



THE

# Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

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## Elisha Wiesel to Keynote Memphis Jewish Federation’s 60th Annual Yom HaShoah Commemoration



Elisha Wiesel will be “in conversation” with Rabbi Abe Schacter-Gampel of Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab at Memphis Jewish Federation’s 60th Annual Yom HaShoah program. Rabbi Schacter-Gampel is the grandson of Rabbi Herschel Schacter, the first U. S. Army Chaplain to participate in the liberation of the Buchenwald death camp, where Elisha’s father, Elie was then an imprisoned 16-year-old boy.

Memphis Jewish Federation’s 60th annual Yom HaShoah Commemoration will be held Thursday, April 28, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. in-person in the Memphis Jewish Community Center Belz Social Hall, or via Zoom and Facebook Live. Advance registration is required for

both in-person and Zoom attendance and can be found at [www.jcpmemphis.org/yomhashoah](http://www.jcpmemphis.org/yomhashoah). Follow the Jewish Community Partners Facebook page to join via Live. For health and safety, in-person seating at the MJCC is highly limited and

requires registration on a first come-first serve basis. In-person attendees are asked to provide proof of COVID vaccination when registering. Registered attendees with special needs may also register for complimentary valet parking. Margo Gruen, chair of Federation’s Holocaust Memorial Committee, is honored to announce the keynote speaker is Elisha Wiesel, human rights advocate and activist and second-generation son of Holocaust survivor, Nobel Laureate, Presidential Medal of Freedom winner and celebrated memoirist Elie Wiesel. “The committee is thrilled to host Elisha Wiesel as our keynote speaker and has planned this hybrid Yom HaShoah program to allow as many people to attend as possible, with a choice to participate in the way that makes them most comfortable,” said Gruen. “After two years of completely virtual events, many will be able to attend in person, while the internet allows the Memphis Jewish community to come together in spirit from the safety of our homes.” Elisha Wiesel will be “in conversation” with Rabbi Abe Schacter-Gampel of Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR). Though Wiesel and Rabbi Schacter-Gampel have only recently been in communication, the two share a fascinating connection. Rabbi Schacter-Gampel is the grandson of Rabbi Herschel Schacter, the first U. S. Army Chaplain to participate in the lib-

eration of the Buchenwald death camp, where Elisha’s then 16-year-old father, Elie, was among the survivors. “The idea that my grandfather was at Buchenwald, and Elie Wiesel was there, and to think that now that I’ll be in conversation with his son, Elisha, gives me goosebumps,” said Rabbi Schacter-Gampel. “We’re brought together through this shared memory of the Holocaust and through this shared experience of what it’s like to navigate our own lives as the descendants of people who were such a big deal. We’ve emailed, but I’ve never met him before, and yet I feel in some ways we know each other in some kind of deep, spiritual way because our recent ancestors were together at a very challenging time in their lives.” Raised in New York City and suburban New Jersey by Marion and Elie Wiesel, Elisha attended Yale University where he graduated with a degree in computer science. After spending some time doing basic military training in Israel, he joined Goldman-Sachs in 1994. In 2017, he became Goldman’s Chief Information Officer, overseeing Engineering. Since retiring from a 25-year career at Goldman Sachs at the end of 2019, he served in 2020 as one of the lead technologists in Mike Bloomberg’s presidential campaign. In his recent board

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## Senate Unanimously Confirms Deborah Lipstadt as Antisemitism Monitor



Deborah Lipstadt  
Credit: Elisabetta A. Villa/  
WireImage via Getty Images

**By Ron Kampeas**  
WASHINGTON (JTA) – The Senate in a voice vote unanimously confirmed Deborah Lipstadt, the Holocaust scholar who endured delays and a contentious hearing in her nomination to be antisemitism monitor. The vote late Wednesday took mere seconds. “The ayes appear to have it,” Sen. Tammy Baldwin, the Wisconsin Democrat who was presiding over the session, said after calling for a vote. “The ayes do have it. The nomination is

confirmed.” There were no “Nos.” It was not clear from the C-Span video, which Georgia Democrat Jon Ossoff posted on his Twitter feed, how many senators were present for the vote to confirm Lipstadt to the State Department role. Still, the fact that none of Lipstadt’s erstwhile Republican critics demanded debate or a headcount – actions that could have further delayed her nomination – was in sharp contrast to the proce-

dural maneuvers Republicans used for months to delay her confirmation. Ossoff introduced the motion to nominate Lipstadt in part because he represents Georgia, where Lipstadt teaches at Emory University, but he also noted his Jewish roots in his 4-minute speech. “It was U.S. forces who liberated Dachau and Buchenwald. and Annie and Israel, my great-grandparents, they got out of Europe,” Ossoff said. “Many

(See Lipstadt Page 3)



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My Teen Israel Experience



David enjoys the view on top of a mountain outside of Eilat, Israel.

By David Sabin

David Sabin, son of Dr. Joanne Levine and Dr. Noah Sabin, is a senior at Memphis University School. Memphis Jewish Federation’s Lemsky Endowment Fund provided him with a Teen Israel Experience grant to help offset the cost of his Ramah Israel Seminar in Israel. All rising high school juniors and seniors in the Memphis Jewish community are eligible for grants up to \$3,000 to attend a recognized teen summer or semester program in Israel. To learn more and apply, please go to: [www.jcpmemphis.org/lemsky-endowment-fund](http://www.jcpmemphis.org/lemsky-endowment-fund)

This past summer I attended Ramah Seminar in Israel. The summer was one of the greatest summers of my life so far.

Being given the opportunity to spend six weeks in Israel with my closest friends not only strengthened my connection with them, but also my connection with Judaism and the Jewish people. To see with my own eyes the thousands of years of Jewish history I learned about in day school was amazing to me.

The main highlight of the trip for me was the Etgar trip, which means challenge. Initially I chose to do the Etgar Desert trip, but unfortunately it was cancelled due to a heat wave, and I had to do Etgar Sea-to-Sea. This new arrangement proved to be an incredible experience. Spending four straight days without everyday luxuries made me appreciate the life I had much more and allowed me to create new friendships with people I had not even spoken to until that point.

Another great part of the Ramah Seminar was the time we spent in the Negev desert. We stayed at several kibbutzim, which were all situated in breathtaking landscapes the likes of which I have never seen. While in the south of Israel, we went to a community on the border between Israel and Gaza. Hearing their perspectives and experiences of living so close to conflict inspired me to do what I can to foster peace not only between Israel and the Palestinians but also anywhere else I see needless violence arise.

Thank you to the Memphis Jewish Federation’s Lemsky Endowment Fund for helping to make my Ramah Israel Seminar possible. **HW**

B’nai B’rith Donates Teddy Bears to Germantown EMS



Germantown EMS Chief Jerome S. Cole (red shirt) and members of the EMS squad are pleased to accept stuffed teddy bears from Sam Schloss lodge member Harold Steinberg.

