



the Hebrew Watchman

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS 1925-2025

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National Leadership Award Shines Light on Native Memphian's Work for Holocaust Survivors



John and Amy Israel Pregulman with a Survivor. Credit: John Pregulman
By Shoshana Center

Amy Israel Pregulman is preparing for a remarkable honor. The Network of Jewish Human Services Agencies (NJHSA) will bestow upon her the Professional Leadership Award for her work supporting Holocaust survivors. The award recognizes professionals who demonstrate exceptional leadership and impact in the Jewish human-services sector. She'll receive the award at the upcoming PowerNET 2026 Network Lunch, part of NJHSA's annual conference that brings together leaders from nonprofit human-service organiza-

tions across North America and Israel. "Jewish human service agencies are facing increased demand for services as more individuals and families turn to them for support, while also navigating funding constraints and challenges in access to care," explained Reuben D. Rotman, NJHSA's president and CEO. "At the same time, there is a meaningful opportunity to innovate through collaboration, shared best practices, and new models of service delivery that strengthen our collective impact. PowerNET is designed to bring leaders together to

address these challenges and advance solutions as a field." Amy and her husband, John Pregulman, founded Kavod in 2015, a national nonprofit dedicated to ensuring Holocaust survivors in the United States can live their remaining years with dignity by filling the gaps for emergency financial assistance and essential services. Kavod expanded in 2019, partnering with Seed the Dream Foundation, launching KAVOD SHEF: Survivors of the Holocaust Emergency Fund. "It's rare to encounter an individual whose actions align so entirely with her words, and who gives of herself so completely and selflessly," said nominator Talia Kaplan, executive director of Seed the Dream Foundation. "When I first met Amy in 2019, her generous spirit was unmistakable. She understood the immense challenge we faced, with over one-third of the 100,000 Holocaust survivors living in poverty across the U.S. at the time, and she did not shy away from the challenge. ... She became our partner in launching KAVOD SHEF and leading a national philanthropic and local practitioner partnership system that has filled more than 156,000 requests of Holocaust survivors to date. Amy embodies courage in action, dedicating her life to ensuring that survivors across the country receive the dignity, respect, and

support they so rightfully deserve." While humbled by the honor, the award carries meaning far beyond Amy's personal accomplishment. "This recognition is really about Kavod's mission and raising awareness that we still have Holocaust survivors in our communities and many of them are struggling," she said. "There are about 31,000 Holocaust survivors in the U.S., and a large portion continue to face financial hardship. Many survivors who didn't previously need assistance are now aging to a point where they're facing new challenges, especially with rising costs and reductions in federal benefits." "Amy has worked with Seed the Dream Foundation and more than 20-plus national philanthropic partners to provide material support, ensuring survivors had direct access to nutritional foods, emergency homeware, home repairs, utilities, dental care, and more, together with emotional support, offering an empathetic ear when she instated the first national hotline for Holocaust survivors, and as she fielded calls from agencies across the country as they joined the KAVOD SHEF family," shared Becca Stern Wenger, Seed the Dream Foundation's U.S. office director. "KAVOD SHEF now includes

(See Pregulman Page 2)

BBYO Supports Thrive with "Wild About Fashion" Show



The BBYO River City Chapter is proud to bring back one of Memphis's most meaningful and joy-filled community events: the Thrive Fashion Show, taking place on Sunday, April 26, 2026, from 2-4 p.m. at the Memphis Jewish Community Center Belz Theater. This highly anticipated event is more than just a fashion show. It is a celebration of confidence, inclusion and the power of community. This year's theme, "Wild About Fashion," invites the community to embrace boldness, individuality and the beauty of diversity. River

City is especially excited to revive this tradition after many years, honoring the legacy of past organizations that made this event so impactful while bringing fresh energy, creativity and a little wild spirit to its return. As a chapter rooted in leadership, philanthropy and sisterhood, River City is committed to creating opportunities that not only unite people but also uplift important causes, and the Thrive Fashion Show is a perfect reflection of that mission. At the heart of this event is Thrive Memphis, a remarkable local nonprofit

organization dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals with disabilities. Thrive Memphis serves teens and adults ages 13 and up with a wide range of exceptionalities, including Autism Spectrum Disorder, Down Syndrome and developmental delays. Through programming that focuses on social and emotional connection, recreation and life skills, Thrive creates a supportive environment where participants can truly thrive. As one of the few organizations in Memphis that receives no government funding, Thrive relies heavily on the generosity of the community to continue offering these life-changing programs, including summer camps, year-round activities and daily support for its participants. The fashion show itself highlights Thrive participants as the true stars and models of the event, giving them the chance to strut down the runway and show off their one-of-a-kind styles. With the "Wild About Fashion" theme, the runway will come alive with vibrant looks, fierce confidence and a celebration of what makes each individual unique. It is a powerful and uplifting experience, not only for the models but for every person getting to experience the

