

# B'NAI B'RITH

M A G A Z I N E

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## Seeing Torah: A Visual Exploration

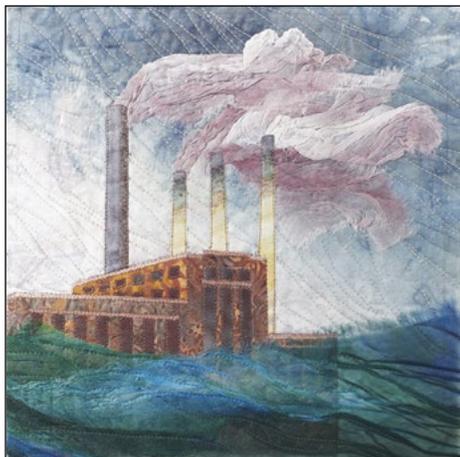
By Andrea Linne with Anita Rabinoff-Goldman

Photos: Hornick Rivlin Studio, Waltham, Massachusetts

**H**ow relevant is the Torah in your life? It's a question that had long been on the mind of artist Anita Rabinoff-Goldman, so she set out to answer it. After retiring in 2017 from a career as a business and nonprofit administrator, she and her husband moved from Albany, New York, to Boston to be close to their children and grandchildren. "Change is always challenging, even though I finally had time to focus on my artwork," Rabinoff-Goldman says. "As part of my transition to my new life, I decided to read the Torah in its entirety and use art to process and interpret the text."

The result is "Seeing Torah," a collection of 54 contemporary quilts — one for each of the Torah portions — that invites viewers to experience the ancient text through a modern lens — visually. To prepare, Rabinoff-Goldman spent a year reading and studying each Torah portion, as well as numerous commentaries that helped deepen her understanding of the text. Choosing a section of the parsha that resonated for her, she then created 11-inch-square quilts — nine of them pictured here — using a variety of fabrics in different patterns, colors and textures. Each quilt illuminates the feminist, political or spiritual lesson she gleaned from the parsha. Rabinoff-Goldman says she saw the Torah through the eyes of a wife, mother and grandmother. "I decided to leave the edges of each quilt unfinished to acknowledge that the study of Torah is never finished," she says. "Everyone brings their own perspectives to the understanding of Torah."

The quilts pictured here are accompanied by the relevant Torah portion, in order as they appear in the first five books of Moses, a summary of the passage and a short commentary.



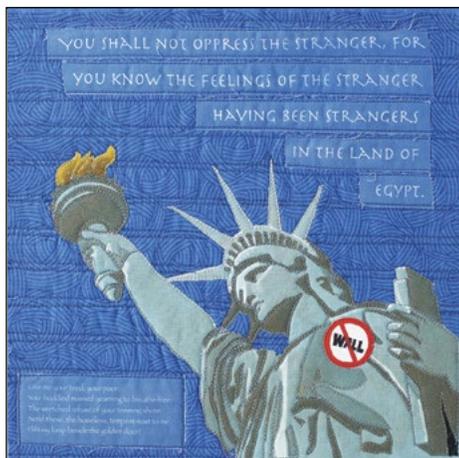
### NOAH

*Now, God saw that great was humankind's evildoing on earth...*

— Genesis 6:5

God decides to destroy almost all the flora and fauna and humans. God instructs Noah to build an ark and to bring onto it his immediate family, two of each animal species and seeds from every plant, so the world can be repopulated after the flood. God promises never again to destroy the world in this way. Noah is given the task of caring for this new world, in the hope that future generations will learn from past mistakes. Have we earned God's faith in us? Or are human-made evils that threaten wildlife, crops and our way of life doing what God promised never to do again? Are we allowing greed to overshadow the science that says climate change causes the current floods ravishing so many countries?

## Seeing Torah: A Visual Exploration



### MISHPATIM

*You shall not oppress the stranger, for you know the feelings of the stranger having been strangers in the land of Egypt.*

— Exodus 23:9

Mishpatim, meaning “laws,” lays out rules for a just society, including those that express concern for the less fortunate and the strangers in our communities. Today, there is an urgent need for empathy with the struggles migrants endure in the United States and in other countries. Beyond that, we must consider the root causes of their suffering and fight against them.



### KEDOSHIM

*When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger.*

— Leviticus 19:9-10

God decrees we should care for the hungry. According to Feeding America, a nonprofit relief agency, one in eight people in the United States struggles with hunger, including roughly 12 million children and 5 million senior citizens. The nonprofit Food Aid Foundation reports that some 795 million people worldwide do not have enough food to lead a healthy, active life. Support for local food banks and international food relief agencies can serve to implement this law.



### EMOR

*The son of the Israelite woman pronounced the Name in blasphemy...*

— Leviticus 24:11

In the parsha emor, meaning “say,” Moses receives more instructions for the priests and instructions for the Israelites regarding the Sabbath and festivals of Passover, Shavuot and Sukkot. The parsha ends with a story of a blasphemer. God created the world with words — “God said, ‘Let there be light.’” (Genesis 1:3) While words pass like the wind, they have the weight and power to hurt or heal, tear down or build up. In this era of alleged “fake news” and cyber-lies, we must be exceptionally careful about the words we use and how we evaluate what we hear.

## Seeing Torah: A Visual Exploration



### B'MIDBAR

*Take a census of the whole Israelite community by the clans of its ancestral houses, listing the names, every male, head by head.*

— Numbers 1:2

B'midbar, “in the wilderness,” is the first parsha in the book of Numbers. God commands Moses to count all the men over the age of 20 who are able to bear arms. Women, children, younger men and men who are unable to do so do not count. If we do not count, what is our worth in the community? We are all created in the image of God, and we all matter. Jewish women today stand on the accomplishments of generations of Jewish women who fought to be included in all aspects of Jewish life and have a voice in our community.

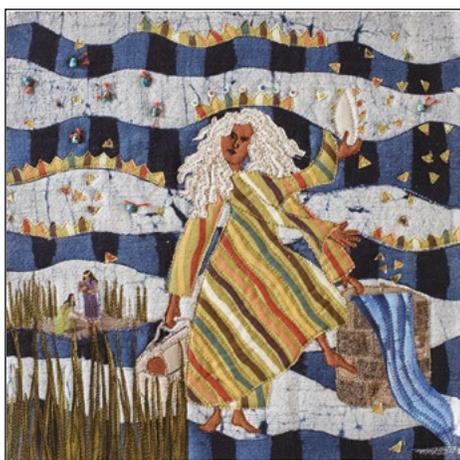


### BEHA'ALOTEKHA

*As the cloud withdrew from the Tent, there was Miriam stricken with the snow-white scales! When Aaron turned toward Miriam, he saw that she was stricken with scales. And Aaron said to Moses, “Oh my lord, account not to us the sin which we committed in our folly. Let her not be as one dead, who emerges from his mother’s women with half his flesh eaten away.” So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, “O God, pray heal her!”*

— Numbers 12:10-13

At the beginning of this chapter, Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses, their brother. God chastises Miriam and Aaron for complaining and reminds them that Moses holds a unique position because of his ability to speak directly to God. (Miriam had ensured Moses’ survival by placing him in a basket in the Nile, saving him from the Pharaoh’s decree to kill every Hebrew son.) When God departs, Miriam is left with tza’ra’at, white scaly lesions. Moses cries out and begs God to return her to health. Nowadays, we recite the Mi Sheberach, the traditional prayer for physical and spiritual healing.



### HUKKAT

*The Israelites arrived in a body at the wilderness of Zin on the first new moon, and the people stayed at Kadesh. Miriam died there and was buried there.*

— Numbers 20:1

This piece is a visual eulogy to Miriam, reflecting some of the events in her life that impacted the lives of Moses and the Israelites. The fate of Miriam and her brothers Moses and Aaron is sealed in this portion, placing her on a par with them. But while Moses and Aaron each have successors, Joshua and Eleazar, respectively, no one is designated to replace Miriam. Jewish women can represent Miriam by standing strong against hatred and fear, nourishing others, speaking truth to power and, when the time is right, dancing and celebrating.

## Seeing Torah: A Visual Exploration



### MAS'EI

*YHVH spoke further to Moses: Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you cross the Jordan into the land of Canaan, you shall provide yourselves with places to serve you as cities of refuge to which a manslayer who has killed a person unintentionally may flee. The cities shall serve you as a refuge from the avenger, so that the manslayer may not die unless he has stood trial before the assembly.*

— Numbers 35:9-12

Today, spiritual places of refuge can exist, sometimes as cocoons of our own making. They can be spaces for acceptance or for teshuva (repentance). They can be places to learn forgiveness or to heal oneself. A “city of refuge” may protect a person from the outside world, but, perhaps, it can also become its own type of prison.



### EKEV

*Cut away, therefore, the thickening about your hearts and stiffen your necks no more.*

— Deuteronomy 10:16

*He subjected you to the hardship of hunger and then gave you manna to eat, which neither you nor your fathers had ever known, in order to teach you that man does not live on bread alone, but that man may live on anything that YHVH decrees.*

— Deuteronomy 8:3

Both passages speak about opening up to a spiritual path. On the left, “Cut away... the thickening about your hearts” encourages us to peel away the layers that keep us from engaging fully with our spiritual selves. On the right, we are reminded that by following God’s laws and ordinances, we have a path to spiritual sustenance.

To see more of Rabinoff-Goldman’s artwork, please visit [anitarabinoff-goldman.com](http://anitarabinoff-goldman.com). 

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## Editor's Note

Israel, a small country, has produced some big winners in the wide world of sports. In this issue, we feature two of them. There is Alon Day, a NASCAR driver who has won many racing competitions, mainly in Europe, but is attempting to do the same in the United States, where he proudly displays his country's flag when he competes. "Speedy Beatie" Deutsch is also making a name for herself in her adopted country of Israel and beyond, as she competes and wins as a marathon runner. She is the country's first ultra-Orthodox marathon runner, notable also for her traditional, modest dress that encumbers her but does not stop her from winning.

Time traveling from today's sports competitions, we look back at Ladino, sometimes known as Judeo Spanish, the language that Jews who were expelled from the Iberian Peninsula during the Inquisition took with them to the Sephardic Diaspora in countries such as Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey and the Balkans. To preserve and perpetuate the language, written in Hebrew script and mixing Spanish with Hebrew and the vernacular of their adopted countries, Ladino speakers persevered through the centuries. Today, we report, there is a concerted effort to preserve and perpetuate what appeared to be a dying tongue, through music and more.

For regular (and irregular) synagogue-goers, we offer a visual approach to some of the 54 Torah portions read on Shabbat. Artist Anita Rabinoff-Goldman has produced quilts for each of the readings, and we present nine of them, along with commentaries on their continuing relevance.

In addition to these features, B'nai B'rith President Charles O. Kaufman reflects on the importance of mitzvot and reports on a recent conference in Lisbon, Portugal. B'nai B'rith CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin writes about a new focus within the U.S. government on combating the scourge of anti-Semitism. Mark Olshan, associate executive vice president and director of the Center for Senior Services, looks back on his long career devoted to developing the organization's senior housing and advocacy programs.

Finally, we are proud to announce that B'nai B'rith Magazine has received two coveted Rockower Awards, presented in June by the American Jewish Press Association. Congratulations to writers Rita Rubin and Michelle Chabin for their articles on the benefits and challenges of prenatal genetic testing and on Israel's unusual approach to burying the dead when cemeteries are filled to capacity, respectively. 🇮🇱

— Eugene L. Meyer

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## From the Vault

# B'nai B'rith's Ambassador Abram I. Elkus and his Legacy

By Cheryl Kempler

**A**bram I. Elkus (1867-1947) was an eminent attorney and B'nai B'rith member whose investigation into Manhattan's 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, killing hundreds trapped behind locked doors, yielded new safeguards for American workers.

