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# Hebrew Watchman

**SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925** 

HEBREWWATCHMAN.COM 3 NISSAN, 5784 APRIL 11, 2024 VOL. 102, NO. 30

## Memphis Jewish Federation Welcomes Michael Bornstein and Debbie Bornstein Holinstat as Keynote Speakers for its 62nd Yom HaShoah Commemoration



Michael Bornstein

Memphis Jewish Federation's 62nd annual Yom HaShoah Commemoration will be held Sunday, May 5, at 4 p.m. at the Memphis Jewish Community Center. The event is open to the community, and pre-registration is required for all guests. Visit jcpmemphis.org/yomhashoah to register. Please note: non-registered guests will not be permitted to attend the event.

Each year, Federation's Yom HaShoah commemoration honors Holocaust survivors living among us, pays tribute to those we have lost, and transmits the legacy of the Holocaust to the next generation. This year's program will include a moment of silence in memory of those who lost their lives on October 7 and in its aftermath. There will also be a memo-



rial tribute to Sam and Frieda Weinreich, of blessed memory, who participated in

Yom HaShoah for more than 60 years.

Dorothy Kelman Goldwin and Michelle Goldwin Kaufman, co-chairs of Federation's Holocaust Memorial Committee, are honored to announce this year's keynote speakers. Michael Bornstein is one of the youngest child survivors of Auschwitz. He and his daughter, Debbie Bornstein Holinstat, a TV producer, co-authored Michael's memoir, "Survivors Club: The True Story of a Very Young Prisoner of Auschwitz." Federation thanks the Tennessee Holocaust Commission for its keynote speaker sponsorship.

"Now, more than any other time since the Holocaust, we must never forget," said Co-Chair Dorothy Goldwin. "I am honored to welcome Michael and his daughter, Debbie, to Yom HaShoah. This is a powerful opportunity to commemorate the six million that perished in the Holocaust and to hear Michael's unique survivor story."

The book, available at Novel Memphis, tells the unforgettable story of Michael's mother's intense love, his father's courageous wit, and a perfectly timed illness that saved his life. At the age of four, Michael survived seven months inside Auschwitz, where the average lifespan of a child was just two weeks.

Six years after his liberation, he immigrated to the United States with his mother and grandmother.

Michael's daughter, Debbie Bornstein Holinstat, began her career writing for some of the biggest names in news, including Lester Holt of NBC Nightly News, CNN's Ashleigh Banfield, and the Today Show's Natalie Morales. Her greatest professional reward has come from writing alongside her father as they collaborated on "Survivors Club."

In addition to Michael and Debbie's presentation, the Yom HaShoah program will include the traditional candle lighting ceremony by survivors and second and third generation survivors, a musical reflection by young violinist Amelia Boer, and the El Maleh Rachamim memorial prayer led by Or Chadash's Rabbi Cantor David Julian.

Psalms and Kaddish will be led by David Winestone, Shelby Baum, and Rebecca Gerber in memory of their father, Ted Winestone, a Holocaust survivor.

Federation's Holocaust Memorial Committee recently lost a founding member, Sam Weinreich, of blessed memory. Sam and his wife, Frieda, of blessed memory, were married 77 years, and both were survivors of the Holocaust and pillars in the Memphis Holocaust survivor community.

For decades, Sam used his beautiful voice and his passion to perform the Partisan and Ghetto songs at Yom HaShoah. He never missed an opportunity to tell his survival story to anyone who would listen, and Federation arranged many speaking engagements for him. Frieda was a longtime commemoration candlelighter – she lit a memorial candle at Federation's first Yom HaShoah commemoration in April of 1962 and for almost every year thereafter.

To mark Sam's legacy, Rabbi Abe Schacter-Gampel of the Memphis Jewish Community Center will lead the audience in a communal singing of the Partisan Song. Visit jcpmemphis.org/yomhashoah to see a recording of Sam singing the Partisan song and to view the song lyrics.

Cantors Ricky Kampf and Aryeh Samberg will open the program with the National Anthem.

The closing benediction will be offered by Rabbi Ian Lichter of Baron Hirsch Congregation. Eleanor Talle Steinberg, representing Temple Israel, will close the program leading Hatikvah. The winners of Federation's Annual Holocaust Art and Essay Contest will be recognized, and art entries will be on

(See Yom HaShoah Page 3)

## A Growing Playlist: Music Momentum at Temple Israel



**Emily Groff Heilborn** 

Temple Israel is thrilled to grow its music offerings at Temple Israel through worship, education, and entertainment



Eleanor Tallie Steinberg

on campus this spring and beyond.

"Music continues to be the heart and soul of our synagogue, and we're build-

ing the tempo for a beautiful season of opportunities to sing, pray and celebrate with community," said Emily Groff Heilborn, Temple Israel music director.

In addition to Emily Groff Heilborn and the Temple band, Eleanor Tallie Steinberg, a talented voice and presence in the Temple Israel family, will join the rotation of liturgical music leaders during Friday and Saturday Shabbat services at Temple throughout the year. Eleanor learned multiple instruments while growing up in Israel and began writing her own music and lyrics when she was 12. By the time she finished her schooling in Israel, she went on to travel throughout the country both as a solo artist and with a band. By 2011, she had joined a traveling blues band that toured the Netherlands; and with a budding love for blues, Eleanor eventually went on to move to Memphis, where she has called home since 2013. Eleanor and her husband, Corey Steinberg, are parents of Dylan and Lilah, who attend Temple's Barbara K. Lipman Early Learning Center.

Composer, multi-instrumentalist and prayer leader Elana Arian will return to Memphis April 19 for a powerful Shabbat service celebrating and honoring Temple Israel's Presidential transition from Leigh Baim Mansberg to Wendy Rotter beginning at 7 p.m. Elana inspires communities across the country with her soulful music, and has collaborated with some of the leading voices in contemporary Jewish music, including Dan Nichols, Josh Nelson, Noah Aronson and Debbie Friedman, z"l.

On April 28 in the Temple Israel (See **Music** Page 3)

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## My Teen Israel Experience



Hugh Parker with friends at the top of Red Canyon.

#### By Hugh Parker

I have always had a close connection to Judaism. From attending Sunday school, to camp, to bar mitzvah celebrations of my friends, Judaism has always been a key aspect of my life. However, I knew I needed one more aspect of my Jewish life to truly connect with the religion. I had the opportunity to do this when I went to Israel for the first time this past summer. The only way I can describe it was "amazing." Every single second I was in Israel, I could feel myself becoming closer to Judaism.

I stayed in a wide array of places, mainly in kibbutzim throughout Israel. The first kibbutz we visited after landing at Ben Gurion airport overlooked a gorgeous canyon, which was one of the most beautiful places I had ever seen. In our first two days, we spent a lot of time sightseeing, and we even met the foreign affairs director of Israel! After our first couple days, we had a four-day camping trip across the Negev, which was one of the highlights of the trip.

For the first three days, my group and I stayed in a clearing in the red canyon, one of the best parts of the Negev. Every day, we got up at 5 a.m. to avoid the hottest part of the day and went on four-to-five-hour hikes across the desert, where we saw extraordinary sights and ate desert food with the help of our tour guide, Ofri. After returning to base camp, we did exciting things such as go to Eilat or the beach.

The fourth night of our trip, we spent a night in the Bedouin tents in central Israel. Even though we went to bed at around 11 p.m. that night, we woke up incredibly early, 3:30 a.m., for a Jewish rite of passage of watching the sunrise at Masada. Masada was beautiful, something I will remember forever. After Masada, my group went to a beautiful

kibbutz outside of Jerusalem. While there, we did things such as visit the Western Wall, speak with an Orthodox rabbi, tour a Druze village, and observe a Zionist vs. Palestinian debate.

