



Jewish Community News

The Publication of the Jewish Federation of the Desert

www.jfedps.org

Tishrei/Chesvam 5784 - October 2023

Event Highlights 2023-2024

October 16, 2023

JBC Eti Elboim:
"The Girl Who Survived Auschwitz"

November 5, 2023

Defiant Requiem

November 8, 2023

JBC Miriam Ruth Black: "Shayna"

November 27, 2023

Cabaret for a Cause

December 3, 2023

Feast of Jewish Learning
JBC 5 authors/6 books

December 11, 2023

Women's Card/Game Day

January 8, 2024

JBC Fayne Frey: "The Skincare Hoax"

January 22, 2024

Lion of Judah Event

February 5, 2024

JBC Omer Bartov:
"The Butterfly and the Axe"

February 7, 2024

Federation Main Event

February 14, 2024

Deborah Applegate:
"Madam: The Biography of Polly Adler,
Icon of the Jazz Age"

March 6, 2024

Sarah Bimbach: "A Daughter's Kaddish"

March 18, 2024

Pomegranate Event

March 26, 2024

Federation Day at Tamarisk

April 3, 2024

Rachel Shteir: "Betty Friedan"

April 14, 2024

All Things Israel

May 5, 2024

Yom HaShoah;
Holocaust Remembrance

From Pomegranates to Robots: Israel Leads the Way in Innovation in the Desert

A Taste of Israel from our CEO while on our Community Mission



Alan Potash

Jewish Federation
Chief Executive
Officer

Spending time in the desert of Israel reminds me of the desert of the Coachella Valley, but only with the temperature. The days while we were there reached a cool 118 degrees, just like home. That is where the similarities ended.

Growing pomegranates in the desert isn't easy and many fail to produce enough fruit to make a living. We spent time with Yuval who didn't give up. He currently has the only pomegranate orchard in the Negev that can produce enough for export and domestic consumption. The good fruit is for export and the not-so-perfect is used for juice domestically. Next time you are in Israel and drink pomegranate juice it is possible that it came from Yuval's orchard.

A true delight for me always is spending time at schools in the Negev. We visited the main regional high school in Ramat HaNegev. Walk into any high school today in America or Israel and you see kids' personalities coming out in the way they dress or their hair style. But walking into this class we saw something unusual; banners celebrating robotics victories.

This school's robotics team came in second in Israel and eighth in the world at the international finals in Houston, Texas. Israel had sent two teams to Houston to compete against 190 schools from around the world. The first place Israeli team did not compete in the finals because they came from a religious school and did not compete



Robots class in Ramat HaNegev



Pomegranates from the Negev

on Shabbat.

In short, Israel had two schools qualify for the international competition which hosts 190 teams from around the world.

When we talk about Israel as a

startup nation it means that someone with an idea for something gives it a try and, if her or she fails, tries again until successful ... no matter if it is pomegranates or robots.

**everyone
counts**
can we count on you?

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**2023-2024
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**Jewish Federation
OF THE DESERT**

Cabaret for a Cause

Starring
Broadway Performer
David Burnham

**Monday Evening
November 27**
Tamarisk Country Club

5:30pm Cocktail Reception
6:30pm Buffet Dinner
7:30pm Show

Limited Seating Available
Please RSVP By November 13th
gloria.benavides@jfedps.org
or call 760.324.4737
Tickets \$365 person

**GATHERING
FOR GOOD**



A Message from Arnie Gillman, Federation President

Shanah Tovah. As Yom Kippur approaches, we think about the past year and what we can do to be a better person within our family and community. I believe one of our most important responsibilities is to educate our children and grandchildren what it means to be Jewish; to commit to Jewish values of respecting one another and being aware of, caring about and helping those who are less fortunate and require assistance.

As the years go by there are ever fewer Holocaust survivors to bear witness, so it is crucial that we speak up and inform future generations about the horrors of the Holocaust, how six million of our

people perished, and how it must never happen again.

Sadly, with so much antisemitism going on here and abroad, it is imperative for the Jewish community to stand with each other, globally and locally as well. Our Jewish Federation Board and I take this very seriously. This year our community is offering many exciting opportunities to come together, and I hope you will make this a priority in the months ahead.



**Arnie Gillman,
President**

Educational programs include our collaboration with the Jewish Book Council in bringing speakers who will come to the Federation in person, or through Zoom, and speak about an exciting array of books, which we detailed in last month's Jewish Community News. (Dates of these programs can be found in the "Event Highlights" column on the front page). We have a library at the Federation office, where you can check out books at your leisure.

We are also affiliated with the PJ Library program, which invites parents and grandparents to sign up their children/grandchildren to receive wonderful Jewish themed books monthly.

An important project of the Jewish Federation is our Holocaust education outreach with the local schools. As part of our Yom HaShoah/Holocaust Remembrance programs we invite middle and high school students to participate in essay and art contests about the Holocaust and we bring the winners to our annual Yom HaShoah event.

I invite you to become more involved. You are always welcome to contact me. My email address is Hag33150@aol.com.

Wishing everyone peace and good health in the upcoming year 5784.

Jewish Federation 2024 Grant Allocations



Federation President Arnie Gillman {l} and Federation CEO Alan Potash {r} present check to JFS Executive Director Kraig Johnson.



Federation Board Member Barry Fisher {l} and Federation CEO Alan Potash {r} present check to Safehouse of the Desert's Birgit Phillips, Safe Place Coordinator.



Federation President Arnie Gillman {l} and Federation CEO Alan Potash {r} present check to Harriet Baron, Mizell Center Director of Development.

After rigorous vetting and hours of meetings with the many institutions requesting funding, the Jewish Federation presented checks to local synagogues, organizations and agencies during August and September. Three of the recipients are featured this month, Jewish Family Service of the Desert, Safehouse of the Desert and Mizell Center.

Jewish Family Service of the Desert was established by the Jewish Federation in 1983, and became a separate agency after several years of ever increasing demand for services. Today it is a social service agency committed to meeting

the needs of the Jewish residents of the Coachella Valley however its services are open to all people regardless of religious beliefs. A special project of JFS is Café Europa, a socialization club for Holocaust Survivors and their families to meet and build supportive relationships. This year programs will increasingly focus on second-generation survivors.

SafeHouse of the Desert provides emergency shelter, intervention and outreach services to runaway, homeless or other youth in crisis. It offers youth positive alternatives to becoming victims of the streets. Their Emergency Shelters and Transitional Housing

Programs (Riverside and Thousand Palms) provides over 400 young people with crisis intervention services annually and 10,000 youth are reached through our mental health and community outreach programs. SafeHouse Of the Desert has been providing the Street Outreach program to entrenched street youth since 1997. Their team is in the community six days a week to seek and provide services for runaway and homeless youth of our community.

Mizell Center has been servicing the senior community in the Palm Springs area since 1974. Their programs and services are curated for seniors on

a broad socio-economic spectrum, enabling them to welcome more than 60,000 visitors annually. Mizell offers more than 50 weekly activities designed to support independence, promote lifelong learning and sustain a healthy and engaged lifestyle. Its Nutrition Program is the largest in the Coachella Valley. Through our contract with the Riverside County Office on Aging, we prepare and deliver nutritious meals every weekday to homebound seniors, as well as up to 8 congregate meal sites, such as other senior centers and senior living communities throughout the Valley.

Women's Philanthropy Begins Season with "In-Person" Presentation

Fran Kaufman, Women's Philanthropy chair is excited to kick off the 2023/2024 year on Wednesday, November 08, 2023, will be the opening meeting of women interested in getting involved in the various activities being planned this year. Miriam Black, one of our Jewish

Book Council authors, will join us in person at 10:00 am for a discussion of her latest book, "Shayna," a story that is steeped in the



Miriam Black

Yiddish culture of the shtetl and the lower East side of New York in the early 20th century.

Miriam Ruth Black is a storyteller, teacher, lecturer, and therapist



and was the winner of a National Book Award in 2022, inspired by her family's history.

It will be helpful if you call or email Leslie Pepper, Women's Philanthropy Director, at 760-324-4737 or leslie.pepper@fedps.org to advise you will be attending.

Holocaust Programming

By Leslie Pepper, Jewish Federation Director of Women's Philanthropy and Community Engagement

H o l o c a u s t Programming chairs Stephanie Ross and Dr. Gary Levin announce plans to bring programs on the Holocaust to our community throughout the upcoming season, beginning with two authors from the Jewish Book Council presenting their books via Zoom on October 16 and November 13. (Contact the Jewish Federation Office, 760-324-4737, for link).

Eti Elboim will present the book she co-authored with Sara Leibovits, **"The Girl Who Survived Auschwitz"** on Zoom on Monday, October 16 at 3:00 pm. This is the powerful true story of Sara Leibovits and the incredible pain and hardships she went through during her time



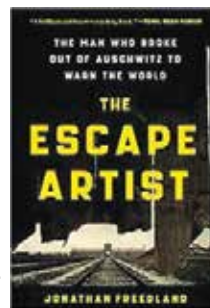
Stephanie Ross



Dr. Gary Levin

in the death camp. Yet despite the horrors she faced, she always tried to maintain her family's values of courage, faith, and kindness to others. In this compelling memoir, Sara's story is intertwined with that of her daughter, Eti. Seventy years after the horrors of the Holocaust, Eti reveals the inherited trauma of the second generation and completes the Holocaust survivor's tale.

The second book being presented, also on Zoom, is by Jonathon Freedland on Monday, November 13 at 3:00 pm. **"The Escape Artist"** is a winner of the National Jewish Book Award and a New York Times Bestseller. "The Escape Artist" is a brilliant and heart-wrenching book, with universal and timely lessons about the power of information--and misinformation. Award-winning journalist and bestselling novelist Jonathan Freedland tells the astonishing



true story of Rudolf Vrba, the man who broke out of Auschwitz to warn the world of a truth too few were willing to hear. In April 1944, Rudolf Vrba became one of the very first Jews to escape from Auschwitz and make his way to freedom--among only a tiny handful who ever pulled off that near-impossible feat. He did it to reveal the truth of the death camp to the world--and to warn the last Jews of Europe what fate awaited them. Against all odds, Vrba and his fellow escapee, Fred Wetzler, climbed mountains, crossed rivers, and narrowly missed German bullets until they had smuggled out the first full account of Auschwitz the world had ever seen--a forensically detailed report that eventually reached Franklin Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, and the Pope. And yet too few heeded the warning that Vrba had risked everything to deliver. Though Vrba helped save two hundred thousand Jewish lives, he never stopped believing it could have been so many more. This is the story of a brilliant yet troubled man--a gifted "escape artist" who, even as a teenager, understood that the difference between truth and lies can be the difference between life and death. Rudolf Vrba deserves to take his place alongside Anne Frank, Oskar Schindler, and Primo Levi as one of the handful of individuals whose stories define our understanding of the Holocaust.

Freedland is a columnist for The Guardian in London and presents BBC Radio in a contemporary history series, the long view. The Escape Artist is a 2023 National Jewish book Award Winner for biography and Holocaust.

The Jewish Federation's Holocaust Programming are partnering with Jewish Family Services on several events this year, focusing on our Second Generation Children of Survivors. And, as in past years, we are also holding the annual Yom Ha Shoah Community program on Sunday, May 5, 2024, at University of California/Riverside Campus Auditorium in Palm Desert at 3:00 pm.

As part of our Yom HaShoah observance, we are again promoting a contest for all students grades 8-12 in the Coachella Valley's three school districts, as well as home schooled and private schooled children. This 2024 event will be Art and Poetry contests, on the theme "Never Again, Never Forget".

Judges will be needed for the contests. If interested in assisting with judging and/or for more information about the contest, contact Leslie Pepper, Community Outreach Director, at 760-324-4737 or at leslie.pepper@jfedps.org.

