Happy Passover

Shared moments and many memories

By Marcia Reinhard, JFEC Asst. Director

I don’t know how many of you remember Noa Brosh and Ron Peleg (2014-15) or how many of you had the pleasure of really getting to know them. I sincerely hope there are many of you. I know they made a lot of connections and became close to quite a few people, but I can never keep track of all those who impacted each of the emissaries’ lives. If you were lucky enough to get to know them, you will remember two very sweet people; two gentle souls. Add to that, their good nature, their senses of humor and their hard work and dedication to the program and to our community.

As I read through Noa’s and Ron’s articles, it struck me how, two emissaries, two young people from the same year, who shared many of the same moments, have different memories come to the forefront of their minds. Their narratives, while similar in tone and sentiment, give us a broad overview of their year thanks to the events that affected them each individually. It illustrates for us, in black and white, the impact the Year of Service has had on each and every one of our past emissaries.

Save these Dates

Community Yom Hashoah Observance
Holocaust Remembrance – Wed., April 7, early evening

Yom Hazikaron/Yom Haatzmaut
Israel Memorial Day/Israel Independence Day -- Wed., April 14 & Thurs., April 15
For both these events go to www.JFEC.com, Community Calendar on the date of the event to register and receive a link to the program.

Campus moves ahead

A rendering of the proposed new Jewish campus was presented to the Campus committee on March 9. Michael Doherty and Joe Sziabowski, the Boston-based architects presented three thrilling options for the campus which would be the new home of Temple Emanu-El and Congregation Beth El along with a new building for the Jewish Federation of Eastern CT. The project is expected to add vitality to the entire Jewish community in Eastern CT and renovate the existing Temple Emanu-El facility creating an awesome place for observance, celebrations and more.

The Campus is expected to be fully funded by donations and grants. “This is a once in a life-time opportunity to help create long term solid financial footing for the congregations and build upon the already exciting atmosphere at Temple Emanu-El,” says Kenn Fischburg, a member of Temple Emanu-El and the committee.

Gail Weber, Chair of the committee says that, “Strength in numbers is the best way to emphasize the importance of this project to our entire Jewish community. How exciting to imagine all that we can do together!”

Local cemetery has a new name

Beth El Cemetery Association, Inc. has been reorganized under a new leadership committee, a new name and a new mission. Located on Lestertown Road in Groton, it is now known as, The Beth El Community Cemetery of Eastern Connecticut, Inc. The newly organized committee members include: Harriet Juli, President; Jerry Fischer, Treasurer; Len Cohen, Cemetery Maintenance; Sarah Rogovin, Secretary; and Cemetery Administrator, Merrill Mazzella. Committee Members are Nancy Brand, Steve Daren, Sandra Davidson and Judi Goldberg.

Moving forward, we will continue to provide the community with a place to celebrate the lives of our loved ones. Some guidelines have now changed as it has become a Jewish Community Cemetery. An individual need not be a member of Congregation Beth El (or any synagogue) to purchase a plot. Accommodations can be made if a member of the family is not Jewish and chooses to be buried at the cemetery.

If you or a loved one are seeking peace of mind, buying plots for the future will provide comfort for all family members. This will eliminate a task that must be undertaken at a particularly difficult time. We will be happy to assist you when you are ready to choose and purchase your plots. To contact our administrator, Merrill Mazzella, please call (860) 383-5605.

Special thanks to Jerry Schwell, who has been kind enough to act as our advisor as we reorganized.
Celebrating Yachad Day and much more

By Jack Haynes

On February 27, Yachad hosted another amazing virtual event! The event, “Yachad Day,” focused on learning about our chapters’ short but meaningful history!

Our VP of programming, or in Hebrew, our Sh’liach, Ethan Novick, put together an amazing slideshow of past chapter events dating all the way back to before any current members were even in high school! It was a beautiful experience reminiscing together about old events. To add to the nostalgia, we had Yachad alumni join the Zoom as well! It was great hearing about what each alum has been up to since leaving Yachad. To learn more about how our chapter works, our chapter president Hannah Linder showed everyone the Yachad charter, old Yachad merchandise (swag), and other Yachad memorabilia.

After the pictures, we got a chance to celebrate our amazing advisors, Marcia and Rebecca Reinhard. The teens took turns sharing what they love most about each advisor in addition to their most memorable moments together. Again, thank you so much to Marcia and Beca for everything you do for our chapter!!

Even after pictures and advisor appreciation, there was still more to come! Next up was celebrating Purim. During this section of the event, we played a dress up game to simulate dressing up for Purim. During each round, we had one minute to find items around our houses to dress up as whatever theme was chosen. For example, if the theme was princess, everyone had one minute to scramble around grabbing princess items before we all returned to the zoom and decided who had the best costume. We had about five rounds of costume hunting. Congratulations to Hannah for winning the costume contest!

The event was a massive success! Stay tuned for our next event on March 21 from 3 to 4:30 pm where we will celebrate Passover!

Thank you to the many people in our community who participated in our Krispy Kreme fundraiser.

We raised a good amount of money for our chapter, but more importantly, we have 63 boxes of donuts that we were able to donate to Safe Futures and the New London Meal Center which comes to 756 donuts in total.

If you or someone you know is interested in joining our JFEC sponsored Senior Youth Group which has been a BBYO chapter for the past seven years, please contact Regan Kaye, our VP - Membership at kayer@region18.org. You can also email our Youth Director, Marcia Reinhard at mreinhard@jfec.com.

Jack Haynes is a Senior at East Lyme High School and the Communication Chair for our Yachad BBYO Chapter. Jack enjoys posting on social media and putting his skills to work for the chapter.

Candle Lighting for Eastern CT area

Friday, Mar 19  •  6:41 pm
Friday, Mar 26  •  6:49 pm
Friday, Apr 2   •  6:56 pm
Friday, Apr 9   •  7:04 pm
Stop & Shop Bloomin’ 4 Good program has raised over $100 for the JFEC

The Jewish Federation of Eastern CT (JFEC) is a beneficiary of the Stop & Shop Bloomin’ 4 Good Program for the month of March. To date shoppers’ generosity has raised over $100 for the Federation. It’s not too late, especially if you want flowers for your Seder table or are visiting friends or family. Specially marked bouquets purchased now through the end of March will garner a $1 donation for every $9.99 Bloomin’ for Good Bouquet purchased at the Stop & Shop, 155 Post Post Road in Waterford.

“Flowers can make someone’s day, brighten a room or spread a smile,” said Carin Savel, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation. “Now they can fight hunger too. Every bouquet sold will feed 10 plus people in need.”

Jewish art competition to increase awareness of shmita

Hazon, the Jewish Lab for Sustainability non-profit, officially opened submissions for The Shmita Prizes – an international arts competition with five different prizes. The goal is to draw attention to and raise awareness of the forthcoming shmita year (beginning Rosh Hashanah 2021). Categories include ritual object, fine art, film or video, performance art/music/liturgy, plus a fifth category for the written word - essays and ideas.

Shmita is “a year of letting go”. It takes place every seven years in the Jewish calendar - it is indeed where the modern notion of a “sabbatical” comes from. “Shmita offers a remarkable framework for addressing some of the most pressing issues of our time,” said Hazon CEO, Nigel Savage. “Shmita is about our relation to land and food; to community and boundaries; to work, overwork and rest; and to debt relief and the amelioration of inequality. Each of these topics is a significant issue in contemporary life.”

The inspiration for the project came from Rabbi Nina Beth Cardin, who saw that everything else in Jewish life has an associated ritual except for Shmita – lighting candles on Shabbat, attending a seder on Passover, or eating apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah.

The Shmita Prizes aim to engage artists, teachers, and religious leaders from around the world in their own exploration of what a “Shmita” might look like.

Shoshana Gugenheim, the project director for The Shmita Prizes, is a social practice artist and former Jewish environmental educator. She passionately believes that “connecting and reconnecting Jewish artists with the tradition is a profound and lasting way to strengthen Jewish life, to enrich Jewish experience for people who are already involved, and to bring new people through the door to Judaism who have not previously found a gateway.”

The Prizes are open to people of any age or background and from any country.

