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SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

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Memphis Jewish Federation Celebrates Success of Israeli Scout Friendship Caravan Visit



Museum of Science and History campers dance and sing with the Scouts

The Israeli Scouts Friendship Caravan visit to Memphis was a resounding success, according to everyone who engaged with the Israeli teens. Excitement ran high, as this was the Caravan’s first visit to Memphis since the COVID-19 pandemic started three years ago.

Through engaging song and dance routines, the 10 talented and energetic Scouts brought Israel to life through diverse public and private performances throughout the city. This year’s Caravan included Yiftach Simchi, a Scout from Shoham, Memphis’ sister city in Israel.

Performances for the broader Mem-

phis community included one at Crosstown Concourse and another for 150 campers at the Museum of Science and History.

“Through these two performances, we were able to share the dynamic culture of Israel with the broader Memphis community,” said Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein, Executive Vice President of Memphis Jewish Federation (Federation).

Campers at the Memphis Jewish Community Center enjoyed the Scouts’ hands-on participation during the “Israel at 75” celebration day. The Scouts



Crosstown guests pose with a Scout

also gave a special camp-only performance that got campers of all ages up and dancing.

At the Jewish community performance at Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR), the audience of children, seniors and everyone in between appreciated the warmth and vitality exuded by the Scouts.

The complimentary pre-show dinner graciously offered by the Home was enjoyed by all.

“It was such a joy to host the community again for the Israeli Scout Caravan – and a beshert moment of sorts,” noted

MJHR Director of Development Bayless Less. “COVID kept the residents of the Home and the Scout Caravan separated from our community for three long years. It was beautiful to see everyone come together for this happy occasion! Beshert.”

Other community seniors enjoyed a Scout performance at the Village of Germantown, where the Scouts were introduced by Village resident and past president of Memphis Jewish Federation Mr. Harry Samuels.

(See Federation Page 2)

Ilhan Omar: ‘No Way in Hell I am Attending’ Israeli President’s Speech to Congress



Reps. Ilhan Omar and Dean Phillips make their way to the Supreme Court for a rally with congressional Democrats, April 2, 2019. Credit: Tom Williams/CQ Roll Call

By Ben Sales

(JTA) – Rep. Ilhan Omar declared in a series of tweets that she not be present when Israeli President Isaac Herzog addresses a joint session of Congress next week.

“There is no way in hell I am attending the joint session address from a President whose country has banned me and denied @RashidaTlaib the ability to see her grandma,” Omar, the Minnesota

Democrat, tweeted last Wednesday night regarding Herzog’s July 19 speech.

Omar’s tweet referenced Israel’s decision in 2019 to bar her and Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib from visiting Israel and the West Bank because both congresswomen support the movement to boycott Israel. Israel later said Tlaib, who is Palestinian-American, could visit her grandmother in the West Bank on humanitarian grounds, but she declined the offer, citing “oppressive” conditions Israel was placing on the visit. (Tlaib does not appear to have commented publicly on Herzog’s address.)

Omar added, in a separate all-caps tweet, “We should not be inviting the president of Israel – a government who under its current prime minister barred the first two Muslim women elected to Congress from visiting the country – to give a joint address to Congress.”

Herzog’s visit to Washington comes amid a chill in relations between President Joe Biden and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has yet to receive an invitation to the White

House. As president, Herzog serves as head of state in a historically apolitical role, though he has repeatedly called for a pause on Netanyahu’s effort to weaken Israel’s judiciary – which Biden has also criticized.

Omar also criticized the judicial overhaul effort, as well as the Netanyahu government’s strong opposition to Palestinian statehood, among other issues. She acknowledged that Herzog does not hold executive power but said that he would nonetheless be acting as an “ambassador” for the Israeli government. She wrote that she also opposed a recent address to Congress by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi because of opposition to his policies.

Omar is not the first U.S. lawmaker to sit out an address by an Israeli leader. When Netanyahu controversially addressed Congress in 2015 to rally opposition to then-President Barack Obama’s nuclear agreement with Iran, eight senators and 50 members of Congress, all Democrats or allied with them, did not attend. **HW**



Scouts perform at the Village of Germantown Federation...
(Continued From Page 1)

At the Plough Towers performance, which included Thrive Memphis program participants, the Scouts recognized local friends and supporters including Laura Wolff Morris. The daughter of Israeli Scout Caravan visionary and longtime patron Art Wolff (Of Blessed Memory), Ms. Morris received a commemorative plaque in honor of her father.

Accompanied by Boy Scout Leader and Federation Israeli Scout Committee member Dr. Mark Clemons, the Scouts traveled to Boy Scout Camp Kia Kima in Hardy, Arkansas, for their final performance, delighting and educating nearly 300 campers and camp staff.

Federation extends its appreciation to the families who graciously opened their homes to the Scouts and their two leaders: Larry and Teri Graber, Eileen and Norman Itkowitz, Jaclyn and Steve Marshall, Hila and Nir Shimony and Susan and Saul Stein.

"I loved having the girls, and it was such a treat to see them perform," said Scout host and Federation lay leader Jaclyn Marshall. "I look forward to the next caravan!"



A Scouts sings with a Museum of Science and History camper

Thanks also to Patricia Schwarz, Crosstown Concourse resident, who gave the Scouts a tour of Crosstown and treated them to MemPops, a local favorite.

The Caravan's visit to Memphis was made possible by a generous grant from Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund. [HW](#)

THE Hebrew Watchman

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7/20/2023



Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. July 21, 2023 / 3 Av, 5783 7:53 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. July 22, 2023 / 4 Av, 5783 8:53 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Devarim

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CORRECTION

In the July 13, 2023, edition, the JCP caption on page 1 was listed incorrectly.

The correct caption is: Laura Linder, JCP President and CEO, with incoming and outgoing Chairs for 2023 (from left: Scott Vogel, Cindy Finestone, Jason Salomon, **Marty Kelman**, Laura Linder and Scott Notowich) [HW](#)

Beth Sholom offers Honey for a Sweet Rosh Hashanah!

Winnie the Pooh would be thrilled! Beth Sholom Sisterhood's successful Rosh Hashanah Honey From The Heart sale is back by popular demand. The program enables people to order decorative jars of sweet, kosher honey for family, friends and business acquaintances. The honey is shipped directly to

recipients in time for the first night of Rosh Hashanah on September 15. Proceeds of the sale benefit Sisterhood and Beth Sholom Synagogue.

