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# THE Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

HEBREWWATCHMAN.COM 30 AV, 5783 AUGUST 17, 2023 VOL. 101, NO. 47

## Save the Date: Memphis Community Chanukah Celebration featuring Miami Boys Choir

Sponsored by the Bornblum Foundation; presented by 26 local agencies and businesses



Miami Boys Choir

Let the light shine! Every Chanukah, Jews around the world light Menorahs in their houses, most by their windows, to bring light to the world. And every Chanukah, Jewish agencies around the world hold Chanukah festivities for their membership and communities to

bring people together in celebration. Here in Memphis, we're coming together big-time! This year, 26 local agencies and businesses are partnering, so we can all celebrate Chanukah under one roof. On Sunday, Dec. 10, at 5:30 p.m. – sponsored by The Bornblum

Foundation – you are invited to register and join together at the Memphis Jewish Community Center (MJCC) for a dairy dinner followed by a concert featuring the world-renowned Miami Boys Choir! On Chanukah, when we light our Menorah candles at home, we all say the same blessings and choose to sing songs from the same song lists, like "I Have a Little Dreidel," "Ma'oz Tzur," and "Chanukah, Oh Chanukah." And we certainly can't forget fun songs like a cappella melodies by the Maccabeats, Six13, and so many more! On Dec. 10, for one of the few times in the history of Jewish Memphis, 26 local agencies are collaborating to encourage our community to celebrate together. (List of participants below). The goal is for us to unite for a celebration of Judaism, of light, of hope, and of our common heritage and traditions. The evening will take place at the Orgel Family Performing Arts Center at the MJCC, with dinner in the Belz Social Hall and a concert in the Belz Theater. There are 300 seats available for the evening, and registration will be through the MJCC.

Individual tickets will be available, as well as table sponsorships, which will include reserved seating for the concert. More information on the event and how to register will be announced soon. We hope to see you there for a fun, bright evening of celebrations. Participating agencies and businesses: Baron Hirsch Congregation, BBYO, Beth Sholom Synagogue, Bornblum Foundation, Bornblum Jewish Community School, Chabad of Tennessee, Cooper Hotels, Diamond Printing, Hadassah Memphis, The Hebrew Watchman, Hillels of Memphis, Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South, Jewish War Veterans Post 121, Margolin Hebrew Academy/Feinstone Yeshiva of the South, Memphis Jewish Community Center, Memphis Jewish Federation, Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab, Memphis Kollel, Memphis Kollel Torah MiTzion, NCSY, Or Chadash Synagogue, Plough Towers, Sam's Corner, Ricki's Cookie Corner, Temple Israel, Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Services, Young Israel of Memphis. **HW**

## New Kosher Restaurant to Open in MJCC



Shmuel with his wife, Sigalit, and son Gavriel Edri

By Shoshana Cenker

Jewish Memphis, rejoice. A new kosher restaurant is setting up shop in the Memphis Jewish Community Center (MJCC). Owner Shmuel "Sam" Edri's "Sam's Corner A Taste of Milk & Honey" is in the final planning stages, awaiting the Shelby County Health De-

partment's inspection sign offs. "I hope to be open as soon as possible," he said over our pleasant Zoom chat, "hopefully September." So, how did Shmuel and his family – wife, Sigalit, and 9-month-old son, Gavriel – end up in Memphis all the

way from LA? There are two main reasons, actually. Sigalit wanted to move closer to family, and her sister's fam, Michal and Jason Caplan and their two daughters, have been happily living in the Bluff City for several years now. As for Shmuel, he's always wanted to open his own restaurant. Now, they're both getting what they've wished for, right here in Memphis. Shmuel's interest in food began as a child growing up in Israel, "my dad was cooking all the time." Later on, after serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) for five years, he started working in Valentino's Italian Restaurant, a popular eatery in Jerusalem, first as a waiter, then moving to the kitchen a few months later to help the head chef with preparation, then to helming the pizza section. "I really liked it a lot," Shmuel said. Fast-forward to LA, where he worked in a few restaurants doing everything from managing to being a *mashgiach* (kosher supervisor)... and even meeting Sigalit, his future wife. "I was cooking that night," he remembered with a smile, "I guess the meal was good!" Though he also had the opportunity to work with Sigalit's father as a contractor in LA, Shmuel wanted to get back in the kitchen. Which is where Memphis

came in. Sigalit came up with the "Milk & Honey" part of the name. "It brings a little taste of Israel to Memphis," Shmuel explained, "and we've noticed that Memphis is very Zionistic." So, what is the Israeli taste that's coming to Memphis? Well, Shmuel is building a delicious menu with Israeli chef Asaf Yeger of the Café Café and Piano Piano franchises. They're planning Israeli-type breads, baked goods, Jerusalem bagels, salads, pasta, and eventually high-end pizza made fresh in a pizza oven. "In the early morning, we'll have a quick 'Starbucks'-style approach," Shmuel said. "Later in the morning and afternoon, we'll have a full-service restaurant where you can sit and eat. But we'll also have to-go options, too. Maybe in the future, we might add dinner." A couple months after it's up and running, Sam's Corner will begin offering catering. Chabad of Tennessee is providing kosher certification. As Jewish Memphis welcomes the Edri family and Sam's Corner A Taste of Milk & Honey with our Southern charm and hospitality, we're pretty sure they'll be saying *B'tayavon* to those heading to the MJCC to dine on tasty kosher Israeli-influenced delights. *Hatzlacha!* **HW**



# Pitmasters' Prelude ASBEE Kosher BBQ Contest at Baron Hirsch This Sunday



By Shoshana Cenker and Eric Mogy

What’s that wonderful smell in the air? Ahhh yes, it’s the familiar aroma of kosher BBQ. A “teaser event” for the ASBEE Kosher BBQ at Baron Hirsch (BH) will be held on Sunday, Aug. 20! The community is invited to join in the familiar fun as teams compete in a scaled-down version of the legendary event.

“This year’s competition is a pre-amble,” explained BH president Marc Lennon. “With the event taking a hiatus during COVID-19 and the former Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth joining Baron Hirsch’s congregation, we are honoring the longtime famed event in this smaller showing, which will gear up for the full event in August 2024, with the typical 40+ teams.”

A committee of former ASBEE members and BH members have joyfully come together to prepare for this teaser event. This year’s “Pitmasters’ Prelude” will feature 10 classic ASBEE teams. The tasty competition categories are best brisket, best ribs and best chicken wings. Don’t worry, fun activities, including a bouncy house, are planned for the kiddos. And attendees can enjoy an à la carte BBQ dinner from the always delicious Cowsher Café.

Competitors will be busy all-day Sunday, starting in the wee hours of the morning to create their award-worthy dishes. The event welcomes VIP sponsors at 4 p.m., and general admission for the community is from 5 – 7 p.m.,

with judging beginning at 5 p.m. Winners will be announced before the event ends.

The Contest would like to thank its generous sponsors for helping make this mini-BBQ possible: Campbell Law Firm, Harkavy Shainberg Kaplan, Lubin Property Management, Mendelson Law Firm, Mogy Law Firm, Ortman Chiropractic and Highland Capital.

Congregation members placed bids through a BBQ Judge Auction to win the highly sought-after judging spots. The top three bidders won the brisket judging, the next three will judge ribs, and the third-highest bidders will be chicken wings judges.

