

NORTH SHORE

Released Israeli hostage to speak in Peabody Oct. 6

GREATER BOSTON

Anti-Israel rapper dropped from Ed Sheeran's Foxboro show

SPORTS

NFL's Jake Curhan spent his summers at Camp Young Judea

Epstein Hillel turns the page after last year's fiscal uncertainty

By **ETHAN M. FORMAN**
JOURNAL STAFF

MARBLEHEAD – DURING A RECENT VISIT to the Arthur J. Epstein Hillel School on Community Road, kindergarteners were busy with a lesson about dipping apples into honey for a sweet New Year.

Students in the first and second grade classroom had come from the school's garden, where they sampled vegetables as part of the science curriculum, and the room smelled of basil. Third grade students were writing about their hobbies. Fourth graders were learning multiplication arrays. In the combined fifth and sixth grade classroom, sixth grader Ada Freudenberger said they were studying vocabulary for the book, "The Girl Who Drank the Moon," by Kelly Barnhill.

After several weeks of financial uncertainty last winter, in which the more than 70-year-old school faced closure, the Epstein Hillel School (formerly Cohen Hillel Academy) held its first day on Sept. 1.

It opened as a pre-kindergarten through sixth grade elementary school, after a financial crisis last year and budget cuts forced the closure of the middle school.

A successful "Step Up to the Moment" fundraising campaign over the winter saw the community work together to save the school. It raised \$2.82 million of a \$3 million goal. The funds spared the only Jewish day school north of Boston from closure and kept it sustainable.

"It was a very painful process to make the decision to close the upper school," said Head of School Amy Gold. "But we had to really work on expenses, and the budget had to be rightsized; it just wasn't sustainable for us."

"Our [fiscal 2027] budget represents roughly a 25% reduction from [fiscal 2026]," board Chair Shira Kraft, class of 1997, said in an email. "A significant portion of those savings comes from

the closing of the middle school – a bittersweet strategic decision that allowed us to right size the budget and focus our resources on building an

exceptional pre-K through sixth grade experience where children develop the confidence, curiosity, and strong Jewish identity that will carry them into whatever comes next"

New this school year, the school is offering a combined fifth and sixth grade classroom with three students in each grade. Tuition stayed at \$18,000.

"The Step Up to the Moment campaign was a tremendous show of support from the community that gives EHS an important bridge toward a sustainable model," Kraft said.

"Everybody is coming into the school year feeling just so happy to be back after the crisis of last year," Gold said. "It was a lot for everybody to process emotionally and the families who are here are just so grateful that the school is in our community and that everybody is super-focused on the mission and proud to be here and wants the school to grow."

"There's an energy in the building that's hard to miss."

**– SHIRA KRAFT
EPSTEIN HILLEL SCHOOL**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



Third graders Helena Wyner and Isabella Weintraub on the first day of Epstein Hillel School.

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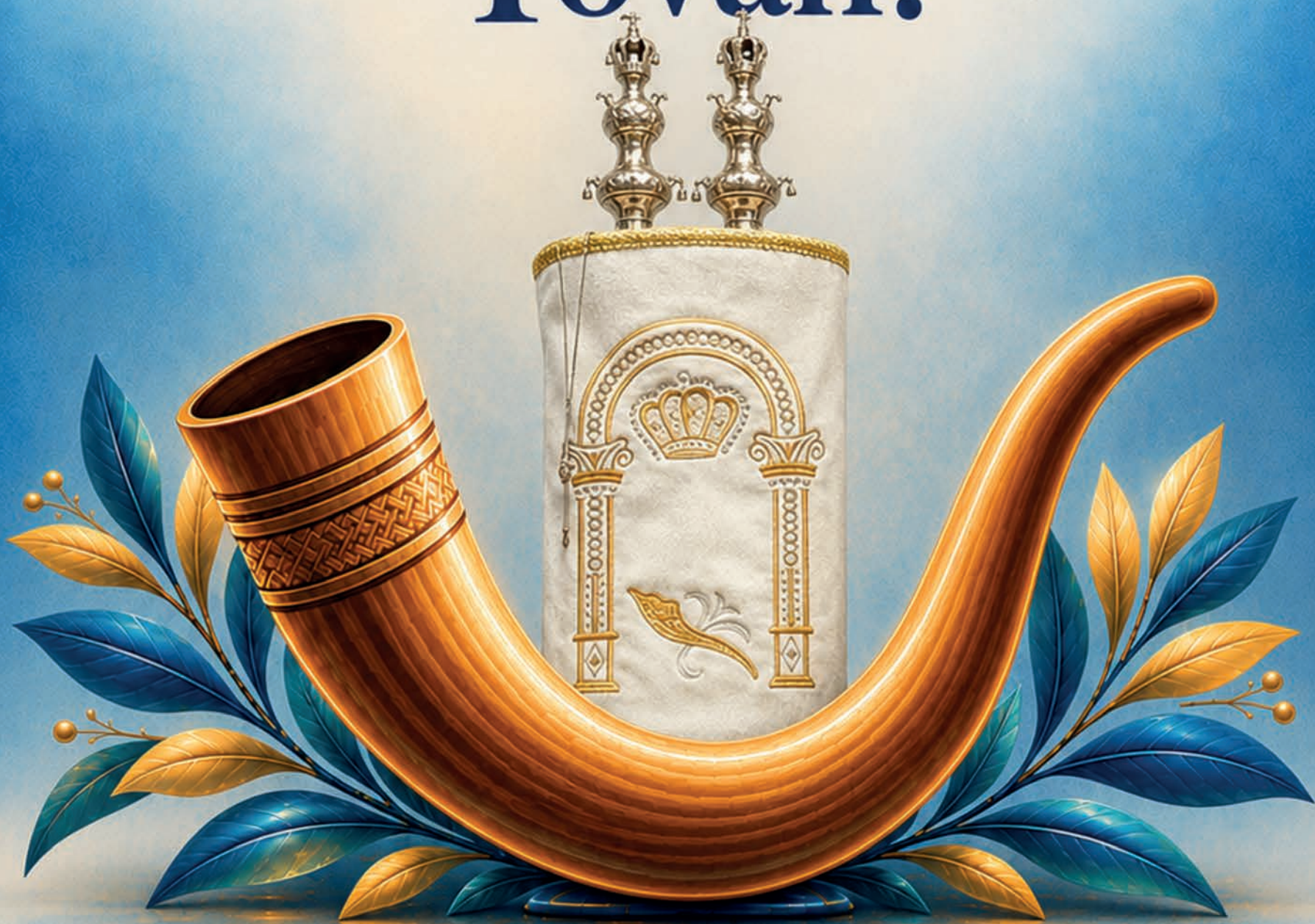
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Chabad and Peabody schools to bring former Israeli hostage to the North Shore

By **ETHAN M. FORMAN**
JOURNAL STAFF

PEABODY – After being taken hostage by terrorists at the Nova music festival in southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, Omer Shem Tov survived 505 days in captivity despite being given little food or water and being kept in complete darkness in the terror tunnels.

Shem Tov was fresh from army service when he was taken captive. He was finally released in February 2025. Through the efforts of his family calling for his and other hostages' release, he came to symbolize their plight.

Shem Tov plans to share his story of survival with the North Shore during an event called "Resilience: An Evening of Remembrance of the Attack of October 7" at the Higgins Middle School in Peabody on Oct. 6 at 6 p.m. The event coincides with the eve of the third anniversary of the attacks.

Shem Tov's invitation to speak in Peabody was prompted after several antisemitic incidents in the spring.

Chabad of Peabody Rabbi Nechemia Schusterman, who was a target of one of those incidents, said the event is meant to educate the wider community about the dangers of all forms of hate and prejudice, to combat ignorance and online misinformation, and bear witness to Shem Tov's experience.

Chabad of Peabody on Lowell Street is bringing Shem Tov to Peabody in partnership with Peabody Public Schools, with support from Combined Jewish Philanthropies, North Shore Suburban Jewish Community Center, and the Journal.

As of Sept. 10, some seats in the 454-seat Higgins auditorium were still available, according to an email from Chabad of Peabody. The cost for admission is \$18, with seats reserved for Peabody school families to attend free.

Since his release, Shem Tov has spoken widely, including locally at the Harvard Kennedy School's John F. Kennedy Jr. Forum on March 2, 2026.



WIKIPEDIA

Omer Shem Tov will speak in Peabody on Oct. 6.

He also threw out the ceremonial first pitch at Fenway Park on May 19, 2025, at the celebration of Jewish Heritage Night, during a trip to campaign for the release of the remaining hostages sponsored by CJP, according to a report by CBS News Boston.

The Hamas terror attacks of Oct. 7 killed about 1,200 people in a single day – the biggest loss of Jewish lives in one day since the Holocaust. In all, 251 people, including Shem Tov, were taken hostage and held, some for more than two years. About 85 were killed, according to the Washington Post.

The attacks sparked the Gaza War, and backlash to it has triggered widespread condemnation of Israel and its government, leading to an increase in antisemitic incidents and threats since then both here and abroad.

"Since Oct. 7, myself along with I'm sure the entire Jewish world has been consumed sometimes with horror and sometimes with excitement as hostages were freed," said Schusterman.