In July 1916, President Woodrow Wilson named Elkus U.S. ambassador to the Ottoman Empire. Posted to the embassy at Constantinople (now Istanbul, Turkey) he worked with B'nai B'rith and other Jewish organizations to feed, shelter and medically treat thousands of refugees in the city. Recalled in early April 1917, just prior to America's entry into World War I, Elkus, who had contracted typhus in one of the soup kitchens he helped to open, could not travel for months. Henry Morgenthau (1856-1946), Elkus' predecessor as Ottoman ambassador, also belonged to B'nai B'rith.

In January 1917, B'nai B'rith's Constantinople Lodge instituted the Jane Elkus Prize, endowed by the ambassador in memory of his youngest daughter one year after her death. Awarded through 1932, the 50 lira purse (approximately \$1,200 today) was first given to poor girls enrolled in one of several private Jewish academies there. But after the 1918 Armistice, the jury honored women — nurses, academics and philanthropists — who helped people during the war. Speeches by leaders of both the men's and women's lodges each year detailed extraordinary accomplishments of winners who put themselves at risk or made sacrifices caring for others; some were educators dedicated to the underprivileged.



An article about the 1927 Elkus Prize winners Héléne Weismann and Victoria Semach that appeared in "Hamenora," B'nai B'rith's French-language periodical published by the Middle Eastern district.

The 1921 Elkus recipient, teacher Rachel Naar, founded several orphanages in Turkey, rescuing many homeless children. In 1927, her sisters, retired school deans Héléne Weismann and Victoria Semach, were selected. In the 1870s, Weismann had been one of the first instructors of the Alliance Israélite Universelle, promoting human rights and modern, secular schools for Jews in the Middle East. Semach began her

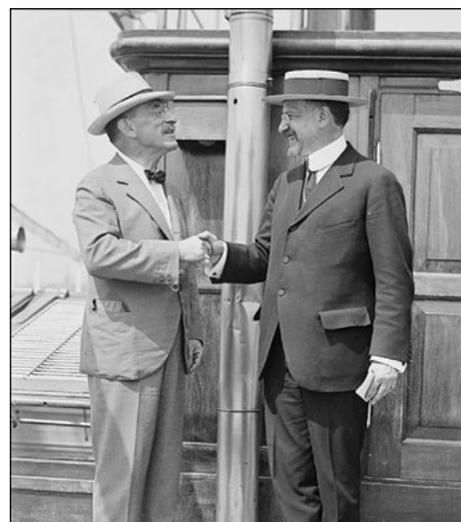


Photo: Prints and Drawings Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C

American diplomats and B'nai B'rith brothers Abram Elkus (right) and Henry Morgenthau in 1916.

30-year career living and working in one-room schoolhouses in Bulgaria, eventually joining her sister, who established several girls' academies near Constantinople. Both experienced the often-violent backlash from religious leaders who objected to the teaching of math and science. The sisters donated their prize money to a senior residence and a Jewish hospital.

In 1928, Rachel Bejarano, assistant to her father, Turkey's Chief Rabbi, was chosen. A nurse during the war, she remained active in philanthropic causes. With the prize money, she established a "vacation home" facility where poor children received adequate nourishment and medical care. Enlarged during the 1930s, it remained open until at least 1945. 📍



## From the President

# Performing Mitzvot, Tracing Roots in Portugal

*By Charles O. Kaufman  
President, B'nai B'rith International*

A prospective donor recently asked, “Could you produce a list of the many projects B'nai B'rith performs all over the world?”

I responded that I'd be glad to do this. “Do you have 176 years?”

Chances are great that you know someone who performs mitzvot every single day. Perhaps you are that person. Most recently, an army of B'nai B'rith volunteers completed the annual cemetery cleanup in the old silver mining town of Leadville, Colorado.

B'nai B'rith groups in cities with our non-sectarian senior housing facilities perform an endless number of tasks to help people live fulfilling and dignified lives every single day.

Other groups drive efforts to bring smiles to children's faces in hospitals; they deliver food and other goods to shelters and do so much more. Less visible and obvious are those who organize programs to fight anti-Semitism. We put volunteer dollars to work in so many ways and produce constructive, often challenging efforts with little fanfare.

In private gatherings with prime ministers, foreign ministers, ambassadors and a host of experts, B'nai B'rith really does act as the “Global Voice of the Jewish Community.”

Mitzvot always yield positive results. Mitzvot are actual, tangible tasks that do good for people. Some mitzvot do worlds of good and enact justice. They seem to carry a different weight, however, than acts focused on eradicating injustice. Fighting injustice — inequality, hatred of all kinds, anti-Semitism — aspires to overcome a different, perhaps more formidable, if not



The distinctive call of Rabbi Natan Peres's shofar heralds the opening of the conference of the International Council of B'nai B'rith in Lisbon.

insurmountable, human condition.

B'nai B'rith members and supporters are heroes to so many people. Our recent fundraising dinner honorees exemplified these characteristics. In accepting our recognition, they acknowledged B'nai B'rith's values for service and working for the good of humanity. These humble industry leaders generally steer clear of such public recognition. But when invited to receive it from B'nai B'rith, they were proud to share a bit of themselves with their communities to our benefit. They knew funds raised would be used well.

During our recent International Council conference in Lisbon, we met and heard



Photo credit: www.sousamendes.org.

A portrait of Portuguese diplomat Aristides de Sousa Mendes, whose heroic deeds were honored in Lisbon. Posted to the consulate in Bordeaux, France, in 1940, he defied his government's orders and issued visas allowing thousands of Jews to escape the country.

from people who also perform good deeds in their own communities. In doing so, people prove their generosity. They do what others don't. They don't seek recognition. They give for the honor of giving. They sacrifice.

### Profiles in Courage

In Portugal, we learned of many profiles in courage, beginning with **Aristides de Sousa Mendes**, the Portuguese diplomat who in 1940 rescued thousands of refugees seeking to escape the horrors of Nazi Germany. He issued more than 30,000 visas, including roughly 10,000 to Jews in just a few days. In defying his government, he was stripped of

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his diplomatic status and was actually forbidden to earn a living.

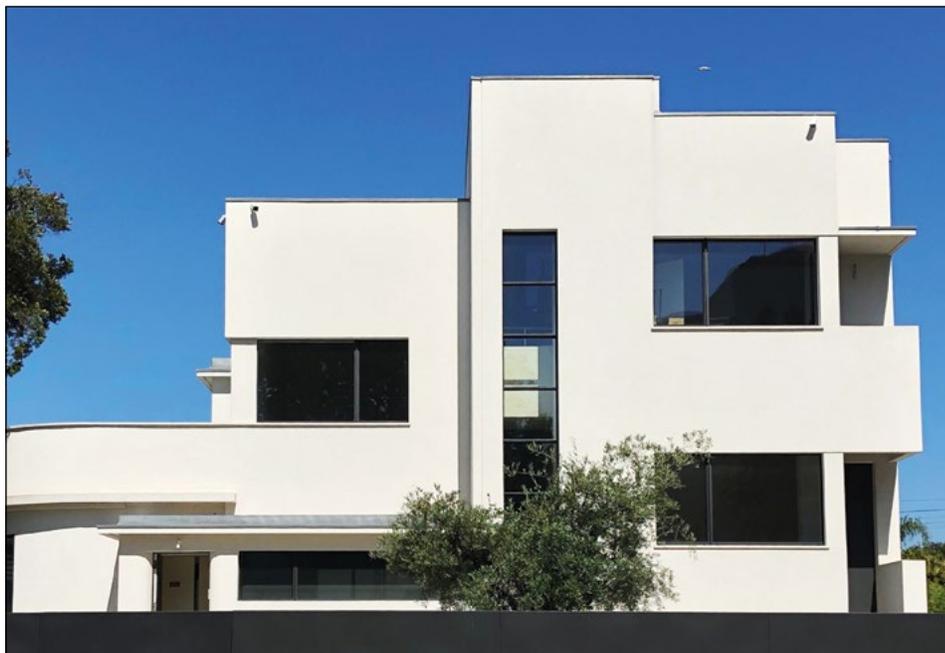
We were able to celebrate his life with leaders of the Sousa Mendes Foundation and even his grandson, who said his grandfather never had second thoughts about performing this mitzvah, "because he knew he was doing the right thing."

We heard from **Catarina Vaz Pinto**, deputy mayor for culture of the Lisbon City Council, who is leading the effort to create the Jewish Museum of Lisbon. She's taken on this project because she understands the importance of the Jewish people in building the Portuguese Empire centuries ago.

Of course, the Jewish population, once 20% of the country, has dwindled, and Portugal has remarkably created a pathway to welcome back descendants of the people it expelled during the Inquisition. Vaz Pinto said public funds for the museum and its leadership are set aside. All that's lacking is the location. With wrangling that could be headed for the courthouse, the opening of the museum may be years away. Yet, her bold commitment to a Jewish museum, given this country's history of anti-Semitism with the Inquisition, makes her a profile of courage.

B'nai B'rith member **Sammy Eppel**, a Venezuelan native now living in Florida, presented a trailer from his upcoming movie documenting the story of Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany aboard the SS St. Louis who were denied entry to Cuba, the United States and Canada. The ship returned to Europe, and many of its passengers perished in the Holocaust. The film includes interviews with our very own CEO Dan Mariaschin and Eric Fusfield, director of legislative affairs. We look forward to showing the full feature at a future B'nai B'rith gathering.

Back to Ms. Vaz Pinto. She was interested to learn of my comments in The Jerusalem Post about the Berlin Jewish Museum



Harmonizing with the traditional architecture of the Old Jewish quarter, a sleek modern building will house the community-run Jewish Museum of Oporto. Visitors and residents who celebrated at its opening heard remarks by B'nai B'rith International President Charles O. Kaufman.



allowing its venue to advance the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement, an effort used to demonize Jews and castigate Israel. Any focus on promoting BDS is hardly appropriate for a Jewish Museum.

My characterization of this exhibit wound up in The Jerusalem Post. "It appears that the

German propaganda machine of the 1930s lives," I said. "I became aware of your anti-Israel mission with your recent 'Welcome to Jerusalem' exhibit, an utter distortion of the capital of the Jewish State. Now with its pro-BDS message . . . , the Jewish Berlin Museum becomes the leading contender to

## From the President

### Performing Mitzvot, Tracing Roots in Portugal

be renamed the Insult to Injury Museum. ... It's sad that this museum so miserably misses the mark time and again in telling the story of the Jewish people. Its work not only serves as an insult to Jews, it's an insult to the intelligence of the German people." A week later, the director resigned. Pledged Vaz Pinto: "That (kind of exhibit) will never happen here" in the Lisbon museum.

It also won't happen in the soon-to-open Porto Jewish Museum, whose new building is directly across from the Kadoorie Mekor Haim Synagogue, the largest on the Iberian Peninsula. In a speech at the inauguration of the museum, I told the more than 150 guests: "This Jewish Museum will punctuate a reawakening of Jewish life in Portugal. It

should serve as a beacon of light to the rest of Europe, a land darkened today by resurgent anti-Semitism. While this magnificent museum cannot erase the horror of what happened in Portugal 500 years ago, it will, with G-d's blessing, revive your soul, as much as your ancestors walked through the valley of the shadow of death."

