

New Cracow Friendship Society, Inc.

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CRACOW

FRIENDSHIP

A NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW CRACOW FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY



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HAPPY CHANUKKAH



VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.newcracowfriendshipsoc.org

תחי מדינת ישראל ועם ישראל

LONG LIVE THE STATE OF ISRAEL AND THE JEWISH PEOPLE

NEW CRACOW FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

President **Simone Hilfstein Scheumann**

Editor **Bernice Slutzman**

www.newcracowfriendshipsoc.org

Email: ncfs@newcracowfriendshipsoc.org

EDITORIAL

Another holiday/festival period has come and gone and still we “met” with family and friends electronically through Zoom. Although we couldn’t share in the aromas of fresh latkes through the computer screens, the warmth and glow of the candles was still a welcome sight. Who knows, now that vaccines are becoming available, maybe next year we will be able to meet in person and our Society gatherings will be able to continue.

In the last issue, which was published prior to the election it was brought out that the leadership of the nation was sorely lacking. Once again, however, I must write that never before in the nation’s 244 year history has there been such a tumultuous result. Never before has an incumbent president who has clearly lost both the popular and the electoral vote failed to concede that loss. Never before has the threat of violence been so apparent by the supporters of the loser.

During the past four years we were made painfully aware of the rise in violence and anti-Semitism in our nation and the world. The administration had made such sentiments the norm. Remember how there were “nice people” on both sides during the march where peaceful protesters were set upon by neo-Nazis? Now with continued denial of the loss, the loser has done nothing but to foment hatred against those who support the incoming administration.

The group “The Proud Boys” openly display their anti-Semitism by brazenly sporting shirts which read “6MWE.” For those who are unaware, it stands for ‘6 Million Wasn’t Enough.’ [These garments were available on Amazon and Teespring or a brief time after which they were removed by those retailers.]

Groups such as these which found that they could openly spew their rhetoric of hate for the past four years, I fear, will not go quietly back into their holes. The Pandora’s box which was opened 4 years ago will not be so easily closed and the ills released contained. As a survivor organization now focused on educating those who were never taught and those who have so easily forgotten the hatred and murder of the Holocaust we must be ever vigilant and not settle into complacency.

The Editor

PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

Your society is now actively planning virtual events. Our first virtual panel webinar open to members and non-members “Power of our Stories” on October 29, 2020 was a success. The feedback was very positive. As we develop more programs we will post information on our websites calendar page:

www.newcracowfriendshipsoc.org in addition to using email, phone and snail mail.

Facebook recently took steps to remove Holocaust denier propaganda sites due to an initiative by claims conference and survivors, including our very own Arthur Spielman. It was an action initiative necessary to help stem the tide of increased Jewish hate crimes. The survivors’ spirit is truly inspirational. Our new publication the NCFS Bulletin helps direct you to current news and provides you with links to be part of the conversation. The second Bulletin went out via email in October. Let us know if you did not receive it.

The leaves have fallen, the cold weather has arrived, and Hanukkah lights are flickering. As safety must be our priority, sadly we will not gather to celebrate together this year. I’m confident that this will change in the months to come.

I hope that you and your families are doing well. My deepest condolences go out to those who have lost a loved one in the past months. May their memory be for a blessing.

Consider making an end of year charitable donation so our society can continue to support survivors in need wherever they reside, and support Holocaust educational initiative in the USA, Israel and Poland. More details can be found in committee reports throughout this Newsletter.

Stay well and keep in touch.

Respectfully,
Simone

LISTING OF COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Cemetery	Bernice Slutzman brei513@aol.com Leon Hilfstein Leonh74d@gmail.com
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Welfare	Renata Farahnik Teacherspet130@hotmail.com

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

Dear Members,

I hope this Newsletter finds you all in good health and adapting to our "new normal" in ways we never thought we would have to. 2020 is going to be a year we will never forget! It will be talked about and referred to for centuries. It's a year we will remember how individuals and world populations who thought or imagined they had control over their lives or the lives of others learned that there was very little they could control but their own thoughts and actions... and for some, even that would be a challenge!

However, even with the unexpected challenges of illness, deaths, fears, concerns and other hardships this year, we were still inventive, innovative, willing and steadfast in our commitments to protect and be protected. We demonstrated the fortitude and resilience necessary to survive these pandemics of global viruses, senseless hatreds, and the dirty business of politics in order to find that inner core of wisdom and peace which will hopefully bring much needed changes to keep our humanity and planet thriving. Wisdom, Kindness, and Understanding... 3 pillars of life.

