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Memphis Yom HaShoah Commemoration Will Explore Intergenerational Responsibility with Second Generation Holocaust Survivor



Anna Salton Eisen, author and daughter of Holocaust survivors, will speak at this year's Yom HaShoah Commemoration.

"The children of Holocaust survivors are collectively referred to as the Second Generation. Not since the biblical flood and the start of a new world with Noah had there been a second counting of generations. Our parents' entire world was destroyed, and with us they had to begin anew."

Anna Salton Eisen, author and daughter of Holocaust survivors, writes these powerful words in the introduction to her memoir "Pillar of Salt: A Daughter's Life in the Shadow of the Holocaust." She'll be delivering the keynote address at this year's 63rd Annual Yom HaShoah Commemoration, "Echoes of Liberation: Intergenerational Implications,"

hosted by the Memphis Jewish Federation on April 23.

Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, serves as a crucial moment for communities worldwide to honor the six million Jews murdered during the Holocaust. This year, the annual event will explore intergenerational responsibility and resilience through the lens of Anna Salton Eisen's family's story.

The daughter of two Holocaust survivors, Eisen never heard her parents speak about the horrors they endured in Europe as children – until she accidentally discovered two watercolor paintings by her father depicting his brutal experiences and embarked on a journey as an adult to finally break their silence.

"I had never heard my father speak about the Holocaust before," she said. "It always seemed like something forbidden to talk about in my childhood. But I think he was waiting to be asked."

As the first generation of Holocaust survivors grows smaller, Eisen's presence at the event brings a unique and powerful dimension to the commemoration. In addition to "Pillar of Salt," Eisen co-authored her father's Holocaust memoir, "The 23rd Psalm: A Holocaust Memoir" and has been featured in numerous major news outlets, including CNN, The New York Times, The Washington Post and Fox News.

Eisen, a founding member of Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas,

was already a prominent Holocaust education speaker when her synagogue was targeted by a terrorist in a hostage crisis in January 2022. In the years since, Eisen has spoken repeatedly to media and her audiences about the importance of Holocaust awareness in light of rising anti-Semitism.

"The Holocaust and antisemitism used to be history, but now they are current events," she said.

The theme of "Echoes of Liberation: Intergenerational Implications" highlights the ongoing relevance of Holocaust remembrance in today's world. Eisen's presentation will focus on the ways that the experiences of survivors continue to resonate through their children and grandchildren, shaping their identities and perspectives. She will discuss the responsibilities of subsequent generations to carry the torch of remembrance and to combat the rising tides of antisemitism and hate.

Eisen's perspective will address the complex questions of how to honor the past while building a future free from prejudice. She brings a message of hope and resilience, emphasizing the importance of education, empathy and dialogue in fostering a more just and compassionate world.

In addition to Eisen's keynote, the Commemoration will also feature an original Holocaust musical selection performed by violinist Diane Zelick-

man Cohen and clarinetist Rena Feller, written by Dr. Stanley Friedman; Rabbi Cantor David Julian of Or Chadash Conservative Synagogue leading the national anthem with the Fourth Generation Choir; greetings and personal message by Co-Chairs Harry and Michelle Diamant, survivors and second generation survivors lighting memorial candles, featuring Shoshana Cenker and her children reading the biographies of those who perished; prayers by Rabbi Micah Greenstein of Temple Israel and Cantor Ricky Kampf of Baron Hirsch Congregation with second generation survivors leading the community memorial Kaddish; Rabbi Sarit Horwitz of Beth Sholom Synagogue delivering the closing benediction; and all clergy leading the Hatikvah joining with Memphians who served in the IDF.

The Memphis Jewish Federation's Yom HaShoah Commemoration is a crucial opportunity for the community to come together in solidarity and remembrance. It provides a space for reflection, education and a collective commitment to ensuring that the lessons of the Holocaust are never forgotten.

Pre-registration is required to attend the Yom HaShoah Commemoration. Location will be provided upon registration. To register, visit jcpmemphis.org/yomhashoah. **HW**

A Two-Way Bridge: Shoham and Memphis Strengthen Bonds Through Reciprocal Visits



The delegation in Makhtesh Yerucham, Israel.

The Memphis-Israel connection is stronger than ever, thanks to a series of recent visits by – and to – sister city, Shoham.

A delegation from the Memphis Jewish Federation's Shoham Partnership Committee visited Shoham, a town of 23,000 in central Israel, in February. This trip was a journey of discovery and connection for Memphians. The experience

was made more personal, as the Memphis delegation – which included Lee Harkavy, Sarah Siegel, Laura Harkavy, Hila Shimony, Shoham Partnership Chair Keri Unowsky and Federation Executive Vice President Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein – stayed with Shoham committee members, immersing themselves in the daily life of Israelis and strengthening relationships with

their Shoham counterparts.

Their itineraries included a visit to Kedma Youth Village, a meeting with Liat Amar-Aran, Head of Rehabilitation and Development for the Western Negev at the Jewish Agency, and a tour of Wadi Attir, showcasing the innovative work of the Bedouin community. The group also explored the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Innovation Center in Yeruham, originally a development town for Moroccan immigrants, experiencing the Negev's unique blend of innovation and tradition.

The delegation spent Shabbat with host families and came together for a beautiful Havdalah with Rabbi Rinat Sefania of the Reform Congregation in Shoham. Following Havdalah, Shoham community members shared painful and inspiring experiences about the hostages and the ongoing war.

Visits to the Shachaf Democratic School and Ulpanat Shalhevet, where they met with Israeli students currently

twinning with Bornblum Jewish Community School and Margolin Hebrew Academy, and a lecture by Dr. Lior Yohanani of the Israel Democracy Institute, provided insight into Israeli society and current events.

