

**Forward**

JEWISH. INDEPENDENT. NONPROFIT.

**20  
23**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**Clarity Amid the Chaos:**



**PROVIDING ACCESS AND INSIGHT  
WHEN IT'S MOST NEEDED**

# Dear Friends,

Just hours before Yom Kippur, the *Forward* broke the news that the Canadian Parliament gave a standing ovation to a former soldier who had served in a Nazi unit. The story ricocheted around the world and the fallout was swift: the speaker's resignation, the prime minister's apology and further disclosures of Canadian support for former Nazis.

**What we thought would be our biggest story of the year was usurped less than two weeks later by the devastating events and unfathomable aftermath of Oct. 7.** The *Forward* team was on the ground in Israel within days and has been reporting on the impact across the U.S. – and our changed world – ever since.

Amid the chaos of war, rising antisemitism and a tidal wave of disinformation, the *Forward* took another bold step. **We removed our paywall, making all our content free to anyone for the first time in our 126-year history, ending subscriptions and becoming member-supported.**

This year has proven why the *Forward* is the leading Jewish voice in American journalism. Now more than ever, American Jews need news they can trust with reporting driven by truth, not ideology. We've been guided this year by the same values we've held for more than a

century: to report the news with courage, accountability, integrity and Yiddishkeit. It's your support that allows us to produce journalism that brings clarity amid the chaos.

We're deeply grateful to the many long-time and new supporters who stepped up during this defining year with both encouragement and generosity. It's so important that we have the resources we need to secure and expand our ability to bring you the news, investigations, cultural coverage, analysis and opinion columns our community needs and deserves.

On behalf of the entire *Forward* team, thank you.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rachel Fishman Feddersen".

Rachel Fishman Feddersen  
CEO & Publisher



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Silberstein".

Alan Silberstein  
Board Chair

# Forward

**JEWISH. INDEPENDENT. NONPROFIT.**

## MISSION

The *Forward* is the most significant Jewish voice in American journalism. Our outstanding reporting on cultural, social and political issues inspires readers of all ages and animates conversation across generations and different segments of our community. Our English and Yiddish platforms build on a century-old legacy maintained in our archives and lead to a deeper understanding of what it means to be Jewish in the 21st century.

## VISION

The *Forward* envisions a vibrant, connected global Jewish community informed by our shared history and committed to justice, compassion, truth and our collective responsibility to bridge our divides.

## VALUES

**INTEGRITY** We provide fair and full reporting in the highest tradition of public-service journalism, a cornerstone of resilient democracy. Through our work, we help build the foundation for a just, open, pluralistic society.

**COURAGE** We pursue the truth wherever it takes us, delivering the news, investigations, narrative storytelling and commentary that our community needs and deserves.

**INDEPENDENCE** As a nonprofit supported by our readers and a broad array of philanthropies, we are not beholden to any individual, institution or ideology. We are always relevant but also irreverent, challenging conventional wisdom in respectful ways as we showcase the full spectrum of voices shaping our experience.

**ACCOUNTABILITY** Through rigorous, even-handed journalism, we hold leaders accountable to the people and communities they serve. At the same time, we believe we must continuously earn the public's trust by delivering on promises, operating with empathy and upholding our core values.

**YIDDISHKEIT** We revel in the richness of our culture and history, providing a smorgasbord of art and politics, argument and understanding. We also share our rich Yiddish heritage, promoting it as a living treasure for future generations. Sharing stories, in English and Yiddish, of the diverse ways Jews of all backgrounds – and our neighbors – live and think and celebrate and mourn enhances our human connections. Ours is a particularly Jewish-American way of looking at the world: contrarian, cosmopolitan, fiercely intelligent and wickedly funny.

# Awards and Recognition

We won 33 Simon Rockower Awards for Excellence in Jewish Journalism (the “Jewish Pulitzers”) – the most of any Jewish media organization.

Jodi Rudoren, editor-in-chief, was honored as a 2023 “Editor Extraordinaire” by Editor & Publisher.

The *Forward* again competed against some the most widely read and respected publications to win prestigious awards and recognition from the Religion News Association, the Deadline Club, the Los Angeles Press Club and the Society for Features Journalism.