“I was so excited when I was asked to help run this year’s teaser event,” said Eric Mogy, who previously ran the ASBEE BBQ Contest for over 10 years. “This event was near and dear to me, and I am happy we can restart this wonderful tradition in our new home.

“This year’s event promises to be enjoyable,” Eric continued, “even if it’s just a prelude to get everyone excited for the grand return next year.”

Please note that the Winter Oak entrance will be blocked off, as the festivities will take place on that side of the shul. Please enter through the Yates side of the synagogue, where there’s plenty of space to park.

Now all you have to do is come ready to party, schmooze, and dine on some tasty BBQ fare. Who’s hungry?! **HW**

# THE Hebrew Watchman

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## Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. August 18, 2023 / 1 Elul, 5783.....7:27 p.m.  
Havdalah, Sat. August 19, 2023 / 2 Elul, 5783..... 8:23 p.m.  
Weekly Torah Portion: Shoftim

## Argentina Restaurant Scraps 'Ana Frank Burger,' 'Adolf Fries' from Menu

(JNS) – A restaurant called the Honky Donky in Rafaela, Argentina, isn’t helping the reputation of the South American state, which long served as a safe haven for Nazi Germans. Guests can order “Adolf fries,” which appropriately come with decidedly

non-kosher bacon, and a 3.5-ounce “Ana Frank burger,” which for \$11 is accompanied by lettuce, tomato, pickles and mayonnaise, according to the “New York Post.” “It’s unclear why Honky Donky, which also featured menu items named Benito, after Benito Mussolini, and ‘Gengis,’ after Genghis Khan, decided to roll out Holocaust-themed noshes,” the “Post” wrote.

The local Jewish community expressed its “deepest rejection and indignation,” and threatened to sue the establishment. The restaurant apologized on social media, scrapped the Hitler fries and re-named the burger after the executed English queen Anne Boleyn. “The restaurant also pledged to roll out dishes based on more inspiring and heroic historical figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Nelson Mandela, among others,” the “Post” reported. After World War II, Argentina provided refuge for Nazis fleeing justice. Israeli Mossad agents captured Nazi Party officer Adolf Eichmann in Argentina in 1960 before bringing him to Jerusalem for trial, where he was ultimately hanged. **HW**

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# Israeli Held in Madagascar for Trying to Smuggle Out Rare Tortoises

(JNS) – An Israeli citizen has been held for weeks in the African island nation of Madagascar after being caught attempting to smuggle tortoises out of the country.

The 39-year-old man from Beitar Ilit, south of Jerusalem, was arrested a month-and-a-half ago at the airport after 59 rare tortoises were found in his possession. It is illegal to take the animals and according to “Ynet,” the prosecution wants him sentenced to 10 years in prison with a fine of \$100,000. The trial was scheduled to begin on Aug. 11.

The defendant claims that he was not aware that it was an illegal act. He attempted to transport the radiated and spider tortoises to Israel via Bangkok, Thailand. The animals were found in his suitcase before he boarded an Ethiopian Airlines flight with a connection in Addis Ababa.

Israel’s Foreign Ministry has tried to intervene in his detention, which he described to his attorney Mordechai Tzivin as being conducted under terrible conditions. He has been transferred four times.

“Save me, what’s happening here is unbelievable. I am constantly cornered, they took my clothes, and I have nothing to eat. I won’t last here,” the man said in a recent phone call to Tzivin, according to “Ynet.”

“I sleep in a crowded room with 150 people, each of us having little space. It’s rough here; I feel threatened as anyone

*The Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem has tried to get his conditions of detention improved.*

can harm me. Just last week someone tried to touch me, and when I protested, he hit me twice. The nights feel never-ending and I long for morning to come. I gave the jailer my food to get my tefillin, but then another person asked for money. When I refused, he punched me in the eye and took my tefillin away.”

The defendant pays \$200 a week for kosher food but says that other inmates frequently steal it.

He says he is a plumber by trade and is trying to raise \$270,000 to cover his legal fees and other expenses via crowdfunding.

“My client is an ordinary citizen with a clean record. He was unaware that taking tortoises out of Madagascar was prohibited, and he made no attempt to conceal them. It is reasonable to assume that an average person, especially a foreigner, would not have regarded this as a criminal act,” Tzivin said.

“The conditions in the prison, considered one of the harshest in the world, are tremendously challenging for him both physically and mentally. I sincerely hope that law enforcement authorities in Madagascar will soon recognize my client’s innocence, putting an end to the tremendous suffering he is enduring.” **HW**

# White Supremacist Man Arrested for Allegedly Threatening Jurors, Witnesses in Pittsburgh Shooting Trial



A Texas Department of Public Safety reward announcement for information leading to the arrest of Hardy Lloyd, May 20, 2022. (Screenshot)

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – Federal agents arrested a West Virginia man last Thursday for allegedly threatening jurors and witnesses in the trial of the Pittsburgh synagogue shooter, which culminated [the previous] week in a death sentence.

The man who was arrested, Hardy Lloyd, 45, is “a self-proclaimed ‘reverend’ of a white supremacy movement,” according to a statement from the U.S. Attorney’s office in the northern district of West Virginia. The statement said Lloyd “made threatening social media posts, website comments, and emails towards the jury and witnesses during the trial.” He is charged with obstruction of justice, witness tampering and trans-

mitting threats in interstate and foreign commerce.

“Jury trials are a hallmark of the American justice system and attempts to intimidate witnesses or jurors will be met with a strong response,” U.S. Attorney William Ihlenfeld said in the statement. “The use of hateful threats in an effort to undermine a trial is especially troubling.”

The Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh welcomed the arrest. It said Lloyd had also targeted survivors of the 2018 attack, the victims’ families and employees of the federation and Secure Community Network, a nonprofit that coordinates security for Jewish institutions.

“The offender in this case targeted the Jewish community for years with hate, vitriol and calls for violence,” Michael Masters, the CEO of the Secure Community Network, said in a statement. “The offender sought to terrorize the community. We now seek justice and accountability.”

According to the federation and Masters’ group, Lloyd extolled Robert Bowers, the man who carried out the attack at the Tree of Life synagogue building, killing 11 worshippers. Lloyd’s statements also allegedly referred to Squirrel Hill, the neighborhood where the shooting took place, which has a reputation for being tight-knit and friendly. It was also the home neighborhood of the late Fred Rogers, the longtime children’s TV host.

“All jews must be murdered. The jew race MUST be wiped out...So, target jews as BOWERS did ...” one of Lloyd’s threats allegedly read, according to the federation and Secure Community Network. They said another of his threats read, “make the myths of Hitler seem like Mr. Roger’s Neighborhood ... start kidnapping jews and torturing them to death.”

Wheeling, West Virginia, Lloyd’s hometown, is commuting distance from Pittsburgh. Lloyd alleged left stickers in heavily Jewish areas of Pittsburgh directing people to his website.

He has long been known to law enforcement for harassing the Jewish community and has been sentenced to prison three times, the local CBS affiliate reported. He was most recently released in 2020, according to the Jewish federation and Secure Community Network.

