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CELEBRATING

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1925-2025

*the* Hebrew Watchman

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# The Hebrew Watchman Celebrates Centennial in 2025



Leo Goldberger handed the reins to his son, Herman, in 1970.

### Matt Timberlake

There was a time when Jewish newspapers were as abundant as synagogues, with daily, weekly and monthly publications rolling out of print shops from the Pacific Northwest to the Florida Keys, and any community with a sizable Jewish population in between.

Only a handful of them remain today, in the cities one might expect: Chicago, Los Angeles, New York City. Many are run as nonprofits, often by the community’s Jewish Federation or with close association to a congregation or school.

Here in Memphis, the Jewish com-

munity relies on *The Hebrew Watchman* (*The Watchman* as locals refer to it) and has for just shy of a century. This Rosh Hashanah, *The Watchman* will mark 100 years of serving the Memphis Jewish community with news and information carefully chosen to connect Jewish readers to one another, zoomed in to the household level here in Memphis, zoomed out to a wide-angle lens covering Israel and the global diaspora, and at every level of magnification in between.

“My family had their printing company downtown when my father, Leo Goldberger, started the paper in 1925,”

said Herman Goldberger, Leo’s son and second-generation newspaperman who led the paper from 1970 until his retirement and its sale in 2021. “I grew up in the printing company and at the paper, but my main career focus was always *The Hebrew Watchman*.”

Herman came of age at the newspaper, clocking in during childhood and not punching out until his 2021 retirement, when the paper was sold to Susan and Larry Nieman, who publish *The Hebrew Watchman* today.

During his life, Leo often said he started the paper to “unify Jews from all over Memphis and the Mid-South,” a goal accomplished by the consistent special coverage given to every synagogue and Jewish organization in the city and surrounding area, and the paper’s reporting on engagements, weddings, births and deaths marking the milestones of Jewish families.

“My dad had friends at every synagogue and Jewish organization,” said Herman. “He belonged to every congregation, knew everybody and their stories, and had many friends in the non-Jewish community as well.”

The Goldberger family edited and published *The Hebrew Watchman* from 1925-2021 and during the long stretch of Goldberger years it was a true family affair, with a role for seemingly everyone. Brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles, sons and daughters and cousins, in-laws - any and all pitched in, writing columns, selling advertising and subscriptions, editing and transcribing community submissions and articles

from wire services. In 1964, Herman married Barbara (Bobbie) Buring, who became the paper’s associate editor, the two working on weekly editions until their retirement in 2021. At one point, even Bobbie’s mother, Hattie Ruth Buring, had a staff role. Herman became editor and publisher in 1970, when Leo retired, though he still made almost daily appearances at the office until his death in 1989.

In future editions of this paper and in a soon-to-be-announced exhibit at the Memphis Jewish Community Center, the Memphis Jewish community will toast *The Watchman*, and honor its history with a content series created to help the Memphis Jewish community celebrate the historic milestone.

“I was quite hesitant in the beginning to commit to a weekly paper, often saying ‘there is no way I would publish a weekly publication,’” said Susan. “Most people think print is dying. But I found out rather quickly after purchasing the paper in 2021 that was not the case in Memphis.

“Jewish Memphians, those who have moved out of town and even non-Jews look forward to receiving the paper each week,” she said. “It was an honor that Herman and Bobbie entrusted their family’s legacy with me. I hope I can see it through at least another 20 years and pass it on to the next generation of Memphis Jewish publishing storytellers.”

*The Hebrew Watchman* contributors, writers and readers – past and present – are working diligently to bring to the community a great historical exhibit this fall. **HW**

## Teen Philanthropists Donate to Local Jewish Orgs at Jewish Foundation of Memphis’ B’nai Tzedek Grant Reception

By Sheri Gadberry, Senior Philanthropic Officer & Foundation Executive Vice President, Jewish Foundation of Memphis



Current participants in B’nai Tzedek: Mia Katz, Maya Weiser, Darya Shimony, Lucy Pai, Molly Kirshbaum, Ethan Vanderwalde, Isaac Cowens, Jack Shanker, Liya Shimony, Maggie Olswanger, Eve Pai and Wallis Rogin with Carolyn Schrier, Coordinator.

The future of Jewish philanthropy in Memphis shone brightly on Monday, May 5, as the Jewish Foundation of Memphis hosted its 2025 B’nai Tzedek Grant Reception. The evening celebrated the remarkable achievements of 50 dedicated Jewish teen philanthropists.

At the Grant Reception, the B’nai Tzedek teens proudly awarded grants to seven vital local organizations serving the Memphis Jewish community. The recipients included:

- Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service, an organization providing crucial social services and support to individuals and families.
- Hillels of Memphis, fostering Jewish life and engagement among college students.
- Beth Sholom Synagogue, a cornerstone of Conservative Jewish worship, education and community connection.
- Memphis Jewish Experience, dedicated to engaging and connecting individuals with Jewish life and learning.
- Memphis Jewish Federation, the

central fundraising and planning body for the Memphis Jewish community.

- Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab, providing compassionate care and support for seniors.
- Plough Towers, offering affordable and supportive housing for seniors.

Carolyn Schrier, coordinator of the B’nai Tzedek Teen Philanthropy Program at the Jewish Foundation of Memphis, warmly welcomed the attendees, including the teens, their families, agency representatives and community leaders.

“It is such an honor and a privilege to work with these amazing Memphis Jewish teens as they learn to be both individual and communal philanthropists,” she said.

The program uniquely empowers young individuals to become philanthropists. As Schrier explained, teens join B’nai Tzedek by contributing a portion of their bar or bat mitzvah gifts, which is then generously matched by

(See B’nai Tzedek Page 2)



## B’nai Tkedek...

(Continued From Page 1)



Liya Shimony, Darya Shimony and Wallis Rogin with Susan Moinester, Tikkun Olam Chair at Beth Sholom Synagogue (grant recipient).

an anonymous donor, establishing a donor-advised fund in their name, which allows them to support any non-profit in the United States.

“Through B’nai Tzedek, they are able to support philanthropically their many different interests and passions,” Schrier noted, highlighting the diverse charitable inclinations of the participants. In fact, over the program’s history, participants have allocated more than \$190,000 to over 1600 different U.S.-based charities.

The B’nai Tzedek teens engaged in a formal grants process focused on the local Jewish community, with \$10,000 available for allocation. Throughout the year, they toured Memphis Jewish agencies and spoke with grant applicants. This allowed them to witness the impact of communal support firsthand and engage directly with the organizations seeking funding.

As Schrier emphasized, the teens approached this process with maturity and empathy: “They took part in Zoom interviews with all grant applicants to hear expanded narratives about each program and asked questions of the representatives that were both compassionate and strategic. They made sure every voice around the table was heard. They talked with one another, not at one another.”

The culmination of their diligent efforts was the grant award ceremony, where the teens proudly announced their funding decisions.

Liya and Darya Shimony, presenting a grant to Beth Sholom Synagogue’s Tikkun Olam Committee for their Coleman School Winter Coat Drive, said, “We think it’s important to ensure that every child has a warm coat, which is a necessity during the winter, as well as to give them a sense of being cared for

through our community.”

Wallis Rogin, in support of Beth Sholom Synagogue’s Room in the Inn program, shared, “We are excited to be a part of this amazing program and appreciate all they are doing for our community.”

Mia Katz and Maya Weiser championed Hillels of Memphis’ Interfaith Seder, stating, “We also think that it is important, especially in today’s day and age, to provide all Jewish college students with opportunities and programs that they will enjoy and that make them proud to be Jewish.”

