



Jewish Community News

The Publication of Jewish Federation of the Desert

www.jfedps.org

Adar II-Nissan 5786 - April 2026



Jewish Federation
OF THE DESERT

Invites the community
to the observance of

Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day

Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 3:00 pm

Held at Temple Sinai



*The opposite of love is not hate;
it is indifference.*

- Elie Wiesel

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2026

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Table of Contents
Vol. 53 • No. 9

Community Calendar	16-17
Federation	1-4, 8, 12, 13
Have A Nosh	22
PJ Library	22
School Listing	5
Simchas & Classifieds	23
Temples	5, 9, 16-17
Tributes	15
Women's Philanthropy	10

When History Feels Only Partially Familiar



Danny Labin

*Chief Executive Officer,
Jewish Federation
of the Desert*

Over the past weeks, some could not help but recognize themes of our history repeating themselves a couple millennia later. The holiday of Purim commemorates events that took place more than 2,000 years ago in Shushan, in ancient Persia, but an evil plot to destroy the Jewish people struck especially familiar chords this Purim as thousands of Iranian missiles and rockets once again began falling on Israel. Israelis have been through a lot recently.

Sadly, we don't have to think back two thousand years to remember Iranian missiles. As recently as this past summer, thousands of missiles struck Israel during what was the 12 Day War with Iran. It's an especially fresh memory for me as I was part of a delegation of Desert leaders who joined Jewish Federation of North America's LGBTQ+ Mission to Israel, finding ourselves caught in the missile exchange of last summer. Those twelve days were not easy for Israelis. And now, as we experience a new and seemingly prolonged period of war, we are witness to further destruction, devastation, and

death. And what's more, this has all come as part of what is now a multi-year period of upheaval since October 7, 2023. When we think of everything that has transpired in Israel and around the world to the Jewish people in this relatively short period of time, it's fair to say we've all been through a lot recently.

Along with the perceived similarities between the Purim story and the renewed conflict, there are a few significant differences that put us today in a much better place than we were 2,000 years ago. For one of course, at the time of the Purim story there was no modern State of Israel, with the capacity and fortitude to defend and protect the Jewish people. It is moments like these when we simply cannot take for granted that Israel is not only a proverbial Jewish homeland, but is also a force to ensure the survival of the Jewish people worldwide. And something else has changed since ancient days. Today, the Jewish people is organized, focused and committed. Today, unlike in Shushan, we have the Jewish Federation.

Here in the Desert, Jewish Federation is investing in building our community for today and for the future. In the past few months, we have invested in a multi-year security initiative through the Secure Communities Network, a national Jewish security agency, which will help prepare our entire Desert community for any crisis or emergency we may face. Federation is doing more and more to strengthen Jewish identity for future generations.

By investing in our Riverside County college campuses with strong, confident Jewish leadership and by making sure that students across the Coachella Valley learn the lessons of the Holocaust, we are investing in a future that is based on knowledge, resolve, and pride.

In Israel, for those who are on the frontlines of this round of daily missile attacks, our investments over the past few years are paying off. More Israelis than ever before can now access the support they need to cope with difficult circumstances thanks to the incredible infrastructure of social services and enhanced programs that Federation's funding has helped to develop. Those programs, birthed with Federation dollars, are meeting the unique needs of this moment. Federation has been a silent hero for a long time, slowly and steadily building the foundations that make these programs possible now, at the most complex of times.

How much hardship and loss we will ultimately endure is something that we all wonder over the course of this painful and protracted period. While the answer to that is impossible to know, I am comforted knowing that in an uncertain, fragile reality, we have each other. It's especially in difficult moments like these that I am truly inspired knowing we have the Jewish Federation. Wherever this current situation takes us, I am confident that Federation will be here to continue paving the way for the Jewish future.

The Meaning of Being Jewish During Passover: Generosity and Community



Arnie Gillman

*Board President,
Jewish Federation
of the Desert*

Passover is one of the most meaningful holidays in Jewish life. It commemorates the ancient story of the Israelites' journey from slavery in Egypt to freedom. Yet Passover is not only about remembering

history—it is about living Jewish values today. To celebrate Passover is to reflect on freedom, gratitude, and responsibility toward others.

At the center of the holiday is the Seder, a ritual meal where families and friends gather to retell the story of the Exodus. Through symbolic foods, prayers, and storytelling, each generation is reminded that freedom should never be taken for granted. Jewish tradition teaches that every person should feel as though they personally experienced the journey from slavery to liberation. This message encourages empathy for

those who struggle for justice.

Generosity is also a central value during Passover. Before the holiday begins, many Jewish communities participate in the tradition of ma'ot chitim, giving money or food so that everyone can afford Passover meals. The idea is simple but powerful: no one should celebrate freedom while their neighbor goes hungry. Sharing food, inviting guests to the Seder table, and supporting those in need are ways that the lessons of Passover become real actions rather than just words.

continued on page 4



Jewish Federation
OF THE DESERT



presents

The Feast of Jewish Learning

Sunday, March 29, 2026 - 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

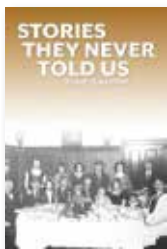
The Feast of Jewish Learning is Jewish Federation of the Desert's annual event that brings four of today's most celebrated Jewish authors from around the country to our Federation for a daylong series of book talks. Participation in the event is complimentary, and lunch boxes will be available for purchase. Participants are encouraged to register for the entire day of talks, though it is also possible to attend particular sessions. This is an exciting day to learn and build community together, meeting acclaimed authors and celebrating contemporary Jewish scholarship!



Dr. Steven Windmueller 1:00 p.m.

Steven Windmueller is an American scholar and Jewish communal professional, and professor emeritus at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles. A fellow at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and the board member of local Jewish organizations, he has authored over 100 works on Jewish politics and anti-Semitism and contributed to major Jewish and national media outlets.

Dr. Janette Silverman Stories They Never Told Us 10:00 a.m.



Most American families began as immigrants seeking a better life, whether for economic opportunity, safety, or survival. This book follows four families who left Europe between the 1890s and 1920s, tracing how they built new lives in the United States while relatives abroad endured wars, shifting borders, and genocide. It explores the challenges of maintaining family ties

across continents and generations—and the ongoing search to reconnect with ancestral roots and descendants around the world.

Pamela S. Nadell Antisemitism, An American Tradition 11:15 a.m.



Jews have faced antisemitism in America since their arrival in 1654, when early settlers even tried to expel them. Antisemitism, an American Tradition traces how European stereotypes took root here, leading to centuries of discrimination— from quotas and exclusion to vandalism and violence, including Charlottesville and Pittsburgh. The book also shows how American Jews have pushed back through advocacy, legal action, and community alliances. In a moment of rising hate, it's a reminder that antisemitism in the U.S. is longstanding—and still demands vigilance.

Jonathan Branfman Millennial Jewish Stars 2:15 p.m.



Millennial Jewish Stars explores why a new generation of Jewish celebrities—Drake, Lil Dicky, Abbi Jacobson & Ilana Glazer, Seth Rogen, and Zac Efron—have found major success by highlighting rather than hiding their Jewish identity. Jonathan Branfman shows how these stars navigate racial antisemitism and stereotypes about Jewish masculinity, using humor, charm, or satire to reflect national hopes and anxieties. Their stories reveal how antisemitism, white privilege, and racism intersect in America—and offer readers new tools to recognize and challenge these forces in everyday life.

Box lunches by Dukes will be served 12:15-1:00 and will include the choice of a tuna, egg, or vegetarian sandwich, a cookie, chips and a drink.

Payment for the lunches need to be received by March 24.

No fee to attend but RSVPs are a must. 760-324-4737.

Barbara Fremont 1930-2026

Barbara Fremont was truly an Aishet Chayil—a Woman of Valor—and is sadly missed by all who knew and cherished her friendship. Barbara embodied understated elegance and was a force to be reckoned with for her warmth, humor, and generosity. She was kind and always a joy to be with. Her love and support of theater, music and the arts was evident throughout our desert community through her extraordinary generosity. Barbara and her beloved husband of 60 years, Robert Fremont, were devoted supporters of the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and were major contributors to the Jewish Federation of the Desert. Barbara was “the real deal ... kind, fun-loving, wonderfully down to earth.” May her memory forever be a blessing to all whose lives she touched during the 95 years she graced this earth.



continued from page 1

Community also plays a vital role in the holiday. Passover is rarely celebrated alone. Families gather across generations, communities organize communal Seders, and people open their homes to guests, strangers, and those who might otherwise be alone. This openness reflects a line repeated during the Seder: “Let all who are hungry come

and eat.” The message reminds Jews that the celebration of freedom must always include others. Ultimately, being Jewish during Passover means remembering the past while shaping a compassionate present. Through generosity and strong community bonds, the holiday transforms an ancient story into a living commitment to kindness, justice, and shared humanity.

We are excited to share that, this year,

our Desert congregations and various local organizations are hosting dozens of community seders that you can join so that we can all take part in the holiday in different ways, together. We are pleased to include information about many of them here in this issue of our Jewish Community News as a resource and guide.

JEWISH COMMUNITY NEWS

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VOL. 53, No. 9

EDITORIAL

Miriam H. Bent, Editor
Bailey Communications,
Layout & Design
Chief Executive Officer
Danny Labin

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.

The JCN is published monthly, ten months a year by the Jewish Federation of the Desert, 69-710 Highway 111, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270, 760-324-4737, fax 760-324-3154.

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IT'S ISRAEL'S 78th BIRTHDAY!
COME CELEBRATE!
TUESDAY, APRIL 28th @ 3 pm
at the Jewish Federation

It will be a great party and we'd love to have you join us for Yom HaAtzmaut!
We're celebrating with wonderful entertainment & delicious Israeli party foods!
IMPORTANT NOTICE: In order to attend, advance reservations are **REQUIRED**.
Please Contact Jewish Federation at info@jfedps.org or calling 760-324-4737.



"It's OK to Laugh: Coping Through Dark Humor"

In this fun and educational presentation, Benji Lovitt explores how Israelis have always turned to humor during even the darkest times, not to be insensitive, but as a coping mechanism. Through standup, TV/YouTube videos, social media clips, and more, we'll discover a perspective that's both hilarious and therapeutic, a morale boost that gives people "permission to laugh."

Since making aliyah in 2006, comedian/author Benji Lovitt has performed for audiences around the world including Jewish Federations, Hillels, Birthright Israel, and more, and has opened for headliners such as Jim Gaffigan, Elon Gold, and Yohay Sponder.

Benji's perspectives have been featured on Israeli television and radio and in outlets such as USA Today, Time Magazine, BBC Radio, The Atlantic, and the Times of Israel.

Benji has worked as a cross-cultural trainer with groups including Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Masa Israel Journey, and he recently co-authored "Israel 201," the winner of the National Jewish Book Award for Jewish Identity.

Featuring Benji Lovitt and much more!

"Life, Land, and Law: From Israel to Coachella Valley"

Congregation Beth Shalom's 15th Annual Scholar-in-Residence Weekend April 24-26, 2026

By Ken Hailpern, Beth Shalom Madrikh Ruhani

Rabbi Amy Levin, Immediate Past President of the Rabbinical Assembly of Israel, will serve as Scholar-in-Residence at Congregation Beth Shalom Friday, April 24 through Sunday, April 26, 2026, made possible by a grant from the Jewish Federation of the Desert. The Shabbaton's theme, "Life, Land, and Law: From Israel to Coachella Valley," will be explored through presentations, divrei

Torah, dialogues, and interactive conversations throughout the weekend, at Beth Shalom, Coachella Valley's Conservative Synagogue, 42600 Cook Street, Second Floor, in Palm Desert. The entire



Rabbi Amy Levin

community is welcome to attend.

Only the second woman ordained by the Masorti/Conservative Schechter Rabbinical Seminary (SRS) in Jerusalem, Rabbi Levin is a pioneer for women's religious leadership in Israel. The SRS is part of the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, the only academic institution in Israel devoted entirely to Jewish studies and to fostering a pluralistic approach to Jewish-Israeli identity through education, the arts, and community leadership.

