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# THE Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

HEBREWWATCHMAN.COM 20 TISHREI, 5784 OCTOBER 5, 2023 VOL. 102, NO. 3

## Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein Selected for Spertus Institute Antisemitism Leadership Program



Federation Executive Vice President Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein

Memphis Jewish Federation Exec-

utive Vice President Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein was selected for the second cohort of Spertus Institute’s *Leadership Certificate in Combating Antisemitism*. Spertus Institute, a center for higher Jewish education headquartered in Chicago, recently launched this initiative to provide Jewish leaders with tools and training to respond to the troubling rise in antisemitism.

The initiative’s second cohort begins October 2023, when Ms. Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein will join 17 other U.S. and Canadian front-line leaders. They will work with experts for six months and learn how to respond to antisemitism with improved knowledge, strength, and skill.

“Being chosen for this initiative is an honor,” said Ms. Zuckerbrot-Finkel-

stein. “I am thrilled to join this national cohort of professionals who are all focused on addressing the toxic rise of antisemitism and look forward to exploring best practices and bringing it all back to our community.”

Memphis Jewish Federation’s (Federation) newly relaunched Community Relations Council has taken on addressing antisemitism as a primary focus. Ms. Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein’s participation in this initiative will enhance Federation efforts in this area. In addition to this training for Ms. Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein, Federation antisemitism initiatives include awarding microgrants to programs addressing antisemitism and building community ties through outreach to other faith-based and ethnic groups in Memphis.

Spertus Institute President and CEO Dr. Dean P. Bell explained why the *Leadership Certificate in Combating Antisemitism* is so critical, saying, “Rising antisemitism targets the very fabric of our communities. Combating antisemitism requires both a high-level of historical and contemporary knowledge about the issue and the development of determinative real-world skills.”

The mission of Memphis Jewish Federation is to develop a vibrant and sustained Jewish community in Memphis, Israel, and throughout the world. Federation helps nourish Jewish life through community grants, programs for the Memphis Jewish community and by supporting Jews in Israel and throughout the world.

To learn more, visit [jcmmemphis.org/federation](http://jcmmemphis.org/federation). **HW**

## Dozens Gather at Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab for Yom Kippur



Volunteers gather at the Home for Yom Kippur.

By Baylee Less

For the first time in three years, in-person High Holy Day services resumed at Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. A long-held tradition, the Home welcomed back volunteers, guests, and family members to observe the Yom Kippur in the Belz Synagogue.

Services were led by Rabbi Ilai Grunwald, Rosh Kollel of Kollel Torah MiTzion (KTM), and a group of fantastic volunteers joined for the entire day, including: Rabbi Grunwald’s wife, Sarit Grunwald, and their three children: Zimrat, Ganya, and Hodaya; additional members of Kollel Torah MiTzion: Tsfanya Sperling, Ori Yamini, and Yedidya Ariel; and students from MHAFYOS: Refael Bauer, Yehuda Weiss, Joshua Parcover, Tzvi Bleier, Elisha Pollak, and Tzvi Steiner.

“The members of Kollel Torah MiTzion had come to the Home for Yom Kippur for almost 20 consecutive years until the COVID pandemic, and it was always a most special highlight of their time in Memphis,” said David Cooper, the President of Kollel Torah MiTzion of Memphis. “Unfortunately, the pandemic prevented them from coming the past three years, so it was especially gratifying for the group to return this year for the first time since 2019. The beautiful experience of davening with the residents meant so much to each of them, and we trust it was also very special for the residents who were able to attend, as well as some of their family members who joined them.”

Cooper continued, “On behalf of

KTM, I would like to thank Maurice Buring, who is so dedicated to the Home and its residents and who makes sure the Kollel members feel so welcome and included in this Yom Kippur experience. He worries about every detail of their logistics to make sure they are comfortable and taken care of. And of course, a very huge thank you as well to Bobby Meadows and his extraordinary team at the Home, who do so much to make sure the Kollel members are well taken care of for the holiday, and that they are very well fed before and after the fast. Our community is so blessed to have Bobby and his team managing the Memphis Jewish Home and making sure all of its

(See MJHR Page 2)

## Calls Grow to Remove Memorial to Ukrainian Nazi Collaborators in Philly-Area Cemetery

(JNS) – The gray stone cross with sharp, pointed edges standing amid other graves had escaped attention for more than 30 years.

The Philadelphia-area Jewish community has recently learned about a monument in St. Mary’s Ukrainian Catholic Cemetery in the suburb of Elkins Park that honors members of the Ukrainian Waffen S.S. Division.

In response, Marcia Bronstein, regional director of American Jewish Committee (AJC) Philadelphia/Southern New Jersey, said: “We really do look forward to being partners and exploring how best they can condemn this and how they can remove this statue that is so painful to the Jewish community.”

The cemetery has not yet responded, redirecting queries to the Ukrainian Catholic Arch Diocese.

The memorial appears to have been installed shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The AJC identifies it as part of a trend wherein formerly Communist countries seek to honor historical figures who fought against communism while whitewashing collaboration with German Nazis during World War II. **HW**



MJHR...  
(Continued From Page 1)



Rabbi Grunwald leads the congregation in kiddush.



The Home's Chef Rod with his fabulous ice sculpture

residents are so well provided for.”

Staff at Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab were also exceedingly thrilled to be back, and they showed it with a Break Fast spread fit for kings and queens. One of the chefs created an ice sculpture for the buffet and vegetable flowers for the tables – it was truly a sight to see.

Maurice Buring told us, “It was just so fantastic to be back. The whole day was so spiritual, and the residents enjoyed it so much too. All of the volunteers did such a great job leading and participating in the services. This Yom Kippur was so meaningful, I could barely sleep!”

Annually, community members are welcome to attend services at the Home,

and the organization is grateful to all those who come to observe the holidays with the residents. The singing, praying, and overall energy from the High Holy Days truly lift the residents’ spirits and help them feel more closely connected to the Memphis Jewish community.

