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Federation’s PJ Library Sparks a Love of Jewish Life and Learning in Our Youngest Memphians



Memphis families enjoyed successful event programming last year through PJ Library, including the 2024 Kickoff in the summer and the 2nd Annual Pajamakkah Party in the winter.

**By Sarah Besser Snyder, Engagement Manager,
Jewish Community Partners**

Young Jewish families: are you looking for a way to engage your little ones in the Jewish community from an early age? PJ Library isn’t just delivering books; it’s building a vibrant, joyful hub for young Jewish life in our city. From festive celebrations to meaningful learning adventures, PJ Library Memphis is forging lasting connections and enriching Jewish Memphis families, one engaging event at a time.

PJ Library, the national program that sends Jewish children free monthly books honoring Jewish culture and values, is managed locally by the Memphis Jewish Federation. Thanks to the Barbara and Earl Magdovitz Family, the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and donors to the Annual Community Campaign, PJ Library delivers books to over 280 children in Memphis.

But in Memphis, PJ Library has become something even more special: a vibrant community, bringing families

together through shared celebrations, engaging learning experiences, and joyful Jewish moments all year long.

“PJ Library has been such a blessing for our family,” shared Natalie Klaven, a parent whose children regularly attend the programming. “My children absolutely love the events, and it’s been wonderful to connect with other Jewish families in Memphis. It truly feels like we’re building a stronger community together.”

We’re excited to bring families together for another year of community events, starting with the Young Family

Kickoff Celebration on Sunday, August 17. It will be a fun-filled, outdoor event featuring a bounce house, water balloons, relay races, sweet treats from Kona Ice, and more.

Last year’s kickoff, held at the MJCC Pavilion, was a fun-filled day of outdoor games, a bounce house and pizza, drawing 45 families and 115 people. It served as the perfect launchpad for a year of engaging PJ Library programming. We’re sure this upcoming kickoff for 2025 will

(See PJ Library Page 2)

Uniting Through Music: Israeli and Memphis Musicians Join Together for Unique Candlelight Concert



Tomer Adaddi

Rena Feller

Diane Cohen

In a moving testament to the unifying nature of music, Israeli and Memphis musicians are preparing to share the stage for a highly anticipated Candlelight Concert celebrating the Young Israel of Memphis’ 25th Anniversary on Sunday, August 31.

The unique milestone event will feature a rare collaboration between world-renowned Israeli performers and leading members of the Memphis Symphony Orchestra. Acclaimed composer and pianist Tomer Adaddi will be joined by Israeli cellist Elad Kabilio and violist David Pedraza in a program blend-

ing well-known classical compositions, original arrangements and Jewish soul. They will be accompanied by local talent Diane Cohen, first violinist with the Memphis Symphony Orchestra, and fellow Memphis Symphony Orchestra member, clarinetist Rena Feller.

For Cohen, the opportunity to perform with the Israeli artists carries personal significance: “This concert brings together musicians who speak the same language of heart and heritage, even if we’ve never shared a stage before. It’s an honor to represent Memphis in such a meaningful collaboration.”

Rena Feller echoed the sentiment, adding, “The blend of local and international musicians adds an emotional depth that’s truly special.”

Tomer Adaddi, known for his orchestral arrangements and performances with artists like Andrea Bocelli and Avraham Fried, described the event as a celebration of Jewish connection.

“We come from different places – Israel and Memphis – but we’re telling a shared story through music,” he said. “And to do so in candlelight, with such thoughtful community energy behind it, is something extraordinary.”

The evening will also feature a special appearance by Amitai Horowitz, a gifted young violinist and member of the Young Israel community, who will join the ensemble as second violinist for what is certain to be a memorable piece.

Prior to the Concert, guests will enjoy a gourmet buffet reception catered by Celebrity Chef Erling Jensen.

The concert promises to be more than just musical excellence. It marks a moment of unity between generations, traditions and continents, celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Young Israel of Memphis. **HW**

Memphis Community to Come Together for Inspirational Pre-High Holiday Concert



World-renowned singing sensation Eli Marcus

The community is buzzing with excitement as the “Sounds of the High Holidays” concert, featuring one of the most sought-after Jewish singers, the world-renowned singing sensation Eli Marcus, makes its way to Memphis on Sunday, September 14 at the Belz Theater at the MJCC.

The concert promises to be an unforgettable evening of music and inspiration, as Eli Marcus brings his soulful voice and heartfelt performances to the

stage. The event is designed to prepare and get us in the mood to usher in the High Holiday season and will feature a special mix of music that will leave attendees feeling uplifted and connected.

“Music is the language of the soul,” said Rabbi Levi Klein director of Chabad of Memphis, who is hosting the event. “It is a unique opportunity for our community to come together and prepare for the High Holidays in a meaningful, entertaining and uplifting way.

Eli Marcus’s music has the power to touch our hearts and souls, and we’re thrilled to have him share his gift with us,” he continued.

Tickets for the concert start at \$25 and can be purchased online at www.JewishMemphis.com/concert with sponsorships and VIP Seating options available.

“A dessert buffet will follow the concert,” said Rivky Klein co-director of Chabad, “This concert is a rare opportunity for Memphis to experience music of this caliber. It is an inspiring evening of music, that you don’t want to miss and is sure to be a memorable experience for all who attend.”

For more information visit www.JewishMemphis.com or contact Chabad at 901-754-0404 or Chabad@JewishMemphis.com [HW](#)

PJ Library...

(Continued From Page 1)

be just as memorable.