A Shmita Prizes committee will select one artist in each category to be awarded a lead prize of $1800 with three additional awards of $750 in each category. Submissions are open until May 19.

The Shmita Prizes is a centerpiece of the wider Shmita Project, a significant collaboration of a wide and growing range of organizations. Each partner is planning to teach about shmita or produce programs in association with the shmita year. Project partners include leading educational institutions (such as the Fuchsberg Center in Jerusalem, Hadar, the Shalom Hartman Institute, Limmud, Pardes, Aleph and 929.org), as well as many JFEE (Jewish Outdoor, Food, Farming & Environmental Education) organizations (Elka Farm, Jewish Farmer Network, Organic Torah, Pearlstone, Shores, Shmita Project Northwest, Grow Torah and Wilderness Torah).

Arts partners include Atiq, the Jewish Maker Institute, Jewish Arts Salon, Gold Herring, and the Greensboro Contemporary Jewish Museum. Sponsors include the Covenant Foundation and a number of individual supporters.

For more information, visit https://shmitaproject.org/about-prizes/ or reach out via email to Shmitaproject@hazon.org.

About Hazon

Hazon, the Jewish Lab for Sustainability, is the largest faith-based environmental organization in the U.S. It is building a movement that strengthens Jewish life and contributes to a more environmentally sustainable world for all. One of the ways that it accomplishes these goals is by striving to leverage Jewish thought itself, and Hazon’s work on shmita, since 2007, is a significant part of this.

Donate your chametz to JFEC Food Pantry

With Passover fast approaching on March 27, those who keep kosher for Passover should consider donating their chametz to the Federation’s Food Pantry. The pantry serves the general community and its clients would appreciate your cereal, pasta, and grains like wheat, oats, rye, barley and spelt to name just a few things. Please donate only unopened items that haven’t expired. Donations can be made between 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday. Food can be dropped at the Federation’s back door at 28 Channing St. in New London. You need not call ahead of time, but a call to 860-442-8062 would be appreciated when you drop the food at our back door.

Pictured above is Sam Linder who dropped off a friend’s chametz to the Federation earlier this week. Todah Rabah!
Adding to your Passover food repertoire

By Carolyn Goodman Kaufman

From January until just this week we’ve been reading in the Torah the story of the Hebrews’ exodus from Egypt, and now we’re coming up to our annual commemoration of that event: Passover.

This festival brings with it so many memories. Among mine is the model seder we students put on every year in the community Hebrew School, where we dipped celery into saltwater, made Hillel sandwiches, and recited the four questions. We sang Had Gadaya and Ehad Mi Yodea, among other songs, and looked forward to performing them at our family seders.

But the seder at my Bubbie’s house wasn’t like one of today’s more entertaining, er, educational ones with puppet shows, quiz games, and toy frogs atop the children’s plates. No, ours consisted of the men — my dad, Uncle Ralph, and Zayde Meyer — whipping through the Haggadah and droning the narrative, stopping only for our well-rehearsed recitations. Regardless, Cousin Myla and I had a grand old time mumbling along, guzzling the Mogen David, and giggling.

Of course, many of our memories of Passover have to do with the menu (this is a food column, after all). The flavors and aromas of chicken soup with kneidlach, potent horseradish, cinnamon-tinged haroset, and tzimmes can all conjure up thoughts of loved ones long gone and the beautiful tables they set.

So, given that the holiday spread tends to be vast, isn’t there room for a twist on the Passover menu? A small addition? Sure, tradition is important, but how about expanding our repertoire a little to encompass the culinary customs of our extended global Jewish family?

Now, a little detour: One of the guests at the wedding of my son Avi and his wonderful Shira was Rabbi David Golinkin, a close friend of the bride’s family. I simply had to meet the man who had written the response ruling that certain foods known as kitniyot (including corn, rice, and legumes) were permissible on Passover because they were never outlawed in the Torah. (In fact, corn didn’t even exist in ancient Israel.)

I must have looked like a rock band groupie when I sat myself down next to him to say “thank-you” for the reasoned argument he gave on the subject of kitniyot. With a wry smile he replied, “Of all the responsa I’ve written in my career, that’s the one I’ll be remembered for.”

Rabbi Golinkin may have been droll in his self-assessment, but I for one shout “hurrah” that we Ashkenazi Conservative Jews are finally at one with our Sephardi family. Am Yisrael Chai and all that.

And now, with so many Jews practicing vegetarianism, getting that all-important protein into the diet practically requires the use of kitniyot.

Which brings us back to the food question. What shall we serve for Passover that will add something to the traditional family fare? (I won’t say same-old, same-old.) We need something exciting to stimulate our palates while it fosters a connection to our cousins on the other side of the world. So, I give you gondi - Persian chicken and chickpea balls. Serve these in your soup this year and see the smiles (happy, not wry) all around the table.

Gondi: Persian Chicken and Chickpea Balls

About 18 meatballs

This recipe is adapted from one in The Encyclopedia of Jewish Food by Gil Marks (z’l)

Ingredients:

Meatballs:
- 1/2 pound ground chicken or turkey
- 1/2 pound ground beef
- 2 cups chickpea flour
- 2 medium yellow onions, grated
- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil or 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley
- 2 tablespoons water

Soup:
- 3 quarts chicken soup
- 5 red or Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon ground turmeric
- Salt to taste
- 1 can chickpeas, drained and rinsed

Directions:

In a medium bowl, combine all the meatball ingredients, adding enough water to form a mixture that is smooth but not sticky. Refrigerate until firm, at least three hours. Using moistened hands, shape into smooth 1-inch balls.

In a large pot, bring the chicken soup to a boil. Add the potatoes, lemon juice, turmeric, and salt and simmer for 30 minutes. Add the gondi and chickpeas, cover, and simmer until the gondi are tender, about 40 minutes.

Two notes:

You can prepare this dish one or two days ahead of the seder because the flavors meld and mellow over time. Ideal for the holiday rush!

This recipe is easily doubled or tripled for a really big crowd (or because you just can’t get enough of it).

Pesach

By Dana Kline

It’s nearly Pesach. After 59 years of marriage, I ordered a new Seder plate. Why you may ask. What’s wrong with the one that graced my table since forever? That my friend is my tale of woe. That and what came next. Please let me explain.

It was over a year ago when Chanukah came just after Thanksgiving. I decided to clean my menorah (last year’s was, if you know what I mean was still there). While rearranging the items in the cabinet to get to the menorah, I pulled out a box. Inside was my Seder plate with a card lovingly inscribed “love mom and dad”.

I took out the cream-colored Lenox china plate trimmed with gold letters indicating where to put the ceremonial food... Now I ask you to imagine what happens when porcelain meets a tile floor. The answer is shards. Yes, my beautiful Seder plate was scattered across the kitchen floor. Tears streaming down my cheeks. There was nothing to be done but pick up the large pieces. But I couldn’t throw them away and stuffed them into a plastic bag. Out of sight in the linen closet they sat for months.

Next COVID arrived. A few weeks before Elijah was supposed to visit our home. No need for a Seder plate. All guests canceled for that night when we asked “Why is this night different from all other nights?”

Marty and I had the matza ball soup, the gefilta fish, the chicken, the famous Bessie’s sponge cake. But no real Seder. Oh we were on zoom with the family, but zoom was new to us. And all the tech preparations took our “kishkas” out. Needless to say it was a poor substitute for the real thing. Now we are mavens at zoom. Which brings me up to why I took our “kishkas” out. Needless to say it was a poor substitute for the real thing.

Out of sight in the linen closet they sat for months. Perhaps we will be outside. My hope is this year in Sarasota.

Pesach begins on March 27 this year. My children are planning to come from Nevada for a visit. Will it be safe to sit around the table? Perhaps we will be outside. My hope is this year in Sarasota.

