

# B'NAI B'RITH

M A G A Z I N E

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## Jews and Guns, a Trigger Issue for Many

*By Miranda S. Spivack*

Kathryn Fleisher wanted to send a message to the National Rifle Association. The University of Pittsburgh freshman was in front of more than 1,000 Jewish activists who had turned out for the March for Our Lives in Washington, D.C., following the deaths of 17 students and faculty at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, last February.

"This is a crazy time where students can be shot dead in their classrooms," said Fleisher, a former president of NFTY North America, the Reform Jewish organized youth movement. "Our lawmakers refuse to protect us," she said at the gathering in March.

But her generation, she believes, will overcome.

"We are certainly not going to be told to sit down, be quiet and accept the status quo," she said. "Oh, and we are registered to vote." She received sustained applause in the ballroom of a Washington hotel before she and thousands of others from across the nation headed out for the march some five weeks after the Parkland shootings.

While many of the marchers Fleisher addressed were affiliated with Jewish organizations and had gathered before the march to pray and to talk about tikkun olam and the Talmudic caution not to stand idly by as your neighbors bleed, the issue of Jews and guns is far from a simple matter. Jewish groups pushing for "common sense" gun measures to tighten licensing, tracking



and keeping guns from the hands of people deemed mentally ill, have been very vocal in 2018.

Following the march, B'nai B'rith President Gary P. Saltzman and Executive Vice President and CEO Daniel S. Mariaschin praised the participants' "bold call to action." B'nai B'rith, they noted, "has long called for comprehensive gun reform measures including appropriate waiting periods, volume sales restrictions and background checks for all firearm sales, together with criminal and mental health reviews ... Meaningful legislation is desperately needed to limit access to the most dangerous

weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines whose sole purpose is to maximize death counts."

But there is also a strong if less well-publicized group of American Jews worried that there soon could be too many restrictions on gun ownership that could limit gun use for self-defense. They often invoke the Holocaust or a recent spike in anti-Semitism as a means of explaining their views. Eric Fusfield, B'nai B'rith International's director of legislative affairs, said he is mindful that there is a diversity of opinion in the Jewish community about how much gun control is too much.

## Jews and Guns, a Trigger Issue for Many



Photo by Miranda Spivack.

A group of NFTY members before the March for Our Lives in Washington, D.C. in March 2018.

*A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.*

The first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution form the Bill of Rights. The Second Amendment (Amendment II) was passed by Congress in 1789 and ratified on Dec. 15, 1791.

Fusfield says his work is not aimed at disarming people in the United States. "When I say we respect the Second Amendment, we respect the place of guns in our culture. There is also recognition that there are responsible people who feel they need guns for their own self-protection." He added, "They are licensed to own guns, and trained in the use of guns and they want to own guns only for this purpose."

Some data suggest that a discernible majority of American Jews believe more restrictions on gun ownership are necessary to quell the rising number of school shootings and other gun-related violence. While there are no reliable statistics about Jewish gun ownership, Jews likely own guns at a lower rate than the general U.S. population, according to data compiled about political affiliation and gun ownership from the [Pew Research Center](#).



## Jews and Guns, a Trigger Issue for Many

### Never Again: Citing the Holocaust in Defense of Guns

The recent rise in anti-Semitic incidents may give some Jews cause to believe that obtaining arms is a reasonable means to protect the Jewish community. They often invoke the moves by Nazis to disarm Jews as the Holocaust took shape. Don Young, an Alaska Republican congressman, suggested after the Parkland killings that Jews with arms might have protected themselves against Nazi aggression. (He was denounced by the Anti-Defamation League, and others who said his comments were naive and being used to score political points in the current gun debate.)

There are Jewish gun groups such as Bullets & Bagels in Los Angeles, “a noshing, networking, and shooting club” founded in 2013 by Fred Kogen, a Reform mohel. Charging for membership and events, its stated purpose is to give members of the Jewish community “the satisfaction and pleasure of learning to shoot a gun and to hone shooting skills.” About a quarter of its members are not Jewish, according to its website.

And there is Jews Can Shoot, a group formed by Doris Wise Montrose, that offers classes in self-defense and whose website says “learning to shoot will make you a better and prouder Jew.” Its motto: “Nothing Says Never Again Like an Armed Jew.”

Wise Montrose has described her organization as providing a means for Jews to defend themselves in an atmosphere of rising anti-Semitism. “If anyone did a little bit of research they would find that many Jews can shoot, own firearms and are very visible in the firearms industry in the United States,” she said in a 2015 podcast. “The perfect partnership for our survival, in my opinion, is being informed and being armed.”

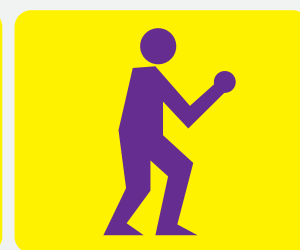
Jews Can Shoot offers firearms training, which she says is focused on creating a community that can learn to “use a gun safely and effectively.” As inspiration, she cites Ze’ev Jabotinsky, a Russian Jewish Zionist leader



**Escape from  
active shooter**



**Hide, barricade,  
and stay calm**



**Fight only as  
a last resort**

“Active shooter” drills are now part of many students’ school day. These exercises are conducted by more than two-thirds of school districts surveyed by the U.S. Government Accountability Office.

who advocated Jewish self-defense during the two world wars and pre-state Israel. She recently moved her organization to Arizona from California and said she could not spare time for an interview.

Fleisher and other young Jewish activists pressing for tightening of gun laws say they are well aware of varying viewpoints about gun ownership. But they say they feel adults have failed children by allowing them to go to school fearful that a shooter will invade what they had long assumed would be a safe place for learning.

Having grown up in Cleveland and now attending college in Pennsylvania, Fleisher said she knows that any outright ban on personal possession of weapons in the United States would be a non-starter, politically. That is why groups such as NFTY have pushed for about two decades for what the group terms “common sense” gun legislation.

“We know what Jewish values drive us in this fight,” she said.

### Was Parkland a Turning Point?

The Parkland killings seemed to re-energize Jewish opponents to the 2004 congressional decision to not to renew a ban on assault weapons, which have often been used in school shootings. Since the beginning of 2018, there have been more than two dozen

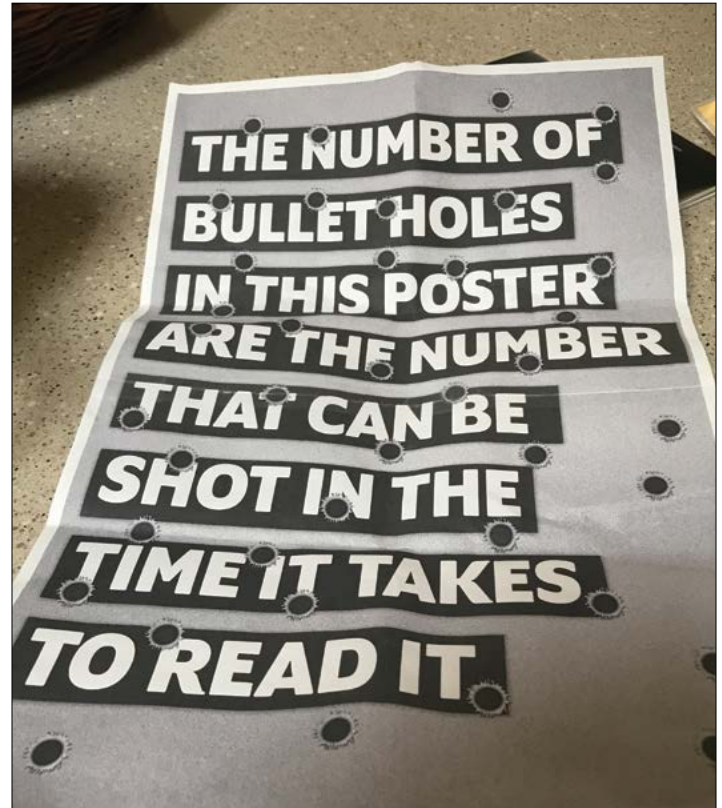
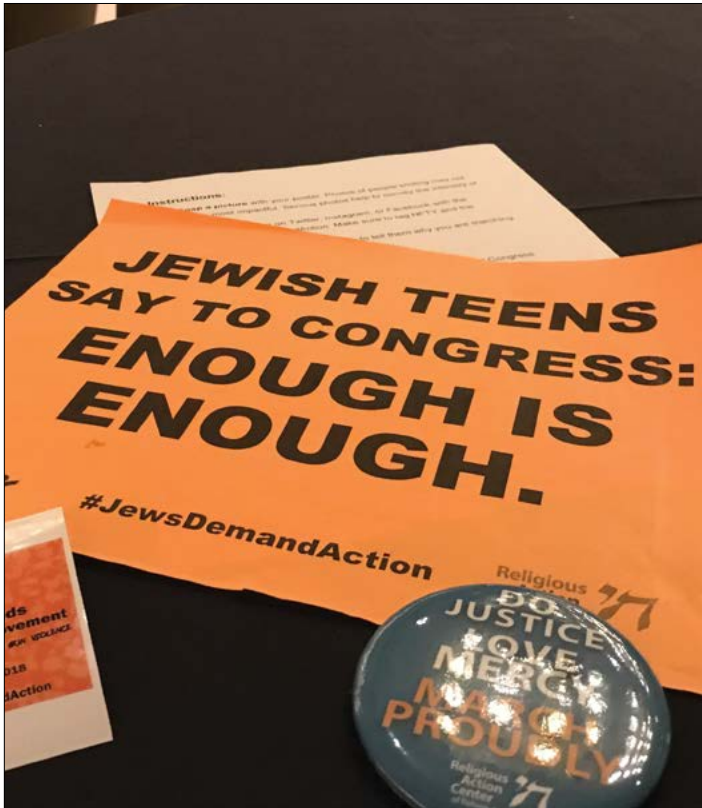
school shootings, with many fatalities. Several of the Parkland victims were Jewish.

“Since Parkland, there has been a renewed opportunity for teens’ voices to be heard,” said Lauren Theodore of the Union for Reform Judaism. “People either had one or two degrees of separation of knowing someone at Parkland,” said Emily Rosenberg, the United Synagogue Youth (USY) international social action vice president. Now an Oberlin College freshman, Rosenberg said that the swift action planned by Parkland survivors helped galvanize many young Jews who had otherwise thought it was fruitless to challenge the gun lobby in the United States.

“I really had a normal day that day. The worst thing would be a phone being taken away or a bad grade. When I got home, I saw the fear and heartbreak from my friends. That is what really changed the perspective for me,” said Rosenberg, of Tappan, New York. Adults too, she said, “have been pushed since Parkland. And teens see other teens speaking up and push for change.”

USY, the youth arm of the Conservative movement in the United States, has stayed neutral in the gun debate, unlike NFTY, which has specific positions pushing for restrictions on gun ownership. USY instead is putting its energy toward educating its members about how to become active on

## Jews and Guns, a Trigger Issue for Many



Photos by Miranda Spivack.

At an event held on the morning of the March for Our Lives, participants made and distributed posters and flyers.

an issue, rather than approving specific goals for change in gun laws, according to Rosenberg.

“The most important thing anyone can do is simply educate oneself on what is happening, and get the least biased information. We don’t want to push anyone to feel uncomfortable or think that everyone is against them. We want them to form their own opinions and think freely,” Rosenberg said.

While USY does not take political positions, many of its members went to the March for Our Lives and plan to continue to be active in promoting education about gun violence.

Zachary Zabib, USY’s international president and a Yale University student, said it was part of his group’s approach to repairing the world — tikkun olam. “As citizens, we want to empower you to make your journey of activism on your own.”

Since Parkland, other Jewish organizations have increased pressure on Congress.

Fifteen groups outlined their views in a letter in March. Signers represented a broad mix of Jewish organizations, including B’nai B’rith, and denominations, from Reform to Orthodox.

“We,” the signers wrote, “are strongly united in calling for imme-

diately action to address and end gun violence in America. Our Jewish communities, like so many others, are heartbroken by the horrific shooting in Parkland, Florida, where one individual, armed with a military-grade weapon of destruction, transformed an esteemed place of learning into a killing field . . . But we are no longer shocked. The killing of 17 innocent people in Parkland was not an isolated tragedy. . . .”

In their letter, directed at members of Congress, they advocated limiting access to assault weapons and other high-capacity arms; imposing longer wait times for gun purchases; deeper background checks that include a mental health assessment; mandatory registration and database tracking of all firearms at the time of sale or transfer of ownership; periodic relicensing for gun owners and users; and expansion of federal laws prohibiting gun trafficking and purchases by straw owners for other users.

The organizations also argued for greater access to mental health care; an examination of violence in the media; and ways to expand school security. In addition, they are pushing for funding for the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to study the effects of gun violence.

## Jews and Guns, a Trigger Issue for Many

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), who wrote the original 1994 bill banning assault weapons, (which was allowed to lapse by the U.S. Congress in 2004) has renewed her push for its re-enactment, since the Parkland killings. But she faces fierce opposition in Congress, and the National Rifle Association frequently cites a [2004 study](#) asserting the difficulty in measuring the impact of the assault weapons ban. However, the study also found a decline in the number of assault weapons crimes in the six cities that were studied.

### Research and Data, or Lack Thereof

Congressional opposition to new gun laws, however, remains intense. And it is not new.

More than 20 years ago, members restricted research on the impact of gun violence, and have limited the type of data the federal government can collect about gun ownership.

Research on the impact of gun violence at the CDC was suspended under pressure from Congress following a [1993 study](#) that found that keeping a gun at home was associated with a 2.7 percent higher incidence of homicide when compared with non-gun households. Congress killed funding for similar research.