Throughout last year, PJ Library Memphis continued to offer plenty of family fun:

- **November 2024:** 30 families (72 people) gather for a delightful Young Family Ice Cream Social, providing a sweet opportunity for connection and community building.
- **December 2024:** Our 2nd Annual Pajamakkah Party was a resounding success and by far the largest event of the year. This vibrant Hanukkah carnival brought together an impressive 97 families (257 people). The event’s success was amplified by strong partnerships with nine different organizations, including Margolin Hebrew Academy (MHA), Bornblum Jewish Community School, Chabad of Memphis, the Memphis Jewish Community Center (MJCC), Memphis Jewish Experience, Temple Israel and The Barbara K. Lip-

man Early Learning Center, Beth Sholom, Young Israel of Memphis and Bar-on Hirsch.

- **January 2025:** PJ Library partnered with the Civil Rights Museum for an impactful MLK Storytime at Novel. This educational event allowed 11 families (27 people) to learn about Martin Luther King Jr., and a week-long fundraiser hosted by Novel further supported the initiative.
- **February 2025:** Our Tu Bishvat Family Celebration, engaging 39 families (118 people) in a meaningful exploration of nature and Jewish values. This event also benefited from strong collaborations with MJCC, MHA and Bornblum.
- **April 2025:** PJ Library also fostered intergenerational connections at a Backyard BBQ held at the Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR). This heartwarming event brought together six families (30 people) and residents of MJHR, creating memorable moments

THE Hebrew Watchman

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8/14/2025



Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. Aug. 15, 2025 / 21 Av, 5785.....7:30 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. Aug. 6, 2025 / 22 Av, 5785 8:26 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Eikev

for all.

Building off the momentum of last year’s success, PJ Library Memphis is excited to kick off another year of enriching programming! Mark your calendars for the Young Family Kickoff Celebration on Sunday, August 17 at 9:30-11 a.m. at the MJCC’s Judy and Larry Moss Family Pavilion. It will be a fantastic event for the whole family, and an opportunity to connect with other Jewish families and introduce your children to the joy of PJ Library programming. We can’t wait to see you there! RSVP today at: tinyurl.com/35xd79dt. [HW](#)

Portland Police Learns Antisemitic Vandal It Sought Already in Jail

(JNS) – A week after the Portland Police Bureau, in Oregon, sought the public’s help identifying a suspect accused of vandalizing a “Portland business with Jewish cultural practices” with a swastika on June 14, the department found its man – already jailed.

The department stated last Wednesday that it identified the suspect as Joseph Thompson, 38, who had been incarcerated at the Multnomah County Detention Center on other charges since early July, based on community tips.

Police said that Thompson is charged with a bias crime in the second degree.

Thompson was jailed on July 1 for allegedly threatening several people, including a security guard, with a knife, according to court documents. [HW](#)

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Weekly Word of Torah

Torah on the Road: Teaching for the Long Journey

I remember when I was 10, my family went on an epic RV trip around the Grand Canyon. Late on a Friday afternoon, my father and I were tying string between poles, creating a makeshift *eiruv*, a symbolic enclosure, around our little campsite. Before we began, he taught me some of the *halachot*, the laws, behind what we were doing – how Jewish law prohibits carrying in a *reshut harabim*, a public domain, on Shabbat. But through the mechanism of a *tzurat hapetach* – literally, a “form of a doorway” made by stretching a wire or string across two poles – we could enclose our camping area and carry within it as if it were a private space.

I don’t think I understood all the technical details back then. But I *do* remember the feeling: that Torah comes with us, wherever we go. Between shopping for kosher food at far-flung Walgreens and cooking in two-square-feet of kitchen space, I became more aware than ever of how deeply embedded Torah is in our daily lives – even, or especially, on the road.

This week’s *parsha*, *Eikev*, reminds us how richly detailed Torah life is. It shapes what we eat, how we speak, how we build our homes, how we build ourselves. These mitzvot can seem like a lot. Yet Moshe Rabbenu, as the *Ramban* points out in *Devarim 10:13*, reframes it all with just two words: “*P’tov lach*” – “it is for your good.” Torah doesn’t burden us. It *builds* us.

But how do we transmit that message to our children?

Devarim 11:19 commands: “*You shall teach them to your children... when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road...*” The *Ketav Sofer* notices a subtle but telling shift: the verse begins in the plural – “*you [plural] shall teach*” – but then moves into the singular – “*when you [singular] sit in your house...*” Why? Because while teaching Torah is a communal responsibility, it is made real through the personal example of each individual parent.

Torah is not only passed down in classrooms or shuls. It is lived in Walmart aisles and RV kitchens. It’s modeled when a parent patiently builds a halachic structure with their child in a dusty campground – showing that wherever we are, Torah is our compass.

As we return to school routines, new teachers, new classrooms, and a renewed set of expectations, it’s easy to feel overwhelmed. But just like the *mitzvot* in this week’s *parsha*, these demands are ultimately “*P’tov lach*” – for our benefit, and for the long-term growth of our students and our community.

To all the families, educators, and supporters in our Memphis Jewish community: thank you for living Torah not just in the beit midrash, but in the carpool lines, the dinner tables, and yes, even the campgrounds. May we all be blessed with a year of growth, meaning, and Torah that travels with us – wherever we go.

R. Dr. Gavriel Brown is the Head of School of Margolin Hebrew Academy - Feinstone Yeshiva of the South 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, August 18
Mid-South Hobbies will bring a special Art Project for the group to do.