"I was overwhelmed by the response we got from our Honey From The Heart fundraiser last year, not just from our congregation but from the broader Jew-

ish community in Memphis," said Susan Stein, who is co-chairing the Sisterhood campaign with Sheri Gadberry. "It's a unique and thoughtful way to wish family and friends a sweet New Year. I noticed several people ordered extras to have on hand as hostess gifts."

Beth Sholom Sisterhood is partnering with "Honey From The Heart," ORT's fundraising program in Atlanta, which provides and ships the honey. Each eight-ounce jar of honey, certified kosher by the Orthodox Union, comes with a personalized gift card and a keepsake enclosure with the traditional blessings for eating apples dipped in honey.

Susan Levko, Sisterhood president, said last year she both gave and received honey from friends. "The honey was absolutely delicious," she said. "It felt special to open a jar of honey made especially for Rosh Hashanah and use it for the blessing."

Beth Sholom Sisterhood is the only organization offering Honey From The Heart in the Midsouth. The honey sells for \$14.50 a jar. Shipping is free for orders placed by August 1. Honey can be ordered online by clicking on the pop-up when you visit the Beth Sholom website, bsholom.org. [HW](#)



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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.

The list of plaques may be found at <https://t.ly/OWg2L>

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**

MJCC Receives Grant Award from FedEx Corporation

The Memphis Jewish Community Center is proud to announce it has received an award from the FedEx Cares grant program for 2023. FedEx has been a longtime MJCC community partner, previously sponsoring cultural arts programs, the JCCA Biennial held in Memphis in 2018 and supporting our scholarship program for many years.

This latest grant award supports the Kay and Allen Iskiwitz Shalom Shuttle program at the Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service at the MJCC. Shalom Shuttle was launched in 2015, enhancing the lives of seniors and adults with special needs by helping them maintain the highest levels of independence. A full-time, experienced driver provides rides and door-to-door assistance to doctor appointments, employment, grocery shopping, and more, creating a special bond with the riders.

According to MJCC President/CEO

Larry Skolnick, “In 2022 we provided more than 2,000 rides through our Shalom Shuttle program, filling a vital need for our community. We are honored and grateful to FedEx for collaborating with us in these continued efforts.”

The Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service is a comprehensive system, offering support to the most vulnerable individuals and families in the Memphis community. Individuals who qualify can receive support through a variety of social service programs including: special needs advocacy and support, senior case management, transportation, counseling, meal delivery/food pantry and emergency financial assistance.

If you or a loved one is in need of help, or is interested in learning more about the Kay and Allen Iskiwitz Shalom Shuttle program, please call Fogelman Jewish Family Service at 901-767-8511. **HW**

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is Monday–Friday at 11:30 a.m. All programs start at 12:15 p.m.

Monday July 24

Speaker Rabbi Ian Lichter, Senior Rabbi of Baron Hirsch Congregation.

“Insights to Tisha B’Av!” His talks are always informative and fun.

Wednesday July 26

Speaker Rabbi Sarit Horwitz of Beth Sholom Synagogue

“Learn and Discuss about Tisha B’Av!” Please join us for this talk about this important holiday!

Monday July 31

Speaker Josh Goldin with Hospice of Hope.

“Aging in Place!”

This is one of the most interesting subjects for seniors and their families! Please join us for this informative topic. 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 join us for lunch or just come for Bingo!

Please join us from Monday through Friday at 11:30 a.m. for a delicious kosher lunch from the kitchens at the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required the day before by 1 p.m. For reservations, contact Adult Services Coordinator Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org, or by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. **HW**

Zelenskyy: Netanyahu didn’t Take up my Offer to Visit



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a joint press conference in Jerusalem, Jan. 24, 2020. Credit: Office of the President of Ukraine.

(JNS) – Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he had invited Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to visit but the latter didn’t take him up on the offer.

“Netanyahu was invited to Kyiv, and I also invited the two prime ministers who preceded him [Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid] to Ukraine. In the meantime, the prime ministers change, and the result is the same,” Zelenskyy told “Kan News” last Wednesday.

He also said that his country had requested military support from Israel to help in its war with Russia but didn’t receive it.

“Regarding the Iron Dome and other air defense systems that we would like to receive from our partners in Israel, we asked for them at the beginning of the war. The result is like the example of the prime ministers. Months have passed, with no result,” he said.

“Ukraine is very interested in preserving the important, historical, close relations that we have. Unfortunately, there is still no result,” Zelenskyy added.

Ukraine has pressured Israel for weaponry since Russia invaded in February 2022. While Israel has provided humanitarian aid and agreed to jointly develop an air defense system for Ukraine, it has explained that it must look to its own interests first.

Netanyahu has stated that he fears if Israel sends weapons to Ukraine it could fall into the wrong hands and end up reverse-engineered and used against his country. He also said that Israel must take into account that it shares a military border with Russia and that Israeli pilots fly next to Russian pilots over the skies of Syria.

In a recent interview with a Ukrainian news outlet, Israel’s Ambassador to Ukraine Michael Brodsky pointed out that Ukraine demands Israeli support even as it votes against Israel at the U.N. 90% of the time.

In June, Ukraine’s ambassador to Israel was summoned to the Foreign Ministry after accusing Jerusalem of having a pro-Russian stance.

The dressing down took place on July 3. Ambassador Yevgen Korniychuk met with Aliza Ben-Nun, the head of the ministry’s Strategic Affairs Directorate.

The ministry said in a statement at the time, “The Israeli government continues to act and promote cooperation as agreed between the countries. The behavior of the ambassador does not help.” **HW**

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Sweden Approves Burning of Bible Outside Israeli Embassy



Libertarian Rasmus Paludan burns a translation of the Koran during a demonstration outside the Turkish embassy in Stockholm. Jan. 21, 2023. Credit: Tobias Hellstren via Wikimedia Commons.

(JNS) – Swedish police have approved the burning of a Bible on Saturday, [July 15, 2023] outside the Israeli Embassy in Stockholm, officials said last Friday.

The controversial decision follows similar burnings of the Koran in Sweden by activists that have sparked outrage in the Islamic world.