Similarly, Congress has prohibited the Drug Enforcement Administration from maintaining a searchable database of gun ownership, compelling investigators to rely instead on paper records. For details, visit: <https://www.nraila.org/articles/20120201/gun-owners-score-wins-in-spending-bill> and <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2013/02/atf-gun-laws-nra/>.

The CDC, however, has collected [data on the frequency of firearm-related injuries](#), finding death by firearms was the leading cause of death in 2016 for young men ages 15 to 19.

Earlier this year, Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health, endowed by gun control activist and Hopkins graduate Michael Bloomberg, named Daniel Webster, a leading researcher on gun violence prevention, to be the first Bloomberg Professor of American Health. "This new position will support the great work Dr. Webster is leading on gun violence and help build evidence for smart policies that can prevent more needless deaths," said Bloomberg, also a former New York mayor.

A member of Temple Emanuel in Kensington, Maryland, Webster has worked with Jewish groups seeking to provide information to those hoping to strengthen

gun control laws. "There are plenty of messages in the Torah about seeking peace, seeking justice. That is pretty much right in line with what I study and do and try to promote. There is a justice dimension to it as well as pro-life and pro-peace," said Webster, a convert to Judaism.

"Tikkun olam really resonated with my own upbringing, as well as my professional undertaking," he said. "Working on gun violence is something that enables me to work on something that is personally and spiritually meaningful."

Webster has said the issue of gun violence in the United States "has an enormous impact on public health, and in particular among minority communities." But the debate is rarely framed that way and instead is often characterized as extreme opposition to new controls, or extreme distaste for any type of gun ownership, he has said. "The debate has kept us very confused and prevented us from looking for useful solutions."

B'nai B'rith's Fusfield is settling in for a long debate over next steps on guns, although he says movement is possible if the November elections shift some seats in Congress. But even then, action is not likely to be swift, he said. "It will be a long battle. These are not overnight issues." □

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## Editor's Note

**T**he horrific shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, last February once again raised the issue of guns and their largely unrestricted use in American society. It was but the latest in a string of school shootings since Columbine, Colorado, in 1999, and, tragically, it was followed by more mass shootings.

In reaction, hundreds of thousands — including many Jews — joined March for Our Lives, demanding stricter gun control laws. At the same time, other Jews adamantly defended their right to bear arms as the last, best defense against another Holocaust. In this issue, we look at “Guns and Jews.” The cry of “Never Again” is being heard from both sides, as Jews, along with the rest of society, wrestle with thorny issues of freedom and survival.

Elsewhere in this issue, we deal with matters of life, death and sex. We think you'll find our interview with 90-year-old “Dr. Ruth” Westheimer is both entertaining and informative.

Halfway across the world, we look at a burial crisis in Israel, which is finding innovative ways to deal with an increasing lack of space in cemeteries. We also offer food for thought — how to maintain culinary traditions for the High Holidays, while finding healthy alternatives to high-fat, high-sugar recipes.

Daniel S. Mariaschin, B'nai B'rith executive vice president and CEO, offers a personal take on Israel's 70th anniversary. Mark Olshan, associate executive vice president, looks forward to November's mid-term elections as key to saving the country's safety net for health, housing and other programs that have been foundational for B'nai B'rith for decades. Finally, in his farewell column, departing B'nai B'rith President Gary P. Saltzman shares his thoughts about the organization's relevancy in today's complex world. 

— Eugene L. Meyer

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## From the Vault

# B'nai B'rith Honored Jackie Robinson at Interfaith Baseball Game in 1957

*By Cheryl Kempler*

**D**uring a week of great significance in American civil rights history in Washington, D.C., B'nai B'rith made its own contribution to the cause, joining with other organizations to honor the legendary Jackie Robinson in the year that he retired from baseball.

On May 14, 1957, 9,000 fans came to Washington's Griffith Park Stadium to cheer the city's first Interfaith Baseball Game, organized and sponsored by three fraternal organizations, B'nai B'rith, the Almas Temple Shrine (the Shriners) and the Catholic Knights of Columbus.

Following a festive parade, plaques were presented to Robinson and President Dwight D. Eisenhower, accepted by Cabinet Secretary and Anti-Defamation League leader Maxwell Rabb. Also honored was Robinson's friend, comedian and baseball fanatic Joe E. Brown, the father of two adopted German Jewish children and one of only two civilians to earn the Bronze Star for selling war bonds and entertaining the troops. A special award was presented to D.C. Judge Milton S. Kronheim, B'nai B'rith's event chairman. The game was rained out in the second inning.

Now adulated, Robinson would shortly take on a new career as an executive at the Chock full o'Nuts Corporation. In the coming months, he would also raise more than \$1 million for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. He later launched a number of successful entrepreneurial ventures.

Born into poverty in rural Georgia, Robinson was the first UCLA athlete to win varsity letters in baseball, basketball, football and track. After wartime military service, he was recruited in 1947 by the



In 2013, Robinson's widow Rachel and daughter Sharon joined B'nai B'rith in honoring Major League Baseball (MLB) Commissioner Bud Selig. Left to right: Allan J. Jacobs, president, B'nai B'rith International; Sharon Robinson; Bud Selig; Rachel Robinson; MLB executive Joe Torre; and Daniel S. Mariaschin, executive vice president, B'nai B'rith International.

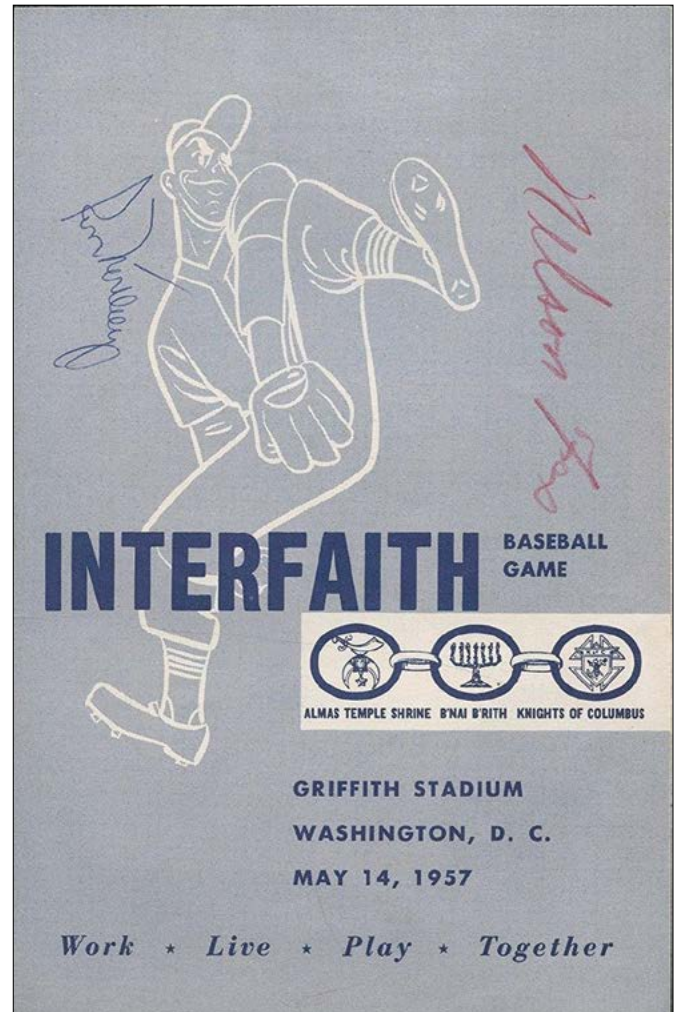


Interfaith award recipients at the White House in May 1957. Left to right: Jackie Robinson, President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Joe E. Brown.

## B'nai B'rith Honored Jackie Robinson at Interfaith Baseball Game in 1957

Brooklyn Dodgers, as the first major league player in modern times to break the color barrier. Named Rookie of the Year and Most Valuable Player, Robinson was idealized by many who believed that his strength of character and prodigious talent became integral to the successful integration of baseball. He was inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame in 1962.

On May 17, 1957, three days after the rained-out game, Robinson was among prominent athletes, performers and others lending their support to the Prayer Pilgrimage for Freedom at the Lincoln Memorial, held on the third anniversary of the Supreme Court's decision desegregating the nation's schools. As many as 37,000 people took part, intending to send Eisenhower a message to end the delay in implementing the ruling. The event also featured a speech by the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., calling for full and unfettered voting rights. 🗳️



Program from the Interfaith Baseball Game, held at Griffith Stadium in Washington, D.C. on May 14, 1957.



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

### Jews in Baseball – the Podcast

Just as baseball season heats up this fall, the B'nai B'rith International podcast turns to The Jewish Baseball Card Book. We spoke with author Bob Wechsler, who uses baseball cards to tell the story of Jews in the sport. The book features 698 cards and focuses on Jewish Major Leaguers from 1871 right up to today.

 [Click here to listen in as Weschler talks with B'nai B'rith CEO and avid baseball fan Daniel S. Mariaschin.](#)





## From the President

# Reflections and Looking Forward

*By Gary P. Saltzman*

*President, B'nai B'rith International*

One of the things that has kept me an active and enthusiastic supporter of B'nai B'rith International for more than 40 years is our vast footprint. We touch so many lives — from the community to the national to the global level — in so many different and important ways.

As my presidency is coming to a close this fall, I have spent a fair amount of time reflecting, and I want to share with you some of those thoughts about B'nai B'rith's relevancy in today's complex world.

Issues related to the United Nations and its ill-treatment of Israel have been at the forefront of my efforts during my tenure. Sadly, the world body has strayed so far from its original purpose and its stated objectives. We are a vital voice of reason at an often unreasonable institution. I have led meetings with U.N. leaders in New York and at the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva and with UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) officials in Paris. Our work focuses on getting the U.N. back to its original role, instead of its singular, misdirected and utterly biased standard of anti-Israel animus. The U.N. needs to self-analyze and reform if it is to truly be a voice for the voiceless of the world. That's why we stay involved in the United Nations as a non-governmental organization. We speak up against the rubber-stamp that the world body has become regarding Israel-bashing.

The giant B'nai B'rith umbrella also protects freedoms.

Spending time around the world visiting Jewish communities in the United States,



Left to right: B'nai B'rith International President Gary P. Saltzman; Irina Bokova, secretary-general, UNESCO (2009-2017); and Daniel S. Mariaschin, executive vice president and CEO, B'nai B'rith International, at UNESCO in Paris.

Europe and Latin America, where too often Jews face assaults on their freedoms, has been a difficult challenge. But it's also been an enlightening one. To see Jews in a community come together, to celebrate holidays and to share their culture with the broader community has been a lesson in tolerance and sharing.

Given the false narrative about the Holocaust that, sadly, still gains so much traction, I have seen first-hand the need for

global Holocaust remembrance and educational events. B'nai B'rith works hard to ensure the Shoah, and its lessons, are never forgotten. Our involvement in Unto Every Person There is a Name provides a vital link from generation to generation. Our Kristallnacht events across Latin America provide a dual purpose: to remember the Holocaust within our own community and to teach a broader community about the genocide of the Jews of Europe.

## From the President

### Reflections and Looking Forward

And speaking of generations, working within B'nai B'rith's commitment to seniors issues, to ensure access to safe and affordable housing for low income older adults, has been a highlight of my tenure. Honor thy father and mother is a significant tenet of Judaism. Attending our senior housing conference last year reminded me of our unrivaled expertise as housing and senior policy experts. The "best practices" that were shared among our housing managers and staff were stellar. But perhaps more important was the sense of community and belonging evident at each of our buildings.

Aging should be synonymous with living with dignity. Our advocacy efforts help ensure that.

Out of our recognizing the need for safe and affordable senior housing we developed our senior advocacy efforts. Ensuring a robust Social Security and Medicare system, along with universal health care, benefits ALL of society. You can't age well if you don't have health care that travels

with you through the years. Health care as a right, not as a privilege, is something we must strive for.


Fighting global and national anti-Semitism has taken on new urgency in recent years, and B'nai B'rith continues to monitor these acts and speak to local authorities when they occur. We know that there is a scary slippery slope from language to acts and we will not let the barriers slip. When we meet with political leaders across the world, the topic of anti-Semitism is at the top of our agenda. Jews must feel safe and integrated into broader society, and local governmental leaders, perhaps with inspiration from the likes of our organization, must understand how vital it is to have zero tolerance to making Jews societal scapegoats.

Community service is another one of those big-tent terms that really comes down to the personal level. Of course, we aid communities recovering from natural disasters. Floods, fires, earthquakes, all dev-

astate. Through our disaster relief efforts, we help communities rise up. The other side of community service is truly at the individual level. Without a program such as our Project H.O.P.E. for instance, those without the means could not celebrate Passover with all of the specialty items the Seder requires. But by packaging and distributing these items in various communities, we reach out to some who may feel left out at the holiday.

These are the areas we have worked on over my tenure as president, as B'nai B'rith leaders, volunteers, supporters and staff continue to strive for a better world.

Though my time as president is ending, my commitment and dedication to serving this storied organization and the ideals and values it embodies will continue. The future of B'nai B'rith is bright. We have stayed relevant for 175 years by staying active, engaged and motivated.

I will stay engaged. Will you? Help our work by visiting: <https://donatenow.net-workforgood.org/bbi-donate> 



**Do you have a parent/other relative who was one of 4,000 Jewish refugees placed at the Kitchener Camp in 1939 near Sandwich, Kent, England?**

**CLICK HERE**





From the EVP/CEO

## Personal Reflections on Israel at 70

By *Daniel S. Mariaschin*

*B'nai B'rith Executive Vice President and Chief Executive Officer*

**M**y love affair with Israel goes back so far, I don't know exactly how old I was when I first saw the photo of my cousins Chaya and Shmuel Arad on our living room mantelpiece.