Jewish holidays and activities at the Home are generously funded by the Ben and Larisa Baer Jewish Activities Fund at Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. Only through the help of generous donors is the organization able to care for those in need. Find more information at [www.memphisjewishhome.org/](http://www.memphisjewishhome.org/) giving or by reaching out to Director of Development Baylee Less at [bless@memphisjewishhome.org](mailto:bless@memphisjewishhome.org). **HW**





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10/5/2023




**Memphis Candlelighting Time**

Erev Shabbat, Fri. October 6, 2023 / 21 Tishrei, 5784 .....6:19 p.m.  
Havdalah, Sat. October 7, 2023 / 22 Tishrei, 5784 ..... 7:13 p.m.

**Shemini Atzeret**

**OBITUARY**



**Ida Leigh Levy Wener**

Ida Leigh Levy Wener, born June 29, 1939, in Houston Texas, died Saturday, September 23, 2023, at her home. She was 84.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Monte Wener, her sister, Marilyn Haas, her mother, Sarabess Malkin Levy, her father, Alvin Levy, and her great-aunt, Rosabel Malkin Strauch.

She is survived by her daughters, Cynthia Wener Brown, Sharon Wener Fielder (Tim), Sharon Butler, her granddaughter, Magen Fielder Hall (Justin), and her great-granddaughter, Emy Leigh Hall.

She was a member of Temple Israel. Her interests included walking on the beach, gardening, going on cruises, fishing and loving her family.

The family held a private service.

The family requests that in lieu of flowers that donations be sent to a charity of your choice. **HW**

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# U.S. Attorney General Invokes Jewish Ancestry, Holocaust in Testimony



**U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland testifies before the House Judiciary Committee on Sept. 20, 2023. Source: CBS/YouTube.**

JNS – U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland is facing criticism following his testimony for a Judiciary Committee hearing on Sept. 20 titled “Oversight of the U.S. Department of Justice” during which he was visibly emotional on several occasions.

The committee, chaired by Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), sought in the hearing to examine how the U.S. Justice Department “has become politicized and weaponized under the leadership of Attorney General Merrick Garland.”

Garland noted his Jewish ancestry in his opening statement. “My family fled religious persecution in Eastern Europe at the start of the 20th century. My grandmother, who was one of five children born in what is now Belarus, made it to the United States, as did two of her siblings,” he said. “The other two did not. Those two were killed in the Holocaust.”

“There is little doubt that, but for America, the same thing would have happened to my grandmother,” he added. His grandmother was safe in the United States, Garland said. “That protection is what distinguishes this country from so many others. The protection of law – the rule of law – is the foundation of our system of government.”

Later in the hearing, Rep. Jeff Van Drew (R-N.J.) asked Garland if he agreed, as an FBI memo indicated, that traditional Catholics are violent extremists. Visibly emotional, the attorney general said: “The idea that someone with my family background would discriminate against any religion is so outrageous – so absurd!”

The exchange “reflected his growing frustration with relentless attacks on his department from the right,” “The New York Times” reported of Garland. “While some of the questions hurled at him [last] Wednesday were an attempt to pry free information, many were overtly partisan or based on distortion, insinuation and misinformation.”

The “Daily Mail” added that Garland “got choked up and tears came to his eyes when discussing his ancestry.”

Others, including those in the hearing, saw Garland’s responses differently. Rep. Victoria Spartz (R-Ind.), who was born in the former Soviet Union, told Garland that he “had a very moving statement about your grandparents coming here from Belarus to live in the country without fear of prosecution.”

“I grew up in [a] very similar country – Ukraine now – and when I came here as a young person, I believed in the value as an American not to be afraid of

my government,” she said. “But I wanted to tell you, and I want to share with you and get your thoughts on that: Are you aware that a lot of Americans are now afraid of being prosecuted by your department?”

“One has nothing to do with the other” Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) also criticized the attorney general on social media and on his podcast. “He will not give a straight answer to anything,” Cruz said. “He is the legal equivalent of Anthony Fauci. Fauci says, ‘I am the science.’ Merrick Garland’s response is essentially, ‘I am the law.’ And they’re both wrong.”

“Fine words from Merrick Garland about his commitment to the rule of law based on his family’s persecution in the Holocaust,” the journalist Miranda Devine wrote. “But they ring hollow in light of the actions of his DOJ.”

Bryan Leib, executive director of CASEPAC, told JNS that his grandfather’s wife and three children were killed in the Holocaust.

“I am the end result of my grandfather starting over and coming to the United States to start a new life,” he said. “I was appalled to watch Garland invoke the Holocaust during a hearing about the weaponization of the Department of Justice. One has nothing to do with the other.”

Leib noted Spartz’s comment that many Americans fear the federal government.

“That is unacceptable. When parents speak out at school board meetings to protest the content being taught to their children, they should not be labeled as domestic terrorists,” he told JNS. “They

should be celebrated for taking a stand, but that’s not what is happening.”

If Garland “is so keen to invoke his Jew card, what is he doing to use federal resources to shut down the Goyim Defense League that is prevalent here in my home state of Florida?” Leib added. “What is he doing to utilize federal resources to crack down on the sharp rise of antisemitism over the last couple of years?”

Leib questioned whether Garland has ever publicly addressed antisemitism or the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance’s (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, or has visited Israel as the U.S. attorney general.

If Garland “wants to invoke the memory of the 6 million Jews who perished in the Holocaust, perhaps he should be taking some tangible steps to improve the American people’s trust in our federal government with transparency and showing some actual support for the Jewish community in America by taking a strong and public stance about antisemitism in America,” Leib said. **HW**

## Study Shows Right-Wing Extremist Attitudes on the Rise in Germany

**By Toby Axelrod**

(JTA) – A new survey by a political think tank shows a major increase in right-wing extremist and antisemitic attitudes in Germany.