THE Hebrew Watchman

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4/7/2022



Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. April 8, 2022 / 7 Nissan, 5782.....7:09 p.m.  
Havdalah, Sat. April 9, 2022 / 8 Nissan, 5782 ..... 8:06 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Metzora

By Harold I. Steinberg

Sam Schloss Lodge of B’nai B’rith recently donated 36 teddy bears to Germantown Emergency Medical Services. Joined by a group of 11 squad members, EMS Chief Jerome S. Cole accepted the bears from Schloss member Harold (Hesch) Steinberg, a long-time member of the lodge.

In accepting the bears, Chief Cole said, “A teddy bear can have an enormous effect on a sick child or a child who is losing their home to a fire. It gives them a caring and calm feeling. A teddy bear gives them hope, which affords a

healthy swift recovery. A small item like a teddy bear makes a kid smile.”

The service project was started in 2003 by Joel Turetzky and the late Leon Hellman. In the ensuing years, many thousands of stuffed bears have been donated to community organizations such as the Child Advocacy Center, Plough Towers, Harwood School, Fogelman Jewish Family Service, Madonna Learning Center and the Wings Cancer Foundation.

The lodge is doing a real mitzvah and still have more than 450 teddy bears to distribute this year.

The funds for the bears were generously donated by the members of Sam Schloss Lodge. **HW**

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Yom HaShoah...

(Continued From Page 1)

position at Good Shepherd Services, El-isha raised millions of dollars for New York’s neediest by convening “Midnight Madness,” where hundreds of finance professionals stayed up all night solving elaborate puzzles on the city streets. He is currently on the board of Zionness, a coalition of Jewish activists and allies who self-describe as “unabashedly progressive and unapologetically Zionist.”

After his father’s passing in 2016, Wiesel realized the extent to which his father’s voice was missed in world conversation. Today, he shares his father’s message to continue his legacy of standing up for persecuted and marginalized communities, including speaking out on behalf of Syrian refugees, the Uyghurs in China, the LGBTQ community and the children of immigrants impacted by DACA.

Rabbi Abe Schacter-Gampel grew up in New York City. He studied at Yeshivat Maale Gilboa and Mechon Hadar and was ordained from Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School. He went on to complete Clinical Pastoral Education at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center and Methodist LeBonheur Health-care. Rabbi Schacter-Gampel is the first

board-certified Chaplain and Director of Spiritual Care at MJHR and serves as a Rabbi for the Hospice of Hope.

Memphis Jewish Federation’s annual Yom HaShoah honors Holocaust survivors living among us, pays tribute to those we have lost, and transmits the legacy of the Holocaust to the next generation. This year’s program will include the traditional candle-lighting ceremony and memorial prayers. Community cantors and the Temple Israel Teen Team will participate, and the closing benediction will be offered by Temple Israel’s Rabbi Micah Greenstein.

The annual observance is coordinated and hosted by Memphis Jewish Federation’s Holocaust Memorial Committee. It is supported by Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth Congregation, Baron Hirsch Congregation, Beth Sholom Synagogue, Chabad Lubavitch of TN, Facing History & Ourselves, Memphis Jewish Community Center, Or Chadash Conservative Synagogue, Temple Israel and Young Israel of Memphis.

For more information about the program, please contact Lorraine Wolf at Memphis Jewish Federation 901.767.7100 or at lwolf@jcpmemphis.org. **HW**

Lipstadt...

(Continued From Page 1)

of my family did not, Madam President, and they perished in the Holocaust. This isn’t ancient history. This is recent history. And right now as we speak, the scourge of antisemitism is rising again, in this country and around the world. If we mean the words ‘never again,’ then at long last Madam President, let’s confirm Deborah Lipstadt to fight antisemitism on behalf of the United States.”

Lipstadt is now the first antisemitism monitor to have the role of ambassador, under a law passed by Congress in 2020, which enhances her status overseas when she makes representations to foreign governments and allows her more direct access to the secretary of state and to the president should she come across a situation that she believes requires executive action.

The fact that the rank of ambassador

means the role requires Senate confirmation subjected Lipstadt to scrutiny. Her sharp past criticisms of former President Donald Trump, and particularly of Wisconsin Republican Sen. Ron Johnson, led to delays and a contentious hearing in February. Only two Republicans on the Foreign Relations Committee joined Democrats earlier this week in advancing the nomination.

A broad array of Jewish and pro-Israel groups advocated on behalf of Lipstadt, including groups like the Orthodox Union and Christians United for Israel that maintain close ties with Republicans.

Lipstadt, 75, has been for years a go-to expert for the media and for legislators on Holocaust issues, particularly on how the genocide’s meaning should be understood in the 21st century, and whether it had any cognates among anti-democratic forces in the current day. **HW**

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Young Israel Shares Purim Pizza with a Platoon of IDF Soldiers

By Rabbi Akiva Males

For me, one of the most rewarding aspects of being a congregational rabbi is being privileged to administer my Rabbi’s Discretionary Fund (RDF). The RDF is a vital way for Young Israel to

assist members of our local Jewish community – and even some in Israel – who at times can use a helping hand. The Purim season might be when the fund keeps me busiest – as many entrust the



IDF soldiers receiving Young Israel of Memphis’ uplifting Purim gifts

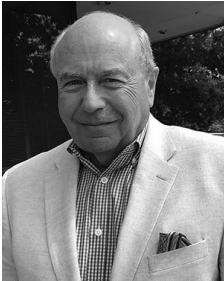
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RDF with their special donations to be shared with those in need on Purim. I’m proud to say that thanks to the generosity of many donors, this past Purim, Young Israel’s RDF was once again able to help lighten the burdens felt by many of our brothers and sisters.

This Purim, YI’s RDF was also proud to engage in another uplifting project. For the sixth consecutive year, YI decided that Purim would be the perfect time to reach out and thank the brave soldiers of Israel’s Defense Forces (IDF) who are doing their best to protect our extended family in Israel. While away from the festive Purim atmospheres of their own homes and locales, those soldiers work hard to keep their fellow citizens safe and sound. Toward that end, YI reached out again to [www.BasketstoIsrael.com](http://www.BasketstoIsrael.com) to supply an entire platoon of active-duty IDF soldiers with enough pizza and soda to make their Purim festive.

This refreshing treat served as a long-distance embrace from our congregational family. Knowing that a caring synagogue in far-away Memphis, Tennessee, was thinking of them on Purim surely provided this IDF platoon with a much-appreciated morale boost. YI thanks the generous sponsors who made this gift possible.

With the festival of Pesach (Passover) just around the corner, I know that YI’s RDF will soon be busy assisting others again. On behalf of all those who benefited, or will benefit from YI’s RDF, I thank the fund’s many donors for their generous ongoing support. In the merit of your acts of Tzedakah, may G-d bless you and your families with a happy and healthy Pesach.

