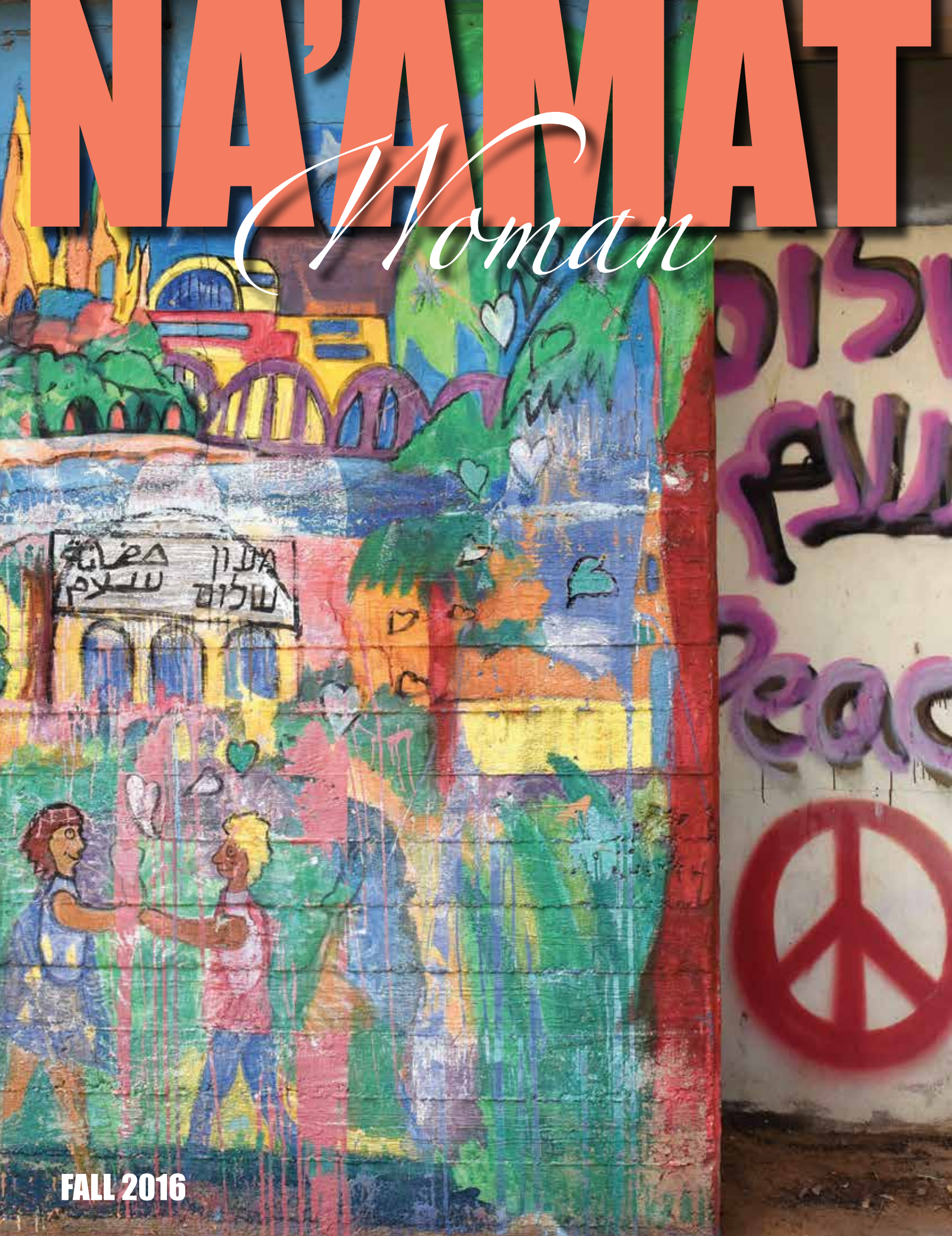


NAMMAT

Woman



FALL 2016

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NA'AMAT Woman



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**MAGAZINE OF
NA'AMAT USA
FALL 2016**

Vol. 31 No. 3

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(ISSN 0888-191X) is published three times a year by NA'AMAT USA. Postmaster: Send address changes to NA'AMAT USA National Office, 21515 Vanowen St., Suite 102, Canoga Park, CA 91303.

For change of address, contact naamat@naamat.org, phone 818-431-2200 or write to national office in California. Editorial and advertising, contact Judith@naamat.org, phone 212-563-5222 or write to Na'amat Woman, 505 Eighth Ave., #12A04, New York, NY 10018.

Signed articles represent the opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of NA'AMAT USA or its editor.

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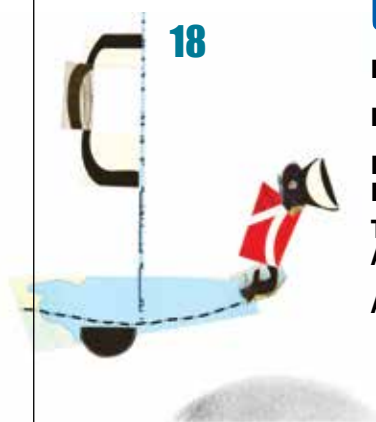
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Our cover: Outside wall at Na'AMAT's Shalom Day Care, which promotes coexistence (see story on Jaffa, page 8).

Photo by Debbie Hill



Mission Statement

The mission of NA'AMAT USA is to enhance the status of women and children in Israel and the United States as part of a worldwide progressive Jewish women's organization. Its purpose is to help NA'AMAT Israel provide educational and social services, including day care, vocational training, legal aid for women, absorption of new immigrants,

community centers, and centers for the prevention and treatment of domestic violence. NA'AMAT USA advocates on issues relating to women's rights, the welfare of children, education and the United States-Israel relationship. NA'AMAT USA also helps strengthen Jewish and Zionist life in communities throughout the United States. NA'AMAT USA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.

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President

Chellie Goldwater Wilensky was installed as national president of NA'AMAT USA at the 90th Anniversary Celebration in Las Vegas on July 31. An excerpt from her acceptance speech follows.

I am a life member of NA'AMAT USA, of course, but before that I was a *lifer* of Pioneer Women. My mother, Nettie Goldwater, was a very active member of the Rishonah club in Chicago. As far back as I can remember, Israel was the single most important thing in my family's life and Pioneer Women was how we showed it. JNF (Jewish National Fund), JUF (Jewish United Fund), MH (Moetzet Hapoalot), Histadrut, Israel Bonds — these were the alphabet of my youth. It didn't matter that we didn't have a lot of money. We had to give to all these causes so Israel could survive. My mother told me that when Israel was founded, they were asked to give a week's salary to support the beleaguered state. So I asked her, what did you do? She said, we gave, of course. This is where I come from.

When I was in high school, Rishonah club had a meeting at our house. Esther Zackler, a good friend of my mother's, spoke about the history of Labor Zionism and Pioneer Women. My mother asked me if I wanted to listen. I said I really couldn't because I had a lot of homework but I would come down for a few minutes. One hour and ten minutes later I got up from the step I was sitting on, having been mesmerized by Esther's talk.

So becoming national president of NA'AMAT USA is a very momentous step for me. Esther Zackler and Phyllis Sutker, two previous national presidents who came from Chicago, were very special, brilliant women whom I

knew personally. Esther was at my wedding and Phyllis was my good friend Sharon's mother. Lynn Wax, the most recent national president from Chicago, was on my Israel seminar, and I have already met with her to get advice and take advantage of her experience. I don't presume to be as outstanding as they were, but I will work as hard as I can for NA'AMAT USA and for *you* who have put your trust in me.

Forty-two years ago, Judy Telman (who is with us today representing NA'AMAT Israel) called my mother and asked her if she thought I would be willing to help start a Pioneer Women club of young women. A few weeks later, four daughters and daughters-in-law of active members met at my mother's house with Judy — and the Toladah club was founded. It seemed like such a wonderful

way to show my love for Israel in a concrete manner. Everything we did was exciting and fun, and being able to educate other young women about the wonderful work of NA'AMAT Israel was a real bonus. I want to thank the members of Toladah who have come to Las Vegas to support me — I really appreciate it.

Being single then, I could spend as much of my free time after work as I wanted on Toladah. Fortunately, when I got married to Yankee, he came from the same kind of family. His parents were not Labor Zionists like mine, but General Zionists, and their love of Israel was just as strong. His mother, Bessie, was active in Hadassah, so he was used to her often being away at meetings

These are not easy times for

continued on page 28



The family of newly elected national president Chellie Goldwater Wilensky, who attended her installation, are all life members of NA'AMAT USA. From left, standing: son-in-law Asher Zarkowsky, daughters Chai and Dvora Wilensky, daughter-in-law Rochelle Wilensky and son Moshe Wilensky; sitting: Chellie is holding grandson Matan and her husband Yankee Wilensky is holding grandson Zev.

Tonya Harvey

NA'AMAT USA

Celebrates

90 Years!

Heard loud and clear at the milestone gala:

"Together we create a strong and influential movement."

by JUDITH A. SOKOLOFF

What is age 90? Is it the new 70, 60? That's what people are saying. What does it mean for an organization?

It was obvious from the 90th celebration of NA'AMAT USA — held July 29 to 31 at the JW Marriot Las Vegas — that a movement with a long and vibrant past can continue to thrive and be forward looking. When the top priority is to advance and strengthen the status of Israeli women and to nurture thousands of Israeli children and teenagers, the challenges are constant and the work must go on.

Welcoming members and friends at the opening dinner, conference chairper-

son Chellie Goldwater Wilensky from Chicago said, "I am happy to see you all here and excited to celebrate our 90 years of dedication, service and partnership with NA'AMAT Israel. We have so many accomplishments to be proud of."

Participants never tired of hearing praise from conference speakers: "NA'AMAT USA is amazing." "It is meaningful to Israeli women and children." "Many thousands of Israeli families depend on you." "NA'AMAT makes a real difference." "Israelis appreciate actively engaged people like you." Perhaps even more important was the tangible and pervasive atmosphere of warmth, camaraderie and enthusiasm. Emphasized throughout the conference was the importance of members supporting each

other and working together.

Judy Telman, a past national vice president of NA'AMAT USA who moved to Israel 32 years ago, came with warm greetings from Galia Wolloch, NA'AMAT Israel president; Shirli Shavit, director of the International Department; and Masha Lubelsky, NA'AMAT representative on the Executive of the World Zionist Organization. NA'AMAT's leaders expressed their "deep appreciation to



Photos by Tonya Harvey



Longtime friends, from left: Obbie Sherman and installing officer Rita Sherman; outgoing national president Elizabeth Raider and Dave Raider.



The new NA'AMAT USA executive board, from left: Marcia Weiss, Debra Kohn, Susan Isaacs, Esther Friedberg, Gail Simpson, president Chellie Goldwater Wilensky, Ivy Liebross, Susan Brownstein, Jan Gurvitch, Doris Katz, Hilary Botchin and Raena Zucker. Not shown: Linda Schoenberg and Sandra Silverglade.



Prof. Shulamit Reinhartz, director of the Brandeis University Women's Studies Research Center, talks about organizational development.

all members for their hard work, concern and solidarity with NA'AMAT and the State of Israel. Together we create a strong and influential movement."

"I'm fortunate to live in Israel where I am proud to be involved in the educational and social programs of NA'AMAT," said Telman, who witnesses the organization's day-to-day interactions. She is always impressed, she said, by the NA'AMAT workers' dedication, constant caring, warmth and attention they give to the people they serve.

Telman enumerated many activities that distinguish NA'AMAT as a movement making a vital difference in people's lives. The recent annual awarding of scholarships to 210 Israeli women helps them pursue their bachelor's and master's degrees. Eight women earning doctoral degrees also received stipends. NA'AMAT's 23 multipurpose centers provide loving care for 2,000 at-risk preschoolers throughout a long day "from pajama to pajama." NA'AMAT day care centers for some 17,000 children can be found throughout Israel. NA'AMAT's 17 technological schools and two youth villages guide teenagers who have known only failure to develop faith in

themselves and to succeed.

Telman spoke about NA'AMAT's Glickman Center for the Prevention and Treatment of Domestic Violence located in Tel Aviv. It now shelters 30 women and their children, who receive support, counseling and education. The many legal aid bureaus and women's rights centers throughout Israel offer advice and counseling for women on issues concerning the family, marriage and divorce, stalking, sexual harassment and employment issues. NA'AMAT community centers are a hub of activity, both for education and socializing. Four new day care centers on the drawing board will open in Haifa, Jaffa, Shoham and Eilat in the near future. "We're all in this together," Telman emphasized, "and I like it this way."

Working together is how the NA'AMAT USA commitment has been passed down from generation to generation. It was Judy Telman who 42 years ago in Chicago called Nettie Goldwater, asking her if she thought her daughter, Chellie, would be willing to start a Pioneer Women club of young women. After years of serving in various leadership roles, Chellie

Goldwater Wilensky is now the new national president of NA'AMAT USA. When she started the Toladah club in Chicago, she said at the conference, "it seemed like such a wonderful way to show my love for Israel in a concrete manner." NA'AMAT continues to be that vehicle of love for her and so many other members. "We can be proud of all we make happen, but we need to grow and get stronger so we can continue to do so," she said, promising to do her "best to keep NA'AMAT strong and vibrant."

Outgoing president Elizabeth Raider was enthusiastically commended for strengthening the foundation of the organization. She spearheaded the move of the national office to California from New York in 2014. At the same time, with the help of the national board, executive board and national staff, she moved the organization forward with social media and other electronic communication. "We were literally making a fresh start by hiring a staff basically

new to NA'AMAT USA and structuring a cohesive national office with the understanding that working together is the key to maintaining a productive and responsive atmosphere," Raider said. In a message from the leadership of NA'AMAT Israel, she was thanked for giving the organization "a new lease on life" during her six-year tenure.

Enthusiastic members from the San Fernando Valley Council sport their NA'AMAT USA T-shirts.

At the wine and cheese reception, from left: Marjorie Moidel, outgoing national publicity chair; Rita Sherman, past national board member; NA'AMAT Israel representative Judy Telman and her husband Stu Telman from Israel.



