



TOLEDO Jewish News

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Ohio rabbis feel personal impact of terror attack

JIMMY OSWALD

Rabbi Noah Leavitt, spiritual leader of Oheb Zedek Cedar Sinai in Lyndhurst, enjoyed his time as a visiting rabbi in Sydney, Australia, so much that it became a second home to him: a place he could see himself living in permanently, raising a family on the beaches that stretch for miles with golden grains of sand and the glistening, blue sea as a backdrop.

So, when two gunmen - a 50 year-old father and his 24-year-old son - attacked a Chanukah celebration on Sydney's Bondi Beach on Dec. 14, killing at least 15 and injuring at least 40 in a shooting targeting Sydney's Jewish community, it left an impact that was a bit different than other antisemitic attacks that Leavitt had seen occur on the news in places around the world.

"Anytime something happens in a place that you walked and frequented regularly - you imagine what it might have been like for you to have been there, very easily, in a parallel life," Leavitt told the Cleveland Jewish News. "Had I made one or two different decisions about where I was going to move or what community I was going to serve, I could very easily have seen myself at that event being directly affected."

Leavitt spent seven months about "eight or nine years ago" at the Great Synagogue in Sydney, which is the oldest in the community according to its website. He is still a good friend of Rabbi Benjamin Elton, senior rabbi of the synagogue, and had planned to go back for his honeymoon in 2020 until COVID-19 canceled that trip.

"It's a community that I know well and is very close to my heart," Leavitt said. "I'm still in touch with a lot of

friends there."

Bondi Beach was about a 15- to 20-minute walk from where Leavitt lived, and he would often take to those shores to surf.

"It's a beautiful surfing location and is very much the heart of the community," he said. "On Friday mornings, I would surf down there and then walk up the street to have breakfast at a bakery, pick up goods for Shabbat and then head to the butcher's as well."

When Leavitt awoke on the morning of Dec. 14 and saw the news on his phone, he said his stomach immediately dropped.

"Knowing Bondi, I just had this sense that if something happened there, it was probably an attack on the Jewish community," he said. "It was heartbreaking and devastating to hear the news. It then went from that feeling to being really concerned for

my friends there. I spent the morning reaching out and checking in on people."

Leavitt said he "thankfully" didn't have any close friends who were at the event, but Rabbi Areyah Kaltmann, director of Chabad Columbus, wasn't as lucky. The native Australian is mourning the loss of Rabbi Eli Schlanger, a 40-year-old family friend who was killed in the attack and leaves behind a 2-month-old baby among his five children.

Schlanger was assistant rabbi at Chabad-Lubavitch of Bondi and organizer of the Chanukah by the Sea.

"He was torn away from his family, killed for no reason," Kaltmann told the CJN. "He spent his life helping people. I find it absolutely horrendous."

Kaltmann grew up in Melbourne

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Bill seeks to create Ohio-Israel Trade and Innovation Partnership

STEVE MARK

A few years ago, Howie Beigelman, president and CEO of Ohio Jewish Communities, was on a trip to Israel, meeting with business leaders and promoting the welcoming business climate in Ohio.

Beigelman said he thought Israeli tech and agriculture businesses were a perfect fit.

"There's just so much happening here with cyber and aerospace here, and where Israel is also a leader in those areas," Beigelman told the Cleveland Jewish News.

He was told, though, that other states had an advantage over Ohio because some had already set up commissions to promote Israeli business relationships.

So, Beigelman returned home to Columbus and went to work. He connected with state Rep. Eric Synenberg, D-Beachwood, to help

get official support from the state. Synenberg reached across the aisle and found an ally in state Rep. Thomas Hall, R-Madison Township.

The two co-sponsored a bill passed by the Ohio House Development Committee on Oct. 29 aimed at creating the Ohio-Israel Trade and Innovation Partnership to strengthen relations between the two business regions.

"We are the perfect state to have one of these commissions to promote economic development, trade and partnership and growth between Ohio and Israel," Synenberg told the CJN.

"The reason I say that is obviously, as CJN readers know, we have a large Jewish community, obviously in Cleveland, but also in Columbus and in Cincinnati and in other parts of the state. Our economy is perfect for this because what the Israeli companies excel in are all areas where we already have good industries in Ohio.

"We have agriculture, and you get into, of course, ag tech, medicine, technology, aerospace and defense. We have an economy that is a perfect one to benefit Israeli business, and could benefit from more partnership, more trade, more camaraderie and friendship."

The bill proposes the creation of the Ohio-Israel Trade and Innovation Partnership, which would include establishment of a 17-person commission that represent various businesses and cultural interest groups to focus on exploring bilateral trade.

The goal of the partnership would also encourage economic support and infrastructure investment between the Buckeye State and Israel.

Hall met with business leaders during a visit to Israel in August 2023.

"They showed us particularly some of the technologies they had in regards to agriculture but also the

growing of trees and how they grow trees based on the climate that they have there," Hall said. "Another thing that Israel I think does exceptionally well is water management and we obviously have a lot of water around us with rivers and the Great Lakes to the north so we are set up very

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JFGT kicks off "As One" campaign for 2026

This is a defining moment for the Jewish people. We face a convergence of challenges that demand decisive action and a unified response. Jewish Federation and Foundation of Greater Toledo is uniquely positioned to meet this pivotal moment.

We are the backbone of Jewish life in Toledo. As One, we mobilize our vast resources and global network to confront today's pressing issues: rising

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My Israel trip bonded me to the land and its resilient people I love – Part Two

BY NINA MARKOWICZ FRIEDMAN, CHICAGO-NORTH SHORE HADASSAH 2026 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT

This is the second column of a two-part-series about the author's recent trip to Israel.

We are now up to the fourth day of my Authentic Israel Volunteer Experience.

In Tel Aviv, we visited an unassuming apartment building where Revital Ben Tzur Josef lives. She shared her story of how one person can make a difference. In the early days after October 7, Revital started making schnitzel sandwiches out of her home to feed hungry soldiers when the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were unprepared for the number of soldiers who showed up to serve. Others volunteered to help and her enterprise grew into a huge volunteer project.

We spent the morning making care packages with candy and writing letters of appreciation and encouragement to the IDF brigade that had brought home the remains of two hostages the previous week. They had been murdered on October 7. Every package we prepared had a sticker with Revital's phone number and a message providing a hug from home. She is a dynamo and a true inspiration!

After lunch and shopping at the crowded Carmel Market, we met up again with Ayelet Segev, this time at the Ra'anana memorial to fallen soldiers, which now includes her son. She shared more about her son and that fatal day. There was not a dry eye in the group.

Friday morning, we visited what was then called Hostage Square. We watched the digital clock counting the time the hostages were in captivity; viewed pictures of hostage families at happy occasions; walked through the replica of a Hamas tunnel; and saw the piano dedicated to musician Alon Ohel and the empty table set for the remaining hostages, who, thankfully, have since returned home.

From there we made the drive to Jerusalem. The mood was somber as we contemplated the past few days. I wondered how Israelis are putting one foot in front of the other, fighting for survival after so much loss, pain and suffering. It is beyond my comprehension.

There is a feeling you get driving into Jerusalem, a city filled with

thousands of years of Jewish history. It's hard to explain its impact. Jerusalem was bustling with preparations for Shabbat, with throngs of people packing the streets, shops and restaurants.

To get the full pre-Shabbat experience I went to Ben Yehudah Street and the Machane Yehudah Market. On a side street I noticed a frenzy of people and security guards, but I couldn't see over the crowd. I asked a tall man next to me what was happening and he pointed out Itamar Ben-Gvir, minister of national security and head of the far-right Israeli political party Jewish Power (Otzma Yehudit), who was shopping and taking selfies.

I was thrilled to get a personal tour of the new Gandel Rehabilitation Center at Hadassah Hospital Mount Scopus, accompanied by Barbara Goldstein, Hadassah's ambassador-at-large at the Hadassah Offices in Israel. While I was at the 100th Hadassah Convention in Jerusalem in 2022, I stood at Hadassah Hospital Mount Scopus as the director pointed to where the future rehabilitation center would be. It was an amazing feeling to be in that building in 2025 and to see that it became a reality.

We started our visit in the temporary Emergency Room, set up in the parking structure within two weeks of October 7 to meet the needs of wounded Israeli soldiers. This amazing rehab facility has eight floors (four below ground) with seemingly endless treatment rooms for physical, occupational and speech therapies, as well as social work, physiotherapy, neurology, orthopedic, spinal cord and psychology services. There is even a mock apartment and a grocery store so patients can work on regaining skills of daily living such as getting in and out of bed, picking up a baby from a crib, cooking, doing laundry, selecting items off shelves, etc.

There are rehabilitation rooms with traditional equipment along with state-of-the-art equipment that helps paralyzed people walk, including the latest model anti-gravity machine and a machine for spinal cord stimulation. And, there are two hydrotherapy



▲ Nova Festival site, 2025 - Tracy Lowenthal, Erika Heeres, Nina Markowicz Friedman, Sue Zipkoff, Cheryl Mell, Erin Kerpel, Carole Mangurteen, Debbie Copley

pools.

I felt such pride that our work with Hadassah supported the creation of this incredible facility. Countless soldiers and civilians have and will continue to receive the crucial high level of services for which Hadassah Hospitals are known.

As if the day wasn't full enough, that evening we walked to the Kotel (Western Wall) to welcome Shabbat. Even though I have been to the Kotel many times, I still experienced that indescribable feeling deep inside of being somewhere sacred as I stood in the same place where my people have been for thousands of years. It always takes my breath away. Not that I needed a reminder, but the empty area near the wall —usually so crowded on a Friday evening -- reminded me of the sad reality of war time and how very few tourists are visiting Israel.

Shabbat in Jerusalem is a special day for rest and rejuvenation. I chose to spend Shabbat morning at the Israel Museum, viewing the Dead Sea Scrolls and other artifacts. I especially enjoyed seeing the four reconstructed synagogue interiors from around the world: 16th-century Kochi,

India; 18th-century Vittorio Veneto, Italy; 18th-century Suriname, South America; and 18th-century Horb, Germany.

A significant new experience for me was witnessing thousands of protesters at a rally that evening right outside our hotel in Paris Square, calling for the release of the hostages and marking 700 days in captivity. The location was chosen because the Prime Minister's home was nearby. Even though I could not understand the calls, I could feel the emotion in the crowd.

The final day of my trip began at the home of Leah Aharoni, who started "Our People" at the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine war to assist Ukrainian and Russian Jewish families who found refuge in Israel. The focus of her initiative shifted after October 7, and we spent the morning making care packages for soldiers and toy packages for their children. This was another reminder of what one person with an idea can do!

Our afternoon visit was to Achim L'Chaim (Brothers for Life), a day rehabilitation center where injured veterans help other injured veterans

ISRAEL TRIP | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

reclaim their lives. It's not only a place for rehab but a place for companionship with others who understand what they are going through. The number of wounded men and women is staggering and even if the wounds are not visible, the trauma is there and requires treatment. The program's numbers have doubled since October 7.

Our final stop was at the Biblical Neot Kedumim Park to plant trees for future generations and have a farewell dinner. I returned to Jerusalem and took an early evening walk, seeing groups of soldiers everywhere, enjoying one last night before returning to army service.

This day was a wonderful conclusion to my volunteer experience in Israel. The amazing dedication and resilience I witnessed brought me such hope. Who knew the next day, my final day in Israel, would be so tragic?

I woke up to a bright red sunrise over Jerusalem. On this beautiful morning, my friend and I made our way to Ben Gurion Airport via the public train, handing off leftover power bars to a group of female IDF soldiers. As I reflected on an incredibly powerful and meaningful journey, re-living the experiences we had as volunteers and remembering the people who impacted us more than we impacted them, I learned of

the deadly terror attack at a public bus stop in Jerusalem. Our hearts were breaking as the news unfolded -- six dead, many others injured, devastating and tragic.

My solace was having witnessed the resilience of the Israeli people and knowing that the Hadassah Medical Organization was treating many of the wounded with the best care in the world. I know nothing will deter the Jewish people from believing in, fighting for and supporting our rightful historic indigenous homeland.

As of January 2026, Nina Markowicz Friedman is Hadassah Chicago North Shore (CNS) Executive VP and will be CNS President in 2027. Nina earned a Master of Social Work from Washington University in St. Louis and a Bachelor of Arts from The Ohio State University, is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker, and the Director of Post Adoption Support at The Cradle adoption agency in Evanston, IL. Nina grew up in suburban Toledo, Ohio, where she attended The Hebrew Academy of Toledo and is a proud graduate of Ottawa Hills High School. She lives in Glencoe, IL with her husband and two teenage sons. She enjoys playing tennis, reading, traveling and spending time with friends and family.

