

COURAGE

Forward

INTEGRITY

2019 ANNUAL REPORT

ACCOUNTABILITY

YIDDISHKEIT

INDEPENDENCE

Living Our Values

Reporting with integrity and reveling in Jewish culture

Message from our CEO & Publisher, and Board Chair

Dear Friends,

As The Forward concluded the decade, we are incredibly proud of our significant impact on the Jewish community—and our hard work to reinvent this storied publication into a modern digital news outlet. This past year, our investigative reporting, innovative storytelling and sharp cultural coverage in English and Yiddish reached millions of readers, a third of whom are 35 and under.

After several years moving in this direction, 2019 was the year when The Forward pivoted to a fully digital organization, on the path to sustainability. To do this required vision, courage, and difficult decisions—and yet, 2019 was also the year that our commitment to this strategic direction started paying substantial dividends.

The first was receiving our largest donation in the history of The Forward, from the Craig Newmark Philanthropic Fund, in support of our digital transformation. His belief in The Forward's future galvanized additional contributors, and our fundraising revenue increased by more than 36% in 2019 from 2018.

Throughout the year, our courageous and informative stories captivated readers all over the world. As in previous years, we received recognition for our excellent reporting, garnering 15 Simon Rockower Awards—the Pulitzer Prize of Jewish journalism. We engaged millions of people digitally, and in person—our editors and leadership spoke all over the world sharing insights and moderating civil discourse on challenging issues.

We were beyond thrilled to bring on Jodi Rudoren as editor-in-chief. In just her first few months on the job, Jodi was invited to speak at the American Jewish Committee's Board of Governors meeting, the Anti-Defamation League's Never is Now conference, J Street's national conference, as well as more intimate events, like a conversation with A.G. Sulzberger, publisher of The New York Times, at Park Avenue Synagogue.

In order to build a strong foundation for our reinvention, we engaged staff and lay leaders in a collaborative process to reaffirm our mission and create a vision statement and company values to guide us through this new era.

Lastly, 2019 brought a carefully planned board leadership transition. After 10 years under Jake Morowitz's steady leadership, we are pleased to have elected a new board chair, Alan Silberstein, whose commitment and wisdom will be an incredible asset to begin this new decade.

Through increased clarity of vision, focus on essential work and external support, we enter 2020 surer than ever in our history and our commitment to continue being the most significant Jewish voice in American journalism.

Thank you and *zayt gezunt*,
Rachel & Alan





Rachel Fishman Feddersen
CEO & Publisher



Alan Silberstein
Board Chair



Craig Newmark's Generous Gift

In July, 2019 we were so grateful to have received a \$500,000 gift from Craigslist founder Craig Newmark,

propelling our work as a leading source for Jewish news and culture reporting. The grant is fueling our future as a fully digital publication, enabling us to strengthen our ability to collaborate with other Jewish organizations.

"I'm a proud supporter of fearless, independent journalism and have been a long-time fan of The Forward," Newmark said. "This 122-year-old organization is evolving for today's readers and I wanted to help strengthen their digital tools to increase readership among younger audiences. I'm excited to keep reading The Forward for years to come."



Jodi Rudoren becomes Editor-in-Chief

Inspired by The Forward's legacy and motivated by this "urgent moment in both Judaism and journalism,"

Jodi Rudoren took the helm as The Forward's editor-in-chief in September 2019 after more than two decades as a senior editor and digital leader at the New York Times. At The Times, Jodi served as Jerusalem bureau chief from 2012 through 2015, covering two Israeli elections and two wars in Gaza. She previously covered the 2004 American presidential campaign, and served as Chicago bureau chief, education correspondent and education editor, and deputy on both the Metropolitan and International desks, before joining the masthead as Associate Managing Editor for Audience Strategy.

Jodi is enthusiastic, brimming with ideas on addressing the critical challenges our communities face and committed to engaging our audience in important conversations in today's complicated and polarized digital world. We're thrilled to have her on board.

Mission, Vision, Values

With so much change at The Forward, in the journalism landscape, and in the Jewish world, one of the most important things we did in 2019 was to clarify our Mission, Vision and Values, which we share with you here. It was the first project Jodi worked on as editor-in-chief, joining an inspiring series of workshops on priorities and principles. It informs everything we do, and we hope it will deepen your understanding of why our brand of journalism matters so much to the Jewish community, the American public and our precious democracy.

