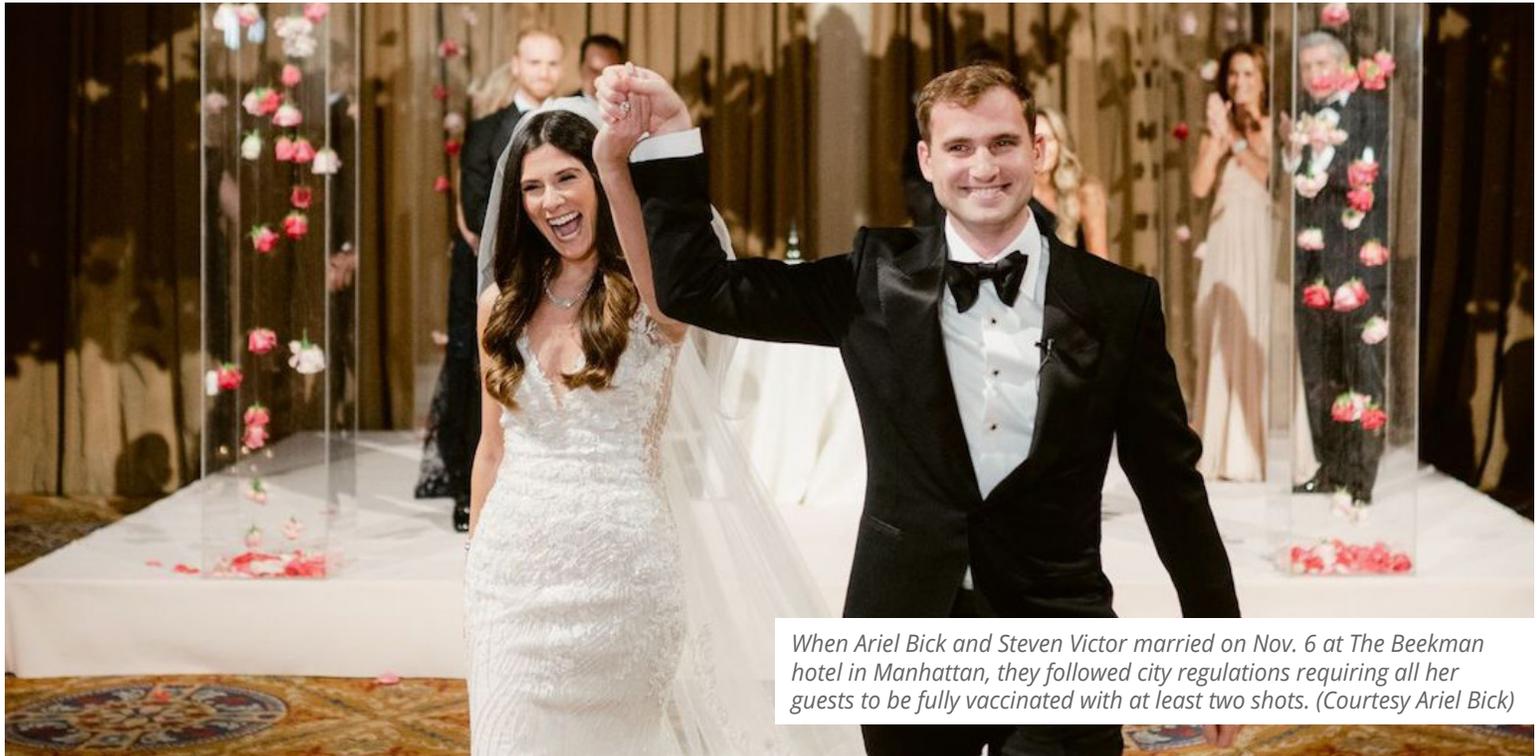


# The New York Jewish Week/end

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*When Ariel Bick and Steven Victor married on Nov. 6 at The Beekman hotel in Manhattan, they followed city regulations requiring all her guests to be fully vaccinated with at least two shots. (Courtesy Ariel Bick)*

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## ● NEWS

# Jewish Weddings Are Back — and So Are Rising Prices, Staff Shortages and Lots of Uncertainty

By Stewart Ain

After 18 months of barely performing any weddings at all, For Rabbi Howard Buechler of the Dix Hills Jewish Center on Long Island recently found himself with not just one but two requests to officiate on a recent Saturday night.

So he enlisted his daughter, Rabbi Yael Buechler, to officiate at one of them. The bride, Pamela Rosen, and her parents knew her because she has led an alternative service at the synagogue during the High Holidays.

Meanwhile, one of his sons, Rabbi Eli Buechler, assistant rabbi at The Jewish Center, an Orthodox synagogue in Manhattan, was officiating at still another wedding that weekend in the city.

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"This is the first time we ever had a Buechler trifecta," Howard Buechler said.

The unusual feat was driven by an explosion of weddings this fall as couples schedule the big nuptials that were unsafe during the height of the pandemic. Along with growing guest lists, the trend has put pressure on rabbis, caterers and vendors across the New York City area who are working their way through a backlog of weddings.

No one suggests that the pandemic is over, and the uncertainty — of case surges, new variants and gaps between who is and isn't vaccinated — brings with it its own anxiety. (At all three Nov. 13 weddings, Buechler said, he believed guests were required to be fully vaccinated.)

Still, families have been scrambling to reschedule postponed weddings — and dealing with rising prices, limited venues and ever-changing medical recommendations as they do so.

"The number of weddings this year is off the charts," said Bill Vidro, the owner of Azure Limousine in St. James, New York, in Long Island's Suffolk County. "People are getting married this year who rescheduled their wedding from last year. There are weddings now from 10 a.m. until 3 or 4 p.m. because the venue was already booked for the night. We are picking up brides and grooms as early as 6:30 in the morning. They go for pictures and then for an afternoon wedding. It's insane. And people are getting married during the week because weekends are booked."

The wedding blitz is a microcosm of a global economy still mired in a pandemic, from shifting medical protocols and rising prices to staffing shortages and supply chain disruptions.

Ariel Bick, 28, said that when she and her husband Steven Victor married on Nov. 6 at The Beekman hotel in Manhattan, they followed city regulations requiring all her guests to be fully vaccinated. Guests were asked to email their vaccination records to her before the wedding; those who didn't had to show them at the door.

Some 350 guests were invited; 220 attended. "About 10 to 15 didn't come because they were not vaccinated," she said.

One challenge: the rising price of flowers. Flower grow-

ers were very conservative when they planted this year because of the losses they sustained last year when many events were canceled, explained Jay Riether, an owner of Fleurs du Mois in Manhattan.

"That has created a shortage," he said. "The New York wedding scene is now like what it was pre-pandemic, but flowers are scarce and costs are inflated and the more esoteric flowers are impossible to get. As a result, prices have gone up 20 to 50%."