event as well. River City BBG is so honored to serve as the host of this event, working to ensure that every detail reflects the love, excitement and strong purpose behind it. Co-chaired by Jillian Tochner and Mia Katz, the event represents months of dedication, planning and passion from the River City BBGs, all coming together to make a meaningful and lasting impact. Community support is what makes this event possible, and everyone is encouraged to attend, spread the word and be part of something truly special. Whether you come to cheer on the models, support a meaningful cause or simply experience an afternoon that's as inspiring as it is unforgettable, you'll be sure to go "wild" for the joy and spirit of this event. For those interested in contributing further, donations and sponsorships are greatly appreciated and go directly to supporting Thrive Memphis and its programs. If you would like to get involved as a donor or potential sponsor, please reach out to jilliantochner@gmail.com. Mark your calendars and join us on April 26! We cannot wait to see the Memphis community come together to celebrate, support and uplift Thrive Memphis. HW

Pregulman...
(Continued From Page 1)



John and Amy with a Survivor. Credit: John Pregulman

43 Jewish human service agencies and 43 Jewish Federations across the country. Amy has prioritized these relationships and worked to be a resource and true partner by every definition – always seeking new and imaginative ways to reach more Holocaust survivors in the most sensitive and dignified manner.”

Oftentimes, situations reveal just how fragile daily life can be for survivors, reinforcing the urgency behind Kavod’s mission.

“A survivor might have an emergency dental situation and can’t afford treatment,” Amy noted. “We get the request, call the dentist that day, and it’s paid for before she leaves. Survivors don’t have to deal with reimbursements or cash outlays. We’ve seen survivors using their broken oven for storage; becoming isolated because their hearing aids don’t work; or they need help because a storm damaged their home. One survivor’s shoes were so worn and his feet so swollen that he cut the tops open and duct-taped them just to wear them.”

This reality underscores the vital need to continue supporting survivors.

“There are many priorities in the Jewish world now: antisemitism, Israel, security,” Amy said. “But we really need to keep paying attention to survivors living in poverty. That’s the most important thing to me about this award, that it brings light to this critical need.”

Leaders across the Jewish human-services field also recognize Amy’s work for creating a model that addresses that need at scale.

“We aim to recognize leaders who are driving meaningful, measurable impact in their communities – those who are innovative, collaborative, and deeply committed to advancing human services. Celebrating this leadership publicly not only honors their work but also elevates replicable models and inspires others,” noted Mr. Rotman. “We are proud to recognize leaders like Amy, whose work has had extraordinary, measurable impact on some of the most vulnerable members of our community. ... Amy’s work through the KAVOD SHEF framework exemplifies how coordinated partnerships and philanthropic investment can be scaled to meet urgent needs nationwide, and it’s exactly the kind of leadership we believe is important to elevate and celebrate.”

Leading up to the PowerNET conference in Toronto this May, the NJHSA and Amy remain focused on the work ahead.

“We’re especially excited about conversations around scaling impact and how agencies can do more, together, in a rapidly changing environment,” said Mr. Rotman. “Participants will leave with practical tools, new partnerships, and fresh ideas they can implement im-

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Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. April 3, 2026 / 16 Nissan, 5786.....7:05 p.m.
Havdalah, Sat. April 4, 2026 / 17 Nissan, 5786 8:02 p.m.
Weekly Torah Portion: PASSOVER

mediately to strengthen their organiza-
tions and better serve their communities.
“We’re in no position to stop; there
is still tremendous need,” added Amy.
“Ultimately, this recognition helps re-
mind people that survivors are still here,
and that we all have a responsibility to
care for them.” HW

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Center for Jewish Life & Learning at the Memphis JCC Presents: Gems of Judaism “All that Glitters is not Just Gold”

When you look at a gemstone, do you really see everything about it? It looks pretty, maybe a flicker of light bounces off it. But when you pick it up to the light and examine it from many angles, you get to see that it has many facets and light bounces off from countless sides. You see more than you thought was there originally, you see deeper beauty, and you may even see some small imperfections.

Judaism has many beautiful facets that can be explored in myriad ways. The Center for Jewish Life & Learning at the Memphis JCC is proud to present a new class series entitled “Gems of Judaism” starting the week after Passover.

This 6-week series of classes will, each week, highlight a different core, enduring treasure of Jewish Life that is meaningful across backgrounds and levels of observance. Open to the entire community, classes will be held each Tuesday from 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m., running April 14 - May 19.

The class formats will be instructional as well as interactive. Deeper meaning comes, not just from a teacher, but exploring thoughts from each other as well. Participants will be encouraged (but not required) to share personal gems to add to the “setting” as each key concept is discussed.

What is Judaism? Religion? Culture? Peoplehood? Civilization? Why

and how has Judaism survived thousands of years? Is the Torah a guide or a rulebook? What are the levels of interpretation of the Torah? How do we understand Jewish times and the Jewish calendar? What does Judaism say about justice, kindness and responsibility? What is the Rambam’s ladder of tzedakah? What are the Jewish approaches to joy and grief (simcha and mourning)? These questions and so much more will be explored this Spring.

