



Jewish Community News

The Publication of Jewish Federation of the Desert

www.jfedps.org

Kislev-Tevet 5786 - December 2025

**Jewish Federation of the Desert
Invites You to Our First Annual**

Chanukkah

Community Celebration

**Sunday, December 14, 2025
2 pm at the Federation Building**

Entertainment

Refreshments

Fun for All Ages

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to Light*



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Kindling Our Collective Light



Danny Labin

Chief Executive Officer,
Jewish Federation
of the Desert

As we celebrate Hanukkah this year, I would like to take a moment to reflect on the relevance of the holiday. After rebuilding and rededicating the Temple, it is the light that lasted eight nights and brought the Jewish people together. Today, light continues to symbolize the miracle of Hanukkah – and our unity.

We all recently witnessed that collective light anew as the October 7th hostages returned home. Around the world, the Jewish community came together to celebrate the hostages' release and to mourn those who will not return. That is what we do. In times of both celebration and crisis, our light unites us — here in the Coachella Valley, across the nation, in Israel and globally.

In moments of both darkness and light, we seek unity. As antisemitism continues to rise, we turn to one another for support and strength. In the face of persistent threat, we look to our community for a deeper, more meaningful connection to Jewish life. That which unites us — our faith, our traditions, and our shared values — remains our greatest source of resilience and hope.

At the core of our unity is Federation. Locally, Federation is working to strengthen Jewish identity, combat antisemitism, and ensure that our most vulnerable receive the care and services they need. Federation helps keep us safe, provides welcoming spaces for Jews seeking connection, and protects Jewish life across the Desert.

Your donation to Jewish Federation of the Desert unites and strengthens our community. With your help we can continue to build a secure, vibrant Jewish future. Our light glows stronger together.

Please consider making an end-of-year gift to Jewish Federation of the Desert. Giving is easy — simply visit Jfedps.org to donate online.

As we celebrate the miracle of Hanukkah, let us each commit to kindling the light together — not only for eight nights, but for generations to come.

Happy Hanukkah!

Upcoming Events



Arnie Gillman

Board President,
Jewish Federation
of the Desert

Looking Ahead with Gratitude: Celebrating the End of 2025 & Getting Ready for 2026!

As 2025 comes to a close, we take a moment to reflect on a remarkable year filled with community, connection, and generosity. Thanks to the continued support of our donors, volunteers and friends, our Federation has been able to make a lasting impact — strengthening Jewish life, supporting vital programs, and bringing people together in meaningful ways.

With hearts full of gratitude, we are also looking forward to an exciting start to 2026, filled with opportunities to celebrate, laugh, and give back. Please mark your calendars for these special upcoming events:



Lion of Judah Luncheon

Monday, January 12,
2026, at 9:30 am.

We're proud to honor the strength, leadership, and philanthropy of our Lion of Judah members. This inspiring gathering celebrates the women whose commitment and compassion continue to shape our community and secure our shared future.



Federation Day at Tamarisk Country Club

Wednesday, February 11, 2026, at 10 am.

Save the date for Federation Day at Tamarisk Country Club, a day of friendship, fun, and community spirit in a stunning setting. Whether you come to play golf, cards, tennis, or simply enjoy the company, this event embodies what makes our Federation so special — connection and caring.



Comedy for a Cause

February 18, 2026, at 5:30 pm.

Laughter is one of the best ways to strengthen community, and our Comedy for a Cause promises to do just that! Enjoy an evening of humor and heart with world-renown comedian Modi Rosenfeld as we raise funds to support Federation initiatives that make a difference locally and globally. Come ready to laugh — and to give generously.

With Gratitude

As we look toward 2026, we extend our heartfelt thanks to every donor and supporter who makes the impact of Federation possible. Your generosity fuels programs that educate, inspire, and strengthen Jewish life.. Together, we are building a future rooted in compassion, community, and hope.

Thank you for being part of our story — and for helping us continue to write new chapters filled with celebration, laughter, and purpose – together.

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Women's Philanthropy: The Heart of Our Federation

Fran Kaufman, Women's Philanthropy Chair

Women's Philanthropy is the backbone of the Jewish Federation of the Desert. We are the key decision-makers in directing our charitable giving — but we are also about community. According to the Torah, it is our sacred duty to honor one another through acts of kindness, to support those in need, and to bring joy and fulfillment to our lives and those around us.

After a period of inactivity brought on by COVID-19, it's time to come together once again. Under the leadership of Leslie Pepper, Director of Community Engagement and Women's Philanthropy, we are re-energizing with new programs and opportunities to connect.

We recently hosted a Women's Philanthropy event: a meaningful Zoom dialogue with Rabbi Angela Buchdahl of New York's Central Synagogue in conversation with Abigail Pogrebin about Rabbi Buchdahl's new book *Heart of*

a Stranger. More programs are already being planned for the coming months.

Lion of Judah

Our annual Lion of Judah Brunch will take place on Monday, January 12th at Tamarisk Country Club, chaired by Katie Small, Nina Zale, Stephanie Ross and Fran Kaufman. We are honored to welcome Izzy Ezagui, an American IDF lone soldier who lost his arm fighting for Israel, as our guest speaker.

- The annual donation for local Lions is \$5,000.

- Those giving their Lion pledge through their hometown federation may attend with a \$1,800 contribution.

A special thank-you to Robin Berman for



Fran Kaufman

generously underwriting the event's floral arrangements, and to Katie Small and Stephanie Ross for underwriting a copy of Izzy's book for all attendees.

Kosher Meals Project

We are also excited to support a new volunteer initiative spearheaded by Chabad of Palm Springs to prepare and deliver 100 Kosher meals weekly to local Jewish community members in need. The Lion of Judah Committee, through our Tzedakah Fund, has recommended donating \$2,000 to cover four weeks of meals (\$500 per week). Volunteers are welcome every Wednesday morning to help with meal preparation. Contributions

may be made through our Tzedakah Fund by earmarking "Desert Community Kitchen."

Looking ahead, Women's Philanthropy is planning a special Spring event featuring The Braid, the acclaimed Jewish theatrical ensemble. Admission will be a \$365 donation to our campaign — just a dollar a day to support our shared mission.

We invite all women in our community to join us at our upcoming Women's Philanthropy meetings, to get involved, and make your voices heard. Together, we can strengthen our bonds, live our values, and continue to make a meaningful impact in the Jewish community and beyond.

IDF Soldier Izzy Ezagui to Speak at Lion of Judah Brunch in January

Izzy Ezagui: A Portrait of Courage and Inspiration

Izzy Ezagui is a young American who volunteered to fight in the Israel Defense Forces, lost his arm in combat, and then returned to the battlefield. On January 8, 2009, Izzy Ezagui—an American who had enlisted in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) at nineteen—lost his arm in a mortar attack on the border of the Gaza Strip. few) girl troubles. His search for direction eventually led him to that explosion on the Gaza border, changing his life forever. In the midst of disaster, Izzy discovered a deep well at his core, from which he could draw strength. Through his motivational speeches across the world, and now through this book, he encourages people to seek their own power, and to face whatever adversity life throws at them. Izzy Ezagui, a decorated squad commander in the Israel Defense Forces, is the only soldier in the world who lost an arm in combat and returned to the battlefield. In 2011, former President Shimon Peres awarded him one of Israel's highest military honors. While he continues to serve in an elite unit in the reserves, Izzy delivers inspirational talks across the United States and



internationally. He's appeared on the Huffington Post Live, Al Jazeera America, and Fox News. He also raises millions of dollars for hospitals, rehabilitation programs, and other charities, such as the Birthright Foundation. He has worked with amputee organization, schools, colleges, universities, hedge funds, and corporate events for companies such as Nike and Apple.

Izzy Ezagui's story is one of extraordinary resilience and purpose.

For more information on becoming a Lion of Judah please contact Leslie Pepper, 760-333-4869 or leslie.pepper@jfedps.org



Women's Philanthropy Community Initiative

Women's Philanthropy is proud to sponsor four weeks of food purchasing, preparation, and delivery of over 100 wholesome, nutritious, and balanced kosher meals to hundreds of Valley residents during this time of increased food insecurity.

Through our Federation's Tzedakah Fund, we have recently donated \$2,000 toward the cost of these meals.

Please join Leslie Pepper, Director of Community Engagement and Women's Philanthropy, on **Wednesdays — November 19, November 26, December 3, and December 10** — at Chabad of Palm Springs to help prepare these much-needed and deeply appreciated meals.

The meals will be distributed through Rabbi Kreiman's Bikur Cholim, Well in the Desert, and Kosher Meals on Wheels.

If you would like to make a donation to the Federation's Tzedakah Fund and earmark it for kosher meals, please contact the Jewish Federation of the Desert at 760-324-4737 or email Leslie.pepper@jfedps.org

No donation is too small — every contribution helps bring nourishment and hope to those in need within our community.

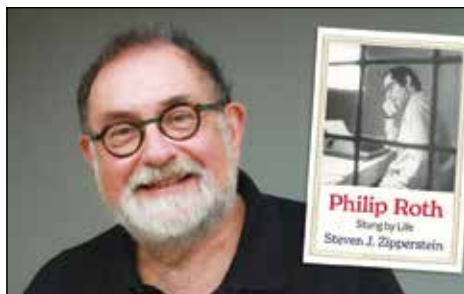


Steven Zipperstein 'In Person' January 22

Author of "Philip Roth: Stung by Life" in Conversation with UCR Professor Michael Alexander at Jewish Federation

The Jewish Federation of the Desert in partnership with the University of California, Riverside welcome Professor Steven Zipperstein for a talk on his recent book, Philip Roth: Stung by Life, the landmark biography of one of our most prominent chroniclers of American life. He will be joined in conversation by Maimonides Chair of Jewish Studies, Professor Michael Alexander on Thursday January 22 at 4:00 pm.

In this groundbreaking literary biography, Steven J. Zipperstein captures the complex life and astonishing work of Philip Roth (1933–2018), one of



America's most celebrated writers. Born in Newark, New Jersey—where his short stories and books were often set—Roth wrote with ambition and awareness of what was required to produce great literature. No writer

was more dedicated to his craft, even as he was rubbing shoulders with the Kennedys and engaging in a spate of famous and infamous romances. And yet, as much as Roth wrote about sex and self, he viewed himself as socially withdrawn, living much like an "unchaste monk" (his words).

Zipperstein explores the unprecedented range of Roth's work—from "Goodbye, Columbus" and Portnoy's Complaint to the Pulitzer Prize-winning American Pastoral and The Plot Against America. Drawing upon extensive archival materials and over one hundred interviews, including conversations with Roth about his life and work, Zipperstein provides an intimate and insightful look at one of the twentieth century's most influential writers, placing his work in the context of his obsessions, as well as American Jewishness, freedom, and sexuality.

Steven J. Zipperstein is the Daniel E. Koshland Professor in Jewish Culture and History at Stanford University. He is the author and editor of ten books, including Rosenfeld's Lives: Fame, Oblivion, and the Furies of Writing and Pogrom: Kishinev and the Tilt of History.

Hold the Date Jewish Federation Feast of Jewish Learning Sunday, March 29, 2026 • 10:00 – 3:00

Join us for a day of inspiring learning, conversation, and connection featuring four outstanding scholars and educators.

Featured Presenters

Professor Pamela Nadell

"Antisemitism: An American Tradition"

An historical exploration of antisemitism in America spanning four centuries —from colonial times through today's rise in hate crimes.

Dr. Janette Silverman

"Stories They Never Told Us"

A professional Jewish genealogist specializing in Jewish and Eastern European research, including Sephardic Jewish ancestry.

Dr. Jonathon Branfman

"Millennial Jewish Stars"

A Postdoctoral Fellow in Jewish Studies at Stanford University, he examines six well-known Jewish stars and what their surprising success reveals about race, gender, and antisemitism in America.

