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The Barbara K. Lipman Early Learning Center: A Family of Families



Head of School Blair Trotz with Junior Kindergarten Graduates. By Melinda Lejman

On Friday, May 24, 2024, Temple Israel held its annual 'Shalom Ceremony' to commemorate and celebrate their Junior Kindergarteners' graduation from the Barbara K. Lipman Early Learning Center (ELC). The excitement and joy marking the occasion was palpable, mixed with smiles and tears, as families watched their little ones cross the bimah.

The morning was filled with singing, dancing, and a display of the Jewish knowledge and creativity that Head of School Blair Trotz and her wonderful team of teachers instill in the next generation, shared Rabbi Ross Levy, Assistant Rabbi at Temple Israel.

"The Barbara K. Lipman Early Learning Center is a true gem of our community. Each day, I see the joy and love of learning that radiates from the children walking, singing, and strolling through our halls," continues Rabbi Levy. "The 'Shalom Ceremony' was a perfect culmination and celebration of a wonderful year as we wish our former Junior Kindergarteners a bittersweet farewell."

For Molly Bernatsky and her family, watching their third child graduate from Temple's ELC was a bittersweet experience. "Our family has had a child at the ELC for a decade, and it is truly the end of an era for us. The Junior Kindergarten class sang precious songs and looked too cute for words in their customized caps and gowns. Thank you so much for another wonderful year!"

"Temple Israel's ELC graduation was nothing less than adorable and memorable. Seeing each kid's personality shine through in the answers from their interviews about favorite memories and future careers was both comical and sweet," shares Emily Saslawsky. "The school did a great job highlighting each student individually, even letting them choose what color cap and gown would make them feel confident the day of graduation. And it was nice to see the pre-kindergarten class included in celebrating our Junior Kindergarteners' achievements and marking the start of their growth as the new 'big kids' at the ELC."

The Shalom Ceremony came at the end of a month of culmination celebrations, beginning with Confirmation and Graduation. As Temple Israel President Wendy Rotter shares, these moments are poignant markers along the transformative journeys of Temple teens into adulthood, reinforcing Temple Israel's enduring role as a nurturing home for families.

"The beaming faces of parents watching their preschoolers' performances once again reminds us of Temple's paramount role as an anchor for our families – no matter the age or stage," shares President Rotter. "We are feeling and seeing Temple's unique ability to foster and deepen meaningful and lifelong connections. Nurturing this family of families and investing in our youth from birth to graduation is and always will be key to ensuring a thriving Temple Israel." **HW**

Netanyahu: Israel Ready for 'Intense Action in The North'



"Whoever thinks he can hurt us, and we will respond by sitting on our hands, is making a big mistake. We are prepared for very intense action in the north. One way or another, we will restore security to the north," he said.

The prime minister was accompanied

campaign, but also for a more limited attack that would remain below the war threshold but risk a sudden and rapid escalation.

Hezbollah has been engaging in continuous attacks on northern Israel since joining the war on Oct. 8 in support of Hamas. Last month, the IDF raised its response to the attacks to include attacks deep inside Lebanon, destroying terrorist infrastructure and killing terrorists. The Americans have been undertaking a "feverish" effort behind the scenes to prevent an escalation, and despite the increasingly militant rhetoric from the Israeli side, behind the scenes there is almost complete agreement on the Israeli desire for an arrangement that will calm things down on the Lebanese front, Dvori wrote. "The northern front is directly related to what is happening in the Gaza Strip and the continuation of the fighting there, which may be stopped following a new kidnapping deal," he continued. "If, in the end, a new deal is launched, Israel recognizes that this will be an opportunity to lead the political process vis-à-vis Lebanon, thereby preventing escalation and bringing about a political settlement." HW

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a lookout point in Kiryat Shmona, June 5, 2024. Credit: Amos Ben-Gershom/GPO.

(JNS) – Israel is "prepared for very intense action in the north" to restore security, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last Wednesday, speaking during a visit to Kiryat Shmona near the Lebanese border.

"We said, at the start of the war that we would restore security in both the south and the north, and this is what we are doing," the premier said at a lookout point in the city after earlier being briefed by commanders at the IDF's Gibor base.

"Today, I am on the northern border with our heroic fighters and commanders, and with our firefighters. Yesterday, the ground burned here, and I am pleased that you have extinguished it, but ground also burned in Lebanon," Netanyahu continued, referring to fires that broke out in recent days in the north as a result of Hezbollah attacks. by his chief of staff, Tzachi Braverman and his military secretary, Maj.-Gen. Roman Gofman.

Defense Minister Yoav Gallant visited the northern frontier last Tuesday for a situational assessment with commanders.

"Minister Gallant and the commanders discussed IDF operational and intelligence efforts in the face of Hezbollah's aggression, ongoing efforts to thwart Hezbollah terrorists and the forces' readiness for operations against Hezbollah," the Defense Ministry said in a statement, adding that Gallant was also briefed on firefighting efforts in the area.

Israel is preparing to launch a largescale attack against Hezbollah in Southern Lebanon, Channel 12 security and military correspondent Nir Dvori wrote in an article published last Wednesday.

The past eight months of fighting in the north has been "below the threshold of war," he added.

The IDF is prepared for an all-out

My Teen Israel Experience



Dahlia (right) with friend Shira on camel ride in Negev.

By Dahlia Siegel

This past summer, I had the wonderful opportunity to visit Israel through a program called Yad B'Yad. It was truly a life-changing experience for me. I was one of 144 teens from around the world participating in a unique, five-week adventure. From rappelling and jeeping, to tubing and water sports, to camel riding and visiting Bedouin tents, each day was filled with fun activities. Yad B'Yad had it all. I feel so fortunate that I was able to participate in this memorable trip.

What made the experience most enjoyable were the friendships that I developed with both my fellow campers and the staff. Our counselors did a superb job of leading programs that fostered these connections. For example, they led numerous learning opportunities with us, including a "bus medrash." Whether the bus ride was ten minutes or an hour long, the staff was there to learn with us. There were countless educational and growth opportunities on Yad B'Yad and everyone participated in them.

The activities on Yad B'Yad were incredible. Our time in Eilat was one of the highlights of the trip. On the boardwalk there, we went on many rides, including a human slingshot and flying swings. The next morning, we went tubing and banana boating. That evening, we went on a party boat and even had the opportunity to jump off into the water where there were inflatable trampolines and rafts.

Finally, we went to the Eilat ice mall where there was a zipline, an ice-skating rink, aqua spa, bumper cars, a ropes course, a roller coaster, and so much more! The time we spent in Eilat was my favorite part of the trip because we all bonded as a group and created amazing memories.

Becoming a leader is an important part of Yad B'Yad. From overcoming fears, organizing activities, and even becoming counselors for the day, at Yad B'Yad, everyone stepped out of their comfort zones and increased their responsibilities. Yad B'Yad empowers teens to push themselves to their fullest potential.

Even though the trip is now over, the effects of Yad B'Yad are ongoing. I have grown, learned, and have a whole new community of people always supporting me. Counselors now have whatsapp chats and send regular messages of inspiration. My favorite one involves explanations of prayers that make them more meaningful.

Going on Yad B'Yad was the best decision I have made in my life. Although I have been to Israel previously, this was the most meaningful trip. I am counting down the days until the fall reunion!

I am grateful to the Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund for helping to make my Yad B'Yad trip to Israel possible. I highly recommend that other high school students visit Israel whenever possible. There is truly no other place like it on earth.

Dahlia Siegel, daughter of Rachel and Dr. Joel Siegel, is a rising senior at the Goldie Margolin School for Girls. Memphis Jewish Federation's Lemsky Endowment Fund provided her with a Teen Israel Experience grant to offset the costs of her Yad B'Yad 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 available at jcpmemphis.org/ lemsky-endowment-fund. **HW**



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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. June 14, 2024 / 8 Sivan, 5784	. 7:57 p.m.	
Havdalah, Sat. June 15, 2024 / 9 Sivan, 5784	9:00 p.m.	

