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## In bipartisan vote, Texas adopts IHRA definition to define anti-Jewish acts



Texas Gov. Greg Abbott with state legislators after the signing of measure HB3257 that establishes a Texas Holocaust, Genocide and Anti-Semitism Advisory Commission in Austin on June 16, 2021.

Source: Screenshot

By Faygie Holt

(JNS) – With the support of its governor and state legislators, Texas has become the first U.S. state to fully utilize the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of anti-Semitism to interpret anti-Jewish acts.

Republican Gov. Greg Abbott signed the measure last Wednesday, part of HB3257 that establishes a Texas Holocaust, Genocide and Anti-Semitism Advisory Commission.

Among the commission’s work will be producing a biennial study of anti-Semitism in the Lone Star State with the IHRA definition as a guide. That definition has been passed by numerous cities and countries in recent months and is believed to be the most comprehensive explanation of what constitutes modern-day anti-Semitism.

“Anti-Semitism has no place in Tex-

as, and we have a duty to combat it whenever and however it arises,” said Abbott. “That is why I am proud to sign House Bill 3257 into law, which will create the Texas Holocaust, Genocide and Antisemitism Advisory Committee, and bolster our efforts to eradicate anti-Semitism in the Lone Star State.”

Joining the governor for the signing were members of the state legislature who championed the bill, including State Reps. Phil King, Craig Goldman, Tan Parker and Charles “Doc” Anderson; leaders of the state’s Jewish community; representatives from the Israel National Defense College; and Consul General of Israel Gilad Katz. In a Twitter post, Katz praised Gov. Abbott and the Texas government, noting that this legislation was important to both Israel and the Jewish community.

Also in attendance were Randy

Czarlinsky, the Houston director of the American Jewish Committee (AJC), and Dallas director Joel Schwitzer.

Czarlinsky recalled that during the AJC’s International Holocaust Remembrance Observance in January 2020 at the State Capitol with the Texas Consular Corps in attendance, Abbott “declared that the Texas Legislature would adopt the international definition on anti-Semitism during its next session. The 18-month process concluded with the governor signing the bipartisan legislation that was passed unanimously in the Texas House and Texas Senate.”

“The use of the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism to guide a state-mandated biennial study will help ensure Texas remains a leader in combating anti-Semitism,” said Schwitzer. “Given the sharp uptick in anti-Semitism across America, we are gratified that this legislation has received overwhelmingly bipartisan support.”

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations also lauded Abbott and the Texas Legislature for the measure.

“Texas, whose Senate and House of Representatives approved the legislation with nearly unanimous bipartisan support (no legislators voted against the bills), sets an example for the rest of the country by joining the growing global coalition of countries, major cities and institutions that have rallied behind this key instrument in addressing the urgent threat of anti-Semitism,” said the letter signed by Conference chair Dianne Lob; William Daroff, CEO; and vice chair Malcolm Hoenlein. “It is essential to define anti-Semitism in order to combat it successfully.” **HW**

## Fires in southern Israel caused by arson balloons sent from Gaza



Palestinians in the Gaza Strip burn tires and send incendiary devices across Israel border. Credit: Abed Rahim Khatib/Flash90.

(JNS) – Palestinian terrorists released arson balloons from Gaza towards Israel for the second day in a row last Wednesday, leading to four fires in agricultural areas in southern Israel.

The Israeli cabinet is deliberating on whether or not to respond to the latest arson attacks, Kan reported.

The incidents came just hours after the Israeli Air Force struck Hamas compounds in Gaza overnight between last Tuesday and Wednesday, in response to Tuesday’s arson balloons.

In last Tuesday’s attacks, an estimated 120 dunams (about 30 acres) of forests were destroyed.

Meanwhile, the Israel Defense Forces reported that one of its soldiers fired on and hit a suspect who hurled an explosive device at Israeli forces south of Nablus in the West Bank last Wednesday.

The soldier spotted dozens of Palestinians approaching them in the area of Givat Eviatar, said the IDF Spokesperson’s Unit.

“One of the Palestinians ran towards the soldier and hurled a suspicious object at him, which exploded adjacent to the soldier. In response, the soldier operated to stop the suspect by firing into the air and then by firing towards him. A hit was identified. No IDF injuries were reported,” the military said. **HW**

## A Black and Jewish Bible scholar will lead Reconstructionist rabbinical school

By Gabe Friedman

(JTA) – The Reconstructionist movement has chosen a Jew of color to lead its rabbinical college, a first for a major American Jewish movement.

Hebrew Bible scholar Amanda Beckenstein Mbuvi, who is Black, will lead the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College outside of Philadelphia, the movement’s umbrella organization Reconstructing Judaism announced last week. She will become vice president of academic affairs, the school’s highest post, and report to Reconstructing Judaism CEO Rabbi Deborah Waxman.

Mbuvi is neither a rabbi nor previously involved with the Reconstructionist movement, although she told Waxman in

an online conversation that her “formative experience of communal Jewish life” had taken place in a Conservative synagogue that had a Reconstructionist rabbi.

In that conversation, she said the diversity of the American Jewish community is important to reflect in rabbinical training. She said her vision for rabbinic education is that “it equips students to envision, embody and bring forth new possibilities for the world – to root them in Jewish tradition and equip them to engage others in that tradition in all of the diverse embodiments and social locations that people are bringing to Jewish community now.”

The 44-year-old is currently a facul-

ty member at High Point University, a liberal arts college in North Carolina, where she helped found the school’s minor in Jewish studies. Mbuvi holds a Ph.D in religion from Duke University and in 2016 published a book titled “Belonging in Genesis: Biblical Israel and the Politics of Identity Formation.” Her online biography says she “grew up Jewish in the Black church.”

The Reconstructionist movement, which seeks to evolve its Jewish teachings to fit contemporary times, is the smallest and most progressive of the four major streams of American Judaism – including Reform, Conservative and Orthodox. Mbuvi is the second Jew

of color that the movement has hired in recent months for prominent positions. In January, it brought on Rabbi Sandra Lawson, who had been the Hillel rabbi at Elon University, also in North Carolina, to become its first-ever director of racial diversity, equity and inclusion.

Lawson told the Forward this week that Mbuvi had stood out among a large pool of applicants for the leadership position. “The fact that the best candidate also happens to be a Jew of color shows that this is the direction the Jewish community is going,” Lawson said. “There are going to be incredibly talented people in the Jewish community who are not White.” **HW**

# Ben & Jerry's stopped using social media after violence erupted in Israel. Why?



Credit: Kevin Dietsch/Getty Images

By Asaf Shalev

(JTA) – Pro-Palestinian activists were swarming the social media comments sections of Ben & Jerry's to demand the company boycott Israel.

In response, Ben & Jerry's appears to have indeed entered a boycott – of social media itself.

The international ice cream brand with hundreds of millions of dollars in annual sales typically posts to its Twitter, Instagram or Facebook pages daily, including about the many progressive social causes that the company supports. But Ben & Jerry's fell silent on May 18 amid the deadly exchange of fire between Israel and Hamas in Gaza that also played out intensely on social media.

The company did not respond to a request for an explanation by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Those who waged a social media campaign against Ben & Jerry's because of its affiliated factory in Israel and the availability of its products in Israeli settlements are taking credit for the silence.

"20 days without online advertising means @benandjerrys knows they can't go back to business as usual without addressing their investments in Israeli colonization and land theft. Now is not the time to back down," a user named @princessmlokha, an anti-Zionist account with nearly 15,000 followers, tweeted earlier this week. The movement even has a hashtag, #HasBenandJerrysTweetedYet.

The silence is atypical for a company famously founded by two Jewish hippies in Vermont. Ben & Jerry's, which launched in 1978, is known for its marketing strategy of appealing to social justice values. Last year, following the murder of George Floyd, the company added a special section of its website devoted to combating white supremacy.

"Silence is NOT an option," the site says.

But Ben & Jerry's has conspicuously refrained from weighing in on Israeli-Palestinian affairs. So while it has readily marked the anniversary of the Supreme Court's landmark Brown v. Board of Education ruling barring school segregation in the 1950s and con-

demned the Jan. 6 U.S. Capitol attack as a riot for white supremacy, the company did not mention Israel or Palestine even as the flare-up in May grabbed headlines around the world.

But on social media, users can respond even when nothing has been said. And each time a new Ben & Jerry's post appeared, a digital crowd formed to condemn the company.

For example, when Ben & Jerry's asked, "Any mint lovers out there?" user @husamunism spoke up – but not about favorite flavors.

Offering an opinion on the company's politics, this user wrote: "Will never buy Ben and Jerry's until I hear you all stop doing business in illegal settlements stealing Palestinian land and contributing to the ethnic cleansing of Palestine."