Dr. Steven Windmueller

A noted scholar and Professor Emeritus at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Los Angeles, Dr. Windmueller teaches contemporary political and American Jewish affairs and serves as a Fellow at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and on the boards of the Jewish Federation and Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles.



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EDITORIAL

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

JCN STATEMENT

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

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100 Australian Doctors Prepare to Immigrate to Israel

Etgar Lefkovits, Jewish News Syndicate

Over one hundred Australian doctors gathered in both Melbourne and Sydney as part of a major immigration fair for medical professionals planning on moving to Israel following the war against Hamas in Gaza.

The event comes amid a sharp rise in antisemitism around the world following the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas-led attack on southern Israel. In Australia, currently ruled by a strongly anti-Israel government, a synagogue and a Jewish daycare center were firebombed and Jewish-owned properties and cars have been vandalized.

The attacks have shaken the 110,000-strong Jewish community in Australia, which is strongly Zionist, in no small part because Australia long served as the second largest refuge for Holocaust survivors after Israel.

"The reality is that if you would have run this conference before Oct. 7 you would have at 10% of what you have now," said

Dr. Jonathan Levy, 50, a GP who relocated to Australia from the United Kingdom over two decades ago and who now intends to move to Israel with his four children. "There has always been a strong pull factor to Israel, but now there is a very strong push factor that didn't used to exist," he added.

"Oct. 7 cemented and reinforced why we want to come to Israel," said Dr. Daniel Diamond, 33, an Australian GP who married an American-Israeli he had met in Israel three years ago when taking some time off, afterwards returning to Australia to finish his medical training. "The comfort level of life here went away after Oct. 7," he said.

"You can feel the vibrant and Zionist community in the air," Aliya and Integration Minister Ofir Sofer told JNS at the fair in Melbourne. "I came to strengthen, and I came away strengthened."

The 100 medical professionals who attended the inaugural Australian event

specialize in 22 fields of medicine and are being recruited by some 16 medical institutions in Israel.

"We were always planning to make aliyah to Israel—it was always the pull," said Dr. Michal Bloch, a 35-year-old Australian general pediatrician who is planning the move with her husband and four kids.

Bloch, who already did a rotation in the emergency room at Jerusalem's Sha'are Zedek Medical Center when in medical school and worked at Magen David Adom, praised the streamlined process offered by the program, and is following in the

footsteps of her doctor sister who moved to Israel eight years ago.

"The physicians we met in Australia are not only exceptional professionals but also deeply motivated by a sense of purpose and connection to Israel," said Tony Gelbart, co-founder and chairman of Nefesh B'Nefesh.

"Bringing Jewish doctors to Israel is a profound expression of modern Zionism," said JA chairman Doron Almog. "This initiative is a living testament to mutual solidarity and the deep connection between Israel and world Jewry."

Greater Palm Springs Pride Week 2025



Sporting tee shirts reading "Jewish and Proud," printed and distributed by our Jewish Federation of the Desert, participants from the many

synagogues, temples, and chaverot of our desert community proudly marched in this year's Greater Palm Springs Pride Parade. Temple Sinai's Desert Keshet, led by their Rabbi David Novak, came with their sign. Others recognized the identification and joined them, which included members of Temple Isaiah and Rabbi Ken Emert of Sun City Jewish Services. Desert Outreach Synagogue marched in the parade with their Rabbi Jules King. For the entire Pride Weekend Havurah of the Desert hosted

a booth about LGBTQ+ Jewish inclusion.

Jewish Federation CEO Danny Labin had the opportunity to address the crowd, speaking alongside Palm Springs Mayor Ron deHarte and all the members of the Palm Springs City Council.

Kicking off Pride weekend, Rabbi David Lazar of Or Hamidbar held a Interfaith Pride Shabbat Service, where he was joined by Christian and Buddhist clergy. Danny Labin addressed the service, which included Palm Springs City Council member Grace Elena Garner.



CELEBRATE THE FIRST NIGHT OF CHANUKAH IN STYLE!

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Pomona College Bans Students Who Raided Jewish Event from Campus

Campus Security Did Nothing to Stop the Disturbance

By Dion J. Pierre, *The Algemeiner*

Pomona College, located 78 miles from Palm Springs, working with its sister institutions in the Claremont consortium of liberal arts colleges in California (5C), has identified and imposed disciplinary sanctions on members of a group who stormed a Jewish event recently held on campus to commemorate the victims of Hamas's Oct. 7, 2023, massacre across southern Israel.

Footage of the incident showed the group, whose members concealed their faces with keffiyeh scarves, attempting to raid the event venue while screaming expletives and pro-Hamas slogans. They ultimately failed due to the prompt response of the Claremont Colleges Jewish chaplain and other attendees who formed a barrier in front of the door to repel them, a defense they mounted on their own as campus security personnel did nothing to stop the disturbance.

Later, the group behind the incident issued a disturbing open letter on social media. "Satan dared not look us in the eyes," the note said, while



attacking event guests and Oct. 7 survivor Yoni Viloga. "Immediately, zionists [sic] swarmed us, put their hands on us, shoved us, while Viloga retreated like he did on October 7th, 2023."

Appearing to threaten murder, the group added, "We let that coward know he and his fascists settler ideology are not welcome here nor anywhere. Zionism is a death cult that must be dealt with

accordingly [sic]."

After an exhaustive investigation Pomona College determined that two of the young people involved in the raid are enrolled in sister schools it would not identify due to privacy laws. It has banned them from the Pomona campus. Two other individuals remain at large.

"Given the gravity of the alleged offense — and the published statement that has raised significant concerns about similar disruptions in the future — I have initiated an interim campus ban for both individuals, pending further inquiries, and in line with

our policy," Pomona College president Gabrielle Starr said in a statement. "The alleged behavior here is serious, and to ensure an appropriate adjudication is reached, the college is committed to maintaining a fair process." She added, "I assure you that Pomona hopes for — and will advocate for — an outcome that ensures our campuses are free of the kind of targeted harassment we witnessed."

The campus antisemitism crisis in the US continues to rage, more than two years after the Oct. 7 massacre. Last month National Students for Justice in Palestine (NSJP), a primary organ of the student anti-Zionist movement in the US, appeared to call for executing Muslim "collaborators" working with Israel in retaliation for the death of Palestinian influencer Saleh Al-Jafarawi during a conflict between the Hamas terrorist group and a rival clan, Doghmush, in Gaza City.

The statement went on to volley a series of unfounded charges alleging that anti-Hamas forces are "exploiting Gaza's youth for money" and pilfering "desperately needed aid to the killing of their own people in service of Zionism." NSJP concluded, "Death to the occupation. Death to Zionism. Death to all collaborators."

Jewish Men's Outreach Group of the Desert Launches Annual Holiday Toy Drive

By Barry Fisher



Toys from 2024 Toy Drive delivered to Aleph Schoolhouse by JMOGD members (photo from January 2025 JCN)

children during the holiday season.

"This is one of several programs we organize each year to give back to our community ... "The holidays remind us of the importance of generosity and compassion—and this is a simple way to make a real difference in a child's life."

JMOGD encourages individuals, families, and businesses to participate in the toy drive by contacting JMOGD2020@gmail.com for drop-off information or to arrange a donation.

"The act of giving is at the heart of our mission. It's a wonderful way to do a mitzvah and share the joy of the season with those less fortunate."

This year the JMODG toy drive is partnering with the Federation and the Hanukkah Party on December 14th is one great way to donate an unopened and unwrapped toy through the JMODG drive.

The Jewish Men's Outreach Group of the Desert (JMOGD) has announced the launch of its annual Holiday Toy Drive to benefit children and families in need throughout the Coachella Valley.

The drive, one of JMOGD's signature community service initiatives, invites residents to donate new, unwrapped toys that will be distributed to local

JMOGD
JEWISH MENS OUTREACH GROUP OF THE DESERT

Join the Jewish Men's Outreach Group of the Desert (JMOGD)

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- Annual Dinner Dance
- Couples Gatherings
- And much more

We support holiday Toy and Book Drives for Loma Linda Hospital, assist local Kosher homes through Angel View, and contribute to the Jewish Federation of the Desert through our annual membership drive.

Women of JMOGD enjoy special luncheons throughout the year.

With over 200 members and growing, there's a place for you in our community.

Visit www.jmogd.org to learn more and get involved today!

Israel's New Plane: Hovers Like a Butterfly, Stings Like a Bee

By Aharon Lapidot, Jewish News Syndicate

The Blue Sky Warden aircraft, the result of a collaboration between Israel Aerospace Industries and the U.S. company L3Harris Technologies, embodies an innovative concept in light strike and reconnaissance aircraft.

It is an enhanced iteration of the Air Tractor aircraft, which is originally a farming workhorse and an aerial firefighter, and also serves in Israel in the Elad Squadron, the aerial firefighting squadron.

The new version of the aircraft will be adapted in Israel for intelligence, observation and light strike missions, with an emphasis on low operating cost, prolonged air endurance and fast response.

The choice of a durable, light and simple-to-maintain platform provides a solution for the needs of the Gaza and Lebanon borders, where continuous aerial presence is required, but not necessarily supersonic interception or the operation of expensive fighter jets.

The approach led by Israel Aerospace Industries relies on rich experience in converting civilian platforms for military purposes, such as the Westwind (Shavit) that was converted into a maritime intelligence aircraft and the Eitam and Oron models, which are advanced intelligence aircraft based on U.S. Gulfstream business jets.

Other aircraft, which were refined, developed and produced by IAI, include the Arava, a dedicated light transport aircraft, and the Kfir and Nesher fighter jets, based on the French Mirage 5.

Especially remembered is the daring, unsuccessful attempt to produce an advanced and independent Israeli fighter jet, the IAI's Lavi, whose development was halted by the U.S. administration in 1987.

In addition, many Gulfstream business jets were manufactured, developed and



The Blue Sky Warden

assembled in collaboration with IAI. The cooperation focuses on the production of specific models such as the G280, whose development and production are carried out by IAI, and other models produced in the past, such as the G100 (Astra), which were designed by the Israeli side.

The IAI is also a world leader in converting passenger aircraft, such as the Boeing 777, into cargo planes.

The integration of advanced Israeli systems into the Blue Sky Warden, such as open mission interfaces, encrypted communication, electro-optical sensor pods and a dedicated doctrine, turns the platform into a modern tool capable of integrating into the IDF's operational network and providing constant awareness, fast response and precise operational capability along the borders.

It is not a replacement for fighter jets like the F-35 or for an escort force, but a flexible addition to the aerial mix. It allows field commanders to monitor patterns, direct interceptions and respond to changing targets, all without straining expensive fighter jets or advanced drones.

In fact, it returns the routine missions that take the most significant resources of the Israeli Air Force to cheap and reliable platforms.

Similar platforms exist in the international arena—the U.S. AT-802 from Air Tractor, the Brazilian Super Tucano (Embraer), the U.S. OV-10 Bronco and the U.S. IOMAX Archangel—all demonstrating the trend of using light aircraft, sometimes agricultural, that have been converted for strike and reconnaissance missions.

In the U.S., a debate has been ongoing about how to balance cost, flexibility and survivability in an era where advanced air defense systems threaten the operational freedom of fighter jets. The choice by the U.S. Special Operations Command of the military version of the Sky Warden, called the OA-1K Skyraider II, is a clear response to that problem.

When it is inefficient to send heavy and expensive aircraft on a mission, it is still possible to achieve intelligence control and

limited strike capability using a simple and cheap platform.

In Israel, the need is similar, but more geographically focused—not strategic superiority thousands of miles away, but a reliable presence along the border fence.