JEWISH COMMUNITY NEWS

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EDITORIAL

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Miriam H. Bent, Editor
Bailey Communications,
Layout & Design

JCN STATEMENT

The Jewish Community News seeks to provide news and feature material of special interest to its readership, and to create a heightened sense of Jewish identity through the dissemination of information about people, events and issues at home and abroad. The JCN seeks to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions in the Jewish community.

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DEFIANT REQUIEM Defiant Requiem is a feature-length documentary film that tells the extraordinary, untold story of the brave acts of resistance by Jewish prisoners at Theresienstadt (Terezin) during the Holocaust. It tells the story of the moral leadership of brilliant Czech conductor Rafael Schächter, who sustained hope and courage for his fellow prisoners by creating a choir and "singing to the Nazis what they dared not say."

Join Temple Sinai and the Jewish Federation on
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2023, at 9:30 AM
for a special preview of the award-winning
documentary **Defiant Requiem**.

For further details contact Leslie Pepper at the Jewish Federation: 760-324-4737, or Temple Sinai: 760-568-9699.

Florida University Students Delve into Israel's "Innovation Nation"

Seminar attracts mainly students without previous exposure to anything Israel-related, eager to learn and apply lessons from Israel's startup success.

By Abigail Klein Leichman, ISRAEL21c

In the upcoming semester, students at America's fifth largest university will delve into the foundations of Israeli innovation and entrepreneurship.

The "Innovation Nation: The Global Influence of Israeli Technology and Entrepreneurship" course at the Honors College of Florida International University is taught by Aaron Kaplowitz, president of the Miami-based United States – Israel Business Alliance (USIBA), and USIBA Managing Director Andi Flug Wolfer.

"This will mark our third year teaching the course, and the first time we've had to turn students away because we're beyond capacity," Kaplowitz tells ISRAEL21c. "We have 20 enrolled with more students on the waiting list."

Kaplowitz notes that "for the vast majority of the students in our class, this is their first exposure to anything Israel-related." The seminar-style course presents the principles and unique cultural factors that impact Israel's innovation ecosystem, such as mandatory Israel Defense Forces service after high school. Students apply these concepts toward startups they develop in teams during the semester.

Lessons of Failure

"They learn how to pitch, how to think through different angles, how to work as part of a team, and the important lessons of failure, which Israelis approach very differently than Americans do. If you have a failure on your resume [in Israel], companies look at that as a benefit that

will help you build a better startup next time," says Kaplowitz.

Part of the class time is devoted to analyzing the teams' decisions and improving their concepts and operations.

"We had a student startup last year that had poor internal communication. We recognized that early on, but let them work through the issues on their own. By the end, they felt that was the most important thing they got out of the class," says Kaplowitz.

"And that is a principle ingrained in the Israeli startup experience. Every IDF mission has analysis after the fact, a debriefing that carries over into the startup world, and this is a really important lesson that our students benefit from."

Guest Speakers

"The highlight of the semester for the students is our field trip to the Wix office in South Beach," Kaplowitz adds.

Wix, founded in 2006 in Tel Aviv to help people build their own websites, now has offices across the globe offering democratized cloud-based web development services.

Most of the weekly sessions feature a guest speaker, sometimes via Zoom from Israel.

Among past speakers were Maurice Ferre, CEO and chairman of Israeli unicorn Insightec; Nadav Kidron, CEO and Chairman of Oramed Pharmaceuticals; Consul General of Israel in Miami Maor Elbaz-Starinsky; serial entrepreneur

Jonathan Greenblatt, now national director of the ADL; and Yaron Sfadyah, head of business development at Believer Meats.

Speakers scheduled for the coming semester include Omri Shalev, CTO and cofounder of hotel procurement startup Reeco; Esti Burke of the Public Innovation Challenge at the Miami Innovation Authority; Nadav Solomon, president and cofounder of Tabit mobile restaurant POS solution; and Jeremy Parker, CEO of promotional products company Swag.com.

Impact Lab

As a complement to Innovation Nation in the fall semester, Kaplowitz and Wolfer started teaching a spring semester course last year, "The Miami-Israel Impact Lab," examining the Israeli approach to social-impact entrepreneurship.

Impact Lab students volunteer at nonprofit organizations in Miami and analyze each one's operations. Working together as "consultants," they offer actionable plans that bring value to the organizations and innovative solutions to the community.

Kaplowitz says that one Impact Lab student was inspired to go on Passages Israel, an experiential trip for Christian students, and to intern in Israel.

"Not all our students want to be entrepreneurs," says Kaplowitz.

"We try to impress upon them that no matter what you do in life, you will pick up concepts and principles from this course

that will apply. Our goal is to get them to think and learn how to apply these concepts so they can excel with the tools we've given them. We get messages from former students all the time that they utilized one of the concepts they learned in our course to complete an assignment at work."

Wolfer thanked FIU Honors College Dean Juan Carlos Espinosa for supporting the initiative from the start.

"When we approached the Honors College with an idea for a course on Israeli innovation, Dean Espinosa told us that Israel's unique approach to entrepreneurship is exactly what his students should be learning as they begin to think about life after college," she says.

"Andi and Aaron have designed a fantastic course that highlights Israel as a powerhouse for technology and entrepreneurship," said Espinosa.

"An important part of the course is devoted to the impact of Israeli tech on the world and the important connections between Israeli firms and South Florida. Students have an opportunity to hear from guest experts from industries from medical devices and creative software to water technology and AI and quantum," he said.

"By the end of the course, the students will be familiar with the contours of the Israeli tech ecosystem. ... I look forward to strengthening connections with Israeli universities and with firms in South Florida looking for smart interns."

Porto's Jewish Community Unveils Memorial to Victims of Portuguese Inquisition

By Shira Li Bartov, JTA

In the city Porto, on Portugal's northwestern coast, a small Jewish community has dedicated years to identifying its predecessors who were killed or expelled in the Portuguese Inquisition of 1536 to 1821.

Drawing on newly digitized records, the community was able to identify 842 people, ranging from 10 to 110 years old, who were victims of the Inquisition locally. On Sunday, it inaugurated a memorial engraved with their names.

The memorial, dedicated during a special event called the European Day of Jewish Culture, measures 13 feet wide by 6.5 feet high and is installed on an exterior



Sebastião Feio, president of the Porto municipal general assembly, speaks at a ceremony dedicating the Portuguese city's memorial to the local victims of the Inquisition, September 3, 2023

wall of Porto's Jewish Museum.

The museum is one of several institutions

that have flourished in recent years as Porto, which is home to roughly 1,000 Jews today, has benefited from a swell of interest among tourists and descendants of Sephardic Jews expelled from the region who for the last eight years have been allowed to apply for citizenship.

But while the citizenship law has given rise to new investments in contemporary Jewish communities, Portugal still has a dearth of education about the Inquisition, according to Hugo Vaz, the curator of Porto's Jewish Museum and Holocaust Museum. Although references have begun to make appearances in the curricular manuals for Portuguese schools, many

students are asked to learn little about the Jewish population that was all but stamped out of their country over three centuries.

"I am 35 years old, and when I learned about the Inquisition in school, I learned that the Inquisition was the hunting of witches," Vaz told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "I learned that in less than five minutes."

Comparatively, Holocaust education has improved. Portugal was officially neutral in World War II and became a passageway for many Jewish refugees, making that episode of its history more favorable than the "black page" of the Inquisition, said Vaz.

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak Names Jewish Lawmaker Grant Shapps New Defense Secretary

Grant Shapps, one of British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's staunchest Cabinet allies, was named U.K. Defense Secretary on August 31, as Sunak began a Cabinet reshuffle ahead of a general election that is expected to take place next year.

The move came after Ben Wallace formally submitted his resignation earlier in the day, honoring a promise made last month. Wallace was defense secretary for four years, overseeing Britain's military response to the war in Ukraine.

Shapps, who supported Sunak during his campaign to become Conservative Party leader and prime minister last



U.K.'s New Defense Secretary Grant Shapps

year, has been a Cabinet member since 2019, most recently serving as secretary of state for the Department of Energy

Security and Net Zero.

Shapps is known as a gifted communicator, a key attribute ahead of what is likely to be a bruising general election campaign. But he has no experience in the fraught and complicated world of defense, which the ongoing conflict in Ukraine has complicated.

"As I get to work at @DefenceHQ I am looking forward to working with the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who defend our nation's security," Shapps said, adding he would continue "the UK's support for Ukraine in their fight against (Vladimir) Putin's barbaric invasion.

Shapps visited Kyiv last week, visiting a power plant undergoing repairs following a Russian bombing.

The visit was billed as part of government actions to back supplies of fuel for Ukraine's nuclear power plants. Shapps pledged a 192 million pound (\$243 million) loan guarantee to help power Ukraine through the winter and to end its reliance on Russian supplies.

Grant Shapps leaves Downing Street after being appointed Defense Secretary following Ben Wallace's formal resignation in London on Aug. 31, 2023. (Yui Mok/PA via AP).

Iranian Weightlifter Banned for Life After Shaking Hands with Israeli

The athlete "crossed red lines" with the exchange on the medal podium in Poland.

By Jewish News Syndicate

Iranian weightlifter Mostafa Rajaei has been handed a lifetime ban by the regime in Tehran for shaking the hand of an Israeli competitor at an event in Poland, the *Islamic Republic News Agency* reported.

Rajaei shook hands with Israeli weightlifter Maksim Svirsky as they stood at the medal podium at a World Masters championship in Wieliczka, in the Krakow metropolitan area, on August 27.

According to the *IRNA* report, the silver-medal-winning Iranian athlete stood on the



Israeli Maksim Svirsky (left) and Iranian Mostafa Rajaei (center) shaking hands on podium

medal platform "next to the representative of the regime that burned Jerusalem and placed the Iranian flag next to the Israeli flag without paying attention to the red lines and the values of the system."

The Islamic Republic of Iran Weightlifting Federation said in a statement cited by the state-run news agency that it "bans athlete Mostafa Rajaei for life from entering all sports facilities in the country and dismisses the head of the delegation for the competition, Hamid Salehinia."

An Enhanced Method of Phototherapy Against Breast Cancer

Researchers overcome photodynamic therapy's main constraint of limited target range by integrating nanotechnology into the treatment process.

By Yulia Karra, Israel 21c

A new study from Israel's Ariel University shows that nanotechnology-powered photodynamic therapy (PDT) is effective in fighting breast cancer.

Breast cancer is the most prevalent cancer diagnosis among women worldwide. According to a World Health Organization report, in 2020 at least 2.3 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer globally. At least 685,000 breast cancer-related deaths were recorded worldwide the same year.

Although PDT is already being used by medical professionals to treat cancer, its application is currently limited. The light used in the therapy has a short



range and only targets areas close to the surface of the skin and small tumors.

The Ariel University researchers managed to overcome that obstacle by integrating nanotechnology into the treatment process.

They created a drug that can be stimulated by infrared light, which can penetrate deeper than regular

light, and minimized the distance between the drug and the harmonic nanoparticle.

The researchers said the new method will enable future PDT treatments to reach tissues that weren't previously accessible, vastly improving the method's potential. PDT, unlike other common methods to treat cancer, has relatively few side effects.

The study was led by PhD student Ayan Barбора from the research team of senior lecturer Refael Minnes from the Department of Physics at Ariel University's Faculty of Natural Sciences.

"The ability to harness the depth-penetrating power of infrared light,

combined with the precision offered by nanotechnology, means we are now able to target and treat tumor sites that were previously out of reach. This innovation not only signifies a revolutionary leap in the realm of cancer therapy but also brings a beacon of hope for countless patients and their families," Dr. Minnes told ISRAEL21c.

The study was recently published in the *Spectrochimica Acta Part A* journal.

"Our findings enable rapid clinical adaptation of the latest advanced light delivery systems to develop optimized NIR pulsed laser photodynamic therapy from classical visible light reactive photosensitizers," the authors conclude.

Bipartisan Legislators Urge Added Measures to Tackle Campus Antisemitism

A letter signed by 90-plus members of the House and Senate urges for focused attention on universities.

