PAGE 1 | MAY 23, 2024 THE HEBREW WATCHMAN | hebrewwatchman.com

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Hebrew Watchman

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Federation Lions of Judah Commemorate Year of Challenges and Impact



Lions of Judah co-chairs and Spring reception committee welcome nine new Lions.

Every spring, Memphis Jewish Federation Lions of Judah gather to reflect on achievements and welcome new members. In typical fashion, this year's event was held on a warm spring evening at one of Federation's grantee organizations, Bornblum Jewish Community School. An increased campaign was announced, nine women were welcomed as new members, and plans for the fall were shared. But not so typical was the fact that interspersed with celebrations of achievement, event attendees were reminded of the rise in antisemitism, the hostages still captive in Gaza, Israel at war, and the protests happening across our college campuses.

"As we share this evening together let's continue to pray for the return of the hostages, peace, and an end to antisemitism and hate," was the opening delivered by Kimberlee Strome, Lion of Judah Co-Chair. "It is clear from the impact our Memphis Lions of Judah have made during these difficult times, that when challenged, we are a united force. As we navigate these unchartered waters, let's find joy and meaning in being together."

Memphis Lions of Judah have grown to 150 members, with each member representing family gifts to Federation's Annual Community Campaign of \$5,000 or more. With 18,000 Lions of



Alla Olswanger-Lubin congratulates Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland award nominee Eileen Baer Posner.

Judah nationally, Memphis has been a participant in this unique national women's philanthropy recognition program since 1985. It is a powerful group of women representing every age group and denomination. As stated so beautifully by Lion of Judah Co-Chair Cindy Finestone, this distinguished group of women are always ready to "answer the call."

"This year, our Lions of Judah answered the call to attend the rally in Washington to demand the release of hostages; answered the call to serve on agency boards and committees; answered the call to help those less fortunate and cook meals for clients served

by Church Health; answered the call to increase their annual campaign gifts *and* make a second gift in support of Israel and the critical needs on the ground," Cindy stated.

Nine Memphis women were welcomed as new Lions of Judah: Lauren Cohn, Deena Davidovics, Sheril Greenstein, Denise Kerlan, Eve Lazarov, Brooke Lubin, Judy Ringel, Emily Steinberg, and Keri Unowsky. Additionally, nine women announced increases in their campaign gifts.

An important focus of Memphis Lions of Judah has been on estate planning and

(See Lions Page 2)

Journey of Solidarity: a Transformative Mission Trip to Israel



The Baron Hirsch group had an opportunity to make a barbecue for IDF soldiers.

By Akiva Levine

In April, the Baron Hirsch synagogue gave Jewish teens in the Memphis community the opportunity to embark on a solidarity mission trip to Israel. It was a jam-packed five-day trip with meaningful and uplifting sights, speakers, and discussions. The trip would not have been possible without the generosity of Andrew and Jan Groveman and was beautifully led by Baron Hirsch youth

directors Eitan and Dina Selter, and Rabbi Lichter. I was fortunate to go on the trip, with nine others from the CY-HSB and GMSG. The trip allowed us to connect to Am Yisrael on a deeper level and let us integrate into an entity bigger than ourselves. It allowed us to truly relate to the events and experiences of October 7th and understand the state of Israel as it is today.

Wednesday morning, we arrived. We headed to a high school in Shoham, Israel, to meet with high-school students. We discussed with them their experience of October 7th and the war and found that each of them, in some way, was directly affected by the events. For instance, a teacher we met was connected to a hostage through her husband's cousin. Everyone in Israel is interconnected.

While there as well, it felt incredible that we connected with Jewish teens living in Israel. Our next visit was to the rehab center of Tel Hashomer, or Sheba Hospital. We met with the head psychologist and two wounded soldiers who bravely shared their stories. Hearing from such courageous individuals, made us wonder how much they have

(See Mission Page 3)



Lions...

(Continued From Page 1)



Family members honoring Suzanne Lazarov, Federation's newest Forever Lion of Judah.

legacy giving. Legacy Chair Marlene Gerson announced that 30 Memphis Lions of Judah plan to leave meaningful after-lifetime gifts to Memphis Jewish Federation. She shared a personal message that she had written to her family as part of a new program - Lion Behind the Pin – and encouraged everyone to do the same. "Please find the time to write a legacy letter. One day your children and all generations that follow will understand your love of family, your Jewish community, and your commitment to help Jews everywhere through your philanthropy." Marlene also recognized two Lions who recently made plans to endow their gifts - Jan Groveman and Andie Uiberall.

A candle-lighting ceremony was held to remember and honor 13 women as "Forever Lions of Judah" for establishing endowments in support of Memphis Jewish Federation every year: Marilyn Belz, Bernice Cooper, Evelyn Graber, Mimi Grossman, Barbara Jacobs, Dale Kelman, Suzanne Lazarov, Annette Lichterman, Sylvia Marks, Ronna Newburger, Bailie Perlman, Mary Shainberg, and Hedi Ward. Family and friends came forward to light a candle and honor the memory of these special

A beautiful tribute to Federation's newest Forever Lion of Judah, Suzanne Lazarov (of blessed memory), was made by her daughters and granddaughters, who reflected that the most important things to her were "family and community."

A highlight of the meeting was Alla

Olswanger-Lubin's announcement of this year's Kipnis Wilson Friedland Award winner - Eileen Baer Posner! With this national program, each awardee is chosen by her community and then honored at the International Lion of Judah Conference, being held in January 2025 in Atlanta. Winners embody the qualities of a strong woman philanthropist, leader, and role model, all qualities of Eileen. Eileen was presented with flowers and a beautiful tzedakah box. Her name will be added to a plaque that proudly hangs in the Federation's offic-

In closing the meeting, emotions ran high in response to beautiful and meaningful words from Margo Fogelman about her recent participation in Federation's Emergency Mission to Israel. She shared experiences of the people she met and the impact of bearing witness to the atrocities of October 7. "I stand with Israel and will always stand with Israel," she expressed.

But it was her final message that gave the event attendees hope for the future - a description of a tattoo etched onto the arm of released hostage Mia Shem, a young woman from Shoham held for 50+ days in Gaza. The tattoo reads "We will dance again" and it was this message, these words of hope, that everyone took away from this special evening.

With "Od Yavo Sholom Aleinu" playing loudly through the sound system, all 80 participants joined hands and danced; living out the hope of Mia Shem that we will indeed dance again. HW

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Havdalah, Sat. May 25, 2024 / 17 lyar, 5784 8:48 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Behar

Student Assignment at Georgia Private School: Hitler as 'Solution Seeker'

(JNS) – At the private Mount Vernon School in Atlanta, the administration apologized after eighth-graders received the challenge of assessing Adolf Hitler's leadership skills.

The teacher's assignment asked, "According to the Mount Vernon Mindset rubric, how would you rate Adolf Hitler as a 'solution seeker'?" The potential answers then included "Lacks Evidence," "Approaching Expectations," "Meets Expectations" and "Exceeds Expectations."

Another question challenged students to rate Hitler's ethics.

"We do not condone positive labels

for Adolf Hitler," said Kristy Lundstrom, Mount Vernon's head of schools, in a statement last Wednesday. "The intent of the assignment was an exploration of World War II designed to boost student knowledge of factual events and understand the manipulation of fear leveraged by Adolf Hitler in connection to the Treaty of Versailles."

Lundstrom said that "when leadership was made aware of how the assignment was written, it was removed from the curriculum.'

Founded in 1972, the school was formerly known as Mount Vernon Presbyterian School. HW



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CORRECTION

In the Federation Yom HaShoah article on page 1 of the May 16, 2024, edition, this line was left out of the text.

"Rabbi Cantor David Julian led the audience in "El Maleh Rachamim," a prayer of remembrance for lives lost in the Holocaust."





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Mission...

(Continued From Page 1)

sacrificed by devoting themselves to Am Yisrael. After learning about a biofeedback device used to treat soldiers with PTSD, we went to the "Hostages and Missing Families Forum" head-quarters, followed by Hostage Square, in Tel Aviv. Hearing from former hostages and seeing the booths educating about the massacres in the Kibbutzim, will resonate with us for a lifetime.

We started off the next morning with the lighter activity of volunteering at "Pantry Packers." We had the chance to help pack food such as coffee beans and lentils for poor families in Israel. Not only was it an engaging activity, but we knew that our food would provide meals for thousands of individuals in need. The same day, we traveled to Southern Israel to the city of Sderot and the sight of the Nova Festival massacre. Sderot is a border town less than 0.6 miles from Gaza and was affected immensely by October 7th. In Sderot, we witnessed the destroyed police station that Hamas ambushed and walked around the city. Rabbi Katz, a former educator in the school. accompanied us in Sderot and shared his stories of October 7th and the war.

