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Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

HEBREWWATCHMAN.COM 13 ADAR I, 5784 FEBRUARY 22, 2024 VOL. 102, NO. 23

Memphis Jewish Community Unites in Torah Study to Support the Hostages and Israeli Soldiers



More than 200 members from Memphis congregations filled Baron Hirsch for the Siyum event.

In a stirring display of unity and solidarity, Baron Hirsch Congregation, Chabad, Kollel Torah Mitzion, the Memphis Kollel, and the Young Israel of Memphis partnered to organize a collective Siyum Tanach. Over 200 participants committed themselves to studying sections of Tanach over a six-week

period, culminating in the completion of the entire Tanach. This monumental achievement was dedicated to the merit of the chayalim (soldiers) fighting in Israel and the hostages.

The atmosphere at the Siyum, held at Baron Hirsch Synagogue on February 10, was one of reverence and joy. Rabbi Lichter, the senior rabbi of Baron Hirsch, warmly welcomed everyone and set the tone for the evening's proceedings. Rabbi Joel Finkelstein of Baron Hirsch and Rabbi Levi Klein of Chabad led the gathering in reciting Tehillim (psalms), invoking spiritual strength and protection for those in harm's way.

Rabbi Grunwald of Kollel Torah Mitzion offered a heartfelt Mi Shebeirach for the chayalim, hostages, and Eretz Yisrael, underscoring the community's deep concern and support for those on the front lines. Rabbi Yehoshua Nissan, joined by local musicians and vocalists, then led the room in soul-stirring songs of prayer and hope.

Reflecting on the significance of the community's collective Torah study, Rabbi Fromowitz of the Memphis Kollel emphasized the power of Torah to unite and uplift, stating, "It is through our shared commitment to Torah study that we find strength and connection as a community." Rabbi Males led the assembly in the Hadran, marking the completion of Tanach, which was followed

with heartfelt dancing and celebration.

Following the main meal, Sarit Grunwald of Kollel Torah Mitzion, herself the mother of two IDF soldiers currently deployed, delivered a poignant address on the protective power of Torah in times of danger. Her words resonated deeply with the audience, reinforcing the vital role of Torah study in sustaining the Jewish spirit.

A highlight of the evening was a video presentation featuring an interview conducted by Jason Caplan with Avi Kahn, a reservist who had recently returned from four months of service in Gaza. Avi Kahn's firsthand account of the courage and faith displayed by those fighting on behalf of Israel, coupled with heartfelt expressions of gratitude from a number of chayalim, served as a powerful reminder of the profound impact of the Memphis community's support and Torah study has on those risking their lives for the Jewish people.

The Siyum Tanach in Memphis

(See Siyum Page 2)

With Addition of Plough Towers as Partner Agency, Foundation Furthers Its Commitment to Vibrant Jewish Life

Plough Towers has joined Jewish Foundation of Memphis as its 11th partner agency and is the first agency to be added since 2004. When the Foundation was established in 1995, it began its mission to ensure the financial stability of Memphis Jewish community organizations through endowment building.

Notably, a grant from the Plough Foundation enabled Jewish Foundation of Memphis to get its start, hire its first director, and begin the process of education and outreach about the importance of legacy giving and endowments. That work and mission are now further strengthened with Plough Towers as the newest Foundation partner agency.

As Sheri Gadberry, Foundation Senior Philanthropic Officer and Executive Vice President, explained, "Plough Towers is an especially important part of Jewish life in Memphis. They are the only local agency providing independent housing for low-income Jewish seniors. Their work and services are strongly aligned with the Foundation's mission to build and sustain a vibrant Jewish community."

Plough Towers, along with the 10 other partner agencies under Foundation's endowment umbrella, has a long history of financial support from the community, an involved board of directors, and a commitment to making endowment

fundraising a priority. All these criteria demonstrate its potential for endowment development. That potential was the catalyst for Plough Towers receiving an invitation from the Foundation Board to apply for partner agency status.

Laura Linder, Jewish Community Partners President and CEO, remarked on the full circle the Foundation has experienced, and how Plough Towers is part of the Foundation's next chapter in legacy giving and endowment development.

"It's so important to remember that the Foundation was created by a group of agencies that wanted a unified endowment resource. At the time, no one agency could achieve this on its own. The endowment resource model has grown and evolved, and now Foundation can serve as a strong ally for the leadership of Plough Towers and its fundraising and endowment needs," said Laura.

"As a partner agency, Plough Towers is now eligible to receive comprehensive endowment development support, including board training, marketing, donor meetings and policy development," Laura continued. They are also eligible to participate in Foundation programs such as Life and Legacy and the monthly agency needs list.

"Plough Towers has a long history of serving our community, and there are

many community members and donors who care deeply about ensuring its financial future," she explained.

Leigh Hendry, Executive Director for Plough Towers said, "Being selected as the Foundation's newest partner agency is an honor and privilege for Plough Towers and our residents. Our Board and staff are confident this partnership will enhance the strong ties between the two organizations. The value of strengthening our financial outlook and further developing connections to the Memphis Jewish community is beyond measure."

With the addition of Plough Towers, Foundation now partners with 11 Memphis Jewish agencies to build endowments, including Anshei Sphard-Beth El Emeth Congregation, Baron Hirsch Congregation, Beth Sholom Synagogue, Bornblum Jewish Community School, Margolin Hebrew Academy/Finestone Yeshiva of the South, Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab, Memphis Jewish Federation, Temple Israel and the Wendy

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The mission of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis is to encourage charitable giving, support partner agency endowment development, and build and sustain a vibrant Jewish community. To learn more, visit jewishfoundationofmemphis.org. HW





Sivum...

(Continued From Page 1)



Rabbi Yehoshua Nissan of the Memphis Kollel and Eitan Selter of Baron Hirsch leading songs of prayer and hope.

stands as a testament to the enduring strength of Jewish unity and the centrality of Torah. Through their collective efforts, the Memphis Jewish community has demonstrated unwavering solidarity with their brethren in Israel and beyond, affirming the timeless bond that unites Am Yisrael. As the echoes of celebration fade, the spirit of achdut (unity) and spiritual fortitude kindled at the Siyum Tanach continues to shine brightly, illuminating the path forward for all who seek solace and inspiration in the eternal wisdom of Torah. **HW**

Anti-Israel Protesters Hold Student 'Die-In' at Harvard's Main Library



Widener Library at Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass. Credit: Caroline Culler via Wikimedia Commons.

By David Swindle

(JNS) – Nearly 200 student activists rallied last Monday on the steps of Harvard University's Widener Library, advocating for the destruction of the Jewish state.

"The vitriol coming out of America's most famous university is intolerable," freshman Charlie Covit, who is Jewish, told JNS about the Feb. 12 rally. "On the same day that Harvard hosted Francesca Albanese, a U.N. special rapporteur banned from Israel for her justification

of Hamas's attack on Oct. 7, hundreds of students, mostly masked, gathered on the iconic Widener Library steps to chant in Arabic, 'from water to water, Palestine will be Arab.'"

Video from the event captured the Arabic chant, which was a more extreme version of the now well-known call for the destruction of Israel, "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free."

The protest, organized by Harvard Out of Occupied Palestine (HOOP) in

Hebrew Watchman

SEDVING THE MEMBHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 192

Established September, 1925 By Leo I. Goldberger (1902-1989)

MAILING ADDRESS THE HEBREW WATCHMAN PO Box 770846

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The Hebrew Watchman is a Member of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, and Jewish News Service

THE HEBREW WATCHMAN (USPS #807-360) is published weekly every Thursday

for \$36 per year by

JEWISH LIVING OF THE SOUTH, Inc.
THE HEBREW WATCHMAN
PO Box 770846

Memphis, TN 38177-0846 Periodical postage paid at Memphis, Tenn.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: THE HEBREW WATCHMAN

PO Box 770846 Memphis, TN 38177-0846

PUBLISHER'S STATEMENT

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. Feb. 23, 2024 / 14 Adar 1, 5784 5:31 p.m. Havdalah, Sat. Feb. 24, 2024 / 15 Adar 1, 5784 6:28 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Tetzaveh

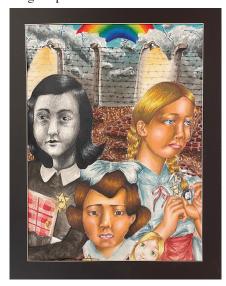
response to [last] Sunday airstrikes on the city of Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, also featured a "die-in." Participants called for a divestment of Harvard funds from companies they called "complicit in genocide."