We recently went on a field trip to their Summer Ave. location. They always bring a cool project for the group. There is no charge for this event. Their teachers make it very fun and enjoyable. No experience is necessary, and if the project is not finished, they give everyone the supplies to finish at their own home. Come have a nice lunch and bring home something that you did yourself. Reservations are needed by the Friday before so we have enough projects and food for everyone.

Wednesday, August 20
August MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Monthly Luncheon

The luncheon will feature musical duo, Elmo and Lester! “Elmo” Lee Thomas is a Memphis native, best known as the leader of the iconic Memphis Band Elmo and the Shades. Elmo has long been recognized as one of the region’s top harmonica talents, and is equally capable of lighting up the stage with his roots inspired guitar approach. He has performed on NPR’s Beale Street Caravan and had television appearances including commercials and movies. In spring of 2015, he toured Vietnam sponsored by the United States State department, representing Memphis Music to celebrate the normalization of relations between Vietnam and the U.S.

Elmo and Lester was formed in 2017 by two former Overton High School classmates and has been having a suc-



Elmo and Lester

cessful run since. The duo had a residency at The Graceland Guesthouse and have played restaurants, wineries, parties, senior communities and more. Their show is a high energy journey through a variety of musical styles and eras, from the American Songbook, 50’s & 60’s rock & roll, country, blues, jazz, rhythm and blues, and beyond.

Please call the front desk at 901-761-0810 to reserve your seats. Entertainment provided by Creative Aging. Lunch sponsored by Humana.

Monday, August 25
Speaker: Rabbi Yosef Braha, Rosh Kollel and director of operations of the Memphis Kollel
“Ask the Rabbi”

His talks are always one of the highlights for the speaker series. Bring all your Jewish questions and queries that you have been wondering about, but maybe, were afraid to ask. No questions too tough! With the Jewish High Holy Days just a few weeks away, this is a perfect time to get answers to many of the questions you have been thinking about! Rabbi Braha always has a nice, and sometimes humorous answer. Have a nice lunch and an informative afternoon.

Wednesday, August 27
Speaker: Cindi Longmire, representative of Silverts, adaptive Clothing and Footwear
Topic: Adaptive Clothing and Footwear

Adaptive clothing provides easy dressing solutions with adaptive designs for seniors and disabled people. Clothes for seniors should be easy to wear so they don’t have to struggle needlessly with narrow neck openings or difficult-to-button pants or waist bands to dress or undress.

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This clothing can be a real game changer for people who sometimes struggle getting in or out their clothes. Cindi will also have some samples to show. This company has been around since 1930! The program will start at 12 p.m. Reservations are only needed for the lunch! Call Steve Kaplan at 901-259-9220 with any questions.

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

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MJCC Day Camp in Memphis Celebrates a Fabulous 75th Birthday with Over 650 Campers!



Seventy-five summers of friendship, fun, and unforgettable memories! This year, the Memphis Jewish Community Center (MJCC) Day Camp marked a major milestone with a joyful celebration of its 75th birthday – and it did so in true MJCC style, with over 650 campers filling the campus with energy, laughter and excitement.

To celebrate this historic anniversary, MJCC Day Camp pulled out all the stops.

Campers enjoyed special events throughout the summer including retro-themed dress up days, lip-sync battles, birthday party celebrations and an Alumni Shabbat to Celebrate the 75th year with one Alumni present who was a counselor the first year that MJCC Day Camp began! Alumni, staff and families joined in the festivities, reflecting on de-

cades of MJCC memories while making new ones together.

“This is more than a camp – it’s a community,” said Camp Director Juliana Kaitibi. “Celebrating 75 years with over 650 amazing campers this summer shows just how strong and special the MJCC Day Camp tradition really is. We’re proud of our history and thrilled about the future.”

This summer’s programming offered a perfect blend of classic camp activities and fresh new experiences. Campers swam, danced, explored nature, created art, tried their hand at science and sports, and deepened friendships that will last long after the final camp-wide Shabbat. True to MJCC’s values, the camp continues to emphasize personal growth, Jewish identity, inclusion and community connection.



As MJCC Day Camp wraps up this remarkable season, it does so with hearts full and eyes toward the future.

The spirit that began in 1950 remains alive and well – growing stronger with each summer. [HW](#)



Alumni Shabbat



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Marjorie Taylor Greene Calls Gaza War a ‘Genocide,’ Likely the First Republican Lawmaker to Do So



U.S. Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene presides over a hearing of the House Oversight Subcommittee in the U.S. Capitol on February 26, 2025, in Washington, D.C. Credit: Anna Moneymaker/Getty Images

By Grace Gilson

(JTA) – Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, a far-right Georgia Republican who has previously advocated against U.S. funding to Israel and been accused of antisemitism, appeared to be the first Republican in Congress to call Israel’s war in Gaza a “genocide.”

“It’s the most truthful and easiest thing to say that Oct. 7 in Israel was horrific, and all hostages must be returned, but so is the genocide, humanitarian crisis, and starvation happening in Gaza,” Greene said in a post on X last Monday evening.

Greene’s use of the word “genocide” comes as Israel has faced global condemnation in recent weeks over allegations of widespread starvation in Gaza. Greene’s comments about “genocide” came after President Donald Trump’s statement last Monday that he believed that there was “real starvation” in Gaza, suggesting some unease with the war in a party that is loath to criticize Israel.

Greene’s statements came as part of a barrage of criticism aimed at fellow Rep. Randy Fine, a Jewish Florida Republican and one of Israel’s staunchest supporters in the House, over his recent comments on social media about the conflict.

“There is no starvation. Everything about the ‘Palestinian’ cause is a lie,” Fine wrote in a post on X last Sunday. Last week, Fine also posted, “release the hostages. Until then, starve away.”