- April 14: Jewish Identity
- April 21: Torah: A Living Conversation
- April 28: Shabbat & Sacred Time
- May 5: Ethics & Jewish Values
- May 12: Community, Ritual & Lifestyle
- May 19: Jewish Resilience, Hope & the Future

Some classes will be led by Laura Kurcfeld, director of the Center for Jewish Life & Learning, and some will be led by other community rabbis and educators. Learn more and register for the entire series or select weeks at jccmemphis.org/JewishLife, which will also provide information as weekly educators are announced. Have questions? Feel free to reach out to Laura Kurcfeld at lkurcfeld@jccmemphis.org. **HW**

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club Happenings

The MJCC Larisa and Ben Baer Senior Adult Club lunches and programs will take a break the week of April 6, resuming on Friday, April 10. Please note that the MJCC will be closed Wednesday and Thursday, April 8-9, for Passover. No lunches will be served during Chol HaMoed. To join us for our return on Friday, April 10, please call the front desk by 1 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7.

Wishing everyone a Great Passover!

Monday, April 13
Ask the Rabbi with Rabbi Yosef Braha.

Whether you have deep questions or simple inquiries about Judaism, holidays, or Kashrut, come enjoy a delicious lunch and get answers from an expert.

Lunch Details & Reservations:
Enjoy a delicious kosher lunch from the Memphis Jewish Home, Monday through Friday, for only \$2 (seniors). Reservations are required by 1 p.m. the day before. Please call the front desk at 901-761-0810 or call Steve Kaplan, Adult Services Coordinator, at 901-259-9220 or email stevekaplan@jccmemphis.org (Available Mon-Thu, 9:30 a.m., - 2:30 p.m.). **HW**

Wednesday, April 15
Team Trivial Pursuit
Enjoy a great meal and test your knowledge on various subjects, with a special focus on springtime questions. We encourage new participants to join the fun – you don’t need to be a trivia expert to win.

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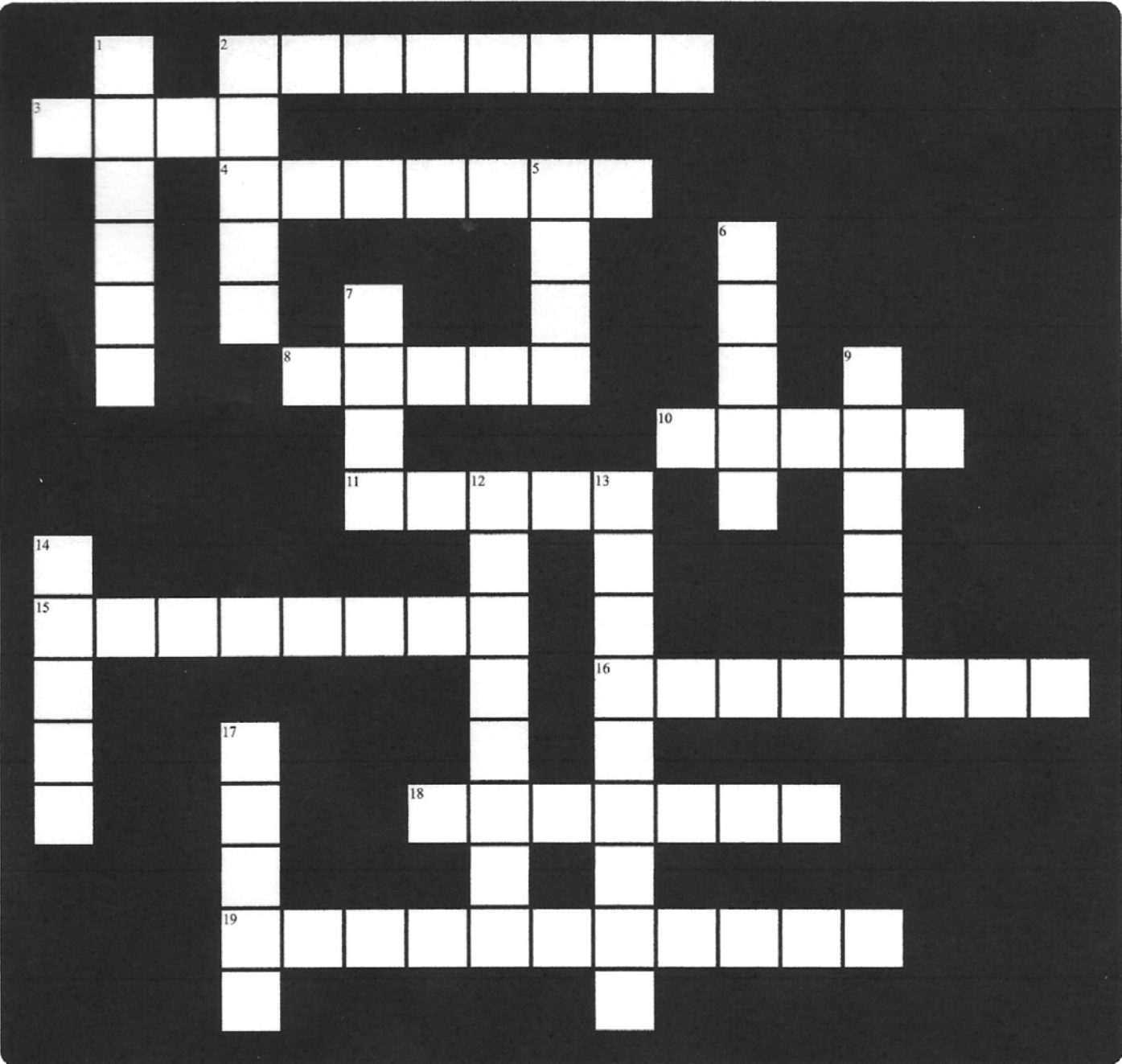
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Jewish Scientists