In other words, Ben & Jerry's was being repeatedly ratioed, which is internet slang for when replies to a post, typically negative, vastly outnumber likes and retweets.

The criticism of the brand coalesced on May 19 with a call by a social justice group called Decolonize Burlington in Vermont for Americans to boycott the company, according to the Burlington Free Press. Local activists have been lobbying against Ben & Jerry's Israel ties since at least 2012.

"If Ben & Jerry's wants to profit off of anti-racist messaging, they need to be consistent," Decolonize Burlington said in its post. "The BLM movement has publicly supported the Palestinian cause. It's time for Ben & Jerry's to divest from their holdings in Israel."

Ben & Jerry's has not responded to the activists.

The last time Ben & Jerry's was caught up in Israeli-Palestinian politics on social media was in 2018, when the pro-Israel camp was attacking the brand for supporting left-wing activists such as Linda Sarsour, who has been accused of animus toward Jews.

The Israeli Ben & Jerry's, the brand's only independent licensee, is widely popular. It has produced special flavors for holidays, such as haroset for Passover and "mixed-up" for this spring's national election, and last year held a Purim costume party whose prize was a six-month supply of ice cream.

The Israeli Ben & Jerry's also did not post during the recent conflict. But the day after Israel and Hamas agreed to a cease-fire, it resumed posting to its thousands of followers.

"The quality of a weekend is measured in a quality brunch," it said in Hebrew, "for example one that incorporates an ice cream sandwich." **HW**

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## Memphis Candlelighting Time

Erev Shabbat, Fri. June 25, 2021 / 15 Tammuz, 5781 .....8:00 p.m.  
Havdalah, Sat. June 26, 2021 / 16 Tammuz, 5781 ..... 9:02 p.m.

Weekly Torah Portion: Balak

## Haredim fume over coalition's plan to review religious-secular status quo

By Hanan Greenwood

(Israel Hayom via JNS) – United Torah Judaism (UTJ) lawmakers were enraged to learn last Wednesday that Israel's new government plans to set up a special committee to review the long-standing religious-secular status quo in Israel.

The panel, set to be formed under the aegis of the Religious Services Minis-



Israel's Finance Committee  
chairman Moshe Gafni leads a  
committee vote in the Knesset, on  
June 9, 2021.  
Credit: Olivier Fitoussi/Flash90.

try, is expected to look into controversial matters such as conversion, kashrut, commerce on the weekends and public transportation on Shabbat.

"It turns out that the prime minister doesn't only break his campaign promises, but also breaks his word in office," said UTJ lawmaker Uri Maklev, referring to Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's statement that the government was unlikely to revisit the issue of the status quo.

UTJ leader Moshe Gafni said in response to the development that "there will be a war for every 'T' crossed and 'I' dotted and, God willing, we will topple this evil government."

This article first appeared in Israel Hayom. **HW**



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# Will Bennett-Lapid government have political power to address Israel’s contentious issues?



Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett with Minister of Justice Gideon Saar during a swearing in ceremony of new Israeli parliament members at the Knesset, the Israeli parliament in Jerusalem, June 16, 2021. Credit: Yonatan Sindel/Flash90

By Josh Hasten

(JNS) – Yamina Party head Naftali Bennett was sworn in as Israel’s 13th prime minister on Sunday evening June 13, with a razor-thin 60 Knesset member majority. At the same time, Yesh Atid Party head Yair Lapid was sworn in as Israel’s 14th prime minister and will serve as the alternate prime minister, slated to take over for Bennett in two years’ time. The coalition built by these two leaders is Israel’s most diverse ever and includes members of Knesset from the right-wing, center and left, and for the first time in Israel’s history, Israeli Arabs as well. The “change” government is technically headed by Yesh Atid as it secured 17 seats – the most out of any coalition party in Israel’s recent election.

Along with a document of key governing principles composed by Bennett and Lapid, Yesh Atid had to sign separate coalition agreements with each party individually, documenting their backing of each respective party’s desired national policy changes on some of the most contentious issues in Israeli society in recent years. Some of the major policy topics include issues of religion and state; the drafting of the haredi community into the army, which includes paving a path for them to join the workforce; and Israel’s policies when it comes to building in “Area C” of Judea and Samaria. Yohanan Plesner, president of the Israel Democracy Institute, told JNS that “if this government is to succeed, it’ll have to adopt the 70-30 rule. Focus on the 70 percent of issues that all the parties agree to while pushing off the 30 percent where there is strong disagreement. To make any progress on the 30 percent of issues where there is strong disagreement, complete unanimity will be needed among all the coalition partners.” He said that the 30 percent “includes most long-term foreign-policy questions, as well as the most difficult issues relating to religion and state.” In regard to religion and state, Plesner explained that “the only coalition agreement that is binding is the one between Yamina and Yesh Atid. That agreement specifies that changes to almost all areas relating to religion and state must be done with the full agreement of all the coalition partners. This means that we are unlikely to see major changes when it comes to the current status quo.” Plesner added that “the only areas where all the government members are in agreement are to alter the voting body

for the Chief Rabbinate with the hopes of increasing the chances of Zionist candidates for these positions, allowing municipal Orthodox Rabbinate officials to conduct conversions and to open up the kashrut market to more competition.” **Making conversions more inclusive** Rabbi David Stav, founder and chair of the Tzohar Rabbinical Organization, is hopeful that since the new government is in agreement on these three areas of religion and state, change is on the way. He told JNS that he believes Zionist candidates should have opportunities to be part of the Chief Rabbinate. “Elections should represent the diversity of society of the Jewish people in Israel,” he said. Stav thinks that the current arrangement doesn’t truly reflect Israeli society, with haredi parties dominating the Chief Rabbinate, while that population is only composed of 12 percent of the population. He would also like to see the allowance of conversions being carried out on a regional and municipal level, albeit, of course, according to Jewish law. “We would like conversions to be more inclusive – that doesn’t mean less halachic, but part of the process is to make sure the convert is being treated in the proper way,” which he believes could happen under the government plan. In regard to opening up the kashrut market, it was Tzohar, said Stav, who launched the idea of alternative kashrut certification in order to create completion. “Monopolies corrupt; they give people control without responsibility. Therefore, what is urgently needed are alternative certifications, like we (Tzohar) are giving, in order to create a revolution in this area.” Stav also commented on one of

the other bullet points mentioned in the coalition agreement, which calls on the new government to implement the currently frozen “Western Wall Plan,” allowing for the expansion and accessibility of the southern section of the Western Wall Plaza earmarked for egalitarian prayer services. “The egalitarian section has existed for years, and the government (in 2016) already approved the renovation, but it’s all about politics, and a few very right-winged politicians stopped it.” At the same time, he explained that originally, while there were those against the entire concept of the egalitarian section, there were those on the other side who wanted to make the entire Western Wall egalitarian. “But a normal compromise was made. Implementing the plan is a sign of good intention from the new government,” said Stav. On the topic of haredi inscription in the Israel Defense Forces, Yisrael Beiteinu Finance Minister Avigdor Lieberman has historically staunchly called for drafting members of that community. In a related move, one of his coalition stipulations calls on the State to enforce a mandatory core curriculum in all state-funded schools, so that the ultra-orthodox community has the tools to join the workforce. Plesner explained that “all sides have agreed to adopt the Defense Ministry plan that ostensibly led to this political crisis back in 2018. This would mean promoting equality by establishing higher conscription targets for the ultra-Orthodox community over the coming years, but also allowing those over 21 who did not serve to enter the workforce instead of forcing them to remain in yeshivah with government stipends.” **Protect Israel’s interest in ‘Area C’** Finally, when it comes to the situation in “Area C” of Judea and Samaria, part of the Bennett/Lapid document calls for the ensuring of Israel’s national interests in that area while strengthening enforcement against illegal construction and takeover of land. However, some are not convinced. Naomi Kahn, director of the international division at Regavim, a research-based think tank and lobbying group dedicated to preserving Israel’s resources and sovereignty, told JNS, “We anticipated that the government would create a specialized directorate to protect the open spaces of ‘Area C,’ not under the auspicious of the Ministry of Defense. The Ministry of Defense – i.e., the Civil Administration – is not equipped to do the job and doesn’t see the job the same way as the rest of the government sees it. The Civil Administration has proven that it works together with the Palestinians for Palestinian interests and does not see itself as a guardian of Israeli interests.” She added, “By taking the oversight over open spaces still left in ‘Area C’ out of the hands of the Civil Administration and creating a centralized unit – something like the Green Police [an arm of the Environmental Protection Ministry] – that would protect the open spaces as open spaces.” “So yes, we are in favor of more inspectors and enforcement, and more oversight. Yamina said it would insist on a new directorate to protect Israel’s interest in ‘Area C,’ but they folded.” When it comes to the New Hope Party platform indicating that the government will clamp down on illegal Arab construction there, Kahn said, “we’re all for it. The tools exist, but it’s a question of political will. I don’t know how that’s going to work under the current constellation.” HW

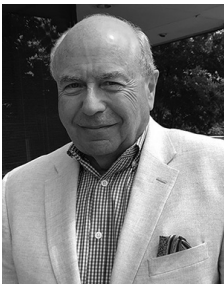
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## Republican voters likelier to see antisemitism when Ilhan Omar's name is attached to a statement, poll finds

*By Ron Kampeas*

(JTA) – Republican voters are much likelier to regard a statement grouping Israel with Hamas as antisemitic if they know Ilhan Omar said it, according to a poll published last Wednesday.

