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93-Year-Old Holocaust Survivor to Speak at Temple Israel



Anya (Bogvogusheva) Baum By Shoshana Cenker

Anya (Bogvogusheva) Baum was just 10 years old during WWII, when Nazis forced her and her family to flee her hometown of Belarus. She remembers exactly when and how it happened – on June 22, 1941, Anya heard the terror on the radio: "Attention, Attention! Germany has attacked us!"

"One of my sisters said to us, 'We have to run, the Germans are going to kill us!" Anya recalled. The next day, war planes began bombing her town. Her dad, Motel, who had to register for the army, was even injured in one of those bombings.

So Anya, her mother, Rachel, brother, Sam, aunts, and cousins began to run for their lives. Hiding where they could. Nearly starving. No shoes, often without clothes. Suffering illnesses like typhus and lice. Anya even survived a bullet to her leg that caused a severe infection and near amputation. "My mother washed my hair my with gasoline to get rid of the lice and eventually had to shave it all off," Anya said. "And she had worked in a hospital for wounded soldiers, so she knew how to save my leg."

While on the run, Anya arrived in Stalingrad. "The people who greeted us asked us where our horns were, because they believed Jews had horns. My mother said, 'No, we're people just like everybody else,'" added Anya, who didn't even realize she was Jewish when she was very young. "We couldn't practice religion in Russia; you'd be arrested if you practiced religions. Synagogues were quietly made in homes; my dad and brother would go."

Anya remembers a particularly horrific incident during her escape. "A doctor told me that 8,000 Jews were taken into the forest, ordered to get undressed so Nazis could find hidden gold and gems in the Jews' clothes, forced to dig their own graves, then the Nazis shot rows and rows of Jews into the graves," she said. "When earth was put on top of the bodies, the earth was still breathing – not everyone was dead yet."

Thanks to resourcefulness and connections in the Kremlin, Anya ended up in a displaced persons camp in Germany where she learned to be a seamstress and photographer. Sadly, most of her family, including her dad, was murdered. Her mother and brother barely survived. Sam was enlisted in the Russian army – it took a full 22 years for them to reunite.

In November 1947, Anya immigrated to Israel, got married in 1951, then moved to Belgium, Canada, and finally the U.S. in 1967. Unfortunately, Anya couldn't have children – she was pregnant twice and lost both babies because of how the war affected her body. She later adopted a 2-week-old girl in Canada, naming her Mona, with Malca as her Hebrew name after Anya's grandmother. Mona lives in California and has two daughters.

Despite being on the run for most of her adolescence and no formal education past the third grade, Anya became a successful entrepreneur. She's designed jackets for celebrities including Prince and Diana Ross, and she even did makeup for Cher and the Princess of India as a professional makeup artist. Now living in Boca Raton, at 93, Anya has two great-grandchildren, and she loves to dance, laugh and spend time with her dog, Rocky.

Anya's incredible story is featured in a book called "Childhood Lost," with other Holocaust survivors in South Florida. Anya shares her story, speaking throughout Florida and New York, and now reaches thousands around the world through social media, interviews, and articles. She's coming to Memphis for her first speaking engagement in Tennessee.

"People need to know what happened, because you never know if it could happen again. It's so important, especially for children to learn," she said. "Growing up, I had no father, no family, no birthday celebrations, never had a kiss or a hug from someone who loves me. I was all alone in the world. I tell children to be good to their parents and that a hug a day takes the pain away. When teachers hug me, it feels good. When I get letters from children about my story, it feels good. They say I've changed their lives. That feels good."

Anya's harrowing story of survival is unique yet familiar at the same time, considering the atrocities of the Holocaust. She'll speak at Temple Israel on April 16, from 12:30 - 2:30 p.m. and later visit Memphis schools. You'll hear every detail about her remarkable survival – her memory is crystal clear, which she proved on our Zoom interview. Local teens will also share remarks at the event about their passion for Judaism and Israel, as we soon celebrate Israel's 75th anniversary. Give Anya a hug when you see her, she welcomes them.

"I want to promote awareness and gratitude for what we have," Anya said, "and recognize that through the will to fight and believing in G-d, that we can truly be anyone we want to be and accomplish anything we want to."

RSVP for Anya's event: www.bit.ly/ AnyaBaumMemphis **HW**

Rocket Barrage from Lebanon into Northern Israel Escalates Tensions after Temple Mount Clash



were slightly injured, Kan reported. Violence on Jerusalem's Temple

Tuesday night to remove Ramadan worshipers who sought to occupy the mosque overnight because of reports that Jewish extremists hoped to sacrifice an animal on the Temple Mount to mark Passover. Under an arrangement in place since shortly after Israel captured the Temple Mount in the 1967 Six-Day War, Jewish worship on the site is limited to silent prayer. Some of the Muslim worshipers set off fireworks, and phone cameras caught police beating the protesters in images that were widely shared on social media. The Temple Mount confrontation led to rocket fire from the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip and to clashes between police and residents of Israeli Arab towns. No major injuries were reported.

Firefighters try to extinguish a fire caused after a rocket sent from Lebanon hit near the Israeli town of Shlomi, April 6, 2023. Credit: Fadi Amun/Flash90

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – Dozens of rockets fired from Lebanon hit Israel's north in a significant escalation of tensions that followed clashes between Israeli police and Palestinian worshipers at a Jerusalem holy site. Israel's government-run Kan broadcaster said at least 30 rockets had crossed into Israel last Thursday, the first full day of the Passover holiday. All but five were taken out by Israel's antimissile Iron Dome system. Three people Mount days earlier had already led to clashes between police and Israeli Arabs, and to rocket fire from the Gaza Strip. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was set to convene his security cabinet to consider the escalation.

No group claimed responsibility for the rocket fire, the worst since a war in 2006 between Israel and Hezbollah, the Lebanese militant group that calls for violence against Israel and is considered a terrorist organization by the United States and the European Union.