By Erwin Williamson ©



Answers on page 10

ACROSS

- 2 the Sylvia Plath of DNA
- 3 Danish atomic physicist Neils, Nobel Prize 1922
- 4 American environmentalist Paul, ‘The Population Bomb’
- 8 the ‘_____’ exclusion principle of electron spin
- 10 Nobel Prize 2024, computer design of proteins
- 11 Nobel Prize 1953, the “_____”cycle of cellular respiration
- 15 Memphis-born astrophysicist, novelist, Malco descendant
- 16 former CDC Director Rochelle
- 18 Nobel Prize 1965, quantum electrodynamics, shared prize with Schwinger
- 19 built Little Boy and Fat Man, WWII

DOWN

- 1 Ada _____, Nobel Prize 2009, ribosome structure
- 2 father of classical psychoanalysis
- 5 Gerty _____, Nobel Prize 1947, catalytic conversion of glycogen
- 6 American astronomer Carl, “billions and billions”
- 7 developer of polio vaccine Jonas
- 9 _____ Waksman, Russian-born American microbiologist, developed streptomycin
- 12 energy = mass times the speed of light squared
- 13 son of Ashkenazi NYC garment makers, shared 1965 Nobel with Feynman
- 14 Swiss-American physicist Felix, Nobel Prize 1952, magnetic resonance
- 17 Gertrude _____, developer of acyclovir for shingles, chickenpox, etc. Nobel Prize 1988

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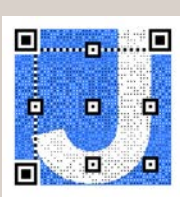
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Rebecca Brenner Graham,
author of *Dear Miss Perkins*

Frances Perkins was the first woman to serve in a presidential cabinet, the longest-serving Labor Secretary, and an architect of the New Deal. As Secretary of Labor, she wrestled widespread antisemitism and isolationism, finding creative ways to work around quotas and restrictive immigration laws. Diligent, resilient, empathetic, yet steadfast, she persisted on behalf of the desperate when others refused to act.

Janet Bond Brill,
author of *Little Edna's War*

A Harrowing memoir that traces the survival of Edna Szurek, a young Jewish girl born at Mila 18. Disguised as a Catholic child after escaping the Warsaw Ghetto, Edna became the youngest known member of the Polish Home Army at age 9. By 12, Pope Pius XII decorated her for bravery assisting the Polish Resistance, never knowing his “Catholic war hero” was actually a Jewish child in hiding.



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A Pesach Message For Your Table



“Pesach is the oldest and most transformative story of hope ever told. It tells of how an otherwise undistinguished group of slaves found their way to freedom from the greatest and longest-lived empire of their time, indeed of any time. It tells the revolutionary story of how the supreme Power intervened in history to liberate the supremely powerless. It is a story of the defeat of probability by the force of possibility. It defines what it is to be a Jew: a living symbol of hope.”

– Rabbi Jonathan Sacks





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Meet Vernon Durham

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 one of our current residents, Vernon Durham.



Vernon Durham.

MJHR: Tell us about yourself (hometown, education, family, hobbies, career).
I am from a little country town in Fayette County, called Somerville. When folks have money, they'll buy land. It was hard for me to get land, but I eventually got some and have had it all my life. I like to hunt, basically anything I can get at. Mostly, I hunt foxes, squir-



Vernon enjoys a lunch outing with friends.

rels and rabbits. I drove 18- wheelers for work. I have five kids: Larry, Junior, Eddie, Thomas and Deborah.
MJHR: How did you become connected to MJHR?
My daughter, Deborah, found it for me, and they moved me to the Home. I've enjoyed it, I've made friends. My favorite activity is the live music every Thursday. I'll go downstairs and listen

to the music they are playing.
MJHR: Share your favorite MJHR memory.
My favorite memory is whenever my grandson, Jerrin, comes to visit me. He comes to see me almost every day! There are times when he'll come to visit, and his parents are looking for him; they don't even know where he is. He's up here with me.