A highly regarded Jewish Educator, Rabbi Levin has taught at the Schechter Institute, Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, and The Conservative Yeshiva, a co-educational institute for the study of traditional Jewish texts, part of the Fuchsberg Jerusalem Center. She is also the founder of Pirka: Mobile Jewish Learning, which offers live, online interactive learning opportunities for adults.

In addition, Rabbi Levin serves on two prestigious committees of the international Rabbinical Assembly: the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, which sets halakhic policy for Rabbinical Assembly rabbis and for the Conservative Movement; and the Vaad Hakavod, which ensures compliance with the Rabbinical Assembly's Code of established ethical standards.

Rabbi Levin is a Kashrut Supervisor, having completed the Rav Hamachshir

program of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. In addition she is certified as a consultant for faith communities through the prestigious Alban Institute's Consulting for Vital Congregations program.

She lives on Kibbutz Hanaton in Israel's beautiful Jezreel Valley, located near Tel Hanaton, site of the ancient city mentioned in the Book of Joshua.

On Friday, Rabbi Levin will share "After the Return of the Hostages: Life in Israel Today" during a special Erev Shabbat Service at 6:30 p.m. This will be preceded by a catered Shabbat dinner at 5:00 p.m. The cost for the catered dinner for Beth Shalom members is \$40 per member and for non-members is \$50 per person. Advanced paid reservations are required no later than Friday, April 17. Seating for the dinner is limited.

During Shabbat morning services, Rabbi Levin will deliver the d'var Torah on "Masorti (Conservative Movement) Life in the Land of Israel: My Experience." Services begin at 9:15 a.m. and are followed by a sumptuous Kiddush Luncheon.

The Shabbaton will conclude on Sunday at 10:30 a.m. with a complimentary Continental Breakfast where Rabbi Levin will be teaching "A Case Study in Applying Jewish Law: How Today's Conservative Rabbis Approach Halakhah (Jewish law)."

All services and sessions (except for the catered dinner) are free of charge and the entire community is welcome with valid identification. In order to plan appropriately, an RSVP for all sessions is appreciated by Friday, April 17. Information is available on the website: CongregationBethShalom.net or by emailing info@CongregationBethShalom.net or calling (760) 200-3636.



קהילת בית שלום
The Coachella Valley's Conservative Synagogue



15th ANNUAL SCHOLAR-IN-RESIDENCE WEEKEND
Made possible by a grant from the Jewish Federation of the Desert



FRIDAY - SUNDAY,
APRIL 24-26

RABBI AMY LEVIN
Immediate Past President
Rabbinical Assembly of Israel

Life, Land, and Law:
From Israel to Coachella Valley

The ENTIRE COMMUNITY is WELCOME at ALL SESSIONS

Blue & White Sponsors
Steven Karash & Rabbi J.B. Sacks, Bill Amplo,
Larry & Ed Sogolow, Arave Talve & Tom Hill, and
Joel & Martene Wolf

Friday evening at 6:30 PM "After the Return of the Hostages: Life in Israel Today"
Preceded by Catered Shabbat Dinner at 5:00 PM – LIMITED SEATING
Catered Dinner Underwritten by Dr. Noam & Heidi Arzt,
Ben & Heather Altman and Jay & Roni Spetalnick
Security Sponsors: David Klingenberg & Dan Weisberg and
Peter & Kathy Reynolds

PAID RESERVATIONS for Friday Dinner REQUIRED by
Friday, April 17
Members \$40 / Non-Members \$50

Saturday morning at 9:15 AM "Masorti Life in the Land of Israel: My Experience"
Followed by Festive Kiddush Luncheon
Generously Sponsored by Dr. Karen Hailpern, Rabbi Yaacov & Nina Rone, Dr. Paul & Stephanie Ross and Dr. Robert Greenstein
Security Sponsors: Arthur B. Cohen and Vivian Posen

RSVP for all services & sessions appreciated by Friday, April 17
Sunday morning at 10:30 AM
"A Case Study in Applying Jewish Law: How Today's Conservative Rabbis Approach Halakhah"
Complimentary Continental Breakfast
Security Sponsor: Ron & Arlene Schwartz
Sponsorships Available

For information call the Beth Shalom office 760-200-3636 or
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Director: Dina Pinson
73-550 Santa Rosa Way, Palm Desert
347-721-8782
Children 18 months through
Elementary School
Alephschoolhouse.org

Jewish Federation Support Makes a Difference at Angel View

By Barry Fisher

A recent visit to the Angel View facility in Desert Hot Springs was a powerful reminder of how much local philanthropy, particularly funds from the Jewish Federation of the Desert, can enhance lives. During a tour of the organization's day program and

residential facilities, I witnessed firsthand the compassionate care, thoughtful programming, and sense of community provided to children and adults with disabilities.

Angel View helps dozens of clients each day through nursing support,

transportation, activity programs, sensory spaces, and residential care designed to promote dignity, comfort, and independence. The staff's dedication was clear everywhere. They know their clients well, celebrate their milestones, and work hard to make each day meaningful.

The visit also highlighted the impact of the Jewish Federation of the Desert's support. Federation-funded improvements, including kitchen upgrades, accessibility enhancements, new appliances, and therapeutic facilities, have improved residents' and program participants' daily lives.

Angel View's staff expressed deep gratitude for the Federation's ongoing partnership, noting that steady support from community organizations is invaluable. They also emphasized the need for greater public awareness of Angel View's work and the people it serves.

I left feeling deeply moved by the dedication of the staff, the warmth of the residents, and the tangible difference our community's support continues to make. Angel View is doing important work, and it deserves greater visibility across the Coachella Valley.

A Sold-Out Event!



From the March 1st **Voices of LGBTQ+ Jews in the Desert** Discussion Group and Purim Brunch, a collaboration between JQ International, Jewish Federation of the Desert and LGBTQ Community Center of the Desert.

Global Antisemitism Up 34%

Jewish News Syndicate Staff

Global antisemitic incidents have surged 34% since the outbreak of the war against Iran, according to new data released on Sunday by the Combat Antisemitism Movement's Antisemitism Research Center.

The center recorded 154 incidents in the first week of the conflict, with nearly half directly linked to the war, including incitement against Jews, conspiracy theories blaming Israel or Jews for the fighting and public glorification of the Iranian regime.

CAM CEO Sacha Roytman Dratwa warned that extremists are exploiting the conflict to promote hatred toward Jews. He urged governments and civil society to follow the United States' lead in condemning antisemitism and protecting Jewish communities.

The group said the spike continues a pattern seen during previous conflicts involving Israel, when global antisemitic activity rises sharply.

TEMPLE ISAIAH

Jewish Community Center of Palm Springs

PASSOVER SEDER



Join us for our Community Seder
Wednesday, April 1, 2026 - 5:30 PM
{Please note the time change}

Hilton Palm Springs
400 East Tahquitz Canyon Way, Palm Springs

Led by Rabbi Dr. Kenneth A. Emert
Cantorial Soloist Ezra Yaron
and Pianist Danielle Schneider

Festive Kosher-style Buffet Dinner
Adults: \$95 • Children under 10: \$45

Register online at templeisaiahps.com
or call Temple Isaiah at 760-325-2281

Deadline: Noon on Friday, March 27

Kindly note: Neither last minute reservations nor walk-ins can be accommodated.

Making Jewish Summer Camp Accessible

JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE DESERT

is committed to assisting Jewish families in the greater Coachella Valley to send their children to JEWISH SUMMER CAMPS by providing

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SCHOLARSHIP ELIGIBILITY:

1. Campers must reside in the greater Coachella Valley
2. Camp must be a registered Jewish residential camp
3. Camp session must be 7 days or longer
4. Priority given to first-time residential campers

For more information contact Leslie Pepper,
Director of Community Engagement at
760-324-4737 or leslie.pepper@jfedps.org



Michigan Shul is at Least the 8th Diaspora Synagogue Targeted So Far This Month

Ramming and shooting incident at Detroit-area congregation follows multiple attacks in Canada, a foiled plot in Azerbaijan, blasts in Belgium and Netherlands

By Luke Tress, The Times of Israel

The ramming attack against a synagogue near Detroit, Michigan, on March 12 was the latest in a string of violent incidents targeting synagogues in the US and other countries.

An attacker armed with a rifle rammed a truck through the doors of Temple Israel, in West Bloomfield, which says it is the largest Reform congregation in the US.

Armed guards fired on the attacker, and he was killed at the scene, police said.

One of the guards was struck by the vehicle and injured but is expected to recover. The children and staff who were in the synagogue were unscathed and all accounted for, the congregation said.

There have been at least eight incidents targeting Diaspora synagogues this month, including the Michigan attack.

On Friday night, a shooter fired through the glass doors of Beth Avraham Yoseph of Toronto, a Modern Orthodox synagogue in the Thornhill neighborhood. Two maintenance workers were still cleaning up after a Shabbat dinner.

Just 30 minutes later, a shooter approached the Orthodox Shaarei Shomayim congregation in North York, about 10 kilometers (6 miles) south, and fired multiple rounds at the entrance. In both cases, only the buildings were damaged, and no injuries were reported.

Another Toronto synagogue was hit with gunfire on March 2, less than two hours after a Purim event there concluded, while the community's rabbi was still inside. No injuries were reported.

A Toronto Jewish girls' school has been fired on three times in the past year, and a Montreal synagogue has been firebombed twice since the start of the Gaza war.

Azerbaijan said on Friday it had foiled a series of Iranian terror attacks on its territory, including against the Israeli embassy in Baku, a synagogue and Jewish community leaders.

A synagogue was damaged in a blast on Monday in Liege, eastern Belgium, police said, in an incident denounced by the mayor as an "extremely violent act of antisemitism."

On Tuesday, antisemitic graffiti was discovered at Congregation Shaare Tefila in Olney, Maryland.



Parents retrieving children from Temple Israel pre-school

On Friday, the day after the Michigan attack, Dutch police said they had arrested four men on suspicion of setting off an explosion outside a synagogue in Rotterdam that caused a brief blaze and damage to the building.

Also this week, a teenager fired a pellet gun at a Jewish man near a synagogue in Teaneck, New Jersey. The assailant reportedly asked the victim whether they supported Israel or Palestine before firing.

In other recent incidents, in January, an antisemitic arsonist torched a synagogue in Jackson, Mississippi.

In September, another arsonist allegedly set fire to a Chabad synagogue in Punta Garda, Florida.

In October, on Yom Kippur, an attacker killed two and wounded four in a stabbing and shooting attack at a synagogue in Manchester, England.

In January, a man rammed his car repeatedly into the Chabad Hasidic movement's world headquarters in New York City, although investigators said the suspect appeared to have been attempting to connect with the Jewish community.

Other recent incidents have targeted synagogues with vandalism or arson in France, Germany, Chile, Bulgaria, California, Ukraine, Italy, Texas, the Australian cities of Melbourne, Brisbane and Sydney, and repeated incidents in Canada.

In addition to physical attacks, synagogues are regularly subject to bomb threats.

Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro.

Law enforcement in the US has also repeatedly thwarted attempted terror attacks against American Jews at synagogues and other locations in recent years.

Jewish Federation of the Desert CEO, Danny Labin, explained that the Riverside County Sheriff's Department was in direct communication with him within minutes of the terrorist attack in West Bloomfield, Michigan. Local law enforcement immediately reached out to Federation to assure our community that they would be immediately increasing patrolling and monitoring of our local Jewish institutions and reconfirmed their commitment for any needs that may arise. Since joining the Jewish Federation of the Desert as CEO, Danny Labin and the JFED Board of Directors have prioritized security and emergency preparedness for the community and have been building close relationships with local law enforcement.

LET ALL WHO ARE HUNGRY FOR...
an Amazing Passover Experience...
Being Part of a Wonderful Community...

If you are looking for an evening filled with stories of freedom, redemption & Jewish Pride, then this Seder is for you!

Beit Haverim
Community Passover Seder

Wednesday Night, April 1st at 6:00pm
at the Mizell Center
480 South Sunrise Way, Palm Springs

Adults: \$70.00 | Children: \$35.00

The entire community is welcome to participate in the Coachella Valley's most delicious and joyful Passover Seder!

