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# the Hebrew Watchman

1925-2025

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## 17th Annual Hillel Yiddishe Cup Fundraiser Set for April 27



Previous year's Yiddishe Cup winners, participants and students.

Get ready to show off your putting prowess for a great cause at the 17th Annual Yiddishe Cup Mini Golf Tournament, hosted by Hillels of Memphis. This fun-filled event will take place on Sunday, April 27, from 2-4 p.m. at Golf & Games.

This year's theme, "Teeing Off for Tomorrow," emphasizes the role Hillel plays in shaping the next generation of Jewish leaders and community members. Participants are encouraged to reflect on the impact of Hillel in their lives, whether through leadership experiences, friendships, or moments of growth.

Event chair Zach Roberts, along with Hillels of Memphis Advisory Council co-chairs, Daniel Snyder and Audrey Siskind, are excited to bring people together for a meaningful and memorable afternoon.

"The first Yiddishe Cup was during my freshman year of college. I can't believe we are coming up on our 17th Annual Yiddishe Cup already. I look

forward to seeing you all at the event and continuing to support Jewish life on campus," said Zach Roberts.

The Yiddishe Cup is the primary fundraiser for Hillels of Memphis, a program of Memphis Jewish Federation, with all proceeds supporting campus educational programs, Shabbat and holiday meals, social events, and community outreach for the two Hillel chapters at University of Memphis and Rhodes College. All Memphis-area Jewish college students are welcomed to participate in Hillels of Memphis programs.

"For me, serving on the Hillel Advisory Council for the past four years and co-chairing the last two has given me the opportunity to share my previous Jewish communal knowledge and experience with our staff, students, and volunteers," noted Hillels of Memphis Advisory Council Co-Chair Audrey Siskind. "My own three college graduates had very different experiences at their different schools, and Hillel helped them build upon their Jewish journeys.

Working with our local Hillel has brought me joy as I care deeply about the organization and the engagement opportunities it gives to Jewish students both at the University of Memphis and Rhodes College."

There are several ways to get involved in the Yiddishe Cup Mini Golf Tournament. Gather your friends and family to form a team of four for just \$36, or consider becoming a sponsor at various levels, beginning at \$118. Teams will compete for prizes, including trophies in various age categories and special awards for hole-in-one achievements.

Daniel Snyder, Hillels of Memphis Advisory Council co-chair, added, "Hillels of Memphis means so much to me. It has allowed me to remain connected to an organization that fosters community and cultivates the next generation of Jewish leaders – some of whom may choose to make Memphis home. We are constantly reminded by our youth and young adults that the future is brighter because of them."

Additionally, this year's tournament will feature a silent auction with some incredible items up for bid, including unique experiences, local gift certificates, and other amazing prizes. Be sure to check out the auction and maybe even take home a special treasure while supporting Hillel's mission!

"Each year, Hillel offers college students a place to explore their Jewish identity, form lifelong connections, and engage in meaningful experiences," said Phoenix Goldberg, Hillels of Memphis director. "Through the Yiddishe Cup, we are able to support these students and ensure Hillel continues to thrive."

This family-friendly event is open to people of all ages and promises an afternoon of fun and community spirit.

Registration, sponsorships, and additional details are available at [www.hillelsofmemphis.org/yiddishecup](http://www.hillelsofmemphis.org/yiddishecup). For more information, please contact Phoenix Goldberg at 818.408.1086 or email [pgoldberg@hillelsofmemphis.org](mailto:pgoldberg@hillelsofmemphis.org). **HW**

## Postponed Lehrhaus Lecture to Take Place March 18 at Beth Sholom



**Rhodes College Professor of History Jeffrey H. Jackson will describe Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe's effort to wage psychological warfare against Nazi soldiers, as well as their life as trailblazing lesbian partners, at Beth Sholom's Lehrhaus Lecture March 18 at 7 p.m.**

for Tuesday, March 18 at 7 p.m. at Beth Sholom Synagogue. Professor Jackson will discuss his book, "Paper Bullets: Two Artists Who Risked Their Lives to Defy the Nazis," which tells the true story of Lucy Schwob and Suzanne Malherbe, two Parisienne avant-garde artists and Nazi resisters that used their literary skills to demoralize German soldiers during WWII.

"Paper Bullets" is a compelling World

War II story about the galvanizing power of art, and of resistance. The book recounts how Lucy Schwob, who was half Jewish, and Suzanne Malherbe wrote and disseminated "paper bullets" – wicked insults against Hitler, calls to rebel, and subversive fictional dialogue – by slipping notes into soldiers' pockets and magazines on newsstands. Today, the women are primarily known by their artist names, Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore.

In 1944, the women were betrayed to the secret police and were imprisoned by the Germans, who sentenced the couple to death. But their story did not end there. Dr. Jackson will describe what happened next in his lecture, which is free and open to the community.

