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# CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

## the Hebrew Watchman

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## Emerging Leaders Experience Israel, Strengthen Connections and Leadership



**Memphis Jewish Federation's Leadership Development cohort spent four immersive days in Israel.**

Memphis Jewish Federation's renewed Leadership Development Program brought a cohort of emerging leaders to Israel in February for a four-day immersive mission, translating a year of leadership training into firsthand experience.

The group of eight leaders – Danielle Lazarov, Emily Lennon, Jaclyn Marshall, Lee Olswanger, Greg Phelps, Leor Reef, Shayna Roark and Rachel Siegel – led by Program Director Jill Shanker, traveled together to deepen their understanding of Israel, Jewish communal life and their own roles as leaders in Memphis.

Throughout the prior year, participants explored strategic thinking, philanthro-

py, governance, communication skills and the broader Jewish communal landscape. The Israel mission provided an opportunity to see these lessons in action, strengthening bonds within the cohort and fostering a shared commitment to leadership and community.

A central focus of the trip was learning how the Jewish Federation of Memphis helps support vital programs in Israel. Participants visited the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) Nativ program, a Jewish identity-building program for immigrant soldiers, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) Pathways to Recovery program,



**Participants volunteered at Pantry Packers in Israel.**

which provides essential social services to vulnerable populations and assists in rebuilding lives after Oct. 7.

Seeing these programs firsthand made the impact of local community donations feel real and personal – showing how they help strengthen communities, care for those in need and develop future leaders. The cohort also witnessed the aftermath of Oct. 7, touring communities near the Gaza border affected by the attacks. They saw homes damaged and rebuilding underway, and heard personal stories of courage, loss and resilience. These experiences underscored the importance of supporting Israel and the strength of its people in the face of adversity.

Beyond witnessing tragedy, participants also saw Israel's resilience and innovation. They toured cultural, historical and technological sites, meeting community leaders, educators and volunteers who embody leadership, creativity and dedication. They formed friendships with young adults in our sister city, Shoham. These encounters demonstrated the diversity of ways Israelis respond to challenges, from emergency relief to long-term community-building, inspiring the cohort to reflect on leadership in their own community.

"This trip reinforced why leadership

(See **Leaders** Page 2)

## Rivky Klein Joins Thousands of Women Leaders at the 'Kinus Hashluchos' in New York



**Thousands of shluchos, Jewish women leaders, pose for a group photo in front of the Chabad-Lubavitch World Headquarters in the Brooklyn borough of New York, Friday, Feb 6, 2026. The annual conference brings together women leaders serving Jewish communities across the globe, celebrating a year of growth, connection and renewed commitment to strengthening Jewish life worldwide. Credit: Chaya Tegner / Chabad.org**

From February 5-9, 2026, over 4,000 Chabad-Lubavitch women emissaries, or shluchos, from around the world gathered in New York for the annual Kinus Hashluchos, a powerful conference

of leadership, sisterhood and renewed purpose. Among them was Rivky Klein, co-director of Chabad of Tennessee, who returned home reinvigorated to continue facilitating Jewish life both in

Memphis and across all of Tennessee.

"After 32 years, we are still eager to continue finding new ways to inspire and educate Jews across Memphis to connect more deeply to their community and their heritage," said Rivky Klein.

The Kinus is not simply a conference. Over several days, women from nearly 100 countries shared stories from bustling urban centers to far flung and often isolated communities.

One of the most moving moments was the iconic class photo outside 770 Eastern Parkway, Chabad-Lubavitch World Headquarters. Over 4000 shluchos from over 100 countries and all 50 states stood shoulder to shoulder in a display of Jewish confidence and pride.

Throughout the Kinus Hashluchos, the women participated in dozens of workshops on topics ranging from education and mental health to community building during times of global uncertainty.

The gala banquet was another unfor-

gettable highlight. Particularly powerful were the voices from Bondi, Australia, where young Chabad leaders spoke with courage and faith after enduring a devastating terror attack. Their words of strength, resilience and unwavering commitment to life and mission resonated deeply throughout the hall.

The Kinus Hashluchos concluded with a visit to the Ohel, the resting place of the Rebbe and the Rebbetzin, on the anniversary of the Rebbetzin's passing, the 22nd of Shevat. The shluchos stood together in prayer, carrying handwritten petitions for themselves, families and from their communities. In the quiet intensity of that moment, many described feeling both humbled and uplifted, strengthened to return home and continue their sacred work.

As Rivky and the rest of the Tennessee shluchos make their way back home, they do so with renewed clarity and purpose. **HW**

Leaders...

(Continued From Page 1)



The group outside the Knesset.

development matters," said Jaelyn Marshall, Memphis Jewish Federation vice chair of Leadership Development and a member of the cohort. "Seeing the resilience and leadership of the people we met – and witnessing how our support makes a difference – strengthens our commitment to lead thoughtfully and responsibly back home."

The mission also deepened connections among cohort members. Shared experiences of reflection, challenge and inspiration strengthened relationships and fostered trust, creating a foundation for future collaboration in Memphis Jewish leadership.

As the cohort returns, they do so with

strengthened relationships, a deeper understanding of Federation impact and a renewed commitment to Jewish communal leadership. The Israel mission reinforced the value of supporting Israeli communities, highlighted the courage and ingenuity of its people and demonstrated the real-world applications of leadership learned in the program.

Memphis Jewish Federation's investment in leadership development reflects its long-standing commitment to building a vibrant and sustainable Jewish future – one that is nurtured through strong local leadership and meaningful global connections. **HW**

Bar Mitzvah



Shmuel Aryeh Bauer

Shmuel Aryeh Bauer will become a bar mitzvah on March 14, 2026, at Young Israel of Memphis. He studied for this joyous occasion with Cantor Aryeh Samberg.

Shmuel is in 7th grade at the Margolin Hebrew Academy. He loves playing soccer and basketball and is big fan of the Atlanta Braves.

He is the son of Sarah and Eliezer Bauer of Memphis, and the grandson of Lisa and Randy Harris of Memphis, and Roberta and Marc Bauer of Israel. He is the great-grandson of Ted (z"l) and Shirley (z"l) Roberts of Huntsville, Ala., and Leena (z"l) and Nechemia (z"l) Piller. His siblings include brothers Shimon (24), Aharon (22), Rafael Moshe (19), Gavi (9) and sisters Tehila (17) and Miriam (16). **HW**

THE Hebrew Watchman

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. March 6, 2026 / 17 Adar, 5786 .....5:42 p.m. Havdalah, Sat. March 7, 2026 / 18 Adar, 5786 ..... 6:38 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Ki Tisa

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# 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, March 9**

**Speaker:** Laura Kurcfeld, Director of the Center for Jewish Life & Learning at the Memphis Jewish Community Center.

**Topic: Identifying with Judaism through Memories**

Laura's talks are engaging and thought-provoking. A question-and-answer period will follow her discussion. Come have fun and learn at the same time.

**Wednesday, March 11**

**Speaker:** Josh Goldin from Comfort Keepers

**Topic: Brain Health for Seniors**

Josh's presentations are always informative and well received. Please sign up at the front desk for this talk as well as the preceding lunch. A Q&A session will follow his presentation.



**Wyndie Oh**

**Monday, March 16**

**Speaker, Sherry Harbur**

**Topic: Saving Money on Housing**

Sherry's talks are always enjoyable, and she will provide handouts so there is no need to take notes. Her last presentation was very informative and sparked many questions. As usual, there will be a question-and-answer period following her talk.

**Wednesday, March 18**

**March Big Monthly Luncheon featuring entertainers Wyndie Oh and her accompanist.**

Wyndie performs with Creative Aging Mid-South and specializes in smooth jazz, old-school R&B and neo-soul. She has opened for major artists such as Jonathan Butler and Rachelle Ferrell, and she brings engaging performances to senior audiences throughout the Mid-South. We are very lucky to have her for our March luncheon.

The lunch and performance begin at noon and the cost is \$5, which includes both the meal and entertainment. Reservations may be made by calling the MJCC front desk at 901-761-0810. Payment is made at the door on the day of the luncheon. This month's lunch is sponsored by Comfort Keepers.