Young Israel’s Rabbi Akiva Males can be reached at [rabbi@yiom.org](mailto:rabbi@yiom.org) **HW**



# Field Trip and Lessons for MJCC Seniors!

**Field Trip**  
MJCC Seniors get ready to visit the world-famous Sun Studios on Sunday April 10.

Tour the small studio where “Rocket 88” was recorded in early March 1951, the first rock ‘n’ roll record according to some experts. Sun Studio is also where Elvis recorded his first record ever (1953) and his first hit (1954). By 1959 it had closed, but in 1987 reopened as a recording studio and tourist attraction (U2 left their drums here), and in 2003 it was declared a National Historic Landmark.

Modern-day visitors can soak up the ancient rock vibes, gaze at Elvis’s high school diploma and take photos of each other singing into the microphone once used by the King. The exact time and price, to be determined. Please call

Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 for more information.

**Game Lessons**  
**Mah Jongg for Beginners:** Lessons with Melanie Mann, returns beginning Mondays April 11 through May 9, from 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Want to learn to play Mah Jongg? Come join other beginners and learn this popular game. Mah Jongg card included in class fee. \$80 fee/\$72m. Class #8220.

**Beginning Bridge Lessons** with Debbie Jackson, returns on Thursdays, April 14 through May 12 from 10 a.m. -12 p.m. \$80 fee/\$72m. Class#8219

No previous experience is necessary for either course. You may call the front desk at 901-761-0810 for class reservations. **HW**

# MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club in April Events

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club has exciting programs planned for April.

**All programs start at 12:15 p.m. Tuesday, April 12**  
Join us for “Israeli Bingo!” with Noa Lavyud.

This Israeli take on an old favorite will be a lot of fun. Noa, the new Israeli Shlichah is 22 years old and is from Ashkelon, Israel. She makes every program fun and exciting.

**Thursday, April 14**  
Frank Shaeffer will entertain us with his ‘HEALTHRHYTHMS DRUM CIRCLE!’ The Healing Power of the Drum gives anyone the opportunity to experience the transforming power of music. You do not need any previous musical experience to be a member of a drum circle. All that is required is an open mind and an open heart. Come join the fun and experience the many benefits

that group drumming has to offer. This is one of the most popular programs the Senior Club has had. Because of space limitations, reservations are required for this program.

**Tuesday, April 19**  
Rabbi Joel Finkelstein will discuss “Passover, Which Child are You?”

**Thursday, April 21**  
Join us for “Super Passover Bingo,” a free bingo with Passover-themed Prizes! No reservations are required.

Remember, every Monday through Friday, join us for a delicious kosher lunch prepared by the Kitchens at the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required the day before by 1 p.m. Please contact Adult Services Coordinator Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org. You may also call the front desk at 901-761-0810 to make a reservation. **HW**

# Baron Hirsch/ASBEE to Host Annual 100 Man Minyan

Following a two-year break due to the pandemic, Baron Hirsch’s 100 Man Minyan is back and will take place on Sunday, April 10.

This year, Baron Hirsch is joining with Anshei Sphard Beth El Emeth to grow the program even more. The goal is to get a massive group of men, women and children to attend morning services together, hear some words of Torah, as well as enjoy a delicious complimentary breakfast.

When the program began in 2012, some doubted the goal of 100 could be reached, but it was tough, and many more. The annual event has continued to grow and expand since its inception.

“The 100 Man Minyan is always such an enlightening experience,” said Baron Hirsch President Marc Lennon. “And I can’t wait to be a part of it again this year. Seeing so many people come together to daven, learn and be with friends is so uplifting. The commitment, dedication and desire to grow is so evident among our congregation during this event.”

The minyan will begin at 8 a.m. in the Belz Sanctuary and will be followed by a delicious hot breakfast in the Mar-si Moss Social Hall at about 8:40 a.m. Volunteers will be on hand to help those

who may not remember how to put on Tefillin, or in some cases, may never have worn them before at all.

“It is always so nice to see the wide range of people who come together for this event,” observed Jake Lipsey, Baron Hirsch Men’s Club president, and the organizer of the event. “We have participation from every segment of the community, and we go out of our way to make sure everyone feels comfortable – whether they attend minyan every day, or whether this is the first time in their lives.”

New this year will be a choice of several breakout classes to be held after the breakfast. Each of the classes will focus on the upcoming Passover holiday, and will be taught by Rabbi Joel Finkelstein, Rabbi Yisrael Wende and Michael Stein.

The deluxe breakfast will be made by members of the two congregation’s Men’s Clubs and will feature well-known favorites and a few rare surprises. Everyone in the community is invited to attend. There is no cost for the breakfast, but reservations are requested so that volunteers may properly prepare.

For information or to make reservations, please contact the Baron Hirsch office at 901-683-7485 or email gwen@baronhirsch.org. **HW**

# Lending for Life Provides Free Short-Term Loans of Medical Assistive Devices



**Kaylee Stahler and Linda Schlesinger**

Need crutches for your child who sprained her ankle at basketball practice?

Need a cane, walker, rollator or shower chair for a family member having surgery?

Need a wheelchair or a bedside commode for an elderly relative coming to visit?

If you had to buy medical equipment every time you needed it, you could spend a fortune! And where are you going to store the devices after recovery?! Not to worry! Lending for Life has you covered.

Lending for Life is a free lending service or gemach of medical assistive equipment. Gemach is an acronym for *Gemilut Chasadim* (Acts of Kindness) and refers to a free loan society to benefit members of a community. Kaylee Stahler and Linda Schlesinger established Lending for Life last summer in memory of Kaylee’s grandparents, Jack and Lottie Kampf z”l, and Linda’s in-laws, Rabbi Dr. George Natan and Shulamith Schlesinger z”l and her sister, Lois Goldberg z”l.

“I got the idea for Lending for Life

sitting in my grandmother’s house after she passed away,” says Stahler. “She had state-of-the-art, brand new, walkers and wheelchairs that she was hardly able to use. I knew that she would want to see these things put to good use. I thought a gemach would be a nice way to keep her legacy alive, starting with items that she herself purchased at the very end of her life.”

“I read about a medical gemach in the Dallas Jewish community and thought it would be a great idea for Memphis,” says Schlesinger. “I had collected so much medical equipment in my attic and garage from my kids’ injuries, my in-laws’ physical decline, and my sister’s illness, and it was all just sitting there collecting dust and taking up space! I wanted someone to be able to use it and thought it would be a nice way to honor the memory of my husband’s parents and my sister.”

While Schlesinger was contemplating the logistics of her concept, she was shocked one day to see Stahler’s flier for Lending for Life in a community What’s App group and reached out to her about joining forces.

Mostly word of mouth publicity has kept Lending for Life busy during the past eight months, much to the delight of its creators. Schlesinger keeps all the larger equipment, such as wheelchairs, walkers, crutches, knee scooters, shower chairs and commodes in her garage storage room, and Stahler stores all the smaller items, such as slings, braces, monitors, canes, bed rails, a cold therapy unit, and an inflatable hair washing basin. All items are sanitized upon return.