Jewish News Syndicate

The bipartisan Senate and House Task Forces for Combating Antisemitism has called for the implementation of extra measures to protect Jewish students on U.S. college campuses.

Sens. James Lankford (R-Okla.) and Jacky Rosen (D-Nev.), and Reps. Kathy Manning (D-N.C.) and Chris Smith (R-N.J.) led a group of more than 90 lawmakers to sign a letter to the U.S. Department of Education that begins: "As members of Congress who are committed to countering antisemitism, we are deeply concerned about the rise of antisemitic incidents at universities and college campuses."

The legislators "strongly encourage the department to continue taking the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism into consideration as it



U.S. Department of Education

investigates individual incidents of anti-Jewish discrimination and enforces

federal civil rights law."

Statistics from multiple studies backed up such concerns.

One cited a report by the Anti-Defamation League documenting that "antisemitic incidents on college campuses increased by 41% from 2021 to 2022." Another reference in the letter asserted that "54% of Jewish students feel that they pay a social cost for supporting the existence of Israel as a Jewish state."

The correspondence concluded with five questions and requests for a briefing by the end of the month.

Some of the signatories of the letter include Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.), Sen. Rick Scott (R-Fla.), Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.), Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) and Rep. Josh Gottheimer (D-N.J.).

Hundreds Flock to London for Global Jewish Genealogy Conference

The historic conference crossed the Atlantic for the post-COVID summit.

By Georgia L. Gilholy, Jewish News Syndicate

Through meticulous research, Leigh Dworkin helped his cousin Stacey identify people in family photographs she owned. Now the two meet regularly in London, where he lives, and New Jersey, where she lives, during meetings of the International Conference of Jewish Genealogy, which Dworkin co-chairs.

Traipsing through the bulging corridors at London's Park Plaza Hotel Westminster Bridge in early August, 2023, at the conference's 43rd iteration, it was clear that many of the 400 attendees, who skewed older, had personal stories connected to their heritage.

"The International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies has been instrumental in making genealogy accessible to a worldwide audience, and we were excited to bring it to the U.K.," Dworkin told JNS.

The conference usually convenes in the United States, but it ventured across the Atlantic this year to London, a city with deep-rooted Jewish history.

"Our last U.K. conference was in 2001," Dworkin said. "I'm sure a future conference will be in Europe, but no one knows when yet."

In London, attendees had opportunities to learn about the Jewish heritage of their ancestors

through discussions about DNA analysis and specific Jewish communities. Some events were held in the city's East End, once home to a thriving Jewish community.

In-Person Connections

Nicholas Evans, a senior lecturer in Jewish Diaspora history at the University of Hull in England, called the conference his "personal highlight of the genealogical calendar because they bring together academics of Jewish history with both professional genealogists and those passionate about discovering every facet of their family's history."

As the online genealogy craze continues to boom, with Ancestry.com estimating that 30 million people worldwide have now taken a DNA test, Evans stressed the value of personal dialogue.



"As an academic, the conference enabled me to cascade the fruits of my research career with genealogists from around the world. I even made friends who will help my academic research," he told JNS.

"This is incredibly important because, in the case of migrant history, stories preserved within families provide important clues often missing from official sources," he added.

Evans told JNS that he spoke to one person whose parent was a migrant stranded in the United Kingdom a century ago when U.S. quotes curtailed Eastern European immigration to America.

Other attendees had records detailing their families' movements to the United Kingdom, South Africa, the United States, Canada and Australia. Some had already used online databases to understand their ancestors' experiences emigrating from imperial Russia a century ago.

"It was lovely to catch up with dear friends I'd met at earlier IAJGS conferences in London, Paris, Jerusalem, New York, Boston and Chicago," Evans said, "most of whom I've not seen since COVID-19 changed all our lives."

Technological Facilities

Dworkin told JNS that artificial intelligence-driven tools and DNA analysis are impacting contemporary genealogical research.

"AI tools have taken strides in generating narratives and deciphering records in various languages, while DNA analysis advancements have facilitated the exploration of heritage and family connections," he said.

He noted that Marlis Humphrey, CEO and president of L'Dor V'Dor Foundation, delivered a "rousing" speech on the ways that artificial intelligence can help preserve and understand documents.

At the conference, computer labs were on hand to connect attendees to scores of genealogical databases, and experts wandered up and down rows of seats answering queries from attendees.

The event also included site visits to important Jewish venues, including London's Sephardic congregation Bevis Marks Synagogue—the oldest in continuous use in the United Kingdom—and a display of more than 1,500 Czech Torah scrolls rescued during the Holocaust on view at Westminster Synagogue.

Israel Wins 2023 World Rhythmic Gymnastics Championships

Gold medal is Israel's first as a group in the annual world championships.

By Abigail Klein Leichman, Israel 21c

On August 25, Israel won its first-ever group all-around gold medal in a World Rhythmic Gymnastics Championships event, cementing its place at the 2024 Paris Olympics.

The Israeli team of Shani Bakanov, Eliza Banchuk, Adar Friedmann, Romi Paritzki, Ofir Shaham and Diana Svartsov earned scores of 38.150 in five hoops, and 32.650 in three ribbons and two balls. The total was enough to edge out the People's Republic of China for the gold.

The 40th annual International Gymnastics Federation (FIG) Rhythmic Gymnastics World Championships, held in Valencia, Spain, marked the second time Israel has medaled as a group in the event. Last year, the team



Israel's gold medal rhythmic gymnastics team in action at the World Championships

won a silver medal at the championships held in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The victorious team released a statement saying the athletes were "elated that we were able to win this medal and get to chant the Israeli national anthem on the podium. It's the best feeling any athlete could have."

Rhythmic gymnastics has long been a strong sport for Israel. In the 2020 Olympics held in 2021 in Tokyo, Israeli rhythmic gymnast Linoy Ashram won a gold medal, becoming the first female Israeli ever to accomplish this feat. In 2022, Daria Atamanov won a European Championships all-around gold in Tel Aviv.

Western Wall Stones Inspected Before Rosh Hashanah

By Jerusalem Post Staff

The Western Wall Heritage Foundation conducted its semi-annual examination of the Western Wall stones on August 29 in preparation for the influx of visitors expected around the Jewish High Holy Days.

This check is conducted annually around Rosh Hashanah and Passover, to make sure that Western Wall prayer does not pose a safety risk to anyone wishing to observe the holidays there.

According to the Western Wall Heritage Foundation, the examination was conducted by a team of engineers who checked the durability and maintenance requirement of "each and every stone."



Engineers conduct inspection of the Western Wall

They were supervised by the rabbi of the Western Wall, Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, along with the Israel Antiquities Authority.

A large stone above the egalitarian section of the Western Wall at the Robinson's Arch site fell out in 2018, which closed the section of the prayer platform abutting the stones of the Western Wall for an extended period of time. The incident occurred the morning after the fast of Tisha B'Av, one of the most crowded days of the year at the Western Wall.

German Player Stops Match After Nazi Slogan Yelled at US Open

By Jewish News Syndicate

As Alexander Zverev, 26, prepared to serve against Jannik Sinner, 22, in their fourth set at one of the world's top tennis tournaments, three infamous words rang out at Arthur Ashe Stadium in Queens, N.Y.

"Deutschland über alles," an unidentified man yelled, prompting the 12th-seeded German athlete angrily to stop the match and approach umpire James Keothavong, who soon unleashed his own rage over the declaration.

"He just said the most famous Hitler phrase there is in the world," Zverev said as he approached Keothavong. Zverev repeated himself and said, "it's unacceptable, this is unbelievable."

Keothavong then turned to the crowd and boomed through the microphone, "So who was the smart tongue that said that? Put your hand up."

"Who said that?" Keothavong demanded to know, asking multiple times, saying "we are going to get him

out."

After the change-over following the serve, security removed the man believed to have yelled the Nazi slogan after spectators identified him. Zverev won the match and afterwards told reporters that while he was used to angry taunts, this was the first time he had heard antisemitic rhetoric directed at him.

Right: Alexander Zverev



Orthodox Union Certifies Israeli Brand of Lab-Grown Meat as Kosher — But Not Pareve

By Jackie Hajdenberg, JTA

The Orthodox Union has granted kosher certification to a type of lab-grown meat, a decision that could signal an expansion of the options available under Judaism's intricate dietary laws.

The O.U., the most prominent kosher certifier in the United States, recognized poultry products from Israeli startup SuperMeat as kosher, the company announced Wednesday. The startup is part of a growing industry that aims to provide an alternative to traditional meat by creating the food in a laboratory from stem cells.

"This collaboration aims to bridge the gap between scientific understanding and halachic adjudication, setting unprecedented standards in the cultivated meat industry," Rabbi Menachem Genack, the CEO of O.U. Kosher, said in a statement, using a term referring to Jewish law.

The process of certifying lab-grown meat, a years-long quest for SuperMeat, demonstrated the complexity of applying Judaism's age-old dietary laws to a culinary landscape where the range of foods, and how they are produced, is expanding rapidly — from lab-grown meat to plant-based alternatives and more. It may also represent yet another increase in the number of products kosher consumers can take off supermarket shelves.

"This step represents our commitment to inclusivity and respect for diverse dietary needs, making our cultivated chicken meat accessible to audiences around the world," Ido Savir, CEO of SuperMeat, said in a statement. "We believe this historic initiative with the Orthodox Union not only broadens the options for kosher consumers worldwide but will also set clear guidelines for other companies in the cultivated meat industry seeking kosher certification, opening new avenues for the Kosher food industry."

The lab-grown meat industry is in its infancy and may appeal to consumers who enjoy eating meat but oppose slaughtering animals for food. It remains to be seen whether lab-grown meat produced at a mass scale will



Israeli chef Shachar Yogev serves a burger made with "cultured chicken" meat at The Chicken, SuperMeat's restaurant adjacent to their production site in the Israeli town of Ness Ziona

be cheaper or more environmentally sustainable than regular beef or poultry. The U.S. Department of Agriculture granted its first approval for cell-cultured meat in late June, and SuperMeat first plans to roll out its products in the United States. The company is also looking into halal certification.

"The vast majority of the vegan-vegetarian movement is very supportive," SuperMeat's co-founder and CEO, Koby Barak, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in 2016. "And we thank them for really supporting us."

On the surface, kosher certification for lab-grown meat doesn't appear to herald a revolution for observant Jewish eaters, especially in places where traditional kosher animal products are already easy to find.

As with regular chicken, the O.U. has certified the lab-grown variety as kosher meat, meaning that it can't be eaten with dairy products. That separates it from recent plant-based meat alternatives such as Impossible Foods or Beyond Meat, many of whose products are certified as pareve — neither meat nor dairy — meaning that they may be eaten together with all kosher foods.

Plant-based meat has provided a pathway for observant Jews to eat imitations of some archetypal non-kosher foods, such as cheeseburgers or pizza with a meat topping. SuperMeat will not offer those kinds of possibilities.

But Genack said that for Jews who keep a stringent form of kosher laws, SuperMeat's certification will be a

boon. "Theoretically, the impact on prices and availability should be significant," he said.

That's because the company's chicken products are categorized as Mehadrin kosher — the strictest form of kosher supervision. And if the O.U. moves to certify lab-grown beef as kosher, which it has yet to do, it could lead to an increase in the supply of meat that is "glatt" kosher, a term that refers to meat slaughtered from an animal whose lungs are smooth.

The kosher seal of approval came after SuperMeat hosted two rabbinic delegations, and kosher authorities held a series of conversations on Jewish law surrounding the science used in the company's technology, the Times of Israel reported.

Obtaining kosher certification for lab-grown meat is complicated because the process of cultivating meat from stem cells requires the use of living animals — and kosher law bars the consumption of any part of a living animal. Founded in 2015, SuperMeat's lab-grown poultry avoids this dilemma by acquiring stem cells from eggs rather than from the living birds themselves. And because the eggs are at an early stage of fertilization, there's no concern that blood will end up in the product, which would also be prohibited by Jewish law.

