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THE

Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

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Memphis Jewish Federation’s Antisemitism Initiative Casts a Wide Net In Memphis



Memphis University School Headmaster Pete Sanders, Federation Representative Jason Goldstein and Principal/Assistant Headmaster Barry Ray

The week of Hanukkah saw Memphis Jewish Federation’s *Shine A Light on Antisemitism* initiative soar through digital channels throughout the greater Memphis community.

After securing the support of all Memphis Jewish schools, agencies, congregations and youth groups, and receiving a grant from Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA), Memphis joined the national initiative. Lay committee members Janis Finan, Cindy Finestone, Margo Gruen, Jill Notowich, Charna Schubert and Rachel Shankman brainstormed ways to catalyze conversations across a broad spectrum of communities so that people will better understand what constitutes antisemitism, what contributes to its rise, and take steps to respond.

Award-winning video production company Running Pony was engaged to produce eight videos of Memphians sharing their personal stories – one for each night of Hanukkah – to be widely disseminated via email and social media platforms with discussion questions and a link to action items and resources. The powerful videos captured a wide range of experiences including elementary school hateful rhetoric and bullying, high school teens suffering through antisemitic stereotypes and the desecration of religious objects, college students encountering swastikas and Israel-based hate, and a second-generation Holocaust survivor enduring grotesque Holocaust comparisons.

The videos also showcased those who have stood up to hate including alums

of Facing History & Ourselves – both a national and local partner – and the transformation of a local neo-Nazi and Ku Klux Klan leader into a peace and human rights activist.

The broader Memphis community stepped up in solidarity with the Jewish community. Memphis University School (MUS) invited Federation to present on antisemitism and the *Shine A Light* campaign during their weekly Wednesday school-wide chapel. Federation board member and local attorney Jason Goldstein immediately and graciously agreed to represent Federation.

“I was honored to act as Federation’s representative,” said Jason. “Being an MUS alumnus, it was a full circle moment for me to return to the school, and it was extra special to be able to talk about such a serious and important topic as antisemitism. Many in the administration and faculty made a point to come over to me afterwards and express their solidarity with the Memphis Jewish community against antisemitism. I learned about MUS’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee and how the *Shine A Light* campaign aligns with its mission. Most importantly, I got feedback from students that the message really resonated with them and that was the whole objective of the campaign.”

Other schools who participated include Lausanne Collegiate School, which held a *Shine A Light* program at Convocation, Christian Brothers High School’s showing of a *Shine A Light* video, and St. Mary’s Episcopal School, which posted a solidarity message along

with a shout out to its alums, Emma Mansberg and Michele Becton, who together participated in one of the videos.

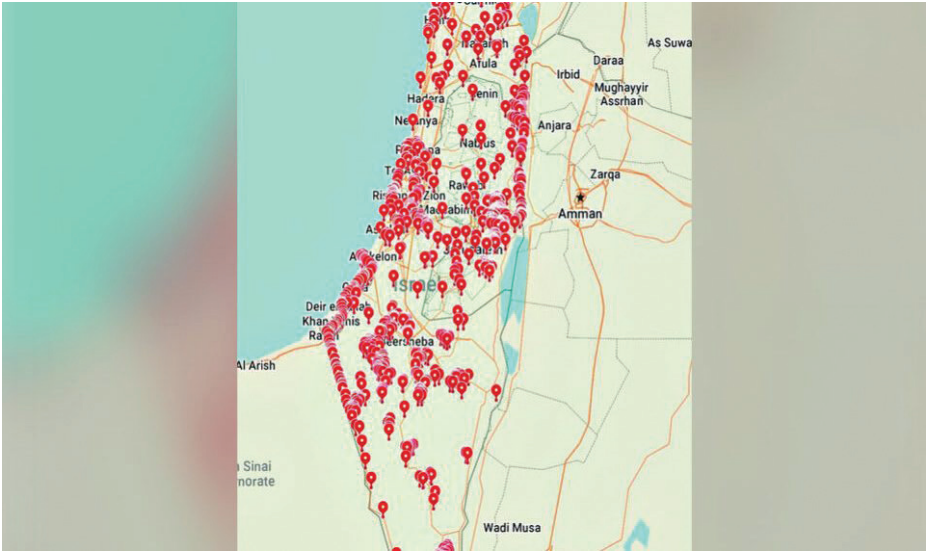
In the Jewish community, congregations, schools, youth groups and agencies held programs, posted on social media and e-newsletters, and shared the videos. More than 40 teens at Memphis’ BBYO Aleph Regional event watched community member Rayna Exelbierd’s *Shine A Light* video on Israel-based campus hate and discussed strategies to overcome antisemitism.

“We partnered with Federation on the *Shine A Light* initiative because I think it’s very important for our teens in Memphis to hear about the antisemitism happening all around them,” said Zoe Goldberg, BBYO’s Delta regional director. “Our high school seniors need to hear the example Rayna gave. It is vital that we teach our teens, the future leaders in our community, about these hateful acts and how to react and stand up for themselves. Getting involved with their college Hillel, Chabad or other Israel groups on campus can help support them when acts of antisemitism occur. Our teens had a great discussion around this topic, one we will continue to have.”

University of Memphis’ ZBT fraternity students gathered with Hillels of Memphis students at a Hillel-ZBT Hanukkah party, where another *Shine A Light* video was shown and discussed, this one examining antisemitic graffiti that shocked students on the University

(See **Antisemitism** Page 2)

Israeli General and Former Security Chief: Iran ‘Target Map’ is Psychological Warfare



A map of Israeli targets published by “The Tehran Times” includes nearly every populated part of the country, December 2021

(JNS) – An Iranian newspaper that published a map of Israel filled with red dots marking targets amounts to “psychological warfare” and little else, former National Security Council head Maj. Gen. (res.) Giora Eiland told Army Radio last Thursday.

“They did not invest too much in choosing the targets,” said Eiland, noting that “those who prepared the map did not notice that it also marks Palestinian cities.”

Still, he added, “the ‘scary’ message has been passed; this is psychological warfare.”

Eiland said Iran had limited abilities in directly attacking Israel from its territory, but that the firepower capabilities of Lebanese proxy, Hezbollah, as well as its attempts to arm proxies in Syria

and western Iraq, form the bulwark of an authentic and serious threat.

Last Wednesday, the Tehran Times, which is linked to Iran’s foreign ministry, ran a front-page article with the headline “Just One Wrong Move!” An accompanying graphic featured the map with red dots.

“An intensification of Israeli military threats against Iran seems to suggest that the Zionist regime has forgotten that Iran is more than capable of hitting them from anywhere,” said the article. **HW**

Maj. Gen. (res.) Giora Eiland says that “those who prepared the map did not notice that Palestinian cities are also marked there.”

Antisemitism...
(Continued From Page 1)



University of Memphis ZBT fraternity and Hillel students watch a Shine A Light on Antisemitism video at a Hillel-ZBT Hanukkah party

of Tennessee Knoxville (UTK) campus in 2018 and 2019, as well as Federation’s work with UTK administrators to firmly address the issue.

“The *Shine A Light on Antisemitism* project exposes antisemitism through the individual lenses of Jewish people. It tells of their vivid experiences with the many faces of antisemitism, from unfortunately common prejudices to outright violence against Jewish people and their faith,” said ZBT fraternity member Tristan Atkins. “After watching the video and discussing with my peers, I have a greater understanding of the adversity faced against Jewish people, and I feel more equipped to help my Jewish friends respond to antisemitism that they may face.”