Additionally, the *Forward* won nine awards from the Religion Communications Council for coverage including the synagogue hostage crisis in Colleyville, Texas, and the rash of celebrity antisemitism. Our contributor Andrew Silverstein also won the organization’s top honor, the Wilbur Award, for five significant feature stories.



## BY THE NUMBERS



**1,300,000+**  
monthly readers, 1/3 under 35



**19,400,000+**  
Social media reach in 2023



**120,000+**  
newsletter subscribers

# The *Forward* Removes its Paywall, Becoming Member-Supported

*In December, the Forward removed its paywall for all content.*

For the first time in our 126-year history, *Forward* journalism is now free and available to everyone, everywhere. During this chaotic moment of war, disinformation and rising antisemitism, the *Forward* believes that open access to our independent Jewish journalism is essential.

Readers have enthusiastically supported our new tax-deductible membership program.

[Learn more about Forward membership.](#)

## READERS REACT

*“Making your content free is a big step in fighting antisemitism. We need all hands on deck. Thank you.”*

*“I congratulate you on removing the paywall. The Forward has really stepped up its game in the past year...The writing is A+ and the stories are of genuine interest to us Jews (and beyond)...removing the paywall is a first-rate decision.”*

*“I wish to show my support on your BOLD decision to remove the paywall.”*

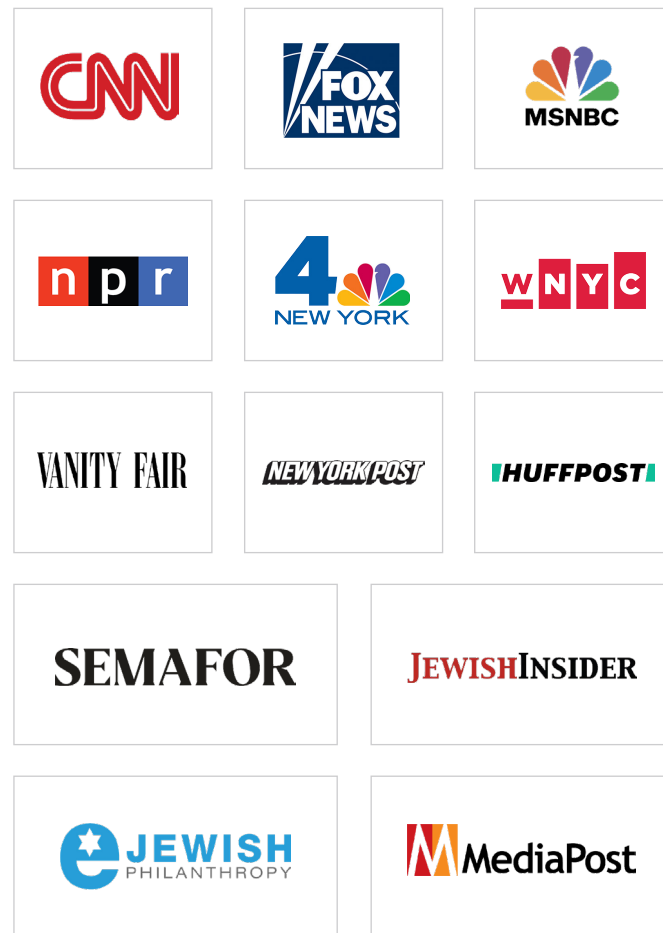
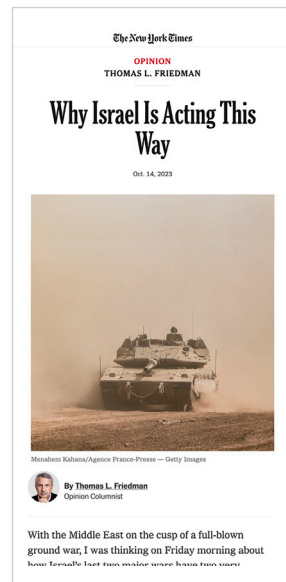
*“I’ve subscribed for the last few years, am active in a local Jewish community, and have been very impressed with the work that you do. When I saw that you had eliminated subscriptions, I felt moved to provide a higher level of support than I had done in the past...we need a journalism that isn’t dependent on subscriptions, so that journalists can do the creative reporting that is required in these challenging times.”*



# The *Forward* in the News

Global media outlets and Jewish newspapers across the United States continued to refer to the *Forward's* coverage and perspective throughout the year.