Greene posted that a “Jewish U.S. Representative calling for the continued starvation of innocent people and children is disgraceful,” and argued that his statement will “actually cause more antisemitism.”

Jewish groups, including the American Jewish Committee, also criticized Fine’s remarks, putting them in a position of rare agreement with Greene, who has advanced a range of dangerous conspiracy theories, including one that the Rothschild family was involved in starting California wildfires using lasers from space.

And yet the largest of the Jewish groups, like Israel, are adamant that the war in Gaza does not meet the legal definition of genocide, and that such comparisons are meant to denigrate and delegitimize Israel.

Greene joins a chorus of groups and individuals who are using the term,

including Amnesty International, the International Court of Justice and, last Monday, two Israeli human rights groups – B’Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights – who became the first Israel-based NGOs to level the charge.

During a press conference in Jerusalem, the rights groups published two reports that concluded that Israel was committing a genocide in Gaza as defined by international law, saying that

Israel was carrying out a “coordinated, deliberate action to destroy Palestinian society in the Gaza strip.”

If Greene’s comments reflect a growing split among Republican lawmakers, it is not reflected in the grass roots: A recent Gallup poll found that the proportion of Republicans who approve of Israel’s actions in Gaza, 71%, is at the same level today as it was the month after Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel. [HW](#)

Rosh Hashanah Catering Menu

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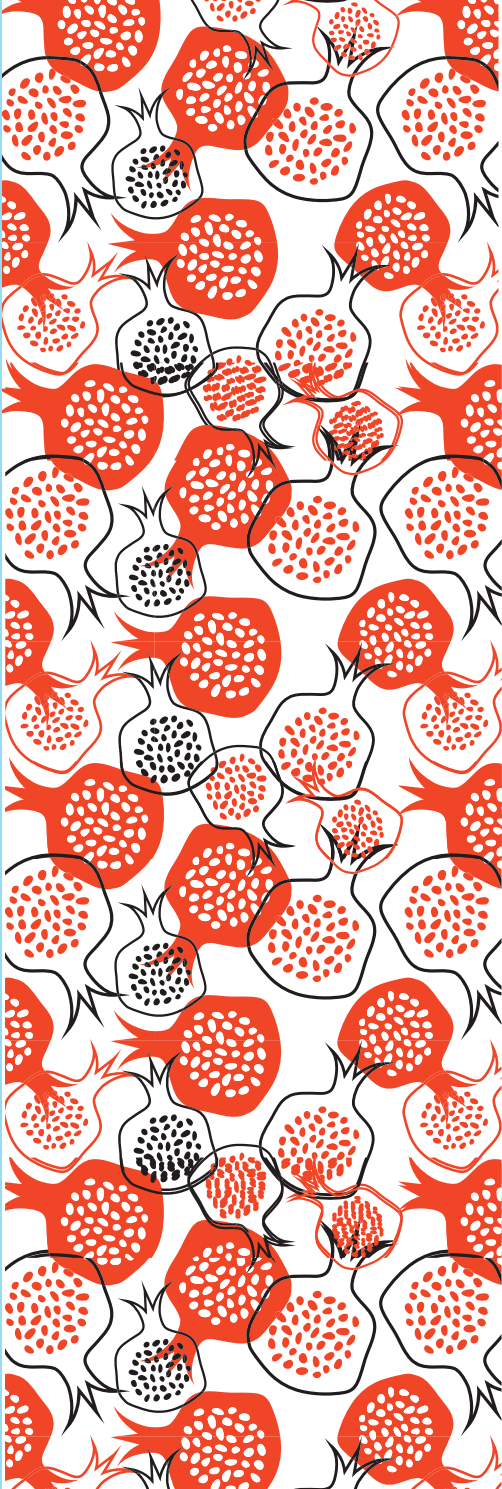
Sides

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Desserts

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Do You Need to Adjust Your Tax Withholding?

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

Once you’ve filed last year’s tax return and can see where your finances are headed this year, it may be a good time to adjust your income tax withholding to help make sure you’re having the right amount withheld from your paycheck.

Tax withholding is a balancing act. If you have too much tax withheld, you will receive a refund when you file your income tax return. If you prefer to receive more in your paycheck, you will need to reduce your withholding. However, if you have too little tax withheld, you will owe tax when you file your tax return and might owe a penalty.

Two tools – IRS Form W-4 and the Tax Withholding Estimator on irs.gov – can be used to help figure out the right amount of federal income tax to have withheld from your paycheck. Using these can be beneficial when tax laws

change, your filing status changes, you start a new job, or you have other major life changes. You might make a special effort to review your withholding if any of the following situations apply:

- Filing as a two-income family
- Holding more than one job at the same time
- Working for only part of the year
- Claiming credits, such as the child tax credit
- Itemizing deductions
- Having a high income and a complex return

How to adjust your withholding
Your employer will withhold tax from your paycheck based on the information you provide on Form W-4 and the IRS withholding tables. In some cases, you will need to give your employer a new Form W-4 within 10 days of a change in personal circumstances (for example,

if the number of allowances you are allowed to claim is reduced or your filing status changes from married to single). In other cases, you can submit a new Form W-4 whenever you wish. See IRS Publication 505 for more information.

If you have a large amount of non-wage income, such as interest, dividends, or capital gains, you might want to increase the tax withheld or claim fewer allowances. In this situation, also consider making estimated tax payments using IRS Form 1040-ES.

You can claim exemption from federal tax withholding on Form W-4 if both of these situations apply: (1) in the prior tax year, you were entitled to a refund of all federal income tax withheld because you had no tax liability, and (2) for the current year, you expect a refund of all federal income tax withheld because you anticipate having no tax liability.