**Elise Meyer**

**Special Evening Program**

**Tuesday, March 10 – 7-9 p.m.**

Elise Meyer will present **Declutter 1-2-3!**

Elise helps people declutter and organize their homes, reduce unneeded items and implement storage solutions that improve daily efficiency and ease of use. She will also discuss packing, unpacking and event organization, sharing practical tips that everyone can use. During the talk, Elise will present a special segment titled "How 15 Minutes Can Change Your House!" A question-and-answer period will follow. Reservations are already coming in and seating is limited, so please call the front desk at 901-761-0810 to reserve your spot. **HW**

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. Please call Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or email [stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org](mailto:stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org). Steve works Monday through Thursday from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. You may also call the MJCC front desk at 901-761-0810 to make a reservation. **HW**

## IDF Spokesman: Iran Using Cluster Bombs Against Civilian Centers

By JNS Staff

The IDF's international spokesperson condemned the Iranian regime for targeting civilians after a missile strike on the city of Beit Shemesh killed nine on Monday.

"Since the beginning of 'Operation Roaring Lion' the Iranian regime has been targeting civilians. We know that this is their strategy," Lt. Col. Nadav

Shoshani tweeted.

A young girl was reportedly one of two people seriously wounded by the direct impact.

At the same time, another missile struck a public building in Rosh Ha'ayin, lightly wounding one person.

The day before, Shoshani accused Iran of intentionally firing cluster munitions at Israeli population centers. "Cluster

weapons are designed to disperse over a large area and maximize the chances of a harmful strike," said Shoshani.

"Iran goes to great lengths in trying to maximize harm to Israeli civilians. Directing attacks at civilians is a war crime," he said.

A woman was killed and at least 21 people were injured late on Saturday when Iranian missiles struck a Tel Aviv residential block. **HW**

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# Bornblum Students Earn Top Recognition in International Accessibility Design Challenge

Out of nearly 400 entries from Jewish day schools and partner institutions across North America, two Bornblum Jewish Community School teams finished in the top 10 of the ADI Negev “Make the Change” Challenge, including one team that cracked the top five. For a school that has woven design thinking into its academic DNA, it was more than a competition result. It was proof of concept.

ADI Negev-Nahalat Eran is an Israeli nonprofit that provides residential care, rehabilitation and community services for people with physical and cognitive disabilities. Founded by Doron and Diane Livnat in memory of their son, Eran, ADI Negev operates a village in Israel’s Negev desert that has become an internationally recognized model for inclusive, dignity-centered care.

Each year, ADI Negev invites students to participate in its “Make the Change” Challenge, an accessible de-

sign competition that asks students to identify a real problem faced by people with disabilities and design a practical solution. The competition draws hundreds of entries, making a top-10 finish genuinely competitive.

The challenge aligns naturally with Bornblum’s design thinking curriculum. The ADI Negev challenge gives students a high-stakes, real-world application for those skills and connects them to the broader Jewish value of seeing and responding to the needs of others.

Fifth graders Tamara Klaven, Carter Garrison and Emerson Kleinman designed an accessible laundry cart for people with arthritis. Their research showed that lifting and moving laundry is one of the most painful everyday tasks for arthritis sufferers. Their solution: a motorized, height-adjustable cart that can be steered with an Xbox controller or controlled by voice through Alexa, combining accessibility technology stu-

dents already knew with a problem that doesn’t get much attention.

“We thought about daily activities that might be painful for people with joint problems, and we realized that laundry is something many people have to do every day, but it could be painful for some. That made us want to think of ways to make laundry easier and less painful,” the group explained.

The top-five finish went to fifth graders Nora Weiskopf, Joel Marshall and Island Austin, who designed a swim safety device for people with epilepsy. Their concept pairs a sensor-equipped swim cap that monitors brain wave patterns with an inflatable bathing suit. When the cap detects a seizure, the suit automatically inflates to keep the swimmer’s face above water until help arrives. They presented their project live on Zoom to competition judges, walking through their research, design process and the empathy that drove it.

“We added the auto-inflating life jacket into a bathing suit so it would not look big or embarrassing. Our goal was to create something that keeps people safe while also protecting their independence and dignity,” said fifth grader Joel Marshall.

Being named a top-five finalist out of hundreds of entries is a genuine achievement for elementary school students. Their faculty advisors Nathan Collier, Miriam Beeber and Stephanie Wilson supported both teams throughout the process.

Director of Curriculum and Instruction Jill Cross spoke to what the recognition really reflects:

“Being selected as one of the top-five projects out of hundreds of submissions is an extraordinary accomplishment. This recognition reflects their innovative spirit and dedication, as well as the thoughtful guidance and support provided by their teachers throughout the process. We are incredibly proud of all of them.” HW

## JBI Library Announces Free, Accessible Passover Resources for 2026: Ordering deadlines: March 4 for organizations; March 18 for individuals

NEW YORK (February 5, 2026) – As Passover approaches, JBI Library is once again making it possible for people who are blind, have low vision or have other print disabilities to fully participate in the holiday. This year’s Passover offerings include free accessible Haggadot in multiple formats, the expansion of braille options and new customization features for large print materials.

Passover centers on shared storytelling, community and ritual. For many people with print disabilities (which include physical disabilities such as MS

and Parkinson’s, and reading disabilities such as dyslexia), barriers to accessing the Haggadah can disrupt that sense of connection at the seder table. JBI Library’s Passover resources are designed to remove those barriers and support meaningful participation for readers of all ages.

“The seder is built around reading together, asking questions, and feeling part of something larger than ourselves,” said Michelle Shapiro Abraham, executive director of JBI Library. “When someone cannot see or comfort-

ably hold a Haggadah, that experience can quickly become isolating. Our goal is to ensure that everyone at the table has equal access to the text and traditions, so they can participate fully and with dignity.”

JBI has also expanded its accessible Haggadah collection. The family-friendly Gateways Haggadah by Rebecca Redner is now available in braille, in addition to the original large print. The Gateways Haggadah is widely recognized for its inclusive approach, welcoming families with children of all abilities and disabilities. JBI’s accessible Haggadot are available in large print, braille and audio formats, with multiple editions representing a range of traditions, languages and communal needs.

This year JBI is also offering expanded flexibility in JBI’s large print offerings. JBI’s standard large print format uses Tahoma font, with Hebrew text in size 30 and English text in size 22. Upon request, the text can be produced in even larger sizes or in reverse contrast, with white text on a black background, an option that can make reading easier and more comfortable for some individuals.

All Haggadot are provided free of charge to individuals and should be requested by March 18, 2026, to ensure

delivery in time for Passover. For organizations planning to host communal seders and seeking larger quantities of accessible materials, requests should be submitted by March 4, 2026. To request a free accessible Haggadah or to learn more about JBI Library’s Passover offerings, visit [www.jbilibrary.org](http://www.jbilibrary.org), call 800-999-6476, or email [haggadah@jbilibrary.org](mailto:haggadah@jbilibrary.org).

### About JBI

Founded in 1931, JBI Library is a nonprofit organization that supports anyone who is blind, has low vision or has a print disability so that they may fully participate in Jewish life – from education and community to prayer and celebration. JBI is the heart of a community where patrons can come for accessible books and texts, cultural programs, learning and all things that connect people to Judaism, culture and community. JBI strives to remove barriers to accessibility and inclusion, so that everyone can read, learn and engage independently and with dignity. If you or a loved one could benefit from JBI’s wide range of services, or for more on how your community, school or organization can connect with JBI Library, please reach out to [jrothstein@jbilibrary.org](mailto:jrothstein@jbilibrary.org), or visit [jbilibrary.org](http://jbilibrary.org). HW

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## Your Best Self

A monthly column by *Greg Graber* (Graber Performance Coaching LLC)

# Lindsey's Search for Meaning

(Note: A slightly different version of this was published in USA Today on Feb. 27, 2026)

Lindsey Vonn has gotten a lot of attention for competing in the Olympics in Milan on a ruptured ACL. It is astonishing enough that the 41-year-old is still performing on this elite level, much less with a serious injury that would end many alpine skiing careers.

It would seem that she is risking long-term physical repercussions by refusing to hang up her skis at this point. You have to wonder what would drive her to do this.

