UJA Presents COVID-19 Impact Study for the Community

BY STEPHEN E. LIPKEN

Giselle [Gigi] Weissman, Chair, UJA Westchester Advisory Committee welcomed the Westchester Jewish community to a virtual COVID-19 Impact Study on the New York Jewish Community on Tuesday, December 7th.


“We just celebrated Thanksgiving and Chanukah and I know that these celebrations are centered around food, but the cost of holiday staples, especially a kosher turkey makes festivities a financial stretch for families grappling with food insecurity. One finding that came out of the COVID Impact Study is that 13% of our Westchester Jewish community live in or near poverty,” Weissman continued, mentioning the recently organized HOPE Community Services Kosher Food Pantry.

Weissman then introduced Annette Jacoby, UJA Federation Director of Research. Jacoby addressed Jewish Life during COVID; Poverty and Hardship; Employment; Housing Insecurity; Food Insecurity; Mental Health and Emotional Well-being; Social Isolation and Loneliness; Health and Disability; Domestic Violence; Substance Abuse; Philanthropy and Volunteerism; Vaccine Hesitancy; Antisemitism; Inclusion and Discrimination.

Regarding emotional attachment during the pandemic, Jacoby noted that only 8% of Westchester Jewish adults indicated that their attachment to being Jewish had increased since the pandemic compared to 20% of Jewish adults in the 8-county area; 38% of Westchester Jewish adults felt that their Jewish identity helped them cope.

Addressing Poverty, Jacoby said that 23% of adults in the 8-county area live in poverty compared to just 13% of Westchester adults. With Food Insecurity, only 3% in Westchester Jewish households reported being food insecure compared to 9% in the 8-county area.

“Half of adults in Jewish households felt socially isolated; 81% of adults living in 1-person households felt socially isolated compared to 70% in the 8-county area. In terms of mental health, 18% of adults reported symptoms of anxiety and/or depression; 16% felt more down; 55% with symptoms of depression/anxiety not seeking professional health, compared to 50% in the 8-county area; Westchester Domestic Violence rate is 2%.”

Further interactive web-based tools and reports can be found on www.ujafedny.org/covid-19-impact-study.

Scarsdale Synagogue Temples Tremont and Emanu-El Dedicates Newly Renovated Sanctuary

Scarsdale Synagogue Temples Tremont and Emanu-El, 2 Ogden Road, safely welcomed hundreds of synagogue members and local residents during the weekend of December 3-5 to celebrate the holiday of Hanukkah and to formally dedicate their newly renovated Sanctuary. The new Sanctuary, which has been several years in the making, updates the historic worship space that the congregation has gathered in for more than 50 years.

During the formal dedication service, which took place on Friday night December 3rd, Rabbi Jeffrey Brown and Cantor Chanin Becker noted that, “We gather here tonight, particularly cognizant that the term Hanukkah in Hebrew means ‘dedication.’ How fitting that we join together, both to commemorate the Maccabean rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem so long ago and rededicate ourselves to the work of our sacred community as we look ahead to the future.”

Highlights of the new Sanctuary space include: A flattened floor to ensure accessibility by synagogue attendees of all ages and physical abilities; Walls featuring beautifully repurposed wood from the prior Sanctuary as a nod to the past as well as a strong environmental statement about the imperative of recycling; Even larger windows that fill the room with light and highlight the community’s respect for the natural beauty of the surrounding world; A striking ceiling fixture that invites peaceful reflection and meditation; and an enhanced multi-access audio-visual system for those who want to connect virtually.

Temple President Michael Luskin observed that, “This evening’s Dedication marks a defining moment in the life of our synagogue. In the last 18 months, coinciding with the pandemic, hundreds of families in our community generosity stepped forward to participate in our Capital Campaign. Defying anxiety about the state of uncertainty in our fragile world, our community stepped up, and dramatically invested in our congregation’s vibrant future.”

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Visit www.westchesterjewishlife.com
31st Annual New York Jewish Film Festival

The Jewish Museum and Film at Lincoln Center will present the 31st annual New York Jewish Film Festival (NYJFF) in person and virtually from January 14 through 25, 2022. Among the oldest and most influential Jewish film festivals worldwide, NYJFF presents the finest documentary, narrative, and short films from around the world that explore the Jewish experience.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, the 2021 festival was presented exclusively online. The 2022 edition will feature both in-person screenings at the Walter Reade Theater, 165 West 65th Street, NYC, and virtual offerings. The NYJFF line-up showcases 33 wide-ranging and exciting features and shorts (24 features and 9 shorts), including the latest works by dynamic voices in international cinema, as well as the world premiere of a new 4K restoration of the 1984 film Kaddish by Steve Rosedale.

Several notable highlights in this year’s festival are: A Kaddish for Bernie Madoff, The Lost Film of Nuremberg, Tiger Within, and The Will to See.

U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand recently returned from a Congressional Delegation to Israel where she met with the leadership of the new Israeli government. The Senator joined JCRC-NY Executive VP and CEO Gideon Taylor to share her insights into the status of the U.S.-Israel relationship and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The conversation is available now on JCRC’s Facebook and YouTube pages.

Senator Gillibrand declared in reference to her meetings with Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, Foreign Minister Yair Lapid and Defense Minister Benny Gantz that “I left my time in Israel feeling extremely hopeful. It was actually one of my best visits to Israel over the last ten years. I really saw a lot of strength in the new government. I saw the leadership having complementary strengths that I thought would really work together to have a very strong and forward-looking government. Each of the leaders had something different to bring to the table, and I was really grateful to get to know them.”

