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Hebrew Watchman

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Jewish Community Partners and Memphis Jewish Federation Welcome New Board Chairs



Marty Kelman JCP Board Chair

As a new fiscal year begins, Jewish Community Partners (JCP) is pleased to have Marty Kelman as incoming Board Chair. Memphis Jewish Federation (Federation) welcomes Scott Notowich as incoming Board Chair. Mr. Kelman and Mr. Notowich will serve alongside Jason Salomon, current Board Chair for Jewish Foundation of Memphis.

Mr. Kelman and Mr. Notowich are known throughout the Jewish and greater Memphis community for their leader-



Scott Notowich Federation Board Chair

ship and passion for volunteering, in the spirit of tzedakah.

Mr. Kelman is a founding partner and chairman at Kelman-Lazarov and is a senior financial advisor. As the son of Holocaust survivors, Mr. Kelman has served for more than 20 years on the international and local boards of Facing History and Ourselves. He is a longtime member and former chair of Federation's Holocaust Memorial Committee.

In addition to his new role as JCP

Board Chair, he also serves on the University of Memphis Alumni Board and the Vitalant Community Leadership Council. Mr. Kelman and his late wife, Dale, have one son. He enjoys traveling and being outdoors.

Mr. Notowich is senior vice-president at Highland Capital Management and is a former Board Chair at Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. He has been a longtime lay leader with Federation, holding several Executive Committee positions, including most recently that of Vice Chair, Israel & Overseas. He was Chair of Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund and founding Chair of Federation's Memphis-Shoham partnership. His wife, Jill, is an active Federation lay leader. They have three children – Joey, Samantha, and Deena.

During the 2023 Annual Meeting held June 21, Mr. Kelman thanked his predecessor, Scott Vogel, for his leadership and vision. He outlined his goals as incoming Chair, saying, "Our priorities include exploring opportunities in technology, using data to drive decision making and increasing financial transparency."

Mr. Kelman also shared his hopes for

the Jewish and greater Memphis community. "With the support of devoted and wise people, we can work together to not only make the Jewish community better, but also help our entire Memphis community reach new heights."

Mr. Notowich also began his Annual Meeting remarks with gratitude for the leaders that came before him and were mentors to him. He especially recognized outgoing Chair Cindy Finestone, saying "Cindy's thoughtfulness and consideration to the entire Jewish community is an exceptional way to lead."

Mr. Notowich also detailed his priorities as incoming Chair for Federation, including the cultivation of youth leadership and developing new ways to deepen Federation Board and executive committee engagement. In addition, he will lead the capital campaign to upgrade the Hillel facility at University of Memphis.

Laura Linder, President and CEO of Jewish Community Partners, said of Mr. Kelman and Mr. Notowich, "We are thrilled to have two wonderful Jewish community leaders as chairs for JCP and Federation. We look forward to working with Marty and Scott." **HW**

American Jewish Groups Celebrate Herzog's Speech to Congress



and actionable solutions to many of the issues that confront Israel." He called the speech "a potent symbol of the ironclad partnership between the U.S. and Israel, and how it has transformed the Middle East."

"President Herzog's address serves

The Jewish Federations of North America referred to the Israeli president's "warm reception across party lines," which it called "a testament to the relationship these two nations share and the eternal bonds that unite us."

Israeli President Isaac Herzog addresses a joint session of Congress in Washington, with Vice President Kamala Harris and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy in the background, July 19, 2023. Credit: Screenshot/C-SPAN

(JNS) – In an address to a joint session of Congress on July 18, Israeli President Isaac Herzog thanked U.S. legislators for their support of Israel and had harsh words for Iran, which he said is building "nuclear capabilities that pose a threat to the stability of the Middle East and beyond" and calls "to wipe Israel off the map."

The address drew praise from major American Jewish organizations.

Ted Deutch, CEO of the American Jewish Committee, called Herzog a "bridge-builder" who "offers pragmatic as a testament to the unwavering bond between the Israeli and American peoples," stated Harriet Schleifer and William Daroff, chair and CEO respectively of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "The timing of President Herzog's address highlights Israel's 75th anniversary, a moment to celebrate the nation's remarkable resilience and prosperity."

In a statement, the Jewish Federations of North America referred to the Israeli president's "warm reception today by members of Congress across party lines," which it called "a testament to the unique relationship these two nations share and the eternal bonds that unite us."

"Herzog's well-received speech, interrupted by applause and standing ovations, was a testament to his exemplary leadership and diplomacy and highlighted his commitment to fostering cooperation between Israel and the United States and to peace in the Middle East," B'nai B'rith International stated.

"We appreciate his pragmatic and forward-looking solutions to pressing issues, such as the threat posed by Iran to Israel, the Middle East and the world," B'nai B'rith added. "He said that the greatest challenge Israel and the U.S. face together is the Iranian nuclear threat, and he went on to stress that Iran is not trying to gain nuclear power for peaceful purposes." **HW**

Real Estate Gift Funds Livnah-Brown Family Philanthropy Through Jewish Foundation of Memphis



Rose Merry Brown and Aron Livnah

"Our feeling was to create something good from the tragedy of Segall's early death; something that truly offered a real benefit to others." ~ Rose Merry Brown, on the establishment of The Segall Livnah Memorial Fund.

Segall Livnah dreamed of becoming a pediatrician. When she was only 19, she enrolled in an undergraduate course that would be the foundation of her journey into pediatrics. But her life was tragically cut short, and she didn't have a chance to fulfill her dream.

Her father, the late Aron Livnah, often dreamed of doing something that would, in some measure, help to fulfill Segall's dream. Before his death in March 2022, Aron and his wife, Rose Merry Brown, met with the Jewish Foundation of Memphis to define their philanthropic legacy. With the help of the Foundation, Segall's dream took flight. Aron's estate plan included donating to the Jewish Foundation's JFM Realty a piece of property he owned on Brookhaven Circle. Working with a team of professional advisors, the property was sold, and the money generated is now in The Segall Livnah Memorial Fund at the Jewish Foundation and will be used to make Segall's and Aron's dreams come true.

During his life, Aron funded a plaque memorializing Segall, which is displayed next to the outdoor playground at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem. Segall's name also can be found in the hospital's children's ward, and in the Yarhzeit book inside the Hospital's synagogue beneath its famous Chagall windows. Now, with the help of the Jewish Foundation, others will benefit.

Rose Merry and her son, Jay Brown, are working with Sheri Gadberry, the Foundation's senior philanthropic officer and executive vice president, and Larry Schaffer, the Foundation's senior philanthropic advisor, so that The Segall Livnah Memorial Fund's assets will be carefully invested and managed while the fund is held at the Foundation. A yearly dollar amount will be earmarked for philanthropy and directed to a charity that will center around Segall's love for pediatrics.

"Aron was born and reared in Israel, and that's where his heart was," said Rose Merry. "If there is a special opportunity in Jerusalem, or Haifa where Aron was born, and particularly related in some way to pediatrics that would honor Segall, we will consider it."

Jay echoed Rose Merry's sentiments. "Working with Hadassah Hospital could be a good opportunity to memorialize both of them," said Jay. "And because we'll be able to make an annual gift, this will be something to look forward to at the end of each year, knowing we're helping someone, somewhere."

JFM Realty is the real estate arm of the Jewish Foundation. With a lesser-known profile than the Foundation's donor advised funds, JFM is a powerful philanthropic resource through which donors can transform gifts of tangible property into funds to support important charities while potentially providing important tax benefits to donor families. HW

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. July 28, 2023 / 10 Av, 5783	7:48 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. July 29, 2023 / 11 Av, 5783	8:47 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Va'etchana

Former ASBEE Yahrzeit Plaques **Available to Families**

Yahrzeit plaques from the former AS-BEE synagogue are available to families at no charge.

Some of the oldest yahrzeit plaques at the former ASBEE building were of people who passed in 1900. Some of the newest are from 2021 and perhaps early 2022. After the sale of the building,

boards were donated, and people bought plaques to fill up the boards.

