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SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

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Federation Hosts Israeli Scout Friendship Caravan, Who Deliver Hope Through Community Performances



Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein, Scout Noa, Jaclyn Marshall, Lorraine Wolf.

Memphis Jewish Federation recently hosted the Israeli Scout Friendship Caravan, and celebrated their arrival, community visits, and performances with the greater Memphis Jewish and non-Jewish community.

This year’s Caravan delivered a new show that acknowledged the crisis in Israel, while providing a message of hope for the days to come. In addition, Scouts Michael and Noa, both of whom live in Shoham, came with personal greetings for Memphis, Shoham’s sister city.

Laura Harkavy and her family served as hosts for two Scouts, and she shared her thoughts on hosting, saying, “Our family had the best time hosting Noa

and Tal. They are so enthusiastic and full of warmth and joy. We loved hearing about their families, cities, involvement in the Scouts, and their gap year. They said they really felt at home in Memphis.”

During their time in Memphis, the Scouts performed for day campers at the Memphis Jewish Community Center, residents at the Villages of Germantown and Plough Towers, and little ones at Temple Israel’s Barbara K. Lipman Early Learning Center.

“Having the Scouts at Plough Towers was such a treat!” said Leigh Hendry, executive director of Plough Towers. “Our residents found the Scouts to be engaging and very uplifting. It was



The Scouts perform for campers at Memphis Jewish Community Center.

amazing to see how much effort they put forth to give an outstanding show.”

Their final performance was featured as part of Federation’s Israel Unity Evening, which also included a prayer for the hostages, letter writing for Shoham residents, and Israeli bracelet making. More than 200 community members of all ages and backgrounds turned out for the event.

This year marks the Scout Caravan’s 51st trip to Memphis. The creation of the Israeli Scout Friendship Caravan is due, in no small part, to Art Wolff (of blessed memory), a local leader and social activist.

In early 1970, Art was serving as head Scout Master for the Jewish Boy

Scout Troop in Memphis. Art was contacted by the leader of the Israeli Scouts to help develop a program that would bring the Scouts to Memphis. A few short years later, the first Scout Caravan was formed, and regular performances in Memphis soon followed.

After the Scouts wrapped up their Memphis visit, Lorraine Wolf, Federation manager of Community Impact, said, “The turnout for the Scout performances was unprecedented. Every venue was at capacity, and the audiences could not have been more welcoming or enthusiastic. This year’s Scouts fully felt the love and appreciation of the Memphis Jewish community and the greater Memphis community.” **HW**

Ronna K. Newburger Adult Day Center Now Serving the Community 7 Days a Week!



June and adult day staff member blowing bubbles on the patio.

Since its opening in January of this year, the Ronna K. Newburger Adult Day Center has been on a rewarding journey. As of early June, the program is now fully licensed, which means it can admit more participants, and it is open seven days a week to improve convenience for community members.

The past few months have been ex-

ceedingly rewarding as the center has served several clients who come multiple days a week. The participants are often busy with art therapy, planting flowers in the garden, sitting in the rocking chairs on the patio, and doing many puzzles and games to help with brain health. Even though the schedule of the day is structured, there is room in



Elaine, an adult day participant, playing a card game.

the program to adapt to the moods and interests of the clients.

With the Adult Day Center receiving its license to be fully opened, the Home is excited to expand the program, not with just clients but also with opportunities.

Paige Taylor, director of Adult Day Center shared, “Because the program can work with more clients, we can

have more activities like chair yoga, movement classes and entertainment to visit. As we grow, we want to continue to explore more programs and opportunities with clients that come in.”

The program strives to find what is beneficial and therapeutic to the indi-

(See **Adult** Page 5)

My Teen Israel Experience



Adina Steiner on her way down from the waterfalls.
By Adina Steiner

This summer, I went to Israel with NCSY LEAD. Based in a foster village in Afula, NCSY LEAD was an incredible opportunity to both help myself grow and help encourage the growth of others.

The summer we spent was meaningful, as we got to help children who needed it. These children needed something to brighten up their summer, and our group came just in time to lift spirits.

In addition to being meaningful, the summer was fun too. We went on exciting trips and had bonding moments with both each other and the children.

Being in a foster village in Afula was a learning experience. Since we lived in an Israeli house, we learned a lot of Hebrew and experienced the way Israelis lived. While it may have been hard to adjust to some of the new patterns, such as having meat for lunch, and speaking Hebrew all the time, by the end of the summer it was hard to turn back. The kids and adults in the village were all patient with us and encouraged us in our new setting.

By the time we left, it was noticeably clear that the kids were happier than when we arrived. The head of the village thought it would be very meaningful to have girls from America come to change the kids’ summer, and this past summer it finally happened.

Just like he [the village head] thought, these kids were quick to warm up to us and invite us into their homes. We brought light to the village that had been lost over the hard year. We played

games with the kids and led activities, brightening both their days and ours.

Over the summer there were also many learning opportunities to gain experience about being a better leader and a better person. We had leadership workshops every few days, which taught us steps to becoming a better leader, including honesty, love, and humility.

We learned about past Jewish leaders and what they did that made them incredible leaders, and how we could emulate their leadership. We also learned about a sefer called Michtav Me’Eliahu, teaching us the importance of balancing giving and taking.

We had meaningful mishmars (evening learning sessions) every Thursday night, D’var Torahs, and even a gedolim (great Jewish leaders) circle, where we would all hear stories about a different gadol (great Jewish leader) every night.

Shabbos was fun and meaningful. We bonded with each other and our madrichot (leaders) with games and activities, heard interesting D’var Torahs, and sang zemirot (songs) at our meals.

The day trips were always fun; many times we would be nervous about what was to come for the day, but we always left with a smile as all our worries were quickly washed away. Even though it was constantly hot, we had lots of water and always wore hats on our heads.

With these protections and precautions, we were able to enjoy the fun activities that LEAD planned for us. One place we went was Tzfat, a bustling city in Israel where we immersed ourselves in the true feel of Israel. We hiked up to Tzfat’s Citadel and learned about the history of Tzfat, and why it is such an amazing place for the Jewish people. Through this trip, I learned a lot there about Israel and its people.

Thank you to Memphis Jewish Federation’s Lemsky Endowment Fund for helping make my NCSY LEAD Israel journey possible for me.

Adina Steiner, daughter of Chaya Miriam and Zachary Steiner, is a rising senior at 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 NCSY LEAD 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 2025 will open in November 2024. **HW**

THE Hebrew Watchman

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7/11/2024



Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. July 12, 2024 / 6 Tammuz, 5784 7:57 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. July 13, 2024 / 7 Tammuz, 5784 8:58 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Chukat

Abraham Marley, Grandson of Bob Marley, Celebrates Bar Mitzvah

(JNS) – Abraham Marley, the grandson of renowned Jamaican reggae musician Bob Marley, became a bar mitzvah recently.

