Dynamic Relationship Between Israel and Diaspora Explored

BY STEPHEN E. UPIKEN

Rabbis Shai Held, President and Dean, Hadar Institute; Jane Kanarek, Associate Dean and Professor of Rabbinics, Hebrew College and Ethan Tucker, President and Rosh Yeshiva, Hadar Institute met on Sunday, March 31st at Temple Israel Center, White Plains to address the topic, “Exploring the Dynamic Relationship between Israel and the Diaspora,” presented by the Rabbi Gordon Tucker Fund for Jewish Learning, Thought and Culture before a rapt, enthusiastic audience of over 200 community members.

Discussing “Reading the Talmud in the Diaspora: Reclaiming Lost Stories,” Kanarek talked about the slaying of the Egyptian firstborn. “With some Egyptian women unfaithful to their husbands—each child born from a different father—was a firstborn, according to Rashi. “Although Bitiyah, Pharaoh’s daughter who found Moshe in the reeds was firstborn, she was spared because Moshe prayed for her.” It was debated whether firstborn girls should fast.

“However, that is not the custom (Maharil); Mishnah Berurah: ‘And this is not the custom, because the Torah does not grant holiness of the firstborn to a female in any matter,’” Rabbi Kanarek averred.

In “Center and the Diaspora: The Relationship of the Jewish Center in the Land of Israel to the Jewish Presence Throughout the Globe,” Rabbi Ethan pointed out that the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden was the first diaspora, saying that G-d protects Jews in exile.

Once they return, the protection ceases and their fate will be dependent on their actions. If they sin, they will be exiled and protection will once again safeguard them until they return to Israel.

In his concluding remarks, Israeli Journalist and Visiting Fellow Yair Ettinger, Shalom Hartman Institute of North America acknowledged that the relationship between North American Jews has always been complicated “except for a few days in 1967.”

The question of separation of church and state in Israel was raised. It was noted that Israel was founded by secular Jews but that Ben Gurion provided for a Central Rabbinate. “If you look carefully the Rabbinate is losing its hold,” Ettinger remarked. “It is difficult to perform conversions for young children. If his/her family makes teshuva (penitence) then the child can be converted. There is no separation of church and state in Israel.”

Rabbi Gordon concluded, “that a close interpretation of the Mishnah yielded that if you are directed to a place that you think of as exile, if a Torah is there, it is a Jewish home.”

Jewish American Heritage Month Celebrates American Jews

Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM), a national commemoration of the contributions that Americans Jews have made to the fabric of our nation’s history, culture, and society, has announced the theme for the May 2019 celebration: American Jewish Illustrators. First established by presidential proclamation in 2006 and renewed every year since, JAHM encourages people of all backgrounds to learn about and draw inspiration from the more than 360-year history of Jewish life in this country.

“The stories of American Jews are woven into the rich history of this diverse nation,” says Ivy Barsky, CEO and Gwen Goodman Director of the National Museum of American Jewish History, the lead sponsor of JAHM. “By celebrating JAHM, we honor the values of inclusion, acceptance, and religious pluralism cherished by this country.

“JAHM’s 2019 theme provides an opportunity to highlight the many American Jews who have helped create the nation’s beloved children’s books, iconic graphic novels and their superheroes, and syndicated comics and illustrations. These Jewish artists, illustrators, and writers have been shaped by American life, society, and culture, and in turn enriched America’s imaginative landscape. Through the prism of their Jewish identity, and often by approaching their work through the lens of social justice, they have been able to make poignant observations about the world around them, offering powerful commentary on issues of the day through their unique and universal medium.”

From Ezra Jack Keats who grew up as the child of Jewish immigrants in Depression-era Brooklyn, to contemporary writer/illustrator Maira Kalman who examined (and illustrated) the American democracy she saw around the country, these keen and witty social observers reflect us and our world in lasting ways.

Award-winning author and illustrator Ezra Jack Keats (1916 – 1983), whose children’s books include Whistle for Willie, Peter’s Chair, and The Snowy Day, was the son of Eastern European Jewish immigrants and very poor. Growing up in East New York, Keats’ experience of antisemitism and poverty in his youth gave him a lifelong sympathy for others who suffered prejudice and want. His work transcends the personal and reflects the universal concerns of children. The Snowy Day featured the first African American protagonist in a full color picture book.

Stan Lee (1922 – 2018), though not an illustrator himself, gave the world Spiderman, Incredible Hulk, Iron Man, among other legendary Marvel Comic superheroes. In the DC Comics universe, characters like Superman, created by Jerry Siegel (1914 – 1996) and Joe Shuster (1914 – 1993), has clear Jewish roots, and whose character further developed as WWII unfolded. Rube Goldberg (1889 – 1970), the subject of recent NMAJH special exhibition, The Art of Rube Goldberg, is one of the most influential and prolific cartoon illustrators of the twentieth century who is best known for his whimsical invention drawing cartoons, and also won a Pulitzer Prize for his political cartoon about the Atom Bomb. Roz Chast, The New Yorker cartoonist and author of Can’t We Talk About Something More Pleasant?, Leela Corman, who’s graphic novel Unterzahn follows the lives of Jewish twin sisters growing up in the tenements of New York City’s Lower East Side, and underground comics movement artist Diana Noom in, best known for her character DiDi Glitz, who addresses transgressive social issues, are just a few of the industry’s leading women today.

Maira Kalman, best known for her exuberant The New Yorker covers and child-
A Personal Perspective of Latina/Jewish Relations

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Liat Altman, Director of Latin American Affairs for the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) in New York City, appeared on Thursday, April 4th, discussing “Latinas and Jews—A Personal Perspective.” A Westchester resident, Altman is in charge of combating anti-Semitism in Latin America for ADL.

Altman, former Mid-Westchester JCC Director of Arts and Talks, disseminated two topics: 1) Anti-Semitism in Latin America and how it affects Jews in the United States and worldwide; 2) What is going on in Venezuela?

“Here was a two-party system in Venezuela, pretty much Republicans and Democrats before Hugo Chavez was elected in 1999,” Altman began. “There, 10% of the population holds 90% of the riches. The population is largely uneducated, in poverty with few resources. There was a middle-class immigrant population from all over, attracted by the oil riches.

“Chavez came to power with an agenda of socialism. His brand of socialism was manipulative.

“One of the first things he did was to change their Constitution from requiring a new government every four years, now creating automatic elections and no term limits. He admired Fidel Castro and was very anti-American and Israel, charging that America put Israel in the Middle East, blaming the U.S. and Zionists for everything. Many Venezuelan Jews left the country. “Opposition candidates were either disqualified, jailed or exiled. Voting is controlled by Smart Chip IDs, exchanging votes for food. Chavez died of cancer on March 5, 2013, succeeded by Nicolas Maduro, who opposes humanitarian aid, even though children are dying of diseases eradicated elsewhere; 10% percent of the population have left the country. There is little electricity due to lack of power plant workers.”