Jeffrey H. Jackson is Professor of History at Rhodes College, where he teach-

es European history and environmental studies. In 2011, Dr. Jackson won the prestigious Clarence Day Award for Outstanding Research, Rhodes' highest honor for faculty. He is also the author of "Paris Under Water: How the City of Light Survived the Great Flood of 1910" and "Making Jazz French: Music and Modern Life in Interwar Paris." "Paper Bullets" is a Stonewall Honors Book. He received his B.S. in history from Vanderbilt University in 1993 and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Rochester in 1999.

Lehrhaus at Beth Sholom takes its inspiration from The Free Jewish House of Learning, the school for Jewish studies and adult education founded by Franz Rosenzweig in Frankfurt in 1920. The lecture is hosted by the Lifelong Jewish Learning Committee. **HW**

Postponed due to inclement weather, the Lehrhaus Lecture by Jeffrey H. Jackson of Rhodes College is now scheduled



Bat Mitzvah



Samantha Avery Glazer

Samantha Avery Glazer, daughter of Michelle and Evan Glazer, will celebrate her bat mitzvah on Saturday, March 22 at Beth Sholom Synagogue in Memphis, Tenn.

Samatha is a 7th grader at Houston Middle School where she is a member of the Beta Club, Choir and Tennis Team.

Her other hobbies include playing

guitar, musical theater and spending the summer at Blue Star Camps in Hendersonville, N.C.

For her mitzvah project, Samantha is volunteering in the after-school program at Madonna Learning Center.

Samantha is the sister of Lila and the granddaughter of Gail Rose, Doc Wittenberg (z”l), Lynn Glazer, Steve Glazer (z”l) and Jon Goldman. **HW**

Mitzvah for Memphis Veterans



Chandler King prepared 125 bags with his family to distribute to veterans.

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. March 14, 2025 / 14 Adar, 5785 .....6:49 p.m.  
Havdalah, Sat. March 15, 2025 / 15 Adar, 5785 ..... 7:45 p.m.  
Weekly Torah Portion: Ki Tisa

By Chandler King, Collierville High School Freshman

This past Valentine’s Day was the 12th year that our family provided a usable gift plus treats for patients at the Memphis VA hospital. Each gift bag contained candy (sugar free for diabetics) and warm socks. We prepared 125 bags.

Recently I learned of a family member who served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He participated in the D-Day landings at Normandy as well as liberating of the Buchenwald Concentration Camp in Germany. He remained in the Reserves and rose to the rank of

Major.

The City of Memphis has honored our Veterans, creating the Veterans Plaza in Overton Park. Both Temple Israel and Barron Hirsch cemeteries contain memorials honoring Veterans.

I would like to thank both Catherine Austin, retired Food Service Director at the VA and Deb Burns, Director of Volunteer Services, for their assistance with my project.

This May 31 to June 5, Memphis is hosting the National Veterans Golden Age Games. Participants from all over the United States will come to Memphis. VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED.

E-mail:  
vhamemgoldenagegames@va.gov (...to know if you are eligible to volunteer and to see the opportunities available) **HW**



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# Trump To Khamenei: Nuke Deal ‘A Lot Better’ than Having ‘To Do Something’ Against Iran

(JNS) – U.S. President Donald Trump revealed last Friday that he sent a letter to Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, urging him to negotiate a new nuclear deal with Washington or face possible military action.

“I said: ‘I hope you’re going to negotiate, because it’s going to be a lot better for Iran,’” Trump said in an interview with the Fox Business Network channel. The missive was sent [last] Thursday, he added.

“I think they want to get that letter,” Trump said. “The other alternative is you have to do something, because Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon.”

The Islamic Republic has significantly increased its stockpile of near-weapons grade uranium, enough to build six nuclear bombs, according to an International Atomic Energy Agency report seen by “Reuters.”

Earlier last week, Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said there is “zero chance” there will be an agreement with Iran that would convince Khamenei to abandon his ambitions to build nuclear weapons.

“The ayatollah is a religious Nazi; he will not take a deal and honor it,” the senator declared when asked about offers by Russian President Vladimir Putin to broker a deal with Tehran.

“I don’t think you can negotiate with this guy,” the senator said, adding, “To

President Trump: I encourage you to allow Israel to use military force to destroy their nuclear program while we can.”

On Feb. 26, Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar told “Politico” that a “reliable military option” is required to deter the Islamic regime from taking the final steps toward acquiring nuclear weapons.

Israel’s top diplomat said time was running out to act against Tehran’s nuclear program, as it had enriched enough uranium for a “couple of bombs” and was now “playing with ways” to weaponize it.

Jerusalem is open to pursuing a diplomatic path, he said, adding that the chances of talks being successful were “not huge” and that a failure to stop the Islamic Republic would be a “catastrophe for the security of Israel.”

During his first term in 2018, Trump pulled the U.S. out of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action nuclear deal with Iran and stepped up sanctions on the regime in Tehran. The deal offered sanctions relief in exchange for a promise to dial back its nuclear program for 10 years.

