

Feds charge three in Tibor's vape case

KIRSTEN BEARD

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Five years after the Cuyahoga County Sheriff's Department and federal law enforcement agents raided the homes of Eyton Senders, his relatives and Tibor's Kosher Meats in 2020, Senders is being charged with a felony surrounding a multi-million-dollar drug trade operation.

Senders, 37, was charged in federal court in Cleveland alongside two others, Jake Lindsey and Justen Balay, with conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute hashish oil, a cannabis concentrate, according to federal court documents.

The charges, filed March 17, were filed via information, meaning all three agreed to forgo the grand jury process. It is unknown what that means.

Multiple calls by the Cleveland Jewish News for comment were made to their defense attorneys, Edmund Searby of Porter Wright Morris & Arthur in Cleveland, Justin M. Weatherly of Henderson, Mokhtari & Weatherly in Cleveland and Victor Sherman of Law Offices of Victor Sherman in Los Angeles. Searby and Weatherly could not be reached and Sherman said he could not comment.

U.S. Attorney Henry F. DeBaggis II

CHARGES | CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



▲ A law enforcement agent carries out evidence from Tibor's Kosher Market on Sept. 22, 2020. Faces of law enforcement officers have been blurred intentionally. | CJN Photo

Post-Oct. 7, 2023, campus climate discussed at Federation's CRC Annual Meeting



▲ Kenneth L. Marcus, founder and chairman of The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, delivers the Sidney Z. Vincent Memorial Lecture at the Jewish Federation of Cleveland's 78th annual Community Relations Committee Annual Meeting and Sidney Z. Vincent Memorial Lecture on March 20 at Green Road Synagogue in Beachwood. | CJN Photo / Abigail Preiszig

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College students that worked with The Louis D. Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law in 2023 and 2024 said they “can’t unsee what they saw at their campuses” on Oct. 8, 2023.

According to Kenneth L. Marcus, founder and chairman of The Louis D. Brandeis Center, it was a “moment when

we already had a fairly significant amount of information about the mass murders, torture, sexual assaults, desecration of corpses and certainly kidnappings” of the Oct. 7, 2023, surprise attack on Israel and students saw an “outbreak of celebration for the Hamas activities” before the Israel Defense Forces even entered Gaza.

“For many students, they would see that their own classmates were participating in this,” Marcus told more than 150 attendees gathered on March 20 at Green Road Synagogue in Beachwood for the Jewish Federation of Cleveland's 78th annual Community Relations Committee Annual Meeting and Sidney Z. Vincent Memorial Lecture. “If not their friends, at least their

acquaintances, people who are part of their community, people to whom they had significant goodwill, but they didn’t know how they could react anymore because no longer could they have the sense that they were part of the community in which they were fully welcome.”

His lecture, “The Campus Climate and the Washington Response: What Jewish Students Face on College Campuses and How the Government is Responding,” focused on the transition in government, Title VI investigations, congressional action, violations and lawsuits and the work of The Louis D. Brandeis Center, an independent,

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Married life can take back seat for many reasons

REGINA BRETT

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The headline in The Wall Street Journal gave me a jolt: “American Women Are Giving Up on Marriage.”

Really?
Apparently, American women are embracing the single life like never before. More women are going to college, buying houses and focusing on friendships and careers. Dating and marriage are taking a back seat.

The article said: “A 2022 Pew survey of single adults showed only 34% of single women were looking for romance, compared with 54% of single men, down from 38% and 61% in 2019. Men were also more likely than women to say they were worried that nobody would want to date them.”

That means women get to be choosy. And they should be choosy.

Before you marry, choose you first. Know what makes you happy. Create a life you love as a single person so that anyone attracted to your light wants to share in your joy to enhance it, not diminish it.

Do not compromise on joy. As poet Mary Oliver wrote, “Joy is not a crumb. You deserve the whole cake, a la mode.”

Being married isn’t a requirement for a fulfilling life, but it’s a wonderful option to consider. Being single is a great choice. So is marriage. The benefits are endless, and I say this as I come to the end of a 28-year-marriage. It’s sad to see it end, but I’m so grateful that I was married and for so long. I learned so much, loved so much and grew so much.

So why marry?
Your joys are doubled because they’re shared. You have a witness to your life. You wake up with someone and go to bed with someone, and in between, they know you’re out for a walk or staying late at work or having a rough day.

You have a partner for life or at least a big part of your life.

You gain financial flexibility. If you buy a house, you split the cost, the taxes and the insurance. You share health insurance. You land in a better tax bracket filing jointly.

You can divide and conquer. You aren’t alone taking on the ants in the kitchen, the mice in the attic, the relatives descending upon your house for a long weekend.

If you marry your best friend, you have a guardrail to protect you from scams, a next of kin emergency medical contact and an emotional support person.

Every night feels like a sleepover with your best friend.

You share meals and split chores. You cut sorrows and problems in half.

You become part of a we, no longer a me. Compromise helps you grow and constantly recalibrate, How important is this really?

You get to grow and expand family traditions. No more dating drama. No more pressure to create the right profile or go the right bar or find the right dating app.

You expand your list of friends to include each other’s.

You have a safe harbor where you feel anchored and moored.

You live with a human back scratcher, someone to zip your dress or straighten your tie or tell you those slacks are way too short. You can let your guard down and forget to shave.

Someone celebrates you when you are at your best and forgives you when you are at your worst.

When you get sick, there is someone to bring you the ginger ale with a bendy straw, to drive you to and from the medical tests, to hold your hand when you get the results, to celebrate crossing the finish line to good health again.

You have your own personal rescue 911 when you get a flat tire, get skipped over for a promotion, need someone to hold a ladder or figure out the remote.

You have another driver on long road trips so you can sleep part of the way. You get better photos because they aren’t all selfies.

There is someone to wipe your tears, hug you whole, snuggle and spoon with and warm your cold feet.

Your heart has a place to land at the end of each day, and maybe at the end of your lives. You carry each other’s heart in your heart for the long haul, no matter how long that lasts.

And no matter how it ends, you’ll know it was a grand adventure you will be forever grateful that you took to become the person you became together and alone.

Connect with Regina on Facebook at ReginaBrettFans and sign up for her weekly newsletter at reginabrett.com. To read more from her, visit cjn.org/regina. Regina was named 2023 Best Columnist by Ohio Associated Press Media Editors on July 21, 2024.



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CHARGES | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and U.S Attorney David M. Toepfer are representing the United States of America in the case titled “United States of America v. Senders.”

Toepfer told the CJN on March 26 that he could not comment on the case and details as it is still pending. Arraignment dates have not yet been set.

On Sept. 22, 2020, Tibor’s Kosher Meats in University Heights, houses in Beachwood, Moreland Hills and University Heights were raided under federal search warrants, the CJN previously reported.

One of the houses searched was at 14393 Washington Blvd. in University Heights, and owned by Toni Dee and Cary Senders, the CJN reported. Their son, Ilan Senders, who along with Eyton Senders own Tibor’s, lived at the residence.

Law enforcement officials carried out at least two boxes and wheeled a suitcase from the University Heights house, the CJN reported. Law enforcement was also heard using a tool that is used to break open walls, floors or doors, the CJN reported.

Another house, owned by Jason and Rachel Zuchowski, at

2543 S. Green Road in Beachwood was also searched, the CJN reported. Rachel is the daughter of Toni Dee and Cary Senders, and the sister of Ilan Senders.

Another home owned by the Zuchowskis at 2560 Larchmont Road in Beachwood was also searched and a canine unit was used, the CJN reported.

At Tibor’s, at 2185 S. Green Road, there were at least six law enforcement vehicles, including two with Maryland license plates, and several law enforcement agents present the afternoon of Sept. 22, 2020. Homeland Security Investigations of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was present as well. A box and bag were taken from the shop at about 1 p.m., the CJN reported.

In a previous interview with the CJN on Sept. 23, 2020, Ilan Senders, said, “We’re doing beautiful. We’re open for business as usual and we’re going to continue to be open for business as usual.”

When asked questions specifically about the raid on his business, Ilan Senders said, “I’m not answering any other questions like that,” the CJN reported.

The CJN reported in March 2021, a U.S. Attorney’s Office was attempting to seize \$2,197,323 in cash, houses, gold, a boat, a sports car, watches and other assets following the raids on Sept. 22. Six properties were on the list – including four homes in Greater Cleveland and two properties in Los Angeles, Calif. – along with a vacant parcel on South Green Road, a 1996 Porsche 911, a 2019 Nautique G25 Boat with trailer, a Patek Philippe Rose men’s wristwatch, three Rolex men’s wristwatches, and a 1 Metalor kilogram gold bar.

A 40-page complaint dated Feb. 17, 2021, seeking civil forfeiture, described a pattern of activity in which Dank Vapes and Dankwoods – which manufacture and distribute THC cartridges in California – funnel funds through Tibor’s Kosher Meats, the CJN reported.

THC is the compound that produces the high from marijuana.

“The Major Crimes Task Force is conducting an investigation of Eyton Senders and Justen Balay and others who have been involved in an interstate drug trafficking and money laundering operation,” DeBaggis wrote in his complaint seeking civil forfeiture, the CJN reported. “Tibor’s is another entity in which (Eyton) Senders is using to launder his illicit drug proceeds. This business, similar to other businesses listed in this affidavit, allows Senders a place to legitimize his ill-gotten gains.”

DeBaggis wrote that Senders, Balay and others manufactured and distributed more than 3.7 million THC vape cartridges from California to various other states, including the Northern District of Ohio, from July 2018 through July 2019.

DeBaggis continued to write that as Senders “emerged as a partner,” he and another relative established a Fifth Third Bank personal checking account and listed their occupations as co-owners or a butcher for Tibor, the CJN reported. As they set up bank accounts to launder money, Senders and Balay repeatedly listed their address where Ilan Senders lived with his parents in University Heights.



▲ An agent carries a clear plastic bag with items from Tibor’s Kosher Meats during the execution of a federal search warrant on Sept. 22, 2020. Faces of law enforcement officers have been blurred intentionally. | CJN Photo

The CJN reported that DeBaggis said the search of that home “revealed various amounts of suspected marijuana, THC vape cartridges, THC edibles in a clear vacuum sealed pouch, (two) loaded handguns, and financial records and documents for Tibor’s Kosher Meats.”

Tibor Rosenberg, who owned the store for about 30 years, sold Tibor’s Kosher Meats to Ilan Senders of the Sendies Boys Limited LLC, which was established June 17, 2019, for an undisclosed amount, which went through on Sept. 9, 2019, the CJN previously reported. A trade name assignment was executed on Sept. 11, 2019, the CJN previously reported.

Among the deposits into an account was a \$100,000 deposit on Sept. 9, 2019, from “one of the third party money launderers used by Dank Vapes DTO in their illegal enterprise,” DeBaggis wrote, the CJN reported. “This correlates with the purchase date of Tibor’s Kosher Meats.”

When Rosenberg decided to sell the shop and his name, he did not know one of the new owners was engaged in an alleged multi-million-dollar drug trade operation in California, he previously told the CJN.

Rosenberg previously told the CJN he sold the business because his daughters were not interested in taking over the butcher shop.

Ilan Senders was working at the shop for two years before taking over as part owner.

Ilan Senders told the CJN, at the time that he planned to make one immediate change – opening the store until midnight on Thursdays to serve freshly made kugel and cholent. He also said he was planning to raise the presence of the business on the internet and in social media, the CJN reported.



▲ A law enforcement officer wheels a case out of a house on Washington Boulevard in University Heights on Sept. 22, 2020. | CJN Photo / Bob Jacob

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▲ Susan R. Borison, community relations committee chair, delivers the State of the Community Relations Committee address to 150 attendees. | CJN Photos / Abigail Preiszig



▲ Sarah Deitsch, program director at Schottenstein Chabad House at The Ohio State University in Columbus, says “the fight for Israel and the fight for Judaism will only be won with Jewish education” during the panel discussion.



▲ Maira Ligo-Pineda, a senior at Kent State University and student board president of Hillel at Kent State University, says immediately after Oct. 7, 2023, she hid her Jewish identity for safety, however, in recent months, she and several other students have become very open about their Zionism and Judaism.



▲ Rabbi Davey Rosen, CEO of Michigan Hillel in Ann Arbor, says this school year has been “much better,” but it took a couple of students filing with the Department of Education’s Office for Civil Rights before the university agreed to enforce protest and encampment policies.

CRC | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

unaffiliated, nonprofit corporation established to advance the civil and human rights of the Jewish people and promote justice for all in Washington, D.C.

It was followed by a panel of university representatives who shared their respective experiences on campus: Sarah Deitsch, program director at Schottenstein Chabad House at The Ohio State University in Columbus; Maira Ligo-Pineda, a senior at Kent State University and student board president of Hillel at Kent State University; and Rabbi Davey Rosen, CEO of Michigan Hillel in Ann Arbor.

Susan R. Borison, community relations committee chair, delivered the State of the

Community Relations Committee address.

She shared her personal experience with the committee, the heart of its work and the changes it made after Oct. 7, 2023, including the creations of interfaith and intergroup subcommittees.

“CRC work has always been important, but Oct. 7 dramatically increased the volume of work and highlighted the value of strong community relationships,” Borison said. “In the midst of insurmountable needs, we took a step back to reimagine CRC.”

Aaron Evenchik, event co-chair, introduced Marcus and delivered the closing remarks while Anna Novik, event co-chair, paid tribute to Sidney Z. Vincent, former executive director of the Federation and former director of community relations.

Marcus began and ended his lecture referencing two statements made by Sen. Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-New York, during a March 2025 interview with The New York Times: “Oct. 7 changed everything” and that the year 1950 was “a golden age for Jews in America and would be for 50 years.”

He said the statements are true, but “mutually incompatible.”

“If the ‘golden age’ ended around the year 2000, how could everything change on Oct. 7, 2023? And I think that what changed is the world as we perceive it, the world as we experience it,” Marcus said. “... If it truly took 23 and a half years to realize that we were no longer in a ‘golden age,’ as Sen. Schumer’s two comments suggested, it

might be that when we get into a golden age, it will take a little while to realize that as well.

“My point of view is that right now in a lot of ways things might look gloomy, things might look bad, but we do have a number of different areas in which we are making significant success. ... There is every possibility that when we look back at the year 2025, we will say that was an ugly time, but it was a time when things turned around thanks to people who got together to make change.”

Publisher’s note: Aaron Evenchik is a member of the Cleveland Jewish News Foundation Board of Directors.



▲ Anna Novik, event co-chair, pays tribute to Sidney Z. Vincent, former executive director of the Federation and director of community relations.



▲ Aaron Evenchik, event co-chair, introduces Kenneth L. Marcus.



▲ Kenneth L. Marcus, left, moderates a panel with university representatives Sarah Deitsch, Maira Ligo-Pineda and Rabbi Davey Rosen sharing their respective experiences on campus.

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'ISRAEL AT WAR'

Protests erupt in Gaza as Palestinians demand Hamas step down; Netanyahu says 'proof our policy is working'

JOSHUA MARKS | JNS

Hundreds of Palestinians staged protests in northern Gaza on March 25, notably in Beit Lahia and Jabalia, demanding an end to the ongoing conflict with Israel and calling for Hamas to relinquish control of the territory.

Demonstrators chanted slogans such as "Hamas out" and carried banners reading "Stop the war" and "We want to live in peace."

The protests, among the most significant against Hamas since the war began, were reportedly organized through social media platforms. Eyewitnesses noted that Hamas security forces attempted to disperse the gatherings, with reports of forceful interventions.

The demonstrations reflect growing frustration among Gaza's residents over deteriorating living conditions and the prolonged conflict with Israel. Criticism of Hamas' governance has intensified, particularly concerning its handling of the war and the economic hardships faced by the population.

The protests are proof that Israel's approach to the terrorist organization is working, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu declared on March 26.

"In recent days, we have seen something we have never seen before – public protests against Hamas rule in Gaza," the premier said during a 40-signature debate, which the opposition can call once a month and which he is obliged to attend. "This shows that our policy is working."

Following the collapse of a ceasefire in mid-March, Israel retook the Netzarim Corridor, a key route dividing northern and southern Gaza, to pressure Hamas to release hostages and curb terrorist activity.

In January, Israel briefly allowed displaced Palestinians to return to northern Gaza but halted entries on Jan. 26, citing Hamas ceasefire violations. Amid renewed fighting and rocket attacks, Israel expanded evacuation orders on Tuesday, preventing large-scale civilian returns.

Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz on March 25 approved the Israel Defense Forces'

operational plans to continue military actions against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

"Our main goal is to bring the hostages home," Katz stated. "If Hamas continues to refuse a deal, it will pay an increasingly heavy price. We will take territory, eliminate terrorist operatives and destroy infrastructure until Hamas is completely defeated."

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Eyal Zamir has called for an escalation against the Hamas terrorist group.

"Hamas is stalling for time – this is a strategy, not just a tactic," Zamir said in security discussions, according to a Channel 12 News report on March 24. "The IDF's actions are hurting them and causing instability, but they are not leading to the release of hostages. Therefore, we have no choice – we must increase the pressure."

Israeli political and military leaders are considering plans for a fresh ground campaign in Gaza that could include a military occupation of the entire enclave for months or longer,

according to The Washington Post.

Current and former Israeli officials briefed on the matter told the Post that the new tactics would likely include direct military control of humanitarian aid, targeting Hamas' civilian leadership and evacuating women, children and vetted noncombatants to "humanitarian bubbles" while laying siege to those who remain.

Israeli officials emphasized to the Post that Jerusalem is still waiting for the outcome of ceasefire talks and no decisions have been made on whether – or how – to escalate the current phase of the offensive, which has so far consisted mostly of aerial bombardment, with limited ground maneuvers.

The IDF announced on March 22 that it has expanded military operations in both northern and southern Gaza, including the encirclement of Tel al-Sultan in Rafah and an offensive in Beit Hanun – targeting Hamas terrorists and infrastructure and widening the security buffer zones.

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Three rockets fired from Gaza in two separate attacks on southern Israel

JNS

Terrorist forces in the Gaza Strip launched three rockets into southern Israel in two separate attacks on March 26, according to the Israel Defense Forces.

On March 26 in the morning, two rockets were fired. One of the projectiles was intercepted, while the other fell in the Zimrat area. There were no immediate reports of injuries or damage.

The al-Quds Brigades, the armed wing of Palestinian Islamic Jihad, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Following the attack, the IDF issued an urgent evacuation warning for parts of Gaza City.

In a post on X, IDF Arabic-language spokesman Col. Avichay Adraee shared a map of the affected areas, calling the notice a "final warning" before imminent airstrikes. The evacuation order applied to the neighborhoods of Zeitoun, Tel al-Hawa, Sheikh Ijlin and surrounding areas.

Residents were instructed to leave immediately via Al-Rashid Street and move south of Wadi Gaza to designated shelters. The IDF said that rockets were launched from within civilian areas and that it had previously warned residents multiple times.

On March 26 in the evening, the IDF announced that an interceptor was launched at one projectile that "crossed into the south of the country from the northern Gaza Strip."

"The results of the interception are being examined," added the military.

On March 24 in the evening, the IDF intercepted three rockets fired from Gaza. Islamic Jihad also claimed responsibility for that attack.



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▲ Dr. Stephen Parker, from left, Rabbi Eli Dessler, financial director at the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, and Peter and Susie Meisel at the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland's 82nd Scholarship Tribute Dinner on March 23 at the Cleveland Museum of Art. | Photos / New Image Photography



▲ Erika B. Rudin-Luria, president of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, from left, Gary L. Gross, past board chair of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, Rabbi Eli Dessler, financial director at the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, Rabbi Simcha Dessler, menahel/educational director at Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, Jeffrey J. Wild, recipient of the Mendy Klein Community Service Award, and Dr. Louis Malcmacher, president of the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland.

Hebrew Academy of Cleveland gala raises nearly \$2.5M

KIRSTEN BEARD
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Over 900 people attended the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland's 82nd Scholarship Tribute Dinner on March 23 at the Cleveland Museum of Art. The dinner was in tribute to Dr. Michael (Moshe) and Sydney Harris, while Jeffrey J. Wild received the Mendy Klein

Community Service Award and the event was in memory of Mel Waxman. "As we celebrate exponential growth and remarkable achievement, tonight we have gathered to say thank you," Rabbi Simcha Dessler, menahel/educational director at Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, said at the event. "This amazing event tonight perhaps exemplifies the fulfillment of the vision of our founders. Those who dared to dream on the

ashes of the Holocaust some 82 years ago. ... The academy today, is an anchor of our community, is a bastion of Torah, and is a national leader in Torah Chinuch in America. ..." The event also marked the completion of its scholarship campaign, which raised \$2,495,214 with over 900 contributors, Dr. Louis Malcmacher, president of the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, said at the event. The campaign allows the academy to educate its 1,530 students across its three campuses in Cleveland Heights and Beachwood regardless of their parent's financial constraints, the CJN previously reported. Malcmacher also gave opening remarks and thanked academy partners. Jeffrey J. Wild, a firm administrative partner, chief strategy partner, executive committee member and chair of the real estate practice group at Benesch Friedlander Coplan & Aronoff LLP in Cleveland, received the Mendy Klein Community Service Award at the event. The award recognizes an outstanding individual or couple, the CJN previously reported.

GALA | CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

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▲ Erika B. Rudin-Luria, president of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland, and Stephen H. Hoffman, chairman of the Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel Foundation and former Federation president.

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▲ In a surprise presentation Rabbi Simcha Dessler, menahel/educational director at Hebrew Academy of Cleveland, recognizes Lois Mager, teacher and administrator of the Academy's Beatrice J. Stone Yavne High School in Beachwood, for four decades of service at the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland. | Photos / New Image Photography



▲ The Hebrew Academy boys' choir under the direction of Rabbi Shmuel Yaakov Mann performs at the event.

GALA | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Michael Harris is a board member and Sydney Harris is president of the PTA. They received framed art of a Jerusalem painting by an Israeli artist for outstanding dedication and achievements in the Cleveland Jewish community and beyond.

A surprise tribute to Lois Mager, teacher and administrator of the academy's Beatrice Stone Yavne High School in Beachwood for over 40 years, who will retire at the end of the school year was presented at the event by Dessler.