Sophomore Violet T.M. Barron, a member of Harvard Jews for Palestine, called the demonstration "a testament to the power of student organizing and protests on campus."

Covit said that "this explicit call for ethnic cleansing in Israel is intolerable," stressing that "Harvard must take action." **HW**

CORRECTION

The artwork published with the Holocaust Art + Essay article (Feb. 8 edition) was not the correct image. The correct image is pictured here.





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Frequent Reminders

By Alice Zalon

After deplaning at Ben Gurion Airport, one is immediately reminded of the tragic circumstances of 10/7 by the row of the hostages' head shots, including those who are no longer with us, a sight that is repeated at other venues around the country.

Of course, one gets busy going through customs, claiming baggage, etc. and getting to the home of your son's inlaws in Nahariyah where your grandson will be called to the Torah on the occasion of his bar mitzvah at the historic Shvil HaGeula synagogue the following day. But en route, my son, Avi Fisher, makes a detour to pick up his sister-inlaw, Chanit, a professional dog trainer, and two of her rescue dogs who will be joining three other dogs at the home of her parents, Amos and Tzvia Golan. Another reminder: one of those two dogs had belonged to someone who was evacuated from one of the kibbutzim that was attacked on 10/7. He survived but couldn't take the dog with him to the place he was sent.

On the following day, Shabbat, the bar mitzvah went off without a hitch, Yonaton making us all proud. During the service, two of Avi's half-sisters, Re'ut and Adaya, his half- brother, Moti, and their mom, Tziona, arrived. Of course,

it wasn't until we got back to the Golans' house for the reception, that we could have any in-depth conversations. Another reminder: Re'ut, her husband, Idan, twin brother of famed opera singer, Merav Barnea, and their two boys, Itamar and Ofri, had to evacuate their home on Kibbutz Malkya, which is within striking distance of the Lebanese border, to a kibbutz further south, Lahavot Habashan, and don't know when, or even if, they'll be able to return.

But the most touching reminder of all was at the Ilan Ramon Airport, outside of Eilat, where Avi, who works at the airport, his wife, Sharon Golan-Fisher, and their kids, Lee, Yonaton and Ariel live. Once a week, Lee, an 11th grader, travels to Ben Gurion University in Be'er Sheva, along with two other kids from Eilat, for some advanced placement studies. We had time to enter the coffee shop before her flight. There was an unoccupied table that had some toys on it and a booster seat on one of the chairs. One would have thought that a parent had taken the child to the bathroom until you notice the two photos mounted to the tops of the chairs, one of Kfir Bibas who turned 1 while being held hostage and the other, his 4-yearold brother, Ariel. It's impossible not to be deeply touched. HW

Terrorist Kills Two Israelis, Wounds Four in Shooting in Southern Israel

(JNS) – A terrorist shot and killed two Israelis and wounded four others [last] Friday afternoon at a bus stop near the Re'em Masmiya Junction, near Kiryat Malachi in the northern Negev, medical officials said.

Magen David Adom paramedics tried to resuscitate a man in his 20s in critical condition. The man was declared dead upon arrival at the hospital.

A teenaged boy, a man in his 20s and a man in his 60s were seriously injured, and two others, including an elderly woman, were moderately hurt.

It was not immediately clear which of the victims was the other to succumb to his or her injuries. The injured were treated at Assuta Ashdod Hospital and Kaplan Medical Center in Rehovot.

Police said the terrorist arrived in a vehicle and opened fire on people waiting for a bus. A civilian at the scene shot and killed him.

Israeli media identified the assailant as an Arab from Shuafat, in the eastern part of Jerusalem.

National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and Israel Police chief Kobi Shabtai visited the scene.

A large security force was conducting sweeps to ensure no other terrorists were involved in the attack.

"I send heartfelt condolences to the families of those who were murdered in the terrorist attack and am praying for the wounded," said Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"This attack reminds us that the entire country is on the frontline and that the murderers, who come not only from Gaza, want to kill us all," he added. "We will continue to fight until total victory, with all our might, on every front, everywhere, until we restore the security and quiet for all citizens of Israel."

[Last] Tuesday, Israeli forces thwarted an attempted vehicular assault in Gush Etzion.

The driver, a Palestinian, tried to run over civilians at the Gush Etzion Junction, located south of Bethlehem about 10 miles from Jerusalem, the Israel Defense Forces said.

IDF forces neutralized the assailant following a pursuit and arrested him and took him to a hospital for treatment.

There were no other injuries in the attack.

A knife was found during a search of the terrorist's vehicle.

[Last] Sunday, an Israeli police officer was lightly wounded in a stabbing at the Lion's Gate entrance to Jerusalem's Old City.

The assailant was neutralized by Israeli security forces on the scene.

Also [last] Sunday night, a Palestinian terrorist attempted to stab Israel Defense Forces soldiers at the Hussan Junction near the ultra-Orthodox city of Beitar Illit in Judea.

No casualties were reported in the incident and the terrorist was neutralized, the IDF said. **HW**

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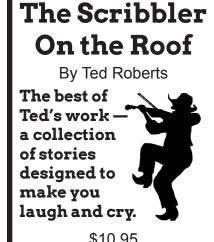
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Art in The Loop: April 12-14

ArtWorks Foundation presents its 7th annual edition of Art in The Loop, the Art Festival in East Memphis, featuring works of Fine-Craft in metal, glass, wood, clay, & fiber, as well as 2-D disciplines. In addition to its juried artists market, you'll also enjoy the fare of the town's top food trucks, craft demonstrations and performances of classical music. Art in The Loop will take place on Ridgeway Loop Road (between Briarcrest Avenue & Ridge Bend Rd.); hours are Friday 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Art in The Loop is presented by WKNO TV, WKNO FM, and ArtWorks Foundation: admission is Free. For more, see: www.artworks.foundation or www.artintheloop.org **HW**



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2 Matisyahu Concerts in the Southwest are Canceled after Pro-Palestinian Activists Protest

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – Two concerts by Matisyahu, the American Jewish singer famous for his peace anthem "One Day," have been canceled after pro-Palestinian protesters targeted venues where he was set to perform.

Meow Wolf in Santa Fe, New Mexico, canceled one concert [last] Wednesday. The Rialto Theatre in Tucson, Arizona, canceled a second [last] Thursday, after first saying it would not do so.

Both venues cited staffing shortages and safety concerns. Both had been targeted by protesters who said Matisyahu's record of performing for Israeli soldiers and pro-Israel groups in the United States should disqualify him from appearing.

Matisyahu said in a statement posted to Instagram that he had offered to pay for additional staffing and security at the Rialto show but had been rebuffed.

"They do this because they are either antisemitic or have confused their empathy for the Palestinian people with hatred for someone like me who builds empathy for both Israelis and Palestinians," he wrote about those who had sought to cancel his show. "It truly is a sad day when dialogue with those you disagree with is abandoned for hate-mongering and silencing artistic expression."

He will instead play a free show in Tucson for hundreds of people.

The concerts' cancelation adds to a growing number of incidents in which Jewish and pro-Israel athletes and celebrities have had appearances scuttled, or threatened to be canceled, amid fierce criticism by pro-Palestinian activists, more than four months into the Israel-Hamas war that began Oct. 7 when

Hamas attacked Israel.

Matisyahu, 44, was notable early in his career for balancing his reggae-infused music and an Orthodox Jewish lifestyle; he has since changed his religious practices but remains popular among Jewish and non-Jewish audiences. His 2008 hit "One Day" – which preaches a message of peace and envisions a world without war or bloodshed – is especially well known after appearing in movies, commercials and as a theme song during the 2010 Winter Olympics.

In 2015, Matisyahu was briefly booted from a Spanish music festival after he refused a demand from organizers that he endorse Palestinian statehood. After a brief uproar, he was reinstated, and eight pro-Palestinian activists were prosecuted, though not convicted, on hate crimes charges related to the incident.

