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Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

HEBREWWATCHMAN.COM 21 KISLEV, 5783 DECEMBER 15, 2022 VOL. 101, NO. 12

Glow in the Dark Chanukah at Chabad's Annual Giant Menorah Lighting Event



Rabbi Levi Klein of Chabad kindles the Giant Candy Menorah at last year's Chanukah festival.

Once again, Chabad Lubavitch of Tennessee will attempt to kindle the spark of Yiddishkeit (Jewishness) within each and every Jew with their bold public displays of Jewish pride.

"This year we have added a new twist to our Giant Menorah Lighting celebration," said Regional Director of Chabad Lubavitch Rabbi Levi Klein. "We will be having a Glow In The Dark Chanukah with lots of activities and goodies all with a Glow In The Dark theme."

The festivities will get underway at 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, December 18, the First Night of Chanukah at the Chabad Center for Jewish Life located at 2570 Kirby Parkway.

One of the highlights will be a live presentation by Memphis Graffiti Artist ToonkyBerry as he creates a Judaic Mural for the Chabad Center that will also Glow in The Dark.

Participants can also partake in the building of the Glow in the Dark Giant

Menorah, which will be kindled at the event. There will also be Glow In The Dark arts & crafts, cookie decorating, decorating your own tote bag, and more.

"The festival is open to the public and all activities are free of charge," said Rabbi Klein. "And the Giant Menorah Kindling will be followed by Chanukah music, donuts, hot latkes and other Chanukah and Glow In The Dark giveaways."

The holiday of Chanukah is a festival of victory and celebration for all times, highlighted by the kindling of menorahs each night of the holiday.

"It is a holiday replete with traditions and with display of Jewish pride and unity," said Rabbi Klein.

Chabad Lubavitch, an international organization, has expanded its centers all over the world. With over 4500 offices and centers throughout the world, in-

(See Chabad Page 3)

Doug Emhoff to Chair White House Roundtable with Jewish Groups on Rising Antisemitism



Second gentleman Douglas Emhoff, center, husband of Vice President Kamala Harris, delivers remarks during a roundtable about the rise of antisemitism with White House Domestic Policy Advisor Susan Rice, left, and Senior Advisor to the President for Public Engagement Keisha Lance Bottoms in the Indian Treaty Room at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building in Washington, Dec. 7, 2022. Credit: Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The White House will convene a roundtable with Jewish organizations on antisemitism, to be chaired by Douglas Emhoff, the Jewish Second Gentleman.

Also appearing at the event will be Susan Rice, President Joe Biden's top domestic policy advisor; Deborah Lipstadt, the State Department's special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism; and Keisha Lance Bottoms, Biden's senior advisor for public engagement, the White House said last Monday in a statement.

Biden has made combating antisemitism and other bigotries a centerpiece of his agenda; he launched his campaign in April 2019 by saying that the deadly 2017 white supremacist march in Charlottesville, Virginia, and former President Donald Trump's failure to unequiv-

ocally condemn it, made him decide to run for president.

Antisemitic expression has spiked following Elon Musk's removal of content controls after he purchased the social media giant Twitter and unabashed antisemitism embraced by rapper and designer Kanye West. Biden convened a White House summit in September to address the threat extremism poses to various communities.

The Department of Homeland Security last week issued a terrorism advisory bulletin that the Jewish, LGBTQ and migrant communities face a "persistent and lethal threat," NBC previously reported

The same day, Sen. Ben Cardin, a Jew-

(See Emhoff Page 3)



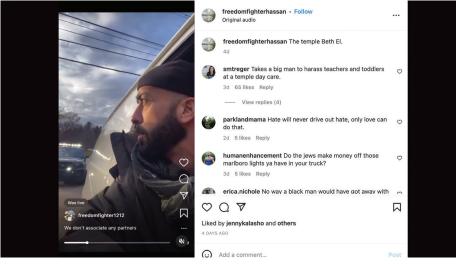
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Michigan Man Charged after Threatening Synagogue-Goers Yelled Antisemitic Invective During Arraignment



Hassan Chokr filmed the traffic stop where police questioned and released him after he left Temple Beth El in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where congregants alleged that he threatened them.

Credit: Screenshot from Instagram)

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – A Michigan man who allegedly threatened and harassed congregants at a Detroit-area synagogue uttered antisemitic slurs at the magistrate who arraigned him last Monday.

Meanwhile, the synagogue where the incident took place is planning events to help community members process both their trauma and their concern about how local police handled the incident.

Hassan Chokr, a Dearborn resident, remained in custody in Bloomfield Township after being arrested last Sunday, two days after he yelled antisemitic and anti-Israel invective outside Temple Beth El while parents were dropping off their children at its early childhood education center. After the incident drew widespread attention, including because of a video apparently filmed by Chokr of his conversation with police immediately following his departure from Beth El, he was arrested at his home and charged with two counts of ethnic intimidation.

As Magistrate Julie Nelson-Klein set a bond of \$1 million for his release last Monday and outlined conditions if he is able to meet it, Chokr called her a "Jewish b—-" and "Zionist b—-," the *Detroit Free Press* reported. (Nelson-Klein is Jewish.) Court officials frequently muted Chokr, who appeared via video, as he ranted about God punishing the magistrate.

Chokr, who pleaded not guilty, had told congregants they were going to die, witnesses from Beth El reported. He also had delivered a string of profanities to families as he demanded to know whether they supported Israel, saying, "Do you support Israel? How dare you.

F— Israel and Jews," and hurled racist language at a member of the synagogue's security staff who tried to get him to leave.