To borrow or donate an item or make a monetary contribution, email lendingforlife@gmail.com, or text Stahler at 901-679-8437 or Schlesinger at 901-598-8256. All donations will be used to buy needed equipment. If you are unable to arrange pick up of an item, Lending for Life will deliver it. **HW**

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## Bat Mitzvah



Abby Portnoy

Abby Portnoy, daughter of Doctors Lisa Usdan and David Portnoy, will become a bat mitzvah on April 9, 2022, at Temple Israel. Rabbi Micah Greenstein will officiate the service.

Currently Abby is a seventh grader

at Hutchison School. She serves on the Middle School Peer Committee, which helps to support new students. She is also actively involved in Youth in Government at Hutchison. Abby studies dance at Ballet Memphis. She performed in the Nutcracker at the Orpheum in 2021. Abby has joyfully attended Henry S. Jacobs Camp since 2016.

Abby and her younger sister, Paige, were both born prematurely and had prolonged stays in the neonatal intensive care unit. For her mitzvah project, Abby has been knitting hats for preemies to give to local NICUs. Preemies have a difficult time regulating their body temperature, and hats like these help them stay warm.

Abby is a sixth-generation Memphian. She is the granddaughter of Dr. David and Mrs. Linda Usdan of Memphis, Tenn. and Dr. Barry and Mrs. Wynne Wilder of Westbury, N.Y. and the late Mark Portnoy. **HW**

## Mazel Tov



Ari Nathan Tenenbaum

Emily Bernhardt would like to introduce her great-grandson, Ari Nathan Tenenbaum, son of Gina and David Tenenbaum of Atlanta, Georgia.

## Volunteer Shops for Baron Hirsch Sandwich Make



Yosef VanderWalde shops for peanut butter and jelly – nearly buying the entire inventory of peanut butter at a local Aldi's store – in preparation for Baron Hirsch's Sandwich Make. Yosef attends Margolin Hebrew Academy, and is a member of Baron Hirsch and of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis B'nai Tzedek Teen Philanthropy Group

# PASSOVER INSIGHTS

## READING FOR YOUR SEDER

Pesach is the oldest and most transformative story of hope ever told. It tells of how an otherwise undistinguished group of slaves found their way to freedom from the greatest and longest-lived empire of their time, indeed of any time. It tells the revolutionary story of how the supreme Power intervened in history to liberate the supremely powerless. It is a story of the defeat of probability by the force of possibility.

Three thousand three hundred years ago, a group of slaves were liberated and began what Nelson Mandela calls the long walk to freedom. And ever since, at this time of the year, we've re-lived their story on what we call Pesach, Passover, the Jewish festival of the exodus.

To me it raises a fascinating question. Imagine we could travel back in time and meet the great Pharaoh himself, Ramses II. I know what I'd say. *Ramses, there's good news and bad news. The good news is that one people alive now will still be alive in thousands of years' time. The bad news is: it won't be yours. It will be that group of slaves out there, building your great temples, the people you call the habiru or Hebrews, the children of Israel.*

Nothing could sound more absurd. The Egypt of the Pharaohs was the greatest empire of the ancient world; and the Hebrews were nothing - slave labor, powerless, not even yet a nation. Yet it was they, not the Pharaohs, who survived, and still do to this day. How did it happen? The answer, I believe, is this.

Ancient Egypt and ancient Israel were two peoples who asked the most fateful question of all. How, in this all too brief span of years, do we create something that will endure? How do we acquire a share in immortality? The Egyptians gave one answer. Build great monuments of stone - temples, pyramids - that will outlast the winds and sands of time. And they did. What they built still stands. But only the buildings, not the civilization that once gave them life.

The Israelites gave a different answer. You don't need to create monuments. All you need to do is tell the story, generation after generation. You need to engrave your values on the hearts of your children, and they on theirs, so that you live on in them, and so on to the end of time. You need to build a civilization around the home, the school, and education as a conversation between the generations. *You need to put children first. That is what Jews did for thousands of years; and it's why we're here today.*

The Pesach story, more than any other, remains the inexhaustible source of inspiration to all those who long for freedom. Freedom is a moral achievement, and without a constant effort of education it atrophies and must be fought for again. *Nowhere more than on Pesach, though, do we see how the story of one people can become the inspiration of many.*

~ The Late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks ZT'L

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# Post 121: Local Jewish War Veterans Group



The Memphis chapter of Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.

By Shoshana Cencer

As the war in Ukraine tragically carries on, no doubt a special group of locals has plenty to say about it, as well as their own experiences in the military and previous wars. The Memphis chapter of Jewish War Veterans of the U.S. (JWV) – known as Post 121 – was started back in January 1981 and elected its first officers that May.

According to its national website: “The Jewish War Veterans (JWV) is the premier voice for Jewish uniformed service members and veterans in the United States. The JWV affirms that Jewish men and women serve honorably and heroically in the military forces of the United States of America during peacetime and war. The JWV defends the rights and benefits of all service members and veterans, fights anti-Semitism, and supports the State of Israel.”

In addition to its overall mission, JWV supports and advocates for all uniformed servicemembers, veterans, and their families nationwide and is even involved in government legislation related to veterans.

At the local Post 121, members gather for events throughout the year, thanks to Chaplain, Colonel (Retired) Brett C. Oxman and his wife, Cori. “When we moved to Memphis in 2013, the local Post was inactive,” explained the career military chaplain. “What motivated me to get involved was realizing that lo-

cal members had passed away and that many people don’t know about the military honors servicemen and women are supposed to receive when they die. But what keeps me going is the wonderful friendship and fellowship that’s developed within our group of ‘Merry Men and Women.’”

Since joining Post 121, Rabbi Oxman and Cori have hosted BBQs and dinner get-togethers on a quarterly basis. There are 18 members in the group, ranging from a Jewish vet who had served in the Russian army to an ROTC member to Korea, Vietnam, WWII vets and others. Several wives, whose husbands served and have since passed away, still attend the events, too. They feel a connection that only people who’ve served can truly understand.

“Anyone who’s served in the military can relate to others in the military better than anyone else,” said Cori, who cooks the delicious meals for Post 121’s meetings. “There’s a certain way servicepeople carry themselves and how they talk. There’s this insider understanding of military life. It’s almost like going ‘home’ at these special meetings.”

When JWV Post 121’s members get together, there’s lots of talk about military duties, where people were stationed, and their experiences with war. It’s appropriate to say that all their stories are incredible, including that of

member Nathan Blockman. “After high school graduation,” said the 96-year-old WWII veteran, “I was drafted to serve.”

From basic training in Alabama, Nathan was sent to fight in Germany. He ended up suffering severe frostbite on his feet and was captured by the Germans. Perhaps the only reason he’s alive is from the sympathetic, quick thinking of a soldier who checked Nathan into a POW camp.

