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Hebrew Watchman

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DECEMBER 9, 2021

VOL. 100, NO. 14

The Memphis Jewish Community Center Receives \$3 Million Gift from The Plough Foundation



Memphis Jewish Community Center plans a springtime renovation to the back of the property

For more than 60 years the Plough Foundation has been a cornerstone of philanthropy throughout the Memphis community and has been a generous supporter of the Memphis Jewish Community Center (MJCC). In August of 2019, the Foundation announced that it would be granting its remaining assets to local nonprofit organizations and closing its operations within four years. The Plough Foundation has made a generous gift of \$3 million to the MJCC to develop its outdoor space. The MJCC's plans include the construction of a new multi-use building with both indoor and outdoor space in the current campground area, a 4-foot-wide asphalt track that will skirt the entire outdoor space surrounding the fields, a permanent outdoor pickleball facility that will include eight courts, and new drainage systems to ensure full use of the entirety of the outdoor field space.

This project and the new facilities will transform the way that the Memphis Jewish Community Center is able to meet the needs of its members and program participants and accommodate steadily increasing membership and program participation.

"This exciting project to expand usage of the MJCC's outdoor space will allow us to offer new and innovative programs for the community and enhance so many of our existing programs," said MJCC President and CEO Larry Skolnick. "Through the foresight of the Board of Directors in its strategic planning process and the incredible generosity of the Plough Foundation, we will be providing for a continued and strong future for the MJCC as we begin work on this major endeavor in the coming months."

The MJCC's plans have been in the works since 2017, when it completed a comprehensive strategic planning process. One of the cornerstones of this project was the development of the outdoor space, but due to the COVID pandemic, those plans were temporarily put on hold. This \$3 million gift has allowed

the MJCC to put its focus back on the future and best provide for the current and expanding needs of its members and participants. Construction on the new space is set to begin in the spring of 2022.

"I am so pleased and proud that this key strategic vision will now come to light and am so thankful to all who are making it happen," said past Board Chair Elise Jordan, who facilitated the strategic planning process.

In conversations between the Plough Foundation and the MJCC leadership, it became apparent that the foundation was looking to make a long-term impact on the community with its final grants and that the MJCC's strategic planning initiative of better utilizing and developing the outdoor space was consistent with this goal.

"This extraordinary gift from the Plough Foundation will be transformational to the MJCC," explained MJCC Board Chair Robin Orgel. "Though the Plough Foundation is winding down its operations, the legacy and generosity of its founder, Abe Plough, is poised to reach well into the future and touch generations of Jewish Memphians through this final gift to the Memphis Jewish Community Center." **HW**

Young Israel Thanks First Responders on Thanksgiving



YI thanks the many children and parents who joined together at Shul on Sunday morning, November 21, to create appreciative cards and posters, and to prepare and bake 31 mouth-watering pumpkin and sweet potato pies. Taking part in these activities was a fun and meaningful activity for everyone involved.



More than 70 children and adults brought pies, which they helped make, to Fire Station 21 By Rabbi Akiva Males

Thanksgiving is a wonderful and obvious time to stop and say 'Thank You' to some very important people whom we don't often recognize – our local firefighters, police officers, and Sheriff's deputies. After all, rather than spending Thanksgiving at home with their families, those hard-working heroes spend that day on duty keeping our neighborhoods safe and secure. Six years ago, Young Israel (YI) began the beautiful tradition of sharing some Shul-made pies and 'Thank You' cards with our local firefighters on Thanksgiving. This heart-warming program, named 'Pies for Our Guys,' has been very well received. In 2020, YI added the Memphis Police Department and the Shelby County Sheriff's Office to our list of pie recipients, and we excitedly continued the tradition this year. On Thanksgiving morning, Thursday, November 25, Young Israel brought more than 70 children and adults together to say "Thank You" to our firefighters at Fire Station 21 (located just next to Kroger on S. Mendenhall Road).

The children presented many of their Shul-made pies, as well as their hand-crafted Thanksgiving cards and posters to the very appreciative – and noticeably touched – firefighters. The firemen gladly treated our entire group to a tour of their fire station, gave us a close look at their equipment, and even let the children climb into their ambulance.

During our visit, an actual call came in. Everyone quickly moved out of the way, and we watched the firefighters quickly gear-up and take off in two of their fire engines. Witnessing our first responders in action on Thanksgiving helped the children gain an even deeper appreciation of our local heroes.

Following the program at the fire sta-

Rabbi Males delivers pies to the Sheriff's deptartment

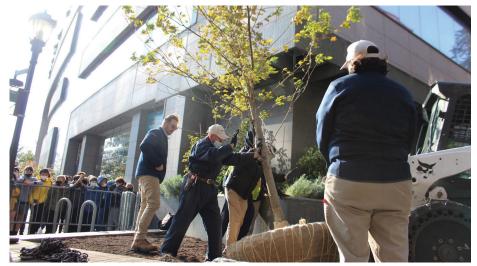
tion, I drove more Shul-made pies out to the grateful deputies of the Shelby County Sheriff's Office in Arlington. The last batch of YI's Thanksgiving pies were delivered to the appreciative Memphis Police Department officers stationed on Appling Farms Parkway.

Visiting and thanking our local firefighters and law enforcement professionals on Thanksgiving made Thanksgiving so much more meaningful for all parties involved.

Young Israel thanks everyone who helped sponsor this heart-warming program. YI also thanks the many children and parents who helped us express our appreciation to our community's first responders.

Young Israel of Memphis' Rabbi Akiva Males can be reached at rabbi@ yiom.org **HW**

A Tree That Survived the Holocaust Gains a New Life in **New York City**



Students from Battery Park City School watch as the silver maple was planted in Battery Park outside the Museum of Jewish Heritage. The dedication ceremony was held on Dec. 2. Credit: Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

By Julia Gergely

(New York Jewish Week via JTA) -In January of 1943, Irma Lauscher, a teacher at the Theresienstadt concentration camp in Czechoslovakia, smuggled a tree into the camp so that the Jewish children imprisoned by the Nazis could celebrate Tu B'Shevat in a secret ceremony. The children used their water rations to nurture the sapling.

Of the 15,000 children who were imprisoned in Theresienstadt during the Holocaust, fewer than 200 survived. But the tree was still standing when the camp was liberated in 1945, and a sign was placed at its base marking it as a symbol of resilience.

"As the branches of this tree, so the branches of our people!" said the sign under the tree, which survivors named "The Tree of Life." Lauscher, who survived the Holocaust, eventually was buried alongside the original tree in 1985.

In the 1980s, branch saplings were cut from the tree and planted in Jerusalem, as well as in San Francisco, Chicago and Philadelphia to accompany a traveling exhibit of treasures nearly lost in the Holocaust.

Now, New York City - home to the largest community of Holocaust survivors and their descendants of any city outside Israel - will also nurture a descendant of the original tree. Dr. Roger Pomerantz, a Jewish philanthropist who owns a farm in Pennsylvania that holds seven trees grown from cuttings of the original tree, has donated one to the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Battery Park City.

"The Children's Tree," as it will be known, will be unveiled to the public

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on December 2 during a dedication ceremony held jointly by the Museum of Jewish Heritage and the Battery Park City Authority. Currently 15 feet tall, the silver maple tree will have a permanent home in Battery Park City, in front of the museum.

"We want everybody in Battery Park City to be able to walk by and see a piece of history," Jack Kliger, the president and CEO of the Museum of Jewish Heritage, told the New York Jewish Week. "To not only remember but to understand what resilience means in the face of tremendous odds."

Calling the project "a labor of love," Kliger said transporting the tree involved hiring a horticulturist to uproot the tree from Pennsylvania and working with Battery Park City Authority to find the right space for the tree.

As at Theresienstadt, the tree will be cared for by children – in this case, students at PS/IS 276: The Battery Park City School, a public elementary and middle school located just across the street from the museum. In collaboration with the museum, the school will make the tree part of an ongoing curriculum in Holocaust education.

"They were planting a tree that would live in a world that they would not live in, as sort of a physical expression of belief in the future and a form of spiritual resistance," said Michael Berenbaum, a Holocaust historian who was instrumental in the transplant of the tree to New York, of the imprisoned children who cared for the original Tree of Life.

"Now their legacy can continue," he added.