Nina is a member of the Hadassah Writers' Circle, a dynamic and diverse writing group for leaders and



▲ Home of Revital Ben Tzur Josephf, Tel Aviv, 2025 - Erin Kerpel, Christine Monford, Denise Meckler, Larry Kapel, Tonia Kapel, Carole Mangurteen, Danielle Hess, Nina Markowicz Friedman, Sharon Blumenfeld, Cameron Hess, Steven Blumenfeld, Cheryl Mell, Debbie Copley, Tracy Lowenthal, Cathy, Erika Heeres, Sue Zipkoff, Alon Yirzhaki

members to express their thoughts and feelings about all the things Hadassah does to make the world a better place. It's where they celebrate their personal Hadassah journeys and share their Jewish values, family traditions and interpretations of Jewish texts. Hadassah members are proud of their Zionist mission and their role as keepers of the flame of Jewish values, traditions and beliefs as well as advocating for women's empowerment and health equity for all. Since 2019, the Hadassah Writers' Circle has published nearly 650 columns in *The Times of Israel Blogs* and other Jewish media outlets. Interested? Please contact hwc@hadassah.org.

The Toledo Jewish Community Foundation through its Gerald Getz Fund for Impoverished Israeli Children and Families Fund granted nearly \$8,000 in 2025 to Leket, Israel's National Food Bank, where Nina volunteered.

Nina Markowicz Friedman is a Toledo native and Chicago-North Shore Hadassah 2026 Executive Vice President.

 **To read about my first few days in Israel, see Part One in the December 2025 edition of Toledo Jewish News at jewishtoledo.org/about-us/tjnff.**



▲ Hadassah Hospital Gandel Rehabilitation Center, Jerusalem, 2025 - Nina Markowicz Friedman and Hadassah Offices in Israel Ambassador-at-Large Barbara Goldstein



▲ Nina Markowicz Friedman, Western Wall, Jerusalem, 2025

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Eat Jewish: Sharing recipes infused with love and memories

The handwritten message shimmers in gold ink inside the front cover of Melinda Strauss' *Eat Jewish: Over 100 Recipes That Blend Jewish Heritage, Modern Flavors & Family Tradition*: "Try the fish cakes! ♥ Mel!"

That personal touch (literally, in the case of my review copy) infuses this charming book, the first from the social media influencer who celebrates Jewish life, food, history, and culture from her kosher kitchen in New York.

From fancy schmancy to family-friendly (and with heavy reliance upon the latter), Melinda offers something for every appetite. But no matter what she's serving, you'll find an abundance of the heimishness that followers of her website, melindastrauss.com, and social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and a YouTube channel) are already well aware of. She chats like she's your BFF as she shares Shabbat and holiday recipes, the only broccoli preparation her daughter will eat, interesting background information about Jewish observance, sprinklings of Hebrew, and favorite dishes from loved ones representing both multiple generations and a wide swath of the Diaspora.

"These recipes are inspired by the people I love, the places I've been, and the rich diversity of Jewish culture," Melinda writes with great affection.

The afore-mentioned Nora's Broccoli – a three-ingredient prep involving the vegetable, oil, and a dash of onion soup mix – has proven so popular on the internet that it spurred the publication of *Eat Jewish*. Fisherman's Potatoes "are the Shabbos potatoes of my childhood," Melinda writes of the recipe that was passed down from her Savtah Adina. Her grandmother's Marinated Cucumber Salad – so simple, but so good – "might just be at the top" of the author's favorite legacy dishes. And the Cornflake-Crumb Chicken Bake, Melinda's "favorite chicken growing up," is one that's now being served to a third generation.

Rainbow Hamantaschen, Cold Brew Cheesecake, and Brussels Sprout and Beef Bacon Latkes are just three examples in the cookbook that demonstrate how creative kosher cooks can be. On the other hand, cozy comfort food like Sandy's Tuna Quiche, Dad's Cholent, and Cinnamon-Sugar Mandelbroit preserve tradition and truly offer food for the Jewish soul.

A variety of international dishes are also on Melinda's menu, such as the Turkish Fasulye that was served by some of her Sephardic friends when she was growing up; it's stewed green beans in tomato sauce, "slowly

simmered until they become melt-in-your-mouth tender." Moroccan Matbucha, "a popular appetizer in Israel," can be served as a dip or topped with an egg to make shakshuka. Hungarian Goulash is a reminder of family heritage, carried on even after Melinda's great-grandmother emigrated to the United States during the first World War. And Yakir's Biscoff Babka Buns are a tribute to the sweets-loving son of a social media follower whose son was "killed in Gaza after the October 7 attack, forever a hero who fought to protect us all."

Every recipe in *Eat Jewish* comes with a heartfelt story or a memory to share.

"Jewish food is many things, and I'm excited for you to learn, explore, and cook alongside me," Melinda invites warmly in her book.

Just be sure, as you work your way through all the recipes, that you try the fish cakes.

Mock-Crab Fish Cakes Makes 12 fish cakes

From Melinda Strauss: Crab isn't kosher, and as someone who has kept kosher my entire life, I've never tried it. Thankfully, we have kosher imitation crab made from surimi, a paste of finely shredded fish! Does it taste exactly like crab? I have no idea. But it's delicious, and so are these crab cakes – so I'm happy!

- ½ cup (120 ml) mayonnaise
- Juice of 1 lemon
- ¼ cup minced jarred roasted red peppers (2 to 3 peppers)
- 2 green onions, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 2 teaspoons hot chili sauce (such as sriracha)
- 2½ teaspoons kosher salt, divided
- 1 package (16 ounces or 455 g) imitation crab, shredded
- 1½ cups (120 g) panko bread crumbs, divided
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- 1 teaspoon sweet paprika
- Cooking spray
- Chopped fresh parsley, for garnishing
- Lemon wedges, for serving

In a large bowl, whisk together the mayonnaise, lemon juice, peppers, onions, ketchup, hot sauce, and 2 teaspoons of the salt. Pour half of the sauce into a small container, cover, and refrigerate. Gently fold in the imitation crab to the remaining sauce. Add 1 cup (80 g) of the bread crumbs and the beaten eggs and stir to combine; the mixture should be thick but a bit loose.



In a small bowl, add the remaining ½ cup (40 g) bread crumbs, the paprika, and the remaining ½ teaspoon salt; stir to combine.

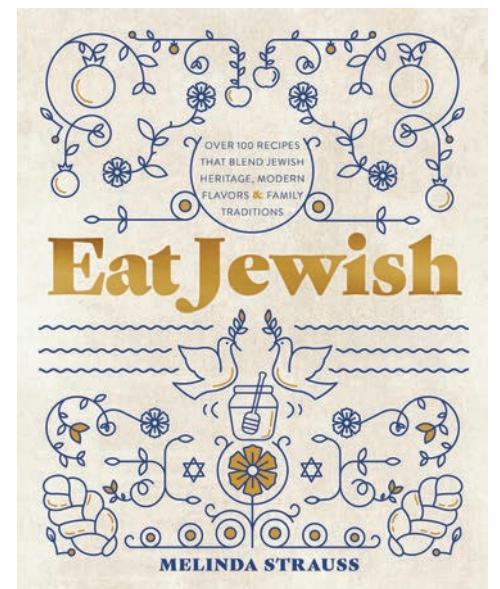
Line a baking sheet with foil or parchment paper. Scoop the mixture into 12 firm patties (1/2 cup or 40 g each). Coat the patties in the bread crumbs and place on the prepared baking sheet. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until set, about 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 400F (205C°/ gas 6). Spray the tops of the cakes with cooking spray.

Bake until golden brown, about 20 minutes. Let cool for about 10 minutes. Transfer to a serving dish and garnish with parsley. Serve warm with the reserved sauce and lemon wedges for squeezing.

Note: The mock-crab cakes can be stored in the refrigerator in an airtight container for up to 3 days and in the freezer for up to 3 months.

Excerpted from EAT JEWISH by Melinda Strauss. Reproduced by permission of the publisher, Rock Point, an imprint of The Quarto Group, New York, NY.



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"These recipes are inspired by the people I love, the places I've been, and the rich diversity of Jewish culture."

Strauss

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Happy Tears

LAUREN SACHS

When it comes time to ring in the New Year for 2026, many of us will engage in the time-honored tradition of setting New Year's resolutions. I have certainly been known to sit down and plot out a series of goals and priorities for the coming year, willing myself to improve my health, organization, or finances. Nevertheless, this year, as social media and news headlines hone in on how we can outline aspirations to become the best version of ourselves, I have been considering something more unconventional.

While lying in savasana at the end of a recent yoga class, my mind wandered to another priority. During a typical class, my yoga teacher will often call out a traditional pose, followed by a series of possible modifications. She is quick to explicitly communicate that the pose is simply an option, noting how our bodies differ from day to day in terms of what they will allow. I believe that this approach offers a clear parallel for our New Year's intentions. If we want to find a kinder and gentler method for setting objectives, maybe we should push a bit more softly at the edge of our comfort zone. Indeed, this sort of acceptance, of meeting ourselves where we are without judgment or pressure, feels like a more humane way to start off the year for those who have been coping with grief or other significant life stressors.

Given our society's hyper-fixation with presenting an idealized version of

ourselves online, it is no wonder that many feel obliged to work on self-improvement. To me, the idea that we could acknowledge how different each of us is, let alone how much we change from day to day, is almost revelatory. Instead of a focus on constantly bettering ourselves, I personally love the idea of taking stock of our lives and developing an appreciation for who we are now and what we are already doing. With this recognition in mind, we can begin to explore our next steps. Moreover, I think anyone can benefit from recognizing the good things that already exist in their lives, seeking a sense of peace and gratitude for the present.

After my husband died, a part of me knew that I needed to seek out gratitude, no matter how difficult it felt at that time. In an effort to make my bedroom a peaceful haven which brought me comfort, I decided to do some redecorating. Wandering

in a home store, I found a few small wooden signs with meaningful messages. One sign read simply: "You can do this" while the other read: "When you love what you have you have everything you need." Placing these in my bedroom, the signs helped to remind me about my own strength and the power of acceptance at the time I needed it most.

As we begin this year, I wonder if we could all benefit from letting things unfold ahead of us, instead of forcing ourselves into a new mold. Much like easing into a difficult yoga pose, we could try to simply be observers of our bodies and our spirits. Along the same lines, perhaps we could open ourselves up to the possibilities before us, listening to the universe for subtle signals about where we should go next. In particular, I think this perspective allows us to pay less

attention to our social media feeds and all the current hype around change for the sake of change.

Maybe we could also take a note from savasana, the final resting pose in most yoga practices. Savasana is all about relaxation and integration, knowing that the work we need to do is already done. It is a time to simply breathe and be yourself. While I believe there is a time and place for work, goals, and achievement, too often we neglect the stillness and quiet solitude we need for ultimate healing and peace. This idea is especially true for those who are dealing with grief, since being patient and nurturing yourself are vital for palliating pain. As we enter 2026, I hope you will accept wherever you are on your journey, giving yourself grace and showing yourself the love that you deserve now and into the future.

Do you have thoughts or a question for Lauren? Email her at laurensachs@gmail.com, and she may respond (anonymously) in a future "Happy Tears" column.

Lauren Sachs holds a bachelor's degree in English and Psychology, and a Master's Degree in Social Work, from the University of Michigan. After completing advanced clinical training at Yale University, she worked as a therapist and consultant in a variety of settings. During her time in Jewish Toledo, Lauren has received the Harry Levison Young Leadership Award and the Shining Light Award, and is currently serving as the Chair for the 20th Annual NW Ohio Jewish Book Festival. In addition to her involvement within the local Jewish community, Lauren serves as a volunteer for Hospice of Northwest Ohio. She is also the author of a forthcoming book about her late husband, his joyful approach to life and work as an oncologist, and how examining his life helped her better cope with her grief. To learn more about Lauren's journey and her work on living well after loss, visit www.literally-lauren.com.

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Sydney Opera House lit by giant menorah as vigils for Bondi Beach victims take place across Australia

More than 1,000 people gathered for a vigil on behalf of the 15 people killed in the Hanukkah attack.

GRACE GILSON | JTA

The Sydney Opera House was illuminated by a large menorah last month, a solemn tribute to the 15 lives lost the previous day in an antisemitic terror attack that rocked Australia's Jewish community.

