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11 SHEVAT, 5786

JANUARY 29, 2026

VOL. 104, NO. 19

MJHR Art Gallery Opening Showcases the Importance of Art and Connection



Margaret poses with her painting, "Purple Flower."

By Jasmine Williams

On January 14, 2026, Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR) hosted an Art Gallery Opening showcasing resident art and to celebrate the organization's thriving arts education program. Families, staff and visitors attended and enjoyed the event, and two residents sold their original pieces. The residents created art pieces throughout the year with MJHR art therapist Camaron Spencer and learned a wide variety of techniques such as abstract painting, yarn work, sculpting, mosaic, candle making and collage. As art is a wonderful bene-

fit to cognitive function, staff have prioritized bolstering the arts culture at the Home.

The different pieces showcased the specialties each resident chose throughout the year. Theresa, a resident, did an acrylic painting called "Bunny in a Basket." Another resident, Linda, created a nature landscape, with only yarn, called "Three Trees."

As one of the most consistent art class students, Margaret had multiple pieces shown at the gallery opening. She shared, "It's important for to me make



Linda poses with her art, "Three Trees" and "LOVE."

it to the art classes, because it helps me mentally. I'm kind of anti-social, but it keeps me from feeling stuck in my room, and it really does make me happy. It tickled me to death to see my art in the auditorium, and to see people really looking at it."

The art therapy program works to help residents feel more socially connected, experience improved emotional well-being and ensure they have pathways to express their feelings. Studies have shown the great benefit of the arts on seniors, especially those living in care communities, and the effect a high-quality program can have on their quality of life.

Art therapy is also available to inpatient rehab patients and participants of the Ronna K. Newburger Adult Day Center. Engaging in activities such as painting, sculpting and making collages helps enhance fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination and muscle strength, particularly

in the hands and fingers. These are great benefits to our residents whose movement is restricted due to their physical abilities or who are working on specific movements in a rehab plan.

Art has played a pivotal role in the lives of many who have come through the Home, and the gallery opening showed the impact of it. The value of access to art culture is never undervalued by the residents and staff. MJHR hopes the community sees the benefit of its inclusion in the programming as well.

Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab is a not-for-profit nursing home, Jewish in character and environment, dedicated to providing the highest level of care possible with dignity, compassion, and professionalism. Only through the help of generous donors is the organization able to care for those in need. Find more information at www.memphisjewishhome.org/giving. **HW**

Holocaust Survivor Mark Schonwetter to Speak with Shelby County High School Students

The Tennessee Holocaust Commission (THC) is bringing Holocaust survivor Mark Schonwetter to Memphis for three days of programs designed for Memphis-area private and public high school students, Holocaust survivors and their families.

On Tuesday, Feb. 3 at 6:30 p.m., Memphis University School (MUS) is hosting an International Holocaust Remembrance program at MUS and has invited high school (grades 9-12) students and parents from other Memphis private schools, including Margolin Hebrew Academy and 8th graders at Bornblum Jewish Community School.

"The MUS program is truly unprecedented and makes an impactful statement supporting Holocaust education and standing up against hatred in Memphis," said Lorraine Wolf, community

impact manager at Jewish Community Partners.

On Wednesday, Feb. 4 at 10:30 a.m., THC has arranged for many groups of Shelby County high school students to be bussed to Temple Israel to hear Mr. Schonwetter speak. Also invited are Holocaust survivors, second and third generations.

On Thursday, Feb. 5 at 10 a.m., Mr. Schonwetter will be speaking to the University High School students on the campus of University of Memphis.

Mark Schonwetter, age 92, of Livingston, New Jersey, was a young child living in Brzostek, Poland, when Germany invaded at the start of World War II. His family was forced from their home, and after his father was taken by the Gestapo, Mark fled with his mother and sister. They were confined for a time in a near-

by ghetto before escaping into hiding in the Polish countryside. For nearly three years, they survived by moving between attics, forests and farms, constantly evading capture. By the end of the war, Mark was among only a handful of Jews from Brzostek who survived.

In 1961, Mark emigrated to the United States, where he found work in a jewelry factory. Through determination and hard work, he purchased the Lieberfarb jewelry manufacturing company from the Lieberfarb family in 1971. He expanded the business beyond plain wedding bands, introducing a complete line of high-quality, exquisitely engraved wedding and engagement rings, men's diamond rings and diamond anniversary rings.

In the 1990s, his two daughters, Ann Schonwetter Arnold and Isabella Schonwetter Fiske, joined the business. In

2002, Ann and Isabella were honored by the Women's Jewelry Association with the "Manufacturer of the Year" award.

Mark remained in the jewelry manufacturing business until his retirement in 2018.

He later co-authored the memoir, "Together: A Journey for Survival" with his daughter, Ann Arnold, chronicling his Holocaust experiences and his life afterward.

In 2019, his daughters, Ann and Isabella, founded the Mark Schonwetter Holocaust Education Foundation, dedicated to creating a world in which all people are treated with kindness and respect by expanding and supporting Holocaust education. Mark continues to share his story through speaking engagements, always accompanied by either Ann or Isabella. **HW**

Attack on Khamenei will Trigger Jihad, Iran's Parliament Warns



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, speaks at the Imam Khomeini Hussainia conference hall in Tehran on July 24, 2015. Credit: Seysd Shahaboddin Vajedi via Wikimedia Commons.

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – An attack on Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei would spark a jihad, Iran's national security parliamentary commission said last Tuesday.

"Any attack on the Supreme Leader means a declaration of war with the entire Islamic world and must await the issuance of a jihad decree by Islamic scholars and the response of Islam's soldiers in all parts of the world," Iran's parliamentary commission said, according to Reuters, citing an Iranian Students News Agency report.

The threat follows one by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian last Sunday that a strike on Khamenei is "tantamount to an all-out war" against the country.

His comments came a day after U.S. President Donald Trump called for "new leadership in Iran."

"The man is a sick man who should run his country properly and stop killing people. His country is the worst place to live anywhere in the world because of poor leadership," Trump told Politico, reacting to a series of tweets by Khamenei.

Trump has urged demonstrators to "keep protesting" and threatened military action if the regime's security forces use lethal force against them.

U.S. officials told The Wall Street Journal last Tuesday that the president was still pressing aides for what he called "decisive" military options.

It was reported that the Abraham Lincoln Carrier Strike Group left the South

China Sea last Sunday. Media outlets have said the group had been ordered to the Middle East, though the Pentagon and U.S. Navy have not confirmed it, according to USNI News, the U.S. Naval Institute's online site.

America is directing other assets to the region. U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) posted to its X feed last Tuesday an image of a U.S. Air Force F-15E Strike Eagle fighter assigned to the 494th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron landing at an undisclosed base in the Middle East on Jan. 18.

"The F-15's presence enhances combat readiness and promotes regional security and stability," the tweet said.

The F-15E has a bomb capacity of 23,000 lbs.

Iran has previously threatened to strike Israel and U.S. military installations if attacked.