As the hostages were freed during a long, painful process, the rabbi had wanted to bring one of them to the North Shore to speak, but the cost was prohibitive.

Then, toward the end of May, Schusterman took to social media to

describe "deeply disturbing incidents," including someone in a passing car shouting, "Heil Hitler" at his brother-in-law while he was walking to shul. In a separate incident, someone in a car yelled, "free Palestine" at Schusterman during Shavuot.

What followed was not political discourse from the motorist "but a stream of hateful abuse," the rabbi said. In a separate incident, Schusterman said his 15-year-old son was spat at by an adult in a passing car and called a "dirty Jew."

On June 9, two antisemitic incidents were brought up at a Peabody School Committee meeting. One involved the discovery of a swastika scrawled in the dirt of a ball field, and the other was a bus argument in which students allegedly traded antisemitic and homophobic barbs.

For the rabbi, the incidents "brought to the forefront the intertwining of anti-Zionism and antisemitism in a way that I don't think anyone could have denied before, but even if

you were someone who wanted to bury your head in the sand, I found you could no longer do so."

After the incidents, local officials reached out to Schusterman, including Superintendent Josh Vadala and Councilor-at-Large Jarrod Hochman, a former longtime member of the Peabody School Committee.

Schusterman asked Hochman what they could do to bring more awareness to the issue of antisemitism and hatred. He told Hochman he wanted to invite a hostage to speak here. Hochman suggested the rabbi speak to the superintendent, given the district had grants available for Holocaust and genocide studies.

Vadala credited Schusterman for making the arrangements, and the schools used grant funding to help pay for the event.

"Our small community here in Peabody is a reflection of our greater community and our nation, and of course we are seeing antisemitic incidents in our community and across

the nation. ... We really want to make sure when that happens, we are providing education and we are really leaning into this and having tough conversations and creating opportunities to see where we can improve, where we can be a better community," Vadala said.

"For Peabody to host such an international event is incredible," said Hochman. The event is meant to shed light on a person who experienced first-hand such a level of hate just because he was Jewish.

Hochman was glad to see Peabody's continued leadership in anti-hate education, and said it's important to continue educating the community.

"It's how we get past hate."

Admission to "Resilience" is \$18. A pre-event meet-and greet with Shem Tov costs \$180 to help defray the cost of the event. ☎

Learn more and register to attend at www.jewishpeabody.com/hostage, or call 978-977-9111.

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Jewish Journal

OF GREATER BOSTON

STEVEN A. ROSENBERG
PUBLISHER/EDITOR

To every thing, there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven

By LINDA MATCHAN

A FEW DAYS BEFORE Rosh Hashanah, I got a text from my friend Gayle. Gayle and I go way back. Our oldest kids went to preschool together eons ago, and we belong to the same Reform temple.

“We’re going to family service at 8:30,” she wrote, “we” meaning

her daughter and 5-year-old grandson. “Do you want to go? It will be like old times!”

To be clear, those old times were 40 years ago. Now, our “kids” are even older than we were when we met, which was in the classroom of a JCC preschool. Every weekday morning, we’d hustle them out of the car and into the building, then try to pry ourselves loose from them so we could get to work without being too egregiously late. And every morning – amidst the tears and chaos around misplaced teddy bears and lost mittens – Gayle and I and another mom named Amy exchanged friendly greetings, then bolted to our jobs as a lawyer (Gayle), journalist (me), and social worker (Amy).

In time, our kids became playmates, and so did we. We snuck out for dinners together, talked about work and politics and other grown-up things, and welcomed the arrival of more children, each being announced with great fanfare on the preschool classroom door. (“Solly has a baby sister!” read the sign when my daughter was born.)

We got to know each other’s families. We carpoled to Hebrew school. (Amy’s mother-in-law drove, often late and often lost.) We celebrated the Jewish holidays together, each of us taking a holiday and hosting a meal. I picked Hanukkah, though Amy’s husband would commandeer the kitchen to make his sweet potato latkes, maintaining they were better than my ordinary

ones, with my pedestrian Russet potatoes. No meal was complete without the argument. Or without my sugar cookies, in the shape of menorahs.

Amy hosted the Passover Seder, presided over by her father, a rabbi. My assignment was to make the gefilte fish, a laborious production that was non-negotiable. One year my family couldn’t make it to the Seder, and I called Amy to apologize.

“That’s OK,” she said. “But can you send the gefilte fish anyway?”

Gayle hosted a lavish Rosh Hashanah brunch following temple services, that would stretch well into the afternoon and culminate with my sugar cookies again, shaped like shofars this time. The kids played in the basement. The grownups argued about politics.

So many milestones, so many events. Our rabbi retired; a new one came in. Our parents died, one by one. There were bar and bat mitzvahs. Weddings and baby showers and funerals. Somehow, we, too, became grandparents – all but one of us, that is, since my husband died after a long illness before our kids were even married.

This year, the “new” rabbi, as some still call him, announced he was retiring, after 31 years. *Thirty-one years?* In his video announcement to the congregation, he sang a passage from the famous Pete Seeger song, adapted from Ecclesiastes, the theme of which is the fullness of life, the cyclical nature of what happens.

*To every thing, turn turn, turn
There is a season, turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven.*

I often think of this passage at Rosh Hashanah, when the seasons are palpably changing, when the elders of our congregation grow more frail, entering with walkers and in wheelchairs. When hope is renewed each time we dip apples in honey and wish each other a sweet and good year. *A shana tova.*

And every year this has seemed like a reasonable expectation. In many ways, my own life has gotten sweeter, now that “Solly’s little sister” has a little boy of her own, and Solly has two kids himself.

But this year felt different, felt off, as I walked into the Rosh Hashanah service with my daughter and my grandson, and not just because the holiday coincided with the Sept. 11 anniversary when a member of our congregation died on the first flight to hit the World Trade Center.

On the face of it, the scene looked the same – little hands reaching up, big hands reaching down, on a sacred holiday. But this year, police in fluorescent jackets met us at the door. And volunteers scanned QR codes on our tickets before letting us in.

Of course. Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh. Colleyville synagogue in Texas. Central Synagogue in New York. This but a small part of a very long list.

It was impossible not to feel how profoundly world events have brought ominous currents to this otherwise joyous and hopeful tradition.

What our synagogue is experiencing is, of course, mirrored



The writer’s children 33 years ago, dressed up for Rosh Hashanah.

across the country. Many Jews are thinking about how the message of Rosh Hashanah has been forever altered. Our rabbi addressed this in a High Holiday letter to congregants. “The world breaks our hearts daily. It disappoints us and frightens us. Some days it feels as though a giant asteroid is aimed squarely at our heads.”

But he invited us to sing, and pray and put our burdens down, at least for this holiday.

The hopeful and lasting image I’m left with is my 2-year-old grandson standing wide-eyed in the aisle as the rabbi blew the shofar. His joyous fascination seems to affirm our enduring traditions, which again and again have been renewed throughout history – in ages darker than the one we’re living through now. ☺

Linda Matchan is a Boston-based journalist.

What’s really being asked on campus this fall

By JONATHAN A. GREENBLATT

THE BEST TEACHERS ask hard questions. As a parent of three, I want my kids to get plenty of hard questions. But too often, especially in college, hard questions cross a line, when Jewish students are pushed to answer for their identity rather than their ideas.

Beyond that, far too many Jewish students have personally

observed antisemitic activity by a faculty member. Fewer than half feel comfortable letting their classmates know they are Jewish.

Antisemitic incidents on college campuses spiked after Oct. 7, 2023, peaking at 1,694 in 2024. That number fell by 66% last year, to 583, and campus antisemitism is no longer making headlines the way it did two years ago. That’s real progress, though some of the decline may also reflect underreporting. But any number above zero hits too close to home as a parent.

In the time since the encampment organizers folded up their tents, the fight has moved from the quad to the classroom, from a protest anyone could see to a comment in a lecture or a line in a syllabus. Some of this might look minor to the average college student, but I guarantee it is major to any Jewish student sitting there.

And the damage does not stop with Jewish students. When prejudice is presented as scholarship, it shapes how non-Jewish students understand Jews, Israel, and antisemitism – and gives bias the authority of the classroom.

Sometimes it’s a matter of who gets asked to answer for what. ADL research has found a pattern of students being asked to speak on behalf of Israel or the Jewish community, effectively positioning them as representatives of a government rather than students in a seminar.

At Stanford and Princeton, course descriptions presented contested claims about Israel and Zionism as a historical fact, all before class convened for the first time. That gives Jewish students a signal about who will be allowed to disagree in the classroom and who won’t be.



HILLEL

Fewer than half of all Jewish college students feel comfortable letting their classmates know they are Jewish.

At the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, a professor was reported to have started the first day of class with an assertion that Israel is committing “genocide” in Gaza. It’s hard to imagine that false and offensive comment doesn’t shape how he grades a Jewish student’s paper or what the rest of the class walks out believing.

None of this is confined to individual classrooms. Organized

networks, led by Faculty and Staff for Justice in Palestine and now active on more than 130 campuses, have coordinated with student activists and at times helped shield them from discipline. Some of those same faculty assign grades that can make or break a scholarship or internship, and there is no guarantee that bias won’t seep into a recommendation letter.