Come Join Us!

Seder led by Rabbi Steven Rosenberg & Hazzan Dr. Sarah Sela

RSVP to Beithaverimps@gmail.com,
call 760-548-3908 or visit our website: beithaverimps.org

"Comedy for a Cause" a Fabulous Evening in Support of our Community

By Leslie Pepper, Director of Community Engagement



Modi Rosenfeld with co-chairs Margie Kulp, Fran Kaufman, and Carol Fragen



Randi and Jeff Gillman, Sue and Federation President Arnie Gillman, Stacie Gillman and Paul Gutkowski



Modi with Johnny Krupa and Steve Tobin, Grace Helen Spearman Charitable Foundation, Presenting Sponsor



Modi Rosenfeld with Sherwyn Turbow



Modi with Ella and Nitzah Ohana, in honor of Ella's 90th birthday



Modi with Joanne and Bill Chunowitz



Modi with Phyllis Eisenberg

On February 18, 2026, in an evening was filled with joy, laughter and a strong sense of community, 237 members of our desert Jewish community gathered at Tamarisk Country Club for "Comedy for a Cause," featuring the fabulous Jewish comedian Modi Rosenfeld.

Attendees appreciated coming together on behalf of our Jewish Federation and reflected on the importance of the life-changing work that our community's support makes possible.

This year, contributions to the Jewish Federation of the Desert are helping to fuel critical programming at more than 30 agencies we support locally and globally.

As Federation board member and community leader Margie Kulp so beautifully stated, "Federation serves as our collective insurance policy for the Jewish people and for our Desert community."



Attendees socializing at the reception before the performance

MODI ROSENFELD



124 Groups Tell University of California Regents to Act on Report of Anti-Israel Profs Fueling Jew-Hatred

By Aaron Bandler, Jewish News Syndicate

More than 120 organizations, many of them Jewish, signed a letter calling on the University of California regents to act on a recent AMCHA Initiative report on Jew-hatred, about which 350 former and current scholars at the public school system penned a letter last month.

Tammi Rossman-Benjamin, co-founder and director of the AMCHA Initiative, which organized and also signed onto the letter, told JNS that “we were hearing from different groups about the report and how outrageous it was.”

The many signatories suggest “that it’s not just a Jewish issue, that it’s not just a conservative issue, that it’s not just a legal issue,” she said. “That it’s really a human

issue, that really people from all walks of life represented by these organizations are losing confidence in the university rapidly.”

JNS saw an exclusive copy of the letter, whose signatories include B’nai B’rith International, Zionist Organization of America, Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, Combat Antisemitism Movement and Lawfare Project, as well as Christians and Jews United for Israel, Defending Education and National Association of Scholars

The report, which is the focus of the letter, suggests that professors are a key driver of rising Jew-hatred at the public university system.

“UC’s instructional authority, official unit communications and UC-branded platforms should not be used to carry organized political advocacy into the university’s academic life as an institutional program,” the letter states.

“In the cases documented in the report, that politicization has centered on organized anti-Israel activism and has helped fuel a surge of antisemitism and hostile or exclusionary conditions for Jewish students and others perceived as ‘Zionist’ or ‘pro-Israel,’” it adds. “When institutional authority is used this way, political agendas can appear to carry the university’s endorsement, academic norms break down and affected students face harassment, intimidation and exclusion.”

The letter states that the regents should enforce current UC policies and enhance them where necessary, and discuss the report at their next meeting. (JNS sought comment from the UC system.)

“The issue is not just about Jews and

Israel. The issue is about misuse of the institution,” Rossman-Benjamin told JNS. “It’s a general issue. Stop politicization.”

Kenneth Marcus, chairman and CEO of the Brandeis Center, told JNS that the AMCHA report shows how antisemitism is “systemic at California public institutions.”

“In too many instances, it is driven by the misuse of academic authority, particularly among faculty members,” he said. “It is imperative that the regents take firm action, at long last, to restore institutional sanity, strengthen conduct policies and protect Jewish students’ civil rights.”

Rabbi Eric Fusfield, director of legislative affairs at B’nai B’rith, told JNS that “far from remaining ‘aloof from politics,’ as UC policy requires, faculty have used their classrooms and resources to promote incendiary anti-Israel propaganda.”

“Jewish students are paying the price,” he said.

Gerard Filitti, senior counsel at Lawfare

continued on page 20

Jewish Federation OF THE DESERT

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MICHAEL LOTKER

on “Science & Religion: Conflicts, Confusion, and Clarity”

Weekend of April 17 - 19

Friday, April 17, 5:30 PM
Pre-oneg Reception at 5:00
Introductory remarks

Saturday Morning, April 18
at 10:00 AM:
“God as an organizing intelligence in the universe”

Sunday Morning, April 19
at 9:30 AM:
Bagel Breakfast & “Implications & consequences of God caring about us”

No charge, but reservations for Sunday morning are a must.

Presented by Temple Sinai & Jewish Federation of the Desert

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Israel Sets Up New Rocket-Protected Hospital for Vulnerable Patients

"A society is ultimately judged by its ability to protect those who cannot protect themselves," said the CEO of Israel's largest healthcare provider.

By Jewish News Syndicate Staff

The Magen HaAri ("Lion's Shield") rocket-protected hospital in Rishon Letzion is inaugurated on March 8, 2026. Credit: Clalit Health Services Spokesperson.

Clalit Health Services has opened a new rocket-protected hospital designed to safeguard some of the nation's most vulnerable patients as Iran continues to fire ballistic missiles at the Jewish state, the healthcare provider said.

Located in Rishon Letzion, the hospital on March 8 began receiving 216 patients transferred from rehabilitation and geriatric facilities that lack adequate protected spaces, along with their medical and nursing teams, Clalit said.

The complex operation involved dozens

of ambulances transporting elderly and medically fragile patients from cities across Israel, even as air-raided sirens continued to sound.

"The decision to establish Magen HaAri hospital reflects the urgent needs of this moment," said Dr. Eytan Wirtheim, CEO of Clalit Health Services.

"Since the beginning of the current conflict, we have taken extensive measures to reduce patient density and strengthen protection in hospitals, achieving more than 90% optimal protection across our 14 hospitals," he was quoted as saying.

The initiative was advanced amid a nationwide shortage of fully protected inpatient facilities, Clalit noted.

"Many patients in rehabilitation and geriatric facilities are bedridden. ... Our responsibility is to ensure a safe and protected environment for these patients and for the medical teams caring for them around the clock," Wirtheim continued.

"A society is ultimately judged by its ability to protect those who cannot protect themselves," he said.

The establishment of the hospital required rapid coordination across Israel's healthcare system. Wirtheim thanked Israel Ministry of Health Director General Moshe Bar Siman Tov and the ministry's teams for their cooperation and support, which made it possible to launch the initiative in such a short time.

Hundreds of Clalit employees took part in the effort, including physicians, nurses, engineers, IT specialists, logistics teams and operations staff who worked around the clock to prepare the facility, the healthcare provider said.

The operation also involved coordination with other elements across Israel's healthcare system.

Dr. Tatiana Vender, director of Clalit's Beit Rivka Geriatric Medical Center in Petach Tikvah and a specialist in neurology and physical and rehabilitation medicine, will serve as the hospital's director.

The initial direct cost of establishing the hospital is estimated at approximately four million shekels (\$1.29 million), Clalit said.

Friendship and Baking Challah

On Sunday, January 22, Women's Philanthropy of Jewish Federation of the Desert gathered with 40 women from across the desert for an afternoon of friendship and challah baking. It was a joyful coming together for an afternoon of connection, creativity, and community. Special gratitude for

Rebbetzin Chaya Denebeim and her extraordinary helpers for guiding us step-by-step in creating our perfect challot and Shirley Shapiro for the beautiful clothing. Together, we strengthened not only our braids of challah, but the bonds of sisterhood that continue to nourish our community.



Left: Jewish Federation Board members Carol Fragen, Wendy Brooks, Fran Kaufman, and Katie Small with Women's Philanthropy/Community Engagement Director Leslie Pepper (second from left)



Federation Day at Tamarisk

By Leslie Pepper, Director of Community Engagement



Thank you to NBC-TV/Channel 13 for their continued support and coverage. Photo from newscast includes news anchor Mark Meister, who played in the tournament, along with Federation President Arnie Gilman and VP Ron Langus



Pickleball aficionados Jeff Behrens, Nina Zale, Jane Beller, Cathy Hirschmann, Margie Kulp, Kim Shwachman, Barbara Wolf, and Adrienne Kriezelman



Burt Kaplan, Bill Chunowitz, Al Siwak, and Julian Levy



Jeff Behrens, Mark Mester, Ron Langus and Jim Levitas

Federation Day at Tamarisk Country Club was held on February 11, bringing together 88 men and women from throughout the Coachella Valley to support the Jewish Federation in raising vital funds for our community and its most vulnerable members.

This year saw an increase in participation — a wonderful testament to our community's growing commitment to giving back. The day was filled with camaraderie and purpose as participants enjoyed golf, mahj jong, canasta, tennis, and pickleball, all while helping raise much-needed funds to support those in need across our Valley.

Ron Langus, Federation Board Vice President and chair of the day, led a phenomenal committee that ensured the event ran smoothly. Committee members included Jeff Behrens, Nina Zale, Jane Beller, Cathy Hirschmann, Margie Kulp, Kim Schwachman, Barbara Wolf, and Adrienne Kriezelman.

The staff at Tamarisk Country Club were immensely helpful and welcoming, helping create a warm and successful day for all who attended.

A particularly heartwarming highlight of Federation Day came during the raffle drawing for a 75-inch television. In a beautiful gesture of generosity, the winner chose to donate the television back to Angel View, where it will be used in one of their residential homes.

Federation Day once again demonstrated the power of community — coming together for fun, friendship, and the shared purpose of supporting those who need us most.

California Sues Oakland School District, Says it Ignored Order to Address Antisemitism

By Asaf Elia-Shalev, JTA / The Times of Israel

A large school district serving Oakland, California, is facing a lawsuit from the California Department of Education over its response to antisemitism on school campuses.

In January, the state directed the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) to send letters to families and staff condemning antisemitism and to implement additional corrective measures. According to the lawsuit, the district failed to complete the required actions by the March 1 deadline. The state filed suit on March 9 in Alameda

County Superior Court seeking a court order requiring the district to comply. An OUSD spokesperson told the San Francisco Chronicle that the district does not comment on pending litigation.

The state's directives included districtwide communication condemning antisemitism, staff training on nondiscrimination and political activity in schools, and a public presentation at a school board meeting. Officials also required student assemblies at four schools—American Indian Model Schools, Thornhill Elementary, Montera

Middle School and Oakland Technical High School—addressing the Holocaust, the meaning of the swastika, and the harm caused by antisemitic imagery.

The dispute stems from complaints filed by Oakland attorney Marleen Sacks on behalf of the Oakland Jewish Alliance, a community group formed after the October 7, 2023, attacks in Israel. After investigating 17 complaints, the district acknowledged that discrimination against Jewish or Israeli individuals had occurred and that some practices contributed to a discriminatory environment.

Among the issues cited were pro-Palestinian posters displayed on campuses, instructional materials presenting the Gaza war from only one perspective, political advocacy by staff using school resources, and antisemitic graffiti on school property.

State education officials determined the district's proposed remedies were insufficient, prompting the lawsuit. Sacks said the state's intervention is necessary to address what she described as ongoing discrimination affecting Jewish students.



A Letter from our Partnership Region in Israel, Ramat HaNegev

March 5, 2026

Dear Friends in Palm Springs,
Warm greetings from the Negev Desert.

These are very intense days here in Israel, and we know many of you are following events closely from afar. While the situation remains complex and emotionally demanding, we wanted to share a brief update from our region and offer a glimpse into how our communities are navigating this moment. Here in Ramat HaNegev, life continues with a strong sense of responsibility and solidarity. In recent days, we have welcomed many families from central Israel who came here for a short respite from the constant sirens and tension they face at home. Fortunately, our area is relatively quieter, and the open desert landscape offers people a moment to breathe and for children to experience a few hours of calm.