ТНЕ Hebrew Watch

Established September, 1925 By Leo I. Goldberger (1902-1989)

MAILING ADDRESS THE HEBREW WATCHMAN PO Box 770846 Memphis, TN 38177-0846

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THE HEBREW WATCHMAN (USPS #807-360) is published weekly every Thursday for \$36 per year by JEWISH LIVING OF THE SOUTH, Inc. THE HEBREW WATCHMAN PO Box 770846 Memphis, TN 38177-0846 Periodical postage paid at

> Memphis, Tenn. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to: THE HEBREW WATCHMAN PO Box 770846 Memphis, TN 38177-0846

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Memphis and Mid-South \$36 Out-of-State \$50 **Payable in Advance**

Submissions Send editorial submissions (calendar items, news releases, event photos, and letters to the editor) at least 9 days prior to publication date to info@hebrewwatchman.com

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The Hebrew Watchman is a Member of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, and Jewish News Service

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

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Weekly Torah Portion: Vayigash

"Resilience is represented by both humans as well as trees," Kliger said, comparing their abilities to survive as well as endure such a long, roundabout journey to New York.

Speakers at the ceremony included Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the U.S. representative to the United Nations; Theresienstadt survivor Fred Terna; Czech Consul General Arnošt Kareš; and Battery Park City Authority President and CEO B.J. Jones. The student choir at PS/IS 276 also performed. HW



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'Economist' Ranks Tel Aviv World's Most Expensive City



The Tel Aviv coast and skyline, Feb.19, 2018. Credit: Yossi Zamir/Flash90.

(JNS) – Tel Aviv is the world's most expensive city, The Economist reported last Wednesday.

A strong shekel and price increases for goods and services have moved Israel's "White City" to the top spot this year – up four from 2020 – replacing Paris, according to the Worldwide Cost of Living Survey from the newspaper's sister company, the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

The French capital last year shared the top slot with Hong Kong and Zurich, the EIU survey found. It currently shares second place with Singapore. The annual survey compares the prices of more than 200 products and services in 173 cities globally, The Economist said, explaining that it is used primarily by companies negotiating compensation when relocating staff, but can serve to gauge local and worldwide trends.

The financial news outlet further stated that pandemic-related supply-chain problems have pushed the price of goods up in many places in the world, pointing to the fact that the cost of shipping was four times higher in September than it was during the same month last year. **HW**

THE HEBREW WATCHMAN Serving the Memphis community for 96 Years

Temple Israel's "Exploring Judaism" Class Returns Via Zoom

Temple Israel's "Exploring Judaism" class offers lifelong Jews an opportunity to refresh their Jewish knowledge.

Led by Temple Israel's clergy and master teachers, this course is for those born Jewish, interested in Judaism, contemplating conversion or entering a marriage with a Jewish partner. We will explore Jewish beliefs, practices, and philosophy through a modern lens. This class is a required prerequisite for those contemplating conversion to Judaism and is also highly recommended for lifelong Jews seeking to grow and learn more about Judaism on an adult level.

Topics will include Jewish ethics and values, the principles of Reform Judaism, creating a modern Jewish life, understanding what is behind the High Holy Days and Jewish festivals, the cycle of Jewish life from birth to death and mourning, different understandings of God, prayer and liturgy, sacred Jewish texts, a timeline of Jewish history from the Bible through the Enlightenment; antisemitism and the Shoah, Israel and Zionism, the denominations of American Judaism and Judaism in the 21st century.

Class begins on January 5 and will run every Wednesday evening from January 5 through April 20, 2022, at 7-8 p.m. on Zoom. To sign up or learn more, visit timemphis.org/exploring. Please email Lynn Owen at lynno@timemphis.org with any questions. **HW**

Bones of Herzl's Grandparents to be Brought to Israel



Austro-Hungarian journalist and founder of modern-day Zionism Theodor Herzl. Source: YouTube.

By Yori Yalon

(Israel Hayom via JNS) – The president of the Republika Srpska of the Serbian Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina agreed last Monday to help exhume the bones of the grandfather Republika Srpska President Željka Cvijanović agrees to the request to exhume the remains of the grandfather and grandmother of the father of modern political Zionism and have them sent to Israel.

and grandmother of Theodor Herzl, the father of modern political Zionism, and send them to Israel.

President Željka Cvijanović visited Mount Herzl earlier last week.

During her visit, she laid a wreath at Herzl's grave, toured the Herzl Museum, received an explanation of his Zionist vision and finally signed a guest book that many visiting heads of state previously signed.

During the visit, Yaakov Hagoel, chairman of the World Zionist Organization, said that Herzl's grandparents, from whom he drew his Zionist inspiration, were buried in her country, and asked the president to help bring their bones to Israel.

After the establishment of the state, Herzl's remains were exhumed from his tomb in Vienna and reburied on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem in August 1949, with his parents and sister by his side. Many years later, in September 2006, the bones of his two children were also brought to Israel and buried next to those of their father.

In 2007, the remains of Herzl's only grandson, Stephen Theodore Norman, ere exhumed from a Washington cemetery for burial in Jerusalem. Herzl's paternal grandparents, who inspired his Zionist conception, remained buried in the small cemetery in the town of Zemun, on the outskirts of the Serbian capital Belgrade. Born in 1805, Herzl's grandfather, Shimon Loeb Herzl, was an ultra-Orthodox Jew who served as a rabbi in various honorary priesthoods in the Zemun community in Serbia. He was enthusiastic about the idea of Zionism, and actively advocated in his community for the idea of establishing a Jewish state in the land of Israel. The town's spiritual leader, Rabbi Yehuda Alkalai of Zemun, one of the forerunners of Zionism, influenced Herzl's grandfather and guided him to the vision of political Zionism, which he then, evidently, passed on to his grandson.



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This report first appeared in Israel Hayom. **HW**

Is the Biden-Bennett Honeymoon Over? Here are 6 US-Israel Issues that are Raising Tensions.



President Joe Biden meets Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in the White House, Aug. 27, 2021.

Credit: Avi Ohayon/Israel Government Press Office

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) – "Behind closed doors" is a phrase that crops up a lot in conversation with senior U.S. and Israeli officials these days. That's the place both sides want to settle disagreements.

So far, that strategy has worked to repair the structure of the diplomatic relationship between U.S. Democrats and the Israeli government, frayed by years of open and sometimes heated contentiousness.

Barack Obama and Benjamin Netanyahu in particular repeatedly clashed in public. But despite their ideological differences on paper, President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett have projected a convivial and united front.

"Biden, I think it's visceral with him, given his historic commitment to Israel, and also not wanting a repeat of the Obama years," said David Makovsky, a fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a think tank with ties to both the U.S. and Israeli governments.

"And with Bennett and Lapid, they don't want to repeat the Netanyahu years."

Still, an array of issues have begun to swirl over the past several months that threaten the current calm.

Bennett has allowed for the construction of thousands of new settler homes. Biden is pushing to reopen the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem, formerly the principal venue for U.S.-Palestinian relations. Last month the United States sanctioned two Israeli spyware companies.

Then there is the ongoing strife over Iran's nuclear program, a point of contention that those who analyze the U.S.-Israel relationship say could eventually blow the doors wide open. el is concerned."

Here are the issues that could drive a wedge between the two countries.

Iran

This week, talks on what conditions the United States wants to see before reentering the Iran deal, known formally as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, resume in Vienna. The JCPOA swaps sanctions relief for Iran rolling back its nuclear program.

Former President Donald Trump, with Netanyahu's encouragement, exited the deal in 2018, reimposing suspended sanctions and adding hundreds of new ones. Iran retaliated, suspending some of its compliance with the deal.

Biden campaigned on reentering the deal brokered in 2015, when he was vice president, seeing it as the best means of stopping a nuclear weapon. Bennett and Lapid are skeptical but have said they are willing to wait and see if Biden negotiates better terms with Iran.

Israeli officials have said they believe Iran is weeks away from nuclear weapons capability; the country is enriching uranium to 60% purity, perilously close to the 90% needed for weaponization. Last week, Axios reported, Israel warned the United States that Iran is on the verge of 90% enrichment.

Makovsky said what Iran does this week could set off any number of calculations from the United States and Israel that could lead to open confrontation between the allies.

"I think the U.S.-Israel relationship will be tested in terms of how each side responds to this uncertainty," Makovsky said.

Settlements

The call that Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz took Oct. 26 was the first of its kind in almost five years: There was a U.S. secretary of state on the line, livid about the announcement that week that Israel had greenlighted more than 3,000 new units in the West Bank. Some were located in "E1," the corridor that separates the Maaleh Adumim settlement from Jerusalem, and which Palestinians say is critical to the existence of a viable Palestinian state – the Biden administration's favored outcome to the decades-long conflict.

