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features



Never Too Late for a New Career4 Many women have discovered that changing direction in midlife or beyond can infuse the second half of life with renewed meaning and enthusiasm. By Rahel Musleah

The Glass Ceiling Is Breaking......10 Israeli women are breaking the high-tech ceiling with help from the Israel Defense Forces and other women. By Michele Chabin

The Land of Milk and Honey and Cannabis16 Israel is a pioneer and world leader in medical marijuana. By Judith Sudilovsky

The Torah scholar, rock violinist and award-wining poet believes in a healing force that pervades everything. By Robert Hirschfield



departments

President's Message By Chellie Goldwater Wilensky
What I'm Reading: Israeli Authors By Judith A. Sokoloff24
Take Action! Protecting Our Privacy By Marcia J. Weiss
Around the Country28

Our cover: Israeli-American actress Bar Paly (left) promotes Na'AMAT in a terrific video produced by Deanna Migdal (right). NA'AMAT USA national executive director. View it on our website or Facebook.

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

Dear Haverot,

Our long-term partnership with Na'AMAT Israel continues to make a deep and far-reaching difference. You would have been proud to be with me on my recent visit to two outstanding Na'AMAT day care centers and the site of our new Women's Health Center, our 90th anniversary project. I'd like to share my experiences with you.

The Bialik Day Care Center in the port city of Ashdod serves 97 preschoolers. Divided into four classrooms, the children range in age from three months to three years. Since the Israel government does not pay for renovations of our day care centers, it's up to us. Three years ago, NA'AMAT USA funded the renovation of this very old building. The transformed space is light, airy and cheerful, reflecting the creativity of director Ronni. The colorful decorations covering the walls and hanging from the ceiling stimulate the children's creativity. The week I was there, they were learning about personal hygiene, so large pictures of toothbrushes, hair brushes and combs blanketed the rooms. All the teachers and staff are so enthusiastic about what they do and so proud of their little students.

The teachers of the 3-year-olds had made four signs in English that when held up together read, "Thank You NA'AMAT USA." They taught the kids to say in English, "Thank you, NA'AMAT USA." Now remember we are dealing with 3-year-olds. The signs never quite got held up in the right order (although I am sure they did it perfectly when the strangers weren't there) and they never did say "Thank you NA'AMAT USA" in unison as they had practiced. Some of the toddlers were too shy to speak at all, but one adorable boy said over and over, "Tank you Na'AMAT USA, tank you Na'AMAT USA." (You can see him in our new video on the Na'AMAT USA website.)

Sderot in the western Negev was our next stop. This was my first visit to the beleaguered city of about 24,000, and I was deeply moved by what I saw. Less than a mile from Gaza, Sderot has suffered attacks by Qassam rockets since 2001. When the sirens go off, residents have 15 seconds to get to a shelter. When the red alert begins, bus stop shelters automatically unlock to protect people at the bus stops and on the street. All new buildings in Sderot are constructed with reinforced concrete to withstand rocket attacks. The Israeli government has added a safe room of reinforced concrete to every older apartment building in the city.

We visited the building that will soon become our new Women's Health Center. Originally a day care center, it was hit by a bomb — fortunately on Shabbat when no one was there. In three large activity rooms, this women's empowerment center will provide classes in nutrition, parenting and preventive health care. The center will also hold workshops to help women overcome post-traumatic stress, which affects a large portion of Sderot's population; legal assistance; and psychological counseling. I am so pleased that we chose to celebrate NA'AMAT'S 90th anniversary by establishing this health center, which is scheduled to open this summer. The women of Sderot and their families really need and deserve our help.

NA'AMAT runs two day care centers in Sderot. They are built entirely of reinforced concrete, making each building a safe room. I visited our multipurpose day care center, which has 93 children, including 39 designated as at risk. During the normal day care hours, the at-risk children are in a class with others of the same age. After hours, until 7 o'clock, they are together in one class. Ten of these children are in the center by court order. Chagit, the center's social worker, said *continued on page 27*



National president Chellie Goldwater Wilensky visits a Na'AMAT multipurpose day care center in Sderot.



Forget retirement. Women are carving out second careers that are their passion, infusing midlife and beyond with renewed meaning. Hear their stories: hospice doula, abstract painter, pulpit rabbi, social activist, cantor, freelance writer.

Paul Pruitt



by RAHEL MUSLEAH

ver the course of 43 years, Betsy Teutsch built a successful career as a Judaica artist. Today, she is an energetic writer, speaker and activist, focusing her passion on alleviating poverty through environmental technology and microfinancing, with a focus on women. "I knew I had one more big project in me that would be more heart and soul," says Teutsch, 64, a Philadelphia resident.

Rozanne Gold — a celebrated culinary pioneer, chef, restaurant consultant and food writer — decided to become an end-of-life doula after 40 years in the food world. With a thousand hours under her belt, she is now bringing meaning and comfort to the dying, adding the dimension of spiritual nourishment to her life's work. "Older years are a time of freedom," says Gold, 63, who lives in Brooklyn.

When pediatrician Jill Hackell retired from her job as a clinical researcher in pediatric vaccines at the age of 55, she turned her love of Judaism into a second career. After six years of study, she was ordained as a rabbi in 2013.

"You have to be willing to take charge and think out of the box. What limits most people is imagination."

BETSY TEUTSCH



Gold, Teutsch and Hackell are among the many women who have changed direction in midlife and beyond - a choice that can infuse the second half of life with renewed intensity. "People think midlife is the beginning of a downward slope but it's really like being at the top of a hill," says Barbara Waxman, 54, a California-based gerontologist, coach and author of The Middlescence Manifesto: Igniting the Passion of Midlife. "You have the ability to see far and wide and recognize where you want to go, how to make the journey, who to take with you and where you want to make a difference. It's a natural time to revisit who we want to be, and purpose is the prize."

According to Encore.org, a movement and website founded by social entrepre-

neur Marc Freedman, since the first baby boomers turned 65 in 2011, about 10,000 Americans pass that milestone each day, a trend predicted to continue through 2020. Over the next decade, the number of people ages 65 and over will evolve from one in ten to one in four. But, says Freedman, aging is not a problem; it's a solution: "Neither young nor old, the vast population moving into midlife offers an extraordinary resource," since they can draw on 20 or 30 active and healthy "bonus" years. Many who search for an "encore career" embrace a new model that combines elements of work, service and social im-



Phil Mansfield

" I've always been a risk taker, propelled by ideas, even if I didn't know where I was going."

ROZANNE GOLD



" There is too much of life left just to do travel and theater. "

JILL HACKELL

pact. Women may have more options than men, who still retain the primary responsibility as breadwinners.

"As we get older and more mature we realize we have less time. There's a pull toward meaning. Even when people need to make money they can't do soulless work. Balancing the two becomes increasingly important," says Waxman, noting that the Peace Corps now attracts more people in midlife. Often, those who make a change can trace a theme in their new careers to a consistent thread in their lives. The work is not without challenges. Many exchange higher earning power for fulfillment, enter fields in which they have little previous expertise and invest years in achieving their goals.

StaJe.org, an organization committed to serving Jewish 60-somethings, delineates seven reasons baby boomers make a midlife change. They want to follow their dreams; have a desire to give; aren't ready to retire but crave new challenges; prefer a part-time position as they near retirement; can afford to; lose a job; experience a health crisis. StaJe draws on Jewish wisdom to provide encouragement: "The balance between remaining rooted and embracing change can be seen in Judaism itself ... the Jewish people constantly experience growth and change." Paradigmatic Jewish leaders have included Abraham, who left his homeland at the age of 75 (he lived to 175); Moses, raised as a prince until he escaped Egypt and retreated into the life of a shepherd before answering God's call; and Rabbi Akiba, an illiterate shepherd who only began learning at the age of 40, and after 12 years of study became a great scholar.

Shlomo Maital, academic director of the Technion Institute of Management, Israel's leading executive leadership development institute, and a pioneer in action-learning methods, calls each person's life and career "creative design projects." Don't be afraid to reinvent yourself, he urges. "All of us, in our careers have many, many choices. And we sometimes feel trapped by taking the path that we've chosen. It is not a one-way turnpike with no exits."

Change often begets change: Mourning a parent, launching children or other changes in status often pave the way to switching directions. Culinary star Gold experienced enormous loss after her mother died in 2006, three years after her father's death. "I had no experience and I was scared to death when they were sick. I didn't know who to talk to or where to turn. There is so much mystery about death and dying. It's the last conversation to come out of the closet." Hospice work served as her own path to healing. Then she realized she wanted to help others in similar situations.

In addition, though she has a stepson, Gold had no children of her own. So a year after her mother's death, she and her husband adopted an 11-year-old daughter, Shayna. Gold was 52. "I was filling myself because I had such a hole in my heart," she says. "My dreams were born of loss and grief, finding a different kind of nourishment because my primary nourisher was no longer."

The doula hospice work has allowed her to feel the "sacred space" around death and to find a community of kindred spirits at the Zen Center for Contemplative Care in New York, a non-religious organization that focuses on compassion and bearing witness. In the process, she stumbled across another

Vanessa Nastro



realization: The comments she scribbled on patient worksheets resembled poetry, which she has always loved. She also wanted to teach but knew she would need a graduate degree, so she enrolled in an M.F.A. program in poetry. She now teaches an undergraduate course called "the language of food"



at The New School in Manhattan.

"I've always been a risk taker, propelled by ideas, even if I didn't know where I was going," says Gold, recalling that she and a friend created a backyard day camp when she was 11; that she became a bartender illegally at 16; intended to become a psychologist; studied sex therapy in graduate school, then decided that food was really her passion. She was the first chef to New York Mayor Ed Koch; wrote 13 cookbooks and countless magazine and newspaper articles; helped create legendary restaurants, including the Rainbow Room, Windows on the World and the Hudson

Photo, courtesy of Helene Cohen Bludman



"I've had to become competent in something new. It's a 100-percent commitment that involves a relentless amount of work."

River Club where she helped launch today's locavore movement. To move on, she documented her work in a website archive (rozannegold.com).

Gold still writes a column in The Huffington Post and another called Handwritten Recipes (handwrittenwork.com), but service — tikkun olam (healing the world) — has become a true calling. The soup kitchen she organized after Hurricane Sandy in her Brooklyn synagogue ultimately fed 185,000. An advocate in the field of contemplative care, she helps fund a program in doctor-patient communication at NYU Langone Medical Center. "People don't realize how many opportunities there are by offering themselves," she says. Noting that at a practical level it's a luxury to make the changes she has, she says, "I still sometimes debate whether I should maximize my earning power."