The *Forward* was a sought-after source for expert commentary on the Israel-Hamas war and unrest on college campuses, including appearances by Jodi Rudoren on CNN, MSNBC, and WNYC. The removal of the *Forward's* paywall and membership program launch garnered coverage from the business media.



# ISRAEL AT 75... AND AT WAR



The *Forward* provided clarity amid the chaos and a Jewish lens on the most important storyline of the year, breaking news reporting from the ground and driving and hosting challenging conversations.

**A muted celebration amid the protests:** Months before the war, our collection of stories edited by Talya Zax on Israel at 75 and reporting on the ground by Mira Fox provided a sober portrait of a divided country.

**Oct. 7 and beyond:** Within hours of the Oct. 7 attack, we had a robust report online and former opinion editor Laura E. Adkins headed to Israel. We later sent Jacob Kornbluh and Jodi Rudoren to report from Israel, and by December we had hired Pulitzer finalist Susan Greene for a six-month assignment. The *Forward* team's prolific, searing work

captured stories other media missed and stood out among a crowded field of foreign correspondence.

**Homefront fallout:** The *Forward* delivered daily scoops and deep dives on campus antisemitism and anti-Zionism, including Arno Rosenfeld's first-ever interview with the founders of Students for Justice in Palestine and our team's special report on what it's really like to be Jewish on campus right now.

**Diverse thought leadership:** The *Forward* showcased thoughtful, provocative columns by Jodi, Rob Eshman, Jay Michaelson, Shalom Hartman Institute President Yehuda Kurtzer, former Ambassador Michael Oren, IfNotNow co-founder Yonah Lieberman and others.

# Israel at 75 and at War: Reporting from the Ground

Our journalists reported from Israel on the battle over democracy and the fight against Hamas



[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**Trumpets, drums and shouts of ‘Shame, shame’ — scenes from the raucous protests on the streets of Israel**

By Mira Fox (August 6, 2023)



[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**From a kabbalist’s grave to a destroyed kibbutz: Inside an IDF press tour**

By Laura E. Adkins (October 23, 2023)



[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**‘A warm hug from grandma’: In Tel Aviv’s Hostages Square, families contemplate the expected release of 50 hostages**

By Jacob Kornbluh (November 22, 2023)



[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**‘Everybody needs to be uncomfortable’: Rachel Goldberg-Polin’s tireless campaign to bring her son home**

By Jodi Rudoren (December 22, 2023)



[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**‘Ashamed at how my heart has shrunk’: Takeaways from 10 days of reporting in Israel**

By Jodi Rudoren (December 22, 2023)

# Israel at War: College Campuses Erupt



[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**Special report: What's it really like to be Jewish on campus right now?**

By *The Forward* (November 5, 2023)



[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**The secret history and uncertain future of Students for Justice in Palestine**

By Arno Rosenfeld (December 20, 2023)



[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**The university presidents were right and American Jews' moral panic is wrong**

By Jay Michaelson (December 11, 2023)



[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**Israel Therapy: I'm in college, and I refuse to choose between #standwithIsrael and #freePalestine**

By Libby Lenkinski (December 6, 2023)



[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**Many universities fumbled reactions to Hamas' attack. Here's how Dartmouth got it right**

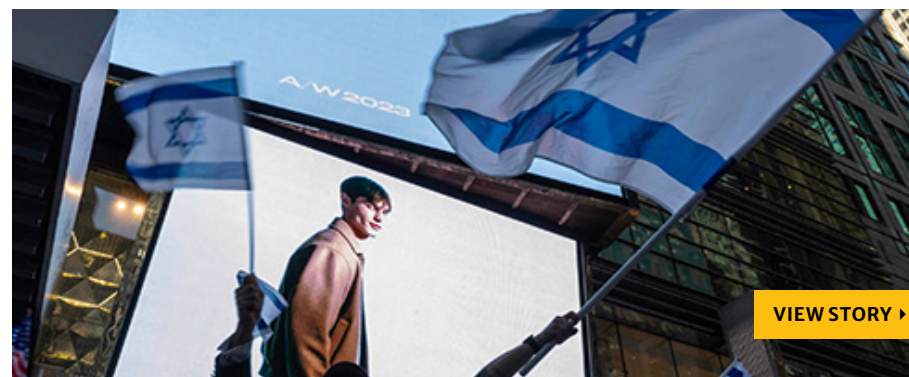
By Rob Eshman (October 25, 2023)