“There was an ‘H’ on my dog tags, which stood for Hebrew, meaning Jewish,” explained Nathan. “The soldier told me to throw those tags away because the Germans were taking all Jews in the back of the camp and killing them on the spot. ... I was in the POW camp for about eight months before the Russian army liberated it. I moved to New York for a year before settling in Memphis.”

“This JWV group is wonderful,” added Barbara Blockman, Nathan’s wife. “They talk about their experiences – they all have something in common. We say a prayer before the wonderful kosher dinner. And Cori is so sweet!”

Post 121 is mostly an older group of folks. When looking at the ages, it’s clearly linked to when the national draft was done away with – some 50 years ago. Not as many Americans

now choose to serve as were compelled to serve back then, and even fewer are Jewish.

“It’s an era gone by,” noted Rabbi Oxman, who’s been stationed across the U.S., West Germany, South Korea, England, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Iraq, Afghanistan, and several other locations around the world. “But when we get together – members like Barry Weiser, Alvin Gordon, our Post Chaplain Rabbi David Radinsky, and Quarter Master Murray Habbaz – you can see these servicepeople jumping right back into the past. There’s a gleam in their eyes and smiles as they reminisce together, sharing stories and experiences.”

As Post 121’s Commander, Rabbi Oxman holds the JWV group’s paperwork and other important items including its official gavel, Bible, hat and pins. There are some fascinating papers too – Post 121’s constitution and by-laws, formal War Department documentation, and a slew of old newspaper clippings and other papers documenting the group receiving its official charter and events the Post has participated in around town over the years. It’s quite a remarkable record of the history of this important group.

Post 121 is always accepting new members – any Jewish serviceperson who’s a current or former member of the military is welcome to join. And, donations can be made to the 501(c)(3) to help continue the gatherings.

“I found the military to be so wonderful – to serve something higher. Everyone is welcome to serve no matter your political preference, race, religion – it doesn’t matter,” said Rabbi Oxman. “Cori and I feel great about being able to facilitate these meetings. It’s such a neat group of people. We’re hopeful we can keep Post 121 going and continue having these get-togethers.” HW





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# A Jewish Art Exhibit at Princeton was Canceled Over Ties to the Confederacy. Jewish Scholars are Outraged.



**Jewish sculptor Moses David Ezekiel (left) in his Rome studio with his statue "Religious Liberty" (back center), 1909. A planned Princeton University exhibit of Jewish American artists in 2022 was to feature Ezekiel and a statue based on "Religious Liberty," but was scrapped owing to his lifelong support of the Confederacy.**  
*Credit: Public domain*

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – Princeton University spent months planning an exhibit of 19th-century American Jewish art before canceling the show because two of its featured artists had supported the Confederacy.

The cancellation has drawn criticism from the exhibit’s Jewish donors and consulting historians. They say the decision “rewrites art history.”

“I was really stunned by the university taking this position,” Leonard Milberg, the Jewish financial manager and art collector who funded the collection and whose name adorns the gallery where the exhibit was to be shown, told the Princeton student paper.

The exhibit was to feature the work of Moses Jacob Ezekiel, a renowned sculptor who also crafted the Confederate Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery and hung the Confederate battle flag in his Rome studio for his entire career, and painter Theodore Moise, who was a major in the Confederate Army, among other artists.

A famous Ezekiel sculpture known as “Faith,” an adaptation of an earlier work “Religious Liberty” commissioned by B’nai B’rith that celebrates the 100th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence and is currently displayed outside the National Museum of American Jewish History in Philadelphia, was to be the exhibit’s centerpiece; another Ezekiel work was to feature a sculpture of Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, the founder of American Reform Judaism.

After first agreeing to organize the exhibition last summer, Princeton canceled the show in December. According to emails first obtained by Religion News Service, the university’s vice provost for institutional equity and diversity had expressed concerns over the Confederate links and had asked for Ezekiel and Moise to be substituted for other artists.

That decision didn’t sit well with Milberg, the show’s curator Samantha Baskind or the Jewish historians they consulted for the exhibit, Adam Mendelsohn and Jonathan Sarna, who argued that the exhibit as planned had addressed the artists’ Confederate associations in a thoughtful manner.

In a statement to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency and other outlets, Princeton disputed the charge that the school itself had canceled the exhibit, saying it had in fact been “canceled by the donor” after they “were unable to agree on the show’s composition.” University spokesperson Michael Hotchkiss added, “The Librarian and her senior staff have a duty to ensure that any materials exhibited are presented, explained, and contextualized in a manner consistent

with the Library’s educational and research mission.”

That account was disputed by the show’s curators.

“The donor pulled out because Princeton canceled the art,” Baskind told the Daily Princetonian, saying that the decision was “an unfortunate anti-intellectual surrender to cancel culture.”

She added, “Removing the artists with

Confederate ties rewrites art history. Art historians examine the meaning of art in its own time as well as how it’s perceived in the current moment. We need to inform and discuss the past, not bury it.”

American institutions, including universities, have increasingly reevaluated whether and how to acknowledge racist figures in their past. That effort has included, at times, Jews with ties to the

Confederacy: A Northern California synagogue, for example, has weighed whether to include Jewish Confederate leader Judah Benjamin in an engraved list of illustrious Jews.

In an op-ed, Milberg noted that he had previously sponsored Princeton exhibits spotlighting artists with antisemitic ties. “I felt that I should not erase history but learn from it,” he wrote. **HW**

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# Going Green: A Fast-Growing Corner of the Global Bond Market

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

Green bonds are debt instruments that corporations and governments can use exclusively to finance major climate-related or environmentally friendly initiatives. Global issuance of green bonds reached a record \$523 billion in 2021, and is expected to exceed \$775 billion in 2022.<sup>1</sup>



The growth in green bonds is closely tied to a broader investment trend that gained traction in recent years: Investors have increasingly considered environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles in their efforts to address the world’s problems and help reduce the related portfolio risks.

### Prioritizing the Planet

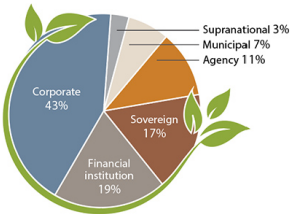
Some common types of projects funded by green bonds include transitioning to renewable energy, modernizing the electric grid, ensuring sustainable water supplies, and building clean transportation systems. Issuers must typically provide investors with certain information, such as a detailed outline of the project they plan to fund, estimates of the environmental impact, and regular progress reports. The European Union and a growing number of sovereign nations have issued green bonds. The U.S. government has not sold green bonds, but mortgage giant Fannie Mae, some states and municipalities, and well-known U.S. corporations have issued them.<sup>2</sup>

Like all bonds, green bonds are rated for credit risk. A range of AAA down to BBB (or Baa) is considered “investment grade,” and lower-rated or “junk” bonds carry greater risk.