Lucy Pai, a sophomore at St. Mary’s Episcopal School, presented a grant to the Fogelman Jewish Family Service at the MJCC for their Diverse Abilities Music Therapy Program, noting, “The program hopes to positively impact its participants through music therapy sessions that involve playing instruments, listening to music and more.”

Ethan Vanderwalde highlighted the importance of community connection in his presentation to the Memphis Jewish Experience’s Young Adult Shabbat Connect program: “We at B’nai Tzedek felt like this program is fulfilling a real need in our community and are looking forward to hearing about the wonderful work they will do.”

Eve Pai and Molly Kirshbaum underscored the vital support provided by the Memphis Jewish Federation’s Senior Hot Meals program, explaining, “Through our grant, Memphis Jewish Federation will be able to feed a total of 100 meals to seniors in our local Jewish community.”

Isaac Cowens and Jack Shanker awarded a grant to the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab’s Wishmakers program. “This program allows senior citizens to be granted a wish that they’ve always

# THE Hebrew Watchman

SERVING THE MEMPHIS JEWISH COMMUNITY SINCE 1925

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5/22/2025

## Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. May 23, 2025 / 25 Iyar, 5785 .....7:45 p.m.  
Havdalah, Sat. May 24, 2025 / 26 Iyar, 5785 ..... 8:47 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Behar-Bechukotai

wanted,” they said, expressing their hope to see the seniors having fun.

Finally, Maggie Olswanger highlighted Plough Towers’ Creative Aging program, noting its ability to “entertain residents while fostering a sense of community.”

In closing, Schrier expressed her gratitude to all involved: “B’nai Tzedek gives our teens the knowledge, tools and passion to make philanthropy and tzedakah a meaningful part of their lives, and this incredible group gives all of us hope for the future of our Memphis Jewish community.”

The evening served as a powerful testament to the commitment and com-



Jack Shanker and Isaac Cowens with Jasmine Williams, Communications Coordinator of the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (grant recipient).

passion of these young philanthropists, embodying the true spirit of tzedakah and promising a bright future for Jewish giving in Memphis. If you know a bar or bat mitzvah age student who would like to join B’nai Tzedek, visit jcpmemphis.org/teen-philanthropy. **HW**



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# Jr. K Program at Temple Israel Offers a Joyful Introduction to Jewish Learning

Beginning in fall 2025, the Wendy & Avron Fogelman Religious School is thrilled to introduce an exciting new initiative designed especially for young learners – the Jr. K Program. This engaging program provides children in the year before kindergarten and their parents with a warm, welcoming introduction to Jewish education, fostering a love for Jewish learning through interactive experiences, creativity and hands-on activities.

Open to the Memphis Jewish community, the Jr. K Program meets eight times a year, offering a vibrant and meaningful way for families to explore Jewish traditions together. This program is a fantastic way for families to get a taste of our beloved Sunday Funday experience, providing young children with their first exposure to Jewish learning in a fun and age-appropriate setting, the year before kindergarten.

Each session features a unique theme that highlights different aspects of Jewish life, making the learning experience exciting and well-rounded. Through storytelling, music, art and cooking, children and their families will build connections to Jewish traditions while enjoying quality time together. The sessions include:

- Art – Learn about an important Judaic ritual object and create one to take home.
- Cooking – Discover Jewish holidays while preparing traditional treats to enjoy.
- Music – Experiment with different instruments, learn Jewish songs and participate in tefilah (prayer) with the rest of the school.
- Israel – Learn about Israeli culture and explore historic sights!
- Shabbat & Holidays – Explore how to celebrate Shabbat at home, experience Havdalah rituals and discover other meaningful Jewish traditions.

The Jr. K Program is open to all families in the community. Participation is free for families currently enrolled at the Barbara K. Lipman Early Learning Center (BKLELC). Temple members can enroll for just \$90 per year, while non-members are welcome to participate for \$180 per year.

This unique experience offers a joyful and enriching way to begin a child’s Jewish learning journey, helping families build lasting connections to Jewish traditions and community life. We can’t wait to welcome you and your little ones to Jr. K! **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, May 26**  
**Memorial Day – No Lunch**  
The MJCC Senior Lunch Room is not open. For a listing of what is open at the MJCC please see the MJCC website. Have a great holiday!

**Wednesday, May 28**  
**Special Program – Trivia with Kevin Payne**  
Kevin will bring his Special Edition of “Boomer Trivia” to the MJCC Senior Lunch Room! Kevin will both entertain and challenge the group. The room will be split into 2 teams with prizes for the winners. Come have some fun and learn what you know, what you thought you knew, and what you forgot! Everyone who has been there for our Team Trivial Pursuit always has a good time. This will be a little bit of a different take on that game.

**Monday, June 2**  
**This is the second day of Shavuot.**  
The MJCC is closed for the Jewish holiday. Have a good Yom Tov!

**Wednesday, June 4**  
**Special Game of Team Trivial Pursuit!**  
These questions will mainly center on the 50s and 60s. Special prizes will be awarded for both the winning teams and the other team. Plus, a drawing amongst all the players for a special prize! Come have fun, test your knowledge and win a nice take home prize. Reservations are only required for the lunch.

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

**THE HEBREW WATCHMAN**  
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# Rubio Backs Syria-Israel Thaw in Rare Diplomatic Talks

(JNS) – U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio met last Thursday with Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani in Antalya, Turkey, marking the first

high-level diplomatic engagement between Washington and Damascus in 15 years. The meeting follows President Donald Trump’s announcement of plans to lift U.S. sanctions on Syria.

Rubio, according to a State Department readout, “welcomed the Syrian government’s calls for peace with Israel, efforts to end Iran’s influence in Syria, commitment to ascertaining the fate of U.S. citizens missing or killed in Syria, and elimination of all chemical weapons.”

He also emphasized the importance of protecting human rights for all Syrians, regardless of ethnicity or religion.

The meeting coincided with a trilateral discussion involving Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan, reflecting Ankara’s role in facilitating dialogue between the U.S. and the new regime in Syria.

This diplomatic engagement follows Trump’s meeting with Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa in Riyadh last Wednesday, where the American leader encouraged Damascus to join the Abraham Accords and expel foreign terrorist groups. Al-Sharaa expressed support for these initiatives and proposed economic partnerships with the U.S.

In parallel, Israel is reportedly conducting secret talks with the new Syrian regime, mediated by the United Arab Emirates. According to Channel 12, a recent meeting in Azerbaijan involved IDF Operations Directorate head Maj. Gen. Oded Basyuk and representatives close to al-Sharaa, alongside Turkish officials.

Al-Sharaa has also confirmed indirect talks with Israel aimed at de-escalating tensions and reaffirming commitment to the 1974 Agreement on Disengagement between Israel and Syria.

While these developments suggest a possible shift in regional dynamics, Israeli officials remain cautious, citing al-Sharaa’s past affiliations. Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar has previously referred to the new Syrian government as “jihadists in suits.” **HW**

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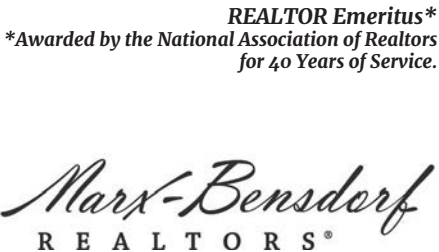
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# At the 100-Year Mark, Hebrew University’s American Friends are Looking to Capitalize on a Unique Moment

By Larry Luxner

April 24, 2025 – (JTA) – In 1974, Pamela Nadler Emmerich – then a teenager from Montreal – arrived in Jerusalem for her freshman year at Hebrew University.

