



# JEWISH MESSENGER

Adar 5781  
Winter 2021

The Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford

Zoom Meeting



# THE ZOOM YEAR THAT WAS

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Amir Cohen, *executive director*  
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## A Year Unlike Any Other

By Amir Cohen

**W**hen I wrote my column for last year's *Messenger* in January of 2020 very little attention was paid to a new flu-like illness in China. In a little more than a year the world has changed.

Millions have died and all aspects of life have changed. It has been challenging for every individual, every organization and every country. Covid-19 has reminded us that some populations are more at risk. As an organization built on a foundation of Jewish values helping such populations was and forever will be our *raison d'être*.

Our Federation, like so many other organizations, was quick to adapt and regularly use digital platforms for meetings, programs, fundraising and keeping in touch. As the cover of this issue indicates it has been the year of Zoom.

Our first significant program on Zoom was for Yom HaShoah last year and we will once again use Zoom on April 8th for this year's program. It was a little awkward a year ago, but even the greatest of Luddites have since figured it out. On April 13th, just a few days after Yom HaShoah, I will lead a program hosting two stars of *Faada*. Our community will be joined by 15 other Federations with participants in all three US time zones as well as Israel. The program will mark the start of our Israel independence week. On April 18th as part of a very busy April schedule, we will again use Zoom to host a former IDF pilot who will speak to us from the cockpit of his airplane as he tours Israel from above and shares not just the view on the ground but also his family's story and survival from the horrors of the Holocaust. That program is brought to us by our partnership team in Israel that keeps generating more new programs. They have also helped us and our partner communities around New England provide needed support to HaEmek Hospital in Afula and Arab communities around the Afula-Gilboa region when they needed support during the early days of the pandemic. Most recently they helped us deliver computers to new Israelis who emigrated from Ethiopia.

Everything we do is made possible by your support. This *Messenger* more than anything is a vehicle to celebrate you and your contributions. For many of us the past year has also been financially challenging.

Nevertheless our annual campaign remained strong. Thanks in part to a matching program at the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), many of you increased your donations this year. As a result we are able to remain strong and it is critical that we do.

While the challenges of a pandemic dominated our daily lives, displays of antisemitism were everywhere and our work to educate and advocate is as important as ever. The events of January 6th left a painful and permanent mark on our democracy, but for American Jews the extra serving of antisemitism made that day even more hurtful and harder to heal from.

The dedicated team of leaders who volunteer their time made this year easier to navigate for our Federation. Our Federation President Manya Bark, members of the executive committee - Marsha Onufrak, Ellen Hull, Marty Lipman, Jack Belkin and Cindy Yoken - also continued to lead by example. Thank you, too, to our Holocaust Education committee.

Our dedicated board members all continue to participate regularly in what are now Zoom board meetings. Their names are all listed next to this column. We would not be the community we are without them. Michelle and I have also adjusted our work to the new demands and the new reality and I am very thankful for her daily contribution. We communicate with you weekly through the *Bulletin* and many of the choices we make each week we make together.

Our annual campaign runs through June and I would like to ask those of you who have not yet made your contribution to please consider doing so soon. You can make a donation on our website at [jewishnewbedford.org](http://jewishnewbedford.org) or you can respond to the spring appeal. Before we close the campaign in June we will host former *New York Times* columnist Bari Weiss (you guessed it, on Zoom) in what will certainly be a super conversation about another hot topic, cancel culture.

It has been a privilege to serve you as executive director for another year and I look forward to a more normal year ahead. Please join us for our future programs. They are designed for you and from the feedback I've gotten throughout the year, they are both informative and fun.

Stay safe,  
Amir



*Everything we do is made possible by your support. This Messenger more than anything is a vehicle to celebrate you and your contributions.*