The sight of the Nova Festival Massacre was the most poignant sight to witness. Amidst the verdant landscape of the festival were memorials and pictures of each of the murdered and the captive victims of Hamas. Being there was surreal. Being 6,000 miles away hearing about the Nova massacre on television is one thing, but to stand on the very blood-stained ground of our Jewish brothers was captivating. We gathered

together to sing Acheinu and recite Tehillim (other Israelis came to join us); when, in the middle of Acheinu, a shot of artillery fired.

It immediately startled us, yet we soon realized it was the fire of the Israeli Defense Forces, fighting our nation's brave battle in Gaza, just 3 miles away. We left the sight with a black and white mark on our hearts – a mark of sorrow yet one of hope.

Arriving back in Jerusalem, we met with Tamar Schwarzbard, a woman who works for the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In our meeting with her, she told us how she is in charge of the Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok accounts of Israel, and it is her duty, with these accounts, to educate the world on emerging Israeli actions and events in the war. Without these accounts, she explained, individuals would be ill-informed and the world would blame Israel for events during this war. She additionally gave us advice on how to use Social Media safely and productively.

The next day, Erev-Shabbos, we visited Har Herzl, a military cemetery honoring IDF soldiers who sacrificed themselves for our nation. We heard an inspiring story by a friend of Eitan and Dina Selter, who recounted the life of their brother who fell in battle. Afterwards, we visited the grave of Rose Lubin who courageously defended the State of Israel. As we traversed the grounds before leaving, we witnessed how new the graves were and were told that each day, Har Herzl became more and more full. However, it's not just the graves' markings that fill

the space but the prayers and appreciation of Am Yisrael.

We finished the day with an activity at Machane Yehuda Market and Ben Yehuda Street. Upon returning to our hotel, we served ice cream to the children of families living in our hotel. These families were displaced from their homes in Shlomi, a town near Lebanon in the north, due to the war and the threat of Hezbollah. Before Shabbos, we also gave them toys that we brought from Memphis for the children.

The Shabbos during our trip was a time to reflect on our experiences. Friday night, we went to Nitzanim, a shul in Bacca, and ate at Eitan and Dina Selter's friends for dinner. On Shabbos day, after davening at a nearby shul, we had the entire afternoon to rest. Right before Seudah Shlishit, we heard from Israelis who personally were affected by the war and who were soon going to American colleges to spread awareness of Israel and Jewish identity. Two individuals whom we spoke to for instance, were a survivor of the Nova Music Festival and a paramedic who treated soldiers. After Shabbat ended, we had a meaningful visit to the Kotel and met with our Memphis friends in Yeshiva and the former Torah Mitzion family, the Wendes.

Sunday was our last day on the mission, but arguably the most impactful. After an early wake-up and breakfast, we headed to Charish, Israel, a city Northeast of Netanya to meet with Hadas Lowenstern. Hadas is a widow with six kids who lost her husband in the war.

She spoke to us about herself and her husband, and her immense emunah, or faith in Hashem, even as she was a ba'al teshuva, in her humble manner. After leaving her home, we were amazed at how righteous and faithful she is. "Baruch Hashem that my husband was the only person to die in his tank," she told us, conveying her connection to Am Yisrael and her appreciation of other soldiers that she had never met. We were also amazed at how she is raising six children on her own.

Following this, we went to Netanya to go strawberry picking for a local farmer. We were happy to help with the farmer's parnasa and felt that we made an impact. For our last experience of the trip, we had a great opportunity to make a barbecue for IDF soldiers. We arrived at the army base in the West Bank and helped grill the burgers and set up dinner. During the meal, the soldiers spoke about their service in the reserves and the infantry unit they are in; they told us how many left their families behind to fight on the Gazan border, and now they are defending the West Bank while they are based there.

With all of these incredible experiences, from our interactions with IDF soldiers to our visit to Nova, we know that what we experienced will stay with us forever. My group and I are so fortunate we had this opportunity and thank the Selters and Rabbi Lichter for accompanying us. Thank you as well to Andrew and Jan Groveman for making this trip possible. It is thanks to you that we truly feel a connection to the Jewish nation. **HW**

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French Police Shoot and Kill Man Attempting to Torch Synagogue in Rouen

(JNS) – A man armed with a knife and metal bar was shot and killed by police after attempting to set fire to a synagogue in Rouen, France, last Friday morning – an industrial city on the Seine River perhaps best known for its cathedral painted so often by Impressionist Claude Monet.

The incident drew the attention of law enforcement after smoke was seen rising from the building, allegedly from an item meant to ignite it.

It caused some damage to the synagogue, though no one was hurt, according to news reports. Red handprints related to the cause of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip were found on the walls surrounding the shul, where worshippers will head this weekend for Shabbat services.

Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin posted on X that the armed individual was "neutralized."

"In Rouen, national police officers neutralized early this morning an armed individual clearly wanting to set fire to the city's synagogue. I congratulate them for their reactivity and their courage," he said.

France has seen a spate of antisemitic incidents since Oct. 7 and the Hamas terrorist attacks in southern Israel. Even before then, its Jewish population was on alert throughout the country, particularly in Paris.

A study by the American Jewish Committee released in May showed that younger French people are more likely to hold antisemitic beliefs, and French Jews under 25 years old are more likely to be the target of antisemitic incidents. **HW**

PAGE 4 | MAY 23, 2024 THE HEBREW WATCHMAN | hebrewwatchman.com

JCRS College Aid Program Extends College Application Deadline

Jewish Children's Regional Service (JCRS) is now accepting applications for financial aid for the 2024- 2025 academic year. Jewish students seeking assistance should apply at https://jcrs.org/services/college-aid/. In response to the delay in FAFSA, the deadline for priority review is June 15, 2024.

This current school year, JCRS awarded the largest amount of college aid since the inception of the program. In total, JCRS approved over \$400,000 in grants and no-interest loans to 109 Jewish college students from its seven-state service region that includes Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee and Texas-.A JCRS college aid recipient states, "I am so grateful to JCRS for providing me with the resources and scholarship that allowed me to succeed while in college. Through JCRS's help I was able to alleviate the stress of finances in college and beyond while I currently attend Physician Assistant school to pursue a graduate degree."

"Our two-fold goal for this academic year is to fund more Jewish students who need financial assistance with even larger awards. We are proud to fill this important role within our Jewish communities. We could not do what we do without the support of our generous donors," says

JCRS Executive Director Mark Rubin.

Since 1946, JCRS has provided college or vocational training scholarships based on financial need. Many of the Jewish college students who receive aid from JCRS are from low-income families, but middle-class families are encouraged to apply. Over half of JCRS's college scholarships are awarded to families whose household income is between \$50,000 and \$150,000.

If you have questions about the JCRS College Aid Program, contact: Lisa Tabb at Lisa@jcrs.org.

For more information on JCRS and how you can support its unique and important work with vulnerable Jewish youth, call (800)729-5277, or visit our website, www.jcrs.org.

ABOUT JCRS: Established in 1855 as an orphanage in New Orleans, JCRS is currently the oldest existing Jewish children's social service organization in the US, as well as the only regional Jewish child welfare agency in the country. JCRS provides needs-based scholarships for summer camp experiences, college aid and assistance to children with special needs. Additional outreach programs include the Oscar J. Tolmas Hanukkah Gift Program and the PJ Library program for Jewish children ages 12 and under. HW

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Join the North American Jewish Choral Festival

Each summer, the North American Jewish Choral Festival (NAJCF) brings together hundreds of singers from across the country to enjoy five magical days of a life-changing musical experience, share their love of Jewish choral music and feel a sense of pride and belonging. The 35th annual event will be held from July 14-18, 2024, in Westchester County, New York.

"As we continue to face challenging times, NAJCF gives us something to sing about," says Matthew Lazar, Festival founder and director. "It serves as a creative outlet to express solidarity and support, and to celebrate Jewish heritage."

Festival participants of all ages and singing levels enjoy a variety of uplifting Jewish musical experiences, led by renowned conductors creating a melodic tapestry of contemporary, folk, classical and traditional music. The program includes daily community sings; workshops and seminars on a wide range of topics; and evening concerts featuring guest choirs and outstanding performers.