The Memphians also gained a deeper understanding of the critical work of the Jewish Agency for Israel, including rebuilding destroyed southern communities, easing financial burdens with grants from the Victims of Terror Fund, and facilitating Ukrainian, Russian, and Ethiopian Aliyah and Absorption. They also convened for a meeting of the Memphis-Shoham Partnership Steering Committee to review past projects and discuss new ones for the next year.

The Memphians left Shoham with a renewed sense of connection to Israel and a deeper understanding of the challenges and triumphs facing the community.

Just weeks later, in March, a group

(See **Shoham** Page 2)

Shoham...

(Continued From Page 1)



Educators from Shoham at Temple Israel's Purim Carnival.

of Shoham educators reciprocated the visit, arriving in Memphis to further strengthen the bonds forged earlier in the year. This exchange included delegation members Libat Kaminsky (Education Coordinator for the Memphis-Shoham Partnership), Noa Keren Penhala (Principal of Ulpanat Shalhevet), Elisheva Levy (Teacher at Ulpanat Shalhevet), Ronit Dahan (Teacher at Yahalom School) and Iris Raber Cohen (Teacher at the Shachaf School), who experienced the warmth and hospitality of the Memphis Jewish community.

Their itinerary was carefully designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of Memphis's history, culture and Jewish community. Highlights included a poignant tour of the National Civil Rights Museum, a visit to Crosstown Concourse and Kabbalat Shabbat services at Bornblum and Margolin, Baron Hirsch and Temple Israel.

The twinning program between the Memphis and Shoham schools was a central focus, as Elisheva and Noa taught classes at Margolin, and Iris and Ronit visited Bornblum, reinforcing the existing connections between the schools. Middle school students defined their three most important values with Morah Ronit and Morah Almalem (they chose love, unity and understanding). The same debate will take place in the twin class at Yahalom School in Shoham. Morah Ronit and Morah Almalem also baked a cake with the two twin classes, utilizing a recipe chosen from the farmers of the Gaza Envelope.

“It was such a joy to host Iris and Ronit at Bornblum, and to see that our twinning program is stronger than ever,” said Michal Almalem, Jewish Studies Principal at Bornblum Jewish Community School. “From exploring the Haggadah to baking Israeli recipes, our students engaged in hands-on,

values-driven learning with our Israeli friends that will reinforce their connection to Israel for years to come.”

At Margolin, Elisheva and Noa spoke to several grade classes. They focused on sharing the stories, language and history of Shoham and Israel with students. Teachers at Margolin say that students left feeling more connected to the land and to the people of Israel.

“We were so excited to welcome Elisheva and Noa to our school!” said Anat Kampf, Middle School Principal at Margolin Hebrew Academy. “So many of our students commented how meaningful their visit was and how much they learned from them. It is very different for our students to hear firsthand reports from educators on the ground about the situation in Israel. Our teachers very much enjoyed observing Noa and Elisheva teach, and they commented how impressive, creative and engaging they were. This visit helped build an even stronger bond between our two cities, and we are looking forward to hosting them again in the near future.”

The Shoham educators also experienced the heart of Memphis through visits to Beale Street, the MJCC, the Temple Israel Purim Carnival and Memphis Jewish Home and Rehab. A particularly moving conversation with River City BBG students about their experiences following October 7 deepened the understanding of the challenges faced by American Jewish youth. The week culminated in collaborative lesson planning, faculty meetings, a screening of “October 8,” and heartfelt farewells.

The impact of the Memphis visit on the Shoham educators was profound. Elisheva Levy shared, “This journey was about more than building relationships – it was about strengthening them. I leave with a deeper understanding of Jewish life in Memphis and will carry

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PO Box 770846
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Office: 901.763.2215
Direct: 901.827.7244

info@hebrewwatchman.com

Susan C. Nieman
Editor and Publisher

Larry Nieman
Advertising Sales Director

Toni Nieman
Office Manager & Subscriptions
toni@hebrewwatchman.com

Rebecca Schudel
Social Media Director
Web Development

Herman I. Goldberger
Editor and Publisher Emeritus

Barbara B. Goldberger
Editor and Publisher Emeritus

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4/17/2025



Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. April 18, 2025 / 20 Nissan, 5785.....7:17 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. April 19, 2025 / 21 Nissan, 5785 8:15 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Pesach (7th Day)

these experiences with me always.”

Libat Kaminsky emphasized the broader impact, stating, “This was a meaningful delegation that showcased the deep connections built over the years between teachers in Shoham and Memphis. The Jewish community embraced us warmly, and we engaged in profound conversations with community members and youth about Jewish identity, Israel and the challenges of antisemitism. Building relationships and investing in education are the true bridges between Israel and the Diaspora.”

“What a wonderful week and visit,” said Lee Harkavy. “It is so nice to continue to grow our *mishpacha*.”

Even Shoham's city leadership expressed their gratitude for the visit.

“This delegation represents a significant step in deepening the ties between our communities, providing a meaningful opportunity for personal encounters with students and educators in Memphis, and strengthening the shared Jewish identity between Israel and the Diaspora,” said Dafna Rabinowitch, Mayor of Shoham. [HW](#)

Brian Lurie

Broker, Vice-President
GRI, RENE, MMDC, CRS

Cell: 901.315.2298

Office: 901.260.4780

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Celebrating 100 years

In celebration of our 100-Year Anniversary, we are asking readers to submit old clippings from past editions. Here is our first submission by Natalie Rosenberg from the April 17, 1986, edition.