Regarding the Senator’s leadership on securing funding for Israel’s Iron Dome missile defense system, the Senator remarked, “I lead the letter every year to make sure that Israel has the resources it needs to defend itself - to have the technology and defense funding it needs, and this year was no exception,” the Senator continued. “Israel’s security is very important to me because I think long-term, our national security is fundamentally intertwined and so helping one another really does make a difference.”

“We commend Senator Gillibrand for her work ensuring that Israelis are well-protected from rocket attacks and that local Jewish community organizations have the resources to protect themselves from antisemitic assaults,” said Gideon Taylor, JCRC-NY Executive Vice President and CEO. “The Jewish community locally in New York and in Israel is truly appreciative to have her deep support and her work to advance peace in the region.”

“We treasure our longstanding relationship with Sen. Gillibrand, and greatly appreciate hearing insights from her recent visit to Israel,” said Cheryl Fishbein, JCRC-NY President. “We are excited to learn about her optimism in working with the new Israeli government leadership.”

Scarsdale Synagogue Temples Tremont and Emanu-El Dedicates Newly Decorated Sanctuary

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That future was on full display on Sunday December 5th, when the synagogue hosted a festive outdoor Hanukkah (and Sanctuary Dedication) party for young families in its burgeoning Mazel Tots Early Childhood Center and Religious School program.

Cantor Becker and Rabbi Brown, in noting the unique relational connectedness that members experience in this 350 family congregation, expressed gratitude. Thanks to the holiday and Dedication, masked members of all ages had a good excuse to joyfully coming together to celebrate.

Scarsdale Synagogue Temples Tremont and Emanu-El strives to be a sacred community where members feel connected, engaged and enlightened.
Join UJA Federation of New York, Learn and Volunteer on MLK Jr. Day

On Monday, January 17, 2022, UJA Federation of New York will sponsor all-day opportunities, in person and virtual, for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (MLK Day).

As we confront the next stage of the pandemic, you can help people rebuild their lives and help rebuild our city. This Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, join UJA and their nonprofit partners to volunteer and make a difference in your local New York community and the greater community to which we all belong. You can pack food and winter items to keep people nourished and warm, donate blood to help save lives, call isolated seniors to bring warmth and cheer into their lives, and more. (UJA is closely monitoring the developing situation with Omicron, and they will give updates to the current plans when required.)

Also, one may join an evening of learning with scholars and thought leaders from the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America and Ammud: The Jews of Color Torah Academy, where participants explore a role in creating a community of belonging, virtually, on Sunday, January 16, 2022 from 5:00 – 7:30 pm.

“This MLK Day, let's live our values and live MLK's dream in the process. Together, let's build a better world.”

Check agencies’ registration pages for their vaccination requirements regarding in-person volunteer opportunities.

For questions contact Laura Hemlock at hemlockl@ujafedny.org.

Gov. Hochul Announces Winner of New York-Israel Smart Energy Innovation Challenge

Governor Kathy Hochul has announced the winner of the New York-Israel Smart Energy Innovation Challenge, a competitive award with a value of $1 million that enables New York State to partner with an Israeli company to develop an innovative energy technology that helps New York advance its clean energy agenda. Governor Hochul made the announcement on behalf of the New York Power Authority (NYPA), the largest state public utility in the U.S., which identified Tel-Aviv-based Prisma Photonics as the contest winner. Prisma was awarded for its real-time transmission line issue detection system that will help improve grid safety, security and reliability while advancing the efficient delivery of clean power statewide. New York Power Authority Interim President and CEO Justin E. Driscoll and Israel’s Consul General Asaf Zamir met in midtown Manhattan in December to celebrate the award announcement.

“Two of the world's leading energy technology centers - New York and Israel - are coming together to develop new technologies that will benefit both parties as well as the global utility industry,” said Governor Hochul. “New York State and Israel are working together through this smart energy challenge to develop solutions that will result in resilient, renewable and affordable energy systems. With the assistance of smart Israeli companies through innovative partnerships like this one, we are rapidly pursuing technologies with the potential to optimize our energy infrastructure and further develop a state-of-the-art grid that is equipped to deliver reliable, affordable, clean power statewide.”

Ambassador Asaf Zamir, Consul General of Israel in New York, said, “It’s very exciting to see an old and strong friendship like the one between Israel and New York produce cutting edge partnerships that actually modernize that relationship and produce great results for New Yorkers and Israelis. This partnership, under the Governor's leadership, and the continuation of this great and continued on page 9
An Original Musical Tribute to the Borscht Belt

Inspired by the rise and fall of the Borscht Belt, clarinetist/composer Sam Sadigursky’s “The Solomon Diaries” reflects the freedom, rebellion, celebration, tradition, independence, loss, hope and renewal of the Jewish community. His original compositions will be performed live in the sanctuary of Temple Israel of New Rochelle, 1000 Pinebrook Boulevard, on Saturday, January 8 at 7:00 pm.