To collect a plaque, please email asbeeplaque2023@gmail.com with the name of the relative(s) and date of death, if you have it. They will contact you when the plaques are available for pick up. HW



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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.

Monday July 31

Josh Goldin, with Hospice of Hope "Aging in Place!" This is one of the subjects of most interest to seniors and their families! We hope you join us for lunch, however if you can't, you can call and sign up for just the talk at 901-761-0810.

Wednesday August 2

"August Super Bingo"!!

Special Games and Prizes!! Please come join us for lunch or Just for Bingo!

Please join us from Monday through Friday for a delicious Kosher lunch at 11:30 a.m., 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, Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org or by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810

NBC Releases Unaired 'American Ninja Warrior' Footage of Orthodox Competitor Cut After Shabbat Opt-Out



Members of the Jewish Inspiration Foundation on the set of "American Ninja Warrior." From left to right: Chaya Ruth Weberman, Eli Casper, Ari Cohen, Esther Schwab and Aydra Jones. Credit: Leah Cohen

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) –When Michael Neuman found out his run on this season of the NBC obstacle course competition show "American Ninja Warrior" would not air, the competitor inside of him was crushed. Part of the filming schedule had conflicted with his Shabbat observance.

But Neuman was even more disappointed that he would not get to keep any footage from the show. Neuman, a 30-year-old psychotherapist from Miami Beach, had arranged to bring three young people from his Jewish Inspiration Foundation – which supports Jewish youth with physical challenges through sports – onto the show with him. Their parents were counting on keeping the footage of their family members on the obstacle course sidelines as a keepsake of a bright moment in their lives.

Now, just over two weeks after a Jew-

ish Telegraphic Agency article about their story, the show has given Neuman and the families he brought on set a 47-second montage clip from Neuman's time on the show. In an email reviewed by JTA, a producer alluded to the article and commended Neuman for his foundation's work.

"I'm so appreciative to 'American Ninja Warrior' for releasing the clip to us," Neuman told JTA. "I think it means a lot more than just a clip from the show. It means people care, and we are all in this together as humans."

He added that having the video "means the world" to the families. "It's so impactful and so inspiring that [the show] would do something so generous," he said.

Neuman's cohort of young adults was put up in a five-star hotel at Universal Studios, served kosher food and participated in promotional filming for the show. When Neuman competed in the show's obstacle course – a run that would initially earn him a spot in the semifinals – they cheered him on from the sidelines. Although he falls, Neuman placed within the top 12 after initial episodes and had moved on to the late round.

But Neuman, an Orthodox Jew, ultimately forfeited his spot in the semifinals because filming for the episode fell on Shabbat. As a result, he was later cut entirely from the show, along with the footage of his fan section.

Leah Cohen, who traveled to Los Angeles with her son, Ari, who has the rare chromosomal disorder mosaic trisomy 9, appealed to one of the show's producers to share the footage with the foundation.

"I said, 'Listen, you guys made a decision not to air [Michael]. I don't know why you did that. But that's your thing," Cohen recounted to JTA. "But at least share those pictures with us. I can't fathom that that's out there and one day when my son, God forbid, is not here, to know that those pictures and those videos are out there, and I won't be able to have any comfort in looking at them and seeing them and being proud of them."" Sam Bullard, a supervising producer for "American Ninja Warrior," told JTA last month that Neuman was "cut for time" and that it's "standard practice" to remove contestants in post-production. He said NBC would not release the footage Cohen said she was "shocked" to hear that NBC had changed its mind. "What I saw brought me back to one of the happiest moments of my life," she said about the video. "It's showing the world that there are people who care about you and who are exhibiting kindness." HW

"Talmud is for Everyone" Course at Or Chadash

The Adult Education committee of Or Chadash Conservative Synagogue is pleased to announce the continuation through the upcoming year 5784 of its weekly "Talmud is for Everyone" series.

Begun in response to a grass-roots request for an introductory course in Judaism's foundational body of sacred literature, the streamed sessions are now available to everyone by merely "dropping in."

According to Rabbi Cantor David Julian, "what began as a brief, cursory exploration of its history and structure is now a serious study program, carefully probing texts and commentaries, relating ancient Rabbinic thought and Halachot to modern life's challenges and decision making. Thankfully the recent publication of the Koren Talmud Bavli, with exquisite commentary by Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz, has given the lay and scholarly Judaica 'knowledge seeker' a never-before-possible entrée to Talmudic learning."

While ownership of the Koren edition of the tractate being studied is highly recommended, any edition will suffice.

Zoomeetings take place on non-holiday Sunday mornings, 9:45-10:30 a.m.; no "prior experience" needed.

To join, enter this Zoom link: https:// us02web.zoom.us/j/3016030523, and the host will admit you from the Zoom waiting room. Questions? Please call Or Chadash at 901-435-6353. **HW**

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Herzog, Harris Unveil \$70 Million Climate-Tech Partnernship



Israeli President Isaac Herzog and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris discuss a new climate initiative at the White House complex on July 19, 2023. Credit: YouTube.

By Mike Wagenheim

(JNS) - Ahead of a one-on-one meeting on July 19 at the White House, Israeli President Isaac Herzog and U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris unveiled a new climate technology partnership, which will draw up to \$70 million of U.S. and Israeli investment to support climate-healthy agriculture and use new technologies to protect critical Middle East and Africa water resources.

"We are harnessing today the broad infrastructure of our cooperation to introduce a new joint initiative to address a primary challenge of our time," said Herzog. He said the implications of the "climate crisis" were "far reaching," with repercussions for all.

The two leaders announced the partnership at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building, which is part of the White House complex.

Harris noted that she had toured Israeli desalination plants when she last visited the country, calling Israel's advances in the field "a model for the rest of the globe, in terms of how we use the best of innovation and science and technology to preserve some of our Earth's most natural and precious resources."

She told Herzog: "The work that you have done has inspired so many here in the United States as well."

The partnership, which Harris said could extend to Negev Forum countries or India via the I2U2 forum, could expand access for farmers and innovators to certain Israeli and U.S. technological tools or mobile applications, investment in training, technical assistance and education, according to Harris.

"This investment in innovative solutions for sustainable food production and water use augments existing cooperation between our two countries and will help build resilient food systems and address the climate crisis around the

globe," said the vice president.

Herzog told reporters that he had predicted Harris's political ascent when he met the then-U.S. senator in Jerusalem in 2017. "I'm so happy I was right," he said.

The two have spoken by phone four times since Herzog became president in 2021.

Iran threat, judicial reform

At their meeting, Herzog and Harris also discussed the Iranian threat, Israeli normalization with Arab and Muslim countries, the volatile security situation in Judea and Samaria and the need to combat antisemitism, according to a White House official.

Harris said that countering Iran was the "highest priority."

Harris repeated the refrain of an "unbreakable" U.S.-Israel bond, and emphasized Washington's "ironclad" commitment to Israeli security, however, she touched on a pair of sore points.

She emphasized the need to "strengthen our respective democracies and democratic institutions," an apparent reference to Israeli judicial reform, which the White House has criticized harshly and extensively.

Harris also made reference to the "work we will do to ensure Israelis and Palestinians can live safely and securely and enjoy equal measures of freedom, prosperity and democracy," also a common Biden administration refrain.

Earlier in the day, Herzog had addressed judicial reform head-on in his address to the joint session of Congress, likening the internal debate in Israel to those in the United States in recent years. "I have great confidence in Israeli democracy. Although we are working through sour issues, just like you, I know our democracy is strong and resilient," he told Congress.

Herzog has largely avoided the Pales-

In a First, Moroccan King Invites Netanyahu to Visit



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his wife, Sara, celebrate Mimouna, a Jewish-Moroccan celebration marking the end of Passover. Credit: GPO

(JNS) - King Mohammed VI of Morocco has invited Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to visit the North African country, the Prime Minister's Office announced last Wednesday evening. "The invitation was issued in a warm personal letter in which the king thanked the State of Israel for its willingness to recognize Morocco's sovereignty in Western Sahara," the prime minister stated.