Jane Breskin Zalben, 66, a Long Island, New York, author and illustrator of more than 50 children's books and young adult novels, also attributes her return to her first love — painting ab-

"The 60s are the prime of life. It's the right time to do something for ourselves." HELENE COHEN BLUDMAN stract art — to a search for healing after her mother's death two years ago. She meditated on her mother's life — she worked for an importer of Chinese goods, earned her master's degree in library science at 50 and became a librarian for children with learning disabilities. Then, Zalben mulled over her own career, which had helped support her family. "To do books I could have a family, work all day uninterrupted and make a soup at the same time."

As she cleaned out her mother's house, she found a hoard of gauze bandages from various hospital and rehab stays. She decided to turn the gauze into art. "Gauze can be used to soak up blood from a wound, but it can also help heal,"



"The reward is I'm just starting to discover the belief in myself that others had in me."

LOIS KITTNER

Zalben explains in her artist's statement (janebreskinzalben.com). She began a series of acrylic and oil paintings, and since her mother had always cleaned her home obsessively, she incorporated household cleaners into the paint, then dyed, spray painted and dried the gauze outdoors so it took on a lyrical shape as it blew in the wind. She returned to the grid format she had explored in her 20s but broke out of the boxes to produce new canvases. Creating the first painting was "heart-wrenching. It felt like a last communication with my mother."

"This isn't a new direction. This is coming home," says Zalben, who continues to work on children's books to earn a living. She has sold her first painting and is looking forward to several solo shows. "I never feel bored or burnt out. I don't want to do anything else. It's getting back to the path instead of taking a fork in the road. I'm forging ahead to the future." But, she says, most galleries want young artists. "I'm worried I waited too long. But that won't stop me."

Women who have been juggling families and careers can shift the horizon when their mothering duties lessen, says gerontologist Waxman. "There are times in our lives we have to put aside what we care about to put dinner on the table, take care of sick parents or pay a mortgage. Later, even when we may not have to make more money, people forget to connect to what they care about." If they notice their lifelong dreams may not have come true, they still have 40 years to make an impact. "It's emotionally empowering," she says.

For Teutsch, too, the flexibility of working at home as a Judaica artist meshed well with child-rearing. She calls her artistic career serendipitous, beginning when she created her own ketubah (Jewish marriage contract) in 1973. Later, she streamlined her business from one-of-a-kind originals to lithographs. When the wide availability of digital fonts affected the market, she concluded it was saturated. "I wasn't that bothered. I felt I didn't pick being an artist. It picked me."

As the demands of motherhood lessened, she felt restless and began to research and blog about environmental issues, focusing on eco-smart purchasing. "There's a side of me that's a social activist, community organizer and problem solver, and those skills came out," Teutsch observes. But as a 50-something woman just entering the field, she did not find the job she was looking for. "It took a long time for me to realize people weren't going to hire me. You have to be willing to take charge and think out of the box. What limits most people is imagination."

A conference she attended on microfinancing put all the pieces together. She learned she could combine tikkun olam - focusing on helping people escape poverty — with environmentally smart technology. Teutsch became communications director for GreenMicrofinance, which promotes affordable paths out of rural poverty. Two years ago, she published 100 Under \$100: One Hundred Tools for Empowering Global Women. "It's not true that we don't know how to get women out of poverty. Most solutions are inexpensive." She now speaks regularly at schools, conferences, community groups and synagogues, demonstrating tools from solar lights to water technology, and she has been commissioned to work on a book by one of the organizations she profiled.

Teutsch is completely immersed in her new life, though her calligraphy "miraculously" continues. She knows she is making an impact but remains cautious with her expectations. "You can get grandiose and say, 'Wow, I want to help women out of poverty.' It's not simple. You have to be humble and remember that if you save one life it's as if you have saved the world." Every once in a while, she says, she does ask herself, "What was I thinking? I could be quilting!"

At the Academy for Jewish Religion in Yonkers, New York, most of the students are second-career, says Ora Horn Prouser, executive vice president and academic dean. The 204 rabbis and cantors the institution has ordained since its founding in 1956 include former astrophysicists and lawyers, pest exterminators and bus drivers. "It's a blessing to be in a career you feel is meaningful. Not everyone can do that in a first career," says Prouser. To switch, "you have to be gutsy and passionate, the kind of person who will find meaning and enjoyment in the process." Many AJR students continue working while studying. "They don't give up either identity. Being a successful professional you've already built yourself up. You come to the experience with more life skills and maturity," says Prouser.

Some lay leaders and educators don't have the background they wish they did. One AJR student in his 70s said he felt as if he had been driving without a license and was now ready to get one, Prouser recalls. Former pediatrician Jill Hackell, 65, falls into that category, channeling her thirst for Judaism from a hobby into a full-time commitment. "Every time I learned something it wasn't enough," she says. When she became eligible for retirement after 22 years, she decided there was "too much of life left just to do travel and theater."

One of the challenges Hackell faced was transforming her fact-based scientific perspective to more interpretive thinking. "I prepared a d'var torah (Torah commentary) as a Powerpoint, though I didn't deliver it that way," she chuckles. She maintained one foot in each world. The first class she took was in bioethics. Though she loved the study, her career direction eluded her, until she realized she had enjoyed the caretaking role she had played as a doctor. She decided to become a pulpit rabbi and is now the part-time spiritual leader of West Clarkstown Jewish Center, a Conservative synagogue in New City, New York. Hackell has found that teaching is her true calling and enjoys transmitting Torah to her small congregation of older people. She also frequently teaches bioethics. "I'm blessed with a situation that fits naturally with who I am," she says.

Not everyone pursues a long-standing aspiration or has the means to do it. Lois Kittner, 60, graduated AJR a year ago and is now cantor at Adath Shalom in Morris Plains, New Jersey. "I came at it kicking and screaming," she says. "So many people said I should become a cantor, but I said: 'It's impossible. Are you crazy?' People assume it was a lifelong dream, but I could never have imagined it."

A cabaret singer with a master's degree in French literature, she found comfort in prayer after her father passed away when she was 40. She was already a bar/bat mitzvah teacher and expanded her lay leadership to the position of congregational cantor. She considered enrolling in AJR but the job she had held for more than 10 years as administrative assistant for a small financial planning company fell victim to the economic downturn. Her husband overruled her *continued on page 34* Your donation to the Circle of Life helps to support Na'AMAT's invaluable services for women: legal aid bureaus; vocational and professional education; intervention, treatment and prevention of domestic violence; cultural enrichment activities; and advocacy for women's rights.

Join the NA'AMAT USA Circle of Life!

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When you take part in the Circle of Life, you help create a better life for the women of Israel. You educate women to expand their opportunities and achieve their goals • You protect women from domestic violence • You help women overcome the obstacles to gender equality • You encourage women to participate in political life • You empower women to become agents of social change • You reinforce women's awareness of their value and rights • You invest in the economic growth of women and their families

You can join the Circle of Life by contributing \$1,800. Two people each donating \$900 also count as a circle. Donors' names will be inscribed on the Circle of Life Wall at the Na'AMAT Women's Center in Jerusalem.

Send your contribution to Na'AMAT USA, 21515 Vanowen St., Suite 102, Canoga Park, CA 91303. Phone: 818-431-2200.

The Glass Ceiling Is Breaking

Israeli women are breaking the high-tech barrier with help from the IDF and other women.

by MICHELE CHABIN

For much of her 25-year career Nava Swersky Sofer, an Israeli entrepreneur, lawyer and venture capitalist, was the lone woman in the room at high-level technology meetings and gatherings. "When I was a partner of a venture capital firm 20 years ago I was the only woman at the table," Swersky Sofer said.

That began to change as the country's high-tech industry started to flourish, and the need for quality technology employees increased dramatically.

Israel's Central Bureau of

Statistics says women comprise about 35 percent of the high-tech workforce, but Swersky Sofer believes the percentage who work in hardcore tech positions is actually much lower: 15 to 17 percent.

"Where you do see more women in high tech tends to be in a tech company's law, marketing and, of course, human relations," she explained, not in technology development or in the highest echelons of leadership. As for the percentage of women entrepreneurs in high tech,

"of 100 entrepreneurs, only 5 will be women."

Renana Peres is an associate professor in the Jerusalem School of Business Administration at the Hebrew University.

Photo, courtesy of Renana Peres





Nava Swersky Sofer is an entrepreneur, lawyer and venture capitalist.

While "not enough" is being done by the government and the private sector to encourage more women to enter this sector, Swersky Sofer said, it's gratifying to see the issue "finally on the table." She explained, "I'm glad to say that in the last couple of years it's

become a visible issue, and that's the step in an eventual solution."

Swersky Sofer's achievements and those of other women who have made it to the top of Israel's high-tech hierarchy are impressive by any yardstick, but given the many obstacles they face, remarkable might be a better descriptor.

No one denies that Israel is a powerhouse of innovation, with more startups, scientists, tech professionals and venture capital investments per capita than any other country. Plus, it ranks

third, after the United States and China, in the number of companies listed on the Nasdaq.

But most Israeli women aren't reaping the benefits because they face the same biases and educational barriers as their American counterparts. However, Israeli women have advantages that many American women lack: access to relatively affordable child care and the opportunity to serve in a tech unit during their mandatory military service.



Sabina Tsytkin is pursuing a doctorate in bioengineering at the Hebrew University's BioDesign Medical Innovation Program.

Some units, including the renowned 8200, are a veritable incubator for high-tech entrepreneurs who go on to create multi-million dollar companies. In 2016, *Forbes* magazine estimated that more than 1,000 companies have been founded by soldiers who once served in the 8200 unit, Israel's counterpart to the NSA.

So why has it taken so long for Israeli women to seek out employment in this sector? As in the United States, it's complicated.

Until recently, few Israeli schools and programs actively encouraged girls and women to study STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), which society continues to view as a male domain. A 2015 study by Israel's Ministry of Science, Space and Technology found that women represent only 25 to 31 percent of university students studying STEM subjects.

Today in Israel "only 15 percent of computer science and engineering degrees are going to women," said Jonathan Medved, founder and CEO of OurCrowd, a successful Jerusalembased venture capital fund that invests in innovative Israeli start-ups. "When 85 percent of these are going to men, it's not surprising that this number flows through the system."

The problem, Medved said, starts "in the way girls are educated as far back as elementary school." The more educated and financially secure an Israeli family is, the more they try to expose daughters — and sons, of course — to activities like youth hackathons and coding camps.

In contrast, girls from workingclass and underprivileged homes, especially in the country's periphery, have far fewer options to engage in STEM

Jonathan Medved is the founder and CEO of OurCrowd, a venture capital fund.

