



Holocaust Artifacts



Discovered in Palm Springs



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A Farewell Message from Federation's Outgoing Board President



**Arnie
Gillman**

As I conclude my term as President of the Board of Directors of the Jewish Federation of the Desert, I want to express my deepest gratitude to our extraordinary Desert Jewish community. Serving in this role over the past three years has been one of the greatest honors of my life, and I will always remain thankful for the trust, support, and partnership so many of you have given me throughout my presidency. Together, we have celebrated meaningful achievements, strengthened our connections, and reaffirmed our commitment to caring for

one another. None of this would have been possible without our dedicated volunteers, generous donors, committed staff, and visionary lay leaders. Every contribution of time, talent, and resources has helped ensure that our Federation continues to thrive and fulfill its vital mission.

These past three years have been filled with unexpected challenges, both for the Jewish people and for this Federation. Not long into my presidency, our beloved CEO Alan Potash tragically passed away leaving shock and sadness in our community. For nearly a year, I served as interim Executive Director while the search for our new CEO was underway. Over this past year, I have had the privilege of working with our new CEO, the talented and dynamic Danny Labin, who will work with the new board president, Bryan Kocen, and, no doubt, continue to do wonderful things.

As one chapter comes to a close, another begins. While my presidency has ended, my commitment to the Jewish Federation of the Desert remains as strong as ever. I

look forward to continuing to serve our community in new ways and to supporting the Federation's important work for many years to come. I also encourage each of you to remain actively engaged. Your ongoing support—whether through volunteering, participating in programs, advocating our mission, or making a financial contribution—is essential. The strength of our Federation has always come from the dedication of our community, and together we can continue to build a vibrant Jewish future here.

Thank you again for the privilege of serving as your president. I am especially excited about our new leadership, and I know that, with your continued involvement and generosity, the Jewish Federation of the Desert will continue to flourish and make a lasting difference in the lives of so many.

With heartfelt appreciation, thank you for allowing me to be part of this remarkable journey. I look forward to continuing it alongside all of you.

Arnie Gillman

Incoming Board President: Defining Our Future Together



**Bryan
Kocen**

I have had the privilege to live in this wonderful Jewish community for more than 36 years. During that time, our community has grown, evolved, and become more diverse. This evolution has added both to the challenges facing the community; it has also opened up new

opportunities. As incoming President of the Jewish Federation of the Desert, I am enthusiastic to deal with both of these.

While I have been back on the Board for the past two years, this is far from my first rodeo. I first joined the Jewish Federation Board in 1992 and served in the roles of Campaign Chair, Treasurer, Allocations Chair, and Nominating Chair over my 20 plus years of service at that time. I am also a proud Federation "legacy" as my father Joel Kocen served as Campaign Chair and my mother Jo Ann Kocen of blessed memory served on our Federation's Women's Philanthropy Board.

One of the things I have learned over the many years that I have been involved in Jewish Federation is that our success

is the result of a team endeavor. The only way to accomplish what I hope to accomplish is with both community buy-in and support. In the coming issues of our newspaper, I will be sharing more about my vision. Over the course of the coming months, I look forward to engaging with many people's points of view regarding the needs of our community. We all know that many challenges face our community.

I look forward to working closely with our Federation CEO, Danny Labin, the dedicated staff of Federation, my fellow board members, and each of you. Working together, I am confident we can do great things as a Jewish Federation.

Bryan Kocen



Desert Jewish News

The Publication of Jewish Federation of the Desert

www.jfedps.org

Av - Elul 5786
August 2026

Jewish Federation of the Desert is proud to offer our community newspaper at no charge to our Desert community. In a world where subscription-free, printed newspapers are increasingly rare, we believe the Federation newspaper remains a meaningful way of informing our readers of local, national and international news that uniquely impacts the Jewish community of the Desert. The particularly dedicated or astute reader may have noticed

that this issue is the first to reflect the newspaper's new name, Desert Jewish News: The Publication of Jewish Federation of the Desert. This new name underscores our ongoing pledge to emphasize local events and to feature local voices from throughout the Coachella Valley. We are grateful to our committed advertisers and to our many Federation supporters whose philanthropic donations make the printing of the newspaper possible. It is thanks to your generosity that we are

able to offer this important resource for information-sharing and community-building. We hope you continue reading, enjoying and learning from our newly rebranded "DJN"! If you would like to become a Federation donor or advertiser in the paper, please contact us. And we always welcome any feedback on the newspaper!

Warm regards,
Danny Labin, CEO
Miriam H. Bent, Editor

Holocaust Artifacts Donated to Tolerance Education Center in Rancho Mirage

Edited By Miriam H. Bent, Editor, DJN

While it is probable that the full story will never be known, its beginnings take us back to the horror of the Holocaust, and its final story ends with respect, kindness and preservation.

As reported in the Palm Springs Desert Sun on June 21, Susan Cox was just a few weeks into volunteering at the Palm Springs Revivals thrift store when she made an unforgettable discovery. As she was sorting through donated items in the store's back room she came across a couple glass frames. Enclosed in one was a handwoven Star of David, while the other held some sort of currency.

Right away, Cox said, she could tell that the Star of David was old, cut out with edges stitched, but when



Danny Labin
Chief Executive
Officer,
Jewish Federation
of the Desert



Michele Gold
Executive Director
of the Tolerance
Education Center

she saw the currency came from the Lodz ghetto, an area of Poland where Nazi Germany incarcerated tens of thousands of Jews before mass extermination, something clicked.

"I started putting them in the boxes, and I took a second look and thought, 'Holy cow. I think this might be real!'" recalled Cox. Her mind flashed to black-and-white images she had seen of Jewish people in the Warsaw Ghetto, and she knew she was dealing with something important. She immediately sent a note to her supervisor.

As Cox suspected, the pair of items came from the Holocaust, the systematic persecution and murder of six million European Jews by Nazi Germany. Jews were required to wear arm bands or badges with the star of David on them, as a way for Nazis to isolate, humiliate and intimidate them.

Her discovery led workers at Revivals to connect with DAP Health Care, who owns Revivals. DAP CEO David Brinkman noted that it remains unclear who donated the items to Revivals as the store doesn't track donors. Brinkman turned over the artifacts to their new home, our desert community's Tolerance



Education Center in Rancho Mirage, presenting them at a Rancho Mirage City Council Meeting on June 18.

Michele Gold, Executive Director of the Tolerance Education Center, said the artifacts will serve as crucial tools "to ensure the stories that they carry are not forgotten and that the lessons of the Holocaust continue to inspire vigilance against all hatred and all prejudice and all injustices."

While the mood at the ceremony was positive, Jewish Federation of the Desert CEO Danny Labin noted that the artifacts were being donated at a time when "hatred is resurfacing in ways we haven't seen, for many of us, in our own lifetimes." Labin noted that over 10,000 incidents of antisemitism occurred in the year following the October 7, 2023 Hamas massacre in Israel, and continues in unprecedented numbers today.

Labin also thanked Rancho Mirage City Council member Eve Fromberg Edelstein, a DAP Health board member, for ensuring the artifacts remain in the Coachella Valley, where thousands of students visit the Tolerance Education Center on field trips.

In a video shown during the meeting, Gold noted that the 1940 currency was worthless outside the Lodz ghetto and almost worthless inside, as price of goods were deliberately inflated for people living there.

"You can see how worn they are," Gold said of the money, "Some are slightly torn and some have marks on them. But the most moving thing about them is imagining the amount of people that have actually touched them."

Holocaust Artifacts Find Home Through Community Partnership

On June 18 the Rancho Mirage City Council convened for a historic event at their Council Chambers, coming together with Jewish Federation of the Desert CEO and board members, Desert Aids Project Health, and Tolerance Education Center, collaborating for a special ceremony where objects that survived the Holocaust and that were recently discovered through DAP Health's Revivals store donation initiative, were presented to the Tolerance Education Center.

The City Council graciously hosted a reception prior to the presentation for Jewish Federation board members and supporters to meet the council and representatives from all of the organizations. The objects will become part of Tolerance Education Center's permanent collection and will be used to further local Holocaust education programming, in partnership with Jewish Federation. A short documentary was created to commemorate the occasion and was shown at the ceremony.



(L-R) Rancho Mirage Council Member Steve Downs, Mayor Pro Tem Michael O'Keefe, Council Member Eve Fromberg Edelstein, Desert Aids Project CEO David Brinkman, Tolerance Education Center Director Michele Gold, Jewish Federation of the Desert CEO Danny Labin, Rancho Mirage Mayor Lynn T. Mallotto and Council Member Ted Weill

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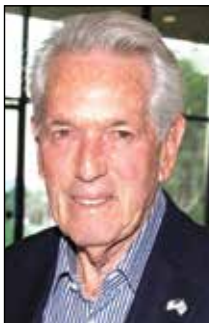
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DESERT JEWISH NEWS

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EDITORIAL

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

DJN STATEMENT

The Desert Jewish 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 DJN seeks to serve as a forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions in the Jewish community.

The DJN 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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SEE BACK PAGE FOR DETAILS.

Margie Kulp Selected Jewish Federation of the Desert 2027 Kipnis-Wilson Friedland Awardee

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

JFED Board Member Margie Kulp is our Jewish Federation of the Desert 2027 Kipnis-Wilson Friedland Awardee. She will be honored



at our community's Lion of Judah Brunch on Wednesday, January 13, 2027 and during the International Lion of Judah Conference in Austin, TX, in February 2027.

Margie Kulp has been a devoted and visionary leader within the Jewish Federation of the Desert and the broader Jewish community. Through her longstanding commitment to philanthropy, volunteerism, and communal leadership, she has made a meaningful and lasting impact locally, in Israel, and throughout the Jewish world.

Margie has held leadership roles



within both the Women's Campaign and the General Campaign, where she has inspired others through her dedication, integrity, and example. Her leadership has been both creative and effective, helping to address community challenges, strengthen Federation initiatives, and advance opportunities

for growth and engagement.

Throughout her years of service, Margie has demonstrated exceptional initiative in both philanthropy and volunteer leadership. She has consistently set a standard of excellence through her generosity, her willingness to lead, and her unwavering commitment to the values of Jewish communal life.

A particularly meaningful aspect of Margie's leadership has been her ability to encourage, mentor, and inspire other women to take on leadership roles in philanthropy and Federation life. She has served as a role model for women across generations, welcoming new voices and empowering others to become active participants in shaping the future of the Jewish community.

Margie embodies the spirit and vision of the Lion of Judah through her enduring commitment to Tzedakah and Tikkun Olam. Her leadership, compassion, and generosity reflect the very highest ideals of Jewish philanthropy. She is deeply

deserving of recognition as a woman whose contributions have strengthened our community and whose example will continue to inspire future generations of Lions of Judah.

The Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award honors exceptional women in the Jewish community for outstanding philanthropy and volunteerism. It is a biennial recognition presented by Jewish Federations of North America to women who exemplify extraordinary commitment to philanthropy, volunteerism, and social justice within the Jewish community. In 1970, Norma Kipnis-Wilson envisioned a path for elevating women's leadership in Jewish philanthropy. She took the Lion of Judah as a symbol of the strength of Judaism and the Jewish people, and with that concept and her passion for women's leadership, Kipnis-Wilson and her good friend Toby Friedland co-founded the Lion of Judah program in 1972.

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THE DESERT'S FIRST COMMUNITY MISSION • POLAND • MAY 3–9, 2027



The March of the Living brings together participants from more than 52 countries and regions around the world. It is the world's largest Jewish educational program for teens and adults, offering a profound opportunity to honor the memory of the Holocaust while celebrating the resilience and continuity of the Jewish people.

In 2027, a mission from the Desert will march alongside participants from across the globe—a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to forge meaningful connections and share moments of remembrance, reflection, hope, and joy that create lifelong friendships and an enduring sense of Jewish unity.



**SAVE THE
DATE!**

The Jewish Federation and the Tolerance Education Center are excited to begin planning our first-ever March of the Living Mission, **May 3-9, 2027**. The program begins at the main Auschwitz “Arbeit Mach Frei” Gate and it concludes at the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp. The weeklong program includes guided visits to Kraków, Auschwitz and Birkenau, Warsaw and Majdanek in Poland.

Poland: May 3-9, 2027 | **Optional Israel Add-On:** May 9/10-13, 2027

Participants will also have the opportunity to extend their journey with an optional add-on to Israel to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut (Israel Independence Day)—a powerful way to continue from remembering our past to celebrating the strength and future of the Jewish people.

Stay tuned for additional details, itinerary information, and registration opportunities. We hope you'll join us for this unforgettable and life-changing experience.

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Contact Leslie Pepper for more information at Leslie.Pepper@JFEDPS.org or (760) 324-4737



Palm Springs Council Approves Historic Status for Temple Isaiah

The Palm Springs Council voted unanimously to designate the synagogue and Jewish community center a Class 1 landmark, citing its layered architecture and 75-year role as a cultural gathering space.

By Mark Talkington, The Palm Springs Post

The Palm Springs City Council voted 5-0 on July 8 to designate Temple Isaiah as a Class 1 historic landmark, approving an application for the property at 332 West Alejo Rd.

The council's vote followed a recommendation from the city's Historic Site Preservation Board, which found the site meets several criteria under the city's historic preservation ordinance, including that it reflects a significant period of local history and represents the work of a master architect, according to a city staff report presented at the meeting.

Founded in 1950 by Holocaust survivors, Temple Isaiah evolved over several decades into a more than 50,000-square-foot campus shaped by some of Palm Springs' most prominent Modernist architects. Its original sanctuary was designed by E. Stewart Williams, later expanded in the early 1960s by Donald Wexler and Richard Harrison, and then enclosed in the 1980s by David Christian within a sweeping Late Modern, Brutalist-style design.

At the July 8 Council Meeting, Temple Isaiah President Robert Weinstein said that Frank Sinatra helped raise funds for the 1980's expansion. Sinatra gave two fundraising concerts that helped finance the project.

City Historic Preservation Officer Sarah Yoon told the council that despite the design changes, the site's



Current Temple Isaiah building and rendering of original structure

location, setting and overall integrity have remained consistent, supporting the case for a Class 1 designation. The site also contains notable religious artwork, including a kinetic Torah ark by Israeli artist Yaacov Agam and stained glass by Eric Ray.

Beyond its architectural history, staff and public speakers said Temple Isaiah has served as a cultural hub for the broader Palm Springs community, hosting weddings, funerals, quinceañeras, musical and opera performances, theater, and a Jewish film festival now entering its 14th year.

"It is one of the biggest attractions to the city of Palm Springs," said Douglas Morton, who described serving on the temple's board for more than a decade, including 12 years as executive director.

Weinstein said preserving the building is meant to protect it for the long term.

"We want to preserve this for future generations because it is a historical item in our community," he said.

Palm Springs Preservation Foundation's Steven Keylon, who worked on the nomination, called Temple Isaiah "one of the most important cultural resources we have in the city."

During council discussion, Councilmember Jeffrey Bernstein, who had his bar mitzvah and was married at Temple Isaiah, urged preservation groups to help support the building while it remains active.

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Kol Nidre • Sunday, September 20 • 6:30 pm

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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.

Five Jewish WWI Soldiers Receive Star of David Headstones in France After a Century Beneath Crosses

Jewish Newsz Syndicate

Five Jewish American soldiers killed in World War I received new headstones bearing Stars of David at France's Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery on June 2, 2026, replacing Latin crosses that had marked their graves for more than a century.

The American Battle Monuments Commission made the changes in coordination with Operation Benjamin, a nonprofit that works to identify Jewish U.S. service members buried under incorrect religious markers.

The marker replacements of the soldiers—Pvt. Samuel Tamkin, Pfc. Barney Bardman, Pvt. Samuel A. Backer, Pvt. Hyman Aronoff and Pfc. Maurice W. Akabas—were approved after historical research and documentation were submitted to the U.S. government, along with requests from the soldiers' families. Speaking at the ceremony in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, commission chairman Michael X. Garrett said the effort was about ensuring historical accuracy and properly honoring the fallen.



Jewish Federation of the Desert First Vice President Lori Fritz on a recent visit to Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery in Romagne-sous-Montfaucon, France

"Meuse-Argonne is the largest American cemetery in Europe, and most of those buried here gave their lives in the

Meuse-Argonne Offensive," Garrett said. "In a place shaped by such immense loss, every name matters. Every marker

matters. Every detail matters. Because remembrance worthy of sacrifice must be careful, humble and exact."

He said that "for more than a century, these men have rested beneath markers that do not fully reflect who they were."

"This ceremony does not alter their sacrifice," Garrett said. "It affirms it more completely. It tells the truth more faithfully. And it ensures that the memory we pass to future generations is as accurate as it is reverent."

Operation Benjamin researches military and genealogical records to identify Jewish service members who were mistakenly buried under crosses, often because military records were incomplete or inaccurate. The organization then works with descendants and government agencies to seek corrections.

Since partnering with the American Battle Monuments Commission in 2018, the group has helped secure dozens of headstone changes at American military cemeteries overseas.

Zionism Is Not Optional for Reform Rabbis

By Rabbi Steven Rosenberg, Member Advisory Board, RabbisUNITED, a division of StandWithUs

Recent arguments opposing a Zionist requirement for rabbinic ordination at Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) miss a fundamental distinction: Zionism is not merely one opinion among many within Judaism. It is the national liberation movement of the Jewish people and an essential component of contemporary Jewish identity.

Some have compared requiring rabbinical students to embrace Zionism with HUC-JIR's former policy requiring students to marry Jews. The comparison is flawed.

The question of whom one marries is a personal choice. Zionism, however, concerns whether one recognizes the right of the Jewish people to self-determination in their ancestral homeland. One is a matter of individual practice. The other is a matter of collective Jewish peoplehood.

A rabbi is not simply a scholar. A rabbi is entrusted with preserving, teaching, and transmitting the Jewish story. That story is inseparable from the Land of



Israel.

From Abraham's journey to Canaan, to the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, to the prophetic vision of return, to the prayers recited daily for nearly two thousand years of exile, Judaism has always maintained a profound and

enduring connection to Eretz Yisrael. The longing for Zion is woven into our liturgy, our holidays, our sacred texts, and our collective memory.

To deny Zionism is not merely to reject a modern political movement. It is to reject a central expression of Jewish historical consciousness.

The Reform Movement itself recognized this reality decades ago. While classical Reform Judaism once distanced itself from Jewish nationalism, the movement underwent a profound evolution. Since the Columbus Platform of 1937, Reform Judaism has affirmed the centrality of Jewish peoplehood and the significance of a Jewish homeland. Successive Reform platforms and resolutions have strengthened that commitment.

If Zionism is truly a core Reform value—as even opponents of a Zionist ordination requirement acknowledge—then it is reasonable to ask whether individuals who reject that value should serve as Reform rabbis.

Every institution establishes standards

for leadership. Seminaries routinely refuse to ordain candidates whose beliefs fundamentally conflict with the principles of the movements they seek to represent. No one would expect an Orthodox yeshiva to ordain a student who openly rejects halakhah. Nor would anyone expect a Reform seminary to ordain a candidate who opposes egalitarianism or LGBTQ inclusion.

The issue is not ideological purity. It is institutional integrity.

Opponents argue that requiring Zionism would undermine intellectual freedom. We strongly disagree.

Students should absolutely study the full spectrum of Jewish thought. They should read Ahad Ha'am and Jabotinsky. They should engage with Herzl and Kook. They should wrestle with anti-Zionist voices as well. They should examine the complex moral, political, and theological challenges facing Israel today.

But studying an idea and advocating for it are two different things.

continued on next page

We teach students about Christianity, Islam, secularism, and atheism. We do not therefore expect rabbis to be neutral regarding Judaism itself.

Likewise, studying anti-Zionist thought does not require ordaining anti-Zionist rabbis.

Jewish tradition celebrates debate, but debate has always occurred within a framework of shared covenantal commitments. The Talmud preserves minority opinions, yet it also establishes normative conclusions. Judaism values argument for the sake of heaven, not argument for the purpose of dissolving the foundations of Jewish peoplehood.

The events of October 7 and the unprecedented global surge in antisemitism that followed have made this discussion even more urgent. Jewish communities increasingly look to their rabbis for moral clarity, historical context, and spiritual leadership regarding Israel and the Jewish people's security.

How can a rabbi effectively support Jewish self-determination if they

reject the legitimacy of Jewish self-determination?

How can a rabbi teach the centrality of Israel in Jewish history and liturgy while denying the Jewish people's right to sovereignty in that very land?

How can a rabbi faithfully represent a movement that officially embraces Zionism while personally rejecting it?

These are not abstract questions. They go to the heart of rabbinic leadership.

The purpose of HUC-JIR is not merely to produce intellectuals. It is to train rabbis capable of leading Jewish communities. Reform congregations have every right to expect that their spiritual leaders affirm the Jewish people's right to exist as a nation among nations.

This does not require blind allegiance to any Israeli government. Zionism is not support for a particular political party or policy. Israelis themselves vigorously debate government decisions every day. One can be a Zionist and oppose settlements. One can be a Zionist and support a two-state solution. One can

be a Zionist and sharply criticize Israeli leaders.