A visit by Netanyahu would "open up new possibilities for strengthening relations between our countries," wrote the Moroccan king, according to the PMO.

Israeli National Security Advisor Tzachi Hanegbi and Moroccan Foreign Affairs Minister Nasser Bourita will coordinate a date for Netanyahu's first-ever visit to the kingdom.

Last Wednesday's invitation came after Israel officially recognized Moroccan sovereignty over the disputed Westposition with "the United Nations, to regional and international organizations of which Israel is a member and to all countries with which Israel maintains diplomatic relations."

Netanyahu also informed the king that his government is mulling opening a consulate in the coastal city of Dakhla as part of the move, according to news reports.

"I welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu's announcement on the recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over Western Sahara," said Foreign Minister Eli Cohen, adding that the step would "strengthen the relations between the countries."

tinian issue during his time in Washington, except when discussing Palestinian terror preventing progress in a peace process.

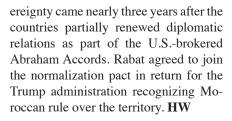
Visa waiver program

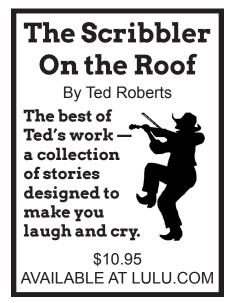
On the same day Herzog and Harris unveiled the climate partnership, Israel announced that it will change its travel procedures for U.S. citizens who are listed on the Palestinian population registry. Starting on July 20, such individuals will be able to travel through all Israeli points of entry, including Ben Gurion Airport, and like other U.S. citizens, remain in Israel for up to 90 days.

Ben Gurion Airport had been off-limits to Palestinians, who had to travel to Jordan and then fly in and out of Amman. The change brings Israel closer to qualifying for the coveted U.S. Visa Waiver Program, which requires reciprocity. Under the program's terms, all participating countries' citizens can travel visa-free to the United States in exchange for the same courtesy applied to U.S. citizens traveling abroad.

"We understand that these changes are designed to ensure equal treatment for all U.S. citizens, without regard to national origin, religion or ethnicity," the U.S. State Department stated. "The department is working closely with the government of Israel in its efforts to meet those requirements, in furtherance of our shared goal that Israel join the Visa Waiver Program when it meets all program requirements."

Washington will reportedly send a team of officials to Israel over the coming days and weeks to ensure Israeli compliance with the parameters of the memorandum of understanding on the issue, which the U.S. and Israeli ambassadors signed. If Israel doesn't comply with the program requirements by September 30, it would have to reapply for membership in the program. HW





ern Sahara region earlier in the week.

The king received a missive from Netanyahu last Monday in which the prime minister pledged to share his updated

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In response, Morocco announced that it would elevate its Tel Aviv mission to an embassy. A senior Moroccan government official told the Spanish EFE news agency that Rabat is "in the process" of establishing an official embassy in Israel following recognition of the disputed region, i24NEWS reported last Tuesday. Israel's recognition of Morocco's sov-



Beth Sholom Starts Its Backto-School Supply Drive



Coleman School students will start the year with fresh supplies, thanks to Beth Sholom's Back-to-School Supply Drive.

With tax-free weekend (July 28-30) quickly approaching, Beth Sholom's Tikkun Olam Committee is urging the community to help the 650 students at Coleman School in Raleigh start the year with the supplies they need to learn.

Coleman is a Title 1 school, which means that at least 40% of their students are from low-income households. 80% of the students qualify for free lunch and the school provides free breakfast to 100% of their students.

"It costs parents hundreds of dollars to buy uniforms, backpacks, pens, pencils, notebooks, and the many more items children need to complete their schoolwork," said Mindy Lipson, Chair of the Tikkun Olam Committee Coleman School Supplies Drive. "Sadly, parents at the Coleman School live on tight budgets and most do not have enough money to buy everything their children need."

Lipson encourages the Memphis community to drop off supplies at Beth Sholom by September 10 or to go online and donate at https://bsholom.shulcloud. com/form/coleman-supply23.html. **HW**

Johnny Bench Apologizes for 'Insensitive' Jewish Penny-Pinching Remark



Johnny Bench signs autographs in Houston in May 2014. Credit: Eric Enfermero via Wikimedia Commons

(JNS) – Johnny Bench, 75, who is widely considered the best catcher in professional baseball history, had his tive," he stated on July 16. "I apologized to Jennie for taking away from her father the full attention he deserves. Gabe Paul earned his place in the Reds Hall of Fame, same as the others who stood on that stage. I am sorry that some of the focus is on my inappropriate remark instead of solely on Gabe's achievement."

The now Hall of Famer's daughter has said that she didn't hear the original remark and that if she had, she would have said something. **HW**

Bar Mitzvah



Freddie Gold puts on Tefilin with his father, Jacob, at Camp Munk 30 days before his bar mitzvah.

Freddie Gold, son of Jacob and Lilly Gold, of New York City, will become a bar mitzvah on July 29. The festive weekend will begin with a Shabbat dinner on July 28.

On Saturday morning he will read Torah portion Va'etchana, the haftarah and speak at 5th Avenue Synagogue in New York.

Following will be a Kiddush lunch for family, including his grandparents, Nathan and Anna Gold of Lawrence, New York, and Eli and Rebecca Almo of Seattle, Washington; and aunts, uncles, cousins, friends who are able to leave camp, and the community. Later there will be a Seudah Shelishit.

Freddie is an eighth grader at Yeshiva Ketana of Manhattan, New York, and also studies once a week at the West Side Kollel. He is very athletic and plays basketball, baseball, hockey and golf.

He was named for his great-grandfather, Freddie Gold z"l, of Memphis, Tenn.

Freddie enjoys trips to Memphis with his parents and sisters, Rebecca and Deena, where he visits family and friends and pays his respects to all his great-grandparents who are buried there, including Freddie and Goldie Gold, both of blessed memory, and Meyer and Eva Rosenberg, both of blessed memory. **HW**





blooper over the weekend.

The Hall of Famer, who played 17 seasons for the Cincinnati Reds from 1967 to 1983, attended a Saturday event honoring the induction into the Hall of Fame of the team's former general manager Gabe Paul (who died in 1998), as well as former pitchers Danny Graves and Bronson Arroyo, ESPN reported.

Paul's daughter, Jennie Paul, and Pete Rose, a former Reds (and Philadelphia Phillies) player who has been banned from the Hall of Fame, attended the event.

Rose said that Gabe Paul signed him to a \$400 weekly contract in 1960 when Rose graduated high school. "That cheap, never mind," Jennie Paul said.

That's when Bench chimed in. "He was Jewish," Bench said, drawing laughter from some in the audience, according to ESPN.

Bench has since issued an apology. "I recognize my comment was insensi-

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Jason M. Goldstein Honored as Best of the Bar



Jason Goldstein

Jason M. Goldstein, a member of Harkavy Shainberg Kaplan PLC, has been honored as one of the city's top attorneys by Memphis' leading business publication.

"Memphis Business Journal" selected Goldstein to be featured in its 2023 Best of the Bar awards program in which the weekly newspaper highlights the city's top legal professionals. Only 15 Memphis attorneys were selected for the honor.

"Jason's selection for this honor affirms what we at Harkavy Shainberg and our clients have known for a long time. Jason is one of the best lawyers in the city," said Michael D. Kaplan, managing member of the law firm.

Goldstein's law practice focuses on civil litigation, business and corporate law, HOA representation and collections, landlord-tenant law, real estate law, and estate planning and probate.

He received his Juris Doctorate from the University of Miami School of Law in Coral Gables, Florida, and his Bachelor of Arts degree from George Washington University. He served as a law clerk in the Office of the Prosecution at the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague, Netherlands, and has business experience in the logistics and transportation sectors.

