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# Hebrew Watchman

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# Federation Will Convene Community for October 7 Commemoration



One year ago, Federation Chair Scott Notowich welcomed a record crowd to Federation's Solidarity Gathering.

As the one-year anniversary of the devastating events of October 7 approaches, Memphis Jewish Federation (Federation) invites the community to An Evening of Remembrance, Unity, and Hope. This special commemoration will be dedicated to mourning our tragic losses, expressing our unity, and embracing our resilient spirit.

The commemoration is scheduled for Monday, October 7 at the Memphis Jewish Community Center. Doors will open at 6 p.m., with the program beginning at 6:30 p.m. All guests are required to register by Sunday, September 29-registration is available at tinyurl.com/fedoct7event. Please note – some of this event's content may be difficult for young children.

16 ELUL, 5784

"This commemoration will acknowledge the sorrow and trauma that we, the Jewish people, continue to endure. The raw pain of October 7, the ongoing war and the hostages murdered and those still in captivity are heavy burdens we are still carrying. And yet, the Jewish community is resilient and hopeful. During this immersive experience, we will pay tribute to our heartbreak, draw strength from our



Rabbis from diverse congregations led Solidarity Gathering guests in prayer.

unity, and hold out hope for our future," said Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein, Federation executive vice-president.

This unique multimedia commemoration will include community members and leadership from across the diverse Memphis Jewish community. Israeli resources will also be part of the evening's program.

"It is our honor and privilege to provide the Memphis Jewish and broader community with an evening where we can reflect on the past year and move into the days ahead," said Laura Linder, president and CEO of Jewish Community Partners.

"We also want to acknowledge the incredible work of the planning committee for this event. Thank you to our chair, Jill Shanker, and to members Margo Fogelman, Michelle Katz, Benjamin Lazarov, Betsy Saslawsky, Hila Shimony, Jerry Siegler and Mary Trotz for their thoughtful and sensitive guidance and support."

For more information on this event or other Federation events, email info@jcpmemphis.org or call 901-767-7100. **HW** 

# MHA-FYOS Celebrates 75 Years of Jewish Education in Memphis





#### By Jessica Baum Sukhodolsky

A few short weeks ago, two hundred students descended on the Margolin Hebrew Academy-Feinstone Yeshiva of the South's Aaron David Shainberg Campus, eager to start school, reacquaint themselves with friends and meet their teachers. They smiled for first day pictures, unpacked their supplies and welcomed 24 new students to the family with the warmth and hospitality for which MHA-FYOS has become known with each passing year.

But this year is a year like no other. This year, MHA-FYOS will commemorate its milestone 75th year of existence. It started with a bang, bringing more



The kindergarten class of 1953 (above) and the 2024-25 kindergarten class (left).

energy and excitement than any year in recent memory. The school's Parent/ Teacher Association created many exciting programs including new student and new family welcome bags, a jampacked Back-to-School Barbecue in the MHA Moss Gym and a First Day Breakfast for teachers. MHA administrators held several divisional icebreaker activities, including "Swim into the New Year" and "Bonding in the Barn." The Goldie Margolin School for Girls introduced a new community women's learning program, and the Cooper Yeshiva High School for Boys relaunched its beloved Beit Midrash Project, featuring rebbeim from across the community. Each high school embarked on a twoday nature trip to further acquaint the new students with the school.

Now, with the first few weeks under its belt, MHA-FYOS is preparing for

(See MHA Page 3)

## **Pomegranate: Tradition or Just** a Great Fruit?



Janet Rubin (I) and Elisa Lysbeth Benaim demonstrated how to extract seeds from a pomegranate at Beth Sholom Sisterhood's "The Art of the Pomegranate" program.

On Sunday, September 8, Beth Sholom Sisterhood held its annual pre-Rosh Hashanah program, which focused this year on the pomegranate and its place in Jewish tradition and art. Event chairs Janet Rubin and Barbara Hellman assembled a series of engaging speakers, and of course there was food - plenty of it - featuring the pomegranate.

"The event was a huge success," said Ms. Rubin, who spoke about the many symbolic foods of Rosh Hashanah from Sephardic and Ashkenazic traditions. "Each attendee received a full plate of different and tasty foods prepared with pomegranates. Everyone also received a beautiful recipe booklet so they can replicate the recipes at home."

Rabbi Sarit Horwitz started off the program with a d'var Torah. She shared some of the ways that the pomegranate is viewed in the Jewish tradition, and ways that it might relate to our lives especially during this High Holiday season.

The secular world has also celebrated the pomegranate, according to Deanna McAlexander, who said that pomegranates have been used in art throughout the centuries. She showed images of pomegranates in architecture, pottery, paintings and Israeli coins. The pomegranate symbolized fertility, she explained, and over time, the fruit evolved into a powerful symbol of womanhood.

Next on the program was Dr. Elisa Lysbeth Benaim, who, with Ms. Rubin, gave a humorous and informative demo on how to extract a pomegranate's tasty arils (or seeds). She described how one has to "beat" the fruit and then whacked one with a sturdy wooden spoon. The arils came tumbling out into a bowl.

Judy Bookman put on her chef coat to show how one can make use of the seeds. She demonstrated how to make Mohambra, a Middle-East red-pepper dip with arils. She spoke of the exotic spices used in her cooking...cumin, turmeric, dill, mint sumac, just to name a few.

By the end of the event, participants agreed that the pomegranate is both a wonderful tradition and a great fruit. Many thanks to the dozen or so volunteers who made the program a success. Sisterhood's next program will be a lunchtime "Soup, Salad, and Song in the Sukkah" with Rabbi Abe Schacter-Gampel on Tuesday, October 22, during Sukkot. 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.

# Hebrew Watch

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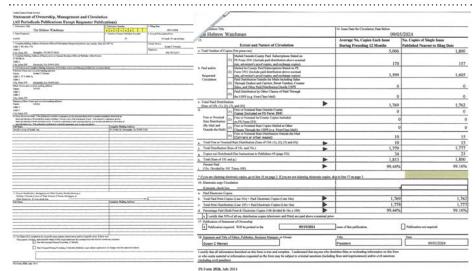
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Erev Shabbat, Fri. September 20, 2024 / 17 Elul, 5784	. 6:40 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. September 21, 2024 / 18 Elul, 5784	7:34 p.m.

#### Weekly Torah Portion: Ki Tavo





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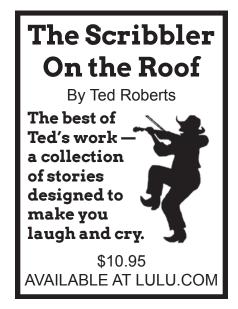
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#### **MHA**...

(Continued From Page 1) a yearlong celebration of its 75th anniversary through events and experiences that honor the past while looking ahead to the institution's incredibly bright future.

"Our 75th anniversary is an opportunity to connect with our history and to bring back people who have had an impact on the life of this school," said Jessica Baum Sukhodolsky, MHA-FYOS director of engagement. "Our school was founded in 1949 with a handful of students in kindergarten and first grade. Now, our thousands of former students are serving as leaders and benefactors both in Memphis and in Jewish communities around the world, deeply rooted in the foundation of Torah and Zionism that was instilled in them at MHA."

