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29 TISHREI, 5785

OCTOBER 31, 2024

VOL. 103, NO. 5

Federation Focuses on College Campus Climate During Lions Fall Reception Hosted at Newly Renovated Morris S. Fogelman Jewish Student Center



Kimberlee Strome and Cindy Finestone, Lion of Judah Co-Chairs.

Every fall, Memphis Jewish Federation invites its women donors at the Lion of Judah level (Lions) to hear about Federation’s key priorities and kick off a new year. This year, Lions came together on a gorgeous fall afternoon at the newly renovated Morris S. Fogelman Jewish Student Center. Attendees were amazed at the redesigned

space and excited for the students who will benefit from it.

When long-time philanthropist and Lion of Judah Mary Lynn Perl entered the building, she was brought back to memories of the original building and remarked, “I could have never dreamed of such a beautiful home for our college students. I am so proud of what Avron



More than 60 Lions attended the Fall Reception.

and Wendy (Fogelman) have done by leading the way for this renovation. Avron is keeping his father’s legacy of giving alive.”

With more than 60 attendees at the event, the room was filled with high energy, as Lions explored the new space while sipping “Liontini” cocktails and catching up with friends. As guests took their seats, Lion of Judah Co-Hairs Cindy Finestone and Kimberlee Strome extended a warm welcome and opened the evening’s program.

Cindy touched on the importance of the Morris S. Fogelman Jewish Student

Center serving as the home for Memphis Jewish college students, saying, “It has never been more important for Jewish students to have a safe space where they can be fully themselves and celebrate being Jewish.”

In her remarks, Kimberlee praised the Lions for their growth in membership and giving, stating that Memphis Lions of Judah have grown to 150 members, with each member representing family gifts to Federation’s Annual Community Campaign of \$5,000 or more. Ac-

(See Lions Page 2)

Rabbi Akiva Males and Jeanne and Dr. Bruce Alpert to Share Experiences about Operation Benjamin November 17



Rabbi Akiva Males and Dr. Bruce and Jeannie Ashford

The Jewish Historical Society of Memphis and the Mid-South (JHSMM) will showcase the important work of Operation Benjamin in honor of Veterans and Veterans Day on Sunday, November 17, 2024, at 2 p.m. at the Memphis Jewish Community Center.

The second presentation in the Sumner Levine Speakers Series features Rabbi

Akiva Males of Young Israel, a board member of Operation Benjamin, who will highlight the history and mission of this unique organization. Operation Benjamin is dedicated to locating the remains of Jewish personnel at American military cemeteries around the world, who were mistakenly interred under headstones that did not represent their

religion – marked with a cross instead of the Jewish Star of David and making sure the proper headstones are erected. In his talk, Rabbi Males will also discuss how families of Jewish heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice can finally have closure and share some of their touching stories.

Memphians Jeanne and Dr. Bruce Alpert will share details of their journey to Belgium and speak about how Operation Benjamin discovered what happened to Jeanne’s uncle, Lt. Joseph M. Sugarman Jr., a soldier killed during World War II.

Greg Siskind, president of JHSMM, said, “We look forward to hearing from Rabbi Akiva Males and Jeanne and Dr. Bruce Alpert about the significant work

of Operation Benjamin and how it has impacted Memphians in our Jewish community. We are also proud to honor our veterans who have made such a special contribution to our country.”

Jeanne Alpert said, “Operation Benjamin is a fabulous organization and what they do is mind-boggling. From the way they go to find the people, to the books, to the research, to the changing of the headstone, from the beginning to the end, they are so compassionate and caring, and just wonderful.”

Rabbi Akiva Males grew up in Cleveland, Ohio, and received his Jewish Education at the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, The Wisconsin Institute for Torah Study and Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim (Rabbinical Seminary of America in New York) where he received his Semi-cha. He has served as Rabbi of Keshet Israel Congregation in Harrisburg, Pa., and together with his wife, Layala, relo-

(See Benjamin Page 2)

Lions...
(Continued From Page 1)



Close friends of Marlene Gerson perform a skit in honor of Marlene receiving the Lion of Judah Legacy Award.

cording to Kimberlee, it is a powerful group of women representing every age group and denomination.

During her remarks, Laura Linder, JCP president and CEO, shared the priorities for the 2025 Annual Community Campaign, saying, “This year, we are going back to the basics – building tomorrow’s leaders, addressing the rise in antisemitism, securing our community, inspiring Jewish joy by investing in the next generation, and caring for our local and global Jewish families. These priorities will sustain a vibrant Jewish community for today and always.”

Laura also announced an exciting new initiative as part of this year’s campaign, asking Lions to “Reach for the Ruby.” She explained, “This giving initiative is for every Lion ready to increase her commitment over the next three years. I am already looking forward to sharing the names of 10 new Ruby Lions at our Spring Reception.”

One of the most meaningful moments of the evening was the announcement of the second-ever Lion of Judah Legend Award recipient. The award, given to a Lion who has gone above and beyond in her service to the community, was presented to Marlene Gerson with a creative skit written and performed by her friends and fellow Lions.

The group, which included close friends, colleagues and her daughter, Stefanie, lovingly shared all the reasons why Marlene is an exemplary Jewish community leader. The room erupted in applause as Marlene walked up to accept her award. The Memphis Jewish community is a better place because of her hard work and dedication.

Jennifer Roberts was invited to share her connection with Hillel and what it has meant to her. She spoke about her long-time role as a member of Hillel’s Advisory Committee and her joy in seeing and working with generations of Memphis Jewish college students. Jennifer emphasized Hillel’s critical role in

the Memphis Jewish community, providing a space for students to connect, learn, and grow.

She also personally thanked the Lions for generously donating kitchenware for the new Hillel kitchen, saying, “These gifts will help bring more Shabbat dinners, bagel brunches and other celebrations for the kids starting their new school year.”

The evening’s keynote speaker, Lisa Armony, executive director of Hillel International’s Campus Climate Initiative, was introduced by Fall Reception committee member Monique Jalenak. Confronting antisemitism remains a key priority for Federation and Monique introduced the speaker by saying to her fellow Lions, “As a mother of two kids in college and a high school senior, there is no one I would rather hear from than Lisa.”

Lisa started her presentation with some startling statistics, sharing, “Since the October 7 attack on Israel, reports of antisemitism on college campuses has increased 700 percent. In this school year alone, 473 incidents have been reported, including physical violence and harassment. 73 percent of Jewish college students are experiencing some form of antisemitism at their college or university.”

Lisa then explained how Hillel International is meeting this unprecedented moment, through providing security equipment grants and guidelines for security protocols, legal support for students through its Hillel Help Line, and wraparound services for campuses in crisis.

She explained, “Hillel’s Campus Climate Initiative is focused on working with campus administrators, faculty, and staff to provide better support for Jewish students, now and in the long term. We offer mental health and educational resources, and we give Jewish students the tools they need to advocate for themselves.” She concluded her pre-

THE
Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

Established September, 1925
By Leo I. Goldberger (1902-1989)

MAILING ADDRESS
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The Hebrew Watchman is a
Member of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, and Jewish News Service

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES:
Memphis and Mid-South \$36
Out-of-State \$50
Payable in Advance

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THE HEBREW WATCHMAN
(USPS #807-360) is published
weekly every Thursday
for \$36 per year by
JEWISH LIVING OF THE SOUTH, Inc.
THE HEBREW WATCHMAN
PO Box 770846
Memphis, TN 38177-0846
Periodical postage paid at
Memphis, Tenn.
POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to:
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PO Box 770846
Memphis, TN 38177-0846

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10/31/2024

Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. November 1, 2024 / 30 Tishrei, 5785 5:46 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. November 2, 2024 / 1 Cheshvan, 5785..... 6:42 p.m.
Simchat Torah
Weekly Torah Portion: Bereishit

sentation by sharing additional information about Hillel’s work on college campuses and thanked Federation for its continued efforts.