Photo, courtesy of Jonathan Medved

studies or activities. The result is far fewer female role models in the industry.

The few programs that do exist - almost always spearheaded from the non-profit sector serve as equalizers. One program, the educational startup StellarNova, inspires girls to love sci-"We're starting ence. with the pipeline," said Yael Schuster, a chemist who is the company's cofounder. "The gender balance isn't going to change unless we actively engage



our girls and give them the tools they need to succeed in STEM fields."

StellarNova, which recently won a NIS 300,000 (about \$82,000) grant from Mass Challenge, a competition that gives Israeli startups access to global markets, runs hands-on workshops on everything from molecular gastronomy and global warming to electromagnetism and coding. It's also developing a four-book series for girls that features fun, interactive science experiKira Radinsky founded SalesPredict, a company that provides predictive sales-retention analysis. Ariel Elinson

ments and interactive experiences.

Another program, run by the organization KIAH (Call Israel Haverim), serves girls ages 14 to 18. Called Cracking the Glass Ceiling, the curriculum includes enriched math and science subjects to prepare girls for the highest level of matriculation exams. This boost, along with the professional

The more educated and financially secure an Israeli family is, the more they try to expose daughters to activities like youth hackathons and coding camp.

We will break the glass ceiling. In the next

generation, our daughters will make the change, said the Arab CEO of a biotech company in Nazareth.

workplace mentoring the program offers, encourages the students to pursue science and engineering in the IDF and, later, in a university.

Because the army actively recruits male and female participants of honors science and math programs, the more girls who intensively study STEM subjects, the more will be tapped to serve in the IDF's top units.

This is crucial since "there is a huge correlation between army success and excellence and later entrepreneurial leadership in the Start Up Nation," Medved noted, referring to the large number of successful high-tech companies founded by former soldiers who served in the IDF's top tech units. With an estimated 90 percent of positions in the IDF currently open to women, "there are a lot of women in IDF intelligence units but not in technical development," Medved said.

Alumni from the 8200 unit have launched and sold superstar companies like Check Point (cybersecurity), Waze (automotive navigation) and Wix (website design). "Tech giants like to gobble up 8200 firms like hors d'oeuvres," journalist Richard Behar wrote in Forbes. "Microsoft bought Adallom, a data privacy firm, for a reported \$320 million; Facebook bought mobile analytics company Onavo for some \$150 million; and PayPal grabbed CyActive, which predicts hacks, for an estimated \$60 million."

Kira Radinsky, now 30, "graduated" from the 8200 unit and cofounded SalesPredict, a company that provides predictive sales-retention analysis. In

2012, eBay purchased the company for a reported \$40 million, and Radinsky now serves as eBay Israel's chief scientist.

In the Forbes article Radinsky, who entered university at 15, said working in 8200's elite Unit 81 provided her the training she needed to become a successful high-tech entrepreneur. She described her fellow soldiers as "just insanely amazing people" who, like Radinsky, were considered prodigies. "We [were] given a problem that will either give or take life. And the moment you understand you don't have a choice, every action you do has such implications. You just do it by the adrenaline," she said. The same is true when it comes to steering a high-tech company, Radinsky said. "It doesn't look as scary to take a risk because I took much bigger risks before."

Swersky Sofer agrees, which is why she is frustrated. "We're seeing more women in various IDF technical positions, but the majority are in support positions" that provide little of the hightech and out-of-the-box thinking that turns soldiers into tech entrepreneurs. "And that's unfortunate because at this time in their lives female soldiers don't have the pressure of raising a family."

r. Renana Peres, an associate professor in the Jerusalem School of Business Administration at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, said that unless high-tech companies make a much greater effort to accommodate women who want to have children, they will continue to lose out



Ola Baker Salameh is the CEO of Sebana Medical, a biotech company in Nazareth.

on some of the best and brightest minds in the country.

A former high-tech CEO, Peres walked away from the sector after her company was acquired. Instead of pursuing another tech opportunity, she chose a career in academia. Israel "is an extremely child-centered society," Peres said. "It's largely a Jewish society and the feeling is that as a woman you must have kids. It doesn't matter what you do, women are expected to have more than one child."

As long as men dominate upper management positions, Peres said, parents and especially mothers — "are expected to adjust themselves to these standards -

Photo, courtesy of Miriam Lottner

being judged not for their productivity but by how many hours they work in the office."

Because women in Israel are entitled to 16 weeks of paid maternity leave and can legally take off up to a year (mostly unpaid) and mothers tend to leave work earlier than their male counterparts to be with their children, "it creates a vicious cycle," Peres said. "It's hard to get promoted."

Despite this, some Israeli women in high tech have found a good life/work balance that ensures a good steady paycheck and solid care for their children. "There's a support mechanism in Israel that was created even before the creation of the state," Peres noted. "Israel was a new country and everyone was expected to work. You have places like NA'AMAT day care around the country. It was part of the socialist ethos."

This is in sharp contrast to the United States, she said. "I see my American friends, who receive little or no paid maternity leave and child care is very expensive. You're allowed to have a family as long as your employer doesn't have to hear about it."

Speaking from personal experience, Peres predicted the corporate culture will change once more women head tech companies.

Peres introduced a change when she served as the CEO of Persey, a subsidiary of Converse Technology that developed voice recognition software. She took 12 weeks of maternity leave — the norm at the time — before returning to work. And because she was breastfeeding and was in a positon of authority, she was able to bring her baby to work.

"As a CEO, I never asked people to stay late. I don't believe people are more efficient if they work 12 hours a day. I gave people the right to go home and keep working from home. Or not." Unlike many high-tech bosses, Peres said the only people she employed were parents "because they are multitaskers."

Adrian Folberg-Blum works in a very flexible, child-friendly, high-tech



Miriam Lottner launched a company that produces children's games.

firm, but that wasn't always the case. Director of patents at Rosetta Genomics, a biotech company, Folberg-Blum said she feels "very privileged" to be employed there.

"They allow me to work from home, though I try to go in four times a week. They are in Rehovot. I live in Jerusalem," more than an hour's com-

The gender balance isn't going to change unless we actively engage our girls and give them

the tools they need to succeed in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.



Adriana Folberg-Blum is the director of patents at Rosetta Genomics, a biotech company.

mute each way. The mother of two said Rosetta's staff is "mostly women" and "they are very, very focused and very busy. Many of them leave work around 3:30 or 4 p.m. but they stay late one day a week. It's very family-oriented," unlike her previous employer, who, she said, displayed "no understanding of the need to give flexibility, to sometimes allow employees to work from home. My impression is that they always said women work less and took women's work less seriously."

When Folberg-Blum returned from an eight-month maternity leave she found herself with fewer cases to work on. "I lost my place," she said.

Rachel (a pseudonym), a high-tech executive and mother who has worked in both Silicon Valley and Tel Aviv (often called Silicon Wadi), believes that Israel is a far better place to work in high tech, even with the challenges. "It's so much better in Israel. There is no comparison. Working in the U.S. was death by a thousand cuts."

Rachel, who is middle aged, said the men in Silicon Valley ignored her. "They really don't care about talking to you unless you're a 30-something white male. The sexism there runs deep and wide." Sabina Tsytkin, a 25-year-old student pursuing a doctorate in bioengineering in the Hebrew University's Bio-Design Medical Innovation Program, is relatively new to the field, but she already sees the toll it can take on families. "It would be very difficult to have a family and do what I'm doing," she said in the program's state-of-the-art laboratory. "I'd like to work at the cutting edge of innovative engineering. Just as driverless cars are on the cutting edge of auto technology, I want to be on the cutting edge of biotech."

The issue, Tsytkin said, is the intensity and length of her work day. "I have to work long hours. Last week I was here at least 10 to 11 hours a day, sometimes 14 hours. I don't think I'll be able to have children and a Ph.D. and a career. It's an option I'm considering, since my husband, who is doing a master's in physics, also wants a career."

Parenting issues aside, Tsytkin said she hasn't encountered any obstacles in her career path. She said pursuing a career in biotech — she is researching ways to create better models that simu-

NA'AMAT USA Enables Israeli Women Seeking High-tech Careers

Very year, the Na'AMAT USA Professional Scholarship Fund makes it possible for some 200 deserving Israeli women to pursue bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees. Emphasis is placed on giving grants to women studying STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and math) — about 70 percent of awardees. One of seven recipients pursuing doctorates in the medical sciences, Roni Arbel explains some of her research in cognitive neuroscience in the following letter. Check the Na'AMAT USA website for coverage of the June 2017 award ceremony in Tel Aviv.

Dear NA'AMAT Contributor,

I'm an M.D./Ph.D. student, combining clinical studies with research work as I aspire to enhance my toolbox as a future physician in a way that will enable me to help patients in a more holistic way. As a teenage triathlete, I was first exposed to the challenges blind individuals face while running alongside a congenitally blind runner. I realized the great need for accessibility tools as well as meticulous investigation of brain mechanisms that are influenced by sensory and motor deprivation.

I chose my Ph.D. topic accordingly in the field of cognitive neuroscience. I focus on reading and face recognition in congenitally blind people. I built tools that aid the blind in everyday tasks such as reading and shape recognition, which I then use, along with functional neuroimaging methods (fMRI), to investigate how the brain is shaped under conditions of congenital blindness.

The first tool I have designed enables blind persons to "read" using their ears in a way that engages the brain's reading network. For the second tool, I used auditory methods developed in the lab to teach blind persons to identify faces from the children's game Guess Who. I hope that by making this game accessible, blind parents will be able to play and communicate with their sighted children on topics of facial expression and how emotions are presented through them.

Thank you very much for your kind and generous support, which will help me continue the research and help blind persons.

Roni Arbel

Although the Israel Defense Force recently opened a whopping 90 percent of roles to female soldiers, there are a lot of women in intelligence units but not in technical development.

late the human liver — "was natural" for her because she grew up in a family of engineers. "I attended a science high school, pursed science in university. This is my passion," Tsytkin said.

Miriam Lottner, who ran a large technical writing company for several years before launching a company that produces children's games, expressed an understanding of the dilemma faced by women who want to have children as well as the staffing needs of high-tech startups. "If you're a startup with a limited runway [budget], say nine months, it's hard to lose an employee on maternity leave for six months. So I feel it's somewhat unfair to say it's discriminatory not to want to hire religious women of childbearing age. Sometimes I had five women on maternity leave at the same time," said Lottner, who is Orthodox.

The challenges of long hours and child care are of special concern to Israelis with the most children: ultra-Orthodox Jews and Arabs. The government and some non-profit organizations have been making a special effort to encourage women from these sectors to enter the high-tech industry. The government subsidizes posthigh school tech programs for men and women from these sectors as well as financial incentives to companies that hire them.