But one cannot reject the legitimacy of a Jewish state altogether and still claim to represent a movement whose foundational documents affirm Jewish peoplehood and Jewish national self-determination.

The issue before HUC-JIR is therefore not whether students should be allowed to think critically. Of course they should.

The issue is whether those entrusted with carrying Reform Judaism into the future should embrace one of its core commitments.

The answer is yes.

At a moment when Jewish identity is under assault, Reform Judaism should not retreat from its Zionist convictions. It should reaffirm them. HUC-JIR should

continue encouraging rigorous debate, serious scholarship, and intellectual honesty. But it should also make clear that rabbis ordained in its name are expected to affirm the Jewish people's enduring right to live, thrive, and exercise self-determination in their ancestral homeland.

That is not indoctrination. It is leadership.

Rabbi Rosenberg is the Founding Rabbi and Spiritual Leader of Congregation Beit Haverim in California's Coachella Valley and serves as Director of Chaplaincy Services for a major hospital system in Los Angeles, where he oversees interfaith spiritual care across multiple medical centers.

LEKET Visits Our Desert



L to R: Board Member Dan Weisberg, CEO Danny Labin, Incoming JFED President Bryan Kocen, Rabbi Joshua Cohen of LEKET, Outgoing JFED President Arnie Gillman, Board Member Stephanie Ross and husband Paul, and Board Member Barry Fisher.

On June 18th, Rabbi Joshua Cohen from LEKET in Israel visited Jewish Federation of the Desert. Known as the "national foodbank" of Israel, LEKET is devoted to addressing food insecurity across Israel by gathering and distributing fresh produce and other nutritious foods to the nearly

2 million Israelis who qualify as food insecure. LEKET has been one of our Jewish Federation's partners in Israel for the past several years, and this was a wonderful opportunity to learn more about the direct impact of our Federation's funding in Israel.



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 FIRST DAY ROSH HASHANAH Saturday, September 12, 10:00AM	 YOM KIPPUR Monday, September 21, 10:00AM Morning Service
 SECOND DAY ROSH HASHANAH BRUNCH Sunday, September 13th Call or email for RSVP and location.	 YIZKOR: 5:30PM NEILAH (CLOSING SERVICE): 6:00PM

All are welcome!

FOR INFORMATION AND HIGH HOLIDAY RESERVATIONS:

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May the New Year bring peace, hope, health, and blessing to all.



Report from 2026 Jewish California Capitol Summit

By Harriet Baron, Jewish Federation of the Desert

The Jewish Federation of the Desert and its constituents were proudly represented by Debbie Orgen of Sabra Hadassah at the 2026 Jewish California Capitol Summit in May. A coalition of over 40 leading Jewish community organizations across the state, Jewish California, is our voice in Sacramento, advocating for our communities' core concerns and broadly shared values. The Summit is attended by 50 constituent lobby groups who meet with the representatives that occupy all 120 California legislative offices in Sacramento. Jewish California's advocacy efforts are focused on "building the world we want to live in - for ourselves and for all Californians."

Below is a sampling of the compelling Priority 2026 Legislation that is being



Debbie Orgen third from right with Jewish Community Leaders from California sponsored by Jewish California:

Grant Program - \$100 million to secure institutions from hate crimes

- Holocaust Education Grant Funding - \$10 million to initiate a statewide programming that has already been approved

- Jewish Ethnicity Act will ensure that Jewish identity is captured in ethnicity data collection systems, in addition to existing religious categorization.

The Capitol Summit is a vital opportunity for non-profit professionals, stakeholders and citizen advocates to meet with our representatives in Sacramento to effect meaningful change. Learn more about Jewish California's efforts at www.jewishcal.org and find out how you can advocate for the issues that are most important to you

Report on Washington Meeting: Security for the Jewish Community in America

By Jackie Cohen, Past President and current Board Member, Jewish Federation of the Desert

This May I represented the Jewish Federation of the Desert along with more than 400 leaders from 41 states who gathered in Washington DC to raise

our voices about the state of security for the Jewish community in America. The two-day fly-in was sponsored by JFNA. Collectively we met with over

200 Congressional offices to educate our elected representatives about the need to secure our respective communities from the growing surge of antisemitism.



Jackie Cohen

Professional and lay leaders gathered as the anniversary of the murders of Sarah Pilgrim and Yaron Lischinsky outside of the Jewish Museum in Washington, DC. approached, and just a few months following the attack on the synagogue in Michigan. Our conversations on the Hill centered on the burden that the cost of security is placing on Jewish life. Federations, JCC's, Hillels, synagogues and other institutions bear the growing security costs.

JFNA attendees along with representatives of other major Jewish organizations participated in a press conference announcing the introduction S. 4576, the Jewish American Security Act (JASA) introduced by Senators Jacky Rosen (D-NV) and James Lankford (R-OK). They are the co-founders and co-chairs of the Senate Bipartisan Task Force for Combatting Antisemitism. A House bill, HR 9211 was introduced in June by Representative Dan Goldman (D-NY).

The legislation addresses four major components of keep Jewish communities safe:

- Reauthorizes the Nonprofit Security Grant Program by increasing funding to \$1 billion annually and eliminates the 50% personnel cap allowing broader use of funds for security staffing.

- Holds social media platform accountable by requiring transparency regarding their handling of antisemitic content online.

- Requires the Department of Education to develop and implement a comprehensive Title VI framework to combat antisemitism on college campuses.

- Strengthens collaboration between the Department of Justice and state and local law enforcement to enhance security for at-risk houses of worship.

Both bills were referred to the Homeland Security committees in the respective houses. There are ongoing lobbying efforts to hold a hearing and move the bill to the full Senate and House for consideration.

There is an old saying that Israel drives the foreign aid train that provides foreign aid to other countries. Likewise, enactment of JASA will provide needed security measures for all minorities facing threats.

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Erev Rosh Hashanah Friday, September 11 7:00 PM Oneg following	Erev Yom Kippur/Kol Nidre Sunday, September 20 7:00 PM
Rosh Hashanah Morning Saturday, September 12 10:00 AM	Yom Kippur Day: Monday, September 21 10:00 AM
Afternoon Service/Yizkor: 4:00 PM. Break-the-Fast following (Reservations Required)	

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Colombia's New Government Will Open an Embassy in Jerusalem

By Etgar Lefkovits, Jewish News Syndicate

Colombia's incoming foreign minister has told his Israeli counterpart that the South American country will open an embassy in Jerusalem, the Israeli Foreign Ministry said July 15, making good on President-elect Abelardo de la Espriella's election pledge.

The move comes amid a right-wing wave sweeping across Latin America that is reshaping alliances with the United States and Israel. Israel and Colombia have agreed to fully restore diplomatic and economic relations next month with the inauguration of the new government, reversing a two-year freeze initiated by outgoing left-wing president Gustavo Petro over the war in Gaza.

The agreement follows a meeting in Washington between Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar and Colombia's Foreign Minister-designate Omar Bula Escobar.

Colombia's historic relations with Israel nosedived after Petro severed diplomatic ties with Israel in 2024 over the Gaza war



Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar meets with Colombia's Foreign Minister-designate Omar Bula Escobar in Washington, DC. July 14, 2026

triggered by the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas-led attack, and expelled Israeli diplomats from the South American country.

De la Espriella, a 47-year-old lawyer and political outsider nicknamed "El Tigre," or "The Tiger," who was elected last month with the backing of conservative and evangelical groups, pledged during the election campaign to open an embassy in Jerusalem and renew a strategic alliance with

Israel. He will be inaugurated on August 7.

The Colombian election heralds another gain for the right-wing wave sweeping across Latin America, whose leaders share U.S. President Donald Trump's tough approach in dealing with drug traffickers and offer a marked shift in foreign policy alliances.

Eight countries currently have embassies in Israel's capital: the United States,

Guatemala, Honduras, Kosovo, Paraguay, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Somaliland.

All the other nations which have diplomatic relations with Israel maintain their embassies in Tel Aviv or its suburbs, due to the political sensitivities of Jerusalem.

U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to move the American embassy to Jerusalem during his first term set the stage for other countries to follow suit, with at least two nations expected to do so by the end of the year.

On May 31, JFED CEO Danny Labin and incoming Board President Bryan Kocen attended a special briefing in Los Angeles convened by the Consul General of the State of Israel. Along with approximately 25 heads of other leading Jewish organizations, this high-level diplomatic session welcomed Israel's visiting Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gideon Sa'ar to Southern California. Mr. Sa'ar spoke about Israel's foreign policy challenges at this moment and shared firsthand accounts from the current war with Iran.

Beth Shalom "Sunday at the Movies" August 16



Congregation Beth Shalom is screening "The Return of the Violin" on Sunday, August 16 at 3:00 pm, open to the community. The Israeli film - in English - tells the remarkable story of a 1731 Stradivarius violin once owned by Israeli Philharmonic founder Bronislaw Huberman, stolen in 1936 at Carnegie Hall and lost for nearly 50 years, rediscovered in 1985.

The movie and snacks is being presented at Beth Shalom's location in Palm Desert, for \$10 members/\$15 non-members. Reservation deadline: August 12. Call or email for information: (760) 200-3636 / info@CongregationBethShalom.net.

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Schedule of Services

S'lihot

Saturday, September 5 S'lihot 7:30 pm

Rosh Hashanah

Saturday, September 12 First Day 9:00 am
Sunday, September 13 Second Day 9:00 am

Yom Kippur

Sunday, September 20	Kol Nidre	6:15 pm
Monday, September 21	Morning	9:00 am
	Study Session	4:30 pm
	YIZKOR	5:30 pm
	Ne'ilah	6:30 pm
	Sounding the Shofar	7:30 pm



Honduras' President Asked for Help, and Israel Sent Desperately Needed Eye Surgeons

Ynet News

Relations between Honduras and Israel have warmed rapidly in recent months, with President Nasry "Tito" Asfura leading a dramatic shift in Tegucigalpa's policy toward Jerusalem. As part of the growing relationship, Israel responded to a personal request from Asfura by sending an emergency ophthalmology mission to treat Hondurans suffering from serious eye conditions.

The Israeli delegation completed the first stage of its work Tuesday after treating 155 patients who had been waiting for medical assistance. Of those, 136 successfully underwent eye surgery.

The mission is expected to be followed by additional medical equipment, professional training and another Israeli delegation later this year.

Asfura, who comes from a family of Palestinian origin, has overseen a sharp change in Honduras' foreign policy since his election. His government has altered the country's voting pattern at the United Nations in Israel's favor and announced its withdrawal from the Hague Group.

The coalition, led by South Africa and established in January 2025, seeks to coordinate legal and diplomatic action against Israel. Honduras' departure is viewed in Jerusalem as a positive development in Israel's efforts to counter such initiatives.