"We were looking for something that can be universally accepted as Mehadrin, completely kosher, and that's what taking the stem cells from the eggs represents," Genack said.

The cells are planted in a meat fermenter that simulates a bird's biology. In the fermenter, the cells are provided with heat, oxygen, and plant-based liquid nourishment. They then mature into meat tissue and grow quickly, doubling in mass in just a few hours. When the meat is ready to harvest, the liquid feed is removed.

Other Orthodox rabbis, such as Israeli Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi David Lau, have ruled that some lab-grown meat labeled as a meat alternative could be considered pareve. Genack said that at the Orthodox Union, there were

different opinions on how lab-grown meat should be classified.

But the agency decided to mark it as meat because it's derived from an animal and looks exactly like meat.

Leading rabbis in the Conservative movement came to the same conclusion in 2018, ruling that lab-grown meat of kosher animals would be kosher but that disputes over its status and possible confusion meant it should be considered meat.

"Cultured meat should be designated as 'meaty according to the rabbis' even though there will be no need for kosher slaughter, inspection for injury, deveining, soaking or salting to remove blood," wrote Rabbi Daniel Nevins, the author of the legal opinion on the topic that was accepted almost unanimously by the movement's law committee.

Genack noted that lab-grown pork will remain off-limits because it is derived from a pig, which is not kosher. (The O.U. also declined to give certification to Impossible Pork, even though it is plant-based, because of what Genack called "sensitivities to the consumer.")

"Anything which you derive from something non-kosher itself is not kosher," he said. "If you milk a non-kosher animal, the milk is also non-kosher, because it derived from a non-kosher source. So this doesn't open that opportunity."

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Shabbat Schedule - October 2023

BETH SHALOM, Palm Desert

(Member, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism)

Ken Hailpern, Spiritual Leader
42600 Cook Street, Second Floor, Palm Desert, CA 92211, 760-200-3636.
IN-PERSON Shabbat Morning Services: 9:45 am, followed by light Kiddush lunch.

Saturday, October 7: Shemini Atzeret service at 9:45 am, including Yizkor Memorial Service. For information, email info@congregationbethshalom.net or call (760) 200-3636. www.CongregationBethShalom.net

CHABAD OF PALM SPRINGS & DESERT COMMUNITIES

Rabbi Yonason Denebeim & Rabbi Arik Denebeim

250 East Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92264 www.chabadpalmsprings.com 760-325-0774. Check website or call to confirm times of Shabbat and holiday services.

CHABAD OF PALM DESERT

Rabbi Mendy Friedman

Call for information: 760-651-2424. www.chabadpd.com 760-969-2153 / 760-969-2158

CHABAD OF RANCHO MIRAGE

Rabbi Shimon Posner & Rabbi Benny Lew.

www.chabardrm.com
Weekly Shabbat Services start at 10 am, followed by a sit down lunch/kiddush.

Check online for weekday and Friday schedule of services

Text 760-770-7785

or e-mail: info@chabardrm.com to be added to our mailing list. All programs and events are updated on our website.

Ckids Hebrew School

10:00 AM - 12:30 PM on designated Sundays throughout the school year. Check our schedule online Info: chabardrm.com/ckids or Chaya Posner: chaya@chabardrm.com or 760-272-1923.

CHABAD OF SUN CITY

PALM DESERT

Rabbi Yonason Denebeim.

Call 760-848-8250 or e-mail: info@chabadsuncity.com for schedule.

Contact Rebbetzin Sussie Denebeim to receive weekly "Chabad in Sun City Newsletter" with listing of all services and activities: sussiedenebeim@gmail.com.

CHABAD OF LA QUINTA

Rabbi Moshe Katz

50620 Eisenhower Drive, Ste. G103, La Quinta, CA 92253. 760-709-2431.

Email: chabadlaquinta@gmail.com.

Chabad LQ offers weekly Torah studies, home visitations, Kosher meals, Shabbat Services, Women's Circle, Youth activities, Holiday programs and more.

CONGREGATION HAR-EL, a

Contemporary Reform Congregation (Member, Union for Reform Judaism), offering year-round services, Torah study, youth and adult classes and events. Membership open for residents and non-residents.

Rabbi Richard Zions, Ph.D.; Cantor Joseph Gole, D.Mus. harelurjpd@gmail.com, 760-779-1691. Website: harelurjpd.org.

Shabbat Eve Zoom Services are conducted weekly at 5 PM. Rabbi Richard Zions shares a D'var Torah on a timely topic based on our timeless tradition. Cantor Joseph Gole provides inspiring melodies and insights from our Shabbat Eve liturgy. Attendees are encouraged to click on the Zoom presentation early for a conversation with clergy and congregants. Har-El welcomes visitors from out of state as well as those in California and the Coachella Valley.

Rabbi Zions holds Torah Study on Zoom every Saturday morning at 11 AM. For a Zoom link, contact harelurjpd@gmail.com.

DESERT OUTREACH SYNAGOGUE, Rancho Mirage

Rabbi Dr. Jules King; Rabbi Rachel Axelrad, Rabbi Andrew Bentley,

Cantor Lori Reisman Patterson. 760-449-0111. Mailing address: P.O. Box 982, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270. Shabbat services held on the second Fridays at Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert, 72425 Via Vail, Rancho Mirage. On second Saturdays: 10:30-11:30 am Torah study on Zoom with Rabbi Axelrad. Beit Sefer Religious School begins again on October 8th and is held Saturday mornings (from 9:45 AM to noon. B'nei Mitzvah classes for Children with Arava Talve. "Talkin' Torah": See listing on Community Calendar. Check website for most current information: www.Desert-Outreach-Synagogue.com or www.my-dos.org.

OR HAMIDBAR

Rabbi David Lazar

rabbi@orhamidbar.org

Kabbalat Shabbat Service - Fridays 6:30 pm; Shabbat prayer and study - Saturdays 10:30 am. ToraTeachings on Zoom - Wednesdays at 11 am. For more information of in-person dates and Zoom links visit orhamidbar.org

SUN CITY JEWISH SERVICES, Palm Desert

Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Emert, Cantorial Soloist Alan Scott. In person services in Speaker's Hall in the Sunset View Clubhouse (second clubhouse) in Sun City Palm Desert the first and third Fridays at 7:15 pm. Information: Nadine Brinhendler, 707-332-3947.

TEMPLE HAR SHALOM, Idyllwild

www.templeharshalomidyllwild.org
Email: templeharshalomofidyllwild@gmail.com. Shabbat Candle Lighting on Fridays at 6:00 pm on Zoom. 1st Friday with Rabbi Malka Drucker; 2nd Friday with Rabbi Ilana Grinblat; 3rd Friday with Kerry Abram; 4th Friday with Rabbi Ilana Grinblat. Shabbat Book Study with Rabbi Malka Drucker on Zoom Saturdays 4:00-5:00 pm. Check our website for current info including Torah Study with Rabbi Ilana one Saturday morning per month. For more information and for Zoom link call 951-468-0004.

TEMPLE ISAIAH, Palm Springs

Rabbi Steven Rosenberg. (rabbisteven.rosenberg@gmail.com). Cantor Ken Cohen or Soloist Dr. Sarah Sela join Rabbi on the bima most weeks. 332 West Alejo Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262, 760-325-2281. Email: temple@templeisaihps.com; www.templeisaihps.com.

Shabbat services Friday evenings at 7:30 pm, preceded by Wine and Cheese 'Happy Hour' from 7:00-7:30 pm and Oneg following. Saturday morning torah study, "Nosh and Drash," begins at 10:30 am. All services also streamed online. To access any activity, go to Temple Isaiah's website and click on link to desired service or program. Shabbat afternoon Bereavement Group resuming after High Holidays. Check with Temple Office.

TEMPLE SINAI, Palm Desert

(Member, Union for Reform Judaism)

Rabbi David Novak

rabbi@templesinai.org

73-251 Hovley Lane West, Palm Desert, CA 92260. www.templesinaipd.org 760-568-9699.

Go to templesinaipd.org for access information. Shabbat services are in-person and online on Livestream at www.templesinaipd.org. Friday evening services 5:30 pm, preceded by pre-service Oneg at 5:00 pm. Saturday morning Torah study 8:45 am; Shabbat morning services 10 am.

Temple Sinai's Avi Levine Religious School

9:30 - 12:00 AM on designated Sundays throughout the school year. Contact Talia Lizemer-Hawley, Community Educator, for more information, educator@templesinaipd.org

BIKUR CHOLIM

A project of Chabad of Palm Springs & Desert Communities (Community Outreach) www.BikurCholimPS.com Rabbi Yankel Kreiman - 760-325-8076, and Rabbi Mendy



Community Calendar of Programs - October 2023

Mondays:

Har-El offers three classes with Rabbi Zionts on Zoom on Mondays for residents and non-residents: 10:30 AM—Adult Bar/Bat Mitzvah Class; 1:00 PM—Conversion to Judaism; 4:00 PM—Youth Bar/Bat Mitzvah Preparation. Individual Zoom Sessions will be offered for beginning students who require extra preparation for group study. For registration and additional information, email: harelurjpd@gmail.com or call Rabbi Zionts at (760) 668-9943.

Tuesdays:

4:00 pm Temple Sinai weekly class on ZOOM, "Torah in Translation" where participants join **Rabbi David Novak** in reading the Torah in various English translations. Contact *rabbi for ZOOM information*.

5:00-6:45 pm Chabad Rancho Mirage's popular and weekly **BBQ** begins again for the season, October 8th)

7:00 pm – Chabad of Palm Springs/Sun City: Tanya, a class for women, with **Sussie Denebeim**. Call 760-848-8250 for more information.

Wednesdays:

7:00 pm Chabad of Palm Springs/Sun City: 'Ask the Rabbi': A Weekly Open Q & A with **Rabbi Yonason Denebeim**.

7:00 pm Chabad of Rancho Mirage Tanya Class led by **Rabbi Shimon Posner**. For men and women. Hosted each week in Rancho Mirage and also available on Zoom.

8:00 pm – Temple Isaiah "Judaism 2.0 with **Rabbi Steven Rosenberg**. Online course on ZOOM: Judaism 2.0: "Jewish Observance in a Contemporary World." To participate, email Rabbi at rabbisteven.rosenberg@gmail.com.

Thursdays:

11:45 am **Rabbi David Novak** of Temple Sinai hosts a weekly "Lunch 'n' Learn" in Temple Sinai's Goodman Chapel.

YOUTH AND TEENS:

Chabad of Rancho Mirage offers programs for children 3 through High School. Ckids Club for children 3-13 offers monthly programs. CTeen is for teens in high school who meet weekly for events, discussion and participation in humanitarian projects. For more information on kids' club events, or to register, visit us on the web www.chabadrm.com/ckids.

Sunday, October 1

2:00-5:00 pm Temple Isaiah **Sukkot BBQ**. Check website: templeisaiahps.com for details and to make reservations. \$25 per person.

Tuesday, October 3

5:00-6:45 pm Chabad Rancho Mirage's popular and weekly **BBQ** begins again for the season with "**BBQ**

in the Sukkah." Check their website (www.chabadrm.com) for convenient reservations/order form.

Wednesday, October 4

3:30 pm Har-El **Book Review** on Zoom. **Joan Moyer** reviews "The Letters Project" by Eleanor Reissa. See ad page 13 for Zoom link.

Wednesday, October 18

12:30 pm Har-El. **Har-El Goes to the Movies**, screening and discussion following for Israeli film "**Footnote!**" See ad page 15 for film details and reservations. (Reservation deadline: October 11).

Sunday, October 22

10:30 am Beth Shalom **Brunch and Bingo**. Members \$25 per person. Non-members \$35 per person. Includes

brunch and 7 bingo games. Daubers \$1. Prizes and Opportunity Drawings. Paid reservation deadline: Tuesday, October 17. Information: 760-200-3636

Sunday, October 29

11:30 am Sabra Hadassah **Woman of Valor Luncheon** honoring **Nancy Singer** at Mission Hills Country Club, Rancho Mirage. \$75. Sponsorship opportunities available. Call 760-289-7987 for details. See ad page 14.

