# **DON'T MISS AN ISSUE SUBSCRIPTION FORM ON PAGE 9**

# Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

**HEBREWWATCHMAN.COM** 

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# Local Grammy Award-Winning Musician to Appear at Shuk, **Rattle and Roll**



Jason Caplan of Nagshon's Leap Band with Lawrence "Boo" Mitchell Memphis Jewish Federation excitedly announces Grammy Award-winning entertainer Lawrence "Boo" Mitchell

will join Naqshon's Leap band at the upcoming Shuk, Rattle and Roll community-wide celebration of Israel's 75th Anniversary.

Lawrence "Boo" Mitchell, the owner of Royal Studios, is a record producer, musician, songwriter, and audio engineer, who has worked, among others, Al Green, Rod Stewart, and John Mayer. In 2016 he won a Grammy for the work he did on "Uptown Funk" with Mark Ronson and Bruno Mars. In 2019, Mitchell was named the Memphian of the Year. He has since won three other Grammys. the most recent one in 2023 for his work on "Stomping Ground" from the documentary "Take Me to the River." Along with Naqshon's Leap, he will provide a Memphis flair to the event.

At the May 17 celebration at Memphis Botanic Garden, attendees will also be able to take "reunion-style" niche group photos in front of the specially designed Israel-themed backdrop. Groups slated to have their pictures taken include all JWRP/Momentum trips, the recent Men's group, the Women's Spiritual Mission, Former IDF soldiers, Gap-year

and Birthright participants, and Israelis living in Memphis.

Memphians who have visited Israel will also enjoy seeing pictures of themselves in the beautiful video created by well-known videographer Marci Milman who used the pictures submitted by community members. All attendees will join in a communal, unity toast for the State of Israel led by our local rabbis and other Jewish dignitaries.

"The goal of the event is to spur fond memories of attendees' travels, whether through the food, music, video, or the Shuk and to give the community an Israeli experience for one night in Memphis," said Jeri Moskovitz. Israel at 75 coordinator for Jewish Community Partners.

Pre-paid reservations may be made at www.jcpmemphis.org/israel75 or by calling Carrie Richardson at 901-767-7100. Entry is \$75 per ticket. Sponsorship opportunities are available to help defray some of the event costs that are not covered by admission. HW

# Memphis Jewish Community Center Hosts Annual Morris and Mollye Fogelman Israel Week



The Memphis Jewish Community Center hosted the 2023 Morris and Mollye Fogelman Israel Week with an assortment of events for everyone. This annual week-long event was expanded beyond a week (April 19-30) to allow for more programming. Throughout the 12-day period, the MJCC's lobby was decorated with Israeli flags and contemporary Israeli music was added to fitness class playlists to give attendees a feel for popular music in Israel.

Zikaron Basalon "Memory in the Living Room" a program to commemorate Yom HaShoah was held on April 19 as the first of many Israel Week events. MJCC Community Shlicha Maayan Naor and others gathered in the home

of a community member to hear the story of Jeannine Paul, a Holocaust survivor, and have a discussion. Since 2011, Zikaron Basalon has become popular way to remember the Holocaust that is more intimate, allowing small groups to engage with a survivor who shares their story.

On April 24, Yom Hazikaron was held in the Shainberg Art Gallery at the MJCC to honor the memory of fallen soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) and victims of terrorist attacks in Israel. Members of the Israeli community came together for this ceremony in Hebrew to express both grief and pride.

On April 26, children from the early childhood center held a parade through

the MJCC to celebrate Israel Independence Day. Children of all ages participated; babies waving small Israeli flags from the strollers, toddlers walking while waving their flags, and pre-K and J-K students wearing or waving their Israel Flag-themed projects while singing "Happy Birthday, Israel!" They set a joyful tone for the weekend ahead.

To conclude Israel Week programs and events, community members celebrated Yom Ha'atzmaut on Sunday, April 30 with a festival at the MJCC. Attendees experienced tastes of Israel through pita making, arts and crafts including coloring, beaded bracelets, stickers and temporary tattoos in the shape of Israel's flag. At 11 a.m. the little ones enjoyed PJ Library Story Time conducted by Arie Figueroa, kindergarten teacher at Bornblum Jewish Community School. PJ Library is a program of Memphis Jewish Federation.

The festival was set up similarly to a shuk (outdoor market) and offered face painting, games, henna tattoos, a photo booth, freshly made cotton candy and popcorn, a variety of sweet and salty snacks popular in Israel such as gummy candies and flavored Bamba, and more. There was even an inflatable bounce house for children behind the pavilion. Another highlight was authentic Aroma iced coffee. Aroma is the largest coffee

(See Israel Week Page 2)

### Israel Week...

(Continued From Page 1)

brand in Israel and has quite the following. Attendees were treated to Aroma iced coffee while they munched on fresh-made pita cooked over an open fire.

Events of the 2023 Morris and Mollye Fogelman Israel Week were sponsored by Baptist Memorial Healthcare, proudly supported by the Israel Engagement Fund: A JCC Association of North America Program Accelerator, and made possible by a grant from the Lemsky Endowment Fund of Memphis Jewish Federation. **HW** 



Story Time conducted by Arie Figueroa, kindergarten teacher at Bornblum Jewish Community School. PJ Library is a program of Memphis Jewish Federation.



Attendees were treated to Aroma iced coffee while they munched on fresh-made pita cooked over an open fire.



Memphis Jewish Federation arranged for Rabbi Joel Finkelstein to lead a Holocaust Memorial Service at the Memphis VA Medical Center. Veterans and hospital staff gathered under the auspices of the hospital's Diversity and Inclusion program. Participants lit six memorial candles and heard Rabbi Finkelstein speak about complicity in and individual responsibility for the Holocaust.



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Erev Shabbat, Fri. May 12, 2023 / 21 lyar, 5783	7:36 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. May 13, 2023 / 22 Iyar, 5783	8:37 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Behar-Bechukotai

# *'Iran Is 50 North Koreas,' Netanyahu Tells Bipartisan Congressional Delegation*

(JNS) – Rep. Michael Turner (R-Ohio) led a bipartisan congressional group, which met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Israel last Thursday.

"Iran is 50 North Koreas. It is not merely a neighborhood bully like the dynasty that rules North Korea," Netanyahu told the visiting lawmakers, according to the prime minister's office. "This is an ideological force that views us, Israel, as the small Satan, and views you as the Great Satan."