The projected menorah, displayed on the iconic opera house's largest sail, was called for by the premier of New South Wales, Chris Minns.

"Lighting the Opera House is a simple but powerful gesture: a message to the world that we cherish our Jewish community, that we honour their courage, and that we stand with them in solidarity and love," Minns said in a statement. "Tonight, those candles are a symbol of resilience and a reminder that even in darkness, we choose to stand with one another."

The light of the menorah was one of several acts of remembrance that sprung up across Australia a day after two terrorists opened fire on a ChabadHanukkah event on Bondi Beach, killing 15 and injuring at least 40.

In an interview with the Australian broadcaster ABC, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the two gunmen "weren't part of a wider cell," and had "engaged in this act of antisemitism, driven by ideology."

Hundreds of bouquets were placed around a large menorah in front of the Bondi Pavilion, where more than 1,000 people gathered for a vigil, according to ABC.

"Yesterday was a tragic event, which words cannot explain," Rabbi Yossi Shuchat told those gathered as he lit two candles to mark the second night of Hanukkah. "Lightness will always persevere; darkness cannot continue where there is light."

At the vigil, a Jewish activist, Michelle Berkon, was removed by police for wearing a keffiyeh, the traditional Palestinian headscarf that has become a symbol of anti-Israel protest, according to The Australian.

In Sydney's Hyde Park, hundreds also gathered for an interfaith ceremony where speeches were



▲ The Hanukkah menorah is projected onto the sails of the Sydney Opera House on December 15, 2025 in Sydney, Australia. | (James D. Morgan/Getty Images)

given by First Nation community members and spokespeople from the Jewish Council of Australia and the Australian Imams Council.

"So many in our Jewish community have received messages of love from leaders in different faith communities, from Palestinian friends and friends around this country, and in so doing, we are now learning we are all just flesh and

blood, and we are all also the light," said Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins from the Emmanuel Synagogue in Woollahra, according to ABC.

The Caulfield Shule, a synagogue in a suburb of Melbourne that serves a large Jewish community, was also packed to capacity by 2,000 people the day after the attacks.

AI has a reputation for amplifying hate.

A new study finds it can weaken antisemitism, too.

BY PHILISSA CRAMER | JTA

Every day, it can seem, brings a fresh headline about how AI chatbots are spreading hateful ideas. But researchers tasked with understanding antisemitism and how it can be stopped say they have found evidence that AI chatbots can actually fight hate.

Researchers affiliated with the Anti-Defamation League's Center for Antisemitism Research trained a large-language model, or LLM, on countering antisemitic conspiracy theories, then invited people who subscribed to at least one of those theories to interact with it.

The result, according to a study released in November: The users soon believed in the antisemitic theories less, while at the same time feeling more favorable about Jews as a group. And the effects were still strong a month later, even without further engagement with the LLM.

The researchers are hailing the finding as a breakthrough in the quest for identifying actionable strategies in the fight against Jew-hatred.

"What's remarkable about these findings is that factual debunking

works even for conspiracy theories with deep historical roots and strong connections to identity and prejudice," David Rand, a Cornell University professor who was the study's senior author, said in a statement.

"Our artificial intelligence debunker bot typically doesn't rely on emotional appeals, empathy-building exercises, or anti-bias tactics to correct false beliefs," Rand continued, referring to practices frequently employed by advocates seeking to fight antisemitism, including at the ADL. "It mostly provides accurate information and evidence-based counterarguments, demonstrating that facts still matter in changing minds."

Matt Williams, who has headed the Center for Antisemitism Research since its founding three years ago, says the study builds on a growing body of research that views contemporary antisemitism as primarily a misinformation problem, rather than a civil rights problem.

"We need to think about antisemitism less like feelings about Jews, and more like feelings about Bigfoot," he said in an interview. "And

what I mean by that is, it's not 'Jews' that are the problem. It is 'the Jew' as a function of conspiracy theory that is the problem. And the relationship between 'Jews' and 'the Jew' in that context is far more tenuous than we might want to think."

Calling conspiracy theories "malfunctions in the ways that we make truth out of the world," Williams said the study showed something remarkable. "People can correct those malfunctions," he said. "They really can, which is super exciting and really impactful."

The study emerges from the ADL's relatively new effort to come-up with evidence-based ways to reduce antisemitism, working with dozens of researchers across a slew of institutions to design and carry out experiments aimed at turning a robust advocacy space into less of a guessing game.

The new experiment, conducted earlier this year, involved more than 1,200 people who said on a previous ADL survey that they believed at least one of six prominent antisemitic conspiracy theories, such as that Jews control the media or the "Great Replacement" theory about Jewish involvement in immigration.

The people then were randomly assigned three different scenarios: A third chatted with an LLM programmed by the researchers to debunk such theories, built within Microsoft's Claude AI model; another third chatted with Claude about an unrelated topic; and the final third were simply told that their belief represented a "dangerous" conspiracy theory. Then they were all tested again about their beliefs.

Members of the group that chatted with what the researchers are calling DebunkBot were far more likely than members of the other groups to have their beliefs weakened, the researchers found.

DebunkBot was hardly a panacea for antisemitism: The study found that those who believed in more antisemitic conspiracy theories experienced less change. And Williams notes that the study found only that belief in antisemitic conspiracies was reduced, not rooted out entirely.

But he said any strategy that can cut against what researchers believe has been a widespread explosion of

belief in conspiracy theories is a good thing.

The proportion of Americans subscribing to conspiracy theories over the last decade has reached as much as 45%, more than twice the rate that had held steady for 70 to 80 years, Williams said.

"To me, the increase in that level of saturation is far more concerning than any particular conspiracy theory moving through different generations," he said. "I don't think that we're going to ever create a world in which we go under 15% — but going from 45 back to 30 or 25 seems more doable."

The new study comes as AI models vault into widespread use among Americans, raising concerns about their implications for Jews. When Elon Musk launched a model of his own earlier this year called Grok, it immediately drew criticism for amplifying antisemitism — kicking off a pattern that has played out repeatedly. Soon, the company apologized and said it would train its model to avoid the same behavior in the future. Criticism of Grok is still widespread, but it no longer praises Hitler — though even recently it reportedly told one user that the Nazi gas chambers were not designed for mass killing, prompting an investigation by French authorities.

Chatbot training is seen as essential for delivering high-quality AI results. DebunkBot can be found online on its own website now, but Williams said efforts were underway within the ADL to convince the companies operating major AI platforms to incorporate its expertise.

"There's far more receptivity than not, by any stretch of the imagination," he said, while noting that the work was early and he could not share many details.

Whatever happens with that effort, Williams said, the new research demonstrates that combatting what's sometimes called the world's oldest hatred is possible.

"AI and LLMs — those are tools, right? And we can use tools for good and for evil," Williams said. "But the fact that we can subject conspiracy theories to rational conversation and arguments and actually lead to favorable outcomes is itself, I think, relatively innovative, surprising and extraordinarily useful."

SYNAGOGUE BUSINESS DIRECTOR

Beth Abraham Synagogue in Dayton, Ohio is seeking a Business Director to serve as the primary contact for the officers and directors in administering the affairs of the Congregation working in partnership with clergy and lay-leaders.

Areas of responsibility include the following:

- Ensure that all Synagogue functions are performed in accordance with policy established by the Board of Directors.
- Establish and/or oversee the appropriate systems to handle membership data and financial reporting.
- Provide staff support to lay leadership, including Committees of the Board of Directors.
- Provide oversight for all aspects of the Synagogue's fiscal affairs, working with the Budget Committee, the Finance Committee, the Treasurer and the Synagogue's external Accountant.
- Recruit, train and supervise office and facilities staff.

Qualifications and Requirements:

- Bachelor's degree or the equivalent
- At least three (3) years' experience in organizational management
- Unquestionable integrity, reliability and credibility
- Outstanding communication and interpersonal skills
- Availability to work flexible hours and participate in events outside standard business hours
- Excellent organizational skills and attention to detail
- Basic financial acumen
- Experienced with MS Office Suite. Familiarity with Shul Cloud a plus

For more information or to submit
a resume, please e-mail
bethabrahamdayton@gmail.com



Manischewitz is taking suggestions for its next matzah-box cover athlete

BY JOSEPH STRAUSS | JTA

Manischewitz is thinking outside the box — literally. The iconic Jewish food company has it all figured out when it comes to things like making matzah and selling kosher wine. Now, it's asking America to help solve a different, non-food-related mystery: Who is the best Jewish college athlete in the country?

The company is calling it the quest for the "L'Cheisman" trophy, a play on NCAA football's Heisman Trophy. And the two winners of the quest will receive a distinctly Jewish honor: their photograph displayed on boxes of Manischewitz matzah.

"This is the official SEARCH FOR THE BEST JEWISH COLLEGE ATHLETES IN AMERICA, a national competition celebrating the grit, talent, spirit, and pride amongst Jewish NCAA athletes across the country," the quest's website reads.

Manischewitz, which was founded in Cincinnati in 1888 before relocating to the New York metropolitan area, first dipped its toes in student athlete partnerships last year, when then-Brigham Young University quarterback Jake Retzlaff (the "B-Y-Jew") was featured on a set of matzah boxes. (Retzlaff has since transferred to Tulane University.)

Student athlete deals had previously been off the table until 2021, when the NCAA implemented new rules allowing players to profit

off their name, image and likeness. Seidman said the success of last year's promotion convinced Manischewitz to expand the process.

"We knew we tapped into something big, and we wanted to continue," Shani Seidman, Manischewitz's chief marketing officer, said in an interview.

Now, throughout December and January, Manischewitz has an open nomination form to which anybody can submit their choice, for both a men's and women's division. The form asks not only what sport and school the athlete participates in, but also the question, "Why are they a great representative of the Jewish community?"

In February, finalists will be revealed and the decision will be put to a vote on social media; the voting results will be decided by the general public, as well as a weighted vote by a "team of experts" on the Manischewitz side, and the winner announced in March.

Seidman said the voting criteria include how much the nominee "excels" in their sport, as well as what Manischewitz is calling their "mensch meter."

That "mensch meter" means looking for a winner "who is part of the community, has a strong Jewish identity, and contributes to their community," Seidman said. "We want to spotlight Jewish excellence in all of these areas."

Seidman said last year's



▲ The winners of the search for America's "best Jewish college athlete" will be announced in March 2026. | Photo / Manischewitz; JTA illustration

Retzlaff matzah boxes sparked an "outpouring" of excitement, with numerous Jewish athletes and teams reaching out about potential partnerships. Manischewitz sponsored and designed the bright orange jerseys of a Jewish youth Idaho ice hockey team called the Flying Latkes, Seidman said.

This coming spring, the two winners of Manischewitz's search will be awarded by having their face printed on limited-edition matzah boxes, as well as with a \$10,000 cash prize and recognition from the International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.

While the winners will come away from the search with unleavened glory, the social media voting process

itself will be "a great platform to celebrate" and introduce Jewish student athletes from around the country to a larger, more national audience, Seidman said.

In a release about the initiative, Manischewitz pointed to Jewish student athletes as not only high achievers, but also some of the most visible Jewish figures on campus.

"For years, Jewish college athletes have been breaking stereotypes, smashing expectations, and dominating across every sport in the NCAA. What people don't realize is that these athletes are often the most prominent Jewish representatives on campus," the press release reads.

"Manischewitz wants to give these athletes the recognition they deserve."

Frank Gehry, renowned architect who began life as Frank Goldberg, dies at 96

BY GRACE GILSON | JTA

Franks Gehry, a Jewish architect who became one of the world's most renowned innovators in his field for his contributions to modernist architecture, including the famed Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain, has died at 96.

His death following a brief respiratory illness was confirmed by the chief of staff at his firm, Meaghan Lloyd, according to the New York Times.

Gehry was born Ephraim Owen Goldberg on Feb. 28, 1929, to a Jewish family in Toronto. In 1947, Gehry moved to Los Angeles with his family and later went on to graduate from the University of Southern California's School of Architecture in 1954.

The same year, he changed his name to Gehry at the behest of his first wife who was "worried about antisemitism and thought it sounded less Jewish." He would later say he

would not make the choice again.

Among Gehry's most acclaimed works, which feature his signature, sculptural style, are the Bilbao Guggenheim, the Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, the Louis Vuitton Foundation in Paris and the DZ Bank Building in Berlin.