If the Islamic Republic attacks Israel, Jerusalem "will act with might that Iran has not seen before," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last Monday.

"We are closely following what is happening in Iran," Netanyahu told the Knesset. "No one can predict what tomorrow will bring in Iran, but one thing is clear: No matter what happens—Iran will not return to being what it was."

Death toll based on individual reports

Khamenei publicly acknowledged last Saturday that "several thousand" people have been killed in nationwide protests

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The Hebrew Watchman is a Member of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, and Jewish News Service

THE HEBREW WATCHMAN (USPS #807-360) is published weekly every Thursday for \$36 per year by JEWISH LIVING OF THE SOUTH, Inc. THE HEBREW WATCHMAN PO Box 770846 Memphis, TN 38177-0846 Periodical postage paid at Memphis, Tenn. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: THE HEBREW WATCHMAN PO Box 770846 Memphis, TN 38177-0846

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. Jan. 30, 2026 / 12 Shevat, 5786.....5:08 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. Jan. 31, 2026 / 13 Shevat, 5786 6:07 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Beshalach

that began on Dec. 28, while attributing the deaths and damage to "those linked to Israel and the U.S."

Estimates of the number of protesters murdered by the regime's forces range from a few thousand to tens of thousands, with the full picture difficult to determine amid a government-imposed internet shutdown that began on Jan. 8.

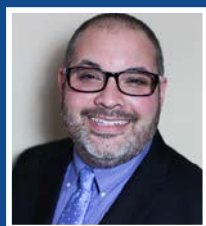
The Human Rights Activists New Agency (HRANA) reported last Sunday that 3,919 people have been killed, including 3,685 protesters, with an additional 8,949 deaths still under investigation.

Some 2,109 people have been seri-

ously wounded, and the number of confirmed detainees has risen to 24,669.

"These figures are based solely on verified individual reports. Given the internet shutdown, communication restrictions and limited independent access to information, the actual numbers are likely significantly higher than reported," HRANA said.

The protests, the largest since the 1979 Iranian Revolution, have spread to nearly every province in the country. What began as anger over a spiraling currency has widened into open calls to end clerical rule. HW



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Florida Nightclub Apologizes, Fires Employees for Playing 'Hitler' Song

(JNS) – A Miami nightclub has fired three employees and permanently banned a group of antisemitic influencers, including podcasters Nick Fuentes, Myron Gaines and Andrew Tate, after the club played the Kanye West song, "Heil Hitler" on Jan. 17.

A widely circulated video shows the group, in the VIP section of Vendome, singing along to West's song, which has been banned on major music streaming platforms.

"A group of influencers who bolster antisemitism with their hateful behavior walk into a club in Miami and request Ye's 'Heil Hitler' song ... No, this isn't the setup of a joke. It actually happened. And guess what? The nightclub shamefully obliged," the Anti-Defamation League said.

"Why would a nightclub play a song that glorifies Hitler and was banned by multiple streaming platforms?" the ADL asked rhetorically. "Imagine being Jewish, out for a fun night, and now you're surrounded by people performing Nazi salutes to a song that glorifies the individual responsible for murdering 6 million other Jews. This is not ok."

Vendome said on Jan. 19 that it had completed an interview review. "This isolated incident involved three people which have been terminated from their employment," the club stated. "We have also permanently banned the individuals involved in this incident from the Vendome premises."

It also acknowledged that the episode "should never have occurred," and that it has implemented new safeguards to make sure that its venue "is never used as a platform for discrimination, hate, antisemitism or any other behavior

harmful towards our community."

JNS sought comment from Vendome but did not immediately hear back.

After the footage was circulated, Vendome released a statement saying it was "conducting an internal review to understand the circumstances surrounding how this requested song came to be played during a bottle parade. We will take immediate action to hold the responsible parties accountable."

The club noted that "our ownership and leadership reflect a diverse group of partners, backgrounds and faiths, including members of the Jewish community, and we are deeply disturbed by the harm caused by this incident and the circulation of this footage."

Vendome was founded by Jonathan Mansour, Adel Bourkia, Byram Zaid and Fallou Bathily, all French. Local outlets are reporting that Mansour can be spotted in the video.

Steven Meiner, the Orthodox Jewish mayor of Miami Beach, Fla., said he was "deeply disturbed by these videos of twisted individuals glorifying Hitler and the murder of millions."

"Miami Beach is a welcoming, inclusive city built by people of all backgrounds and faiths," he said. "These 'influencers' who spread hate should never have been welcomed into this club or allowed to play a song with 'Heil Hitler' lyrics that has been universally condemned."

Daniella Levine Cava, mayor of Miami-Dade County, called the incident "deeply disturbing and unacceptable." She stated that "we stand against antisemitism and all hate, and expect swift accountability to keep our community safe and respectful for all." HW

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m., and speakers and entertainment start at noon.

Monday, February 2

Speaker: Josh Goldin with Comfort Keepers

Josh will give one of his fun talks. This one is titled **Tu B'Shevat. Why?**

Tu BiShvat (or Tu B'Shevat) means the "15th of Shevat" in Hebrew and is known as the Jewish New Year for Trees, an ecological holiday celebrating nature's renewal, especially the emergence of spring in Israel. Come hear a nice take on an old, fun, holiday!

Wednesday, February 4

Speaker: Sarah Cavanaugh with The Avaline at River Oaks

Sarah's topic will be **A More Healthy You.**

She will be joined by an occupational therapist from Fox Therapy. They will focus on things seniors can do to remain in their home and mobile. The last session with Fox Therapy was full of practical tips everyone in the room was happy to hear. Come have a good kosher lunch and learn some useful information at the same time. Dessert will be served following the talk.

Monday, February 9

Speaker: Kristen Miller with Mid-South Ageing Consultants

Kristin's topic will be **The Agony of De-Sleep.**

As we get older, sometimes a good night's sleep gets to be more and more of an issue. Come hear some ideas to get that restful sleep we all need. Reservations are only needed for the lunch.

Wednesday, February 11

Field Trip Tour of Dixon Gallery

The Dixon has a new Interactive Gallery called Meet the Dixons. If you have wondered about who created the original home that became Dixon Gallery and Gardens, come see this interesting exhibit that talks about Margaret and Hugo Dixon. Their dream of creating a place to celebrate art, nature and beauty that became a reality in 1976 with the opening of Dixon Gallery and Gardens. There is no charge for the Dixon Gallery tour. Only \$2 for the roundtrip bus from the MJCC to Dixon. Reservations are limited so please call by the day before.

SPECIAL! Every Tuesday & Thursday there will be an Ice Cream Social following the Senior Lunch at no additional charge. A Parve Ice Cream Treat will be served.

Please join us Monday through Friday for a delicious kosher lunch prepared by the kitchens at Memphis Jewish Home. The cost is only \$2 for seniors. Reservations are required by 1 p.m. the day before attendance.