# War Analysis from Every Corner of the Jewish World



## How Oct. 7 is reshaping the Zionist — and anti-Zionist — left in the US

By Yehuda Kurtzer (November 30, 2023)



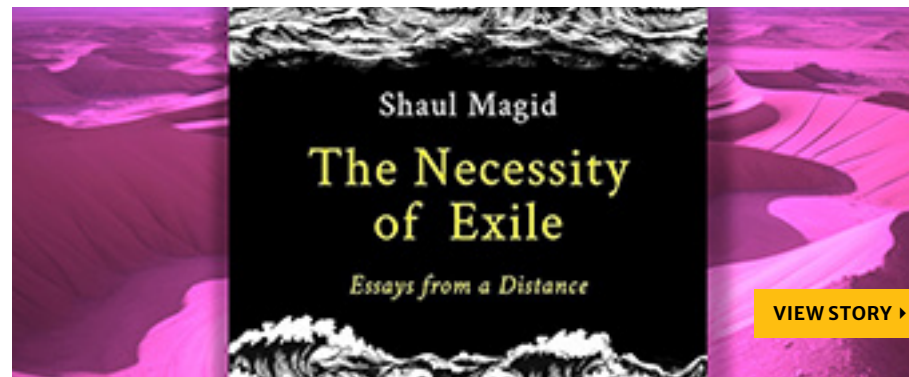
## The March for Israel will make Jews everywhere less safe

By Yonah Lieberman (November 14, 2023)



## How to talk to people who hate Israel

By Rob Eshman (November 13, 2023)



## A plan to save Israel — by getting rid of Zionism

By Emily Tamkin (December 26, 2023)

# Convening Community Conversations



We hosted a conversation in New York City with Pulitzer Prize-winning *New York Times* columnist **Thomas Friedman**.



**Jodi Rudoren** was part of a panel of nine distinguished Jewish thinkers who spoke about “Jewish Challenges, Jewish Solutions in the Wake of the Unthinkable,” based on their essays in a new anthology.



**Jodi Rudoren**, reporting live from Israel, spoke with senior columnist **Rob Eshman** about the mood on the ground, the effects rippling through Israeli and American Jewish culture and the critical role of independent Jewish journalism.



A panel of Jewish student leaders at UCLA spoke about their changed campus with **Jodi Rudoren**.

**BREAKING NEWS**

# Celebration of Former Nazi Fighter Roils Canadian Government



Based on investigative reporting by contributor **Lev Golinkin**, the *Forward* [broke the news](#) that the 98-year-old Ukrainian World War II veteran who was feted in Canada's Parliament had in fact served in a Nazi unit that the International Military Tribunal cited for mass atrocities against Jews and Poles.

Within days of our reporting, the Canadian House Speaker resigned for having led Parliament in a standing ovation for the man, Yaroslav Hunka, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologized, the University of Alberta returned an endowment from Hunka's family and the Polish minister of education said he had "taken steps" toward Hunka's extradition for potential atrocities committed during the war.

A further *Forward* investigation documented more than \$2 million in Canadian government grants to groups that ignored or celebrated this unit's dark past.

Our article was cited in *The New York Times*, *Politico* and across Canadian media – and remains the primary, original source on Wikipedia.

This work built on Lev's three-year project documenting more than 1,600 monuments to Nazi collaborators around the world.

# Investigative Reporting that **Made an Impact**



**Andrew Silverstein**, who in 2022 broke the story of Rep. George Santos lying about his Holocaust history, in January proved Santos also [made up the story of his mother being at the World Trade Center on 9/11](#).



In February 2023, when the Pico-Robertson neighborhood of Los Angeles faced back-to-back [shootings of Jewish men](#) leaving morning prayer services, the *Forward's* **Louis Keene** was the first reporter on the scene. He later broke the news that the suspect had sent threatening text messages to his Jewish peers at UCLA and promoted antisemitic conspiracy theories about Jews creating the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Louis Keene** did deep-dive profiles of an Orthodox gay man in Florida who was [ousted from his synagogue](#), and of the [first openly gay Orthodox pulpit rabbi](#).