Anat Katz, commercial attaché at the Israel Embassy in Washington, D.C., speaks about Israel's trade relations with Egypt.



City of North Las Vegas Councilman Richard J. Cherchio is shown with Lois Josephs and Nadine Carter (seated), both from Las Vegas.



Among the Pittsburgh representatives are, from left, Marcia Weiss, Jackie Braslawcsce, Judy Suffrin and Lisa Steindel.



Raider reported on the many special events held across the United States to celebrate the organization's 90th anniversary, noting that the theme was often the landmark project of building a women's empowerment and health center in Sderot. This will provide an essential service in a town that for many years has endured rocket attacks from Gaza, where a large segment of the population suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. There, women will have a framework to deal with stress and learn about preventative health care, participate in workshops on self-fulfillment and family relationships, get legal counseling, engage in sports and exercise.

Raider also spoke about a few of the memorable events that occurred over the past three years. Most recently, in May, NA'AMAT USA honored Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg with its Golda Meir Humanitarian Award. The private ceremony at the Supreme Court Building included establishing a law school scholarship in her name (see page 29).

The first worldwide NA'AMAT International Solidarity Conference took place in the winter of 2015. The event brought members to NA'AMAT installations throughout Israel and gave them the chance to meet with delegates from eight other nations. In honor of the 90th anniversary, NA'AMAT USA established a research fellowship recognizing the important role the organization has played in shaping Jewish organizational and communal life in the United States and Israel. The recipient, Pnina Lahav, is writing a book on Golda Meir, which includes a chapter on the influence of Pioneer Women on her life. Lahav, law professor at Boston

University, will present her findings to the new national board at its first meeting in November in Cincinnati.

Ninety is not just a time for celebrating, but also an opportunity to reflect, reevaluate, and strategize for the future. Prof. Shulamit Reinharz, founder and director of the Brandeis University Women's Studies Research Center, took the lead in the session "Facing the Challenges: Reshaping Jewish Women's Organizations." Stepping out into the audience with a microphone, she encouraged vigorous participation in a discussion on how an organization must know what it is and how a leader must learn to delegate. There must be a focus on efficiency and opportunity cost, which is defined as a benefit, profit or value of something that must be given up to acquire or achieve something else. For example, since every resource (land, money, time, etc.) can be put to alternative uses, every action, choice, or decision has an associated opportunity cost.

Reinharz urged NA'AMAT USA members to ask: Are we Zionist? Are we feminist? How do we define these terms? How do we promote change? "You have to know what you're talking about in order to grow. ... Disagreement helps to shape who you are. You have to debate all the time in order to shape the future," she said. "What is the real vision? You don't have to agree, but you have to engage in conversation. Other-

wise you are a non-thinking organization." Members must discuss: What are we doing? What are we? How do we do it? How do we get people involved? How do we mobilize?

Also addressed was the concept of working together on a global economic scale. Following the festive opening dinner, keynote speaker Anat Katz, commercial attaché heading the Commercial Mission at the Embassy of Israel in Washington, spoke about how trade affects geo-

political issues and can improve Israel's relations with its neighbors. "Trade is a political decision affecting how a country wants to be connected," she said. An important example is the agreement Israel has with Egypt to create Qualifying Industrial Zones. QIZ are industrial parks housing manufacturing operations in Egypt. These special free trade zones established with Israel take advantage of the free trade agreements between the United States and Israel. This creates both government and people-to-people engagement, Katz said. The collaboration has led to 280,000 new jobs in Egypt and increased textile exports for both countries — "a major accomplishment." It sends a strong message, "We are doing this for peace." She advised: "Check your garment label. If it says made in Egypt, you're supporting Israel and its textile industry and actively supporting peace."

At the installation brunch, Rita Sherman movingly installed the organization's new officers headed by president Chellie Goldwater Wilensky. A close friend and mentor to Wilensky in Chicago since the mid-1970s, Sherman spoke of the new president's long history of leadership, and her intelligence, strength and devotion to Judaism and Zionism.

Mazal tov to the new executive board: president Wilensky, vice presidents Jan Gurvitch and Susan Brownstein (fundraising); Gail Simpson (membership); Marcia Weiss (advocacy and education); Ivy Liebross (leadership development); Hilary Botchin (programming); treasurer Debra Kohn, recording secretary Linda Schoenberg and Susan Isaacs (public relations/publicity). Congratulations to the area coordinators: Doris Katz (Eastern); Raena Zucker (Southeastern); Sandra Silverglade (Midwest); Esther Friedberg (Western) and all the national board members.

Mazal tov to NA'AMAT USA! The organization is a very young 90. With new faces, new projects and determination, we can look forward to many more years of making a real difference — of being a voice for women and children, a voice for Israel.

Judith A. Sokoloff is the editor of NA'AMAT Woman.



**New York's
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Greater Chicago Council celebrants.

Celebrating 90!





The Reality of Jaffa

Once rundown and neglected, the ancient port city has been getting a makeover for several years now. How does this affect the mixed population of Jews and Arabs?

by JUDITH SUDILOVSKY

It was Purim and the smell of baking *oznai haman* (Haman's ears) — as *hamantaschen* are called in Israel — was starting to waft through the kindergarten classroom of the NA'AMAT Shalom Day Care Center in Jaffa. Teacher Siham Satal, who is Muslim, sat in front of a big baking tray forming the triangular pastries with the children.

It was also the day that Mother's Day is celebrated throughout the Arab Middle East. Across the table from Satal, her Jewish counterpart, Revital Hason, showed off the special gifts all the children had prepared for their mothers.

Just like the staff at the center, the students are divided equally between Jews and Arabs, and Christians and Muslims — and over the clambering and enthusiasm of the children it is difficult to determine who is who.

"Jaffa is a magnet for coexistence, an example of coexistence," said Satal, speaking in Hebrew, though both Arabic and Hebrew are used interchangeably in the classroom. She has been working for 26 years at the center. "All my life I have lived together with Jewish neighbors. We exchange cookies on all our holidays. This is how our parents raised us — that, yes, we can live together. The tension in the country now is sad, and we are seeing violence on both sides, but we believe in our way — in the real peace we make every day."

The holiday spirit and playful children are a welcomed oasis coming on the heels of a stabbing terrorist attack near the Jaffa Port in early March, killing a young American veteran on a study trip and injuring 10 people. The police identified the attacker as a 22-year-old Palestinian. He was not a resident of Jaffa.

"The Shalom Day Care Center is an island of sanity in all this violence," said Sivan Kedem, director of the center. "When the stabbing happened, I realized how important it is to be here and it strengthened my resolve. When you get here the world is different and you see it immediately." These days, she added, parents who attended the center as children are sending their own kids here.

Among the handful of traditionally mixed cities of Israel — including Akko, Lod, Ramleh and Haifa — it is not sur-

prising that such a day care center took root under the direction of its first director, Yael Ben Shahr, in this coastal city of Jaffa, the gruff older sister to Israel's sleek metropolitan hub of Tel Aviv.

The gentrification of south Tel Aviv began creeping into Jaffa some 10 years ago, making its mark for good and for bad on this formerly gritty, working class city. Here the lives of its Jewish and Arab residents have always been intertwined, especially in the old Ajami neighborhood, working and living together as a matter of course. However, as old buildings in these neighborhoods are purchased by outsiders and new developments are built, this is less so. The big influx of Jews to Jaffa in the past 10 years includes mostly those who don't want to integrate. The city's population of about 46,000 is comprised of 30,000 Jews and 16,000 Arabs, both Christians and Muslims.

Though on one hand many would like to present Jaffa as a positive example of coexistence and tolerance, others offer another narrative of "creeping gentrification" and "forced coexistence." The negative is described in some academic books about the city — such as the *Jaffa Shared and Shattered: Contrived Coexistence in Israel/Palestine* (2015) by associate sociology and social anthropology professor Daniel Monterescu of the Central European University



NA'AMAT's Shalom Day Care Center in Jaffa is a "magnet for coexistence," serving an equal number of Jewish and Arab children.

in Budapest and *A Town at Sundown: Aging Nationalism in Jaffa* (2011), co-authored by Monterescu and Tel Aviv University sociology and social anthropology professor Haim Hazan. They describe Jaffa as a “torn city” existing within an environment often “saturated with nationalism.”

Ibrahim Abu Shindi, founder and director of the Jaffa Arab-Jewish Community Center, noted that the reality of Jaffa is not black or white.

“We are a part of the Palestinian people and it is a very difficult identity conflict for us,” Abu Shindi explained. “Lots of our families fled in 1948 and we have families in Jordan, Syria and Nablus on one hand. On the other, we have an internal conflict with our Arab, Palestinian, Muslim, Israeli identity. On one hand, we want to live in tranquility and unity, but sometimes we are viewed as a ‘suspicious minority.’ I believe in living together. I believe we can work together to deal with our problems as Jews and Arabs.”

That has been the goal of his community center for the past 23 years. Open from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m., Jewish and Arab residents create a long-term relationship there rather than just meeting for “hummus and gefilte fish,” he said.

Problems must be confronted with open eyes, Abu Shindi emphasized. For Jaffa to flourish the city must not be looked at through rose-colored glasses only “for its richness and beauty. We also must address the problems and anger toward the government. The question is how we try to solve the problems.”

So while Jaffa is getting a much deserved face-lift, many of the long-time residents are feeling left out of their own city. One issue has been the controversial Andromeda Hill, a huge luxury housing complex that opened in 2000. Some call this gated community



Women make “Jaffa Dolls” at the Arous El Bahar women’s center, a place to socialize and learn.

*I believe in living together.
I believe we can work together to deal with
our problems as Jews and Arabs.*

a “Jewish settlement.” Bordering the Ajami neighborhood, it has blocked off a sizeable stretch of property along the city’s main street from the rest of the city and blocked the view of the sea from many of its residents. From the time the community was being planned in the late 1980s, there have been protests from the Arab community who feel walled out and have their own housing needs.

The regeneration of the run-down ancient port city in recent years has brought an increase in tourism. According to Yael Sakori of Tel Aviv Global Tours, some 1 million tourists a year visit the bustling city, with 120 buses arriving each day. More than half of visitors to Israel make a stop in Jaffa during their stay, and it is second only to Jerusalem and the Western Wall in the number of visitors it receives each year, Sakori said.

The municipality has picked up on the interest, reaching out to both tour groups and individual tourists. In late

2011, a new Old Jaffa Visitor’s Center opened to the public, featuring multimedia displays on the history of Jaffa as well as self-guided walking tours. Five free audio walking tours can be followed using smartphones by scanning barcodes in different locations around the city, which open up to a web page providing GPS navigation.

Sakori’s observation that “the combination of old and new is a part of the city’s DNA” was adeptly demonstrated during renovations of an old building to create an upscale boutique hotel near the flea market. The remains of an 8th-century church was discovered in the process and will be preserved and displayed under transparent flooring combining the old and the new. Though, perhaps it would be more appropriate to say the melding of “ancient,” rather than “old,” and new, as some residents feel there is a lack of an attempt to reflect or preserve traditional Arabic

architecture styles in new buildings.

With its almost year-round temperate weather, the city’s refurbished flea market and seaside promenade have become destinations of choice for scores of local and international tourists who come for a stroll. Visitors walk the alleys of the market area with its new upscale shops, bistros and boutiques that have popped up among the renovated apartment buildings. Bars and restaurants and an immense art gallery dot the new boardwalk. A sprawling new park in front of the traditional Ajami neighborhood has been built over a dumpsite that had once been filled with building debris and garbage. The park provides a needed green space for the city residents and a great place for visitors to ride rental bikes.

On the downside, many older businesses no longer find their place here. Property prices have gotten so high that local residents are being pushed out of their traditional stalls at the market

where they hawked used furniture, Persian rugs, antiques and old trinkets.

The younger generation is often forced to leave the city where their families have lived because they can't afford to buy a home here. While the financial consequences of the gentrification affect Jewish and Arab residents equally, moving away from the center of family life is more emotionally fraught in the traditional Arab society, even if it is just a few kilometers away.

Making the problem more acute in the Arab Jaffa community is that people cannot easily buy apartments in the surrounding cities. "Jews can move to Bat Yam or other cities, but for Arabs it is more complicated," noted Abu Shindi. "For Arabs there is still the problem of the mosques (and churches) and schools, which they don't have in other

Johnny Sabah inspects his nets. A fisherman for 42 years, he is unhappy that the development of the port is limiting his work.

While the financial consequences of the gentrification affects Jewish and Arab residents equally, moving away from the center of family life is more emotionally fraught in the traditional Arab society.

places. My family has been here since 1673, and I don't want to leave."

Some longtime Jewish residents are also not happy with the way their city has been usurped for a different sort of clientele. Shopkeeper Uzi Hadad sat in the doorway of his store filled with odds and ends, one of the old-time holdouts of the flea market. It's one of those shops that used to be a destination for a certain type of customer who likes to rummage around for little treasures.

"Yes, the market is pretty now," said Hadad. "But for us, the sellers, there has been a 70-percent decline in business

over the past year. It has changed. Before it was really a shuk, a market. Now it has become a place for entertainment. There are just a few of us old shops left, and they will probably close down soon."

Moshe Levi and Shlomo Cohen are movers who used to be busy all day transporting used furniture from the store where they work to customers' homes.

They call the revamping of the market area a catastrophe. "The market used to have character, now it is all restaurants — it is all fake," said Levi. Like other workers at the shuk, he has lived all his life in the neighborhood. "We used to be able to make a living from the shuk. Now it is all vintage shmintage. They shouldn't call this the shuk. They should call it a mall."

But, he affirmed, there is no place in Israel like Jaffa. "Jaffa is the complete opposite of the country. It is the only city in Israel that you can say there are good relations between Jews and Arabs," he insists, though residents of the



other mixed cities may disagree with his statement.

On one of the streets where Persian rugs were traditionally sold, there remains one holdout, the store of Avi Cohen, 56. On a brisk spring afternoon, a minyan gathers on the sidewalk outside his shop to pray the traditional Minha service. Afterwards they share some soft drinks, then go back to their respective shops. "On the surface everything is pretty, but underneath they did damage to businesses," Cohen said quietly, sitting down inside his store. "It is hard to get clients who want to come see rugs."

