



# Jewish Community News

The Publication of Jewish Federation of the Desert

www.jfedps.org

Adar I - Adar II 5786 - March 2026



Temple Isaiah - Jewish Community Center  
13th Annual

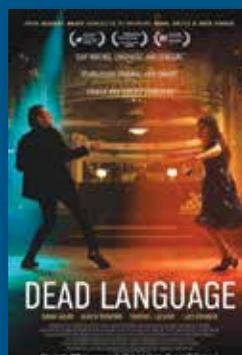
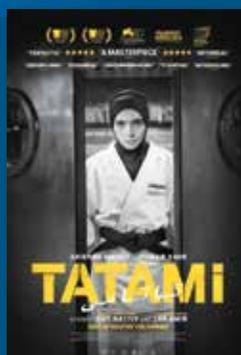
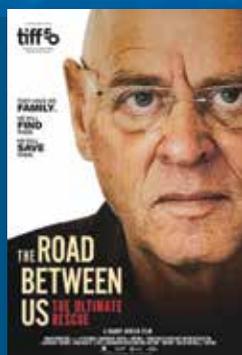
## PALM SPRINGS JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

March 7-12, 2026

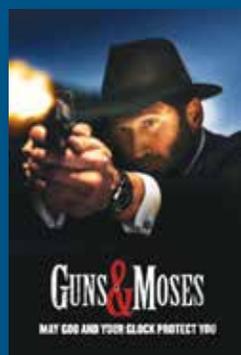


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Film Festival Pull Out - See Pages 11-14 & 19

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**The Palm Springs Jewish Festival:  
Not Just Another Desert Festival**



**Danny Labin**

*Chief Executive Officer,  
Jewish Federation  
of the Desert*

As I experience my first winter in the Desert, it's striking just how many festivals take place here during this time of year. From architecture to tennis to music, there is seemingly something for everyone. The annual Palm Springs Jewish Film Festival will take place this year between March 7th and 12th. It's the Festival that I am most excited about – not just because it is a fundraiser for Temple Isaiah and not only because the Jewish Federation of the Desert is the festival's largest sponsor. What excites me most about the Jewish Film Festival is that our entire Desert is receiving one full week to explore our Jewish selves on-screen using the medium of film to share our stories and expand our own individual experience.

We all know the power a film can have to open up new worlds and expose us

to new people, places and ideas. The awesome capacity for film to help us instantaneously enter into a new reality has long intrigued me. It's what drew me to educational television, the field in which I spent nearly two decades producing Sesame Street in Israel and in more than 30 countries around the world. Research study after study confirms that children can learn cognitive, social and emotional skills from viewing. What's more, those skills can positively impact them in myriad ways for the rest of their lives. That same premise is no less true for us grown-ups who, despite our years of education and accrued life experience, each have our own highly personalized and limited exposure to the world. The Jewish Film Festival is a way to dabble and delve into the wealth of narratives and characters that comprise our Jewish world – the familiar and the comforting as well as the new and different.

At Sesame Street, we often spoke about how to use both mirrors and windows. So too does the Jewish Film Festival offer us these two complementary devices. When we see our own experience reflected on screen, we have an affirming mirror held up before us. And when we have an opportunity to learn about someone's else's experience, sometimes as far removed

from our own as one might imagine, we are given a veritable window into someone else's reality. Empathy, understanding and curiosity are just some of the great things that can result.

The importance of windows and mirrors and all the good things they can do is vital not just for members of the Jewish community. At a time of so much misinformation and confusion about the Jewish community, a Jewish Film Festival as diverse as ours, with 22 films from around the world, offers the entire Desert community an opportunity to learn about Jewish life and broaden an understanding about the Jewish people.

The Jewish Film Festival is not just one more festival in a sea of Coachella Valley activities: it's an incredible educational gift for each of us to celebrate our own stories and to learn about others. It's also an opportunity for each of us to call a friend, Jewish or not, and invite them to see a movie together – like we used to do before Netflix and all the other streaming conveniences grounded our viewing lives. We in the Desert have one week right here to spend with Jews from around the world – and in some cases to even visit Israel – all for just \$12 a film and without any jet lag.

See you at the movies!

**The Holiday of Purim**



**Arnie Gillman**

*Board President,  
Jewish Federation  
of the Desert*

Purim is one of the most joyful and spirited holidays in the Jewish calendar, marked by costumes, laughter, and the retelling of the story of Esther. At its heart, however, Purim is also a celebration of generosity and communal responsibility. The festival doesn't just encourage happiness for its own sake—it insists that happiness be shared.

The Purim story, set in ancient Persia, tells of a moment when the Jewish people faced destruction, only to be saved through courage, unity, and faith. When the danger passed, the response was not quiet relief

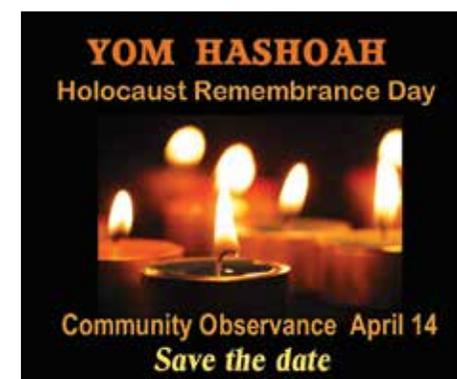
but active gratitude. This response became the foundation of Purim's mitzvot (commandments), many of which center on giving. Jews are commanded to send mishloach manot, gifts of food to friends and neighbors, strengthening social bonds and ensuring that no one celebrates alone.

Even more central is matanot la'evyonim, gifts to those in need. Unlike many other forms of charity, this giving is not optional or symbolic; it is a core obligation of the day. The message is clear: true celebration is incomplete if others are left out. On Purim, special care is taken to make sure that everyone—regardless of financial situation—can participate in the joy of the holiday.

This emphasis on generosity reflects a broader Jewish value: that survival and success bring responsibility. The Purim miracle did not lead to isolation or self-congratulation, but to increased care for one another. Giving becomes an act of

solidarity, a way of saying: "Your joy matters as much as mine."

In this way, Purim transforms generosity into a form of community celebration. Laughter, costumes, and feasts are all part of the day, but they are grounded in kindness. Purim reminds us that the most enduring joy is created not by what we keep, but by what we give to others in need. Purim reflects the historic values of the Jewish people and encapsulates the crucial role of Federation today.





Jewish Federation  
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presents

# The Feast of Jewish Learning

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

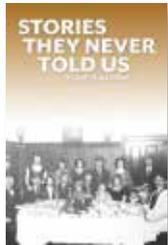
*The Feast of Jewish Learning is Jewish Federation of the Desert's annual event that brings four of today's most celebrated Jewish authors from around the country to our Federation for a daylong series of book talks. Participation in the event is complimentary, and lunch boxes will be available for purchase.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



## Dr. Steven Windmueller

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

## Dr. Janette Silverman *Stories They Never Told Us*



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

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

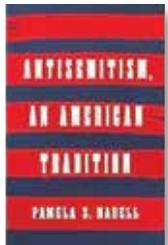
## Jonathan Branfman *Millennial Jewish Stars*



Millennial Jewish Stars explores why a new generation of Jewish celebrities—Drake, Lil Dicky, Abbi Jacobson & Ilana Glazer, Seth Rogen, and Zac Efron—have found major success by highlighting rather than hiding their Jewish identity. Jonathan Branfman shows how these stars navigate racial antisemitism and stereotypes about Jewish masculinity, using humor, charm, or satire to reflect national hopes and anxieties.

Their stories reveal how antisemitism, white privilege, and racism intersect in America—and offer readers new tools to recognize and challenge these forces in everyday life.

## Pamela S. Nadell *Antisemitism, An American Tradition*



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

**Boxed Lunches Available for Purchase By March 26th | \$20**

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# Doctors Without Borders Halts Operations at Hospital

By Algemeiner Staff

The international humanitarian group Doctors Without Borders has publicly acknowledged that armed individuals — many of them masked — were present inside the large compound of Nasser Hospital in southern Gaza, citing intimidation of patients, arbitrary arrests, and suspected weapons movement as reasons for halting some of its work there.

The admission, buried in a rarely referenced FAQ page on the group's website published last month, lends factual support to claims long asserted by Israeli authorities about the use of medical facilities by Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad terrorists during the ongoing conflict in Gaza.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), which is French for Doctors Without Borders, said it has suspended all "non-critical medical operations" at Nasser Hospital as of Jan. 20, 2026, citing "concerns regarding the management of the structure, the safeguarding of its neutrality, and security breaches."

MSF's admission was first reported by independent analyst Salo Aizenberg.

In describing those "security breaches," MSF stated that patients and its own personnel observed "armed men, some masked, in different areas of the large hospital compound ... not in areas where MSF has activities." It added that

since the most recent ceasefire in Gaza, teams have reported a "pattern of unacceptable acts," including the presence of armed men, intimidation, arbitrary arrests of patients, and "a recent situation of suspicion of movement of weapons." The group said such conditions posed "serious security threats to our teams and patients."

The hospital in Khan Younis — one of Gaza's largest and, until recently, few functioning referral centers in the densely populated territory — has been a flashpoint in the Israel-Hamas war since early 2024. After intense battles and an Israeli military operation that searched for hostages inside the complex, the hospital was rendered non-functional and later reopened.

For months, the Israeli government and military have claimed that Hamas and other armed groups used hospitals — including Nasser — as shelter and operational bases, allegations that Palestinian authorities and many humanitarian organizations have rejected. In February 2024, Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Spokesman Daniel Hagari said the military had "credible intelligence" that Hamas held Israeli hostages at Nasser Hospital at one point and that there may have been bodies of hostages currently hidden there.

The Algemeiner has previously documented claims acknowledged by the Palestinian

Authority that Hamas summoned Gazans to the Nasser compound for interrogations and that militants threatened hospital staff.

Terrorists from both Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad, an allied group in Gaza, have confessed that they took over hospitals across the enclave, using the medical facilities to hide military activities, launch attacks, and hold hostages kidnapped during their Oct. 7, 2023, invasion of and massacre across southern Israel.

In the FAQ disclosure, MSF did not explicitly identify the armed men or link them to specific groups. But by reporting the presence of masked fighters, intimidation of civilians, and suspicion of weapons movement within the hospital compound, MSF's account aligns with Israeli officials' long-standing narrative that medical facilities have not been strictly neutral zones.