Netanyahu warned that a nuclear Iran, which could threaten and blackmail every U.S. city, would amount to "a changing of history," per Netanyahu's office.

Last year, Turner urged U.S. President Joe Biden to support the Abraham Accords. "The geopolitical and economic impacts of the Abraham Accords have created waves of change towards peace and progress throughout the Middle East and around the world," he wrote at the time. Turner has also criticized the "deeply flawed" Iran deal, under former President Barack Obama. Also last Thursday, Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said Iran now has enough material for five nuclear bombs. **HW** 



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# The Berenstain Bears Storytime at the Cross County Library Benefits From B'nai B'rith Bear Project



Harold (Hesch) Steinberg, a Schloss Lodge member who grew up in Wynne, delivered 288 stuffed animals to the area.

*Reprinted with permission B'nai B'rith International.* 

The B'nai B'rith Sam Schloss Lodge of Memphis, Tenn., continued its 10year tradition of bringing smiles to young people by delivering 288 Berenstain Bears to Wynne Primary School and the Cross County Library in Wynne, Ark.

Harold (Hesch) Steinberg, a Schloss Lodge member who grew up in Wynne, delivered the stuffed animals. On March 31, much of the city was devasted by an EF-3 tornado that killed four residents and destroyed numerous businesses and residences. All that was left of the city's high school was a huge pile of debris.

Karen McClintock, counselor at Wynne Primary School, said, "The bears came at a great time for our kindergarten students at Wynne Primary. The comfort each bear will bring is beyond words. Thank you again for thinking of our students at such a time as this."

Approximately 260 bears were delivered to the primary school, ensuring that every kindergarten student received one. In addition, all of the Special Education students received a bear.

Another group of bears held court at the Cross County Library where Annette Robinson led a reading group of children. One library staffer said, "Our Storytime friends enjoyed a Berenstain Bear story with Ms. Annette, and thanks to B'nai B'rith, we were able to give each friend their very own Berenstain Bear!"

Vickie Pierce Whitehead, a paraprofessional at the Cross County Library, wrote, "I just want to say 'THANK YOU' for the 'Berenstain Bears' that were donated to the Wynne Primary School. The children I work with loved them. God bless you." **HW** 

# The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is Monday–Friday at 11:30 a.m. All programs start at 12:15 p.m. Big Monthly luncheon begins at noon



Seniors enjoy socializing, entertainment, and a hot kosher meal at the MJCC April Senior Monthly Luncheon.

Monday, May 15 Probate Myths and Preplanning Speakers: Chris Thomas with Brent Taylor and Paul McCarver Funeral Directors

Topics will include Probate Matters, Veteran Benefits, Cemetery and Memorials. Chris will also answer any questions that one might have about these various topics. His company will also provide a FREE kosher lunch for any seniors that attend that day. Please call the MJCC front desk by 1 p.m. on Friday, May 12 to register for this worthwhile event.

### Wednesday, May 17, at noon Big Monthly Luncheon Featuring Deborah Swiney and Ac-

companist provided by Creative Aging.

Deborah Swiney has earned the title of a true chanteuse and is one of our most requested acts. Throughout her performance, you will enjoy a trip back to Harlem to experience the iconic era of Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, and Sarah Vaughn; you'll dance across the Great American Songbook; and you will even take a flight to Rio where you could close your eyes and imagine relaxing on a Copacabana or Ipanema beach. Being a Memphis native, you might even get a splash of blues. Deborah's affinity for music started at an early age with piano lessons and being active in music, whether in church or in school. Growing up in a musical family, music had no borders. Deborah has worked as a backup vocalist with the legendary Al Green and performed on the Oprah Winfrey Show, the Today Show, at Carnegie Hall and has toured internationally. More recently, she released the highly praised co-produced debut album, "I Remember Rio," a Brazilian-inspired album with "Memphis-soul seasoning" (All about Jazz). Transcending the standard definition of a jazz songstress, her melodic and sultry approach to Bossa Nova and other Brazilian stylings are natural without betraying her Bluff City roots. Please come and enjoy a nice lunch and entertainment. This will be our last Monthly Luncheon until August.

The Luncheon and Deborah Swiney start at noon on the 17 – all for just \$5! Reservations can be made by calling the MJCC front desk at 901-761-0810 or emailing Steve Kaplan at stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org.

### Monday, May 22 Ask the Rabbi!

Speaker: Rabbi Yosef Braha with

The Memphis Kollel

Please bring any questions, large or small.

### Wednesday May 23 Preparing for Shavuot! Speaker: Rabbi Abe Schatcter -Gampel

Director of the Center for Jewish Living and Learning at MJCC

Rabbi Abe, always brings an unusual perspective to all his talks. Reservations are needed for the lunch only.

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 or stevekaplan@ jccmemphis.org, or call the front desk at 901-761-0810. **HW** 







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# **Cooper Hotels to Celebrate 100** Years of Hilton Affiliation, Its 100% Hilton Portfolio and \$100 Million Future Hilton Brands Investment

Memphis-based Cooper Hotels today announced a month-long celebration to commemorate 100 cumulative years of operating six hotels within the Hilton portfolio and an agreement to continue operating those hotels for another combined 100 years, the company's transition from operating non-Hilton flagged hotels to a now 100% Hilton portfolio and its planned \$100 million Hilton brands investment in the next five years.

As part of the celebration, Cooper Hotels has scheduled events at its headquarters in Memphis and at each of its 16 hotels.

On May 2, a Zoom call celebration was staged at Cooper Hotels' headquarters to announce a \$100,000 contribution (\$1,000 for each of the first 100 years of the six hotels' Hilton affiliation) to the Hilton Global Foundation. Launched in 2019, the Hilton Global Foundation is Hilton's primary international philanthropic arm and is committed to creating a better world for travel by positively impacting the environment and communities.

Attending the celebration were Cooper Hotels team members and executives, joined virtually by several Hilton brand heads and executives.

To help celebrate Cooper Hotels' 100% Hilton portfolio achievement, all Cooper properties will hold a 100-day fundraising drive to support the Hilton Global Foundation. Numerous activities and fundraising events will take place at each hotel and within their communities.