Harkavy Shainberg Kaplan PLC is a full-service law firm founded in 1963 that has developed a diverse client base, including individuals and family groups, sole proprietorships, financial institutions, large and small public and private corporations, partnerships, joint ventures, and limited liability companies. The firm's clients include various business sectors such as banking, manufacturing, real estate lending, distribution services, health care, real estate development, real estate management, construction, communications, wholesale and retail businesses.

For more information, please contact: Michael D. Kaplan, 901-866-5326, or mkaplan@harkavyshainberg.com **HW**



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In TV Speech, Netanyahu Stresses 'Zero Tolerance' for IDF Service Refusal



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addresses the anti-judicial reform protests that have rocked the Israel Defense Forces in recent weeks, July 20, 2023. Credit: GPO.

(JNS) – In a prime-time televised speech last Thursday evening, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the anti-judicial reform protests that have rocked the Israel Defense Forces in recent weeks, while vowing to "maintain everyone's rights."

Netanyahu spoke as hundreds of demonstrators gathered ahead of a march from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem as part of a "Night of Disruption" declared in protest of the Knesset's initial approval of a bill to limit the use by courts of the "reasonableness" standard.

Rebuffing critics of his proposed changes to the judicial system, Netanyahu posited that his amendment would "strengthen democracy and not endanger it."

"As prime minister of all citizens, I aspire to have a broad understanding regarding the amendment to the judicial system," said Netanyahu, explaining that his coalition made suggestions to the opposition for three consecutive months. "Even if we do not have a partner, the coalition exercises responsibility," he claimed.

"The coalition's door will always be open to the opposition and to you, the citizens of Israel. ... We are one people with one destiny. We have no other country. We are brothers."

The prime minister's speech came in response to the announcement by volunteer IDF reservists, including pilots, that they would not report for duty if the government continues to push through a bill to restrict the Supreme Court's ability to overturn laws and government decisions based on whether or not the judges think they were "reasonable." tution, Law and Justice Committee approved the bill for final readings. With nine lawmakers voting in favor and seven opposed, the amendment to Basic Law: The Judiciary will now head back to the plenum for the second and third readings needed for it to become law.

In last Thursday's speech, Netanyahu stated that he expects "zero tolerance" against the "very dangerous phenomenon" of refusing army service.

"In the past, many citizens objected to the Oslo Accords, the disengagement from Gush Katif [to] a government that was established by not adhering to promises ... and no one threatened to refuse service," he said, adding that "every responsible citizen must object to this."

Earlier last week, Netanyahu and IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi met with Defense Minister Yoav Gallant to discuss the issue of refusals to serve. In a statement, the Defense Ministry announced Gallant and Halevi briefed Netanyahu on the "security situation and the competence of the IDF."

"It is impossible for there to be a group within the army that threatens the elected government [and says] if you don't do as we wish, we will turn off the switch on security. ... No democratic country can accept such a dictate," Net-anyahu has said previously.

Last week, hundreds of reserve members declared they would continue to observe their responsibilities to the nation. "Our love for the homeland and the people of Israel is 10 times greater than any political consideration of one kind or another," the reservists wrote in a petition addressed to Halevi. **HW**



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Rayna Rose Exelbierd's Announces New Inspirational Book, "The Girl Who Wore Two Different Shoes"

Rayna Rose Exelbierd's Inspirational New Book, "The Girl Who Wore Two Different Shoes," Captivates Hearts with Heartwarming Illustrations Featuring Real People and Their Furry Friends; Emphasizes Lessons on Antisemitism and Diversity for Young Readers

Step into a world of warmth and enchantment with "The Girl Who Wore Two Different Shoes," the touching new book by native Memphian Rayna Rose Exelbierd. This heartwarming tale is beautifully illustrated, showcasing not only the diverse array of characters but also the special bond they share with their beloved furry friends. Some of these cherished companions are still by their side, while others have left an indelible mark on their hearts, leaving behind a legacy of love and fond memories.

At the heart of this captivating story lies a powerful message of inclusivity and understanding. As a dedicated educator, Rayna Rose Exelbierd infuses her lessons with important discussions on antisemitism, diversity, and acceptance. Through the pages of "The Girl Who Wore Two Different Shoes," young readers are gently guided to embrace differences, celebrate individuality, and stand against prejudice.

"We are excited to introduce 'The Girl Who Wore Two Different Shoes' to the world," says author Rayna Rose Exelbierd . "This book is not just a story; it is a celebration of life, love, and the everlasting bonds we form with both humans and our furry companions. By incorporating teachings about antisemitism and diversity, I hope to foster empathy and kindness in young hearts, empowering them to create a more compassionate world."

The book's illustrations beautifully depict these heartfelt connections, and readers of all ages are sure to be moved by the emotions they evoke. The engaging narrative and thoughtful exploration of important societal issues make "The Girl Who Wore Two Different Shoes" a must-have addition to any family's library or educational curriculum.

To immerse yourself in the magic of "The Girl Who Wore Two Different Shoes," visit TheRoseGrows.Com and order your copy today. This heartwarming tale is perfect for families, educators, and anyone who values the power of empathy and understanding.

But that's not all! Rayna is teaming up with businesses and foundations for an exciting book tour in the upcoming fall season. Through this partnership, they aim to promote values-based learning for children across the country, with a special focus on addressing antisemitism and embracing diversity. Businesses that care about nurturing a compassionate and empathetic future generation are invited to join the tour and help spread the message of love and acceptance.

Join Rayna on this incredible journey, and be a part of the movement to inspire young hearts and minds. For more information about the book tour or to explore partnership opportunities, please contact Rayna Rose Exelbierd, Rayna@ therosegrows.com, 813-641-4579.

About Rayna Rose Exelbierd:

Rayna Rose Exelbierd is known for her passion for storytelling, her love for animals, and her dedication to creating a more inclusive society. As an educator, she infuses her lessons with discussions on antisemitism and diversity, aiming to empower young minds with the tools to combat prejudice and discrimination. "The Girl Who Wore Two Different Shoes" is a testament to her commitment to teaching essential values and nurturing empathetic hearts in children. **HW**





Editor's Note: Our thanks go out to Rayna, whose caring soul and incredible messages touches hundreds of thousands of people. This photo (left) depicts my sweet, Tiki, who you may remember was viciously attacked by a pit bull in 2022 and crossed the rainbow bridge.





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How Taxes Impact Your Retirement-Income Strategy

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

Retirees face several unique challenges when managing their income, particularly when it comes to taxes. From understanding how taxes relate to Social Security and Medicare to determining when to tap taxable and tax-advantaged accounts, individuals must juggle a complicated mix of factors.

Social Security and Medicare

People are sometimes surprised to learn that a portion of Social Security income becomes federally taxable when combined income exceeds \$25,000 for single taxpayers and \$32,000 for married couples filing jointly. The taxable portion is up to 85% of benefits, depending on income and filing status.¹

In addition, the amount retirees pay in Medicare premiums each year is based on the modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) from two years earlier. In other words, the cost retirees pay for Medicare in 2023 is based on the MAGI reported on their 2021 returns.

Taxable, Tax-Deferred, or Tax-free?

Maintaining a mix of taxable, tax-deferred, and tax-free accounts offers flexibility in managing income each year. However, determining when and how to tap each type of account and asset can be tricky. Consider the following points:

Taxable accounts. Income from most dividends and fixed-income investments and gains from the sale of securities held 12 months or less are generally taxed at federal rates as high as 37%. By contrast, qualified dividends and gains from the sale of securities held longer than 12 months are generally taxed at lower capital gains rates, which max out at 20%.