Last year, the Texas Department of Public Safety offered a \$1,000 award for information leading to the arrest of Lloyd, who was wanted in the state for making terroristic threats. **HW**

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# How Robbie Robertson Learned He was Jewish — and the Son of a Gangster



Robbie Robertson in 1969. Credit: David Attie/Getty Images

By Seth Rogovoy

Originally appeared on “Forward,” and reprinted with permission.

Editor’s note: Robbie Robertson, the lead guitarist and songwriter for the Band died August 9, at the age of 80. To honor his memory, we’re republishing this piece from April 2020, about how Robertson learned of his Jewish roots.

In the new documentary film, “Once Were Brothers: Robbie Robertson and The Band,” Robertson – The Band’s main songwriter and guitarist – tells the story of how he finally learned of his Jewish heritage and how his Jewish relatives in Toronto embraced him and opened a whole new world of “vision” to him.

Robertson had been raised in suburban Toronto as Jaime Royal Robertson without knowing that the man he called dad, James Patrick Robertson, was not his biological father. When his mother, Dolly Robertson – who was a Mohawk raised on the Six Nations Reserve southwest of Toronto – finally had had enough of James Robertson’s physical and emotional abuse, she sat her son down, explained that she was divorcing James, and revealed to him that his nat-

ural father, Alexander Klegerman, had died in a roadside accident before Robbie was born. She also told her bar-mitzvah age son that Klegerman was Jewish.

Or, as Ronnie Hawkins, the Arkansan rockabilly bandleader who, one by one, hired the five Toronto-area musicians who would become the Hawks and later on The Band, says with a modicum of glee in the documentary, “Robbie’s real dad was a Hebrew gangster.”

Robbie picks up the story. His mother introduced him to his father’s family, including his father’s brothers, Natie and Morrie Klegerman, who were prominent members of Toronto’s Jewish underworld. “They brought me into their world with tremendous love and affection,” recounts Robertson, who would occasionally do “errands” for his uncles.

Robertson describes how the typical dream of his schoolmates was to own their own bowling alley. Having already been bitten by the rock ‘n’ roll bug, including its ethos of rebellion against the conformity of suburban life, he could not relate.

“These relatives of mine ... I’m un-

derstanding what’s been stirring inside of me all this time,” he says. “They understand vision. They understand ambition. When I told the Klegermans I had musical ambitions, they were like, ‘Rock ‘n’ roll? You don’t want to be in furs and diamonds?’ And then they were like, ‘Oh, you mean show business!’” That they could understand, and they even helped young Robbie, who had his own rock combo, get gigs in Toronto nightclubs.

That vision and ambition would propel Robertson through good times and bad, and he became the main engine that would drive his fellow musicians in Ronnie Hawkins’s backup band – an incredibly talented assemblage of singers and musicians including Levon Helm, Rick Danko, Richard Manuel, and Garth Hudson – to head out on their own, first as a white R&B group called Levon and the Hawks, then as Bob Dylan’s backup group on his controversial “going electric” world tour of 1965-1966, and later as the Woodstock-based outfit The Band, for whom Robertson wrote signature hits including “The Night They Drove Old Dixie Down,” “The Weight” and “Stage Fright.”

The Band built a bridge from late-1960s hippie-rock to a more soulful and cerebral 1970s roots music – what we now call “Americana.” The likes of Bruce Springsteen, Eric Clapton, George Harrison, Peter Gabriel, Van Morrison, Bob Dylan, and Taj Mahal pay tribute to the group in the film – which is now streaming on all the major rental platforms. Taj Mahal describes them as “the American Beatles;” Springsteen notes they boasted “three of the greatest white singers in rock history;” Clapton says he was “in great awe of their brotherhood.” Clapton recounts that upon hearing their debut album, “Music for Big Pink,” he broke up the English power trio Cream

and traveled to Woodstock to try to get the group to hire him as a rhythm guitarist. (Needless to say, they declined, although Clapton did get all of them to play on his 1976 solo album, “No Reason to Cry,” which he recorded at The Band’s Shangri-la Studios in Malibu.)

For The Band’s penultimate studio album, 1975’s “Northern Light, Southern Cross,” Robertson wrote a song called “Rags and Bones,” which seems to pay tribute to one of the professions typically filled by Eastern European Jewish immigrants to North America – the ragman – and the sounds and music one would hear in those ghetto streets. The refrain goes:

Ragman, your song of the street/ Keeps haunting my memory/Music in the air/I hear it ev’rywhere/Rags, bones and old city songs/Hear them, how they talk to me.

The Band would bow out in 1976 with the all-star concert, “The Last Waltz,” which became a live album and concert film directed by Martin Scorsese, who also appears in “Once Were Brothers.” That farewell project would cement a decades-long relationship between Scorsese and Robertson, in which Robertson would often serve as music supervisor for Scorsese’s films, as he did for last year’s “The Irishman.” Robertson would also enjoy a successful career as a critically lauded solo artist; his sixth solo album, “Sinematic,” came out last fall and included “I Hear You Paint Houses,” which served as the title track to “The Irishman,” as well as the song “Once Were Brothers,” his poignant tribute to his former Band-mates, all of whom have passed away with the exception of organist Garth Hudson.

In its loving remembrances of and tributes to his former, fallen Band-mates, “Once Were Brothers” serves as Robertson’s mourner’s kaddish for the group. **HW**

# How William Friedkin, a Jewish Kid from Chicago, Made Us Fear the Catholic Devil



William Friedkin directed chilling meditations on human (and demonic) evil. Credit: Sylvain Lefevre/Getty Images

By PJ Grisar

Originally appeared on “Forward,” and reprinted with permission.

William Friedkin, the Jewish hand behind one of the most famous film explorations of Christian evil, “The Exorcist,” has died at the age of 87.

Born in Chicago on August 29, 1935, to Jewish refugees from Ukraine, Friedkin was raised in an observant, kosher home. Speaking to the “Jewish Journal” in 2012, the director said “I’m a Jew, and that’s it. In my heart I believe completely in the Ten Commandments, but I also believe we are all imperfect and at times we just can’t cut it.”

Human imperfection was a major theme of Friedkin’s work, which was decidedly eclectic.

Friedkin began his career in the 1960s as a TV director and documentarian. His first narrative film, 1967’s “Good Times,” was a vehicle for Sonny and Cher. He followed it up with another musical comedy, “The Night They Raided Minsky’s” and an adaptation of

Harold Pinter’s bleak “comedy of menace” “The Birthday Party” in 1968.

Friedkin was prolific and celebrated throughout the ‘70s, beginning the decade with another play adaptation, of Matt Crowley’s “The Boys in the Band,” a milestone for its time for its nuanced portrait of gay friends in New York City. (He’d return to documenting gay life in a more controversial fashion in 1980’s crime film “Cruising,” which was protested even during its production by gay rights activists for depicting gay men as deviants and murderers. Friedkin defended the film, stating that its content wasn’t meant to be seen as representative of the community and it has since been reevaluated.)

In 1972, Friedkin won best picture and director at the Academy Awards for “The French Connection,” about a New York detective uncovering a heroin-smuggling syndicate. Its story was informed by Friedkin’s time filming the 1966 documentary “The Thin Blue Line,” about the police force. The film

was lauded as much for its performances and gritty realism as its car chase.

Friedkin often managed to take the trappings of genre and elevate them to what critics regarded as art. [As was] 1973’s “The Exorcist,” about a girl possessed by an ancient demon, and the young and old priest working to save her soul. He came to the material through William Peter Blatty’s novel.