Throughout this community-wide initiative, Memphians were encouraged to join a three-pronged digital antisemitism awareness campaign consisting of signing a public statement of solidarity with the Memphis Jewish community, posting social media messages with the

hashtag #MemphisShinesaLightonAntisemitism, and liking, commenting, and/or sharing the eight potent videos. According to social media analytics, the videos have been viewed and shared hundreds of times.

Other video presenters not previously mentioned include Jeremy Cooper, Isaac and Jeff Cowens, TM Garret, Rabbi Yonason Gersten, Dorothy Goldwin, Dr. Gordon Gruen, Cody Hunter, Jaime Marquis and Rabbi Dr. Gil Perl.

Currently, more than 45 local organizations and companies and many more individuals have signed onto Federation’s solidarity statement against antisemitism. Still open for signatures, the statement is available at jcpmemphis.org/antisemitism, a dedicated webpage that will continue to have resources for community members, including an incident reporting form, an opportunity to obtain a Standing Against Antisemitism yard sign, and other action items and informational resources. [HW](#)

BBYO and Temple Israel Teens Partner to Host Amazing Global Shabbat



Holocaust Survivor Jack Cohen spoke to the teens about his experiences

THE Hebrew Watchman

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. Dec. 24, 2021 / 20 Tevet, 5782.....4:35 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. Dec. 25, 2021 / 21 Tevet, 5782 5:35 p.m.
Weekly Torah Portion: Shemot

Abby Israel and Abby Cassius, two super-active leaders within their youth groups, helped plan a teen-led Shabbat service and reading followed by a pasta dinner in Temple Israel’s social hall.

Local Holocaust survivor Jack Cohen spoke about his experiences being in hiding for many years and the impact the Holocaust had on him.

This special evening brought together Memphis community teens to celebrate along with thousands of Jewish teens worldwide in BBYO’s biggest Shabbat experience. [HW](#)



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Cooper Yeshiva High School for Boys to Hold Annual Steak Dinner

The excitement and anticipation is building amongst the students as the 27th Annual Cooper Yeshiva High School (CYHSB) Steak Dinner is coming up soon on January 30, 2022. The Steak Dinner is a full four-course meal that features hors d'oeuvres, appetizer, salad and wings, entrée and dessert. The entire evening is planned and executed by the CYHSB. It is truly a unique event that showcases the character and talents of the young men in a manner that brings great pride to them, the school, and the Memphis Jewish community.

The CYHSB Steak Dinner promotes and fosters the critical skills of collaboration, communication, coordination and creativity, as well as developing essential qualities of character. The students are very involved in every stage of the extensive planning that is required, from procuring sponsors and getting reservations, to filming commercials, organizing the kitchen and serving the meal. Each year, the veterans of the

dinner educate the newcomers with all the acquired lessons and knowledge accrued from dinners past.

At the dinner, the students will honor an individual who they recognize has given so much to them. Additionally, one of the school's fine young men will present a dvar Torah at the dinner and a group of students will provide a musical performance for attendees. Other highlights include the well-loved commercials.

The Steak Dinner has become famous for its excellent video presentations, which feature student-made commercials on behalf of the corporate sponsors. The commercials are a collaborative effort of several of the students.

Robust community support is critical to the success of the dinner, and MHA-FYOS much appreciates the participation of those who have attended and sponsored the dinner in the past. To make your reservation for this year's dinner, visit mhafyos.org/steakdinner. **HW**

Israel Decides to Delay 'Green Pass' Mandate for Malls

(JNS) – The proposal to implement the “Green Pass” mandate for shopping malls was planned to go into effect last Friday but was delayed since the cabinet meeting failed to reach an agreement.

“There are many arguments and objections behind the scenes; there are tough conversations with the shopping mall [store] owners, which involve legal threats,” Ynet news quoted some ministers involved in the discussions as saying.

Another source said that the government still is looking to implement the measure.

A government source told Ynet that Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett wanted to make the “Green Pass” mandate stricter, but other ministers argued against it. Israel's Ministry of Economy and Industry argued for the malls simply to limit the number of people allowed in stores instead of implementing the pass. **HW**

Bereaved Families Demand Resignation of Israel's Public Security Minister



Israeli Public Security Minister Omer Bar-Lev speaks during a visit to the upper Galilee, Aug. 11, 2021. Credit: Basel Awidat/Flash90

By Efrat Forsher

(Israel Hayom via JNS) – Bereaved families launched a campaign last Wednesday demanding that Israeli Public Security Minister Omer Bar-Lev “apologize or resign” over remarks made to senior American diplomat Victoria Nuland about alleged settler violence and for comparing the “deadly Arab terrorism to some marginal events in the settlements.”

The campaign, co-launched with the Samaria Regional Council, will include roadside billboards. If Bar-Lev refuses to apologize, the families will demand that Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett dismiss him.

The public security minister had told

Nuland that Israel was working to tackle the alleged settler violence and taking steps to bolster police presence in Judea and Samaria. He also said that efforts were being made to provide clearer instructions to Israeli troops on how to deal with attacks by Jews on Palestinians.

Despite a storm of criticism from bereaved families, Knesset members and even fellow coalition members, Bar-Lev refused to apologize.

“I understand that it is really difficult for some of you to look in the mirror and face [the fact] that extreme settler

The families have launched a campaign against Omer Bar-Lev over his remarks comparing Arab terrorism to settler violence.

violence [has become an issue] on the international stage, with foreign governments taking an interest,” he tweeted last Tuesday. “I recommend that those who have difficulty [understanding this] drink a glass of water,” he added.

“I will continue to fight Palestinian terrorism as if there is no extremist settler violence, and extremist settler violence as if there is no Palestinian terrorism,” he wrote.

Yossi Dagan, head of the Samaria Regional Council, said, “A public security minister who compares Arab terrorism to marginal events in the settlements should not remain in office. This is a failure in values. A person who refuses to apologize and belittles bereaved families must resign. ... We launched the campaign because this statement by the public security minister could lead to disparagement in the attacks against settlers in Samaria and could harm the security of the residents.”

The government must force Bar-Lev to either apologize or resign, said Dagan.

The Palestinian Authority last Wednesday expressed support for Barlev's statement, calling it “a step in the right direction and first official recognition by Israel of crimes committed by Jewish gangs against Palestinians.”

Nevertheless, it said, “It is not enough. We call on the centrist and left-wing ministers in the government to end their silence and declare that they condemn and oppose settler terrorism and attacks on Palestinians, which will help create trust-building measures between Palestinians and Israelis and help create a suitable atmosphere for resolving the conflict.” **HW**

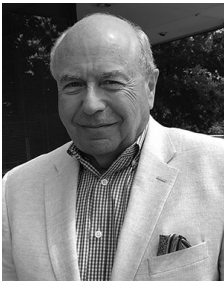
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A Chat with the Son Who Wrote the Viral Obituary For His ‘Plus-Sized Jewish Lady Redneck’ Mother



The late Renay Mandel Corren holds the hand of her son Andy, whose obituary for his mother went viral Wednesday night. Courtesy Andy Corren

By Julia Gergely

(New York Jewish Week via JTA) – When Andy Corren’s mother, Renay Mandel Corren, died on Saturday in El Paso, Tex., at age 84, he did what many bereaved children with a creative bent would do: He wrote an obituary. “A more disrespectful, trash-reading, talking and watching woman in NC, FL or TX was not to be found,” Corren wrote in the obituary that was published last Wednesday in the *Fayetteville Observer*, the newspaper of the North Carolina city where Mandel Corren lived for many years. He honored his “plus-sized Jewish lady redneck” mother thusly: “Hers was an itinerant, much-lived life, a Yankee Florida liberal Jewish Tough Gal who bowled ’em in Japan, rolled ’em in North Carolina and was a singularly unique parent.” The loving yet warts-and-all obituary of the “zaftig good-time gal” quickly went viral after crime writer Sarah

