FALL 2020

B'NAI B'RITH CONNECT

NEWSLETTER

The New Norm

Greetings from Scott Knapp
B'nai B'rith Senior Vice President & Connect Chair

2020 and the COVID-19 pandemic have revolutionized the world: the way we think, the way we communicate, the way we work, the way we educate, the way we spread tolerance and the way we all look at the fragility of life. We have adjusted so much of what was our norm. And with all of that, B'nai B'rith is taking advantage of being nimble, embracing technology and using our next generation of leaders to rally our hopes and activity.

Over the past quarter, we held virtual Happy Hours to check in with each other, hear how others were coping, and brainstorm. We have held multiple virtual discussions both in the United States and abroad. The use of the internet has allowed us to connect throughout the world in unprecedented ways.

On one of our most highly viewed webinars, I had the pleasure of moderating

and hosting the U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Elan S. Carr and B'nai B'rith CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin. Topics included the rise of anti-Semitism during the coronavirus and how young professionals can help fight it.

We followed that with a panel discussion examining anti-Semitism and the challenges facing Jewish students at colleges and universities across the globe. We featured perspectives from former students, activists and law experts from the U.S., Europe, and Latin America. The panel addressed the prevalence of BDS, modern manifestations of anti-Semitism and constraints on Jewish life. We discussed our newest initiative "None Shall Be Afraid" and encouraged one another to sign our pledge against anti-Semitism and hate in all its forms, and also to spread this initiative through our own networks . The program was very well received by people watching all over the world. It was hosted by New York Connect Chair Laura Hemlock and Associate Director of Development & Special Projects, Rebecca Rose.

A third panel discussion was held on August 26. We hosted a timely discussion on Race and Identity in the Jewish Community featuring Stacey Aviva Flint, executive director of Congregation Bonei Shalom and Rabbi Isiah Rothstein, Rabbinic scholar and Public Affairs advisor at JFNA, hosted by B'nai B'rith Director of Legislative Affairs, Eric Fusfield.

Our next program will be on September 15, when we will have an interactive discussion on mental health, well-being and dating
during the pandemic featuring Zach Schleien. DC Connect Chair Trey Meehan will host the discussion.

Wishing our readers a safe and healthy Shana Tovah,

Scott Knapp
Senior Vice President & B'nai B'rith Connect Chair

Elan S. Carr, United States Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism spoke about the rising tide of anti-Semitism during the coronavirus pandemic.

Special Briefing

On May 21, B'nai B'rith Connect was honored to host a virtual discussion with U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Elan S. Carr and B'nai B'rith CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin. The program was hosted by B'nai B'rith Senior Vice-President and Connect Chair, Scott Knapp.

Topics included the rise of anti-Semitism around the globe during the coronavirus pandemic and how young professionals can help combat it. Special Envoy Carr briefed the group on his work directing U.S. policies and projects aimed at countering anti-Semitism throughout the world.

You have to educate people on this and make sure they recognize that this is part of a historic and continually irrational pattern...really the only thing new in this is the coronavirus itself,

Everything else is the same old recycled garbage, the same old Jew hatred with the same tactics....

- U.S. Special Envoy, Elan S. Carr

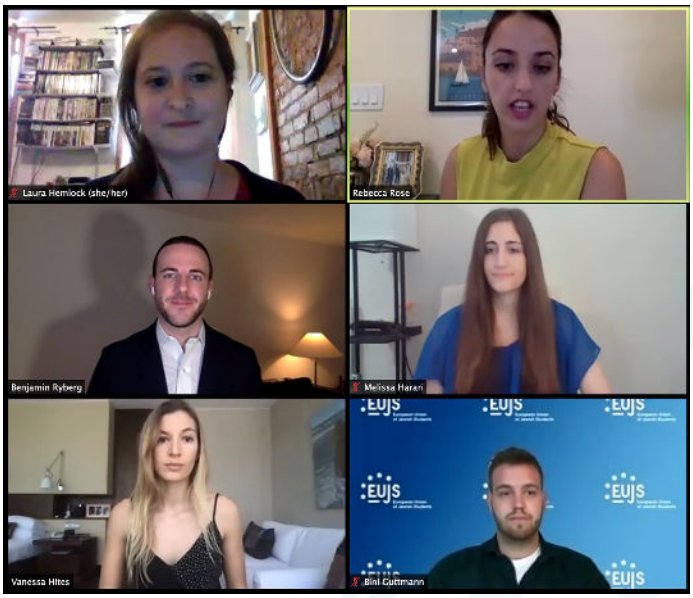
Anti-Semitism on College Campus: A Global Perspective

On August 10, B'nai B'rith Connect hosted a webinar about the anti-Semitism plaguing Jewish college and university students across the globe. Featuring perspectives from former students, activists and law experts from the U.S., Europe, and Latin America, the panel addressed the prevalence of BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement), modern manifestations of anti-Semitism and constraints on Jewish life.

The program was well received by viewers worldwide. Associate Director of Development and Special Projects Rebecca Rose and New York Connect Chair Laura Hemlock hosted the event.

BBI Connect allows me to engage in meaningful events and conversations centered around issues that are important to me and my peers. From anti-Semitism to anti-racism, Connect gives us a platform to be heard and make a difference in the Jewish community both locally and globally.