“I share this photo of Abraham and I from his celebration of becoming a man,” the young man’s father, Ziggy Marley, wrote in mid-June. “According to the ancient tradition, he has reached

that age of responsibility and change.”

The bar mitzvah boy’s mother, Orly Agai Marley, is Israeli and has Iranian-Jewish ancestry, per Israeli media. She was “formerly a vice president at William Morris Agency, now the head of Ziggy’s record label,” “Vogue” reported.

One of Bob Marley’s most celebrated songs is “Exodus,” which includes the lyrics, “Send us another brother Moses.”

On a tour of Israel in 2018, the family celebrated the bat mitzvah of Judah – Abraham’s sister – Ziggy Marley told “Caribbean Heritage Magazine.”

“When asked about Judah’s reaction to being in the ceremony as well as growing up in an interfaith household, Marley, who is Rastafarian and his wife, Jewish, says, ‘My life, how I live, can’t be defined,’” reported the magazine. “I don’t want to be defined by what people’s idea of what things are supposed to be. Yes, I am Rasta, but I define myself.”

“When she sees my life, she doesn’t see a Rastafarian, or a Jewish life or whatever stereotypical thing that means,” he said of his daughter. “We don’t connect to people’s ideas of what things are supposed to be. We just live how we live. We live with love, and this is what she sees.” **HW**

Have a Simcha?
share with The Hebrew Watchman readers
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Camp Magic

By Rabbi Sarit Horwitz

On Sunday I returned from two weeks at Ramah Darom, where I was teaching both campers and staff, and spending time with our Memphis campers there. It was exhilarating; the energy at camp was powerful, and I was so grateful to receive hugs from our Memphis campers whenever they saw me. I was reminded of the magic of being at summer camp and the power that it has to help shape Jewish identity. (I was also reminded that I am not as young as I used to be when I spent significant time at camp.) I want to share with you just a few of the beautiful moments.

I taught an elective for entering 10th graders about Jewish perspectives on disabilities, access, and inclusion. I had three of our teens in my cohort, and they studied texts thoughtfully, engaged with ideas with empathy and a full heart, and shared deep ideas on how to make our societies and Jewish communities more open to those with various disabilities.

One camper from Beth Sholom reflected that while of course they enjoyed their friends and all their activities, they also deepened their relationship to prayer. I watched as this teen led services for their edah (unit) often; their unit head approached me to tell me how big of an asset they were to their unit.

I watched one of our young teens

perform in a camp performance of the show “Frozen,” and in Ramah tradition, it was entirely in Hebrew. With a 2-minute solo, she confidently and beautifully belted out her Hebrew song in front of hundreds of people as Olaf.

Our youth are doing Memphis and Beth Sholom proud.

I facilitated conversations with campers and some of the Israeli Mishlachat (the delegation of Israeli staff at camp), many of whom had just completed their army service. They spoke powerfully about their experience in Israel and in the army, they shared complicated nuanced feelings about their perceptions of the government and how the war has been handled, and they also shared their unending love for their country. I was so glad our campers were able to hear, firsthand, these perspectives.

I am so grateful that I was able to spend this special time at camp. I encourage families to send their kids to Jewish camp and being there reinforced its impact. Allowing our youth to independently create Jewish experiences, to foster their own connection to Judaism, and to become leaders of their own micro-communities at camp - these moments are priceless and will shape them for their entire Jewish lives. I only wish all of you could’ve been with me to see the magic. **HW**

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is Monday–Friday at 11:30 a.m. All programs start at 12:15 p.m. Monthly Luncheon is at noon.

Monday, July 15
Speaker: Tim Flesner with Home Helpers

Topic: How to Prevent Scams
According to the Better Business Bureau, scams involving seniors is on a tremendous rise. Please come hear this talk to learn how to protect yourself and your family from this ongoing threat. The talk is open to the general public.

Wednesday, July 17
Special Program
Jeffrey Day, Magician

Magician Jeffrey Day demonstrates what audiences saw from as long as 150 years ago during The Golden Age of Magic (1837-1901). Most magicians have not seen or heard of the illusions that you will see in Jeffrey’s one man show, “The Mesmerist.” His Magic is perfect for all ages. The seniors will have their own personal and up-close Magic Show. Prepare to be MESMERIZED. It will be a lot of fun for all. Reservations are required the day before as the senior lunchroom can only hold so many.



Magician Jeffrey Day

Monday, July 22
Ice Cream Social featuring Trader Joe’s Special Parve Ice Cream Treats! Come enjoy a delicious lunch and have a nice dessert too!

Wednesday, July 24
Lunch & Learn w/ Rabbi Ross Levy
Rabbi Levy was born and raised in Nashville, where his family attends The Temple Congregation Ohabai Sholom, a sister Reform congregation of Temple Israel. He credits his passion for Judaism to two guiding perspectives: childhood summers spent at Camp Barney Medintz in Georgia and his high school years as an active local, regional, and international leader in BBYO.

A graduate of The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., Rabbi Levy received a degree in Religion and Philosophy and immediately enrolled in Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion. While studying at HUC-JIR’s Cincinnati campus, Rabbi Levy served as a student pulpit rabbi and intern in cities including Cincinnati, Lafayette, La., Nashville, Tenn., and Boulder, Co. He also spent one summer on staff at URJ Henry S. Jacobs Camp. Rabbi Levy, will speak on Treasure Trove: The Wonders of the Cairo Genizah.

Reservations for this Lunch & Learn session are required by Tuesday, July 23 by 1 p.m. Space is limited.

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

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Tree of Life Synagogue Targeted with Bomb Threat

(JNS) – The Pittsburgh synagogue that saw 11 Jewish worshippers shot and killed on Oct. 27, 2018, in the deadliest attack on Jews in U.S. history, became the target of a bomb threat earlier last week that police have determined was a hoax.

The incident directed at the Tree of Life*Or L’Simcha Synagogue last Tuesday is being investigated by local law enforcement and the FBI. The FBI added that it was not aware of any credible threats against the synagogue.

Pittsburgh police spokesperson Cara Cruz called the email “a hoax in line with other similar threats against synagogues around the country” and that officers “very quickly determined” it as such. Law enforcement did not describe any connection between this recent threat and the murders.

In May, Melanie Harris received a 32-month sentence for a campaign of harassment against members of the synagogue.

Robert Bowers, the lone gunman convicted last year for the mass shooting, sits on death row. **HW**

Adult...
(Continued From Page 1)



Adult day participants working on a puzzle together.

vidual and use those ideas to tailor the program to the different interests.

The Adult Day Center has seen growth not only in participation, but friends and families have seen positive changes in their loved ones. Families and friends have shared that they have seen a significant difference in social skills, mood and sleep patterns. For example, June, one adult day participant, has shown a greater interest in attending church and events with families again since starting the program, and Elaine, another participant, enjoys social gatherings more, engaging in conversations happily.