The study published last Thursday indicates that 8% of people in Germany have a right-wing extremist worldview, up from 2-3% in previous years. It was commissioned by the Friedrich Ebert Foundation, which is associated with Germany’s center-left Social Democratic Party.

An antisemitic worldview is held by 5.7% of respondents, up from 1.7% two years ago, and 3.3% in the previous survey. The number of those who totally rejected antisemitism dropped to 79.9 % from 88% and 86.8% in the previous two studies. In recent decades, many surveys of antisemitic attitudes in Germany and elsewhere in Europe have shown similar levels.

Six percent of respondents liked the idea of a dictatorship, up from 2-4% in previous years. More people identify as right or right of center: 15.5 % compared to 10% in the previous two studies.

Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Chairman Martin Schulz told German media that evidently “part of [German] society has less and less trust in democracy and feels threatened socially and economically.” He suggested that it was important to stand up to the right-leaning trend as represented by the rising popularity of the anti-immigrant, anti-European Union Alternative for Germany (AfD) party in polls.

The study came days after more than 40 gravestones were overturned in a Jewish section of the town cemetery of Köthen, in the former East German state of Saxony-Anhalt. The vandalism that took place between Sept. 15 and 19 is under police investigation.

As yet, police have no information about the perpetrators, but restoration costs are estimated at 20,000 euros, or at least \$21,300. **HW**

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# Police Arrest Suspect for Setting Fire to Sukkahs in Ashdod



**The Israel Police arrested a man suspected of setting several sukkahs on fire in the southern city of Ashdod, Sept. 28, 2023. Credit: Israel Police**

(JNS) – The Israel Police last Thursday arrested a man suspected of setting several sukkahs on fire overnight in the southern city of Ashdod.

Local residents had reported the incident to authorities, and the suspect, 30, was subsequently identified and arrested while attempting to steal alcohol from a store.

Police hailed the “swift response” to the incident, and said forces were deployed to uphold “personal security and responsiveness...during the High Holidays.”

Last Tuesday, Israel Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai warned that the country’s security services are confronting “dozens” of Palestinian terrorist plots every day ahead of the upcoming Sukkot holiday.

“We are still very much on alert for the Tishrei holidays, with dozens of warnings and intentions to carry out terrorist attacks [being detected],” Shabtai

said during a briefing with senior police staff.

The week-long Sukkot festival [started] at sundown last Friday and will see tens and thousands of Jewish worshippers flock to the Western Wall in Jerusalem for the traditional Priestly Blessing.

“I am asking everyone today to refresh procedures on the ground, for high vigilance, quick response to events and visibility and presence in crowded places. The general quiet is deceptive and can change in an instant,” Shabtai instructed officers.

On Sept. 13, in a press briefing ahead of Rosh Hashanah, Jerusalem District Police Commander Doron Turgeman first warned of “an increase in warnings and actionable threats of all types, also during the days of Selichot [penitential prayers], on weekdays and holidays.”

Every synagogue in Jerusalem will be guarded by armed security personnel this High Holiday season, Turgeman told reporters, adding that since the beginning of 2023, police have thwarted 31 attempted attacks in the holy city.

Special efforts are being made to maintain the fragile calm on the Temple Mount in the Old City, Judaism’s holiest site, which sees an uptick in Jewish pilgrims over the holiday season, said Turgeman.

Thousands of Israel Police officers, Border Police officers and security volunteers have been deployed to guard Israel’s holy places, recreational sites, parks, beaches and roads. **HW**

# Senior Adult Classes Will Soon be Restarting at the MJCC!



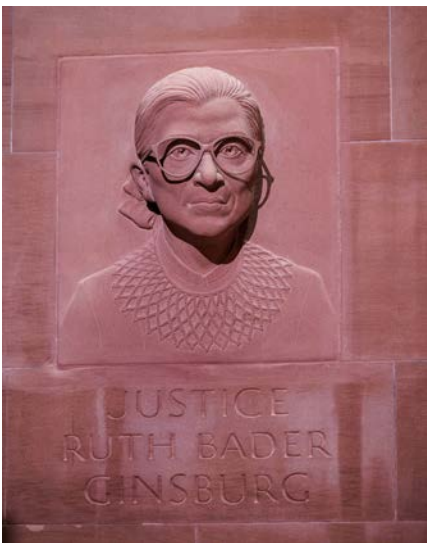
Starting on Tuesday, October 17, at 6 – 8 p.m., Mah Jongg will again be taught by Melanie Mann. Melanie has been teaching Mah Jongg for many years at the MJCC, as well as other places around town. Whether you are a beginner or relearning, Melanie can teach you this very popular game. A new Mah Jongg card is included in the class fee. Course number is 9823.

Beginning Bridge lessons will return on Thursday, October 26 taught by Debbie Jackson. Learn to play the world’s

greatest game. This class will teach you all the basics you need to start playing bridge like a pro! The class will be on Thursdays from 10 a.m. to noon. Course number is 9822.

The cost is the same for all courses: \$80 for nonmembers of the MJCC and only \$72 for members. Reservations can be made by either visiting or calling the MJCC front desk at 901-761-0810. Reservations are limited, so please make your reservations before they are sold out. **HW**

# New York State Capitol Unveils Relief Portrait of Ruth Bader Ginsburg



**A relief portrait of the late U.S. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg by artist Meredith Bergman. Credit: New York State Executive Chamber.**

(JNS) – Her iconic white lace collar translated in carved stone, the late Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg is now memorialized in the New York State Capitol in Albany, N.Y.

New York Gov. Kathy Hochul posted photos last Monday of the relief sculpture portrait created by artist Meredith Bergman, which now emanates from a wall near the capitol’s Great Western staircase. It was the first time in 125 years, she wrote, that a new portrait carving was added to the historic capitol building.

“Throughout her career, Ruth Bader Ginsburg served as a driving force for women’s rights and tirelessly fought against gender discrimination,” Hochul, a Democrat, said at the portrait unveiling.