That was Bick's experience. "We booked the flowers a year before the wedding and as we got closer to the date, they told me that the price was going up and that they had to pass along the increase," she said. "We paid about 20% more because of what they said was an increase in the cost of labor and materials."

Employers across many industries say they are having a hard time finding willing workers, a dynamic that is fueled by a number of pandemic-related factors. The hospitality industry, which includes caterers, has been hit particularly hard, and Gayle Wilk, an owner of Gala Event & Food Artistry in Melville, Long Island, said costs are going up also for wait and kitchen staff.

"It is very difficult getting help and we are paying them a lot of money," Wilk said. "We pay a premium for dishwashers — everybody is getting paid more."

Wilk said her staff wears masks and that there are special precautions in place because of COVID-19. Frankfurters in dough "blankets" are usually served with a communal bowl of mustard; instead, Wilk serves the finger foods with a plastic syringe filled with mustard that guests can squeeze themselves. (COVID-19 spreads in the air, not on surfaces.)

"Guests don't take anything by themselves, everything is served to them," Wilk said.

Heather MacLeish, manager of Deborah Miller Catering & Events in Manhattan, said next year promises to be even busier "because we will be seeing three year's worth of weddings in one year. There will be brunch weddings, two weddings in one day and more Sunday weddings and weekday weddings. Thursday is going to be a big day. And we are already booking 2023 weddings because a lot of dates next year are filled up and we are seeing people who are already married and want to have a party."

People are anxious to put the pandemic behind them and turn to some semblance of normal, said Wilk.

“People are trying to forget about COVID and they are inviting big numbers again,” she said, adding that some invited guests decline because they don’t want to travel or are “not back mentally.”

As a result, she said, parties for 300 end up with 250 because 50 “are afraid to come.”

But 250 is a bigger crowd than the handful who attended weddings held during the worst of the pandemic. Marlene Kern Fischer of Armonk, New York, said her son and his fiancée had planned a wedding for 220 to be held at a hotel in July 2020. The pandemic forced them to cancel the hotel and the party and Fischer said the couple, Eric Fischer and Danielle Clemons, held their wedding July 2, 2020, in her backyard with just 14 people.

“It ended up being so beautiful, so intimate and special that now my middle son says he wants a small wedding,” she said. “I feel like the pandemic has given people license to do things differently now. Weddings don’t have to be in a hall and the couple may not want to share the intimate thoughts they were able to express in their vows before 220 people.”

Fischer noted that the bride’s parents drove to her home from Maryland and, because they did not want to stay in a hotel, rented an RV that they parked in her driveway.

The newlyweds had thought of having a large party after the pandemic, but Fischer said the bride decided against it because “she did not want to insult her beautiful little wedding by having something else.”

The event proved so special, Fischer said, that she wrote a book about it, “Gained a Daughter but Nearly Lost My Mind: How I Planned a Backyard Wedding During the Pandemic.”

For all the hassle, however, the months of waiting to get married have made the wedding day all the more special, according to Rabbi Jack Dermer of Temple Beth Torah in Westbury, New York.

“There is real gratitude to be able to be together,” he said. “I officiated at weddings for couples who postponed their marriages for close to two years. Their marriage now is so much sweeter and holy.”

## ● NEWS

# Backlash Mounts Against Orthodox Children’s Book Author Accused of Abusing Minors, Surprising Many

By Asaf Shalev

In what some are heralding as a watershed moment in the Orthodox world, reports of sexual abuse by a prolific author of children’s books have now led multiple booksellers to stop making his work available.

Meanwhile, advocates and at least one leading rabbi are urging Orthodox parents to remove books by Chaim Walder from their homes. Many are doing so.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz published an investigation last week alleging that Walder, a therapist as well as a writer, psychologically groomed multiple minors before proceeding to abuse them. After the first report, new allegations emerged from additional women who said they had been abused by Walder while under his care.

Because Walder is wildly popular among haredi Jews, whose children mailed him letters with their secrets, the news triggered a cascade of reactions. Some worried that taboos against airing allegations of abuse outside of Orthodox circles, alongside other longstanding norms that protect abusers, would mean that Walder could emerge unscathed.

That concern seemed to fade after Eichler’s Judaica in Brooklyn announced on Tuesday that it would suspend sales of Walder’s books, including his “Kids Speak” series, which can be found in many Orthodox homes in the United States and Israel.

“This decision was not made lightly and will no doubt come at a heavy financial cost, as these books were bestsellers — but as a business that cares about our

community, we cannot ignore the pleas we have received on behalf of the alleged victims,” said the bookstore’s owner, Mordy Getz.

Getz also said that while many rabbis expressed their support for his actions only in private, he found it significant that at least one prominent rabbi had gone public, referring to Rabbi Aryeh Klapper, dean of the Center for Modern Torah Leadership in Sharon, Massachusetts.

In the following days, the Israeli Orthodox newspaper that published Walder for years suspended his column and pressed him step back from public life, Haaretz reported. An Israeli supermarket chain catering to haredi shoppers announced that it, too, would remove Walder’s titles, and his radio show went off the air. The Sephardic chief rabbi of Tzfat, an Israeli city, decreed that families should not keep Walder’s books in their homes.

And on Thursday, Walder’s longtime publisher, Feldheim Publishers of Nanuet, New York, tweeted that it would remove Walder’s book from shelves while the allegations against the author are being investigated.

“We do not judge and sincerely hope he will be able to clear his name,” said the publisher, which has released more than 20 volumes by Walder over three decades.

While some criticized the tone of Feldheim’s statement as overly deferential to Walder, the response to its decision, and Getz’s, has focused more on the precedent they have set. People called the decision an “earthquake,” a “fundamental shift,” “a huge step for the chareidi world” and “a massive change from the denials and coverups of the past.”

“This is an incredible development,” wrote Israeli journalist Anshel Pfeffer. “The Walder case is seminal. Feldheim obviously didn’t want to drop one of their best-selling authors and hope Walder will be rehabilitated, but the public pressure in the Haredi community was too much for them.”

Orthodox families in which parents and children alike have been raised on Walder’s work are also responding to the revelations.

Rahel Bayar, an Orthodox former sex abuse prosecutor who now runs a consultancy aimed at helping organizations including synagogues and camps prevent sex

abuse, wrote on her social media accounts Thursday that she had gotten “so many” questions from parents about what to do in their own homes. She urged them to discard the books — and to explain to their children why.

“Enabling a predator takes many forms and in this case, continuing to engage in the content of an alleged pedophile — content directed at children, no less — enables his normalization. So, we don’t,” Bayar wrote. She added, “Your children must know that if something ever unsafe happens to them, they will be believed.”

On Instagram, a center for activism by Orthodox women, many mothers posted pictures of the books that they said they were throwing away. Without naming Walder, Shoshana Greenwald, for example, wrote, “As you can see from the missing cover, this book has been read many many times. No more.”