Since Oct. 7, Matisyahu has engaged vocally in pro-Israel advocacy, appearing at the March for Israel in Washington, D.C. in November. He recently told the "Jewish Journal" of Los Angeles that before October, his music had become less Jewish in content, but after the attack, he felt "this strange pull back to being Jewish and feeling Jewish, of wanting to be connected to other Jews and Israel and speaking out about what's happening and writing songs about it."

Last week, Matisyahu posted a video of himself draped in an Israeli flag while performing "One Day" for Israeli soldiers during a recent visit in which he toured a kibbutz attacked by Hamas on Oct. 7, met with relatives of the Israeli hostages in Gaza and performed a benefit concert with the Israeli pop star Netta. In a caption, he explained why

attendees at his U.S. shows were seeing him wear a flag onstage representing the Golani infantry unit of the Israel Defense Forces. "It is a reminder for me every time I perform for our family of warriors fighting for the soul of our nation," he wrote.

The Tucson Coalition for Palestine cited video from Matisyahu's Israel trip in explaining to supporters earlier [last] week why they should protest the Rialto show. An email script distributed by the group says the video is evidence of the artist's longstanding support for the Israeli military. It also notes that Matisyahu has performed for pro-Israel U.S. groups including AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby; the Friends of the IDF fundraising group; and StandWithUs.

"I'm calling on the Rialto Theatre to stand against hosting an artist who clearly sides with the belligerent and violent state of Israel," the script says. "Matisyahu does not align with community values that include compassion and peacefulness for Palestinians. I would hope the Rialto would demonstrate those same values by canceling his show."

The Tucson chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace amplified the call. On Instagram, some supporters of the Tucson Coalition for Palestine said they doubted the venue would cancel a nearly sold-out show and suggested protesting in person instead. Pro-Palestinian protests have created frequent disruptions in public spaces and cultural institutions across the country since the beginning of the Israel-Hamas war.

"Rialto won't do anything over some angry calls," one commenter wrote. "Make this unworkable."

In the end, the Rialto did cancel the show. Though it did not post about the cancelation on its Instagram page, comments on the most recent post – the announcement of a show by the 1970s British band The Buzzcocks – are split between expressions of support for and dismay about the decision. An Instagram post by Meow Wolf in which it explained its cancelation in the comments also drew a mixture of responses.

On Matisyahu's Instagram post, messages of solidarity poured in from fans and other pro-Israel celebrities, including the influencer Montana Tucker and the singer Regina Spektor, before the account hid comments [last] Thursday evening.

In his post, Matisyahu lamented widespread tactics deployed by pro-Palestinian activists during the war.

"Tearing down posters of kidnapped children does not bring justice. Chanting genocidal slogans at Jews does not bring peace. Preventing fans of all ethnic and religious backgrounds from singing together in Santa Fe or Tucson does not bring peace," he wrote. "In fact, it does the opposite."

The singer also vowed to continue his tour – for his new album titled "Hold the Fire" – and to return to Tucson in the future. His next scheduled performance [was scheduled for last] Friday night in Las Vegas.

"I'm sorry you were denied a show. I love you all," he wrote. "My band and I will be back. We will not respond to hate with more hate. We will be together again. We will make music together again. We will sing together again One Day soon." **HW**

Nationalist Social Club Stages Second Rally at Home of Massachusetts Governor



Maura Healey. Credit: Massachusetts Governor's Office via Wikimedia Commons.

(JNS) – The Nationalist Social Club (NSC-131), a New England-based neo-Nazi group, protested on Feb. 10 outside the suburban home of Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey, the second such incident since October. Twenty-five people, who alleged a "migrant invasion" of the state, participated in a

12-minute demonstration that night before leaving.

Photos shared on X showed people dressed in black wearing ski masks, and holding torches and a poster that said, "We're not going anywhere."

State troopers and members of the police department in Arlington monitored the scene but made no arrests.

According to the ADL, members of the organization "consider themselves sol-

diers fighting a war against a hostile, Jewish-controlled system that is deliberately plotting the extinction of the white race."

The group previously held protests in 2022 and 2023 at hotels that offered emergency shelters to immigrants. The choice of targets expresses the neo-Nazis' belief in the "Great Replacement Theory," which asserts the existence of a Jewish conspiracy to replace white Americans with non-white immigrants. **HW**

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Estate Planning Issues for Businesses of All Shapes and Sizes

By Benjamin I. Wachtel, Esq. and David L. Mendelson, Esq.

From owning and managing a couple of rental properties to owning multimillion dollar corporations, many of our clients own and maintain businesses. When advising business owners, in addition to standard estate planning concerns, two (2) specific issues arise: (1) how can the business owner shield and protect personal or family assets from company assets and company liability and (2) how can the business create an effective succession plan for the business? We will focus on these two issues via our next articles. For this article, we will focus on issue (1) Asset Protection in Estate Planning and explore the common methods we use to obtain asset protection for our clients.

1. ASSET PROTECTION IN ESTATE PLANNING

OPTION A- Limited Liability Company (LLC)

LLCs are perhaps the most famous form of asset protection for business owners and are often the most effective method for small business owners. When one establishes an LLC, one creates clear legal separation between business and personal property and liability.

In terms of the asset protection obtained via the LLC structure, the general legal principle is that if the business is sued by creditors or some other type of litigant, personal property is shielded and protected. In other words, the law offers asset protection for the LLC owner's personal assets if the company is sued and the entity suing the company will thus only be able to recover from company assets and personal or family assets are protected and not on the line. As with many areas of the law, there are, of course, exceptions to this general rule (for example: illegal, reckless or fraudulent acts committed by the business owner) through which a court could "pierce the corporate vail" and attach personal liability and assets. In general, however, LLCs provide strong asset protection for the owner's personal assets.



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OPTION B - Family Limited Partnership (FLP)

As the name itself indicates, partners in the FLP must be members of the same family. The individual who establishes the FLP typically servers as the FLP's "General Partner" and added family members then join and serve as "Limited Partners."

If, for example, a business owner owns two (2) shopping plazas and conveys the plazas in separate FLPs and an individual is injured in one (1) of the plazas, said injured party could only recover from one of the FLPs and not the other. In addition, the individual assets of each partner in the FLPs would usually be protected from and not exposed to any such lawsuit. Personal property is thus protected and out of play.

As an enticing aside, in addition to providing strong asset protection, FLPs often serve to limit tax exposure and can mitigate or significantly reduce gift and estate taxes.

OPTION C - Asset Protection Trust

More so than many other states, Tennessee's laws provide for strong asset protection via Asset Protection Trusts and such trusts are often used to protect future beneficiaries who have debt or creditor related issues. There are, of course, exceptions here too (such as family court obligations or tax responsibilities) but, in general, Asset Protection Trusts are a wonderful estate planning tool and provide asset protection from future creditors. **HW**

Memphis Jewish Community Center Launches New Theatre Conservatory



Belz Theater in the Orgel Family Performing Arts Center.

The Memphis Jewish Community Center Theatre Conservatory, launching later in 2024, will bring year-round performing arts programming for all ages to the stage of the Belz Theater in the Orgel Family Performing Arts Center. The MJCC Theatre Conservatory, led by Artistic Director Jonathan McCarter, will provide an array of high-quality general and pre-professional theatrical training as well as skill-based age appropriate programming for preschoolers up through adults. Larry Skolnick, MJCC president/CEO stated, "I am thrilled to have Jonathan join the MJCC team and have confidence that the Theatre Conservatory will thrive under his leadership. There is a lack of quality theatre education and programing in the mid-south and the Memphis Jewish Community Center Theatre Conservatory will fill this void."

Jonathan McCarter brings a combined 17 years of experience to the program: 13 years of professional theatre experience and 4 years of classroom ex-

perience. Members and camp families may remember him from summer 2023 Day Camp where he served as drama specialist, leading theatre electives for camp groups. McCarter's extensive theatre experience includes serving as Director of Education and Outreach at Opera Memphis, the Artistic Director at the Jonesborough Repertory Theatre, 9 years at the renowned North Carolina Theatre where he served as Production Coordinator, and most recently as the head of the theatre program at Overton High School for the Creative and Performing Arts.

