the play was difficult, as I could easily see my own family, my own battles, my own inner turmoil about culture and identity playing out on the stage in my mind. Thinking ahead to how this would be presented on stage next month at American Stage feels equally difficult, and admittedly if *Bad Jews* was being performed at a Jewish Community Center, I sense I might feel different. This paradox is worth exploring.

Last month, I jumped at the chance to meet with Stephanie Gulate, artistic director at American Stage. Karen Dawkins, managing editor and co-owner of the *Jewish Press*, joined me for the chat in Gulate's downtown office.

Gulate is clearly a hip, driven, and vision-minded leader, and she energetically shared with us that she's been wanting to include this play in the season line-up for some time. She found the piece to add to the season's theme of We are the People, telling the story of an important component of our larger community and hopefully adding to a level of broad discourse in a way that only live theatre can.

As we chatted through the ins and outs of how to best position this play to achieve these aspirations, I found something resonating that I've noticed in other contexts: a desire for help in making great outcomes happen. Gulate, who has a solid understanding of and respect for Jewish heritage and culture, asked for input on how to best share the play with our Jewish community.

A few themes emerged in our conversation.

We explored the idea that our Jewish community is not like others. We're not a northern or north-eastern Jewish community, despite having a savvy and artistically competent community. We're in central Florida, and we still have much work to do in building toward respect, tolerance, and embracing diversity.

We contemplated how differing levels of observance as demonstrated in the play also resonate right here in Pinellas and Pasco Counties: while we're largely not observant, we still would appreciate the consideration of what Shabbat means. Would it be

possible to have the opening-night celebrations on Saturday evening instead of Friday? Should kosher catering be available? The finer points of delivering the show, and how these could be deployed in a thoughtful fashion, are as complex as the interplay between Daphna (observant rabbi-in-training), Jonah (quiet younger stay-out-of-the-middle cousin), and Liam (self-hating Jewish cousin, majoring in Asian studies).

We navigated through the popular American Stage talk-backs and the opportunity to bring in multiple perspectives: theatrical presentation, Jewish religious themes, multigenerational observance, and more. Who could be involved? Who could speak for the community, and who represents our countless viewpoints?

And that's at the core of the challenge with this show. Who, truly, can speak for our community, to indicate what's proper or not, what's truly observant, what's Jewish enough, what's not? And can any one of us identify who is and isn't allowed to speak their own truth about our people, whether that be a theatre company, a playwright, an actor, a community member?

Around Rosh HaShanah, I received a handful of emails and phone calls from individuals indicating their concern with this show's performance. The general sense from these messages was an abject sense of horror that the show would be produced and that there was no intent for them to attend the show simply based on its title.

Yet, after speaking with Gulate, reading the play, researching its reception in other communities, and boning up on the intent behind the show, I differ in opinion.

Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller once said, "One question is always relevant: How can I use this to move forward?" In thinking about how the play *Bad Jews* can be used to move forward, I offer two possible avenues.

Primarily, this play will likely attract those in our community who identified in our recent demographic study as the over 80 percent who engage in something deliberately Jewish during the last year. And since we only are able to reach a portion of them, this can move our community forward by reaching more people through the advertising that the *Jewish Press* will do as a community engagement partner.

Secondarily, the play presents the spectrum of Jewish experience from a multi-generational perspective that may give our non-Jewish friends in the community a better sense of observance, Jewish values, and the experience of Jewish living.

Can *Bad Jews* be used to move our community conversation forward? I argue yes, if we can hold lightly in our hands the possibility that we might see ourselves on stage. In an era when it's so easy to be Jewish, can we just "stop," as Daphna asks, and turn away from this challenge?

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

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RABBINICALLY — SPEAKING —

What does it mean to be a good rabbi?

By RABBI JACOB LUSKI
Congregation B'nai Israel, St. Petersburg

As I conclude my tenure at Congregation B'nai Israel, the question overwhelms me. It is a leadership role which, though it has changed drastically over the centuries, had its beginnings at least 20 centuries ago. A leadership role whose sole source of authority remains what it always has been, knowledge of Torah.

The questions asked are many: What does it mean to live in God's presence? How can I know what is right in a given situation or, at least, how should I behave in a given situation so as to feel that I have done the right thing? What are my responsibilities toward family members? How shall I deal with physical or verbal abuse? When is it the right time to die? How can I forgive? What do I mean?

Being a rabbi is to live at the heart of those questions — never by yourself, always with others. Not assuming responsibility for others, but always being responsible for who you are and what you do, helping others to assume responsibility for who they are. Always being as faithful an interpreter and exemplar of our sacred tradition as one possibly can.

The question I often ask myself: "Am I a good rabbi?" If knowing what being a good rabbi is all about is important, then I am confident that I have at least begun to answer the question.

... If knowing with Ruth Benedict that "the happiest excitement in life is to be convinced that one is fighting for all one is worth on behalf of some clearly seen and deeply felt good" then ...

If the following by Leo Tolstoy is true: "A man should use that spiritual heritage which he has received from the wise and holy people of the past, but he should test everything with his intellect, accepting certain things and rejecting others" then ...

If understanding, why I needed to be a rabbi, how I ultimately became one, then ...

If being surrounded by fellow hard-working professionals whose moral compasses are steady, who share the same vision of what a Jewish community should be and who can always tell the difference between what is real and what is phony, then, thanks to them ...

If having been given the opportunity to create, with others, Jewish schools and educational settings where Torah is taught, counts for anything, then ...

If being given the opportunity to work with lay leaders who are supportive, encouraging, creative people who themselves are competent, moral and hard-working, then ...

If being part of a community where literally hundreds, perhaps, thousands, have generously supported, often participated and always embraced the vision, then ...

So, am I a good rabbi?

My answer: "I am a rabbi. I know that much. Am I a good one? That is not for me to judge."

Perhaps it is not for you to judge either. God, we believe is the final judge.

One thing I know for certain. I am so very thankful for having had the opportunity to be the rabbi of Congregation B'nai Israel of St. Petersburg these past 41 years. For that I will be ever grateful.

The Rabbinically Speaking column is provided as a public service by the Jewish Press in cooperation with the Pinellas County Board of Rabbis. Columns are assigned on a rotating basis by the board. The views expressed in the column are those of the rabbi and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Jewish Press or the Board of Rabbis.



Congregations

Temple B'nai Israel Clearwater

Havdalah on the Beach: Join Rabbi Daniel Treiser and Cantorial Soloist Laura Berkson for a Havdalah service on Saturday, July 14 at 7 p.m. at Sand Key Park. Come early and bring your own picnic.