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## ● NEWS

# Neighbors Say a Jewish Billionaire’s Penthouse Pavilion Plans Are a Little Too Much — Even for Manhattan

By Ben Sales

Neighbors are objecting to the two-story glass pavilion that hedge fund manager Bill Ackman and his wife, the Israeli-born architect and designer Neri Oxman, want to build on the roof of their apartment building on Manhattan’s West 77th Street.

The dispute has pulled in some high-powered neighbors and advocates on both sides, including legendary PBS journalist Bill Moyers (he’s against) and a small “Who’s Who” of prominent Jewish New Yorkers, according to The New York Times.

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Columnist Gina Bellafante reports that the dispute isn't about historic architecture, sunlight or other similar flashpoints in New York city zoning disputes. It's actually about what, if anything, the city will do to limit the increasing power of its billionaire class. A three-hour debate over the proposal in the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Bellafante wrote, was "about where the retaining wall ought to be erected against the desires of the magnificently wealthy to configure the world precisely to their specifications."

Ackman made a giant windfall in March 2020 by betting that COVID would crash the economy. The Haifa-born Oxman, who teaches at MIT, has drawn wide praise for her pioneering work fusing principles of nature and sustainability into her designs. The couple — who were introduced by Marty Peretz, the former publisher of *The New Republic* and co-founder of *TheStreet.com* — were married at Central Synagogue in January 2019. Ackman has donated large sums to a range of Jewish causes, from the Center for Jewish History to Birthright.

Among their supporters at the Landmarks Preservation Committee meeting were many prominent Jews, including architecture critic Paul Goldberger; Louise Mirrer, the president of the New-York Historical Society and expert on medieval Spanish Jewry; and Betsy Gotbaum, the Historical Society's former president and the New York City Public Advocate from 2002 through 2009. The former owner of the property was media executive Norman Pearlstine.

The dispute is playing out against the media's and public's obsession with billionaires and their spending — including, but not limited to, the HBO series "Succession," recent self-funded trips to outer space by Jeff Bezos and Richard Branson, and Congressional debates over increasing taxes on the very rich. Manhattan, where new luxury "supertall" apartment buildings are changing the landscape, is at the center of the discussion.

As Bellafante reports it, the city's landmarks commission asked Ackman and his architect, the British "starchitect" Norman Foster, to submit a new plan for the rooftop pavilion with a smaller second story.

## ● NEWS

# Alex Edelman's New Comedy Show Raises Contentious Questions About Jewish Identity. He Says That's the Point.

By Ben Sales

If you click through Twitter, you may come upon a list of some 250 accounts called "Jewish Nat'l Fund Donors."

But it's safe to say that no one on the list has ever given any money to the actual Jewish National Fund, an organization best known for acquiring land and planting trees in Israel.

That's because the list is made up exclusively of antisemites and was created by Alex Edelman, a Jewish comedian. He chose that name, he said, "just because it annoys people when they're added to the list."

"It's actually a pretty diverse group of people," Edelman, 32, told the *New York Jewish Week*. "The sad thing is this list used to be several hundred people longer, but Twitter has actually done a good job for the last couple years."

Edelman, a comedian who has appeared on late-night TV and recently opened for the musician Beck, is also an amateur tracker of online antisemites in his spare time. That hobby led him to attend a meeting of white nationalists in New York City in 2017 — a story that forms the core of his latest solo show, "Just For Us," which opens off-Broadway on Dec. 8. But even as the show tells the story of that meeting, Edelman emphasized that "Just For Us" isn't about antisemitism — it's about what it's like for Ashkenazi Jews to navigate whiteness in America.

"Broadly, it's about, What does it mean to be a Jew in a space that's not Jewish?" he said. He added later, "Everyone focuses on the white identity people at the

center of the meeting, these racists. Maybe this is revealing, but the show's about me. They [the white nationalists] are entirely secondary to me talking about how I feel about myself."

Negotiating the boundary between Jews and non-Jews has always been an undercurrent of life for Edelman, a Modern Orthodox Jew who attended Jewish day school in the Boston area and studied for a year in an Israeli yeshiva. Appearing on the late-night show "Conan" in 2018, Edelman told the crowd, "I've never had bacon. I'm that kind of Jew... I've tried cocaine but I've never tried bacon."

("Jews either love that joke, or they're upset by it," he told me. On a video of the performance, you can hear an Israeli in the crowd yell "Good for you!" in Hebrew.)

Edelman has managed to make food a recurring theme in his exploration of what it means to be Jewish in a country and world that is overwhelmingly not. We met at Sable's, a classic New York City deli on the Upper East Side that probably qualifies as one of the most Jewish places ever (cf. the "Jewish rye bread" sold at the counter and a menu heavy on both smoked fish and pastrami). But Edelman said that he tries to visit delis in every place he performs, whether it's Denver, L.A. or Indianapolis.

"You can find a deli almost in any city," he said. "I'm a bit of a snob. But when you're on the road, you take what you can get, and they've got Dr. Brown's cream soda and a decent tuna sandwich, and I'm all for it."

The relative ubiquity of good smoked fish isn't the only reason Edelman is happy to be back in New York. He's excited to perform "Just For Us," which premiered at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival in 2018 and later, he said, "took a nap" for the pandemic. This is its U.S. premiere.

Tellingly, he feels that the show is just as relevant after three years in which the experience of antisemitism has changed significantly — from the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting to the antisemitic rhetoric that accompanied the 2020 election to, most recently, antisemitic tropes in debates over COVID vaccines.

"At the core of this show is the conversation about Judaism and, in particular, my Judaism and its relation to whiteness. That is a huge part of the show, and that has not changed," he said. "I gotta be honest with you, I don't

think antisemitism is ever going out of style."

Edelman is also excited to perform the show in front of an audience that will presumably have a substantial number of Jews, which is a rarity for him. He got his big break in 2014, when he was named Best Newcomer at the Edinburgh Comedy Awards, and has done a fair amount of work since then in the U.K., which has seen an ongoing antisemitism controversy plague its political system for the past several years. He's also performed the show in Berlin, which was weird, he said, "only because they don't speak a ton of English."

In 2019, Edelman made a four-minute documentary about antisemitism for the BBC, in which he manages to cover an impressive amount of ground — from summarizing historical tropes about international Jewish conspiracies to describing the discomfort Jews often feel when they're buttonholed by people asking their opinion on Israeli policies.

"Is it frustrating to have to do a documentary for the BBC where you explain that Jews are people?" he said. "I have lots of patient conversations with people about Jews and Judaism because I am, to some people, the most Jewish person they've ever met... I don't view it as part of my job but I do view it as part of my personhood."

That tone — patient and thoughtful — is how Edelman comes off in person. On stage he can be more bombastic and intense. Edelman's "most resonant joke," he said, is about how hard it is for people of his generation to buy a house.

"How is any young person ever gonna own a home?" he says in an exasperated tone, almost yelling to the audience. "It's made me hate old people. I see a few of you in here tonight. I hate you! Because every old person... they're like, 'My house is worth \$2 million, but when I bought it in 1981, I paid 11 raspberries for it!'"