The police force [week before last] confirmed that it had received an application from a man in his 30s to burn Jewish and Christian holy books outside the embassy on July 15 as “a symbolic gathering for the sake of freedom of speech.”

The demonstration is slated for Shabbat, when the Israeli Embassy is closed, and observant Jews attend synagogue services during which the weekly Torah portion is read.

A recent public opinion poll in Sweden found that the majority of citizens now support a ban on the public burning of religious texts such as the Bible or the Koran.

The head of the Swedish Jewish community, who has come out against a ban on such burnings, said last Friday that the best course of action was to ignore the situation.

“I would advise individuals to ignore this event and not give it more attention,” Aron Verstandig, chairman of the Council of Swedish Jewish Communi-

ties, told JNS. He said that the local community had tried and apparently failed to prevent the development.

Previous police rejections of similar petitions had been overturned by Swedish courts.

Stockholm had weighed stepping in to change the law to allow police to stop Koran burnings in public, in the wake of the damage to the country’s internal security triggered by such events.

“Such explicit acts of bigotry and hatred against the Jewish people is as much revolting as it is reprehensible and has no place amongst the liberal democracies of the world,” Israeli Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli said in a statement last Friday.

Chikli had previously written to the Swedish prime minister urging his government to intervene.

“The Swedish government deeply regrets when extremists and provocateurs try to sow division in our society, even when they are exercising constitutionally protected acts,” Swedish Foreign Minister Tobias Billstrom had replied.

Israeli Ambassador to Sweden Ziv Nevo Kulman last Friday denounced the police decision.

“I utterly condemn the burning of holy books sacred to any religion, as an act of hate and disrespect, that has nothing to do with freedom of expression,” he said. **HW**

Herzog Scores Two White House Invites, Before Netanyahu Gets One

(JNS) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has yet to receive a formal White House invitation during U.S. President Joe Biden’s term. But now, Israeli President Isaac Herzog – slated to be in Washington to address a joint session of Congress – has been invited twice to the White House.

On July 18, Biden “looks forward to welcoming Israeli President Isaac Herzog to the White House,” Karine Jean-Pierre, White House press secretary, announced on July 13. She noted that the visit, amid Israel’s 75th anniversary, “will highlight our enduring partnership and friendship.”

The following day, Herzog will return to the White House to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris, Jean-Pierre stated.

Biden will reaffirm the ironclad U.S.

commitment to Israeli security, and he and Herzog will “discuss opportunities to deepen Israel’s regional integration and to create a more peaceful and prosperous Middle East.”

“President Biden will stress the importance of our shared democratic values, and discuss ways to advance equal measures of freedom, prosperity, and security for Palestinians and Israelis,” she added. “The leaders will also discuss Russia’s deepening military relationship with Iran, and Iran’s destabilizing behavior in the region.”

Biden is snubbing Netanyahu over a disagreement about the Iran nuclear deal, U.S. lawmakers told JNS.

Herzog and Netanyahu discussed the Iran nuclear threat on July 13 at the Israeli president’s residence. **HW**

‘Shifting Russia-Ukraine Dynamics Unlikely to Affect Israel’



Russian President Vladimir Putin during a joint press conference with Moldovan President Igor Dodon, on Jan. 17, 2017. Credit: Russian Presidential Press and Information Office via Wikimedia Commons.

(JNS) – The ostensible coup launched by Wagner Group leader Yevgeny Prigozhin last month has led to debate over whether he exposed a vulnerability in Russian President Vladimir Putin’s bulwark. But despite speculation of Putin’s imminent downfall, the incident seems to have had little impact, and what was first seen as a botched insurrection now seems like a carefully orchestrated event.

Russia’s General Sergei Surovikin, commander-in-chief of the Russian Aerospace Forces and deputy commander of Russia’s forces in Ukraine, has not been seen in public since the Wagner event, indicating that Putin has exercised his authority and remains in control.

It is possible that this situation presents an opportunity for both Putin and Prigozhin to de-escalate tensions and climb down from their respective trees. Israel, conceivably concerned about potential dramatic shifts within the Kremlin and their impact on Israel-Russia relations, currently has no immediate cause for alarm, according to experts who spoke with JNS.

Dr. Ze’ev Khanin, from the department of political science at Bar-Ilan University, told JNS that even after Prigozhin’s exile to Belarus and despite Putin’s seemingly weakened image, “nothing will change.”

Israel, as part of the western camp, “supports Ukraine diplomatically,” while it remains interested in “some sort of coordination with Moscow,” he said.

The onset of Russia’s war against Ukraine in February 2022 presented Israel with a challenging predicament, and the Jewish state found itself in a delicate balancing act, striving to maintain relationships with both countries while avoiding actions that could harm either party.

Israel relies heavily on Russian cooperation and coordination as Israeli military and intelligence units fight Iranian interests in Syria. To prevent accidental clashes between their armed forces in Syria, Israel and Russia maintain a military coordination mechanism there. This system helps deconflict their respective military operations and ensures the safety of Israeli aircraft operating in the region.

Israel has been adamant about its non-interference in internal Russian affairs, clearly stating its intentions not to meddle in Russia’s domestic matters. Israel’s position emphasizes its respect for Russia’s sovereignty and its commitment to maintaining a respectful relationship.

Maintaining a delicate balance between its regional interests and navigating its relationship with both Russia and Ukraine remains an ongoing challenge for Israel.

Ukraine has pressed Israel for more support, including its Iron Dome air-defense system.

However, Israel has thus far been reluctant to transfer defense systems to Ukraine.

In a recent interview with “The Wall Street Journal,” Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu suggested that if these systems were to fall into the possession of Russian forces, the close ties between Russia and Iran could result in the equipment eventually coming under Tehran’s control.

Khanin expressed Israel’s strong interest in maintaining a channel of coordination or, at the very least, communication with Russia. Israel holds hope that through this connection, it can potentially influence the developing ties between Moscow and Tehran. One of Israel’s key objectives is to impede the flow of technology between these two nations.

Still, Kyiv seeks to exert its influence on Israeli policy toward Ukraine through its embassy in Israel. It aims to shape Israel’s stance and actions regarding Ukraine in a manner favorable to its own national interests.

According to Khanin, while Iron Dome has proven effective in Israel, Ukraine requires additional measures to bolster its defensive capabilities against potential threats.