Weinman tweeted it last Wednesday evening to her 380,000-plus followers. This was much to the surprise of Corren, who describes himself in the obituary as “her favorite son, the gay one who writes catty obituaries in his spare time, Andy Corren, of – obviously – New York City.” “When it comes to writing, you meet people where they are,” Corren told the *New York Jewish Week*, of how his words captured his mother’s essence. “That was the crux of my mother’s genius, it was to just completely meet you where you live.” In the obituary, Corren describes his mother, who was known as Rosie, as someone who “played cards like a shark, bowled and played cribbage like a pro, and laughed with the boys until the wee hours, long after the last pin dropped.” She was also, at some point during the 1980s, according to the tribute, “the 11th- or 12th-ranked woman in cribbage

in America, and while that could be a lie, it sounds great in print.” Corren, a talent manager and writer who splits his time between New York and Los Angeles, never expected the obituary to go viral. In hindsight, though, he said he understands why the piece touched so many – and that it’s a fitting coda to his mother’s legacy. “This time of the year, with the pandemic, the government, and the environment, things are feeling really bad. It’s nice to laugh, too,” he said. “That was my mother’s specialty, laughing in the face of quite a bit of tragedy.” Corren is one of Mandel Corren’s six children, and said he grew up in the ’70s and ’80s on a military base in Fayetteville. The family is “100% Jewish,” he said, although he stressed they were non-denominational and not particularly observant. Funds were often low; in the obituary, Corren mentions his mother’s poor credit rating, multiple bankruptcies – and, intriguingly, an alleged affair with Larry King in the 1960s. “Obviously there are poor Jews,” Corren said. “People just aren’t used to hearing that side of the story.” Corren’s grandparents on his mother’s side were Hungarian Jews who emigrated to the U.S. in the 1920s who settled in Miami, and his father’s parents were Brooklyn Jews, themselves the children of Jewish immigrants. His maternal grandparents, Corren explained, were deeply religious. His mother, however, was less spiritually or religiously invested in Judaism as much as she was culturally – actually, make that culinarily – interested. He remembers how his grandparents would bring Jewish deli items with them whenever they visited from Miami, and Corren took up the tradition when he moved out

of North Carolina. “My mother never lived near a Jewish deli,” he explained, “so I was constantly traveling with oily meats and stinky tongue from Katz’s in my checked suitcase to bring back for her.” “She was a Jew, and she was a proud Jew,” Corren told the *Jewish Week*. “It was a humongous part of her self-image and her projected one, which is that she was a Jewish girl through and through, from McKeesport [Penn., where she was born] and until the day she died in El Paso.” For those interested in a “very disrespectful and totally non-denominational memorial,” Corren and his siblings are planning a party at B&B Lanes in Fayetteville on May 10, 2022. “Bowling parties were a feature of our life growing up,” he said. “My mom worked at the bowling alley and that is exactly how we’re going to send her off on her birthday.” Corren’s tribute to his mother has now been shared tens of thousands of times. Some people online said they plan to attend the memorial; others offered compliments such as, “This brief, brilliant obituary is funnier and more moving than most of the novels I’ve read in my lifetime.” Twitter can be a “deranged cesspool,” Corren admits, “but it’s also this magical, charmed place where the story of a heavysset matriarch of this dirtbag American family justifiably gets her praises sung for surviving, for thriving, and for raising kids.” “Please think of the brightly-frocked, frivolous, funny and smart Jewish redhead who is about to grift you, tell you a filthy joke, and for Larry King’s sake: LAUGH,” the obituary concludes. “Bye, Mommy. We loved you to bits.” **HW**

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Dozens of Rabbis Call on City Council to End Solitary Confinement in NYC Jails

By Ben Sales

(New York Jewish Week via JTA) – Dozens of New York City rabbis, including leaders of some of the city’s largest synagogues, signed an open letter calling on the New York City Council to pass legislation ending solitary confinement in the city’s prison system. The letter, published last Tuesday by the liberal rabbinic human rights group T’ruah, is addressed to Council Speaker Corey Johnson and calls on him to bring the legislation to a vote before the council’s session ended last Wednesday. The legislation has 35 cosponsors, which means it has veto-proof support in the 51-member council. The letter was signed by 65 rabbis and cantors in total, including several of the city’s most prominent rabbis. It includes clergy from across the denominational spectrum. “Solitary confinement is torture. In NYC, it is predominantly inflicted on Black and Latinx people,” the letter says. “The very first two chapters of our Torah teach us that every human being is created in the image of God, and that no human being should be alone.” It names several high-profile inmates who died after being in solitary confine-

ment, such as Kalief Browder, who was arrested at age 16 for allegedly stealing a backpack and later died by suicide after having spent two years in solitary confinement at Rikers Island. After a years-long campaign against solitary confinement, in April New York State limited the practice to 15 days or less. Two months later, New York City’s Board of Correction, an oversight body, voted to end solitary confinement in the city. But the plan that was approved still effectively kept inmates isolated for 23 hours a day, either in a cell or in a fenced-in area immediately adjacent to it. The City Council bill would restrict the duration of solitary confinement to no more than four hours at a time. Signatories to the letter include Rabbi Angela Buchdahl of Central Synagogue, Rabbi Lauren Grabelle Herrmann of the Society for the Advancement of Judaism, Rabbi Rachel Timoner of Congregation Beth Elohim and Rabbi Roly Matalon of B’nai Jeshurun. The letter was also signed by leaders of Jewish educational institutions like Rabbi Shai Held and Rabbi Elie Kaunfer of the Hadar Institute, and Rabbi Ismar Schorsch, chancellor emeritus of the Jewish Theological Seminary. **HW**

My Teen Israel Experience

Mazel Tov



Mandy Cassius rides a donkey with friends in Israel at Kfar Kedem

By Mandy Cassius

Mandy Cassius, daughter of Melinda and Lyn Cassius, is a senior at White Station High School. Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund provided her with a Teen Israel Experience grant to offset the costs of her NCSY/JSU/The Jewish Journey program in Israel.

Israel, where should I start? This summer was truly the best one ever! Every day was the best day on the NCSY/JSU The Jerusalem Journey (TJJ) trip. I cannot imagine a better way to have spent my summer!!

Walking in, I never thought I would make as many lifelong lasting friends. I arrived knowing very few people, except my sister and an advisor from my city, and left with at least a dozen best friends. Right now, I can confirm that I have stayed in touch with a lot of the people I met on TJJ Midwest. I have never seen a group of people come together like we did this summer.

We clapped every other minute. We danced. We sang. Before, after, and during Shabbat. We cried and laughed and smiled, sometimes all at once.

We started our trip on the Golan Heights and worked our way through Jerusalem into Eilat and back to Jerusalem, visiting many cities along the way. Some of the most meaningful places we went were the four holy cities, Tzfat, Tiberias, Hebron, and Jerusalem because they really encompassed the four elements of air, water, earth and fire.

Before going on TJJ, I thought I had a strong Jewish identity, but not surprisingly, going to Israel made it even more clear. It got stronger because of the people I was with like my new friends, my amazing advisors, and my family, which were my friends, advisors, and Israeli cousins. Nothing beats the great bond I developed with my Chaburah and our discussions of the power of questions and what tefillah (prayer) meant to us.