Afterwards, we went to Kibbutz Tsuba, on the outskirts of Tel Aviv, and our final destination. There, we had a small group of Israeli teens join our group and stay with us for a week. These kids told us about life in Israel for an average teenager and about the stresses of knowing that they had to eventually serve in the IDF. We departed from our Israeli friends by having Shabbat dinner at their homes, getting to know each other. Two days later, it was our turn to leave for our return to our home in Memphis.

Since returning home from Israel, I have noticed a shift in myself. Now, before I do something, I always ask myself not only if it is the right thing to do, but if it is something G-d would want me to do. That is the impact Israel had on me.

Thank you to Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund for helping make my Yallah / Jacobs Camp Israel program possible for me.

Hugh Parker, son of Liz Rudnick and Elton Parker, is a junior at Lausanne Collegiate School. Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund provided him with a Teen Israel Experience grant to offset the costs of his Yallah Israel / Jacobs Camp Israel program. All rising juniors and seniors are eligible for grants of up to \$3,000 to attend a recognized teen summer or semester program in Israel. Teen Israel Experience applications for Summer 2024 are open and can be accessed at jcpmemphis.org/lemsky-endowment-fund

This essay was written before October 7. HW



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4/11/2024



## **Memphis Candlelighting Time**

Weekly Torah Portion: Tazria

# Free Women's Health Panel to Address the Big Issues

Women of all ages are invited to a free panel entitled "Everything You Want to Know About Women's Health But Are Afraid to Ask" on Wednesday, May 1, 7 p.m., sponsored by Temple Israel Sisterhood.

Experts will discuss reproductive health, women's advocacy in healthcare, menopause, and hormone replacement therapy, as well as diseases relevant to women such as cervical and breast cancer, osteoporosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, and more.

Panelists include Dr. Erica Kaye discussing her IVF journey; Dr. Susan Lacy, OB/Gyn at Modern Gynecology and Reproductive Health; Jennifer Pepper, MBA with CHOICES Center for Reproductive Health; and Dr. Danielle Tate, OB/Gyn at Baptist Medical Group. Faith Ruch, RN and TI director of Congregational Engagement, will moderate the discussion. Come prepared to ask questions and learn.

This event is free and open to the public. Please RSVP to www. tisisterhood.com. Temple Israel is located at 1376 East Massey Road, Memphis, TN 38119. Questions? Call Marla Shainberg, 404-694-3562. **HW** 

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#### Yom HaShoah...

(Continued From Page 1) display in the MJCC lobby.

The annual Yom HaShoah observance is coordinated and hosted by Memphis Jewish Federation's Holocaust Memorial Committee. It is supported by Baron Hirsch Congregation, Beth Sholom Synagogue, Chabad Lubavitch of TN, Facing History & Ourselves, Memphis Jewish Community Center, Or Chadash Conservative Synagogue, Temple Israel, and Young Israel of Memphis.

"As descendants of Holocaust survivors and members of the broader Jewish community, we have dual responsibility

towards past and future generations," said Co-Chair Michelle Goldwin Kaufman. "We must continue to honor and remember those who were directly impacted by the Holocaust and actively share the stories of survivors and those who perished with our children and grandchildren, who do not hear these stories firsthand. To fulfill our legacy, we must engage in deliberate, communal action that involves both personal reflections and emphatic advocacy."

For more information about the program, please contact Lorraine Wolf at 901.767.7100 or at lwolf@jcpmemphis.org. **HW** 

#### Music...

(Continued From Page 1)

Meadow, Temple Israel is producing the second annual TIMPO Fest, a family-friendly, picnic-style festival lineup of voices, bands, Passover-friendly food trucks and more. American Idol contestant and Music Export Memphis artist Alexis Grace is headlining the stage in addition to Temple Israel's band, teen band and choirs. The community-wide event will also feature bounce houses,

face painting, friendship bracelet making and lawn games for children.

Looking ahead to the High Holy Days 5785, vocalist Happie Hoffman will return to Temple Israel from October 2 through October 13, 2024, to lead Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur from the bimah, including both Shabbat Shuva and Kol Nidre Shabbaton.

For more information on Temple Israel events and programs, visit timemphis. org. **HW** 

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Letter to the Editor of the Hebrew Watchman:

In the March 28, 2024, edition on page 4, there's an article whose headline reads, "Prominent Jewish Names Join Letter to Biden from Progressive Donors Warning Against 'Unconditional' Support for Israel." The first sentence says more than 100 Democratic funders are calling on Biden to withdraw his "unconditional" support for Israel's war effort. In the second paragraph we learn of the disillusionment of a critical por-

tion of the Democratic coalition. We're then given the names of six different Democratic Jewish philanthropists who signed the letter, along with the progressive causes they support.

The irony comes on page 5 where an article has the headline "Trump: Democrat Party Hates Israel." I wonder where he'd get that idea. Maybe he read the article on page 4.

~ Susan Stein HW

# The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Wednesday, April 17 - 12 p.m. MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Monthly Luncheon Featuring The Double D Band.

The Double D Band plays a wide range of songs and genres, but especially music from the 50s. Playing guitars and mandolins, they've appeared on MTV, BBC, and have been a part of the music scene in London, England, and New York City, having lived and performed in both. The last time The Double D Band played for the Monthly Luncheon, many of the seniors requested their return!

Entertainment for our monthly luncheons is provided in partnership with Creative Aging of the MidSouth. April's luncheon is sponsored by Harbur Realty and Mid-South Home Helpers. Please call the MJCC front desk, 901-761-0810 to make reservations for this terrific lunch and entertainment. Cost is only \$5!

#### Wednesday, April 17 - 11:30 a.m Interactive Mock Seder

Please join us for an interactive Mock Seder led by Rabbi Abe Schachter-Gampel of the MJCC's Center for Jewish Living and Learning at the MJCC on Wednesday, April 17. Grape juice, matzah, and other Passover staples will be served, and fan-favorite Passover songs will be sung. Join us for the Seder at 11:30 a.m. and then stay for lunch at 12 p.m. with enter-



The Double D Band

tainment following featuring The Double D Band. Seder is free of charge, lunch is just \$5 per person. RSVP to Steve Kaplan 901-259-9220.

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

Vanessa Redgrave who, while accept-

ing her 1978 Oscar, decried the "Zionist hoodlums" who were protesting her support of the PLO outside the theatre). I know he could sock-it-to Jonathan

Glazer for his self-hating 'Jew-ish" (to borrow from George Santos) remarks. I have a suggestion for him: make a sequel to "The Zone of Interest" in which Auschwitz prisoners (Jews and/ or others), breach the wall that features so prominently in his film and bomb the home of Commandant Hoss while he and his family are occupying it (not so far-fetched, as on Oct 7th-of all dates-1944, there was an attempt by members of the Sonderkommando unit to destroy the gas chambers and crematoria at Auschwitz-Birkenau). Obviously the wife's involvement was implicit (and anyway, she wears fur, so no big loss there), but there are the 5 inno-

cent children and the servants, etc. who would have to be sacrificed, and according to Glazer's remarks, victims (as of

the Oct, 7th, 2023 massacres) aren't allowed to avenge their attackers, even if

it's to prevent the same thing from hap-

pening over and over, because it may result in the killing of innocents. Doesn't

Glazer realize that he's able to make his

movie and stand on that stage because his British Jewish forebears were saved by the entrance of America into the war,

which ended in the Allied victory, even

though it entailed the killing of tens of thousands during the "Obliteration of

Dresden" alone, not to mention some two hundred thousand killed by the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki? But perhaps he hasn't watched his competitor's mov-

ie, "Oppenheimer," so he's unaware of what finally brought WW2 to an end. To quote Paddy Chayefsky: "...winning an Academy Award is not a pivotal

moment in history, does not require a

proclamation, and a simple 'thank you'

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Jonathan Glazer's Oscar acceptance speech

Oh, for the likes of a Paddy Chayefsky response to the above (directed to

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would have sufficed." ~ Alice Zalon **HW** 

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# World Central Kitchen's Jose Andres: 'Israel is Better than the Way this War is Being Waged'



Celebrity chef and World Central Kitchen founder Jose Andres, center, joins Sen. Chris Coons and Sen. Peter Welch following a meeting about getting humanitarian aid to Gaza at the U.S. Capitol, March 14, 2024. Credit: Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

## By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – The celebrity chef behind the nonprofit whose aid workers were killed in an IDF strike last Tuesday is appealing to Israel, and the Jewish people, to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

In an op-ed published simultaneously last Wednesday in "Yedioth Ahronoth," an Israeli newspaper, and "The New York Times," World Central Kitchen founder Jose Andres laments the killings and names the seven workers who died. He also calls on Israel to open land routes to deliver aid to hungry Gazans and says his organization's work in Israel after Hamas' Oct. 7 attack makes him confident that the current conditions can change.