If the Blue Sky Warden succeeds in this mission, it may become a significant tool in the IDF's toolkit. It will not be a glittering air symbol like the F-35 Adir or the F-15I Ra'am, but a diligent worker that will prevent dozens of small crises and save expensive flight hours.

Alongside its advantages, the Blue Sky Warden has clear limitations: It is vulnerable to modern air defense threats and is therefore effective mainly in sectors where the aerial risk is limited. Its success depends on meticulous mission planning, quality intelligence and wise integration into the overall array, while maintaining a high cost-benefit ratio.

The choice of this aircraft continues an Israeli tradition of adapting existing solutions to changing operational needs and combines advanced engineering capabilities with simple operational logic aimed at improving Israel's security efficiently and significantly.

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JFS's Highly Anticipated 23rd Annual Patron Party, December 7

Jewish Family Service of the Desert (JFS), a non-sectarian provider of the social service needs of the Jewish and general community for over 42 years, invites you to attend our Annual Patron Party on Sunday, December 7, 2025. This fun and always enjoyable event will take place at the historic "Clancy Lane" in Rancho Mirage from 6:00 to 8:00 pm.

This signature event is the organization's annual party and celebration honoring key Patrons who have loyally and unwaveringly supported Jewish Family Service of the Desert. JFS Patrons attending this year's soiree will be able to mix, mingle and enjoy live music, while also enjoying a scrumptious cocktail supper catered by the highly regarded Eight4Nine Restaurant in Palm Springs.

"I look forward to each year's Patron Party because it's an opportunity to engage with

many of our Patrons at one time, giving me the chance to learn more about them and why they support our agency," said Kraig Johnson, Executive Director of Jewish Family Service of the Desert. "Invariably, they appreciate the significant improvements our programs offer. Counseling helps individuals or families better deal with life's many difficulties, offering information and exercises to mitigate the deleterious effects of unchecked mental health concerns. Case managers help keep clients housed and fed, while helping clients map out potential long-term solutions to help stabilize the household. And, community outreach offers interactive programs for our local seniors, including our Holocaust survivors and children of Holocaust survivors, to help reduce isolation, preserve cognition, and to help our seniors age in dignity. Patrons and staff enjoy fantastic food and spirits, a

lovely setting, and the appreciation of the importance of what we do together for our community."

"Our patrons are like-minded Philanthropists who make it possible for JFS to offer life-saving programs and services to the most vulnerable residents, families, and individuals in the Coachella Valley," said Cheryl Scarlett, Director of Major Gifts and Fundraising for JFS. "The Patron Party is a not-to-be-missed exclusive event to thank our JFS Patrons for their generous support. Please consider supporting us at the highest level possible. Benefactor Patrons and above receive VIP reservations to all of our three wonderful events for the 2025-2026 season."

Jewish Family Service of the Desert's Patron levels include Visionary Patron at \$25,000; Angel Patron at \$10,000; Champion Patron at \$5,000; Benefactor

Patron at \$3,000; and Advocate Patron at \$1,200.

"When I decided I wanted to volunteer and give back to our community, I had hundreds of choices," said Meri Neilsen, President of the JFS Board of Directors. "Every charity is wonderful and worthwhile, but I decided that JFS was the organization I wanted to give my time to because it provides so many different services to so many people here in the Coachella Valley, regardless of race, religion, or persuasion. Our major fundraiser, our Patron Party, will take place at a beautiful home in Rancho Mirage that will give our Patrons the opportunity to help provide the services to those most in need in the Coachella Valley."

For reservations and any additional information, please call Cheryl Scarlett at 760-325-4088 ext. 107 or email her at cscarlett@jfsdesert.org

City of Palm Springs Proclamation: "Hannah Senesh Day" November 7



The City of Palm Springs named Friday, November 7 as Hannah Senesh Day with a proclamation from Mayor Pro Tem Naomi Soto (center) joined by the Jewish Federation of the Desert staff and community supporters. The event was a collaboration between Jewish Federation of the Desert and the Mensch International Foundation. (L to R) Halle Kohn-Levine, Stephanie Ross, Leslie Pepper, Steven Geiger, Ezra Noriega, Naomi Soto, Danny Labin, Rabbi Kenneth Emert, Barbara Platt, Lola Rossi and Yehuda Gidron.

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COMEDY FOR A CAUSE

Hadassah's Gandel Rehabilitation Center – Inaugurated October 27

President Isaac Herzog and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu helped inaugurate Israel's most advanced rehabilitation center, the Hadassah Medical Organization's Gandel Rehabilitation Center, in Jerusalem on Monday, October 27, 2025. The leaders joined Carol Ann Schwartz, National President, and Ellen Finkelstein, CEO, respectively, of Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, which owns the medical center and whose members contributed significantly to the new rehabilitation center's funding; Yoram Weiss, MD, the medical center's director general; and Dalia Itzik, its board chair. Also on hand were government ministers, Knesset members, donors, staff members, and, critically, many recovering soldiers.

More than 2,000 soldiers and civilians have already regained their physical and emotional health because of the center's sophisticated facilities, cutting-edge therapies and compassionate and highly trained staff. Many of the center's patients came to the center after receiving life-saving care at one of Hadassah's two hospitals, Hadassah Hospital Mount Scopus, on whose campus the Gandel center is located, and Hadassah Hospital Ein Kerem, both in

Jerusalem.

Recognizing Israel's acute shortage of rehabilitation beds, the Hadassah Medical Organization began construction of the eight floor Gandel center several years ago, accelerating the opening after October 7, 2023. The first wing opened just three months after the terrorist attack, offering wounded soldiers access to the most comprehensive and advanced treatments available.

The center's principal donor is Australia's Gandel Foundation, whose deputy chairman, Graham Goldsmith, attended the opening. To support this project, the Foundation, which is headed by John and Pauline Gandel, made its largest gift ever, that generosity supplemented by millions of dollars in donations made by members of Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, and Hadassah International, its global fundraising arm.

The Gandel center's many state-of-the-art facilities include therapeutic swimming pools, each with a modular floor that can be adapted to a patient's needs; advanced lifts for moving patients not yet able to get around on their own; computerized systems that track range of motion; and a

sophisticated gait laboratory.

The large and compassionate staff of doctors; nurses; occupational, physical and speech therapists; psychologists; social workers; and nutritionists uses traditional and futuristic-looking equipment, like anti-gravity machines and robotic technologies, to bring patients back to health.

Unveiled at the launch was the Boulevard of Revival, located in the Gandel center's lobby. The "boulevard" features imprints of the footprints of IDF officers and soldiers, amplifying the idea central to the center's ethos that no one walks alone and that progress is made step by step.

In his remarks at the opening event, President Herzog described the Gandel Rehabilitation Center as "granting an essential gift to every human being it helps: hope – hope for the healing of the soul and the strengthening of the body, hope for independence, hope to dream again."

Acknowledging the significant financial contributions of Hadassah members all over the United States, Prime Minister Netanyahu quoted his father, the late historian Benzion Netanyahu, who once told him that "women can be a pivotal force. Just look at the women of Hadassah!"

Hadassah National President Carol Ann Schwartz told the guests that Hadassah's members had "eagerly joined Israel's national mission, determined to raise the funds needed to open the Gandel Rehabilitation Center ahead of time out of a sense of duty to care for the wounded."

"The investment in infrastructure and equipment, made possible only by the extraordinary generosity of many in Israel and worldwide, enabled us to build the most advanced rehabilitation system in the Middle East," said Dalia Itzik, Chair, Board of Directors, Hadassah Medical Organization.

"For more than a year and a half, the team at the Hadassah Medical Organization's Gandel Rehabilitation Center has been proving its true strength — in healing, in emotional and psychological support, in uncompromising professionalism and in compassion," said Yoram Weiss, MD, Director General, Hadassah Medical Organization, adding that it is due to the staff's dedication and relentless commitment that the Gandel center's patients have been able to "begin their new lives strengthened, prepared for the challenges ahead and in a spirit of victory and determination."

Campus Antisemitism Surges at Start of New Academic Year, New Report Finds

By Dion J. Pierre, The Algemeiner

Incidents of campus antisemitism continue to rise around the world, as revealed in a new monthly report published by the Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) civil rights organization.

Published by the group's Antisemitism Research Center (ARC), the report said CAM recorded 53 antisemitic incidents on college campuses in the month of September, a 178 percent increase over the previous month, when 19 were recorded despite students

not being present on campus during the summer holiday.

"This surge reflects the resumption of the academic year and the persistent problem of antisemitism at colleges and university," the report said.

"In France, students at Sorbonne University in Paris discussed a targeted shooting attack against Jewish students at the school. In Argentina, students at the Universidad Nacional de Córdoba seized

control of parts of the campus, protesting Israel's 'genocide' of the Palestinians."

The report added that the US saw 38 campus antisemitism incidents in September, several of which The Algemeiner reported.

In upstate New York, for example, law enforcement agencies filed hate crime charges against two Syracuse University students who they say forcefully gained entry into a Jewish fraternity's off-campus house during Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, and heaved a bag of pork at a wall, causing its contents to splatter across the floor.

Allen Groves, the university's chief officer of student experience, said in a statement issued on behalf of the school that law enforcement captured the suspects just moments after they attempted to abscond to an unknown location in a getaway car.

He added that they will face disciplinary charges brought by the school in addition to pending criminal penalties.

In Hanover, New Hampshire, an unknown person or group graffitied a swastika, the symbol of the Nazi Party, outside the dormitory of a Jewish student at Dartmouth College.

The graffitiiing of a swastika as a method of intimidation and expression of hate on the campus shocked Dartmouth's Jewish community and stood out for being perpetrated only days before Jews across the US and the world observed Rosh Hashanah.

"With Jewish high holidays around the corner, our community feels the impact of this crime even more profoundly," Ruby Benjamin, a Jewish Dartmouth student and president of the campus Chabad, told The Dartmouth, the college's official student newspaper.

"In a time that should be marked with joy, we are forced to look hatred in the eye. While we are disgusted by yesterday's events, we are not afraid. Today, as always, we stand together as a strong community."

In Manhattan, New York, an unknown person graffitied antisemitic messages inside the Weinstein residence hall at New York University, prompting school president Linda Mills to issue a statement condemning antisemitism and imploring students to uphold the institution's values.

The outrages continued into the month of October.

Just last week, Cornell University took center stage in another campus antisemitism outrage when its student newspaper published an anti-Zionist opinion piece which promoted Holocaust inversion by melding a Nazi symbol with the Star of David.

Written by Karim-Aly Assam, the article implied an equivalence of Israel's military objective to eradicate Hamas from Gaza with the Nazi genocide of Jews across Europe during World War II, a trope which anti-Israel activists and antisemites traffic to foster negative public opinion against Israel's efforts to secure its borders and quell jihadist activity in the Palestinian territories.

The tactic — Holocaust inversion — is one part of a triad of Holocaust-skepticism, the other two components of which are "denial" and "distortion" — used to defame Jews and deny that they are and have been victims of hatred.

Once reserved to neo-Nazi media, Holocaust inversion, experts say, is being increasingly embraced by other more mainstream segments of society.

A new survey conducted by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and the Academic Engagement Network (AEN) found that staff and faculty are accelerating the antisemitism crisis on US college campuses by politicizing the classroom, promoting anti-Israel bias, and even discriminating against Jewish colleagues.

The survey of "Jewish-identifying US-based faculty members" found that 73 percent of Jewish faculty witnessed their colleagues engaging in antisemitic activity, and a significant percentage named the Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine (FSJP) group as the force driving it.

Of those aware of an FSJP chapter on their campus, the vast majority of respondents reported that the chapter engaged in anti-Israel programming (77.2 percent), organized anti-Israel protests and demonstrations (79.4 percent), and endorsed anti-Israel divestment campaigns (84.8 percent).