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'Not Artful but You Have to Ask,' Rahm Emanuel Says of Harris Campaign Vetting Josh Shapiro



Rahm Emanuel, then-U.S. Ambassador to Japan, visits the U.S. Naval War College at Naval Station Newport in Rhode Island, Feb. 22, 2024. Credit: Brett Dodge/U.S. Navy.

(JNS) – The questions that Kamala Harris’s campaign asked Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro about the Jewish governor’s possible ties to Israel to vet him as a potential vice presidential can-

didate were both “totally appropriate and totally inappropriate,” according to former White House chief of staff Rahm Emanuel.

Shapiro, who is Jewish, found ques-

tions about his ties to Israel offensive. Emanuel, who, like Shapiro, has been mentioned as a potential 2028 Democratic presidential candidate, said he had undergone background checks before becoming White House chief of staff under then-President Barack Obama, a senior adviser to then-President Bill Clinton and an ambassador to Japan under then-President Joe Biden.

Shapiro and Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz were the finalists for the vice-presidential nomination to run with Harris on the Democratic ticket.

But Shapiro said in his new book that he took offense at being asked, “Had I been a double agent for Israel?” and whether he had communicated with an undercover Israeli agent.

“I wondered whether these questions were being posed to just me – the only Jewish guy in the running – or if everyone who had not held a federal office was being grilled about Israel in the same way,” the governor wrote.

Emanuel said that the investigators had no choice, even if the questions were inartful.

“If you don’t ask, given the trips that Walz makes to China and Gov. Shapiro’s background, if you don’t ask them, you will have not done your job of ‘vetting,’” Emanuel said at a meeting with Washington political reporters sponsored by the Christian Science Monitor.

“On the other hand, it’s kind of self-evident,” he said. “How would you know you’re dealing with a double agent? The question asked like that – not artful, but you have to ask.”

During the session, Emanuel also said that U.S. President Donald Trump should use the power of the presidency to speak out against the rise in Jew-hatred.

“The presidency comes with a tool called the bully pulpit,” he said. “Right now it’s being exercised – all of the bully with none of the pulpit. This is a moment to actually bring people together now.”

Anti-semitism has always existed, but now it is more “acted on and expressed, and that is a different phenomenon,” Emanuel said. “It went from implicit to explicit, and there has to be a full condemnation.” **HW**

Ms. Rachel’s Social Media Activity Reflects ‘Broader’ Jew-Hatred Pattern, Media Watchdog Says

(JNS) – After engaging with antisemitic content on her Instagram page, children’s entertainer Ms. Rachel has drawn criticism from media watchdog HonestReporting, which argued that her behavior reflects a “broader pattern” that “can no longer be dismissed.”

“Screenshots revealed her liking a comment that read ‘Free America from the Jews’ on a post of hers, which called for a ‘Free Palestine, Free Sudan, Free

Congo, Free Iran,’” HonestReporting wrote on Jan. 22.

Rachel Accurso, who launched a YouTube channel for children under the name “Ms. Rachel” in 2019 and has 4.8 million followers on Instagram, said the interaction was a mistake.

“People are allowed to make mistakes,” Accurso wrote on Jan. 21, sharing her response to a follower alerting her to the comment. “I delete antisem-

itism any time I see it. I am against all forms of hate, including antisemitism against the Jewish people.”

“I’m so broken over this,” she said in a follow-up video post. “I feel like we can’t be human anymore online. I am so sorry for the confusion it caused, and I am so sorry if anyone thought that I would ever agree with something horrible and antisemitic like that.”

HonestReporting also highlighted another comment thread on her video apology involving an account called the Palestine News Network, which the watchdog group said praised the late Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar and has publicly harassed Jews. The account wrote of the original post, “Spoiler alert: They left the comment themselves,” to which the Ms. Rachel account immediately responded, “Oooooooooooooohhhh.”

“Everyone has accidentally liked a post while mindlessly scrolling through social media,” HonestReporting stated. “But when that ‘accident’ becomes multiple engagements with blatantly antisemitic comments – alongside posts that are explicitly antisemitic – it can no longer be dismissed as clumsy thumbs on a small phone screen.”

The watchdog group also questioned Accurso’s collaboration with Palestinian photojournalist Motaz Azaiza, who has called on followers to join the “resistance” and praised Sinwar and noted that she has repeatedly accused Israel of “committing a genocide.”

“This is not a matter of clumsy thumbs or a lack of social-media fluency,” HonestReporting said. “When this conduct repeats, it stops being careless and becomes disqualifying for someone positioned as a safe figure for children.” **HW**

‘Let Me Spit on That Jew’: New Jersey Man Charged with Federal Hate Crimes

(JNS) – Federal prosecutors charged a New Jersey man with federal hate crimes last Wednesday after he allegedly attacked three Jews outside a kosher restaurant in Manhattan in October.

Alazim Baker, 29, of Irvington, N.J., approached a visiting Israeli rabbi outside the restaurant and began aggressively asking the victim, “What is your religion?” and refused to let him enter.

“Baker then grabbed Victim-1’s yarmulke and threw it on the floor. He then stomped on the yarmulke and spit on it before punching Victim-1 in the face,” the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the Southern District of New York stated. “While Victim-1 was lying on the ground and bleeding, Baker yelled toward Victim-1,

in sum and substance: ‘Let me spit on that Jew.’”

The punch left the unnamed victim with bruises and caused a brain bleed, according to reports. Baker then allegedly attacked two other Jewish men who tried to help the rabbi while he yelled, “Your people own everything” and “I’m going to jail today.”

“As alleged, Alazim Baker deliberately targeted Jewish victims with violence,” said U.S. Attorney Jay Clayton. “Violence motivated by antisemitism or any other anti-faith bias has no place in this great city.

Baker faces two counts of committing hate crimes, each of which carries a maximum of 10 years in prison. **HW**

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Jared Kushner Presents Plan for 'New Gaza' at Davos as Trump Launches Board of Peace with Israel Absent

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – Jared Kushner presented a phased vision for the future of Gaza at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, last Thursday, saying that there was “no plan B” when it comes to reconstructing the territory battered during the two-year war between Israel and Hamas.

Kushner, President Donald Trump’s son-in-law and advisor, was crucial to negotiating the ceasefire that ended active fighting in the war in October.

The 20-point vision he presented in Davos reflects elements of that ceasefire deal, which has been only partially implemented. It calls for starting at the enclave’s southern border by reopening the Rafah crossing and moving steadily northward until the entire Palestinian territory has been rebuilt, to include a seaport, airport and tourism infrastructure. The end result, according to a slide he presented, would be “peace & prosperity.”

Kushner said the most important step is to disarm Hamas, which still controls a portion of Gaza. Emphasized that reconstruction will take place only in portions of Gaza where Hamas is demilitarized, he said some Hamas members who agree to lay down their arms will be given amnesty and could become part of a new security apparatus in Gaza.

Kushner suggested that he understood that his vision, which would take many years and at least \$25 billion to implement, could encounter obstacles. But the White House had decided to “plan for catastrophic success,” he said.