Altman then showed a video by Venezuelan comedian Joanna Hausmann, decrying the American Left’s stand against intervention (“Hands Off Venezuela”).

“U.S. and 50 world leaders recognized National Assembly President Juan Guaido as Acting President of Venezuela since January 2019. The Venezuelan people want to live with electricity, food, schools, jobs, medicine and a vote that actually counts,” Hausmann stressed.

And it was noted that Jair Bolsonaro, the new Far-Right President of Brazil is pro-Israel.

‘From Holocaust to Independence’, FIDF Mission to Poland and Israel

More than 40 Friends of the Israel Defense Forces (FIDF) supporters from across the country will embark on a mission to Poland and Israel, May 2-10, with Holocaust survivors and alongside 45 soldiers and officers representing all branches of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Joining the delegation will be Holocaust survivor Sophie Tajch Klisman, 89, of Detroit. Klisman, along with her sister Felicia, survived the Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, and Salzwedel concentration camps. The youngest of four children, she was only 10 years old when Nazi Germany occupied Lodz, forcing the family into the Lodz ghetto of 68,000 Jews. Both sisters were liberated from Salzwedel in April 1945, and immigrated to the U.S. in 1949, settling in the Detroit area. The remainder of their family perished.

“If I look at the rest of the family, they were already adults and grown-ups and here was this child; that was just a miracle that I survived; it was meant for me to survive,” Klisman said. “I just hope in conclusion, that nobody, nobody should have to live through such terrors, such horrible..."
Sharp Rise in the Share of Americans Saying Jews Face Discrimination Survey Finds

The public sees widespread discrimination against several racial, ethnic and religious groups in the U.S. And while most of these views are little changed over the last several years, the share of Americans saying Jews face discrimination in the U.S. has increased substantially since late 2016.

Today, 64% of Americans say Jews face at least some discrimination – a 20-percentage-point increase from 2016; the share saying Jews face "a lot" of discrimination has nearly doubled, from 13% to 24%. Democrats remain more likely than Republicans to say there is discrimination against Jews, but the shift in these views is evident in both parties.

The survey by Pew Research Center, conducted March 20-25 among 1,503 adults, also finds majorities continue to say there is a lot or some discrimination against Muslims, blacks, Hispanics, gays and lesbians, and women. Muslims, in particular, are seen as facing more discrimination than other groups in society; 82% say Muslims face some discrimination, with 56% saying they encounter a lot of discrimination – highest among nine groups included in the survey.

While overall views about discrimination against most groups in U.S. society are little changed since 2016, already wide partisan divides in many of these views have grown wider. For example, in December 2016, 57% of Democrats and Democratic leaners, compared with 20% of Republicans and Republican leaners said that blacks faced a lot of discrimination – a 37-percentage-point gap. That has increased to 50 percentage points in the current survey: 69% of Democrats now say blacks face a lot of discrimination, compared with 18% of Republicans.

Majorities in both partisan groups say there is at least some discrimination against many groups, including Muslims, blacks, gays and lesbians, and Hispanics. But the share of Democrats who say each of these groups face discrimination is significantly higher than the share of Republicans who say the same. For instance, 92% of Democrats, compared with 69% of Republicans, say Muslims face at least some discrimination.

In contrast, Republicans are about twice as likely as Democrats to say that evangelical Christians (70% vs. 32%), whites (58% vs. 25%) and men (48% vs. 27%) are subject to at least some discrimination.

Partisan differences in views of how much discrimination several groups experience have widened in recent years. Democrats have consistently been more likely than Republicans to say most groups face a lot of discrimination. Since 2016, however, the share of Democrats who say blacks face a lot of discrimination has increased, while Republicans' views are little changed.

Since 2013, when a similarly-worded question asked about discrimination against African Americans, the change is even more striking. Six years ago, just 28% of Democrats said African Americans faced a lot of discrimination; today, more than twice as many Democrats say blacks face a lot of discrimination. (Over this period, an increasing share of Democrats
In preparation for Holocaust Memorial Day (Yom HaShoah), the World Jewish Restitution Organization (WJRO) launched a month-long social media campaign – #MyPropertyStory – to focus on survivors’ lives before the Holocaust and show how their homes, land, businesses, or personal possessions are important and powerful links to their past.

The campaign began in the beginning of April and continues until Holocaust Memorial Day (Yom HaShoah), on Thursday, May 2. During this time, WJRO asked Holocaust survivors, their children, grandchildren, extended families, and others to share and post their unique stories on social media about life before the Holocaust to shine a light on the injustice suffered by millions as a result of what was wrongfully taken from them during the Shoah and its aftermath. The campaign will culminate on Yom HaShoah with a gallery of photos, videos, and postings on the WJRO website, wjro.org.il/mypropertystory.

During the Holocaust, the Nazis and their allies systematically robbed millions of Jews of every possession from their homes and businesses as well as property belonging to the Jewish community. Each item represented a cherished memory, a loved one, a childhood cut short, a lifetime of labor and generations of history – people’s lives that were taken.

The #MyPropertyStory social media campaign focuses on survivors and their descendants and their connection to their family history before and after the Shoah.

“#MyPropertyStory is a unique social media campaign in which Holocaust survivors and their families can share their cherished memories of lives that were forever changed,” said Gideon Taylor, Chair of Operations, WJRO. “Behind every property there is a story. It is a link, a connection, a bond to the history of Jewish families and communities torn apart by the Holocaust.”

WJRO has created customized videos (in Hebrew and English) with interviews of Holocaust survivors who share their own journey of what has connected them to their family history.

The #MyPropertyStory interviews feature:
- Holocaust survivor Greta Mares, who speaks about her happy childhood in Czechoslovakia, her close call with almost being murdered in Auschwitz, and then upon her return home, the memory of seeing the stolen rings of her dead sister on another woman’s hand in a café. “I looked across the room and she was wearing my sister’s two rings,” said Greta.
- In another video, Holocaust survivor Lea Evron recounts her young life in Poland. She describes her father’s successful business, the family’s exile, and her lifelong battle for her family’s property. Lea says: “Since 1998, when Poland became a democratic country, I have been trying to recover my father’s factory and building. Although I have received numerous promises from Polish Presidents, until today these properties have not been returned. I will not give up.”
- The video of Polish-born Holocaust survivor Yoram Sztykgold highlights his journey from his current home in Israel back to his native Warsaw to find his family’s lost property. He recounts how when Germany invaded Poland, his life changed almost immediately. He is not necessarily looking for compensation for himself. He says that at 82, he is too old to benefit. “My children suffered through me,” said Yoram. “Compensation is a binding chain that ties the story together.”