Temple Beth El Rabbi Mark Miller has been counseling families since the incident. He told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that "there is a mixture of anger and sadness" within the congregation.

Since Chokr's harassment of the synagogue, he said, some of the children who were present saw a white truck parked outside and asked their parents, "Is that that man again?"

Chokr's next hearing related to his actions outside Temple Beth El is set for Dec. 15. He also has an extensive criminal record and is also in the middle of prosecution in another case, where he has been charged with assault with a dangerous weapon and assaulting or obstructing a police officer, according to the Free Press. His Instagram page, which indicates that a previous version had been removed, contains multiple videos showing him making antisemitic comments; a highlight is called "F— the Jew."

Miller said he and others in the congregation remained concerned about how the local police had handled the incident. Police officers had initially engaged with Chokr in a friendly manner and let him go free from a traffic stop even after he said he was heading to another synagogue – behavior that was captured on video and shared online by a prominent antisemitism watchdog. He was not arrested for two days.

"I have a hard time wrapping my head around the idea that, after what this guy did and said, he shouldn't have been im-

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info@hebrewwatchman.com

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mediately in custody," Miller said. "It makes me uncomfortable."

The Bloomfield Township Police Department has defended its actions, saying in a statement that officers had deployed tactics meant to de-escalate conflict and "were able to assess that subsequent to the traffic stop the subject would not be an imminent threat to the community." But a top lieutenant also acknowledged that locals were unnerved by the video and the police practices it captured, telling the Free Press last Sunday, "There are some concerns about that."

Miller said his congregants have "some residual anger at the police" because of the traffic stop video, even now that Chokr is in custody. "Whether the police process was right or wrong, it feels really bad."

Temple Beth El plans to hold a parent forum with a trauma and resiliency expert this week. Following that, Miller said, there will be a community-wide forum about law enforcement's response to reports of antisemitism.

Miller took stock in the fact that the Jewish community has shown "resiliency" throughout the ordeal. "The same day that this happened," he said, "we had an incredible Shabbat with a musical guest." **HW**



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Chabad...

(Continued From Page 1)

cluding the one in Memphis. It is by far the largest network of Jewish and social services in the world. During the holiday of Chanukah, all Chabad Centers hold public Menorah Kindling Ceremonies to publicize the universal message of Chanukah. Chabad also sponsors the large Menorah, which stands in front of the White House and the Largest Menorah in the World (50 feet high), which stands at Rockefeller Center in New York.

Also, Chabad will be visiting the sick in the local hospitals making sure that those unable to make it to a Chanukah party or celebration will not be left out of the Chanukah spirit.

In its Chanukah outreach campaign, Chabad Lubavitch of Tennessee has also arranged for the erecting of several large menorahs around the Memphis area including each of the three lobbies at the Memphis international airport. They join hundreds of Chabad Centers across the globe that are staging similar massive public displays of the menorah and its symbolic lights. From Australia to Africa, Columbia to Hong Kong, New York City's ground zero to the White House lawn, hundreds of thousands will experience the joy of Chanukah with Chabad.

"It is a holiday that enriches our lives with the light of tradition," said Rabbi Klein. "In ancient times, our ancestors rededicated the Temple in Jerusalem with the menorah. Today, we rededicate ourselves to making this world a better and brighter place."

For further information on any of the above events or if you have any questions related to Chanukah, please visit www.JewishMemphis.com or call Chabad at 901-754-0404. **HW**

Emhoff...

(Continued From Page 1)

ish Democrat from Maryland, convened a meeting of top agency officials who handle the threat of antisemitic violence.

"We can and should be doing more," Cardin, who convened the meeting in his role as chairman of the United States' efforts to oversee human rights abroad, said after the meeting. "A unified, national strategy on countering antisemitism is needed. While finding the proper balance between protecting free speech and protecting Americans from harm, we need to up our game, rebuild coalitions with other groups that have been the target of hate-based violence, and institutionalize coordination that counters antisemitism wherever it is found."

Emhoff, whose wife is Vice President Kamala Harris, said that his time on the job has made him more sensitive to Jewish tradition and to threats facing Jews.

"And coming in as Second Gentleman, I thought being the first man in this role would be the headline and it was," Emhoff said last week at a conference of NewDEAL, a group of young progressive elected officials. "But like the one thing was being the first Jewish person of any of the four. There's never been a Jew married to a president, or vice president, or has been president or vice president. As it turns out that has become a very big deal in the Jewish community and in other communities that aren't represented."

Emhoff warned against apathy regarding antisemitism. "So I don't want it to feel normal," he said. "I don't want people to think well it's just words, it's just Kanye, no – this matters. This is important. We have to all step up and speak out about this as leaders in your communities." **HW**

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In A Ukrainian City Liberated from Russia, Local Jewish Leaders Stand Accused of Collaboration



A man rides a bike past a destroyed house in the village of Posad Pokrovske on the outskirts of Kherson, Ukraine, Nov. 30, 2022. Credit: Chris McGrath/Getty Images

By David I. Klein

(JTA) – When Russian troops poured across the Ukrainian border in March, thousands fled from the cities that would be first in their path. But in Kherson, the southern port city with strategic value to the Russians, Rabbi Yosef Itzhak Wolff decided to stay put.

His decision to remain put him in line with the philosophy of his Jewish movement, Chabad-Lubavitch, whose rabbis typically commit to the cities where they are stationed and stay there through thick and thin.

But his decision could also cost him the ability to serve Kherson's Jews. According to a report last week in *The New* York Times, Wolff is now in Germany, concerned because some in Kherson accuse him of collaborating with the Russian forces.