A memorial tribute for Mel Waxman, who died on

Oct. 24, 2024, at age 90, was also shown at the event. Waxman was a former president of the academy, the founder of the Cleveland Chabad community and Waxman Chabad Center in Beachwood, and CEO of Waxman Industries in Bedford Heights, the CJN previously reported. Waxman's son, Larry Waxman, accepted the tribute at the event.

As he presented the tribute, Dessler said above the front doors of academy's main campus on South Taylor Road in Cleveland Heights will now read, "Shaar Waxman, the Gates of Waxman, in everlasting memory of Mel and Marcia Waxman."

Academy staff Rabbi Nochum and Rena Sokol, and

Michele Weiss received tickets to Israel for 25 years of devoted service and Leah Drucker received a gift for 15 years of service.

Rabbi Naphtali Burnstein, spiritual leader of Young Israel of Greater Cleveland in Beachwood, led attendees in Psalms for the safe return of the hostages held in Gaza and those on the front lines.

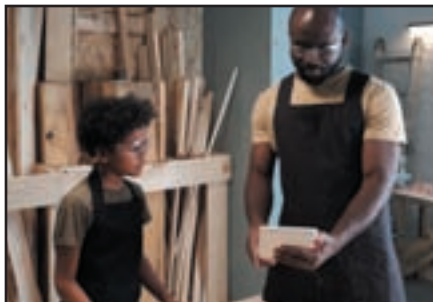
Malcacher also discussed the conflict during his remarks.

"It's hard to believe that we sit here from a year ago being at this dinner, and there's still hostages being held, there's still a war going on, and it's something that weighs heavily on our minds," Malcacher said. "And I just wanted to tell you that the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland is represented well by over 700 alumni living in Israel who are both on the spiritual front lines of learning Torah and on the physical front lines in the (Israeli Defense Forces) to protect the Jewish people."

At the event, video messages from Rabbi Elya Brundy of Vaad Hachinuch and the Jewish Federation of Cleveland were shown.

"The Jewish Federation of Cleveland is very proud of the

GALA | CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



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▲ Rabbi Moshe Marcovich, Rabbi Eli Dessler, Larry Waxman, Rabbi Simcha Dessler and Dr. Louis Malcacher hold a rendering of the South Taylor Road building in Cleveland Heights that will now read, "Shaar Waxman, the Gates of Waxman, in everlasting memory of Mel and Marcia Waxman."



▲ The Wild family in the audience of over 900 people at the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland's 82nd Scholarship Tribute Dinner on March 23. | Photos / New Image Photography



▲ Hebrew Academy of Cleveland president Dr. Louis and Chanie Malcmacher and Chany and Nati Klein.

GALA | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

work of the Hebrew Academy of Cleveland and very proud to be a strong, long-term partner,” Erika B. Rudin-Luria, president of the Federation, said in the Federation’s video message.

A special feature video, “Shaping Futures. Inspiring Excellence,” about HAC’s mission and legacy was also shown.

The event featured performances from the Hebrew Academy boys’ choir under the direction of Rabbi Shmuel Yaakov Mann and Yehuda Fleishman.

The 2025 to 2027 board of directors for the academy was approved at the event.

David Berkowitz from Florida won the \$10,000 raffle, which was chosen by third grader Avi Grodtko, the grandson of the Harrises. Rabbi Moshe Marcovich, director

of development at the academy, announced the winner.

“Tonight, we pledge to the community that we will continue to work tirelessly, shaping futures and inspiring excellence, to nurture a love of Yiddishkeit, to empower Talmidei Chachamim in B’Nos Yisrael, to polish your diamonds, to inspire your families and to build communities one Neshama at a time,” Dessler said.

 **To see more photos, visit cjm.org/clevelandheights**

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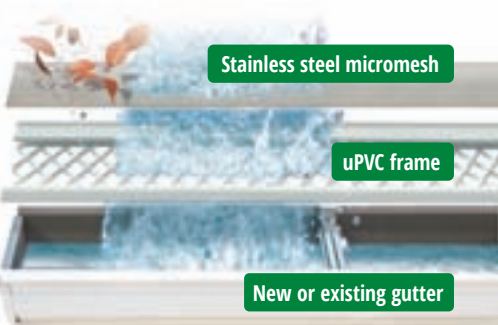
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FIDF Central Region snowbirds gather in Florida to hear ambassador

Over 175 Friends of the Israel Defense Forces supporters from the FIDF Central Region gathered on Feb. 23 in Delray Beach, Fla., to hear featured speaker, Amb. Ido Aharoni (Aronoff), Israeli diplomat, adviser to global companies and university lecturer, at its annual event for “snowbirds,” according to a news release.

“We are grateful to all of our supporters who came together for a meaningful event,” Lane Schlessel, executive director of the FIDF Ohio chapter, said in the release. “Our snowbird gathering has become very popular and something everyone looks forward to each year.”

The brunch of the FIDF Central Region –

made up of Ohio, Michigan and Illinois chapters – also featured Capt. Royi Sela, Israel’s naval attache to the U.S., who spoke to attendees about current threats to Israel and IDF soldiers who protect and preserve Israel, the release said.

“This event gives us an opportunity to see so many from Ohio during the winter and allows us to engage and prepare everyone towards our yearly events,” Kathy and Jeff Cohen, Ohio co-chairs, said in the release.

The Friends of the Israel Defense Forces is the only organization authorized by the IDF to raise funds for IDF soldiers.

Funding, within the requirements of the IDF’s Manpower Directorate, helps soldiers’ well-being by offering mental health services, providing emergency supplies and equipment, renovating and building facilities and funding other programs that help soldiers and families of fallen soldiers, according to the release.



▲ Maj. Gen. (res.) Nadav Padan, from left, FIDF national director; Sarah Perl, director of the FIDF Illinois chapter; Paula Lebowitz, director of the FIDF Michigan chapter; and Lane Schlessel, executive director of the FIDF Ohio chapter, attend the 2025 snowbird brunch on Feb. 23 in Delray Beach, Fla. | Submitted photos



▲ Amb. Ido Aharoni Aronoff speaks at the snowbird brunch.



▲ Jeff and Kathy Cohen, FIDF Ohio chapter co-chairs

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'Fauda' star's visit to benefit Israeli first responders

BILL MOTCHAN

A special appearance by Israeli actor and screenwriter Lior Raz will double as an opportunity for the Cleveland



Cohen

community to support Israeli first responders. Raz is the star and co-creator of the Israeli action-adventure TV series, "Fauda."

Raz will speak at 7:30 p.m. April 1 at Green Road Synagogue at 2437 S. Green Road in Beachwood.



Raz

He will participate in a discussion moderated by Jeffrey Wild, administrative partner and chief strategy partner at Benesch, Friedlander, Coplan & Arnoff in Cleveland.

The event was the developed by Green Road Synagogue congregants Mark Sack

and Avi Jacobs. They worked with Benny Schloss, the synagogue's executive director, to arrange the visit by Raz.

The goal of his appearance is to raise needed funds for Magen David Adom, Israel's primary provider of emergency medical services, and the 33,000 paramedics who provide life-saving treatment are in dire need of supplies, according to Darcee Cohen, executive director of American Friends of Magen David Adom in Cleveland.

"We're raising funds for medical supplies and anything that's needed," Cohen said. They're going through supplies so quickly right now because of the war. The numbers are way up, the amount of calls they go on. It's nearly doubled, so they're going through medical supplies much quicker and at a much faster pace than they did prior to the war."

Magen David Adom EMTs treat everything from heart attacks to motorists hurt in car accidents to women in labor.

"A lot of the babies in Israel are born in ambulances," Cohen said. "That's just the culture. They stay at home until the last minute."

In addition to emergency medical services, Magen David Adom, which was founded in 1930, serves as a blood bank for the entire country. The need for blood has also increased, and the need will only increase since the ceasefire with Hamas ended on March 18. The Israeli army and Magen David Adom work side-by-side as key components of the country's national security force.

In the aftermath of Hamas' surprise attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, Magen David Adom mobilized makeshift clinics in synagogues and parking lots to treat the wounded and provide transport service to hospitals.

Before his career in the entertainment industry, Raz was a soldier in the Israel Defense Forces soldier.

A VIP reception will begin at 6:15. Tickets for the program start at \$118 per person. To purchase tickets, visit shorturl.at/B1NLT.

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IDF Code of Ethics discussion to combat war criticism

STEVE MARK

Ever since the horrific events of Oct. 7, 2023, Congregation Mishkan Or Rabbi Yael Dadoun has heard the criticism of Israel and the Israeli Defense Forces, ad nauseam. She has also heard the bewilderment of congregants, sometimes unable to defend those same criticisms, she said.

"I think there's so much misinformation in the world at this time," Dadoun told the Cleveland Jewish News. "It's difficult for

much of my community to swallow, and they feel like they have to respond to things in a way that's very uncomfortable for them in ways that they're not used to. They're finding themselves having to respond to misinformation, which is even harder. As the faith leader I want my community to feel a sense of pride in their Jewishness and Israel, and having that connection is one of our pillars that feels compromised in this moment. We're here to help people with this complexity, and get a firsthand encounter with people who are familiar with this

situation."

In an effort to provide dialogue with those outside the congregational, Dadoun has enlisted the support of someone who has made it a point to study the tactics of the IDF, and where those fit in the world's military protocol.

At 5 p.m. March 30, Yakir Englander will share a stage with Dadoun to provide context, in a program "Ethics Under Fire: The IDF's Moral Code In Times of War," at Mishkan Or at 26000 Shaker Blvd. in Beachwood.

Englander is the senior national director of leadership at the Israeli-American Council, which is presenting the program in partnership with Congregation Mishkan Or. He studies the relationship between war and Jewish ethics, and knows intimately those who have established and monitor the IDF Code of Ethics.

"It's a really important event because I think that the war – which we are still in, right, we're not even in the post war era – brings a lot of questions," Englander told the CJN. "These sort of questions were not always asked before, not only by Americans, but in-side American Jewish communities. Now we have Instagram, and you don't need a journalist to bring the camera inside the world as a war story. Every person in Gaza has a phone. Every soldier has a phone. Everyone is involved on a totally different level, and there are a lot more questions being asked about what they see."

Englander is aware of the worldwide court of public opinion, and how the IDF – while defending Israel in the war against Hamas – has found itself a target.

"I think this event that we're going to have is a fascinating event for a few reasons," Englander said. "The main reason is to learn and think about the code of ethics of the IDF, and talk about how the Israeli army tries to be the best they can in terms of leading the world with sensitivity to ethics."

"We're going to really learn how the people who serve can bring different dilemmas and examples and to show how ethics comes into action. Every soldier has in their shirts the ethical code, what we call the spirit of ideas. It has many values printed, and a big chunk is about the purity of arms. The good thing is that when we go to a war, we go with set of values and ethics that are very clear, not because we know that a war is a mess. Naturally, it doesn't work all the time, and no one can try to pretend that there are no mistakes or even officers who choose to act differently. We're going to explore the foundations of the ethics



Amar



Dadoun



Englander



Kershner

and then to bring examples by people who serve."

No doubt, the IDF takes marching orders from Israeli leadership, and that in itself has brought different scales of ideology to any debate.

"This is an educational event and the event won't be about politics," Englander said. "We're not going to touch it. What is important about this event is the educational part, to give language to the Jewish community and to understand how to look at that."

Englander will be joined by Zevi Kershner, Sgt. First Class (res.) of the IDF Haredi Infantry Battalion, Alom Amar, Sgt. First Class (Res.) of the Mis-ta'Arvim-Border Police Undercover Unit, and Betzalel Hazen, Reserve Capt., paratroopers.

Dadoun hopes that the upcoming dialogue will fortify congregants and members of the Cleveland Jewish community, in the wake of the frequent criticism of Israel and the IDF.

"It isn't just the fact that Israel or the IDF is being attacked," she said. "What's more bewildering is that their Jewishness is being attacked masked in anti-Israel sentiment. To have stark opinions about very little knowledge or very little understanding, or looking at one segment of what's happening and taking it out of context, that is really the issue. It makes it impossible to thwart off because there's no desire for dialogue. Hopefully, we can combat that."

For more information, visit bit.ly/4l51NS9.



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Former skinhead has 'The Cure for Hate'

BILL MOTCHAN

Tony McAleer was once filled with hate. Now he devotes his life to combating it and preaching compassion.



McAleer

McAleer, 57, is a former skinhead who learned firsthand how racism and bigotry can consume an impressionable youth. He is a former organizer for the White Aryan Resistance. At one point, he was also a skinhead recruiter and manager of a racist rock band.

After disengaging from the that world, McAleer helped found an anti-hate activist group. He now advocates for love and understanding, and the author the book, "The Cure for Hate."

McAleer will share his message at Temple Israel Ner Tamid's monthly congregational shabbat dinner at 6:40 p.m. April 4, following services at 6 p.m. He will focus on effective and positive responses to racism and Holocaust deniers.

McAleer recently shared his thoughts with the Cleveland Jewish News about the rise of antisemitism and how his goal is to make the world a better place.

CJN: What is the solution for the alarming rise in antisemitism in the past several years?

McAleer: Some people are motivated by hate, some people are misinformed and are interpreting events in the world through different lenses, so ignorance is a part of it. If it's out of ignorance, education can be a response. If a person is motivated to vandalism or assaults or worse, then a different approach is needed.

CJN: Did you ever engage in antisemitic vandalism?

McAleer: I did. One of the very first antisemitic acts I ever did was to put a National Front (a British far-right fascist party) sticker on the front door of a synagogue in Vancouver. And 30 years later, I went into that synagogue and spoke to the congregation for an evening. It was a remarkable full circle event.

CJN: How did it come about for you to make amends there?

McAleer: I've spoken at synagogues in a lot of places, but never in Vancouver. I was talking to a Jewish friend, and he said, 'I don't know what any good Jew does when he

"I wouldn't be here talking to you today about compassion, about these other things, without having taken that journey..."

Tony McAleer

meets a former neo-Nazi, but you've got to talk to my rabbi.' He arranged the meeting. His rabbi was actually at the synagogue where I put that sticker.

CJN: In your work, are you trying to advance the Jewish value of tikkun olam?

McAleer: Sure, heal the world. I deeply regret that I did those things and that those people were harmed. I wouldn't be here talking to you today about compassion, about these other things, without having taken that journey through the dark woods, without having gone to that place. I'm doing more good in the world now than I was doing evil then. And from that macro perspective, it's all part of the greater good.

CJN: There's a Yiddish phrase – bashert – which means it was meant to be. Do you ever consider that you wouldn't be doing the positive work you do now if you hadn't started out on a much different path?

McAleer: One counselor had a very transformative effect on me. I opened up to him about my past and he smiled. I was baring my soul, and he started laughing and I couldn't figure out why. He had a cheshire-cat grin and said, 'You know, I'm Jewish, right?' My cheeks flushed with shame, knowing that I had once advocated for the annihilation of him and his people. He told me, 'Tony, that's what you did, that's not who you are.' And that began a journey of a thousand hours of one-on-one and group counseling. I wouldn't be doing the work I do today if it wasn't for him. I would still be hiding from my past instead of repairing my past, repairing the world. I often say G-d has a sense of humor, like when he made my counselor Jewish.

The event is free to congregants and prospective members. The temple is at 1732 Lander Road in Mayfield Heights. Deadline to RSVP is April 2. To RSVP, call 440-473-5120.

Bill Motchan is a freelance journalist.

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Luz House CLE to hold events leading up to Passover program

The Luz House CLE will host several programs before its Passover recognition event.

With the goal of bringing singles together and creating friendships, The Luz House CLE is a specific community for Jewish singles 45 years and older, according to a news release.

Upcoming events include a Social Shabbat dinner on March 28 at the South Euclid Community Center at 1370 Victory Drive, a March 30 Speed Friending event at the South Euclid-Lyndhurst branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library at 1876 S. Green Road in South Euclid and a Shabbat and Passover Recognition on April 12 at the South Euclid Community Center.

“Introductions and opportunity for no pressure socializing are primary focuses,” Jennifer Gale, The Luz House CLE founder, said in a news release. “Participants do not have to consider themselves religious to participate. Participants should seek relevant, updated, and a unique path to connection within a Jewish singles community.”

Shabbat socials are all about food and sharing a common experience, with vegetarian-based foods served alongside dessert and challah, according to the release. Speed Friending will consist of group conversation, a topic or questions for discussion and formatted individual meet and greets.

“As Passover approaches, The Luz House CLE hopes by hosting both a Shabbat dinner and a Friending event beforehand any apprehension toward attending its April 12 event will be reduced because the awkwardness of attending a meal by oneself isn’t the case anymore,” Gale said. “When a single individual decides to attend the Shabbat dinner and the Speed Friending event, he or she will have already had brief conversations with other participants. Therefore, the individual is no longer attending a future event ‘alone.’”

On April 12, the conclusion of Shabbat and Passover can be recognized with others because The Luz House CLE will provide a venue for people to gather, according to the release. Although the organization is designed for singles, this is a special event that will be inclusive of everyone that desires a seat at the table, the release said.

“Even with minimal religious background or current practice, spending the Passover nights by yourself is challenging,” Gale said. “The entire Passover story is framed around family, community, and the bonds with others. Individuals were not redeemed in the Passover story – an entire community was.”

The Luz House CLE believes a Jew is a Jew and strives to create meaningful inclusive connections through educational, religious and social experiences and its goals are for those to reconnect to Judaism outside the synagogue arena, initiating strong friendships, creating compatible dating possibilities, or establishing lifelong Jewish support, according to the release.

For more information, visit theluzhouses.com, email jennifer@theluzhouses.com or call or text 602-541-4410.

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Meijer to open in Richmond Heights May 8

Meijer announced its new Richmond Heights location will open May 8. Along with the Richmond Heights location, Meijer will open stores in Medina and Austintown on the same day.

The 159,000-square-foot locations will offer bakery, meat and deli departments; a floral area and garden center; a full-service pharmacy; apparel and home goods sections and more, according to a news release.

“We’re investing heavily to serve the Northeast Ohio community and consistently receiving positive feedback about our value and convenience,” Todd Anderson, vice president of the Ohio region for Meijer, said in the release. “Ohio was the first state we expanded to outside of Michigan, and we look forward to continuing that growth this year and into the future.”

Some part-time and full-time positions are still available for candidates with customer services skills, the release said. The company employs over 13,000 people across Ohio in its stores and distribution and manufacturing facilities.

Meijer has locations in Avon, Brimfield, Brunswick, Lorain, Mentor, Seven Hills, Stow and Wooster.

Treadmills, agility courses part of Canine Care offerings

AVA FUDURIC

Sam Jessel began his journey as a professional dog trainer after spending three years as a commander in the



Jessel

Israel Defense Forces K-9 unit, where he specialized in training bomb-sniffing dogs. In his unit, called Oketz, meaning “sting” in Hebrew, Jessel began with basic training. After 1½ years, he advanced to combat soldier training. Partnered with his dog, Paudy, he later

became a commander, gaining experience both in combat and in leading his unit.

Since then, the Beachwood resident has accumulated over 10 years of experience in dog training, including running his previous business, “Commander Paw,” in New York City. His passion for working with dogs, which began in childhood, was reinforced through his military service, his business and his personal life. He met his wife Jordyn about six years later.

“It all came through the army, and then after the army, we got Chloe, our cockapoo,” Sam Jessel told the Cleveland Jewish News. “And we are here now on our journey to open up our new facility.”

Now, co-founders Sam and Jordyn Jessel are opening their new dog care business, K-11 Canine Care, offering daycare, boarding, training, fitness and bathing services.

“We had this idea,” Jordyn Jessel told the CJN. “Sam, with his background of dog

training, and my business background, we wanted to build something of our own.”

K-11 is short for Kelevn, derived from the Hebrew word kelev, meaning dog. According to Jordyn Jessel, the company is based on 11 founding principles and the name reflects both their business goals and its Hebrew roots.

The dog care facility offers training programs alongside fitness activities, including treadmills and agility courses. In addition to physical exercise, they emphasize the importance of mental stimulation, setting them apart from other programs.

“We are prioritizing mental stimulation for all the dogs at our facility,” Jordyn Jessel said. “Not just physical exercise.”

Situated on over 1 acre, the facility provides space for dogs to run and play. Dogs are only in their suites when sleeping or eating, ensuring they have ample freedom throughout the day. The layout also allows the couple to offer training services, which many daycares and boarding centers do not include, the said.

“Our facility is different from a lot of boarding facilities, where we prioritize open space and exercise,” Sam Jessel said. “Dogs will only be in their suites when they are sleeping or eating.”

K-11 Canine Care is at 4501 Taylor Lane in Warrensville Heights.

K-11 Canine Care will hold a grand opening event where prospective customers can view the facility on March 30. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/3s7j5u5r.

Ava Fuduric is a freelance journalist.



▲ A rendering of what Canine Care in Warrensville looks like. | Submitted rendering



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Innovation Center highlight of Solon library expansion

KIRSTEN BEARD

✉ kbeard@cjn.org

About 100 people attended the Solon branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library's ribbon cutting ceremony marking the completion of its 4,000-square-foot expansion on March 20 at 34125 Portz Parkway.

"With this strategic expansion, we feel strongly that Cuyahoga County Public Library is meeting the needs of the community by increasing accessibility of library services and creating exciting new workforce development opportunities in the county," Tracy Strobel, Cuyahoga County Public Library CEO, said during the event's opening remarks.

The project broke ground in May 2024 and features the Innovation Center in collaboration with Swagelok, collaborative space and seating, classroom and meeting room space, supported by the Friends of the Solon Library group, group study rooms with computers and virtual meeting capabilities, and a full-service drive-up window, according to a news release. The expansion also included an upgraded heating,

ventilation and air conditioning system, according to previous CJN reporting.

Strobel said Solon has the largest and most advanced innovation center in the CCPL system. Other branches that offer innovation centers and makers spaces include Cuyahoga County Public Library Bay Village, Brooklyn, Fairview Park, Garfield Heights, Mayfield, Parma-Snow and Warrensville Heights.

Hannah Delis, chief human resources officer at Swagelok, said at the event Swagelok is "honored to be a partner with CCPL in bringing this Innovation Center to the residents of Solon and to the broader community as well."

"The future of manufacturing in Solon is very bright, and we certainly look at this Innovation Center as playing a key role in shaping that future," Delis said.