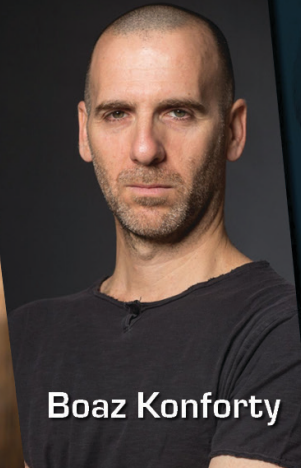


MEET THE CAST  
OF **NETFLIX**  
SENSATION

**FAUDA**



Yaakov Zada  
Daniel



Boaz Konforty

TUESDAY  
APRIL 13, 2021  
@ 5:30 PM EDT



Jewish Federation<sup>®</sup>  
OF GREATER NEW BEDFORD

**ZOOM IN WITH US AND MEET THE CAST**, actor Yaakov Zada Daniel, who plays one of the members of the elite IDF anti-terror unit in the show, and Boaz Konforty who plays Avihai, a member of the counter-terrorist unit who is always ready to jump into action. The stars will share their experiences on the show and answer questions from the host, Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford Executive Director Amir Cohen.

**TO REGISTER, VISIT:**  
**jewishfederation**  
**ofgreaternewwha.regfox.com/fauda**

# The Year in Review

By **Manya Bark**

**S**ince last writing for the *Messenger*, the world has changed beyond my imagination. Who could have imagined that we would be in the middle of a pandemic, with its lockdowns, social distancing, job losses or uncertainties and more tragically – family loss? Our lives have been up-ended, but I am reminded that many have survived in more trying circumstances and far more catastrophic events than we are experiencing now. We are truly blessed to live in an age of technology – where despite the social distancing that



is required of us, we can still connect with loved ones, further our education and carry on with business.

The pandemic has also unleashed conspiracies of its origin and purpose (and yet again antisemitism is at the forefront of these theories), exposing our deepest fears as a Jewish community. We have seen in tandem to these antisemitic conspiracy theories our political sphere proliferated with other alarming trends such as Q-Anon and the Proud Boys (and the list goes on). It all culminated in the Capitol a few months ago. Thankfully democracy survived, even if badly shaken.

The pandemic has perhaps made many more of our Jewish community members aware of the hate and antisemitism that lurks online, unchecked. These extremists seemingly have been given the green light by society to not only express themselves openly but also violently. Unfortunately it is not just restricted to the United States. The liberal West across the globe is watching in horror as right-wing extremism and antisemitic ideas are gaining ground. Many experts have watched as Covid-19 deniers have become radicalized not just here but in Europe as well. Many have seen how these protests have helped promote antisemitic beliefs more broadly, raising the possibility of violence. Just last year according to the RIAS (Recherche und Informationsstelle Antisemitismus) Bavaria

report, a Jewish pedestrian was accosted in a Munich park by a man wearing a t-shirt that read “Corona denier” and “anti-vaxxer.” The assailant went on to claim that Jews had created the coronavirus.

Those same technologies that have permitted such hate to percolate have also provided opportunities for wonderful programming that reaches further and wider than ever before. Our own Yom HaShoah event was the best “attended” (on Zoom) program that we have had in years. People from outside our community as well as community members that were geographically further away were able to attend. We now have the opportunity to bring speakers to the community that perhaps we never could have.

A case in point is that recently we brought to your

“nearest Zoom screens” a number of amazing chefs from near and far preparing Israeli cuisine. Not only were the recipes given in advance – so that you could cook along with the demonstrations – the chefs also provided colorful chatter about personal lives and life in general. It was nice to “see” a number of the community enjoying the programs. Perhaps when we can all start schmoozing again we can enjoy some of the nosh demonstrated in the programs?

We were also able to bring to the community via Zoom our community’s participation in the International Holocaust Remembrance Day. We were able to follow our own small ceremony at the Buttonwood Park Holocaust Memorial with a wonderful speaker from Israel (living in Boston) who recounted her own family’s experience during the Shoah. Only on Zoom!

*Recently we brought to your  
“nearest Zoom screens” a number  
of amazing chefs from near  
and far preparing Israeli cuisine.*



We are diligently working on additional programming to bring to our community, including our annual Yom HaShoah program as well as other excellent speakers. Keep an eye out for those upcoming email notifications.

So despite the restrictions due to the pandemic our work continues, albeit in a different format. This is something that studying Jewish history has taught me: We are an adaptable people and despite the odds, we survive. This is what our own community has done – we have adapted, and we are surviving!