Chaya, my mother's younger first cousin, left Lithuania for pre-State Israel in 1934 and settled in the Jordan Valley's Kibbutz Beit Zera. She married Shmuel, an immigrant from Bulgaria, and they raised four children.

My mother and Chaya corresponded, in Yiddish, regularly; the green Israeli and

blue American aerogrammes, made of fine tissue-like paper with embossed air mail postage, were exchanged several times a year with the latest family news. Phone calls were expensive and hard to arrange; the two met for the first time only in 1965, when my mother went on her inaugural trip to Israel. Notwithstanding the 14 years difference in age, they immediately bonded like sisters.

As a youngster, I would listen when my mother would read Chaya's letters aloud, in translation. I thought the idea of having

cousins in such a faraway place to be pretty neat. I recall mentioning the connection more than once to my first-grade teacher, for no particular reason other than pride.

During the 1956 Suez War, I remember my parents discussing it, with a special concern for Chaya and her family. Our dinner table talk frequently included discussions about current events, and the Arab-Israeli conflict was a regular topic.

Just before my bar mitzvah, a package arrived from Israel with gifts from the Arad



Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin toasting Mazal-Michal and Daniel S. Mariaschin at the Knesset in Jerusalem in 1977.



## From the EVP

# Personal Reflections on Israel at 70

family. There was a tallit, a big picture book about Israel, and a Viewmaster, with four or five “reels” of photos of historic sites in Israel. I was overcome by these presents. They were my first connection really, beyond the aerogrammes, to my relatives and the land.

As I matured, I followed events in the Middle East through the pages of the New York Herald Tribune, which my father picked up daily at a newsstand in my hometown in New Hampshire. In the days leading up to the Six-Day War we were glued to the TV news and worried about the storm clouds of war drawing close on the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian borders. We were somewhat relieved that Arthur Goldberg had been appointed as the U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations by President Lyndon B. Johnson. But given the history of American policy in the region, including lack of U.S. support for Israel during the 1956 Suez Crisis, that was no guarantee that things would turn out well for the Jewish state.

I had missed the morning news the day the war broke out on June 5, 1967, but one of my best friends hadn't. We always congregated at the back of the cafeteria before classes began, and the first thing he said to me was, “You guys are really giving it to the Arabs.” All day, I stopped by the school office to hear radio newscasts and couldn't wait to get home to listen full time — and to learn that on that first day of the fighting, Israel had destroyed the Arab air forces on the ground. Talk about pride swelling.

From that seminal moment, I knew that whatever I would ultimately wind up doing in life, I wanted to help Israel. I made my first philanthropic contribution of any kind — \$25 — to an Israel emergency fund when the war concluded. I reviewed the names on a petition my father had circulated among merchants and others on Main Street in our town in support of Israel. And I counted the days when one day I'd have a chance to visit Israel myself.



Chaya and Shmuel Arad with three of their children: Dalia, Amatzia and Shlomo, at Kibbutz Beit Zera, circa 1949.

It didn't take long for that to happen. In between my two years in graduate school at Brandeis University, my class spent six weeks on a study tour. On that visit, I managed to spend time with Chaya and her family, and on subsequent visits also spent time with the family of another first cousin of my mother who had survived the Holocaust and settled in Israel.

My first job out of graduate school was with Boston's Jewish Community Relations Council, and one of my assignments was to follow Middle East affairs. So, when major Israeli figures would come to Boston, I got to meet them.

The Yom Kippur War was a jarring episode in this growing relationship, with the tremendous losses Israel suffered on the

battlefield, as it turned back the existential threat its enemies posed. Included among the casualties was Chaya and Shmuel's youngest son Boaz, who was killed on the Golan Heights on the third day of the war. His brother Shlomo, several years older, was to lose his life in a military air crash in Sinai two years later.

Right after the war, two young Israeli veterans came to Boston to study at MIT. Benjamin Netanyahu and Uzi Landau (who later held several cabinet posts in Israel) immediately threw themselves into hasbara efforts on behalf of Israel. I was included in a small group of professionals and lay leaders who met with Bibi, Uzi and other students every morning at the Jewish Federation's office on Franklin Street. When I see

## From the EVP

# Personal Reflections on Israel at 70

each of them today, we pause to reminisce about years that were formative for them — and for me.

In the early seventies, we discovered, quite by coincidence, that long-lost cousins living in the Soviet Union had immigrated to Israel. My mother's last contact with the family had been about 1948. Having worked on Soviet Jewry issues in my job in Boston, I went to see them each time I visited Israel. Today, that family has grown to several dozen relatives.

In 1975, I became the Boston director for the American Zionist Federation (AZF), as well as director of Zionist House, a center for Israel-related cultural activities. It was then that I married Mazal-Michal, a beautiful Israeli born in India, whom I had met on a work-related trip for the AZF. At the same time, my eldest sister and her family made aliyah, intensifying my ties to Eretz Yisrael. Later, my younger sister would also make aliyah.

This personal and professional evolution continued at my next stop, as director for Middle East Affairs at the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in New York. To work all day, every day defending Israel, writing briefing papers and meeting Israeli policy makers, was a dream come true.

Pretty much my first day on the job coincided with the election of Menachem Begin as prime minister in 1977. I was fascinated by Begin's life story. Later the next year, ADL honored Begin at a dinner at the Knesset. My wife asked him for his autograph on the printed program for the evening. Excitedly, my wife came back to our table, telling me Begin had asked to meet me, telling her in his always-courtly way, that he "wanted to meet the young man who married this lovely lady." A photo of Begin toasting us is among my most prized possessions.

In the mid-eighties, we relocated to Washington, D.C., where I had taken a job at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee



Daniel S. Mariaschin with his cousin Esther Fein, who immigrated to Jerusalem from Georgia in the early 1970s.

(AIPAC) working on pro-Israel community outreach. But when the opportunity arose to work on a presidential campaign for former Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr., I immediately took it. Electoral politics had been in my system since I was a youngster ringing doorbells in Swanzy, New Hampshire. I became General Haig's press secretary. A proven friend of Israel, Haig and I spent many hours discussing Middle East issues and his interaction with a long list of policy makers in the region.

When that campaign ended in 1988, I returned to Jewish organizational life. I found a comfortable home at B'nai B'rith International, with its historic ties to the State of Israel and its mission working to build a safe and secure Jewish state. On behalf of the organization, I've traveled to Israel many times with presidents of B'nai B'rith and with leadership missions, and participated in numerous delegations to the United Nations and its agencies to fight bias against Israel, and I have spoken at forums dedicated to combating Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions and other forms of

discrimination against the Jewish state. I'm proud of our continuing role in support of Israel, especially now with the Middle East in chaos and threats on Israel's borders increasing.

Chaya and Shmuel, and now, all four of their children have passed away. Their grandchildren are spread out in Israel. I visited Beit Zera a few years ago, and it looked pretty much the same as in 1972, when after a long bus ride and unsparing summer heat, I first walked through the kibbutz gates to their bungalow, set among date palms and with the silence — the peace, actually — of the place interrupted only by the cooing of doves. My cousins are gone, but what they symbolized to me, as a child and as an adult, has lived on in my work and my attachment to the Zionist idea.

As Israel celebrates its 70th anniversary, I honor them and my parents, who always exuded Ahavat Yisrael — a love of Israel — and all those who set a path for me to work for an Israel strong — and at peace.

To paraphrase the Shehecheyanu prayer: thank You, G-d, for bringing us to this day. 🇮🇱

# Dr. Ruth on Her Childhood in Germany, Being a Sniper for the Haganah and, of Course, Sex

By Lisa Traiger

Dr. Ruth Westheimer didn't invent safe sex, but she made it safe to talk frankly about sex, initially on the radio after midnight on WYNY, where she got her start in 1980. Later, her motherly demeanor in talking about intimate acts led to "The Dr. Ruth Show" on television and to frequent guest appearances on late night programs. Her first how-to manual, *Dr. Ruth's Guide to Good Sex* (1983), became one in a long line of bestsellers. Her latest, *Rollercoaster Grandma*, details her surprisingly adventurous life in graphic novel form for the under-18 set.

This past summer Westheimer turned 90, but you'd never know it. Keeping up with Dr. Ruth is exhausting. A long-time academic, with a doctorate in education, she began her career in public health and at Planned Parenthood. She continues to teach at Columbia University and at Hunter College. Shortly following this conversation, she flew to Israel to film segments for a documentary on her life that will be released in 2019.

She's not computer literate, but she is media savvy: You can follow her on Twitter @AskDrRuth or watch her videos on YouTube. If you chat with Dr. Ruth, she invariably has something to promote — recently it's her own line of low alcohol wines, "Dr. Ruth's Vin D'amour." In 2013, B'nai B'rith presented her with an award "for a life's career of the betterment of humanity throughout the world." B'nai B'rith Magazine caught up with the effervescent sex therapist and educator to talk about her remarkable life and, of course, offer a bit of advice for the bedroom.

**B'nai B'rith Magazine:** You were born into an Orthodox family in Frankfurt, Germany. Can you share a childhood memory of your family life there?

**Dr. Ruth:** People like me who have lost their parents at an early age have an obligation to hold onto some memories, which help them in later life. I was an only child living with my mother and father and paternal grandmother. I went to an Orthodox Jewish school in Frankfurt. I do remember that in early November of 1938, after the Kristallnacht — the Night of Broken Glass — I went with my father to the synagogue. He went very often, and when he went on Friday nights, he took some change in the pocket of his vest — just enough to buy me ice cream, because once the Sabbath would arrive, he wouldn't touch money.

I remember that somebody told him, "Julius, we have to leave. Horrible things are happening." My father told him, "Nothing is going to happen tomorrow. It's a Catholic holiday." And that morning the Nazis came and took him to a labor camp. He sent a note to my mother and grandmother — I was an only child — that I should join the Kindertransport to Switzerland ... I didn't want to go because I had 30 dolls and dollhouses, roller skates, a mother and a grandmother with me, but I had no choice. My father actually saved my life, and he did come back to Frankfurt. Then, they deported him to Lodz and then to Auschwitz.



Photo courtesy of Amazon Publishing.

Dr. Ruth Westheimer.



## Dr. Ruth on Her Childhood in Germany, Being a Sniper for the Haganah and, of Course, Sex

**BBM:** You spent your formative childhood years in a children's home, which ultimately became an orphanage, losing your parents, your home, your sense of a stable life. How did that affect you?

**Dr. Ruth:** I'll tell you: I did this study for my master's at the New School for Social Research. I sought out the children, 50 of them, who were with me in the orphanage in Switzerland and [examined] what happened to them. I was still in touch with many of them. It became very clear that the early socialization, the early years of life, were crucial, because in that study the 50 children who were with me — the youngest was six, the oldest was 14, and I was 10 — they all were in the first years of their life part of an intact family. So, I believe their early socialization in a wonderful loving family is why they made it. That's why none of them committed suicide or had any mental illness because of the importance of family in the early years of their lives — and my life.

**BBM:** In Switzerland you learned to be a house maid and cleaned up for the Swiss girls, then after the war you went to Israel.

**Dr. Ruth:** I was 17 when I got there. I was a sniper in the Haganah. I never killed anybody, but I was very badly wounded on my 20th birthday, June 4, 1948, in both my legs. But I can still put five bullets in the red circle.

After the war, I thought that I would live on a kibbutz for the rest of my life. I was picking tomatoes and olives ... then I worked in the kindergarten. I was so interested in getting into education — I remember my grandmother told me I should teach kindergarten because I was so short. I did not know that I would be a sex therapist ... I wanted to study medicine. But I realized I didn't have a high school diploma. I also met a boyfriend on the kibbutz.



Photo by Steve Friedman.

George Burns was a guest on Dr. Ruth's television show during the 1980s.

**BBM:** And that was your first sexual experience?

**Dr. Ruth:** Just say we were very much in love.

**BBM:** You married quite young.

**Dr. Ruth:** I did. I thought that I'm so short — 4'7" — nobody would ever marry me. I was married three times. My first time in Israel, I married an Israeli soldier. We went to Paris to study, and there I went to the Sorbonne. Husband number one: no children. We are still friends. The second time I met a French fellow who later



Dr. Ruth Westheimer  
@AskDrRuth

**ON TWITTER:**  
<https://twitter.com/AskDrRuth>



**DR. RUTH ON HER  
YOUTUBE CHANNEL:**  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/drruth>

## Dr. Ruth on Her Childhood in Germany, Being a Sniper for the Haganah and, of Course, Sex



B'nai B'rith presented an award to Dr. Ruth in 2013. Left to right: Allan J. Jacobs, president; Dr. Ruth Westheimer; Charles Friedman, president of B'nai B'rith Leo Baeck Unit; and Daniel S. Mariaschin, B'nai B'rith International executive vice president

immigrated to Israel. He's not alive anymore. I had my daughter Miriam when we moved to New York. And then my real marriage was with a German boy, Fred Westheimer, an engineer, with whom I was married for 38 years. We met skiing. He adopted Miriam, and then we had Joel together. And now I have four grandchildren.

**BBM:** You wrote a book about sex in Judaism. What do Jews know that the rest of the world can learn about sex?

**Dr. Ruth:** Yes. "Heavenly Sex: Sexuality in the Jewish Tradition" I wrote with Jonathan Mark, who is Orthodox. On Friday nights, the Orthodox husband says the prayer *Eyshet Chayil*, A Woman of Valor, to his wife: A couple of lines before the end, there is one sentence that I believe is the most sexually arousing sentence that a husband can say to his wife. It says: "There are many women out there who are wonderful, but you," he says to his wife, "are the very best." Hearing that is the best sexual arousal I can think of since the couple should have sex on Friday night, except if she is menstruating.