The local fishermen also are concerned about the development of the city and the port area, which, they say, is putting limits on their ability to fish. Their workstations are turning into "tourist attractions" with galleries and restaurants along the port. "Fishing is in my soul. I love it. It is like a sickness and unfortunately I have it," said Johnny Sabah, 51, as he inspected his fishing nets for needed repairs after a day of fishing. He has been fishing for 42 years, he said. "Too bad they don't want us here."

Sitting at a sidewalk café, three Italian friends from Verona were spending the day in Jaffa after competing in the Jerusalem Marathon. Enjoying the atmosphere, they thought the market area was "very cool."

Nearby, Israelis Adi and Nuriel said they were surprised by the open atmosphere given the general tension that exists everywhere else in the country. "You can walk here and see how it was years ago, see the buildings with the arches and imagine the people who were living there," said Adi. "This could be anywhere."

Ami Katz, head of the Jaffa "Mishlama," the Tel Aviv Municipality department created to develop Jaffa and care for its residents, explained that restoring Jaffa is a strategic goal of the municipality decided on by Mayor Ron Huldai. They view the development as an all inclusive "affirmative action" plan for the city in the areas of culture, education and affordable housing, which will move away from reducing Jaffa to only the hyphenated end of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, he noted. Since the founding of the Mishlama, the city has invested 1.5 billion NIS (about \$388,000,000) in Jaffa in the form of in-

frastructure, streets, parks, playgrounds, schools and kindergartens.

Special emphasis has been put into developing tourism and strengthening the arts and social infrastructures along the flea market, famous clock tower and port areas, Katz explained. But early on, the Mishlama also decided to implement a policy limiting the restaurants and cafés in the flea market to no more than 25 percent of the businesses there to maintain the authenticity of the market. "Jaffa indeed has turned into an attraction for tourists from Israel and abroad. The flea market is even more attractive and becoming more popular with every day that goes by," Katz said.

In addition, he continued, the municipality is careful to implement its policy of urban renewal while maintaining the daily life of the existing population. In that vein, they have also initiated housing projects for the Arab community. One of these is an affordable apartment complex on Michelangelo Street. "We have a commitment to make everyone feel at home here; we are serving everyone equally. We are trying to respect the past, plan for the future and live in the present," Katz told visiting journalists during a recent press tour of the city.

Still, for Raffa Sabah, 25, who works in a small but well-known hummus place on a dead end street on the outskirts of the now fashionable area of Jaffa, the going is still rough and getting tougher. Relations among the residents are good, he said, but the cost of living is driving out young people. The few new housing units that the city says are being built for locals do not nearly meet the need, he adds. Sabah is engaged to be married but can't afford to buy an apartment to begin his new life with his bride, as is the expected tradition. "It's difficult to buy a house here. It takes time until I have enough money for a down payment to apply for a mortgage," he said. "I might just have to buy outside Jaffa."

Longtime resident Safa Younes, founder and director of the Arous El Bahar (Bride of the Sea in Arabic), a women's center, loves Jaffa but at the same time sees the difficulties facing her city, especially Arab women from the lower socio-economic strata. These women,

some of whom had been married off at a young age without much education, had no public meeting space until Arous El Bahar was founded, she said.

"I saw a lot of problems in the Arab educational system here. Children with learning and behavioral issues such as ADD were not receiving proper attention," said Younes, 41. She noted that better-off families manage to send their children to private schools. "There are crises in the families and children do not continue their education. It affects all levels of life here. Girls are married at age 17 or 18 and don't study or develop a career but at the same time are not prepared for married life."

Arous El Bahar attempts to provide a space where women can meet as well as learn. In addition to computer, business management, food workshops and community-building groups, the center has also formed a small crafts group for women to use their sewing skills. The women create "Jaffa Dolls," some of which are sold at the Jaffa Tourist Welcome Center. To be truly profitable they will need to dedicate more time to marketing the dolls, acknowledged Younes.

Designed by a Jewish artist and sewn by three Arab craftswomen, the colorful, soft dolls have names like "Yaffy" and "Duba" and represent the essence of cooperation among the residents of the city. Most important, it provides women like 56-year-old Sahar Nabulsi, who is married but has no children, a place to go instead of sitting home all day.

On the day of the knife attack, a meeting of the Arab-Jewish group of the center was scheduled, recalled Younes, and she was concerned that the women would not show up. Yet 15 out of the 20 women came. "We spoke about our feelings — and it was harder because it was in our house, but the person who did it was not from Jaffa," she said. "My Jewish friends and I have continued our relationships just the same way as we always have. We are used to this situation."

From the roof of Arous El Bahar, the women can see the new buildings that have been taking over their neighborhood. When Younes opened the center some nine years ago, the women could look out to the horizon and see

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Challenging Israel's Religious Establishment

Activist organizations, like NA'AMAT, are moving forward in the struggle for religious pluralism.

by MICHELE CHABIN

For years, Israeli organizations have been taking to the courts — and the streets — to chip away at the Orthodox establishment's monopoly on anything Jewish, but neither the Israeli public nor the media have traditionally taken much notice.

That's begun to change as NA'AMAT and other activist organizations have gone more public about their human rights struggles in a country with little separation between religion and state. They are making more of an effort and seeing more progress.

Though their clients vary and their

approaches sometimes differ, what these groups have in common is their desire to challenge the monopolistic authority of Israel's religious establishment, whose leadership has become increasingly haredi (ultra-Orthodox) and, in their opinion, much harsher and more closed-minded.

Rabbi Jeffrey Woolf, a professor of Talmud at Bar-Ilan University, believes government policies that promote greater religious pluralism and inclusion should be voted in by the Knesset, not decided by the courts. But he understands why much of the public

is disgruntled with the chief rabbinate and haredi political parties. "The haredi political parties and rabbis have essentially taken over the chief rabbinate and certainly control the holy places," said Woolf, who is active in the arena for the development of Modern Orthodoxy in

For many years, Women of the Wall has been advocating for the right to pray from a Torah scroll at the Western Wall.

Michele Chabin



Something has changed. The public has stopped relying on the Knesset to enact positive change and has started to use the courts instead.

—RABBI SETH FARBER, ITIM

Rabbi Farber helps Israelis with Jewish ancestry convert to Judaism.



the United States and Israel. “They have imposed all kinds of strictures, including the separation of sexes in public places where it was never expected before.”

Woolf also blamed the chief rabbinate for setting the bar so high for potential converts, creating what he called a “conversion logjam.” He explained: “Their standards and bureaucracy are unparalleled in Jewish history. It’s part of a trend within the religious establishment and has nothing to do with halacha (Jewish law).” By taking such a strict approach, the chief rabbinate “has shot itself in the foot.”

In two recent opinion polls, Hiddush, an organization that advocates for “religious freedom and equality” in Israel and is definitely not a fan of the rabbinate, found that 71 percent of Israelis feel the rabbinate is distancing people from Judaism, while 75 percent want marriage to be under the authority of the secular family court and not the rabbinate.

Activists are increasingly petitioning the High Court of Justice, considered one of the most proactive supreme courts in the world, in the hopes of changing government policies on everything from divorce proceedings to conversions. Even when they win, however, these policies are in danger of being overturned by religious lawmakers and their coalition partners in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s government.

Activists say the haredi leadership is trying to impose haredi norms on a public that is less than 10 percent ultra-Orthodox, and tensions are growing.

For years ultra-Orthodox rabbis tried to gender-segregate men and women on public buses that traveled through ultra-Orthodox neighborhoods, but the Israel Religious Action

Center (IRAC), the Reform movement’s activist arm, won a court case against the practice in 2011.

Critics accuse the haredi leadership of turning the Western Wall, a national heritage site, into a de facto ultra-Orthodox synagogue where Jews cannot pray in an egalitarian service. At the same time, this leadership has vowed to prevent the government from keeping its promise to create and fund the first-ever official egalitarian prayer space at the Wall, at what is now called Robinson’s Arch. (It’s part of the Western Wall but out of sight of the main prayer area.)

Furthermore, haredi leaders who object to allowing Reform and Conservative Jews to convert in state-owned mikvahs (ritual baths) also oppose the Jewish Agency’s offer to fund alternative mikvahs.

The fact that the chief rabbinate, which has sole authority over Jewish status issues and institutions, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, which is in charge of religion-related budgets and holy sites, are run by haredi men “skews their perspective,” said Gali Etzion, the attorney who heads NA’AMAT’s Legislative Department. “These are all-male institutions.”

NA’AMAT is at the forefront of the fight for women’s rights. In 2014, the organization petitioned the court to permit women to apply for the general manager position at the rabbinate’s rabbinical divorce courts. “This would bring a women’s perspective” to an all-male institution half of whose clients are women, said Etzion. “They say only men can be judges according to religious law, but there is no religious reason women can’t be administrators,”

Etzion observed. The court suggested that religious authorities begin the process of inclusion by hiring a female deputy general, “but that was months ago,” Etzion said. “No one has been hired.”

Anat Hoffman, the firebrand chairwoman of Women of the Wall and executive director of IRAC, stated that the rabbinate and the religious establishment as a whole are “impinging on our lives, dictating life choices and not allowing the simple idea that there is more than one way to be Jewish.”

Hoffman ticked off the rabbis’ many spheres of influence: “Marriage, divorce, kashrut, shechita (ritual slaughter of animals), the mikvah system, Shabbat, who can be a state-funded rabbi, who can convert to Judaism and state funding of synagogues and institutions.”

She continued: “They have determined that young haredi men will graduate high school without practical skills [because they study only Jewish religious subjects] and whether they serve in the army. ... They say women can’t sing or even speak in the public sphere and at national ceremonies. They’ve even decided when to end daylight savings time” in a bid to encourage more people to fast on Yom Kippur.

In short, the Israeli public “is fed up,” Hoffman asserted.

Among the several groups trying to change the religious status quo via the courts, one petitioned for — and won — the right for those preparing for non-Orthodox conversions to undergo their conversions in state-funded mikvahs. Another is demanding the right to pray from a Torah scroll at the Western Wall. (Haredi lawmakers in the Knesset

have since introduced a bill that would empower local religious authorities to decide who can and cannot use the mikvahs, hoping to thwart Reform and Conservative converts from using them.)

Others are attempting an end-run around the rabbinate by launching an alternative kashrut supervision system (a move struck down by the courts) as well as an alternative Orthodox conversion program.

In August 2015, Rabbi Seth Farber, a Modern Orthodox rabbi, founded ITIM, an alternative Orthodox conversion program and court system to help non-Jewish Israelis with Jewish ancestry convert to Judaism.

Farber believes “something has changed,” that the “public has stopped relying on the Knesset” to enact positive change and “has started to use the courts instead.” He also said that in addition to the courts increasingly activist rulings, Modern Orthodox Jews in Israel have become bolder in their bid to challenge the chief rabbinate’s monopoly.

Knowing full well that the government would not recognize his program’s converts, and many other converts who have undergone conversion in other Orthodox conversion courts not sanctioned by the rabbinate, Farber peti-



Anat Hoffman (in red) leads a demonstration for religious pluralism.

The rabbinate and the religious establishment as a whole are impinging on our lives, dictating life choices and not allowing the simple idea that there is more than one way to be Jewish.”

—ANAT HOFFMAN, WOMEN OF THE WALL & IRAC

tioned the High Court on behalf of a convert and her son.

ITIM asked the court to order the Interior Ministry, which sets citizenship criteria, to recognize their conversion in a haredi court outside the rabbinate’s jurisdiction. The historic April 2016 ruling, which said the state must recognize all Orthodox conversion programs both in Israel and abroad, “was a blow to the rabbinate,” Farber said.

Chief Sephardic Rabbi Yitzhak Yosef termed the court’s ruling a “scandal,”

saying, “It is unthinkable that the private conversion industry, which is unsupervised by any state body, will be recognized as official.” Bezael Smotrich, an Orthodox parliamentarian, vowed to submit to the Knesset a bill “giving recognition only to state-ordained conversions.”

Immigrants’ rights advocates hailed the ruling because it provides a solution for many non-Jewish immigrants who want to convert to Judaism but who consider the rabbinate’s conversion criteria — living a fully Orthodox lifestyle,

with all that entails — way too stringent.

Unlike the rabbinical courts, Farber’s court converts children of non-Orthodox mothers as well as those whose parents cannot immediately promise to send them to Orthodox schools. “Russian immigrants see themselves as fully Jewish and their entire identity and sociological affinity is Jewish,” said Farber. “But the overwhelming majority aren’t religiously observant and the rabbinate has adopted a very, very high conversion threshold for religious observance.”

More than 300,000 Soviet immigrants (about 30 percent of all olim from the FSU) have no official religion. They immigrated to Israel under the Law of Return, which provides citizen-

The State of Israel embraces religion as part of its political and legal systems, and this embrace causes severe harm to individual and human rights, especially when it comes to women.

—SUSAN WEISS, CENTER FOR WOMEN'S JUSTICE



Courtesy of CWJ

ship to those who can prove they had at least one Jewish grandparent.

On average, only 1,800 Israelis per year convert to Judaism, Farber said. And according to the Israel Democracy Institute, 50 percent of conversion candidates from the FSU are rejected by the rabbinate's rabbinic courts at their first conversion hearing. Immigrants who don't convert to Judaism and have no other stated religion are in some ways "second-class citizens," Farber noted, because they cannot legally marry in Israel.

Marriage in Israel is performed only under the auspices of the religious community to which one belongs. A couple can marry in a non-Orthodox ceremony, but their marriage won't be recognized by the government. They can live as common-law spouses or marry abroad and receive civil spousal rights via the Interior Ministry on their return to Israel, but the rabbinate will not register the marriage. Unless their children convert to Judaism, they, too, will be prohibited from marrying in Israel.

Etzion pointed out that non-Jewish immigrants aren't the only ones denied the right to marry in Israel. NA'AMAT has gone to bat in court for mamzerim—Jews born out of a sexual relation-

ship that is forbidden by Jewish law such as incest or an affair between a married woman and a man who is not her husband or the children of the second marriage of a woman who did not obtain a gett, the divorce decree issued by the rabbinical court. (Although both a husband and wife need each other's permission to divorce, only the man may live with another woman and have children recognized as Jews, according to Jewish law.)