Gehry also often returned to the motif of a fish, including two large fish sculptures in the World Trade Center in New York City and on Barcelona's seafont. Some tied the fish motif to his recollections about his Jewish grandmother's trips to the fishmonger to prepare for Shabbat each week.

"We'd put it in the bathtub," Gehry said, according to the New York Times. "And I'd play with this fish for a day until she killed it and made gefilte fish."

Gehry began to identify as an atheist shortly after his bar mitzvah. But in 2018, while he was working on ANU-Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv, he told the Jewish Journal



▲ Frank Gehry speaks during the MOCA Gala 2025 at The Geffen Contemporary at MOCA on May 31, 2025 in Los Angeles, California. | Presley Ann/Getty Images for The Museum of Contemporary Art (MOCA)

that Judaism had influenced his career nonetheless.

"There's a curiosity built into the

[Jewish] culture," he said. "I grew up under that. My grandfather read Talmud to me. That's one of the Jewish things I hang on to probably — that philosophy from that religion. Which is separate from God. It's more ephemeral. I was brought up with that curiosity. I call it a healthy curiosity. Maybe it is something that the religion has produced. I don't know. It's certainly a positive thing."

In 1989, Gehry won the prestigious Pritzker Prize, considered one of the top awards in the field of architecture, and in 1999 won the Gold Medal from the American Institute of Architects. In 2007, Gehry also received the Jerusalem Prize for Arts and Letters and in 2016 won the Presidential Medal of Freedom from then-president Barack Obama.

His survivors include his wife, Berta Isabel Aguilera, daughter Brina, and sons Alejandro and Samuel. Another daughter, Leslie Gehry Brenner, died of cancer in 2008.



DAVE TULLIS
Security Director
✉ dave@jewishtoledo.org

Why We Should Be Winter Ready!

Being Winter Ready means understanding winter risks you face and taking steps to prepare.

- Sixty-three percent of temperature-related deaths are attributable to cold exposure.
- Home heating is the second leading cause of home fires, and winter is when most home fires happen.
- Travel during the winter has unique risks, especially if you travel by car.

PREVENTING HOUSE HEATING FIRES

Although trending downward since the early 1980s, heating fires remained the second leading cause of home fires in 2023. An estimated 32,200 home heating fires were reported to fire departments within the United States. These fires caused an estimated 190 deaths, 625 injuries, and \$442 million in property loss.

- Keep anything that can burn at least three feet from all heat sources including fireplaces, wood stoves, radiators, portable heaters, or candles.
- Always plug space heaters directly into an outlet, and make sure its cord isn't damaged or frayed.
- Never use an oven to heat your home.
- Maintain heating equipment and chimneys by having them cleaned and inspected each year by a professional.

TIPS ON KEEPING AN OLDER ADULT SAFE DURING THE WINTER MONTHS.

- Engage your support network if you need help clearing ice and snow from your property so you can keep outside walkways and steps clear of snow and ice.
- Low lighting is a major cause of falls, so make sure there is enough lighting outdoors, especially near walkways and stairs.
- Have the name and contact information of a nearby family member or friend who can regularly check in on you.
- Make sure your steps are sturdy and have textured grip to reduce falls if the weather is icy or wet.
- If you use walking aids such as a cane, walker, or a wheelchair, dry the wheels or tips of each before entering your home.
- Keep a small table or shelf near the entry door to put items while unlocking the door. This reduces distractions and dangers of slipping or tripping while trying to enter your home.
- If your home's main entrance is often icy during the winter months, use a different entrance if you can. Stay warm by dressing warmly and

remember to eat enough food to keep yourself at a healthy weight.

STAY SAFE DURING WINTER TRAVEL

Travel during the winter has unique risks, especially if you travel by car. Being prepared can help you "expect the unexpected" so your trip isn't ruined by common problems travelers face in the winter.

KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- From blizzards, to avalanches, to ice storms, be aware of the winter risks in places you visit. Check the local weather forecasts and warnings before heading out. Visit National Weather Service for up-to-date forecasts.
- Check your local weather and traffic reports before heading out.
- If your roads are not in good shape, consider postponing non-essential travel until the roads are cleared. If you do have to go out, make sure you are prepared in case you become delayed while traveling.
- Tell others your route and anticipated arrival time.
- Make sure your vehicle is in good working condition before you travel.
- Keep your gas tank as full as you can. A full tank will also keep the fuel line from freezing.
- Install good winter tires and make sure they have enough tread, or any chains or studs required in your local area.
- When driving, increase your following distance from 3-4 seconds to 5-6 seconds. It takes longer to slow down and stop on icy roads.
- Every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit in the trunk. Kits should be checked every six months and expired items should be replaced regularly.
- Keep family and emergency phone numbers, including your auto insurance provider and a towing company, in your phone.
- Consider keeping a power bank for your phone in your car in case your car loses power.
- If stranded, run the engine for about 10 minutes per hour to run the heater and charge your cellphone. Open a window slightly to let fresh air in and avoid carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning.

POWER OUTAGES

Winter storms may bring power outages that can disrupt things like communications, utilities, transportation, stores, gas stations, and ATMs and prevent your ability to use electrically powered medical devices. It's important

to be prepared for power outages.

DURING OUTAGES

- Keep freezers and refrigerators closed. Throw away any food that has been exposed to temperatures 40 degrees or higher for two hours or more, or that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- If you use a generator, ONLY use it outdoors and away from windows.
- Do not use a gas stove or oven to heat your home.
- Disconnect appliances and electronics to avoid damage from electrical surges.
- Have alternate plans for refrigerating medicines or using power-dependent medical devices.
- Go to a community location with power if the cold is extreme and you can't heat your home.

Winter is a beautiful time of year, filled with opportunities for fun activities like skiing, ice skating, and cozy nights by the

fire. However, it's essential to prioritize safety during the cold months to fully enjoy the season. Make sure to dress in layers to keep warm and protect yourself from frostbite, especially when spending extended periods outdoors. Stay hydrated and maintain a balanced diet to support your immune system, as colder weather can make you more susceptible to illness. Additionally, be cautious of icy sidewalks and roads to prevent slips and falls. By following all these safety tips, you can embrace the joys of winter while ensuring your well-being throughout the season.

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New JFGT Security Policy Purpose

To help ensure the safety and security of all attendees while fostering an environment of openness and community engagement, this policy outlines procedures for event registration, attendance, and security.

Registration Procedures

Individual Registration Required:

All attendees must register individually through our designated online registration form or directly with Jewish Federation and Foundation of Greater Toledo staff registrations.

Complete Data Collection:

Registrants are required to provide accurate contact information, including full name, phone number, and email address. For guests or additional attendees, the primary registrant must add each guest's details separately.

Verification & Confirmation:

Registrants will receive a confirmation email and the location of the event after registration.

Guest Policy:

Attendees need to register all guests in advance. Same-day or walk-in registrations may be limited or declined based on security considerations.

Prohibited Items

Weapons of any kind under any circumstance
Alcohol, illegal drugs, or substances (including drug paraphernalia)
All glass items
Bags over 18"x 12"x 8", camelbacks, Bota bags, and flasks
Signs, flags, banners, posters, or balloons
Flammable liquids or aerosol cans
Other items as deemed inappropriate by the Security Director or event staff

Ahmed al Ahmed's bravery at Bondi Beach reminds us of our own humanity in a world that seeks to erode it

BY IDDO GEFEN | JTA

We tend to think of human behavior as deeply shaped by group lines. Again and again, research in social psychology and social neuroscience, along with everyday experience, shows how easily people come to see themselves as members of distinct groups, how quickly an “us” and a “them” emerge, and how rapidly loyalty on one side gives way to suspicion on the other, sometimes even when those divisions are thin or arbitrary.

As a fiction writer and a doctoral student in cognitive neuroscience who studies how narratives shape our perception of the world, I think often about how events like this strain the explanatory stories we rely on to make sense of why people act

as they do. These patterns of group loyalty are familiar and empirically robust. People genuinely experience themselves through group identities.

And yet sometimes a single human action cuts across these categories, exposing the limits of the narratives we use to understand how people act in the world.

That is what we have experienced in the story of Ahmed al Ahmed, the Muslim fruit-seller who intervened, at great personal risk, to try to stop a deadly attack on Jews celebrating Hanukkah in Sydney.

Al Ahmed's action was not only an act of exceptional bravery, but a direct challenge to the worldview advanced by so many figures today. By knowingly risking his life to protect Jews outside his own group and identity, he crossed the very boundary

that many insist cannot be crossed, revealing a simple truth: that human moral action cannot be reduced to rigid theories of group loyalty alone.

Perhaps one of the most prominent proponents of a growing online current that frames human life as fundamentally governed by group identity is the white supremacist livestreamer Nick Fuentes. He has repeatedly advanced antisemitic claims, arguing that Jews are incapable of full civic loyalty, that they put their own group first, and that Jewish Americans are ultimately more loyal to Jews as a group or to Israel than to the United States itself. He has said about Jews, “They have this international community across borders, extremely organized, that is putting the interests of themselves before the interests of their home

country.” In Fuentes' framing, human existence is a competition between groups, and moral loyalty is by definition exclusive. He is careful to insist that these claims are not antisemitic, presenting them instead as a hard-headed and honest description of human nature.

A similar logic appears in the rhetoric of Thomas Rousseau, the leader of the extremist group Patriot Front, who describes the United States as being locked in an inevitable racial struggle. Rousseau has framed this worldview in stark terms, declaring that white people are “being relentlessly erased on all sides, by the Jew, by non-whites who hate us,” a statement that casts social and political life as an existential battle

BONDI BEACH | CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

Alon Leichman becomes first Israeli head pitching coach in the MLB

BY GRACE GILSON | JTA

Alon Leichman was en route home to Israel to celebrate his wedding with family when he made a group chat with the new coaching staff for the Colorado Rockies to begin planning for his new role as the team's head pitching coach, a first for any Israeli.

Leichman, who grew up on Kibbutz Gezer and was first introduced to baseball on a field his father built, had just wrapped up a season as assistant pitching coach for the Miami Marlins when he received the news in December.

“Thank you Miami! You've changed my life. Can't wait for what's next with

the Rockies and Colorado,” wrote Leichman in a post on Instagram announcing the move.

Before joining the Marlins, Leichman served as the assistant pitching coach for the Cincinnati Reds the previous two years. Earlier in his career, he also played and coached for Team Israel, including a stint as bullpen coach at the 2017 World Baseball Classic.

In March, Leichman is expected to be the head pitching coach for Team Israel at the 2026 World Baseball Classic.

Leichman's latest accolade appears to make him the first Israeli to hold a head pitching coach position in the MLB. (In February 2024, Assaf

Lowengart made pro-baseball history as the first first Israeli-born position player to secure a contract in the United States.)

Leichman will be joined on the Rockies by Gabe Ribas, who will serve as the assistant pitching coach, and Matt Buschmann, who will be the bullpen coach.

“I was on the flight home to Israel when Buschmann was officially on board, so we quickly created a little group chat,” Leichman said in a Rockies press release. “We're going to enjoy these few days, answer phone calls, call players, say our ‘thank yous’ and get to work.”



▲ Alon Leichman, former assistant pitching coach for the Miami Marlins, looks on before a game against the Philadelphia Phillies at Citizens Bank Park on April 18, 2025 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. | Emilee Chinn/Getty Images



Are your kids visiting?

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Spend time with your family over dinner instead of watching them work on your computer. Schedule a one-on-one Device Advice or Tech Support appointment today and let your family gathering be all about *family!*

Contact Tim Hagen, Technology Coordinator at Jewish Senior, Family and Social Services, at 419-724-0412 or Tim@jewishtoledo.org

The lights were bright at a Toledo Zoo Hanukkah celebration



▲ It was a joyful evening of latkes, hot chocolate, games, and more for families of all ages



▲ Dreidel, dreidel, dreidel...



▲ Gotta get that gelt



▲ Diego went with a green dreidel



▲ While Emerson went with a blue and yellow combination



▲ Toledo Zoo continues its annual tradition of lighting up the holidays



▲ Local BBYO members joined the fun as well



New to Jewish Toledo?
Scan the code or visit
jewishtoledo.org for more information.



PJ Hanukkah Kids Day Out



▲ It's never too cold for a game of Gaga



▲ Swinging for the skies



▲ Play time in the gym

PJ Library



Have you heard of PJ Library?

PJ Library sends free, award-winning books that celebrate Jewish values and culture to families with children from birth through 12 years old.



Scan here to register your child for their books!