"MHA-FYOS is so much more than a school – we are a family who, for 75 years, has brought people together in Memphis to help transform the lives of our students," shared Rabbi Dr. Gavriel Brown, MHA-FYOS head of school. "But even more, I hope this year will be a true "הוויה" - which typically translates as an 'experience.' It is actually a modern composite word created by combining the Hebrew words - 'chaim' and 'havayah' and implies a transformative experience. This is what we hope all of our programs across all our divisions - from academic to extra-curricular will create for this special 75th year of our school."

The school is planning many such experiences to revel in its 75th year, including in-class 75th day celebrations and visits from the school's founding families. Its much-hyped annual Irby and Bernice Cooper Alumni Game, now in its 33rd year, will be held on Martin Luther King Jr. Weekend and will include an expanded alumni Shabbaton. The school will also host a truly inspirational event for students and the community at large with the dedication of a Sefer Torah in memory of its founder, Rav Nota Greenblatt. The year will be capped off by an incredible Scholarship Banquet at the end of the school year, which will feature honored guests and a film highlighting the storied history of MHA-FYOS.

Additionally, MHA-FYOS will spotlight its former students and faculty throughout the year in a series of MHA Memories videos and written testimonials. In one of the year's first alumni messages, Class of 2020 alumna Shayna Kahane declared, "The exceptional education I received at MHA laid the foundation for my later collegiate and professional success. The small class sizes and family-like atmosphere allowed me to explore my curiosities and pursue subjects I was passionate about. None of my accomplishments would have been possible without MHA."

"We have created three generations of outstanding alumni," shared MHA-FYOS Board President Mark Kaplowitz. "Among our goals for this year are to celebrate our 75th anniversary by connecting with our memories of our school's founders. We hope to continue to recognize the many generations of Memphians, the families who have sustained and built our school over the decades, and welcome even more patrons of the Academy for the next 75 years."

If you haven't visited the MHA-FYOS lately, now is the perfect time! Please email jessica.baum@mhafyos.org or call 901-682-2400 to schedule a tour. **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, September 23, 12 p.m. Special Program: Declutter 1-2-3 featuring Stacy Saed

Stacey presented this program August 14 to a packed audience! This time she is doing it for the seniors following lunch at noon! Whether it is a move to a new location, a scale down to a senior living community or reviving an existing home, Stacy has you covered. Learn tips on how to declutter your own environment.

There is no charge. Call the front desk at the MJCC 901-761-0810 to register. You can sign up for the lunch and program, or just the program. Reservations are required as space is limited. This will be the last time this year we have this program.

#### Wednesday, September 25 Speaker: Rabbi Abe Schacter-Gampel, Director for the Center of Jewish Life and Learning at the MJCC

Topic: Preparing for Rosh Hashanah

With the Holidays fast approaching, come hear this entertaining speaker. He is always a joy to hear. Reservations are only needed for the lunch.

#### Monday, September 30 Field Trip to Dixon Gallery and Gardens

Weather permitting we will tour the beautiful Gardens. If the weather is not favorable, we will tour the lovely gallery. Get out of the house and enjoy this Memphis treasure.



Stacy Saed

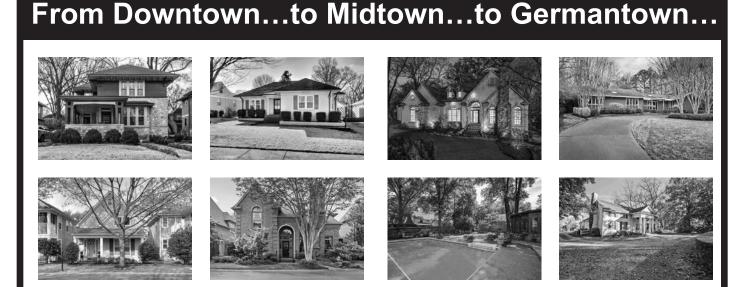
Please join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch from the kitchens at the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required the day before by 1 p.m. by contacting Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or stevekaplan@jccmemphis. org or by calling the front desk at 901-761-0810. Steve works Monday thru Thursday 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **HW** 

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Israeli Pleads Guilty to Smuggling Airplane Parts to Sanctioned Russian Companies

(JNS) – Gal Haimovich, 49, pleaded guilty last Monday to violating sanctions on Russian companies, including by smuggling airplane parts, the U.S. Department of Justice said.

"As part of his plea agreement, Haimovich admitted that his scheme involved deceiving U.S. companies about the true destination of the goods at issue and that the defendant and others attempted to conceal the scheme by submitting false information in export documents filed with the U.S. government," the department said. "Between at least March 2022 and May 2023, Haimovich facilitated the export of aircraft parts and avionics, including those with missile technology applications, from the United States, through the Southern District of Florida, to various third-party transhippers on behalf of Russian customers," it added. "These Russian end customers routinely instructed Haimovich to deceive the U.S.-based manufacturers and suppliers about the ultimate destination of the goods." The Israeli man is slated to be sentenced on Nov. 22. As part of the plea deal, Haimovich agreed to forfeit more than \$2 million that he charged in fees. HW



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# Story 2: An American Israeli's Perspective Through Chesed in Wartime

#### By Shoshana Cenker

Last week we introduced THW's new series of firsthand accounts of Israelis who are promoting *chesed* (loving kindness) as the war continues in the Middle East.

Back for another heartwarming story is Shlomo Pinkus, the global director for Epic, who made aliyah from America with his family. Epic helps children who move to Israel acclimate through therapeutic mentorship and now also helps people with all kinds of war trauma – those who are displaced; whose family members have been killed; and those dealing with suicide.

According to Epic's stats:

• poverty is up 250%

• suicide is up – cases went from the mid-400s to over 1,000, with 7,000+ people requiring medical intervention; 500,000+ have thought about suicide

• addiction rates went from 1 in 10, to 1 in 7 in 2022 during COVID, to 1 in 5 in November, and 1 in 4 in December

"The main substance they're struggling with is sleeping pills and pain medicine," Shlomo said, "so they can just sleep at night, block out the constant attacks and explosions, and get through the next day, to pack their children's lunch and send them to school."

On a personal level, Shlomo does

whatever he can to help Israel's soldiers and their families –including our next story.

Every Thursday, Shlomo has driven north to bring hot food and other necessities to soldiers on army bases near the Lebanon border. "Some of these chayalim feel alone, so I stay for a few hours and schmooze," he explained. "They call me the 'Cholent Guy!"

No matter if an army base is in the middle of nowhere or far north, Shlomo goes, rain or shine. He's driven through barricades and past tanks to bring boxes and food and hot cholent through the mud, into the woods, to get to soldiers' tents. "The soldiers are excited when I show up. Some chayalim are relaxing, some eat, some are exhausted and sleeping, others coming back from their mission are happy with the hot food and new warm socks they've returned to. They ask if I'm afraid to be there. I say, 'Where you go, I'll go. You're fighting for us, so I'm bringing you food and davening."

