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# Federation Welcomes Phoenix Goldberg as New Director for Hillels of Memphis



Phoenix Goldberg is the new director of Hillels of Memphis.

Memphis Jewish Federation is thrilled to welcome Phoenix Goldberg as the new director for Hillels of Memphis, one of Federation’s key programs. In this role he will work with Jewish students at both Rhodes College and University of Memphis to help them navigate Jewish life throughout their college journey.

Phoenix started on November 6, concluding a national search, led by Hillel Advisory Council Co-Chairs Audrey

Siskind and Daniel Snyder. Members of the diverse search committee included Rhodes Professor Victor Coonin, University of Memphis Professor Dan Unowsky, community leaders Hal Fogelman and Jennifer Roberts, and Hillel student presidents Karleigh Ring (Rhodes) and Aaron Bardos (U of M).

Audrey Siskind said of choosing Phoenix, “He has such a heart for Hillel and clear goals for Hillel’s growth and sustainability. Phoenix wants Jewish students to be engaged with each other and with the greater Memphis community, and we cannot wait to see his ideas come to life.”

When Phoenix was asked what interested him about moving across the country to Memphis, a place he knew very little about, he replied, “This position is the perfect fit for me. Throughout my life, I’ve looked for leadership roles in my Jewish community. It’s an honor to be chosen to lead Hillels of Memphis and to have joined this incredibly welcoming community. I am passionate about Hillels of Memphis being a home away from home for Memphis Jewish students.”

Phoenix, who is from Los Angeles, grew up in a welcoming Jewish community where he attended Jewish preschool, went to religious school every Friday night at his synagogue and went to Jewish camps. He credits the support of his community with helping him thrive in every phase of life and inspiring him to immediately get involved with Hillel during his time at California State Polytechnic Institute (Cal Poly). During his college years he held different positions with Hillel and led several key events while receiving mentorship from the Hillel director at Cal Poly.

Following graduation, Phoenix wanted to find a position as a Jewish community leader, but as a college graduate in 2021 he stated, “My perfect job was not available. I studied marketing and business development, because I knew I would acquire job-ready skills. After graduation, I worked at tech start-ups in sales and marketing, but I kept looking for an opening with a Jewish organization. When I saw the director opening in Memphis, I knew I had to apply.”

Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein, executive vice president and chief impact

officer, said, “We are so pleased to have Phoenix as our new director for Hillels of Memphis. He brings energy, enthusiasm, and a compelling vision for Hillel. The newly renovated Morris S. Fogelman Jewish Student Center at U of M will be an ideal gathering place for Hillel students from across the city. We are confident Memphis Jewish students will benefit from his leadership and care.”

Phoenix is fully embracing his new role by meeting with Rhodes College and University of Memphis faculty and staff, and with parents of students.

He explained, “I want everyone in a Hillel student’s life to know I will provide a support system for their student or child during a time of growth and change. I’ve been meeting Hillel students and lending my leadership and support for scheduled and future events. I am dedicated to creating strong ties with every Hillel student, so they feel at ease and comfortable to be proudly Jewish. Hillels of Memphis will be their second home.”

You can reach out to Phoenix at [pgoldberg@hillelsofmemphis.org](mailto:pgoldberg@hillelsofmemphis.org) with any questions. [HW](#)

# A Night of Gifts and Comedy at the MJCC

Sponsored by The Bornblum Foundation



Comedians Noah Gardenswartz, Ester Steinberg and Ophira Eisenberg will perform at the MJCC on December 15.

With the High Holiday season behind us, Chanukah is fast approaching, and the Memphis Jewish Community Center is here to help get you in a festive mood. On Sunday, December 15, the JCC will be hosting two events – one for adults 21+ and one for youth in grades K-6.

For adults 21+, the JCC will be hosting a top lineup of comedians for a night of fun and laughter including two drinks and food from Sam’s Corner. We are welcoming comedians, Ophira Eisenberg, Noah Gardenswartz and Ester Steinberg. Gardenswartz and Steinberg are coming to the JCC in person after

having done an amazing night of laughs over Zoom in December of 2020 as part of a member appreciation event.

Gardenswartz is an award-winning writer and nationally touring headliner. He was a writer on all five seasons of Amazon’s “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” and has performed stand-up on “Conan,” “The Late Late Show with James Corden,” and has his own Comedy Central special. Additionally, he has released four chart-topping comedy albums, and currently lives in Las Vegas with his wife and two children.

Steinberg has a one-hour special on

Amazon called “Burning Bush,” which received rave reviews from “The New York Times,” and a chart-topping album, “Hebrew School Dropout.” Additionally, she starred in Oxygen’s “Funny Girls,” was a cast member on Hulu’s “Up Early Tonight,” and appeared in “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,” “Gotham Comedy Live,” and “Adam Ruins Everything.” She most recently filmed a special titled “Schmear Campaign” which, released in October 2024.

Eisenberg is a standup comedian, writer, and host of the award-winning (2024) comedy podcast Parenting Is A Joke with iHeart and Pretty Good Friends. She also hosted NPR’s Ask Me Another where she interviewed and played silly games with hundreds of celebrities including Sir Patrick Harris, Rosie Perez, Yo-Yo Ma, Roxanne Gay, Nick Kroll, Chelsea Handler and more. She’s appeared multiple times on CBS’s “The Late Late Show,” “Sherri” with Sherri Sheppard, Comedy Central, HBO, The New York Festival, and is a regular on The Moth’s Radio Hour. Her stories are included in three of The Moth’s best-selling collections. Her memoir, “Screw Everyone: Sleeping My Way to Monogamy” was optioned for a TV series, and her recent comedy

special “Plant-Based Jokes” is streaming on YouTube. She is a regular at The Comedy Cellar and other New York clubs, and her solo show “Leaving A Mark: A Comedy About Scars” made it’s Off-Broadway review to rave reviews and won the Women in the Arts & Media Award for Solo Show Scripts.

Additionally, all households will take home one piece of acrylic artwork featuring design by Yitzchok Mouly (The Pop Art Rabbi) and the Chanukah Menorah Lighting blessings, plus Chanukah candles and gelt.

For children in grades K-6, the JCC will have a program running simultaneously featuring a DIY project making granite menorahs. This event will also have a pizza dinner from Sam’s Corner and gym games as well. This menorah will be unlike any other DIY menorah your child has brought home before and will be safe to use for years to come. In addition, children will take home gelt, Chanukah candles and a dreidel.

You can visit [www.jccmemphis.org](http://www.jccmemphis.org) or call 901-761-0810 to check for seat availability for the show. Doors open at 6 p.m., show starts at approximately 6:30 p.m. The youth program begins at 6 p.m. with dinner followed by menorah making and gym games. [HW](#)



# Bornblum Dedicates Lone Soldier Garden



Alla and Nathan Lubin at the dedication of Bornblum's new Lone Soldier Rose Garden.

On Thursday, November 7, Bornblum Jewish Community School held a moving dedication ceremony of its new Lone Soldier Rose Garden. Lone Soldiers are individuals who go to Israel from other countries around the world to join the Israel Defense Forces to defend the land and people of Israel.

According to Bornblum Head of School Dr. Daniel R. Weiss, "Four Bornblum alumni and the son of a current teacher are Lone Soldiers. They are an inspiration to our students and the entire Memphis Jewish community, and we wanted to find a way to honor them, and the more than 7000 of their peers, who have left the comforts of family and their home communities to serve our people and defend our homeland."

The idea to create a Lone Soldier Rose Garden at Bornblum was born out of the tragic loss of Rose Lubin (z"l), a lone soldier and granddaughter of Alla and Nathan Lubin, long-time supporters of Bornblum and grandparents to two current Bornblum students, Bennett and Ari Lubin, as well as their sister, Celia, who also attended Bornblum.

Rose, who grew up in Atlanta, moved to Israel and became a member of Israel's police force, which is a division of the IDF. As a Lone Soldier, Rose settled at Kibbutz Saad and was there on October 7. She not only defended Saad from attack by terrorists, but helped many people who escaped from the Nova Music Festival and came to her Kibbutz, which was near the site of the festival. Approximately a month later, Rose was killed by a terrorist while on duty defending the Old City of Jerusalem.

Bornblum Jewish studies teacher, Maya Sharabi, knew that Bornblum had to find a meaningful way to honor Rose, whose grandparents and cousins have been such an important part of Bornblum for so many years. She came up with the idea of creating a Lone Soldier Rose Garden in her memory.