"We know Israelis. Israelis, in their heart of hearts, know that food is not a weapon of war," Andres writes. "Israel is better than the way this war is being waged. It is better than blocking food and medicine to civilians. It is better than killing aid workers who coordinate their movements with the IDF."

Israel says the killing of the humanitarian workers was an unintentional error. The incident has intensified pressure on the country, including from its allies, to improve aid delivery in Gaza and shield civilians from harm.

Andres, a longtime successful restauranteur, launched World Central Kitchen in 2017 after a devastating hurricane in Houston. It has since become one of the boldest disaster relief organizations in the world, providing meals to people in crisis zones even when other aid groups have held back, and the work has earned Andres accolades and awards. In Israel, he says, his group served 1.75 million hot meals in the aftermath of the Oct. 7 attacks, and before suspending operations last Tuesday, it had served more than 43 million meals in Gaza at a time when humanitarian groups are warning of an impending famine.

In his op-ed, Andres' comments he calls for an end to the war but not an immediate ceasefire, which Israel has

rejected because it would leave Hamas in power in Gaza. He also acknowledges the grievous attack that Israel faced on Oct. 7 — and says it should animate a stronger humanitarian effort in Gaza, where the Israeli army has been waging a ground war for more than five months in response.

"In the worst conditions, after the worst terrorist attack in its history, it's time for the best of Israel to show up," Andres writes. "You cannot save the hostages by bombing every building in Gaza. You cannot win this war by starving an entire population."

Andres' piece concludes by referencing the upcoming Passover holiday, when Jewish families around the world will sit down to seder meals that feature both ample food and a liturgy that addresses hunger.

"I have been a stranger at seder dinners. I have heard the ancient Passover stories about being a stranger in the land of Egypt, about remembering – with a feast before you – that the children of Israel were once slaves," Andres concludes. "It is not a sign of weakness to feed strangers; it is a sign of strength. The people of Israel need to remember, at this darkest hour, what strength truly looks like." HW

# JCC Association and Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs Partner on Ongoing \$7.2 Million Initiative Mit-habrim | מתחברים | Connections

Historic partnership welcomes Israeli heroes and survivors to JCCs and funds programming grants at nearly 100 JCCs

NEW YORK (March 21, 2024) – JCC Association of North America, in partnership with Israel's Ministry for Diaspora Affairs, announces additional programming as part of a new international initiative, Mit-habrim | מתחברים | Connections. The \$7.2 million initiative, set to strengthen ties between North American JCCs and Israel and demonstrate solidarity with the country following the horrific attacks of October 7, has to date impacted more than 40,000 participants at 190 events and 112 JCCs and partner organizations, and will continue through the spring with grants for JCCs to create programs that honor and celebrate major Jewish and Israeli holidays and commemorations. Mit-habrim is supported by a \$3.57 million grant from the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs, the largest grant to a movement outside Israel, with matching funds to be secured by JCC Association.

Initially conceived in 2021 to provide funding to JCCs to design, develop, and implement programming for Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron, and Yom HaAtzmaut during Israel's 75th anniversary year, this partnership has adapted and grown significantly in response to the war in Israel. Since October 7, Mit-habrim has delivered programming and funds into JCCs to support a widening commitment to solidarity with Israel and Israelis. Programs born from the partnership between JCC Association and the Ministry for Diaspora Affairs are empowering JCC members, staff, and leaders to strengthen their connections to Israel and stand up to antisemitism, in all its forms, including anti-Zionism, while supporting engagement with their wider communities. Mit-habrim launched in the days following the October 7 attacks and events will continue through the summer.

"This historic partnership, fostering movement-wide support of Israel, exploring the unbreakable bonds that bind us together as Jews is, perhaps more critical now than ever," says Doron Krakow, president and CEO of JCC Association. "As the largest and most diverse platform for Jewish engagement in North America, we are uniquely positioned to impact commitment to Jewish peoplehood from coast to coast and provide unwavering support to the Jewish state in the wake of the atrocities perpetrated on October 7. Because of this momentous initiative, over the past five months, tens of thousands of participants in every corner of our movement have joined hands in unequivocal support for Israel and her people."

In May, the work of Mit-habrim will continue with \$1.1 million in grants awarded to nearly 100 JCCs across 30 states and three Canadian provinces for the creation and implementation of programs focused on the three major Jewish and Israeli holidays and commemorations. Inspired by the original design of Mit-habrim, the grants, known as Yamim, provide seed funding to JCCs for the creation of Yom HaShoah, Yom HaZikaron, and Yom HaAtzmaut programs for their communities, proudly and powerfully demonstrating their commitment to Israel and the Jewish people. Select highlights of upcoming Yamim programs include: an exhibit featuring photos by photojournalist Erez Kaganovitz at the Merage JCC in Orange County, Calif.; a free outdoor Yom HaAtzmaut community carnival at Kings Bay Y in Brooklyn, N.Y.; conversations with women who were directly impacted by the October 7 attacks at the Miami Beach JCC in Miami Beach, Fla; a citywide Yom HaAtzmaut celebration at Shalom Austin in Texas; a family cooking workshop hosted by a Jerusalem-based couple at the Mandel JCC in Cleveland, Ohio; Southern Arizona Israel Week with a Yom Hazikaron commemoration and Yom HaAtzmaut barbeque in Tucson, Ariz.; and more.

Among Mit-habrim's most powerful, poignant initiatives is Giborim: First Testimony, which has brought 40 Israeli giborim, or heroes, directly to JCCs to share their experiences from the October 7 attacks and its aftermath. With the World Zionist Organization as a partner, giborim have visited over 30 JCCs thus far, welcoming thousands of attendees to engage with eyewitnesses and survivors of the events of October 7 and the ensuing war. Additional giborim visits to communities across the continent are scheduled throughout the spring.

After four Israelis visited his community, Scott Seewald, chair of the JCC of Greater Pittsburgh, said: "We will always be grateful for spending time with these giborim and creating relationships that we know will last forever.... Our Pittsburgh Jewish community may be thousands of miles away from Eretz Yisrael [the land of Israel] physically, but our hearts and souls are with Israel always."

Additional components of Mit-habrim, created by JCC Association, which have had a powerful impact on dozens of JCC communities, include: Shufuni l Look at Me, which welcomed a group of young artists and performers from Sderot and other communities in the Gaza envelope to JCCs to share their music and stories; Zionist Talks, a lecture series featuring notable Israelis including Avi Melamed, Natan Sharansky, Shira Ruderman, and Einat Wilf whose perspectives and insights are enhancing

understanding among American Jews of the current situation in Israel; Israel Solidarity Missions, which brought more than 50 JCC Movement representatives to Israel over the last five months to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Israelis and to bear witness to the atrocities perpetrated by Hamas; and during the winter, Together We Shine Bright Shabbatot, which featured Hanukkah and Tu B'Shvat gatherings at JCCs throughout the movement.

"Right now, it is critical that the Israeli-American relationship remains as strong as it has been through Israel's 75 years. Israel is a complex and dynamic country, and to build meaningful connections with North American Jews, we need to continue to share more about Israel's culture, history, and people," notes Israel's Minister for Diaspora Affairs, Amichai Chikli. "As a movement with reach across the U.S. and Canada, JCC Association is the most effective partner to provide financial and educational resources, allowing each JCC to engage in ways that best suit the community."