The spirit of the Borscht Belt, as captured in photographer Marisa Scheinfeld’s book, which documents the remains of the Catskills region just before many of the resort sites were demolished. Compelled to set these images to music, “The Solomon Diaries is a musical documentation of a pivotal era in American Jewish history. I don’t have a direct personal connection with those places, but a story of refugees facing exclusion and rebelling by creating their own oasis and eventually assimilating is a story that is so relevant today,” says Sam. “I dedicate this music to the memory of my grandparents, who lived through the Holocaust and spent their lives driven away from their homelands of Eastern Europe. Growing up listening to Jewish music (his father is a Klezmer clarinetist/accordionist) coupled with his experience performing Jewish, Arab and Middle-Eastern inspired music onstage in the 10-time Tony Award-winning musical The Band’s Visit, Sam’s musical aesthetic is peppered with traditional folk flavor. “This is the most personal music I’ve written. My connection to Judaism is shaped by its rich music tradition, which goes much deeper than Klezmer music.”

The Solomon Diaries, an aural reflection on American Jewry’s one-time vacationland, celebrates the monument place the Borscht Belt holds in our cultural history by capturing a sense of loss and change within the Jewish American immigrant story.

Composer and clarinet master Sadigursky and accordionist Nathan Kocí recently completed a double album of the same title. After the concert they will host an interactive Q&A session. The Solomon Diaries Vol I, II, and III is available for pre-order at Bandcamp.

Clarinetist Sam Sadigursky was featured onstage in the Tony and Grammy Award-winning production of The Band’s Visit, and recently became a member of the Philip Glass Ensemble. He’s joined by multi-instrumentalist Nathan Koci, who most recently was the music director of Daniel Fish’s acclaimed Broadway production of Oklahoma!

Most of the albums’ songs were written in 2019 and early 2020 and originally performed with a quartet, but The Solomon Diaries was slammed down to a duo due to COVID-related limitations. Sam is joined by his former colleague, accordionist and multi-instrumentalist Nathan Kocí, who prior to the pandemic served as music director and conductor of the Tony Award-winning Broadway revival of Oklahoma. According to Sam, Nathan’s musical background made him the obvious choice for this music. “As difficult as it was having both our performing careers decimated by COVID, it was an enormous gift to have the time and the space to dissect and collaborate on this music in a much deeper way than our busy pre-pandemic lives might have allowed us.”

Tickets for the concert can be purchased online: https://tinyurl.com/3frh8yzp or at the door.

31st Annual New York Jewish Film Festival

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memoir.

Adapted from Sandra Schulberg’s essay, “Filmmakers for the Prosecution,” The Lost Film of Nuremberg re-traces the hunt by Hollywood filmmakers Buß and Stuart Schulberg for film evidence that could convict the Nazis at the Nuremberg Trial. Seventy-five years after the trial, French journalist and filmmaker Jean-Christophe Klotz uncovered never-before-seen footage, and interviews key figures to unravel why the resulting film about the trial was intentionally buried by the U.S. Department of War.

The late Edward Asner demonstrates his versatility yet again in one of his final roles in Rafael Zielinski’s Tiger Within. Asner portrays Samuel, a Holocaust survivor who develops an unlikely friendship with a troubled teenage runaway who sports a swastika on her jacket.

The eye-opening essay film, The Will to See, grew out of writer, activist, and philosopher Bernard-Henri Lévy’s journalistic coverage of places where human suffering predominates. Journeying from Mogadishu, Somalia, “a ghost town abandoned to the warlords,” to Nigeria, where Christians are massacred with impunity, Lévy spotlights locations the world cannot afford to keep ignoring.

For tickets, visit nyjff.org

Holocaust Remembrance Talk with Shelley Greenspan

On Wednesday, January 26 at 7pm, a special online Holocaust Remembrance program with Shelley Greenspan is being offered by the Harrison Public Library and the Jewish Community Center of Harrison. Greenspan is the only child of two Holocaust survivors who came from Northern Transylvania, in present-day Romania. Shelley tells the story of her mother, Lilly, who survived two concentration camps thanks to the love and support of her older sister, Sarah, who was with her throughout the war.

Shelley and her daughter, Emily had the opportunity to visit Romania in May 2019 through her grandmother Lilly. Shelley is a member of GenerationsForward, a group of second and third generation individuals sponsored by the Jewish and Human Rights Education Center of White Plains. For this free program, register online at https://www.harrisonpl.org/events/harrison/38825

Maccabi USA Receives $5M Matching Gift Opportunity from Stuart Weitzman

Maccabi USA has announced the creation of the newly endowed Stuart Weitzman Scholarship Fund, made possible by a $5M matching gift opportunity from the world-famous shoe designer and three-time table tennis alumnus of the Mac cabiah. Often referred to as the “Jewish Olympics,” the event is one of the largest gatherings of Diaspora Jewry in the world, with more than 10,000 athletes competing in Israel from 80 countries. Mr. Weitzman’s gift supports athletes who cannot afford to participate without financial assistance.

"This goes beyond sports," said Mr. Weitzman. “I cannot imagine a better way to create camaraderie and an understanding and appreciation of Jewish heritage and culture than supporting an organization like Maccabi USA. I am making this gift to ensure that athletes in need can take part in this life-changing experience.”

A true matching opportunity, Maccabi USA must raise $3M by December 2022 to receive the full $5M gift. Maccabi USA has raised $850,000 in the first three months to unlock Mr. Weitzman’s first $2M contribution. It is looking to raise the next $1.5M by the end of 2022 to receive the next $2M from Mr. Weitzman.

“This is the most monumental gift in the history of our organization,” said Maccabi USA President Jeff Bukantz. “After every Maccabiah, we start anew and need to raise $1M to support our athletes. This generous endowment gift will help ensure no qualified Jewish athlete in need is turned away from this transformative experience.”