Asked to assess a tweet by the Democratic congresswoman from Minnesota, 36% of Republican respondents to the Morning Consult/Politico poll said they saw it as antisemitic without knowing Omar said it. That rose to 47% for Republican respondents who were told it was Omar.

The June 7 tweet said, “We must have the same level of accountability and justice for all victims of crimes against humanity. We have seen unthinkable atrocities committed by the U.S., Hamas, Israel, Afghanistan, and the Taliban.”

Democrats were marginally less likely to think the statement was antisemitic if they were told Omar was being quoted. Among those who did not know Omar was being quoted, 31% said it was antisemitic, while 27% said the same if

they were told Omar had said it.

Among voters overall, 31% thought it was antisemitic not knowing Omar had said it, while 35% thought it was antisemitic knowing she had said it.

The tweet set off days of tensions within the Democratic Party. Twelve Jewish lawmakers said it could be seen as covering for terrorism and asked Omar to clarify the statement. Omar did clarify what she meant, but also accused the Jewish Democrats of engaging in Islamophobic tropes.

Omar explained that the tweet, which included a video of an exchange the same day with Secretary of State Antony Blinken, was challenging the Biden administration's opposition to the International Criminal Court prosecuting alleged war crimes in the Gaza and Afghanistan conflicts, and was not likening Israel and the United States to the Taliban and Hamas.

Morning Consult said the June 11-13 poll of 1,994 voters had a margin of error of 2 percentage points. **HW**

**WEEKLY DEADLINE AT NOON**  
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## ***EU releases delayed report confirming incitement, anti-Semitism in Palestinian textbooks***

(JNS)—The European Union released its delayed report on Palestinian textbooks last Thursday, confirming that Palestinian Authority textbooks contain anti-Semitism and incitement to violence.

“The report has been released after three declarations of the European parliament condemning anti-Semitism and hate in the P.A. curriculum, dozens of questions in parliaments around Europe and the E.U. sitting on the final version

for months,” said IMPACT-se CEO Marcus Sheff.

“While deeply flawed, it states what has been obvious to all for years: that the Palestinian Authority systematically incites over a million children to anti-Semitism, hate and violence every school day. The question remains: Will the E.U. finally take action to condition funding to the Palestinian Authority on reforms to the curriculum as the European parliament has demanded?”

***Sarah Silverman wishes Ilhan Omar's 'Squad' of lawmakers included a 'progressive Jewess'***

*By Gabe Friedman*

(JTA) – Would Jewish comedian Sarah Silverman join “the Squad,” the outspoken group of progressive House representatives that includes Ilhan Omar and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez?

Probably not, she said – but she wishes a “progressive Jewess” was part of the group.

Last Tuesday, Omar posted a photo of the women of the Squad – the others are Reps. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan, Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Cori Bush of Missouri – on Twitter. Another member, Rep. Jamaal Bowman of New York, was not pictured.

The next day, Silverman commented: Love this group!! You give me hope!" and added "Wish there was a progressive jewess in there ... someday."

“You could run and join us,” Omar responded with a smiley face.

Silverman's response: "My skeletons have skeletons."

Silverman campaigned for progressive flag-bearer Bernie Sanders during the Vermont senator's two presidential runs and often comments about antisemitism on her self-titled podcast. In a recent episode she lamented what she sees as a lack of public figures standing up for Jews in the wake of antisemitic

attacks triggered by the latest Israel-Gaza conflict.

Omar, the second-term congresswoman from Minnesota, has been embroiled in her fair share of antisemitism accusations over several of her public comments, including a recent tweet that said Israel and the U.S. have committed “crimes of humanity” comparable to those of Hamas, the militant group ruling Gaza that the U.S. labels a terrorist entity.

Silverman praised Omar's apologetic op-ed in *The Washington Post* in 2019 in response to the storm of criticism to the lawmaker's tweet on the AIPAC Israel lobby that many found antisemitic. Silverman's sister Susan, a prominent Reform rabbinical leader, took some issue with Omar's comments at the time.

Moderate Jewish Democratic lawmakers have expressed frustration with the Squad and the U.S. progressive movement's broader proclivity to harshly condemn Israel and call for a conditioning on funding to the Jewish state.

Omar, Flaib and Bush are the only members of Congress who endorse the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel. **HW**

of the American Jewish Committee's Brussels-based E.U. Office, the AJC Transatlantic Institute, called on the E.U. to take action to bring an end to incitement in P.A. textbooks, including possibly withholding aid.

“The deeply troubling study was long in the making and confirms what previous reports had documented over the past several years: The Palestinian Authority systematically poisons the minds of Palestinian children, teaching them hatred against Jews, the glorification of terror and the denial of Israel’s right to exist. This outrage has been allowed to continue for far too long and I urge the Commission to take immediate action,” said Schwammenthal.

“Time is of the essence,” he stressed. “Unfortunately, far too many Palestinian children have already been taught with this hateful material. The textbooks must be immediately replaced, and should the Palestinian Authority refuse to do so, the commission will have no other choice but to follow the Norwegian example and withhold some funding to bring about the necessary change.” **HW**

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# COMMENTARY

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## Longing for an ordinary day



Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein and her husband, ASBEE's Rabbi Joel Finkelstein, recently traveled to Israel for their nephew's wedding.

**By Bluma Zuckerbrot-Finkelstein, Memphis Jewish Federation executive vice president**

Really, it was the Christian Arab taxi driver in Jerusalem who summed up the sentiments of the Israelis we met on our recent trip: “Ani Rak Rotzeh Yom Ragil” – “I only want an ordinary day.” While the immediate trigger for the comment was his having to navigate the worse-than-usual Jerusalem traffic because of that day’s Jerusalem Pride Parade, he continued, “Corona, the Meron tragedy, the war with Hamas – It’s enough already.” We were in Israel for my nephew, Avi’s, wedding. My brother and his family made Aliyah almost 26 years ago. Avi’s middle name is Nachshon – named after Israeli soldier Nachshon Waxman who was abducted and murdered by Hamas in 1994. I hadn’t heard his middle name since his birth so when “Avraham Nachshon” rang out during the reading of the Ketubah (wedding contract), I couldn’t help but think that sadly, almost 27 years after Waxman’s murder, Hamas was still terrorizing Israel. At the same time though, how beautiful it was that in the immediate aftermath of the current Hamas assaults, the murdered Nachshon was being remembered and memorialized through my nephew, a groom, now starting a new chapter. This was a trip of reconnecting with family and friends. I’m incredibly proud that my brother and most of my oldest and dearest friends made Aliyah. They all left comfortable lives, senior professional positions and tight social and familial networks to start over and help build and contribute to the Jewish State. Their children are now proudly serving

in the most moral army in the world, defending our Jewish homeland, for themselves, but also for us, so that we, sitting here in Memphis, can enjoy the benefits of an independent Jewish state. Over-caffeinating ourselves in the myriad of cafes dotting Jerusalem’s Emek Refaim street, we heard first-person Israeli Army stories sharply different from the narratives and images back home. Like the army IDF officer responsible for helping at-risk Israeli soldiers earn high school diplomas so they can find good jobs post-Army service.