And yet as I reread this small story, I see that it is just that. A small reflection of someone who has been part of the lucky ones. Sheltered in the sunshine. Vaccinated. Thanks to help getting online for an appointment. I see that I have failed to address the horror of most. I read today of the loss of empathy in our community. This is what my appointment. I see that I have failed to address the horror of most. I

Everyone counts: We are counting on you!
Here in Eastern Connecticut the JFEC works to support, sustain and revitalize Jewish life. But we can’t do it without you. Send in your donation today.
The Shot

Sherrill Waterhouse beckons to the next octogenarian in line at the Lawrence and Memorial Vaccination clinic. “Next.” She says, watching as a man leaning heavily on his walker dodgers in her direction. She takes hold of his elbow and guides him to a chair, enters his information into the hospital database. “Mr. Cohen, you’re getting the Moderna vaccine,” she says when he inquires. “Make sure you return in a month.”

He nods, glancing around the clinic in wonderment. He closes his eyes and then smiles in gratitude, as if he’s witnessing a miracle, which in all likelihood he is. She guides him to a nurse, then repeats her task with the next in line, filling in computer forms until her eyes glaze over. And so, it goes all day long. She thinks of her fiancé working on the other end of the clinic, doing the same task from 9 to 5.

“Imagine helping to end the worst health disaster this nation’s had in a 100 years,” he had said, the day after she closed her restaurant for good. “What could be better than that?”

And so, she volunteered for a week as well, uneasy about accepting government handouts to stay home and pout. Why not do something important when their marriage had to be delayed, their honeymoon canceled. Besides, who in their right mind would take a cruise to Alaska in 100 years,” he had said, the day after she closed her restaurant for good. “What could be better than that?”

During a lull in the action, she daydreams of getting the vaccine for herself when her turn comes, however far in the future that might be. She imagines dancing the hora with her friends, laughing at their jokes without an N95 mask stifling her every breath. “I haven’t even met my prospective in-laws. She wonders if she’ll ever get a paying job in this horrible pandemic. Unemployed restaurant managers are a dime a dozen these days. Somehow my lucks got to change.”

On the other side of the clinic Michael Plotkin is wiping down the counter with disinfectant, sanitizing pens with UV light, all in an effort to keep up with CDC guidelines. He handles his job with a professionalism and concern admired by his supervisors and fellow volunteers. “You’d think these people were his own relatives,” another volunteer mumbles under her breath when she sees the care Plotkin takes with complete strangers.

“Down but not out,” is how Plotkin likes to think of himself. Often, he daydreams about finding another job in the theater — if and when entertainment in person ever resumes.

“I imagine spending two years getting a masters in set design at NYU’s New School only to find myself unemployed,” he says to his parents when they ask if he needs help with his rent. The one bright spot in his life is Sherrill, working in the other end of the clinic. When he gets his COVID vaccination the first thing he’ll do is help plan their wedding.

For Michael, the day seems to fly by. He helps people as fast as he can, keeping the line moving, doing his part for his community. Finally, the crowd thins, the endless flow of humanity stalls. As he’s packing up his personal things to leave, the head of the clinic approaches. “You know, Michael,” he says with a twinkle in his eye. “We’ve got a few extra vaccinations that have to be used by the time we close. He taps the face of his watch. “Five more minutes, and that last shot is yours. If you want it, of course?”

Michael takes a sharp breath, his pulse quickening. He eyes the entry to the clinic, the door eerily closed after an eight-hour shift of incessant movement. The image of Sherrill’s face laughing as he lifts her veil under the chuppah in front of his family rises in his mind.

“That of course I’ll take it,” he says. “I’d be crazy not to.”

He sits in the corner of the room watching the dock on the wall tick off its seconds, the minutes seeming to last an eternity. He cranes his neck to try and see Sherrill, still rushing around at the other end of the clinic.

“All right then. Just about five on the dot.” The clinic director says. “Roll up your sleeve and go wait in that chair.”

At the other end of the clinic a similar scenario is playing out. “Hey, Sherrill,” the director of nursing says. “We’ve got a couple of extra vaccinations left over. “In two minutes, one of them is yours if no one else shows up and you want it.”

Sherrill blinks back tears, takes a deep breath. “Oh, my God! Of course, I’ll take it.”

She glances over at the other end of the clinic, searches out her beloved Michael, sitting with his sleeve rolled up, a huge smile on his lips. Her heart is doing the Mexican Hat Dance in her chest as she contemplates the possibility of sharing a piece of wedding cake with the love of her life. The head of nursing guides Sherrill to a chair. She rolls up her sleeve and waits, watching the clinic clock tick towards the magical 5 pm in an all but deserted clinic: 4:58, 4:59…she closes her eyes and imagines luxuriating on the deck of an Alaskan cruise ship on her honeymoon as icebergs bob in the sea.

“Bam! Bam! Bam!” The sound of someone pounding on the clinic door explodes her reverie, shocking her back to the moment.

The door swings open. A middle-aged man appears in the doorway, sweat on his brow, his hair disheveled, his features contorted. “Am I too late to get my parents the shots they signed up for? We went to the wrong building.” He holds the door open and the heads of an elderly couple appear. “Are we in the right place?” a white-haired woman says in a trembling voice.

“We’ve waited a month for this chance,” says her husband. “Can someone help us?”

Sherrill glances to the other end of the clinic where Michael sits with his eyes closed and his shoulder exposed, waiting for the approaching nurse who wields an uncapped needle like a magic sword. 5:03 reads the clock on the wall.

Sherrill’s eyes bulge. Her mind reels, the icebergs in her daydream sinking beneath a tempestuous sea. She lifts a trembling hand and opens her mouth to speak…

To be continued…
Survivor Stories
Monday, April 26, 2021
7:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Join us for an engaging Zoom webinar with
Marlene Yahalom, PhD, child and grandchild of Holocaust survivors and Director of Education for the American Society for Yad Vashem, as she shares her family’s incredible story of survival. Dr. Yahalom kicks off this multi session community education series focusing on Holocaust survivors from across the globe.

Go to JFEC.com to register and receive a link.

Rose and Sigmund Strochlitz Holocaust Resource Center of the Jewish Federation of Eastern CT

Realtor Corner
Frustration

By Geoff Hausmann

I can honestly state that I have never worked harder for my buyers that I am now. I received a call the other day from a new buyer and I tried explaining the lack of current inventory and that he had to be prepared to offer more on a property than the asking price.

This home hit the market. I thought I was one of the first showings when I made the appointment only to see a parade of buyers going into this home. The asking price was $275,000. My clients offered $290,000 with a clause stating that they would pay $1,500 over any other contract up to $320,000. The seller made the decision to keep the property active for the entire weekend due to the number of showing requests. The end result, a different buyer ended up with this home. This was the sixth offer that these buyers had submitted. Luckily, I found a better home for them and got them under contract for that one. Finally, a happy ending.

I always have stated that buying a home is supposed to be an exciting experience as it is a milestone in your life. In today’s world, people are settling for a home and paying more than they want to pay. Then there is my frustration. I was showing a client a home and finally found a very nice home for her and her family. I explained to my client that there were five offers already on the property and that the agent was planning on meeting with the seller in five hours to pick one. I explained to my client what I would recommend on a purchase price hoping for her to obtain a chance on the home and her response was that she wanted the weekend to think about it as the property has not even been on the market for a day. I lost that battle.

Today, was even worse. I showed a multifamily to an investor and had to explain to them that they should offer over asking price. I thought I was going to be shot as it is unheard of for investor to pay asking price, not to mention over asking. Thank God for COVID as I was six feet away so he could not strangle me easily.

I had a new client contact me with six different properties to check out. I responded with four were under contract and made appointments for the other two on the next day. Well, the next day I was only able to show one property as the other one was now under contract. The sixth property had a unique layout and was not for them. Their search continues.

I do not mean to scare off buyers in today’s market, but I am just trying to explain reality. I want my clients to be prepared so that they are ready and know what will be required when they make the decision to make an offer on a home.

Some agents are recommending things that I am unwilling do. They are having their clients purchase a home in as-is condition with no inspections and no appraisal. Basically, they are purchasing a home without any conditions. What is your feeling of making a $400,000 purchase by looking at a picture?

Not sure if this soap opera is still on TV but join Geoff as the World Turns!

Please remember you can search for homes at www.CallTheHouseMan.com. Do you have a question about real estate?
Advice/responses will be made by: Geoff Hausmann, RE/MAX on the Bay, 860-443-4400, Geoff@CallTheHouseMan.com

Author’s Note: As you read this article, I will be celebrating my 55th birthday. I wish everyone a safe and healthy year Please help me celebrate by having a piece of chocolate cake.