The equipment offered in the center includes a vacuum former, which is used to shape plastic materials; a computer numerical controlled water jet cutter, meaning the water jet is controlled by computer programming; a robotic arm; a

LIBRARY | CONTINUED ON PAGE 23



▲ Sen. Jerry Cirino, who serves Ohio Senate District 18; Ohio state Rep. Phillip Robinson, Jr.; Solon Mayor Eddy Kraus; Tracy Strobel, Cuyahoga County Public Library CEO; Hannah Delis, chief human resources officer at Swagelok; Allyn Davies, president of the Cuyahoga County Public Library board of the trustees; Darlene Davis, branch manager of the Solon branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library; Robert Schleper, District 6 Cuyahoga County Council; and Jeffery Mori, chief operations officer of the Cuyahoga County Public Library, cut the ribbon marking the completion of the Solon branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library's 4,000-square-foot expansion on March 20 at 34125 Portz Parkway in Solon. | CJN Photo / Kirsten Beard

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▲ Tracy Strobel, Cuyahoga County Public Library CEO, gives opening remarks and reading a proclamation sent by Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine at the event. | CJN Photos / Kirsten Beard



▲ Hannah Delis, chief human resources officer at Swagelok and trustees board chair of the Swagelok Foundation offers remarks on behalf of Swagelok at the event.

LIBRARY | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

laser engraver; sublimation heat press; a large format inkjet printer; virtual reality headset; and a 3D printer, the release said.

Strobel also read a proclamation sent by Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine during her remarks.

“On behalf of the state of Ohio, I congratulate Cuyahoga County Public Library’s Solon branch expansion, including the Innovation Center, in collaboration with Swagelok,” Strobel said, reading the proclamation. “I commend you for serving the needs of your community by providing a space to educate students about careers in smart manufacturing and access to design software, equipment, and training that supports regional workforce development in Cuyahoga County. Thank you for your investment and contribution. I extend my best wishes for many more years of continued success.”

The \$6.5 million expansion financial support has come from the city of Solon, the Swagelok Foundation, Burton D. Morgan Foundation, the Friends of the Solon Library, the CCPL Foundation, and local and federal funding through former Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown and former Cuyahoga County Council member Jack Schron, according to the release.

The architecture firm of CBLH Design in Middleburg Heights envisioned the project, and Infinity Construction Co. Inc in Warrensville Heights undertook the construction, the release said.

Ribbon-cutting participants included Strobel; Delis; Solon Mayor Eddy Kraus; Sen. Jerry Cirino, who serves Ohio Senate District 18; Ohio state Rep. Phillip Robinson Jr.; Robert Schleper, District 6 Cuyahoga County councilmember; Allyn Davies president of the Cuyahoga County Public Library board of the trustees; Darlene Davis, branch manager of the Solon branch of the Cuyahoga County Public Library; and Jeffery Mori, chief operations officer of the Cuyahoga County Public Library. Cirino, Robinson, Schleper and Kraus also gave remarks at the event on behalf of the expansion.

“Innovation is what Solon is all about,” Kraus said at the event. “It’s part of our DNA ... This innovation center will harness all of that and so much more. Think about our

Solon students who come across right from Solon High School, from the middle school, from Orchard, from all these schools around here to come to this innovation center and to learn, study, meet and strategize in an innovative place and a platform...Today is about endless possibilities and opportunities for all.”

The ceremony was followed by a reception, which allowed members of the public to explore the new space and learn more about the Innovation Center in collaboration with Swagelok.

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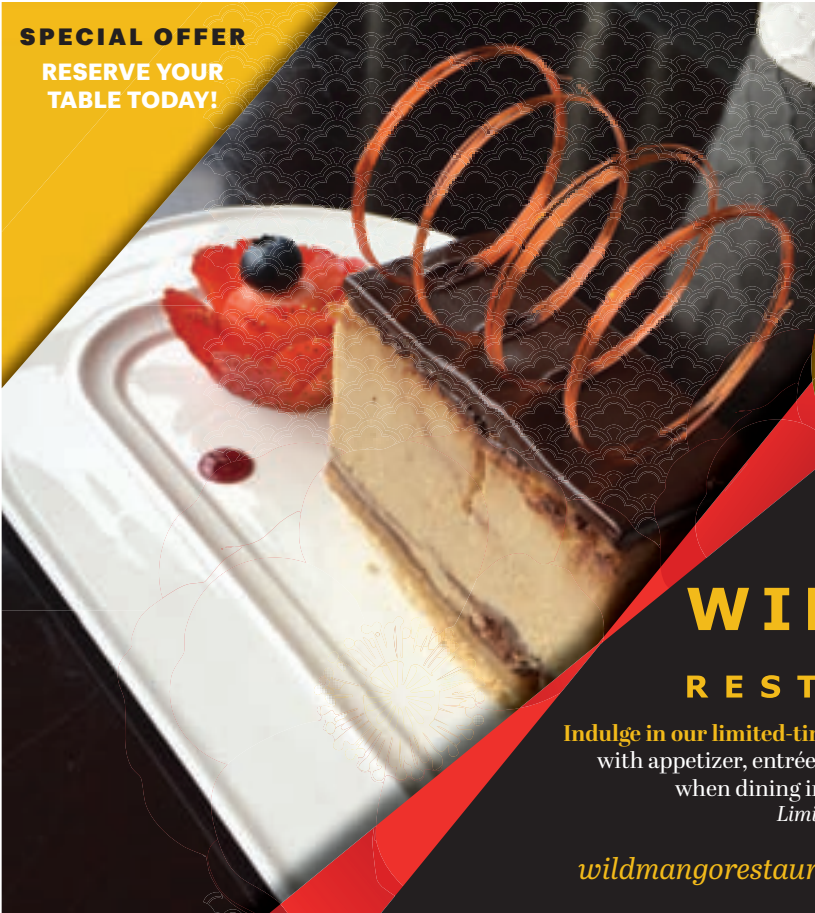


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SHERI GROSS

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'Twelfth Night' offers something for everyone

"If music be the food of love, play on" is one of many quotable lines in William Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" on stage at Great Lakes Theater. And in the spirit of the message that music can elicit some powerful emotions, it seems fitting to quote lyrics from a classic Israeli song by singer-songwriter Naomi Shemer, "Al Kol Eleh," or "For All These Things."

*"For the honey and the (bee) stinger,
For the bitter and sweet ...
For all these things
Please watch over them for me ..."*

It is a song about conflicting emotions, emphasizing that without darkness, there can be no light; without the bitter, we cannot truly appreciate the sweet.

"Twelfth Night," is a play that recognizes that many things can be true at once, and that love and loss, happiness and heartbreak, and in fact comedy and tragedy, can be intertwined. So it makes sense that as you watch this farce, you might feel like you are being served a cocktail that is a combination of a tragic romance, and an episode of "Three's Company."

If there were a curtain, it would rise on Viola (Grayson Heyl) who is shipwrecked in Illyria. Fearing her twin brother Sebastian (Nic Scott Hermick) is dead, she disguises herself as a man, 'Cesario,' and enters Duke Orsino's (Jeremy Gallardo) service. Orsino is enamored with Lady Olivia (Angela Utrera), who is also mourning her brother. He sends 'Cesario' to woo her on his behalf, unaware that Viola has actually fallen for him. However, Olivia falls in love with 'Cesario' instead.

Olivia's household is in turmoil as her uncle, Sir Toby (Dar'Jon Marquis Bentley), and his companions, Maria (Jessie Cope Miller) and Sir Andrew (James Alexander Rankin), hatch a plan to trick the pompous steward Malvolio (Joe Wegner) into believing Olivia loves him. Maria forges a love letter from Olivia that encourages Malvolio to perform a series of ridiculous behaviors, hoping it will ultimately lead to Olivia kicking him to the curb.

Meanwhile, Sebastian, alive and mistaken for 'Cesario,' unknowingly accepts Olivia's marriage proposal. Chaos ensues until the twins reunite, revealing Viola's true identity. In the end, Viola weds Orsino, Olivia remains with Sebastian, and they all find sweet happiness ... except Malvolio who exits the stage with a bitter taste for revenge.

If you are scratching your head, you aren't the only one. But while the story is bumpy, the production is smooth as silk, no doubt a result of director Sara Bruner's deep understanding of the paradoxes that Shakespeare means to highlight. Adding to the vibe is Courtney O'Neill's nautical set, which is simplistic, but paired with Rick Martin's lighting, lends itself to intense moments like characters being washing ashore, to playful moments like having one too many drinks by the sea.

But it is the talented cast that keeps our attention as we ride the waves of the many themes of "Twelfth Night;" themes that include the question of appearance versus reality, the foolishness of ambition, genderbending and all kinds of love.

Heyl, as Viola/Cesario, shows off her versatility as an

actor as she manages to reveal Viola's vulnerability while masquerading as a confident Cesario. Utrera is a standout as Countess Olivia, as she swoons over 'Cesario,' capturing the charm, the melodrama and the humor.

Wegner is a scene stealer as Malvolio, perfectly portraying the stiff-neckedness of his uptight character, but leaning into his still stuffy but slapstick side as he follows the fake love letter's directives. As his character says, "Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them." In his case, what is "thrust upon him" are some great, memorable yellow stockings.

Gallardo is perfectly charismatic as Duke Orsino. Bentley, Cope Miller, and Rankin have comedic chemistry as the mischievous masterminds of the plot to humiliate Malvolio. Bentley and Rankin revel in the humor, and Cope Miller adds a mix of sass and warmth allowing us to connect to her character.

Hermick adds another layer of fun as Sebastian, while also delivering the tender reunion we anticipate, and Evan Stevens gives a solid performance as the sea captain, Antonio.

Theo Allyn has the awesome responsibility of being the jokester, crooner, commentator and liaison as they take on the role of Feste, the fool. Allyn delighted audiences in Dobama Theatre's 2023 production of "Little Women," and they do not disappoint in this lofty role. Their voice is equal parts lovely and haunting as they guide not only the characters through their moral dilemmas, but they guide the audience to understand what to feel.

If you have not recently read "Twelfth Night," you will want to skim a detailed synopsis to keep up with the storyline. Even though the actors spout the prose as if it rolls off the tongue, the fast paced language is difficult to understand at first. It may take some time for your ears to get used to it.

That being said, in terms of the general pace of the show, the first act is surprisingly a bit slow, which doesn't seem to be the fault of the actors, but maybe of the script itself.

But by Act II, the emotional stakes seem higher, and the comedic misunderstandings are front and center, making the Great Lakes Theater production of "Twelfth Night"



▲ **Jessie Cope Miller and Theo Allyn star in "Twelfth Night" at Great Lakes Theater.** | Photo / Roger Mastroianni

one that will have audiences riding the waves of bitter and sweet, comedy and tragedy, and laughter and intrigue to a satisfying shore.

Sheri Gross is the CJN theatre critic. She is a performer, director and freelance writer from Solon. She was the director of the Mandel JCC Playmakers Youth Theatre and Pilloff Performing Arts Camp for over 20 years and is the director of creative programs at Gross Schechter Day School in Pepper Pike.

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WHAT: "Twelfth Night" at Great Lakes Theater

WHERE: The Hanna Theatre, E. 14th St. and Euclid Ave., Cleveland

WHEN: Through April 6

TICKETS & INFO: \$20-\$89, call 216-241-6000 or visit greatlakestheater.org

By William Shakespeare

Directed by Sara Bruner

Scenic Designer: Courtney O'Neill

Lighting Designer: Rick Martin

Costume Designer: Mieka van der Ploeg

Composer and Sound Designer: Matthew Webb

Movement Director: Jaclyn Miller

Fight Director: Nick Steen

There's Hope for 'All Over Now' at CIFF

KEVIN CORVO

Musically inspired by her family members and the late singer-songwriter Jeff Buckley, Cleveland vocalist and songwriter Chayla Hope is gaining exposure and broadening her work. The 38-year-old Hope composed all nine tracks on her second album, "Mess of a Woman." A video for her composition, "All Over Now," one of the nine tracks on "Mess of a Woman," will be screened at the 49th Cleveland International Film Festival at 7:45 p.m. April 1 in the Upper Allen screening room at Playhouse Square at 1501 Euclid Ave. Hope's video is one of six videos that



Hope

comprise "Local Heroes Shorts 1." The three-minute film is directed by Jessie Leigh. The selections are an "annual celebration of films made about Ohio, in Ohio, or by Ohioans," according to the CIFF website. "It's a song about being there for yourself," said Hope, who uses backdrops of Cleveland area locations that have been significant in her life. They include an automotive repair shop, depicting where her father once worked, Cedar Lee Theatre in Cleveland Heights and Beachland Ballroom and Tavern, in Cleveland, where she and her husband, Teddy Eisenberg, son of Rabbi Matthew Eisenberg of Temple Israel Ner Tamid in Mayfield Heights, exchanged wedding vows. Immersed in music from her childhood, Hope said she always wanted to make a living being a musician. It is a goal she has already achieved, but continues to expand as she is traveling to Los Angeles this year to record what will be her third album of

original material to be released early next year. While performing and recording is Hope's full-time job, and passion, today, her family members also took their turns playing music, too. Her maternal grandmother played the organ, her father, David, was a bluegrass guitarist, and her brother, Jed, spent his younger years in a punk band. They inspired her to pursue music, she said, which began with singing in school choirs and performing in the drum corps and marching band at North Royalton High School. From there, Hope played in bands in the Cleveland area while employed at the vinyl pressing plant, Gotta Grove Records. Her experience there lent to her pressing her own vinyl copies of her first album in 2022, "Damn, Feelings" and her latest album, released late last year, "Mess of a Woman."

"A lot of love went into that record ... it means a lot to me," Hope told the Cleveland Jewish News about her latest release. Hope co-produced the album with Nate Saggio at Lefthand Recording. Saggio is also part of the seven-member band, Welshly Arms, which backs Hope on her two solo albums. "Love in Lo-Fi," from her debut album, achieved 1 million streams but Hope said she does not carefully track such statistics, "Because it takes to joy out of music." In co-producing and writing all the tracks on "Mess of a Woman," Hope said she "did all of the things (people in the music industry) told me I couldn't do." Looking ahead, Hope said she will film a video for a future single from "Mess of a Woman" while touring locally to promote the album. "I'm excited about the future," Hope said. Kevin Corvo is a freelance journalist.

Holocaust, antisemitism, tolerance discussion to follow 'The Stamp Thief'

KIRSTEN BEARD
✉ kbeard@cjn.org

"The Stamp Thief," a feature documentary is set to have its Midwest premiere at 12:05 p.m. March 28 and at 7:30 p.m. March 30 at the Miami Ohio Theatre in Playhouse Square in downtown Cleveland. This premiere is a part of the Cleveland International Film Festival. Directed by Dan Sturman, a former Shaker

Heights resident and graduate of University School in Hunting Valley, "The Stamp Thief" investigates a tale dating back to the Holocaust: that a mysterious Nazi stole priceless stamp collections from concentration camp victims and buried the stolen stamps in a small town in Poland, according to a news releases. Embarking on a real-life "Argo-like" adventure, one-time "Seinfeld" producer Gary Gilbert sets out



With far-right, nationalist movements and antisemitism on the rise globally, this story feels especially timely and important to tell now."

Dan Sturman

STAMP | CONTINUED ON PAGE 26

'Babka' puts spotlight on baker, guide dog trainer in Chasidic neighborhood

KIRSTEN BEARD
✉ kbeard@cjn.org

The world premier of "Babka" directed and written by Serena Dykman, a New York-based filmmaker will be shown at 5:20 p.m. April 2 at Playhouse Square in downtown Cleveland as part of the Cleveland International Film Festival. The film is set in Chasidic Williamsburg, a neighborhood in Brooklyn, N.Y., where a newly blind Orthodox



Dykman

Jewish baker forms an unlikely bond with a Queer Catholic Latino guide dog trainer, according to a news release. As he learns to navigate the world "anew" with his German Shepherd, he embarks on an eye-opening journey to overcome personal and cultural barriers in his quest to reopen his beloved bakery, the release said. "Babka came to me when I was walking my medical alert dog in Hasidic Brooklyn, and noticed that the community was avoiding her," Dykman said in the release. "I entered a bakery and after seeing his customers backing away, the sweet Orthodox baker told me, 'Sorry about that. People aren't used to dogs around here.' It led me to thinking, 'What if a dog 'had' to

live in the community.' Hence came the idea of a guide dog and a trainer who comes from another minority." The film's cast includes Saul Rubinek of the TV show, "Hunters," Ronald Guttman, Hani Furstenberg, and Tony-nominated Betsy Aidem, the release said. The film was produced by Julia Elaine Walker, William Phoenix, Julia McGill and Dykman, according to the release. Dykman's debut feature documentary, "NANA" told the story of her grandmother's survival of Auschwitz and her mission to educate and remember, the release said. After the film was released, Dykman toured North America and Europe with it, giving talks at institutions including the European

Commission, headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, Amnesty International in the United Kingdom, Classrooms Without Borders in Pittsburgh, and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, according to the release. Dykman will also be involved with a panel, "Seeing Differently: Storytelling, Guide Dogs, and Accessibility," at 4:15 p.m. April 2 at the Westfield Studio Theatre at Playhouse Square in downtown Cleveland as a part of added festival programming, as both her projects, "Babka" and "At See" deal with guide dogs. Tickets are \$18 per person. The film has a run time of 17 minutes. To purchase tickets visit, shorturl.at/Bh9K7.

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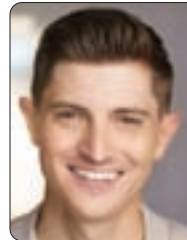
Director's personal experience with acne leads to 'Breakout' at CIFF

KIRSTEN BEARD

✉ kbeard@cjn.org

The premiere of the short film "Breakout" will be at 7:45 p.m. April 2 at KeyBank State Theater at Playhouse

Photo / Cleveland International Film Festival



Soloman

Square in downtown Cleveland as part of the 49th Cleveland International Film Festival, according to a news release.

Jake Solomon, who directed and stars the film, was born and raised in Cleveland, attending Mayfield High

School and Park Synagogue in Pepper Pike, and grew up going to CIFF each year, the news release said. Soloman attended The University of Akron. The short film is based on his deeply personal experience with acne and the side effects of acne treatments, the release said.

The film's story surrounds Myles, played by Jake Solomon, who's desperate for clear skin and begins a powerful and controversial acne treatment with extreme side effects, the release said. He is forced to live with his increasingly declining mental health, and insecurities on a daily basis while trying to navigate simple social interactions, according to the release.

"I grew up in Cleveland and graduated from The University of Akron, so to make this film in my hometown was truly a full-circle moment," Soloman said in the release. "This is by far the most meaningful film festival that I've been a part of; I cried just finding out that I was accepted into Cleveland International Film Festival (CIFF). I grew up going to CIFF nearly every year, but this is my first time as a filmmaker and I couldn't be more excited to do it in the city that I call home."

Tickets are \$18 per person. The film has a runtime of 26 minutes. To purchase tickets visit, shorturl.at/VvPbd.

STAMP | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

to confirm the story and recover the stamps, the release said.

Sturman told the Cleveland Jewish News one of the challenges he faced in creating the film was finding a way to get people to want to see a film about the Holocaust who may not already be inclined to watch movies on the topic.

"The Holocaust is being forgotten, and so the question is how do you get people to learn about the past in a way that you can sort of entice them to actually want to see a movie," Sturman, who attended camp at Park Synagogue in Cleveland Heights, said. "And as with a lot of films that I've done in the past, the goal essentially is if education is medicine, you have to add a lot of spoons full sugar to get people to enjoy the medicine."

In working to attract people to watch the film, which he is "really proud" of, Sturman made the "dramatic" film feel like a heist film, he said.

"We've crafted 'The Stamp Thief' in the guise of a heist movie in order to tell a never-before-told story of the Holocaust in a uniquely dramatic and accessible way," Sturman said in the release. "We hope that by setting out to entertain viewers first and foremost, we will also educate and move

them. With far-right, nationalist movements and antisemitism on the rise globally, this story feels especially timely and important to tell now."

Sturman will conduct a Q&A after both screenings, the release said. He will also participate in a panel discussion after the March 28 screening along with representatives from the Maltz Museum in Beachwood, Kol Israel Foundation in Pepper Pike and Anti-Defamation League Cleveland, in the Westfield Studio Theatre at Playhouse Square.

Sturman said the discussion following the screening will talk about the legacy of the Holocaust and address antisemitism and tolerance "across the board."

With friends and family still living in the Cleveland area, it's a "treat" for Sturman to return and be featured in the Cleveland International Film Festival, in which he has been featured twice before, he said.

"Cleveland is a place where people really are dialed into culture and film ... it's incredibly rewarding to then attend a festival where people are so excited," he said.

Tickets are \$18 per person. The film has a runtime of 100 minutes. To purchase tickets, visit shorturl.at/LUaQe.

Lydia Kacala contributed to this report.

Former senator moves to Bexley. Could he run for governor or Senate?

JULIE CARR SMYTH | ASSOCIATED PRESS

Former U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown launched a pro-worker organization on March 24 to promote the “Dignity of Work,” a creed that he has advanced for years as an officeholder and candidate and that he recently described in a national magazine column as the key to the future of the Democratic Party.



Brown

The non-partisan Dignity of Work Institute will focus on better understanding the lives of American workers, through polls, interviews and other research, Brown said in an Associated Press interview. The move comes as speculation swirls about Brown’s political future and adds a familiar voice to the national conversation among Democrats about how best to respond to their poor showing in the 2024 election, which saw Republicans take control of all three branches of the federal government.

It’s unclear whether Brown’s future ambitions extend beyond the institute and he hasn’t ruled out a run for Ohio governor or Senate next year, according to The Columbus Dispatch.

But Brown said the institute is not political or partisan. Its first national poll did not mention his name but rather explored how politicians talk about the economy. The political dialogue is “fundamentally flawed” and “doesn’t

reflect the reality of workers’ lives,” he said.

Brown, 72, is weighing whether he’ll run for office ever again, he said, after losing his bid for a fourth term to Cleveland businessman Bernie Moreno last year. Before that, the Ohio Democrat had spent three decades in Congress and consistently won statewide elections even as the former bellwether state turned reliably Republican in the era of Donald Trump.