Questions: Contact PJ Library Program Professional, Marnie Younker, at marnie@jewishtoledo.org or 419-724-0365

 JFGT PJ Library & Youth Programming

 jewishtoledo.org/pjlibrary

PJ Library is supported by The Inspiration Fund.



Jewish Federation & Foundation
OF GREATER TOLEDO

An update from BBYO

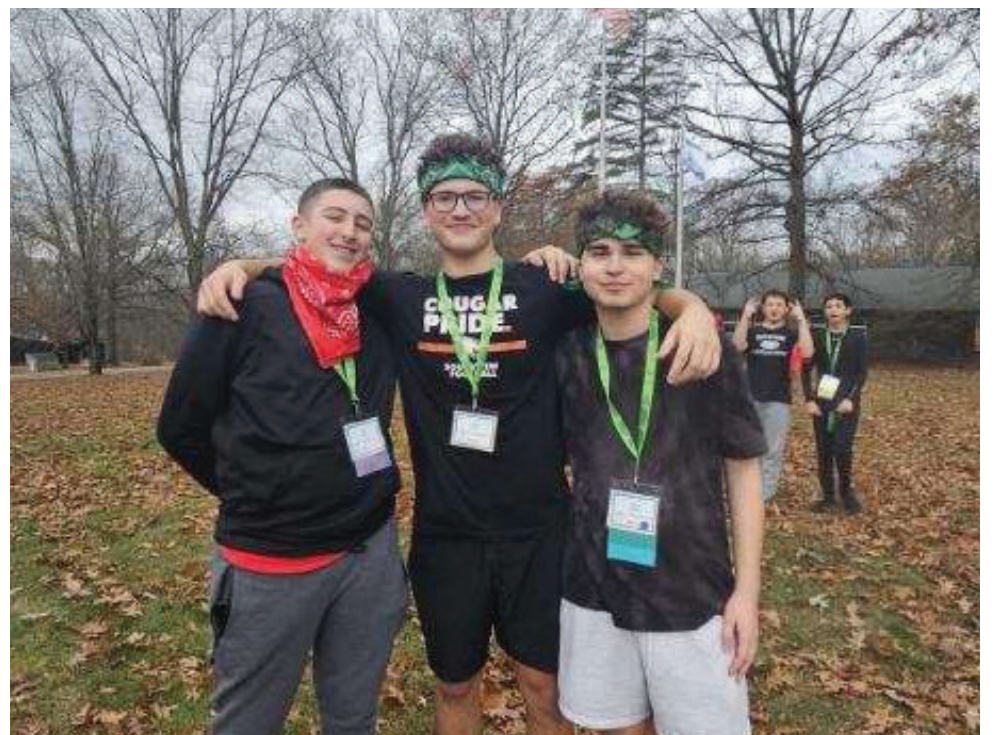
BY COBIN KATZ

The BBYO Fall Kickoff was a really great time! Over the weekend, tons of new friends and I had fun making skits together, competing in games, listening to music during the silent disco, and learning about how to be a young Jewish leader in our community. Even though I had never talked to most of the people at the convention, we all became great friends almost immediately, either simply because we are both Jewish or because of all the fun activities we participated in together. I cannot wait to go to the next BBYO convention!

A group of future Jewish leaders



▲ Hanging out



▲ Brown Smullin Neufeld (BSN) AZA teens from Toledo at Fall Kickoff.

EXPERIENCE A MEMORABLE OVERNIGHT JEWISH INITIATIVE

Jewish Summer Camp Program

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS
NOW OPEN FOR SUMMER 2026!
form.jotform.com/jewishtoledo/emoji2026

More information
jewishtoledo.org/emoji

Jewish Federation and Foundation of Greater Toledo Programs and Events



2026 Mahjong Cards available

The deadline to purchase is January 25, 2026.

Thanks to your generous support, Hillel419 will receive a check for \$765 from 2025 sales of Mahjong cards. This year, The National Mahjong League will be giving back \$6 for every card sold. Please continue to support Hillel at UT and BGSU.

Large card: \$15

Standard card: \$14

Make your check payable to Lois Levison, 6634 Kingsbridge Dr., Sylvania, OH 43560.

Be sure to include your name, address, phone number and email along with the size and number of cards being purchased. Cards will be mailed around April 1.



WEDNESDAYS, JANUARY 7 & 14

DEVICE ADVICE WITH TIM

See page 21 for more information.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 11

EMOJI - MEET WITH CAMP WISE

11 a.m. - Parents Q&A

11:30 a.m. - Kids & Parents

Free event, lunch included

Location TBA

Rabbi Dan Utley, Camp Director, will be visiting Toledo to meet with current and prospective campers and parents for summer 2026. He will have fun camp SWAG to hand out and share exciting updates about new programs and upcoming building projects at Camp Wise. Come ask questions, grab lunch, and learn more about camp. RSVP by Friday, January 9.

JANUARY 16, FEBRUARY 13, MARCH 13, APRIL 17

BABY LOVES SHABBAT

9:30 - 10:30 a.m.

Free event

Each playdate will feature creative play, light snacks, challah, Shabbat songs, and more. Register for a chance to receive a special Shabbat Box to use during the playdates and take home afterward. RSVP by the day prior to marnie@jewishtoledo.org.



Featured Event

**Thursday, January 22
Ladies Who Brew**

****Previously Ladies Who Soar****

Join for a relaxed evening of dinner and craft beer tasting, exclusively for Jewish women ages 65 and under. Let's raise a glass to friendship, L'Chaim! RSVP by Friday, January 16.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 22

LADIES WHO BREW

****PREVIOUSLY LADIES WHO SOAR****

5:30 - 8 p.m.

\$18 per person, includes dinner and drinks
Location TBA (Sylvania-area)

Join for a relaxed evening of dinner and craft beer tasting, exclusively for Jewish women ages 65 and under. RSVP by Friday, January 16.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 25

WINTER FILMS - INTERNATIONAL
HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY
3 p.m.

\$5 per person, includes snacks and movie
Sylvania-area location TBA

Elie Wiesel: Soul on Fire (87 minutes,
English, French, German)

Join us at a special screening exploring the life, legacy, and moral voice of Holocaust survivor, Nobel Laureate, and human rights advocate Elie Wiesel. The screening will be followed by a brief discussion and reflection. RSVP by Friday, January 19. *See page 18 for more information.*

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5

ISRAEL IN FOCUS,
ISRAEL IN THE REGION
7 p.m.

Free event

Location TBA

Is it about us or them? Changing regimes and evolving Israeli society. A deep dive into the schisms in Israeli society and to the regional alliances.

Featuring guest speaker: **Ms. Col. (Ret.) Miri Eisin**, a senior fellow at the International Institute for Counterterrorism (ICT) at Reichman University in Herzliya, Israel. Miri has a deep background in the intelligence, security, and diplomacy worlds and is a frequent commentator on these issues in world media. During her 20 years in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), she served in a variety of positions, including the intelligence officer of a regional border brigade, the intel officer of the Israeli airborne division, and the assistant to the Director of Military Intelligence. As a full colonel she served

as the Deputy Head of the Combat Intelligence Corps. In all her positions she was the first woman to serve in such a capacity. RSVP by Friday, January 30 at <http://bit.ly/44ZccZ4> or with Mary Bilyeu at 419-724-0405 or mary@jewishtoledo.org.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 10

MAHJONG & MORE

5:30 - 7:30 p.m.

\$18 per person, includes dinner and drinks
Location TBA

Grab your girlfriends for a fun night out! Sip, nosh, and learn the art (and luck!) of mahjong. Mahjong is more than a game, it's a tradition bringing generations

Featured Event

**Monday, February 16
Bridge the Gap -
An Intergenerational Journey**

(Bus Day Trip to Cincinnati)
\$18 per child under 18 years old,
\$36 per adult,
includes bus transportation,
admission, refreshments, and
dinner
Time/location of bus pickup and
drop-off TBA

Take part in a meaningful intergenerational journey to the Cincinnati Museum Center for a guided visit of exhibition: "Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away."

This trip is designed for adults and their children or grandchildren (6th grade and up) to experience together. We will have lunch on our own at the museum and dinner together at a Kosher restaurant in Cincinnati.

Find out more about the exhibit at: cincymuseum.org/auschwitz/

Please note: The subject matter is intense and emotionally challenging. Families are asked to use their discretion in determining whether the content is appropriate for the child they intend to bring.

RSVP by Friday, February 6.

For more information and resources, visit jewishtoledo.org.



New for 2026, unless otherwise noted, please register for all programs with Sherry Majewski at 419-724-0351 or sherry@jewishtoledo.org or at <http://bit.ly/44ZccZ4>.



All information subject to change with updates posted on jewishtoledo.org



To have your community events listed in News You Can Use, send information to abby@jewishtoledo.org at least 45 days prior to event.

together, and we're excited to pass it on. Whether you're brand new or a little rusty, our Jewish Toledo mahjong mavens will walk you through the basics so you can play with confidence. No experience needed! RSVP by Friday, February 6.

and beverages
Location TBA (Sylvania-area)
Limited space available
Welcome all future guests with your very own personalized doormat! Enjoy snacks, friends, and great conversations. RSVP by Monday, February 2.

SENIOR PROGRAMMING

THURSDAY, JANUARY 15

SUDS & SCHMOOZE
1 - 3 p.m.
\$15 for campaign donors
\$30 for non-donors to the campaign
Location TBA (Holland-area)

Start 2026 with a fresh burst of creativity and self-care. Spend a hands-on afternoon making bath bombs to take home or share as gifts while enjoying light snacks, good company, and the joy of starting 2026 feeling refreshed and renewed. RSVP by Monday, January 5.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12

SENIOR DIY DOORMATS
1 - 3 p.m.
\$20 for campaign donors
\$50 for non-donors to the campaign;
includes all supplies needed, snacks,

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 24

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN CHINA - CHINESE NEW YEAR CELEBRATION!
5 - 6:30 p.m.
\$18 per person;
includes dinner and presentation
Location TBA (local Chinese restaurant)

Join us for an authentic Chinese dinner as we celebrate the vibrant traditions of Chinese New Year! Discover the fascinating story of Jewish migration to China and how these two cultures intertwined throughout history. RSVP by Friday, February 20.

For the safety of our community, the location of all events will be shared with registrants prior to each event.

Save the Date

Join us and celebrate with Jewish Toledo. This year's theme is *Wicked!*



NEWS YOU CAN USE

TMA acquires \$4M medieval Jewish treasure

In early November, the Toledo Museum of Art (TMA) acquired an 11th-12th century Afghan Kiddush cup for \$4 million. According to Artnet News, the hammered silver vessel blends Hebrew and Arabic inscriptions (reflecting Jewish-Muslim cultural exchange along the Silk Roads). Known as the "Cup of Joy," it was used by members of a Jewish community in eastern Khorasan, modern-day Afghanistan, to commemorate Shabbat and religious holidays. It is inscribed in Hebrew with the first owner's name, "Simcha son of Salman," and a series of blessings in Arabic. "Surei," which means "joy" in Arabic, is written twice. A reference to Simcha's name, it contributed to the naming of the artifact. According to Museum director Adam Levine, it is one of approximately 1,300 acquisitions made by TMA over the past five years.

Relish' the moment with \$100 PJ Library microgrant

There are more ways to do Jewish than you can count! Gather friends for a PJ Library get together and PJ will cover the cost up to \$100. However you do

Jewish, you can count on PJ Library's Get Together program to help when you host Shabbat gatherings or holiday hangouts with at least two other Jewish families you know. Cook something yourself, go potluck, or plan an outing instead. You and your friends (old or new!) are the ingredients that make memories worth preserving. Visit pjlibrary.org/gettogether to learn how to get a \$100 microgrant for your hosting expenses.

Detroit Pistons Jewish Heritage night this February

Sunday, February 1 is Jewish Heritage Night featuring the Detroit Pistons vs. Brooklyn Nets at Little Caesars Arena. The Nets currently have two Jewish players on their roster, Israeli Ben Saraf and American-Israeli Danny Wolf. Special ticket pricing and additional information can be found at content.pistons.com/heritage. Wolf also played basketball for the University of Michigan.

Please note: Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo is not affiliated with this event and is not organizing a local opportunity to attend.

'Tiny Pep Talks' and big fun with authors Linden & Skaggs



▲ The 21st Annual NW Ohio Jewish Book Festival concluded with a fun evening celebrating authors Josh Linden and Paula Skaggs and their book, "Tiny Pep Talks: Bite-Size Encouragement for Life's Annoying, Stressful, and Flat-out Lousy Moments." Community member Lauren Sachs led the Q&A with the duo.