McCarter said, "I realize how important theatrical education is, and how important it is to train not only the next generation of performers but also future patrons of the art form." McCarter sees his work in theatre education as a way to ensure the continuance of the art and show students how they can succeed in all areas of the industry, from acting to production and everything in between. HW

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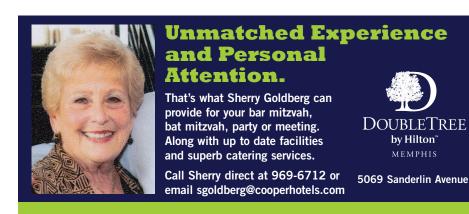


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MEMPHIS









'Powerful' or 'Yikes'? How the Internet Reacted to the First-Ever Super Bowl Ad About Antisemitism



Clarence Jones, wearing a blue pin from the "#StandUpToJewishHate" campaign, during the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism's Super Bowl ad. (Courtesy of FCAS)

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) - Was the first antisemitism-themed ad to air at the Super Bowl tactful or tasteless? How much did it have to do with Israel? And what is "Jewish hate," anyway?

Those are some of the questions that have arisen after the Foundation to Combat Antisemitism, the group founded in 2019 by New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft, placed a 30-second ad during the game titled "Silence" that featured Clarence B. Jones, the longtime advisor and speechwriter for Martin Luther King Jr. (The organization also replayed a different ad it produced last year during the pregame show.)

The ad shows Jones in his study and then, against his voiceover, displays images of a burning cross and swastika and the hashtag "#hitlerwasright." It then shifts to showing people taking action against recent displays of hate, including Islamophobia and anti-Black racism.

"I'd remind people that all hate thrives on one thing: silence," Jones says in the ad, imagining what he'd write in a speech meant for King to deliver today. "The people who will change the nation are those who speak out, who refuse to be bystanders, who raise their voices against injustice. When we stand up to silence, we stand up to all hate."

The ad concludes with the slogan "Stand up to Jewish hate," which then changes to "Stand up to all hate."

The ad meant to strike a universal tone, and some reactions were positive. The American Jewish Committee called it "powerful," and one Facebook user said it was "the best ad from the Super Bowl." The page for a local community of Los Angeles moms thanked Jones and Kraft's foundation for the ad and wrote, "Now is the time to #standuptojewishhate and use your voice."

Others were less impressed. Shmuley Boteach, the Republican activist, author and self-styled "America's Rabbi," wrote on Facebook that the ad was a "complete failure."

"Why were they focusing on Islamaphobia, racism, bigotry - which, of course, as with all forms of hatred, should be fought - when the issue of the hour is antisemitism?" he wrote. His post concluded, "What a wasted opportunity. The ad sucked."

Eve Barlow, a writer and pro-Israel activist, likewise compared the commercial to the "All Lives Matter" slogan that emerged as a rebuttal - or critics would say, distraction - to the Black Lives Matter movement.

"So we spent \$7m "all lives matter-ing" antisemitism at the Super Bowl?" she wrote to her 71,000 followers on X, referencing the estimated price tag on the ad. "Oy vey."

There was also a fair amount of misinformation swirling around the ad. Another ad by Kraft's foundation from 10 months ago, about a man who paints over antisemitic graffiti on a neighbor's house, went viral as a "Super Bowl ad" and garnered considerable praise - but didn't air during the game.

A number of people suggested (inaccurately) that the ad that did air was paid for by Israel, and claimed it was a distraction from the Israel Defense Forces' impending invasion of Rafah, a city in southern Gaza. (The IDF did conduct a rescue operation there during the Super Bowl that freed two hostages, and the Israeli government bought ads that aired during the game on Paramount streaming and on social media.)

"We give Israel 10 million dollars every day so they can spend 7 million dollars on a Super Bowl commercial to propagandize our population while actively carrying out a genocide," a user on X wrote.

In an Instagram post, a user displayed several comments that referenced the Israel-Hamas war and wrote, "The ad had nothing to do with Israel. This is just more proof that anti-Zionism = antisemitism."

And at least one far-right activist who has spread antisemitism - Andrew Torba, founder of the Gab platform – suggested that he appreciated the ad because a hashtag praising Hitler, meant as an example of hate, flashed across viewers' screens.

For some, the use of the term, "Jewish hate" - the foundation's preferred term for antisemitism – was perplexing. There is evidence that the word "antisemitism," which does not include a form of the word "Jewish," is confusing to some people. But the alternative people have generally turned to is "Jew hatred," rather than "Jewish hate," which could give an impression of Jews as the haters rather than the hated.

"The phrase 'Jewish hate' seems to be generating quite a lot of conversation here, and perhaps not for the reasons intended," Avi Mayer, the former editor of the "Jerusalem Post," wrote on X. "The ad was referring to antisemitism - that is, hatred *of* Jewish people – but some folks seem to think it meant hatred exhibited *by* Jewish people. Yikes."

On a lighter note, some users juxtaposed the message of the antisemitism ad with that of other commercials, which promoted Christianity and Scien-

"Religion Super Bowl ads: Christianity: 'join us!'" comedian Elon Altman wrote. "Scientology: 'join us!' Judaism: 'leave us alone!"" HW

Federation Hosts Inaugural Ben **Gurion Society Soiree**



Scott and Jana Weiskopf and their children

Anticipation is building for the first-ever Ben Gurion Society Soiree (BGS), where donors under 50 who give \$1,000 or more to the Annual Community Campaign will be recognized as Ben Gurion Society (BGS) members. This event is a call for the next generation of donors to step up and help Federation continue to build and sustain a vibrant Jewish community.

The event committee, chaired by Jana Ballin Weiskopf, wants the soiree to not only inspire their peers to continue giving, but also to reflect on the lasting impact of donations from earlier generations.

Jana's leadership is inspired by her love for Jewish Memphis and her experiences at Jewish community day school, the JCC, and BBYO. Her commitment

extends to ensuring that her four children have the privilege of growing up in the same inspiring Jewish community that shaped her.

The soiree is Sunday, March 3 and will feature a kosher culinary and wine experience prepared by Chef Erling Jensen. Soiree committee members and hosts include Lisa Barden, Andrea Cohen, Jenny Cook, Ira Lipsey, Andrew Magdovitz, Jaclyn Marshall, Svetlana Rich, and Illysa Wertheimer.

Federation is deeply grateful for a match that makes BGS even more impactful. New gifts at the Ben Gurion level or increases to \$500 or more that commit to \$1,000 for next year (2025) will be matched dollar for dollar by Cindy and Mark Finestone. HW

Brett Gelman Alleges Antisemitism After Stores Cancel Book-Tour Events



Jewish actor and comedian Brett Gelman speaks to the nearly 300,000 attendees of the "March for Israel" rally in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 14, 2023. Source: Screenshot.

(JNS) - Jewish comedian and actor Brett Gelman, 47, spoke passionately at the Nov. 14 "March for Israel" on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., about how he lost friends over his Zionism after Hamas's Oct. 7 terrorist attack on Israel.

Because of that stance, the star of the Netflix hit series "Stranger Things" says certain bookstores have canceled events on a tour to promote his new fiction collection, "The Terrifying Realm of the Possible: Nearly True Stories."

He said two venues have pulled out "due to antisemitic intimidation," adding "but I have not. I won't be silenced and neither will the Jewish people," Gelman wrote on social media.

He shared a graphic identifying the Book Stall, in Winnetka, Ill., and Book Passage in San Francisco as the stores in question. The events were slated for March 20 and 21, respectively.

"I definitely believe it's because of my vocal support of Israel and because of the fact that I'm Jewish," Gelman told the "New York Post." "I think that this is a completely antisemitic act."

"J. The Jewish News of Northern California" interviewed Bill Petrocelli, a Book Passage co-owner, who said the store canceled the event due to Gelman's "intemperate and ill-advised remarks that he made against some other ethnic and social groups." The owner did not specify which comments he meant.

"I don't think it's helpful for me to go into any detail about the comments Mr. Gelman made that prompted our decision," Petrocelli told the "J." For that matter, he added that many of the bookstore's staff members are Jewish.

Gelman's publicist told the paper that

"I have never said anything against an ethnic or social group," said the actor through his publicist. "I have repeated multiple times that I am horrified over the deaths of innocent Palestinians and feel deeply for all innocents affected. So it seems as if Mr. Petrocelli is proving himself to be antisemitic by saying that me advocating for the self-determination, safety and humanity of my own people equates to disparaging Palestinians." HW

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SECURE 2.0 Makes It Easier to Give and Receive

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

They say it's better to give than to receive, but doing both while reducing your income tax liability may be appealing. The SECURE 2.0 Act, included in the federal spending bill passed in late 2022, created two new giving opportunities that could do just that.