Not knowing what to expect, she signed up for a course on Jewish intellectualism, “Philosophical Implications of Rabbinic Thought,” taught by Montreal native Rabbi David Hartman.

“After class, I went up and told the professor that I had grown up in an Orthodox Jewish community but wasn’t sure if I believed in God,” she recalled. “I didn’t even know what the word belief really meant. And he smiled and said, ‘That’s wonderful, it means you’re thinking!’”

That encounter made a lasting impression on Emmerich, who is now president of the American Friends of the Hebrew University (AFHU).

This month the American organization, which was created to support Hebrew University, is marking its 100th anniversary in tandem with that of the university in Jerusalem. With global antisemitism on the rise and many U.S. campuses a hotbed of anti-Israel ferment, supporting the Hebrew University is more important than ever, according to Emmerich.

“One hundred years ago, the university was founded to be a safe haven for Jewish students. And it still serves that role today,” she said.

Hebrew University was co-founded by Albert Einstein and Chaim Weizmann in 1918 and formally inaugurated on April

1, 1925. Meanwhile, AFHU was founded by American philanthropist Felix M. Warburg, who established a \$500,000 endowment for the organization.

Today, fundraising by AFHU, which has an \$800 million endowment and raises \$65-\$75 million annually for the university, accounts for over half of Hebrew University’s overall fundraising revenue.

The historic connections between Jerusalem and New York run deep. Hebrew University’s first chancellor and president was Judah L. Magnes, a prominent New York rabbi. The American Jewish Physicians Committee, founded in 1921, helped finance the Institutes of Microbiology and Chemistry in Jerusalem – which later became part of Hebrew University Hadassah Medical School.

Today, Hebrew University boasts 1,000 faculty members and 23,000 students spread across three campuses in Jerusalem – Givat Ram, Mount Scopus and Ein Kerem – and one each in Rehovot, Rishon LeZion and Eilat.

In 2024, AFHU, which has 45 staffers and regional offices in Florida, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco and Washington, D.C., raised \$74.2 million for the university – the biggest annual haul in its history. The organization’s long-term goal is to raise \$100 million a year, said Clive Kabatznik, chairman of AFHU’s board.

“The pre-state generation of donors and supporters is essentially dying out. Anybody who was alive when the state was born is at least 77 years old now,”

Kabatznik said. “That generation of donors – on whose shoulders we stand – had a different perspective towards Israel and Hebrew University than the high-tech, hedge-fund, private equity players of today.”

The South African-born Kabatznik enrolled at Hebrew University in 1974, where he earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees, met his wife and got married.

“It was the most incredible liberal arts education one could get,” said Kabatznik, now a venture capitalist who divides his time between Israel and South Florida. “The level of teaching was just through the roof, and it really was a formative experience for me. It molded me and taught me how to think on my feet.”

Since 2003, Kabatznik has been active in AFHU, developing its U.S.-based alumni initiative and spearheading programs showcasing Israeli-led technologies in fields such as cybersecurity, clean energy, fintech and nanoscience.

One of Hebrew University’s most urgent challenges these days is the international boycott of Israeli academics and institutions.

“The major impact Oct. 7 has had is this overt and covert closing of international academic ties,” Kabatznik said. “We’re successful in fighting this on a formal basis, but informally, when professors stop replying to emails, it’s much more insidious.”

In an effort to attract more international students, Hebrew University’s Rothberg International School recently began offering a three-year, fully ac-

credited undergraduate program entirely in English.

Compared to American universities, Hebrew University represents a bargain – and not just on tuition. Philanthropists will find that endowing a chair at Hebrew University costs less than half what it would at an Ivy League school, according to Stanley Bogen, a longtime AFHU donor who is now its honorary chairman and president.

“Whenever I talk to people, I tell them that the money they give goes so much farther in Israel,” Bogen said.

With many Jewish alumni disaffected from their U.S. alma maters’ recent record on antisemitism, Emmerich would like AFHU to get them to become supporters of Hebrew University.

Joshua Rednik, the CEO of AFHU since 2021, said his goal this year is to raise at least 100 new commitments of at least \$100,000.

“Over the last 100 years, few institutions have had as significant an impact on the land, people and politics of Israel as Hebrew University,” Rednik said. “We frequently say Hebrew University was the original Zionist project before Israel was even Israel. It has touched every corner of Israeli society.”

*This article was sponsored by and produced in collaboration with American Friends of the Hebrew University, a national nonprofit that connects the passions of Americans to talent at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This story was produced by JTA’s native content team. HW*

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# When Elan Met Ilana



Elan and Ilana (nee' Radinsky) Miller

By Ronda Robinson

When Elan Miller accepted a Shabbat dinner invitation in Manhattan, he thought he had nothing to lose. A native Atlantan who was living in New York at the time, he looked forward to the usual fare of chicken soup, brisket, kugel, challah and dessert. But this particular event had a nontraditional twist.

The hostess had only invited young members of the tribe named Elan and Ilana. The concept proved to be a recipe for dating success. Elan met Ilana Radinsky at the table and was smitten.

As he relates, “This Shabbat meal wasn’t particularly unusual in the structure, but it was exceptional because Ilana was there. I was captivated by her beauty and intrigued by her apparent shyness. I wondered who she was, especially when she mentioned particular interests of hers. When I walked her home that evening she started sharing more, flashing her great smile and laughing. Pretty soon I’d forgotten about all the other people walking with us.”

Ilana was impressed as well. The granddaughter of Memphians Rabbi David and Barbara Radinsky, she says Elan caught her eye when he got up at the meal to demonstrate dance moves he had learned. She loved his confidence and the stories he shared about his adventures, such as the time he lived off the grid in Hawaii with no electricity and another time spent volunteering at an organic farm in Vancouver. She was happy for the opportunity to talk more when he walked her home.

They discovered mutual interests, like working in technology, rock climb-

ing, hiking, camping and backpacking. After dating exclusively for 16 months, the couple got engaged in Central Park. They tied the knot at Ilana’s house on a beautiful warm day last November. Her grandfather, Rabbi Radinsky, performed the ceremony, with a host of family members and friends on hand to celebrate the occasion with singing, dancing, eating, drinking and toasting.

Ilana, 27, is the daughter of Moshe and Dr. Stacey Radinsky of West Hempstead, N.Y. Elan, 30, is the son of the late Danny Miller, Elaine Miller and Chuck Azer.

Neither Elan nor Ilana had spent much time swiping left or right on dating apps when they were single. Instead, they preferred meeting people the old-fashioned way – in person at parties, weddings or setups by friends.

Both online and offline dating methods have their benefits, as any Jewish single can tell you. The key to finding a partner is to be persistent, according to Aleeza Ben Shalom, featured in the Netflix series “Jewish Matchmaking.” “My biggest piece of advice to people who are looking is never give up,” she told the Jewish Journal.

Singles and matchmakers might be inspired by Elan and Ilana’s story to try the clever approach that worked for them. Consider hosting no-pressure Shabbat dinners for Jewish singles with similar names. Think of all the possibilities: Ariel and Ariella, Dan and Dana, Lior and Liora, David and Davida, Chaim and Chava, Judah and Judith, Ron and Ronit and more. The theme can’t help but spark some fun conversations. **HW**

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# Bornblum Middle Takes Learning on the Road



The eighth graders view the sunset in Israel.