While visiting an army base, Shlomo was chatting with a friend of his -amilitary doctor. The doctor was concerned about his son, a fellow soldier, but couldn't text him because Hezbollah is hacking cellphones. The doctor told Shlomo that his son's army unit was sent near the Syria/Lebanon border. Even though GPS doesn't work up there and it's really hard to get to, the doctor asked if Shlomo would take food to his son. Shlomo replied, "Let's do it!" Then he packed up food with his then 14-year-old son, Baruch Eliyahu, and headed out.

It was difficult following directions; there aren't paved roads after a certain point, just off-roading in fields with barbed wire – some of the area is former mine fields from previous wars, other parts are farms. There are signs warning "Don't cross the line. Punishable by death." Shlomo, on his own mission of sorts, drove on.

At 1 a.m., Shlomo and his son still hadn't found the base they were looking for. They thought about backtracking to where GPS would work to get them back on track. Baruch Eliyahu asked his dad if they should just go home – they had driven all over, went on every path, looked everywhere. Shlomo told his son, "If this was my son, I wouldn't go home. We're going to find them."

Driving again, they stumbled on a path they hadn't taken yet, past old broken buildings and a fallen tower. They spotted one lightbulb in the distance and drove toward it. Finally, they'd found the doctor's son's base straddling the border with Syria. It was 2 a.m.

Turns out the base, which was first used in the 60s, was underground. It had been closed and made into a museum. Baruch Eliyahu brought the food in and found Shlomo's friend's son. He was just 19.5 years old and had been serving in the IDF for two years.

"We were actually on the same flight as this soldier when we all made aliyah together! I gave him a big hug, sent regards from his dad, and of course, left all the food," said Shlomo. "When I got back to cell service, I texted his parents letting them know that he was OK, warm, and fed. The next day, the soldier sent me photos - he had gotten up at 5 a.m. for a mission, enjoyed hot cholent and kugel for breakfast, kept warm on a portable burner. Bringing these chayalim such a small thing like hot food, which they enjoy tremendously and gives them good nutrition for their difficult jobs, is incredibly humbling and a joyous effort. I won't stop."

Next up in this series, a terrifying event that came too close to home for Shlomo's family.

Know a chesed superstar in Israel? Email ShoshanaAY@gmail.com **HW** 

# South Carolina School District Restricts Holocaust Graphic Novel for Middle-Graders, Citing New State Law

#### **By** Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – A school district in Columbia, South Carolina, will no longer use a graphic novel about local Holocaust survivors in its middle school curriculum, saying it violates new state guidelines governing, which books are "appropriate" for the classroom.

A spokesperson for the Lexington One school district said that the book, "We Survived the Holocaust," written to educate young readers, will no longer be used in its fifth- and sixth-grade classrooms. The decision follows the passage this summer of restrictive new guidelines on instructional materials at the State Board of Education. "This decision is based on a thorough evaluation of the suggested book, 'We Survived the Holocaust,' to determine its age appropriateness in accordance with State Board of Education Regulation (SBE) 43-170, which clarifies standards for the selection of instructional material," district spokesperson Megan Moore told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Moore added that the book would still be available for eighth graders, and in its school library.

The decision is reminiscent of policies that have recently limited the reach of Jewish books across the country, including in South Carolina. Another dis-



trict in the state briefly pulled "The Fixer," the Bernard Malamud novel about antisemitism, from its shelves last year, restoring it after a panel review; districts in Florida, Texas and beyond have pulled various versions of Anne Frank's diary, "Maus" and other books about the Holocaust and Jewish identity.

"I was and continue to be shocked, appalled and dismayed," Frank Baker, author of "We Survived the Holocaust," told JTA. He added that his book, published in 2022, had been used in fifthand sixth-grade classrooms last year without incident before the new guidelines were passed. On his X social media account, Baker wrote, "Read the book they tried to ban."

The book is a biography of local residents Bluma and Felix Goldberg, who as children were interned in Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen and other concentration camps. They resettled in the Columbia, South Carolina, area after the war with the aid of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, now known as HIAS. After seeing Felix Goldberg deliver a lecture on Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day, Baker - who also created a resource guide for classrooms to teach media literacy – decided to tell the story in a book, with illustrations by Tim Ogline. The book is intended for young readers and garnered praise, including from the Jewish Book Council, whose reviewer last year called it "thoroughly researched" and "appropriately based on the assumption that young readers need to understand the process of Nazi genocide."

Baker promoted his book to local districts, alongside learning guides, in the hopes of educating local children about the Holocaust. The Lexington One district initially took him up on the offer to incorporate the book into its lesson plans.

But new rules on "age and developmentally appropriate" classroom material, which were supported by the conservative activist group Moms For Liberty, changed that equation.

The district also said that its evaluation of Baker's book "included but was not limited to guidance from the South Carolina Council on the Holocaust," without elaborating further. The council has a relationship with Baker, having hosted him for lectures the past two years.

In particular, Baker objected to the district's contention that the images in his book were too graphic for middle-schoolers. The district declined to share its specific objections with JTA. But a social studies coordinator singled out one image in particular - of Nazi doctor Josef Mengele holding a gun to a Jewish prisoner's head in Auschwitz in an email to Baker. "Honestly, these young people are exposed to more violent images in the media they attend to today," Baker said. "And shielding students from a Nazi holding a gun to a Jew's head – surely flies in the face of students today who have to undergo shooter drills." HW

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# Federation Welcomes Avron Fogelman and Family, Donors, and Student Guests to Morris S. Fogelman Jewish Student **Center Grand Re-Opening**



Avron Fogelman presents an historic \$500,000 check as a contribution to the \$1.1 million renovation campaign for the Morris S. Fogelman Jewish Student Center, a facility built in 1984 to support Jewish life on the University of Memphis campus.

# An Evening with Rabbi Manis Friedman at Chabad of Memphis



#### Rabbi Manis Friedman

As a preparation for the High-Holidays, Chabad of Memphis invites you to an enlightening evening with Rabbi Manis Friedman, YouTube's most popular Rabbi.

The event will take place on Sunday, September 26 at 7 p.m. at the Chabad Center on Kirby Parkway and will explore the thought-provoking topic, "I Didn't Ask to Be Born: Why Am I Here?"

The event is free of charge and a des-

#### Nashville **Officials Push** for Laws to Limit Future Neo-Nazi

sert reception will be served.

Rabbi Manis Friedman is a world-renowned author, counselor, lecturer and philosopher, who uses ancient wisdom and modern wit as he captivates audiences around the country and the world.

He's celebrated for his engaging and insightful lectures and videos and will offer profound reflections on the purpose of our existence and the deeper meaning behind our lives.

"This special evening promises to be both inspiring and thought-provoking as we prepare for the High Holidays," said Rabbi Levi Klein of Chabad.

Rabbi Manis Friedman has written five books with more on the way and has been featured on CNN, PBS, BBC, AND A&E, TEDx, to name a few.

"It's a special treat for the Memphis Jewish community to have the opportunity to host Rabbi Friedman" Rabbi Klein continued.

To ensure your place at this meaningful event, RSVP at www.JewishMemphis. com/manis.