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THE HEBREW WATCHMAN

Thursday, April 17, 1986

The traditional way to make a Seder

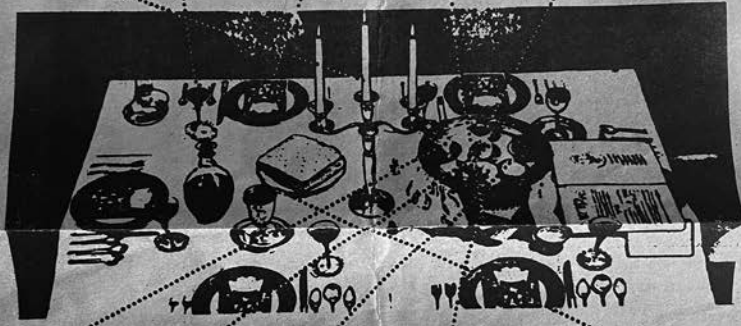
1 CANDLEs are lighted by the mother of the house to usher in the festival of Pass-over. The benediction which she pronounces over the candles gives a religious meaning to this simple act. An abundance of light symbolizes joy and festivity, and the soft candle-glow adds an aura of spirituality to the Seder table.

2 A CUP OF WINE is placed at each table setting. The sanctification of the Holiday is pronounced over the first cup. Three additional cups are drunk during the course of the Seder, making a total of four, to symbolize the four expressions of the Lord's promise to redeem the children of Israel and deliver them from bondage.

3 THE HAGGADAH (literally "the telling") contains the complete Seder ceremonies in their prescribed order (order). The first part of the book, concerned mainly with the story of the Jews' deliverance from Egypt, is read before the meal. After dinner follows the second portion consisting of prayers of praise and thanks to the Almighty.

4 MATZON represents the "bread of affliction" eaten by the Jews in Egypt, and also the bread that had to be baked during their hasty flight when there was no time for leavening. Three matzot are placed in the Seder tray. Half the middle Matzah, saved for the Afikomen (dessert), is playfully "stolen" by a child and ransomed for a prize.

5 THE Z'ROAH, a roasted shank bone, is placed on the Seder tray. It represents the ancient sacrifice of the Paschal lamb (Pesach) which had to be eaten roasted. Pesach, the Hebrew name for Passover, also refers to the Lord's passing over (pesach) the Jewish homes during the plague visited upon the Egyptian firstborn.



6 THE BEITZAH, a roasted egg placed left of the Seder, symbolizes the required offering brought on all festivals in the Temple. The egg, while not itself sacrificed, is used in the Seder as it is the Jewish symbol of mourning (in this case for the loss of the Temple where the sacrifices were brought).

7 THE MAROR or "bitter herbs" (usually horseradish) is placed in the middle of the tray and symbolizes the Jews' bitter suffering under the Egyptian yoke. Directly below is the Charoseth, another piece of bitter herbs, commemorating the custom of eating Maror sandwiched between two pieces of Matzah.

8 THE CHAROSET, placed beneath the Seder, is a mixture of chopped apple, nuts, cinnamon, and wine designed to look like the mortar used by the Jews in building the palaces and pyramids of Egypt during centuries of forced labor. Before the Maror is eaten, it is dipped into the Charoset.

9 THE KARPAS, a piece of parsley or lettuce placed to the left of the Charoset, symbolizes the meager diet of the Jews in Egyptian bondage. It is dipped into salt water in remembrance of the tears they shed in their misery. The Karpas also signifies Springtime, the season of Pass-over.

10 THE CUP OF MILK, filled with wine, is kept on the table throughout the Seder in the hope that the Prophet Elijah may appear as a messenger of the Almighty and announce the coming of the Messiah. Thus, in the midst of their memories of the past, the Jews look forward to the day of universal peace, love, and brotherhood.

First Seder Night APRIL 23

We are happy to extend warm greetings to our friends and patrons on this

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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, April 21
Speaker: Floy Bluestein, local Real Estate Broker, with J. D. Marks, Inc., Realtors
Topic: Preventing Real Estate Scams

Mrs. Bluestein has been in real estate for over 50 years and will cover topics such as what to do if you receive an appraisal that is much higher than last year's. She will also talk about some of the scams that have been in the news recently, such as the attempt to "Steal" Graceland, as well as other properties. This should be a very enlightening topic to hear. A question-and-answer period will follow. This talk is open to all.

Wednesday April 23
MJCC Larissa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Monthly Luncheon
Entertainment featuring Julianne Thomas & Dom Fosco.

This is one of our favorite duos who many have asked to have back. Julianne and Dom have been making music all their lives. They each have many accomplishments in their long careers but along the way, the best reward is the love of sharing what they do. Julianne offers a stirring vocal style with a joyful presence while Dom is an amazing instrumentalist on keyboard, sax and backgrounds. Their repertoire includes traditional jazz, standards, blues and R&B. Everyone will sing, smile, swoon over the tunes and tap their toes while Julianne and Dom create a journey back in time that is "Unforgettable."



Julianne Thomas & Dom Fosco

The Monthly Luncheon has recently been drawing around 70 people with a cost of only \$5 for a kosher catered meal plus dessert served by the MJCC staff. There is a group of volunteers who spend the day before decorating the room, so everyone is sure to enjoy it as soon as they walk in. A few games of Bingo will follow the lunch and entertainment. Bring your friends or come by yourself and make some new friends! This month's luncheon is sponsored by The Avaline, Assisted Living and Memory Care.

Reservations can be made by calling the front desk of the MJCC at 901-761-0810. Hope to see you there.