Everyone counts: We are counting on you!
Here in Eastern Connecticut the JFEC works to support, sustain and revitalize Jewish life. But we can’t do it without you. Send in your donation today.
Hadassah News

President’s Message by Karen Bloustine

Combatting Antisemitism - The Importance of a Working Definition

We cannot eliminate antisemitism without first defining what it is. On January 27, 2021, Hadassah adopted a new policy statement supporting the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Antisemitism.

President Rhoda Smilow said that “In reaffirming Hadassah’s support for the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s Working Definition of Antisemitism, we are saying to organizations, institutions and government leaders both here at home and around the world what we believe the standard ought to be.”

To effectively combat the scourges of antisemitism and racism in all their manifestations, we must be able to easily identify acts of violence or inflammatory rhetoric. Nations around the world are adopting the working definition adopted by the IHRA in 2016, but Congress has not yet written the definition into law. Hadassah will continue to lobby Congress until it that is done.

The IHRA Working Definition includes accompanying illustrations and formally adopts the spelling - antisemitism — without a hyphen or capital S — to ensure clarity of meaning for the term used to signify modern Jew-hatred.

The Working Definition is:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

The following examples serve as illustrations of antisemitism.

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel like that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as manifestations of antisemitism directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals.

Jewry in the Russian Empire and Former Soviet Union

By Sheila Horvitz

The 4th Annual Henny Simon Remembrance Program: Seeking Refuge: Shanghai & Beyond will explore the journeys of Jews fleeing persecution to safe harbors like Shanghai. Helen Elperina and her family’s story represents those Jews remaining after World War II who fought for the right to leave the oppressive life in the Soviet Union.

Through the efforts of the Jewish resettlement agencies and the work of our Eastern CT Jewish Federation, Soviet Jews have found refuge here in our community. What is the history of the Jews of the former Soviet Union, once the home of the majority of Jews in the world?

Jews in the Russian Empire

The story of the Jews goes back 1,500 years. They can be traced back to the 7th century. Expelled en masse from Spain, France, and most other Western European countries at various times, and persecuted in Germany in the 14th century, religion in secret.

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Jews in South America

By Susan Lorinsky

The Jewish population of South America is small but they have a distinct ethnicity. South American Jews are proud of their heritage and practice their religion. Ashkenazi Jews make up the majority and descended from Jews who came from Russia, Germany, and Eastern Europe. Many fled pogroms and discrimination. Sephardic Jews came from Spain and Portugal, as well as Turkey, Morocco, Syria, and Lebanon in the Middle East. They make up the rest of the South American Jewish population.

The first Jewish Settlers to South America came on ships from Spain and Portugal to the New World. These Jews were Marranos or Conversos. They were forbidden to practice Judaism in Spain and Portugal so they outwardly converted to Christianity but observed the Jewish religion in secret. It is believed that Christopher Columbus’ crew were mostly Marranos. They formed Jewish communities in the New World, mostly in Brazil. From 1880 to 1914, many Jews came from the Middle East and Eastern Europe to start communities in Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay. Today’s Jews are mostly descended from this group.

Before and after WWII many Jews emigrated to Argentina from Europe to escape the Holocaust and antisemitism. Argentina has the largest Jewish population in South America, about 200,000 - the sixth-largest Jewish population in the world, and Brazil with 100,000 Jews is the tenth-largest Jewish community in the world.

Important facts about colon cancer everyone should know

By Carol Curland, CRNA, APRN, MSN, PHD

Colon Cancer is the second most common cause of Cancer death among men and women today. It is on the rise for people under 50 years of age.

By the time you have serious symptoms, cancer has often progressed. That’s why it is so critically important to be aware of the signs of colorectal cancer - especially if you are young.

You must not ignore a change in bowel habits and movements or any bleeding. Seek medical care immediately.

If you have a family history of colon cancer, you need to be screened. A large percentage of people who are diagnosed do not have a family history. But we need to be aware of other cancers that are in our families because that can increase your risk of colon cancer. If you have a history of breast or ovarian cancer in your family, you need to really be vigilant.

We need more awareness and research funding. There have not been enough research dollars dedicated to studying different ethnic groups. This is something that is clearly being discussed and painfully revealed with the Pandemic. We need to make medical care more accessible for all people. People of color are 2 1/2 times more likely to be diagnosed with Covid because of

March COLON CANCER AWARENESS MONTH
✓Preventable ✓Treatable Beatable

Medical science is telling us that in the next 15 years, more than one in ten colon cancers will be diagnosed in patients ages 20 to 35.

It is highly preventable with proper screening. Everyone must be vigilant, and we cannot feel squeamish about something that has the potential to save lives. The subject of diagnosing and treating colon cancer is sensitive, but we must keep talking about it.

CANCER cont. on PG 13

JEWRY cont. on PG 11

KAREN cont. on PG 13

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Hadassah Eastern CT
We’d love to hear from you. Please feel free to call or write.

- President: Karen Bloustine bloustinek@gmail.com 860-326-6377
- Membership: Moira Ross moira29ross@hotmail.com
- Donations: Treas. Vicki Seroussi 2 Mitchell Ct Norwich, CT 06360
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Follow us on Facebook
Missing you all so much!

By Noa Brosh, 2014-15 Young Emissary

Hey everyone,

I was a young emissary in 2014-2015 with Ron Peleg, and I can’t believe it’s been 6 ½ years since we first arrived. I remember all the tests that I went through and how much I wanted to be a Young Emissary. I was so excited when they called me and told me that I was going to be a Young Emissary in Connecticut (at that time I didn’t even know where Connecticut was), and that I would be in your community with Ron Peleg as my partner.

I remember my many concerns, as I didn’t know anything about the community to which I was coming other than its name, if I would get along with my host family, with Ron, or with my Coordinator, Marcia Reinhard, and of course with all of you.

With all these concerns, I got on a flight to New York, and after four days of orientation at Camp Laurelwood in Madison, CT, I finally reached the community. As time passed all my concerns were gone; I had the perfect host family – The McCaffreys - who will always be my second family. I was more than blessed to work with Marcia as my Coordinator and a good friend that I could always approach with any question or problem and who was always there for me, working around the clock with a lot of love and care.

Of course, I was privileged to be part of your community. Even though I was 5000 miles away from home, you all made me feel that I was among family and friends, with a warm feeling, just like at home.

I will carry with me fabulous memories from those days at Solomon Schechter Academy with the kids and staff, and especially with Tracy Todd, (the principal back then) who cared about us like a mother and was a great friend for Ron and me.

I miss the religious school on Sunday mornings at Temple Emanu-El and all the activities we did with the kids as well as the great conversations with the adults over bagels and coffee in the social hall. We went to Ahavath Achim and did activities with their students whom I also think about and miss very much.

On Wednesday afternoons after Solomon Schechter, we drove to Willimantic (separately, alternating weeks) to be with the students at Temple Bnai Israel and do Israel programming with them as well. They were also a great group of kids. I miss them all.

Then there are the teens. Another group I really miss. We used to meet with them every Monday night at Jewish Community High School and enjoyed our weekly pizza dinners before lessons with the rabbis. We also joined them at their monthly BBYO chapter events. Bonding with this group of teenagers really helped make our year very special.

Of course, I also miss my host family, The McCaffreys, who hosted me throughout the year; and always made me feel accepted and at home. They provided me with endless love and experiences, from tickle wars, family road trips to Florida and Maine, to making me tacos whenever I was sad; thankfully not too often. I am very grateful and will never forget everything they did for me. They will always have a big chunk of my heart saved especially for them.

Lastly, I cannot write about my year with all of you, without mentioning our amazing Yom Ha’Atzmaut event. It was only the third year since the emissaries took it over and we really wanted it to be spectacular! We knew your expectations were high, and so were ours. We hoped it would be as good, if not better, than the years before us! We knew we were successful when the Beth-El social hall was jam-packed with people and there was tremendous celebration and energy throughout the evening! I was lucky enough to have my parents, not only witness this amazing event but participate in it as they also brought wonderful items from Israel to be sold at the shuk. It helped us tremendously and they had a blast!