For more information call Chabad at 901-754-0404. HW



Avron Fogelman and grandson Josh, surrounded by family and friends, cut the ribbon on Sunday, September 8, officially welcoming guests into the fully renovated Morris S. Fogelman Jewish Student Center.



Hanging the Mezuzah at the grand re-opening of the Morris S. Fogelman Jewish Student Center are Memphis Jewish Federation Chair Scott Notowich, Rabbi Joel Finkelstein and donor Joe Roberts.

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







#### **Protests**

(JNS) - Leaders in Tennessee's capital seek to implement measures to constrain the white supremacist activists spreading hate on the city's streets after a flurry of activity this summer.

WTVF-5 reports that Nashville Mayor Freddie O'Connell, the Metro Council and the city's Department of Law have collaborated on multiple proposed legal changes.

Measures include requiring buffer zones around demonstrations; prohibiting the display of distracting flags on overpasses; banning the distribution of leaflets on private property; and criminalizing face masks for reasons not exempted from medical, religious or costume purposes.

These efforts come following four demonstrations in the city by the Goyim Defense League on July 6, 14, 15 and 16. **HW** 

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# Hot and Smokin"

#### Photos: Rachael Rovner Photography

The air was thick with the smell of grilled brisket, chicken, ribs and beans at the 33rd Annual ASBEE World Kosher BBQ Contest & Festival at Baron Hirsch held on August 25.

While the temps on the pavement were well into the 100s, that didn't stop the grilling contenders and visitors who enjoyed the colorfully decorated booths, petting zoo, bounce house and the basketball tournament. Passersby could even grab a hot-offthe-grill taste if you were lucky enough to be there as the grillers were preparing their dishes for the judges. And if you were really hungry and needed an air conditioner break, there was plenty of BBQ to purchase from the hardworking sisterhood ladies at the Kowsher Café.

Among the 30+ teams competing in this year's competition, the winners are:

Congratu	lations to all the top performers at the			
33rd Annual ASBEE World Kosher BBQ Contest & Festival at Baron Hirsch!				
Category: Team name				
Sth place: Meatallica	Allen Ardestani and co.			
Ith place: Good Goys	Darren Rogers and co.			
Brd place: Memphis Chewish Experience	XLM			
Ind place: Dead Meat	Marshall Levy and co.			
L <b>st place:</b> Risk It for the Brisket	Memphis Jewish Home and Rehab			
Category: Team booth				
ith place: Meatallica	Allen Ardestani and co.			
Ith place: Dead Meat	Marshall Levy and co.			
Brd place: MHA-FYOSLand: The Magic Wingdom	Margolin Hebrew Academy/Feinstone Yeshiva of the South			
2nd place: Memphis Chewish Experience	MJX			
L <b>st place:</b> Risk It for the Brisket	Memphis Jewish Home and Rehab			
Category: Beans				
<b>ith place:</b> Char Trek	Deborah Burg (Skokie, Illinois) and co.			
Ith place: Meat Mitzvah	Young Israel of Memphis			
Brd place: Pitmasters General	Jacob Klaven and co.			
Ind place: Jacob Samuels and Friends	Jacob Samuels and co.			
Lst place: MHA-FYOSLand: The Magic Wingdom	Margolin Hebrew Academy/Feinstone Yeshiva of the South			
Category: Chicken wings				
Sth place: Good Goys	Darren Rogers and co.			
Ith place: Goyz in the Hood	Hanger, Inc.			
Brd place: Burnt Offerings	Palm Beach Synagogue (Florida)			
Ind place: Not Your Bubbie's Brisket	Michael Kaplan and family			
Lst place: Moses' Meat Mavens	Abraham Bendayan and co.			
Category: Ribs				
ith place: Babka's Sizzle Squad	Bornblum Jewish Community School			
Ith place: Temple Israel Brotherhood	Temple Israel Brotherhood			
Brd place: Char Trek	Deborah Burg (Skokie, Illinois) and co.			
Ind place: Pitmasters General	Jacob Klaven and co.			
Ist place: Moses' Meat Mavens	Abraham Bendayan and co.			
Category: Brisket				
Sth place: Grillin' and Tefillin	Chabad Lubavitch of Tennessee			
Ith place: Team Olymbec	Olymbec USA			
Brd place: MHA-FYOSLand: The Magic Wingdom	Margolin Hebrew Academy/Feinstone Yeshiva of the South			
2nd place: Meatallica	Allen Ardestani and co.			
Lst place: Babka's Sizzle Squad	Bornblum Jewish Community School			
	Bornbram Jewish Community School			
ra Weinstein Showmanship Award				
Brd place: Memphis Chewish Experience	MJX			
Ind place: Dead Meat	Marshall Levy and co.			
L <b>st place:</b> Risk It for the Brisket	Memphis Jewish Home and Rehab			
Donna Reisman Grand Championship Trophy				
	Jacob Klaven and co.			
Brd place: Pitmasters General	Jacob Klaven and co. Memphis Jewish Home and Rehab			



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Memphis Chewish Experience







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# Hal Lansky of Lansky Bros. Inducted into Duck Walk Hall of Fame as Peabody Celebrates 155th Anniversary



Hal makes the walk with the duck master as he leads the Peabody Ducks to their daytime resting spot.

# File File

#### By Shoshana Cenker

The Peabody Memphis' grand lobby was decked out for a festive party on Wednesday, Sept. 4. The acclaimed hotel celebrated its 155th anniversary and inducted Hal Lansky of Lansky Bros. into the distinguished Duck Walk Hall of Fame, which honors those who have played a significant role in the development of Memphis.

"The lobby was filled with hundreds of friends and family of the Belzes and Lanskys, along with local dignitaries, members of the business community, and many past Duck Walk Hall of Fame honorees. We couldn't be happier to see Hal join his father, Bernard Lansky, in the Duck Walk Hall of Fame," said Kelly Brock, director of marketing communications for The Peabody Memphis. "Highlights of the event were the performance of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra's Big Band and the cutting of the year's massive, themed cake."

Hal is the president and second-generation owner of Lansky Bros. retail shops. His dad, Bernard (OBM), started the business in 1946 on Beale Street. Bernard is still well known as the "Clothier to the King" for styling Elvis Presley throughout his career. Today, there are four Lansky retail stores in The Peabody lobby. Notable customers throughout the years have included incredible musicians like Johnny Cash, B.B. King, Isaac Hayes, Al Green, Robert Plant, Drake, Jack White, The Black Keys, and countless others.

"I'm especially honored to receive my duck feet 18 years after my father received his," Hal said in his induction speech. "Every day for these past 18 years, I have walked by my father's duck feet, and it's inspired me to continue his legacy. I'm excited that my duck feet will now appear next to his in front of our shops on Union Avenue. ... I smile knowing our work collectively has been cemented in history (and the Union Avenue sidewalk) for generations to come."

Over the past 43 years, Hal is often asked how the family business came to The Peabody. "In 1981, Jack Belz asked my father to do him a favor and open a small haberdashery in the lobby for the grand reopening of the South's 'grand hotel," explained Hal. "My father didn't hesitate and wanted to be part of the rebirth of Downtown Memphis. We still had our store at 126 Beale Street and more throughout the Mid-South, but we just knew this would be a new and exciting adventure for Lansky Bros."