This information is not intended as tax, legal, investment, or retirement advice or recommendations, and it may not be relied on for the purpose of avoiding any federal tax penalties. You are encouraged to seek guidance from an independent tax or legal professional. The content is derived from sources believed to be accurate. Neither the information presented nor any opinion expressed constitutes a solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security. This material was written and prepared by Broadridge Advisor Solutions. © 2024 Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc.

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Rubio: Freeing Hostages, Disbanding Hamas Must Remain a Focus

(JNS) – U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio emphasized last Wednesday the importance of freeing the hostages being held by Hamas, dismantling the terrorist group and addressing critical humanitarian needs in Gaza, while calling for greater focus on the first two issues.

“There’s a lot of attention being paid to the humanitarian, and we want to do everything we can to be helpful on the humanitarian problem, but not enough attention being paid to the fact that 20 people that had nothing to do with this

are being held hostage in tunnels on the verge of death, and no real talk about how Hamas needs to be disarmed and disbanded,” the top American diplomat remarked during an appearance on Fox Business’s “Kudlow,” where he discussed U.S. and Israeli policies regarding the ongoing conflict and the future of Gaza.

“We have to focus more on those two things. You have to do all three, and all the talk is about humanitarian – which is important; we are willing to do a lot to

be helpful there – but we have to focus on the other two. Those other two cannot be forgotten,” he said.

U.S. President Donald Trump has said that he wants all of the hostages returned from Gaza, including the deceased, “not five, not seven, all of them,” Rubio emphasized.

He insisted that any long-term solution must include ending the terrorist group’s rule in Gaza, saying that “ultimately Hamas cannot continue to exist. Even the Arab League says it. As long

The U.S. secretary of state stressed that for there to be long-term peace in the region, the Gaza-based terrorist group “cannot continue to exist.”

as Hamas exists as an armed group in Gaza, there will not be a peace, there will not be a peaceful future because it’s going to happen again, and this can never happen again.” [HW](#)

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Regina Spektor Responds to Pro-Palestinian Protester at Concert: ‘You’re Just Yelling at a Jew’



Regina Spektor performs at MGM Music Hall at Fenway on July 31, 2024, in Boston, Massachusetts. Credit: Lisa Dragani/Getty Images

(JTA) – Jewish singer-songwriter Regina Spektor shot back at a pro-Palestinian protester who interrupted her concert last Saturday night, telling the protester, “You’re just yelling at a Jew.” Later, she engaged in a back and forth with another audience member about the hunger crisis in Gaza, in a dramatic example of how deeply Israel’s war in Gaza is interceding in the public con-

sciousness and shaping the experience of Jews. The confrontation came 10 songs into Spektor’s performance at Revolution Hall in Portland, Oregon, when a protester began shouting “Free f—ing Palestine” from the crowd. Spektor, who emigrated from the Soviet Union to the United States as a child, has faced scrutiny for her pro-

rael activism on social media. In November 2023, the singer rebuked fellow artist Bjork for sharing an infographic about the displacement of Palestinians, and in July 2024 she was targeted by the Instagram account Zionists in Music for being a “proud Zionist who frequently posts her support for Israel on Instagram and X/Twitter.” During an event to commemorate the anniversary of Hamas’ Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel by Hamas in New York City, Spektor sang a rendition of “Avinu Malkeinu,” the classic High Holiday prayer. Last Saturday, the singer stopped her concert and began speaking directly to the pro-Palestinian protester. “You’re just yelling at a Jew,” she said to the person who interrupted her set. To the rest of the crowd, she said, “I don’t know what he thinks he’s doing. I really appreciate the security. We had a really hard time last night, when I said, ‘Shalom aleichem.’” Most of the crowd responded by cheering for Spektor while others laughed, and several people yelled, “Am Yisrael Chai,” according to vid-

eo of the concert posted on social media. Later, while an audience member who had yelled “Free Palestine” left the venue, Spektor said, “I thought this was different than the internet. This is real life.” When another audience member said, “There’s a genocide happening,” Spektor said, “You can leave the show if you want. This is not an internet comment section. I know that you are mistaking my show for a YouTube video.” The audience member then replied, “I’m watching children dying. That hurts.” “I think you should go because this is not the place for that conversation,” Spektor replied. “The only reason I even speak English is because I came here to escape this shit,” Spektor continued after several audience members left the concert. “I only speak English because I came from a country where people were treating Jews as others, and now I’m being othered here, and it sucks. It’ll be nice if one of my family’s generation didn’t have to go to a new country and learn a new language.” [HW](#)

‘Hamas is Not Interested in a Deal,’ Israeli FM Tells German Counterpart

By Steve Linde

(JNS) – Israel’s Foreign Minister Gideon Sa’ar told visiting German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul in a meeting at the Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem last Thursday evening that “Hamas is not interested in reaching a deal” to release the remaining 50 hostages being held in Gaza. “The main reason for this is that Hamas is receiving international support through the attacks against Israel,” Sa’ar said, according to a statement issued by the Foreign Ministry. “Hamas is holding the hostages and is not laying down its arms; it is entrenching itself in its refusal to accept the framework for the release of the hostages because it sees that the international community is giving it rewards and gifts.” Sa’ar also addressed the growing in-