Additionally, 50 percent of respondents said that anti-Zionist faculty have established de facto, or "shadow," boycotts of Israel on campus even in the absence of formal declaration or recognition of one by the administration.

"What we're seeing is a betrayal of the fundamental principles of academic freedom and collegiality," ADL chief executive officer Jonathan Greenblatt said in a statement when the report was released.

"Jewish faculty are being forced to hide their identities, excluded from professional opportunities, and told by their own colleagues what constitutes antisemitism — even as they experience it firsthand. This hostile environment is driving talented educators and researchers away from careers they've dedicated their lives to building."

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California Governor Gavin Newsom signs 'Landmark' Bill to Counter Antisemitism in K-12 Public Schools

The governor signed the measure on the second anniversary of the Oct. 7, 2023 terrorist attacks

By Gabe Stutman, "J, The Jewish News of Northern California"

Gov. Gavin Newsom has signed a bitterly contested bill to combat antisemitism in public schools, garnering praise from Jewish groups and blowback from opponents.

The California Legislature passed AB 715 on September 13, but Newsom chose the second anniversary of the Oct. 7 terrorist attack in Israel, as the day to sign it into law.

"Antisemitism is a historic scourge and needs to be addressed aggressively," Newsom said in a message accompanying his signature on the legislation, which supporters call the first of its kind in the nation.

The bill requires the state to appoint an antisemitism prevention coordinator for California's K-12 schools to monitor and address the anti-Jewish hate that has escalated after the Oct. 7 attack and the ensuing war. It also strengthens tools for reporting "discriminatory content" in classrooms and establishes an Office of Civil Rights, which will hire coordinators to respond to and address antisemitism and other forms of bias. Described in a companion bill called SB 74, the Office of Civil Rights will employ the coordinators to prevent religious, race, ethnicity, gender and LGBTQ discrimination.

The Jewish Community Relations Council Bay Area touted AB 715 as a "landmark bill" and a "victory against antisemitism in our schools ... Our community truly answered the call."

AB 715 traces its roots to the statewide fight over ethnic studies, which predates the Oct. 7 massacre. An early draft of a statewide model curriculum for ethnic studies, released in 2019, treated boycotts of Israel favorably, did not meaningfully address antisemitism and included a controversial rap lyric about Israel manipulating the press.

But after antisemitic incidents, including the harassment and bullying of Jewish students, have continued to grow and intensify across the state, the bill's authors reworked the measure to instead apply broadly to K-12 schools.

Many reported incidents have been linked to a belief that the state of Israel is illegitimate, and that "Zionists" are a pernicious force for evil. Opponents of the bill have argued that such incidents are either warranted criticism of Israel or do

not rise to the level of antisemitism.

In Oakland, for example, Jewish community leaders spoke out forcefully after the teachers union there released a statement after Oct. 7, 2023, that condemned the founding of the Jewish state but not of Hamas. Weeks later, Oakland teachers held an unauthorized "teach-in" using anti-Zionist materials for students as young as kindergarten.

A group of Jewish families scrambled to gain permission to leave the district during the middle of the 2023-2024 school year, including parents who said they could not let their kindergartner wear Star of David pajamas to school on pajama day out of fear.

The bill was opposed by many organizations, including the largest teachers union in the state and progressive and anti-Zionist groups.

CAIR-CA, the California chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, said it "condemns" Newsom for approving the measure and predicted that the bill would "chill classroom instruction" by "pressuring teachers to avoid discussion of Palestine."

The ACLU criticized the bill for relying on the U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, released in May 2023 by the Biden administration. The national strategy cites the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism, which has come under fire from left-leaning activists for painting some criticism of Israel — such as equating Israeli policy with that of Nazi Germany, depending on the context — as antisemitic.

AB 715 itself does not mention the IHRA definition.

"If our schools and state agencies begin using the IHRA definition of antisemitism to understand and prevent antisemitism, protected speech would inevitably be chilled," ACLU California Action wrote in a Sept. 16 letter urging Newsom to veto the bill.

Anti-Zionist organizations in California similarly excoriated the legislation as a right-wing attack on speech and education.



Governor Gavin Newsom



Map of Middle East used in Oakland schools, replacing "Israel" with "Palestine."

Meanwhile, mainstream Jewish organizations celebrated Newsom's approval of the measure.

"Today is a historic day for California's Jewish community and for every child who has ever felt unsafe, unseen, or unwelcome at school," said David Bocarsly, executive director of the Jewish Public Affairs Committee of California (JPAC).

JPAC lobbies on behalf of about 40 Jewish Federations, Jewish Community Relations Councils and other mainstream Jewish nonprofits in California. JPAC actively backed AB 715 and mobilized a statewide campaign of supporters who lobbied their representatives and spoke at legislative hearings.

Bill co-author Dawn Addis (D-Morro Bay), a former teacher and a member of California's Legislative Jewish Caucus, also celebrated the bill's passage.

"This is a historic first-in-the-nation effort that centers on the wellbeing of children across our state, many of whom bravely shared horrific stories about their experiences in our schools," Addis said. "When we hear what these kids and families have faced, it becomes impossible not to act."

MEET THE TEAM

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Two Convicted of Attempting to Provide Material Support to ISIS in New York Court

Jewish News Syndicate

Abdullah At Taqi, 26, was convicted on October 24 by a jury on all counts of an indictment charging him and co-defendant Mohammad Daniel Hashimi, 38, of conspiring to provide material support to

ISIS and conspiring to launder money, the U.S. Department of Justice announced. Hashimi previously pleaded guilty to all counts of the indictment as jury selection was scheduled to begin on October 6.

"Taqi conspired to support the group and its atrocities by funneling cryptocurrency to ISIS fighters, hoping they would establish a stronghold in the Middle East from which the group could destabilize the entire region,"


John A. Eisenberg, assistant attorney general for national security, stated. "This conviction reflects the department's commitment to holding accountable those who knowingly finance terrorism."

At Taqi and Hashimi, along with two others separately charged and convicted, used Bitcoin, PayPal, and GoFundMe to collectively transfer thousands of dollars to the Islamic State, which were partially disguised as charitable giving.

According to the Justice Department, At Taqi was found to have engaged in 15 Bitcoin transactions to Osama Obeida, an avowed ISIS member, for nearly a year, and Hashimi was part of a group chat of ISIS supporters in 2021, where they discussed disguising links as raising money for humanitarian purposes but would actually go toward ISIS.

At sentencing, each defendant faces a maximum penalty of 60 years in prison.

"ISIS relies on supporters, like the defendants, to sponsor its terrorist aims, which is why our office and our law enforcement partners are working tirelessly to disrupt that pipeline and prosecute those who provide material support to terrorist organizations and their evildoers," said Joseph Nocella Jr., U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York.



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Advocates Decry 'Pogrom on the Playground' After Jewish Children Targeted in Chicago Suburb

By Grace Gilson

A heavily Jewish suburb of Chicago has condemned antisemitism after an investigation confirmed reports that a group of Jewish children were attacked with pellet guns and subjected to antisemitic rhetoric in a public park earlier this month.

The incident took place on Oct. 7, the first day of the Jewish holiday of Sukkot and the second anniversary of the Hamas attack on Israel, in Shawnee Park, which is located blocks from a number of the town's Orthodox synagogues.

It occurred when five children between the ages of 8 and 13, were approached by another group of children who asked if they were Jewish, according to the Chicago Jewish Alliance, an advocacy group that has taken an aggressive stance against antisemitism in Chicagoland.

When the children replied that they were Jewish, the group of roughly 20 assailants, who were between the ages of 12 and 14, then allegedly shouted "f—k Israel" and "you are baby killers so we are going to kill you" at the children and shot gel gun pellets from a recreational gun at them, according to a Facebook post by Daniel and Robyn Burgher Ackerman, the parents of a 13-year-old girl who was among the victims.

The Ackermans posted what they said was their first public account after an investigation by the town was completed. The Village of Skokie said this week that police had responded to the scene on Oct. 7, where the children alleged to have participated in the incident were identified and interviewed and a police report was filed.

The case was "closed" following the investigation's conclusion, according to the Village of Skokie. It did not name any actions it was taking in response but said the incident had been documented and shared with the Human Relations Commission, which would later issue a recommendation based on its findings.

"There is no place for hate in Skokie," said Mayor Ann Tennes in a statement. "Our community has long been built on respect, inclusion and care for one another. The Village remains committed to standing against antisemitism and all forms of bias, and to ensuring that Skokie continues to be a safe and welcoming place for everyone."

The Ackermans and the Chicago Jewish Alliance say they are concerned that the



Five Jewish children were shot with pellet guns at Shawnee Park in Skokie, Illinois on Oct. 7

incident is not being treated with the appropriate urgency, citing a lack of evidence of any disciplinary action against the children who participated.

In a post on Facebook the Skokie Police Department addressed community members' "frustration and concerns" with the incident, saying that although details available to the public were limited because the perpetrators were minors, it had been classified as a hate crime.

"Due to the antisemitic statements demonstrating bias as a likely motivator in the battery involving the gel blaster, the Department has classified this incident as a hate crime," the post read. "This classification was made upon the Department's initial investigation into this incident on October 7."

Police said that one minor had reported being struck in the leg by a gel pellet, and that while the investigation into the incident has concluded, the resolution of this incident is ongoing.

Following the police announcement, the Chicago Jewish Alliance shifted the focus of a planned appearance at the Village of Skokie Board meeting on November 3 to demand increased transparency between law enforcement and the Skokie community, according to Daniel Schwartz, the group's president.

"While we appreciate this overdue recognition, it is important to reflect on why it required public outcry to reach this point. The classification of a hate crime should never depend on media coverage or community pressure. It should be immediate, transparent, and guided by moral clarity," wrote Schwartz in a statement.

He said that during the assault, the

Jewish community.

"I think this hits a nerve, because it happened on Oct. 7, it happened to children, it happened to children in Skokie, Illinois, which has a very dense Jewish population, and then the municipality itself, similar to what we saw in 1940s Germany, was almost like — there was just no justice or repercussion," said Schwartz.

He added that the parents of the victims of the attack are also seeking legal counsel over the incident.

"This was not 'kids being kids.' This was a targeted, violent antisemitic attack on Jewish minors— in their synagogue dresses on a Jewish holiday," the Ackermans wrote. "The fact that it happened on October 7th—exactly two years after the October 7, 2023 massacre of Jews in Israel—makes it even more chilling."

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Rabbi Steven Rosenberg (rabbisteven.rosenberg@gmail.com) and Hazzan Dr. Sarah Sela. Where friends old and new gather Friday evenings at 6:30 pm for Shabbat services and festive Oneg. Shabbat services alternate between being held at Mission Hills CC or services/potluck dinners in members' homes. Shabbat mornings at 10:30 am: Nosh and drash/torah study online or in person. For schedule of services, potluck Shabbat dinners, Shabbat morning programs and activities, email beithaverim@gmail.com or call 760-766-3212.