Paige shared, “Most often families will come back to me and say they noticed that the clients have an openness to ideas and experiences that they haven’t before. Improvements in mood where – without intervention – there is typically an increase in depression. Those are the improve-

ments we want to see and strive for.”

In an effort to support caregivers as well, the center has partnered with Temple Cares at Temple Israel to host a monthly caregiver support group called Caregiver Café. The casual and therapeutic meetings are held at the Home and are open to anyone in the community to attend for free. For more information, feel free to contact Baylee Less-Eiseman, director of development, at bless@memphisjewishhome.org.

Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab is a not-for-profit nursing home, Jewish in character and environment, dedicated to providing the highest level of care possible with dignity, compassion, and professionalism. Only through the help of generous donors is the organization able to care for those in need. Find more information at www.memphisjewishhome.org/giving. **HW**

WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT



Rebecca Sarah Feldbaum and Joshua Evan Kahane

Rebecca Sarah Feldbaum and Joshua Evan Kahane were married June 9, 2024, at Memphis Botanic Garden.

The ceremony was officiated by Rabbi Levi Klein of Chabad Lubavitch of Tennessee. Rebecca is the daughter of Sylvia and Bruce Feldbaum of Memphis, Tenn.

She attended Solomon Schechter (Bornblum) Jewish Community School, the University of Florida, and graduated with a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Touro University in New York City.

She is currently employed as an outpatient orthopedic physical therapist in Manhattan.

Joshua is the son of Rhonda and Hillel Kahane of Huntington, N.Y.

He attended Brandeis University and obtained his law degree from the University of Pennsylvania.

He is a former Assistant United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York and is currently employed at an international law firm.

The couple met in 2021 and reside in New York, N.Y. **HW**

New House Bill Would Impose ‘Lofty Financial Punishments’ on Schools Lenient on Jew-Hatred

Schools that receive tax benefits “should be doing more than simply giving a slap on the wrist to perpetrators of hate,” said Rep. Nicole Malliotakis.

(JNS) – Colleges and universities that receive “generous” tax benefits from the federal government “should be doing more than simply giving a slap on the wrist to perpetrators of hate,” according to Rep. Nicole Malliotakis (R-N.Y.).

The congresswoman introduced legislation earlier last week “to hold these institutions accountable with lofty financial punishments that would encourage them to investigate and crack down on instances of antisemitism and help foster a safer academic environment for all students, regardless of their gender, race or religion,” she stated.

The University Accountability Act, H.R.8914, was co-sponsored by Rep. Elise Stefanik (R-N.Y.), chair of the House Republican Conference, and nine other House members. A member of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, Stefanik has been at the forefront of the House’s investigations of schools for allegedly not doing enough to combat antisemitism on campus.

“I will continue to lead the efforts ridding our higher education institutions of antisemitism,” Stefanik stated. “Hardworking taxpayers have no interest in funding institutions that fail to protect their students from antisemitic rhetoric and behavior and this bill puts their tax-exempt status on the chopping block.”

“Universities have a responsibility to protect their students from violence and discrimination and instead we’re seeing a disturbing increase in antise-

mitic attacks and rhetoric on college campuses,” Malliotakis said.

Although violations of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 “can result in the loss of federal funds,” they often result “in a mere corrective action that would bring the college or university back into

compliance,” Stefanik’s office stated.

“The University Accountability Act would require colleges and universities that meet the penalty criteria to pay a fine of either 5% of the school’s aggregate administrative compensation as reported on the school’s Form 990,

or \$100,000, whichever is greater,” the congresswoman’s office said.

“After three civil rights violations, the Internal Revenue Service would be required to review the college or university’s tax-exempt status for possible revocation,” it added. **HW**

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Netanyahu, Biden Discuss Hamas Hostage-Release Proposal



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu meets with U.S. President Joe Biden in Tel Aviv, Oct. 18, 2023. Credit: Miriam Alster/Flash90.

(JNS) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last Thursday evening informed U.S. President Joe Biden of his decision to dispatch a delegation to continue negotiations to free 120 hostages held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

The prime minister “reiterated the principles that Israel is committed to, especially its commitment to end the war only after all of its goals have been achieved,” according to an Israeli read-out of the call.

Netanyahu has defined his government’s war goals as returning all of the hostages, eliminating Hamas’s military and governing capabilities and ensuring that Gaza will never again constitute a threat.

Last Wednesday, Hamas presented proposed changes to the hostages-for-ceasefire framework outlined by Biden in May.

Jerusalem had immediately accepted the original Biden proposal, which Netanyahu stressed does not call for a permanent end to the war sparked by

Hamas’s Oct. 7 massacre of some 1,200 people.

Hamas rejected the Biden proposal, demanding a “permanent” end to the conflict and the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

During their call last Thursday, Biden “welcomed [Netanyahu’s] decision to authorize his negotiators to engage with U.S., Qatari and Egyptian mediators in an effort to close out the deal,” per a White House readout.

Biden also “reaffirmed his ironclad commitment to Israel’s security including in the face of threats from Iranian-backed terrorist groups such as Lebanese Hezbollah.”

Finally, Netanyahu congratulated Biden and the American people on their Independence Day.

“Without the U.S. there would be no freedom in the world,” the prime minister said, while Biden noted that “without Israel there would be no security for Jews in the world,” according to the Israeli statement. **HW**

Israeli Treated for Brain-Eating Amoeba in Second-Ever Case



Family members of Hallel Yaniv and Yagel Yaniv, victims of terrorism in Huwara, near Nablus, meet with patients who received organ donations from them, at Rabin Medical Center-Beilinson Hospital in Petach Tikvah, June 18, 2023. Credit: Avshalom Sassoni/Flash90.

(JNS) – An Israeli patient is being treated for *Naegleria fowleri*, an extremely rare brain-eating amoeba. It is the second case ever reported in Israel and the first time it has been discovered in a living patient.

The 26-year-old male was admitted last Tuesday to Hasharon Hospital at Rabin Medical Center in Petach Tikvah with fever, headache and vomiting. His condition rapidly deteriorated and following a series of comprehensive tests, the diagnosis was made.

Last Wednesday evening, he was transferred to the intensive care unit within the neurological department at Beilinson Hospital, which is also part of Rabin Medical Center.

The *Naegleria fowleri* amoeba thrives in warm waters ranging from 35 to 42 degrees Celsius (95 to 108 degrees Fahrenheit). Only in rare cases is a human infected.

“This disease is so rare, and it is often

only identified post-mortem. The rapid diagnosis by Dr. Tamar Gutsman, head of the infectious disease unit at HaSharon Hospital, and the microbiological laboratory at Beilinson Hospital, allowed us to start treatment quickly with several medications,” said Beilinson Hospital’s Dr. Ayana Dvir.

“Our team is working around the clock to save this young patient’s life. His condition is critical but stable, he is still in life-threatening danger. Given that this is only the second case in Israel and the global cases are not many, the diagnosis is even more remarkable. Currently, we are focused on saving the patient’s life, but there is no doubt that this case will be studied further,” she added.