Cong. Beth Shalom Clearwater

Spiritual workshop: A combination of guided meditation, Torah study and personal reflection are included in a Summer series of workshops with Rabbi Danielle Uppin. The next sessions are on Thursdays, July 5, 12 and 19 at 12:30 p.m. These sessions offer the Jewish tools to nurture self-growth and spiritual awareness. New participants are welcome! Call the CBS office to RSVP.

'Prayer in Motion': An alternative Shabbat morning service will take place on Saturday, July 14 from 9:30-10:30 a.m. "Prayer in Motion" is a combination of study, discussion and personalization of the morning service along with guided, gentle movement to awaken the body and stir the soul. Come as you are and leave after the session or stay for the main service and lunch.

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 at (727) 531-1418 to confirm dates of the classes.

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.

Chabad of St. Petersburg

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, July 17 at noon. There is no charge for the event. RSVP's are appreciated but not necessary. To RSVP email Chaya@ChabadSP.com or call (727) 344-4900.

Temple Ahavat Shalom Palm Harbor

Annual meeting: The congregation will hold its annual meeting and Shabbat dinner on Friday, June 29. Congregants are invited to join in a light dinner at 6 p.m., which is free to all temple members. The annual meeting will begin at 7 p.m. and will be followed by a special "Shabbat Live" musical worship service. While there is no need to RSVP for services,

reservations are requested by Tuesday, June 26 for the dinner and/or the meeting by calling the temple office, (727) 785-8811.

Honey of a fundraiser: The Sisterhood is holding a fundraiser to enable folks to wish loved ones and friends a sweet New Year by sending them jars of honey. The honey is certified kosher. To order honey, go to www.orthoney.com/phf and follow the step by step instructions.

Cong. B'nai Israel St. Petersburg

Summertime services: Musical Kabbalat Shabbat services with a glimpse into Jewish history will be held on Fridays at 6:30 p.m. and Shabbat morning summer sermonettes will be held during Saturday services, which begin at 9 a.m. The schedule of speakers lined up so far are: Friday, June 29, Solomon Howard; Saturday, June 30, Jay Kauffman, who will speak on "What is the Meaning of Chai?"; Saturday, July 21, Dr. Steve LeVine, who will speak on "Sackcloth and Flashlights."

Cong. Beth Shalom Gulfport

Israel trip: The congregation is planning a trip to Israel next year. For more information, call the synagogue at (727) 321-3380.

Chabad of West Pasco

Classes with the rabbi: Rabbi Yossi Eber teaches weekly classes, alternating between Torah study and the Tanya, on Mondays at 7 p.m.

Pray, eat, watch video: On Sundays from 9-10 a.m., feed your body and soul with a bagel and lox plus tefillin. Afterward there will be a short video presentation. There is no charge, and everyone is welcome.

Tanya class: A new weekly

Shabbat Candle Lighting Times

June 22 • 8:11 pm
June 29 • 8:12 pm
July 6 • 8:12 pm
July 13 • 8:11 pm
July 20 • 8:08 pm



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 in-depth study will ask such questions as: What is a soul? What is our purpose here on earth? The class is free.

Young Israel Chabad of Pinellas County

Shabbat learning: Attend a class on "Ethics of our Fathers" at the Chabad center an hour before sunset on Shabbat afternoons. The class is free and no reservation is needed.

For more information, call (727) 789-0408 or email info@yichabad.com.

Temple Beth David Spring Hill

Torah study: Rabbi Paul Schreiber conducts Torah study classes on Mondays at 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. Free for members and \$5 per class for non-members.

Chabad of Spring Hill

Torah studies: The community is invited to attend Torah study classes on Wednesdays from noon to 1 p.m. The classes, taught by Rabbi Chaim Lipszyc, are not sequential, so drop-ins are welcome. Brunch and coffee will be served. The first class is free then \$7 per class.

For more information, call (352) 600-2779.



Youth mentors of the Chabad Hebrew School of the Arts in St. Petersburg recently went to a laser tag arcade in appreciation for their participation in the "Come Back, Give Back" program. Upon completing Bar/Bat Mitzvah training, teens are encouraged to return to the Hebrew school to serve as mentors to younger students — volunteering every Sunday morning to assist with Aleph Champ reading, Tikkun Olam projects and arts. (L-R) Back row: Ilan Kohan, Rabbi Alter Korf, Jake Weiss and Amy Singh. In front, Erin Singh and Max Baker.

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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

Temple B'NAI ISRAEL — 1685 S. Belcher Road, Clearwater, 33764 • Rabbi Daniel Treiser • cantorial soloist, Laura Berkson • Services: Friday, 7:00 p.m. • Telephone: (727) 531-5829 • Website: www.TBIClearwater.org • Affiliated with Union for Reform Judaism

Conservative

Congregation BETH SHALOM — 1325 S. Belcher Road, Clearwater 33764 • Rabbi David Weizman • Rabbi Danielle Uppin, 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.cbsclearwater.org • Affiliated with United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism.

Congregation BETH SHOLOM — 1844 54th St. S., Gulfport 33707 • Evan Cohen, lay leader • 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 6:00 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: rabbil18@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, 6:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m. and 5:30 p.m • Sunday, 8:30 a.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: rabbichabadwp.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.

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: chabadspringhill.com

Expert to talk on Iranian threats to peace, human rights

The Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties will offer a lecture and discussion entitled "Iran: A Threat to Peace and Human Rights," featuring Bob Feferman from the national organization United Against Nuclear Iran (UANI).

The event will be held on Thursday, July 5 at 7 p.m. in the Federation's Community Room, 13191 Starkey Road, Suite 8, Largo.

The event is free and open to all, and light refreshments will be served.

Feferman is the outreach coordinator for United Against Nuclear Iran. In 2009, Feferman helped to initiate legislation in the Indiana General Assembly that required Indiana's state pension funds to divest from holdings in companies working in Iran's energy sector. In 2011, he helped to support the efforts of the In-

dianapolis JCRC in passing Iran Contracting Legislation that was signed into law in 2012. Prior to working for UANI, Feferman taught history and language arts in a Montessori school in Indiana.

"This is a significant opportunity for our community to gain insight about the most up-to-the-minute perspectives on Iran's role in global security matters," said Aliza Norstein, Federation board secretary and chair of the Jewish Community Relations Council. "The US State Department has listed Iran as the number 2 state sponsor of terrorism, surpassed only by North Korea in November 2017."

According to UANI's website, "the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran is a danger to world peace," and therefore since 2008 the not-for-profit, bi-partisan advocacy group has set as its mission to "prevent Iran from fulfilling its

ambition to obtain nuclear weapons." Ambassador Mark D. Wallace, the late Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and Middle East expert Dennis Ross, among others, founded the organization, and UANI "works to ensure the economic and diplomatic isolation of the Iranian regime in order to compel Iran to abandon its illegal nuclear weapons program, support for terrorism and human rights violations."