At the same time, many families in our communities are coping with the realities of reserve military duty. A large number of our residents were called up again in recent days and are currently serving across several fronts -- from Israel's northern border, to the Gaza envelope, and to many places in between. Behind every reservist stands a family that continues to carry daily life at home, caring for children, supporting elderly parents, and maintaining routines under uncertainty.

Our professional teams that are part of the Ramat HaNegev Regional Council, together with community leaders, educators, and social services professionals, are working closely to strengthen the emotional and social resilience of our residents. We are expanding community activities that help people reconnect, release tension, and support one another, including informal gatherings, creative workshops, and youth initiatives. At the same time, as schools are currently operating remotely, educators and counselors remain in close contact with students and families, providing emotional support through online frameworks and personal outreach.

Despite the exhaustion that comes with such intense days, there is also a deep sense of hope. Many of us feel that a long-standing tension in our region is finally being confronted in a meaningful way. While no one can yet know what the coming weeks will bring, there is a growing belief that we may be moving toward the possibility of a different and safer Middle East, one that would bring greater security not only to Israel but also to Jewish communities around the world.

Throughout this period, the knowledge that communities like yours stand with us gives our residents strength and encouragement. Your partnership with Ramat HaNegev has always been deeply meaningful to us, and in times like these it is felt even more strongly.

Thank you for your continued friendship and solidarity.
With warm regards from the Negev,

Eran Doron
Mayor of Ramat HaNegev
On behalf of the entire Ramat HaNegev community



Income Statement

Fiscal Year Ending 06/30/25
(*) Unaudited Amounts

Where our Dollars Come From

Annual Campaign	\$1,933,315
Endowments	\$120,000
Tamarisk contributions (Federation Day)	\$118,060
Israel Emergency Fund	\$60,813
General Contributions & other	\$73,617

Total Support & Revenues **\$2,305,805**

Where our Dollars Go

Local Allocations - Caring for the Vulnerable	\$360,709
Local Allocations - Community Inclusion & Engagement	\$215,000
Local Allocations - Jewish Education & Identity	\$265,500
Overseas Allocations - Israel & World Jewry	\$359,000
General and administrative	\$211,441
Fundraising Cost	\$211,441
Programs Cost	\$634,324

Total Allocations & Expenses **\$2,257,415**

Net Surplus \$48,390

* Gain on Investments \$225,016

* Gain on Investments includes interest, realized and unrealized gain or loss and investment expenses

Balance Sheet

Assets

Cash & Cash Equivalents	\$165,959
Pledges receivable, net	\$105,469
Investments	\$6,086,357
Other Assets	\$200,000
Federation Building & Property Net	\$1,347,030

Total Assets **\$7,904,815**

Liabilities & Net Assets

Allocations Payable	\$724,026
Deferred revenue	\$59,784

Total Liabilities **\$783,810**

Undesignated	\$3,511,346
Board Designated	\$1,368,467
With Donor Restrictions	\$2,241,192

Total Net Assets **\$7,121,005**

Total Liabilities & Net Assets **\$7,904,815**

JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE DESERT ALLOCATIONS

Year End 6/30/25 For Distribution 2025/2026

Angel View - Jewish Resident Homes (Tamarisk)	\$30,000
Bikur Cholim - Mitzvah Mission & Programs	\$155,000
Jewish Family Service - Café Europa - Ner Tamid	\$25,000
Jewish Family Service - Mental Health Outpatient Treatment	\$35,000
Jewish Family Service - Senior Care Case Management	\$35,000
Jewish Family Service - Let's Do Lunch	\$5,000
Mizell Senior Center - Meals on Wheels	\$15,000
Temple Sinai - Mitzvah Food Delivery Project	\$9,709
The Joslyn Center - Meals on Wheels	\$6,000
Jewish Federation of the Desert -Tzedakah & Burial Fund (Tamarisk)	\$45,000

Caring for the Vulnerable 30% \$360,709

Aleph Schoolhouse	\$16,500
Congregation Beth Shalom - Scholar in Residence Program	\$8,500
Congregation Har El	\$7,500
Inland and Desert Hillel Council - Ongoing Programs	\$90,000
Jewish Federation of the Desert - Jewish Community Outreach	\$20,000
Jewish Federation of the Desert - PJ Library	\$8,000
Jewish Federation of the Desert - Jewish Community Programs	\$20,000
Temple Isaiah - Palm Springs - Jewish Film Festival	\$28,000
Temple Isaiah - Palm Springs - Twice Blessed - LGBTQ Outreach	\$4,000
Temple Sinai - Palm Desert - Hebrew School Scholarships	\$15,000
Temple Sinai - Desert Keshet	\$2,000
Temple Sinai - Tot Shabbat	\$1,000
Sun City Jewish Concert	\$6,000
Havurah - Jewish Speakers	\$4,000
Chabad of Rancho Mirage - Youth Programs	\$5,000
Chabad of Riverside	\$30,000

Jewish Education & Engagement 22% \$265,500

ADL	\$10,000
Inland and Desert Hillel - Israel Advocacy	\$5,000
Inland and Desert Hillel -Antisemitism & Antizionism, Interfaith	\$2,000
Inland and Desert Hillel -Training and Speakers	\$7,000
Jewish Federation of the Desert - Jewish Community Newspaper (JCN)	\$75,000
Jewish Federation of the Desert - Yom Hashoah	\$6,000
Jewish Federations of North America - National Dues	\$75,000
The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) - Youth Futures, Eliat	\$30,000
Or Hamidbar - Interfaith Programming	\$5,000

Community Inclusion, Security & Addressing Antisemitism 18% \$215,000

Israel Guide Dog Center for the Blind - Guide Dog Training	\$10,000
Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) - Former Soviet Union (FSU) Camps	15,000
Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) - Ofek Mechinot	20,000
Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) - Nativ	19,000
Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) - Reuniting Ethiopian Families	\$16,000
Joint Distribution Committee (JDC)	\$125,000
Leket	\$9,500
Ramat HaNegev - Center for Children with Special Needs (CCSN) & Other	\$135,000
DROR Israel Educational Centers - Support for High	\$9,500

Israel, Overseas & World Jewry 30% \$359,000

Total Allocations \$1,200,209

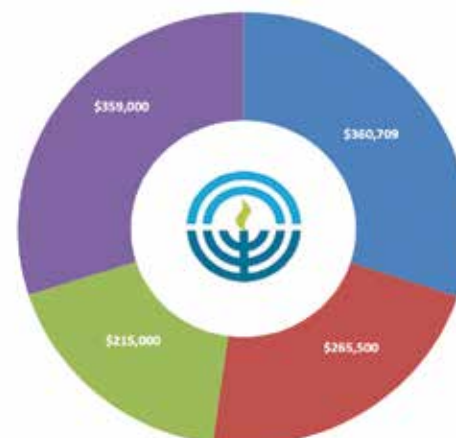
The Tzedakah Fund

The Tzedakah Fund was established by Helene Berman Seidenfeld in 2006 and since then the Jewish Federation has helped over 370 local families and individuals through our Tzedakah Fund Program, with an average of \$2,500 per recipient. We are grateful for all you have done, and continue to do, to support the Tzedakah Fund.

We receive more aid requests every year and your support is more critical now than ever to continue helping less fortunate members of our community.



Amount Percentage



- Caring for the Vulnerable
30% - \$360,709
- Jewish Education and Engagement
22% - \$265,500
- Combatting Antisemitism and Securing Community
18% - \$215,000
- Israel, Overseas & World Jewry
30% - \$359,000

LOCAL - 70% - \$841,209
WORLD JEWRY - 30% - \$359,000
TOTAL ALLOCATION - \$1,200,209

In 2026 California Governor's Race, Antisemitism Emerges as a Defining Issue

A candidate forum organized by Jewish groups came the same week as three high-profile antisemitism lawsuits against California institutions.

By Asaf Elia-Shalev, Jewish Telegraphic Agency

In a state where housing costs, wildfires and water shortages usually dominate campaign rhetoric, the 2026 race for California governor is being shaped to a significant extent around a different flashpoint: antisemitism.

At a packed gubernatorial forum at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles on February 26, five leading candidates — Democrat Rep. Eric Swalwell, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan, entrepreneur Tom Steyer and Republican businessman Steve Hilton — competed to present themselves as the strongest defenders of Jewish safety.

Three other candidates who met the forum's viability criteria — former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco and former Rep. Katie Porter — were invited but did not attend.

The event, organized by a coalition of major Jewish groups including Jewish Federation Los Angeles, Jewish Community Relations Council Bay Area and Jewish California (formerly The Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California),



Five California gubernatorial candidates — from left, Steve Hilton, Matt Mahan, Tom Steyer, Eric Swalwell and Antonio Villaraigosa — appear on stage at the Jewish California Governor Candidate Forum at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles, where antisemitism emerged as a defining issue in the 2026 race

drew more than 1,000 attendees and was livestreamed on YouTube. With Gov. Gavin Newsom term-limited and widely seen as a likely 2028 presidential candidate, the contest to succeed him is one of the most closely watched gubernatorial races in the country.

California is home to an estimated 1.2 million Jews — second only to New York among U.S. states — and its public schools and universities have become central battlegrounds in the national debate over Israel and antisemitism since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

That tension was on vivid display. The forum coincided with three major antisemitism lawsuits filed in rapid succession against California educational institutions.

On February 26, the Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights and StandWithUs sued the state of California, its Department of Education and several school districts, alleging that officials allowed antisemitic harassment of Jewish and Israeli students to “fester” in K-12 schools. The lawsuit seeks court-ordered oversight of campus antisemitism and limits on funding for districts that fail to enforce nondiscrimination policies.

Earlier in the week, the Trump administration's Justice Department filed suit against UCLA, accusing the university of permitting a hostile work environment for Jewish and Israeli employees following pro-Palestinian encampments in 2024. And at UC Santa Barbara, former student body president Tessa Veksler sued the

university, alleging it failed to protect her from antisemitic harassment after she condemned the Oct. 7 attacks.

Against that backdrop, antisemitism was the dominant theme at the Thursday forum.

Candidates pledged to enforce Assembly Bill 715, a law signed last year aimed at combating antisemitism in K-12 schools, and to ensure its implementation across districts. They denounced the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement and affirmed Israel's right to exist, even as some voiced criticism of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

Swalwell made protecting Jewish Californians central to his pitch. “My job is to protect all Californians and with antisemitism on the rise and violence on the rise, that especially includes the Jewish community,” he said. Calling Los Angeles home to a Jewish population larger than Jerusalem's, he added, “This is a large community that is living under fear and insanity right now.”

Villaraigosa rooted his response in biography. “As some of you know ... I came out of the civil rights movement,” he said. “I have stood against racism, antisemitism, homophobia, my entire life because of the learning and education I got back in Boyle Heights” Recalling growing up alongside Jewish neighbors he said he had attended “a bris” and “bar mitzvahs and bat mitzvahs” and learned early about the Holocaust's impact on local families.

Hilton, the lone Republican on stage,

framed antisemitism as part of what he described as a broader ideological problem in public institutions. After describing visiting UCLA following campus protests, he said, “This is unacceptable,” arguing that “we have an attitude, a mindset, an ideology that infected so many of our institutions in this state. We've got to root this out.”

Mahan struck a managerial tone, emphasizing implementation. “Passing rules, passing new laws, doesn't matter if we don't fully implement and enforce them,” he said, promising that on “day one” he would accelerate staffing for the state's antisemitism prevention coordinator and civil rights office.

Steyer placed antisemitism within what he described as a larger breakdown in democratic norms. He argued that combating antisemitism requires coalition-building across communities. “Let's have a positive way of reaching out for a different vision of what this state stands for,” he said, “so we're not just dealing with the problems. We're creating the solution in our behavior and our language.”

Despite sharp disagreements over immigration, artificial intelligence and how to relate to President Donald Trump, the candidates were largely aligned in tone and substance when it came to Jewish safety.

For Jewish leaders, that alignment reflects both political clout and deep anxiety.