It should be noted that Vonn does not owe any of us an explanation. However, since we often use sports as a metaphor to make sense of our lives and the nature of the human condition in general, it is interesting to ponder why some of our most revered athletic superstars sometimes play way past their primes.

### Athletes extending their careers can go either way

Recent examples of athletes extending their careers include striking examples of both the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat.

Our collective consciousness is raised

a few levels with excitement when “old guys” like NFL quarterback Phillip Rivers and soccer superstar Lionel Messi play at the highest levels of greatness in their respective sports.

On the other end of that spectrum, it is difficult to see our heroes take a fall by refusing to hang it up and call it a day when the times comes. Case in point: Mike Tyson, getting pummeled by a much younger social media influencer/turned boxer, Jake Paul.

### Athletes need skills to cope with bad performances

It has been my experience working with elite athletes that it is not uncommon for many of them to base most of their self-worth on their athletic performance. Because they have spent so much time honing their skills, it is only natural to identify with being athletes.

To counter this mindset, I encourage them to develop “multiple identities.”

One day, a young man will not be able to play basketball. He may blow his knee out, or he may retire after a long career. Whatever the case may be, there will come a time when his playing career is done, and he will need to have cultivated a strong sense of self that ex-

tends well beyond the court.

### With Vonn, maybe the pain is the point

As for Vonn, there are probably many reasons why she is skiing injured at her age. In these types of cases, there isn't usually a single answer to why.

Often, we speculate about athletes' “why” because this type of contemplation gives us insight into the mindset of all-time greats, people we respect and admire.

Whatever the case may be, I am not judging her. In his seminal masterpiece, “Man's Search for Meaning,” Viktor Frankl may have the answer: “In some

way, suffering ceases to be suffering at the moment it finds a meaning.”

I have no doubt there is meaning behind Vonn's suffering, and that should be good enough for all of us. **HW**



**Greg Graber, the author of *Slow Your Roll-Mindfulness for Fast Times*, is an internationally respected coach who helps teams, schools, organizations and individuals thrive. From NBA coaches to soccer moms, he offers mental performance coaching, wellness counseling and executive coaching. For more information (and *The Hebrew Watchman* discount), email Greg at [info@greggraber.com](mailto:info@greggraber.com), or visit his website at [www.greggraber.com](http://www.greggraber.com).**



# Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's Supreme Leader and Avowed Enemy of Israel, Killed in Strike on Tehran



A demonstrator holds up a poster of Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, during a protest against Israeli attacks on Iran, central Tehran, June 20, 2025. Credit: Majid Saeedi/Getty Images

By Grace Gilson

February 28, 2026 (JTA) – Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, was killed Saturday morning during a joint U.S.-Israeli strike that hit targets throughout the country.

Israeli officials first announced the

death, followed hours later by U.S. President Donald Trump and then Iranian state media.

“Khamenei, one of the most evil people in History, is dead,” Trump posted on Truth Social.

Video showing Iranians appearing to celebrate in the streets following the Iranian government's confirmation of Khamenei's death. He had been Iran's top religious authority, ruling with an increasingly iron fist, since 1989.

Khamenei, 86, made hatred of Israel and of the United States into Iran's guiding principle. His death is a major blow to the Islamic Republic, which Trump and Israeli Prime Minister have both said they sought to topple in the strikes.

Khamenei reportedly appointed a deputy to succeed him ahead of the strikes. But the CIA has assessed that he may be replaced by hardline figures from the Islamic Revolutionary Guard, according to Reuters.

Trump said he believed a large number of other Iranian officials were killed in the initial strikes, but neither he nor Israeli officials immediately named other officials they believed had been killed.

The trickle of information about Khamenei's status occupied the news on Saturday even as bombs fell across

the region. In a televised address late Saturday, Netanyahu said there were “growing signs” that Khamenei had been killed during an Israeli strike on his compound in Tehran. Shortly after the address, Israeli officials told Axios and the Associated Press that they had confirmed his death.

Trump confirmed the death of Khamenei in the post on Truth Social, writing that it marked “the single greatest chance for the Iranian people to take back their Country.”

“We are hearing that many of their IRGC, Military, and other Security and Police Forces, no longer want to fight, and are looking for Immunity from us,” wrote Trump, adding that the “heavy and pinpoint” bombing would continue in the country “as long as necessary to achieve our objective of PEACE THROUGHOUT THE MIDDLE EAST AND, INDEED, THE WORLD!”

Iranian state media reported Khamenei's death, without stipulating a cause, early Sunday morning. **HW**

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# 100 STORIES for 100 YEARS

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**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 sharing words from This week, we are sharing words from Director of Human Resources Staci Ulrich.**

## Meet Staci Ulrich



Staci Ulrich

By Jasmine Williams

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

I am from Drummonds, Tenn. I love to hike, read books and spend time with my granddaughter. My husband is from New York, so we're a combination of the North and the South. I've been at the Home for 29 years. I started as a receptionist, payroll, and I did a little accounts receivable, but I didn't like it, then I worked my way up to director of HR.

**MJHR: How did you become connected to MJHR?**

I actually saw an ad when I was working for a consulting company. I didn't know anyone here, I was completely new.

**MJHR: Share your favorite MJHR story.**

As you know, I have been here a lot of years. There are so many things that I have experienced in the 29 years that it is hard to pinpoint a favorite. All of the units were called something different years ago, 200 Unit was called the Special Care Unit. They had painted a mural on the outside of the doors, and it is where our patients with Demetia lived. The doors were locked, and you needed a code to access the doors. There was a resident, Mr. Posner, who would watch the employees type in the code at the door, and he memorized it and was able to the leave unit. He would come down the hallway and be so happy he had been able to outsmart us. There have been so many residents throughout my time here and they all hold a special place in my heart.

Another fond memory is presenting Maurice Buring and dedicating the Torah to him. Maurice does so much for all of us, the residents and the employees. His dedication to our facility is felt by each and every one of us. You will al-



Staci with fellow coworkers at MJHR.

ways see him smiling when he is in the facility, stopping and speaking with everyone he meets. We are very grateful.

**MJHR: What do you wish for the future 100 years of the organization?**

Just for them to continue what they are doing, caring for the residents. I hope they continue training our employees so that we can continue to grow. I know assisted living has been talked about, so I hope for the future for us.

**MJHR: In those 29 years of working at MJHR, how have you seen MJHR grow, and how have you seen yourself grow?**

When I first started here, there was a children's day care, an adult day service, and strictly skilled nursing. In those years, we have built the 500-unit with a state-of-the-art rehab facility, which

is beautiful. Just seeing the rehab grow from when it was just a nursing home to having outpatient therapy that we offer to the community has been meaningful.

I have grown a lot! Going from a receptionist to the HR director, we continue to learn. No matter what age we are, where we are in life, I learn something new every day, and I hope that I continue to do that.

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# Here's How American Jewish Organizations are Responding to the Joint US-Israeli Strikes on Iran

By Grace Gilson

February 28, 2026 (JTA) – Major American Jewish groups quickly backed the U.S.-Israel strikes on Iran Saturday morning, while urging heightened security at Jewish institutions amid fears of retaliation.

The strikes, which were billed by both President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as an effort to topple the Islamic Republic regime that has long targeted Israel, follow weeks of stalled diplomacy between the United States and Iran over its nuclear program that failed to produce an agreement.

The American Jewish Committee quickly threw its support behind the United States and Israel Saturday morning, writing in a statement that the “responsibility for this crisis lies entirely with Tehran.”

“The world will be a safer place when the threat of the Iranian regime’s illicit nuclear and missile programs, along with the IRGC, is dismantled once and for all,” the AJC said. “We hope today’s military action is a decisive step toward fulfilling that vital mission.”

In a post on X, the Anti-Defamation League wrote that it “stands with the United States, Israel and the Iranian people, who deserve dignity and freedom from a regime that murders its own citizens.”

The strikes also follow large-scale nationwide protests in Iran last month over its economic crisis and widespread calls for political change, which were met by a violent government crackdown.