The new provision modifies the rules for qualified charitable distributions (QCDs), which allow a taxpayer who is age 70½ or older to contribute up to \$100,000 annually – indexed for inflation – from a traditional IRA to a qualified public charity. The limit is \$105,000 in 2024. While the contribution is not tax-deductible, the distribution – which would normally be subject to ordinary income tax – is not taxable. And the QCD can satisfy all or part of your required minimum distribution, which might otherwise increase your taxable income.

Under the new rules, up to \$50,000 of one year's QCD limit – also indexed for inflation – can be used to fund a charitable gift annuity (CGA) or a charitable remainder trust (CRT), either of which could provide a lifetime income in return for the gift. The limit is \$53,000 in 2024. The option can only be used once in your lifetime, but multiple gifts can be made in the same year, up to the lifetime limit. Your spouse can also use the lifetime limit, so a couple could make up to a \$106,000 bequest in 2024.

Charitable gift annuity

A charitable gift annuity is a contract between you and a charitable organiza-

tion that generally guarantees a fixed payment in return for the bequest. Payments can be made monthly, quarterly, semiannually, or annually, and extend for the lifetime of the beneficiary(ies). These annuities are not new, but they previously could not be funded from an IRA. CGAs are commonly offered by colleges and universities, as well as by many other organizations.

Charitable remainder trust

When you place assets in a charitable remainder trust, you designate an income beneficiary or beneficiaries to receive specified payments for a term of up to 20 years or for the lifetime of the beneficiary(ies). Income payments must be made at least once a year and may be fixed or variable depending on the type of CRT. Upon the end of the term or the death of the beneficiary(ies), the assets in the trust go to the charity.

Potential Payouts

These are sample annual payouts (below) for one individual from a \$50,000 gift annuity, based on suggested 2023 maximum rates from the American Council on Gift Annuities. Actual payouts may differ, and rates can change

with economic conditions. Payouts for two people depend on both ages.

Rules for the QCD opportunity

Funding a CGA or CRT from sources outside your IRA has more flexible rules. For example, you can gift highly appreciated assets such as stocks – which could have other tax benefits – and you can designate a beneficiary other than you or your spouse. For the QCD option, the funds must be distributed directly from the IRA trustee to the CGA or CRT, and the beneficiary(ies) must be you or you and your spouse. Here are some other key points.

- The minimum payout rate is 5%. The CRT maximum rate is generally 50%; maximum CGA rates generally target a residual value of at least 50%. Payouts must begin less than one year after making the bequest.
- Although the contribution is not tax-deductible, it must pass the 10% test for tax-deductible contributions, meaning the charitable value must be more than 10% of the contribution.
- All payments are taxable at the recipient's ordinary income tax rate.
 - Only a new CRT can be funded by

the QCD option, and a QCD-funded CRT cannot receive other funding from the IRA or other donated assets.

Although payments from a CGA or CRT are guaranteed under the terms of the contract, the guarantee depends on the strength of the charitable organization. If you choose to fund a CRT, keep in mind that the use of trusts involves a complex web of tax rules and regulations, and there are initial costs and ongoing expenses. You should consider the counsel of experienced estate planning, legal, and tax professionals before implementing trust strategies or funding a gift annuity.

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Potential Payouts



Suggested maximum payout rates

Source: American Council on Gift Annuities, 2023

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OBITUARIES

The Hebrew Watchman publishes obituaries (up to 500 words) as a service to the Jewish community at no charge. Over 500 words there is a minimum fee.

Hate-Crime Charges Against Palestinian Who Stole Flag, Punched Jewish Man

(JNS) – Law enforcement has charged Bechir Lehbeib, 26, with a hate crime after he allegedly took an "In This Home We Stand With Israel" banner from a house in Long Beach, N.Y., and then assaulted the owner who ran after it.

Aleksandr Binyaminov, who is Jewish, saw Lehbeib steal the flag after his security system alerted him that someone was outside. He went after the man, a self-described Palestinian from North Africa.

Binyaminov said he confronted Lehbeib and demanded the return of the flag, resulting in the alleged thief "fighting with me and punching me in my face," according to the "New York Post." The assault was captured on video.

Binyaminov said Lehbeib "got me in a choke position, threw me on the floor and head-butted me," causing bruising to the face.

Before fleeing, Lehbeib reportedly said, "I am Palestinian, and you Jews are killing Palestinians," wrote the "Post." After his arrest, he was said to have told police that he hated Israeli Jews, and "if I see the flag of the people that killed my people, we will have a problem."

Lehbeib has been charged with a hate crime, second-degree assault, robbery and criminal mischief. **HW**



Your Health By Cindy Katz, Nurse Practitioner

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and being proactive in your health involves preventing illness and injury before they occur. Engaging in behaviors and practices to improve your quality of life includes healthy eating, exercise, and regular cancer screenings and check-ups with your healthcare provider.

Healthy Diet:

When you make a conscious effort each meal to choose heart-healthy foods, you will feel better and see changes in your weight, cholesterol numbers, blood pressure, and sugars.

A heart-healthy diet includes a variety of vegetables, fruits, whole grains,

beans, legumes, nuts, non-fat dairy, lean meat, fish, and poultry.

Avoid trans fats and partially hydrogenated oils, and limit your intake of sugary and salty foods, white flour, and cooking with tropical oils.

Exercise:

Commit to regular exercise to improve cardiovascular health and boost immunity. The goal is to exercise for a minimum of 150 minutes per week. If you train vigorously in an aerobic workout such as running, swimming, or biking, 75 minutes a week is recommended. If you dislike exercising, try to walk more, take the stairs instead of an

elevator, and park further away from a building. As you build up your endurance, add activities that will help you reach 150 minutes of moderate weekly exercise.

Check-ups and Screening:

See your healthcare provider for annual wellness exams.

Your healthcare provider will review your family history and medical history, which include past illnesses, surgeries, current medications, immunizations, and smoking and alcohol use.

They will order lab work to check your complete blood cell count, glucose, electrolytes, kidney, liver, thyroid function, and cholesterol. They will discuss with you age and gender-appropriate questions that will consist of screening for cancer, such as mammograms or colonoscopies, and testing for depression or cognitive decline.

Your healthcare provider will provide personalized recommendations and interventions to help you meet your individual health goals and needs.

In conclusion, being proactive in your health is not a one-time effort. It is a lifetime commitment to prioritize your health, consciously work daily, and focus on a healthier routine that improves your quality of life. **HW**

British University Chaplain and Family in Hiding Following Death Threats Over Stint as IDF Reservist

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – A rabbi at several British universities who drew hundreds of death threats after flying to Israel to serve as a reserve soldier after Oct. 7 is now in hiding with his wife and two children on the recommendation of police.

Both the University of Leeds and British Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis have condemned the threats against Rabbi Zecharia Deutsch, his wife, Nava, and their two children, which began shortly after Oct. 7 and escalated recently with antisemitic phone calls and an attack on the school's Hillel House.

"Tell that Jewish son of a bitch we are coming for him," a message left for Nava Deutsch said, according to the Daily Mail, which listened to some of the messages.

"The University of Leeds is deeply shocked and saddened by the events of Friday 9 February during which Rabbi Zecharia Deutsch received threats to his safety and that of his family and Hillel House was attacked," a spokesperson for the university said in a statement.

The statement added, "We totally condemn the antisemitic abuse and threats directed towards the chaplain and his family – such attacks on any individual are unacceptable and will not be tolerated from members of the public or our University community."

Like many former Israeli soldiers living abroad, Deutsch flew to Israel soon after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack to rejoin the Israel Defense Forces as a reservist. While he was away, a petition began to circulate demanding his removal from the position of university chaplain, saying his participation in a deadly war would create an unsafe environment at Leeds. The petition now has more than 11,000 signatures.

Opposition to Deutsch grew in November when videos he shared of himself with his unit were shared in an anti-Israel WhatsApp group.

Deutsch returned to England in January, amid a broad demobilization of Israeli reservists. Last week, students with the Palestine Solidarity Group gathered outside a student services building to protest his presence on campus.