Also during the month of May, each

of the 16 Cooper Hotels properties will volunteer 100 hours of team member time to local community service in honor of the company's future 100 years of Hilton affiliation and its \$100 million planned Hilton investment. The volunteers will work with organizations that foster youth opportunities, help strengthen communities and preserve the environment.

In 1982, Hilton Knoxville Airport became Cooper Hotels' first Hilton franchised property. The company's only remaining non-Hilton brand hotel, a Crowne Plaza hotel in Fort Myers, Florida, recently committed to become a DoubleTree by Hilton, making the Cooper portfolio 100% Hilton family of brands hotels.

For more information on the Cooper Hotels 100 years/100% Hilton brand hotels celebration visit cooperhotels. com. For more information about the Hilton Global Foundation and its causes or to donate visit hiltonglobalfoundation. hilton.com.

### **About Cooper Hotels**

Cooper Hotels is a Memphis-based, privately owned company founded in 1959. The company owns and manages 16 hotels in four states. The hotels include seven DoubleTree by Hilton hotels, three Hilton hotels, two Homewood Suites by Hilton hotels, two Hilton Garden Inn hotels, one Hampton & Suites by Hilton and one Embassy Suites by Hilton. For more information on Cooper Hotels, visit cooperhotels. com. **HW** 

# Recruiting Singers for the 2023 Jewish Choral Festival Hundreds of Voices Create Harmonious Choral Community

Each year since 1990, the North American Jewish Choral Festival (NA-JCF) has attracted hundreds of singers who "Sing Their Hearts Out" and connect to Jewish culture during a fiveday immersion in Jewish music. From around the country, hundreds of voices come together to form one harmonious choral community led by a renowned staff of conductors and other music experts who inspire and create a truly unique musical society. This year's 34th annual event will be held from July 9 -13, 2023 at the Sleepy Hollow Hotel in Tarrytown, N.Y.

"The Festival is for anyone who wants to experience the joy of Jewish music," says Matthew Lazar, Festival founder and director. "The participants are multi-generational and include amateur singers, professionals, cantors, conductors, and lovers of Jewish music of all ages."

Festival participants from across North America and beyond, enjoy a wide variety of Jewish musical experiences. These include daily community sings; workshops and seminars on topics ranging from sight-singing and vocal technique to spirituality through music; and evening concerts featuring choirs and outstanding performers.

According to Dana Stein of North Brunswick, N.J., who has been participating in the Festival since its inception, "The Festival presents a wonderful opportunity to learn extraordinary music and work with accomplished conductors from all over the world, all while having a mini vacation."

One of the distinguishing features of this Festival is that individual singers can participate in "Instant Ensembles." All singers are divided into five different choirs, based on their sight-reading abilities and previous musical experience. The Festival culminates with ensembles performing for the entire group.

"The Festival is an uplifting experience for people of all denominations who have Jewish connections to come together through their love of music," adds Sharon Greene of Sarasota, Fla.

This year's Festival celebrates the 75th anniversary of the State of Israel with choral repertoire by Israeli composers featured throughout the Festival program.

According to Barry Brian of Walnut Creek, Calif., "The Festival represents my five favorite days of the year. I connect to my Jewish heritage through music and form an emotional bond with hundreds of people to create glorious sound."

"Whether you're a novice or a pro, you'll leave with new skills, new music and new friends to cherish as hundreds of singers gather together for an unforgettable experience," concludes Mr. Lazar.

The North American Jewish Choral Festival is a program of the Zamir Choral Foundation. To register for this year's Festival go to zamirchoralfoundation. formstack.com/forms/najcf\_2023

For more information, go to zamirchoralfoundation.org. **HW** 

# Barbra Streisand is Getting the Next 'Jewish Nobel,' in Prize's Return to Celebrity Tradition

### By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – The prize dubbed the "Jewish Nobel" will be going to Barbra Streisand later this year, in a return to its tradition of honoring Jewish celebrities for their lifetime of achievements.

The iconic actor and singer is get-

ting the Genesis Prize, which has been awarded since 2013, in recognition of her contributions to a number of fields, including the arts and philanthropy.

The prize was endowed by a group of Russian Jewish billionaires, three of

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Located in the White Station area Remodeled 3BR/2BA with Den, new appliances, Central Heat & Air, Detached garage. whom stepped down from the board of a related foundation, the Genesis Philanthropy Group, after being targeted by Western sanctions last year for their ties to Vladimir Putin following his invasion of Ukraine. The most recent Genesis Prize, awarded earlier this year, went to Jewish activists and nonprofits in Ukraine – the first time the prize had not been given to a single individual.

Now, the prize foundation is signaling a return to normalcy by selecting Streisand, 81, who has served as a symbol of pride for generations of women and men who saw themselves reflected in her brash, Brooklyn-bred, unapologetically Jewish persona. She has sold more than 100 million records; had more albums chart in the Top 40 than any other female recording artist; and is one of just 18 people to rack up an EGOT – an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony. The prize's goal is to stimulate Jewish giving by raising awareness of particular needs. Streisand will be donating her \$1 million award to four groups aimed at protecting the environment, promoting women's health, combating disinformation in the media and aiding the people of Ukraine, according to a press release from the Genesis Prize Foundation. "I am delighted to be honored by the special 10th Anniversary Genesis Prize and to work with The Genesis Prize Foundation to support organizations that seek to better society and our shared humanity," Streisand said in a statement. "I am very proud of my Jewish heritage, and have always been moved by the Jewish tradition of tikkun olam, to repair the world. I hope to join and inspire others in their own commitment to build a better world."

The ceremony honoring Streisand, which will be held for the first time in Los Angeles, marks another change for the prize.

Before this year, the prize had been awarded at a ceremony in Israel. In the past, it was presented in cooperation with the Israeli Prime Minister's Office, and in 2018, actor Natalie Portman, that year's honoree, stirred controversy by declining to attend the ceremony in protest of "recent events" in Israel. The partnership with the prime minister end-

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### ed in 2020.

The award seeks to honor "extraordinary individuals for their outstanding professional achievement, contribution to humanity, and commitment to Jewish values," according to the press release, and has generally gone to a celebrity who has worn their Jewish identity publicly. Many of its laureates have been involved in the arts – including actors Michael Douglas and Portman; sculptor Anish Kapoor; violinist Itzhak Perlman; and, in 2021, filmmaker Steven Spielberg.