ADL is responding with research

and tools, because a university that lets this happen in its classrooms is not neutral, but complicit. We recently launched Campus Classroom Reporting, a confidential channel where students, faculty and staff can flag classroom antisemitism without navigating a formal complaint process. That matters because our research shows most students who witness or experience antisemitism never report it to anyone.

We have also released model policies on tenure, academic freedom and faculty conduct, grounded in Title VII, so administrators have real tools instead of the excuse that no clear standard exists.

Jewish students are walking into lecture halls every day hoping to be treated like every other student in the room. They deserve a professor that asks hard questions, judges their work fairly, and lets them show up as they are without having to defend themselves. That’s what we will keep fighting to guarantee. ☺

Jonathan A. Greenblatt is CEO and National Director of ADL (the Anti-Defamation League).



UNITED STATES HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM

White supremacists participate in a torch-lit march at the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017.

Antisemitism: a story of deep injustice

By **DAVID M. SHRIBMAN**
JOURNAL CORRESPONDENT

BUBBLING BENEATH the new debate over the place of Jews in the United States lies a set of fundamental questions that have been unresolved for three-quarters of a century, perhaps for far longer.

They get to the heart of the disquiet many Jews feel today, they raise uncomfortable geopolitical questions, they challenge many of the fundamental notions about the way American Jews regard their own security, and they threaten many of the assumptions and convictions they have about Israel.

What exactly is antisemitism? Is it a creed or a prejudice? What are its ancient origins? How do long-standing biases shape the current surge in anti-Jewish actions and sentiments? What place does Israel play in post-World War II antisemitism? Is it caused by the response to Israel's reaction to the Hamas invasion of Oct. 7, 2023 – or was it merely reignited by it?

And do any of these questions really matter at all?

These are the debates that are raging in Congress, in American universities, in synagogues – and, in slightly different forms, in Jewish communities around the globe.

These are not, of course, new questions, yet they have a distinctly modern tinge. The Hamas invasion changed everything, not only in Israel, not only in the broader Middle East, not only on campus, not only in the White House, not only among Jews. They unleashed a fury of debate, and of intense emotion. They have provoked fresh looks at history and at contemporary politics. They revived ancient biases and equally timeworn fears.

It should be no surprise that there is a flood of notions, hypotheses, convictions, impulses, and

books that deal with this question. Dozens of books on antisemitism and the position of Jews in the contemporary world have been released in recent months; Dara Horn's "The Final Solution to the Jewish Question" and Peter Beinart's "Being Jewish After the Destruction of Gaza" are among them.

Two of these volumes stirred conversation and controversy far beyond the U.S. Jewish community. The fact that they take very divergent angles speaks to the complexity of these issues, and ultimately to the passions they provoke.

"Facing antisemitism . . . was mostly the Jewish problem of the Old World, with its expulsions, Inquisition, ghettos, pogroms, and Holocaust," writes Pamela S. Nadell, onetime president of the Association of Jewish Studies and the director of the Jewish Studies Program at American University, explaining that when antisemitism emerged in the U.S., "it was dealt with quickly and never approached the level of Europe's outrages."

That was the conviction for generations. But in "Antisemitism, An American Tradition," Nadell demonstrates that antisemitism has been a subterranean river under the U.S. political, cultural and social landscape, sometimes nearly invisible yet clearly sensed, sometimes visible and undeniably and deeply wounding. She sets out "just how powerfully antisemitism has coursed through the lives of American Jews no matter where or

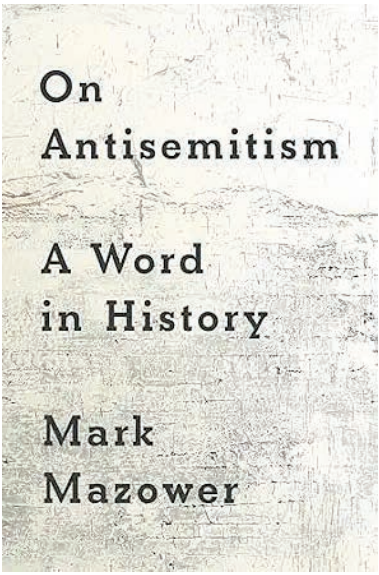
when they lived," though adding that the "immigrant and the native born, those making homes in cities and small towns, those living in colonial days, during the Civil War, the Great Depression, or in this first quarter of the 21st century, all could, and often didn't encounter this expression of hate."

Nadell didn't expect to be writing a book about antisemitism but its recent surge, she writes, "shocked me and propelled this book forward." It prompted her to chronicle the broader society's views of Jews from colonial times through the 1876 cause célèbre of the denial of the banker Joseph Seligman and his family entry to the Grand Union Hotel to the appearance of swastikas at New York's Congregation Rodeph Shalom to the growth of support of the Palestinian intifada.

She argues that the hinge of this hatred came in 2016 and with the emergence of Donald Trump as a formidable presidential candidate, prompting the emergence of antisemitism as a major American challenge. The White House has spent months challenging this view and has sought to portray the president as a leading combatant against antisemitism.

One way or another, antisemitism came to full flower with the Israeli military response to the Hamas invasion. "Those who have directly experienced antisemitism in recent years, whether encountering it on social media, on campus, or on city streets, and who no longer feel safe in their synagogues," she argues, "will undoubtedly carry those memories across their lifetimes as their predecessors did."

Mark Mazower, a Columbia historian, treads some of the same territory but takes a different view in "On Antisemitism: A Word in History." "A term that began as a way to describe the hostility faced by Jews as a minority struggling for their legal rights is now used to defend a Jewish majority state



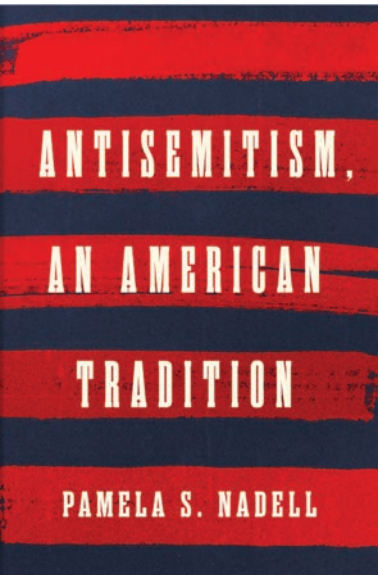
Dozens of books on antisemitism and the position of Jews in the contemporary world have been released in recent months.

depriving the minority within it of theirs," he writes. "Fighting antisemitism once meant battling ethnonationalism; now it often justifies ethnonationalism's excess."

Mazower also seizes upon the irony that, as he writes, "Even racists these days say they are fighting antisemitism, something that would have been unimaginable when the term was coined and should itself be a kind of signal that it is now being abused."

Indeed, abuse is at the center of this debate – the abuse of the term that Mazower identifies, the abuse Jews have felt even in their comfort in the U.S., the abuse Israel experienced two years ago, the abuse wrought on the Palestinians as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pressed ahead with his military response.

"The enormous attention given in recent times to redefine antisemitism has created its own problems," he writes, adding, "The concept, which derives its very name from a discredited racial theory, is routinely applied to everything from prejudices and stereotypes to feelings, attitudes,



and forms of legislation, not to mention acts of violence ranging from petty abuse to massacre and genocide."

In this volume, Mazower speaks of the clash between establishment figures, many of them Jews, who "were accustomed to seeing Israel as a plucky and beleaguered underdog and felt outraged" by campus protests and students who "were equally outraged by U.S. support for an occupying force that was systematically evicting Palestinians from the ancestral homes and obliterating much of Gaza."

The place of Jews in this debate thus ranges from innocent victims of antisemitism to co-conspirators in it. It is an uncomfortable balance. And yet it is not a balance in the scales of justice. It is more fundamentally a story of deep injustice, and how sometimes in history injustice can beget injustice, as unjust as that may be. ☪

David M. Shribman, who won a Pulitzer Prize as Washington bureau chief of The Boston Globe, is executive editor emeritus of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette and teaches at Carnegie Mellon University and McGill University.

Rapper who accused Israel of genocide dropped from Foxboro concert

By **ANDREW LAPIN**
JTA.ORG

ROBERT KRAFT, the Jewish and pro-Israel billionaire, took credit Monday for helping to pressure Ed Sheeran to drop pro-Palestinian rapper Macklemore from his tour.

Kraft, who owns one of the stadiums where Macklemore was scheduled to perform, confirmed the rapper's own account of the

businessman's involvement in a statement.

"Gillette Stadium has a long-standing commitment to providing a welcoming environment for all guests and ensuring that events held at our venue do not provide a platform for hate speech," Kraft said.

His statement continued, "Based on Macklemore's recent actions, material shared from the stage during Ed Sheeran's shows in New Jersey, and a broader history of antisemitic rhetoric and imagery that we believe has been deeply offensive and hurtful to the Jewish community, we determined that his participation in the Sept. 25 and 26 concerts at Gillette Stadium would cross that line."

The controversy stemmed from a recent show at New Jersey's MetLife stadium, where Macklemore upset some Jewish and pro-Israel groups by accusing Israel of genocide and saying "Free Palestine" onstage while showing images of the war in Gaza.