Moving forward, we must remain vigilant to the anti-semitism that has been given a new platform and accrued new adherents. We must support our Federation as well as local organizations and groups that are working hard to help combat it. We must educate young people, so they don't fall for the online conspiracy theories and propaganda. We may want to laugh at a "Jewish Space Laser" (after all, it's

absolutely ridiculous) – but unfortunately Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene has her followers (how else did she get elected?). Fringe ideas may be looney, but they have the power to create havoc and should be recognized as dangerous, particularly in the era of social media.

*We are an adaptable people and despite the odds, we survive. This is what our own community has done – we have adapted, and we are surviving!*

offer – they will not only educate you but feed your soul and connect you with this wonderful community which is so vitally important during these times.

Manya Bark

The silver lining in all of this is that we also have available to us some of those same platforms to get the truth out there to combat such rising hatred. But it takes a commitment from everyone to do whatever we can to effect change, whether it seems insignificant or not. It all adds up and it counts. Attend some of the excellent Federations Zoom events that are on



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through June 30, 2020



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## Passover Appeal 2020

**Thank you for your generous response to the 2020 Passover Appeal, which raised \$3,046 to purchase kosher-for-Passover foods for members of our community in need.**

### PASSOVER APPEAL DONORS

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## Memorial Gifts

### Gifts made in honor of:

George Handler, George Jacobs, Bill Mosher,  
Adele Nosowitz, Lucia Oliveira, Ida Tatelbaum,

### Gifts made in memory of:

Judy Barry, Goldie Gitlin, Ellen Horvitz, Barbara Kaplan,  
Mae Lipp, Judi Mickelson, Betty Shapiro, Mark Shapiro

**When you include the Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford in your estate plans, you provide for the future of our Jewish community. We would like to thank those who have for their thoughtful generosity.**



JOIN US FOR AN  
**ISRAEL  
FLYOVER**

*via Zoom*  
**Sunday**  
**April 18th**  
**at 2:30 PM**

**ALON MOLLER**, a retired lieutenant colonel in the IDF Air Force, will speak to us from the cockpit of his airplane as he tours Israel from above and shares not just the view on the ground but also his family's story and survival from the horrors of the Holocaust. This program is brought to us by Partnership2Gether in the Afula-Gilboa region.

Alon resides in Kibbutz Mishmarot and is a tour guide and freelance helicopter pilot who shows Israel in a way that can only be seen from a bird's-eye view.

Look for Zoom link in weekly *Bulletin* email  
or contact [office@jewishnewbedford.org](mailto:office@jewishnewbedford.org).





**“CANCEL  
CULTURE  
THROUGH  
A JEWISH  
LENS”**



## A Conversation with Bari Weiss

**BARI WEISS** is an opinion writer and editor. She is the author of *How To Fight Anti-Semitism*, published in September 2019.

From 2017 to 2020, Bari was an opinion writer and editor at *The New York Times*. *Vanity Fair* called her the paper’s “star opinion writer.” Before joining *The Times*, Bari was an opinion editor and an associate book review editor at *The Wall Street Journal*. Previously, Bari was a senior editor at *Tablet*, the online magazine of Jewish news, politics, and culture, where she edited the site’s political and news coverage.

Through her columns and speeches, Bari has changed the way we think about important issues, including #MeToo, freedom of speech, and our common culture. Bari is a regular commentator on television and radio, most especially on HBO’s *Real Time with Bill Maher*.

In July 2018, Bari was awarded the Bastiat Journalism Prize for what the judges called “her brilliant, incisive journalism that defends the cornerstone of individual liberty and civil society: freedom of speech.”

**SUNDAY,  
JUNE 6TH,  
2021,  
7:00PM**

Look for Zoom link  
in weekly *Bulletin*  
email or contact  
office@jewishnewbedford.org.

# The Year in Review: A Message from Bristol Community College Holocaust Center Director Ron Weisberger

**L**ike most other people, those of us at the Bristol Community College Holocaust and Genocide Center were taken aback when the pandemic hit. It soon became clear that it was going to upend our plans for spring 2020. We had three speakers scheduled as well as a

the Holocaust. We also scheduled a professional development workshop online in late August for regional teachers. All the programs turned out as well as possible with good attendance and recordings linked to our website.

As the pandemic has continued, we have scheduled

continued to reach out to regional parochial and public school teachers. We have a subcommittee of our Advisory Committee along with a number of local teachers planning a series of four professional development workshops for this coming summer.