ternational campaign to recognize a Palestinian state, saying, “We do not call these areas the ‘West Bank.’ We call them Judea and Samaria.” In Europe today, they think that Jews can live in Berlin, London and Brussels, but that Jews cannot live a kilometer and a half from here. We believe that Jews have the right to live in the heart of their historical homeland. Even in Judea and Samaria.” Several Western countries, including the United Kingdom, France and Canada, have in recent days announced their intentions to recognize a Palestinian state at the United Nations General Assembly in September. Sa’ar said that historically, “there has never been a Palestinian state” and he slammed what he called “illegal Pales-

tinian construction in Area C” of Judea and Samaria, saying that “it cannot be ignored.” Referring to the Palestinian Authority, he said, “It pays terrorists and terrorism and poisons the minds of the next generation, through wild incitement against the State of Israel in its education system, in mosques and in the media.” If the P.A. had control over its borders and airspace, he said, “we will find ourselves with a flow of Iranian weapons into the land of Israel. This will not happen.” Sa’ar concluded by saying that “a Palestinian state will not be established for the simple reason that Israel will not be able to forfeit its own security.” Wadephul, who also held talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Net-

anyahu earlier in the day, said in a statement issued shortly before he took off for Tel Aviv that talks on establishing a Palestinian state must begin immediately. “A negotiated two-state solution remains the only path that can offer people on both sides a life in peace, security, and dignity,” he said. “For Germany, the recognition of a Palestinian state comes more at the end of that process. But such a process must begin now.” In response, National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir accused Berlin of “supporting Nazism” by considering the recognition of a Palestinian state in the wake of Hamas’s Oct. 7, 2023, attacks. “80 years since the Holocaust, and Germany is once again supporting Nazism,” Ben-Gvir posted on X. [HW](#)

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS: JOURNEY THROUGH THE DECADES
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Israel Approves Plan to Take Over Gaza City, Setting Oct. 7 Deadline for Civilians to Leave

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – Israel’s security cabinet has endorsed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s plan to expand fighting in Gaza, despite warnings from military leaders and others that doing so would put soldiers and hostages at risk. The plan approved early last Friday morning does not specify that Israel will “occupy” Gaza, as Netanyahu said shortly before entering the marathon meeting that he intended to do. Instead, it focuses on Gaza City, the largest area within Gaza where the Israeli army does not already operate on the ground. The IDF says it has conquered about 75% of Gaza since entering in October 2023 but has avoided major ground operations in Gaza City and a handful of other places where it believes hostages are being held – and where a majority of Palestinians are living after mass displacement within the territory. Now, Israel is reportedly giving civil-

ians sheltering in Gaza City until Oct. 7 – the two-year anniversary of the Hamas attack from Gaza that inaugurated the war – to leave. The timeline allows for the Israeli army to array its personnel and supplies. It also leaves open the possibility for a negotiated end to the conflict, which much of the world has called for but Israel and Hamas have never agreed to, or for Hamas to surrender, as Israel has demanded but Hamas has sworn never to do. Netanyahu’s office said shortly before 7 a.m. last Friday that the security cabinet had approved a plan to prepare for seizing Gaza City “while distributing humanitarian assistance to the civilian population outside the combat zones.” Israel has drawn international condemnation over humanitarian conditions in Gaza, which are likely to worsen substantially as hundreds of thousands of

displaced Palestinians will be forced to move again into even more densely packed portions of the strip. The announcement lists five principles for ending the war: disarming Hamas; returning all 50 remaining hostages, of 20 are thought to be alive; the demilitarization of Gaza; Israeli “security control” in Gaza; and the creation of a civil administration “that is neither Hamas nor the Palestinian Authority,” the body that controls parts of the West Bank that some countries have endorsed as the governing authority of a future Palestinian state. Netanyahu has drawn criticism for resisting calls to make a “day-after” plan for the war that would include a governance scheme. Israeli military leaders reportedly pushed back against expanding operations in Gaza, citing the risk to hostages – some have been murdered when the

IDF neared – and the condition of the country’s reservists after nearly two years of war. Most hostage families and members of the Israeli public also want the war to end with a deal that would release the hostages. The plan leaves the door open to further expanded operations in the future but falls short of the ambitions of some members of the security cabinet, who have said they want to see Gaza totally controlled by Israel, Jewish resettlement in the enclave and Palestinians encouraged or even forced to leave. The statement from Netanyahu’s office signaled that there was dissent without offering details about what form it took. “A decisive majority of Security Cabinet ministers believed that the alternative plan that had been submitted to the Security Cabinet would neither achieve the defeat of Hamas nor the return of the hostages,” it said. [HW](#)

OBITUARIES

Annabelle Beyer Kaplan

Annabelle Beyer Kaplan, of Memphis, passed away Wednesday, August 6, at the age of 89. Her absence will be felt by all who knew her.

She was predeceased by her husband, Dr. Jerry Kaplan. The memories of the two of them will forever be in the hearts of their four children: Mark Kaplan, of Providence, R.I., Valerie Arnold (Thomas), of Memphis, Hugh Kaplan (Caroline), of Bethesda, Md., and Susan Rosenbloom, of Memphis. She will also be missed by her seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

We will always remember her smiling face and amusing family stories.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to one of these charities, which Annabelle supported: The Senior Lunch Program at Ben and Larisa Baer Senior Adult Center, or Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service, both at the Memphis Jewish Community Center, https://mycenter.jccmemphis.org/MyCenter/eventdonate.jsf?search_string=Operating%20Contributions

Service were held in the Levy-Cooper Chapel at Temple Israel Cemetery, Friday August 8, 2025. **HW**



Shirley I. Summerfield

With heavy hearts, we announce that Shirley I. Summerfield passed away peacefully on Monday, August 4, 2025, at the age of 98.