Monday, April 28
Mid-South Hobbies Special Art Project

We will again have the privilege of having Mid-South Hobbies bring a Special Art Project for the group. A few weeks ago, we went on a field trip to their location on Summer Ave. They always bring a really cool project. There is no charge for the art project. It is always a lot of fun and their teachers make it very enjoyable. No experience is necessary, and if the project is not finished, everyone takes supplies home to finish at their own home. Come have a nice lunch and bring home something that you did yourself. Reservations are needed by the Friday before so we have enough projects and food for everyone.

Wednesday, April 30
Rabbi Talk with Rabbi Noach Karp, Director of Memphis Jewish Experience for the Memphis Kollel.

Topic: What's up with The Beard?
You may figure from the title that Rabbi Karp's talks are not the typical ones you hear. Rabbi Karp always brings a fun and informative topic to his talks at the MJCC! Come listen, learn and enjoy a session with this engaging rabbi. There is a reservation needed for the lunch but not the rabbi's talk. We hope to see you here.

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 through Thursday 9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. **HW**

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Celebrating 30 Years of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis

Planting Seeds of Philanthropy: B’nai Tzedek Nurtures New Generation of Givers

In honor of the 30-year anniversary of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis, we are showcasing the Foundation’s history and impact through a content series across multiple platforms. This will include a regular article series in The Hebrew Watchman, with each article focusing on different themes and delving into the core principles of the Foundation, including endowment building, supporting partner agencies and promoting legacy giving.



The Jewish Foundation of Memphis celebrating 10 years of teen philanthropy at the 2013 Annual Meeting. Bobbie Shainberg, Molly Wexler and Bunny and Jeff (not pictured) Goldstein were honored for their support of Memphis B’nai Tzedek.

Sheri Gadberry, Senior Philanthropic Officer and Executive Vice President of the Foundation, Jewish Community Partners

Since its inception in 2002, the Jewish Foundation of Memphis’ B’nai Tzedek program has nurtured a new generation of young philanthropists. The initiative empowers bar and bat mitzvah students to establish their own charitable funds, laying the groundwork for a lifetime of dedicated giving.

Aimed at instilling the values of *tzedakah* (righteous giving) in young people at a pivotal moment in their lives, B’nai Tzedek provides teens with the tools and knowledge to make informed philanthropic decisions, cultivating a commitment to community service.

Two important families made this program a reality: Bobbie Shainberg first came up with the concept and seed money, and Bunny and Jeff Goldstein have been the program’s sponsors and funders. The initiative would not be the success it is today, 23 years later, without their generous support. Incredibly dedicated staff members have been instrumental to B’nai Tzedek’s profound impact and include Susan Nieman, Molly Wexler, Josie Ballin and Carolyn Schrier. These individuals launched the program into two successful decades of impact, and thanks in part to their leadership, B’nai Tzedek was recognized in the early 2000s as a Youth Philanthropy of the Year by The Association of Fund-raising Professionals.

Laura Kaplan Paller, Jewish Community Partners’ VP of Finance & Operations, was among the first participants when the program was initiated in 2002. As she recounts in the Foundation’s new donor-focused podcast, “Generations of Giving,” B’nai Tzedek sparked a passion for Jewish philanthropy that has resonated throughout her life.

“At 35, I’m now an active participant in Memphis Jewish life in so many ways – and that all stems back to when I joined B’nai Tzedek at age 12,” Kaplan Paller said. “It inspired me not only to join the Foundation’s Board as an adult, but also to dedicate my career to Jewish nonprofit leadership.”

The journey begins with each participant establishing their own individual charitable fund, endowed with a portion of their bar or bat mitzvah gifts. This act of ownership empowers them to become active stakeholders in the community’s well-being. Guided by experienced mentors, they undergo a comprehensive learning experience, exploring the diverse needs and challenges facing local organizations.

Central to the B’nai Tzedek curriculum are workshops, discussions and site visits that provide firsthand exposure to the impact of philanthropy. Participants gain a deeper understanding of the vital work being carried out by various non-

profits, fostering empathy and a sense of shared responsibility.

During last year’s annual B’nai Tzedek Bus Tour, teens visited various partner agencies to see their impact in action. At Temple Israel, they learned about the history of Jewish Memphis from author Judy Ringel. At Hillels of Memphis, they explored Jewish life on campus and revisited the interfaith seder program they had helped fund.

In addition to the opportunity for individual philanthropy, the program brings teens together to take part in a collaborative grant-making process, where participants collectively deliberate and decide how to allocate \$10,000 annually for programmatic funding throughout Jewish Memphis. Programs that have been funded in the past include Senior Hot Meals, inclusion programming at the Memphis Jewish Community Center, Creative Aging experiences at Plough Towers and interfaith seders through Hillels of Memphis.

The program’s impact extends far be-

yond the individual participants, shaping the future of the Memphis Jewish community. By empowering young people to become active philanthropists, B’nai Tzedek ensures a legacy of giving that will benefit generations to come.


“I am proud to be a member of a group that directly benefits the community,” said Wallis Rogin, a student at St. Mary’s School. “Though I am only in high school, I get to review grant applications and meet with program directors to decide which projects to fund, and I find that truly exciting.”

“B’nai Tzedek is an amazing program led by terrific people where teens get to make decisions that benefit the Memphis community,” said Jack Shanker, from Memphis University School. “It is incredibly encouraging that what we do can make such a big impact on other people’s lives. Also, I have made new friends through this program and strengthened the ones that I already had. I recommend every teen join B’nai Tzedek.”

To learn more about B’nai Tzedek, visit jcpmemphis.org/teen-philanthropy. **HW**




One of the first groups of B’nai Tzedek participants in an early meeting to discuss ways of giving.