Edelman's previous work touches on his Judaism, including his first two comedy specials: "Millennial," about his generation and "Everything Handed to You," about his family. "Just For Us" obviously addresses Jewish identity directly. Although he began performing it before the pandemic, the off-Broadway run comes after a year and a half in which Edelman says his Jewish observance has changed.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Edelman was the head writer of “Saturday Night Seder,” a virtual Passover seder and variety show hosted by Jason Alexander and attended by other Jewish celebrities and those who play Jews onscreen, such as Rachel Brosnahan. It raised more than \$3.5 million for charity. Later last year, Edelman helped out rabbis who hoped to make virtual High Holiday services more engaging during the pandemic.

He’s also started having a regular hevruta, or two-person Jewish study session, about the weekly Torah portion with Sarah Hurwitz, a former speechwriter for Michelle Obama who went on to write “Here All Along,” a book about exploring Judaism. Speaking with me, he referenced the Talmud as a work of “pragmatic idealism” and also name-dropped Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, a leading 20th-century Modern Orthodox thinker.

Edelman said “Saturday Night Seder” is part of what led him to become more observant during the pandemic.

“I found a community of Jews that I didn’t know existed, which were traditional Jews who were focused in a creative way and felt like my people, who weren’t looking to reinvent or hack Judaism, but just had an interest in it, but also can exist keenly in the secular world,” he said.

And after “Just For Us” is done — the show runs through Dec. 19 at the Cherry Lane Theatre — Edelman doesn’t plan to stop talking about Judaism. He’s even considering making his next special about another fraught topic: Israel. He said his manager used to joke, “We can call the show ‘Career Suicide.’”

But Edelman doesn’t mind the contentious questions that ensue when he’s talking about Judaism to non-Jews. That kind of conversation, he said, is the best part.

“My favorite thing to do is argue and discuss and have discourse,” he said. “When people ask me what my favorite thing about Judaism is I always say it’s discourse. It’s not a fun answer. People want bagels. People want me to say it’s bagels, but it’s not.”

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## ● NEWS

# This Catchy ‘West Side Story’ Hanukkah Parody Was Filmed on Location in New York

By Lisa Keys

The opening shot is a panorama of the George Washington Bridge, its tower and the surrounding buildings transformed into a flickering menorah with all nine of its candles lit. “A West Side Chanukah Story,” the opening text announces — and immediately, the very New York sounds of traffic and car horns give way to a familiar sequence of snaps and the wordless singing of a well-known tune.

So begins the latest Hanukkah parody video from the New York-based Jewish a cappella group Six13. The video is a voices-only compilation of and riff off some of the greatest hits from Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim’s iconic 1957 Broadway musical, “West Side Story,” including “Maria” (reimagined here as “Menorah”) and “Tonight” (which becomes “Eight Nights”).

While Hanukkah a cappella parody videos have become something of an annual tradition in recent years, a major inspiration for this particular video is the forthcoming reboot of the 1961 film version of “West Side Story.” Directed and co-produced by Steven Spielberg, with an updated screenplay by Tony Kushner, the new film is set to hit theaters on Dec. 10. “When I heard that was coming out, I was like, when?” original Six13 member and chief arranger Mike Boxer tells the New York Jewish Week. “We are doing this, for sure.”

“West Side Story,” Boxer added, “is one of the greatest pieces of art ever crafted.”

Six13’s Hanukkah-inspired musical medley, filmed on location in Manhattan, is chockablock with clever Festival of Lights puns and imagery. For example, in “On Chanukah” — a version of the “West Side Story” showstopper “America” — the lyrics include: “Chocolate money on Ha-

nukkah/Latkes are crunchy on Hanukkah/Presents from Bubbe on Hanukkah/I want a puppy for Hanukkah!" (This last lyric is notably a reference to David Digg's 2020 instant classic, "Puppy for Hanukkah.")

It's truly a delightful watch from this well-seasoned group, which first formed 18 years ago as an outgrowth of a co-ed Jewish a cappella group at Binghamton University. After college, Boxer and a few buddies missed the camaraderie of the group, he said. And so they formed Six13; essentially "just guys who like to sing," as he described it.

"Over the years, the guys would get a promotion at work, or would do things like get into med school, or have a third or fourth kid, and their time [with the group] would expire," Boxer said. "The silver lining was, every time we lost someone, we gained someone who was even better."

These days, Six13 consists of eight members, most of whom range in age from 26 to 32, according to Boxer, who, at 41, is the elder of the group. "I'm the guy who just won't leave," he quipped. Its members live across the city, as well as in Long Island and New Jersey, which made Manhattan the ideal location for a video — not only is it essential to the spirit of "West Side Story" but it was convenient for everyone, too.

The video's intro, for example, features six members of the group snapping their fingers and leaning against a chain-link fence. Boxer stumbled across the location — which is a fence that surrounds the playground at P.S. 452 on West 61st Street — as he was dropping off his kids at Abraham Joshua Heschel School. "Perfect!" Boxer recalled thinking. "We're just going to stand right there."

Other locations include Morningside Park, the social hall at the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, the SAR Academy in Riverdale, and the offices of the Manhattan Jewish Experience, an organization that encourages young Jewish professionals to explore Jewish life and meet one another, which sponsored the video.

Six13 has consistently put out a stream of high-quality Jewish holiday parody videos — including a super-catchy sea shanty from Passover 2021, as well as "Bohemian Chanukah," a version of the Queen epic "Bohemian Rhapsody."

Singing a cappella, Boxer points out, is something Jews,

regardless of their musical abilities, do all the time. "That's something everyone around the world is going to be doing on Sunday night," he said, "singing a cappella around their menorahs."

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## ● REMEMBERING

# Justus Rosenberg, Professor and Last Surviving Member of Group That Smuggled Intellectuals Out of Nazi-Held Europe, Has Died at 100

By Shira Hanau

Justus Rosenberg, a professor whose long career teaching literature was preceded by a remarkable tenure in the French resistance during World War II, died last month at the age of 100.

Rosenberg was a professor at Bard College in Annandale-on-Hudson, New York for decades where he taught literature and languages, including German, French, Yiddish, Russian and his native language, Polish. It wasn't until he was in his mid-70s that he began to speak about his experiences during the Holocaust, when, as a Polish-Jewish refugee in Paris, he worked as a courier for a rescue effort led by the American journalist Varian Fry to save intellectuals, writers and artists stuck under Nazi rule.

Even Rosenberg's wife Karin, who he first met in the 1980s, was unaware of her husband's heroic past until 1998. "I believe he was a hero. But he did not think of himself as a hero. To him, he was just doing what needed to be done," Karin told The New York Times.