Kushner’s presentation came as Trump held a “signing ceremony” for his new “Board of Peace,” an entity devised initially to oversee Gaza but

whose mandate Trump has indicated could include other world conflicts. (Its charter does not mention Gaza specifically.) Of the 60 countries that the United States invited to join, representatives from about 20 attended the ceremony, including Hungary’s Viktor Orban, Argentina’s Javier Milei and officials from Qatar and Saudi Arabia.

Orban was the only European leader present; other European countries have turned down the invitation to join the board or expressed concerns about its composition – potentially to include Russia – and potential to undercut other international bodies, about which Trump has expressed disdain.

Israel also did not have a representative at the ceremony. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said last Wednesday that Israel would join despite misgivings about the presence of Turkey and Qatar, which have backed Hamas, on the board. Netanyahu is not in Davos (Switzerland is party to the International Criminal Court, which has issued a warrant for his arrest) but Israeli President Isaac Herzog, who is present, did not attend.

The Egyptian official at the ceremony announced that the crossing at Rafah, which has been closed since Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, would reopen in both directions next week. Israel has said it would not open the crossing until the final Israeli hostage in Gaza, Ran Gvili, is returned, which Hamas agreed to do as part of the ceasefire.

Kushner urged those who have expressed skepticism about the board to hold their criticism. “Just calm down for 30 days,” he said. “The war is over. Let’s work together.” **HW**



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Meet Paul Edelstein

In 2027, Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab (MJHR) will celebrate 100 years of serving patients. In honor of this accomplishment and all the people who made it possible, we are telling 100 of their stories.

Over the next two years, we will publish 100 Stories for 100 Years – a weekly column spotlighting resident, staff, and lay leader stories with the Home from throughout our history. This week, we are highlighting a resident story. Enjoy reading about and meeting Paul Edelstein.



Paul Edelstein relaxing at the Home.

By Jasmine Williams

MJHR: Tell us about yourself (hometown, education, family, hobbies, career).

I grew up in Western Kentucky, right outside of Louisville. I have two brothers and two grandsons. My daughter's name is Polly, and she lives in Philadelphia. I love to paint, and I started at 15. I do pet portraits, still-life portraits. I didn't go to school for painting, I just kind of liked it, so I kept doing it.

MJHR: How did you become connected to MJHR?

I've been at the Home for a couple of years. My daughter found MJHR for

me, and I have enjoyed it ever since. The people are nice, and it is conveniently located in the area. I've made a lot of connections at the Home, like Martha, who's my tablemate in the dining room.

MJHR: Share your favorite MJHR story.

My favorite memory is meeting Dan-O, the therapy dog. He's my favorite. I visit him at least once a day. I know that he likes hamburgers. I had a leftover hamburger from the deli one day, and he ate it gladly.

MJHR: What do you wish for the fu-



Paul Edelstein relaxing at the Home.

ture 100 years of the organization?

Maybe there will be a new facility, with more rooms and programs. It would be nice to have a foreign language program, art studies and more trips to art museums. I would join in on those programs if we had them.

MJHR: You painted a portrait for the Ronna K. Newburger Adult Day Center. Could you tell me more about that?

Bobby asked me to paint it for the Adult Day Center, and I was honored that he considered me for it. I painted a portrait of butterflies, the symbol of

the Center. I liked that idea, because butterflies show free movement, which felt right for the program. It took about three weeks for me to finish it.

Memphis Jewish Home & Rehab is a not-for-profit nursing home, Jewish in character and environment, dedicated to providing the highest level of care possible with dignity, compassion, and professionalism. Only through the help of generous donors is the organization able to care for those in need. Find more information at www.memphisjewishhome.org/giving. **HW**

Mississippi Senate Unanimously Adopts Resolution Backing Jackson Synagogue



The Mississippi State Capitol building in Jackson, Miss. Credit: formulanone via Wikimedia Commons.

By Jessica Russak-Hoffman

(JNS) – The Mississippi State Senate adopted a bipartisan resolution on Jan. 20 in support of Beth Israel Congregation following a Jan. 10 arson attack at the Jackson synagogue.

Senate Resolution 8, which expressed full support for the congregation “and for justice following this heinous crime,” was authored by Democratic state senator David Blount and handled

on the floor by Republican state senator Dean Kirby. It passed unanimously.

“Any act of arson is a serious crime,” the resolution states. “But attacking a house of worship is a particular outrage because it is not merely an attack on a building, it is an attack on the right of individuals to worship as they deem proper.”

The resolution states that the arson at

the synagogue “brings to mind some of the most tragic events in the history of Mississippi.”

“It's something we just can't tolerate in our state,” state senator Hillman Frazier, a Democrat and co-author of the resolution, told JNS. “We have a history of violence, but I thought we were making progress. I think this act that took place in the synagogue is going to make folks look at us differently. We'll do all we can to bring justice to the person who committed the crime.”

Stephen Spencer Pittman, 19, admitted to setting the fire intentionally “due to the building's Jewish ties,” according to the FBI.

“We want to prosecute him to the fullest extent of the law, be it jail time, fair trial,” Frazier told JNS. “We want to make sure that he pays for the act of violence.”

“Also, it's going to be a time for us to reflect in our state in terms of where we are as people, as a nation,” he said. “We can use it as a learning tool and a building process in terms of building a better relationship in the city of Jackson and the state of Mississippi.”

Frazier told JNS he hopes this was an “isolated incident,” but that “we are going to make sure that we do all we can to safeguard our houses of worship.” **HW**

Jewish Cemetery in Libya Destroyed

(JNS) – A Jewish cemetery in the eastern Libyan city of Derna has been demolished due to construction work at the site, the head of an Israeli center for the preservation of Libyan Jewish heritage said last Thursday.

Scores of graves believed to have once been at the site were destroyed over the last couple of weeks, said Pedhazur Benattia, chairman of the Or Shalom organization in Bat Yam, just south of Tel Aviv.

He shared video footage of the site with the Israeli Foreign Ministry.

“There is nothing left there now,” Benattia told JNS, adding that such destruction was standard practice in the country.

No Jews live in Libya today, with the last resident leaving in 2003, ending a community that existed for more than two millennia. **HW**

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Nazi Imagery Found on Shalom Park Campus in Charlotte, NC

(JNS) – Signage featuring antisemitic language and Nazi imagery was found on the grounds of Shalom Park in the city of Charlotte, N.C., a campus that houses synagogues, schools and community organizations, including the Jewish Federation of Greater Charlotte.

A purported photo of the sign, circulated on social media, reads: “Whether you swung to the left or whether you swung to the right, we will simply swing you by the neck. Join your local Nazis.” The text is accompanied by imagery of a noose hanging from a swastika.

The Federation stated that the signage, discovered the morning of Jan. 20, was removed promptly. “Let us be clear: This imagery is not political speech or protest,” the Jewish agency said in a statement posted to Facebook. “It is hate. It is intimidation. And it is intended to unsettle, threaten, and dehumanize members of our community.

While deeply disturbing, it does not define who we are.”