Something even greater than the people themselves was experiencing Israel, its holy cities, shuks (markets), hikes, shawarma, hostels, rivers, views, each Shabbat, and museums with the TJJ family. Shabbat was surreal and really gave the day of rest a new meaning to me.

TJJ had a lot of adventures, and some of my favorites were wakeboarding, sleeping in Bedouin tents, and scenic water hikes. As for the Jewish connection I had, well, it's indescribable. At the shuk market on Ben Yehuda Street,

I bargained for a Hamsa necklace that I've worn every day since returning from Israel. It makes me feel closer to my Jewish homeland.

Stepping on that slippery Jerusalem stone with my eyes closed and hand on my friend's shoulder was just the beginning: the Kotel reveal. I just started tearing up, not expecting to cry. There, straight in front of me was the wall with all the history staring back at me. On the trip we went to the Kotel four times, and I had a different experience every time. My second time going was on Tisha B'Av (the ninth of the Hebrew month of Av), the saddest day of the year. The third time was on Shabbat where we danced with a bride to be, and the fourth time was right before our goodbye banquet.

I will miss the sunrise hike and countless gorgeous red sunsets, which made me feel like I was living a dream. Even though the summer is over, I know I will be back in the near future!!

I am grateful to Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund for helping to make my NCSY/JSU TJJ summer experience possible.

All rising high school juniors and seniors in the Memphis Jewish community are eligible for grants up to \$3,000 to attend a recognized teen summer or semester program in Israel. Teen Israel Experience applications for Summer 2022 are open and can be accessed at <https://jcpmemphis.org/lemsky-endowment-fund>. **HW**



Brittany Baum and Eric Lindenfeld

On January 2, 2022, Brittany Baum and Eric Lindenfeld will marry at Baron Hirsch Synagogue in Memphis. Rabbi Sholom Brook of the Chabad Young Professionals of Uptown Minneapolis will officiate the ceremony.

Brittany is the daughter of Shelby and Lee Baum of Memphis; granddaughter of Ted and Joscelyn Winestone and the late Tillaya Lusky, and Joan and Phillip Baum.

Eric is the son of Billi and Stanley

Lindenfeld of Cedarhurst, New York and the grandson of the late Clara and Abraham Hoch and the late Erna and Marcel Lindenfeld.

Brittany attended New York University College of Dentistry and is in private practice on New York's Upper West Side. Eric received his law degree from University of Minnesota and is a lawyer with Robins-Kaplan.

After a honeymoon in Costa Rica, the couple will live in Manhattan. **HW**

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Jeff Garlin Will Not Return to ‘The Goldbergs’ after Allegations of Misconduct



Jeff Garlin attends HBO’s “Curb Your Enthusiasm” Season 11 Premiere at the Paramount Theatre in Los Angeles, Oct. 19, 2021.
Credit: Jeff Kravitz/FilmMagic for HBO/Getty Images

By Shira Hanau

(JTA) – Jeff Garlin will not return to the ABC comedy “The Goldbergs” after an investigation into his alleged misconduct on the show’s set.

The news was reported by Deadline, which cited sources on set who said the decision was a mutual one by Garlin and the producers of the show.

Garlin plays the father on the show, which centers on a Jewish family living in a Pennsylvania town in the 1980s. The show has aired since 2013 with the ninth season currently in production.

According to Vanity Fair, Garland was accused by other employees of the show of engaging in a patter of inappropriate verbal and physical conduct, including using disrespectful language and hugging people who were uncomfortable being hugged.

“He is extremely verbally and emotionally abusive,” an employee of the show told Deadline.

Garlin spoke to Vanity Fair earlier this month about the allegations and rumors that he had been fired from the show. He chalked up the behavior that offended his colleagues to his being a comedian.

“We’re trying to come to a place where we come to an agreement. Either I can behave the way [they want] or not. We’ll see, but I’m not being fired and I’ve not been fired... When I do shoot more days, just to make it go smooth, I will not be doing any of my silly stuff or anything, out of respect,” he told the magazine.

In addition to his role on “The Goldbergs,” Garlin is also a cast member and executive producer of Larry David’s HBO series “Curb Your Enthusiasm.” **HW**

Eighth Night of Chanukah Festivities at Young Israel of Memphis



Everyone enjoyed the festivities at Young Israel’s 2021 Chanukah party

It may have been cool outside, but inside Young Israel of Memphis on Sunday evening, December 5 – the eighth and final night of Chanukah – the scene was warm and inviting. More than 250 adults and children turned out to enjoy a fun and inspiring evening in honor of the holiday.

“Young Israel’s Chanukah Chagiga [party] was such a great success,” shares Rabbi Akiva Males, rabbi of Young Israel of Memphis. “Despite an incredible turnout, no one felt crowded – thanks to our spacious new building. Everyone enjoyed each other’s company, a delicious dairy meal, an inspiring Torah thought from Dani Schneider (representing the congregation’s children), and fantastic activities for the kids. This event truly provided something for everyone.”

Guests enjoyed a delicious spread of vegetable soups, pasta dishes, salmon, latkes, a robust salad bar, a hot cocoa

buffet, an extremely popular coffee bar, and a top-your-own doughnut station for dessert. But food was only part of the attraction. A variety of fun Chanukah crafts, games, and prizes entertained the children – as did a local balloon twisting expert.

The delightful evening was made possible thanks to a frenzy of activity by many dedicated volunteers, led by chairwomen Havah Schneider, Sarah Ardastani, and Sarah Bracha Wogan.

“Bringing everyone together, especially members of all ages, on the final night of Chanukah was the perfect way to conclude the holiday,” commented Havah. “Everyone was laughing and having a great time, and it created a real family atmosphere.”

Rabbi Males concurred. “We really appreciate each and every volunteer who rolled up her or his sleeves to create such a perfect Chanukah Chagiga.” **HW**

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Temple Israel's Religious School and Early Learning Center Gave Back this Holiday Season with Mitzvah Projects Benefitting MIFA and Perea Preschool



Delivering packages to Perea Preschool

The Temple Israel Religious School and Early Learning Center teamed up to collect gifts for the students at Perea Preschool during the holiday season. Temple families were able to connect with a child from the school and gift them a new book, educational toy, and a winter hat and gloves.

On December 16, Music & Education Specialist Carly Abramson, Education

Administrator Jackie Evans, Clergy Assistant Jan Klein, and Director of Youth Education & Family Engagement Sophie Weiss delivered the trove of gifts to the 134 students. This is the 14th year that Temple and Perea Preschool have come together during the holiday season. Perea Preschool is a faith-based, privately funded preschool for three-and-four-year olds serving the North

Memphis area.

The 7th-grade students at WAF/RS, the Wendy & Avron Fogelman Religious School, focused their efforts on two mitzvah projects. This passionate group not only raised \$400 for MIFA by

selling baked goods, handmade bracelets and paintings in the Atrium at Temple Israel, but they also came together to make sandwiches for the First Presbyterian Soup Kitchen, which they delivered on December 12. [HW](#)



The 7th-grade students at Wendy & Avron Fogelman Religious School, raised \$400 for MIFA by selling baked goods, handmade bracelets and paintings in the Atrium at Temple Israel

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A Map for Your Family

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director – Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors

A will is an essential legal document that describes how your estate should be distributed upon your death. It is the basis for the probate process and can serve as a guide for your heirs.

A letter of instruction – which has no legal status – provides information that can help your loved ones settle your estate and move forward with their lives. You might consider it a map for your family.

Unlike a will, which must follow legal guidelines for your state and may require an attorney, a letter of instruction can be written yourself in any way you choose. Here are some topics you may want to address.