"When Bornblum reached out to us about this project we loved the idea of honoring Rose and all of the Lone Soldiers," said Alla Lubin. "The Lone Soldier Rose Garden seemed like a perfect way not only to honor Rose's sacrifice, but to create a permanent tribute to Lone Soldiers like Rose and the other Bornblum students who have chosen to leave their homes and families to defend our homeland. We know that this garden will be a place of education and inspiration for students at Bornblum for generations to come."

According to Michal Almalem, Bornblum's Jewish studies principal, "The ceremony was so moving for our students and teachers. We teach our students about Lone Soldiers and invite the Bornblum Lone Soldiers to school when they are in town. We can't wait to show them the new garden in their honor."

During the ceremony, the students heard from Nathan Lubin, who had the students stand up and stand tall, as he talked to them about their role in standing up for Israel and the Jewish people. Students also heard from Kara Bierman, past president of Bornblum whose son, Avi (Austin) Bierman, a Bornblum graduate, currently serves as a Lone Soldier. She spoke about how proud she and her family are of Avi and his determination

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## Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. Nov. 22, 2024 / 21 Cheshvan, 5785.....4:32 p.m.  
Havdalah, Sat. Nov. 23, 2024 / 22 Cheshvan, 5785 ..... 5:30 p.m.  
Weekly Torah Portion: Chayei Sarah

since his time as a Bornblum student to make aliyah and join the IDF. Other Bornblum students who have gone on to become Lone Soldiers are Zach Woronoff and Josh Woronoff. Also serving as a Lone Soldier is Nadav Goldkin, son of current Bornblum teacher Amy Goldkin. The ceremony ended with each student taking a ceramic poppy flower, created by Bornblum Middle students, and placing it in the Lone Soldier Rose

Garden. The calanit (crown anemone), commonly referred to in English as the Poppy, is the national flower of Israel and a symbol of resilience, possibility and growth. According to Weiss, "We are so grateful to the Lubin family for sponsoring this beautiful garden. It is an amazing addition to our campus, and we look forward to educating our students about the important contributions Lone Soldiers make to our people and our land." HW

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# Gal Gadot's Daughter Just Celebrated Her Bat Mitzvah



Credit: Gilbert Flores/WWD via Getty Images

By Lior Zaltzman

This originally appeared on Kveller. Reprinted with permission.

It's hard to believe it, but Gal Gadot is now the mom of a bat mitzvah girl. The Israeli actress's oldest daughter, Alma, just celebrated the Jewish rite of passage, having turned 13 on November 5 of this year.

For the momentous occasion of her oldest girl becoming a woman, Gadot did something she very rarely does: shared a picture of her entire family, posing with her husband, Jaron Varsano, Alma, Maya, 7, Daniella, 3 and baby Ori, who was born in March of this year, with their faces completely unblurred and unobscured. Alma stands in the middle, wearing a sparkly lavender spaghetti-strap dress. It's unclear whether the couple traveled back to Israel from their Los Angeles home for the celebration, but they seem to be on a balcony on a sunny day with a sprawling verdant view.

Gadot also wrote a special message to her not-so-young-anymore daughter.

"My baby is celebrating her bat mitzvah. I can't believe the amazing person you've become," she shared with her

millions of followers on Instagram. "Your joy, humor, curiosity, and big heart of yours are absolutely magnetic. You teach me so much about motherhood, life, and myself."

"Thank you for choosing me to be your mother, for choosing us to be your parents," she continued. "There is no mountain too high for you, and no ocean too wide and deep that you cannot conquer. Love you forever and always, Ima," she finished, with the Hebrew word for mom.

Gadot also shared a photo of Alma from the day she was born, the young actress and her husband taking a selfie with that plastic hospital baby cart, just a couple of years after Gadot got her first big Hollywood break in the "Fast & Furious" franchise as Gisele Yashar, half a decade before she would become the iconic "Wonder Woman."

Many fellow Jewish celebrities, including Selma Blair, Shira Haas, Rachel Zoe, Jessica Seinfeld, Chelsea Handler and Sarah Silverman, wished Alma and Gal a hearty mazel tov in the comments.

Isla Fisher wrote to Gadot: "You have the most beautiful family I can't believe Alma is having her batty! I could cry. I'm so so proud of her."

Many have noted that young Alma looks a lot like her mom, and the teen has a couple of acting credits under her belt: Sam-Sam in the "The Angry Birds Movie 2," and appearing, along with her sister, Maya, and father, in the final scene of "Wonder Woman 1984," so it's clear that she could potentially follow in her mother's footsteps.

A hearty mazel tov to Alma and the entire Gadot-Varsano family! **HW**

# Beale Street Brass Note Ceremony Honors Berl Olswanger



Join us on Wed., December 4, 2024, at 4 p.m. at Trezevant (177 North Highland, Memphis, TN 38111), when the Beale Street Brass Note Walk of Fame Committee awards a Brass Note to famed pianist, band leader, prolific composer and teacher, Berl Olswanger, dubbed "Mr. Music of Memphis." The event will include musical remixes of Berl's music by students from Memphis Music Initiative and performances of three of his original compositions by students of PRIZM Ensemble. Kicking off the ceremony will be a video of Berl himself performing. Musicians Pete Vescovo, a bass player with the Berl Olswanger Orchestra, and Carolyn McCoy, one of the orchestra's singers, will share memories. The event will conclude with the presentation of the Brass Note by the Beale Street Walk of Fame leadership and committee.

Mr. Olswanger's daughter, Anna, will be in attendance at Trezevant (where Berl and his wife, Edna, lived in their later years) to receive this honor on behalf of her father and family. As a commemorative gift from the Olswanger family to mark the special occasion, guests at the event will receive a copy of "Berl Olswanger's Popular Piano Course" instructional booklet, published in 1958.

Event attendance is free and space is limited, so please RSVP to Kim O'Donnell at 901-251-9205 or kodonnell@trezevantmanor.org.

**About Berl Olswanger:** Born in 1917, Berl Olswanger grew up surrounded by the sounds of Memphis. He began playing piano professionally at the age of 12 and, after a stint on WMC radio in his 20s, joined the George Olsen Orchestra, a big band that toured from New York to Hollywood. When the crisis of the second World War landed him in the Navy, Admiral "Bull" Halsey quickly placed Berl in charge of all music and entertainment for the South Pacific, where he accompanied legendary acts like Bing Crosby, Jack Benny and Bob Hope. After the war, Memphis impresario Ike Myers sponsored a "Middle Brow" concert by Berl at Ellis Auditorium, which was a sell-out. Mr. Myers gave Berl all the proceeds from the concert to go to New York where he was represented by the William Morris Agency. But after getting a good look at show business in New York, Berl decided that he would rather return home. During the rest of his life in Memphis, he became known on both a local and national scale, which eventually earned him the title of "Mr. Music of Memphis." In Memphis, the city he loved, he opened a music store, then a music school, then an entertainment agency.

As the local press noted, Berl could have been a big star if he had chosen a life on the road. Instead, he preferred having a family life, and he loved the people of Memphis. Berl left behind five record albums, over 30 original compositions, and the "Berl Olswanger Popular Piano Course" instructional booklet. For more information on Berl's legacy and to stream his music from Big Round Records, visit [www.berlolswanger.com](http://www.berlolswanger.com). **HW**

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# Trump Picks Lee Zeldin to Head Environmental Protection Agency

(JNS) – President-elect Donald Trump named Lee Zeldin, a former congressman who ran for New York governor in 2022, administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency in his forthcoming administration.

Zeldin, who is Jewish and is a board member of the Republican Jewish Coalition, "will ensure fair and swift deregulatory decisions that will be enacted in a way to unleash the power of American businesses, while at the same time maintaining the highest environmental standards, including the cleanest air and water on the planet," Trump stated.

"He will set new standards on environmental review and maintenance that will allow the United States to grow in a healthy and well-structured way," Trump added. "I have known Lee Zeldin for a long time, and have watched him handle, brilliantly, some extremely difficult and complex situations. I am very proud to have him in the Trump administration, where he will quickly prove to be a great contributor."

The Israel Heritage Foundation congratulated Zeldin on the nomination and wished him "success in restoring U.S. energy dominance, revitalizing the auto industry, promoting American jobs and ensuring clean air and water for all." **HW**



# ‘Wanted’ Posters at U of Rochester Target Hillel Director, Netanyahu’s Brother and Others with ‘Ties’ to Israel



The campus of the University of Rochester was papered with “Wanted” posters targeting Jewish and non-Jewish university personnel over their alleged associations with Israel, Rochester, New York, Nov. 10, 2024. Courtesy: Joy Getnick

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – When the director of the local Jewish federation first saw the hundreds of red, white and black posters plastered around the University of Rochester’s campus last weekend, an eerie comparison came to her mind.

