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SUBSCRIPTION FORM ON PAGE 5

THE Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

HEBREWWATCHMAN.COM 5 TEVET, 5783 DECEMBER 29, 2022 VOL. 101, NO. 14

Women of Strength Ricki Krupp and Alla Olswanger-Lubin at the Center of Federation's 2nd Impact Luncheon



Ricki Krupp, owner of Ricki's Cookie Corner & Bakery (left), and Alla Olswanger-Lubin, lay leader, philanthropist, and proud Ukrainian-American, will be honored by Memphis Jewish Federation as Women of Strength, Tuesday, January 10, 2023, at a luncheon and VIP shopping experience also featuring jeweler, mother of four, and entrepreneur Freida Rothman, who will deliver the keynote presentation. Learn more and get tickets at jcpmemphis.org/freida.

On Tuesday, January 10, 2023, the women of Jewish Memphis are invited to support Federation's annual campaign and celebrate Women of Strength at a luncheon and VIP shopping experience. Ricki Krupp and Alla Olswanger-Lubin, two Memphis women who have each made a significant impact in our Jewish community, will be honored during the

Impact Luncheon. Second-generation jeweler, mother of four, and entrepreneur Freida Rothman will keynote the event. "Both of these dynamic women have made this community richer in countless ways. In simple terms, Ricki has nourished our bodies, and Alla has nourished our hearts," said Federation board chair Cindy Finestone who, along with

event co-chairs Jaclyn Marshall, Debbie Rosenthal, Jody Shutzberg, and Jessica Baum Sukhodolsky, is part of the leadership team planning this exciting event. "Ricki is part of every family simcha in our Jewish community. It doesn't matter where you affiliate, every Jewish family values and savors Ricki's challah and desserts! And Alla is known by everyone for her warmth, her smile and her incredible dedication to so many organizations. She has spent her adult life dedicated to our Jewish community – including being a critical resource for Fogelman JFS when dozens of families from the FSU were resettled in the early 1990s. Now, most nights, she's at a board meeting or volunteering by making calls for Federation's campaign. Everyone agrees that she is an incredible leader and advocate for Jews worldwide."

The event will be held at 11:30 a.m., Tuesday, January 10 in the Memphis Jewish Community Center's Belz Social Hall. There is a \$50 couvert, with attendance open to anyone whose household has pledged or commits to pledge \$180 or more to Memphis Jewish Federation's Annual Community Campaign. At the time of this writing, more than 130 tickets had been sold, with orders coming in consistently. Those who wish to attend are encouraged to act fast. Visit jcpmemphis.org/freida to learn more and buy tickets.

"The Memphis Jewish community means everything to me, and every day I open the bakery, I feel honored to have my own special role to play here," said Ricki Krupp, whose Ricki's Cookie Corner & Bakery has been providing kosher challahs, pizzas, cakes, cookies, and, of course, chipsticks to the city's Jewish households and beyond since 1980, and from her brick and mortar location at Eastgate Shopping Center since 2000. "I think of everyone who comes through our doors as a friend. I'm deeply touched to be honored at this event and look forward to seeing that big room filled with other women of strength."

"Growing up in Kyiv, Ukraine, my parents always told me not to tell anybody I was Jewish. Every single day we worried about antisemitism and violence. I stood out like a sore thumb with my darker complexion, dark hair, and the dark eyes, but I never really talked about that," said Alla Olswanger-Lubin, a prominent lay leader and philanthropist whose leadership and generosity has touched almost every corner of the community that first allowed her to live a richly Jewish life.

"What an incredible life I've found here," she said. "I'm so very grateful

(See Luncheon Page 3)

Chanukah Lights Glow in the Dark at Chabad's Festival



On the first night of Chanukah, Rabbi Levi Klein, Regional Director of Chabad Lubavitch of Tennessee kindled the giant menorah at their annual Chanukah party.

Participants had the opportunity to help create the Glow in the Dark Menorah.

On December 18, the first night of Chanukah, Rabbi Levi Klein, Regional Director of Chabad Lubavitch of Tennessee kindled the giant menorah at its annual Chanukah party.

The Glow in the Dark theme added a new twist on the age-old holiday celebration.

One of the highlights was a live presentation by Memphis Graffiti Artist ToonkyBerry who created a Judaic Mural for the Chabad Center that also Glows in the Dark and will remain on

(See Chabad Page 5)



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Young Israel's 5783 / 2022 Chanukah Chagigah



Children enjoying themselves at Young Israel's Chanukah Chagigah (party)

By Rabbi Akiva Males

It may have been cool outside, but inside Young Israel of Memphis (YI) on Sunday evening, December 18 – the first night of Chanukah – the scene was warm and inviting. Over 250 adults and children turned out to enjoy a fun, warm, and inspiring evening in honor of the holiday. Young Israel's Chanukah Chagigah (party) was such a great success. Everyone enjoyed each other's company, a delicious dairy meal, an inspiring Torah thought from Naomi Schwartzberg (representing the Shul's children), and fantastic activities for the kids. This event truly provided something for everyone. Guests enjoyed a delicious spread of 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 numerous generous sponsors, and by many dedicated volunteers – led by chairs Sarah Ardestani, Ari Hagler, Yocheved Naftel, and Sarah Bracha Wogan. Bringing so many age groups together on the first night of Chanukah was the perfect way to begin the holiday. YI truly appreciates each and every one of the many volunteers who rolled up their sleeves to create such a perfect Chanukah Chagigah! Young Israel's Rabbi Akiva Males can be reached at rabbi@yiom.org [HW](#)