“My focus isn’t there now,” he said. “I’m not going around the state campaigning. My focus is on getting this up and running.”

The institute will be based in Columbus. Brown and his wife, Connie Schultz, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, moved to the Columbus suburb of Bexley last week to be closer to their grandchildren. They previously lived in Cleveland.

Brown said he wanted it in Ohio, not the coasts. “This isn’t a plaything, this isn’t a launch for higher office,” he said. “I’m serious about this. I always have been on these issues.”

Brown recently offered a treatise of sorts in The New Republic magazine for restoring the national Democratic Party and regaining the support of working class voters.

“We cannot solve this problem without an honest assessment of who we are,” he wrote. “How we see ourselves as the Democratic Party – the party of the people, the party of the working class and the middle class – no longer matches up with what most voters think.”

Brown told AP neither party is doing an adequate job centering workers.

“We cannot solve this problem without an honest assessment of who we are. How we see ourselves as the Democratic Party – the party of the people, the party of the working class and the middle class – no longer matches up with what most voters think.”

Former U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown

“The Democratic Party is the compensate-the-betrayed (party),” he said. “You know, we pass a trade agreement, people lose jobs we give them a little money. The Republicans are the party of compensate-the-winners, tax cuts for rich people.”

“Neither party is the make-workers-the-winners party, and that’s what this is about.”

The progressive Center for American Progress Action Fund scheduled Brown as its keynote speaker on March 27 at an event titled, “Working-Class Voters, the Economy, and the Democratic Party.”

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Silver Linings

Lee Markowitz

LYDIA KACALA

✉ lkacala@cjn.org

Solon resident Lee Markowitz has been volunteering since he graduated from college, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics from Kenyon College in Gambier and his Ph.D. in social psychology from Bowling Green State University.

Markowitz told the Cleveland Jewish News that he has been volunteering as a tutor since his graduation.

"I've been tutoring on and off for about 40 years. I first got involved with it after I finished college, and I had a year living at home," Markowitz, a graduate of Cleveland Heights High School, said. "I volunteered to tutor at my old high school and that was a great experience. That's really how I got my start with tutoring."

CJN: How did you get into volunteering?

Markowitz: I was definitely influenced by my father, in particular, who did a lot of volunteering. He was a lawyer and did many things. So, that was when I started, and I tutored on and off for years.

Before I retired, the Jewish Federation of Cleveland in Beachwood had a program called the Public Education Initiative that they started, and I tutored for them on Friday mornings for years, and that was a really good experience.

When I retired, I did have a plan about what I wanted to do and one of things I wanted to do was continue tutoring. I tried different types of

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Name: Lee Markowitz

Age: 68

Residence: Solon

Synagogue: B'nai Jeshurun Congregation

Previous career: Marketing

research

Retirement year: 2019

Hobbies: Walking, math, traveling to visit one of his two daughters in South Africa, creating card tricks and participating in a monthly Zoom call with fellow 1977 Kenyon College graduates

tutoring. I tried tutoring different ages.

Right now, I'm tutoring for Seeds of Literacy, which is a program that tutors adults in helping them get their GEDs.

And then, I also do other types of volunteering. Some of it is like 'one and done' type volunteering, like the Federation has a Good Deeds Day, and I try to do that when it comes; the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, I try to do that occasionally. But then there's other things that are longer-term, ongoing commitments.

I have a daughter who has disabilities, and so I got very involved in that because we've been looking for housing for her since she was very young. We (Markowitz and his wife, Theresa Markowitz) did a lot of searching and we finally found some people who were doing this, who we had a lot of confidence in. We worked with

them to build this community in Solon – Solon Community Living – which just fully opened up this year. I got involved with it just before I retired, and I'm on the board of that organization.

I've always been interested in working in the community. Most of the tutoring I did was in the city of Cleveland, in the schools, and some of it was the Federation and some other things.

We also got involved with Greater Cleveland Congregations in Shaker Heights, which I've been involved with since 2016, but I'm always interested in working in the community. And so, this is a way to do it and it's been a good experience. I'm on the board there, too.

CJN: Why did volunteering seem like a good fit for you?

Markowitz: I always felt like there's a lot of unmet needs in the community, and I always had an interest in helping out.

One time I wanted to be a teacher, and I didn't go into that. I went into business. I felt like I wanted to do something to help out the community on the side. And so, I think this is instilled from my family, but I felt like it was a good do. I feel good about it. The volunteer gets as much out of it, or more out of it, than the people that they're volunteering to help. It's very rewarding.

CJN: What advice would you give people who are unsure about getting involved?

Markowitz: It's not like working in the sense that you have to show up every day and you have the pressures of the office or wherever you are every day and you're trying to get something done. You have a lot more flexibility in volunteering. You can take your time. You don't have to figure out what you need to do right away. It may take you several attempts to find out what you want to do. And that's the nice thing about volunteering, you can try something and if it's not the best fit you can try something else. So there's not this pressure that it has to work. You can choose the type of commitment that you want.

For example, some people might want to have a more ongoing commitment, but then other people might feel that's too much time and they don't want to do that right away, so they just try this or that. And in the end, you can do what you want.

Generally, if you try and look around, I think you will tend to find something that you enjoy and that you can grow from, and you can end up



▲ Lee Markowitz | Submitted photo

doing that more. And you can volunteer as much as you want. You can volunteer a few hours a week, or you can make it 30 hours a week or 20 hours a week. It's all up to you.

Markowitz said he looks forward to different things at each of the places he volunteers. In the "criminal justice" type of work he does, he enjoys seeing systems change in a "way that's positive," he said.

However, his goal when working with Seeds of Literacy is seeing the people he tutors get their GEDs, he said.

"The thing you look forward (to) when you tutor, you work with the students and then your goal is to get them to graduate, to get them to get their GED. So, when that happens, that's very, very rewarding," Markowitz said.

"Silver Linings" is a feature about life after retirement. If you are a retiree with an interesting story about your new life or know of someone who fits the bill, email your suggestion to editorial@cjn.org and include "Silver Linings" in the subject line or send us a direct message at @CleveJN.



To read the stories about other Silver Linings in the CJN, visit cjn.org/silverlinings

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CJNNextGen

PRESENTED BY:



Sarah Braun

KIRSTEN BEARD

✉ kbeard@cjn.org

Sarah Braun of South Euclid never imagined she would end up working in the family business. With a career that once took her down a different path, she now finds herself fully immersed in the company her mother built – manufacturing and selling locally sourced and organic soaps and skincare.

Braun, 38, is the chief marketing officer and owner at Chagrin Valley Soap & Salve in Solon.

When Braun was a teenager growing up in Chagrin Falls, her mother who was a biologist and former science teacher at The Agnon School, now the Joseph and Florence Mandel Jewish Day School in Beachwood, turned her hobby into a business. After discovering her stepfather had an eczema issue on his arm, her mother began researching and eventually formed her first bar of soap called Goat Milk Oatmeal, which is still sold today.

“She used to go to craft fairs in Chagrin Falls and local fairs and stuff like that and sell (her products),” Braun said. “Slowly, it got bigger and bigger. She created a website, took a business course and then we expanded on our house (because) she used to make it in the kitchen.”

During this time, Braun explored her own path. After graduating from Chagrin Falls High School in 2004. She went on to graduate from The Ohio State University in Columbus for her undergraduate studies in 2008. Then Braun attended Cleveland State University, graduating with her master’s degree in public policy in 2011. During her undergraduate studies, Braun interned with the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs in Israel and studied at

Who Knew?

the Mayanot Institute of Jewish Studies in Jerusalem, where she met her husband.

After being married to her husband, David, in Cleveland, the couple moved to South Africa, where Braun worked for the South Africa Zionist Federation until accepting a position at South Africa’s Israeli embassy.

To Braun, a congregant of Bais Dovid Cleveland in Beachwood, her Jewish faith is a big part of her life, and she describes herself as a “product of all the systems, Jewishly.” Braun grew up attending Temple Emanu El in Orange.

Braun’s involvement in the community includes growing up in a traditional non-observant home, attending Jewish sleepaway camps, Jewish day camps and The Agnon School, joining BBYO in high school and continuing being involved on the chapter and regional boards, and being involved in OSU Chabad and Israel advocacy on campus.

“I joined BBYO, which was a huge part of my Jewish upbringing,” she said. “I was super involved on my chapter board and regional board and did all things BBYO. ... And I would say that it shows the importance of all of those touch points growing up that I had, that community in my life that made me want it more and more and know that I needed that for my children.”

Once the business reached the point where a building needed to be purchased, Braun returned home in 2014 and helped

NEXTGEN | CONTINUED ON PAGE 31

Introducing CJN NextGen:

The Cleveland Jewish News will spotlight the future of Northeast Ohio in this new, biweekly feature, called CJN NextGen, presented by the Cleveland Jewish News Foundation. The series profiles the inspiring next generation of Northeast Ohio’s Jewish community members. If you know someone with an interesting story to share, a unique job or a remarkable journey, submit your suggestions to editorial@cjn.org and include “CJN NextGen” in the subject line. Each feature is available to read and share at cjn.org/nextgen.



▲ Sarah Braun with her husband, David, and children, Benji, 7, Bayla, 3, and Sophie, 10, in Wynwood, Fla., at Ben B Coco Chocolate Factory making chocolate in January 2025. | Submitted photo

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NEXTGEN | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

open the Chagrin Valley Soap & Salve location in Solon.

"I was very inspired by what she was doing, and honestly, I love Cleveland," Braun said. "I think that Cleveland is an amazing place to raise a family. I feel privileged that I grew up in Cleveland, and when we were at that turning point, I was pregnant with my first child, and I was like, 'You know what, yeah, I want to move back to Cleveland. I want to raise my family there, and I want to be a part of this (growing) business.'"

Braun said all products are manufactured in Solon and locally sourced.

"We sell organic certified skin care, which is very unique in the skincare sector," she said. "We love to support other local businesses as much as we can, and when it makes sense, we source locally. We get our organic oats from Amish country right here in Ohio, that

"I think Cleveland is an amazing place to raise a family, I feel privileged that I grew up in Cleveland, and when we were at that turning point ... I (wanted) to move back to Cleveland."

Sarah Braun

Connect with Sarah

linkedin.com/in/sarah-braun-35a185349/

Business Socials

IG: @chagrinvalleysoap

Facebook: Chagrin Valley Soap



they grind freshly for us."

She added many of their customers "find us" because they have skin sensitivities to specific issues.

"They have reactions to a lot of products on the shelf (and when) a dermatologist tells them to really dig deep and find something as most natural they can," Braun said. "They end up finding us."

Braun added through the store's website, people can search products by allergens and what specific ingredients you can and cannot have. She said customers have said, "We've enhanced their lives."

As "pioneers in the field," Braun said the customers understand the business isn't conforming to recent trends but producing true, clean, organic and fresh products for those with sensitive skin.

"It's become very trendy to be conscious of what we put in our bodies, and to be conscious of what we put on our body," she said. "People who are looking for real, clean skincare find us. They know our name because we have been around for 20 years. We've been doing it since before it was trendy. We don't do anything because of optics. Everything that we do, and this is part of what I feel like (has) kept me in the company, is real."

MEET SARAH

What's the most unusual or unexpected talent you have? Ceramics. I love doing pottery, and always have.

If you could travel anywhere in the world right now, where would you go and why? Israel, always. Jerusalem. My husband and I met there, and it's our favorite place in the world.

Where are you going on date night? Mendel's KC BBQ

What is your most memorable Jewish experience? All of it. It's all made me who I am today. From The Agnon Day School (now the Joseph and Florence Mandel Jewish Day School), to BBYO, Jewish sleep away camp, to my Jewish sorority at The Ohio State University, the Campus Chabad, and eventually returning to Cleveland to raise my Jewish family.

She said that the business is organic-certified and 99% plastic-free.

As advice for other local business owners or those who want to take their hobby to the next level, Braun said to stay curious and be yourself.

"The reason that I think that we are who we are today, and we've maintained a place where there's a new company of natural goods coming up every few weeks (is) because we stay true to who we are," Braun said.

"You always go back to the why - why you're doing what you're doing. Is your next move in line with the why? Also staying curious. We would not be who we are, where we are or anything without my mother's curiosity. She's a learner, which is inspiring to me."

Child salon, spa now open in Lyndhurst

Sweet & Sassy salon and spa for children opened on March 15 at Legacy Village in Lyndhurst.

Sweet & Sassy's first Ohio location offers children ages 4 to 13 haircuts, hairstyling and spa treatments, including age-appropriate manicures, pedicures and facials. The salon will also host themed children's birthday parties and events, including classes.

Jewish fashion designers course offered

Case Western Reserve University's Siegal Lifelong Learning Program will offer a remote course from 1 to 2:30 p.m. on Thursdays from April 10 and May 15 about Jewish fashion designers and photographers. Registration is required by April 3.

"From The Rag Trade to Ralph Lauren: How Jewish Designers and Photographers Shaped Fashion," instructed by Lee Rubinstein, will examine the history of Jewish designers including as Ralph Lauren, Judith Leiber, Calvin Klein and Marc Jacobs who made the clothes and Jewish fashion photographers who made those garments famous.

The course is \$100 for nonmembers. Members of the Siegal Lifelong Learning Program will receive a discount. For more information, visit bit.ly/4bLyGzd.

Color Me Mine opens at Crocker Park

Color Me Mine, a paint-your-own-pottery studio, is open at Crocker Park at 262 Crocker Park Blvd. in Westlake. The studio will also host a grand opening celebration in May on a date to be announced.

Cirque Us presents 'One Man's Trash'

Cirque Us will perform "One Man's Trash: A Repurposed Circus" from 7 to 9 p.m. March 29 at Disciples Christian Church at 3663 Mayfield Road in Cleveland Heights.

"One Man's Trash" was originally produced in 2016. The 2025 troupe of "One Man's Trash" is Doug Stewart, Mariah Fraker, Jeremy Cifonie, Tyler Jacobson, Sam Hollis and Ava Kapelczak.

Tickets range from \$10 to \$25. To purchase tickets, visit [theCirqueus.com](https://the Cirqueus.com).

Luster seeks donations for Laura's Home

Luster Gifts in Shaker Heights will host a donation drive to support Laura's Home Women's Crisis Center of Cleveland through March 31.

In honor of Women's History Month, Luster will accept donations of all sizes of new women's and children's underwear, bras and socks; hygiene kits of unopened toiletry items; unopened baby wipes; new towels, washcloths, twin sheets, pillows and blankets; new and gently-used women's and children's clothing, outerwear and shoes; new toys; Cleveland Regional Transit Authority bus tickets; and gift cards to Target and Walmart.

Luster is at The Van Aken Market Hall at 3441 Tuttle Road in Shaker Heights.

Good Deeds Day slated for April 2

The Jewish Federation of Cleveland will host "Good Deeds Day," a global day of volunteerism, on April 6.

Individuals and families of all ages are invited to volunteer at one of 13 locations throughout Jewish Cleveland and Greater Cleveland that will help comfort the elderly, feed the hungry, support at-risk populations and more. Volunteer opportunities are offered from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Registration is required by April 2. To view all volunteer opportunities, visit bit.ly/43OjT4D.

Clean energy forum April 6

The Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Cleveland will host the forum "Route to a Cleaner Energy Ohio" from 9 to 10 a.m. April 6 at 21600 Shaker Blvd. in Shaker Heights and virtually at bit.ly/UUCCForumsWinterSpring2025.

Grant Goodrich, executive director of Case Western Reserve University's Great Lakes Energy Institute, will present followed by a Q&A session as part of the congregation's "Forums That Matter" every first and third Sunday.

For more information, visit bit.ly/42mhiOA or email forums@uucleveland.org.



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The Atlantic releases entire Signal chat showing US's detailed attack plans against Houthis

TARA COPP | ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – The Atlantic on March 26 released the entire Signal chat among senior national security officials, showing that Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth provided the exact timings of warplane launches and when bombs would drop – before the men and women flying those attacks against Yemen’s Houthis this month on behalf of the United States were airborne.

The disclosure follows two intense days during which leaders of President Donald Trump’s intelligence and defense agencies have struggled to explain how details that current and former U.S. officials have said would have been classified wound up on an unclassified Signal chat that included Atlantic Editor-in-Chief Jeffrey Goldberg.

White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt has said no classified information was posted to the Signal chat.

The chat was also notable for who it excluded: the only military attendee of the principals committee, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Adm. Christopher Grady is currently serving in that position in an acting capacity because Trump fired former chairman Gen. CQ Brown Jr. in February.

National security adviser Mike Waltz was authorized

to decide whether to include the Joint Chiefs chairman in the principals committee discussion, “based on the policy relevance of attendees to the issues being considered, the need for secrecy on sensitive matters, staffing needs, and other considerations,” the White House said in a Jan. 20 memo.

The Pentagon said it would not comment on the issue, and it was not immediately clear why Grady, currently serving as the president’s top military adviser, would not be included in a discussion on military strikes.

Hegseth has refused to say whether he posted classified information onto Signal. He is traveling in the Indo-Pacific and to date has only scoffed at questions, saying he did not reveal “war plans.” Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and CIA Director John Ratcliffe told members of the Senate Intelligence Committee on March 25 it was up to Hegseth to determine whether the information he was posting was classified or not.

What was revealed was jaw-dropping in its specificity and includes the type of information that is kept to a very close hold to protect the operational security of a military strike.

In the group chat, Hegseth posted multiple details about the impending strike, using military language and laying out when a “strike window” starts, where a “target terrorist”

was located, the time elements around the attack and when various weapons and aircraft would be used in the strike. He mentioned that the U.S. was “currently clean” on operational security.”

“Godspeed to our Warriors,” he wrote.

“1215et: F-18s LAUNCH (1st strike package)”

“1345: ‘Trigger Based’ F-18 1st Strike Window Starts (Target Terrorist is @ his Known Location so SHOULD BE ON TIME – also, Strike Drones Launch (MQ-9s)”

“1410: More F-18s LAUNCH (2nd strike package)”

“1415: Strike Drones on Target (THIS IS WHEN THE FIRST BOMBS WILL DEFINITELY DROP, pending earlier ‘Trigger Based’ targets)”

“1536 F-18 2nd Strike Starts – also, first sea-based Tomahawks launched.”

“MORE TO FOLLOW (per timeline)”

“We are currently clean on OPSEC” – that is, operational security.

“Godspeed to our Warriors.”

Goldberg has said he asked the White House if it opposed publication and that the White House responded that it would prefer he did not publish. Signal is a publicly available app that provides encrypted communications, but it can be hacked.

Researchers in limbo as Columbia bows to Trump's demands in bid to restore \$400M federal funding

PHILIP MARCELO | ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK – When President Donald Trump canceled \$400 million in funding to Columbia University over its handling of student protests against Israel’s war in Gaza, much of the financial pain fell on researchers a train ride away from the school’s campus, working on things like curing cancer and studying COVID-19’s impact on children.

The urgency of salvaging ongoing research projects at the university’s labs and world-renowned medical center was one factor in Columbia’s recent decision to bow to the Republican administration’s unprecedented demands for changes in university policy as a condition of getting funding restored.

The Ivy League university announced March 21 it would overhaul its student disciplinary process, ban protesters from wearing masks, bar demonstrations from

academic buildings, adopt a new definition of antisemitism and put its Middle Eastern studies program under the supervision of a vice provost who would have a say over curriculum and hiring.

The university’s decision to accede to nearly all of the Trump administration’s demands outraged some faculty members, who say Columbia has sacrificed academic freedom. The American Association of University Professors and the American Federation of Teachers, representing members of Columbia’s faculty, filed a lawsuit March 25 saying the funding revocation violated free speech laws.

Scientific and medical researchers are appalled that their work was drawn into the debate to begin with.

“There’s simply no justifiable link for the federal government to put this kind of research in the line of fire for the goal of mitigating antisemitism at a different location,” Dr. Dani Dumitriu, a pediatric

researcher studying babies born during the COVID-19 pandemic, said from her office in midtown Manhattan.

Dr. Andrew Lassman, a brain cancer specialist and associate director of clinical trials at Columbia’s cancer center, said researchers will have to make difficult decisions if the cuts stand. Those choices could include prioritizing which experimental cancer treatments they will focus on and how many patients they can treat, he said.

“This is real, not theoretical research,” said Lassman, who works at Columbia University Irving Medical Center, located about 2.5 miles north of the university’s main campus. “Young, old, Black white, Republican, Democrat – cancer doesn’t care.”

U.S. Education Secretary Linda McMahon said the university was “on the right track” after it announced the changes Friday, but hasn’t indicated yet whether

funding might be restored.

Columbia’s interim president, Katrina Armstrong, on March 25 characterized the school’s policy changes as “right for Columbia.”

“Implementation of these measures is fundamental to sustaining our academic mission without disruption and ensuring the safety of Columbia’s students and campuses,” she said in a statement, adding that she was committed to restoring the partnership between the university and the federal government.



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Ukraine ready to observe ceasefire against energy targets following deal

ILLIA NOVIKOV | ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYIV, Ukraine – Ukraine is ready to proceed with a ceasefire prohibiting attacks on energy infrastructure, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said, in line with a deal that was brokered by the United States during three days of negotiations with Ukrainian and Russian officials in the Saudi capital.

Speaking in a video address late March 25, Zelenskyy said Ukraine had agreed with U.S. negotiators “that a ceasefire for energy infrastructure can start today.” But, he warned, any strikes on Ukraine’s energy facilities by Moscow would draw “strong retaliation.”

The comments underscored the tenuous agreements that came out of the three days of separate U.S.-Ukrainian and U.S.-Russian talks in Riyadh. Washington said it had agreed with the warring parties to implement a pause on attacks on energy infrastructure as well as taking steps to ensure safe navigation for ships in the Black Sea.

Those talks were part of a broader effort by President Donald Trump’s administration toward a limited, 30-day ceasefire that Moscow and Kyiv agreed to in principle last week, but has thus far failed to materialize as both sides continue to launch drone and rocket attacks against the other.

While Zelenskyy on March 25 thanked the U.S. for its efforts to strike an agreement, questions remained over some key details, and a comprehensive peace deal to end the three-year war still looked distant.

On Tuesday, the White House said in separate statements that the sides had “agreed to ensure safe navigation, eliminate the use of force, and prevent the use of commercial vessels for military purposes in the Black Sea.”