Master teacher and internationally acclaimed choral conductor Eleanor Epstein will give a special presentation "To Sing is to Belong: The Power of the Communal Voice" in tribute to noted composer Alice Parker, with whom she studied extensively. She will discuss how the evocative music of the Jewish people is a powerful force for building understanding and connection.

Josh Shron, cantor, Israeli music ex-

pert and radio personality, will explore the healing power of music in an excerpt from his moving and inspiring program "A Musical Hug From Israel." His presentation is designed to help English speakers connect to the range of emotions felt in Israel and around the world, through a look at the meaningful songs released after October 7.

Each year, the Festival presents the Hallel V'Zimrah Award to honor individuals who have made important contributions to the world of Jewish music. This year's honoree is Jack Mendelson, world-renowned cantor and international performer, who is being recognized for his artistry as well as his devotion to the choral music of the synagogue.

The unique experience of the North American Jewish Choral Festival is summed up by Barry Brian of California, "The Festival represents my five favorite days of the year. I connect to my Jewish heritage through music and form an emotional bond with hundreds of people to create glorious sound."

Program fees for the 5-day Jewish Choral Festival including kosher meals are \$1295. Young people up to age 35 can participate for a price of \$900 including hotel accommodation. The North American Jewish Choral Festival is a program of the Zamir Choral Foundation. To register for this year's Festival, go to North American Jewish Choral Festival - Zamir (zamirchoralfoundation.org)

For more information, visi zamirchoralfoundation.org. **HW**

Citing Safety Concerns, Nashville Hotel Cancels Pro-Israel Summit



Downtown Nashville. Credit: paulbr75/Pixabay.

By Larry Brook, Southern Jewish Life

A Nashville hotel has pulled out of hosting a pro-Israel event, stating that it had received "threats."

The Israel Summit – scheduled for May 20 to May 22 at the Sonesta Nashville Airport Hotel – is being coordinated by HaYovel, a Christian organization that facilitates volunteer service work in Israel, and the Israel Guys, a pro-Israel media initiative that grew out of HaYovel.

The inaugural event, which is expected to draw about 500 people, is billed as a "gathering of pro-Israel supporters who unconditionally support Israel's right to be sovereign in the entirety of the land of Israel, including Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the Gaza Strip."

As many as 400 participants have already booked rooms at the hotel, which has now canceled their reservations.

Speakers for the event include Knesset member Ohad Tal; former U.S. Congresswoman Michelle Bachmann; journalist and author Caroline Glick; International spokesperson for the Jewish community of Hebron Yishai Fleisher; National Religious Broadcasters President Troy Miller; the Land of Israel Network's Rabbis Jeremy Gimpel and Ari Abramowitz; Israel365 CEO Rabbi Tuly Weisz; and many others.

The summit also includes a concert featuring Israeli musician Yair Levi, a veteran of the Israeli Defense Forces' Shayetet 13 unit, Israel's equivalent to the Navy SEALs. The concert was scheduled for May 21 at 6:30 p.m.

Israel365, a co-sponsor of the event, said the hotel consulted with local police who "were concerned that the hotel, their guests, local businesses and attendees to the Israel Summit would be in physical danger due to the threatening nature of the calls and messages they received."

Palestine Hurra, a Nashville-based organization that is "dedicated to the total liberation of Palestine, from the river to the sea," and dismantling "the occupying Zionist apartheid state," posted an "urgent call to action" for its members to call the hotel and tell them "we will not allow genocidal racists to hold a conference in our city."

The call stated that "they choose to come here and celebrate the death of civilians and recruit new Zionists. Call relentlessly until this event is shut down!"

On May 10, the hotel contacted HaYovel and used the "force majeure" clause of the contract to cancel the event. The contract had been signed on Jan. 31.

On May 13, First Liberty Institute sent a letter to the hotel, urging it to fulfill its commitment. First Liberty Institute is the nation's largest law firm dedicated exclusively to defending and restoring religious liberty for all Americans.

"It is un-American – and illegal – to cancel a gathering due to religious beliefs and quite frankly it is morally wrong," said Hiram Sasser, executive general counsel at First Liberty Institute. "The Sonesta and others cannot surrender to terror in violation of federal and Tennessee law. If this hotel chain surrenders to pro-Hamas, terrorist beliefs, where does it stop? The hotel must make the choice of standing with American ideals or pro-Hamas terrorists. We hope the hotel will quickly reverse its decision."

In its letter to the hotel, the institute said the threats the hotel reported "presumably ... were antisemitic and anti-Israel in nature and in line with the hateful rhetoric.

'Pretext for religious discrimination'

Sasser stated that the force majeure clause is only if it were illegal or impossible to use the facilities, not for "unsubstantiated safety threats," and that the cancellation "bears the unmistakable and distinctly unpleasant odor of pretext for religious discrimination."

Miller, who will be leading an NRB fact-finding mission to Israel just after the summit, said he was disappointed to hear about the news, "where I and fellow Christian and Jewish leaders planned to express our support and solidarity with Israel"

He said, "It is a sad day for our country when a peaceful, educational and informative gathering can be sabotaged by activists and abruptly canceled by the host venue on short notice. Whether this action sprung from corporate hostility or intimidation by hecklers, the result is that HaYovel has been denied a public accommodation due to its religious beliefs."

Miller urged the hotel to honor its contractual commitment.

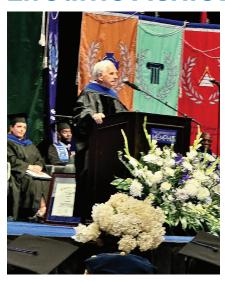
In February, the NRB held its annual conference at the Gaylord Opryland Hotel with numerous pro-Israel events. One of them was the launch of Keep God's Land, one of the co-sponsors of the summit. The group promotes Israel's maintaining sovereignty in the territories. Luke Hilton, the marketing director for the Israel Guys, told "The Washington Times" that the summit will still go on – at the Sonesta or another location.

The pro-Israel Christian group Eagles' Wings started an "Urgent Petition to Uphold Rule of Law," to guarantee the right of freedom of peaceful assembly.

The petition is directed to Tennessee Sen. Marsha Blackburn and Bill Hagerty, and Rep. Andy Ogles, all Republicans; Gov. Bill Lee; and Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell.

This story originally appeared in "Southern Jewish Life." **HW**

Avron Fogelman Receives 2 Honorary Doctorates and a Lifetime Achievement Award



Avron Fogelman addressing students during University of Memphis commencement.

Avron B. Fogelman of Memphis and Boca Raton, Florida, has received an honorary doctorate of human letters from the University of Memphis and from Florida Atlantic University, and the highest alumni award from Tulane University, the McGlinchey Lifetime Achievement Award. These awards are in recognition of the outstanding contributions Mr. Fogelman has made to each of these educational institutions.

At the ceremony where these honors were bestowed, the Presidents of Tulane, University of Memphis, and Florida Atlantic University all lauded Mr. Fogelman's extraordinary business acumen, career achievements, services to each community he has been associated with, and his contribution to the betterment of society as well as advancing the goals, education mission, and programs of these outstanding universities.

Avron Fogelman is a life-long Memphian and is the founder and chairman of the board of Fogelman Properties, one of the country's largest privately-owned real estate companies.

Mr. Fogelman has received many civic awards, including Junior Achievement's Master of Free Enterprises Award, Big Brothers/Big Sisters "Man of the Year" Award, Philanthropist of the Year, Civitan's "Citizen of the Year" Award, and the NAACP Distinguished

Mr. Fogelman served as president of the Memphis Area Chamber of Commerce, chairman of the Shelby County (Tennessee) Planning Commission, and first chairman of the Memphis and Shelby County Sports Authority. He has also been chairman of the National Civil Rights Museum Awards banquet and the NAACP Freedom Awards Gala and

In 1983, Mr. Fogelman became co-owner of the Kansas City Royals baseball team, a team that went on to win the 1985 World Series. Avron Fogelman served on the Board of Directors of the American League of Major League Baseball, and in 1986 the players of Major League Baseball voted him the "Most Admired Owner" in the highly respected "Baseball Confidential" publication. In 1999, Mr. Fogelman was elected to the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, as well as being inducted into the Memphis Sports Hall of Fame in 2019.

In 1986, the Tennessee Legislature, with the concurrence of the U.S. Department of Transportation, honored Mr. Fogelman by naming the eastern leg of I-240 the "Avron B. Fogelman Express-

He has been awarded keys to the cities of New Orleans, Louisiana; Kansas City, Missouri; Ft. Myers, Florida; Memphis, Tennessee; and Shelby County, Tennessee. HW

of Israel rate cuts, with the next interest rate decision due on May 27.

without spreading to other fronts. **HW**

Israel's Economy Rebounds in First

(JNS) - Israel's economy sharply rebounded in the first quarter of 2024 after taking a hit late last year from the war that Hamas started on Oct. 7.