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.

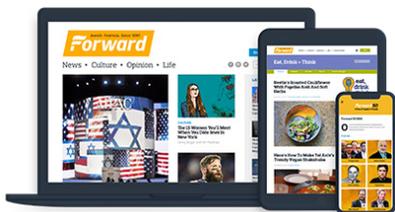
Accountability: Through rigorous, even-handed journalism, we hold leaders accountable to the people and communities they serve. At the same time, we believe we must continuously earn the public's trust by delivering on promises, operating with empathy, and upholding our core values.

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.

By The Numbers

Forward.com

2x as Popular as Competitor Sites
(Per Alexa Rank)



35% of our readers are under 35

NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

DEC 2019 **88,335** ↑ **13%**
DEC 2018 **78,434**

Fundraising

Donations ↑ **36%**

Number of Donors ↑ **5%**

Yiddish Site

פֿאַרװערטס

Youtube Channel Subscribers ↑ **34%**

Social

Twitter Followers English & Yiddish ↑ **12%**

Instagram Followers ↑ **77%**

Yiddish Facebook Followers ↑ **6%**

Awards



15 Rockower Awards
American Jewish Press Association



1 David Twersky Journalism Award

New Opinion Contributors



Deborah Lipstadt



Muhammad Sheahda



Tema Smith



Alex Zeldin



Ari Hoffman

Buzzworthy Partnerships



New Newsletters



Wide Range of Opinions

In 2019, an intense news year in the Jewish world, we rededicated ourselves to one of The Forward's core goals: providing a platform for civil discourse on the issues that divide our communities.

In this critical moment, we aim to engage a broad, diverse audience and challenge readers to think deeply about a variety of perspectives beyond their own experience by publishing a full spectrum of sophisticated, provocative opinion pieces—reflected below, in the variety of opinions on Bernie Sanders.



Of Course They're Accusing Bernie Sanders Of Anti-Semitism—Because He Supports Palestinians

Peter Beinart

I'm An Orthodox Jew. Why Is Bernie Sanders Whitewashing Violence Against Us?

Eli Steinberg

Bernie Sanders Alliance With Linda Sarsour Is An Insult To Jews

Matthew Shultz

Bernie Sanders' Oped Settles It: You Can Be Both Progressive And Zionist

Abe Silberstein

Leading Stories

The Forward is particularly proud of our outstanding reporting in 2019—breaking news, exclusive investigative pieces, in-depth cultural features, and a wide range of opinions across the Jewish spectrum.



Forward 50 2019

Forward Staff

The 25th installment of The Forward's annual list of influential American Jews, for the first time, including 14 names nominated by readers.



The Torah That Ended Up At A Goodwill Doesn't Belong To A Jew

Ari Feldman, Staff Writer

The bizarre story of how a mysterious torah auctioned by Goodwill belonged to a non-Jewish retired real estate agent.



In Pittsburgh, Archivists Work To Preserve The World's Response To Mass Violence

Molly Boigon, Investigative Reporter

A look into how archivists in Pittsburgh are working to preserve the thousands of artifacts that collectively document the world's response to the deadliest anti-Semitic attack in American history.



'Made In China' Finds The Orthodox Wig Industry

Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt, Life Editor

With most wigs averaging more than \$1,000, social media and global e-commerce are starting to push back against the monopoly of Orthodox wig shops, offering direct to consumer wigs made in China for a fraction of the cost.



A White Supremacist Murderer Devastated Chicago 20 Years Ago. Why Didn't Anything Change?

Talya Zax, Deputy Culture Editor

Over two days in July 1999, a white supremacist shot a Jewish teenager, killed two people and injured nine more. A look into what has happened in the twenty years since the violent attacks.



What Bernie Sanders Is Saying When He Won't Talk About Being Jewish

Batya Ungar-Sargon, Opinion Editor

An opinion piece on how Bernie Sanders claims his immigrant identity over his Jewish identity and the impact this has on Jewish voters.