The Israeli-American Council called for the rapper, who has made his pro-Palestinian views a center-

piece of his act for the last few years, to be dropped from the tour. Pop stars Pink and Matisyahu, who are Jewish, also criticized the artist.

On Monday morning, Sheeran's North American promoter told Rolling Stone that Macklemore had indeed been dropped, following pushback from unnamed venues that "will not allow a concert to take place with Macklemore on the lineup."

Following the announcement, Macklemore took to social media to finger Kraft as the instigator of the venue boycott.

"Ed told me that Kraft said I would not be allowed to perform in his stadium," the "Same Love" singer wrote on Instagram. "Ed also told me that Kraft had rallied some of the other stadium owners and collectively they gave him an ultimatum: If Macklemore stays on the tour, you will not be allowed to play in our venues."

Kraft now confirms he played a role – but says his objections were not to the rapper's pro-Palestinian views.

"This decision is not about dimin-



JANE GERSHOVICH/GETTY IMAGES

Robert Kraft

ishing the suffering of innocent Palestinians or denying anyone the right to advocate on their behalf. Their pain and loss are real," the sports and private-equity mogul, who also owns the New England Patriots, said in his statement. "But that advocacy should not come at the expense of the Jewish community."

Kraft added that he has "created athletic and entrepreneurial opportunities for Palestinians who I admire and respect," adding, "Standing with the Palestinian people and standing against Hamas, antisemitism and hate should not be mutually exclusive."

He ended by extending a hand to Macklemore: "I would welcome the opportunity to sit down with Macklemore and discuss the facts,

because ultimately our goal is the same – peace for all people, an end to suffering, and an end to all hate."

Kraft has been heavily involved in Jewish initiatives since the Oct. 7, 2023, deadly Hamas raids in Israel, including staffing a bunker under Gillette Stadium to monitor antisemitism on social media.

Macklemore, whose name is Benjamin Hammond Haggerty, is 43 and has been performing since 2000. He has spoken publicly about overcoming addiction and almost died in 2020 of a near-fatal overdose after a relapse.

In his own post over the weekend, Sheeran explained his position.

"I am appalled by the conflict between Israel and Palestine," he wrote. "The suffering and pain

caused on both sides is a human tragedy. There are too many wars across the world causing immeasurable pain, none of which should be tolerated. Macklemore asked to join my tour last year and I agreed, because I respect him as an artist. As with all my support acts, I agree that they play a setlist of their choosing.

"After Macklemore's performances at my New Jersey shows, venues on my upcoming tour dates communicated that they would pull the shows if he was still supporting. I was informed that this stance was based on how Macklemore conveyed part of his message during his performance, rather than on everything that was said. I spoke with the venues at length all week to try and build a bridge. One of those people was Robert Kraft. I was also involved in direct talks with promoters along with activists on both sides to try and find a mutual resolution for all, but the venue's and promoter's decision was final."

The IAC praised the decision to drop Macklemore.

Macklemore has been outspoken in his pro-Palestinian beliefs. In 2024, he released a single, "Hind's Hall," dedicated to the Columbia University encampment movement. In his Monday statement he said, "What I said at MetLife, I have been saying on stages around the world for almost three years." 🗨

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Brandeis conference to examine sexual violence on Oct. 7 and in war zones globally

By **BRETT M. RHYNE**
JOURNAL STAFF

ON THE ANNIVERSARY of the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks and the ensuing war in Gaza, scholars from Brandeis and Bar-Ilan universities will come together to examine how international law addresses sexual violence in war and why some deny it has happened in Israel and globally.

Organizers say the “Brandeis–Bar Ilan Conference on Conflict Related Sexual Violence and the Legacy of October 7” aims to situate the events in Israel and Gaza and in other war zones within the evolving legal framework around conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV), which is a crime under international human rights law.

“It’s exploring the possibilities of accountability [for perpetrators] and justice for victims,” said Lisa Fishbayn Joffe, director of the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute, which is convening the conference with The Dinah Project at the Rackman Center, Faculty of Law, Bar Ilan University, Israel.

The conference will examine how norms governing conflict-related sexual violence “were or were not applied in the context of the offenses of Oct. 7 and against hostages that were held afterwards,” Fishbayn Joffe said. Sessions will also look at possibilities for implementing remedies for women who were subject to CRSV in Israel and Gaza, as well as in war zones around the world.

“Up until the 1990s, rape in war was just a fact of life,” Fishbayn Joffe said. “It was just a terrible thing that happened, but it was not something that was tracked. It was not something that international human rights law offered remedies for.”

With the atrocities committed in Rwanda



AMY POWELL

Lisa Fishbayn Joffe

and the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, though, legal experts began to secure recognition of rape and sexual violence in war as crimes that could be prosecuted under international law.

The conference itself came out of ongoing conversations between Fishbayn Joffe and Ruth Halperin-Kaddari and her colleagues at Bar Ilan University about the production of knowledge about what happened on Oct. 7 and the reaction afterwards. The recent release of the Dinah Project report was one catalyst. Another was a

growing body of scholarship: what happened in terms of sexual violence on Oct. 7 and afterward; how international law around CRSV applies in this context; and how denialism has emerged and been amplified in political, media and activist spaces.

It was time to convene a public conference “to look at this new scholarship and consider what it tells us,” Fishbayn Joffe said.

Keynote speaker Dr. Alice Edwards, who until earlier this year served as the UN special rapporteur on torture, will begin by discussing the emergence of recognition of crimes of a sexual nature in international law, the provision of remedies, and the challenges of seeking their effective application in the context of Oct. 7 and the war that came afterward.

A panel on international perspectives on combat related sexual violence will trace how this shift occurred, mapping the emergence of CRSV as a legally recognized category and a focus of advocacy. It will also offer a broader history as a framework for understanding the response to the incidents of Oct. 7 in that context.

Some of that response, including from segments of the international human rights and women’s movements, was silence and denial, a subject to be addressed by an international panel moderated by Fishbayn Joffe.

A panel on radical ideologies and joint responsibility will examine the beliefs and doctrines that animated the perpetrators of the Oct. 7 attacks and how those ideologies might factor into legal accountability.

Finally, a panel of Dinah Project members will look at that group’s report, “A Quest for Justice: October 7 and Beyond,” consider its findings and recommendations, focus on concrete legal strategies to implement them, and

possibly criminally prosecute the perpetrators.

The conference builds on longstanding work at the institute. A Harvard-educated lawyer, Fishbayn Joffe has directed the institute’s Project on Gender, Culture, Religion and Law, which looks at questions around women’s rights under Jewish and secular law, for nearly two decades.

Immediately after the Hamas attacks of Oct. 7, Fishbayn Joffe teamed up with Harleen Singh, an associate professor of literature and women’s, gender and sexuality studies at Brandeis, to lead a session at a campus teach-in on how sexual violence in war came to be recognized as a crime under international law and why that recognition mattered.

Fishbayn Joffe emphasized that the lessons drawn in Israel could help shape responses far beyond that conflict. The conference is designed to widen the lens on CRSV, she said, placing Oct. 7 within a longer struggle to take women’s experiences in war seriously and to translate recognition into action.

“I hope it will set the phenomenon of conflict-related sexual violence in a broader context,” she said. “That this has been part of a project seeking to recognize the experience of women in war, really for the last 50 years, and treat that with the kind of seriousness and sobriety that it deserves.”

The Hadassah-Brandeis Institute’s free “Brandeis–Bar Ilan Conference on Conflict Related Sexual Violence and the Legacy of October 7” will be held Oct. 6-7 at Brandeis University in Waltham. For more information, visit brandeis.edu/hbi/events/brandeis-bar-ilan-conference. 📍

Contact reporter Brett M. Rhyne at brett@jewishjournal.org.

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Noah Wyle wins his second Emmy Award

NOAH WYLE on Monday night won his second consecutive Emmy for playing Dr. Michael "Robby" Robinavitch on "The Pitt." The win also marked

a second victory for one of television's more fully realized Jewish characters.

The actor won Outstanding Lead Actor in a Drama Series for the

HBO Max medical drama. In his acceptance speech, Wyle recalled growing up in Los Angeles and said, "This is all I've ever wanted to do, and this is the only club I've ever



ALBERTO RODRIGUEZ/DEADLINE VIA GETTY IMAGES

Noah Wyle with his Emmy.

wanted to join."

For Jewish viewers, the significance of Wyle's victory goes beyond the actor's own Jewish ancestry. In the first season, Robby was seen reciting the Shema at one of his lowest moments, turning what might have been a throwaway piece of character background into an intimate expression of fear and faith.

In the second season, Wyle, who is also a writer, director and executive producer on the show, pushed that dimension further. An episode he wrote dealt with the trauma of the 2018 Tree of Life Congregation shooting in Pittsburgh, while also exploring Robby's complicated relationship with his Jewish faith.

Wyle was not the only Jewish winner of the night. Saul Metzstein, the Scottish Jewish director whose father was the prominent mod-

ernist architect Isi Metzstein, won Outstanding Directing for a Drama Series for "Slow Horses." Metzstein had been competing against Wyle, who was nominated for directing an episode of "The Pitt."