▲ Jewish Toledo showed out for the final Book Festival event of 2025.

Facing antisemitism and exclusion, Jewish authors get a lifeline

BY ELANA SZTOKMAN | JTA

Susan Blumberg-Kason, a Jewish author whose work explores Jewish history and identity, was deep into a book about Golda Meir's Milwaukee childhood when her literary agent abruptly dropped her early last year.

The agent offered only a vague explanation, saying, "We can no longer champion your career."

Blumberg-Kason was surprised at the 180-degree turn by her agent. But she soon discovered three other Jewish writers in her online community also had been suddenly dropped by their agents with little explanation other than the same phrase she heard: "We can no longer champion your career."

It didn't feel like coincidence.

"It wasn't just that she dropped me," Blumberg-Kason said. "It was that suddenly several of us were hearing the exact same sentence. It felt coordinated. It felt like something had shifted under our feet."

It turns out many other Jewish writers have had similar experiences over the past two years, since the beginning of the Oct. 7 war and the boom in anti-Israel and antisemitic ferment that followed. In writers' groups and forums, Jewish authors describe a sense that their work is being railroaded because they are Jewish. They've lost agents, publishers and book events. Some report that editors have cooled the moment Jewish themes appeared in their work.

In May 2024, anti-Israel boycotters propagated a shared spreadsheet called "Is your fav author a Zionist?" that went viral, "outing" Jewish writers for any kind of connection to Israel.

Author Elissa Wald felt the anti-Jewish sentiment so strongly that she created the Never Alone Book Club for Jewish authors to give one another support. The group now has 3,500



▲ Author Gilly Segal, left, interviews literary agent Rena Rossner, center, and rabbi and author Angela Buchdahl at the Artists Against Antisemitism 2025 Jewish Writers Mifgash, Sept. 14, 2025. | Photo / Rebecca J. Michelson

members, a Facebook community and a Substack, and it hosts Jewish book events and shares resources for writers who no longer feel safe in mainstream literary spaces.

The challenging climate prompted UJA-Federation of New York to begin funding projects aimed at helping Jewish authors, awarding a total of \$300,000 in grants to six organizations working in different areas of the literary ecosystem.

"Supporting Jewish writers is an important part of UJA's overall strategy to confront rising antisemitism," said Eric S. Goldstein, CEO of UJA-Federation of New York. "Efforts to marginalize Jewish voices in culture and the arts must be met by even greater efforts to ensure they're heard."

The organizations receiving UJA grants are helping Jewish writers with everything from publishing logistics and visibility to offering emotional support.

"Jewish writers were being dropped, disinvited, and sidelined — and many were questioning whether they could continue writing Jewish stories," said Rina Cohen, who manages strategy across UJA's Combating Antisemitism portfolio. "By supporting them with tools and resources, UJA is sending a clear message: You deserve to create freely, and we'll stand behind you as you do."

The Jewish Book Council used funding from UJA for a unique program to kick off the 100th anniversary of Jewish Book Month: The council designed and distributed

100 Jewish Book Kits to libraries and public spaces across New York City that offer a curated selection of Jewish literature, visual displays, QR codes and author highlights. The aim is to give librarians and community centers an accessible way to showcase Jewish books, helping make Jewish writing visible in the very spaces where many writers feared their work was being erased.

"Jewish books need visibility," said Jewish Book Council CEO Naomi Firestone-Teeter. "We said: Let's bring more Jewish books out into the world — into more readers' hands — and build community around them. That's what the kits do. They let people see Jewish books where they live their lives."

Bodner offers guidance, inspiration, and a call to action on antisemitism

Last month's annual Shine a Light on Antisemitism program brought Jewish Toledo together to hear from Zack Bodner, author of "Why Do Jewish? A Manifesto for 21st Century Jewish Peoplehood." The event came at a moment when antisemitism is surging around the world and Jewish identity is being challenged and reshaped. He explored how we can resist threats to Jewish life, not only by defending ourselves, but by deepening our identity, taking communal responsibility, and rediscovering how Judaism can be vibrant, relevant, and resilient. Together, we will continue to shine a light on our enduring strengths, responsibilities, and hopes for the future.



▲ Zack Bodner and Stephen Rothschild, CEO, Jewish Federation & Foundation of Greater Toledo



▲ Bodner addresses Jewish Toledo



▲ Helen and Zev reunite



▲ Delicious kosher desserts book-ended the inspirational evening



▲ Fagie and Cindy greet each other



▲ Bodner's "Why Do Jewish?" books for sale at the event

Israel in Focus: Israel in the Region

Is it about us or them? Changing regimes and evolving Israeli society. A deep dive into the schisms in Israeli society and to the regional alliances.

Thursday, February 5 | 7 PM
Featuring guest speaker: Ms. Col. (Ret.) Miri Eisin
Free event, Location TBA*



In partnership with




For the safety of our community, the location will be provided to registrants prior to the event.

Winter Films - International Holocaust Remembrance Day

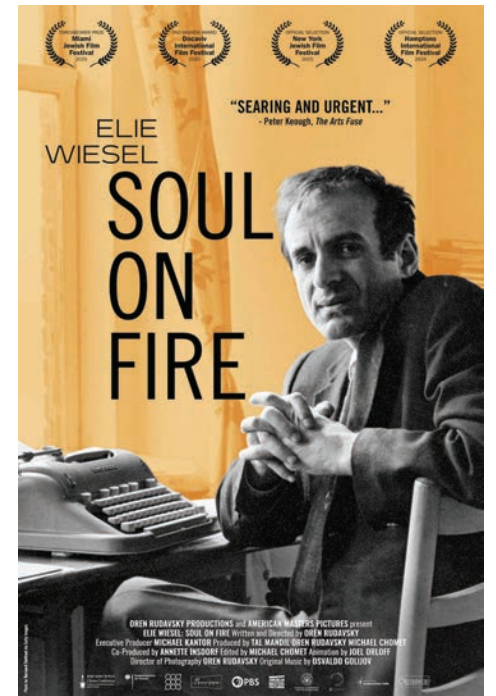
In commemoration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, we invite you to a special screening of “Elie Wiesel: Soul on Fire”, a powerful film that explores the life, legacy, and moral voice of Holocaust survivor, Nobel Laureate, and human rights advocate Elie Wiesel.

This moving documentary offers a deep and personal look into Wiesel’s journey, from the horrors of Auschwitz to his lifelong mission to bear witness and speak out against injustice. Through archival footage, interviews, and reflections, “Soul on Fire” captures Wiesel’s unwavering commitment to memory, compassion, and ethical responsibility.

The screening will be followed by a brief discussion and reflection, offering attendees a chance to engage with Wiesel’s message and consider how we, as a community, can continue to uphold the values of remembrance, resilience, and moral courage.

Join us as we honor the victims of the Holocaust and reaffirm our commitment to “never forget.”

RSVP by Friday, January 19 to <http://bit.ly/44ZccZ4> or with Sherry Majewski at 419-724-0351 or sherry@jewishtoledo.org.



Winter Films - International Holocaust Remembrance Day

What: Elie Wiesel: Soul on Fire (87 minutes, English, French, German)

When: Sunday, January 25 at 3 p.m.

Where: Sylvania-area location TBA

Info: \$5 per person, including snacks and movie



AUTHORS | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

It’s not always clear that a Jewish writer’s professional setback stems from antisemitism. Publishing is a brutal industry, and even successful writers experience abrupt and opaque rejection.

But many Jewish writers say that what they’re experiencing suggests something nefarious. They’ve felt their Jewishness was treated as suspect in classrooms, critique groups or conferences. They’ve felt pressure from editors to strip Jewish elements from their work.

When the Jewish Book Council opened a portal inviting Jewish writers to share incidents affecting their creative or professional lives, over 400 authors wrote in.

“Some of what we see is subtle and hard to pinpoint, and some of it is very direct: events canceled, students pushed out of MFA programs for being ‘Zionists,’ bookstores refusing to stock books,” Firestone-Teeter said. “Things are not okay. This is not just the normal difficulty of publishing.”

In addition to the Jewish Book Council, UJA’s other five grants went to Artists Against Antisemitism, PJ Library, the Jewish Theological Seminary, the Jewish Life Foundation and 70 Faces Media (the parent organization of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency).

In October, 70 Faces Media held a one-day Jewish Authors’ Summit, offering writers practical tools, digital strategy training and community-building to navigate this increasingly hostile publishing environment.

PJ library will hold a Jewish children’s book festival for authors and families at New York’s 92nd St. Y on Jan. 11, 2026. In just the first few days, an unprecedented 3,500 registrants signed up.

The Jewish Theological Seminary held a literary festival in September that brought together 450 writers, students and community members for



▲ Jewish Book Month 100 display kits designed by Eitan Gutenmacher were placed in strategic locations around New York, including this one at Carnegie East House, an assisted living facility, to bolster the visibility of Jewish authors. | Photo / Scott Gordon

masterclasses, public panels and craft development.

The Jewish Life Foundation is creating a TV and podcast series, “The People of the Book with Josh Radnor,” that will spotlight Jewish authors and conversations about Jewish identity and culture.

Artists Against Antisemitism created a full-day gathering for 140 authors, the Jewish Writers Mifgash, that included pitch sessions with literary agents, professional development workshops, mentorship matching and mental health support. Project Shema, a training and support organization focused on contemporary antisemitism, led a session at the conference on how to recognize antisemitism in creative spaces.

Elizabeth Berkowitz, one of the event’s organizers, said several authors came away with promising

“Jewish books need visibility. We said: Let’s bring more Jewish books out into the world – into more readers’ hands – and build community around them. That’s what the kits do. They let people see Jewish books where they live their lives.”

leads.

“Agents were asking, ‘Can you send me the full? I want to see more,’” Berkowitz said. “We definitely had some shidduchs made — real follow-ups between writers and agents who were actively seeking Jewish authors.”

Novelist Zeeva Bukai said just being around others experiencing the same challenges was a welcome relief.

“I realized it’s not just me experiencing this; others are too,” she said. “That validation was just as

Firestone-Teeter

important as the tools we learned to deal with it.”

That’s the point, said the Jewish Book Council’s CEO.

“We want authors to know we’ve got you on the other side,” Firestone-Teeter said. “Your job is to keep writing. Our job is to deal with the industry issues and build a community that celebrates you and your work. Jewish writers need to feel confident writing the books only they can write.”

Toledo Jewish Men's Club 2025-2026 Calendar

The Toledo Jewish Men's Club (The "Club") is open to all men in the Toledo Jewish Community. There are no dues or fees other than the couverte for luncheons.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 6 (2026):

SANDY SPANG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TOLEDO METROPOLITAN AREA COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

As TMACOG Executive Director, Sandy is responsible for leading regional economic collaboration across northwest Ohio and southeast Michigan. Sandy previously served as Deputy Director of Economic Development for the City of Toledo and a member of Toledo City Council.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 3 (2026):

DAVID BRIGGS, SPORTS COLUMNIST FOR THE TOLEDO BLADE

Veteran observer of sports in Toledo, across Ohio, and nationally, Dave is a voting member of the AP top 25 football rankings. In addition to his role as a lead sports columnist for The Blade, Dave has written for, and appeared in, many national sports media outlets.

TUESDAY, MARCH 3 (2026):

DR. ROMULUS DURANT, CEO/ SUPERINTENDENT-TOLEDO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Durant's 11th year as the Superintendent of TPS, he is the youngest educator to hold the

position and the first awarded "Urban Educator of the Year" by the Council of Great City Schools.

TUESDAY, APRIL 7; TUESDAY, MAY 5; AND

TUESDAY, JUNE 2 (2026):

TO BE ANNOUNCED

Questions?

Call Joel 419-704-5039

Co-Chairs: Mark Greenblatt, Dick Greenblatt, Matt Rubin, and Joel Beren

Gross Electric announces strategic leadership transition as fourth generation assumes leadership of Electrical Supply Division

Last month, Gross Electric announced a strategic leadership transition designed to advance the company's multigenerational legacy and strengthen its operational focus. As part of an internal family succession plan, ownership of the company's Electric Supply Division has transitioned to the fourth generation of the Gross family. Under the new name Gross Electric Supply, the division will be led by Drew and Jason Gross.

Drew Gross will serve as President of Gross Electric Supply, guiding the company's overall strategy,

operations, and long-term growth initiatives. Jason Gross will continue in outside supply sales, deepening customer relationships and supporting business development efforts.