Investors who take on more risk are generally compensated with higher interest rates. Because government entities have the power to raise taxes and fees as needed to pay the interest, municipal bonds are generally considered to be less risky than corporate bonds, so they typically offer lower interest rates.

Bond prices and interest rates are also influenced by supply and demand. In some cases, enthusiastic investor demand for green bonds has driven up prices and pushed down yields, resulting in a small cost savings (0.1 to 0.2 percentage point) for the issuers. This also suggests that the buyers were willing to pay a slight premium (or “greenium”) for bonds that are intended to fund a greener future.<sup>3</sup>

Share of 2021 Global Green Bond Issuance



Source: Moody’s, 2022

### Evolving Standards

The term “greenwashing” describes the concern that some companies might try to attract eco-conscious investors with misleading claims. Corporations don’t always report sufficient ESG data, and currently there is no standardized criteria by which to judge sustainability-related risks and investment opportunities. However, investors may soon have access to more reliable information. The International Sustainability Standards Board has been tasked with setting global standards that may provide a baseline for ESG disclosure.<sup>4</sup> U.S. regulators at the Securities and Exchange Commission are expected

to propose new climate-risk disclosure rules.<sup>5</sup>

Some corporate bond issuers enlist third parties to provide verification that their green bonds would indeed finance projects intended to have a positive environmental impact. Still, investors may want to look beyond a bond investment’s green label and take a deeper dive into the specific projects being funded, as well as the issuer’s finances and overall environmental record.

*The principal value of all bonds tends to fluctuate with changes in market conditions. As interest rates rise, bond prices typically fall, and vice versa. Bonds redeemed prior to maturity may be worth more or less than their original cost. Investments seeking to achieve higher yields also involve a higher degree of risk. In addition to credit and interest-rate risks, the risks associated with purchasing bonds from other countries include differences in financial reporting, currency exchange risk, as well as economic and political risks unique to a specific country. This may result in greater price volatility.*

*Interest paid by municipal bonds issued by the owner’s state or local government is typically free of federal income tax. If a bond was issued by a municipality outside the home state, the interest could be subject to state and local income taxes. A*

*municipal bond sold at a profit could incur capital gains taxes. Some municipal bond interest could be subject to the [federal and state] alternative minimum tax.*

- 1) Moody’s, January 31, 2022
- 2) World Economic Forum, October 26, 2021
- 3) The Wall Street Journal, December 17, 2020
- 4) S&P Global, October 15, 2021
- 5) Bloomberg, September 15, 2021

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## Netflix to Produce a ‘Jewish Matchmaking’ Series

By Caleb Guedes-Reed

JTA) – Matchmaker, matchmaker – are you going on Netflix?

The streaming giant announced a new “Jewish Matchmaking” series last Thursday, modeled after its hit “Indian Matchmaking.”

Details are scant, and there is no premiere date, but Netflix’s companion site Tudum says it will feature “singles in the US and Israel as they turn their dating life over to a top Jewish matchmaker.”

“Will using the traditional practice of shidduch help them find their soulmate in today’s world?” the show asks.

“Indian Matchmaking” was nominat-

ed for an Emmy after premiering in July 2020, but was also criticized by many who said it promoted stereotypes and classism. The show’s production group, Industrial Media’s The Intellectual Property Corporation, will also produce “Jewish Matchmaking.”

Netflix has also sustained criticism for some of its other shows such as “Unorthodox” and “My Unorthodox Life,” for their negative portrayals of Orthodox Jews.

Significant drama has also occurred within the Haart family, who is at the center of “My Unorthodox Life,” during filming of the show’s second season. [HW](#)

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# First Cohort of Herbert Shainberg Scholars Spend a Month in Israel



**Macy Cottrell and Colbe Earles**  
*By Amelia Ables*

March 17, 2022 – The first cohort of the Herbert Shainberg Scholars Program officially arrived in Israel at the beginning of March. Colbe Earles and Macy Cottrell are studying at Ben-Gurion University (BGU) of the Negev during March as part of the new student exchange program that gives fourth-year students in the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) College of Medicine an opportunity to learn about the cultural, ethnic, and religious aspects of health care.

“Because it’s a multicultural university, BGU Medical School for International Health provides a unique perspective throughout students’ entire education, which is what makes it so special,” said Nia Zalamea, MD, assistant professor of surgery, director of the UTHSC Global Surgery Institute, associate director of the UTHSC Center for Multicultural and Global Health, and director of the Shainberg Scholars Program.

“The program is housed within the Center for Multicultural and Global Health (CMGH) in the UTHSC College of Medicine. The CMGH was created with the intention of better understanding people from other cultures, whether in Memphis or abroad.”

To understand the significance of the Herbert Shainberg Scholars Program, it’s important to first understand the history of the name.

Herbert Shainberg was featured in The UTCHS Record (the former UTHSC newspaper) in 1979 for his philanthropy work.

Herbert Shainberg was a Memphis businessman who owned a department store on Main Street in Downtown Memphis. His grandchildren, Jill, Stuart, and Craig Lazarov would visit their grandfather there, often heading to nearby Dyer’s Burgers to enjoy a meal together.

“Because restaurants were still segregated then, Dyer’s had a Black entrance and a white entrance. Mr. Shainberg, although not Black, quietly took his grandchildren through the Black entrance each time, and then sat in the Black section of the restaurant,” said Dr. Zalamea.

“This was his way of teaching his grandchildren about racism, fairness, justice, the difference between right and wrong, and one of the many ways he

demonstrated the importance of being kind.”

That spirit is what inspired the Shainberg Scholars Program.

The program came to life when Scott Strome, MD, and Robert Kaplan, executive dean of the UTHSC College of Medicine and vice chancellor for Health Affairs, connected with Mr. Shainberg’s grandchildren. Jill Lazarov Notowich, Stuart Lazarov, MD, and Craig Lazarov, JD, wanted an impactful way to honor their grandfather, and UTHSC’s partnership with BGU created the perfect opportunity.

“We are so excited and delighted to initiate this student exchange program in Israel,” said Dr. Strome. “The program is named in honor of Mr. Herbert Shainberg, whose legacy of humanism lives on through each of these scholars. It is our profound belief that this exchange will enrich the lives of both our trainees and their hosts, while broadening ties between our two universities.”

Both Earles and Cottrell underwent a rigorous selection process that lasted from June through November 2020, including a written application, a personal essay, and interviews with a selection committee.

“Our selection committee, which included UTHSC faculty and the (College of Medicine’s) Board of Visitors, asked critical questions and were as objective as possible,” Dr. Zalamea said. “There were three rounds of selection, each one about two hours. We really wanted to learn about the students’ motivation for being part of this first cohort and to capture the spirit of the program.”

Earles, who plans to go into family medicine, believes the experience will provide him with a unique perspective as he begins his career as a physician.

“I imagine a country halfway across the world does things differently than us,” he said. “I think seeing how other countries and cultures practice medicine helps us improve how we practice back home, and I hope to take some of those things with me as I move into residency. I’ve always been interested in global health. It’s why I wanted to become a doctor, and I’m excited to be here learning more about it.”