Tax-deferred accounts. Distributions from traditional IRAs, traditional work-sponsored plans, and annuities are also generally subject to federal income tax. On the other hand, company stock held in a qualified work-sponsored plan is typically treated differently. Provided certain rules are followed, a portion of the stock's value is generally taxed at the capital gains rate, no matter when it's sold; however, if the stock is rolled into a traditional IRA, it loses this special tax treatment.²

Tax-free accounts. Qualified distributions from Roth accounts and Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) are tax-free and therefore will not affect Social Security taxability and Medicare premiums. Moreover, some types of fixed-income investments offer tax-free income at the federal and/or state levels.³

The Impact of RMDs

One income-management strategy retirees often follow is to tap taxable accounts in the earlier years of retirement in order to allow the other accounts to continue benefiting from tax-deferred growth. However, traditional IRAs and workplace plans cannot grow indefinitely. Account holders must begin taking minimum distributions after they reach age 73 (for those who reach age 72 after December 31, 2022). Depending on an account's total value, an RMD could bump an individual or couple into a higher tax bracket. (RMDs are not required from Roth IRAs and, beginning in 2024, work-based plan Roth accounts during the primary account holder's lifetime.)

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Let's Connect

Don't Forget State Taxes

State taxes are also a factor. Currently, seven states impose no income taxes, while New Hampshire taxes dividend and interest income and Washington taxes the capital gains of high earners. Twelve states tax at least a portion of a retiree's Social Security benefits.

Eye on Washington

Finally, both current and future retirees will want to monitor congressional actions over the next few years. That's because today's historically low marginal tax rates are scheduled to revert to higher levels in 2026, unless legislation is enacted (see table).

Tax Rates Scheduled to Rise

Unless legislation is enacted, federal marginal income tax rates are scheduled to rise in 2026.

Current rate	2026
10%	10%
12%	15%
22%	25%
24%	28%
32%	33%
35%	35%
37%	39.6%

Help Is Available

Putting together a retirement income strategy that strives to manage taxes is a complex task. Investors may want to seek the help of a qualified tax or financial professional before making any final decisions.⁴

1) Combined income is the sum of adjusted gross income, tax-exempt interest, and 50% of any Social Security benefits received.

2) Distributions from tax-deferred accounts and annuities prior to age $59\frac{1}{2}$ are subject to a 10% penalty, unless an exception applies.

3) A qualified distribution from a Roth account is one that is made after the account has been held for at least five years and the account holder reaches age 59½, dies, or becomes disabled. A distribution from an HSA is qualified provided it is used to pay for covered medical expenses (see IRS publication 502). Nonqualified distributions will be subject to regular income taxes and, possibly, penalties.

4) There is no guarantee that working with a financial professional will improve investment results.

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Netanyahu, Biden Speak as Herzog Heads to U.S.

(JNS) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a "warm and long" call with U.S. President Joe Biden last Monday, the Prime Minister's Office confirmed.

During the conversation, "President Biden invited Prime Minister Netanyahu to an upcoming meeting in the U.S.," Netanyahu said.

The call furthermore focused on issues related to strengthening the U.S.-Israel alliance, countering the Iranian threat, expanding regional peace, and promoting stability in Judea and Samaria.

Last Monday's call was also a chance for Biden to make clear his opposition to the judicial reform plans of Netanyahu's right-wing coalition, the Hebrew-language "Walla" news site reported earlier. "Prime Minister Netanyahu informed the U.S. President regarding the law that will be passed in the Knesset next week," the statement from Jerusalem said, referring to a proposal to restrict the use of the "reasonableness" standard by the Supreme Court. Netanyahu told Biden he would seek "broad consensus" over the summer regarding his effort to reform the country's judicial system. Biden has criticized Israel's government previously, crossing the line in the view of some critics when he weighed in on the country's domestic politics and expressing a hope that Netanyahu "walks away from" his judicial reform plans.

During the conversation, "President Biden invited Prime Minister Netanyahu to an upcoming meeting in the U.S.," Netanyahu said.

calling it "one of the most extreme" Israeli governments he's ever seen.

In May, it was reported that the Biden administration demanded that Israel shelve its judicial reform plans in exchange for American support for a normalization agreement with Saudi Ara-

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The U.S. president sharply criticized Netanyahu's coalition in a "CNN" interview with Fareed Zakaria on July 7,

bia.

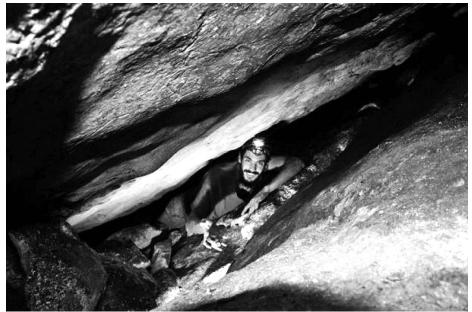
"Israel is a sovereign country, which makes its decisions by the will of its people and not based on pressures from abroad, including from the best of friends," the prime minister has said in response.

Biden had been criticized for not inviting Netanyahu to the White House since he returned to the Prime Minister's Office in December. Former U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman recently told JNS that Biden's failure to do so was "despicable."

The call took place shortly before President Isaac Herzog departed for Washington, where he visited the White House and addressed a joint session of Congress.

Herzog's trip to Washington and New York is meant to strengthen the ties between the two countries, "which are placed above all controversy," his office said. **HW**

Cave Near Beit Shemesh Possibly Used for Necromancy in Roman Times



Extricating an oil lamp from a crevice between boulders. Credit: B. Zissu/ Te'omim Cave Archaeological Project.

(JNS) - A local oracle may have used a cave near Beit Shemesh for sorcery, black magic and communicating with the dead some 1,700 years ago.

The theory about the goings-on at the Te'omim ("Twins") Cave located in the Jerusalem Hills follows the discovery of 120 intact oil lamps during an excavation last decade, most of which were dated to the second to fourth centuries C.E., researchers write in an article published this week in the "Harvard Theological Review."

The large and complex cave on the western edge of the Jerusalem Hills was first studied and mapped by British explorers in 1873. But it was over the last decade that archaeologists and other scholars found the lamps in the cave's inner chambers.

The lamps had been inserted into narrow, deep crevices in the main chamber walls or beneath the rubble. Some crevices contained groups of oil lamps mixed with weapons and pottery vessels from earlier periods or placed with human skulls.

The article by Eitan Klein of the Israel Antiquities Authority and Professor Boaz Zissu of Bar-Ilan University discusses the possibility that the oil lamps, weapons, human skulls and other artifacts were used as part of necromancy ceremonies that took place in the cave during the Late Roman period, and that the cave may have served as a local oracle.

The scholars concluded that their identification and analysis is an outstanding test case worth examining within the developing discipline of the "archaeology of magic."

Sections of the cave are open to the public from April to October free of charge, although not the interior sections where the latest finds were located. **HW**

The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Launches Education Program for Jewish Day Schools



Rabbi Sacks Legacy's Program Director Rabbi Jeremy Bruce Addresses Participants

Administrators and educators from 18 Jewish day schools - hailing from eight U.S. states, Canada and Mexico (including Bornblum Jewish Community School) - gathered this week for a high-level conference focused on incorporating Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks' cannon of work into the framework of their schools' curriculum. The course, titled Torah V'Chochmah, began with a five-day program hosted by The Rabbi Sacks Legacy at Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School for Girls and featured more than a dozen experiential education sessions led by some of the most innovative thought leaders in Jewish education globally.

A prolific educator and leader with a world-renowned ability to distill and communicate complex biblical text and Jewish philosophical concepts with audiences both learned and not, Rabbi Sacks passed away in November 2020. The impact Rabbi Sacks had on communities across the globe even transcended his title as Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, and he is perceived worldwide as one of the greatest Jewish educators of recent generations.

The curriculum development initiative comes as part of a multifaceted approach by The Rabbi Sacks Legacy to advance Jewish learning on a global scale by mainstreaming Rabbi Sacks' comprehensive philosophical teachings. This program's name "Torah V'Chochmah," comes from one of Rabbi Sacks' teachings wherein he said, "To be a Jewish leader means spending time to study both Torah and Chochmah: Chochmah to understand the world as it is, Torah to understand the world as it ought to be."