"We have a situation where people in Israel have the right to die for the country in combat, the right to pay taxes but don't have the right to get married in their own country," Etzion said of those with mamzer status.

Divorce in Israel can be even more problematic than marriage. When a woman refuses a divorce, the rabbinical court has the power to force the divorce on her. A man cannot be forced to give his wife a gett, though sanctions may be imposed if he refuses. In many cases, the husband's power to refuse to give a gett is a bargaining chip (some call it extortion) for issues like shared property, alimony and child custody. Many women are required to waive their rights to receive the gett that they want.

Rabbinical court rabbis "have a lot of power over women," Etzion said, citing cases where rabbinical court judges have set aside previous agreements by judges in the parallel civil court divorce court, often to the detriment of the wife. In this complex system, matters concerning division of property, child custody or alimony may be held in a civil family court, depending on which system was approached first.

Rabbinical judges "have the power

to say no to the gett," Etzion explained. "They can reduce child support. They can order the couple to try to reconcile even when the husband is abusive."

She recounted how NA'AMAT represented a wife whose husband was about to leave Israel without giving his wife a gett. "The rabbinical court was trying to impose a financial settlement, but that's something both sides needed to agree to, not something that should be imposed. The settlement was unfavorable to the woman. In the meantime, the court refused to declare him recalcitrant and said he could leave the country."

In another case of gett refusal, NA'AMAT represented a wife who sued her husband for damages in civil court. "The rabbinical court told her, if you don't withdraw the suit we're not going to rule in favor of the gett," Etzion said. "The rabbis have it in their power to impose sanctions like taking away the husband's driver's license, but they didn't because, in my opinion, they wanted to impose their authority over the civil court system."

Sometimes NA'AMAT works alone while at other times it collaborates on court cases with organizations like Mevo Satum, which advocates for agunot (literally "chained women"—women whose husbands cannot or will not give them a Jewish divorce).

"This is 2016, and from my point of view we can't rely only on Jewish law in these proceedings," Etzion said. "The same laws must apply to everyone. Child support must be based on the same criteria, across the board. It doesn't matter if the person is Jewish or Muslim or Christian or secular."

Susan Weiss, director of the Center for Women's Justice (CWJ), articulates what many activists believe but won't necessarily voice for fear of sounding too extreme. "The problem is not how

the religious establishment operates. The problem is that it exists at all. We don't want to fix the religious establishment — we want to remove it or at least its pernicious effects.”

The State of Israel “embraces” religion as part of its political and legal systems, Weiss said, “and this embrace causes severe harm to individual and human rights, especially when it comes to women.”

The activist said CWJ is working “within the limits of the law” to “ameliorate, limit or rectify” rights infringements “and to prevent any further expansion of the religious establishment into the personal lives of Israeli citizens...or further harm to the democratic nature of the state.” For example, CWJ has asked the civil courts to reward compensatory damages if a spouse refuses to give a *gett*. “We can and should cause the civil arm of the state to acknowledge the abuse caused by the religious arm of the state,” she asserted.

Many of CWJ's cases involve instances where, in the organization's opinion, religious authorities have overstepped their authority, she said. “We represented a woman who wanted to use a public mikvah but was turned away because she isn't married. We said the state has no right to ask questions and must provide services to all women. We have gone to [civil] court to say the rabbinical courts have no authority to ask women who are getting divorced who they have slept with. It's not relevant.”

CWJ has handled a few cases, Weiss said, where the rabbinical divorce courts have questioned whether converts seeking a divorce are true converts. “The rabbis have questioned their religious commitment. We claim the court has no authority to ask such a question.”

In June, Tzohar, a Modern Orthodox rabbinical organization that offers a somewhat more liberal brand of Orthodoxy than the rabbinate to Israelis wishing to get married and in other areas, accused the rabbinate of retaliation against those who question its practices.

In a statement, Tzohar “condemned” the Ministry of Religious Affairs rabbinate's decision to forcibly retire the Ethiopian community's 67-year-old Chief Rabbi Josef Hadani,

despite the fact that extensions are routinely given to state rabbis until they are 80. Rabbi Hadani had accused the Petah Tikveh rabbinate — an especially strict branch — of refusing to marry Ethiopian Jews, saying they are not Jewish. “Seemingly, his only transgression was his brave decision to stand in defense of Ethiopian Jews who had been denied the right to marry according to halacha by the Petah Tikvah rabbinate,” Tzohar said in a statement.

If the rabbinate has many detractors, it also has its supporters.

Leah Aharoni, the Orthodox co-founder of Women for the Wall, a group that has fought for the Orthodox status quo at the Kotel (in contrast to the egalitarian Women of the Wall), worries that the push to abolish the rabbinate “is part of a larger effort to transform Israel from a Jewish state to a state of all its citizens.”

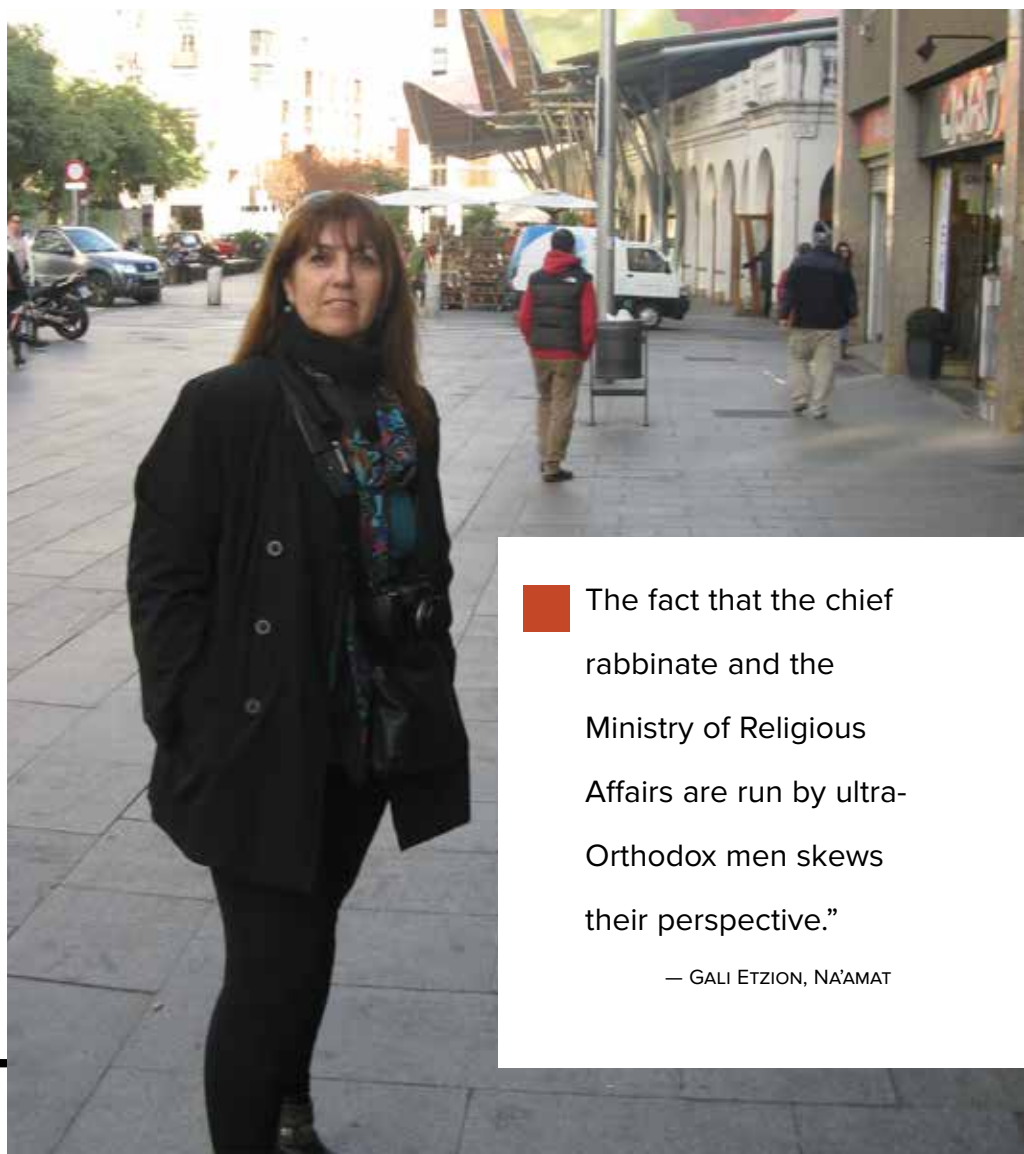
Since its founding, Aharoni said, “Israel has been declared a Jewish state

— the only one in the world to preserve the unique character of the Jewish people, the only one to serve as our national home.” She is convinced that for the “vast majority” of Israelis, “Judaism is synonymous with Orthodoxy,” even if they don't actively observe the commandments.

For this reason, she explained, “attempts to change the nature of the Western Wall,” such as those led by Women of the Wall, “have simply failed to garner any traction because the overwhelming majority of Israelis are not interested in such reforms.”

“It is therefore the job of the chief rabbinate to maintain our unifying Jewish tradition,” Aharoni said. “I realize that the notion of a state religion sounds oppressive to most Americans, yet it is the reality in many democratic countries, including the United Kingdom, Argentina and throughout Scandinavia. Were Israel to become a secular state, it

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■ The fact that the chief rabbinate and the Ministry of Religious Affairs are run by ultra-Orthodox men skews their perspective.”

— GALI ETZION, NA'AMAT



Lynne Avadenka

Creating Mystery and Meaning in Art

by RAHEL MUSLEAH

Lynne Avadenka immerses herself in the lives of iconic as well as unsung Jewish and feminist heroes, then engages them in conversation — through her art.

The Detroit-based printmaker and book artist has created visual dialogues with Scheherazade and Queen Esther; architect Mary Elizabeth Jane Colter, who designed landmark buildings in Grand Canyon National Park at the turn of the 20th century; and in her lat-

est project, Rahel Bluwstein, a poet and pioneer of pre-state Israel so legendary that she is known simply as “Rahel.”

In works that delve deeply into themes of Jewish culture, the land of Israel, women’s creativity, identity and the power of language, word and image, Avadenka, 61, explores both the particular and the universal through paper, glass and multimedia installations. “I look for commonalities instead of divisions,” she says, explaining that Jewish culture is “a compelling and endless source of material. By working with Jewish subject matter I start from a specific place, but I hope I reach a broader audience.”

Her project on Rahel, titled “How a Poem Begins,” represents the moment a poet (Rahel) or an artist (Avadenka) faces the blank white page “hoping to create mystery and meaning,” in Avadenka’s words. The two artists co-exist across the generations in the multilayered work, inviting viewers to experience the process of transforming landscape into art from both verbal and visual perspectives. Funded by the Covenant Foundation, the exhibit was recently shown at Yeshiva University Museum in Manhattan.

Rahel’s poetry serves as a conduit for the pastoral countryside, which Avadenka translates into

abstract etchings. “You Are Yourself a Map,” three large, rectangular prints exhibited as one, evokes the lush green of the Galilee. Swirling lines depict waves and wind, punctuated by pale blue windows filled with lines that suggest musical staves and Hebrew notebooks (*mahbarot*). Avadenka also embeds copies of Rahel’s handwritten drafts (saved by the poet’s nephew, Uri Milstein), complete with crossed-out words that convert text to image. “Her work is literally included in my work,” says Avadenka, acknowledging that the conversation between them is “a little one-sided!”

In another, smaller set of prints with similar elements (“Now a Poem Begins”), Avadenka changes the palette to blood reds, earthy browns, and greenish grays. According to a catalog essay by independent curator Emily Bilski, Avadenka shapes those features into ovals reminiscent of the birth process, the dawning of creation and creativity from chaos. “I’m not sure imposing order is even possible,” Avadenka says, “but maybe art provides solace in a time of chaos. Art remains after chaos.”

Avadenka is especially captivated by book art, a genre all its own that riffs off books as concepts rather than traditional objects, and can resemble books, screens or sculptures. “We are a people who read the same book every

Top: “You Are Yourself a Map” (2014), a large-scale triptych. Background: detail from “Now a Poem Begins” (2014). These two etchings embed writings from the seminal Israeli poet Rahel Bluwstein. Left: Avadenka at work.

Photos courtesy of Lynne Avadenka



week and always finds something new,” she explains. “We are connected to text, storytelling, repetition and a collective narrative. People think they know what a book is, and when they experience book art there’s an element of surprise or subversiveness.”

In Avadenka’s hands, a fragment of Hebrew poetry preserved in the Cairo Geniza becomes an accordion-folded artist’s book ornamented with tile-like calligraphic shards (“Plum-Colored Regret”). The eight lines attributed to the unnamed wife of rabbi and liturgical poet Dunash ibn Labrat may be the only poem written by a Jewish woman in medieval Spain. Avadenka juxtaposes the text with a backstory of her own creation in which ibn Labrat abandons his wife after the birth of their child.

Avadenka’s inventiveness, skill and resourcefulness in locating intriguing texts have been recognized in numerous commissions and awards. Her work is fueled by her “empathetic imagination,” in Bilski’s words, and is in collections from the Israel Museum and the Library of Congress to the New York Public Library and the British Library. The University of Michigan library has her complete works of limited edition artists’ books, and Skidmore College library holds many of the books. She recently received a career achievement award from her alma mater, Wayne State University’s College of Performing and Fine Arts in Detroit. She furthered her studies at the Center for Book Arts in New York and is artistic director of Signal-Return, a community



Above: “Signs and Lines: Lamed” (2015), a letterpress print on a Hebrew grammar book page. Below: “All My Paths Twist” (2015), a mixed media folding screen that plays with the Hebrew word “halutza” (pioneer).

letterpress print shop in Detroit.