"Her sense of responsibility to heal the world grows out of her Jewish values and her Jewish identity, which Barbra has displayed proudly since the very beginning of her extraordinary career," Genesis Prize Foundation founder Stan Polovets said in a statement about Streisand. "Barbra's innovative philanthropy has had significant impact in so many areas, including health, environment, and gender equality." **HW** 

# My Teen Israel Experience



### Elisha in the Golan Heights

Elisha Serman, son of Nina and Adir Rovner and Hirsch Serman, is a senior at the Cooper Yeshiva High School for Boys. Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund provided him with a Teen Israel Experience grant to offset the costs of his NCSY Kollel trip Israel. All rising juniors and seniors are eligible for grants of up to \$3,000 to attend a recognized teen summer or semester program in Israel. Teen Israel Experience applications for Summer 2023 are open and can be accessed at Lemsky Endowment Fund | Jewish *Community Partners (jcpmemphis.org)* 

### By Elisha Serman

NCSY Kollel was an amazing and fantastic program that I will never forget. Every day was filled with programming, from morning seder (study), to leagues, to chakras at 11 p.m. Every night I collapsed into bed, exhausted, and every morning I got up to read and learn with all my heart.

The people and programming are what made Kollel such a memorable experience. Our morning learning rabbis prepared sources that allowed us to follow every step of some highly complex Talmudic debates. Our madrichim (counselors/leaders) spent hours learning, playing sports and joining us on trips.

Every day offered a different mini-tiyul (trip) to enjoy; one day was a trip to Nefesh B'Nefesh (the organization that facilitates moving to Israel) and the next was a tour of the Latrun Tank Museum. For the times that I stayed on campus, the pool was open for a couple of hours a day. There were also chaburahs (study groups) going on during the break. I participated in a hike in the Golan, and it was followed by a few hours at Aqua Kef, a water park in the Sea of Galilee. and a tour around Chevron (Hebron)

before going to Ma'arat Hamachpela (Cave of the Patriachs) for afternoon and evening prayers.

Throughout the six weeks of constant activities, there were two activities that were memorable. The first was learning with Rabbi Hershel Schachter, the leading Talmudic scholar, Jewish legal authority and Rosh Yeshiva (Dean) at Yeshiva University. For the first three weeks, Rabbi Schachter was in the Beit Midrash (House of Study), where he would answer questions and learn with people. My study group came up with multiple questions during the first couple of weeks. At the beginning of the third week, my group approached Rabbi Schachter and asked our questions. Rabbi Schachter's answers were amazing. He was able to answer our questions, but he didn't just answer, he included other halachot (laws) related to the questions and answered with such clear explanations that he answered many other questions we had not even asked.

Asking Rabbi Schachter questions was amazing, but it did not compare to learning in a chaburah (study group) with him. Every day at 3 p.m., my group learned Pirkei Avot (Ethics of our Fathers) with Rabbi Schachter. I was amazed by his depth of knowledge and ability to make far-reaching connections. It was incredible to experience this type of learning and to be a part of it throughout the entire trip.

The second memorable part of Kollel was the amazing and difficult hike we took through the Black Canyon in the Golan Heights. Each step had to be carefully placed so that you did not injure yourself on a rock or fall into the stream next to where we walked. After an hour of hiking, we approached a small pool of water, and on the other side was a waterfall. Our guide prepared ropes and gave us a lesson on rappelling down the waterfall. The rappelling was difficult, and I lost my footing and fell a few times, but by the end of that waterfall, I got the hang of it. In total there were three waterfalls, each had a pool in front and a pool behind. The Black Canyon was the most amazing hike I ever did and when I go back to Israel, I hope I can do it again.

Kollel was an extremely memorable trip. I learned Torah in amazing depth and had experiences I will never forget. I am looking forward to going back to Israel (most amazing place on the Earth) next year.

Thank you to Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund for helping to make my NCSY Kollel trip possible. HW

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# Germany to Fine Twitter for Ignoring Antisemitic Content

(JNS) - Earlier this month, Germany's Federal Justice Office began the process of fining Twitter, under the country's Network Enforcement Act, for failing to remove hate speech. The German law requires social-media sites to remove illegal content within seven days, and for the most egregious material, within 24 hours.

The German office stated publicly that hateful material was published on Twitter, "which the authority considers illegal and, despite user complaints, was not deleted or blocked by the provider within the legally stipulated periods."

Reportedly, Twitter faces a fine as high as €50 (nearly \$55 million) in Germany. An email to a Twitter press account auto-replied with an excrement emoji, as Twitter owner Elon Musk has tweeted it

would, and it wasn't immediately clear how to otherwise reach a spokesperson.

In January, a German activist group sued Twitter for hosting content denying the Holocaust, which is a crime in Germany.

One of Musk's first publicized decisions after buying the company was to decrease the content moderation division. Many saw that as welcoming hateful speech, while others had long believed that division was driven by partisan politics.

Europe has stricter laws about free speech than the United States does, and Musk had told the European Union he would comply with those rules.

Since Musk took over Twitter, there have been reports that antisemitism has increased on the platform, as well as on other social networks. HW

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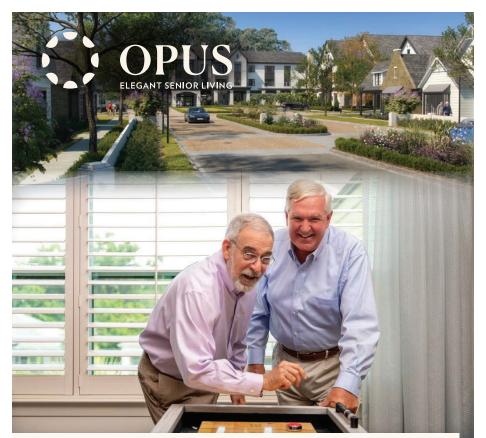


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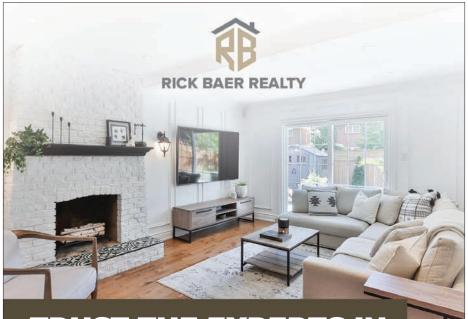
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# Kol-Rena So Shuls Update — Luncheons Resume in August