"We are disgusted and outraged by the recent news that Rabbi Zecharia Deutsch has been allowed to return to campus after serving in the IDF, an army that has been committing genocide in its ongoing assault of Gaza," the group wrote on their Instagram account at the time. "Please show your support and make it clear to the university we will not stand with a genocidal chaplain on our campus."

Hours before the protest, the words "Free Palestine" were found spray painted on the Hillel House at the university.

The family also continued to receive threats. According to the Daily Mail, another said, "Us Muslims are coming for you, you dirty Zionist m—-f—-."

A third message said, "We are going to get you. How dare you come back to Leeds and expect the Muslims not to do 'owt [anything], when all you lot have been doing is killing innocent children?"

The University of Leeds, which has more than 35,000 students, enrolls thousands of Muslim students, many from abroad, according to university data.

Mirvis also denounced the threats against the Deutsch family and called on the university to take action.

"The shameful antisemitic abuse and violent threats directed at the Jewish Chaplaincy couple in Leeds, their young children, and the Jewish students are emblematic of the extremism, which stains our society," Mirvis said. "These attacks are motivated by a hatred, which might appear to be targeted at Jews, but which are ultimately a threat to all of our society. I call on the University of Leeds to be unequivocal in the face of such brazen intimidation and hateful extremism."

The University Jewish Chaplaincy assigns rabbis and rabbinic couples to work with students at more than 100 schools across England. In addition to the University of Leeds, the Deutsches, who previously lived in Jerusalem and Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, work at six other schools in the Leeds area.

"We are deeply shocked and appalled by the despicable torrent of horrific anti-Semitic hate and threats of violence being directed at Rabbi Deutsch and his family," the chaplaincy group said in a statement. "We are in constant communication with Rabbi Deutsch, and our primary concern is to ensure his and his family's ongoing safety, and the safety of Jewish students at Leeds University. To find ourselves in this situation in the U.K. in 2024 marks a dark day for British Jews." **HW**

Grandson of Munich Massacre Victim Assaulted in Berlin in Alleged Hate Crime



A sign at an entrance to the Free University in Berlin, Nov. 13, 2023. Credit: Wolfram Steinberg/picture alliance via Getty Images By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) – Police in Berlin have arrested a 23-year-old man who allegedly attacked and seriously wounded a Jewish student in a bar [last] Friday. The Jewish student and his family say the attack was a hate crime.

The victim, Lahav Shapira, 30, was hospitalized and underwent surgery for non-life-threatening injuries to his face. He is the grandson of Israeli athletics coach Amitzur Shapira, who was murdered by Palestinian terrorists in the Munich Olympics terror attack in 1972.

His older brother, Shahak Shapira, is a prominent comedian and writer who has lampooned Germany's relationship to the Holocaust. The brothers moved from Israel to Germany with their mother as children, and Shahak himself entered public consciousness in 2015 after several Arab men beat him on a Berlin train because he had objected to their singing anti-Israel and antisemitic

Police told German media that the incident at the bar began with a dispute between the two Free University in Berlin students.

"During the argument, the younger man is said to have suddenly hit the older man [Shapira] in the face several times, causing him to fall," the statement said. "The perpetrator is then said to have kicked the man who was lying on the ground." Multiple reports said the two had argued about the Israel-Hamas war.

The family's account is different. Shahak Shapira tweeted, "There was no political debate whatsoever. He was recognized by the attacker in the bar, who followed him and his companion, spoke to them aggressively and then punched him in the face unannounced."

Shapira's mother, Tzipi Lev, who also

lives in Germany, told Israeli media her son had been "sitting in a bar with his girlfriend. She felt like someone was constantly looking at her, and then Lahav told her that it was someone he knew from university." She described the attacker as an Arab student.

According to Lev, the younger student "suddenly started attacking Lahav in a very harsh manner. He shouted at him: 'Why are you posting pictures of kidnapped people?' He was full of hate."

[Last] Monday, Lahav Shapira offered his own account to Israeli media from his hospital room. "He suddenly punched me from the side. Then another one and I lost my balance," he recalled in the interview. "I tried to get up, so he kicked me in the face. And then when I got up, he ran away from the scene."

Shapira has engaged in pro-Israel activism at the Free University since Oct. 7, when Hamas attacked Israel, killing some 1,200 and taking more than 250 people hostage. He was one of several students to clash with pro-Palestinian students there in December.

Shahak Shapira tweeted that his brother had been a target online and in real life and that he had not commented about it to avoid betraying his brother's identity. "This consequence was almost unavoidable, and I feared it from the beginning," Shahak wrote about Lahav's assault.

The Free University in Berlin has been the site of several pro-Palestinian protests since the start of the war, all unauthorized as the university has not sanctioned any protests. The demonstrations are relatively unusual in Germany, where criticism of Israel is widely discouraged and antisemitism is heavily criminalized, reflecting the country's reckoning with its perpetration of the Holocaust. Academics and students at the Free University protested the university's crackdown on pro-Palestinian expression at the school after police were called to disperse a protest in December.

"We are deeply horrified by the brutal, allegedly anti-Semitic attack on a Jewish student at our university and condemn the act in the strongest possible terms," the school said in a statement [last] Monday. "Our condolences go out to the student and his family. We wish him a speedy and complete recovery."

The school said it would "immediately examine possible legal steps" against the alleged perpetrator if he is confirmed to be a Free University student. Saying that it stands for "openness and tolerance," the school added, "The Free University is doing everything in its power to prevent Jewish students from being threatened on campus. Our unrestricted solidarity goes out to all victims of antisemitic hostility and violence."

Meanwhile, law enforcement is continuing its investigation. Local reports said police officers pursued and arrested the attacker, searched his apartment and confiscated his smartphone. **HW**

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Birthright Trippers Find Visiting Israel During War is a Unique and Invigorating Experience



Over 400 American Jews came to Israel on Birthright trips in January 2024. Credit: Nate Lawler

By Elana Sztokman

When Alon Fishman visited Israel in early January on a group trip, it wasn't his first time in the country. But Fishman, 23, had never seen Israel like this before.

When his Birthright Israel group arrived at the Western Wall, they found it uncharacteristically empty, and the plaza featured a new memorial with the names of the 1,200 victims of the Oct. 7 attack. For Fishman, a native of Rockland County, New York, the muted visit was a poignant reflection of the times – and a powerful emotional experience.

"It was a blessing to have that space and time to reflect, and an opportunity I may never get again," Fishman said of the experience of visiting Israel in wartime. "It made me understand not only how hard we got hit but also how we face these things, how we are still standing and come out ahead."

Many participants traveling to Israel on Birthright Israel trips these days say the experience is unique and affirming at a time when many Jews around the world feel at a loss for how to respond to the atrocities of Oct. 7 and public displays of anti-Israel sentiment in their commu-

nities. In Israel, they say, they feel safe, embraced and a sense of belonging being around Israelis and fellow Jews.

"The friendships I made – it's nothing I've ever felt before," said Noah Solomon, 25, from Boca Raton, Florida. "The amount of Israelis who I met who now say 'You are my brother for life, my friend for life, come to my house for Shabbat' – it's incredible."

Over 400 Jews visited Israel in January on Birthright, which offers free 10-day Israel trips to Jews ages 18-26. Participants came from the United States, Canada, Argentina, Brazil, France, and Russia.

When Gillian Zitrin, a 21-year-old Skidmore College senior from New York's Westchester County, told friends she was going to Israel, many of them expressed surprise.

"There was a lot of concern from people – like, there's a war happening, don't go," Zitrin said. "But I felt very safe and had such an amazing experience. I'm glad I didn't listen to those people."

Since November, over 1,200 Birthright Israel alumni have come to Israel to volunteer in the country. Seeing their enthusiasm as well as hundreds of new Birthright Israel participants come on the 10-day trip has been extraordinary and heartwarming, said Noa Bauer, Birthright Israel's vice president of marketing.

She added, "Some may be concerned with safety or that they will miss the 'real' Birthright Israel experience, but I want to assure them that safety is our top priority, and we will not compromise on anyone's gift of their free trip to Israel."