The program's goal is to give the teachers new insights and skills to enable them to build unique Judaic studies curricula in Chumash, Jewish philosophy and the weekly Torah reading. While there are many teacher training courses that provide either access to high quality content or approaches to improve the teaching of Judaic studies, for Girls in Teaneck, New Jersey; The Frisch School in Paramus, New Jersey; Rae Kushner Yeshiva High School in West Orange, New Jersey; SAR in the Bronx, New York; Barkai Yeshiva High School in Brooklyn, New York; Fuchs Mizrachi School in Cleveland, Ohio; Bornblum Jewish Community School in Memphis, Tennessee; Robert M. Beren Academy in Houston, Texas; Milwaukee Jewish Day School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Bnei Akiva Schools of Toronto; Hebrew Academy in Montreal; Netivot HaTorah Day School in Toronto; and Colegio Hebreo Maguen David and Yeshivat Emuna in Mexico City.

"Rabbi Sacks made profound contributions to Jewish learning and education. By infusing the Jewish day school curricula with his wisdom, his legacy will continue to inspire students of today, and future generations, broadening their understanding of Jewish values and their application to everyday life," said The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Chief Executive Joanna Benarroch. "By engaging in Torah V'Chochmah, educators are afforded a truly exceptional opportunity to combine their teaching practices with Rabbi Sacks' inspirational wisdom and enrich the educational experiences of their students. This initiative seeks to build a deeper understanding and appreciation of Judaic texts, promoting a vibrant and engaging learning environment within day schools across the region."

"Torah V'Chochmah offers a platform for day school educators to gather for a yearlong curriculum development program that brings Rabbi Sacks' inspirational teachings into the Judaic curricula of day schools across the United States, Canada, and Mexico," added Program Director Rabbi Jeremy Bruce. "This initiative will allow each school to personalize its curriculum to suit the needs and approach of their school community."

At the time of Rabbi Sacks' passing his professional initiative, the Office of Rabbi Sacks, transitioned to The Rabbi Sacks Legacy to perpetuate the timeless and universal wisdom of Rabbi Sacks as a teacher of Torah, a moral voice, and a leader of leaders. Through innovative programs and an active digital and social media presence, The Rabbi Sacks Legacy continues to bring the vision and philosophy of the world-renowned leader directly to generations to come. Akiva Weisinger attended the conference on behalf of Bornblum Jewish Community School. "In addition to the official program material and support for the curriculum based on Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z"l, which we will be working on over the course of the year, we will have the opportunity to get help from our peers and mentors," he said.

In Rebuke to Jayapal, U.S. House Passes Pro-Israel Resolution

(JNS) – The U.S. House of Representatives last Tuesday overwhelmingly passed a resolution affirming that Israel is "not a racist or apartheid state," in a rebuke to remarks Rep. Pramila Jayapal (D-Wash.) made the previous weekend.

The resolution introduced by Rep. August Pfluger (R-Texas) was approved by a vote of 412-9, with 195 Democrats joining all Republicans in voting yes. It also states that Congress rejects antisemitism and that the United States "will always be a staunch partner and supporter of Israel." Israel is "not a racist or apartheid state," the measure approved 412-9 reads.

Jayapal, the chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, also voted in support of the resolution.

The Democrats voting against the measure were Jamaal Bowman (N.Y.), Cori Bush (Mo.), André Carson (Ind.), Summer Lee (Pa.), Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (N.Y.), Ilhan Omar (Minn.), Ayanna Pressley (Mass.), Delia Ramirez (Ill.) and Rashida Tlaib (Mich.).

As protesters with Palestinian flags disrupted a keynote speech by Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-III.) at the Netroots Nation conference in Chicago last Saturday attended by several members of Congress, Jayapal sought to placate the Israel critics. "I want you to know that we have been fighting to make it clear that Israel is a racist state!" she said.

She has since walked back her comments, claiming that they were directed at the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and not the Jewish state.

Rep. David Kustoff (R-Tenn.) and Rep. Max Miller (R-Ohio) co-sponsored the resolution, which was supported by House leadership.

"Israel is the United States' strongest partner in the Middle East," Pfluger said ahead of the vote. "Representatives Pramila Jayapal's, Rashida Tlaib's and Ilhan Omar's repeated comments denigrating Israel are unacceptable and disgusting. I am proud to introduce this resolution ensuring all Americans know where their representatives stand when it comes to supporting Israel and our Jewish communities." **HW** this program achieves both.

The workshop sessions were led by an international team of senior educators and curriculum designers, including Rabbi David Stein of LaHaV Learning (California), Rabbi Dr. Zvi Grumet of The Lookstein Center (Israel), Dr. Yoel Finkelman of Israel, Rabbi Udi Dvorkin of Herzog Global (Israel) and Yolande Pieters of Etz Chaim Jewish Primary School (UK). The seminar, which included lectures and practical design workshops, covered topics such as "Introduction to Curriculum Design" and "Crafting Essential Questions."

Participating schools across the United States, Canada, and Mexico included Irvine Hebrew Day School in Irvine, California; Jean and Jerry Friedman Shalhevet High School in Los Angeles, California; Donna Klein Jewish Academy in Boca Raton, Florida; Katz Yeshiva High School in Boca Raton, Florida; Ma'ayanot Yeshiva High School

He also noted an unofficial benefit. "Being with all of these educators in one room, gave us the opportunity to network, talk and trade ideas," he explained.

To learn more visit: www.rabbisacks. org. **HW**

48 Years after Carving his House into a Cliff, Israeli Faces Eviction



Nissim Kahlon at home in Herzliya, July 16, 2023. Credit: Kobi Natan/TPS

By Pesach Benson

(JNS) – An Israeli man who literally carved a home for himself in a seaside cliff faces eviction after having lived there for nearly half a century.

"I really love the sea," said Nissim Kahlon. "I don't have money to buy a home."

Wearing a yellow T-shirt with a four-cornered fringed religious garment known as tzitzit on top and a large gray

knit skullcap, he showed this reporter around his home.

The residence is carved into a seaside cliff on the outskirts of the upscale city of Herzliya. What began as a 26-footwide room is now a warren of rooms, tunnels and stairs, decorated with seashells, wood, stones, glass and ceramics of all colors. Despite a heat wave, the house is surprisingly cool and airy. It is connected to electricity and plumbing, and the kitchen sports a gas stove.

Other than conversation, the only sounds were the tinkling of hanging decorations swaying in the breeze and the crashing of the waves.

The Environmental Protection Ministry recently served Kahlon, 77, with an eviction notice. The ministry says the home was built illegally and threatens the coastline.

In a statement, the Environmental Protection Ministry called the home "a significant environmental, and security, hazard, according to professional reviews on behalf of the Herzliya Municipality, which is subordinate to the ministry."

The statement added, "In the reviews that the Herzliya Municipality has released throughout the years it seems that the building is dangerous and that the cliff is falling apart. The municipality even informed the ministry that it has alternative accommodational solutions."

Explosions at an abandoned military facility near Kahlon's home have further weakened the cliff, the ministry said. Improperly stored gunpowder in an old ammunition factory exploded in June, leaving a crater in the ground. And in 1992, explosives at the facility blew up, killing two people.

Kahlon doesn't deny that he's been squatting. He was 29 when he first came to the cliff with a shovel and pick. But Khalon questions why authorities armed with an eviction notice didn't remove him in 1974.

"Fourteen cars came. Police, Border Police, city inspectors," he recalled. "I thought, 'Nissim, this is not your day."

They were there for half an hour without evicting Kahlon or demolishing the home. He wasn't given an explanation. "Thank God they left,' I said."

He also stresses that in 1992, the house was connected to electricity and water. The home does not have a telephone or internet connection, and people who want to reach Kahlon call a social worker who knows him.

The ministry and the Israel Land Authority reportedly intend to seal off the rooms he carved into the cliff.

Kahlon is appealing the eviction order. Family and friends began a crowdfunding campaign to cover his legal expenses.