The next Maccabiah will feature competition in almost 40 sports from July 12-26, 2022. Prior to the Games, Maccabi USA provides the week-long Israel Connect experience for its U-16, U-18, Open, and Para-athletes, which utilizes professional educators to lead athletes around Israel for a variety of experiences, activities, and discussions.

“While sports introduce many young Jews to the Jewish world with Maccabi USA, they are really just a unique vehicle for Jewish and Israel engagement,” said Maccabi USA CEO Marshall Einhorn. “Sports help to build pride, camaraderie and life-long relationships, and ultimately a tight-knit Jewish community that shares a passion for both heritage and competition.”

The first Maccabiah was held in in Israel in 1932 with 390 athletes from 18 countries. Traditionally held every four years, interrupted only by the Second World War, by 2017 the Games had grown to include nearly 10,000 Jewish athletes from 80 countries competing in 40 sports, making it the third largest international multi-sport event, and one of the largest gatherings of Diaspora Jewry in the world. In July 2022, Maccabi USA anticipates sending its largest-ever delegation of more than 1,200 to Israel.

Maccabi USA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with an extensive history of enriching Jewish lives through athletic, cultural, and educational programs. Maccabi USA is the official sponsor of the United States team to the World Maccabiah Games, the Pan American and European Maccabi Games, and the Maccabi Youth Games, as well as a sponsor of the JCC Maccabi Games for teens in North America.

Maccabi USA develops, promotes and supports international, national and regional athletic-based activities and facilities. It strives to provide Jewish athletes all over the world the opportunity to share their heritage and customs in competitive athletic settings. Maccabi USA supports programs that embody the Maccabi ideals of Jewish pride, continuity, Zionism, and excellence in sport.

Maccabi USA is a US Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) Affiliate Organization. The organization is one of only 28 affiliates nationwide to be recognized by the USOPC for its ability to cultivate a national interest in sport and increase opportunities for participation internationally, nationally, and at the grassroots level.

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With the Jewish community’s future at stake,

Together
we can reimagine what’s possible.

AJC (American Jewish Committee) Westchester/Fairfield invites you to join our efforts to:

- Advocate for the Jewish people and Israel
  - Join our groundbreaking interfaith and intergroup work and programs to reach out to government officials
  - Defend democratic values for all
  - Join our work to provide increased training to better equip officials to recognize and address antisemitism
- Educate and empower our youth
  - Through our Leaders for Tomorrow (LFT) initiative, we’re empowering high school students to stand proudly as Jewish leaders – for today and tomorrow
  - Support students on college campuses in countering antisemitic activity and anti-Israel rhetoric

Together, we can reimagine what’s possible to ensure that we can live in a world where antisemitism and anti-Zionism are on the decline; where coalitions of diverse faith and ethnic groups unite to protect our most precious democratic values; and where important strides are being made towards strengthening Israel’s place within the community of nations.

To find out how to get involved, please contact us at AJC Westchester/Fairfield: westchester@ajc.org.

American Jewish Committee (AJC) is the leading global Jewish advocacy organization.

AJC Westchester/Fairfield

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Delegation of UN Ambassadors from Around the World Visit Israel

On December 14, 2021, at the invitation of Israel’s Ambassador to the United Nations, Gilad Erdan and the American Zionist Movement, a delegation of 12 UN Ambassadors to the UN and their spouses arrived in Israel. The delegation includes ambassadors from Albania (who will begin serving on the UN Security Council in January), Argentina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Ecuador, Hungary, Nauru, Palau, South Korea, Samoa, Uruguay and Zambia, representing a variety of countries from the different regional groups within the UN.

The delegation stayed in Israel for a full week. The ambassadors toured historical sites including the Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and Yad Vashem, high-tech, innovation and development centers, and more. They visited the Northern and Southern Commands, received security briefings from IDF officials, toured a Hezbollah terror tunnel, visited an Iron Dome battery, and visited the Nevatim Airbase and received a briefing on the F-35 aircraft. The delegation was also scheduled to meet with the President, Prime Minister, and Foreign Minister.

Ambassador Erdan said, “The delegation of ambassadors is of great importance. It is an opportunity to present to them the truth about the State of Israel. At the UN, many lies are spread against Israel and after a week of comprehensive visits, I am convinced that the ambassadors will return to their countries and the UN with a deep understanding of the challenges facing the State of Israel and our contributions and solutions to global problems. From my experience in bringing ambassadors to Israel, I am sure that the visit will increase their activity within their foreign ministries to grow collaboration with Israel within the UN.”

Deborah Isaac, President of the American Zionist Movement, said, “The American Zionist Movement is pleased to sponsor this diplomatic visit in partnership with Ambassador Gilad Erdan and thanks the Israeli Government for welcoming the delegation. We hope that the ambassadors come away from the experience with a deeper and more realistic perspective of Israel and the threats it faces, as well as an appreciation for the rich and diverse culture of the State of Israel. AZM looks forward to forging new and lasting friendships with the members of the delegation and their countries.”

All participants on the delegation have received a COVID-19 booster shot and have been approved by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to enter Israel. There are strict COVID-19 protocols in place and the ambassadors entered isolation immediately upon arrival in Israel.

In December, Tal Brody, Israeli Basketball Star spoke to students at Westchester Torah Academy in New Rochelle.