Syria Alleges Israeli Airstrikes Hit Sites Near Damascus

(JNS) – Israel carried out airstrikes against targets near Damascus late last Monday, the *Syrian Arab News Agency* (SANA) claims, adding that two soldiers were wounded. The Israel Defense Forces did not address the report, in keeping with its policy of not generally commenting on specific air raids in foreign countries. However, it has admitted in the past to conducting hundreds of strikes against Iran-backed militias attempting to establish a foothold in Syria. The IDF also targets weapons shipments that are meant to arm these militias, especially those bound for Hezbollah in Lebanon. Last week, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Aviv Kochavi appeared

to confirm that Israel was behind a Nov. 8 airstrike on a truck convoy from Iraq to Syria. On Dec. 11, the Israel Air Force attacked a Syrian military radar station in the southwest of the country, according to a local opposition media report. Shortly before the Syrian media reports of last Monday's alleged strike, Israelis near the northern border filmed Israel Air Force jets flying overhead. SANA said the IAF jets fired their missiles from over the Sea of Galilee. According to the Saudi-supported *Al Arabiya* news outlet, this latest attack was aimed at an Iranian air defense battery that was recently placed in the area of Damascus International Airport. [HW](#)

THE Hebrew Watchman

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. December 30, 2022 / 6 Tevet, 5783.....4:40 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. December 31, 2022 / 7 Tevet, 5783..... 5:40 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Vayigash

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Bernstein Scholarship Fund Open Enrollment Begins Jan. 1, 2023

Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service (Fogelman JFS) at the Memphis Jewish Community Center is now accepting applications for the Bernstein Scholarship Fund.

In 2001, Nate and Minnie Bernstein set up the scholarship fund to assist Jewish students with educational expenses. Fogelman JFS has been administering the fund since its inception.

Once again there will be an open enrollment period beginning January 1 and ending March 30, 2023, during which time Fogelman JFS will be accepting applications for the fund.

If selected, recipients will be notified in May of the amount of their award and the awards will be paid to the applicant's identified school.

To be eligible, applicants must be Jewish and must reside in the Memphis area. Also, the funds must be used for educational expenses, and recipients of other scholarship funds administered by Jewish Community Partners are ineligible for this fund.

All disbursement checks will be made out to the educational institution that the student will be attending.

For more information about the Bernstein Scholarship Fund contact Fogelman JFS at (901)767-8511. Scholarship applications will be available beginning January 1, 2023, at www.jccmemphis.org/FogelmanJFS **HW**

Trevor Noah has Hosted His Last 'Daily Show.' Al Franken, Sarah Silverman and Chelsea Handler will Soon Sit in the Chair.

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – As “The Daily Show” looks ahead to a future without host Trevor Noah, at least three Jewish comedians are waiting to take his place – at least temporarily.

Al Franken, Sarah Silverman and Chelsea Handler are among the extensive list of guest hosts Comedy Central has lined up to hold down the fort in 2023 following the Dec. 8 departure of Noah, who had taken over the show in 2015 after longtime Jewish host Jon Stewart called it quits. Noah, raised in South Africa, himself had a bar mitzvah and was raised by a single mom who converted to Judaism, although he got in trouble when he assumed the gig for tweets that were seen by some as antisemitic.

The Jewish hosts won't be first out of the gate in the new year – that honor goes to former “Saturday Night Light” cast member Leslie Jones. But the Jewish comics waiting in the wings are no strangers to political humor. Franken enjoyed a long “SNL” career and brief stint as a progressive talk-radio host before becoming a U.S. senator in 2009. Silverman, in addition to her own time on “SNL,” hosted a Hulu talk show, “I Love You, America,” from 2017 to 2019. Handler, whose father was Jewish and who had a bat mitzvah, has hosted several talk shows on E! in addition to numerous other books and stand-up appearances.

The announcement of Franken as a guest host was particularly notable as he has only recently moved to re-enter the comedy world after reluctantly stepping

down from the Senate in 2018 following multiple allegations of sexual misconduct. Silverman, meanwhile, has been an active internet presence in the last few years through her podcast and social media accounts, and helped to popularize the controversial term “Jewface” to describe non-Jewish actors being cast in Jewish roles.

Handler has courted controversy numerous times throughout her career, including favorably sharing a video of antisemitic Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan at the height of the Black Lives Matter protests before later apologizing.

While plans for a permanent Noah replacement remain up in the air, the show likely wouldn't announce one until at least the second half of 2023, reports say. There's a chance producers could draw from the show's current well of (non-Jewish) correspondents rather than its rotating guest hosts. Other guest hosts scheduled to take turns anchoring the show include Hasan Minhaj, Wanda Sykes, John Leguizamo and Marlon Wayans.

Late-night TV currently has a dearth of Jewish hosts, with the strongest Jewish connections coming from NBC's Seth Meyers (whose wife is Jewish) and HBO's Bill Maher (whose mother was Jewish but hid the information from him until he was a teenager; he currently identifies as an atheist). Stewart, meanwhile, now hosts the comedic newsmagazine “The Problem With Jon Stewart” on Apple TV+. **HW**

Luncheon...
(Continued From Page 1)
that I can't help but give back in any way I can think of. I just love, love, love helping people. It's because I have always believed in treating people the way I want to be treated. Life is too short not to.”

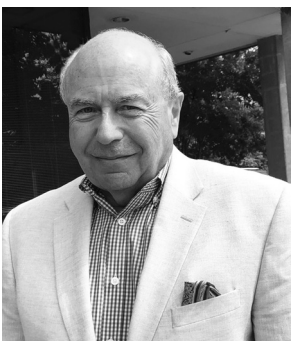
Event attendees will also hear Freida Rothman's amazing story, in part inspired by the legacy of four Holocaust survivor grandparents. Immediately following the event, those in attendance can participate in an exclusive shopping opportunity offering the latest inspired designs from Freida's collection. 10% of each sale will benefit Federation's Annual Campaign.

“Our annual campaign is so critical to ensuring a vibrant Jewish community,” said Laura Linder, President & CEO of Jewish Community Partners, which manages Memphis Jewish Federation. “This event will bring together hundreds of women from every corner of our Jewish community to celebrate Alla and Ricki and to raise critical funds for Jewish needs here in Memphis, in Israel, and around the world. We're also excited that Elisheva Massel, Director, Strategic Partnerships at the Joint Distribution Committee, will be joining us to share stories of the impact of our gifts in supporting families across the world.”