Meanwhile, a member of his Jewish community is facing life in prison over

his actions during the chaotic early days of the war, according to The New York Times report.

Russia captured Kherson on March 2, and for months, the city suffered a brutal occupation that resulted in hundreds dead and scores more "disappeared" or tortured, according to Human Rights Watch.

Among those living in the occupied city was Wolff, an Israel-born rabbi who arrived in Ukraine nearly 30 years ago, just after the fall of the Soviet Union and Ukraine's independence. For the past 13 years, he had presided over a Jewish community in Kherson estimated before the war at 8,000 people.

In the early days of the war, Wolff's work to supply food, medicine and at least some semblance of a joyous Purim to his community was highly publicized.

During one trip, the Times of Israel reported, he dodged bullets shuttling

food back to the city from the border with Crimea, where his brother is also a rabbi. In another, according to Chabad. org, he went out to deliver food even as Russian tanks rolled through the town.

"Despite heavy fighting in the streets of Kherson, Rabbi Yosef Wolff did not abandon his community for a moment. remaining in the war-torn city through it all and serving the local population," Rabbi Motti Seligson, a spokesperson for the Chabad movement, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. He called Wolff a "true hero of the Jewish people and for people of good conscience everywhere."

Before the Holocaust, Kherson was a major center of Jewish life, with some 26 synagogues, but now, there is only Wolff's. And before the war, it was like Chabad centers around the world: serving a local community, but also famously welcoming to unfamiliar faces, including foreign visitors.

Opening the doors to newcomers took on added gravity after the war began and Russians streamed into Kherson. For much of the year, it was unclear whether Ukraine would regain control of the city, or whether it would become like Crimea and remain under Russian occupation. But last month, Ukraine liberated Kherson, generating scenes of jubilation - and putting anyone perceived as collaborating with the Russian army under suspicion.

Some of that suspicion landed on Wolff, who had allowed Russian soldiers to pray in his synagogue. The soldiers were Jewish officers who had arrived with armed guards, he told The New York Times.

In the days after liberation, he left Kherson, and Ukraine, for Germany. Now, with efforts to penalize collaborators underway, he told the newspaper that he is not sure when or if he will re-

Among those who remained in Kherson was a prominent member of the Jewish community who is now being prosecuted for his choices amid the messy reality of occupation.

Illia Karamalikov, a nightclub owner and member of Kherson's city council, was close to Wolff, frequently allowing Chabad to use his nightclub's space for events, the rabbi told *The New York Times*.

In the early days of the occupation, Kherson descended into a state of lawlessness. The Ukrainian civil administration fled ahead of the Russian forces and, after conquering the city without

much resistance, Russia took little responsibility for its administration, instead sending soldiers on to other targets such as neighboring regions of Odessa, Mykolaiv, Kryvyi Rih - Ukrainian president Voldymyr Zelensky's hometown and ultimately, Kyiv.

Looting was rampant, and cut off from power and supply lines, the thousands of people who remained in the city faced a real risk of starvation.

It was locals who managed to bring back some semblance of order. Karamalikov helped organize a 1,200-strong community patrol to enforce curfews and watch for looters.

It was in that role, according to The New York Times report, that he found himself face to face with a lost and confused Russian pilot, whom his men had taken into captivity. Karamalikov held the prisoner in a utility closet in his home for a night, before ultimately making the decision to return him to the Russian forces unharmed.

That earned him a 12-page indictment from Ukraine, as he ran afoul of new laws enacted at the outbreak of the war that stipulate that "cooperation with the aggressor state, its armed formations, or its occupation administration" are punishable as acts of collaboration under Ukraine's criminal code.

Many of those who spoke to *The New* York Times said the laws don't account for the reality of living under occupation.

"All these people who ran away are judging us," Wolff told the newspaper. "These are cruel times."

Through returning the soldier, Karamalikov allegedly "organized the further participation of a Russian serviceman in aggression against Ukraine," according to his indictment.

But many in Kherson are not sure what other option they had. Karamalikov's community watch organization was a volunteer and non-military force whose limited power involved pressing looters into doing community service. To have harmed the soldier would have made them combatants against Russia.

"We wondered later: Should we have killed the soldier and kept it secret?" one of Karamalikov's watchmen, Andriy Skvortsov told The New York Times. "But I've decided no, that wouldn't have been good."

"With a life in his hands, I can't imagine Illia ever killing anyone," Wolff told the newspaper. "What he did was the most humane decision he could make." HW



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30 Deaf and Hearing-Impaired Youths Celebrate Bar and Bat Mitzvahs in Jerusalem



Thirty deaf and hearing-impaired students from across Israel celebrate their bar and bat mitzvahs in Jerusalem as part of a program developed by Young Israel in Israel's Judaic Heritage Program for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, the Jewish Agency for Israel and World Mizrachi. Credit: Courtesy.

(JNS) - Thirty deaf and hearing-impaired students from across Israel celebrated their bar and bat mitzvahs in Jerusalem this week as part of a program developed by Young Israel in Israel's Judaic Heritage Program for the Deaf and Hearing Impaired, the Jewish Agency for Israel and World Mizrachi.

The program, which included a sign-language interpreter, began at the Beit Knesset Nitzanim in Jerusalem's Baka neighborhood, with the boys donning their tefillin and being presented with a tallit and siddur. The girls received candle sticks designed by famed Israeli artist Emanuel and a book of tehillim (psalms).

Following a celebratory meal, the group of 21 boys and nine girls headed to the Old City for a guided tour and an additional ceremony at the Western

The youths, who study in special schools that address their hearing challenges, traveled to Jerusalem from across Israel.