I cannot begin to describe the year I had in words - all the experiences, the hard work, this great community - I could never thank each and every one of you enough who took part in our year; and I am lucky and privileged to have been chosen to be your emissary.

Today I want to tell you a little bit about my life since I left Connecticut.

When I went back to Israel, I enlisted in the military and served for two years (it is mandatory for all Israeli’s.) I don’t know if you guys remember but I always loved sports! So, in the army I served as a Combat Fitness Instructor for soldiers in a brigade called Golani.

My time in the Army was hard but very educational, and even fun sometimes. I got to know a lot of people and made some good friends along the way that will stay with me forever. They helped me get through challenges that made me stronger.

In the army I met my boyfriend, Itamar Ben-Atar. He was a combat soldier in Golani and today we are together for 4.5 years. We are best friends; we live together in a city called Beer Sheva and we are both studying at the university of Ben-Gurion in the south of Israel. He is doing his first degree in Computer Science, currently in his second year with one more year until he finishes. I am also working towards my first degree, still in my first year in Software and Information Systems and Engineering.

After my army service, I came back to the community for a short visit with Itamar and got to see The McCaffreys, The Reinhard’s and even attended a graduation party for Amanda Zettler where I was lucky enough to see so many people whom I have missed so much.

My year in Eastern Ct, with you provided me with so many positive experiences. I carry it with me every day. That year will always be with me and affect my life in so many ways. It already has.

This has been a strange year for all of us and has kept us all apart. Thankfully, The McCaffreys visited last December; just in time before COVID hit. I hope this will end soon and I can come “home” for a visit with Itamar again and you can all start coming back to Israel and visiting me and all of your emissaries. I’d love to see as many of you as possible. In the meantime, if you’d like to stay in touch, you can reach me at my email address: noabrosh011@gmail.com. You can also reach me using Facebook at Noa Brosh. I’d love to hear from you!

Love and miss you all, Noa Brosh

Noa Brosh and her boyfriend Itamar at a pre- COVID wedding in Israel.

Noa Brosh (3rd from left) with host family The McCaffreys during Emissary Farewell at 2015 JFEC Annual Meeting.

Noa Brosh (2nd from left) with host family The Novicks during Emissary Farewell at 2015 JFEC Annual Meeting.
The best year of my life!

By Ron Peleg,
2014-15 Young Emissary

Dear community,

Six years ago the best year of my life had started and the reason for it was because of all of you! I heard about the Young Emissary program through my older sister, Shahar - YE in Worcester MA 2011-12. During her year I got to hear all about her experiences, and I started to understand the importance of our Living Bridge.

In my senior year of high school when preparing for my year I was matched with Noa Brosh, my partner for the year, and Eastern CT as my community!

During that summer, the community had organized a trip to Israel (led by the one and only Jerry Fischer) and I got to experience a day worth of experiences of what the year was going to be like - from meeting a lot of new people to having entire conversations in English and doing fun activities. From that day on, I couldn’t wait for my year to begin!

Finally, it was time to leave Israel and from the first moment I arrived in the community and into the Novick Family home, everything felt like home because of all of you and the Novick’s. Everywhere I went I was welcomed with open arms. On my first day at Solomon Schechter (SSA), where I spent most of my morning, I had the chance to meet the people I would be working with and began to understand the work I would be doing. As time went on, I became friends with the AMAZING staff including Esther Morrell, Terri Goldsmith (R.I.P) and Tracy Todd, who allowed Noa and me to bring our experiences and ourselves to the classes and to the kids themselves.

For me, one of the best parts at SSA was singing the prayers at lunch. It opened a whole new (good) Jewish experience for me that I had never had before. Seeing how much the kids wanted to participate and even lead it, how much joy and happiness it brought to us every day by just taking a few minutes to sing together, left a lasting impression on me. Every day was filled with memories I will never forget! I also got to work in the religious schools at Temple Emanu-El in Waterford, Ahavath Achim in Colchester and Temple Bnai Israel in Willimantic, as well as Hebrew High, up with an Israeli meal. We inspired him when we showed the class the many different foods in Israel. We got approval to bring them to Temple Emanu-El where they were given a tour led by Rabbi Aaron Rosenberg (for some of the kids it was their first time visiting a synagogue) and then they were treated to Shakshuka, an Israeli breakfast that was cooked by ME (and Noa of course.) What better way to share one’s culture than with a delicious meal?

A HUGE part of my year was living with my host family The Novick’s - Caryn, Steven, Ethan, and Ryan. They truly made me feel at home - everything from having dinners in the evenings to just spending the nights together, along with going to all the possible sports games in the community and traveling to many different places like New York, Washington, D.C., local community parks and more! Having spent my WHOLE
In the summer of 2014, I returned to Israel with Jerry on one of his missions. It had been four years since Mike and I had made that first journey to Israel together and when we met Shai and Asaf (2010-11 emissaries), I was thrilled to be returning. If I remember correctly, there were 45 people on that trip. Jerry asked me to contact all our past emissaries as well as the two that were due to arrive in August and have as many of them join us as possible. So, I did just that and out of 28 emissaries, including our two new ones, we had 17 past emissaries join our trip intermittently, whenever and wherever they could. It was amazing! While seeing our past emissaries was so exciting and so much fun for everyone, another highlight for me was getting to meet Noa Brosh and Ron Peleg, our two new Young Emissaries, in person and in Israel.

Once back home in Connecticut, I awaited their arrival at the end of August. It was four days at Camp Laurelwood and then the car ride from Madison to East Lyme. Ron and Noa were both living with families in East Lyme and the bonus? The families were close friends. The McCaffreys and the Novicks had been friends for years because Erica and Caryn had been friends since high school.

One of the bonuses for me in this program is getting to know so many families in our community and even becoming friends with some. The Novicks were one of those families, and to this day, Caryn and I are good friends. Mike and I were already friends with The McCaffreys and having them host Noa brought us even closer.

At Passover, The Novicks invited my entire family to their home for the first seder along with, of course, The McCaffreys. Ron's parents were visiting from Israel, so it was quite a party! Noa and Ron got to be together with their host families and we all got to be with Ron's parents for the holiday. What a treat!

Noa and Ron worked really hard all year long. Noa was the morning person and Ron was the night owl. The exact opposite of the year before. Thank goodness I always get one night owl. Ron and I often discussed programs and activities late at night. When it came to collaborating during the day, Noa and Ron were amazing! They rarely argued, never a raised voice and they always seemed to figure out what would work best. They made it look so easy.

Happily, it wasn't all work and no play. Noa and Ron had a wonderful friendship. There was always laughter in the office and even, an occasional shenanigan or two. I'll never forget when they found Abir’s gorilla costume in the closet that The Krasner’s gave him. Next thing I know, we've got a gorilla in the office. Noa and Ron had the best time with that gorilla costume. And when it wasn’t the gorilla costume, they’d find something else to joke around about. It was fabulous to see them work together and “play” together.

Noa's and Ron's kindness and friendship towards each other extended to everyone around them, including their site mentors and the families. They would come to the office after being at Schechter and often worked together and “play” together.

Noa’s and Ron’s kindness and friendship towards each other extended to everyone around them, including their site mentors and the families. They would come to the office after being at Schechter and often stop at Dunkin Donuts. They knew I was watching what I ate, but they also knew I loved mocha lattes and had a weakness for Boston Cream donuts. If they went to Dunkin', you can bet they had a coffee for me and sometimes, even a Boston Cream, whether I wanted it or not.

Purim was a fantastically wonderful event with Noa and Ron. They made these fabulous masks – one that was painted with the Israeli flag and one with the American flag. Then they did the sweetest thing – they surprised me with a mask half painted as the Israeli flag and the other half as the American flag. I had that mask up until about a year and a half ago when we cleaned out the office. Suddenly, it was gone. I'm still hoping it will turn up.