Under the leadership of the event co-chairs, a host committee representing every corner and age demographic of our community has assisted in planning the details of the event as well as recruitment. The committee includes Maureen Baum, Suzanne Baum, Marion Bessoff, Ellee Breit, Jill Buring, Hallie Charney, Bari Eiseman, Jackie Evans, Janis Finnan, Karen Franklin, Marlene Gerson, Shayna Giles, Margo Gruen, Myrna Halpern, Elana Kahane, Karen Karmel, Justin Katz, Lisa Kaufman, Karen Koplon, Barb Lansky, Danielle Lazarov, Debbie B. Lazarov, Emily Lennon, Danielle Levine, Aviva Lewis, Betsy Libby, Sharon Lubin, Lisa Menuskin, Lindsey Reef, Shelley Robbins, Hillary Samuels, Sophie Samuels, Stacy Siegler, Lisa Silver, Audrey Siskind, Jill Steinberg, and Kathy Wexler. **HW**

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Is This the Largest LEGO Menorah in the World?



The massive LEGO menorah with Yitzchok Kasowitz (left), founder of Jbrick, and the manager of LEGO Store Tel Aviv. Credit: Courtesy of Yitzchok Kasowitz.

By Alan Zeitlin

(JNS) – A Tel Aviv LEGO store has secured what is believed to be the largest-ever LEGO menorah.

Located in the Dizengoff Center, LEGO Store Tel Aviv in July became the first official LEGO store to open in Israel. The store commissioned expert LEGO artist Yitzchok Kasowitz – who lives in North Miami Beach, Fla., and is the founder of Jbrick, a company that sells Jewish-themed LEGO items – to design the menorah.

Kasowitz had contacted the owner of the Israeli store, expressing his desire to collaborate on a future project. But he didn’t imagine it would be something this big.

“It’s kind of unheard of,” Kasowitz, 45, told JNS. “I was thrilled to do it. There were difficulties along the way. We knocked it out in basically three days, and it took a month to go back and forth with LEGO in getting the right pieces for my design. It’s between 131,000 and 136,000 bricks. I provided them with instructions, but in the end, I told them I’d be really excited to come to Israel and help build it. It’s massive. I explained that for safety reasons, it has to be done right...They said, ‘No problem.’”

Kasowitz, who was trained by a master LEGO builder for five years, said the height was about 4.52 meters (14.8 feet) with a width of 4.7 meters (15.5 feet).

He said that while they still have to

wait for the Guinness Book of World Records, he is certain it will be.

“It’s not about breaking records, it’s about making records,” Kasowitz said.

His love for LEGO started when he was 4 years old. He is the son of *shluchim* (emissaries) of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement in Des Moines, Iowa, across from Drake College. He said that his brother, for his *upsherin* (first haircut at age 3), received a LEGO toy – and so did Kasowitz and his sister, so they would not become jealous. Kasowitz got a red fire truck.

“I’ll never forget it,” Kasowitz said. “I ran upstairs on the spot and challenged myself not to look at the instructions if I didn’t have to and have been challenging myself to build stuff ever since.”

Born in Brooklyn, Kasowitz, who has lived in Minnesota, proceeded to hone his LEGO art skills as the years went on.

Kasowitz sells his Jewish-themed LEGO creations, including mezuzah cases, tzedakah boxes, chamisas and more.

Now, with Kasowitz’s creation in hand, the Tel Aviv store is applying to get into the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest LEGO brick menorah.

“Growing up, I didn’t have the opportunity to have Jewish LEGO, and thankfully Hashem gave me the talent and ability to make them for others,” Kasowitz said. **HW**

Christian Churches are Urged to Act Against Antisemitism, Including by Scrutinizing their Own Practices

By Asaf Elia-Shalev

(JTA) – A group of educators dedicated to solidarity between Christians and Jews is urging churches to take action against the growing prevalence of antisemitism in the United States – and to reflect on how their own practices may be fueling hatred against Jews.

“We implore all churches to redouble their efforts to denounce antisemitism publicly as antithetical to the very essence of Christianity itself,” the Council of Centers on Jewish-Christian Relations, which represents about 30 institutions working on interreligious understanding, said in a public statement issued last week.

Published during Advent, the season of preparation ahead of Christmas, the statement opens by declaring that “the United States is facing the greatest crisis of public antisemitism in a century.”

Blame for the crisis rests on entertainers, athletes and politicians who vilify Jews and spread antisemitic tropes and conspiracy theories on the internet, according to the statement, which also calls out self-described Christian nationalists advocating for hatred against Jews. The spread of antisemitism is manifesting in attacks on Jews on social media, in the streets and at synagogues, according to the group.

In explaining what triggered the statement, the group said it was “increasingly alarmed that we may be witnessing the normalization of antisemitism in American discourse, which recalls events that happened in Germany when the Nazis rose to power in the 1930s.”

The Anti-Defamation League, which records antisemitic incidents, said its most recent annual tally saw a 34% increase between 2020 and 2021, reaching an all-time high. A 2021 survey by the American Jewish Committee found that an estimated 40% of American Jews changed their behavior over the preceding year because of fear of antisemitism.

CCJR’s statement calls on Christian clergy and educators not only to denounce antisemitism but also to examine how they might be inadvertently promoting antisemitic ideas.

“As students of history, we know that the roots of modern antisemitism and associated conspiracy theories grew out of Christian libels perpetuated against Jews in medieval Europe and out of centuries of Christian religious teaching of contempt for Jews,” the statement says.

Christian theology has evolved since the Holocaust and most denominations have long disavowed antisemitic teachings, including the idea Jews are responsible for killing Jesus and that he represents the negation of Judaism.

But, the CCJR statement says, remnants of this problematic thinking can persist, requiring caution from Christian leaders.

“We entreat the churches to look inward by examining their preaching, teaching, and theologies to eliminate any traces of anti-Jewish sentiments and look outward to act and speak against all forms of antisemitism they encounter,” the statement says.