Rivka Morowitz, a mother of eight children, including three with special needs, accompanied her son, Meir, who is deaf and has Down Syndrome.

"This event allowed Meir to know that something special was being done just for him, and he now knows that he is being introduced to the world of Jewish adulthood in a meaningful way that he and our family will always remember," said Morovitz.

"There are few more rewarding things than witnessing a child who, despite his or her limitations, realizes that they are being counted and can celebrate in a way that respects their specific needs and interests," said Daniel Meyer, executive director of Young Israel in Israel. "Many of these parents were told that their child would never talk or be able to learn. It's truly heartwarming to see how far these children have come, the mountains they have had to climb to get to this point. This is a moment that every one of these children is sure to cherish for the rest of their lives," he added.

Rabbi Doron Perez, chair of World Mizrachi, said: "The beauty of Jewish life is that it is immersive and engages all people, including those with particular disabilities. We as a community are committed to ensuring that these young men and women will be able to experience the special transitional moments of the bar and bat mitzvah in a way which takes into account their unique needs." HW

U.S. Swaps 'Merchant of Death' for WNBA Player Griner



WNBA star Brittney Griner in a Russian court. Source: Twitter (JNS) - American basketball play-

er Brittney Griner was released from Russian captivity last Thursday, in a one-on-one prisoner exchange for arms dealer Viktor Bout.

"She's safe. She's on a plane," President Joe Biden said in brief remarks at the White House. "She's on her way home, after months of being unjustly detained in Russia, held under intolerable circumstances."

Griner was arrested at a Moscow airport in February after the discovery of cannabis-derived oil cartridges in her luggage. She had been prescribed medicinal cannabis in Arizona, which is illegal in Russia.

The 32-year-old star center for the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury later pleaded guilty to charges of drug smuggling. On August 4, she was sentenced to nine years in prison.

Bout is a former Soviet military translator who has used his multiple companies to smuggle weapons from Eastern Europe to Africa and the Middle East since the fall of the Soviet Union, earning the nicknames "Merchant of Death" and "Sanctions Buster."

Bout's network allegedly delivered surface-to-air missiles to Kenya that were used in a failed strike on an Israeli airliner during the 2002 Mombasa terror attacks. Bout also reportedly met with Hezbollah officials during the run-up to the 2006 Second Lebanon War.

Bout was arrested in Thailand on terrorism charges in 2008, and later convicted by a federal jury in Manhattan of conspiracy to kill U.S. citizens and officials, delivery of anti-aircraft missiles and providing aid to a terrorist organization, and sentenced to a minimum of 25

years imprisonment.

The exchange leaves retired U.S. Marine Paul Whelan, a corporate security director, imprisoned in Russia. Whelan, who has Canadian, American, British and Irish citizenship, has been in Russian custody for nearly four years accused of espionage, a charge that the U.S. denies.

Biden on Thursday insisted that the administration has not forgotten about Whelan. HW





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IDF Busts Drug Smuggling Attempt from Sinai



Soldiers in the Paran Brigade's Caracal Battalion carry a comrade on a stretcher towards the end of a 16 km. overnight hike to complete their basic training, in Tel Nitzan, near the border with Egypt, Sept. 3, 2014. Credit: Hadas Parush/Flash90.

(JNS) – The Israel Defense Forces announced last Wednesday the foiling of an attempt to smuggle approximately 6 million shekels (\$1.75 million) worth of drugs from Egypt into Israel.

Soldiers from the Paran Regional Brigade, which secures the border with Sinai, spotted a number of suspects attempting to smuggle drugs into Israel, according to the IDF Spokesperson's Unit.

"IDF soldiers were dispatched to the scene and thwarted the smuggling attempt. The soldiers confiscated 140 kg. of drugs, estimated at approximately 6

million shekels," said the military.

The drugs were handed over to the Israel Police, it added.

Some 200 drug runs from Egypt into Israel were thwarted or disrupted in 2021. So far this year the number has surpassed 500, according to a security official

According to the IDF's figures, while drug runners had a 50% success rate in 2021, that has dropped to 20% in 2022.

In 2021, some 300 million shekels (\$88 million) worth of drugs passed through the border illegally. **HW**

Police: Antisemitic Crimes Up 125% in New York City



A New York City Police Department cruiser. Credit: Photo Spirit/ Shutterstock.

(JNS) – The New York Police Department last Monday reported 45 antisemitic crimes in the city in November, compared to 20 over the same period in 2021, according to police data.

In the most high-profile incident, two men were arrested for plotting to attack Jewish targets in the city. One was in possession of a hunting knife and a swastika arm band at the time of his arrest, with authorities later seizing a handgun and 30-round magazine from a bag one of the men had been filmed carrying earlier.

In other antisemitic incidents, four suspects assaulted a Jewish man on a street in Brooklyn; a man threw rocks at a Jewish school; and a vandal sprayed "Free Palestine" on a Chabad outreach vehicle, according to local media.

New York City Mayor Eric Adams denounced the increase in global Jew-hatred in an address at the 2022 Mayors Summit Against Antisemitism in Athens, Greece.

"The temperature is increasing ever so slightly that we have allowed [antisemitism] to normalize in every part of our lives. We have become accustomed to it; it has become popular," said Adams at the event, which was attended by over 50 mayors and municipal leaders from across the globe.