An anonymous Israeli aide described the call by saying "The U.S. gave us a yellow card," Axios reported. In soccer, a yellow card is a strong warning over conduct handed from a referee to a player; two yellow cards in one game equals an ejection.

In other words, Blinken's dressing down was just a warning, not a signal of a new status quo in U.S.-Israel relations.

Palestinian NGOs

Last month, Gantz designated six leading Palestinian human rights organizations operating in the West Bank as terrorist groups. The designation would allow Israel's government to shut the groups down, although it's not yet clear if the government has taken those steps.

Gantz argued that the NGOs are affiliated with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, designated by the State Department as a terrorist group. But the international condemnation of the move was swift.

The Biden administration also said it was caught off-guard by the designation. Anonymous Israeli officials countered that the United States was forewarned and that intelligence about the groups had been shared. European officials have said the intelligence they have seen is not persuasive.

The U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, has signaled that the Biden administration remains less than convinced by whatever intelligence Israel was proferring. She has made a point of expressing support for Palestinian NGOs.

"This week, I had the chance to meet with civil society leaders in Ramallah," Thomas-Greenfield said on Twitter on Nov. 20 after a visit to Israel and the West Bank. "I was inspired by their work to advance democracy, human rights, and economic opportunity for the Palestinian people. We support Palestinian NGOs' role monitoring human rights abuses wherever they occur."

Last Tuesday, Thomas-Greenfield told the United Nations Security Council that settler attacks created a "serious security situation" for Palestinians and said she had raised it with Israeli officials.

The National quoted her as saying she had heard of "Israeli settlers attacking Palestinians, ransacking homes and destroying property in the West Bank" and that "this is an issue that I discussed extensively with Israeli counterparts." al would put the Bennett government in the position of acknowledging a Palestinian claim to the city – the third rail in Israeli politics.

The old consulate predated Israel's existence, which meant that until Trump closed it, there was no need to seek Israel's approval for its ongoing function. That's no longer the case, according to Lara Friedman, the president of the Foundation for Middle East Peace think tank, who from 1992-1994 was a U.S. diplomat at the consulate.

"A diplomatic mission operates as, literally, an island of foreign sovereignty within the territory of the host country, staffed by foreign diplomats who (for the most part) enjoy immunity from the jurisdiction of the host government," Friedman wrote last month in her weekly roundup of congressional action related to the Middle East. "No nation can simply rent/buy a property in a foreign country and declare it, unilaterally, under their own country's sovereignty. The host country must consent to giving up its sovereignty to a foreign nation."

Israeli officials say that they are seeking a way out that would save face for both sides, perhaps by opening a consulate in an area of the West Bank not seen as Jerusalem.

Spyware

The Biden administration this month sanctioned two Israeli spyware companies, NSO group and Candira, saying that repressive governments are using the tools to "threaten the rules-based international order." Apple sued NSO for selling its cell phone hacking spyware to governments that used it to spy on activists and journalists.

Israel's Defense Ministry must approve exports of Israeli security technology, and Biden officials have made clear they want answers. Nevertheless, the Biden administration says no actions against Israel's government are forthcoming.

"We look forward to further discussions with the government of Israel about ensuring that these companies" products are not used to target human rights defenders, journalists and others who shouldn't be targeted," said Ned Price, a State Department spokesman.

China

One issue that has simmered over from the Trump to the Biden administrations: Israel's increasing trade with China.

Like Trump, Biden is wary of what he sees as China's increased belligerency and is set on confronting the country. As of now, he is considering a diplomatic boycott of next year's Olympics in Bei-

"The Iran issue is where the two parties don't control the developments," Makovsky said. "And that's where Isra-

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The Jerusalem consulate

Biden campaigned on reopening the U.S. consulate in Jerusalem, which was the site of U.S.-Palestinian relations until Trump closed it in 2019. Both Bennett and Lapid, Israel's more centrist foreign minister who is slated to rotate into the prime minister role in 2023, have said that can't happen.

The Biden administration says it is determined to make good on the pledge, which the president sees as key to reviving Israeli-Palestinian peace talks toward a two-state outcome.

Lapid has sought to persuade his counterpart Antony Blinken that forcing the issue could endanger the Bennett-Lapid government.

That's because there's no way the consulate could reopen without explicit Israeli approval and giving that approv-

jing.

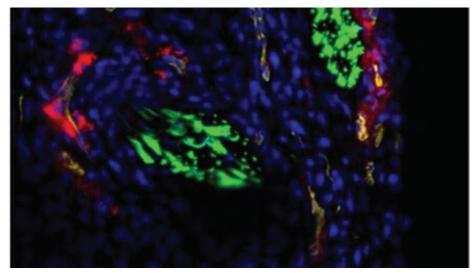
Both the Biden and Trump administrations made it clear to Israel that it was expected as an ally to roll back its ties with China, especially in areas of infrastructure that risk exposing U.S. technology.

But Israel has yet to alter its course. In October, Israel refused to sign a U.N. statement condemning China's treatment of the Uighurs, a Muslim minority group in China that has been forced into "re-education camps," which some have likened to concentration camps.

China was perhaps the most sensitive issue at a meeting between Lapid and Blinken in October.

"The importance of China to Israel's economy is very substantial, and we have to find a way to discuss this subject in a way that does not harm Israel's interests," an official close to Lapid said at the time. **HW**

Innovative Breast-Cancer Treatment Uses Anesthesia of Nervous System Around Tumor



The research on the cover of the magazine "Science Advances." Credit: Kaduri et al., Sci. Adv. 2021; 7: eabj5435.

(JNS) – Researchers at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology have developed an innovative treatment for breast cancer based on analgesic nanoparticles that target the nervous system. The study, published in Science Advances, was led by Professor Avi Schroeder and Ph.D. student Maya Kaduri of the Wolfson Faculty of Chemical Engineering.

Breast cancer is one of the most common cancers in women, and despite breakthroughs in diagnosis and treatment, approximately 1,000 women in Israel die of the disease per year. About 15 percent of them are under the age of 50. Worldwide, it causes some 685,000 deaths annually.

Schroeder has years of experience in developing innovative cancer treatments, including ones for breast cancer – specifically, triple-negative breast cancer, an aggressive type characterized by rapid cell division with a higher risk of metastasis. Technologies developed in his lab include novel methods for encapsulating drug molecules in nanoparticles that transport the drug to the tumor and release it inside without damaging healthy tissue.

The researchers found that cancer cells have a reciprocal relationship with the nerve cells around them; the cancer cells stimulate infiltration of nerve cells into the tumor, and this infiltration stimulates cancer-cell proliferation, growth and migration.

In other words, the cancer cells recruit the nerve cells for their purposes.

Based on these findings, the researchers developed a treatment that targets the tumor through the nerve cells based

ulate increased formation of new blood vessels around them so that they receive oxygen and nutrients, but the structure of these blood vessels is damaged and contains nano-sized holes that enable penetration of nanoparticles. The cancerous tissue is characterized by poor lymphatic drainage, which further increases the accumulation of the particles in the tissue."

Therefore, she explains, "the anesthetizing particles we developed move through the bloodstream without penetrating healthy tissue. Only when they reach the damaged blood vessels of the tumor do they leak out, accumulate around the nerve cells of the cancerous tissue and disconnect them from the cancer cells. The fact that this is a very focused, precise treatment enables us to insert significant amounts of anesthetic into the body because there is no fear that it will harm healthy and vital areas of the nervous system."

In experiments on cancer-cell cultures and in the treatment of mice, the new technology inhibited not only tumor development but also metastasis. The researchers estimate that these findings may be relevant for the treatment of breast cancer in humans. **HW**



Bornblum Jewish Community School's 6th grade students Sophie Rossen (bottom L) and Nava VanderWalde (bottom R) presented to Jewish Community Partners a beautiful menorah they created as part of a school-wide project to spread the light of Chanukah across the Memphis community.

Gal Gadot Movie Becomes Most-Watched Film in Netflix History



Israeli actress Gal Gadot, star of the Netflix film "Red Notice." Source: Screenshot

By Ami Friedman

(Israel Hayom via JNS) – "Red Notice," starring Israeli actress Gal Gadot, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson and Ryan Reynolds is now officially Netflix's most-watched film of all time, surpassing the previous record-holder, "Bird Box."

The action-comedy heist film has clocked 328 million hours of total viewership, against 282 million hours for the 2018 movie, "Bird Box," starring Sandra Bullock.