Birthright's current trips include all the typical highlights of the organization's tours, including visits to popular sites and encounters with Israelis, but they also offer opportunities for participants to volunteer, bear witness to what happened on Oct. 7 and go beyond the headlines to learn about what's happening on the ground in Israel.

Participants visit Tel Aviv's "Hostage Square" to learn about Israel's captives in Gaza and spend time volunteering on farms. They also hike Masada, swim in the Dead Sea, eat their way through shuks in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, sleep in Bedouin tents and visit national sites like Yad Vashem. They currently do not spend time near the border conflict zones or in the Golan Heights.

Birthright Israel is booking trips now for the spring and summer both for traditional 10-day tours for Jews ages 18-26 as well as for volunteer-focused programs for Jews ages 18-40 who want to spend their time volunteering.

"We expect thousands of young Jews to visit Israel this summer," Bauer said.

Fishman said that visiting Schneider Children's Hospital, where he learned about how the hospital dealt with the historically unprecedented challenge of caring for children recently released from Hamas captivity, was one of the most meaningful moments of his January trip.

"It was a very deep, emotional day," Fishman said, "seeing how much people cared, and understanding that this is what Israel is about."

Zitrin said her trip helped equip her to better deal with challenges of being a representative of the Jewish community at home, especially on her college campus.

"The trip changed me," she said. "I now connect more with Israel and understand the importance of Israel, and I feel like I can now advocate in my community."

Nate Lawler of Los Angeles, 25, said he's always been a proud Jew: "I wear a Chai and star of David, I love being Jewish, and I'm unapologetically me," said Lawler, who went to Israel in January. "But now I feel like I want to be more outspoken, and I have better understanding to do so. When I see people attacking the Jewish community, I will stand up for what I love and what's close to my heart."

Most of all, Lawler said, he felt like he was among his people.

"I made wonderful friends. I never felt like I fit in so much in my life. It strengthened my feeling of being Jewish," Lawler said. "When you're in Israel, you are wrapped up in Jewish unity."

Solomon said the trip made him reflect on his Jewish observance in a way he had never before considered. Solomon grew up in a religious household but stopped practicing as an adult. After spending Shabbat on a kibbutz during the trip, he said, he realized for the first time that Shabbat is not about restrictions but about connecting with community.

"I feel so much lighter. I can genuinely say that I enjoy Shabbat. That's amazing for me," Solomon said. "Just trying to talk about it I get choked up, because I don't have the words to describe the feeling. It definitely changed me."

Since returning home, Solomon said, he finds himself turning his experiences over and over in his mind and wishing he could go back to Israel.

"I tell everyone I know that they have to visit," he said.

This story was sponsored by and produced in partnership with Birthright Israel, which aims to give every young Jewish adult around the world the opportunity to visit Israel on an educational trip. This article was produced by JTA's native content team. **HW**

With New UN Ceasefire Resolution, Algeria All But Dares Washington to Veto

By Mike Wagenheim

(JNS) – Washington is out of reasons for rejecting a U.N. Security Council resolution insisting upon a ceasefire between Israel and the Hamas terror organization, according to Algeria, which plans next week to put forward a resolution to that effect to a vote at the United Nations.

A final version of the resolution, which has circulated among members of the council, is the latest attempt by Algeria, the council's de facto representative of the Arab and Muslim world, to stop Israel's military operation in Gaza to eliminate Hamas and free the hostages, whom terrorists have held since Oct. 7.

The North African country, which once had one of the world's oldest Jewish communities but now has no Jewish presence, has a long history of virulent opposition to Israel.

The United States has vetoed all previous resolutions demanding a cease-fire, with Washington insisting early in the war that Israel had the right to defend itself against Hamas. More recently, the Biden administration declared that council members should defer to ongoing negotiations between Israel

and Hamas through intermediaries, including Qatar, Egypt and France.

Algerian diplomats said last week that a cycle of rejections of the terms of a humanitarian ceasefire by the warring parties puts to bed Washington's diplomacy-first efforts, necessitating, the anti-Israel country said, action from the council.

The new Algeria draft demands an immediate ceasefire, which all parties must respect, and immediate and unconditional release of all the hostages. It further calls upon all parties to "comply with their obligation under international law in relation to all persons they detain."

The resolution also insists upon a rapid, safe scale-up of humanitarian aid into Gaza and the formation of a Palestinian state, among other provisions.

The Palestinian Authority's U.N. envoy Riyad Mansour appeared to give away the game last Wednesday, when he told the press in Arabic that the resolution "is leverage for those who want to use it as a pressure tool on the Israeli side to speed up the process of completing this deal."

"We were very close to a deal with regard to getting hostages out and getting aid in, and Hamas threw a wrench into them and put forward another proposal that they knew was a non-starter," said Robert Wood, U.S. deputy ambassador to the United Nations, last Monday.

Wood added that the talks would continue and "we're still going to try to reach an agreement we think that's the best way to end this fighting right now and get to scale up humanitarian aid."

A vote on Algeria's resolution will likely come next week.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken held a call with Algerian foreign minister Ahmed Attaf last Wednesday, with some Arabic media outlets claiming Blinken attempted to talk Attaf out of filing the resolution.

The Algerian Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the "conversation falls within the framework of regular consultations that the two ministers agreed to maintain on major international and regional issues of common interest."

The two top diplomats agreed to "continue close coordination" on issues

related to the war that arise before the Security Council, according to Matthew Miller, the U.S. State Department spokesman.

The two also talked "about ongoing diplomatic efforts to achieve an enduring end to the crisis in Gaza that provides lasting peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians alike," Miller added

"They discussed the urgency of ensuring civilians are protected, increasing humanitarian aid to Palestinians in Gaza and our strong commitment to establishing a Palestinian state."

The Palestinian Authority's U.N. mission is expected to travel to The Hague early next week for the opening of a week's worth of hearings in the genocide case South Africa launched against Israel.

That means a vote on Algeria's resolution likely [wouldn't] come before Wednesday. The regular monthly U.N. Security Council meeting on the Israel-Palestinian file was scheduled for [last] Thursday, making that day an additional candidate for a vote. **HW**

How to Talk about Israel with Someone You Disagree with

By Eli Cosrove, The Forward

This originally appeared in "The Forward" and reprinted with permission.

In the four months since Hamas' inhumane Oct. 7 attack on Israel, I have developed more – not less – moral clarity.

No matter what is being said in the newspapers, on social media, on college campuses, in the International Court of Justice or on city streets, my moral compass is steady. I stand by the Israel Defense Forces' campaign to root out Hamas, free the captives and secure Israel's future.

I recall the atrocities committed that Black Shabbat. I remember the sights and smells when I visited the burnt-out communities in Israel's south and listened to the testimony of survivors. I think of the more than 100 hostages still in captivity – no contact or communication with the outside world and, based on testimony from the hostages who have been released, subject to unspeakable acts of physical, psychological and sexual violence.

I piece together the ongoing rocket fire from Gaza and from Hezbollah in the north, as well as the attacks from the Houthis in Yemen, and I reject any David/Goliath, oppressed/oppressor, liberator/colonialist narrative. The actions of Iran and its proxies make clear that it is the destruction of Israel, not the liberation of the Palestinians, that is their goal.

I am heartbroken at the Palestinian lives disrupted, destroyed and displaced, just as I mourn the loss of every Israeli civilian and soldier. Every life is created equally and in the infinite dignity of a God of all creation, who I believe is shedding tears for all God's children in this dark hour.

The displays of smug celebration by IDF soldiers in the face of human suffering, as reported by "The New York Times" last week, are obscene and

should be shut down without delay. To not be heartbroken is to be inhuman.

These are my views – clear, unequivocal and steadfast.

The challenge we face is how to relate to those for whom the truths that I hold to be self-evident are not self-evident at all. Those whose views, sympathies and histories differ from our own.

The grandchild of Holocaust survivors who was on a hunger strike at Brown University in solidarity with Palestinian suffering. The Jewish employees of Jewish nonprofits who signed a petition calling for a ceasefire. The Jewish social justice activist who believes they have not only the right but the obligation to call out perceived wrongs committed in the name of the Jewish state.

I know where I stand. But how do we stand with those members of the wider community who stand for something else? Are there rules of engagement on responding to that squirm-inducing moment when encountering a view different from one's own?

Rule No. 1: Judge generously.