Quarter

According to preliminary estimates from the Central Bureau of Statistics published last Thursday, gross domestic product (GDP) grew at an annualized rate of 14.1% in the first three months of the year, after having contracted at an annualized 21.7% in the previous quarter (revised from a previous estimate of

The rebound was led by a large increase in private spending and investment, especially in the residential sector.

"The relatively sharp increase in the gross domestic product in the first quarter of 2024 reflects a significant increase in private consumption data and investment in fixed assets after large decreases in the fourth quarter of 2023, but still the private consumption data and investment in fixed assets are affected by the security situation and have not returned to the level before the outbreak of the war," the CBS statement said.

The 14.1% growth rate was close to the Reuters consensus projection of 15.3%.

Israel's annual inflation rate rose to 2.8% in April compared to 2.7% in March, data published last Wednesday showed, above expectations of 2.5% although within the government's annual target of 1-3%.

According to Reuters, the economic rebound plus the slightly higher inflation rate for April could push back Bank Service Award.

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way."

Bat Mitzvah



Eliana Ray Sukhodolsky

Eliana Sukhodolsky, the daughter of Jessica and Alex Sukhodolsky, will become a bat mitzvah on Saturday, May 25 at Baron Hirsch Synagogue. She will deliver a d'var Torah to the congregation following services.

Eliana is in sixth grade at Margolin Hebrew Academy. She enjoys creative writing, singing and dancing. She is a member of the Competitive Dance Company at Visions Academy of Performing Arts. Eliana also attends Camp Moshava Wild Rose and is active in Jr. NCSY. She is a good friend and is always willing to lend a helping hand, especially for causes that are close to her heart. Earlier this year, Eliana spearheaded a friendship bracelet project to raise money for the Memphis Jewish Federation Emergency Israel Campaign.

Eliana is a sixth-generation Memphian and sixth-generation member of Baron Hirsch Congregation.

She is the granddaughter of Shelby and Lee Baum and Natalie and Jacob Sukhodolsky and the great-granddaughter of Joan and Phillip Baum, Ted Winestone A"H, and Tillaya Lusky A"H. **HW**

Have a Simcha? share with The Hebrew Watchman readers 901.763.2215 info@hebrewwatchman.com





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PAGE 6 | MAY 23, 2024 THE HEBREW WATCHMAN | hebrewwatchman.com

5 Israeli Soldiers Killed in Friendly Fire Incident in Gaza, Adding to Toll of Accidental Deaths



Wounded Israeli soldiers arrive from the Gaza Strip to Shaare Zedek Medical Center in Jerusalem, May 15, 2024. Credit: Chaim Goldberg/Flash90

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – Five Israeli paratroopers were killed and seven were wounded in a northern Gaza city last Wednesday after another Israeli unit shelled the building where they were gathered, mistaking them for enemy fighters.

The incident is especially notable both

because it occurred in an area thought to be captured from Hamas months ago, and because the deaths add to the number of Israeli troops killed by friendly fire. According to a "Haaretz" investigation published earlier this month, roughly 10% of the 278 Israeli soldiers killed in Gaza have died after being hit by their own army.

Another roughly 10% have died after accidents and equipment malfunctions. It is unclear how the friendly fire rate in Gaza compares to past conflicts, both involving Israel and around the world. But a landmark 1995 study of U.S. war deaths over time put the average friendly fire rate at 15%. "Haaretz" reported that commanders wrote about their concerns regarding mistakenly targeting fellow Israelis in incident reports that the newspaper obtained.

The casualties also occurred as the defense establishment in Israel has grown more openly critical of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's leadership over the war in Gaza. Defense Minister Yoav Gallant demanded in a televised speech last Wednesday that Netanyahu devise a plan for Gaza's postwar governance because he said the absence of a plan would lead either to Israeli military rule in the territory or to Hamas maintaining control.

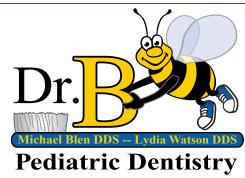
"As long as Hamas maintains civil rule in the Gaza Strip, it is likely to rehabilitate its strength, and the IDF will have to return to fight in places it has already fought, so we need to destroy Hamas' ability to rule," Gallant said. "The key to that is military action and

the creation of an alternative ruling authority."

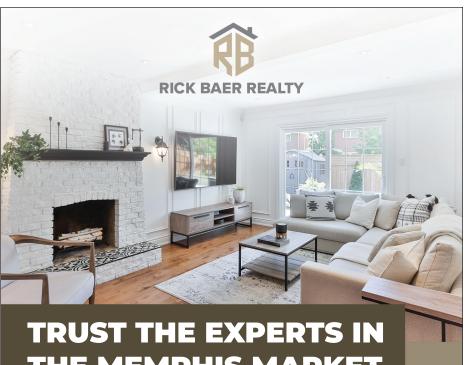
Gallant added that "indecision" would lead to "the erosion of military achievements, reduce pressure on Hamas and undermine chances to reach an outline to free the hostages" held by Hamas.

While people close to Netanyahu have presented plans for a "day after" in Gaza, Netanyahu has not elaborated on what a post-Hamas reality might look like in the territory. In a video posted to social media last Wednesday, Netanyahu doubled down on his opposition to the Palestinian Authority, which governs Palestinian population centers in the West Bank, running Gaza. He said Israel's focus should remain on defeating Hamas.

The soldiers killed and wounded last Wednesday were all from a unit for haredi Orthodox soldiers. Their deaths come as a bill meant to increase haredi enlistment is drawing opposition from haredi political parties and dividing lawmakers in Israel's parliament, in addition to splitting Israel's three-person war cabinet: This week, Netanyahu endorsed a 2022 plan from former Defense Minister Benny Gantz, but Gantz rejected that idea, saying the plan was no longer relevant given the war against Hamas. HW



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Chabad's Lag Ba'omer Family Fun Day BBQ with BMX Show for Memphis Jewish Community







BMX athletes will be performing at the Lag Ba'omer Family Fun Day.

Chabad will be having a community-wide Lag Ba'omer Family Fun Day on Sunday, May 26. Lag Ba'Omer, the 33rd day of the Omer Count – which this year corresponds to Sunday, May 26 – is a festive day on the Jewish calendar, traditionally celebrated with outings, cookouts, bonfires, and other joyous outdoor events all over the world.

"The Family Fun Day here in Memphis will have a delicious BBQ dinner with all the trimmings and will also have colorful snow cones, cotton candy, and much more," said Mrs. Rivky Klein co-director of Chabad of Tennessee. "In addition to the delicious food, there will

be an awesome BMX Freestyle Stunt Show by professional BMX athletes. There will also be inflatables, music and fun for all to enjoy."

The Family Fun Day will take place at The Chabad Center of Jewish Life at 2570 Kirby Parkway. The fun begins at 5 p.m. and costs only \$15 for adults and \$12 for children and includes all food and activities.

Reservations should be made by Thursday, May 23 by visiting www. JewishMemphis.com/BBQ or by calling Chabad at 901-754-0404.

"Come join us and bring your friends" Rivky concluded, "It will be lots of fun." **HW**

IDF Soldier Wounded in Terror Stabbing Near Nablus



The scene of a stabbing attack at the Yitzhar Junction, south of Nablus in Samaria, March 5, 2024. Source: Screenshot.

(JNS) – A terrorist stabbed an Israeli soldier last Thursday morning as he sat in his car at the Yitzhar Junction, close to Huwara and Nablus in Samaria.

The victim was evacuated in moderate condition to Beilinson Hospital in Petach Tikvah.

The assailant fled the scene on foot. Israeli forces launched a manhunt and set up roadblocks in the area, and a suspect was subsequently apprehended in the nearby Arab town of Awarta.

Overnight last Wednesday, a knife-wielding terrorist attempted to stab Border Police officers near the Shalem police station and Herod's Gate to Jerusalem's Old City.

Security camera footage showed a man being questioned by three police officers before drawing a knife and lunging at one of them.

In response, the guards shot and killed the assailant.

No officers were hurt in the attack. HW



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PAGE 8 | MAY 23, 2024 THE HEBREW WATCHMAN | hebrewwatchman.com

Individual Bonds vs. Bond Funds: What's the Difference?

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

Individual bonds and bond funds can both provide an income stream, but there are important differences. An individual bond can offer more certainty and stability than a fund, while a fund can offer diversification that might be difficult to obtain with individual bonds.