*Arriving so soon after the ceasefire ended 11 days of rocket attacks, Bluma was pleased to still find that “Israel magic,” from the comforting sounds of spoken Hebrew, to walking for miles along the winding Jerusalem streets named after Biblical and Jewish historical figures, or simply being wished a Shabbat Shalom by a bus driver.*

vice. Or the young woman in an intelligence unit who worked 24/7 helping to confirm that every site targeted in Gaza was indeed a terrorist stronghold. The precision of Israeli strikes was actually confirmed by an UNWRA official who, under intense political pressure, later retracted. Our family and friends represent a broad array of religious and political leanings and different views were expressed regarding what justifies entering a mosque or the legal status of Sheikh Jarrah homes. But even those critical of recent Israeli actions agreed that the two incidents in no way justified indiscriminate and relentless Hamas rocket attacks

against civilians and that Israel had a moral duty to defend its citizens. All were dumbfounded and disheartened by the world’s negative reaction to their defending themselves against a genocidal terrorist organization committed to the dismantlement of the State of Israel and the death of its citizens. There was more that did not align with international condemnation. We took the number 3 bus to the Kotel (Western Wall), which circles the Old City’s Damascus Gate – the site of recent disturbances. It happened to be Friday around noon, time for the special jum’ah prayer. From our bus window we saw throngs of Muslim men peacefully gathering and entering the Damascus Gate, likely on their way to Al Aqsa Mosque. There were no journalists capturing this “ordinary” and extraordinary expression of Freedom of Worship in Israel. No one is saying Israel is perfect and doesn’t make mistakes. And she certainly faces numerous security, political, religious and societal challenges. None of that detracts though from the “Israel magic” that I was gifted with, whether it be the comforting sounds of spoken Hebrew, my people’s language, walking for miles along the winding Jerusalem streets named after Biblical and Jewish historical figures, sampling exquisite kosher cuisine lurking in the alleys of Machane Yehuda, or simply being wished a Shabbat Shalom by a bus driver transporting masses of frenetic Jews on a Friday afternoon. All this was coupled with the beautiful cacophony of Israelis of varying religious, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds – Jews, Arabs, Druze – all just trying to have “an ordinary day.” May there be many of them in the months and years ahead. **HW**

## Blinken, Lapid discuss US-Israel ties, efforts to expand normalization agreements

(JNS) – U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken spoke with his new Israeli counterpart Foreign Minister Yair Lapid last Thursday, discussing a range of issues from the U.S.-Israel relationship, Iran and a push for more normalization agreements with Arab countries. “The secretary discussed the U.S. commitment to Israel’s security, the importance of the U.S.-Israel bilateral relationship and the need to improve Israeli-Palestinian relations in practical ways,” said a State Department readout. It added that the two also “shared opinions on opportunities to deepen normalization efforts as well as on regional security issues, including Iran. Secretary Blinken and Minister Lapid underscored the strong partnership between the United States and Israel, and America’s unwavering support for Israel’s security.” The call between the leaders was the second this week after the new Israeli government was sworn in on June 13. According to Israel’s Foreign Ministry, Blinken and Lapid agreed to a policy of “no surprises,” to maintain open and regular communication, and planned to meet again soon. Meanwhile, last Sunday, Israel Defense Forces’ Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi will be the first Israeli official to visit Washington since the change in government. The IDF said that Kochavi, who will

meet with U.S. defense officials, will discuss “current shared security challenges, including matters dealing with the Iranian nuclear threat, Iran’s efforts to entrench itself militarily in the

Middle East, Hezbollah’s rearmament efforts, the consequences of the threat of precision-guided missiles and joint force build-up.” Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Ben-

nett has indicated that he plans to oppose the Biden administration’s efforts to rejoin the Iran nuclear deal, though intends to voice any criticism in private. **HW**





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## Israeli swimmer sets new record with gold-medal win at European swim meet



Anastasia Gorbenko

Credit: Israel Swimming Association

(JNS) – Israeli swimmer Anastasia Gorbenko won Israel’s first-ever gold medal at an Olympic swimming competition on May 22, Haaretz reported. The 17-year-old took home the top honor at the European Aquatics Championship in Budapest, Hungary. Gorbenko came in first in the women’s 200-meter individual medley finals with a time of 2:09.99 minutes, which also set a new Israeli record. She reportedly entered the competition with a lifetime best of 2:11.92, which she swam at the 2019 World Championships and which stood as the Israeli record until a week ago Saturday. In second place was the United Kingdom’s Abbie Wood, with a time of 2:10.03 minutes, followed by Hungary’s Katinka Hosszu, who finished just seven

hundredths of a second later. Gorbenko’s win last Saturday ended Hosszu’s winning run of five straight titles, according to Swimming World magazine. Alluding to the recent conflict with Israel and Hamas in the Gaza Strip, after her win, Gorbenko said: “It’s hard to take in, but I’m really happy. I’m very surprised, realizing it slowly. I’m really proud of myself for proving that we’re a very strong country. It was important to me – not for myself, but for the country and what is happening there – because I can’t be with my friends and family at this difficult time. Being the European champion with the Israeli flag makes me proud.” Gorbenko will compete in the Tokyo Olympics this summer, reported The Times of Israel. **HW**

## Florida legislation supports emergency responders, funding for day schools



Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed legislation that adds funding for Jewish causes and supports Hatzalah emergency-service workers, June 17, 2021. Source: Twitter/Hatzalah of South Florida.

By Faygie Holt

(JNS) – Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis visited a synagogue in South Florida last Monday to sign legislation that had the support of many in the Jewish community there. At the Shul of Bal Harbour in Surfside, Fla., a Chabad-Lubavitch synagogue north of Miami, DeSantis ensured that faith-based, volunteer first-responder services, like the Orthodox-run Hatzalah ambulance corp., can operate more fully, including using lights and sirens in an emergency if they meet specific criteria and have been operating for more than 10 years. According to Rabbi Moshe Matz, executive director of Agudath Israel of South Florida, “Hatzalah of South Florida has been operating for 13 years as emergency responders but without permission to have emergency lights and sirens, as well as not being able to transport a patient if necessary. This limited Hatzalah’s ability to give the best possible service to the community. With this bill, Hatzalah will be able to shorten their response time even more, better their operations and save more lives.” In speaking with JNS, he noted that the Orthodox community has been growing tremendously in South Florida in recent years and that this will really change the “level of care” they can receive from Hatzalah. State Rep. Mike Caruso, who helped spearhead the legislation, said in a statement, “Hatzalah serves Jewish communities with religious sensitivities. Many

of their community members follow strict Jewish guidelines, only speak Yiddish or Hebrew, and some are Holocaust survivors whose religious beliefs mean that their preference is to be transported and treated by a member of their community, someone they know.” DeSantis also signed into law a “Moment of Silence” to encourage children in public schools to reflect at the beginning of the day – a suggestion made by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, in the early 1980s. It was sponsored in the state House by Rep. Randy Fine (R-Palm Bay) and in the state Senate by Sen. Dennis Baxley (R-Ocala), and passed with bipartisan support, and welcomed by Chabad leaders in Florida. Meanwhile, the state budget has included the allocation of \$4 million to Jewish day schools for security funding, dollars that can be used for the first time to pay for professional security; \$1.35 million for the Florida Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg, which was vandalized two weeks ago; \$400,000 for the Holocaust Memorial in Miami Beach; and more. “Every family in our state should be able to send their children to school and know that they will be protected from harm, and be able to practice their faith,” said DeSantis in a statement. “I will continue to make sure that in Florida we root out anti-Semitism, and that every day we show our support for Israel and our Jewish communities.” **HW**

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# 10 reasons why beneficiary designations are important

Provided by Mike Stein, Wells Fargo Advisors

Beneficiary designations can provide a relatively easy way to transfer an account or insurance policy upon your death. However, if you’re not careful, missing or outdated beneficiary designations can easily cause your estate plan to go awry.

We often complete these designations without giving it much thought, but they’re actually important and deserve careful attention. Here’s why: Beneficiary designations take priority over what’s in other estate planning documents, such as a will or trust.

For example, you may indicate in your will you want everything to go to your spouse after your death. However, if the beneficiary designation on your life insurance policy still names your ex-spouse, he or she may end up getting the proceeds.

### Where you can find them?

Here’s a sampling of where you’ll find beneficiary designations:

- Employer-sponsored retirement plans [401(k), 403(b), etc.]
- IRAs
- Life insurance policies
- Annuities
- Transfer-on-death (TOD) investment accounts
- Pay-on-death (POD) bank accounts
- Stock options and restricted stock
- Executive deferred compensation plans

Because you’re asked to designate beneficiaries on so many different accounts and insurance products, it can

be difficult to keep up. However, it’s worth the effort; failing to maintain the beneficiary designation on that 401(k) from three employers ago could mean money will go to the wrong place.

When you first set up your estate plan, go over all the designations you previously made and align them with your plan. After that, you should review and update them regularly – at least once a year.

### 10 tips about beneficiary designations

Because beneficiary designations are so important, keep these things in mind in your estate planning:

**1. Remember to name beneficiaries.** If you don’t name a beneficiary, one of the following could occur:

The account or policy may have to go through probate court. This process often results in unnecessary delays, additional costs, and unfavorable income tax treatment.

The agreement that controls the account or policy may provide for “default” beneficiaries. This could be helpful, but it’s possible the default beneficiaries may not be whom you intended.