A presidential request for urgent care

The medical mission began taking shape during Asfura's visit to Israel in January, shortly before he was sworn

into office. During a meeting with Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar, the president-elect asked Israel to provide urgent ophthalmological assistance to Honduran citizens.

Honduras has high rates of glaucoma and cataracts and faces a severe shortage of surgeons and suitable medical equipment.

Sa'ar approved the request and instructed MASHAV, Israel's international development agency, to organize a delegation of eye specialists.

The mission was assembled with the Israeli Embassy in Honduras, led by Ambassador Nadav Goren, Sheba Medical Center and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Israeli experts worked alongside local medical teams, treating complex cases while also providing professional training intended to strengthen Honduras' medical capabilities after the delegation leaves.

"Despite the differences in working methods, equipment and medical practice, professional and personal ties were formed with the local medical team within a very short time," said Dr. Emanuel Schwalb, a senior surgeon from Sheba Medical Center who joined the mission.

He described the Honduran doctors and medical workers as dedicated and welcoming professionals.

At a ceremony marking the opening of the mission, Honduran Presidency Minister Juan Carlos García expressed appreciation for Israel's assistance.

"We are convinced that the partnership between the countries will continue to grow stronger, and we appreciate the commitment of our friends from Israel," García said.

Goren said the mission was a direct response to Asfura's appeal.

"For Israel, it is a privilege to place the knowledge and experience of our finest medical professionals at the disposal of the Honduran people," he said.

More aid planned for Honduras

The current delegation is only the first stage of a broader Israeli assistance program.

Advanced equipment for treating glaucoma is expected to be sent to Honduras in August. A second medical delegation is scheduled to arrive in November, alongside a program to train local emergency teams in responding to mass-casualty incidents.

The initiative reflects Israel's growing use of medical and humanitarian assistance as a diplomatic tool in Latin

America, where recent political changes have created opportunities to rebuild relationships damaged under previous governments.

Israel sees historic opening in Latin America

The rapprochement with Honduras is part of a broader political shift across Latin America. Governments in countries including Peru, Bolivia, Chile and Colombia that had taken hostile positions toward Israel or severed diplomatic ties have been replaced by right-wing or center-right administrations that view Jerusalem as a potential ally and strategic partner. Israel's Foreign Ministry sees the regional changes as a historic diplomatic opportunity and is working to use the momentum to restore and institutionalize ties. The ministry has moved to appoint an Israeli ambassador to Colombia following an extended unilateral rupture in relations and an ambassador to Bolivia after the recent restoration of diplomatic ties.



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.

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FUND

For a meaningful way to say thank you for a special occasion, send wishes for recovery from illness or extend condolences, there is no better way to send your thoughts than to purchase a Tzedakah card from the Jewish Federation.

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Call 760-324-4737 to order your cards, or go online to jfedps.org.

Members of Congress Call for Stronger Action Against Antisemitism and Iran at ZOA Washington Mission

By The J.Ca Staff

Nearly 200 Jewish leaders from across the United States gathered in the nation's capital mid-June for the Zionist Organization of America's annual Washington Mission, where almost two dozen members of Congress from both political parties called for stronger action to combat antisemitism and urged continued efforts by the Trump administration to counter the threat posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The advocacy mission brought together Jewish community leaders for meetings with lawmakers on Capitol Hill, discussions with senior government officials, and briefings on issues affecting Israel, American national security, and rising antisemitism.

Throughout the two-day event, speakers emphasized that growing antisemitism in the United States and abroad, along with Iran's regional ambitions and support for terrorist organizations, remain among the most pressing challenges confronting both Israel and the Jewish people.

Cruz Calls Antisemitism a Threat to Democracy

One of the keynote addresses came from Senator Ted Cruz, Republican of Texas, who warned delegates that antisemitism threatens not only Jewish communities but also democratic institutions. "Antisemitism is a gateway drug that, unless eradicated, will ultimately lead to the diminution of the democratic values we cherish," Cruz told delegates, receiving a standing ovation. "We need to stand and fight because what has happened is staggering and dangerous."

Cruz also urged leaders in both political parties to confront antisemitic voices within their own ranks. "The Democratic Party thought it would just go away. But today there is a real contingent of antisemitic sentiment," Cruz said. "But it also pains me that we see antisemitism growing on the right. I couldn't imagine that would be the case two years ago, but

it is, and it must be stopped."

Cruz praised the Zionist Organization of America for what he described as its unwavering advocacy on behalf of Israel and the Jewish people. He thanked the organization for its "inimitable, fearless and inspiring commitment to speak and advocate for the truth and the clarity of its message."

Lawmakers Stress Bipartisan Support

Representative Mike Lawler, Republican of New York, also addressed delegates, emphasizing the need for stronger measures to confront rising Jew hatred. "Let me be clear. Antizionism is antisemitism. It is rooted in Jew hatred," Lawler said. "We are living in a moment that at times feels like 1930s Germany, where the dehumanization of Jews is leading to physical attacks. But not on my watch. All of us as Americans should be appalled by this and take action to stop it."

Other members of Congress participating in the Washington Mission included Senator John Hoeven (R-ND), and Representatives Andy Biggs (R-AZ), Randy Fine (R-FL), Laura Gillen (D-NY), Josh Gottheimer (D-NJ), Kevin Kiley (I-CA), George Latimer (D-NY), Claudia Tenney (R-NY), Shri Thanedar (D-MI) and additional members from both parties.

ZOA Highlights Three Legislative Priorities

ZOA delegations met with dozens of senators, representatives and congressional staff to discuss three principal policy priorities. The first focused on the threat posed by the Islamic Republic of Iran, arguing that Iran remains an existential threat to Israel and a significant security threat to the United States and its allies. Delegates expressed support for continued efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring a military nuclear capability and voiced support for American military and economic measures intended to weaken the regime's ability to finance and arm terrorist organizations.

A second priority centered on combating antisemitism. Delegates described growing levels of antisemitism

on university campuses, in public schools, online, and in major cities since the Hamas terrorist attacks against Israel on October 7, 2023. ZOA urged lawmakers to strengthen enforcement of existing laws protecting Jewish Americans while considering additional legislation to address antisemitic violence, intimidation, and discrimination.

The organization's third priority focused on reaffirming Jewish historical, legal, and religious connections to Judea and Samaria. ZOA representatives encouraged lawmakers to support legislation adopting the historically accurate terminology of Judea and Samaria rather than the term West Bank, while emphasizing what they described as Israel's legal and historical rights in the territory.

Justice Department Announces National Initiative

The Washington Mission officially began the previous evening with a reception featuring Leo Terrell, Chair of the U.S. Department of Justice Task Force on Antisemitism. During his remarks, Terrell announced a nationwide initiative, a 15-city tour aimed at strengthening federal efforts to combat antisemitism. "Antisemitism is local," Terrell said. "It's a failure of prosecutors to prosecute. It's a failure of teachers when they teach antisemitism in schools." "We are bringing the message that either they prosecute or we will file a lawsuit against them." Terrell assured attendees that combating antisemitism remains a priority for the Justice Department. "Fighting antisemitism is a 24/7 commitment," he said. "I am there for you, the Justice Department is there for you, and President Trump is there for you."

Klein Praises Advocacy Efforts

ZOA National President Morton A. Klein told delegates that confronting Iran and combating antisemitism remain the organization's highest priorities. "Coming to Washington as proud Jews and Zionists sends a powerful message to Congress," Klein said. "We are right, the antisemites are wrong. We are truthful and just. Our enemies are full of lies." Klein argued that preventing Iran from developing

nuclear weapons and continuing efforts to counter Iranian-backed terrorist organizations remain essential to both Israeli and American security. He also praised Terrell's commitment to protecting Jewish communities. "Leo Terrell will go down in history as one of the best friends the Jewish people ever had," Klein said.

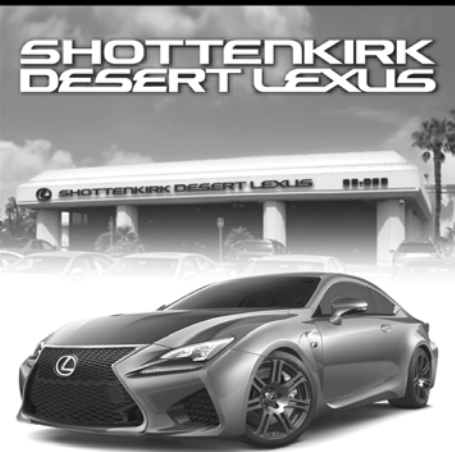
Continuing Advocacy

Founded in 1897, the Zionist Organization of America is the oldest pro-Israel organization in the United States. The organization advocates for stronger United States-Israel relations through public policy initiatives, educational programming, media engagement, and congressional advocacy. As delegates concluded their meetings across Capitol Hill, organizers said the Washington Mission demonstrated continued bipartisan support for Israel while reinforcing the importance of confronting antisemitism, strengthening United States-Israel relations, and addressing security threats posed by Iran.



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Shabbat Schedule - August 2026

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.

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 7:00 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. Beit Haverim will begin holding services in the Montecito Clubhouse at Sun City Shadow Hills with the High Holidays. 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 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.

CHABAD OF PALM SPRINGS & DESERT COMMUNITIES

Rabbi Yonason Denebeim & Rabbi Arik Denebeim 250 East Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92264 www.chabadpalmsprings.com 760-325-0774. 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. (Hon). Email: harelurjpd@gmail.com, 760-779-1691. Website: harelurjpd.org.

The August Friday night Shabbat service held online on August 14 at 5:00 pm. Weekly in person Shabbat Eve services return after the High Holidays. 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.

DESERT OUTREACH SYNAGOGUE, Palm Desert

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 of the month. Note new location: UC Riverside/Palm Desert Campus, 75080 Frank Sinatra Drive at Cook, Palm Desert. 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

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@templeisaihps.com; Website: templeisaihps.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; Summer schedule: services held every other week. 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.templesinaipd.org 760-568-9699. Go to templesinaipd.org for access information. Shabbat services are in-person and online on Livestream at www.templesinaipd.org. Friday evening services 5:30 pm, preceded by pre-service Oneg at 5:00 pm. Saturday morning Torah study 8:45 am; Shabbat morning services 10 am. Services in the summer are held in the chapel.