Over the last few weeks, sixth through eighth grade students from Bornblum Jewish Community School took their classrooms on the road to Israel and Washington D.C.

According to Daniel R. Weiss, Bornblum’s head of school, “A Bornblum education is unique for many reasons, not the least of which is our commitment to educational travel for our students. With the eighth-grade seminar in Israel and our sixth and seventh grade biennial trip to Washington, D.C., our students once again had the opportunity to get out of their classrooms and bring a real-world component to their learning.”

With the war continuing in Gaza, many schools chose to sit out their annual Israel trip, or to change the trip to visit other countries. But according to Michal Almalem, Jewish Studies principal at Bornblum, “We monitored the situation carefully throughout the year and decided that it was safe to take our students to Israel. We know that there is no substitute for Bornblum’s culminating trip to Israel, and it was important to us that our graduating students had this experience. Everything went off without a hitch, and students had an amazing trip to the Holy Land.”

Bornblum’s Israel seminar, which is supported in part by the Lemsky Endowment Fund of the Memphis Jewish Federation, takes students to each of Israel’s regions and is designed to engage all of their senses. Students walked the trails the patriarchs and matriarchs walked, they enjoyed the unique food culture of a diverse nation, they connected each

site they visited to the biblical and modern history they had studied, and they interacted with Israelis in Hebrew.

“Whether repelling the Ramon crater, learning the geology of the land during a Jeep tour or hiking in several desert oases, students experienced the Land of Israel in a personal way that they cannot find in any classroom,” added trip chaperone and Jewish studies teacher Rinat Kremer.

Students also spent the night in a Bedouin tent, climbed Masada and floated in the Dead Sea before heading to Jerusalem to welcome Shabbat at the Western Wall. According to eighth grader, Elizabeth Daggett,

“Our first Shabbat in Israel was very emotional for me, because we welcomed Shabbat at the Western Wall. Honestly, looking back at the time I was there, I almost cried, because even though the Western Wall is a wall, I felt as if I was standing next to the Kohanim in the Temple next to the Holy of Holies.”

Adding a special Memphis connection, students visited the grave of Rose Lubin”l, the cousin of two Bornblum students, who was killed following the Oct. 7 attacks. This experience of understanding the events of Oct. 7 was deepened with a student visit with Aner Shapira, who on Oct. 7 threw eight hand grenades out of the shelter he hid in and helped save 11 people who were hiding with him.

On Yom Hazikaron students visited Shoham and their twin school Yahalom where they joined in with their Memorial Day ceremony. Students also spent the last two days of their journey with



Bornblum sixth and seventh grade students visit the Arlington National Cemetery during their four-day trip to Washington, D.C.

students of Yahalom. Students sang together on the bus rides, shared their knowledge on Mt. Shaul overlooking the Jezreel Valley, and hiked the Hula Valley learning about the importance of the Golan Heights. In the evening, both classes had deep conversations about Jewish identity, the importance of Israel and the struggles they all face today.

“Traveling with the kids from Yahalom allowed me to learn about life as an Israeli teenager. We had interesting discussions about how we practice our Judaism differently in Israel compared to the United States. The students from Shoham discussed their intense Zionism and love for the state and worried for us who might experience antisemitism,” according to eighth grader Dov VanderWalde.

Meanwhile, Bornblum’s sixth and seventh grades spent four days in America’s capital as part of their study of the Federal government and American history.

According to Jill Cross, Bornblum’s director of Curriculum and Instruction and resident expert on all things George Washington and the Revolution, “Our trip to Washington, D.C. is designed to bring American history and government to life in powerful and memorable ways, allowing students to experience the ideals and complexities of our nation’s past firsthand. Meaningful, immersive moments deepened classroom learning and will help shape informed, engaged citizens. We are grateful to the American Battlefield Trust History Field Trip Grant for helping make this learning experience possible.”

While in Washington, D.C. students had a very busy itinerary, including a tour of the Capitol with Congressman Kustoff and his staff, visits to some of the Smithsonian museums, a tour of

the National Holocaust Museum, as well as visits to the National Portrait Gallery, Arlington National Cemetery and the American Revolution Institute at the Society of the Cincinnati, where students explored Jewish artifacts from the American Revolution. There they learned about the unique organization founded by George Washington and other patriots who sought to preserve the lessons and history of the Revolution. Students also enjoyed a Washington Nationals baseball game and a nighttime monument tour where they held a meaningful Yom HaZikaron experience at the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool.

Sixth grader, Owen Jaffe, reflected on the trip saying, “Being with all our friends on an academic trip made the experience even more enjoyable. It was a fun and active way to learn about the past and our nation by experiencing it firsthand.”

Seventh grader Jade Daggett added, “I think this experience was important because it helped us learn about our government and our history in a real way. Instead of just reading or hearing about it, we got to see it for ourselves, which made it more interesting and easier to understand.”

“Our class trips are such an important and impactful way to end each year at Bornblum. Students are fortunate to have these annual experiences through which they develop meaningful connections to their Jewish and national identities,” said Dr. Weiss. “These trips are among the many great opportunities for Bornblum students, and we are so grateful to our staff chaperones who step up each year to ensure that our students have extraordinary learning experiences outside the classroom.” **HW**



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# Iran at ‘Threshold of a Nuclear Weapon,’ Rubio Tells Hannity

(JNS) – Iran can be both a prosperous and peaceful country, and U.S. President Donald Trump hopes that the Islamic Republic seizes that chance, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio told Sean Hannity, of Fox News, during an interview last Thursday from the Cornelia Diamond Golf Resort and Spa in Antalya, Turkey.

“Our problem is not with the Iranian people. The Iranian people are a peaceful people, an ancient civilization and culture we admire greatly,” Rubio said. “Our problem is with a clerical regime that is behind every problem in the region: Hezbollah, Hamas, the Houthis, the militias that have conducted attacks out of Iraq and Syria.”

All of those terror groups “track back to the Iranian regime,” Rubio said. “All the instability in Syria tracks back to the Iranian regime. It’s a regime that every day and every Friday chants, ‘death to Israel, death to America.’

“We have to believe them when they say that,” he said.

The Iranian regime must never get nuclear weapons, according to Rubio. “The end decision lies in the hands of one person, and that’s the supreme leader in Iran, and I hope he chooses the path

of peace and prosperity, not a destructive path,” the secretary said. “We’ll see how that plays out.”

Hannity asked Rubio about published reports that the Iranian regime has enriched uranium to “quite a high” level, and that “if you’re at 60% enrichment, it is not a stretch to get to weapons-grade enrichment at 80%, 90%.”

“When you say 60, it’s misleading when people hear that number because they think 60% enrichment and 90% is what you need for a weapon,” Rubio said. “Actually, 90% of the work it takes to get to weapons-grade enrichment is getting to 60. Once you’re at 60, you’re 90% of the way there. You are, in essence, a threshold nuclear weapon state, which is what Iran basically has become.

“If they decided to do so, they could do so very quickly,” Rubio said. “If they stockpile enough of that 60% enriched, they could very quickly turn it into 90 and weaponize it.”

That ability to weaponize quickly is “why Israel feels urgency about it, and that’s why we feel urgency about it,” Rubio said. “But not just us. Throughout the Gulf region, no country in the region wants Iran to have a nuclear weapon.” **HW**

# Jewish NHL Owner Suspended After Social Media Spat with Fan He Called an ‘Anti-Semite Loser’

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) – Florida Panthers minority owner Doug Cifu has been suspended indefinitely by the NHL after a social media spat with a fan that included discussion of the Israel-Hamas war and accusations of antisemitism.