The women Avadenka chooses to focus on are often strong, pioneering spirits. Rahel, an independent and idealistic woman, was born in Russia in 1890, and left her home at the age of 19 to start a new life in Palestine. She was sent to France to study agriculture and returned to settle on Kibbutz Degania in 1919. Rahel chose poetry over her other artistic passion — painting — and is considered the founding mother of modern Hebrew poetry written by women. Many of her poems have been

set to music and have become part of the Israeli cultural canon: “V’Ulai” (My Kinneret); “Sham Harei Golan” (Hills of the Golan). “She defied the norm,” says Avadenka, imaging her admiration in a two-sided folding screen that plays with the word halutza (pioneer).

To frame and contextualize Rahel’s rich artistic legacy, Avadenka curated an accompanying installation of historical materials that evoke Rahel’s biography and the history of early Palestine. “Visit Palestine,” exclaims a large turquoise and orange poster of the Old City of Jerusalem. Postcards of palm trees and silhouettes of pioneers — at the well, playing the recorder, harvesting — hang by a card that reads, “Happy New Year near the lack [sic] of Kinnereth,” the spelling mistake an unintended foreshadowing of Rahel’s untimely death at age 41 of tuberculosis. She is buried at Kibbutz Kinneret.

Avadenka, too, is of Russian heritage and visited Israel for the first time at age 19, returning many times since. She grew up in a Conservative home in Pontiac, Michigan, watching black-and-white movies of Israel that had a profound influence on her. “Israel symbolizes my connection to the larger Jewish people,” she says, adding that the exhibit is “like an oasis that focuses on the beauty of the land, not the political ramifications.” She created the exhibit during two weeks she spent at the Gottesman Etching Center on Kibbutz Cabri in the Western Galilee, about two miles east of the Mediterranean. “The whole landscape was unrolled be-



fore me like a scroll,” Avadenka says, recalling the open, contemporary glass building where she worked. The huge etching presses at Cabri allowed her to expand the scale of her work.

Avadenka’s home studio houses a small etching press of her own and shelves filled with printmaking inks, brushes and tools. “I mix colors that feel right, that don’t exist elsewhere,” she says. To create a print, she draws or etches on thin metal plates, then inks the plate and wipes off the excess. As the plates are rolled through the press bed, the pressure forces the ink onto a sheet of dampened paper. She uses another press, a commercial letterpress that became obsolete with the advent of offset lithography, for limited edition books and prints. A set of inked rollers takes impressions from wood or metal type, then transfers them onto paper.

The printing press allows Avadenka to control the message — visual or textual, and she finds satisfaction in the tactile process of seeing the ink connecting directly with paper. She has even created a visual ode to the printing press: “Praise the Press” is based on a quote from David Gans, a rabbi in 16th-century Prague (author of *Tzemach David*) who responded to suspicions in the Jewish community that because the Torah was written by hand, printing it with moveable type was wrong. Printing in Hebrew, he said, is a wonderful way to increase knowledge. Avadenka used letters and numbers to create the design of a press handle, with the quote from



“Breathing Mud” (1999), a limited edition artist’s book, is Avadenka’s artistic version of the golem tale.

Gans in Hebrew and English above and below the image. “You can see that it is wood type by the little imperfections, tiny chips and gradations,” Avadenka says — her short, salt and pepper hair and red frame glasses dipping low as she bends to find a print in one of her drawers. “A computer spits out perfection, but this process provides a human connection and sense of time.”

Avadenka is not a literalist or a representational artist. The abstract designs leave a place for viewers to add their own interpretations, a way for them to invest in and engage with the art. “Artists ask questions but don’t provide answers,” she says. An early reader, she has always been intrigued by words and letter forms, especially Hebrew, which evolved from picture symbols.

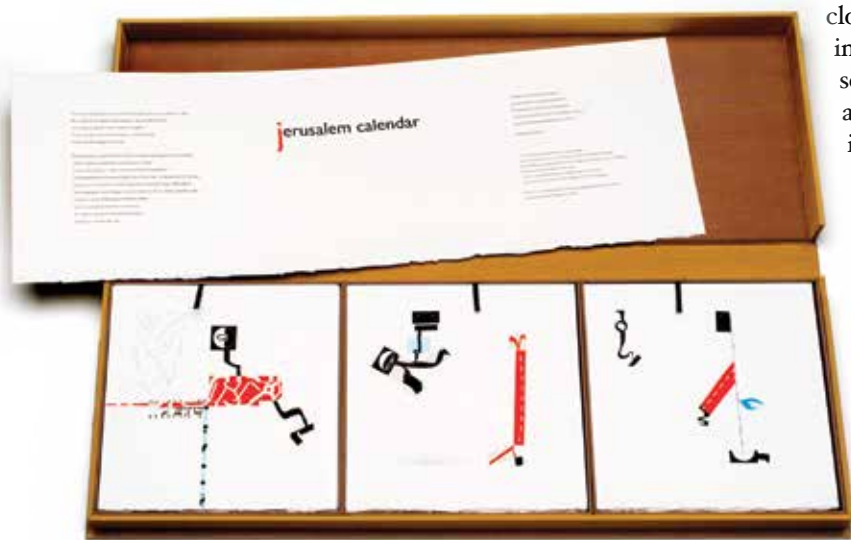
The beauty of a moving line is close to writing, she observes. “Visually, language is as abstract as visual art, but we have realized how to put it together to make meaning.” She often uses

text in combination with visual elements because it renders the artwork less intimidating. “People will walk up to something they can read and then I can engage them. That’s the power of storytelling through language.”

In her interpretation of the Torah portion Vayishlach, in which Jacob wrestles with an “ish” (literally a man, but often interpreted as an angel), she used the letters in the verse, creating a tension by contrasting a shadowy side with a light, golden side. It was exhibited in Jerusalem this past fall as part of an international group show, “Women of the Book.” Nine years in the making, the exhibition consists of 54 works on parchment — one for each Torah portion (the works are also digitized).

Avadenka has also reworked four of the Five Megillot (Song of Songs, Book of Ruth, Book of Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Book of Esther). Ecclesiastes is an ongoing project. “By a Thread” imagines a conversation between Esther and Scheherazade. “Lamentations Suite” was part of “As Subject and Object,” a 2013 exhibit at the Museum of Biblical Art in Manhattan featuring 14 contemporary book artists’ explorations of sacred Hebrew texts. She depicts the story of the destruction of Jerusalem and subsequent exile through oval motifs. “Every life lost is an entire world,” she explains. Her love of text and literature has led her to create bilingual editions of the works of Israeli writers Dan Pagis, Shulamith Hareven, Amos Oz, Yehuda Amichai and A.B. Yehoshua.

The artist draws inspiration from books — often ones that she has rescued and then repurposes. For “How a Poem Begins” Avadenka mined her collection of old books, gathered from travel bookstores and salvaged from libraries that have closed. She built a three-dimensional, multimedia portrait of Rahel’s imaginary library with found objects: card catalog drawers with pages of dried flowers and leaves that Christian pilgrims would collect: almond, oregano, fig leaf, flax, olive, grape and styrax; glass tiles of vocabulary pages from a Hebrew primer; a Hebrew-Rus-



“Jerusalem Calendar” (2012), a limited edition of 66 collages made up of Jewish and Arabic ephemera, was created during a nine-week fellowship in Jerusalem.

The abstract designs leave a place for viewers
to add their own interpretations, a way for them
to invest in and engage with the art.

Artists ask questions but don't provide answers.

sian dictionary; and a Baedeker map of Palestine and Syria. "The dried flowers represent an effort to preserve something precious and transient so it can be transmitted," writes curator Bilski.

During a nine-week fellowship in Jerusalem in 2011, funded by the now defunct Foundation for Jewish Culture, she combed used bookstores and came up with an Arabic-English math dictionary. It became the basis of "Reunion of Broken Parts," the actual meaning of the word algebra (al jabra) but in Avadenka's hands a metaphor for the layered history of Jerusalem. She created monoprints featuring phrases from the dictionary: "Greatest Common Divisor," "A Simple Hypothesis." At the same time, she developed "Jerusalem Calendar," made up of Hebrew and Arabic ephemera — calendars, flyers and newspapers — in a black, white and red palette. "It was like making a new alphabet for the city," she says.

Ten years earlier, she had crafted "Root Words: An Alphabetic Exploration," inspired by her search for commonality in Judaism and Islam. She learned that both Hebrew and Arabic have a three-letter root system, that the word for compassion (rahamim) is the same in both languages and that it derives from womb (rehem). "Language is the root of problem and also the only solution," Avadenka says. She invited calligrapher Mohamed Zakariya to collaborate on a harmonious design that illustrates seven strong words in Hebrew and Arabic side by side (Human Being: Ben Adam, Bnu Adam); their text traces the origins of both languages (in the British and Yale Libraries among others).

Avadenka participated in "Al-Mutanabbi Street Starts Here," a response to the violence in Iraq by the book arts community, sparked by the 2007 bombing of Street of the Book-sellers in Baghdad. Her piece, "One

by One," is inspired by World War I poet Wilfred Owen's rendering of the Abraham and Isaac story as a parable about the old sending the young off to war. A complete set of all the books by more than 200 artists will be donated to the Baghdad National Library. The exhibition is traveling worldwide. (See www.al-mutanabbistreetstartshere-boston for upcoming venues.)

This fall, her artistic version of the golem tale, "Breathing Mud," will be exhibited in a group show at the Jewish Museum Berlin. It is modeled on the structure of a Prague building that morphs into the golem with a spark of kabbalistic energy, then reverts back to an architectural structure when the golem is destroyed. Avadenka broadens the medieval folkloric concept to include puppets, monsters and cyborgs come to life (Pinocchio, Frankenstein and the Terminator) as her text examines the intersection of creation and responsibility, a fundamental question for an artist.

Not all of Avadenka's pieces are rooted in Judaism. "The Uncommon Perspective of M.E.J. Colter" unfolds architecturally and follows a structural line even in the three biographical chapters Avadenka wrote ("Locked Doors," "Foundations" and "Opaque Windows"). "Lady Murosaki's Tale," an accordion screen, follows the 11th-century *Tale of Genji*, thought to be the first novel by a Japanese woman. "The Solutions to Brian's Problem" is based on a short story by Michigan author Bonnie Jo Campbell about possible solutions to an impossible situation — Brian's wife is a meth addict. Avadenka turns the story into a puzzle: pieces of text and image are mounted on Michigan maple veneer and must be put together correctly to read the story. The solution spells out "LOVE." "The project speaks to the direct participatory nature of a book," explains Avadenka. "The viewer

physically has to get involved."

Her next project will take her back to Jewish heroes — this time a man. She envisions a tribute to Dutch artist H.N. Werkman, who resisted the Nazis by printing underground literature. He was killed in Holland and much of his work was destroyed, but a beautiful edition he printed of Martin Buber's *Tales of the Hasidim* remains. "His work is spontaneous and fresh even now," Avadenka says.

In the map of her own life, the constants that guide Avadenka are the book and its creators and heroic men and women from biblical to contemporary times. From their stories she draws the inspiration to tell her own.

Award-winning journalist and author Rabel Musleah leads tours of Jewish India and speaks about its communities. Her website is www.explorejewishindia.com. She wrote about the sculptor Oded Halabmy in our spring 2016 issue.



"By a Thread" (2006), a limited edition artist's book, imagines a conversation between the Jewish Queen Esther and the Muslim Scheherazade.

What's in a Name?

Teachers would look shocked when they heard my Hebrew name.

by MARILYN ROSE

Whenever I am called to the Torah, I am called by the name Machla Rahel bat Avraham v' Henna. When I hear my Hebrew name, I feel a small thrill as I reflect on the Jewish legacy of my parents and the blessing of my name. But I did not always feel that way.

My father, Abraham, whose name was essentially the same in Hebrew and English, lost his mother when he was quite young to the flu epidemic of 1918. He was raised by his bubbe in a household where Yiddish was his first language.

Bubbe was a strong and determined woman who had lost her own husband in a horse-and-buggy accident years earlier while pregnant with their fifth child. The fact that Bubbe used the buggy to deliver coal to support her family as a single mom — and managed to raise and educate her deceased daughter's two children under very difficult circumstances — spoke to her resilience and business savvy in an era before many women entered the workplace.

She was also a woman of great faith and tried to transmit a strong sense of Judaism to her children. Bubbe's sons were determined to blend into 1940s society in spite of strong anti-Semitism. It was to their chagrin that she sent over a workman to hang a mezuzah on the doorpost of the warehouse that they rented when they began their own business. As for my dad, while "cheder" was a large part of his upbringing and he had a strong foundation in Hebrew and Torah, he took this knowledge for granted as he chose a more secular approach to Judaism.

My mother, Ann, was known by the Yiddish name Henna. That she did not have a Hebrew name was the sign of the times when a formal Hebrew name for a girl was superfluous. Like my father, my mom also had a less than traditional family. My maternal grandmother, Regina, was also a single mom, deserted by her husband at a young age and denied a gett (Jewish divorce decree). An immigrant, she had little command of the English language, rearing her three young girls by taking in sewing and piecework.

When my mother spoke of her childhood, there was little mention of the extreme poverty in which she lived. She merely said that she had everything she needed, but she bemoaned her lack of a formal Jewish education. In the era in which my mother grew up, the lack of a male head of household was a shanda and left the family with few resources. When speaking of her past, her only complaint was that when she went to shul on the High Holidays there

were no prayer books with English translations and she was unable to understand or participate in the services. Growing up without a father or brothers, my mother missed out on Friday night kiddush, seders and so many other male-led Jewish home rituals.

So, although my father was the one with the strong Jewish knowledge, it was my mother who insisted on the Jewish practice that she missed out on and on a formal Jewish education for her two daughters as we were growing up. She schlepped us to Hebrew school five days a week. She kvelled when my sister and I sat on either side of my father at family seders, kicking him under the table when he tried to skip any part of the ritual, as she stood ready to serve the elaborate meal to our extended family.

There was one particular Hebrew school ritual that made me dread the start of the school year or the arrival of a substitute teacher. After introducing herself to the class, the teacher would go around the room asking us our Hebrew names.

"Machla," I would announce strongly, with a vague memory that I had been given the Hebrew name of my mother's own grandmother.

"You must mean Malka — it means queen in Hebrew," the new teacher would correct me.