**BBM:** We've seen a very public discussion this year related to issue of consent with the rise of the #MeToo movement. What do you say?

**Dr. Ruth:** I do not talk about politics. Somebody who talks about orgasms and erections and sex all day long has to stay away from politics. The one thing that I can say to your question is that I hope that any sexual encounter has the consent of both partners.

**BBM:** You're an advocate for sexual literacy for young people. What would you like them to know about sex?

**Dr. Ruth:** First of all, I would like them to put their iPhones away. I'm very concerned that young people are losing the ability to communicate, the art of conversation. I see people sitting in restaurants and each one looks on their iPhone. I need people to be aware of the importance of the relationship, and of conversation. I'm old-fashioned and a square. I say I would like them to be married, or definitely I want them to be in a relationship.

## Dr. Ruth on Her Childhood in Germany, Being a Sniper for the Haganah and, of Course, Sex

**BBM:** How did the off-Broadway play “Becoming Dr. Ruth” come about?

**Dr. Ruth:** A wonderful playwright, Mark St. Germain, wrote a play about Freud [“Freud’s Last Session”] and, when I met him after the show, he said he wanted to write [a play] about me. At first I said no, but then I agreed. Debra Jo Rupp — a wonderful actress — had to take a speech coach to learn my accent! That makes me laugh because when I came to this country and did my academic studies, they told me to take a speech therapist to lose my accent in order to be able to teach here. I said okay, but I didn’t have money for a speech therapist. I was a single mother at the time.

**BBM:** You’ve lived a long and exciting life and changed the way generations talk about sex. What explains your success, and what do you want your legacy to be?

**Dr. Ruth:** Part of it is my being old-fashioned and a square and short. When I started [on] the radio, I was already 50. Then when I did television, I didn’t sit there with a short skirt. What helped me is the accent, because the moment I open my mouth, they know it’s me. What I want for the future is that people should say that I valued family — I have a “joie de vivre” that is hopefully contagious — and that I want the next generation to live in peace. 🇺🇸



Members of the B'nai B'rith Young Leadership Network surround honoree Dr. Ruth at the B'nai B'rith event in New York City in 2013.

### BRIEF VIDEOS

**Holocaust survivor and media personality Dr. Ruth shares her story at the United Nations.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CSzhi7pxQTk>



**Dr. Ruth with Jerry Seinfeld:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wmAx5oRjhSY>





# For the New Year: Old World Tastes and Modern Methods

By Paula Shoyer



Modern Borscht — Beet and Parsnip puree.

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Everyone has a food story, an alternative telling of their life story through their food memories. For some Jewish people the journey began during childhood; for others, the story began when they first tasted or prepared traditional Jewish dishes. We are all very attached to these recipes as they connect us to our heritage.

As we learn more about how food affects our bodies, many classic dishes need to be re-examined, though no one wants to give up cherished family recipes. This Rosh Hashanah, why not take calories out of your favorite recipes, while maintaining the flavors you have grown to love and the connection to your own culinary past?

My own food story began in Brooklyn, New York, watching my grandmother drown rugelach in confectioners' sugar and fry super-thin crepes for her blintzes. Those dishes will forever remind me of her and take me back to a 1970's fuchsia and marigold kitchen and warm smiles and smells. I cannot imagine ever giving up those favorite treats.

No matter where you grew up, if your family celebrated Shabbat or major holidays, even occasionally, certain classic Jewish dishes appeared on your menu year after year. When I started my own home in 1992, I wanted to be a modern cook and wow my guests with the latest food trends. As my family grew, I realized that my children were growing up without many traditional dishes, and I started re-introducing them: matzoh balls every Passover, brisket every Rosh Hashanah, rugelach every Sukkot, doughnuts on Chanukah and chocolate babka, well, every Shabbat and holiday.

## How to Lighten up Your Jewish Favorites

- Reduce sugar, especially in savory dishes
- Prepare a dish with natural, rather than jarred or processed ingredients
- Bake rather than fry components of a dish
- Substitute 25 percent whole grain flour for white flour in your challah or dessert
- Avoid kugel — serve sides with vegetables that still look like themselves, or try to substitute healthier ingredients such as ground almonds and egg whites to lighten up your favorite kugel

## Rosh Hashanah Menu

1. Chicken Soup with Chicken Meatballs and Zucchini Spaghetti
2. Brisket Osso Buco
3. Tzimmis Purée
4. Spelt Chocolate Babka

Today, however, our food proclivities gravitate toward more plant-based dishes and natural food. More people have developed food allergies and diabetes, and it is clear that lightening up food is good for our hearts and our gut. So where does that leave our bubbe's food, full of carbs, fat and sugar?

While traveling around the United States giving cooking classes, I meet many kinds of Jewish cooks. I have met people who, like me, try to include both traditional and modern food in family meals. Yet, in some Jewish communities people are still eating as we did back in the 1960s — sugar in every salad dressing and stew, kugels at every meal, a heavy emphasis on jarred sauces and the permanent status of the deli roll on Shabbat tables. When I have encouraged some to update their family recipes, I have been met with resistance as "everyone loves them."

If we change the recipes, will they still taste like our grandmother's versions? Is there a point at which a recipe has veered too far from its original that it's no longer authentic, or must we embrace all the new forms of a traditional dish?

At the same time, I also wonder about those unhealthy recipes, many of which were American adaptations, as it is unlikely that there was ketchup and brown sugar in the shtetl. Maybe what

## For the New Year: Old World Tastes and Modern Methods

I'm trying to do is connect us further back, so cooks skip over the results of efforts to make immigrant food more American.

Leah Koenig, author of "Modern Jewish Cooking" and the "Little Book of Jewish Appetizers," says that "When it comes to Jewish recipes, I think creativity and adaptations are not just acceptable, they are woven into the fabric of Jewish cuisine." Essentially, we have always had to adapt recipes where we lived to the ingredients and tools available. She adds, "As our world has gotten more global and interconnected, this evolution has sped up."

That evolution is most evident on Instagram and Facebook, where every Jewish holiday, if not every week, we are exposed to a multitude of variations of iconic Jewish dishes. Hamantaschen have appeared in so many outrageous forms: brisket taco hamantaschen, sushi hamantaschen and my own matcha green tea ones. It seems that no matter how you vary the dough or what you place inside, it can still be called "hamantaschen," so long as it is triangular.

"The New Yiddish Kitchen" cookbook by Jennifer Robins and Simone Miller addresses the need for gluten-free Jewish holiday recipes. In recent years, challah has been successfully adapted for different diets, whether gluten-free, vegan pretzel and whole-grain for better health. I have been shocked by challahs dyed to look like a rainbow to serve on the Shabbat when we read the book of Noah, and challahs filled with everything from olives and za'atar to chocolate chunks. As long it is braided, is it still challah? From a halachic standpoint, 1/8 of the recipe must be made from one of five grains (wheat, barley, spelt, rice or rye) to be used as "challah," and the motzi blessing made on Shabbat.

Shannon Sarna, author of "Modern Jewish Baker," sees her different types of challah as "a way to merge old and new, and create something comforting but also unexpected." It seems that when it comes to challah, like the hamantaschen, the shaping and texture, more than the flavor, is what is nostalgic to most people.

When it comes to savory food, I have noticed that Ashkenazi cooks are more inclined to "play" with their recipes. Limor Decter, a Sephardi whose husband is Ashkenazi, balances both cuisines: "There are staples from each cuisine that stay as classics, such chicken soup, challah and lachmagine. The rest of the meal is really based on seasonal ingredients." Decter tries out new recipes every week. This sentiment is echoed by Canadian cookbook author Norene Gilletz. "There's a place for traditional dishes at the family table," she says, "but it's fun to add a few new twists and turns to your menu."

Chef Levana Kirschenbaum believes that Sephardic food was inherently healthy so "we never grew up worrying about how to make

a dish healthier." She has spent her entire career inspiring home cooks to adapt the Sephardic approach and create healthier meals, and believes that even when you make a dish lighter "the dish keeps its integrity."

In her "Little Book of Jewish Appetizers," Leah Koenig has a recipe for borscht crostini, which takes the building blocks of borscht (roasted beets and carrots, sour cream, fresh dill, garlic and lemon) and "transforms them into a flavorful crostini," by serving a mixture on oven-toasted bread. "Flavor-wise, there is a clear through line back to what came before." In my latest cookbook "The Healthy Jewish Kitchen," my grandmother's stuffed cabbage is prepared with ground turkey and brown rice and somehow still tastes surprisingly like the original recipe, just as Leah's crostini still tastes overall like classic borscht. Clearly, there are ways to lighten up Jewish recipes to improve our health as well as market them to a new audience.

The goal is to preserve our cultural heritage by making recipes more modern with our contemporary approach to nutrition and to ensure that cooks do not abandon the iconic dishes because they are no longer good for us in their original form. I believe that we can have our babka and eat it too, keeping our food history while making the recipes more healthful and creating menus that balance old and new.

This year, try gluten-free chicken meatballs in your soup rather than matzoh balls, which look identical, and enjoy whole grain challah, babka, rugelach and strudel. The tastes will transport you back to the food influences from days and people long gone, while ensuring that you will have a healthier New Year. 🍷

## For the New Year: Old World Tastes and Modern Methods



### CHICKEN SOUP WITH CHICKEN MEATBALLS AND ZUCCHINI SPAGHETTI

Meat, Passover  
Serves 14–16

**PREP TIME** 25 minutes

**COOK TIME** 2 hours, 8 minutes

**ADVANCE PREP** Soup may be made 3 days in advance or frozen; meatballs may be made 1 day in advance

#### Equipment

- Measuring cups and spoons
- Large soup pot
- Cutting board
- Knives
- Vegetable peeler
- 2 medium bowls
- Large sieve or strainer
- Garlic press
- Food processor

#### SOUP

- 2 whole medium chickens, cut into pieces
- 2 large onions, quartered
- 6 carrots, peeled and cut in half
- 1 leek, white and light green parts only, cut lengthwise in half
- 6 stalks celery with leaves, cut crosswise in half
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled
- 2 parsnips, peeled and cut in thirds
- 1 fennel bulb, quartered
- 1 turnip, peeled and quartered
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 1 gallon (3.8 L) water
- 1/2 bunch parsley
- 1/2 bunch dill
- Salt and black pepper

#### CHICKEN MEATBALLS

- 2 boneless chicken breasts (about 5–6 ounces each)
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) chicken stock
- 2 tablespoons ground almonds or matzoh meal
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 large egg
- 2 scallions, thinly sliced
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

#### GARNISH

- 2 medium zucchini, not peeled

#### To make the soup

**PLACE** the chicken pieces in a large pot. Add the onions, carrots, leek, celery, garlic, parsnips, fennel, turnip, bay leaves, and salt. Add the water and bring to a boil. Use a large spoon to skim the scum off the top of the soup. Cover the pot, reduce the heat to low, and let the soup simmer, checking after 5 minutes and skimming off any additional scum. Add the parsley and dill, cover and simmer for 2 hours. Let cool. Strain through a large sieve, reserving the carrots to return to the soup when serving. Taste the soup and add more salt or pepper if necessary.

#### To make the meatballs

**WHILE** the soup is cooking, prepare the meatball mixture. In the bowl of a food processor with the metal blade attachment, mix together the chicken, stock, ground almonds, garlic and egg until a paste forms. Add the scallions, salt and pepper, and pulse a few times to mix. Transfer the meatball mixture to a medium bowl, cover with plastic wrap and chill for up to 1 day, until ready to shape and cook the meatballs.

**USE** a spoon to scoop up the meatball batter and wet hands to shape it into 1 1/2-inch (4 cm) balls. Bring the strained soup to a simmer, add the meatballs, cover and cook for 8 minutes.

To make the garnish

**MEANWHILE**, prepare the zucchini “spaghetti” for the garnish. Slice the zucchini lengthwise into 1/4-inch-thick (6 mm) slices. Keeping the stack together, use a vegetable peeler to shave the zucchini into long strips. Slice the reserved cooked carrots into rounds and return them to the soup. Top each serving of soup and meatballs with some of the zucchini spaghetti.

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## For the New Year: Old World Tastes and Modern Methods



### BRISKET OSSO BUCO

Gluten-free, Meat, Passover  
Serves 10

<b>PREP TIME</b>	25 minutes
<b>COOK TIME</b>	2 hours, 45 minutes
<b>ADVANCE PREP</b>	May be made 3 days in advance; add gremolata after brisket is reheated

#### Equipment

- Cutting board
- Knives, including a good carving knife
- Vegetable peeler
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Zester
- Garlic press
- Large frying pan with 2-inch (5 cm) sides or Dutch oven
- Wooden spoon or silicone spatula
- Small bowl

### BRISKET

1/4 cup (60 mL) extra virgin olive oil  
1/4 cup (35 g) potato starch (40 g)  
1 (3 pound/1.4 kg) brisket  
2 large onions, cut in half and sliced  
2 carrots, peeled and thinly sliced into rounds  
2 stalks celery, thinly sliced  
1 bay leaf  
1/2 cup (120 mL) white wine  
1 can (28 ounce/795 g) whole peeled or diced tomatoes  
2 tablespoons tomato paste, or 1/2 cup (120 mL) tomato sauce  
Salt and black pepper

### GREMOLATA

2 tablespoons finely chopped fresh parsley  
4 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 tablespoon lemon zest (from 1 lemon)

**PREHEAT** oven to 375°F (190°C).

**HEAT** the oil in a large frying pan with 2-inch (5 cm) sides or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Sprinkle the potato starch on both sides of the meat, shaking off any excess, and brown both sides of the meat until crispy parts develop. Remove to a plate. Add the onions, carrots, celery and bay leaf to the pan and cook over medium heat, using a wooden spoon or silicone spatula to scrape up any pieces of meat that are stuck to the bottom of the pan. Cook until the onions are translucent, about 5 minutes.