Cifu, a vice chairman and part-owner of the defending Stanley Cup champions since 2013, is Jewish and had five Israeli flag emojis in the bio of his X account, which has since been deactivated.

Last Sunday night, during the Panthers’ playoff victory over the Toronto Maple Leafs, a Toronto fan replied to one of Cifu’s posts by asking, “Hey, what’s worse, using headshots to win a series or using starvation as a weapon to win a war?”

The “headshots” comment appeared to be a reference to several upper-body hits from Panthers players, including one that forced Toronto’s goalie out of a game earlier in the series. The latter comment refers to Israel’s halt on the entry of humanitarian aid into Gaza. Aid organizations say the stoppage could lead to imminent famine.

Cifu replied, “Actually being a whiny dope anti-semite is clearly worse. Loser.”

The fan shot back: “Not approving of using starvation as a weapon makes me a bigot?”

Then, Cifu replied again, this time referencing President Donald Trump’s musings about making Canada the 51st U.S. state: “Eat shit 51st state anti-semite loser. Israel now and forever. Until ever [sic] last Hamas rat is eliminated.”

Cifu made his account private last Monday and then deactivated it. Last Tuesday, the league announced its suspension.

“The NHL has concluded that Mr. Cifu’s X posts were unacceptable and inappropriate,” the league said. “As a result, Mr. Cifu has been suspended indefinitely from any involvement with the Club and the NHL. An in-person meeting will be scheduled with Mr. Cifu and the Commissioner at a date to be determined.”

Cifu apologized in a statement that referenced the team’s majority owner family.

“Two days ago, I posted regrettable and inflammatory comments on social media,” he said. “My behavior does not reflect the standards of the Florida Panthers organization and the Viola family. I sincerely apologize to all those affected by my comments. I am committed to working with the NHL to amend my actions.”

The NHL, which has a large Canadian fan base and many Canadian players, did not clarify which of Cifu’s comments it deemed “unacceptable and inappropriate.” The league’s commissioner is Gary Bettman, who is Jewish and has been involved in efforts to combat antisemitism.

Some Jewish fans took issue with what they perceived as the silencing of a pro-Israel voice. One Jewish hockey-focused account called the suspension “outrageous,” and another Jewish account said the NHL was “targeting” Cifu in a post that has gone viral.

“This is a disgrace,” the account @Awesome\_Jew\_ wrote. “At a time when antisemitism is surging globally, the NHL has decided that Jews must stay silent – even when facing hate and defending themselves against genocidal terror.” **HW**

## Bar Mitzvah



Benjamin Sukhodolsky

Benjamin Sukhodolsky, son of Jessica and Alex Sukhodolsky, will be called to

the Torah as a bar mitzvah on Saturday, May 24 at Baron Hirsch Synagogue.

Benjamin is in seventh grade at Margolin Hebrew Academy. He loves sports, politics, writing, and geography. Benjamin plays on the MHA Junior High Basketball Team and was chosen to take part in the Tikvah Truman Scholars Program. He has also competed in academic contests like Math Kangaroo. In the summer, Benjamin goes to Camp Dora Golding, and during the year he stays active with Junior NCSY.

Benjamin is a sixth generation Memphian and sixth generation member of Baron Hirsch Congregation. He is the grandson of Shelby and Lee Baum and Natalie and Jacob Sukhodolsky and the great-grandson of Joan and Phillip Baum, Ted Winestone A”H, and Tillaya Lusky A”H. **HW**




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# Should you be thinking about volatility? Probably

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

When the stock market is on the rise, investors can fall into the trap of believing the good times will never end. But in all probability, market volatility will return, and chances are it'll be when it's least expected.

Rather than waiting for it to happen and risking the possibility of panicking and making costly investment decisions, you may want to think about volatility during those good times. That way, you can be strategic rather than emotional about dealing with it, which may lead to better outcomes.

**What type of investor are you?**

What you should be considering now depends on whether you have an investment plan.

Quite simply, if you don't have an investment plan, you should think about creating one, and here's why: A well-thought-out plan is built around what you're investing for (goals), how long you have until you need to tap into your investments (time horizon), and, most important for this topic, the amount of market volatility you're comfortable with (risk tolerance).

Taking these factors into consideration, your plan should include a strategic asset allocation, which is how your portfolio is divvied up between different types of investments – primarily stocks, bonds, and cash alternatives.

You may be the type of investor who takes market volatility in stride. In that

case, you likely have a relatively high risk tolerance. On the other hand, volatility may make it hard for you to sleep and cause you to panic, which would mean your risk tolerance is probably rather low.

If you're the second type of investor, a larger portion of your asset allocation would likely be in bonds, which historically have been more stable than stocks. However, along with that relative stability generally comes significantly lower returns.

The potential benefit of having an investment plan is you may be able to do a better job of dealing with volatility because you've "baked it into" your plan so you should be better prepared for its possible impact and your reaction to it.

**What if you already have a plan?**

If you have an investment plan, you should be thinking about whether your portfolio is currently aligned with your strategic asset allocation.

While it might be nice if you could set and forget your asset allocation, the fact is over time market activity can cause your investments to drift away – sometimes far away – from where you want them to be if you don't keep an eye on them.

For example, a hypothetical 50% stocks, 45% bonds, and 5% cash alternatives portfolio could become a 60% stocks, 35% bonds, and 5% cash alter-

natives portfolio without you realizing it. While that "new" portfolio may provide better returns, it's also likely to fluctuate more in value if the market becomes volatile. In other words, you could be exceeding your risk tolerance without being aware of it.

To help avoid this situation, consider periodically rebalancing your portfolio when necessary, which may require selling some investments and purchasing others to bring it back to your intended asset allocation.

Because creating a plan and keeping it in balance can be complicated, you may want to turn to a financial advisor with the necessary tools and experience for help.

Asset allocation cannot eliminate the risk of fluctuating prices and uncertain returns.

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OBITUARIES



Bert Alan Less

Bert Alan Less was born in Memphis, Tennessee, on April 27, 1957, to Leon and Dorothy Less. He passed away peacefully in his home, surrounded by his family, on Sunday, May 11, 2025, after a long and brave fight against cancer.

Born and raised in Memphis, Bert was the youngest of five brothers, all of whom he stayed close with until his final days. He grew up in a household of love and rabble, so much rabble at times his mother famously got his birthday wrong for the first 16 years of his life. Only when he went to get his driver’s license did he find out that his birthday was in fact not on April 25. He was a dedicated son and a devoted brother whose favorite activity was going on real estate routes in the afternoon and calling all of his favorite people to check in. He attended White Station High School and was a proud Spartan for his entire life.

On May 18, 1986, Bert married the first love of his life, Debra “Debbie” Goodspeed Less. They spent 19 wonderful years by each other’s side and had two children together: a daughter, Baylee, and a son, Josh. Their home on River Birch was known for poolside parties, loud music and more love than the family knew what to do with.

Following Debbie’s untimely passing in 2005, Bert pieced together his broken heart and put his children’s needs before anything else. He learned to cook, drove them to school, attended parent meetings and supported their grief all while quietly managing his own. Luckily, another person found him soon after and helped him rebuild his life.