Weekly Torah Portion: Naso



Bat Mítzvah

Jordana Segel, daughter of Brian and Jillian Lipkowitz Segel, became bat mitzvah on Monday, June 3 at North Shore Congregation Israel, in Glencoe, Illinois.

Jordana is a student at Central Middle School in Glencoe.

Her hobbies are running cross country for Central Middle School and swim-



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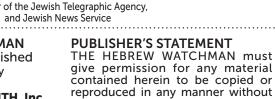
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Jordana Segel

ming for New Trier Swim Club.

For Jordana's Mitzvah project she is doing a 1 ½ mile open water swim June 13, raising funds for St Jude Children's Hospital.

Jordana is the granddaughter of Don and Siraya Segel of Glenview, Illinois, Barbara and Howie Dane of Highland Park, Illinois, and Alan and Millie Katzen of Memphis, and Joe Lipkowitz of Blessed Memory. **HW**

MJCC CEO Selected for Summer Institute for JCC Senior Executives at Brandeis University

Through a partnership between JCC Association of North America and Brandeis University, Larry Skolnick, President and CEO of the Memphis Jewish Community Center, and Rashki Osina, Director of Social Services for Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service, will attend a Summer Institute for JCC Senior Executives at Brandeis entitled *Navigating Israel and the Rise of Antisemitism* later this summer.

This opportunity was open for one CEO and one staff member from no more than 20 JCCs. Considering there are 172 JCCs across the United States, it is notable for a team from Memphis to be chosen.

The seminar goals are to provide education on antisemitism and its intersection with Israel, a skills/Toolbox to develop and implement initiatives for JCC leaders to address antisemitism in their community, exposure to influential thinkers and practitioners who may continue to serve as ongoing resources, and opportunities to network with peers and colleagues. Some of the topics of discussion may include: What is Antisemitism & Understanding the American Jewish Community, Expressions and Reemergence of Antisemitism, and Re-imagining Zionism in the 21st Century. Participants will explore the melding of knowledge and skills, active listening and how to be heard, and individual and group work on initiatives.

Brandeis University is the singular secular university in the United States founded specifically to counter widespread antisemitism and bigotry in higher education. This Summer Institute honors Brandeis' distinct responsibility to the Jewish community and to the ideals of higher education. Brandeis believes that as a research institution, it is uniquely situated to examine issues of antisemitism on campus and to develop data-driven responses.

It is truly an honor for the MJCC team to be chosen to participate in this summer institute and we look forward to the knowledge and impactful ideas to address antisemitism in our community they will bring back to Memphis. **HW** 4 More Hostages Held in Gaza are Dead, Israeli Army Announces

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – Four more male hostages held in Gaza since Oct. 7 are believed to be dead, according to an announcement last Monday by the Israeli army that drew an immediate plea by a group representing the family members of the dozens of remaining hostages to make a deal for their release.

The army last Monday named the hostages as Chaim Peri, Yoram Metzger, Amiram Cooper and Nadav Popplewell and said that Hamas was holding their bodies. The army also announced last Monday that a man who had been thought to be a hostage, Dolev Yehud, had in fact been killed on Oct. 7.

The revelations mean that more than a third of the 120 hostages thought to remain in Gaza are known to be dead.

The army said it was able to determine that the four men had died despite not being able to retrieve their bodies.

"The decision to pronounce the four hostages dead was based on intelligence and was confirmed by a Ministry of Health expert committee, in coordination with the Ministry of Religious Services and the Chief Rabbi of Israel," it said in an announcement. "The circumstances of their death in Hamas captivity are still under examination by all the relevant professionals."

The four men who had been taken alive to Gaza had appeared in hostage videos, although Hamas said when it released a video of Popplewell in May that he had been killed in an Israeli airstrike since it was filmed.

Israeli officials said they believed the four men had died several months ago in Khan Younis while the army was operating there. Several other hostages have been killed during failed rescue operations, while the causes of death for some found dead in Gaza remain unknown.

"I know that difficult questions will arise regarding the circumstances of the deaths," Daniel Hagari, an IDF spokesman, said during a press conference. "We are examining the circumstances of death in depth, looking into all possibilities, and we will present the findings as soon as possible."

The Hostages Family Forum, which represents the families who have joined in protests urging the government of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach a ceasefire deal with Hamas, said the news of their deaths "should shake every citizen in the State of Israel and lead every leader to profound soul-searching."

It called on the Israeli government to approve a deal that U.S. President Joe Biden said [the week prior] was an initiative of Netanyahu's, and which would establish a temporary ceasefire and release elderly, wounded and child hostages immediately in exchange for hundreds of Palestinians detained by Israel.

"The Israeli government must send out a negotiating delegation this evening and return all 124 hostages, both living and murdered, to their homes," its statement said. "It is time to end this cycle of sacrifice and neglect. Their murder in captivity is a mark of disgrace and a sad reflection on the significance of delaying previous deals. We reiterate our demand to the Israeli government: approve the Netanyahu deal immediately!"

Netanyahu has not publicly acknowledged ownership of the deal, although Israeli officials have told Israeli media that parts of it comport to a version his government submitted weeks ago, while saying there remain significant gaps. Far-right parties have threatened to bolt the coalition if he agrees to the deal, which requires Israel to pull out of major population centers in Gaza. The army is currently seeking to rout Hamas from Rafah, a town on the Gaza-Egypt border.

Cooper, 84, Metzger, 80, and Peri, 80, were all from Kibbutz Nir Oz, and Popplewell, a dual British-Israeli citizen, was from Kibbutz Nirim. Both kibbutzes suffered heavy losses on Oct. 7 when Hamas terrorists killed over 1,200 people and abducted more than 250, launching the current war. Popplewell's mother, Channa Peri, was released during a temporary ceasefire in November, as was Cooper's wife, Nurit, and Metzger's wife, Tamar. On Oct. 7, Peri hid his wife in the safe room and went out to fight the invading terrorists, deflecting attention from his wife, who was not harmed; the family later learned that he had been abducted alive by a woman from Nir Oz who was released several days later. "My grandpa sacrificed his freedom to save his wife," his grandson, Mai Albini-Peri, said before Passover, noting that Peri, whose 80th birthday had just passed, was a peace activist who drove sick children from Gaza to Israeli hospitals. "He dedicated his life to liberating oppressed people wherever," Albini-Peri said. HW

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In December, Israeli Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu had a tense phone

conversation with Putin in which he

expressed "dismay" about the recent

anti-Israel positions taken by Russian

representatives at the United Nations

and other international fora, according

Netanyahu said he had emphasized to

Putin that "any country that would suf-

fer a criminal terrorist attack such as Is-

rael experienced would act with no less

The Israeli leader also strongly criti-

On Oct. 25, Russia vetoed a

U.S.-sponsored U.N. Security Coun-

cil resolution condemning Hamas for

its Oct. 7 invasion of southern Israel,

during which terrorists murdered more

The next day, Israel condemned Rus-

sia for hosting a delegation of Hamas

terrorists in Moscow, calling it "an act

In November, "Bloomberg" report-

ed that the Israel Defense Forces had

stopped warning Russian forces in Syria

ahead of every airstrike it carries out in

the country, citing "people familiar with

The IDF did not warn Russia ahead

of an Oct. 30 strike on a military base

in Daraa in southwestern Syria, or when

Israeli jets attacked a Syrian base hous-

cized the Kremlin's "dangerous" coop-

eration with the Iranian regime.

to the Prime Minister's Office.

force" than has Israel.

than 1,200 people.

the situation."

of support of terrorism."

Guard at U.S. Embassy in Beirut Seriously Injured in Shooting



Aerial view of Beirut. Credit: Diplomedia/Shutterstock.

(JNS) - A member of the "local guard force" at the U.S. Embassy in Beirut was seriously injured in a "shooting incident" outside the embassy, Matthew Miller, the U.S. State Department spokesman said at a Foggy Bottom press conference last Wednesday.

"The gunman was arrested after the incident," Miller said. "The embassy was secured immediately."