Jews comprise roughly 3% of California's population but account for a disproportionate share of reported hate crimes in the state. In recent years, high-profile campus protests, lawsuits and heated school board battles over ethnic studies curricula have made antisemitism a defining concern for many Jewish parents and students.

In his opening remarks at the forum, Tyler Gregory, the CEO of the JCRC Bay Area, said the evening's event offered a model for how to respond to the challenge. “We will not overcome the headwinds that we face as a community if we face them divided or face them alone,” Gregory said. “It is only by forging trust relationships across diverse communities and with our elected leaders, like we're doing tonight that we will succeed in ensuring our Jewish future in the state of California.”

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

Honorarium Tributes In Appreciation For:

- **Julie Labin**, *In honor of your birthday, from Danny Labin and Yehuda Gidron.*
- **Mia Frances Labin**, *In honor of your birthday, from Danny Labin and Yehuda Gidron.*
- **Sheryl Labin**, *In honor of your birthday, from Danny Labin and Yehuda Gidron.*
- **Dolly Levy**, *In honor of your special birthday, from Evelyn K. Shukur.*
- **Nancy Noddle**, *Happy special birthday, from Cecille Silverman.*
- **Ella Ohana**, *Happy 90th birthday from Dawn and Michael Johnson.*
- **Barbara Price**, *Thank you for donating the proceeds from your beautiful jewelry at the Lion of Judah Brunch, from Danny Labin, Jewish Federation CEO.*
- **Gail Scadron**, *In honor of your hospitality and friendship,, from Nina and Milton Zale.*
- **Ed Sherman**, *Happy birthday to our dear friend from Richard and Sonya Cowin.*
- **Richard Sukman**, *In honor of your very special birthday, from Bobbi Holland, Loreen Jacobson, Cydney Osterman, Barbara Platt, and Sandy Seplow.*

- **Leslie Usow**, *Happy birthday, from Jane Effress and Harvey Lambert.*
- **Tzedakah Desert Community Kitchen Project**, *Mazel tov on all your good work, from Dianne Greenhouse and Stephanie and Dr. Paul Ross.*

Memoriam Tributes Condolences Sent To:

- **Jess Beim**, *May all your years of special memories help you through this difficult time, from Shelli Goodman.*
- **Benaroya Family**, *In loving memory of your mother, Becky Benaroya, from Stuart Goldfine, Roz Goldstein, and Evelyn and Ed Shukur.*
- **Harriet Berlin and Family**, *In memory of Dr. Robert Berlin, from Debra and Mickey Star.*
- **Suzie Bourgeois**, *On the passing of your dear brother, Richard Bacal, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman.*
- **Laurel Cline**, *In loving memory of Richard Bacal, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman.*
- **Donald Dann and Family**, *In memory of your beloved wife Jackie, from Julian and Dolly Levy, and Marnie Miller.*
- **Nancy Ditlove**, *In loving memory of Dennis Ditlove, from Diane and Richard Cohen.*

- **Mrs. Stuart Fox**, *In memory of your beloved husband, Stuart, from Marnie Miller and Joe Noren.*
- **Fremont Family**, *In memory of Barbara Fremont, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman, Julian and Dolly Levy.*
- **Libby Hoffman**, *In loving memory of Buddy Hoffman, from Diane and Richard Cohen.*
- **Joan Kerns**, *In loving memory of Pat Kerns, from Diane and Richard Cohen, and Fefe Passer and Al Bloch.*
- **Marian Malasky and Family**, *Our condolences on your recent loss. May Alan's memory be a blessing, from Ed and Jackie Cohen.*
- **Marilyn Malkin**, *Sincere condolences in memory of your sister Joanne, from Renee Mayer.*
- **Mimi Paley**, *In memory of your beloved husband, Harold, and our long friendship, from Stuart Goldfine.*
- **Barbara Platt**, *In loving memory of Norman Lewis, from Renee Mayer, Larry and Cathy Pitts, Debra and Mickey Star.*
- **Lisa and Mark Roth**, *Our deepest condolences to you and your family. May Martin's memory be a blessing, from Robin and Eric Hananel.*
- **Cecille Silverman**, *In loving memory of Albert Silverman, from Diane and Richard Cohen.*

Uganda Plans Statue Honoring Hero Yoni Netanyahu at Entebbe Airport

By Vered Weiss, World Israel News

Uganda plans to erect a statue at Entebbe International Airport honoring Lt.-Col. Yonatan "Yoni" Netanyahu, who was killed during the 1976 hostage rescue operation at the site, the country's Chief of Defense Forces, Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, announced February 20, according to Arutz Sheva, Israel National News.

Kainerugaba said the monument will be installed at the exact location where Netanyahu was killed during the operation. He did not specify when construction would begin or when the statue would be unveiled, and no formal announcement from the Ugandan



Yoni Netanyahu

government was immediately available.

In his social media post, Kainerugaba described the planned statue as a symbol of the relationship between Uganda and Israel. Kainerugaba is the son of Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni.

Netanyahu, the older brother of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was the only Israeli soldier killed during the 1976 operation, widely known as Operation Entebbe. The mission freed Jewish hostages who were being held at Entebbe Airport after the hijacking of an Air France flight earlier that year.

The operation is regarded as a major moment in Israel's national history, and Netanyahu's role in leading the mission has been commemorated over the decades.

Israeli officials have marked anniversaries of the operation in Uganda, including a visit by Prime Minister

Netanyahu to Entebbe Airport in 2016 for a memorial ceremony, during which he delivered public remarks.

Prime Minister Netanyahu also traveled to Uganda in 2020, when he met with President Museveni. During that visit, Netanyahu said Uganda was considering opening an embassy in Jerusalem, according to Israel National News.

The announcement of the planned statue follows years of public recognition by Israeli officials of Netanyahu's role in the operation and reflects ongoing diplomatic engagement between Israel and Uganda.



Shabbat Schedule - April 2026



FIRST SEDER:
Wednesday, April 1
SECOND SEDER
Thursday, April 2

BEIT HAVERIM: First Seder
760-548-3908 (Check ad)

TEMPLE SINAI: First Seder
760-568-9699

TEMPLE ISAIAH: First Seder
760-325-2281 (Check ad)

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harelurjpd@gmail.com

AHAVAT ACHIM/Sun City Jewish Services, Palm Desert

Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Emert and Cantorial Soloist Ezra Yaron. 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. Community seder second night, April 2. Call or email for information.

BEIT HAVERIM, Palm Springs
Rabbi Steven Rosenberg (rabbisteven.rosenberg@gmail.com) and Hazzan

Dr. Sarah Sela. Where friends old and new gather Friday evenings at 6:30 pm for Shabbat services and festive Oneg. Shabbat services alternate between services/potluck dinners in members' homes. Shabbat mornings at 10:30 am: Nosh and drash/torah study online or in person.

For schedule of services, potluck Shabbat dinners, Shabbat morning programs and activities, check website: beithaverimps.org, email beithaverimps@gmail.com or call 760- 548-3908 (note new phone number).

BETH SHALOM, Palm Desert
(Member, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism)
Rabbi Dr. JB Sacks (rabbi@congregationbethshalom.net); Ken Hailpern, Madrikh Ruhani/Spiritual Leader (ken@congregationbethshalom.net) 42600 Cook Street, Second Floor, Palm Desert, CA 92211. 760-200-3636. Shabbat **Shabbat morning services** held every week at 9:45 am, followed by light Kiddush lunch. Visitors welcome with valid identification. For information, email info@congregationbethshalom.net or call 760-200-3636. www.CongregationBethShalom.net.

Scholar-in-Residence Weekend with Rabbi Amy Levin.

Friday, April 24: Shabbat Evening Service, 6:30 pm "After the Return of the Hostages: Life in Israel Today." Preceded by Catered Shabbat Dinner at 5:00 pm. Limited seating for dinner. Members - \$40; Non-members - \$50. Paid reservations for dinner required by Friday, April 17.

Saturday, April 25: Shabbat Morning Service, 9:15 am "Masorti (Conservative Movement) Life in the Land of Israel: My Experience" – Festive Kiddush Lunch Community welcome with valid identification. RSVP for Friday and Saturday services appreciated by Friday, April 17. For information, email info@congregationbethshalom.net or call 760-200-3636.

www.CongregationBethShalom.net. See ad and article on page 5.

CHABAD OF PALM SPRINGS & DESERT COMMUNITIES

Rabbi Yonason Denebeim & Rabbi Arik Denebeim 250 East Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92264 www.chabadpalm Springs.com 760-325-0774. Shacharit services Monday-Friday at 7:30 am; Sundays at 8:00 am and Shabbat at 10:00 am. Evening services 10 minutes before sunset. Check website or call to confirm times. **NEW!** First Fridays: Services at 7 pm, followed by Shabbat dinners at 7:30 pm. Check website for details.

CHABAD OF PALM DESERT

Rabbi Mendy Friedman. Located in south Palm Desert. Call for information and location: 760-969-2158; www.chabadpd.com. Shabbat morning services 10:00 am. Monthly Shabbat dinners.

CHABAD OF RANCHO MIRAGE:

Rabbi Shimon Posner & Rabbi Benny Lew. www.chabadrm.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@chabadrm.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: chabadrm.com/ckids or Chaya Posner: chaya@chabadrm.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 information. Monthly Social Happy Hour. Holiday dinners and celebrations. Zoom Torah classes. 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: Info@ChabadLQ.com; website: www.ChabadLQ.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.

Weekly in person Shabbat Eve services. Email for location and schedule. Rabbi Zions holds Torah Study on Zoom every Saturday morning at 11 AM. For a Zoom link, contact harelurjpd@gmail.com. Community seder second night, April 2. Call or email for information.

DESERT OUTREACH SYNAGOGUE, Rancho Mirage

Rabbi Dr. Jules King; Rabbi Rachel Axelrad, Rabbi Chazzan Danny Maseng and Sarah Lonsert, Cantorial Soloist. 760-449-0111. Mailing address: P.O. Box 982, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270. Shabbat services held at 7:00 pm on the second Fridays at Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert in Rancho Mirage. On second Saturdays: 10:30-11:30 am Torah study on Zoom with Rabbi Axelrad. Check the calendar for updates.

Adult Education: Adult B'nai Mitzvah, Hebrew—Beginning and advanced, Introduction to Judaism, Adult Confirmation, Adult Learning. Contacts: rabbi@my-dos.org; www.my-dos.org



Shabbat Schedule Continued - April 2026

OR HAMIDBAR

Rabbi David Lazar rabbi@orhamidbar.org In-person services each first Friday of the month and 3rd Shabbat morning. Online services all other Friday evenings and Shabbat mornings of the month. Kabbalat Shabbat Service - Fridays 6:30 pm; Shabbat prayer and study - Saturdays 10:30 am. For more information re: in-person services, upcoming classes and Zoom links, visit orhamidbar.org.

TEMPLE HAR SHALOM, Idyllwild

www.templeharshalomidyllwild.org
Email: templeharshalomofidyllwild@gmail.com. Shabbat Candle Lighting on Fridays at 6:00 pm on Zoom. First 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

332 West Alejo Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262, 760-325-2281 (Office open Tuesday-Thursday). Email: temple@templeisiahps.com; Website: templeisiahps.com. Shabbat services Friday evenings in either the Bochner sanctuary or Liberman Chapel at 6:30 pm, followed by Oneg. Torah services are on Shabbat mornings at 10:30 during season; Check website to confirm services and programming. To access any activity, go to Temple Isaiah's website and click on link to desired service or program.

Interim Associate Rabbis: Rabbi Rachel Axelrad, Rabbi Dr. Kenneth Emert, Rabbi Suzanne Singer. Cantorial Soloists: Ezra Yaron, Elliot Levine. Check website for schedule.

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.templesinai.org 760-568-9699. Go to templesinai.org for access information. Shabbat services are in-person and online on Livestream at www.templesinai.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 open to children irrespective of parents'

membership at Temple Sinai.