Finally, our project to collect 1.5 million buttons



**Dr. Ron Weisberger, Director, Bristol Holocaust and Genocide Center**

conference on genocide on the African continent. As we have been doing for the past five years, all these programs were to be held in person on our Fall River campus. While initially we thought this situation may be temporary with at least some of the spring programming salvageable, after our campus closed we had to find an alternative.

The conference was rescheduled for the fall by Zoom. Speakers addressed the history of anti-Semitism; the Nuremberg Trials and their effects on international law; and the Displaced Persons Camps after

spring programming to be held by Zoom as well. These include a discussion of the effect of the Papal encyclical *Nostra Aetate* on the long and difficult relations between Jews and the Catholic Church with Dr. Arthur Urbana, Providence College (March 22); Latin American responses to the Holocaust with Christina Chavarria, US Holocaust Memorial Museum (April 5); and a discussion of the recently published book *The Unanswered Letter* with the author, journalist Faris Casell (April 21). The book was recently awarded the 2020 National Book Award for works on the Holocaust.

In addition, despite the disruptions we have con-

in memory of those Jewish children murdered during the Holocaust continues. A Bristol student has taken charge with the hope of achieving our goal by the end of the year. Once we are back on campus, we plan to construct a monument utilizing the buttons.

We thank the Federation for its support, which despite a very difficult and challenging year has allowed us to move forward with our important work.

*We have continued to reach out to regional parochial and public school teachers.*

*We have a subcommittee of our Advisory Committee along with a number of local teachers planning a series of four professional development workshops for this coming summer.*



Please join the Jewish Federation  
of Greater New Bedford's  
**ANNUAL YOM HASHOAH  
HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY**

*via Zoom*

**THURSDAY, APRIL 8TH AT 7:00 PM**

Kaddish and prayer service at the Holocaust Memorial in Buttonwood Park followed by guest speakers **Rachael Cerrotti**, host of the *We Share the Same Sky* podcast, and **Renee Ledbetter** and **David Gomes** of UMass Dartmouth. The latter two will speak about the rise of white supremacy and how it affects the Black community on campus.

**RACHAEL CERROTTI** is an award-winning photographer, writer, educator and audio producer. For over a decade, she has been retracing her grandmother's Holocaust survival story and documenting the echoes of WWII. In the fall of 2019, she released her critically-acclaimed podcast, titled *We Share the Same Sky*, about this story. The podcast is now being taught in classrooms worldwide. Rachael's memoir, also titled *We Share the Same Sky*, will be published this summer and is now available for pre-order.



Rachael is currently the Inaugural Storyteller in Residence for the USC Shoah Foundation and is based in Portland, Maine. For more information, visit: [www.rachaelcerrotti.com](http://www.rachaelcerrotti.com) and [www.sharethesamesky.com](http://www.sharethesamesky.com).

**Look for Zoom link in weekly *Bulletin* email  
or contact [office@jewishnewbedford.org](mailto:office@jewishnewbedford.org).**

# CAN'T MISS EVENTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

**Thursday, April 8, 7:00 PM**

**YOM HASHOAH ANNUAL COMMEMORATION**



Zoom event from the Holocaust Monument with guest speaker Rachel Cerrotti of the podcast *We Share the Same Sky*. Followed by Renee Ledbetter and David Gomes of UMass Dartmouth, who will speak on white supremacy and how it affects the Black community on campus.

**Sunday, April 18, 2:30 PM**

**JOIN US FOR AN ISRAEL FLYOVER VIA ZOOM**

Alon Moller, a retired lieutenant colonel in the IDF Air Force, will speak to us from the cockpit of his airplane as he tours Israel from above and shares not just the view on the ground but also his family's story and survival from the horrors of the Holocaust.



**Tuesday, April 13, 5:30PM**

**MEET THE CAST OF FAUDA**



Zoom in with us and meet the cast. The stars will share their experiences on the show and answer questions from the host, Jewish Federation of Greater New Bedford Executive Director Amir Cohen.

**Sunday, June 6, 7:00PM**

**"CANCEL CULTURE THROUGH A JEWISH LENS"**

A conversation with Bari Weiss. Bari Weiss is an opinion writer and editor. She is the author of *How To Fight Anti-Semitism*, published in September 2019.



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