MJHR: What do you wish for the future 100 years of the organization?
I hope we continue to welcome all people. Where we're all like brothers and sisters together. Continued diversity in the future, I hope that I am here to see the growth, if God lets it happen. It's funny, I'm close to 100 myself!
MJHR: What does family mean to you?
My parents died early, so family means everything to me. My daughter, her husband, and my grandson mean everything to me; they come visit me every week. My other grandson moved to Arizona but passed. He was kind of like me, his own man.

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**

Chag Pesach Sameach

Happy
Passover

חג פסח שמח

FROM THE MJCC



Your Best Self

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

Cancel Culture Leaves No Room for Growth or Grace

In early February, USA Today asked me to write an opinion piece about veteran elite athletes playing in the twilight of their careers. Their angle for my story was that Lindsey Vonn, at 41 years old, was about to compete in the Olympics on an artificial knee and a torn ACL. They wanted me, someone who works with elite athletes, to opine on what would motivate athletes to risk so much to keep competing through immense pain and suffering when they are past their athletic primes.

I wrote the article from a 10,000-foot view. Central to my article was the thesis that many elite athletes have much of their self-identity tied to their athletic performance. I gave several examples of athletes competing well outside of their athletic primes, guys like Philippi Rivers and Messi. I also gave an example of someone not competing well out of his prime, Mike Tyson.

My article was published the day before Vonn skied. I was surprised shortly

after it was published that Vonn Tweeted at me. She insisted that I was wrong, and that she was indeed in her prime. While it was obvious that my intention was not to infer that her prime as a human being was over, rather that at 41 years of age with a fake knee and torn ACL, she was definitely not in her athletic prime. Shortly thereafter, her fans started sending me hateful and harassing messages and emails. In addition, Nancy Armour, a sportswriter for USA Today, wrote a slanderous hit piece on me. I am not sure what her motivation was, but her personal attack piece on me was picked up by virtually every news platform on the internet. In an instant, her emotional diatribe maligning me was spreading false information about me everywhere. The animus towards me was even spouted by the Terminator himself, as Arnold Schwarzenegger referred to me as a “loser.” (I still laugh at this.)

We live in a day and age where people

don’t read much anymore. It is estimated that 40 percent of Americans will not read one single book this year. I would bet everything I own that 99 percent of the people who flamed me on the internet did not read my article. Sadly, in our modern society, nuance is a thing of the past. Not many people take time to reflect, contemplate, or consider others’ opinions. Most are more about getting a hot take (a quick opinion with no basis to substantiate it). It’s not enough to simply disagree with someone on a topic, but our accelerated culture implores us to try to ruin a person if we don’t agree with them.

I survived this ordeal, and I am doing well. However, the next time I disagree with someone, I am going to practice what I preach. I am going to give them the benefit of the doubt or at least disagree with them without trying to ruin them. We should always allow room for growth and grace in our disagreements. **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, or visit his website at www.greggraber.com.

USPS Worker Charged with Felony, Misdemeanors for Allegedly Attacking 4-Year-Old Near Monsey



A New York City Police Department car. Credit: Photogider/Pixabay.

(JNS) – The Town of Ramapo Police Department said last Saturday that it was adding a felony charge, attempted second-degree assault, to the two misdemeanors with which it charged Gabriel Stan, 39, a U.S. Postal Service worker who allegedly shoved a 4-year-old Jewish boy to the ground in the heavily Jewish area, near Monsey, N.Y., at around 6:25 p.m. on March 19. “I have viewed the video depicting an incident involving a physical attack on a small child. The content of this video is very disturbing,” stated Michael Specht, supervisor of the Ramapo Town Council, on Friday. “Ramapo Police have treated this matter with extreme seriousness and have now arrested the suspect.” The Monsey Scoop originally shared the footage. It referred to the site of the alleged attack as Monsey. The police department said it took place in the “Viola section of the Town of Ramapo,” which is near Monsey. The press release from the police department last Saturday stated that the felony charges were added: “due to the ages of the victim and the suspect (suspect over 18 years old and victim under 7 years old).” Video footage appears to show the mailman,

Michael Specht, Ramapo Town Council supervisor, called the incident “very disturbing.”

who works for the independent federal agency, shove an Orthodox boy to the ground, after the latter walked on the sidewalk near where the USPS van was parked. The boy stands up immediately, picks up his fallen yarmulke and walks away. It wasn’t clear when the mailman was due in court. USPS has not commented. **HW**

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Understanding Donor-Advised Fund Basics

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

A donor-advised fund offers a middle ground between participating in simple “checkbook charity” and starting a non-profit foundation.