Hezbollah said earlier it stood in solidarity with Palestinians after clashes last Tuesday night on the Temple Mount, the Jerusalem site that is the holiest in Judaism and which houses a mosque complex that is the third holiest in Islam.

But Kan quoted Lebanese media as saying that Palestinian groups in southern Lebanon, and not Hezbollah, were responsible for the rocket fire.

Police entered al-Aqsa mosque last

The coinciding of Ramadan and Passover has in the past led to clashes.

The new government led by Netanyahu is the most right wing in Israel's history and includes ministers who have said they want to facilitate more visible Jewish worship on the Temple Mount. **HW**

My Teen Israel Experience



Henry Rochkind and friends in the Old City.

Henry Rochkind, son of Leslie and William Rochkind, is a junior at Lausanne Collegiate School. Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund provided him with a Teen Israel Experience grant to help offset the cost of his BBYO Israel trip last summer. 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. Applications for Summer 2023 are now available online.

To learn more and apply, visit www. jcpmemphis.org/lemsky-endowmentfund.

By Henry Rochkind

Ever since I was eight years old, I have spent my summers in Maine at an all-boys camp. Not surprisingly, out of the 215 or so attendees, 200 are from the East Coast, 14 come from California, which leaves me, the lone kid from Memphis, Tennessee. I always took this position with pride however, as my friends learned to embrace me with equal parts awe and curiosity. This year, as I embarked alone on my BBYO trip to Israel, the experience was no different, except I learned to embrace an entirely new culture. The day before I went to the airport, I was extremely nervous about the trip ahead of me. I was going blind into a group of 22 people, including myself, all from various places and backgrounds.

When my dad dropped me off at the JFK airport, my anxiety was even further increased. "This is it" I thought, "I have to spend the next 21 days with these strangers." Although I was at first uncomfortable in my current situation, I soon realized that I and all the other people in my group were connected by one thing – Judaism. With this in mind, I quickly made some friends and took the grueling 11-hour flight all the way from JFK to Tel-Aviv.

The first few days in Israel were definitely tough. It was my first time outside of North America, and I had to adjust to new food, people, language, and not to mention the horrible jetlag you get. As more time went by, however, the adjustment from the United States to Israel became easier and easier. After getting more comfortable with the people around me, I realized the reason I was in Israel – to embrace my Judaism and learn more about my culture and background.

The BBYO Israel Journey I went on did the job. We traveled to all sorts of places: The Golan Heights, Eilat, Haifa, Tel-Aviv, Jerusalem and more. All along the way were experiences that gave me a larger perspective on Judaism as a whole. For example, in Tzfat, our group met a man named Abraham, a follower of a spiritual type of Judaism. He explained how Judaism defines who we are as people. Listening to Abraham especially gave me a new perspective, such as his ideology that our ancestors have been trying to



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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Weekly Torah Portion: Shemini

reach Israel for hundreds of years, and we finally are there, honoring them.

Another experience our group had where I felt most connected to my Judaism was at the Kotel. The Kotel, or the Western Wall, is a sacred place in the heart of the Old City where all the people pray. Seeing the people of Israel together praying gave me a sense of unity, and further helped me understand what it means to be Jewish.

In total, the Israel trip I went on was one of the best experiences I ever went on - I got to experience a new culture, meet new people, and strengthen my Jewish identity. As I said before, I had gone to camp for my entire life. I was only in Israel for three short weeks. Yet, in that short period of time, I made what I hope will be lifelong friends from different parts of the country. We shared incredible experiences from sleeping in a kibbutz to riding camels to swimming in the Dead Sea – memories I will never forget.

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Thank you to Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund for helping to make my BBYO Israel trip possible. **HW**

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The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Monthly Luncheon

On April 19 the MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club will hold their Monthly Senior Luncheon featuring The Double D Band!

The Double D Band plays a wide range of songs and genres, but especially music from the 50s. Playing guitars and mandolins, they've appeared on MTV, BBC, and have been a part of the music scene in London, England, and New York City; having lived and performed in both. Please come enjoy this delightful Band! The cost is only \$5 for seniors. The Lunch is sponsored by Opus, Elegant Senior Living and entertainment provided by Creative Aging.

Please come join us from Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch from 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. by contacting Adult Services Coordinator Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220, stevekaplan@ jccmemphis.org or by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. **HW**

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Four-Week "Jewpernatural" Course Promises to Clear Up Paranormal Questions Rabbi Klein Offers Up Judaism's Most Satisfying Answers on Dreams, Astrology, Demons, and Ghosts

Paranormal beliefs are rising fast. In 2016, 46 percent of Americans reported believing in ghosts, according to Chapman University. That figure has reached 57 percent, and since the pandemic, one in five Americans say they've personally met a ghost. And it's not just ghosts. Topics like astrology, dream interpretation and psychic abilities are rapidly becoming mainstream.

Although the resurgence of public interest in the paranormal is new, Rabbi Levi Klein of Chabad of Tennessee in Memphis says we don't need to reinvent the wheel. Starting this May 3, he's leading a four-week course from the Jewish Learning Institute (JLI) entitled *Jewpernatural* that unearths the Jewish perspective on dreams, astrology, spirits and other enduring mysteries.

"The Jewish tradition has probed these issues for three millennia," he says. "These are legitimate questions that deserve meaningful and satisfying answers."

For some, alternative beliefs provide comfort amid lonely and uncertain times. In one incident reported by "Teen Vogue," Chicago resident Emily Jacobs said the ghost in her apartment "brings her comfort."

"Even in the loneliest of times during the pandemic, especially living alone, I have a friend who checks in on me," she said. *Jewpernatural* takes this into account.

Rabbi Klein says the new course will address the anxiety driving interest in the paranormal. "We won't get bogged down in the spooky details," he says, "and we can't claim to provide absolute certainty. But we will discuss how we can find comfort and refocus our energy on what matters most."