Rosenberg was born in Danzig, Poland in 1921 to a well-

off Jewish family that was not particularly religious. After being forced out of school as a teenager due to new laws barring Jews from the schools, his parents sent him to Paris to continue his studies. When the Nazis invaded Poland in 1939, Rosenberg lost all contact with his parents and sister, who he would only learn had survived after the war ended. He was finally reunited with them in 1952 when they made their way to Israel.

When the Nazis took over Paris, Rosenberg fled to Toulouse where he met a woman who recruited him to join Varian Fry's Emergency Rescue Committee-sponsored rescue effort in Marseille. Rosenberg, who was blonde, appeared younger than his age and spoke French, worked as a courier for Fry, ferrying forged documents and accompanying some refugees across the border to Spain. The rescue effort saved about 2,000 people, among them the writers Hannah Arendt and Heinrich Mann and artists Marc Chagall and Marcel Duchamp.

When Fry's efforts ended in 1941, Rosenberg, himself a refugee, was on his own again and was soon sent to a prison camp outside Lyon. When he learned that his fate and that of the other prisoners was to be sent to a labor camp in Poland, Rosenberg feigned an illness that would get him sent to a hospital. But even after having his appendix removed due to his nonexistent illness, Rosenberg was still slated to be sent to the camp. Devising a new plan, he sent a message to a group of priests that worked with the Resistance who brought him a bundle of clothing and a bicycle, which Rosenberg used to escape before he had recovered from surgery. After his recovery, Rosenberg joined the French Resistance and later worked as a guide for the American Army.

He described his wartime experiences in a 2020 memoir, "The Art of Resistance: My Four Years in the French Underground."

After the war, Rosenberg continued his studies in Paris before immigrating to the United States in 1946. He earned his PhD at the University of Cincinnati and went on to teach literature at several schools before settling at Bard College in 1962. During his years in Cincinnati, he supplemented the meager Jewish education he received as a child by conducting his own study at the Hebrew Union College's library.

He continued to teach literature classes at Bard after

his official retirement in 1992 until his death and was buried at the Bard College Cemetery. Bard College president Leon Botstein wrote of Rosenberg's love of teaching in a letter to the Bard community.

"For Justus, learning and study were instruments of redemption, remembrance, and reconciliation. He possessed a magnetic capacity to inspire the love of learning," Botstein wrote.

Rosenberg and his wife established the Justus and Karin Rosenberg Foundation in 2011 to fight hate and antisemitism. In 2018, the foundation endowed the Bard Center for the Study of Hate. The foundation also supported the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research and the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene.

In 2017, Rosenberg was honored as a Commandeur in the Légion d'Honneur by the French ambassador to the United States in recognition of his work with the French Resistance.

Speaking to the New York Jewish Week in 2016, Rosenberg said his survival during World War II was "bashert."

"It was a fortuitous twist of fate," he explained.

Even so, he didn't consider his work for Fry particularly worthy of note.

"I didn't consider it particularly heroic," he told the Jewish Week. "It was just part of my life. I regret that we did it for only a limited amount of people. There were so many people who did much more and were much more heroic."

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● EDITOR'S DESK

# Is Anyone Jewish Enough to Play Golda Meir?

*The debate over casting non-Jews as Jews is based on a narrow definition of "who is a Jew."*

By Andrew Silow-Carroll

A still of Helen Mirren playing Golda Meir in an upcoming biopic recently made the rounds of social media. Someone reacted on Twitter, "This is what happens when non-Jews are cast as Jews."

What happens? From what I can tell, the makeup artist did a credible, respectful job of turning the glamorous Mirren into the frumpy Meir. And knowing how Mirren has embodied other historical figures thoroughly unlike her (and Golda) – Queen Elizabeth, Hedda Hopper, Maria Altmann – I am sure her Golda will be just fine.

Mirren's casting as Meir, however, is the latest hook for a debate over whether non-Jews should play Jews on stage and screen. Grafting arguments about representation and inclusion onto the Jewish narrative, comedian Sarah Silverman touched off the latest round in what some call the "Jewface" debate in a September episode of her podcast. Hearing that Kathryn Hahn was cast to play Joan Rivers in a limited series (a project since nixed), Silverman complained about the number of "Jewish" roles that have gone to non-Jews, saying Jews don't count in the push for representation in Hollywood.

From what I can tell from Silverman's comments and of those who agree with her, there are three main arguments for why Jews should be given preference in playing Jews:

1. Casting non-Jews in Jewish roles denies opportunities to Jewish actors.
2. Jews have access to Jewish culture and folkways that make them better able to inhabit their Jewish char-

acters authentically.

3. Jewish identity, like race, is not a mask to be put on or taken off. Even a highly skilled non-Jewish actor who plays a Jew is engaged in an act of minstrelsy, no less than a white actor who plays an Asian or a Black character.

The first argument is sort of undeniable: Every role that goes to one actor is a role that doesn't go to another. I don't think of Jewish actors as a starving class, but I am sympathetic to those who want to play Jewish characters that speak deeply to their own Jewish identity – and to audiences who want to see Jewish identity validated on the screen and in the credits. That was partly behind Silverman's lament to Howard Stern last November that, too often, if a Jewish woman character "is courageous, or she deserves love, or has bravery, or is altruistic in any way, she's played by a non-Jew."

And perhaps, as in the second argument, Jews can bring a certain authenticity to a Jewish role. I think of this as the "get me Judd Hirsch" argument, named after the actor inevitably cast to signal that the character is a soulful Jew. The downside to this argument is that it ignores the possibility for deeply authentic portrayals of Jewish characters by non-Jewish actors, like Kathryn Hahn as the rabbi in "Transparent," or Margo Martindale's channeling of Bella Abzug and Tracy Ullman's uncanny Betty Friedan in "Mrs. America."

Casting Jews as Jews can also be used in the opposite way: to forestall criticism, especially of a controversial or problematic Jewish character. Would Susie Essman's caustic Jewish mother on "Curb Your Enthusiasm" or Ilana Glazer's transgressive, pansexual Jewess on "Broad City" be as delightful if they were played by non-Jewish actresses?

But it is the third argument that especially troubles me – since it goes directly against the grain of how we have evolved to understand Jewish identity.

For too long, "American Jew" was assumed to be a synonym for a white, Ashkenazi man or woman. It was a stereotype based in reality, since the overwhelming percentage of American Jews could trace their ancestry to the waves of Eastern European Jewish immigration of the 19th and 20th centuries.

But as other groups began to assert their own diversity

and rightful place in the American mosaic, so did different kinds of Jews: Sephardic Jews, Jews of color and Jews by choice have demanded that they be recognized as no less and no more authentic than the Ashkenazi “default” setting.

Asking whether only Jews should play Jews assumes an essentialism in Jewish identity at a time when the community is being urged to discard rigid assumptions about who is a Jew. “Funny, you don’t look Jewish” used to be a punchline; now, especially for Jews of color and Jews by choice, it is a slur. Historically, it was antisemites who categorized Jews as a “race,” exactly at the time when Jews were being emancipated and had the opportunity to (horrors!) assimilate into, say, the French or German mainstream. The term “Semite” was weaponized precisely to say that Jewish identity was innate and immutable – something you could neither discard nor take on.