Before Mit-habrim was launched, JCC Association's Center for Israel Engagement awarded approximately \$750,000 in donor-funded micro-grants to JCCs across the movement. These grants predate the October 7 attacks and demonstrate ways JCC Association supports JCCs in instilling a commitment to Jewish peoplehood and building connections with Israel in their communities. Both the original micro-grants and Mit-habrim funding give JCCs significant autonomy to design and implement Israel-focused events and programs that address specific needs and objectives in their communities. The matching grant aspect of Mit-habrim provides an opportunity for local and national funders to support Israel-centric programming across North America. HW

# Temple High Jewish Journey to D.C. Sparks Civic Engagement and Inspiration



Temple Israel teens, Rabbi Micah Greenstein, Rabbi Jeff Dreifus and Temple Trustee Leah Gafni in a transformative journey to Washington, D.C.

#### By Melinda Lejman

In a remarkable fusion of faith, activism and exploration, a group of Temple Israel teens recently embarked on a transformative journey to Washington, D.C. as part of their TI High programming. Led and envisioned by Rabbi Micah Greenstein since 1992, the D.C. trip keeps Temple-affiliated teens tethered to their synagogue throughout their pivotal senior year of high school.

"This Jewish journey transcends the ordinary student or family excursion

to Washington," Rabbi Greenstein explains. "Our 14 Temple Israel Graduation D.C. Jewish journeys for juniors and seniors are driven by a spirit of social action and spiritual enlightenment."

In addition to a fun day in Georgetown, visiting The Kennedy Center, and enjoying the famous Comet Pizza eatery, Temple teens toured several monuments and engaged in meaningful discussions with Representatives Steve Cohen and David Kustoff. They also

spent a morning at the United States Holocaust Museum that included a discussion on antisemitism, past and present.

Temple Trustee Leah Gafni joined the group, as well as Rabbi Jeff Dreifus. A highlight for Ms. Gafni, who had never visited the city before, was the group's visit to the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and meeting with the organization's director, Barbara Weinstein, and Ambassador Rabbi David Saperstein.

"I didn't realize how much of the civil rights movement happened in the room that we sat in," she says. "That was pretty amazing – that Martin Luther King sat in that room to help make the movement possible was so powerful."

From Havdalah at the White House to a soul-stirring Shabbat evening at Temple Sinai focused on Israel and freeing the hostages, the itinerary pulsated with purpose and passion, reinforcing the students' connection to their heritage and their commitment to effecting positive change in the world.

This trip is made possible by a generous subsidy from the family of Paul and Mason Gudelsky, both of blessed memory. "Mason was a member of my post-bar mitzvah class," shares Rabbi Greenstein. "He died tragically young, but as his family said, 'his happiest Jewish memories occurred at Temple Israel and teen programs led by our rabbis.""

Reflecting on her experience, Ms. Gafni remarked, "It was impressive just to see this future generation of young Jewish students asking such insightful questions. Being with them and getting to see things for the first time alongside them was incredibly inspiring to me." HW

## White House Welcomes Israeli Announcement of Increased Gazan Aid Flow

(JNS) – The White House welcomes the Israeli government's announcement last Thursday night – at U.S. President Joe Biden's "request" – that it will open the Ashdod port for "direct delivery" of aid and the Erez crossing to "a new route" for assistance to northern Gaza.

The Jewish state also committed "to significantly increase deliveries from Jordan directly into Gaza," and that all changes "must now be fully and rapidly implemented," stated Adrienne Watson, spokeswoman for the National Security Council of the White House.

"As the president said today on the call, U.S. policy with respect to Gaza will be determined by our assessment of Israel's immediate action on these and other steps, including steps to protect innocent civilians and the safety of aid workers," Watson stated.

"We are prepared to work in full coordination with the government of Israel, the governments of Jordan and Egypt, the United Nations and humanitarian organizations, to ensure that these important steps are implemented and result in a significant increase in humanitarian assistance reaching civilians in dire need throughout Gaza over the coming days and weeks," she stated. HW

# New Campaign Urges Families to Set a 'Seder Seat for a Hostage'

## By David Swindle

(JNS) – The leading Jewish organization in the United Kingdom has launched an effort to keep the hostages being held in the Gaza Strip in mind as the holiday of Passover approaches.

The Board of Deputies of British Jews announced its "Seder Seat for a Hostage" campaign urging Jews to add one more chair to their seder table.

"We would recommend that people download and print out a picture of a hostage," Daniel Sugarman, director of public affairs for the Board of Deputies, told JNS, noting that the organization had made the images available on its website. "Then display that sign on a chair at the seder table. If people also wish to post a picture of that seat at their seder table prior to the festival coming in, we would also welcome them doing so."

The hashtag #SederSeatForAHostage can be used when sharing photos for the campaign. The Hostages and Missing Families Forum supports the initiative.

"We want to draw attention to the plight of the hostages, but we also want to make sure that they are remembered as part of the Seder," Sugarman told JNS. "We feel strongly that the seder – Z'man Cherutenu – needs to have an element, which does not allow us to forget that there are people in captivity."

Marie van der Zyl, president of the Board of Deputies, called the campaign, "Commemorating the Festival of Freedom, Remembering Those in Captivity."

She said, "As in ancient days, we call 'Let Our People Go" – Jewish, Muslim, Christian or Buddhist – the hostages

must all come home."

Van der Zyl said that "when we recite the words 'Next Year in Jerusalem,' we will be thinking of all those who are not with us for the seder this year, hoping for their safe return." **HW**  The Board of Deputies of British Jews has sponsored the initiative with the support of the Hostages and Missing Families Forum.

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## **National Guard Unit Deletes** Instagram Post of Soldier with Nazi Patch



German Nazi Waffen SS-Totenkopf-Division in Russia, Sept. 23, 1941.

Credit: German Federal Archives via Wikimedia Commons

(JNS) - A Totenkopf - the skull and crossbones symbol used by the Nazi SS-Totenkopfverbände division that administered concentration camps during World War II - has shown up on the back of a helmet worn by a National Guardsman in the U.S. South.

The 20th Special Forces Group, based in Birmingham, Ala., shared an image on March 24 featuring the antisemitic symbol on its Instagram page with the caption: "That weekend feeling. Enjoy the rest of your weekend. Don't stop training. Don't get complacent."

The image was soon deleted from the account, and the army has begun an investigation, said Maj. Russell Gordon, spokesperson for 1st Special Forces Command.

"The use of symbols and patches de-

## The image came from the 20th Special Forces Group stationed in Birmingham, Ala.

picting historic images of hate is not tolerated and a clear violation of our values," he added.

The SS-Totenkopfverbände, known as the Death's Head Formations, has emerged as one of the most common and popular symbols utilized by neo-Nazis. The Anti-Defamation League noted that "it is this particular image of a skull and crossbones that is considered a hate symbol, not any image of a skull and crossbones." HW

## Biden: Israel 'Has Not Done Enough' to Protect Aid Workers or Civilians in Gaza

By Ron Kampeas

WASHINGTON (JTA) - President Joe Biden said he was "outraged and heartbroken" by an Israeli strike that killed seven hunger relief workers and said Israel was not doing enough to protect aid workers and other civilians, in his sharpest official rebuke of Israel so far in the Gaza war.

Biden's statement late last Tuesday came as Israel scrambled to deal with the fallout of the killing last Monday of seven workers with World Central Kitchen. Israel has acknowledged responsibility for the strike, has launched an investigation and has already made changes to how it coordinates with aid agencies.

Israel made the changes and apologies before Biden released his statement, but the president nonetheless did not hold back in criticizing the Israeli government and army.

"This is not a stand-alone incident," the statement said, referring to the nearly 200 employees of humanitarian agencies who have been killed in Gaza since Hamas launched the war with an attack on Israel on Oct. 7.