Cottrell grew up going on medical mission trips to Central America, which is where she fell in love with medicine

and learning about different cultures. In 2015, she spent a short time studying in Israel. “Being there showed me how strong and how determined its citizens are,” she said. “It’s unlike any other place I’ve seen. Because of these qualities, technical advancement, and deeply rooted culture, I’m excited to spend more time in Israel and with its people, learning from and with them.”

“The more people I meet who are unlike myself, the greater perspective I gain on the world around me,” she continued. “I want to continue to challenge myself to seek differing opinions and beliefs, to immerse myself in cultures unlike the one I grew up in, and to befriend others not because we have similar understandings but because we share a desire to understand one another. As physicians, I think it’s important to be able to empathize with vastly different groups and I hope this helps me grow in my ability to do so.”

The cohort will grow in the coming years, eventually including up to 10 medical students from both universities. As the relationship between UTHSC and BGU continues to develop, students from Memphis will eventually be able to access BGU’s international sites, including Sri Lanka and Tanzania, and BGU students will have access to UTHSC’s campuses throughout Tennessee.

“We had a committee of UTHSC College of Medicine students that developed the curriculum for the BGU students when they come to Memphis,” said Dr. Zalamea. “It includes lectures,

field trips, and projects. We also have a team of faculty who make up the curriculum development team, and of course our administrative team that helps us with everything. It’s been a real team effort from multiple parties who have been very generous and engaged with their time.”

The UTHSC College of Medicine believes that engaging in multicultural health care isn’t just important, but vital for practicing medicine in the United States.

“Our multicultural neighbors are right next to us,” said Dr. Zalamea. “And even though we’re teachers, we’re still learners. It takes us to extract ourselves from our comfortable setting to begin to understand cultures different from our own. Sometimes we must go elsewhere to redevelop and recharge our empathy and understanding, especially in health care.”

“What happens in Israel affects us in Memphis,” she continued. “What happens in Memphis affects Israel. It’s too small of a world, especially in health care, to pretend that we can solve our problems in an insular way. We can learn lessons elsewhere and bring them back home to benefit our local community.”

Earles and Cottrell returned on March 31. Their month abroad will culminate in Memphis with a reception with the Lazarov/Shainberg family and the program selection committee, where they will share their experiences as the first of many cohorts of the Herbert Shainberg Scholars Program. **HW**

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# Dancing on Columns of Air



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

By Ted Roberts

One of a father’s most challenging duties is instruction in the operation of a two wheeled bicycle: a balancing trick on two circular columns of air. It’s the first time the child bumps into the free lunch rule – i.e., there isn’t one. If you want to speed over the sidewalk with your pals, there’s a chance you’ll fall. The price of speed and the kiss of the wind is skinned knees and maybe an occasional tumble. So there are lessons here other than the fine art of balancing and pedaling. Life teems with tradeoffs. It’s a father’s job, I explain to the mother of the future bike rider, to pass this wisdom on to our daughter; and to run behind her that first perilous day as she pedals along.

It began one night as we were finishing up supper. “Hey, let’s go shopping for a bike tomorrow morning, I said to my 6-year-old daughter, “and then in the afternoon we’ll learn to ride it.” Like; let’s go buy us a nice pad of yellow paper and tonight we’ll write King Lear. But my daughter, oblivious to adversi-

ty and the dare of balancing on circles of air, only heard the part about “shopping.” She’s excited. So the next morning, before you can say VISA card, we are wandering around the bike store.

Visions of my first bike shopping expedition came to mind. Back then there were Schwinns, Murrays, Hendersons – voluptuous vehicles with fat wheels, curvy handlebars, broad fenders, upholstered saddle-like seats. These new models, however, were narrow and angular like the fashion models on the covers of our magazine. These were lean, mean machines. So it’s bike time again for the old easy rider. Forty-six years later and a hundred pounds heavier, my inflated body prowls the aisles of bike stores. What a culture shock. Handlebar shock, tire shock, and worst of all – multiple gear shock. And so many choices. I was the simple barn-painter touring the Louvre. Those gears! Who could use so many? Who knew which one to choose?

What if she clicked into 25th instead of 23rd? The salespeople didn’t notice us at first. But when my agile daughter, the future bike rider, lost her balance and knocked over a row of Schwinn 10-speeds, they came right over. I was a father; cheap and impatient. She was a daughter; obsessed with fashion and her friends’ judgments on her first new bike. And she couldn’t possibly ride a red or a green model because her neighborhood friends had already selected those col-

ors. She’s ready to spend the entire day discussing various blends of seat and frame colors, excluding red and green, of course. Eventually, we agree on a blue and white 10-speed that’s got the cutest little dispatch case you ever saw and a sky-blue seat that’s marvelously matching with a dark blue frame. The next day – into the streets we go. I had been through this before with her two brothers. I knew the drill; it involves betrayal. Easy with a rough and ready son, skinned up with playground dust. A lot tougher with a daughter.

“Now you won’t let go, will you?” asks the daredevil daughter. “Oh, no.” An outright lie! Then I let go. A lesson in life.

But first – with her in the saddle – I slowly walk the bike down the street. “Look, you’re riding it,” I say excitedly, while the neighbors peeking behind shaded blinds wonder when I’ll let go.

“Look, look, I’m riding it,” she repeats. Then a little more speed (the neighbors are now betting on when I let go).

“You won’t let go?” says the suspicious rider – hair in the breeze – as she notices we’re picking up speed. In fact, we’ve outdistanced three neighborhood dogs who have been enjoying the outing along with the peeping Toms next door. I can’t gallop beside her forever, I’m thinking. Sooner or later I must release her. But first I must boost her confidence.

“You’re doing it, you’re doing it,” I cry as I run along beside her with one stealthy hand gripping the back fender.

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She’s squeezing the handlebars and her big eyes are staring straight ahead like she sees a precipice before her instead of that slight curve to the left. It’s time, I think. The next hundred yards is only grass. No trees. With a little luck, success or at worst, graceful degradation awaits her. I let go and stop as she plunges ahead to the cliff’s edge. “You’re on your own,” I shout as I puff away, five yards behind her. Sad, but true, in more ways than one. May all her pitfalls be only a small turn in the path.

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

## Cold War 2.0: Russia and Ukraine’s Information Warfare Campaigns

By Maayan Hoffman

(JNS) – The Russia-Ukraine war is being fought not only in the field but also on our social networks, according to Haifa University professor emeritus Gabriel Weimann.

“Unlike in many previous wars, in this war, we have psychological warfare launched by both sides using very new technologies and in a no-limits way,” Weimann told JNS.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict has highlighted what has become an integral part of the contemporary landscape of conflict: Information warfare.