Coupon, maturity, and yield

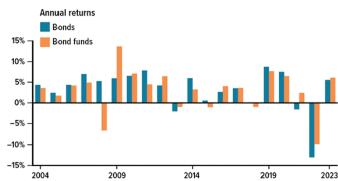
An individual bond has a coupon rate - the annual interest rate paid on the face value of the bond – and a maturity date, which is the date the principal is returned to the borrower. If you hold a bond to maturity, you will receive any interest payments due during the time you own it (typically paid quarterly or semi-annually) and the full principal at maturity, unless the bond issuer defaults. If you sell the bond on the secondary market before maturity, you will receive the market price, which may be higher or lower than the face value or the amount you paid, depending on market conditions.

By contrast, a bond fund does not have a coupon rate or a maturity date (with the exception of certain defined-maturity funds). A fund typically pays monthly distributions based on the bonds in the fund. The rate can change as bonds are replaced (due to maturity or sales), and as market conditions change. A fund also has fees and expenses, which reduce the interest paid, and fund managers can adjust to market conditions in various ways, depending on the fund's objective. Because there is no maturity date, you can hold the fund as long as the fund company remains in business. However, there is never a guarantee that you will receive your principal no matter how long you hold the shares. Fund shares, when sold, may be worth more or less than your original investment.

Yield is the expected return from a bond or bond fund, based on the interest rate and purchase price. If you buy a \$1,000 bond at face value with a coupon rate of 4%, the yield is 4%. But if you buy the same bond on the secondary market for \$800, the yield is 5%, because you receive interest based on the face value: 4% x \$1,000 face value = \$40 interest / \$800 purchase price = 5% yield. Bond fund yields are more complex, but the 30-day SEC yield (or standardized yield) offers a helpful comparison. This is typically calculated using the maximum share price on the last day of the month and projects annual net investment income assuming it remains the same as the previous 30 days.

Varied Performance

Individual bonds and bond funds have performed differently over the past 20 years. In part, this is because fund managers may respond to the market in different ways; for example, they might try to preserve yield over share price or vice versa. Note that the performance of individual bonds only applies to values on the secondary market, not to bonds held to maturity.



Source: London Stock Exchange Group, 2024, for the period 12/31/2003 to 12/31/2023. Bonds are represented by the Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond TR Index, and bond funds are represented by the Thomson US: All Gen Bond - MF Index. Expenses, fees, charges, and taxes are not considered. The performance of an unmanaged index is not indicative of the performance of any particular investment. Individuals cannot invest directly in an index. Rates of return will vary over time, particularly for long-term investments. Investments seeking higher rates of return involve a higher degree of risk. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Actual results will vary.

Interest rate sensitivity

Bonds and bond funds are sensitive to changes in interest rates. Generally, when rates rise, the market value of existing bonds and bond funds falls, because newly issued bonds pay higher interest rates. Conversely, when rates fall, the market value of existing bonds and bond funds rises. This only applies to market values and would not affect an individual bond held to maturity.

If you owned bond funds during the period that the Federal Reserve was aggressively raising interest rates, you may have been frustrated as you watched the value of your shares drop. Now that interest rates seem to have stabilized, share values are likely to

stabilize as well, and they may increase if rates begin to decrease. Bond funds typically replace underlying bonds as they mature, and new bonds added to funds over the last two years will generally pay higher interest rates, increasing the interest paid by the fund. Although it is impossible to predict future market direction, bond funds may be poised to offer solid returns if rates remain stable or begin to fall.

Diversification does not guarantee a profit or protect against investment loss. Funds are sold by prospectus. Please consider the investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses carefully before investing. The prospectus, which contains this and other information about the investment company, can be obtained from your financial professional. Be sure to read the prospectus carefully before deciding whether to invest.

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LA's Academy Museum Initially Excluded Hollywood's Jewish Origins. A New Exhibit on Jewish Film Pioneers Fixes That.



The new "Hollywoodland: Jewish Founders and the Making of a Movie Capital" exhibit at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles. Credit: Josh White, JWPictures/Academy Museum Foundation By Jacob Gurvis

LOS ANGELES (JTA) – Today's understanding of Hollywood – the glitz, the glam, the red carpets and paparazzi – are a far cry from the film industry's humble beginnings, when a group of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe laid the groundwork for what would become an epicenter of American and global culture.

Such is the story told by a new exhibition at the Academy Museum of Motion Pictures in Los Angeles, which [is scheduled to open Sunday, May 19]. "Hollywoodland: Jewish Founders and the Making of a Movie Capital" traces the history and legacy of early 20th century Jewish Hollywood pioneers like the Warner brothers, Louis B. Mayer, Adolph Zukor and others. It is the museum's first permanent exhibit.

The exhibit's debut comes two and a half years after the museum's opening, which sparked controversy among supporters and visitors for not including the industry's Jewish beginnings.

Jacqueline Stewart, the museum's director and president, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that community feedback helped the museum change its contents – and influenced its decision to

make the exhibit permanent.

"I really feel that we're able to present this exhibition now in a way that's better than it would have been if we had tried to tell the story when we first opened," Stewart said during a press preview. "Because we understand our audiences better."

Dara Jaffe, the exhibit's curator, said she held listening sessions and spoke to a number of rabbis and other members of the Jewish community both in Los Angeles and across the country to gather as much feedback as possible.

"I talked to every single person who reached out to me," Jaffe said. "Anyone who called, emailed, I wanted to hear from them. And also, most importantly, we wanted a lot of eyes on this. We didn't want anyone to be surprised by the content. We wanted people to know exactly what to expect, and to feel like their voices were heard."

Stewart also pointed to the exhibit's bilingual presentation – the displays all include English and Spanish – and its permanence as signals of the importance of the "Hollywoodland" story.

"That is providing a point of access to this story that we were not doing when the museum first opened," Stewart said, referring to the Spanish-language offerings. "It's from listening to a broad range of voices and coming to understand that we really need to be the place to tell this industry history. And this industry history is a story about Jewish immigrants and the world that they built in Los Angeles."

For both Jaffe and Stewart, the new exhibition is also personal: Jaffe is Jewish, as are Stewart's children.

"I have a lot of concerns about my kids, their safety, their sense of identity," Stewart said. "I've been really encouraged by the way that this exhibition has come together, because I think that there are so many young Jewish people who will get a sense of pride from it."

For Jaffe, highlighting the Jewish identity of each founder was an integral part of telling the story of Hollywood – particularly because of the influence of antisemitism on their careers.

"We're looking at the way that a dominant culture of antisemitism not only shaped the way these Jewish founders were drawn towards the industry, but the way they were treated even after they were atop this industry that they built," Jaffe said.

Jaffe, who had been working on the current iteration of the exhibit for more than two years, said she hopes it will serve as an educational resource, especially as antisemitism – including conspiracy theories about Jews running

Hollywood – persists today.

"The same kind of antisemitic rhetoric that was leveled at these original Jewish founders of Hollywood, it's still leveled at Jews in Hollywood today," Jaffe said. "So to us, we are thinking about this as a very important educational platform to dispel these antisemitic harmful stereotypes, to offer some clarity and accuracy about why the founding of Hollywood is a Jewish immigrant story."

The exhibit, housed on the third floor of the museum, contains three main sections. "Los Angeles: From Film Frontier to Industry Town, 1902-1929" features a digital topographical map of L.A. alongside a wall-length video screen depicting the city's landscape and its progression, highlighting key landmarks that contributed to the growth of the film industry – from Warner Brothers Studios to influential Jewish sites such as Wilshire Boulevard Temple.

The second component, titled "Studio Origins," is a long series of panels detailing the history of Hollywood's studio system, spotlighting the eight studios known as "the majors" and their Jewish founders. In addition to archival documents, images of early studio lots, movie posters and behind-the-scenes images from film sets, the displays mention each founder's Jewish background.

In the section for Paramount, which was founded by Adolph Zukor and Jes-

(See Museum Page 11)

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PAGE 10 | MAY 23, 2024 THE HEBREW WATCHMAN | hebrewwatchman.com

U.S. Campuses are Roiled by Unrest. How Have Israeli Colleges Filled with Arabs and Jews Managed to Stay Calm?



Academic and administrative staff at Tel Aviv University greeted students at the opening of the school year as part of an effort by the Jewish-Arab Staff Forum to promote goodwill on campus amid the war. Courtesy: Tel Aviv University

By Zev Stub

JERUSALEM – Student unrest over the Gaza war has turned U.S. college campuses into what some describe as war zones.