Almost 75 years after the Holocaust, there are an estimated 400,000 Holocaust survivors still alive around the world. However, most have not received any restitution or compensation or acknowledgment for the wrongful taking of their every possession.

As survivors continue to age, the #MyPropertyStory social media campaign efforts will continue on page 5.

U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to Host Special Screening and Discussion in Harrison

The Jewish Community Center of Harrison, 130 Union Avenue, Harrison, and The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum will host a special screening and discussion on May 15 of the documentary, Prosecuting Evil: The Extraordinary World of Ben Ferencz. Produced and directed by Barry Avrich, Prosecuting Evil tells the fascinating story of Ben Ferencz - the last surviving Nuremberg prosecutor and lifelong advocate of “law not war.”

After witnessing Nazi concentration camps shortly after liberation, Ferencz became the lead prosecutor in the Einsatzgruppen case at Nuremberg, which has been called the biggest murder trial in history. All 22 Nazi officials tried for murdering over a million Jews were convicted. Ferencz went on to advocate for restitution for Jewish victims of the Holocaust and later for the establishment of the International Criminal Court. His fight for justice for victims of atrocity crimes continues today.

Ferencz has been involved with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum since its creation 26 years ago. He has donated his personal archives to the Museum, which includes 500,000 pages of documents, and funded the Ferencz International Justice Initiative at the Museum’s Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide. In 2015 he received the Museum’s highest honor, the Elie Wiesel Award, for his work holding Nazi perpetrators accountable and advocating for Holocaust survivors and other victims of genocide.

Prosecuting Evil is a production of Melbar Entertainment Group with assistance from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Ferencz International Justice Initiative, Simon-Skjodt Center for the Prevention of Genocide, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.


A living memorial to the Holocaust, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum inspires citizens and leaders worldwide to confront hatred, prevent genocide, and promote human dignity. Its far-reaching educational programs and global impact are made possible by generous donors.

The program will begin at 7:00 p.m. and is free and open to the public. Registration is required at ushmm.org/events/prosecuting-evilharrison.

Survivors and their Families Share Stories about their Lives Before the Holocaust

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The 55th Annual Celebrate Israel Parade

The Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY) has announced that Fifth Avenue will turn blue and white on Sunday, June 2, 2019, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., as more than 30 floats, 15 world-class marching bands, and 40,000 marchers join in unity in the largest celebration of Israel in the world, the annual Celebrate Israel Parade.

The 55th annual celebration of Israel in New York City marks one of the largest events in the city, growing exponentially each year in attendance and excitement since its founding in 1964. Hundreds of thousands of spectators will gather on Fifth Avenue for the parade, which celebrates the positive impact the Jewish and democratic state of Israel has on people in New York and around the world.

The parade is produced by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY), in cooperation with UJA-Federation of New York and the Consulate General of Israel in New York.

Michael Miller, Executive Vice President & CEO of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC-NY) said, “The Celebrate Israel Parade acts as a convenor each year for international communities to stand together to promote unity on a global scale.”

This year’s Parade will welcome Edward A. Mermelstein, Founder and CEO of One & Only Realty and President of ZAKA, as the Grand Marshall. Mermelstein said, “As an immigrant New Yorker and a proud Jew, walking up Fifth Avenue as the grand marshal of the Celebrate Israel Parade is the pinnacle of the American dream. I am so proud to stand with Israel.”

More than 250 organizations, Israeli musical artists, and special guests will march along Fifth Avenue, from 57th Street to 74th Street, including groups of rollerbladers, motorcyclists, dance groups, and juggling clowns.

The 2019 creative theme for marching groups and floats is “Only in Israel,” after the famed Hebrew song Rak B’Yisrael. Each group or float will include colorful banners, costumes, and props related to the theme in some way in a show of unity and pageantry for Israel.

For the ninth year in a row, the parade will be televised live by FOX affiliate, WWOR-TV My9 and Jewish Broadcasting Service from 12-3 p.m., and streamed on Facebook Live and https://celebrateisraelny.org, and from 12-3 p.m. The Celebrate Israel Parade broadcast is sponsored by Friends of Maimonides Medical Center.

Parade Co-Chair Judy Kaufthal remarked, “The Celebrate Israel Parade is the world’s largest expression of support for solidarity. It’s breathtaking to see Fifth Avenue filled with people of all ages celebrating Israel and its culture.”

For the latest information on the Celebrate Israel Parade, visit the Parade website at celebrateisraelny.org.

ArtsWestchester Brings the Arts to Local Neighborhoods

ArtsWestchester, with major support from White Plains Hospital and Con Edison, announced the launch of the ArtsMobile in Westchester County. ArtsWestchester’s new ArtsMobile, a colorful RAM van customized with all kinds of art supplies, will bring free arts programming to children and audiences of all ages outside the traditional classroom or studio setting.

ArtsWestchester CEO Janet Langsam explains, “The ArtsMobile is an entirely new concept for us – one that allows us to bring creative, collaborative arts activities to Westchester youth and their families, where they live. It is also an extension of our 35-year commitment to arts education currently bringing art-making workshops to schools and after-school programs.” Langsam continues, “Our partnership with White Plains Hospital and Con Edison recognizes that art-making is a healthy pursuit and one that enlivens our communities.”

The ArtsMobile will allow low professional teaching artists, including Barry M. Cossio and Vicky Youngman, to bring hands-on art workshops designed to spark imaginations and encourage creative expression into neighborhoods providing art activities to those who have little or no access to the arts.

From April through October, the ArtsMobile will be scheduled to take its artists and mobile arts programming to White Plains Housing Authority sites, Westchester festivals, neighborhood parks and community events like workshops, that will take place outdoors.

WHERE TO FIND THE ARTSMOBILE

Events are free to the public unless otherwise noted
All Events are subject to change without notice. See the schedule of upcoming events here: https://artswestchester.org/

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The 51st Salute to Seniors event will take place at Westchester County May 1

ACT and SAT Exam Prep Courses. To Register call 472-3300 or visit jc-dale will offer the following: Chemistry SAT Subject Test Prep on 4 Tues-

daylight Family Celebration; May 7 at 7pm, Yom HaZikaron, Israel Me-

The JCC of Mid Westchester Academic Center, 999 Wilmot Road, Scars-

May 29

May 2

UPCOMING/ONGOING

May 17

May 18

May 19

May 20

May 21

May 22

JUNE

June 2

Celebrate Israel Parade from 11am to 4pm starting on 57th Street to 74th Street on Fifth Avenue, NYC. To learn more, visit celebrateisraelny.org

At 10:15 am, Hadassah Westchester will hold their 4th Annual Spring Fashion Show at Lord and Taylor, Eastchester, with a catered Brunch. Register online at Hadassah.org/events/fashionshow

May 22

At 11:30am, The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center will hold their Spring Luncheon at Bet Am Shalom Synagogue, 295 Soundview Avenue, White Plains. For more information call 696-0738 or email mjas-

May 15

From 10-11:30am, The Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center and The Shames JCC on the Hudson, 371 South Broadway, Tarrytown, will co-sponsor a Cartoonists Against the Holocaust exhibit and lecture. Call 366-7898 or 696-0738 for more information.