"Haredi [ultra-Orthodox] women are relative latecomers to the tech scene because traditionally they have studied to become teachers," said Shaindy Babad, CEO of Temech, a non-profit that works in cooperation with government agencies to provide ultra-Orthodox women opportunities for professional advancement. Although there were always individual ultra-Orthodox women in tech, the big change occurred eight to ten years ago, she said, when the government introduced technology tracks to the post-high school seminaries where an estimated 80 percent of ultra-Orthodox women study.

Some companies offer special accommodations for women, including gender-segregated working quarters, a room to pump and store breast milk and flexible work hours. Firms that employ solely ultra-Orthodox workers tend to build maternity leave into their business plans, according to the Ministry of the Economy.

The fact that some ultra-Orthodox women are creating their own tech startups "is creating another layer, where they themselves are becoming the employers," Babad said.

The entrance of Arab women into the high-tech field is even more striking, given that just 30 percent of Arab Israeli women aged 25 to 64 work. This low workplace participation rate is largely due to cultural norms but also due to a lack of educational and employment opportunities close to home, according to Tsofen, a non-profit organization working to integrate Israeli's Arab minority into the high-tech industry. The organization is encouraging the creation of technology centers in Arab municipalities and placing an emphasis on the high-tech training and placement for Arab women.



Jhoto,

courtesy of Shaindy Babac

Shaindy Babad is the CEO of Temech, a nonprofit that provides ultra-Orthodox women opportunities for professional advancement.

The select group of women who have "made it" to the top of Israel's hyper-competitive high-tech industry want the next generation of women to experience fewer struggles than they experienced. "We will break the glass ceiling. In the next generation, our daughters will make the change," said Ola Baker Salameh, CEO of Sebana Medical, a biotech company in the Arab city of Nazareth.

Many have taken on the role of mentors to younger women. "I'm a member of groups of senior women who are actively promoting women in tech and encouraging them to join boards of directors and decision-making positions," said Swersky Sofer, whose long career includes the managing directorship of IDCBeyond, a year-long entrepreneurship program. She founded Columbine *continued on page 33*

The Land of Milk and Honey and Cannabis

Israel is a pioneer and world leader in medical marijuana.

by JUDITH SUDILOVSKY



aving immigrated to Israel from the United States a dozen years ago, 40-somethings Oren and Keren in some ways run a typical busy Israeli household. The parents of three active children and one laid-back pup, they shuttle between schools, extracurricular activities, doctor appointments, shopping and work. Somewhere in the rush they manage to fit in some family down time.

But in other ways they are atypical. Oren, a stay-at-home dad, manages the family affairs while Keren has a managerial position in an organization that requires regular trips abroad. More notably, Oren is also among the 27,000 people in Israel actively using medical cannabis to treat a variety of medical conditions. In his case it is Tourette syndrome, a neurological disorder that causes repetitive and involuntary movements and vocalizations.

Keren fell in love with Oren's creative sense of humor that clicked with hers and characterizes their life. But as their family grew, they realized Oren's symptoms were interfering with their ability to function as a healthy family.

Thankfully, some 15 years ago Israel became one of the first countries to create a state-supported medical cannabis program. It requires doctor recommendations, permits, renewing of permits and medical prescriptions, but it has made it possible for Oren to calm his symptoms and function better.

Legal medical cannabis was not available in the U.S. when they lived there. Very likely their marriage would have fallen apart had they stayed, said Keren, one Friday morning before going out to stock up on groceries for the weekend. "Oren's ability to use medical cannabis is crucial to our family," she explained. "It absolutely saved our marriage and we have one of the best marriages I know." (Because of her work with international organizations, and the stigma sometimes attached to the use of medical cannabis, Keren asked that their real names not be used.)

For now, Oren administers the medical cannabis by smoking, but he is excited by the prospects of new technology Israel is spearheading to improve the effectiveness of medical cannabis in the form of oils, vapor and time-release capsules.

I srael is considered one of if not the leader in medical cannabis innovation. Its cuttingedge technology in plant research and component isolation, plant cultivation methods and medicinal administration products has put the country at the head of the pack.

Israel also has some of the world's largest medical cannabis farms known as cultivation facilities. Experts predict that number to grow tenfold in the next 10 years. Two of the largest marijuana growers in Israel today are Breath of Life (BOL) Pharma and Tikun Olam. Both companies conduct medical research on medicinal cannabis in conjunction with foreign partners. BOL Pharma's botanical cannabinoid products are used for cosmetic purposes and dermatological problems. They are working with universities and hos-

pitals to develop new drugs for multiple sclerosis, fibromyalgia, inflammatory bowel disease and osteoarthritis. Tikun Olam is

> Syqe Medical developed a metered-dose cannabis inhaler, which Teva Pharmaceutical plans to bring to market.

Photo, courtesy of Syge Medical

Regarded almost as a wonder plant in some circles, different components of medicinal marijuana have proved effective in treating chronic pain, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, PTSD, insomnia, Alzheimer's disease and cancer.

conducting clinical trials on the use of cannabinoids for epilepsy, Crohn's disease and tinnitus.

Regarded almost as a wonder plant in some circles, different components of medicinal cannabis have proved effective in treating chronic pain, Parkinson's disease, epilepsy, PTSD, insomnia, Alzheimer's disease and cancer. Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Medical Center is testing the effects of cannabinoids on 120 autistic children and young adults, the first project of its kind worldwide. American pharmaceutical company CannRx and iCAN: Israel-Cannabis have partnered to launch a sleep aid, called ican.sleep, made from cannabis extracts. The product will be the first pharmaceutical-grade cannabis formulation for insomnia on the market.

Cannabis sativa is one of the more than 1,400 strains of cannabis commonly known as marijuana. Cannabi-

diol — CBD for short — is a major component of Cannabis sativa but only one of its hundreds of chemical components. It is, however, the component garnering the most research interest because CBD possesses potent anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive properties. But unlike the other major component of cannabis, tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), CBDs are nonpsychoactive. And they are well tolerated by humans. Israeli researchers have so far isolated more than 100 different cannabinoids, with basic research showing that different cancers are reactive to different CBDs.

The Hebrew University and Tel Aviv University are researching CBDs to heal bone fractures. Some groups are researching the effect of CBDs on diabetes. One focus of research is how to isolate these different components to produce consistent and diseasespecific, medical-grade cannabis medicines that can be used to treat the individual diseases.

The CBD components of cannabis are just the tip of the iceberg, according to Israeli researcher Dr. David Meiri of the Technion Israel Institute of Technology Laboratory of Cancer Biology and Cannabinoid Research. Speaking at the medical cannabis conference CannaTech 2017 held in Tel Aviv in March, he said that research continues to identify which CBDs affect which cancers in what ways.

Meiri was among the 700 re-

searchers, medical professionals and experts and industry leaders in finance, medicine, government policy, tech innovation, agriculture and entrepreneurship who converged at the conference, considered one of the premier medical cannabis conferences worldwide. In a field ripe for cannabis information, another medical cannabis conference, Cann 10, also took place in Tel Aviv this past June. It covered technology, research, agriculture, regulations and investment opportunities.

"After years of intensive work, we have created a method from extraction to the end of the analytical process where we can analyze all the cannabinoids," said Meiri. "We are not blind anymore. We don't know what they do, but we have them. Each strain is a different medicine."

Recruiting a multidisciplinary team of scientists, Meiri's two-year-old laboratory is already one of the leading

cannabis laboratories in the world. Collaborating with local and international scientists, their principal focus is discovering the therapeutic potential of these cannabinoids. The lab's Cannabis Database Project integrates both clinical data on cannabis patients as well as data on the cannabis usage history for patients in Israel and abroad. The project also includes a separate cannabis strain database, using state-



Saul Kaye, left, CEO and founder of iCan: Israel-Cannabis, the research company that organizes CannaTech, is shown with Prof. Raphael Mechoulam, who has pioneered the field of medical marijuana research since the 1960s.

Israel Health Minister Ya'akov Litzman, an ultra-Orthodox rabbi,

actively promotes national medical cannabis reforms, though he is not in

favor of marijuana for recreational use.

of-the-art mass spectrometry to comprehensively profile the cannabinoid composition for a variety of cannabis strains that are used for clinical purposes in Israel. Meiri explained that by combining and analyzing the two databases, doctors will be able to develop optimal individualized treatment for patients, maximizing disease specific therapeutic efficiency while minimizing side effects.

In one promising set of clinical trials by Talent Biotechs Ltd., a privately held Israeli-based company recently acquired by the Canadian company

More than 700 researchers, medical professionals and experts

Kalytera Therapeutics, the CBD component of cannabis has been shown to be effective in combating deadly Graft versus Host Disease. GvHD can occur following stem cell or bone marrow transplants when the body rejects the transplant. Talent Biotechs, the 2016 CannaTech summit pitch winner, completed its two clinical trials at the Rabin Medical Center in Tel Aviv as well as in Australia and Europe.

"The morbidity rate of GvHD is

very high and can affect 30 to 70 percent of stem cell transplant recipients depending on the match," said Dr. Sari Prutchi Sagiv, former Talent Biotechs vice president of research and development, now vice president of scientific operations for Kalytera. The immunosuppressive properties of CBD make it helpful in combating development of GvHD, she explained. Excited by the positive response of patients in its research, the company has a preliminary



If you're looking for knowledge and partnership in the medical

cannabis business, Israel is the way to go.

meeting with the FDA with the goal of bringing a medical grade drug to market.

The business side of the cannabis industry is largely multinational and, like others in the field, Kalytera collaborates with companies and scientists abroad. Though Kalytera has offices in Israel, it is based in San Francisco and is listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

The U.S. has the largest market for medical cannabis. Some 500 different strains of medical marijuana are being cultivated and distributed in legal dispensaries, but little is known about the effectiveness of these strains mainly because clinical testing is not permitted in America, noted Sagiv. "A community with both the drug [knowledge] and the clinical trials is a more science-based community," she said. "Israel is both."

Hebrew University Prof. Raphael Mechoulam, an Israel Prize winner, is credited with pioneering the field of medical cannabis research in the 1960s. The 86-year-old began his first studies using a batch of confiscated Lebanese hashish procured from the Israeli police department. He identified and isolated both CBD and THC with a multidisciplinary team of chemists and biologists. He continues to teach graduate students and does research linked to diabetes, blood flow to the heart and dementia.