The first case of *Naegleria fowleri* in Israel was diagnosed in August 2022 at Poriya Medical Center near Tiberias in a patient who had died. The very rare amoeba is only diagnosed about 10 times per year in the United States. **HW**



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In ‘Thelma,’ a Jewish Grandma is an Action Hero



Credit: Magnolia pictures

By Kylie Bolter

This originally appeared on HeyAlma.com. Reprinted with permission.

Have you ever wondered what would happen if your Bubbe was given a gun and told that her eldest grandson is in trouble? It would probably look something like the upcoming comedy “Thelma.”

When 93-year-old Thelma Post is scammed over the phone, she goes on a mission to get her money back no matter the risk.

About 10 minutes into watching this movie, I decided this was a Jewish family. I could tell Thelma knew her way around a mahjong game and didn’t play when it came to the High Holidays. She felt like the women in my life who raised me: stubborn, opinionated and unmistakably Jewish.

Throughout the film, I was delighted by every detail that revealed I wasn’t projecting; this family was definitely part of the tribe. Judaism wasn’t necessarily important to the storyline, but those glimpses let audiences into this family’s world and helped further define dynamics. The culture was woven into the details: the perfect combination

of sincerity and humor, fear disguised as sarcasm and love hidden behind eye rolls. So many small moments in the movie made me feel it was as though I was visiting home.

Real events inspired writer and director Josh Margolin for his debut feature film. After his actual grandmother was scammed, Margolin began imagining what would happen if his feisty, quick-witted Bubbe sought revenge. This idea developed into an original heartwarming film that takes a nuanced look at aging. “I wanted to treat her like the star of her own action movie – to celebrate her spirit and tenacity and literalize her fight for what’s left of her autonomy,” Margolin said to Sundance. “I’ve always loved action movies – and my grandma – combining the two just made sense to me.”

In “Thelma,” Academy Award nominee June Squibb stars in her first leading role as Thelma Post, a spitfire matriarch adjusting to life alone in the years following her husband’s passing. Her grandson, Danny, keeps her company by driving her to appointments and teaching her how to use the computer.

The two have grown close while he struggles to enter adulthood.

When Thelma receives a call from someone she believes to be her grandson, saying that he has been in a terrible accident and needs \$10,000 wired to him, she doesn’t think twice about helping. After realizing it was a common scam, Thelma is adamant about getting her money back, undeterred by the pleas from her family.

Danny, along with Thelma’s daughter, Gail, and son-in-law Alan are simply happy she is safe. It’s not so simple for Thelma – it’s the principle that keeps her angry. If you’re going to piss off a Jewish woman, just know that she won’t forget it. Thelma throws caution to the wind and embarks on a glorious revenge journey to get her money back. After all, if she’s going to die anyway, she might as well have one last adventure.

Thelma reunites with an old friend, Ben, played by Richard Roundtree in his final performance, initially only for his motorized scooter, but eventually she convinces him to join her on her quest. Ben is living in an elder care facility, which Thelma looks down upon despite Ben’s insistence that the companionship is nice and the classes are interesting. The chemistry between the two was delightful to watch, showing that good writing can defy what we expect an audience to want. With only platonic and familial love as anchors, two nonagenarians don’t just hold audiences’ attention – they captivate.

Fred Hechinger is charming as Danny, a boy not quite ready to be a man. Parker Posey and Clark Gregg play Danny’s fretting parents, Gail and Alan. When Thelma disappears, their anxious and overbearing attention shifts from Danny to Thelma, which plays silly but is one of the film’s prominent themes. The role reversal between parents and children as they age is both the natural way of life and a horrible loss of autonomy.

Near the film’s end, my assumptions were finally confirmed, when Thelma asks her grandson if his girlfriend can be

buried in a Jewish cemetery. Danny responds by saying he hasn’t had the burial conversation yet and Thelma offers him extra plots in New York if he wants them. Alone in the theater, I laughed while tears ran down my cheeks. Not only was this a near-verbatim conversation I’ve had with my own grandmothers, but it was a beautiful depiction of the love that outlasts life. Mortality isn’t Thelma’s concern; she’s worried she won’t be able to help her grandson after she’s gone.

All of the crucial elements required of a good action movie are included in this film: a high-speed chase, explosions and even a hacking sequence (Thelma logging into her online bank account). Squibb amazingly performed the majority of her stunts, including a chase scene on a motorized scooter. According to the cast, the delight on Thelma’s face might just actually be June’s. She is not Tom Cruise – she’s better.

The comedic juxtaposition between high-stakes action and the elderly protagonist could easily become over the top, but this isn’t the case. Squibb’s performance keeps the world grounded and sincere without sacrificing laughs. The suspense is only heightened when a simple fall could be as detrimental as an explosion. Getting out of a chair is as much of a danger to Thelma as a gun-wielding conman, and both scenarios will have viewers holding their breath. The film, different from the “Jason Bourne”-esque experience, sheds light on issues people face while aging including the quiet grief, frustrations and feelings of indignity or infantilization. The film empathetically portrays these issues while deftly balancing a lighthearted atmosphere.

“Thelma” is a joyous reminder that life is short, so we must make art, laugh a lot and hug our mishpacha tight.

“Thelma” was a fan favorite at the Sundance Film Festival and was bought by Magnolia Pictures. The film had a theatrical release on June 21. **HW**

Sotheby’s Auctions ‘Head Study of a Young Woman’ Following Painting’s Return to Jewish Heirs

(JNS) – An artwork created from 1615-1620 and stolen by German Nazis in 1940 from a Jewish-owned bank’s collection sold on July 3 for a substantial sum following the return to its owners’ heirs.

Sotheby’s auctioned “Head Study of a Young Woman,” a primarily brown portrait featuring a woman with pink cheeks and painted by Jacob (“Jacques”) Jordaens. The painting sold for £360,000,

which equates to \$460,800.

The recovered work is the first to be sold by heirs of shareholders of Lisser & Rosenkranz Bank.

They seek a further 2,500 drawings and 50 paintings that had been held as collateral for a loan to Franz Koenigs, a Dutch collector. The primary shareholders in the bank were Siegfried Kramarsky and Salomon Flörsheim, also Jewish.

Those representing the work’s heirs say they suspect that Luftwaffe head Hermann Göring may have given the painting to Adolf Hitler on his birthday in 1941 or 1942.

Also a draughtsman, and a designer of tapestries and prints, Jordaens, lived from 1593 to 1678. Critics and historians regard him as a key 17th-century Flemish artist known for his scenes of

The 17th-century work sold for \$460,800.

peasant life.

Another work by Jordaens, “Saint Martin Healing the Possessed Man,” sold for \$4.73 million in a Sotheby auction in 2016, the highest price one of his paintings has generated. **HW**



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Housing Market Trends: Are They Helping or Hurting the Economy?