U.S. embassy officials remain in touch with Lebanese authorities about their investigation, and the embassy, which closed last Wednesday, [was] expected to reopen for business last Thursday, Miller said.

"We are aware that the individual who was arrested was wearing what appeared to be ISIS insignia, but we are conducting a full investigation with the Lebanese authorities on the actual motivations," he said.

The shooting occurred last Wednesday morning outside the heavily fortified U.S. Embassy in Aukar, a northern suburb of Beirut.

The unidentified assailant was injured

during the attack and was evacuated to hospital.

At "8:34 a.m. local time, small arms fire was reported in the vicinity of the entrance to the embassy," the embassy said. "Our facility and team are safe."

The United States and Lebanon were "in close contact" to determine the circumstances of the incident, according to the embassy.

According to local reports, three gunmen fired on the embassy, which a Lebanese security official confirmed to "The National," a state-owned English-language daily newspaper published in Abu Dhabi.

Miller declined to comment on the number of shooters when asked at the State Department press briefing, citing the ongoing investigation.

The Emirati newspaper also reported that the Lebanese Armed Forces identified the shooter as a Syrian. A diplomatic source told "The National" that an embassy guard was shot in the incident. Local media reported the gunfight lasted for almost half an hour. HW



Putin: Israel Seeks 'Complete Elimination' of Gaza's Civilian **Population**



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

(JNS) - Russian President Vladimir Putin last Wednesday said Israel's campaign against Hamas in the Gaza Strip amounted to genocide.

"What is currently happening in Gaza in response to the terrorist attack on Israel does not resemble a war at all. It is akin to the complete elimination of the civilian population," said the Russian leader.

Putin blamed the United States for the situation, accusing it of "monopolizing" the peace process. "They pushed aside all previously established mechanisms for collective efforts to solve this extremely difficult problem," he said.

"It is not possible to solve the problem with some material offerings. The real issue, political matters, need to be resolved. This involves creating two states, as foreseen in the U.N.'s decision to establish two states in this territory, a Palestinian state and a Jewish state," he continued.

Putin praised Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has been an outspoken critic of Israel, even calling its leaders Nazis.

"We know that President Erdogan has made vigorous efforts to solve this very urgent and longstanding issue. Considering President Erdogan's authority in the region, the world and the Islamic world, we expect his contribution to be noticeable," he said.

He added that Russia is ready to help in any way possible.

Israel-Russia ties have been strained ing Hezbollah terrorists five days earlisince the outbreak of the war on Oct. 7. er, according to the report. HW

Hunter Biden's Wife Clashes with Ex-Trump Aide, Claiming Antisemitic Slurs

at her husband's trial.

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Hunter and Melissa Cohen-Biden. Source: X.

(JNS) - Outside a Delaware courthouse, a political operative who worked to publicize Hunter Biden's infamous abandoned laptop filled with reportedly salacious material received harsh words and accusations of Jew-hatred from his target's wife.

Last Tuesday, Melissa Batya Cohen-Biden, spouse of defendant Hunter Biden, the president's son, called Garrett Ziegler, a former Trump administration aide, a "Nazi piece of s***" and told him, "You have no right to be here"

Cohen-Biden said that Ziegler has insulted her with "the most horrific [anti-] Jewish slurs."

Ziegler denies Cohen-Biden's claims. "I've never called her any slurs. It's just made up," he said. "For the record, I'm not a Nazi. I'm a believer in the U.S. Constitution. I haven't said one thing to them."

During the final days of the 2020 U.S. presidential campaign, Ziegler worked to promote what many Republicans would characterize as the "laptop from hell." As a result, Hunter Biden sued Ziegler, arguing that the former Trump official and his company broke both state and federal laws in creating a searchable online resource for reviewing 128,000 emails discovered on Biden's laptop.

Hunter Biden is accused of three felony charges for alleged illegal firearm purchases and possession. He has pleaded not guilty. HW

16 World Leaders Back Biden Ceasefire Call, Urge Hamas to Take Deal



U.S. President Joe Biden delivers remarks on the passing of the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in the East Room of the White House in Washington, D.C., on Aug. 10, 2021. Credit: Adam Schultz/White House.

(JNS) - Leaders of 16 countries, including many whose citizens were taken hostage by Hamas on Oct. 7, issued a statement last Thursday backing U.S. President Joe Biden's May 31 ceasefire proposal, calling on the Gaza-based terror group to "close this agreement."

"There is no time to lose," read the statement signed by the leaders of Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Colombia, Denmark, France, Germany, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Thailand and the United Kingdom. The United States also signed the statement.

"As leaders of countries deeply concerned for the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, including many of our own citizens, we fully support the movement towards a ceasefire and hostage release deal now on the table and as outlined by President Biden on May 31, 2024," the text said.

Noting that Jerusalem is "ready to move forward" with the terms proposed by Biden [last] Friday, the world leaders stressed that the deal would lead to an "immediate ceasefire and rehabilitation of Gaza together with security assurances for Israelis, and Palestinians, and opportunities for a more enduring longterm peace and a two-state solution."

"At this decisive moment, we call on the leaders of Israel as well as Hamas to make whatever final compromises are necessary to close this deal and bring relief to the families of our hostages, as well as those on both sides of this terrible conflict, including the civilian populations," the statement continues.

"It is time for the war to end, and this

it differed significantly from what was outlined by Biden [the previous] week.

The terror group sent a clarification memorandum to other Palestinian terror factions last Wednesday, the text of which was seen by the news outlet. It claims that the current proposal "does not promise a permanent ceasefire, the occupation's forces will remain in Gaza, and when they receive the hostages, they will renew the destruction against our nation."

Hamas is demanding an end to the war and the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Strip, two conditions Jerusalem rejects. The Israeli War Cabinet's goals remain the same: returning the hostages, defeating Hamas as a military and political force in Gaza and ensuring that the coastal enclave can never again threaten the Jewish state.

During a closed-door meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee last Monday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told lawmakers he would "not describe the details of the deal," adding however that Biden's portrayal of Israel's position was "not accurate."

"I am not willing to stop the war," Netanyahu was quoted as saying. "We can stop the fighting for 42 days in order to return hostages, but we will not give up on total victory." HW

Beth Sholom Sisterhood Honors Barbara Hellman with its 2024 Woman of Valor Award



"Without Barbara's [Hellman's] leadership, Sisterhood would not be the robust, dynamic, and growing organization that it is today." ~ Susan Levko, Beth Sholom Sisterhood President.

Barbara Hellman, a tireless Jewish community volunteer in Memphis, is the recipient of Beth Sholom Sisterhood's 2024 Woman of Valor Award. The award honors Hellman's extraordinary service and commitment to both Sisterhood and Judaism.

"Barbara's enthusiastic service to Beth Sholom, Sisterhood, and Jewish Memphis is unique," said Susan Levko, Sisterhood President. "Our community benefits from her creativity, tenacity, and intellect, whether she's out in the community, developing a program, organizing an event, or tackling a task. She does it all with a smile, which is undoubtedly one of the warmest and most genuine in Memphis."

Levko continued, "Without Barbara's leadership, Sisterhood would not be the robust, dynamic, and growing organization that it is today."

Hellman served as Sisterhood Programming Chair for many years and continues to play a hands-on role as part of Sisterhood's management team for many years.

Beyond Beth Sholom, Hellman's energy and acumen is recognized by the Women's League of Conservative Judaism's (WLCJ) Southern Region. For the past three years, she served as the Southern Region's Vice President of Torah Fund, helping to raise record amounts to increase educational opportunities for Conservative Jewish professionals. She is a member of both the Torah Fund Cabinet and the WLCJ Board. On July 1, she will assume new responsibilities as Corresponding Secretary of Southern Region.

Barbara is known and respected throughout the Jewish community in Memphis. In 2022, she received a Jewish Family Service Bob Silver Volunteer Award for her efforts, which include delivering kosher meals and holiday packages for the homebound and assisting with monthly Shabbat services at Town Village Retirement Community – a role she has played for eight years.