MSF said it formally expressed concern to "relevant authorities" and stressed that hospitals "must remain neutral, civilian spaces, free from military presence or activity" to ensure the safe delivery of care.

The new disclosure comes amid broader tensions between MSF and the Israeli government over registration and operations in Gaza, including Israel's decision to bar dozens of aid groups, including MSF, from registering to operate in the territory after March 2026.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY NEWS

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### EDITORIAL

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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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# Number of Holocaust Survivors Falls Below 200,000, Half Reside in Israel

By David Swindle *The Algemeiner*

The number of living Holocaust survivors around the world fell from 220,000 to 196,600 over the course of 2025, according to newly released data.

The Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), a nonprofit organization that negotiates and secures compensation for survivors of the Nazis' atrocities worldwide, unveiled its latest figures in January.

Tracking survivors across more than 90 countries, the Claims Conference found that 50 percent of them live in Israel, totaling 97,600. The country with the next highest population is the United States with 31,000, representing 16 percent.

Seventeen percent of survivors live in Western Europe, with 9 percent in France (17,300 people) and 5 percent in Germany (10,700). Meanwhile, 11 percent reside in former countries of the Soviet Union. Seven percent (14,300) live in Russia, and 3 percent (5,200) live in Ukraine.

Other countries with notable populations of Holocaust survivors include Canada (4,800), Hungary (2,800), Australia (2,000), and Belarus (1,600).



The Claims Conference describes nearly all — 97 percent — of remaining Jewish Holocaust survivors as “child survivors,” those born between 1928 and 1946, now with a median age of 87. The youngest survivors are 79, while just over 1 percent of them are over 100. Thirty percent are over 90, and most — 62 percent — are female.

Social services provide for a sizable portion of the survivors with 71 percent — approximately 139,000 — currently or previously receiving support and grants administered through the Claims Conference. Through its Basic Needs Fund, the organization provides for 67,600 who are not receiving monthly

pensions, and the organization delivers “targeted food security assistance to the most economically vulnerable Holocaust survivors.”

These new figures were released a week before International Holocaust Remembrance Day. They followed new data from the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust showing the number of schools in the United Kingdom memorializing the Holocaust has fallen by nearly 60 percent since Hamas's Oct. 7, 2023, massacre across southern Israel, as such discussions have now been labeled “political” and “propaganda” by some pro-Palestinian advocates.

Last year, the Claims Conference released the results of an eight-country survey investigating Holocaust knowledge across the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Austria, Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Romania. The group found that 48 percent of those surveyed in the US could not name a single concentration camp used by the Nazi regime to imprison and murder Jews during World War II — including Auschwitz, the largest and most infamous of the Nazi camps. This figure fell to about 25 percent of those answering in the UK, France, and Romania. In Germany

and Hungary, the level of ignorance reached 18 percent, while in Austria it hit 10 percent and in Poland it stood at 7 percent.

The same study found that many respondents did not know that the Nazis murdered 6 million Jews. The number of people who believed that 2 million or fewer Jews died reached 28 percent in Romania, 27 percent in Hungary, 24 percent in Poland, 20 percent in the UK, and 18 percent in Germany. In France, the US, and Austria, 21 percent of respondents expressed ignorance about the total death count.

A new survey released this month by the Claims Conference asked 1,000 Irish adults about their views on the Holocaust, finding that half did not know the Nazis murdered 6 million Jews and that 19 percent of young people believed accounts of the mass slaughter had been “greatly exaggerated.” Among all respondents, 12 percent said they had never heard of the Holocaust, a number that increased to 15 percent for younger adults. Of all adults surveyed, 8 percent said they believed the Holocaust was a myth.

Gideon Taylor, president of the Claims Conference, called this moment an “inflection point” in a statement and warned that “soon we are going to live in a world without Holocaust survivors, without a Holocaust survivor voice.”

The Anti-Defamation League (ADL) also released research results last year which showed high levels of global confusion about the historical reality of the Holocaust.

The ADL found that “20 percent of respondents worldwide have not heard about the Holocaust. Less than half (48 percent) recognize the Holocaust's historical accuracy, which falls to 39 percent among 18- to 34-year-olds, highlighting a worrying demographic trend. Respondents younger than 35 also have elevated levels of antisemitic sentiments (50 percent), 13 percentage points higher than respondents over 50.”

The Claims conference also revealed that worries about another potential Holocaust to destroy the Jewish people were highest in the United States, where 76 percent of adults thought it could happen again.

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## O Ye of Jewish Faith: Josh Shapiro for President?

When the Pennsylvania governor uses a distinctly un-Jewish term for his Jewishness, he is speaking in a language Christian American voters understand.

By Dr. Claire Sufrin

One evening last April, an arsonist set fire to the Pennsylvania governor's mansion, not long after Governor Josh Shapiro and his family finished their seder celebrating the first night of Passover. The seder is one of the most common ways American Jews express their Jewishness, its central theme of freedom resonating with both our American and our Jewish values, and its emphasis on gathering with friends and family to eat a delicious meal satisfying our need for connection. And so, I suspect I was not alone when I reacted to news of the fire with horror at this latest instance of violent antisemitism and also a little bit of pleasure and pride at how this horrible event was also drawing attention to a defining ritual of American Jewish life.

"Governor Shapiro," I thought, "he's just like me, and his family is just like mine."

Shapiro's new memoir, *Where We Keep the Light*, was recently published, and the media attention it's receiving is focused on two interrelated questions: is the book part of a larger plan to run for president of the United States in 2028, and what does his Jewishness mean to him? In the interviews I've heard, the first question is one the potential candidate avoids answering directly, but the way he answers the second question makes me believe that, yes, Shapiro has an eye on the White House.

Why? Because when Shapiro talks about being Jewish, he talks about his "Jewish faith."

There's a long and continuing debate on the nature of Jewishness, with no one category being quite right. The differences in languages, literatures, and customs between Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews limits the degree to which we can think of Jewishness as an ethnicity or culture; that the Nazis thought of it as a race would be enough to make a racial definition distasteful, though the twin facts that Jews are of many races and that it is possible to become a Jew by conversion rather than biology already rule it out. In Israel, Jewishness is a nationality, but here in the US, we are Americans, so that's not the right category either.

Speaking of Israel, the idea of Jewish peoplehood gained favor after the creation of the Jewish state as a way of building connection between Israeli Jews and their far-flung diaspora cousins. But helpful though it is, peoplehood is not a concept with wide recognition outside the Jewish community or a category on the census; and here too,



there's some tension with being part of the American people too. Defining fellow Jews as cousins suggests Jewishness is rooted in kinship ties, but this faces similar limitations to the "race" label.

And so, more often than not, we are left defining Jewish identity as belonging to the category of religion. Insofar as it's generally accepted that being a Jew means that you aren't a Christian, a Muslim, or a member of most any other religious group, thinking of Jewishness as a religion works well enough. Of course, there are certainly families that are simultaneously Jewish and belong to another religion because the parents are from two different backgrounds. But unsurprisingly, individuals born into these situations often feel pressure to choose one over the other, even if they maintain traditions from both.

The problem is that most Americans with strong Jewish identities don't consider themselves to be particularly religious, and they often don't belong to synagogues or believe in God. So, is it really a religion?

Well, the conundrum we find ourselves in is one we've inherited. In her book, *How Judaism Became a Religion*, Scholar Leora Batnitzky has detailed the ways that Jewish thinkers since the Enlightenment have pushed and pulled to explain Jewishness as Judaism or to limit a broad, all-encompassing way of life into something much more limited, namely, a religion.

In other words, religion is a category our more recent ancestors imposed on Jewishness, not one that emerged from it organically, at least not entirely so.

The category of religion, furthermore, has Christian, specifically Protestant roots that tie it to belief. To be a Christian is to hold certain beliefs about God, to accede to certain creeds. There is behavior associated with these beliefs, but they are what separates the Christian from the non-Christian. Jewishness has behaviors and values and traditions, but belief is either taken for granted or seen, by many Jews, as irrelevant. Either way, among most Jews,

belief is not a condition of belonging.

Because of its emphasis on belief, Christianity describes itself as a faith, and living as we do in a country where most of its current inhabitants are Christian well, religion is defined by faith above all. The fact that Jewishness doesn't fit this mold – or any other mold – doesn't change this.

And so, when I say that I'd be willing to bet that Shapiro is planning a run for president because he is talking about his Jewish faith, this is what I mean. Talking about one's faith is a move an American Jew makes when they want their Jewishness to make them recognizable and relatable in our Christian country. Shapiro is trying to communicate: because I'm Jewish, you can trust that I, like you, believe in God, I, like you, have solid morals and values, and I'm just like every other man thus far who has been president. For they all too had faith or at least knew how to talk about it.

American Jews have complicated feelings

about Jewish politicians who speak openly about their Jewishness. When we hear them, we often experience another version of that combined sense of pride and fear that the arson attack last spring brought on for me. It's a joy we call nachas (if we're Ashkenazi) or nachat (if we're Sephardi) in a fellow Jew's accomplishment; it's an anxiety about that accomplishment bringing too much negative attention and carrying too much risk.

It's with that in mind that I can say I mostly look forward to the day when an American Jew is president. Even more so, though, I look forward to American Jews being known on terms we can define ourselves and not forcing ourselves into a box designed by someone else just to be recognized.

*About the Author*

Dr. Claire Sufrin is Director of Research and Publication at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, where she edits the award-winning *Sources: A Journal of Jewish Ideas*.

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## From the desk of Rabbi Dr. Jules King, Spiritual Leader, Desert Outreach Synagogue

Dear Friends,

I feel profoundly blessed with loving family, good health, dear friends, colleagues, my Desert Outreach Synagogue family, and a community that continues to inspire me every day. I began my rabbinical journey at AJRCA in my 50s.

Along the way, I had the privilege of founding Temple Har Shalom in Idyllwild, California, while holding a personal vision—dreamed of even while in seminary—to one day establish Desert Outreach Synagogue in Rancho Mirage. That dream has become a reality, and this year we are celebrating DOS's 10th anniversary. I am honored to share the bimah with Rabbi Chazzan Danny Maseng and cantorial soloist Sarah Lonsert. We hope to be your source of spiritual upliftment and congregational joy.

If you know me, have studied with me, worked alongside me, prayed with me, or crossed paths with me at any point, help celebrate these two meaningful milestones: My 70th birthday and 10 years of Desert Outreach Synagogue.