The trend toward the paranormal encompasses a broad spectrum of beliefs, including jinxes, demons, spirits, communicating with the deceased and astrology. To satisfy this curiosity, *Jewpernatural* addresses everything from the role of angels and the efficacy of the "evil eye" to whether the stars have much to say about your future.

"We're tackling a wide spectrum of ideas," Rabbi Klein says, "but after preparing the materials of this new course authored by JLI, I'm confident we'll be able to offer a thoughtful, satisfying and relevant perspective rooted in authentic Jewish thought."

As with other JLI programs, the course is designed to appeal to people at all levels of knowledge, including those without prior exposure to Jewish learning. All JLI courses are open to the public, and attendees need not be affiliated with a particular synagogue, temple or house of worship.

Interested students may call Chabad at 901-754-0404 or visit www. JewishMemphis.com/JLI to register or to access the trailer and other courserelated information. JLI courses are presented in Memphis in conjunction with Chabad of Tennessee. **HW**

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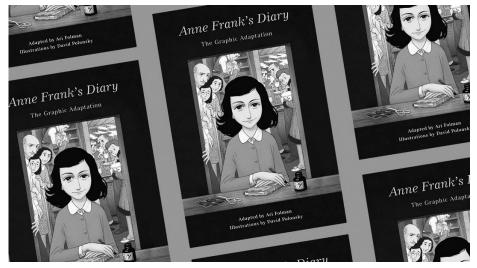
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Florida High School Pulls Graphic Novel Adaptation of Anne Frank's Diary, Saying it is 'Not Age Appropriate'



"Anne Frank's Diary: The Graphic Adaptation" (Courtesy Anne Frank Fonds)

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – A public high school in Florida has removed an illustrated adaptation of Anne Frank's diary from its library. It is the second known instance of this particular edition of the famous Holocaust book being swept up by conservatives seeking to purge schools of literature they deem inappropriate.

The principal's office of Vero Beach High School, which is located in a community on Florida's east coast, recently decided to remove "Anne Frank's Diary: The Graphic Adaptation" from its school library, according to Cristen Maddux, a spokesperson for the Indian River County school district. Maddux told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency the book was determined to be "not age appropriate."

Last year, a school district in Texas ordered its librarians to remove the same book before reversing course a week later following public outcry. Other books about the Holocaust recently removed by public schools include Art Spiegelman's "Maus," which a Tennessee district pulled from its middle school curriculum last year, and Jodi Picoult's "The Storyteller," which was removed from another Florida district last month following a parental challenge.

The removal at Vero Beach High School was spurred by at least one challenge from a parent in the district

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affiliated with the conservative activist group Moms For Liberty, according to the "Treasure Coast News," a local publication. In the challenge, the parent had reportedly written that the book was "not a true adaptation of the Holocaust."

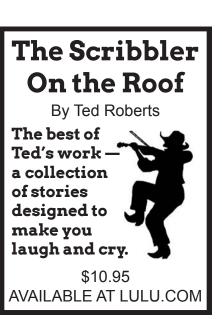
The district backed up that sentiment, Maddux told JTA. "That's not the actual diary of Anne Frank," she said. "It's a fictional novel that has some inappropriate content in it." Maddux added that the book "was removed due to minimization of the Holocaust," and said, "Library spaces in the district currently have factual accounts of 'The Diary of Anne Frank.""

Maddux said that she herself had not read the book and did not immediately know what the "inappropriate content" in question was.

In a statement to JTA about various challenges to the graphic adaptation, the Anne Frank Fonds, the Switzerland-based foundation that controls the copyright to her diary, said it was "generally concerned that ignorance about the Shoah, relativization or denial of history are on the rise, especially in the United States."

The foundation also defended the inclusion of Frank's original writing by saying, "We consider the book of a 12-year-old girl to be appropriate reading for her peers."

The graphic novel adaptation of the diary was released in 2018 with the full



authorization of the Anne Frank Fonds. Adapted by Israeli filmmaker Ari Folman and illustrator David Polonsky and intended for young readers, the book compresses Frank's actual diary entries into a condensed version of her true story. While it does contain some invented dialogue and surrealist scenes, reproductions of Frank's actual diary in the book hew to her exact words.

The graphic novel has attracted some scrutiny for reproducing passages of Frank's diary that had been edited out of its original publication in 1947. (The diary was first published in English in 1952.)

First restored to editions of the diary in the 1980s, and published in English in 1995, those passages relate Frank's latent feelings of attractiveness toward another girl and her description of her own genitalia. Another Florida parent in a different school district has told JTA they filed a request to remove the graphic adaptation because of objections to these passages.

Florida in particular has seen a number of book removals as Gov. Ron De-Santis, a Republican, signed legislation giving parents power to challenge classroom materials, and holding educators liable for making inappropriate content accessible to students.

DeSantis has also signed legislation mandating teaching about the Holocaust and antisemitism in the state. **HW**

Ohio Teen Arrested for Alleged Threat Against New York Synagogue

(JNS) – An Ohio teen who allegedly made terrorist threats against a northern New York State synagogue was arrested last week.

The Secure Community Network's operation command center received information on March 28 about a threatening message on the social-media platform Telegram. The message included a synagogue address, according to SCN, a nonprofit under the auspices of the Jewish Federations of North America and Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. SCN and the Jewish Federation of Central New York alerted the local FBI field office, leading to the arrest of the 15-year-old, whose name has not been released. "We meet, we prepare, and we plan for 'when," said Susan DeMari, community security coordinator for the Federation. "Having witnessed and been a part of the seamless and collaborative effort amongst law-enforcement agencies sharing information clearly reaffirms the need, time and effort vested by all involved." Michael Masters, national director and CEO of SCN, noted that the coordination between groups has been successful. "This is a stark reminder of the threats that we face as a country and faith-based community every day," he said of this and other recent threats. HW

Sunday, April 16, 2023 2:00 - 3:30 p.m. Memphis Jewish Community Center

Jen Kollath, Temple Israel Archivist, will facilitate a walk down memory lane of Memphis' Jewish history with the Children of Beale Street.