Financial accounts and account numbers, including online user names and passwords. If you prefer not to write down user names or passwords, the executor of your estate should be able to access accounts with the account numbers and your Social Security number.

List of documents and their locations, including (but not limited to) your will, insurance policies, tax returns, bank and investment account documents, real estate deeds and mortgage documents, vehicle titles, Social Security and Medicare cards, marriage and/or divorce papers, and birth certificate.

Contact information for professionals who handle your financial and legal affairs, such as your attorney, financial advisor, insurance agent, and accountant. Also include others who may be helpful, such as a business partner or trusted friend.

Bills and creditors, including when payments are due and other pertinent

information, such as loan terms and balances as of the date of the letter.

Your final wishes for burial or cremation, a funeral or memorial service, organ donation, and charitable contributions in your memory.

You might also include more personal thoughts or life lessons that you want to pass on, or you could write a separate letter. Keep your letter of instruction in a safe, yet accessible place and tell your loved ones where it can be found. It might be wise to give a copy of the letter to the executor of your estate and other trusted friends or advisers.

Be sure to review the letter regularly and update it as appropriate. Your heirs will thank you for taking the time to prepare.

This information is not intended as tax, legal, investment, or retirement advice or recommendations, and it may not be relied on for the purpose of avoiding any federal tax penalties. You are encouraged to seek guidance from an independent tax or legal professional. The content is derived from sources believed to be accurate. Neither the information presented nor any opinion expressed constitutes a solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security. This material was written and prepared by Broadridge Advisor Solutions. © 2021 Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc.

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New York City Mayor-Elect Reschedules Inauguration for Shabbat Observers

(JNS) – New York City’s new mayor, Eric Adams, moved the time of his swearing-in ceremony to accommodate supporters who observe Shabbat.

The inauguration was originally scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 1, at noon, but will now take place in the evening after the end of the Jewish Sabbath, it was announced last Tuesday.

The mayor-elect received strong support from the Orthodox Jewish community, especially in Brooklyn, in the recent mayoral election. He was endorsed by one of two factions of the Satmar community in Williamsburg.

Adam also moved the location of the inauguration from the traditional City Hall in Manhattan to the iconic Kings Theatre in Brooklyn.

“It is symbolically impactful for me

to be inaugurated as New York City’s 110th mayor in the heart of Flatbush on behalf of this working-class community and communities like it across the five boroughs, who have elected one of their own to lead our recovery,” said the outgoing Brooklyn borough president, who was born in Brooklyn’s Kings County and grew up in Queens.

He added that “Kings Theatre has made so many wonderful memories over its storied history, and on Jan. 1st, we will make even more history there together.”

Invitations for the swearing-in ceremony will be sent to attendees, including family members, community leaders and others. Adams will formally replace New York City’s current mayor, Bill de Blasio, at midnight on New Year’s Eve during a private ceremony. [HW](#)

Maine Commission Votes Against Landlord Couple Biased Against Jewish Tenant

(JNS) – The Maine Human Rights Commission voted unanimously last Monday that a couple discriminated against their former tenant based on his Jewish religion, reported News Center Maine.

In March, Mark and Michelle Fortin evicted Yohannis Selassie, who is black and Jewish, from an apartment they own in Winthrop after the latter refused their demands to remove a mezuzah from his doorpost, according to a report filed by an investigator and submitted to the commission.

When Selassie refused to take down the mezuzah, telling the Fortins that it is a symbol of his Jewish faith, the landlords terminated his lease and asked police to monitor him during a final walkthrough of the apartment, the report stated.

The Fortins claimed they terminated Selassie’s lease because he screwed a metal object into the doorframe, which is in violation of his lease, and refused

repeated requests to remove a trailer they allowed him to temporarily park on their property. They added that Selassie then damaged the property when he eventually moved the trailer in March.

“The mezuzah and the damage to the doorframe is truly trivial,” said commissioner Edward David last Monday. “I agree that that became part of the motivation and that they ... thought that that confirmed their ability to end this tenancy by saying, ‘Oh, that’s another violation, and you should be out immediately,’ and that – the motivation for doing that – was an impermissible basis on religion.”

The commission will try to have Selassie and the Fortins resolve the incident through a reconciliation outside of court, said executive director Amy Sneirson. If an agreement is not reached, Selassie can sue in superior court.

In October, Michelle Fortin denied to News Center Maine that an eviction had occurred. [HW](#)

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Henry Orenstein, the Transformers toys inventor, Holocaust survivor and poker star, is dead at 98



Henry Orenstein, second from left, at the launch of the Poker Superstars Invitational Tournament in 2004.
Credit: Stephen Lovekin/FilmMagic/Getty Images

By Shira Hanau

(JTA) – Henry Orenstein, a Holocaust survivor who went on to invent the Transformers toys and became a major donor to Jewish and Israeli causes, died last Tuesday at the age of 98.

Orenstein became a best-selling toy maker with his Transformers line, which he first created in the early 1980s. He followed up on that success with numerous other inventions and over 100 patents before eventually becoming a star poker player and being inducted into the Poker Hall of Fame in 2008.

Born in Poland to a Jewish family in 1923, Orenstein managed to survive the war due to a gamble he made in 1944, the first of several that would shape his life.

While imprisoned at Budzyn, a German labor camp in Poland, in 1944, the Nazis running the camp ordered all scientists and mathematicians to register with the camp administration.

Despite not knowing if the scientists and mathematicians would be given better conditions or killed immediately, and despite the fact that Orenstein himself was neither a scientist or mathematician, he signed himself up along with his brothers who were interned there

with him.

That decision may have been the difference between life and death for Orenstein.

“At that time, we’d heard that days before they killed off all 17,000 Jewish inmates in Majdanek, so I thought our turn is coming,” Orenstein told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in 2005, referring to one of the main Nazi death camps in Poland. “And to play for time, I registered myself and my three brothers as scientists and mathematicians, even though we were not. Just gambling for time. It turned out to be a good gamble.”

The Nazis were organizing a special unit of prisoners to develop a weapon to help the Nazis win the war and the prisoners assigned to the unit were spared execution. Luckily for Orenstein, who was only 16 when the war broke out, the math problems he was required to solve were simple and he, along with two of the three brothers with him, survived the war. His parents, a sister and one brother were killed.

After the war, Orenstein came to the United States and found work in a

factory. In the 1950s, he founded a toy company and had his first major success in 1958 when he introduced Betty the Beautiful Bride. But after defaulting on a loan in the 1970s, his company went bankrupt and Orenstein began pitching his ideas to other toy companies.

In 1983, he got the idea for the Transformers – action figures that turn from cars into robots. He brought the idea to Hasbro, which first produced the toys in 1984. The toys would become one of the most successful action figures in history, spawning TV shows, movies and merchandise worth billions of dollars.

In the 1990s, Orenstein turned his inventor’s mind to poker, a game he first started playing in the 1960s. Orenstein was attracted to the game for the way it hinged on calling bluffs and weighing odds.

“Poker is a very fascinating game. You have many elements that go into making a good poker player,” he told JTA in 2005. “You have to be able to calculate odds, you have to read other players’ faces and movements to see whether you can get what they call ‘tells’ – that tell you what kind of a hand they have – and also you have to have a good memory to remember cards.”

In 1996, he patented a new model of poker table with cameras built in that could show television viewers each of the players’ hands throughout the game. That invention, which eventually transformed the experience of watching a poker game from a tedious one to an exciting event, would spark an explosion of interest in the game.

Already a millionaire by the early 1960s, Orenstein was a longtime donor to Jewish causes, including the Metropolitan Council on Jewish Poverty in New York and the Orenstein Project, an Israeli nonprofit he founded in 2017 that focused on food insecurity with special attention to Holocaust survivors.