Shirley is lovingly survived by her daughter, Lisa (Barry) Laiderman, and son Gordon (Michelle) Summerfield, as well as her sister, Jeanne Shanken. She leaves behind cherished grandchildren Stacy (Claude) Bebie, Erica (Craig) Pentak, and Hannah Summerfield, along with her beloved great-grandchildren Evelyn, Norah and Jack Pentak, and Orion and Hera Bebie.

Special thanks to everyone at Brookdale Dogwood and Baptist Hospice along with her primary caretakers, Betty Franklin and Janice Little-McCay, for

your great care and love.

Born in Memphis on June 16, 1927, to Edna and Marcus Iskiwitch, Shirley graduated from Central High School in Memphis and went on to attend Sophie Newcomb College at Tulane University graduating with a degree in Economics. She was blessed to share 67 wonderful years of marriage with her devoted husband, Herman (H.I.) Summerfield.

Throughout her life, Shirley was a tireless volunteer in the Jewish community serving on the boards of Temple Israel and Plough Towers as well as president of the National Council of Jewish Women – Memphis section. She also had a deep appreciation for the arts. As a young woman, she studied ballet and performed in college productions, fostering a lifelong love of artistic expression. Together with H.I., she delighted in attending theater performances, ballet, symphony concerts, jazz shows and the opera, sharing countless memorable evenings celebrating the beauty of live performance.

Graveside funeral services were held at Temple Israel Cemetery on Thursday, August 7, 2025.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made to the charity of your choice in Shirley’s memory. **HW**

This is the Model Who Will Represent Israel at Miss Universe

(JNS) – Israeli model Melanie Shiraz was crowned “Miss Universe Israel” on July 19 and will represent the country at the international Miss Universe pageant in Thailand in November.

The Miss Universe Israel pageant, now in its second year under its current format, is organized by Jewish American businessman Edgar Sakhain, owner of Edgar Entertainment, with the support of the Israeli Consulate. It replaces the iconic Beauty Queen of Israel contest, which for years launched the careers of many Israeli models.

Though intended to select a representative for Israel to Miss Universe, the Israeli competition has for the second consecutive year been held in Miami.

Shiraz, 26, competed as “Miss Caesarea,” despite currently living in California. According to her profile on the contest’s website, she is an Israeli entrepreneur and content creator with a background in innovation, public diplomacy and the arts.

She succeeds Miss Israel 2024, Ofir Korsia, who represented Israel last year with distinction. **HW**

Chikli Criticizes Piers Morgan

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – Israeli Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism Minister Amichai Chikli last Sunday sharply criticized Piers Morgan after the British broadcaster and journalist appeared to accuse pro-Israel figures of hypocrisy.

“It’s interesting that all the prominent pro-Israeli voices on here who refuse

to believe any Gazan casualty numbers published by the Hamas-run Palestinian health ministry, accept the veracity of hostage pix/videos posted by Hamas without hesitation,” said Morgan last Saturday.

Chikli called the statement “utterly disgusting.”

Morgan was apparently referring to propaganda videos released the week prior by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad showing the dire condition of Israeli hostages Evyatar David and Rom Braslavski.

On June 24, Morgan devoted nearly 15 minutes of his YouTube talk show to denying accusations of antisemitism, following pointed criticism from Chikli. The minister had chastised “Piers Morgan Uncensored” for what he called a “sharp and troubling descent into overt

antisemitism,” citing the show’s platforming of antisemitic figures like Candace Owens and Dan Bilzerian.

During their heated exchange, Morgan repeatedly shouted over Chikli and insisted he had never made antisemitic remarks, framing Chikli’s critique as a personal attack. The controversy has prompted several pro-Israel former guests to announce a boycott of the show, citing what they describe as Morgan’s escalating hostility toward supporters of Israel. **HW**

Huckabee: Gaza Humanitarian Foundation to Scale Up Aid Sites to 16

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee has confirmed there will soon be a significant increase in the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation’s aid distribution footprint in the Gaza Strip.

“The immediate plan is to scale up the number of sites up to 16 and begin to operate as much as 24 hours a day to get more food to more people more efficiently,” the diplomat said on Fox News last Wednesday.

“The President has been telling us he wants food into the hands of hungry people, but in a way that it doesn’t get into the hands of Hamas.

The U.S. and other countries are committing \$1 billion in funding for the expansion project, according to Israel’s Channel 12.

GHF – a U.S. nonprofit organization backed by the American and Israe-

li governments designed to bypass the Hamas terrorist group – has delivered nearly 110 million meals since launching on May 26. It has been running four sites, in Rafah’s Saudi neighborhood; Tel al-Sultan, just north of Rafah; Khan Yunis; and Wadi Gaza, south of Gaza City.

“It has worked ..., it’s not going into the hands of looters and thieves. It’s going into the hands of the people who actually have come because they really do need food. That’s what the president wants. This is a president, I think we’ve seen it: He makes a promise, he keeps it,” Huckabee said.