The group is currently chaired by former Sen. Joe Lieberman (CT-I). It supported President Donald Trump's decision to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal.

Reservations are strongly suggested. Those interested in attending the program with Feferman are asked to contact Lucé Piccin, Federation communications and campaign associate, by emailing luce@jewishpinellas.org or calling (727) 530-3223.

Gulf Coast JFCS seeks school and home supplies

Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services is collecting school and home supplies for local students and families.

These supplies help clients in all of the Gulf Coast programs serving children and families in the Tampa Bay area.

"We have families that look forward to coming in each year with their kids to select school supplies. Purchasing backpacks and supplies can be a burden on families with a limited income," said Gail Allen, family support coordinator.

"Every year we have an anonymous donor who drops off 10 new backpacks," said Allen. "Other donors wait for the school supply sales and purchase items for donation."

Gulf Coast also seeks basic home cleaning supplies during this drive, as these items are difficult for struggling families to purchase.

Items needed this year include:

School: Backpacks (no wheels), notebook paper, composition notebooks, crayons, markers, highlighters, colored pencils, pencils or mechanical pencils, large erasers, Scotch tape, blue, black and red pens, index cards, folders with pockets, zippered pencil cases, binders, calculators, quart and gallon baggies, hand sanitizer, facial tissue.

Home: Paper towels, toilet paper, brooms/mops, dust pan with brush, and spray cleaners.

Gulf Coast encourages students, local organizations and the JCC Day Camp to gather backpacks and supplies, making it a fun community service activity. In ad-

dition to gathering donations, students and groups are welcome to come in and help organize the donations.

According to Cindy Minetti, Jewish Family Services senior director, "Last year, through the generosity of the community, Gulf Coast provided school supplies to more than 400 local children. In addition to starting the school year with a new backpack and needed school items, they can replenish needed supplies throughout the school year."

Donations should be delivered by July 27 to Gulf Coast's main office at 14041 Icot Blvd., Clearwater. Write "School and Home Supplies" in the memo line of a check or visit the website for additional donation opportunities, www.gcjfccs.org. For more information, contact Allen at (727) 479-1806 or email gail.allen@gcjfccs.org.



Children from a family helped by Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services receive backpacks last year.

Federation seeks new corps of young adult volunteers

The Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties is seeking young adults up to age 45 to apply during the 2018-19 fiscal year to become Federation Fellows.

The program is open to individuals living in Pinellas and West Pasco County.

Participants selected will be passionate about getting involved with the Jewish community, have a strong interest in visiting Israel and be willing to volunteer 10 hours of their time per month in a variety of on- and off-site activities (some done from home) in support of the Federation's mission to build com-

munity.

The program includes participation in the annual Young Leadership Mission to Israel, offered by the Jewish Federations of North America, which is a nine-day program in early July each year. Volunteer service will begin in September and conclude in June. All costs of the mission are covered by the Federation.

Interested community members should submit a personal statement to Emilie Socash by Aug. 7 that includes thoughts on why the applicant would like to participate as a Fed Fellow, what the applicant

brings to the table, and if the applicant has been to Israel before. A rigorous interview process will follow for finalists. Submissions and inquiries should be emailed to emilie@jewishpinellas.org.

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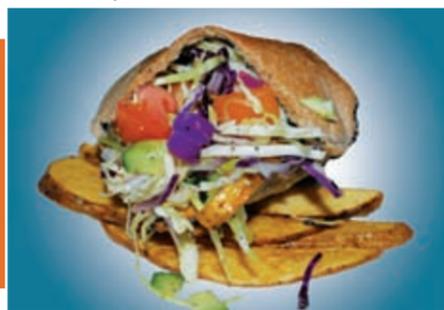
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Federation plans Hanukkah time, musical trip to Israel

Several months ago, Federation board member Steve Schwersky had an idea: "Let's take a community trip to Israel and explore the various types of music throughout the country."

The idea bloomed and preparations are now under way for the trip, sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties.

Schwersky and his daughter, Jordyn Schwersky, host WMNF's Sunday Simcha radio show and are the co-chairs of the 10-day musical tour through the Jewish homeland.

The trip, Dec. 3-12, is planned to coincide with Hanukkah (candles are lit Dec. 2 through Dec. 9) and will include Hanukkah celebra-

tions in several cities as part of the jam-packed itinerary.

An English speaking tour guide will lead the group, viewing the cultural mosaic of Israel through a musical lens, from the tunes of mystical Kabbalah, to Ethiopian melodies and modern Israeli rock.

Encounters with firsthand musical traditions beyond Judaism in Israel – Christian, Mormon, Druze, Bedouin, and Muslim – also await.

A "follow the melody" walking tour through Jerusalem is on the schedule. Tour members will also hear a Mormon choir concert at the BYU Jerusalem campus and dance in Talpiot to traditional Ethiopian music.

Other trip highlights will feature Druze home hospitality, a kabbalah workshop in Safed and surrey rides in the Hula Valley.

The trip is being planned with Ayelet Tours, professional tour advisors who have done thousands of tours through Israel.

An informational meeting for those interested in going on the tour is set for Thursday, June 28 at 6:30 p.m. at the Federation office, 13191 Starkey Road, Suite 8, Largo.

For those who have questions and to RSVP for the informational meeting, contact Federation Director of Arts, Culture and Education Maxine Kaufman at (727) 333-3106 or email mkaufman@jewishpinellas.org.

Federation gets grant to hire staffer to engage young families

This summer, the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties will add the staff position of young family engagement specialist to better meet the needs of families with children, particularly those up through elementary ages.

The program is supported in part by a grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, the creator and primary funder of the popular PJ Library program. PJ Library is a national program that sends a Jewishly themed age-appropriate book to children ages 6 months through 11 years, at no cost to the family. The Federation has been a participant community in the PJ Library program for almost a decade, growing initial enrollment from several dozen children to approximately 500 subscribers currently served in the Pinellas and Pasco Counties region. The Harold Grinspoon Foundation



Alex Sembler

learned quickly that the program best reaches families through a combination of the monthly books enjoyed at home and programs for families to meet each other.

The new young family specialist, Alex Sembler, will endeavor to increase PJ Library enrollment and create a full calendar of programs and events throughout the community for families to connect.

Sembler, who joins the Federation on July 2, holds a bachelor of arts in Editing Writing and Media from Florida State University. She most recently served as digital content producer for Home Shopping Network. The position is personal for her, as she and her husband, Logan, recently welcomed their first child, Adeline, earlier this year.

"I am excited for the opportunity to connect and engage Jewish families within our community. Building positive memories, social connections and awareness for PJ Library will be a wonderful experience," she said.