"This conflict has been one of the worst in recent memory in terms of how many aid workers have been killed," Biden said. "This is a major reason why distributing humanitarian aid in Gaza has been so difficult - because Israel has not done enough to protect aid workers trying to deliver desperately needed help to civilians. Incidents like yesterday's simply should not happen. Israel has also not done enough to protect civilians."

In informal exchanges with reporters, Biden criticized Israel's conduct of the war, at one point saying its bombing was "over the top." But the anguish and anger he expressed [last] Tuesday was notable because it came in a formal statement.

Biden has backed Israel from the outset of the war, when Hamas terrorists massacred more than 1,200 people and abducted more than 250. But more recently, he has openly criticized Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's direction of the war, particularly his plans to launch a massive operation in Rafah, the city on the Gaza-Egypt border where more than 1 million Palestinians have taken refuge, many at Israel's behest.

Netanyahu says four Hamas battalions remain in Rafah and that the war will not be over until the terrorist group is dismantled.

The Biden administration has pressed Israel to facilitate the entry of humanitarian assistance into the Gaza Strip. Israel has blamed the obstruction of assistance on Hamas.

More than 32,000 Palestinians have been killed since Israel launched counterstrikes on Oct. 8, including what Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry says are hundreds of women and children. Israel has said that about a third are combatants. HW

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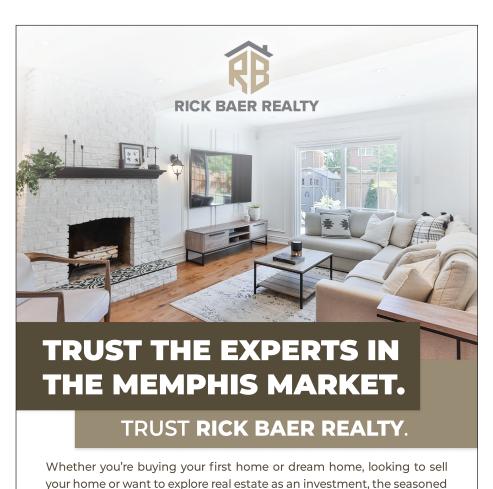
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## As Part of Product Rebrand, Manischewitz Reaches Out to Non-Jewish Consumers





New products and branding from Manischewitz. Credit: Courtesy.

The 136-year-old company wants to make kosher akin to Indian, Chinese or Mexican food with "Matzah Ball Mondays" joining "Taco Tuesdays."

(JNS) – Manischewitz, a longtime staple name in kosher homes and on the shelves of stores that carry kosher items, has changed its product designs, a plan three years in the making. It comes in time for the 2024 Passover season, which begins at sundown on April 22 and culminates after nightfall on April 30.

Boxes and cans with the new look feature bright colors and banners. A matzah-ball mix shows two cartoon characters carrying a hot bowl of soup; the not-so-subtle look is of figures carrying a particular food item and reaching out to their audience. The feeling is of a Yiddish kitsch.

In fact, there will be merchandise featuring "Yiddishisms" like "Manischewitz, soup with chutzpah," "Bubby knows best but we are a close second" and "I'm cooking my tuchus off," according to Kayco, the parent company

of Manischewitz.

Shani Seidman, chief marketing officer for Kayco, said in an article in the business section of "The Washington Post," "We have authentically Jewish food, and we feel like there's a lot of opportunity to invite everyone to come and explore the kosher aisle."

She said kosher foods "should be a culinary destination" along the lines of "Taco Tuesdays" (anyone for "Matzah Ball Mondays?"). She envisioned the potential consumer "who doesn't necessarily need to only buy foods that they're used to."

Seidman said the company was "inspired by the inclusivity seen in brands with other cuisines" and aspired "to become the emblematic gateway to Jewish culture, one delicious product at a time."

Manischewitz has operated for 136 years and is a separate company from Manischewitz Wines. **HW** 

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# Thirsty for Jewish History? Beth Sholom's 'Slivovitz: Passover, Jews & Booze' on April 14 at 1 P.M. is for You



Dr. Daniel Unowsky

For many people, the word "Slivovitz" conjures memories of Zeydes enjoying a l'chaim with men of their generation. For younger generations, taking a timid sip of the clear plum brandy, which burned their tongue and left them gasping for air, was a rite of passage.

Yet Slivovitz holds a special place in the hearts of Central and Eastern European Jews, whose ancestors adopted the fiery spirit of their host countries. Not only did Jews drink it; they began to distill it.

Now, the history of Jews, distilling, and the tradition of serving Slivovitz at Passover will be revealed when Beth Sholom's Lifelong Jewish Learning Committee hosts "Slivovitz: Passover, Jews & Booze" on Sunday afternoon, April 14 at 1 p.m.



Dr. Harald Binder

The lecture will feature two distinguished historians. Dr. Daniel Unowsky, professor of History and department chair at the University of Memphis, will discuss the history of Jews and distilling in Eastern Europe, then Slivovitz specifically. He will be followed by Dr. Harald Binder, who will speak via Zoom from Europe. Binder is also a philanthropist. He is the founder and president of the Center for Urban History as well as the Jam Factory Art Center, housed in a former Jewish-owned distillery in Lviv, Ukraine.

The lecture will take place at Beth Sholom and is open to the public. If all of this history works up a thirst, the program will end with a Slivovitz tasting. L'chaim! HW



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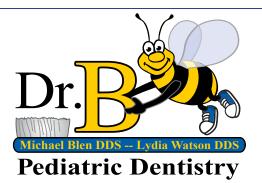
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## Connecting the Dots: The Power of Aggregation

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

To have less stress and more confidence about the future, taking the time to review account statements is helpful. But it can be even more meaningful to have a single place where you can see the total picture of all of your assets and liabilities – and how it may fluctuate over time. Building a comprehensive account summary or net worth statement can make it easier to connect the dots. As more dots are connected, you get a more meaningful picture and see a clearer, more actionable path.

As individuals build wealth, it becomes more challenging to keep track of one's overall financial picture. There will likely be household cash accounts, investment accounts, retirement plans, real estate, loans, and a number of credit cards. Executives may have stock options and other equity-based benefits that vest over time, and deferred compensation plans. Business owners often have multiple entities related to their core business, along with real estate holdings connected to the business. You may have private investments as well.

So gathering financial information and documents from different sources can become a bit of a chore.

#### How do successful people do this? Don't get overly complicated. Build something that works for you. Remember that the goal is to see the big picture, not to focus on the microscopic details.

Let technology do some of the work for you. Many credit cards offer very useful spending summaries. And increasingly, financial institutions are offering account aggregation tools that make it easier to see all your accounts, even at various institutions, in one place. After you take a little bit of time to set this up, you don't need to wait for a monthly statement or quarterly review to get a broader view of your finances. Values are updated daily, so you can get a current picture any time it's convenient for you to go online or check in on mobile.

Work with an experienced professional. An investment plan and net worth statement can form a "foundation built from facts" that may enable really good (if not always easy) conversations about spending, values, choices, and things to look forward to.

#### If I feel pretty sure that I am doing okay, why do all this extra work?

One reason is that having good metrics appears to be a hallmark of good performance. For example: successful business owners or executives can quickly tell you the key metrics that they watch to know how their business is doing. Athletes measure their training (and their rest) so that they will know whether they are progressing toward performance goals.

Another reason is, there is a payoff. We generally have more confidence when we know how we're doing. Uncertainty, on the other hand, is likely to increase anxiety and stress.

Building a net worth statement is not an end in itself. But developing this positive habit can lead to lifelong benefits by providing a starting point for meaningful conversations about what we want our money to accomplish.