They “looked a little bit like the ‘Kidnapped’ posters,” recalled Meredith Dragon of the Jewish Federation of Greater Rochester, referring to the flyers for Israeli hostages being held by Hamas in Gaza that became prominent in the weeks after Oct. 7, 2023. “I wonder if they were designed that way in particular.”

But the Rochester posters were something else entirely. Instead of promoting visibility for Israeli victims, these posters – marked with large “WANTED” lettering – targeted members of the university community who, the unnamed protesters alleged, had some form of ties to Israel. They stood accused of crimes ranging from “genocide” to “racism” and “intimidation.”

Out of more than a dozen individuals on the posters, according to Dragon, at least half were Jewish. Those included

Iddo Netanyahu, brother of the Israeli prime minister, who is a physician at a branch of the university hospital system more than 70 miles away from the upstate New York campus. (The posters accuse him of “committing war crimes” during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, when he served in the Israeli military, according to “The Times of Israel.”)

They also included the director of the university Hillel, Joy Getnick – in a rare instance of a Hillel director being targeted by pro-Palestinian protesters by name. Getnick stood accused of “racism,” “hate speech” and “intimidation,” owing to what the poster’s makers claimed were some remarks she had made toward protesters.

University officials condemned the posters as “vandalism” that had the goal “to intimidate members of our university community.” A separate statement last Tuesday from school president Sarah Mangelsdorf, who is not Jewish but was also named by the posters, added, “We view this as antisemitism, which will not be tolerated at our University.”

Rochester’s Hillel also called the posters antisemitic. So did Sen. Chuck Schumer, the Jewish U.S. Senate majority leader from New York, who wrote on the social network X that he had urged a university investigation and added, “Those responsible must be held fully accountable. These actions must be condemned loudly.”

Campus pro-Palestinian protests have been commonplace since the outbreak of the Israel-Hamas war more than a year ago, and some have also gone as far as to target Jewish institutions like Hillel specifically. But local Jewish leaders said the Rochester posters were ominous in part because, rather than targeting the university or Jewish institutions more broadly, they employed the names and faces of specific people.

That, some said, represented an escalation in protest tactics and a new threat against Jews on campus.

“I think what is most significant about this is the targeting of people,” Getnick said. “It is one thing to target ideas. It is another thing to target specific humans, particularly disproportionately Jewish faculty and staff, which is targeting people because they are Jewish.”

Getnick added that, because the posters had targeted her personally as the Hillel director, the action “creates an environment in which it is harder for Jewish student life to thrive.” The only other recorded instance of pro-Palestinian protesters targeting a campus Hillel director by name took place at Baruch College, in New York City, in September. Activists say they target Hillel because it facilitates campus Israel programs and because its parent organization, Hillel International, has strict protocols against partnering with anti-Zionist groups.

No group has yet claimed responsibility for the Rochester posters. The campus chapter of the anti-Zionist group Jewish Voice for Peace said it was not behind them, but added, in an Instagram post, that it did not believe the posters were antisemitic.

“These posters highlighted Jewish and non-Jewish administrators and professors and explicitly condemned their support for the Israeli military and government,” the group wrote. “It is not, however, antisemitic to criticize the Israeli government and military that is committing war crimes.”

The posters include a range of accusations, many of which center around a partnership between the city of Rochester and Modi’in, Israel (which some of

the posters erroneously claim is a West Bank settlement). Funded by the Jewish Agency for Israel and facilitated by the Rochester Federation, the program involves exchanges of students and educators from the two cities, including in the public school system.

Getnick’s participation on a committee dealing with the partnership was one of the knocks against her on the “WANTED” poster, which claimed that by participating in the program, the Hillel leader was “directly complicit in the displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank, upholding the settler colonial government in occupied Palestine.”

In July, Mangelsdorf wrote an essay defending her decision to remove an encampment at the school while expressing relief that only one student was arrested over the protests.

“This year, our students were not only protesting governmental actions and inactions but also against each other,” Rochester’s president reflected at the time. She concluded, “Protests are a part of campus life and of democracy. They can be an important catalyst for change, but they should not paralyze our campuses, interfering with the basic goals of the university to engage in teaching, learning and scholarly and creative work.”

Under President-elect Donald Trump’s upcoming second term, campuses are expected to be under additional pressure to crack down on pro-Palestinian protesters. Asked about how university administrators have handled the posters, Getnick said by email, “I hope that the University will use this opportunity to reflect on what is needed to instill meaningful education about Jewish Peoplehood and antisemitism, so that UR is a place where Jewish life can fully thrive.”

Dragon told JTA that the university and its public safety department “are taking this very seriously” and will “utilize the legal system” to hold perpetrators accountable.

For Dragon, who was the victim of a different, vulgar targeted harassment campaign this spring by local Green Party pro-Palestinian activists, the posters were also a potential harbinger of protests to come.

“I think that Rochester is being used as a testing ground to see if this is the next iteration of what’s going to happen on college campuses,” she said, adding that she was urging the university “to act decisively and swiftly when they find out who did this.” **HW**

“Since January 2021, the Biden-Harris administration has released nearly 100 dangerous individuals on the terrorist watchlist into the country, as well as illegal immigrants from U.S. adversaries like Iran,” Blackburn stated. “This common-sense, bipartisan bill would ensure that no migrant tied to Hamas and the horrific terrorist attack on Oct. 7 is allowed to enter our country or receive immigration benefits on the taxpayer dime.”

Rosen stated that “no one who participated in Hamas’s brutal Oct. 7 terrorist attack should be allowed to enter the United States.”

“That’s why I’m helping introduce bipartisan legislation to prohibit Hamas terrorists from being eligible to receive immigration benefits,” she added. “I’ll always work across the aisle to keep our nation safe.” **HW**

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## Senators Introduce Bill, which Passed House 422-2, Blocking Oct. 7 Terrorists from Entering U.S.

(JNS) – Sens. Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.) and Marsha Blackburn (R-Tenn.) introduced a bill last Wednesday that aims to block terrorists who participated in Hamas’s Oct 7, 2023, attack from entering the United States.

The No Immigration Benefits for Hamas Terrorists Act, which Rep. Tom McClintock (R-Calif.) introduced last year and which passed the House 422-2 – with Reps. Rashida Tlaib (D-Mich.) and Cori Bush (D-Mo.) dissenting – bars migrants who “carried out, participated in, planned, financed, afforded material support to or otherwise facilitated in any way the attacks perpetrated by Hamas against Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, from being admitted to the United States.”

It also prohibits “any such individual from being eligible for any immigration benefits,” the senators stated.



# 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 25**  
**Speaker, Josh Golden, LMSW**  
**Topic: Aging Gracefully**

Josh always brings a neat, experienced perspective. This talk will focus on how seniors can help make their home environment more conducive to staying in their home. It is also very good for children of aging family members to learn things they can do for their family members. Sherrie Serca, NP, will also be joining him. A Question and Answer period will follow the presentation. There is no charge for the talk, but reservations are needed to ensure that there is enough room for everyone. Lunch reservations are needed so the caterer can prepare enough food. Just call the MJCC Front Desk at 901-761-0810 and tell them if you’re coming for lunch or just the speaker. Everyone is welcome.

**Wednesday, November 27**  
**Team Trivial Pursuit!**

Our game will focus on 50’s and 60’s history and politics with a bit of movies and music mixed in. Come challenge your own memory and those of the others to see how much is remembered from past times.

**Thursday, November 28**  
The MJCC is closed for Thanksgiving. Have a Great Holiday!

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](mailto: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**

## Iran Sets Up Mental Health Clinic to ‘Treat’ Hijab Refusers

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – Iranian women who do not want to wear the Muslim head covering are to be given treatment at a special mental health clinic established in Tehran, a British newspaper reported last Wednesday.

The move, which comes days after an Iranian university student stripped down to her underwear in protest over the dress code, is the latest attempt by the Islamic Republic to quash women’s freedom and equality.

The “Telegraph” first reported that the “hijab removal treatment clinic” was announced by Mehri Talebi Darestani, the head of the Women and Family Department of the Tehran Headquarters for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice.

The government official said the clinic will offer “scientific and psychological treatment for hijab removal,” and that the project is focused on promoting “dignity, modesty, and chastity.”

She claimed that attendance would be optional.

According to the report, the clinic will be overseen by Iran’s Headquarters for Enjoining the Good and Forbidding the Evil, the government body responsible for enforcing religious standards across society.

The department is under international sanction for human rights abuses for its actions against women who do not adhere to Iran’s strict Islamic dress codes.

