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Filmmaker from Leonia tackles Israeli issues

'Faces' film will show at area schools

Heather Robinson • Local
 Published: 06 May 2011

When Amy Beth Oppenheimer was growing up in Leonia, she couldn't wait to learn more about Israel firsthand.

"I loved our community, but there was a little something lacking in the Israel education we received," she told The Jewish Standard.

Her 2009 documentary, "Faces of Israel: A Discussion About Marriage, State, and Religion in the Jewish Homeland" polls Israelis of many ideologies and backgrounds on hot-button issues such as the controversy over legalizing civil marriage.

She will present the recently updated documentary, which she considers a teaching tool, at Kushner Yeshiva High School in Livingston on Tuesday, May 10, as well as at The Frisch School in Paramus on May 12 in a program co-sponsored by Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls in Teaneck.



Amy Beth Oppenheimer, 25, of Leonia has produced a film, "Faces of Israel" that polls Israelis on controversial issues. She will screen the film next week to area students.

The film is divided into 10 "theme chapters" that handle separate issues and feature face-to-face interviews with Israelis. Subjects include the role of the Israeli rabbinat and the continuing controversy regarding who is a Jew. Personalities interviewed for the film include Rabbi Yitzchak Peretz, head of the office of the chief Sephardic rabbi, and Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yonah Metzger.

"I wanted to bring this conversation to teenagers, so they can better understand the ways the Jewish state is growing and changing," she said.

Israelis featured range from haredim to gay university students.

Oppenheimer, 25, a graduate of Johns Hopkins University, says her love for Israel inspired her to make the film during her year studying at the University of Haifa. At present, she and husband Yair Horowitz, 25, are traveling the United States in a recreational vehicle, seeing the national parks and screening the film to Jewish communities, including such outposts as Reno, Nev., and Salt Lake City, Utah.

"I developed the film to get different types of Jews together to discuss important questions of Jewish status, religious pluralism, and civil liberties in Israel," she said.

While the school events are just for students, a May 10 evening screening at the Rockland JCC in West Nyack, N.Y. is open to the public. For more information on the film and upcoming screenings, visit www.facesinthemovie.com or e-mail director@facesinthemovie.com.

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Back to Germany
 Father of Fair Lawn resident returns as honored guest

Larry Yudelson • 1 July 2011
 Local | World

Walter Spier had returned to Germany before.

But his recent trip was different. This time, the 83-year-old Holocaust survivor was an invited guest of his hometown of Holzhausen, where high school students had undertaken to renovate the Jewish cemetery where his grandparents are buried.

Born in Germany in 1927, Spier had remained behind when his oldest siblings escaped to England in 1938. After surviving Auschwitz, he returned to his Holzhausen after liberation, and after a year moved to America where he settled in Washington Heights.

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A conversation with Alex Grobman
 Englewood historian arms Christians with facts about Israel

Heather Robinson • 8 July 2011
 Local

Alex Grobman, historian and Englewood resident, spoke last week and over the Fourth of July weekend with The Jewish Standard about his book "The Palestinian Right to Israel." (The book is published by Balfour Books, a division of the Christian ICON Publishing Group. See related story.)

Grobman, a former director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, serves as executive director of the America-Israel Friendship League, a New York-based nonprofit dedicated to fostering connections between Christians and Israelis.

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Teaneck teens benefit Bet Elazraki Children's Home
 Events net thousands for Israeli children's home

Abigail Klein Leichman • 8 July 2011
 Local

A boy band from Teaneck staged a concert on June 14 that raised more than \$20,000 toward guitars, drums, percussion instruments, recording devices, and a sound system for the music therapy program at Emonah's Bet Elazraki Children's Home in Netanya, Israel, which houses 220 newborns to 17-year-olds from abusive backgrounds.

The bar-mitzvah-age musicians comprising Pulse 5 — Jared Auslander, Joseph Horowitz, Ezra Koppel, Matan Mann, and Yonatan Potash — worked with their private music teacher, Ben Hyman, for months before the event at Englewood's Space Odyssey, and the boys' parents solicited individual and local corporate sponsorships.

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U.S. Senate unanimously calls on U.N. to rescind Goldstone

Ron Kampeas • 15 April 2011
 Local

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Senate unanimously approved a resolution calling on the United Nations to

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rescind the Goldstone report. Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) and James Risch (R-Idaho) initiated the resolution last week after Richard Goldstone, a South African judge, retracted a key conclusion of the U.N. report he helped author on the 2009 Gaza war -- that Israel had targeted civilians as a policy.

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Israeli dignitary welcomed by NJ State Senate March 21

18 March 2011
Local | World

Senate President Extends Invitation to Ido Aharoni, Consul General of Israel in NY

Union, N.J. (March 18, 2011) – In a gesture of friendship and cooperation, Senate President Stephen Sweeney has invited Ido Aharoni, Consul General of Israel in NY to appear before the upper body of the legislature at the Senate Chamber on Monday March 21, 2011 at 2 p.m. Aharoni will make a formal presentation to the State Senate prior to the voting session.

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Christie gives nod to Bergen County Hebrew charter school

19 January 2011
Local

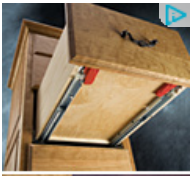
Gov. Chris Christie on Tuesday approved 23 new charter schools for the state, including the Shalom Academy for students in Englewood and Teaneck. The school would be New Jersey's second Hebrew immersion charter school.

The new Hebrew-language charter school is set to provide a Hebrew immersion program for up to 240 students in grades kindergarten to eight. The school, the brainchild of Englewood resident Raphael Bachrach, had been rejected by the state board of education three times in the past.

Bachrach did not immediately return calls for comment.

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