Asked where he will go if authorities follow through on the eviction, Kahlon shrugs.

"I have no place to go," he said. HW

Netanyahu Ousts Likud Party Activist for Telling Protesters He Wishes 'Another 6 Million Would Burn'



Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu poses for a selfie with Itzik Zarka, a Likud activist, during a Likud Party faction meeting at the Knesset, Israel's parliament, on July 9, 2018. Credit: Hadas Parush/Flash90

By Ben Sales

TEL AVIV (JTA) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expelled a prominent activist from his Likud Party after the activist was filmed calling protesters "whores" and saying that he wishes "another six million would burn," a reference to the Holocaust.

The activist, Itzik Zarka, directed the epithets at protesters who were demonstrating last Saturday night against Netanyahu's effort to weaken the judiciary. His com

Weekly protests have occurred nationwide against the planned judicial overhaul, a key portion of which is set to advance to a final vote in the coming weeks.

"You whores, burn in hell, burn in hell," Zarka screamed at a demonstration near the northern Israeli city of Beit Shean. "It's not for nothing that six million went. I'm proud, I'm proud. I wish demned by a wide range of senior Likud politicians, were a crude allusion to a perceived ethnic split in Israel between supporters and opponents of the judicial overhaul, and to a longstanding grievance that supporters of the overhaul hope to address.

The vast majority of the country's founding left-wing elite was Ashkenazi, or Jews of European descent, and enacted discriminatory policies that disadvantaged Mizrahim, or Jews of Middle Eastern descent, particularly in the country's early decades. Correspondingly, Mizrahi voters have long formed a key part of the right-wing Likud's base, while the core of the country's shrinking left has historically been Ashkenazi.

Some supporters of the overhaul say that the Supreme Court is a holdout of an upper-class Ashkenazi elite, and that it wields disproportionate political sway. The overhaul's opponents, by contrast, say the proposed legislation sapping the Supreme Court's power will endanger Israeli democracy.

But for even the strongest proponents of the overhaul, Zarka's comments seemingly wishing for another Holocaust crossed the brightest of red lines. Zarka is a longtime Likud supporter who has been photographed with the party's leaders, including Netanyahu.

"We will not accept this kind of shameful conduct in the Likud movement," read a statement last Sunday from the party, which said Netanyahu ordered Zarka's ouster. "We forcefully condemn Itzik Zarka's words and completely distance ourselves from them. We will not accept or include shocking statements of this kind."

Yariv Levin, Israel's justice minister and the lead architect of the judicial overhaul, said in a statement that "there's no place for that type of behavior and comments, anywhere or in any context."

On his Facebook account, which features a photo of him kissing Netanyahu on the cheek, Zarka has repeatedly apologized for what he called his "terrible words." He wrote that he was accosted by protesters, that his words were taken out of context and that he is a descendant of a Holocaust survivor. He wrote that as penance, he would like to connect with a Holocaust survivor to provide them with company and food.

"I apologize in the name of all of the Jewish people in Israel and the Diaspora," he wrote. "We know what the Jews of European countries experienced in the Holocaust, and I apologize from the depths of my soul." **HW**

another six million would burn." His comments, which were con-

Twitter Users Target Israel 38 Times More than Iran



Illustrative photo. Credit: Pexels.

(JNS) – Twitter is heavily slanted against Israel, research presented to the Knesset suggests.

According to the study, titled "An-

tizionism, Antisemitism and The Polarization Pendulum" and carried out by the Network Contagion Research Institute in partnership with the Ruderman Family Foundation, Twitter users accuse the Jewish state of violating human rights more frequently than any other country.

The Network Contagion Research Institute analyzed almost 100 million tweets posted between Jan. 1, 2020, and June 30, 2022, and discovered that Israel is targeted 111 times more than North Korea, 55 times more than Russia, 38 times more than Iran, and 12 times more than China.

The Boston-based Ruderman Foundation presented its research during a meeting of the Knesset Caucus for Israel-American Jewry Relations on July 12. The report noted that the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) widely embraced working definition of antisemitism lists applying double standards to Israel as an example of contemporary Jew-hatred.

"Many people distinguish between anti-Zionism and antisemitism, but our research suggests that the tropes they use are nearly identical," Adam Sohn, CEO of the Network Contagion Research Institute, said. "The tropes of anti-Zionism are used to justify a larger attack against Jews everywhere, and we urge proper measures to be taken against it."

Ruderman Family Foundation Executive Director Shira Ruderman said, "[T]he fact that Israel is measured differently from other countries in the world, using a double standard, requires us to place the issue on the agenda and insist on change in the world arena.

"This issue crosses political lines and worldviews, and it is an opportunity for elected officials from all sides of the political spectrum to denounce the phenomenon," she added.

In April, Germany's Federal Justice Office began the process of fining Twitter, under the country's Network Enforcement Act, for failing to remove antisemitic hate speech.

Since Elon Musk took over Twitter late last year, there have been reports that antisemitism has increased on the platform and on other social-media networks. **HW**

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. Claims COVID Was 'Ethnically Targeted' To Avoid Ashkenazi Jews, Chinese People

By Ben Sales

(JTA) – Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., the vaccine conspiracy theorist and Democratic presidential candidate, is drawing criticism after arguing that COVID-19 had been "ethnically targeted" to have less of an effect on Ashkenazi Jews and Chinese people.

"COVID-19 is targeted to attack Caucasians and Black people," Kennedy said at an appearance last week at Tony's Di Napoli, a restaurant on Manhattan's East Side. "The people who are most immune are Ashkenazic Jews and Chinese. We don't know whether it was deliberately targeted or not, but there are papers out there that show the racial and ethnic differential of impact."

"There's an argument that it is ethnically targeted," he said immediately beforehand, according to the "New York Post," which published video of the remarks.

Kennedy, who is running a long-shot campaign for the Democratic nomination against President Joe Biden, is a flag-bearer for an anti-vaccination movement that has frequently invoked antisemitic rhetoric in arguing, against evidence, that vaccines are dangerous. He has questioned the established link between HIV and AIDS and also has been a leading proponent of the debunked claim that there is a link between vaccines and autism.

Since at least medieval times, conspiracy theories have falsely claimed that Jews have shielded themselves from plagues or been the cause of them. Similar antisemitic conspiracy theories flared during the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly as vaccines became available and their critics began comparing their use, and mandates requiring vaccination, to the Holocaust.

Last year, Kennedy apologized after invoking Anne Frank at an anti-vaccination rally in Washington, D.C., in a move that his wife, the actress Cheryl Hines, publicly denounced. But his anti-vaccination comparisons have drawn criticism for years. In 2015, he used the word "holocaust" to describe proposed legislation mandating vaccines for children and apologized after facing criticism from the Anti-Defamation League.

His latest comments, too, have drawn widespread criticism, including from Jewish leaders. American Jewish Committee CEO Ted Deutch said in a statement that Kennedy's remarks were "deeply offensive and incredibly dangerous."

"Every aspect of his comments reflects some of the most abhorrent antisemitic conspiracy theories throughout history and contributes to today's dangerous rise of antisemitism," Deutch said.

There is no evidence that any ethnic groups are less susceptible to COVID-19, which has killed nearly 7 million people worldwide. Public health experts say disparities in death rates in the United States reflect unequal access to health care and uptake of vaccines; meanwhile, Jews in the United States were hard-hit, particularly early in the pandemic, and some estimates suggest that 1 million Chinese people died of the disease in recent months. (China's official data is not considered reliable.) Kennedy did not detail which papers he was citing during his comments at the dinner, according to the "New York Post" report.

Last Saturday, Kennedy wrote on Twitter that the Post story was "mistaken" and claimed that he "never, ever suggested that the COVID-19 virus was targeted to spare Jews."

But later in the same post, he wrote that "COVID-19 appears to disproportionately affect certain races" and that it "serves as a kind of proof of concept for ethnically targeted bioweapons. I do not believe and never implied that the ethnic effect was deliberately engineered." He provided a link to a study that he said backed up his claims.