The event concluded with heartfelt thanks to all participants and a sense of shared purpose in continuing the important work of sustaining and strengthening the Memphis Jewish community. As attendees departed, they were left with a renewed sense of commitment to the causes championed throughout the evening and a deep appreciation for the impact of their collective efforts. [HW](#)

Benjamin...
(Continued From Page 1)

cated to Memphis where he has served as Rabbi of Young Israel since 2016.

Elaine Stegman and Susan Labovitz are program chairs for the Sumner Levine Speakers Series of JHSM. Refreshments will be served after the program. The community is invited to attend. [HW](#)

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Baron Hirsch Synagogue November 6, 2024, SoShuls Luncheon

Thanksgiving is just around the corner, and it is time to celebrate the arrival of autumn with food, friends, and music at the Baron Hirsch SoShuls Luncheon. The luncheon will be on Wednesday, November 6, 2024, at 12 p.m.

The SoShuls Luncheons are for people, who are 64 years or older, and the cost for the luncheon is \$5 per person. Luncheon participants do not have to be members of Baron Hirsch Synagogue. Just make a reservation and come enjoy a delicious lunch, listen to live music, and socialize with new and old friends.

Speaking of lunch, November's delicious luncheon menu will include turkey, peas and carrots, an oven potato medley and pumpkin pie.

During the November luncheon, Brandon Cuning will share his talent

for showcasing great Memphis music. Brandon is a Beale Street entertainer, who performs Rockabilly, R&B and early Rock'n Roll, while also sharing stories about the hit songs. He is also a radio disc jockey and co-owner of a Memphis-based tour company. His appearance is courtesy of Creative Aging, a Memphis non-profit agency that provides artistic talent and opportunities for older adults.

Make your reservations for the luncheon by Monday, November 4, 2024, either by calling 901-683-7485, or by email to gwen@baronhirsch.org. The SoShuls Luncheon is sponsored by Elaine Miner.

Come join us for a good time, a good meal and enjoy some great music. We hope to see you there! **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, November 4
Rabbi Talk
Speaker: Rabbi Ian Lichter, Head Rabbi of Baron Hirsch Congregation
Topic: Avraham's Journey Still Resonates Within Us
Come hear this dynamic speaker talk about an interesting topic! No reservations are needed for the talk.

Wednesday, November 6
Rabbi Talk
Speaker: Rabbi Sarit Horwitz of Beth Sholom Synagogue
Thanksgiving as a Jewish Holiday
Rabbi Sarit always has an interesting take on any topic. A question-and-answer period will follow.

Wednesday, November 13
Speaker: Kevin Payne, with Humana
Topic: Scams and Fraud Alerts
Kevin has given many talks to the group, and they are always entertaining and filled with information that one can take home and use. This subject is one that is in the news much lately. Seniors are more targeted by scammers who are more sophisticated in their methods. A handout will be given to all participants so they can take home many of the ways to prevent these scams.

Thursday, November 14
Special Art Project sponsored by B'nai Tzedek
Making a Challah Board
Paige Shainberg will lead this one-hour class that will allow participants to make and take home their own Challah Board for Shabbat! In order to have enough supplies, reservations need to be made by Monday, November 11, by calling the MJCC Front Desk at 901-761-0810. Please tell the person at the desk if you are coming for lunch AND art project or just the project.

Monday, November 11
Free Guitar Concert
Matt Timberlake, formerly with Memphis Jewish Federation, is performing a FREE Guitar Concert at noon. Come for lunch and enjoy the entertainment. Reservations are needed for lunch but not for the performance.

Please join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch from the kitchens at 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**

Medicare Help and Mah Jongg Lessons for Seniors at the MJCC

Beginning Mah Jongg Lessons with Melanie Mann
Thursdays 10 a.m. - noon
November 7 through December 12
\$80fee/\$72 members
Because of the demand we have started a second Mah Jongg class in November on Thursday mornings.

Melanie has been teaching this class for quite a while at the MJCC as well as other places around town. We filled up her other class, so please call in your reservations ASAP! Call the front desk at the MJCC at 901-761-0810 to register. The new class number is 11056. Bring your friends and learn how to play this timeless game!

FREE Medicare Insurance Help!
The Aging Commission of The Mid-South (ACMS) is coming to the MJCC to offer their services to the public as Medicare beneficiaries. Get ready for the Annual Enrollment Period (AEP) for the Medicare State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) assistance for January 2025 benefits.

They will be at the MJCC on Tuesday November 19, 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

The service is FREE!

For appointments call Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator at 901-259-9220. Space is very limited. **HW**

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A New Hanukkah Hallmark Movie from the Maker of ‘Hanukkah on Rye’ Is Coming

It will feature a pop-up Hanukkah bar and Marc Summers as a doting Jewish grandfather.



via Getty Images
By Lior Zaltzman

Originally appeared on Kveller, re-printed with permission.

Hallmark just announced its slate of 47 (!) new holiday movies for 2024, and in it are multiple projects that are at least Hanukkah-adjacent. While the synopsis of “Holiday Crashers” does not include the word Hanukkah, it does have a picture of the film’s two heroines at a Hanukkah party that is as blue and typically Hallmark as we’ve come to expect (with a seven-armed menorah in the background, sigh).

“Leah’s Perfect Gift,” starring Jewish actress Emily Arlook of “Grown-ish” (and soon to be “Nobody Wants This”) fame as Leah, is about a Jewish girl who loves Christmas and goes to her boyfriend’s family Christmas celebration.

There may not be a Hanukkah celebration in this film at all, even if the word is in the description of the film, but the Jewish girl obsessed with Christmas is already a Hallmark trope, and I have to hope it will be handled delicately.

The film I’m most excited about is “Hanukkah on the Rocks,” which, before I get into the synopsis, I’m already rooting for because it’s from the same writer as another Hallmark Hanukkah fave of mine, “Hanukkah on Rye,” Julie Sherman Wolfe, who I guess is now stuck with making different “Hanukkah On...” movies for the rest of time. Hanukkah on the Beach? Hanukkah on Top (s... get it?!)? Hanukkah on a Jewish Space Laser? I’m down for them all. Sherman Wolfe also wrote the script

for what is arguably the most important Hallmark Christmas movie of the season and maybe in history, “Holiday Touch-down: A Chiefs Love Story,” which features Travis Kelce’s mom, Donna Kelce, and Jewish actress Hunter King.

“Hanukkah on Rye” featured two of my Jewish faves, musical star Jeremy Jordan and “Jane the Virgin” star Yael Grobglas, and I’m pretty excited about the cast of “On the Rocks,” too. Tory, the movie’s lead, is played by Canadian actress Stacey Farber, the badass Jewish redhead of “Degrassi,” “Saving Hope,” “Superman and Lois” and the latest season of “Virgin River.” Farber already starred in a Hallmark movie last season, “A Season for Family,” but this is her first Hanukkah one.

Starring as her love interest Jay is Daren Kagasoff, whom I absolutely loved as Ricky in “The Secret Life of the American Teenager” and who most recently starred in NBC’s “The Village” opposite Israeli actress Moran Attias as well as the Korea War film “Devotion.” Jay’s grandfather, Sam, is played by Marc Summers, the delightful and iconic TV host who was actually born Mark Berkowitz and had a childhood dream of being a rabbi. All in all, it’s a really fun, authentically Jewish cast.