Please join us for our DOS Dinner Dance Gala on Sunday, March 8th at 5:00 PM at Desert Willow Golf Resort. To RSVP visit [www.my-dos.org](http://www.my-dos.org) or call 760.449.0111. We are planning a celebratory program honoring our centenarian DOS member, Helen Varon.

Helen was born in England in 1925. Like so many English young women, she chose to serve her country as a nurse in World War II. During her time as a nurse, she said "I saw so many injured service members who faced difficult recoveries. I realized then how important tools for healing are."

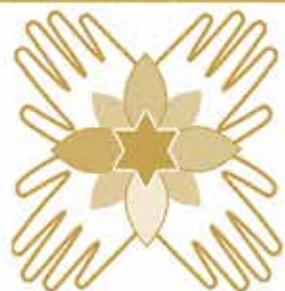
Helen has always loved and supported Israel. She first heard about the work of the Israel Guide Dog Center in 1999. During one of her many trips to Israel, she visited the Center and was again inspired to help others—this time by providing the healing power of dogs to Israelis in need.

In 2009, Helen began hosting annual Israel Guide Dog Center support luncheons in memory of her late grandson, Matthew Varon. Her love for the Center has only deepened as she learned that it rescued abandoned animals from Israel's south, comforted people in Israel with puppy love, and provided specially trained dogs to victimized Israelis. Over the years, Helen Varon and her friends have raised over \$1,000,000 and transformed the lives of many Israelis. Helen's success is a testament to her passion, commitment to Israel, and the love of her family and friends.

Please come to honor Helen and celebrate these milestones together in community.

If you are unable to attend, please consider contributing to Desert Outreach Synagogue. Every gift, regardless of size, is received with immense gratitude and directly supports our Jewish mission and future in the Coachella Valley.

Rabbi Dr. Jules King  
[www.my-dos.org](http://www.my-dos.org)



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**Desert Willow Golf Resort  
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**Celebrating Our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and Rabbi King's Birthday!  
Honoring Centenarian Helen Varon**

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# Jewish K-12 Teachers in US Report Facing Rampant Antisemitism on the Job Amid Rising Incidents in Schools

By Dion J. Pierre, *The Algemeiner*

Jewish K-12 teachers in the US face widespread antisemitic discrimination, harassment, and bullying in both public and non-Jewish private schools, according to preliminary results of a new survey conducted by the research arm of the StandWithUs advocacy group.

The survey, to which the country's leading scientific ethics committee conferred approval, found that 61.6 percent of the 584-person sample have been both targets and witnesses of antisemitic conduct in a professional setting. Meanwhile, nearly half suffered antisemitism perpetrated by their teachers unions, purportedly their advocates and representatives in collective bargaining.

School districts, obligated to comply with civil rights laws which proscribe discrimination, fail at prevention, according to the data. Of the 65 percent of respondents who said they are required to take anti-bias trainings, only 10 percent said those trainings address antisemitism.

"This first of its kind empirical study sought to understand antisemitism experienced by Jewish educators in K-12 education. Over 60 percent of respondents reporting that they personally experienced or witnessed antisemitism in their profession is an astounding number," StandWithUs data and analytics director Dr. Alexandra Fishman said in a statement. "StandWithUs is deeply committed to rigorous research that serves both academic and lay audiences."

She added, "While this study is being prepared for peer review, we are releasing some results now because Jewish educators cannot wait for academic publishing timelines to address the discrimination they face daily in our schools."

Alyson Brauning, interim chair of the National Education Association's Jewish Affairs Caucus, added, "These findings, while disturbing, do not come as a shock. They reveal a serious disconnect between stated commitments to equity and the lived realities of Jewish educators."

K-12 antisemitism has been fostered by the importation of anti-Zionist ideologies into the classroom, multiple advocacy groups have said.

StandWithUs, joined by the North American Values Institute (NAVI), wrote to

New York City's public schools chancellor about the local United Federation of Teachers (UFT) union's promotion of an anti-Israel event organized by a group which calls itself "NYC Educators for Palestine." It targeted "kids ages 6-18," according to social media screenshots included in the groups' letter, violating New York City prohibition on indoctrinating schoolchildren with views held by schoolteachers.

"NYCPS [New York City Public Schools] teachers' speech can be considered government speech, as opposed to private speech, depending on the context. The teachers involved in advertising and speaking at the event are proactively sharing their status and training as NYCPS teachers to attract attendance," the groups said. "Doing so risks misleading families as to whether the event is sponsored or supported by the DOE [Department of Education]."

The UFT has been criticized for violating political neutrality before. According to a report published in September by the Defense of Freedom Institute (DFI), the union has gone from fostering popular support for anti-Zionism among students to seeking cover from government by

placing one or more of its fellow travelers in high office. To that end, the UFT endorsed the New York City mayoral candidacy of Zohran Mamdani in July, calling the avowed socialist and Hamas sympathizer a potential "partner."

Civil rights groups have argued that pushing anti-Zionism in the classroom can have a profound impact on students,

who in many cases perpetrate antisemitic incidents, noting the two 15-year-olds arrested for having graffitied 60 swastikas all over a playground in Brooklyn.

"Words are not enough. Condemning is not enough," community activist Devorah Halberstam told local station WABC. "There has to be change. Immediate change."



**HAR-EL**  
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Member, Union for Reform Judaism  
Est. 2004

Rabbi Richard Zionts  
Ph.D.

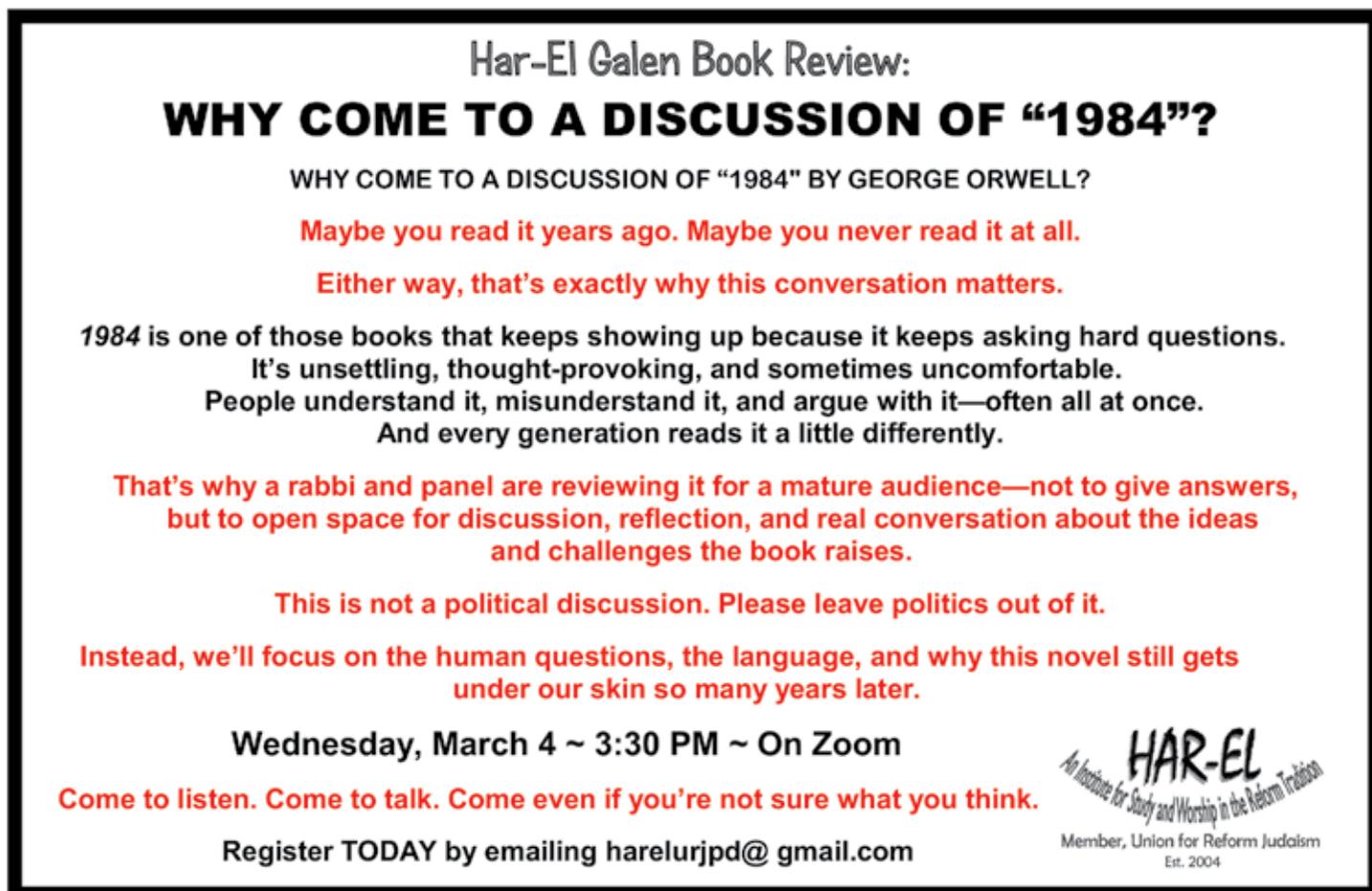
Cantor Melanie Fine  
M.S.M.

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**Har-El Galen Book Review:**

**WHY COME TO A DISCUSSION OF "1984"?**

WHY COME TO A DISCUSSION OF "1984" BY GEORGE ORWELL?

**Maybe you read it years ago. Maybe you never read it at all.**

**Either way, that's exactly why this conversation matters.**

**1984 is one of those books that keeps showing up because it keeps asking hard questions. It's unsettling, thought-provoking, and sometimes uncomfortable. People understand it, misunderstand it, and argue with it—often all at once. And every generation reads it a little differently.**

**That's why a rabbi and panel are reviewing it for a mature audience—not to give answers, but to open space for discussion, reflection, and real conversation about the ideas and challenges the book raises.**

**This is not a political discussion. Please leave politics out of it.**

**Instead, we'll focus on the human questions, the language, and why this novel still gets under our skin so many years later.**

**Wednesday, March 4 ~ 3:30 PM ~ On Zoom**

**Come to listen. Come to talk. Come even if you're not sure what you think.**

**Register TODAY by emailing [harelurjpd@gmail.com](mailto:harelurjpd@gmail.com)**

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# DOES THE SOUL SURVIVE? A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE



With renowned teacher and spiritual guide Rabbi Elie Kaplan Spitz, Rabbi Emeritus of Congregation B'nai Israel in Tustin, Visiting Professor at American Jewish University, Wilkinson College and Chapman University.

**Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 PM**

**CONGREGATION BETH SHALOM**

Berger Foundation Building, 42600 Cook Street, Suite 205, Palm Desert  
*Ample parking available*

Free for Beth Shalom Members ~ \$5 Non-members  
Light snacks available

First 20 people to reserve their space will be entered into a special raffle drawing.

RSVP to 760-200-3636 or email [info@congregationbethshalom.net](mailto:info@congregationbethshalom.net)

## Making Jewish Summer Camp Accessible

### JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE DESERT

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

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1. Campers must reside in the greater Coachella Valley
2. Camp must be a registered Jewish residential camp
3. Camp session must be 7 days or longer
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For more information contact Leslie Pepper,  
Director of Community Engagement at  
760-324-4737 or [leslie.pepper@jfedps.org](mailto:leslie.pepper@jfedps.org)



# Grant Opportunity Announcement



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

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

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



Temple Isaiah - Jewish Community Center

13th Annual

# PALM SPRINGS JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

March 7-12, 2026

Celebrate 13 years of storytelling, culture, and community at the Palm Springs Jewish Film Festival, returning March 7-12, 2026 at the Palm Springs Cultural Center and bigger than ever. Thanks to last year's incredible success, we've expanded the festival by an extra day to showcase 22 powerful films/documentaries, along with even more opportunities to dive deeper through engaging post-film Q&As with select actors and directors from this year's lineup. Join us for six unforgettable days of cinema, conversation, and connection, and learn more by visiting [PalmSpringsJewishFestival.org](http://PalmSpringsJewishFestival.org)



Please scan the QR code to register for this event.



## Champagne VIP Night

Saturday, March 7th • 7:30 PM

You will be greeted with a glass of champagne and dessert prior to "The Everything Pot" Followed by a Q&A with stars Lisa Edelstein, Erik Griffin and Writer/Director Sherise Dorf



## Wine VIP Night

Sunday, March 8th

Following the 7:00 showing of "Ethan Bloom" Wine and a nosh will be served.



# Platinum Pass

VIP Events & All Films

# \$175

# Individual Tickets

Including Saturday Night

# \$12

## On Wednesday, March 11th

following the 3:30 pm film "The Cake Maker" and the Q&A, Join The Jewish Federation of the Desert in the upstairs lounge for wine and cheese reception.

Join Us Wednesday, March 11th at 10:30 AM at the Palm Springs Cultural Center upstairs for Bagels, Coffee and Conversation!



Come schmooze and discuss this year's films!

Thank you to



for donating the bagels and cream cheese for this event.

## CLOSING EVENT

Thursday, March 12th

9:15 PM following film feature film

## "Guns and Moses"

Sandwiches and cookies will be served along with an open bar.

**After Party**  
**Everyone Welcome!**



SUPPORTED BY:  
Jewish Federation OF THE DESERT

All Events Being Held at the Palm Spring Cultural Center • Events Included in Ticket Price

## The Everything Pot

Saturday, March 7 | 7:30 PM

1 Hour 30 minutes

English



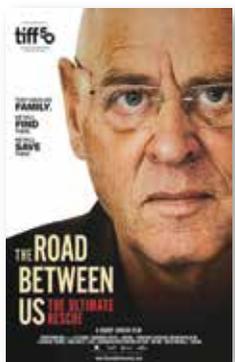
A comedy of errors ensues when empty nester Rachel (Lisa Edelstein) hastily sends a gift to Charlie (James Wolk), a former colleague, upon receiving his wedding invitation. The young couple's wedding gets Rachel out of her perpetual state of confusion in her own marriage and brings unexpected excitement, which inadvertently causes chaos in both unions. As one domino falls after another, cracks begin to show in their respective relationships especially while Rachel's husband Adam (Erik Griffin) becomes obsessed with getting back their wedding gift.

## The Road Between Us

Sunday, March 8 | 10:30 AM

1 Hour 35 Minutes

English



In a harrowing real-life story, a former decorated general comes out of retirement and uses all his extensive military training to rescue his son, daughter-in-law, and two young granddaughters whose home has been surrounded and attacked by terrorists. The Ultimate Rescue follows retired Israeli general Noam Tibon, who on October 7, 2023, received a desperate text from his son: terrorists had stormed his home, and he, his wife,

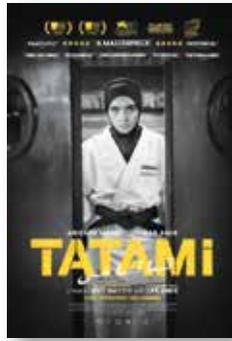
and their two young daughters feared for their lives. With no time to spare, Noam and his wife, Gali, embarked on a ten-hour mission across country under siege to save their family.

## Tatami

Sunday, March 8 | 1:00 PM

1 Hour 45 Minutes

Persian (Farsi), English



TATAMI follows Iranian female judoka Leila (Arienne Mandi) and her coach Maryam (Zar Amir), who travel to the World Judo Championships, intent on bringing home Iran's first gold medal. Midway through the Championships, they receive a chilling ultimatum from the Islamic Republic: Leila must fake an injury and lose or be branded a traitor. With her own safety and her family's freedom on the line, Leila faces an impossible choice: submit to the Iranian regime, as her coach Maryam implores her to do, or fight on for the gold. Inspired by true events. (Q&A on Zoom)

## Dead Language

Sunday, March 8 | 3:30 PM

1 Hour 40 Minutes

English, Hebrew



Based on the Academy Award-Nominated Short Film "Aya" A coincidental encounter propels Aya (Sarah Adler, Foxtrot), who is waiting for her husband at the airport, to pick up

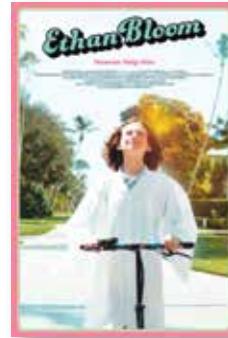
a complete stranger instead. The immediate sense of intimacy that sparks between the two sharply ends when the man disappears, leaving Aya with a yearning that perhaps only a complete stranger can fulfill. (Q&A on Zoom)

## Ethan Bloom

Sunday, March 8 | 7:00 PM

1 Hour 34 Minutes

English



Thirteen-year-old Ethan Bloom is supposed to be preparing for his bar mitzvah - but despite his Jewish family, Ethan is convinced his spiritual calling is with the Catholic church, where he secretly finds solace under the guidance of Father Diaz (Carlos Ponce). Through the wisdom of an unconventional rabbi (Rachelle Lefevre), the love of his complicated father (Joshua Malina), and his first romance with a cowboy-boot-wearing girl who can put him in a headlock, Ethan must confront his lies and grief to discover that faith isn't about choosing sides—it's about honoring all the messy, beautiful pieces of who we are. (Live Q&A)

## Matchmaking 2

Monday, March 9 | 10:30 AM

1 Hour 47 Minutes

Hebrew



Baruch Auerbach (Maor Schweitzer), a mature Yeshiva student who missed every opportunity to marry, is left to live in a small

room in the Yeshiva where he studies and serves as the faithful assistant to the matchmaker Malki (Irit Kaplan). When Malki assigns him the task of escorting her young daughter Shira (Omer Nudelman) from the airport - he decides that it is time to get married. Baruch asks for Malki's help, but when she tries to match him with Ruth (Niv Sultan), he decides to do everything he can to thwart the matchmaking with Ruth and win Shira's heart. Only when he realizes how much he has misinterpreted the circumstances of his life will his heart open to the love he deserves.

## For the Love of a Woman

Monday, March 9 | 1:00 PM

1 Hour 57 Minutes

English, Hebrew



In For The Love of a Woman (Per amore di una donna), Esther (Mili Avital), an American woman in her forties, embarks on a mission in 1970s Israel with the aid of a local university professor to try and unearth the secrets of her family's past, and in particular find a woman who lived in Palestine in the 1930s. They must untangle the story of Yehudit (a mesmeric Ana Ularu), who arrives in a settler's village in the 1930s and entrances three men who live there. A playful and ultimately tragic love story provides a remarkable revelation for Esther.

## One Big Happy Family

Monday, March 9 | 3:30 PM

1 Hour 22 Minutes

English

A comedy-drama about Rachel, a neurotic Jewish woman whose seemingly perfect life in suburban L.A. is upended





by a DNA test revealing her beloved deceased father wasn't her biological parent, forcing her on a hilarious, identity-searching journey. With her eccentric mother (Linda Lavin) to uncover hidden family secrets, exploring themes of identity, ancestry, and what truly defines family. (Live Q&A)



### 31 Candles

Monday, March 9 | 7:00 PM  
1 Hour 30 Minutes  
English



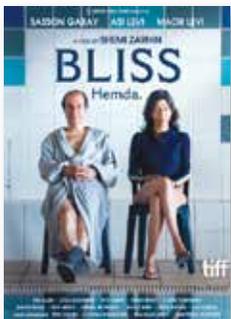
When a Jewish film director who makes Christmas movies in New York City decides to have his Bar Mitzvah at the age of

31, he must navigate situationships, exes, and family to complete his Mitzvah project and impress his childhood camp crush. Inspired by Jonah Feingold's life, 31 Candles is a heartwarming rom-com about love, identity, and growing up—eventually. (Live Q&A)



### Bliss (Hemda)

Tuesday, March 10 | 10:30 AM  
2 Hour 5 Minutes  
Hebrew & Arabic



Sassi (73) and Effi (50) spend their days frantically running from job to job in a seemingly futile attempt to pay back

the enormous gambling debt left behind by Sassi's son. They somehow overcome all the daily obstacles in their lives – the grueling work schedule, their obvious age gap, and Sassi's impotency (a result of prostate surgery) – with love and humor. But when two young men burst back into their home and workspace, breaking their fragile carefully crafted schedule, the limits of their love (and humor) will be tested like never before.



### Soda

Tuesday, March 10 | 1:00 PM  
1 Hour 39 Minutes  
Hebrew



Soda is an Israeli historical drama about Shalom Gottlieb, a Holocaust survivor and resistance fighter in 1950s Israel, whose

new life and love with a mysterious seamstress, Eva, are threatened by rumors that she was a Kapo (Nazi collaborator) during the war, forcing him to choose between his heart and his duty to the community. Set in a working-class neighborhood of survivors, the film explores themes of love, guilt, trauma, and the struggle to rebuild amidst lingering Holocaust scars, inspired by the director's own family history. Inspired by real-life experiences.