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Generations of Giving

A new podcast tracing the roots and relationships that define our mission.
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Memphis Conference for Jewish Women Unites Community in Day of Inspiration



Keynote Speaker Batya Feigenbaum

The Memphis Jewish Community Center was abuzz with energy and enthusiasm as over 70 women gathered for the Memphis Conference for Jewish Women on Sunday, March 16. The day-long event offered participants a meaningful blend of spiritual growth, practical workshops and social connection.

“This conference represents the vibrant spirit of our Jewish women’s community in Memphis,” said Mrs. Miriam Karp of MJX, coordinator of the event. “We designed it to nurture both mind and soul while creating space for genuine relationships to flourish.”

The conference opened with a welcoming registration area where attendees enjoyed morning refreshments including fresh fruit, yogurt parfaits and vegetable cups. Participants then dispersed to their choice of morning sessions, which covered relevant topics including parenting challenges, women’s health concerns, text-based Torah discussion and Passover preparation.

The midday break featured an elegant luncheon catered by Sam’s Corner of MJCC. The meal showcased a dairy feast with salmon, fettuccine alfredo, pesto, hearty soups and fresh salads. During lunch, Mrs. Karp addressed the audience, expressing the joy and importance of bringing women together and acknowledging the event’s sponsors.

The conference highlight came when keynote speaker Batya Feigenbaum took the stage. Feigenbaum, who navigates life as a partial paraplegic using a mobility scooter, captivated the audience with her compelling personal journey. Her presentation skillfully balanced humor with profound insights about overcoming obstacles.

Batya’s message transcended religious boundaries. Demonstrating how to face life’s challenges with grace and even find joy in unexpected circumstances.

The afternoon continued with a second round of workshops that built upon Ms. Feigenbaum’s themes while offering practical applications. Sessions included discussions on implementing the keynote’s lessons, preparations for the upcoming Passover Seder, marriage enrichment and women’s health exercises.

Before departing, participants gathered for dessert and final conversations, with each woman receiving a special Passover Haggadah and the Feigenbaum Family Candle Lighting Guide as keepsakes.

For more information about upcoming events hosted by Memphis Jewish Experience, visit the Memphis Jewish Experience website memphisjx.org and/or info@memphisjx.org. **HW**





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Breaking Down the Numbers: The Soaring U.S. National Debt

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

The U.S. national debt is the total amount of money owed by the federal government. As of March 2025, it stands at \$36.21 trillion.¹

The difference between deficit and debt

When the federal government spends more money than it collects in taxes in any given fiscal year (the government’s fiscal year runs from October 1 to September 30), there is a deficit. The opposite of a deficit is a surplus.

To fund its operations when there is a deficit, the government borrows money by selling Treasury notes, bills, bonds, and other securities to investors, paying interest based on the interest rate environment at the time the security is issued. The interest owed to these investors adds to each year’s spending deficit (if any) and further increases the national debt over time.

In the past 50 years, the U.S. has run a deficit 46 times. The last U.S. budget sur-

plus was in 2001. In 2024, the deficit was \$1.83 trillion, the third-highest on record. The highest deficit was in 2020 during the pandemic, when it was \$3.13 trillion.²

Why is the national debt so high?

There are several reasons for the ballooning national debt. One reason is previous tax cuts and pandemic spending. Another major reason is the increasing cost of Social Security and Medicare, two popular programs that serve a growing demographic of older Americans and make up the two biggest slices of the federal budget pie.³ Cutting spending on these programs is not politically popular, though in theory, future benefits could be trimmed. Military spending also consumes a significant portion of the federal budget.

A category of spending that can’t be cut is the interest the federal government must pay to investors who have purchased Treasury securities, which is consuming an increasing share of

the federal budget. This is sometimes referred to as “servicing the national debt.” As of September 2024, \$1.13 trillion went toward maintaining the debt, which was 17% of total federal spending in fiscal year 2024.⁴

Comparing a country’s total debt to its gross domestic product (GDP) is typically a better way to gauge a country’s ability to pay down its debt than just looking at the raw debt number. For fiscal year 2024, the U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio was 124%. This was just under the record 126% in 2020.⁵ According to the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, based on current spending and revenue projections, the debt-to-GDP ratio is projected to reach 179% by 2054.⁶

Clearly, Congress has work ahead to better balance U.S. revenue and spending.

Projections are based on current conditions, subject to change, and may not come to pass.

1–5) fiscaldata.treasury.gov, 2024–

2025

6) Congressional Budget Office, 2024

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Bornblum Jewish Community School Gala Celebrates 36 Years



Larry and Judy Moss accept (from school Board President Jeri Moskowitz and Head of School Daniel R. Weiss) the first-ever Bert Bornblum Medal for their continued involvement with and commitment to the school.

By Susan C. Nieman

Photo Credit: Eli Ostrow - pixbyelij.com

It was a spectacular evening of celebration, congratulations, community pride and some exciting announcements as 400 people filled the beautifully decorated FedEx Event Center at Shelby Farms for Bornblum Jewish Community School’s 36th Anniversary Diamonds in Education Gala.

The event, held Sunday, March 30, 2025, recognized the past, present and future of the school with former teachers and staff members, alumni, alumni parents, founders of the school, past presidents and local rabbis in attendance.

From the moment you entered the building, you could feel the excitement as guests were treated to signature cocktails and hors d’oeuvres while friends and colleagues reminisced about their involvement throughout the years.

Head of School Daniel R. Weiss

opened the program with a prayer for Israel and the hostages before thanking the co-chairs, Kara Bierman, Abby Felsenthal, Alla Lubin and Jaclyn Marshall along with staff members, Scott Ostrow and Zack Orsborn, for the incredible work in bringing everyone together for such a wonderful celebration.