"No," I would insist, writing it on the chalkboard. "Mem chet lamed hey." The teacher would blanch and tell me it wasn't possible — that was not a proper name. Hebrew is often written without the nekudot beneath the words that indicate the vowels, and the consonants of my name were the same consonants of the word for sickness in Hebrew.

When I insisted that I knew my own name and spelled it properly, the teacher would recite "kina hora" to ward off the evil eye, then send me to the rabbi's office.

Invariably, the rabbi would calm me down, assuring me my name was just fine. He'd pull out the large book that contained the text of the Five Books of Moses and point to the familiar letters of my name in a remote passage.

I would go back to class only slightly calmer. Many of these new or substitute teachers no longer called me by my Hebrew name.

As I grew older and more comfortable with this odd ritual surrounding my name, I drew a parallel between my own name and Mel Brook's 2,000 Year Old Man. In that

Reading the story of my namesake, I was impressed by Machla and her sisters, these “women of chutzpah,” and saw my name as a blessing indeed.

comedy skit, the oldest man on earth is asked the secret to his longevity while he repeatedly sneezes. The interviewer (Carl Reiner) responds “God bless you” and repeats the question. Brooks sneezes again. Finally Brooks in his comic persona explains that sneezing is the secret to his long life since every time he sneezes someone says “God bless you.” Those blessings, he claims, are what keeps him alive. So, I, too, learned to laugh about my name, saying if every time someone became alarmed about the double meaning of my name they uttered a blessing to ward off the evil eye, my name might be the source of a long and prosperous life.

Still, my peace with my Hebrew name was an uneasy one. I would remember my various frustrations over the years: not finding anyone in Israel willing to make a ring bearing my Hebrew name, correcting the pronunciation of my name when called to the Torah.

Years later, after my mother’s untimely death, I became a weekly shul-goer.

One Shabbat, as I was following the Torah reader’s chant of the weekly parshah, I suddenly stopped when I saw the letters of my Hebrew name. I eagerly began to read the English translation of the story about Machla, the daughter of Zelophehad. At a time when Jewish law dictated that only sons were in line to inherit from their father, the daughters of Zelophehad stood up

to this injustice and brought their case to Moshe. He took it to God who ruled in their favor.

Reading the story of my namesake, I was impressed by Machla and her sisters, these “women of chutzpah,” and saw my name as a blessing indeed. In the Torah where so few women are named, it seemed amazing that I had inherited

the biblical name of a strong Jewish woman — much like my grandmothers who were in many ways feminists before that label existed. It was an unexpected legacy I felt honored to share.

Several years later, I attended a Jewish crafts fair. Quite accustomed to the fact that my Hebrew name would not be among the personalized Judaica, I stopped short when I saw an array of beautiful silver beads, each bearing a Hebrew letter. I purchased some of the beads and strung them into a Hebrew name necklace. I was wearing my necklace in synagogue one Shabbat morning when a friend approached me self-consciously. “I don’t want you to think that I am staring at your chest,” he said politely in his melodious Israeli accent, “but I was looking at your necklace and that could not possibly be your name.” Proudly, I thumbed through the Tanach, pointed to my Hebrew name, and told him about Machla and her sisters.



Marilyn Rose is an artist, writer, illustrator, graphic designer, itinerant painter and water color teacher. Her paintings can be seen on her website, MarilynRoseArt.com.

Books for Cooks and Foodies

These Jewish cookbooks will dazzle you with their tantalizing recipes, engaging stories and luscious photos.

by JUDITH A. SOKOLOFF

Daughter of a Romanian mother and Iraqi father, both reared in Israel, Amelia Saltsman grew up with the savory tastes and stories of Ashkenazic and Sephardic kitchens as well as those of California where she lives. In **The Seasonal Jewish Kitchen** (Sterling Epicure), the food writer and cooking teacher writes: "It dawned on me that many cooks are seeking the kind of Jewish cooking I do: modern, seasonal, ingredient-driven, lighter and brighter relaxed rather than formal, and reflective of the many flavors of the Jewish Diaspora."

Now we can benefit from her fresh, often innovative, approach to Jewish food. The book is divided interestingly and sensibly into six seasons reflecting the natural growing seasons of the Jewish calendar. Beautifully organized and illustrated, it includes brief sections on kitchen fundamentals, essential ingredients, helpful tools, the Jewish farm movement, Israeli farming and information about the Jewish holidays. Delightful introductory notes accompany each recipe.

For September and October, there's Tunisian Lemon Rind Salad; Roasted Carrot and Sweet Potato Tzimmes; and Lamb, Butternut Squash and Quince Tagine. In November and December, try Safta Rachel's

Sesame Seed Bageleh, Yemenite Pumpkin and Carrot Soup, Mini-Latkes with Labneh and Smokey Harissa (there's a whole page on "The Art of Perfect Latkes"). In January and February, check out Duck with White Beans and Gribenes as well as with Blood Orange and Olive Oil Polenta Upside-Down Cake. March and April bring Savory Persian Herb and Cheese Hamantaschen plus Green Garlic and Leek Matzah Brei with Smoked Salmon and Horseradish Cream. For May and June, try Fresh Grape Leaves Stuffed with Three Cheeses; Golden Borscht with Buttermilk and Ginger; Freekeh, English Peas and Smoked Fish. For summer, enjoy Israeli Eggplant Caviar Wraps, Grilled Spatchcocked Rock Cornish Game Hens, and Brooklyn Bar Sundays.

Chef and cooking instructor Kim Kushner invites us to sit at her table in **The New Kosher** (Weldon Owen). Raised in a modern Orthodox home in Montreal, she learned to cook from her Moroccan-born mother who grew up in Israel. Kushner writes: "My kitchen is the center of my heart. When I think about food, many strong memories and traditions from my upbringing filter into everything I make. I

express myself through my food. Cooking serves as a

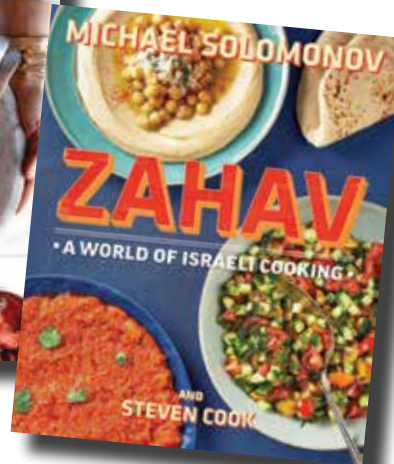
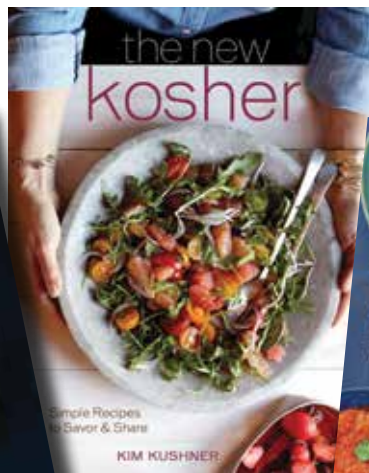
connector, a comfort in my life."

The book is divided into nine categories: Kim's essentials, butter and brunch, soups and dips, more than salad, from the sea, all about chicken, beef and brawn, grains and vegetables, and favorite sweets. Here's a sampling: Vanilla Bean Applesauce; Za'atar Everything Topping; Dark Chocolate, Coconut and Olive Oil Granola; Giant Ricotta Ravioli with Cinnamon; Thai-style Summer Salmon; Veal Roast with Porcini, Thyme and Garlic Rub; Kim's Quick Latkes; and Chocolate Chunk Biscotti with Lavender. Lots of great photos enhance the recipes.

Famed chef Michael Solomonov and his business partner Steven Cook have written the gorgeous, hefty **ZAHAV: A World of Israeli Cooking** (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt). The two opened the award-winning Philadelphia restaurant Zahav in 2008, and this past spring they launched Dizengoff in New York's Chelsea Market. (When friends told me that Dizengoff makes the best hummus in New York, I checked it out. I not only had the pleasure of tasting the superb hummus — topped with various vegetables — and piquant salads, but also meeting the very affable Solomonov.)

In a personal narrative, Solomonov writes candidly about his early life (born in Israel, lived for many years in Pittsburgh, returned to Israel, the death of his 21-year-old brother David while in the IDF) and his eventual realization that through cooking he "could expose people to a side of Israel that had nothing to do with politics." He also began to see cooking as a powerful way to honor his brother's memory.

Solomonov enthusiastically presents a cuisine that is



continually evolving, hoping that readers “find some of the magic...I found in Israel.” My cooking, he writes, “comes from a deep well of Israeli hospitality, from the intimacy of sharing food.” Readers can feel his warmth.

A chapter on tehina reveals the secrets to creating this extremely popular Israeli food. Hummus, of course, is also given special attention (Hummus Pitryot, Turkish Hummus, Hummus Masabacha and more). All recipes have a personal introduction. Writing about his recipe for Sweetbreads Wrapped in Chicken Skin with Black Garlic Tehina, Solomonov observes: “When the sweetbreads are sizzling and crisp, I swear to God they taste just like an Israeli barbeque on the beach.”

Among the many other tantalizing recipes, try Latkes with Gralax, Pink Lentil Soup with Lamb Kofte, Borekas (many kinds) and Grilled Branzino Fillets with Chickpea Stew. Admitting to being a compulsive sugar eater, like his mother, he offers Turkish Coffee Ice Cream and Rugelach with a variety of fillings: dates; peanut butter and marshmallow fluff; apricot jam and pistachios.

Mouthwatering photos will motivate you to cook — right away!

Yofi! Another stunning book on Israeli cooking: Steven Rothfeld's **Israel Eats** (Gibbs-Smith). Actually, it's much more than a cookbook. The author, a travel photographer who specializes in culinary topics, takes readers on a sensuous tour of the country, as he and Nancy Silverton (chef, baker and author) visit chefs, restaurants, farmers and food markets. “My quest as a photographer and a traveler is to find good food, interesting people and alluring places,” Rothfeld writes, and he surely does. He says about Israel: “I love the intensity of the place, the hint of danger, and the notion that so many

monumental events have occurred in these landscapes.”

The book is chaptered according to the geography of Israel: Tel Aviv-Jaffa, Jerusalem and the Judean Hills, the North, the Center, the South. His sensational photographs capture the food, the people involved in cooking and the surrounding landscape.

Rothfeld says that North Abraxas chef Tal Zion Kawi's Roasted Beet Carpaccio “is one of the best things I have ever eaten.” In Akko's Uri Buri restaurant, he discovers chef Uri Jeremias who shares his recipe for Salmon Roll with Pickled Fennel. In Mattat, he enjoys Erez Komarovsky's Challah with Olives, Anchovies and Oregano. Visiting Smadar and Yossi Yardeni's B & B in Cilil, he relishes Smadar's Date Honey and Tahini Semifreddi with Cashew Brittle. In the restaurant Oratorio in Zichron Yaakov, he meets chef Ohad Levi, creator of Stuffed Cabbage Cake. At the restaurant Majda in Ein Rafa, Rothfeld feasts on chef Jalil Jalil's Falafel Shrimp with Eggplant Salad along with Fresh Fig, Arugula and Cheese Salad with Honey Lemon Dressing.

We're still in culinary Israel, readers, a wonderful place to be — now at the invitation of Danielle Oron, chef and food blogger (iwillnoteatoysters.com). In **Modern Israeli Cooking** (Page Street Publishing) she presents 100 new recipes for traditional classics. Infatuated and obsessed by food as a child, she tells us, she's now an “adult who plans dinners for months in advance.” From an Israeli-Moroccan background, her family moved from Tel Aviv to New Jersey when she was three.

The book's nine sections are Weekdays, Fridays, Beach, Slow Cooking, Brunch, Midnight, Salads

and Sides, Sweets and Staples. Without actual permission, she divulges her mother's classified recipe for Schnitzel and Sumac Slaw Sandwiches; then moves on to Everything Challah, Chicken Liver Over Creamy Corn Polenta, Sumac Fries (with schug mayo and harissa ketchup), Sweet Shredded Honey Lamb, Roasted Tomatillo and Poblano Shakshuka, and Tahini-Swirled Brownies. These imaginative but doable recipes are revealed in her own beautiful photos.

Kosher by Design Brings It Home (Mesorah Publications) is the ninth and final installment of Susie Fishbein's wonderful *Kosher by Design* cookbook series. Here she offers us 115 recipes inspired by her travels — working with chefs in Israel, France, Italy, Canada and Mexico. The New Jersey chef says Israel is her “favorite place...to explore edible delights.”

For appetizers, try Quinoa Mushroom Sliders or Tuna Seviche Tostados. For soups, there's Beresheet Spa Corn Soup. Fishbein learned to make this from chef Michael Eshel at the spa's Rosemary Restaurant (near Israel's Ramon Crater). In the salad category, check out Kale, Squash Caesar Salad; in the chicken chapter, you'll find Amalfi Sage Chicken from a kitchen that she worked in on the Amalfi Coast. For beef eaters, there's Sloppy Joe Pulled Beef Tacos. In the dairy/fish section, you'll find Khachapuri Shakshuka, comfort food from the Georgian Khachapuri Restaurant in Jerusalem. Side dishes include Eggplant and Tomato Tart from Provence. For dessert, you can savor Cannoli Sandwiches from Sicily or Glazed Donut Twists, perfect for Hanukkah.

I look forward to whatever Fishbein has in store for us next.

For 52 weeks, **A Taste of Torah** (Gefen) provides a recipe, a bedtime story based on that week's parshah (Torah portion) and a dvar Torah (discussion of the parshah). Every recipe can be made “with ease by you and your children,” writes author Aviv Harkov, a 22-year-old amateur cook and Hebrew University student.



The inventive author begins with Berisheit: "God saw that the light was good, and God separated between the light and the darkness." She explains that Black and White Cookies show how light and dark can be separated in a delicious way. The recipe is followed by a dvar Torah on how and why God created separations and then a story about a young Soviet Jew challenging his teacher's atheism.