One of the steadfast commitments I had the pleasure of seeing these past 2 weeks was receiving your support of yearly membership dues/ renewals and your generous contributions for 2021. Renewal letters were mailed out just recently and shortly afterwards your checks came pouring in, bringing a wave of hope for this coming year. Please keep them coming! Your continued support today will help us with support for remaining survivors and the creation of new programs for 2nd, 3rd & future generations... all descendants of the Shoah. We are partners in this link between the past, the present and

the future. There is much to be done as we walk on the path with so many others striving for a better humanity.

It is most important that we have all your current contact information... your address, e-mail and phone #s. If you wish to be removed from the Phone Tree list, please let us know... but do still include your phone #s on your renewal card. Also include your spouse's name for family membership.

Renewal fees are \$25 single-\$40 couple/family. Any voluntary contribution will be gratefully appreciated. Membership Dues can also be made online on PayPal. Please refer to our website www.newcracowfriendshipsoc.org.

If you would like to enroll your children as members or if they would like to join, there is a one time initiation fee of \$50 "in addition" to the yearly dues.

We welcome new member Ruth Kandel.

To our members who have lost family in recent months, we are sorry for your loss and extend our deepest most heartfelt condolences. To members who are ill or have had unfortunate accidents, we wish you a speedy recovery.

Looking forward to a new year. Hope to see you soon. Stay safe. Be well.

As a reminder please keep your membership current, provide us with address changes, and send us your email address and mobile number to ncfs@newcracowfriendshipsoc.org. Be assured we do not share your information.

Best regards,
Ida Lewis
Membership Committee Chairperson
147-17 78th Road
Flushing NY 11367
(718) 380-3574

POWER OF OUR STORIES- EVENT IN REVIEW

On October 29th, thanks to overwhelming support from the other members of the Board, The New Cracow Friendship Society hosted its first webinar. The pandemic has presented many challenges, but the silver lining has been the exploration of digital events which does not limit attendees based on location or ability to travel. We are proud to announce that this event was a great success with 90 individual computers logged on.

The discussion revolved around personal and familial experiences with bigotry and how those struggles became a motivating factor in our panelists' lives. Our discussion was moderated by Yair Rosenberg, journalist, senior writer for Tablet Magazine and grandson of Holocaust survivors, and featured Leotis Sanders and Leora Klein.

Leora is a 3rd generation survivor and a founding and current board member of 3GNY. She discussed how she went from growing up being sheltered from anti-

Semitism to learning about her family's story of survival and encountering bigotry when she went off to college.

Leotis is the Chief Civil Rights and Diversity Officer for NJ Transit. He discussed growing up black in an all white neighborhood and how being chased as a child by a man with a crowbar became the defining moment that steered his life towards fighting bigotry.

Our panel discussed the importance of standing up for one another; that we shouldn't think of anti-Semitism as solely a Jewish issue and racism as black issue because both are societal issues. If you are interested in checking out this very relevant webinar, it will be online soon so keep your eyes on our website and look for an email notification with a link.

We are also very proud to report that from event donations we were able to send a check to 3GNY in the amount of \$500 earmarked for their WEDU (we educate) Holocaust speaker training program. If you would like to add to our contribution, head to our website to make a donation. Make sure to write "WEDU" under "special instructions".

We plan on hosting similar events in the future and are open to suggestions. Please email: socialaction.ncfs@gmail.com for suggestions and feedback.

Hope to see you all healthy and in person soon,
Anna Scheumann Gallegos
Bonnie Kantor
Social Action Committee

YIZKOR DONATIONS

Jack Betteil, in memory of Helen Betteil
Mr. & Mrs. Steven Blumner in memory of Cillian Blumner & Henry Blumner
Cindy Patrych Brotman and David Brotman, in memory of Fela Teitelbaum-Patrych & Rafael Patrych
The Estate of Anna Erlich, in memory of Anna Erlich & Jacob Erlich
Miriam Fishman, in memory of Lee & Nathan Abramowitz and beloved son, Michael Benabou
Miriam and Roman Hartman, in memory of Jaron Rejtig
Dena and Leon Hilfstein, in memory of Erna & Max Hilfstein, Anna Kluger, Dorothy & Bob Forman and Terry Forman
Helen and Harvey Kaminski, in memory of Eda Kaminsky & Reuven Kaminski
Pauline Boyman Leitzes & Marty Leitzer, in memory of Geia & Sevek Boyman
Ida & Regina Lewis, in memory of Victor Lewis, and the Lezerkiewicz & Steiner Families
Eta Mandelberger, in memory of Arthur Mandelberger & Emil Mandelberger
Rosalind & Oskar Matzer, in memory of Gitla Matzner & Lawrence Farkash