Often considered smaller and nimbler cousins of private foundations, donor-advised funds offer many of the benefits of foundations, including the ability to:

- Involve multiple members of the family, friends, or other advisors
- Research potential recipients
- Recommend how funds are distributed

But, unlike foundations, donor-advised funds require less legal and financial paperwork, such as an annual tax filing that is subject to public inspection, regulatory requirements, and excise taxes.

How do you contribute?

Donor-advised funds allow you to contribute cash, stock, real estate, or other assets, such as business interests. These contributions can be bunched to combine multiple calendar years’ worth of gifts into one year, which may offer tax benefits if you are close to your standard deduction limit.

You may partner with a donor-advised fund sponsor or the sponsor may run your fund. A fund sponsor can be a financial institution or a community, educational, or religious institution. Grants may then be recommended by you or your designee to your charities of choice.

Rather than keeping track of gift receipts from multiple charities, a donor-advised fund serves as your single source for tax receipts and grant-recipient information. Keep in mind, your potential deduction is based on your contribution(s) to the fund itself, not the individual grants distributed from the fund.

More potential considerations for donors and recipients

Donor-advised funds are gaining popularity for other reasons, including:

Anonymity. When you give gifts to a charity through a private foundation, those gifts become public record through IRS form 990-PF. In contrast, you can choose to make your gifts from a donor-advised fund anonymously.

Recurring gifts. Many donor-advised funds have recurring gift options so you can optimize your giving in line with your giving strategy and the organization’s needs. If you had previously used credit cards to make recurring gifts, you can use tax-advantaged dollars and save a charity from costly credit card processing fees.

Noncash gifts. Appreciated stock, real estate, or collectibles are easier to handle for both the giver and the recipient through a donor-advised fund. This holds true even for highly liquid yet noncash assets like cryptocurrency.

While many charities may be unable to take noncash gifts given the level of complexity, donor-advised funds serve an important role to help charities benefit from the wealth accumulated in these illiquid assets.

Potential cautions

Of course, there are some potential cautions for anyone considering a gift to a donor-advised fund:

Irrevocable donations: The donor to the fund cannot withdraw their money for any reason once it’s gifted.

No legal requirement to make grants: There is no legal requirement to grant the money donated to the fund. This has been viewed as a criticism of donor-advised funds as grants may not be made at the time they are most needed.

Underlying costs/fees: Be aware of the administrative fees associated with the management of the donations as well as the investment options within the fund. Fees and investment options vary by provider.

Grant-making restrictions: Grants can be made only to certain eligible 501(c)(3) organizations that the IRS recognizes as public charities. These organizations cannot provide goods and services to the donor, such as tickets to a gala.

Potential tax advantages

Contributing to a donor-advised fund may bring tax advantages, such as:

- You may receive a tax deduction, the use of which is subject to your Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitations.
- There is no capital gains tax for highly appreciated assets when sold inside the donor-advised fund. The invested assets have the potential to grow tax-free, which could increase the eventual grant that you can make from the fund at a later date.
- Real estate gifts are valued at their current value, which may provide a bigger tax break if the property has appreciated, unlike similar donations to a private foundation that limit the deduction to the cost basis in the property.

If you’re considering using a donor-advised fund but are uncertain about whether it could be right for you, talk with your tax advisor and your financial advisor to help you decide.

Donor-advised fund donations are irrevocable charitable gifts. The sponsoring organizations maintaining the fund have ultimate control over how the assets in the fund accounts are invested and distributed. Donor-advised funds donors do

not receive investment returns. The amount ultimately available to the donor to make grant recommendations may be more or less than the donor contributions to the donor-advised fund. While annual giving is encouraged, the donor-advised fund should be viewed as a long-term philanthropic program. Tax benefits depend upon your individual circumstances. You should consult your tax advisor. While the operations of the donor-advised fund and pooled income funds are regulated by the Internal Revenue Service, they are not guaranteed or insured by the United States or any of its agencies or instrumentalities. Contributions are not insured by the FDIC and are not deposits or other obligations of, or guaranteed by, any depository institution. Donor-advised funds are not registered under federal securities laws, pursuant to exemptions for charitable organizations.

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The Meaning & the Moments that Make Passover Special

By Shoshana Center

Each spring, Jewish families around the world prepare for one of the most meaningful and memorable holidays on the Jewish calendar: Pesach/Passover. The holiday commemorates the biblical story of the Exodus, when G-d finally freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt after generations of oppression under Pharaoh.

The Torah commands us to remember this moment of liberation each year by telling the story during the Passover *seder* (ceremonial meal), eating matzah, and refraining from *chametz* (leavened foods) throughout the holiday. Passover is filled with symbolism, reflection, and, of course, loads of preparation.

Sometimes, that preparation becomes its own story. “It says we were slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt,” joked Rachamim Pauli, “but some people think they are slaves to Pesach cleaning!”

If you’ve spent days scrubbing kitchens, switching dishes, and searching for the last crumbs of chametz, you probably smiled at that sentiment. No one said being Jewish was easy, right?