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@templesinaipd.org

BIKUR CHOLIM of Palm Springs

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



Tribute Card Donations

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

Honorarium Tributes In Appreciation For:

- **Merle Arenson**, In honor of Merle Arenson's birthday; Artie would have loved this party, from Dolly and Julian Levy.
- **Merle Arenson**, Congratulations on your special birthday, from Phyllis Eisenberg, Cecille Epstein, Rosemary and Sandy Hertz, Loreen Jacobson, Gail and Bob Scadron, and Leslie Usow.
- **Chabad of the Conejo**, In honor of Izzy Ezagui, Lion of Honor Award, from Nina and Milton Zale.
- **Lois Davidson**, Happy special birthday! Enjoy a great celebration with wishes for a perfect year, from Loreen Jacobson and Cecille Silverman.
- **Phyllis Eisenberg**, Thank you for a lovely afternoon, from Barbara Paget.
- **Sandy Epstein**, Thank you! What a fabulous afternoon, from Cecille Silerman.
- **Sandy and Paul Epstein**, In your honor, from Phyllis Eisenberg.
- **Carol Fragen**, Thank you for a lovely evening, from Gail and Bob Scadron.
- **Barbara Fromm and David Hausen**, Thank you for supporting our pottery projects, from Bruce Radler and Stewart Fleishman.
- **Barbara and Bernie Fromm**, Mazel tov on the birth of your newest great great grandson Breeze, from Marnie Miller and Joe Noren.
- **Arnie Gillman**, In recognition of your exceptional dedication, leadership, vision and commitment, helping shape the success of the Jewish Federation this year, from The Jewish Men's Outreach Group of the Desert.
- **Ellen Glass**, Love and best wishes on your special birthday, from Gail and Bob Scadron.
- **Jerry Halperin**, In honor of your big birthday, from Rosemary and Sandy Hertz.

- **Janni Jaffe**, In honor of your recent birthday, from Joann Glaser.
- **Leenie Kaplan**, In honor of Leenie Kaplan from Phyllis Eisenberg.
- **Saralyn Levine**, Happy little bitty birthday from Marnie Miller and Joe Noren.
- **Reva Levy**, Thank you for a lovely 4th of July, from Eunice Meister.
- **Dr. Paul Lubar**, Best wishes on your special birthday, from Bill Chunowitz, Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Ehrlichman, Barbara and Bernie Fromm, Margot and Jerry Halprin, Gail and Bob Scadron, Cecile Silverman, and Leslie Usow.
- **Marnie Miller and Joe Noren**, Happy celebration, from Sherry Schor.
- **Joe Noren**, In honor of your 95th birthday, from Judith Sontag and Michael Pollak.
- **Larry Peerce**, Wishing you a happy and healthy birthday, from Margot and Jerry Halperin.
- **Jeff Schoenfeld**, In honor of Jeff Schoenfeld whose actions reflect a deep commitment to the Jewish community and compassion for others, from Steve Steinhart and Jim Stoller.
- **Sherry Schor**, Wishing you the happiest of birthdays and many more, from Bonnie Carmell, Margot and Jerry Halperin, and Cecille Silverman.
- **Katie and Scott Small**, Thank you for a beautiful evening, from Ed and Rachel Gubman, Margie and Stephen Kulp.
- **Penny and Michael Swartz**, Mazel tov on 50 years .. and on renewing, from Dan Weisberg and David Klingenberg.
- **Helen Varon**, In honor of your 101st birthday, from Paul and Sandy Epstein.
- **Judy Wallis**, I want to be just like you when I grow up! Happy 95th. from Barbara Platt.
- **Judy Wallis**, Wishing you many more happy birthdays, from Gloria Snyder.
- **David and Troy Weisberg**, Thank you for your warm hospitality. What a beautiful party, from Barbara Platt.

Refuah Shleimah Get Well:

- **Mrs. Tom Bernstein**, In hopes for a complete and speedy recovery, from Marnie Miller and Joe Noren.
- **Jean Carrus**, Get well soon Jean! From Phyllis Eisenberg.
- **Leenie and Roger Kaplan**, Sending warm healing wishes for a speedy recovery from Gail and Bob Scadron.
- **Charlotte Morris**, Sending warm healing wishes for a speedy recovery from Gail and Bob Scadron.
- **Celia Norian**, Wishing you a speedy recovery, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman.
- **Neil Seidel**, Get well soon, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman.
- **Scott Small**, Wishing you a speedy recovery, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman.
- **Mickey Star**, Thinking of you. Hoping you're on the tennis court very soon, from Barbara Platt.

Memoriam Tributes Condolences Sent To:

- **Rabbi Nicolas Behrmann**, In loving memory of Joan, with deepest condolences, from Larry and Cathy Pitts.
- **Jeffrey Bernstein**, Condolences on the loss of your beloved husband, Oscar Chamudes, from the Jewish Federation of the Desert
- **Boettcher Family**, In memory of Eric Boettcher, from Ron and Danielle Cukier.
- **Jim Borax**, In loving memory of Sheri Borax, a beautiful woman, from Janet Kleban.
- **Dennis Carlin**, Our deepest sympathy on the loss of your beloved sister Donna, from Gail and Bobby Scadron.
- **Mr. and Mrs. Bill Chunowitz and family**, Deepest sympathy on the loss of your brother Jim, from Gail and Bob Scadron.



Tribute Card Donations Continued

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

- **Stacy Cohen**, My deepest sympathy on the loss of your beloved husband, from Gail Scadron.
- **Roberta Esquibias**, In memory, with love, Bob and Carol Friedman.
- **Dan Greenberg**, In memory of your beloved wife Nancy, from Marnie Miller.
- **Dr. Stephen Hilzenrath**, In memory of your beloved Susan, from Debbie and Mickey Star.
- **David Hirsch and Family**, Condolences on the passing of your mom, Joan Hirsch. OBM, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman.
- **Jimmy Hirsch and Family**, Condolences on the passing of your mom, Joan Hirsch. OBM, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman.
- **Orly and Alan Klugman**, Our deepest sympathy on the loss of your beloved father, Moshe Lizemer, from Dr. Paul and Stephanie Ross.
- **Talia Lizemer-Hawley**, In memory of your father, Moshe Lizemer, from Gary Levin.

- **Gale Luckman**, Our deepest sympathy on the loss of your husband Bob, from Gail and Bob Scadron.
- **In loving memory of our beloved mother, Annette Novack**, from Jason and Diane Novack.
- **The Novack Family**, In memory of a great lady, Annette Novack, from Ira and JoAnn Heiman.
- **Jason and Diane Novack**, Sincere sympathy on the passing of my dear friend Annette Novack from Fran Kaufman.
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- **Susan Shankman**, In memory of Terry, from Linda and Stuart Bloom.
- **Howard Shapiro**, In memory of your brother, from Phyllis Eisenberg.
- **Pam Siegman and Family**, Our deepest sympathy on the loss of your beloved husband Joe, from Gail and Bob Scadron.
- In loving memory of my husband, my love, my rock, **Mel Simrin**, from Enid Weissman.
- **Maddy Wolpa**, In memory of Steve Wolpa from Stuart and Ellen Markus.

Gwyneth Paltrow Draws Backlash After Starring in Ad for Luxury Israeli Development

By Kelly Hartog

Gwyneth Paltrow has drawn backlash after appearing in a new advertising campaign for 51 Park, a luxury residential development in the affluent Israeli coastal town of Herzliya.

The commercial shows the 53-year-old Oscar-winning actress and lifestyle entrepreneur waking up in a New York luxury high-rise apartment and going for a run through the city. At the end of the commercial she says, "There's a reason the most iconic buildings are built by a park." She then asks her driver to take her to "51 Park."

When he responds, "New York?" she smiles and responds, "Herzliya, Israel."

For some watching, it was a bold statement of connection with Israel at a time of widespread anxiety among many pro-Israel Jews about whether Hollywood remains hospitable to them, and as some A-list celebrities with track records of engaging with Israel distance themselves.

Others saw it as tone-deaf. Criticism against Paltrow quickly erupted on social



media, with pro-Palestinian activists decrying her decision to promote luxury Israeli properties at a time when many of them believe Israel has perpetrated a genocide in Gaza. (Israel denies the allegation.)

"That whole family is as Zionist as it gets," one representative commenter wrote. "Paltrow is not tone deaf, she

is just proudly advertising her Jewish supremacism."

Bertha Merikanskas, a senior publicist at Newsroom PR in Los Angeles who has lived in Israel, said she was unsurprised that Paltrow embraced an Israeli project.

"Gwyneth is one of the few A-list celebrities who has been outspoken about her support for Israel since Oct.

7 and has embraced her Jewish roots publicly," Merikanskas told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. She added, "It's refreshing to see A-listers who refuse to bow to pressure."

Paltrow is the daughter of the late director and producer Bruce Paltrow, who was Jewish and descended from a rabbinical dynasty, and her husband is Jewish. Her brother Jake directed the 2022 film "June Zero" about the capture and trial of Adolf Eichmann. The movie was shot in Israel and filmed in Hebrew.

After Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel, Paltrow spoke out repeatedly on behalf of the Israeli hostages held in Gaza and, in 2024, publicly participated in a Hanukkah video campaign alongside the Israeli actress and activist Noa Tishby, who for a period was an official spokesperson for Israel in the United States.

"It should come as no surprise," Merikanskas said, "that she's not afraid of her name being associated with Israel."

Hollywood Celebrities Who Publicly Support Israel and the IDF

By Hezy Laing

Though support for Israel is becoming less and less popular in Hollywood – some major stars have had the courage to speak out in defense of the embattled Jewish State. Most are Jewish, but not all. There are also several non-Jewish celebrities who have made it a point to publicly support Israel. All these stars have faced backlash for their positions, but they've used their platforms to speak out during a time of intense global criticism of the State of Israel.

Jerry Seinfeld The legendary comedian has openly shared his support for Israel and for families of hostages. He has visited and met with affected communities to listen and to offer comfort.

Montana Tucker: Tucker wore a dramatic yellow ribbon dress at the 2024 Grammys to highlight the plight of Israeli hostages. She also sang "Hatikva" at the UN and visited Kibbutz Kfar Aza.

Michael Rapaport: The actor and comedian has used social media to fiercely defend Israel and criticize Hamas. He's also condemned antisemitism in Hollywood.

Howard Stern: The radio host has

repeatedly defended Israel on his show, especially criticizing anti-Israel figures like Roger Waters. He's known for saying, "Where do you want the Jews to go, Roger?"

Bill Maher: On his HBO show and social media, Maher has repeatedly and backed Israeli military actions and criticized Hamas. He's argued that Israel shows restraint compared to its enemies. Many clips of his defense of Israel have gone viral.

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson: Following the October 7th massacre Johnson wrote on social media, "I'm heartbroken, angry, and sickened by the brutal murders and kidnapping of Jewish people through the horrific acts of the Hamas terrorist group. Hateful acts of terrorism like these are never justified. I condemn and denounce terrorism... I pray for compassion and resolve. I pray for all innocent lives." Johnson chose to turn off comments on the post to avoid fueling polarization, but the message itself was widely shared and acknowledged for its empathetic tone.