Parashat Terumah advises, "You shall make a menorah of pure gold, hammered out shall the menorah be made. ..." And "Speak to the children of Israel and let them take for Me a portion, from every man whose heart motivates him you shall take My portion." Harkov pairs this statement with Fiery Roman Pasta, the spicy flavors inspired by the menorah's flames. The dvar Torah and story address the importance of performing mitzvot.

It's not necessary to be a believer to get something out of her attractive book.

This is not your mother's slow cooker, professional chef Laura Frankel reassures us in **Jewish Slow Cooker Recipes** (John Wiley & Sons). We're talking the latest high tech appliances with timers, thermostats and several temperature settings that "help meat and hearty root vegetables retain their textures as well as their flavor." She provides the information you need to buy and use this "convenient, time-saving, efficient" item, which "acts like a second pair of hands." All recipes follow kosher guidelines and are charted as pareve, meat or dairy in a final section.

The book is divided into appetizers, soups, main dishes, side dishes, desserts and breakfast, sauces, and basic recipes (for items

like curry powder, za'atar, meat and vegetable stocks and preserved lemons). Using her slow cooker for the meat in VIP Kreplach with Short Ribs, Frankel notes that "half the work" is done for her. For authentic Dafina, the Moroccan equivalent of cholent, she includes two variations of accompanying side dishes. Frankel's Thai Fish Wrapped in Banana Leaves with Jasmine Rice is served with cucumber-mint relish and lime wedges. Key Lime Cheesecake, she writes, "never cracks and always has the most incredible velvety texture." This is an attractive book, but there are no photos.

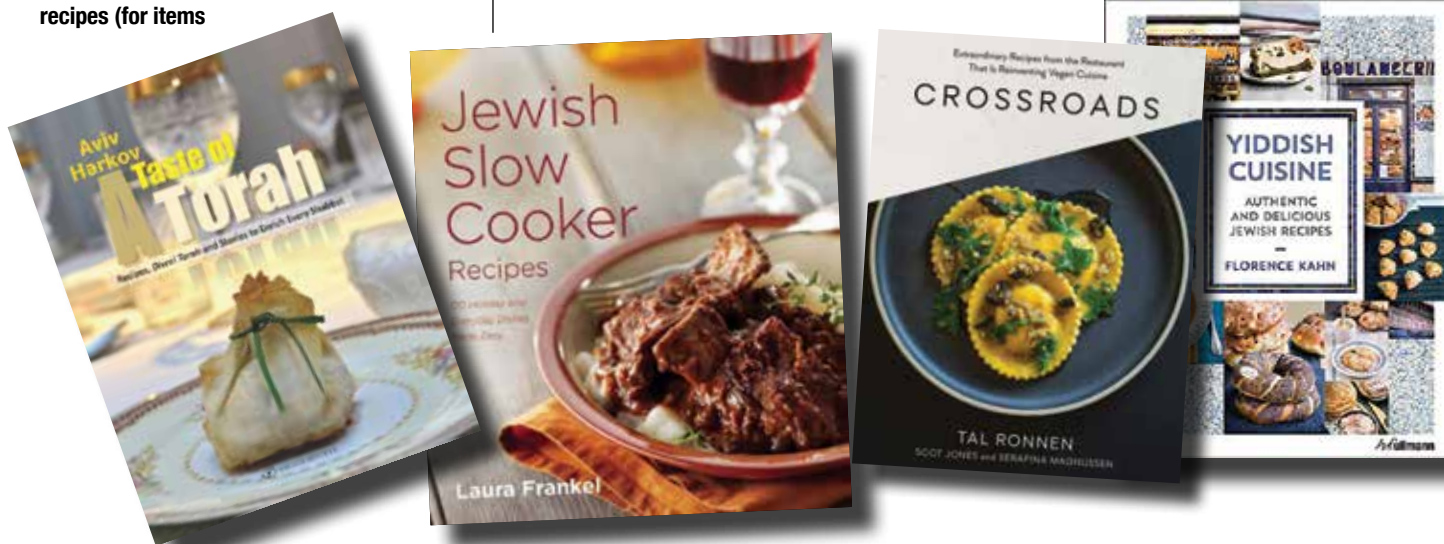
You don't have to be vegan or vegetarian to love this Tal Ronnen's plant-based cookbook. In **Crossroads**, his popular restaurant in Los Angeles, chef Ronnen "redefines the concept of vegan dining, steering away from a sterile Zen-like atmosphere and a catering to more than a health food crowd," he writes in the preface to **Crossroads** (Artisan). You, too, can create his scrumptious Mediterranean-inspired vegan meals. The book is authored with the restaurant's executive chef Scot Jones and master vegan baker Serafina Magnussen. Some 125 recipes are divided into snacks and spreads, salads, flatbreads, soups, small plates, pasta, desserts, cocktails and basics (like cashew cream, balsamic reduction and basil pesto cream sauce). A taste of his enticing fare: Pistachio-Kalamata Tapenade; Tomato and Watermelon Gazpacho; Artichoke Oysters with Tomato Bearnaise and Kelp Caviar; Chive Fettuccine with Asparagus, Morels and Prosecco Sauce; and Grilled Marinated Nectarines with Vanilla-Basil Ice Cream.

We've now moved on to the Jewish district of Paris. Florence Kahn welcomes us to the bakery-delicatessen named after her on the corner of the Rue des Ecoiffes and the Rue des Rosiers. "I like to think of myself as a neighborhood landmark for all those still searching for their roots...when the poetry of belonging is hard to come by." Kahn's own ancestry includes her great-great-great grandfather, a rabbi who had a store on the same street.

Additional nourishing roots are provided in the centuries-old Yiddish recipes and other popular Jewish food she shares in **Yiddish Cuisine** (h.f. ullmann). Her starters include Spinach Tart, Zucchini Strudel and Pastrami Sandwich. Among her main dishes are Kapusta Borscht, Sandrine Moss-Pissaro's Kneidlers (Ashkenazi-Sephardic fusion), and Herring in a Fur Coat (the photo of layers of potatoes, beets, carrots, eggs, gherkins, peas and herrings — formed in a tall glass — is worth a thousand words). In a short chapter on special festivals, you'll find Passover Vegetable Matzagnes and Hamantaschen. Another brief section covers bread, including blinis and onion pletzels. The longest chapter is for sweet things like pistachio croissants and raspberry cheesecake. There are great photos of the dishes and the shop.

Be'tei'avon! Es gezunterhey! Hearty appetite!

Judith A. Sokoloff is the editor of Na'amat Woman.





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Take Action!

Advocating for Social Justice

by MARCIA J. WEISS

Social justice involves promoting equality and equal opportunity in society. A cornerstone of a just society is support for human rights. NA'AMAT strongly supports issues that help achieve social justice in women's rights, reproductive freedom, children's welfare, employment and health.

Advocacy is the act of speaking or writing in support of an issue or proposal. The strength of advocacy lies primarily in its ability to bring about long-term change by influencing policymakers. Advocacy may inspire and motivate a community to work together on a common cause in a set time frame. It offers an opportunity to partner with other groups, developing new relationships, drawing on specialized skills, and providing opportunities for professionals to share their expertise.

Before becoming advocates, specific steps must be taken.

First, education is an integral part of advocacy. Before speaking out on a particular subject, we must educate ourselves on the issues through mainstream media and specialized periodicals, the Internet, radio and television news, as well as information from nonpartisan groups.

Second, know your audience. Familiarize yourself with the person or people you will be speaking to

as well as their political activities or leanings. Be prepared for the positive, anticipate the negative and have the ability to respond to whatever questions you may encounter. Know your allies and opponents.

Third, build coalitions with elected officials and community leaders in local Jewish and secular organizations. Use the news media to promote your issue or event. Town hall meetings can be key to achieving community collaboration and outreach. These are important tools in educating the public about your activities on the local, national and international levels.

Contact elected officials to request their affirmative or negative vote on a bill pending in the legislature. Letters, emails, phone calls and faxes are effective in informing legislators of their constituents' positions on issues.

Fourth, keep abreast of vital topics. The Take Action column in each issue of *Na'amat Woman* is one educational resource informing readers about issues of particular interest to women and families. Take Action covers pending legislation and vital subjects of everyday relevance, providing steps that can be taken to make our voices heard. Check back issues of the magazine for columns on sex trafficking, gender equity in medical research,

bullying, domestic violence, sexual harassment in the workplace and child care. You can also find advocacy material on the NA'AMAT USA website (www.naamat.org).

We can become grassroots advocates by becoming involved in issues with the potential to impact and transform the status quo. Let's work to excite organization and community members and establish coalitions among diverse groups. Training sessions using role playing in timely scenarios permit members to develop their skills as advocates. These sessions can generate a genuine buy-in from participants while gaining the interest of others. Personal stories also ignite a spark that theory alone does not.

Our work is a powerful expression of our Jewish value of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) combined with our civic duty to become informed participants in American democracy and government decisionmaking. Through advocacy we can actively support issues of importance to our goal of social justice. Together our voices can be strong. We can impact our legislators to set priorities on a broad set of issues essential to us, our families and our communities.

Marcia J. Weiss, JD, is NA'AMAT USA national vice president of advocacy and education.

President

continued from page 3

women's organizations or Zionist organizations. But we have wonderful new national board members who are excited about our projects and are eager to try new methods to get the word out about the worthwhile work of NA'AMAT Israel.

With our help, NA'AMAT Israel can continue to undertake projects like building a new women's health center in Sderot. This facility will provide a variety of preventative health care services as well as classes on nutrition and issues affecting women's health. It will be a

place of hope and safety in a city with a history of being targeted by missile attacks from Gaza.

With our help, new day care centers can be built, old ones beautified and security upgraded, so even more children can be cared for in safe and loving surroundings. *With our help*, new computers can be purchased for our technological schools so at-risk teenagers can learn the skills necessary to function in Israel's tech-savvy society. *With our help*, women in colleges and graduate schools can get scholarships so they can continue their education and become even more successful and productive members of Israeli society. *With our help*, abused women can gain self-respect, so they

will have the courage to free themselves from destructive relationships.

We can be proud that we help make all this happen, but we need to grow and get stronger so we can continue to meet the many challenges facing the women, youth and families of Israel. To do this we must get the word out. We must educate ourselves about the vital work of NA'AMAT Israel; we must educate our members and then our friends and then the public at large. We have a *great* product — now let's go out and sell it.

I value the trust you have put in me by electing me president of NA'AMAT USA, and I promise I will do my best to keep our organization strong and vibrant.

NA'AMAT USA Honors Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg: A Role Model for Humankind

NA'AMAT USA has bestowed its highest accolade — the Golda Meir Humanitarian Award — on Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. The award is presented to international leaders who have made outstanding contributions to the pursuit of justice and equality and the support of Israel. Marking the lives of two women of the highest stature — Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Golda Meir — was a highlight of NA'AMAT USA's yearlong 90th anniversary celebration.

This past May, in the stately East Conference Room of the Supreme Court building, then NA'AMAT USA president Liz Raider pointed out how Golda Meir, Israel Labor Party leader and fourth prime minister of Israel, was a “role model for women across the globe.” For NA'AMAT USA members, she was particularly important as she headed the organization (then called Pioneer Women) from 1932 to 1934, helping the organization to expand by encouraging American women to support the struggling Jewish women pioneers in Palestine.

Justice Ginsburg is a courageous pioneer of our time, Raider said. “The award we are presenting recognizes the achievements of a woman whose aspirations and work have become an inspiration for women worldwide.” A crusader for justice, her consistent efforts to combat workplace, racial and voting discrimination, and to promote gender equality and reproductive freedom have significantly improved the lives of Americans. This remarkable jurist has championed some of the most important civil rights and women's rights cases. Her work “parallels our efforts to enhance the quality of life for women and children,” Raider said.

Following the presentation, Raider announced the Ruth Bader Ginsburg Scholarship Award for law students, a new category for NA'AMAT USA Professional Scholarships for Israeli Women.

“We honor Justice Ginsburg,” Raider concluded, as a “humanitarian whose voice and thoughtful deliberation to seek an equitable solution to many complex issues before the Supreme Court has had an indelible imprint on our society.”

Accepting the honor, Justice Ginsburg said she was pleased to accept an award named for Golda Meir. Talking about her life and work, Justice Ginsburg cited Belva Lockwood (1830-1917) as a source of great inspiration for her. An attorney, Lockwood lobbied Congress for five years for qualified women to have the same access to the bar as male colleagues. She became the first woman to argue a case before the Supreme Court (she also ran for president). Justice Ginsburg urged, “Don't take no for an answer!”

At the reception following the award ceremony, Justice Ginsburg spoke informally to NA'AMAT USA leaders. Then she quietly excused herself, saying it was a workday and she had to get back to her chamber.



NA'AMAT USA awards Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg (left) with its highest honor in a private ceremony at the Supreme Court Building. Shown with her are Elizabeth Raider (center) and Chellie Goldwater Wilensky.

Religious Establishment

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would in due course lose its Jewish nature, and that would be a tragedy.”

That being said, Aharoni thinks there is room for improvement on the part of the religious establishment. “I agree with the need for the chief rabbinates to become more ‘user-friendly.’ The notion that Torah observance is somehow overbearing is simply not true. It's enough to take one look at the thousands of Chabad houses around the world, serving Jews from all lifestyles, from scrupulously observant to intermarried, to understand that traditional Judaism can be made accessible to all.”

Farber, the Modern Orthodox proponent of alternative approaches to Orthodox conversion, believes the rabbinate is learning a positive lesson from the frequent challenges to its authority. After ITIM petitioned the High Court to permit women to immerse in the mikvah privately, without an attendant present, the rabbinate said such an immersion could violate Jewish law. But, sensing it would lose the case, the rabbinate agreed to the condition.

Farber thanked the rabbinate for its flexibility. “They have their halachic position but understand there are more positions than just their own. I think this is a good example of allowing and respecting people's rights that are different from those of their own. I think it represents a new model of how religious services can work in Israel.”

Hoffman, from Women of the Wall and IRAC, believes more Diaspora Jews should actively support Israeli initiatives for pluralism and an end to religious coercion. She said: “If Diaspora Jews want to see the kind of diversity they see at home in Israel, they need to fight for these values to take root in Israel. If the Jewish community capitulates to religious extremism, the entire Jewish world will suffer.”