Email (preferred)
Miriam Bent at
mhbentjcn@earthlink.net
or call 760-323-0255
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Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo Reopens After Significant Restoration

By Jewish News Syndicate

A ceremony in Cairo on August 31 marked the completion of the years-long restoration of the Ben Ezra Synagogue, whose current building dates to the late 19th century though traces its origins to the Middle Ages, including being associated with the Jewish scholar and philosopher Maimonides.

The site is also where the Cairo genizah was discovered. That trove of medieval Jewish manuscripts is now housed at Cambridge University in England.

Mostafa Madbouly, Egypt's prime minister, attended the ceremony, as did Cairo's governor, as well as Egyptian ministers of tourism and antiquities, and of local development.

The synagogue is "one of the most important and oldest



synagogues in Egypt," according to an Arabic announcement from the Tourism and Antiquities Ministry. The ministry added that the synagogue is associated with biblical commentator Abraham ibn Ezra (1089-1167).

In late 2018 and early 2019, the Egyptian government announced tens of millions of dollars in funding to repair

religious sites, including Jewish ones. The recent project involved architectural restoration, including reinforcing roofs, updating lighting systems and insulation, and cleaning marble columns.

Part of a medieval ark door from the synagogue is jointly owned by the Yeshiva University Museum in Manhattan and the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore.



Ben Ezra Synagogue in Cairo: Exterior and Restored Sanctuary

US Couple Rejected as Foster Parents Because They're Jewish

The law used against the Rutan-Rams allows state-funded agencies to denying adoption access to same-sex or non-Christian couples.

By Batya Jereberg, World Israel News

A Tennessee court has ruled that a Jewish couple has the right to sue the state for using a law originally designed for other purposes in order to reject them as foster parent candidates due to their religion, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) reported August 27.

According to Tennessee law, faith-based adoption agencies can refuse to place children in homes that "violate the agency's written religious or moral convictions or policies." When passed in 2020, critics charged that the legislation was passed in order to exclude LGBTQ+ applicants, but

the wording of the law could clearly be used to reject those practicing a religion other than that espoused by the agency.

"Liz and Gabe Rutan-Ram suffered outrageous discrimination because they are Jewish," said Rachel Laser, president and CEO of Americans United for Separation of Church and State told JTA in a statement. "This loving couple wanted to help a child in need, only to be told that they couldn't get services from a taxpayer-funded agency because they're the wrong religion."

Laser's group, as well as others who oppose religious discrimination, are

backing this first challenge to the law, with the respondents being Tennessee's Department of Children's Services. The case was initially rejected on a technical basis, but that decision was reversed Thursday by an appeals court, with a trial date to be set soon.

The Rutan-Rams were open about their Jewishness with the Holston United Methodist Home for Children in Greenville, which initially accepted them for foster parent training in 2021, JTA reported. Their goal was to eventually adopt a certain three-year-old boy and raise him as a

cultural Jew like them, and they didn't hide this from the agency.

The day before training was to begin, the Home informed them that it went against the agency's "values" to place a child in a non-Christian home.

"We've faced antisemitism our entire lives. [Elizabeth's] nickname in school was 'Jew girl' because she has very characteristic features. When I was in second grade, I had some kids on the bus give me a swastika on a sheet of paper. Some people within my social circle, like friends of friends, told me that Hitler didn't do a good enough job," Gabriel told JTA in an interview.

The fact that a publicly funded entity could be openly discriminatory was what shocked them, they said. But the support from friends, especially evangelical Christians, has "been wonderful."

The Rutan-Rams discovered that they were not the only Jews to have been rejected by Christian adoption agencies, as some couples reached out to them on Facebook to share their own stories, they told JTA.

The couple has had a 14-year-old girl living with them since the first day they were eligible to become foster parents; a different agency had asked if they could take her in. While introducing her to Jewish customs and foods, they completely respect her right to practice her own religion.

Sabra Hadassah of the Desert invites you to its
Woman of Valor Luncheon
Honoring and Celebrating
Nancy Singer
Sunday, October 29, 2023 at 11:30 AM
Mission Hills Country Club, Rancho Mirage
Tickets: \$75
Mail checks to "Hadassah", 38180 Del Webb Blvd, PMB 315, Palm Desert, CA 92211
Sponsorship Opportunities offered. Call 760-289-7987

HADASSAH
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New Jersey Court Rules in Favor of Woman Who Used Social Media to Lobby for Jewish Divorce

By Jackie Hajdenberg, JTA

Advocates for Jewish women who say their estranged husbands are abusing them by refusing to assent to a religious divorce are cheering after a New Jersey appellate court overturned a ruling against a woman in that state who used social media to advocate for her divorce.

A lower court ruled in 2021 that the woman's social media posts constituted harassment and incitement. The American Civil Liberties Union of New Jersey got involved in the case then, joining several Orthodox women's rights groups who had already been working on her behalf.

The woman, who was identified only by her initials, LBB, in the September 6th 39-page court ruling, has been separated from her husband since 2019. She says that he has refused to give her a get, or ritual divorce document.

According to Jewish law, if a husband does not give his wife a get, she becomes an "agunah," Hebrew for "chained woman," who is unable to divorce and therefore to remarry — even if the couple has already completed a civil divorce. Men who refuse to deliver a get, often to gain leverage in a civil divorce proceeding, face no such restrictions under Jewish law.

A number of organizations in the United States, Israel and beyond have mobilized to press Jewish legal authorities to find a solution to the issue, which Orthodox women's rights



advocates consider a form of domestic abuse. Three Jewish groups filed legal briefs in support of the woman, including the Organization for the Resolution of Agunot, Unchained at Last and the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance.

"We applaud the court's upholding of the right of agunot, those denied a Jewish divorce, to advocate for themselves within their communities without fear of repercussion," Keshet Starr, CEO of the ORA, said in a statement. "Get refusal is unquestionably a form of domestic abuse; today, the court has stood up for survivors and against abuse in all its forms."

In recent years, agunot and their advocates have turned to social media to recruit support for their cause and

pressure their husbands to deliver a get. That appears to be what happened in this case. According to the court ruling, in 2021 the woman in question created a video in which she asked viewers to "press" her husband to give her a get. She says she sent it to only two people, but it appears to have spread more widely, and to have led to other social media activism that identified him by name, along with a photo.

The man testified that he subsequently received a series of anonymous phone calls, some containing threats. According to the ruling, he "explained his belief that the Jewish community reacts violently to the withholding of a get and that identifying him as a 'get refuser' subjected him to kidnappings and brutal beatings."

He also said his father was a get refuser and was subject to beating as a result. And he testified about a history of verbal abuse throughout their marriage.

The man also claimed that he did not withhold the get and that he had in fact given it to someone identified in the ruling as the "Chief Rabbi of Elizabeth," who could have given it to the man's wife. It is unclear which rabbi the ruling referred to: There is no broadly recognized "chief rabbi of Elizabeth," a New Jersey city, and unlike other countries such as Israel or the United Kingdom, the United States or its cities do not have a chief rabbi.

In 2021, the man received a

temporary, and later a final, restraining order that barred his estranged wife from contacting him and ordered her to remove social media posts calling for the get. The court that issued the restraining order ruled that the social media posts constituted harassment, an invasion of privacy and incitement, and were thus not protected under the First Amendment's free speech provisions.

The appellate court's three-judge panel rejected that reasoning, saying that her social media activism did count as protected speech.

"In sum, the judge's finding that the Jewish community was prone to violence against get refusers — and the implicit holding that defendant was aware of and intentionally availed herself of such violent tendencies — is not supported by the record," the decision says. "The video was intended to get a get. The video did not threaten or menace plaintiff, and nothing in the record suggests that plaintiff's safety or security was put at risk by the video."

Israel Completes Purchase of DC Home for its Ambassador

By Jewish News Syndicate Staff

Israel has completed the purchase of an official residence for its ambassador in Washington. Michael Herzog will be moving into an 11-bedroom, 12-bathroom home with a listing price of \$10 million, *Jewish Insider* reported on Thursday. It is located in the upscale neighborhood of Forest Hills in the northwest quadrant of the U.S. capital.

Herzog, 71, the older brother of Israeli President Isaac Herzog, has been living in hotels and rental properties since taking up the post in November 2021. He will likely move in within the next month, an embassy source told *Jewish Insider*.

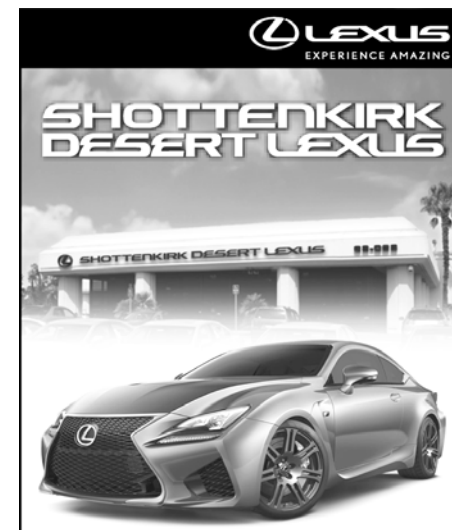


Israeli Ambassador to the United States
Michael Herzog

"After almost 10 years of temporary housing, the State of Israel has decided to purchase an official residence to provide a long-term solution for its ambassador," the source said.

Israel has rented properties for its D.C. ambassadors since 2013, when the previous official residence on Chesapeake Street NW was abandoned due to unlivable conditions. The residence that was used by every Israeli ambassador since the 1960s was condemned and eventually torn down.

According to the Jewish Historical Society of Greater Washington, the Forest Hills neighborhood became predominately Jewish in the 1940s and 1950s due to an absence of restricted housing covenants.



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Israel Sees Big Rise in Natural Gas Revenue

By United With Israel

Israel's Energy and Infrastructure Ministry has received more than 11.7 billion shekels (\$3.8 billion) in natural gas royalties to date, of which more than 1 billion shekels (\$263 million) were received in the first half of 2023.

That second figure represents a 23% jump from the first half of 2022.

The revenue growth stems from increases in the production of natural gas for export and the production of hydrocarbon liquids, as well as a rise in the value of the dollar against the shekel — because the prices of exports are set in dollars.

The Energy Ministry's Division of Royalties, Accounting and Economics published the report.

Royalties from exports totaled approximately 590 million shekels (\$155 million—58.6% of the royalties in the first half of 2023).

Royalties from the Leviathan reservoir—Israel's largest—during the same period amounted to approximately 482 million shekels (\$127 million) from the production of approximately 5.44 billion cubic meters (BCM) of gas. The Leviathan royalties were up 6.4% from the same period last year.

Most (about 86.12%) of the Leviathan royalties came from exports, with the balance produced



Aerial view of the Israeli 'Tamar' gas processing rig

by sales to the domestic market.

Royalties produced by the Tamar reservoir in the first half of 2023 totaled 379 million shekels (\$100 million), up 3.4% from the corresponding period last year. Approximately 4.91 BCM of gas was produced.

Royalties from the Karish reservoir (which began production in October 2022) in the first six months of 2023 totaled 145 million shekels (\$38 million) from the production of approximately 1.97 BCM of natural gas and approximately 947,000

barrels of hydrocarbon liquids.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held a discussion on the state of the natural gas industry on Sunday, his office said.

The premier received a comprehensive briefing from Energy Minister Israel Katz along with a forecast for the next 25 years of offshore production and ways to boost exports.

National Economic Council Director Avraham Simhon and his team presented similar data to that of Katz regarding the expansion of

production and exports.

Netanyahu decided to establish a joint Energy and Infrastructure Ministry, Finance Ministry and National Economic Council team “to formulate a plan to provide a horizon for companies and certainty for the local economy.”

He also reiterated that Katz is authorized to approve exports “to ensure the energy security of the State of Israel and fight the cost of living while maximizing the diplomatic benefits.”