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(Member, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism)

Rabbi Dr. JB Sacks (rabbi@congregationbethshalom.net); Ken Hailpern, Madrikh Ruhani (ken@congregationbethshalom.net) 42600 Cook Street, Second Floor, Palm Desert, CA 92211. 760-200-3636. Shabbat **Shabbat morning services** held every week at 9:45 am, followed by light Kiddush lunch. Visitors welcome with valid identification. For information, email info@congregationbethshalom.net or call 760-200-3636. www.CongregationBethShalom.net. **Friday evening, December 19, 2025: Chanukah Dinner 5:00 pm followed by Friday night service.** Advanced Reservations REQUIRED by Sunday December 14. Members - \$36 / Non-members - \$46. Information and Reservations: (760) 200-3636

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

CHABAD OF RANCHO MIRAGE:

Rabbi Shimon Posner & Rabbi Benny Lew. www.chabadrm.com. Weekly Shabbat Services start at 10 am, followed by a sit-down lunch/kiddush. Check online for weekday and Friday schedule of services Text 760-770-7785 or e-mail: info@chabadrm.com *to be added to our mailing list. All programs and events are updated on our website.*

Ckids Hebrew School 10:00 AM

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

CHABAD OF SUN CITY PALM DESERT

Rabbi Yonason Denebeim. Call 760-848-8250 or e-mail: info@chabadsuncity.com for information. *Monthly Social Happy Hour. Holiday dinners and celebrations. Zoom Torah classes. Contact Rebbetzin Sussie Denebeim to receive weekly "Chabad in Sun City Newsletter" with listing of all services and activities: sussiedenebeim@gmail.com.*

CHABAD OF LA QUINTA

Rabbi Moshe Katz 50620 Eisenhower Drive, Ste. G103, La Quinta, CA 92253. 760-709-2431. Email: Info@ChabadLQ.com; website: www.ChabadLQ.com. Chabad LQ offers weekly Torah studies, home visitations, Kosher meals, Shabbat Services, Women's Circle, Youth activities, Holiday programs and more.

CONGREGATION HAR-EL,

a Contemporary Reform Congregation (Member, Union for Reform Judaism), offering year-round services, Torah study, youth and adult classes and events. Membership open for residents and non-residents. Rabbi Richard Zions, Ph.D.; Cantor Joseph Gole, D.Mus. harelurjpd@gmail.com 760-779-1691. Website: harelurjpd.org. Weekly in person Shabbat Eve services. Email for location and schedule. Rabbi Zions holds Torah Study on Zoom every Saturday morning at 11 AM. For a Zoom link, contact harelurjpd@gmail.com.

DESERT OUTREACH SYNAGOGUE, Rancho Mirage

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

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

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 of 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 the Liberman Chapel at 6:30 pm, followed by Oneg. Torah services are on Shabbat mornings at 10:30 during season; Check website to confirm services and programming. Services also streamed online. 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. Friday Kabbalat Shabbat service is broadcast on Facebook: www.facebook.com/templeisaihapalmsprings.

TEMPLE SINAI, Palm Desert (Member, Union for Reform Judaism)

Rabbi David Novak rabbi@templesinai.org, 73-251 Hovley Lane West, Palm Desert, CA 92260. www.templesinaipd.org 760-568-9699. Go to templesinaipd.org for access information. *Shabbat services are in-person and online on Livestream at www.templesinaipd.org. Friday evening services 5:30 pm, preceded by pre-service Oneg at 5:00 pm. Saturday morning Torah study 8:45 am; Shabbat morning services 10 am. Temple Sinai's Avi Levine Religious School open to children irrespective of parents' membership at Temple Sinai.* Contact Talia Lizemer-Hawley, Educator, for more information: educator@templesinaipd.org

BIKUR CHOLIM

A project of Chabad of Palm Springs & Desert Communities (Community Outreach) www.BikurCholimPS.com Rabbi Yankel Kreiman - 760-325-8076, and Rabbi Mendy Kreiman - 760-567-6726.



Community Calendar of Programs - December 2025

Tuesdays

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

Tuesdays

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

Wednesdays

7:00 pm Tanya Class with Rabbi Shimon Posner, Chabad of Rancho Mirage. In person and available online.

Email: info@chabadrm.com, Phone: 760-770-7785; www.ChabadRM.com.

Wednesday, December 3

3:30 pm Har-El Book Discussion Group Email haredurjpd@gmail.com for more information.

Sunday, December 7

6:00-8:00 pm Jewish Family Service 23rd annual **Patron Party**. See ad and article on page 8.

Saturday, December 13

7:00 pm Beth Shalom Pre-Hanukkah Celebration & Gift Auction. Sufganiyot, Fruit, "Gelt," Beverages and Gift Auction. Members - \$5 / Non-members - \$10 with a new wrapped gift, minimum value \$25. Newcomers welcome with valid identification. Advanced Reservations REQUIRED by

Monday, December 8. Information and Reservations: (760) 200-3636

Sunday, December 14

2:00 pm Jewish Federation **Hanukkah celebration**. Information on page 1.

Sunday, December 14

5:00 pm Beit Haverim invites the community to **Chanu-Que** at Mission Hills Country Club. BBQ dinner \$29, Candlelighting of giant Hanukkah, DJ Singalong. See ad page 5.

Tuesday, December 16

7:00 pm Mensch International and Temple Isaiah Hanukkah Concert with "Hungary's Jewish Pavarotti" **Cantor Greg Nogradi**. Tickets: \$18. See ad page 7.

Wednesday, December 17

12:15 pm Har-El afternoon at the

movies. Film: **Guns and Moses**, the story of a rabbi in a high desert Jewish community who unexpectedly turns gunfighter. Discussion follows. For more information contact harelurjpd@gmail.com.

Wednesday, December 17

Chabad of Rancho Mirage's 4th annual Jewish Heritage Night with **Coachella Valley Firebirds** at Acrisure Arena.

Sunday, December 21

11:00 am-3:00 pm Hanukkah Brunch at Mission Hills Country Club. All you can eat brunch (\$53 adults; \$27 children 5-10). Hanukkah celebrated with renown Cantor David Propis of Southfield, MI and Rabbi Moshe Cohen of Los Angeles. See ad page 9.

Yad Vashem Says It Has Identified 5 Million Holocaust Victims: 'Behind Each Name Is a Life That Mattered'

By Grace Gilson, JTA

Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, says it has reached a major milestone in its efforts to uncover the identities of all of the Jews murdered in the Holocaust, crossing the 5-million name threshold with the help of AI.

That leaves 1 million names still unknown from the tally of 6 million murdered Jews that is synonymous with the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis during World War II.

Two years ago, Yad Vashem inaugurated a 26.5 foot-long "Book of



The Hall of Names at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem
Names," which included the names of 4,800,000 victims of the Shoah, at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

Since then, researchers deployed AI technology and machine learning to analyze hundreds of millions of archival documents that were previously too extensive to research manually, according to Yad Vashem. In addition to covering large amounts of material quickly, the algorithms were taught to look out for variations of victims' names, leading to the new identification of hundreds of thousands of victims.

Yad Vashem estimates an additional 250,000 names could still be recovered

using the technology.

"Reaching 5 million names is both a milestone and a reminder of our unfinished obligation," said Dani Dayan, the chairman of Yad Vashem, in a statement. "Behind each name is a life that mattered — a child who never grew up, a parent who never came home, a voice that was silenced forever. It is our moral duty to ensure that every victim is remembered so that no one will be left behind in the darkness of anonymity."

Taiwan President: Israel's Defense Strategy a 'Valuable Model' for Taiwan

The Jerusalem Post

Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te said in remarks delivered during National Day celebrations in Taipei, Taiwan, October 10, 2025, that Israel is a model for Taiwan to learn from in strengthening its defenses, citing the Biblical story of David versus Goliath on the need to stand up to authoritarianism.

Taiwan has been a strong backer of Israel since the 2023 Hamas-led attack on that country, which triggered the war in Gaza, though Israel, like most countries, has no formal diplomatic relations with Taipei.

Lai, who has also been courting conservative US media in an effort to win support from the White House, said that Jewish people have suffered constant persecution over their history. "The Taiwanese people often look to the example of the Jewish people when facing challenges to our international standing and threats to our sovereignty from China. The people of Taiwan have never become discouraged." Appeasement has never been the way to stop authoritarian governments, and the concept of peace

through strength is a maxim that Israeli, US, and Taiwanese societies have had for years, Lai added. Israel's determination and capacity to defend its territory provides a valuable model for Taiwan. I have always believed that Taiwan needs to channel the spirit of David against Goliath in standing up to authoritarian coercion."

Taiwan has a de facto embassy in Tel Aviv, while Israel has a similar representative office in Taipei. There is no similar arrangement between Taiwan and the Palestinians, with whom China has a close relationship. China

recognized a Palestinian state in 1988.

Lai earlier this month announced a new multi-layered air defense system called "T-Dome" to defend itself against a possible future attack by Beijing, which claims the democratically governed island as its own territory. T-Dome had been inspired by Israel's Iron Dome missile defense system, as well as US President Donald Trump's "Golden Dome" missile defense shield.

Lai added, "I believe that trilateral Taiwan-U.S.-Israel cooperation can help achieve regional peace, stability, and prosperity."

'Thoughts of Security Are Always with Us,' Pittsburgh Rabbi Says Seven Years After Tree of Life Attack

"Just because it's 'quiet' out there, that doesn't mean we're actually safe," the rabbi of a Conservative congregation in the city told JNS.

Aaron Bandler, Jewish News Syndicate

The seventh anniversary of the mass shooting at the Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha in Pittsburgh on Oct. 27, 2018, drew widespread reflections from political and Jewish leaders.

"Lori and I are thinking of the Pittsburgh community, as we remember the 11 Jewish Pennsylvanians who were murdered while they prayed at Tree of Life in the deadliest act of antisemitism in our nation's history seven years ago today," stated Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro, who is Jewish. "To those who've come together in the years since this tragic day—thank you for showing us that we are indeed stronger than hate," Shapiro stated. "To the families who continue to bear the burden of empty seats at your tables, we offer you prayers of comfort and support."

"It's a terrible tragedy," said Sen. Dave McCormick (R-Ra.), alongside Sen. John Fetterman (D-Pa.), in a joint video. "We both are from Pittsburgh. I live right around the corner from the Tree of Life in Squirrel Hill. Those 11 souls that were murdered that day, a terrible tragedy."

National 'Call to Action' before more lives are lost to this enduring hate

The anniversary of the attack ought to be a "national call to action for leaders at every level and for all Americans to stand together and act decisively before more lives are lost to this enduring hate," according to Holly Huffnagle, director of antisemitism policy at the American Jewish Committee. Since the attack, Jew-hatred has both persisted and intensified, threatening "not just Jewish communities but the very core of our democratic values," she said.

Daniel Mariaschin, CEO of B'nai B'rith International, told JNS that the attack was "a tragic, horrific harbinger of the cascade of antisemitism we are experiencing today."

"Floodgates were opened for further violence, intimidation, bullying, social media mis- and disinformation, and worse, in a way not seen in this country in most of our lifetimes," he said. "Now



raised to a feverish level, we have the responsibility not only to call out those who are the perpetrators of antisemitism, but to demand that those who have the ability to assist us in pushing back—the media, public officials, university administrators and the major media platforms—do so without equivocation."

'Wake-up call'

Vladislav Khaykin, executive vice president of social impact and North American partnerships at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, told JNS that the attack "wasn't only the deadliest act of antisemitic violence in American history," but also "a wake-up call the world still hasn't answered."

"It reminded us how centuries-old hatreds adapt to new platforms, new politics and new excuses," he said. "Seven years later, we're not just confronting antisemitism in the dark corners of the internet. It's been repackaged as moral virtue in classrooms, on campuses and in cultural institutions that should know better."

As the child of Holocaust survivors, Morton Klein, national president of the Zionist Organization of America, still grieves and prays with and for the victims and their families, "along with all the victims of antisemitic hatred."

"As I testified in Congress, the Tree of Life massacre was a stark reminder that we cannot lose sight of other hatreds. We cannot write off neo-Nazism as

a marginal phenomenon," Klein told JNS. "We need to pay attention to and combat the sickening neo-Nazi and white supremacist internet sites and ideology that foment hatred and violence."

The attack seven years ago "also displayed the irrational contradictions that Jew-haters display," Klein said. The shooter said he hated U.S. President Donald Trump for not being an antisemite but also "hated anti-Trump Jews," Klein said.