Contact Talia Lizemer-Hawley, Educator, for more information: educator@templesinai.org
Scholar in Residence Weekend with Rabbi Michael Lotker "Science & Religion: Conflicts, Confusion, and Clarity"
Friday, April 17 5:00 pm Pre-Oneg reception; 5:30 pm Shabbat Services/Introductory remarks. **Saturday, April 18** 10:00 am "God as an organizing intelligence in the universe." **Sunday, April 19** 9:30 am Bagel breakfast and "Implications and consequences of God caring about us." No charge but reservations for Sunday morning a must. See ad page 9.

BIKUR CHOLIM of Palm Springs

(Community Outreach).
www.BikurCholimPS.com.
Rabbi Yankel Kreiman, 760-325-8076.



Community Calendar of Programs - April 2026

Tuesdays

5:00-7:00 pm Chabad of Rancho Mirage weekly **Community BBQ**. Join others in the community for a kosher weekly social. Restaurant style BBQ with choices from soups and salad to salmon and steak. **Pick-up** is also available/Order online or call in order before 3 pm • Email: info@chabadm.com • Phone: 760-770-7785 • website: www.ChabadRM.com.

Tuesdays

7:00 pm "Living With the Times": Exploring the weekly torah portion on Zoom. Instructor: Sussie Denebeim, Chabad of Palm Springs. Chabadps.com.

Wednesdays

7:00 pm Tanya Class with Rabbi Shimon Posner, Chabad of Rancho Mirage. In person and available online. Email: info@chabadm.com, Phone: 760-770-7785; www.ChabadRM.com.

Thursdays

8:30-9:30 am A class for men. **Text-Based Talmud: "Establishing Courts of Justice"** with Rabbi Yonason Denebeim / Chabad of Palm Springs. To RSVP text 760-424-2177.



Tuesday, April 14

3:00 pm Community Observance of Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance. At Temple Sinai in Palm Desert. Guest speaker: Author

Julie Hersh, "Food, Hope & Resilience:

Authentic Recipes and Remarkable Stories from Holocaust Survivors."

Sunday, April 19

9:30 am Temple Sinai. **Scholar in Residence** program continues: Bagel breakfast and "Implications and consequences of God caring about us." No charge but reservations for Sunday morning a must. See ad page 9.

Sunday, April 26

10:30 am Beth Shalom's **Scholar in Residence** program continues with complimentary continental breakfast. Rabbi Amy Levin presentation: "A Case Study in Applying Jewish Law: "How Today's Conservative Rabbis Approach Halakhah. RSVP appreciated by Friday, April 17. Information: 760-200-3636 - info@congregationbethshalom.net; www.CongregationBethShalom.net See ad and article page 5.

Sunday, April 26

3:00 pm Sabra Hadassah of the Desert presents **American Songbook Favorites and Memorable Opera Selections**, dedicated in memory of Sheri Borax, a life-long member of Hadassah and presented through the generosity of the Borax Family Trust, at the Sun City Palm Desert – Sierra Ballroom, Mountain View Clubhouse. Prepaid Reservation: \$30 per person; \$35 at the door. Make check payable to Hadassah. Mail to: Hadassah, 38180 Del Webb Blvd., PMB 315, Palm Desert, CA 92211. Questions: 760-289-7987.

Tuesday, April 28

3:00 pm Celebrate **Yom Ha-atzmaut**, Israel's 78th birthday at the Jewish Federation, with comedian **Benji Lovitt** "It's OK to Laugh: Coping Through Dark Humor." Nosh together with friends as we celebrate Israel's birthday.

A Changing Battlefield: Five Takeaways from Israel's War with Iran, Two Weeks In

NATIONAL AFFAIRS: Two weeks into the war with Iran, the military picture is rapidly evolving, even as broader patterns have begun to emerge.

By Herb Keinon, March 13, 2026

It all began two weeks ago with a jaw-dropping attack on Iran's senior leadership meeting in Tehran.

Among those killed in that strike was Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei – a man who repeatedly called for Israel's destruction and worked relentlessly to develop the capabilities to carry it out, even if it meant mortgaging his country's future. He was arguably the greatest threat to the Jewish people since Hitler.

That attack, which was the opening act of Operation Roaring Lion, triggered air-raid sirens throughout Israel in anticipation of an Iranian retaliatory attack, sending millions rushing to bomb shelters and safe rooms.

Two weeks into the war with Iran, as Israelis continue to dash daily for shelter from Iranian missiles, the military picture is rapidly evolving, even as some broader patterns have emerged. Here are five:

The Israeli Air Force strikes checkpoints and soldiers of a Basij militia unit that was recently established in Tehran on March 12, 2026. (CREDIT: IDF SPOKESPERSON'S UNIT).

Strategic shift from managing to dismantling threats

Perhaps the most important takeaway is how dramatically Israel's strategic mindset has shifted since the Hamas attack of October 7.

Before that day, Israel's dominant doctrine was containment. Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon were largely treated as threats that could be managed through deterrence, periodic military blows, and cautious steps. Against Iran itself, Israel waged what it called the "war between the wars" – a shadow campaign of strikes, sabotage, and assassinations meant to slow Tehran's buildup without triggering a full-scale confrontation. Quiet – even fragile quiet – was still prioritized above all else.

October 7 shattered that worldview.

The massacre exposed the dangers of allowing hostile forces to accumulate capabilities just across Israel's borders while assuming deterrence would hold. The lesson drawn across much of Israel's political and security establishment was stark: threats allowed to mature do not remain theoretical.

That realization now shapes the current war.

Israel's decision to strike deep inside

Iran, knowing full well it would trigger retaliation, reflects a willingness to accept immediate costs in order to prevent far greater dangers later. It marks a stark departure from the earlier instinct to delay confrontation in hopes of avoiding escalation.

In effect, Israel has moved from managing threats to dismantling them. The calculation today is that waiting carries greater danger than acting – even if acting means putting your own population on a war footing for weeks at a time.

Hamas, Houthis not involved

One of the least discussed but most consequential realities of the current war is something that is not happening.

Two weeks into the conflict with Iran, Hezbollah has entered the fighting forcefully from Lebanon, launching rocket and drone attacks that have opened a major northern front.

But two other pillars of Iran's regional network – Hamas in Gaza and the Houthis in Yemen – have so far played no military role.

The reasons, however, are vastly different: Hamas because it can't; the Houthis because they don't want to.

Start with Gaza.

If Hamas still possessed the military capabilities it held before October 7 – thousands upon thousands of rockets, underground rocket-manufacturing capacity, and a functioning command structure capable of coordinating sustained fire – Israel today would be facing a far more complicated battlefield.

Instead of confronting Iran and Hezbollah simultaneously, it would be fighting on three fronts.

Air defenses would be stretched thinner, the IDF would be forced to conduct major operations inside Gaza, and southern Israel – not only the North – would once again be living under constant rocket fire.

That scenario would dramatically increase the military, economic, and psychological strain on the country.

But Hamas's ability to play that role has largely been taken out of the equation. The organization still exists, and Gaza remains unstable. But Hamas can no longer fire rockets into Israel and, as such, can no longer shape the battlefield the way it once did.

The Houthis, however, are a different story.

Unlike Hamas, they do retain some ability to attack Israel and American interests. Yet they have chosen not to do so.

Their restraint seems a mix of deterrence and calculation. Years of Israeli, American, and British strikes have degraded their missile and drone capabilities, as well as parts of their command-and-control network. Launching attacks now could invite devastating retaliation – potentially targeting their leadership and their stronghold in Sanaa.

At the same time, the Houthis are still fighting their own war in Yemen and appear reluctant to expend valuable military assets in a regional confrontation that does not directly determine their survival.

Analysts also believe Iran itself may be carefully managing the tempo of proxy escalation, encouraging some allies to act while keeping others in reserve.

The result is that two key components of Iran's regional network have largely stayed out of the fighting.

For Israel, that absence is strategically significant. Had all three fronts – Gaza, Lebanon, and Yemen – erupted simultaneously alongside direct Iranian attacks, the war would look very different today.

US President Donald Trump talks to the media upon his arrival at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, US, March 11, 2026.

US President Donald Trump talks to the media upon his arrival at Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, US, March 11, 2026. (credit: REUTERS/KEVIN LAMARQUE)

Trump continues to give mixed signals

Another striking feature of the war so far has been the White House's mixed messaging.

On some days, US President Donald Trump suggests the conflict is nearing its end. He has spoken about the war being largely complete and hinted that a conclusion could come quickly.

At other moments, his rhetoric goes in the opposite direction. He has spoken about continuing the campaign until Iran is decisively defeated and about unconditional surrender.

At first glance, the two messages appear irreconcilable. One suggests imminent closure. The other implies a campaign

that could continue for some time.

Yet the contradiction may not be as confusing as it initially seems.

Trump is operating on multiple stages simultaneously. One stage is the battlefield; the other is the global economy.

The possibility of a prolonged war has made markets jittery, particularly because of the impact on global oil supplies and shipping routes. Even the perception that the conflict could escalate dramatically has immediate consequences for energy prices.

Signals that the war might soon end help calm those fears. At the same time, the military campaign itself continues.

Seen in this light, Trump's messaging is serving two purposes: reassuring markets and allies that escalation will not spiral indefinitely, while simultaneously maintaining pressure on Iran through ongoing military operations.

In other words, the rhetoric suggesting a quick end is aimed less at Tehran than at traders, investors, and governments worried about economic fallout. All the while, the bombs keep falling.

Israeli unity vs US polarity on the war

Another key takeaway so far is the contrast between how the war is playing out politically in Israel and in the US.

Israel entered this conflict once again deeply divided – over the fallout from October 7, haredi draft exemptions, and the courts. In other words, the same old arguments.

Yet the war has largely suspended those divisions.

According to a recent Israel Democracy Institute poll, roughly 82% of Israelis support the campaign, including a thundering 93% of Jewish Israelis. In Israel, that level of consensus is extraordinary.

The explanation lies in how Israelis perceive the stakes. Israelis have heard Khamenei's threats over the last three decades, seen his military buildup, and felt personally the blows from the terrorist proxies he armed and financed.

For Israelis, the Iranian threat is real, immediate, and existential. Removing it, therefore, transcends political divisions.

Across the ocean, the picture looks very different.

In the US, public opinion over the war is far more divided. Polling shows support

continue on next page



Har-El Tu B'Shevat Seder February 2, 2026

Congregation Har-El held a community Tu B'Shevat Seder at the Jewish Federation and invited the community to join them. Danny Labin, Jewish Federation Chief Executive Officer, welcomed all to the Federation facility (bottom row, left photo). The Tu B'Shevat Seder was led by Rabbi Richard Zions, Ph.D., spiritual leader of Har-El (top row, left photo), who invited leaders of our desert community's congregations and Jewish organizations to take part in presenting the story of the holiday, which celebrates "making the desert bloom" through the planting of trees and, in recent years, holding Tu B'Shevat seders featuring the seven native species of Israel: pomegranates, olives, dates, figs, grapes, wheat, and barley.

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hovering around 40%, breaking sharply along partisan lines. Americans who back Trump largely support the campaign; those who oppose him generally do not.

The war has not unified those two camps; rather, it has only accentuated the polarization.

While Israelis broadly see the war as a matter of national survival, many Americans view it as just another distant Middle Eastern conflict whose goals are unclear – and one that could show up at the gas pump.

That gap in perception has been compounded by the administration's failure to successfully frame the confrontation with Iran as directly and immediately tied to American security interests.

The result is a political dynamic in which Israelis are largely united around the war, while Americans remain deeply divided over it – a divergence that could become increasingly significant if it begins to affect Washington's staying power in the war.

Iran increases global pressure to stop war

The manner in which Iran has expanded the battlefield by firing at its Gulf neighbors – and beyond – reveals much about its strategic calculations.

At first glance, Tehran's missile launches toward Israel might seem like the central front of the conflict. Those attacks are, of course, highly disruptive to daily life and to the country's economy. And Iran knows it. Tehran is showing that it can reach Israel directly, that it can impose disruption, and that it can keep Israeli society on edge.

But Iran also knows that these missiles are not going to defeat Israel or force it to sue for a ceasefire. In that sense, the

fire directed at Israel is largely symbolic – serious, but symbolic.