After our April article detailing [allegations of sexism and sexual harassment](#) at American Jewish University's rabbinical school, the university notified students and alumni in September the school was conducting an external review.

## A NEW PODCAST

# Playing Anne Frank

Building on the success of our Bintel Brief advice podcast, we created [Playing Anne Frank](#), a seven-episode series created by executive editor **Adam Langer**.

Using archival material and interviews with surviving cast and crew members, Playing Anne Frank presents the never-been-told backstory of the beloved play and film and how this iconic work shapes those involved in performing it.

Launched with live events in New York, Chicago and online, Playing Anne Frank has surpassed 33,000 downloads and is the #1 performing arts podcast in Germany, India, Netherlands, Austria and Israel.

“My heart stops every time I listen to Playing Anne Frank. It feels like I’ve wandered into a special place.”

—  
**Lauren Passell**  
Podcast The Newsletter



# PLAYING ANNE FRANK

A LIMITED SERIES PODCAST

“What I am appreciating is the insights of the cast and that they understood the necessity of sharing Anne’s story.”

—  
**Writergurlny**

# Our Top Arts & Culture Stories of the Year

We delved into the history of new prayers written for hostages; talked with the creator of the show “Fauda” about how the Hamas attacks defied his imagination; profiled one artist who escaped war in Ukraine and Israel, another whose comic book about 1948 has taken on new meaning, and three artists whose work can help us process the atrocities of Oct. 7.

At the same time, the *Forward* uncovered Jewish culture stories unlike those published elsewhere, including a profile of a [Jewish actor](#) who played the mystic Baal-Shem Tov in a Ukrainian blockbuster film; [an exhibit at 92NY on Israeli jewelry artists](#); and a [pop-up bagel shop made entirely of felt](#) in New York City.


[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**‘Fauda’ nearly predicted a terrorist invasion of Israel — the show’s creators thought it was too far-fetched**

By PJ Grisar (October 10, 2023)


[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**In a blockbuster film about the Ukrainian Robin Hood, the Baal Shem Tov makes his debut**

By Jon Kalish (November 8, 2023)


[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

**Can art help us process the atrocities committed by Hamas on Oct. 7?**

By Laura Hodes (December 7, 2023)


[VIEW STORY ▶](#)

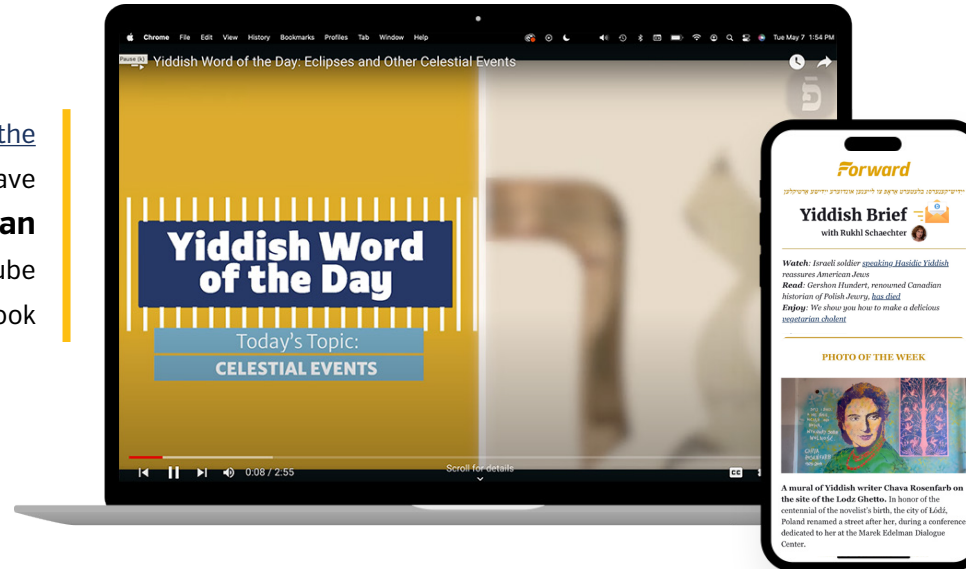
**The most beautiful new bagel shop in New York doesn’t have any bagels in it**

By Sam Lin-Sommer (October 13, 2023)

# A Year of Growth for the *Forverts* in Yiddish and English

2023 was a year of profound growth for *Forverts* content

The “[Yiddish Word of the Day](#)” videos now have reached more than **1.4M views** on YouTube and Facebook



The [Yiddish Brief](#) newsletter list grew **31%**.