For more information about receiving free books for your children through PJ Library, or young family events in the Pinellas and Pasco Jewish communities, contact the Federation at (727) 530-3223 or email dmorin@jewishpinellas.org.

Pride weekend draws support from 2 St. Pete congregations

Two congregations in St. Petersburg are participating in events in conjunction with the St. Petersburg Pride weekend of Friday through Sunday, June 22-24.

Congregation B'nai Israel, 300 58th St. N., will hold a Pride Shabbat service on Friday, June 22 at 6:30 p.m. and the service will include a talk by guest speaker Dr. Elizabeth Unruh sharing her perspective on being "Twice Blessed: LGBT & J." Unruh is a Hofstra University professor emerita with a background in culture, language, and cognition. All congregants will receive a special kippah designed for the occasion and there will be a cocktail oneg following the service.

Temple Beth-El, 300 S. Pasadena Ave., will hold a Pride Shabbat the same evening at 7:30 p.m. in the temple's all-purpose room. Beth-El congregants wishing to march in the parade on Saturday, June 23, should gather in south



Pride flag flying at Temple Beth-El in the days leading up to the Pride weekend.

Straub Park between 2-4 p.m. To learn where the group will be placed in the parade, email alickacic@gmail.com.

Congregation B'nai Israel will have a booth throughout the day Sunday, June 24 at the Pride Festival on Central Avenue in downtown St. Petersburg, welcoming festival-goers to learn about the congregation and its preschool.

The St. Petersburg Pride weekend events will include a concert at North Straub Park in downtown St. Petersburg on Friday from 7-10 p.m., a Pride Party at Straub Park that begins at 2 p.m. Saturday and a Pride Parade along Bayshore Boulevard from Fifth Avenue North to Dali Boulevard that

begins at 7:15 p.m. On Sunday there will be a Pride Festival in the Grand Central District from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, go to www.stpetepride.com.

Israel destroys terror tunnel that stretched out to sea

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Israel's military destroyed a Hamas terror tunnel that reached several yards into the sea, which would have allowed the group's naval commandos to launch an attack on Israel from its coast.

The tunnel was destroyed by the Air Force on June 3, the IDF said in a statement.

Hamas divers would have been able to discretely enter Israel in a short amount of time by using the tunnel, according to the IDF.

Hamas has been increasing its naval prowess and power for some time, a senior Navy official said in a statement.

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TOP Jewish Foundation appoints new executive director

The TOP Jewish Foundation selected Ellen Weiss as its new executive director, effective last month.



Ellen Weiss

The leadership transition was relatively seamless as Weiss has been on the TOP staff since the beginning of 2016 and, most recently, served as the Foundation's associate executive director, working alongside Emilie Socash, TOP's former executive director.

"Ellen is assuming the role of executive director at a critical point in our growth. We are confident in her ability to tap her experience and talent to propel us to the next stage in our organization's evolution," said Jeffrey Herman, TOP board president.

Weiss said she is "honored to work closely with donors and organizations that care so deeply about the future of our Jewish community." Her primary focus will be managing funds for donors, continuing to build the legacy program and expanding the organization geographically to provide the services of a Jewish foundation in communities where one doesn't exist.

Weiss has had significant success at TOP in forging new relationships, notably expanding TOP's territory to include the Naples Jewish community.

Weiss brings 20 years of leadership experience in nonprofit management and corporate marketing. Before joining TOP, she spearheaded the countrywide expansion of the Children's Heart Foundation, creating the only national nonprofit that exclusively funds congenital heart defect research. She is an executive committee member, as well as a past president of Temple Ahavat Shalom in Palm Harbor. She holds an MBA from New York University and a BA from Brandeis University.

Weiss follows Socash, whose six-year leadership propelled the Foundation from \$35 million in assets under management to nearly \$50 million. Socash brought the Life & Legacy program to TOP, which secured close to 500 legacy gifts with an estimated future value of \$15 million. For the past three years, Socash split her time between TOP and serving as executive director of the Jewish Federation of Pinellas and Pasco Counties. She will now focus her attention solely on the federation.

With a portfolio of more than 600 donor-advised, endowment and institutional funds, TOP serves hundreds of individuals, families

and organizations. TOP was founded with the original intention of serving the Jewish community in central Florida. More recently, the Foundation recognized the need for its unique services well beyond the three-community Tampa, Orlando, Pinellas region and now works closely with donors and organizations throughout Florida and a handful of other states. TOP's unique anti-terror and pro-Israel investment policy as well as its focus on providing philanthropic consulting service resonates with donors who collectively aim to ensure the financial strength of our Jewish communities.

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UF Hillel listed among America's top 50 innovative Jewish organizations

The University of Florida Hillel has been named one of North America's top 50 innovative Jewish organizations in the 13th annual Slingshot Guide.

Selected from among hundreds of finalists reviewed by more than 100 individuals with expertise in grant-making and Jewish communal life, the Guide recognized the University of Florida Hillel for its "new approaches for Judaism's future by helping students amplify their voices through tradition, inspiration, and activation."

The only other Florida organization to make the 2018 Slingshot Guide is Fuente Latina, a source for Latino media covering Israel, based in South Florida.

UF Hillel was acknowledged for shifting its programming model, focusing its efforts on training future leaders to positively impact the world through a Jewish lens. Students are connected through Israel, travel experiences, spirituality, career advancement op-

portunities, and entrepreneurial endeavors.

Programming includes Career Up Now, which features career advancement retreats in cities across the country for students to connect with top industry leaders, and the Selling Factory, which hires students to assist start-ups.

"Being recognized by Slingshot affirms the great work occurring by the UF Hillel team in engaging the disengaged and disenfranchised Jewish population and highlights the importance of reimagining old paradigms to inspire a new generation with Jewish meaning," said UF Hillel's CEO Rabbi Adam Grossman.

The Guide has become a go-to resource for volunteers, activists, and donors looking for new opportunities and projects that, through their innovative nature, will ensure the Jewish community remains relevant and thriving. The Guide is available as a free download at www.slingshotfund.org.

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Beware of consequences of Embassy 'grand bargain'

Dear Editor:

Finally, the Jewish news service, JTA, has written articles that the Jewish Press has reprinted that indicate a through-line from Evangelicals supporting the move of Israel's capital to Jerusalem to the support of President Trump. The grand bargain was to give up on the two-state solution and re-appropriate Israel as a prize to Evangelicals for their support of his agenda.

Obviously moving the capital to Jerusalem was well received by the majority of Israelis, but I would caution them to examine

the history of others who have climbed out on the Trump limb because virtually no one has escaped being deceived, demeaned, or embarrassed as a consequence of supporting this president.