Iranian Mahsa Amini became an icon



**Monday, December 2**  
**Art Program with Aubrey Overstreet from Mid-South Hobbies**

Aubrey and her group bring really neat group projects with everyone doing their own individual project. The last project we did was a 3-D Flower Pot with a Sunflower that was colored and assembled that afternoon. Everyone enjoyed it, and those that did not finish it were able to take it home to finish. There is no charge for the individual art project. Come have a good time with others and a nice lunch as well.

**Wednesday, December 4**  
**Speaker, Josh Golden, LMSW**  
**Topic: Improving Winter Doldrums**

This time of year with the colder weather and darker sky’s it’s easy to feel less than cheerful. Join us for a frank discussion on ways to stay as cheerful as possible during those cold winter days and nights. A discussion will follow with a special dessert following the discussion.

for oppressed women around the world as news spread of her death after being arrested by Iranian morality police for “improperly” wearing her hijab two years ago. **HW**

# Estate Planning How Estate Planning Can Help Individuals Afford Long-Term Care

By Benjamin I. Wachtel, Esq. and David L. Mendelson, Esq.

About seventy percent (70%) of Americans who reach the age of sixty-five (65) will need some type of long-term care during their lives. In Tennessee, the average cost of a nursing home varies depending on several factors including location, quality of facility, and the level of care required. On average, the cost of a nursing home in Tennessee is around seven thousand dollars (\$7,000.00) per month for a private room and around six thousand dollars (\$6,000.00) per month for a semi-private room. Thus, in Tennessee, the average annual cost for a private room in a nursing home is eighty-four thousand dollars (\$84,000.00), which amounts to four hundred twenty thousand dollars (\$420,000.00) over a five (5) year period and a whopping eight hundred forty thousand dollars (\$840,000.00) over a ten (10) year period. These daunting numbers leave many Memphians concerned about their ability to afford long-term care in the event they need it.

As with many areas involving estate planning, proper planning on the front end as relates to financing long-term care often makes all the difference on the back end once an individual actually needs to use some form of long-term care. Importantly, for individuals who are Medicaid eligible, Medicaid covers most, if not all, long-term care expenses.

Many of us are familiar in some form or another with Medicaid. Medicaid is a government-funded program that helps individuals pay for medical expenses – including long-term care. However, the program has strict eligibility requirements, including financial limits on the assets and income of its beneficiaries. In Tennessee, for example, if an individual has more assets than the Medicaid limit, they are required to spend down their assets (get rid of them) before becoming eligible for Medicaid.

This is one area where proper plan-




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ning on the front end can serve to protect the individual from spending all of his or her funds on long-term care and can enable individuals with assets to protect those assets from Medicaid spend-down requirements. To do so, many individuals and families in Tennessee establish a Medicaid Asset Protection Trust (MAPT). A MAPT is an irrevocable trust that enables individuals to transfer assets into the trust, retain some control over those assets and still qualify for Medicaid when it comes time to pay long-term care expenses. By properly establishing and funding a MAPT, individuals can protect assets from Medicaid spend-down requirements and ensure those assets are preserved for the individual’s family’s benefit.

A MAPT trust agreement should specify how assets in the trust are to be managed and who is to benefit from the assets. One important aspect of a MAPT is that it must meet certain requirements to be considered a Medicaid-compliant trust. For example, the trust must be irrevocable, meaning that the individual who establishes the trust cannot change or revoke it.

In sum, many Memphians will need long-term care at some point throughout their lives and long-term care is expensive. A Medicaid Asset Protection Trust is often a valuable tool for individuals and families in Tennessee who want to protect their assets for their family and still enjoy the benefits of Medicaid when it comes to financing long-term care. **HW**

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For more information, please contact: Jason Goldstein, 901-866-5357, or [jgoldstein@harkavysheinberg.com](mailto:jgoldstein@harkavysheinberg.com) **HW**

# Anti-Israel Protester Indicted for Hate Crime for Allegedly Threatening Jewish Man on Subway



Close up of the NYPD logo on a police car. Credit: Tim Drivas/Getty

By Luke Tress

(New York Jewish Week) – New York prosecutors indicted a man for an antisemitic hate crime that allegedly occurred around the time of controversial protests against an exhibit on the Oct. 7, 2023, Nova music festival massacre.

Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said last Friday that Christopher Husary, 36, had been indicted for attempted coercion as a hate crime and aggravated harassment.

Bragg’s office said Husary’s alleged victim, a 35-year-old Jewish man, boarded a subway at Fulton St. station in lower Manhattan on the evening of June 10 and saw Husary drawing an inverted red triangle, a Hamas symbol, on a subway door.

The Jewish man then allegedly used his cell phone to photograph Husary, who then approached the man, who was wearing a kippah, and demanded he delete the photo.

According to Bragg’s office, Husary berated and threatened the Jewish man, calling him a “Zionist” and saying, “You’re not a real Jew.” He then added, “We’ll find you and there will be consequences.”

The victim reported the incident to police two weeks later, on June 22, Bragg’s office said. The same day, “The New York Post” published an article identifying Husary as a resident of a wealthy San Francisco suburb with a history of legal trouble. Soon afterward, the NYPD’s Hate Crimes Task Force launched an investigation into the incident.

The incident occurred around the time that protesters gathered outside a Lower Manhattan exhibit commemorating the victims of Hamas’ massacre at the Nova

music festival on Oct. 7, where more than 360 people were killed.

The protest, led by the hardline activist group Within Our Lifetime, was widely decried as antisemitic by government officials and Jewish leaders.

Protesters gathered in Union Square before taking the subway to the exhibit. A man appearing to match Husary’s description, and wearing a Hezbollah shirt, was at the Union Square protest. “The New York Post” report similarly said Husary wore a mask and a Hezbollah shirt at the protest.

In a separate incident on the same day, a protester in a crowded subway car in the same area allegedly demanded that “Zionists” identify themselves. Anas Saleh, 24, was arrested weeks later and charged with attempted coercion in the third degree for the incident.

Widely circulated footage showed a man matching Saleh’s description shouting, “Raise your hand if you’re a Zionist” on a packed subway car.

“This is your chance to get out,” the man shouted. The call was repeated by other activists on the train, many of whom were wearing keffiyehs, or Palestinian scarves frequently worn by activists, that covered their faces.

Antisemitic hate crimes have surged in New York City in the past year.

Prosecutors are pursuing hate crimes charges in a number of high-profile cases, including in an indictment announced this week against activists who allegedly sprayed Hamas triangles on the home of the Brooklyn Museum’s Jewish director. That incident was also tied to a campaign led by Within Our Lifetime. **HW**

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## Florida Man Arrested for Targeting Jewish Rep. Jared Moskowitz, Who Says the Suspect was Found with an Antisemitic Manifesto



Rep. Jared Moskowitz at the U.S. Capitol, Feb. 15, 2024. Credit: Tom Williams/CQ-Roll Call, Inc via Getty Images

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) – Rep. Jared Moskowitz, a Jewish Florida Democrat, said a man who was arrested for planning “a potential plot on my life” was found near the congressman’s home with an antisemitic manifesto.

Following a police raid on Nov. 2, the suspect, John Lapinski, 41, was arrested for possession of a firearm by a convicted felon and other firearms charges, police told Fox News. He has two prior felony convictions.

“During the investigation, our detectives located several firearms and evidence that indicated he may have been planning some type of criminal act,” the police statement said, adding that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and the FBI were involved in the investigation.

Moskowitz said in a statement posted to X that Lapinski was arrested near his home. The congressman said that Lapinski was in possession of a rifle, a suppressor and body armor, as well as a manifesto that included antisemitic language and a “target” list with only Moskowitz’s name.

Moskowitz, who was elected to Congress in 2022 and reelected last week, wrote, “Serving my constituents is a great honor, but it has put my family in danger.”

Moskowitz said he was informed about the threat on Nov. 4, Election Day eve, by the Margate Police Department inside his southeast Florida district, which covers parts of Broward and Palm Beach counties and is home to a sizable Jewish population.

“As someone who was appointed to the Task Force on the Attempted Assassination of Donald J. Trump, I understand the failures and importance of fixing the protection of our current and

future Commander-In-Chief and Vice President,” Moskowitz wrote. “At the same time, I am deeply worried about Congressional member security and the significant lack thereof when we are in the district. Regardless of our political affiliations or differences, we all have families we want to keep safe.”

The arrest occurred about two months after the Justice Department charged two white supremacist leaders for urging terror attacks against Jews, including a Jewish senator, and other groups. Ahead of the election, Jewish security agencies had cautioned communal institutions to remain on guard for threats and violence targeting Jews. On Election Day, a man carrying fuel, various implements to ignite a fire and a manifesto decrying U.S. support for Israel’s military campaign in Gaza was arrested at the U.S. Capitol.