- New York Connect Chair, Laura Hemlock



Race & Identity in the Jewish Community

On August 26, B'nai B'rith Connect and B'nai B'rith International hosted a crucial discussion about race and identity in the Jewish community with two important voices: Stacey Aviva Flint, executive director of Congregation Bonai Shalom and Rabbi Isaiah J. Rothstein, public affairs adviser for the Jewish Federations of North America. The discussion was moderated by Eric Fusfield, B'nai B'rith International's legislative affairs director.

B'nai B'rith Connect leaders were proud to see this thoughtful, engaging program assembled and are planning to keep this conversation moving.

We have to remember who we are. When we 'other – ise' or even make invisible, Jews of color, we're forgetting who we are as a Jewish community.

We have been historically and purposefully, I believe, multi-cultural and so the presence of Jews of color in a Jewish synagogue or institution should not be a surprise.

A Jewish child should not gasp at a black or brown classmate or synagogue visitor and they should not be directed to the kitchen or assumed to be the help, or assume that all Jews are white.

- Stacey Aviva Flint, Exec. Director of Congregation Bonai Shalom

EARLIER THIS YEAR

NYC Fundraiser for Disaster Relief

Before the coronavirus pandemic upended life around the world, B'nai B'rith Connect-New York held a fundraiser for Disaster Relief on January 29. The event was a great success. It raised funds for our Disaster Relief efforts in support of IsraAID's global humanitarian relief assistance.

The attendees heard from guest speaker Ari Berman, the IsraAID fellow who detailed the vital work her organization carries out in more than 50 countries to aid vulnerable, disaster affected communities.

in March, during the height of the pandemic, B'nai B'rith Connect leaders from Florida, Washington DC, New York, Colorado and more got together for a virtual meet-up to check in on one another.

The B'nai B'rith International – Kakehashi Project Mission to Japan was slated for the end of February, but due to rising concerns over COVID-19, in partnership with our Japanese colleagues, the decision was made to reschedule the trip for a later date (TBD).

The trip is a premier cross-cultural exchange hosted by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs that increases understanding of trilateral relations between the United States, Japan and Israel.

UPCOMING!

B'nai B'rith Connect Presents:

Mental Health and Dating in the Age of COVID-19

FILTER OFF

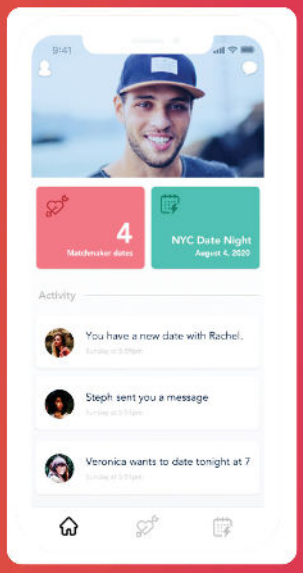
With special guest Zach Schleien, Co-Founder of Filter Off, an online video dating app.

Join us for an interactive discussion about how dating has changed during unprecedented times.

Moderated by B'nai B'rith-Connect DC Chair Trey Meehan

September 15 at 6:00 p.m. ET

BNAI BRITH CONNECT



STUDENTS SPEAK OUT AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM

A CREATIVE VIDEO PRODUCTION CONTEST

SUBMIT CREATIVE VIDEOS THAT EDUCATE ABOUT ANTI-SEMITISM AND THE PREJUDICE, HATRED AND VIOLENCE IT ENGENDERS

CONTEST PRIZES

1ST PLACE: $5,000
2ND PLACE: $2,000
3RD PLACE: $1,000

ENTRY DEADLINE

S OCTOBER 15 NOTE NEW DEADLINE! 20

B'NAI B'RITH INTERNATIONAL

COMBAT ANTI-SEMITISM

Register for the September 15th webinar on Mental Health & Dating here.

Learn more about the Students Speak Out Against Anti-Semitism Contest here.

To view any of our past webinars click here.

For more information or if you have an idea for a virtual Connect program, please reach out to BBIConnect@bnaibrith.org

HOW YOUR DONATIONS HELP VULNERABLE SENIORS DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

SHELTER

We are the largest national Jewish sponsor of non-sectarian subsidized housing for the elderly in the United States. The B'nai B'rith Senior Housing Network consists of 38 buildings in 28 communities, encompassing more than 4,000 low-income apartments and serving more than 5,000 people. During this unprecedented pandemic, secure affordable housing for vulnerable seniors is vital.

QUALITY OF LIFE

We provide seniors with quality, independent living apartments in a secure, caring community environment, without regard to religion, race or national origin, in order to maximize their autonomous and dignified lifestyle. Social isolation is a threat to the well-being of older adults; living in a supportive environment ensures seniors are still engaged in community connections.

ADVOCACY

During this COVID-19 pandemic, B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services staff members are working tirelessly to support seniors at the local and national levels. In addition to assisting the on-site staff and residents, our seniors team is advocating on Capitol Hill and speaking out to ensure that seniors are cared for during this uncertain time. We are monitoring issues of affordable housing, Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid and elder fraud. During the COVID-19 crisis, we have mobilized through community partnerships to help some residents in communities that had food shortages due to coronavirus store closures, ensuring seniors had an ample food supply.

PLEASE DONATE NOW

Help us ensure seniors in our independent living buildings stay safe and healthy during this crisis.

LEARN MORE AT BNAIBRITH.ORG