Trained as a chemist, Mechoulam works with scientists and experts of different fields, convinced that research should cross boundaries of all disciplines. "I believed then, and I still believe that the separation of scientific fields is just an admission of our limited ability to learn and understand several scientific areas. In nature, the border does not exist," he said in a 2007 interview for the journal *Society for the Study of Addiction*, which he handed out to journalists covering CannaTech 2017. He also noted, "I believe that the cannabinoids represent a medicinal treasure trove which waits to be discovered."

In 2016, Israel's government began reforming its system for licensing cannabis production. More than 200 groups have applied to join the current eight farms legally growing marijuana for medicinal research and use. In March 2017, 37 farmers received preliminary permits to grow the plant, including many on kibbutzim. Earlier this year, an Israeli government committee approved a plan for medical cannabis companies to export products internationally. The plan awaits Knesset legislation, but investors have taken note.

Israel Health Minister Ya'akov Litzman, an ultra-Orthodox rabbi, actively promotes national medical cannabis reforms, though he is not in favor of cannabis for recreational use. His ministry recently shortened the waiting period for medical cannabis permits and eased limits on its use, allowing patients to use the drug in public in its vapor or oil form. Smoking, however, must still be done only at the patient's home. Cigarettes are considered the least effective delivery system because much of the medicinal properties literally go up in smoke.

The Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* quoted the chairman of the interministerial committee on medical cannabis as saying that the recent changes "are part of the medicalization of medical cannabis as much as possible. We see great value in helping make things easier for patients who need it."

In January 2017, the Israel government announced it would invest \$2.13 million in 13 medical cannabis research projects. More recently, the Hebrew University announced the creation of a multidisciplinary center on cannabinoid research. It's already sponsoring three different CBD studies in the fields of cancer, acute pain and brain trauma. Mechoulam heads the Academic Committee of the Multidisciplinary Center. The Israeli Ministry of Agriculture's Agricultural Research Organization, Volcani Center is building a national institute for its continuing medical cannabis research.

Nevertheless, the Israel Health Ministry has not yet approved export of Israeli medical marijuana. Meanwhile, international researchers are eager to collaborate with their Israeli counterparts and take advantage of the results of their clinical studies.

In opening remarks at CannaTech, Yuval Landschaft, director of the Health Ministry's Medical Cannabis Unit, told the international audience that he believed medical-grade cannabis products should be treated as any other medicine and should be made accessible to patients. He said he believed this should be possible in Israel within the next year.

"Historically, Israel did not have any anti-research policy against using cannabis, cocaine or heroin. It has never been stigmatized. In some other countries, cannabis is not available to researchers," noted Saul Kaye, CEO and founder of iCan: Israel-Cannabis, the private research company that organizes CannaTech. In Israel, not only is research federally legal, but it is encouraged by the government, he added.

Twenty-eight states in the U.S. now allow legal use of medical cannabis, and since 2012, eight states have legalized its recreational use. It is estimated that the medical cannabis market in the U.S. will reach \$50 billion over the next 10 years. For now the Israeli domestic market of some 27,000 medical users provides a local market of some \$30 to \$40 million, said Kaye. An Australian native who moved to Israel more than *continued on page 33*

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Alicia Jo Rabins Torah Scholar, Rock Violinist, Award-Winning Poet

by ROBERT HIRSCHFIELD

Ver tea one evening, amid the clatter and chatter of the Think Café on Lower Broadway in Manhattan, Alicia Jo Rabins compared Joyce's Ulysses, her "desert island book," to the Talmud. Having read her poetry, that didn't surprise me. The poems in Divinity School, winner of the prestigious American Poetry Review/Honickman First Book Prize for 2015, are filled with structural and thematic surprises. The contemporary Jonah, in her poem "The Story of Jonah," is vexed not by the

divine command of prophecy but by the spirit-deflating demands of the computer that "only does what you tell it to.

"Like *Ulysses*, the Talmud was written with the complete disregard for genre. It also has the same crazy-quilt nature. In the Talmud, you can find a legal debate followed by a recipe followed by a magic spell followed by a midrash (interpretation of Torah). It contains a multiple-genre fusion, which was the direction my work was already headed in."

The multi-genre aspect of her poetry is striking. "How to Tell Time" is a 21st-

century proverb clothed in the evanescent fabric of a haiku. At first reading, I found myself exhilarated by her crisscrossing of these two disparate streams: "Now, / like manna, / is perfectly / sufficient / and will rot / if stored."

The Oregon poet, whose girlishness and inflections would seem to slot her in an age range closer to 20 than her actual 40, laughs at the odyssey that brought her from her secular Jewish household in Baltimore ("My parents only casually celebrated Jewish holidays. They didn't do Christmas, but they were definitely on the reform edge of Reform.") to the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem and a life of Torah study.

A key to understanding this odyssey and her poetry is to be found in her habit of "holding contradictory realities at the same time." Her poem "Between the Tongue and the Warm Salt" holds

A bardic chemist, she mixes together the ancient and codified with the wild, lonely longings of our speeded up and rudderless age fixated on how-to solutions.

> remoteness and earthiness: "Dearling. Sweatheart. / In the quantum spaces between words / people understand each other. /They meet in a central square / and have a hot pretzel. / They taste the same salt. / Don't be scared because / We are ghosts to each other."

> I tell her, "You get more mileage out of a salted pretzel than any contem

porary poet I know."

Rabins throws back her head and laughs. She doesn't deny it. Her homage to the pleasures of the salted pretzel is enshrined in more than one poem in *Divinity School.*

During her two-year stint at Pardes, when she wasn't studying Torah, she was off playing the violin in the Jerusalem religious rock band Ein Sofek or in Tel Aviv playing bluegrass.

"It sounds like more of a radical contradiction than it actually was. Don't

forget, Pardes is a progressive co-ed yeshiva. If there was a simcha (celebration), I'd play the violin." (The poet was a child prodigy whose emails come with a stamp-sized photo of a little girl playing a violin big enough to knock her off her feet.)

Poetry, which Rabins began writing with a sense of destiny at 13, was a link in her transition to Pardes. She was doing a workshop with the poet Claudia Rankine at Barnard when she mentioned to an Orthodox student that she would like to know more about Judaism.

"She said I should go to the Wednesday night student-facilitated havruta (studying in pairs) at Columbia University across the street. It was my first experience in the Jewish text world. Here was this boiled down wisdom from people who had thought a lot about how to live a good life thousands of years ago. I was captivated by the language of the Mishna. It was passed down orally before it was written, so it had to be compelling and clean, yet it had all these differing opinions."

Her sophisticated literary palette as an adolescent drew her to poets Sylvia Plath, Polish Nobel Prize winner Czesław Milosz, even the surrealists Andre Breton and Paul Eluard. She makes me think of her less fortunate historic predecessors, those brilliant, doomed Jewish girls, reading and writing poetry in their dreary Warsaw flats soon to be emptied by the SS.

I asked her what Jewish poets and poems influenced her.

"I was drawn to Ginsberg's 'Kaddish.' I had never seen anyone make interesting art about Judaism. It served as the realization that the two aspects of myself that felt separate could actually unite: my Jewishness and my love of poetry. The part of me that was a counterculture artist and the part of me that was an inherently, if strangely, pious Jew came together. I did not think that was even possible."

After Pardes, she went to live in Northampton, Massachusetts, where she taught Jewish studies at the Solomon Schecter School. Now, in addition to writing her acclaimed poetry in her plainspoken surrealist vein, she teaches bat and bar mitzvah students out of her home in Portland.

I am struck by how many of her poems can be called teaching poems a genre she claims and has virtually all to herself. A bardic chemist, she mixes together the ancient and codified with the wild, lonely longings of our speeded up and rudderless age fixated on how-to solutions.

Here is her poem "How to Be a Prophet: "There is a frozen waterfall / at a man's center. / Your job is to kneel / below, to warm / his body, to draw / that slow fountain / into your mouth, like a prophet / receiving God's word."

Looking around at the coffee drinkers at the café, talking about their day, I thought maybe some of them would like this poem. It might seem odd, even shocking, at first, the strongly sexualized construct of the prophetic calling. But "Prophet," like many of Rabins' poems, draws you to it with its irresistible humanism.

"I think I see the world as incredibly varied bits of matter that have lack and over abundance at every level. There is plenty of brokenness, but there is also a healing force that pervades everything."

Robert Hirschfield is a New York-based poet who writes about poets. His reviews of Jewish poets' books appear regularly in The Jerusalem Report.



BOOK REVIEWS

What I'm Reading

Israeli authors are at the top of my reading list. These three gripping novels will shake you up.

by JUDITH A. SOKOLOFF

wo She-Bears (Schocken), the title of Meir Shalev's seventh novel, does not augur well for a happy story. It refers to the biblical tale of Elisha who convinces God to send two she-bears from their cave to devour 42 children in a nearby village. The youngsters had been taunting Elisha about his

baldness (2 Kings 2:24). Shalev's engrossing story is also one of horrific, violent acts of vengeance. They contrast sharply with the beautiful, peaceful land on which they occur: a lush moshav (agricultural community) somewhere in Israel. It is also the story of great loves, losses, loyalties and lies.

The feisty, truth-telling Ruta Tavori, a third-generation moshavnik, narrates the story of her community as she is being interviewed by an academic (her straightman throughout the book) researching gender roles in the moshav. Ruta explains: "They wanted to establish a Jewish settlement here, and we turned into an Arab village. With hospitality, clans, honor, land, revenge." The tale grows increasingly mesmerizing as one becomes



caught up in the emotions and tensions between characters — husbands and wives, fathers and sons, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren.

As in his other novels, Shalev artfully portrays the conflicts that power a relationship and the emotional clashes within individuals. And then there is the who, how and why of a good murder mystery as

Ruta unravels the truth.

Judas (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt) by Amos Oz places the reader in Jerusalem of 1960, a rubble-strewn city that visitors today would hardly believe existed. It's only 12 years after the War of Independence and a few years after the Sinai War. Wounds are still burning.

Shmuel Ash, a university dropout researching and writing about Jewish views



of Jesus, takes a live-in job in a Jerusalem home. His duties are to spend six hours a day talking and arguing with 70-year-old invalid Gershom Wald, a vociferous,

Gershom Wald, a vociferous, opinionated intellectual. Shmuel also serves him food and feeds his fish. A good job for a lost soul. The mysterious, aloof Atalia Abravanel also lives in the house. She is the

war-widowed daughter-in-law of Gershom. Shmuel falls in love with the unattainable woman, 20 years his senior, as have the previous employees.

Atalia is the daughter, eventually revealed, of an anti-Ben-Gurion figure (the kind of person we don't hear about), who opposed Israel's War of Independence. Her late father believed that Jews and Arabs could live together in harmonious neighborhoods. War, he warned, would lead to endless bitterness and bloodshed. He was reviled as a traitor. These characters live in emotional isolation, but on occasion the walls between them break down.