Orenstein is survived by his wife, Susie Orenstein. **HW**

OBITUARIES

Martin Robert LeVine

Martin R. (Marty) LeVine, son of Fay Epstein LeVine and the late S. Earl LeVine, passed away December 5, 2021, in Memphis, Tenn. after a long illness. He was born in Houston, Texas, Sept. 4, 1963. Although he left Texas with his immediate family when he was very young, he was quick to tell anyone that he was from Texas. He spent his early years in New Jersey and Monsey, N.Y.

In 1976, Marty came with his mother to live in Memphis, where he attended middle school at the Memphis Hebrew Academy and graduated from the Cooper Yeshiva of the South. He briefly attended Or Dovid Yeshiva in Jerusalem before a severe illness caused him to return to Memphis for years of rehabilitation. Eventually he was able to work and enjoyed 14 years working at Corky’s BBQ.

During his high school years he became active in a religious youth organization, National Conference of Synagogue Youth (NCSY). He served on its national board and subsequently was elected president of its eight-state Southern Region.

Besides his mother, he is survived by his brother, Jeff LeVine (Gail), of Austin, Texas; sister Amy Shayne (David) of Seattle, Wash.; a niece Aviva Shayne, and nephews Zak Shayne (Chana Ahuva), Avery LeVine and Marshall LeVine, as well as a large extended family and many friends in Memphis and all over the U.S. and Israel.

Throughout his life he was known for his sense of humor and positive outlook. Donations in his memory may be made to NCSY or the synagogue he attended, Anshei Sphard Beth El Emeth (ASBEE). **HW**

DEADLINES FOR
STORIES AND ADS
WEDNESDAYS AT NOON

That Time Tom Waits Taught Bob Dylan How to Curse in Yiddish

By Seth Rogovoy

This first appeared in Forward. Reprinted with permission.

Tom Waits, whose colorful career in music and entertainment began around 1970, turned 72 on December 7. While he may not be as prolific as he once was as a recording artist, Waits continues to perform and record, and he still shows up in feature films like “Licorice Pizza,” the new Paul Thomas Anderson film starring Sean Penn, Bradley Cooper, Benny Safdie, Maya Rudolph and Alana Haim of the sister singing group Haim. While mainstream commercial success has evaded Waits – whose style is sui generis and more than a bit off-center – he has garnered a cult following as well as the respect of his peers, who have showered him with numerous Grammy Awards and a place in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Back in the aughts, Bob Dylan hosted a weekly, one-hour satellite radio show called “Theme Time Radio Hour.” The program harked back to the days of freeform radio, featuring an eclectic mix of music, including pre-rock pop, jazz, blues, folk, R&B, country, rockabilly and rock ‘n’ roll, interspersed with musings and commentary by Dylan himself. Dylan recorded 100 episodes of the program between 2006 and 2009 before calling it quits.

The program occasionally featured call-ins from celebrities, usually comedi-

ans and musicians. Waits was a frequent guest, appearing at least five times to expound upon various subjects, including passenger pigeons and body parts. One time, and without any explanation, Waits called in (he actually sent Dylan cassette tapes, since the program was prerecorded) to share a list of Jewish curses, which from the sound of them must have begun life as Yiddish aphorisms.

Dylan introduced his special guest thusly: “One guy who’s always got something on his mind is Tom Waits. Let’s hear what he has to say.”

In his inimitable deep, gravelly voice that exudes the mood of a hangover, Waits – who is not Jewish – said to the future Nobel Prize-winning rock poet:

Hey Bob, it’s Tom. Here’s a little morsel of information. The Jewish people have always had a penchant for colorful cursing. Here are some of the most famous Jewish curses:

May God call the tune, and may your enemies play the music.

May you lose your faith, and may you marry a pious woman.

May all your teeth fall out except one, which should remain for a toothache.

May you grow like an onion with your head in the ground and your feet in the air.

May you have a good long sleep, and may your dreams be only of your troubles.

May you be the proof that man can

endure anything.

May your wife eat matzohs in bed and may you roll in the crumbs.

So there.

To which Dylan replied succinctly, “Thanks Tom. That was something else.”

Perhaps it was just coincidence, but Waits’s curses numbered seven in all. Way back in 1963, Dylan wrote a song called “Seven Curses.” The obscure number, written in folk-ballad style, told the story of a cruel hanging judge. Dylan’s seven curses were not funny like Waits’; they were much more grim, more akin to “Chad Gadya” than to the Borscht Belt:

These be seven curses on a judge so cruel:

That one doctor will not save him

That two healers will not heal him

That three eyes will not see him

That four ears will not hear him

That five walls will not hide him

That six diggers will not bury him

And that seven deaths shall never kill him

One thing we do not know is how or why Waits came to know and share those Jewish curses. What we do know is that early in his career, Waits’ manager and publisher was Herb Cohen. David Geffen signed Waits to his first recording contract, with Geffen’s Asylum Records label. Waits and Bette Midler were romantically linked in the mid-to-

late 1970s; Waits also dated Jewish comedian Elayne Boosler in the ‘70s.

When Waits moved from Los Angeles to New York City, he befriended Jewish jazz musician John Lurie of the Lounge Lizards, and the duo began sharing a music studio in the Westbeth artist-community building in Greenwich Village. The two also appeared together in “Down By Law, a film by Jim Jarmusch, and Waits was a guest on Lurie’s TV show, “Fishing with John.” The cover of Waits’ 1992 album, “Bone Machine,” was designed by Jesse Dylan, a filmmaker whose father is Waits’ pal Bob. In 2008, Genesis Prize-nominee Scarlett Johansson recorded an entire album of Tom Waits songs called “Anywhere I Lay My Head.”

In January 2008, Waits performed at a benefit for Bet Tzedek Legal Services – The House of Justice, a nonprofit poverty law center, in Los Angeles, founded in 1974 by a group of Jewish attorneys. Their social justice philosophy was rooted in a central tenet of Jewish law and teaching: “Tzedek, tzedek tirdof – Justice, justice you shall pursue.”

So perhaps those Jewish curses were just something Waits picked up along the way.

Seth Rogovoy is a contributing editor at the Forward. He frequently mines popular culture for its lesser-known Jewish stories. **HW**

Puzzle of Puzzle: Theodicy



*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

Theodicy: An awkward word much used by explorers of Divine justice and great for impressing the philosophy professor you meet at the cocktail party.

Theodicy: A blockbuster exam question dreaded by all theology students. Easy to spell, but impossible to express accurately. Theologians of all stripes fruitlessly study their holy books – especially the Judeo-Christian Bible – and then attempt to explain this clumsy word to us amateurs. It is a mountainous peak difficult to surmount – the concept of Theodicy, a short, but venomous word that defeats every attack at justification – i.e., put simply: if G-d is good, why is there evil in the world?

It’s not as simple as why do 7 million planetary inhabitants (a few of them totally innocent) perish of Malaria. Mosquitoes must eat, too, you know. (And we know nothing of their souls. Maybe the world was made for the Anopheles Mosquito. We know so little.) Who knows how this nasty assassin fits into cosmological and ecological balance? Don’t ask me. ASK HIM – He put them

here. Were it not for venom of the insect maybe elephants would multiply by millions and mash down the habitations of man.

But pose a tougher question: assume a loving G-d, as we do. Ignore for the moment some gory elements of those five Books of Moses – the unholy skeptic must admit – make a strong plea for loving kindness. Methinks that’s where the conundrum starts. Love and hate waltz together, they say. Kill and cure, also twins. It is inarguable that the Lord G-d of Hosts has two faces in our Humash. Maybe a schizophrenic world demands schizophrenic guardianship.