Students are taking over buildings, protesters are disrupting commencement ceremonies, and police have been summoned to employ force to dismantle protest encampments or, in some cases, quell violence between different factions.

Yet in Israel, where the actual war is unfolding, college campuses filled with Jews and Arabs have managed to stay relatively calm. This, despite the fact that many Jewish students are army reservists who took part in the combat in Gaza and many of the Arab students are Muslims with family in Gaza and the West Bank.

The quiet at Israeli universities isn't just happenstance or good fortune, insiders say, but the result of painstaking work over months to minimize possible conflict between Israeli Arabs and Jews on campus.

For example, at Tel Aviv University – Israel's largest institution of higher learning, with nearly 30,000 students, 14% of whom are Arab – a team of administrators implemented a broad action plan after Oct. 7 that touched on virtually all aspects of university life, including strengthening coexistence leadership programming, increasing Arabic-language signage on campus and developing a system for fielding complaints about students' comments on social media.

"We did everything to provide our students with a sense of normalcy," said Prof. Neta Ziv, Tel Aviv University's vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI). "Many students told us they just wanted to leave everything outside the university gates."

Much of the coexistence work on Israeli campuses has been funded and supported by American Jews, with UJA-Federation of New York playing a key role. Working in partnership with Gisha, a joint program by some 30 Israeli colleges and universities to advance DEI work in Israeli academia and developed by the Edmond de Rothschild Partnerships, UJA-Federation provided grants worth more than \$400,000 since the outbreak of war to help dozens of universities develop programs to minimize Jewish-Arab student conflict. These funds are part of the more than \$94 million in Israel emergency funding UJA-Federation has allocated to date.

"Immediately after Oct. 7, there was a great fear that college campuses in Israel, where Jews and Arabs regularly come into close contact, would become a dangerous flashpoint," said Itzik Shmuli, director general of UJA-Federation's Israel office.

"Emotions were extremely raw, and we envisioned tense scenes between Jewish students," Shmuli said. "A two-sentence exchange by a soldier triggered by hearing Arabic in the dormitory, or a teacher talking about martyrs in the classroom, had the potential to create an explosion on campus. There were fears that our learning environments could easily become unsafe."

The beginning of Israel's academic year was pushed back by more than two months in part because so many students had been called away to military reserve duty in the Israel Defense Forces. However, when the semester finally started on December 31, most of those fears didn't play out.

"Before the semester we were very worried," said Prof. Mona Khoury, vice president for diversity and strategy at Jerusalem's Hebrew University, which has 25,000 students spread over multiple campuses. "But we had virtually no conflicts between students."

Hebrew University received \$20,000 from UJA-Federation to develop campus leadership groups composed of Jewish and Arab students. A disciplinary committee tasked with dealing with problems had to meet on only three cases, each of which ended with people apologizing, according to Khoury.

"Throughout the country, there were actually a surprisingly small number of academic incidents that required disciplinary measures," Shmuli said. "This is in part due to educational frameworks that had been put into place to prepare for these situations."

DEI programming is a relatively new phenomenon on Israeli campuses and differs significantly from the American model for DEI. In Israel, DEI efforts focus mostly on bridging socioeconomic gaps between minority groups like Arabs, haredi Orthodox Jews, Ethiopian Israelis, LGBTQ+ students, and people with disabilities.

Even before the war, Gisha hosted an online forum where DEI leaders from Israeli universities met weekly to share experiences and discuss challenges.

"We already knew what was happening at each institution," said Yosepha Tabib-Calif, who as vice president for strategy and academic programs at Rothschild Partnerships oversees the Gisha program.

Projects funded by grants after Oct. 7 were divided into three main categories, according to Tabib-Calif. The first was developing infrastructure on campus – including staffing and departments – to develop, implement and enforce strategies for managing tense interactions.

The second was the creation of Jewish-Arab leadership programs where students could work together and train student ambassadors to address tensions. The third was training students and faculty through workshops, one-onone training and ongoing consultation with experts.

In the end, 16 academic institutions were awarded grants of between \$10,000 and \$36,000 each. Among them was a \$29,000 grant to Tel Aviv University.

Even before the semester started, the university was fielding a tsunami of complaints about student comments on social media, some of which tested Israeli laws against incitement or violated the school's code of conduct. Some 70% complained of Arabs expressing support for Hamas or the Oct. 7 massacre,

according to Ziv, and 30% were about Jews inciting violence against Arab students.

"One of the first issues that came up was freedom of speech," Ziv said. "How can we, as a university, make sure everyone can express themselves as freely as possible without threatening others' feelings of safety?"

After dozens of investigations, charges were brought against just three students. Others were summoned for meetings where administrators encouraged them to sympathize with how someone from the other side might feel – for example, if a classmate with a sister kidnapped in Gaza read an online student post sympathetic toward Hamas's attack.

"Through dozens of meetings like these, I hope we were able to help them understand that we are all part of a community that is made up Jews and Arabs, right-wingers and left-wingers, and everybody is grieving," Ziv said.

Tel Aviv University conducted hundreds of hours of workshops, consultations and meetings with more than 800 faculty members to prepare them for when issues arose and explain who to call for help. University administrators also met with Arab and Jewish student organizations to hear their concerns and ensure them the university was committed to their safety.

"But we explained to them that they also need to take responsibility to make sure their peers stay safe," Ziv noted. "If they want to feel at home, they need to treat others the same way."

When students arrived back on campus for the beginning of the semester, they were personally greeted by faculty members with chocolates and a welcome packet including information about safe speech and rules for campus coexistence.

There was also a refresher on rules about carrying weapons on campus, and students were told that political assemblies would not be allowed during the first three weeks of the semester to set a more peaceful tone. Signs were placed around university buildings in Hebrew and Arabic reminding students to act responsibly.

Throughout the semester that wrapped up in mid-March, Tel Aviv University experienced very few incidents. Ultimately, Ziv said, most students just want to study in peace and quiet.

This story was sponsored by and produced in partnership with UJA-Federation of New York, which cares for Jews everywhere and New Yorkers of all backgrounds, responds to crises close to home and far away, and shapes the Jewish future. This article was produced by JTA's native content team. **HW**

Gallant: Rafah Battle Will Continue with Reinforcements

(JNS) – Israel's military operation in Rafah in southernmost Gaza "will intensify" as additional forces join the campaign, Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said on Thursday during a visit to the headquarters of the IDF's 162nd Armored Division, aka the Steel Formation

After completing a situational assessment with commanders leading the charge in the last Hamas bastion, the minister touted the achievements since the ground offensive began on May 6.

"I am now in the Rafah area after meeting the head of the Southern Command [Maj. Gen. Yaron Finkelman] and the commanders of Division 162 [Brig. Gen. Itzik Cohen], Brigade 84, Brigade 401 and the Fire Brigade. All our troops are working in an extraordinary manner. Hundreds of [terrorist] targets have already been struck, and our forces are maneuvering in the area," Gallant said.

"This operation will continue as additional forces will enter [the area]. Several tunnels in the area have been destroyed by our troops and additional tunnels will be destroyed soon. This activity will intensify – Hamas is not an organization that can reorganize, it does not have reserve troops, it has no supply stocks and no ability to treat the terrorists that we target. The result is that we are wearing Hamas down."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and other members of his coalition slammed Gallant last Wednesday night after he demanded that the government commit to Palestinian control over the Gaza Strip after the war with Hamas ends

"I am not willing to exchange Hamastan for Fatahstan," Netanyahu said in a video statement, with the latter term referring to Palestinian Authority chief Mahmoud Abbas's ruling Fatah Party.

The premier reiterated that the Ramallah-based P.A. "supports terrorism, teaches terrorism and funds terrorism."

"The first condition for 'the day after' is to eliminate Hamas, with no excuses," he said, addressing criticism by Gallant and the Biden administration that Israel does not have an exit plan for Gaza.

Netanyahu's remarks came shortly after Gallant at a press conference urged the government to "make a decision and declare that Israel will not establish civilian control over the Gaza Strip, that Israel will not establish military governance in the Gaza Strip, and that a governing alternative to Hamas in the Gaza Strip will be promoted immediately.

"Since October, I have been raising this issue consistently in the Cabinet and have received no response. The end of the military campaign must come together with political action. The 'day after Hamas' will only be achieved with Palestinian entities taking control of Gaza, accompanied by international actors," the defense minister said. **HW**

Museum...