Since returning to the White House on Jan. 20, Trump has renewed his “maximum pressure” policy on Iran, including by issuing punishing sanctions and targeting its oil revenue. **HW**

# The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

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

**Monday, March 17**  
**Speaker, Josh Goldin, LMSW with Extendicare Home Health**

**Topic: How to keep Your Brain Strong**

Josh has had several talks with the seniors and always has a different slant on any topic. As we get older we need to constantly focus on ways to keep our brains sharp and engaged. Come hear some unique ways to do this. Have a terrific meal for only \$2 and hear some great ideas afterwards.

**Wednesday, March 19**  
**MJCC Larissa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Monthly Luncheon featuring the Michelle Shrader Duo, entertainment provided by Creative Aging.**

So many participants enjoyed her last performance and asked for her to return, so we booked Michelle and her accompanist. Michelle plays the type of songs that everyone seems to love. She focused on training her voice for several years as a child before picking up the guitar at the age of 16. She had an aptitude for the instrument, and began writing songs within six weeks of her first lesson and recording within six months! The monthly lunch has been drawing around 70 people recently with a cost of only \$5 for a catered kosher meal with dessert delivered by the MJCC Staff. A wonderful group of volunteers spends the day before the luncheon decorating the room so everyone is sure to enjoy it as soon as they walk in. This luncheon will be the first where we will



Michelle Shrader

have a few games of Bingo following the lunch and entertainment. Bring your friends or come by yourself and make some new friends! Reservations can be made by calling the MJCC front desk of at 901-761-0810. March’s luncheon is sponsored by Belmont Village Senior Living. Hope to see you there.

**Monday, March 24**  
**Mid-South Hobbies Special Art Project**

We recently had a field trip to the Mid-South Hobbies location on Summer Ave. They always bring a really cool project for the group that is a lot of fun. Their teachers make it very enjoyable. This project is free. No experience is necessary, and if the project is not finished, everyone takes supplies to finish at their own home. Come have a nice lunch and bring home something that you made yourself. Reservations are needed by the Friday before so we have enough projects and food for everyone.

**Wednesday, March 26**  
**Speaker: Tim Flesner with Mid-South Home Helpers.**

**Topic: Understanding and Overcoming Fragilities**

Tim is always an entertaining speaker and opens up the floor to questions during his talks. This is a topic that many seniors wrestle with for themselves, their spouse or other friends and loved ones. Come hear some answers to questions that you might have been thinking about.

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

OBITUARY FEES

The Hebrew Watchman publishes obituaries (up to 500 words) as a service to the Jewish community at no charge. Over 500 words there is a minimum fee.

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COMMENTARY

# Mezuzas, Purim and the American Flag

By Seth Kaufman

We have proudly displayed an American flag on our home for years. As a first generation American, I particularly appreciate the freedom and opportunity that America has provided to our family, and to millions of others. Unfortunately, the American Flag has become an increasingly divisive symbol. It is perceived by some as having been hijacked by the “Right” and has become a symbol of America’s sins to a vocal minority.

I postulated that asking my neighbors and friends to display a flag would be an easy ask and would generate overwhelmingly positive responses. The American flag was ubiquitous at both the Republican and Democratic National Conventions. I thought that those whose political views leaned toward the right would agree to do so, thereby affirming their support of America and its values. I believed that those who leaned left, would be motivated to display the flag, and thereby help reinstate it as a symbol that all Americans would re-

spect. I assumed that this would be especially true in the aftermath of October 7, with the immediate upsurge in antisemitism and the charge that American Jews were jeopardizing American interests by supporting a genocidal Zionist regime. Unfortunately, but for a few exceptions, I was wrong. Some objections were technical, such as the flag had to be lowered every night (it does not if it is lit up). Some thought that it would not fit in with the look of their home. Others told me that they were too busy to consider it or that it was too political and/or divisive, (even though a few previously had no problem displaying strong political messaging signs in their front yards).

My most receptive audience were Christians. I received mixed responses from politically right-leaning Jews and an overwhelmingly negative response from those who lean left. This was disheartening. It seems to me that as American Jews we have a special obligation to demonstrate “Hakarat Hatov,” appreciation for the good. Almost all

involved American Jews have mezzos on their door posts. These small objects are powerful symbols that remind each of us to respond personally to a higher calling both within our homes and in the public domain. In contradistinction, the American flag is visible to us and to outsiders. It should inspire each of us to act guided by the values that have helped our country prosper.

Displaying the American flag is more than just a patriotic gesture; it is an affirmation of the principles that have allowed Jews to flourish in America. It symbolizes the nation’s commitment to religious freedom, the opportunity for Jews to contribute to society, and the unity that comes from diversity. For American Jews, the flag represents a history of gratitude and pride in the country that has offered refuge and opportunity for generations. In a world that often seems divided, the American flag, our flag, stands as a unifying symbol of the shared values that bind us together as Americans.