That little haberdashery started at



just 300 square feet and now covers 8,500 square feet, with four unique concept shops. Hal noted that he "could not do this without" his daughter Julie, third-generation owner, maintaining Lansky Bros.' reputation and with top-notch service to hotel guests and customers. Hal thanked several others, including many family members, the Lansky Bros. staff, saying that he "shares these duck feet with all of you," and other Peabody staffers, as well as Jack Belz for "believing in our family. ... The partnership between The Peabody Hotel and Lansky Bros. is symbolic of Memphis' rich history of fashion, music, and hospitality."

The Duck Walk Hall of Fame was created in 1996, recognizing those who have made significant contributions to Memphis. The commemorative plaques are on the sidewalk surrounding The Peabody, featuring duck footprints and the honoree's name. The first recipient was Philip Belz; the second was Jack Belz. Other inductees include Danny Thomas, Marty Belz, Bernard J. Lansky, Elvis Presley, Ron Belz, Richard Shadyac, among others. Jack Belz inducted Hal into the Duck Walk Hall of Fame.

"I'm still amazed at Jack Belz's vision to reignite Downtown Memphis with The Peabody Hotel's reopening. At 96, for him to talk about The Peabody Hotel's history and induct me into his Duck Walk of Fame was one of the most treasured moments in my life and career," added Hal. "Fifty years ago, Jack gave me a gold pocket watch when my father and I opened our Lansky shop in the Eastgate Shopping center. He said it would bring our family good fortune. And because of his continued belief in us, we proudly operate in The Peabody today, in the house that Jack built."

Hal says Lansky Bros. has allowed him to meet amazing people from all over the world, and he still wakes up each day excited to meet and greet customers and help style them.

"As the third generation in our family's retail business, I am truly elated that Hal's hard work, positive energy, and dedication has been recognized," said Julie. "He truly is an ambassador to The Peabody Hotel and Downtown Memphis."

Hal has served Memphis through the Rotary Club, Better Business Bureau, Cook Convention Center, Memphis Convention and Visitors Bureau, and the Common Threads Retail community. Lansky Bros. received the Menswear Retailer Uptown Downtown Award in 2018 and the Downtown Memphis Commission Entrepreneurial Vision Award in 2022. Lansky Bros. was also prominently featured in the international Baz Luhrman biopic "Elvis."

"For over 78 years, we've been proud to have our business in the heart of Downtown," said Hal. "We love Downtown, support everything Downtown, and will continue to call The Peabody Hotel home." **HW** 

Celebrating with the Lansky family.



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# **Consumer Sentiment: Do Americans See Brighter Days Ahead?**

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

Each month, researchers at the University of Michigan ask hundreds of consumers what they think about present market conditions, the job market, their personal finances and buying intentions, as well as the prospects for the general economy in the future. (Samples are statistically designed to be representative of all American households.) Their answers to about 50 questions are captured in the Index of Consumer Sentiment, which includes the Index of Current Economic Conditions and the Index of Consumer Expectations.

After a long stretch of downbeat readings, this closely watched gauge of consumer confidence turned more optimistic at the beginning of 2024. Between November 2023 and January 2024, the University of Michigan's Consumer Sentiment Index improved 29%, the biggest two-month increase since 1991. In March 2024, the index reached its highest point since mid-2021 before dipping again over the following three months. Year-ahead inflation expectations dropped from 4.5% to 3.0% over the same period.<sup>1</sup>

Businesses, investors, and policymakers – including Federal Reserve officials who must determine when and how much to lower interest rates – pay attention to how consumers are feeling, because household spending accounts for more than two-thirds of all U.S. eco-

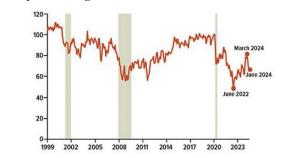
#### nomic activity.<sup>2</sup> Perplexing signals

In the past, consumer sentiment has been a reliable indicator of the direction of the economy in the near term, with the index rising during periods of expansion and falling sharply at the beginning of recessions (see chart). Yet, the 2022–2023 readings were out-of-sync with an improving economy.

In June 2022, sentiment reached a record low – worse than readings during the pandemic and the 2007–2009 Great Recession – and they remained weak through most of 2023.<sup>3</sup> But after that mid-2022 plunge, real gross domestic product (GDP) growth strengthened and grew a healthy 3.1% in 2023, up from 0.7% in 2022.<sup>4</sup> The unemployment rate remained at historically low levels below 4% over the same period.<sup>5</sup> The solid labor market supported the 2.7% increase in consumer spending that was the main driver of GDP growth in 2023.<sup>6</sup>

Why did it take so long for consumers' outlooks to reflect this positive economic data?

Confidence could have been shaken, in part, by a widely forecasted U.S. recession that never came. And many people may have felt uneasy about inflamed geopolitical tensions around the world, including Russia's war with Ukraine, and/or the contentious political environment in the United States.



**University of Michigan Consumer Sentiment Index** 

Shaded bars indicate periods of recession. Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2024

#### Inflation scars

Another possible explanation for the disconnect between consumer confidence and economic performance is the lingering financial and emotional effects of high inflation. While consumers can breathe a sigh of relief that inflation has retreated (from an annual rate of 9.1% in June 2022 to 3.3% in May 2024), they are still paying much higher prices than they were before the pandemic.<sup>7</sup>

Plus, the Fed's interest-rate hikes made borrowing to buy big-ticket items like cars and homes much more expensive, and extreme unaffordability put home ownership out of reach for many Americans. It could take quite some time for consumers to get over their sticker shock and adjust mentally to higher price levels, as well as for their wages and purchasing power to fully catch up to the cost of living.

The confidence surge at the beginning of 2024 coincided with a rising stock market and declining mortgage rates, both of which may have raised consumers' hopes for the future. And even though consumer sentiment has improved, the index level is still well below the pre-Covid peak in 2020.<sup>8</sup>

Fed officials and many economists now expect the United States to avoid a recession in 2024, but spending and growth are expected to slow, and unemployment is likely to tick up, as the full impact of high interest rates strains the finances of households and businesses.<sup>9</sup> There could also be some unexpected bumps in the road as the Fed works to bring inflation the rest of the way down to its 2% target.

- 1, 3, 8) University of Michigan, 2024
- 2, 4, 6) U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2024
- 5, 7) Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024
- 9) The Wall Street Journal, January 19, 2024

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#### SEPTEMBER 19, 2024 | PAGE 9

# At Debate, Trump Says Israel 'Will Not Exist' if He Loses and Harris Calls for Gaza War to End 'Immediately'

#### **By Ron Kampeas**

(JTA) – In the first debate between Kamala Harris and Donald Trump, Harris said Israel's fight against Hamas was justified but that the war "must end immediately," in part because of how many Palestinians have been killed.

And Trump predicted that if Harris wins, Israel would disappear "within two years."

Moderators at the debate last Tuesday night in Philadelphia asked Harris to explain her repeated claims that Israel has the right to defend itself but also that "it matters how" Israel conducts the war.