Mayim Bialik: Signed the open letter condemning Hamas and supporting

Israel. She has long been vocal about her Jewish identity and support for Israeli security.

Debra Messing: The Jewish actress has repeatedly shared pro-Israel posts and condemned Hamas' actions. She has also called out misinformation about Israel and urged support for the hostages.

Liev Schreiber: He signed an open letter along with other celebrities supporting Israel and has spoken out against antisemitism and terrorism. In interviews he's emphasized that antisemitism is not just a Jewish issue but a societal threat, saying it's rooted in "intellectually stupid" and "lethal" ideas. He also lent his voice to The Conspiracy, a documentary that explores the history of antisemitic myths and propaganda—from the Protocols of the Elders of Zion to modern conspiracy theories.

Amy Schumer: One of the most outspoken celebrities on social media, she has repeatedly criticized silence from other stars and shared graphic details of Hamas atrocities. I've lost so many friends these last few weeks but feel powerful and free knowing I stand for the truth and will fight for it always. I don't think

it's OK to hate anyone because they were born Jewish." Shumer also recommended reading Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth by Noa Tishby to better understand Israel's history and challenges. Due to her support, Schumer has faced backlash, including accusations of Islamophobia and criticism from fellow celebrities.

Mark Hamill: Hamill, best known as Stars Wars' Luke Skywalker, has publicly expressed support for Israel, particularly during times of conflict. Hamill shared a post on X (formerly Twitter) featuring the message: "America stands with Israel", alongside the American and Israeli flags. He has also condemned terrorist acts by Hamas, aligning himself with calls for international solidarity against terrorism.

Gal Gadot Gadot has helped amplify firsthand accounts of the attacks and thanked first responders and volunteers. Her posts often pair grief with a steady message about unity and resilience. Gadot has helped amplify firsthand accounts of the attacks and thanked first responders and volunteers. Her posts often pair grief with a steady message about unity and resilience.

CSUSB Receives Archive Gift from San Bernardino/Redland's Congregation Emanu El

California State University, San Bernardino has received an extraordinary collection of historical archives from Congregation Emanu El documenting 135 years of Jewish life in the Inland Empire. This landmark gift – the William Russler Memorial Archives of Congregation Emanu El Collection – will be housed at the university's John M. Pfau Library.

Congregation Emanu El, formally chartered in San Bernardino in 1891, traces its roots to the region's Jewish community of the 1850s. Among its most enduring legacies is the Home of Eternity Cemetery and Mausoleum, founded in the 1850s. It is designated as a California historical site and recognized as the oldest Jewish cemetery in continuous use in Southern California.

The congregation relocated to Redlands in 2010 and has remained a vital part of the Inland region's cultural and historical fabric.

"This is a significant moment for Cal State San Bernardino and the Inland Empire," said Ginger Thomas, assistant director of philanthropy at CSUSB. "The trust placed in our institution through this gift ensures that the stories, voices, and contributions of Congregation Emanu El will be preserved and shared for future generations."

For Congregation Emanu El, the gift represents both a preservation of history and a partnership with CSUSB.

"The rich history Congregation Emanu El enjoys in the San Bernardino Valley pairs perfectly with the resources and stewardship abilities of California State

University, San Bernardino," said Greg Weissman, president of Congregation Emanu El. "Since its charter in 1891, our synagogue has amassed a significant historical collection of writings and artifacts that weaves a wonderful tapestry to tell the story of the Jewish people in Southern California. CSUSB is perfectly positioned to preserve our rich history and make it available for generations to come."

The archives include sermons from Rabbi Norman F. Feldheim and Rabbi Hillel Cohn, as well as photographs, ledgers, directories and commemorative plaques documenting generations of community life.

Right: Rabbi Hillel Cohn and Emanu-El President Greg Weissman



Malaysian PM Vows to Deport Israelis Found in Country

By Jewish News Service

On July 15 Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim said that any Israeli found in the country would be deported "immediately," as authorities investigated

allegations that Israeli citizens had joined a fledgling international tech community in the Muslim-majority nation. "If we find any Israeli, we will deport them

immediately because we do not recognize Israel," Ibrahim told the English-language Free Malaysia Today outlet. Malaysia, a Muslim-majority country with

sizable Buddhist and Christian minorities, does not have diplomatic relations with Jerusalem. Hamas's "military wing" is known to operate in Malaysia.



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Local Hillel Concludes Another Great Year

By Eran Vaisben, Inland and Desert Hillel's Executive Director



The 2025-26 academic year has been a remarkable year of growth and community-building for Inland and Desert Hillel. Serving five campuses across Riverside and San Bernardino counties, Hillel staff and student boards successfully engaged 230 students through more than 55 diverse programs. From educational programs to social gatherings, these activities provided a vital space for Jewish students to connect with their heritage and one another, fostering a sense of belonging that extended far beyond the classroom.

Among the year's standout successes was the Mega Shabbat, a high-energy event that brought together 100 students from across the region for an evening of tradition, fun activities, and communal dinner. The momentum continued with a wonderful weekend retreat at Big Bear Mountain, where students stepped away from the pressures of academic life to bond in the serene beauty of the San Bernardino National Forest. Hillel students led a Shabbat service outdoors, hiked in the forest, and sang songs around the campfire at night. These flagship experiences were instrumental in helping attendees build lasting friendships and a strong Jewish identity.

Cultural and religious life also flourished on campus through events including the Israeli Film Festival at UC Riverside, which showcased the depth and diversity of Israeli storytelling for the broader University community. Throughout the year, holiday celebrations, from the High Holy Days to Passover, transformed campus spaces into festive environments where students

could observe traditions away from home. These programs not only honored Jewish heritage but also encouraged meaningful dialogue and cultural exchange across the diverse student populations of the Inland Empire and the Desert. Rose Padlipsky, a sophomore UCR student, summarized this year's experiences: "Hillel this year has been a lot of fun! We had an exciting Shabbat retreat which was a great opportunity for getting closer to friends in nature. Our Jewish learning programs have been very enlightening and good for preparing me for future involvement with Jewish community."

Inland and Desert Hillel empowers Jewish student leaders with the tools and opportunities to confront and combat antisemitism on campus. Over the past two years, students have engaged with university leadership, civil rights office administrators, and local legislators to highlight the challenges Jewish students encounter both inside and outside of the classroom. By maintaining an open-door relationship with University administration, Hillel actively works to ensure the safety of Jewish students.

This successful year would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our community partners. We extend our deepest gratitude to the Jewish Federation of the Desert, whose commitment and resources have been instrumental in empowering the next generation of Jewish leaders. As we look ahead, the strength of the 2025-26 academic year serves as a powerful foundation for the continued growth of Jewish student life in our region, ensuring that every student has a place to call home within our community.

A Flame That Endures: Holocaust Survivor Eva Schneider Inspires a Community

Chabad Jewish Center of Riverside Yom HaShoah Program

By Rabbi Shmuel Fuss

Understanding that with the generation of Holocaust survivors diminishing, bringing a living voice directly to young people carries profound importance. The event was the initiative of Rabbi Mendel and Chani Kleyman, co-directors of Chabad of UCR — a thriving center made possible in part through the generous support of the Jewish Federation of the Desert. Chabad partnered with the Tolerance Education Center of the Desert to bring Holocaust survivor Eva Schneider to share her remarkable story.

Born in Slovakia in 1933, she was just eleven years old when she was deported to Auschwitz, surviving two concentration camps and a brutal death march. Yet it was not only her survival that moved the room — it was two deeply personal moments she shared that touched everyone present.

The first was a moment of profound inner struggle. After the war, having endured unimaginable suffering



simply for being Jewish, Eva seriously considered leaving Judaism altogether, spending a year exploring other faiths. At the end of that journey, she arrived at a quiet but unshakeable conclusion.

"I was born a Jew," she said, "and I will die a Jew."

The second moment came when she was reunited with her father after the war. His words to her would shape

the rest of her life: "You have been to hell and back. Hashem has given you a second life. Now go and do something good with it." She took those words to heart completely. She returned to school, built a career, married, and raised a family — and every single morning, she recites Modeh Ani, thanking Hashem for the gift of a new day.

A warm question-and-answer session, led by Michele Gold, Executive Director of the Tolerance Education Center of the Desert, deepened the conversation further, and for students and community members alike, the evening was truly transformative.

"Her story of courage, hope, and resilience left our students not only moved, but truly hopeful," said Rabbi Mendel and Chani Kleyman. "We must continue to share stories like Eva's — to make sure we never forget, and to remind ourselves that no matter what we go through, there is always hope."

Israel's Plan to Prevent the Targeting of its Waterway Supply Lines

Israel Shipyards is accelerating production of the Shaldag Mk V fast patrol boats, which are specifically outfitted with upgraded electronic warfare suites to neutralize hostile drone swarms

By Hezy Laing

Israel fears severe disruptions to its vital maritime trade routes as hostile actors target choke points in both the Red Sea and the Mediterranean. In June 2026, Abdul Malik al-Houthi, leader of Yemen's Houthi movement, announced a total ban on Israeli-linked shipping in the Red Sea. This aggressive blockade, reinforced by drone and ballistic missile strikes near the Bab el-Mandeb strait, previously drove Israel's Port of Eilat into bankruptcy.

Simultaneously, the concurrent blockade over the Strait of Hormuz enforced by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps escalated global shipping vulnerabilities, compounding the threat.

To the north, geopolitical friction with Turkey, marked by alternative economic initiatives like the Turkish-Saudi rail corridor, challenges Israel's regional connectivity via the Port of Haifa.

This multipronged encirclement directly threatens the state's economic lifelines, since over 90% of Israeli imports arrive by sea.

In response to this multi-theater pressure, Prime Minister Benjamin



Israel's Saar 6 vessel

Netanyahu announced a decisive military doctrine during a visit to the Haifa naval base, declaring that the central objective of the Israel Navy is to independently guarantee freedom of navigation and maritime trade routes.

To reinforce vital maritime assets in both the Mediterranean and Red Sea frontlines, the Israeli Ministry of Defense is aggressively expanding its naval procurement and domestic production pipelines.

The Israel Navy is integrating advanced standard iron-dome naval variants, known as the C-Dome, onto its new Sa'ar 6-class corvettes to intercept sophisticated anti-ship ballistic missiles.

Furthermore, the state has fast-tracked

the acquisition of next-generation Dolphin 2-class submarines from Germany's ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems to bolster its deep-sea strategic deterrence.

Israel Shipyards is also accelerating production of the Shaldag Mk V fast patrol boats, which are specifically outfitted with upgraded electronic warfare suites to neutralize hostile drone swarms.