John Hardie, deputy director of the Russia Program at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, told JNS, “Israel is in the unenviable position of having its policy toward Russia and Ukraine criticized by both Moscow and particularly Kyiv.”

He said that if Netanyahu goes through with a visit to Kyiv, we can expect to see Russia retaliate in any number of ways, including at the political/diplomatic level, such as a rebuke from the Russian Foreign Ministry, criticism of Israeli policy toward the Palestinians and maybe a Hamas visit to Moscow, among other reactions.

“That said,” Hardie continued, “Moscow appreciates that Israel is refraining from sending lethal military aid to Ukraine. So long as that remains the case, I don’t expect Russia’s stance toward Israeli airstrikes in Syria to change.”

He added that even if Israel were to send lethal aid to Kyiv, he is “skeptical” that Russia would go as far as to shoot down Israeli aircraft. **HW**

Kol Rena So-Shuls Return in August



Guests at the May So-Shuls Luncheon enjoyed Rabbi Ian Lichter's insights about Shavuot and Lag B'Omer and entertainment from Davy Ray Bennett with Creative Aging.

After a summer break, Baron Hirsch Congregation is happy to announce the return of the Kol Rena So-Shuls luncheons at noon on Wednesday, August 2, 2023.

The August luncheon will feature entertainer, Davy Ray Bennett, courtesy of Creative Aging. Mr. Bennett's musical talent ranges from jazz and country to blues and rock. Mr. Bennett loves audience participation, and he has the music and the talent to encourage audience singalongs. And let's not forget the food. The luncheon menu will feature summer favorites, including hamburgers with all the fixings, french fries and coleslaw, as well as delicious cookies and cool melons for dessert. Bingo games will follow the luncheon.



It was a pleasure to have Rabbi Ian Lichter attend the May luncheon and share his insights about Shavuot and Lag B'Omer. We sincerely thank the luncheon guests and the many wonderful volunteers who have made the So-Shuls Luncheons such a success since they restarted in 2022.

Baron Hirsch So-Shuls luncheons are for people 64 and older and cost \$5. Come be part of the fun and meet old friends, make new friends, or invite a friend to join you at the August So-Shuls luncheon. Please make your reservation by email to gwen@baronhirsch.org or calling 901.683.7485.

We look forward to seeing you at Baron Hirsch at noon on Wednesday, August 2, 2023. [HW](#)

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Quick Verdict: Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooter Eligible for Execution

(JNS) – It took fewer than two hours of deliberation for the jury's unanimous decision that the murderer convicted of perpetuating the massacre at the Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha Synagogue should potentially face the death penalty.

Jurors in the penalty phase of Robert Bowers' trial completed deliberations last Thursday, the trial's 25th day, concluding that the defendant was mentally fit to be considered for capital punishment. The defense's argument, that epilepsy or schizophrenia meaningfully influenced the killings, failed to persuade.

After the verdict was read, Bowers' attorney Judy Clarke asked for the jury to be polled, which meant each juror stood and expressed agreement.

The trial [was scheduled for last] Monday, with Judge Robert Colville estimating it could last seven to 10 days. But prosecutors and the defense predicted it would take longer than that, due to potential rebuttal witnesses and the defense's case. [HW](#)

Memphis AEPi Alumni Club Inaugural Dinner



The inaugural dinner had 25 attendees

On Monday, June 26 at Patrick's Bar and Grill, 25 Brothers and Friends of Alpha Epsilon Pi from Memphis and the surrounding areas gathered for the inaugural dinner of the recently reestablished Memphis AEPi Alumni Club. Good times were had by all with a diverse crowd that included from newly graduated to longtime alumni.

The evening's special guest was Jay

Feldman, the newly appointed executive director of the AEPi Foundation.

If you are an AEPi undergrad or alum and this is the first you are hearing about our events, this means we do not have your contact info! Please get in touch with us so you can be added to our email mailing list for future dinners and events. Contact Evan Rosenthal at aepimemphis@gmail.com or 901-603-4182. [HW](#)



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Heat Wave Scorches Israel



People play in the springs and waterfalls of the Snir Stream, one of the tributaries to the Jordan River. in northern Israel, May 22, 2023. Credit: Ayal Margolin/Flash90.

(JNS) – Soaring temperatures sent Israelis to seek the comfort of air conditioning or shade while children played in water.

The highest temperatures of 38°-43°C (100°-109°F) were recorded in southern Israel and the Jordan Valley.

The heat wave, which is affecting the eastern Mediterranean region as well as the Balkans and much of Europe, is expected to continue into the middle of next week.

The Health Ministry urged the elderly and chronically ill to avoid exposure to the sun and called on the public to drink lots of water to avoid dehydration and heatstroke. Authorities also banned lighting fires in public areas and placed an aerial firefighting squadron on special alert.

At the Zoological Center Tel Aviv-Ramat Gan, aka the Ramat Gan Safari, animals were given special popsicles to beat the heat. Bears received ice cubes containing fish, lions were given frozen ostrich eggs, and other animals were given various frozen fruit treats.

The hotfront, nicknamed “Cleon,” [was expected to] reach its peak last Thursday, meteorologists said.

In a statement, the Israel Meteorological Service announced that lighting fires in parks and reserves would be prohibited due to the danger of sparking wildfires. The Judean Desert will be closed to visitors altogether, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority said.

Last Sunday, the Noga electricity management company presented a plan to the Energy Ministry to avoid nationwide power outages during the heatwave.

Last month, amid similar weather, some 300,000 homes throughout the Jewish state were left without electricity. **HW**

New Jersey Teen Pleads Guilty to Online Threats Detailing Attacks on Jews

By Julia Gergely

(JTA) – The New Jersey teen charged with making threats to synagogues and other Jewish institutions last year has pleaded guilty.

Omar Alkattoul, 19, of Sayreville, was arrested in November, shortly after many Jewish institutions in New Jersey, including synagogues and schools, briefly shuttered amid warnings from the FBI about a “broad threat.”

Jewish organizations were encouraged to take extra precautions and follow security measures. Some cities sent additional police officers to guard synagogues and schools.

The FBI announced a day after its initial warning that the threat was no longer active, and a suspect had been identified. A week later, Alkattoul was arrested and charged, with the U.S. Attorney’s Office alleging that he had pledged allegiance to ISIS as well as researched mass shootings and how to obtain firearms.