The group’s letter follows initiatives in some of the world’s largest Christian denominations to address antisemitism in their liturgy and history. Earlier this year, the Episcopal Church announced that it would review pre-Easter readings that blame “the Jews” for the death of Jesus and offered an alternative to them. Meanwhile, Pope Francis restricted the use of the Latin Mass, a traditionalist liturgy that includes a prayer for the conversion of Jews, out of concern that it was being used by those who did not accept the Catholic Church’s 1965 statement declaring that the Jews were not responsible for Jesus’ death; he has condemned antisemitism. And the Church of England recently apologized to Jews for the antisemitic laws that led to their expulsion 800 years ago. **HW**

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The Lion Behind the Pin: Alla Olswanger-Lubin



Alla Olswanger-Lubin and Shelley Robbins

“I trust Memphis Jewish Federation because they trusted that if they helped me become a Memphian, I would do my part to help make Jewish Memphis better and better,” said Alla Olswanger-Lubin, community activist, Federation Campaign donor, board member and volunteer, and proud Lion of Judah since 2011.

Alla’s relationship with Federation, with the entire Memphis Jewish community, is unique. She arrived a true outsider, the Ukrainian daughter of a high-powered attorney. She and the father of her first son chose to leave wealth and status behind, arriving in Memphis in 1979 with each other, their 2-year-old son, Jon, and little else in order to make a better life in the United States. Guided by the unignorable urge to freely live as proud Jews, something they never would be able to do in Kyiv, they started

over, strangers in a strange land. When her boundless affection for people was met by the open doors of “the warmest Jewish community in the world,” she found her forever home. Today she has almost as many family members as friends in her chosen community, and her good will, generous spirit, and electric smile touch every corner of Jewish Memphis.

“I would not be sitting here if it weren’t for the Federation system. They supported my family when we immigrated here,” she said. The family was resettled through a program of Jewish Federations of North America, making their way first to Vienna and a small town outside of Rome, where they lingered for a few months while awaiting a decision on their final destination.

“I had a job outside Rome in an open-air market,” she recalled. “I kept ex-

tending my time because I didn’t want to go to the cities they offered, big cities where I’m never going to learn to speak English. I wanted a place where I can meet everybody and learn the language and culture. Memphis was that place.”

The agency now known as the Wendy & Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service operated the resettlement program locally, and they worked to line up host families for those arriving. Alla and her family were warmly welcomed by Iris and Ronald Harkavy, Saralyn and Danny Weiss, and Ralph and Carol Yaffe, with all three couples becoming important figures in her life. Still, Memphis was a sleepy backwater in contrast to the bustle of Kyiv, and adjustment wasn’t immediate.

“The first morning when I woke up, I opened my blinds and this yard man for the apartments was in my window and I’m like, ‘Oh my G-d, where are the cows?’” she said. “I feel like I’m totally in the country. What have I done?”

But because of her love of people and genuine social connections, Alla helped her family acclimate.

“Of course, I made mistakes. Having a couple over for dinner the first time entertaining, I see that the husband had no fork,” she said. “I asked him, ‘Would you like a fork?’ But I didn’t use that word, I used a different word. And the eyes of the wife went very big. But then we were all laughing a lot.”

When her first marriage ended Alla found herself a single mom. She’d grown her social network and made connections, and with her accounting degree, she began her American career. She also began her life as a philanthropist.

“I made the promise that when I got my feet on the ground, I would start giving to Federation. I started with \$50 a year, then maybe \$108,” she said. “But today I pinch myself because I never dreamed that I would be part of an organization like this, knowing that, for example, someone can send a kid to a Jewish camp, which is sometimes where Judaism really lights up.”

It was through her growing social circle that she met Marty Olswanger, of blessed memory, who became her second husband in 1984. Marty adopted Jon, and the couple soon welcomed two more boys, Sam and Lee, making a cozy young family of five. With the stability of a rock-solid marriage, she became la-

ser-focused on giving back to the Jewish community. She began working for the then-named Jewish Family Service as an accountant and volunteering with Russian resettlement, and she developed an understanding of the ways Memphis Jews depend on the non-profit agencies that serve the community.

When Alla’s sister, Lilia, fell ill and died, she and Marty flew to Kyiv to begin the process of bringing Alla’s mother and 15-year-old niece Lana to better lives in the United States. It’s no coincidence that this is when she began evolving as a philanthropist and had her first aspirations of becoming a Memphis Lion of Judah.

“One day, I said to Marty, ‘I want to be a Lion.’ He said ‘Not yet. We’re not there yet,’” she said. Sadly, they didn’t get there together. Marty was diagnosed with colon cancer at age 36, his body already overtaken by the disease. He died mere months later, after promising her that after he was gone, she would become a Lion.

In 2012 Alla married for the third and final time, to her beloved Nathan Lubin. With her three boys and Lana added to four sons and two daughters of his, the family was now quite large. Following their parents’ footsteps, this younger generation is already taking philanthropy and volunteerism seriously, donating to their synagogues and Federations and serving in lay leadership positions at Jewish agencies and shuls.

“My children already see the legacy of giving back that Nathan and I are working to make. They are very much involved themselves,” she said. “Now it’s a legacy that I want to leave for my grandchildren.”

Alla sees her Lion of Judah pin as a symbol of that legacy.

“This pin means that the community is going to stay sustainable after we’re gone, because of people like us,” she said. “It’s something that’s priceless. Building that foundation of a sustainable Jewish community is very important to me, and the reason I endowed my gift. I had to hide my Jewish identity when I was little. I never wore any Jewish stars, never even dreamed to own one. I would be afraid to put it on. Today in Jewish Memphis, my grandchildren walk freely, and proudly say ‘I’m Jewish.’ All of our hard work made this happen and it means everything to me.” **HW**



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Unpacking the Inflation Reduction Act: What’s in It?

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

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), signed into law on August 16, 2022, is a package of climate, energy, health-care, and tax legislation. It authorizes about \$440 billion in new spending and will generate an estimated \$740 billion in revenue and savings, reducing the deficit by around \$300 billion over a decade.¹

About \$370 billion will fund new and existing programs that aim to expand renewable energy sources and help mitigate the negative effects of climate change. This shift in energy policies has the potential to cut greenhouse gas emissions to about 40% below 2005 levels by 2030, according to the administration and several climate models that analyzed the legislation’s environmental impact.²

The jury is still out on whether the Act will do much to help reduce today’s inflationary pressures, but it is poised to lower health costs shouldered by the federal government and certain individuals, especially retirees. New revenue comes from taxes imposed on corporations and stronger tax enforcement.