**2. Name both primary and contingent beneficiaries.** It’s a good practice to name a “back up” or contingent beneficiary in case the primary beneficiary dies before you. Depending on your situation, you may have only a primary beneficiary. In that case, consider whether a charity (or charities) may make sense to

name as the contingent beneficiary.

**3. Update for life events.** Review your beneficiary designations regularly and update them as needed based on major life events, such as births, deaths, marriages, and divorces.

**4. Read the instructions.** Beneficiary designation forms are not all alike. Don’t just fill in names – be sure to read the form carefully.

**5. Coordinate with your will and trust.** Whenever you change your will or trust, be sure to talk with your attorney about your beneficiary designations. Because these designations operate independently of your other estate planning documents, it’s important to understand how the different parts of your plan work as a whole.

**6. Think twice before naming individual beneficiaries for particular assets.** For example, you establish three accounts of equal value and name a different child as beneficiary of each. Over the years, the accounts may grow unevenly, so the children end up getting different amounts – which is not what you originally intended.

**7. Avoid naming your estate as beneficiary.** If you designate a beneficiary on your 401(k), for example, it won’t have to go through probate court to be distributed to the beneficiary. If you name your estate as beneficiary, the account will have to go through probate. For IRAs and qualified retirement plans, there may also be unfavorable income tax consequences.

**8. Use caution when naming a trust**

**as beneficiary.** Consult your attorney or CPA before naming a trust as beneficiary for IRAs, qualified retirement plans, or annuities. There are situations where it makes sense to name a trust – for example if:

- Your beneficiaries are minor children
- You’re in a second marriage
- You want to control access to funds

Even in cases like these, understand the tax consequences before you name a trust as beneficiary.

**9. Be aware of tax consequences.** Many assets that transfer by beneficiary designation come with special tax consequences. It’s helpful to work with an experienced tax advisor, who can help provide planning ideas for your particular situation.

**10. Use disclaimers when necessary – but be careful.** Sometimes a beneficiary may actually want to decline (disclaim) assets on which they’re designated as beneficiary. Keep in mind disclaimers involve complex legal and tax issues and require careful consultation with your attorney and CPA.

### Next steps

- When creating, updating, or simply reviewing your estate plan, pay attention to your beneficiary designations.
- Remember, beneficiary designations take precedence over what you may have specified in a will or trust.
- Put a reminder on your calendar to check your beneficiary designations annually so you can keep them up-to-date.

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## As Israeli swimmers took 4th place in an Olympic trial, a TV commentator criticized their country



Clara Basiana, left, and other members of the Spanish national team compete at the London Olympics in the United Kingdom on April 21, 2012. Credit: Paul Cunningham/Corbis via Getty Images

By Cnaan Liphshiz

(JTA) – Standing poolside in Barcelona, Eden Blecher and Shelly Bobritsky beamed with pride and satisfaction as they struggled to catch their breath.

The two athletes from Israel last Sunday had just clinched the fourth slot in the Women Duet category of the Artistic Swimming Qualification Tournament in that city in Spain, assuring their participation in the 2021 Olympics in Tokyo.

But the commentator who narrated the tournament for TV3, the state broadcaster of Catalonia, the separatist Spanish region whose capital is Barcelona, didn’t focus on their technique or performance.

“Beyond the technical commentary, I’d like to draw attention to the fact that Israel’s international presence is another

strategy for whitewash the genocide and violations of human rights that they’re committing against the Palestinian people,” the commentator, swimmer Clara Basiana, said during the live transmission.

As Blecher and Bobritsky waited for the score, then flashed excited smiles and hugged happily when they saw it, Basiana went on.

TV3 did not immediately reply to a request by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency for comment about Basiana’s commentary. Another commentator, veteran sports reporter Imma Pedemonte, avoided the subject. “Well, they certainly seem happy with the result,” she said.

“We’ve seen it repeatedly in Eurovi-

sion, and it’s as though the war crimes of the State of Israel are erased, and we’d like to point this out to the viewers so as not to normalize it,” she said.

On social media and in some left-wing publications, Basiana’s commentary was celebrated as a rare case of demanding accountability from Israel. The news site Contrainformacion praised it as “truths that hit like fists.”

ACOM, a pro-Israel organization in Spain, accused TV3 of singling out Israel due to antisemitism. The event’s second-place winners were from Belarus, often referred to as Europe’s last dictatorship and where mass arrests and violence against pro-democracy protesters took place earlier this year.

“It is unsurprising that TV3, a mouthpiece for supremacist and hostile feelings toward Spanish people, again disseminates antisemitic libels,” ACOM wrote on Twitter. It was a reference to the perceived support of TV3 for the Catalan separatist cause, which in 2017 led to a failed attempt by the government to break away from Spain.

Daniel Sirera, a former politician for the center-right Popular Party and a journalist in Catalonia, tweeted that Basiana had engaged in “unethical behavior by dragging politics into sports.”

And Marc Villanueva, a writer for the El Nacional paper, said that linking the athletes to the politics of their country “is as unfair as linking Basiana, who competed in the Spanish national team, to the taking of political prisoners by Spanish authorities” in Catalonia, he wrote. **HW**

## Donald Trump says American Jews ‘don’t love Israel enough’ and more should have voted for him

By Ron Kampeas

(JTA) – Donald Trump is still trying to figure out why more American Jews didn’t vote for him, arguing in a haredi Orthodox magazine interview this week that they “don’t love Israel enough” and the Israel-related moves he made as president should have earned him a larger share of the Jewish vote.

“You know what really surprised me?” Trump told Ami Magazine. “I did the Heights, I did Jerusalem, and I did Iran – the Iran Deal was a disaster, right? And I also did many other things. Jewish people who live in the United States don’t love Israel enough. Does that make sense to you? I’m not talking about Orthodox Jews. I believe we got 25% of the Jewish vote, and it doesn’t make sense. It just seems strange to me.”

Trump referred to his decisions to recognize Israel’s sovereignty over the Golan Heights, to recognize Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and move the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal, which Israel’s government loathes.

Exit polls election night found Trump scored between 21% and 30.5% of the Jewish vote. He is also correct that an overwhelming majority of Orthodox Jews voted for him.

Jewish groups slammed Trump in 2019 after he said that Jews were disloyal for voting for Democrats and doubling down on the claim. **HW**

## Israeli police arrest Lod imam on suspicion of incitement



Lod imam Youssef Elbaz was arrested by Israeli police on June 17, 2021, for incitement on social media. Credit: Source: YouTube

(JNS) – A Lod imam was arrested last Thursday on suspicion of inciting violence, according to the Israel Police.

Without identifying the imam by name, police reported last Thursday that as part of its “fight against incitement of offenses committed online” it had arrested a Lod resident in connection with a June 15 Facebook post “which allegedly calls for harming police officers.” The suspect was later identified by Hebrew media outlets as Youssef Elbaz, an imam at the city’s Great Mosque.

Lod erupted in violence in mid-May, with Arab residents of the city attacking their Jewish neighbors, setting fire to their cars, breaking into homes and vandalizing synagogues. The violence,

which began in Jerusalem, spread to other cities, including Akko, Haifa, Jaffa and Tiberias.

According to Channel 12, Elbaz had posted a clip to Facebook from the 2005 horror film “Wolf Creek,” together with the words: “The best way to deal with injustice.” The seven-minute clip shows two police officers being brutally murdered.

Several Lod residents reached out to police about the post, according to the report.

“A month after the riots, which erupted from the Elbaz mosque with his support and encouragement, the sheikh strikes again and tries to set the area on fire,” one Lod resident told Channel 12.

“The situation on the streets of Lod is tense and worrying and any such extreme statement could degenerate the entire city back into the anarchy that raged here just a month ago,” said another resident.

Hours before his arrest, Elbaz expressed surprise at the storm his post had caused, Channel 12 reported. “People have lost their minds,” he wrote on social media. “Who would have believed that [Knesset members] would be afraid of a video from an American movie and a person expressing his opinion about the movie?” **HW**

## Wounded Israeli soldiers get some rest at Jerusalem resort



A total of 150 soldiers spent a weekend at the Ramot Hotel Resort in Jerusalem, courtesy of Belev Echad, May 2021. Credit: Bentzi Sasson

(JNS) – Wounded Israel Defense Forces’ veterans got the five-star treatment recently when the New York-based nonprofit Belev Echad hosted them at the Ramot Hotel Resort in Jerusalem.

“Now, more than ever, our soldiers need a community, and they need support,” said Rabbi Uriel Vigler, co-founder of Belev Echad with his wife, Shevy. “It’s been a tiring few weeks for our wounded warriors in Israel, especially after ‘Operation Guardian of the Walls.’ This is our chance to say thank you and to say that we’re here for you.”