The attacks aimed at the UAE – which has absorbed more missiles and drones than Israel – as well as Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and other targets in the Gulf, are far more strategic.

Those attacks – beyond targeting American diplomatic and military assets – have hit airports, oil infrastructure, hotels, and other civilian economic sites.

The choice of targets reveals a clear logic.

The Gulf is the world's most sensitive energy corridor. Disruption there reverberates immediately through oil markets, shipping lanes, insurance costs, and global supply chains.

Tehran's calculation is that economic instability in the Gulf will not only alarm those countries but also governments in Europe and Asia whose economies depend on energy flows from the region.

As markets are rattled and oil prices surge, pressure could mount internationally on Trump to end the war.

And that strategy is not fantastical.

Consider these words on Tuesday from German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, who understands what the war is about and supports its aims. Still, with oil prices rising, he said:

"The United States and Israel have been waging war against Iran for over a week. We share many of their goals. But with each day of the war, more questions arise. We are particularly concerned that there appears to be no common plan for bringing this war to a swift and convincing conclusion."

Iran is triggering economic chaos in hopes that outside powers will pressure Washington to stop.

Iran is gambling that widening the conflict economically will translate into diplomatic leverage. But those same attacks could also deepen the sense of shared vulnerability among Gulf states already wary of Tehran's ambitions.

That dynamic could produce new alignments in the region. Still, it would be premature to assume that this will automatically lead to sweeping diplomatic breakthroughs such as

normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Even if Iran emerges weakened from the war, Riyadh and other Gulf capitals will remain cautious about the regional balance of power. The Saudis have long feared Iranian hegemony in the region – and, as this week's Iranian strikes on some of their oil infrastructure demonstrate, with good reason. But they are unlikely to want to see Israel emerge as an overwhelmingly dominant regional power, either.

Yet one conclusion will be difficult for the Saudis – or anyone else in the region – to escape: When it comes to long-range intelligence, operational reach, and sustained military capability, there is currently no other actor in the Mideast with Israel's ability to project power.

This may not create affection, but in this harsh neighborhood, respect often matters more – and respect can be the foundation of new alliances.

Grant Opportunity Announcement



Jewish Federation of the Desert
 2026–2027 Grant Submission Period is Now Open

Jewish Federation of the Desert invites non-profit organizations to request a grant application to submit proposals for this coming cycle that deliver on our mission to support vulnerable populations and improve the vibrancy of Jewish life in the Coachella Valley and around the world.

For more information: call (760) 324-4737; or email to info@jfedps.org

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A Tapestry of Song: Coachella Valley United for Fourth Annual Azi Schwartz Concert

By Robyn Eagles

On January 14, the Del Webb Sun City Clubhouse was transformed into a sanctuary of music and communal pride. For the fourth consecutive year, the Azi Schwartz and Friends Concert brought together a diverse crowd of more than 500 people, proving that even in a time of shifting cultural tides and rising global tensions, the Jewish spirit remains resonant and unified.

The event has grown into a significant regional draw. Attendees traveled from all corners of North America, including the East Coast, Canada, and the Pacific Northwest, to join local Coachella Valley residents in a celebration of Jewish heritage.

Musical director Tali Tadmor, of the Stephen S. Weiss Temple in Los Angeles, led a program that balanced the weight of tradition with the energy of contemporary hits. Cantor Azi Schwartz once again anchored the evening with the infectious positivity and audience engagement that have become his hallmark. Whether leading a complex cantorial melody or a modern favorite,



Schwartz navigated the stage with a charisma that kept the room focused and energized.

The evening featured distinct

artistic contributions. Rabbi/Cantor Danny Maseng delivered a storytelling performance that held the audience in rapt silence, blending narrative

depth with song. Cantors Lisa Piccott and Lizzie Weiss provided uplifting solo performances of well-known favorites. A particular highlight was their collaboration with Schwartz on the anthem "You Raise Me Up," which highlighted the vocal precision and emotional range of the ensemble.

The concert was founded in 2022 by resident Lew Rader to honor the memory of his wife, Carol. What began as a personal tribute has evolved into a vital pillar of the Palm Desert cultural calendar. In an era where many feel the pressure of external cultural clashes, the night served as a reminder of the strength found in shared identity.

The evening concluded not with polite applause, but with a display of collective joy. The crowd rose to its feet, singing and dancing in the aisles, a final expression of love and community.

The Jewish Federation of the Desert was proud to be a sponsor of the concert, along with Ahavat Achim/Sun City Jewish Services, and JMOGD/Jewish Men's Outreach Group of the Desert.







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continued from page 9

Project, told JNS that "the regents have both the authority and the responsibility to act and make clear that while faculty

and staff retain full rights to their personal views, UC's classrooms, official platforms and institutional resources are not vehicles for political advocacy."


He added that "free speech and academic freedom do not override students' civil rights."

"UC entered a resolution agreement with the government in December 2024, but these patterns have continued anyway," Filitti said. "This is both a compliance failure and a choice, and the regents must answer for it."

Mort Klein, national president of the ZOA, told JNS that "California's universities, and all of our nation's universities, have a responsibility to prevent faculty members from using their positions and institutional resources to espouse hatred toward Jewish students and the Jewish homeland."

"Changes are moreover desperately needed at the top," he said. "California's governor appoints members to the University of California Board of Regents and California State University Board of Trustees."

"California Gov. Newsom's recent blood libels falsely accusing Israel of apartheid sends a terrible message to his appointees and fans the flames of antisemitism throughout California's universities," he added.



A PLACE OF REMEMBRANCE

You are encouraged to visit our community's Holocaust Memorial, located in the Palm Desert Civic Center Park off Fred Waring Drive, between San Pablo and San Pascual. Spearheaded by survivors Joe Brandt and Earl Greif, this moving memorial tells the unimaginable horrors of the Holocaust and why we must commit our lives and efforts to assure it does not happen again. Never again.

Elite Australian Summer Camp Simulates Holocaust Atrocities, Including Mock Gas Chambers

By Vered Weiss, World Israel News

An Australian youth leadership camp attended by students from some of Victoria's top schools is facing renewed scrutiny after allegations that teenagers were subjected to simulated Holocaust scenes, humiliating punishments, and intimidating late-night exercises.

The Herald Sun reported that Lord Somers Big Camps, which have operated since the 1930s and bring together about 100 boys aged 16 to 18 with up to 200 volunteer leaders and staff, were investigated in 2023 by Victoria Police and the Commissioner for Children and Young People over concerns about participant safety.

A Safeguarding Services review that year found certain activities posed "potential

risks to participants' emotional and psychological wellbeing."

According to the report, campers were allegedly made to dig mock versions of their own graves on a beach, take part in group showers meant to resemble gas chambers, and endure overnight wake-ups involving blindfolding and strobe lighting.

Leaders were said to have worn electric dog collars during some exercises. Other reported incidents included public humiliation, water being thrown on campers as punishment, and practices described as designed to be confronting and intimidating.

The Safeguarding Services review recommended that leaders remain clothed, that informed consent be obtained, that

disruptive nighttime activities be limited, and that emotionally distressing practices cease.

However, the Herald Sun reported that at a camp held from January 3 to 10, some leaders were again shirtless and participants were still awakened during the night.

A separate 2023 report by a child safety expert and psychologist claimed parents were "actively deceived about some aspects of the program" and that limited phone access made it harder for campers to seek outside support.

A whistleblower told the paper that "most parents and schools have no idea of what happens on these camps," describing the culture as having "major negative impacts" and calling for an independent

investigation and the temporary standing down of leadership.

A spokeswoman for Lord Somers Camp and Power House said the organization self-reported to authorities in 2023 and that police "determined no action was required." She said recommendations from child safety officials had been implemented and that those involved were informed of the outcomes.

The Herald Sun said the girls' Lady Somers camp was not part of its investigation.

Participants were forced to engage in Holocaust re-enactments, with campers forced to dig their own graves on a beach and take a collective shower, simulating gas chambers at concentration camps.

Anti-Jewish Hate Crimes in NYC Increased 182% During Mamdani's First Month in Office

By Shiryn Ghermezian, The Algemeiner

Anti-Jewish hate crimes in New York City skyrocketed by 182 percent in January during Mayor Zohran Mamdani's first month in office compared to the same period last year, according to newly released figures from the New York City Police Department (NYPD).

The NYPD's Hate Crimes Task Force investigated 152 percent more bias-related incidents last month (58) compared to January 2025 (23), the data showed.

There were 31 anti-Jewish hate crimes in the first month of 2026, which accounted for more than half of all the hate crime incidents in January, compared to only 11 anti-Jewish hate crimes in January 2025. Last month's hate crimes targeted Jews more than any other group, including Muslims (7), Asians (5), Blacks (2), Hispanics (1), and Whites (1). Others were victimized over their sexual orientation (5), religion (3), gender (2), and age (1), according to NYPD statistics.

Approximately 10 percent of New York City residents are Jewish, according to the New York City Council.

Mamdani, a democratic socialist and avowed anti-Zionist, was sworn into office on Jan. 1. Hours later, he formally revoked a series of executive orders enacted by his predecessor to combat antisemitism.

Among the most controversial actions was Mamdani's decision to undo New York City's adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, a framework

widely used by governments and law enforcement around the world to identify contemporary antisemitic behavior. The definition has been widely accepted by Jewish groups and lawmakers across the political spectrum, and it is now used by hundreds of governing institutions, including the US State Department, European Union, and United Nations.

Mamdani, the first Muslim mayor in New York City history, also nullified an order that opposed the campaign to boycott Israel. The boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS) movement, which Mamdani openly supports, seeks to isolate Israel from the international community as a step toward its eventual elimination. Leaders of the movement have repeatedly stated their goal is to destroy the world's only Jewish state.

Mamdani, who has made anti-Israel activism a cornerstone of his political career, is a supporter of boycotting all entities tied to Israel, has repeatedly refused to recognize Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state; routinely accuses Israel of "apartheid" and "genocide"; and failed to clearly condemn the phrase "globalize the intifada," which has been used to call for violence against Jews and Israelis worldwide.

Mamdani assumed office amid an alarming surge in antisemitic hate crimes across New York City over the last two years, following the Palestinian terrorist group Hamas's Oct. 7, 2023, massacre across southern Israel.

Jews were targeted in the majority (54 percent) of all hate crimes perpetrated in New York City in 2024, according to data issued by the NYPD. A recent report released in December by the Mayor's Office to Combat Antisemitism noted that figure rose to a staggering 62 percent in the first quarter of 2025, despite Jewish New Yorkers comprising a small minority of the city's population.

The NYPD shared the news about anti-Jewish hate crimes at the end of a press release on Monday that focused mostly on how last month was "the safest January ever" in New York City for gun violence, with the fewest shooting incidents and shooting victims in recorded history.

The city had 40 shooting incidents and 47 shooting victims in January, compared to the previous all-time low of 50 set in 2025. Murders also declined to their lowest level for January, surpassing the previous record of 22 set in 2018 and 2022. There were no murders in Manhattan or Staten Island for the month of January, and the number of murders declined in every single borough in New York.

The NYPD also said that retail theft was down 16 percent in January, burglary was at its lowest ever recorded in history for the month of January, and crime in school safety zones was reduced overall by more than 50 percent. However, reported rapes (167) increased in January compared to last year and transit crime increased for the month by

6.1 percent. Overall major crime reduced 6.7 percent across the city.

January ended with a man ramming his car repeatedly into the Chabad Lubavitch World Headquarters in Brooklyn. The suspect, 36-year-old Dan Sohail, was arrested at the scene and charged with attempted assault as a hate crime, reckless endangerment as a hate crime, criminal mischief as a hate crime, and aggravated harassment.

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PJ Library Grandparents.

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HAVE A NOSH:

Instructions for this recipe are detailed but easy to follow ... and it makes an absolutely beautiful -- and delicious -- cake.