In a subsequent post, Kennedy said the "New York Post's" reporting, which he called a "disgusting fabrication," reflected antisemitism – something he said he is dedicated to combating.

"I understand the emotional pain that these inaccurate distortions and fabrications have caused to many Jews who recall the blood libels of poison wells and the deliberate spread of disease as the pretext for genocidal programs against their ancestors," he wrote. "My father and my uncles, John F. Kennedy and Senator Edward Kennedy, devoted enormous political energies during their careers to supporting Israel and fighting antisemitism. I intend to spend my political career making those family causes my priority."

Kennedy has Jewish defenders – including Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, the author and Republican political activist, as well as sports reporter and pro-Israel advocate Emily Austin. But his comments drew criticism from across the political spectrum. The "New York Post" reported that Morton Klein, the president of the right-wing Zionist Organization of America who is advising Kennedy on Israel policy and calls him a "good friend," said the candidate's claims were "crazy."

"This is crazy," Klein told the newspaper. "It makes no sense that they would do that. I read everything. I was totally against the vaccine. . . I wanted to convince myself it was correct not to take it. I have never seen anything like this."

Meanwhile, Amy Spitalnick, CEO of the left-leaning Jewish Council on Public Affairs, said in a statement that Kennedy was "using support for Israel to deflect criticism" and said that she was unsurprised but distressed by Kennedy's rhetoric.

"Antisemitism is at the core of countless conspiracy theories – including COVID and vaccine-related conspiracy theories – so it's no surprise that RFK Jr.'s presidential campaign has quickly descended into overt antisemitism," Spitalnick said. "His comments also illustrate the deep interconnection of antisemitism and anti-Asian hate at this moment. ... At a moment of increasingly normalized antisemitism, hate, and extremism, it's crucial that we call out these conspiracy theories and bigotry for what they are." **HW**

American Tourism to Israel Sees Significant Boost



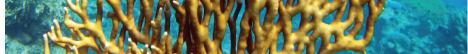
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A scuba diver swims in the Eilat Dolphin Reef. Credit: Asaf Zvuloni/Israel Nature and Parks Authority/Flash90.

(JNS) – After more than two years of sealed borders due to COVID, "people are traveling in droves, and we expect 2023 to be a banner year for Israel," said Eyal Carlin, the Jewish state's Commissioner of Tourism to North America.

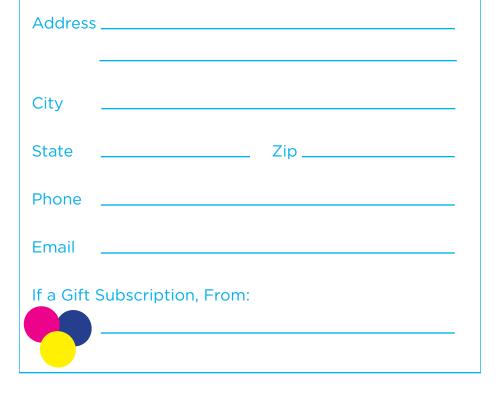
Carlin described new statistics showing the first six months of 2023 at 12% higher than the same time in 2019 as "extremely encouraging" and pointed out that during the final full year before the pandemic "was our best" so far.

Other countries with high levels of Israeli tourism include France, Russia, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy.

Carlin said Israel was "heavily investing in tourism," seeking to expand the country's number of hotel rooms and resorts. He also mentioned "new food, wine and spirits destinations add to the overall excitement along with our many outdoor adventure opportunities as well as arts and culture experiences."

He also pointed out that while many tourists first come for the holy and ancient sites, others return to experience less well-known sites.

"Forbes" senior editor Christopher Elliott agreed with Carlin's assessment. He said that while tourists want to see the religious sites, they're also interested in wine experiences in the Galilee and Negev; meals and sleepovers at a Bedouin camp; an international jazz festival; and scuba instruction at underwater excavations. **HW**



'Barbie' Director Greta Gerwig Wants the Movie's Viewers to 'Feel Like I Did at Shabbat Dinner'



Greta Gerwig attends the world premiere of "Barbie" at Shrine Auditorium and Expo Hall in Los Angeles, July 9, 2023. Credit: Frazer Harrison/ FilmMagic via Getty Images

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – Barbie the doll has a deep Jewish history. Now, the creator of "Barbie" the movie hopes watching the film will also evoke a deep Jewish experience.

Greta Gerwig, who conceived and directed the buzzy live-action film re-

leased this month, told "The New York Times" that she hopes watching the movie will be a quasi-spiritual activity for its viewers. The feeling she wants to achieve, she said, is the same one she felt as a child when she was a guest at the Shabbat dinners of close family friends who were observant Jews.

At those dinners, she recalled, the father would include Gerwig as he blessed the children, a traditional element of Shabbat ritual. (Gerwig's own family was Unitarian Universalist, and she attended a Catholic high school, a period of her life that inspired her 2017 film "Lady Bird.")

"I remember feeling the sense of, "Whatever your wins and losses were for the week, whatever you did or you didn't do, when you come to this table, your value has nothing to do with that," Gerwig told "The New York Times" of the Shabbat dinners.

"I remember feeling so safe in that and feeling so, like, enough," she said. "I want people to feel like I did at Shabbat dinner. ... I want them to get blessed."

Gerwig is winning acclaim for transforming Barbie from a stagnant symbol of capitalism and women's oppression into a canvas for exploring self-discovery, through an accidental jaunt from the toy world into the real one. The movie's lead writer, Noah Baumbach, is Gerwig's Jewish partner and co-parent. Its stars include Jewish actress Rhea Per-Iman as the doll's real-life Jewish creator, Ruth Handler.

The movie is the first for Mattel, the toy company that Handler and her husband grew into an empire. Mattel has always closely guarded the Barbie brand, but under the leadership of the Israeli-American Ynon Kreiz, who has served as its CEO since 2018, it is loosening the reins. The company has embarked on more than 100 brand partnerships in conjunction with the movie, including with the Israeli ice cream chain Golda, that are expected to generate billions of dollars in revenue. Other toy-spinoff movies are in the works. **HW**

Jewish 'Stranger Things' Star Noah Schnapp Visits Israel



Noah Schnapp attends the 26th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards at The Shrine Auditorium on January 19, 2020 in Los Angeles, California. Credit: Kevin Mazur/Getty Images for Turner

By Lior Zaltzman

A version of this article originally appeared on "Kveller."

Jewish actor Noah Schnapp, who plays Will Byers on the Netflix hit "Stranger Things," is currently in Israel, where he appears to have been hounded by some fans and paparazzi.

The actor, 18, shared a picture from the Western Wall on his Instagram stories, captioning it: "learning so much about my culture. So inspiring."

Schnapp, whose parents are both Jewish, was seen wearing a kippah on his head and teffilfin wrapped on his arms. Schnapp was on a tour of the city organized by Aish Global, an Orthodox outreach organization, along with fashion influencer Moti Ankari and actress and producer Rachel Katsner.

Schnapp, now 18, who has both Russian and Moroccan Jewish roots, was also seen enjoying Tel Aviv and bopping to a song by Israeli singer Mergui. "In love with this place," he wrote in one Tel Aviv photo he posted in his stories, in which he's overlooking the Mediterranean at dusk on a city balcony.

This wasn't Schnapp's first visit in Israel – the actor had his bar mitzvah there half a decade ago.

And while Schnapp's character in "Stranger Things" is not Jewish (even if his mom is played by Winona Ryder, née Horowitz), he did play a young Jewish boy in the 2019 movie "Abe" and a young shepherd helping smuggle Jewish refugees out of Nazi-occupied France in the 2020 movie "Waiting for Anya."

In "Abe," Schnapp's character blends the cuisines of his mother's Jewish family and his father's Palestinian parents to forge a truce between the feuding branches of his family tree. **HW**



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