Also introduced at the Portugal meeting were small touches that added powerfully to the experience. We opened with the blowing of the shofar. During our program with the Israeli ambassador, we involved our Israeli delegates and others in the recitation of the Prayer for the State of Israel and the Prayer for the Israel Defense Forces. This provided an opportunity for our brothers and sisters

from around the world to stand united in support of a secure Jewish State of Israel. Zvi Rotenberg, an energetic B'nai B'rith International Board of Governors member in his 80s from Jerusalem, asked if he could have the honor of reciting the prayer for the State of Israel for the rest of his life.

"Yes," I answered. "And may you live to be 120."

The tradition continues Nov. 2-4 at the B'nai B'rith Leadership Forum in Washington. 

*Do you know a B'nai B'rith supporter who has a wonderful appetite for performing mitzvot? Send their names, where they're from and explain how their good deeds help others to [president@bnaibrith.org](mailto:president@bnaibrith.org).*



## L'SHANAH TOVAH

May every day in the new year be filled with health, happiness, joy, peace and prosperity.

*Charles O. Kaufman*  
Charles O. Kaufman  
President

*Daniel S. Mariaschin*  
Daniel S. Mariaschin  
Chief Executive Officer





From the CEO

## The Accelerating Fight Against the Scourge of Anti-Semitism

By *Daniel S. Mariaschin*  
*B'nai B'rith Chief Executive Officer*

The dramatic increase in anti-Semitism both at home and abroad has no longer been relegated to the inside pages of newspapers, brief mentions online and occasional 9-second clips on television. Fatal shootings at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh and the Chabad synagogue in Poway, California, have tragically brought the threats posed to Jewish communities into the “Breaking News” category.

But if the worldwide outbreak of anti-Jewish hatred is better known, our deeply concerned community wants to know what is being done to fight back. The shootings, physical assaults, bystander taunts and other forms of hate-inspired intimidation seem to be burning out of

In 2016, the 31 countries then comprising the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance adopted the following definition: “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward 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.”

control. It comes from the left, the right and from Islamists who not only seek to delegitimize Israel but who have brought back the dual loyalty charge against those who support the Jewish state. That means us.

After a lengthy period in which the position was vacant, the appointment of Elan Carr — a former Los Angeles County prosecutor — as the State Department’s special envoy to monitor and combat anti-Semitism has already made a difference in how some foreign governments view the spike in anti-Semitism in their own countries. At conferences I’ve attended abroad and at meetings here in Washington, I’ve seen diplomats seek out Carr to discuss the issue and to extend invitations for him to visit their capitals.

In an op-ed I co-wrote in January for FoxNews.com with Mark Levin of the National Coalition in Support of Eurasian Jewry (NCSEJ), we called for the vacancy to be filled. “The significance of an envoy dedicated to fighting anti-Semitism cannot be understated,” we wrote: “It puts the United States on the record as a moral authority and unequivocally tells the world that we will not let it start down a slippery slope of tolerating the intolerable: the acceptance of anti-Semitism.”

The battle against this oldest form of racism continues. The appointment of Carr (whose portfolio does not include anti-Semitism in the U.S.) was followed a few months later by the convening of a “Summit on Combatting Anti-Semitism,” by the U.S. Justice Department. B’nai B’rith participated in the summit, which Attorney General William Barr headlined. In his opening remarks, Barr assessed the threats by saying:

“We must have zero tolerance for violence that is motivated by our fellow citizens whether based on race, sex or creed.



B'nai B'rith International CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin (r) and U.S. State Department Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combatting Anti-Semitism Elan Carr.



Attorney General William Barr delivering remarks at The Justice Department’s Summit on Combatting Anti-Semitism, held in Washington, D.C., in July.

## From the CEO

# The Accelerating Fight Against the Scourge of Anti-Semitism

Samuel D. Brownback, State Department ambassador at large for international religious freedom at the podium during the ceremony honoring the recipients of the first International Religious Freedom Award during the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom on July 17, 2019. Standing behind him are (l-r) Ivanir dos Santos, Brazil; Salpy Eskidjian Weiderud, Cyprus; United States Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo; Pascale and William Warda, Iraq; Mohamed Yosaif Abdalrahan, Sudan.



Anti-Semitism violence is especially pernicious because it targets both Jewish ethnic identity and practice...

"I think of the various forms of anti-Semitism as very much like different kinds of cancer. ... if the immune system weakens, cancer can emerge. Some might be localized, but others can rapidly metastasize and become systematic. Like a physical body, a body politic must have an immune system that resists anti-Semitism and other forms of hatred."

Barr was joined by three other cabinet members at the conference. Topics on the agenda included anti-Semitism on campus, prosecuting hate crimes and one titled "Combating anti-Semitism While Respecting the First Amendment," a uniquely American challenge in a time when the internet and the media, generally, air and publish incendiary language daily, much of

it aimed at Jews and supporters of Israel.

Just a day later, the State Department hosted its second "Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom." More than 100 countries were represented at the gathering by foreign ministers and other diplomats and dozens of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) from around the world. It was largest human rights gathering ever held at the State Department and the largest meeting on religious freedom anywhere. B'nai B'rith was present for this important international conclave, organized by the department's Office of International Religious Freedom, headed by Ambassador Sam Brownback. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo joined Brownback in delivering opening remarks.

The gathering's leadoff speaker — in a session titled "Survivors of Religious Persecution" — was Rabbi Jeffrey Myers

of the Tree of Life Synagogue. Other speakers, including former British Prime Minister Tony Blair, spoke out against anti-Semitism. One breakout session, in a day devoted to NGOs, featured a panel discussion focusing on best practices, which included a dialogue on anti-Semitism.

As at many large international gatherings, some of the most important work was accomplished in the corridors, at side meetings and during an extended lunch period especially designed for informal conversations. I shared a table with an evangelical leader from North Carolina and a religious rights activist from Vietnam.

We've been centrally engaged in the battle against anti-Semitism in Europe, Latin America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. B'nai B'rith has also been very much at the center of efforts, within the European Parliament, to enlist the support

## From the CEO

# The Accelerating Fight Against the Scourge of Anti-Semitism

of that body in addressing this mounting challenge. And our recent efforts to have the Organization of American States (OAS) incorporate the working definition of anti-Semitism adopted by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance succeeded earlier this year when the OAS Secretary General announced his intention to have the group do so. When the OAS held its annual meeting in Colombia, B'nai B'rith was there to press other member states to follow suit.

B'nai B'rith has a record of leading the

battle against anti-Semitism, almost from our very founding in 1843. As early as the 1850s, we wrote to members of Congress concerning blatant discrimination against Jews in Switzerland, as a U.S.-Swiss treaty was being considered.

As the world becomes smaller because of the internet, and as hatred proliferates, anti-Semitism is at its most threatening levels since 1945. To win this battle, or at least to turn the tide, we need political and governmental leaders to join the fight. Emanuel Macron, the French president, has

declared that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism. Canada's Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, has called the BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions) movement the same.

Here in the U.S., the Justice and State Department's conferences have been a major contributor to confronting this most pernicious of hatreds. Hopefully, they will set the standard and cause other countries to follow suit. In the meantime, B'nai B'rith will continue to be on the front lines at home and abroad, working with all those seeking to defeat the threats before us. 



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Podcast Hosted by B'nai B'rith International CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin

## B'nai B'rith Podcast with U.S. Anti-Semitism Envoy Elan Carr



The United States prioritizes fighting global anti-Semitism through the bipartisan, Congressionally-created State Department post of the U.S. Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat anti-Semitism.

On Episode 55 of the B'nai B'rith Podcast, CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin talks with Elan Carr, who ascended to the post in February, about the vital need for this position.

"If a community cannot feel safe; if you can't leave the house and know that you're going to come back in one piece, or send your kids to school and know that they're safe, there is no quality of life. It is intolerable to live in such a place," says Carr. "So what we're looking at is to make sure Jewish assets are protected. In countries, especially where Jews are being attacked on the streets, and there are no shortages of examples of that, protecting Jewish assets and making sure that Jews are safe and protected is number one."



[CLICK HERE](#) - Episode #55: Special Envoy to Monitor and Combat Anti-Semitism Elan Carr

# Ladino: A Language Defying Death, Clinging to Life

By Sandra Gurvis

**T**ony Romano has warm memories of childhood Saturdays with his grandparents, munching on burekas, pastries filled with eggplant or spinach, and listening to them chatter in Ladino — also known as Judeo-Spanish, Judezmo and Djudio — the language spoken in the Sephardic Diaspora after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492. Many settled in the Ottoman Empire that encompassed Turkey, Greece, what is now Bosnia and parts of Northern Africa, as well as in Holland, England and Morocco.

“My grandfather was originally from Turkey, and my grandmother came from the Isle of Rhodes, but met after they immigrated to America in the 1920s,” recalls Romano, 51, who works for a fair housing advocacy organization in his native Atlanta. While they kept many of their traditions and corresponded with family overseas, he says, “they wanted to be American through and through and didn’t share much about their past.”

Because his grandparents spoke Ladino among themselves, Romano had minimal comprehension. What he was left with were letters written in Solitreo (also called Soletreo), a Sephardic cursive form of the Hebrew alphabet that nobody seemed to be able to translate. “I had all these great memories of my grandparents growing up. Yet, a whole part of their and my history was lost to me,” he says. “I wanted to know more about my family and their stories.”

Is Ladino a dying language? Classified as endangered by UNESCO, Ladino nonetheless is spoken, if not with fluency than with some knowledge, by a number of people estimated at between 160,000 and 300,000 worldwide, including 50,000 to 80,000 in Israel. A resurgence in academia, entertainment and particularly among Sephardic Jews and the younger generation belies the rumors of its demise.

Devin Naar had a rudimentary knowledge of Ladino from his grandfather, a Sephardic rabbi in New Brunswick, New Jersey. “Some greetings, prayers and songs incorporated in the Sephardic service and, of course, a few curse words,” says Naar, now a professor of Sephardic studies at University of Washington, in Seattle.

“But what I didn’t realize was that there was a gaping hole in American Jewish consciousness and in scholarship.” Most American Jews related to the Eastern European Ashkenazi traditions of “Yiddish, bagels and lox.” That is not surprising, since, at the start of World War II, there were perhaps a million Ladino speakers, compared to 13 million who spoke Yiddish. During the Holocaust, an estimated 90% of Ladino speakers perished, taking their language and history with

them. “I felt compelled to push back against this injustice.”

Naar, who is also chair of the University of Washington’s Stroum Center’s Sephardic Studies program, received degrees from Washington University in St. Louis and Stanford University and spent a year in Greece as a Fulbright Scholar studying pre-World War II Jewish archives. His dissertation resulted in an award-winning book, “Jewish Salonica: Between the Ottoman Empire and Modern Greece” (Stanford University Press, 2016).

Few if any people under the age of 40 are native Ladino speakers. “Most are over 60, and the most fluent are over 80,” says Naar. “Ladino is a language confronting its own mortality.”

## Ladino’s Glorious Past and Uncertain Future

But it wasn’t always so. Chabad.org estimates that, at one time, 80% of Diaspora Jews were Ladino-speaking. Before the Second World War, the language flourished in Sephardic communities in Greece, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. “Even the non-Jews had to learn Ladino so they could do business with the Jews,” said Rabbi Nissim Elnecavé, of the Sephardic Temple in Forest Hills, New York. These included teachers, shopkeepers and others who served the thriving communities.