May 13

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May 16

At 6pm, AJC Westchester/ Fairfield will host their 2019 Gala honoring Richard J. Cohen, Ruth and Sid Lapidus at The Ritz Carlton Westchester, White Plains. To attend call 948-5585 or email klinev@ajc.org

May 17

Scarsdale Synagogue Temples Tremont and Emanu-El, 2 Ogden Road, Scarsdale, will host a dinner discussion featuring Tova Kantrowitz speaking on Technion, the MIT of Israel. Call Fawn Mendel at 725-5175 for more information.

May 18

At 9:30pm, Young Israel of New Rochelle, 1149 North Avenue, will present David G. Greenfield, CEO of Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty who will discuss The Politics of Poverty: How Public Poverty Shapes the Lives of the Neediest. RSVP to ujafedny.org/yir/community-event or call 385-2120.

May 19

At 5pm, The American Technion Society will host a special Yom HaAtzmaut celebration for community members and Technion alumni at Asia Society Auditorium, 725 Park Avenue, New York. Register at web.

May 20

American Friends of Soroka Medical Center present Swing for Soroka, their first Golf and Tennis Outing at Old Oaks Country Club, Purchase. Sign up at soroka.org/register/outing or call 725-9070

May 21

At 7:30pm, Westchester Jewish Council will hold their 44th Annual Meet-

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Center, White Plains from 9:30am-2:30pm. For details call 813-6300.

At 9am, UJA Federation of New York in Westchester will convene the first Westchester Women’s Symposium featuring 14 women who have turned ideas into action. Event is being held at The Jacob Burns Film Cen-

ter, 364 Manville Road, Pleasantville. To attend, call 385-2103.

At 8pm, the Yorktown Jewish Center, will hold a Yom Hashoah program at the synagogue, 2966 Crompond Road, Yorktown Heights. For details call 245-2324.

At 6:30pm, The Drefner Judaica Museum at The Hebrew Home at River-

dale, 5901 Palisade Avenue, Riverdale, will host a Commemorative Po-

ey Event in observance of Holocaust Remembrance Day. RSVP to art@ hebrewhome.org Photo ID required for entrance.

At 10am, in observance of Yom Hashoah, participate in the Butterfly Proj-

ect with Engage, at The Shames JCC on the Hudson, 371 South Broad-

Way, Tarrytown. RSVP to Laura Wexler at lwexler@shamesjcc.org

May 6

At 6pm, Westchester Legislators host the annual Westchester Jewish His-

tory and Heritage Month Celebration at the Michaelian Office Building, 148 Martine Avenue, 8th Floor, White Plains. For more information, call Westchester Jewish Council at 328-7001.

May 10

At 5:30pm, join Engage and the congregants of Congregation Emanu-El, 2125 Westchester Avenue, Rye, for a Mitzvah Shabbat. Email Debora Cerbi-

n for information at dcerbin@shamesjcc.org to learn more...
BE A GOOD COOKIE Lacrosse Tournament Raises Money for Pediatric Cancer Research

STAFF REPORT

It’s not often that a Bar Mitzvah project renews itself years after and continues to raise money for a good cause. But Sam Rosenberg and Evan Phillips, 15 year old High School students from New Rochelle, have done just that. For the fourth year, the boys have organized and hosted The BE A GOOD COOKIE Lacrosse Tournament, bringing their total raised to more than $50,000 in support of children’s cancer research.

This year, the March 31 tournament raised $14,000. “We started this tournament as a bar mitzvah project but decided to keep it going because of how good it makes us feel to give back.”

Both boys play lacrosse for their school teams; Rosenberg at New Rochelle High School and Phillips at Salisbury School in Conn. The Rosenberg family are members of Temple Israel of New Rochelle and the Phillips family belongs to Larchmont Temple.

“We knew we wanted to do something that would have a positive impact on kids,” said Phillips. “With cancer being the number one cause of death by disease of children in the U.S., Cookies for Kids’ Cancer was a great fit for what we hope to achieve.”

With fifteen teams of 5th-8th grade boys participating from lower Westchester and Greenwich, Conn., The Sports Underdome in Mount Vernon, was filled with hundreds of families. The teams competed in brackets named for cookie favorites like sugar, oatmeal and chocolate chip. This year’s winners were the 5th grade team, Sugar Cookies, from Larchmont/Mamaroneck Youth Lacrosse, the 6th grade Oatmeal Cookies, also known as Greenwich Warriors and an 8th grade Chocolate Chip team from Pelham. All winning teams received a customized champion’s medal.

All proceeds from the Be A Good Cookie Tournament go to COOKIES FOR KIDS CANCER, a national 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to raising funds and awareness for research into less toxic, more effective treatments for childhood cancer, the leading disease killing children in the United States.

“With pediatric cancer research receiving less than 5 percent of federal money earmarked for cancer research, Cookies for Kids’ Cancer is a great fit for what we hope to achieve,” explained Phillips. “This is an organization dedicated to finding new treatments for kids’ cancer and it feels great knowing that our efforts are helping them to do so.”

To join the fight and make a donation, visit http://cookiesforkidscancer.org/fundraiser/stickittoacancer2019. The boys hope to continue running the tournament through their high school years. Cookies for Kids’ Cancer is dedicated to raising funds for pediatric cancer research. The organization provides support and resources for individuals and businesses to host grassroots events, as well as other simple ways for anyone to get involved.

Cookies for Kids’ Cancer was founded in 2008, by parents inspired by their young son’s courageous battle with neuroblastoma. Since inception, Cookies for Kids’ Cancer has granted $16 million to childhood cancer research. As a result, 110 research grants have been awarded, leading to 42 new treatments available to kids today. Learn how you can get involved at cookiesforkidscancer.org.
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Cassatt String Quartet Performs Cantor Gerald Cohen’s Voyagers

On Saturday, May 11, 2019 at 9:00 to 11:00 PM, the widely acclaimed Cassatt String Quartet, clarinetist Vasko Dukovski, and bassist Pablo Aslan perform a musical café event entitled Musical Voyages – International and Interplanetary at Shaarei Tikvah, 46 Fox Meadow Road, Scarsdale. The concert program features Cantor Gerald Cohen’s highly praised compositions, Voyagers and Preludes and Debka.