So what’s the story of “Hanukkah on the Rocks?” Well, according to the casting announcement for the movie, it’s all about Tory finding herself after quitting her big corporate law job a week before Hanukkah. Bereft after years of working a corporate job, she takes up a gig at the very unstylish local Chicago bar called “Mack’s” and tries to help her grandmother (her bubbe, if you will) with Hanukkah preparations, all the while keeping her big lifestyle change a secret.

The Hanukkah errands her grandmother sends her on include a mission to find her a box of the “good” Hanukkah candles (we all know people who are particular about their Hanukkah candles; I personally am a sucker for these, which I can’t say are “good” but still remain my favorite). Unfortunately, when she finds the last box, she also discovers that there’s competition for them, in the form of Jay, a doctor (a nice Jewish doctor!) visiting from Florida for the holidays.

As an aside, the least believable part of Hanukkah Hallmark movies is that we all migrate en masse to our family’s homes for Hanukkah – a feat usually reserved for the High Holidays and Passover.

But I digress... The candle quest leads Tory to an Old Town bar called Rocky’s where she meets Sam and a cast of fascinating characters (yes, including an aspiring comedian, this is Chicago) that help her find a new passion and then turn the bar into a Hanukkah pop-up called, you guessed it, Hanukkah on the Rocks. (Fun fact: There is actually a Hanukkah pop-up bar in Chicago called 8 Crazy Nights!) The bar brings a new connection to the local community and lots of Jewish treats, drinks and joy. Jay is trying to convince his grandfather to move with him to sunny Florida, where all old Jewish men retire, but will he end up finding his place in Chicago, with Tory, instead? I think we know the answer to that one (this is a Hallmark movie!!!).

This is all to say, the story of this film sounds suitably fantastical and adorable for a delightful Hanukkah Hallmark movie. Yes, Chicago natives will likely find some settings jarring (you can always tell Hallmark movies are not filmed on location, but I’m OK with that). Yes, the candle premise is a bit of a stretch. But just like “Hanukkah on Rye” and the crowd favorite from last year, “Round and Round,” this feels like a story told from a Jewish perspective, written by a Jewish writer with love and genuine fondness for the holiday. In “Hanukkah on Rye,” Sherman Wolfe based some of the scenes and storylines on her own Jewish family and interactions they’ve had, and I bet she may have done the same for this one. She may have also been inspired by 8 Crazy Nights or by Maccabee Bar, a yearly pop-up bar founded in 2018 by an amazing Jewish bartender called Naomi Levy in Boston, whose decor is perfectly suited for a Hallmark movie.

“I wanted to write a Hanukkah movie that wasn’t ‘explaining’ Hanukkah or Judaism to anyone – just like we never explain Christmas or Christianity in a Christmas movie,” Sherman Wolfe told Kveller about “Hanukkah on Rye.” Hopefully, her second Hanukkah movie will have that same haimish feel.

“Hanukkah on the Rocks” premieres on December 13 at 8 p.m. ET on the Hallmark Channel, meaning you’ll be able to watch it long before the Festival of Lights, which starts on Christmas Day this year. That means a lot of us may in fact be traveling home for Hanukkah, and hopefully will have a fun Hanukkah Hallmark movie to watch with our loved ones. **HW**

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Massachusetts Restaurant Apologizes for World War II Re-Enactors Dining in SS Uniforms

(JNS) – The owners of Kith and Kin restaurant in Hudson, Mass., apologized for seating a party of World War II re-enactors earlier this month that included two people wearing SS uniforms reminiscent of Nazi Germany.

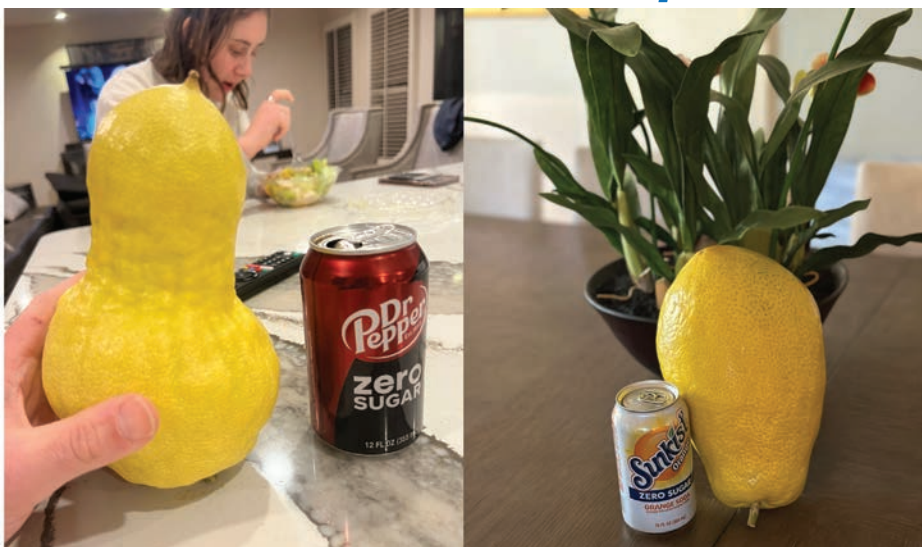
“A group of living historians from the American Heritage Museum dined at our restaurant,” the eatery posted on its Facebook page on Oct. 13, referring to diners the night before. “The table of eight showed up in their costumes: four U.S. soldiers, a military nurse and a couple dressed as SS soldiers.”

The restaurant said that “in hindsight, they should have been asked to change before being seated. Even though we knew they were living historians, at a time when acts of antisemitic violence continue to rise, we should have realized other diners might not be aware of the local World War II re-enactment.”

Had those in the Nazi uniforms been spouting antisemitism, the owners said “we would never have allowed them to step foot in the restaurant. As a small, family-owned business, we strive every day to do our best and are continuing to learn and grow. Last night we fell short, and we deeply apologize.”

The World War II event sponsored by the museum in Hudson, about an hour west of Boston, featured more than 350 participants who wore a variety of costumes from Axis and Allied powers. **HW**

MJX Hosts a Lively Sukkah Crawl for Young Jewish Professionals in Memphis



The Kahane Esrog from this Sukkot and last Sukkot.

By Eli Ostrow

Memphis Jewish Experience (MJX) hosted an unforgettable Sukkah Crawl for their Young Jewish Professionals (YJP) group. The event brought together singles and young couples without children, ages 21 to 42, for an evening of laughter, tradition, and good company during Sukkot.

The night started off at the home of the Noach and Miriam Karp, who graciously hosted everyone for a pre-crawl meal.

The crawl kicked off at Rabbi Nissan's Sukkah, where the excitement was already in the air. After some quick introductions and a few jokes, Rabbi Nissan told a story from his family's heritage dating back hundreds of years that even left some attendees in tears. Following that, the group headed over to Richard and Aviva Lewis's Sukkah, the second stop of the night. There, everyone joined in singing traditional songs, toasting with a couple of l'chaims and chatting about life in Israel, where, as everyone learned, almost everything is just a 20-minute drive from Tel Aviv. It was the perfect way to get to know one another while embracing the spirit of the holiday.