When we started planning Yom Ha'Atzmaut, and even before, I was still nervous. It was only the third year the emissaries were responsible for the event, and although I knew how capable Noa and Ron were, I couldn’t help asking myself, “Would they be able to pull off another amazing event as the emissaries did the two years before them?” The answer was an unequivocal, YES! Noa and Ron put everything into their planning. They wanted their celebration to be bigger and better. Just as Hadar and Paz brought us the event itself and May and Bar brought us the candle lighting, it was Noa and Ron who brought us the Pitot on the Tabun - make your own Pita with Israeli chocolate spread - outside the Beth-El social hall on the deck. That was another tradition we’ve kept through the years. (With many thanks to Ella Sackett who was always out there, year after year, making them.)

It is hard to believe that we are 14 years and 28 emissaries into our “Where Are They Now?” series. And we are not done yet. Noa and Ron were here six years ago. They brought charm, humor, kindness, and a whole lot of love. We still have five more years and ten more emissaries to go. Stay tuned. . .
many Western European Jews migrated to Poland and areas of Eastern Europe. The Jews faced many periods of anti-semitic policies, pogroms, and persecutions in Russia - but also many years of development of Jewish cultural traditions. Ashkenazi Jews make up the largest group of Jews in Russia - but there are also Mountain Jews, Sephardi Jews, Crimean Karaites, Krymchaks, Bukharian Jews, and Georgian Jews.

**The Shiṭṭel**

During the reign of Catherine II in the 18th century, Jews were restricted to the Pale of Settlement which included Belarus, Lithuania, eastern Poland, and Ukraine. In the Pale, Jews lived in small communities called shtetls and traditionally ruled themselves according to halakha. They were limited by the privileges granted them by local rulers. They were not assimilated into the larger eastern European societies but remained a separate ethnic group with a unique set of religious beliefs and practices. Within the Pale, they were required to obtain special permission to immigrate into other parts of Russia. They were given the right of voting in municipal elections, but their vote was limited to one-third of the total number of voters, even if their proportion in many areas was much higher, even a majority. Life in the Pale for many was economically bleak. Most relied on small service or artisan work, but even so, Jewish culture, especially Yiddish, developed in the shtetls and intellectual culture developed in the yeshivas created by the Jewish community.

During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Russian Empire had not only the largest Jewish population in the world but actually the majority of the world’s Jews living within its borders. In 1897, the total Jewish population of Russia was over 5 million. Of this total, 94 percent lived in 25 provinces of the Pale of Settlement. After 1827, Jewish boys were forcibly conscripted to military service at the age of 12 and placed in cantonist schools. They were then required to serve in the imperial Russian army for 25 years after the completion of their studies, often never seeing their families again. Many potential conscripts preferred to run away rather than submit. In order to fulfill quotas, Jewish boys of eight and even younger were frequently taken.

**The Great Migration from Russia**

Beginning in the 1880s, waves of anti-semitic pogroms swept across the that Jews had been involved in the assassination of his father Tsar Alexander II, made Jews easy targets and scapegoats for pogroms and anti-Jewish riots. The situation for Jews became especially desperate after the unsuccessful revolution of 1905.

Between 1880 and 1920, more than 2 million Jews fled Russia mostly to the US and some to Palestine.

**The 1917 Revolution and Civil War**

The chaotic years of World War I, the 1917 Revolution, and the ensuing Russian Civil War led to anti-semitic persecutions. Over 150,000 Jews were killed in the pogroms of 1920-1922, 125,000 in Ukraine, and 25,000 in Belarus. They were perpetrated mostly by anti-communist forces. These Russian Civil War pogroms shocked world Jewry and rallied many Jews to the Red Army and the Soviet regime - with many young Jews becoming the backbone of the Bolsheviks who came to power after the Civil War. The new Bolshevik government initially established policies that helped nurture Jewish culture, setting up Yiddish schools, Yiddish newspapers, settling Jews on farms, and establishing the Jewish Autonomous Oblast settlements in the Russian Far East. These settlements were formed to show that Russian Jews could receive a territory in which to pursue cultural autonomy in a socialist framework. The JAOS’s capital city was in Birobidzhan, with Yiddish as its official language. In the 1920s, Yiddish writers like Sholem Aleichem and Mendele Mocher Seforim were celebrated as Soviet Jewish heroes.

The story by Sholem Aleichem - “Tevye the Milkman” - later adapted into the musical “Fiddler on the Roof”, offers a good explanation of the situation of the Jews in Russia at the turn of the century and the beginnings of the Russian Revolution: one daughter moves to Palestine, another goes with the rest of the family to America, and a third marries the revolutionary and remains in Russia. Only a small part of Jewish immigrants at the turn of the century went to Palestine. America was the place of Dreams, and many families yearned to go there.

**The Young Bolshevik Revolutionaries**

The young Jews who remained in Russia and became actively involved in the Revolution saw their future after the revolution as a safe harbor without anti-semitism and pogroms. Their hopes were understandable, for life in Russia under Tsarism was unbearable. For these young revolutionaries, the hope for a better future became in a way a religion for them that replaced Judaism. After the Revolution, they could leave the poverty of the shtetls. Forty percent of the population in the Pale left for the newly industrialized cities where the emphasis was on education. The Jews became one of the most educated population groups in the world. Out of all ethnicities in Russia, only Jews were 100 percent literate and skilled in learning because of their traditional Jewish values of education.

But the short-lived illusions about a better future for Jews quickly evaporated with Stalin’s reign and as World War II approached. Jews were victims of Stalin’s deadly purges and many Jewish leaders were arrested and executed.

**World War II and the Holocaust**

By 1941, the Soviet Union was home to almost 5 million Jews. The majority lived in rural western Belarus and Ukraine. These were the populations that suffered greatly due to the German occupation and the Holocaust. During World War II, more than 500,000 Jewish soldiers served in the Red Army and about 200,000 were killed in battle. Approximately 3 million Soviet Jews died in the Holocaust, in warfare, in Nazi-occupied territories, and in extermination camps.

**The Reign of Stalin**

After World War II, Stalin’s campaign against “rootless cosmopolitans” and anti-Zionism led to mass arrests of prominent Jewish intellectuals and suppression of Jewish culture. On August 12, 1952, in the event known as the “Night of the Murdered Poets”, thirteen of the most prominent Yiddish writers, poets, actors, and other intellectuals were executed on the orders of Stalin. Stalin died before his next wave of arrests and executions could be launched which were to include the forceful resettlement of Jews to the farthest reaches of the Soviet Union - Siberia.

**The Fight for Soviet Jewry**

The fate of Soviet Jews began to emerge as a major human rights issue in the West. Life for the Jews remained bleak as the Communist
By Rhoda Smolow and Frieda Rosenberg

“Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.”

Hadassah policy statements have repeatedly reaffirmed support for the ERA. “The status of women in this nation has long been of major concern to Hadassah, and we believe that this Amendment is essential to strengthen the position of women,” it said succinctly in our 1980 statement, urging members in states that hadn’t yet ratified the amendment to take action.

The struggle to have the 24 simple words of the ERA enshrined in the Constitution has been anything but simple. It wasn’t until 1972 that the ERA passed the House and the Senate, finally moving along to the states for ratification. To become an Amendment, 38 states must ratify. And last year that finally happened — the same year we celebrated a century of voting rights for women. In January 2020, Virginia became the 38th state to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment.

Yet the deadline for ratification — originally 1979, then extended by Congress to 1982 — had long since passed. The attorneys general from the states that ratified after that deadline filed a lawsuit to push recognition of its ratification, and then-Attorney General William Barr argued that the deadline for ratification had been missed. Lawyers filed cases challenging the constitutionality of a ratification deadline. Again, Congress revisited the deadline for ratification. The House voted to move forward. The Senate did not vote. That was last year.

Where We Stand Now

ERA supporters from both parties have pushed on, convinced that as long as women face a meaningful pay gap and a staggering rate of domestic violence, the need for the ERA remains. And in case it wasn’t clear enough, COVID-19 has made it even clearer — with women facing the disproportionate brunt of its economic impact, particularly women of color.

Eileen Filler-Corn is the Virginia House speaker, who announced the Virginia vote with this unifying message: “We stand today on the shoulders of the thousands of women — and men — who have fought for the last 97 years to secure the Equal Rights Amendment’s ratification,” she said last January. “By the action we have taken today, our daughters and their daughters after them will have equal protection under the law. While putting gender equality in the United States Constitution does not right the injustices of history in the Commonwealth or our nation, nor does it cure all forms of discrimination, we have sent a signal to America today of a shared commitment to a more just and equal future.”