Those two wins were among the relatively few Jewish victories at this year's ceremony. Jewish actors including Jason Segel, Lisa Kudrow, Harrison Ford and Hannah Einbinder were among the nominees but did not win in their categories.

An Emmy was also awarded to a Jewish actor and director whose death in 2025 stunned the industry and a legion of fans. Rob Reiner, who was killed in December with his wife, Michele, won a posthumous Emmy for his guest role as a kind dispenser of business advice on "The Bear." 🕯

- JTA.org

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Israeli ballet wunderkind makes his Boston Ballet debut



OFER MOLDOVAN

Israeli dancer Yuval Cohen is a native of Jerusalem.

By **SHELLEY A. SACKETT**
JOURNAL CORRESPONDENT

GROWING UP IN JERUSALEM, Yuval Cohen always loved to dance. He started at age six with the Mehola Dance Company, focusing on folk and modern dance, and then joined the Jerusalem Ballet School in 2017, after receiving an excellence scholarship from the American-Israel Cultural Foundation.

But it was not until 2018, at age 15, when he won the gold medal at Russia's Nutcracker International Ballet Competition and received an invitation to the Vaganova Academy in St. Petersburg, that he realized dancing was more than his passion; it was his destiny.

"It felt so natural to be in a huge theater, performing with an orchestra, even though I'd never seen these kinds of opera houses or even listened to a live orchestra," Cohen recalled.

After graduation, he continued his meteoric path, first with the Bolshoi Theatre and then with the Philadelphia Ballet, where he was promoted quickly from apprentice to company and soloist. He made history in 2023 when he won the bronze medal at the Jackson International Ballet Competition, the first Israeli dancer to both reach the final round and receive a medal.

Cohen joined the Boston Ballet as an artist of the company in 2026, and the 23-year-old couldn't be more excited about his move, both professionally and personally. "I love that Boston is super clean, with historic buildings alongside gorgeous skyscrapers, parks and greenery. It's so relaxing and peaceful," he said, noting that, when he misses home, he goes to one of the many Israeli/Jewish-owned restaurants.

He will dance in the season opener, "Fall Experiences" in the second piece, "Vertical Road [Reimagined]," a ballet set to an evocative score and driven by rhythmic, elemental movement that explores humanity's search for meaning. "It's so intense and so hard on the body, but has such a powerful energy and connection to God and humans collectively," Cohen explained.

Although he has lived far from

Israel for most of his career, Cohen retains deep connections to both his homeland and his Jewish heritage no matter where he resides. Surprisingly, his years in Russia were no exception.

Russia and Israel had better relations from 2018-2021, the years Cohen was there, than they do today. He spent a lot of time at the Chabad synagogue in Saint Petersburg. "It made me feel very close to home and kept me connected to the traditions that I grew up with in Israel," he said.

The Russian appreciation for the art of ballet was equally surprising, unlike anything he had experienced anywhere else. "Being an artist in Russia is like being a Hollywood star in America," he said, recounting the time a taxi driver asked him for his autograph when he heard he was a ballet dancer.

After the Hamas attack on Oct. 7, 2023, Cohen became very active and vocal in his support of Israel. By coincidence, he was scheduled to perform his first featured role with the Philadelphia Ballet – Escamillo in "Carmen" – that very night. He dedicated his performance to Israel and the hostages. "It was my way of serving Israel, like my brothers and our soldiers, but in my field," he said.

With the hostages back, he is happier and relieved, but is still scared to look at what news he has awakened to. He is aware of the international damage the war has caused, and he remains committed to continuing to help however he can, whether by performing at fundraisers or by showing up at simple talks and gatherings. "The Jewish and Israeli communities have to keep supporting each other and Israel," he said.

He was raised in Israel during times of war and uncertainty in a family that included Holocaust survivors. "This makes you see life differently," Cohen said. "Jews and the Israelis are, in general, optimistic." He credits this optimism with keeping him focused and able to push his body and mind forward to continue to break new ceilings in his career.

"I believe everything is a journey. No matter how hard and difficult life is, you must still work and grow. You might not see the light at the end of a dark path today, but it will happen," he said.

In July 2024, Cohen was selected

by Dance Magazine for their "25 to Watch" list of up-and-coming dancers. He performed an excerpt from William Forsythe's "In the Middle, Somewhat Elevated" for the magazine's "25 to Watch Live Event." (Forsythe is an American choreographer who transformed classical ballet into a dynamic 21st-century art form by pushing classical technique to extreme physical and conceptual limits).

Cohen has been fortunate to work with different choreographers and staggers across many repertoire genres, from classical and traditional to modern and contemporary. The Forsythe work

is one of his favorites to perform because it "shapes your body and mind in a most interesting way," he said. Nonetheless, he is always ready to prepare for a classical, full-length ballet because he thinks "it's most satisfying for the dancers and audience to follow a story and characters on stage in a ballet journey."

Cohen is excited to join the Boston Ballet and the Boston community. "I hope I can bring over beautiful traditions, culture and Jewish Israeli spice to any stage and platform. Being together gives us strength to spread love and happiness to the world," he declared. ☺

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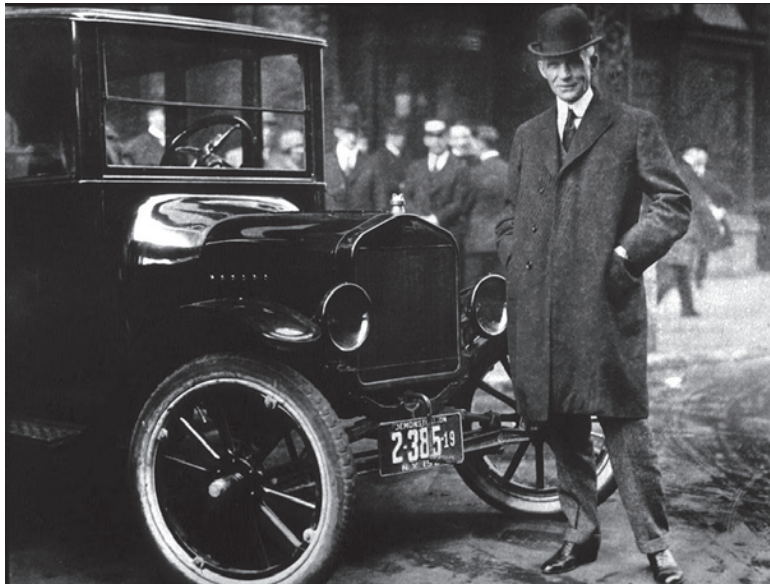


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'Long overdue': Henry Ford home museum to confront his antisemitism



GETTY IMAGES

Henry Ford with his Model T.

By **ANDREW LAPIN**
JTA.ORG

THE BUST of Henry Ford looked on sternly as hundreds of Jewish professionals flooded his pool room.

The visiting Jews admired the views of the Rouge River from Ford's windows and strolled through his immaculately maintained garden. They studied a mock-up for a Navajo rug in his basement woven with a particular pattern – one that appeared to resemble a Nazi swastika.

The staff at Fair Lane, the historic Dearborn home of Henry and his wife Clara, welcomed the Jewish educators, historians and museum staff. Why they did soon became clear during a panel discussion in that pool room. When the home reopens to the public in June 2027, after a 17-year closure for restoration, staff will teach visitors about Ford's antisemitism.

This facet of the pioneering industrialist's life was hardly incidental. The onetime richest man in the U.S. published venomous conspiracy theories in his newspaper, The Dearborn Independent, for years. Hitler was a professed admirer, and Nazi Germany awarded him a medal.

Leaders of Jewish groups greeted the news that the home would address Ford's antisemitism with optimism. Local Jewish groups have been pushing for Ford's enterprises to acknowledge his antisemitism for years.

"The reckoning is long overdue, and we all will be better for it," Catherine Cangany, CEO of the Jewish Historical Society of Michigan, said a statement. "This history happened, it caused harm, and it continues to have consequences we all must confront."

More than two months after the conference, staffers Austin Eighmey and Hannah McCready outlined their educational plans in more detail.

"Our mission is to illuminate the lives and legacy of Henry and Clara Ford," Eighmey, senior director of historic resources, said. Part of that legacy, he said, was noting that "he was an ignorant man, fed a lot of poor information that he himself sought out."

"It's our job to tell a more full picture and give people a lens with which to view history," added McCready, the site's director of interpretation and education.

In the Detroit area, where Ford's name still looms large nearly 80 years after his death, such a commitment is notable. In 2023, the former president of the Ford Foundation, the family's charitable arm, acknowl-

edged and condemned its namesake's antisemitism.

But as Ford the man continues to be heavily mythologized today, by new generations of entrepreneurs and gearheads – and white supremacists – the physical museums and educational institutions in the region that bear Ford's name and have connections to his family largely have not broached his antisemitism.

Those include The Henry Ford, a museum built around his personal collections; Greenfield Village, a historic reenactment village that includes a restoration of the mogul's childhood home; and the Ford Piquette Avenue Plant, a Detroit heritage site where Ford's Model Ts were built.

Eighmey said the plan to teach about antisemitism had been the goal since the restoration's early days. The staff met with representatives from the Zekelman Holocaust Center, the state's flagship Holocaust museum, to discuss how such a project would look.