Moskowitz, 43, had risen to prominence during the pandemic, when he served under Gov. Ron DeSantis as Florida’s director of emergency management. Moskowitz was appointed to the Broward County Commission in 2022 and served until his election to the House of Representatives later that year. He succeeded longtime Rep. Ted Deutch, who left Congress to lead the American Jewish Committee.

Moskowitz has earned a reputation for bipartisanship, and the news of the arrest drew sharp rebukes from a number of Republican representatives in Florida.

“This is outrageous. Nobody should hurt Jared!” Rep. Matt Gaetz, a prominent Trump ally, tweeted in response to Moskowitz’s statement. Rep. Anna Paulina Luna called the threat “abhorrent.” Rep. Carlos Gimenez said, “this violent anti-Semitic hate is despicable.” [HW](#)

## CIA Official Charged with Violating Espionage Act for Leaking Documents Revealing Israel’s Plans to Attack Iran



A fighter jet being prepared ahead of the Israeli army’s attack on Iran, Oct. 26, 2024. (Israel Defense Forces Credit: IDF/Handout/Anadolu via Getty Images

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) – A CIA official was charged with violating the Espionage Act after the FBI found him responsible for a recent leak of classified documents revealing Israeli plans to attack Iran.

The man, Asif W. Rahman, was indicted last week in federal court in Virginia on two counts of willful retention and transmission of national defense information, according to “The New York Times,” felony charges that could carry significant prison sentences. (Former U.S. Air National Guard member Jack Teixeira, who had recorded himself delivering an antisemitic rant, was sentenced to 15 years last Tuesday for similar charges.)

Rahman, who worked overseas, was arrested in Cambodia last Tuesday and brought to Guam, where he [was scheduled] to appear in court last Thursday.

The documents stemmed from the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency,

which aids in clandestine and military operations, and the National Security Agency, and appeared on the Telegram messaging app in October. The documents revealed that Israel was preparing to conduct a military strike in retaliation to Iran’s Oct. 1 missile barrage on Israel. Rahman reportedly held a top-secret security clearance.

Israel conducted strikes on military targets in Iran in late October.

The FBI had acknowledged the leak last month and had said, according to the “Times,” that it was “working closely with our partners in the Department of Defense and intelligence community” to identify the source of the leak.

Rahman’s arrest also follows separate leaks in Israel that roiled Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s war cabinet and contributed to his decision to fire Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [the previous] week. [HW](#)

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# Retroactive Social Security Benefits: A Chance to Turn Back Time

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

Did you know that if you postpone claiming Social Security past your full retirement age, you have the option of receiving a lump-sum payment for up to six months of benefits when you finally apply?

Receiving retroactive benefits in a lump sum might be helpful if you face a change in health or need cash in an emergency. However, you'll want to think through the consequences, because taking an initial lump sum will reduce your monthly Social Security retirement benefit for the rest of your life.

For example, let's say your full retirement age is 67, and your full retirement benefit would be \$2,400. You decide to wait to apply for Social Security. By waiting past full retirement age, you earn delayed retirement credits that will

increase your benefit by 8% per year, up to age 70. You apply for retirement benefits at age 67 and 6 months. Your benefit is now \$2,496, due to the delayed retirement credits you've earned, 4% higher than at age 67.

If you opt to take benefits retroactively in a lump sum, your official Social Security start date and the amount of your monthly benefit will be rolled back by six months, and you will lose six months of delayed retirement credits. Your lump-sum benefit will be based on your age 67 benefit, so you will receive \$14,400 (\$2,400 x 6) — a sizeable amount. The downside is that your ongoing monthly benefits will be permanently reduced.

In this example, because you received a lump-sum payment for six months of

benefits, your ongoing monthly benefit will be 4% lower for the rest of your life.

Factors to consider when deciding if you should take retroactive benefits include your life expectancy and whether you have a greater need for immediate funds or ongoing retirement income. If you're married, your decision might affect future benefits paid to your surviving spouse, because these will be based on what you were receiving. There may also be tax consequences.

There's no single "right" time to claim Social Security retirement benefits. Knowing that you have the option to claim retroactive benefits any time after you reach full retirement age and before age 70 might help lessen the pressure of trying to perfectly time your decision.

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## 'History's Greatest Comeback': Netanyahu Congratulates Trump



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu shares with former President Donald Trump his autobiography at Trump's estate, Mar-a-Lago, Palm Beach, Florida, July 26, 2024. Credit: Amos Ben-Gershom, Israel Government Press Office

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered enthusiastic congratulations to President-elect Donald Trump, saying his victory heralds a “powerful recommitment to the great alliance between Israel and America.”

“Dear Donald and Melania Trump, Congratulations on history’s greatest comeback!” Netanyahu said early [the Wednesday after the election] in a message to the once and future president.

Netanyahu is no stranger to comebacks. In 1996, an upset win that took all night to decide elevated him to the prime ministership; he lost decisively three years later, but then returned to politics and to Israel’s highest office in 2009, remaining prime minister until 2021, when he was ousted in another close race. His latest reelection was in late 2022.

For Netanyahu, Trump’s election also offers a fresh start with the White House. He has tussled in recent months with the Biden administration over how Israel is conducting its multi-front war, and [week before] Tuesday fired his defense minister, who was close to the Biden administration. He suggested in his statement that good times were ahead under Trump.

“Your historic return to the White House offers a new beginning for America and a powerful recommitment to the great alliance between Israel and America,” he said. “This is a huge victory!”

Netanyahu’s office put out the statement just before 3 a.m. Eastern time, when Trump’s win seemed all but inevitable – but almost three hours before the major outlets called it definitively.

His alacrity was not surprising: Trump took years to forgive him for congratulating Joe Biden for his 2020 win. At that time, Netanyahu’s congratulations were delayed – coming 12 hours after the race was called and after other world leaders had offered their congratulations. But nonetheless Trump, who has never accepted the results of the 2020 election, bristled at Netanyahu, later using an expletive to describe him and falsely claiming the Israeli leader was first to congratulate Biden.

Trump and Netanyahu made up over this past summer, when Netanyahu and his wife, Sara, visited the Trumps at their Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. Netanyahu signed his note to Trump, “In true friendship, yours, Benjamin and Sara Netanyahu.”

Netanyahu has brushed off claims that he and Trump, whom he has said was the best-ever U.S. president for Israel, were ever truly on the outs. When they were last both in office, from 2017 to 2021, Trump made far-reaching changes to U.S. policy regarding Israel that fulfilled many of Netanyahu’s wishes, including moving the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem, recognizing Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights and parts of the West Bank, defunding Palestinian agencies, pulling out of the Iran nuclear agreement and brokering normalization deals between Israel and four Arab countries.

During the campaign, Trump has pitched himself as a staunch defender of Israel, and has said it should have a freer hand in battling its enemies, but has also called for the Israel-Hamas war to be over, and the Israeli hostages held by the terror group in Gaza to be released, by time he takes office in January.

Netanyahu’s ministers openly celebrated Trump’s victory. Diaspora Affairs Minister Amichai Chikli shared a post on X that said, “Hamas, Hezbollah, and all terrorists globally. You’re f—ed.” Far-right National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir tweeted, “Yesssss.” Transit Minister Miri Regev wrote, “The world needs a strong leader for the world’s largest power – the U.S. America’s citizens chose correctly.” [HW](#)

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OBITUARIES



Gail Belz

The world lost a joyful, sophisticated and accomplished woman last Friday, and it will forever be a little less colorful without her. Gail Belz, a well-known figure in U.S. furniture manufacturing circles, died peacefully in her San Francisco home after a courageous battle with cancer. She was 86.

Gail was born in Chicago in 1938 but spent most of her childhood in Memphis, Tennessee, attending Vollentine, Snowden and Central High. She continued her education at the University of

Alabama and later worked for a family-owned furniture store in Memphis.

In 1962, Gail joined two friends on an adventurous cross-country road trip culminating in the City by The Bay. Immediately, they were sold! Shortly after their vacation, the three pals packed up and returned to live in San Francisco – permanently.

Gail’s first – and last – job in her long career was with Lenoir Associates, a furniture showroom in San Francisco’s Western Furniture Exchange and Merchandise Mart. Though she started as a receptionist, Gail quickly climbed the ladder and eventually became the owner of the company. Later, she relocated the business to the hip SF Design Center.

Gail was a long-time board member and president of the IFDA (International Furnishings and Design Associates). She was also an active member of Variety Club International.