The Anti-Defamation League recorded 2,717 antisemitic incidents across the United States in 2021, a 34% increase over the previous year. **HW**



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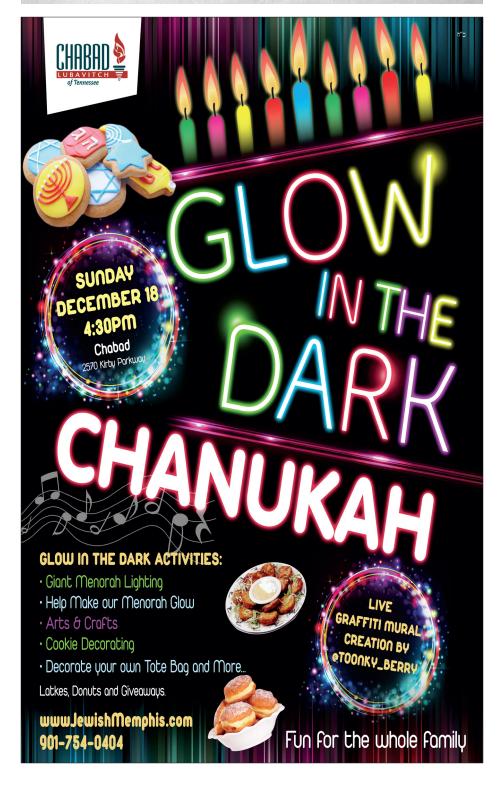
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Preparing for a Natural Disaster

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors Questions for Mike? You can reach him at 901.761.8151 or Michael.Stein@WellsFargoAdvisors.com fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael-stein

Most areas in the United States are susceptible to some form of natural disaster, whether it's a wildfire, tornado, hurricane, earthquake, or flood. A severe storm or other catastrophic event often strikes with little warning, can result in costly damage to your home, and puts your family's safety at risk. Being prepared may help you make it through a natural disaster safely. **Protect Your Home**

Wherever you live, there are proactive steps you can take to help protect your home from natural disasters:

- To help fend off storm damage, inspect and repair roof shingles and flashing, clean your gutters and downspouts so that water can flow freely away from your home, trim overhanging tree limbs, and consider investing in storm windows, doors, and shutters.
- If you live in a fire zone, create a defensible perimeter around the outside of your home; keep roof surfaces and gutters free of flammable materials such as pine needles, leaves, and branches; and consider installing fire-resistant roofing and/or siding material.
- If you live in an area that could experience a major earthquake, retrofitting an older home (strengthening the foun-

dation with braces and bolts) might reduce the amount of damage caused by severe shaking.

Have an Emergency Plan / Disaster Kit

A natural disaster can sometimes cause power outages that last for days. It can also result in downed power lines, fallen trees, and/or flooding that make roads impassable. Know evacuation routes and have an emergency plan that identifies a safe place to meet in the event that family members become separated. Keep important addresses and phone numbers accessible, and identify a place where you can safely stay for an extended period of time if necessary. In addition, assemble a disaster kit with the following items:

- Food/supplies. Stock up on several days' worth of nonperishable food and bottled water. Store other items that are specific to your family's needs, such as infant formula, diapers, pet food, clothing, and blankets.
- First aid/medicine. Be prepared for any possible medical needs by having a first-aid kit. Also talk to your doctor about obtaining an extra prescription for important medications you take.
- Communication/safety items. Make sure your cell phones are fully charged

before the storm arrives. Also gather additional safety items, such as matches, flashlights, batteries, and an AM/FM radio.

• Important documents/valuables. Place important documents, such as personal/financial/medical records and any valuables in a secure location that is easily accessible in case of an emergency. **Review Your Insurance Coverage**

Review all of your insurance policies (e.g., homeowners, renters, and auto) to make sure that you have appropriate coverage for your property and belongings. Your home and its contents should be insured to their full replacement cost, including any new additions, remodels, and furniture. Be sure to take pictures/ videos and make an inventory of your home and valuables in case they are damaged or destroyed. Keep in mind that certain types of damage (e.g., flood and earthquake) are generally excluded from a standard homeowners policy, but separate coverage is often available. Contact your insurance agent to determine if you need to purchase additional insurance tailored to the risks in your area.

If your home suffers severe damage from a natural disaster, you'll need to file a claim with your insurance company. Take pictures to document the damage (both inside and outside of your home) as soon as possible. While your claim is being processed, take steps to prevent further damage (e.g., putting a tarp on a damaged roof), since the insurance company may not cover anything beyond the initial damage to your property.

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Volodymyr Zelensky Named Time's 'Person of the Year'



Volodymyr Zelensky pictured during a a welcoming ceremony in Kyiv, Nov. 26, 2022. Credit:Philip Reynaers / Pool / Photonews via Getty Images

By Caleb Guedes-Reed, Gabe Friedman

(JTA) – Volodymyr Zelensky, the Jewish president of Ukraine, was named *Time's* "person of the year" last Wednesday for galvanizing "the world in a way we haven't seen in decades," in the words of the magazine's editor-in-chief.

"From his first 40-second Instagram post on Feb. 25 – showing that his Cabinet and civil society were intact and in place – to daily speeches delivered remotely to the likes of houses of Parliament, the World Bank, and the Grammy Awards, Ukraine's President was everywhere," Edward Felsenthal wrote in an article explaining the choice. "His information offensive shifted the geopolitical weather system, setting off a wave of action that swept the globe."

Zelensky is only the fifth Jew to claim the honor in the magazine's almost 100 years of awarding it. Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg earned it in 2010, former Treasury Secretary Ben Bernanke won it in 2009, former business executive Andrew Grove won in 1997 and Former United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger earned the award in 1972.

Since the outbreak of Russia's war against Ukraine in February, Zelensky has emerged as a Jewish symbol around the world. The former comedian and actor, first glorified for staying put in Ukraine as the violence threatened his life, is seen by many as a tough "modern Maccabee." His Jewish heritage is widely acknowledged as historically significant in a country with a bloody Jewish history, and he and his allies have used his identity to dispel Russia's arguments that the war was meant to "de-Nazify" Ukraine.