“As the first woman to be elected as governor of New York State, I join the ranks of millions of women inspired by Justice Ginsburg’s wisdom and cour-

age,” she said. “Her portrait’s presence in the capitol will stand as a lasting reminder of her extraordinary legacy and New York State’s forefront position in the movements for women’s suffrage and rights.”

Ginsburg, who died at the age of 87 on Sept. 18, 2020 – right before the start of Rosh Hashanah that year – was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. She graduated from Cornell University in 1954 at the top of her class and was first in her graduating class at Columbia Law School in 1959. **HW**

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# Memphis BBYO Meet Mia Engelberg



Mia Engelberg

Hi, my name is Mia Engelberg, and I am Delta’s 76th Regional Sh’lichah. I am a member of River City BBG in Mem-

phis. I got involved in BBYO because I wanted to connect with other Jewish teens and further explore my Jewish identity. Once I joined BBYO, I quickly realized that I wanted to become more involved, so I began to run for leadership positions. Being a leader in BBYO gives me the opportunity to make a positive impact on my community and inspire others. I want to share this organization that has become my home with all Jewish teens. BBYO means so much to me and my Judaism because it provides a supportive and inclusive space where I can celebrate my heritage and create lifelong friendships. I sincerely value every friendship and connection I have made at BBYO. This is truly a place where I feel connected, empowered, and proud of my Jewish identity. **HW**

# Born From Shared Trauma, Local Nonprofit Builds a Brighter Future for Rwanda



Susan Moinester (right) with Hands of Mothers’ Rwandan Director, Yvonne Umwali, and some of the 160 children in the Education Initiative

By Melinda Lejman

The connection between the Jewish people, Israel, and Rwanda may not immediately be apparent, but it is a remarkable and powerful one. A key factor in this connection is the shared history of persecution and genocide. Jews have a deep understanding of the pain and trauma that Rwanda endured during the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi population wherein an estimated 800,000 people were brutally slaughtered – approximately 75% of the Tutsi population. This empathy has led to a strong commitment to supporting Rwanda in its journey towards healing and securing peace through building a more just and economically equitable nation.

Several Jewish organizations have played pivotal roles in Rwanda’s recovery. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) has been active in Rwanda, as have American Jewish World Service and World Jewish Relief, implementing programs that focus on education, healthcare, and economic development. Israeli expertise in various fields including agriculture, healthcare, and technology have been instrumental in Rwanda’s development. These initiatives are vital in rebuilding a society scarred by genocide, providing hope and opportunities for the Rwandan people.

A small organization that has made an outsized impact in the lives of women and children is based here in Memphis – Hands of Mothers (handsofmothers.org). Founded by second generation Holocaust survivor Susan Moinester and her daughters, Arielle and Margot, Hands of Mothers has been working in Rwanda since 2007. What began as a family Tikkun Olam project during Margot’s summer internship with the AIDS organization WE-ACTx has grown into an extremely cost-efficient nonprofit organization whose mission is to empower vulnerable women and girls through education and economic development. Among many other accomplishments, Hands of Mothers has helped to initiate and capacitate six craft and agricultural cooperatives containing over 200 women and young adults. Their Sex Work to Safe Work Initiative has provided path-

ways for sex workers living with HIV to establish legal and safe small businesses through the formation of Savings and Lending Groups, the provision of literacy, entrepreneurship training, and the extension of micro-loans.

According to Susan Moinester, “Hands of Mothers’ most forward reaching and important program is our Children’s Education Initiative. School in Rwanda is very expensive, and girls suffer disproportionately when families struggle to pay for school. Funded exclusively by private donations – mostly from here in Memphis – we pay school fees (including lunch) and provide uniforms, book, and supplies to 160 children in the WE-ACTx community who otherwise would not be able to attend school. The average cost per child is almost \$300 per year. Ninety-five percent (95%) of every dollar donated to Hands of Mothers goes directly into programming for children and women.”

Hands of Mothers’ 7th annual concert brunch will be held at Memphis Made Brewery’s new location in the Edge District and will feature Hope Clayburn – a local Soul-Jazz-Funk legend. Hope is “on a mission to move you” and will be bringing her Soul Scrimmage band. Brunch will include a scrumptious hot buffet by Big Bad Breakfast, unlimited Bloody Marys, Mimosas and, of course, a variety of Memphis Made beer!

Hands of Mothers is again blessed to be the recipient of a challenge grant to match gifts received by October 15, up to \$10,000. As in the past, all the funds raised will support education for vulnerable women and children in Rwanda.

To buy tickets, become a sponsor, or make a donation, visit handsofmothers.org.

“The connection of Jews to the people of Rwanda is truly a testament to the shared values of compassion, resilience, and the belief in the possibility of a better future,” shares Ms. Moinester.

Empowering women and children in Rwanda is a powerful way that we as Jews can exemplify our commitment to preventing future genocides and to promoting peace and justice worldwide.” **HW**



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## THE HEBREW WATCHMAN

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# Young Israel of Memphis Shares Rosh Hashanah Care Packages with U.S. Air Force Academy Cadets



Jewish U.S. Air Force Academy cadets receiving some of Young Israel of Memphis' Rosh Hashanah care packages.

By Rabbi Akiva Males

Do you remember how great it felt to receive a care package from home when you were away at camp or school? What if you were a U.S. Jewish serviceman/woman during the season of Yom Tovim (Jewish Holidays) – rather than a camper or student? Can you imagine how lonely it must feel to be away from family and friends during such a special time of the year? Now imagine how that Jewish man/woman in uniform would appreciate receiving a care package before Rosh Hashanah.

For the sixth year in a row, Young Israel (YI) of Memphis played a role in lifting the spirits of some of our coun-

try's brave Jewish troops, who were far away from a normal Yom Tov setting. Years ago, I got to know Rabbi Shaul Rapoport who was then serving as a Rabbi in a small Pennsylvania community. Since then, Rabbi Rapoport has "switched pulpits," and is now serving as a Chaplain in the U.S. Air Force (USAF).