The group then took a leisurely seven-minute stroll to Josh and Elana Kahane's Sukkah, where they were greeted by even more young professionals, many visiting for the holiday. Josh had everyone cracking up with the backstory of his unusually large esrog – so big it was compared to a papaya! The crowd was thoroughly entertained by his hu-

morous tale, and the energy only ramped up when an intense game of beer pong broke out. Laughter and friendly competition filled the air, making it a night to remember.

As the night continued, the group made their way to Shelby and Lee Baum's Sukkah. The Baums have been hosting a second-night Sukkot celebration for two decades, and their hospitality didn't disappoint. Though the party was winding down when the group arrived, they quickly brought it back to life. Singing, lively Torah discussions, plenty of tasty food, and a few more rounds of l'chaims made sure the night ended on a high note. It was well past midnight when the group finally left, conversation and laughter could still be heard from all the attendees.

The final destination was back at the Karp residence, where participants lingered a bit longer, chatting outside under the stars. The Karps went inside to wrap up the evening's meal while the rest of the group continued to schmooze, savoring the sense of community that had grown throughout the night.

Reflecting on the experience, Eli Cohen, a member of the MJX YJP, shared, “Going from Sukkah to Sukkah was something totally new for me. It was amazing to meet new people and experience Sukkot with others who were just as excited about it as I was. It felt like a real community.”

For the YJP community in Memphis, it was a night that won't soon be forgotten. **HW**

Ex-Boxing Champ Gives Israeli Rescue Group 100 Bulletproof Vests

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – American boxing legend Floyd Mayweather Jr. is donating \$100,000 to buy 100 bulletproof vests for Israeli medical volunteers on the front lines, in his latest show of support for the Jewish state.

The gift was announced last Monday evening, at an annual Jerusalem concert for the United Hatzalah volunteer emergency-rescue service that raised funds for the purchase of 1,000 protective kits for its volunteers.

About 3,000 people attended the sold-out event organized by the Jerusalem-based service at the city's International Convention Center, which included performances by Israeli singers Ishay Ribo, Gad Elbaz and Shmuel Star.

“Your presence shows that even in

difficult times, we can find strength in unity,” said Eli Beer, United Hatzalah president and founder. “Let’s continue to stand together for our soldiers, our volunteers and our community.”

Mayweather, 47, from Las Vegas, is a boxing promoter and former professional boxer who competed between 1996 and 2017. He retired undefeated with an 50-0 record and won 15 major world championships spanning five weight classes from super featherweight to light middleweight.

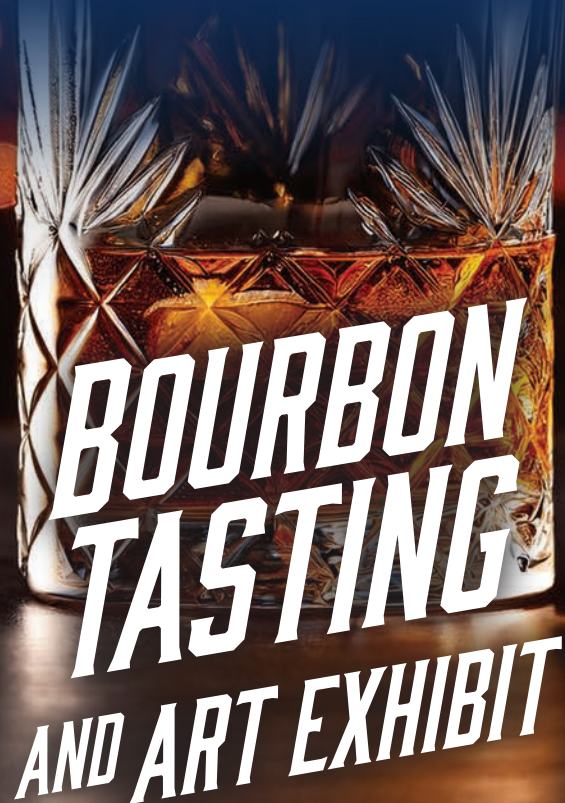
Earlier this year, he visited Israel in a wartime solidarity trip wearing a large Star of David necklace. At the time, he dedicated a fleet of ambulances to Israel's Magen David Adom rescue service. [HW](#)



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Former KKK Leader David Duke Endorses Jill Stein for President

By Jackie Hajdenberg

(JTA) – David Duke, the former leader of the Ku Klux Klan, endorsed Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein, who is Jewish, on his radio show last Tuesday.

Duke, long one of the country’s highest-profile white supremacists and antisemites, has repeatedly sought political office while spreading conspiracy theories about Jews. In his endorsement of Stein, he said that she was the candidate with the strongest stance against “Jewish power” because she opposed

Israel’s military campaign. “Although Dr. Stein and I obviously have our differences on important issues, she’s the only candidate who speaks clearly against the war in the Middle East and Ukraine,” Duke said on his radio show. “By opposing Jewish supremacy in Israel and Jewish mass murder in Israel, and the policies of the American government in these insane wars and the Ukrainian war there, she’s actually doing something which is harming this Jewish power.” Duke is an unlikely supporter of



David Duke and Green Party presidential candidate Jill Stein. (Photos via YouTube, Wikimedia)

Stein, who in addition to being Jewish is a far-left candidate. Duke, a fixture of the far right, previously endorsed Donald Trump in 2016 and 2020.

On his show, Duke claimed that Trump had since lost his support due to a “full-throated subservience to Israel and to the Jewish lobby in the United States” and “on a global level.”

But in endorsing Stein, Duke is still backing a candidate who could help return Trump to the White House. Stein’s bid for president is widely viewed as having a potential spoiler effect on the Harris-Walz campaign, taking enough votes away from the Democratic ticket in crucial swing states to throw them to the Republican nominee. At a recent rally, a Stein surrogate said the ticket couldn’t win but could “deny Kamala Harris the state of Michigan.”

Stein’s campaign immediately disavowed the endorsement, which it painted as insincere.

“A racist troll has ‘endorsed’ our campaign to draw attention to himself, and certain smear merchants are happy to platform this troll to attack us,” Stein said in a statement. “Of course, I reject any ‘endorsement’ from a white supremacist like David Duke, unlike Kamala Harris who can’t stop bragging about her endorsement from white supremacist mass murderer Dick Cheney.”

(Cheney, Republican George W. Bush’s vice president, announced last month that he would vote for Harris because he believed Trump “can never be trusted with power again.” Stein contends that the Bush administration’s war in Iraq amounted to mass murder.)

Duke has made repeated political forays of his own over the decades, at certain points drawing national attention. He is a former member of the Louisiana House of Representatives, campaigned for U.S. president as a Democrat in 1988, and advanced to the runoff in the 1991 election for governor of Louisiana, which he lost by a wide margin. He has since mounted other unsuccessful runs for office.

And this is not the first time Duke has endorsed or praised a Democrat while citing their antipathy toward Jews or Israel. In 2019, he praised Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar amid controversy over tweets she wrote that drew accusations of antisemitism and for which she apologized. Weeks earlier, he endorsed then-Democratic presidential candidate Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, saying she would “actually put America First rather than Israel First!” (“America First” was the name of an antisemitic World War II-era movement. In 2016, Trump adopted the phrase, and it has become a common campaign slogan that Jewish supporters have also used. Gabbard is no longer a Democrat and endorsed Trump this year.)

Whether or not Duke actually has enough of a following to sway any voters to Stein, supporters of Harris are using the endorsement to attack the Green Party candidate.