Violent Attack Opens Years Of Quiet, Happy Growth In Jersey City's Hasidic Haven

Ari Feldman, Staff Writer

A mass shooting left six people dead in a growing Hasidic community in Jersey City, where families have been relocating in the past five years from expensive and crowded parts of Brooklyn.



Why Is This Facebook Group Trying To Shame The Most Jewish Town In America?

Helen Chernikoff, News Editor

A Facebook group is targeting Lakewood, America's most Jewish town, and the group's anonymous leaders deny claims of anti-Semitism.



Here's What It's Like To Celebrate The Jewish Sabbath On An Air Force Base

Aiden Pink, Deputy News Editor

A look into how Shabbat is observed on an Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas where 19 faiths are represented and there are many quirks of customs.

Participatory Journalism

At The Forward, we believe that readers should be central to creating our journalism, not just recipients of it. By welcoming feedback and encouraging dialogue, we're engaging community members in our work. And—these multi-directional conversations are structured to maintain our journalistic quality and integrity while deepening our readers' relationship with it.



'I Have Stopped Wearing My Magen David': 27 Jews On What It Feels Like To Be Afraid For Their Lives

Forward Staff

The Year In Review

From Los Angeles to Stockholm, through music, images, film and thought-provoking discussions, The Forward was "on the road" non-stop in 2019. Forward journalists presented topics which ranged from the serious to the humorous, and represented the scope, breadth and diversity of our coverage.



January 11

After Pittsburgh, Anti-Semitism As Seen From The Diaspora And Israel

At the Greenwich Reform Synagogue in Connecticut, Forward opinion editor Batya Ungar-Sargon spoke about what the Pittsburgh massacre taught us about the American Jewish community and the growing divide between the Diaspora and Israel.



January 15

Remembering the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

Forward Archivist Chana Pollack appeared as a panelist at the David Rubenstein Pavilion in New York City discussing the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire and how The Forward covered this historic event and its aftermath.



January 24-26

Fire in My Mouth

The Forward's archival materials about the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire were featured in Fire in My Mouth, Julia Wolfe's multi-media presentation performed by the NY Philharmonic. We hosted a 'Green Room' reception following the performance.



February 2-3

Yiddish For The New Millennium At Limmud Helsinki, Finland

Rukhl Schaechter, Forverts editor, was a key presenter at the Limmud annual Jewish cultural learning festival.



March 24

Meet Trailblazing Judge Ruchie Freier

Forward Life Editor Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt traveled to Baltimore's Ner Tamid Greenspring Valley Synagogue to engage in conversation with Judge Ruchie Freier, the world's first ever female Hasidic judge.



April 8
Yiddish Tour Of 'Lost & Found - A Family Photo Album'

The Forverts, in conjunction with the Yeshiva University Museum co-presented a tour of the exhibition "Lost & Found - A Family Photo Album". Yiddish literature scholar Ruth Wisse led this tour in Yiddish and shared the remarkable story of a pre-war family album.



April 10
The Musical Legacy of Eastern European Jews

Chana Pollack gave a lively presentation at the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (NY), where she showcased the Forverts' newspaper ephemera. Through archival ads and photos about music, she illustrated how Jewish immigrants were offered a platform for entry into the dream of America.

June 3
"Why Democrats and Republicans are diverging on Israel"

On June 3rd, Lisa and Josh Greer of Los Angeles graciously hosted a lively discussion featuring Opinion Editor, Batya Ungar-Sargon and Peter Beinart. Over 70 people were in attendance as Batya and Peter debated this controversial issue.



June 25
Screening Of 'To A More Perfect Union: U.S. v Windsor'

The Forward and the JCC Manhattan co-presented a screening of "To A More Perfect Union: U.S. v Windsor," the documentary exploring the history of the Gay Rights and Marriage Equality movement, from the perspective of Edie Windsor and her attorney, Roberta Kaplan. Following the film, Forward writer-at-large Jane Eisner interviewed Kaplan.



July 28
San Francisco Jewish Film Festival Closing Reception

As a media sponsor of the SFJFF, The Forward held a wine and hors d'oeuvres reception at the famed Castro Theater following a fascinating week of films.

October 23
Opening Reception for "Pressed: Images From The Jewish Daily Forward"

In conjunction with the Museum at Eldridge Street, The Forward exhibited pieces chosen from the our vast archival collection in the "Pressed" Exhibit.