Israel's economy saved more than 316 billion shekels (\$86.1 billion) over the past decade thanks to its “natural gas revolution,” according to a study released in early August. The report, by economic consulting firm BDO and the Israeli Natural Gas Trade Association, said this reflected a savings of more than 120,000 shekels (\$32,000) for every family in Israel over the past decade.

According to the study's projections, an additional 70 billion shekels (\$19 billion) of natural gas funds are forecast to be paid into the state treasury by 2030, with that figure expected to rise to more than 300 billion (\$81.8 billion) by 2050.

Helen Mirren Explains Why She Ignores BDS Pressure, Praises Israel

By Shiryn Chermezian, The Algemeiner

British actress Dame Helen Mirren has faced pressure from the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel throughout her career but prefers instead to support Israeli artists and the Jewish state as a whole, the famed Academy Award winner explained in a new interview.

“I've met great artists in Israel. To abandon those artists didn't seem the right thing to me,” Mirren, 78, told the Israeli media outlet N12. “On the contrary, work with the artists of Israel. It's the artistic community that I believe will carry Israel forward.”

The actress added that she's been told in the past not to go to Israel or participate in Israeli projects but chooses to ignore those requests because she's “met such extraordinary

people” in the country.

“I know that there is a foundation of deep intelligence, thoughtfulness, commitment [and] poetry even in Israel that is very, very special,” she explained.

The BDS movement, which seeks to isolate the Jewish state from the international community as a step toward its eventual elimination, tries to pressure individuals,



Helen Mirren



Helen Mirren as Golda Meir in film 'Golda'

companies, and other entities not to travel to or associate with Israel.

Mirren plays former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir in the recently released film *Golda* from Israeli director Guy Nattiv. The movie tells the true story of Meir's leadership during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Mirren came to Israel for the first time after the war and worked as a volunteer at Kibbutz Ha'on by the Sea of Galilee. She told N12 about being in Israel during that time: “The extraordinary magical energy of a country just beginning to put its roots in the ground — it was an amazing time to be here.”

The actress has played a few Jewish roles in the past, including in the 2010 film *The Debut*. Five years later in the movie *Woman in Gold*, she starred as

a real elderly Jewish refugee living in California named Maria Altmann, who fought the government of Austria to reclaim a painting of her aunt by famed Austrian painter Gustav Klimt.

Mirren most recently starred in the 2023 film *White Bird* as a Jewish woman who survived Nazi-occupied France as a youngster with the help of a non-Jewish boy from her school and his family who sheltered her.

“It is something that I do feel strongly about,” Mirren said when asked about the number of Jewish characters she has played.

The actress added: “I believe in the existence of Israel, and I believe Israel has to go forward into the future for the rest of eternity. And I believe in Israel because of the Holocaust.”

Remarkable Protein May Unlock Treatments for Neurodegenerative Diseases

People with conditions such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and ALS could benefit down the road.

By Pesach Benson, Jewish News Syndicate

Israeli scientists have identified a protein that might lead to treatments for neurodegenerative diseases by facilitating nerve cell repair in the peripheral nervous system.

A chance discovery by a team of researchers at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot sheds new light on regeneration in the nervous system and opens up exciting possibilities for combating diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and ALS that have long remained incurable.

Regeneration is more widely known among certain species of lizards, salamanders and frogs—among other animals—whose tails or limbs can grow back if broken off.

The peripheral nervous system, responsible for connecting the human brain and spinal cord to other organs, possesses a remarkable ability to regenerate damaged nerve cells. In contrast, the central nervous system, composed of the brain and spinal cord, exhibits limited

regenerative capabilities, leading to the irreversible and incurable nature of neurodegenerative diseases.

Until now, scientists have focused on understanding why the peripheral nervous system can regenerate so effectively.

PTBP1, a protein known to decrease sharply as embryonic cells differentiate into adult nerve cells, has been a point of interest in regenerative research. Previous studies aimed to replicate this process in non-neuronal cells by reducing PTBP1 levels, hoping to generate new neurons in the brains of persons with neurodegenerative diseases.

However, a recent study led by Stefanie Alber and doctoral student Pierluigi Di Matteo in Professor Mike Fainzilber's laboratory at the Weizmann Institute revealed that PTBP1 is not limited to embryonic cells. Surprisingly, it is also expressed in adult neurons of the peripheral nervous system, challenging conventional wisdom.

The team's findings were recently published in the peer-reviewed *Science Advances*.

The research, initially focused on understanding the regulation of KPNB1, a protein responsible for delivering messages within neurons, stumbled upon PTBP1's presence in the adult cells.

According to the researchers, KPNB1 serves as a "mail van" for transporting messages from the neuron's distant branches to the nucleus, where regeneration signals are initiated. PTBP1 binds effectively to the RNA messenger molecules that carry instructions for creating these messenger "vans."

To determine PTBP1's impact on neuron function and regeneration, the researchers studied the response of neurons to injuries. They observed that PTBP1 levels in cells increased three days after injury, peaking at one week. Concurrently, nerve cells in the branches began regenerating.

Sequencing of messenger RNA molecules bound to PTBP1 revealed its interaction not only with KPNB1 but also with RNA molecules encoding other proteins crucial for nerve cell regeneration, such as RHOA, a significant regulator of cellular growth.

To further investigate PTBP1's role in adult cells, the scientists silenced its expression through genetic engineering. This manipulation resulted in reduced regeneration of nerve cells responsible for transmitting pain sensations in the peripheral nervous system. Additionally, muting PTBP1 increased sensitivity to mechanical stimuli and heat, underscoring its role in nerve cell health and regeneration.

According to the World Health Organization, 55 million people suffer from dementia, mostly due to Alzheimer's, making it the most common neurodegenerative disease. Parkinson's disease is the next most common with 8.5 million patients.

Ancient Jewish City to be Labeled a 'Palestinian' Heritage Site by UNESCO

"This is not only an insult to Jews, but also an insult to Christians around the world who admire the site for its biblical history," writes Likud MK.

By World Israel News Staff

Israeli lawmakers spoke out on September 3 after the UNESCO organization revealed its plans to declare the ancient Biblical city of Jericho as a "Palestinian" heritage site.

UNESCO's World Heritage Committee, which officially declares sites around the world as having extraordinary cultural, historical, or natural significance, is set to meet in Saudi Arabia later in September.

At that meeting, the committee is expected to deem the Old City of Jericho as a "Palestinian" historical site, glossing over the thousands of years of Jewish history at the site.

The city is currently administered by the Palestinian Authority and Israeli passport holders are forbidden from visiting.

However, ancient ruins in and around the modern-day municipality, including the discovery of numerous palaces of Israelite kings and a synagogue dating back to the 7th century, have proved a



longstanding connection between Jews and Jericho.

Writing to UNESCO President Audrey Azoulay, Likud MK Dan Ilouz said declaring old Jericho as

"Palestinian" was both religiously offensive and historically inaccurate.

"This is not only an insult to Jews, but also an insult to Christians around the world who admire the site for its

biblical history," Ilouz wrote.

"The Palestinian Authority is systematically working to erase all ties of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel. This is evident on the Temple Mount, where valuable archaeological findings were destroyed, as well as throughout Judea and Samaria, where acts of vandalism and deliberate destruction of biblical evidence frequently occur.

"It is our duty to stop this and insist on our right to our country against enemies at home and abroad," he added.

"UNESCO must recognize the ancient history of the Land of Israel and preserve its history without distorting it for political purposes. Actions like these undermine the organization's credibility and more importantly harm the State of Israel."

According to the Bible, the Jews first crossed into Israel after the Exodus from Egypt and wandering in the Sinai Desert for 40 years at Jericho.



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Sending tributes and memorials is a meaningful way to honor loved ones.

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- **David Levitz**, In memory of your beloved father Bob, from Marnie Miller and Joe Noren.

- **Helen Lewis**, In memory of your beloved husband Jim, from Eunice and Jerry Meister.

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- **Cathi Weiner**, in memory of your "flirty" mother, from Marnie Miller and Joe Noren.

- **Lynne Williams**, In memory of Peter Williams, from Wilma Finmark.

All contributions received by the Jewish Federation for Tribute Cards are placed in our special Tzedakah Fund, which provides direct monetary intervention for needy Jews living in the Coachella Valley. Call 760-324-4737.

California: Two Synagogues Evacuated During Sabbath Livestream

2 synagogues evacuated during livestreamed Shabbat services as wave of bomb threats enters 4th week.

Andrew Lapin, JTA

At least two synagogues in California evacuated during Shabbat services the last week of August as online trolls targeted Jewish congregations for the fourth straight week with fake bomb and other security threats.

At least 26 congregations in 12 states have received the threats, according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), which is raising alarm about the barrage. The organization believes the instigators are selecting their targets based on the availability of livestreamed services and other events, motivated by their desire

to watch the congregations react to the threats in real time.

"This is what happens when individuals coalesce around their hatred of Jews and use technology to try to optimize that," Oren Segal, vice president of the ADL's Center on Extremism, told the *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*.

The two California synagogues that evacuated in response to the threats were Temple Beth Torah, a Reform congregation in Fremont, which emptied its building on Friday evening, and Temple Beth Tikvah, a Reform

congregation in Fullerton, which did the same during Saturday services. Both had received anonymous phoned-in bomb threats.

Beth Tikvah's Facebook livestream captures the moment that the threat made its way to the prayer leaders. "I am afraid that we need to stop and leave the building right now," congregation leader Mati Kirschenbaum says after placing one hand on the shoulder of cantor Shannon McGrady Bane, causing her to stop singing. She nods, removes her headset and exits the camera's view as a message goes up for viewers: "Coverage will be stopping."

The wave of threats has also targeted two ADL offices and other religious congregations, including African-American churches. But the activity seems primarily motivated by antisemitism, Segal said, citing what he called "lowbrow and classic antisemitism" in the language used in the phone calls. The perpetrators do not seem to be connected to any larger antisemitic groups, he said.

Synagogues and other Jewish institutions have weathered previous waves of false threats, including a spate of bomb threats at day schools Jewish community centers in 2017 and, in early 2020, emailed threats to Jewish

community centers that were deemed not to be credible, but not before they caused disruptions in 23 states.

Segal said that even as antisemitic harassment has become a frequent problem for synagogues over the last few years, the sustained nature of this current campaign "is a level beyond what is normal."

The increase in the number of synagogues streaming their services since the pandemic has created a new frontier for disruption. (A watershed moment in the streaming of U.S. synagogues came in January 2022, when an armed man took a rabbi and three congregants hostage in a Texas synagogue whose service was being streamed.)

While the ADL does not recommend that congregations stop streaming their services, Segal said synagogue leadership should be aware that "bad actors" may seek to manipulate them, especially heading into the High Holidays.

"What makes this different is that this is a particular campaign using tools that many of us take for granted but that we can see are weaponized," he said. "As people go into the High Holidays, it's just another thing to be concerned about and to be prepared for."