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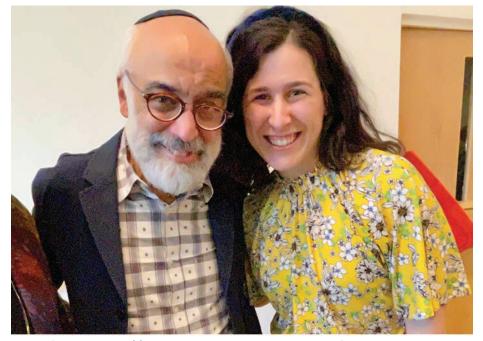
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# Beth Sholom Honors Rabbi Horwitz for Going 'Above and Beyond' at Torah Brunch



Rabbi Sarit Horwitz (r) with guest speaker Benjamin R. Gampel, MPhil, PhD

Beth Sholom pulled out all the stops for its 80th Anniversary Torah Fund Brunch on Sunday, April 30 to celebrate eight decades of Torah Fund fundraising by the Women's League for Conservative Judaism. Both women and men turned out in mass to honor Beth Sholom Rabbi Sarit Horwitz and to hear from the distinguished guest speaker, Benjamin R. Gampel, MPhil, PhD, the Dina and Eli field chair in Jewish History at the Jewish Theological Seminary. Guests enjoyed a special menu of salmon en croûte, spinach soufflé, blintz loaf, fruit, and dessert to celebrate the occasion. The energy at the event was a fitting conclusion for the most successful Torah Fund campaign in Beth Sholom's history, according to Barbara Hellman, a Beth Sholom member and Torah Fund vice president for the Southern Region Women's League of Conservative Judaism (WLCJ).

In honoring Rabbi Horwitz, Beth Sholom Sisterhood president Susan Levko cited the Rabbi's spirituality, intellect, Ruach, and creativity. "She has led the shul in good times and bad," Levko said, referring to the Rabbi's resourcefulness during the pandemic. "Rabbi, we have loved you since the day you came to Memphis. Your contributions have gone above and beyond any expectation."



Beth Sholom Sisterhood leadership greeted South Region WLCJ officials. From left: Marcia Menuskin, Barbara Hellman, Regina Neuman (front), Susan Steinberg (back), Susan Levko, and Sharon Finkelstein.

Levko presented Rabbi Horwitz with a lifetime membership in Sisterhood.

Dr. Gampel beamed as Rabbi Horwitz, his daughter-in-law, was honored. Earlier, Dr. Gampel, a specialist in medieval and early modern Jewries, had enthralled listeners as he explained how a thriving Jewish community took root in Iberia in the 10th century. (Pirates played a role in the story.) He said Jewry requires similar conditions – a tolerant host society, philanthropic support, and Jewish institutions – to thrive today.

The afternoon's other speakers in-

cluded Susan Steinberg, president of Southern Region WLCJ and Julee Levine, director of education at Beth Sholom, who gave the dvar Torah.

The Torah Fund was started in 1943 by the Women's League of Conservative Judaism to support five institutions of higher learning. "The Torah Fund helps ensure that the Conservative Movement will have strong leaders and professionals, so it will continue to flourish," said Marcia Menuskin, who chaired the Torah Fund Brunch. "It helps ensure the future of the Jewish people." **HW** 



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# Palestinian Terrorists Open Fire at Israeli Bus in Samaria

(JNS) – Palestinian terrorists opened fire on a bus carrying Israeli civilians in Samaria late on April 19.

No injuries were reported, but the vehicle sustained damage, the Israel Defense Forces said.





The attack took place between the Tapuach Junction and the community of Migdalim, and troops were deployed to search for the perpetrators, the army said.

Earlier that day, Israeli security personnel apprehended the terrorist who shot and moderately wounded two haredi Jews in Jerusalem's Shimon HaTzadik neighborhood the previous day. The Palestinian attacker was caught during a raid in the Samarian city of Nablus (biblical Shechem) that included the IDF, Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) and the Border Police's Yamam counterterrorism unit.

The day before, Israeli forces arrested three Islamic Jihad operatives in Jenin in northern Samaria. The terrorists – Aa Kareem Ala Adin Ibrahim Ahmad, Ahmad Muhammad Ahmad Jaradat and Amjad Muhammad Ahmad Jaradat – were taken for questioning by the Shin Bet. **HW** 

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# Are You Eligible for Any of These College-Related Federal Tax Benefits?

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

College students and parents deserve all the help they can get when paying for college or repaying student loans. If you're in this situation, here are three federal tax benefits that might help put a few more dollars back in your pocket.

### **American Opportunity Credit**

The American Opportunity tax credit is worth up to \$2,500 per student per year for qualified tuition and fees (not room and board) for the first four years of college. It is calculated as 100% of the first \$2,000 of qualified tuition and fees plus 25% of the next \$2,000 of such expenses.

There are two main eligibility restrictions: the student must be enrolled in college at least half-time, and the parents' modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) must be below a certain level. To claim a \$2,500 tax credit in 2023, single filers must have a MAGI of \$80,000 or less, and joint filers must have a MAGI of \$160,000 or less. A partial credit is available for single filers with a MAGI between \$80,000 and \$90,000, and joint filers with a MAGI between \$160,000 and \$180,000. The same limits applied in 2022 (and would be used when completing your 2022 federal tax return).

One key advantage of the American Opportunity credit is that it can be claimed for multiple students on a single tax return in the same year, provided each student qualifies independently. For example, if Mom and Dad have twins in college and meet the credit's requirements for each child, they can claim a total credit of \$5,000 (\$2,500 per child).

### Student Loan Debt Statistics

Outstanding U.S. student loan debt in 2022: \$1.745 trillion

Loan source breakdown: 92.7% federal, 7.3% private

Number of borrowers with federal student loan debt: 42.8 million

Average federal student loan balance: \$37,787

### Source: EducationData.org, 2022 Lifetime Learning Credit

The Lifetime Learning credit is worth up to \$2,000 for qualified tuition and fees for courses taken throughout one's lifetime to acquire or improve job skills. It's broader than the American Opportunity credit – students enrolled less than half-time as well as graduate students are eligible. The Lifetime Learning credit is calculated as 20% of the first \$10,000 of qualified tuition and fees (room and board expenses aren't eligible).