Details of the prospective deal were not released, but it appeared to mark another attempt to ensure safe Black Sea shipping after a 2022 agreement that was brokered by the U.N. and Turkey but halted by Russia the next year.

After the White House issued its statement March 25, the Kremlin warned that a potential Black Sea deal could only be implemented after sanctions against the Russian Agricultural Bank and other financial organizations involved in food and fertilizer trade are lifted and their access to the SWIFT system of international payments is ensured.

Zelenskyy on March 25 evening reacted to those demands, casting them as an example of Moscow “manipulating, twisting agreements, and lying” about the terms of the agreement.

“There are absolutely clear statements that have been published by the White House, everyone can see what is stated there,” Zelenskyy said. “And there is something that the Kremlin is lying about again: that supposedly the (ceasefire) in the Black Sea depends on the issue of sanctions.”

In an apparent reference to Moscow’s demands, the White House said Tuesday the U.S. “will help restore Russia’s access to the world market for agricultural and fertilizer exports, lower maritime insurance costs, and enhance access to ports and payment systems for such transactions.”

When asked about when Washington might help Moscow achieve those ambitions, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on March 26 that contacts between Russia and the U.S. “continue quite intensively,” and that authorities are “satisfied with how pragmatic, constructive and productive our dialogue is.”

Peskov said the 2022 Black Sea Grain initiative could be revived if Russia’s demands regarding agricultural and fertilizer exports are met. He said that those are the same demands that Russia initially put forward in the grain deal and that weren’t being fulfilled.

Peskov said that Putin’s order to pause strikes on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure for 30 days, given on March 18 per an agreement with Trump, still stands, and that Russian forces are complying with it. He accused Kyiv of continuing to target Russia’s energy infrastructure but added that “we still believe that this moratorium (on strikes) should be observed.”

Ukrainian officials have reported multiple strikes against their energy sites since March 18. In a post on X on March 25, Zelenskyy’s communications adviser Dmytro Lytvyn said Moscow was “lying” about observing a ceasefire on energy infrastructure.

“They’ve been hitting our energy sites with bombs, attack drones, and FPV drones. We’re not going into all the details, but there have already been 8 confirmed hits on energy facilities,” Lytvyn wrote. “Every night our air defense forces shoot down nearly a hundred attack drones – and many of those drones were likely targeting other energy facilities.”

What will happen to data after 23andMe files for bankruptcy

BARBARA ORTUTAY | AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

The genetic testing company 23andMe has filed for bankruptcy, prompting people who’ve used the service and sent in DNA samples to be analyzed to wonder what will happen to their genetic data.

The company says the filing does not change how it stores, manages or protects customer data. But some privacy experts are recommending that people who have used 23andMe delete their data, given concerns not only about a potential buyer getting access to sensitive information, but also hackers who might take advantage of the upheaval to gain access to it.

“What we’re witnessing with 23andMe is a stark wake-up call for data privacy,” Adrianus Warmenhoven, a cybersecurity expert at NordVPN, said. “Genetic data isn’t just a bit of personal information – it is a blueprint of your entire biological profile. When a company goes under, this personal data is an asset to be sold with potentially far-reaching consequences.”

23andMe filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on March 23. Anne Wojcicki, who co-founded the company nearly two decades ago and has served as its CEO, stepped down effectively immediately. The San Francisco-based company said that it will look to sell “substantially all of its assets” through a court-approved reorganization plan.

Wojcicki’s resignation comes just weeks after a board committee rejected a nonbinding acquisition proposal from her to take the company private.

Wojcicki still intends to bid on 23andMe as the company pursues a sale through the bankruptcy process. In a statement on social media, Wojcicki said that she resigned as CEO to be “in the best position” as an independent bidder.

23andMe says filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection will help facilitate a sale of the company, meaning that it’s seeking new ownership. The company said it wants to pull back on its real estate footprint

and has asked the court to reject lease contracts in San Francisco and Sunnyvale, California and elsewhere to help cut costs. But the company plans to keep operating during the process.

In a post about the Chapter 11 process, 23andMe said its users’ privacy and data are important considerations in any transaction and that any buyer will be required to comply with applicable laws when it comes to how it treats customer data.

But experts note that laws have limits – for instance, the U.S. has no federal privacy law and only about 20 states do.

There are also security concerns. For instance, the turmoil of a bankruptcy and related job cuts could leave fewer employees to protect customers’ data against hackers. It wouldn’t be the first time – a 2023 data breach exposed the genetic data of nearly 7 million customers at 23andMe, which later agreed to pay \$30 million in cash to settle a class-action lawsuit accusing the company of failing to protect customers whose personal information was exposed.

Experts note that DNA data is particularly

sensitive – and thus valuable.

“At a fundamental biological level, this is you and only you,” David Choffnes, a computer science professor at Northeastern University and executive director of its Cybersecurity and Privacy Institute, said. “If you have an email address that gets compromised, you can find another email provider and start using a new email address. And you’re pretty much able to move on with your life without problem. And you just can’t do that with your genetic code.”

23andMe says it does not share information with health insurance companies, employers or public databases without users’ consent and with law enforcement only if required by a valid legal process, such as a subpoena. Choffnes said while that’s good, it’s a fairly narrow set of categories.

“There’s still other things that they are allowed to do with that data, including, as they mentioned, provide cross context, behavioral or targeted advertising,” he said.



Countering the Oct. 7 deniers

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Jews have long been accustomed to being history's double victims. We are victims of its most murderous currents and the victims of subsequent attempts to revise, play down or even outright deny these episodes of bloodshed, usually emanating from the perpetrators themselves or their fellow travelers.

The most glaring example of this trend is Holocaust denial. And the one thing we have learned from dealing with the deniers is that they are impervious to fact and reason. They engage in denial because their hatred of Jews predisposes them to conspiracy theories about Jewish power and Jewish dishonesty. You can patiently explain the milestones of the Nazi genocide – the anti-Jewish legislation of the 1930s, the Wannsee Conference convened by the Nazis in 1942, the shift in the method of killing from extermination by gunfire to industrialized slaughter in gas chambers and the obsessive antisemitic ideology underlying all this – but you'd be wasting your breath on these people.

There are other examples outside of the Holocaust. In the Arab and Islamic worlds, where antisemitism ironically runs rampant, the myth that Jewish communities lived in peaceful harmony with their Muslim neighbors until the Zionists began "colonizing Palestine" prevails. Among Communist apologists – sadly, a growing trend today, more than 30 years after the Cold War ended – the Soviet wartime dictator Josef Stalin is seen as a symbol of anti-fascism, whose postwar antisemitic campaign, reminiscent of the excesses of Russia's imperial czars, is portrayed in these circles as a willful "Zionist" attack on his reputation.

The Hamas-led pogrom in Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, has not been spared from these efforts. But while the methods are much the same as the examples I cited – especially by taking small nuggets of fact and turning them into full-blown conspiracy theories – the context is different. Technology now provides a platform for anyone to declare himself or herself a "historian" or a "journalist," and to purvey lies by turns monstrous and ridiculous using those professions as a cover. The Wall Street Journal's Gerard Baker put it best in a recent opinion piece analyzing the spread of antisemitic tropes on the nationalist right: "Our culture is dominated by people with epic levels of historical, economic and scientific ignorance."

When it comes to the Oct. 7 atrocities, there have been similarly epic levels of

social media posts denying the gang rapes, mutilations and mass slaughter that took place on that dark day. One popular theme spread by organizations like "Code Pink," a pro-Russian advocacy group based in the United States that masquerades as a peace movement, and online publications like the Grayzone, which functions as an outlet for Russian and Iranian propaganda, is that Israel itself was responsible for the vast majority of civilian deaths, rather than the Hamas terrorists and the thousands of ordinary Palestinians who joined them for the onslaught.

The underlying claim here is that the so-called "Hannibal Directive" – an Israeli military protocol introduced in 1986 to prevent the capture of Israel Defense Forces personnel by terrorist groups, which was abandoned by the military's top brass in 2016 – was operational during the assault. "The Hannibal Directive," noted the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, an independent organization that monitors political and religious extremism around the world, "has been central to false claims that Israeli security forces killed as many or more civilians than Hamas, and in downplaying well-documented war crimes against civilians."

Recently, a report prepared for the British parliament on the Oct. 7 pogrom entered this melee. Written by Lord Andrew Roberts, the eminent historian whose output includes magisterial biographies of Napoleon Bonaparte and Winston Churchill, the harrowing report is the most comprehensive account of the Hamas land invasion issued so far. It painstakingly documents the unfolding of the slaughter across more than 40 distinct locations. It spares no details, and so we learn, inter alia, how 3-year-old Abigail Idan, daughter of the murdered Ynet journalist Roeie Idan, "crawled out from under her father's body and took refuge at a neighbor's house." Or how Bar Kislev, a resident of Kibbutz Kfar Aza, watched from hiding as a squad of killers, some as young as 14, broke into apartment after apartment screaming "Kill the Jews!" – pausing for snacks and cigarettes along the way. Or how the body of Itai

Hadar, a 28-year-old attending the Psyduck festival (a smaller psychedelic trance music party that took place at the same time as the better-known Nova festival a few kilometers away), was booby-trapped with grenades after his murder. Indeed, the 381 pages of the report are replete with stories like these, all of them forensically accounted for.

Yet, as Roberts explains in his foreword to the report, its purpose was not simply to provide a comprehensive record of what happened. "Holocaust denial took a few years to take root in pockets of society, but on 7 October 2023 it took only hours for people to claim that the massacres in southern Israel had not taken place," he wrote. The report, therefore, was prepared "to counter such pernicious views and to lay down incontrovertible proof – for now, and for the years to come – that nearly 1,200 innocent people were indeed murdered by Hamas and its allies, and very often in scenes of sadistic barbarism not seen in world history since the (Imperial Japanese Army's) Rape of Nanjing in 1937."

In the days since the report was released, Roberts' social media accounts have been inundated with abuse from Oct. 7 deniers. "This is the kind of thing we're up against, and why people should read the Report and decide for themselves if it's 'Zionist propaganda,' or detailed, fully footnoted and irrefutable proof of the atrocities from

multifarious impeccable sources," he posted in response to one such missive. I don't believe that Roberts seriously thinks that his report will change the minds of those in thrall to the denial agenda. The abiding value of his work is that, when it comes to the detail and quality of his research, it offers an impressive counterweight for undecided readers who will encounter the deniers as they seek the truth.

Even so, given the epistemic crisis that envelopes public discourse these days, we would be naïve to expect that everyone will be persuaded of the truth. Like the struggle against antisemitism, the struggle against denialism has no end in sight.

Ben Cohen is a New York City-based journalist and author who writes a weekly column on Jewish and international affairs for JNS. To read more from him, visit cjn.org/cohen.

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FROM THE SAMUEL H. MILLER KEEPING OUR WORDS ALIVE DIGITAL ARCHIVE OF THE CLEVELAND JEWISH NEWS THIS WEEK IN THE CJN...

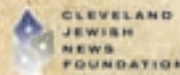


MARCH 28, 1969

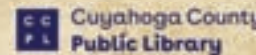
"AJCONGRESS VIEW FROM THE HILL"

Hometown issues pertaining to civil and human rights were discussed by the Cleveland delegation to the recent American Jewish Congress* National Women's Division biennial convention in Washington, D.C. when it met with Congressman Charles Vanik on Capitol Hill.

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DOUGLAS BLOOMFIELD

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Weaponizing pro-Israel antisemitism

Anyone involved in last year's protests against Israel's conduct of the war in Gaza and is not a U.S. citizen should be worried about their safety. The Trump administration has begun scooping up leaders in the name of fighting antisemitism and terrorism and flying them off to secret detention centers with a promise of more to follow.

Immigration officials insist they are targeting those who support foreign terrorists and say they must be deported regardless of their immigration status. But the motives of those orchestrating these deportations and the lack of transparency should have the American Jewish community very worried.

To be fair, some may really be bad guys and deserve to be arrested or deported, but according to the rule of law, not on the whim of a would-be autocrat.

For the moment the only thing keeping those people in the country are some courageous lawyers and judges willing to stand up to a vengeful president who is targeting them with invective and reprisals.

The courts will be sorting this out for months and possibly years. The administration brushes aside claims of First Amendment rights, citing – though so far not proving – national security threats.

The president and his followers have broadly painted the protesters as antisemites, possibly even the Jews who also opposed the Netanyahu government's war policies.

President Donald Trump has proclaimed his mission is protecting Israel and the Jews from those who oppose the Jewish state. That may resonate with many of his MAGA evangelical followers and Republican Jewish supporters, but it can also be read by those he has singled out for punishment as “You can blame the Jews for your problems.”

And the frantic effort to deport in the name of Israel raises the question of whether the Jews are really being helped – or being scapegoated by the president's crusade.

Is Trump an antisemite? Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-New York, insists he is not, but says this president gives the haters “safe harbor.” The two men differ on supporting Israel's handling of the Gaza war, leading the president to say the highest Jewish elected official in the country's history has “become a Palestinian. He used to be Jewish. He's not Jewish anymore.”

Apparently in addition to defying the courts and marginalizing Congress, Trump believes he is the arbiter of religious identification.

Amy Spitalnick, head of Jewish Council for Public Affairs, said Trump's slur “only makes Jews less safe.”

Few Jewish leaders came to Schumer's defense, apparently fearful the President would turn on them as well.

Using charges of antisemitism to attack those who don't share Trump's views has been called pro-Israel antisemitism, which vox.com described as “a simultaneous embrace of the Jewish state and attack on American Jews' place in American life.”

Pro-Palestinian protesters are not by definition antisemitic or anti-American. Nor is opposition to the current Israeli government, something polls show most American Jews and most Israelis share. Using charges of antisemitism to silence opponents of the Jewish state or to restrict First Amendment rights should be unacceptable, and it is definitely dangerous.

For all his rhetoric about fighting antisemitism, no president in the past century has more closely embraced it by his affinity for White supremacists, Christian nationalists, neo-Nazis, neo-fascists,

Holocaust deniers, militant extremists – like the Proud Boys and Oath Keepers – Islamophobes, assorted sordid hate groups and other antisemites. Several who fit these categories have been picked for posts in the new administration. Some have podcasts, websites, MAGA followings and other outreach that give platforms for spreading hate.

Let's be clear: Having a Jewish spouse, child, in-law, grandchild, lover, employee or one's best friends does not grant absolution.

In January, Trump issued an executive order telling American Jews, “With your vote, I will be your defender, your protector.” Democratic voters apparently are not included.

Trump has a history of accusing American Jews – at least those who don't support him – of dual loyalty, referring to Israel and its leader as “your country” and “your prime minister.” That includes tropes in campaign ads, social media postings, dog whistle remarks, scapegoating Jewish figures and embracing vile bigots.

Neither party has a monopoly on antisemitism. It is more disturbing on the right, however, because it permeates the White supremacism, Christian nationalism, isolationism and nativism that are part of the MAGA movement. And it is increasingly tolerated and even encouraged by one of the two major political parties.

Trump has used charges of antisemitism to discredit Democrats and Progressives but has been blind to it on the right.

The GOP and MAGA have a Jewish problem. All their declarations of love for Israel and opposition to antisemitism are not enough to overcome the discomfort most Jews feel with an increasingly authoritarian, anti-democratic right-wing administration. The crusade against diversity, equity and inclusion programs is billed as support for “meritocracy” but is really SWCM – straight white Christian male – culture. It is an extension of the xenophobic, racist Great Replacement theory.

Trump's closest adviser and benefactor, Elon Musk, recently told a rally of an extremist right wing neo-fascist German party that there is “too much focus on (Germany's) past guilt,” which was seen as a rebuke of the Jewish insistence that we should “never forget” the Holocaust. Musk even tried to absolve mass murderers and affix blame for the Shoah on “deep state” players. “Stalin, Mao and Hitler didn't

murder millions of people. Their public sector employees did,” he said.

The Trump administration is “absolutely weaponizing antisemitism” to silence critics of Israel and administration policies, and it makes Jewish students feel less safe, Kenneth Stern, director of the Center for Study of Hate at Bard College, said. “It puts pro-Israel Jewish students in a situation where they may be seen as trying to suppress speech rather than answer it,” he told NPR.

Trump has used the antisemitism weapon to pressure and intimidate his critics. He canceled \$400 million in federal grants for Columbia University ostensibly in response to its failure to address to address campus antisemitism, in reality as the first step in imposing MAGA ideological requirements on all federal funding.

That is “the absolute wrong approach,” Rep. Laura Friedman, D-California, told Jewish Insider. “In fact, it's going to make Jews responsible for the defunding of programs to deal with cancer research, with science, [and] has nothing to do with antisemitism.” The Jewish lawmaker said Trump's action is “a way to punish schools that this administration thinks ideologically are not in lockstep with MAGA.”

Other colleges, law firms and even federal judges have also been targeted by the wrath of Trump. He has also turned his anger abroad on allies like Canada, Mexico, Panama, Denmark and NATO. If he is willing to abandon them, Israel should take heed in the words of Pastor Martin Niemöller inscribed at the entrance of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum about complacency. If you don't know it, Google his name.

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JONATHAN S. TOBIN

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Netanyahu right about Israel's 'deep state'

For liberal and leftist critics of Israel's government, it was just the latest example of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's effort to follow the same playbook as President Donald Trump. When the former spoke recently of the efforts on the part of Israel's "deep state" to derail his government, both Israelis who voted for Netanyahu's political opponents in the last election and Democrats who backed former Vice President Kamala Harris tuned out everything that followed. As far as they are concerned, talk of a "deep state" in either country is just a right-wing conspiracy theory that is part of an attempt by both leaders to overturn or seriously undermine democracy.

That's also the line that most pundits are spreading about the prime minister's move to fire the head of the Shin Bet and the attorney general, as he seeks to carry on the war on Hamas without being held back by opponents inside the governing apparatus. Such analysts claim that Netanyahu's assertions about an army of bureaucrats – aided by elites who run the business, legal, media, academic and cultural establishments – is seeking to sabotage his government, is a figment of his imagination.

If Netanyahu were lying about the existence of a "deep state" and merely, as his opponents claim, seeking to grab power, that would, of course, be bad. But even if they believed that he was a would-be authoritarian, it would also mean that friends of Israel could rest easy, secure in the knowledge that there was nothing fundamentally corrupt about the structure of the country's government.

They could have confidence in its legal system; they could then sit back and watch the drama that has played out since Netanyahu won the November 2022 Knesset election and believe that democracy would ultimately be saved by Israel's all-powerful Supreme Court, which can always be counted to overturn just about everything he tries to do.

If only.

The problem is that Netanyahu is not lying. The Israeli "deep state" is all too real and the efforts of its operatives and their liberal elite supporters to hold on to the power they've held since the early days of the state have, as he said, done much to sabotage every prime minister that has come from the right.

The really bad news for Israel is that, unlike Trump, whose Article 2 constitutional powers do give him the ability and the right to make the sort of sweeping changes in the federal bureaucracy that can sweep

the American "deep state" out of power, Netanyahu has no such powers. If Israel's Supreme Court is brazen enough to carry out what is nothing less than a judicial coup, they can effectively stop Netanyahu not only from carrying out the government's determination to fire both the Shin Bet head and the attorney general, but from doing anything else, including adopting necessary measures for fighting the war on Hamas.

That, like the court's shameless ruling that invalidated a Knesset measure imposing even the most minimal efforts at reforming an out-of-control judiciary, could set off a constitutional crisis. It's one that can only be avoided by a decision by the country's democratically elected government to surrender to the country's decidedly non-democratic judicial rulers.

It's important to remind American observers of this Israeli political dustup that, contrary to the disingenuous claims of Netanyahu's opponents, this isn't about defending the same kind of checks and balances between the separate branches of government that made the U.S. Constitution a work of genius that has preserved the American republic for the last 237 years.

Like some other parliamentary democracies, Israel has no written constitution. In Britain, that problem has been overcome by the way the country's democratic system naturally evolved over several centuries, as traditions rooted in history helped restrain the power of government. Though even there, recent legal changes enacted by left-wing Labor governments are potentially eroding freedoms and equality under the law.

But Israel's legal problems stem from a judicial revolution that began in the last 30 years under the aegis of former Supreme Court President Aharon Barak. He arrogated to the judiciary almost unlimited powers to overturn virtually any measure undertaken

by the country's government.

Rather than defending a stable system of checks and balances, Barak's judicial revolution created a system in which there is no check on the court, giving its permanent liberal majority the ability to override governmental decisions.

This is reinforced by the stranglehold that the country's elites have long held on its major institutions, whose numbers overwhelmingly come from left-leaning secular Ashkenazi Jews. This enabled it to have a permanent and undemocratic check on the will of the voters.

That's an issue because the electorate is increasingly made up of right-leaning traditional and religious Jews, as well as the Mizrahim, who currently make up about half of the population.

Netanyahu's 2022 win reflected that trend, since it gave Israel its first government made up solely of right-wing and religious representatives, who commanded a clear majority of the Knesset.

That shocked the liberal/non-religious establishment, which was not only upset about being unable to prevent Netanyahu's return to office after 18 months of an ineffective anybody-but-Bibi government. They also feared that, given the demographic trends, the left might not prevail again at the ballot box for the foreseeable future.

Netanyahu's new government then sought to enact changes that imposed some relatively mild restraints on the power of the courts.

Such a shift would have restored balance to a system that was increasingly resembling a juristocracy. But the left rightly regarded it as a threat to its grip on the last vestige of its once unchallenged power.

Chaos followed as an anti-Netanyahu "resistance" took to the streets to prevent any change. Though it was presented to the world as an effort to save democracy, the truth was just the opposite. The goal of the demonstrators was to prevent democratically elected governments with which they disagreed from being able to truly rule.

The protest movement that arose in 2023 nearly shut down the country. And, by inspiring a revolt among Israel Defense Forces reservists, especially those serving in the Air Force and filling other technical roles in the military, gave Israel's foes the impression that the country was too weak and divided to defend itself. The left continues to blame Netanyahu, rather than itself for this dangerous development. But it not only stopped judicial reform; it also set the stage for the Oct. 7 massacre and the war that followed.

Nevertheless, Israel's deep state has continued to snipe at the government and undermine its ability to function.