A total of 150 soldiers got the chance for some much-needed rest and time off last weekend.

One of them was Shay Yair, 37, from the city of Ofakim. Yair, who served in the Golani Brigade, lost his leg in 2003

after a rocket-propelled grenade exploded next to him.

“It was a great escape, especially for IDF wounded soldiers, many of whom suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD,” he said. “It was a wonderful opportunity to reload and clear my head, especially in light of the recent operation in Gaza and the thousands of rockets that were launched at Israeli civilians. Some of them landed not far from my home.”

Founded in 2009 by the Viglers, co-directors of Chabad Israel Center on New York City’s Upper East Side, Belev Echad began as an annual tour of New York as a gesture of solidarity and support for wounded Israeli soldiers. Over the years, it has developed a global movement dedicated to helping IDF veterans reintegrate into civilian life. **HW**

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# Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service at the Memphis Jewish Community Center provides strength, hope and comfort

By Mary Elizabeth Jones, FJFS Director of Social Services

Do you or someone you know need transportation to doctor’s appointments, know someone who could benefit from a frozen meal program or know someone who needs a support group? How about a social services counselor needing Continuing Education Units (CEUs), or someone looking for a volunteer opportunity?

You might have heard about the Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service at the MJCC, (FJFS). But as we come out of this past year, I especially wanted to take a moment to tell you more about everything FJFS can do for you, those you know and our entire community.

FJFS is located in the lower level of the MJCC with its own private side entrance and provides an array of compassionate social services and a connection to any additional services needed. All FJFS services are confidential and in accordance with strict HIPPA standards.

In response to needs within the Memphis Jewish community, FJFS opened a Kosher Food Pantry in January 2016. FJFS provides shelf-stable food to supplement the frozen meal program and

serves those who are food insecure but ineligible for the frozen meals. Last year we provided over 6,500 frozen kosher meals to those in need.

We recently introduced a new Baby Pantry for newborn to 1-year-olds that includes baby essentials for families in need including food, diapers, wipes and bottles.

Please consider donating to the Baby Pantry and the Kosher Food Pantry to help keep these programs running.

FJFS offers “Shalom Shuttle” a transportation system for Memphis Jewish community members who are at least 60 years old, and adults of any age with special needs. Transportation is provided with door-to-door assistance for just \$4 one-way to locations within Shelby County such as doctor appointments, grocery shopping, etc.

FJFS provides case management, support groups, sliding-scale counseling, programs for individuals with special needs, and other services to help individuals through all walks of life.

FJFS provides a “Parenting Through Divorce Class,” which is a court-mandated class for anyone going through a divorce who has minor children.

CEU events for counseling professionals are offered throughout the year.

# Palestinian Authority cancels deal for 1 million COVID vaccine doses from Israel

By Ben Sales

UPDATE: This article has been updated to reflect that the Palestinian Authority canceled an agreement by which Israel would have provided it with one million vaccine doses.

(JTA) – The Palestinian Authority canceled a deal that would have seen Israel give it one million COVID vaccine doses in exchange for a later shipment.

The P.A. made the move because many of the doses were set to expire in the coming weeks, according to Haaretz. By time Palestinian Health Minister Mai al-Kaila announced the cancellation, 100,000 of the doses had already been delivered.

The decision, made last Thursday by Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz and approved by Naftali Bennett, the prime minister, constituted a change of Israeli policy following months during which Israel was criticized for not helping Palestinians get vaccinated. Israel led the world in inoculating its population, and its vaccination rates have slowed recently after most of the population has been vaccinated and case rates have plummeted.

In return for the shipments, the Palestinian Authority was to send Israel shipments of Pfizer doses it is set to receive in the future. The deal had been initiated by the previous Israeli government, which was in power through last week, but details had not been worked out. It was finalized by the new coalition before it was nixed.

“The coronavirus knows no borders,” said Horowitz, the chair of the left-wing Meretz party, according to Haaretz, when the deal was still in effect. “This important step is in the interest of all parties. I hope that it will set in motion

a collaboration between Israel and its Palestinian neighbors in other areas as well.”

The U.S. State Department had already praised the agreement by early last Friday afternoon.

“The United States welcomes cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority to provide over 1 million COVID-19 vaccines to the Palestinian people,” spokesman Ned Price tweeted.

Human rights organizations criticized Israel for not immediately providing large amounts of vaccines to Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza after it received its early Pfizer supplies. Critics said that Israel, as the occupying power of the West Bank, has a responsibility to vaccinate the territory’s residents regardless of nationality.

Israel has countered that prior agreements with Palestinian officials gave Palestinian agencies responsibility for healthcare. **HW**

The next CEU will be held on June 10. “Long-Haired Hippie Freaks Need Not Apply” discusses the effects of exclusion and prejudice. Attendees will explore their underlying beliefs about those who are perceived as different from themselves and the various ways in which they actively or passively include or exclude them. If you are a counseling professional or someone just interested in this topic, we invite you to attend next week.

Now is a perfect time to come together to share experiences, strengths, hopes, and to provide comfort and encouragement. If you do not need services but want to get involved, there are ways to do that. Community volunteers are always needed. Not only is volunteering your time and energy to help someone or something rewarding, but volunteers have an enormous impact on the health and well-being of communities worldwide. Volunteers at the J are needed for many types of projects, such as visiting homebound seniors, helping with transportation, delivering food packages, administrative duties, and so much more. For more information on services, classes, or programming, please contact the Wendy and Avron B. Fogelman Jewish Family Service office at 901.767.8511. **HW**

## OBITUARIES

Kay Ross Geller

Kay Ross Geller, 70, of Memphis, passed away on June 18 after a life filled with happiness. She was born on February 18, 1951, in Clarksdale, Miss., the daughter of Jack and Natalie Ross. She is survived by her loving husband of 37 years, Mike Geller; sons Phillip Geller of Memphis and Clay Scholz-Geller (Jessica) of Milwaukee; brother Jack Ross (Dorene) of Gainesville, Fla.; brothers-and sisters-in-law Randy and Joan Covitz of Lenexa, Kan., and John and Linda Gorman of Overland Park, Kan., and many nieces and nephews. A graduate of Stephens College in Columbia, Mo., Kay served in the communications office for a Mississippi congressman in Washington, D.C, before meeting Mike and devoting her life to raising a wonderful family. She was a Grizzlies season ticket holder and enjoyed chocolate in the fourth quarter to ensure victories. She enjoyed traveling with Mike’s sisters and spouses to Mexico and most anywhere with a beach. She was excited when her brother purchased a condo in Palm Coast, Fla. Perhaps the highlight of her trips was two days of Centre Court at Wimbledon. After the children were grown, she worked as a 211 representative at the Memphis Library. Kay and Mike later owned the Doc Popcorn franchise in Memphis. **HW**

# Egg prices increase in Israel for first time in seven years

(JNS) – A wave of higher food costs in Israel is now hitting products under government price supervision with the announcement last week by the Ministry of Agriculture that egg prices will increase by 6.5 percent, reported Globes.

The reason given is that inputs have gone up, including a 17 percent rise in

the price of feed. The Israeli Ministry of Agriculture price committee stressed that this is the first price hike on eggs in seven years. A dozen extra-large eggs will soon cost NIS 13.10 (about \$4), a dozen large eggs NIS 12.05 (about \$3.6) and a dozen medium-sized eggs NIS 11.15 (about \$3.40). **HW**

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# My Wife, the Personal Trainer



*Editor's note:  
This story is being  
reprinted in memory  
of Ted Roberts in  
appreciation of his  
longtime service  
as a newspaper  
columnist.*

**By Ted Roberts**

*My Personal Trainer Wife  
She's the love of my life  
She's my personal trainer wife*

Don't go to the gym today; instead go grocery shopping with your wife. You'll get more exercise.

Students of wife-directed grocery tours say you are sure to burn at least a thousand calories. Maybe more if the wife is hunting the exotic ingredients of a festive meal.

My fat friend, Rob, lost 10 pounds in a single month, with only three grocery tours. They call him skinnybob now, in fact some health organizations have forsaken their facilities full of equipment and sponsored multiple grocery store tours.

I know it has helped me, like we're on aisle 2 and she sends me to fetch garlic powder – she thinks maybe on aisle 12.

But she has no idea where it is. So, you have to prowl the aisles 2 through 12: the distance of 10 or so football fields. You're lucky she didn't need a 50-pound sack of potatoes only 500 yards away on 7. Or maybe you are not so lucky since 1000 yards with a

50-pound sack of taters equals 2 hours on a stationary bike or 20 reps with an 80-pound bar bell. There are many forms of healthy exercise.