Jews in the city are commemorating the seven-year anniversary by gathering with survivors and families of victims to light candles in honor of the 11 who were killed, according to Maggie Feinstein, executive director of the 10.27 Healing Partnership, which is part of the Jewish Community Center of Greater Pittsburgh.

Jewish Pittsburgh residents are also honoring the victims through Torah study and community service, she told JNS. "Back in 2018, when we had to face 11 of our community members being murdered while worshipping, every single person who's part of this community had a strong urge of, 'never again,'" Feinstein said.

'Significant changes' in security

Since the shooting, Jewish institutions in Squirrel Hill, and nationwide, have made "significant changes" in their security, Feinstein told JNS.

"There's been security changes literally everywhere," she said. "There's now federal money that goes through each of the states that could be applied for. All of that has increased since 2018, partially in response to this shooting."

Seven years ago, some rabbis and community leaders had specific training to help save lives, according to Feinstein. "They were able to warn each other. They were able to know what the escape route was. They were able to know how to shelter in place and how to call for help," she said. "Those were things that they didn't just know intrinsically. They practiced."

"Part of the legacy is to continue to use those to save lives," she said. "Our best method for saving lives is having people train and looking at what security protocols we have in place and, most importantly, continuing to live and find Jewish joy."

Jewish Federations of North America and its partners have made "historic strides in security and preparedness, training thousands, strengthening institutions and securing critical federal funding to keep our communities safe," Shira Hutt, executive vice president of the Federation, told JNS.

"In 2018, only a handful of local Federations had community security initiatives," Hutt said. "Today, that number has soared to more than 130 local Federations that have community security initiatives, and while we have come far, we have far to go as the threat of antisemitism remains real and rising ... If the shooting 'taught us anything, it was to never ever let our guard down.' 'Just because it's 'quiet' out there, that doesn't mean we're actually safe,' he said. "'Never again' means constant vigilance."

Feinstein, of the JCC initiative, says security is important, but it's not the only value. "Don't stop living. Continue to gather. Continue to feel joy. Continue to worship, and we will do what we can to make it as safe as possible. But do not let fear of safety be a reason to stay home."



Tribute Card Donations

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

Honorarium Tributes In Appreciation For:

- **Martin Frank and Steve Weiss**, Happy anniversary from Dorian Trostler.
- **Loren Friend**, Happy birthday from Marjorie Kulp.
- **Loreen Jacobson**, In celebration of your birthday, from Lois Davidson, Muriel and Ron Goldberg, Sanford and Rosemary Hertz, Joan and Pat Kerns, Maxine Kirshenbaum, Joellen Leifer, Marilyn Malkin, Cathy Maslan and Cydney Osterman.
- **Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Kulp**, Wishing you good health and much happiness in your new Highland Park home, from Ruth and Mal Kaufman.
- **Eskie Shepard**, Happy and healthy 100th birthday from Pam and Harry Bookey, Loreen Jacobson, Joan and Pat Kerns, Nancy Noddle*, Mickey and Debra Star.
- **Eskie Shepard**, Thanks to you and Wendy for a wonderful celebration, from Loreen Jacobson
- **Sherwyn Turbow**, Happy 90th birthday from Beth and Duke Park, Dr. Paul and Stephanie Ross.

Refuah Shleimah Get Well:

- **Jo Ellen Leifer**, Love and hugs for a speedy recovery, from Loreen Jacobson and Patty.
- **Mary Levine**, Wishing you a refuah shleimah, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman.
- **Toni Victor**, Refuah shleimah – Feel better, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman.

Memoriam Tributes Condolences Sent To:

- **Dr. Bruce Bewnnin**, In memory of your beloved Eileen from Ruth and Mal Kaufman
- **James Borax**, In memory of your beloved Sheri from Sande and Ed Fineman.
- **Charlotte Don and Family**, In memory of your beloved Robert, from Ruth and Mal Kaufman, and Marnie Miller.
- **Myra Gordon**, In memory of Norman Lewis, from Sherry Schor.
- **Rabbi David Lazar**, Our deepest condolences on the loss of your beloved mother, from Rabbi Yankel and Rochel Kreiman.
- **Mrs. Douglas Noren**, In memory of your beloved mother, Jane, from Marnie Miller and

Joe Noren.

- **Mrs. Tracy Noren**, Our condolences on the passing of your dear mother, from Marnie Miller and Joe Noren.
- **Dr. Jeffrey Schulman**, In memory of your beloved Carol, from Dr. Robert and Justin Schneider.
- **Cecille Silverman**, In memory of your beloved Albert, from Tammy and Carl Birnberg, Al Bloch and Fefe Passer, Joann and Bill Chunowitz, William DeWoskin, Nancy and Dennis Ditlove, Jane Effress and Harvey Lambert, Sandy and Paul Epstein, Sande and Ed Fineman, Cora Ginsberg, Muriel and Ron Goldberg, Shelli Goodman and Bernard Plack, Judy and Mel Hecktman, Sanford and Rosemary Hertz, Loreen Jacobson, Ruth and Mal Kaufman, Pat and Howard Levy, Marilyn Malkin, Eunice Meister, Nancy Noddle, Sherry Schor, Gail and Robert Scadron, Jay Spak, Mickey and Debra Star.
- **Helen Silverman**, Our deepest condolences on the loss of your beloved husband Billy, from Joanne and Bill Chunowitz.

* Funds directed to Desert Community Kitchen Project.

When Jewish Students Are Afraid, Leaders Must Be Visible, Says US Rep. Randy Fine

By David Taragin, The Algemeiner

At a moment when many Jewish students are hiding Stars of David and removing mezuzahs from dorm-room doors, US Rep. Randy Fine (R-FL) has chosen the opposite approach. He is the first US lawmaker to wear a kippah on the House floor — asserting publicly what others feel compelled to conceal.

"You shouldn't have to shrink to be safe," Fine said. "Not in America."

Speaking on The Algemeiner's "J100" podcast with host David M. Cohen, Fine explained that the decision began with his son.

Before a congressional hearing on



Rep. Randy Fine
(R-FL)

campus antisemitism, Fine's teenage son urged him to wear his kippah so Jewish students — especially those afraid to show their identity — would know they had an advocate in the room.

"The reaction was overwhelming," Fine recalled.

Jewish families across the country reached out in support. That night, his son told him: "You should keep wearing it until every Jewish student in America feels safe." Fine acknowledged that could take years — or forever.

"And that's fine," he said.

Cohen reflected that the moment captured "what so many Jewish parents feel — that their children are inheriting a world where being visibly Jewish requires bravery."

Fine's comfort with Jewish visibility was not always assured. Growing up in Kentucky, he was one of the only Jewish children in his school and was taunted with the nickname "Kentucky Fried Jew." At age 13, he made a vow: that he would never again feel afraid because he is Jewish. That conviction now guides his public life.

Before entering Congress, Fine served in the Florida legislature, where he championed protections for Jewish students and helped secure funding for synagogue and school security. He sees this work not as politics, but as responsibility. His urgency reflects what he described on "J100" as a major shift in the lived reality of Jewish students.

"We're seeing Jewish students who won't wear a Star of David necklace, who won't

walk across campus alone," he said. "No one in America should be afraid to be Jewish."

Fine believes these conditions represent not only safety concerns but also a failure of leadership. For Fine, the kippah has become a visible reminder that Jewish identity and American patriotism are fully aligned — and that the burden of courage should fall on leaders first.

"This is a moment where Jews need to be proud, loud, and unafraid," he said. "Not only in private spaces, but in the places where power is exercised."

Cohen emphasized that visible Jewish leadership signals "not just courage, but character."

And if a kippah in Congress helps one Jewish student feel braver, "it's worth it," Fine said.

More than 1,200 in Entertainment Industry Sign Letter Denouncing the Call for a Boycott of Israeli Film Institutions

By Ellise Shafer, Variety



Liev Schreiber, Mayim Bialik, Debra Messing
Among 1,200 Industry Names Rejecting Israeli
Film Boycott

Liev Schreiber, Mayim Bialik and Debra Messing are among more than 1,200 entertainment industry names who have signed a new open letter denouncing the call for a boycott of Israeli film institutions over the war in Gaza.

The letter, released by the nonprofit organizations Creative Community for Peace and The Brigade, urges the nearly 4,000 signees of the boycott pledge — including Emma Stone and Joaquin Phoenix — to reconsider their stance. Other stars and industry professionals putting their names behind the new open letter include Gene Simmons, Sharon Osbourne, Greg Berlanti, Jerry O'Connell, Howie Mandel, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Lisa Edelstein, Erin Foster, Anthony Edwards, Rebecca De Mornay, Sherry Lansing and Haim Saban.

The boycott pledge, originally released on September 8, said its signees would refuse to work with Israeli institutions and companies that are "implicated in genocide and apartheid against the Palestinian people." Alongside Stone and Phoenix, signees included Yorgos Lanthimos, Ava DuVernay, Adam McKay, Boots Riley, Olivia Colman, Ayo Edebiri, Lily Gladstone, Mark Ruffalo, Hannah Einbinder, Peter Sarsgaard, Aimee Lou Wood, Paapa Essiedu, Gael Garcia Bernal, Riz Ahmed, Melissa Barrera, Cynthia Nixon, Tilda Swinton, Javier Bardem, Joe

LETTER DENOUNCING BOYCOTT:

To our fellow artists and the global film community,
We know the power of film. We know the power of story. That is why we cannot stay silent when a story is turned into a weapon, when lies are dressed up as justice, and when artists are misled into amplifying antisemitic propaganda.

The pledge circulated under the banner of "Film Workers for Palestine" is not an act of conscience. It is a document of misinformation that advocates for arbitrary censorship and the erasure of art.

To censor the very voices trying to find common ground and express their humanity, is wrong, ineffective, and a form of collective punishment.

Israel's film industry includes groundbreaking, celebratory, and critical projects about Palestinians and Jews, which many of you have lauded and celebrated. Israel's film community is restless, argumentative, and independent, where directors challenge ministers and many of the very festivals you target, consistently program dissent.

Israel's entertainment industry is a vibrant hub of collaboration between Jewish and Palestinian artists and creatives, who work together every single day to tell complex stories that entertain and inform both communities and the world. Israeli film institutions are not government entities. They are often the loudest critics of government policy.

The pledge uses nebulous terms like 'implicating' and 'complicity.' Who will decide which Israeli filmmakers and film institutions are 'complicit'? A McCarthyist committee with blacklists? Or is 'complicity' just a pretext to boycott all Israelis and Zionists — 95% of the world's Jewish population — no matter what they create or believe?

History warns us. Censorship has been used to silence filmmakers before: Nazi Germany's propaganda machine, Soviet censorship, and even Hollywood's own blacklists. Every time it was dressed up as virtue. And every time it was oppression. Every time, its targets expanded.

We know that many of you have good intentions and believe you are standing for peace. But your names are being weaponized and tied to lies and discrimination. This pledge erases dissenting Israeli voices, legitimizes falsehoods, and shields Hamas from blame.

If you want peace, call for the immediate release of the remaining hostages. Support filmmakers who create dialogue across communities. Stand against Hamas.

Let art speak the whole truth.

We call on all our colleagues in the entertainment industry to reject this discriminatory and antisemitic boycott call that only adds another roadblock on the path to peace.

Alwyn and Josh O'Connor.

As the new letter points out, in spite of the boycott calls, much of the country's left-leaning film and TV industry has been standing against the Israeli

government at their own risk. Just last week, the film "The Sea" — which tells the story of a young Palestinian boy who risks his life to go to the beach in Tel Aviv — won the top prize at Israel's Ophir Awards and

was submitted as the country's selection for the Oscars international feature race. As a result, the Israeli sports and culture minister vowed to cut funding from the awards.