But beneath the humor lies Passover’s powerful themes: remembering the sacrifices, struggles, and important lessons of those who came before us. “Giving up something for a week to honor the monumental sacrifices our ancestors made for us so that we can live free,” is what Beth Okeon appreciates most.

The traditions surrounding Pesach are deeply rooted in the Torah. We eat matzah, the unleavened bread that reminds us of the haste with which the Israelites fled Egypt, leaving no time for their dough to rise. At the seder table, symbolic foods like *maror* (bitter herbs) represent the bitterness of slavery, while sweet *charoset* evokes the mortar used by Jewish slaves forced to build for Pharaoh.

But while the story is ancient, each generation finds its own way to connect

with it and pass it on to future generations. For many families, that connection begins around the seder table. “Setting up our seder table and always looking for something new to add to make the seder more enjoyable for everyone,” is Zechariah Steiner’s favorite part.

The seder itself is designed to spark conversation, especially among children. The youngest participants ask the traditional *Mah Nishtanah* “Four Questions,” prompting the retelling of the Exodus story. The evening blends ritual, storytelling, song, food, and some crafty creativity to produce an experience meant to bring history to life.

Often, it’s the food that carries some of the strongest memories. “Baking my Baubie’s brownies always brings me back to Pesach as a little girl in Minneapolis at my grandparents’ table,” shared Shana Lowell.

Family recipes and traditions typically dominate the holiday, connecting to families’ histories in the most wonderful ways. “Making homemade gefilte fish with my great-grandmother’s spoon, making homemade horseradish using my dad’s recipe, and the wonderful smells while preparing the wonderful dishes,” are what lyse Lichterman Evans treasures.

For others, the joy comes from the moment when all the preparation is finally complete: “Sitting down at my table with family after getting everything together,” said Hanielle Sauer about her favorite parts of Pesach, “and knowing it’s done, and it all came together.”

“Knowing my house is very clean,” added Kathie Fox, “plus the food and the seder!”

There are some people who admit that another moment also holds a special place in their hearts. “The end,” joked my sister, Elli Pauli, of her favorite part of Pesach.

Still, the discipline required to observe Passover can also be deeply meaningful. Avoiding chametz for the entire week requires planning and commitment. “I’m very proud that I can keep strict restrictions for a week,” said Leah Goodfella. “Self-control around food is very difficult, and I smile when I see how good we do for Pesach.”

Beyond the dietary changes, Passover also transforms homes in imaginative ways to keep younger generations involved. “Decorating my house for Pesach – frogs all around, blow-up fish,” is what Leslee Morris does. “One year, we created a tent-like atmosphere, finding ways to entertain and engage the children and grandchildren.”

Even something as simple as the main Passover item can become a highlight: “Matzos, if you can find them,” noted Susan Thorp of her Pesach fave.

Humor, nostalgia and tradition all weave together during Passover, re-

minding us that while the holiday commemorates hardship, it ultimately celebrates freedom. At its heart, the Passover seder ends with a powerful declaration: *L’shanah haba’ah b’Yerushalayim*: “Next year in Jerusalem.” The phrase captures both hope and continuity, linking Jewish families today with generations past and future.

Perhaps that’s why Passover continues to resonate so deeply. Whether through the taste of a beloved family recipe, the laughter around the seder table as toy frogs are thrown about, the discipline of keeping the holiday’s laws, or the creativity to ensure children and grandchildren participate and enjoy, Pesach invites each person to connect with the same story yet in their own unique way.

A story of struggle, resilience and ultimately, freedom, retold year after year around tables filled with matzah, memories and the enduring bonds of family and the Jewish people. **HW**

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At this Jerusalem Museum, Everyday Objects Tell the Story of the Holocaust in a Unique Way



Hebrew prayers scrawled on the back of Romanian wine labels are displayed as part of the “Living Memory” exhibit at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. Credit: Larry Luxner

By Larry Luxner

February 17, 2026 (JTA) – JERUSALEM – A guitar played by Jewish teenager Nina Simon of Skopje, Yugoslavia. A shortwave radio that once belonged to Raphael Ahav of Lyon, France. An embroidered prayer shawl, or tallit, used by 7-year-old Yosef Valdman of Borszczów, Poland.

These everyday artifacts are among 33 displayed in glass cubicles at the entrance to “Living Memory” – a new exhibit at Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center.

What these items all have in common is that none of their owners lived to see the end of World War II – all were victims of the Nazi horror that took six million Jewish lives. The exhibit explores how memory is formed and passed on, through personal objects that tell extraordinary – and at times, unbelievable – stories, along with rare Holocaust-era documentation and compelling artwork.

“These personal items serve as bridges between past and present, as evidence of what happened,” said Eliad Moreh-Rosenberg, chief art curator at Yad Vashem, which is located on Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem. “Some of them deal with religion, others with daily life. We ask ourselves the ques-

tion, what is memory? And how will we transmit this memory when the direct witnesses to the Holocaust will no longer be among us?”