The merits of Netanyahu's decision to fire the head of the Shin Bet may be debated. But the notion that a head of government who has no confidence in one of his intelligence chiefs (particularly one who, it should be pointed out, is among those most responsible for the Oct. 7, 2023, debacle) can't replace him with someone he trusts is, like the 2023 street protests, nothing more than a thinly veiled effort to topple the prime minister by undemocratic means.

The same goes for an attorney general who seems to believe her unelected post gives her the right to thwart Netanyahu on

TOBIN | CONTINUED ON PAGE 38



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measures, like choosing a head of the Shin Bet, about which she has no authority.

At the same time, Netanyahu is still battling a set of dubious corruption charges in court. These, like the equally flimsy cases Democrats brought against Trump to bankrupt and jail him, are nothing more than banana republic-style lawfare.

The most telling argument being flung at Netanyahu is that he is wrong to do anything that might divide the country at a time of war. But this claim falls apart when you realize that the Shin Bet head may, like the rest of the “deep state,” be interested in more than just unseating Netanyahu. They might also wish to prevent him from seeking victory in the war against Hamas, rather than consenting to a deal that would ensure the terrorists remain in power in Gaza, since that conforms to their ideas about the conflict. If Netanyahu is to effectively lead Israel in wartime, he deserves to have subordinates who agree with his vision, not opponents seeking to hamper him.

The power of the haredi sector, which grows with each new election as their numbers increase more than that of secular Jews, is in stark contrast with their refusal to serve in the military and defend the country. The fact that a large percentage of haredi men also don’t make meaningful contributions to the economy, or even support their own families, is galling to the

majority of Israelis. Of course, the power of the haredim would be checked if some of the parties in the opposition would agree to work with Netanyahu. But they are so bitter about him – and, after more than three decades as a leading figure in Israeli politics, including 17 as prime minister, his enemies are legion – that they have refused to partner with him.

Still, even if you agree that the influence of the ultra-Orthodox should be sharply reduced, the democratic way to achieve this is at the ballot box. If Netanyahu stays in power, it is not because of any authoritarian tendencies, but due to his ability to win elections. To claim, as the prime minister’s detractors do, that a system that produces results that they dislike isn’t really democratic, is not so much absurd as it is a form of gaslighting.

American politics, too, is increasingly driven by class, education and income levels. The Democrats have become, much to their detriment, the party of the credentialed elites and the very rich, while Trump and the Republicans, much to their advantage, now draw most of their support from the working class, those without college degrees and/or make under \$100,000 a year.

Trump’s efforts to reduce the power of the federal bureaucracy is an attempt to change a situation in which its left-leaning apparatchiks now form an unelected and unaccountable fourth branch of

government. It remains to be seen how much success he will have in cutting them down to size. The same is true of his much-needed campaign to defund institutions of higher education that have been captured by woke ideologues who, as one aspect of their insidious influence, have fueled the surge of antisemitism since Oct. 7, 2023.

Yet any efforts to draw comparisons between the two countries inevitably fall apart. Each country may have its own version of the “deep state,” but Israel’s political divide is the product of its unique Jewish demography.

Nevertheless, American friends of Israel should not reflexively accept the claims of the country’s establishment and its allies in the U.S. media that Netanyahu is endangering democracy. Like Trump, he rules over a country where approximately half the voters hate him and will always vote for his rivals no matter what he does.

The existence of a “deep state” in Israel, like that in the United States, is not really debatable.

The firm grip on power held by those who are entrenched in Israel’s bureaucracy and the establishments that run many of its institutions is not the same thing as democratic legitimacy. Their liberal opinions and contempt for the Mizrahi and religious majority does not give them the right to effectively hamstring the government that the country voted into office at the last election.

Israel’s voters will likely have the chance to choose a new government at some point by the end of 2026 when the current Knesset’s term is up. There are reasons to support a change at the top due to Oct. 7 and Netanyahu’s long tenure. But no one should underestimate the chances that, if he runs again, he may win yet another term in office.

Until then, the prime minister should be given the ability to govern and, hopefully, lead the country to a victory that will finally end the threat from Hamas and its Iranian sponsors. And American friends of Israel should give no aid or comfort to those seeking to prevent him from doing that, regardless of how they feel about him or the haredim.

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Misleading comments harmful

The constant misleading comments against the charter review commission and their process on Pepper Pike social media and in the public continue to be divisive for our city. All voices need to be heard. That is not the case. The conversations of a few are aimed at dismissing the incredible work of our charter review commission while claiming otherwise.

The charter review commission was made up of nine outstanding Pepper Pike residents who were voted on by our mayor and city council. Our mayor voted for six of the nine members of this commission. He attended 10 of the 17 charter review commission meetings giving input to the commission.

The Commission was set up to create guardrails to protect our City going forward into the future. Our Mayor vetoed the process. He posted to the City website a misleading letter by omission, failing to collaborate with Council.

The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections felt confident in the amount of time a voter needs to understand an issue – 60 days notice. The redline version was sent out recently. I would advise reading this and the final report that details the reasons behind the commission’s decisions.

We all have one vote. Pushing it to November does not change this fact. Educate yourselves and ignore the chatter. Contact one of your council representatives and have a conversation with them. After all, we did vote for them just like our mayor.

Grace Barber
Pepper Pike

How to submit letters

WRITE US: The Cleveland Jewish News welcomes letters from readers. Letters should be no longer than 250 words and may be edited. Submit letters online at cjn.org/letters, send letters to CJN, 23880 Commerce Park, Suite 1, Beachwood, OH 44122, or email letters@cjn.org. Please include your complete name and your place of residence, and a telephone number for fact-checking purposes. Readers can post comments to any online story or feature at cjn.org.

Election letters deadline noon April 14

Ohio has a primary/special election on May 6, 2025. The Cleveland Jewish News will accept election-related letters through NOON on Monday, April 14 for consideration for the Friday, April 18 edition. No election-related letter received after the deadline will be printed.

- Letters that rebut facts in letters published through Friday, April 18 will be printed no later than Friday, April 25 if received by NOON on Monday, April 21.
- Letters should be no longer than 250 words.
- Letters of rebuttal should address each incorrect fact in one sentence only.
- Letters should be unique to the CJN and not appear elsewhere.
- No new election letters will be printed after Friday, April 18 as that does not leave rebuttal time before the Tuesday, May 6 election.
- Letters should be submitted via email to letters@cjn.org, online at cjn.org/letters or by U.S. mail to 23880 Commerce Park Suite 1, Beachwood, OH 44122.
- Letters must include your name and place of residence for publication, and daytime telephone number for verification purposes.
- Full letters policy is at cjn.org/letters.

Vote yes for Pepper Pike issue

On May 6, Pepper Pike residents will vote on proposed changes to our 60-year-old charter – when LBJ was president and Ronald Reagan California’s governor.

Nine residents were selected by city council and mayor from applicants to review the charter, suggesting changes/updates. For 20 weeks, the commission met in public sessions. Residents were encouraged to actively participate in the process via email updates, hard copy mailings and Pepper Pike Post. Through all this work, the charter remains largely unchanged.

Key revisions: updated language/removal of provisions not consistent with Ohio’s Constitution/law; establish qualifications for mayor and council; establish separation of powers with council selecting a presiding officer who would set agenda and preside over council meetings. The mayor would still attend and could add items to the agenda. Currently, the mayor makes the agenda and presides over council meetings, although he doesn’t vote. He appoints residents to the planning commission, architectural review and other committees without council input.

The mayor has said, “We are not broken.” Do we wait until we are “broken” to look at the charter. Pepper Pike has evolved, but our charter remains firmly in the last century. Repeatedly, we have been told that Pepper Pike is changing due to an influx of new, younger residents. If true, why doesn’t our charter need updating?

Let’s move forward, let’s be proactive instead of reactive.

I urge all residents to read the charter commission report at pepperpikecharter.com.

Vote yes on Issue 17. Let’s move Pepper Pike into the 21st century.

Lou Ann Graham
Pepper Pike

A happy Purim story

As we do every year, we placed a large order of hamantaschen from Davis Bakery to celebrate Purim with our friends and family. I love the cookie dough, but my partner prefers the raised dough, and they’re getting harder to get each year.

When we picked up the order, we were told there were no raised dough poppyseed. Apparently a poppyseed war going on with bakeries, and someone had usurped all the poppyseed to make strudel. The manager saw how disappointed we were, and after two days of calling back and forth, the manager found four raised dough poppyseed to complete our order. God bless Davis Bakery for understanding and taking such good care of its customers.

Carol Rivchun
Cleveland Heights

FOR THE RECORD

- The Cleveland Kosher Food Pantry purchases kosher protein products. Incorrect information was reported. (“Food pantries face cuts, urge community support,” March 21)
- IRA stands for individual retirement account. Incorrect information was reported. (“Tips for managing an inherited retirement account,” March 21)

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CORRECTIONS

We strive for 100% accuracy throughout each of our publications. We will promptly print corrections of substantive errors, “For The Record.” If you believe incorrect content has appeared in the Cleveland Jewish News, contact Editor Bob Jacob at bjacob@cjn.org or 216-342-5207.

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Ending program violates faith

Possibly one of the greatest rabbis of the 20th century was Menachem Schneerson. When students asked the Rebbe what was the most important commandment, he told them it was to love G-d with all your heart. He then added the second most important commandment was to love your neighbor like yourself.

Sadly, last week my synagogue, Congregation Mishkan Or, violated one of our faith’s most important commandments by ending a 35-year-old program that brought Alcoholics Anonymous members once a week inside our temple. The executive committee decided it was a security issue. Everything that happens in our synagogue is a security issue. For 35 years, these friends and neighbors have been attending one meeting a week. They are part of our community. They are Jew and Gentile, and some are members of our synagogue.

How did the executive committee come to this decision? Was there discussion among the entire board, the clergy, the congregation, or with members that attend these meetings? Security is an excuse to get rid of a program. Besides violating the commandment to love your neighbor like yourself, the fundamental issue is what kind of synagogue are we.

Steven Schecter
Pepper Pike



New cancer radiation therapy reduces time, improves odds

MONICA ROBINS

✉ monicarobins@wkyc.com | @monicarobins



Hi Monica,
My friend just had radiation for cancer and said she only needed two appointments. It was done at University Hospitals in Cleveland. I thought radiation would take weeks to complete. How is this even possible?

Sandra

A game-changing new type of radiation therapy cuts time while improving precision in targeting tumors, a development that could transform cancer care as we know it.

Traditional radiation therapy has been a lengthy process, often stretching up to eight weeks, with patients making daily trips to the hospital five days a week. For many patients, this schedule creates significant disruption to their lives affecting work, family commitments and overall quality of life.

New technology at University Hospitals is changing that equation.

"I think it's critical for patients to make sure they get that information, because there's probably less than 5% of centers in the United States (that) have adaptive radiotherapy," explained Dr. Daniel Spratt, chair of radiation oncology at UH Seidman Cancer Center in Cleveland.

The game-changer is called the Varian Ethos 2.0, and its capabilities sound like something out of science fiction. Unlike traditional radiation that uses the same treatment map day after day, this sophisticated machine can create a new, precise plan in just six seconds.

"This machine can get a high-resolution CT scan, a diagnostic quality scan and we can remake that plan every single day of treatment," Spratt said while demonstrating the technology.

The importance of this daily adaptation cannot be overstated, especially for treating tumors in organs that move, such as the lungs or abdomen. Traditional radiation therapy faces a significant challenge: As tumors shrink during treatment, there's a risk of affecting healthy tissue. The Varian Ethos eliminates this concern by updating its targeting daily.

"The more confident you are that that tumor is exactly here and the healthy tissue is at a distance, you can keep that dose substantially lower," Spratt said. "There's been different studies done where actually the side effect profile is significantly lower with this adaptive approach."

The technology's precision is enhanced by artificial intelligence, which works alongside the physician, medical physicist and radiation therapist. This collaborative approach accounts for daily changes in patient anatomy – everything from a fuller stomach after lunch to subtle movements during digestion.

Perhaps most remarkable is how this technology condenses treatment time.

"Almost no patient will receive more than five treatments, so it's usually between one and five treatments that we give," Spratt said. This represents a dramatic improvement from the traditional eight-week schedule, and he adds that because they can see more patients in a day, the price would be similar to traditional radiation.

The impact of this advancement is already being felt across various cancer treatments. Dr. Lauren Henke – director of gastrointestinal radiation oncology – along with Dr. Alex Price and Dr. Rojano Kashani, successfully treated numerous patients with complex pancreatic cancer. In another breakthrough, Dr. Angela Jia recently treated a kidney cancer patient with a single treatment of adaptive radiosurgery, building on years of research by Dr. Lee Ponsky and the urology team at UH.

As the first in Northeast Ohio and one of the first in North America to acquire the Varian Ethos 2.0, UH Seidman Cancer Center is leading the way in adaptive radiotherapy. The technology's versatility allows it to treat a wide range of cancers throughout the body, including prostate, lung, breast, pancreatic, liver, head and neck, bladder, gynecologic and anal cancers.

Dear Monica,
You did a story on a way to predict who is at risk for falls. This might help my mother. Can I get more information?

Thanks,
Shelley

As Northeast Ohio battles another round of winter weather, many of us are grabbing our shovels to clear walkways and stairs. But for older adults and those with Parkinson's disease, navigating icy steps can be more than just challenging – it can be dangerous.

Now, Cleveland Clinic researchers have developed a breakthrough device that could help predict who's most at risk for dangerous falls on stairs or simply walking and turning. While less than 6% of falls occur on steps, they're among the deadliest, resulting in more fatalities and serious injuries than falls on level ground.

"We know the biggest predictor of a future fall is having fallen before," said Dr. Jay Alberts, director of Cleveland Clinic Concussion Center and vice chair of innovation at Cleveland Clinic Neurological Institute.

The innovative technology, called SAFE GAIT (Stair Ambulation Functional Gait Assessment), looks deceptively simple. Patients climb a short flight of stairs, walk about 20 feet, turn around and descend. But beneath each step lies sophisticated sensors collecting crucial data about how people move.

"If we know someone is at risk, you can obviously recommend them for physical therapy, but that's very broad," Alberts explained. "With this we're able to really hone in on what are the potential problems or what's causing them to be at risk. Some people may be at risk because they have deficits in muscle strength, so they're going up the steps potentially slower. Some people may have coordination difficulties. Individuals with Parkinson's, for example, may have problems with the turn."

I tried it myself and let me tell you – it revealed I need to be more careful going downstairs. The device creates a detailed assessment showing exactly where a person might be most vulnerable to falling.

Alberts envisions this technology becoming part of routine Medicare wellness assessments. It could be particularly valuable in nursing homes, where identifying fall risks early could prevent devastating accidents.

The Cleveland Clinic is seeking older adults and individuals with Parkinson's disease to participate in their SAFE GAIT study. If you're interested in contributing to this potentially life-saving research, contact the Cleveland Clinic Neurological Institute at 216-780-9160.

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To submit your question and read more from Monica Robins, visit cjn.org/AskMonicaRobins

Watch Monica Robins nightly on 3News 

Monica Robins is the Senior Health Correspondent at 3News. The information provided in this column is for educational and informational purposes only. Always seek the advice of your physician or other qualified health care provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical condition or treatment and before undertaking a new health care regimen. Never disregard professional medical advice or delay in seeking it because of something you have read in this column or on our website.

Photo / Camp Gan Izzy



CAMP GUIDE

A Cleveland Jewish News Advertising Special Section

Mandel JCC offers holiday vacation camps

LYDIA KACALA

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As part of its camp offerings, the Mandel Jewish Community Center of Cleveland in Beachwood offers vacation camps, which take place throughout the year during certain holidays on the school calendar.

The camps, part of the Mandel JCC's J-Kids Department, are meant to keep children engaged while school isn't in session and provide an option for working parents that might not have the same breaks from work as their children do from school, Aubree Lieberman, director of day camps

and youth services, told the Cleveland Jewish News. The camps offer active programming for the children involved, who range in age from kindergarten-age to those in sixth grade.

"Our vacation camps offer children a fun and active alternative to staying at home, while giving parents the peace of mind that their kids are in a safe, structured and enriching environment," Lieberman said. "J-Kids Vacation Camps have been a cornerstone of the JCC for over 30 years, and we're proud to continue that tradition."

Throughout the day, campers can participate in different activities, including arts and crafts, indoor or outdoor sports,



"The vacation camps are special because it's a sense of adventure, creativity and connecting kids from all different diverse backgrounds."

Aubree Lieberman
Mandel Jewish Community Center of Cleveland

and group games like bingo or "Jeopardy!"-style activities, she said. Each day of camp also looks different from the previous day, she added.

Depending on the time of year or holiday during which the camp takes place, games or other parts of the camp experience are themed, Lieberman said.

"We love incorporating creative themes into our vacation camps, especially around holidays," Lieberman said. "On Election Day, for example, kids cast their votes for favorite snacks. Around Thanksgiving, we might host a playful turkey trot and recreate the 'Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade' — complete with our own mini floats and conversations about gratitude."

She said some themes may have nothing to do with the holiday to "break it up." For example, during the winter break vacation camp in 2024, one of the days was pirate themed.

"For our Pirate Day, campers created their own pirate names, designed eye patches and even 'walked the plank' — using a balance beam, of course," she said. "We're intentional about fully immersing kids in each theme to spark imagination and make each day feel like an adventure."

Campers also eat lunch and snacks during the day, but the goal of the camps is to ensure children are "moving, learning and engaged," she said.

Lieberman said she has seen campers from different backgrounds, school systems and communities develop friendships by attending the vacation camps.

"What makes our vacation camps truly special is the sense of adventure, creativity, and connection they foster among children from a variety of backgrounds," Lieberman said. "Our dedicated J-Kids staff go above and beyond to ensure it's not just childcare — it's about creating meaningful, lasting experiences."

Vacation camps cost \$80 per day for Mandel JCC members and \$100 per day for nonmembers. To register, call the Mandel JCC at 216-831-0700 or visit mandeljcc.org/J-Day-Camps.

The Mandel JCC is at 26001 S. Woodland Road.

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Summer camps have right RX when child gets sick

STEVE MARK

Ever witness a medical team on summer camp check-in day? It can be a lesson in precision.

“Does your son do better with liquid or chewable Benadryl?” is one query you’ll hear often.



Stevens

“When was the last time your daughter had to use an epinephrine injector?” is another.

Never mind you’ve probably answered those questions before you even arrived to drop off your child at camp, thanks to the standard pre-camp questionnaire that took considerable care to answer and perhaps even more care to issue.

It’s all well worth the time and effort, and no question is a small one.

Liz Stevens of Camp Walden in Cheboygan, Mich., offers tips to stay safer at camp.

“With 220 to 250 kids arriving at camp on day one, our medical professionals require as much background and medical history as possible on those kids,” Stevens said. “That’s vital when you have campers with life-threatening allergies, for example, or children coming to camp who have had recent or recurring injuries at home.”

While many camps are in rustic settings, their medical records are high-tech.

“It’s a lot of information,” Stevens said. “But if you begin reviewing medical forms and histories prior to the camp season and making sure that your health team knows what’s coming to camp, caring for all those kids isn’t as hard as it might seem. Of course, campers get sick and injure themselves at camp, and those situations sometimes require a seasoned physician or nurse to attend to (them). As long as everyone on the health staff knows where they are supposed to be and when, and what their responsibilities are, we’re in good shape.”

Most camps have established protocol with regard to notification to parents should a camper become sick or suffer an injury.

“We call home whenever our staff doctor believes a child requires a prescription, and whenever a camper spends the night in the Infirmary,” Stevens said. “Our camp health officers will reach out when a camper has what appears to be a minor but chronic issue for a few days. Of course, we call home immediately if a child needs a trip to the urgent care or emergency room.”

If you are in the early stages of planning for your young one’s camp experience, Stevens has no hesitation when asked what should be in any camper’s first-aid kit.

“Allergy medication,” she said. “We’re in the north woods, and lots of kids suffer from allergies – some of which they may not have at home. Communal living makes it easy for viruses to spread, so if there’s a cold in the cabin, chances are everyone is going to get it. Dermatological issues come up a lot as well – rashes, open mosquito bites, even impetigo.”

In this era, when there is a statistic for everything, there are statistics that predict the most common summer camp injury – falls, which according to many accounts are responsible for half of all summer camp medical issues.

Steve Mark is a freelance journalist.

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“It’s a lot of information. But if you begin reviewing medical forms and histories prior to the camp season and making sure that your health team knows what’s coming to camp, caring for all those kids isn’t as hard as it might seem. Of course, campers get sick and injure themselves at camp, and those situations sometimes require a seasoned physician or nurse to attend to (them). As long as everyone on the health staff knows where they are supposed to be and when, and what their responsibilities are, we’re in good shape.”

Liz Stevens
Camp Walden

Assistance available to offset costs of summer camp

STEVE MARK

Paying for summer camp takes commitment. The average summer camp for a day camp, according to TrustedCare, can cost anywhere between \$50 to \$500 per week.



Taunt

For an overnight camp, of course, the tab can be between \$1,000 to \$2,000 per week.

Don't fret yet, though. There are resources to help parents navigate the costs. Many camps offer scholarships, and you'll want to compare prices between nonprofit camps and those which are for-profit.

Amanda Taunt, vice president for operations at Great Lakes Science Center in Cleveland, offered some insight into the museum's summer day camp and how area parents can achieve a great experience for their young ones while not breaking the bank.

"About 9 to 10% of our total camp registrations each year are directly from a scholarship from the science center," Taunt said. "About 15% of our total campers each year receive a scholarship or assistance with funding through another program.

"We offer scholarships that cover the entire cost of camp, plus lunch and extended care. We also work closely with programs through the Cuyahoga County Board of

"We offer scholarships that cover the entire cost of camp, plus lunch and extended care. We also work closely with programs through the Cuyahoga County Board of Developmental Disabilities, OhioRISE and ACE Ohio, so parents can pay for camp using funds from those entities."

Amanda Taunt
Great Lakes Science Center

Developmental Disabilities, OhioRISE and ACE Ohio, so parents can pay for camp using funds from those entities."

Taunt noted that at a camp such as the one at Great Lakes Science Center, registration costs have increased slightly each year, like most other camps, mostly due to increased staffing and material costs.