In addition, Hellman's past and present volunteer activity includes serving as President of The Young Women's Group of Hadassah, Memphis Chapter of Hadassah Copresident, Hadassah Southern Region Board Member, Board Member of the Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Midsouth, a Salon Circle Board Member, and a volunteer reader of scholarship applications for Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority.

Hellman says she learned the joy of volunteering from her mother, Madelynne Cantor Z"l, who volunteered at the MJCC for more than 20 years. "I enjoy all of my volunteer work, and it is wonderful to have Sisterhood acknowledge me," says Hellman. "I am honored to be recognized and appreciated." HW

OBITUARIES

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





deal is the necessary starting point," it concludes.

Earlier last Thursday, Saudi Arabia's "Asharq al-Awsat" daily reported that Hamas had rejected the deal, claiming

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'Indefinitely End Shipment of Weapons, Artillery to Israel, NAACP Tells Biden

(JNS) - The NAACP, a 115-year-old civil-rights organization headquartered in Baltimore, is calling on U.S. President Joe Biden to stop sending weapons to the Jewish state and to those who support the Hamas terror organization.

"Draw the red line and indefinitely end the shipment of weapons and artillery to the State of Israel and other states that supply weapons to Hamas and other terrorist organizations," Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP, said in a statement last Wednesday directed at Biden.

It is the NAACP's responsibility "to speak out in the face of injustice" and to hold elected officials to their promises, "as the nation's leading civil rights organization," Johnson said.

"Over the past months, we have been forced to bear witness to unspeakable violence, affecting innocent civilians, which is unacceptable," he added. "The most recent statement from the Biden administration is useful but does not go far enough. It is one thing to call for a ceasefire. It is another to take the measures necessary to work towards liberation for all."

The NAACP leader stated that "decades of conflict reflect that factions inside Israel and Hamas actively work against resolution of the conflict."

"The latest proposal must clarify the consequences of continued violence," he said. "The United States and the international community must be willing to pull the levers of power when appropriate to advance liberation for all."

Johnson called on Hamas to "return the hostages and stop all terrorist activity," saying that Israel "must commit to an offensive strategy that is aligned with international and humanitarian laws."

"Peace and security for Israelis and Palestinians can only align when the humanity and common needs of people within the region are respected," he added. "Centuries of conflict reflect that violence results in more violence. The spillover effect in the United States is more racism, antisemitism and Islamophobia."

B'nai B'rith International called the NAACP leader's statement "a historic betrayal of Jews' devotion and solidarity in fighting for civil rights for all." HW

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Iran and Its Proxies will Stage All-Out Attack in Two Years, Liberman Says



Yisrael Beiteinu leader Avigdor Liberman addresses a press conference at the Knesset in Jerusalem, April 6, 2021. Credit: Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90.

(JNS) - "The State of Israel must understand that Iran is planning an all-out attack within two years, of the entire axis of evil against the State of Israel," Avigdor Liberman, chairman of the Yisrael Beitenu Party, warned last Monday.

The "coordinated and synchronized attack" would emanate from Iran and its proxies: Hezbollah in Lebanon, Hamas in the Gaza Strip, Shi'ite militias operating in Iraq and Syria, and the Houthis in Yemen, the former defense minister told 103FM radio hosts Ben Caspit and Aryeh Eldad.

"I don't get the impression that the decision-makers at both the political and military levels understand this, have internalized it, and are preparing for it," Liberman said.

"Everything we see right now from

Hezbollah is a promo. They are trying to learn our defense system, the reactions of our anti-aircraft, the nature and speed of the reaction, this is a learning process," he said.

Liberman based his prediction on the time it would take Iran to complete the military aspects of its nuclear program.

"They have already passed from the stage of enriching the uranium to the deployment of the military part. The military part will take them two years," he said.

Iran wants to have an umbrella of nuclear weapons, not just the possession of enriched uranium, he explained.

"The erosion of Israeli deterrence brought them to the conclusion that they can sprint [towards nuclear weapons]," Liberman said, referring to Israel's failures on Oct. 7 and its muted counter-attack to the Iranian aerial assault on the Jewish state in April.

Liberman sharply criticized Israel's policy of containment where it attempts to manage aggression rather than decisively defeating it.

"The fact that we don't know how to defeat a terrorist organization like Hamas for eight months requires examination," he said.

"It can't be that for six days a small country with a much smaller population, with equipment and weapons not as advanced as compared to what we have today, fought on three fronts against three countries," he said, referring to the 1967 Six-Day War.

"Now we do not know how to fight against two terrorist organizations at the same time," he said. HW





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Benjamin Netanyahu to Address Congress on July 24



By Ben Sales

(JTA) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will address a joint meeting of the U.S. Congress on July 24, his fourth time appearing before the legislative body.

The Netanyahu speech, coming against the backdrop of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, is meant to demonstrate American support for Israel at a time when Israel has come under widespread criticism for its military campaign and Netanyahu faces a possible arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court.

"We look forward to hearing the Israeli government's vision for defending democracy, combatting terror, and establishing a just and lasting peace in the region," House Speaker Mike Johnson said in a statement.

The announcement Thursday of the date comes at a time of uncertainty in the war, as Hamas weighs a ceasefire proposal put forward by the United States and Israel that would pause the fighting for at least six weeks and could lead to an end to the war. It also comes at a tenuous political time in Israel: Former Defense Minister Benny Gantz, whose centrist party joined Netanyahu's

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks in English about Israel's plans for the Gaza Strip after the war's end, Nov. 10, 2024. (Screenshot)

government at the outset of the war, appears likely to quit after demanding a clear plan for the day after the fighting.

The speech is also sure to attract controversy in Washington. A significant number of Democrats have lambasted Netanyahu and called for a ceasefire in the war. Senate Democratic Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, long one of Israel's most stalwart backers, gave a speech earlier this year calling for new elections in Israel and for Netanyahu's government to be replaced. He later agreed to invite the prime minister to Capitol Hill.

"I have clear and profound disagreements with the Prime Minister, which I have voiced both privately and publicly and will continue to do so," Schumer said in a statement. "But because America's relationship with Israel is ironclad and transcends one person or prime minister, I joined the request for him to speak."

Netanyahu, who has served as Israel's prime minister longer than any other person, has addressed Congress thrice previously. His last speech, in 2015, was particularly contentious as he was invited by Republican leadership and attacked then-President Barack Obama's nuclear deal with Iran. **HW**

Florida Tire Shop Owner Who Displayed Nazi Flag Denies He's Antisemitic

By David Swindle

(JNS) – Radi Ahmad, who owns a tire store in Jacksonville, Fla., insists that he isn't a Jew-hater despite flying a Nazi flag on a busy street with a large Jewish community.

Ahmad said the flag display "is his way of reminding people that what Palestinians are going through in Gaza is supposedly the same as what Jewish people experienced during World War II under Nazi Germany," the "New York Post" reported.

"Antisemitism has no place in Florida and must be condemned by all who understand the horrific evils of the Holocaust," wrote Sen. Marco Rubio (R-Fla.), in response to the CBS affiliate WJAX-TV that broke the story.

Mariam Feist, CEO of the Jewish Federation and Foundation of Northeast Florida, told JNS that the federation decided to speak out about the flag with full knowledge that it could give the hateful symbol more attention.

"In this instance, when someone publicly displays a Nazi flag in an area that is heavily trafficked, in an area that is heavily populated by our Jewish community, and evokes such pain –especially on the day of national Holocaust Survivor Day [June 4] – that's when we decided to respond when asked by media," she said.

The federation gets daily calls from reporters asking for comments about anti-Israel protests on college campuses, Feist told JNS. "I would respond, 'There's nothing new, so why do I want to continue to talk about this?"" But the flag at the tire shop is "an act we haven't seen – that type of affront – in many years," she continued. "This isn't something that is done every day. The protests were happening every week."

The federation leader dismissed the tire shop owner's justification for his actions.