Harris made the same arguments she has in the past, saying she would ensure Israel could defend itself and that she believed Hamas was to blame for the war.

"Let's understand how we got here. On Oct. 7, Hamas, a terrorist organization, slaughtered 1,200 Israelis, many of them young people who were simply attending a concert, women were horribly raped, and so absolutely I said then, I say now, Israel has a right to defend itself. We would," she said.

She continued, "How it does so matters, because it is also true far too many innocent Palestinians have been killed – children, mothers. What we know is that this war must end. It must end immediately."

She did not lay out her own plan to

end the war, instead leaning into the efforts of President Joe Biden to bring about a hostage release deal before he leaves office. Hamas and Israel have been negotiating for months over a deal that has not materialized, and hopes have recently dimmed that the sides will come to an agreement in the near future.

"The way it will end is we need a ceasefire deal, and we need the hostages out," she said. "And so we will continue to work around the clock on that."

As the Democratic nominee, Harris has had to contend with two Democratic constituencies, supportive and critical of Israel, that are at odds with each other, and has sought to stick to Biden's policies of backing Israel while conveying sympathy for the mounting Palestinian casualties. She called for Palestinian statehood, which the current Israeli government forcefully rejects.

"We must chart a course for a twostate solution, and in that solution, there must be security for the Israeli people and Israel, and an equal measure for the Palestinians," she said. "But the one thing I will assure you always: I will always give Israel the ability to defend itself, in particular as it relates to Iran, and any threat that Iran and its proxies pose to Israel."

Trump, as he has before, claimed the Oct. 7 attack would not have happened

on his watch because of sanctions he placed on Iran, which funds the terror group. He said Iran was "broke under Donald Trump" and unable to fund its other proxies including Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen, both of which have attacked Israel. About the war, he said, "I will get that settled, and fast," though he did not elaborate.

He also mentioned that Harris did not attend Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's speech to Congress this summer, instead speaking at an event in Indiana. Netanyahu met with both candidates later in the week.

Last Tuesday, Trump made a new claim: that Israel would disappear in two years if Harris were elected.

"She hates Israel," he said. "If she's president, I believe that Israel will not exist within two years from now, and I've been pretty good at predictions, and I hope I'm wrong about that one."

He also sought to appeal to Harris' perceived vulnerabilities among Arab Americans who have been critical of Israel's actions in Gaza.

"At the same time, in her own way, she hates the Arab population, because the whole place is going to get blown up, Arabs, Jewish people, Israel will be gone," he said.

Harris shot back that she does not hate Israel. "Oh, that's absolutely not true. I have, my entire career and life, supported Israel and the Israeli people," Harris said. "He knows that."

In another section of the debate, about the pro-Trump riot at the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, Harris brought up Trump's remarks after the deadly neo-Nazi march in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017. President Joe Biden repeatedly cited the Charlottesville rally and Trump's response as the reason he ran for president in 2020.

"Let's remember Charlottesville, where there was a mob of people carrying tiki torches, spewing antisemitic hate, and what did the president then, at the time, say? There were fine people on each side," she said. She also brought up something Trump said in a debate with Biden in 2020, where he told the Proud Boys, a far-right group, to "stand back and stand by."

Trump said that the "very fine people" claim had been "debunked." Trump backers have pointed out that in the same press conference where he said there were "very fine people on both sides," he also condemned neo-Nazis – suggesting that the "fine people" remark was referring to peaceful protesters who wanted to preserve Confederate statues and who were marching alongside the extremists. The vast majority of protesters at the rally were white supremacists and neo-Nazis. **HW** 

### Benj Pasek Becomes 8th Jew to Enter Elite EGOT Ranks after 'Only Murders' Emmy



Benj Pasek, Justin Paul, Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman, winners of the Emmy Award for Outstanding Original Music and Lyrics for Only Murders in the Building, attend the 76th Creative Arts Emmys Winner's Walk at Peacock Theater in Los Angeles, Sept. 8, 2024. Credit: Kevin Winter/Getty Images

#### By Shira Li Bartov

(JTA) – Benj Pasek has become the eighth Jew to win an EGOT, taking the elite show business throne alongside his songwriting partner Justin Paul.

The duo won an Emmy last Sunday with their original song, "Which of the Pickwick Triplets Did It?," a rapid-fire patter about three infants suspected of murdering their mother, from the Hulu series "Only Murders in the Building." Pasek and Paul are the 20th and 21st people to win the coveted quartet of Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony awards. They also won all the awards together, starting with a 2017 Oscar for their song, "City of Stars," in the film "La La Land" and a Tony for their score of the stage musical, "Dear Evan Hansen," later that year, followed by a Grammy for the cast album of "Dear Evan Hansen" in 2018. The 39-year-old pair met as freshmen at the University of Michigan and won their first Tony nominations in 2013 for the songs in "The Christmas Story," a stage adaptation of the classic movie. (For its TV special, they added a Jewish family and Hanukkah number.) Pasek joins a large proportion of Jewish artists to win all four of the top entertainment awards. More than a third of all EGOTs have been Jewish, including the first person to ever reach the status, composer Richard Rodgers. Rodgers

and Marvin Hamlisch, who was also Jewish, are the only people to have added a Pulitzer Prize to the EGOT crown.

Pasek, raised in a Jewish family in Philadelphia, has celebrated his ties to the community throughout his rocketing career. He is a member of the Jewish arts and culture nonprofit Reboot and hosted an untraditional Passover seder for Broadway performers, focused on reinterpreting Passover themes to discuss modern-day concerns, in 2017. During the COVID-19 pandemic he created "Saturday Night Seder," a digital broadcast that featured dozens of celebrities and raised \$2.6 million for the CDC Foundation. This May, Pasek spoke about his Jewish identity during an early-morning session at an all-night learning event for Shavuot at the Jewish community center near his home on Manhattan's Upper West Side. "My Jewish identity totally informs my work," Pasek told the Jewish Community Voice of Southern New Jersey in 2019, adding that Jews have a vantage point of looking in from outside the mainstream that enables unique insights. "It's important to be vocal about identity and politics and be vocal about what you believe in - especially at a time when so many people are being

marginalized as 'others," Pasek said. "I think Jewish people particularly have a responsibility to claim their Jewishness and also be champions for people in marginalized groups. It's a really important thing that you inherit that comes with being a Jewish person." In addition to the 21 artists who have won EGOTs in competition, six others have earned the four awards with one achieved as an honorary or non-competitive distinction. Non-competitive EGOT winners include the legendary Jewish actor and singer Barbra Streisand. **HW** 



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# Pro-Israel Demonstrator in Newton, Mass., Charged with Shooting Pro-Palestinian Activist Who Tackled Him

(JTA) – A demonstrator at a pro-Israel rally in Newton, Massachusetts, has been charged with shooting a pro-Palestinian activist who rushed and tackled him.

Police said they would increase security around houses of worship after the incident.

The incident was caught on video last Thursday evening and posted by a reporter for the "Daily Wire," a conservative news outlet. It involved a man shouting charges of genocide at the pro-Israel rally, and then rushing across the street and tackling a participant in the rally. A shot is fired, and then the pro-Palestinian activist attempts to stands up, bloodied in the gut.