(Continued From Page 9)

se Lasky, the exhibit explains that "Zukor aimed to elevate the artistic status of movies to gain social respectability otherwise out of reach for a Jewish immigrant." The idea of assimilation – and of raising the profile of an initially low-brow industry – are anchors of the exhibit.

The Warner Bros. display highlights Harry and Jack Warner's "early stance against Nazism when polls and public discourse still conveyed this was an unpopular position in the United States."

In the Universal installment, there is a 1938 letter written by studio founder Carl Laemmle, in which he emphasizes his concern for European Jewry. Laemmle would help hundreds flee Nazi Germany.

The third component of the "Holly-woodland" exhibit is a 30-minute documentary, "From the Shtetl to the Studio: The Jewish Story of Hollywood," which traces the rise of the Jewish studio exec-

utives and their myriad impacts on the industry and on Los Angeles.

Narrated by TV host Ben Mankiewicz, the grandson of legendary screenwriter Herman Mankiewicz (the subject of the film "Mank"), the documentary follows the Hollywood pioneers from their humble beginnings as working-class immigrants through their steady rise to power, all while overcoming a deep-seated antisemitism that permeated both the United States and Los Angeles – from calls for boycotts and discriminatory real estate practices to antisemitic leaders like Henry Ford and Father Charles Coughlin.

The film also focuses on the studio founders' desire to fit in during a time when assimilating was crucial to success in America. Louis B. Mayer, for instance, the co-founder of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios, was born Lazar Meir, while fellow co-founder Samuel Goldwyn was born Szmuel Gelbfisz.

"The dream was to be assimilated and accepted as true Americans in their new country," the documentary says early on. "The fear was that a dominant culture of anti-immigration and antisemitism would tear away their progress, keeping them marginalized, vulnerable and powerless. For this group of Jewish immigrants, these twin motivations drove the creation of Hollywood and combined into a force that could redefine their lives, and ours."

The film also explores how, as the executives sought to depict their idealistic interpretations of "the American Dream" in their movies, that meant deferring to the cultural zeitgeist of the era, which oftentimes excluded or misrepresented women, people of color and members of the LGBT community. It also meant suppressing their own Jewish identities.

"This empire could be taken away at any moment by antisemitic forces that persistently questioned the Hollywood Jews' admittance to America," the documentary says. "If their Jewish identities became visible in their movies, they would suffer the consequences."

For Jaffe, while the events of the past several months – namely Hamas' Oct. 7 attack, the Israel-Hamas war and the reported global spike in antisemitism – didn't influence the content of the exhibit, she said the current climate does accentuate the need for accurate storytelling.

"Unfortunately, antisemitism has always been prevalent and remains so, so this story always remains relevant," Jaffe said. "There have been so many times throughout the last couple years where I wished that this exhibition was open so I could point to it and say, 'if you'd like to be educated on this topic, please come to the Academy Museum, we'll tell you exactly why.' And so I'm just glad that it's finally open." HW

Sail the Danube on AmaWaterways



By Debbie Rosenthal

Imagine stepping onto your own personal balcony while cruising on the Danube River, on board AmaWaterways' award-winning flagship, the innovative AmaMagna, to views of the magnificent Hungarian Parliament Building in Budapest, Hungary. This past November, I had the pleasure of making this dream a reality – sailing through grand capitals and charming villages of old-world Europe. AmaMagna's cruises on the Danube River highlight timeless cities such as Budapest, Bratislava and

Vienna, and offer a variety of included excursions and exclusive experiences that suit every kind of traveler, including multigenerational families that are all ages and activity levels.

Twice the width of traditional European river ships, AmaMagna offers the luxury of space with five bars, four unique restaurants and an expansive Zen Wellness Studio featuring innovative outdoor spin bikes, two massage rooms and a juice bar. Best of all, a majority of the ship's accommodations

are ultra-spacious suites where you will enjoy fresh air and breathtaking scenery. With plenty of daytime scenic sailing, you will be able to enjoy the extraordinary AmaMagna to its fullest – from al fresco dining to a game of pickleball on the top deck as you journey through the Danube's spectacular landscapes and breathtaking scenery.

Aboard the AmaMagna, we stopped in 1-2 towns each day of our 7-day journey where we had the opportunity to explore, learn and experience local culture. We began our journey in Budapest, set sail to Vienna, home to a treasure trove of Baroque splendors, including the grand Schönbrunn Palace, offering a glimpse into bygone grandeur. While touring the city we had the opportunity to trace the paths of the most renowned classical musicians and view the famed Opera House. We spent a day in Austria's stunning Wachau Valley where we indulged in an epicurean experience of Apricot brandy and chocolate tasting, we took a guided tour of Passau, the charming Bavarian city where the Ilz and Inn Rivers join the Danube River. At the end of our journey, we enjoyed Oktoberfest in Vilshofen, Germany, an intimate celebration of the

festival that occurs exclusively yearround just for AmaWaterways guests!

At every stop along our journey, AmaWaterways offered multiple activity options for every type of traveler from food and wine lovers to history buffs, as well as active guests who will enjoy taking in the fresh air while pedaling among the city's monuments, walking tours through vineyards, and active hikes to fortresses and gorgeous views of the Wachau Valley.

AmaWaterways also offers optional add-on Land Packages which include Budapest, Prague and Munich.

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Students Walk Out as Jerry Seinfeld, a Recent Israel Advocate, Delivers Duke Commencement Address

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – As Duke University's president introduced the commencement speaker, two cries rang out: first, loud boos, and then, a joyous chant of "Jerry! Jerry!"

Dozens of graduates, some carrying Palestinian flags, walked out of the ceremony to protest Jerry Seinfeld, who has been outspoken in his support for Israel since Oct. 7, the beginning of the war that has ignited anti-Israel protests on college campuses across the United States. With Seinfeld at his side, Duke President Vincent Price paused his introduction for nearly a minute for the commotion to settle down.

It was an example of the types of disruptions that have punctuated graduation ceremonies this spring amid the protest movement, which has caused some schools to cancel or revamp their commencements. Price resumed his comments quickly, and Seinfeld delivered his address as planned, to raucous applause. Still, the protest was detectable – and made more pointed because the students appeared to be protesting Seinfeld himself, not, as at other schools, their university.

"No room for celebration when your

school brings a Zionist, pro-genocide commencement speaker," one wrote on social media, according to a post shared widely and disparagingly by a pro-Israel

Seinfeld, who has never made politics a centerpiece of his celebrity, has emerged as an unexpected pro-Israel advocate in the wake of Oct. 7, when Hamas attacked Israel. Seinfeld visited Israel in December, visiting with families of hostages held in Gaza; the visit elicited a sharp backlash, including heckling by pro-Palestinian protesters when he attended a speech in New York City by Bari Weiss, the editor of "The Free Press" and a longtime crusader against antisemitism and anti-Zionism, in February.

When "GQ" magazine asked him last month why he chose to make the trip to Israel, Seinfeld answered, "Well, I'm Jewish." He also acknowledged the backlash, saying, "Every Jewish person I know was surprised by how hostile the reaction was."

But Seinfeld told "GQ" that he did not view himself as a crusader when it comes to Israel, as some celebrities have become over the last seven months. "I don't preach about it," he said. "I have my personal feelings about it that I discuss privately. It's not part of what I can do comedically, but my feelings are very strong."

Seinfeld did not mention Israel during his speech, and he mentioned his Jewish identity only when exhorting graduates not to be ashamed of the advantages they possess, including a Duke degree.

"Privilege is a word that has taken quite a beating. I would like to take a moment to defend it," he said, adding, "I say, Use your privilege. I grew up a Jewish boy from New York. That is a privilege – if you want to be a comedian."

But he did allude to a form of intolerance that some have pointed to as a driving force behind problems with contemporary universities.

"This is probably the biggest point I would like to make to you here today regarding humor. ... The slightly uncomfortable feeling of awkward humor is OK. It's not something you need to fix," Seinfeld said.

"I totally admire the ambitions of your generation to create a more just and inclusive society. I think it is also wonderful that you care so much about not hurting other people's feelings in the million and one ways we all do that every second of every day," he added. "It's lovely to want to fix those things but – all caps – but what I need to tell you as a comedian: Do not lose your sense of humor. You can have no idea at this point in your life, how much you're going to need it to get through."

Seinfeld's oldest child, daughter Sascha, graduated from Duke last year; his son, Julien, is an undergraduate at the school now.

Seinfeld received an honorary degree from the university, which says it enrolls about 800 Jewish undergraduates out of a total population of 6,600. (The school is home to both a thriving Jewish life center and a newly expanded Chabad as well as one of the only Jewish basketball coaches in the NCAA.)