"What we find so offensive is the fact that one would compare contemporary Israeli policy with that of Nazis," she said. "I mean that is outright unequivocally antisemitism and Jew-hate.

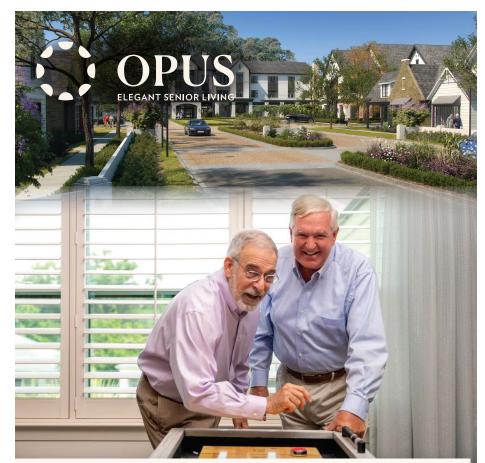
"What we're sharing is that people of moral conscience need to come together to condemn this act" and that such a display "anywhere will not be tolerated," Feist added. "This crosses the boundaries."

Sheriffs and the FBI are investigating whether Ahmad poses a threat to the Jewish community, she said.

Donna Deegan, the mayor of Jacksonville and a Democrat, appeared to universalize the incident.

"I strongly condemn the flying of a Nazi flag in Jacksonville. This symbol of antisemitism – and all symbols of hate that seek to divide us – are never welcome in our diverse and inclusive city," she wrote.

"Jacksonville's greatest strength is that we are a beautiful mosaic of people from all walks of life, which includes our Jewish and Palestinian citizens who are experiencing immense pain right now," she added. **HW**





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Beware of These Life Insurance Beneficiary Mistakes

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

Life insurance has long been recognized as a useful way to provide for your heirs and loved ones when you die. While naming your policy's beneficiaries should be a relatively simple task, there are a number of situations that can easily lead to unintended and adverse consequences. Here are several life insurance beneficiary traps you may want to discuss with a professional.

Not naming a beneficiary

The most obvious mistake you can make is failing to name a beneficiary of your life insurance policy. But simply naming your spouse or child as beneficiary may not suffice. It is conceivable that you and your spouse could die together or that your named beneficiary may die before you and you haven't named successor beneficiaries. If the beneficiaries you designated are not living at your death, the insurance company may pay the death proceeds to your estate, which can lead to other potential problems.

Death benefit paid to your estate

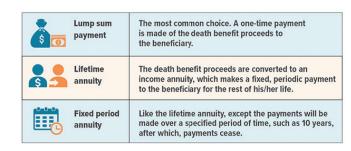
If your life insurance is paid to your estate, several undesired issues may arise. First, the insurance proceeds likely become subject to probate, which may delay the payments to your heirs. Second, life insurance that is part of your probate estate is subject to claims of your probate creditors. Not only might your heirs have to wait to receive their share of the insurance, but your creditors may satisfy their claims out of those proceeds first.

Naming a minor child as beneficiary

Insurance companies will rarely pay life insurance proceeds directly to a minor. Typically, the court appoints a guardian - a potentially costly and time-consuming process – to handle the proceeds until the minor beneficiary reaches the age of majority according to state law. If you want the life insurance proceeds to be paid for the benefit of a minor, you may consider creating a trust that names the minor as beneficiary. Then the trust manages and pays the proceeds from the insurance according to the terms and conditions you set out in the trust document. Consult with an estate attorney to decide on the course that works best for your situation.

Disqualifying a beneficiary from government assistance

A beneficiary you name to receive your life insurance may be receiving or be eligible to receive government assistance due to a disability or other special circumstance. Eligibility for government benefits is often tied to the financial circumstances of the recipient. The payment of insurance proceeds may be a financial windfall that disqualifies your beneficiary from eligibility for government benefits, or the proceeds may have to be paid to a government entity as reimbursement for benefits paid. Again, an estate attorney can help you address this issue. **Life Insurance Payout Options** Most life insurance policies offer several options to the policy beneficiary, including:



Creating a taxable situation

Generally, life insurance death proceeds are not taxed when they're paid. However, there are exceptions to this rule, and the most common situation involves having three different people as policy owner, insured, and beneficiary. Typically, the policy owner and the insured are one and the same person. But sometimes the owner is not the insured or the beneficiary. For example, mom may be the policy owner on the life of dad for the benefit of their children. In this situation, mom is effectively creating a gift of the insurance proceeds for her children/beneficiaries. As the donor, mom may be subject to gift tax. Consult a financial or tax professional to figure out the best way to structure the policy.

As with most financial decisions, there are expenses associated with the purchase of life insurance. Policies commonly have mortality and expense charges. In addition, if a policy is surrendered prematurely, there may be surrender charges and income tax implications. The cost and availability of life insurance depend on factors such as age, health, and the type and amount of insurance purchased.

While trusts offer numerous advantages, they incur up-front costs and often have ongoing administrative fees. The use of trusts involves a complex web of tax rules and regulations. You should consider the counsel of an experienced estate planning professional and your legal and tax advisors before implementing such strategies.

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On 30th Anniversary of AMIA Bombing, House Reps Call for Justice



Thousands of people attended a memorial in Argentina for the 85 people

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killed and more than 300 others wounded in the 1994 AMIA bombing in Buenos Aires, July 18, 2022. Credit: Ellie Cohanim.

(JNS) – The four co-chairs of the Latino-Jewish Congressional Caucus submitted a resolution last Wednesday to hold accountable the Iranian-sponsored terrorists who bombed the Buenos Aires Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) building on July 18, 1994, leaving 85 dead and more than 300 injured.

Reps. Mario Díaz-Balart (R-Fla.), Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.), Tony Gonzales (R-Texas) and Adriano Espaillat (D-N.Y.) sponsored the resolution.

"It has been three decades since the lethal AMIA Jewish Center Bombing took place in Buenos Aires, and we continue to tirelessly demand justice and accountability for the vile perpetrators responsible for the attack, including Iran's current Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi and other terrorist proxies," said Balart.

Wasserman Schultz warned that

"with antisemitism on the rise around the world, this attack on Argentina's thriving Jewish community must not go unanswered. Congressmen Diaz-Balart, Espaillat, Gonzales and I are proud to honor the victims of this attack and champion justice for their loved ones."

Gonzales said the Caucus's leaders "remain a steady hand in Congress in the fight to eradicate the horrors of antisemitism. We will never forget the victims, their families and all those touched by this horrific tragedy – may justice and accountability prevail."

Describing the resolution as "our unified commitment to ensuring justice for each of the victims," Espaillat stated that "terrorism and antisemitic hate have no place in our society, and this legislative effort reaffirms our solidarity with the Jewish community of Argentina and around the world." **HW**

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OBITUARIES

In Normandy, a Jewish D-Day Veteran Buried in a Nazi Mass Grave will Receive a Proper Burial 80 Years Later



German and American soldiers at Ramstein Air Force Base, Germany honor Nathan Baskind's remains after their excavation. Credit: U.S. Army

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – Growing up, Samantha Baskind's father would sometimes mention his "Uncle Nate," who stormed the beaches of Normandy on D-Day.

He called Nate "a great Jewish American war hero," often just around Memorial Day, Baskind recalled. "He would always use that exact same phrase."

There's a family picture of Nate in his mid-twenties, just before shipping off to war, holding Baskind's father as a toddler. But the family knew nothing of his fate, other than that the U.S. Army had declared him missing in action.

That all changed last year, when a tip arrived in the inbox of Operation Benjamin, a nonprofit that tracks down gravesites of Jewish American servicemen who were mistakenly buried under crosses. The tipster had recently visited a German-maintained grave site for Nazi officers, where the names of the dead were engraved on a plaque.

There, on the plaque, was an unusual and Jewish-seeming name: Nathan Baskind.

So began a yearlong investigation. Operation Benjamin came to determine that Baskind, a first lieutenant in the U.S. Army, had been shot behind enemy lines, died in a German P.O.W. camp, and was buried in a Nazi mass grave, where – despite being positively identified by the German war memorial commission – he went unidentified as an American Jew for eight decades.