You may be breathing the same air as the person in front of you, but you inhabit different worlds. Maybe you came of age under the shadow of the Shoah or the 1967 War. Remember that millennials and members of Gen Z know nothing of the history of Arab rejectionism – only a strong Abraham Accord, "startup nation" Israel that is in control of who gets what access to what piece of land.

In the digital era, the sources informing that person's reality are also different. Their news is not your news; their social media feed is not yours. Their views need not reflect evil, ill-will or self-hate; they believe what they believe because they believe it to be so.

Rule No. 2: Reject thought police.

As every parent knows, sometimes the hardest and most important thing to do is ... absolutely nothing. Coming down hard on a developing mind risks having the opposite effect than intended. Not every idea is worthy of airing. But within some guardrails – let's say, the goal of a secure, democratic and Jewish state – there is more than one way to get there.

There are questions that can and should be debated: Should Israel's primary goal be to topple Hamas or free the hostages? How many lives lost are too many for either goal? Can one support Israel's right to self-determination and still object to its government?

Such questions are not betrayals. They are being debated in real time by Israelis who are sending their children into harm's way. And we American Jews also have a stake in their outcome.

Counterintuitive as it sounds, it is especially at this moment that left-leaning Jewish organizations play an important role. With many on the left branding anyone who supports any version of a Jewish nation-state a sellout, Jewish groups with proven credentials in progressive circles are the only ones who have a fighting chance to find allies for the Jewish people.

Now is positively not the time to scold someone for expressing a different view of Israel and the resolution of its conflict with the Palestinians. We have real enemies to fight – let's waste no energy picking someone off from within our own ranks.

Rule No. 3: Ask a good question.

A well-placed question can prompt another person to interrogate their position and emerge from the tired and toxic slogans that dominate their social media feed. It can help you figure out the person's intent and build dialogue and trust. Here are a few to start with:

- I hear your calls for a ceasefire, and I want peace as much as you. But don't you think that if your demands for a ceasefire were preceded by a demand for the hostages to be released, those demands would be practically and morally stronger?
- I understand your outrage over proportionality. But how do you explain the fact that the same people accusing Israel of war crimes cannot bring themselves to name the atrocities of Oct. 7?
- I hear you chanting for Palestinian liberation. I also believe in a two-state solution. But when I hear, "from the river to the sea," I'm concerned about the line blurring between championing Palestinian self-determination and calling for the destruction of the Jewish state. It is not clear to me. Is it clear to you?

As with so many things, more important than what you say is how you say it. The exchange itself may not change anyone's mind, but it will be part of their experience as they post their next post, attend their next rally or engage with a friend whose views are even farther from yours. And whatever they say in response to your questions should likewise animate your next public statement, action or conversation.

At the very least, you should have situated that person's views in their humanity, and they should have situated your views in your humanity.

I know what I believe. In many cases, those who hold views different than my own are mishpacha, family. And family is family. We make room for each other's views, ask each other good questions, and listen to each other's answers.

Elliot Cosgrove is senior rabbi at Park Avenue Synagogue in Manhattan in New York City. **HW**

Israeli Hiker Finds 2,800-Year-Old Scarab Amulet



Erez Abrahamov holds an ancient Assyrian amulet he found in the Nahal Tabor Nature Reserve. Credit: Erez Abrahamov

By Pesach Benson

(JNS) – An Israeli army reservist stumbled upon an ancient Assyrian scarab amulet while hiking in northern Israel's Nahal Tabor Nature Reserve during a day off, the Israel Antiquities Authority announced [last] Wednesday.

"I received a two-day leave from the reserves and decided to take advantage of the two sunny days for a trip," said Erez Abrahamov, 45, a resident of Paduel.

"During the trip, I saw something shimmering in the ground. At first, I thought it was a bead or an orange stone. After I picked it up, I noticed that it had engravings that resembled a beetle. I called and reported the amazing find to the [Israel] Antiquities Authority," he said.

The area of the nature reserve has been inhabited for thousands of years and there are numerous archaeological sites scattered around the park, including ancient ruins and burial caves.

Analysis by professor emeritus Othmer Kiel from the University of Friborg revealed that the scarab – 2,800 years

old and crafted from carnelian – depicted a griffon or winged horse at a gallop, consistent with similar artifacts dating back to the eighth century BCE.

According to the IAA, the scarab was found at the foot of Tel Rekhesh, one of the most important mounds in northern Israel. Researchers have identified the site as Anaharath, a city referred to in the book of Joshua as lying within the territory of the tribe of Issachar.

According to Itzik Paz, an IAA archae-

ologist who excavated at Tel Rekhesh, the amulet "may belong to the period of Assyrian rule and may indicate the presence of Assyrian, or perhaps Babylonian, officials at Tel Rekhesh during this period."

Paz explained that "the griffon is a well-known artistic motif in the art of the Ancient Near East, and it is common on seals from the Iron Age. In light of the paucity of findings that have been discovered, so far, within the citadel,

and if the seal can indeed be dated – based on artistic aspects, to the Late Iron Age, it may be possible to link the seal and an Assyrian presence in the citadel of Tel Rekhesh, which would be a discovery of great significance."

Scarab seals, widely utilized across ancient civilizations, featured symbols of various cultural and religious beliefs. Fashioned from materials like carnelian, these artifacts served as both decorative ornaments and functional seals. HW



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Unearthed: A Lost Actress, a Forbidden Book, and a Search for Life in the Shadow of the Holocaust

A thrilling mystery woven into a beautifully constructed family memoir: Meryl Frank's journey to seek the truth about a beloved and revolutionary cousin, a celebrated actress in Vilna before World War II, and to answer the question of how the next generation should honor the memory of the Holocaust.

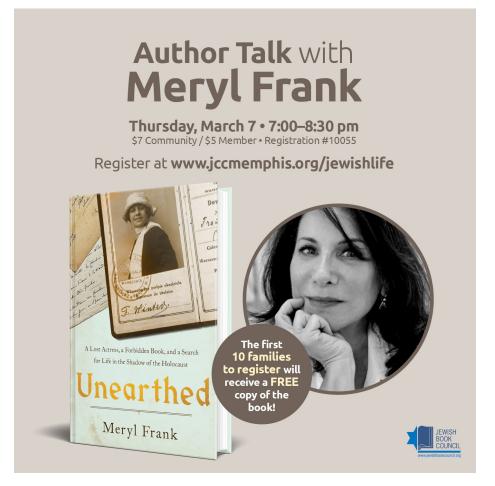
As a child, Meryl Frank was the chosen inheritor of family remembrance. Borrowing from Israeli psychologist Dina Wardi's work, Frank took on the role of "yahrtzeit candle," the memorial candle lit to honor a loved one's passing. Meryl became the human embodiment of the candle and what it represented. One of her missions in life is to ensure that she is her "generation's keeper of the family memory" and to educate her children about what it means to stand up for injustice.

Frank had a close relationship with her aunt Mollie and over long afternoons, Mollie, told Meryl about Vilna, its theater, and, above all else, Meryl's cousin, the radiant Franya Winter. Franya was the leading light of Vilna's Yiddish theater and was a remarkable and precocious woman. Yet there was one thing her aunt Mollie would never tell Meryl: how Franya died. One day, before Mollie passed away, she gave Mer-

yl a Yiddish book containing the terrible answer but forbade her to read it. "When I'm gone," Mollie told her, "I want you to take this book... Keep it and pass it on to your children. But don't read it." And for years, Meryl obeyed.

Unearthed is the story of Meryl Frank's search for Franya and a timely history of hatred and resistance. Through archives across four continents, by way of chance encounters and miraculous discoveries, and eventually, guided by the shocking truth recorded in the pages of the forbidden book, Meryl conjures the rogue spirit of her cousin - her beauty and her tragedy. Frank's search reveals a lost world destroyed by hatred, illuminating the cultural haven of Vilna and its resistance during World War II. As she seeks to find her lost family legacy, Meryl looks for answers to the questions that have defined her life: What is our duty to the past? How do we honor such memories while keeping them from consuming us? And what do we teach our children about tragedy?

Please join us as the Center for Jewish Life and Learning welcomes Meryl Frank on Thursday, March 7 at 7 p.m. at the Memphis Jewish Community Center. You can register at www.jccmemphis.org/jewishlife. HW



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