But the Jews’ understanding of themselves was never so determinative. On the one hand, there is matrilineal descent – the traditional notion that Jewish identity passes at birth from a Jewish mother to her child. On the other, people are able to convert to Judaism – albeit, according to the rabbis, after being warned just what they are getting into. The Reform movement has accepted “patrilineal” descent since 1983. Israel itself widened the possibilities for Jewish belonging even further, with a Law of Return that extends citizenship in the Jewish state to those with one Jewish grandparent.

For all those reasons, many Jews tend to think of themselves as a “people” – bound together partly by biology, yes, but also by choice and common destiny.

***“What is ‘essential’ about Jewish identity that makes a Jew uniquely qualified to play a Jew?”***

The question, then, is this: What is “essential” about Jewish identity that makes a Jew uniquely qualified to play a Jew? Is it biology? That gets icky, especially in that it erases Jews by choice. Is it common experience? That assumes a weird sort of cultural alchemy that makes a Jewish actress, no matter her background, better equipped than a non-Jew to play a character with as particular and distinct a Jewish biography as Golda Meir.

Or to put it another way, if Helen Mirren were to convert to Judaism tomorrow, would that make her a better

choice to play Golda? Would Scarlett Johansson inhabit Golda’s character more deeply simply because she has a Jewish mother? Could a devoutly religious Jew be credibly played by a famously secular actor, and vice versa?

Admittedly, I am the kind of viewer who kvells when the planets align and a Jewish actor plays a thoughtful, juicy Jewish role, especially when that actor articulates, in her performance and her public comments, how her Jewish identity comes to bear on their portrayal. That honors Jewish identity as a voluntary but meaningful part of who we are as people.

But let’s face it: the only thing actors can ever promise is the illusion of authenticity. I am happy to watch a non-Jew play a Jew – or any actor play any role – if they deliver. But I am wary of saying that actors shouldn’t play Jews if they aren’t Jewish themselves. Because that’s a short step away from saying that actors shouldn’t play Jews if they aren’t Jewish enough.

*Andrew Silow-Carroll is the editor in chief of The New York Jewish Week and senior editor of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency (@SilowCarroll).*

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## ● OPINION

# The Orthodox Community Rose up Against Accused Abuser Chaim Walder. That Needs to Become the Norm.

By Asher Lovy

Allegations of child sexual abuse against Chaim Walder, the author of children’s books beloved in the haredi Orthodox market, and the uncharacteristically swift and harsh community response, have left many wondering if this case could mark the turning point in how the community addresses sexual abuse.

As an abuse survivor who supports and advocates for victims of sexual abuse in Orthodox communities, it's a question I've been asked many times over the last week. That was when Mordy Getz, owner of Eichler's of Boro Park, a Judaica store in Brooklyn, took the unprecedented step of removing Walder's books from its shelves, setting off a cascade of action including Feldheim Publishers halting the sale of Walder's books.

Those who come to me want to know: What led to this moment, and what does it mean for the future of the community? And why do some allegations stand out when so many do not result in swift changes?

Part of the answer may be the unknowable vagaries of human behavior. Sometimes it's because someone is victimized in a shocking way, or decides to go public with their experiences. Part of it is no doubt thanks to the foundation laid by activists and advocates working to raise awareness and change how people think about the issue. In this case and some others, careful reporting by reputable journalists lay the facts bare and make them harder to discard. And sometimes it's because there's a reserve of pent-up frustration that just hits the boiling point.

Too often abuse allegations in the haredi Orthodox community are met with fierce denials by the accused's defenders, or stony silence from leaders. Accusers have been vilified and ostracized for daring to come forward, especially but not only when the alleged abuser is someone who's revered or beloved by their own community.

I see the impact of that dangerous dynamic all the time, when people in the haredi community call and tell me their stories of being sexually abused. Consistently, after I explain their legal options, most will express that they're too scared to come forward because of the backlash they expect to receive. Many are scared they won't be believed, or of losing their livelihoods, homes or positions in the community, or are concerned about what will happen to their children or loved ones in retaliation.

In one extreme case a man told me he'd sat outside the home of his daughter's abuser with a baseball bat mustering the courage to kill him, only to leave once he realized he'd gotten the wrong address. When I asked him if he'd like to report the abuse, he said he had other children whose futures he was scared to jeopardize. He asked me instead to "embarrass" the abuser in the community.

Walder's is the rare case in the Orthodox community where the alleged abuser is beloved by, well, everyone. This is our Bill Cosby, our Jimmy Saville (the late British entertainer accused of assault). Every millennial and Gen-Z haredi child, and even many Modern Orthodox children, grew up reading "Kids Speak" and "People Speak," Walder's popular book series. In Israel, where Walder is a prominent speaker, columnist, radio host and child-treatment expert, he's even more universally known and beloved. I knew that whatever the reaction was going to be to the allegations against him, it was going to be fierce, and visceral.

Indeed, in different parts of the community there were equally forceful — if opposite — reactions. While some did go on the offensive and vigorously defend Walder against what they claimed were false allegations, many others were disgusted and threw out his books.

There are those who are hailing the community's response to the Walder allegations as a sign that it has turned the corner on sexual abuse and is now a safer place for survivors to come forward and receive help and support. That's a mistake — understandable, but a mistake nonetheless.

Flashpoint cases are never themselves definitive indicators of sustained, systemic change. They merely provide the opportunity for such change. For example, the murder of George Floyd caused America to take a hard look at the system of policing within which he was killed. But even though Derek Chauvin, the police officer who killed him, was convicted at trial of murder, it is clear that lasting and widespread change is still far off. Others remain at risk.

The Orthodox community is still not a place where survivors of sexual violence are encouraged to come forward. Institutions like Agudath Israel of America still require as their stated policy that a rabbi be consulted before abuse is reported to secular authorities. Whether that rule is written or unwritten in other parts of the Orthodox community, it's very often the expected norm. That has to change.

Survivors must also know that they will receive the support they need from the community when they come forward about abuse. They must know and feel that their allegations will be taken seriously, and that they will receive the resources they need, whether that's

mental health, financial, or legal resources, following their disclosure. The community has a large and impressive network of chesed, or charitable care, organizations for every possible need imaginable, yet spends precious little time, effort and money on supporting survivors of sexual abuse — not because it can't but because it chooses not to. That has to change.

Furthermore, the culture of backlash against survivors who dare to disclose their abuse publicly, or pursue a case against their abuser, whether civil or criminal, must end. Too often we've seen rabbis or community leaders make public statements insulting survivors or minimizing their experiences. Lately, with the spotlight that Child Victims Act cases have shone on the issue in New York — allowing victims to report abuses sometimes decades old — some have resorted to making these statements in private, but to people they know will spread them. The result is the same: Survivors feeling too intimidated, and too scared to want to come forward.