A life member of Hadassah who has attended and spoken at many Hadassah events, Filler-Corn has broken many barriers of her own — as the first woman to be speaker in the Virginia House and the first Jewish speaker.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) — with whom Hadassah worked closely on the Never Again Education Act — has pushed forward the ERA, for decades alongside now-Senator Cynthia Lummis (R-WY), to garner support from both parties. By the 1940s, the Democrat and Republican parties had added the ERA to their political platforms — with the GOP lending its support first in 1940 (though the GOP removed the ERA from its party platform 40 years later).

This January, Maloney shared a powerful piece in Ms. Magazine in support for the ERA, stressing that “the Biden Justice Department can simply withdraw Barr’s opinion and direct certification of the ERA as the 28th amendment to the Constitution, at last guaranteeing equal rights to women.”

A Moment Ripe for History

Now what? The new presidential administration has clearly stated its support for the Equal Rights Amendment. And Article V of the Constitution gives Congress the power to set and change deadlines for the ratification of constitutional amendments.

To help secure the amendment’s place in the Constitution once and for all, a bipartisan joint resolution to eliminate the deadline was introduced in the House and the Senate in late January 2021. Introduced by Sen. Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) in the Senate and Rep. Jackie Speier (D-CA) and Rep. Tom Reed (R-NY) in the House, it became the first bipartisan legislation introduced into the 117th Congress, almost exactly a year after Virginia’s vote to ratify, which passed with a solid majority (59 to 41).

Far beyond the walls of Congress and the pages of Ms., the ERA has found its place in the cultural spotlight, from “What the Constitution Means to Me” and “Mrs. America.”

Yet with our voices and perseverance, together we can help make sure that the Equal Rights Amendment finds its rightful place in 2021: as the 28th Amendment to the United States Constitution.

We know that change can take time. After all, the most recent Constitutional Amendment — the 27th — took a 202-year journey from being proposed to being ratified. While challenges remain, we have high hopes in 2021 for the ERA. And we’re encouraging our members and friends to help secure the amendment’s place in the Constitution once and for all! If all goes well, generations to come can learn all about this hard-fought win at the National Women’s History Museum on the Washington Mall.

Rhoda Smolow is the national president of Hadassah.
Frieda Rosenberg is the coordinator of Hadassah’s Education and Advocacy Division.

Join us – We look forward to meeting you!
Antisemitic. Antisemitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms, and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of antisemitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, considering the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media, economy, government, or other societal institutions.
- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g., gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic antisemitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

JEWRY CONT. FROM PG 11 leadership closed down Jewish organizations and declared Zionism an ideological enemy. Synagogues were often placed under police surveillance. Soviet Jews suffered hardships, often not being allowed to enlist in universities, work in certain professions or participate in government. “Allowed” professions included teaching and engineering. In 1972, the USSR imposed a “diploma tax” on would-be emigrants who received higher education in the USSR. The tax was designed to combat the brain drain caused by the growing emigration of Soviet Jews. After international protests, the tax was revoked - but limitations on emigration continued. Those seeking to leave - but who were denied became known as “Refuseniks”. Throughout the ’60s, ’70s, and ’80s, Solidarity rallies in support of Soviet Jewry were organized in American cities. In 1965, Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach debuted his song, “Am Yisrael Chai” at a New York City demonstration and it became a rallying cry for the Soviet Jewry movement. In 1977, Natan Sharansky, a young Jewish activist, and participant in the human rights movement was arrested on charges of treason and became a symbol of the “Refuseniks”. Upon his early release from prison in 1986, he arrived in Israel.

In the late 1980s, the liberal government of Mikhail Gorbachev allowed emigration and the Soviet Union itself collapsed in 1991. As a result, mass emigration of Jews took place. Since the 1970s, over 1.1 million Russian Jews have immigrated to Israel and over 100,000 to the US and Canada.

Jews Today in Russia and former Soviet Republics

The Jewish population in Russia and former Soviet republics today is shrinking due to small family sizes and high rates of assimilation and intermarriage. The majority live in the Moscow area with another 20 percent in the Saint Petersburg area - with a total population of 1 million. In the Autonomous Oblast of the Russian Far East, the population is about 4,000. Most Russian Jews are secular and identify themselves as Jews via ethnicity rather than religion - but there are Jewish movements that are active and most Russian Jews have relatives who live in Israel.

Soviet Refugees Arrive in Eastern CT

As part of the “Passage to Freedom” Campaign in Connecticut, under the leadership of former Federation Executive Director Jerry Fischer, Soviet refugees Helen Elperina and family members were welcomed to our community in December 1989. Jerry Fischer has called his work in helping to bring Soviet refugees here “the most significant accomplishment” of his long career at the Federation. Before Helen and her family arrived, there was a core of families already here to welcome them. Hundreds of refugees arrived, with each family warmly integrated into the community with the help of religious and civic organizations. He recalls the Pais family who became the caretakers of Beth El - Boris the janitor and Sophie the cook. "They transformed our Shabbat Kiddush luncheons into a weekly feast. Needless to say, our Shabbat morning attendance shot up greatly once word got out.” When Fischer organized a mission to Israel that included Elperina and Michael Rabinovich, he was amazed as they met, by chance, people from their hometown Minsk. "The ties our new citizens have to Israel are very strong and very meaningful. It is beautiful to see them, their children, and now their grandchildren thrive in their new home.”

Stay tuned for more news about Jews in the Diaspora and our April 11 program: Seeking Refuge: Shanghai & Beyond. Contact Karen Bloustine at bloustinek@gmail.com for more information and to sign up for the Zoom program.
Claudia Shapiro

Waterford - Claudia Moynihan Shapiro, 92 years of age, of Waterford, died on March 11, 2021 at Bridebrook Health & Rehabilitation Center. Claudia was born November 4, 1928 in Bridgton, Maine, the daughter of Hazel Hartford and Claude Moynihan.

She graduated from Bridgton High School and completed courses at Connecticut College. Claudia was employed as an Administrative Assistant for many years; her last ten at Connecticut College for former President Claire Gaudiani, retiring in 1998. While at Connecticut College, she won first prize in a contest sponsored by the Center for International Studies and the Liberal Arts with her essay, “Democracy is a Discussion.” As she often stated, ‘working at Conn College has been a great highlight in my life. Where else could I have worked and had the opportunity to meet and shake hands with Professors Elie Wiesel and Cornel West among many others?’

She was a devout convert to Judaism yet remained proud of her Irish/English heritage. Claudia was a descendant of Charles Dickens.

Claudia and Lester Shapiro were married on December 18, 1960 in Manchester, New Hampshire, by the late Rabbi Samuel Umen of Temple Adath Yeshurun.

She was a long-time member of Temple Emanu-El, serving on its Board of Trustees, teaching Sunday School, and was a member of Sisterhood. She was a 14-year National/International News Editor for the Jewish Leader under former Managing Editor Vicky Shulman.

Claudia loved children and was a literary tutor at Harbor School. In 1999, Claudia was presented an award by then Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell for being an outstanding volunteer at the Drop-In Learning Center. She was a spokesperson for Seeds for Peace, a human rights advocate, and an outspoken supporter for social justice.

In 2007, Claudia was presented the Connecticut Lego Award by Governor M. Jodi Rell for being an outstanding volunteer at the Drop-In Learning Center. She was a spokesperson for Seeds for Peace, a human rights advocate, and an outspoken supporter for social justice.

Claudia was employed as a spokesperson for Seeds for Peace, a human rights advocate, and an outspoken supporter for social justice. Her love of life and her support of democratic values was evident in her writing and teaching.

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Claudia was a glowing light to all who knew her. She will be deeply missed by her family and friends. A graveside service will be held Thursday, March 11, 2021 at Brothers of Joseph Cemetery in Preston at 12:00.

Marian S. Silverstein

Mystic - Marian Stepner Silverstein, 93, passed away after a valiant struggle with multiple health issues on March 9, 2021.