The Nusblat Family, in memory of Ida & Emanuel Beitscher
Gloria Reich, in memory of Betty & Melvin Reich
Barbara Rosenstock, in memory of Sol & Helen Rosenstock
Lucy Ross, in memory of Julius Ross
Ettie Shapiro, in memory of Lucy Myers & Morris Myers
Judith Weinstein
Helene Wolloch, in memory of Rela Halecki & Zygfryd Wolloch
The Zuckerman Family, in memory of Mina Zuckerman

THE GREAT (POTENTIAL) ISRAELI POLITICAL SHAKEUP

It would be foolish to predict anything in this country. History has proven that such predictions rarely come true. However, and I'm going to go out on a limb here, I believe that it is safe to say that the events of the past few days (including the decision of Benny Gantz's Blue and White Party to support legislation calling for new elections and Gideon Saar's resignation from the Likud to form a new party) will create a dynamic that will have significant impact on the future political makeup of the country.

While most of the world, including much of Israel, was riveted to the news from the US leading up to and following the US election, the boiling political cauldron in Israeli politics was bubbling over. There was hope here that the Corona pandemic and the accompanying economic crisis would lead to desperately needed political stability. You recall that Israel has already held 3 elections in the past two years. The country hasn't had an approved state budget since December 2018 when that first election of three was called. The past two years, unrelated to Covid, have reflected the worst political crisis in the country's history. The pandemic, which was barely a serious thought on March 4, the last election held here, has now taken over the public debate, creating both the worst health and economic crises in the country's history as well.

Back in the heady days of May 2020, when Benny Gantz broke away from the rest of the 33 member strong Blue and White party to negotiate a deal with Netanyahu for a unity government, the majority of Israelis (full disclosure: me too), supported the move. It was a move that tore apart the party. 20 members of Knesset went with Gantz to the government (including the Labor party (3), and Orly Abuksis of Gesher, who later joined the Likud block). The rest, 17 members of Yesh Atid-Telem, stayed in the opposition. The strongest opposition to Netanyahu in a decade had fallen apart but for many, it was worth it, as long as the government functioned as a cohesive body to fight the pandemic and the economic crises.

To that end, new laws were legislated to allow for 19 Blue and White legislators against 36 Likud legislators

to have an even say in any vote, for a rotation between Netanyahu and Gantz as Prime Minister to take place in November 2021, the creation of an Alternate Prime Minister's Office and other such changes. Among the agreements between the parties was that there would be a two year budget passed by August 2020 for both 2020 and 2021 and high level positions such as the Attorney General, and the Chief of Police would be taken together within several months.

The deal was put together by lawyers in what was the most detailed, complicated and controversial coalition agreement in Israeli history. It was supposed to be foolproof. The deal stated that if the government fell apart for any reason, the side that initiated it would hand over the Premiership to the other side until after new elections. Such was the distrust between Gantz and Netanyahu. And such was the legal screw up. The lawyers left a glaring loophole and everyone signed off on it, that only in a single case would that transfer of the Premiership NOT take place – if the government failed to pass a state budget and the Knesset, by law, dissolved and new elections were called.

At the beginning, little attention was paid to this loophole. Everyone, especially Benny Gantz, wanted to believe that the pandemic and the economic crisis were above personal politics and above Netanyahu's legal troubles (his trial begins in Feb or March of 2021). He believed this even as support for his party (in the polls) went from 19 seats to single digits, as demonstrations against the government intensified, as the health and economic crises worsened. Gantz staked everything he had on this agreement. He lost his base of support. He was ridiculed in the press. His only political horizon was if Netanyahu kept his word on the rotation, which meant passing the state budget and eliminating any exit point for the Prime Minister to initiate new elections by not passing the budget.

By August, it was clear that wasn't happening. Netanyahu had no intention of passing the 2021 budget and the positions of Attorney General and Head of Police weren't being filled either. At best, Netanyahu wanted to pass the 2020 budget in December and then take the country to March of 2021 (by which time by law the 2021 budget would have to be passed), and then have the option not to pass the budget and have new elections automatically called and held in June 2021. Gantz refused to allow only a 2020 budget to pass and at the last moment in August, a compromise was reached, and legislated, that pushed the deadline to December 23, to pass the state budget. Gantz continued to insist on passing both the 2020 and 2021 budgets as agreed upon in the coalition deal, and Netanyahu continuing to say that only the 2020 budget would be passed in December while the 2021 budget would be passed in February or March.

The bad blood boiled over. The government

didn't function. It became a laughing stock. The calls for dismantling the government and saving whatever pride Gantz and Blue and White still had were growing stronger by the day. And in late November, Gantz, according to all accounts finally realized that Netanyahu never had any intention of keeping the rotation agreement, that the 2021 budget would not pass in December, gave his faction's support to the Opposition's call to dissolve the Knesset. The vote still left room for compromise by the December 23rd deadline, but the train had left the station and Israel was hurtling towards its 4th election in 2 years.