Throughout the conflict, Zelensky has also repeatedly called on Israel, citing his Jewishness, to break its strategic connections to Moscow and join the wave of Western nations that supplied Ukraine with aid and arms. **HW**

Antisemitism in the Air: Southwest Airlines Passenger Dons 'Ye is Right' Burger King Crown



A Southwest Airlines passenger wearing a Burger King crown that states, "Ye is right." Credit: Twitter.

(JNS) – Two passengers on a Dec. 6 Southwest Airlines flight were spotted wearing Burger King crowns bearing antisemitic and racist phrases, including "Ye is right."

Twitter user @ScienceStajner posted pictures of the two people sitting in front of her. "Didn't realize this behavior was permitted as part of the @ Southwestair experience," the tweet begins. "These 2 also had sentiments such as '6 million wasn't enough' & tons of swastikas plastered on their make shift [sic] 'crowns."

The Twitter user went on to describe the situation as threatening.

"We're sorry if another passenger's attire was in poor taste," Southwest Airlines' Twitter account replied. "We do

encourage you to reach out to a flight attendant on board if you feel the need. Allow me to advise that Southwest operates under a flag of many colors, and we appreciate your feedback."

The crowns included the words "white power" and "Ye is right," the latter in reference to the rapper formerly known as Kanye West.

Ye has been on a rampage of antisemitic statements and actions, including praise for Nazis and Holocaust denial.

"I like Hitler," Ye said in his recent interview with conspiracy theorist Alex Jones. "I'm not trying to be shocking, I like Hitler."

Southwest Airlines did not immediately return a request for comment from JNS. **HW**

Estate Planning for Young Individuals



You May Be Young, But You Are Not Immune

By Benjamin I. Wachtel, Esq. and David L. Mendelson, Esq.

Recent polls and studies found that the majority - over two thirds - of Americans do not have an estate plan in place. There are several reasons, which lead to an individual or couple failing to establish a plan, chief amongst which is simple procrastination. Amongst younger individuals and couples, even more than procrastination, we have found that the failure to establish an estate plan stems from two key misunderstandings – (1) estate planning applies only to the elderly and (2) estate planning applies only to the super wealthy. In fact, from an estate planning attorney's perspective the term "estate planning" is a misleading title for the area of law because when one hears "estate" they often conjure up images of horses running around within a white picketed fence and in front of a massive mansion. Thus, young individuals use a faulty line of logic and assume "I don't have a massive estate and thus I do not yet need an estate plan." The reason this line of logic fails is because estate planning and, particularly, incapacity planning, applies to everyone, regardless of age or net worth, at different times and in different ways.

To prove my point quickly, we'll use the example of a young couple in their early thirties with a child and limited net worth. In fact, let's assume the couple's liabilities outweigh their assets and they owe far more in student loans than they currently have in the bank. Often, a young couple will assume that because they have limited to no assets, they do not have an estate and thus estate planning does not apply to them. Well, if that couple suffers some type of accident and are no longer able to make decisions on their own (or, for that matter are disabled for whatever reason) who gets to make medical decisions for the husband or wife? Who gets to make property decisions? Perhaps even more importantly, who now gets to raise, house and educate their child? The couple may wrongly assume they know the answers and that their spouse or parent will simply take over and make decisions. Unfortunately, the bottom line for young individuals, or anyone for that matter, is that without one's own plan in place one is simply on the state's plan and through a Guardianship or Conservatorship proceeding, upon death or incapacity, a judge will make decisions for the individual or couple. That means that for over 67% of Americans, in the event of death or disability, the state will determine who makes decisions for the individuals, their assets and their loved ones. If you've read or watched Lemony Snicket's "A Series of Unfortunate Events" and remember Count Olaf, you know exactly what we are talking about

Of course, individuals with limited funds can start with a basic estate plan and upgrade or modify their plan as life progresses and as they acquire more assets, but as stated above, planning is paramount and applies to different individuals in different ways and at different times – not just to the elderly or super wealthy. **HW**

Israeli UFC Fighter Natan Levy Responds to Kanye West's Antisemitism: 'Come See Me, Bro'



Natan Levy proudly shows an Israeli flag before his matches. Credit: Amy Kaplan

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) – Natan Levy, one of the few Israelis ever to compete in the mixed martial arts Ultimate Fighting Championship, or UFC, isn't pulling any punches in talking about Kanye West's antisemitism.

"Kanye West, if you've got a problem with me or my people, come see me, bro," Levy said during an interview last Saturday following a victory at UFC Orlando.

"I think life is too short to hate, so to all these hateful people it sucks for you, I pity you," he said, when asked for his reaction to the recent controversies surrounding West, who now goes by Ye, and NBA star Kyrie Irving.

Last week, Ye added to his growing list of antisemitic rants by praising Hitler during a three-hour appearance on conspiracy theorist Alex Jones' "InfoWars" show. "Every human being has something of value that they brought to the table. Especially Hitler," Ye said.

Levy, who was born in France and moved to Israel as a young child, has become only the third Israeli to sign on with the UFC, the world's top mixed martial arts league. He told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last year that he's proud to bring an Israeli flag with him to fights.

"I am Jewish, it's what I am, it's what I was born," Levy said during his post-fight interview. "I'm very proud of it and I will fight for it. I will fight for my people in the octagon, or wherever need be, and I will not stand for antisemitism. I won't stand for any racism – not around me. Don't bully anybody around me, or I'm going to find you."