In 2020, Chaplain Rapoport was reassigned to the U.S. Air Force Academy (USAFA) in Colorado Springs, Colorado. After contacting Captain (Rabbi) Rapoport at the beginning of August, I confirmed that he would be more than happy to once again distribute 'Shanah



Jewish U.S. Air Force Academy cadets receiving some of Young Israel of Memphis' Rosh Hashanah care packages.

Tovah care packages' to Jewish USAFA cadets on our behalf of our Shul.

Soon after, Captain (Rabbi) Rapoport informed that he had just received a new assignment and would be deployed to spend this year's Yom Tovim season at a U.S. airbase in Qatar. However, his wife, Michal, (in Colorado) would gladly share YI's Rosh Hashanah packages with the Jewish cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Just prior to Rosh Hashanah 5784/2023, in partnership with Memphis' own Ricki's Cookie Corner, YI sent Mrs. Michal Rapoport 36 Rosh Hashanah care packages of Ricki's signature cookies and challah rolls (along with other sweet treats and YI Shanah Tovah cards) to distribute to Jewish cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy. YI also sent a special gift of challahs and cookies for Mrs. Rapoport and her

children to enjoy over the Yom Tovim.

At a special pre-Rosh Hashanah gathering, Mrs. Rapoport distributed all the care packages to the very appreciative Jewish USAF Academy cadets. In a subsequent email to me (from Qatar), Captain Rapoport wrote:

"Cadets, Airmen and families joined together for a festive Yom Tov meal. Everyone absolutely loved the packages from Ricki's, and each recipient was so touched and grateful to know that a far-away Shul cares about – and was thinking about – them on Rosh Hashanah."

Young Israel of Memphis thanks Ricki's Cookie Corner ([www.rickiscookies.com](http://www.rickiscookies.com)) and each of the generous sponsors who brought this heart-warming project to fruition.

Young Israel of Memphis' Rabbi Akiva Males can be reached via email at: [rabbi@yiom.org](mailto:rabbi@yiom.org) **HW**

# Israel Inks Largest Defense Deal in its History

(JNS) – Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant last Thursday in Berlin signed an agreement to provide Israel's Arrow 3 missile defense system to Germany. At an estimated value of \$3.5 billion, the deal is the largest of its kind in Israel's history.

The first missile battery, including radar, launch and interception management systems, is to be supplied to the Germans by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) by the fourth quarter of 2025.

Germany is the first foreign purchaser of the system.

Arrow 3 is the upper-tier layer of Israel's missile defense program, designed to intercept ballistic missiles during the exoatmospheric portion of their trajectory, at altitudes above 100 kilometers (62 miles). It became operational in Israel on Jan. 18, 2017.

In June, German lawmakers approved advanced payments of up to €560 million (\$606 million) for the system.

The primary contractor for the integration and development of the system is IAI, working with additional Israeli and American defense firms. **HW**



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The IRS issued about 95 million federal income tax refunds by May 12, 2023 (for tax year 2022), averaging \$2,812.<sup>1</sup> You might consider this type of windfall a stroke of good fortune, but is it really? You probably wouldn’t pay someone \$234 each month to receive \$2,812 back at the end of a year. But that’s essentially what a tax refund is – the repayment of your interest-free loan to the government.

If you received a large refund on your 2022 return, consider reducing your federal income tax withholding, which would leave you with a bigger paycheck. Taking home more of your pay may let you put that money to better use. For example, you may be able to pay off credit-card debt sooner, build up your emergency savings, or contribute more to a retirement account. If your tax bill was higher than you expected and you had to scramble for the money to pay it, bumping up your withholding might help you avoid a similar situation next April.

In any case, it’s a good idea to check your withholding periodically. This is particularly important when something changes in your life; for example, if you move, get married, divorce, or have a child; you or your spouse change jobs; or your financial situation changes significantly. The IRS has an online tool (the Tax Withholding Estimator) that can help you determine whether – and how much – to adjust your withholding. The amount of federal income tax withheld from each paycheck is based on the information on your W-4 Form, which may have been filled out a long time ago. If you decide to make an adjustment, you will need to complete a new W-4 and submit it to your employer.

1) Internal Revenue Service, 2023

Federal Tax Brackets for 2023

Marginal tax rate	Single taxpayers	Married couples filing jointly
10%	Income up to \$11,000	Income up to \$22,000
12%	\$11,001 to \$44,725	\$22,001 to \$89,450
22%	\$44,726 to \$95,375	\$89,451 to \$190,750
24%	\$95,376 to \$182,100	\$190,751 to \$364,200
32%	\$182,101 to \$231,250	\$364,201 to \$462,500
35%	\$231,251 to \$578,125	\$462,501 to \$693,750
37%	Income over \$578,125	Income over \$693,750

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# Dianne Feinstein, Long-Serving Jewish Senator from California, Dies at 90



**Sen. Dianne Feinstein, a California Democrat, introduces Xavier Becerra, nominee for Secretary of Health and Human Services, during his Senate Finance Committee nomination, Feb. 24, 2021. Credit: Greg Nash-Pool/Getty Images**

**By Ron Kampeas**

(JTA) – Dianne Feinstein, the long-serving Jewish senator from California who rose to national prominence when she appeared before cameras with her hands stained with the blood of a murdered colleague, has died.

Feinstein, who had recently faced criticism for remaining in the Senate despite clearly failing health, was 90 years old. She died Thursday night [Sept. 28, 2023] major news organizations are reporting.

Feinstein had served in the Senate for more than three decades as its longest-serving woman.

Feinstein became a national figure in 1978 when she was the president of the Board of Supervisors in San Francisco and found the body of fellow supervisor Harvey Milk.