### Rosenthal: The Great Showman

Tuesday, March 10 | 3:30 PM  
1 Hour 32 Minute  
German

Germany, 1978. Hans Rosenthal is the country's most popular TV presenter,



and, what few people know: He is Jewish and a Holocaust survivor. The 75th edition of his beloved live game show is about to be broadcast, but the celebratory mood is dampened by the air date: November 9. Exactly 40 years after the Nazi pogrom against the Jewish population, Hans is expected to entertain and distract an audience of millions with his harmless TV show, rather than attend the first official German memorial for the victims. Hans finds himself in a moral dilemma: Has the Jewish showman become himself a henchman of repression? Or will he find the strength to address his family trauma?



### Swedishkayt: YidLife Crisis In Stockholm

Tuesday, March 10 | 7:00 PM  
1 Hour 16 Minutes  
English, Yiddish



Swedishkayt: YidLife Crisis in Stockholm is a documentary where creators Eli Batalion and Jamie Elman explore Sweden's unexpected, vibrant Jewish community, uncovering 250 years of history, a surprising Yiddish revival (Yiddish is a government-recognized language!), and a resilient culture through humor, history, and heartfelt encounters, celebrating Jewish happiness, identity, and surprising connections. It's a cultural deep dive showing how a small community

thrives through unique traditions, even navigating challenges like Sweden's "Law of Jante". (Live Q&A)

## DOUBLE FEATURE

### Welcome to Yiddishland

Wednesday, March 11 | 10:30 AM  
1 Hour 36 Minutes  
Yiddish, English



A feature-length documentary about the progressive artists spearheading a global cultural

renaissance of the endangered Yiddish language; by creating new art in an ancient language and music that speaks to our times. (Q&A on Zoom)

### Yiddle Yiddle On

Wednesday, March 11 | 11:45 AM  
15 Minutes  
English

Leigh Nudelman is an Ashkenazi South African Jewish singer, who is single-handedly reviving Yiddish music in Johannesburg. A fourth generation South African, Leigh eloquently describes the power of Yiddish to connect her to her ancestors, just as she expresses the struggles and joys of being Jewish in South Africa today. Leigh describes singing Yiddish music as a feminist act that takes on new relevance in light of the crimes against women on October 7th. In the film, she brings the residents of the Sandringham Gardens Retirement Community to their feet singing Yiddish and South African favorites.



## Lucky Star

Wednesday, March 11 | 1:00 PM  
1 Hour 40 Minutes  
French



France, 1940. Jean Chevalin, a somewhat cowardly trickster, never meant to desert the army. He just got a bit scared... and somehow ended up back home without the faintest idea how to fix the mess. With the Nazis closing in, Jean quickly realizes that his sleight-of-hand tricks won't cut it this time. Desperate to protect his wife and his eight-year-old son, he hatches a wildly ridiculous plan: change their identities and pretend to be Jews, hoping this brilliant idea will help them slip past the soldiers and reach the Free Zone. It sounds genius... for about five minutes. Before long, everything spirals out of control. The family gets swept up in a perilous (and completely unplanned) adventure, recruited by the Resistance, and discovers the hard way that solidarity and empathy are a lot messier than they look on paper. As the chaos snowballs, Jean must figure out if he's brave enough to do the right thing—without digging himself an even deeper hole; it's going to take a miracle.

## The Cakemaker

Wednesday, March 11 | 3:30 PM  
1 Hour 44 Minutes  
English, German, Hebrew

Thomas, a young German baker, is having an affair with Oren, an Israeli married man who has frequent business visits in Berlin. When Oren dies in a car crash in Israel,



Thomas travels to Jerusalem seeking answers regarding his death. Under a fabricated identity, Thomas infiltrates into the life of Anat, his lover's newly widowed wife, who owns a small café in downtown Jerusalem. Thomas starts to work for her and create German cakes and cookies that brings life and an unexpected relationship into her café. Inspired by true events. (Live Q&A)

## Influenced

Wednesday, March 11 | 7:00 PM  
1 Hour 28 Minutes  
English



A sharply outrageous comedy with big laughs and real heart, this fast-talking New York satire skewers influencer culture and Upper East Side snobbery with unapologetic bite. Odd Mom Out creator Jill Kargman co-writes and stars as Danielle, a status-chasing social media climber navigating a glittering world of obscene wealth, curated friendships, and transactional clout, where philanthropy becomes performance and popularity is measured in followers. Newly divorced and spiraling into bar mitzvah planning gone feral, a chance encounter with a homeless man punctures her perfectly filtered world. This raunchy crowd-pleaser, packed with celebrity cameos, skewers fame fixation while delivering genuine warmth and a surprisingly redemptive take on

empathy, generosity, and what really matters once the phones are put down. (Q&A on Zoom)

## Running On Sand

Thursday, March 12 | 10:30 AM  
1 Hour 44 Minutes  
English, Hebrew



About to be deported from Israel, a young Eritrean refugee is mistaken for the new Nigerian striker of Maccabi Netanya Football Club. After embracing his new identity, his survival becomes dependent on the team's success.

## The Tasters

Thursday, March 12 | 1:00 PM  
1 Hour 25 Minutes  
German



Autumn 1943. While her husband is serving at the front, Rosa Sauer has fled bomb-stricken Berlin and taken refuge with her in-laws in the northeastern Polish village of Gross-Partsch. One morning the young woman is taken to Wolf's Lair, the Nazi headquarters. There she joins a group of women who are forced to eat meals before they are served to the Führer to make sure that the food is not poisoned. In this atmosphere of coercion and torn between the fear of dying and the hunger that devours them, the tasters will form alliances, friendships and secret pacts among themselves, without ceasing to hope. Inspired by the true story of Margot Wolk.

## The Ring

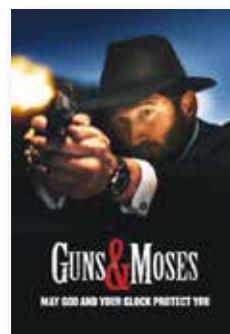
Thursday, March 12 | 3:30 PM  
1 Hour 50 Minutes  
English



Arnon Noble is a religious man with a strong bond to his mother, a Holocaust survivor. He usually drives her to school lectures where she tells the students how she saved the lives of her baby boy and herself with the help of a thin gold ring. When the mother's health deteriorates, he travels to her old hometown, Budapest to search for the mythological ring that saved her life in the past. He turns for help to his estranged daughter who is a TV researcher and offers her to go on this journey together. Will the search for the ring be successful? Will the ring save the mother's life again and will the same ring that saved his mother also succeed in saving Arnon's relationship with his own daughter. A heart-warming dramady about three generations and the family history that reconnects them. The Ring is based on Adir Miller's Holocaust survival story.

## Guns & Moses

Thursday, March 12 | 7:00 PM  
1 Hour 34 Minutes  
English



After a synagogue is attacked, a retired agent is pulled back into action. With an old partner at his side, he uncovers a deadly conspiracy in this sharp, high-stakes thriller packed with action, wit, and heart. (Live Q&A)





# Tribute Card Donations

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

## Honorarium Tributes In Appreciation For:

- **Jackie Cohen**, *Happy Birthday wishes to my beautiful wife, Jackie (the love of my life), on celebrating her special Birthday! Love Ed.*
- **Jackie Cohen**, *A very happy birthday on your milestone, a great new decade, from Kit and Sally Narodick, Debra and Mickey Star.*
- **Bernie Fromm**, *We love you! Happy birthday from your children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.*
- **Leenie Kaplan**, *Thank you for a lovely day, from Gail Scadron.*
- **Susie Konheim**, *In honor of your birthday, from Ressa and Terry Niznick.*
- **Marjorie Kulp**, *In honor of your big birthday, from Steven and Janet Anixter, and Nina and Milton Zale.*
- **Mr. Mandell**, *Our love and best wishes as you celebrate your milestone 85<sup>th</sup>, from Gail and Bob Scadron.*
- **Joanne Mintz**, *In honor of your special birthday, from Leslie and Barry Usow.*
- **Bruce Rabinowitz**, *Mazel tov on celebrating your special birthday, from Ed and Jackie Cohen.*
- **Carol Resnick**, *Thank you for a lovely day, from Gail Scadron.*
- **Bob Scadron**, *In honor of your 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, from Stephen and Judy Ehrlichman, Debbie and Mickey Star.*
- **Mr. and Mrs. Bob Scadron**, *Thank you for a beautiful evening celebrating Bob's 85<sup>th</sup> birthday, from Ruth and Mal Kaufman.*
- **Debra and Mickey Star**, *Mazel tov on your son Darren being bestowed Knight of the Legion of Honor Award by the President of France, from Ed and Jackie Cohen.*
- **Leslie Usow**, *Sending love in honor of your birthday, from Trudy Schwartz, and Shelly Zucker.*
- **Eileen and Larry Zoll**, *Happy Anniversary.*

*Wishing you a continued life of health and happiness, from Stephen and Judy Ehrlichman, Muriel and Ron Goldberg, Margot and Jerry Halperin, Ruth and Mal Kaufman, Susan and Bruce Konehim, Margie and Stephen Kulp, Julian and Dolly Levy, Marilyn Malkin, Eunice Meister, Gail Richards, Gail and Bob Scadron.*

## Refuah Shleimah Get Well:

- **Sam Cohen**, *Wishing you a speedy recovery, from Ed and Jackie Cohen.*
- **Nancy Ditlove**, *Thinking of you fondly, from Barbara Platt.*
- **Loreen Jacobson**, *Thinking of you fondly, from Barbara Platt.*
- **Cecile Silverman**, *Our best wishes for a speedy recovery, from Eunice Meister, Gail and Bob Scadron.*
- **Nora Solowitz**, *Wishing you a speedy recovery, from Ed and Jackie Cohen.*

## Memoriam Tributes Condolences Sent To:

- **Jim Borax**, *Condolences on the death of your beloved Sherri, from Ed and Jackie Cohen.*
- **Karen Cohen**, *Our condolences on the loss of your dear husband Charles, from Ed and Jackie Cohen.*
- **Nancy Ditlove**, *In memory of your beloved husband Dennis, from Larry Pitts.*
- **Stuart Goldfine**, *In memory of your beloved Susan, from Ed and Jackie Cohen.*
- **Scot and Lance Karp**, *In memory of your dear brother, Earl Karp, from Debra and Mickey Star.*
- **Joan Kerns and Family**, *Condolences on the death of your beloved husband, Pat, from Ed and Jackie Cohen.*
- **Sydelle Kramer**, *In memory of your beloved husband, father and grandfather Sherman*