"Red Notice" tells the story of an FBI profiler (Johnson) who must partner with the world's greatest art thief (Reynolds) in a daring heist, in order to catch a most-wanted criminal, played by Gadot.

Released in theaters last weekend, "Red Notice" also registered the biggest opening weekend for a Netflix film.

This report first appeared in Israel Hayom. **HW**



Human Spirit

on injecting nanoparticles containing anesthetic into the bloodstream. The nanoparticles travel through the bloodstream towards the tumor, accumulate around the nerve cells in the cancerous tissue, and paralyze the local nerves and communication between the nerve cells and the cancer cells. The result: significant inhibition of tumor development and of metastasis to the lungs, brain and bone marrow.

The nanoparticles simulate the cell membrane and are coated with special polymers that disguise them from the immune system and enable a long circulation time in the bloodstream. Each such particle, which is around 100 nanometers in diameter, contains the anesthetic.

"We know how to create the exact size of particles needed, and that is critical because it's the key to penetrating the tumor," says Kaduri. "Tumors stim-

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UN Adopts Three Resolutions Condemning Israel, Ignores Jewish Ties to Temple Mount

(JNS) – The U.N. General Assembly passed three resolutions last week that targeted Israel, which brings the total to 14 resolutions being adopted in the next month that single out the Jewish state.

"The U.N's assault on Israel with a torrent of one-sided resolutions is surreal," said UN Watch executive director Hillel Neuer after the three resolutions were adopted last Wednesday. "It's absurd that in the year 2021, out of some 20 U.N. General Assembly resolutions that criticize countries, 70 percent are focused on one single country – Israel. What drives these lopsided condemnations is a powerful political agenda to demonize the Jewish state."

One of the resolutions from last Wednesday refers to the Temple Mount, Judaism's holiest site, only by its Muslim name, "Haram al-Sharif." Another resolution solely puts the blame on Israel for the lack of peace in the Middle East and makes no mention of terrorist attacks and human-rights violations by the Palestinian Authority, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

The resolutions were adopted two days after the United Nations held its annual "International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People" on Nov. 29.

Neuer said France, Germany, Sweden and other European Union states are expected to support almost all of the 14 resolutions against Israel.

He added that "the same European nations have failed to introduce a single UNGA resolution on the human-rights situation in China, Venezuela, Saudi Arabia, Cuba, Turkey, Pakistan, Vietnam, Algeria or on 170 other countries. Where's the supposed E.U. concern for international law and human rights?"

UN Watch recently launched a detailed

database that documents the U.N.'s bias against Israel. It revealed that since 2015, the General Assembly has passed 115 resolutions condemning Israel and only 45 against other countries.

The Conference of Presidents condemned the U.N. resolution omitting the

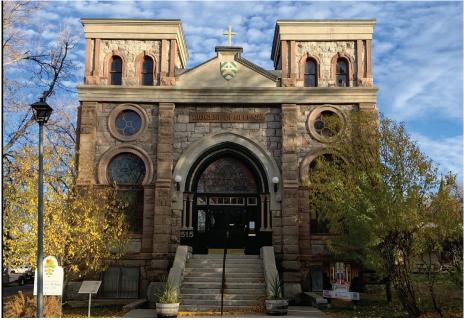
Since 2015, the U.N. General Assembly has passed 115 resolutions condemning Israel and only 45 against other countries.

Temple Mount designation.

"We are deeply disturbed by the deliberate and offensive omission of the 'Temple Mount' designation in the 'Jerusalem resolution,' passed by the United Nations General Assembly, which effectively denies both Jewish and Christian connection to one of the most sacred sites for all three faith communities," said Dianne Lob, chair; William Daroff, CEO; and Malcolm Hoenlein, vice chair of the Conference of Presidents.

They emphasized that "the vote sets a dangerous moral precedent that is both historically inaccurate and detracts from critical efforts to promote inclusivity and peace in the region. We welcome the Biden administration and the governments of Australia, Canada, Hungary, Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru and Palau for rejecting this shameful and false resolution, and call upon other nations to oppose resolutions that unfairly single out and condemn Israel while needlessly exacerbate political tensions." **HW**

Jewish Community in Helena, Montana, Seeks to Buy Back Synagogue Building Sold for \$1 in the 1930s



The Montana Jewish Project is trying to purchase the Temple Emanu-El building, now owned by the Helena Catholic Diocese, and turn it into a community center. Credit: Montana Jewish Project

By Shira Hanau

(JTA) – It's been 86 years since the Jewish community of Helena, Montana, sold its first synagogue, Temple Emanu-El, to the city of Helena for just one dollar. Now, the small Jewish community that remains in the town is trying to buy it for nearly \$1 million from the Helena Catholic Diocese, which purchased the building in 1981.

Rebecca Stanfel, a member of the community who is leading the effort to raise the necessary funds to purchase the building, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that she had long hoped to restore the building to its original purpose as a gathering place for Helena's Jewish community.

"For years, I parked outside the former synagogue, looking at the cross affixed on top, and wondering what might be possible – some day. Now, we are one step closer to making this a reality," she said.

If purchased by the Montana Jewish Project, the nonprofit established by Stanfel and others to purchase the building, the synagogue would serve as a community center and host cultural events and holiday celebrations. Stanfel also hopes to establish an exhibit dedicated to the history of Montana's Jewish communities.

Though today's Jewish community in Helena is small, the capitol city was once home to a large Jewish community thanks to the gold rush of the 1860s. The cornerstone of Temple Emanu-El was laid in 1891, a time when hundreds of Jews still flocked to the Reform synagogue to celebrate holidays. The synagogue was built to accommodate 500 worshippers.

But within just a few decades, many of the town's Jews had moved on, leaving the much smaller community unable to afford the building's upkeep. In 1935, the community sold the building to the town for just one dollar. The city removed the building's distinctive decorative copper domes and turned the building into a social services office building before selling it to the Helena Catholic Diocese in 1981.

The group has until February 2022 to raise 75% of the necessary funds in order to seal a deal with the Diocese that was signed last week. **HW**



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Meet the Jews of The Grand Canyon and Rural Arizona, Where Jewish Life Takes Dedication



Rabbi Nina Perlmutter officiates a wedding overlooking the Grand Canyon in 2017. Credit: Tom Brodersen

By Shira Hanau

(Jewish News of Greater Phoenix via JTA) – Stan Coffield and his wife were pretty open-minded when deciding where they would retire.

"I wanted someplace that was lower cost of living [than New York] – warm, dry, near a body of water that I could water-ski on, and had some manner of Jewish presence," Coffield said.

In 2010, they moved into their house in Lake Havasu City, about 200 miles northwest of Phoenix. Even though the synagogue is small, he hasn't looked back since.

"When my wife and I first moved out here, you would turn a street corner and really be tempted to just pull over to the side of the road and stare; it looks like a picture postcard," he said. "And you go three blocks, and it's another picture postcard."

He and his wife are two of Lake Havasu's nearly 60,000 residents, according to the U.S. Census Bureau, and part of the roughly 30 members of the area's only synagogue, Temple Beth Sholom.

"Given that we're the only congregation and synagogue within all of Mohave County, we have the full gamut [of members]," he said. "We've got people in Havasu, God bless them, who manage to be Orthodox and keep kosher, all the way out to the fringes of Reform."

Jewish life takes a different shape in rural areas than it does in the city – and often requires great dedication. In some places, that means the congregants have to learn how to lead services since they can only afford to bring a rabbi in periodically. For some, that means driving hours from a remote area to attend a tiny synagogue in another small town. And in nearly every community, a rural Jewish life is one in which your synagogue is like a family for better or for worse, and like any family, you only get one. Coffield has been president of the congregation for about six years and does his best to provide regular services and Torah study and to grow the congregation. A rabbi travels to Lake Havasu from Los Angeles about once a month to run a Shabbat service on Friday and a Torah study on Saturday. The congregation tries to coordinate his travel with Jewish holidays.

The synagogue strives to have a schedule posted three months in advance to ensure members, some of whom drive nearly two hours to get there, have ample time to plan.

"We get congregants from Laughlin, Bullhead City, Blythe, California, Needles – I mean, we're it," Coffield said.

Being the only Jewish institution for miles can mean Coffield becomes the person people call on to attend end of life matters. Lake Havasu is "almost exclusively retirees and service personnel," Coffield said. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the median age in the city is 54.2.