Milk, who was Jewish, was the first openly gay elected official in the city's history and was assassinated by a former colleague, Dan White. White also killed San Francisco Mayor George Moscone.

Feinstein announced the murders while her hands were still stained with Milk's blood. She soon stepped in to replace Moscone, serving two terms as mayor.

"I remember it, actually, as if it was yesterday," she recalled in 2008. "And it was one of the hardest moments, if not the hardest moment, of my life. It was a devastating moment. For San Francisco, it was a day of infamy."

Feinstein's father was a Jewish physician, and her mother was a model who was born to an ethnically Jewish family but raised in the Russian Orthodox church. Feinstein was born on June 22, 1933, in San Francisco, attended a Roman Catholic school and said, when she was running for governor in 1990, that her parents left it up to her to decide which faith suited her.

When she was 20, she picked Judaism, she said, "because I liked its simplicity and directness." She was twice widowed and once divorced; all three of her husbands were Jewish.

The trauma of the double murder propelled her to become an outspoken advocate for gun control, a cause she took with her into the Senate, when she won a special election in 1992 to replace Sen. Pete Wilson, a Republican who had defeated Feinstein in the 1990 election for governor.

That election cycle became known as the Year of the Woman. Feinstein and three other newly elected women senators tripled the number of women in the Senate from two to six. One was Barbara Boxer, who, like Feinstein, was a Jewish Democrat from California.

Record numbers of women ran for office, spurred in part by the humiliating treatment Anita Hill got in the Senate the

year previous when she testified about the sexual harassment she allegedly endured while employed with Clarence Thomas, a Supreme Court nominee.

Hill's treatment helped galvanize Feinstein's decision to run for the Senate. During the 2018 hearings for another Supreme Court nominee accused of sexual wrongdoing, Brett Kavanaugh, Feinstein recalled coming across a crowd of people watching the Thomas hearings at a TV in an airport in 1991, a year before her election.

Not a lot had changed, she lamented. "How women are treated in the United States, with this kind of concern, is really wanting a lot of reform," she said during the Kavanaugh hearings.

With Boxer and Feinstein, California had a two-Jewish women representation in the body until 2017, and the effects of the Year of the Women were long lasting.

"I would be proud to carry on just a portion of their legacy," Rep. Adam Schiff, a California Democrat who has signaled his intention to run for Feinstein's seat, said in February when Feinstein announced she would not run for another term, regarding Feinstein and Boxer.

Referring to a traditional Jewish imperative to repair the world, he added, "I would love to bring that passion for tikkun olam with me to the U.S. Senate."

Laws long on the liberal wish list were suddenly ripe for passage, among them an assault weapons ban that Feinstein took the lead in passing in 1994. It lapsed after 10 years, and Feinstein since 2004 persistently, and unsuccessfully, sought to reinstate the ban.

Also in 1994, Feinstein joined then-Sen. Joe Biden in passing the Violence Against Women Act. When it lapsed in 2019, Feinstein led the charge to reauthorize it, but faced conservative resistance because the reauthorization bill added protections for LGBTQ partners and sought to close the "boyfriend loophole," extending restrictions on gun ownership to people who had abused partners to whom they were not married.

It took until 2022 for Feinstein to overcome resistance and reauthorize the Act. It was a compromise: The LGBTQ protections remained in, but the boyfriend loophole was out; Feinstein was unable to overcome gun lobby resistance.

"This is a major advancement for protecting women from domestic violence and sexual assault – a tragedy faced by one in three women in this country," Feinstein said then in a statement.

President Biden, its original author, signed the reauthorization into law.

Feinstein stood apart from her liberal cohort in some respects. Her best-known split with liberals was her championing the death penalty until 2018, when she said during her campaign for reelection that its unfair application had finally changed her mind.

Her enthusiasm for law and order was triggered when a far left group, the New World Liberation Front, detonated a bomb planted in a flower box outside her home in 1976, when she was a member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, part of a terrorist campaign targeting city leaders.

As outraged as she was at the easy access to guns that brought about the murder of Milk and Moscone, she was also furious that White got away with a manslaughter conviction by claiming he had been depressed. The tactic became known as the "Twinkie defense," as a

defense psychiatrist testified that junk food had contributed to White's depression.

"Yes, I support the death penalty," she said in 1990 when she was running for California governor, earning boos at a Democratic convention. "It is an issue that cannot be fudged or hedged." She won the primary but lost to Wilson.

The episode displayed her political chops: She used footage of the boos in political ads in the general election for governor, reinforcing her image as a moderate and helping to propel her to the Senate in 1992. She managed to preserve the seat in 1994, her first full-term election, a year that was otherwise disastrous for Democrats.

In 2004, she feuded with Kamala Harris, then the San Francisco District Attorney and now the vice president, when she learned at the funeral of a slain police officer that Harris opposed the death penalty for his killer. Feinstein said then she would not have endorsed Harris for the district attorney job had she known of her opposition to the death penalty. (The feud didn't last; Feinstein and Boxer endorsed Harris in her 2016 Senate run to replace Boxer, key nods that helped propel Harris to victory.)

Feinstein was for years a centrist on Israel, allied with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, although she was a sharp critic of the country's treatment of non-Orthodox Jews. In 1986, as mayor, she expanded commercial ties with San Francisco's sister city, Haifa. It was her revulsion with deadly weapons that nudged her toward questioning Israel: She was appalled at Israel's use of cluster bombs in its 2006 war with Hezbollah in Lebanon.

"What gives rise, in part, to my bill are recent developments in Lebanon over alleged use of cluster bombs by Israel," she said in 2007, introducing legislation to restrict the sale of the weapons.

Remarkably, Feinstein chose to promote her proposed cluster bomb ban that year at the Arab American Institute, an organization frequently at odds with the mainstream pro-Israel community. "We will get this job done," she said at the time to applause.

Within a few years she was departing from pro-Israel orthodoxy in other areas: She opposed proposed Iran sanctions in 2014 because she feared the underlying legislation would draw the United States into a war on Israel's behalf.