*Kramer, from Tobby Rubin.*

- **Ken Lieberman**, *In memory of Marny Dixon, from Edward Gubman.*
- **Marilyn Malkin**, *In memory of your beloved sister Joanne, from Margot and Jerry Halperin, Ruth and Mal Kaufman, Sheila W. Keeshin, Gail and Bob Scadron, Elaine and Claude Steinberger.*
- **Dr. Harry Marshak**, *Deepest condolences on the loss of your mother, from Sheila Bailin and Larry Pitts.*
- *In loving memory of **Norm Lewis**, from Barbara Platt.*
- **Mimi Paley**, *In memory of your beloved husband Harold, from Marnie Miller and Joe Noren, Elaine and Claude Steinberger.*
- **Barbara Platt**, *In loving memory of Norm Lewis, from Elaine Leib and Jim Miringoff, and Sherry Schor.*
- **Lisa Roth**, *Honoring Marty Sobel's well-lived life, from Cathy and Mark Maslan.*
- **Mr. and Mrs. Marc Roth**, *Our deepest sympathy on the loss of your beloved father, from Gail and Bob Scadron.*
- **Leslie Usow**, *In memory of Judy Torodor, from Ed and Jackie Cohen.*
- **Laura and Michael Werner**, *In memory of your dear father, Jerry Weisman, from Leslie and Barry Usow.* **Alan Potash Family**, *in memory of Alan Potash, from Phyllis Eisenberg.*



### A PLACE OF REMEMBRANCE

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



# Shabbat Schedule - March 2026

## AHAVAT ACHIM/Sun City Jewish Services, Palm Desert

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

## BEIT HAVERIM, Palm Springs

Rabbi Steven Rosenberg (rabbisteven.rosenberg@gmail.com) and Hazzan Dr. Sarah Sela. Where friends old and new gather Friday evenings at 6:30 pm for Shabbat services and festive Oneg. Shabbat services alternate between services/potluck dinners in members' homes. Shabbat mornings at 10:30 am: Nosh and drash/torah study online or in person. For schedule of services, potluck Shabbat dinners, Shabbat morning programs and activities, email beithaverimps@gmail.com or call 760-548-3908 (note new phone number).

## BETH SHALOM, Palm Desert

(Member, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism)  
Rabbi Dr. JB Sacks (rabbi@congregationbethshalom.net); Ken Hailpern, Madrikh Ruhani (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. Join Congregation Beth Shalom for a special Pirkei Avot class taught by Rabbi Rachel Axelrad, Saturday morning March 13 and 21 at 8:45am. Information and Reservations: -760-200-3636.  
**PURIM** Megillah Reading and Purim Seudah Tuesday, March 3 at 4pm followed by Purim Seudah.

## CHABAD OF PALM SPRINGS & DESERT COMMUNITIES

Rabbi Yonason Denebeim & Rabbi Arik Denebeim 250 East Palm Canyon Drive, Palm Springs, CA 92264 www.chabadpalmsprings.com 760-325-0774.

Shacharit services Monday-Friday at 7:30 am; Sundays at 8:00 am and Shabbat at 10:00 am. Evening services 10 minutes before sunset. Check website or call to confirm times.

**NEW!** First Fridays: Services at 7 pm, followed by Shabbat dinners at 7:30 pm. Check website for details.

## CHABAD OF PALM DESERT

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

## CHABAD OF RANCHO MIRAGE:

*Rabbi Shimon Posner & Rabbi Benny Lew.* www.chabadm.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@chabadm.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: chabadm.com/ckids or Chaya Posner: chaya@chabadm.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 Danny Maseng and Sarah Lonsert, Cantorial Soloist. 760-449-0111. Mailing address: P.O. Box 982, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270. Shabbat services held at 7:00 pm on the second Fridays at Unitarian Universalist Church of the Desert in Rancho Mirage. On second Saturdays: 10:30-11:30 am Torah study on Zoom with Rabbi Axelrad. Check the calendar for updates.  
**Adult Education:** Adult B'nai Mitzvah, Hebrew—Beginning and advanced, Introduction to Judaism, Adult Confirmation, Adult Learning. Contacts: rabbi@my-dos.org; www.my-dos.org

## OR HAMIDBAR

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

## TEMPLE HAR SHALOM, Idyllwild

www.templeharshalomidyllwild.org  
**Email:** templeharshalomofidyllwild@gmail.com. Shabbat Candle Lighting on Fridays at 6:00 pm on Zoom. First Friday with Rabbi Malka Drucker; 2nd Friday with Rabbi Ilana Grinblat; 3rd Friday with Kerry Abram; 4th Friday with Rabbi

Ilana Grinblat. Shabbat Book Study with Rabbi Malka Drucker on Zoom Saturdays 4:00-5:00 pm. Check our website for current info including Torah Study with Rabbi Ilana one Saturday morning per month. For more information and for Zoom link call 951-468-0004.

## TEMPLE ISAIAH, Palm Springs

332 West Alejo Road, Palm Springs, CA 92262, 760-325-2281 (Office open Tuesday-Thursday). Email: temple@templeisaiahps.com; Website: templeisaiahps.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/templeisaiahpalm Springs.

## 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 of Palm Springs

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



# Community Calendar of Programs - March 2026

## Tuesdays

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

## Thursdays

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

## Sunday, March 1

**11 am-2 pm** **Voices of LGBTQ+ Jews**

**in the Desert: Discussion Group and Purim Brunch.** See ad page 5.

## Wednesday, March 4

**3:30 pm** Congregation Har-El Zoom program: Helene Galen Book Review of George Orwell's **"1984."** See ad page 9.

**Saturday, March 7-Thursdays, March 12** 13<sup>th</sup> Annual Palm Springs Jewish Film Festival at the Palm Springs Cultural Center. 22 films. See film schedule and synopses pages 11-14.

## Sunday, March 8

**5:00 pm** Desert Outreach Synagogue 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Dinner Dance Gala. See ad and article on page 8

**Wednesday, March 11** JFS Gala: **"An Evening at the Museum Benefitting Jewish Family Service of the Desert."** See ad page 4.

## Thursday, March 12

**3:30 pm** Congregation Beth Shalom First Annual Jerry Solomon Memorial Lecture: "Does the Soul Survive? A Jewish Approach," with Rabbi Elie Kaplan Spitz. See ad page 10.

## Sunday, March 15

**10:30 am** Havurah of the Desert presents **Concert & Conversation: Jews, Music, and**

**the American Dream:** How Jews Defined the American Experience through Popular Song, with **Ben Sidran**, in person and on the piano. Location given following registration at havurahofthedesert.org/speakers. See article below.

## Monday, March 16

**9:30 am** Sabra Hadassah of the Desert program for women and men. **"Cancer Has Come A Long Way...But Not Far Enough,"** featuring Dr. Stewart Fleishman, who will focus on the big advances in care in the last 25 years.. Program held at the Jewish Federation Office. Coffee and nosh at 9:30; program begins at 10 am. Hadassah members \$20; non-members \$25. RSVP to Debbie Orgen, Treasurer, at 760-289-7987.

## Wednesday, March 18

**6:30 pm** Sabra Hadassah of the Desert private home interactive event. **"When Harry Passes"** featuring

Beverly Ross. Contact President Marilyn Katz to RSVP and more information - sabrahadassah9@gmail.com.

## Sunday, March 29

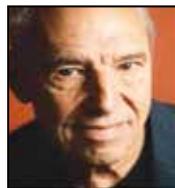
**10 am-3 pm** Jewish Federation's annual **Feast of Jewish Learning.** Four in-person presenters. Everyone welcome to attend some or all of the speakers. See page 3 for details. No charge to attend, but box lunches will be available to purchase ahead of time by calling the Federation Offices, 760-324-4737.

**Email (preferred)**  
**Miriam Bent at**  
**mhbentjcn@earthlink.net**  
**or call**  
**760-835-1022**  
**to have your events**  
**included in the**  
**community calendar.**

## Havurah of the Desert Program "Jews, Music and the American Dream" March 15

By Scott Mezistrano, Havurah of the Desert Chair

Havurah of the Desert invites the community to **"Concert & Conversation: Jews, Music, and the American Dream: How Jews Defined the American Experience through Popular Song"** with Ben Sidran, In Person and on the Piano, on Sunday, March 15<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 am at the Jewish Federation building at Frank Sinatra and Hwy. 111 in Rancho Mirage.



The Jews have never been more than 3% of the American population yet, through their work as composers, publishers, performers, and entrepreneurs, they defined the world of popular music. How and why did this Jewish enterprise shape the terms of the American dream and change the way all Americans saw themselves?

Program is free. Bagels and spreads nosh will be served.

Space is limited. RSVP is required by emailing havurahofthedesert.org/speakers.

*Editor's note: If you are following the Henry Louis Gates Jr.'s PBS program*

*"Black and Jewish America: An Interwoven History," you may have noticed that Ben Sidran was mentioned in the February 10 program.*



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

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# US Jewish Orgs Are Reassessing 'Allies' After Oct. 7 Betrayals, Key Jewish Leader Says

As institutions look to 'reset' following two years of war, resources spent on community relations may be better used for Jewish education, says Conference of Presidents CEO William Daroff

By Zev Stub, The Times of Israel

American Jewish organizations are rethinking the value of traditional coalition-building efforts after many long-time allies "punched us in the gut" following the October 7, 2023, Hamas massacre, CEO of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations William Daroff told The Times of Israel on February 5.

Daroff, considered one of the most influential figures in American Jewry, said that community leaders are thinking about how to "press reset" after the ceasefire and hostage return that brought Israel's two-year war in Gaza to a level of closure.

After the shock of the Hamas attack, in which 1,200 people were killed and 251 kidnapped, the Jewish world experienced a second shock afterwards, on the proverbial "October 8," when many saw friends and partners turn against Israel or stay silent, Daroff said.

"The day after the attack, we were punched in the gut a second time when we saw how many of our erstwhile friends and allies, with whom we'd marched and supported, abandoned us," he said.

For years, mainstream Jewish organizations have invested heavily in community-relations work, building ties with African American, Latino, LGBT groups and labor unions, among others, Daroff said. They joined coalitions on issues such as raising the minimum wage, civil rights and broader social justice



CEO of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations William Daroff

agendas. Part of the purpose was basic decency, but there was also a strategic aspect: an expectation that when Jews faced rising antisemitism or when Israel was under attack, those allies would stand with them.