As president of the congregation, he gets "sorrowful phone calls" from people he's never seen at the synagogue but who are suddenly in need spiritual support. Coffield does his best to accommodate those requests, "but it's just hard from so many different perspectives."

Yuma, about 200 miles southwest of Phoenix, also has a small but dedicated Jewish community. With a population of nearly 100,000 people, the city's only synagogue has about 20 family units.

"Those range from people that are single, to couples, to people who have kids," said Leone Neegan, president of Congregation Beth Hamidbar. The synagogue, whose name means "house of the desert," meets in a space rented from a church.

"I am not sure that anyone for whom

place with so few Jewish institutions," she said. "We don't know how many, but there are Jews here who don't belong to the congregation, who just aren't religious at all."

For the past seven years, a rabbi has driven from Orange County in California to Yuma to lead High Holiday services. "The rest of the time, he gave us a class in doing lay-led services, so we take turns leading Shabbat services, and we pool our knowledge," Neegan said.

Members meet for services twice a month most of the year – in the summer, that's halved. Some of the congregants also meet in a weekly Torah study group.

Neegan was born and raised in Phoenix but moved to Yuma in 1975 after graduating from the University of Arizona when a friend told her about a job at the local library that had opened up. At the time, she didn't think she'd stay in Yuma long. "I couldn't imagine anyone living here. It was just, to me, a very small, dusty town," she said.

For a few months, she thought she was the only Jew in town. But one day, she saw an article in the local newspaper about High Holiday services. "I went to services, and found that there was a small Jewish community here, and the people were very welcoming," she said.

At the time, the congregation wasn't affiliated with any branch of Judaism, since the people who attended had a variety of Jewish backgrounds and observance. Eventually it affiliated with the Union for Reform Judaism. Neegan never expected to become as involved in her congregation as she did.

"If I had remained in either Phoenix or Tucson, or some other large city with a larger population, I might not have become as involved with either the religion or the congregation as I ended up being," she said.

Neegan's fellow congregants have become "a giant, extended family," she said. "It's like being on an island with people. If you get angry, there isn't another synagogue to go to. You have to work it out somehow."

Rabbi Nina Perlmutter, rabbi emerita of Congregation Lev Shalom in Flagstaff, said she's often found that the further a Jewish person lives from an established Jewish community, the more dedicated they are to building Jewish community.

Many Jews who live in the Grand Canyon, where Perlmutter often officiates at lifecycle events, or other rural areas of Arizona moved for the beauty of the landscape, she said. For most of them, Jewish life wasn't necessarily a priority and isn't easily supported by the Jewish infrastructure of the area.

"But then they often find that they miss having Jewish connections," she said. "I know people who have commuted a long time, like the Grand Canyon folks, to Flagstaff. That's not easy. You gotta really want to do it."

A version of this article originally appeared in the Jewish News of Greater Phoenix and is republished with permission. **HW**



their Jewish religion is the most important part of their life would move to a



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House advances the Build Back Better Act: What could it mean for you? Key Takeaways

Provided By Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments, Wells **Fargo Investors**

• On November 19, 2021, the Democratic-led House of Representatives passed the Build Back Better (BBB) Act, a broad \$1.75 trillion bill focused on addressing climate change, education, poverty, health care, and other priorities.

• The House-passed BBB also includes tax increases and tax changes that are applicable to businesses, high income individuals, and individuals with higher-balance retirement-investment accounts.

• The BBB debate will now continue in the Senate, where the details of the legislation is likely to change

What this may mean for you

• Continue to make decisions to achieve your long-term financial goals and objectives and consult with your advisor to better understand how this legislation may affect your family, business, and overall financial picture.

What tax changes are "in" the bill today and what's "out" (for now)?

With the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (aka the Bipartisan Infrastructure Framework) signed into law, the focus has turned to the President's "Human Infrastructure" programs. After months of negotiations and debate, the Democratic-led House of Representatives advanced the Build Back Better (BBB) Act to the Senate.

The chart to the right is a snapshot that shows how the tax provisions have evolved since the House Ways and Means Committee initially considered Build Back Better Act in September. The spending and tax provisions of the BBB are both expected to continue to evolve in the Senate.

What are the next steps?

The House passage is just one step in the process, with this bill now moving to the Senate where the provisions are anticipated to evolve. Given the slim Democratic majority in the Senate, it is unclear what the changes will be, and

when the Senate will take up the vote. Should the Senate pass the bill, reconciliation between the House and Senate versions will be required. Furthermore, if the Senate does not take up the vote in December, the reconciliation process will start over again.

What actions should I consider taking?

In this fast-changing environment, with little time before year-end, be thoughtful as to what steps to take. Evaluate what traditional year-end tax planning activities may be appropriate for your situation:

· Consider capital loss harvesting, charitable contributions, and annual exclusion gifts

• If gifting strategies were recently started, consider whether they still achieve your goals and objectives. If so, continue the strategy. If you are not sure, take the additional time to have a thoughtful conversation with your advisors.

• Do not wait too long as these provisions could either return or will naturally occur (for example, the estate tax sunset will still change in 2026).

Consult with your advisor to better understand how this legislation may affect your family, business, and overall financial picture. As changes could happen quickly with final passage potentially occurring towards year-end, it is best to have dual-track plans of action depending upon the result.

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	Build Back Better Act: September 2021	Build Back Better Act-passed by the House in November 2021
Individual income tax rates	Increase highest individual income tax rate to 39.6%	Removed
Capital gains tax rate	Increase long-term capital gains tax rate to 25% effective September 13, 2021	Removed
Qualified business income deduction	Provide a maximum allowable qualified business income deduction for individuals, estates, and trusts	Removed
Net investment income tax (NIIT)	Apply the 3.8% NIIT to trade or business income for individual taxpayers with adjusted gross income (AGI) greater than \$400,000	<i>Remains in the Build Back Better</i> Act
Excess business losses	Makes permanent the limitation on excess business losses from the Tax Cuts and Jobs	<i>Remains in the Build Back Better</i> <i>Act</i>
Surcharge on high income earners	Act (TCJA of 2017 Apply a 3% surcharge on taxpayers with AGI greater than \$5,000,000	Apply a 5% surcharge on modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) in excess of \$10,000,000 and an additional 3% on MAGI of \$25,000,000
State and local tax deduction	<i>No change to the state and local tax deduction</i>	For years starting after 2020, the limitation for the state and local tax deduction increased to \$80,000 through 2030HAT
Lifetime federal tax exemption	Accelerate the sunset of the TCJA Provision for estate tax from 2026 to 2022	Removed
Grantor trusts	Changes to grantor trust rules that would have impacted estate planning changes	Removed
Contributions to Traditional and Roth IRAs	At certain income thresholds, no further contributions to a Roth or Traditional IRA if the total value of IRAs and defined contribution retirement accounts exceeds \$10,000,000	Remains in the Build Back Better Act
Required minimum distributions from IRAs	At certain income thresholds with IRA balances greater than \$10,000,000, a required minimum distribution of 50% of the amount above \$10,000,000 and 100% of the amount greater than \$20,000,000	Remains in the Build Back Better Act
Roth IRA Conversions	At certain income thresholds, starting in 2032, Roth conversions prohibited from traditional IRAs or certain employer sponsored plans.	Remains in the Build Back Better Act
Back Door Roth IRA conversions	Effective January 1, 2022, Roth conversions including after-tax contributions from traditional IRAs or employer sponsored plans prohibited	Remains in the Build Back Better Act
Qualified small business stock deduction	At certain income levels, elimination of the 75% and 100% capital gain deduction for qualified small business stock	<i>Remains in the Build Back Better</i> Act

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Israel Promotes Tax-Relief Program to Attract High-Tech Workers



Participants at the DLD Tel Aviv Digital Conference, Israel's largest international high-tech gathering, which features hundreds of startups, investors and leading multinational companies, at the Old Train Station complex in Tel Aviv on Sept. 6, 2017. Credit: Miriam Alster/Flash90.

(JNS) – Israel announced last Tuesday the creation of a tax-benefit program for returning residents aimed at solving the workforce crunch in Israel's high-tech industry.

The goal of the program is to attract Israeli high-tech workers currently living abroad, as well as those entitled to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return, according to a statement by Israel's Ministry of Innovation, Science and Technology. The tax benefits will be transferred by temporary order for a period of approximately two years and will give a "significant boost" to Israel's high-tech sector, according to the ministry.

Among the program's benefits, a returning resident who left Israel more than a year ago will not have to pay taxes on passive income and capital gains earned outside Israel. In the past, that option only applied to people returning after a decade abroad.