"They were straightforward about Henry Ford's antisemitism and hope that it will be incorporated into the interpretive narrative where appropriate but, at the same time, they respectfully acknowledged many of Henry Ford's strengths and expressed a deep regard for Fair Lane's stories, physical spaces, and current restoration work," reads one executive summary of the focus group that a consultant shared with JTA.

The team has developed talking points about Ford's antisemitism as part of their "non-negotiables," museum terminology for facets of history that every visitor will encounter. Donna Braden, a museums consultant who formerly worked with The Henry Ford and who is Jewish herself, was hired to give her feedback on the plan and drafted her own proposed "non-negotiables" for the subject.

"Explaining the true story of Henry Ford's antisemitism to non-Jewish people will help them understand why it is so important to the Jewish community," Braden told the Fair Lane team in a report on their efforts.

"I hope that they will move forward to bring Henry Ford's antisemitism to the public," said Steven Watts, author of the 2006 biography, "The People's Tycoon: Henry Ford and the American Century."

"He basically begins to argue that Jews lay behind the corruption of that old-fashioned kind of rural, WASP cultural virtue, that Jews were behind jazz music, Jews were behind Hollywood movies, and that there was a kind of moral degradation that was at work," Watts said. ☹

Carolina Panthers offensive lineman spent formative summers at Camp Young Judea



CAROLINA PANTHERS

Jake Curhan (74) lines up at right tackle for the Carolina Panthers.

By **MICHAEL MURRA**
JOURNAL CORRESPONDENT

CAROLINA PANTHERS OFFENSIVE TACKLE Jake Curhan didn't play organized football sooner, partially because of the memorable summers he experienced at Camp Young Judea in Amherst, New Hampshire.

Curhan, a 28-year-old sixth year NFL player, has a North Shore connection. His father, Greg, is from Marblehead and graduated from Dartmouth College.

The 6-foot-6, 316-pound lineman grew up in Marin County, California and played college football at University of California, Berkeley. It wasn't until he aged out of summer camp that he took up football, as a high school sophomore.

He still maintains strong connections to Camp Young Judea, located

just north of the Massachusetts state line.

"During my first or second year in the NFL with the Seahawks, 10 to 15 friends from Camp Young Judea came out to a home game in Seattle," Curhan said. "A lot of them live in New York City. Whenever we play the Jets or Giants, I always have a group that will come see me. It's super fun to keep up with my friends."

He traveled to Israel with a group from Camp Young Judea in the summer of 2014. His love for CYJ was one of the reasons he didn't play football until high school. Once he aged out of camp, he gave it a chance.

Curhan is starting the season on the Panthers' practice squad, with hopes of making the active roster. He was on the active roster last season as the Panthers won the NFC South and nearly upset the Los Angeles Rams in the playoffs.

The Panthers are in rare company with not only Curhan but Jewish running back AJ Dillon, who graduated from Lawrence Academy in Groton and Boston College. Dillon respectfully declined an interview.

"When AJ signed here, our shared Judaism is one of the first things we talked about," Curhan said. "I told him that this is the first time since college that I've played with another Jewish player. It was a fun little connection to make. It's a badge of honor for a lot of Jewish people to look and see fellow Jews playing in the NFL."

Curhan said there's much diversity in NFL locker rooms, which provides environments conducive to listening, learning and growth.

"A lot of times, I'm the first Jewish person some of my teammates have ever met," Curhan said. "There's questions and misconceptions. Everyone is from all over the

place, but we're all teammates, and at the end of the day, everyone gets along."

Curhan, who earned a business degree from UC Berkeley, remembers one Passover in college when he introduced some of his teammates to the holiday.

"During Passover, my parents, in classic Jewish fashion, would tell me to invite whomever to celebrate with us," Curhan said. "There was at least five of my college teammates that

got to experience their first seder coming over to my parents' house. It was great to be able to share our culture with my teammates."

Curhan earned All-Pac academic honors at Berkeley. He signed with the Seahawks as an undrafted free agent in 2021 and spent his first three seasons in the Pacific Northwest. He then played with the Chicago Bears in 2024, followed by the Arizona Cardinals and Panthers last fall. 📍



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Kenneth Coburn, 89, of Peabody, formerly of Chelsea and Malden

Kenneth Coburn, 89, of Peabody, entered into rest on Sept. 7, 2026 after a battle with Parkinson's disease and cancer.

Born and raised in Chelsea, Ken was the son of Myer and Marion (Resnick) Coburn. His family moved to Malden during high school, and after graduation, he went right into business with his father at Coburn Auto Parts, eventually extending the business to include engine repair. Later on, he moved the shop to Peabody and ran the business until his retirement.

Kenny met his wife, Anita (née Schenk), z"l, in Florida while each was on vacation. Since she lived in Chicago, they dated long-distance before marrying in 1959. During their 55 years of marriage, they welcomed two daughters and three granddaughters.

In his younger days, Ken enjoyed tennis, squash, badminton, table tennis, and racquetball, and he also



practiced aikido, just like his father. For most of his life, he was also an avid bridge player. He loved zoos and brought his family to them as often as he could. He also loved having summer barbecues at his pool, grilling for 75 people at a time. For fun, he liked to study maps and atlases, and he read several newspapers every

day to keep up with what was going on in the world.

Kenny and Anita were among the first members of Temple Beth Shalom (now Temple Tiferet Shalom) in Peabody, a congregation that meant so much to them. Ken served on the temple board as chairman of the House Committee and sang in the choir. He was also a longtime member of the local B'nai B'rith chapter and ran the B'nai B'rith booth at Topsfield Fair for many years.

After his wife passed away, Ken felt fortunate to have had two other special partners in his life, Vita Freedman, z"l, and Elaine Hepworth.

Kenneth leaves behind his daughters, Robin McMahon and Jodi Coburn; his sister, Rhonda Fisher; his son-in-law, Steven Blumenkrantz; his granddaughter, Melissa McMahon, who took such wonderful care of him; his granddaughters, Lindsay and Haley Blumenkrantz; and a niece and many nephews.

Arrangements were private. Following Jewish tradition and in lieu of flowers, donations in Ken's memory may be made to Temple Tiferet Shalom of Peabody.

Ellen Becker-Gray, 74, of Marblehead

Ellen Becker-Gray, 74, of Marblehead, passed away peacefully on Sept. 7, 2026. She leaves behind a life filled with creativity, family, friendship, and a deep love of the arts.

Ellen will be lovingly remembered by her family, including her siblings, Rabbinic Pastor Matia Angelou and her husband David Osmond, David Belf Becker and his wife Jackie Belf Becker, Ellen's twin sister Susan Grant and her husband John Grant, and Charles Becker and his life partner Sue Pevear; as well as her stepchildren Chris Gray and Tim Gray, and her step-granddaughter Marissa.

Ellen had a lifelong passion for the arts and entertainment. She began her career teaching kindergarten at Eveleth School in Marblehead, where she worked for 25 years.

Upon retiring, Ellen continued to pursue her love of the arts and enter-

tainment. She worked as a paid extra in a number of notable productions, including "Evening," "Gone Baby Gone," "30 Rock," and "The Heat," starring Sandra Bullock and Melissa McCarthy. Ellen was especially proud of her appearance in "The Heat." She was a member of SAG-AFTRA and Equity and also participated in Marblehead Little Theatre.

Ellen's creativity extended beyond acting. She enjoyed painting with watercolors and was also an accomplished cake decorator.

A graveside service was held on Sept. 14 at Waterside Cemetery, Marblehead. In lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy may be made in Ellen's memory to Marblehead Dollars for Scholars, P.O. Box 4, Marblehead, MA 01945, or online through the Marblehead Dollars for Scholars website (marblehead.dollarsforscholars.org).

Marlene F. (Miller) Cohen, 84, of Peabody, formerly of Marblehead

Marlene F. (Miller) Cohen, 84, entered eternal rest at her Peabody home on Sept. 10, 2026.

Born in Chelsea, she was raised in

Marblehead. A graduate of the class of 1960, she was on the reunion committee for many years and attended and enjoyed her 65th reunion.

Marlene had a long career in sales management. She worked for Casual Male, Cape Cod Crafters, Life Uniform Company and Brides by Contessa. She also owned Mardi Gras Mania Party Goods store.

Marlene was a woman who enjoyed life to its fullest. She loved to travel, dance, dine at restaurants, attend musicals, plays and concerts. She shared these experiences with her husbands, Thomas O'Brien and the late Wayne Cohen, her late sister Frumie Tanzer, and many friends.

Marlene is survived by her children Dov and Missy Cohen, Mara B. Cohen, Seth and Karen Cohen, and step-daughter Susan and Dana Tennent. She will be missed by her grandchildren, Robert and Molly, Katherine, Billi and Dana, Alexander and Alan, Tyler, Elijah, Mia, Waverly and Joshua, Zander, Rachel, Sarah, D.J., Dhevin, Meghan, Trey and Casey, and 13 great-grandchildren. Marlene was the sister-in-law of Marcia Cohen, Roger Cohen, Carolyn Pivnick, Irene O'Brien, the late Nathan Tanzer, Gerald Cohen, Dave and Joan Kelley, Phil O'Brien and Maureen Mahoney.