Hear from Jack Belz about the Randolph Building, Hal Lansky about Lanksy Brothers and Beale Street, and Madelyn Daneman about her father, Lou Rafael.

See slides of some of those Beale Street businesses such as Malco Theatre, Bert's, Weinman's Pawn Shop, The Randolph Building / M & M Building, Pantaze Drug Store, Home of the Blues Record Shop, Safferstone Pawn Shop, Segal's Deli, Salky's, American Loan, Nathan Novick's, Capitol Loan, A. Schwabs, Epstein's Loan, Morris Lippman, Art Hutkin Hardware, Cohen Brothers Pawn Shop, Goldsmith's and Julius Lewis.

Everyone is invited to share their memories.

THE PROGRAM IS FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Post event recording will be available on www. Jhsmem.org



) JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MEMPHIS AND THE MID-SOUTH

Ben Stiller Satirizes Adam Sandler's 'Chanukah Song' at Mark Twain Prize Ceremony



Adam Sandler, far right, and his wife, Jackie Sandler, pose with actor Ben Stiller as they arrive for the 24th Annual Mark Twain Prize for American Humor at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC, on March 19, 2023. Credit: Oliver Contreras/AFP

tenure as a fan favorite cast member on SNL. Adam has created characters that

have made us laugh, cry and cry from laughing."

Previous Jewish winners of the award include Carl Reiner, Lorne Michaels, Neil Simon, Billy Crystal and Jon Stewart. The 2019 prize went to Dave Chappelle, who last year angered many Jewish viewers with a monologue on "Saturday Night Live" making light of antisemitism accusations against rapper Kanye West and basketball star Kyrie Irving. **HW**

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

(JTA) – Ben Stiller offered his own High Holiday alternative to Adam Sandler's "Chanukah Song" as his fellow Jewish comedian accepted the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor.

During an awards ceremony that took place on March 19 and aired on CNN, Stiller asked from the stage at Washington, D.C.'s Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts how Sandler's novelty song, first heard on "Saturday Night Live" in 1994, became a seasonal standard.

"It's really just a list of rhyming celebrity names, and yet it goes multiplatinum and it's become a holiday radio staple that my daughter forces us all to listen to after we light the candles every year," said Stiller.

Pretending to be baffled by Sandler's success, Stiller imagined what his own representatives would have said had he proposed his own song about Yom Kippur. He then went ahead and sang its "killer opening line," which included a reference to a notorious slapstick scene in Stiller's 1998 film "There's Something About Mary": "It's time to atone / So let's get in the zone. / Got my d–k caught in my zipper / and now it is Yom Kippur."

It wasn't the only Jewish moment in a night dedicated to a comedian who, in the course of a tenure on "Saturday Night Live" from 1991-1995 and more than 30 films since, has often displayed his own Jewishness, including playing an Israeli in "Don't Mess with the Zohan" and starring in what may be the first and only big-budget Hanukkah animated film, "Eight Crazy Nights."

Fellow comic Chris Rock told a lovely story about meeting Sandler when they were both struggling comics. Rock, who was among just a handful of Black kids at his Brooklyn elementary school, spoke about the one time he was invited to another kid's house to play. The boy's name was "David Moskowitz – a Jew," Rock said, with evident admiration.

Years later, after their sets at a Manhattan comedy club, Sandler invited Rock to hang out with Sandler and his friends at his New York University dorm. Rock said the invitation meant a lot to him as a kid who often felt left out. "The Jews – they're just nice," he said. Although the typical Sandler character is an often crude and frequently angry man-child, his generosity to fellow comics and actors was a recurring theme of the evening, which included presentations by Jennifer Aniston, Drew Barrymore, Steve Buscemi, Luis Guzmán, Conan O'Brien and David Spade. His longtime collaborator Tim Herlihy called him a "mensch." Sandler's mother, Judy Sandler, got in a dig about her son's penchant for wearing baggy sweatpants and T-shirts despite the billions of dollars his films have grossed. "He's a fashionista, they say, but I say he's a slob," she said. In choosing Sandler, 56, for the prize, named for the 19th-century writer and humorist, Kennedy Center President Deborah F. Rutter said Sandler has "entertained audiences for over three decades with his films, music and his



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George Washington U Faces Federal Investigation over Antisemitism Charges after Clearing Professor of Them

By Andrew Lapin

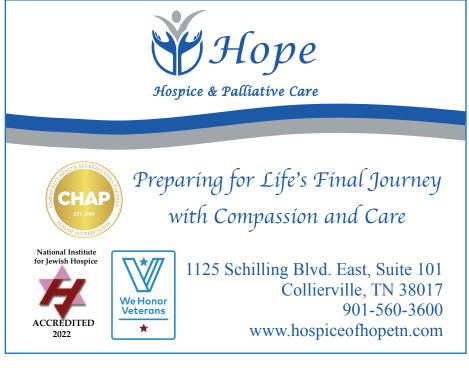
(JTA) - Little more than a week after it dismissed allegations of antisemitism against one of its professors, George Washington University will face a federal investigation over the same allegations.

The U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights will open an investigation into a federal discrimination complaint brought against the university by the pro-Israel group StandWithUs, the group said. The complaint alleges that the university did not properly respond to student reports of the professor, who teaches graduate-level psychology, making antisemitic comments in class and bringing in a guest speaker

who expressed anti-Zionist views.

Opening an investigation does not necessarily mean that the department believes the complaint has merit, but pro-Israel activists still celebrated it as a symbolic victory.

The news came nine days after the university's own investigation into the matter, conducted by a third party, had determined that student allegations of antisemitism were unfounded. The university's investigation was also prompted by the StandWithUs complaint, but its interviews with students and reviews of recorded lectures could not corroborate any of the allegations. The investigation concluded, in addition, that





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StandWithUs' definition of antisemitism "could infringe on free speech principles and academic freedom."