Hanukkah Menorah Toppled in Dnipro, Ukraine's Fourth-Largest City



A large Hanukkah menorah was toppled in an anti-Semitic attack in Dnipro, Ukraine, on Nov. 29, 2021. Souce: Twitter.

(JNS) – An oversized public Hanukkah menorah was toppled in the Ukrainian city of Dnipro, formerly Dniepropetrovsk. apprehend those responsible," said Kaminezki, according to the report. "This is not an ordinary case for Dnipro; it just reminds us that we are still in exile. The Returning residents will also be allowed to deduct the expenses of returning to the country.

Similarly, those entitled to immigrate to Israel under the Law of Return will be able to receive the benefits of returning residents.

"In addition, the individual's tax rate in Israel will be capped at 30 percent (instead of 47 percent) in the first year and 35 percent in the second year," said the statement.

The program also expands the current one-year period of adjustment to two years, meaning an individual who immigrates to Israel can return to their country of origin after two years and not be considered to have been a resident of Israel during their two-year stay.

The program is a joint initiative of Israeli Finance Minister Avigdor Lieberman and Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology Orit Farkash-Hacohen.

"We see paramount importance in promoting the high-tech industry, which is the locomotive that leads the economy and a significant factor in its growth," said Lieberman, according to the statement.

Orit Farkash-HaCohen added that "this is another step out of a wide range of programs that I am promoting in response to the acute human power problem that the Israeli high-tech industry is experiencing, alongside all-time records." **HW**

Canadian University Postpones Event with Palestinian Terrorist Amid Outcry from Jewish Groups

By Faygie Holt

(JNS) – A program scheduled at the University of British Columbia on Dec. 2, which was to include a talk by a member of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the airing of a movie that glorified a convicted terrorist, has been postponed, according to a university spokesman.

Matthew Ramsey, director of university affairs, said "at this time, the event in question is postponed pending a safety and security review in accordance with university procedure."

The event was titled "Fedayin: Georges Abdallah Film Screening," which organizers say "chronicles the course of a Lebanese Communist imprisoned in 1984 for his involvement in the struggle for the liberation of Palestine and Lebanon from Zionist occupation."

It was being sponsored by the Palestinian Youth Movement, Solidarity for United States.

"The PFLP is responsible for terror attacks that resulted in the murder of countless civilians, including a massacre at an Israeli airport where a Canadian citizen was murdered. Therefore, we thank UBC's administration for intervening and postponing the event," said Steven Greenwood, executive director StandWithUs Canada. "It is unfathomable that any student organization would host an event that glorifies terrorism featuring members of a Canadian and American federally recognized terrorist organization and invite them to set foot on UBC grounds where Jews and Israelis who are Canadian citizens attend.

"We expect that UBC's administration will prioritize the safety and security of its students, hold the organizers of this despicable event accountable, and protect and support UBC's Jewish and

OBITUARIES

Patricia Shapero Lerner

Patricia (Patsy) Shapero Lerner was born in Memphis, Tenn. She is survived by her husband of 64 years, Gene Lerner, Jr.; her children, Gene III (Kathryn Garland), Jeffrey, and Jody (Don W. Cockroft, Jr.), and grandchildren Courtney and Connor. She passed away on November 27, 2021, after a brief illness. She was a friend to many and was loved by all.

Services were held at Temple Israel Cemetery on Tuesday, November 30, 2021, No Shiva will be held due to COVID. Condolences may be sent to Lernerfamilytogether@gmail.com.

In lieu of flowers the family requests donations to LeBonheur Children's Medical Center or Jewish Family Services (https://jcpmemphis.org) or the donor's choice. **HW**

OBITUARIES The Hebrew Watchman provides obituaries with a photo as a service to the Jewish community at no charge.

The act of vandalism was captured on

security cameras that showed five people knocking it over, reported Ynet.

Dnipro's Chief Rabbi Shmuel Kaminezki said the incident was not typical in the country's fourth-largest city, home to as many as 60,000 Jewish residents.

"The incident is being examined, and local law enforcement is working to city has a large concentration of Jews, thus quite Jewish in nature."

"I hope they get caught, that we know who did this," he added. "It is important to mention that the city has dozens of menorahs ... and this is the only case that happened."

The rabbi also made it a point to say, "We completely trust the local security services." **HW**

The Hebrew Watchman and Jewish Scene Magazine

are seeking experienced freelance writers to cover local Jewish Memphis stories. Please send writing samples of past work to susan@jewishscenemagazine.com. The Hebrew Watchman is published weekly. Jewish Scene Magazine is published 6 times a year. Palestinian Human Rights UBC and Samidoun Palestinian Prisoner Solidarity Network, and was to include a talk by Khaled Barakat, who has been named as part of the leadership of the PFLP abroad.

While the movie seeks to paint Abdallah as a political prisoner, he is a convicted terrorist who was found guilty of murdering Lt. Col. Charles R. Ray, a U.S. military attaché in Paris, and Yacov Barsimantov, an Israeli diplomat in 1982.

The decision to postpone the event came amid an outcry by Jewish groups, which noted that the PFLP is a designated terror group in both Canada and the

Ъ

Israeli community," it said.

Marty York, a spokesperson for B'nai Brith Canada, said: "We have been informed that this event has been postponed. We will continue to work on this issue until we have been ensured that this terror-glorifying event has been permanently canceled."

B'nai Brith Canada noted it's not the first time that the university has hosted a program with a PFLP member. It said that in 2013, a recognized club on campus hosted a Skype program with Leila Khaled, who in 1969 hijacked a plane en route to Israel. **HW**



No Tears for the Golden Years



Editor's note: This story is being reprinted in memory of Ted Roberts in appreciation of his longtime service as a newspaper columnist.

By Ted Roberts

I used to be a father. I still am, and now in my golden years I'm a grandfather, too.

The job description is similar, but a little fuzzier.

And a lot harder.

The job you left behind you must be replaced with an avocation that's a) fun, b) important – not world-shaking, just important, c) stressless, and D) most of all, satisfying. Katherine Hepburn said it best: "Old age (pardon her bluntness) ain't for sissies."

I thought about it for a few minutes. There's gardening, but you just get dirty and run up your water and energy bill. There's sports, but it seems to be sliding into corruptibility. There's volunteering in community affairs. Nice. Worthwhile for sure, but not earthshaking. Wait a minute, if it's earthshaking you're looking for, how about immortality. And where do you find immortality? In your children and grandchildren, of course. Why not spend that last decade or two guiding, structuring, guiding their lives?

The job calls for inspiration of young minds and young hearts; especially grandkids who are geographically remote and therefore consider themselves safe from my constant inspirational messages.

Yes, despite TV and video games and other electronic paraphernalia, we Jews honor and cherish words printed upon paper. We still are the People of the Book. Give us a pencil and a piece of paper, and we'll find something to say to those grandkids.

So, I write a lot of letters to my brood. For only 55 cents (it goes up every year - no competition will do that every time) you're allowed a large number of words written on paper. And a wise grandfather, besides counsel, advice, and family gossip, can include a candy bar, a stick of gum, a newspaper clipping, or a baseball card to lure the young mind into the civilized joy of correspondence. Try THAT in an email. What teacher ever taught successfully without incentives? It's a trick I learned years ago from the Crackerjack people. They marketed candy with cheap, fragile toys. I market family pride. What a worthy avocation. Beats napping in the recliner every time.

History hints that Socrates – you've heard of the Socratic School – kept a big jar of black olives beside his desk to reward precocious students and I do the same with my letters.

I use wiles of all kinds to encourage my younger kin to rip open their envelopes with frantic enthusiasm. "Wonder what he sent this time? Maybe if I write back today, he'll send me another Hershey bar."

Yes, Hershey bars are great. Nice and flat – but they have their disadvantages in July unless you live in Nome and your granddaughter hangs out with her kids in Anchorage. Kids love letters with or without sweet bonuses. They love their name in big, bold letters on the envelope. They love the ritual of sorting through the mail and throwing the discards on the floor before finding THEIR letter.

And like I say, I rarely write without including something that is either amusing, edible, or ethically fortifying. That's how I foster my benign immortality. My favorites are clippings from my local newspaper ("human interest" stories, we used to call them). So educational! Encourages kids to read and observe the world outside of home and school.