Alkattoul had written an extremist manifesto titled “When Swords Collide,” which he shared with at least six people via social media. The manifesto, which was written as if it were made to be found after he had already attacked a synagogue, extensively detailed Alkattoul’s hatred of Jews. But Alkattoul was unclear, in messages with other extremists and with comments to investigators, whether he actually planned to carry out his threats.

Alkattoul will be sentenced Nov. 14. He faces up to five years in prison.

The New Jersey incident came at a time of high alert in the Jewish community – just weeks after the rapper Kanye West made several antisemitic comments and less than a year after synagogue-goers in Colleyville, Texas, were held hostage by a man who broke into their Shabbat services. Later in November, two men who had made online threats to “shoot up a synagogue” were arrested in New York City’s Penn Station. **HW**



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Temple-Era Banquet Takes Diners Back 2,000 Years



The banquet at the Psagot Winery, July 12, 2023.
Credit: Binyamin Regional Council.

(JNS) – A lavish banquet held at the Psagot Winery, located in Samaria north of Jerusalem, brought participants back to the Second Temple era last week.

The unique dinner, an initiative of the Binyamin Regional Council’s Department of Religious Culture, was organized as part of the council’s Binyamin Temple Conference last Wednesday.

Attendees were served historical foods, mentioned in the Bible and other traditional sources, that the Jewish people ate some two millennia ago, including sacred breads, sacrificial meat, priestly offerings, biblical-style salads and wine produced from local grapes.

All dishes were prepared under the supervision of Professor Zohar Amar of the Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology at Bar-Ilan University, while international chef Yossi Ben Dayan oversaw the culinary aspects.

“This evening is for people who want to contemplate and feel close to the divine presence that existed in the Temple,” Binyamin Regional Council head Israel Ganz told participants, adding

The event “emphasizes what once was—and what will be once again.” Binyamin Regional Council head Israel Ganz said.

that the event “emphasizes what once was – and what will be once again.”

Other speakers included Rabbi Yisrael Ariel, director of the Temple Institute, and Dr. Shivi Drori, a researcher who specializes in rediscovering the ancient wines and grapes of Israel.

The Temple Conference continued last Thursday with lectures at Tel Shiloh, the center of Jewish life before the construction of the First Temple in Jerusalem. Among other topics, speakers were to discuss the offering of the Passover sacrifice in modern times, the traditional grape varieties of the region, and urban and logistic planning “in the vision of future Jerusalem.” **HW**



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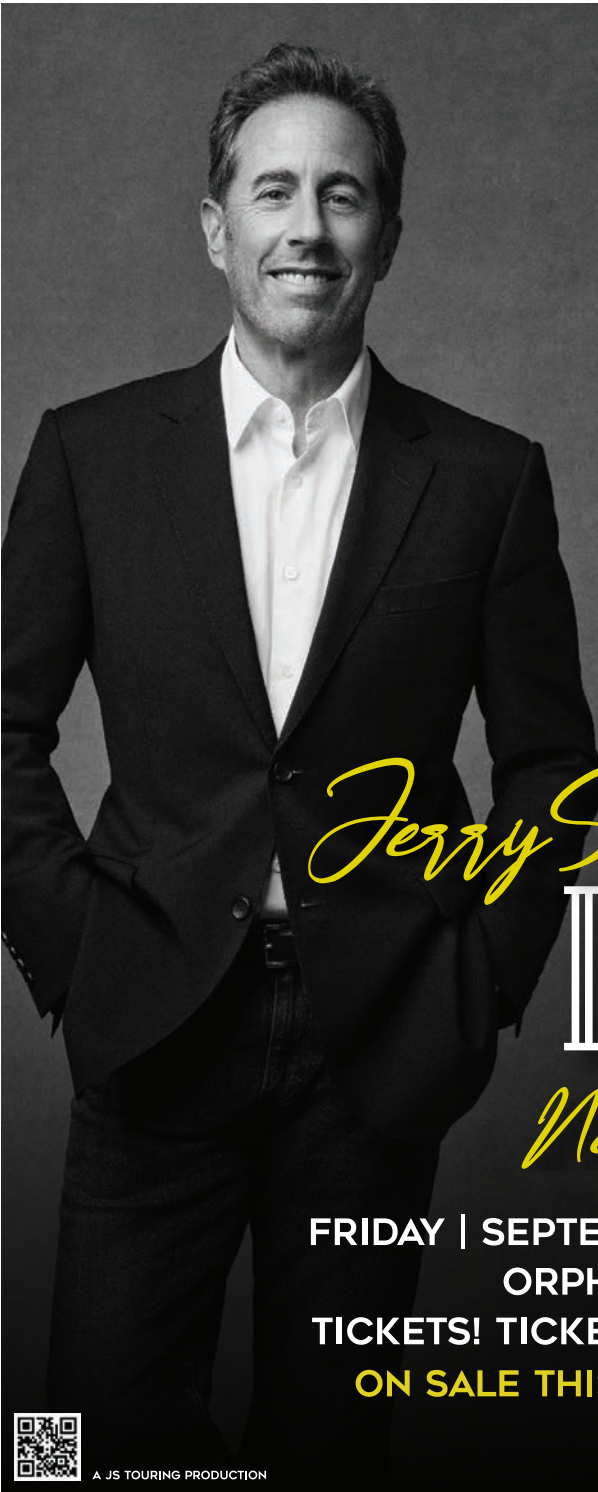
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Does the Social Security COLA Help If You’re Not Receiving Benefits?

Provided by Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments, Wells Fargo Advisors
Questions for Mike? You can reach him at 901.761.8151 or Michael.Stein@WellsFargoAdvisors.com • fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael-stein

The Social Security cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for 2023 was 8.7%, the largest benefit increase since 1981. Obviously, the COLA helps current beneficiaries, but you may wonder whether it will make a difference if you’re not yet receiving retirement benefits.

The answer depends on your age. If you reached age 62 by December 2022, the 2023 COLA will increase your retirement benefit regardless of whether or not you have begun receiving it. If you were under 62 in 2022, the COLA will not directly apply to you, but high inflation may increase your future benefit due to an increase in wages on a national level and/or an increase in your own wages. Here are some details.