Seinfeld's wife, Jessica Seinfeld, a vocal supporter of Israel on social media, wrote on Instagram that the boos had targeted the protesters, not her husband.

"Jerry's speech was amazing, and the grads and their parents gave him a standing ovation," she posted. "You can't beat this school. We are #forever Duke." HW

PAGE 12 | MAY 23, 2024 THE HEBREW WATCHMAN | hebrewwatchman.com

Toddler Video Superstar 'Ms. Rachel' Launches Fundraiser for Children in Conflict Zones Including Gaza, Dividing Jewish Moms



Ms. Rachel, the hit children's video educator, singer-songwriter, in a clip from one of her videos. Screenshot via YouTube

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – The children's YouTube sensation Ms. Rachel has ignited a controversy among Jewish and Israeli moms – and it's not about screen time.

Last Monday, Ms. Rachel – whose real name is Rachel Griffin Accurso and whose bright voice, overalls and pink headband are instantly recognizable to toddlers and their parents – announced that she was creating a fundraiser to benefit children in conflict areas, including Gaza.

"The idea is, I'll make videos for little ones, and all the money raised on my end will go to Save the Children's emergency fund, which will go to children living in conflict in Gaza, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ukraine," she said in the video announcement. (Griffin Accurso refers to children as "little ones.")

"Hopefully I can make little ones smile by giving them a personal video, and then the money will go to help more children living in unimaginable circumstances," she added. "Children should never experience the horrors of war."

So many people took Ms. Rachel up on her offer that she paused sales through the website Cameo, which allows celebrities to sell personalized videos, after selling 500 videos and raising \$50,000 within hours. "Didn't think I could love Ms Rachel more, but look at you taking a stand," one commenter wrote on TikTok, where Ms. Rachel has 4.3 million followers. (She has nearly 10 million followers on YouTube.)

But the announcement was less popular among some Jewish and Israeli fans who saw Ms. Rachel's advocacy for children in Gaza as taking sides in the

seven-month-old Israel-Hamas war.

"When I saw her fundraiser, it really triggered me," Moran Gold, a Jewish mother and multilingual speech therapist who teaches language and reading to young children, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

"I feel that it's lovely – and I want to emphasize this: I think it's lovely for an educator to try to bring light to children in Gaza or in Sudan or in Congo or in Ukraine – but I don't understand why it's a deliberate attempt by her and her team and Save the Children to never mention Israeli children," said Gold, who also posts educational videos on social media. "And that includes Arab children, Jewish children, Druze children, Christian children and all other children that live in Israel."

Save the Children is a nonprofit that aims to protect children around the world from violence and disease and improve their access to education. Its emergency fund supports children's needs in areas with active humanitarian crises, including war zones.

The group does not work in Israel, although its website points visitors to other charities that do. In the fall, it also issued multiple statements about the situation in Israel and Gaza, including one expressing concern about the status of child hostages.

Save the Children did not respond to JTA's request for comment, and Ms. Rachel declined to comment for this story.

Criticism of Ms. Rachel's fundraiser also flared on Instagram, where she has 2 million followers and where she disabled comments on the announcement post after a flurry of angry messages.

Now, anger about the fact that the entertainer is not raising money for Israeli children, too, can be seen in comments attached to other, unrelated posts on her account.

"What about Israeli children Ms Rachel," one reads. Another says, "What about the hostages?!!!! do they matter." A third reads, "What about children in Israel? How about the the [sic] children hostages??? You 'care' about the children except if they are from israel! Shame."

Hamas took dozens of children hostage when it attacked Israel on Oct. 7, and dozens of children were also among the 1,200 Israelis killed. Most child hostages were released during a temporary ceasefire in November, but two – Ariel and Kfir Bibas, 4 and 1 – remain in Gaza, among roughly 130 Israeli hostages, of which a significant number are understood to be dead. Within Israel, thousands of children are among the hundreds of thousands evacuated from their homes in the south and north because of the war.

Children living in Gaza, meanwhile, have experienced seven months of war that has required most people living in the enclave to leave their homes, some multiple times. United Nations statistics show that thousands have been killed. Children and their parents do not have reliable access to food, medical care and safe accommodations. The United Nations and humanitarian groups such as Save the Children are meeting some needs.

Ms. Rachel's fundraising for Save the Children, which she said she joined as an ambassador in September, is going toward blankets, food, and psychological support, according to language on Cameo.

The debate over Ms. Rachel's fundraiser carried over into private Jewish women's Facebook groups, where the discourse reflected a widening divide in the broader Jewish world. Some expressed concern that the fundraiser excludes mention of Israeli children, while others argued that aiding children in Gaza does not imply that one wants Hamas to prevail in its war with Israel.

"We're talking about children who don't have access to water, to hygiene and sanitation. They may be living outdoors in a refugee camp, they may not only be orphaned, [they may] have nobody – no adults looking after them," Hailey Zislis-Gaus, a public health spe-

cialist based in Scotland and the mother of a 9-month-old girl with whom she watches Ms. Rachel, told JTA.

"These are really, really dire circumstances and it doesn't take away from the pain and displacement and death and destruction that has happened in Israel," she said. "We can hold two things at once."

Zislis-Gaus, who said she was familiar with Save the Children from her past work in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, said she had learned about Ms. Rachel's fundraiser in a nearly 50,000-person Facebook group for Jewish women and had been discomfited by the response.

"I noted just initially that this sparked really serious outrage and there were really terrible things being said about her," she said. "But there were many people deeming her some kind of, like, 'Israel-hater' or 'Hamas apologist' or 'antisemitic.' Lots of terms being thrown around. Some people went as far as to encourage people to kind of essentially cyberbully her, which was quite shocking to me."

In a post following her initial announcement, Ms. Rachel seemed to allude to critical feedback when she mentioned child hostages.

"Children should never experience the horrors of war – nor be killed, injured or taken hostage," the post said. "These are grave violations of children's rights. Children have the right to clean water, food, medical care, a safe place to live and education. We need to get aid to children and their families. We need the hostages home safe. The violence has to end. Children have rights.

We should be ashamed of how children around the world are suffering when we could wrap each and everyone up in love."

For Gold, the allusion offered little comfort.

"Why is it that in the one post that you vaguely mentioned hostages, you don't say the word 'Israel,' as though it's like Voldemort from 'Harry Potter'?" she asked. She added that she felt that Ms. Rachel's approach was at odds with the values of her educational videos.

"When you're a teacher, if you have 25 students in your class, you're supposed to take an interest in all of them," Gold said. "You don't uplift a few children at the expense of others, even if you feel that their situation is more dire." **HW**

Netanyahu Submits Haredi Draft Bill



IDF soldiers from an ultra-Orthodox section of the Givati Infantry Brigade pray during a training exercise near Beit Shemesh, Sept. 27, 2017. Credit: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90.

By Troy Osher Fritzhand

(JNS) - Days before a High Court deadline on submitting a bill for ul-

tra-Orthodox Israelis to be drafted to the IDF, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanya-

hu has released the text.

Not changing anything, Netanyahu submitted the bill passed in a first reading by the previous Knesset and drafted by War Cabinet Minister Benny Gantz.

"To bridge the differences and bring about a broad consensus, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu decided to advance the conscription bill that passed the first reading in the previous Knesset (Amendment 26 to the Defense Service Law)," said a statement from the Prime Minister's Office.

"The bill was prepared by the defense establishment after thorough staff work and submitted by the then-Defense Minister Benny Gantz. ... The prime minister calls on all factions that supported the proposal in the previous Knesset to join the proposal."

The draft bill calls on setting targets for ultra-Orthodox conscription, capping at 35% of male students by 2036. Additionally, it allows for a roughly 85%-15% split between IDF service and

National Service for the ultra-Orthodox.

If the targets are not met, large fines will be placed on the yeshivahs that do not send their students.

The ultra-Orthodox parties have yet to chime in on the announcement, though the premier had consulted with them.

When the bill passed its first reading in the Knesset, United Torah Judaism Knesset member Moshe Gafni called it "a despicable and disgraceful proposal" and Shas chairman and Netanyahu confidante Aryeh Deri called it an "offensive law whose sole purpose is to harm the members of the yeshivah and to exclude the youth from their studies."

Commenting on the announcement by Netanyahu, Yisrael Beytenu head Avigdor Liberman said the circumstances have changed due to the war, therefore requiring "a mandatory conscription law for everyone. Every young man and woman aged 18 – Jewish, Muslim, Christian, Druze or Circassian – must report for military or civil service." HW