The StandWithUs complaint alleges that the university did not properly respond when Israeli students said the professor, Lara Sheehi, had made dismissive comments to them, including telling one, "It's not your fault you were born in Israel." The students also said the professor had brought in a guest speaker for an optional lecture who expressed anti-Zionist views, and that Sheehi did not acknowledge that they felt targeted by the talk.

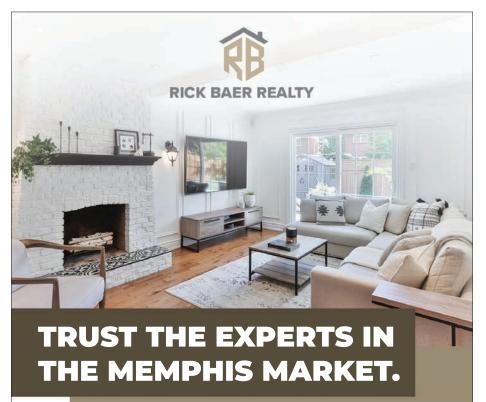
Sheehi has denied the allegations and accused the university of having "colluded" with StandWithUs. The university's third-party investigation could not corroborate whether she had made the comments in question. It did find that Sheehi had "repeatedly acknowledged the students' feelings." The federal investigation is concerned only with whether the university responded appropriately to the student complaints.

The case has attracted both supporters and detractors across the world of higher education. Sheehi has garnered support from academic groups including the Middle East Studies Association. Meanwhile, Jewish groups have pointed to other reported instances of antisemitic behavior on George Washington's campus over the last couple of years, including graffiti outside the campus Hillel and a damaged imitation Torah at a Jewish fraternity.

StandWithUs trumpeted the news of the federal investigation as a refutation of the university investigation's findings. Like other pro-Israel groups that have filed legal complaints, the organization has petitioned the Department of Education to explicitly define anti-Zionist speech as antisemitic.

"University administrators have an affirmative obligation to respond adequately when students report allegations of such misconduct," StandWithUs CEO Roz Rothstein said in a statement, which added that the Department of Education's civil rights office "has recognized the need to investigate these allegations in a thorough and unbiased manner."

The Department of Education has been playing a more active role in adjudicating campus disputes over antisemitism allegations since the Donald Trump administration expanded the department's civil rights mandate in 2019 under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discriminatory behavior at federally funded programs or institutions, such as public universities. Earlier this week, the office reached a resolution with the University of Vermont over a separate case, finding that administrators had failed to respond adequately to reports of antisemitism on campus including anti-Zionist speech from students and teaching assistants. HW





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Memphis Jewish Federation Board Chair Cindy Finestone offered welcoming remarks about the impact of Federation's work in Memphis, Israel and all over the Jewish world at the Annual Prayer Dinner for Israel held on March 30 at First Assembly Church.

Netanyahu: 'Iran Responsible for 95% of Security Threats Against Us'



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the annual Passover toast with the IDF General Staff Forum. Credit: Kobi Gideon/GPO.

(JNS) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last Tuesday that Iran was behind nearly all of the security threats to the Jewish state and warned that the country's internal debate over judicial reform would not prevent it from defending itself.

Speaking at the traditional Passover toasts with the Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) and Israel Defense Forces General Staff Forum, Netanyahu said, "Iran is responsible for 95% of the security threats against us, including those that you deal with both directly and indirectly."

Addressing the General Staff Forum, he said, "Tomorrow we will sit around the Seder table, and we will read: 'In every generation, there are those who rise up to destroy us.'"

This remains true today despite the rise of Zionism and the restoration of Jewish sovereignty, he said.

"But from here, I want to reiterate to the enemies of Israel that they should not err. No debate will prevent us from wielding the sword and shield to defend ourselves and repel any aggression by them in order to ensure the continuity of the Zionist enterprise," he added.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei, referring to Israel's internal divisions over legal reform, told a group of his country's officials last Tuesday, "We said a few years ago [2015] that the Zionist regime would not see 25 years from then. They themselves are in a rush and want to leave sooner." Israel has reportedly carried out four airstrikes on Iranian targets in Syria in recent days, and last Monday, the Israel Defense Forces confirmed that an unmanned aerial object brought down the previous day after it crossed into Israeli airspace from Syria was most probably of Iranian origin. Israel has admitted to carrying out hundreds of airstrikes in Syria in the past in order to contain Iran's efforts to establish itself in the region and transfer sophisticated missile technology to its terror proxy Hezbollah in Lebanon. Netanyahu has made containing Iran a chief objective of his administration. At his government's swearing-in ceremony on Dec. 29, 2022, he said his new government would focus on three main goals, first of which would be preventing Iran from "developing an arsenal of atomic weapons that will threaten us and the whole world."

Israel has been involved in a yearslong campaign to sabotage Iran's nuclear program. At a weekly Cabinet meeting in February, Netanyahu said Israel is ceaselessly confronting Iran's nefarious activities, as

the Islamic Republic's attempts to attack the Jewish state are unending.

Addressing the General Staff Forum last Tuesday, he said, "I can tell you one thing: There is a limit to the number of miracles that history can grant a nation, and the people of Israel has already received an extra portion of such miracles.

"Therefore we only have one choice: To stand together, united. I say that together we will stand and together we will continue to be victorious." **HW**

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Key Retirement and Tax Numbers for 2023

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

Every year, the Internal Revenue Service announces cost-of-living adjustments that affect contribution limits for retirement plans and various tax deduction, exclusion, exemption, and threshold amounts. Here are a few of the key adjustments for 2023.

Estate, Gift, and Generation-Skipping Transfer Tax

• The annual gift tax exclusion (and annual generation-skipping transfer tax exclusion) for 2023 is \$17,000, up from \$16,000 in 2022.

• The gift and estate tax basic exclusion amount (and generation-skipping transfer tax exemption) for 2023 is \$12,920,000, up from \$12,060,000 in 2022.