A new [Yiddish community calendar](#) instantly became a hub for Yiddishists everywhere.



One of the most read – and watched – stories of the year was a beautiful remembrance from Ruth Katcher of [unearthing an 8mm film of her family's 1932 Seder](#), including the newly digitized video.



More than 2,000 people registered for “[What did our great-grandparents eat for breakfast?](#)” an online event with Yiddish editor Rukhl Schaechter.

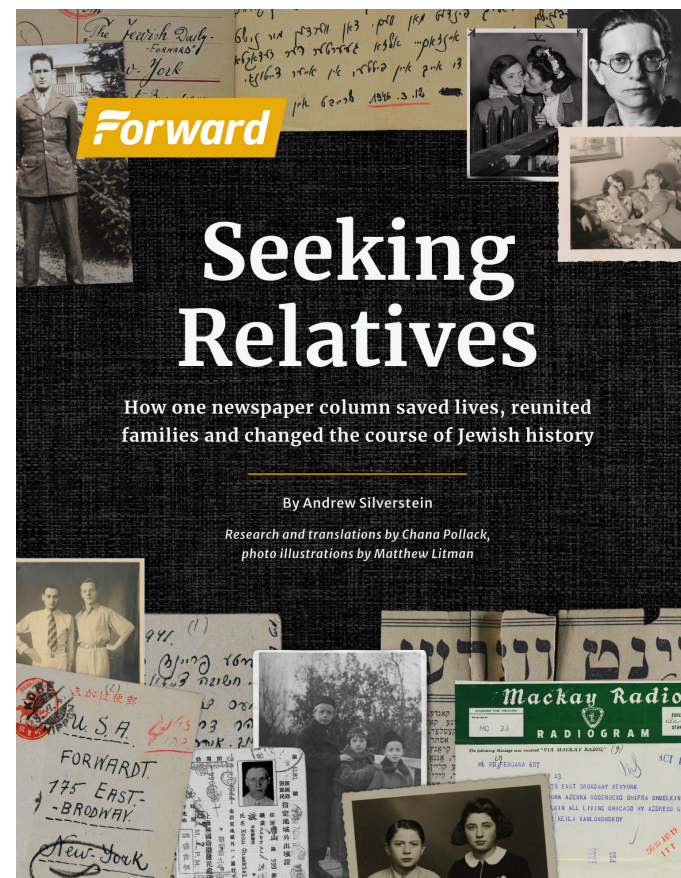
# Seeking Relatives:

How one newspaper column saved lives, reunited families and changed the course of Jewish history

In September 2023 we published [“Seeking Relatives”](#): a special project by contributing reporter **Andrew Silverstein**. From the early 20th century through the late 1970s, the *Forward*’s “Seeking Relatives” column helped Jews scattered across the globe by pogroms, war and forced migration find each other. It reconnected families torn apart by Nazis, and allowed the lost, orphaned and isolated to create new chapters for themselves in the U.S.

Andrew stumbled upon thousands of letters that fueled the “Seeking Relatives” column in the archives of Yad Vashem, and spent a year piecing together their stories. Aided by our archivist, **Chana Pollack**, Andrew poured through the pleas for help and met the children and grandchildren of people the column helped save.

- Andrew’s behind-the-scenes look at [how he discovered 15,000 documents](#) relating to the “Seeking Relatives” column.
- Editor Isaac Metzker was the driving force behind “Seeking Relatives.” [But he rarely talked about it.](#)
- We published the entire “Seeking Relatives” project as a [33-page downloadable PDF](#).