"When artists boycott fellow artists based solely on their country of origin, it is blatant discrimination and a betrayal of our role as storytellers," Messing said in a statement. "History shows us that boycotts against Jews have long been a tool of authoritarian regimes — by joining this effort, these artists are knowingly or unknowingly aligning themselves with a dark legacy of antisemitism."

Added Bialik: "Artists and creatives have a unique opportunity and responsibility to remind the world of our shared humanity. Boycotting filmmakers, studios, production companies and individuals simply because they are Israeli fuels division and contributes to a disturbing culture of marginalization. Additionally, this boycott pledge does nothing to end the war in Gaza, bring the hostages home, or help curb the alarming rise of antisemitism globally."

The new open letter also comes on the heels of Paramount condemning the boycott call in a statement on Sept. 12. "We do not agree with recent efforts to boycott Israeli filmmakers," Paramount chief communications officer Melissa Zukerman said. "Silencing individual creative artists based on their nationality does not promote better understanding or advance the cause of peace," the statement continued. "The global entertainment industry should be encouraging artists to tell their stories and share their ideas with audiences throughout the world. We need more engagement and communication — not less."

Israel, Hungary Join Forces to Combat Rising Antisemitism in Europe

Jerusalem Post Staff

Diaspora Affairs and Combating Antisemitism Minister Amichai Chikli met with János Bóka, the Hungarian government minister in charge of fighting antisemitism, to discuss the rising rates of antisemitism across Europe and the security challenges facing Jewish communities, the Diaspora

Ministry announced on October 28.

Following the meeting, the antisemitism task forces of both ministries reportedly met and discussed the strategic issues regarding how to deal with the growing threats to European Jewish life. The task forces also examined operational action plans and practical cooperation between

the two countries.

"The Hungarian government continually proves its deep commitment and the strength of the relationship between Hungary and Israel," Minister Chikli said. "My friend Minister János Bóka deeply understands the current dangers to Jews in Europe. Together with

the teams, we discussed the challenges and strategy for combating the rising antisemitism in Europe and ways to respond," recognizing the need for continued joint action to strengthen the protection of Jewish communities and combat antisemitism.

'Jewish Life More Fragile Than Ever,' Says Photographer Who Documents Jewish Cemeteries

Dave Gordon, Jewish News Syndicate

Documenting Jewish cemeteries and synagogues over a decade for what became his book *The Posthumous Landscape: Remnants of Jewish Life in Eastern Europe*, Jewish photojournalist David Kaufman found helpers and those who got in his way.



Jewish Photojournalist David Kaufman

"Every place we went, there was someone who knew where the former cemetery or synagogue was. Those people were invariably happy to help us find our way and did this graciously, often out of a commitment to preserve Jewish material culture," the Toronto-based filmmaker and former CBC documentarian told JNS.

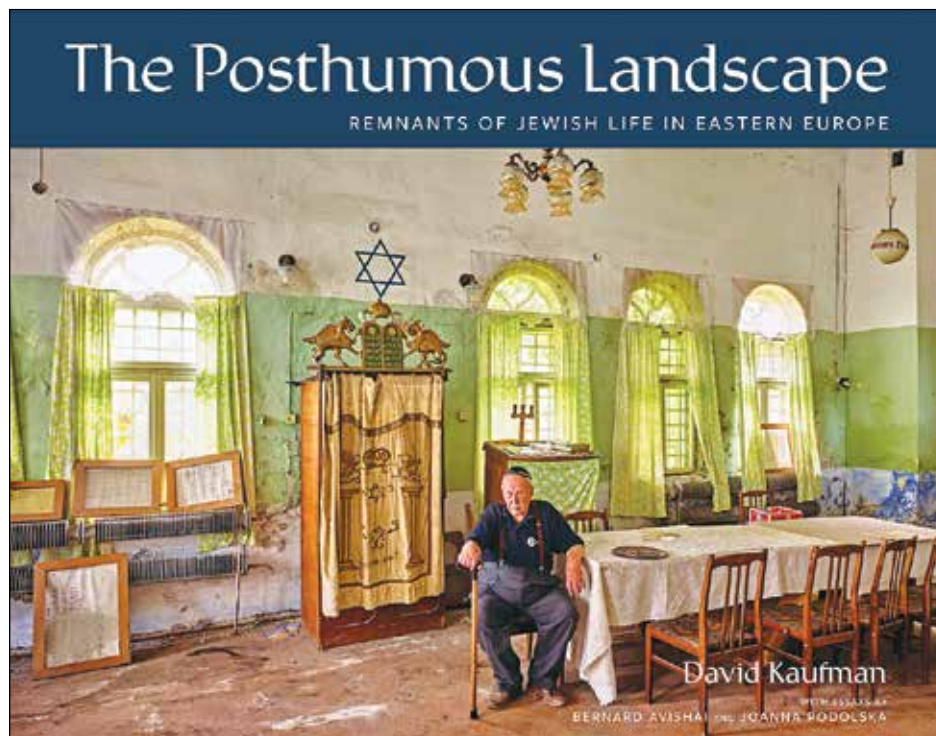
Some non-Jewish caretakers have long tended to Jewish sites, like the man who has cared for and catalogued every stone in the Jewish cemetery in Bochnia, some 25 miles southeast of Kraków, for 50 years. Kaufman asked the man why he did it. "I cared for the Jews who lived in this town before the war," the man told Kaufman. "They were my brothers." The man's sibling had been a political prisoner in Auschwitz, he told the photographer.

A "very interesting phenomenon" that Kaufman encountered was in smaller cemeteries, whose only visitors were Chassidim from abroad who came to gravesites of revered rebbes. Kaufman learned that a new generation of Poles, including those who are outsiders in their communities like gay and socially marginalized people, has taken up the responsibility of protecting Jewish heritage.

But not all of his encounters were positive. When he tried to photograph a marketplace built over a medieval Jewish cemetery in Lviv, Ukraine, people in the market, who were wary of outsiders due to court battles over the land, told him he couldn't take pictures, he told JNS.

"Traveling through all these places," he told JNS, "underlines how precarious Jewish communal life is everywhere." At some shuls and cemeteries in Europe, Jewish sites are quite precarious.

"There are parts of the Warsaw Jewish cemetery and parts of the Lodz Jewish cemetery where you simply cannot walk in anymore, because they have not cleared the vegetation for five or seven years," he told JNS.



"The Posthumous Landscape: Remnants of Jewish Life in Eastern Europe" (2024)



Early 20th-century gravestones in the Jewish cemetery, Lodz, Poland



Okopowa Street Jewish Cemetery in Warsaw, Poland

The coffee table book, published last month, contains 163 photographs—culled from 600—documenting landmarks in dozens of once-vibrant Jewish communities in Poland, Ukraine, Latvia and Lithuania that are now in tatters and ruins after decades

of disuse.

"This was the heart of Jewish civilization for hundreds, almost a thousand years," he said.

Greenery has overtaken many of those sites. "If you look at pictures of the Warsaw

cemetery before the war," he told JNS, "there are no trees. But these cemeteries were partly damaged, and trees were allowed to grow up during the Soviet period."

"Now they're like forests—beautiful green forests with huge numbers of carved memorial stones," he said.

'Very strong mental note'

Raised in an Orthodox home in Montreal, Kaufman had a strong Jewish education and long aspired to "express my Jewishness in my professional work."

His early career led him to documentary filmmaking, including work for CBC's *The Fifth Estate*. He recalls a 1992 reporting trip to a small town in Poland, called Kazimierz Dolny, about 30 miles from Lublin.

"They were trying to build a hot water line across a football field in a high school, ironically a high school named after Janusz Korczak, who, of course, had been the director of the orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto, and who chose to go to Treblinka with his young charges instead of letting them go by themselves," he told JNS.

Returning to Canada from that trip, he picked up a copy in the airport of *A Tribe of Stones: Jewish Cemeteries in Poland*, a book of black-and-white photos that Polish-Jewish artist Monika Krajewska published in 1983.

"I made a very strong mental note," he told JNS. "This is a project you should do, you should take up sometime in your life."

"And I pored over that book, and the photographs were beautiful, I thought this could be a worthy subject for a photography project," he said.

For the project that became his new book, Kaufman mapped and photographed nearly 50 sites, often using detailed U.S. congressional reports to identify cemeteries and synagogues.

The project stretched across regions "where Jews once made up 30%, 40%, 50%, sometimes 90% of the population," he said. "There is nothing left except maybe a cemetery or maybe a ruin of a synagogue, and sometimes not even that."

Ten years have passed since Kaufman started his project. It's now a "different historical era" with fewer survivors and rising Jew-hatred. There is "renewed urgency" now to learn the lessons of Jewish history, he said.

"I don't think I'm exaggerating," he said. "Jewish life everywhere is more fragile than ever."

'No One Left Behind': After 11 years, Hadar Goldin Laid to Rest with Words of Love and Reckoning

By Jessica Steinberg and Times of Israel Staff

Lt. Hadar Goldin, an Israel Defense Forces officer killed in Gaza in 2014 and held there by Hamas for more than a decade, was laid to rest on November 11, 2025, in a ceremony attended by tens of thousands, including the IDF chief of staff.

The long-awaited funeral was a moment of closure and reckoning for Goldin's relatives and, as noted in their eulogies, for the country.

For years, Goldin's family was at times a lonely voice campaigning for the release of his body from Gaza, along with that of fellow fallen soldier Oron Shaul. That cause was greatly amplified after the Hamas-led October 7, 2023, attack, when Goldin was included among the more than 250 hostages whose return became a national mission.

Still, Goldin's family waited through two more painful years, as hundreds of hostages, living and dead, including Shaul, were returned to Israel, with no guarantee



Body of Lt. Hadar Goldin returned after 11 years*

or timetable for their son's return. Finally, on November 9, 2025, his body came back, 4,120 days after his body was dragged into

a Gaza tunnel during Operation Protective Edge in 2014.

He was the fifth-to-last hostage to be

released after October 7, and the final casualty of the 2014 war to come home.

At the funeral, IDF Chief of Staff Lt.-Gen. Eyal Zamir eulogized Goldin. Speaking before a sea of mourners, Zamir said, "An entire nation stands today as one great formation of Hadar. We accompany him on his final path — a path he was worthy of long ago. The IDF never gave up for a moment. Hadar's return was made possible through the operational might of our forces. I pledge that we will continue to uphold this sacred duty."

"Hadar, we waited for you 11 years, it's a long time," Leah Goldin, his mother, said in her eulogy at the Kfar Saba military cemetery, her voice breaking. "A long time."

**The photo was taken by "our" 16 year old photographer, Yonatan Berman of Kfar Saba, whose photos of Israelis rejoicing in the return of hostages filled the center pages of last month's JCN.*

El Al Faces New Competition as Foreign Airlines Flock Back to Israel

By Mark Feldman, CEO of Zions Tours, Jerusalem

While many take umbrage with the government using the label "revival" for this war, make no mistake that the tourism industry sees this period as "Operation Revival." Since October 7, 2023, one could count on two hands the number of airlines flying into Israel. Flash forward to a nascent ceasefire, coupled with the dearth of Houthis missiles targeting Ben-Gurion Airport. As a result, dozens of foreign carriers are resuming flights to Israel. The current status quo has given numerous carriers the confidence to resume flights to Israel.

We have always had the Emirates/Fly Dubai and Etihad airlines, with over 10 flights a day; expect that number to increase over the next two months. Forget about Turkish Airlines and the antisemitic, offensive, tyrannical president of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, with his unceasing contemptuous comments about Israel. Turkish Airlines has left Israel, and, hopefully, its tepid steps to return to Ben-Gurion Airport will be met with the stoic response that it is no longer needed.

The North American market remains Israel's number one hub, which is why El Al flies over 50 flights a week to Newark, JFK, Boston, and Los Angeles. Its flights remain quite full, with high fares eclipsing

all historical prices.