Voyagers is a tribute to the Voyager spacecraft on the 40th anniversary of their launch. The piece has its world premiere at New York’s Hayden Planetarium in November, 2017 and was met with great critical acclaim. The program also includes works by Ljova and Pablo Aslan.

The Cassatt String Quartet was the first quartet chosen for Juilliard’s Young Artists Quartet Program. Since then, they have performed at New York’s Alice Tully Hall, and Weill Recital Hall at Carnegie Hall, Tanglewood Music Theater, the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées in Paris, the Beijing Central Conservatory in China and for Queen Elizabeth II’s Sapphire Jubilee Celebration in London. At the Library of Congress, the Cassatts performed on the library’s matched quartet of Stradivarius instruments, and they performed the three complete Beethoven Quartet cycles at the University at Buffalo.

The quartet is named for the celebrated American impressionist painter Mary Cassatt. Cassatt members include: Muneko Otani and Jennifer Leshnower, violins; Ah Ling Neu, viola; and Elizabeth Anderson, cello.

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Vasko Dukovski, is a New York based multidisciplinary artist and diverse stylistic performer of the highest caliber, one of the most-sought-after instrumentalist in his generation.

Living in the United States since 1980, Argentine-born bassist and composer Pablo Aslan is recognized internationally as one of the leading figures in traditional and contemporary tango. His extensive discography includes Piazzolla in Brooklyn, a jazz-tango tribute to Astor Piazzolla, and Tango Grill. The latter earned him nominations for a Latin Grammy Award ("Best Tango Album") and a Grammy Award ("Best Latin Jazz Album").

Cantor Gerald Cohen has been praised for his “linguistic fluidity and melodic gift,” creating music that “revels in a very personal modernism that offers great emotional rewards.” (Gramophone Magazine). His deeply affecting compositions have been recognized with numerous awards and critical accolades. The music on his recent CD, Sea of Reeds (Navo), “is filled with vibrant melody, rhythmic clarity, drive and compositional construction...a sheer delight to hear.” (Gapplegate Music Review)

Recognition of Cohen’s body of work includes the Copland House Borromeo String Quartet Award and Hoff-Barthelson/ Copland House commission, Westchester Prize for New Work, American Composers Forum Faith Partners residency, and Cantors Assembly’s Max Wohlberg Award for distinguished achievement in the field of Jewish composition. Cohen received the Yale University’s Sudler Prize for outstanding achievement in the creative arts, and has been awarded commissioning grants from Meet the Composer, National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, and Westchester Arts Council. Throughout his career, he has been selected for residencies including those at The MacDowell Colony, Yaddo, Virginia Center for the Arts and American Lyric Theater.

Cohen’s music has been commissioned by chamber ensembles including the Cassatt String Quartet, Verdehr Trio, Francisican String Quartet, Chesapeake Chamber Music, Greta Ensemble, Wave Hill Trio, Bronx Arts Ensemble, and Brooklyn Philharmonic Brass Quintet; by choruses including the New York Virtuoso Singers, Canticum Novum Singers, Syracuse Children’s Chorus, St. Bartholomew’s Church in New York City, Zamir Chorale of Boston, and Udana Center Chorus; and by the Cantors Assembly of America and Westchester Youth Symphony. Cohen’s music has been performed by Oxford University Press, G. Schirmer/AMP and Transcontinental Music Publications. Gerald Cohen received a BA in music from Yale University and a DMA in composition from Columbia University. He is Cantor at Shaarei Tikvah, Scarsdale and is on the faculties of The Jewish Theological Seminary and Hebrew Union College.

For further information, synagogues@shaareitikvah.org, or call (914) 472-2013, ext. 300 General Admission is $36, $20 for students, and wine, cheese and refreshments are included.
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Judy Boyle

Cancer Support Team® Honors Volunteers at “Celebrate Spring” Event

On May 9, friends, supporters and staff of Cancer Support Team (CST) will “Celebrate Spring,” at the Bronxville Field Club, honoring Judy Boyle and Bonnie Gould, two extraordinary volunteers who will receive the Making Miracles Happen Award.

CST Board Chair, Lisa Edmiston, noted that, “Judy and Bonnie have been part of the fabric of CST for decades. Each has helped further our mission to enhance the lives of cancer patients and their families throughout southern Westchester. Whether volunteering to drive our patients to medical treatments or assisting with fund-raising events, both are dedicated to our cause, and we want to publicly recognize their contributions and thank them for their years of service.”

Judy Boyle of New Rochelle, volunteered to visit cancer patients over thirty years ago. When CST expanded and needed another full-time nurse, Judy joined the team. Today, she continues to be a force for Cancer Support Team by working on fundraising events, including serving on the planning committee for the annual Gayle K. Lee Health Awareness Luncheon as well as the biannual gala. When reflecting on her work with CST, Judy remarks, “I am inspired by the dedication of the team and have learned so much from my patient experience. It’s true, when you give, you get so much more in return.”

Bonnie Gould of Scarsdale, a retired nurse and educator, has also worked tirelessly on CST’s events, even co-chairing The Health Awareness Luncheon. She has been a board member for five years and continues to drive cancer patients to and from chemo or radiation. “The patients are always thankful, not just because the rides make their lives a little easier, but they have the opportunity to talk and to share. We develop a relationship.”

Both honorees also “spread the word” about Cancer Support Team. As Bonnie says, “I have always been an ambassador of CST. The agency is an invaluable resource, and the team continues to deliver the highest quality of care. I am so proud to be associated with CST.”

The Cancer Support Team® provides nursing, social work counseling, and case management services at any stage of the disease at no cost and without regard to insurance coverage. It is a Westchester County, licensed non-profit, home healthcare organization that has been enhancing the quality of life for individuals and families affected by cancer for over 40 years. Cancer Support Team also provides transportation and financial assistance when needed.

As a nonprofit charitable organization, financial support comes from individual donors, events and grants. Cancer Support Team is a grantee of The Community Fund of Westchester, Eastchester and Tuckahoe and is very grateful for The Community Fund’s support.

For more information about the Cancer Support Team, go to www.cancersupportteam.org or call Executive Director Tonia Weiss at 914-777-9777.

Interested in helping those who are working to overcome mental health challenges?

Willing to make a one-year commitment?

Become a Volunteer for the WJCS Compeer program!