I wish Shmuel, Gershom and Atalia were more flesh-and-blood. They seem like contrivances for Amos Oz to address notions about Jewish statehood, Zionism, Jewish-Arab relations, war, love, Jesus, Judas, betrayal and anti-Semitism — ideas that are larger than the characters. Some would call *Judas* a novel of ideas and that's OK. The engaging story gives readers a lot to think about. Don't expect any answers.

I'm only on the second page of David Grossman's **A Horse Walks into a Bar** (Knopf) and already I'm scared. By page five, I'm deep into a manic night of a stand-up comedian's abusive shtick. Dov Greenstein, in his late 50s, is brutal to the Netanya audience, though they sometimes laugh at his more routine jokes. He is also masochistic. He brings insult comedy to a new height (or is it depth?). I can't help but think his performance will end in immolation.

The story's commentator is Avishai Lazar, a boyhood acquaintance of Dovaleh, now a judge, whom he hasn't seen in decades. Dovaleh has invited him to the show, entreating him to tell him what he sees: to reveal the comic's "secret tremble of singularity. Everything that lies beyond the words that describe a person." Dov wants someone to see his real self, something he has erased with his comedy. Wiping out bad memories, the judge has forgotten the comedian until now.

Midway through the performance, most of the audience walks out, especially after the self-loathing Dov pummels his own face, breaking his glasses, which he manages to still hang on his face. A guy hisses: "People come here to have a good time, it's the weekend, you wanna clear your head, and this guy gives us Yom Kippur." Only the most empathetic or curious want to hear the tragic



stories of his life: how he walked on his hands as a boy to deflect bullies, how his depressed mother and abusive father were unfit to rear a child, how his mother was traumatized by the Holocaust.

Much of the book centers on a frenzied truck ride from the south of Israel — where Dovaleh was attending a military training camp for youth —

to his home in Jerusalem. He is on his way to the funeral of one of his parents; somehow, no one has told him which one.

To be in Dov's head through the journey is to be in agony. This reader is riveted and yet recoils. When I witness enough of Dov's suffering, grief, loss and shame, I put the book down. But I can't walk out. I need to find out where he is heading, whether he will find any redemption, peace or relief. Will anyone see him, understand him, have compassion? Will he have any tenderness and forgiveness for himself?

Isn't this what we all want-- to feel that we really matter in this world? To not be alone.

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

Two She-Bears

write because there are stories that are better to write than to tell, because it's unpleasant to feel their words in the mouth. Instead of being like scorpions and centipedes on the tongue, better they should crawl on the paper and drip their venom there. There's another reason for writing —



There's another reason for writing for a long time I didn't really have anyone to talk to. For that reason, by the way, I haven't shut up since you walked in. But the truth is I started with children's stories. When my son, Neta, was two years old, he was always asking me to read him books and stories. I quickly discovered that I was editing and improving them while reading and therefore realized that I could write

Meir Shalev

just as well as the geniuses who wrote them, and I began to write for him myself. I wrote about the magnificent ox that belonged to my grandfather and about his mulberry tree, and I wrote him a story about the caveman and the fire and about a boy who liked to wear costumes, like he did, and wanted to masquerade as the Angel of Death. ...

True stories?

Of course they're true. If I don't show them to anyone, then who is there for me to hide the truth from? From myself? In any case, you are a historian and I am a Bible teacher, so we don't need to be told that the truth isn't true, and we of all people know that over time only what is written becomes true, and what is spoken doesn't.

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Judas

I sorts of women will love you, with your wild beard and your disheveled curls that are impossible to comb. Even with a garden rake. Always in a muddle and always touching and, in fact, also quite dear. You're not a predator. You never boast, you never throw your weight around, you're not too much in love with yourself. And another thing I like about you: everything is always written on your face. You're a child with no secrets. You're always running around between all sorts of loves, but really you don't run around



Amos Oz

at all - you simply wait with your eyes closed for love to come and find you and make a fuss over you without your having to wake up. I like that. Jerusalem nowadays is full of young men with thick voices and thick arms who were all, without exception, war heroes in the Palmach or the trenches, and now they're at university, studying something or other, migrating from department to department, some of them teaching. And if they're not at university they're working for the government, they're involved in secret operations going on hush-hush missions, and they're all dying to tell you, dying to tell any girl in strict confidence, all sorts of top-secret state business they're engaged in, in a leading role. There are also those who pounce on you in the street as if they've just this minute come down from some hilltop trench. As if they haven't set eyes on or touched a woman for the last ten years. I like it that you're not like them: you're not entirely awake and you sometimes seem to be elsewhere.

Excerpt from JUDAS by Amos Oz, translated from the Hebrew by Nicholas de Lange. Copyright © 2014 by Amos Oz. Translation copyright © 2016 by Nicholas de Lange. Used by permission of Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

A Horse Walks into a Bar

G But when I was on my hands, you know, no one beats up a kid walking upside down. That's a fact. Let's say you want to slap an upsidedown kid — well, how are you gonna get to his face? I mean, you're not going to bend all the way down to the ground and slap him, right? Or say you wanna kick him. Where exactly would you do that? Where *are* his balls now anyway? Confusing, eh? Illusory! And maybe you even start to be a little afraid of him. Yeah, 'cause an upsidedown kid is no joke. ..."

"Here's an example. Some guy comes up to my dad one day and tells him I was doing this or doing that and I was walking on my hands. Someone saw me on the street walking upside down behind my mom. And just so you understand parentheses — ours truly's job was to wait for her at five-thirty at the bus stop when she got back from her shift and walk her home and make sure she didn't get lost, didn't end up in places, didn't sneak into castles and dine at kings' feasts... just pretend you understand. Good city, Netanya." The crowd laughs. ...

"And there was another bonus, which was that when I walked on my hands no one noticed *her*; see? She could walk around all day with her face on the ground and the *schmatte* on her head and the rubber boots, and now suddenly no one looks at her all crooked like she always



David Grossman

thinks they do, and the neighbors don't say things about her, and the men don't peek at her from behind the shutters — they're all just looking at me all the time and she gets a free pass."

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Protecting Our Privacy In a Digital World by MARCIA J. WEISS

I n this high-technology era of smartphones, all kinds of computers and social media, what we communicate, search for and store can be used for unwanted interference into our private lives. Privacy and data security issues are a growing concern of Americans, especially as the internet and technology have made personal information more accessible and easier to collect and manipulate.

Security cameras monitor traffic and our movements in public and private places. Mobile tracking devices that anyone can buy can trace your location via GPS. Smart (or internet-connected) televisions have snooping devices, and tracking cookies on our computers routinely divulge our shopping and other habits. Even when we've taken precautions to ensure privacy — eliminating spyware in our computers, regularly changing passwords, deleting cookies and using encryption — we are still at risk.

A recent Karlstad University (Sweden) study found that few people even know how their data are accessed, collected, used and shared.

New technologies are advancing our freedoms, but they are also enabling unprecedented invasions of privacy. National laws have yet to catch up with the changing needs for privacy that come with new digital technologies.

The Fourth Amendment guarantees that "the right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable causes supported by oath or affirmation and particularly describing the place to be searched." Now more than 200 years later, however, the websites we visit and what we read and buy in cyberspace help to establish personal patterns that can be monitored, disclosed and manipulated.

The right of privacy is not expressly guaranteed in the Constitution. Instead, privacy has been inferred within the "liberty" guarantee of the Fourteenth Amendment to encompass decisions about procreation, marriage, abortion, child rearing and termination of medical treatment. It is also referred to in the Ninth Amendment's "enumeration clause," stating that the Bill of Rights "shall not be construed to deny or disparage other rights retained by the people."

What is our expectation of privacy? In 1890, the future Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis and his law partner Samuel D. Warren published the influential essay "The Right to Privacy." They reasoned that privacy encompasses the often quoted phrase "the right to be let alone." Author Gabriel Garcia Marguez noted, "All human beings have three lives: public, private and secret." Statistics have demonstrated older generations are concerned with maintaining information away from watchful eyes, while younger generations are less fearful of revealing certain data about themselves and their likes and dislikes.

In a 2012 issue of the *Stanford Law Review*, authors Omer Tene and Jules Polonetsky write that there are ways in which data collection can help promote the common good, for example, enabling researchers to determine adverse side effects of drugs that might otherwise go unnoticed and to track and respond to the exposure and spread of diseases. Balancing the various interests in health information and upholding confidentiality, privacy and security present major challenges within our healthcare and legal systems.

Insights into various aspects of human behavior may also be beneficial but violate personal rights. Invasion of privacy might be justified in allowing law enforcement agencies to collect and use certain information when investigating crimes and in permitting the military to uncover terrorists through personal information.

The scope of privacy issues extends far beyond the limits of this article, but here are some thoughts on educating ourselves and taking action.

There are ways to protect our privacy. Consider the inherent risks and make efforts to control the amount of personal information that you provide online. Educate friends and family about the importance of online privacy and the steps they can take to protect themselves. Change passwords frequently and make them strong; use different passwords for different sites. Refrain from opening emails from unrecognized sources.

You can contact your internet service provider (ISP) and opt out of data sharing on your internet use. You can use encryption to hide the content of your communications from an ISP or other parties. You can use a VPN (Virtual Private Network). Unfortunately, these options have limitations and might be difficult to set up.

Electronic health information can also be compromised. If health information privacy has been violated, the Office of Civil Rights of the Department of Health and Human Services should be notified and a complaint filed.

Forty-nine states have created databases to track prescription drugs. Law enforcement agencies need a warrant to access the content of the database. Since records of prescription medications can reveal sensitive personal information, some states give legal protection to drug databases. But protection does not go unchallenged. Although Oregon requires probable cause to issue a warrant for law enforcement access, the federal Drug Enforcement Administration has tried to obtain the data without a warrant. An ACLU lawsuit resulted in a judicial ruling that patients have a reasonable expectation of privacy in their drug prescription records within a state database. Failure to obtain a warrant is illegal under the Fourth Amendment.

Monitoring and advocating for privacy laws are essential. Look at a headline from this past April: "Trump Signs Bill Repealing U.S. Internet Privacy Rules." These Obama administration rules would have required wireless and broadband providers to get your permission before packaging and selling your private information, including your Social Security number, financial and health data, web browsing history, app usage history and the content of communications. In terms of rights, the new rules violate our freedom of speech and our right to associate. It also violates our First Amendment rights, making it more difficult to understand how personal information is being shared and used.