The World Jewish Congress also came out in support for the strikes, calling on the international community to “stand behind this historic effort and support further measures that end the ability of theocratic tyrants to inflict harm on the Iranian people and the world at large any longer.”

The Jewish Federations of North America wrote that it will “pray for the success of the joint United States and Israeli actions in Iran,” simultaneously urging Jewish communities in the United States to maintain security protocols.

“All security protocols in North America should be fully observed. May this moment bring a renewed understanding of our shared responsibility for

the future of the Jewish people and the free world,” Eric Fingerhut, the CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America, said in a statement.

Following Saturday morning’s attacks, the Secure Community Network “urged continued vigilance across Jewish communities.” In the wake of Israel’s strikes on Iranian nuclear sites last June, Jewish security groups also warned Jews abroad to remain vigilant, as Iran has a track record of violence against Jewish and Israeli targets abroad following military setbacks on its home turf.

“Relevant national organizations and Jewish security professionals remain in close coordination, including with institutions, to monitor developments, share timely information, and strengthen protective measures, particularly in light of Shabbat services and upcoming Purim gatherings,” SCN wrote in a post on X.

But while major national and international Jewish groups rallied behind the military intervention, some progressive Zionist Jewish political groups condemned the strikes.

“Americans are waking up to the

deeply unsettling news that President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu chose to start a war with Iran,” wrote New Jewish Narrative, a progressive Zionist Jewish organization, in a post on X. “This is wrong. It needs to stop.”

Jeremy Ben-Ami, the president of the liberal pro-Israel lobby J Street also voiced his opposition to the strikes, writing in a statement that the group was “appalled by President Trump’s reckless decision to launch a war of choice against Iran explicitly seeking regime change.”

“The Iranian government’s nuclear and missile programs, support for proxy groups throughout the Middle East and brutal repression of its own people represent a real national security challenge for the United States and its allies, including Israel. We would be pleased to see this government replaced with one that is a responsible international actor and responsive to the needs and demands of its people,” wrote Ben-Ami. “However, Iran does not present an imminent threat that requires launching a ‘preventive’ war.” **HW**

## Pennsylvania Girl Scout Launches Holocaust Education Patch Program



Lily Sassani, 18, a Girl Scout from the Pittsburgh area, created a Holocaust Education Patch Program in partnership with the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh. Credit: Melanie Wieland.

By Jessica Russak-Hoffman

(JNS) – When Lily Sassani set out to earn her Girl Scout Gold Award, she knew that she wanted to bring together her Jewish identity and her years in scouting. She created a Holocaust Education Patch Program in partnership with the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh.

Sassani, 18, who lives in Lower Burrell, a city outside of Pittsburgh, said as a Jewish Girl Scout, she was part of “an active service unit that helped me grow into someone that upholds the Girl Scout code, which encourages us to be

sisterly and model leadership.”

She told JNS that growing up in an area with a small Jewish presence came with challenges. “My Jewish faith has little representation in my area, and for a long time I felt othered in the sense that I didn’t have Jewish friends or role models outside of my family to confide in about the struggles I faced,” she said.

“It was difficult for me to grow up where the ignorance of Jewish history and culture could not be combated by a strong Jewish presence,” Sassani added.

“That is why, for my Gold Award – the highest honor a Girl Scout can earn before she graduates – I aimed to create a project to bridge the gap between my Jewish and Girl Scout identities by involving myself in both communities,” she said.

Sassani said she was motivated by the “undiscussed yet astonishing resistance work of the Girl Guides and Scouts during the Holocaust.”

“I learned a lot doing this project, about myself and about the subject, but I think what really surprised me the most was the lengths to which Guides went to save people affected by the Holocaust, and how little the general public knew about it,” she said.

Guides “did things like dig trenches, hide prisoners from concentration

camp selection processes, free prisoners in ghettos, deliver information within camps and so much more.”

“I think we owe it to all the girls and women who risked and lost their lives for a better world, to remember their stories and embody their courage,” she added.

Sassani explained that “a badge and a patch are two separate entities in Girl Scouts.”

“This project was to create a patch,” she said. “Which is different in the sense that I can have more creative freedom and control over regulating it, whereas a badge requires more supervision from the council.”

‘Make the world better’

The curriculum, designed and written by Sassani, mentored by Emily Loeb and Julia Gaetano of the Holocaust Center of Pittsburgh, follows the Girl Scouts’ three-part format: Discover, Connect and Take Action.

In the Discover phase, participants engage with a required curriculum video and optional interviews. The Connect phase encourages activities such as visiting Holocaust museums or hearing survivor testimony. Take Action projects range from planting flowers in memory of victims to inviting a survivor or descendant to speak.

Loeb told JNS the center began working with Sassani in 2023. “We learned about Lily’s project in the summer of 2023 and connected with her that September when she asked if the Holocaust Center would serve as her mentor for her Gold Award project,” she said. “Since then, we’ve met every week to guide her as she developed both the curriculum and the patch.”

Because the project was created for Girl Scouts, Loeb said it was a “meaningful challenge” to create a curriculum that participants would “choose to learn about on their own time.”

The development process took nearly two years, followed by an additional 10 months for design and production. The center now houses and distributes the patches.

Since the announcement of the patch in January, interest in it has surged. Sassani said that “300 troops from across the world have inquired with interest to earn it, and right now we already have troops nearing completion.”

Loeb told JNS that she hopes the patch will leave a lasting impact on Girl Scouts. “I hope they learn how much power they have and how they can use their voices to make the world better,” she said. “This program is timeless, and its lessons are deeply relevant today.” **HW**

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# Looking to Ease College Tuition Anxiety?

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](https://fa.wellsfargoadvisors.com/michael-stein)

Once you realize how many resources may be available and begin your research on college financial assistance, you could be on your way toward easing some of the anxiety often associated with paying for higher education.

According to the College Board's "Trends in College Pricing and Student Aid 2024," approximately \$257 billion in student aid in the form of grants, Federal Work-Study (FWS), federal loans, and federal tax credits and deductions was awarded to undergraduate and graduate students in 2023 – 2024.

During that academic year, undergraduate students received an average of \$16,360 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student in financial aid: \$11,610 in grants, \$3,900 in federal loans, \$760 in education tax credits and deductions, and \$90 in FWS.

## 5 lessons for seeking help with college costs

**Start planning during the high school years.** Look to reposition assets or adjust income in the calendar years before your child's sophomore year. For example, if the student is applying for financial aid for the 2025-2026 school year, the federal aid application will include income from the 2023 tax year (two years prior).

**Assume you're eligible for aid ... until you're told you're not.** There are no specific guidelines or rules of thumb that can accurately predict the aid you and your child may be offered. Because each family's circumstances are different, keep an open mind as you consider financial aid alternatives.

Two forms will be key to your aid application process: the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and the College Scholarship Service Financial Aid Profile (CSS Profile). The FAFSA helps you apply for federal aid, and many states use it to determine a resident student's eligibility for state aid. Many schools use the CSS Profile to collect additional information before awarding their own funds, i.e., institutional student aid.

**Reassess assets held by your children.** Federal guidelines expect children to contribute 20% of their assets toward their education's costs while parents are expected to contribute up to 5.64%.

Assets held in custodial accounts (bank accounts, trust funds, brokerage accounts) in your children's names may reduce the aid for which your family qualifies more so since they are assessed at the 20% rate. While assets held in Coverdell Education Savings Accounts

(ESAs) and 529 plan accounts (if owned by the dependent student or the parent) are factored into the parents' formula, having less effect on the aid for which the family qualifies.

**Apply to multiple schools and compare financial aid awards.** This is especially important if there is a noncustodial stepparent because some colleges count this person's resources while others do not. You may also want to consider asking the financial aid officer for more aid if the current award is not enough for attendance — all they can say is "no." If there are extenuating circumstances, be sure to attach a letter of explanation to the application.

**Go beyond financial aid.** Although aid can help, it can be unpredictable, and your family may still find it difficult to afford higher education. So rather than relying strictly on financial aid, consider turning to a professional financial advisor for help with determining an appropriate college savings strategy. For the greatest potential impact, beginning to save as early in the child's life as possible is a good idea.