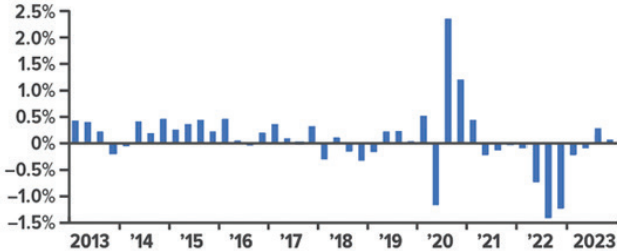
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In an unusual twist, U.S. home values climbed to an annual record of \$389,800 in 2023, even as mortgage rates rose to the highest levels in a generation. The median price of existing homes rose 4.4% for the twelve months ended in December 2023 to reach \$382,600. (Buying activity and prices tend to peak during the summer and tick back down when the market slows later in the year.)¹ Near the end of October 2023, the average rate for a 30-year fixed mortgage climbed to a 23-year high of nearly 8%, before retreating a bit.² But despite sky-high borrowing costs, buyer demand exceeded the supply of homes for sale. As a result, sellers generally fared well, but 2023 was a challenging year for would-be homebuyers.

A market in limbo
Rising mortgage rates and home prices made it harder to afford a home, causing many buyers to be priced out of their favorite neighborhoods and forcing others out of the market altogether. In August 2023, housing affordability dropped to its worst levels since 1985.³ Many people who already own homes have been reluctant to sell and move because they would have to finance their next homes at much higher rates than they currently pay – a conundrum that has worsened the inventory shortage. This persistent lack of inventory combined with low affordability has cut deeply into home sales. For all of 2023, existing home sales fell to the lowest level in nearly 30 years (4.09 million).⁴ An estimated 668,000 new homes were sold in 2023, an increase of 4.2% from the previous year, but new construction accounts for less than 15% of the total market.⁵

Housing and GDP
Housing contributes directly to the nation’s gross domestic product (GDP) in two ways: spending on housing services and residential fixed investment. Housing services include rental payments, imputed rent (the estimated rental value of owner-occupied homes), and utility payments. Residential fixed investment includes new home construction, residential remodeling, production of manufactured homes, and brokers’ fees. In the fourth quarter of 2023, housing accounted for \$4.4 trillion of U.S. GDP on a seasonally adjusted annual basis or 15.9% (12.0% for housing services and 3.9% for residential fixed investment).⁶ New home construction stimulates local economies by creating higher-wage jobs and boosting property tax receipts. Nationally (and locally), it benefits other types of businesses as well, by spurring production and hiring in industries that provide raw materials like lumber or that manufacture or sell building tools, equipment, and home components such as windows, cabinets, appliances, flooring, and fixtures. That’s why the Census Bureau’s report on housing starts – which were up 7.6% from the previous year’s level in December 2023 – is considered a leading economic indicator.⁷ **Home Building Stages a Recovery**
In the third quarter of 2023, residential fixed investment added to U.S. GDP for the first time since Q1 2021. But in Q4, an increase in new residential structures was offset by a decrease in brokers’ fees.

Residential fixed investment: contribution to change in GDP



Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2024

Consumers are the key
The health of the housing market can also affect economic activity in other industries indirectly. For example, the “wealth effect” refers to how shifts in home prices, up or down, can influence consumer finances, confidence, and behavior. When home values and equity are rising, consumers who own homes tend to feel wealthier and may be more comfortable spending their money. The “transaction effect” describes the increase in consumer spending that typically occurs when people move into new homes, which tends to generate demand for goods and services such as appliances, furniture, electronics, home improvement, and landscaping. On the other hand, extremely low affordability might influence younger consumers in a different way. When buying a home seems unattainable, it may cause them to give up on saving for that goal and shift to spending on other things. Given housing’s importance to the broader economy, there is some concern that a prolonged period of high interest rates could continue to constrain home building and sales, cause home prices to fall, and damage consumer confidence. When the Federal Reserve begins to cut interest rates, mortgages should gradually follow suit, but that’s not likely to happen until GDP growth slows and inflation is no longer seen as the larger threat.

- 1, 4) National Association of Realtors, 2024
- 2) Freddie Mac, 2023
- 3) National Association of Realtors via Haver Analytics, 2023
- 5, 7) U.S. Census Bureau, 2024
- 6) U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2024

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Netanyahu Honors Brother Yoni, Who Fell Rescuing Hostages at Entebbe

(JNS) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his wife, Sara, and their younger son, Avner, attended a ceremony last Friday at the Mount Herzl Military Cemetery in Jerusalem honoring Lt. Col. Yonatan Netanyahu, who died while commanding soldiers in the operation to free 102 hostages at Entebbe airport in Uganda on July 4, 1976. The prime minister and his brother, Ido, recited the kaddish mourning prayer and laid a memorial wreath on the grave of their older brother. They laid an additional wreath together with Yonatan’s IDF General Staff Reconnaissance Unit (Sayeret Matkal) colleagues. Also attending the ceremony were Knesset Speaker Amir Ohana, Cabinet ministers, MKs, former and current IDF commanders and friends of the family. On June 27, 1976, Arab and German terrorists hijacked an Air France plane en route from Israel to Paris with 248 passengers onboard and forced it to fly to Uganda’s main airport in Entebbe. Uganda’s government provided cover for the hijackers, who were welcomed personally by dictator Idi Amin. Initially, the terrorists separated the Israelis and Jews from the larger group of hostages and forced them into another room. On the first day, 47 non-Israeli hostages were released. The next day, 101 more non-Israeli hostages were allowed to leave. Dora Bloch, 74, an Israeli-British dual

citizen, was taken to Mulago Hospital in Kampala after choking on a chicken bone. After the raid, Uganda Army officers murdered her and doctors and nurses who apparently tried to intervene. More than 100 Israeli and Jewish passengers remained as the hijackers threatened to kill them if their demands were not met. Israel’s response was “Operation Thunderbolt,” led by Lt. Col. Yonatan Netanyahu. His 29-man Sayeret Matkal unit was given the primary task of attacking the airport terminal and rescuing the hostages. A paratroopers force was tasked with securing the civilian airfield, clearing and securing the runways, and protecting and fueling the Israeli planes. A group from the Golani Infantry Brigade secured the C-130 Hercules aircraft for the hostages’ evacuation, getting as close as possible to the terminal to board the hostages. Another elite commando unit was tasked with destroying the squadron of MiG fighter planes on the ground to prevent possible interception by the Ugandan Air Force and hold off hostile ground forces. The operation took place under cover of night and rescued 102 hostages. Yoni Netanyahu was killed and five Israeli commandos were wounded. “Operation Thunderbolt” was renamed “Operation Yonatan” in his memory. [HW](#)

Hostages’ Family Members Say U.N. Head Guterres Listens to Their Plight



Oded Lifshitz, 83. Credit: Courtesy of the Hostages and Missing Families Forum. By Mike Wagenheim

(JNS) – The head of the United Nations has been assailed by a range of Israeli officials since the Hamas massacre in southern Israel on Oct. 7 for any number of diplomatic offenses, mischaracterizations, false assessments and perceived bias, starting with an implied justification for the assault in the weeks after.