Displaying the American Flag is another way to demonstrate our “Hakarat Hatov.” This would be an incredibly powerful message if it were conveyed from the homes of a majority of Jewish Americans and the leaders of our community. We must never forget that millions of Americans died fighting for this flag thereby helping provide us with the opportunities that we have today. Despite its flaws, when compared to any other country, America is still a shining light. A strong case can be made that there is no historical precedent for the success that the American Jewish community has enjoyed. We are about to celebrate Purim, a timely reminder of the dangers of a government that tolerates antisemitism. I encourage each of you to purchase a flag made in America, display it prominently on your homes, and to encourage your families and friends to do so as well. Let’s do so by Passover, the holiday that helped inspire the American Revolution, the abolition of slavery and the Civil Rights movement. **HW**

# ‘Columbia Should Be More Worried Than I Am,’ Many Thinking of Transferring, Jewish Student Says

(JNS) – As Barnard College sought to de-escalate a protest last Wednesday afternoon, in which dozens of anti-Israel demonstrators – many wearing keffiyehs – stormed its library, the school received a specific bomb threat targeting the Milstein Center for Teaching and Learning.

“Our staff, at risk to their own personal safety, remained in the Milstein lobby, urging the masked disrupters to take the threat seriously,” stated Laura Rosen-

bury, Barnard’s president. “Even when the college activated the fire alarm, the masked protesters put our entire campus at risk by refusing to leave.”

“The safety of our campus – and every single person on our campus – must be protected above all else,” she added. “The moment we received the bomb threat, we had to clear the Milstein Center and inform the authorities.”

“Barnard made the necessary deci-

sion to request NYPD assistance so they could evacuate the building to reduce the risk of harm,” she stated. “The NYPD were then able to search for the bomb and assess the threat, ultimately determining that the campus was not at risk.”

The New York City Police Department told JNS that nine people were taken into custody and charged with obstructing governmental administration, trespassing and disorderly conduct.

protests will continue to happen.

“How can anyone be surprised that students took over another building when they weren’t punished for doing the same thing last week?” he said. “When will the university start enforcing rules instead of letting masked students run wild?”

“It’s time for the government to send in the National Guard, so the students who paid \$70,000 for an education can simply go to class,” he added.

Barnard and Columbia University have a historic connection, per the university’s website. The two are “separate institutions but for students, they’re essentially the same,” Zussman told JNS.

“As long as you have a Columbia ID, you can go to Barnard, and if you have a Barnard ID, you can go to Columbia,” he said. “Columbia students take Barnard classes, so for students’ purposes, it’s the same campus.”

**‘Enough’**

The House Committee on Education and the Workforce, which has been probing campus Jew-hatred, condemned the protesters for distributing flyers from the Hamas media office.

“Horrible, horrible behavior,” the House panel stated. “These students are supporting terrorist hatred for their Jewish peers. Leaders on campus need to do something to hold these students accountable or be held accountable themselves for their failure.”

Rep. Virginia Foxx (R-N.C.), former chair of the committee, said that the protest is evidence of the university’s ongoing issues with Jew-hatred.

“Columbia is infested with antisemitism,” she stated. “The university’s administration is filled to the brim with mealy mouthed invertebrates, who caved to the mob.”

“Enough,” she said.

Rep. Ritchie Torres (D-N.Y.) said Barnard should expel students for endangering the safety of the campus.

“The pro-Hamas agitators, who were proudly distributing pro-Hamas propaganda in defense of Oct. 7, not only orchestrated a hostile takeover of Barnard College but also subsequently kept the administrators from evacuating the building in the midst of a bomb threat,” he said. **HW**

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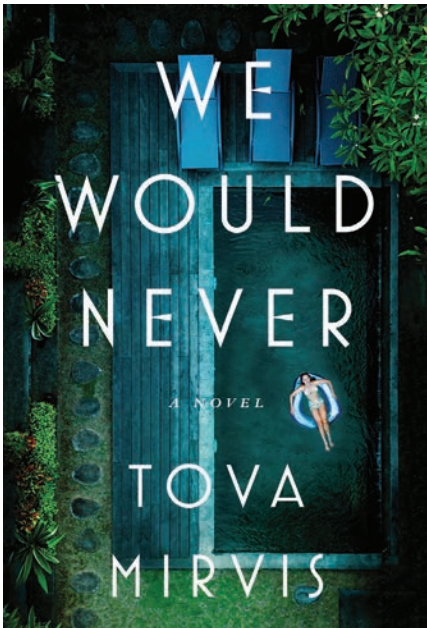
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# Tova Mirvis Dishes on New Powerful Mystery Novel at the MJCC



Tova Mirvis



By Shoshana Cencer

On Monday, March 24, at 7 p.m. in the Shainberg Gallery of the Memphis Jewish Community Center (MJCC), Memphian Tova Mirvis sits down for “Author Talk” to discuss her latest book. “We Would Never” is a gripping page-turner that explores the extremes to which a family will go to protect their own. Tova will share the inspiration behind her latest novel as well as her creative journey.

Published in February, “We Would Never” is based on a real-life murder that took place during a bitter divorce. The intimate family portrayal is somewhat of a cautionary tale about overinvolved parents, love, loyalty, betrayal, and the blurred line between protecting and forsaking the ones we love.