The Sephardim used Hebrew for study and prayer and their native tongue, what eventually became known as Ladino, for everyday use. As Jews assimilated into the prevailing culture, “the language took on elements of their environment,” explains Ilan Stavans, Lewis-Sebring Professor of Humanities and Latin American and Latino Culture at Amherst College. This included components of Turkish, Arabic, Greek, French and others. Stavans believes that because Sephardic schools changed their language of instruction to French in the late 19th century, “it was a big blow to Ladino.” Although people still spoke it at home and songs and liturgy survived and even thrived, “unlike Yiddish, there was much less printed matter.”

Another difference was that, “for centuries, Ladino was written in Hebrew characters, using either the special alphabet employed by the medieval commentator Rashi” or cursive Solitreo, writes author Aviya Kushner in [myJewishlearning.com](http://myJewishlearning.com). By the early 20th century though, like most European languages, Ladino was written in the Latin alphabet, but using “phonetic transcription instead of the spelling system of today’s Spanish. Ladino speakers emphasize that they are not writing incorrect Spanish, but rather phonetic Ladino,” says Kushner.

## Ladino: A Language Defying Death, Clinging to Life

That also means people who understand Spanish can comprehend Ladino. But there are regional variations. “It can be like the difference between British and American English,” explains Naar. But Ladino can also be like the Tower of Babel. “In the 1920s, there were an estimated 22 dialects of Ladino spoken in New York City alone,” adds Naar.

### A Tale of Two Professors

But Ladino endures. Bryan Kirschen, assistant professor of Hispanic linguistics at Binghamton University in New York, and Naar, of Seattle, both in their 30s, have done much to raise awareness and visibility. An Ashkenazi Jew, Kirschen discovered Ladino as an undergraduate at Middlebury College. “I’ve always loved languages and initially focused my studies on Hebrew, Spanish and Arabic,” earning a master’s degree in Spanish literature. “The more I studied the language, the more interested I became in helping to preserve it.”

While getting his doctorate at UCLA, he worked with a small group that met weekly to study Ladino. This evolved into uCLA-DINO, a group of students who hold Judeo-Spanish centered workshops, guest lectures and an annual symposium. Kirschen worked on a documentary, “Saved by Language” (2012), about the Sephardic community in Sarajevo.

In 2018, he also helped establish International Ladino Day in New York City, which has one of the biggest Sephardic populations in the United States. Initially suggested five years earlier on the Ladino internet chat room Ladinokomunita, International Ladino Day was endorsed by the late Yitzhak Navon, former president of Israel and chairman of its National Authority for Ladino (NAL), established by the Knesset in 1996 to perpetuate the language and preserve Sephardic culture. The result has been Ladino Days in Jerusalem, Istanbul, Madrid and elsewhere throughout the U.S., including in Seattle, Dallas, Boston and Forest Hills, New York.

In addition to organizing the Seattle Ladino day as well as other cultural events, the University of Washington’s Sephardic Studies Department has, along with physical artifacts, digital versions of original Ladino books and letters and audio of Sephardic ballads and folk songs. It also provides translation services, which is where Tony Romano’s Solitreo letters eventually landed. Along with helping him locate long-lost relatives, the translations offered up intimate glimpses into family members’ personal lives, “such as when my great-grandfather’s home was decimated by an earthquake in the Isle of Kos,” says Romano.

Such scholarship has also helped bring Ladino into the 21st century. “Suddenly Jewish studies have an entire other contingent,” observes Naar, who, while at home, speaks Ladino to his children, both of whom are under the age of four. “I want them to have a sense of culture and history.”



Both Photos by Meryl Schenker of Meryl Schenker Photography

One of the leading lights of the Ladino literary movement, writer and folklorist Franois Azar (left) was the principal speaker during Ladino Day in Seattle, held at the University of Washington’s Stroum Center for Jewish Studies in December 2018. Azar shares the podium with one of the event’s organizers, Sephardic studies professor Devin Naar.



One of the highlights of International Ladino Day 2018 was a Ladino reading of the modern story “The Jewish Parrot,” seen onscreen in its English translation.

### The Language of Music

Ladino’s refinement — and changeability — are particularly vivid in music. Rachel Valfer, of Berkeley, California, who comes from a Sephardic family of musicians, moved to Israel in the late 1990s to study Ladino at Hebrew University. “What people didn’t know — and what I discovered while there — was the importance of staying true to the instrumentation and feel” of the music’s original culture.

## Ladino: A Language Defying Death, Clinging to Life



Photo: Jeff Malet/Maletphoto.com

Generations of fans have been introduced to the world of authentic Sephardic music by singer, instrumentalist, composer and teacher Flory Jagoda (pictured at center, with the players belonging to one of her ensembles), who has recorded and performed for more than a half-century. A 2002 recipient of a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, she is the subject of a documentary film and a children's book.



Photo courtesy of Rachel Valfer Sills

Rachel Valfer, a singer and oud player who performs with the Bay Area ensemble The Ladino Project, has spent years studying Sephardic music's regional distinctions and stylistic diversity.

Songs from North Africa, Turkey, Greece and other countries with Ladino-speaking communities have different vocal styles and musical arrangements "that, if they are westernized or otherwise interpreted, lose their nuance" and unique sound.

Vocalist Valfer, who also plays the guitar and oud (a Middle Eastern lute), along with choreographer Miriam Peretz, created the [Ladino Project](#), in which Valfer's husband Eliyahu Sills plays bass and ney (a Middle Eastern reed flute), with Dan Cantrell on accordion and other instruments, and percussionist Faisal Zedan. Based in California, the performances of the Ladino Project focus on the music and dances of Sephardic women throughout the ages and have been featured on NPR's "All Things Considered," the Jewish Telegraph (London) and the San Francisco Chronicle.

"We have epic ballads, religious songs and cantigas from women's everyday lives," explains Valfer. The last category encompasses tunes "about everything from the awful mother-in-law to the cheating husband to the bride to the bris."

# Ladino: A Language Defying Death, Clinging to Life

But the seeds of Ladino's musical revival were sown decades before, thanks to musician Flory Jagoda, who received a National Heritage Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts and a Master Artist designation from the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities' Folklife Apprenticeship Program. She was also the subject of a 2014 documentary "Flory's Flame," part of a 90th birthday concert celebration held at the Library of Congress in her honor.

A native of Sarajevo, Jagoda, who lives in Alexandria, Virginia, learned songs and traditions from her grandmother, which had been passed down through generations, before she fled the Nazis and came to the U.S. as a war bride. In addition to composing and arranging new songs in Ladino, recording, teaching and publishing "The Flory Jagoda Songbook," she is the focus of a just-released children's book, "The Key from Spain: Flory Jagoda and Her Music," by Debby Levy. "Thanks in part to my mother's contributions," says her daughter, Betty Murphy of Cedar Grove, New Jersey, "'Ocho Kandelikas' [eight candles] has become a standard for Hanukkah," in some cases supplanting "I Have a Little Dreidel."

## Past and Present Meet Future

Ladino liturgical music might have been lost forever, if not for its dedicated practitioners. While growing up in Mexico, "my ears got used to listening to Ladino chanting, and it was wired in my brain," says Elnecavé. "But I found out that what I heard was a drop in the bucket," because Sephardic synagogues all over the world put their own unique stamp on the ancient religious tunes, with some even creating their own. But Elnecavé and Rachel Bortnick, 80, of Dallas, who grew up speaking Ladino in Turkey, recognized the potential of the internet in not only disseminating information but in preserving melodies.

Bortnick, who has traveled from Istanbul to Israel to meet Ladino speakers, promote the language and assist with the NAL's centralization of norms in modern spelling and writing, started the Ladinokomunita chat room in 1999. Communicating entirely in Ladino, its nearly 1,700 members discuss various aspects of Sephardic culture. She serves as Ladino's unofficial archivist, keeping track of past and present publications and current developments.

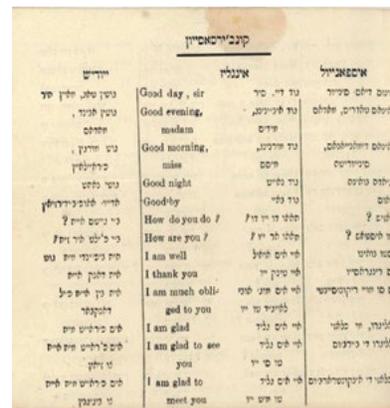
Currently the only Ladino newspaper is the monthly El Amaneser, from Istanbul, although La Lettre Sepharade, a Ladino-French journal, is published in France. And there are Ladino radio broadcasts in Israel and Spain. In the U.S., the Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies and Culture serves as a clearinghouse for Ladino learning and information.

In addition to heading up the Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America and its weekly online newsletter "La Boz Sefaradi" Elnecavé maintains its website of liturgical recordings, some 30,000 from all over the world.

Also encouraging was the 2018 creation of the National Ladino Academy in Israel by the Royal Spanish Academy, which establishes and reinforces the use of the Spanish language worldwide. Adult education courses in Ladino can be found at Hebrew University, Bar-Ilan University and Ben-Gurion University in Israel, and at Sephardic synagogues throughout the U.S., including Congregation Shearith Israel (the Spanish-Portuguese synagogue) and the Center for Jewish History, both in New York City.

While some believe the use of Ladino will never be widespread, the language somehow survives, at least among a devoted circle of enthusiasts. "It's a very beautiful, sweet, intelligent and down-to-earth language," says Elnecavé. "It encompasses all of our culture — food, music, language and ritual." 🇮🇱

## Visual Representation of Ladino



Conversational phrases from "Livro de Embezar" (New York, 1916), a Ladino-English-Yiddish guidebook for Sephardic Jewish immigrants in America. The columns, read from right to left, are Ladino (identified here as "Espanyol" (sic), followed by Rashi script with English translation, then "Yuddish [sic]."

Courtesy of the Sephardic Studies collection, University of Washington.

## A Translation of Flory Jagoda's Shabbat Song:

Buen Shabat, buen Shabat  
Kun salud i vida,  
Buen Shabat, buen Shabat  
A toda la familia.

Buen Shabat, buen Shabat  
Kun salud i vida,  
Anyus muchus, anyus muchus,  
Kun pas i alegriya.

## English translation

On Sabbath  
On Sabbath, on Sabbath,  
We wish good health and life,  
On Sabbath, on Sabbath,  
To the whole family.

On Sabbath, on Sabbath,  
On Sabbath, on Sabbath,  
We wish good health and life,  
Many years, many years  
Of peace and happiness.

## To hear the song, visit:

<https://lyricstranslate.com/en/buen-shabat-sabbath.html>

## Ladino: A Language Defying Death, Clinging to Life

### B'nai B'rith's District 11 Fought to Preserve Sephardic Culture, Language

By Cheryl Kempler

**B**'nai B'rith's District 11 boasted a membership composed of Sephardic and Ashkenazi men and women from Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Greece, Rhodes, Egypt and pre-State Israel.

From 1887 through the late 1930s, District 11 rescued thousands during wars and natural disasters, while making strides in education on all levels. Lodge members spoke many languages, but the Grand Lodge secretary in Constantinople (Istanbul) managed correspondence and edited the District magazine by communicating in French, German, Hebrew, Arabic, Ladino — the official language of the Bulgarian and Rhodes lodges, Arabic and a host of dialects.

This was a time when urbanization and the conditions of modern life led to the disappearance of indigenous folk traditions, passed on through the spoken or sung word for centuries. Nations worldwide recognized the urgency of preserving their valuable heritage. Devoted to maintaining the legacy of Sephardic culture for future generations, three District 11 members led the way to its revival and renewed appreciation.