But the families of those being held hostage in Gaza since Oct. 7 say that António Guterres, the U.N. secretary-general, has provided an open and willing ear, and is doing what he can to address their concerns, despite his limited options and power.

Regular Friday-morning protests by the hostages’ families and their supporters outside of Guterres’s Manhattan residence subsided months ago.

“Every time he opened the door, and they were there, he would stop, and he would speak to them. These are people in distress, people who hurt,” Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson for Guterres, told JNS.

While those protests were halted, families of the estimated 120 hostages still being held captive in the Gaza Strip (though a percentage is said not to be alive) have continued to meet with Guterres, often during publicly unannounced sitdowns. The last known such meeting came the week of June 2.

“We need to understand that the secretary-general has no real influence or real power. He is a ceremonial figure at the end of the day, so he can’t offer much. It’s not like he can release the hostages,” Moshe Lavi, brother-in-law of hostage Omri Miran, told JNS.

Still, Lavi, who has sat in some of those meetings with Guterres, says what he can do is use the pulpit that comes with being the head of the world’s largest global diplomatic organization to shape the narrative and define his priorities.

“What he can do – and he does – is tweet often or release official statements with the U.N. stamp about the need to immediately release the hostages unconditionally,” Lavi continued. “And what he does as well is engage in diplomacy behind closed doors, specifically with Qatar, because he has close connections to the leaders of that country.”

Daniel Lifshitz, the grandson of 83-year-old hostage Oded Lifshitz – one of the oldest remaining Israeli captives – also had his 85-year-old grandmother, Yocheved Lifshitz, taken by terrorists

“He has to say that the end of the war is the release of the hostages,” the grandson of a hostage still being held by Hamas in the Gaza Strip tells JNS.

from Kibbutz Nir Oz on Oct. 7. She was released in a hostage/security prisoner exchange in October.

Lifshitz said the families asked Guterres early on in the war – when the chief’s sole focus seemed to be the welfare of the Palestinians in Gaza – to speak more about the hostages’ plight.

“At some points now, he tweets just about the release of the hostages,” said Lifshitz. “I can say that he helped us as well with arranging some meetings of the U.N. ambassadors of the Arab countries. Some refused. Some said yes.”

Guterres, according to Lifshitz, facilitated meetings with the Qataris and the Emiratis. A meeting requested by the hostages’ families with the Saudis through Guterres was not granted by Riyadh.

‘He needs to take some more actions’

In talks with the families, Guterres discussed prior experience he had dealing with two detained colleagues when he served as the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. One was held in Chechnya for more than a year, with another held in Pakistan for six months, according to a Guterres spokesperson. Guterres has shared his dealing with the trauma of the families of those detained workers.

Lavi described the nature of the families’ meetings with Guterres as “always positive yet somber.”

He added that the families have tried to separate their personal mission from the tensions in the broader U.N.-Israeli relationship.

“We’re not diplomats. We’re not the Israeli delegation to the U.N. And so, we engage only on the issue that matters to us, which is the release of the hostages,” said Lavi. “Our goal is to engage stakeholders from every possible institution – to call for the release of the hostages and work behind closed doors to promote their release.”

Ultimately, Lifshitz told JNS that regardless of the U.N. head’s feelings on Israel and the war, it’s in his own interests to push for the hostages’ release if he truly wants to bring an end to the hostilities. **HW**

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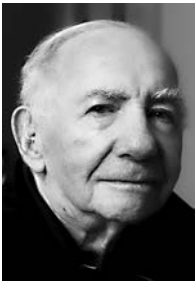
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NATURE: The Sun



*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

You can learn a lot from your rabbi – you can also learn a lot from nature. To watch a mama cat handle its young may be as informative as a chapter in Genesis. The wired care and affection she exhibits is as strong a proof of a supreme creator as Genesis. She is a prime exhibit of the proof that somewhere, somehow a power started and maintains the engine of life we call the world. Put a potted bulb, say an amaryllis, in a sunny window. When the warmth of the sundown the green shoot from the Earth, it seeks the sun. It leans into the sun. And only by continuing to turn it can you keep it straight. Oddly, this plant – with no brain like us or even the cat – seeks its power source. In a way it has no independence. If it leans away from the sun – if it’s removed from the

sun, it dies or is horribly distorted. So is it with us with the exception that we often cannot find the sun or since we are endowed with freewill, choose the dark – not the sunlight. Why would a perfect G-d bless nature with independence – some call it instinct – and curse us with the ability to make the wrong choices? Some mothers don’t quite match up to the instinctual maternity of the cat. The answer to that conundrum partially answers the age-old question that our forefathers must have discussed around the campfires of Sinai. Why did a pure-hearted G-d create evil as well as good? Why couldn’t man, like the amaryllis, always seek the sun. Because, say the rabbis, He gave us the gift of free choice. Because life is a trial. Because every day presents choices. And you do not grow in a sunlit window, but in a bottomless, topless, side less, timeless neighborhood of infinity. Your only guide is the pitifully scant holy books that confusedly, imperfectly point to the sun. The interpretation is variable as the Talmud witnesses. If all the light beamed from the sun lit our path, the trial would be unfair – as instinctive as the mother cat purring and feeding her young. They all do it perfectly. There

are no evil cat mothers – there are no super mothers, either. And maybe trees are not smart nor good mothers, because they grow a seed with wings that carry them away from the shade of their mother tree into sunlit meadows. There is no consciousness in nature – only programmed behavior. However, if life is a trial implying some verdict in the end, Judaism is imperfect – not erroneous in its G-d view – just imperfect. Why? Because we really don’t believe in the punishment – the Hell – of Christianity. (And even their concept of perdition has not the strength of yesteryear. It has lost its credibility. Heaven? Depends on which rabbi you ask. Maimonides, a major leaguer, says sure. But if you read the Humash carefully, you notice that G-d, when in a fit of anger (we have made Him anthropomorphically moody like us), talks about punishing your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, not you personally. Implying strongly that that’s the only way He can get at you. That’s the way He has made the Cosmos within which His creatures lie and cheat and steal and kill as well as love one another. If Heaven and Hell don’t exist – or even if they do, and we don’t believe it –

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then it follows that life is not a trial. But we must have meaning. And if the world is purposely imperfect as it must be by a perfect G-d: we fall back on that sturdy, but ubiquitous explanation of our mission. Tikuun Olam: repair this flawed world. If by saving one person you save the world, it follows that if you find the sun for yourself, you’ve warmed the world. So, seek the sun. *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*

Keir Starmer, Who Prioritized Fighting Antisemitism in Labour Party, Becomes Britain’s PM After Landslide Win

By Ben Sales

(JTA) – Keir Starmer, a centrist who worked to fight antisemitism in his party, has become the United Kingdom’s prime minister following Labour’s landslide victory in British elections last Thursday. With nearly all results in, Labour had won 412 seats out of the 650 in parliament, ending 14 years of Conservative rule in the U.K. The defeat for the Conservatives, who won just 121 as of last Friday morning, is the worst in its nearly two-century history. Reform UK, a populist right-wing party, won a handful of seats, while the centrist Liberal Democrats won more than 70.