The novel has earned high praise from the literary community. “Publishers Weekly” calls it “a penetrating study of a family whose all-consuming love for each other turns sinister. Readers won’t be able to look away.” “Hadassah Magazine” says “more than a whodunit, Mirvis’ characters are multidimensional, wrestling with doubts and guilt, not just about murder, but also about a lifetime of questionable choices. ... The

combination of murder mystery and character-driven literary fiction makes the perfect read for a winter snowstorm or beach vacation.”

“Thrillingly plotted and exquisitely imagined, ‘We Would Never’ is a masterful portrait of a family and its many secrets. A relentlessly intelligent barnburner of a book,” notes Claire Dederer, author of “Monsters.” Author of “Good Neighbors,” Sarah Langan describes it as “an urgent, insightful family drama about complicity and entitlement that

could not be more timely. It’s essential reading by a true talent.” And the Book Reporter highlights it as “propulsive in its tone, ambitious in its probing of the human psyche, and full of poignant questions about morality and love, ‘We Would Never’ is a must-read.”

Tova is also the author of the memoir “The Book of Separation” and three novels: “Visible City,” “The Outside World,” and “The Ladies Auxiliary,” which was a national bestseller. Her essays have appeared in numer-

ous publications including “The New York Times,” “The Boston Globe,” and “Real Simple,” and her fiction has been broadcast on NPR. She lives in Newton, Mass., with her family. Connect with her on her website: TovaMirvis.com.

“We Would Never” is available on Amazon, Simon & Schuster, Barnes & Noble, and BAM Books A Million. “Author Talk” on March 24, at the MJCC is a free event. Register here: <https://www.jccmemphis.org/cultural-arts/cultural-arts-programs/> [HW](#)

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# Is Tip Fatigue Wearing You Out?

*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*

Traditionally, tipping has been a way to reward workers for providing good service. But the norms around tipping are changing, and if you’ve recently felt more pressure to tip, you’re not alone. A survey by the Pew Research Center found that 72% of adults said that tipping was expected in more places today than it was five years ago, a phenomenon known as “tip creep” or “tipflation.”<sup>1</sup>

### Why tipping culture is changing

Tipping affects everyone (even tipped workers have to tip others!) and confusion and complaints about tipping abound. If you’re among those feeling uneasy about tipping, blame the pandemic. That’s when tipping culture started to change. Consumers, anxious to reward front-line workers and support struggling businesses, left more and bigger tips. Businesses adopted digital ordering and payment solutions that made tipping more convenient and could be programmed with preset tip suggestions that were often higher than customers were used to.

And then inflation took its toll. Businesses that lost employees during the pandemic increasingly realized that tips could help fill wage gaps and attract employees reluctant to return to service positions. But consumers, already having to make their money go further, began to grow weary of seemingly constant tip

requests, especially in situations or places where they had not previously been asked to tip.

### Tipping guidelines

Tipping often feels good, but the pressure to tip can be guilt-provoking and confusing. When a worker turns a screen around and you’re prompted to choose a preset tip, it can feel wrong to choose the lowest option. While you might always tip your server at a sit-down restaurant, in situations where you’ve had little to no direct interaction with any employee, should you even tip at all?

Ultimately, tipping is always voluntary and it’s up to you to decide who, where, and how much to tip. While there are no set rules, here are some guidelines you can use to inform your decisions.<sup>2</sup>

- Full-service restaurant or food delivery: 20% of total bill
- Quick service restaurant: 10%
- Online food orders/takeout: \$1 to \$5 per order
- Bar or coffee shop: \$1 to \$2
- Hotel bellstaff: \$1 to \$5 per bag
- Hotel housekeeping: \$1 to \$5 per night
- Valet/parking attendant: \$1 to \$5 when car is delivered
- Rideshare/taxi driver: 15% to 20% of the fare

### To Tip or Not to Tip?

Percentage of U.S. adults who say they always or often tip for:



Source: Pew Research Center, 2023

### Finding a balance

Planning ahead can help you avoid some of the frustration around tipping and still tip fairly and appropriately.

**Do an informal audit.** How much have you spent on tips during the last month or two? Does that align with your budget?

**Set tipping limits you’re comfortable with.** You can always make adjustments at the register.

**Reserve higher tips for special situations.** This might be rewarding a worker at your favorite coffee shop, or showing your appreciation when someone provides extra-special service.

**Don’t feel bound by on-screen tip recommendations.** Use the “custom” tip option when available to leave the amount you want.

**Carry small bills.** These can be used in traditional tip jars, or when traveling, to reward workers who don’t have access to digital tips.

**Talk to the manager or business owner if you have questions or complaints.** It’s not always clear where your tips are going (for example at fast-casual restaurants or when ordering online), so feel free to ask. And reserve your complaints about tipping expectations for management, rather than workers.

**Respect policies.** While many businesses encourage tipping, some do not allow their employees to accept tips for legal reasons. Instead, consider leaving positive feedback.