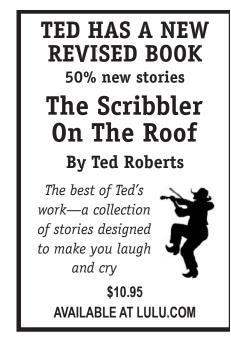
And if you pick your stories with care, you can package amusement and even morality in your envelopes. For example, I just mailed off to eight grandkids a story of a 65-year-old lady who wrote a confession to her high school principal; she cheated in a high school writing course 47 years ago! My small audience loved it and marveled at her delayed, but full confession.

They were full of questions: "Did she have to take the class over? Did she get a punishment? Did they send her a new report card? I assured them she was not punished and maybe – because of her honesty – they renamed the auditorium in her honor. Lesson: Honesty is sweet and rewarding.

But my kids usually award the family Pulitzer Prize to the vignettes I call "Pet Saves Family:" The collie who pulled Jamie out of the river. The cocker spaniel that barked and alerted the family to their smoldering home. And, of course, the whole category of dog-finds-missing-child story. We humans, even after we've lost the glow of childhood, still have a soft spot for animal rescue stories. It goes back in history to the gabbling geese that saved Rome. A story probably told in a grandfather's letter of 300 BC.

We don't' always need burning homes and swollen rivers. Kids of the right age (say over 3 and under 10) love any animal story. Naturally. They love animals. There's a kinship there of smallness, innocence, helplessness that we just don't understand.

Just this month I mailed out a tearjerker that couldn't fail to warm the juvenile heart. A 2-column report of a 3-legged dog – yes, a handicapped mutt who had lost a race with a truck and forfeited one



of his four limbs – found a lost child. The sheriff and an army of searchers failed, noted the article, but the dog, only 75% effective, found the missing child.

The returns from my young readers have been overwhelmingly enthusiastic about this theme. More! they cry. They want more. But that's not so easy. I'm at the mercy of the newspaper industry, which is attracted to war, corruption, crime, and disease rather than the uplifting genre of "Pet Finds Child."

Besides the inspirational value, there's a selfish payoff to my letter-writing campaigns: I like the return mail.

And maybe decades from now when I'm old and my pen trembles on the paper; and my poor old grinders are loose and wobbly, my mail will be full of attentive notes sweetened with easy-tochew Hershey Bars. Bread on the waters, you know. Can you think of a better way to spend your now-plentiful leisure time? Ah, my golden years.

The syndicated humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the Roof, has appeared in newspapers around the U.S., on National Public Radio and numerous websites. **HW**

Gabrielle Giffords Just Celebrated Her Bat Mitzvah at Age 51



Giffords speaks during a demonstration with victims of gun violence in front of the Supreme Court, Nov. 3, 2021. from the story of Joseph," Giffords told the Forward in an email. "If you know Vayeshev you know it begins 'And he lived.' Any story that begins 'and he lived' is good with me. I lived. Everything afterwards is a gift."

Giffords and Aaron first began studying together when Giffords was a member of the Arizona legislature in the early 2000s. While the two discussed Giffords becoming a bat mitzvah multiple times, it wasn't until two years ago when Giffords recruited two friends to study with her that they began preparing for the moment in earnest. The four women studied the weekly Torah portion together before beginning to study Gifford's portion, which Giffords chanted along with Aaron. "I am a person who is always looking for ways to grow, to keep moving and find new paths," Giffords wrote to the Forward. "I am proud and honored to become a bat mitzvah as an adult. It is never too late to explore faith, to learn the stories of the past and reflect on their meaning today." Giffords' grandfather changed his surname from Hornstein in the 1940s to avoid antisemitism. She was raised by a Jewish father and Christian Scientist mother in Tuscon but has practiced only Judaism since the early 2000s.

44 Games into its Winning streak, Yeshiva U's Basketball Team is Now No. 1 in NCAA's Division III the NCAA. Yeshiva University plays



Ryan Turell plays in a game for the Yeshiva University Maccabees.

the NCAA. Yeshiva University plays in Division III, which includes smaller schools with more modest basketball programs.

That hasn't stopped the Macs from drawing attention to a school that's better known for producing rabbis than power forwards. The team boasts the longest current win streak of any school in any division, which they extended last Sunday with a comeback win over Manhattanville College. The Macs' star guard Ryan Turell, a senior, took an accolade of his own home last Tuesday, when he was named Division III National Player of the Week by the U.S. Basketball Writers Association. Turell leads the team with 28.6 points per game. In last Sunday's win, he scored 51 of the team's 78 points, an all-time high for Yeshiva. The team record for most points in a game was previously set in 1964 by Sheldon Rokach, who scored 48 in a game, according to D3Hoops. "It's November and we are just trying to get better everyday," Yeshiva Head Coach Elliot Steinmetz said in a press release. "There are a lot of great teams out there and we hope we are good enough to compete with them when it matters in a couple of months." Steinmetz was probably referring to the NCAA tournament that pits the division's best teams against each other and that Y.U. hopes to win. In 2020, the team made it to the tournament's Sweet 16 before it was cancelled due to the pandemic. HW

Credit: Joshua Roberts/Getty Images

By Shira Hanau

(JTA) – After former House Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was shot in the head outside a supermarket in Tucson in 2011, it wasn't clear if she'd survive, let alone be able to speak. Giffords' injuries, which led her to resign from office, left her with partial paralysis and aphasia, which makes it difficult for her to speak.

But last Saturday, Giffords chanted her Torah portions, becoming a bat mitzvah at Temple Chaverim in Tucson at the age of 51, the Forward reported.

The milestone was the culmination of 20 years of study with Rabbi Stephanie Aaron, as well as two close friends. Aaron delivered a speech that Giffords wrote and Giffords performed the song "Amazing Grace" on the French horn. "My Torah portion is from Genesis,

Giffords represented Arizona's 8th District in Congress from 2007 to 2012. **HW**

Credit: Courtesy of Yeshiva University

By Ben Sales

(New York Jewish Week via JTA) – The Yeshiva University men's basketball team is on a 44-game winning streak that dates back to 2019. Now, just in time for Hanukkah, the Y.U. Maccabees are finally getting some official recognition.

A poll of the top teams in Division III men's college basketball placed the Macs first – well ahead of their competitors, with 13 first-place votes. It's the first time in the Orthodox Jewish school's history that it's topped the poll, which was published last Monday by D3Hoops.com.

The number-one ranking doesn't mean that Y.U. is about to go up against powerhouses like Duke or Gonzaga. Those schools, and others with large athletics programs and coveted basketball scholarships, play in Division I of

Larry David has Never Been More Jewish than in This Season's 'Curb'



In a recent episode of the 11th season of "Curb Your Enthusiasm," Larry David feels obligated to clean a Klansman's robe. Credit: John P. Johnson/HBO

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

(JTA) – "Curb Your Enthusiasm" has always been a Jewy show, but this season it is downright Jewish.

On the HBO sitcom, now in its 11th season, Larry David has never been shy about surfacing, and lampooning, Judaism and Jewishness. He has contemplated the dilemmas of Holocaust survival, waded into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (via a local chicken restaurant) and gotten stranded on a ski lift with an Orthodox Jew on Shabbat.

This season, it's not just the occasional matzoh ball joke, or the Yiddish lesson he gave Jon Hamm in the season premiere. David is plunging into questions of Jewish pride and belief, and if he isn't exactly Abraham Joshua Heschel, he could provide a Jewish educator with a semester of lively classroom debate.

In the latest episode, for example, a Jew for Jesus joins the cast of the show that Larry's character is developing for Hulu. Although neither Larry nor his Jewish friends are remotely religious, they seem genuinely upset by the actor's apostasy, and Larry gives him a rather sober warning that he shouldn't proselytize on set.

A week earlier, a member of his golf club (played by Rob Morrow) asks Larry to pray for his ailing father. Larry declines, saying prayer is useless. He also wonders why God would need, or heed, the prayer of a random atheist like himself instead of the distressed son who wants his father to live.

For anyone who has gone to Hebrew school, it's a familiar challenge, usually aired by the wiseacre in the back row who the teacher suspects is perhaps the most engaged student in the classroom. And it is not just atheists posing the question, "Why pray?" The Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz, a devout Orthodox Jew, believed that "worship of God must be totally devoid of instrumental considerations." In addition to a Jewish funeral, the episode has a bonus theological theme: "Middah k'neged Middah," or as Morrow's character puts it, "what goes around comes around." Morrow warns Larry that his actions will have consequences, which actually gives Larry pause. If anything, the entire "Curb" enterprise is an exercise in Jewish karma. Larry is constantly being punished in ways large and small for his actions, inactions, meddling and slights. As the old theater expression has it, if Larry opens a donut shop to drive a rival out of business in act one, his own shop will burn to the ground in act three. A prior episode was even more self-consciously Jewish: Larry attends High Holiday services only because he

lost a golf bet to the rabbi, and he literally bumps into a Klansman coming out of a coffee shop. The latter sets off a string of plot twists, as he and the KKK guy trade a series of favors and obligations that will have disastrous consequences for both. Larry's salvation comes at the end, when he blares a shofar from his balcony, literally raising the alarm on antisemitism and waking his neighbors to the threat of white supremacy.