It added that “importantly, no buildings were entered, and the materials were removed before the school day began.”

Federation said it is “working in close coordination with all Shalom Park agencies, Shalom Park Security and law enforcement to ensure the incident is fully documented, investigated and addressed with the seriousness it warrants.”

The incident comes amid broader concern about rising antisemitic activity in North Carolina. The Anti-Defamation League recorded 175 antisemitic incidents statewide in 2024, up from 151 in 2023.

The North Carolina Democratic Party’s Jewish Caucus published an antisemitism explainer in July 2025, calling the rise in incidents “a subject of increasing concern, reflecting a broader national rise in hate crimes.” **HW**

Timothée Chalamet wins Golden Globe for ‘Marty Supreme’

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – French-American actor Timothée Chalamet took home the Golden Globe for best actor in a musical or comedy earlier this month, winning for his performance as an aspiring Jewish table tennis champion in “Marty Supreme.”

The film follows Chalamet as Marty Mauser, a shoe store employee with dreams of professional ping-pong stardom in 1950s America. The role draws inspiration from Jewish ping-pong legend Marty Reisman.

Chalamet bested a competitive field

including Leonardo DiCaprio, George Clooney, Ethan Hawke, Lee Byung-hun and Jesse Plemons at the 83rd Golden Globe ceremony in Beverly Hills.

Born in Manhattan to a multicultural family, the 30-year-old Chalamet traces his Jewish heritage through his Ashkenazi mother, Nicole Flender, making him Jewish according to halachah. His father, a French journalist from Nîmes, comes from a Protestant background. Under traditional Jewish law, his maternal lineage defines his Jewish identity. **HW**

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The following deposit product(s), offered through Wells Fargo Bank, N.A., are eligible for the \$325 direct deposit cash bonus if opened by March 31, 2026:

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- Clear Access Banking⁴

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The minimum amount to open each of these accounts is \$25.

Prime Checking account has a \$25 monthly service fee.

Everyday Checking has a \$15 monthly service fee.

Clear Access Banking has a \$5 monthly service fee.

See important information below for ways to avoid the monthly service fee.^{2,3,4}

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How to receive your cash bonus

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2. Maintain at least a \$250,000 balance in linked accounts through day 90 after account opening.

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See important information below.^{5,6}

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See reverse side for important information.

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To receive the \$325 bonus: You must open a new eligible Wells Fargo consumer checking account, which is subject to approval by March 31, 2026 and receive \$1,000 or more in qualifying electronic deposits within 90 calendar days of account opening (the “qualification period”). A qualifying electronic deposit is a deposit of funds, such as your salary, government benefit payment, or other income, that has posted to your account and is (1) a direct deposit made through the Automated Clearing House (ACH) network, (2) an instant payment processed through the RTP® network (real-time payment system) or FedNowSM Service, or (3) an electronic credit from a third party service that facilitates payments to your debit card using the Visa® or Mastercard® network (e.g., an Original Credit Transaction). Transfers from one account to another, mobile deposits, Zelle®, or deposits made at a branch or ATM are not considered a qualifying electronic deposit. An ACH direct deposit made available early with Early Pay Day does not count toward the bonus requirements until it posts to your account and is no longer pending (e.g., scheduled payment date).

After the 90-day qualification period, if you have met all requirements, we will deposit the bonus into your new account within 30 calendar days. Your new account must stay open through the time we attempt to deposit the bonus. We may close accounts with a zero balance without prior notice. You are responsible for any taxes due on the bonus. We will report the bonus as income to tax authorities, as required by applicable law. If you are subject to backup withholding at the time of payment, we may withhold the required amount and remit to tax authorities.

(See **Wells Fargo** Page 9)



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(Continued From Page 8)

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Talk with a banker or see the "Consumer Account Fee and Information Schedule" and "Deposit Account Agreement" available at wellsfargo.com/depositdisclosures for complete checking account details, including the applicable monthly service fee and options to avoid it. The actions required for this bonus are separate from the actions available to avoid the monthly service fee.

2. Refer to the Wells Fargo Bank [Consumer Account Fee and Information Schedule](#) for further information about the Prime Checking or Premier Checking account and applicable bank fees. For the Private Bank Interest Checking account and applicable bank fees, refer to both the Wells Fargo [Consumer Account Fee and Information Schedule](#) and The Private Bank Consumer Deposit Products Disclosure. The Prime Checking account has a \$25 monthly service fee. The fee can be avoided each fee period with \$20,000 or more in statement-ending qualifying linked balances. The Premier Checking account has a \$35 monthly service fee. The fee can be avoided each fee period with \$250,000 or more in statement-ending qualifying linked balances. The statement-ending qualifying balances for each of these account types include linked (a) consumer bank deposit account balances (checking, savings, time accounts (CDs), FDIC-insured IRAs) and (b) investment account balances (investments available through our affiliate Wells Fargo Advisors, and applicable bank fiduciary and custody accounts.) Wells Fargo may waive the monthly service fee at its discretion for promotional or other purposes.

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3. The Wells Fargo Everyday Checking account monthly service fee is \$15. Minimum opening deposit is \$25.

The monthly service fee can be avoided with one of the following each fee period:

- \$1,500 minimum daily balance.
- \$5,000 or more in qualifying deposit balances, investment balances, or both.
 - On the last business day of each fee period balances in eligible Wells Fargo accounts will be automatically totaled. Eligible accounts include consumer deposit account balances (checking, savings, CDs, FDIC-insured IRAs), certain investment account balances, and applicable Wells Fargo bank fiduciary and custody accounts.
- \$500 or more in total qualifying electronic deposits.
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 - Transfers from one account to another, mobile deposits, Zelle®, or deposits made at a branch or ATM are not considered a qualifying electronic deposit.
- A primary account owner who is 17 to 24 years old. (When the primary account owner reaches the age of 25, age can no longer be used to avoid the monthly service fee.)
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4. The Wells Fargo Clear Access Banking account monthly service fee is \$5. Minimum opening deposit is \$25.

The monthly service fee can be avoided with one of the following each fee period:

- Primary account owner is 13 through 24 years old. (When the primary account owner reaches the age of 25, age can no longer be used to avoid the monthly service fee). Customers between 13 and 16 years old must have an adult co-owner.
- \$250 or more in total qualifying electronic deposits.
 - A qualifying electronic deposit is a deposit of funds, such as your salary, government benefit payment, or other income, that has posted to your account and is (1) a direct deposit made through the Automated Clearing House (ACH) network, (2) an instant payment processed through the RTP® network (real-time payment system) or FedNowSM Service, or (3) an electronic credit from a third party service that facilitates payments to your debit card using the Visa® or Mastercard® network (e.g., an Original Credit Transaction).
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- A qualifying monthly non-civilian military direct deposit with the Wells Fargo Worldwide Military Banking program.
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5. How to qualify for the \$2,500 offer

To be eligible: Offer is from Wells Fargo Bank, N.A. for customers who are opening a new Wells Fargo Premier Checking account. Only the primary owner of the new checking account is eligible for this offer. The primary account owner is the owner whose Taxpayer Identification Number, such as a Social Security Number, is assigned to the account and has tax responsibility. Offer is not available to customers that received a Premier Checking bonus within the past 12 months, are Wells Fargo employees, or are non-resident aliens or foreign entities signing any version of IRS Form W-8. Only one Premier Checking bonus may be applied per new Premier Checking account.