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Massive Earthquake Kills over 1,300 in Morocco

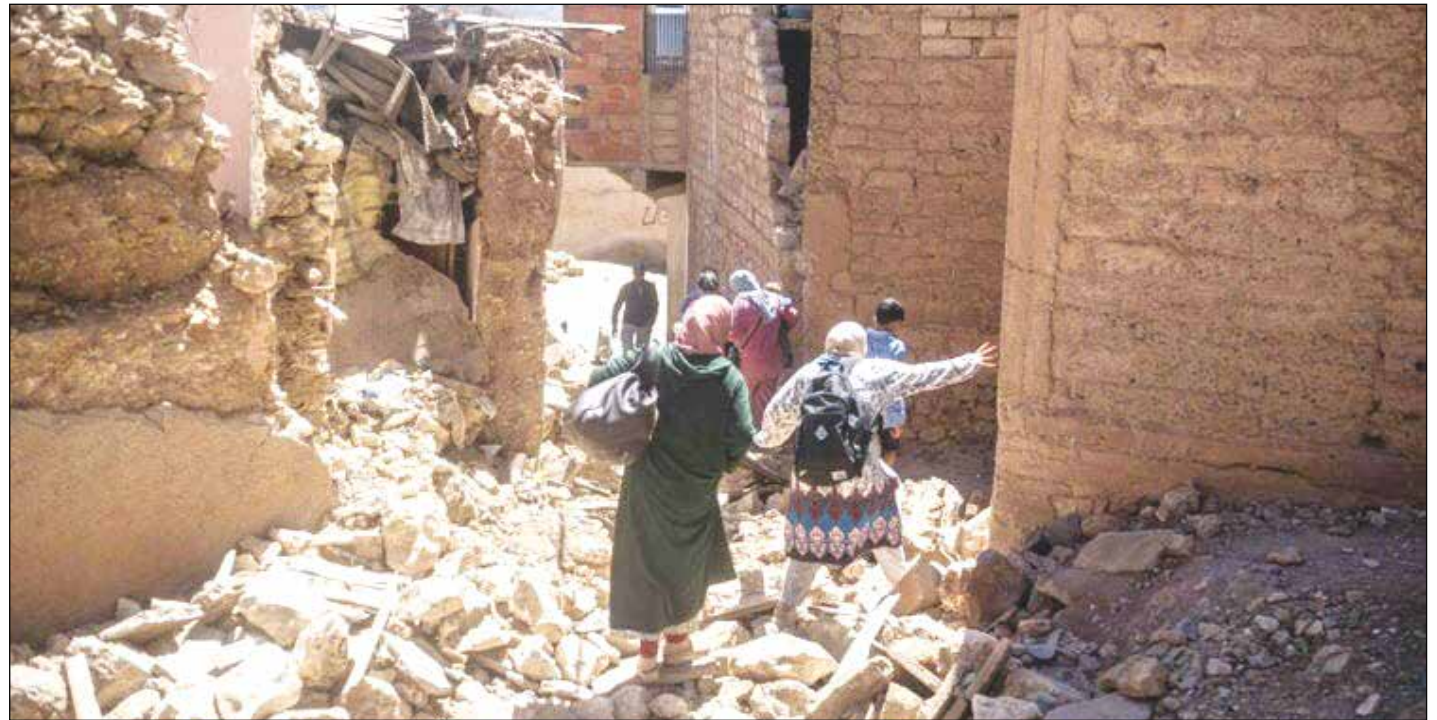
6.8 magnitude earthquake devastates Marrakesh, killing hundreds of people and injuring thousands more.

By The Associated Press and World Israel News Staff

A rare, powerful earthquake struck Morocco, sending people racing from their beds into the streets and toppling buildings in mountainous villages and ancient cities not built to withstand such force. More than 1,000 people were killed, and the toll was expected to rise as rescuers struggled to reach hardest-hit remote areas where the dead were laid to rest even as desperate efforts were underway to save those trapped.

The magnitude-6.8 quake, the biggest to hit the North African country in 120 years, brought down walls made from stone and masonry not constructed to endure quakes, covering whole communities with rubble and leaving residents picking their way precariously through remains.

Israel, which formally opened ties with Morocco in December 2020, has sent humanitarian aid and a rescue delegation to assist the affected areas and to facilitate the return of Israeli citizens who were affected by this natural disaster. As of the latest available information, there were approximately 468 Israeli citizens in Morocco, with 56



individuals still unaccounted for.

Teams of rescue workers, including medical professionals, have prepared to deploy to the affected areas. In addition to governmental efforts, humanitarian organizations such as IsraAID and the Joint have initiated actions to aid the

local communities, including sending a plane to Morocco in coordination with the local Jewish community in Marrakesh.

Israeli President Isaac Herzog offered his condolences to King Mohammed VI and the victims' families, tweeting: "Our hearts are with the Moroccan

people. On behalf of the people of Israel, I send deepest condolences to His Majesty King Mohammed VI & all the people of Morocco for the tragic loss of life in last night's earthquake. We pray for the injured. Israel is ready to help as needed."

CUNY President Resigns After Hiring Antisemite Who Wants Israel to Disappear

It's unclear if Robin Garrell's departure is related to the hiring of anti-Zionist professor Marc Lamont Hill.

By World Israel News Staff

The president of City University of New York (CUNY)'s Graduate Center announced her retirement just weeks after playing an instrumental role in hiring a prominent anti-Israel professor to teach at the school.

Robin Garrell, who served as CUNY's Graduate Center president for three years, is stepping down from her role, according to a statement from the school's Chancellor.

"CUNY will appoint an interim president in the coming weeks and launch a national search for her successor in the near future," Chancellor Matos Rodriguez said in a statement.

"In the meantime, we congratulate



Robin Garrell



Mark Lamont Hill

President Garrell on her accomplishments, thank her for her service to the Graduate Center and CUNY, and wish her well in her future endeavors," Rodriguez added.

CUNY has been plagued by numerous antisemitic scandals in recent years, including discriminating against

faculty who are Shabbat-observant, fostering a vehemently anti-Zionist atmosphere on campus, and senior officials praising two consecutive years of commencement speeches featuring virulently antisemitic rhetoric.

The latest incident at CUNY sparking backlash from the Jewish community was the institution's decision to hire Marc Lamont Hill, who called for a "free Palestine from the river to the sea" and claimed that Israel was responsible for alleged U.S. police brutality against black Americans.

It's unclear if Garrell's departure is related to Hill's hiring, but the announcement was welcomed by many

who were critical of her choice to recruit the outspokenly anti-Zionist professor.

"This is wonderful news," former state Assemblyman Dov Hikind said in a media statement. "The ouster of the CUNY Graduate Center president sends a powerful message to CUNY campus officials to stop hiring Jew haters."

Hill has publicly denied that he is antisemitic, despite repeatedly making remarks against Israel and Jews. In 2019, the academic said that American media outlets are controlled by Zionists.

JPPI: Global Jewish Population Approaches Pre-Holocaust Levels

By Alexandra Sifferlin, Jewish News Syndicate

The global Jewish population is nearly as large as it was before the Holocaust, when six million Jews were killed, according to a new tally released by an Israeli think tank on August 29.

A report by the Jerusalem-based Jewish People Policy Institute estimates that the global Jewish population has reached 14.2 million people. If accounting for people with one Jewish

parent and people who identify as partially Jewish, the number reaches close to pre-Holocaust levels of 16.5 million, the Associated Press reports.

The report says that the rise is due

to natural growth, mainly in Israel. In addition, 59% of adult children in the U.S. who have one Jewish parent say they identify as Jewish.

Paris Mayor Revokes Abbas' Top Honor After He Spreads Holocaust Falsehoods

By Ron Kampeas, JTA

In a blistering letter, Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo told Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas that he no longer deserves a medal she gave him eight years ago — her city's top honor — because of what she called his willful Holocaust denial.

Hidalgo's letter to Abbas, delivered on Thursday, comes after U.S., German and Israeli diplomats as well as U.S. Jewish groups across the political spectrum condemned a speech Abbas delivered in which he peddled falsehoods about the Holocaust and distortions about Judaism and the Jews.

Abbas said that Adolf Hitler and antisemites before him hated and persecuted the Jews not because of who they were but because of "their role in society" having to do with "usury, money, and so on and so on."

"On Sept. 21, 2015, I received you



Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas with Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo

at Paris City Hall, in the presence of my executive and the leaders of the council's political factions," Hidalgo wrote. "On that occasion I bestowed upon you the Grand Vermeil de Paris medal, the city's highest distinction. The positions you hold contradict our

universal values and the historical truth of the Shoah, therefore you may no longer maintain this distinction."

It was not clear from the letter whether Hidalgo expects Abbas to return the medal. Her letter was posted on X, the platform formerly known as Twitter, by Yonathan Arfi, the president of the CRIF, the umbrella body for French Jewry. "This important decision honors Paris and its constant engagement against antisemitism," Arfi wrote.

In her letter, Hidalgo made clear that she does not accept that Abbas was misunderstood, as he has claimed when in the past he made similar statements offensive to Jews. She said that "with manifest will, you denied the genocide of the Jewish populations of Europe by the Nazi regime and its allies.

"As you know, the Shoah is part of

Paris' history," she wrote, using the Hebrew term for the Holocaust. "In our city, during the Second World War, tens of thousands of Jewish children, women and men were rounded up, deported and exterminated in death camps."

Hidalgo said the city would maintain its sisterhood relationship with three Palestinian cities — Bethlehem, Jericho and Jenin — in the spirit of advancing Middle East peace.

Abbas, 87, delivered the speech last month to a body of his political party, Fatah. It was translated and posted on social media on Wednesday by MEMRI, a pro-Israel group that tracks depictions of Jews and Israel in the Arab world and translates material in Arabic. Other agencies verified the translation.

Ohio School Board Member Apologizes for Giving Nazi Salute at Public Meeting

By Marshall Weiss, Dayton Jewish Observer via JTA

A school board member outside Dayton, Ohio, has apologized after delivering a Nazi salute and uttering "Sieg heil" at the board's president during a public meeting on September 5.

Anne Zakkour was initially defiant when fellow board members and local Jewish groups denounced her after she made the gesture, during a meeting of the Tipp City Board of Education. The gesture came after the board president chastised her for trying to interrupt him.

The board president, Simon Patry, "does have a dictator mentality," Zakkour told the Dayton Jewish Observer. She said she was making a "sarcastic gesture" of "submission to a board member trying to act like a dictator" and did not intend it as alarming to Jews.

"That was in no way meant to be anything towards the Jewish people," Zakkour told the Jewish newspaper. "If we don't identify, even at a local level, if we don't call out suppression and oppression, I'm not an expert at this, but isn't that how some of this snowballed with Hitler and Nazism?"

But Zakkour expressed a more regretful tone after two other board members; the Jewish Federation of Greater Dayton; Ohio's regional Anti-



Tipp City Board of Education member Anne Zakkour delivers a Nazi salute and utters "Sieg Heil" at board then-president Simon Patry during a public meeting, September 5, 2023.

Defamation League office; and Ohio Jewish Communities, the umbrella organization of Ohio's eight Jewish federations, all denounced her actions. (A third board member, who was out of town during the incident, declined to comment.)

"Invoking Nazism with a 'Sieg heil' salute during a school board meeting, a place meant to support and guide our youth, is outrageous, offensive, and potentially dangerous," Kelly Fishman, regional director of the ADL based in Cleveland, told the Dayton Jewish Observer. "Hateful gestures and words cannot be normalized by local officials who are tasked with representing everyone in their communities."

Tipp City, located about 16 miles north of Dayton, is home to about 10,000 people. It does not have a

large Jewish population; a synagogue in a nearby town that counts Tipp City among the populations served describes itself as "a very small Reform congregation."

The local Federation CEO, Cathy Gardner, said she did not believe Zakkour "had antisemitic intent" but said the board member's actions "highlight the need for education and a deeper understanding for all."

Ohio does not currently have a law requiring Holocaust education in schools; last year, a Republican lawmaker on the other side of the state made headlines by suggesting that a law he sponsored about instruction on "divisive concepts" would call for schools to teach from the Nazi perspective in addition to their victims' perspective when presenting about the Holocaust.

"Flippant, casual references to Hitler, the Nazi regime, or the Holocaust grossly diminish the tragedy that still affects so many," Gardner said. "Seeing this image splashed in the news in reference to a disagreement at a board meeting desensitizes people to the terror that ensued at the command of Hitler."

And Howie Beigelman, president

of Ohio Jewish Communities, said, "It's never acceptable to use a Nazi salute in debating and discussing policy or political differences."

Following the criticism, Zakkour told the Dayton Jewish Observer in an email, "In hindsight, I regret having done this."

She added, "After four years of attacks by a board member that I believe has been acting as a dictator spreading lies and division, my action was spur of the moment and I'm very sorry for that. My heart is open to all religions, and it was never my intent to offend anyone of the Jewish community."

Zakkour's current term on the board expires in December, and she has previously said she isn't running for reelection. Patry shocked locals by announcing at the meeting that he would be resigning from the board, effective immediately, for unrelated reasons; he has since called on Zakkour to resign over her conduct.