“This is part of the Cold War 2.0 paradigm,” explained Yaniv Levyatan, an expert in psychological and information warfare, also at Haifa University. “Both sides show that they can make significant moves that are directed towards the other side, the local population, or people around the world who are watching the events.”

Israel experienced this last May, when TikTok videos helped spark several nights of clashes and chaos among Arab and Jewish youth in Jerusalem. Scholars, including Weimann, blamed the video sharing platform at the time for playing a role in the security escalation at large, which included Hamas firing thousands of rockets in Israel.

“Everyone is calling it the TikTok intifada,” Tehilla Shwartz Altschuler, a senior fellow at the Israel Democracy Institute, said in an interview then.

According to Levyatan, the world needs to be “looking and learning” from the current conflict to understand the vital role information warfare could play in future escalations.

“During the war in Ukraine we are getting a clear understanding about the crucial role it plays in today’s modern warfare,” he told JNS.

### Borrowed videos, rumor mills

Russian information warfare began weeks before the invasion itself. The country used social networks to show images and videos of its soldiers on the Ukraine border, showing the size and strength of its force.

Then, when the war launched, “The Russian invasion was accompanied by a huge ‘noise’ of TikTok videos designed to sow demoralization among the Ukrainians,” said Levyatan. “Along with genuine videos of the Russian army’s progress, there were videos ‘borrowed’ from other armies and even Star Wars movies. The message promoted here was that the invading Russian army is huge.”

Social media was also used to spread rumors, such as a rumor that special units were being sent to Ukraine to assassinate President Volodymyr Zelensky or that Zelensky had fled Ukraine, which put the Ukrainian people on high alert.

But while on the one hand, Russia’s goal has been to intimidate the Ukrainians, on the other hand, its greater focus has been messaging targeted at its own people. Russia is using social media to bolster domestic public opinion of the war and Russian President Vladimir Putin, which Levyatan said is crucial for the continuation and safety of the regime.

“Russia is practicing mostly in-house propaganda, trying to convince Russian civilians that this is not a war and that the operation in Ukraine is against America and Western superpowers who are trying to develop nuclear and biological weapons in Ukraine,” he said.

Ukraine is engaging in the same virtual battle, but in its case, the messaging is more geared toward world public opinion, he said.

“From the beginning, Ukraine’s goal was to position itself as ‘David’ to [Russia’s] ‘Goliath,’” said Levyatan.

He said President Zelensky is likewise trying to share a message with the West that “we share the same values” to help keep officials and the public engaged.

“But we must understand that both Putin and Zelensky are using fake news – telling lies to achieve their goals,” Levyatan stressed. This includes the “Snake Island” incident, where Zelensky reported that 13 brave Ukrainian soldiers chose death rather than surrender to the Russians when, in fact,

they had surrendered. Another incident was the supposed deliberate bombing of Babyn Yar by the Russians, which turned out not to have happened.

“On a daily basis we see fake stats, fake pictures, fake maps, false information about victims,” said Weimann. “You cannot trust even the basic numbers, like how many people were killed.”

He said even some of the testimonies that appear heart-wrenchingly genuine are contrived.

“The most important problem with this is that the fake news [on the social networks] is now being conveyed to us by the conventional media,” he noted.

Professional journalists are being “fooled” by disinformation because they are “starving for pictures and stories and eager to get as much information as they can in a fast way in today’s competitive media environment,” he said. “The thresholds are lower, and their selection of material is with less caution than in other days.”

### A lesson for the future

Both countries are using a variety of social networks, from Twitter and Facebook to TikTok and Instagram. However, Levyatan said that “most fascinating” was the way that LinkedIn was now being used.

“LinkedIn is a business social network and using it is super intelligent and effective because people on LinkedIn can relate to one another,” he explained. “If I am in the high-tech community and see my colleagues in Ukraine leaving their offices with an AK-47, I feel empathy. You can see huge numbers of likes and comments.”

He added that both Russia and Ukraine have engaged top marketing professionals to carry out their campaigns, and are using the same data that any other business would – measuring traffic, evaluating who saw what message where, and on what device.

Russia, of course, has a history of using information warfare. But as Weimann stressed, this latest example is just the start of what we are likely to see in the future. HW

**OBITUARY**  
**Alan I. Samuels**

Alan I. Samuels, PhD, 81, of Delmar, N.Y., passed away on March 16, 2022, at home.

He was born in Memphis, Tenn., a son of the late Bernard and Beckie Mandelman Samuels. Dr. Samuels received his Bachelor of Science in Pharmacy from the University of Tennessee, a PhD from Tulane Pharmacology, and a Fellowship at Harvard.

As a pharmacologist he worked at Revlon Healthcare Group, Tuckahoe, N.Y., and then the Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, Texas.

He was the husband of Joyce E. Braak, MD, father of Adam M. Samuels of Austin, Texas, brother of Sidney P. Samuels of San Francisco, Calif., and Jerry E. Samuels of Concord, Calif., uncle of Brent and Ivan Samuels, both of San Francisco, Calif.

Alan had many Memphis friends as a youth. He was a good friend without guile, gentle and a pleasant companion. He will be missed.

Funeral services were held on Sunday, March 20 at Temple Israel in Catskill, N.Y. Rabbi Zoe B. Zak officiated. Interment was in Temple Israel Cemetery.

Memorial contributions may be made to the American Cancer Society. Messages of condolence may be made to [www.MillspaughCamera](http://www.MillspaughCamera) HW



# In *The Band's Visit*, Playwright Itamar Moses Helps Strangers Tell The Truth

BY MARK BLANKENSHIP

Sometimes, you can only be honest with strangers. “It’s much safer to talk about things with someone you don’t know and will never see again,” says playwright Itamar Moses. “They don’t know the story you’ve built up around yourself.”

That curious freedom shapes *The Band’s Visit*, the new Broadway musical about a group of Egyptian musicians who get lost on their way to a concert in Israel. Stranded in a small town, they pass the time with the locals, eating at their tables and sleeping in their spare rooms.

To Moses, who wrote the musical’s book, that’s a perfect catalyst for drama. “Everything that happens is only possible because these two groups of people don’t know each other,” he says.

Take Iris, an Israeli wife and mother who finds her own birthday party crashed by musicians her husband brings home. After years of mute frustration with her marriage, she suddenly reveals everything. “The eyes of these strangers on her life make it impossible to ignore what she’s been trying to suppress,” Moses says.

The same is true for characters who confess their dreams, regrets, and loves. Ironically, they may be even more honest with each other because they don’t share a language. The Egyptians speak Arabic and the Israelis speak Hebrew, but when they talk to each other, they use halting, tentative English.

“When you don’t have unlimited language as a tool, you really have to get to the point right away,” Moses says. “People aren’t going to talk around the truth, because they don’t have the words.”

Naturally, that limited vocabulary affected Moses’ playwriting. “But I never lamented it as a limitation,” he says. “I really enjoyed the tension between the simplicity of the language and the depth of the emotion. Sometimes there’s nothing better than having a constraint.”

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