Michele Chabin is a journalist living in Jerusalem. She covers the Middle East for the New York Jewish Week and other publications. She wrote “I'm BRCA Negative. Now What?” in our spring 2016 issue.

Christy Bowe

AROUND THE COUNTRY



▲ Cleveland Council honors Lauren Rock with the 2016 Tikkun Olam Award at its gala Na'AMAT USA 90th Anniversary Celebration. The newly retired president and CEO of Montefiore, a senior living campus in Beachwood, Ohio, was honored for her longtime dedication and commitment to health care. The event was also a fundraiser for Na'AMAT's new women's health center in Sderot, Israel. From left: Judith Shamir, vice president/fundraising; Lauren Rock, honoree; Eppie Shore and Dina Rock, event co-chairs.



▲ San Fernando Valley Council holds gala spring luncheon with wonderful food and entertainment. A boutique and silent auction added to the fun. Shown is Renee Algazy.



▲ Na'AMAT USA leaders attend Greater Chicago Council's 90th Anniversary Celebration for Na'AMAT USA. From left to right, back row: national vice presidents Jan Gurvitch, Ivy Liebross and Gail Simpson; national board member Susan Isaacs and now Western Area coordinator Esther Friedberg; front: Eastern Area coordinator Doris Katz and now Midwest Area coordinator Sandy Silverglade.



▲ An important fundraiser for Long Island Council is its gift-wrapping service in a shopping mall for Mother's Day, Father's Day, Valentine's Day and the December holidays. Shown prior to Mother's Day are, from left: Eastern Area director Ange Nadel, Tal Ourian, Diane Hershkowitz and Nadine Simon.



◀ Planning for the future at the Eastern Area office in New York City are, from left: Ange Nadel, Eastern Area director; Tal Ourian, former Eastern Area coordinator; Debra Kohn, national treasurer; and Gail Simpson, national vice president/member-ship.



◀ Na'AMAT USA's Cincinnati chapter celebrated Passover with a women's seder held jointly with two synagogue sisterhoods. The women are receiving the priestly blessings from the rabbis who led the seder in solidarity with Israel's Women of the Wall.

Keep up-to-date with Na'AMAT USA and Na'AMAT Israel activities, events and news on Facebook.

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Deanna Migdal Is Named Executive Director of NA'AMAT USA

NA'AMAT USA has appointed Deanna Migdal national executive director. She will work with the organization's president and national board in leading the organi-



zation, managing current activities and planning for the future. Her role will include overseeing fundraising, donor relations, membership development and managing the national office in Canoga Park, California, as well as overseeing the four national areas and community outreach.

A graduate of the University of Illinois, Migdal previously held executive positions in the film and television industry. Since 2014, she has served as NA'AMAT USA national office manager.

"Deanna has proven her ability to guide NA'AMAT USA through her work managing our national office," said outgoing president Elizabeth Raider, "improving administrative procedures and developing our communications programs. She is uniquely qualified to assume this new role. Her commitment and focus in advancing NA'AMAT USA toward its goals has been invaluable. Her commitment and focus in helping NA'AMAT USA improve on all levels is second to none."

"I am very excited about being appointed national executive director and successfully meeting the challenges and opportunities," said Migdal. "In close collaboration with the board, I hope to increase membership and expand our donor base to fulfill NA'AMAT USA's mission of enhancing the lives of women, children and families in Israel. Strengthening the existing bonds among the areas, councils and clubs throughout the country will further facilitate achieving our goals."

Migdal lives in Tarzana, California. She is married and has a 16-year-old daughter, who attended the 90th celebration in Las Vegas, and two older stepsons.



▲ At the Greater Chicago Jewish Festival: Stacey Zisook Robinson is ready to tell participants about the great work NA'AMAT does in Israel. Many thousands celebrate Jewish culture at this one-day event in June, featuring art, food and music.



▲ Broward Council luncheon celebrates the 90th birthday of NA'AMAT USA at the Woodlands Country Club in Tamarac, Florida. Entertainer/educator Myrna Goldberger charmed the audience performing "Pure Gold – the Life of Golda Meir." Members of Medina chapter are shown, including president Isabel Resnick, top left.



▲ Golda, Eilat, Nili and Mitzvah chapters of the San Fernando Valley Council hold a festive Membership Celebration Brunch, celebrating 90 years of NA'AMAT USA. The Eilat members' table is pictured.



▲ NA'AMAT USA members enjoy touring the White House in May, prior to the presentation of the Golda Meir Humanitarian Award to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg at the Supreme Court. From left: Deanna Migdal, now national executive director; Esther Friedberg, now Western Area coordinator; and Susan Isaacs, national board member.

And in Israel...

Renowned sculptor Oded Halahmy from New York City visits NA'AMAT's Shalom Day Care Center in Jaffa. He made a generous donation to the center in memory of his parents Saleh and Saliman Chebbazam. After emigrating from Iraq as a boy, he lived in Jaffa and still has a home and gallery there. ▼





It's Not Too Late to Celebrate...

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Just go to our website — www.naamat.org — and click on Marketplace. You'll find Judaica Webstore (selling all things Israeli), Feldheim (Jewish books for adults and children) and Israel-Catalog.com (thousands of products made in Israel). Become a Marketplace regular to check out new vendors. And remember — part of every purchase you make through our website directly benefits Israeli women, children and families.

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Jaffa

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the ocean, she said. But now all they see is the development of opulent houses, blocking the sea from their view.

"These are people who we do not see," said Younes. "They come into their parking lot, park their cars and go inside their homes. They are not people who come to us to be together. They are different from the local people. Most of the people who live there are rich Jews. Many don't even live there. They just buy it as a real estate investment. But there are also Jewish people in Jaffa who live here with good neighborly relations with us. There is a frustration that people can't buy these apartments for themselves or their children."

Despite the many coexistence ini-

tiatives, the balance remains delicate at times. When the wave of Israeli-Palestinian tensions erupted last October, demonstrations by both Jews and by Arabs in Jaffa and elsewhere turned violent. In Jaffa, local Arab residents feel that they had not been permitted to express their opposition to the situation surrounding the Al Aqsa mosque, whose status quo was thought to be in danger of being changed. The large demonstration in Jaffa was apparently organized by the northern branch of the Islamic Movement in Israel and made the news headlines with its unexpected violence.

"If there is democracy, why can't Arabs stand up and say something against the policies of the government?" asked Younes, noting that many

who took part in the demonstrations were young. "It doesn't mean they are against the Jews. It doesn't mean we are against our friends. We are against the government policy. There were also Jews who disagreed with what the government was doing. We don't want to be enemies. We are Israeli citizens and we need to have our full rights. We see it as natural that we should live together. It is unnatural not to be able to live together because of differences."

A journalist and writer in Jerusalem, Judith Sudilovsky has covered the Middle East for 20 years and is a regular contributor to The Jerusalem Report. She wrote "Boys and Their Toys" in our summer 2015 issue.

WELCOME TO THE NEW LIFE MEMBERS OF NA'AMAT USA!

The following have joined our Na'amat family for life and will never have to pay dues again. They became life members between June 1, 2015 and July 15, 2016.

Members Who Became Life Members

Debbie Abelson Woodland Hills, CA	June Fox Arlington Heights, IL	Andrea Kravetz Cincinnati, OH	Betty Peyton Pembroke Pines, FL	Rhonda Shapiro Valley Glen, CA	Karen Docter Fayetteville, NY	Yonatan Shultz Glandale, CA
Karen Abelson Canoga Park, CA	Rita Frazer Laguna Woods, CA	Irma Lazaroff Silver Spring, MD	Monica Pollack West Hills, CA	Julianne Sherman Silver Spring, MD	Paula Eger Pittsburgh, PA	Deborah Stahl Graves Brooklyn, NY
Roz Abraham Moreland Hills, OH	Ellen Freeman Chicago, IL	Beth Levenstein Brooklyn, NY	Nancy Pollinger Phoenix, AZ	Debrah Shulman Fayetteville, NY	Sara Ferne Sunny Isles Bch, FL	Michal Voloshen Boise, ID
Shlomit Antopolski Copley, OH	Rhea Fried Boca Raton, FL	Diane Levin Highland Park, IL	Greta Popper Aventura, FL	Esther Shuster Silver Spring, MD	Elisha Glazer New York, NY	Betty Wahrhaftig Silver Spring, MD
Pamela Beigel Carlsbad, CA	Bernice Frucht Staten Island, NY	Judith Levin St. Louis, MO	Linda Reiff Las Vegas, NV	Florence Silver Tarzana, CA	Marla Goldin Van Nuys, CA	Carly Walder Deerfield, IL
Carmela Ben Yosef Kiamasha Lake, NY	Shirley Fustfeld Tamarac, FL	Patty Levin Pittsburgh, PA	Gwen Reisner Cherry Hill, NJ	Evelyn Silverstein St. Louis, MO	Amalia Haas Beachwood, OH	Robert Watson Boca Raton, FL
Beverly Berger Pembroke Pines, FL	Jill Gaines Chicago, IL	Gladys Levitin Pembroke Pines, FL	Susan Richter Reseda, CA	Fredda Simon Scottsdale, AZ	Keren Hack Bronx, NY	Arlene Wider Solon, OH
Jacalyn Berman Chicago, IL	Lillian Garner Thousand Oaks, CA	Jeanette Levy Pembroke Pines, FL	Sylvia Rifkin New Haven, CT	Anita Singer Laguna Woods, CA	Rona Heifetz Beverly Hills, CA	Shellie Winkler Sherman Oaks, CA
Karen Blank Boynton Beach, FL	Helen Gebler Wheeling, IL	Linda Lewensohn Agoura Hills, CA	Diane Rishe Oak Park, CA	Nadine Spitz Beigelman Chesterfield, MO	Jennifer Holst Pittsburgh, PA	
Wendy Blum Scottsdale, AZ	Sandra Glass Delray Beach, FL	Natalie Lewis Silver Spring, MD	Barbara Riske Arlington Heights, IL	Deborah Ruth Stein Syracuse, NY	Elisabeth Horowitz Cherry Hill, NJ	Affiliate Life Members (up to age 17)
Sophie Bock Pembroke Pines, FL	Diane Glickman Los Angeles, CA	Elyse Magram Boynton Beach, FL	Esther Rokeach Berkeley, CA	Sandra Stein Silver Spring, MD	Gloria Kahan Pepper Pike, OH	Hannah Bishop Maryland Heights, MO
Marilyn Brenner Las Vegas, NV	Alexandra Greenberg Pittsburgh, PA	Elana Malekan Calabasas, CA	Debbi Rosen Akron, OH	Sandra Steinbaum-Bondy Arlington, VA	Anne Kaye Boynton Beach, FL	Anyia Feldman Los Angeles, CA
Mary Brickman Mundelein, IL	May Greenman Boca Raton, FL	Phyllis Marcus Surprise, AZ	Hilda Rosenberg Pembroke Pines, FL	Lilly Strausberg San Diego, CA	Frona Klotzman Baltimore, MD	Brianna Flynn Brownstein Tarzana, CA
Brenda Brotz Cherry Hill, NJ	Natalie Groner Long Grove, IL	Lois Margolis Mundelein, IL	Tobie Rosenberg Encino, CA	Avis Streicher Buffalo Grove, IL	Shulamith Mellman St. Louis, MO	Bayla Gaines Highland Park, IL
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Irene Buchman Cherry Hill, NJ	Marcia Jacobson Floral Park, NY	Rhona Meyerowitz Sherman Oaks, CA	Donna Rothschild Encino, CA	Art Verity Sherman Oaks, CA	Shelley Miller Delray Beach, FL	Meital Hailpern Evanston, IL
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Dorene Coffey Pittsburgh, PA	Meera Kamegai Las Vegas, NV	Susan Miller Granada Hills, CA	Sheila Sauber Los Angeles, CA	Lucille Weisfuse Boca Raton, FL	Emily Pollinger Phoenix, AZ	Maya Margolis Altamonte Spgs, FL
Amy Croen Milwaukee, WI	Jody Kanter Buffalo Grove, IL	Ety Moldovan Studio City, CA	Jean Saunders Delray Beach, FL	Hanna Weiner Pembroke Pines, FL	Lauren Rock Cleveland, OH	Eliora Margolis Vernon Hills, IL
Rochelle Dicristofalo Delray Beach, FL	Rochelle Katz Boynton Beach, FL	Joyce Moser Laguna Woods, CA	Barbara Scherz Boynton Beach, FL	Arlene Wolff Sherman Oaks, CA	James Rohde Laguna Woods, CA	Paloma Merino Los Angeles, CA
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Help Us Build a Women's Health Center in Sderot— A New Flower in the Blossoming of the Desert



In celebration of NA'AMAT USA's 90th anniversary, we are proud to sponsor a new women's health center in Sderot. The facility, serving the women of the town as well as surrounding kibbutzim, will be the first of its kind in the western Negev.

Sderot, with a population of about 25,000, was established in 1951 as a development town for new immigrants. Less than one mile from the Gaza Strip, Sderot has been the target of Kassam rocket attacks since 2001, with a high percentage of the population suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Despite living with tension and uncertainty, the people of Sderot have shown great courage and strength. There is ongoing rebuilding, construction of new houses, opening of new businesses, improvements in the educational system and transportation, and an increase in cultural activities. What Sderot clearly needs is a women's health center.

Modeled on NA'AMAT's outstanding health center in Karmiel, the Sderot facility will offer many of the same services: educational programs and workshops on health issues and concerns, counseling and

promoting women's empowerment.

The building that is being completely renovated for this purpose was once a NA'AMAT day care center. (NA'AMAT runs two day care centers in Sderot.) In addition to three large activity rooms, the site will include a kitchen, safe room and large outside area.

Sderot ("boulevard" in Hebrew) was given its name to symbolize the biblical prophecy of "making the desert bloom." Our health center will be a new flower in the blossoming of the Negev.

To contribute to this far-reaching project, the cornerstone of our 90th birthday celebration, please contact the national office:

NA'AMAT USA

21515 Vanowen Street, Suite 102

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