Happy Passover! MHB



PESACH-DIC PARVE CHOCOLATE MERINGUE SWIRL CAKE

Neutral oil, for the pan	1½ teaspoons kosher salt, plus a pinch
10 ounces semisweet chocolate (64 to 70% cacao), coarsely chopped	5 large eggs, whites and yolks separated, at room temperature
6 tablespoons neutral oil, as grape-seed or avocado	2 teaspoons vanilla extract
¼ cup) brewed coffee	1 cup sugar, divided
	¾ cup almond flour, sifted if lumpy

1. Arrange an oven rack in the center position and preheat the oven to 350°F. Brush the bottom and sides of a 9-inch springform pan with oil, making sure to coat the sides all the way to the rim. Line the bottom with a parchment round and brush with more oil, then set the pan aside.

2. Fill a medium saucepan with about 1 inch of water and bring to a simmer over medium-low heat, then reduce the heat to maintain a gentle simmer. In a large heatproof bowl, combine the chocolate, oil, coffee and 1½ teaspoons salt and set it over the saucepan, taking care that the bottom of the bowl doesn't touch the water. Stir occasionally with a heatproof flexible spatula until the chocolate is melted and the mixture is completely smooth, then remove the bowl from the heat and set aside.

3. Add the egg yolks, vanilla and ¼ cup of the sugar to the chocolate mixture and vigorously whisk to combine. Whisk in the almond flour until thoroughly combined. It will look broken and separated, which is okay! Add ¼ cup water and whisk vigorously until the mixture comes back together and looks smooth and glossy. Set the bowl aside.

4. MAKE THE MERINGUE: In a separate clean, large, non-plastic bowl, with a hand mixer, beat the egg whites and the remaining pinch of salt on medium-low speed until the whites are broken up and frothy, about 20 seconds. Increase the speed to medium-high and continue to beat until the whites are foamy and opaque, about 30 seconds, then gradually add the remaining ¾ cup sugar in a slow, steady stream, beating constantly. Once all the sugar is added, increase the speed to high and continue to beat just until you have a dense, glossy meringue that holds a stiff peak on the beaters. Try not to overbeat, or the whites will take on a dry, grainy texture and be difficult to incorporate.

5. MAKE THE BATTER: Scoop a heaping cup of the meringue and set it aside for swirling on top of the cake. Scrape about half of the remaining meringue into the bowl with the chocolate mixture and fold gently until just a few streaks remain. Scrape in the rest of the meringue and fold just until you have a light, airy, evenly mixed batter. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, then dollop spoonfuls of the reserved meringue across the entire surface. Use a skewer or toothpick to swirl the meringue into the batter. Swirl a little or a lot; it's up to you.

6. Bake the cake until the surface is risen and cracked, the meringue is light golden and a skewer or cake tester inserted into the center comes out shiny but clean, 1 hour to 1 hour 10 minutes. Remove the cake from the oven and place on a wire rack, then immediately run a paring knife or small offset spatula between the very top of the cake and the rim of the pan to loosen any areas that may be stuck (this will help the cake settle evenly as it cools). Cool the cake completely. Cut around the sides again to loosen the cake, then remove the outer ring of the pan. (Best eaten first or second day. Crisp meringue softens after a couple days).

CHOCOLATE CHIP MIRACLE BARS

2 cups ground almonds (see note)	2 eggs
1 cup brown sugar	1 cup chocolate chips

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Grease a 9" x13" pan. Mix ingredients together and spread in pan with spatula. Batter will be thick but do not add water. Just mix it well. Bake for 23 minutes.

Note: Grind almonds in your food processor but watch carefully as you grind them so they don't become almond butter! Adding a little of the sugar in with the almonds helps with controlling the grinding.



Simchas

Mazel tov to **Noah and Elkie (Denebeim) Flinkman** on the birth of their daughter **Mika Root** on February 25, in Los Angeles. Delighted grandparents are **Rabbi Yonason and Sussie Denebeim, Gina Liszovics and Lewis Flinkman** ... And **Rabbi Yonason and Sussie**

Denebeim's simchas continued with the birth of **Risya Denebeim**, born to **Aliza and Mendy Denebeim** of Palm Desert on March 6. Sharing the joy of Risya's arrival are maternal grandparents **Arkie and Chaya Engle** ... And, if you recall, in last month's JCN we announced the arrival of Mika and Risya's cousin, **Shlomo Aharon**, born February 5 to **Moishe and Mussie (Denebeim) Witkes**, also of Chabad of Palm Desert! ...

Gail and Saul Jacobs shared the happy news - and wonderful picture - of their newest great-grandchild, **Tzvi-Elimelek**, born to **Rabbi Pesach and Shoshanna Muller** in Jerusalem. Mazel tov! Mazel tov! Share your simchas with us. Email



Tzvi-Elimelek Muller

or call Miriam Bent at mhbentjcn@earthlink.net / 760-825-1022.

Share your simchas with us. Email or call Miriam Bent at mhbentjcn@earthlink.net or call her at 760-835-1022.



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WRITER, EDITOR, PROOFREADER, COPYWRITER ... I have a 'whey' 'weigh' 'way' with words. Contact Tina Levine at prunehaven@protonmail.com or call or text 310-993-1668.

LISA SILVERMAN; Intuitive Designer with an eye for all things beautiful! Recently relocated from San Francisco to Sun City Palm Desert, Lisa will find your unique personal style and create the space you have been dreaming about. 650-401-8813; www.decoratorguru.com.

HAR-EL, Member URJ, welcomes you. Rabbi Zions and guest Cantor Melanie Fine welcomes you to the *Second Night of Seder, April 2*. Email harelurjpd@gmail.com.

JEWISH FAMILY SERVICE SUPPORTERS welcomed. JFS has rewarding **volunteer opportunities** in its community programs and is now accepting applications for several positions. **Tribute cards** provide a unique way to celebrate a special occasion or honor a loved one, all while supporting JFS programs. If you're interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities or supporting JFS through the purchase of tribute cards, please contact 760-325-4088 ext. 107.

THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE Swedish, deep tissue and foot reflexology modalities. Treat yourself or someone you love to a wonderful therapeutic massage in your home. Jewish Massage Therapist with over 25 years' experience, fifteen in the desert. Call or text Leora at 323-394-4947.

DESERT COMMUNITY KITCHEN



Since October 2025, Desert Community Kitchen has had over 100 volunteers who prep and package over 1,000 fresh Kosher meals - and 2,000 cookies - for those in need. To get in on the action and make a difference, go to our website: www.desertck.com. Session dates vary but current information is always listed on the website. Signing up online is required each time you plan to come so we can know how many volunteers to expect.



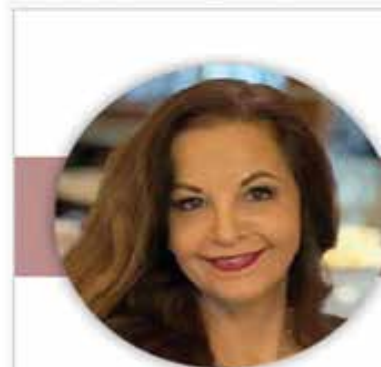
Candle Lighting Times

Wednesday, April 1	First Seder	6:23 pm
Thursday, April 2	Second Seder	After 7:23 pm
Friday, April 3	Shabbat Pesach	6:25 pm
Friday, April 10	Shabbat Shmini	6:30 pm
Friday, April 17	Tazirah-Metzora	6:36 pm
Friday April 24	Acharei-Kedoshim	6:41 pm

NEED A NOTARY?

BEBSABE MORRISON
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We Mourn the Passing of...

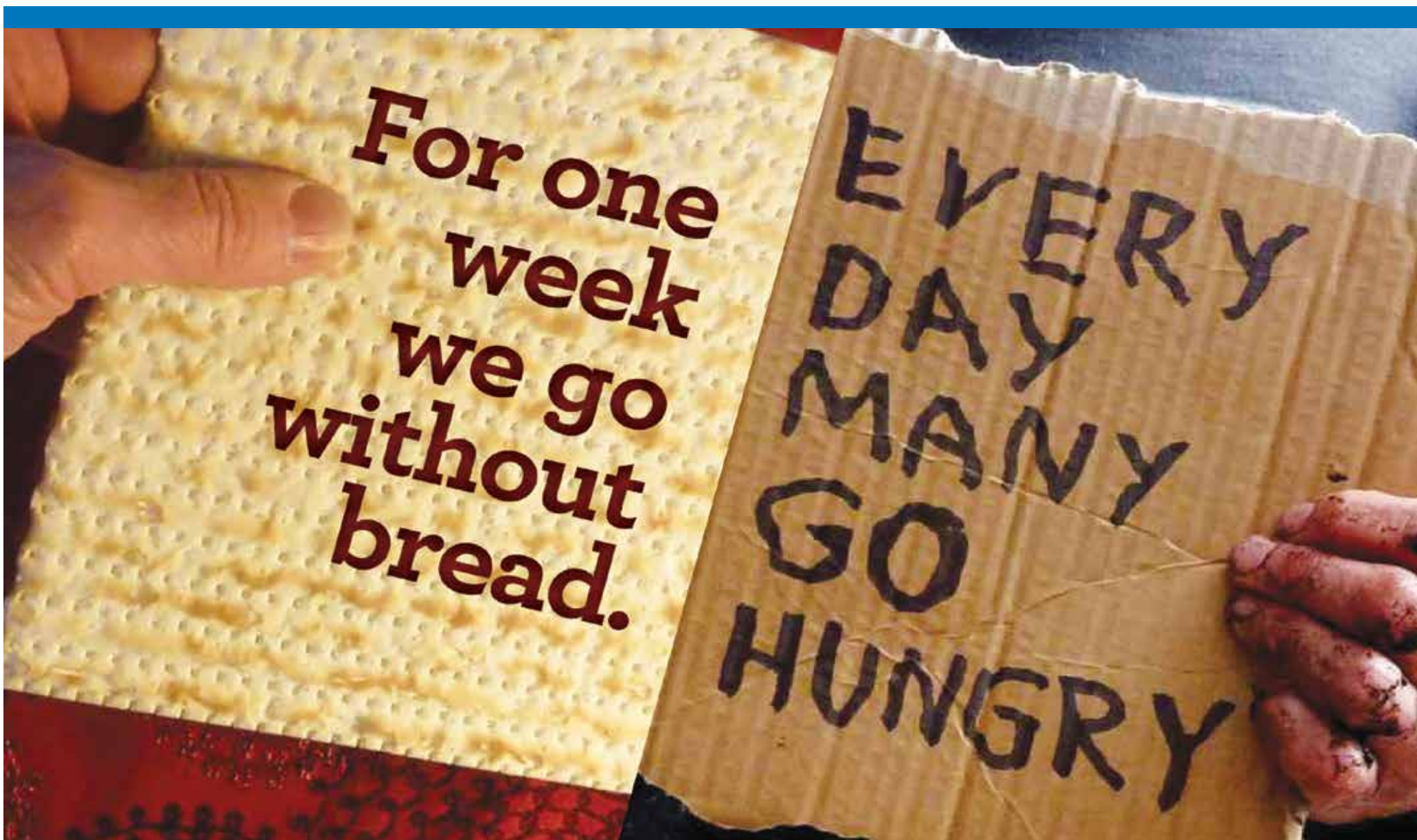
Richard Bacal, Rabie Ben Nasser Banafsheha, Joan Behrmann, Becky Benaroya, Audrey Bernstein, Elaine Blitz, Julie Coplan, Eric Cowle, Rabbi Jerome "Jerry" Cutler, Harriet Earhardt, Dr. Leo Eisenberg, Jack Fisher, Roger Rosenberg, and Roberta 'Bobbie' Weisner. Our deepest sympathies to their families and friends. May their memories endure as a blessing.



ברוך דיין האמת

JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE DESERT

69-710 Highway 111
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The Jewish Federation is the safety net for our community here at home, in Israel and in over 70 countries around the world. Through our efforts and with your help, a hungry child in Kiev receives hot meals. Medicine gets delivered to a fragile Holocaust survivor in Haifa. Shelter is provided for a homeless family in the Coachella Valley. And much more. **Change hardship into hope today.** Our 2025 campaign is underway and we ask that you give generously. The needs are great. The time is now. **Your link to getting started: www.jfedps.org.**



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