# “PRESSED”

**PRESSED**  
Images from the  
Jewish Daily Forward



## The *Forward* Archives on the Road

“Pressed: Images from the Jewish Daily Forward” – the exhibit of archival materials organized by the *Forward* in collaboration with the Museum at Eldridge Street – went on the road this year for a five-month installation at the Hillman Library of the University of Pittsburgh. In May, **Rachel Fishman Feddersen** and **Chana Pollock** traveled to Pittsburgh to lead a guided tour of “Pressed.”

“Pressed” presents a selection of print photographs in the paper from the 1920s to the 1960s. With its images of strikes and activists, Yiddish theater stars and baseball players, daily life and historic moments, “Pressed” captures the remarkably preserved depth and breadth of the *Forward*’s history, audience and Jewish life in America and around the world.

The exhibit at Hillman Library was seen by more than 300,000 visitors and the university’s Jewish Studies Program developed educational opportunities based on the display, further contributing to the knowledge of a younger generation of college students and academics.

“One of my students said that visiting the Pressed exhibit and completing their Forverts headline at Hillman Library was the single most engaging experience they ever had during their four years at Pitt.”

–  
Dr. Rachel Kranson

Associate Professor and Director  
of Jewish Studies,  
University of Pittsburgh

# Forward Events

Bringing Readers Behind the Scenes



## The Role of Journalism in Combating Antisemitism

**Craig Newmark**, the founder of craigslist, has been an avid supporter of organizations that fight antisemitism and disinformation, reinvigorate journalism education and strengthen independent news outlets, including the *Forward*. With hate speech and actions rising to record levels, Craig joined Jodi Rudoren in Aspen for a candid conversation about the issues, challenges and responsibility journalists face in covering and combating antisemitism.



**Andrew Silverstein** and **Jacob Kornbluh** joined Jodi Rudoren to talk about how their exclusive 2022 report broke apart the fiction of George Santos's family history that led to his political decline.



Award-winning actor **Mandy Patinkin** joined *Forward* news director **Benyamin Cohen** and Jodi Rudoren for a discussion of Cohen's new book, *The Einstein Effect*. Einstein launched the International Rescue Committee to save his fellow German Jews from the Holocaust. Patinkin, a longtime refugee activist, is the organization's ambassador.



The *Forward* joined the **Museum of Jewish Heritage's** Mishpachah Festival for "**Bintel Brief – Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow: How one advice column changed (and is still changing) Jewish life in America.**" Archivist **Chana Pollack** and reporter **Beth Harpaz** led a conversation about the history of the famous Bintel Brief column and what it says about the changing world of Jews in America over the decades.

# Thank you

to our supporters for their  
generous contributions  
to the *Forward*.

# Universal Access Campaign Supporters

Thanks to these generous donors for supporting the launch of the *Forward*'s membership and free access initiative.

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 Ruth Horowitz and Michael Nachman  
 Jacob and Susanne Morowitz  
 Howard J. Swibel and Gail S. Regenbogen  
 Ronnie and Elliot Zolin

“The *Forward* is essential for my understanding of my world.”

– Jeremy Kagan

# Our Supporters: Annual Campaign

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 Horace W. Goldsmith Foundation  
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 Sy Syms Foundation

“Thank you for covering the news  
 with integrity and through a  
 Jewish lens.”

– Karen Hirsch

## Publisher's Circle Gold

\$50,000 - \$99,999

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Jacob and Suzanne Morowitz  
 Alan and Carol Silberstein  
 Marcy Syms

“I’m reading everything you’re  
 writing. It helps me better  
 understand what I’m feeling.”

– Roberta Spivek

## Publisher's Circle

\$25,000 - \$49,999

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## Columnist's Circle

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 The Lucius N. Littauer Foundation

“The *Forward* provides the clearest  
 journalism through a Jewish lens  
 available in the United States, and  
 it covers the full spectrum of the  
 Jewish community.”

– Jacqueline Hamilton

# Thank You (continued)

“Since October 7th the frequency and depth of your reporting has been superb. The on-the-ground coverage gives honest, in-depth analysis.”

– Sandra Schiffman

Stuart Loeser

Nicole Mutchnik

Samuel Norich and Deborah Ugoretz

Claudio and Penny Pincus

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“Your thoughtful examination of tough issues makes the *Forward* a crucial voice in elevating Jewish community discourse.”