For details, please contact Laura Stein, LMSW about the WJCS Compeer Program. (914) 761-0600 x 208  lstein@wjcs.com

JCC Shames Celebrates the Roaring 20’s

L to R: Honorees Susan Tolchin, Jaime and Beth Geiger, Allen Halpern, Nancy Lonky; Board Chair: Peter Boritz; Gala Chairs: Lisa Cohen and Michelle Frank

WJCS 2019 Gala: A Record-Breaking Success

The WJCS-Westchester Jewish Community Services 2019 Gala on April 2nd was a record-breaking success, with 300+ community and business leaders and Westchester residents in attendance. Neil Sandler, founder and CEO of ClearPath Development Corporation, and Roy Stillman, Esq., President of Stillman Property Management, were honored at the event which was held at the Brae Burn Country Club in Purchase. Ben Boykin, Chairman of the Westchester Board of Legislators and Legislator Terry Clements attended.

Four of WJCS’ 80+ programs were featured, with clients sharing very personal and moving stories of overcoming the trauma of domestic violence, obtaining the school services needed for their child on the autism spectrum, being 101 years old and receiving geriatric care to stay safely at home with dignity rather than move into a nursing home and benefiting from language and early literacy skills so that preschool children from socio-economically challenged families are prepared to enter kindergarten ready to succeed.

The speakers emphasized the message of Tikkun Olam. Neil Sandler thanked attendees and asked them to continue to be part of WJCS “to help support the least secure link, and strengthen the fabric of our Westchester community.” Roy Stillman said, “WJCS is a human services organization, Underscore and boldface the word HUMAN. The range of people who are helped by WJCS—their backgrounds, their ages, and the nature of their challenges—runs as wide a gamut as you can imagine.”

WJCS is one of the largest human service organization in Westchester County, and provides programs and services to 20,000 individuals of all ages and backgrounds each year.

“This year’s Gala was the most successful in WJCS’ 76-year history. With the support of our partners in government and community organizations and UJA and our other generous donors, we look forward to continuing to fulfill our mission of helping individuals in Westchester address mental health, educational, cognitive, social, geriatric, and financial challenges and shape positive futures,” said WJCS CEO Seth Diamond. “We will continue to strengthen our partnerships with synagogues, day schools, and other Jewish institutions.”
An American Jewish Committee (AJC) delegation has visited the nation's capital for a series of meetings to deepen engagement with American Muslim communities, institutions and leaders.

The two-day visit included substantive encounters and candid dialogue with leadership from Masjid Muhammad, the Nation's Mosque; the All Dulles Area Muslim Society (ADAMS) Center; the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA); the Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU); and several others. Topics discussed included the joint battle fighting bigotry and hate crimes against Muslims and Jews, identifying and combatting misperceptions of the other within the respective communities, and navigating intercommunal conversations arising from different understandings of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Dr. Ari Gordon, AJC's U.S. Director of Muslim-Jewish Relations, said, “We must learn to work through the tensions that threaten to divide us, so that we can yield the fruit of working on a common agenda. This requires decisive action, but we must also listen, learn and understand what moves and disturbs our Muslim partners, even as we ask that they do the same about Jews.”

Muslim-Jewish relations is a top priority for AJC, a longstanding pioneer in interreligious relations. In recent years, AJC has expanded its commitment to Muslim-Jewish relations by launching the Muslim-Jewish Advisory Council in partnership with ISNA and increasing outreach on the regional level. MJAC is a national civil society coalition with eight regional affiliates across the country that advocates on issues of common concern to both Muslims and Jews in the U.S.

The massacres at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh last year and at Al Noor Mosque and Linwood Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand in March have underscored the ways in which Muslims and Jews have increasingly become targets of prejudice and violence.

Imam Mohamed Magid, Executive Imam of the ADAMS Center, said, “Mulsims and Jews need to stand up for each other when either group is attacked. We must also commit to fighting anti-Jewish and anti-Muslim bigotry as they appear within our own communities.”

“If thoughts and prayers are not enough, then we must lay a foundation of partnership that our children and grandchildren can build upon,” said AJC's Gordon. “This is our privilege and responsibility as Americans.”

Dr. Susan Band Horwitz has received the prestigious 2019 Canada Gairdner International Award for her research on Taxol, a cancer drug. She was chosen for the award by a group of Laureates who have won the Canada Gairdner Award. The award recognizes her contribution to biomedical science.

Dr. Horwitz is a University Professor at the University of Toronto and has been recognized for her work in cancer research. She has been one of the most influential scientists in the field of cancer research and has made significant contributions to the development of new therapies for cancer patients.

The Canada Gairdner Awards are presented annually to scientists who have made significant contributions to biomedical science. The awards are considered some of the highest honors in the field of cancer research.

Dr. Susan Band Horwitz is one of the most influential scientists in the field of cancer research. She has been recognized for her contribution to biomedical science and has been awarded the prestigious 2019 Canada Gairdner International Award for her research on Taxol, a cancer drug.

Dr. Horwitz's research has led to the development of new therapies for cancer patients and has had a significant impact on the field of cancer research. She has been one of the most influential scientists in the field and has made significant contributions to the development of new therapies for cancer patients.

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Real Estate Matters by John E. Baer, SRES, SRS

Home Selling Tips for the Spring and Summer of 2019

With the National Association of Realtors predicting that a large number of millennials’ plans to buy a home this year and with mortgage rates low, 2019 should still be a good year to sell your home. Therefore, if you are seriously planning to sell your home, here’s several things you can do to get top dollar.

It is still a Seller’s Market

Many real estate professionals and economists believe that 2019 will have fewer bidding wars, fewer offers, and that homes will stay more days on the market before an offer arrives. My experience differs slightly. I am finding Westchester homes that are properly priced and in the $400,000 to $600,000 price range are selling quickly. Even in communities with outstanding school systems, three and four bedroom homes properly priced under $1 million appear to be selling quickly. On the other hand, homes that are overpriced are the ones not selling. This is because close to 90% of buyers are looking at available homes online and can generally determine which homes are properly priced and which are not.

Know What Appeals to Buyers

Homes that sit on the market are most cases not updated and often not priced to take that into account.

Count Your Cards

Many professionals believe staging can increase the sale price by 10% or more.

- Get rid of clutter, including too much furniture. Clean out the clutter in your closets.
- Keep your home neat, clean and odor-free.
- No family photos, religious symbols, or personal collections on display. You want people looking at the features of your home and not distracted by these items.
- Let the light come in. Remove heavy drapes and other window treatments that prevent the natural light from coming in.
- Keep your kitchen counters free of appliances and other clutter.
- If you have hardwood floors, remove carpeting and rugs and refinish your floors.

Carefully Select Your Real Estate Agent

Signing with a real estate agent is hiring someone to perform an expensive service, so treat it like an important job interview where you’re the employer. Ask questions, interview more than one candidate and make a decision when you find the right person for the job. Pay attention to how agents communicate and perhaps more importantly how they listen. And since you will be working with this individual for a while, make sure that you feel comfortable with their personality. Talk to them about marketing and ask them how they plan to market your home. And when it’s all said and done, go with the one that you feel is the most professional, knowledgeable, attentive, honest, and that you trust the most.