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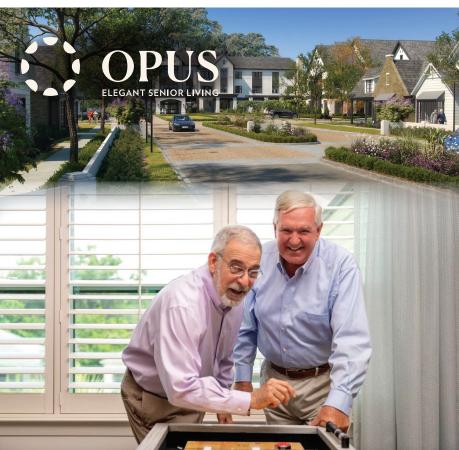
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# Rare Limestone Box from Second Temple Era Uncovered in Jerusalem

(JNS) – A rare multi-compartment stone container dating back around 2,000 years has been revealed to the public for the first time at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

The box, carved from soft limestone, measures 30 x 30 cm (about 12 x 12 inches) and is divided into nine equalsized interior compartments. The box was discovered in a destruction layer inside an ancient store dated to the end of the Second Temple period that once stood alongside the Pilgrimage Road in the City of David. The sides of the box are blackened, indicating that it was burned, perhaps during events of the Great Jewish Revolt, which ultimately led to the destruction of Jerusalem.

Researchers assume that the box was used for commercial purposes such as displaying premeasured goods.

"During the excavations of the Pilgrimage Road, where the box was discovered, many objects have been found [giving] testament to the flourishing commercial activity that took place alongside the road during the Second Temple period," explained Yuval Baruch and Ari Levy, excavation directors on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority.

"During the excavations we have uncovered ceramic and glass vessels, production and cooking facilities, various measuring tools, stone weights and coins. Together, these objects suggest that the road was connected to commercial activities such as a lively urban market. The Pilgrimage Road connecting the Pool of Siloam to the Temple Mount was the main thoroughfare of the city 2,000 years ago. It seems that the newly discovered box was related to this commercial activity," they added.

The economic and commercial systems of Second Temple Jerusalem were similar to those in other large cities in the Roman world and boasted large markets featuring local and imported goods, some even exotic. As a temple city and pilgrimage center, ancient Jerusalem's markets likely had specialized items, uncommon in other areas.

Daily life and trade in Second Temple Jerusalem must have been conducted with strict adherence to Jewish purity laws. Evidence of this can be seen by a number of distinct archaeological finds such as thousands of limestone vessel fragments discovered in excavations throughout the ancient city and its surroundings. The widespread use of stone vessels can be explained by Jewish law, which designates that stone, unlike made clay or metal, cannot become impure. Therefore, it is possible that stone vessels were re-used for long periods.

"It seems that the multi-compartment stone box from the City of David was related to the unique Jerusalem economy conducted in the shadow of the Temple, maintaining strict observance and in accordance with purity laws. Therefore, we can consider this box a distinctly Jerusalem find," said Levy and Baruch.

Pieces of a similar box were discovered about 50 years ago by the archaeologist Nachman Avigad during excavations in the Jewish Quarter. Avigad humorously called the object a "nuts and seeds bowl," a name which has stuck. All similar boxes have been discovered in Jerusalem, mostly in the City of David; the newly discovered box is the only complete example. **HW** 

#### **OBITUARIES**

#### Roland Ira Oser

Roland Ira Oser, 88, passed away on March 28, 2024. Roland was born on February 4, 1936, in Memphis, Tenn.

He was a lifelong member of Baron Hirsch Congregation. He managed the family business including Oser's Dry Good store for most of his life.

He was an avid fan of everything Memphis. He was loved by his family and many close friends, as well as anyone he met.

Roland is survived by his daughter, Lainie, and his pride and joy – his two grandsons, Hayden and Zachary. He was preceded in death by his wife of 55 years, Delores, his son, Marshal (survived by his wife, Gayle), sister Irma Sacharin (Jon) and his parents, Marquell and Florence Oser.

He was laid to rest at Baron Hirsch Cemetery on March 29, 2024. Donations may be made in his memory to Baron Hirsch Congregation. **HW** 

DEADLINES FOR STORIES AND ADS WEDNESDAY AT 5 P.M.

## Israel Opens 'Prehistoric Garden of Eden' to Public



The Ubeidiya site is accessible and open to the public. Credit: Emil Aladjem/Israel Antiquities Authority

(JNS) – A new Israeli national park in the Jordan Valley was officially opened to the public last Thursday morning, with government officials hailing its 1.6-million-year-old archeological site as a "prehistoric Garden of Eden."

Ubeidiya National Park, which is located near Kibbutz Beit Zera, south of the Sea of Galilee, and was first discovered in 1959, contains 30 geologic layers with evidence of ancient human activity, researchers say.

Last Thursday's festive opening ceremony was held in the presence of Jordan Valley Regional Council Head Idan Greenbaum, Israel Antiquities Authority Director Eli Escusido, Israel Nature and Parks Authority Director Raya Shourky and Lake Kinneret Authority Chairman Moti Dotan.

"Every year, the Israel Antiquities Authority develops tens of archaeological sites, making them accessible to the public. But Ubeidiya is unique: This is a prehistoric site of inestimable scientific importance for researching the beginnings of the human race," said Escusido.

He noted that previous attempts to develop the site were unsuccessful due to "the lack of appropriate partners to manage and maintain it."

Ubeidiya contains geologic layers with evidence of human activity dating back some 1.6 million years. Archaeologists have found traces at the site indicating how conditions on Earth were between 1-2 million years ago.

Shourky noted that the site's importance spans from prehistoric times to modern Zionist history.

"First, 'Ubeidiya's prehistoric site represents man's entry into the Middle East 1.5 million years ago. Secondly, adjacent Tel Ubeidiya represents early Israel, based on an inscription dating to the Egyptian Pharaoh Merneptah. And finally, Moshav Menahemia represents the beginning of the Zionist movement – established here in 1901 right in this very district, and heralding Zionism flourishing throughout this region," Shourky explained.

"These three sites tell the story and provide the complete picture of life in this region throughout the course of history until our own times," added the Nature and Parks Authority head.

The Authority declared Ubeidiya a national park in 2022. At the same time, the site was incorporated into a national project to revive the greater Southern Jordan River Reserve, led by the Lake Kinneret Authority and the Jordan Valley Regional Council.

Government organizations combined forces in recent months to open the park to the general public. Access roads were paved, as well as a circular pedestrian route with explanatory signs. The site is currently in the first of three site development stages. In the next stage, a visitors' center will be opened in the original field labor. **HW** 

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## I Married Centerpiece Sal



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

Ted Roberts

Ever since I've been married, I've been afflicted with an obsession about centerpieces. (Later, more about this linkage of centerpieces and marriage.) Around the table, the other bar mitzvah guests are cutting into their well-done rib steaks and aesthetically analyzing a weird cacophony of white and black and green and red in the middle of the table. Oh well. Thank G-D it is so bushy that it protects me from the dentist opposite me. My tablemate is conducting a seminar on root canals. Diners all over the room are hiding behind the centerpieces. I can tell he's gonna hand out business cards at any minute – probably decorated with a full color photo of a diseased mouth. (That oughta go great with the dessert.)

Ah, finally I figure out the thing in the middle of the table. It's a large size 12 athletic shoe holding a cluster of flowers. "Beautiful," exults my wife (more about her fetish later). "It's a damn SHOE! On the table." I exclaim – much too loud, since the family who invented this concept of sneakers on tables is only 10 feet away. "Gorgeous," repeats my wife. She knows centerpieces like Kraft knows mustard and mayo. She researches the Talmud for details of the

floral arrangement at the Jacob/Rachel wedding or at Esther's feast for Ahaservos.

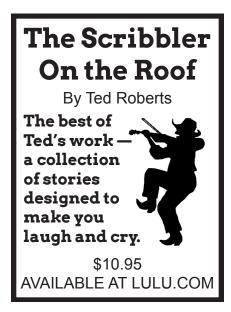
I didn't grow up in this kind of elegance. My mother, a product of the "old school," believed that kitchen tables should be surrounded by eaters – edged with silverware and plates full of food. And maybe at the Shabbos meal, a daisy in a bud vase – not a botanical garden.