With the help of Nathan's grand-

vators, the group has, to date, identified around 20 Jewish American soldiers whom the U.S. military had mistakenly buried under crosses and worked to give them Jewish burials instead. (Like other Jewish burial groups, Operation Benjamin places an imperative on burying the dead according to Jewish law, in particular with as many of their body parts intact as possible.)

But the group had never before uncovered a Jewish American who had been buried with the very Nazis he was fighting. The reverse, however, has occurred: In 2013, scientists determined that the head of the Nazi Gestapo, Heinrich Muller, had been buried in a Jewish mass grave.

"You can understand very well how meaningful it is for us to be able to bring a soldier buried with Nazis for so long into the bosom of his ancestral faith and his country," Rabbi Jacob Schacter, president and co-founder of Operation Benjamin, told JTA. (The group's other founder was real-estate developer Sheldon Lamm.)

Schacter got his first look at the grave holding Baskind during a 2023 trip to Normandy to attend the reburial ceremony of another Jewish soldier. Visiting the German cemetery, he recalled, he indulged in a bit of the theatrical.

"I got up on a little stone fence around the mass grave, and I said to him, 'Nathan, we're coming for you. We want to take you away from here. We want to bring you back to your home," Schacter said. When they first contacted Samantha Baskind, she was working on her latest book: a biography of 19th-century Jewish American artist Moses Ezekiel, who fought for the Confederacy. A planned exhibit on Ezekiel's work, curated by Baskind, was canceled by Princeton University in 2022 following blowback over his Confederate sympathies. Soon, Uncle Nate's burial became almost another full-time job to Baskind. She did extensive research into her family lineage and underwent DNA testing in order to determine a positive match. Meanwhile, Operation Benjamin worked with the Volksbund, a German war memorial commission that looks after the graves of officers including Nazis, to disinter the mass grave in search of Nate's remains. (Schacter said he felt comfortable working with the memorial group, saying that its director "wears his German historical identity with an enormous amount of kindness and sensitivity.")

Amid the extensive decomposition of the bodies, the excavators were able to identify two of Baskind's bones. The whole process, including negotiations with the German, French and American governments, took over a year. Shortly before Memorial Day this year, Samantha hopped on a Zoom to plan Nate's reburial arrangements and was surprised when a military representative who had been dispatched to her house presented her with Nate's medals, including a Purple Heart. Just like her earlier Memorial Day conversations with her father, here was confirmation that Uncle Nate was a war hero. The parallels with her academic

work, she said, made her emotional.

"I'm doing research simultaneously on both of these men who fought, but for very different reasons," she said. Part of her research into Ezekiel, she said, "uncovered canards about Jews and the military" held by mainstream society during the time period, including Mark Twain (who later recanted this stereotype and became an ardent champion of the Jews during his life).

"There was a lot of antisemitic conversation about how Jews shirked from their patriotic duties of the countries in which they lived, because they were only loyal to their own people," she said. Decades later, Jews who fought in both World Wars – including Nate – would disprove these stereotypes by enlisting in large numbers.

Inside the Pentagon, another influential figure was pondering what Nate's story meant for Jews in the military. Jacob Freedman, the Jewish chief of staff to the U.S. Army secretary, read about the project to grant Baskind a Jewish burial. Freedman realized that he, too, was distantly related to the family: his grandmother was Nate Baskind's second cousin.

Now, Freedman is working to ensure an Army representative will be present at Baskind's ceremony, alongside Samantha and Operation Benjamin representatives, who also plan to attend.

"It is very meaningful for me to realize this connection," Freedman, who was chief of staff to former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, told JTA. "I think it's a great reminder, particularly in this very fraught moment for the Jewish people, that Jewish Americans are really part of the fabric of the



Harold Eric Blockman

Harold Eric Blockman left this world Friday, May 31, 2024.

Harold was the ultimate lover of everything family. Not only to his daughter, Laura, son's Justin and Josh, and of course to his wife, Denise, the love of his life, but also as an advocate, advisor, mentor and friend to the numerous up and coming realtors over the past 45 years from Knoxville to Memphis.

He lived in Knoxville, graduating from University of Tennessee and stayed on for 17 years, prior to returning to Memphis. He opened a Bagel shop in Knoxville way before Bagels were cool and on his return to Memphis opened Blockman's Deli.

A Realtor Emeritus, which is a NAR designation for members who have held consecutive membership for 40 years, he was a true pioneer and leader in real estate. He was a trailblazer who adored the industry, the agents he worked with and the community he served.

His career at Keller Williams was a vocation for him, not just a job. He left a true legacy in real estate and the broader Memphis community.

He was a member of Baron Hirsch Synagogue and brought up in a Jewish Orthodox home. He relished in his role as a father, brother, son and husband. Sometimes you meet people who you know have a truly humble soul. This was Harold Blockman, he was generous and giving with a contagious laugh.

He was dedicated to his community service tutoring at Southwind elementary and volunteering to help kids read and write once a week, receiving the Lions Heart award from Youth Villages, Good Neighbor award and Community Service awards.

He leaves behind his wife, Denise Blockman, daughter Laura Blockman, sons Josh Epperson and Justin Epperson, his mother, Hazel Blockman, sister Karen Blockman Carrier and nephews Travis and Austin Carrier.

Services were held Monday, June 3, 2024, at Baron Hirsch Cemetery.

All donations should be sent to St.

niece Samantha, who became the family's point person, the group dug up the grave, identified stray bones of Nate's remains, and worked with the German, French and American authorities to arrange for a Jewish reburial, which will be held in Normandy on June 23, the 80th anniversary of his death. It will fall just a few short weeks after ceremonies this week commemorating the 80th anniversary of D-Day, which are being attended by living World War II veterans as well as by President Joe Biden.

"It has felt overwhelming at times," Baskind, an art historian at Cleveland State University who also teaches about the Holocaust, told JTA about spending the last year of her life immersed in her great-uncle's history. "But it's also an honor."

The Baskind case was more intense than Operation Benjamin's typical fare. Enlisting genealogists and excacountry. We have fought and died for the country, and we are serving at all levels and in many different capacities today."

Samantha's father died over a decade ago. But after learning of Nate's fate, she took to showcasing her old photo of him with his uncle in her office. When the Army asked her where she wanted her Uncle Nate to be buried, she considered the family plot in Squirrel Hill, a Jewish neighborhood of Pittsburgh. But ultimately, she said, "I wanted him to be in Normandy" – at the American cemetery for soldiers who died in combat during the invasion, a place she describes as "just cross after cross."

"He'll be in the American cemetery with a Star of David, amid all those crosses," she said. "He's being buried next to another Jewish soldier who died. He'll be next to a Star of David." **HW** Jude Children's Hospital and The Humane Society of Memphis. **HW**

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Fathers, You're Never Too Old to Inspire



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, z"l

I used to be a father. I still am, and now I'm a grandfather, too. But it's a load I can handle because the job description is just about identical. It calls for inspiration – of young minds and young hearts; especially grandkids who are remote and therefore consider themselves safe from my constant inspirational messages. I guess they never heard of the Post Office. And I'm sure they don't know that we Jews used to be called "the People of the Book."

Yes, despite TV and video games and blackberries and cell phones and an environment humming with electronic messages – we Jews honor and cherish words printed upon paper. We still are the People of the Book.

So, I write a lot of letters to my grandkids. For only 44 cents, you're allowed a large number of words written on paper. And a wise grandfather, besides council, advice and family gossip, can include a candy bar, a stick of gum, a newspaper clipping, or a baseball card to lure the young mind into the civilized joy of correspondence. What teacher ever taught successfully without incentives? It's a trick I learned years ago from the Crackerjack people. They marketed candy with cheap, fragile toys. I sell family pride.

Legend tells us that Socrates – you've heard of the Socratic School – kept a big jar of black olives beside his desk to reward precocious students. Incentives are necessary to learning.