To receive the \$2,500 bonus: You must bring \$250,000 or more in new assets into qualifying linked accounts by Day 45 and maintain at least a \$250,000 balance through Day 90 after account opening. Qualifying linked accounts include (a) consumer bank deposit account balances (checking, savings, time accounts (CDs), FDIC-insured IRAs) and (b) investment account balances (investments available through Wells Fargo Advisors). Excludes applicable Wells Fargo bank fiduciary, custody accounts, and annuities. New assets received into qualifying linked accounts up to 7 calendar days before the bonus offer code is applied to the Premier Checking account will count towards the offer requirements.

When you have met all offer requirements, we will deposit the bonus into your Premier Checking account within 30 calendar days. Your Premier Checking account must stay open through the time we attempt to deposit the bonus. We may close accounts with a zero balance without prior notice. You are responsible for any taxes due on the bonus. We will report the bonus as income to the tax authorities, as required by applicable law. If you are subject to backup withholding at the time of payment, we may withhold the required amount and remit to tax authorities.

Other Terms: The Premier Checking account is an interest-bearing account. The Annual Percentage Yield (APY) is 0.01% if the balance is \$0 or more and is accurate as of August 1, 2025. Rates are variable and subject to change without notice. Fees could reduce earnings on this account.

Offer may be discontinued or changed without notice and cannot be combined with any other consumer deposit offer. Offer cannot be reproduced, purchased, sold, transferred, or traded. The actions required for this bonus are separate from the actions available to avoid the monthly service fee.

6. Wells Fargo Premier

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Trump: Hamas 'Will Be Blown Away Very Quickly' If It Won't Disarm

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – President Donald Trump warned in Davos last Wednesday that Hamas “will be blown away very quickly” if it fails to disarm under the second phase of his Gaza peace plan.

Speaking at a question-and-answer session with former Norwegian foreign minister Børge Brende following his special address to the World Economic Forum, Trump said Hamas had “agreed to give up their weapons” as part of his 20-point Gaza initiative, which has entered a second phase focused on demilitarization and technocratic governance.

“They were born with a weapon in their hands. When they were born, they were born with a rifle in their hand. It’s not an easy thing for them, but that’s what they agreed to,” he said.

Trump said it would become clear “over the next two or three days, certainly over the next three weeks” whether the terrorist group would follow through on disarmament, calling it a condition for Gaza’s reconstruction and the deployment of an international stabilization force under a Trump-chaired Board of Peace.

“If they don’t do it, they’ll be blown away very quickly. They’ll be blown away,” he said, reiterating his assertion that dozens of countries back the deal and “want to come in and take out Hamas” if the terrorist group reneges.

A signing ceremony for the Board of Peace was held on the sidelines of the WEF’s 56th annual meeting last Thursday. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is among the some 50 leaders invited to join the board. **HW**

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OBITUARIES



Randie Lee Breland

Randie Lee Breland (née Applebaum), 71, passed away peacefully on January 17, 2026. Born in Memphis,

Tennessee, she later made her home in Plano, Texas, following a long and dedicated career in customer service with Winzer Corporation.

Randie was preceded in death by her parents, Ruben and Sylvia (Franklin) Applebaum, and her husband, Doug Breland. She is survived by her brother, Allen (Phyllis) Applebaum of Houston, Texas, and her sister, Sandra (Applebaum) Friedman of Vernon Hills, Illinois.

A proud aunt to four and a devoted great-aunt to nine, Randie loved fiercely. She will be remembered for her generous heart, her love of football, game nights, pickle pizza and the steady, unwavering way she always showed up for the people she loved.

Private interment has been held. **HW**



Elliott Joseph Slutsky

Elliott Joseph Slutsky, born on November 23, 1939, passed away on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at the age of 87.

Elliott was the beloved son of Jennie Fries Slutsky and Irving Slutsky. He received his education at Bruce Elementary and Christian Brothers High School, ultimately graduating from Christian Brothers University, where he remained a proud alumnus and maintained lifelong friendships.

A passionate learner, Elliott embraced education throughout his life, frequent-

ly attending classes at the University of Memphis. He had a deep love for reading and engaging in discussions about a wide range of literature, often sharing his recommendations with his step-daughter, Amy, with whom he enjoyed many enlightening conversations.

Elliott and his wife, Carol, cherished their travels around the world and relished their time together in Florida, where they took long walks in the beautiful weather. As a devoted grandfather, Elliott was actively involved in the lives of his grandchildren, attending school events, baseball games and family dinners, always surrounded by those he loved.

Elliott was preceded in death by his wife, Carol Cohen, with whom he shared 20 wonderful years. He is survived by his stepchildren, Fred (Shana) Cohen, Stuart (Stephanie) Cohen, and Amy Cohen Devore (Jeff), as well as six cherished grandchildren. He is also survived by his brother, Dr. Avron Slutsky (Rochelle), and his partner, Terry Orgel.

A burial service was held on Sunday, January 18, at Baron Hirsch Cemetery.

Elliott’s vibrant spirit and love for life will be deeply missed by all who knew him. **HW**

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Trump Lawyer Floats Asylum for British Jews



A protest against antisemitism held in Manchester, England; among those in attendance is the then-U.K. Security Minister Tom Tugendhat, Jan. 21, 2024. Credit: U.K. Home Office via Wikimedia Commons.

By JNS Staff and Amelie Botbol

(JNS) – U.S. President Donald Trump’s personal lawyer has initiated discussions with the U.S. State Department regarding the possibility of offering asylum to Britain’s Jews, The Telegraph reported last Sunday.

The United Kingdom was “no longer a safe place for Jews,” said Robert Garson, according to the report. During an interview with the paper, Garson said he’d reached that conclusion following the slaying of two people on Oct. 2 at a synagogue in Manchester, amid the proliferation of expressions of antisemitic hatred following the Hamas attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

Garson, himself from Manchester, said he could see “no future” for Jews in the United Kingdom. He added that British Prime Minister Keir Starmer had allowed antisemitism to flourish.

Garson discussed the idea with Rabbi

Yehuda Kaploun, the U.S. special envoy to monitor and combat antisemitism, he added, in Garson’s capacity as a board member of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. Garson, a Trump appointee to the Council, began serving on it in May after Trump had fired some board members appointed by Joe Biden.

“The U.K. is no longer a safe place for Jews. I have spoken to the State Department as to whether the president should be offering British Jews asylum in the U.S. It is certainly not an unattractive proposition. It is a highly educated community. I have spoken to people in the State Department, and I have mentioned it in my role on the Holocaust Museum board,” said Garson, who moved to the United States in 2008 after working in London as a barrister.