“I wasn’t Catholic so I had no idea what the hell an exorcism was,” Friedkin said earlier this year, at a Turner Classic Movies event for the film’s 50th anniversary, nonetheless, the idea “turned out to have some legs.”

This was an understatement. “The Exorcist,” with an Academy Award-winning screenplay by Blatty, was the first horror film nominated for the Oscar for best picture and spawned a still-thriving sub-genre of Catholic-themed terror. A new chapter in the franchise, “The Exorcist: Believer,” featuring original cast member Ellen Burstyn, is slated for release in the fall. Friedkin was not enamored of his film’s original sequel, 1977’s “Exorcist II: The Heretic,” directed by John Boorman, once calling it “the worst piece of sh— I’ve ever seen.”

Following “The Exorcist’s” success, he made 1977’s “Sorcerer,” which he believed to be his best film and perhaps his most jarring confrontation with evil. (Often cited as a remake of the film “Wages of Fear,” Friedkin maintained it was merely based on the same source material, a novel by “confirmed antisemite” Georges Arnaud, who Friedkin said hated the film for shooting a sequence in Jerusalem.)

When asked how his Jewishness influenced his films, Friedkin was loath to

make the connection. Indeed, in several interviews in recent years, Friedkin stated that he “believed in the teachings of Jesus” and, on an episode of Marc Maron’s WTF podcast, spoke of his wonder at seeing the Shroud of Turin, on which is said to be the face of Jesus.

Known for his quick and often caustic wit in interviews, to say nothing of his creative profanity, Friedkin told the “Forward’s” A.J. Goldmann in 2016 that he didn’t try to reconcile his directorial brooding with his personal humor.

“I think I’d rather take life with a sense of humor, but I’m more interested in drama that’s dark or that’s about the eternal struggle of good and evil,” Friedkin said. “Those make the best dramas. But personally I have to take things lightly. You’d go absolutely crazy if you didn’t.”

Friedkin continued making films until close to his death. His last announced feature, “The Caine Mutiny Court-Martial,” based on the Pulitzer-winning novel and play by Jewish writer Herman Wouk, is set to debut at Venice next month. If the film is at all like the novel or play, it will be about what drives men to either blindly follow orders or to reject a rigid and unethical hierarchy. That theme recalls a horror film Friedkin never got to make.

When Goldmann asked Friedkin if he was ever interested in making a movie about the Holocaust, Friedkin said it was hard to do something different with the material, but then considered what he could add to it.

“If I were able to do anything about that it would be about the Germans and the madness that overtook a sophisticated, intelligent population.” Friedkin said. “To me, it was demonic possession on a massive scale.” **HW**



## Beth Sholom is all Abuzz about Sisterhood's 'Bees & Teas' Kickoff Event Aug. 27



Bees & Teas Co-Chairs Barbara Hellman and Janet Rubin say, "Bee there or bee square!"

With the High Holidays right around the corner, Beth Sholom Sisterhood is sponsoring a sweet, Rosh-Hashanah-inspired event, "Bees & Teas," on Sunday, August 27 from 1-3 p.m. at Beth Sholom Synagogue. Organizers expect a swarm of guests, who will be treated to a lesson on bees, delicious nibbles, hot and cold teas and fabulous door prizes. A cooking demonstration using different honeys will take place, thereby satisfying all who demand, "Show me the honey!"

"Bees & Teas' is Sisterhood's kickoff event for 5784, and it represents the dynamic programming we have planned for the year," explained Janet Rubin, who is co-chairing the event with Barbara Hellman. "We'll be learning, eating and schmoozing! I promise it will be the bees' knees!"

The event's highlight will be a presentation by a Memphis Area Beekeepers Association apiarist, otherwise known as a beekeeper. "Honeybees are an important part of our lives," Rubin

said. "Not only do they provide us with delectable honey, they also are responsible for pollinating the fruits and vegetables we grow and the flora we enjoy. It's 'unbelievable' how much these busy bees contribute to our ecology."

Beth Sholom invites all women in the Greater Memphis Jewish community to 'Bees & Teas.' The cost to attend is \$18 for non-Sisterhood members and free for paid-up Sisterhood members. Reservations are required. Please send RSVPs to bachellman@gmail.com. [HW](#)

## Israeli Firm Rolls Out Cancer Screening Program in DRC

*Cervical and breast cancers are the top two cancers among women in the DRC.*

(JNS) – Tel Aviv-based FemTech company MobileODT, in partnership with Cingulate Medical, has announced phase one of its planned rollout of a large-scale National Cervical Cancer and Breast Cancer screening and treatment program in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The program is the initiative of Congolese President Felix Tshisekedi Tshilombo and will highlight the importance of women's health in the DRC. Mobile ODT provides complete screening and treatment solutions for women's health.

Sub-Saharan Africa alone accounts for about 66% (196,000) of estimated global maternal deaths according to a joint report released by WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Bank Group in 2019. Cervical and breast cancers are the top two cancers among women in the DRC. Close to 8,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, with 5,550 dying from it, every year. Breast cancer is a leading cause of cancer-related morbidity and mortality in sub-Saharan Africa.

This program, using groundbreaking Israeli technology, will allow millions of Congolese women access to life-saving healthcare solutions. This will be the most comprehensive and largest cervical and breast cancer screening and treatment program in Africa.

"We are extremely proud that the MobileODT screening and treatment technologies have been selected to be part of this endeavor in the DRC," said Leon Boston, MobileODT's CEO.

"Our turnkey screen and treat offering, from HPV testing to visual inspection and thermocoagulation treatment, offers a complete single-visit solution. With our single-visit solution, we overcome the two main issues in the developing world: accessibility and loss to follow-up. We are privileged to contribute to saving lives and changing outcomes for so many women."

Mobile ODT and Cingulate Medical will also assist the DRC Health Ministry in developing a cancer registry. This registry is necessary in the DRC health system for better epidemiological monitoring of cancer and surveillance data and for the development of cancer control policies and their integration into primary health care. [HW](#)

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## Jewish Community Fellowship Recipient Sarah Folz Builds Jewish Community Close to Home



Jewish Community Fellowship Recipient Sarah Folz

When Memphian Sarah Folz received a \$10,000 Jewish Community Fellowship merit scholarship from Rhodes College, she was pleasantly surprised, to say the least. Ms. Folz was completing her senior year at Houston High in Germantown and was busy applying to several schools. Her intention was to venture out from Memphis and experience a new place.

She explained, “I was exploring pre-med programs at several colleges and wasn’t sure where I would land. I knew wherever I went for college, I wanted to be involved with Jewish life on campus.”

Ms. Folz was encouraged by a Memphis friend at Rhodes, Jewish Community Fellow Mandy Cassius, to apply for the fellowship. The fellowship is a joint venture between Rhodes College and Memphis Jewish Federation and is renewable annually for a total of \$40,000

in merit aid. To be considered for the fellowship, applicants must be active in Jewish life in their community.

All fellowship recipients are expected to participate in Jewish life at Rhodes, including attending Rhodes Hillel programs and planning at least one program. Ms. Cassius is heavily involved with Hillel at Rhodes and believed Ms. Folz would be a powerful addition to the Rhodes Jewish community.