I use wiles of all kinds to encourage my younger kin to rip open their envelopes with frantic enthusiasm. "Wonder what he sent this time? Maybe if I write back today, he'll send me another Hershey bar."

Yes, Hershey bars are great. Nice and flat – but they have their disadvantages in July unless you live in Nome and your granddaughter hangs out with her kids in Anchorage. Kids love letters with or without sweet bonuses. They love their name in big, bold letters on the envelope. They love the ritual of sorting through the mail and throwing the discards on the floor before finding THEIR letter.

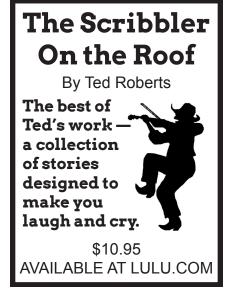
And like I say, I rarely write without including something that is either amusing, edible or ethically fortifying. My favorites are clippings from my local newspaper (human interest stories, we used to call them). So educational! Encourages kids to read and observe the world outside of home and school. And if you pick your stories with care, you can package amusement and even morality in your envelopes. For example, I just mailed off to eight grandkids a story of a 65-year-old lady who wrote a confession to her high school principal; she cheated in a high school writing course 47 years ago! My small audience loved it and marveled at her delayed, but full confession.

They were full of questions: "Did she have to take the class over? Did she get a punishment? Did they send her a new report card?" I assured them she was not punished and maybe – because of her honesty – they renamed the auditorium in her honor.

But my kids usually award the family Pulitzer Prize to the vignettes I call "Pet Saves Family:" the collie who pulled Jamie out of the river. The cocker spaniel who barked and alerted the family to their smoldering home. And of course, the whole category of dog-finds-missing-child story. We humans, even after we've lost the glow of childhood, still have a soft spot for animal rescue stories. It goes back in history to the gabbling geese who saved Rome. A story probably told in a grandfather's letter of 300 BCE.

We don't always need burning homes and swollen rivers. Kids of the right age (say over 3 and under 10) love any animal stories. Naturally. They love animals. There's a kinship there of smallness, innocence, helplessness that we just don't understand.

Just this month I mailed out a tearjerker that couldn't fail to warm the juvenile heart. A 2-column report of a 3-legged dog – yes a handicapped mutt who had lost a race with a truck and forfeited one of his four limbs – found a lost child. The sheriff and an army of searchers failed, noted the article, but the dog, only 75% effective, found the



missing child.

The returns from my young readers have been overwhelmingly enthusiastic about this theme. More! they cry. They want more. But that's not so easy. I'm at the mercy of the newspaper industry which is attracted to war, corruption, crime, and disease rather than the uplifting genre of "Pet Finds Child."

Besides the inspirational value, there's a selfish payoff to my letter writing campaigns: I like the return mail. And maybe decades from now when I'm old and my pen trembles on the paper; and my poor old grinders are loose and wobbly, my mail will be full of attentive notes sweetened with easy to chew Hershey Bars. Bread on the waters, you know.

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**

Florida Man Facing Death Sentence Allowed to Cover Swastika Face Tattoos for Trial

(JNS) – A Florida man facing a potential death sentence was granted permission to cover a swastika tattoo under his right eye after his lawyers argued that it could bias the jury against him.

Accused of murdering two women in 2019 – one by strangulation and the other with a car – Wade Wilson, 30, allegedly confessed to his father and ex-girlfriend. He spent the last five years behind bars, his trial delayed by his first attorney's death and his escape attempt. The trial began last Monday in a Cape Floral courthouse.

Despite Judge Nicholas Thomp-

son's approval of his lawyers' request to cover up a small swastika under his right eye and other images, most of the defendant's provocative body art remained visible.

Other intimidating illustrations Wilson chose to apply to his face include lines extending up his checks from his mouth like a cut-out smile, with simulated stitches holding his face together, reminiscent of the Joker antagonist in the Batman film "The Dark Knight."

Additional charges against Wilson include grand theft auto, battery, burglary and petty theft. **HW**

ISRAEL INSIGHTS Bibi Goes to Washington... or Not

By Howard Weisband

I am writing in Jerusalem on the 28th of Iyar, corresponding to June 5 this year. It is Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day, commemorating the reunification of Jerusalem in 1967 during the Six-Day war.

This morning I again participated in a festive, meaningful morning service

lives in question as well as the life of the current Israeli Government.

Amidst all of this is a May 31 invitation extended to Prime Minister Netanyahu to address the U.S. Congress, both the House and the Senate. Initiated by the Republicans, the formal invitation fortunately came in a bipartisan manner from the four leaders of the Congress. Ironically, Senator Chuck Schumer, the Democratic Majority Leader, was a part of the invitation, reportedly in coordination with the White House, after he publicly lambasted Netanyahu several weeks ago, going as far as calling for new elections in Israel. All too quickly it was announced that Thursday, June 13 would be the date of the Prime Minister's address to Congress. However, with indications of bad staff work, either in Israel or in the U.S. or both, that date was withdrawn, noting that said date is the second day of Shavuot in the Diaspora. (In Israel, Shavuot constitutes only one day.) In addition, it was noted that President Biden would be in Italy on June 13 for a Group 7 Summit. Interestingly, both Israeli and U.S. officials may have wanted a date when the President would not be available so as to skirt the ticklish issue of whether or not there would be an invitation to the White House.

As of this writing the address has not been rescheduled, only that July is in consideration.

On June 2, Jacob Magid reported in the "Times of Israel" that: "Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu... accepted an invitation to address a joint session of Congress." He said that he was "excited for the privilege to present in front of the representatives of the American people and the entire world the truth about our just war against those who wish to kill us. The statement from the Prime Minister's Office boasted that he would be the first world leader to address a joint session of Congress for a fourth time. He is currently tied at three with Britain's wartime prime minister, Winston Churchill."

sions, neither in the media nor in political discourse.

When the trip was merely rumored, Sherwin Pomerantz wrote an opinion piece in the "Jerusalem Post" on May 28, in which he appealed to the PM: "Stay home where you are needed, keep your eye on the objectives you outlined

overlooking Jerusalem, on the Tayelet Haas Promenade, along with 1,200 other men and women, beautifully organized by the Orthodox Union.

With Israel in the midst of war, and with many of our hostages still being held by Hamas in all of its evil cynicism, today's festivity was understandably muted, even as the IDF is pushing forward in Rafah in Gaza. The moment was made more surreal, as within my prayers my phone was literally abuzz in my pocket with constant alerts of drone and rocket attacks in the north coming from Hezbollah in Lebanon, and then IDF retaliatory measures.

Such is a microcosm of our world in Israel since October 7.

Politics and international diplomacy also seem to be in turmoil. The constant question of the possibility of a pause/ ceasefire in the war in exchange for our hostages is again at play and involved in debate, with the balance of peoples' The part above regarding presenting "the truth about our just war" is spot on. The latter statement, however, is all about what I call "Bibi super ego." It should have no place in international diplomacy, nor in local governance for that matter.

Lest it be felt that the local electorate or public is supportive at this time for the Prime Minister to leave the country, even for such an important purpose, I have not found encouraging expreson October 8 but have not yet achieved, and stay out of America's domestic policies."

Moreover, the Prime Minister himself, today, June 5, during a visit to the northern border, is quoted by Tovah Lazaroff in the "Jerusalem Post," "We are prepared for very intense action in the north. One way or another, we will restore security to the north."

If so, Bibi, please ask yourself again: is it a time when you should be in Washington and not in Jerusalem?

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**

Barbra Streisand is Known for Her Songs and Movies. But this Proud Jew is also a Powerhouse Philanthropist.



Barbra Streisand, winner of the Genesis Prize, receives a glass sculpture of a shofar from Genesis Prize Foundation co-founder Stan Polovets at a ceremony in Los Angeles, June 6, 2024. Credit: Kevin Mazur/Getty Images for Genesis Prize Foundation

By Larry Luxner

(JTA) – Many people know Barbra Streisand as the awkward Jewish girl from Brooklyn who grew up to become one of the best-selling recording artists of all time – and an award-winning actor, director, producer, author, screenwriter and songwriter.