- 1) Pew Research Center, 2023
- 2) Toast, 2023; American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2023; U.S. News & World Report, 2023

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# ‘We’ll Get Them Out,’ Trump Tells 7 Released Israeli Hostages in Oval Office Meeting



**Freed Israeli hostages appeal to President Donald Trump during a meeting in the Oval Office of the White House, March 5, 2025. Credit: Screenshot**

**By Philissa Cramer**

(JTA) – President Donald Trump told a delegation of freed Israeli hostages in the Oval Office last Wednesday that he was confident that the remaining hostages in Gaza would be released. “We’ll get them out,” Trump told the hostages, who traveled to the United States from Israel to advocate for the 59 hostages still in captivity after a temporary ceasefire. Arranged in a row before him, the hostages praised the new president and told him that they believed that he holds

special power to free the remaining hostages. “My family and I, myself, we believe that you have been sent by God to release them,” said Omer Shem Tov, freed on Feb. 22, according to video from the meeting published by an Israeli journalist. “You’ve really helped. You have the power to do it.” Naama Levy, a soldier freed early in the ceasefire, added, “You were our hope while we were there. Now you are their hope.”

“So you didn’t think until I came along, you didn’t think you were going to get out?” Trump asked. Many of the hostages said, “No.” Levy added, “Once you were elected, we heard that you wanted to do everything to make a deal as soon as possible.” “Well, we said, ‘You better let us have those people back,’” Trump said, alluding to his public threat in December that there would be “all hell to pay” if a ceasefire was not reached by his inauguration on Jan. 20. “‘You better let them out.’ We did say that, and something happened, right? Now we’ve got to get the rest out.” Eli Sharabi, who was released, emaciated, on Feb. 7 and found out then that his wife, daughters and brother had all been killed, said, “Please do it again. Please.” Trump responded, “We’re working on it very hard.” Earlier last Wednesday, reports emerged that Trump administration officials have negotiated directly with Hamas, in a break from past protocol, to negotiate on behalf of the hostages. Each of the freed hostages then shook Trump’s hand, as he said to several, “We’ll get them out.” To Wenkert, the final hostage to shake

his hand, he pointed and said, “You’ve got a good future.” The hostages presented Trump with a golden plaque inscribed with a famous line from the Talmud that means, “Whoever saves a single life, it is as though he has saved a whole world.” The plaque used a formulation that appeared in the Oscar-winning movie “Schindler’s List,” when a Holocaust survivor tells rescuer Oskar Schindler: “Whoever saves one life saves the world entire.” The other former hostages on the delegation were Doron Steinbrecher; Yair Horn, who wore a shirt featuring his brother, Eitan, who remains a hostage; and Keith and Aviva Siegel, who were released separately 15 months apart. Keith Siegel, who was born and raised in North Carolina, was one of two Americans released during the current ceasefire. Steinbrecher and the Siegels wore shirts featuring Gali and Ziv Berman, twin brothers from their kibbutz, Kfar Aza, who remain hostage. All of the men wore black suits. Under the terms of the ceasefire, which expired this week, 33 hostages were released, mostly alive, and five others were freed outside the deal’s terms. Trump has said that he will respect whatever Israel decides to do about resuming the war. **HW**

# Pentagon Rep has Called for Curbing Aid to Israel, Posted Hateful Messages

(JNS) – Before working for the Pentagon, a spokeswoman for the Trump administration posted that the United States should spend its money domestically rather than aiding Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan and, among other things, that Leo Frank, who is widely considered the victim of an antisemitic blood libel, was guilty, “Jewish Insider” reported. The Anti-Defamation League told the

publication that it hopes that Kingsley Wilson, the deputy press secretary at the U.S. Defense Department, will retract her comments immediately. “We are deeply disturbed that any public official would parrot these hateful and false conspiracy theories,” the nonprofit told “Jewish Insider.” (JNS sought comment from the Pentagon.) “Anyone who posts antisemitic conspiracy theories lifted right out of the

neo-Nazi playbook should not be in public office,” wrote the American Jewish Committee, adding that Wilson “is clearly unfit for her role.” “It’s horrible; it’s just not appropriate,” Sen. Deb Fischer (R-Neb.) said, per “Politico.” “Sometimes people think they’re anonymous when they’re on social media, that they can comment or post on whatever may be their attitude at the

time and then they later regret it.” Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) said that U.S. President Donald Trump “doesn’t believe any of the things she’s talking about, and I’ll leave it up to them to determine if they think she’s the right spokesperson,” according to “Politico.” “If what you say about these posts are true, then she’s completely off-script with President Trump.” Wilson was sworn in on Jan. 20. **HW**

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# A Legacy of Dedication: Gates Lumber Celebrates 105 Years, George Buzard’s 90th Birthday, his 70 Years of Service at Gates, and his 65 Years of Marriage

Gates Lumber is proud to celebrate an extraordinary year of milestones, honoring a man whose dedication has shaped both the company and the community. George Buzard will celebrate his 90th birthday on March 25, marking a lifetime of leadership, service, and commitment.

This year also marks his 70th anniversary with Gates Lumber, where he has played a pivotal role in the company’s legacy of quality and service. Adding to these remarkable achievements, he and his wife, Joanne, are

celebrating 65 years of marriage – a testament to their enduring partnership. All of this comes in the same year that Gates Lumber commemorates 105 years as a cornerstone of the Memphis community.