*Please consider the investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses carefully before investing in a 529 savings*

*plan. The official statement, which contains this and other information, can be obtained by calling your financial advisor. Read it carefully before you invest.*

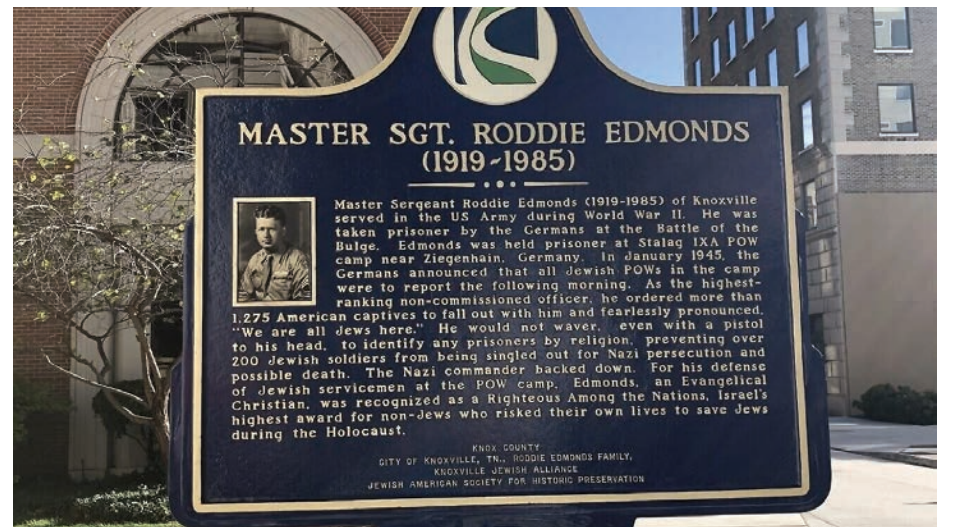
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This article was written by/for Wells Fargo Advisors Financial Network and provided to you by Mike Stein, Managing Director - Investments.

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## WWII Hero Who Defied Nazis to Save Jewish Troops to Receive Medal of Honor



Historical marker for U.S. Army Master Sergeant Roderick ("Roddie") Edmonds in Knoxville, Tenn. Credit: Jrryjude via Wikimedia Commons.

By Mike Wagenheim

(JNS) – U.S. President Donald Trump will posthumously award a U.S. soldier who protected Jewish-American prisoners during World War II the Medal of Honor on March 2.

U.S. Army Master Sgt. Roderick ("Roddie") Edmonds, of Knoxville, Tenn., was captured during the Battle of the Bulge in January 1945 and taken to Stalag IX-A in Ziegenhain, Germany. On the evening of Jan. 26, 1945, the Germans announced that only Jewish American prisoners were to fall out for roll call the next morning, at the threat of execution.

As the senior non-commissioned officer, Edmonds was aware of the danger facing the Jewish soldiers. He ordered all 1,200 American POWs to report for roll call, helping conceal the identity of the more than 200 Jews.

The Nazi commandant threatened to execute Edmonds unless the Jewish Americans were ordered to step forward. Still, Edmonds resisted, saying, "We are all Jews here," and citing the rights afforded to all prisoners under the Geneva Convention until the commandant relented.

Edmonds later led a rebellion in the camp, which forced the Nazis to aban-

don it.

He died in 1985, with the story of his heroism coming to light only after his death. Israel's Holocaust memorial, Yad Vashem, later honored him as one of the "Righteous Among the Nations," a distinction held by only five Americans.

Trump recounted Edmond's story during a 2019 Veterans Day ceremony in New York, noting his "unbelievable and exceptional valor." In February 2020, Trump announced that he was "strongly considering" Edmond for the Medal of Honor.

In 2016, then-U.S. President Barack Obama stated at an International Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremony in Washington, D.C., "I cannot imagine a greater expression of Christianity than to say, I, too, am a Jew."

Edmonds' son, Chris, will receive the award on his father's behalf at the White House on Monday.

The Medal of Honor is the highest military decoration that may be awarded by the United States government. It is awarded to members of the Armed Forces who "distinguish themselves conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their own lives above and beyond the call of duty." **HW**

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# Sirens, Shelters and an Empty Old City: Jerusalem Rattled on the First Day of War with Iran

By Theia Chatelle

February 28, 2026 (JTA) – JERUSALEM – Jacob Phillips’ first trip to Israel from his home in Germany was in 2023, to visit Holocaust survivors in Tel Aviv as part of a university program. It was cut short by the Oct. 7 Hamas-led attack, which forced him to leave the country.

He returned with his girlfriend this month to see the sites he missed. “Because the last trip, it was a harsh cut,” he said. “That’s why we came back, to visit the people I met here in Israel.”

On Saturday, Phillips and his girlfriend Michelle were among the very few people walking the streets in Jerusalem as another war unfolded, with Iran. The war, which began when Israel and the United States together attacked Iran early Saturday, had already sent them multiple times to shelters and scrambled their departure plans for next Thursday. Ben Gurion Airport is closed until at least March 7.

Phillips said he was in touch with the German consulate and felt safe in Jerusalem despite the incoming missiles, citing Israel’s Iron Dome air defense system. He said he remained happy to be in Israel.

“I wanted to come here to learn about the Jewish experience, especially as a German, and I feel like I have gotten to see so much of it,” Phillips said.

While missile impacts rocked Tel Aviv and elsewhere in Israel, an eerie calm pervaded the streets of Jerusalem on Saturday, extreme even for Shabbat, as residents hunkered down at home between the sirens that indicated that war with Iran had begun anew. The sirens scattered the prayer services that dot the holy city and disrupted plans for shared meals.

The gates of the Old City were closed by Israeli police to everyone but residents. A crowd of Hasidic Jews argued with officers, petitioning for entry to pray at the Western Wall but ultimately giving up and turning back.

One resident who ventured out between air raid alerts said the assault had provided “pauses just long enough to walk up the stairs before heading back [to the shelter] again.”

Those who braved journeys away from their homes offered a general consensus that the war would be significantly worse this time around, only nine months after a 12-day war that led to the deaths of 32 Israelis. In that conflict, Iran launched more than 500 ballistic missiles at Israel and targets throughout the Middle East in retaliation for strikes that Israel initiated and the United States joined.

This time is indeed different. President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu are gunning for regime change and said they believed Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, had been killed in an opening salvo. Sensing an existential threat, the Islamic Republic of Iran has already escalated its response, using its fire-power against not only Israel but U.S. targets throughout the Middle East.

Richard Weiner and Rolly Feld had been in Nahariya, in Israel’s north, until Saturday morning. When the sirens began, they drove back to Jerusalem in the hope they would be safer in the city and farther from significant military targets for the Iranian regime, including the port of Haifa, which was struck by an Iranian barrage at 10 a.m.

Feld recounted that while driving

down Route 4 toward Jerusalem, it felt as if they were being chased by missiles. Periodically, another batch of air raid alerts would sound, forcing them to shelter in tunnels along the highway.

Feld said he would have preferred to continue driving, contrary to the advice of Israeli authorities who recommend pulling over and lying flat to avoid exposure to shrapnel from missile impacts.

“My wife wanted all the time to stick to the guidelines, to stop the car and stay away, and I keep driving fast then stopped in the tunnels. It’s a compromise,” Feld said.

Weiner, who grew up in Israel but has lived as an adult in South Africa, was critical of Netanyahu’s decision to launch the strikes.

“What he’s doing is horrible for the Iranian people and it’s horrible for the people over here. The government is pushing for this; the people are not.” Weiner identified himself as “something of a pacifist,” adding, “We have to look for other ways of dealing with the Iranian government, as irrational as they are. We should be supporting the people who are protesting and not trying to topple the government by killing the leadership.”

Weiner and Feld bantered back and forth on a sidewalk in the leafy neighborhood of Rehavia, discussing the possibility of further escalation and whether it was Israel’s place to intervene on behalf of the Iranian people – if that was indeed part of the calculus.