“Just because you disavow KKK grand wizard David Duke’s endorsement doesn’t mean it’s not concerning and you didn’t earn it,” tweeted Keith Edwards, a Democratic campaign strategist. **HW**



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An Unbound Offering: Genesis 22 in Biblical, Second Temple, and Christian Reception



Daniel Oden

Though the topic of child sacrifice figures prominently in the laws and narratives of the Hebrew Bible, there is little to no explicit connection of Genesis 22 to any text of the Hebrew Bible other than 2 Chronicles 3:1, in which Solomon’s Temple is built on Mount Moriah. Yet within Second Temple Judaism and Early Christianity, Genesis 22 invites interpretative expansions, as these communities wrestle with the profound theological questions raised by this provocative chapter. New Testament references to the chapter (whether explicit, allusions, or “echoes”) do not seem merely to recapitulate the minimalistic narrative of MT Genesis, but show signs of dependence on later reception of Genesis 22, such as the Septuagint, *Targumim*, and traditions in *haggadah* (Robert Daly, Leroy Huizen-

ga). Later Christian and Jewish interpretations of Genesis 22, despite clear differences, demonstrate continued dialogue between both communities, while maintaining within each community a pluriformity of interpretive traditions. Daniel Oden is an associate professor of Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East at Harding University in Searcy, Ark. A first-generation college graduate, Daniel earned a Bachelor of Arts in biblical languages at Lipscomb University, a Master of Arts in Religion in Biblical Studies at Westminster Theological Seminary (Philadelphia, Pa.), and a Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible and Ancient Near Eastern studies at New York University. While an assistant to Lawrence H. Schiffman, Daniel contributed to two volumes of the Brill series The

New Testament Gospels in their Judaic Contexts, “A Comparative Handbook to the Gospel of Mark” (2009) and “A Comparative Handbook to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke” (2021). Along with J. David Stark, Daniel edited and contributed to a collection of essays on hermeneutics and reception history published as “Scripture First: Biblical Interpretation that Fosters Christian Unity” (ACU Press, 2020). As a generalist, Daniel maintains interest in the study of texts and the material culture of the Ancient Near East, Egypt, and Mediterranean World from the Early Bronze Age through the Second Temple period into Rabbinic Judaism and early Christianity. Daniel is married to Helen (Chun), and they have five children (four sons and one daughter) ranging in age from 21-31 years. [HW](#)

Hezbollah Drone Scored Direct Hit on Netanyahu Home

(JNS) – Last Saturday’s Hezbollah drone attack targeting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s private residence in Caesarea scored a direct hit on the premier’s home, the military censor cleared for publication last Tuesday. Following the attempted assassination, security measures for ministers and other officials have been “significantly” reinforced. “Iran tried to eliminate the prime minister of Israel – it will not escape responsibility,” a senior Israeli government official told “Ynet.” According to reports, the assault included three drones, one of which scored a direct hit on a bedroom window at the Caesarea residence. Netanyahu and his wife, Sara, were not home at the time. “The attempt by Iran’s proxy Hezbollah to assassinate me and my wife today was a grave mistake,” the prime minister said in a statement last Saturday, adding, “This will not deter me or the State of Israel from continuing our just war against our enemies in order to


“Iran tried to eliminate the prime minister of Israel – it will not escape responsibility,” a senior government official said.

secure our future. “I say to Iran and its proxies in its axis of evil: Anyone who tries to harm Israel’s citizens will pay a heavy price,” Netanyahu warned. Hezbollah media chief Mohammed Afif during a press conference in Beirut last Tuesday declared the Iranian-backed terrorist organization’s “full, complete and exclusive responsibility for the Caesarea operation.” The Lebanese terrorist spokesman also warned, “If we did not reach you this time, then we will reach you the next time. Between us lie the days, nights and the battlefield.” [HW](#)



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The Taxpayer Relief Act of 1997 provided homeowners who sell their principal residence an exclusion from capital gains taxes of \$250,000 for single filers and \$500,000 for joint filers. At that time, the average price of a new home was about \$145,000, so this exclusion seemed generous and allowed more Americans to move freely from one home to another.¹ Unfortunately, the exclusion was not indexed to inflation, and what seemed generous in 1997 can be restrictive in 2024.

Capital gains taxes apply to the profit from selling a home, so they may be of special concern — and potential surprise — for older homeowners who bought their homes many years ago and might yield well over \$500,000 in profits if they sell. In some areas of the country, a home bought for \$100,000 in the 1980s could sell for \$1 million or more today.² At a federal tax rate of 15% or 20% (depending on income) plus state taxes in some states, capital gains taxes can take a big bite out of profits when selling a home. Fortunately, there are some things you can do to help reduce the taxes.

Qualifying for exclusion

In order to qualify for the full exclusion, you or your spouse must own the home for at least two years during the five-year period prior to the home sale. You AND your spouse (if filing jointly) must live in the home for at least two years during the same period. The exclusion can only be claimed once every two years. There are a number of excep-

tions, including rules related to divorce, death, and military service. If you do not qualify for the full exclusion, you may qualify for a partial exclusion if the main reason for the home sale was a change in workplace location, a health issue, or an unforeseeable event.

Increase basis for lower taxes

The capital gain (or loss) in selling a home is determined through a two-part calculation. First, the selling price is reduced by direct selling costs, including certain fees and closing costs, real estate commissions, and certain costs that the seller pays for the buyer. (The amount of any mortgage pay-off is not relevant for determining capital gains.) This yields the amount realized, which is then reduced by the adjusted basis.

The basis of your home is the amount you paid for it, including certain costs related to the purchase, plus the costs of improvements that are still part of your home at the date of sale. In general, qualified improvements include new construction or remodeling, such as a room addition or major kitchen remodel, as well as repair-type work that is done as part of a larger project. For example, replacing a broken window would not increase your basis, but replacing the window as part of a project that includes replacing all windows in your house would be eligible. This basis is adjusted by adding certain payments, deductions, and credits such as tax deductions and insurance payments for casualty losses, tax credits for energy improvements,

and depreciation for business use of the home. (See hypothetical example below.)
Hypothetical Example
Pete and Joanne purchased their home for \$100,000 in 1985 and sold it for \$800,000 in 2024.

This is how their capital gains might be calculated.

Capital gains	Basis
\$800,000 sales price	\$100,000 purchase price
- \$50,000 direct selling costs	+ \$8,000 purchase costs
\$750,000 amount realized	+ \$52,000 improvements
- \$150,000 adjusted basis	\$160,000 total basis
\$600,000 capital gain	- \$10,000 solar energy credit
- \$500,000 capital gains exclusion	\$150,000 adjusted basis
\$100,000 taxable gains	

At a 15% rate — which applies to most taxpayers — this would cost \$15,000 in federal capital gains taxes.

This hypothetical example of mathematical principles is for illustration purposes only. Actual results will vary.

Inheriting a home

Upon the death of a homeowner, the basis of the home is stepped up (increased) to the value at the time of death, which means that the heirs will only be liable for future gains. In community property states, this usually also applies to a surviving spouse. In other states, the basis for the surviving spouse is typically increased by half the value at the time of death (i.e., the value of the deceased spouse's share).

Determining the capital gain on a home sale is complex, so be sure to consult your tax advisor. For more information, see IRS Publication 523 Selling Your Home.

- 1) U.S. Census Bureau, retrieved from FRED, Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, 2024
- 2) CNN, January 29, 2024

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Treasury Informs Banks How to Identify Hezbollah's Ties to Monetary Crimes

(JNS) – The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) has issued guidance to aid financial institutions in identifying transactions that may involve funding the Hezbollah terrorist organization.

"Hezbollah's role in the ongoing conflict in the Middle East has exacerbated the risk of a wider regional war, and its strikes on Israeli territory have displaced thousands and killed innocent civilians," FinCEN director Andrea Gacki said last Wednesday.