Primary Insurance Amount

When you reach age 62, the Social

Security Administration (SSA) calculates your primary insurance amount (PIA) – the amount you would receive at full retirement age. Your benefit is always based on your PIA, although it may be reduced or increased due to claiming earlier or later than your full retirement age. Any COLA is applied to your PIA. The 2023 COLA was applied in December 2022 for benefits beginning January 2023, so you must have reached age 62 by December 2022 to receive the COLA.*

Indexing Wages for Inflation

Even if the 2023 COLA does not apply to you, your future benefit may be increased due to higher average wages in the current inflationary environment. Your PIA is based on the average of your 35 highest years of earnings, adjusted for inflation using the national average

wage index (AWI) – calculated each year based on national wages. There is a look-back period of two years, so for someone who turns 62 in 2023, the PIA is calculated using the AWI for 2021. The 2021 AWI would be applied to wages prior to that year, and wages in 2021 and later would not be indexed.

The effect of the AWI may surprise you. To use a simple example, let’s say Jim reaches age 62 in 2023 and earned \$100,000 in 2021 and \$35,000 in 1991. After adjusting for the wage index, Jim’s 1991 earnings would be \$97,202 – almost as much as his 2021 earnings. With wages rising due to high inflation in 2022, the 2022 AWI may substantially increase average wages for people who turn 62 in 2024 or later.

Although earnings after age 59 are not indexed, they can increase your future benefits if your annual earnings are higher than one of your previous 35 highest years of earnings. In this case, the SSA will recalculate your PIA.

You can obtain an estimate of your future Social Security retirement

benefit at various retirement ages by establishing a my Social Security account at ssa.gov/myaccount.

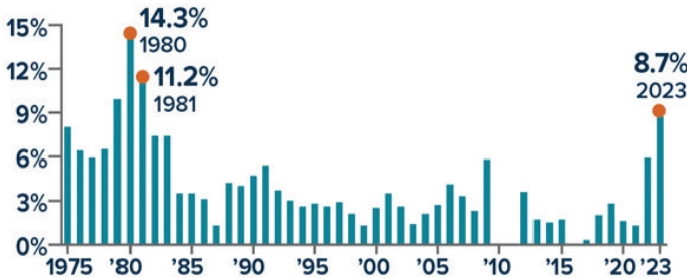
*The SSA considers a birthday on the first of a month to fall in the previous month, so a New Year’s Day birthday would be considered to occur in December.

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KEEPING UP WITH INFLATION

Social Security COLA, 1975–2023



There was no COLA in 2010, 2011, and 2016.
Source: Social Security Administration, 2022

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Fran Drescher Uses Yiddish to Denounce Hollywood Execs



Credit: via Frazer Harrison/Getty Images

By Lior Zaltzman

July 14, 2023 – This originally appeared on Kveller, reprinted with permission.

Yesterday, actress Fran Drescher, the president of the actor’s union SAG-AFTRA, shared that her union voted to strike alongside the Hollywood writers guild (WGA). Drescher announced the strike with a speech some are calling the performance of her lifetime.

While I would argue that her performance in every episode of “The Nanny” should be bestowed that honor, we can all agree that the Jewish actress came off impassioned, wise, and impossibly eloquent.

Drescher called the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (AMTP) a greedy entity that is victimizing actors, and declared “the jig is up” – stating that the trade organization’s inability to offer proper compensation to actors in light of a changing business model, with streaming services on the rise and AI and technology changing the industry is no longer acceptable.

“What are we doing, moving around furniture in the titanic?” she decried. And of course, like a Jewish maternal figure, she chastised them with a “shame on them.” Fran took no prisoners and minced no words, saying that AMPTP is “on the wrong side of history.”

Along with that familiar signature New Yawk accent, she also peppered her speech with Yiddishisms – giving extra weight to her rallying cry.

She likened the AMPTP’s offer to what her Jewish mother calls “a leck and a schmeck,” a lick and a sniff – a whole lot of nothing, basically. The audience might have giggled, but it is the perfect Yiddish expression to use when you are getting short-changed, and works in so many settings – from labor organizing to relationships.

It wasn’t the only time Drescher mentioned her Jewish mother on last Thursday’s press conference. She also used the moment to – well, Jewish mom guilt her own Jewish mom! When a journalist questioned the optics of a glamorous picture of Drescher with Kim Kardashian at a tony Dolce & Gabbana event in Italy while the union was negotiating, Fran corrected emphatically “it was absolute work... I worked around the clock in three different timezones, because my parents live in Florida though I keep asking them to move here, and I manage their wellbeing as well,” she said.

And in a sit down with the AP, Fran also dropped a little bit of Yiddish when talking about what SAG was offered by execs – “we got bupkis, I think that we were duped,” she said, using the Yiddish word for nothing.

Drescher, who, it should be mentioned, was recently under fire for her stance against vaccine mandates, also made sure to remind us that this strike is about more than just some wealthy actors getting better pay. She talked about how the majority of SAG-AFTRA

members are journeyman performers – working-class people looking to take care of their families. And she also talked about the implication of the strike beyond Hollywood.

“What is happening here is not unique,” she explained, “We being performers are able to get press... it’s very important that everybody appreciate that we’re not just sticking up for ourselves, but we’re sticking up for everybody else... It’s a slippery slope into a very dangerous time and a real dystopia, if big business, corporations think that they can put real human beings out of work and replace them with artificial intelligence, it’s dangerous, it’s without thinking or conscience.”

Drescher, 65, said she hopes that the media attention the SAG strike will get will help other labor movements. The W has also been on strike for 11 weeks, and now SAG is joining them, making this strike led by Drescher historical. It’s the first time in since the 1960s that both unions have been on strike at the same time.

While Drescher’s use of Yiddishism feels like an adorable extra embellishment, it is a throwback to the vital part Yiddish played in the Jewish labor movement, and the great number of Yiddish labor songs out there that are perfect for all strikers (and these Yiddish curses are pretty great to use against greedy corporations).

It’s also a reminder of how integral unions have been to Jews in this country and beyond, an idea that you can even find in one old Nanny episode: In “The Strike,” Fran refuses to cross a picket line because it was one of only three rules her Jewish mother told her she is never allowed to break. When Mr. Sheffield tries to get her to cross the line anyway, she says it would make her aunt roll in her grave, a grave, she says “was paid for by her union.”