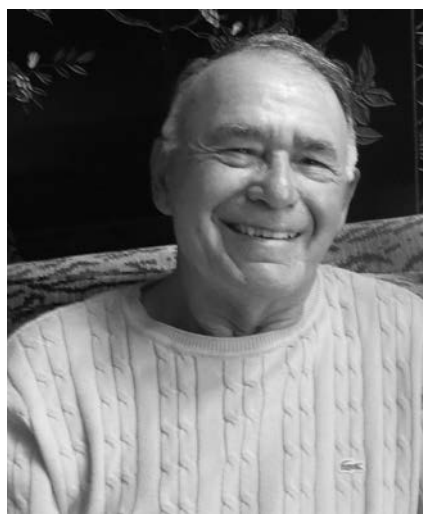
Weiner concluded, “I have a love-hate relationship with this country. I come back and this happens again. This is clearly not the answer. Many people will be killed, and it’s horrible that tens of thousands have been killed due to their dissent, but how does this help?”

The question of whether the war would succeed in the U.S.-Israeli ambition of achieving regime change in Iran was a preoccupation of many of those who were out and about.

“The chance of actual change is so low,” said Ishay, 44, a Jerusalem resident. “Like in Israel, there is such a strong contingent of those with radical beliefs in Iran. Even if the regime is toppled, who will replace Khamenei?”

Information was hard to come by throughout the day, though over time it became clear that missile impacts had been confirmed in multiple locations, including Bnei Brak, where Magen David Adom treated people who were wounded. By overnight, it was clear that one woman had been killed and another man had been seriously wounded in Tel Aviv.

## OBITUARIES



Harve C. Stein

Harve C. Stein, a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, February 24, 2026.

Harve’s life was anchored by his extraordinary 68-year marriage to his beloved wife, Libby. Their nearly seven decades together served as a beautiful testament to friendship, resilience and an enduring bond that served as the foundation for their entire family.

A proud veteran, Harve served his country with honor as a First Lieutenant. Following his service, he applied that same sense of duty and integrity to his professional life, building a highly

successful business and career in the furniture industry. Beyond his professional life, Harve was a lifelong athlete who found great joy in staying active. Whether he was casting a line as a passionate fisherman, walking the fairways as an avid golfer, or engaging in various sports, he lived every day with a vibrant energy and a deep appreciation for life’s simple pleasures.

He is survived by his wife, Libby, and his four children: Gayle Woloshin (Dave), Bruce Stein, Melissa Berman (Adam), and Andy Stein (Wendy). Harve was the proud grandfather to 14 grandchildren, and he was further blessed to be a great-grandfather. Each generation of his family carries forward his strength, his character and the lessons he taught through a life well-lived.

Funeral services were held on Friday, Feb. 27 in the Levy-Cooper Chapel at the Temple Israel Cemetery in Memphis.

In lieu of flowers, the family kindly requests that donations be made in Harve’s memory to The Volen Center in Delray Beach, Florida. This organization provides essential services to seniors and their families, and your support helps continue their vital mission.

<https://volencenter.com/donate/>

The Volen Center, 1515 West Palmetto Park Road, Boca Raton, FL 33486. HW

The war comes as Israel prepares to celebrate Purim, a Jewish holiday commemorating the overthrow of an oppressive Persian regime, offering a powerful parallel for the current moment.

In the lead-up to the holiday, two Israelis stood talking down the street, seemingly unconcerned by the sirens, both in costume – one wearing a sombrero, the other dressed as a clown.

Yael, who lives in Rehavia, was walking her dog, Lucky, in Meir Sherman Garden Park in central Jerusalem.

“We’ve just come to expect this. I am

raising my children here in Israel, but sometimes I wonder if there is a future here,” she said.

For Phillips, the fact that both of his visits to Israel have been derailed by two different conflicts did not dampen his support for Israel’s decision to launch the attacks on Iran.

“It’s time to change the regime there because of the nuclear weapons; it’s important to have this under control,” he said. “For Israel, it will be a hard time, I think, but nothing is free. You have to pay with something.” HW

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# Why was Tucker Carlson Pushing for DNA Testing for Jews? What to Know about the 'Khazar' Theory That Antisemites Can't Shake.



Tucker Carlson and Mike Huckabee speak in a Feb. 19, 2026, interview filmed at Ben Gurion Airport in Israel and released by Carlson online. (Screenshot)

By Andrew Lapin

(JTA) – During Tucker Carlson’s interview the week prior with Mike Huckabee, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, both men made considerable waves with their takes on history and theology.

Huckabee sparked a diplomatic row by citing the Bible to argue that Israel had a divine right to claim all of the Middle East – even though he didn’t back doing so politically.

But Carlson’s own interpretation of Israeli sovereignty was also notable, as the far-right pundit insisted that Israelis should undergo genetic testing to determine if they have a rightful claim to the land.

“Why don’t we do genetic testing on everybody in the land and find out who Abram’s descendants are?” Carlson asked Huckabee at one point, using the name Abraham used before he made a covenant with God to become the first Jew. “It’s really simple. We’ve cracked the human genome. We can do that. Why don’t we do that?”

At another point, Carlson singled out Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu specifically as an illegitimate Israeli.

“What you’re saying is that certain people have a title to a highly contested region. They own it, in some deep sense,” he told Huckabee. “So I think it’s fair to ask, who are they, and how do we know? So the current prime minister’s ancestors weren’t from here within recorded history. He has no deed. Bibi Netanyahu, on one side, his family’s from Poland, they’re from Eastern Europe. So how do we know he has a connection to the people who God promised the land to?”

The line of questioning made little sense to many Jewish listeners, who understand Judaism as a blend of religion, ethnicity and community in which converts have always been accepted. For Jewish listeners, too, the idea of tracing bloodlines is often associated with the Nazis, who chose their victims based on how many Jewish ancestors they had.

But both Carlson’s critics, and supporters across the ideological spectrum who have agreed with his views on Israel, understood what he was getting at. They identified his line of questioning as a variation on the “Khazar theory:”

the belief that Ashkenazi Jews, like Netanyahu, are genetically descended from a Turkic minority that converted to Judaism in the Middle Ages rather than from the 12 tribes of Israel.

“The people currently occupying Israel are Khazarian Turks,” far-right pundit Candace Owens, a promoter of many antisemitic conspiracy theories, wrote on X.

“He has ZERO ancestral connection to the land. He’s Polish,” the far-left influencer Shaun King wrote on X about Netanyahu in praise of Carlson’s interview. “His real last name is Mileikowsky.”

The theories as to why the Khazars, who were a real people, would have converted en masse to Judaism have varied according to the teller; one tale holds that a Khazar royal held a debate between representatives of Judaism, Islam and Christianity to hold the best religion, and Judaism won out. But no matter how it happened, the theory goes, Jews who trace their genetics to Eastern Europe should not be considered rightful heirs of Israel and should instead claim the Caucasus as their ancestral home.

The Khazar theory has a long history but was largely discredited with the advent of DNA analysis. Yet it has grown in prominence among antisemitic circles since the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attacks in Israel and ensuing Gaza war, according to research by the Anti-Defamation League.

“Antisemites suggest that if Jews are descended from people not native to Israel (i.e., Khazars), then they have no legitimate claim to the land,” the ADL’s own description of the theory’s popularity notes. “In addition, because Nazis sought to expel Jews and others from their homes in Europe in order to obtain lebensraum (‘living space’) for ‘Aryan’ people, antisemites have argued that Jews are doing the same thing because they have no historic claim to the land of Israel.”

The ADL also notes that, setting aside the validity of the theory, most Israeli Jews are not Ashkenazi but rather trace their roots to North Africa and elsewhere in the Middle East.

The origins of the Khazar theory date back centuries and have always had some promulgation from Jews; Hungar-

ian Jews in the 19th century latched onto the theory, according to researchers. The Khazar theory has also been promoted by some Jewish and Israeli scholars in more recent years, including Arthur Koestler in his 1976 book “The Thirteenth Tribe;” Shlomo Sand, a historian at Tel Aviv University who identifies as “post-Zionist,” in his controversial 2008 book “The Invention of the Jewish People;” and Israeli geneticist Eran Elhaik.

This has further boosted the theory’s seeming validity among proponents: Owens, for example, has cited Sand’s book on X as evidence for the theory.

But such studies are largely refuted by established historical scholarship. “This claim, pardon my chutzpah, is nonsense,” Shaul Stampfer, an emeritus history professor at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, has said about the Khazar theory in college lectures.