This should be especially true of Jews who should have learned to recognize a demagogue on the rise who always begins with the co-opting of business, demeaning the court system and the rule of law, and a free press.

It's a shame there is no perspective offered from our community, especially from our rabbis how defining deviancy down is different this time.

Robert Berman
St. Petersburg

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Photo courtesy of Tampa Bay Times

Rabbi and Joanne Luski with children Yael and Jeremy, which appeared on the cover of the Times' Crossroads religion section in September 1979.



Rabbi Luski with “minyanares” in the chapel of the former synagogue building, which was torn down to make way for Congregation B'nai Israel's present home. The long-running twice daily minyans have been a source of pride for the rabbi and congregation.

LUSKI

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

“I spent a little time at the Jewish Theological Seminary one summer to see if it was something I would want to immerse myself in, and it was quite successful. I applied for a special program because I didn't have all the necessary education to enter rabbinical school.”

He took the one-year preparatory program, was accepted to JTS, but still didn't know whether he wanted to go into congregation, education, administration or some other rabbinic field. In his last two years at JTS he spent some time as an unofficial full-time assistant rabbi, “a rabbinic intern, kind of an innovative idea at the time,” he said, “and that helped me create a love for congregational work, which led me to pursue that upon my ordination and (I was) happy to come to St. Petersburg.”

In Cuba, he said, Zionism played a big role in the community and, growing up with all four grandparents nearby, their commitment to Zionism rubbed off on him.

“My zeyda, Israel Luski, was president of the Zionist organization in Havana for many years and any time visitors came from Israel ... they would be in his house and so would I. By osmosis I inherited that love of Israel and love of Zion.”

The Luski's were members of the conservative Patronato de la Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba (Beth Shalom synagogue) in Havana “and when people go to Cuba today that's one of the places they visit. We would go there for the High Holidays, for Purim, Hanukkah, Pesach seders.”

He recalled that as Castro was coming to power and nationalizing businesses and industries, his parents told him, “Tomorrow we're getting on an airplane. Don't say anything to anyone.”

When they arrived in the United States “my parents were wise enough to figure out that if you join a shul, that's how you truly plug into the Jewish community, so we became active participants in Temple Israel in Charlotte after having been warmly welcomed by Rabbi Mayer Abramowitz at Temple Menorah in Miami Beach during those first few months.” (Rabbi Abramowitz, who was 97 when he died Feb. 2, 2017, opened his synagogue to hundreds of Cuban Jewish youth who came to the United States as part of Operation Pedro Pan from 1960-62.)

Much has changed in the Conservative movement and at B'nai Israel in Luski's 41 years there.

Women's participation, and more recently the welcoming specifically of members of the LGBTQ community, are probably the most visible changes.

Women can be counted in the minyan; they can be

called to the Torah; they can become a president of the synagogue “and as such there's more equality in the participation today than there was in previous years,” Rabbi Luski said.

And on June 22, B'nai Israel will host its third Pride Shabbat service.

“We have always been an inclusive community,” Rabbi Luski said. “We accept interfaith families. ... We don't discriminate on age, on gender, on sexual preference. We do a lot of special Shabbatot. We do Sephardic Shabbat, we do law Shabbat, we do educator Shabbat, and on and on. So a Pride Shabbat is one of those things that's inclusive. It kind of evolved as the city of St. Petersburg has evolved on the subject.

“I feel that I was ahead of the curve, looking ahead to see what should be, what could be, at least from the spiritual side,” Rabbi Luski said.

“From the business side, even though I have a good practical business background from my engineering approach to life and having grown up in a family business, it was, ‘You're the rabbi. Leave the rest to us.’ But I still put in my two cents' worth when wise leadership were willing to listen.”

Susan Marger LeVine, B'nai Israel's immediate past president, said Rabbi Luski was very supportive when the synagogue decided to be “more relationship-driven, less fiscally-driven, to bring in more young people. And we've succeeded; we have more young leaders under the age of 35 than ever before. ...

“We're traditional yet egalitarian. We do the full Torah readings and a twice-daily minyan and we are strict kashrut (dietary laws) within our building. However, women can do everything men can do at the bima. I've been a hagbah, lifting the Torah during the service,” LeVine said.

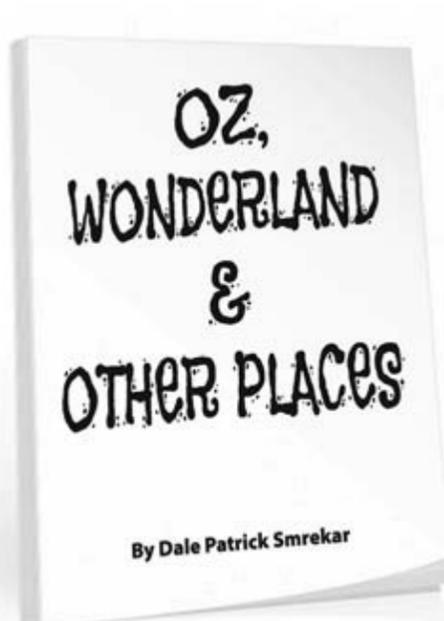
“Politically, I don't think we're either conservative or liberal, and rabbi's been very careful not to present a one-sided sermon. He's never told us to vote a certain way ... although if it has to do with Israel he will give a very passionate sermon,” LeVine said.

“Think of the number of sermons over 41 years,” added Pearlstein. “He helped educate us on things like Israel. He affected us all in a very positive way. We take our lead from the lessons of the Torah and he was always good at reminding us how to live and be moral, ethical people.”

Rabbi Luski said he'd like to be remembered for his “love of Yiddishkeit (Jewish way of life), promoting Conservative Judaism as the way to love Judaism. You can pray, you can study, you can socialize, all those are important parts of being a Jew. You can't be a part-time Jew; you have to be a full-time Jew.”

Leaving the pulpit will be bittersweet, he said, “sweet because I'm looking forward to retirement,

• CONTINUED on NEXT PAGE



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It's been a time for celebration for the Slomka and Reiskind families. **Jeremy Reiskind**, son of **Laurie and Marc Reiskind**, graduated from Ohio University with an MBA. Grandparents **Mike and Sandy Slomka** traveled to Athens, OH with daughter **Laurie** (unfortunately Marc was on-call and couldn't get away) for the graduation, which was the weekend before the Slomka's 55th anniversary. While in Athens, they golfed on the Ohio University golf course and Mike achieved a significant goal in his golfing career. He shot his age for the round, sinking a 50-plus foot putt on the final hole, I'll let you guess on that final score!



(L-R) Sandy, Jeremy and Mike Slomka

Sincerely yours,

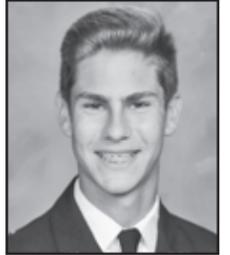
Judy
Judy Ludin



A big salute...