"For external funding, requests go through the external agency's program process," Taunt said. "For our scholarships, we begin accepting applications when general registration begins. Children at a Title 1 school who are

eligible for free and reduced lunch qualify to receive a camp scholarship.

"We do not ask for eligibility proof, as this is often a barrier for a family to apply.

Taunt said that the camp, like many others, will work with families on special payment plans.

"We also offer payment plans that allow families to split up camp payments over several months," Taunt said.

"We offer significant discounts for summer camps, including our \$50 early-bird discount through January and \$25 off for members, as well as sibling and multi-week discounts and alumni discounts. We allow families to stack discounts so a family could save as much as \$100 if all were applied. The same discounts are available for our winter break camps, except we do not currently offer an early-bird discount on winter break camps."

For sleepaway camps, being a good shopper can make the difference between making the experience affordable, or not.

ActivityHero echoes Taunt's reference to money-saving tips for parents, including finding out if a camp offers a better rate for registering early or for committing to multiple weeks.

Above all: Do your camp shopping early and pack lots of sunscreen.

Steve Mark is a freelance journalist.



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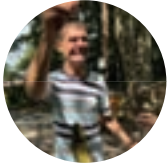
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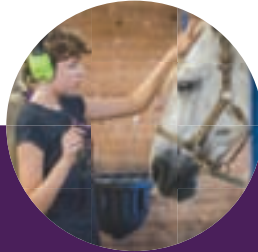
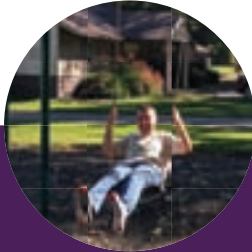
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Donald, Father of 2024 Summer Overnight camper



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From generation to generation, summer camp forms bonds

LYDIA KACALA

✉ lkacala@cjn.org

When she was about 12 years old, Abby Fischer began attending Falcon Camp, a 45-acre overnight camp in Carrollton. Today, her older son, Ben Fischer, 12, attends the summer camp.

Fischer's family has a long history of being involved in summer camps, going back to her grandmother, Virginia Potter, who owned Brentwood Riding Camp in New York from the 1940s through 1980s.

"Camp for me is like a second home," Fischer, a Columbus resident, told the Cleveland Jewish News. "Camping is actually, I say it's in our blood."

She said she first started going to Falcon Camp because her father, Joel Potter, wanted her to have a camp experience in an environment that was similar to the one he grew up in. He grew up to be "very active" in the summer camp his mother owned, eventually running the horseback riding department and finding his way to serve as co-owner, she said.

"When I went to camp, I had no idea what to expect, but I left there and almost 30 years later, it's still one of the most important places to me," she said.

During her summers growing up in the Columbus suburb of Bexley, Fischer was able to experience things that "summer at home doesn't provide," including horseback riding, archery and sailing, all while making friends from "all over the place," she said.

Continuing the camping tradition in his family, Ben has been attending Falcon Camp since he was 6 years old and has experienced five seasons, with a break in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Fischer said. Her younger son, Riley, 5, isn't attending camp this year, but she said she hopes he will go next year.

Throughout his time as a camper, Ben has developed a love for water-related activities, such as sailing, swimming and canoeing, he told the CJN. He also enjoys sharing his stories from camp with Fischer when he returns.

"Especially when I come home, I like to share my stories with her," Ben said. "It's really fun, and I like to hear her stories and our different perspectives about camp."

The mother-son duo are able to bond over the things they've both experienced in the same place, and even with the same people, Fischer said. Ben and Fischer know the same people at the camp, as well, with some of the Falcon Camp administration having been campers at the same time as Fischer.

At Falcon Camp, Jackie Finch, co-health



▲ **Abby Fischer, a Falcon Camp alumni, spends time with her sons, Riley Fischer, now 5, and Ben Fischer, now 12, and her father, Joel Potter.** | Submitted photos

director, has been a staff member when both Fischer and her son were campers, she told the CJN. She first met Fischer when she was her camp counselor and now she serves as a nurse during Ben's summer camp experience.

"We bonded way back when over our love for camp," Finch, a full-time emergency room nurse at The Queen's Medical Center in Honolulu, said.

Finch's family, including her grandparents, children and cousins, have a strong relationship with the camp going back four generations.

Fischer said she loves getting to watch as her son falls in love with the same camp she did.

"It's been incredible watching something that means so much to me and something that I've stayed so close to throughout the years become something similar for him, too," Fischer said. "And he loves it for his own reasons, not just because I loved it. You really see the bonds between him and camp that's really forming."

After her father died in May 2024, Fischer began thinking more about the connection camp created in her family, she said. The common camp experience in her family helped develop bonds between each generation.

"This has been on my mind a lot, but just thinking about how cool it is to know that we've had this part of us that we share and we get it," she said. "Camp is a unique experience that not everybody understands, especially if you don't attend summer camp, and I just feel like that brings everybody closer together."

Summer camp can help students with education, too

LYDIA KACALA
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For about nine months out of the year, students are actively involved in educational activities, including school, homework and other study programs or after-school activities. During the summer months, it's possible for children to forget what they learned during the previous school year.



Rouse

According to a 2024 survey from Progress Learning, 31.3% of teachers feel that the students entering the grade they teach retained the information they learned the previous school year. However, 63.6% of teachers feel the students leaving the grade they teach have retained the information they learned and are prepared for the next

school year. The survey also looked at the areas in which the most regression occurs. Out of seven subjects, 74.8% of people said reading regression was in their top three concerns. Writing regression was ranked as a second or third most common concern by 46.9% of those that responded to the survey. Math was ranked as a top four concern by a majority of people who responded, with 25.1% ranking it third. The disruption of routine and lack of consistency was ranked as the No. 1 reason for learning loss over summer break by 28% of people, and an additional 71% ranked it as a top three issue, the survey said. The Cleveland Jewish News spoke with Mary Rouse, director of outdoor experiences at the Cleveland Metroparks, to discuss how summer camp can be beneficial to a child's education.

CJN: What do children learn at camp?
Rouse: Summer camp experiences are a great way to supplement the social, emotional and even academic learning that takes place in school and in the home. It often puts together youth from different backgrounds and communities and broadens their experience meeting and interacting with people who may be different than them. Summer camps can also offer youth a “deep dive” into a topic or skill that they are interested in, such as nature ID, or technology that helps identify plants, animals and other things in nature, outdoor recreation and computer or language skills. In the case of nature-based outdoor camps, youth can grow their comfort level in these types of environments and engage in less-structured learning and play, which is great for brain development.

CJN: How can being in an educational environment over the summer months be beneficial for children?
Rouse: Most parents and educators are familiar with the “summer slide.” This refers to the fact that most children lose academic ground, especially in reading and math, over the summer. It is similar to physical activity, meaning it's a use-it-or-lose it type of phenomenon. Children who remain mentally engaged over the summer months are known to exhibit significantly less of this “summer slide.”

CJN: How can learning over summer impact the next school year?
Rouse: Keeping your child engaged and learning over the summer is a great way to lessen the adjustment back to school in the fall. It can help keep them on a regular sleep/activity schedule and may help those with social or emotional issues gain ground over the summer through interactions with other youth and adults.



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Parents should look for camps with ACA accreditation

BILL MOTCHAN

Camp Emma Kaufmann is one of 2,300 U.S. camps that have an important designation: they are accredited by the American Camp Association. Only 11.5% of all 20,000 U.S. camps can make that claim. For camps like Camp Emma Kaufmann, that places them in elite territory, according to camp director Aaron Cantor.

"Accreditation through ACA demonstrates a camp's commitment to the highest standards in safety, programming and operations, enhancing credibility with families and peers," Cantor said. "By joining ACA and pursuing accreditation, camps strengthen their ability to deliver meaningful, high-quality experiences that positively impact campers and staff."

Cantor, whose camp is operated by the JCC of Greater Pittsburgh, has been a member of the ACA for 20 years. He also serves as an accreditation visitor, a peer review role. That is a key component of the accreditation process, according to Henry DeHart, ACA interim president and CEO. In fact, it was one of DeHart's first assignments when he began his career.

"When I became a full-time staff member at a Y camp, the very first thing the camp director did was to say, 'You need to become a member of ACA, and an accreditation visitor,'" DeHart said. "As a camp professional, going on accreditation visits to other camps is one of the only other times that you can see a camp while it's in session in the summer."

"It was a great opportunity to see another camp, to learn from another camp," he said. "I appreciated not only the implications of being accredited, but I got a lot of personal professional development out of being an accreditation visitor."

Obtaining accreditation requires a camp to be graded on 266 standards, 41 of which are mandatory for compliance. It covers a variety of areas, including food services, emergency procedures, medication storage and equipment maintenance. The written checklist is supported by a site visit where a trained volunteer performs a visual inspection of the camp's practices and documentation. The camp must also maintain standards to keep its accreditation.



Cantor



DeHart

"Normally, a camp would be revisited every five years," DeHart said. "If it's the first time for accreditation, then they get the revisit in three years. If there's a change in leadership, that triggers an in-person visit, as well. There is also a robust educational process in the years without a site visit. We call that the annual accreditation review process."

Beyond the accreditation process, the ACA offers member camps a variety of virtual conferences and online learning opportunities, including webinars and certification courses. The ACA accreditation program has been a camping industry seal of approval for more than 70 years in some form.

"It's really the only national accreditation program for camping around health, safety and risk management," DeHart said. "Camps are largely regulated at the state level if they're regulated at all. And many states have very minimal or no regulations."

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, many states didn't require a background check for employment at camps, DeHart said. He cautioned that ACA accreditation isn't meant to replace regulation, but it is an important benchmark. Accreditation isn't intended as a guarantee, either, since with issues like safety, there are no guarantees that a child will survive a week in the wilderness without a scrape or bruise.

"We like to say it is the best assurance that a parent can have that a camp has robust practices around health, safety and risk management," DeHart said. "It is a strong indication that a camp is committed to and invested in continually reviewing their practices."

Bill Motchan is a freelance journalist.

Summer camp jobs can benefit you later in life

BILL MOTCHAN

Henry DeHart fell in love with camping as a child and it continued when he was a teenager. At age 19, he worked in a camp and had a level of responsibility equivalent to a middle-manager in the business world.

“I was responsible for a staff of 36,” DeHart told the Cleveland Jewish News. “I was doing formal evaluations. I was doing training. And I had a fleet of 250 boats that I had to care for worth several million dollars in assets.”

Now the interim president and CEO of the American Camp Association, DeHart believes there’s no better way for a young person to get valuable work experience than in a summer camp.

“From a business standpoint, it’s hard to find an environment where a young person can encounter that amount of responsibility that quickly,” he said.

Then there are the fringe benefits, like working in the outdoors, going on wilderness adventures while off the clock and living virtually expense-free. Those are just some of the reasons a camp



DeHart



Mahen

counselor position can be an ideal way for a high school or college student to spend nine weeks in the summer instead of waiting tables, according to Nici Mahen, assistant camp director at Falcon Camp in Carrollton. Making new friends is part of that experience.

“It’s just that connection and common bond that they have,” Mahen said. “And to this day, many staff 10 or 20 years later remain in touch. Those are the lifelong relationships that you gain from being in a place where you are isolated, but in a good way.”

The camp setting and responsibilities of staffers can come in handy when they get

back to civilization and go job-hunting for a permanent position, Mahen said. When a prospective employer sees camp experience on a resume, it speaks to the candidate’s ability to work on a team toward a common goal.

“A lot of the kids are missing face-to-face skills, and employers perceive that,” Mahen said. “I think being a camp counselor really helps with situations like, how do you have a disagreement with another co-worker respectfully?”

The environment in camp also is conducive to unplugging from technology. During a campfire under a full moon, you’re less likely to check email or social media. Mahen said it represents an immersive experience.

“Some people enjoy taking a break from all the other things in the outside world,” Mahen said. “For potential staff members, those are the benefits of a resident camp.”

One of the main characteristics a camp counselor should have is a love of working with children. A new staffer can easily pick up other necessary skills.

“I can teach you how to make bracelets if you want to work with crafts,” she said.

“I can teach you how to play gaga ball. But what I can’t teach is that love and passion for working with children and knowing that that’s something that is important to you, because it’s something that unifies all of us in our experience.”

The pay varies for employment in summer camp and depends on the staffer’s qualifications and experience. An average paycheck for the nine-week duration is \$4,000, according to Mahen.

“If you are a lifeguard, or if you have a lot of experience with horseback riding, you’re going to be paid differently than a staff member who doesn’t have certifications,” Mahen said.

For many summer camp staffers, the compensation comes largely in the form of memories and lifetime relationships, she said.

“It’s the way that staff members will write me and say, ‘Do you remember in the summer we spent together,’” Mahen said. “I really do think those lifelong memories and the friendships that are made are the piece that keeps people coming back.”

Bill Motchan is a freelance journalist.



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▲ Rebecca Semel, from left, Ashley (Southard) London, Alexa (Shankman) Lipp, Moriah Shtull and Becca Kendis pose for a picture together in 2010. | Submitted photo

Friendships developed at camp can last lifetime

LYDIA KACALA

✉ lkacala@cjn.org

Rebecca Semel started attending Camp Wise in Claridon Township when she was in fourth grade and she continued going to the camp for 16 summers, participating as both a camper and a staff member.

Semel, a psychologist with a private

practice and a resident of New York City, told the Cleveland Jewish News she and her parents made a compromise – if she didn't go to a Jewish day school, she had to go to Jewish camp and Hebrew school. During her many summers at camp, she made friends with many people, lots of whom she's still friends with to this day.

FRIENDSHIP | CONTINUED ON PAGE 51



▲ Moriah Shtull, from left, Ashley (Southard) London, Rebecca Semel, Alexa (Shankman) Lipp and Becca Kendis met through attending summer camp at Camp Wise in Claridon Township and remain friends to this day. | Submitted photo

Hiram House Camp to host Sunday Supper May 4

Hiram House Camp will host its Sunday Supper from 4 to 8 p.m. May 4 at 33775 Hiram Trail in Moreland Hills to support its Campership Fund, which financially supports children’s camp experiences, according to a news release.

The dinner will feature food from chefs Steve Schimoler; Sam Lesniak, executive chef at CRU Uncorked; Terry Bell, team chef for the Cleveland Cavaliers; John Haggerty of

Never Say Drive; Scott Stiving of Oddfellows; Kevin O’Connell of La Ville Lumiere; and James Thornton, executive chef at Normandy Catering, as well as from restaurants Lopez44, Capriccio’s and Tavern Six, according to a news release. The dinner will be followed by a bonfire after-party with drinks and cigars.

A meal ticket is \$200, a ticket for the meal and access to the bonfire after-party is \$250. Registration is required by May 1. To purchase tickets, visit shorturl.at/P49NV.

FRIENDSHIP | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 50

“I am still friends with a lot of people from my camp experience,” Semel, who grew up attending services at Park Synagogue in Pepper Pike, said. “... There’s five of us that are still incredibly close. We all met at different times at camp.”

The “really special group” of five – Ashley (Southard) London, Alexa (Shankman) Lipp, Moriah Shtull, Becca Kendis and Semel – have shared over 20 years worth of experiences together, she said. They’ve been in each other’s weddings and met each other’s children, as well as attended funeral services and shiva together.

Since the group is spread out in the Cleveland area and New York, they all get together about once a year, but they have a “very active” group chat, she said.

Semel said there are many other people in her life that she met at camp, as camp friendships “are very particular” because of the camp set up. In living with people and growing close over the course of camp, people “really do sort of become a family in a different way.”

“There’s people who I saw at the camp – there was alumni reunion last summer – who I haven’t seen truly since I was probably 13 or 14, who it’s like we didn’t miss a beat and just caught up,” she said. “You just build really strong friendships because you’re spending all of your time together and learning how to be independent from your

parents or your family members in a new setting.”

When attending camp, you live with a group of people and see them go through the ups and downs during that period of their lives, which develops a level of closeness people may not experience through friendships made in other ways, she said. These shared experiences lead Semel to friendships that still impact her life today.

“Obviously, when you go through a whole month or two months of living together, people have a lot of ups and downs, and so you really get to know people in a really deep way,” she said. “So, my camp girlfriends that I’m in this group of friends with are like my family. They’re basically all my sisters and it’s just a real closeness that is hard to find – especially in making adult friendships, it’s way harder to find.”

As a psychologist, Semel is able to use her own camp experiences to connect with her patients, who are children, and see the benefits, including the “mental and social emotional learning,” campers are able to take advantage of, she said.

“Camp is one of the best places for that because kids are really getting to try things out on their own without their parents, but with a lot of adult healthy support,” she said. “And so I think that that’s a huge reason why camp friendships are so meaningful because you are learning how to be a person outside of your family and you get a lot of feedback on that when you live with people.”

“They’re basically all my sisters and it’s just a real closeness that is hard to find – especially in making adult friendships, it’s way harder to find.”

Rebecca Semel



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Achievement Centers for Children to host specialized camps

Achievement Centers for Children will host specialized camps throughout summer 2025.

The camps are for children and adults with and without disabilities, according to a news release. The camps will be held at Camp Cheerful at 15000 Cheerful Lane in Strongsville and Achievement Centers for Children's west campus at 24211 Center Ridge Road in Westlake.

"With Achievement Centers for Children's proud 85-year history of serving our community, our team of experts is excited to host a wonderful variety of camps they have designed, which combine learning and fun, while addressing the specific development needs of a diversity of campers," Bernadette Kerrigan, president and CEO of Achievement Centers for Children, said in the release.

Cheerful Day Camp is for campers ages 5 through 21 with disabilities, focusing on providing a traditional camp experience tailored to campers of all abilities, the release said. The daylong camp is offered weekly from June 9 through Aug. 15, and the new Camp Buddy program invites those ages 12 through 16 to enroll as peer

supporters. This camp will be held at Camp Cheerful.

Summer Overnight Camp is open to campers ages 16 and older with disabilities and offers weekly themes that guide activities. It's held five nights per week – Sunday night through Friday morning – from June 8 through Aug. 8. This camp will be held at Camp Cheerful.

Sensational Extended School Year Camp is a camp for school districts and families needing to continue a student's learning into the summer, blending learning and recreation, the release said. This camp will be held at Camp Cheerful and three sessions are available in two-week or three-week periods from June 9 through Aug. 1. School districts must register students, but parents can request the option.

The Speech Language Camp is a weeklong camp for kindergartners through second graders, focusing on building language and literacy skills, the release said. It's led by the organization's speech language pathologists in 90-minute sessions once per day from June 23 through June 27. This camp will be held at Achievement Centers for Children's west campus.

Nature Explorers Camp is an outdoor sensory camp for children ages 5 through 7 and is offered in three weeklong sessions in June and July. Led by pediatric occupational therapists and focusing on campers connecting with nature, the camp will be held at Achievement Centers for Children's west campus.

Writing Wizards Camp is tailored to children entering kindergarten or first

grade struggling with handwriting. The weekly daylong camp is led by pediatric occupational therapists and focuses on pencil grip, letter formation and fine motor development, according to the release. This camp will be held at Achievement Centers for Children's west campus.

For more information, visit campcheerful.achievementcenters.org or contact lora.grove@achievementctrs.org.

Champ Cheerful introduces new Camp Buddy Program

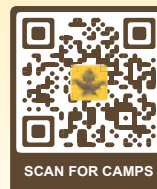
The Achievement Centers for Children's Camp Cheerful is inviting those ages 12 through 16 to serve as a role model for campers at its 2025 Cheerful Day Camp through its new Camp Buddy Program.

Cheerful Day Camp will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays from June 9 through Aug. 15 at 15000 Cheerful Lane in Strongsville. Participants can register for one week or multiple weeks for \$375 per week.

For more information, call 440-238-6200 or email Maggie Clautti, manager of youth services, at maggie.clautti@achievementctrs.org.



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If you have a suggestion for a column idea for Andy Baskin, send him an email at columnists@cjn.org. He can be heard on "Baskin & Phelps" weekdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on 92.3 The Fan. | [@andy_baskin](https://twitter.com/andy_baskin)

If it's March, it's time to play ball

It's March, so let's play ball. It still seems too early for baseball to start in Northeast Ohio. Usually, it's time to freeze on Opening Day.

The Cleveland Guardians opened this season on the road at Kansas City on March 27 and then they will head to San Diego and Anaheim, Calif. I will give credit to Major League Baseball. They got it right.

Starting a northern team in a warm-weather city or a dome is logical. Nothing is worse than having early-season games canceled because of snow.

The Guards won't play at home until April 8. Almost two weeks after the start of the season, the projected forecast for Opening Day against the Chicago White Sox is in the high 40s and low 50s.

I'm looking forward to this season. Let's be honest – just like last season, the team's expectations are meh.

That is not a bad thing. It might be easier to enjoy success when the pressure is off.

The team was a little active in the offseason. Andres Gimenez and Josh Naylor are gone, Carlos Santana is back. This week, a trade brought Nolan Jones back from the Colorado Rockies for Tyler Freeman.

The best part of the Jones-Freeman trade is how they discovered they were getting traded. They happened to call each other while waiting to hear why they were pulled out of a spring training game and figured it out before they received the news.

I give the Guardians credit on this one. By making the

trade, they admitted they made a mistake by letting Jones leave in the first place. The only caution in this deal is his health.

The man in the original deal that sent Jones to Colorado was moved to Columbus, Juan Brito.

Brito was hitting better toward the end of spring training. If Gabriel Arias struggles at second base, we could see him back in the big leagues shortly. Arias is out of options. The team would have had to release him if he didn't make the big league club.

It's all just a waiting game at second base. When will Travis Bazzana, last year's first overall pick in the MLB Draft, make his major league debut?

Bazzana will start the season in the minors and should help fill some seats in Double-A Akron. When he gets to Cleveland, let's hope he stays a long time.

The top of the Guardians' rotation feels strong, but after that, it's about faith. Tanner Bibee is the Opening Day starter with a fresh, new contract. Gavin Williams had an impressive spring. Luis Ortiz, Ben Lively and Logan Allen round out the rotation. Former starter Triston McKenzie will be in the bullpen.

Hopefully, the Jones deal shores up what the team will look like in the outfield. Before the trade, Will Brennan was with the team. After the deal, he ended up in Columbus.

The last question will be how manager Stephen Vogt will match his freshman success in his sophomore season.