David Fresco (1853-1936) and Isaac Navon (1859-1952) were active in the Constantinople Lodge. Fresco, the author of articles and pamphlets on subjects ranging from science to Zionism, was the owner and editor of the city's influential Ladino newspaper, *El Tiempo*. He was also a noted authority and advocate for the language, about which he frequently wrote and lectured. Navon was a rabbi and a scholar, poet and musician who sang in the "Maftirim" choir, developing an expertise in its rarified repertory of centuries-old synagogue chants. His widely published verses, written in Ladino and modeled on medieval and Renaissance Jewish poetry, spurred a new interest in Sephardic literature. Though blind, he continued his work in Israel, where he created scores for the performance of the folk songs and prayers that he had discovered, making them accessible for the first time.

Alberto Hemi (1898-1975), a classical composer from Turkey, received funding for his research in Ladino folk melodies and liturgical music from his lodge on Rhodes. Honoring his accomplishments in this field, the Italian government awarded him the honorary academic title of Chevalier. Inspired by masters, including Maurice Ravel and Enrique Granados, Hemi later based the Ladino art songs he composed for the concert hall on the authentic material he had studied and recorded. Truly exquisite, some of them have been recorded and can be enjoyed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0VUJkMZnhA>



**Flory Jagoda:**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0fHPK6CEN1k>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9GeZhxP6OZM>



**Rachel Valfer/Ladino Project:**

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FxeJuSgIwjU>
- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HMNX9jso\\_4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3HMNX9jso_4)

# "Speedy Beatie," Ultra-Orthodox Runner, is off to the Races

By Jennifer Lovy

All photos courtesy of Beatie Deutsch

Her friends call her Speedy Beatie. The Israeli press calls her "Israel's most unlikely marathoner" because, in addition to her overnight success, this 29-year-old mother of five is the country's first ultra-Orthodox marathon runner. As a religious woman, Beatie Deutsch dresses modestly, always running in a skirt that falls just below her knees, a long-sleeve shirt and a headscarf.

In addition to the fact that she is a running neophyte with incredible speed, much of the attention Beatie Deutsch garners is over the fact that she is religious and doesn't dress like a typical runner, let alone an Olympic hopeful.

Deutsch says that it's not easy to run in a long skirt, long sleeves and a head covering. If she were an amateur runner, it wouldn't make a difference. But when every second matters, Deutsch admits it would be nice to find better performance-oriented clothing.

"The fact that I'm maybe held back a little by my clothing doesn't bother me because I'm very proud of being able to stand as an example that you can do something that you're passionate about without compromising your values," she says.

Deutsch adds: "I also think it's really powerful to say there is not one way that you have to dress to be a professional runner and to win races. You don't have to be limited to one type of clothing and I think that's an empowering message for women in this world, regardless of religion."

For Deutsch, there is an almost religious aspect to what she does. "I find running to be a very spiritual experience and an opportunity to meditate and connect with Hashem," she says. "I close my eyes and think about the goals I'm working toward... I find visualiza-



Photos left and right: Deutsch unabashedly credits the source of her athletic prowess: "If God's strength is infinite, why limit myself? When you know where your strength is coming from, you realize that anything is possible. Tap into the Divine spark and never stop believing in the gifts God has given you."

tion to be a really powerful tool."

A New Jersey native, Beatie Deutsch made aliyah in 2009. She and her husband Michael and their children, ages two to nine, live in an Orthodox neighborhood in Jerusalem, which looks askance at a woman running in its streets. To avoid offending her neighbors, she runs very early in the morning from her home to the Old City. Other times she trains on the track at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Givat Ram campus, or in Gan Sacher, Jerusalem's largest public park.

Deutsch didn't set out to be a marathon runner. She took up running as a way to get back in shape after coming in dead last in what was meant to be a fun family race along the beach in Israel.

Before that dismal finish, she typically won her family's yearly competition, but raising kids and working full time as a communications officer left no time for exercise.

Deutsch decided that the only way to get back in shape was to run a marathon. She gave herself four months to prepare for the 2016 Tel Aviv Marathon; a race that drew around 40,000 participants.

## "Speedy Beatie" Sets the Pace

During those precious few months of training, she did what any marathoner would do — she got out and ran. However, unlike other runners, Deutsch, who was 26 at the time and had no racing experience, completed the 26.2-mile course in 3 hours, 27 minutes and 26 seconds. Her only goal was to finish. She ended up placing sixth among the female competitors.

Deutsch's extraordinary speed wasn't a fluke. In 2018, she won both the Jerusalem Marathon and Israel's half-marathon national championship. She probably would have had an equally impressive run during

## "Speedy Beatie," Ultra-Orthodox Runner, is off to the Races

the 2017 Tel Aviv Marathon, her second 26.2-mile race, but she was seven months pregnant, so she took her time and finished the course in just over four hours.

After winning the 2018 Jerusalem Marathon, Deutsch became more serious about training. She joined a supportive running group consisting of men and women and was able to increase her weekly mileage.

Ruti Sindel Ochman, a running coach and marathoner who trains alongside Deutsch twice a week, says that in her 24 years of running, she has never seen someone who has "trained so little and achieved so much. I think she was born to run. Her mindset while running is a big part of her success."

With each race, Deutsch's success and popularity grow. In January, she added Israel's national marathon championship to her list of accolades by winning the Tiberias Marathon. In May, she participated in her first international race. It was a half marathon in Riga, Latvia. She won that one, too. However, in June, she was disappointed with her seventh-place finish in a half-marathon in Hamburg, Germany.

After dominating the national championship marathon last January, Deutsch said she was "totally blown away with my time." Her coaches predicted a finish of 2:48. She secretly hoped to complete the run in 2:45. With her winning time of 2:42:18, she exceeded both, and this race pushed her into the realm of becoming a professional athlete. The victory placed her squarely in the national spotlight and garnered international attention as well. It also would have qualified her for the 2016 Olympics, when women needed a qualifying time of 2:45 or less.

Deutsch is hoping to compete in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and now gets a small



Deutsch with her coach, Amit Ne'eman. She often credits the contemplative aspect of her life as an athlete as the most rewarding. "Everyone likes to hear about winning, about the external success we can see and share, but often the most internal moments, the ones only we have felt and experienced, are truly the greatest triumphs."

stipend from the State of Israel, which helps pay for a personal coach as well as the costs associated with participating in races. Additionally, each race victory comes with a cash prize, typically a few thousand dollars, with bonuses for finishing within a specified amount of time. Deutsch, who recently quit her job to focus on training, also earns money through speaking engagements.

According to Deutsch, there are two ways to qualify for the 2020 Olympics; one is by finishing a marathon in 2:29:30 or less, and the other is through a complicated ranking system. She does not anticipate qualifying based on time.

She plans to participate in the Sanlam

Cape Town Marathon on September 15 as well as a yet-to-be-determined marathon in January, with the hope that these and a few other shorter races will increase her rank and earn her a trip to Tokyo. She and the other Olympic hopefuls who do not qualify based on time won't know their status until May, when the rankings are finalized.

Despite all the attention, friends say her success has not gone to her head. Elana Gottfried is a clinical therapist in Michigan with one marathon and several half marathons under her belt. She, along with 13 other American women, are in a private texting group with Deutsch, who is the only professional athlete in the bunch. The women, who call the group "Frum Women Run and Rock It," text daily about things like juggling work and family, exercise goals and workouts or sharing inspirational thoughts and messages.

Gottfried, who ran with Deutsch during a summer visit to Israel, says that her friend remains humble and down to earth. Gottfried describes the five- or six-mile run as a recovery run for Deutsch and a "push pace" for her.

### Raising Awareness for a Cause

Deutsch uses her running and rising popularity as a platform to raise awareness and funds for an organization in Israel called Beit Daniella: a rehabilitation facility established by her aunt for youths struggling with mental health issues. Beit Daniella is structured to help teens return to their schools and communities following a long-term hospitalization.

With all her accomplishments, Deutsch says she is most proud of being able to help this nonprofit, which was founded last year

## “Speedy Beatie,” Ultra-Orthodox Runner, is off to the Races



The glamorous world of Israel's fastest mom ... “It's been a really long day. I got up at 5:30, ran 22 miles, then came back to cook, clean, organize, pack and of course keep all five kiddos entertained without them tearing down the house.”

in memory of her cousin Daniella Pardes, a young woman who struggled with anorexia and took her own life at the age of 14.

Through daily posts on Instagram using the screen name Marathonmother, she promotes the mission of Beit Daniella to her growing list of nearly 7,000 followers. Additionally, she uses social media to inspire and empower others, particularly women, with positive messages about pursuing goals and overcoming challenges.

She also addresses the challenges of balancing family, work and training. Sometimes she writes about seemingly mundane events of catching up on family laundry, knocking the bumper off her car while parking, or wondering why her son “painted the floor” with ketchup and water.

Josh Halickman runs a website called SportsRabbi.com and wrote about Deutsch for the Jerusalem Post. He says that Israelis are intrigued by an Orthodox woman who participates in sports because it's so rare to see an observant athlete.

“She has a gift that very few people have. She understands that, and she uses it to bridge the gap between the secular and religious, while also being a role model for many,” says Halickman.

Ruti Sindel Ochman describes her fellow runner as “revolutionary, because she inspires other observant women to find the courage to run.” As far as a backlash from the religious community, Ochman says she has seen only a positive side to all of Deutsch's publicity.

So what does Israel's fastest woman think about when she's averaging 75 miles of training runs per week? Aside from connecting with God and expressing gratitude, she likes to use the time to clear her head. During recovery runs, Deutsch pops in a pair of earbuds and listens to music or something educational.

“I'm a busy mom and I just love the downtime. Even though I'm an extroverted person, I really enjoy silent runs too,” says Deutsch, who listens to parenting classes, Jewish lectures and motivational podcasts from other athletes. Listening to music is useful when she needs to “chill,” she says. “Because every run has its purpose.” 🗨️

### Beatie Deutsch Timeline\*

- February 2016** Deutsch participates in the Tel Aviv Marathon. It's her first marathon and she places sixth with a finishing time of 3:27:26.
- February 2017** Deutsch runs the Tel Aviv Marathon seven months pregnant. She completes the race in 4:08:16.
- March 2018** Deutsch wins the Jerusalem Marathon and sets a course record for Israeli women runners with a time of 3:09:50.
- December 2018** She becomes Israel's half-marathon national champion in Beit She'an with a time of 1:19:53.
- January 2019** During the national championship marathon in Tiberias, she finishes first with a time of 2:42:18. This is the fifth best finish of all time for a female Israeli runner.
- May 2019** Deutsch participates in her first international race in Riga, Latvia, and wins this half marathon with a finishing time of 1:17:34.
- June 2019** Deutsch runs a half marathon in Hamburg, Germany, but finishes in seventh place with a time of 1:20:47.

*\*In competitive running, men and women do not race against each other. Therefore, all rankings are in comparison to female runners.*

# Meet Alon Day, Israeli NASCAR Driver — and His Florida PR man

By Seth Shapiro

When Alon Day started competing in race car competitions as a teenager, motorsports were still illegal in his home country of Israel. He learned how to race through computer simulations and by driving Go Karts — but he had to travel outside Israel to get the real experience of driving on a full-size racetrack in a high-speed car.

“I was fortunate that my father realized my passion, my skills,” Day says. “My family invested a lot of money and a lot of time.” This included flights to Europe, so he could participate in racing competitions.

By the time Israel repealed the decades-old law that banned car racing in 2011, Day was already winning races. His first win came in 2009 at the junior-level Asian Formula Renault Series.

Now a 27-year-old professional driver, Day has won two consecutive NASCAR Whelen Euro Series championships.

But even as he continues to compete in Europe, Day has his sights on America.