"As part of the Treasury Department's enduring campaign against Hezbollah's finances and in response to Hezbollah's attacks against Israel, we are issuing this alert to help financial institutions uncover Hezbollah's illicit activities and protect the U.S. financial system from abuse by terrorists," she said.

Treasury notes Hezbollah's involvement in oil, gas, gold, currency exchanges, real estate, high-value art, construction and import-export businesses. Its money-laundering efforts focus on Europe, West Africa and South America.

Hezbollah has shown particular interest in "the tri-border area of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, as well as in free trade zones in Panama, to generate revenue for the organization through both licit and illicit activities," according to Treasury. These plans often coordinate with drug cartels and organized crime groups.

The alert concludes with identifying seven red flags for banks to identify in countering Hezbollah's criminal transactions. These include activity involving those identified on lists of sanctioned companies or banks named as a "primary money-laundering concern." [HW](#)

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Hundreds Pray at Nova Massacre Site Ahead of Hebrew Anniversary



Israelis visit. Credit: Israel Hadari/Flash90

(JNS) – Hundreds of people gathered at the site of the Supernova music festival massacre early last Wednesday morning for prayers, on the occasion of Hoshana Rabbah, exactly 24 hours before the Hebrew-date anniversary of the attack.

The 12-hour event in the area of Kibbutz Rei'm in Israel's south was held at the initiative of the Tikvah Forum for Families of Hostages. It also included Torah classes, as is customary on Hoshana Rabbah ("The Great Supplication"), the last day of the weeklong Sukkot holiday, which ended at nightfall last Wednesday, when the Shemini

Atzeret ("Eighth [Day] of Assembly") holiday began and, in Israel, Simchat Torah, began as well.

The Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led massacre in which some 1,200 people were murdered – including more than 350 at the Supernova festival – was launched on the morning of Simchat Torah.

"In the place where the terrible massacre took place a year ago, now the sounds of Torah study and prayer are heard. We study here because this is the strongest Zionist and Jewish response," the Tikvah Forum said.

"We miss our loved ones and are here to pray and study for them. We light

more light in a place where [Hamas] tried to darken it," it added.

Following the conclusion of Simchat Torah in Israel last Thursday night, the forum returned to Re'im for "Hakafot Shniyot" – another round of dancing with Torah scrolls accompanied by musical performances.

On Oct. 7, relatives of the 364 people murdered by Hamas at the music festival gathered at the site to honor their loved ones on the first anniversary of the massacre according to the Gregorian calendar.

At 6:29 a.m., the exact time when Hamas launched its assault, a moment of silence was observed. The Israeli flag was lowered to half-mast and the song "The Children of Winter 2023" was played. Then, the Yizkor memorial prayer was recited, and bereaved families recited the Kaddish mourning prayer. The ceremony ended with the singing of "Hatikvah," the Israeli national anthem.

"It's even harder a year later. I come here a lot. I was here last October 7 to look for Shani, and I saved many people. I didn't manage to save her, but it's essential for me to be here," Yaakov Gabay, whose daughter Shani was killed while trying to escape the terrorists at the festival, told JNS at the time.

Twenty-one festival attendees are still held hostage by Hamas terrorists in Gaza, with 17 presumed to be alive, according to official Israeli figures. **HW**

Israeli Nabbed for Plotting Assassination at Behest of Iran

(JNS) – A resident of Petah Tikva in central Israel has been arrested for plotting to assassinate prominent figures at the direction of Iran, the Israel Police announced last Wednesday.

Vladimir Verhovski, 35, from Petah Tikva, "carried out various tasks" for Iranian sources in exchange for payment, according to police. Verhovski had allegedly agreed to murder an Israeli scientist in exchange for \$100,000 and had already acquired a weapon to carry out the hit.

He also spray-painted graffiti, posted flyers and gathered information on an Israeli official, according to the statement. Verhovski communicated with his Iranian operators in English through the purchase and use of a special phone, according to police.

He was set to appear in court last

Wednesday for an extension of his remand.

Last Monday, Israeli authorities revealed they had uncovered a network of Iranian intelligence operatives working to recruit and activate Israeli citizens.

As part of this operation, police arrested Vladislav Viktorson, a 30-year-old Ramat Gan resident, for questioning. Investigators found that since August, Viktorson had been in contact via social media with an individual using the name "Mari Hossi." Their communications were conducted in Hebrew.

Under the direction of an Iranian operative, and fully aware of the handler's identity, Viktorson allegedly carried out various tasks. According to police, these included spray-painting graffiti, hanging posters, planting money and torch-

ing vehicles in north Tel Aviv's Yarkon Park. He was later instructed to sabotage communication infrastructure and ATMs and to set forest fires.

Some of these activities were documented, and Viktorson received more than \$5,000 for their execution, according to police. The investigation revealed that Viktorson had agreed to assassinate a prominent figure in Israel and to throw a grenade at a house. Following this, he allegedly took steps to acquire weapons, including a sniper rifle, handguns and fragmentation grenades.

Last month, authorities said they had arrested a Jewish Israeli businessman on suspicion of having met with Iranian intelligence operatives and assisting them in planning high-profile assassinations, including of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. **HW**

IDF Confirms Death of Hezbollah Executive Council Chief

(JNS) – The Israel Defense Forces announced last Tuesday that it killed a group of Hezbollah commanders, including Hashem Safieddine, the head of Hezbollah's chief executive council.

"The terrorists were eliminated in a strike carried out approximately three weeks ago in the area of Dahiyeh, a key Hezbollah terrorist stronghold in Beirut," the IDF stated. "The Israeli Air Force conducted a precise, intelligence-based strike on Hezbollah's main intelligence headquarters, deliberately located underground beneath the civilian population in the Dahiyeh."

The strike killed 25 Hezbollah terrorists, including Safieddine and Ali Hussein Hazima, the commander of Hezbollah's intelligence headquarters, per the IDF.

Safieddine was a first cousin of Hassan Nasrallah, Hezbollah's secre-

tary-general who was killed in an Israeli airstrike in September. The IDF said that Safieddine frequently served as acting secretary-general of Hezbollah when Nasrallah was outside Lebanon.

Hashem Safieddine's brother, Abdullah Safieddine, is the terror group's representative in Tehran. Hashem's eldest son, Reza, is married to a daughter of former Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps-Quds Force commander Qassem Soleimani, whom the United States killed in a 2020 airstrike in Iraq.

The confirmation of Hashem Safieddine's death, which Israeli leaders first said was "likely" on Oct. 8, is the latest Israeli-delivered blow to Hezbollah's leadership cadre.

In September, more than 3,000 Hezbollah operatives were wounded when their pagers and walkie-talkies exploded. Israel has neither confirmed nor de-

nied responsibility for that operation, although Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant said the day after the mass beeper explosions that Israel's security services have achieved "very impressive" results.

On Sept. 27, Israel killed Nasrallah in an airstrike on Hezbollah's underground headquarters in Dahiyeh, on the same day that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu addressed the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Hashem Safieddine was believed to be a potential successor to Nasrallah. With his killing, Gallant said on Oct. 8 that Hezbollah has "no one to make decisions, no one to act."