The ambassador saw the GHF’s work firsthand on Aug. 1, when he joined U.S. special envoy Steve Witkoff for a visit to an aid site in Khan Yunis, the southern Gaza Strip. **HW**

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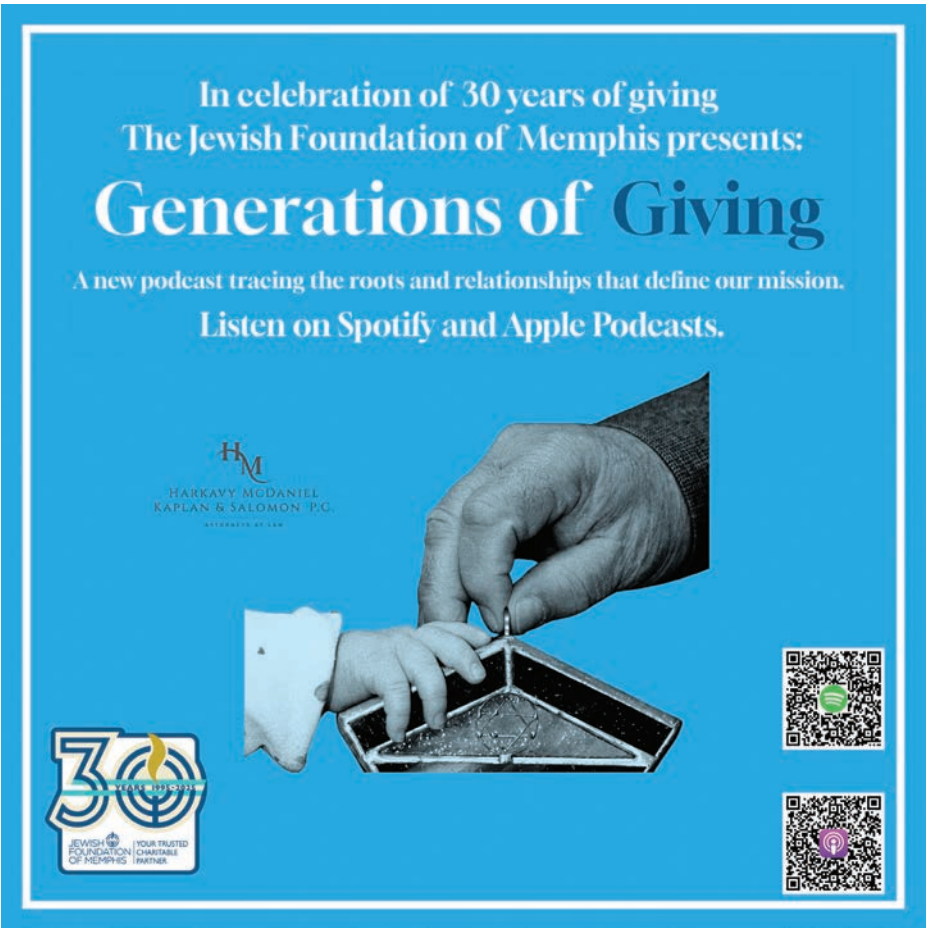
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Celebrating 30 Years of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis



Financial Advisor Charles Jalenak has been a leader in the Memphis Jewish community for many years. Currently he’s beginning a new term as Chair of Jewish Community Partners. In the past, he served as Chair of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis and previous Chair of the Investment Committee. Charles is part of a multigenerational philanthropic family: both his parents and his children are part of Generations of Giving, a program recognizing families with a long-standing relationship with the Jewish Foundation of Memphis spanning three or more generations. Listen to an interview with Charles on the Foundation’s new podcast, “Generations of Giving,” available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

30 Years, 30 Moments
A Look Back at the Legacy of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis in Photos



In honor of the 30-year anniversary of the Jewish Foundation of Memphis, we are showcasing the Foundation’s history and impact through a content series across multiple platforms, including a photo series highlighting key moments in the Foundation’s history.

October 2008: The Jewish Foundation of Memphis broadened its fund offerings and partnered with its first donor family to create a family foundation, The Belz 2008 Foundation. With their own boards of directors, by-laws, investment strategies and grant priorities, family foundations created in partnership with the Foundation provide a cost effective and impactful way for multi-generational families to structure their philanthropy. Today, the Jewish Foundation of Memphis has three family foundations with projected assets to exceed \$250 million.

Alleged Capital Jewish Museum Shooter Elias Rodriguez Indicted on Federal Hate Crime Charges



People attend a candlelight vigil at Lafayette Square across from the White House in Washington, DC on May 22, 2025, following a shooting that left two Israeli Embassy staffers dead. Credit: Mandel NGAN/AFP

By Grace Gilson
(JTA) – The man accused of fatally shooting two Israeli Embassy staffers in the back at the Capital Jewish Museum in Washington, D.C., in May was indicted last Wednesday on federal hate crime charges.
Elias Rodriguez, 31, of Chicago, was indicted on nine new charges, including local charges as well as two federal counts of hate crime resulting in death.
The new charges join those already in place in the alleged murder of Yaron Lischinsky, 30, and Sarah Lynn Milgrim, 26, two Israeli Embassy staffers who were about to be engaged, as they

exited a May 21 event for young Jewish professionals and diplomats at the Capital Jewish Museum hosted by the American Jewish Committee.
The indictment alleges Rodriguez killed Milgrim “in an especially heinous, cruel, and depraved manner,” noting that Rodriguez could potentially be eligible for the death penalty if he is convicted.
U.S. Attorney Jeanine Pirro has not yet announced whether she plans to seek the death penalty in the case.
“This office will leave no stone unturned in its effort to bring justice to the innocent victims of Elias Rodriguez,” she said in a statement. “The hate

charges shed further light on his evil intent in the killing of innocent victims.”
The indictment alleges that Rodriguez had a history of violent rhetoric online against Israelis, including one direct message sent in May 2024 that read, “please please please god please vaporize every Israeli 18 and above so these kids have some chance at becoming human.”
The night of the shooting, Rodriguez also allegedly scheduled a social media post for later that night that read, “those of us against the genocide take satisfaction in arguing that the perpetrators and abettors have forfeited their humanity,” according to the indictment. **HW**



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