**ADD** the wine and cook until most of it has boiled off and only a little liquid is left around the vegetables. Add the canned tomatoes, including their juices, and tomato paste to the pan and bring to a boil. If you used a Dutch oven, return the meat to the pan. If you used a frying pan, transfer the vegetables and sauce to a baking pan and place the meat on top. Add salt and a generous amount of pepper. Cover tightly with aluminum foil and bake for 1 1/2 hours. **MEANWHILE**, prepare the gremolata. Combine the parsley, garlic and lemon zest in a small bowl. Cover and place in the fridge until ready to serve. Gremolata may be made 1 day in advance.

**REMOVE** the pan from the oven, place the meat on a cutting board, and slice against the grain into 1/3-inch-thick (8 mm) slices. Return the slices to the pan, cover and bake for another 1 1/4 hours. Sprinkle the gremolata over the meat in the pan, stirring some into the sauce. Serve in pan or transfer to a serving dish.

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## For the New Year: Old World Tastes and Modern Methods



### TZIMMIS PURÉE

Gluten-free, Vegan, Passover  
Serves 10–12

**PREP TIME** 8 minutes  
**COOK TIME** 32 minutes  
**ADVANCE PREP** May be made 2 days in advance

#### Equipment

- Measuring cups and spoons
- Cutting board
- Knife
- Vegetable peeler
- Microplane zester
- Medium saucepan
- Silicone spatula or wooden spoon
- Immersion blender or food processor

1 tablespoon sunflower or safflower oil  
1 medium onion, cut into 1-inch (2.5 cm) pieces  
2 cloves garlic, chopped  
2 pounds (1 kg) sweet potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch (2.5 cm) cubes  
4 carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch (2.5 cm) chunks  
1 cup (200 g) dried apricots  
1/2 teaspoon orange zest (from 1 orange)  
1 cinnamon stick  
2 cups (480 mL) water  
Salt and black pepper to taste

**HEAT** the oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the onions and cook them for 3 to 5 minutes, or until translucent and just starting to color. Add the garlic and cook for another 2 minutes.

**ADD** the sweet potatoes, carrots, apricots, orange zest, cinnamon stick and water, and bring to a boil. Stir the mixture, cover it and cook for 20 to 25 minutes, or until the carrots and sweet potatoes are soft. Let the mixture cool for 10 minutes, covered.

**REMOVE** the cinnamon stick and use either an immersion blender to purée the mixture until it is smooth, or transfer it to a food processor. Taste the tzimmes and add salt and pepper if desired.

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#### White Sweet Potatoes?

When I was living in Geneva, Switzerland in the 1990s, I celebrated Thanksgiving every year. The first year, I went to the Migros supermarket and bought sweet potatoes that looked just like the ones we had at home. I schlepped my groceries home and proceeded to peel the sweet potatoes only to discover that they were white inside. Confused, I went to another store and bought some more. After the second batch was also white inside, I gave up and continued with my side dish, which tasted great but was not orange, as planned. So, if you cannot find orange sweet potatoes where you live, use butternut squash instead. I have since learned that there are 6,500 varieties of sweet potatoes with flesh that might be red-orange, yellow-orange, dark orange, cream or white.

## For the New Year: Old World Tastes and Modern Methods



### SPELT CHOCOLATE BABKA

Parve

Makes 1 loaf

**PREP TIME** 13 minutes for dough; first rising 1 to 1½ hours; 10 minutes to prepare filling and assemble; second rising 30 minutes

**BAKE TIME** 30 minutes

**ADVANCE PREP** May be made 3 days in advance or frozen

#### Equipment

- Measuring cups and spoons
- Stand mixer
- Plastic wrap
- Medium microwave-safe bowl
- Silicone spatula
- Whisk
- 12-inch (30-cm) loaf pan
- Parchment
- Kitchen scissors
- Rolling pin
- Long flat-blade knife

#### DOUGH

- 1/4 cup (60 mL) water
- 2 envelopes (1/2 ounce [15 g]) active dry yeast
- 1/3 cup (65 g) plus 1 teaspoon sugar, divided
- 1 1/2 cups (165 g) spelt flour, plus extra for dusting
- 3/4 cup (95 g) all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup (65 g) whole-wheat flour
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) sunflower or other mild oil
- 6 tablespoons (90 mL) coconut oil or spread
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- 2 large eggs, plus 1 egg white (reserve 1 yolk for glaze)

#### FILLING

- 5 ounces (140 g) bittersweet chocolate, broken into small squares
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 cup (20 g) dark unsweetened cocoa
- 2 tablespoons sunflower or other mild oil cooking spray
- 3/4 cup (125 g) chocolate chips

**PLACE** the water, yeast and 1 teaspoon of the sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer. Mix and let sit for 8 to 10 minutes, or until thick. Add the remaining 1/3 cup (65 g) sugar, spelt flour, all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, sunflower oil, coconut oil, vanilla, 2 eggs and 1 egg white to the mixture. Combine it by hand or use a dough hook attachment until all the ingredients are mixed together. Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and let the dough rise for 1 1/2 to 2 hours, or until it is spongy.

**WHEN** the dough is almost ready to be rolled out, place the bittersweet chocolate in a microwave-safe medium glass bowl. Heat the chocolate in the microwave oven for 1 minute and stir. Heat it for another 45 seconds and stir, and then heat for another 30 seconds, if needed, and stir until it is completely melted. Add the sugar, cocoa and oil to the chocolate, and whisk it well. Place the mixture in the freezer for 5 minutes. Whisk it again.

**USE** cooking spray to grease a 12-inch (30 cm) loaf pan. Trace the bottom of the loaf pan onto a piece of parchment paper and cut it out. Place the rectangle on the bottom of the pan and spray it.

**PLACE** a large piece of parchment paper on your counter. Sprinkle a little spelt flour on top of it. Roll out the dough until it is about 12 x 18 inches (30 x 46 cm) to 13 x 19 inches (33 x 48 cm). Spread the filling over the dough, all the way to the edges. Sprinkle the chocolate chips over the top of the filling and roll up the dough the long way.

**WRAP** the roll in the parchment paper and place in the freezer for 5 minutes to firm up. Remove the roll from the freezer, unwrap it with the seam on the bottom, and use a large flat-blade knife to slice it in half lengthwise. Turn each half of the roll so that the cut sides face up and drape over each other in an "X." On each side of the "X," twist the 2 strands over and under each other, keeping the cut side facing up. Tuck the ends under the loaf so that they touch or slightly overlap each other in the center.

**PLACE** the loaf in the prepared pan.

**LET** the babka rise for 30 minutes. Brush the top with the reserved egg yolk mixed with 1 teaspoon of water. Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Bake the babka for 30 minutes, or until it is golden brown. Let it cool for 10 minutes and then turn it out onto a wire cooling rack.

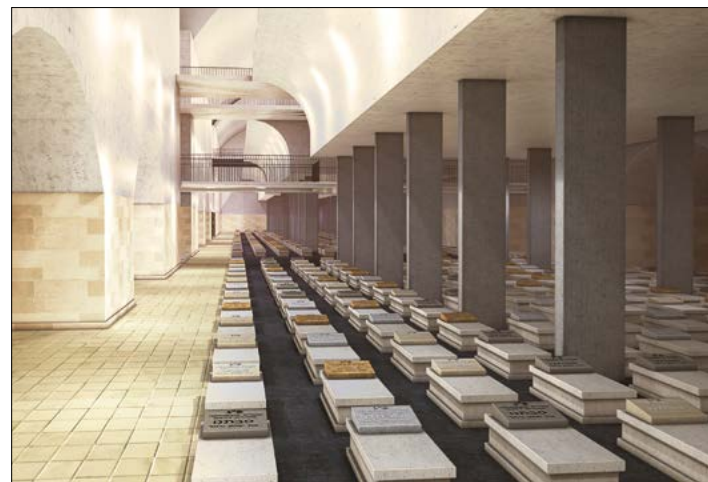
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# People Are Dying to Get in, but Israeli Cemeteries Are Running Out of Space

By Michele Chabin

All photos by Debbie Hill, taken at the construction site of Har Hamenuchot Cemetery, May 8, 2018.



Courtesy of Arik Glazer, Rolzur.

Renderings show how the underground Har Hamenuchot Cemetery, now under construction in Jerusalem, will look upon completion.

As the general manager of Kehilat Yerushalayim, Jerusalem's largest Jewish burial society, Hananya Shachor has a lot on his professional plate.

Every year the society, one of more than a dozen in the city, interrs about 1,800 people, a job that requires not only a deep knowledge of Jewish law and Israeli burial practices but also strong administrative skills.

Kehilat Yerushalayim performs several funerals a day at the sprawling, multi-level Har Hamenuchot cemetery, built into the side of a mountain, and at two other cemeteries in Jerusalem. It also allocates or sells interment space to local residents and Diaspora Jews wishing to be buried in the holy city.

But graves and other interment spaces are in short supply in Jerusalem, where close to 4,000 people are interred every year. The Har Hamenuchot, Sanhedria and ancient Mount of Olives cemeteries are nearly full and hemmed in on all sides. Har Herzl, the city's military cemetery, provides burial to a limited number of Israeli dignitaries and soldiers killed while serving in the Israel Defense Forces.

Anxiety over the decreasing supply of land to bury the dead used to keep Shachor awake at night. That began to change four years ago, when Arik Glazer, an Israeli tunnel engineer, asked Shachor, for a meeting.

Glazer, managing director of Rolzur Tunneling, an Israeli company that plans and builds infrastructure like tunnels and bridges,



Rendering of a visitor entrance to the underground Har Hamenuchot Cemetery, under construction. Courtesy of Arik Glazer, Rolzur.

had an idea. He proposed building the world's first modern-day subterranean cemetery below the existing Har Hamenuchot cemetery.

## Interment Infrastructure

The project called for the construction of a half-mile long underground cemetery 164 feet deep, the height of a 15-story building.

The \$50 million project, which is being funded solely by the burial society with financing from Rolzur, will provide space for

## People Are Dying to Get in, but Israeli Cemeteries Are Running Out of Space

22,000 in-ground and other interment spaces when completed in five years or so. Some spaces are expected to be ready next year.

The burial society hopes to recoup the money through the sales of spaces to Diaspora Jews wishing to be interred in Jerusalem. Such funerals — not including interment, which is free to Israelis — typically cost \$15,000 to \$25,000, Shachor said.

These 22,000 spaces should meet the burial society's needs for at least a dozen years because many Israelis and Diaspora Jews have already purchased places — either graves or in “pre-cast” structures — in an existing cemetery, often next to loved ones, and will be buried in them when the time comes.

The project, well underway, required Rolzur to burrow a huge tunnel or cavern from solid rock. Three elevators, each with the capacity to convey 90 people, will bring mourners to the cemetery's three levels.

The lowest level will provide in-ground graves as well as a new concept: niche spaces burrowed into the cemetery's rock walls. A third option will provide interment in pre-cast boxes, one stacked on top of the other, faced in stone. In the latter two cases, a layer of soil from the cemetery will be placed in the spaces before the deceased is placed inside.

Unlike Jerusalem's above-ground cemeteries, this one will be accessible to people with disabilities, and anyone with mobility problems can be transported by golf cart. The space will be air-conditioned, so mourners will not have to contend with Israel's fierce summer heat.

There will also be a small museum that explains the long history of underground Jewish burial.

Glazer came up with the idea for a subterranean cemetery while driving from his office in Petach Tikvah, a city east of Tel Aviv, to Jerusalem for a construction project. “I was coming to Jerusalem to work every day and the first thing I saw on the outskirts of the city was a cemetery, Har Hamenuhot.”

“I thought, ‘This is Israel's capital. The first view of Jerusalem shouldn't be a cemetery.’ It really bothered me,” Glazer said, pointing to building plans and architectural illustrations pegged to the walls of his dusty prefab office at the underground cemetery's entrance.

When Glazer began to research subterranean cemeteries, he found many references to Jewish, Roman and other rock-cut tombs or catacombs dating back as far as 2,000 years. The only contemporary reference was to a 1992 research paper by a Technion profes-



Arik Glazer, managing director of Rolzur, stands outside one of the tunnel entrances to the underground cemetery project.



Arik Glazer, managing director of Rolzur, explains blueprints and artist renderings in an office trailer at the underground cemetery project in the Har Hamenuhot Cemetery in Jerusalem.

sor that mostly explored the logistics of creating an underground cemetery from a Jewish law perspective.

Once Glazer learned, after consulting several prominent rabbis, that an underground cemetery could be considered “kosher,” he assembled a team of engineers and an architect to draw up a plan. When the plan was completed, he searched for the appropriate government official. He couldn't find one.



# People Are Dying to Get in, but Israeli Cemeteries Are Running Out of Space

## Burying the Issue

"When it comes to building roads, tunnels or railroads, it's a government issue. But cemetery expansion is considered a business and not an issue for the government," he said.

Shachor concurs.

"There is no one taking charge of this problem. Not the Ministry of Religion and not the Ministry of Infrastructure. No one wants to speak about the future of cemeteries."

Eventually Glazer heard that Kehilat Yerushalayim was searching for ways to create more space, and he contacted Shachor.

"When we met, Hananya asked me, 'Where were you? I was expecting you years ago!'"

"Arik came to me with a very, very good business model," Shachor recalled. "It was as if someone had brought ice cream when everyone else brought sour milk."