“I want to be the best in the world,” he says. To be the best, he must beat the best. And the best drivers compete in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series, where he has participated in two races since 2017 — the first Israeli ever to do so, according to NASCAR.

## His Florida Fan

To make the leap from Europe to the United States, Day has relied on the support of someone he considers to be a second father figure: David Levin, a Florida-based lawyer and avid NASCAR fan.

“Without [Levin], I probably wouldn't do any racing in the States — I owe him so much,” Day says. “I'm thankful I'm the



Photo: Stephane Azemard/NASCAR Whelen Euro Series.

Race car driver Alon Day (center, wearing yellow and white coveralls) triumphant after finishing first in the NASCAR GP competition as a member of Italy's CAAL team in Franciacorta, Italy, on May 12, 2019. Sharing in the victory are exuberant team members and their manager, Luca Canneori (in the car, left, wearing a multicolor cap).

guy holding the steering wheel ... because I know how hard [Levin's] job is.”

Since 2016, Levin, who works full-time as an environmental and real estate lawyer, has been helping to promote Day's career in America.

“Unlike other sports, where an athlete is paid by a team to compete,” Levin says, “in NASCAR, it's the driver that pays the team to be able to drive.” So the driver's sponsors — those companies and individuals that cover the race car with ads — pay for the car and all the necessary racing equipment. Everything the driver needs comes with a hefty \$500,000 price tag — per race. And that's if you want to be

competitive, Levin says; the top-of-the-line equipment can cost even more than that.

While Day has been able to acquire the finances to support his professional career in Europe, he hasn't had the same success attracting sponsors in the United States. Levin has spent almost \$500,000 of his own money so Day could compete in American races. He's even started a non-profit organization, Racing for Israel, to support Day and aspiring Israeli drivers.

“This is somebody who's worthy of our support,” Levin says. So far, he has helped Day compete in six races in America: two in the NASCAR Gander Outdoors Truck Series, considered the lowest level for

## Meet Alon Day, Israeli NASCAR Driver — and His Florida PR man



Photo: Stephane Azemard/NASCAR Whelen Euro Series

Driving for the CAAL Racing team, Day takes the lead in his vibrant yellow Chevy SS during the final leg of the 2018 NASCAR Whelen Euro Series held at the Circuit Zolder course in Belgium.

NASCAR; two in the NASCAR Xfinity Series, the intermediate level; and two at the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series. Lack of sponsors has prevented Day from entering more races.

While Levin has been a NASCAR fan for a while, his foray into the business side of the sport began with his desire to cross something off his bucket list.

When Levin and his wife attended a race in Talladega, Alabama, in 2016, Levin was given the opportunity to sponsor a car and put his company's logo on it. That car was driven by a non-Jewish driver. In the lead-up to the race, Levin told the owner of the team that, if he could find a qualified Jewish driver, he would work to find sponsors.

Levin met Day shortly thereafter, and the two agreed to work with each other.

Day's desire to partner with Levin is primarily career-oriented. "I want to [race in the United States] because it's the highest level of motorsports right now," Day says.

### Flying the Flag

To some extent, Day sees himself as "just a driver...I want to be [in America] anyway," Day says, "even if I was a French guy." But, at the same time, he recognizes that, wherever he goes, "I take my country with me."

When Day wins a race, the Israeli flag flies at the top of the podium and Hatikvah (the Israeli national anthem) plays over the loudspeaker. As an internationally known driver, he represents Israel and the Jewish people.



Photo: Stephane Azemard/NASCAR Whelen Euro Series.

A native of Ashdod, Israel, Day accepts the victory personally and as a team member, as well as in the name of his country. He captured the NASCAR Whelen Euro Series title for the second year in a row in 2018.

He is proud of being Jewish and Israeli, Day says. "I see that as an opportunity to talk about Israel and show a different angle." He's excited to be the standard bearer for the Jewish and Israeli people on the international stage. He has plastered his race-day cars with Israeli flags and often sports Jewish stars on his track suit.

"You can't buy better publicity on a positive side for Israel than having one of its own competing at the highest level of a national sport," Levin says.

In addition to being positive for Israel, Levin believes Day is also good for the American Jewish community.

"I figured this would be a way for the Jews to be represented in this quintessential American sport," Levin says.

NASCAR has a reputation as being a Southern, Christian sport, Levin says, a place, perhaps, where Jews might not feel comfortable. He references a 2016 incident at the Texas Motor Speedway where Phil Robertson, a star on the reality show "Duck Dynasty," delivered the traditional invocation before the race and prayed for a "Jesus man in the White House."

Despite that incident, NASCAR is committed to having diversity. "Regardless of where you're from, there is a pathway into the sport," says Jusan Hamilton, NASCAR's director of racing operations and event management. Day was selected for the NASCAR NEXT program in 2016, an initiative to promote up-and-coming race car drivers.

"NASCAR has been able to diversify over the past several years," says Rod Moskowitz, CEO of Pro Sport Management, an agency that represents athletes, including Bubba Wallace, the

## Meet Alon Day, Israeli NASCAR Driver — and His Florida PR man



Photo courtesy of David Levin

Day with his friend and sponsor, Florida attorney David Levin, in 2016. Levin is motivated by his belief that Day's pioneering achievements serve to bolster Israel's image.

first African-American driver to win a NASCAR race in the past 50 years. Day “appears to be a very good talent and [is] unique to NASCAR. If successful, he will become the first Jewish NASCAR racer to have any staying power.”

Levin believes that diversity in general and Day in particular are good for the sport. He references one of Day's races, where a rabbi gave the invocation.

“I felt like that was progress,” Levin says. “The more [Day] races, the more likely there will be a recognition that there are other faiths that are interested in NASCAR.”

Levin has an interest in seeing the Jewish people represented in places where they traditionally haven't been. He went to college and law school in Alabama, where he was the first Jewish person many of his classmates ever met.

“You try to feel like you're American like everyone else,” he says. “But every now and then, something comes up that reminds you that you're Jewish, that you're somehow different.”

But despite those differences, Levin wants Jews represented in all walks of American life. He notes that Adam Sandler brought his Judaism to television's biggest stage when he sang “The Hanukkah Song” on “Saturday Night Live.”

“It gives us a sense of pride,” Levin says, “that people like us are liked by everybody else.”

And it gives Jews someone to look up to and identify with, Levin says.

Levin mentions a YouTube video of a boy unwrapping an Alon Day replica toy Matchbox car. In the video, the boy mentions

how he likes that Alon is Jewish and Israeli, that there's someone like him that he can cheer for.

“Whenever I'm banging my head against the wall [trying to find sponsors], I remember that moment and realize I'm not crazy, that it really is a valuable thing,” Levin says. “It was heartwarming. That's what keeps me going.”

Shawn Green, the two-time Major League Baseball All-Star who retired from the sport in 2007, says he was embraced by Jewish communities throughout his 15-year career. “Everywhere I went, there was a sense of family.”

During three seasons, Green had games scheduled during the two days of Rosh Hashanah. He would sit out one game and play the other. “I wanted to be true to my teammates, while also acknowledging my Jewish heritage and being a good role model,” Green says.

Even though Green did not grow up feeling particularly Jewish, he says: “I learned more about my heritage and Judaism playing and being embraced by different groups within the Jewish community all over the country and in Canada.”

While Day does have American fans, he says that “a lot of the Jewish community [don't] know a lot about NASCAR.”

Most of his Jewish fans live in other countries. “There are tons of Jews following my career.” He gets regular emails from fans from Israel to Chile asking him for merchandise or tips to become a successful race car driver. In Israel, motorsports are becoming more popular since the law banning them was repealed.

Even if NASCAR never becomes the most popular sport among American Jews, Day would still like to be known.

Day references Julian Edelman, the Jewish three-time Super Bowl-winning wide receiver for the New England Patriots. “People here in Israel don't follow football, but everybody knows who Julian is,” Day says. “Even if you don't follow motorsports, but you know who Alon Day is because he's the Jewish race car driver — that's who I want to be.” 📍

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## The Simon Rockower Jewish Journalism Awards

# B'nai B'rith Magazine Wins Awards for Journalistic Excellence



**A**t the risk of immodesty, we are pleased to announce B'nai B'rith Magazine has won two Rockower Awards for journalistic excellence! Administered by the American Jewish Press Association, the Rockowers are the pinnacle of distinction in the world of Jewish media.

B'nai B'rith Magazine won 1st place in the category of Journalistic Excellence in Writing about Health Care for our feature by Rita Rubin on Jewish genetic testing: "Jewish Genetics: To Test or Not to Test? That is the Question — And the Answer."

The judging panel noted: *"This is a thoughtful, informative, and sensitively written article with a compelling message for any Jewish young adults contemplating marriage and children: Get genetic testing. It offers medical insights into genetics and the nature of "Jewish" diseases such as Tay-Sachs and provides information about genetic-testing services for various Jewish populations. Woven into the narrative are poignant stories about people who have lost children to these terrible diseases, and young couples undergoing genetic testing who must make extremely difficult decisions based on the results. Many stories have*

*been written about Jews and genetics, but this one combines science, medicine, and humanity in an especially affecting way."*

We also earned a 2nd place prize for Journalistic Excellence in Covering Zionism, Aliyah and Israel for our report: "People Are Dying to Get In, but Israeli Cemeteries Are Running Out of Space," by Michele Chabin.

The judges noted: *"The author finds a fascinating and unpredictable way to cover one more way Israel is dealing with the constraints of its limited space...and coming up with another creative solution. This one is cemeteries. The solution is a wonderful metaphor for Zionism and the Israeli experiment. Story offers solid reporting, while exploring burial from a cultural, engineering, and Jewish law perspective."*

We thank you, our loyal readers, for providing a supportive audience for the unique reporting and writing you find in this magazine. Though these were not our first series of Rockower prizes — and they won't be our last — we will continue to strive with each issue to produce such award-worthy journalism. 🇺🇸

To read these stories, please visit the B'nai B'rith Magazine online archives.

**Jewish Genetics: Spring 2018 cover story**



[Click Here to Read](#)

**Cemeteries: Fall 2018, page 24**



[Click Here to Read](#)

# B'NAI B'RITH TODAY

## International Council of B'nai B'rith Meets in Portugal, Gains Insights into Jewish History and Heritage

By Katherine Dolgenos

The International Council of B'nai B'rith (ICBB) met for three days in June in Lisbon, Portugal, visiting towns that accepted Jewish refugees from the Spanish Inquisition and learning about a Portuguese diplomat named "Righteous Among the Nations" who helped save Jews fleeing the Holocaust.

B'nai B'rith International President Charles O. Kaufman noted the special significance of holding the conference in Lisbon: "We are here to do more than convene the International Council of B'nai B'rith, a gathering that gives this 176-year-old organization increased history," he told the gathering. "We are here to confront a slice of our past — the Inquisition. That was the Portugal of the past. But in 2019 we are no longer at the crossroads. The Jews of Portugal are coming back. We are back, even for just a visit."

After the opening session featuring a welcome from Gabriel Steinhardt, the president of the Jewish Community of Lisbon,

conference attendees learned about Portuguese diplomat Aristides de Sousa Mendes. Sousa Mendes issued visas to refugees, including thousands of Jews fleeing Nazi terror during World War II. His actions defied the Portuguese government and ultimately damaged his career. Speakers also included Mariana Abrantes de Sousa, treasurer of the [Sousa Mendes Foundation](#), and Monica Barzilay, a descendant of a Sousa Mendes visa recipient and representative to the B'nai B'rith International Board of Governors.