"Let me acknowledge Israel's real, well-founded concerns that a nuclear-armed Iran would threaten its very existence," she said then on the Senate floor. "While I recognize and share Israel's concern, we cannot let Israel determine when and where the U.S. goes to war."

More recently, she championed renewed aid to the Palestinians, slashed to almost nothing by Trump and Republicans in Congress hostile to a Palestinian leadership they depict as bloodthirsty.

"Denying funding for clean water, health care and schools in the West Bank and Gaza won't make us safer," she said in 2019. "Instead it only emboldens extremist groups like Hamas and pushes peace further out of reach."

Feinstein, who was the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee from 2009 to 2017, also differed from her colleagues – particularly Ron Wyden, the Jewish Democrat from Oregon – in defending the intelligence community even after a welter of leaks toward the end of the 2000s revealed its

abuses.

She defended the intelligence agencies' collection of American citizens' metadata, the wealth of information that can track where a person is with whom they communicate and for how long, among other details. "It's called protecting America," Feinstein said in 2013, claiming the practice was routine.

As her party moved left, however, so did she; In 2014, as committee chairwoman, Feinstein declassified a report on the CIA's use of torture after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks over the objections of President Barack Obama. In 2017, she said her decision in 2002 to be one of 29 Senate Democrats to authorize the Iraq War would haunt her, in part because she bought into the false claims the intelligence community was peddling.

"It is the decision I regret most and I have to live with it," she told author Gail Sheehy.

One factor nudging her to the left was the election in 2016 of Donald Trump as president. Her deep experience in matters of intelligence helped spur her outrage with the new president as she uncovered evidence ahead of the election that Russia was interfering.

"Based on briefings we have received, we have concluded that the Russian intelligence agencies are making a serious and concerted effort to influence the U.S. election," she and Adam Schiff, a House California Jewish Democrat who is now running to replace her in the Senate, said in a headline-making statement just weeks before election day.

"At the least, this effort is intended to sow doubt about the security of our election and may well be intended to influence the outcomes of the election," the statement said. "We can see no other rationale for the behavior of the Russians."

Republican obfuscation about Russia's interference helped push her over the edge, a close friend, Orville Schell, told Sheehy in 2017. "Trump injects an entirely new level of outrage," he said. "Dianne is like the canary in the mine shaft. The last bastion of bridge building in the Senate may be giving up."

On one issue LGBTQ rights, Feinstein always tracked to the left of her party; in the 1990s she was one of just 14 Democrats to vote against the Defense of Marriage Act, which defined marriage as being between a man and a woman. She became a leader of a years-long effort to repeal the Act, which was successful in 2022.

In 2020, as the top Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, Feinstein drew outrage from fellow Democrats for her friendly questioning of Amy Coney Barrett, the Supreme Court nominee Republicans rushed through to replace Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the liberal Jewish icon who had died just before an election that returned Democrats to the Senate majority. It didn't help that she hugged the committee chairman, South Carolina Republican Lindsey Graham, after the hearing.

That along with signs that Feinstein's mental acuity was diminishing led her to step down as the top Democrat on the key committee. Reporting described her as engaged during meetings and telephone calls, and then, hours and even minutes later, not remembering the exchanges. In early 2023, she announced that she would not run again for election in 2024.

Feinstein is survived by her daughter, Katherine Anne Feinstein, a former judge, and a granddaughter. **HW**



# A Simchat Torah Legend



Ted Roberts

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

On Simchas Torah it’s entirely appropriate to ask a basic question that our sages, throughout the ages, have ignored. Why did The Almighty wait so long to hand us the Book of Books – the Torah?

There’s a legend – not quite at the Midrashic level – just a legend told by kibitzers sitting around the pool that explains the delay.

The angels, says the story, cast a unanimous vote for the Almighty to lay the Torah at the foot of the Tree of Knowledge that first week in Eden. They suggested that he prop it up against the trunk, so the world’s first newlyweds dizzy with the world’s first love affair, couldn’t miss it.

The angels were wary of man. “He’s dangerous,” they advised the Creator. “At first, he’ll use a stick to walk with. Next, he’ll use it to knock fruit out of the trees. Then, he’ll sharpen one end of it and throw it at his fellow creatures. You have made him with the reproductive glands of the desert hare, the feroc-

ity of the tiger, and the acquisitiveness of the honeybee. But the hare is gentle, the tiger is lazy, and the honeybee is small. They will never desecrate your creation. But man is different. He needs restraints. He needs Torah now.”

The Lord replied, “Humanity is not programmed like the animals. I have given this breed a soul and I’ve given them the blessing and curse of free will. We shall see what we shall see.”

And the Lord looked down on the paradise he had built on earth. And he saw the incredible variation of plants and creatures. And He saw Adam and Eve, the newlyweds, as gentle as the fruit-eating orangutans. So the Lord rested.

The angels chattered among themselves like the blue jays in the garden. “He shouldn’t have rested before he made Torah.”

“Yeah,” said one little fellow with still fluffy wings. Wait’ll he gets a load of Cain.”

The next day – a day of heaven is many generations on earth, you know – the Lord inspected His universe. He saw the first act of disobedience in the Garden and He saw Cain’s murderous rage. He saw the generations who displayed all the faults of the desert hare and the honeybee with none of their virtues. “The earth was corrupt in his sight,” as he was later to note in Genesis Chapter 5, verse 11.

So he sent the flood. “That’ll do it,”

He predicted to the angels. “Such power will make man fear me. They will flock to me like the gentle dove. Just watch their improvement.”

“They need the Torah,” mumbled the angelic court.

“No,” He said.

Then came the generations of the Patriarchs; G-d fearing men, but imperfect. With hesitancy and a sigh, the Master Builder of the universe peeped between his fingers again at the strange animal with a soul, called man. Just in time to see the sons of Jacob betray their father and their brother Joseph.