Enhanced Services to Help Afghan Evacuees Acclimate to Life in NY

Governor Kathy Hochul has announced that $2 million in additional state funding will be provided to help Afghan evacuees acclimate to life in New York, bringing the total state commitment to $5 million. This is the first gubernatorial commitment of such funds in New York State.

“For generations, immigrants have come to New York and the U.S. seeking freedom and opportunity—their contributions defining and strengthening the fabric of our state and nation,” Governor Hochul said. “With Afghan evacuees fleeing widespread instability in their own country, New York State is proud to take a leading role in the massive resettlement effort, and with this historic, first-of-its-kind investment, we will connect people with the support they need to flourish in their new home. I also thank President Biden and Governor Markell for their efforts welcoming our friends and allies to our shores.”

The funds will be administered through the Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance’s (OTDA) New York State Enhanced Services to Refugees Program (NYSESRP), and award letters will be issued within one week of the announcement. The funds will be distributed to more than one dozen nonprofit partners throughout the state that are providing intensive assistance to 1,790 Afghan evacuees that since September and continuing over the coming months have arrived or will arrive in New York State. Approximately 250 evacuees are scheduled to arrive in Albany, 495 in Buffalo, 190 in the New York City area, 50 in Niagara Falls, 275 in Rochester, 10 in Rockville Center, 420 in Syracuse, 50 in Utica, and 50 in Yonkers. Governor Hochul made the announcement while delivering virtual remarks on Afghan Resettlement efforts with White House Coordinator for ‘Operation Allies Welcome’ Jack Markell and Bard College President Leon Botstein.

Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) New York Director Alla Shagalova said, “We at HIAS are delighted that Afghan evacuees will be included in the New York State Enhanced Services to Refugees Program, and very grateful to have these resources to help them start their new lives in the great state of New York.”

HHREC 2022 Community Guided Tour of Holocaust Museums in Germany and Poland

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center (HHREC) of White Plains, has announced a guided tour of Holocaust Museums in Germany and Poland from June 18-29, 2022. The HHREC Community Guided Tour and Trip is being offered to those interested in visiting these museums and to hear from experts in the field.

“This trip was created to expand the comprehension of this monumental event in human history,” said Steven Goldberg, Co-Director of Education at HHREC in White Plains. “We are very excited to offer this guided tour, to help participants gain first-hand knowledge to help understand the meaning of the Holocaust and pass on lessons learned for the future.”

The 2022 guided tour of Holocaust Museums in Germany and Poland is now open for applications, and trip highlights include: Sightseeing Coach Tour of Berlin, including the Berlin Wall Memorial, Brandenburg Gate, Bebelplatz; Holocaust Memorials in Berlin; Tours at the Berlin Jewish Museum, House of the Wannsee Conference, and Polin (Museum of the History of Polish Jews) in Warsaw; Tours at Sachsenhausen and Auschwitz-Birkenau camps; Tour of Warsaw Ghetto and other Holocaust sites; Tour of Kazimierz (historic Jewish section of Krakow); Panel discussion on Jewish life and antisemitism in Germany today and visit to the Neue Synagogue in Berlin; Interactive workshop on the effects of the Nuremberg Laws of the 1930s.

Services provided as part of this trip and tour include Intercontinental roundtrip flights from New York ( Newark) to Berlin, Germany and National and Intra-European transportation by public transportation, local, coach, taxi, local and long-distance trains. Accommodations include breakfasts in 4-star hotels (10 nights) in Berlin, Warsaw, and Krakow, along with group lunches and dinners, and tickets for the Chamäleon Theater in Berlin and lectures, discussions and local guided tours in English or with English translation.

To register or for more information, visit hhrecny.org/educators-study-tours/summer-community-tour/ or contact Steve Goldberg sgoldberg@hhrecny.org or call 914.696.0738.

The Holocaust & Human Rights Education Center is a not-for-profit organization based in White Plains that serves Westchester, Fairfield and neighboring counties. Their Mission is to enhance the teaching and learning of the lessons of the Holocaust and the right of all people to be treated with dignity and respect. They encourage students to speak up and act against all forms of bigotry and prejudice. Their work with students and teachers helps schools fulfill the New York State mandate that the Holocaust and other human rights abuses be included in their curriculum. For more information call 914.696.0738 email info@hhrecny.org
As we confront the next stage of the pandemic, you can help people rebuild their lives and help rebuild our city — and in the process, you’ll help build a world that’s better for all.

We’ve got a few ways for you to make a difference. **Volunteer with us** in person or virtually, by yourself or with friends and family. **Learn with us**, and scholars from the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America and Ammud: The Jews of Color Torah Academy, about how we can have a role in helping everybody feel like they belong.

**This MLK Day, let’s build a better world.**

**Sign up here:** ujafedny.org/mlk-day
Westchester Jewish Council Celebrates 46th Anniversary

The Westchester Jewish Council (WJC) will celebrate its 46th Anniversary Gala on Saturday evening, February 5th at 7:15pm, held at Congregation Kol Ami, White Plains and virtually. The celebration will honor Marc Klee, Jennifer Sokol, and their Westchester Business honorees, RPW Group (Robert P. Weisz and Andrew Weisz) for their dedication and service to the Westchester Jewish community.