“I spoke to Mandy,” Ms. Folz said. “She thought I could meet the fellowship requirements. I joined B’nai B’rith Youth Organization (BBYO) during my sophomore year at Houston and took on some leadership roles. I was excited about building my leadership skills as a Rhodes Jewish Community Fellow. I talked to my family and decided to apply.”

By April of this year, Ms. Folz knew she was accepted at Rhodes and was going to be a Rhodes Jewish Community Fellow. Going to Rhodes had not been Ms. Folz’s original plan, but this new plan felt exactly right. She knew she would get a first-rate education at Rhodes and could stay connected to her Memphis Jewish community.

“I never anticipated going to Rhodes but now, I am super excited about it,” said Ms. Folz. “I am really happy about being part of the Rhodes Jewish community and staying involved with my synagogue. The scholarship will give me a great foundation for becoming a Jewish community leader.”

“We appreciate our partnership with Rhodes College and value the support given to the Rhodes Hillel chapter, led by Sophie Bloch,” said Memphis Jew-

ish Federation’s Chief Impact Officer & Executive Vice President Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein. “Rhodes has been so welcoming to the Jewish community, and we look forward to creating long-lasting ties.”

The Rhodes Jewish Community Fellow program began in 2016, and the Rhodes College chapter of Hillel launched in 2017, building on the previous work of the Jewish Student Union. Memphis Jewish Federation partners with Rhodes to review all fellowship applications and makes recommendations for fellowship recipients.

Rhodes Hillel is operated by a student board in cooperation with Hillels of Memphis Director Sophie Bloch and a lay-led Advisory Council, chaired by Audrey Siskind and Daniel Snyder. Rhodes Hillel focuses on cultural, religious, educational and social programming and is open to all students regardless of background. Rhodes Hillel is managed by Memphis Jewish Federation and endowed through the generosity of an anonymous donor.

For more info on the Jewish Community Fellowship program and other Rhodes scholarships, visit <https://www.rhodes.edu/admission-aid/cost-affordability/how-apply/scholarships>. Information on applying for next year’s Jewish Community Fellowship will be available soon.

The Memphis Jewish Federation’s mission is to develop a vibrant and sustained Jewish community in Memphis, Israel, and throughout the world. The Federation helps nourish Jewish life through community grants, programs for the Memphis Jewish community and by supporting Jews in Israel and throughout the world. [HW](#)

## Whole Foods Offers Expanded Selection of Kosher Items



The produce department at a Whole Foods Market in Tulsa, Okla. Credit: Wikimedia Commons.

(JNS) – Haddar Sesame Tahini, Manischewitz Matzo Ball Mix and Heaven & Earth Almond Butter Bites in Coconut Date and Coconut Hazelnut are among the products in an expanded partnership between one of the biggest suppliers of Jewish delicacies and an influential grocery chain with more than 500 locations across the United States.

Kayco, a kosher-food creator with numerous brands such as Gefen and Manischewitz announced that now a collection of 50 items would make up the Kayco Kosher Food Set at Whole Foods Market.

Kayco notes that “the expanded assortment is designed to cater to a wide range of tastes and preferences.”

Other items included chicken broth, vegetable broth, egg noodles, potato-pancake mix, whole-wheat tea biscuits and matzah meal, as well as offerings from the Kedem line of organic grape juice and cooking oil. Kayco also provides Whole Foods with a line of kosher gluten-free products, such as matzah, cookies, candy, noodles and cooking wines. [HW](#)



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# Israeli President Decries Hate Crimes Against Christians



President Isaac Herzog visits the Stella Maris Monastery in Haifa, Aug. 9, 2023. Credit: Kobi Gideon/GPO.

By Etgar Lefkovits

(JNS) – Israeli President Isaac Herzog last Wednesday condemned recent hate crimes against Christians in the Holy Land and pledged to uproot the phenomenon.

Herzog’s remarks came after a spate of attacks against Christians by Jewish extremists and following a meeting the Jerusalem police chief held with Christian leaders in the capital to discuss security and cooperation.

“We must respect the members of all religions, we have committed to this since the dawn of our existence,” said Herzog during a visit to the Stella Maris Monastery in Haifa, which has been targeted by several attacks. “This is the most basic commandment of ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

The president, who was accompanied by the police commissioner and leaders of various Christian denominations in

the Holy Land, reiterated Israel’s unequivocal commitment to freedom of worship and freedom of religion and pledged to clamp down on hate crime.

In recent months, ultra-Orthodox Jews have spat at Christian clergy in Jerusalem and vandalized holy sites and cemeteries.

“I view this phenomenon as extreme and unacceptable in any shape or form,” said Herzog. “This phenomenon needs to be uprooted, and I am very grateful to the Israel Police and the law enforcement agencies for taking this issue seriously.”

He continued: “We are committed to the story of the Christian denominations in the Holy Land, a special and unique story, which has inspired people around the world – and not without reason, because here in the Holy Land the three great monotheistic religions emerged, and we must do everything so that the common life continues together.”

The hate crimes are an aberration in the only state in the region where the Christian population is steadily growing, while Christians in other countries are persecuted and under religious duress.

“My message is both internally to all Christians as citizens of Israel and to all the dwellers and worshipers from all over the world: The Christian communities are safe and sound and protected and thriving in the Holy Land,” said Herzog.

“The Israel Police is engaging in an

array of activities to eradicate the incidents and trends that affect the sense of security for all of us,” Israel Police Commissioner Yaakov Shabtai said. “We are here to reassure you of that and to offer any assistance that may be required.”

The president’s visit came a day after the Jerusalem police chief met with Christian religious leaders in the capital.

“We will continue to work to safeguard the peace and security of people of all faiths and denominations,” said Jerusalem District Police chief Doron Turgeman. “Strengthening cooperation and addressing hate crimes remain top priorities.”

Father Jean Joseph Bergara, the abbot of Stella Maris, thanked the Israel Police, Haifa Mayor Einat Kalisch-Rotem “and everyone who has expressed support not only with words but also with very clear actions against all these phenomena, on behalf of all the Christian denominations here in Israel.”

He continued: “We need to work together to encourage our dialogue, our solidarity and our brotherhood, because we belong to the same country and live in the same places. We want to live together in peace and harmony. Thank you for your cooperation and support. We are all children of the same God.” **HW**

# Couple Sues Tel Aviv Hospital for \$9.2m Over In-Vitro Error

(JNS) – A couple who discovered that one of their children is definitely not biologically related to the father, and a second one is most likely not as well, is suing Assuta Medical Center in Ramat Hachayal, Tel Aviv, for NIS 34 million (\$9.2 million).

The couple discovered the truth three months ago when they were advised by a genetics specialist at Schneider Children’s Medical Center in Petah Tikvah to have their youngest child, age 2, take a medical test to determine if there was

an underlying genetic cause for a medical problem, Channel 12 reported.

Blood tests instead revealed that there was no genetic compatibility between the child and the father. As the second child came from the same group of in-vitro fertilization embryos, it is nearly certain that it, too, has no genetic link to the father.

Five years ago, the couple, who are in their 30s, underwent fertility treatments at Assuta after having trouble conceiving.

Attorney Gilad Ginzburg, representing the couple, said: “Not only did As-

suta run a cover-up campaign with the aim of closing the case under the table in an arrangement with the parents, but they also spread rumors about the couple ..., very difficult rumors, things that should not be said.”