The plan resonated right away, "because this way of burying has been part of Jewish tradition from Second Temple times," Shachor said. "The only graves that exist from ancient times are the ones that were built in caves and tunnels."

## The Urban Space Crunch

While Jerusalem, a city of more than 850,000 with a booming birth rate, may be feeling the land crunch more acutely than some other municipalities, the shortage of land for burial afflicts many cities around the world.

"There's definitely an urban cemetery space crunch," Florida State University Professor of Urban and Regional Planning Christopher Coutts told the publication, *Forbes*. "Space is at the highest premium in urban centers."

Urban cemeteries, which serve large numbers of people, run out of space sooner and charge more for their services than their rural counterparts. On average, a burial in the United States costs \$7,000 to \$10,000. That is one reason more than half of American funerals in 2016 involved cremation, according to the National Funeral Directors Association.

Although cremation is available in Israel, almost no Jews choose this option because Jewish law forbids it, and because the country's National Insurance Institute, Israel's Social Security agency, won't pay for it.

All Israelis are entitled to free funerals and burials within their respective municipalities, but some, like those being interred at the existing Har Hamenuhot cemetery, are entombed, not buried in the ground.

Rabbi Jay Karzen, chairman of the bereavement and cemetery committee at the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel (AACI), believes the construction of a subterranean cemetery is "a wonderful, creative idea."



A worker carries material under burial niches in the wall, where bodies will be buried, in the underground cemetery project under construction.



A worker walks on top of precast graves under construction in the cemetery project.



Workers carry materials in the tunnels where the underground cemetery project is being built.



## People Are Dying to Get in, but Israeli Cemeteries Are Running Out of Space



Construction is in progress to build the underground addition to Har Hamenuhot Cemetery, which is a half-mile long and 164 feet deep, the height of a 15-story building.



Har Hamenuhot is “a very big cemetery, but the population of Jerusalem is growing, thank God, and they need more space, and they are already building up vertically,” Karzen said, referring to the pre-cast spaces that various burial societies have built there in recent years.

“This is a way of handling the overflow,” Karzen said.

Karzen acknowledged that “not everyone is happy” with the pre-casts in the existing cemetery, which some mourners have likened to stackable shelving or beehives. It remains to be seen whether the pre-casts or stone wall niches will be any more popular below ground.

“Most of the underground cemetery’s graves will be wall graves,” Karzen said. “Halachically it’s okay and kosher, but there are many people who would prefer to be buried in the ground and not in a wall.”

Jerusalem residents can arrange to be buried in ground-only cemeteries elsewhere, but that burial will cost thousands of dollars, Karzen said.

Despite some hesitations, others believe the subterranean cemetery idea is a great idea, and yet others have no opinion. Says Sarah Kaye, a technical writer, “When I’m dead, I’m dead. I don’t care where I’m buried.”

Another Israeli woman, who declined to be named, called the concept of building a subterranean cemetery “a terrible idea.” “What an ordeal mourners would have to go through just to get

to the burial site. It’s not about the deceased at that point, it’s about their living loved ones and their comfort,” she said.

Shachor insisted that, once completed, all sections of the cemetery below and above ground will be dignified places of burial. While sympathetic to criticism, he said Jerusalem’s burial societies have run out of options.

“There is open space in Israel for cemeteries, but I can’t see building one in the Negev desert” in the south, “because it would require Jerusalem families to drive hours each way. It would be a burden on the mourners.”

Throughout history, Shachor said, communities have built their cemeteries very close to home, and creating cemeteries underground will enable them to continue this practice.

The unchecked expansion of cemeteries on valuable land within and adjacent to urban areas must stop, he said. “This land must be used for the living. If we don’t do something our grandchildren won’t have a place to live.”

Other municipalities around the world are beginning to show interest in Rolzur’s concept, which was one of three finalists in the 2015 International Tunneling and Underground Space Association competition in the innovation category.

Lack of burial space is a worldwide problem, but it’s also about the role religion, tradition, culture and respect play in how we wish to be interred. Respecting their wishes is the last thing we can do for people,” Glazer said. ☑

# New Jewish Operatic Treatments Are Flourishing

By Cheryl Kempler



Photo by Robert Kusel/Lyric Opera of Chicago.

"The Passenger."

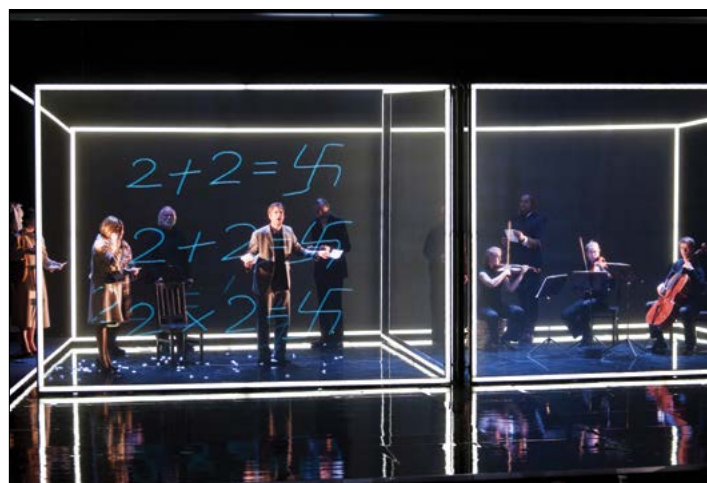


Photo by Regine Koerner, Munich.

"L'Absence."

Fraught with dramatic intensity that surpasses any work of fiction, Jewish history has lent itself to operatic treatment. Inspired by musical styles including jazz, blues, traditional liturgy and beyond, as well as the diverse blending of traditional genres, the gifted men and women who compose them do not merely address earth-shattering events but also the psychological consequences that have colored the lives of both victims and persecutors, and of those born later.

A select survey of operas with Jewish themes that have premiered this decade also reveals many sources and dramatic and visual approaches, as well as the varied backgrounds and concerns of the composers, lyricists, librettists and artistic directors.

The recent entries include "The Passenger," an operatic treatment of a Polish radio play; "L'Absence," inspired by an experimental Egyptian novel; "The Red Heifer," a folk opera based on a 19th century "blood libel" incident in Hungary; and "Iron & Coal," a choral work about the composer and his father.

## The Unnerved Passenger

The past intrudes on the present in "The Passenger," by composer Mieczysław Weinberg. In the opera, a former Auschwitz guard glimpses a fellow traveler who resembles, or perhaps might even be, the prisoner she killed a decade earlier.

Unnerved, she relives the events that transpired in the camp, now hellishly reconstituted in the bowels of the ship. The gifted Weinberg, a Polish Jew who lived and worked in the Soviet Union, turned

out a prolific body of orchestral and vocal works and film scores but was compelled to conform to the Soviets' demand for readily understandable music weighted toward the melodic. Despite these restrictions, he was able to forge an original and very strong style.

David Pountney, the English director of the opera's first production at the 2010 Bregenz Festival in Austria, has described the work as "never prone to emotional grandstanding ... but the delicacy and patience with which [Weinberg] establishes the timeless misery of prison life, and allows the story's weight of emotion to speak for itself, is masterly."

Weinberg, the son-in-law of actor/director Solomon Mikhoels, among the internationally celebrated Russian artists purged by Stalin, was himself arrested and barely escaped the same fate. His choice of a Jewish subject matter was probably the reason for the cancellation of the opera's scheduled 1968 premiere in the Soviet Union. The opera, completed 50 years ago, wasn't fully staged until 2010.

Included in next season's repertory at the Israeli Opera, "The Passenger" has been performed by major European and American companies, and is also available on DVD.

## The Absence of Roots

The libretto of Berlin-based composer Sarah Nemtsov's highly cerebral "L'Absence" premiered in March 2012 and was inspired by "Book of Questions," the experimental Egyptian novel by Edmond Jabès.

Opening the Munich Biennale, a festival showcasing emerging

## New Jewish Operatic Treatments Are Flourishing



Photo by Eszter Gordon.

"The Red Heifer."



Photo by Jim Saah.

"Iron & Coal."

composers, Nemtsov's five-act opera "L'Absence" explores the condition of the itinerant and rootless, as revealed through the mind of Sarah, a young woman who has suffered the trauma of the Holocaust. The role, shared by a soprano and a dancer, literally personifies Sarah's conflict between mind and body. Her splintered personality is demanding for both artists who must interact, physically and psychically.

Confined in a series of box-like spaces, Sarah is detached from her inner life. This state is conveyed by the composer's dissonant music — constructed on mathematical principles and punctuated by non-musical sounds and human cries, as well as fragmented echoes of Klezmer, Jewish melodies and chants. Nemtsov has commented that "even if the audience might not be able to retrieve all of these layers [of sounds], it was important for me to include them as a musical reminiscence of my own Jewish identity."

"L'Absence" was directed by Jasmin Solfaghari, an Iranian Muslim now living in Germany who said she "read up on the vast Jewish background of this work, which was overwhelming."

### Recalling the Blood Libel

First produced in 2013, "The Red Heifer," Iván Fischer's folk opera, looks back to a 19th century blood libel incident in Hungary.

History tolls a warning bell in "The Red Heifer," a reference to the calf sacrificed for ritual purification, as described in the Torah. Composed by the Hungarian conductor Iván Fischer, the opera received extensive press coverage during its October 2013 premiere at

Budapest's contemporary space, the Millenáris Teátrum. A year later, it was performed in Germany.

The opera paints a stylized picture of a Hungarian village, where in 1883 authorities forced a 13-year-old boy to testify that he saw his father commit ritual murder — a libel that Jews used Christian children's blood to make matzot. The defendants continued to endure persecution, even after they were acquitted.

Influenced by a range of styles spanning several centuries, its score pays homage to J.S. Bach, Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Kurt Weill and others, and is augmented by Klezmer tunes and gypsy dances. Bringing the audience into the present are modern sounds: Muzak, ring tones, and the vuvuzela, a loud plastic horn whose overpowering toots are an essential component of soccer stadium culture. For the Jewish composer, it's as if nothing has changed after 135 years, Hungary's anti-Semitic Jobbik party continues to perpetuate the blood libel and still venerates the murdered girl's memorial statue.

### A Father and Son Reckoning with the Past

"Iron & Coal," which premiered in May 2018 at the Music Center at Strathmore, in North Bethesda, Maryland, is a choral work about the composer and his father, a Holocaust survivor who spent a year at Auschwitz concentration camp at the age of 10.

The multimedia piece by pianist/songwriter Jeremy Schonfeld is scored for orchestra and rock band, showcasing an onstage performance by the composer himself.

Colored lights dart across the stage. Projected onto a translucent



## New Jewish Operatic Treatments Are Flourishing

screen are snippets of home movies, prewar newsreels and animated graphics depicting the protagonists. They are intended to transport the audience from the everyday world of today into the past, and ultimately to the realm of heaven. These images connect the dots of a narrative that unfolds over 70 years.

Including a cast of adult and children's choruses, two singing actors, dancers and Schonfeld, as himself, this ballad-gospel-rock-opera-oratorio mélange interpolates passages excerpted from the memoirs of his father, Gustav, who lived to become a doctor, scientist and family man. Speaking of the work's emotional trajectory — from disappointment and despair to fulfillment achieved through the renewal of bonds, Schonfeld said the father-son collaboration was key.

"Our father's life — his bravery, strength and even the questioning of his faith — was not remote, or unconnected to us," he said. "His presence defined our family and continues to determine the course of my life. My dad really did understand me and was proud of me."

"Iron & Coal" begins with Jeremy's song, a response to a choral setting of the Kaddish mourner's prayer signaling Gustav's death.

Only at the finale does this milestone culminate in the son's realization that "it was at his death that we rediscovered who we really were."

### More to Come

More projects are unfolding. In June, Marisa Michelson's oratorio about Noah's wife and the flood, "Naamah's Ark," inspired by Hurricane Sandy, premiered at the 2018 River to River Festival at Rockefeller Park along the Hudson River in Lower Manhattan.

It was, according to the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council, yet another opportunity for "shared music-making to explore themes of diversity, the role of women in society and the possible devastation of climate change."

Already generating a buzz is the scheduled 2020 performance of American composer Matthew Aucoin's staging of the poetry of German poet and Holocaust survivor Paul Celan. San Francisco's Philharmonia's "Jews and Music Initiative" commissioned Aucoin, 28, the Los Angeles Opera's artist-in-residence and conductor, to write the work. It focuses on the impact of Jewish performers and composers from the 17th century to the present. [📺](#)

Watch live performances of three of the operas described in this article by clicking on the links below:



**"The Passenger,"** produced at the 2010 Bregenz Festival

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Wv2ol2sdk>



**"L'Absence,"** excerpts from the 2012 Munich Biennale

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLC-nBWffVxqTiAsH4eE6yG-0Bx7YXKxe9>



**"The Red Heifer,"** 2013 world premiere in Budapest, Hungary

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtjX-VPeOt24>



Hear excerpts from "Iron & Coal" by clicking on the link below:

[https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTNQfqiQeBIyOhKy\\_PbpjJaaMc-LH1n](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLTNQfqiQeBIyOhKy_PbpjJaaMc-LH1n)

# B'NAI B'RITH TODAY

## From Buenos Aires: B'nai B'rith Argentina Active on Many Fronts

*By Susana Chalón de Nesis, B'nai B'rith International Vice President, translated from Spanish, with Eugene L. Meyer*

With the largest Jewish population in South America, Argentina has been a fertile ground for B'nai B'rith, and the organization has a robust program and agenda to meet the needs of citizens regardless of religion or race. These include providing free medicines to impoverished areas, sponsoring a long-running social and cultural club for the blind, and holding events recalling pogroms targeting Jews prior to World War II.