In addition to collecting accolades for her industry and service work, Gail also collected people. Her retinue of friends

often encompassed their whole families, and she was known as “Auntie Gail” by her friends’ children, with whom she maintained close bonds. She also had six real-life nieces and nephews and six great-nephews, who considered her their Auntie Mame as much as Auntie Gail. All of them have cherished memories of their beautiful and exotic Auntie Gail swooping in from California to shower them with her love and attention.

She leaves behind her sister, Merle Belz Backer, of Chattanooga, Tenn.; nephew Greg Belz of Memphis, Tenn.; niece Marla Backer Brown of Atlanta, Ga.; nephew Dean Backer (Katy Mooney) of Santa Barbara, Ca.; nephew Michael Belz of Memphis; niece Lisa Belz Devisfruto (Dan) of Memphis; nephew Robert Backer (Jennifer) of Chattanooga Tenn., and her adoring great-nephews, Sam and Miles Backer, Jake Backer, Spencer and Carter Brown, and Levi Belz.

Services were held on Thursday, November 14 at Baron Hirsch Cemetery in Memphis, Tenn. **HW**

Sandra Brawer Koplon

Sandra Brawer Koplon passed away peacefully on October 27, 2024. She was 82 years old. Sandy was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, and grew up in Miami, Florida.

She graduated from the University of Alabama where she met her husband, the late Joe A. Koplon, at Alabama.

Sandy was president of her sorority, Sigma Delta Tau, and president of the College of Education. She later earned a master’s degree in gifted education from the University of Alabama in Birmingham.

Sandy raised her family in Birmingham, Alabama, where she lived for over 50 years. She had a long career as a teacher at the NE Miles Jewish Day School, was the founder of the Arthritis Information Center at UAB, worked as the executive director of Jewish Family Services, and was the program director of the Alabama Head Injury Foundation. She was a member of Leadership Birmingham, Temple Beth El, Hadassah and National Council of Jewish Women.

Sandy was preceded in death by her husband, Joe Koplon, parents Pearl and Joe Brawer and brother Mark (Carol) Brawer.

She is survived by her three beloved children, Mindy (Warren) Binderman of Atlanta, Georgia, Michael (Karen) Koplon of Memphis, Tennessee, and Julie (Philip) Schanzer of White Plains, New York, as well as her eight grandchildren, Josh, Rachel and Mollie Binderman; Sammie Jo and Alyssa Koplon; and Elle, Joe and Sam Schanzer.

Sandy always put her family first. She will be remembered for her devotion to family, her meaningful and lasting connections to her friends, her beautiful voice, her perfect penmanship, her life-long love of learning, and her unbelievable strength.

Donations can be made to Temple Beth El in Birmingham, Alabama, or the Alabama Head Injury Foundation. **HW**

Hamas Tied to Amsterdam Pogrom, Israeli Officials Say

By Nissan Shtrauchler and Neta Bar

(Israel Hayom via JNS) – Israeli intelligence officials have identified Dutch organizations with Hamas ties as the primary instigators of last week’s disturbances in Amsterdam, according to a report released last Wednesday by Israel’s Diaspora Affairs Ministry.

The report details how several local organizations allegedly utilized social media platforms to heighten tensions and orchestrate attacks against Maccabi Tel Aviv soccer fans following their match against a Dutch team. Evidence includes screenshots from that evening showing explicit calls for violence and coordinated sharing of locations and tactical information.

The report identifies the Palestinian Community in the Netherlands (PGNL) as the primary organization behind the violence, claiming it maintains direct connections to Hamas. The document provides detailed evidence of these connections, including specific individuals reportedly serving as intermediaries.

Additional organizations and individuals involved in escalating tensions were allegedly linked to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a terror organization that maintains significant support and presence across Europe.

In a related development, Geert Wilders, leader of the largest party in the Dutch Parliament, demanded the resignation of Amsterdam Mayor Femke Halsema over her handling of the violent incidents. “Her incompetence is unprecedented,” Wilders stated. **HW**

Robin Celeste Fleischer

Robin Celeste Fleischer, 64, of Memphis, Tenn., passed away suddenly on Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at her home after a brief illness. She was born in Biloxi, Miss., on the Keesler Air Force Base and lived in various eastern cities during her childhood before residing in Memphis permanently.

She graduated from White Station High School in 1977 and was a Z.A.P. volunteer at the Memphis Zoo while at WSHS. Robin loved to care and be with animals. For 50+ years of her life she always had at least one cat living with her. After high school, she became a veterinary technician. She also attended State Technical Institute and studied computers.

In 1984 she was hired part-time at the Federal Express Corporation where she soon became a full-time telephone customer service employee. For almost 40 years Robin worked exclusively for FedEx in several capacities as an expert telephone customer service representative. She was well known for her unusual and often humorous storytelling about FedEx shipping deliveries.

Robin was preceded in death by her parents, Eva Fleischer and George Fleischer.

Robin leaves behind her sister, Amy (Eddie) LaVene, nephews Charlie (Gaby) LaVene and Randy LaVene, great-niece Shaina LaVene, uncles Jerry (Helaine) Bluestein and E. Frank (Brenda) Bluestein, Aunt Sylvia LaVene, as well as many cousins and countless friends.

The family requests that any donations be made to LeBonheur Childrens Medical Center. **HW**

Leonard Garber

Leonard Garber was born June 3, 1939.

He was raised in Brooklyn, N.Y., and had various jobs growing up but ultimately retired from the mortgage loan business.

He served honorably in the U. S. Army. His friends either called him Lenny or “Poppy” given to him by his family. He was an avid reader, student of history, lover of cars, trains and baseball, particularly the Mets and was therefore a favorite team member for Trivial Pursuit. He was quick witted and always kind to others.

He is survived by his twin, Norman Garber, his sister, Nina Nissenfeld, and his wife, Peggy, who diligently cared for him until the end.

A graveside service for family was held at Beth Sholom cemetery in Memphis, Tenn., on Monday, November 11. **HW**

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# House Set to Vote on Bill Targeting Nonprofits Accused of Supporting Terrorism



**U.S. Rep. David Kustoff, a Tennessee Republican, speaks to guests at the Republican Jewish Coalition annual leadership meeting in Las Vegas, Nov. 19, 2022. Credit: Scott Olson/Getty Images**

**By Asaf Elia-Shalev**

(JTA) – U.S. law prohibits nonprofits from providing support to terrorist organizations, but enforcing that prohibition requires the government to furnish proof of a violation, triggering a judicial process that can be lengthy and arduous.

In the more than two decades since the current law was enacted, following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, the law has rarely led to penalties: nine charities have lost their tax-exempt status under its terms.

A bipartisan bill slated for a major vote on Capitol Hill Tuesday aims to create a new way to achieve that goal without the existing legal hurdles. The bill would give the treasury secretary new powers to independently classify any nonprofit as a terrorist-supporting organization and revoke its tax-exempt status almost immediately.

A version of the bill was introduced following the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas invasion of Israel and passed the House in April, amid a wave of pro-Palestinian protests on college campuses, which many pro-Israel groups labeled as “pro-Hamas.” The bill advanced with broad bipartisan support, 382-11, but stalled in

the Senate.

Now, the new version of the bill is dividing Jewish groups. Centrist and conservative groups support the bill as an urgent measure to curb support for terrorism. Progressive organizations oppose it as a threat to political dissent – and worry that the powers it affords will be abused by the incoming Trump administration to go after groups that oppose its policies.

At a September hearing, Robert Harvey, an expert at Congress’s nonpartisan Joint Committee on Taxation, explained that the government would not be required to disclose how it reached its determination or to provide any evidence of wrongdoing.

“As I understand it, all the Treasurer has to do to deny tax exemption is to mail a notice to the organization involved saying: ‘You’re a terrorist supporting organization, we have found you are providing material support, and you’re denied your exemption?’” Democratic Rep. Lloyd Doggett asked Harvey, according to “The Intercept.”

“That’s correct, Mr. Doggett,” Harvey replied.

## Biden Administration Says It Will Not Issue an Arms Embargo Against Israel

(JNS) – The U.S. State Department will not withhold arms from Israel, according to State Department officials, a month after the White House sent a letter to Israel stating the Jewish state had 30 days to improve the humanitarian conditions for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip or be subject to an arms embargo.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken seemed to indicate that the requirements had been met. According to a readout of a meeting between Blinken and Israeli Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer, the two “reviewed steps that Israel has taken to improve the dire humanitarian situation inside Gaza,” including a recent Gaza aid package approved by the Israeli cabinet.