Evan Schlifstein, a rising senior at Admiral Farragut Academy, has been announced as the Regimental Commander for the first semester of the 2018-19 school year, following in the footsteps of his brother **Ian** who held that rank in 2014-15 school year. Regimental Commander is the top leadership position for the corps of cadets (all 8th-12th graders) as part of Farragut's NJROTC program. For the past two summers, Evan has served as a camp counselor and is also a teacher's

assistant at his temple. This year he earned the following awards: the Anne Frank Humanitarian Award from the Florida Holocaust Museum for humanitarian actions; the Suncoast Chapter 014 Korean War Veterans certificate and medal in recognition of leadership and achievements in JROTC; the Military Order of the Purple Heart for excellence in overall academic studies, naval science, and leadership and the NJROTC Honor Cadet for having the highest overall academic achievement as a junior. In addition, Evan is on the academy's track and soccer teams and participates in student government and Model United Nations. Proud parents are: **Dr. Brett Schlifstein** of Seminole, and **Michele Horwitz** of Palm Harbor.



Evan Schlifstein

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.

• CONTINUED from PREVIOUS PAGE

bitter because there are so many relationships that go to a different level when you're no longer the rabbi. But both are good. Joanne and I are going to continue being members of the community, looking forward to participating with the new rabbinic leadership."

Rabbi Luski conducted his last Shabbat services on June 1-2 and the new rabbi, Philip Weintraub, will officially conduct his first services on the July 6-7 Shabbat. Rabbi Weintraub has been the rabbi since 2011 at Congregation Agudas Israel in Newburgh, N.Y. The Summa Cum Laude graduate of Brandeis University is 34.

Following his retirement, Rabbi Luski will assume the honorary title of rabbi emeritus. While he will no longer have an official role at B'nai Israel, it is expected he will occasionally be invited to sit on the bima and participate in special events.

He plans to continue his work as chaplain at the Bay Pines Veterans Administration Medical Center. In addition, Rabbi Luski and wife Joanne will travel, which they love, and will continue doing volunteer work for the Jewish community.

He also just assumed the role—for the next two years—of chairman of the national Israel Bonds Rabbinic Advisory Council. "We probably have one of the largest Israel Bond campaigns in the state if not the country, thanks to Rabbi Luski," said Pearlstein, former director of the local Israel Bonds office.

There's also the matter of the Luski's offspring in Florida, New York and California. "I'll be spending a lot more time with my wife and our children and grandchildren. We have three grandchildren and more coming along the way, please God,

and we'll be spending time with them when I want, not when I can," the rabbi said. "That's going to be a big change."



Rabbi Luski at Purim celebration with Rivvy Chapman in 1980.



Photo courtesy of Tampa Bay Times

Rabbi Luski demonstrates the shofar for children in 1984.

Obituaries

GARY GORMIN, 74, of Texas, formerly of Clearwater, died May 25. Together with his wife Elaine, he was very active in the growth of Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater, including serving as temple president from 1983-1985. He is survived by his children and grandchildren.

WILLIAM "BILL" KRUTCHICK, 74, of Clearwater, died June 5. Born in the Bronx, he worked for many years as an accountant. He was a member of Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater. Survivors include his wife Frances; daughters, Diane Baker and Sherry Slingsby; son David Krutchick; and five grandchildren. The family suggests memorials to Temple B'nai Israel. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

ESTHER PANTZER, 101, of Largo, died June 10. Born in Poland, she moved to the United States in 1937 and lived in Detroit and Oak Park, MI, for many years before moving to Florida. She worked at a family owned shop, Janée the Paper Place, for more than 25 years and was a long-time member of Temple B'nai Israel in Clearwater. She liked to gamble and enjoyed card games and remains the reigning champion of the card game "spite and malice." Survivors include her son and daughter-in-law Gary and Joyce Kolb, daughters and son-in-law, Renee and Manny Raimi, and Laurie Nosanchuk; seven grandchildren and 12 great-grandchildren. (Serenity Gardens Memorial Park)

STEVEN ELLIOTT PEARL, 58, of St. Petersburg, died June 11. A native of St. Petersburg, he worked for many years as a gemologist. He was a prior member of Congregation B'nai Israel as well as its Mitzvah Men's Club. Survivors include his son, Devin Pearl; two brothers, Jeffrey and Robert; and sister Beth Pearl Kraft. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

STEVEN PERSON, 60, of Safety Harbor, died May 29. He was born and grew up in St. Petersburg, attending Boca Ciega High School. He was a self-employed jewelry and antique dealer and collector, frequently visiting the jewelry shows around the state. He also was a Jelly Belly jewelry collector. Survivors include his wife of nearly 40 years, Ada; sons, Adam, Evan (Tanya) and Ezra; sister Amy; brother Jeff; and a grandson. The family suggests donations to the Christopher & Dana Reeve Foundation, www.christopherreeve.org. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, Clearwater Chapel)

GEORGE J. ROSENTHAL, 93, of Oldsmar, died May 14. Born in Amityville, NY, he was a World War II Army veteran, receiving two Purple Hearts among his many other medals. He owned and operated The Corner Store in Larchmont, NY for many years, retiring to Florida in 1984. Survivors include his wife of 15 years Arlene; children Laurie and David Harmer, Nancy and David Jensen, Dan and Pam Rosenthal, Lisa and Joel Levinson, Elaine and John Schaefer and Alec and Don-

na Paul; along with grandchildren and great-grandchildren. The family suggests memorials to TOP Jewish Foundation, www.topjewishfoundation.org. (Blount Curry West)

ALAN ZWIBEL, 94, of St. Petersburg, died May 17. He was originally from McKeesport, PA. (David C. Gross Funeral Homes, St. Petersburg Chapel)

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Organizations

Hadassah

Cruise to Cozumel: The Tampa Ameet Chapter of Hadassah is hosting a four-night Hanukkah cruise on the Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines' *Brilliance of the Seas* from Dec. 6-10, departing from Tampa and sailing to Cozumel, Mexico. The cruise includes all meals (kosher food is available), Broadway-style entertainment, mah jongg, and all the standard fare the ship offers. Special events will be planned revolving around the group's common interests, including lighting Hanukkah candles at sea. Everyone is welcome. Cabin rates range from \$512 to \$639 and a \$75 deposit is due by June 29, with final payment by Sept. 10. Proceeds will benefit Hadassah's medical research. For additional information, contact **Michele Norris** at (813) 352-8765.