Standard Deduction

A taxpayer can generally choose to itemize certain deductions or claim a standard deduction on the federal income tax return. In 2023, the standard deduction is:

• \$13,850 (up from \$12,950 in 2022) for single filers or married individuals filing separate returns

• \$27,700 (up from \$25,900 in 2022) for married joint filers

• \$20,800 (up from \$19,400 in 2022) for heads of household

The additional standard deduction amount for the blind and those age 65 or older in 2023 is:

• \$1,850 (up from \$1,750 in 2022) for single filers and heads of household

• \$1,500 (up from \$1,400 in 2022) for all other filing statuses

Special rules apply for those who can be claimed as a dependent by another taxpayer.

IRAs

The combined annual limit on contributions to traditional and Roth IRAs is \$6,500 in 2023 (up from \$6,000 in 2022), with individuals age 50 or older able to contribute an additional \$1,000. The limit on contributions to a Roth IRA phases out for certain modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) ranges (see chart). For individuals who are active participants in an employer-sponsored retirement plan, the deduction for contributions to a traditional IRA also phases out for certain MAGI ranges (see chart). The limit on nondeductible contributions to a traditional IRA is not subject to phaseout based on MAGI.

MAGI Ranges:	Contributions	to	a	Roth	IRA
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	2022	2023
Single/Head of household	\$129,000-\$144,000	\$138,000-\$153,000
Married filing jointly	\$204,000-\$214,000	\$218,000-\$228,000
Married filing separately	\$0-\$10,000	\$0-\$10,000
MAGI Ranges: Deductible	Contributions to a Tra	ditional IRA
MAGI Ranges: Deductible	Contributions to a Tra	ditional IRA 2023
MAGI Ranges: Deductible Single/Head of household	2000 Barrier 1	

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Note: The 2023 phaseout range is \$218,000–\$228,000 (up from \$204,000–\$214,000 in 2022) when the individual making the IRA contribution is not covered by a work-place retirement plan but is filing jointly with a spouse who is covered. The phaseout range is \$0–\$10,000 when the individual is married filing separately and either spouse is covered by a workplace plan.

Employer-Sponsored Retirement Plans

• Employees who participate in 401(k), 403(b), and most 457 plans can defer up to \$22,500 in compensation in 2023 (up from \$20,500 in 2022); employees age 50 or older can defer up to an additional \$7,500 in 2023 (up from \$6,500 in 2022).

• Employees participating in a SIMPLE retirement plan can defer up to \$15,500 in 2023 (up from \$14,000 in 2022), and employees age 50 or older can defer up to an additional \$3,500 in 2023 (up from \$3,000 in 2022).

Kiddie Tax: Child's Unearned Income

Under the kiddie tax, a child's unearned income above \$2,500 in 2023 (up from \$2,300 in 2022) is taxed using the parents' tax rates.

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Jewish Federations of North America Prep for General Assembly in Tel Aviv



The modern-day architecture of Tel Aviv. Credit: Pixabay.

(JNS) – With a just few weeks left until Israel's 75th anniversary, the leadership of the Jewish Federations of North America is finalizing plans for this year's General Assembly, to be held in Tel Aviv starting on April 23.

More than 2,100 representatives from Jewish communities in the United States and Canada are expected to attend.

Among this year's highlights will be a program at Latrun – the site of fierce fighting during Israel's 1948 War of Independence – to mark the start of Yom Hazikaron, a day of remembrance for Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror, which begins on the evening of April 24. The event will be hosted by MASA Israel Journey, which provides long-term immersive programs for thousands of young Jews, many of whom will attend.

In advance of the opening of the General Assembly, JFNA will host its inaugural "Jews of Color Mission." Two dozen leaders from North America and Israel who identify as such are participating in the program and spending Shabbat together in Jerusalem.

Julie Platt, board chair of JFNA, said

bringing together thousands of federation leaders to celebrate Israel's 75th anniversary "is a testament to our unbreakable commitment to the Jewish State and to the everlasting bonds between our two communities.

"Along with the celebrations, we will engage in dialogue with Israeli leaders around issues of concern to our communities, as we continue to raise our voices out of deep love for Israel and the Israeli people," she said.

Among topics slated for this year's conference are an exploration of Israel's Law of Return, and whether the separation of religion and state is possible; a look at Israel's ongoing role as a global leader in technology; and how the Abraham Accords have led to increased interworkings with Gulf States as well as initiatives to help battle climate change.

In addition to JFNA, the opening ceremonies are being sponsored by the Jewish Agency for Israel, Keren Hayesod and the World Zionist Organization. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israeli President Isaac Herzog are expected to address the audience. **HW**

Kansas Proclaims May as Jewish American Heritage Month



A ceremony at the Kansas State Capitol celebrating the state's designation of May as Jewish American Heritage Month, March 29, 2023. Credit: Combat Antisemitism Movement.

(JNS) – The Kansas state legislature passed a resolution on March 29 to declare May officially Jewish American Heritage Month – a designation that then-President George W. Bush proclaimed nationally in 2006.

In part, the Kansas resolution notes that biblical and contemporary Jewish history and Judaism's "enduring values" were vital inspiration for the nation's founding; that Jews underwent a "miraculous return" to the "Jewish homeland;" that Jews helped define U.S. character and values; and that Israel "has emerged as a beacon of freedom, prosperity and world leader in technology, agriculture, water conservation and medicine."

"Kansas is made stronger by our Jewish residents and their many contributions," said Laura Kelly, the state's governor. "Discrimination of any kind, including antisemitism, has no place in Kansas, and as governor, I will continue working to unite Kansans and to celebrate the diversity of our state and our communities."

The Jewish Community Relations Bureau/American Jewish Committee of Kansas City, the Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City and the Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) held a ceremony in the Kansas State Capitol to mark the occasion.