Attorney Anat Ginzburg, also representing the couple, added, “Assuta Hospital was colossally negligent. It’s that they failed to create safety processes. The writing was on the wall for many years, not a day or two. The family we

represent paid the price.”

The hospital responded, “From the moment the couple first approached us, Assuta reviewed the case with the couple and acted with compassion and transparency towards them.”

In a related case, a second couple in March announced they were suing Assuta Medical Center in Rishon Lezion after being given the wrong embryo. They are suing for NIS 100 million (\$26.8 million). **HW**



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# A Mortgage Recast Is an Alternative to Refinancing

*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  
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**If you would like to reduce your monthly mortgage payment without having to refinance, then you may want to explore a mortgage recast. When you recast your mortgage, you put money toward the principal balance of your current home loan. Your mortgage lender then recalculates (reamortizes) your loan based on your new, lower balance, which reduces your monthly payment. Your interest rate and the number of years remaining on your loan stay the same. Here are three scenarios where a mortgage recast might be especially appealing.**

- You have extra cash on hand, perhaps from a bonus or an inheritance. It’s sitting in a low-yield account.
- You are close to retirement or retired. You want to keep your home but lower your monthly expenses.
- You bought a new home with a smaller down payment than you intended because your old home is still on the market. But once your old home sells, the proceeds can be applied to your new mortgage through a recast.

Refinancing your mortgage may be a better option if your goal is to pay off your loan faster by shortening the term, or if you want to lower your interest rate or obtain cash. But if your objective is simply to lower your monthly payment and save on interest charges, then recasting your mortgage may be appropriate.

Recasting is generally simpler and less expensive than refinancing because you’re keeping the same mortgage instead of applying for a new one. It doesn’t require an extensive application, a credit check, a new appraisal, or closing costs, though you typically will need to pay a processing fee.

#### Check with Your Lender

Not all mortgage lenders offer recasts, and some types of loans, including FHA, VA, USDA, and certain jumbo loans are not eligible for recasting. If you do qualify for a recast, your lender will give you more details about the process.

You may be able to recast once you’ve increased your equity by making extra payments or by paying a lump sum toward your mortgage balance. Minimums vary, but the additional principal required may be as little as \$5,000. Of course, the more you put toward your principal, the lower your future monthly mortgage payment. If you are currently paying principal mortgage insurance (PMI), putting a lump sum toward your mortgage may help erase that, further lowering your monthly payment.

One drawback of a mortgage recast is that it could tie up money you might need later for other purposes. To access your equity in the future, you may need to refinance, take out a home equity loan, or even sell your home.

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## Top Palestinian Official Slams Biden Administration as ‘Weak’



*Then-U.S. Vice President Joe Biden with Palestinian Authority leader Mahmoud Abbas in Ramallah, March 9, 2016. Credit: Flash90.*

(JNS) – The Palestinian Authority’s top diplomat, on Aug. 3, slammed the Biden administration as “weak” over its failure to date to launch a negotiating process with Israel.  
“I’m frustrated,” P.A. Foreign Minister Riad al-Maliki told a gathering of reporters in Ramallah, adding, “It seemed that [President Joe Biden] wanted to change all policies [former President

Donald] Trump had taken, but not when it comes to Palestine.”  
Al-Maliki pointed to what he said was Washington’s failure to rein in Israeli construction in Judea and Samaria and curtail IDF counterterror operations there.  
“We have a weak [American] administration when it comes to Palestine,” said al-Maliki. “We re-engaged with the administration hoping that they would

have the strength and the courage to move forward.”  
Earlier this year, P.A. chief Mahmoud Abbas outlined a series of demands for Israeli concessions during a meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken in Ramallah.  
In May, Abbas likened Israel to Nazi Germany during a speech at the United Nations marking “Nakba Day,” meaning the “disaster” or “catastrophe” of the establishment of modern-day Israel on May 14, 1948.  
“Zionists continue to say that Israel made the desert bloom. As if Palestine was a desert and they made the desert bloom,” said Abbas. “These are lies. They continue to lie, like Goebbels, and they continue to lie until people believe them.”  
The P.A. leader also demanded the “right of return” for some 5 million descendants of Palestinians displaced during the Arab-initiated war to eradicate the nascent Jewish state following its modern-day rebirth.  
Last month, a bipartisan group of U.S. lawmakers called on the State Department to update Congress on negotiations to end the Palestinian Authority’s policy of paying terrorists.  
In a letter sent to Blinken, the 50

members of Congress noted with concern the uptick of violence in Judea and Samaria in recent months and the P.A.’s refusal to condemn the killings of Israelis while at the same time continuing its “pay for slay” program.  
The Trump administration cut off aid to Ramallah; Biden has restored more than \$1 billion in funding to the Palestinians.  
[The same day], al-Maliki also said the P.A. is pushing for Saudi Arabia to condition any normalization with Israel on the creation of a Palestinian state.  
“One of these conditions is really the end of the Israeli occupation and the materialization of the state of Palestine,” he said. “I hope that the Saudis will stick to that position and not yield to any kind of pressure, intimidation coming from the Biden administration or any other power.”  
Last Monday, Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Cohen [said] the door for a U.S.-brokered deal between Jerusalem and Riyadh would remain open until the U.S. election season kicks into high gear in March.  
While he noted that it was too early to comment on specific concessions Israel might have to make for an agreement, he said convincing Saudi Arabia to join the Abraham Accords was not only an Israeli interest but an American one. [HW](#)



# Michigan State Senator Apologizes for Visiting Israel



Michigan State Sen. Sylvia Santana (right) with a constituent.  
Source: Facebook10

(JNS) – A state senator in Michigan has apologized to her Arab and Muslim constituents for a recent visit to Israel with her fellow lawmakers.

Sylvia Santana, whose district includes part of Detroit, as well as Dearborn and Dearborn Heights, with a high concentration of Arab Muslims, posted the apology on social media.

“I recognize my presence on this trip has sparked anger and disappointment by many in the Arab/Muslim community,” she wrote.

“For this, I truly apologize, seek your forgiveness and hope that you will understand that I had no malicious intent. There is no perfect combination of words that I can offer that truly reflects the feelings in my heart. My only goal was to learn about this region of our world and to improve my understanding of matters related to Michigan.”

Santana described the visit as an “annual trip offered to state lawmakers to learn more about Michigan’s relationship with Israel.”

An official with the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit, David Kurzmann, confirmed in a statement to the “Detroit Free Press” that the federation facilitated the trip for several lawmakers.

Osama Siblani, publisher and editor-in-chief of the Dearborn-based “Arab American News,” said in a Facebook post that the trip took place at the end of July. He reported that a meet and greet at the Arab American-owned Custard Company in Dearborn on Aug. 7 was canceled after the trip became known.

“The news about Santana’s visit to Israel shocked and angered the Arab American community, to say the least,” Siblani wrote. “Santana’s visit constitutes a slap in the face to the Arab American community who has been supportive and respectful to the Senator.”

Santana’s district overlaps with that of Democratic Rep. Rashida Tlaib, who has continued to come under fire for antisemitic and anti-Israel rhetoric, including recently speaking at an art show in Detroit advocating Israel’s destruction.

Rabbi Asher Lopatin, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council for the metropolitan Detroit area, told CBS News Detroit that it was important for lawmakers to visit the Jewish state.