See, unlike myself, the wife understands that all "events" must have a pile of something at table center. And a matching theme. The theme of this bar mitzvah is athletics – specifically basketball. So, how can you beat flowers stuffed in sneakers? Well, if basketball is the theme, I'm thinking let's see how many of these olive pits I can dunk in the dentist's champagne glass four feet away.

Why basketball? Since it's a bar mitzvah, why not Judaism, Chumash, Haftorah-oriented Centerpiece? Maybe a Torah scroll or a great picture of Amos who composed the child's Haftorah, or a tablet with those 10 rules... I could suggest 50 more symbols. But nobody asked me - they asked the 13-year-old athlete, honoree, decorator. So, they got a used tennis shoe. I've seen 'em all from footwear to guitars wrapped in honeysuckle vines. The simplest, most useful one I ever saw was a huge bowl of popcorn - artistic - and practical for guests who were allergic to the chicken gizzard main course. I once saw a swan molded out of chopped liver floating in a bowl of chicken soup. Like the popcorn - designed for double duty - serving both beauty and the stomach's need for fulfillment.

I've always had trouble with the theme-centerpiece, bar mitzvah linkage. I teach bar/bat mitzvah, and I like compatible themes. What's the theme of a wedding? Obviously love. Centerpiece? Edna St. Vincent Millay's book of love poems or maybe a stack of diapers. What's the theme of the synagogue fund raiser social? Money. Centerpiece? A wad of cash, a stack of stock certificates. Those creations in the middle of the table should reflect the core of the ceremony.

So, why am I talking to a deranged dentist through a tennis shoe crammed with flowers? I'll tell you why. Because it's a bar/bat mitzvah and when it comes to bar mitzvahs and the decorations, anything goes. Like I say, when it comes to centerpieces, I am no novice. Did I not marry "Centerpiece Sal" (a creative kindova gal) who uncomfortably twitches if salt, pepper, ketchup, and mustard occupy the center of the table? For 30 years she has gussied up tables for kiddushes, weddings, bar mitzvahs, and brisses. "Simcha Sal" has filled every room in our home with the remnants of a hundred weddings. Normal people have knick knacks; we have a palm tree with plastic coconuts that say "Cohen Wedding, 82." Working at the dining room table, I reach for a thesaurus and find I've picked up a cardboard Moses plodding up Mt. Sinai - "Goldberg Bat Mitzvah 1975" it says. But usually, she leans to Torah scrolls planted amidst a garden of flowers. I like to remind her of my allergic bar mitzvah student who sneezed his way through his Haftorah and was so moved by his own speech (and her flowers) that tears soaked his



five-page exegesis of Genesis 20. Her imagination knows no bounds, Once, for a close friend's bat mitzvah, she did a miniature Garden of Eden. She was crushed when I banned the snake. And who can forget her Bathsheba decoration? Why not just holding hands?

Of course, given my wife's passion, she can't neglect our own dinner table, which usually has a floral theme. I hate flowers in the middle of the table since it's really hard to use lilies to prop up the Sports Section. A nice ketchup bottle is perfect. "Much too simple," says Centerpiece Sal. But by now, I know how to play the game. "Look how nicely it matches the meatloaf," I say, thereby getting in two blows. First, matching, which is huge in her circles, and secondly, pointing out in ambiguous language (which I can later retract) that she has undercooked the meatloaf again!!

The syndicated humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the roof, has appeared in newspapers around the U.S., on National Public Radio, and numerous websites. **HW** 

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# **ISRAEL INSIGHTS**A Trembling Government

#### By Howard Weisband

Once again it is being written, examined, and pondered that the current Netanyahu coalition and Government is in danger of collapsing in the near future. First it was its overly aggressive approach to judicial reform, then the horrific, barbaric attack by Hamas on October 7 caused by intelligence, operational, and oversight failures, and now the prolonged war on three fronts, particularly that in Gaza.

Relations with the Biden Administration have been called into question, international demands for more food and humanitarian aid in Gaza have become divisive, and internal political wrangling between factions, most recently between Netanyahu and Ganz themselves, have been the cause for speculation regarding the stability of the Government.

The latest scenario winding throughout the local press and the international media that predicts a possible Government collapse is the need for, even a demand for a substantial draft of Haredi yeshiva students. In part this represents a continuation of internal political and societal arguments of a historical nature. However, the issue has become distinctly more critical today.

The Israeli army, the IDF, requires significantly more manpower. What's

happened? The failures of October 7 have resulted in renewed border security requirement. The realization that the "conceptzia" of a largely "technologically sealed border" has been overcome by surveillance and counter technology, meaning that more troops will be necessary to secure Israel's borders.

Including October 7, Israel has lost more than 600 soldiers who have already fallen in the ongoing war, and countless more to injuries.

The IDF has increased the time that both current soldiers and reservists will serve in uniform. This factor has increased the divide in the society between those who feel the commitment to serve in the army and those who do not serve.

Aliyah, or immigration from the west is minimal, at best an uptick, even with rampant renewed antisemitism abroad. There is no foreseen upsurge like that which was experienced in the 1990s from the former Soviet Union.

All told, to repeat, the IDF requires significantly more manpower. Recommended reading is an excellent analysis by Herb Keinon, "Israel's post-October 7 reality: The urgent need for ultra-Orthodox conscription," in the "Jerusalem Post," March 27. More background can be found in a

July 11, 2023, paper by the Israel Policy Forum titled "The Heredi Exemption."

The Haredi exemption was first introduced by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion in 1948 as a way to allow young men to continue full time Torah study without conscription, and thus bring Haredi parties into his coalition. The number of exemptions at that time was a few hundred.

Keinon reports that according to the IDF "some 66,000 haredim aged 21-26 were exempted from conscription this year on the grounds of being yeshiva students."

Thus, in short, his "urgent need for ultra-Orthodox conscription."

On legal and political levels, the Supreme Court, the Attorney General, the Knesset, the political parties, and the Government are all intensely involved in finding an equitable solution. The Haredi parties demand some form of the status quo, while the center right and center left parties are fighting for substantive change. Netanyahu is trying to engineer a compromise to hold his coalition, his Government, and his own political life together. Gallant and Gantz both have threatened to leave the Government if a new law is enacted without broad support.

A brief, important background note about the Hebrew term Haredi, which today is most often "translated" as ultra-Orthodox in political and religious parlance. However, early usage of the term can be found in the Book of Isaiah, chapter 65, verses 2 and 5. In his book "Hasidic Relics, Cultural Encounters," author Levi Cooper informs us (page 112) that: "The biblical term haredi connotes trembling and awe-inspired fear.... as a quest to perform the Almighty's will."

The Government is currently trembling at a critical moment in Israel's history. Let us hope that our leaders are in a quest to construct solutions with an intent and a result to ultimately fulfill the will of the Almighty.

This is a very dynamic process. We will follow up.

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

## Quite a Megillah!



Nadav Weiss shows Bornblum students how he writes the Megillah.

## By Daniel R. Weiss, Ed.D.

When Bornblum Jewish Community School's Eighth Grade class of 2023 decided to donate a Megillah case to Bornblum, they were unaware that it would be filled by a Megillah written by Nadav Weiss, my oldest son. In fact, the whole Megillah (the Gantza Megillah if you will) turned into a Weiss family project.

As Head of School at Bornblum, I had the pleasure of working with our eighth grade students to pick their class gift, a long-standing tradition at Bornblum where the eighth grade class purchases a meaningful gift for the school in honor of their graduation. I was especially proud that my son, Dotan, was part of the class that presented this beautiful Megillah case to the school at their graduation this past May.