Marian was born March 15, 1927 in Hudson New York, the daughter of Fannie and Meyer Stepner. At the young age of twenty-one she took over the family business and forged it into the best wine store in Southeastern Connecticut-Towne Liquor Store. She was an innovative and formidable business woman with a vision that kept her ahead of the curve in her industry. She delighted in telling jokes - sometimes unexpectedly and sometimes a bit risque. She loved a good party and had a zest for life that lasted for 93 years. The glass was always half full. She was highly respected by the Norwich business community and in the Connecticut Liquor Industry. She was also an active member of Brothers of Joseph Synagogue.

Marian was a quiet and perceptive observer of the people and organizations in her life.Should a need arise, she generously and quietly provided support. Marian was deeply appreciated by the many organizations and individuals that she supported.

Marian was a devoted and loving wife to her husband, Jerome Silverstein who predeceased her. He was the love of her life. Together they loved travel, theater, fine dining, supporting the Norwich Community and visiting the wine areas of the world and especially France. Marian’s family always came first. Throughout her life she kept in close touch with her brother and sister to make sure they and their children were thriving. Her nieces and nephews, and great nieces and nephews have many special memories of the times they spent with Marian and Jerry in Franklin, CT or on vacation.

Marian leaves behind her loving nieces Betsy Alter Eichholz (Karen Scopino) of Mystic, CT, Rochelle Alter Levine (Zachary) of Charlotte NC, Tova Kantrowitz (Gary) of West Hempstead, NY, and Dodie Rothschild (Brian) of Brooklyn NY; nephews David Alter (Carol) of Vernon CT, Charles Alter (Bonnie), Manhattan, NY, Meyer Stepner (Lisa) of Israel, and Saul Stepner (Rachel) of Teaneck NJ; and sister-in-law Ruth Silver of North Franklin, CT and niece Deborah Larkin. She was predeceased by her brother, Jerome Stepner and sister Henrietta Stepner Alter.

The family is eternally grateful to Marian’s loyal and caring health care worker, Mamadou Diop who carefully, gently and lovingly helped her for many years. Special thanks to the many people at Masonicare in Mystic who assisted her. She was a larger-than-life person and there is an emptiness in all of her family’s hearts.

A graveside service was held Thursday, March 11, 2021 at Brothers of Joseph Cemetery in Preston at 12:00.

Due to Covid-19 there was no Shiva.

The Church and Allen Funeral Home, 136 Sachem St. assisted with arrangements. Please visit www.churchandallen.com to leave a message of condolence for the family.

Donations in Marian’s memory can be made to The Jerome and Marian Silverstein fund at Goodspeed Theater in East Haddam, CT.
God-Talk and the Passover Seder

Two years ago I wrote about my friend Valeria’s “Catholic Tsuris” [I have used pseudonyms for all names in this column.] Despite Valeria’s providing her son Michael with parochial school education, Michael went ahead and found himself a Jewish girlfriend, Lisa. The couple is still together and my friend is now resigned to having Jewish grandchildren. Over the past few months due to Covid-19 accommodations, Valeria has spent a lot of time with Michael and Lisa. To her surprise, Lisa told Valeria that growing up through all her (Reform) Jewish educational frameworks (Sunday school, summer camps, etc.), there was absolutely no talk about God. Talk about ritual and practice, yes; God, no. Valeria was dumbfounded since for her God-talk is a key part of Catholicism. The truth is that since Lisa attended and still attends Passover Seders, she was exposed to much discourse about God — at least in print. The Haggadah is replete with God talk. Indeed, Moses is completely absent from the Haggadah’s narrative in order to concentrate our attention solely upon God’s role in the Exodus. For Lisa this powerful theological message got lost amidst the ritual meal with its four cups of wine, matzo, maror, and haroset.

With so much going on at the Seder, it is perhaps understandable how God could get overlooked, and yet what about the entire course of Lisa’s Jewish education? Apparently the strategy that guided Lisa’s teachers was as follows: with a limited amount of time for Jewish education, it’s best to emphasize what is unique in Judaism (i.e., Jewish ritual and tradition). If this strategy was designed to increase intra-Jewish marriage, my hunch is that Lisa was not the only one for whom it was misplaced. At any rate, it’s hard to square such a strategy with the Haggadah’s bold God-talk; for example take the Haggadah’s dialoguing with Exodus 12.12: “And I will pass through the land of Egypt; I and not an angel. ‘And I will smite every firstborn in the land of Egypt;’ I and not a seraph. ‘And I will carry out judgements against all the gods of Egypt’; I and not a messenger. ‘I am the Lord’; it is I and no other.”

This year, during your Seder, I encourage you to expand your God-talk. Questions are especially encouraged on this night (indeed one explanation for certain portions of the Seder, such as the hand-washing before eating the Karpas vegetable, is that they are designed to stimulate the Seder night in particular.

Postscript/Passover Gift: Because Israel is a majority-Jewish culture, it regularly happens that artists find inspiration in Judaism. In a brilliant move, 28-year-old singer/songwriter Adi Avrahami cuts the first syllable from the classic Haggadah song/text “Ve-hee she’amda” (and it has stood) to create a catchy and women-empowering song called “Hee She’amda” (she has stood), ending with the words, “and in every generation she will stand in the light”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXyqdcpYgaA

Passover-friendly brownies are coconut bliss

By Nina Friend, Food & Wine

Although brownies aren’t typically included in the canon of classically Jewish food, for Jake Cohen, they’re integral to his Jewish identity. Cohen is a New York-based food writer and a serious entertainer; friendly dessert. pre-pandemic, he hosted communal Shabbat dinners for 100 people at a time. For a crowd-pleasing dinner, he’d serve sheet pan brownies—but found dinner guests were divided on them. “They fell into either Team Cakey or Team Fudgy,” Cohen says. “I wanted to create a brownie that was going to please everyone.”

And that’s exactly what Jake Cohen did in his new cookbook, Jew-ish: Reinvented Recipes from a Modern Mensch. Using coconut flour instead of wheat flour, Cohen created a brownie with a consistency that’s simultaneously tender and dense, while also keeping the brownies gluten-free and kosher for Passover.

Then, in an homage to the canned Manischewitz macaroons he grew up eating at his own family’s Passover Seder; Cohen tops the coconut-flour brownies with a layer of well-salted coconut macaroon to yield an eye-catching hybrid dessert that’s the best of all worlds: chewy, crunchy, and not too sweet.

**Coconut Macaroon Brownies**

*Active: 20 mins / Total: 3 hrs 50 mins / Yield: 2 dozen*

**Ingredients**

**Brownie Layer**

- 8 ounces dark chocolate bar (70% cacao), coarsely chopped
- 1 cup unsalted butter or coconut oil (8 ounces)
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ¼ cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon instant espresso granules
- 1 cup coconut flour (about 4 ounces)
- 1 cup milk chocolate chips

**Macaroon Layer**

- 4 large egg whites
- ⅔ cup granulated sugar
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 4 cups unsweetened finely shredded coconut (12 ounces)

**Directions**

**Make the brownie layer**

*Step 1*

Line a 13- x 9-inch baking pan with parchment paper, leaving overhang on all sides. Set a medium metal bowl over a small saucepan of simmering water. Place dark chocolate and butter in bowl, and cook, stirring occasionally, until melted and smooth, about 10 minutes. Remove from heat.

*Step 2*

Whisk together eggs, granulated sugar, brown sugar, cocoa, vanilla, salt, and espresso granules in a large bowl until smooth. Whisk in warm chocolate mixture until smooth. Fold in coconut flour until just combined, and fold in chocolate chips. Transfer batter to prepared pan; spread in an even layer. Refrigerate 1 hour.

**Make the macaroon layer**

*Step 3*

Preheat oven to 375°F. Beat egg whites with a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment on medium speed until frothy, about 1 minute. With mixer running on medium speed, slowly add granulated sugar, vanilla, and salt. Beat, gradually increasing speed to high, until stiff peaks form, about 2 minutes. Add coconut; beat on low speed until just combined, about 30 seconds. Spread coconut mixture in an even layer over brownie batter.

*Step 4*

Bake in preheated oven until brownies are just set and top is golden, about 30 minutes. Let cool completely on a wire rack. Remove from pan; cut into 24 brownies and serve.

TEDDY WEINBERGER

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