Theodicy is no surprise in the world He created – in the world He manages. At least not according to his holy constitutions, the written and oral law, that Jews and Christians worship and study to learn His intentions. And here we are only talking about the Judeo-Christian question.

We watch a friend – shining with goodness. A Hasid who enriches the world with his gilded morality – who pays duty to both G-d and man. He dies a torturous death of cancer in his late twenties. Justice, where are you and your scales? Not to mention genocide beginning with the climatic Holocaust and followed by numerous others just as wrathful that stalk our world. Why does He let it happen, we cry? Why do the innocent bleed?

The seeker of truth has a flimsy an-

swer. The perpetrators were punished, he replies. Consider WWII. German cities were pulverized – millions of Germans died (though G-d’s timing was off – better before to prevent evil than after). Still, even in the Holocaust that rained from G-d’s skies, the punitive punishment was rife with Theodicy: The incinerated Dresden infant was as innocent as a child of the 19th Century. That old couple – now no more – on the 8th floor of the rubbed Berlin flat spent six to eight hours, five days a week, reading their bibles to each other.

To put it succinctly, injustice may not reign, but it healthily exists. Why – how to explain. We need evil to allow free will? That’s the common answer. Sure, but couldn’t an all-powerful G-d design a wedding cake world without a bitter bite?

The ancient Gnostics had one answer. This is not the “real” world, and you are not looking upon “real” events. And to demean the human dimension even further, this deity you worship (they claim) is only a stand-in for the majesty that set the galaxies a’spinning. Furthermore, your petty life would wither in the fiery glow of the “truth.” Like Jack Nicholson says in the movie, “you couldn’t stand the truth.” The mathematics of truth and justice are unknown to you. Not very Jewish, though the Creator, himself, tells you, “you may not see my face.”

Somewhat related, the closest enlightenment to the dilemma may come from

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Isaac Bashevis Singer who says, “there is no reality and there are no lies (and therefore no truths).

“No doubt the world is an imaginary world,” he says. “The longer I lived the more I understood that there were really no good – no evil.” Everything happens somewhere, sometime, in one world or another. What appears as life to your earthbound eyes is a grand drama performed in a theater, he could have added. That’s one man’s answer. There are ten thousand others. Pick a simple one within the Jewish framework that makes you comfortable. Somewhere G-d punishes – G-d rewards. That’s not a bad beginning.

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

OPINION

China, Russia and Iran: The Empires Strike Back America is threatened by neo-imperialists.

By Clifford D. May

(JNS) – Let’s play “Jeopardy!” The answer: “All were great empires in the past, and all now have rulers determined to establish great empires in the future.” And the question is: “What are China, Russia and Iran?”

China is ruled by a Communist, Russia by a hyper-nationalist, and Iran by an Islamist. All three seek to restore what they consider their rightful realms, and all see the United States as their biggest obstacle. It’s on this basis that they now have a flourishing alliance. No surprise that American diplomats speaking softly and carrying carrots instead of sticks fail to make progress with any of them.

Those who proclaim themselves jihadis of various stripes also intend to establish an empire, along with a caliphate, in the image of those that dominated much of the world for more than a thousand years.

By the way, though not an adversary, Turkey, the heartland of the former Ottoman Empire, has become America’s least reliable and most problematic ally since Recep Tayyip Erdoğan became its neo-sultan.

Is America an empire? That depends on how you define the term. The United States has long led a rules-based, liberal international order. We hoped and even expected that post-Soviet Russia and post-Maoist China would become stakeholders in this arrangement, preferring compromise to confrontation and tacitly acknowledging that American predominance is the worst form of global organization – except for all the others that have been tried.

Over recent years, however, Moscow and Beijing have made it abundantly

clear that they intend to replace Washington as leader and chief rule-maker of an increasingly illiberal international order.

Former President Barack Obama believed he could entice Iran’s rulers to join the club in return for dollars, respect and a chance to “share the neighborhood” – the Middle East, that is – with Saudi Arabia. President Biden continues to make them offers they can refuse.

All these once-great empires are now striking back to avenge what they perceive as humiliations, and striking out to extend their influence.

Start with Beijing, whose current imperial possessions include Xinjian, a Turkic and Muslim land, and Tibet, which also is religiously, linguistically and culturally distinct from China.

China’s rulers have stripped Hong Kong of autonomy and freedom, despite having signed a treaty pledging not to do that.

Free, democratic and prosperous Taiwan has never been under Chinese Communist rule, but Beijing calls it a “rogue province” that must be brought to heel sooner or later. Escalating military threats have raised fears that it could be sooner.

The Belt and Road Initiative is a neo-imperialist project with a global reach. China’s Communist rulers reportedly intend to establish their first permanent naval presence on the Atlantic Ocean in Equatorial Guinea. They also have a military base in Djibouti overlooking the Bab el-Mandeb, a strategic chokepoint for ships transiting the Suez Canal via the Red Sea.

Let’s move on to Tehran’s empire. It includes Lebanon, a country dominated

by Hezbollah, the proxy of Iran’s rulers. Those rulers also deploy the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps to Syria, instruct Shi’ite militias in Iraq and support the Houthis rebels in Yemen, which sits on the eastern shores of the Bab el-Mandeb, across from the Chinese military base in Djibouti. Tehran’s interventions in Latin America have included terrorist bombings in Argentina and currently include weapons shipments to Venezuela and Nicaragua.

Iran’s rulers want to bestride the Middle East like a colossus, driving out infidel Americans and their “satanic” influences and toppling Muslim leaders friendly to the United States, e.g., the Saudi, Bahraini and Emirati royals. The weaker Washington appears, the more we will see Arab pragmatists hedging their bets by attempting to placate what they fear will soon be a nuclear-armed Islamic Republic.

Regarding Israel, Iran’s rulers harbor genocidal intentions. “We will not back off from the annihilation of Israel, even one millimeter,” Brig.-Gen. Abolfazl Shekarchi, spokesman for Iran’s armed forces, said in a recent interview. “We want to destroy Zionism in the world.”

Turn now to Russia where, I’ve long been convinced, President Vladimir Putin sees himself as a 21st-century czar, committed to rebuilding the Russian empire, which became the Soviet empire even as Soviet leaders declared themselves anti-imperialists.

Belarus, under Alexander Lukashenko, is already a vassal state. Putin has used military power to gain a foothold in the Middle East, including a Syrian port on the Mediterranean.

Since 2008, he’s occupied 20 percent

of neighboring Georgia. He threatens the Baltic states and foments instability in the Balkan states. He took Crimea away from Ukraine in 2014 and backs separatists in eastern Ukraine. He now has tens of thousands of troops pressing on Ukraine’s borders.

Conventional wisdom holds that Putin “fears” that Ukraine will join NATO. I disagree. Putin knows quite well that current NATO members are not prepared “by unanimous agreement” to invite Ukraine to join in the foreseeable future.

More to the point, based not least on a 5,000-word article he published in July, Putin believes Russians and Ukrainians are “one people – a single whole” that should never have been separated. He places much of the blame on Vladimir Lenin, who, in 1922, established the Soviet Union as a federation of “equal republics,” a move that “planted in our statehood the most dangerous time bomb.”

Before I let you go, one more round of “Jeopardy!” The answer: “Unquestionable military superiority, a powerful, fast-growing economy and an insurmountable lead in advanced technologies.”