At a press conference following the incident with the mayor and police officials, Marian Ryan, the Middlesex County district attorney, recounted the details of the altercation and said the shooting victim had suffered life threatening injuries and was hospitalized.

The pro-Palestinian activist "ultimately came across and jumped upon one of the demonstrators," Ryan said. "A scuffle ensued. During that scuffle, the individual who had come across the street was shot by a member of the demonstrating group."

Ryan identified the alleged shooter as Scott Hayes, 47, from Framingham, and said he was under arrest. "He, right now, is charged with assault and battery with a dangerous weapon and violation of a constitutional right causing injury," she said.

Hayes was scheduled to be arraigned last Friday. Ryan's office and Newton police did not answer multiple requests from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency as to whether the shooting victim was being charged for his role in the fight.

Newton, a suburb of Boston, is home to a large Jewish community. The intersection where the rally took place is about a mile from an area with multiple synagogues.

This is not the first time physical clashes have ensued at rallies surrounding the Israel-Hamas war. A month after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack, a Jewish man died after a pro-Palestinian protester struck him in the head with a megaphone. This year, multiple other clashes have occurred between demonstrators in Los Angeles, including at the University of California, Los Angeles.

The New England branch of the Anti-Defamation League expressed concern about the rush to charge Hayes.

"Reports that charges were immediately filed prior to completion of the investigation are concerning," it said in a statement. "Protests should not subject anyone to violence. We encourage Newton Police and the Middlesex District Attorney to conduct a thorough investigation of the entire incident."

A GoFundMe fundraiser for Hayes' defense identified him as a non-Jewish Iraq war veteran who was involved in Newton-area pro-Israel activities. It had raised more than \$109,000 of a \$180,000 target as of last Friday afternoon. A statement on the fundraising page did not explicitly say Hayes shot the man, though it said he tried to help the shooting victim after the shot was fired.

"As Scott was about to leave, a young man wearing a Palestinian flag pin started shouting from the other side of the street to Scott and other protests in the area," the statement said. "This person suddenly ran across the street, charged Scott, attacked him and tackled him to the ground. Scott was wrestling with him when a gun went off. As soon as Scott noticed his assailant was hurt, he provided emergency medical treatment."

At the press conference, the acting police chief, George McMains, said police would beef up their presence in coming days.

"The Newton police department will be providing extra patrols at the houses of worship over the next several days, as well as beyond, if we feel that's appropriate or necessary," he said. He appealed for more witnesses to come forward.

The Boston area Jewish Community Relations Council said the offices of Ryan and of Newton's mayor, Ruthanne Fuller, had been in touch to brief them on the incident.

Fuller at the press conference offered trauma counseling to residents affected by the incident. "I ask everyone to remain calm," she said. **HW** 

# Cabinet Shown 'Horrific' Video of Tunnel Where Six Hostages Executed



The entrance to the tunnel in Rafah, the southern Gaza Strip, where the six murdered hostages were found on Aug. 31, 2024. Credit: IDF.

(JNS) – Israeli Cabinet ministers last Sunday night were presented with video footage of the tunnel in Rafah where the six murdered hostages were held, footage they described as "stomach-churning" and "horrific."

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Herzi Halevi showed the visual documentation from southern Gaza at the request of Defense Minister Yoav Gallant. Gat, 40, and Master Sgt. Ori Danino, 25, were found in a 65-foot-deep tunnel on Aug. 31. The bodies had gunshot wounds to the head and elsewhere.

Lawmakers were shocked to see the video of the tunnel, which was 31.5 inches (80 cm) wide. Blood stains and torn clothes can be seen in the video, and it is believed that the male abductees attempted to shield the female captives. Ministers were also informed during the session that the murders occurred last Thursday evening, placing their executions at the same time that a Cabinet meeting was taking place regarding the Philadelphi Corridor that runs along Gaza's border with Egypt. The meet-

ing ended with a vote in favor of maintaining security control over the buffer zone. Therefore, it is impossible that the guards shot the hostages based on the Philadelphi Corridor decision, as some have argued, but instead likely because they felt that the IDF was closing in on them.

"It was perfectly quiet in the room. It was one of the hardest videos to watch. It turns your stomach. The tunnel is narrow and low, you can either lie down or sit or walk on your knees. You can't fit more than a mattress and a half across. You can assume that they slept either in turns or along the length of the tunnel," ministers said.

"You see in the documentation a lot of drinking water and protein bars, some clothes, a chess board or backgammon and notebooks. Seeing the video and realizing that they survived 11 months only sharpens the understanding of what they are going through. No one remains indifferent," they added, calling Hamas terrorists "monsters" and "human animals."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told the ministers: "When you watch this video, it sharpens your understanding of the evil we are facing. They are Satan incarnate."

Channel 12 last Sunday published other findings from the IDF's initial investigation into the murders, including evidence that some of the abductees defended themselves and fought their captors. nel, and with no air vents, difficulty breathing. There were no toilets or showers. They showered with water bottles, from which they also drank, and suffered from starvation and drastic weight loss, with Yerushalmi only weighing 36 kilos (79 pounds). The few protein bars found were not enough to prevent hunger.

Notebooks were collected by security forces and will be delivered to the families.

The IDF has opened an investigation after the names of six slain hostages were leaked before their families could be notified through official channels.

News of the bodies' recovery spread online hours before they were returned to Israel, resulting in the families learning of their loved ones' deaths through social media rather than from the army.

To put a stop to the rumors, the army felt obliged to publish a special announcement that the bodies had been recovered, although without confirming the identities of the abductees.

During last Sunday night's presentation to the Cabinet, the team led by Mossad chief David Barnea that is negotiating for the release of the 101 remaining hostages gave an overview of the talks, saying that "Israel does not know if and when the American compromise proposal will be submitted. [Hamas leader Yahya] Sinwar has hardened positions, and he is expanded the numbers of murderers [Palestinians serving life sentences in Israeli jails Hamas wants released] in a way that goes beyond the range that allows for consensus." **HW** 

Ministers did not see the hostage's corpses but rather the inhumane conditions in which their Hamas captors forced them to live.

The bodies of Hersh Goldberg-Polin, 23, Eden Yerushalmi, 24, Almog Sarusi, 25, Alexander Lobanov, 32, Carmel

The investigation found that the hostages had difficulty standing in the tun-

# Cotton to UN Human Rights Commissioner: 'Is Hamas a Terrorist Organization?'

(JNS) – Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) has asked Volker Türk, the U.N. high commissioner for human rights, to "muster the courage" to answer what he calls a "simple question."

"I write regarding your shocking failure to condemn the terrorists of Hamas," Cotton stated in a Sept. 10 letter. "While you preen as the moral voice of the world, you've refused to call Hamas a terrorist organization and repeatedly drawn a false equivalence between Hamas and Israel."

Urging Türk and others at the United Nations to label Hamas as terrorists, Cotton pointed to the fact that the United States, United Kingdom, Israel, Australia, Japan and the European Union have done so.

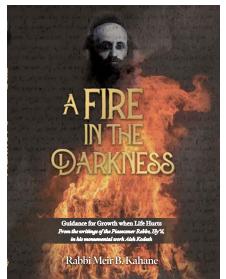
He suggested to Türk that "moral blindness unfortunately seems to be your modus operandi."