“We are labor, and we stand tall, and we demand respect, you share the wealth because you cannot exist without us,” Drescher said in her speech last Thursday, echoing the sentiments of so many Jewish labor activists before her. **HW**

The ‘Transparent’ Musical is Headed to Broadway Next Year

By Jacob Gurvis

(New York Jewish Week) – After a successful month-long showing in Los Angeles, “Transparent” is headed to Broadway in 2024, according to Amazon producers.

From the same duo who created the acclaimed TV series, “A Transparent Musical” is a musical adaptation of the dramatic comedy that follows a Jewish family navigating a parent’s coming out as a transgender woman in her 60s. Created by Joey Soloway, who also co-wrote the book of the musical, the Amazon series won eight Emmys along with awards from GLAAD and the NAACP. It starred Jeffrey Tambor as Maura Pfefferman and had been considered by many to be “the most Jewish show on TV.”

The musical adaptation, with music and lyrics by Faith Soloway, recently concluded its world premiere at LA’s Mark Taper Forum. The team behind the production told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that they focused on increasing representation – especially after the original series was criticized for casting a cisgender actor in the starring role.

“I’ve never seen a show with so many trans actors,” said Adina Verson,

who identifies as nonbinary and plays Ali Pfefferman, the family’s youngest sibling. “It’s an incredible room full of unique, incredible performers who honestly haven’t often been given the stage that they deserve.”

According to the Center Theater Group, which operates the LA theater where the musical ran from May 23–June 25, the show attracted the highest proportion of under-40 viewers of any recent production at the venue.

““Transparent” remains an incredibly impactful series with salient representation for the LGBTQIA+ community,” said Nick Pepper, an executive at Amazon Studios, according to “Deadline.” “This is the ideal series and characters to bring from series to stage, and we are thrilled to partner with Tony-winning Broadway Producer Eva Price. We hope the audience walks away inspired after experiencing this poignant story.”

The play is set in a suburban Jewish community center, complete with fake promotional posters for a Purim carnival, banners from youth sports championships and pre-show announcements about other Jewish community events. **HW**

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Secrets of Prayer



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.*

Those mortals – they just don’t get it. Of course, I’m only a class III angel, so I don’t know everything, but I’ve been up here a few thousand eons. So, you know I’ve picked up a little knowledge of the system. I mean up here and down there. We class III angels are each assigned to a shtetl, a village, a municipality. My little town has only me. New York has 500. We think of ourselves as guardian angels, but we really are the prayer filters. G-d Almighty, himself, can’t handle the load. That fellow, Mark Twain – not exactly a saint, you know, but a heckuva humorist – marveled at the flawed human understanding of heaven. He couldn’t believe that the one thrill that motivates human behavior even more than money, the subject they think about, long for, and whisper about constantly, was not in the Sunday School definition of heavenly activities. Singing, playing the harp, napping on clouds, but never that other recreational activity. You know what I mean.

Well, I’m not giving away any secrets. Humans are confused about a lot of things. Take prayer for example. They never have understood that, either. Hannah, you know in Samuel II, prays like a wild woman (remember Eli thought she was drunk) for a child and

we delivered Samuel – greatest priest in all Israelite history. Sarah is as quiet as a church mouse (pardon the expression) and we also deliver – Isaac, in her case. You think the Boss can’t hear Sarah’s plea without her mouth forming the words? He reads the language of the heart, you know.

Yeah, I know what you cynics are gonna say next. You’re gonna tell me about the Chasidic farmer – Belzach – who was so righteous that he wouldn’t let his hens lay eggs on Shabbos. Poor man, he had a sick wife. He prayed for her recovery every day like my rabbi davens on Yom Kippur. Nothing happened. His friends and students were appalled. If his prayers were unheeded, what hope did they have? They fled from their faith like dandelion seeds sail over the meadow. Trouble is, being human they couldn’t see the plan. Most folks are more interested in what goes on AROUND them than what goes on ABOVE them. It’s like watching a dog sniff out a lost child. They don’t understand why he confidently turns off the road to follow a footpath that leads to the valley caves and the whimpering child. Talk about understanding the Creator of heaven and Earth – we don’t even understand the G-d given tracking ability of a dog.

But back to the Holy Man and his ailing wife and the hidden plan. She was so bad they had to take her to the healer in Gdansk. Guess what? The next day the river flooded and for its amusement, stood up over its banks, dunked the empty house in the river, then reduced it to straw and splintered boards. If the wife had been well – if they had not gone to the healer – the whole family would have been fish food.

And another thing humans don’t get. Sometimes, it’s a zero-sum game. If a supplicant asks for a thousand rubles – its gotta come out of someone’s pocket. We don’t print money, you know, like most governments these days. You pray for Amalgamated Computer Chips to go up – and some short seller loses his stake. Listen, when it comes to prayer, conflict is everywhere.

Take Becky, a nice, 15-year-old maiden but with facial skin like a serpent; three times a week she begs me for beauty because her heart yearns for that Belski boy whose father runs the vodka store. But so do 12 others. And the town doctor has a lotion he sells for 300 groshen a bottle that turns serpent skin into velvet. (You need to smear on a bottle a week for 20 weeks.) And Doc has got a kid on the way and needs all the income he can get. He’s gotta make a living, you know. See how complicated it gets. How to make everybody happy?

And A wants to buy a cheap wagon (and may the seller throw in two healthy horses!). But B, the wagon seller, prays for a fat price. And even if I grant A’s prayer, in a week he’s back at me for a zoftig wife (she should have red hair, he tells me) sitting beside him in his discounted wagon.

Then there’s that corny line I hear 10 times a week from the same pleader. “Just gimme this one, and I’ll never bother you again.” Oh yeah. It’s like jellybeans and popcorn – the more you give ‘em, the more they want.

Of course, we’ve all got our favorites. Those who you hate to refuse. Those who ask for others – not themselves.

As soon as I arrived up here, I chose prayer as my area of specialty. Smart

The Scribbler On the Roof

By Ted Roberts

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move – some of my angelic colleagues chose sacrifice, which seemed a promising field. 700-800 BC. After all, the Temple was operating 24/7. But today they don’t have much of a career field.

The very first thing they taught us was how to respond to human complaints about the efficiency of prayer. The overriding answer when you encounter a cynic is: When we answer G-D’s prayers, well, that’s the day He’ll answer ours.