Grandparents watched as their children and grandchildren, all alumni, took the stage to honor and congratulate those whose vision and dedication have made the school such a success. Throughout the evening, videos created by Running Pony Productions, also a sponsor of Bornblum’s 36th year, showcased the school’s amazing programs and highlighted kind words about the honorees.

Alvin Gordon (z”l) was honored for his work in founding the school and



Robert Gordon, son of Alvin Gordon, z”l, accepts a plaque inscribed: In recognition of Alvin Gordon for his visionary leadership and unwavering dedication to Bornblum Jewish Community School, March 30, 2025 / 2 Nisan 5785.

working with the Bornblum Foundation.

Sally Baer was honored for her 36 years of service, first as a second-grade teacher and then administrator. In a surprise announcement Dr. Weiss said, “We are pleased to honor Sally and her contributions to Bornblum by renaming Makom Shalom, the Sally Rhodes Baer Makom Shalom, as a reminder that when you walk in, you feel Sally’s presence, warmth, and her Baer Hug.”

Sally accepted the award, thanking her family and friends for their support.

Michelle Kaufman, an alum of and present student parent, presented Sally with a tribute book about her as a role model, friend and mentor.

In addition, Rhonda and Lenny Feiler, along with Sally’s family and friends created the Sally Rhodes Baer Social Emotional Learning Fund.

“The Gala was a magical night filled

with love and gratitude and generosity beyond anything I could have imagined,” exclaimed Sally. “It felt like the model for every lesson that we teach in Social Emotional Learning at Bornblum. I am so proud of the school and deeply touched by the tremendous kindness that was shown at the event.”

Larry and Judy Moss were the recipients of the first-ever Bert Bornblum medal for their continuous support of the school.

Prior to a sparkler-filled room with a champagne toast, the Endowment Committee announced the start of an endowment campaign, which has already raised \$3.6 million.

The evening ended with the announcement of the two winners of diamonds that were generously donated by Robert Irwin Jewelers, which were presented by owner Shelley Knoph. [HW](#)



36th Anniversary Planning Co-Chairs Alla Lubin, Abby Felsenthal and Jaclyn Marshall (not pictured is Kara Bierman).



Endowment Committee members Benjamin Lazarov, Janice Ringel and Alla Lubin announce the Together for Tomorrow: Ensuring Bornblum’s Legacy Endowment Campaign.



Jeri Moskowitz and Daniel Weiss present Sally Baer with the plaque for the newly named Sally Rhodes Baer Makom Shalom.



A crowd-filled room.

Born in Memphis: A New Jewish Play



Zy Palmer, Dana Bernstein and Emily Burnett at a recent rehearsal.

Sarah Siegel knew she wanted to write when she retired from her 30-year IBM career. In her final year at the company, COVID struck, and she began testing her dream during an early morning, pre-work Psalms class offered by her rabbi at the time, Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum of Congregation Beit Simchat Torah in New York City.

“Rabbi Kleinbaum’s online class combined the opportunity for students to rewrite more than 30 Psalms in ways that spoke to each of us,” Sarah explained, “I wrote ‘Raising Ilana’s Mother,’ my first full-length play, after retiring, and after my wife and I moved to Memphis. A number of the reimagined psalms made it into the play.”

The play, offering drama, humor and even magical time travel, is a Voices of

the South production, running at Theatre South, 1000 Cooper Street, May 1-3, 8 p.m., with a matinee show on May 4 at 2 p.m., which will also be livestreamed.

Beth Sholom served as the engine, igniting the play. As soon as the pandemic lockdown eased, Susan and Fred Levko invited some fellow congregants, including Sarah and her wife, Pat Hewitt, to a Shabbat dinner. There, they met Jeannie Ashford, who told Sarah, “I know another lesbian playwright. We were neighbors. Would you like to meet her?”

The other playwright, The Rev. Elaine Blanchard, introduced Sarah to Prof. Alice Rainey Berry, co-founder of Voices of the South. Sarah joined the theatre company’s weekly writers’ group, bringing with her an early draft of the script.

Over time, she developed it with Voices of the South Writers’ Workshop. Actor Darius Wallace, who dropped in for one of the early readings, commented astutely, “I feel like Jewish culture is practically another character in the play.”

About the Play

“Raising Ilana’s Mother” explores dual truths, portraying a coming-of-age story intertwined with a parent-child tale. At its core, the play is about self-discovery and the courage to embrace one’s adventurous spirit.

Magical, intergenerational time travel serves as a narrative device that connects past and present, allowing characters to confront their histories and forge new paths.

The play examines the rich tapestry of Jewish culture and the experiences of growing up American while exploring the possibility of becoming Israeli. The characters oscillate between pride and disappointment, confrontation and avoidance, conveying the profound emotional and cultural burdens that characters carry and ultimately learn to navigate.

The Stellar Cast

The production boasts a talented cast, featuring Emily Burnett, Dana Bernstein, Alice Rainey Berry, Zy Palmer and Chris McCollum.

“Dana and I both belong to Beth Sholom, and we began talking about the

play at a Shabbat kiddush, but no one else in the cast is Jewish,” Sarah said, “Aside from some [Hebrew and Yiddish] pronunciation coaching by me, they’re doing what actors do and embodying these characters gorgeously.”

Creative Direction and Design

The play is co-directed by Tracey Zerwig Ford and Alice Rainey Berry, who bring their visionary talents to the helm of this production. Asked why she felt interested in co-directing “Raising Ilana’s Mother,” Tracey said, “I’m not Jewish, but it’s a universal story,” and Alice agreed, adding, “It’s a beautiful play.”