Why not a 5-pound sack of sugar on the next aisle. Or an 8-ounce box of cereal from the aisle we are on. No, she needs that 50-pound sack of potatoes that's a half-mile away: she's my personal trainer wife you know.

But that's not the end of your workout. The potatoes or other exercise equipment (groceries) have to be stowed in the car and eventually brought into the house. (You can postpone it into tomorrow and stretch your workout to a 2-day muscle maker. That doesn't hurt a bit.)

Once in a while she pressures me to accompany her to Marshalls or Target. But I, the wily workout devotee, know such a workout is not near as healthy as my grocery program. What kind of exercise is it to lug a half-pound sweater from the store to car and then from car to house? Big Deal!

My lovely wife never ignores me when it's time for a grocery marathon. But sometimes she "forgets" to mention the purpose of the trip: "Come on hon, take a ride with me." I jump in the passenger seat and soon realize, by the route, that we're headed to that gym where they sell sacks of potatoes as well as 2-ounce bottles of garlic powder. Too late (and I went to a real gym yesterday) what am I going to do? Bail out? Sometimes I develop a headache, that usual ally of unresponsive wives, and must be taken home immediately. Of course. my personal trainer, when she gets home won't excuse me from the car to kitchen segment of the workout. But I do ask her: "Why do we need 50 pounds of taters?" Why not a couple bags of chips? I get a stare in return and a speech on the benefits of weightlifting.

Once I jumped in the car around lunch time for a "juicy hamburger smothered in lettuce, tomato and mayo" and ended up wrestling a 100-pound coffee table into the trunk – then dragging it into the living room. Better than a destination-free ride on a stationary bike says my personal trainer wife. She knows what is best for me. That's why she takes me shopping. I'm a lucky man.

*The syndicated humor of Ted, the Scribbler on the roof, has appeared in newspapers around the US, on National Public Radio, and numerous websites. HW*

# Insights From Israel Passing the Baton

**By Howard Weisband**

As incoming Prime Minister Naftali Bennett introduced his Government-to-be to the Knesset, he stated:

*"...this is a special moment. The moment in which the baton of leading the people and the country passes – as in a relay race – to the next generation. It's a sacred endowment.*

*The State of Israel is not "just another country." It is the dream of generations of Jews – from Marrakesh to Budapest, from Baghdad to San Francisco – a dream we merited to see realized every day before our very eyes. Each generation has its own challenges, and out of each generation comes the leaders that can overcome them.*" (Published translation from Hebrew.)

Reminiscent perhaps of the transfer of generational leadership from Moses to Joshua, the current passing of the baton was not done willingly – as would be done in a relay race – from Benjamin Netanyahu to the Naftali Bennett-Yair Lapid Government.

While a new generation of Israeli leaders have taken the baton of leadership, the opportunity has been granted to them by the electorate and the political acumen of the Bennett-Lapid partnership.

Although they are not allied on all political issues, neither in the past nor today – Yair Lapid is center-left and Naftali Bennet is more comfortable in the right-wing camp – they both understood that the moment called for historical change. It would require the necessity of building an eight-party coalition that would cover the political spectrum, albeit with a razor-thin margin. Informally they labeled their effort as a "change government," which had a double meaning: the ouster of Netanyahu's reign as Prime Minister and the creation of a different political culture.

The glue that may hold this Government together is first and foremost based upon the relationship between Bennett and Lapid. Friends since 2012 when they first met, they have referred to themselves as brothers. Simply put, they trust one another. That factor in and of itself portends political change in a meaningful way.

Gil Hoffman, chief political correspondent and analyst for The Jerusalem Post, recently wrote: "Since then (the

2013 elections), the partnership has had its ups and downs. But they both said they never lied to each other and that they kept up a relationship of trust."

Will the Bennet-Lapid Government last four years through its term of office? It is an understatement to say that it will be a challenge. Holding eight parties together itself will be challenging. More so, they will face constant attacks from the opposition led by Bibi Netanyahu. Reportedly, he recently met with Nir Barkat, former Jerusalem mayor and a rising power in the Likud, in order to solidify their joint efforts to bring down the Government.

To counter those attacks, look for early positive achievements on the part of the Government. For instance, the passing of a state budget, which has not happened for over three years. Budget is policy, and it allows for strategic spending. In addition, the establishment of an independent commission of inquiry into the Lag B'Omer Meron disaster would be a serious step forward and show that the new Government again is able to accomplish something that had been gridlocked within the prior coalition. Diplomatic achievements generally take longer, but watch for those as well.

One senses that Bennet and Lapid are more determined to transfer the Prime Ministership from one to the other than what existed within a similar arrangement between Netanyahu and Gantz in the last Government. That determination again is based on relationship and trust.

Stephen Covey wrote: "Trust is the glue of life. It's the most essential ingredient in effective communication. It's the foundational principle that holds all relationships."

In this case, the trust between Bennet and Lapid, and then within the coalition, may well define the future of Israel's 36th Government.

*Howard Weisband served as Assistant Executive Director (1975-77) and Executive Director (1977-84) of the Memphis Jewish Federation. Following Aliyah with his family in 1986, he served as Secretary General of the Jewish Agency for Israel through 1997, and then in other senior professional positions in Israel. Now retired, he and Kayla live in Jerusalem. He can be reached at hweisband@gmail.com HW*

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# Memphis Jewish Federation’s Lions of Judah celebrate a successful year



**Memphis Jewish Federation Lions of Judah Sarah VanderWalde, Debrah Saharovich, Jeri Moskovitz, Eileen Posner, Betsy Saslawsky, Rhonda Saslawsky, Jill Notowich, Lions Co-Chair Shelley Robbins, and Laura Harkavy welcome the newest Lions to the sisterhood of women philanthropists.**

On June 3, Memphis Jewish Federation’s Lions of Judah celebrated a year of impactful accomplishments with their 2021 Spring Event, entitled *Watch Us Grow*. Using the evocative symbol of a bonsai tree at its center, the program honored the dedication of the 10 founding Memphis Lions of Judah, whose seeds have sprouted almost 40

years later into a vibrant group of 127 women philanthropists who nurture and strengthen Jewish life in Memphis, in Israel, and around the world. Thirteen women were honored as new Lions of Judah, several women increased their gifts to achieve a new level, and two women were recognized for making provisions in their estate plans.

These future gifts will ensure that their annual gift to Federation’s Annual Community Campaign will continue in perpetuity.

During one of the most-treasured segments of the annual reception, candles were lit by family members for six women who are no longer living, but who are now Forever Lions. Gifts to Federation in their names are made each and every year from endowments they created during their lifetimes. This year a seventh name was added to the list of Forever Lions of Judah, Marilyn Belz, of blessed memory, who was honored in a moving tribute, which included an eloquent speech from her beloved husband, Jack Belz.

The Memphis Jewish Federation Lion of Judah is a sisterhood of dynamic, philanthropic Jewish women who embody a deep commitment to *tikkun olam*. They contribute their time and resources to aid the most vulnerable, preserve human dignity and strengthen Jewish life. Their annual spring program was sponsored this year by Kelman-Lazarov, Inc., a boutique wealth management firm whose

Chairman, Marty Kelman, spoke at the event. In addition, thanks were given to Bob and Jay Mednikow as Mednikow Jewelers was recognized as the official jeweler of Memphis Lion of Judah. **HW**



**2021 Lion of Judah Co-Chair Debbie B. Lazarov, LOJ Recognition Committee Chair Marlene Gerson and Lion Joanne Cohen**

## ‘The Shrink Next Door,’ a dark Jewish-themed podcast, is becoming a TV show with Will Ferrell and Paul Rudd



**Will Ferrell as the manipulated Jewish patient Marty Markowitz in the trailer for “The Shrink Next Door.” Credit: Screenshot**

**By Ben Sales**

(JTA) – “The Shrink Next Door,” a 2019 reported podcast about a Jewish psychiatrist on the Upper West Side of Manhattan who takes control of the life of one of his Jewish patients, is being made into a limited TV series.

And it’s starring two comedy stars who last collaborated on “Anchorman 2: The Legend Continues.”

The 8-episode adaptation will star Paul Rudd as Dr. Isaac “Ike” Herschkopf, the psychiatrist, and Will Ferrell as Marty Markowitz, the patient whose life he takes over. It will stream on Apple+ beginning in November.

The podcast, reported by Bloomberg columnist Joe Nocera, is dark and tragic. It narrates how, over the course of nearly three decades of therapy, Herschkopf came to dominate Markowitz’s life and finances, commandeer his house, treat him like hired help and cut him off from his family and friends.