Income eligibility limits for the Lifetime Learning credit are the same as the American Opportunity credit. In 2023, a full \$2,000 tax credit is available for single filers with a MAGI of \$80,000 or less, and joint filers with a MAGI of \$160,000 or less. A partial credit is available for single filers with a MAGI between \$80,000 and \$90,000, and joint filers with a MAGI between \$160,000 and \$180,000. The same limits applied in 2022.

One disadvantage of the Lifetime Learning credit is that it is limited to a total of \$2,000 per tax return per year, regardless of the number of students in a family who may qualify in a given year. So, in the previous example, Mom and Dad would be able to take a total Lifetime Learning credit of \$2,000, not \$4,000. Two other points to keep in mind: (1) the American Opportunity credit and the Lifetime Learning credit can't be taken in the same year for the same student; and (2) the expenses used to qualify for either credit can't be the same expenses used to qualify for taxfree distributions from a 529 plan or a Coverdell education savings account.

### **Student Loan Interest Deduction**

Undergraduate and graduate borrowers can deduct up to \$2,500 of interest paid on qualified federal and private student loans during the year if income limits are met. In 2023, a full \$2,500 deduction is available for single filers with a MAGI of \$75,000 or less, and joint filers with a MAGI of \$155,000 or less; a partial deduction is available for single filers with a MAGI between \$75,000 and \$90,000, and joint filers with a MAGI between \$155,000 and \$185,000. In 2022, the income limits were slightly lower: a full deduction was available for single filers with a MAGI of \$70,000 or less, and joint filers with a MAGI of \$140,000 or less; a partial deduction was available for single filers with a MAGI between \$70,000 and \$85,000, and joint filers with a MAGI between \$145,000 and \$175,000. The 2022 limits would be used when completing your 2022 federal income tax return.

If you paid at least \$600 in student loan interest during the year, your loan servicer should send you a Form 1098-E showing how much you paid. If you don't receive a 1098-E, you can still claim the deduction. You just need to call your loan servicer or log in to your online account to find the amount of interest you paid.

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# *Teaching Painful Truths The All-Important Legacy of Margot Stern Strom*

### By Michael Berenbaum

This originally appeared in "Jewish Journal." Reprinted with permission.

We buried my friend and colleague, Margot Stern Storm last week. She was the dynamic, charismatic teacher who began her career in the classrooms and found that teaching the honest – unexpurgated past – was the best way to reach her students and have meaningful impact their lives.

Together with the late Bill Parsons, her fellow teacher, she founded Facing History and Ourselves and transformed it into a worldwide teacher-training and educational curricula-creating powerhouse that confronts some of the most painful and important historical issues. She began with the Holocaust and understood immediately that the Holocaust had echoes - elements it shared in common with human slavery and other genocide. There were parallels and differences. What they shared in common was as important as what made the Holocaust distinct. She understood that comparisons were not equivalences. She realized that by confronting the past, students could explore the present and their future roles as informed and concerned denizens of the 21st century.

Let me tell you about the Facing History classrooms I have been in for the last 45 years. These classrooms are noisy and loud. If you want an orderly, quiet classroom there are other methods and subjects available with which to bore students. In those classes, discussion is lively, student-centered, and content-centered, not teacher centered. Students are engaged, involved, and creative. Their diverse opinions are expressed passionately, but they also learn to listen respectfully to different opinions.

Margot believed that controversial subjects must be taught; that it was good for teaching material – but not their teachers – to make students uncomfortable, to challenge and engage them. Socrates – and good teachers ever since – made the citizens of Athens uncomfortable, because good teaching challenges students, it engages them, and it leads to critical thinking, essential to understanding the world.

Her work is the ultimate refutation of those politicians and boards of education who want to make students comfortable in class by not facing what is uncomfortable in American history.

I can hear her voice.

Germany is a better country because it confronts the Holocaust – including its role as perpetrator. They recognize the Nazis grew out of German soil and spoke in the name of the German people. Recently retired Chancellor Angela Merkel, her successor and her most of her predecessors, insisted that Germany face its past, to look back on a path once taken and never to be taken again so that it can be a vibrant democracy, committed to human rights and human dignity.

Knowing what you do not want to be helps you to shape what you aspire to be.

Roman Catholicism is a better religion because it confronted the aspects of its teachings that led to antisemitism. Pope John XXIII, now a Roman Catholic Saint, confronted the teaching that Jews were Christ killers. If Christ died for our sins, he taught, then human sin is responsible for the Crucifixion, a Roman – not a Jewish – form of capital punishment. Pope John Paul II – also a Saint – apologized for the antisemitism

### of Christians and taught that antisemitism is anti-Christian. He recognized Israel and even prayed at the Western Wall. Pope Francis, the current Pope, eliminated the mission to convert the Jews, respecting the Jewish covenant with God. And a Catholicism that makes sure to push antisemitic teachings to the side is a better religion.

Another example of a country examining its racist past is Romania. Its government assigned the late Elie Wiesel and Radu Ioanid, a distinguished historian and now its Ambassador to Israel, to write a formal report on the history of antisemitism in Romania. They could have played it safe and ignored some painful, yet important truths. Now the State seeks to build an Elie Wiesel Institute, its own Holocaust Museum in the heart of its capital, Bucharest, to tell the painful truth of its own history. And it is a better country for it.

Neighboring Hungary seeks to rewrite its history to place all the blame on the Germans and not confront the role of its own Iron Guard and its wartime leader Admiral Horthy. It changes texts in Museums to misinform its citizens of deeds that were done by their ancestors. It is a worse country for it.

Margot knew, very well, that students have highly honed BS meters. They know when adults are lying to them, or not leveling with them. She also knew that once you lose a student's trust, it is most difficult to regain it and almost impossible to teach them anything else.

Take this from a man who has been in the classroom for more than a half century and remains in the classroom today. Besides that, today's students have so many other sources of information that a constricted curriculum or books removed from the library will not keep them from learning their teachers are not telling them the truth, or are retrained by anti-woke politics that stops them teaching truth.

When, in Margot's lifetime - she

grew up in the segregated South – America confronted slavery and confronted Jim Crow, dealt with the failure of Reconstructionism and the ongoing stain of segregation, we became a better nation for it. If and when we refuse to confront this past and the way in which Native-Americans were treated, including in the Constitution as written by our Founding Fathers – who did so many things, but not all things, brilliantly – we will become a diminished people.