Bert married Monica Less on 7/7/07 in an intimate ceremony in the backyard of their home. Bert and Monica shared 18 years in love, laughter and partnership, never wavering in their devotion to one another. He was a true romantic whose heart was so full, and life was so joyful from simply getting to love his “Storm.” Bert gained two additional sons through their marriage, Parker Woods and Hudson Sanderson, and the six family members learned quickly what it meant to be a family. Their home became the gathering place for friends, from Tiger watch parties to New Year’s Eve celebrations, from casual dinners to rambunctious sleepovers. There was nowhere better to be than at LeFleur.

His family was his life, but his work

brought him a second family. Bert founded Leco Realty in 1988, and most people have never seen a man so happy to go to work. He took great pride in the company that he built, that he employed the same people for over 30 years, and that his tire-some hard work created success that sustained a beautiful life for his family.

Bert will be remembered for his love of reading and music, of Memphis Tiger basketball and foosball. He loved reading on the porch with a fire crackling, one dog in his lap and the other in the chair beside him. He loved listening to records for hours on end and telling you stories about where he bought which album and the next. He loved his Leco girls and Little Feat. He loved date nights with his Storm, car rides with his dogs, Louis and George, and family dinner around the kitchen table doing “highs and lows.” He loved walks on the beach in the early morning just before the sun crested along the shoreline. He loved museums and art, but you would also catch him posing like every statue in the building before he walked out. He loved celebrating Shabbat with his family and taking trips around the world with his wife. He loved April Fool’s Day and the New York Yankees, writing poetry and grilling out. He loved laughing and making others laugh and smiling – God did he love to smile! Bert loved fiercely and devotedly his whole life, and he loved his family to the very, very end. Nothing brought him more joy than being a father and grandfather.

While Bert never wanted to be labelled by his disease, the family would be remiss to not mention and thank the kind and caring medical teams that worked tirelessly to heal him. We are forever grateful to the doctors and nurses at West Cancer Center, Sarah Cannon and Accent Care. The family is sincerely grateful to Dr. Jim Andrews and Dr. Brad Somer for their guidance and support during this journey and in Bert’s final days.

Bert is predeceased by his parents, Leon and Dorothy Less, by his first wife, Debbie Less, and by his nephew, Peyton Less. He leaves his wife, Monica Less, and four children, Baylee Less (Monte Eiseman), Josh Less (Leah Baer), Parker (Emma) Woods, and Hudson Sanderson. He leaves three grandchildren, Lofton and Archie Woods and Dahlia Eiseman. He leaves his brothers, Mike (Michele), Stanley (Vicki), David (Angela) and Barry (Pam) Less.

As Monica and Bert said to each other daily, one lifetime with you will never be enough.

A funeral service was held on Tuesday May 13, at Temple Israel.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations in Bert’s memory to Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab, Temple Israel, West Cancer Center or the charity of your choice. **HW**



Cecile Felsenthal Prager

Cecile Felsenthal Prager, born December 25, 1939, in Memphis, Tenn. passed away peacefully at her home on May 6, 2025, surrounded by her family. Cecile was a wonderful daughter, sister, friend, wife, partner, mother, grandmother and great-grandmother.

Nothing brought Cecile more joy than her 6 grandchildren. Family was everything to Cecile, so she moved from her beloved Memphis after the death of her husband to Atlanta to be near the grandchildren. She loved being involved in their lives, and her grandchildren adored having her nearby.

A graduate of Tulane University and the University of Memphis, Cecile was a longtime educator with a specialty in reading. She was always a teacher at heart. Cecile taught 1000s of people to read. Her favorite moments came when she taught an adult, particularly a senior citizen, to read for the first time. She worked for several non-profits including Memphis Partners and Junior

Achievement as well as volunteering with the NCJW. In 2018, Reach Memphis honored Cecile for her work with Memphis Prep and recognized the key role she played in building the program. In Atlanta, Cecile was an active volunteer with LaAmistad and The Temple.

Jewish life and Judaism were especially important to Cecile. Upon moving to Atlanta, she began teaching first grade at The Temple’s religious school. In doing so she was able to have 4 of her 6 grandchildren as students over the years. Cecile partook in the Melton Institute courses at The Temple and MJC-CA as well as studying for and becoming a bat mitzvah through The Temple. Additionally, Cecile served on the board of directors for both The Temple and Temple Israel in Memphis.

Cecile was preceded in death by her husband, Beirne M. Prager Jr., She is survived by her children, Lynn (Barry) Deutsch, Susan (Brian) Banner, and Nancy Prager; her grandchildren, Ben (Sophie), Michael, and Rebecca (Brandon Alaniz) Deutsch, and Bradley, Henry, and Anna Banner; and one great-grandchild. She is also survived by her brother, Eddie (Gloria) Felsenthal; her partner, Dr. Elliott Goldstein; and many beloved nieces and nephews.

Cecile embraced the motto, “Bloom Where You Are Planted,” and she truly lived by it – thriving in both Memphis and Atlanta and enriching the lives of all who knew her.

Donations in Cecile’s memory can be made to REACH Memphis, Most Valuable Kids of Atlanta, Temple Israel or the charity of your choice. **HW**

Trump Signs Agreement to ‘Generate Economic Exchange’ with Qatar Worth \$1.2t



U.S. President Donald Trump meets with Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Saudi Arabia, May 21, 2017. Credit: White House/Shealah Craighead.

(JNS) – U.S. President Donald Trump and Qatar’s Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani signed an agreement last Wednesday that will “generate an economic exchange worth at least \$1.2 trillion,” the White House announced.

Trump also announced economic deals that total more than \$243.5 billion,

according to the White House.

“Since President Trump took office, his commitment to American manufacturing and innovation has attracted trillions of dollars in investments and global commercial deals,” the statement read. “Allies like Qatar are partnering in the United States’ success.”

The agreement includes a \$96 billion deal for Qatar to acquire up to 210 Boeing 787 Dreamliner and 777X aircraft powered by GE Aerospace engines and a \$1 billion deal for Qatar’s acquisition of counter-drone capabilities.

“This historic agreement will support 154,000 U.S. jobs annually, totaling over 1 million jobs in the United States during the course of production and delivery of this deal,” the White House stated.

The agreements were signed during Trump’s trip to the Middle East. **HW**

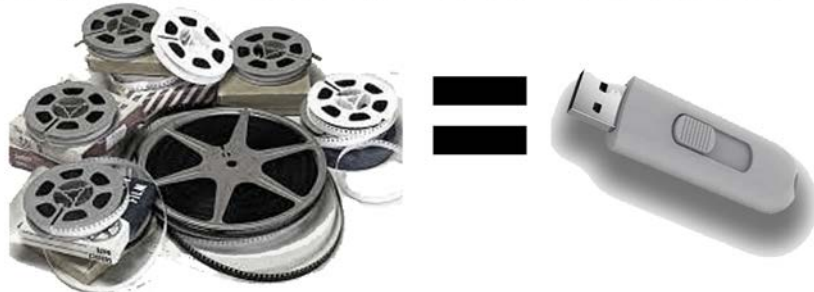
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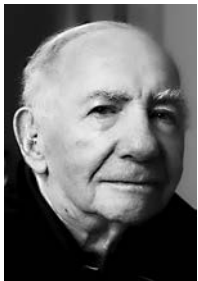


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# Something To Think About “I Set Before You a Blessing and a Curse”



*Editor’s note:  
This story is being  
reprinted in memory  
of Ted Roberts in  
appreciation of his  
longtime service  
as a newspaper  
columnist.*

By Ted Roberts

I made a drastic leap yesterday from reading the headlines about Iran and their death-dealing weaponry to the Haftorah of my current bar mitzvah student. It wasn’t a jump – it was a chasm. A chasm in logic that has puzzled scholars, Isaiah, Maimonides, Rabbi Akiva and Beryl the trash collector since Sinai times. The Lord speaks of the justice. Justice, basically, is the theme of the psalms – basically the theme of the covenant, itself. Walk in my ways – be holy like me and all shall be yours. You shall eat and drink and live in relative luxury, in peace. How many times is the

bargain recited in the Book of G-d? He adds – through the heart of Isaiah, “No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper.” A familiar, oft-repeated biblical theme.