Jeremy Fisher serves as the lighting designer and David Newsome as the sound designer. Cyd Trice takes on the role of stage manager, ensuring a seamless performance, and Mark King is directing live streaming of the Sunday matinee.

Whether in person at any of the four shows, or virtually for the final performance only, don’t miss this opportunity to witness new Jewish theater in Memphis. The play promises to compel audiences ranging from high school-aged people through older adults with its unique blend of drama, humor and magical realism.

In-person and virtual tickets for “Raising Ilana’s Mother” are available now at <https://our.show/raisingilanasmother>. **HW**

OBITUARIES

Sharon (Becker) Finkelstein

Sharon (Becker) Finkelstein, 82, of Memphis, Tenn., (formerly of St. Louis, Mo.) passed away peacefully on April 8, 2025, with her family by her side. Mrs. Finkelstein is preceded in death by her husband, Barry S. Finkelstein, and her parents, Emil “Dutch” and Ruth Becker.

Beloved wife, mother and grandmother, she is survived by her children, Andy (Sonja) Finkelstein of Kansas City, Mo., Julie Cameron (Jason) of Lakeland, Tenn., and David (Rebecca) Finkelstein of Omaha, Ne.; grandchildren, Ari, Ethan and Asher Finkelstein; and sister Pamela Becker.

She was an aunt, cousin and friend to many, whose kindness, giving heart and generosity will be greatly missed by everyone she touched.

Funeral services for Mrs. Finkelstein were held on Thursday, April, 10 at Beth Sholom Memorial Gardens. In lieu of flowers, the family asks that memorial donations be made to Beth Sholom Synagogue of Memphis. **HW**



Marilyn Pearlman

Marilyn Pearlman was a go-getter, a tiny tornado who got things done. Whether leading a non-profit organization, promoting a product, or ushering at The Temple, she always gave her best. Marilyn died April 3 from complications of a stroke. She was 77.

Born in Memphis, she graduated from Central High School followed by Rhodes College with a degree in English. Growing up in Memphis she was a member of Temple Israel and Reena BBG. After college she moved to Atlanta where she taught English briefly. A novice in PR, Marilyn volunteered for community organizations, newspapers,

and radio and TV stations.

Her first PR job was with the Atlanta Housing Authority writing human interest stories. By the late ‘70s she launched Pearlman Associates Public Relations. As CEO, she created and publicized Women’s Career Weekend; she also served as publicist for Limelight Entertainment Complex, a nightclub and Atlanta’s answer to Studio 54 of New York.

Although clients loved her ability to sell their product, they also respected her know-how and engaging personality.

She was president of the Buckhead Kiwanis Club and the Northeast Council of the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce; board member of the Atlanta Lions Club, American Cancer Society, the World Trade Center, the Jewish National Fund and the Atlanta Women’s Alliance.

A dog lover, Marilyn volunteered for Canine Companions, Animals Deserve Better, FurKids and the Atlanta Dog Rescue Games.

In the ‘70s she flew to Newcastle, England, as part of the Friendship Force and Atlanta Sister Cities Commission, serving as ambassador from Atlanta.

Closer to home, she was executive director of the Atlanta Press Club and founder of the Philanthropy Club at the Buckhead Club.

A true workaholic, she was busy even when away from work. She was an aerobics addict and loved ballet, symphony, theater, opera, travel and enjoying her favorite canine companions: Lucky and the many dogs she mothered in her pet-sitting business.

Finally, Marilyn was a dear friend and compassionate person. When you entered a room with Marilyn, you would meet everyone, because she had already become their friend.

She is predeceased by her parents, Liverne (Albert) and Harry Pearlman, and is survived by her sister, Joanne (Pearlman) Fleetwood (Dennis); her niece, Katie Fleetwood; her companion, Gary Leshaw; and Lucky, her hound dog rescue.

A memorial service will be held April 15 at 1:30 p.m. at The Temple, 1589 Peachtree Street, NE, Atlanta 30309. Donations may be made to Canine Companions, canine.org; or Life House Atlanta, lifehouseatlanta.org (assistance to families of medically challenged children), or your favorite charity. **HW**

PAST ISSUES
2021, 2022, 2023, 2024
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Baron Hirsch Packs & Delivers Pesach Chesed Boxes to Community



Baron Hirsch volunteers prepared and delivered chesed boxes.

Dozens of volunteers gathered at Baron Hirsch (BH) Congregation on March 30, to pack *chesed* (kindness) boxes

filled with tasty Pesach food including grape juice, jelly, matzah and more. In total, 39 boxes went to Plough Tow-

ers and 58 boxes to Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service (FJFS) to support those in need.

“Special thanks to BH’s executive director Robert Schneider for ordering all the products and boxes for the program, as well as Rabbi Brett Oxman and Dr. Havah Schneider, who delivered the boxes to FJFS using his big truck,” said Cori Oxman, a chesed box program organizer. “Of course, we want to thank all the volunteers who came to help too! Everyone was having a great time packing all the boxes together.”

Before COVID, BH volunteers would drive all over Memphis delivering these chesed boxes to FJFS recipients. Now, FJFS handles that. The org’s volunteers

already deliver other kosher food to families in need every two weeks, and they graciously included these special Pesach chesed boxes on their routes before the holiday began.