### National Medicine Donation Program

Since 2002, B'nai B'rith Argentina has distributed medicine valued at more than \$75 million free of charge to national, provincial and municipal medical institutions in Argentina.

In June, B'nai B'rith Argentina expanded its medical mission to provide medicines and supplies, shipped from the United States, for thousands of Venezuelan refugees fleeing to city of Cúcuta in neighboring Colombia. Fundación OSDE, Cemic (The Center for Medical Education and Clinical Research) and other private organizations are sending medical professionals to assist in this humanitarian crisis.

Among those participating in the official launching of this program on June 6 in Buenos Aires were Jorge Faurie, Argentine minister of foreign affairs and worship; Marcelo Stubrin, Argentine ambassador to Colombia; and Martin Torres, the operations coordinator of the White Helmets in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



On June 7, the Humanitarian Assistance Program to aid refugees from Venezuela was launched at the San Martín Palace in Buenos Aires. Argentine government officials and members of the Executive Committee of B'nai B'rith Argentina met with the group of doctors and primary health care professionals leaving for the Colombian city of Cúcuta, near the Venezuelan border.

Present from B'nai B'rith Argentina were executive committee members Susana Chalón de Nesis, international vice president; David Petliuk, president; Daniel Sporn, vice president and chair, B'nai B'rith Communities in Crisis; and Santiago Kuperwajs, secretary general.

B'nai B'rith International Communities in Crisis was founded in March 2002 and B'nai B'rith Argentina was the first district to take part in this program. Over the years, B'nai B'rith has provided funds to ship lifesaving medical supplies and pharmaceuticals procured from Pittsburgh-based Brother's

Brother Foundation to B'nai B'rith leaders in Latin America who work with local government agencies and foundations to ensure that supplies reach clinics, hospitals and persons in need following a disaster or emergency.

### Friendship Club for the Blind

Since its founding by German immigrant women in 1959, the Friendship Club for the Blind has met regularly under the auspices of B'nai B'rith Argentina. Gathering every other week on Mondays at the B'nai B'rith headquarters in downtown Buenos Aires, participants socialize, eat pastries, sip tea,



## From Buenos Aires: B'nai B'rith Argentina Active on Many Fronts

sing, listen to music and dance. Some 30 to 50 people attend, and the group is open to all, regardless of religion.

### Human Rights Award

Since the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations in 1988, B'nai B'rith Argentina has bestowed an annual human rights award on an exemplary individual. The recipient is chosen by the members of B'nai B'rith Argentina for the individual's efforts to aid or advocate for those in need.

The winners over the decades have included a broad range, including religious leaders Monseñor Justo Laguna and Rabbi León Klenicki; Martha de Antueno, president of the Judeo-Christian Argentina Confraternity; Red Solidaria, a network of hundreds of volunteers providing humanitarian aid; Jack Fuchs, a writer and Holocaust survivor; José Pepe Eliashev, a journalist and author; writer Ernesto Sábato; the CONIN Foundation, represented by its president, Abel Albino; and Graciela Fernández Meijide, for her work at the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons, formed after Argentinean democracy was restored in 1983 to investigate the fates of thousands who disappeared during the junta rule.

In 2017, B'nai B'rith Argentina granted the Human Rights Award to Leandro Despouy, a politician, lawyer, defender of human rights and an Argentine member of the Radical Civic Union. Despouy was formerly president of the U.N. Human Rights Commission.

The award has also been bestowed on groups, including Music for the Soul, a band that entertains patients at hospitals. A Roof for My Country was cited for its work to build emergency housing throughout South America. The group began in Chile and then continued its work in El Salvador and Peru, expanding into Argentina under its current name.



B'nai B'rith Argentina and the Interfaith Dialogue Commission — Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, jointly organized the commemoration of Kristallnacht, held Nov. 13 at the San Ignacio Church in downtown Buenos Aires.

### Commemorating "Kristallnacht"

Every year in Argentina an interfaith event recalls the "The Night of Broken Glass," a pogrom against Jews that took place on Nov. 9 and 10, 1938, in Nazi Germany and Austria. During "Kristallnacht," Nazis vandalized Jewish businesses, synagogues and shops, and attacked Jewish residents, a precursor to the mass murder of Jews by the Germans and their collaborators during World War II. This commemorative program takes place in Buenos Aires, the surrounding province of Buenos Aires and in the city of Paraná (Entre Ríos).

B'nai B'rith Argentina and the Interfaith Dialogue Commission — Archdiocese of Buenos Aires, jointly organized the commemoration, held last November at the San Ignacio Church in downtown Buenos Aires. Rabbi Baruj Plavnik and Father Victor Manuel Fernandez attended, along with Holocaust survivors and the Minister of the Israeli Embassy Modi Efrain. Father Fernandez lit



Dr. Daniel Sporn, vice president, B'nai B'rith Argentina and chair, Communities in Crisis, B'nai B'rith International, oversees the shipment of medicines.

six candles in remembrance of the 6 million Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Also attending were representatives of several embassies, as well as members of the Folklore movement, members from Catholic Action, representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, students from several Catholic and Jewish schools, and leaders of [B'nai B'rith Argentina](#). 📺



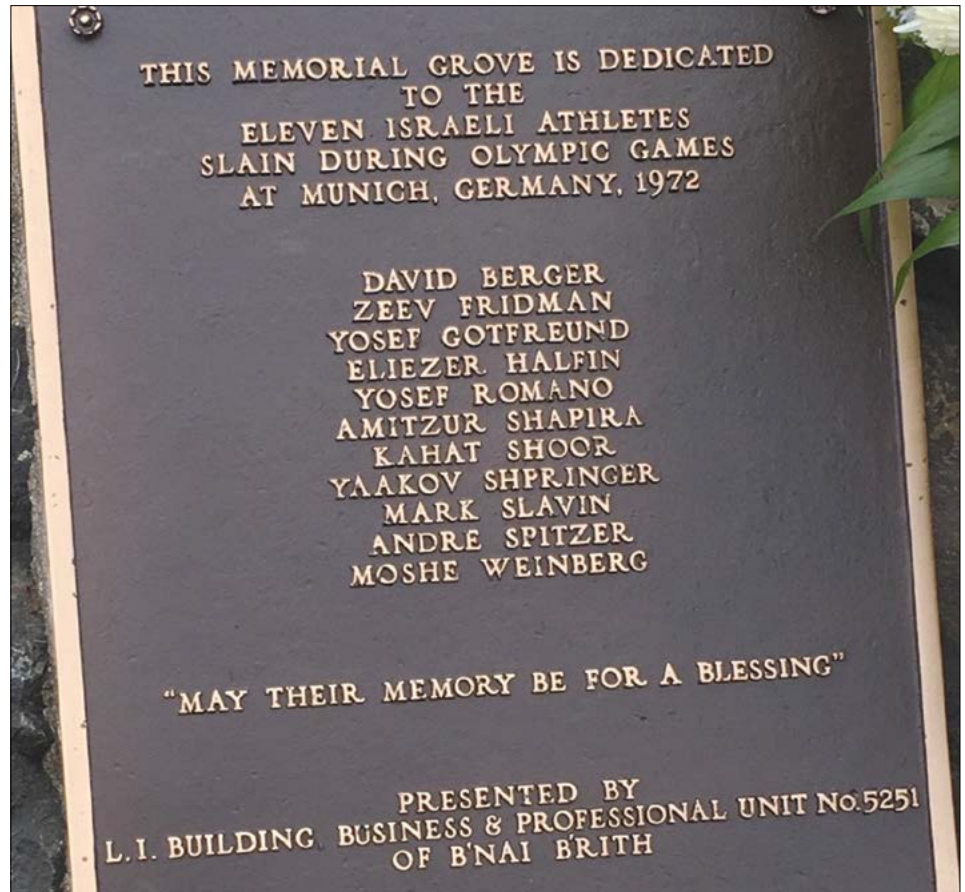
# Rededication of Memorial Recalls Slain Israeli Olympic Athletes

By Felice Caspar

B'nai B'rith Metronorth Region held a ceremony on June 22 to rededicate the memorial grove created 30 years ago in memory of the 11 Israeli Olympic athletes murdered by Palestinian terrorists during the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich.

The memorial was conceived by the men and women of the Long Island Building, Business and Professional Unit of B'nai B'rith. The Israeli Olympic Athletes Memorial Grove was officially dedicated in June 1988 on land set aside for it on land owned by Nassau County, in Uniondale, Long Island, New York. The park-like setting, with trees and benches, offers visitors a serene place to reflect on the tragic loss of the athletes, who are named on a bronze plaque.

With the anniversary approaching, B'nai B'rith Unit members Susan Berk, Deanna Friedman and Harold Mitchell visited the memorial grove. There they learned that the county's Department of Parks, Recreation and Museums wanted to discuss renovations with B'nai B'rith. The three, as project



At the rededication of the B'nai B'rith plaque honoring Israeli athletes murdered at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, left to right: Brian Nugent, Former Deputy Commissioner of Nassau County Parks Department; Susan Berk, Harold Mitchell and Deanna Friedman, B'nai B'rith co-chairs; and Tim O'Connell, Deputy Commissioner of Nassau County Parks Department.



Left to right: Robert Samson, Nina Levin, Asher Matathias, Frieda Stangler, Marilyn Rosenberg, Steven Levine, Barbara Glembourt, Harold Mitchell and Doris Levinson

## Rededication of Memorial Recalls Slain Israeli Olympic Athletes

co-chairs reviewed the replacement of trees toppled in Hurricane Sandy in 2012 and raised funds for the project.

At the rededication, the B'nai B'rith Harvest Lodge, the Jerome S. Beatus Housing Foundation and the B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief Fund were recognized for their assistance. The Mitchell and Goldfine families were also thanked for their support.

On behalf of B'nai B'rith, the co-chairs greeted those attending and thanked the county for its cooperation in implementing the improvements, which included replacing foliage and fencing, and continuing maintenance of the memorial and bronze plaque.

The grove will thus remain a quiet place for contemplation for those who visit the park.

The rededication ceremony provided an opportunity for others to share the impact the tragedy had on them. After offering an invocation, Rabbi Jaimee Shalhevet recalled that in 1972, as a young girl, she received an Olympic teddy bear as a gift. She named her teddy bear "Berger Bear" in memory of David Berger, one of the athletes murdered.

Almog Elijis, spokesperson for the Consulate General of Israel in New York, said, "This rededication is significant because it honors those 11 Israeli athletes [who were murdered] because they were Jews and Israelis. This was also an attack against what the Olympic Village was created to represent: hope and co-existence."

But, since 1972, Israelis have continued to participate in Olympic competitions. "Israel is a strong state that is fighting terrorism for all people in countries around the world," Elijis said. "Israel's fight against terrorism is one that should unite all human beings to stop the terrorist threats among us, and we have the right to live in peace."

Elijis encouraged the participants to read the names of the victims memorialized on the plaque and remember them as belonging to a nation that stands tall and defends itself.



Almog Elijis, spokesperson, Consulate General of Israel in New York, addressed the gathering on June 22, when B'nai B'rith rededicated a Uniondale, New York memorial to the 11 Israeli Olympic athletes murdered by Palestinian terrorists during the 1972 games in Munich.

Frieda Stangler, past Unit president and coordinator of the project to create the memorial grove, shared some insights into its history as well as her thoughts on events that show not much has changed — our current times being filled with acts of violence and terrorism. She expressed hope that the participants would look within themselves to get involved in fighting against hateful acts by speaking out as voters.

Rhonda Love, B'nai B'rith International vice president of programming, thanked all who helped make this memorial possible in 1988 and also its rededication 30 years later. Recalling 1972, she said she had just returned from a teen tour of Israel that summer when she heard about the murders. For her, Israel was now no longer a faraway place; she thought about the Israelis she met


on the trip and what this horror must have meant to them.

B'nai B'rith International issued this statement on Sept. 6, 1972: "The murders and barbarism are not isolated acts but are a repeated consequence of the overt and tacit support and encouragement, and the comfortable sanctuary, which Arab governments have given to terrorist groups."

Love also related some excerpts from a September 1972 report by Harvey Platt, secretary of B'nai B'rith District One, encompassing New York and New England. His words evoked the grief and resolve felt by B'nai B'rith locally, and by those who came from other locales to take part in a service of mourning on Sept. 6 and a weeklong Vigil of Mourning that B'nai B'rith organized.

"What happened at the Olympic Village was a gruesome symbol," Platt wrote. "When murderous terrorists run amok and are disassociated from any sense of responsibility, the barbarians are at the gate. They threaten our standards, our values, our morals and the very meaning of life. At a time when civilization is itself at stake, passivity is a crime."

In his report, Platt had also included comments from vigil participants. "I wonder what good it accomplishes," said one. "It is only a drop." Platt had responded, "Yes, it is only a drop, but a wave consists of many drops, the ocean consists of many waves, and an ocean itself begins with a single drop of water."

At the rededication, Harold Mitchell, president of B'nai B'rith Metronorth Region, thanked Rabbi Shalhevet of North Shore Synagogue; Gail Warrack, director of Volunteer Services, Mid-Island Y Jewish Community Center, who also spoke; and to all who had attended the ceremony. He noted that the rededication showed that past events are not forgotten; they become a part of the fabric of our organization's long life. 



# B'nai B'rith Young Leadership Network Thriving

*By Rebecca Rose*

The B'nai B'rith Young Leadership Network (YLN) continues to thrive. This summer, the menu of events included diverse programs in Florida, New York and Washington, D.C.