November 16-17
Yiddish Forward In The Digital Age At Limmud Stockholm

Rukhl Schaechter was the keynote speaker at the Limmud Stockholm conference, where she gave three talks: "How the Yiddish Forward Is Being Transformed in the Digital Age," "The Powerful Role Women Played in the Yiddish-Speaking Shtetl," and "How 'Shtisel' Has Changed the Way We Look at Haredi Jews."

November 21
Never Is Now

Jodi Rudoren moderated the opening panel of the ADL's signature conference on anti-Semitism, "Never Is Now" at the Javits Center in New York City. The panel focused on a 360 degree view of anti-Semitism and included panelists, Bret Stephens, New York Times op-ed columnist, Bari Weiss, New York Times op-ed staff editor and writer and Eric Ward, executive director at the Western States Center.

Taking the Lead: A Celebration of the Forward's Future

On Nov. 21st, The Forward celebrated a new era highlighting some of the exciting changes that took place in 2019. Our honorees included the young socially-minded entrepreneur, Josh Tanenbaum; the James Beard award-winning chef and co-owner of CookNSolo Restaurant Partners, Michael Solomonov; and the famed litigator suing white supremacists, Roberta Kaplan. Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney was presented with a special citation for her introduction of a bill to federally fund Holocaust education in public schools.

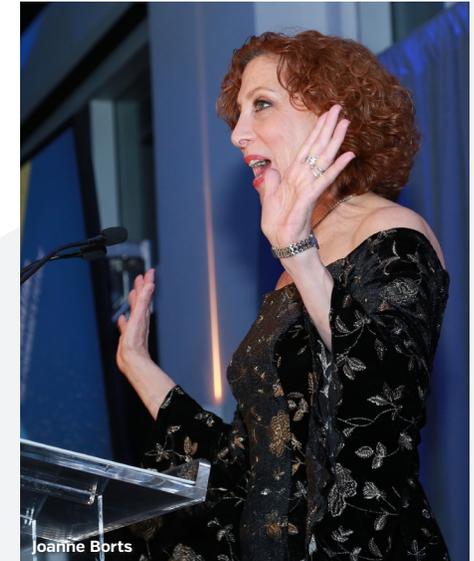
More than 200 guests honored these inspirational leaders and raised their glasses to toast our new editor-in-chief, Jodi Rudoren.



Alex Zafran, Josh Tanenbaum, Robyn Polansky, Avital Chizhik-Goldschmidt, Adena Philips, Shira Mazor, Michael Littenberg Brown



Jodi Rudoren speaking to the crowd



Joanne Borts



Michael Solomonov



Rachel Fishman Feddersen, Josh Tanenbaum, Roberta Kaplan, Michael Solomonov, Jodi Rudoren



Group from Temple Ner Tamid Congregation in Bloomfield, NJ



Rachel Fishman Feddersen, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, Haifa Just-Michael and Sam Norich



Gala crowd



Liz Mirovich



Josh Tanenbaum



Sam Norich, Roberta Kaplan, Harvey Sigelbaum, Fred Mitterhoff

Thank You

Thank you to each and every one of our 2,526 donors. We are very grateful to our generous supporters who contributed nearly \$2,613,000, and enable The Forward to deliver high quality news and culture reporting every day.

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"The Forward is really important to me, my most important link to Judaism. The Forward is my anchor to Judaism...like many others have travelled a long journey of spirituality...but no longer affiliated with any synagogue...for deeper philosophical, political and literary aspects of Judaism, the Forward is my place. Thanks for your work and this great source of Jewish news."



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"I can't let the week pass without acknowledging everything The Forward has done recently in documenting the phenomenon of bigotry against traditionally religious Jews, insisting that it be brought into open discussion, separating it from the all-consuming flames of electoral politics, and beginning to formulate a semantics for rational discussion of some of the surrounding problems.

In no small measure because of the Forward's work, we are starting to feel that we can expect others to see us as people again."

Moshe Arieff

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Pride of Judea

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Digital Media English	3,551,000
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Total	5,826,000

REVENUE	2019
Advertising	302,000
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Funds drawn from investment accounts	2,449,000
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