Levy also said he has personally felt the recent spike in online antisemitism in the wake of the news surrounding multiple antisemitic public figures, saying sarcastically that he has received "a lot of lovely DMs," or direct messages on social media. "Trust me, I've noticed it," he said with a smile. **HW** PAGE 10 | DECEMBER 15, 2022 THE HEBREW WATCHMAN | hebrewwatchman.com

After Donor Cuts, Birthright CEO Puts Out a Challenge to the Jewish Community



A view of a Birthright Israel group. Credit: Courtesy.

By Mike Wagenheim

(JNS) – Now that the shock has worn off, the question for Birthright is who will step up.

Last week, Miriam Adelson, Birthright Israel's most generous donor, addressed a board meeting of the organization known for bringing tens of thousands of young Jews to Israel each year.

She and her late husband, Sheldon Adelson, through the Adelson Family Foundation, have contributed nearly \$500 million to Birthright over the past 15 years, but, after slashing the foundation's annual commitment nearly in half this year, and halving it again next year, she told meeting attendees that "we are creating space for others to commit, to re-commit or to increase their commitment. Birthright is not an Adelson family investment. It is an investment in us all, in our collective, communal future."

The cuts, paired with sharp inflation and accompanying higher travel outlays, means Birthright plans to bring approximately 23,500 participants to Israel next year, fewer than half the number in pre-pandemic 2019 and a significant drop from this year's 35,000. Its organizational budget will fall to around \$120 million, down from \$150 million in 2022.

The Adelson announcement sent shock waves throughout the Jewish philanthropic community, but Birthright President and CEO Israel "Izzy" Tapoohi told JNS the donation cuts had been long planned and it's time for others to answer Adelson's call to step up.

"The budget shortfall cannot be covered by one person. There is a feeling within the Jewish community that says, 'Ah, don't worry about it. The Adelsons are going to take care of it.' They've been beyond generous," said Tapoohi, who noted that Miriam Adelson will remain Birthright's largest donor. "It's time for the rest of the Jewish community to fulfill that commitment if they feel that this is the most important issue today for the Jews of the United States," he continued.

But whether the community actually feels that way is an open question as it absorbs the impact of last week's announcement and amid the reality that other organizations have long relied on the Adelsons' largesse.

Tapoohi said the fact that Birthright alum play such prominent roles throughout the Jewish non-profit world will spur the community to action.

"In a recent study, 49% of young

adults below the age of 40 that work in Jewish non-profits are Birthright Israel alumni. We had six alum that were amongst the 100 most influential people in the Jewish community," he said. "These alumni are actively involved in the Jewish community, in the pro-Israel community, in the digital world where they are defending Israel. And this is just one of many examples. We have an effect on our participants."

The Birthright Foundation is currently supported by nearly 40,000 annual donors. The organization's most recent public report shows 17 donors who gave \$1 million or more. So, it appears that support is broad-based. Still, the Adelson cuts loom large, especially in light of a broader uncertain economic outlook and other communal priorities such as the Ukraine refugee crisis.

Tapoohi, though, feels Birthright's mission is part and parcel of the American Jewish community's overarching goals

"I think that the Jewish community is going to ask, what is the most important issue that we need to deal with in order to ensure that the community in the United States is going to remain strong, active and Jewish-minded?" he said. "Now, there's no doubt if you look today at what's going on at universities with BDS and antisemitism, that you need to ensure Jewish pride. And by making sure that the young generation that's growing up today knows what Israel is all about, what Judaism is all about, not just to appreciate and understand Chanukah and Purim, but to be in Israel and see what it's like when you are in the majority culture and you switch on your TV, and they are speaking Hebrew and you don't see Santa Claus."

What concerns Birthright, along with the cuts themselves, is the potential message it sends to donors. Alarms have the tendency to wake people up, or to send them running. Tapoohi hopes last week's announcement brings about the former.

"It is very important to stress that we

are not an organization in trouble. People shouldn't say, 'Boy, look at them. They don't have any money," he said, pointing out that Birthright is still the largest Jewish educational organization and projects to take almost 25,000 young Jews to Israel next year. He also noted his organization's recent merger with Onward Israel, an eight-to-10-week internship program that will bring an additional 3,000 participants to Israel.

But, Tapoohi said, "Sometimes you have to shake the lulay, shake the tree, and let the Jewish community understand that they've got to decide what they want to do. If they do not want to support us, whether for the first time or at an increased level, we will still take a third of the Jewish young adults born every year in the world [to Israel]. And that will be sufficient."

Decreased funding, though, will mean "fewer educated and proud Jewish young adults who are actively involved in the Jewish community and willing to defend Israel," he said.

Nevertheless, he stressed that the current situation means that "we're taking anywhere between 28,000-30,000 young Jewish adults. Not bad at all. So, we're not disappearing, we're here, we're going to be here for a long time to come. This is not an 'Oy gevalt' moment. We have transformed a generation, sending more than 800,000 participants on Birthright Israel and we have more work to do."

The level at which that work continues is now in the hands of donors and potential donors. While some have already opened their wallets in the wake of last week's news, Tapoohi said he'll get real answers this winter.

"When summer registration begins, do not be surprised if I come to you in February or March to tell you we have thousands of more applicants than we do spots on a Birthright Israel trip," he said. "Do we send them to Israel or leave them behind? And that will be the call, the battle cry, for the Jewish community." **HW**

Jewish National Security Group Calls for Biden to Stop Iran's Assassination Plots

(JNS) – The Jewish Institute for National Security of America (JINSA) last Monday called on the Biden administration to take immediate action to stop Iran from killing U.S. citizens overseas and for plotting assassinations domestically.