"Kansas has done what we hope every state will do in rightfully acknowledging Jewish American Heritage Month every May," said Elan Carr, a member of CAM's advisory board and former U.S. special envoy.

"In a world where senseless violence and hatred toward Jews seems to abound, it's vital that every American in every neighborhood throughout the country understand the remarkable blessings that Jewish citizens have bestowed on this land they call home," he added. **HW**

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(JNS) - The Republic of Finland officially became the 31st member state of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) last Tuesday. Having signed the accession protocol to join NATO on July 2, 2022, the case of Finland has become the fastest accession process in the treaty's history. "When Putin launched his brutal war of aggression against the people of Ukraine, he thought he could divide Europe and NATO. He was wrong. Today, we are more united than ever," said U.S. President Joe Biden in a statement. "And together - strengthened by our newest Ally Finland -we will continue to preserve transatlantic security, defend every inch of NATO territory, and meet any and all challenges we face." U.S. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) called it "outstanding news" that Finland joined NATO. "Russia's brutal escalation of its war against Ukraine has prompted leaders across Europe to get more serious about collective security. But the people of Finland have long been ahead of the curve," McConnell stated in a release. He added that he hopes NATO will welcome Sweden into the alliance by this summer.

ident Volodymyr Zelenskyy congratulated Finland.

"My sincere congratulations to Finland and President Sauli Niinistö on joining NATO on the 74th anniversary of its founding," he wrote. "Amid Russian aggression, the alliance became the only effective guarantee of security in



Writing on Telegram, Ukrainian Pres-

the region." HW



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Why 1973 was a Particularly Jewish Year in Pop Music



Bette Midler performs onstage during her Continental Baths tour in New York. Credit: Getty Images

By Seth Rogovoy

This originally appeared in Forward, reprinted with permission.

Fifty years ago, the pop charts experienced a bit of a lull in the aftermath of the dynamic years of 1971 and 1972 (about which entire books have been written). A close examination of the pop charts of 1973, however, reveals a surprising number of hits written by Jewish songwriters – including the year's top song – and a handful of hit singles by Jewish artists.

Tony Orlando and Dawn's version of "Tie a Yellow Ribbon Round the Ole Oak Tree" by the Jewish songwriting duo of Irwin Levine and L. Russell Brown was the No. 1 song of the year. The duo was also responsible for Dawn hits including 1973's "Say, Has Anybody Seen My Sweet Gypsy Rose," "Knock Three Times" and "Candida," which had nothing to do with a fungal infection.

"Killing Me Softly with His Song," recorded by Roberta Flack, was the third most popular song of the year, written by the Jewish songwriting duo of Charles Fox and Norman Gimbel, both of whom were children of immigrants from Eastern Europe.

"My Love," at No. 5, by Paul McCartney and Wings, was dedicated to Mc-Cartney's wife of four years, the former Linda Eastman. Linda was the daughter of Louise Sara Eastman (née Lindner), whose father was Max J. Lindner, founder of the Lindner Company clothing store in Cleveland, Ohio, and the scion of a German Jewish family.

Linda's father, Lee Eastman, was born

Leopold Vail Epstein, the son of Russian-Jewish immigrants. Lee Eastman and his son, John Eastman, represented Paul McCartney toward the end of the Beatle's career, while McCartney's bandmates – John Lennon, George Harrison and Ringo Starr – opted to be managed by Allen Klein. The struggle over Beatles' management after their Jewish manager Brian Epstein (no relation to the Eastman/Epsteins) died at the young age of 32 in 1967 was in large part the reason the band split up in 1970.

The ninth most popular hit of 1973 was Carly Simon's "You're So Vain." Simon's father, Richard L. Simon, was a co-founder of the publishing house Simon & Schuster, and from a German-Jewish family. Simon was raised Catholic, however – the religion of her mother. "You're So Vain," Simon's biggest hit and trademark tune, was produced by the Brooklyn-born Richard Perry, who also produced hit songs for Jewish artists including Barbra Streisand and Art Garfunkel.

The Jewish songwriting duo of Ron Miller and Michael Masser supplied Diana Ross with her 1973 comeback hit, "Touch Me in the Morning," which Masser also produced. Her second solo No. 1 hit and her first big hit since 1970, the song sparked a career renaissance for Ross. Miller, born Ronald Norman Gould, also wrote songs for Stevie Wonder including "For Once in My Life" and "Someday at Christmas." Masser put aside his nascent career as a lawyer and a stockbroker to pen hits for the

IDF Soldier Wounded by Gunfire in Beit Ummar Attack



Israeli forces came under fire during a counterterror operation likes of Whitney Houston, George Benson, Natalie Cole and Ross.

Bubbling just underneath the yearend Top 10 at No. 11 was "The Night the Lights Went Out in Georgia" by Vicki Lawrence, known best as a comic actress and for her decade-plus stint on The Carol Burnett Show. Her only hit song, written by her husband, country music songwriter Bobby Russell, went all the way to No. 1, making her something of a one-hit wonder. Chances are few TV viewers and radio listeners realized that Lawrence was born Vicki Ann Axelrad - her paternal grandfather, Simon Axelrad, was an Austrian-Jewish immigrant, and her paternal grandmother, Anna Irmas, was born to German Jewish parents in Illinois. Her mother was also Jewish.

The 18th most popular song of 1973 was "Little Willy" by British glam-rock band the Sweet. The song was co-written by London-born Jewish songwriter Nicky Chinn, who in addition to other hits for the Sweet, including "The Ballroom Blitz," also had a hand in writing songs for Suzi Quatro, Tina Turner, Peter Noone and Huey Lewis and the News.

The Isley Brothers originally recorded a song called "Who's That Lady?" in 1964. Nine years later, the group revisited the number, teaming with producer Bert Berns, the Bronx-born son of Russian-Jewish immigrants, who gave it a deeper, funk-based arrangement with Jimi Hendrix-inspired guitar fills. This time around, the song cracked the Top 10 and wound up at No. 21 for the year.