Services were held at Shirat Hayam (Temple Israel) Cemetery, Peabody on Sept 15. In lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy may be sent to Congregation Sons of Israel, P.O. Box 3949, Peabody, MA 01961, or Care Dimensions, 75 Sylvan St., Danvers, MA 01923. Arrangements were handled by Goldman Funeral Chapel, Malden.

OBITUARY POLICY

The Jewish Journal prints obituaries up to 200 words for \$200; longer submissions will be charged accordingly. Paid obituaries will also be posted online at jewishjournal.org. Photographs cost \$40 each; emailed photos should be sent as jpeg or tiff files. Submissions are subject to editing for style. For further information, contact your local funeral home, or email andrew@jewishjournal.org.





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Poll: A third of Israelis call settler rioters ‘terrorists’

A THIRD of Israelis describe Jewish rioters involved in recent violence in the West Bank village of Qusra as “Israeli terrorists,” according to a survey released Monday by the Jewish People Policy Institute. Coupled with another 18% who called them “nationalist criminals,” the results demonstrate the degree to which the rioters, whose actions have roiled Israel’s relations with its allies, including the Trump administration, are outliers in Israel, institute President Yedidia Stern said. “The survey shows that support among Israelis for the Jewish rioters in the West Bank is truly negligible, at just 5%,” Stern said in a release

accompanying the poll. “More than half the public judges them very harshly, as terrorists or criminals, while others view them with varying degrees of severity. This represents an unusually broad consensus in Israel’s polarized society.” Only 13% of the respondents chose one of the two most lenient descriptions: “young people who sometimes go too far” or “the salt of the earth.” The government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has come under pressure from the Trump administration and European nations to crack down on the rioters. Netanyahu has until recently resisted serious action, mindful that a significant portion of his coalition

includes far-right parties sympathetic to varying degrees with the rioters. Earlier this month, Netanyahu ordered some of the outposts associated with the rioters removed. Views on the rioters differed according to political affiliation. Sixty-three percent of respondents on the left described the rioters as “Israeli terrorists,” compared with 49% in the center and just 3% on the right. Arab Israelis were also more likely to use the term, at 55%, compared with 27% of Jewish Israelis. The survey referred to a recent incident in Qusra in which dozens of masked Israelis arrived in pickup trucks, threw stones at Palestinian residents and barricaded themselves inside a Palestinian home while

members of the family were still inside, according to the Israeli military. Several Palestinians were wounded, and the rioters fled when security forces arrived. No arrests were made. The incident came weeks after another confrontation in Qusra in which Israeli settlers set up an unauthorized outpost beside Palestinian homes. U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee condemned that episode at the time as a “horrific act of terror” meant to “intimidate and harass” families. The survey was conducted Sept. 1-3 among 663 Jewish respondents and 206 Arab respondents and weighted to represent Israel’s adult population. JPPI did not list a margin of error.

– JTA.org

IDF weighs legal action against NAZA filmmakers amid calls to revoke their citizenship

EARLIER THIS WEEK, the Israeli army chief of staff ordered the military to examine possible legal action over “NAZA,” a documentary alleging that Israeli forces knowingly killed large numbers of civilians in Gaza. The 80-minute documentary by Israeli filmmakers Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor won the Special Jury Prize at the Venice Film Festival on Saturday, two days after its premiere there drew a 25-minute standing ovation. In Israel, it drew widespread condemnation from Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, senior military officials, former hostages and other public figures. Eyal Zamir requested that Military Advocate General Maj. Gen. Itai Ofir “examine security aspects and possible involvement in relation to the leak of classified materials used in the pro-

duction of the film” as well as advance “possible legal actions regarding the film and those involved in it.” Zamir also convened senior IDF officials, including the deputy chief of staff, the military advocate general, the air force commander and the commander of the elite 8200 military intelligence unit to address what the army says are the film’s distortions. In a statement announcing the meeting, Zamir denounced the film’s allegations as “blood libels,” a “deliberate distortion of reality” and “false and grave accusations” against Israeli soldiers and commanders. The film “adopts narratives of Israel-haters, defames our soldiers and commanders, and seeks to present the IDF as deliberately acting unlawfully,” he said. The IDF said in a separate statement that it “categorically rejects” the film’s allegations and questioned the

credibility of its anonymous sources. It said some claims about national and military strategy were “clearly beyond the knowledge of junior-level soldiers” and that intelligence personnel cited in the film “by definition would not have been involved” in some of the situations described. It also rejected what it called the film’s portrayal of unintended civilian deaths from lawful strikes as deliberate killing or part of a “genocide.” The Hamas-run Gaza health ministry says that over 70,000 people have been killed in the war launched by Hamas on Oct. 7, 2023, with deadly raids inside Israel. The army does not dispute the number, but says that a substantial portion of the dead are fighters. Gaza’s health ministry does not distinguish between fighters and civilians. The military also disputed NAZA’s depiction of artificial intelligence in

targeting, saying such decisions are made “by human personnel only.” It said anticipated civilian harm is weighed against the expected military advantage before a strike is approved and that attacks are not carried out when that harm would be disproportionate. The IDF added that it had only seen excerpts and a trailer, and asked the filmmakers for a full screening before responding comprehensively. Culture Minister Miki Zohar asked the government to examine whether Abraham and Szor’s conduct could justify revoking their Israeli citizenship. Zohar accused the filmmakers of harming Israel abroad and said officials should examine whether the way material for the film was obtained or published could amount to treason or assisting the enemy during wartime.

– JTA.org

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September 18, 6:31 p.m.
September 25, 6:18 p.m.

ONGOING

Israeli Folk Dancing, Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 8:30 a.m. Classes are held at the JCCNS. Free, RSVP to ns.israeli.folk.dance@gmail.com. JCCNS, 4 Community Road, Marblehead.

Israeli Folk Dancing at Temple Ner Tamid, Tuesdays at 8 p.m. \$2 donation is appreciated. No experience necessary. For more information, email algrnewman@aol.com. Temple Ner Tamid, 368 Lowell St., Peabody.

Knitting Knights, first and third Wednesdays of every month at 7 p.m. Join for fun evenings of knitting and chat. All ability levels welcome. JCCNS Women's Health Center, 4 Community Road, Marblehead.

Open Play Canasta and Mah-Jongg, Wednesdays, 3-5 p.m. at the JCCNS in Marblehead. The community is invited for weekly canasta and mah-jongg games. Bring your own playing cards and canasta card holder and your own mah-jongg set. Members, free; community, \$5. RSVP to Sara Ewing at sewing@jccns.com. JCCNS, 4 Community Road, Marblehead.

BalaGan! Third Friday of every month, 5:30 p.m. PJ Library and Rabbi Evan, Cantor Rubenstein, and Miss Bari of Temple Tiferet Shalom in Peabody connect families with young children with each other and build strong connections over a shared Jewish identity. BalaGan is designed for families with children ages 2-6, siblings and grandparents are welcome, too. Followed by a family dinner. Register by emailing Beth at office@templetiferetshalom.org.

org. For questions, contact Lynne Krasker Schultz at lynnne@lappinfofoundation.org. Temple Tiferet Shalom, 489 Lowell St., Peabody.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Downsizing 101, 11:30 a.m. Presented by the JCCNS in Marblehead. The community is invited to join professional organizer and senior move specialist Rachel Carlino-Dangora for an informative discussion on the practical and emotional aspects of downsizing. Coffee and bagels will be served. The event is free and open to everyone. Visit JCCNS.org for details and RSVP. JCCNS, 4 Community Road, Marblehead.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 25

Shabbat in the Sukkah, 6 p.m. Presented by Congregation Shirat Hayam in Swampscott. The community is invited to celebrate Shabbat and welcome Sukkot. We'll gather for a special Shabbat service and festive dinner in the sukkah, followed by holiday-themed games and crafts. Free; RSVP required at bit.ly/ShabbatInTheSukkah. Congregation Shirat Hayam, 55 Atlantic Ave., Swampscott.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27

Schmooze and News, 10:30 a.m. Presented by the JCCNS in Marblehead. The community is invited for an invigorating discussion about the month's biggest news stories. Bagels will be served. Free and open to everyone. JCCNS, 4 Community Road, Marblehead.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29

JCCNS North Shore Singers, 1-2 p.m. Organized by the JCCNS in Marblehead. Do you love music and singing? Join us for a joyful hour of song. No experience required, but enthusiasm is much appreciated. Led by Debra Basil. Session starts Sept. 29 and will run weekly for 10 weeks. Visit JCCNS.org for details and to register. JCCNS, 4 Community Road, Marblehead.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1

Snacks & Crafts in the JCDS Sukkah, 5-5:45 p.m. Organized by Boston's Jewish Community Day School (JCDS) in Watertown. Families are invited to join the JCDS community for snacks, songs, and connection in our sukkah as we celebrate Sukkot together. This event is especially geared toward families with children in preschool through Grade 2, although everyone is welcome. Families with questions can reach out to Karen Siegel, director of admissions, at KarenS@jcdsboston.org. Families can register at events.veracross.com/jcds/3-community-adm-events. JCDS, 57 Stanley Ave., Watertown.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4

Mah-Jongg Madness, 12:30-6 p.m. Organized by Temple Emanuel. Come for an afternoon of friendly competition. This is a community event, open to the public, for all experience levels. Your ticket includes playing mah-jongg, prizes, and a ton of fun socializing and engaging with friends, old and new. For some excitement and to foster community engagement, we'll be mixing the levels of play and rotating tables. \$18 to enter. Light refreshments will be provided. More information at templemanuel.net. Temple Emanuel, 7 Haggetts Pond Road, Andover.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6

Resilience – An Evening of Remembrance of the Attack of October 7, 6 p.m. Co-sponsored by Chabad of Peabody and Peabody Public Schools. Uniting the Peabody community against all forms of hate and prejudice, speaker Omer Shemtov will share his experience and message of hope and resilience. Cost: \$18. Register at jewishpeabody.com/hostage. Higgins Middle School, 85 Perkins St., Peabody.