British Jews are a segment of the population that “speaks English natively,

that is educated and doesn’t have a high proportion of criminals,” said Garson, who lives in Florida.

Last year, Trump allowed into the United States dozens of Afrikaner asylum seekers from South Africa, whom he and many others have said were being targeted by the government, or denied its protection, because of their race. Trump said Afrikaners were “victims of unjust racial discrimination” sponsored by the state, a claim disputed by the South African government and some of Trump’s critics.

Expressions of hatred

“When I look at what is going on with Jews in Britain, and when I look at the changing demographics, I don’t believe – and I have discussed this with people in the Trump administration – that there is a future for Jews in the United Kingdom. For me, that is particularly sad,” Garson told The Telegraph.

The failure of authorities to prevent expressions of hatred toward Jews on the street, including through violence, has been a significant factor in destabilizing British Jewry’s sense of security, according to Garson. The Crown Prosecution Service has failed to uphold the law in its refusal to bring charges against protesters “on the streets of Britain who had glorified in the rape or death of Jews” after the Hamas-led massacre in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, he continued.

There was “a lack of political will” to use the Public Order Act to crack down on anti-Israel demonstrators, said Garson, who has specialized as a criminal defense barrister in the United Kingdom. Starmer “has turned a total blind eye to antisemitism. The prime minister has allowed rampant antisemitism to be-

come commonplace in society and has allowed it to come from those who really don’t have Britain’s best interests at heart,” he added.

Entire areas of Britain would succumb to sharia law if fundamental Islamism went unchecked, Garson warned. “Mark my words, they are coming for the Jews, and then they are coming for your pubs. You are going to have sharia-compliant areas very, very soon,” he said.

“In Britain, why has the IRGC [the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of Iran] never been banned, and why hasn’t the Muslim Brotherhood been sanctioned?” Garson asked.

Britain last year tallied the second-highest annual total of antisemitic incidents in decades, according to the Community Security Trust Jewish security group. The CST counted 3,528 incidents, “reflecting sustained levels of hatred towards Jews,” it said in its report for 2024.

‘Open our gates’

Yair Lapid (Yesh Atid Party), the leader of the Israeli opposition, told JNS last Monday he was “very worried” about the global rise in antisemitism.

“We need to emphasize the fact that Israel is the homeland of every Jew on earth and is more than welcome to come here if he feels in jeopardy or suppressed in any way,” he said, speaking after a faction meeting at the Knesset in Jerusalem.

“I don’t know if I would specify the United Kingdom, but it is true that all over the world Jews feel that they are being persecuted again,” Lapid added. “Therefore, we need to open our gates and do more than what this government is doing now in order to welcome them home.” **HW**

Trump: ‘We Think We Know’ Location of Last Israeli Hostage in Gaza



Israel Border Police Master Sgt. Ran Gvili. Source: Israel Hayom.

By JNS Staff

(JNS) – U.S. President Trump said last Tuesday that “we think we know” the location of the body of Israel Police Master Sgt. Ran Gvili, the last Israeli hostage in Gaza.

“Got all 20 living hostages returned to their families and the remains. Uh, they all came out. We got the 20 living hostages. We got the 28 [deceased] hostages. They have one left that we think

we know where it is. Amazing. It looked like we weren’t going to get anywhere near that, now they’ve gotten it almost,” Trump said.

Gvili’s mother, Talik, and father Itzik responded to Trump’s remarks, saying that his “statements prove what we’ve been saying for three months – Hamas knows exactly where our son is and is deliberately and knowingly violating President Trump’s framework and the agreement for the return of all the hostages.”

The parents continued: “Now the responsibility lies with the government of Israel and the American administration to use all their weight to ensure that Hamas fulfills its part of the agreement, or that sanctions be imposed on it.”

According to Israeli authorities, Gvili, 24, lost his life from wounds suffered while battling terrorists at the entrance to Kibbutz Alumim during the Hamas-led terrorist attacks in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023. He jumped into battle with a broken shoulder after hearing the news

of the mass infiltration.

The last image of him alive shows him on a motorbike being driven off by terrorists, with Al-Shifa Hospital in Gaza City in the background.

The 20 remaining living hostages still held captive as the most recent ceasefire began were freed on Oct. 13, and the bodies of deceased hostages have been sporadically returned since that date. Gvili has yet to come home.

“If we didn’t do it, most of those people would have been dead,” Trump said last Tuesday. “I don’t know if that’s covered properly, but you know, the 20 [living returned hostages] is great. They were the last ones. I always said the last 20 are going to be hard, but we got them, and we got close to 28 of the bodies of the dead.”

“And to those parents, that was just as important as getting their son back alive. They were almost even more intent on getting – they knew their son was dead – they wanted to get the body and got him back,” added Trump. **HW**

Israeli BBQ Joint Pitmaster to Open Sites in South Florida, Manhattan

By Jessica Russak-Hoffman

(JNS) – The popular Israeli restaurant Pitmaster, known for its immersive multicourse meat feasts, announced on Jan. 17 that it has begun construction of an establishment in Southeast Florida.

“Pitmaster’s smoke is coming to Miami,” the restaurant announced on Instagram. “Over six years, with four branches in Israel, in a journey of partnership, passion for meat and hard work that

drain into an exciting moment.”

The post ended with “Miami, be ready, the Pitmaster show is on the way,” and was met with enthusiastic feedback in the comments.

The Israeli restaurant launched in November 2019 in Petach Tikvah, a suburb of Tel Aviv, and expanded to three other sites in the country. Its model is experimental, featuring an open butcher counter

where chefs prepare and plate multiple courses, asking diners to come up and help. In the backdrop of food prep, a DJ plays music to stir up the crowd.

“Having attended Pitmaster in Jerusalem about 18 months ago, I know that it will be a special experience for all diners, kosher and non-kosher alike, when they open in Miami, and later, in New York,” Dani Klein, founder of

YeahThatsKosher, told JNS.

The establishment at Aventura Waterways in North Miami—near the heavily Jewish city of Hollywood, Fla.—is set to open in April, after Passover, under ORB kosher supervision, said Klein.

And in September, another location is coming to Manhattan’s Chelsea neighborhood, he added, under the supervision of the Orthodox Union. **HW**

US Holocaust Museum Board Cites Yearlong Absences in Call to Oust Sanders



Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) speaks at a “fight oligarchy” rally at Mullett Arena in Tempe, Ariz., March 20, 2025. Credit: Gage Skidmore via Creative Commons.

(JNS) – Members of the governing board of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum have asked Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) to remove Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) from the United States Holocaust Memorial Council amid reports that the senator has not attended a single meeting in 18 years. Sanders was appointed to the council in 2007. The board, which meets twice a year to oversee the D.C. museum’s mission, programming and educational

work, is composed of both presidential and congressional appointees. According to attendance records reviewed by board members and provided to the New York Post, Sanders “has missed every meeting of the board since his appointment.” In a Jan. 13 letter to Schumer signed by a dozen council members, the board wrote that Sanders “has rarely, if ever, attended council meetings or participated meaningfully in the work of the council since his appointment.”