Zakkour has faced previous calls to step down. A concerned citizens' group sought to force Zakkour off the board over what their complaint alleged was a flagrant misuse of authority and power. A local court dismissed the challenge earlier this year, and the citizens' group opted not to advance their claim.

Little Known Nazi Monument Near Philadelphia Draws Outrage from Jewish Groups

By Andrew Bernard, *The Algemeiner*

A Philadelphia-area monument to a Nazi military division has drawn condemnation from Jewish groups demanding its removal and calling it “one of the worst examples” of attempts to rehabilitate Nazi collaborators.

The 30-year-old monument to the 14th Waffen Grenadier Division of the Schutzstaffel — the Nazi military branch known as “the SS” — sits in a Ukrainian Catholic cemetery in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania. The division was made up of military volunteers who were primarily ethnic Ukrainians.

Remaining hidden in place sight for years, the monument was noticed late last month in *The Forward*, which keeps an international database of monuments to Nazis and Nazi collaborators. Since then, the structure’s existence has triggered shock and outrage. The American Jewish Committee (AJC) on September 5 called for the removal of the monument, which like similar monuments to Ukrainian collaborators attempted to conceal the unit’s Nazi connection under the guise of Ukrainian nationalism.

“More than 30 years have passed since the fall of Communism and the establishment of democratic governments in Central and Eastern Europe. They had never been forced to openly confront their own Holocaust-era past and the role of local collaborators and perpetrators,” the AJC said in a statement. “In fact, many first saw independence as an opportunity to rehabilitate wartime fascist leaders, honoring their anti-Communist struggles while ignoring their documented role in the murder of Jews.”

“We trust our Ukrainian friends and colleagues recognize that [the Elkins Park memorial] cannot remain,” the statement continued. “We urge them to act in the same spirit that motivated Ukrainian President Zelensky to correct these historical myths at home and remove this memorial stone from our community.”

The AJC added that it looks forward to working with the Ukrainian

Federation of America and the local Ukrainian community to condemn and remove the monument.

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) echoed that sentiment, saying that the Jewish civil rights group rejects any memorializing of Nazi or Nazi-adjacent groups.

“We have no objection to the national symbol of Ukraine appearing on any monument; however, we do object to monuments dedicated to Waffen SS soldiers,” ADL Philadelphia director Andrew Goretsky in a statement.

The 14th Grenadier Division of the SS, also called the 1st Galician division, was formed in 1943 and made up largely of ethnic Ukrainian volunteers from the Galicia region of Nazi-occupied Poland.

The unit has been implicated in war crimes, but as SS leader Heinrich Himmler noted in a speech to the division in 1944, the Jews of Galicia had already been murdered in the Holocaust before the group could collaborate with the Nazis.

“Your homeland has become so much more beautiful since you have lost — on our initiative, I must say — those residents who were so often a dirty blemish on Galicia’s good name, namely the Jews,” Himmler said. “I know that if I ordered you to liquidate the Poles ... I would be giving you permission to do what you are eager to do anyway.”

The division participated in the massacre of Polish civilians in 1944, but was not specifically accused of criminality after the war.

In 1945, the division was rebranded as the 1st Ukrainian Division of the Ukrainian National Army, which is how it is referred to on the Elkins Park monument. But the monument also includes the division’s emblem from its time as an SS unit.

Memorials to the unit have in previous years also been identified and condemned in Canada, where a large number of its veterans eventually settled. A similar memorial without the Galician insignia has also been found in Warren, Michigan.



Have A Nosh

I recommend casseroles and one-pot dishes for Sukkot, simplifying carrying the meal outside to the Sukkah, and kugels fit the bill well. All are great dishes, whether served around the dinner table, for Sukkot in the sukkah, or throughout the year. Enjoy! MHB



Yerushalami Kugel (Pareve)

16-19 oz. Vermicelli (thin spaghetti) more than 1½ teaspoons table salt
2/3 cup vegetable oil 1½ - 2 teaspoons finely ground black pepper (more or less, according to your preference, but this kugel is supposed to have a bit of a peppery “bite.”)
2 cups sugar
8 eggs, beaten
2 teaspoons kosher salt (just a little)
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Cook noodles in salted water according to package directions; rinse and drain well. Put in large bowl.
In a heavy skillet, combine oil and sugar over medium heat. Cook, stirring regularly in the beginning and constantly in the last stages, until sugar is very dark but not burnt. Will take from 12 to 20 minutes. If you burn it you must start over! Remove from heat.
In a large bowl, quickly combine drained noodles and caramelized sugar. Stir to incorporate. Let cool at least 10 minutes, then add eggs, salt, and pepper and stir to combine.
Can be baked in a 9” X 13” pan, but making it in a Dutch oven or in a half foil pan (about 8” X 10”) makes a taller kugel. In any case, grease the bottom and sides of the container, pour the kugel in, do not cover it, and bake for 70-75 minutes. The top should be crusty. Serves 12-16.

Roasted Garlic Kugel

1 head garlic, halved crosswise 2-3 teaspoons kosher salt, to taste
1 tablespoon olive oil 6 eggs
1 stick unsalted butter, melted, plus Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
more for greasing baking dish 12 ounces wide egg noodles
2 cups cottage cheese 2 tablespoons minced parsley
1 cup sour cream 1 tablespoon minced fresh rosemary
Preheat the oven to 375° F. Rub olive oil over split garlic and wrap with foil. Roast in oven until golden and fragrant 1 hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes. Let cool slightly then squeeze out roasted garlic, discarding skin.
Grease a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with butter. To a blender, add the roasted garlic, melted butter, cottage cheese, sour cream, salt, eggs and black pepper. Blend until smooth, then set aside.
Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the egg noodles and cook until al dente, 7 minutes. Drain, then add to the bowl along with the egg mixture, parsley and rosemary. Toss until well coated.
Add the noodle mixture to the prepared baking dish and smooth the top with a spatula. Bake until golden brown and set, 45 minutes. Let rest for 5 minutes, then slice and serve.

Cranberry Orange Kugel (Dairy)

1 cup dried cranberries 1½ cups sour cream
¼ cup orange juice ⅓ cup sugar
1 pound wide egg noodles 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ pound butter, melted 2 teaspoons grated orange rind
6 large eggs ⅛ teaspoon salt
2 cups cottage cheese
Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place cranberries in a bowl, pour the orange juice on top and let soak for at least 30 minutes. Butter a 9”x 13” baking dish. Cook noodles al dente, drain and place in a large bowl. Add the melted butter and stir to coat all the noodles. In a separate bowl, combine eggs, cottage cheese, sour cream, sugar, cinnamon, orange rind and salt. Blend ingredients thoroughly and spoon the mixture over the noodles. Add cranberries and any remaining juice to the noodles. Mix ingredients well. Place in the prepared baking dish. Bake for about 40 minutes or until the top is browned and crunchy.

Triple Fruit Dessert Kugel (Dairy)

½ lb. fine noodles, cooked 1 teaspoon vanilla
8 oz. Brick cream cheese, at room temperature 4 eggs
¼ lb. butter or margarine, at room temperature 2 15-oz. cans mandarin oranges, drained
8 oz. sour cream 1 20-oz. can crushed pineapple, drained
½ cup sugar 1 16-oz. can pitted dark cherries, drained
Cinnamon and sugar for topping
Preheat oven to 350 F. Combine cream cheese, butter, sour cream, sugar, vanilla and eggs in a blender until well combined. Pour in a bowl and add contents of one of the cans of mandarin oranges plus the pineapple, cherries and cooked noodles. Combine well. Pour into a 9” X 13” baking dish. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar and arrange remaining mandarin oranges over top. Bake for 45 minutes until golden brown and a knife inserted into center comes out clean. Can be made several days ahead, refrigerated, and served cold.

Newly Discovered Document Lists More Than 3,000 Jews the Catholic Church Sheltered from Nazis

By Andrew Lapin, JTA

Newly uncovered documentation appears to confirm that Catholic convents and monasteries sheltered more than 3,000 Jews from the Holocaust following the Nazi takeover of Rome in 1943.

The papers, which have yet to be made public, were discovered at Vatican City's Pontifical Biblical Institute and announced on Thursday. They contain the names of 3,200 people who have been verified to be Jews by the organizing body of Rome's Jewish community.

The research was a joint project of the institute, Rome's Jewish community and Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust museum, in addition to two Catholic-affiliated universities. It was coordinated by Dominik Markl, a scholar at the institute.

The discovery appears to further complicate the already ambiguous narrative surrounding the Catholic Church and the Holocaust. For decades, historians have battled over how to interpret the actions of Pope Pius XII, who signed a treaty with Nazi Germany as a Vatican official before he ascended to the papacy. Later, he maintained a public silence as thousands of Italy's Jews were rounded up and deported to concentration camps, where nearly all of



Documents on Pontificate of Pope Pius XII them perished.

Much of the postwar scholarship, including work drawing on recently unsealed Vatican archives, has argued that Pius XII was indifferent to the fate of the Jews. But some researchers favorable to the church have long maintained that, behind the scenes, it was working to save as many Jews as possible through back channels.

"The documentation thus significantly increases the information on the history of the rescue of Jews in the context of the Catholic institutions of Rome," the three partner organizations said in a joint statement announcing the findings.

The documents, which were thought to have been lost, confirm that Catholic institutions did save thousands of Jews as others were deported from Rome's Jewish Ghetto, across the Tiber River from the

Vatican. Compiled between 1944 and 1945 by Father Gossolino Birolo, an Italian Jesuit priest, the papers list the names of around 3,600 people sheltered by more than 150 Catholic religious institutions. Previous documentation said that Catholic institutions had hidden thousands of people, but had not listed their names.

But some scholars are cautioning against drawing too many conclusions about the church from the document, which was compiled between the Allied liberation of Rome in 1944 and 1945, according to the Vatican. The list has not yet been made publicly available to historians, leading David Kertzer, a Pulitzer Prize-winning Jewish historian of the Vatican who has published two books on its actions during World War II, to express skepticism regarding its contents.

"I hopefully will be allowed access to this document, as there is much about it that remains unclear from the press release and the press reports to date," Kertzer told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in an email. "As most of the people finding refuge in Rome's religious institutions during the German occupation of the city were not Jews, I wonder how and why the list would have

been compiled in 1945."

Kertzer also noted that many Catholic institutions would only take in Jews who had been baptized and were considered Catholic.

"We may see this document used to revive and bolster what we might call redemptive narratives about the 'good' Catholics who saved thousands of Jews," Robert Ventresca, interim academic dean of King's University College in Ontario who specializes in Pius XII research, told the Jesuit publication America. But, Ventresca cautioned, "There is a more complex reality at play even in the case of so-called 'rescue' during the Holocaust."

The Vatican, which last year hosted the director of Yad Vashem for the first time, has been active on other fronts when it comes to Holocaust remembrance. This weekend the church will beatify a Polish family murdered by the Nazis in 1944 for sheltering Jews, bringing the family one step closer to sainthood. Italy's far-right government also announced earlier this year that it would build a new Holocaust museum in Rome.



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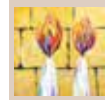
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Friday, October 27	Shabbat Lech Lecha	5:15 pm



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JUDGES WILL BE NEEDED for the Jewish Federation's Holocaust and Poetry Contest to be held in April. The contest is open to all teens in the Coachella Valley in grades 8-12. The contest theme this year is "Never Again, Never forget". For more information contact Leslie Pepper at 760-324-4737 or at leslie.pepper@jfedps.org

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DESERT HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL

The Desert Holocaust Memorial is located in the Palm Desert Civic Center Park at San Pablo Avenue & Fred Waring Drive. Residents and visitors are encouraged to visit this moving memorial, a place of remembrance and monument of hope.

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For more information and to explore options, please contact Alan Potash, Chief Executive Officer, Jewish Federation of the Desert, at alan.potash@jfedps.org or 760-324-4737.

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