Several of the Conservative Party’s senior figures lost their races, including the U.K.’s Jewish defense secretary, Grant Shapps, who took the post less than a year ago, and former Prime Minister Liz Truss, who held the post briefly in 2022. The incumbent Conservative prime minister, Rishi Sunak, conceded the race. Starmer took the helm of Labour following its electoral defeat in 2019 under Jeremy Corbyn, a staunchly left-wing leader and harsh critic of Israel. Under Corbyn’s leadership, he and the party faced repeated allegations of antisemitism, and lost Jewish supporters in droves.

Starmer, whose wife, Victoria, is Jewish, worked to pull the party more to the center, including by making a concerted effort to root out antisemitism. Labour blocked Corbyn from running with the party and implemented the recommendations of a government commission investigating antisemitism in its ranks. Corbyn ran and won as an independent in his constituency this year. “I’ve changed the Labour Party,” Starmer wrote on X earlier last Thursday. “If you put your trust in me by voting Labour, I will change the country.” A poll of British Jews found that they

were expected to vote for Labour in slightly higher numbers than the overall electorate. A Labour candidate won in the heavily Jewish London constituency of Finchley and Golders Green. Israel came up during the campaign, as pro-Palestinian Labourites protested Starmer’s support for Israel. And in the final days of the campaign, the Conservatives attacked Starmer for signing off work at 6 p.m. on Friday for dinner with his family. The attack drew backlash from Jewish commentators, as Starmer has said for years that the family welcomes Shabbat together. **HW**

ISRAEL INSIGHTS Fantasy Politics

By Howard Weisband

As a sports enthusiast, I note the popularity of fantasy sports in which individuals pick, or “draft,” the names of real players based upon their actual statistics, then compete with one fantasy team against another, often in fantasy leagues. I myself have never participated in such fantasies, always preferring to follow real sports teams in real time. In some degree of similarity these days, I have become aware of what I might label as “fantasy politics.” I hastily add that the game of politics has much more at stake than football or baseball games, real or fantasy. As one who follows Israeli and American politics rather closely, I often engage in discussions with family and friends about the political landscape in both Israel and the United States. In the U.S. the current fantasies relate to who the Democratic nominee might be in the November presidential election. In these columns, which I see as “Israel Insights,” I choose however to limit myself and my readers to what’s happening inside the State of Israel. In Israel, there are certain similarities with the U.S. that relate to the quality of leadership and more specifically, the qualifications and trust in the candidates. But there are major differences,

primarily that relate to the nature of the political system and thus the parties and candidates. Moreover, as I described in past columns, it’s not at all certain as to whether we will go to the polls in the near future, albeit it is appearing to be more and more likely as internal and external pressures mount upon the Prime Minister and the current Government. A keen observer of the Israeli situation is Brett Stephens, “The New York Times” columnist and a former chief editor of “The Jerusalem Post.” In a July 2 column titled “What Would a Better Israeli Prime Minister Do,” his opening sentence stated: “A better Israeli prime minister than Benjamin Netanyahu would immediately hold an election. Israelis deserve a government they believe can bring them out of crisis, not one that got them into this crisis.” Israeli politicians and pundits are deeply engaged in fantasizing on who may and may not run for office, what new parties and coalitions might emerge, and pollsters are busy predicting what early elections might produce based upon their population samplings. In a most interesting June 28 column in “The Jerusalem Post,” Herb Keinon dove head first into the game of fantasy politics. “A sense of new elections is

lurking just around the bend... there is a surge of talk about the formation of a new right-wing party – a Likud B so to speak – made up of former prime minister Naftali Bennett, Yisrael Beytenu head Avigdor Liberman, New Hope leader Gideon Sa’ar, and former Mosad chief Yossi Cohen. In two television polls taken this week, this party would be dominant – Channel 12 giving it 25 seats and a Channel 13 poll giving it 34. In either case, it would be the largest party in the land and in the driver’s seat regarding building a coalition and crowning a new prime minister.” Names not mentioned are Ganz, Gallant, Eisenkot. They undoubtedly would play a role. Keinon continues: “What has fallen by the wayside in recent months are the voices that were a constant feature in the immediate aftermath of October 7 calling for a “clean sweep,” voices calling for new leaders....” Immediately added is the voice of Roni Rimmon, political strategist and consultant, “a clean sweep is unrealistic and wishful thinking. In the end, voters choose from what is available, not from what is not.” Keinon was reporting on what has been happening on the center/right of the political spectrum, since that by and

large is where the Israeli electorate resides today. Yet simultaneously there is a new push on the center/left for relevance and recognition. As reported in the “Times of Israel” on July 3: “Newly elected Labor chairman Yair Golan largely fulfilled his pledge to unify Israel’s liberal camp... announcing a merger with the left-wing Meretz to form a new party that is calling itself, ‘The Democrats’.... the new left-wing party said that the merger was not a ‘technical bloc,’ but rather a historic process that produced, finally, one large and united party, a liberal-democratic Zionist party that will be a political home for a large part of the Israeli population.” Stay tuned. Political fantasies may soon turn into political realities across the spectrum. *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*

At July 4 Event, Herzog Hails ‘Unbreakable Friendship’ with U.S.



U.S. Ambassador Jack Lew (left) and Israeli President Isaac Herzog at an American Independence Day event in Jerusalem, July 3, 2024. Credit: Koby Gideon/GPO.

(JNS) – Israeli President Isaac Herzog last Wednesday evening hailed the “unbreakable friendship” with the United States, at the annual U.S. Independence Day reception hosted by Ambassador Jack Lew at his official residence in Jerusalem.

“My friends, we name here again a clear, self-evident and sustained bipartisan truth: Our unique alliance is based not only on the values we share, but on our willingness to defend those values,” said Herzog.

“Since October 7, Israel has been at the forefront of a global battle against terror and extremism. Against those acting on behalf of the oppressive [Iranian] ayatollah regime. And against those who seek to impose their dark vision of a future based on radical hate and oppression. Again and again, the United States has shown, in word and in deed, and in utterly bipartisan fashion, that it is Israel’s greatest ally,” he continued.

“We stand together in the long and difficult fight to defend our values, our lives, and our very way of life. Like in any family, we do not always agree on everything. And that is okay. Disagreements do not draw into question the broad basis of friendship and alliance that keeps us connected to our shared story and advances the vital interests of both of our nations.

“In the name of the state and people of Israel, I express my deepest gratitude to President [Joe] Biden, to the American government, to Congress, and to the American people for the support and solidarity, which has always been an anchor of our safety, and which has been evident in countless ways since October 7,” said Herzog.