If You Don’t Price Your Home Right, You’ll Really Pay

Make absolutely sure that the price you ask is what the market value is for your area. In fact, it may make sense to list your home at the lower end of the market value range. At the end of the day, the final price you get could be well above your listing price.

Breaking Through the Barrier: Youth Mental Health

Why is children’s mental health shrouded with stigma and shame? If a child has diabetes we take them to get their insulin, and if they have asthma, we get them an inhaler. Childhood mental illness is real and very common. The National Institute for Mental Health reports that one out of five children in the U.S. suffers from a mental health disorder. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death in youth ages 15-24. In fact, half of all psychiatric illnesses occur before the age of 14, and 75 percent by the age of 24. According the World Health Organization, mental illness is the number one disability in the world. Yet somehow, many still find it more acceptable to get treatment for other significant illnesses than for a mental health disorder.

For far too long, families of children with a mental health disorder have hidden in the shadows of the fear and shame, not seeking proper care for their child’s mental health concerns. The stigma of seeking help too often creates a barrier many can’t overcome.

May is National Mental Health Awareness Month, and a great time to shine the light on what is needed to overcome stigma and find help, healing, and hope. WJCS is dedicated to focusing attention on child and adolescent mental health, and the opportunity to transform the lives of thousands of children and families in our county through education, early intervention, and identification of mental health challenges. It is essential for parents, caregivers, and educators to become aware and address the first warning signs, including mood changes, intense feelings, difficulty concentrating, sleep irregularities, behavior changes, unexplained weight loss, substance abuse, and physical harm.

The good news: there are now, very effective interventions and treatments available. There is hope for the millions of children and youth living with mental illness and their families. Current research shows that many emotional and behavioral disorders can be mitigated if identified and treated early in childhood and adolescence. WJCS provides programs and services for children, youth, and families, which address mental health literacy and enhance community awareness.

One of WJCS’ key initiatives is offering Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) trainings throughout Westchester County to educators, sports coaches, camp staff, first responders, parents, and any youth-centered organization. YMHFA is a nationally recognized, evidence-based certification course that teaches warning signs and risk factors of various mental health challenges common among adolescents and ways to deal with them until professional help is available. YMHFA, like CPR, teaches how to be a first responder for a mental health challenge or crisis. The goal is for individuals to be well-versed in how to handle a youth’s panic attack as they would be applying pressure to a wound.

Community conversations about mental health are happening throughout the county more than ever, and many are youth-driven. The students of Schechter Westchester, partnered with WJCS, to coordinate a full-day “Open Minds Summit” — a community event with one goal to de-stigmatize mental illness. Over 600 students, parents and staff attended the event, an important beginning to help raise awareness about mental health. Not only in May, but every day, children, youth and adults must no longer hide in the shadows of shame and fear of judgment, but rather bloom in the light of appropriate care, acceptance, awareness, and hope.

Brenda P. Haas, LMSW, Ed.M is the Coordinator of WJCS GPS (Guiding Parents Through Services), a services of Partners in Caring, and Partners in Schools Consultant at Schechter Westchester.

Westchester Jewish Life • May 2019 • Nisan-Iyar 5779 • Page 12 • www.westchesterjewishlife.com
Long-Term Care Insurance Update

BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

A few weeks ago, one of the leading American companies that sells long-term care insurance suspended sales of its most popular product. Then, a week or so later, the company restarted sales — but only by direct online contact. In other words, brokers and insurance salespeople are now not able to sell this product for the largest seller. What does that mean for the marketplace, and for consumers?

The company that we are referring to is named Genworth Financial. What they did initially was suspend all sales of traditional, individual policies of long-term care insurance (LTCI). A move like this is big news in the industry, since Genworth has the largest number of LTCI policyholders of any insurance company. In the past year, Genworth had raised its premiums by 52%, and had set aside an additional $327 million to cover unanticipated costs paid out on its policies. This was due to increased capital requirements imposed by regulators, the current and long-standing low interest rate environment and the increased longevity of Americans. By living longer, it is more likely that a person will become incapacitated and require long-term care, which in turn means that there will be more claims. Also, when someone buys LTCI, they typically pay premiums for many years prior to filing a claim, if ever. During this time period, the insurance company invests the premium dollars in a diversified bond portfolio. With interest rates at historically low rates, the return on investment for the insurance companies was much lower than anticipated thus resulting in the need to raise premium rates.

What does this mean going forward for the LTCI industry and consumers? For starters, the number of companies who sell LTCI has been decreasing and will continue to do so since the companies are finding it difficult to make a profit on this product and that not many consumers have purchased the product due to how expensive it can be. Moreover, the industry is moving away from traditional, LTCI policies, and towards “hybrid” policies. Hybrid policies are actually life insurance policies or annuities with a long-term care component. Here’s how it works: Basically, the consumer purchases a life insurance policy — either with a single premium or a series of large payments. The policy will pay out to heirs at death, just like traditional life insurance. However, if the policyholder needs long-term care during their lifetime, the policy can be used up to certain amounts to pay for that care. There are similar hybrid policies available in the annuity industry. Although the annuity type policies are less popular than the life insurance hybrids, they have also increased in sales in recent years.

These hybrid policies have been very popular in recent years. Even as traditional LTCI policy sales declined, hybrid policy sales surged. A 2017 Forbes article, for instance, reported that hybrid policies were about twice as popular as traditional LTCI in that year. Regardless of growth in the hybrid LTCI marketplace, total sales of policies continue to decline. Is there a future for LTCI at all? No one is certain. One thing does seem clear: the cost of long-term care and the cost to insure against it will continue to rise.

So, should you buy LTCI and if so, when? Well, that depends upon a number of factors, including your aversion to risk, the possible dependency of family members, among others. One big factor is whether you have the ability to self-insure. In other words, do you have enough assets to pay for this potential cost, if necessary. In the New York metropolitan area, that could mean $200,000 or more a year. And if you are married, those numbers could apply to your spouse as well. Could you afford this amount of money if one of you had a chronic illness such as Alzheimer’s disease and needed nursing home care for 8-10 years or longer?

Also to be considered is your age. If you are under 60, the cost may not be prohibitive; however, the older you get the more expensive LTCI gets; furthermore, you may not even be insurable later in life for health reasons. That is one of the primary reasons for considering LTCI at an early age.

Bottom line: if you have an LTCI policy, it probably makes sense to keep it. Monitor premiums carefully, usually as many insurance companies continue to raise their prices. If you don’t have LTCI, you should certainly start the conversation among your family and advisors as to how you would pay for long-term care if the need arises.