In Stampfer’s own research into the Khazars, he said that while there were a few Jews among the Khazars, he has found no genetic links between the ancient Central Asian tribe and modern Ashkenazi Jews (whose own genetics have been thoroughly studied owing to a preponderance of genetic diseases in the population). There are, however, genetic links between Ashkenazi Jews and ancient Palestine, as well as to North Africa, he says.

In addition, there are very few Turkic origins to be found in Yiddish, while there are extensive Latin origins in Yiddish, further boosting evidence of broader Jewish migration to Europe and decreasing the likelihood of mass migration from Turkey.

There are other practical considerations, too, Stampfer told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last week.

“Take a look at a map,” he wrote in an email. “Even if the Khazars had converted, they would not have dragged themselves to Poland. It is far away and cold in the winter.”

The National Institutes of Health, too, published an extensive genetic study in 2013 that found “no evidence from genome-wide data of a Khazar origin for the Ashkenazi Jews.”

The researchers assembled what they called “the largest data set available to date for assessment of Ashkenazi Jewish genetic origins,” as well as available genome sets from the Caucasus. Their conclusion, the abstract notes, “corroborates the earlier results that Ashkenazi Jews derive their ancestry primarily from populations of the Middle East and Europe, that they possess considerable shared ancestry with other Jewish populations.”

None of the evidence has stopped the Khazar theory from emerging as a lodestar of modern antisemitism, thanks in part to influential right-wing personalities such as Carlson. This is not the first time he has toyed with the idea of genetics testing for Jews, though he previously seemed to be aware that such an ask would carry undesirable connotations.

“In order to determine who’s actually inherited the land, we would have to conduct global genetic testing to award property on the basis of the results,” he texted right-wing filmmaker Dinesh D’Souza months ago, according to D’Souza, who shared the text on a recent podcast. Carlson continued, “Sounds like a Nazi project to me. As a Christian, I reject that.”

“I don’t think that’s necessary any more than it’s necessary to genetically test Indians to make sure their ancestors are from India,” D’Souza, who is Indian-American, responded. “Remember Jews maintained their tribal identity. Very little intermarriage. They didn’t try to convert people, as Christians did.”

D’Souza continued, “Shakespeare’s ‘Merchant of Venice’ conveys the picture very vividly. The Jews don’t mix. So their continuity as a group is generally more secure than virtually any other group.” (“The Merchant of Venice,” which features the Jewish villain Shylock, is generally seen as promoting antisemitic stereotypes.)

Carlson responded by returning to the genetics question – and this time seeming more open to it than when he first called it a Nazi project. “I agree with all that and I admire it. I’m hardly against Jews,” he texted D’Souza. “But if the claim is that Jews have a genetic right to certain pieces of land, it’s going to be necessary to do genetic testing.”

The broader lurch into conspiratorial thinking on the right, exemplified by the views on the Jews and Israel espoused by Carlson, increasingly has some other conservatives worried about losing control of the narrative.

“The most popular digital content on the Right is now ‘Erika Kirk killed Charlie,’ ‘Epstein was leading a pedophile blackmail ring for the CIA’ and ‘Jews are a diabolical power destroying the world,’” Christopher Rufo, an influential right-wing thought leader who helped orchestrate the larger push against diversity initiatives, warned on X. “In these instances, we need to correct public opinion, rather than cave to it.”

For his part after the Carlson interview, Huckabee accused his interrogator of drawing on a “dangerous conspiracy theory” from “some of the darkest realms of the internet” for his genetic testing line of questioning.

“I do know that the discredited idea that most Ashkenazi or European Jews descended from the ancient Turkic kingdom of Khazaria is bunk,” Huckabee wrote on X. “It’s also been weaponized by people trying to deligitimize [sic] Jews, to strip them of their history, and to call them ‘imposters’ or ‘fake Jews.’”

Stampfer was hesitant to diagnose why the Khazar theory may be growing in popularity today.

“People who don’t like Jews might be attracted to the idea that this is one more Jewish lie,” he offered. Yet, he added, “Explaining why people believe what they believe is a tough business.” **HW**

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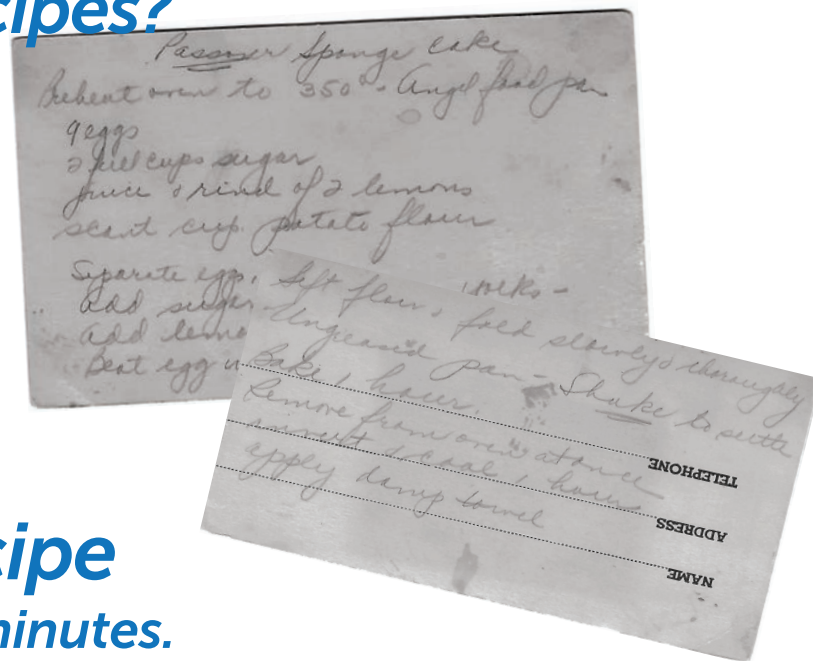
## Passover Sponge Cake

Use angel food pan Preheat oven to 350°

### Ingredients

- 9 eggs
- Juice and rind of 2 lemons
- Scant cup of potato flour

1. Separate eggs
2. Add sugar to beaten yolks
3. Add lemon and juice to above
4. Beat egg whites stiff and fold in above
5. Sift flour and fold slowly and thoroughly
6. Place in ungreased pan – shake to settle
7. Bake 1 hour
8. Remove from oven at once
9. Invert to cool 1 hour
10. Apply damp towel



## Banana Bread Matzah Brei Recipe

The perfect Passover breakfast, ready in 15 minutes.



By Hannah Paperno

(JTA) - This story originally appeared on *The Nosh*.

There's something about the comfort of a warm slice of banana bread with some butter that never gets old. If there are a million ways to consume the flavors of banana bread, I can assure you I'll find them. During Passover, when we're meant to be reflecting on our liberation from slavery in Egypt and avoiding hametz, I find myself craving my favorite comfort food – banana bread. Though I love some of the standard Pesach fare

like matzah ball soup and spoonfuls of charoset, the decadence of banana bread is something I yearn for. I have fond memories of waking up to the smell of matzah brei wafting from the kitchen downstairs as a child. Last year, I finally decided to set out to learn how to make matzah brei myself. Admittedly, this was a dangerous choice because now it means I can have my favorite kind of pancake any time of year, but I digress. After several rounds of my standard favorite (plain matzah brei topped with a mound of butter and

sugar), I looked at the slowly browning bananas in my kitchen and decided to do some experimenting. With the power of sheer hunger and willpower on my side, banana bread matzah brei was born. It's a simple matzah brei recipe that you can whip up in under 20 minutes, with the addition of all the flavors that make banana bread so great. Overripe mashed bananas paired with cinnamon and butter make for a Passover breakfast that I'll be coming back to for years. I traded out my standard butter and sugar for butter and maple syrup to make it a more traditional pancake experience, however, you're welcome to top them in whatever way you see fit. However you choose to enjoy them, I hope they bring all who try them the same comfort that they bring me.