– Elliot Palevsky

David and Susan Sherman

Julie and Lewis Stone

Efrat and Richard Weisfield

“I trust your research and value the sensitivity with which you cover important topics.”

– Melissa Monsky

## Contributor’s Circle

\$1,000 – \$4,999

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Barry and Mimi Alperin

Nurit Amdur

David and Madeleine Arnow

Noah and Tamara Arnow

Nan Bases

Henry Bayer

Brandon Becker

Georgette Bennett and Leonard Polonsky

Lori and Bruce Berman

# Thank You (continued)

Nancy Bernstein  
 Thomas and Mary Lynne Bird  
 Carole Blueweiss  
 Thomas Blumberg  
 Nancy and Kenneth Bob  
 Ernest and Rita Bogen  
 Rabbi Angela Buchdahl  
 Joseph Buchwald and Mia Gelles  
 Bonnie Burt and Mark Liss

“You are such an important force and pillar in our American community. Thank you, all of you, for the holy work you do.”

– Julie Fingersh

Howard Cohen  
 Milton Cooper  
 Rabbi Elliot Cosgrove  
 Mark Deutsch  
 Gary Ginsberg  
 Linda Jo Doctor and Elliot Ginsburg  
 Deborah Dwork

“Your reporting on the crisis in Israel is beautiful and very moving.”

– Judah Levine

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 Edward Jones  
 Jonathan and Karen Kaplan  
 Donald Katz  
 Victor and Phyllis Katz  
 Patti Kenner  
 Ann Kern  
 Sara Klar  
 Frank Kreutzer  
 Lynn and Jules Kroll  
 Bill Lambert

“Quality investigative Jewish journalism is more important now than ever.”

– Remy Rosenbaum

Harry Lerner  
 Roberta Lipson  
 Burt Liss Charitable Fund  
 Barbara Brooke Manning

# Thank You (continued)

Andrew Lachman and Ruth Messinger

Albert Macovski

Sari Miller

F. Joshua Millman and Deborah Abel-Millman

Mark and Audrey Mlotek

Neubauer Family Foundation

Sarah O'Hagan

“The *Forward* brings Judaism to life like no other publication.”

– Benjamin Katz

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William Schneider

David and Patricia Shulman

Beth Sirull

Norma Solarz

Solutions Journalism Network

Regan Solmo and Geoff Brewer

Alan and Andrea Solow

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Elisa Spungen Bildner

Carolyn Starman Hessel

Shale Stiller

Julie and Lewis Stone

Howard J. Swibel and Gail S. Regenbogen

Joseph Tischler

Rachel Tiven and Seth Marnin

Heidi Urich and Benjamin Fincke

Roselin Wagner

David Wax

Deborah Waroff

Lisa Wolfe

Howard Wolfson

Moses Znaimer

“The *Forward* tells the Jewish human story as no other publication.”

– Harvey Levy

# Abraham Cahan Legacy Society

Abraham ["Ab"] Cahan was a visionary. When he founded the *Forward* in 1897, he changed American journalism forever and earned a place in the pantheon of America's greatest editors. His legacy of activism and hope for the Jewish future continues to inspire us today. In his honor, we have created the Abraham Cahan Legacy Society.

L'dor V'dor. For the *Forward* that means passing along our love of the truth and social justice, while strengthening Jewish identity for a whole new generation of young people. Making a legacy gift is a meaningful way to show your support of the *Forward's* mission while also accommodating your own personal, financial, estate-planning and philanthropic goals.

We thank those who joined the Abraham Cahan Legacy Society by making a legacy gift to the *Forward*.

**Dr. John R. Dreyer**

**Michael Eliastam**

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# Financial Summary

Unaudited

<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>2023</b>
Management	\$540,000
Fundraising	\$801,000
Digital Media English	\$4,944,000
Digital Media Yiddish	\$398,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,683,000</b>

<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>2023</b>
Advertising	\$319,000
Subscriptions	\$971,000
Fundraising	\$4,314,000
Other	\$17,000
Funds drawn from investment accounts	\$2,450,000
Change in net assets	(\$1,388,000)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$6,683,000</b>

# THE FORWARD ASSOCIATION, INC.

125 Maiden Lane, New York, NY 10038-5015



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