In addition a new deployment injected over 1,000 additional combat troops across active naval vessels to protect critical undersea infrastructure and counter coastal drone incursions.

Israel's naval blueprint blends defensive deployment with aggressive, proactive intelligence-driven strikes.

The navy's advanced reconnaissance assets identified 95 strategic maritime targets inside Iran, enabling the air force to kill the commander of the IRGC's navy.

Additionally, the navy utilizes its advanced Sa'ar 6-class corvettes to deploy targeted naval interceptors capable of neutralizing remote Houthi threats.

To secure the Mediterranean and counteract Turkish and Iranian influence, Israel is simultaneously building a tripartite intelligence and early-warning mechanism alongside Greece and India.

This alliance strengthens maritime domain awareness, builds cybersecurity shields, and secures transit corridors against regional sabotage.

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Defying Predictions, Eurovision Juries Gave Israel a Boost Amid Voting Reforms

For 1st time, Israel didn't win 'rest of the world' vote and it received fewer top rankings from nations' voters than last year, but picked up jury points from 22 of 34 countries

By Amy Spiro Times of Israel

Noam Bettan from Israel, center, reacts as the points are awarded during the Grand Final of the 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna, Austria, May 17, 2026. (AP/Martin Meissner)

For the second year in a row, Israel finished in second place at the Eurovision Song Contest, beaten only by Bulgaria's Dara with "Bangaranga." But the paths it took with Noam Bettan's "Michelle" this year, and Yuval Raphael's "New Day Will Rise" last year, were markedly different.

Saturday night's achievement came after months of speculation, hand-wringing, allegations, and reforms surrounding the Eurovision voting process. Which begs the questions: How did Israel actually fare in the voting breakdown, and did the changes introduced this year affect the outcome?

Israel still did notably well in the voting from the public, coming in third place in the televote. But, bucking predictions, it was actually the jury votes that pushed Bettan to a second-place finish, after he picked up support from the majority of the professional panels at the grand final.

All 35 countries taking part in the Eurovision select a seven-member jury made up of music professionals, who each rank every performance, are instructed to vote solely based on artistic merit, and are forbidden from discussing or coordinating their votes with each other. Enforcement of those rules, of course, is largely impossible.

The European Broadcasting Union appeared to want the juries to have a cooling effect on the more volatile popular vote — bringing them back this year in the semifinal rounds after they



were scrapped in 2023. But when it came to support for Israel, Bettan appeared to win over many on the juries with his smooth vocals, solid performance, and unwavering stage presence.

Last year, Raphael received only 60 votes from the juries, coming in a middling 14th, but she topped the televote to send Israel soaring to second overall. This year, Bettan received 123 points from the professional panels, putting Israel in eighth place after he received at least some jury points from 22 of the 34 voting countries. Last year, Raphael got jury points from only 14 of the 36 nations.

Israel's Yuval Raphael performs 'New Day Will Rise' during the grand final of the Eurovision Song Contest 2025, at the St. Jakobshalle arena in Basel, Switzerland, on May 17, 2025. (Fabrice COFFRINI / AFP)

While the Eurovision odds this year were resoundingly inaccurate (and have been wrong on the winner for three years running), they notably predicted

Israel would finish only 16th in the jury vote but first in the televote. In addition, most Eurovision analysts predicted a low jury vote for Israel, simply because another runaway televote was expected, and avoiding an uncomfortable Israel win was seen as the ideal outcome for all involved.

So what about that public vote? The EBU releases data showing how each country allocated its points in the semifinals and grand final, but not how many votes were cast. Therefore, the ability to judge the impact of the voting reforms is limited. And as always, assigning motivations to any votes is wildly speculative at best.

Did the UK get zero televote points this year because of a long-running tradition of punishing the nation post-Brexit (with one exception), or because it sent a quirky YouTuber with a synthesizer, Boris Johnson-esque hair, the stage name "Look Mum No Computer" and a song inexplicably about counting to three

in German? The world will truly never know. Look Mum No Computer from United Kingdom arrives on stage ahead of the dress rehearsal for the Grand Final of the 70th Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna, Austria, May 15, 2026. (AP/Martin Meissner)

One of the major changes this year was capping votes per person at 10 instead of 20, aiming to tamp down on the phenomenon of Israel supporters maxing out their votes for political reasons.

The reform may have had an effect, as Israel received significantly fewer top rankings from countries' televotes. This year, six countries maxed out public support for Israel — Azerbaijan, Portugal, Switzerland, Germany, France and Finland. But last year, when voters could cast 20 votes each for Israel, 12 countries all gave the Jewish state the top score of 12 points, prompting a number of allegations of voter fraud.

The only countries that did not give any audience votes to Israel in the grand final this year were Australia, Croatia and Lithuania.

And for the first time since it was introduced in 2023, Israel did not win the "rest of the world" vote, amalgamated from all non-participating countries. It didn't even come second, but rather fifth, picking up just six points there. The EBU has never released a full breakdown of the countries that participate, but has said that the US, Canada, Mexico and Turkey are among the highest-voting countries.

In the semifinal round, Israel came second with the "rest of the world," getting 10 points, after the 12 points went to Moldova.

Jewish Federation Board Receives Jewish Agency Briefing

Anat Cohen, West Coast Program Director, The Jewish Agency for Israel, recently visited the Desert to provide a firsthand update to the Jewish Federation of the Desert's Board of Directors. The

Jewish Agency for Israel is one of JFED's most significant implementation partners in Israel, providing services for Israelis of all ages and backgrounds to excel in life, no matter their socioeconomic

difficulties or other challenges. With Federation support, the Jewish Agency has also been providing emergency services to Israelis directly affected by the current war with Iran.



Colleges Cracked Down on Encampments. But Antisemitism on Campus Hasn't Gone Anywhere

The challenges for Jewish students today are dramatic and perhaps more stubborn, writes a Hillel International vice president at end of 2025-26 School Year.

By Jonathan Falk for JTA

We were used to a pretty steady stream of calls, texts, and emails reporting things like a swastika on a bathroom floor, a Jewish student being punched or a threat that the kosher dining hall would be shot up. As the person leading Hillel International's Israel Action and Addressing Antisemitism program, my team and I had developed an unfortunate fluency in these incidents: what they meant, how to respond, and what came next.

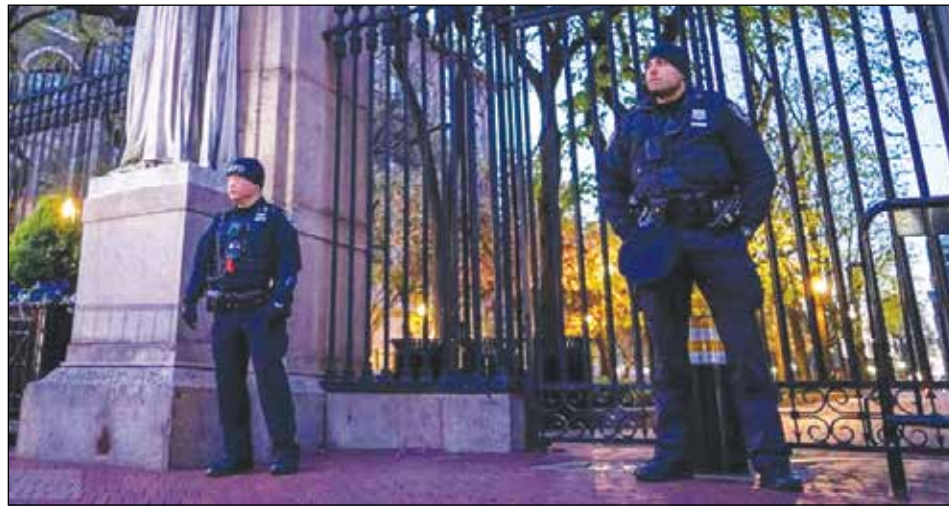
Then, in the middle of April 2024, something shifted. Students and others staged an anti-Israel encampment in the middle of Columbia's campus, and within days, my inbox looked like a fire alarm had gone off simultaneously across the country as more than 100 campuses followed. The tents multiplied. And what happened around them was not only standard protest: students chanting for the elimination of Israel, antisemitic tropes displayed openly on posters, Zionist students physically blocked from parts of their own campuses. For many Jewish students, the encampments felt like a message directed specifically at them: You don't belong here. This moment confirmed just how isolated, vulnerable, and misunderstood they had become on way too many campuses.

Now that we have some distance from spring 2024, it is worth asking what we have learned since and whether we are prepared to be honest about the answers.

Some things have improved. Some campuses are less visibly chaotic. Some interventions have worked. But the encampments were never the whole story. They were one highly visible expression of a deeper problem — a problem that did not leave when the tents did.

Since the encampments, the most important thing we have learned is that antisemitism is adaptive. When one form becomes less acceptable or more constrained, another emerges. And what has emerged over the past two years is more diffuse, more ideologically embedded, and in some ways harder to confront than a tent city on the quad.

The hatred did not disappear after the encampments — it migrated. More than



half of what Jewish students experience now shows up online: in posts, anonymous messages, group chats, and the steady churn of conspiracy and incitement. A campus can look calmer and still be deeply unhealthy.

And it has persisted regardless of what's happening in the news cycle. We continue to see antisemitism on campus even when an immediate conflict fades from the headlines. That tells us the issue is not limited to one conflict or one protest wave. In too many places, there is now a deeper culture in which Jews are treated with suspicion, Zionists are cast outside the moral community, and anti-Jewish hostility is rationalized as politics.

Two specific developments have accelerated this. The first is the normalization of Holocaust inversion — the idea that Jews today, or the Jewish state, are the new Nazis. This is not criticism. It is a way of weaponizing Jewish memory against Jews, draining the Holocaust of its meaning while recasting Jewish identity as uniquely suspect. The second is the anti-Israel Boycott, Divest, Sanctions campaign playbook. When BDS comes to campus, antisemitism reliably increases, not only at the final vote, but throughout the campaign itself, which stigmatizes Jewish students and isolates Jewish voices long before any resolution passes.

The good news is, in the past two years, we have also learned what actually makes a difference.

Clear rules, consistently enforced, work. When schools establish expectations and follow through on them, harassment

and intimidation decrease. This sounds obvious, but it had to be relearned at enormous cost to Jewish students on too many campuses. Security matters in the same way. Students feel it when adults take their safety seriously. Visible deterrence and thoughtful security planning change behavior. Too often, security was treated as an overreaction or as a panicked last resort. We learned that it is frequently what allows Jewish life to continue with confidence.

But enforcing rules and improving security only address part of the problem. The encampments taught us that campus antisemitism is fundamentally a climate problem, not a conduct-management problem. What gets normalized, what gets excused, what university leaders are willing to name clearly — that is what shapes whether Jewish students feel they belong. If a school removes tents while leaving the ideas and norms that enabled them untouched, then that is not a solution, it is a surface repair.