Grand Funk Railroad wore its nationality proudly in its 1973 hit, "We're an American Band," which proved to the 23rd most popular song that year. And if by "American" the group meant a (partial) rainbow of diversity, they were "Love Train" by the O'Jays, a No. 1 hit in early 1973, was one of the rare pop songs to include reference to the Jewish state, in the lyric, "Tell all the folks in Egypt, and Israel, too/ Please don't miss this train at the station."

Dr. Hook & the Medicine Show's version of "The Cover of the 'Rolling Stone" hit the Top 10 in early 1973. The song was written by Shel Silverstein, who, while best known as a children's author ("The Giving Tree," "Where the Sidewalk Ends"), wrote several other hit novelty songs, including Johnny Cash's

Jewish Chair of Florida's Democratic Party Arrested at Abortion Rights Protest By Ben Sales

(JTA) - Nikki Fried, who chairs Florida's Democratic Party, was arrested at a protest for abortion rights in the state capital, along with 10 other demonstrators. The protest last Monday night, which took place outside Tallahassee City Hall, was in opposition to a proposed six-week abortion ban in Florida that the state senate passed last Monday evening. The bill must pass the state House of Representatives before heading to the desk of Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis. Fried, who is Jewish, previously served as Florida's commissioner of agriculture, a rare Democrat elected to statewide office in Florida. Last year, she mounted an unsuccessful bid for the Democratic nomination for governor. She became the state Democratic Party chair earlier this year. The legislation that the state Senate advanced would tighten Florida's already limited access to abortion. A Boynton Beach synagogue filed an early lawsuit challenging the state's new 15-week abortion ban last year, part of a wave of activism by Jewish leaders across the country to make religious freedom argu"A Boy Named Sue."

"The World Is a Ghetto" by the interracial, multi-ethnic funk-pop group War, was the bestselling album of 1973. The title track was a Top 5 hit, cowritten by group member Lee Oskar, born Oskar Levitin in Copenhagen to a mother who was a Holocaust survivor, and produced by Brooklyn-born Jerry Goldstein. Oskar, a harmonica player, was partially responsible for the unique sound of War's music, treating his instrument as part of a horn section. For Oskar, who released a solo album called "Never Forget" in 2022, the concept behind "The World Is a Ghetto" held special meaning for obvious reasons.

The 1973 movie "Deliverance" includes a scene where two backwoods Southern men speak to each other not with words but through their banjos. The actual banjo playing, however, was done by two nice Jewish boys from the New York metropolitan region. Eric Weissberg and Steve Mandell took their version of "Dueling Banjos" to No. 2 on the pop charts. They also garnered a Grammy Award for best country instrumental performance.

Steely Dan followed up their 1972 hit "Do It Again" with "Reelin' in the Years" in early 1973. The song was cowritten by the core of the group, Donald Fagen and Walter Becker, and sung by the New Jersey-born Fagen, whose father was an accountant and whose mother was a singer at Catskills resorts in her teenage years.

Bette Midler scored one of her first Top 10 hits with her remake of the swing-era jump-blues number, "Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy," in mid-1973. The song was produced by a then-unknown pianist and singer named Barry Manilow, born Barry Alan Pincus in Brooklyn.

Aspiring hard-rock quartet Kiss, featuring two Jewish members – Haifa-born Chaim Witz aka Gene Simmons and New York City-born Stanley Bert Eisen aka Paul Stanley – played their first concert at the Coventry Club in Queens, New York, in January 1973. By November, they were signed to their first record deal. Simmons and Stanley are the only founding members remaining in the group, still limping along 50 years later. Last month, they announced they would play their final concert in December. **HW**

ments in favor of abortion rights.

Fried and the other protesters were arrested hours after the state Senate vote, according to the "Tallahassee Democrat,"

IDF soldiers take part in widescale counter-terror operations across Judea and Samaria, Feb. 6, 2023. Credit: Israel Defense Forces.

(JNS) – An Israel Defense Forces soldier was wounded by gunfire early last Wednesday morning during an operation in Beit Ummar, located near Hebron in Judea.

According to the military, the soldier received medical treatment on the scene and was evacuated to the hospital.

Forces were searching the area for suspects, said the IDF.

During the mission, a violent disturbance erupted in which Palestinians burned tires and threw rocks and explosives at troops. At one point, terrorists opened fire on the soldiers, who re-

in the village, according to the military.

turned fire, according to the military.

The incident comes after three Israeli soldiers were injured after being run over by terrorists last Saturday night near Beit Ummar.

Last Tuesday morning, two Israeli soldiers were wounded in a terrorist stabbing near Rishon Letzion in central Israel.

Civilians on the scene subdued the Palestinian attacker from Hebron, who has since been transferred to authorities for questioning, according to police.

The attack took place at the Tzrifin Junction, near the entrance to a military base. The wounded soldiers were evacuated to the Shamir Medical Center. **HW** a local newspaper. The arrest occurred as they sat in a circle on the ground and sang "Lean on Me," surrounding a yellow flag with a picture of a uterus. Fried wore a T-shirt reading "Just f**k!ng vote."

The protest, which was led by women, had begun early in the day. Also arrested was state Senate Democratic Leader Lauren Book. Both were released overnight, according to a local TV station.

"I'm out. And not ever backing down," Fried tweeted along with a photo of herself in handcuffs last Monday night. The tweet also repeated the slogan on her shirt.

"Florida Democrats will not back down in our defense of abortion rights," the state Democratic Party tweeted. "Our Chair made that clear tonight."

The state Republican Party chairman, Christian Ziegler, posted a tweet last Tuesday morning mocking Fried and asking if federal loans are available because the state Democrats are "in need of extra cash to bailout their Chairman." **HW**

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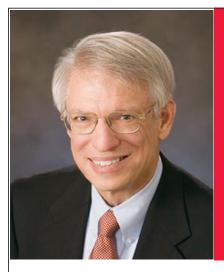


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