According to the podcast and a subsequent trial at the New York State Department of Health, other patients of Herschkopf also accused him of manipulating them financially and getting them to sever relationships with their families – including a woman who, on Herschkopf’s advice, stopped speaking to her mother and didn’t attend her funeral or shiva. After an investigation of those allegations, the Department of Health ordered Herschkopf to surrender

his license in April.

The podcast is chock-full of Jewish references. Markowitz was referred to Herschkopf by Shlomo Riskin, the prominent Modern Orthodox rabbi who, at the time, led Markowitz’s synagogue. Herschkopf hosted parties at what was, in fact, Markowitz’s house and invited an array of prominent Orthodox leaders. Markowitz worked in the famously Jewish garment industry. And Herschkopf also ran a charity created by Markowitz that had a Hebrew name (and to which he instructed Markowitz to leave his millions in wealth). The list goes on.

While Rudd (born Paul Rudnitzky) is Jewish, Ferrell is not. He’s certainly not the first non-Jewish actor to take center stage in a very Jewish show, though there is no shortage of actors (including several of Rudd’s frequent collaborators, like Seth Rogen or Jason Segel) who often mine their Jewish background and culture in their acting.

The trailer for the show, released last Thursday, hints at the story’s upsetting turns. Ferrell and Rudd, of course, are not known for their work in psychological drama. They’re best known for starring in blockbuster comedies such as “Anchorman” and “I Love You, Man.”

But both actors have done dramatic work. In 2018, Paul Rudd starred in “The Catcher was a Spy,” a film about

Moe Berg, a Jewish baseball player who becomes (you guessed it) a spy in World War II, based on a true story. And Ferrell has had his share of more serious roles, including in “Stranger than Fiction,” a 2006 dramedy in which he plays an introverted, straitlaced IRS agent. His character in this trailer seems to share similar qualities.

We’ll see in November whether Ferrell and Rudd can capture the feel of the twisted story – and its Jewishness. **HW**

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## MJCC to host community festival each Sunday



The MJCC is hosting Sundays at the J – a fitness and art festival series that is open for everyone. More than 20 amazing local vendors and sellers will be displaying their goods for purchase. There will be fitness opportunities that everyone can enjoy together. So, come support local, small businesses and grab a fitness class.

Mandy Kelley, MJCC programs director for Sports, Fitness, and Aquatics, had the idea to bring the community together. She stated, “I have been at the J for nine years, and the best part of my job is being able to connect with the community. All I have been hearing from my community is how much they have missed their friends and fam-

ilies and how they have enjoyed having opportunities to reconnect. I know that some in my community have been looking at ways to get their small locally owned businesses back up and running as well. That is when I thought, why not combine the two?”

Vendors will be set up in the MJCC Lobby and will include paintings, clothing, jewelry, pottery, soaps, and much more.

So, mark your calendars for these free events, open to all, on Sundays from 8 a.m. - 12 p.m., June 27, July 25, August 29 and September 19.

For more information on the event or becoming a vendor visit [www.jccmemphis.org/SundaysAtTheJ](http://www.jccmemphis.org/SundaysAtTheJ) **HW**

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A Philadelphia festival cut an Israeli food truck, citing ‘the concerns of community.’ Response was fierce.

By Philissa Cramer

(JTA) – Organizers of an event celebrating immigrant chefs in Philadelphia have removed an Israeli food truck from the lineup, citing “the concerns of community that we love and serve.”

But the bid to calm controversy by Eat Up the Borders, the event’s organizer, backfired: After announcing the removal, thousands of people replied, with varying levels of vitriol, questioning why the group associated a chef living in Philadelphia to the policies of a country nearly 6,000 miles away.

Eat Up The Borders took its Instagram account offline early Sunday morning, under an onslaught of at least 4,200 critical comments, many from people directed to the page from various accounts devoted to chronicling and responding to antisemitism. At least one prominent account warned the organization to bulk up security at Sunday’s event.

Moshava, the month-old food truck and catering company removed from the roster of “A Taste of Home,” has attempted to defuse the situation, even as it said it believed that Eat Up the Borders had “succumb[ed] to such antisemitic and dividing” rhetoric.

“We didn’t share this with the intention to cancel or boycott anyone,” Moshava wrote late Saturday night. “The way we got canceled was terribly mishandled no doubt, but the point was to bring a positive and constructive dialog [sic] to the table not more hate and violence.”

The incident encapsulates some of the dynamics that have characterized online discussions of Israel and antisemitism in the weeks since the violence in Israel and Gaza turned social media into a battleground of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Allies of the Palestinian cause have found unprecedented allyship online; meanwhile, Jewish social media users have increasingly sought to call out instances where they see criticism

of Israel veering into antisemitism. Neither Eat Up the Borders nor Moshava Philly replied to requests for comment late Saturday. But the saga is spelled out in Instagram posts from the last several days.

It began late last week when Eat Up The Borders announced the lineup for the third iteration of Taste of Home, billed as “a curated event celebrating diversity through food” and other activities. Along with eight other vendors including a Mexican restaurant and a tea company, Moshava was on the list for the second month in a row of the festival.

Launched last month by a chef named Nir Sheynfeld who came to the U.S. in 2015 to attend culinary school, Moshava serves Israeli street food such as falafel and sabich. Its first public event was at the last Taste of Home on May 16, during the recent conflict in the Middle East.

The post announcing the lineup quickly began attracting comments criticizing the inclusion of an Israeli truck.

“I’m absolutely disgusted by the cultural appropriation of Palestinian food in this event. I will definitely not be attending and telling all my friends the same,” one user, @buzkashi, wrote in response to the announcement.

Initially, Eat Up the Borders indicated that it did not intend to relent to pressure.

“We will not be private on our values, which are uplifting the immigrant [sic] voices,” it said in an Instagram post Friday. “Our concern is not where they have immigrated from but giving a platform to small businesses here in Philadelphia.” Moshava responded with three applause emojis.

But on Saturday morning, the group reversed course.

“In order to provide the best experience to all, we decided to remove one of our food vendors from Sunday’s event,”

it wrote on Instagram. “This decision came from listening to the concerns of community that we love and serve. Our intent is never to cause harm. We’re sorry, and we realize being more educated is the first step to preventing that from happening again.”

Eat Up The Borders did not name the food truck it had removed. But Moshava filled in the details in a post on its own account in which it said it was “deeply saddened” not to be attending the event.

“The organizers of the event heard rumors of a protest happening because of us being there and decided to uninvite us from fear that the protesters would get aggressive and threaten their event,” the post said. “We were really hoping that the organizers @eatuptheborders and @sunflowerphilly would step up to the plate and defend local, small and immigrant-based businesses, no matter where they are from (as per their so called ‘mission statement’) but by the looks of it fear, violence, and intimidation got the best of them.”

Moshava also said it believed that Eat Up The Borders had given in to antisemitism.

“We really do hope that in the future you don’t succumb to such antisemitic and dividing rethoric[sic] and keep true to your words of a safe environment for all religions and nationalities — not just all of them except Israeli and Jewish ones,” the company’s account posted.

By midday Saturday, the incident had gained attention among Jewish influencers, especially within the contingent of anti-antisemitism crusaders on social media. Some simply decied it, while others explained in comments why Eat Up The Borders’ decision was objectionable. A few likened Moshava’s removal to the Nazi boycott of Jewish-run businesses in 1933, a precursor to the Holocaust.

Blake Flayton, a college student

who is among a self-described group of New Zionists fighting antisemitism online, told his Twitter followers that he saw danger in the way Eat Up The Borders explained its decision. “Notice how they word it — it sounds like justice. It sounds like inclusivity and openness. This is how antisemitism becomes mainstream.”

On Instagram, he added another line tagging the event’s organizers. “@eatuptheborders hire security if you want to ensure safety you clowns,” he wrote late Saturday night.

It was as those comments rolled in that Moshava posted again, thanking its supporters but emphasizing that Eat Up The Borders does good work.

“Let’s not dim the light they shine on local, immigrant businesses,” the company wrote, before announcing that it would be selling at a different event Sunday afternoon. On Sunday, it posted that it was meeting with both representatives of Eat Up the Borders and Sunflower Philly, the nonprofit that was hosting the event.

“We do not believe the organizers’ intention came from an antisemitic place but the threats they were receiving to their event were,” Moshava wrote. “Our shared goal for the future is to steer away from violance (sic) and hatred and be able to share a platform with all members of our community and collectively share our cultures.”

In a comment posted Saturday, a representative of Eat Up The Borders told one commenter that the saga had caught the event organizers by surprise.

“We received more hate than I thought was possible for having an Israeli vendor,” the representative wrote. “They themselves never detracted from the event. The amount of uproar we received and legitimate threats forced our hand.”

Several hours later, Eat Up The Borders was no longer online. **HW**



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