The question: “What must the highest priority of the American president be if he is to deter neo-imperialist adversaries of the United States and the West?”

Until and unless the occupant of the White House gets this one right, America’s national security will remain in serious ... well, jeopardy.

Clifford D. May is the founder and president of the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and a columnist for The Washington Times. HW

Sarah Silverman’s Very Jewish Podcast Has Thoughtful Advice for Moms and Daughters

By Maddy Albert

This originally appeared on Kveller. Reprinted with permission.

Jewish comedian Sarah Silverman always has a refreshing take on life’s conundrums. What’s more, we love just how open she is about her Jewish identity. Silverman proudly discusses her Jewishness in whatever she’s doing – whether she’s posting on social media, being interviewed by someone (see: her recent conversation with Howard Stern about how Jewish women should play Jewish characters) or hosting her own podcast.

Jewish content is a regular feature of the Sarah Silverman Podcast. In March of this year, she hosted an episode that addressed Jewish stereotypes head-on and implored non-Jews to be allies of the Jewish community. “I feel bad, because I feel like this podcast has become very Jew-heavy,” she began, before addressing the dangers of antisemitism.

This week’s episode (“E46 Tootsie Teeth, Braless, Vulva”) continues the Jewish trend. This recent episode is chockablock with Jewish content: she calls her father a Yiddish-sounding endearment, “shleppie;” she describes her partner, comedian Rory Albanese, as being a mensch (“he’s the shit and I’m knee-deep in it,” she says); and she points out how a photo of Jewish comedians Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks help form the background of her set.

But what we’re really kvelling about today is the incredible advice about mothers and daughters that Silverman gave to a fan. A 20-year-old woman named Elizabeth – who had recently had breast-reduction surgery – called in to ask her advice about how her mom was dealing with her choice to not wear a bra.

Evidently, Elizabeth’s mom said this choice made her look “trashy and bad.” (Oof!) She confides: “I don’t want to wear a bra just to appease her because I find them so uncomfortable, but I don’t want there to be more problems. I don’t think she should be talking to me like that.”

OK, can we take a moment to say WE FEEL THIS. There’s been a noticeable anti-bra movement making waves these past few years; Vogue, FWIW, declared that 2020 may be “the end of the line for the bra.” During the pandemic, many of us decided to stop wearing things that are uncomfortable – you know, things like heels, pants and, of course, bras. We’re already under more than enough stress, thankyouverymuch, so if something isn’t comfortable, why wear it?

Silverman, however, smartly realizes the problem here isn’t really about bras, and she comes back with a much more thoughtful response about the conflict between Elizabeth and her mother. “I mean listen, we all have our mishegas with our mothers,” she says, using the Yiddish term for “craziness.”

“This is for some reason important to her,” Silverman continues. “It seems to be important to many moms.” We have to agree here – many of us can relate to comments that our moms may have made about our bodies in the past, and the damage it does to our self-esteem. (We’d also like to take a moment here to celebrate those moms who are trying their hardest not to pass body-image issues onto their own children. We see you!)

“Your mom is not a bad person, this is what moms do,” Silverman tells the caller. “I promise it has less to do with you and more about how she feels about

herself.”

Silverman then shares some advice that can only be summarized as “pick your battles.” She concludes: “You can get really upset or you can just laugh and kiss her forehead and say, ‘I love you mom, and I’m sorry my boobs are not high enough for your comfort, but you’re going to have to find a way to love me anyway.’”

Like so much of what Silverman does, her advice is hilarious, to the point and perfectly said.

Silverman may not be a mom herself, but we love how she displays empathy to both parties here. Sometimes, she notes, parents say things that are more a reflection of themselves than about us; sometimes, kids need to go against their parents’ wishes for their own best

interest. And unlike many comedians – who may be tempted to insert a Jewish mother joke here – it’s refreshingly mature to see Silverman conclude that the bond between mothers and daughters is far stronger than these small-scale disagreements. In short, bra or no bra, love is what matters most – and we love you, Sarah, for reminding us of this important truth. [HW](#)

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A California University Could Rename Library Honoring a Nazi Sympathizer

By Maya Mirsky

(J. The Jewish News of Northern California via JTA) – Administrators at California State University, Fresno, announced on December 3 that they would consider renaming the school’s Henry Madden Library, after a professor at the university shared with students that Madden, a longtime librarian at the school, was an antisemite and vocal Hitler supporter.

“First and foremost, I want members of our Jewish community to know that we stand with you and against both the historic and ongoing antisemitism that remains all too present in our society,” the university’s interim president Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval said in a Nov. 29 email sent to faculty, staff and students about the renaming.

“I’m very glad the university is quickly addressing this,” said Rabbi Rick Winer of Fresno’s Temple Beth Israel, who serves on an advisory council on Jewish life at the school.

The development comes amid a national reckoning on names and monuments honoring figures who expressed racist views, a movement that has seen the University of California-Berkeley law school renamed, highways in northern Virginia bearing the names of Confederate generals rededicated to honor

abolitionists, and a proposal put forth to replace more than 40 San Francisco public school names because of associations with racism.

Earlier this year a statue at St. Mary’s College in Moraga, California, was removed from campus grounds following a student petition because the artist, Fritz von Graevenitz, was widely celebrated by Nazis and sculpted busts of Hitler.

The Madden issue at Fresno State came to light because of research by Bradley Hart, a professor in the school’s Media, Communications and Journalism Department and the author of a book on American supporters of Hitler and fascism. He praised the administration for the announcement.

“I think they acted with great sense of purpose,” he said. “Obviously they take it seriously.”

Hart’s book, “Hitler’s American Friends: The Third Reich’s Supporters in the United States,” was published in 2018 but, according to university spokesperson Lisa Boyles Bell, the school was only made aware of Madden’s views after Hart lectured on the material in a class on Nov. 17. Bell told J. it was the first time, to the university’s knowledge, that material from the book

had been taught at the university.

“The topic only came up right at the end,” Hart told J., describing the class. He said students caught the small reference to the school’s librarian and asked Hart about it, which led to a discussion of his research – conducted at the Madden Library.

“There was quite a bit of shock,” he said.

Madden was librarian at the school from 1949 to 1979, and the university’s central library was named for him in 1981. He donated his papers to the library, including private correspondence, but they were sealed until 2007.

According to local news station ABC 30, in the book Hart quotes a letter from Madden: “Whenever I see one of those predatory noses, or those roving and leering eyes, or those slobbering lips, or those flat feet, or those nasal and whiny voices I tremble with rage and hatred. They are the oppressors. ... Whom do I hate more than the Jews?”

The university confirmed it had copies of Madden’s antisemitic writings in its collections.

“The views attributed to Dr. Madden are more than allegations; they are reflections of his beliefs as captured in his own words, and in documents he curat-

ed and donated to the Library before his passing,” Jiménez-Sandoval’s email said.

A task force has been announced to rename the building, but the university was not able to confirm a timeline.

“The Task Force understands the urgency of this matter and will convene soon to begin their review of the materials and documents, which we anticipate will take some time,” Bell said.

Hart said that was appropriate, as scholars should examine the large collection of Madden’s documents scrupulously.

“We don’t know whether Madden’s views changed over time,” he said.

Winer, who has been tapped to be a member of the task force, said the issues surrounding Madden’s views reach beyond the small Jewish community in Fresno, a city of about 500,000 with three synagogues and a Jewish federation.

“While the Jewish community is extremely small, the community of people of color and the community of religious minorities is very substantial,” he said. “White supremacists and neo-Nazis are a continuing issue.”

A version of this story was first published in J. The Jewish News of Northern California, and is republished with permission. HW

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