Marc Klee has been an active volunteer for Jewish causes ever since he joined Beth El Synagogue Center’s Religious School Board more than 25 years ago. In 2011, he joined the Board of the Westchester Jewish Council, where he has served as Vice President, Secretary, and now as Treasurer. Marc has an MBA from Wharton and has been involved in portfolio management since 1977. He and his wife Barbara have lived in New Rochelle for more than 30 years, where they raised two sons, Robert and Brian.

Jennifer Sokol cares deeply about building Jewish community. Jennifer is in her sixth year as a member of Westchester Jewish Council’s Board of Directors, where she has chaired the Council’s Nominating Committee. An active member of Bet Torah in Mount Kisco for nearly twenty years, Jennifer served on the synagogue’s Board of Directors and has served in numerous leadership volunteer positions with UJA-Federation. Jennifer has a B.A. in English from Binghamton University and studied at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

RPW Group, Inc. was founded in 1980 by Robert P. Weisz and has since become a premier manager of commercial property in the New York tristate area. Robert P. Weisz is the President and Chief Executive Officer of RPW Group. Born in Montevideo, Uruguay, Robert Weisz arrived in the United States in January 1977 and started a career in the furniture industry. In 1979, he purchased his first warehouse to house his furniture company; and by 1980, Weisz was intent on creating his own commercial real estate business. Weisz is considered one of the most knowledgeable executives in the industry and is a highly sought-after speaker for lectures and other speaking engagements.

Governor Kathy Hochul signed legislation (S.7151/A.7390) in December, expanding the discrimination protections of the Human Rights Law to include for-profit colleges, universities, career schools, and English as a second language schools by updating the definition of a covered ‘educational institution.’

"Every student in New York deserves the chance to learn without shouldering the unacceptable burden of harassment and discrimination in the classroom," Governor Hochul said. "This legislation makes it absolutely clear that we have no tolerance for discrimination or harassment in as many of New York’s schools and educational institutions as possible."

For decades, the Division of Human Rights has accepted, investigated, and adjudicated discrimination complaints from students of both public and private secondary schools and universities. However, this protection has not included students attending for-profit colleges and universities in the state, until now.

By declaring that the provisions of the Human Rights Law apply to for-profit colleges, universities, career schools and English as a second language schools, as well as both public and private non-profit institutions, New York State will ensure that all students are afforded legal protection against discrimination.

State Senator Toby Ann Stavisky said, “Discrimination and harassment have no place in our schools. This common-sense legislation amends the current law to help protect all New York’s students, at both our public and private institutions. Our students deserve a safe environment to study, and the peace of mind to know they are protected from intolerance and mistreatment.”

Assemblymember Jaime Williams said, “All New Yorkers should be able to attend any school setting without being afraid of discrimination or harassment, and to the extent that students are harassed or bullied in school, remedies should be available to them under the New York State Human Rights Law.”

Legislation Broadens the Definition of 'Educational Institution' in the Human Rights Law to Include for Profit Educational Institutions

Governor Kathy Hochul

The Westchester Jewish Council connects Westchester’s Jewish communities and strengthens relationships among Jewish organizations and other ethnic and faith-based groups, elected officials, Israel and the community at large.

This event is open to the entire community. Cost varies by donor level. Details and registration are available at www.wjcouncil.org. For more information contact Donna Bartell, donna@wj-council.org or call 914-328-7001.

The Westchester Jewish Council

HHREC Community Trip to Germany & Poland

June 18-29, 2022

Join Steve Goldberg, Co-Director of Education, and Gerrit Book, professional tour guide, formerly of the Goethe Institut, on the first HHREC Community Trip to visit Holocaust museums and sites in Berlin, Warsaw, and Krakow.

• Learn about the history of the Jewish community in Germany and Poland.
• Trace the origins of the Holocaust
• Explore Monuments and Memorials.

For more information, contact Steve Goldberg at sgoldberg@hhrecny.org or call (914) 696-0738.

www.westchesterjewishlife.com
Latimer Signs 2022 Westchester County Budget

Westchester County Executive George Latimer has signed the 2022 Westchester County Budget officially cutting the County property tax levy by $7 million dollars. This is the third consecutive year we have cut County property taxes. This budget cuts the levy by $7M, totaling $9M over the last three years. I thank the New York County Board of Legislators for their hard work on this budget. I am proud of this budget and proud that through smart and innovative budgeting, we have been able to cut taxes responsibly again, find new revenue sources, save and provide needed services to County residents. We are committed to doing right by the people of Westchester County – and that is exactly what we have done.”

Latimer’s 2022 County Budget totals $2.2 billion while maintaining fiscal stability. The County is closing 2021 with a $64 million operating surplus.

The 2022 budget contains a total of $58.9 million for childcare subsidies. An increase of $10.2 million from 2021 levels ($28.7 million).

• Expanded income eligibility up to 85% of State Median Wage.
• from $73k for a family of 4 previously, to $80k now.
• Reduced the parent contribution from 27 to 10 percent of income above the poverty level, a 63 percent decrease.

Gov. Hochul Announces Winner of New York Israel Smart Energy Innovation Challenge

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The groundbreaking technology will use optical fiber sensing and artificial intelligence to detect potentially disruptive activity on transmission lines. The Governor also announced a second $1 million smart energy competition for 2022 calling for new energy innovators to apply for an award and encourage New York’s continued collaboration with innovative Israeli energy technology firms on creative energy solutions. NYP A uses no tax money or state credit. It finances its operations — including this award — through the sale of bonds and revenues earned in large part through sales of electricity.