Energy and Climate Initiatives

Starting in 2023, an updated tax credit of up to \$7,500 will be available for the purchase of new clean vehicles (battery electric and hydrogen fuel cell) that meet certain requirements. Individuals with modified adjusted gross incomes higher than \$150,000 (\$300,000 for joint filers) are not eligible for the tax credit. Eligible vehicles with a manufacturer’s suggested retail price higher than \$55,000 — or higher than \$80,000 for trucks and sports utility vehicles — are excluded. To qualify for the EV tax credit, new vehicles must be assembled in North America.

For the first time, a new tax credit of up to \$4,000 will be available for some pre-owned electric vehicles (EVs) purchased from a dealer. To qualify, models must be at least two years old with

a sales price not exceeding \$25,000. Income thresholds for buyer eligibility are lower than they are for new vehicles: \$75,000 for individuals and \$150,000 for joint filers.

Starting in 2024, new EVs will not qualify if any battery minerals or components are sourced from “foreign entities of concern,” such as China or Russia. The tax credits are meant to incentivize automakers to expand domestic production and create jobs for U.S. workers, but it may be a while before consumers have a wide selection of qualifying new vehicles. Also in 2024, dealerships will be able to offer the value of a tax credit upfront as a discount on new or used vehicles.

Homeowners and businesses will be offered tax credits and rebates to make energy-efficient upgrades to their properties. Businesses can also claim tax credits for producing clean electricity sources (such as wind, solar, and geothermal) and storage, manufacturing clean energy technologies (such as solar panels, charging stations, and batteries) in the United States, preventing existing nuclear reactors from closing, and for carbon capture and storage.

On top of incentives that encourage a transition to clean energy, the legislation will fund projects related to the development of sustainable agricultural practices, forest conservation (including wildfire risk reduction and restoration), and drought, weather, and climate resilience. A new fee will be imposed on excess emissions from oil and gas drilling, but the government is also required to expand access to more leases on federal lands and waters, which may boost fossil fuel production and help hold down energy prices.

Health-Care Savings

Starting in 2023, deductibles will not apply to covered insulin products under Medicare Part D, and there will be

a limit on monthly coinsurance under Medicare Part B for insulin furnished through durable medical equipment. Also, the copayment for covered insulin products will be capped at \$35 for a one-month supply. Starting in 2025, a \$2,000 annual cap (adjusted for inflation) will apply to out-of-pocket costs for Medicare Part D prescription drugs.

The legislation authorizes the Department of Health and Human Services to negotiate Medicare prices for certain high-priced, single-source drugs. Initially, negotiated prices for 10 of the most expensive drugs will take effect in 2026. The number of negotiated drugs will rise to 15 in 2027 and 20 in 2028, and more may be added in later years. Drug makers must also provide rebates if they raise prices faster than inflation over time. These two provisions are projected to save the government more than \$200 billion over a decade, though drug companies have warned they could impede future innovation.³

Enhanced Affordable Care Act subsidies (scheduled to expire at the end of 2022) have been extended through 2025. In addition, those with household incomes higher than 400% of the federal poverty line remain eligible for the premium tax credit. As a result, more than 13 million people who receive federal subsidies will be spared from sharp premium increases in 2023 or, in some cases, from losing their health coverage entirely.⁴

Tax Provisions

Starting January 1, 2023, a new 15% alternative minimum tax (AMT) will apply to corporations (excluding S corporations, regulated investment companies, and real estate investment trusts) that have book income with profits exceeding \$1 billion. According to a *Washington Post* analysis, more than 250 companies in the S&P 500 averaged more than \$1 billion in pre-tax income over the last three years, and 83 of them

paid less than 15% in income tax — with some paying little or no tax.⁵

Also, publicly traded companies that repurchase shares of stock will pay a 1% excise tax on the fair market value of their net buybacks — the number of shares repurchased offset by the number of shares issued during the taxable year.

Together, these two new taxes will raise nearly \$300 billion over a decade.⁶ Most households won’t see their taxes increase directly, but corporate taxes do cut into profits, which can impact shareholders or result in lower wages for employees.

Lastly, the IRS will receive an influx of about \$80 billion to modernize outdated technology and rebuild a depleted workforce, which is expected to improve enforcement to the tune of about \$200 billion over a decade. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen directed the agency not to use additional resources to increase audit rates for taxpayers making under \$400,000 a year, but the tax returns of high earners, large businesses, and complex partnerships are likely to face more scrutiny.⁷

- 1) The Associated Press, August 16, 2022
- 2) Bloomberg.com, August 4, 2022
- 3) The Wall Street Journal, July 31, 2022
- 4) The Wall Street Journal, August 16, 2022
- 5) The Washington Post, August 12, 2022
- 6) Joint Committee on Taxation, August 9, 2022
- 7) U.S. Treasury Department, August 10, 2022

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OBITUARIES

Aaron Leon (Lee) Coplon

Aaron Leon (Lee) Coplon passed away peacefully in his home during the early morning hours of Wednesday, December 14, 2022.

Born to Jacob and Bessie Coplon in Schenectady, N.Y. on July 12, 1927, he was the youngest of four children. Lee grew up in a loving and hardworking family that owned a store in Schenectady. His father emigrated from Lithuania to escape the Russian pogroms, and his mother emigrated from Poland. He attended a Jewish elementary school. He graduated high school in 1945 and was inducted into the Army Air Force during the latter months of World War II. After military service he attended and graduated Union College in Schenectady.