"Forever, I will be grateful to Aristides de Sousa Mendes for his decision to save thousands of people at the risk of his career, and in particular my grandparents," said Barzilay. "The Talmudic expression of 'Whoever saves a life saves the world' is indeed true, as I can see now from the thousands of names on the foundation's list of people Sousa Mendes saved."



Photo by Annie Damon

Flanked by B'nai B'rith International President Charles O. Kaufman (l) and B'nai B'rith CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin is Gabriel Steinhardt, president of the Jewish Community of Lisbon, who opened the Conference of the International Council of B'nai B'rith there on June 23.



In sessions on the first day, Monica Barzilay, representative to the International Board of Governors, B'nai B'rith Europe, spoke on the courage of Portuguese diplomat Aristides de Sousa Mendes. Samy Eppel, representative to the International Board of Governors, B'nai B'rith Northern Latin America and the Caribbean, screened a clip from the documentary he produced about the ill-fated SS St. Louis, "Turned Away: An Inside Look."

## International Council of B'nai B'rith Meets in Portugal, Gains Insights into Jewish History and Heritage

Attendees viewed a clip from the documentary "Turned Away," about the 1939 voyage of the SS St. Louis, a ship carrying 937 Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi Germany that attempted to reach Cuba but was turned away. The ship then tried to unload passengers in the United States and Canada, but both countries denied them entry. The St. Louis returned to Europe, where those who found refuge in the United Kingdom survived while others in Holland and Belgium ultimately perished in the Holocaust. Sammy Eppel, a member of the B'nai B'rith International Board of Governors from Venezuela, made the documentary and spoke to conference attendees.

The second day of the conference included a session on "Sephardi Jews Between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean" held at the University of Lisbon. Catarina Vaz Pinto, deputy mayor for culture on the Lisbon City Council, and Raphael Gamzou, Israeli ambassador to

Portugal, also spoke. Gamzou's talk centered on bilateral Israeli-Portuguese relations.

Also on the agenda: "Sefarad," a 2019 film inspired by real events in the city of Oporto during the mid-20th century, tells the story of Arthur Carlos de Barros Basto, a captain in Portugal's army who converted to Judaism after discovering his own forgotten Jewish ancestry. Barros Basto revitalized the Jewish community in Oporto, helping found a synagogue there, but was expelled from the army for conduct unbecoming a military officer.

Conference attendees toured Shaaré Tikva Synagogue in Lisbon and spent the final day on a Jewish heritage tour of the region of Alentejo, in south central and southern Portugal. The day included a visit to Castelo de Vide, a town next to the Spanish border that served as a destination for Jewish refugees from the Spanish Expulsion in 1492, and Marvao, a walled town with a rich Jewish history. 📍



On June 24, Daniel S. Mariaschin presented Catarina Vaz Pinto, councilor of culture for the city of Lisbon, with a special award honoring her efforts to preserve and promote Jewish heritage.



Photo by Annie Darmon

A postcard featuring photos of Oporto's Kadoorie Synagogue Makor Heim was issued by Portugal's postal service to honor B'nai B'rith and its Lisbon meeting. Displaying the cancellation side are (l-r) Daniel S. Mariaschin; Charles O. Kaufman; Yigal Zion, president of the Jewish Community of Oporto; Raphael Gamzou, ambassador of Israel to Portugal; Raul Moreira, Philatelic Services director, Portuguese Postal Service.



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## B'nai B'rith World Center Bestows Awards for Israeli Journalism

By Katherine Dolgenos

All photos: Bruno Charbit

The B'nai B'rith World Center Awards for Journalism Recognizing Excellence in Diaspora Reportage were handed out in Jerusalem on July 3rd. Top honors went to Antonia Yamin, chief Europe correspondent for KAN-Israel Public Broadcasting Corporation, and Zvika Klein, Jewish world correspondent for Makor Rishon and NRG360. The full ceremony can be viewed online [here](#).

Acclaimed Holocaust historian Deborah Lipstadt, Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish History and Holocaust Studies at Emory University, Atlanta, delivered the keynote address on “Old Wine in New Bottles: Antisemitism in the Contemporary World.”

“Our award for journalism is aimed at recognizing Israeli journalists who have excelled in reporting on the Diaspora and encouraging them to do more,” said Alan Schneider, director of the B'nai B'rith World Center-Jerusalem. “Israel’s free press is an effective tool to help build recognition and understanding of Diaspora communities and their relationship with the state of Israel.”

Yamin and Klein each received the 2019 Award for Recognizing Excellence in Diaspora Reportage, in memory of Wolf and Hilda Matsdorf. Yamin’s broadcast media award was for a series of reports on Jewish life in Great Britain and Austria and on anti-Semitism in Germany. Klein received the print media award for his series “Distant Relatives,” which explored Israeli and Jewish American relations.

A certificate of merit in memory of Luis and Trudi Schydlofsky was conferred on Attila Somfalvi, the lead anchor of Ynet news, for a series of reports and commentaries on the relationship between Israel and American Jewry. Actor and Israel Prize laureate Yehoram Gaon was honored with a special citation for fostering Israel-Diaspora relations through the arts.



Two reporters, pictured with members of the award jury, were recognized for their work focusing on Diaspora relations during B'nai B'rith's 27th Award for Recognizing Excellence in Diaspora Reportage ceremony in Jerusalem on July 3. (l-r): publisher and editor Asher Weil; former United Nations ambassador and academic Gabriela Shalev; Antonia Yamin, chief Europe Correspondent for KAN — Israel Public Broadcasting Corporation (winner for broadcast media); Zvika Klein, Jewish world correspondent for Makor Rishon and NRG360 (winner for print media); Bar Ilan University communications professor Yehudit Auerbach; and columnist Yair Sheleg. A certificate of merit in memory of Luis and Trudi Schydlofsky went to Attila Somfalvi, lead anchor of ynet news. A special citation for fostering Israel-Diaspora relations through the arts went to singer, actor and Israel Prize laureate Yehoram Gaon.



Keynote speaker and Emory University professor Deborah Lipstadt. The American scholar is known for her books on the Shoah, including “History on Trial: My Day in Court with a Holocaust Denier,” an account of the libel suit brought against her by David Irving in a case which made headlines worldwide. Irving lost his case.

## B'nai B'rith World Center Bestows Awards for Israeli Journalism

Keynote speaker Lipstadt writes on the Holocaust and contemporary Jewish life. In her bestselling book, "History on Trial" (2005), Lipstadt chronicled the London courtroom battle that erupted when English author David Irving filed a libel suit against her in the United Kingdom for having called him a Holocaust denier. After a 10-week trial, Irving lost his case, and the proceedings exposed the true depth of his association with neo-Nazi groups. "History on Trial" became the basis for the critically acclaimed 2016 feature film "Denial," starring Rachel Weisz. Lipstadt's recent book, "Antisemitism: Here and Now" (2019), addresses the ever-present danger of anti-Semitic hatred and violence. It has already been translated into German and Hebrew and was an Amazon bestseller.

Haim Katz, chairman of the B'nai B'rith World Center-Jerusalem, reflected on the importance of a good relationship between

Jews in Israel and the Diaspora. "There is no need to panic in the face of rising anti-Semitism worldwide. This is not the 1930s," Katz said. "But what we do have to do is to join hands — Israel and Jews living worldwide, and together fight this horrific prejudice by education, education and more education. This joining of the hands of the Jewish world is the precise goal of the Journalism Award given by B'nai B'rith to the press that encourages interaction and knowledge of the two sides of the Jewish world, Israel and the Diaspora."

Daniel Schydowsky, a B'nai B'rith World Center-Jerusalem board member, also emphasized relationship-building between Israeli and Diaspora Jews. "The Jewish communities of the Diaspora have always been more informed about events in Israel than vice versa," said Schydowsky. "Righting this imbalance has always been important, but increasingly so as Israel reaches out to the

world as a purveyor of advanced technology of all kinds. The first step in knowing a country is to know its Jewish community ... Where the small Jewish world of less than 20 million souls is concerned, keeping the largest Jewish community of the world, namely the Israeli one, suitably informed of what goes on in other sister communities contributes to synergy for the Israeli community as well as all the others."

The B'nai B'rith World Center Award for Journalism Recognizing Excellence in Diaspora Reportage is named for the late Wolf Matsdorf and his wife Hilda. Wolf Matsdorf was an editor of the World Center-Jerusalem's journal "Leadership Briefing" and a journalist in Israel and Australia. Hilda Matsdorf was a pioneer in social work in both Australia and Israel. The award is made possible through donations from the Matsdorf family and Schydowsky. 



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## Great Lakes Region Holds Annual Golf Classic, Other Events

By Katherine Dolgenos

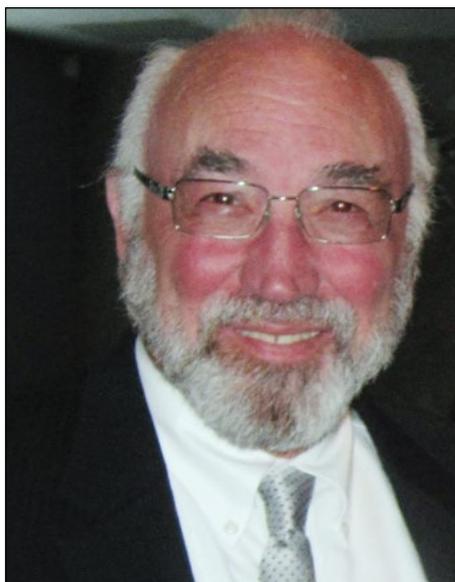
All photos courtesy of Jerry Olson

After more than six months of planning, B'nai B'rith Great Lakes Region held its 37th Annual Golf Outing this year at the Tam-O-Shanter Country Club in West Bloomfield Township, Michigan. About 136 golfers participated in the tournament and additional guests attended the banquet afterwards.

This year's tournament was renamed the Stephen B. Zorn Memorial Golf Outing to honor Steve Zorn, of blessed memory, a longtime leader in (and two-time president of) Great Lakes Region who served as a B'nai B'rith International senior vice president, marketing chair and in other roles on the Executive Board of Directors. His leadership emphasized building ties between B'nai B'rith and other Jewish organizations, as well as investing in leadership training, including two retreats.

Zorn's widow, Lila, is the current president of Great Lakes Region. "Personally, the best part of [this year's golf tournament] was they had renamed it in my husband's memory, which was very, very touching, and that made it extra-special for us," Zorn said. She is also excited about this year's upcoming establishment of the Stephen Zorn Scholarship, which will go to a student with special needs. Stephen Zorn, who had two autistic grandchildren, was passionate about education access for students with special needs.

Proceeds went to fund college scholarships for three students: Jonah Stearn, Elizabeth Kagan and Garrett Berke. David Lubin, the vice president of finance for the Great Lakes Region and co-chair of the golf classic for the past 12 years, regards the scholarship program as B'nai B'rith's most important work. "We started [it] from scratch a few years ago," said Lubin, who is also a member of the committee that oversees the scholarship program. In addition to supporting the scholarship fund, at least \$20,000 of the pro-



This year, B'nai B'rith Great Lakes Region renamed its annual summer golf tournament and fundraiser to honor longtime Michigan leader Steve Zorn (1942-2018). A two-term region president, international senior vice president and Executive Board of Directors member, Zorn is remembered for revitalizing the organization by instituting innovative programs that engaged young members, as well as for building relationships with local Jewish organizations and other philanthropies.



ceeds from the golf classic is directed toward B'nai B'rith International, and the event also supports Hillel and BBYO.