Vandal Scrawls Dozens of Swastikas on Brooklyn Neighborhood Playground

By Jessica Russak-Hoffman

(JNS) – Police responded to reports of aggravated harassment on Jan. 19 and again on Jan. 21 after dozens of swastikas were found at a playground in Brooklyn, N.Y., according to the New York City Police Department. “On Wednesday, at approximately 1050 hours, police responded to a 911 call of an aggravated harassment in the vicinity of 56 Street and 18 Avenue (Gravesend Park), within the confines of the 66 Precinct,” the NYPD Deputy Commissioner of Public Information told JNS. “Upon arrival, officers discovered approximately 57 swastikas in the playground and handball court area written on the wall in red, blue and yellow colors,” the DCPI added. “There are no arrests at this time, and the incident is being investigated by the NYPD’s Hate Crime Task Force.”

Brooklyn Community Board 12 highlighted the hateful symbols and pointed to what it described as a similar case. “Same park, different day. A day later, and this is what happened,” the community board wrote. “We are requesting that NYPD Hate Crimes pull out all the stops to catch these vile Jew haters.” NYPD DCPI told JNS that on Jan. 19, police responded to the same park. “Upon arrival, officers discovered multiple swastikas drawn in red paint in the playground area of the park,” DCPI said. “Approximately 16 swastikas were drawn on slides, walls and floor of the playground. The paint bottles were found on scene.”

DCPI said this incident is also being investigated by the NYPD’s Hate Crime Task Force. “It’s sad what’s happening in my community. It’s sad that on consecutive days, I have to see this kind of hate,” said Barry Spitzer, district manager for the community board. “It’s sad that in 2026 this has become the norm. It’s sad that stuff like this doesn’t even raise an eyebrow anymore. I’m just so tired of being sad.”

The Anti-Defamation League of New York and New Jersey condemned the vandalism. “Parents should never have to fear their children will encounter vile hatred at the playground,” the ADL stated. “We are disgusted to see this display of antisemitism in Boro Park, home to tens of thousands of Jewish New Yorkers and thousands of Holocaust survivors.” The Consulate General of Israel in New York described the incident as “antisemitic hatred.” “A playground meant for joy and innocence was deliberately turned into a place of fear and terror because the children who play there are Jews,” it added. “We will not be silent. The Jewish community around the world will stand together and will not be intimidated.” **HW**

The council also raised concerns about some of Sanders’ public statements on “contemporary genocidal conflicts, including characterizations widely viewed as inconsistent with the principles of Holocaust remembrance and genocide prevention.” Sanders has been an outspoken critic of Israeli policy, calling for an end to U.S. military aid to Israel and describing Israel’s war against Hamas in Gaza “a

genocide.” The letter stated that those stances bring into question Sanders’s “alignment with the mission of the museum and its governing body.” “In the current context, with Jew hatred and Holocaust distortion rising globally, it is imperative that Senate-appointed representatives on the council are fully engaged and steadfastly supportive of its mission,” the letter states. **HW**

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War-Driven Labor Shortage Pushes Israel Toward Asian Workers



Foreign workers from India enjoy traditional holiday celebrations in Jerusalem, Sept. 8, 2025. Photo by Rachel Alroey/Flash90.

By Linda Gradstein

Over the next few months, Israelis will continue to encounter foreign workers, mostly from Thailand and India, as caregivers and in workplaces such as supermarkets and car repair shops, as well as in agriculture and construction.

The foreigners are replacing Palestinian workers, most of whom have not been allowed to enter Israel for security reasons since the war began following the Hamas attacks on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023.

Before the war, an estimated 190,000 Palestinians worked in Israel, 95,000 of them in construction, industry sources say.

Most were from Judea and Samaria (the West Bank), although some commuted daily from the Gaza Strip. Wages in Israel are significantly higher than salaries in Judea and Samaria or Gaza.

The war sparked a labor shortage in

Israel, with many construction projects suspended for lack of workers. Since the war began, only 8,000 to 10,000 Palestinians have been permitted to continue working in Israel, while some 30,000 work in Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria.

The government decided to replace the Palestinian workers with foreigners, primarily from Asia. More than 86,000 foreign workers have come to Israel since the war began, half of them in construction.

Even before the war, there was a labor shortage in construction. Construction companies said they could use tens of thousands more workers, which would speed up the pace of building across the country, of housing and light rail systems.

In recent months, Israel has increased the number of foreign workers coming

from Thailand, China, Vietnam and Sri Lanka to replace many of these Palestinian laborers. But the bureaucracy to bring them to Israel takes months and Israeli consulates abroad cannot process them quickly enough.

“Israeli consulates around the world are unable to handle tens of thousands of applications from foreign workers who wish to come to work in Israel,” Eli Yifrach, deputy director of the Foreign Ministry’s Committee for Foreign Workers, told JNS.

According to the Population and Immigration Authority, in 2025, Israel issued 61,000 permits to foreign workers, bringing the total to over 227,000. This includes tens of thousands of caregivers, mostly from the Philippines.

Unlike the Palestinian workers, however, the foreign workers stay in Israel for several years at a time. Their employers must provide housing for them, and they must be able to buy food they are used to eating. The companies also provide health insurance.

There is also often a language barrier, although translating apps help with communication. Supermarket chains have begun importing thousands of workers from Thailand to work in supermarkets across the country.

A Carrefour supermarket spokesman told Israel Television’s Kan 11 that competition for the jobs in Israel is fierce because salaries are significantly higher than in Thailand and thousands more workers are ready to come at a moment’s notice.

“Bureaucracy imposed by the Population Authority and Ministry of Justice is delaying the arrival of about 40,000

foreign workers to the construction sector,” Eldad Nitzan, the chairman of the Foreign Manpower Companies Union in the Israeli Chamber of Commerce, told journalists.

“The current pace of worker recruitment won’t resolve the severe shortage stalling hundreds of projects nationwide.” He explained that 200 foreign labor corporations in the construction sector could bring workers from Vietnam, India, Sri Lanka and Thailand within three months.

He also said that motivation is high among the foreign workers, who have a high work ethic and barely take breaks.

However, Ohad Amar of the Kav LaOved hotline for workers’ rights said bringing foreign workers from Asia presents more challenges than hiring Palestinian workers.

“The main difference is that migrant workers don’t have families, communities, or anyone to support them here,” he told JNS. “In some cases, the manpower companies that bring them hold them in conditions of modern slavery, with employers holding their passports and restricting their movements.”

In some cases, he said, workers sleep in buildings under construction or in garages that are not meant to be lived in. He said some workers pay more than a year’s salary to manpower companies that organize the visas and bring them to Israel. That means the first year here, they are basically working to recoup their expenses on arrival.

At the same time, he said, Asian workers are here to stay, and their number is likely to increase over the next few years. **HW**

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