Young Adults

YAD happy hour: The Young Adult Division of Pinellas and Pasco Counties hosts monthly Hebrew happy hours. The next one is on Tuesday, July 17 at 7 p.m. at Jimmy B's, 6200 Gulf Blvd., St. Pete Beach.

The Young Adult Division aims to connect young Jewish adults (both singles and couples in their 20s, 30s and 40s) to a broad range of educational, social, philanthropic, and leadership activities as a means to enhance their commitment and connection to the Jewish community. For full line up of all YAD activities, visit facebook.com/PinellasYAD.

#Gather events: #Gather, sponsored by the Tampa JCCs, offers a mix of social and interactive activities for those in their 20s, 30s and 40s of all faiths and backgrounds. For more information or to RSVP for any #Gather event, visit: www.bryanglazerfamilyjcc.com/gather or contact **Lisa Robbins** at lisa.robbins@jewishtampa.com or (813) 769-4723.

Museum tour - The #Gather group will take a private tour of the Florida Holocaust Museum's exhibition: "Operation Finale: The Capture & Trial of Adolf Eichmann," on Sunday, June 24. The group will gather first at 12:30 p.m. at La V, a Vietnamese fusion restaurant, at 441 Central Ave., St. Petersburg.

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COULD YOUR CHILD USE ANOTHER ADULT IN THEIR LIFE? Do you have children between the ages 6-17 who would benefit from frequent interaction with another Jewish adult/mentor? Call the Yad B' Yad Program Coordinator at Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, Deena Silver, at (727) 450-7278, for more information.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

WANTED: Adults with a desire to befriend a Jewish youngster. As a mentor/role model you can greatly influence a child's life. For details, call Deena Silver, Yad B'Yad Program Coordinator at Gulf Coast Jewish Family & Community Services, (727) 450-7278.

The museum is a few blocks away and the tour there begins at 2 p.m. The cost is \$12 for members and \$15 for guests, lunch not included. Registration in advance is required.

Armature Works tour - The #Gather group will take a free behind the scenes tour of Armature Works on Tuesday, June 26 at 6:30 p.m. Tour Tampa's hottest new project with **Taryn Bruck**, managing director of Armature Works. After the tour, the group will dine together in the Heights Market inside Armature Works. Cost of dinner is not included.

Cocktails by the pool - The #Gather group will meet on Wednesday, Aug. 29 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. for a poolside party with cocktails at the Mezrah Family Aquatics Center at the Glazer JCC, 522 N. Howard Ave., Tampa.

This event is free to JCC members and \$5 for guests. There will be cocktails and hors d'oeuvres by the pool. RSVP by Friday, Aug. 24 and receive one free drink ticket. There will be icebreakers, pool deck games, prizes and more.

Job-Links

Monday Morning Links: Free sessions of Monday Morning Links are offered at the Jack Roth Center for Career Development at TampaBay-Job-Links, 4100 W. Kennedy Blvd., Suite 206, Tampa from 9:30 - 11 a.m. Monday Morning Links is supported by the Vinik Family Foundation. The next session will be on June 25 from 9:30-11 a.m. when the topic is "What to do if your job search stalls?"

Job-search aids: There are Success workshops on select Thursdays to aid with job-search skills. On June 28 from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. the topic is "Preparing for your interview." The workshops are free for TampaBay Job-Links full program participants and \$15 for guests. Reservations required for all programs. 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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'Operation Finale' doubles museum's normal attendance

The public response to the Florida Holocaust Museum's current display of Operation Finale: The Capture and Trial of Adolf Eichmann has been extraordinary, according to museum officials

Since the exhibit's opening in February, attendance has nearly doubled. There have been visitors from Canada and all over the United States, coming from as far as Oregon, Colorado and Nebraska, as well as from cities all across Florida.

Operation Finale, which runs through July 15 at the St. Petersburg museum, is the first exhibition in the United States to offer an inside look into the capture and trial of the Nazi war criminal.

For those who have not yet seen the exhibition, the museum is offering free admission all day on Thursday, July 12.

Museum officials say not only the numbers, but the feedback has been enthusiastic.

One such visitor was a homeless woman who visited the exhibit about a month ago. Although she had walked past the museum almost daily, she had not visited the museum until then, taking advantage of the museum's partnership with the library system (See related story, this page) "She was very excited to see the Operation Finale," said Sara McDonald, the museum's admissions and store manager. "After viewing the exhibition, she spoke with museum staff about how horrible the atrocities

were and how the courtroom set up really made her feel like she was there."

Included within the exhibition are some interactive pieces, including a question that prompts viewers to put a chip in a box that they believe answers the question in the best way. The question reads, "Which outcome of Eichmann's trial is most significant?"

The options are:

- Israel having tried and convicted a major Nazi war criminal
- Survivor empowerment and publicizing the events of the Holocaust worldwide

The second option has received the largest amount of chips. This idea of survivor empowerment and publicizing what happened during the Holocaust ensures these horrific events will never be forgotten, museum officials noted.

In addition to reaching people who visited the museum, the museum's education team has travelled across the state to teach people about the Operation Finale exhibit and the Eichmann trial, reaching people in Tallahassee, Gainesville, Miami, and Sarasota.

The museum is located at 55 Fifth St. S., St Petersburg. For more information call (727) 820-0100 or visit www.flholocaust-museum.org.

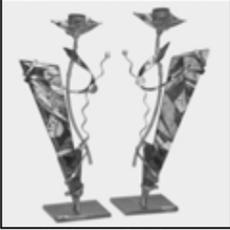
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Book a free visit to Holocaust museum and others

Got a library card? Snag a pass for free admission to the Florida Holocaust Museum.

The museum recently partnered with the Pinellas County and Hillsborough County Public Library Cooperatives to offer free admission to the museum.

This partnership is set to continue indefinitely. To take advantage of the offers:

The Pinellas County member library branches each have two museum passes that can be checked out with your library card, much like checking out a library book. The passes are available on a first-come, first-served basis and each pass is good for up to two adults and three children. You can ask for a pass at your branch or check the Pinellas Public Library Cooperative online catalog (www.pplc.us) to see where passes are available, then go to a branch with an available pass and check it out in person. You may place a request (hold) for a pass and pick it up when it becomes available.

You get a printed receipt that is valid for one visit within a 7-day period and you turn that receipt in at the museum. Passes are also available to the Museum of Fine Arts and the Great Explorations Children's Museum, both in St. Petersburg.

For Hillsborough County Library members, the rules are similar for its Discovery Pass. They are good for a family of up to five for a seven-day period. You can reserve a pass online (www.hcplc.org/services/Discoverypass) and once you are notified the pass is available you have five days to pick it up at a library branch. As with the passes in Pinellas, you turn the pass in at the museum. The passes are on a first-come, first-served basis. The Hillsborough County Library Discovery Pass is also good at a variety of other museums and attractions in Hillsborough County.