He married the love of his life, Nancy Eno, in January 1953. They were married for almost 70 years. They had a wonderful life together. Lee attended graduate school at Columbia University in NYC, receiving a master’s degree in statistics. This led to a long career in the emerging computer industry beginning in the early 1950s. His early career led him to Michigan, California, and Arizona. In 1958, he returned to New York – to Poughkeepsie for an opportunity with IBM. Later, IBM relocated him to the greater NYC metropolitan area and the family moved to Nanuet, N.Y. where their four children spent most of their formative years and graduated high school. He resided in Nanuet from 1960 until 2005.

In 1969, an opportunity to work with JP Morgan led him to finish the remaining 25 years of his career in management of computer operations for the banking and financial services industry. Throughout his life and especially upon retirement, he devoted his life to his wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. He was affectionately called “Grandpy” by his grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Lee and Nancy would often visit the grandchildren in Memphis, Tenn. and London, England. They also travelled visiting Ireland, Italy, France, Israel, Scotland and other nations. All who knew Lee remember a man of warmth, of stability, a man of integrity and hard work – disciplined and faithful in all he set himself to do.

He involved himself in his children’s and grandchildren’s activities – sports, scouts, music, academics, and achievement. They took many family vacations with their extended family of children and grandchildren – including an annual summer vacation in Cape May, N.J.

He was a man who served and who cared for his family in an exemplary fashion – one that his children cherish and honor. His many nephews, nieces, friends, and neighbors remember him as an honorable man – a mensch.

Lee and Nancy gave their time and energy and later served as president of Rockland County NAMI. He is survived by his wife, Nancy, children Sherry, Michael, Steven (Debra), Melanie Schreyer (Jay); grandchildren, Anna Coplon Suen (Garret), Laura Coplon Weaver (Timothy), Sarah Coplon Barlow (Caleb), Elizabeth Coplon, Jonathan Coplon, Jocelyn Schreyer, Ethan Schreyer, and Jackson Schreyer; and great-grandchildren Wallace Weaver, Aaron Leon Coplon “Ari” Weaver, Grace Weaver, Brandon Aaron Coplon Suen, and Ella Coplon Barlow. He was preceded in death by his parents Jacob and Bessie Coplon and siblings Arthur Coplon and his wife, Julie, Laura Coplon Garber and her husband, Bill, and David Coplon and his wife, Suzanne.

Memorial donations can be made to NAMI of Rockland County, N.Y. or the Jewish National Fund. **HW**

Evelyn Margolin Graber

Evelyn Margolin Graber, 88, of Memphis, Tenn., passed away peacefully on Monday, 18 Kislev 5783 - December 12, 2022. Evelyn was born on November 4, 1934, in Memphis to Joseph and Fannie Margolin. A lifelong Memphian, Evelyn attended Gordon Elementary, Snowden Junior High and Central High School in Memphis. It was during this time she met her husband of 68 years, Marlin Merle Graber.

After high school she attended the University of Tennessee in Knoxville. Evelyn and Marlin married August 9, 1953. In 1954 Marlin entered the United States Army. For the next two years while serving in the army Evelyn and Marlin lived in El Paso, Texas and Skokie, Ill. They soon resettled in Memphis with their first-born infant son. Evelyn chose to be a homemaker raising four sons. Marlin went to work with his father-in-law, Joseph Margolin.

Evelyn was very much involved in communal affairs. She served on the board of the Memphis Jewish Federation and during her tenure she was instrumental in ensuring and implementing the highest standards of Kashrut at the Memphis Jewish Home. She was a lifetime member of the Lion of Judah. She served as president of the Margolin Hebrew Academy’s P.T.A. Evelyn was also a lifelong member of the Baron Hirsch Congregation dating back to the Fourth and Washington location. Her wedding with Marlin was the first to occur at the new Vollintine Street location of Baron Hirsch.

Evelyn’s passion was her family. As the mother of four sons, 18 grandchildren and numerous great-grandchildren, she was the beloved Grandmoma and Safti and inculcated in them a love of each other and of Torah.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Marlin, and her only sibling, Betty Margolin Robinson. She leaves Steve (Esther) Graber of New York City, Larry (Teri) Graber of Memphis, Glenn (Pammy) Graber of Hollywood, Fla. and Roy (Tova) Graber of Memphis.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers contributions be made to the Margolin Hebrew Academy or the Baron Hirsch Congregation. **HW**

IDF Downs Suspected Hezbollah Drone

(JNS) – The Israel Defense Forces announced last Tuesday the interception of a drone crossing from Lebanon into Israeli airspace.

The military said it suspected that the Iranian-backed Hezbollah terror group launched the small unmanned aerial vehicle.

According to the IDF, the aircraft was monitored throughout its flight until being downed in an unspecified manner near the border moshav of Zar’it.

The military said that it would continue to prevent any attempt to violate Israeli sovereignty.

In July, the IDF shot down three Hezbollah drones sent towards Israel’s Karish offshore natural gas platform.

The UAVs flew at low speed and low altitude in an attempt to evade Israel’s interception systems; however, they were detected “at an early stage” before being neutralized “at the optimal operational point.”

In February, the IDF used electronic warfare to bring down a drone launched by a Hezbollah special-forces unit from Lebanon.

A drone the IDF downed in January contained images apparently showing a Hezbollah-affiliated force training with UAVs. **HW**

Chosen Comedy Festival Takes Miami by Storm

(JNS) – Dani Zoldan told JNS that he gave the city of Miami a Hanukkah present a few nights early.

The owner of Stand Up NY and founder of The Chosen Comedy Festival said that the event, held at the James L. Knight Center, attracted more than 2,500 people and was also live-streamed. The show will come to Los Angeles on February 13 at The Orpheum Theater.

Antisemitism has gotten so awful that “right about now, Mel Gibson is going, ‘See I told you I wasn’t that bad,’” comedian Elon Gold told the crowd in Miami on Dec. 14. He said it marks a new low to claim that Jews aren’t the real Jews and wondered why they wouldn’t want to be part of a group “with better hair and less fast days.”

Gold, who married a Russian woman, said people should be mad at Vladimir Putin but not the Russian people.

“Russian sounds like the noise you hear when you’re trying to swat a fly,” Gold said.

Gold said the idea that Jews are trying to replace others is nonsense.