"This transition honors our family's legacy and positions us for the future," said Laurie Gross. "Drew and Jason bring tremendous energy and a clear vision for growth. Their leadership allows Gross Electric Supply to operate with enhanced focus while ensuring our customers receive the same exceptional service they've trusted for generations."

Gross Electric Supply has

served commercial, industrial and institutional customers throughout Northwest Ohio and Southeast Michigan for more 115 years.

Laurie Gross will maintain full ownership and leadership of Gross Electric's lighting showroom operations and will remain focused on residential lighting solutions for homeowners, builders, and designers.

For customers of both companies, service will continue without interruption. Existing contacts, processes, and support structures remain in place. The transition is designed to strengthen each business area by enabling more focused

strategy, investment, and operational clarity.

"We are proud to continue the Gross family tradition and help take Gross Electric Supply to the next level," said Drew Gross. "Our goal is to grow the business while staying true to the values our family built over generations."

"This transition gives us the opportunity to focus on what we do best and deliver even better service moving forward," added Jason Gross.

Laurie Gross was Jewish Federation of Greater Toledo President from 2021-2023.

BONDI BEACH | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

between fixed identities.

But the worldview advanced by figures like Fuentes and Rousseau collapses when confronted with a single human act such as that of Ahmed Al Ahmed. If human life were truly governed only by intergroup competition and instinct, there would be no room for a person to knowingly risk his life for strangers from another group, let alone in the midst of mortal danger. Yet this is precisely what happened. Al Ahmed risked his life to protect members of a group to which he did not belong. This altruistic act directly contradicts the theories advanced by Fuentes and Rousseau and exposes them for what they truly are, not neutral descriptions of reality but ideological narratives imposed upon it. Beneath the edgy aesthetics, viral memes, and provocative social media packaging, these claims amount to recycled pseudo-intellectual arguments, longstanding tropes of racism and antisemitism that have circulated throughout history under different guises.

Understanding Al Ahmed's act, however, requires moving beyond abstract theory to the explanations offered by those closest to the event. Two interpretations have emerged in media accounts of why

he risked his life. One, expressed by his father, presents the act in simple and universal terms. His father said that "Ahmed was driven by his sentiment, conscience and humanity." The other explanation, voiced by Lubaba Alhmididi AlKahil from within the Muslim and Syrian community after visiting Al Ahmed in the hospital, situates the act within a specific moral culture and identity. As she put it, this kind of response is "not strange for a Syrian individual," coming from a community with strong bonds that has learned to refuse injustice. What is striking is that these two explanations can exist side by side without canceling one another, a possibility that figures like Nick Fuentes and those who share his worldview struggle to grasp because they are locked into a rigid, binary understanding of human motivation.

One might argue that Al Ahmed's act was a rare exception in a world otherwise governed by group conflict and self-interest. But the reality is that every day, people risk their lives to protect others across lines of identity. Adam Cramer dove into the water to save a drowning girl. Lassana Bathily hid Jewish shoppers during the Hyper Cacher attack in Paris. Mamoudou Gassama saved a child he did not know. Wesley Autrey

jumped onto subway tracks to rescue a stranger, and Henri d'Anselme confronted a knife attacker to protect children. Seen in this light, Ahmed Al Ahmed stands within a long human tradition that includes, even in more distant history, figures such as Raoul Wallenberg and Chiune Sugihara, who risked their lives to save others during the Holocaust.

Evolutionary research itself points in the same direction. Across species, altruistic behavior appears again and again, from dolphins that keep injured companions afloat so they can breathe, to rats that will free trapped cage mates. Far from an anomaly, altruism is a recurrent feature of social life, and our brains have a remarkable capacity for empathy and for understanding the experiences of others, far beyond the lines of group identity and social belonging. Fuentes and those like him may insist that people are loyal only to their own group, but reality erodes this impoverished and intellectually lazy theory on a daily basis.

Crucially, these acts do not testify only to universal altruism abstracted from identity. In many cases, they emerged from deeply held group identities and moral traditions. Cultural, religious, and national affiliations did not prevent these

individuals from acting on behalf of others. They often supplied the very moral language and sense of responsibility that made such action possible. Universal concern and particular identity therefore do not stand in opposition. They coexist, with specific histories serving not as barriers to moral action but as sources from which it can arise.

That is precisely what figures like Nick Fuentes and those who share his worldview fail to account for. Their politics rests on a rigid vision of identity as a closed framework, one that leaves no room for moral action that crosses its prescribed boundaries. The horrific attack at Bondi Beach, and the courage of Ahmed Al Ahmed within it, remind us that moral action often arises neither from abandoning identity nor from clinging to it defensively, but from inhabiting it fully while remaining open to others.

In an age shaped by clickbait, algorithms and relentless simplification, such moral complexity is difficult to sustain. Political arguments reward camps and slogans. But the actual behavior of people like Ahmed Al Ahmed escapes the internet's simplified categories and points instead toward a richer form of conduct, one that can be called, quite simply, humanity.



**Ahava program
For families of individuals
with special needs**

Ahava is a program of the Jewish Federation and Foundation of Greater Toledo that is managed by Jewish Senior, Family and Social Services and has provided a lifeline since 2016 to Jewish families in Greater Toledo who are raising children with special needs and simply want to be able to access the best care possible for their children.

Through Ahava, Federation awards local Jewish families an annual scholarship of up to \$1,500 for each child, no matter their age, to put toward the cost of therapies such as speech therapy and music therapy, equipment, medical supplies, continuing education for parents on raising children with special needs, and other resources that help positively impact individuals and their families.

For more information about Ahava, please contact Ben Malczewski at ben@jewishtoledo.org or 419-885-2561.

GO PAPER LESS

TOLEDO Jewish News

Want to opt out of the Toledo Jewish News print version? The newspaper is posted online every month (often earlier than the mail) and always FREE to read on your smart phone, computer, or tablet. Stay up-to-date on the latest of Jewish Toledo at www.jewishtoledo.org/about-us/tjnff.

To opt out, mail Abby Hoicowitz at abby@jewishtoledo.org with your name and address, and we'll remove you from the mail list. Thanks for helping us save the planet!



READ TJN ONLINE HERE

JSFSS Family Pantry Wish List

While the Food Pantry appreciates food donations, there is a greater need for personal care and paper products. The Food Pantry depends on financial gifts or donations for personal care items. If you'd like to donate items to the Food Pantry, please consider choosing items from its wish list:

- paper towels
- facial tissues
- diapers
- feminine hygiene products
- disposable razors
- shampoo
- soap (bar soap, dish soap,
- liquid hand soap, and laundry soap)
- toilet paper (preferably individual, pre-wrapped rolls)
- Other personal hygiene items of your choice

Contact Hannah Loeser
(419) 724- 0401

HOW TO CONTACT JSFSS

Perhaps you or a family member are in need of help with senior social services. Maybe you know someone in need of support from a family pantry. Jewish Senior, Family and Social Services offers a range of services to benefit our community. JSFSS has a knowledgeable and caring staff waiting to help you.

Vice President Jewish Senior,
Family & Social Services
Ben Malczewski
(419) 724-0408

JSFSS Office Manager and
Program Associate
Hannah Loeser
(419) 724- 0401

Support Services Coordinator
Liz Witter, LSW
(419) 724-0406

Project Manager and Technology
Coordinator
Tim Hagen
419-724-0412

Food Pantry and Support Services
Coordinator
Stacy Willis, LSW, MSW
419-724-0407

jewishtoledo.org/jfs



Get Fit Classes

Monday

**Prime Movers Early, 9-10am -or-
Prime Movers Later, 10:30-11:30am**

Join us for this upbeat and energetic dance/exercise program designed to improve your fitness level safely and effectively. This is a comprehensive workout that includes strength, flexibility, balance, posture-improvement, and more. All moves can be modified to meet specific needs.

Cardio Drumming, 12-1pm

A high-energy workout that also includes some dance moves. This can also be done seated.

Wednesday

**Prime Movers Early, 9-10am -or-
Prime Movers Later, 10:30-11:30am**

(see description above)

Ballet Fusion, 12-1pm

A special blend of ballet warm-up, cardio drumming, and a Tai Chi/yoga cool-down. Ballet shoes are not required.

Friday

**Zumba, 9-10am
Foundation Fitness, 10am-11am**

Designed to improve mobility, core strength, and stability from the ground up. Focus will be on foot and ankle strength, mobility, healthy posture, pelvic floor, and breathing. Exercises can be done in chairs and/or standing.

In-person classes at Sylvania-area location. Contact Hannah at 419-724-0401 for exact location.*



* For the safety and security of our community, the location of all events will be shared with registrants prior to the event.

Can't join us in person?
Tune in on YouTube at
Jewish Toledo



YouTube



Tech Time with Tim

TIM HAGEN
 ✉ tim@jewishtoledo.org

With the start of every new year comes forecasts and predictions about all aspects of life. Considering consumer technology, please be on the lookout for the following trends to be marketed by manufacturers and/or adopted by the public in increasingly common ways.

1. Additional smart features on cars, including driving, parking, and navigation assistance
2. Smart glasses that offer translation help and enhanced vision
3. Mobile device apps that monitor heart rate, blood pressure, sleep patterns, blood sugar levels, and more
4. AI search assistance features on Internet browsers
5. Improved wireless connectivity and signal strength for mobile and home devices
6. Smart home features like lighting, security systems, and HVAC and appliance control
7. Adoption of retro (“dumb”) technology such as point-and-shoot digital cameras (pre-smart phones) and basic flip phones that aren’t Internet compatible
8. Decreased social media use

Until next month – Tim

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Upcoming Device Advice Tech Programs
 Wednesdays, 11 a.m.-noon:

1. January 7: Let’s Talk about AI – learning the basics
2. January 14: Your TV and You. Streaming vs. Cable - weighing the pros and cons

Please RSVP with Sherry Majewski at: 419-724-0351 or sherry@jewishtoledo.org

* For the safety and security of our community, the location of all events will be shared with registrants prior to the event.



(Tech Time with Tim)

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January Worship Schedule

<p>Friday, January 2 at 6pm Shabbat with Rabbi Delson and Cayden Greenblatt</p> <p>Friday, January 9 at 6pm Shabbat with Rabbi Delson and Dr. Andrew Pelletier</p> <p>Saturday, January 10 at 9:30am Torah Today with Rabbi Delson</p> <p>Friday, January 16 at 6pm MLK Jr. Shabbat with special musical guests Followed by festive oneg</p>	<p>Saturday, January 17 at 9:30am Tot Shabbat</p> <p>Saturday, January 17 at 10:30am Shabbat Yoga Body and Soul</p> <p>Friday, January 23 at 6pm Shabbat with Rabbi Delson and Dr. Andrew Pelletier</p> <p>Friday, January 30 at 6pm Meditative Shabbat Service and Challah Bake Challah baking at 5:15pm</p> <p>Saturday, January 31 at 10:30am B'nai Mitzvah Shabbaton</p>
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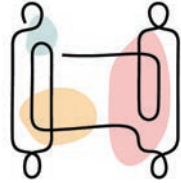


carry into your everyday life. You can join in person OR join on Zoom: contact the office for information to join on Zoom.

The Gift of Mindfulness

Wednesday, January 7 at 7pm

Join us for the Temple's mindfulness program. We will explore different dimensions of mindfulness practice - different kinds of meditation, Jewish text study, small group conversations, and real-life practices that you can



Torah Today

Saturday, January 10 at 9:30am

An interactive discussion on the Torah portion for the week. Bagels and coffee are served. No experience necessary. Everyone is welcome.



Jewish Literacy

Sundays at 1-1:45pm with the clergy

Discover the meaning behind Jewish traditions and terminology

January 11 January 25



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Shabbat Morning Yoga: Body and Soul

with Cantor Roher, Saturday, January 17 at 10:30am

Start your Shabbat morning with a rejuvenating spiritual practice that will give you a renewed sense of peace. The class is for all levels, using a chair or a mat, whichever is most appropriate for you. No experience needed. Call the Temple office for the Zoom link.

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CONGREGATION B'NAI ISRAEL

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All CBI programs and religious services are open to the members of all local congregations & guests with RSVP unless otherwise indicated.

If you are not a CBI member and would like to attend, please contact the office at 419.517.8400 during office hours.

New & Ongoing Classes with Rabbi Marsh

All classes are in-person at CBI & on Zoom. Contact the office if you need the Zoom link and passcode.