Now let us look at the evidence. Let us examine the fate of Judaism – the historical record – side by side with our celestial contract. One might boldly come to one of several conclusions.

The whole book – multiple covenants and all is a lie, a mother’s, a children’s tale, made by men to be believed by men. G-d forbid. But a possibility that must not be ignored.

We broke the contract, therefore, we were punished.

The Book of Books is not true. (Sorry, but sadly, must we consider this possibility.

One must consider carefully the meaning of success and failure. Regardless of the painful punishment we suffered over four millennia we emerge victorious. Why? Because we survive as a people and our contribution to the


glory of the human race is not only disproportionate but continues to flourish. I assume, therefore, that the contract was real, not mythical, and we are even now reaping our reward.

That leaves me with pogroms – centuries of cruelty, and above all the Holocaust to cope with. Answer: The same roll call of bloodshed applies to other races, some of whom are long deceased. And why were we bloodied by fate? Because we broke the covenant? Was it quantitatively stated? Maybe 10% of Jews playing gold on Saturday was bad enough to bring the Nazi plague upon us. Who knows? I am not attempting humor. According to the Chumash, our “holy” behavior is only loosely defined. Our ancestor signed up to a dated document that doesn’t mention cars, computers, electricity and dozens of unknowns that affect behavior. Our reward for “holy” (whatever that specifically means) was G-d’s blessing and a land now under far greater threat than most Jews – outside of governing circles –

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By Ted Roberts

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understand.  
Considering the above, I stand with Isaiah. Fear not!  
*The syndicated humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the roof, has appeared in newspapers around the U.S., on National Public Radio, and numerous websites. HW*

## Belgian Police Raid Mohel’s Home over Brit Milah Complaint

By Canaan Lidor

(JNS) – Belgian police last Wednesday raided the home of at least one mohel in Antwerp and confiscated his equipment in connection with complaints lodged against him by a local Jew, JNS has learned. A mohel is an individual trained to perform ritual Jewish circumcision, or brit milah.

According to reports, the homes of several other mohels were raided in addition to that of Rabbi Aharon Eckstein, one of the most experienced mohels in the country.

Eckstein told JNS that the raid had occurred at about 5 a.m. “They didn’t say much. They just looked through the

place and took my kit,” he said. He intends to continue performing circumcisions, “because I have not been told not to,” he added.

The search was based on a complaint filed against Eckstein and other mohels by another rabbi, Moshe Aryeh Friedman, in 2023. Friedman claimed that six mohels, whom he identified to police, had endangered children by sucking the blood from the penises of babies on whom they’d performed the Jewish ritual, a custom known as metzitzah b’peh.

Eckstein does not perform this custom, he and several people who had their sons circumcised by him con-

firmed to JNS. Friedman has publicly criticized multiple customs that are important to ultra-Orthodox Jews in Belgium and Antwerp, where they account for most of the city’s 18,000 Jewish population.

Rabbi Mencahem Margolin, who is based in Brussels and heads the European Jewish Association, condemned the raids.

“This constitutes yet another red line crossed in the intimidation of Jewish religious figures in Belgium,” he told JNS. “Following the ban on shechita [kosher ritual slaughter], the harassment of mohels represents a further red line and a

clear warning sign to Belgian Jews and the Belgian government. Freedom of religion must be upheld!”

Belgium is among several European nations that have recently outlawed shechita and its Islamic counterpart, dabhiha or zabihah. These religious slaughter methods, which require animals to be conscious at the time of killing, are criticized by animal rights advocates as inhumane.

A comparable controversy is playing out around the nonmedical circumcision of boys. However, unlike ritual slaughter, this practice has not yet been banned in any European country. HW

## ISRAEL INSIGHTS Israel In or Out?

By Howard Weisband

Given President Trump’s current visit to the Middle East (I’m writing on May 14), perhaps the most discussed topic in the media and on the street, is whether the President has left Israel or Israeli interests completely out of the negotiations.

True, Israel is not represented at the table with him in Saudi Arabia, Qatar or the UAE, nor is a stop in Israel even on his itinerary, but does that mean that consultations with Israel and Israel interests are being totally ignored?

Local journalists, all not to be doubted regarding Israel’s well-being and future, are themselves taking different positions.

David Horovitz, in his Editor’s Note on May 14, in a sharp column in The Times of Israel, writes the following: “But the U.S. president, as he is proving almost minute by minute in his current fast-paced Middle East trip, is an insistent deal-maker. And whether he’s still broadly empathetic to Netanyahu’s concerns or not particularly bothered by some of them, he’s moving ahead on a whole range of vital regional issues without including Israel on his regional itinerary, without arranging for an Israeli presence at his critical meetings, and

without heeding Israeli concerns in an expanding number of his agreements.”

Frankly, if I might be critical of Horovitz, in his last three statements above, the first two are factual, but the third is speculative. He offers no immediate proof nor throughout the column that Israeli concerns are not included in his agreements.

Horovitz concludes: “The fact is that Trump is forging ahead with a whole slew of deals and alliances radically impacting Israel – and in so doing, he is already determining core aspects of Israel’s security and geopolitical future.”

Horovitz continues: “Trump said on the plane to Qatar that the U.S. having good ties with the Gulf states ‘is very good for Israel.’ Potentially, that is true, but only if the Israeli leadership proves capable of utilizing those ties. The longer Israel is not seated at the main table alongside the U.S. president, metaphorically and literally, the narrower Israel’s room for maneuver.”

There is some immediate reality in what Horovitz writes, but he also recognizes that the Trump Administration is making a strong push to expand its Abraham Accords with Saudi Arabia and even Syria possibly joining the pact.

Such would be historically relevant, very possibly a “game-changer” for the Middle East and certainly for Israel.

My critique again is that Horovitz should acknowledge that possibility and give it time to unfold.

A different approach is taken by Jerusalem Post analyst Seth Frantzman. Also writing on May 14, his analysis is titled “Trump’s Mideast visit making historic progress, still many issues at stake.”

Frantzman earlier in the day focused on the President’s meeting with new Syrian President Ahmed Al-Sharaa, writing that it “symbolized that a new world order is emerging.” While candidly that approach contains hyperbole – he might have more correctly said “a new Mideast order is emerging.” President Trump encouraged the Syrian leader to join the Abraham Accords, just as he has done with the Saudis.

Specific answers have yet to emerge from either the Saudis or the Syrians, but if results materialize in a positive fashion, it certainly will be good for Israel.

Frantzman also points to U.S. economic objectives as benefiting the region. He quotes Michael Mitchell, one of the U.S. government’s principal Arabic-language spokespeople in the State

Department: “I must say that President Trump did not choose the region randomly. This region is extremely important, and we want to strengthen strategic relations with all our Gulf partners. This is the main reason for the visit, not only on the security front, but also on the trade and investment front.”