**Total Time: 20 minutes**

**Yield: 20 pancakes**

### Ingredients

- 10 sheets of matzah
- hot water
- 3 overripe bananas, mashed
- 2 eggs 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- pinch of salt
- 1 stick of butter, for cooking

### To top

- cinnamon-sugar
- walnuts
- bananas sliced
- maple syrup

### Instructions

1. In a large bowl, crush matzah and soak in hot water for 15 seconds before draining excess water.
2. In a separate bowl, combine the bananas, eggs, vanilla, cinnamon and salt.
3. Into the large bowl of drained matzah, add the egg and banana mixture, and stir to combine.
4. In a small pan over low heat, melt about 1 Tbsp of butter (per pancake), then use a 1/2 cup to measure out your pancakes. Flatten with a spatula and fry until golden brown on each side, about 3-5 minutes. Repeat with remaining batter.
5. Top with cinnamon sugar, walnuts, bananas and maple syrup. **HW**

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## Passover Spinach and Cheese Lasagna Recipe

A year-round favorite reimagined for Passover.



By Adeena Sussman

(JTA) - This story originally appeared on *The Nosh*.

Lasagna for Passover? You bet. After days of preparing two (probably meat-based) seders, this dairy dish will be a welcome change — especially on a holiday where pasta is strictly forbidden. Matzah makes a suitable replacement for lasagna noodles, and the moisture released by the marinara sauce and the cheese softens the stiff, unleavened boards, resulting in a tender lasagna with layers just as delicious as one made with conventional, wheat-based noodles. I decided to keep this recipe simple, using frozen spinach and store-bought mari-

nara sauce. If the inspiration strikes you, by all means make your own sauce. One cup of sautéed mushrooms would also be a welcome addition, but the goal here was to liberate cooks from hours in the kitchen. Since ricotta cheese is difficult to find with kosher-for-Passover certification, cottage cheese is substituted. If you'd like a more ricotta-like consistency, whip the cottage cheese in the blender or food processor for a few seconds before combining with the other ingredients. Note: This recipe constitutes gebrochts, the Yiddish word for "broken" which refers to matzah products that have come into contact with liquid.

Some Ashkenazi Jews do not eat gebrochts on Passover, believing that liquid causes the matzah to rise, rendering it unfit for Passover consumption.

**Total Time: 1 hour 25 minutes**

**Yield: Serves 4-6**

### Ingredients

- 8-9 whole boards matzah (regular or whole-wheat)
- 2 jars (about 6 1/2-7 cups) marinara sauce
- 1/4 tsp black pepper
- 3/4 tsp salt
- 1/4 cup chopped parsley
- 1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
- 3 cups (3/4 lb) shredded mozzarella cheese
- 3 cups (1 1/2 lbs) small-curd cottage cheese
- 1 lb package frozen spinach, completely defrosted

### Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Combine cottage cheese, 1 1/2 cups mozzarella, parsley, salt and pepper in a bowl and stir to incorporate. Reserve.
3. Using your hands, squeeze excess moisture from spinach and separate spinach until it is no longer clumped

(you should end up with about 3 1/2-4 cups spinach). Reserve.

4. Spoon 3/4 cup marinara sauce into the bottom of a disposable, high-sided lasagna pan. Fit matzah to cover as much of the bottom of the pan as possible, breaking into pieces where necessary. Pour 1 1/2 cups sauce on top of matzah and distribute evenly.
5. Spoon about 1 cup of the cheese mixture onto the matzah and distribute evenly. Sprinkle about 1/4 cups of the spinach on top of the cheese, then sprinkle 2 Tbsp parmesan cheese. Repeat matzah-sauce-cheese-spinach-parmesan process two more times, then cover with a fourth layer of matzah.
6. Pour remaining 1 1/2 cups sauce on top of matzah.
7. Let lasagna rest for 15 minutes before baking to allow matzah to moisten slightly. Cover lasagna with foil and bake for 35 minutes.
8. Remove foil and sprinkle remaining 1 1/2 cups mozzarella on top of lasagna.
9. Reduce oven temperature to 350°F and bake lasagna an additional 30 minutes, until cheese is bubbly and browned around the edges.
10. Remove from oven, let rest for 5 minutes and serve hot. **HW**

# Jewish Hockey Star Jack Hughes' Overtime Goal Propels US to Historic Gold Medal in Olympic Hockey



**Jack Hughes #86 and Quinn Hughes #43 of Team United States celebrate winning the gold medals after the team's 2-1 overtime victory in the Men's Gold Medal match between Canada and the United States of the 2026 Winter Olympic games in Milan, Feb. 22, 2026. Credit: Gregory Shamus/Getty Images**

By Jacob Gurvis

(JTA) – Jewish hockey star Jack Hughes scored the game-winning goal last Sunday to clinch a gold medal for the U.S. men's hockey team, its first since 1980.

The New Jersey Devils star center, who had scored twice in Team USA's semifinal win, sent the puck between the legs of Canadian goaltender Jordan

Binnington 1:41 into overtime to give the American team a 2-1 win.

"This is all about our country right now. I love the USA," Hughes told NBC. "I love my teammates."

The win broke a 46-year Olympic drought for Team USA, which had not taken gold since the famous "Miracle on Ice" team that upset the Soviet Union

on its way to gold in 1980. The United States also won in 1960.

"He's a freaking gamer," Quinn Hughes, Jack's older brother and U.S. teammate said, according to The Athletic. "He's always been a gamer. Just mentally tough, been through a lot, loves the game. American hero."

Quinn Hughes is a defender for the Minnesota Wild and a former captain of the Vancouver Canucks who won the NHL's top defenseman award in 2024. He was also named the best defender in the Olympic tournament by the International Ice Hockey Federation after scoring an overtime goal to send the U.S. team to the semifinals.

The third Jewish member of the U.S. team, Boston Bruins goaltender Jeremy Swayman, won the one game he played, a Feb. 14 preliminary-round victory over Denmark.

The Hughes family – rounded out by youngest brother Luke, who also plays for the Devils – has long been lauded as a Jewish hockey dynasty. They are the first American family to have three siblings picked in the first round of the NHL draft, and Jack was the first Jewish player to go No. 1 overall. They are also the first trio of Jewish brothers to play in the same NHL game and the first broth-

ers to earn cover honors for EA Sports' popular hockey video game.

Jack, who had a bar mitzvah, has said his family celebrated Passover when he was growing up. Their mother, Ellen Weinberg-Hughes, who is Jewish, represented the U.S. women's hockey team at the 1992 Women's World Championships and was on the coaching staff of the gold-medal-winning women's team in Milan. Weinberg-Hughes is also a member of the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

Hughes' golden goal ushered in a burst of Jewish pride on social media, with one user calling it "the greatest Jewish sports moment of all time." The Hockey News tweeted that Hughes was "the first player in hockey history to have a Bar Mitzvah and a Golden Goal! Pretty cool!"

Jewish groups and leaders also jumped on the praise train. "Special shout out to @jhugh86 on scoring the game-winning goal!" tweeted Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League. "Beyond his incredible skill on the ice, Jack makes history as a proud representative of the American Jewish community, reminding us that the Jewish people are interwoven into America in her 250th year! Mazel Tov, Jack!" **HW**



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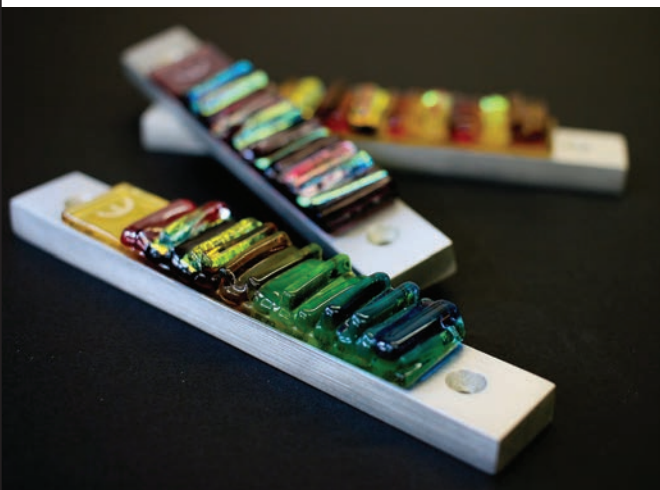


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