“Everyone should go. It’s the holy

land. Whether you like who’s the state now ... maybe you preferred it when it was under the Ottomans or the Crusaders or the Romans, but whoever it is, everyone should visit, and I like to encourage everyone to visit,” he said.

A group of 24 Democrats from the U.S. House of Representatives is in Israel this week, led by House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York and previous House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu welcomed the delegation to his Jerusalem office last Monday, thanking the lawmakers for their fight against antisemitism and the false accusation that Israel is an “apartheid state” and for supporting Israel’s security. Netanyahu also personally thanked U.S. President Joe Biden for his administration’s efforts “to expand the circle of peace.”

Ahead of the trip, Jeffries said that the Israel visit would allow for House Democrats to “reaffirm our commitment to the special relationship between the United States and Israel, one anchored in our shared democratic values and mutual geopolitical interests.

“We will learn ways Congress can continue strengthening this alliance and enable peace and stability between Israel and its neighbors. As we listen and learn, we reiterate our ironclad commitment to the safety and security of Israel and to the existence of Israel as a prosperous and Jewish, democratic state,” the congressman continued. **HW**

# Investigation Continues after French Jewish Boy is Threatened with Death

(JNS) – In the French city of Lyon near the Cours Émile-Zola intersection on July 24 at around 5:30 p.m., three individuals assaulted an unidentified Jewish 13-year-old boy, shoving and pushing him against a wall. The violence in a small alley stopped when a witness intervened.

After the attack, the still-unknown assailants reportedly told the adolescent, who was wearing traditional religious clothing, that they would kill him if he dared tell anyone of their crime.

The teen was not intimidated by the threat of retaliation, telling his parents upon reaching home and prompting a police visit to begin a hate-crime investigation. According to Anne-Sophie Sebban-Bécache, director of the American Jewish Committee’s Paris branch, no new updates have been filed regarding the case since last week.

Sebban-Bécache told JNS that this act of violence fits with the broader trends of antisemitism throughout the country. “Antisemitic violence is particularly very much present in France,” she said. “The number of violent antisemitic attacks has increased by 8 percent. The case of this young man was covered because local media from Lyon decided to make a story out of it, but unfortunately, this kind of antisemitic assault is not an exception.”

She pointed to recent AJC research showing that 74% of French Jews have experienced antisemitism, while for young French Jews, that number reached as high as 82%. The risk increases for Jews donning visible signs of their religion, with 39% doing so experiencing a physical assault compared to 13% who rarely or never wear such items or clothing. **HW**

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# High Noon in My Own Front Yard



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

**Ted Roberts**

A summertime shower always reminds me of one of the few potholes I encountered on the rocky road of parenting. It brings back those stormy days when my youngest son was an unruly, semi-civilized adolescent; and I was a stern but compassionate father.

We had a great relationship because I liked this son. And sometimes in the web of family relationships, liking is better than loving. Love is a romantic fool full of kisses and tears: a guest, not a fulltime resident of the human heart. But day in, day out, I liked this son. Hopefully, he felt the same way about me.

My kids were easy to raise – the cultural winds outside the family nest were not as shrill as today’s. TV, cinema, school actually chorused the same virtues that were lauded at home. We parents of the 50s only had to remember the simplest of platitudes; kids needed discipline for the life to come like birds needed feathers to fly.

And nobody endlessly babbled about love. A civilized world assumed its existence between parents and children. It did not need constant repeating. Good parents did not believe you had to constantly blow on the coals of love to keep the fire going. So they fearlessly applied discipline without worrying about cooling the ardor in the child’s heart. There were rules.

One rule – the rule I grin about every time we get a rain in July – applied to the yard. It must be cut. Not by me, who made other contributions to the family’s welfare like economic survival. No, the 13-year-old adolescent who ate the family’s food and lived in the family’s house and who already had his adolescent eye on the family’s car HE would cut the yard. That was the rule. “Cut the yard once a week.” This family rule was brief, simple, and invulnerable to misinterpretation. So we thought.

I noticed that his summertime metabolic cycle seemed to peak towards the end of the week. I could tell because starting Wednesdays or Thursdays he ate his breakfast before 10 a.m. and rarely went back to bed for more sack time – his favorite avocation. Some kind of weekly physiological cycle had him in its grasp. Great. That’s why I amended our yard contract: “Joe, you’ll cut the yard once a week – it shall be done by Friday.” Thereby giving him the first five days of the week to stock up on sack time.

Oh, but that simple contract! It became a tombstone for the father and son relationship. Oedipus Rex in Suburbia. “Joe, it’s Wednesday – you haven’t cut the yard yet,” or “Joe, it’s Thursday and they’re calling for rain Thursday and tsunamis Friday and Saturday – better clip the yard,” or “Joe, there’s gonna be a total eclipse of the sun the rest of the week. Joe -the yaaaaaaaard!”

I couldn’t make him understand that if the new bridge over the river must be opened in a gala ceremony on the 4th of July, you didn’t buy the girders on the 2nd, assemble them on the 3rd, and accept congratulations and watch the fireworks on the 4th.

I could not convince him that rain

storms, tidal waves, cyclones, eclipses, and sudden shortages of steel girders frustrate the best laid schemes of yardmen and bridge builders. We spent our quality time together debating the lawn problem.

“Do it today,” I’d say. He’d answer with amazing intellectual power; “Why?”

I would tell him of life’s tsunamis.

He told me of Betty Ann McCorkel or a soccer game that was waiting his attention.

Finally, in a flash of parental insight, I clearly saw the damage that this lawn dialogue was doing to our relationship. One Saturday morning – a weekend – when Joe’s bodily cycle was hyper-actively humming, I met him at the breakfast table. It’s 9:30. Dawn to him, mid-morning to me. He stared hard at his three-egg omelet. Even though we sat opposite from each other, his eyes would not meet mine. He did not want to meet my lawn-crazed eyes. He could predict my admonitions since it was Saturday, and the front yard grass was high enough to hide Betty Ann McCorkel and several of her playful friends.

“Joe,” I said, looking up over my morning paper like Gary Cooper in High Noon. “Joe,” I repeated for both drama and clarity. “You ain’t cutting the yard anymore.” (This Gary Cooper thing was useful.)

“Whatya mean, Paw?” he replied.

It was High Noon from then on. I told him he was fired. Pop (who made many other contributions to the family welfare) would sheer this green lamb of a lawn. Joe was now an EX-lawn mower. He begged and pleaded. I looked at my watch and wished Grace Kelly (a cool scoop of vanilla ice cream in that dusty

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By Ted Roberts

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town) could see me, courageously facing up to rebellion.

So, that’s what I did. I canceled his assignment. Instead, I substituted some menial task – which I forget – that required no management or planning skills. As the years went by, he frequently pleaded – “Hey, Dad, lemme cut the yard, huh? I know it’s only Thursday, but ya never know when a cyclone’ll blow into town. Better do it now.”

No way. I steadfastly denied him the privilege of mowing his family’s yard.

Now he’s in his 40s with a yard and kids of his own to manage. Just to get a rise out of him when he returns to the old homestead, I greet him and his family at the car with, “Hey, Joe, bet you’d like to cut the yard, right? Well, you can’t.” Even if he begged and invited us over for Friday night supper and his wife’s fried chicken (battered and refrigerated earlier that morning), I’d still turn him down.