This should not be remembered as the moment the community solved the issue of child sexual abuse, but as the moment it was given the opportunity to begin fixing the problem.

**Asher Lovy** is an abuse survivor and director of ZA'AKAH, which raises awareness about child sexual abuse in the Orthodox Jewish community, advocates for legislative reforms, and operates a Shabbat and Yom Tov mental health peer-support hotline.

#### CANDLELIGHTING, READINGS:

**Kislev 22, 5782 | Friday, November 26, 2021**

- **Light candles at:** 4:13 p.m.

**Kislev 23, 5782 | Saturday, November 27, 2021**

- **Torah reading:** Vayeshev, Genesis 37:1–40:23
- **Haftarah:** Amos 2:6–3:8
- **Shabbat ends:** 5:15 p.m.

## ● SABBATH WEEK PARSHAT VAYESHEV

# Getting to Know the Pain that Those Around Us Carry

*Joseph is silent about the traumas that defined his youth.*

By Shuly Rubin Schwartz

Many of us have become podcast connoisseurs during the pandemic. For me, the interview format has proven most appealing, and within that genre, “The Axe Files” stands out. Why? Like many interviewers, David Axelrod speaks to authors, politicians, thought leaders and public figures. What sets his questioning apart is his ability to elicit the background story of his guests: Where were their grandparents from? Where did they grow up? What was their family life like? What challenges did they face in their early lives? And how did this impact the people they have become?

Axelrod-type questions reverberated in my mind as I reviewed this week's portion, Vayeshev, with its focus on Joseph's early life. We learn that Jacob loved Joseph best and adorned him with a special tunic; we study the dreams Joseph shared with his brothers. We learn about the growing hatred Joseph's brothers felt for him, and the disastrous consequences of their festering fury.

But we don't get to interview Joseph and probe the impact of his childhood on him; we need to tease out those clues with limited data. In the preceding portion, Rachel dies giving birth to Joseph's brother Benjamin. Joseph grew up as a motherless child. Perhaps giving him an ornamental garment was Jacob's awkward way of over-compensating for this void. But this special treatment made Joseph ripe for bullying. The next verse tells us that it bred the animosity of his brothers, who hated him so much that they could not speak a friendly word to him.

After the dreams Joseph shared, ones that further ex-

acerbated his brothers' hatred, Jacob sent Joseph to his brothers who were pasturing their flock at Shechem. Was Jacob clumsily trying to improve brotherly ties? Was he blind to their growing hatred, unwittingly sending Joseph into the arms of those who wished him dead?

There is a blaring silence from Joseph: After agreeing to visit his brothers, as per his father's request, we don't hear from Joseph again until he refuses Potiphar's wife's sexual overture. Yet how terrified and despairing Joseph must have felt in the pit into which his brothers threw him, and then the carried away by the Ishmaelites and Midianites! He was isolated from everything he knew, left only with the painful certainty that his brothers preferred him dead. Rather than seeing Joseph as a spoiled, immature child with delusions of grandiosity, I see a lonely child who had experienced numerous adverse experiences.

Given his vulnerable state of mind, one would expect Joseph to choose the behavior most likely to ensure his survival; thus in the situation with Potiphar's wife, he would accept her overture. Some commentators go so far as to cast Joseph as the instigator in the story. Noting the Bible's mention of Joseph's good looks (Genesis 39:6), they conclude that he came into the house (39:11) looking for a rendezvous. Rashi, citing Midrash Tanchuma (Vayeshev 8), imagines that as Joseph became comfortable in Potiphar's house, he began to eat, drink and curl his hair, prompting God to unleash a seductress against him as punishment.

In Joseph's refusal — against all odds — we see the beginnings of his emerging autonomy. Some commentators note the rare cantillation, known as "shalsholet," that accompanies the word "refused" (39:8) as written in the Torah. Rabbeinu Bahya (Bahya ben Asher, 13–14th century Spain) believes that this cantillation offers a window into Joseph's intentions, "for from the cantillations in the Torah, we learn what isn't written, like people's body language through which we can discern their heart's intention."

The zigzag look and sound of the cantillation depicts the mental gymnastics that Joseph went through to resist the damaging patterns of his past and chart a new, healthier future. While Joseph didn't have the benefit of a good therapist, God served as the catalyst for his change of heart. The Torah tells us that Joseph came to understand that such behavior was immoral and a sin

against God (39.10).

***"Only through understanding others' humanity can we truly appreciate their stories of growth and draw upon them as catalysts for our own."***

Insight into Joseph's past makes this action and indeed all his adult achievements remarkable, for Joseph displayed the resilience not only to survive a painful childhood but also to assume a role that would ensure the survival of the Egyptians, and, ultimately, of the Jewish people. We can only imagine that when Joseph's brothers appeared before him in Egypt, the pain and hurt that had been buried for so long resurfaced. Not surprisingly, Joseph initially spoke harshly to them (42:7). But Joseph ultimately engaged lovingly and generously with the brothers who had betrayed him. And by saving their lives, he ensured that God's promises to his father could someday be fulfilled.

We rarely know the pain that people around us carry. The Joseph story teaches us that if we are to draw lessons and inspiration from others, we must attune ourselves to the many factors — both apparent and hidden — that made them who they are. Only through understanding others' humanity can we truly appreciate their stories of growth and draw upon them as catalysts for our own.

***Dr. Shuly Rubin Schwartz*** is the Chancellor and Irving Lehman Professor of American Jewish History at The Jewish Theological Seminary. To read more commentaries, visit [JTS Torah Online](#). The publication and distribution of the *JTS Commentary* are made possible by a generous grant from *Rita Dee (z"l)* and *Harold Hassenfeld (z"l)*.

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## ● MUSINGS

# A Thanksgiving Prayer

By David Wolpe

The first words I say in the morning, in accordance with the Jewish tradition, are Modeh Ani, "I thank You." I walk out of my house and am greeted by the dawn. I step

from a house I didn't build in clothes I did not sew into a day I did not create with a life I was given. Thank you.

With each challenge and difficulty that arises in the day, I try to be mindful that things that seem unbearable now may later be important; I've lived long enough to remember how we treasure people and things in retrospect. Even moments we wish would end can leave us with a taste that we savor.

To be grateful is not to be naïve; to be grateful is not to be unable to confront deficiency or injustice or anguish. It is to recognize how abundant are the blessings of this world and how easy to overlook. It is to say, with the poet Yeats, in a moment of open-armed embrace of life: "We must laugh and we must sing,/ We are blest by everything." Happy Thanksgiving.