Even though he took off a season, you know that Guards fans will be looking down south to see how Terry Francona is fairing with the Cincinnati Reds.

If nothing less, it creates some good drama.

Vegas and the experts predict that last season's run to the American League Championship Series was a fluke. It's hard to find a prediction that the Guardians will repeat as Central Division champion.

Outside of the game, fans will notice the changes at the ballpark.

The old Terrace Club is gone. The new Terrace Hub is in. You can see it off in the distance from the outside of the park. I'm looking forward to the remodeled areas of the ballpark. They did a good job of redoing the right-field stands. Now, the changes are in between the dugouts. Let's see how many more fans can be on the phones waving to friends on TV behind home plate in the new Dugout Club.

Speaking of TV, Fanduel/Bally's/Fox Sports/Fox Sports Net/SportsChannel, or whatever you want to call the network or what the network that sold the naming rights is gone. The announcers are the same. Major League Baseball now has the rights to Guardians television. The only thing for sure is the games will be streamed on CLEGuardians.tv to start the season. Other television distribution was up in

the air in the final days before the start of the regular season. Fans who understand how to watch the games on the stream need to be patient in explaining to the folks looking to figure out how to watch the game.

Now, is that .com, .gov, .edu, or .tv? It was easier when the games were on free TV on WUAB. Is there any chance the current Rockies and former Indians announcer Jack Corrigan was in the deal for Nolan Jones, too?

So, let's put on our ski caps, scarves and parkas and play ball.

Andy Baskin writes about Sports for the Cleveland Jewish News. To read more from him, visit cjn.org/baskin.

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▲ Colorado Rockies' Nolan Jones watches the flight of a fly ball during the third inning of a spring training baseball game against the Seattle Mariners on March 2, 2 in Scottsdale, Ariz. Jones was traded back to the Guardians this week. | AP Photo / Ross D. Franklin

Watch NCAA tourney video from Cleveland at cjn.org/cjntv



▲ A Rocket Arena crowd watches Tru Washington attempt free throws in New Mexico's second-round game against Michigan State in the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament on March 23. To watch a video of the tournament, visit cjn.org/cjntv. | CJN Photo / Daniel Newman



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To read about past Cleveland Jewish News Les Levine High School Players of the Week, visit cjn.org/playeroftheweek

LILLIE ASKARI

✉ laskari@cjn.org

Goldi Aschkenasy, Beachwood High School senior girls' varsity basketball power forward and shooting guard, was ranked the best shot blocker in Ohio this year by the Ohio High School Athletic Association and Max Preps, according to Don Readance, head varsity girls' basketball coach.

Readance said Aschkenasy, who averaged 4.3 blocks per game, also was ranked first in the Chagrin Valley Conference Metro Division for Division V girls' basketball.

"Heading into this year, she made it

Get to Know Goldi

Residence: Beachwood

Favorite Subject: Science

Favorite Movie: The "Harry Potter" series

Favorite Book: "The Natural"

Favorite Pro Athlete: Caitlin Clark

Favorite Jewish Food: Challah

Favorite Jewish Holiday: Pesach

Favorite Jewish Activity/Organization: National Conference of Synagogue Youth

Parents: Amy and Eli Aschkenasy

known that she wanted to finish up with a really strong senior year, and with that, she stepped up," Readance told the Cleveland Jewish News, adding that Aschkenasy also averaged 11.7 points and 9.1 rebounds per game. "She accomplished that, and I think in many ways was a leader for us and instilled confidence with the players, leading us to our best record in over 10 years."

According to Readance, Aschkenasy's "impressive" game was impactful at both ends of the floor, noting that she was the team's leading rebounder and second-leading scorer, helping the Bison finish the season 13-10.

"It's my third year of Beachwood as head coach, and so I've (coached) her since she was a sophomore, and I think each year she's grown more as a individual and as a player" Readance said.

"I'm proud of the awards I've won," Aschkenasy told the CJN. "I've won second-team (Chagrin Valley Conference and) first-team districts ... But at the same time this year, we actually have had the first girls' basketball winning record in (about) a decade within Beachwood, so that's a huge thing I'm proud of (as) a captain."

For the second year in a row, Aschkenasy represented Beachwood on the Chagrin Valley Conference Metro Division all-star girls' basketball team, making "three to four" blocks and scoring eight points in the championship game against the Lake Division in overtime in a 55-50 victory on March 19 at Wickliffe High School, Aschkenasy, who helped her National Basketball Academy Cleveland Select club team win the Coaster Clash tournament in



▲ Beachwood High School senior Goldi Aschkenasy receives high-fives from teammates during introductions before a game. | Photo / Allisa Monahan

2023 and 2024 at Cedar Point Sports Center in Sandusky, said.

"It was just a big celebration of how good everyone is," Aschkenasy, whose all-star team consisted of seven players at competition, including teammate Lexi Jaffe, said. "So, I made a shot, and everyone would cheer, or someone else made a big three pointer, and everyone would be happy, even if you weren't on their team."

Aschkenasy, who is 6 feet tall, said she started playing basketball in sixth grade due to her height but continued to play and compete, starting in seventh grade, due to her love for the game and how much it helped her grow as a person, she said.

"The amount of leadership that you learn, the amount of determination and the commitment. It's a very big commitment to play varsity athletics at any level and play any kind of sports. I think all of those lessons that I've learned throughout the years not only are going to help me in (sports), (but also) are going to help me throughout my whole life," Aschkenasy said.

According to Aschkenasy, learning as a team to adapt and continuing to improve throughout the season was "mind blowing," and her focus also was on improving her blocks to help out her team.

"I will always be down to shoot a three," Aschkenasy said. "I love shooting. But I love

to play defense. I'm a very big defensive player."

Aschkenasy, who wants to be a physical therapist and plans to attend The Ohio State University in Columbus in the fall and major in exercise science, received interest from NCAA Division III universities and one offer to play collegiate basketball, but she would like to focus on academics and play club basketball at Ohio State, Aschkenasy said.

She said she was grateful for support from the Jewish community and that her Judaism helped her accomplish her goals this year.

"Having a community behind me has helped me so much, not only believing in myself, but also having other people believe in me has helped me," Aschkenasy, who serves on the regional and Cleveland boards of the National Conference of Synagogue Youth, said. "The leadership that (the National Conference of Synagogue Youth) taught me has also translated to the core and to basketball."

Aschkenasy said she hopes that aspiring girls' basketball players have fun and take it all in.

"It goes by so fast, and even those hard days, you're going to miss it so much when you're done," Aschkenasy, who started for the Beachwood varsity basketball team since her freshman year, said.



▲ Goldi Aschkenasy holds the 2024 Sandusky Coaster Clash basketball tournament championship trophy on behalf of her club basketball team, The National Basketball Academy Cleveland Select. | Photo / Eli

Aschkenasy

The true ledger of wealth

RABBI CHAIM FELD

The legend goes that Baron Rothschild once asked his accountant to bring the ledgers to determine his net worth. When the ledgers were brought, Rothschild replied that these were the wrong ones. He wanted his tzedakah ledger. He explained that the only true wealth he had was the tzedakah he had already given. All his other assets could disappear overnight due to economic downturns, political instability, or misfortune, but charity - the good one does for others - remains eternal.

Northeast Ohio is home to numerous local synagogues and congregations to meet the worship needs of all members of the community. For service times and additional information, including links and passwords to attend online services and requirements for attending services in person, visit the synagogue website or contact the synagogue office directly. This is a paid listing with Information provided by synagogues.

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This week's parsha, Pekudei, is all about accounting. After months of construction, the Mishkan – the portable sanctuary in the desert – is finally complete. Yet before moving forward, Moshe takes a crucial step: he provides a full financial report of all the donations collected and how they were used. Every piece of gold, silver, and copper is accounted for, down to the last shekel.

At first glance, this might seem unnecessary. Moshe was the most trusted leader of the Jewish people – did he really need to justify the expenses? But in doing so, he sets a timeless example: when dealing

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Pekudei
Ezekiel 45:16-25
Shabbat HaChodesh

with communal funds, transparency is essential. No matter how righteous a leader may be, integrity demands accountability. Public trust is built on openness, and Moshe ensured that the people knew their donations were used appropriately.

However, there's a deeper lesson as well. The mishkan was not just about numbers

TORAH | CONTINUED ON PAGE 56

Candlelighting
March 28
Shabbat ends
7:29 p.m.
8:30 p.m.

Upcoming times:
April 4
April 11
April 18
April 25
7:37 p.m.
7:45 p.m.
7:52 p.m.
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To be included in the Synagogue directory, send an email to Abby Royer at aroyer@cjn.org or call 216-454-8300.

B'nai Mitzvah



Logan Eisner

Logan Eisner will become a bar mitzvah on Saturday morning, March 29, at Congregation Mishkan Or. Logan is the son of Brendon and Emily Eisner of Orange. He attends Brady Middle School and loves anime, video games, scary movies and animals. For his mitzvah project,

Logan started a dog treat business with his sister to raise money for animal shelters.

Weddings



Mandel-Strayer

Rita and Bruce Mandel of Beachwood happily announce the marriage of their son, Josh Mandel, to Alyssa Strayer, daughter of Lisa Strayer and Mark Strayer.

Alyssa and Josh celebrated their wedding on March 26, 2025, in Ayrshire, Scotland, overseen by the Chabad of Glasgow.

The couple resides in Pepper Pike with their five children, two dogs and six chickens.

TORAH | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 55

and materials; it was about transforming physical wealth into something holy. Gold and silver by themselves have no meaning – but when used for a higher purpose, they become vessels for the Divine presence.

This idea applies to our own lives. Too often, success is measured in numbers – our income, possessions, or social status. But parsha Pekudei teaches that true value is not in how much we have, but in how we use it. Are we investing our time, resources and talents in ways that create something lasting? Are we building our own mishkan – a space where kindness, honesty, and spirituality can thrive?

The mishkan itself was a physical structure, but its purpose was to create a dwelling place for holiness. The same is true in life – wealth, status and material success are only meaningful when they serve something greater.

As Rothschild taught, our true ledgers are recorded in the hearts of those we help and in the heavenly books above. Just like the gold of the mishkan, what we give and how we live is what truly lasts.

Rabbi Chaim Feld is director of Clean Speech Cleveland and co-director of Aish Cleveland in South Euclid.

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Obituaries

Mintz, Loren

Loren A. Mintz, 89, passed away peacefully on Feb. 25, 2025, at home in Boca Raton, Fla.

Loren was descended from one of the early Jewish families in Cleveland. He was the beloved husband of 64 years of Lynn Newman Mintz. Loren was the loving father of Steven (Rosemary) and Daniel (Karen); grandfather of Sarah, Jason and Anna; and dear brother of Karen Mintz Margulies. He was preceded in death by his parents, Alexander and Betty Mintz, and his sister, Barbara Rosenblatt.

Loren was respected by his colleagues and loved by his friends. He held to a high standard of personal integrity, treating people fairly and doing what he believed was right.

Raised in the Cleveland suburb of Shaker Heights, Loren graduated from Darrow School in New Lebanon, N.Y., Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va., and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where he earned a Master of Business Administration. He did his military service with the U.S. Army.

Loren was the longtime president of Shaker Savings Association, which was founded by his father. He held leadership roles in many civic associations in the Cleveland area and in Palm Beach County, Fla. In both places, his accomplishments

made significant impacts and touched many lives. He was a member of Oakwood Club and a congregant of the former The Temple-Tifereth Israel in Beachwood.

In the mid-1980s, Loren moved to Florida, where his business acumen was greatly prized in service to three museums. At the Boca Raton Museum of Art, he oversaw the museum's transition to its new building in Mizner Park. At the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, he supervised restoration of the 1916 courthouse now serving as the headquarters and museum of the society. At the Boca Raton Historical Society and Schmidt Boca Raton History Museum, he managed restoration of the historic former city hall into the current museum.

Loren was introduced to travel by his parents and continued to travel worldwide through much of his life. He was a dedicated photographer and took classes in the subject. He photographed streetscapes, architecture, special places he visited and family members, and displayed his photography in his home. A lover of fishing, Loren took trips to Alaska, Canada, Hawaii and Florida to do so. He sometimes returned with wall-mounted trophies and always kept an aquarium at home. He enjoyed watching sports and was a committed fan of teams from Cleveland and South Florida. Politics excited Loren, and he followed it closely. He was a lifelong fiscal conservative but more liberal on social issues. Loren enjoyed fine cuisine and loved to cook outside on his grill.

He was a gardener who grew vegetables, especially tomatoes, and planted flowers as well.

If friends wish to honor Loren's memory, contributions to a charity of the donor's choice, Planned Parenthood (plannedparenthood.org) or the Jewish National Fund for trees in Israel (shop.jnf.org/collections/plant-trees) would be appreciated.

Penn, Donald



Donald Penn, beloved father, grandfather and friend passed away on March 21, 2025. He was 89.

Don was born in Cleveland and remained a resident his entire life. He graduated from Cleveland Heights

High School, attended The Ohio State University in Columbus and earned a degree in industrial baking from Florida State University in Tallahassee, Fla. Don then oversaw his family's retail bakery business, New York Bakery.

Refocusing the business on industrial baking, Don became a pioneer in the frozen foods industry. He developed several products that can still be bought in major stores today. Most well-known is New York Bakery Original Texas Toast. Don found his work invigorating and remained active and well-respected in the food industry into his early 80s, including a starring role in several

New York Bakery commercials alongside his grandchildren.

In his personal life, Don had many interests. He loved to exercise just as much as he loved to eat and rode his bike to his favorite restaurants as often as he could. Don was a prolific artist who explored mediums including wood, clay, metal, paint and most recently photography. One of his most cherished places was Squire Valleevue Farm in Hunting Valley. When visiting he often sat on his donated bench next to the bust of Andrew Squire. The family encourages you to visit and enjoy.

Above all, Don was devoted to his family and friends. He was predeceased by his wife Judy, and parents Alex and Sylvia. Don is survived by his children Marc Penn (Kim, deceased 2013), Kimberly Novak and Stefanie Spear; grandchildren Alexandra, Cory, William, Brittany, Taylor (Ariel), Mitchell, Samantha and Zachary; great-grandson Asher; and brother Sigmund (Phyllis) Penn.

Graveside services were held on March 23 at Bet Olam Cemetery in Beachwood.

Donations in his memory can be made to the Cleveland Print Room (clevelandprintroom.com).

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be left at bkbmc.com for the Penn family.

Arrangements under the direction of Berkowitz-Kumin-Bookatz Memorial Chapel.

OBITUARIES | CONTINUED ON PAGE 58

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OBITUARIES | CONTINUED FROM PAGE 57

Rubin, Rowena



Rowena “Ronnie” Rubin (nee Duchan), 94, of Beachwood, passed away on March 24, 2025. Rowena was born Feb. 24, 1931, in Cleveland.

A graduate of John Adams High School and the former Flora Stone Mather College, both in Cleveland, and Kent State University, she was a dedicated learning disabilities teacher and lifelong volunteer.

She was kind, compassionate and always willing to give of herself to help others. Rowena volunteered at Menorah Park, R.H. Myers Apartments, Judson, Playhouse Square, Severance, Meals on Wheels and other organizations.

She was active in several organizations, such as B’nai B’rith and the Jewish War Veterans, and found great joy in camping with her special social group, the Hobos.

Rowena’s warmth, optimism and wisdom touched everyone she met. She had a remarkable way of uplifting others and left a legacy of unconditional love, gratitude and selflessness. She will be deeply missed by all who were fortunate enough to know and love her.

She was the beloved wife of Richard Rubin (deceased); devoted mother of Devorah (Avraham) Appel of Israel, Laura (Mark) Templar of Willoughby Hills, Renee (Marc) Kitay of Beachwood and David Rubin (deceased); cherished grandmother of 13 and loving great-grandmother of 33; dear sister of Alan (Judy) Duchan of Buffalo, N.Y.

Funeral services were held March 26 at Berkowitz-Kumin-Bookatz Memorial Chapel in Cleveland Heights. Interment

followed at Zion Memorial Park.

The family will receive friends from 1 to 4:30 p.m. March 28 at the Templar residence at 2760 Graylock Drive in Willoughby Hills.

Contributions in memory of Rowena are suggested to B’nai Jeshurun Congregation (bnaijeshurun.org), Everytown for Gun Safety (everytown.org) or the Euclid Hunger Center (euclidhungercenter.com/donate).

Fond memories and expressions of sympathy may be left at bkbmc.com for the Rubin family.

Arrangements under the direction of Berkowitz-Kumin-Bookatz Memorial Chapel.

Teplitzky, Phillip Michael



It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Philip Michael Teplitzky, 90, on March 13, 2025, at his home, surrounded by his loving family. Philip was born in Philadelphia, Pa., to Celie Survis Teplitzky and Morris Isaac Teplitzky, both of whom have predeceased him.

Philip’s life was a testament to love, service and community. In 1983, he married the love of his life, Judy Carolyn Keene, and together they shared more than 40 years of joy, laughter and adventure. Together, they raised four children: daughters, Dori Ginsburg (David), Vicky Kingkiner (Lisa), Rebecca Goldstien (Keith), and son, Edward Morrell (Marie). He was a proud father, grandfather and great-grandfather.

Affectionately known as “Grumpy” by his grandchildren – Abby Stevenson (Morgan), Michael Goldstien (Brittany), Janie Goldstien, Katie Rosichan, Steven Goldstien (Casey),

Lily Rosichan, Jordan Morrell, Courtney Morrell, Lee Morrell and Hunter Morrell – Philip’s love and warmth touched all who knew him. He was also the proud Grumpy to eight great-grandchildren, whose lives he enriched with his wisdom and laughter.

Philip spent much of his life in Cleveland, where he was a familiar face and pillar in the community. He was known to many as “Mr. T” and became a fixture in local business, having owned and operated several stores before retiring from Paragon Steel Company, where he worked in sales. Philip also played an important role in rebuilding the congregation of The Temple-Tifereth Israel, now Congregation Mishkan Or in Beachwood, lending his time, heart and efforts to ensure the community thrived. He was a man of deep faith, embodying the values of kindness, generosity and integrity that the Torah teaches.

In 1999, Philip and Judy moved to Atlanta to retire, where they embraced the slower pace of life but remained deeply committed to family and friends. Philip never met a stranger, and his ability to connect with others left a lasting impact on everyone he encountered. His warm spirit and caring nature will be missed by all who knew him.

A service in Philip’s honor was held, followed by a celebration of his life in true Philip fashion at 4 p.m. at Il Giallo Osteria & Bar in Sandy Springs, Ga.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to The American Kidney Foundation (kidneyfund.org) or a charity of your choice in Philip’s memory. May his memory be a blessing.

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Don't criticize anybody for anything

Most of us do this at one time or another, and it just might be in our human nature. Our parents or grandparents taught us as children not to criticize anyone, and they were right. It's so easy to see yourself in a good light and at the same time focus on imperfections of other people.

Criticizing people will typically lead to a lose-lose situation that only creates distance, spreads negative energy and causes tensions.

When you criticize someone, they become defensive, you hurt their pride and cause resentment. Also, you don't correct the situation. Criticizing someone can have several negative effects, both on the person being criticized and on the relationship between the criticizer and the criticized.

I have seen so many salespeople "knock" or criticize the competition in a sales situation when the prospect is looking at their competition. Why tell someone they are wrong or "stupid" to look at them. You have strengths and so does the competitor – or they would not have any customers – so why not focus on what you do best?

Here are some reasons why criticizing someone should be approached with caution.

Can be harmful: Criticism can create a negative dynamic in relationships. It can breed resentment and erode trust between

individuals. Friendships are built on trust and meaningful conversations.

Can hurt someone's self-esteem:

Criticism can damage a person's self-esteem and confidence. Repeated criticism can lead to feelings of inadequacy and worthlessness. We all want to feel good about ourselves, so try not to make someone feel bad about themselves.

Emotional toll: Criticism can evoke strong emotional reactions, such as anger, sadness or resentment. These emotions can further strain relationships and make it difficult to resolve conflicts constructively. Why have conflict if it's not necessary?

Communication breakdown: Harsh criticism can shut down communication channels. Instead of fostering understanding and growth, it can lead to defensiveness and withdrawal. You all have heard the line, "you can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." Why not try the positive approach rather than be negative.

Missed opportunities for growth:

While constructive feedback can be

valuable for personal and professional development, overly negative criticism can overshadow opportunities for learning and improvement. In our hearts, we typically are trying to help someone, so if we are trying to help, look at being helpful and not destructive.

Perception of intent: Criticism can be perceived as hurtful or malicious, even if the intention was to provide feedback for improvement. The recipient may interpret the criticism as an attack rather than as genuine concern or guidance. If you are intent on helping someone, think of the different ways you can approach them without conflict.

Negative spiral: Criticism can perpetuate a cycle of negativity. When someone feels criticized, they may be more inclined to criticize others in return, creating a harmful cycle of judgment and blame. No need to argue or be combative, try to stay in the "positive zone."

Alternative approaches: There are often more effective ways to address concerns or provide feedback than through criticism. Approaches such as constructive feedback, active listening and empathy can lead to more positive outcomes.

While feedback and constructive

criticism can be beneficial when delivered with care and empathy, it's important to consider the potential consequences of criticism and approach it thoughtfully. Building a culture of respect, understanding and support can lead to healthier and more fulfilling relationships.

Remember, your dog learns faster by rewarding good behaviors rather than punishing bad ones. Let's always try to reward rather than punish.

Hal Becker is a nationally known speaker on sales and customer service. He is the author of numerous business books including two national best sellers, "Can I Have 5 Minutes Of Your Time?" and "Lip Service." Hal's newest book on sales is titled "Ultimate Sales Book." He can be reached at Halbecker.com.

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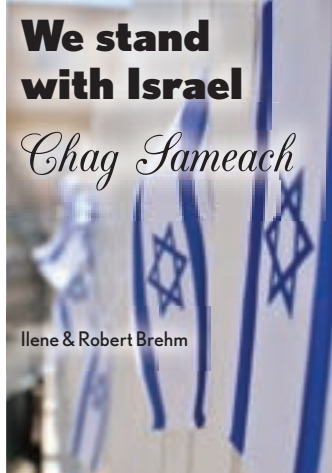
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