The following day at a press briefing, Vedant Patel, principal deputy spokesperson, was pressed for a concrete answer. He stated that Israel had taken “a number of steps to address the measures laid out in the letter,” and as such, “we at this time have not made an assessment that the Israelis are in violation of U.S. law.”

When asked if Israel would face any consequences, Patel responded: “I certainly don’t have a change in U.S. poli-

cy to announce today.”

He added that Israel still must take “additional steps” to improve the humanitarian conditions in the coastal enclave, echoing Blinken’s earlier conversation, which stated that Israel must ensure “those changes lead to an actual improvement in the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza.”

Blinken also reaffirmed America’s “ironclad” commitment to Israel.

U.S. President Joe Biden said the same in a meeting with Israeli President Isaac Herzog at the White House last Tuesday, saying his administration’s “commitment to Israel is ironclad, and we share a deep friendship.”

President-elect Donald Trump also spoke with Dermer at Trump’s Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida. The minister reportedly conveyed messages to Trump from Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, discussing Israel’s plans in Gaza and Lebanon as it continues to battle Hamas and Hezbollah amid ongoing tensions with Iran.

Dermer also met with Jared Kushner, Trump’s son-in-law and former senior adviser. **HW**

Lawmakers sponsoring the bill say the government needs a better tool to prevent terrorist organizations from being subsidized by American taxpayers. Their position is endorsed by the Anti-Defamation League, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and the Republican Jewish Coalition.

The bill would allow the Treasury Department to act against the U.S.-registered charities that it determines have provided support to groups designated as terrorist organizations by the United States – including, for example, Hamas and Islamic Jihad, both based in Gaza, and the Lebanese Hezbollah.

After making the determination, the Treasury would notify the charity, giving it 90 days to file a court challenge before losing its tax-exempt status. Republican Rep. David Kustoff of Tennessee, one of the bill’s two Jewish cosponsors along with Democratic Rep. Brad Schneider of Illinois, says the problem isn’t theoretical: He claims tax-exempt donations are currently flowing to terrorist organizations, though neither he nor any other proponents of the bill have named specific examples.

“To put it plainly, domestic financiers of terrorism are currently being subsidized by U.S. taxpayer dollars,” Kustoff said earlier this year. “Let me be clear: No American should receive a tax benefit for funding terrorism.”

The RJC said the bill should be used to ensure that Hamas and other terrorist organizations are not receiving any funds from U.S. nonprofits and framed it as a tool against groups that attack American Jews and Israel.

“Congress is right to address the threat of organizations using tax-exempt funds to support Hamas and other terrorist groups,” RJC said in a statement. “In case last week’s election results didn’t make it clear: The days of impunity for antisemitic extremists who target the Jewish state and Jewish Americans are over.”

Critics of the bill say it grants too

much power to the government and that it could be used to silence political dissent – particularly from pro-Palestinian organizations that don’t have ties to terror groups but may nonetheless be branded as supporters of Hamas. The language of the bill prohibits providing “material support or resources,” a category defined in law that, opponents say, could still be interpreted broadly. They also worry that the incoming Trump administration could use the bill to penalize groups focusing on signature progressive issues such as reproductive justice, the environment, and promoting immigration.

The American Civil Liberties Union has been spearheading opposition to the bill with support from voices on both sides of the political spectrum. The libertarian Cato Institute and “Reason” magazine, for example, have come out against the bill. So have several progressive American Jewish groups such as Bend the Arc and the New Israel Fund.

“This bill is as dangerous as it is extraneous,” the New Israel Fund, which donates to civil society groups in Israel, many of them left-leaning, said in a statement. “The United States already has a meticulous process in place to determine whether a group is providing material support for terrorism. What this would do is strip that system of due process and enable willy-nilly terrorist designations.”

The bill is scheduled for a full vote in the House of Representatives Tuesday, after which it would have to be approved by the Senate and signed by the president.

The current version of the bill is identical to the one that passed in April, except that it’s been combined with another bill that aims to give American hostages and political prisoners held abroad relief from tax deadlines and penalties. The ACLU believes the pairing with an unobjectionable bill is a ploy to weaken the likelihood of opposition. **HW**

## Israeli Study Shows Breakthrough in Treatment of Cancer



**Beilinson Hospital in Petach Tikvah. Credit: Doron Horowitz/Flash90**

(JNS) – A pioneering study conducted at Beilinson Hospital in Israel has revealed a potential breakthrough in prostate-cancer treatment that could significantly reduce the number of radiation sessions required for effective care.

The research comes as the Israel Cancer Association projects that 2,800 men will receive diagnoses of this type of cancer this year with about 530 fatalities expected. The disease remains the most prevalent cancer among Israeli men and ranks as the fifth leading cause of cancer mortality.

The groundbreaking research, led by Dr. Elisha Freedman, director of urinary system cancers and clinical radiation research at the Davidoff Center’s radiotherapy institute at Beilinson Hospital, focuses on reducing radiation

treatments to just two sessions for early-stage patients.

In the initial phase, researchers studied 20 patients who underwent the abbreviated two-session treatment protocol. The results showed no unusual side effects, with treatment outcomes matching those of the traditional five-session approach. Significantly, no cancer recurrence was observed during the 18-month follow-up period.

“This transition to two radiation sessions represents a significant advancement in patient care,” Freedman explained. “We’re seeing fewer side effects, reduced hospital visits and increased treatment capacity. This could revolutionize treatment globally. Given the psychological impact of treatment, reducing radiation sessions appears highly promising, which helped secure approval for expanded research.”

The treatment particularly benefits intermediate-risk patients not requiring hormonal therapy, who comprise the majority of prostate cancer cases. The findings, published in the prestigious “International Journal of Radiation Oncology, Biology, Physics,” have led to an expanded third phase involving 502 patients, comparing outcomes between two-session and five-session treatment groups. **HW**



# Newly Single, Jewish Chef Jake Cohen is Bringing His Style of Easy Entertaining to TV



Jake Cohen wears a Jewish star necklace on his TV show “Jake Makes it Easy.” Courtesy: A+E Networks 2024

By Rachel Ringler

(New York Jewish Week) – A lot has changed in Jake Cohen’s life since he finished filming his first TV show, a cooking show that incorporates but does not solely focus on his Jewish identity.

“Since we recorded, I have split with my husband. I am currently single,” Cohen said in an interview. After six years of marriage, Cohen has moved from Queens into Manhattan, where he is living with two other celebrity Nice Jewish Boys: EGOT-winning singer-songwriter Benj Pasek and comedian Alex Edelman.

Still, when “Jake Makes it Easy” begins airing on Monday night on A&E’s Home.Made.Nation, Cohen’s fans will recognize the effervescent Jewish cook that they have come to know through his best-selling cookbooks and Instagram and TikTok accounts, where he has a collective 2.5 million followers. And Cohen is looking forward to gaining a new audience, too.

“The most exciting thing about this is that it is going to be on cable and speaks to a different audience of people that are just as passionate about cooking and passionate about food,” Cohen said. “They haven’t met me yet and once they do, new people will fall in love with my recipes, which is the goal.”

The series’ trailer does not mention Cohen’s Jewish identity, but in the first episode, he clearly announces who he is. The 30-year-old New York City native is wearing a Star of David necklace that is hard to miss, talks about past travel to Israel and refers to his husband and his in-laws, who are Jews from Iraq.

He also shares two recipes with roots in the Middle East – Iraqi salmon that he learned to make from his mother-in-law and date brownies, the idea for which came to him while walking through the shuk, or open-air market, in Tel Aviv.

Cohen has long credited his husband’s Mizrahi family with widening his Jewish food horizons. Middle Eastern recipes play a prominent role in his last book, “I Could Nosh,” and many of them, says Cohen, “have become so integral to my life and my story.”

Now, even though his marriage is ending, those recipes, he said, “are still part of the fabric” of what makes him who he is. “I look at the past fondly,” Cohen said. “I don’t try to predict the future. I am in the moment.”

In his newly single era, those moments include lots of time on Citi Bikes, traversing New York City and visiting favorite haunts such as Gertie’s and Laser Wolf in Williamsburg, Theodora in Fort Greene, Katz’s Deli on Houston Street and appetizing store Barney Greengrass near his new home on the Upper West Side.

It also includes tying up his third cookbook, out next year, and launching his 10-episode cable show. Both aim to give their audiences the confidence to entertain with ease.

“It is time to inspire a generation of home cooks who not just love to cook but love to entertain,” said Cohen. “My job is to give people the tools to understand how recipes go together in order to properly host the people you love

without losing your mind.”