*Named the most influential Rabbi in America by Newsweek Magazine and one of the 50 most influential Jews in the world by the Jerusalem Post, **David Wolpe** is the Rabbi of Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, California.*

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## ● HAPPY HANUKKAH

# Hanukkah 2021: 8 Festival of Lights Events That Celebrate NYC's Return

By Julia Gergely

Mayor-Elect Eric Adams recently told the New York Post that one of his goals as mayor was "patronizing nightlife," and that he was going to find a new place in the city to go every night. Well. Mayor Adams, we see your nightlife promise, and we raise you eight nights of celebrating Hanukkah.

This year, Hanukkah begins on Sunday evening, Nov. 28. Yes, that's Thanksgiving weekend, so if you've been too busy buying a turkey or preparing side dishes to think about how you're celebrating the Festival of Lights, you are forgiven.

Nonetheless, Hanukkah is coming — and with it, a host of public events across the city that commemorate the eight-day festival. What better way is there to signal that New York is back than to celebrate Hanukkah in true New York City style?

From family-friendly events to adults-only all-nighters, here are the New York Jewish Week's eight suggestions Hanukkah events well worth attending this year.

### 1. EXPERIENCE A BIT OF JEWISH BURLESQUE

Celebrate the first night of Hanukkah with the final Menorah Horah, a burlesque show presented by Thirsty Girl Productions and the Schlep Sisters that pays homage to Yiddish Theater and Vaudeville on the Lower East Side. For the 15th year, the Schlep Sisters — burlesque dancers Minnie Tonka and Darlinda Just Darlinda — are joined by fellow burlesque stars and DJ Momotaro at Le Poisson Rouge on Saturday November 27th. It's their last year performing, so this is one you won't want to miss. "It's been a really good run and we've had so much fun over the last 15 years," Darlinda Just Darlinda told the New York Jewish Week. "There will be reminiscing on the last 15 years of joy and celebration. And of course there will be gelt." Tickets range from \$20 to \$50 and are on sale now at [https://lpr.com/lpr\\_events/menorah-horah-15](https://lpr.com/lpr_events/menorah-horah-15).

### 2. VISIT BROOKLYN'S LARGEST MENORAH

If you're looking for a free event, join Chabad of Park Slope in lighting their iconic 32-foot menorah in Grand Army Plaza outside the entrance to Prospect Park. There will be a kickoff party and concert at 4:30 pm on Sunday, Nov. 28 and subsequent candle lightings every night of Hanukkah after that, with music, latkes and gifts for children. Find out more information at [https://www.chabad-parkslope.com/templates/articlecco\\_cdo/aid/3517890/jewish/Kickoff-Concert.htm](https://www.chabad-parkslope.com/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/3517890/jewish/Kickoff-Concert.htm).

### 3. ROCK OUT WITH YO LA TENGO AT THE BOWERY BALLROOM

Indie rockers Yo La Tengo are back with their classic, eight-night Hanukkah concert series at the Bowery Ballroom. You can still snag tickets to one of their concerts for \$50; many of the nights are already sold out so move fast to see the band live! Each night features a different surprise opener and comedic performance before the band takes the stage. Get tickets at <https://yolatengo.com/schedule>.

#### 4. SPIN LIKE A DREIDEL AT “CHANUKAH ON ICE”

It may be unseasonably warm out this Hanukkah, but that doesn't mean we can't go ice skating. Back for the 12th year in a row, Chanukah on Ice — featuring live music, Hanukkah food and a menorah lighting — is set for Nov. 29, the second night of Hanukkah, at Wollman Rink in Central Park. Tickets are \$22 if reserved in advance, not including skate rentals. More information is available at <https://chanukahoniconenyc.com>.

#### 5. ENJOY FIRE AND ICE IN CLINTON HILL

Speaking of ice, there will be a menorah carved out of ice at the Chabad of Clinton Hill Chanukah party on Sunday, Nov. 28. Arrive at 5:30 pm to see the menorah carving, and then watch the menorah be lit at 6:00 across from 541 Myrtle Ave. in north-central Brooklyn. The party includes a magic show, latkes, sufganiyot (that's Hebrew for irresistibly oily doughnuts) giveaways and music. Maybe the magic is in the menorah not melting? You'll have to go to find out. For more information, visit <https://myrtleavenue.org/event/menorah2021>.

#### 6. EMBARK ON A DIY FRIED-FOOD CRAWL

Maybe the free sufganiyot at all these events aren't doing it for you. Maybe the thought of homemade latkes sounds a bit too messy this year. Luckily, New York City has no shortage of the delicious Hanukkah treats. Bread's Bakery, a Manhattan staple famous for their babka and rugelach, will be serving their Hanukkah menu from Nov. 26 through Dec 5, which features latkes and four different flavors of sufganiyot. For more sufganiyot options, check out Michaeli Bakery in the Lower East Side, and pick up sufganiyot in halva, dulce de leche, or banana pecan flavors, alongside the traditional strawberry jam. On the savory side, don't miss latkes (sold year-round) from Veselka's, the renowned Ukrainian spot in the East Village. Or, head up to Liebman's Kosher Delicatessen in the Bronx, where little has changed in seven decades of business, and each latkes is the size of a Frisbee.

#### 7. PARTY LIKE IT'S 2ND-CENTURY BCE

For those who want to party all night long, Bushwick's infamous House of Yes is throwing a Hanukkah party for the ages. There will be a special candle-lighting ceremony, live performances, “aerial spectacles,” latkes

and dancing. The event, which lasts from 9:00 pm until 4:00 am through the night of Dec. 5 to Dec. 6 is 21+ and proof of vaccination is required for entry. Entry is free before 10:00 p.m., and tickets are available for purchase after that at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/a-very-house-of-yes-hanukkah-tickets-195268753097>.

#### 8. DISCOVER THE PLATONIC IDEAL OF A LATKE

The location of the New York Annual Latke Festival is still to be announced, but it's not something you're going to want to miss. In 2019, the Latke Festival took over the lobby of the Brooklyn Museum, and more than 20 restaurants and organizations competed for best latke in different categories. The festival is a charity event organized by Great Performances, and will take place on December 6. Sign up at <https://www.latkefestival.com> for their email list to be the first to know about the festival this year!

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

November 29 | 6:00 p.m. Free

##### Remembering William Helmreich

Join the Center for Jewish History and The New York Jewish Week for a tribute to William Helmreich, the late sociologist, author, scholar of Judaism and distinguished professor. Featuring Jeffrey S. Gurock, the Libby M. Klaperman Professor of Jewish History at Yeshiva University, and Matt Green, who walked every block of New York City for his film “The World Before Your Feet.” Moderated by Sandee Brawarsky.

Register at <https://bit.ly/3cNpigO>

December 2 | 6:45 p.m. Free

##### Remembering Rachel Cowan

Rachel Cowan was a civil rights activist, community organizer, the first female Jew by choice ordained as a rabbi, and a beloved and influential mindfulness teacher. The program will feature a screening of “Dying Doesn't Feel Like What I'm Doing,” a new film about Cowan from American-born, Jerusalem-based documentary filmmaker Paula Weiman-Kelman.

Register at <https://bit.ly/3rbtu27>