"The actions we are taking are being observed all over the Middle East," Gallant said. "When the smoke in Lebanon clears, they will realize in Iran that they have lost their most valuable asset, which is Hezbollah." **HW**

OBITUARIES



Lillian Siegel Stegman

Lillian Siegel Stegman passed away peacefully on October 11, 2024, at the age of 98. Lillian leaves her four children, Dr. Marc Stegman (Elaine), Lisa Perschon (Bill), Shelley Levy (Donny) and Brad Stegman (Stacy). She also leaves five grandchildren. Dr. Rebecca Perschon, Abby Levine (Dr. Ross Levine), Anna Levy, PhD, Joseph Levy (Alanna), Sophie Levy, and her three great-grandchildren, Noah, Lily and Logan. In addition, she leaves her brother, Dr. Jerome Siegel, and her sister-in-law, Gloria Siegel, PhD.

Her children have always been thankful for the love, commitment, and the many sacrifices she made throughout her life.

Lillian was a woman whose life was filled with love, kindness, generosity, and thoughtfulness. She supported her family in ways that truly matter, putting her four children through college, ensuring they had the opportunities to succeed and thrive. That is no small feat, and it is one of the greatest accomplishments anyone could achieve – providing love, guidance, and support for those they care about most, her children.

She was also someone who found immense joy in the simple, beautiful things in life. She had a love for theater, movies, music, and dancing. Her greatest love was her family and attending the many family celebrations throughout her life. At any family event, you could count on her to dance, laugh, and make everyone around her feel special. She lived with a sense of style and grace, always fashionable, always full of life.

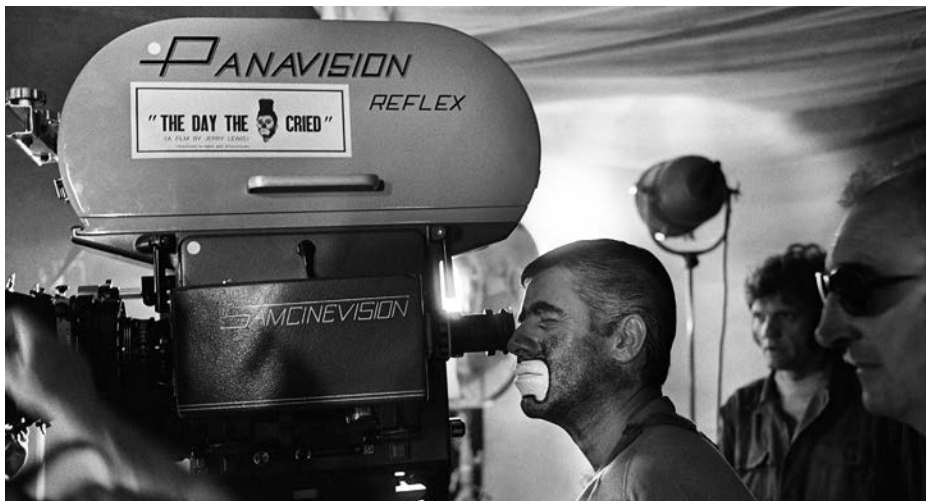
Lillian worked at Goldsmith's in Memphis for 20 years in the coat department. During her time at Goldsmith's, she received many accolades as a top salesperson and was loved by management and all her customers. After her retirement from Goldsmith's, she volunteered at Saint Francis Hospital in Memphis and once again gave the gift of her time, her heart, and her generous spirit to all those in need of comfort. Her thoughtful and generous spirit is her legacy, and that is something truly remarkable.

She was preceded in her death by her parents, Max and Sophie Siegel, and her brother, Dr. Saul Siegel.

Lillian was buried at Temple Israel Cemetery in Memphis. Memorial donations can be made to the Humane Society of Memphis, Tennessee, and Temple Israel in Memphis, Tennessee. **HW**

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‘The Day the Clown Cried,’ Funnyman Jerry Lewis’ Infamously Terrible Holocaust Movie, is Having a New Moment. But You Still Can’t Watch It



Jerry Lewis (L) looks through the camera on March 22, 1972, during the shooting of the film “The Day the Clown Cried.” Credit: STF/AFP via Getty Images

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – In 1993 the film critic Shawn Levy was working on a biography of Jerry Lewis when, sitting down with the comedian on his yacht, Levy gingerly asked him about “The Day the Clown Cried.”

Levy knew the film, Lewis’ unreleased Holocaust movie, was likely to be a touchy subject for the legendary funnyman. Even so, the response was apoplectic.

“I’ve never been yelled at like that in my entire life,” Levy recalled to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency three decades later. He recited the string of insults the once astronomically popular Jewish performer threw at him for having the gall to inquire about the movie: “‘You need a personality transplant. You’ve got some nerve.’”

Finally, in an epilogue that became so famous in comedy circles that Martin Short would later reenact it for dinner guests, Lewis ordered Levy off his yacht. The star also demanded the author’s tape recorder, then erased everything related to discussion of the film that he directed and starred in before sending it back to his biographer. That meeting, Levy’s second with Lewis, would be his last.

Despite Lewis’ best efforts to bury it, “The Day the Clown Cried” remains an object of intense fascination for film buffs, one of the most bizarre and beguiling what-ifs in Hollywood history. The maudlin tragicomedy about a German clown ordered to entertain children at the Auschwitz death camps was filmed in the early 1970s but was never completed or released. Instead, rumors mounted that it was secretly the worst film of all time, and an embarrassed Lewis buried all records related to the movie. Apart from occasional bits of footage leaking online, it’s remained all but unseen.

Now, 53 years later, Lewis’ folly is reentering the public eye. A new German documentary about the movie is premiering at the Venice Film Festival later this month, and a Hollywood producer recently announced that he had acquired the rights to the original script, by Joan O’Brien and Charles Denton. That producer, Kia Jam, says he intends to mount a new version of the film as it was originally intended to be seen, without Lewis’ fingerprints.

“I’m not really interested in what somebody else did with the movie. I’m interested in making this movie, which we’re going to do,” Jam told JTA. He added that the original script “just absolutely floored me” and that he hasn’t seen the footage of Lewis’ version.

In addition, the Library of Congress, which holds archival materials related to the movie, will make them available to researchers. Lewis, who died in 2017, had donated the materials to the library under the condition it not make them available until 2024. In the interim, not even revelations by some of his former co-stars in 2022 that Lewis had sexually assaulted them could fully dismantle the mystique of “The Day the Clown Cried.”

None of this means that anyone will actually be able to watch Lewis’ version of “The Day the Clown Cried,” despite some reports to the contrary. Due to its tortured production history, a finished version of the movie doesn’t actually exist, except possibly buried somewhere in Sweden where the film was shot, people with knowledge of the footage said.

The Library of Congress told JTA that its material is limited to a handful of outtakes and behind-the-scenes footage, which lack proper sound. Though the library has digitized the footage for researchers, it is not putting the material online. It has no plans to stage any public screenings of the footage it does have, and it would likely be legally barred from doing so.

That’s because Lewis shot the film after his producer no longer held the full rights to the script, and the screenwriters were so horrified by the footage Lewis showed them that they refused to ever grant him, or any entities associated with him, the right to release it – a provision that still holds true today, despite all three parties having died.

“It was a disaster,” co-writer O’Brien would recount years later. Her co-writer Denton would remark, “The original story was a tale of horror, conceit, and finally, enlightenment and self-sacrifice. Jerry had turned it into a sentimental, Chaplinesque representation of his own confused sense of himself, his art, his charity work, and his persecution at the hands of critics.”

Yet even unseen, the film was a harbinger of today’s Hollywood. Decades before the film industry embraced “the Holocaust movie” as a genre unto itself, including with commercially successful comic melodramas like “Life is Beautiful” and “Jojo Rabbit,” Lewis attempted to render a fictional depiction of the death camps for mainstream audiences.