The senator pointed to the High Commissioner's statement following the recent discovery of six hostages murdered in the Gaza Strip by Hamas. "Although you professed that you were 'horrified' by the executions, you failed even to mention Hamas as the murderer and called for an 'independent' investigation into the killing," he wrote. "Hamas had already admitted to these barbaric murders, so I'm not sure what such an investigation would prove."

Cotton said Türk could address his objections "with very little effort by simply joining the rest of the civilized world. Could you please answer this simple question: Is Hamas a terrorist organization?"

He requested a response by Sept. 17, noting he would "happily accept a letter that says nothing more than 'Hamas is a terrorist organization' between the salutation and the signature line." **HW** 

# New Book Features Acclaimed Piaseczner Rebbe's Teachings by Native Memphian Rabbi Meir Kahane



#### By Shoshana Cenker

For his latest book, "A Fire in the Darkness: Guidance for Growth when Life Hurts," Rabbi Meir Kahane (Michael to those of us who grew up with him) dove into the incredible manuscripts of the first Piaseczner Rebbe of Poland, Rabbi Kolonymos Kalman Shapira.

With a passion for education and joyous belief in G-d, the Rebbe continued to support Jewish life while held captive in the Warsaw Ghetto during WWII. The Piaseczner Rebbe crafted many educational pieces, including the Aish Kodesh in the early 1940s – a collection of sermons focusing on personal and communal suffering. Rabbi Shapira lost his wife, son, and daughter-in-law as Nazis bombed Poland in September 1939; and he was killed in the Trawniki work camp in November 1943. A profound, innovative thinker, he's credited with providing a pathway to elevate emunah (faith), creating the potential for growth, regardless of someone's situation.

How do we even know about his extraordinary works? The Piaseczner Rebbe's manuscripts were eventually discovered in the ghetto, buried underground in a milk canister.

Noting that Jewish education has experienced a shift over the past 20 years in the types of questions that are presented or asked, Rabbi Kahane illustrates that the Rebbe's wisdom continues to offer us guidance in today's modern world. "A Fire in the Darkness" provides thoughtful answers to several difficult questions that many, if not all of us, have perhaps considered at various times in our lives: Does Hashem really love me? What can I do if I'm angry? Why is it so hard for me to daven? How can I grow when I'm hurting?

Using the Piaseczner Rebbe's deeply thoughtful manuscript, Rabbi Kahane offers actionable advice for coping with loneliness, unbearable or overwhelming feelings, helplessness, self-compassion versus making excuses, and more topics on pain and suffering.

"I'd always had a strong affinity for the Piaseczner Rebbe. ... I had marveled at his brilliance as an educator but knew little else about him besides the fact that he was in the Warsaw Ghetto. Around 15 years ago I joined a team of educators leading a trip to Poland. (I have subsequently led many trips of my own.) In my preparations for these trips, I learned more and more about the holy Rebbe, and as my understanding of the Holocaust deepened, my interest in the Piaseczner increased. I was very inspired by the fact that he wrote a sefer while in the Gehinnom of the Warsaw Ghetto. I bought myself a copy of Aish Kodesh and began to learn it," Rabbi Kahane explains in his book's Preface. "I had never learned a sefer quite like it. The Rebbe was acutely sensitive to the complex thoughts and layered feelings of those who experience suffering. The more I worked on understanding his points, the more I came to appreciate that the Rebbe wrote a work that addressed the questions of a future generation he would never know. It was nothing short of prophetic. I began to integrate the Rebbe's ideas into my classes and discovered that they spoke to the students in a very deep way. I found that the Rebbe's ideas were impactful for all types, irrelevant of level or background; all seemed to be moved by what the Rebbe was saying. ... I continued to develop classes and curricula based on his ideas. Those classes became the seeds for 'A Fire in the Darkness."

Rabbi Kahane notes that Aish Kodesh is "absolute brilliance" and a "treasure chest of guidance for the Torah approach to pain, suffering, and particularly growth while suffering." The challenge, however, is that modern readers have difficulty understanding it.

"A Fire in the Darkness" isn't a trans-

lation of Aish Kodesh. It's a systematic guidebook with many of Rabbi Kahane's own ideas based on the "development of the Rebbe's words."

As the Piaseczner Rebbe's teachings have uplifted countless Jews, shining a beacon of light in the darkest of times, Rabbi Kahane continues Rabbi Shapira's important legacy through his own exceptional book.

"It is with a deep sense of awe and humility that I even attempt to present the thoughts of the great Piaseczner Rebbe. The Rebbe was an individual larger than life ... even years after his death," Rabbi Kahane added. "His piety and genius are overwhelming to even think about. The depth of his writings and his grasp of human nature were unique in the annals of Jewish history, and the story of his life, particularly of his death, model everything a Jew's life should be: one continuous kiddush Hashem."

Rabbi Kahane is the menahel of Chedvas Bais Yaakov in Jerusalem. A world-renowned educator, he's been at the forefront of Jewish education for over two decades. A highly sought-after and engaging speaker, he's known for inspiring today's generation and lecturing on TorahAnytime.com. He lives in the Maalot Dafna neighborhood with his wife and family.

May the Piaseczner Rebbe's memory be a blessing.

Buy "A Fire in the Darkness" from Jewish bookstores around the globe, Menuchapublishers.com, Amazon, or eBay. **HW** 



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# SARAH FREEMAN for District 8

# It's time to decide our future

I'm Sarah Freeman, and I'm running for U.S. Congress in Tennessee's District 8 as a Democrat, an educator, and an unwavering defender of democracy.

I am a native southerner, born in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia where I lived until nine. After my parents split up, I moved to Davenport, Iowa with my mother and three older siblings.

My mother worked at the Rock Island Arsenal to support us, and I attended public schools. We faced challenges, including losing my brother in the Vietnam War, but these experiences shaped my resilience and commitment to fighting for working and military families.

My passion for education led me to earn a Ph.D. in U.S. history and pursue a career as a college history professor while, together with my husband, raising a family. I've spent my career empowering others as a teacher, advocating for quality public education, and addressing the tragedies of gun violence after a 1998 school shooting directly affected our community.

For twenty-six years, West Tennessee has been our home. Locally, I fought to protect my town from corporate predatory development and the government corruption that goes with it. I worked to reform the voting system in Shelby Co. and establish a secure and verifiable paper trail for elections. Serving on the Shelby County Democratic Executive Committee and as a state-elected official on the Tennessee Democratic Party Executive Committee has honed my skills in leadership and advocacy.

I am committed to addressing the challenges faced by Tennesseans,

including supporting veterans, advocating for common-sense gun laws, and increasing federal funding for public schools. I believe in equal rights for all, protecting our environment, and upholding democratic principles. It would be an honor to serve the people of District 8. Now, more than ever, we need leadership that prioritizes common sense and the needs of everyday Tennesseans.

I'm running to challenge the status quo in Congress and to ensure that our voices are heard. With your support, I believe we can bring about real change for West Tennessee and for our country.



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