That assumption did not hold after October 7, however, Daroff said.

"The unions that we had stood with abandoned us," he said bluntly. "Now, in an environment where organizations have limited resources, I think there needs to be a reassessment of how we prioritize engaging with allies."

This does not mean turning inward and ignoring broader social issues, Daroff stressed.

"Fighting for minimum wage, for instance, in and of itself, might be a good thing" from a Jewish values perspective, he said. However, he said, the notion that such advocacy would "pay dividends" for the Jewish community in the form of support on issues of Israel or antisemitism has been "blown away."

Meanwhile, Daroff said, the last two years have shown that organizations should pour more resources into "doubling down" on Jewish education to strengthen people's identity and resilience.

"We need to ensure that these kids have the self-confidence to talk about Judaism, about Israel, so when they hit the campus as freshmen, they're not hit with challenges for the first time and have no way to respond."

## A Return to Unity

Looking at the current landscape, Daroff, whose umbrella organization represents 50 mainstream Jewish organizations from across the political spectrum, said he

sees a new level of unity and willingness to cooperate following the events of the past two years.

After Israel's judicial reform debate split society in the year before the October 7 attack, "organizations have learned to bite their lips on the 10% they disagree on for the sake of Shalom Bayit [cohesion] and to cooperate on the 90% that they do agree on," Daroff said. "October 7 forced us to focus on who our real enemies are and what our real priorities are, and there is so much work to be done that we can do better together."

Mainstream Jewish leaders are nearly all in agreement on most of the core issues, such as the centrality of Israel in Jewish life, Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the Jewish people, and a basic understanding of Israel's role and rights in a hostile region, Daroff said. While they may have squabbled over secondary matters before the war, unity now means working together on these issues and speaking with commonality of purpose and agreement.

"My big focus now for the American Jewish community is to try to continue this, and to impress upon our Israeli brothers and sisters to put unity at the top of their priorities," he added.

Daroff outlined his approach to "leading from consensus" as the head of the Conference of Presidents, whose members span the entire political spectrum.

"My practice has been to focus on areas of agreement, and from there, tiptoe into areas of disagreement to see if there are ways to bring people together in a way that will make everybody happy," he said.

## Antisemitism and engagement

Looking at the state of antisemitism today, Daroff sees "early indications" of a gradual cooling of the explosion in anti-Jewish hostility over the last two years. While it is too early to guess how things will progress over the coming months, there are signs of progress, especially on the fierce ideological battlefields of

college campuses.

"Things like anti-Israel encampments and Jewish students being harassed are not happening anymore," Daroff said. "Campuses are much calmer now than they were previously."

That marks a sharp contrast with the spring of 2024, when weeks-long encampments, building occupations and class disruptions were common at major universities.

Tents and signs fill Harvard Yard by the John Harvard statue in the pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel encampment at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts, on May 5, 2024. (Joseph Prezioso / AFP)

Much of that, he said, is because the Trump administration took strong steps to enforce Title VI protections against discrimination, including threatening to withdraw federal funding, to force university administrators to clamp down on hate activities on campus.

"Those interventions raised the stakes for institutions and literally changed the atmosphere for Jewish students and faculty overnight," he said.

Meanwhile, the phenomenon of surging Jewish engagement among non-affiliated Jews since October 7 shows no signs of abating, Daroff said. Organizations continue to report rising synagogue and JCC attendance, increased involvement in Jewish and pro-Israel advocacy, and public displays of Jewish identity such as wearing yarmulkes and Magen David necklaces.

"We haven't seen indications that the surge is reversing," Daroff said. "As a community, we have been circling our wagons because we have seen that, at the end of the day, the people we can count on the most are our Jewish friends and neighbors. I think that's been an important part of the surge, and we need to find ways to ensure that Jewish engagement continues."

"My hope at this point," Daroff said, "is that with the conflict here receding, the Jewish community can press reset and focus on what is important."

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# Mississippi Senate Unanimously Adopts Resolution Backing Jackson Synagogue

Jessica Russak-Hoffman, Jewish News Syndicate

The Mississippi State Senate adopted a bipartisan resolution on January 20 in support of Beth Israel Congregation following a January 10 arson attack at the Jackson synagogue.

Senate Resolution 8, which expressed full support for the congregation "and for justice following this heinous crime," was authored by Democratic state senator David Blount and handled on the floor by Republican state senator Dean Kirby. It passed unanimously.

"Any act of arson is a serious crime," the resolution states. "But attacking a house of worship is a particular outrage because it is not merely an attack on a building, it is an attack on the right of individuals to worship as they deem proper."

The resolution states that the arson at the synagogue "brings to mind some of the most tragic events in the history of Mississippi."

"It's something we just can't tolerate in our state," state senator Hillman Frazier, a Democrat and co-author of the resolution, told JNS. "We have a history of violence, but I thought we were making progress. I think this act that took place in the synagogue is going to make folks look at us differently. We'll do all we can to bring justice to the person who committed the crime."

Stephen Spencer Pittman, 19, admitted to setting the fire intentionally "due to the building's Jewish ties," according to the FBI.

"We want to prosecute him to the fullest extent of the law, be it jail time, fair trial," Frazier told JNS. "We want to make sure that he pays for the act of violence."

"Also, it's going to be a time for us to reflect in our state in terms of where we are as people, as a nation," he said. "We can use it as a learning tool and a building process in terms of building a better relationship in the city of Jackson and the state of Mississippi."

Frazier told JNS he hopes this was an "isolated incident," but that "we are going to make sure that we do all we can to safeguard our houses of worship."



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FESTIVAL OPENS SATURDAY, MARCH 7<sup>th</sup> - 7:30 PM

\* The Everything Pot \*

Followed by Q & A with stars Lisa Edelstein & Erik Griffin  
& Writer/Director Sherise Dorf



SUNDAY, MARCH 8

10:30 am \* The Road Between Us

1:00 pm \* Tatami

Q&A on Zoom with Director and Cast

3:30 pm \* Dead Language

Q&A on Zoom with Film Makers Mihal Brezis & Oded Binnun

7:00 pm **Opening Night Red Carpet Event with Wine & Nibbles**

\* Ethan Bloom

Q&A Live with Actors Joshua Malina & Hank Greenspan



MONDAY, MARCH 9

10:30 am \* Matchmaking 2

1:00 pm \* For the Love of a Woman

3:30 pm \* One Big Happy Family

Q&A Live with Actor/Writer Lisa Brenner

7:00 pm \* 31 Candles

Q&A Live with Producer Jonah Weinstein & Director/Actor Jonah Feingold



TUESDAY, MARCH 10

10:30 am \* Bliss

1:00 pm \* Soda

3:30 pm \* Rosenthal: The Great Showman

7:00 pm \* Swedishkayt: YidLife Crisis in Stockholm

Q&A Live with Filmmakers/Actors Jamie Elman and Eli Batalion



WEDNESDAY, MARCH 11

9:30 am *Bagels and Schmoozing*

10:30 am \* Welcome to Yiddishland and Yiddle Yiddle On

Q&A on Zoom with Director Peter Decherney

1:00 pm \* Lucky Star

3:30 pm \* The Cakemaker

Q&A Live with Director Ofir Graizer

**Jewish Federation of the Desert Special Event follows film/Q&A**

7:00 pm \* Influenced

Q&A Zoom with Actor/writer Jill Kargman



THURSDAY, MARCH 12

10:30 am \* Running On Sand

1:00 pm \* The Tasters

3:30 pm \* The Ring

7:00 pm **Closing Night Red Carpet Event!**

\* Guns & Moses

Q&A Live with director Salvador Litvak and Actor Mark Feuerstein

9:15 pm After Party . . . Everyone welcome!!



The VIP Event, all films, Bagels & Schmoozing and After Party will all be held at the Palm Springs Cultural Center (formerly the Camelot Theater), 2300 East Baristo Road, Palm Springs. For information about becoming a sponsor, call 760-325-2281.

View trailers and purchase your Platinum Pass or individual tickets at [PalmSpringsJewishFilmFestival.org](http://PalmSpringsJewishFilmFestival.org)

Schedule subject to change



# California Theater Apologizes for Canceling Show by Israeli Comedian After He Refuses to Condemn Home Country

By Shiryn Ghermezian, *The Algemeiner*

The Fine Arts Theater in Beverly Hills, California apologized for canceling a show by Israeli stand-up comedian Guy Hochman after he declined the venue's demand to issue a public statement denouncing "genocide, rape, starvation, and torture of Palestinian civilians."

In a statement posted on Instagram and on the theater's website over the weekend, Michael S. Hall, president of the Screening Services Group, acknowledged that canceling Hochman's scheduled appearance at the Fine Arts Theater was poorly handled. He said the venue, which will host screenings as part of the 37th Israel Film Festival in February, has contacted Hochman's representatives and is open to rescheduling his performance if "it can be done safely."

The relationship between the theater and the Screening Services Group was not immediately clear.

Hall also admitted that the decision to cancel the show was made after he and the theater received several



*His scheduled performance in Dallas, Texas, this week was canceled because of a winter storm in the region.*

messages from the public, including threats of violence, related to Hochman's performance.

"I want to apologize, especially to the Jewish community, for my statement and for how this situation was handled," Hall wrote. "I understand that my decision caused harm and distress to many people in the community, and I take responsibility for that ... I made the decision to cancel the show without giving the matter the careful thought and judgement it required. That was my

mistake."

He also acknowledged it was wrong to ask a performer "to make political or ideological statements as a condition of appearing" and that "imposing a litmus test of any kind was a mistake and should never have happened."

"The Fine Arts Theater has supported and will continue to support Jewish and Israeli projects, artists, and community events," Hall added. "I am committed to ensuring the theater remains a place for culture and expression without discrimination. I am already engaging with members of the local Jewish community and will continue to listen, learn, and work with community leaders moving forward."

Hall's apology follows a public statement from the venue that said Hochman was banned from the theater after he declined to issue a public statement denouncing "genocide, rape, starvation, and torture of Palestinian civilians."

The statement also acknowledged that the venue could not corroborate accusations made against the comedian but still asked him to issue a public statement against Israel. Hochman talked about the venue's demands in an

Instagram video and said he will never condemn his home country.

The former Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldier further told *The Hollywood Reporter* he does not accept Hall's apology and refuses to return to the venue.