“If we replace you, how we gonna in-voice you, you stupid idiot?” he asked rhetorically.

Gold said that while he is proud of being Jewish, as a kid, a part of him wanted to celebrate Christmas, eat cheeseburgers and be able to catch a football without flinching.

“Nerf was invented for us...No Jew has ever won an Olympic medal for running,” Gold said. “Hiding, I think we would do very well.”

In a Russian accent, he explained that winning a bronze medal would not be accepted in Russia.

“If you win the bronze in Russia, they put you to death,” Gold said, adding that they ask you how you would like to be executed.

Abby Feldman, who was chosen among hundreds of contestants who attended Birthright Israel to win a five-minute spot in the show, came out with significant energy.

“My mom is here, my dog is here, my husband is here,” she said. “We haven’t met yet, but I have a feeling. If he’s not in this crowd of 2,000 people, it’s a me issue, it’s a me problem. I am single though, so slide into my DMs.”

She said she eats gluten free and vegan, and when some people ask what she misses most, she sometimes says pizza, but it’s really friendship.

Rich Vos referred to Feldman as a young Liza Minnelli. Vos said he was in a restaurant and asked if they serve turkey burgers, and the waitress said, “we used to,” and he asked to sit down and reminisce about the good old days.

Rachel Feinstein said that her husband complimented her on their wedding day by saying she was “bringing it,” which she thought was not the right thing for him to say.

“I’m like, that’s what you say to a running back, not your wife on her wedding day,” she quipped.

There were music performances by Matisyahu, who treated the audience to his hit “Sunshine,” among other songs.

Matisyahu told JNS that Miami has always supported him and it is a pleasure to perform there.

Nissim Black and Miami resident Gad Elbaz performed “Hashem Mel-ech.” Moshe Reuven and Julian Marley also performed.

Elbaz told JNS that he loves performing in Miami because there is a special feeling of unity there.

Jessica Kirson had a hilarious set in which she explained that at the nail salon, they shout at her to “pick a color!” and nearly give her a heart attack. She had the crowd laughing about two young users on TikTok who only care about their videos and speak incredibly fast.

Eric Neumann, who gained fame on TikTok nine months ago, did a late night routine for the first time.

In his set, he joked about his overprotective Jewish mother, who alarms him when she calls his friends looking for him late at night and is worried someone will follow him home – but he says, that’s the entire point.

“My best financial year is still my bar mitzvah year,” Neumann said.

Modi Rosenfeld closed the show with a fiery set.

He told JNS that Jews in Miami have figured out they don’t have to be “unhappy and cold.”

“Miami has become a year-round Pesach program,” he told the crowd. “Miami Jews are in a restaurant every night.” **HW**

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How a Standup Show at a Chinese Restaurant Turned Into a 30-Year Jewish Comedy Tradition



Lisa Geduldig shown onstage at the first annual Kung Pao Kosher Comedy show in San Francisco in 1993. Credit: Courtesy of Lisa Geduldig

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – Just a few years into her comedy career, Lisa Geduldig was invited to perform standup at the Peking Garden Club near Northampton, Massachusetts. She went to the gig assuming it was a comedy club.

It wasn't.

"I just had the most ironic experience," Geduldig remembers telling a Jewish summer camp friend on the phone in October 1993. "I was just telling Jewish jokes in a Chinese restaurant."

As a Long Island native who was by then living in San Francisco, she was very familiar with the tradition of Jews eating Chinese food on Christmas, a product of the neighborhood dynamics between Jewish and Chinese immigrant populations living in New York's Lower East Side from the end of the 19th century.

After ruminating on it, she thought: why not start a Jewish comedy night on Christmas Eve?

She had enough time before the holiday to find other Jewish comics who liked the idea, write her own press release and partner with a restaurant in San Francisco's Chinatown with banquet room space open on Christmas Eve to organize the event, which she called Kung Pao Kosher Comedy. (Geduldig liked the alliteration, even though it doesn't involve kosher food.)

It was an instant hit, with around 400 guests, and Geduldig said nearly 200

people were turned away at the door. The kitchen of the Four Seas Restaurant was completely unprepared for the volume, as Geduldig didn't expect anything close to the turnout. The show received a heap of local press, and the next year it earned a three-quarter page spread in *The New York Times*.

Fast forward and this year marks the 30th Kung Pao Kosher show, and the first one back in person since the COVID-19 pandemic. This time, the event has moved into a synagogue – the Reform Congregation Sherith Israel in the Pacific Heights neighborhood, one of the country's oldest Jewish houses of worship. The Chinese banquet room at New Asia Restaurant, where the show had been hosted since 1997, became a supermarket in 2020.

Over the years, an impressive roster of comedians has performed, including names such as Marc Maron, Margaret Cho, Shelley Berman, David Brenner, Judy Gold, Gary Gulman and Ophira Eisenberg. Many of the show's comedians return – Wendy Liebman, who has been doing standup for 38 years, has performed at Kung Pao four times.

Geduldig – who is now a publicist and comedy show producer, in addition to a comic – said the show that put her project on the map was when well-known Jewish comedian Henny Youngman headlined in 1997, at 91. Youngman – famous for his quick succession of

clever one-liners and interludes from his favorite prop, a violin – died of pneumonia just two months after giving his final performance at Kung Pao Kosher Comedy. For six months after Youngman's death, Geduldig and other Kung Pao promoters and staff were convinced that they killed him. The *SF Weekly* published an article titled "The Gig of Death?" But in that same article, Youngman's daughter, Marilyn Kelly, exonerated everyone involved in the show, saying the travel was a strain on her father's health, but he was "delighted to have done it."

Ten years after Youngman's final performance, Shelley Berman, then in his 80s, was scheduled to perform at Kung Pao when he called Geduldig complaining of chest pains.

"I go, 'No! I can't kill another one!'" she recalled.

It turned out to be just acid reflux, and the emergency room doctor told Berman he could go onstage. (The doctor was extended an invitation to the show, but did not attend.)