Prisma Photonics, a Tel-Aviv-based provider of smart monitoring solutions for physical infrastructure, was selected as the 2021 challenge winner through a competition for new utility-related technologies jointly organized with the Israel Smart Energy Association (ISEA) and NYP A. NYP A and Prisma Photonics will collaborate on a research and development project to advance the functionality of Prisma Photonics’s sensor free grid monitoring platform already installed through a pilot project on one of NYP A’s transmission lines.

NYP A is concentrating its transmission portfolio on projects that balance system planning, returns and wider state objectives to generate a responsible supply of affordable, clean and reliable electricity.

As the winning submission, Prisma Photonics earns the opportunity to work with NYP A, a large utility to support New York’s clean energy transition as well as NYP A’s strategic priorities. The firm’s technology monitors transmission network performance along the grid 24 hours a day using existing optical fibers, detecting vandalism, climbing, tower hits, damaged lines, etc., and providing data that is analyzed so alerts can be sent directly to the relevant NYP A operation center. The project will start in the vicinity of NYP A’s Blenheim-Gilboa Pumped Storage Power Project in Schoharie County.

NYP A had already engaged Prisma Photonics for a pilot project in December 2020 to demonstrate the capabilities of the firm’s sensor. Based on its success, Prisma proposed an 18-month real-time detection and notification project that uses artificial intelligence to recognize attacks on transmission towers using the previously demonstrated fiber sensing-based technology. Prisma Photonics, which submitted a proposal in the open competition, was determined to be the best “fit” for the Challenge partnership.

The 2022 Smart Energy Innovation Challenge will open in January. The competition’s focus is on next generation technology such as electric vehicle charging, reliability with electric grid systems, energy storage, buildings/campus energy management, data analytics, artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and demand flexibility technologies. Interested companies can learn more about the challenge and submission details and deadlines in January on NYP A’s Smart Energy Innovation Challenge web page. A webinar with additional competition details also will be held in January.

Institute for Jewish Spirituality Hosts New Antiracism Learning Series

A free four-part Learning Series hosted by The Institute for Jewish Spirituality and Dimensions Educational Consulting, begins January 12, 2022, and will include cycles of Rest, Release, and Liberation: Antiracism and Shemita as Spiritual Practice.

This transformative series will combine Jewish text, antiracism teaching, and opportunities to reflect and help better understand and actualize antiracism as Jewish spiritual practice.

Yavilah McCoy, CEO of Dimensions Educational Consulting, will lead four live webinars over the course of six months. Webinars will run January 12, February 16, March 30 and May 11, all at 6pm.

Also included: Two free optional tracks for racial affinity learning groups which will be a time for processing, reflecting, and applying learning from the webinars.

Since 1999, The Institute for Jewish Spirituality (IJS) has been a leader in teaching traditional and contemporary Jewish spiritual practices that cultivate mindfulness so that each of us might act with enriched wisdom, clarity, and compassion. These practices, grounded in Jewish values and thought, enable participants to develop important skills while strengthening leadership capacities, deepening their inner lives, and connecting more meaningfully with others, Judaism, and the sacred. As a non-profit organization, IJS is able to provide programming and resources to the community thanks to the generosity of its donors. Visit www.jewishspirituality.org to learn more.
Guardianship – What You Need to Know

BY BERNARD A. KROOKS, CERTIFIED ELDER LAW ATTORNEY

It seems like almost every day clients are asking us questions about guardianship, including what is it? Why do I need it? How can I avoid it?

Keep in mind I am talking about New York law and the answers may be different in another state. While there is a movement to make guardianship laws more uniform, there remain significant differences among the states.

What is guardianship of the estate?

We don’t use those terms in New York. Other states might have guardianship of the estate. In New York, we use guardianship of the person and the property.

Property management guardian manages the property of the person who is incapacitated, and a personal needs guardian manages the personal health care decisions of the incapacitated person. Sometimes, the same person serves in both roles and other times there are different people serving in each role.

Can my Mom name me as her guardian?

Yes. You should keep good records of what you do on behalf of the incapacitated person. And, of course, the person over whom you secure guardianship will need to have funds to pay your fees. But you do not have to work for free. However, all guardianship fees payable out of the guardianship estate are subject to court approval.

For additional questions, make an appointment for a consultation about guardianship.

Bernard A. Krooks, Esq., is a founding partner of Littman Krooks LLP. He was named 2021 “Lawyer of the Year” by Best Lawyers in America® for excellence in Elder Law and has been honored as one of the “Best Lawyers” in America since 2006. He was elected to the Estate Planning Hall of Fame by the National Association of Estate Planners & Counselors (NAEPC). Krooks is past Chair of the Elder Law Committee of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTE). (914-685-2100) www.littmankrooks.com.

“No Hate in Our States” AJC Westchester/Fairfield: The Zionism = Racism Lie Isn’t Over*

GUEST OP ED BY AARON JACOB

Thirty years ago, on December 16, 1991, the UN General Assembly revoked its infamous resolution 3379, which had equated Zionism with racism. It was a great victory for the State of Israel, comparable to the 1947 UN partition resolution and the admission of Israel to the world body in 1949.

Resolution 3379 was adopted, by 72 in favor to 35 against, with 32 abstentions, in November 1975, a volatile moment in Middle East history. Two years earlier, Israel had emerged victorious from the Yom Kippur War, but at a heavy human cost. Following that war, Egypt, the most populous Arab country, renounced its traditional strategic alliance with the Soviet Union, prompting the latter to intensify efforts to woo the Arab world. During the 1973 war and the ensuing months, Arab oil-producing countries imposed an oil embargo against the United States and other Western nations in retaliation for their support of Israel.