"Do I think he's sincere? No. He's doing it because he was pressured," Hochman said of Hall. "He doesn't care. He tested me, like a loyalty test. For me, my people come before my career. I don't care about money. I will never say lies about my people. I will never say things like rape, starvation, or genocide. That is not the story, and I don't believe it ... Jewish pride comes before everything."

Actress and comedian Amy Schumer came to Hochman's defense on Sunday. In an Instagram story, she wrote that the venue's demand for Hochman to publicly condemn his country was "straight up wrong."

"They canceled his show, admitted there's zero evidence, and only backpedaled after the backlash. No artist should sign a forced apology note just to perform," Schumer wrote. "Last I checked, we don't run like those dictatorship-run spots, demanding stars trash America before letting them on stage." Hochman shared Schumer's statement on his Instagram story.

Hochman's stand-up comedy tour has faced protests in several cities, and his scheduled show in New York City was canceled over safety concerns. He was also detained for several hours by Canadian border officials earlier that month after the pro-Palestinian advocacy group Hind Rajab Foundation filed a legal complaint against him, accusing the comedian of war crimes and "incitement to genocide." The comedian was released and not charged, but his Canadian visa was revoked.

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# Nearly One in Three US Jews Reported Being Targeted by Antisemitism in 2025, Survey Finds

American Jewish Committee findings show 55% of American Jews avoid specific behavior that may identify them as Jewish, and two-thirds feel less secure than in previous year  
By Grace Gilson, The Times of Israel

Almost one-third of American Jews reported being the target of an antisemitic incident in 2025, according to a new survey published by the American Jewish Committee.

The report said 31% of respondents were “a target of an antisemitic incident—a physical attack, a remark in person, antisemitic vandalism or messaging, antisemitic remark or post online or through social media, or any other form of antisemitism.”

The finding marked no change over the previous year, suggesting that American Jews could be settling into a distressing new normal in the aftermath of the October 7, 2023, Hamas-led assault on Israel.

“Things aren’t getting markedly better,” said Ted Deutch, the CEO of the AJC, in an interview. “I don’t think that we can afford to accept it as a baseline. We can’t accept that, and America shouldn’t accept that.”

Surveying 1,222 American Jewish adults from September 26 to October 9, 2025, the AJC found a plateau in several indicators of sentiment.

Overall, 55 percent of American Jews reported avoiding specific behaviors in 2025 due to fear of antisemitism, including steering clear of certain events and refraining from wearing things, or posting things online, that would identify them as Jewish.

The finding also marked no change from 2024, when 56% of Jews reported changing their behavior for fear of antisemitism, but was up from 46% in 2023 and 38% in 2022.



Jewish protesters and allies demonstrate against antisemitism outside Columbia University

Respondents were also asked if they felt “less safe” as a result of several high-profile antisemitic attacks in 2025, including the arson attack on Pennsylvania Gov. Josh Shapiro’s home in April; the deadly shooting of two Israeli embassy staffers in Washington, DC, in May; and the firebombing of a demonstration for the Israeli hostages in Boulder, Colorado, in June.

About a quarter of respondents said the attacks had made them feel “a great deal” less safe, while 31% reported feeling “a fair amount” less safe and 32% responded that they felt “a little” less safe.

Overall, according to the report, two-thirds of respondents said that they believed Jews in the United States were less secure than a year ago.

Deutch said the findings of the group’s latest report should serve not only as a

warning for Jews, but as a “warning sign of the cracks in the foundation of our society.”

“This is about more than just what’s happening to Jews,” he said. “We’ve always been first, the Jews have always been a canary in the coal mine, and we have to take this seriously. The broader community has to take this seriously for the benefit, not just of our Jewish community, but for our society and our democracy.”

For the first time, the AJC also asked American Jews whether they approved of the way US President Donald Trump was responding to antisemitism in the country.

Roughly two-thirds of respondents said they disapproved of Trump’s actions, though views split sharply along partisan lines, with 84% of Jewish Democrats disapproving of Trump’s

response to at least somewhat compared to 9% of Jewish Republicans.

The survey comes as some Jewish leaders have lamented what they have described as the inefficacy of efforts to combat antisemitism.

Last month, at the Second International Conference on Combating Antisemitism in Jerusalem, political theorist Yoram Hazony decried what he described as an “extremely high level of incompetence by the entire anti-Semitism-industrial complex.”

Bret Stephens, the right-leaning Jewish New York Times columnist, argued in an address last week that the Jewish community should abandon its efforts to combat antisemitism and instead invest in strengthening Jewish life.

Deutch said the decision between combating antisemitism and strengthening Jewish education and infrastructure was a false choice.

“It’s not a trade-off. We can’t afford to choose one or the other,” said Deutch. “We don’t have the luxury of deciding that we’re either going to invest in more education for our leaders and for ourselves and helping to create the next generation of well-educated Jewish leaders, or engaging with the broader community and leaders across the broader community about the scourge of antisemitism.”

## El Al to Launch New Europe, Asia Routes

The Jerusalem Post

On February 8, 2026, El-Al, Israel’s national airline, announced the launch of a series of new destinations for the first time since October 7, 2023. The expanded flight operations offer direct flights to several destinations in Europe and Asia.

The company will now be flying to Hanoi, Manila, Seoul, Sardinia, Sicily, Switzerland, and Croatia three times a week. For the first time since 2001, El Al is also reintroducing flights to Copenhagen.



### New Flights for Business Travel

“The new routes will provide an optimal solution for business travelers and will strengthen economic ties between Israel and Asia,” El Al said in a statement.

“In addition to the direct routes, the company will offer connecting flights to a variety of additional destinations on the continent, through collaborations with many airlines.”

The move is a development that strengthens collaboration and ties with Asian and European countries, marking improved diplomatic relations and a return to normalcy after the introduction of phase one of the Gaza ceasefire deal brokered by US President Donald Trump.

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## HAVE A NOSH:



As always, I'm giving you my mother-in-law Goldie's wonderful hamantashen dough along with a couple great fillings. But for those who are chocolate lovers, and particularly enjoy Sabra Liqueur, I'm including a recipe for wonderfully decadent chocolate-citrus pleasures. Happy Purim! MHB



### GOLDIE'S HONEY DOUGH FOR HAMANTASHEN

1/3 cup Crisco	1/4 teaspoon salt
2 1/2 cups flour	2 eggs, beaten
1/2 cup sugar	1 Tablespoon lemon juice
2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder	1/2 teaspoon grated lemon rind
1/4 cup honey	

Preheat oven to 350°. Thoroughly cream the Crisco and sugar together. Add honey. Beat in eggs, lemon juice and lemon rind. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt, then stir into the egg mixture and form into a soft dough. Toss lightly on a floured board. Roll out to 1/4 inch thickness and cut into circles. Fill with desired filling, pinch into triangles and bake for 18 to 20 minutes at 350 F. until brown.

### DATE-WALNUT-RAISIN FILLING

1/4 cup coarsely chopped walnuts	1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
2 cups pitted dates	1 teaspoon grated lemon rind (optional)
1/2 cup sultana raisins	

In food processor, with steel blade, process dates with raisins, rind and cinnamon until minced, about 15-20 seconds. Add nuts with one or two quick on/off turns. (May be prepared in advance and refrigerated or frozen).

### COCONUT CHEESECAKE FILLING (Milchig)

8 oz. cream cheese, softened	1/4 cup shredded coconut
1/4 cup heavy cream or coconut milk	3 Tablespoons sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract	Extra shredded coconut

Combine cream cheese, vanilla, heavy cream or coconut milk, shredded coconut and sugar until smooth. After filling and forming hamantashen added extra shredded coconut on top. Important: Place in refrigerator for 10 minutes before baking to prevent filling from leaking out.

### WHITE CHOCOLATE & BRANDIED CHERRY FILLING (Milchig)

1 cup white chocolate chips, coarsely chopped	1/4 cup dried cherries, plumped in 2 Tbsp brandy
1/4 cup pecans, finely chopped	2 Tbsp. sugar
	1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

Plump the dried cherries in the brandy for at least 10 minutes. Drain and combine cherries with the white chocolate chips, pecans, sugar and cinnamon. Mix together and use about 2 teaspoons for each hamantashen.

### CHOCOLATE ORANGE HAMANTASHEN

3 1/4 cups sifted all-purpose flour	1/4 cup orange juice
1 1/2 cups cocoa powder	1/4 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons baking powder	1 teaspoon vanilla
3/4 cup oil	1 teaspoon orange extract or orange flavored liqueur
1 cup white granulated sugar	Orange marmalade for filling
3 eggs	

Combine sifted flour, cocoa powder and baking powder in a medium bowl and set aside. In a mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, blend oil, sugar, and salt starting on low speed, gradually increase speed to high, until creamed. Add eggs one at a time and continue beating until well blended. Reduce speed to low. Add a little bit of the flour to thicken the mixture. Add orange juice slowly, alternating with the rest of the flour and cocoa powder. Add vanilla and orange extract and beat until well combined. Cover with plastic and refrigerate for at least one hour until firm. Preheat oven to 375°. Line 2 large sheet pans with parchment paper. When dough is firm enough to work with, remove from refrigerator on a well floured surface roll out until dough is about 1/8-inch thick. Cut out the dough with a 3-inch round cookie cutter. Place rounds on prepared sheet pan. Spoon about a tablespoon orange marmalade into the center of the rounds. Fold the dough around the cup to make a triangular shape. You can brush the inside edge of the dough with light egg wash if you want to help keep the sides sticking. Bake for 10-12 minutes, turning halfway through baking. Makes 42 hamantashen.



## Simchas

Mazel tov to **Moishe** and **Mussie Witkes** of Chabad of Palm Desert, on the birth of their son, **Shlomo Aharon**, born February 5. Delighted grandparents are **Rabbi Yonason** and **Sussie Denebeim** and **Gary** and **Tammi Witkes** ... *Share your simchas with us. Email or call Miriam Bent at 760-835-1022 / 760-825-1022.*



Recent Desert Community Kitchen volunteers



## Classifieds

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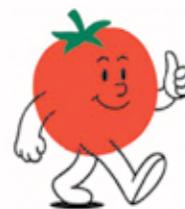
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## Candle Lighting Times

Friday, March 6	Shabbat Ki Tisa	5:04 pm
Friday, March 13	Shabbat Vayakhel/Pekudei	6:09 pm
Friday, March 20	Shabbat Vaiyikra	6:14 pm
Friday, March 27	Shabbat Tsav	6:20 pm

\* Daylight savings time begins Sunday, March 8

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