Students can handle the truth and be trusted with it, perhaps even especially uncomfortable truths. By confronting this material, they will become better people, more informed and concerned citizens. If you want empirical truth, look at the students who have studied with Margot and her myriad of colleagues. They faced history. They faced themselves.

Michael Berenbaum is a Distinguished Professor of Jewish Studies and Director of the Sigi Ziering Institute: Exploring the Ethical and Religious Implications of the Holocaust at American Jewish University. He serves on the Scholars Advisory Committee of Facing History and Ourselves. **HW** 

### **OBITUARIES**

### Zenia Bolotin Revitz

Zenia Bolotin Revitz, 93, passed away peacefully at her home in Coconut Creek, Fla., during the evening of April 30. She was born in Chicago, Ill., to Lillian and Sidney Bolotin, moved to Bay Harbor Islands, Fla., in 1963, and lived many years in Memphis, Tenn.

Ms. Revitz was predeceased by her sister, Beatrice Lowe, and her ex-husband, Robert Revitz. She is survived by three daughters, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. Ms. Revitz was a schoolteacher, realtor and avid tennis and bridge player. A former president of Hadassah in Chicago, she remained an active member throughout her life. She was interned at Lakeside Cemetery in Miami, Fla., on May 1. **HW** 

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# 'Technical Error' Caused Iron Dome to Malfunction During Gaza Terror Onslaught

(JNS) – A "technical error" caused a malfunction in the Iron Dome missile defense system during last Tuesday's conflagration with Palestinian terrorists in the Gaza Strip, an Israel Air Force investigation found.

During a barrage last Tuesday afternoon, several rockets hit populated areas in Sderot, including one that wounded three foreign nationals working on a construction site.

A ceasefire that took effect early the next day ended 24 hours of fighting during which more than 100 rockets were fired at the Jewish state.

The IAF said last Thursday that the interception rate of rockets headed for populated areas during the flare-up was nevertheless 90.5%.

The exchange erupted early last Tuesday morning when senior Palestinian Islamic Jihad operative Khader Adnan died in an Israeli prison after an 87-day hunger strike.

Thereafter, terrorists in Gaza fired four projectiles at Israel, which responded later in the afternoon by shelling Hamas targets in the Palestinian enclave. Following the IDF strikes, barrage after barrage of rockets were fired from Gaza into southern Israel, setting off warning sirens in numerous communities for the remainder of the day and overnight.

Amid the ongoing rocket fire, the IDF began striking terror assets in Gaza, including military compounds, weapons manufacturing sites and depots, a subterranean attack tunnel and training grounds.

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Both Hamas and Islamic Jihad took responsibility for the rocket fire, the worst such outbreak since a conflict in August 5-7 of last year. **HW** 



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# Sarah Makes a Discovery



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

### Ted Roberts

With us licensed Bar Mitzvah teachers, it's usually the same drill. At least in my shul. You teach your young Abrahams and Sarahs the Torah, the Haftarah, and the prayers. And finally you must a) make them write a speech, which they will recite. (This takes heavy pressure and a lot of parental threats or rewards.) b) Try to squeeze some thoughts out of the kid and you translate these thoughts into words in some sort of reasonable sequence resulting in a speech. c) Write a speech for them to recite (This latter choice is every student's preference) Students prefer "c," I prefer "b."

The modus operandi is the same. Sorta like the cop interrogations you see on TV. You read their confession (the Torah section) over to them three or four times. You question their understanding three or four times seeking a consistent interpretation, so the judge won't throw your case out of court.

Then you supply the words for the speech. But there's one overriding theme of the speech that you must always underline. An essential element that must have smote even young Jacob (did he have a Bar Mitzvah?) right between the eyes. Has the reader yet guessed it? C'mon – it's obvious. THE QUESTION!

Has there ever been a Bar/Bat Mitzvah teacher who hasn't demanded an answer to this query? And has there ever been a teacher who hasn't received the same dum-dum reply? I should have a raisin kugel for every time my student, with wide eyes, has said, "I am now responsible for my actions." Like at eight or 10 or 12 years of age he didn't know that he shouldn't steal from his mama's purse? Or didn't know he could go to jail for heaving a brick through his neighbor's window. Now, suddenly the lightning bolt of the Bar Mitzvah ceremony has focused on his ethical behavior. But give the kid credit - that's what everybody says, and he knows it. "I am now responsible for my actions." A serenely, unassailable platitude that with the addition of five or six hundred words becomes a speech.

I tell you all this so you have a standard upon which you can appreciate the insightful bombshell from my recent student, Sarah.

"So, Sarah," I say in my usual sweet tea-Southern voice that encourages sugar in return, "what does your Bat Mitzvah mean to you?" (Like I didn't know the typical answer.)

a. Today I am a woman. (Does that imply shopping privileges, I'm thinking?)

b. As of my Bat Mitzvah day I am responsible for my actions. (Does that mean before that she could lie to her parents and run amuck in society?)

c. Today I can stay out past midnight? But seriously, the typical answer, as most readers know, implies responsibility. As though in years one through 12 I was not judged. But NOW society, parents, and G-d himself bring out the scales of justice and behavior.

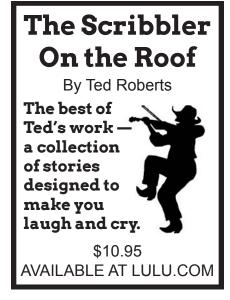
BUT – miracle of miracles – my new student discarded this line of platitudinous BS. But first I must tell you that her Torah section dealt with Abraham's negotiation with the angry G-d who contemplates the destruction of Sodam and Gomorrah. You remember. A vengeful G-d says he'll nuke the cities. Abraham replies that somewhere there must be some innocents in the city limits. A stunning reversal of rules - one must admit: our Creator is merciless, but Abraham, a human born with a heart churning in a cauldron of good and evil, pleads for the guiltless. It's as though he understands the quality of justice better than his maker! They bargain. Abraham loses. The cities of the plain resemble Hiroshima and Nagasaki three to four millennium later.

This, then, was the passage we studied. "So, what is the meaning of your Bat Mitzvah?" I asked. "What did you learn?"

A shocking, down-to-Earth answer!! No prattling about responsibilities. My student, a wide-eyed, charming 12-yearold. A thinker – not to mention a beauty – looked at me with surprise. "I didn't know you could argue with G-d. I learned you could argue with G-d."