In each episode, Cohen guides the viewer in the art of making a main course and dessert that make sense together and are special enough for company. Some of the recipes spring from his Jewish background, but others do not. Other dishes that he will be sharing include a balsamic and soy brisket, baked gnocchi, and what he is calling soup-less chicken soup.

The recipe he describes as his favorite in the series has Jewish roots, too. “It’s a play on matzah brittle that I make for Passover,” said Cohen. “I thought what if instead of using matzah I use a Tate’s cookie. It is by far the most incredible thing I have ever made in my life. I just did Yom Kippur with Benny Blanco in L.A., and I made tubs of it and everyone went crazy.”

Among those praising Cohen’s cooking is his new roommate Edelman, who recently won an Emmy for his stand-up show about antisemitism and Jewish identity, “Just For Us.” Calling Cohen “one of the great chefs on planet Earth as far as I can tell,” Edelman said he had also been impressed by how Cohen provides sustenance that goes beyond food.

“I think one of the reasons that he is so successful is because he manages to somehow infuse his cooking with himself, which means that that cooking is full of personality and generosity and community and is respectful of tradition but innovative at the exact same time,” Edelman said. “I can’t say enough good things about the guy.”

That blend is visible on the show. Some lovers of Jake Cohen’s challah recipe – he devotes more than 20 pages to challah in his most recent cookbook and said he would pick challah if he could make only one Jewish recipe for the rest of his life – may be surprised to see that while it shows up on the series, it does not do so in the classic, braided form.

The dough that he demonstrates on the show is used to make challah-wrapped hot dogs and as the base for monkey bread, in which the dough is sweetened with sugar, cinnamon and nutmeg and then glazed with a mixture of confectioner’s sugar and vanilla bean paste.

“There’s a lot of intimacy that comes with foods that are a living, breathing

thing that adapt every time you make them and really express to someone how much love and effort you put into the interaction,” Cohen said, adding that he introduced challah early in the series on purpose. “I wanted to get it out of the way so it was really universal, and not just for Jewish people to take away this beauty, but for anyone.”

Does that mean that Cohen is blurring his self-definition as a Jewish cooking guru? After all, in the aftermath of Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, which sparked a spike in reports of antisemitism around the world, some Jews have grown wary about broadcasting their identity publicly.

Cohen says no. “If I’m writing it, it’s Jewish,” he said. But that doesn’t mean Oct. 7 hasn’t changed him.

“I am 100% more committed to being authentically myself publicly, and I’m more aware of the people around me, which is all you can do,” he said. “I am a big proponent of Stoicism and what it all comes down to is that you can only control your actions, you can’t control the actions of others.”

He added, “I am not going to let it change who I am publicly. I am making a show about entertaining, and it is still so inherently Jewish even if it is not an exclusively Jewish cooking show.”

The clearest evidence may come in the form of the Jewish star necklace he wears in real life, and on the show.

“I wear it every day,” he said, adding that he also wears his trademark overalls, and jewelry by the Jewish designer Susan Alexandra. “There was no budget for fashion, so I wear what I wear.”

With the first season wrapped and the heaviest lifting on his third book complete, Cohen is cooking and busy. He recently prepared a brunch made from recipes from his third cookbook for Erin Lichy, one of the Jewish women featured on “Real Housewives of New York.” He also traveled to Pennsylvania with Pasek and Edelman to canvass for Kamala Harris.

Cohen is also looking forward to heading farther afield. Although he hasn’t been back to Israel since last Oct. 7, he said he definitely plans to return when he can for an extended visit.

“I’m in a house-guest era,” he joked. “I need someone to give me their apartment for a month.” **HW**

# Trump Names Fellow Real Estate Mogul Steve Witkoff as Middle East Envoy



Businessman Steven Witkoff speaks on stage on the fourth day of the Republican National Convention at the Fiserv Forum, Milwaukee, July 18, 2024. Credit: Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – WASHINGTON – President-elect Donald Trump named as his Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, a realtor and golf buddy who was present at

a recent foiled assassination of Trump.

“Steve is a Highly Respected Leader in Business and Philanthropy, who has made every project and communi-

ty he has been involved with stronger and more prosperous,” Trump said last Tuesday in a statement. “Steve will be an unrelenting Voice for PEACE and make us all proud.”

Witkoff, who is Jewish and who has been friends with Trump since the 1980s when he bought Trump a sandwich after they worked on a real estate transaction, has no Middle East diplomatic experience.

In that sense, he is similar to his counterpart from Trump’s first term, Jason Greenblatt, the special representative for international negotiations, who was a lawyer for Trump before becoming his envoy, and served in the role until 2019.

Trump said Witkoff, 67, was with him on the golf course when Secret Service agents fired at a man who was allegedly preparing to assassinate Trump. He and his son, Zach, spoke in July at the Republican National Convention in Milwaukee. Another Witkoff son, Andrew, died in 2011 at a rehab facility, and the

elder Witkoff described how Trump had stood by him in the wake of the tragedy.

“Many Americans have only witnessed his leadership on TV, but I have seen his humanity,” Witkoff said. “In the quiet moments away from the spotlight. In hospital rooms he didn’t have to be in, where his presence brought real solace in a dark hour from my family, and many other families.”

Witkoff as a realtor has purchased major New York City landmarks, including the Woolworth Building.

Witkoff was one of a flurry of national security and diplomacy picks announced or reported last week, including former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee as ambassador to Israel; Florida Rep. Mike Waltz as national security adviser; Florida Sen. Marco Rubio as Secretary of State; New York Rep. Elise Stefanik as United Nations ambassador and John Ratcliffe, Trump’s first term Director of National Intelligence, as CIA director. **HW**



# Priscilla Presley Set to Speak at A Night to Shine, the Unknown Child Foundation's 15 Year Anniversary Celebration



Priscilla Presley will be the Featured speaker at Unknown Child Foundation's 15 Year Anniversary Celebration.

The Unknown Child Foundation is gearing up to host A Night to Shine at the Landers Center in Southaven, Miss., on December 16. This special evening, beginning at 6:30 p.m., is so much more than a celebration – it's a chance to come together and remember the 1.5 million children who perished during the Holocaust as well as support an im-

portant next step in the Foundation's work. With cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, a silent auction, and a special appearance by Priscilla Presley, the night will surely be unforgettable.

Over the past 15 years, the Unknown Child Foundation has been focused on making sure those children's stories are never forgotten. For the last seven years, their memorial has been on display at the DeSoto County Museum, in Hernando, Miss., serving as a reminder, to all visitors of the devastating loss of innocent lives. Now, the Foundation is looking to take its mission even further.

The goal is to create a traveling exhibit – a replica of a WWII boxcar used to transport children and families to concentration camps. This exhibit will tell the stories of the children whose lives were taken and teach visitors about the dangers of hatred. By bringing this history to schools, museums, and communities across the states of Mississippi, Tennessee and beyond, the Foundation hopes to inspire a greater sense of understanding as well as educate the masses.

This is where A Night to Shine comes in. The event's purpose is to begin raising the funds needed to bring this traveling boxcar exhibit to life. Every sponsorship secured and ticket purchased, along with money raised through both the silent auction and donations, will help make this

project a reality, allowing the Foundation to expand its reach and continue its mission of education and remembrance.

It all began in the fall of 2009 in a meeting with Horn Lake Middle School teachers Susan Powell and Melissa Wheeler and volunteer Diane McNeil.

The teachers' passion for increasing awareness about the Holocaust sparked an idea that went on to become the "Pennies Project." Students came together to collect pennies, one for each of the 1.5 million children who died in the Holocaust. What began as a small, simple act grew into something amazing and laid the groundwork for the Unknown Child Memorial. The following year's school group along with Gen SC homeschoolers from Tennessee joined in the excitement and still remain active today.

To make this evening even more special, Priscilla Presley will be attending as the featured speaker. Known for her humanitarian work, her support of this event helps shine a spotlight on the Foundation's mission. She will be sharing why Unknown Child is special to her and why it has caught her attention.

The silent auction features unique items and experiences, with proceeds going toward the creation of the mobile exhibit. It's an opportunity not only to enjoy the evening but also to




Scan to purchase tickets

play a part in bringing this important project to life.

A Night to Shine is not just about the past 15 years, it's about what we do now to ensure that these lessons are never forgotten. It's about honoring the children who perished and teaching future generations about the importance of kindness, compassion, and standing against hate no matter who you are.

You can be a part of this meaningful mission. Tickets and sponsorships are available now at [event.gives/unknownchildfoundation](https://event.gives/unknownchildfoundation) or scan the QR code below. For more information about the Unknown Child Foundation and its mission, visit [unknownchild.org](https://unknownchild.org). [HW](#)



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