Beyond his professional accomplishments, George has dedicated time to serving the community, including his involvement with juvenile court and other civic efforts. He is also an avid enthusiast of sailing, aviation, photography, and more, embodying a spirit of adventure and passion in all he does.

To honor these incredible milestones, a special celebration will be held at the Gates Lumber office, bringing together family, friends, and colleagues to recognize the man who has left an indelible mark on so many.

For more information, please contact Bobby Buzard at [bbuzard@gateslumber.com](mailto:bbuzard@gateslumber.com) or 901.301.5994.

### About Gates Lumber

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craftsmanship, integrity, and exceptional service, the company has provided generations of customers with top-quality lumber and building materials. Gates Lumber’s long-standing success is a testament to the dedication of individuals like George Buzard, whose 70 years of service have embodied the company’s values. As Gates Lumber celebrates its 105th anniversary, it remains committed to upholding the traditions of excellence and community service that have defined it for over a century. **HW**

# Noah Wyle’s Jewish Background Shaped His ‘The Pitt’ Character

## Wyle’s Dr. Michael “Robby” Robinavitch makes for a complex and magnetic Jewish character in the Max medical drama from the same team behind “ER.”



Credit: via Warrick Page/MAX  
By Lior Zaltzman

*This article first appeared on Kveller. Reprinted with permission.*

When the team behind the medical ’90s drama “ER” started working on a new medical drama, “The Pitt,” also starring Noah Wyle but not meant to be a spinoff of that original series, they knew they needed to find a way to differentiate Wyle’s character from Dr. John Carter, that fresh-faced third-year medical student so many fell in love over the course of 12 seasons.

According to Wyle, who is an executive producer of the new show, that process began with a conversation with the creators, R. Scott Gemmill and John Wells. “Noah, where’s your family from?” Wells asked, to which Wyle replied, “They’re Russian-Jewish.” That activated Wells, who said, “Well, what’s a name? What can we play with there? Would you want to play in that blood memory?”

Wyle shared that through his “Pitt” character Dr. Michael Robinavitch (an untraditional spelling of the common Jewish last name Rabinowicz, Rabinowitz or Rabinovitch), he was “interested in playing a guy who came from a way more blue-collar background” than his “ER” character, “and who hadn’t had any of those early opportunities, who came to medicine for completely different reasons.” While people don’t automatically associate Jewishness in this country with a blue-collar background, there are many Jews who do, in fact, work blue-collar jobs, especially in a city like Pittsburgh. Jewish doctors on TV, especially those deemed magnetic enough to play protagonists in shows like “Northern Exposure” and “Royal Pains,” don’t usually

feel like they’re from a blue-collar background, and there’s something fresh and dare I say needed in this take on the “nice Jewish doctor” TV trope.

Wyle’s father, Stephen Wyle, an electrical engineer, came from a family of Russian Jewish immigrants, while his mother was Episcopalian. Faith didn’t play a particularly large part in his upbringing, but both his parents’ religious and cultural backgrounds were a part of his experience growing up, mostly through the holidays. “It was like a Chinese menu – one from Column A, one from Column B,” Wyle once recalled in an interview.

It’s that Jewish part of his background that inspired Dr. Robinavitch, who goes by Robby, at the Pittsburgh E.R. where he is a senior attending doctor at the fictional Pittsburgh Trauma Medical Hospital.

The entire first season of “The Pitt,” one of the best medical dramas I’ve ever seen, takes place during Robinavitch’s 15-hour shift at the ER on the 4th anniversary of a very traumatic day for him – the loss of his mentor in that same hospital. The show depicts how doctors deal with the lasting scars from the COVID-19 pandemic, as the echoes of that haunting death reverberate over and over in Robby’s mind through his shift.

It’s also a visceral, unvarnished and poignant depiction of that high-pressure work of first responders – we see bodies bleeding and broken, floors littered with the debris of life-saving work, the jarring experience of having to move between losing and saving lives, the stress of ensuring the ER remains high-rated and valuable while appeasing business interests in this for-profit medical sys-

tem. We see the many faces of death as they come in the ER, fast and abrupt and impossible to grasp: young people dying from accidental overdoses, old people dying from the usual suspects that come with age. Yet, the patients are never just props for the interpersonal drama of the staff, with so many patients themselves dealing with heart wrenching situations, like a mother who feels like she’s drowning and a teen dealing with an unwanted pregnancy. Because of the way the show is structured, more “24” than “Grey’s Anatomy,” you get to feel the real stakes of what happens at the ER, and while there is some of that interpersonal intrigue, it unfolds slowly amid the fast-paced medical action.