Throughout this period, Naftali Bennet's Yamina party was polling at 20+ seats. What this meant was that in an election, Netanyahu would not be able to form a government without Yamina. He and Bennet have been bitter enemies for a long time. In recent months, Bennet has gone out of his way to play the statesmanlike card that he will be above the fray, putting his right wing credentials aside in order to form a government that would not play petty politics (as he accused Netanyahu of acting out of personal reasons – his trial starts in early 2021 – to not honor the deal with Gantz for a rotation as he wants to call for new elections at a time of his convenience). Would Bennet join a Netanyahu led government after new elections with all that bad blood? Its not likely he would trust him to honor a rotation agreement after the way he handled the current one with Gantz. Whether he would join with other parties to form an alternative government remains an issue of great speculation.

And then came the Saar announcement.

As the press has pointed out ad nauseum, Saar is the latest of people who used to work closely with Netanyahu who eventually left his circles to go elsewhere and compete against him. Others are Bennet, Avigdor Lieberman, Ayelet Shaked, Moshe Cachelon (the former Finance Minister), even Gantz who was the Army Chief of Staff under him, to name just a few... Saar has been humiliated by Netanyahu over the years and decided that this was the right time to make the announcement, resign from the Knesset and form his own party to take down Netanyahu. Initial polls showed he could gain as many as 17 seats. Whether those numbers hold, if he brings even half of that, and some of those seats come from the Likud, together with Bennet, Lapid, Lieberman and what's left of Gantz's Blue and White, that would be enough to not only prevent Netanyahu from forming a government, but actually replace him – if those players can agree on a working coalition.

What all this means is that Netanyahu may be thinking again about having early elections. Perhaps he will order the Finance people to finalize the 2021 budget by December 23 and get it approved. Then the government would not fall, and in theory, there would be no obstacle

for Gantz to be Prime Minister in November 2021. That might be a better scenario for Netanyahu than having Saar and Bennet lead the pack and determine his fate.

But like I said above, its hard to predict how any of this will play out. What is clear is that Saar has thrown the gauntlet and by December 23rd at the latest, we will know if Israel is headed to elections and a possible fundamentally altered political reality.

I'd like to take the opportunity to give a shout out to my father, Arthur Spielman, a longtime member of the Krakow Society, who is celebrating his 92nd birthday. May he continue to live a happy and healthy life for years to come!

Happy Chanuka!
Barry Spielman
Oranit, Israel, December 9, 2020

SUNSHINE COMMITTEE REPORT

HAPPY EVENTS

ANNIVERSARIES:

November

Mr. & Mrs. Howard Cagan 42

Mr. & Mrs. Norman Fishman

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Horowitz 35

Mr. & Mrs. Alvin Lewis 44

Mr. & Mrs. Michael Toporek 21

December

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Jacobs 38

Mr.. & Mrs. Marion Keren

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Moldawer 51

Reufah Sheleima

Our best wishes to Samantha Caren for a complete and speedy recover after an accident and surgery. To our members who are ill and in need of healing, we wish you a speedy recovery and a return to optimal health. May it be soon.

Please inform us of any members who would appreciate their names being mentioned for thought and prayers for healing.

Donations

Simone and Lee Scheumann, hoping for a quick recovery to Samantha, daughter of Susan Krul Caren, \$180
Betty and William Nusblatt in honor of; Elan Herl, great nephew; Noam Halpern, grandson; and the marriage of daughter Daniella, \$100

Susan Krul Caren, in memory of her mother, Jean Krul \$72

At this time of incoming membership renewals, we do not mention each member who has given an additional contribution with the yearly membership dues... only the names of members who contribute for a specific simcha, yahrzeit, get well blessing, memorial of a recent passing, etc. However, we are grateful for all your generous contributions and we thank you wholeheartedly. Please keep your support flowing with your thoughtful tzedaka.

Please send us your good news, i.e. births, bar and bat mitzvah, engagements, marriages, graduations, etc., We love to share good news with our members.

Wishing everyone a safe and healthy winter, a HAPPY CHANUKAH, and a very good new year 2021.

Sunshine Committee Chairpersons

Ida Lewis 718 380-3574, idale747@gmail.com

Eva Pfau 718 464-0932

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We sadly announce the passing of
Dear Member and Friend

REGINA PETERSEIL

Our sincerest condolences
To her Family

MAY HER SOUL REST IN EVERLASTING PEACE



We acknowledge the contribution of the
Conference on Jewish Material Claims
Against Germany in helping to publish
this Newsletter.