In addition to free admission via library card, the Holocaust Museum is offering free admission all day for everyone on July 12.

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KITES

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

doing great damage to the forest, to the plants and animals. Everything here is burned. We don't really see a solution, either from the government or the army, against this kite terror."

Ben David says KKL-JNF employs 12-13 private firefighters who are responsible for the forest, a number bolstered by volunteers from local communities and Israel's overstretched Fire and Rescue Services.

"We are doing what we can. You extinguish one and you move on to the next one," he says.

At another site nearby, a tractor puts out the flames by driving over them followed by a man carrying a hose attached to a small water tank on his back. It's siren blaring, a firetruck pulls up and a regular-duty firefighter gets out and starts spraying a flaming clump of trees.

Over the course of less than an hour, Ben David visits more than five fires, one of which blazes alongside a small one-lane road, completely obscuring visibility.

"At the end of the day, we are succeeding at extinguishing everything," he says, but adding it would help if he had access to firefighting planes. Ben David explains that such aircraft are prohibited from taking part in the battle due to the proximity to the Gaza border.

"These kites aren't toys, they're weapons," he says. "If the IDF or government will understand that, I hope they will do something."

In nearby Nahal Oz, Yael Lachyani walks along pointing out the damage done to her kibbutz's farmlands. She points to a small patch of burnt ground on which small shoots are already beginning to sprout. Lachyani, the agricul-

tural collective's spokeswoman, says that on the festival of Shavuot each year, a small ceremony is held here for the community's children, but this year it was set ablaze only hours before the gathering.

"We put out the fire and held the ceremony anyway. We are proud that we didn't let them destroy our holiday," she says, noting that 600 dunams, or almost 150 acres, have already gone up in flames.

"We try to be optimistic. It's all about resilience," Lachyani says. "We don't complain. We don't let them run our lives. You burn and we plant. Our morale is high."

While acknowledging the damage has only been to vegetation, she says it is only a matter of time until someone gets hurt in the community of fewer than 500 residents next to the border fence. The Israel Defense Forces and the government have not responded to the fires in the same way in which they act in the wake of a rocket attack, she says, and this "sends a message" to Hamas.

Lachyani says that despite the rocket attacks and fires, Nahal Oz is thriving, with residency at capacity, in part due to the "new secular Zionism of living wherever it's necessary and wherever it's meaningful." But while the community has grown since the last flare-up with Hamas in 2014, it does not mean the residents are totally sanguine about the situation.

"We are thriving under fire ... for the moment," she says, complaining of the feeling that "no one cares." Citing Regional Cooperation Minister Tzachi Hanegbi's statement that he was "not excited by the kite terrorism" – that is, that people shouldn't overreact to what he called a "pathetic" enemy – Lachyani asserts that the "government isn't doing anything."

Defense Minister Avigdor Liberman has pledged to strike back in response to the kites "when it is convenient for us." The army is testing two types of drones for use against the kites as "part of a comprehensive response, which includes cooperation with firefighting forces and the activity of combat forces on the ground," an IDF spokesman told JTA.

According to police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld, bomb disposal experts have responded not only to kites dragging alcohol-soaked rags but also explosive devices, "which is a much more serious threat to both soldiers and civilians."

"Every day we have at least 30 firefighters with 10 fire engines to deal only with fires near the fence," Israel Fire and Rescue Services spokesman Yoram Levy says. "In order to respond quickly we opened five temporary stations in kibbutzim. ...When we receive intelligence that there might be mass demonstrations, we are reinforcing our staff as needed."

Levy says the fire service has used airplanes twice, near Kibbutz Or Haner and Kibbutz Karmia, after receiving permission from the Israeli Air Force.

One resident of Nahal Oz sees the attacks as an opportunity to give something back. Only weeks before the fires started, Raymond Reijnen immigrated to the kibbutz with family from Rotterdam in the Netherlands. A 16-year veteran of his city's fire brigade, Reijnen saw no future in Europe and decided to make aliyah so his children could grow up in a Jewish state.

Assigned to the kibbutz dairy, where he tends cows, Reijnen threw himself into agricultural work and learning Hebrew. Now he is volunteering for the kibbutz's own firefighting team.

He says he felt good that he could "give something back to the kibbutz with my skills as a firefighter. I can pay them back for all the things they do for me here."

Kibbutz Saad, located three miles away, has had to deal with far fewer fires than Nahal Oz, and the fields that burned were already harvested, says Buki Bart, a member of the kibbutz administration. While expressing frustration, Bart says he understands that "everybody is doing the best that he can" and that the damage thus far has been minor enough that he doesn't feel he has to report every small fire to the kibbutz members.

According to Adi Meiri, a spokeswoman for the Shaar Hanegev Regional Council, whose territory includes Sderot, extinguishing the fires is not the only struggle for residents of the region. While the state has pledged reparations for farmers who have lost crops, local representatives also have been pushing hard for additional payments for those forced to harvest early, losing part of the value of their produce, as well as for those who have lost agricultural equipment.

Aside from the financial side, Meiri says the constant fires have caused stress for residents, especially children, many of whom are receiving help from psychologists at a local "resilience center." She describes how she has gone to great lengths to shield her own children from the reality of the past two months.

Picking up on Meiri's theme, council head Alon Schuster told JTA it is important that the IDF, when attacking targets in the Gaza Strip, announce that the strikes are in part in retaliation for the kites. He says "it is important for the internal psychological resilience of our residents."

SPECIAL NEEDS

• CONTINUED from FRONT PAGE

jointly announced "with high hopes and great expectations of making a difference," by Yogman, Chief Financial Officer Jay Kauffman, and board member Adele Morris.

Those interested in receiving a grant are asked to submit an application by visiting www.jewishpinellas.org and state in a single-page letter the nature, urgency, perceived benefit(s), timing, and reasonable cost estimate for the request. Priority will be given to those applications seeking support for opportunities that will further enhance connection with the applicant's Jewish identity and experience.

All future grants will be flexible as to the amount and duration, subject to availability of funds and the continuing generosity of the community at large. Ages of potential recipients will range from young children to mature adults and the elderly.

The need to aid those with special needs is high, according to the recent demographics study of the Jewish community in Pinellas and Pasco counties. The study found that 18 percent of Jewish children up to age 17 are in need of programs for children with learning disabilities or other special needs, ranking our community with the greatest percentage of those with such needs when compared to 30 other Jewish communities in the nation.

Both applications for grants and tax-deductible donations may be submitted to: Tikvah Suncoast, Inc., 5368 First Ave. N., St. Petersburg, FL 33710, and should include all relevant contact information.

For more information, contact Yogman at (727) 321-4673.

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