All its many characters feel well-drawn and real: the socially awkward possibly autistic-coded second year resident, Dr. Mel King (Taylor Dearden), the 20-year-old prodigy medical student and daughter of two other hospital big-shots Victoria Javadi (Shabana Azeez), the overly cocky intern, Dr. Trinity Santos (Isa Briones). Yet it’s Robby who is the beating heart of the show. He feels, inadvertently in some ways, like a rabbi, and not just because his last name is Robinavitch. He sports a bushy salt and pepper beard. He is usually wise and often patient, full of advice and reflection that’s both compassionate and learned and Pittsburgh tough. We see that kind of sagacious power when he helps a non-religious family find adequately spiritual ways to say goodbye to their father or comforts a medical student coping with losing his first patient. But he, and we, are constantly aware of his flawed humanity. When he talks to that young med student, he tells him that, eventually, “You learn to live with it. You learn to accept it as much as your own mortality and find balance.”

“You found balance?” the med student asks hopefully.

“No, not even close,” Robby admits. “But you keep trying, which is all you can do.”

It’s that kind of advice that makes him feel like a Jewish leader, making it clear that he doesn’t have all the answers, guiding him to the more equipped experts (a social worker, in that case) when needed. And like another recent TV Jew, Adam Brody’s Rabbi Noah Roklov in “Nobody Wants This,” Wyle, quite dreamy in his “ER” days, is still a heartthrob, with that authoritative voice and chiseled cheekbones, a McDreamy, or rather, as Emily Gould dubbed him

in this “The Cut” piece, “a McWeary,” suave and easy on the eyes but also authentically tired and run-down.

That weariness comes from working in the trenches during the pandemic, and continuing to do so every day, but if Robinavitch’s character is meant to draw on that ancient blood or genetic Jewish memory, there’s certainly another marrow-deep aspect to it too, a kind of weariness any Jewish viewer can relate to right now.

In the fourth episode of the show, Robby mentions his Jewishness in a conversation with charge nurse Dana Evans, who accidentally attributes a quote that comes from the Book of Luke to Shakespeare. The line, he tells her, should be attributed to “Luke, the disciple, who probably heard it from Paul, the apostle, but what do I know? I’m Jewish, it’s not my book.”

It feels like a casual, authentic way for the character to mention his roots without belaboring it. Dr. Robinavitch is one of around 50,000 Jews living in Pittsburgh, many in the Squirrel Hill neighborhood, and many, like him, highly educated, though a 2018 survey found that around a quarter of Pittsburgh Jews consider themselves “poor or just getting by.” The Jewish neighborhood gets mentioned when Robby’s son comes to visit him in the middle of his shift.

The ER may feel like its own world, apart from anything going on outside it, but the city of Pittsburgh is very much a part of the show. An older patient worked on “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood,” another talks about riding his bike in Frick Park, cultural events in the city make their way into the many stories that come wading in and out of the ER. Since the show deals with such dark chapters in recent history, like the pandemic, it’ll be interesting to see if it also will address the deadliest antisemitic attack that ever took place on U.S. soil. Could a Pittsburgh-based show with a Jewish protagonist get away with never mentioning the Tree of Life massacre that took place in Squirrel Hill? Especially with a character that is meant to draw on that historical blood memory?

We’ll have to wait and see the answer to that one, but in the meantime, it’s clear that Wyle’s Dr. Robby and “The Pitt” make for a fascinating, complex Jewish representation that’s impossible to look away from.

“The Pitt” is currently streaming on Max, with new episodes airing every Thursday at 9 p.m. ET. **HW**



*By Philissa Cramer*

He told Stet News he had been the “Palm Beach Post’s” only Jewish editor.

“They’re conflating criticism of the government of Israel with antisemitism,” he said about the cartoon’s critics. “I fully support Israel’s right to exist. ... I think you can feel that way and still be open to discussion of the issue of violence that has taken place there. They don’t get to shut down the conversation just because they’re not comfortable with it.” **HW**

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Dr. Adina Newman, creator of My Family Genie, is a professional genealogist with specialties including Jewish genealogy and genetic genealogy.

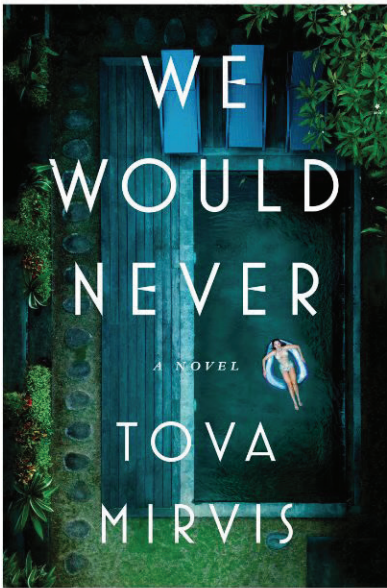
Have you just taken a DNA test? Can't make sense of your results? Still considering taking the plunge? This presentation is for you! Learn about the different types of DNA testing, how the testing process works, what to expect from your results, and best practices to incorporate DNA into your traditional family tree research.

Program will be by Zoom only: A link will be emailed to JHSMM members. Others may log in at <https://bit.ly/4axrRAI>

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**Monday March 24th**  
**7:00 PM**

**Memphis Jewish  
Community Center**  
**6560 Poplar Avenue**