Fewer may know that Streisand is a philanthropist, advocate and activist whose charity has transformed the lives of thousands in the United States, Israel and Eastern Europe.

Over the past 37 years, the Streisand Foundation has poured tens of millions of dollars into more than 2,000 causes ranging from environmental protection to women's health. More recently, she's funded Ukrainian refugees made homeless by Russia's invasion and, since Oct. 7, has helped Israelis displaced by the war that followed Hamas's attack from Gaza.

In recognition of her extraordinary professional achievements, philanthropic generosity, and Jewish pride, Streisand was chosen in May 2023 to receive the Genesis Prize, a \$1 million award given annually to celebrate Jewish values, talent and achievement. Like the previous prize honorees – who have included Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Natan Sharansky and Michael Bloomberg – Streisand elected to allocate her prize money to an array of charities.

"I am delighted to work with The Genesis Prize Foundation to support organizations that seek to better society and our shared humanity," Streisand said upon accepting the prize. "I have always been moved by the Jewish tradition of tikkun olam, to repair the world – and I hope to join and inspire others in their own comgrants to more than 230 nonprofit programs in 31 countries.

Streisand was unanimously chosen as the prize's 10th anniversary laureate following nominations from tens of thousands of Jews around the world – a sign "of the overwhelming display of support and admiration of Barbra by global Jewry," according to Stan Polovets, the foundation's founder and CEO.

Polovets said Streisand meets and exceeds each of the three criteria established by the selection committee for its prize laureates: unparalleled professional accomplishment, contribution to humanity and pride in one's Jewish heritage.

"At a time of increased antisemitism, it is important to honor Jewish role models – especially heroes like Barbra Streisand who have stayed true to their Jewish identity despite the complications one faces today when expressing his or her pride in one's Jewish heritage, which often leads to personal attacks on social media and elsewhere," Polovets said. "It is also important to celebrate what Jews have contributed to the world and remind everyone of our collective accomplishments, strength and perseverance."

The 1983 movie release of "Yentl," a musical drama starring Streisand that tells the story of a young woman in prewar Poland who disguises herself as a man in order to study the Talmud, was a key milestone of Streisand's long career – especially for Jews. Based on the novel by Isaac Bashevis Singer, the movie received five Golden Globe nominations including best director, making



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mitment to build a better world."

She highlighted four philanthropic areas of focus: fighting climate change, women's health equity, combating disinformation and aiding Ukrainians.

This month, at a June 6 ceremony in Los Angeles, the foundation announced the recipients of the prize grants in Streisand's honor: the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, the National Resource Defense Council, the Women's Heart Alliance, the Streisand Center for Truth in the Public Sphere at UCLA, the State Leadership Project, and United24, an initiative launched by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for collecting charitable donations in support of Ukraine.

In the past decade, the Genesis Prize has leveraged the annual \$1 million award into philanthropic initiatives that, with additional donor support, have totaled more than \$50 million, including Streisand the first woman ever to be nominated and win that award.

Streisand is a winner of too many awards to count: Oscar, Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Golden Globe, National Endownent for the Arts, Peabody awards, Kennedy Center Honors, the American Film Institute's Lifetime Achievement Award, the Film Society of Lincoln Center's 40th annual Chaplin award, France's Légion d'Honneur, the National Medal of Arts from President Clinton, and others. She's also won the nation's highest civilian honor: the Presidential Medal of Freedom, from President Obama.

"Ms. Streisand has done all of this while being extremely – and publicly – proud of her Jewish heritage," Polovets said. "While many influential people in the entertainment industry told Barbra early in her career to tone down her

(See Streisand Page 12)



Streisand...

(Continued From Page 11)

Jewishness, she never did, always staying true to who she was."

This was the main theme of Streisand's 1994 performance of "I'm Still Here," in which she sings: "I've kept my clothes and kept my space / I've kept my nose to spite my face."

Streisand also has been an unabashed advocate for women's health, highlighting the gender inequality that for decades excluded women as subjects of medical research and thereby resulted in treatments not optimized for women.

"Even though heart disease has been called a man's disease, since 1984 more women have died annually from heart disease than men," Streisand said in a 2011 TEDxWomen talk, noting that only 24% of participants in cardiovascular studies were female. "For 50 years, women have been treated based on diagnostics created for men, and only a very small percentage of research dollars spent in the U.S. focus on the treatment of women with heart disease."

In 2014, the Barbra Streisand Women's Heart Center at the Cedars-Sinai Smidt Heart Institute in Los Angeles and the Ronald O. Perelman Heart Institute at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/ Weill Cornell Medical Center established the Women's Heart Alliance – the only heart-related nonprofit group that studies the impact of cardiac disease and stroke on women exclusively.

After Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Ukraine's president invited Streisand to be one of 24 goodwill ambassadors for United24, and she helped raise \$240,000 for urgent medical care for Ukrainian refugees fleeing the war. Streisand also directed a grant to the New York-based Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), in addition to two previous gifts, to help resettle Ukrainian refugees in Poland, Moldova, Romania, the United States and Israel.

Streisand's gifts "are significant because of who they came from," said HIAS CEO Mark Hetfield. "That's what makes it so meaningful."

With the November U.S. election approaching, Streisand has channeled thousands of dollars into programming aimed at countering the spread of fake news. The State Leadership Project combats online disinformation and educates voters, and UCLA's Barbra Streisand Institute challenges the widespread proliferation of lies and disinformation.

After Hamas's attack from Gaza, Streisand moved quickly to send funding to Israel through a grant to the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles's Israel in Crisis Fund. The grant was matched by The Genesis Prize Foundation.

Among the other nonprofit organizations that have benefitted from Streisand's generosity in recent years are the Center for American Progress, Planned Parenthood, Mother Jones, ProPublica, Women's Media Center, People for the American Way and the Union of Concerned Scientists.

At 82, Streisand shows no sign of letting up, continuing to use her influence, renown and philanthropy to help repair the world.

This article was sponsored by and produced in partnership with The Genesis Prize Foundation, which aims to foster Jewish identity, inspire Jewish pride and strengthen the bond between Israel and the Diaspora. This article was produced by JTA's native content team. **HW**

Bipartisan Senate Bill Targets 'Hostile Iranian Space Activities'

(JNS) – In 2018, Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) suggested that one of those behind a space laser that was causing California fires was the Jewish Rothschild family. She drew widespread ridicule for the social media post, but there are very real threats beyond the earth's atmosphere.

A bipartisan bill that Sens. Joni Ernst (R-Iowa) and Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.), co-chairs of the Abraham Accords Caucus, introduced focuses on the Iranian threat in space.

The Space Technology and Regional Security (STARS) Act "would build on the Abraham Accords by requiring the Department of Defense to develop a strategy and data-sharing agreement to protect allies and partners in the Middle East from hostile Iranian space activities," the senators state.

"This improved space and satellite security coordination would enhance U.S. space situational awareness, defend against threats from adversaries and deepen space cooperation with Israel and other allies in the Middle East," they add.

"The next step to ending Iranian aggression is by deepening the United States' international space partnerships to improve awareness of the Middle East," Ernst wrote. "After the success of the DEFEND Act and MARITIME Act in intercepting Iran-backed attacks at land and sea, the STARS Act will adapt this model to space and use 21st Century technology to deter Iran."

Rosen stated, "As Iran and its terrorist proxies escalate their aggression against Israel and continue to destabilize the Middle East, it's critical that we work with our allies in the region to bolster collaboration in all areas of defense."

The Washington-based Jewish Institute for National Security of America said it "strongly supports" the bill that the two senators put forward.

"As Iran-backed projectile attacks continue to inflict significant and tragic costs across the Middle East, spacebased sensors could help detect those launches earlier and faster," JINSA said, citing its prior reports.

"Advances by U.S. regional partners – namely Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Israel – in satellite development provide an opportunity to develop integrated space-based intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities in the Middle East," the think tank continued. HW

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