G-d’s prayer? What can he mean? I mean about 300 times in the Torah G-D asks us to behave – to walk in his ways, to obey his commandments, to act like a man or a woman instead of a baboon. Over and over he pleads with us. In YOUR language He PRAYS – yes, He prays – that we honor the covenant. The day we answer his supplications He’ll wake up and answer ours. Seems fair to me.

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

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ISRAEL INSIGHTS A Different Debate

By Howard Weisband

It’s a renewed debate, but not a debate that will send Israelis into the streets to loudly demonstrate against the Government by the tens and hundreds of thousands, nor at all whatsoever.

There is an opposition, but it’s not a debate, which will utilize ugly and chilling language against those who advocate differing opinions.

The national and international media will not pick up the debate and analyze every angle, at times even inflaming the various positions, as was done recently by a BBC interviewer of a former Prime Minister, and by Thomas Friedman, again, in his July 11 column in “The New York Times.”

Officials in the United States will not be pitted against the PM nor Israeli Ministers.

And I dare say that the geopolitics of the region will not seriously engage in the issue, albeit there may be arguments emanating against it, again, from the Palestinian Authority or those speaking on its behalf.

So what is the debate, you no doubt ask, fascinating and intriguing that it is, albeit to merely a few relatively speaking.

It’s a renewed debate as stated above, but it was encapsulated in one sentence

in an article published in August 2020 by the Armstrong Institute of Biblical Archaeology: “King David clearly had a palace: The question is, where exactly was it situated?”

That article opens with: “Did I find King David’s palace?” Archaeologist Eilat Mazar asked that bold question in the January/February 2006 issue of “Biblical Archaeology Review.” Her lengthy article summarized her 2005 archaeological excavation at the northern tip of the City of David and the scientific evidence she had uncovered.

The detailed article states: “The combined dating evidence left a window of less than 100 years in which this massive building could have been constructed. And directly within that time period is the biblical account of the reign of King David! Based on her discoveries, Dr. Mazar found that the evidence fit precisely with the biblical account of David’s palace: She had found a massive, 3,000-year-old building right where the Bible says David’s palace should be!”

Mazar, who died in 2021, was a respected archaeologist at Hebrew University, who utilized first and foremost her excavations plus multiple sources

of evidence in order to draw her conclusions. She famously said. “Let the stones speak.”

Her focus was on the northern tip of the City of David (today at times referred to as the village of Silwan), which is on the southeast slopes just below the Temple Mount and the Old City of Jerusalem. Her placement of King David’s palace was at the northern tip of the City of David, outside today’s Old City.

Mazar’s conclusions were debated, as is most often the case in academic circles.

Now the debate has been renewed. Prof. Nadan Na’aman, of the Department of Jewish History at Tel Aviv University, published on June 9 a similarly detailed, well documented and lengthy academic article titled in part “Locating Jerusalem’s Royal Palace in the Second Millennium BCE....,” in the “Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University.”

Na’aman writes that more recent excavations at the foot of the Temple Mount have “changed the balance of evidence....”. He continues: “This hypothesis brings to the fore the question when the royal palace was first built on the Temple Mount.”

“According to this logic,” he explains, “the centre of the city at the time was located on the Temple Mount, north of the Southeastern Hill, with the latter having been a peripheral, poorly inhabited area in its vicinity. The selection of the Temple Mount for the seat of the royal house was mainly strategic, as it is raised and naturally defended on all sides, and it controls the surrounding regions and dominates the lower hill to its south.”

If true, it means that King David’s palace was atop that hill, prior to his son, King Solomon building the First Temple on what we know as the Temple Mount.

Historically, if accurate, that is potentially earth-shaking.

But the debate will continue, civilly.

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

From the Kitchen of Seth Feibelman

Tisha B’Av

By Seth Feibelman

Although Tisha B’Av is recognized as a sad holiday on the calendar, I see any moment you get to break fast with family and friends as a time to spread joy with food.

Traditionally, a light dairy meal is eaten around brunch for the holiday. When planning a menu, I look for inspiration in my garden. Currently, I have spinach, tomatoes and fresh herbs growing nicely. The spinach I will prepare into a quiche. The tomatoes and herbs I will stuff into mushrooms and some golden fried hashbrowns to bring it all together.

I find it convenient to prepare these recipes ahead of time and heat them up for the occasion.



Tomato-Stuffed Portabella Mushrooms

- 4 to 6 portabella mushrooms stemmed and washed
- 1 cup sliced cherry tomatoes
- 1 garlic clove minced
- 1 tsp fresh thyme
- 1 tsp fresh oregano
- 1 tsp fresh basil
- 2 Tbsp + 2 Tbsp olive oil
- ½ cup breadcrumbs
- ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- ¼ cup parmesan cheese
- Salt & Pepper

Brush mushrooms with olive oil and roast in a preheated 400-degree oven for 8-10 minutes. Combine tomatoes, garlic, thyme, oregano, basil and olive oil to a bowl and marinate for 10 minutes. Add breadcrumbs, mozzarella cheese, parmesan cheese and salt and pepper. Remove mushrooms from oven and let cool to room temperature. Layer the tomato mixture inside the mushroom and return to oven. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until top gets golden brown.



Crustless Spinach Quiche (Serves 6-8)

- 1 cup spinach chopped and drained
 - 8 large eggs
 - ½ cup heavy cream
 - ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese
 - ½ cup shredded mozzarella cheese
 - 1 Tbsp salt
 - 2 tsp pepper
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 3-quart dish with non-stick pan spray. Mix all ingredients in a bowl and pour into greased dish. Cook at 350 degrees for 25 minutes or until firm.



Golden Shredded Hashbrown (Serves 4-6)

- 5-6 medium Idaho potatoes
 - 1/3 cup vegetable oil
 - ¼ cup butter
 - Salt & Pepper
- Peel, shred and soak potatoes in water for 5 minutes. Rinse and drain thoroughly. Preheat skillet to medium low heat and add oil. Add potato shreds to pan careful not to splatter the oil. Dice butter into cubes and drop on top of potatoes. Add salt and pepper. When the bottom of potatoes are golden brown, flip them and slowly turn up the heat to medium high. Remove from pan and drain excess grease using a paper towel. [HW](#)

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