“This clarity has been asserted not only on the battlefield, but in the international arena as well. The United States has stood up boldly for Israel in international institutions. Against attempts to delegitimize Israel, against hatred, prejudice and antisemitism, and in favor of the humanity that keeps us secure and whole. This is clarity and vision. This is moral high ground. This is the blessing of the United States of America to the world.

“God bless America. God bless Israel. And God bless the unbreakable friendship between our nations,” said Herzog. [HW](#)

Top Iranian General: Next Attack on Israel Will Lead to ‘Complete Victory’



Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the head of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard’s aerospace division, speaks at Tehran’s Islamic Revolution and Holy Defence museum in Tehran on Sept. 21, 2019. Credit: Atta Kenare/AFP via Getty Images.

(JNS) – A senior Iranian general last Monday told family members of Hamas terrorists killed in Gaza that the Islamic Republic was prepared to launch another attack on the Jewish state, similar to its massive missile and drone strike in April.

“We await an opportunity for ‘True Promise II’ ... in which I do not know how many missiles will be fired,” Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps aerospace forces commander Brig.-Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh told the family members, who were visiting Iran.

Iran’s next attack, said Hajizadeh, “will lead to a complete victory for the Palestinian people.”

“True Promise” is the Islamic Republic’s name for its unprecedented April 13 attack on Israel, comprising more than 300 ballistic missiles, cruise missiles and suicide drones.

According to Tehran, the attack was retaliation for the assassination of Mohammad Reza Zahedi, commander of the Quds Force of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps in Syria and Lebanon, by Israel on April 1.

Hajizadeh’s statement came a few days after the Islamic Republic threatened to destroy Israel if the country embarks on a full-scale war against Hezbollah in Lebanon.

“Albeit Iran deems as psychological warfare the Zionist regime’s propaganda about intending to attack Lebanon, should it embark on full-scale military aggression, an obliterating war will ensue. All options, incl. the full involvement of all Resistance Fronts, are on the table,” their mission to the United Nations wrote on X.

Requests for comment from U.N. chief Antonio Guterres about Tehran’s genocidal threat were not answered.

“Iran threatens today to destroy Israel if Israel fully responds to Hezbollah attacks from Lebanon,” Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz tweeted in response to the threat.

“My response to Iran is clear: 1. If Hezbollah does not cease its fire and withdraw from southern Lebanon, we will act against it with full force until security is restored and residents can return to their homes. 2. A regime that threatens destruction deserves to be destroyed,” he wrote.

The Iranian threats come as Iran accelerates its nuclear program.

Tehran has continued to ramp up enrichment while maintaining that its nuclear program is strictly peaceful. Its stockpile of 60%-enriched uranium has increased by 20.6 kilograms (45.5 pounds) since February, AFP reported on May 27, citing a new IAEA report.

The confidential document, which was also seen by the Associated Press, revealed that Tehran had accumulated 142.1 kilograms (313.2 pounds) of uranium enriched to 60%. This level of enrichment is just a technical step from 90% enrichment, considered weapons grade.

According to the IAEA definition, it is technically possible to create an atomic bomb with roughly 42 kilograms (92.5 pounds) of uranium enriched to 60% if the material is further enriched to 90%.

In response, Israel has reactivated six working groups on the Iranian threat, that were frozen 18 months ago, Axios reported last Wednesday. [HW](#)

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Oct. 7 ‘Deeply Personal,’ Says U.S. Actor Michael Rapaport



Michael Rapaport addressing the “Pulse of Israel” conference in Jerusalem, June 30, 2024. Credit: Alex Traiman.

By Alex Traiman, Etgar Lefkovits

(JNS) – American-Jewish actor Michael Rapaport said last Monday that the Oct. 7 Hamas massacre, and the wave of antisemitism that it triggered across the United States, were deeply personal for him and enhanced his connection with Judaism.

The comedian has emerged as a leading voice for Israel in Hollywood, at a time when many of his Jewish colleagues in the film industry have remained silent or exhibited politically correct neutrality.

“How could I not take it [Oct. 7] personal?” he responded in an interview with JNS. “How could you not take it personal that, you know, immediately after that people were celebrating it? How could you not take it personally immediately after the celebrations that people were

ripping down posters of the hostages?”

He continued, “How could you not take it personally that there are five Americans still being held? How could you not take it personally that any Jew of any category, any denomination, if they were here on Oct. 7 and in the line of fire, something bad could have happened to them?”

As a native New Yorker, he was offended by the response of some in the Big Apple which, along with Los Angeles, has seen some of the most violent antisemitic protests, beginning on campuses but quickly spreading out across the city.

He noted that pictures of the missing after the 9/11 attacks were never taken down in New York, nor were there overt protests in support of terrorists.

“They stayed up until nature took ’em down. You never would’ve seen them ripped down – ever,” recalled Rapaport, adding that if someone had celebrated the 9/11 terrorists back then, “they would get killed, they literally would get beaten to death if they did that in New York.”

“So all those things, you know, build up in me and resonate with me,” he said. “It pushed me to a different place spiritually, emotionally and in regards to my Jewish identity.”

The actor has been to Israel several times since Oct. 7, and skewered Hollywood in a highly acclaimed skit on a top-rated Israeli satirical TV show over its silence about Hamas and failure to advocate for the 120 hostages still being held in Gaza.

In an earlier show, he lampooned the infamous performance of Ivy League presidents during a congressional hearing on campus antisemitism.

He was also one of 450 Jews in the entertainment industry to sign a letter denouncing the speech that film director Jonathan Glazer gave at the Academy Awards ceremony refuting his Jewishness.

A comedy show he was scheduled to perform in Madison, Wisconsin, in May was cancelled due to pro-Palestinian rioters.

Rapaport told JNS that while his vocal support for Israel had cost him some friends, it had endeared him to many others.

“The friendships I’ve gained and the relationships that I’ve gained are more important than the ones that have gone,” he said.

He voiced concern that the antise-

The comedian has emerged as a leading voice for Israel in Hollywood, at a time when many of his Jewish colleagues in the film industry have remained silent or exhibited politically correct neutrality.

mitic rallies in the United States would become only more violent and lead to terrorism, which, he said, would wake some people up.

Rapaport spoke to JNS on the sidelines of the annual Pulse of Israel conference in Jerusalem, where he received the “Leadership of Zion Award” from the hands of CEO and founder Avi Abelow.

Rapaport’s recent visits to the Jewish state were marked by “incredible, inspiring, heartbreaking, demoralizing, beautiful experiences,” he stated.

The actor said he keeps coming back due to “the urge and the pull to be amongst my people, the urge and the pull to be supportive, the urge and the pull to continue to deepen my connection with my Judaism.”

His unequivocal message to Israelis who stop him on the street to express their gratitude for his very public support: “I’m here with them. I’m with them. I’m Jewish. I always speak out on behalf of Israel. I’m not backing away. ... We’re all together.” **HW**



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