United Airlines already has two flights a day from Israel to Newark; Delta is flying to JFK; and Air Canada is flying to Toronto. Those US- and Canadian-based airlines are already making plans to increase their capacity. Next month, United is bringing back its Chicago and Washington routes and is planning even more daily flights to Newark next year. Air Canada is adding Montreal to its flight network next summer.

This indicates that many airlines believe that while we will not have the post-COVID boom, which saw air traffic numbers escalate by hundreds of percent, tourists will resume visiting Israel. Although Israelis may travel in greater numbers, these foreign carriers need the tourists to be lucrative.

Very few tourists in past two years

The tourists who have come here during the last two years have been few in number. Many delegations of politicians and Jewish lay leaders did visit Israel. A wonderful group of Christians came here for the recent Feast of Tabernacles, but Israelis are mainly the ones filling 80% of each plane. That number will change as long as there is relative quiet. It is too early to expect a huge influx for both Hanukkah and Christmas; few groups have



Ben Gurion Airport

made plans to return here in 2026.

Airlines like Air India, American Airlines, and Cathay Pacific have not announced whether they will return to Israel. Then there is Ryanair's CEO, Michael O'Leary, who has made accusations that the Israel Airports Authority is denying his airline coveted slots; like a spoiled child, he has decided he won't bring his planes back to Israel.

Virgin Atlantic Airlines was flying between London and Tel Aviv until the Israel-Hamas War broke out. Its Israeli CEO, Shai Weiss, quietly decided to close his office in Israel, cease all operations, and sever ties between Ben-Gurion Airport and London. He has just been replaced, and those in the industry are hoping that when Corneel Koster takes over on January 1, 2026, he will reverse the company's decision.

While many take umbrage with the

government using the label "revival" for this war, make no mistake that the tourism industry sees this period as "Operation Revival." Prices will fall, with winter fares already dropping by 20%. As more foreign carriers fly here with more tourists, there will be greater competition and lower fares.

In addition to the legacy carriers that are returning to Ben-Gurion Airport, the absence of EasyJet and Ryanair does not mean that the Israeli leisure market will not benefit from lower fares.

There is Wizz Air, a low-cost carrier hell-bent on gaining every seat to cities throughout Europe. It hopes that enticing prices will encourage customers to take to the skies. They will push our Israeli carriers, with a far larger cost structure, to lure Israelis to fly them and pay a hefty surcharge.

Arkia, with its new Airbus A330, has very large eyes. The airline sees itself filling this sparkling plane with passengers headed to New York, Phuket, and Saigon. It is a bold move that hopefully will succeed. Arkia now has one plane that can attract economy, premium, and business class passengers. Of course, if something happens to that plane, the airline has yet to outline how it will respond to stranded customers

4 Arrested Over Israeli Orchestra Concert Interruption in Paris

Jewish News Syndicate Staff

On November 7th French authorities arrested four suspects connected to the coercive disruption to a concert performed by the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra in Paris the previous day.

Three women and a man were detained on charges of violence, destruction and organizing an unauthorized protest.

Activists were seen on videos posted on social media throwing flares and chanting pro-Palestinian slogans at the Philharmonie de Paris complex in the city's northeastern 19th arrondissement, as audience members and security personnel tried to remove them.

At least one hooligan could be seen dodging individuals who tried to stop him or her. The incident apparently lasted a few minutes.

The concert went ahead despite three interruptions, the venue said.

"I strongly condemn the actions committed last night during a concert at the Philharmonie de Paris. Nothing can justify



Protester brandishing a flare on the Concert Hall balcony.

them," French Interior Minister Laurent Nuñez said on X.

"I thank the personnel from the Paris police who enabled the rapid arrest of several perpetrators of serious disturbances inside the venue and contained the demonstrators outside. Four people have been placed in custody," he added.

According to Le Monde, the disruptions began at around 8:40 p.m., when the Israeli orchestra, conducted by Lahav Shani, performed Ludwig van Beethoven's Piano

Concerto No. 5.

A woman stood up, shouted, "Israel murders," and hurled yellow leaflets into the crowd, which read, "Israel, you play the symphony of your genocidal army," Le Monde reported. The concert resumed after the woman was removed.

Another woman who attended the concert with her son told the newspaper that "five, maybe 10 minutes later, the orchestra stopped playing again. I saw a young man brandish a flare on the balcony. There were

flames, it was striking. It could have been very dangerous. There were screams, an usher was in tears. I was really frightened."

The Philharmonie de Paris said it had filed a police complaint, adding that it "deplores and strongly condemns the serious incidents that occurred," France 24 reported.

The French branch of the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, together with other anti-Israel organizations, had called on the hosting venue to cancel the concert.

For the past several years, the Israeli Philharmonic has performed in the Desert to sold out audiences at the MacCallum Theater. Those performances have been deeply appreciated by our Desert community who has showered the performers with praise for their world-class musical interpretations. However, not so elsewhere, including places such as San Francisco, and just last month, Paris. I'd like to recall the relevance of the Israel Philharmonic to our community! D. Labin

JEWISH FEDERATION 2025-2026 SEASON ~ COMMUNITY EVENTS

December 14, 2025	Sunday	Hanukkah Program at Federation Office
January 12, 2026	Monday	Lion of Judah Brunch
January 25, 2026	Sunday	An Evening of Jewish Theater: "Simon Wiesenthal Presents"
February 11, 2026	Wednesday	Federation Day at Tamarisk Country Club
February 18, 2026	Wednesday	"Comedy for a Cause" Starring Modi Rosenfeld
March 29, 2026	Sunday	Feast of Jewish Learning (Note Date Change)
April 14, 2026	Tuesday	Holocaust Remembrance/Yom HaShoah Observance



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HAVE A NOSH:

Hanukkah is coming! I've been alternating years in this column, sharing latke recipes one year and sufganiyot the next. It is the sufganiyot year and I realized there is a Sephardic 'cousin' of sufganiyot that I haven't shared in the past. They are bimuelos, one of the foods emblematic of Marranos. Many people who have discovered their Sephardic Jewish roots recall eating

fried foods, including bimuelos, around the holiday season, without appreciating a connection to Hanukkah, yet bimuelos with a honey-orange drizzle, are a wonderful Sephardic Hanukkah dessert. While bimuelos can be served at room temperature a few hours after serving, they're best fresh from the fryer, drizzled with orange-scented honey.

The honey-orange drizzle is more traditional but I'm also giving you another delicious alternative to enjoy with bimuelos: Date Caramel Sauce. I'm giving you a "Sufganiyot in a Hurry" recipe, made with baking powder instead of the traditional yeast dough. Note that it is a dairy recipe ... and is super easy to make!

Wishing you a delicious Hanukkah, MHB



Bimuelos with Honey-Orange Drizzle

3½ cups all-purpose flour
1 Tbsp + 1 tsp sugar
¾ tsp salt
1½ cups warm water, divided
1 Tbsp active dry yeast

juice of 1 large orange, strained of pulp (about
⅓ cup), divided
1 tsp finely grated orange zest
2 Tbsp vegetable oil + more for frying
1 cup honey

Combine flour, 1 Tbsp sugar and salt in a large bowl. Set aside. Pour ½ cup water into a large bowl. Sprinkle sugar and yeast over water and wait until mixture become foamy, about 10 minutes. Add flour mixture, remaining water, 3 Tbsp orange juice, orange zest and 2 Tbsp oil to yeast mixture and stir with a wooden spoon to combine, about 30 seconds. Using your hands, knead dough in bowl until smooth, adding 1 Tbsp of additional flour at a time to reduce stickiness, for about 1-2 minutes. Remove dough and place in a clean, lightly oiled bowl.

Cover with a clean kitchen towel and let rest until dough has doubled in volume, about 1 to 1½ hours.

Heat about 4 inches of oil in a large, tall pot to about 350-360°F (very hot but not smoking, or when a pea-sized piece of dough turns brown immediately when dropped into oil). Lightly oil hands, form dough into walnut-sized balls and drop into oil in batches. Fry until golden brown on both sides, about 3-4 minutes total. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

Place honey and remaining orange juice in a small saucepan and simmer 3-4 minutes until warm. Drizzle honey over doughnuts and serve.

Date Caramel Sauce

½ cup date syrup (also known as silan, date
molasses or date honey)
2 tbsp canned coconut cream

2 tbsp raw cashew butter
1/8 tsp vanilla extract
1/8 tsp sea salt

Add all of the date caramel sauce ingredients to blender. Blend on lowest speed for 30 seconds, or until well combined. Let the mixture sit for 2 minutes. Scrape sides of blender and blend again on lowest speed, slowly increasing speed to medium-high. Blend for 1 minute on medium-high. Sauce should be thick and pourable, like a caramel sauce. Pour sauce into a covered container and set aside until bimuelos are cooked. If making sauce ahead, refrigerate up to two days in a covered container, and let it come to room temperature before serving.

Date syrups, coconut creams, and cashew butters may vary slightly in texture. If you feel the sauce needs to be thickened, add more cashew butter by the teaspoonful and blend until desired texture is reached. To thin it out, add liquid coconut cream by the teaspoonful and blend until it's still thick but pourable, like honey.

Sufganiyot in a Hurry (Dairy)

3 cups flour
1/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon nutmeg or mace
½ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon baking powder

1 egg
1/4 cup salad oil
3/4 cup milk
½ cup sugar mixed with 1 teaspoon cinnamon
Vegetable oil for deep frying

Combine flour, 1/4 cup sugar, baking powder, nutmeg (or mace) and salt. Add egg, oil and milk. Mix thoroughly. Drop by small teaspoons into the vegetable oil heated to 375 degrees and fry until golden brown. Drain on paper towels and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. Makes about 4 dozen.



Simchas

Jewish Federation of the Desert wishes **Sherwyn Turbow** (pictured with Federation CEO **Danny Labin**) a happy birthday as he celebrates his 90th! May Sherwyn long continue to impact our community through his extraordinary

kindness, passion and tzedakah ... It was a sell-out crowd on November 12 when **Carol Fragen** was honored by the Mizell Center for her generosity and years of support for



the popular Palm Springs' community

center. Among the attendees at the Cheyenne Jackson Concert to honor Carol (third from left) included **Yehuda Gidron**, Jewish Federation President **Arnie Gillman** and Jewish Community News Editor **Miriam Bent**. ... Share your simchas with us. Email Miriam Bent at mhbentjcn@earthlink.net; or call or text her at 760-835-1022.



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December

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Friday, December 12	Shabbat Vayeshev	3:55 pm
Sunday, December 14	First night of Hanukkah	
Friday, December 19	Shabbat Miketz	3:57 pm
Friday, December 26	Shabbat Vayigash	4:01 pm



We Mourn the Passing of...

Ruth Ruffner, Liela Carol Schwartz, Annette Silverman, Bernice Weidershine and Bernard Zemmol. Our deepest sympathies to their families and friends. May their memories endure as a blessing.



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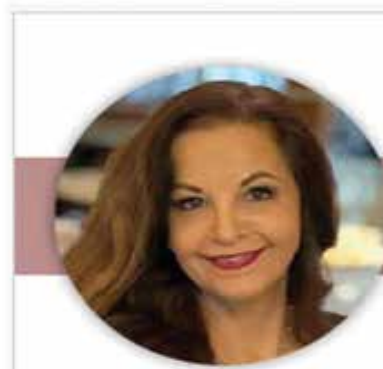
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As we peacefully gather in our homes and light the candles that commemorate this holiday of freedom, Israeli infantry soldiers gather to light their Hanukkah candles in a bunker overlooking a hostile, dangerous border.

Their vigilance is critical. Can we, who live in peace, do any less? Too many in the Coachella Valley have never given to the Federation Annual Campaign. This Hanukkah, become part of K'lal Yisroel.

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