Moreh-Rosenberg added: “All of us know Holocaust survivors, but the next generation will not. Our challenge is to make these memories more present and tangible.”

That challenge has taken on added urgency, given that roughly only 200,000 Holocaust survivors remain alive worldwide today. Their average age is 87, according to the Claims Conference.

The “Living Memory” exhibit is designed to offer museum-goers a first-hand encounter with a Jewish world that no longer exists. The objects on display range in size from a tiny pocket watch used by Yaakov Ostfeld of the Romanian town of Vatra Dornei to the full-sized wardrobe, salvaged from a house in Poland, in which Jewish teenager Genia Sznajder hid in 1941, the wooden door punctured by a German soldier’s bayonet.

In total, more than 400 rarely seen artifacts and artworks form the exhibit. Partially funded by the Austrian government, “Living Memory” opened Oct. 30, 2025, in a ceremony that featured

a performance by 104-year-old Auschwitz survivor and conductor László Roth.

“The idea for this exhibit came after we opened a new repository for all our collections in July 2024. It occurred to me that we should make these collections accessible to the public,” Moreh-Rosenberg said. “I thought it was important to show visitors what is actually being preserved.”

The exhibit – which includes items connected with survivors as well as victims – consists of three sections comprising three layers of memory.

“The first stage is during the Holocaust itself, when Jews made every attempt possible to preserve memory, so that something would be left. The second stage is after the Holocaust, when survivors went back to their homes and communities, trying to find traces of life and collect documents, names and information,” she said.

“The third stage is memory speaking through symbols,” Moreh-Rosenberg said as she guided visitors through a gallery of Holocaust-themed art. “This is collective memory.”

Moreh-Rosenberg, originally from France, has been working at Yad Vashem for 20 years. She studied art history at Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and museum studies at Tel Aviv University.

“We’ve made a point of showing original, authentic pieces,” she said.

One of the most unusual objects on display is the trunk of a hollowed-out tree that saved the life of Jakob Silberstein, a Polish Jew who escaped from a Nazi death march in Czechoslovakia’s Sudetenland. He eventually found refuge at the home of a Czech woman, Jana Sudova.

“One day, he saw a rabbit running and entering the tree, so he understood that the tree was hollow,” Moreh-Rosenberg explained. “He dug into the tree, and you can see here the hole he made. He knew he had a hiding place in case the Germans would come looking for Jews.”

That is exactly where he fled when

the Gestapo made a final sweep of the area towards the end of the war. Silberstein hid for nine hours; he survived and eventually settled in Israel. Sixty years later, in 2005, he returned to the Czech Republic, tracked down the tree and eventually donated it to Yad Vashem.

Other remarkable artifacts include a package of yellow stars intended for distribution to French Jews, and a Hanukkah menorah that was concealed under the floor of a synagogue-turned-church in the Dutch town of Alphen aan den Rijn. The menorah was discovered in 1980, wrapped in newspapers from the year 1941.

Also on display is a silver-threaded waistcoat made by Sol Levi, who lived in the Greek port of Thessaloniki. Sol spent four years knitting it but never wore it. In 1943, the entire family was deported to Auschwitz; only her son Marcel survived.

“There is one artifact that especially moved me – a notebook that belonged to Josima Feldschuh, a child prodigy pianist and composer who gave concerts in the Warsaw Ghetto,” Moreh-Rosenberg said. “She played Chopin, Mozart and Schubert. We have her notebook in which she composed music. She and her parents found a hiding place, but at the age of 13 she died of disease, and so did her mother. Only her father survived.”

The last section of the exhibition showcases the work being done at Yad Vashem’s new Shapell Family Collections Center. In this space, visitors get a behind-the-scenes glimpse of the cataloging and research that takes place daily so that Holocaust memory can be preserved for future generations.

At the exhibit’s conclusion, a prominent quote from the late Holocaust survivor and Nobel Prize-winning writer Elie Wiesel sums up its mission: “We have to be the messengers’ messengers.”

This article is sponsored by and produced in collaboration with Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center. This story was produced by JTA’s native content team. **HW**

Crossword answers from page 4

1Y

2FRANKLIN

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8PAULI

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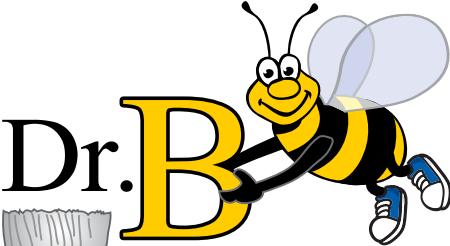


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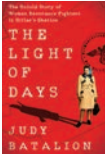
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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Judy Batalion



Granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, Judy is the author of *The Light of Days*, a New York Times and international bestseller and the winner of both a National Book Award and a Canadian Jewish Literary Award. Her debut novel, *The Last Woman of Warsaw*, will be released in early April 2026. [Books available at Novel Memphis](#)

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