Meanwhile, over the course of the 2022-2023 school year, Nadav had been working on learning Safrut, Hebrew calligraphy used to write sacred texts. At his Yeshiva, Migdal HaTorah in Modiin, Nadav learned the basics of Safrut from Bornblum alumni, Tzvi Joffree. Nadav spent the year writing his own Megillah and together we talked about how cool it would be for him to write one that could be used at Bornblum.

When Nadav came home this past summer, each night, with quill in hand, he spent hours working on the Megillah. The artistic method he used was deliberate and precise. Nadav had hoped to finish the Megillah over the summer but found himself a column shy of finishing. We decided it would be extra special for



Daniel R. Weiss presents the Bornblum Megillah at Kabbalat Shabbat.

him to come to Bornblum, before returning to Israel, to show our students how to write a Megillah and write a line with them watching, allowing them to be a part of the process.

Nadav spent time explaining the process of preparing the parchment, the quill, the ink, and how to put crowns on the letters. Students asked questions and stood by as Nadav wrote the first line of the Megillah (his process is to start at the final column and work backwards).

Finally, after nearly 80 hours of work, Nadav completed the Megillah this year while back in Modiin learning again at Migdal HaTorah. Together with Tzvi, Nadav has been perfecting his craft and learning how to become a certified Sofer. Since completing Megillat Esther, Nadav has begun to write his very own Megillat Rut.

This past week, when my middle son, Yaron, a Bornblum alumnus (class of 2020), and my wife, Jessica, were in Israel, Nadav passed Bornblum's new Megillah to Yaron, who transported it back from Israel to give to Bornblum's students. The Megillah was presented at our community Kabbalat Shabbat on March 15.

As Head of School and more importantly, as a parent, I take great pride in the role that each of my sons played in bringing this Megillah to Bornblum. Dotan and his classmates demonstrated their appreciation to Bornblum and their dedication to Hiddur Mitzvah (beautifying a commandment) by purchasing a beautiful Megillah case and helping to fund the supplies needed for Nadav to write the scroll. Yaron took great care and pride in making the connection between Naday and Bornblum, and by safely transporting the Megillah back to Memphis for our students. And of course, Naday, who moved to Memphis in nineth grade and never had the opportunity to attend Bornblum, embraced the opportunity to use his talents to inspire Bornblum students and write a meticulously crafted, kosher Megillat Esther. HW

## 'The Murder of Jews Does Not Matter,' Israeli Envoy Says of UN Human Rights Council Resolution



Meirav Eilon Shahar, Israeli ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, talks with reporters on April 5, 2024 outside the U.N. Human Rights Council. Credit: Nathan Chicheportiche/Israel in Geneva.

(JNS) – After the U.N. Human Rights Council adopted a resolution on "Human rights situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice," Israel's envoy to the United Nations in Geneva denounced what she said was that body's 105th anti-Israel resolution.

"This council spoke loud and clear: To the overwhelming majority of its members, Israelis do not matter. The murder of Jews does not matter. The hostages do not matter. The rape of Israeli women does not matter," Meirav Eilon Shahar told reporters on Friday. "Where is the accountability for the Israeli victims of Palestinian terrorism?"

"All that matters to this council and many of its members is condemning Israel, singling out the only Jewish state, and protecting Hamas, the Palestinian Authority and all those who seek to destroy our country," the ambassador added. "This resolution is a stain on the Human Rights Council and on the United Nations as a whole."

The Israeli envoy announced that she would skip the rest of the session.

"I can no longer sit in the room of this so-called Human Rights Council that cannot even bring itself to mention Hamas or its brutal terrorist attacks on Oct. 7," she said. "It cannot even condemn the brutal murder of over 1,200 of my people; the kidnapping of over 240 individuals, including infants; the rape, mutilations and sexual abuse of Israeli women, girls and men."

"'Me too unless you're a Jew' is the overwhelming message from the council today," she said.

"This council has long abandoned reason. It has long abandoned the human rights of Israelis and Jews," she added. "Today's vote was one of the darkest days in the history of this council, and the history of the U.N."

In response to a question from a reporter, the ambassador noted that Israel appears 59 times in the resolution, while Hamas does not come up once.

The World Jewish Congress denounced "the four one-sided, anti-Israel resolutions" that "are rampant with inflammatory language and one-sided The new anti-Israel statement is the U.N. council's 105th, according to Meirav Eilon Shahar, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

narratives," which the Human Rights Council adopted.

"The failure to acknowledge Hamas as the perpetrator of the Oct. 7 terrorist attacks is a moral stain on the council and undermines Israel's right to self-defense," stated Leon Saltiel, the congress's representative to the United Nations in Geneva.

"The World Jewish Congress wishes to thank Argentina, Bulgaria, Germany, Malawi, Paraguay and the United States for opposing this subversion of truth by voting 'No' on the resolution filed under item 2," Saltiel added. "The other three texts are adopted under the council's discredited agenda item 7, the only item against a particular country, Israel." HW

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# No Changes in Instructions to Civilians Amid Iranian Threat



Off-duty female soldiers at the Mahane Yehuda Market in Jerusalem, March 8, 2024. Credit: Chaim Goldberg/Flash90.

(JNS) – There are no changes to current civilian guidelines issued by the Israel Defense Forces Home Front Command, the military said last Thursday amid mounting fears of an Iranian retaliatory attack that could target large population centers and critical infrastructure in the Jewish state.

In a post on X, Israeli military spokesman Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari emphasized to the public that "there is no need to buy generators, store food and withdraw money from ATMs.

"As we have done until today, we will

immediately update on any change, in an official and orderly manner," he added.

Last Monday, seven members of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, including its leader in Syria and Lebanon, were killed in an attack in Damascus that targeted a building adjacent to the Iranian Embassy.

Israel has not officially taken responsibility for the attack, but four officials told "The New York Times" that Jerusalem ordered the strike.

Last Thursday, Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei threatened

Israel in Hebrew, tweeting, "With God's help, we will make the Zionists repent of their crime of aggression against the Iranian consulate in Damascus."

Senior sources in the Iranian regime told "Reuters" that the Islamic Republic would give a "serious response" to the raid, though suggested that Tehran would avoid direct conflict with Israel and the United States.

According to Israeli assessments reported by Channel 12, Iran could attempt to strike Israel through one of its terror proxies – Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen or militia forces in Syria.

IDF Intelligence head Maj. Gen. Aharon Haliva stated at an army ceremony last Thursday that "it is not certain that the worst is behind us," warning his subordinate officers that Israel is to face "complex days."

#### 'A multi-front situational assessment'

Fears are exacerbated by a convergence of events set to take place over the next 72 hours, Channel 14 said, noting that Muslims worldwide will this weekend mark the last Friday of Ramadan, Laylat Al-Qadr ("Night of Power") and Iran's annual Quds Day ("Jerusalem Day").

In a statement last Wednesday, Israel's National Cyber Directorate warned of an increased risk of hacking attacks related to Quds Day, including but not limited to "website defacement, distributed denial-of-service [DDoS] attacks and dissemination of false information."

The military took the unusual step of canceling weekend leave for combat soldiers. "The IDF is at war, and the deployment of forces is under continuous assessment," it said last Thursday.

The notice came after the army last Wednesday decided to increase manpower and call up reserve soldiers to the IDF Aerial Defense Array.

"We have strengthened alertness in combat units, bolstered defense systems, and we have planes prepared for defense and ready for attack," Hagari told reporters last Thursday night. He said troops are ready on "all of the borders" and are prepared "for a variety of scenarios."

Hagari also confirmed that the military was behind the widely reported GPS disruptions, a defensive measure meant to proactively confuse enemy aerial attacks targeting Israeli territory. The IDF has urged Israelis to manually set their location on the Home Front Command application to continue receiving emergency alerts for their area.

Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant held a "multi-front situational assessment" with senior officials from the defense and military establishment, the Defense Ministry announced last Thursday night. In attendance were IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi, Israel Security Agency (Shin Bet) head Ronen Bar, Mossad director David Barnea, Defense Ministry Director General Eyal Zamir and other top officials. HW



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