In a Washington Examiner opinion piece, Gabriel Noronha, a fellow at JIN-SA's Gemunder Center for Defense and Strategy, called for a military response against Iran to protect nearly a dozen U.S. officials and exiled dissidents living under a threat of attack.

The op-ed mentions Iran's launch of ballistic missiles and suicide drones into Iraqi Kurdistan on Sept. 28, in an attack that killed 14 civilians, including a U.S.

citizen. Noronha also points to U.S. citizen Stephen Troell being gunned down on the streets of Baghdad by an Iranian-backed militia group on Nov. 7.

A recent State Department report to Congress revealed Iranian threats of assassination of high-level American officials, including former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and former Special Representative for Iran Brian Hook. The Department of Justice earlier this year discovered an Iranian plot to kill former National Security Advisor John Bolton.

The Washington Post reported this week that, among dozens of plots that have been uncovered and thwarted, one Iranian assassination plan target-

ed French Jewish philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy – an outspoken critic of repressive regimes.

Noronha suggested that President Joe Biden order missiles to be fired at the headquarters of Iranian intelligence or to sink an Iranian intelligence vessel that supports Iran's terror operations around the Persian Gulf. Thus far, wrote Noronha, there has been no military response from the U.S. government despite the serious threats of assassinations from the Iranian regime.

"The U.S. government's first responsibility is to provide for the defense of its citizens," Noronha wrote. "No American who heeds the call of public service should have to live for years

under the threat of assassination by a foreign power, much less while living in the U.S. with their family. [President] Biden must take action now to end these despicable Iranian plots."

In response to a brutal stabbing attack on author Salman Rushdie last August, the U.S. Treasury Department sanctioned an Iranian organization that increased the bounty on Rushdie, which was put on after a *fatwa* (religious edict) was issued against the novelist by the Ayatollah Khomeini after the 1989 publication of his book, *The Satanic Verses*. The Treasury Department said the Iranian entity 15 Khordad Foundation encouraged the attack on Rushdie, which left him severely injured. **HW**

Canadian Opposition Leader Vows to Move Embassy to Jerusalem if Elected Prime Minister

(JNS) – Canadian Opposition Leader and Conservative Party head Pierre Poilievre vowed last Tuesday to move the Canadian Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem if he is elected prime minister.

"I announced my recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital [while campaigning] and now, as opposition leader and head of the Conservative Party, I repeat clearly and unambiguously: Jeru-

salem is the capital of Israel, and when I am elected prime minister of Canada, I will ensure that our embassy is relocated from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem," said Poilievre.

He made the comments to fellow Canadian lawmakers and Israeli diplomats during a gathering on Parliament Hill in Ottawa organized by the Keep Jerusalem–Im Eshkachech group, which educates communities about the centrality of Jerusalem in Jewish life and the importance of maintaining the city united and secure under Israeli sovereignty.

"The purpose of our visit to Canada was precisely this: to hear this clear and official pronouncement from Canadian members of parliament and especially the opposition leader, who will potentially be the next prime minister," said Keep Jerusalem–Im Eshkachech Founder and chairman Chaim Silberstein. "We

intend to develop collaborative relationships with additional international parties on the issue of Jerusalem," he added.

Canadian Prime Minister and Liberal Party head Justin Trudeau won a third consecutive term in office in Canada's Sept. 2021 elections, and currently leads a minority government.

The next Canadian election is scheduled for Oct. 20, 2025. **HW**





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Where the Wild Things Are

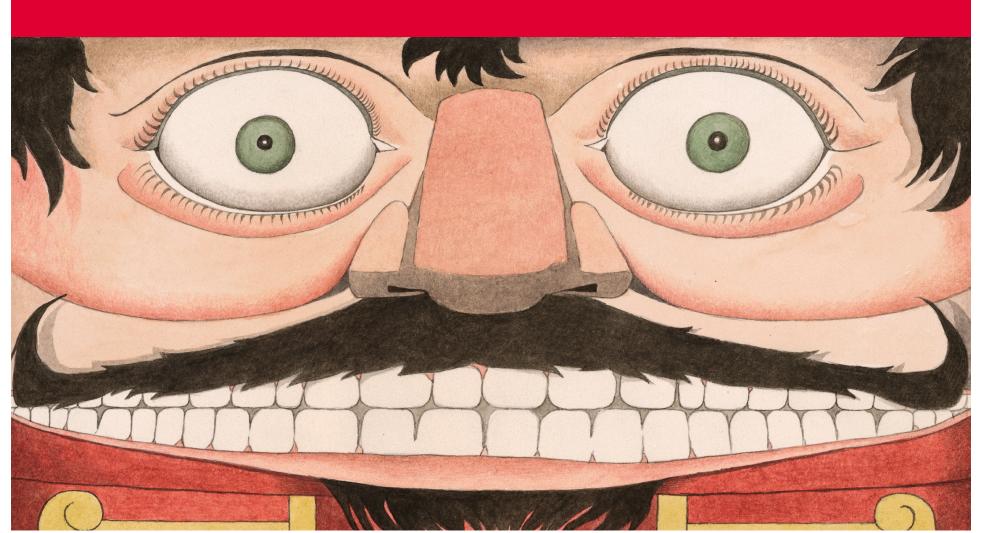
A film by Spike Jonze

Saturday, January 7 | 2pm

Sendak, Maurice. Design for show curtain from Nutcracker (No. 116). 1979-83 Credit line: The Morgan Library & Museum, Bequest of Maurice Sendak, 2013.103:58e.



Memphis Brooks Museum of Art



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