These political realities were reflected in the UN as well. In 1974, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat was invited to speak before the General Assembly, where he famously declared, “I have come bearing an olive branch and freedom fighter’s gun,” purporting to promote both armed struggle and peace at the same time. A year later, the General Assembly established the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, a permanent body of member states dedicated to advancing the Palestinian cause against Israel.

However, resolution 3379 went further than any other anti-Israel initiative. “Determining” that “Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination,” it was the worst resolution ever adopted by the UN regarding Israel. Previous UN resolutions had stated that racism should be eliminated. If Zionism is a form of racism, then Zionism, and the state it created, Israel, must be eradicated, too.

Conditions conducive to the revocation of the Zionism equals racism resolution finally emerged in 1991. The Soviet Union, which had played a key role in the adoption of resolution 3379, was on the verge of disintegration. The defeat of Iraq in the first Gulf war had weakened not only the Baghdad regime but the radical anti-Western bloc in the Arab world. Importantly, the October 1991 Madrid Peace Conference had opened new horizons for a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Israeli government, preparing its strategy to get the UN General Assembly to rescind resolution 3379, recognized that a long resolution reaffirming the Zionist idea could elicited Arab amendments that would distort the meaning of the Israeli draft. It therefore opted for a very short text, which only stated: “[The General Assembly] Decides to revoke the determination contained in its resolution 3379 of 10 November 1975.”

Some UN diplomats expressed doubts that such a short resolution, which did not even mention Zionism, would suffice. However, there was agreement that the PLO and its allies to the short text made clear that Israel had chosen the right formula. The rescinding resolution was adopted by 111 to 25, with 13 abstentions. Fifteen countries, including Egypt, Morocco, and several other moderate Arab countries, chose not to participate.

By revoking resolution 3379, the UN determined that Zionism is not a form of racism, a determination it has not made regarding any other national movement. Clearly, this has been a setback for those seeking to use the UN as a platform to advance their extreme anti-Israel agenda. Will they learn from this experience and act differently in the future?

Sadly, Israel’s adversaries have not relented. Last May, following the hostilities between Israel and Hamas, the UN Human Rights Council established a Commission of Inquiry responsible for investigating “systematic discrimination and repression based on national, ethnic, racial or religious identity” in the Palestinian areas and inside Israel, language previously used to allege that Israel is guilty of apartheid policies. Evidently, the term apartheid is meant to rebrand the Zionism-racism equation under a different heading.

In 1948, the same year the term apartheid was first used to denote legal separation of the races in South Africa, Israel issued its Declaration of Independence. To the Arab inhabitants of Israel, this Declaration promised “full and equal citizenship and due representation in its provisional or permanent institutions.” Consistent with these principles, Israel has maintained a democratic political system based on majority rule. Israel’s Arab citizens participate fully and actively in this system and are represented in the Knesset. Indeed, an Arab political party is a member of the current governing coalition. The relationship between majority and minority is never simple, and Israel is no exception, all the more so because of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Yet despite the difficulties, Israel has achieved a remarkable degree of coexistence between the Jewish and Arab communities, flying in the face of the allegations that Israel is conducting “apartheid policies.”

This OpEd first appeared in The Times of Israel. Aaron Jacob is the American Jewish Committee (AJC) Director of Diplomatic Affairs. He served in the IDF during the Yom Kippur War as a combat officer in an armored division in the Egyptian front. Reprinted by permission of the author and AJC.

WICS 2021 Have a Heart for the Holidays Drive, a Huge Success!

Westchester Jewish Community Services (WICS) 16th Annual Have a Heart for the Holidays Drive was an enormous success, bringing holiday joy to hundreds of needy children in underserved communities in Westchester County. Over 1,200 younger children received toys and games while about 390 older children received gift cards.

WICS Board member Linda Plat us hosted her annual Have a Heart for the Holidays Drive luncheon in her Scarsdale home, where fellow Board members Michele Bretschneider, Sarah Kaylor, Nina Ross, Shirley Shwiell, and Suzanne Yearley joined in raising attention about this important initiative to all the event attendees.

Community partners participated in this year’s drive in a huge way; UJA Northern Westchester’s Young Families Division supplied nearly 1,000 toys through their Gift of Chanukah event.

Westchester synagogues Temple Beth Shalom, Community Synagogue Rye, Congregation Emanu El, Sharei Tikvah, and Woodlands Community Temple and the Leffel School also collected toys on behalf of WICS for the drive. Flames of Giving collected toys with a focus on infants and toddlers.

“This has been a challenging time for all children, especially those whose families have financial need,” said WICS CEO Seth Diamond. “It is a thrill to be able to relieve some of the burden of parents in underserved communities and help them enjoy the festivities of the holidays.”

Founded in 1943, WICS is one of the largest non-sectarian, not-for-profit, trauma-informed human services agencies in Westchester. They provide services to 20,000 Westchester residents, of all ages and backgrounds, annually to help them overcome life challenges and achieve personal success. Their 88+ programs include: mental health treatment, child and youth development initiatives, programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, services for older adults, and privately-funded educational and spiritual programs for the Jewish community. Programs and treatment are being offered via Telehealth during COVID-19.

To learn more, go to wjcs.com.
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