In keeping with the Jewish tradition of social responsibility and tzedakah, meaning "charity" or "justice," Geduldig has given a portion of the proceeds from ticket sales each year to two different charities. Past beneficiaries include a variety of Jewish and secular organizations; this year, the charitable proceeds will go to the San Francisco-Marin Food Bank and The Center for Reproductive Rights.

The charitable aspect is part of what keeps Shelley Kessler, a long-time California labor leader, coming back to the show. She has yet to miss a single one.

"Given what's going on in the world, this is a very nice way to manage the depression," Kessler said.

At Kessler's table, her core group of five always bring tchotchkes and booze – though the synagogue has asked this year's guests to refrain from red wine, to avoid any accidents on the carpet.

"People bring all kinds of things," Kessler said. "We once had a humongous menorah. Our table has fun, I'll tell you."

This year's lineup of comics includes

Mark Schiff (Jerry Seinfeld's longtime opening act), Cathy Ladman and Orion Levine. Lisa Geduldig will emcee in her customary tuxedo, accented this year with a Cuban guayabera shirt.

Joining Kung Pao on the virtual stage for the third time is Geduldig's mother, Arline Geduldig, 91, who will Zoom in from Boynton Beach, Florida.

"One of the silver linings of the pandemic was not only living with my mother, but getting to know each other, finding out how funny she was," Lisa Geduldig said.

In March 2020, the younger Geduldig flew to Florida to visit her mother – and stayed there for 17 months. That was when she launched Lockdown Comedy, a monthly online comedy show where Arline got her start, thanks to some mentoring from her daughter. Arline's routines are often centered around her fascination with handsome young firemen and the way she calls her husband, Irving, downstairs for dinner.

"I love people saying they like me," Arline told the *Los Angeles Times* in 2021. "I have a swelled head already."

In previous years, Geduldig said she tried to turn "a Chinese restaurant into a synagogue." She brought inflatable dreidels, giant matzah ball pillows and "Happy Hanukkah" banners, when Hanukkah and Christmas overlapped. Things are trickier now, since she wants to avoid any cultural appropriation while still paying tribute to the show's origins. For instance, she learned that red paper lanterns are symbolic of good luck in Chinese culture, so she wants to incorporate some into the room.

"This year, I'm turning a synagogue into a Chinese restaurant," she said.

The food will still be provided by a local Chinese restaurant – including the usual fortune cookies filled with Yiddish proverbs. The food isn't kosher, but because the event is being held in a synagogue there are still restrictions: No pork and no shrimp, despite Geduldig's 30-year streak of serving treif (or non-kosher) food at Kung Pao Kosher Comedy.

"I was like, 'How about if I call it kosher prawns?'" Geduldig joked. "They didn't go for it." **HW**

Why Zelenskyy Made a Jewish Joke in his Netflix Interview with David Letterman

By PJ Grisar

This article previously appeared on Forward. Reprinted with permission.

Halfway through his interview with David Letterman, an otherwise dour Volodymyr Zelenskyy makes a Jewish joke.

"Two Jewish guys from Odesa meet up," Zelenskyy said, 300 feet below the streets of Kyiv on an active subway platform.

One Jew asks the other about "the situation," and the other tells him that Russia is fighting NATO. Things are going badly for Russia. 70,000 dead Russian soldiers, depleted missile supplies, damaged equipment.

"What about NATO?" the Jew seeking news asks.

"What about NATO? NATO hasn't even arrived yet!"

It's a rare moment of levity in the conversation, a special installment of Netflix's *My Next Guest with David Letterman*, and it only comes after some prodding from Letterman about Zelenskyy's past as a comedian and the necessity of humor during difficult times. But

the joke, which skewers Russia's lack of readiness and NATO's level of support for Ukraine, is also a rare expression of Jewishness from a figure who has only occasionally addressed his heritage.

When CNN's Jake Tapper paid a visit to Zelenskyy during Passover, the journalist's attempt to draw a parallel to the holiday and the Ukrainian fight for freedom out of the president fell flatter than the bread of affliction. (Zelenskyy also seemed indifferent to Tapper's gift of matzah – probably because he needed munitions more than an afikoman.)

This is to be expected. The American press seems to make more of Zelenskyy's Jewishness than he does. Throughout the war, perhaps his most direct invocation of his Jewish background has been in his plea to the Knesset, where he controversially compared Russian plans for Ukraine to the "final solution."

But if one looks back at his comedy career, which we only glimpse in Letterman's special, we are able to see a more

Jewish side of Zelenskyy, who, growing up in the Soviet era, had fewer opportunities to express that identity. Humor, it seems, is where he connects to Jewishness, and, given that it shaped his ultimate trajectory from an actor playing the president to the actual head of state, it is in no way superficial.

Zelenskyy may not have had a bar mitzvah, but he did pretend to play "Hava Nagila" on the piano with his testicles. The gravity of his current position may not allow for such displays, but it's telling that, when offering a joke, Zelenskyy decided to make it a Jewish one.

Looking it over, though, we may wonder what makes the joke Jewish, apart from its interlocutors. Couldn't it just have easily been two nondescript Odesans? Or Kyivans?

In an interview with *The Washington Post*, Letterman seemed to think the specifics were interchangeable.

"I love the universality of that joke," Letterman said. "It can't just be a guy walks in. It's got to be the Jewish guy."

It's a priest, it's a rabbi. It's a Buddhist, you know, walk into a bar. It's just like, yeah, why not?"

But I think that's missing something essential. The spirit of the joke – the delay of a vital piece of information, the punch-up jab at NATO, the sense that the speakers are underdogs left to fight their war alone and somehow winning anyway – means more when coded as Jewish. In fact, given the context, it's maybe more Jewish than it is funny.

Stepping back a bit, it takes a kind of chutzpah for the president, now receiving billions in aid from NATO, to drag the organization like that – particularly while his country is seeking membership status. (That's not to say he's wrong in his critique.)

But maybe I'm overthinking it. The people in the joke, and its point of view, are Jewish because the man telling it is.

PJ Grisar is a Forward culture reporter. He can be reached at Grisar@Forward.com and @pjgrisar on Twitter. HW



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