If accomplished, such objectives, like the Abraham Accords themselves, will benefit Israel’s interests both geopolitically and internally.

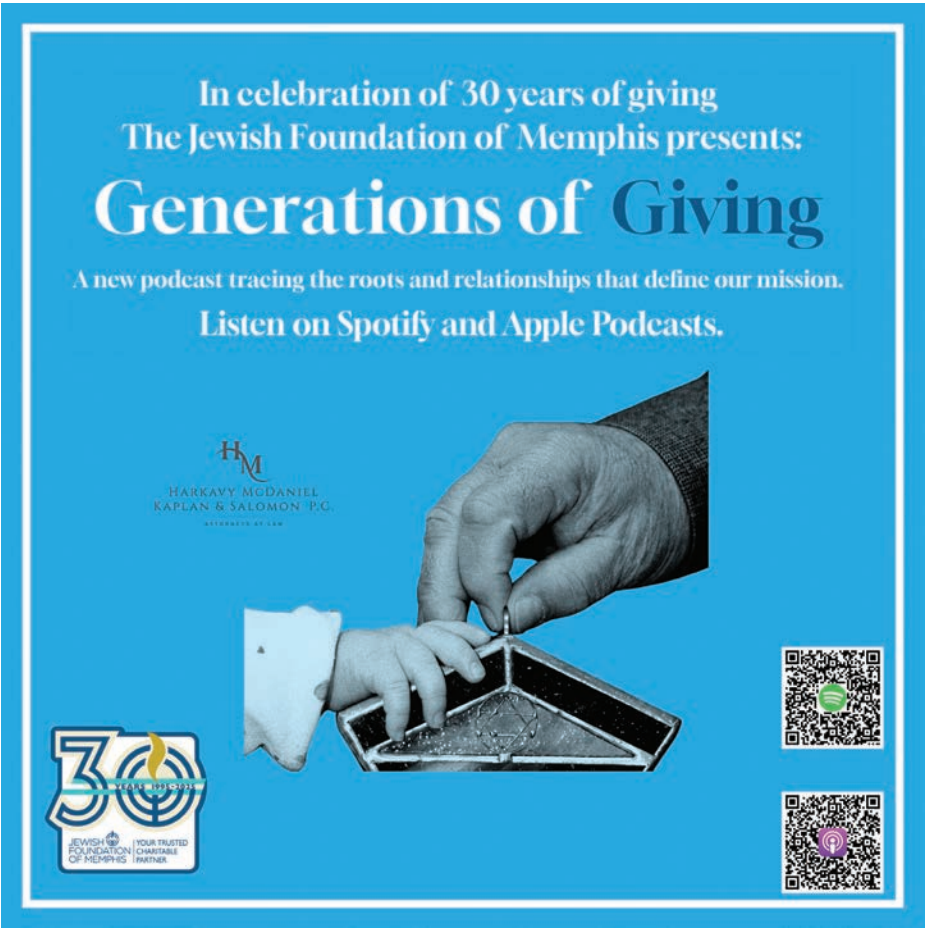
Allow me to add simultaneously. I have no illusions. Like Prime Minister Netanyahu’s own personal ambitions in wanting to do good for his country, President Trump also has personal legacy ambitions. That no doubt includes a Nobel Prize for Peace.

Time will tell on all of the above.  
*Howard Weisband served as Assistant Executive Director (1975-77) and Executive Director (1977-84) of the Memphis Jewish Federation. Following Aliyah with his family in 1986, he served as Secretary General of the Jewish Agency for Israel through 1997, and then in other senior professional positions in Israel. Now retired, he and Kayla live in Jerusalem. He can be reached at hweisband@gmail.com HW*





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Steve McDaniel is a partner at Harkavy McDaniel Kaplan & Salomon, PC. He is a board-certified Estate Planning specialist, an accredited Estate Planner, and a member of the American College of Trust and Estate Counsel (ACTEC). Steve also serves on the Professional Advisor Group of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis. Listen to an interview with Steve on the Foundation’s new podcast, “Generations of Giving,” available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts. HW

Man Burns Library Books on Jewish History, including Anne Frank’s Diary, in Jewish Suburb of Cleveland



Rabbi Robert Nosanchuk speaks at an interfaith press conference condemning a man’s recent burning of books on Jewish history and other topics, Beachwood, Ohio, May 12, 2025. (WKYC Cleveland/ Screenshot via YouTube)

(JTA) – A man checked out dozens of books on Jewish history and other marginalized topics from a public library in a heavily Jewish Cleveland suburb before filming himself apparently setting fire to them, local authorities said.

Local Jewish leaders decried the incident at the Beachwood Public Library, appearing alongside other interfaith leaders at a press conference last Monday outside a local church to denounce the burnings.

“Whoever perpetuated the idea that you can burn us out of Cleveland, deport us out of Cleveland, deny our ideas or press us and frighten us, picked the wrong community,” Rabbi Robert Nosanchuk of Congregation Mishkan Or, a

Reform synagogue in Beachwood, said at the press conference.

The books the man burned included a copy of “The Diary of Anne Frank” and a title dealing with “Jewish Solidarity,” a researcher with Princeton University’s Bridging Divides Initiative told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. The Princeton lab, which tracks political violence, first flagged the man’s video with the library after seeing it on the social network X.

The researcher, who requested anonymity owing to the nature of the group’s work, described the book selection as “something that you would expect of someone that is going into the library and trying to get books about Jewish authors and the Holocaust and

everything.” In addition, the man had also burned books related to Black and LGBTQ topics.

“I think the act of targeting these materials, burning them, carries specific threatening connotations with it,” the researcher noted.

The Princeton lab had first seen the video on an account affiliated with the white-supremacist group White Lives Matter Ohio, which appeared to have since removed it. Local media also reported that material related to the burnings had made its way to the social network Gab, which is popular with extremists. JTA could not independently locate the video; local clergy told media they were deliberately not circulating it, in an effort to tamp down on its influence.

The book-burning incident appeared to be an unusual local manifestation of a simmering culture war over books reflecting diversity, one that has occasionally ensnared Jewish books and has lately been folded into the Trump administration’s push against diversity initiatives.

According to local media descriptions of the police report, the man burned around 100 books in total across multiple trips to the library in April, including other books “on topics including Jewish history, African American history and LGBTQ education,” which he obtained after telling librarians he had a son in the LGBTQ community. Multiple spokespeople for the Beachwood police department declined to provide the report to JTA.

“The Beachwood Police Department is actively investigating this incident,” police chief Dan Grispino said in a statement. “Our department stands against antisemitism and all acts of bias-motivated crimes. We are committed to vigorously investigating and prosecuting any hate-motivated incidents within the City of Beachwood. Our priority is to maintain a community that can thrive without the fear of threats of intimidation or violence.”

A spokesperson for the library also declined to provide additional information on which books were targeted, citing an Ohio state law that forbids the release of any patron information. If the man is determined to have committed a crime, the library said, the police may make the information public. He could potentially be charged with destroying city property if the books he checked out are found to have matched the books he burned.

The spokesperson also told JTA the library would be replacing all of the burned books. In addition, local residents have donated upwards of 1,000 books to the library in response to the incident.

That surge of donations was a notable outcome for the Princeton lab, whose researcher said they appreciated how local clergy have led the community in coming together to reject acts of hate.

“The backfire of, for every one book that’s stolen, 10 will be donated, is really encouraging,” they said. HW







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