“Now!” said the angels.

“No,” said the Lord. “Did I not make them in My likeness? And unlike the animals, did I not give them freedom – even unto sin?”

Soon, the descendants of Abraham were slaves in Egypt and their wailing drifted up to heaven itself and the ears of their Creator.

Ah, another opportunity to demonstrate My power to this unruly species, He thought. Therefore He delivered his people from the whips and clubs of the Egyptians. Later, He was to tell the whole story in Exodus.

Strengthened by His might, they strode out of Egypt as free men, but no sooner had they struck off their chains than they assumed the characteristics of the lustful hare, the savage tiger, and the acquisitive honeybee.

The Lord threw up His hands in despair.

## The Scribbler On the Roof

By Ted Roberts

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“They need a rule book,” He announced to the heavenly hosts, who without exultation modestly nodded. “They need limits on their freedom like the planets need an orbit – like the river needs a bank.”

And the Lord G-d took the ex-slaves to Sinai where He spoke face-to-face to Moses and gave him the Torah like a father gives a son a prayer book on his bar mitzvah day. The slaves were now accountable, even as you and I.

As I said before, it’s only a legend and a legend has nowhere near the authenticity of a Midrash. Ask your Rabbi. But if he laughs at your legend, ask him for HIS explanation.

*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*

## Full Text: Biden’s Message for Yom Kippur

(JNS) – As Jewish communities in the United States, Israel and around the world observe Yom Kippur, Jill and I extend our best wishes on this sacred and solemn holiday.

Jewish tradition holds that from the time the Book of Life is opened on Rosh Hashanah, until the gates [of heaven] close on Yom Kippur, our fate hangs in the balance. From the powerful Kol Nidre service to the haunting Neilah prayer

and until the piercing sound of the final shofar blast, worshippers are given an opportunity to humbly atone for past misdeeds, repair broken relationships and commit to doing better in the future.

The blessing of Yom Kippur is that it is not just a day of reflection, repentance and reverence – but a day of transformation, forgiveness and hope. God invites us to write a new chapter in the story of our lives, and in the life of our nation.

As the High Holidays conclude, let us all summon the courage to make the changes required to bridge the gap between the world we see and the world we seek.

On behalf of my family and my entire administration, we wish you a meaningful and easy fast. May we all be sealed in the Book of Life.

*G’mar chatimah tovah.*

**“As the High Holidays conclude, let us all summon the courage to make the changes required to bridge the gap between the world we see and the world we seek,” the U.S. president stated.**

## ISRAEL INSIGHTS Lessons Learned? 50 Years and 30 Years Later

By Howard Weisband

2023 marks two anniversaries in the 75-year history of the modern State of Israel.

Israeli and Jewish newspapers worldwide are filled with analyses and columns reflecting back and looking forward on the 50th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War and the 30th anniversary of the Oslo Accords.

These writings, interviews, podcasts, etc., generally consider each event on its own in terms of what was learned in order to improve Israel’s positioning moving forward.

However, I see a connection, a grim one to say the least, and one that I have yet to see explored, which I believe should have been a lesson learned.

About 25 years ago I was privileged to hear a private briefing at Bar-Ilan University provided by an active Israeli army intelligence officer. In the course of his talk, he said something that has remained with me ever since. Simply stated, he said that if an Arab leader, military or political, says something, believe him. Do not try and analyze it. Do not use our western culture, education, and training to overthink it. Believe him.

In 1973 the Egyptian and Syrian armies were clearly preparing for war.

Israelis on the military and political levels were aware, but unlike 1967 they were unprepared to believe the reality on the ground, both Arab war chants and military build-up. There was no first strike as in 1967, and Israel suffered a devastating blow in terms of soldiers’ lives and military equipment.

Volumes of analyses have been written over 50 years, and more so these days now that Israel recently opened heretofore classified archives and made them public.

Commanders Ariel Sharon in the Sinai and Avigdor Kahalani in the Golan Heights eventually turned defeat into stunning victory for Israel, so much so that the Israeli turn around in 1973 is said to be studied in American and British war colleges more deeply than the 1967 lightning victory.

But the cost was huge. In both human lives and the human psyche.

“The Jerusalem Post” Editor-in-Chief Avi Mayer published a column on September 22 titled “Could the Yom Kippur War Happen Today?” In it he quoted current IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi: “The failure of warning on the eve of the war is the worst failure in the history of the State of Israel. Its roots are in

arrogance, lack of understanding of the abundant intelligence information, and disregard for the enemy.”

Halevi’s statement took me back to “If an Arab leader, military or political, says something, believe him. Do not try and analyze it. Do not use our western culture, education, and training to overthink it. Believe him.”

Skip to 1993, the Oslo Accords. Then Minister of Foreign Affairs Shimon Peres, through his political team led by Yossi Beilin, negotiated agreements with Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) interlocutors in Oslo, Norway. Thus the Palestinian Authority (PA) was born.

Most commentators believe that the Oslo Accords were negotiated secretly, particularly without Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin’s full knowledge at the very least. It put Rabin in an uncomfortable position of accepting the agreements, especially once President Bill Clinton supported and even sponsored them. One need only look at Rabin’s discomfort in the official White House photo with Rabin shaking the hand and looking into the eyes of Yasser Arafat, dressed in military uniform, as Clinton gently pushes them toward one another on the lawn of the White House.

Failure and disaster seem to be the predominate terms associated with the many current writings analyzing the Accords 30 years later. The best is “what we learned.”

But what didn’t we learn? After much back and forth, the PLO national covenant, which called for Israel’s destruction, was never formally amended to recognize Israel. Arafat, who was born and lived as a terrorist, instead launched a new wave of terror to be known as the “Intifada.”

Disregarding important accomplishments in people-to-people initiatives, PA leaders in 2023 still call for one democratic state from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. That means no Jewish state. It was the same in 1973 and 1993.

Believe what they say.

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