Well, I couldn't refute sweet Sarah without calling Abe, Moses, Elijah, Job and others I can't recall – liars. (And don't forget Tevye the milkman constantly mumbling under his breath over the world's imperfections.) Not to mention Jacob, who took his foggy encounter beyond the verbal to the physical level. HE WRESTLED WITH G-D! Does not our book so tell us?

"You can debate with G-d," repeat-



ed this gem of a student. She was awed into silence as I told her that we "stiffnecked," loquacious, preachy Jews frequently practiced this tradition found in no religion but Judaism.

Then it occurred to me – maybe – just maybe this discontentedness with this flawed world wherein He placed us – plus our belligerency accounted for our activism. We not only debate with the Potter, but we repair cracked pots. You don't cure polio, split atoms, and write songs and win Pulitzer Prizes if you bow humbly and praise the Creator for a wondrous world; but also a world of poverty, famine, disease, death, and dreams that dissolve into mist.

Is that the plan? To test righteous anger as the glue of Tikuun Olam? Strange that an echo of this occurred to Sarah – not Aristotle. But don't ask me – ask your rabbi. Or if he's not home, call Sarah.

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** 

# Erdan: 'Tlaib's Ignorance and Hate Toward Jews and Israel Know no Bounds'

(JNS) – Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations Gilad Erdan responded to a tweet on May 3 from Rep. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.), who wrote that "Speaker [Kevin] McCarthy wants to rewrite history, but the apartheid state of Israel was born out of violence and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians."

"Tlaib's ignorance and hate toward Jews and Israel know no bounds. The facts are clear: the Arabs rejected the U.N.'s resolution to establish a Jewish state and started a war to annihilate it," wrote Erdan. "Palestinian leadership is leading its people to catastrophe by inciting hate/terror and rejecting peace."

The Israeli diplomat went further in an interview with "Fox News."

"Tlaib is rewriting history, and her antisemitic lies ignore the fact that the only ethnic cleansing took place against the 850,000 Jews, who were expelled from Arab countries following Israel's establishment," he said.

One of nine House members to vote against funding Israel's Iron Dome air-defense system, Tlaib has often attacked Israel on social media, including a recent post that slandered Israeli police. **HW** 

# **ISRAEL INSIGHTS** Reflections on Israel at 75

### **By Howard Weisband**

We recently celebrated Yom HaAtzmaut, Israel's 75th Independence Day. Many varied articles appeared throughout the media: "The Miracle of Israel," "Israel at 75 – What comes Next?," "The State of the State at 75." As one would expect, many authors chose to comment of Israel's accomMy family had an appreciation and a love of Israel; they were donors to Israel causes and purchasers of Israel Bonds. The JNF Blue Box was in our home, and the first visit to Israel was that of my maternal grandparents. There was an excitement when they returned as we gathered in their home to hear of their plastic hammers playfully bopping friends and strangers. During the day there was a full military parade, soldiers marching, tanks and half-tracks rolling by, and jets in screaming flight overhead.

I quickly became enthralled with all that I was experiencing. While I enjoyed Hebrew ulpan and my Bible and Talmud studies, I developed a hearty thirst for learning more about the modern State of Israel and the history and ideology of Zionism. I bought and read as many books as I could find on the state in the making, the Balfour Declaration, the British presence in the Middle East, the War of Independence, and the Six-Days War. I studiously read books on Zionism, its history, ideologies, and personalities from Theodor Herzl to Chaim Weizmann to David Ben-Gurion among others. In short, it was that year, 1969-70, that I became a Zionist as well as a Jew. My personal philosophy of life, that Judaism and Zionism must be integrated and intertwined, began to take shape.

at the American Jewish University. It poignantly concludes:

"Herzl's life and his achievements were of biblical proportions. As a writer, as an institution builder, and as a diplomat, he bore on his shoulders the weight of the Jewish future. At the appointed hour, his prophecy, written on

plishments, Israel as the innovation state, and prospects for further advances.

At the same time, there was no escaping the current political turmoil in Israel. The multitude of demonstrations in Jerusalem and throughout the country fuelled a bevy of writings, interviews, and conversations manifesting a fear for the future. For the first time I heard the question will Israel be here to celebrate its 100th year, and will the State make another 75 years, etc.

I honestly do not share such a fear. Yes, we are in the midst of a political crisis. But like most others, I believe in Israel's democracy, it's strength by design, its base of Jewish values, and the citizenry's respect for those values and democratic principles.

Maybe as a result, perhaps because I realized that my "growing up" more or less matched Israel's 75 years, I found myself reflecting much more in a personal way around Yom HaAtzmaut.

visit and see their pictures.

However, truthfully, during my high school and college years, my focus was not so much on Israel. I was much more involved with school-related studies and activities, and on Jewish life. That all changed in 1969-70, post college, when I spent 10 months studying in Jerusalem and experiencing Israel from Haifa in the north to Eilat in the south, and especially throughout Jerusalem, its city center and the Old City.

It was just two years after the Six-Day War and the time was very different. We were often at the Kotel, the Western Wall, no longer called the Wailing Wall. We walked and shopped wherever and whenever in the Old City, as well as in Hebron, Bethlehem, Jenin and Tulkarem.

I remember Yom HaAtzmaut in 1970. It was celebrated very differently. Joyfully, we gathered in downtown Jerusalem, singing and dancing, with little As I reflected on Yom HaAtzmaut 2023 and Israel at 75, I reread "The Mystery of Theodor Herzl," an article published in "Mosaic Magazine" in January 2021 by Rick Richman, a scholar the final page of "The Jewish State," (published 1896) miraculously came true:

"I believe that a wondrous generation of Jews will spring into existence. The Maccabeans will rise again.... The Jews who wish for a state will have it.... And whatever we attempt there to accomplish for our own welfare, will react powerfully and beneficially for the good of humanity."

Amen, Theodor Herzl. I trust that today you are smiling.

Howard Weisband served as Assistant Executive Director (1975-77) and Executive Director (1977-84) of the Memphis Jewish Federation. Following Aliyah with his family in 1986, he served as Secretary General of the Jewish Agency for Israel through 1997, and then in other senior professional positions in Israel. Now retired, he and Kayla live in Jerusalem. He can be reached at hweisband@gmail.com **HW** 

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