On June 3, the YLN of South Florida joined the residents of B'nai B'rith Apartments in Deerfield Beach, Florida, for a Sunday afternoon of art and wine. Led by Angie Arroyo, an art instructor and B'nai B'rith Apartments' receptionist, residents learned painting techniques while creating tropical landscapes, complete with ocean waves lapping an island, a wind-blown palm tree and mountains in the background.

While the paint dried, James Lynch, the building's administrator, took the young adults on a tour of the facilities, comprising 270 units in three towers, a garden, coffee shop, internet lounge, fitness room and libraries in each building. "The intergenerational event was not only a special opportunity to meet new friends but also provided young adults the chance to see the senior advocacy and housing pillar of B'nai B'rith International in action," said Jessica Kreger, chair of YLN-South Florida.

On June 20, B'nai B'rith YLN of New York heard from David Michaels, director of B'nai B'rith United Nations and Intercommunal Affairs, on the implications of the United States' withdrawals from the Iran nuclear deal and the U.N. Human Rights Council.

In Washington, D.C., YLN members gathered at Studio Xfinity, which sponsored the event, on Friday, July 13, to hear about our YLN's spring trip to Japan as guests of the Japanese government's Kakehashi Project. The young leaders ushered in Shabbat by lighting candles, eating sushi and drinking sake.

"It is incumbent that our young leaders continue to take part in these programs, which ensure that there are many more



Standing outside the B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach are (left to right) Scott Knapp, member, B'nai B'rith International Executive Board of Directors; Alicia Buckman; Jessica Kreger, chair, YLN-South Florida; Aelita Alperovich; and Kay Rubin.



Angie Arroyo (standing), provided art instruction at the YLN of South Florida Art and Wine party on June 3 held at the B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach.



## Lest They Forget: Names of Holocaust Victims Read Aloud Annually



Standing outside the B'nai B'rith Apartments of Deerfield Beach are (left to right) Scott Knapp, member, B'nai B'rith International Executive Board of Directors; Alicia Buckman; Jessica Kreger, chair, YLN-South Florida; Aelita Alperovich; and Kay Rubin.



YLN-DC Chair Dee Sampson pours wine at the YLN-DC Shabbat dinner on July 13.

anniversaries to celebrate,” Said Ed Redensky, chair of the Young Leadership Network and a member of B'nai B'rith International's Executive Board of Directors.

At B'nai B'rith's 175th Anniversary Celebration, part of the annual Leadership Forum, October 14-16, young leaders are to meet at B'nai B'rith's Manhattan

office for Sunday brunch and a Virtual Global Roundtable, followed by activities in New York City. The Forum begins that evening, and it is anticipated that B'nai B'rith International's Label A. Katz Young Leadership Awards will be presented at the opening session. YLN program organizers look forward to meeting with other B'nai B'rith Young Leaders from around the

country and globe. Special registration prices for Young Leaders are on our website.

Visit [www.bnaibrith.org/young-leadership-network](http://www.bnaibrith.org/young-leadership-network). 

*Rebecca Rose is associate director, Young Leadership and Development, B'nai B'rith International.*

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## Planned Giving

# Art, Love, and Legacy

By Marna Schoen

When Marty Herman tentatively picked up a camera at the age of 13 to chronicle his own bar mitzvah, he could have never imagined that he would one day own the largest fine-art gallery in the Southwest, where his own photographs would be displayed. That pivotal day was just the beginning of a life filled with creativity, adventure, and abundance.

During the Vietnam War, Herman was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Photo Intelligence Division, utilizing his skills as a field photographer. Upon his return home, his passion for photography continued while he established his own business in Los Angeles. He consulted with struggling companies, turning them around and making them successful.

At one point, one of the companies needed a good marketing agency. Herman couldn't find one that he liked, so he started his own marketing and advertising com-



All photos by Tom Johnson.

Diane and Marty Herman.

pany. The agency was a huge success, and allowed Herman to retire at a young age.

Throughout this period, he remained grounded in the art world, photographing the environment around him and further developing his techniques.

It was in Los Angeles that he met his wife, Diane. She was also deeply rooted in the arts, with a background in dance and painting. The two fell madly in love, sharing the same values and passions.

Shortly after their wedding, they took a five-year "honeymoon" on their private yacht, sailing around the world, covering 10,000 miles, and visiting hundreds of exotic locations. It was during this intense bonding period that the couple decided they wanted to give back to society and to create a special place that would capture the beauty of the world through art.

Upon their return from traveling, Diane called the Environmental Protection Agency and spoke with a commissioner, asking where in the United States they could find the cleanest air. Sedona, Ariz., was the obvious choice. Thus they embarked on their next adventure—beginning to build [Exposures International Gallery of Fine Art](#),



Exposures International Gallery of Fine Art in Sedona, Arizona, at sunset.



## Art, Love, and Legacy

today one of the most successful art galleries in the country.

Marty and Diane's connection to B'nai B'rith is rooted in family history as well as their mutual core values. Marty's mother, Rebecca Herman, was a strong supporter of B'nai B'rith. When Marty was a teenager, Rebecca was asked to take a post in her local lodge, something of which she was extremely proud. Sadly, Rebecca Herman was never able to realize this honor, as she died in a house fire before she could accept the post. Since then, B'nai B'rith has been a "point of warmth" for Marty, who never forgot his mother's commitment to the organization.

Marty and Diane have always been committed to the fight against bigotry and prejudice, and feel strongly about helping those less fortunate. Wanting to honor the memory of his mother, along with their commitment to helping people in need, Marty and Diane decided to name B'nai B'rith International as one of the primary beneficiaries of their [estate plan](#). They felt this was another way for them to give back to society, to help others, and to create a legacy.

The Hermans take great pride in declaring that their gallery was inspired by both their deep love for one another and their love for art. The experience of conceiving, devel-



A variety of artwork and jewelry is offered in the gallery.




Art lovers enjoy the 2017 Fall Show at Exposures International Gallery of Fine Art.



oping, and growing this gallery has been a labor of love as well. They feel that, from their investment of sweat equity, something beautiful and unique sprouted. They feel fortunate to be surrounded by beauty—that of the art within the gallery, the gallery itself, and the natural beauty of Sedona. Marty and Diane relish the joy they receive by providing that beauty to others.

The Hermans feel a sense of continuity,

knowing that their legacy of giving will continue through their bequest to B'nai B'rith International. Their [bequest](#) will benefit many causes, including helping those devastated by natural [disasters](#), providing [housing and food to the needy](#), [combating bigotry and anti-Semitism](#) around the world, and exposing tomorrow's youth to the power and joy of art through [The Diverse Minds Writing Challenge](#). 

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

This article was originally published in the Summer 2008 issue of B'nai B'rith Magazine. In the last 10 years, Marty and Diane Herman's gallery, [Exposures International Gallery of Fine Art](#) has grown exponentially, in terms of artists and physical space. The gallery continues to receive accolades as one of the largest and most unique art galleries in the world. The Hermans remain committed to supporting B'nai B'rith's and leaving a legacy through their bequest.

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## About Seniors

# Looking Toward the Mid-Terms

*By Mark D. Olshan*

*Associate Executive Vice President, B'nai B'rith International*



**N**ow that the dog days of summer in Washington have passed and we look forward to the cooler nights and changing colors, the one thing that remains constant in Washington, D.C. is political discourse and finger pointing. But, can things change this time around?

Yes, it's time to get ready for "mid-term" elections and to endure the cringe-worthy political ads that begin to blanket the airwaves. Oh for the innocence of summer! But, this is Washington, and politics goes on, and on and on. So, the big questions are: Should you care? Will this time be any different?

Well, from my perspective as director of B'nai B'rith's Center for Senior Services, yes,

and I certainly hope so.

Generally, the past 18 months have been very trying for B'nai B'rith's seniors agenda, particularly the relentless attempts to "repeal and replace" the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) rental reform proposal.

Admittedly, there were a few victories, with enough government assistance retained in the spending bills to allow current residents of HUD-assisted housing to keep their apartment subsidies, and, an ever so slight increase in the total amount available to construct new apartment units.

Additionally, one might celebrate the eventual retention of the Low Income

Housing Tax Credit provision in the final tax bill enacted early in the new year and its slight expansion in the 2018 spending bill. This truly bi-partisan program established in 1986 is currently the only major funding program for affordable housing in this country and came uncomfortably close to being totally scrapped in the new tax law. So, at least for the time being, there is still one funding mechanism available to construct new units or, even more importantly, to ensure that current housing can be renovated and available for another 30 to 40 years.

While we are not naive to think that trends to erode the programs would reverse course and Congress begin to increase

## Looking Toward the Mid-Terms

funding, solutions could be found that would no longer target the poorest of those who rely on these programs to survive.

According to the Commonwealth Fund, a nonprofit foundation focused on health-care issues, the consistent attack on the ACA over the past few years has taken its toll and the rate of uninsured working-age persons has actually increased nearly six percentage points over the past two. While the ACA was never perfect, instead of trying to improve it, the administration has taken several steps to make things worse.

Even Tom Price, the former Secretary of Health and Human Services, the first under President Trump, now acknowledges that “the repeal of the individual mandate,” which required everyone to obtain health insurance or pay a penalty, “would directly drive up costs” for those in the insurance pool. Those who are younger and healthier are withdrawing from their mandated coverage, with the direct effect of driving up the cost for the older, less healthy individuals who need to purchase insurance.

This comes as no surprise.

Opponents are fighting back not only in the court of public opinion but also in the judicial courts to overturn gerrymandered districts that assure one-party control. This is, however, also a bipartisan problem, in which both parties have been implicated. So the immediate political and programmatic impact of any court rulings on redistricting remains unclear.

It's safe to say, however, if conservatives opposed to govern-

ment-assisted programs retain control of Congress, there may be more attempts to finally repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, as well as to drastically restrict food stamps by adding additional burdensome work requirements and to cut back on other meaningful safety-net programs.

There is also the likelihood that emboldened conservatives could use the twin issues of debt and deficit, inflated by the recent tax cuts reducing government revenues, to threaten funding for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid. “If someone wants to get serious about debt, come talk to me about entitlements,” said U.S. Rep. Tom Cole (R-Okla.), foreshadowing this approach. “Tax cuts produce growth: entitlement spending doesn't.” However, what some call “entitlements” are not giveaways. Payroll taxes on earned income fund these programs.

Taxes workers pay also help support our senior housing communities across the country, even those in our Goldberg Towers, Levi Towers and Covenant Place in Cole's neighboring states of Texas, Arkansas and Missouri, respectively.

So, bear this in mind as the mid-term congressional campaigns heat up: These are not elections to sit out. Our votes can make a difference. Our futures hinge on the outcome.

*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.*

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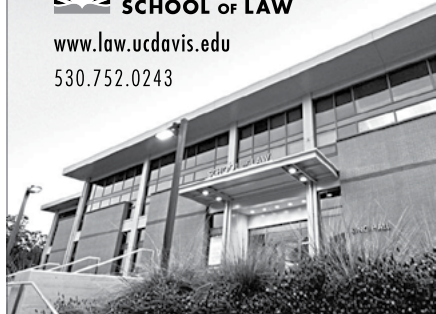
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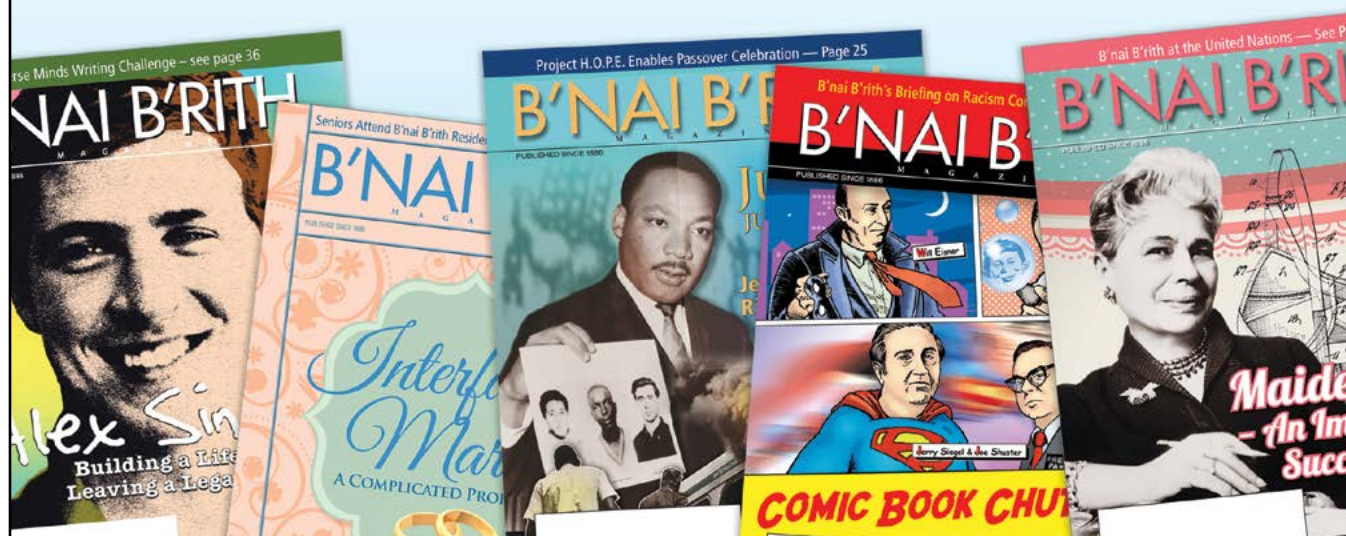
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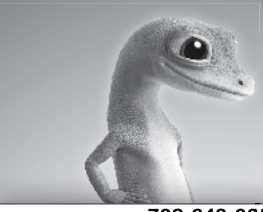
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