Great Lakes Region had an exciting calendar this spring. In April, the members participated in Project H.O.P.E. (Help Our People Everywhere), packaging kosher-for-Passover

Greeting those who attended, Regional President Lila Zorn spoke about the scholarship program and shared memories of her husband, whose service to B'nai B'rith is evidenced in many ways today.

## Great Lakes Region Holds Annual Golf Classic, Other Events



From left: Co-chair Jody Rodnick; two of the tournament winners, Cam Kennedy and Nick Haratsaris; Co-chair David Lubin and Master of Ceremonies Alan Muskovitz.



From left: Scholarship Oversight Committee Chairman Rick Sherline with scholarship recipients Gabriel Burke, Elizabeth Kagan and Jonah Stern.

meals for poor and elderly Jews during the holiday. In conjunction with the Berman Theatre, Great Lakes Region presented a screening of "The Samuel Project," which explores Holocaust history through the lens of a family sharing its personal story.

Great Lakes Region leaders were particularly proud of an April program, "Immigration: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow: A Historical Perspective," a panel discussion featuring Chaldean Catholic immigrants living in the Detroit area. Chaldeans originate from northern Iraq and trace their ancestry to the ancient Assyrians. The panel featured both Chaldean immigrants and immigration lawyers with strong ties to the Chaldean community in Detroit. More than 50 people listened to the speakers discuss the challenges they faced, even after being granted legal status in the United States. Lila Zorn is especially proud of the connections the Jewish community and its Chaldean counterpart have forged in the Great Lakes region: the local Jewish newspaper runs a section about activities in the Chaldean community, while the Chaldean newspaper has a similar section about goings-on in the Jewish world. 



Pictured on Tam O'Shanter's beautiful course are the members of the winning foursome, B'nai B'rith supporters (l-r) Cam Kennedy, Nick Haratsaris, Ron Ruks and Glen Young.

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## Aaron Grossman Lodge Summer Activities



Lodge Vice President Alan Samuels (center in banner photo) coordinated the activities.



Members and guests of the consolidated Aaron Grossman B'nai B'rith Lodge relaxed on Aug. 4 in Hermitage, Pennsylvania, with a wonderful picnic cooled by oldies and Motown tunes played by local group The Dorals.





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## Planned Giving

# Finding A Sense of Community in B'nai B'rith

By *Jon Sidney Apfelbaum*

**M**arlene Franklin is incredibly proud of her involvement with the Jewish community. Her devotion to Jewish life has always included a strong commitment to charity and helping others. She learned these principles from her parents, Betty and Albert Zeitzew, who were a strong influence on her. Marlene grew up with her family in Philadelphia.

She remembers her mother, Betty, encouraging her to join B'nai B'rith Girls. At the time, BBG was still relatively new, giving teenage girls the opportunity to become involved in what was historically a fraternal organization and enjoy many of its activities. Her mother's encouragement led her to B'nai B'rith Women and to experiences that would shape her life and Jewish identity. She would later join B'nai B'rith in the 1980s as a full member, becoming even more engaged in the stewardship of the organization. Marlene remembers her mother saying, "Go, you'll love it!" From her many years of involvement, it's clear that she did.

Marlene's involvement in the Jewish community is what enabled her to meet her late husband, Jerome "Jerry" Franklin. They first met on a group outing with their synagogue's Junior League. They married in 1947 and spent 57 wonderful years together. Both were heavily involved with B'nai B'rith.

Over the years, Marlene moved frequently with her family, and before each move she would always ask around to learn where the strongest Jewish community was located, which would inform where her family would settle. This sense of community (and the warmer climate) is why Marlene and her family decided to move to Dallas in 1968. After stints in Tucson



and then Philadelphia, Marlene returned to Dallas in 2010.

While living in Dallas, Marlene and her husband became very active in their local couples unit. This provided an opportunity for husbands and wives to participate in B'nai B'rith activities together. As a member of the couples unit in Dallas, she often participated in charity events that the unit would host in the local neighborhoods. She recalls many wonderful evenings of fun and successful fundraising.

One way the couples lodge supported the community was to contribute proceeds of their events to several B'nai B'rith senior housing properties. There are now 38 low-income B'nai B'rith senior housing facilities in the United States. These facilities work hard to provide beneficial services to residents, regardless of race, religion or sexual orientation. As Mark D. Olshan, B'nai B'rith's associate executive vice president and director of B'nai B'rith's Center for Senior Services, explains, B'nai B'rith's senior housing "offers a safe, secure and

From Philadelphia to Tucson to Dallas, Marlene Franklin has many fond memories of her life in B'nai B'rith. Assuming leadership roles through the years, she continues to maintain her commitment to the organization and its future.

supportive community environment that allows residents to maximize their independent and dignified lifestyle."

Marlene's dedication to the work of B'nai B'rith would inspire her to take on different leadership positions, including serving as the first female vice president of District 7, which encompassed Texas and much of the southern United States. Additionally, she would later serve as president of the Western Frontier region while living in Tucson. Supporting B'nai B'rith and the Jewish community has remained a priority for Marlene. For many years, she has been a member of the B'nai B'rith International Board of Governors, and currently serves as an associate justice on the B'nai B'rith International Court of Appeals.

Working to strengthen B'nai B'rith and the Jewish community is also what led Marlene to include B'nai B'rith in her will. She worked with her attorney to include B'nai B'rith as a beneficiary, ensuring that the organization would be able to continue its mission for future generations. By establishing this gift, Marlene (and her late husband) became members of B'nai B'rith's esteemed 1843 Society, a special circle of B'nai B'rith supporters who have chosen to leave a gift so that their legacy enables the organization to continue its vital work.

## Planned Giving

### Five Generations of Volunteerism and Nachas

There are several ways that individuals can support B'nai B'rith through planned giving, including establishing a Charitable Gift Annuity or listing B'nai B'rith as a beneficiary of a life insurance policy. No matter how someone decides to establish a planned gift, the gift will ultimately support the longevity of the Jewish community and

the vital work that B'nai B'rith does.

Marlene has spent her lifetime engaged with the Jewish community, active in many facets of Jewish life. For her, B'nai B'rith has always been a special part of that experience. As she explains, "I feel so strongly about what you do. I wanted B'nai B'rith to be a part of my legacy."

For more information about supporting B'nai B'rith through a bequest, endowment fund, charitable gift annuity or other planned gift, please contact the Planned Giving Department by phone at 800-656-5561; by email at [plannedgiving@bnaibrith.org](mailto:plannedgiving@bnaibrith.org); or by mail at 1120 20th St., NW, Suite 300 North, Washington, DC 20036. 



After she moved to Arizona, Marlene Franklin gave her time and support to B'nai B'rith's Covenant House senior apartments, where she served on its board of directors.

**B'nai B'rith would like to recognize and thank the Ruby Diamond Foundation for their recent generous contribution.**

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## About Seniors

# B'nai B'rith Senior Housing: More than Bricks and Mortar

*By Mark D. Olshan, Associate Executive Vice President, B'nai B'rith International*

**T**his past spring, I celebrated my 36th anniversary at B'nai B'rith, and I'd have to say that overall, it has been an incredibly wonderful experience. Spending most of a career at a single place of employment offers a unique perspective on one's impact over the years and how the programs have evolved and changed.

Thirty-six years! And I'm only the third longest-serving current employee. I was hired as the first full-time director of Senior Citizens Housing. I was given an office, a stack of file boxes filled to the brim, and told, "Here's your program. Set it up any way you see fit," and so I did.

During my tenure, we've grown from a small network of 12 properties to 38, making us the largest national Jewish sponsor of federally assisted housing. Our expanded Center for Senior Services provides safe, supportive housing to more than 5,000 seniors of limited income, regardless of race, religion or country of origin. And, because of our continually growing knowledge of the issues, we have expanded our services to provide advocacy on Capitol Hill and with the federal agencies on the variety of matters affecting our residents as well as older persons nationwide.

And throughout these many years, there has been one overarching theme that has been consistent. That is, our B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services is about more than just bricks and mortar.

Now, truth be told, I helped promote this philosophy over the years. B'nai B'rith housing doesn't end when the doors open; it starts there. It goes to the very heart of what B'nai B'rith is all about. People helping people.



Wow ... 36 years! Here I am, the new kid on the block, in a photo taken on my first day as B'nai B'rith's director of senior services in 1983.



On May 7, 1995, I was on hand to present then- Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Secretary Henry Cisneros with B'nai B'rith's \$35,000 check for the Oklahoma City mayor's Housing Emergency Fund in memory of the 35 HUD employees who lost their lives in the April 19 terrorist bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. B'nai B'rith raised a total of \$500,000 in disaster relief to help families impacted by the tragedy.

## B'nai B'rith Senior Housing: More than Bricks and Mortar



The greater B'nai B'rith community ... delivering sweat equity at a farm outside of San Juan during a day of service at the June 2019 managers and service coordinators meeting in Puerto Rico.



Creating a stronger association ... a group shot of participants from our senior apartments, together with members of our B'nai B'rith team at the 2015 Resident Leadership Retreat at Perlman Camp.

Once a property opens, we involve the management and members of the building's board of directors in meetings, training sessions and updates. Additionally, we take residents from around the country to a youth camp in northeastern Pennsylvania for a weeklong program on how to advocate on their own behalf when they return home. And, of course, we continue to advocate, educate and spend time on Capitol Hill in our continued attempt to make the programs more responsive to the needs of our residents.

### Our Access to Experts

Located in Washington, D.C., we are fortunate to have access to some of the most knowledgeable persons involved in developing housing for seniors, and we have used them for our meetings and educational sessions. What began as a daylong meeting for property managers responsible for building operations has grown into a three-day program for management professionals and service coordinators responsible for a range of activities and services.

Experts over the years have included assistant secretaries and various deputies at the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), as well as staff directors and representatives of congressional

committees and subcommittees responsible for funding services and programs at the properties. And our programs continue to grow and evolve.

Most recently, we convened managers and service coordinators in San Juan, Puerto Rico, to learn more about such topics as emergency preparedness, federal housing policy, aging-in-place and elder fraud awareness. Among the participants were HUD staff members.

At this point, I need to emphasize that our efforts don't stop at our conferences and professional meetings. Being a member of our housing network means that you are not just part of a housing program but also a member of the greater B'nai B'rith community.

We recognized early on how important a tenant council is in achieving the best quality of life for our residents. A council is made up of all the residents in a specific building and serves as a conduit between the individual residents and the management of the property. Additionally, it creates important programs and activities for residents.

Understanding the critical importance of these associations, shortly after I arrived more than 30 years ago, I created the Resident Leadership Retreat at a youth camp we owned in Pennsylvania. At that time, it was a three-day session with formal training in

how to start a resident's council and included many hours of interacting with youth campers in everyday activities such as Israeli dancing, arts and crafts and even working out at the gym. And, of course, spending time swimming and lounging at the lake.

Today, my colleague Janel Doughten has taken over the administration of the program and expanded it to a full week. It now includes sessions on how to run a tenant association; how to plan activities and programs for fellow residents; how to recruit and retain volunteers; how to write newsletters, deal with difficult members and celebrate the diversity in their own buildings.

I'm immensely proud of this program and how it continues to grow and evolve.

B'nai B'rith Senior Housing is far more than constructing the building. It includes investing in the management professionals who run the building, the volunteers who take the time to serve on the boards of directors of the properties and an understanding and commitment to the residents.

And so, as I've said many times: B'nai B'rith Senior Housing — it's much more than bricks and mortar. 🗨️

*Mark D. Olshan, who holds a doctorate in psychology, is associate executive vice president of B'nai B'rith International and director of the B'nai B'rith Center for Senior Services.*