Taken together, these lessons clarify what universities and the Jewish community must do next.

First, education matters. Campuses cannot rely on crisis response alone. They must invest in helping students, faculty, and administrators understand antisemitism and respond with clarity.

Second, enforcement matters, but it is not enough. Universities need to go beyond reactive responses and do the deeper, proactive work of strengthening their codes of conduct and student and faculty disciplinary procedures so expectations are clearer for everyone

long term.

Third, Jewish students need more than protection. They need places where they can live Jewishly with joy, confidence, and belonging.

Fourth, universities and the Jewish community must continue investing in Jewish student resilience and leadership so students are not only protected in difficult moments, but they are equipped to lead, respond, and thrive through them.

I still receive calls and emails from Hillel professionals navigating hard moments on campus. But the nature of the requests has shifted. I see fewer urgent Slacks about immediate chaos. More are about the quieter, more entrenched problems: the hostile syllabus, the student group that got excluded from a coalition, the administrator who didn't know how to respond and didn't ask. The problems are less dramatic and in some ways more stubborn.

What I hope for, and what I believe is possible, is a future in which these calls become fewer and fewer. Not because antisemitism has been eliminated, but because universities have built the knowledge and the habits, and the institutions will address it early and more effectively to strengthen what all students need to thrive. That is the work we at Hillel are helping to lead: partnering with universities to improve campus climate, strengthen expectations and accountability, and invest in the resilience, leadership, and flourishing of Jewish students. Campuses where education, stronger conduct systems, consistent enforcement, and genuine investment in Jewish life have changed the climate enough that the next generation of Jewish students doesn't have to spend their college years wondering whether they truly belong.

The encampments forced a reckoning. That reckoning is not over. Universities must continue to educate, enforce their rules, and create the conditions for Jewish students not only to be safe, but to live with pride and joy. This path forward is clearer than it was two years ago, and the universities willing to take it seriously have the chance to make a real difference.

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HAVE A NOSH:

It's August! It's hot! It's a challenge to want to bake in this weather, but an easy whimsical project can bring us into the kitchen, and this recipe may just be the lure. I invite you to take a basic challah recipe and morph it into a lovely monkey bread "challah" for your summer Shabbat table! And, if this recipe wasn't easy enough to make, the "shortcut version" at the bottom is an even easier option, using refrigerator biscuits. Clearly there is no excuse not to treat yourself this Shabbat! MHB



Apples & Honey Challah Monkey Bread

BASIC CHALLAH RECIPE

1 pkg. quick rise yeast	4 cups flour
1-1/3 cup warm water	1 egg
1/2 cup sugar	1/3 cup oil
2 teaspoons salt	Additional flour for kneading

In a bowl, dissolve yeast in water. Add sugar. Let stand 2 minutes, until it starts bubbling (foaming). Add salt, egg and oil and mix well. Gradually add flour, a cup at a time, mixing after each addition. As mixture becomes stiff, flour your hands and begin kneading the dough until smooth but not sticky.

CREATING THE MONKEY BREAD

Dough from above recipe	Juice of 1 lemon
3 firm apples such as Honeycrisp or Granny Smith	1/2 cup honey
	2 teaspoons cinnamon

Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Grease a 10-12 cup bundt or springform pan. Divide challah dough into 40 (1-inch) pieces. Roll into balls and place on lined baking sheet. Peel, core and cut apples into 1-inch dice. Place apple pieces in a bowl and toss with lemon juice. Place 1 layer of challah dough balls into the bottom of the bundt/springform pan. Be sure it completely covers the bottom. Add a layer of apple pieces, a drizzle of honey and a sprinkle of cinnamon. Continue layering challah pieces, apples, drizzle of honey and cinnamon. Cover and allow to rise for 1 hour. Preheat oven to 350°F.

Place bundt pan on parchment paper covered baking sheet. Bake 30-40 minutes or until the surface is golden brown. If the surface browns too quickly, loosely cover with foil. Allow to cool on a baking rack for 10 minutes. Invert onto a serving platter or cake stand.

SHORTCUT VERSION

1 cup white sugar	3 apples, peeled, cored, and chopped
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon	1/2 cup margarine
3 (12 ounce) cans refrigerated biscuits, separated and cut into quarters	1 cup packed brown sugar

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a tube pan. Combine the white sugar and cinnamon together in a large sealable plastic bag; add the biscuit dough in batches of 6 to 8 pieces and shake to coat. Alternate layers of the chopped apple and the coated dough pieces in the prepared pan.

Melt the margarine in a small saucepan over medium heat; stir the brown sugar into the melted margarine. Bring to a boil; cook at a boil for 1 minute, remove from heat, and pour over the apple and biscuit layers. Bake in the preheated oven until cooked through, about 35 minutes. Allow the bread to cool in the pan for 10 minutes before turning out onto a plate to serve.

Antisemitic Harangue in State Voter Guide Spurs Jewish Lawmakers to Act

By Niva Ashkenazi, J News (Northern California)

An antisemitic screed made it into the official California voter guide sent at taxpayer expense to millions of households ahead of the June 2 primary election. Politicians in Sacramento are now preparing to introduce legislation to prevent that from ever happening again.

Lawmakers with the California Legislative Jewish Caucus said they want future guides to prohibit candidates from including hate speech in their statements.

"The antisemitic statement included in the state voter information guide is reprehensible," Assemblymember Gail Pellerin (D-Santa Cruz), chair of the Assembly elections committee and a caucus member, said. "It does not reflect California's values and has no place in voter resources produced and distributed by the state."

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (D-Encino), who chairs the caucus, called the statement "dangerous, deeply offensive, and

antithetical to California's proud tradition of standing up to hate."

The offending statement was submitted by Don Grundmann, a longtime fringe candidate who was running for governor, and included a link to the white supremacist group Goyim Defense League and antisemitic conspiracy theories. These included false accusations that "Israel 'art students'" were responsible for the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack on the U.S. and that an Israeli "shape-charge

bomb" killed conservative activist Charlie Kirk in September.

Current guidelines on the content of candidate statements are limited to prohibiting references to opponents and requiring candidates to stick to their own background and qualifications, according to the secretary of state's website. The state's elections code also prohibits candidates from posting any false material with the intent to mislead voters.



Simchas

It's hard to surprise **Rabbi Yonason Denebeim** but his 14 children, many, many grandchildren and his countless friends in our desert community



Rabbi Yonasson Denebeim

managed to keep the celebration of his 70th birthday a surprise! The weekend began with just Rabbi and Sussie and their 14 children - no spouses or grandchildren - for the first time since childhood being alone together in Big Bear for two days. Upon returning to Palm Springs he was told his grandchildren were at the shul and wanted to see him. On arrival he had a moment's pause at the number of cars in the parking lot, but seconds later he was enthusiastically greeted by a room bursting with well-wishers as

he entered the building! ... Staying with Denebeim simchas: Mazel tov to **Mendy Witkes**, son of **Moshe** and **Mussie (Denebeim) Witkes**, and grandson of **Rabbi Yonason** and **Sussie Denebeim**, on being called to the torah as a Bar Mitzvah on May 28 ... and four days later, on June 1st, his cousin, **Nava Pinson**, daughter of **Tani and Dina (Denebeim) Pinson** celebrated her Bat Mitzvah ... Temple Isaiah is very excitedly anticipating **Svetnana Portnyansky** as their High Holiday cantor this Yomtov, joining **Rabbi Marc Rubenstein** on the

bima. Everyone who attended will remember the wonderful concert with Svetlana that opened the 2023 Palm Springs Jewish Film Festival, but most are unaware of her cantorial background, including her having studied with Cantor Samuel Fordis, the father of Cantor Ron Fordis who served at Temple Isaiah for many years. She has served several southern California congregations since 1994 ...



Svetnana Portnyansky

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.

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Candle Lighting Times

Friday, August 7	Shabbat Re'eh	6:58 pm
Friday, August 14	Shabbat Softim	6:50 pm
Friday, August 21	Shabbat Ke Teitzei	6:42 pm
Friday, August 28	Shabbat Ke Tavo	6:33 pm



We Mourn the Passing of...

Oscar Chamudes, Gerda Gordon, Rose Levy, Moshe Lizemer, Susan Meredith, and Rabbi Larry Seidman. Our deepest sympathies to their families and friends. May their memories endure as a blessing.



ברוך דיין האמת

NEED A NOTARY?

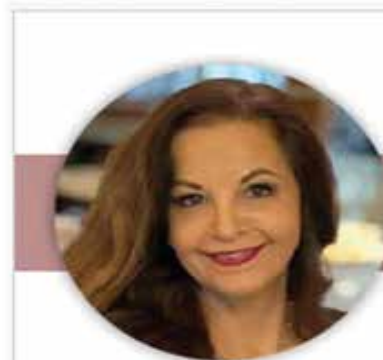
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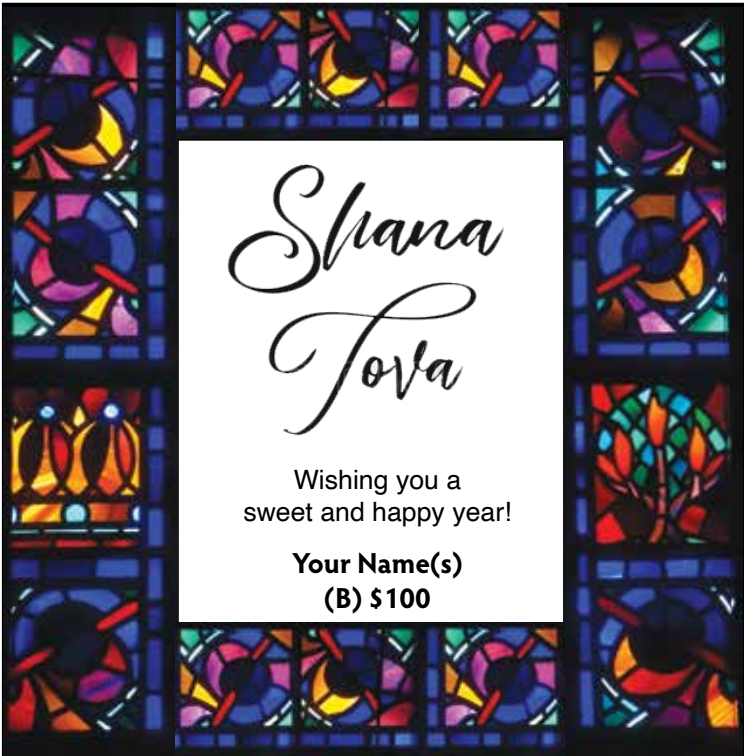
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