Parashat Hashavuah: Join us for the interactive weekly discussion of the week's Torah Portion
Fridays at 11:00 AM unless otherwise notified

Gabbai Skills Class: Learn how to call people to the Torah, help honorees, correct Torah readers.
Mondays at 10:30 AM, January 5th, 12th

Megillah Reading Class: We need extra help reading the Megillah this Purim - even if you only read 3 verses; help us by learning how with this class.
Monday Evenings at 7:30 PM until Purim

Intro to Judaism: The Basics of Judaism on a variety of topics. Suitable for conversion students, non-Jewish family members, and those who missed out on the basics in one area or another (you can attend specific sessions).
Wednesday Evenings at 8:00-9:00 PM

Judaism & Modernity: New Scientific/Technological Developments: What does Judaism have to say about new developments such as AI, genetic engineering, etc. How do they help us? Create challenges for us? Different topics each week.
Sundays at 10:30-11:30 AM (This class will run on Sunday mornings when there is not a monthly Adult Ed Series program)

Tefillah Talk - Musaf: Where did the prayers come from? What is their purpose? How do we relate to them? What is the "choreography"? Learn to sing them.
Monday Evenings at 8:00-9:00 PM

Basic Hebrew Reading: We will be learning a few letters/vowels each week and doing reading exercises; when we've learned all the letters, we will re-announce this as "Intermediate Hebrew Reading". The class is for those who know their letters and want to improve their ability.
Wednesday Evenings at 7:30 PM

RSVP to the office by calling 419-517-8400 if you'd like to join. Contact Rabbi Marsh with any questions at rabbi@cbitoledo.org

Connecting Kids to Meals Volunteer Event

Thursday, January 8, 2026 10 AM - 12 PM
Cherry Street Mission Building, 1501 Monroe St.
RSVP to Fran Weinblatt at programming@cbitoledo.org by Jan. 7th.

Kabbalat Shabbat Service & Dinner

Friday, January 9, 2026, 6:00 PM at CBI
Join us for in-person Shabbat Ma-ariv services followed by a delicious Italian-inspired dairy dinner.
Adults: \$18, Children under 13 & CBI RS Students: FREE
Reservations required. RSVP to Kim Brody at kbrody@cbitoledo.org or call the office at 419.517.8400 by Jan. 5th.

A Night of Stars! Havdalah & Planetarium Visit

Saturday Evening, January 24, 2026, 7:00 PM
Lourdes Appold Planetarium, 6832 Convent Blvd.
Join us at 7:00 PM for a meaningful Havdalah service, snacks, and schmoozing and at 7:30 PM the Planetarium show "Back to the Moon for Good".
Cost: Adults \$10, Children (12 & under) \$5
Reservations required. RSVP to Kim Brody at kbrody@cbitoledo.org or call the office at 419.517.8400 by Jan. 20th.

Join us for Canasta!

Tuesdays at 12:30 PM at CBI
If you are interested in playing, please contact Rhoda Miller at rmiller@cbitoledo.org.

CBI Adult Ed with Rabbi Nina Cardin

Sunday, January 25, 2026, 10:30 AM at CBI
Join us as we welcome speaker, Rabbi Nina Cardin, Director of Jewish Life at the JCC of Greater Baltimore on Zoom. She will speak on the topic "Shomrei HaAretz", which is a diverse approach to the Jewish obligation of Tikun Olam and our role as guardians of the earth.
RSVP to Kim Brody at kbrody@cbitoledo.org or call the office at 419.517.8400 by January 21st.

SAVE THE DATE:

Tu biShvat Seder

Sunday, February 1, 2026, 10:30 AM at CBI
In partnership with Cong. Etz Chayim. Enjoy an exciting intergenerational Tu biShvat seder filled with interactive activities, holiday snacks, and a sweet celebration of nature and renewal. Cost is free, but voluntary donations are greatly appreciated.
Reservations required. Contact kbrody@cbitoledo.org or call the office at 419.517.8400 by January 26th.

CBI Office Closings

Thu. January 1	Closed	New Year's Day
Mon. January 19	Closed	MLK Day

WEEKLY SERVICES SCHEDULE *except during holidays

- Monday & Thursday Morning Minyan: 8:00 AM - IP/ZM
- Monday - Thursday Afternoon Minyan: 5:45 PM - ZM
- Friday Kabbalat Shabbat: 5:45 PM - ZM
- Saturday Morning Shabbat: 9:30 AM - IP/LS
- Saturday Mincha Service: 12:30 PM - IP/LS
- Sunday Morning Minyan: 9:30 AM - IP/ZM

CONGREGATION ETZ CHAYIM

WEDNESDAY WITH FRIENDS

Everyone is invited to play poker and mahj on Wednesday, January 7 from 10 a.m. to noon in the Etz Chayim Social Hall. Snacks will be served. Please contact Nancy or Marc Jacobson if you can attend.

TOLEDO HISTORY MUSEUM TOUR

Come join and hop on the "Toledo tour bus" for a ride around town on Sunday, January 11 from 1-3 p.m. In addition to learning about the city's gangsters and their illegal businesses, riders will travel through much of the city, into the warehouse district, to the Old West End, and to Point Place. Donna, our narrator, will point out buildings that figured into the gambling and bootlegging scene that are now other businesses. The cost of the tour is \$30 per person. Please register with Nancy Jacobson and have money paid by December 30.

MAHJ/POKER

Our Sunday poker and mahj group continues to meet monthly. We continue to build a strong community and friendships. We will be playing on January 18 from 10 a.m. to noon. Contact Marc or Nancy Jacobson if you are interested in joining either group.

ANNUAL FAMILY SHABBAT DINNER PLANNED

The annual Family Shabbat Dinner and services will be held on Friday evening, January 23 at 5:15 p.m. Rabbi Jason Mark will be leading services followed by a delicious Shabbat meal. There will be Saturday morning services on January 24 with a kiddush lunch following. Please call the synagogue office to make a reservation. The cost is \$18 per person.

SAVE THE DATE

The famous Etz Chayim Kishka dinner is back! The entire community is invited to share in a synagogue tradition on Sunday, March 15 at 5 p.m., with brisket, kishka, and all the trimmings. A delightful musical program will follow the dinner. More information will be forthcoming.

PLEASE NOTE: All Zoom, virtual, and in-person programs require registration. You can contact either Nancy Jacobson at Jaco824@bex.net or Elsa Leveton at 419-473-2401 or elsa@etzchayimtoledo.org for further information and registration.

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Nancy D. Forman Katz	Christina & Ian Katz	Gary and Shelly Fruchtman
Tom & Patti Tuschman and Family	Stu & Jo-Jo Goldberg	Sheldon Wittenberg
Gene & Lucy Kutsovsky	In Memory of Marcia Hess, OB" M (Grammie-wife-mom)	Matthew & Breanne Rubin
Dr. Steve and Andrea Rubin	Michael & Sharon Tipping	Drs. Blair Grubb & Dena Eber
Jerry & Carolyn Lemieux	AND THANK YOU TO OUR SHAREHOLDERS FOR YOUR CONTINUOUS SUPPORT!	Andrew R. Schuman, Esq.

Together, we did it - Thank You!

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TOLEDO Jewish News

RABBIS | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

before coming to the United States as an adult. He still has family in the country and makes frequent trips to visit the area.

The Chanukah by the Sea event, where the shooting occurred, was Schlanger's "baby," according to Kaltmann, and he was a key organizer of the celebration.

"(Schlanger) taught tolerance and that people should just get along," Kaltmann said. "And what happens? He is gunned down in his prime. His children are going to grow up orphans. And why? Because another father refused to teach his son that we're all made in the image of G-d and that each and every human being is irreplaceable. This is how warped and distorted the world has become: because people have different beliefs, we have to gun them down and kill



Kaltmann



Leavitt

them for not living up to our own beliefs."

Kaltmann said that he "is ashamed to be an Australian citizen" and criticized Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, citing an anti-Israel protest outside that featured antisemitic chants at Sydney Opera House on Oct. 9, 2023, following the Oct. 7, 2023-Hamas led surprise attack on Israel that he allowed to happen and questioning why Albanese's original statement after the shooting, which read "The scene in Bondi are shocking

and distressing. Police and emergency responders are on the ground working to save lives. My thoughts are with every person affected," didn't make mention of Chanukah or Jews.

"I think (Israeli) Prime Minister (Benjamin) Netanyahu said it right: you have a prime minister of Australia who is pathetically weak," Kaltmann said.

The attack led Kaltmann to reflect on how "lucky we are that we live in Columbus, Ohio, and have an incredible governor and lieutenant governor who are about each and everyone of the almost 12 million Ohioans. It's so sad, but it makes me appreciate where we live much, much more."

Kaltmann said his heart is with the Sydney Jewish community, which he called "very strong."

Leavitt said that along with being

a tight-knit community, he found Australia to be "incredibly warm and welcoming."

"It includes families that have been in Australia for generations, Holocaust survivors and their descendants, families that came from the former Soviet Union and South Africa, as well as from other countries," he said. "It's a vibrant community."

In the face of such attacks, the answer on how to respond is in the theme of Chanukah: bring light into the world, Leavitt said.

"Do not be afraid to show your Jewish identity in public and be proud about who you are," he said. "Bring goodness to the world."

This article first appeared in the Cleveland Jewish News. Reprinted with permission.

TOLEDO Jewish News

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TOLEDO Jewish News

BILL | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

similarly with water and agriculture and emerging technologies. And, selfishly, I want those opportunities to come to Ohio, to help Ohio move in the right direction.

“What started this whole conversation is that we are trying to be competitive with every state in the Midwest with jobs, and with getting businesses to come to Ohio. In this particular situation, we’re trying to be competitive with other states who have an emerging, growing footprint of Israeli businesses,” Hall told the CJN.

Synenberg and Hall got a boost from Elad Granot, former dean of the John Carroll University Boler College of Business in University Heights, who has been involved with numerous start-ups in Israel and the U.S., and who testified in favor of the bill during committee hearings. The bill received bipartisan support and passed by a 10-2 vote.

The Ohio House of Representatives

passed the bill 73-10 on Nov. 5. The bill now moves on to the Ohio Senate, which will take it up when it returns to session in January.

“Today is a historic day for Ohio and its ongoing partnership with Israel,” Hall said in a news release. “In 2023, I was able to visit Israel on a state delegation visit. During the visit, I met with many different industries, including start-ups and emerging technology. This partnership seeks to bring these businesses to Ohio. I am tired of other states continually landing these businesses when they decide to grow and expand. Ohio will now be able to compete.”

Synenberg, a congregant of Jewish Family Experience in University Heights, said, told the CJN, “Two industries, in addition to technology, I look forward to connecting between Ohio and Israel are agriculture and water supply. Both are areas that are considerably important to Ohio families. The goal is to get this at least voted out of the House by the end of the year (which it did). The Senate

will then have to vote on it, but I don’t think that will be a heavy lift. There is already a bill in the Senate that’s the same bill. It just hasn’t moved as fast as ours did.”

If the bill passes through the Ohio Senate, Beigelman will be jump-starting conversations with Israeli power brokers.

“The goal is to connect these two economies and help businesses that need that proof of market for startups,” he said. “After they prove their concepts, they want to prove the market. I’m able to do that. This is an opportunity for two really good economies that are focused on the same to kind of partner to figure out efficiencies, figure out better market differentials for themselves, to figure out ways to extend their market share, expand their market, and find ways to take a technology and use it in a different way.”

State Rep. Christine Cockley, D-Columbus, said that she had decided to vote against the bill due, in part, to her opposition to Israeli

policy.

“As a Jewish woman, I remain committed to advocating for the safety and security of all Jewish people everywhere,” she told the CJN. “Simultaneously, I cannot support all actions taken by the Israeli government during this time. As with any government, I believe it’s crucial to be vocal about human rights violations, no matter where they occur.”

Cockley said that the bill is about “prioritizing foreign political interests.”

“At a time when so many of us are struggling to make ends meet, it is more important than ever that we keep Ohio’s resources and taxpayer dollars focused on the needs of our own communities,” she said.

Beigelman said that Cockley “was an original co-sponsor of this bipartisan legislation and remained on the bill throughout the legislative process, until ... after the floor vote.”

Births



Cameron “Cami” Josie Kaufman

Eli and Emily Kaufman are thrilled to announce the birth of their second child, Cameron “Cami” Josie Kaufman. Cami entered the world on November 13, 2025 in Deerfield, IL. The proud grandparents are Susan and Steve Kaufman and Susan Maxwell and Ron Waife. Cameron Josie is named after Eli’s grandfather, Cal Katz and Emily’s grandmother Jane Waife.

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