It was a story that, his son, Chris Lewis, told “The New York Times,” “was very close to his heart.” Growing up in a heavily German area of northern New Jersey in the 1920s and 1930s, Lewis

frequently encountered members of the Nazi-sympathizing German-American Bund. Pro-Hitler marches were staged in his hometown.

Despite this, Lewis seemed to mostly connect with the Holocaust out of concern for its child victims, represented in the film as the children that his character, Helmut Doork, leads into the gas chambers at Auschwitz like the Pied Piper. Lewis professed a deep love of children throughout his career, most famously in his Muscular Dystrophy Association telethons. (He was less attached to some of his own children, dis inheriting his six sons from his first marriage).

“I think that idea of lost childhood, layered over the trauma of, as a young boy, feeling threatened by these scary people marching down your main street, I think that’s the principal tenor of his treatment of the Holocaust,” Levy said. “He’s drawn to it as an enormous tragedy, but specifically the tragedy of young lives being wiped out.”

By the time he mounted the film, Lewis was years removed from both his star-making partnership with the singer Dean Martin and his successful follow-up career as a solo director and star of hit comedies such as “The Nutty Professor.” Addicted to painkillers and looking for a comeback role, he accepted a producer’s offer to try to merge his comedic stylings with the themes of the Holocaust. He’d made a very different kind of World War II movie the year before, a farce about a group of Jewish soldiers teaming up to kill Hitler called “Which Way to the Front” (which was also critically panned).

The problem, Levy said, wasn’t necessarily the material; it was that the rubber-faced, pratfalling comic was the wrong guy to tackle it.

“Jerry wasn’t ahead of his time. He was outside of his time,” Levy said. “If Jim Carrey came out today and said, ‘I’m going to make a movie about the Trail of Tears, and I’m going to play the leader of an Indian tribe that was being rounded up genocidally,’ it would just be that crazy.”

Even unseen, the film effectively killed Lewis’ career. Following a handful of other low-budget flops, he more or less vanished from the screen, save for a memorable, self-effacing performance in Martin Scorsese’s 1982 drama “The King of Comedy.” (His character makes a crack about Hitler at one point.) Late in life, in interviews and memoirs, Lewis continued to stew over the failure of “The Day the Clown Cried,” usually swearing that no one would ever see it.

Meanwhile, hopes that someone would stage a better version of the script were being kept alive by a Jew. Rabbi Michael Barclay, a conservative pundit who now heads Temple Ner Simcha in Westlake Village, California, acquired the rights to the screenplay in the 1980s, with a studio executive friend of his. Like Jam, Barclay was deeply moved by the script.

“It’s the story of a man who becomes a baal teshuva,” Barclay told JTA, using a Hebrew term for a Jew who becomes religiously observant.

Barclay tried to mount various remakes for decades, and says he came close to a couple improbable partnerships. A potential deal with the Soviet film company Lenfilm fell apart when the Soviet Union collapsed; Egyptian

film producer Dodi Fayed committed to making it before he died in the 1997 car crash that also claimed his romantic partner, Princess Diana; and the disgraced Jewish Republican lobbyist Jack Abramoff, long before his lobbying career, had tried to set it up as a German-Israeli co-production. Anthony Hopkins and Robin Williams were, Barclay said, both attached at various points before backing out.

“It just seemed, every time you got right to the ten-yard line, it stopped,” Barclay reflected.

Barclay turned over the rights to Jam about 15 years ago and hasn’t been involved with the production since. He insisted that nobody who had ever read the script was concerned about being overshadowed by the infamy of the Lewis version: “I don’t remember anybody reading it and saying anything, other than what a great piece of material it was.”

Some who claim to have viewed what exists of the movie say it handles the Holocaust with astoundingly bad taste. The Jewish actor Harry Shearer has described it as “like going down to Tijuana and seeing a painting on black velvet of Auschwitz.” The comedian Patton Oswalt briefly staged live readings of the film’s script in the 1990s with other comics before being served a cease-and-desist order, claiming that the script’s rights-holders at the time were planning to mount a new version starring Chevy Chase.

“Chevy Chase. In clown makeup. In Auschwitz,” Oswalt wrote in his 2015 memoir “Silver Screen Fiend.” “I wanted, more than anything in the world, to see that film.”

Others who have seen glimpses, like the French film critic Jean-Michel Frodon, have defended Lewis’ attempt to approach the subject of the Holocaust from an entertainer’s perspective.

“It’s a very interesting and important film, very daring about both the issue, which of course is the Holocaust, but even beyond that as a story of a man who has dedicated his life to making people laugh and is questioning what it is to make people laugh,” Frodon told “Vanity Fair” in 2018. He added that he saw it as more honest about the Holocaust than Steven Spielberg’s “Schindler’s List,” because both its hero and the children he entertains all die in the gas chambers.

Jam – whose producing credits include the sequel to “Sin City” and the horror prequel “The Strangers: Chapter 1” – says he can mount a new production of “The Day the Clown Cried” that is both faithful to the script and sensitive to the Holocaust.

“I’m very confident that I can make the movie as it needs to be made, with the attention and care that the subject matter requires,” he told JTA, adding that the exact tone and approach of the film would depend on the director and actor they’re able to bring onboard. “What we’re hoping to make is something that we definitely want people to take seriously.”

Levy said that would be “the best thing that could happen to the material.” But when it comes to the Lewis original, the biographer says he won’t be lining up to see the unsealed footage.

“You’d have to be threatening most of my family for me to watch that now,” Levy said. **HW**

IDF Downs Three Drones Fired from Iraq

One UAV was shot down over Syria, and the others close to Eilat.

(JNS) – Israeli air defense systems early last Wednesday morning intercepted three drones fired at the Jewish state “from the east,” a term the military uses to refer to Iraq.

One unmanned aerial vehicle was downed over Syria before crossing into the Israeli Golan Heights, with the others destroyed over sovereign Israeli waters in the Red Sea, close to Eilat, on the polar opposite side of the country.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq, an Iran-backed amalgamation of terror groups, claimed to have targeted “vital” infrastructure in the Eilat attack.

Earlier this month, two Israel Defense Forces soldiers were killed and two dozen others were wounded when a drone launched from Iraq struck a military base in the Golan Heights.

On Sept. 25, two Israelis were lightly wounded in a suicide drone attack on Eilat. The IDF stated that at least two explosive-laden drones had been launched at the Jewish state “from the east.” [HW](#)

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Operation Benjamin

Sunday, November 17th at 2:00 p.m.
Memphis Jewish Community Center

Rabbi Akiva Males of Young Israel, Operation Benjamin advisory board member, will speak on the history and mission of the organization and its dedication to locating Jewish personnel at American military cemeteries all over the world who, for various reasons, were buried under markers incorrectly representing their religion. Memphians Jeanne and Dr. Bruce Alpert will share their personal experience of how Operation Benjamin helped them discover the fate of Jeanne’s family member, Lt. Joseph M. Sugarman, Jr., which led them to Belgium on a remarkable and moving journey.

* In honor of Veterans Day, American veterans in attendance will be recognized at this program.

This event is open to the community.



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SARAH FREEMAN

I am a devoted Democrat and Jewish supporter of the state of Israel. As we await a resolution to the hostilities in Israel and Gaza, I believe that we should also celebrate our diaspora, remembering that Judaism is not represented by one state or nation but thrives in communities around the world. We are a diverse and resilient people with a long and too often tragic history.



My growing family and I are proud members of the extensive Jewish community in the Memphis area.

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