*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 Shock and Awe: Constituting Unity in a Divided Society

**By Howard Weisband**

Shock and Awe.

Yes, I am borrowing a military term to describe the painful manner in which the current Government of Israel has treated its people and society. The beliefs and actions of a relatively few at an ideological extreme, who at the moment hold the reigns of power and aggressively control a legislative process without a national or broad consensus, has caused greater divisions and polarization than ever witnessed within Israel’s 75 years of modern statehood.

One may argue that this has been an ongoing struggle in many ways. Rabbi Naftali Rothenberg, a Senior Research Fellow at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem, writes in the “Times of Israel” (August 8): “The outbreak we are witnessing expresses a deep political-social crisis since the founding of the state and even before. Israel is an arena for the ongoing struggles between many different groups and among themselves, and between subgroups within them. This crisis reality is: The clash of minorities.”

He comments further: “Ensuring that the rights of minorities and individuals are preserved testify to the country’s democracy, its strength as a nation-state and the stability of the majority society.”

Ongoing readers of this column know that I believe strongly, without any doubt, that Israel’s democracy is not under attack from within, albeit corrective measures are needed and must be pursued.

Rothenberg concludes with a statement with which I concur: “There is one way to put society and the state on a path of recovery and create a chance for a decent and good life for every group within it without exception: building a solid, unconditional infrastructure of human and civil rights and making sure they are implemented.”

The question remains: How to achieve that ideal?

The answer in my opinion and that of many is that Israel must develop a constitution with the existing Declaration of Independence and Basic Laws as a starting point. It is not a quick fix. Importantly, however, both the process of doing so and the final product will form healing measures and a foundation for moving forward.

Yedidya Stern, a widely respected Professor Emeritus of Law at Bar-Ilan University, agrees while at the same time suggesting a pragmatic, realistic approach to create a constitution at this moment. Writing recently in the

“Jerusalem Post” (June 12), he calls for a “thin constitution.” “While a full constitution comprises three parts – an identity section that lays out the nature of the state, a rights section that includes a bill of human rights, and a section that deals with the branches of government – a thin constitution, sometimes called a “procedural constitution,” only includes the third part. It would regulate the three branches of government (their composition and how it is determined, their powers, their modes of operation and the division of responsibilities between them, including the separation and balance of powers)…”

Stern’s wise assessment is that the current crisis involves the executive, legislative, and judicial relationships, often referred to as the balance of power. Let’s address that first and create a “thin constitution,” before we tackle the issues of identity and human rights, ultimately building a full constitution.

Of course, in order to forge a path toward a constitution, it requires leadership strong enough and sensitive enough to be able to begin and complete the process. Judicial reform would have to be placed on the back burner while constitutional reform would be given the priority.

The current Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, cannot do it. He is besieged politically and judicially and has lost the confidence of the majority of the people as well. Perhaps he’s also lost the ability to see the big picture, a character trait that he had shown in the past.

It may be up to President Isaac Herzog. While he does not have the executive or legislative authority, he does have the trust and confidence of Israel’s citizens. He could establish a high-level think tank consisting of academics and legal experts, and yes, a wide base of former politicians who retain a “shem tov,” a good name among the general public.

Perhaps the President’s actions could put Israel on a constructive path toward a constitution and constitute a welcomed return to greater unity.

*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](mailto:hweisband@gmail.com) HW*



# Orthodox Jewish Mayor of Florida Town Receives Neo-Nazi Death Threat

(JNS) – Shlomo Danziger, the Orthodox Jewish mayor of Surfside, Fla., is reportedly under police protection following a neo-Nazi death threat against him and his family.

Danziger received a threatening email on Aug. 4 from someone who purported to be part of the Fourth Reich, “a reference to a potential resurrection of a Nazi party, with the unknown sender suggesting the possibility of coming to Danziger’s house to ‘teach his family a lesson,’” “VIN News” reported.

The publication added that authorities saw it as a credible threat.

Danziger, his wife, and their children (9, 14, 15 and 20) have been remaining in their home, and the couple’s 21-year-old son, who is serving in the Israeli Defense Forces, offered to come help protect the family. The family declined, per “VIN News.”

“I told them that they weren’t leaving the house unless someone comes with them and that if they see flashlights around the neighborhood, it is people who are protecting us, just as a precaution,” Danziger told the publication.

“Antisemitism is at historic levels not only in the halls of Congress and on social media but on the streets of South Florida that I and hundreds of thousands of Jewish Americans call home,” Bryan Leib, executive director of CASEPAC, told JNS.

Leib called on the entire Florida Jewish community, both Democrats and Republicans, to pray for Danziger and his family.

“No Jewish public official should have to be put into police protection because they are an outspoken Jew,” Leib told JNS. “But that is exactly what is happening right now in Surfside. Antisemitism has no place in Florida.” [HW](#)

# Israeli Circus Troupe Brings Laughs – But No Clothes – to NBC’s ‘America’s Got Talent’



*The Israeli circus troupe “Bomba” performs on NBC’s “America’s Got Talent.” Credit: Screenshot from YouTube*

**By Jacob Gurvis**

(JTA) – Anyone who has visited an Israeli beach is likely familiar with the popular beach paddle game known as matkot.

For millions of TV viewers and a live audience of 1,400 at NBC’s “America’s Got Talent,” a trio of Israeli performers who go by Bomba, or bomb in Hebrew, offered an intimate introduction to the sport on a recent episode.

The circus trio emerged with only six wooden matkot paddles, one ball and ... no clothing. Keeping the necessary parts covered, the three performers juggled, hit the ball to one another and cautiously walked back and forth across the stage. They performed to Quincy Jones’ famous jingle “Soul Bossa Nova.”

The act, which lasted just under two minutes, elicited countless gasps and considerable applause from the panel of judges and the live audience. A few grimaces were sprinkled in as well, especially when the paddles slipped.

After the performance, which earned a standing ovation, the trio came back out on stage wearing pink bathrobes.

“Is this a famous Israel show? Do

people love this?” judge Sophia Vergara asked them.

“Not yet,” one of them replied.

Heidi Klum, another judge, joked that the trio should try using smaller paddles. “We’ve got a lot more to show!” the same performer quipped.

Uncomfortable giggles aside, the judges all voted in favor of the act, including

Jewish comedian Howie Mandel, who bid the troupe farewell by shouting “Shalom!” as they exited the stage.

The troupe’s members are brothers Noam and Yaron Davidovich and their frequent collaborator Amit Gerbi, all regulars in Israel’s tight-knit circus scene. They have shared videos before of themselves juggling on a kibbutz, teaching circus arts and performing in colorful jester clothing in the Czech Republic, but the matkot cabaret act is newer. The group taped its “America’s Got Talent” performance in April.

In an interview on Israel’s Channel 12, one of the performers said he blacked out on stage for the first time in his life. “Thankfully, we did lots of rehearsals, so my body remembered all of the moves. But I was really in a panic,” he said.

According to the “Times of Israel,” “Bomba” was one of 200 performances, whittled down from 75,000 submissions for the audition round.

Since the now viral act – which has been viewed around 250 thousand times on YouTube – the group has been invited to compete on “Got Talent” shows in Romania and France, they said. [HW](#)



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