The episode suggests the failure of good intentions. Larry spills coffee on the Klansman's robe and offers to have it dry-cleaned. Good liberal Jew that he is, Larry appears genuine in his belief that empathy is a better response to hate than confrontation, and that if he turns the other cheek it might lower the temperature in a post-Trump America. Of course, it doesn't work out that way, and the last word goes to his friend, Susie Green, who performs a pointed act of Jewish sabotage that gets the Klansman pummeled by his fellow racists. Give David credit for embedding within a preposterous half-hour of television a debate about vengeance and resistance that engaged the followers of Jews as different as Jesus and Jabotinsky.

Make no mistake: The Larry David character is sacrilegious and heretical, and "Curb" is no friend of the religious mindset. But to dismiss him as "self-hating" is to miss out on the unmistakably Jewish conversation at the heart of the show. David's character is a deeply principled person: Most of the nonsense he gets himself into is the result of his enforcing unspoken social rules that others appear to be flouting, whether it is taking too many samples at the ice cream counter or dominating the conversation (poorly) at the dinner table. Larry is rude and inconsiderate, but he is seldom wrong. He is what Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik might have called a "Halachic Man" an actualizer of "the ideals of justice and righteousness," even when the rest of the world resents it.

If you think I am overdoing it, remem-

ber that there is an actual discussion in Talmud about the right and wrong way of putting on a pair of shoes.

And just as in the Talmud, there are no easy answers in David's moral universe: If a friend lends you his favorite, one-of-a-kind shirt, and you ruin it, what are your obligations to him? (See: Bava Metzia 96b) If a thief breaks into your house and then drowns in your swimming pool, which wasn't protected by the required fence, who is owed damages and how much? (See: Ibn Ezra on Exodus 22:1-2)

In last week's episode, Larry even touched on – consciously or not – a classic debate in the Talmud: If you and a friend are stranded in the desert, and your canteen has only enough water for one of you to survive, must you share it or save your own life?

Yes, Larry was talking about sharing a phone charger, but if the Sages had cell phones, what do you think they'd be talking about?

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of JTA or its parent company, 70 Faces Media or The Hebrew Watchman. **HW**

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This Holocaust Diarist Has Gone Unknown for Too Long

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Design by Evelyn Frick; photos via Wikimedia Commons

By Gabriel Stein-Bodenheimer

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In small, neat cursive Dutch, on Sunday, March 9, in 1941, at a small desk in a room off of Gabriel Mesustraat in Amsterdam, Holland, a brilliant young Jewish woman began her first diary entry: "These thoughts in my head are sometimes so clear and so sharp and the feelings so deep, but writing about them comes hard." The author, Etty Hillesum, started keeping a diary as a therapeutic exercise prescribed by her psychoanalyst and lover, Julius Spier (that he had terrible professional boundaries is an understatement).

In the pages that follow, Etty proved to be whip smart, unapologetic, an intellectual, self-assured and at the same time, insecure and frustrated with a life not yet fully lived and work not yet created. "The main difficulty," she writes, "is a sense of shame. So many inhibitions, so much fear of letting go, of allowing things to pour out of me, and yet that is what I must do if I am ever to give my life a reasonable and satisfactory purpose. It is like the final, liberating scream that always sticks bashfully in your throat when you make love."

I was 28 when I first read Etty's diary, published in English as "An Interrupted Life" – just about the same age she was when she wrote it. Then, Etty was just about the same age as my grandmother, too, who was living in a flat on some other street in Amsterdam at that time. My grandmother had a sharp mind and a love of academia. She earned a law degree in Paris (one of two women in her class) and worked there in the field of Comparative Law before the war compelled her to join her father and two sisters, themselves escaping Germany, in the neutral Netherlands. A year and a half later, the country was occupied, and three years after that, her family was arrested and sent to the camps. She and one sister survived; her father and her other sister did not. I read Etty for a glimpse of who I imagined my grandmother had been before the terrible times that left an indelible stamp on trauma on her psyche. I wanted to know, too, who I would have been, what I would have done, had I been there. In my imagination, Etty and my grandmother unknowingly crossed paths somewhere along those

cold, Dutch streets.

In the pages of her diary, Etty is alive. She meets up with an old boyfriend days before he marries, and they share a kind of bittersweet goodbye to the relationship they once had. She reads Rilke, studies philosophy at the University of Amsterdam and tutors students in Russian. She has two boyfriends, Hans and Spier, and writes, "I don't think I am cut out for one man.... Nor could I be faithful to one man." She dissects the events of each day. She has period cramps.

But the Nazi occupation of Holland begins to seep into the pages of Etty's diary. In an entry from February 1942, Etty describes the scene at the Gestapo Hall, where a crowd of Jews in Amsterdam have been corralled for questioning. She notes the behavior of a young, harried SS officer. When it's her turn before his desk, he tries to put Etty in her place. "Wipe that smirk off your face!" he says. She tells him, "The smirk is my face."

She analyzes the systems of fascism that have resulted in the Gestapo Hall: "despite all the suffering and injustice I cannot hate others...The terrifying thing is that systems grow too big for men and hold them in a satanic grip, the builders no less than the victims of the system, much as large edifices and spires, created by men's hands, tower high above us, dominate us, yet many collapse over our heads and bury us."

In another room in the same city, another diarist held fast to her perception of humanity's goodness: "I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are good at heart." While Anne Frank's story has become the single story of the Holocaust, Etty Hillesum's life and letters remain in relative obscurity. Anne Frank is palatable to a Christian audience already attuned to stories of martyred innocence and magnanimous forgiveness. Etty's story, filled as it is with poly romance, philosophy, analyses of systems of power, and even an abortion, is no less important.

By 1942, Dutch Jews understood the violence that lay in wait for them at the end of the train track lines. Etty worked in the Dutch Jewish Council and, during that time, her diary takes on a tone of moral clarity.

She writes, "I feel as I were the guardian of a precious slice of life, with all the responsibility that entails. There are moments when I feel like giving up or giving in, but I soon rally again and do my duty as I see it: to keep the spark of life inside me ablaze."

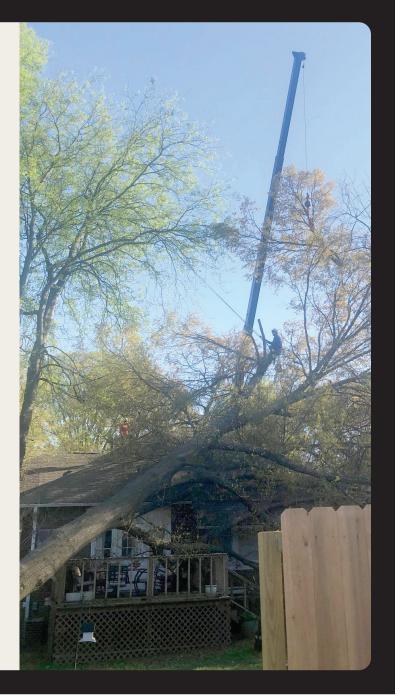
She might not have distributed leaflets or rose up against a guard or bombed a bridge, yet she shows us another method to resist fascism: refusal. Etty refused to extinguish her spark. She was generous to others and remained committed to what gave her joy: her friends, her studies, her Rilke.

From Westerbork concentration camp, she wrote to friends, "It is not easy – and no doubt less easy for us Jews than for anyone else – yet if we have nothing to offer a desolate postcard world but our bodies saved at any cost, if we fail to draw new meaning from the deep wells of our distress and despair, then it will not be enough. New thoughts will have to radiate outward from the camps themselves, new insights, spreading lucidity, will have to cross the barbed wire enclosing us and join with the insights that people outside will have to earn just as bloodily."

Now 80 years and a couple generations removed from the Holocaust, we must make space to reveal unheard, more complex stories from that period. We need our ancestors' stories, their writing, their art, their refusals, not only for a more complete history, but for our own survival. **HW**

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