“Delivering to Plough Towers, we had Rabbi Dov Rossman and his children, Shoshana Cenker and her kids, Kivi, Aiden and Lyla, and their friend, Adi, as well as Yocheved Lobos-Hernandez, her daughter, Naomi, and myself,” added Cori. “It was particularly enjoyable to see the residents’ faces light up when they came to their door to see someone not only delivering a chesed box but also with a smile as we wished them Chag Sameach and Happy Passover greetings.” Chag Kasher v’Sameach! **HW**

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**Looking Back and Looking Forward:
Memories & Reflections on the BBYO Experience**



Moderator: Rachel Shankman
Panel: Meredith Epstein, Rhonda Feiler,
Allen Israel, Leor Reef, Jill Shanker, & Craig
Weiss

As a teen, you might have been a member of BBYO, the B’nai Brith Youth Organization –AZA and BBG. Join us as our panel reminisces about their BBYO experiences throughout the years, the impact BBYO has made on the Memphis community, & a look toward the organization's future.

We invite anyone who has funny or transforming memories of their BBYO experience to please send written anecdotes, photos, or 1-minute videos to [mjhsresident@gmail.com](mailto:mjhspresident@gmail.com) or leave them at the MJCC front desk in an envelope c/o MJHS/Olivia Roman by April 21. All of the material will be displayed at the event.

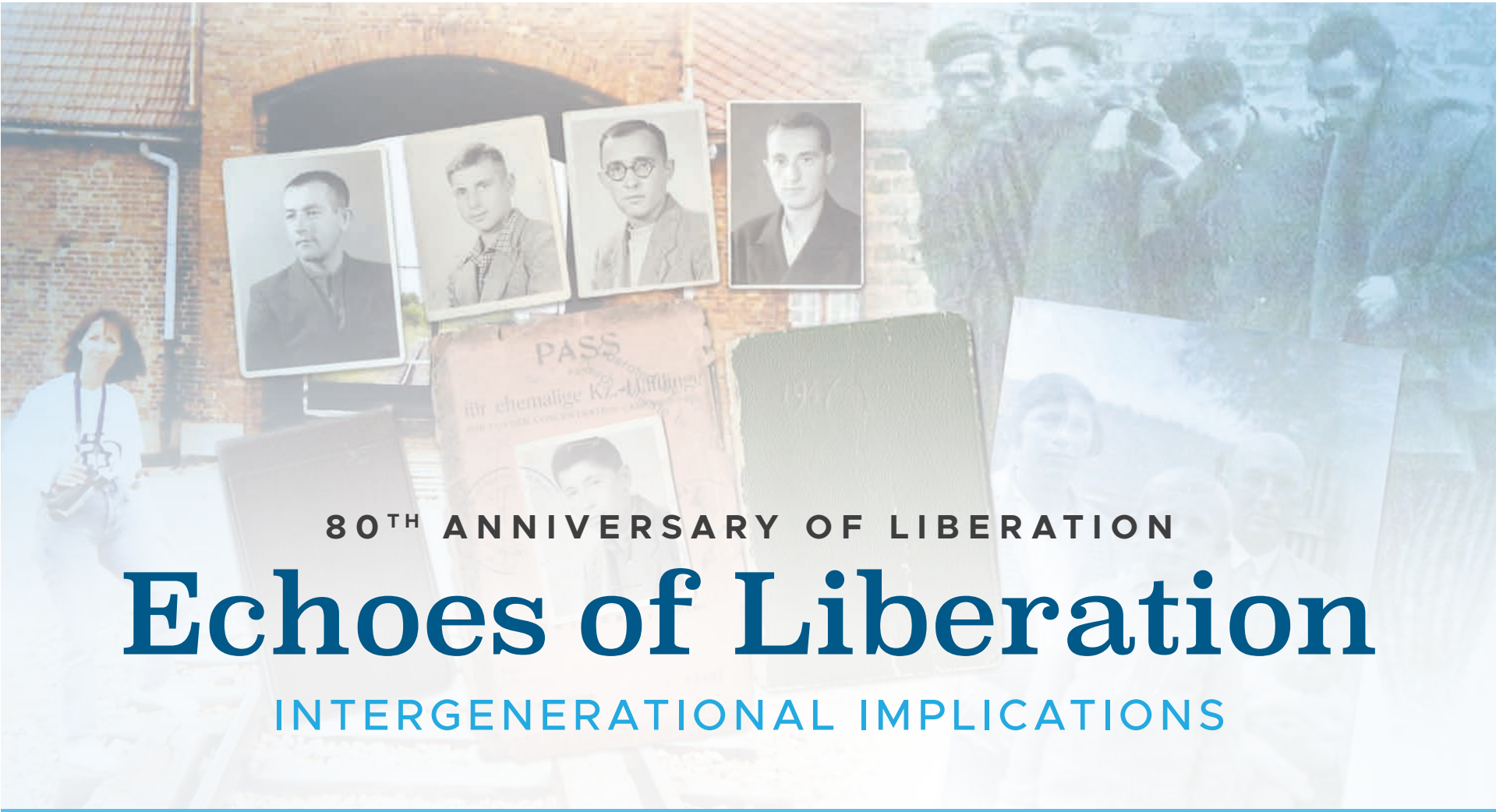


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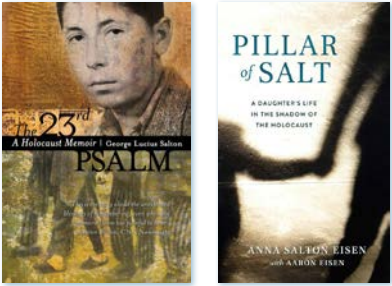
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Keynote Speaker


Anna Salton Eisen

Daughter of Holocaust survivors, author and filmmaker, Anna tells the story of uncovering her parents’ hidden past and how it defined her life’s passion and mission. Anna is a co-founder of Congregation Beth Israel of Colleyville, Texas, site of the January 2022 synagogue attack and hostage-taking incident.



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