The April 26, 2017, issue of *Science News* addressed the need for new human rights laws to protect against advances in neurotechnology that may put the "freedom of the mind" at risk. Brain imaging can be used by consumer companies for neuromarketing. Advanced brain imaging might be used some day in criminal courts to assess criminal responsibility or the risk of reoffending. The field of neurolaw raises some fascinating and frightening questions. Will advanced neurotechnology violate the terms of the Constitution? Should a warrant be required to look inside someone's brain? Even if technologies don't violate constitutionality, ethical questions remain.

Americans are speaking with a unified, nonpartisan voice on these matters: A 2016 poll showed that 90 percent of Americans wanted the next president to prioritize "protecting privacy so [Americans] have more control over our personal information."

State legislators throughout this nation have heard their call. The message from these collective state actions is clear: If Congress is unwilling or unable to act to adequately protect Americans' privacy, the states are more than willing to step up and fill the void. All states except Alabama and South Dakota have security breach laws. They require the government and private companies that collect data and compile information to notify individuals of a security break of personally identifiable information. Twenty-five states have passed social media privacy laws preventing employers and educational institutions from obtaining passwords for personal internet access.

For more information, visit the National Conference of State Legislatures (ncsl.org), a comprehensive, bipartisan source of state laws.

As the internet and new technologies continue to raise new policy questions about privacy, we need to keep up-to-date and to advocate to protect ourselves.

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

President

continued from page 3

many of the children have very young mothers and many don't have a father figure in the home. Some of the parents are on drugs. The multipurpose center is just one step before the children need to be taken out of their homes. One of the main goals of the center is to work with the parents in full cooperation with the welfare department to prevent this from happening.

Chagit talked about one family where the mother was 15 when she had her first child and 16 ¹/₂ when she gave birth to her second. She is unable to take care of the children, so after they leave the center at 7 p.m., they go to a municipal facility to sleep. Thirteen of the 39 at-risk children are brought from public kindergartens after 3 p.m. While NA'AMAT's regular day care centers take children through age 3, our multipurpose centers care for children to age 6, when they enter first grade.

Some of the families are so poor that when the children leave in the evening they are given food for their siblings. When the children are sick, the families can pick up food at the center. Extremely caring and creative, Vicky, the head of the center, made candy flowers for the children to give to their mothers and fathers on parents' day.

Our day care centers are one of many crucial ways NA'AMAT USA helps the children, women and families of Israel. And we have been maintaining these centers long before the birth of the State of Israel 69 years ago. Thousands of people all over the country depend on us: at-risk teenagers in our technological high schools, women who need legal aid, battered women desperate for a safe haven, women who want to pursue higher education and many more.

When I see the work of NA'AMAT Israel that would not exist without us, I want to tell you how proud it makes me and to thank you for your commitment to NA'AMAT USA.

Have an enjoyable and fulfilling summer.

CROODie/

Chellie Goldwater Wilensky

AROUND THE COUNTRY



▲ Cleveland Council honored Rabbi Rosette Barron Haim of Temple-Tifereth Israel with its annual Tikkun Olam Award for her outstanding service to the Jewish community. The longest serving rabbi in the community, she is a member of the boards of Cleveland's Jewish Community Federation and Jewish Education Center. Rabbi Haim, right, is shown with Platinum Sponsors Tamar and Milton Maltz, who are active in numerous philanthropic and civic organizations. With more than 300 in attendance, the event set a record for fundraising. The evening's donations are earmarked for Na'AMAT's scholarships for Israeli women in higher education.



▲ South Shore club (Long Island/Queens Council) held a spring gathering at a local restaurant. From left: Betty Becker, Miriam Ellenberg, Paul Smith, Harriet Forman, Irene Alterman and Doris Shinners.



▲ Golana/Sabra club's successful sale of new jewelry and gently used goods in Brooklyn, NY, raised funds for Na'AMAT. Shown are Barbara Shapiro, Shirley Deutsch, Rita Noped, Roz Yardeni, Bea Bernstein (sitting), Laurren Bernstein and jewelry designer Evelyn Leidner.

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

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◄ Greater Washington Council honored super-member and donor chairperson Theda Rosenblum, left, with its Woman of the Year Award. She is shown with co-president Trudy Stone.



▲ Palm Beach Council (Florida) held a gala luncheon in celebration of Israel's 69th anniversary. From left: national treasurer Debbie Kohn, past national board member Rita Sherman and national president Chellie Goldwater Wilensky, guest speaker, who spoke about her recent visit to NA'AMAT facilities in Israel.



▲ Broward Council honored Three Women of Distinction at its Yom Ha'aztmaut luncheon celebration, chaired by Marjorie Moidel. From left: Raena Zucker, Southeast Area coordinator, presents the awards to Helen Lefkowitz, Bess Frumin and Isabel Resnick. The three dedicated women have served for many years in leadership roles and in planning many cultural and fundraising activities.



▲ The second Na'AMAT USA Research Fellowship honors Elizabeth Raider, immediate past national president of Na'AMAT USA. The 2017-2018 theme is "Jewish Women's Contribution to Israeli Society." The fellowship carries an honorarium of \$2,500.



▲ Palm Beach Council's Dollars for Scholars Luncheon raised funds for the Na'AMAT USA Professional Scholarship Fund, which awards grants to Israeli women pursuing higher education. From left, standing: Rhoda Birnbaum, council president; Joyce Schildkraut, event chair; Raena Zucker, Southeast Area coordinator; Debbie Kohn, national treasurer; and Jan Gurvitch, national fundraising co-vice president. Seated: Guy Gilardi, deputy counsel general of Israel in Miami, and Samantha Lerman, director of academic and Jewish affairs, Consulate of Israel in Miami.



▲ Cipy Baron, right, president of Eilat chapter (San Fernando Valley Council) visited Nahalat Yehuda day care center in Rishon LeZion. Funds raised by her chapter will help renovate the center, located in a low socio-economic neighborhood. She is shown with Shirli Shavit, director of Na'AMAT's International Department.





▲ Medina chapter (Broward Council) held a fabulous fashion show to raise funds for Na'AMAT. Shown are president Isabel Resnick, 4th from left, and Sophia Winkler, far left, along with women from Catholic Charities who took a table and brought their friends.

Past and present Na'AMAT USA leaders now living in Arizona had a chance to catch up at lunch in Phoenix. From left, standing: Deborah Weiner and Yetta Parker; seated: Susan Sparago and Honey Yellin.

MORE 🕨

AROUND THE COUNTRY



▲ Or and Mazal chapters (Miami) held a Mother's Day Art Experience. Members had fun creating art pieces under the direction of renowned artist (and Na'AMAT USA member) Anabel Rub Peicher, standing.



▲ Members of Shalom club (Long Island/Queens Council) enjoyed a festive feminist Passover seder.





▲ Na'AMAT USA's Western Area hosted its first 5K Walk in Encino, CA. Dozens of enthusiastic children and adults circled scenic Lake Balboa three times to raise money for Na'AMAT's educational and social service programs in Israel. Stephanie Nygard-Palenzuela, Western Area director, is shown wheeling her new baby; to her right is Rene Peters, president of San Fernando Valley Council.

▲ Or chapter (Miami) visited the Holocaust Documentation & Education Center in Dania Beach, FL, where they attended a screening of the documentary "The Lost Airmen of Buchenwald." From left: Anabel Rub Peicher, Marilyn Johansen (presenter), Camille Abadi, Berta Feldman, Rebeca Hershberg, Raquel Rub, Rosita Kenigsberg (museum director), Matilde Behar and Valerie Peicher.



Aviva Club's (Chicago) Lox Box Fundraiser was a huge success, with more than 200 boxes sold. From left: Rhonda Schwartz, president of Greater Washington Council Jan Minnick and Eilene Kurtz.

It's so easy to earn money for NA'AMAT USA. *Shop at our Marketplace, iGive and AmazonSmile.*

Support NA'AMAT USA by shopping at our online Marketplace. Find the perfect gift for a bat/bar mitzvah, wedding, birthday or any special occasion that expresses your connection to Israel, Jewish learning and NA'AMAT. Marketplace vendors will donate a portion of your purchase to our organization.

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

Along with shopping with our vendor partners, you can easily earn money for NA'AMAT USA while you shop online at iGive (www.iGive.com/button) or at AmazonSmile (smile.amazon.com). They both donate a percentage of the cost of your purchase to NA'AMAT USA.

With PLANNED GIVING, you can provide an everlasting gift to NA'AMAT USA — one that honors or perpetuates the memory of a loved one or demonstrates your heartfelt support of NA'AMAT USA and Israel.

Your PLANNED GIFT to NA'AMAT USA will enable you to create a legacy while helping you achieve tax and estate goals. Your gift can provide direct funding or general support of the ever-evolving needs of our organization. Your gift can honor or be in memory of a special person in your life.

Depending on the program you select, you could earn significant tax benefits while making an important contribution to improving the lives of Israeli women, children and families. Your gift will become a valuable part of your overall financial and estate planning. Some planned gifts are deferred, which means that you commit now to a gift that NA'AMAT USA will receive in the future. Other gifts provide NA'AMAT USA with needed funds immediately. There are many giving options to suit your goals. Among them are bequests, life insurance, securities, tax-free IRA distributions, individual retirement accounts and charitable trusts.

For more information about PLANNED GIVING that meets your personal financial needs and fulfills your charitable interests, please call the NA'AMAT USA national office toll free at 844-777-5222 or email naamat@naamat.org.

TECH 4 TEENS Share the Joy! Commemorate a Bat/Bar Mitzvah by Helping Israeli Teens in Need.

NA'AMAT USA's TECH 4 TEENS Program gives American teenagers the opportunity to help less fortunate teens in our NA'AMAT technological high schools in Israel.

Many of these teens come from disadvantaged backgrounds, have learning disabilities, behavioral issues and family problems. NA'AMAT creates a safe, empowering and nurturing environment for students who have struggled in traditional high schools or have given up and dropped out.

NA'AMAT gives these adolescents hope and a second chance. They gain confidence, self-esteem and social skills. At the same time, they get professional and vocational training that prepares them to graduate and join Israel's work force.

At NA'AMAT's 20 technological high schools and two residential youth villages, students study communications, photography, computer graphics, design and culinary arts as well as basic academic subjects. As technology evolves, we need to provide the tools needed for success: computers, software programs, printers and photographic equipment.

We are proud of our teen supporters who include NA'AMAT USA in their bar/bat mitzvah plans, sharing our passion to help troubled teenagers feel good about themselves and succeed. Through TECH 4 TEENS, American

teens celebrate their milestone events with a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment, stepping into the tradition of tikkun olam, mending the world.