"Munkács Miracle" Sneak Preview, 7 p.m. Organized by Lappin Foundation. Newton location provided to registrants before the screening. The community is invited for a special sneak preview of "Munkács Miracle," followed

by a Q&A with Holocaust survivor Magda Bader and executive producers Deborah Coltin and Sarah Ovadia. Light refreshments will be served. The film is appropriate for middle school students and older. Free. Registration required: lappinfofoundation.tfaforms.net/429. For more information, contact Sharon Wyner at 978-565-4450 or swyner@lappinfofoundation.org.

OCTOBER 9-11

Celebrating Jewish Plays. Shakespeare & Company welcomes back Celebrating Jewish Plays, featuring three readings presented over three days during the holiday weekend. Live poetry, speakers, musical performances, and more have been added to this year's celebration. New this year: Multi-show weekend. Passes are available at shakespeare.org/shows/2026/celebrating-jewish-plays/. Seats must be chosen at the time of purchase. For more information, call the box office at 413-637-3353 or go to shakespeare.org. Tina Packer Playhouse & Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre, 70 Kemble St., Lenox.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13

An Evening of Music, Remembrance & Support for Israel, 7 p.m. Organized by Congregation Shirat Hayam in Swampscott. The community is invited to hear three extraordinary musicians from the Israel Symphony Orchestra. Like so many artists and cultural institutions in Israel, members of the Israel Symphony Orchestra have faced significant cuts in government funding since Oct. 7. Three exceptionally talented string musicians are coming to the U.S. for a series of performances to raise funds in support of their fellow ISO musicians. Their one-hour concert will give us an opportunity to gather as a community, remember Oct. 7, express our ongoing connection to Israel, and respond through the beauty and resilience of Israeli music. Minimum donation of \$36 per person. Visit jccns.org/event/an-evening-of-music-remembrance-support-for-israel. Congregation Shirat Hayam, 55 Atlantic Ave., Swampscott.

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ETHAN FORMAN

A group of shofar blowers join Rabbi Jenn Mangold, second from left, and a large crowd of congregants for Temple Emanu-El of Marblehead’s Tashlich ceremony at Preston Beach in Swampscott on Rosh Hashanah.

West Roxbury’s Temple B’nai Torah installs solar panels

AS MANY congregations in the region attend to their aging brick-and-mortar assets, the Temple Hillel B’nai Torah (HBT) board chose not just to repair but to innovate. This summer, HBT took a step toward sustainability by installing solar panels while it was replacing its roof. Following a successful community fundraising effort, the 170-family congregation was able to achieve this climate-minded goal with support from the Jewish Solar Challenge (JSC).

“The roof was a liability that was long overdue for maintenance,” said Jason Arenburg, HBT co-president. “Thanks to support from the Jewish Solar Challenge and financial commitments from our community, we’re able to look ahead to a more sustainable facility.”

Founded in 2021, JSC, a project of the Schwartz-Rosman Foundation, facilitates the fiscal and energy sustainability of Jewish community institutions across the country through



The newly installed solar panels atop Temple Hillel B’nai Torah.

matching grants, education and advocacy. “This project will deliver environmental and financial benefits for decades to come, and we hope it inspires other Jewish institutions throughout New England to pursue solar, as well,” said JSC founder and

President Mitchell Schwartz. ☺

All are welcome to a ribbon cutting ceremony and Shabbat services and festivities on Friday, Sept. 25 at 5:45 p.m.; Temple Hillel B’nai Torah, 120 Corey St., West Roxbury.

Brandeis to open Robert K. Kraft Family Center for Jewish Life and Leadership

ROBERT KRAFT is transforming Jewish life at Brandeis University with a \$10 million gift that names a new center that will help prepare the next generation of Jewish leaders. The gift to create the Robert K. Kraft Family Center for Jewish Life and Leadership is part of a fundraising campaign that has received significant support from early leadership donors for this new hub for Jewish life and leadership on the Waltham campus.

“Robert Kraft and the Kraft family have a remarkable legacy at Brandeis, through their generous support of our faculty and students, and we are proud to now be home to the Robert K. Kraft Family Center for Jewish Life and Leadership,”

says Arthur Levine, president of Brandeis University. “We are also deeply grateful to the alumni and friends whose generous support, vision and leadership are making this historic project a reality.”

The gift to name the center honors the Kraft family’s long connection to and support of Brandeis and the institution’s founding as a bold experiment in 1948: a university rooted in Jewish values, committed to excellence, and open to all. Today, these values continue to shape how the Brandeis community teaches, learns and lives together. The Robert K. Kraft Family Center for Jewish Life and Leadership will be the nexus of Jewish life on campus, a formative space for students’

growth, preparing them to shape the future.

A modern destination located in a 28,000 square-foot facility for Hillel at Brandeis, the Robert K. Kraft Family Center for Jewish Life and Leadership will feature state-of-the-art meeting spaces, a house of study (*beit midrash*) designed for collaborative learning, and flexible event spaces that can host conferences, convenings, and critical conversations about the future of Jewish life. The Kraft Center, expected to open in spring 2028 after renovations are complete, will serve as a natural bridge between undergraduate and graduate Jewish leadership development, attracting Jewish students and nurturing talented professionals. ☺



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Epstein Hillel turns the page after last year's fiscal uncertainty



PHOTOS COURTESY OF EPSTEIN HILLEL SCHOOL

Epstein Hillel School held a back-to-school pre-Oneg Shabbat to welcome back families this month.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The school's enrollment on Sept. 1 was 54 students in pre-kindergarten through sixth grade, Gold said. That's down from 83 in the 2025-2026 school year when the school was pre-K through eighth grade, according to the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's website.

The school offers a combined first and second grade classroom and a combined fifth and sixth grade classroom. The school has long offered multi-age classes in "specials" such as physical education, music and art,

Gold said.

Classes have one lead teacher in a room of up to 14 students. The one class that has two full-time teachers is the pre-K classroom, with 12 students. The kindergarten classroom holds 11 students, and the combined first-and-second-grade classroom has 10.

With the closure of the upper school, there was a staff reduction of subject area teachers in math, science, language arts, social studies and Hebrew/Jewish studies, Gold said.

Gold said there are advantages to small schools. The pull of EHS is the relationships teachers develop with

students "because the teachers know the children here so well as learners," she said.

It's a school where students feel they belong, are more independent and are not afraid to take risks academically or socially or try new things, Gold said.

The school year started off with an all-school assembly, during which new students were welcomed with blessings, the Pledge of Allegiance, and the regular sounding of the shofar for the month of Elul, symbolizing new beginnings.

"The teachers are just so happy to



Brothers Nate Levin, second grade, and Elijah Levin, fourth grade, on the first day of school at Epstein Hillel School in Marblehead.

be here and to be back together and for our community to come back together and to be really starting off ... on the right foot," added Gold.

The school also held a pre-Shabbat Oneg celebration at Devereux Beach on Sept. 4 to welcome back students and families.

"Our boys are in fourth and fifth grades," Kraft said, "and the school year has kicked off with so much joy. The feeling of gratitude among parents is palpable."

"Our boys can't wait to come home each day and share exciting tidbits from fourth and fifth grades: how much they love their teachers, their little buddy assignments, getting to be classroom reporter or

"Long-term viability will require growth in enrollment and tuition revenue, alongside continued philanthropy," Kraft said. "Our strategic planning process will help us identify the strongest strategies for advancing both of these critical revenue streams and building a more sustainable model for the future."

"The opportunity before us is bigger than balancing a budget," she added. "It's ensuring that families north of Boston continue to have access to an exceptional Jewish education and a deeply connected community for generations to come."

"We are thrilled to be part of a school community that takes the time to get to know our boys so well," said parents Lisa and Jon Levin in an email. Their boys are second grader Nate Levin and fourth grader Elijah Levin. "The small class size allows them to receive a more personalized education that meets them where they are and pushes them to be challenged. The teachers and staff are thoughtful and caring. My boys love coming to school each day. They're proud of their Judaism and are getting an incredible education."

Immediate past board chair Michele Cohen, who helped lead the campaign to save the school, remains on the board of directors. She was "very, very hopeful" for the future of the school after the uncertainty of the last year or two. She was in awe of those who have stepped up to leadership positions, people she described as having "incredible skills and talent."

"I could not be more excited for the year ahead of us," she said. ☺

Contact reporter Ethan M. Forman at ethan@jewishjournal.org.

Jewish Journal OF GREATER BOSTON



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