Pope Francis Receives AJC Leadership Delegation at Vatican, Strongly Denounces Anti-Semitism

American Jewish Committee (AJC) President John Shapiro led a delegation during a private audience with His Holiness Pope Francis at the Vatican on March 8.

Pope Francis spoke of the church’s longstanding relationship with A JC and the value of interreligious dialogue. “Your commitment to Jewish-Christian dialogue goes back to Nostra Aetate, a milestone in our journey of fraternal reckoning,” Pope Francis said to the visiting A JC leaders.

The Pope expressed “great concern” about “an excessive and depraved hatred” spreading in many places around the world. “I think especially of the outbreak of anti-Semitic attacks in various countries,” said Pope Francis. “I stress that for a Christian any form of anti-Semitism is a rejection of one’s own origins, a complete contradiction.”

“In the fight against hatred and anti-Semitism an important tool is interreligious dialogue, aimed at promoting a commitment to peace, mutual respect, the protection of life, religious and the care of creation,” he said.

Shapiro, addressing the Pope during the audience, praised him for the role he has played in the “historic reconciliation” between Jews and Catholics.

“It is a great joy for this leadership group of the American Jewish Committee to meet with you and to express deep appreciation for the special relationship we have enjoyed with the Holy See over more than half a century,” said Shapiro.

Shapiro expressed appreciation for the Pope’s announcement earlier that the Vatican Archives covering the World War II period and papacy of Pius XII will be opened to international researchers in 2020. “We look forward especially to the involvement of the leading Holocaust memorial institutes in Israel and the U.S. to objectively evaluate as best as possible the historical record of that most terrible of times, to acknowledge both the failures as well as valiant efforts during the period of the Shoah,” Shapiro said.

He also referred in his remarks to the persecution of Christians today, the rise of anti-Semitism, and the Jewish people’s enduring link to Israel.

For this audience, A JC has dedicated the first vine in the Vineyard of the Nations at My Tree in Beit Shehem Israel in honor of Pope Francis. It will annually yield wine for the Pope. David Inlander, Chair of A JC’s Interreligious Affairs Commission, presented the gift.

In addition to the papal audience, the A JC delegation held a series of meetings in the Vatican with key Holy See officials, including Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin, and Cardinal Kurt Koch, president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews.

The delegation of 35 A JC leaders included CEO David Harris; Rabbi David Rosen, International Director of Interreligious Affairs, who was knighted by the Vatican in 2005; Rabbi Noam Marans, Director of Interreligious and Intergroup Relations; and Lisa Palmieri-Billig, Representative in Rome and Liaison to the Holy See.

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A German-made World War II-era Model 2 freight car was installed outside the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust as part of the travelling exhibition Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away. Freight cars such as this were used by the German Nazis to deport people within occupied Europe to ghettos, killing centers, and concentration and extermination camps. Ultimately, 1.3 million people were deported to Auschwitz, and 1.1 million of those were murdered there.

Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away, is the most comprehensive Holocaust exhibition about Auschwitz ever exhibited in North America. The presentation at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is produced in partnership with the international exhibition firm Musealia and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Poland. The groundbreaking exhibition was curated by an international team of experts led by historian Dr. Robert Jan van Pelt. It will open in New York City on May 8, 2019 and run through January 3, 2020.

“The freight car is symbolic of the murder of millions of people. Auschwitz is not ancient history but living memory, warning us to be vigilant, haunting us with the admonition ‘Never Again.’ It compels us to look around the world and mark the ongoing atrocities against vulnerable people, and to take a firm stand against hate, bigotry, ethnic violence, religious intolerance, and nationalist brutality of all kinds,” said Bruce C. Ratner, Chairman of the Museum’s Board of Trustees.

Between June 1940 and January 1945, more than 1.1 million people, including ca. 1 million Jews, were murdered at Auschwitz. Most were transported there in train cars such as the one being placed on display. The horrible journey could last many days. Approximately 80 people and their belongings were crammed into each train car with a single barrel for sanitation and a can of drinking water, on a trip from which most never returned. The train cars brought people to extermination centers and returned filled with their looted possessions.

This freight car is one of 120,000 built between 1910 and 1927, used by the Deutsche Reichsbahn (German National Railway) to transport foodstuffs, goods, and livestock. During World War II such trains cars were also used to transport soldiers and prisoners of war, and to deport Jews, Roma and others to the ghettos and killing centers in occupied Poland and the German Nazi concentration camps across occupied Europe. It is 11.5 ft. wide x 31.5 ft. long and has approximately 215 square feet of space.

Featuring more than 700 original objects and 400 photographs, the New York presentation of the exhibition will allow visitors to experience artifacts from the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum on view for the first time in North America, including hundreds of personal items—such as suitcases, eyeglasses, and shoes—that belonged to survivors and victims of Auschwitz. Other artifacts include concrete posts that were part of the fence of the Auschwitz camp; fragments of an original barrack for prisoners from the Auschwitz III-Monowitz camp; a desk and other possessions of the first and the longest-serving Auschwitz commandant Rudolf Höß; a gas mask used by the SS; and Picasso’s Lithograph of Prisoner.

The Museum of Jewish Heritage has incorporated into the exhibition more than 100 rare artifacts from its collection that relay the experience of survivors and liberators who found refuge in the greater New York area. These artifacts include: Alfred Kantor’s sketchbook and portfolio that contain over 150 original paintings and drawings from Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and Schwarzeide; the trumpet that musician Louis Bannet (acclaimed as “the Dutch Louis Armstrong”) credits for saving his life while he was imprisoned in Auschwitz; visas issued by Chiune Sugihara, a Japanese diplomat in Lithuania often referred to as “Japan’s Oskar Schindler”; prisoner registration forms and identification cards; personal correspondence; tickets for passage on the St. Louis; a rescued Torah scroll from the Bornplatz Synagogue in Hamburg; and dreidels and bullets recovered by Father Patrick Desbois in a Jewish mass grave in Ukraine.

Also on display from the Museum of Jewish Heritage collection will be Heinrich Himmler’s SS dagger and helmet and his annotated copy of Hitler’s Mein Kampf, as well as an anti-Jewish proclamation issued in 1551 by Ferdinand I that was given to Hermann Göring by German security chief Reinhard Heydrich on the occasion of Göring’s birthday. The proclamation required Jews to identify themselves with a “yellow ring” on their clothes. Heydrich noted that, 400 years later, the Nazis were completing Ferdinand’s work. These artifacts stand as evidence of a chapter of history that must never be forgotten.

Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is located at 36 Battery Place, New York City. Call 646.437.4202 for more information or visit mjhny.org.

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