For information on this unique program, please email the national office at naamat@naamat.org, phone (818)-431-2200 or go to our website: https://naamat.org/ tech-4-teens/.

NA'AMAT Thanks These Generous Donors for Enhancing the Lives of Israeli Women and Youth

Sustaining Partnership

Monica Alevy Aventura, FL Rhona Arbit North Potomac, MD Rhoda Birnbaum Delray Beach, FL Susan Brownstein Tarzana. CA Mira Elman Aventura, FL Julia Goldberg Miami, FL Esther Guterman Aventura, FL Janet Gurvitch East Windsor, NJ Frieda Guterman Aventura, FL Debra Kohn Delray Beach, FL **Ivy** Liebross Sherman Oaks, CA Barbara Novick Morton Grove, IL Riva Copernik De Peicher Bal Harbour, FL Poline Shooshani Los Angeles, CA Gail Simpson Agoura Hills, CA Chellie Goldwater Wilensky Chicago, IL Rebeca Yohai Sunny Isles Beach, FL Raena Zucker Delray Beach, FL

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Tech 4 Teens

Donna and Kenny Gold Bell Canyon, CA Susan Isaacs Encino, CA

Welcome to the New Life Members of NA'AMAT USA!

Pearl Cantor Boynton Beach, FL Marjorie Gauley Newbury Park, CA Phyllis Gormezan Boynton Beach, FL Laura Wernik Woodland Hills, CA

LIFE MEMBERSHIP: Only \$250

20 years ago, Kaye said there are currently 100 Israeli companies — many of them collaborating with companies in the U.S., Canada and Australia involved in medical cannabis research and innovation. Kaye estimated that last year there was about \$100 million in international investments in Israeli companies.

Among the innovators, the Israeli company Kanabo Research focuses on precise formulations of medical cannabis extracts designed to work with their VapePod vaporizer. Two of the company's formulations that treat specific central nervous system disorders are patent-pending and several others will be available as orphan drugs, which treat diseases so rare that sponsors are reluctant to develop them under usual marketing.

Also demonstrating Israeli ingenuity, Kanabo CEO and founder Avihu Tamir adapted knowledge he had gained with his previous company, Teva Nature — the leading vaporizer company in Israel, developing a cross over for cannabis. Similarly, Syqe Medical has developed a metered-dose cannabis inhaler, and Israeli pharmaceutical giant Teva has committed itself to bring the inhaler to market.

With Israeli innovation and ad-

vances in the varied fields of agrotechnology, high-tech, financial technology and its progressive regulatory environment, the country is leading in the growing field of medical cannabis research and innovation.

"Israel has the winning global cannabis combination. Long before anyone else, Israel identified its global potential," said Nikki Friedman of South Africa, who came to iCan with business partner Jean Jeffery to learn more about growing medicinal cannabis. "If you are looking for knowledge and partnership, Israel is the way to go. The [Israel] government is getting behind the industry and that is so progressive."

For now, as it waits to export its own medicinal cannabis products, Israel is sharing and exporting its extensive bank of statistical data gained from clinical and lab research. "Making medical cannabis available in pharmacies with prescriptions from trained doctors makes sense," said Kaye, predicting that this will be the reality in Israel within six months.

He also predicts that because of demand for medical purposes, the cannabis plants will be "more valuable than gold." Israeli companies who are working on increasing the yield per gram will have "incredible value."

Despite all the Israeli advancements in the field, the Israel Ministry of Health Cannabis Unit still cautiously maintains on its website that "Cannabis is a substance that is defined as a 'dangerous drug.' It is also illegal. Medical cannabis is not a medicine, it is not registered as a medicine and its efficacy and safety when used for medical purposes has not yet been established. Nevertheless, there is evidence that cannabis could help patients suffering from certain medical conditions and alleviate their suffering." At the same time, the site notes that the cannabis products prescribed by authorized physicians "are to be of a good quality level like that required of drugs." Note that the Israel cabinet has authorized a plan to decriminalize the use of marijuana by first-time offenders.

Back in Jerusalem, Oren prepares his dose of medical cannabis, then looks out the kitchen window as he puts the cigarette to his lips. To make the system work more efficiently, doctors also need to be kept abreast of new innovations and methods, he said, noting that his own doctor does not seem aware of the new ways cannabis can be administered.

"I wouldn't be able to function without this," Oren said. "I was always getting into trouble. Now I manage a household. This has made my whole life better."

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 "The Reality of Jaffa" in our fall 2016 issue.

Glass Ceiling

continued from page 15

Ventures and served as vice president at Novartis AG. She previously served as the president and CEO of Yissum, the Hebrew University's technology transfer company.

She is joined by women like Hilla Ovil-Brenner, who founded Whitesmoke, a grammar and writing-correction software company publicly traded on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange. Like Swersky Sofer, she is paying it forward as the creator of Yazamiyot (female entrepreneurs), which offers mentoring and support.

And there are other leaders, like

Orna Berry, corporate vice president, Growth and Innovation, at the EMC Corporation. Over a career spanning a quarter century, she has inspired countless women. Berry was the first and until now the only female chief scientist of Israel. She was a founding partner of Ornet Data Communications Ltd., served as the chairperson of the Israeli Venture Capital Funds Association (IVA) and was a venture partner at Gemini Israel Funds. Berry has also held a number of positions in consulting and management of scientific research at Fibronics, IBM, Intel and UNISYS. And she served as a director at PrimeSense, recently acquired by Apple.

Swersky Sofer said much more

needs to be done to ensure women's equality in the high-tech sector and elsewhere, but that she definitely senses progress. "I had a meeting today with someone at an investment organization who made a point of telling me he just appointed two female CEOs to head their portfolio companies. In the past," she said, "I wouldn't be having conversations like this."

Michele Chabin is a journalist living in Jerusalem. She covers the Middle East for the The New York Jewish Week and other publications. She wrote "Challenging Israel's Religious Establishment" in our fall 2016 issue.

Never Too late

continued from page 8

financial objections. "He said, 'You always tell other people, God will provide. You have to believe it for yourself, too.' I kept saying no. I was a singer who couldn't sight-sing, a davener (one who prays) who didn't know Hebrew, a musician who didn't know music theory. I needed a lot of remedial work."

She took comfort that her teachers said they, too, were still learning. Over the course of six years she absorbed what she needed, increased her teaching hours to earn more and lived on an austerity budget. "It was on my husband's faith that we climbed that mountain. Even though I am a woman of faith I didn't have it when the going was rough. The reward is I'm just starting to discover the belief in myself that others had in me."

Changing direction, says Kittner, takes a sense of adventure, perseverance and a "certain something inside that was always there and that maybe was continually pushed away." Role models are also important, she says. Her father took a "cool and courageous" step in his early 70s. He had always wanted to be a comedian, so he prepared a show and did a standup routine at a comedy club. Her mother took night classes at a community college in her 50s. One of the first women to be ordained by the Conservative movement also inspired her.

Turning 60 served as a literal turning point for Helene Cohen Bludman of Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania. "I didn't think it would affect me much," she says, but her longtime ambition to write a novel began to percolate in her mind. An M.B.A. with a concentration in marketing, she was unhappy in the job she had held for seven years as director of marketing for a college. Encouraged by the feedback she got when a blog she wrote for the Huffington Post went viral ("10 Ways to Annoy Your Coworkers"), she quit her job and created her own blog, Books is Wonderful, where she reviews "exceptional" books. The intentionally ungrammatical name stems from a childhood incident and reflects her fascination with words and language. She has also branched out into freelance writing for companies,

brands and digital marketing. Her novel is in its third draft.

Bludman, now 64, says her new direction provides creative fulfillment. "The 60s are the prime of life. It's the right time to do something for ourselves." The challenges, she says, are the ups and downs of a freelance career, selfdoubt and lack of a regular paycheck. "I waver on whether I can make a go of a digital marketing career when I'm 30 years older than most in the field."

Her communities - both virtual and real - have supported her. She found her "tribe" through a Facebook group called The Women of Midlife, which helped her get published and inspired her to think about the role of women in social media. Spurred by the presidential election, Bludman has also become active locally in "issues that matter," through groups including the ACLU and Writers Resist: Philadelphia United for Liberty, which tries to effect change through writing. "It's an important new facet of my life I never could have predicted. I'm as passionate about it as about my writing. Social activism makes me feel that in my small way I can make a difference." Protesting injustice is "in my DNA," she says, tracing her actions back to marching for Soviet Jewry.

Laura Talmus, 61, of Marin County, California, has devoted most of her life to progressive causes and candidates. Her consulting business specialized in fundraising and development for nonprofits and political campaigns, and she served as executive director of the American Jewish World Service, Western Region. The daughter of a Holocaust survivor, she says the essence of her identity is based on the Jewish values of community and tzedakah (charity).

Talmus's work became personal seven years ago when her 15-year-old daughter, Lili, died in her sleep from medical complications. Lili had Apert Syndrome, a genetic disorder that causes an abnormal development of the skull. Reading the memorial booklet, a group of her former classmates understood that Lili had felt left out in middle school. They approached Talmus and told her they wanted to make sure others didn't experience that isolation. Talmus helped them found Beyond Differences, a non-profit organization dedicated to ending social isolation among students in middle school. Nearly 4,000 schools use its curricula.

For five years, Talmus remained in her job at AJWS, until Beyond Differences became too consuming to manage as a volunteer. She now runs the project full time. "This is an issue and topic I wasn't familiar with before," explains Talmus. "I've had to become competent in something new. It's a 100percent commitment that involves a relentless amount of work. I can't close the books at the end of the day." She is proud of the impact the organization is making but stresses that it will never fill the hole Lili has left. "You don't heal from losing a child," she says. "My job is to represent my daughter's life and to make sure her voice stays loud. My work is devoted to all the children in the program today who never even knew her."

Talmus urges women who are considering changing direction to take small steps until they are confident enough to make the leap. "If you are lucky enough to find something that can take over your heart, follow that and know the real thing when it hits you. Not doing it at all is not an option. Do it even if you do it slowly. No matter what your age, follow your instinct if something pulls at you. Be courageous and do the work."

Journalist and author Rahel Musleah added a new direction to her career by creating and leading Jewish tours to India. www.explorejewishindia.com. She wrote "Wise Aging" in our winter 2017 issue.

Editor's Note

Judith A. Sokoloff, editor of *Na'amat Woman*, will be joining her postmid-life cohorts in pursuing a new career path. The national board of NA'AMAT USA decided to cease publishing the magazine due to budget constraints. The demise of our 91-year-old publication is a sad moment in American Jewish history. I will miss you, dear readers. It's been 40 meaningful and gratifying years! Shalom, shalom.



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