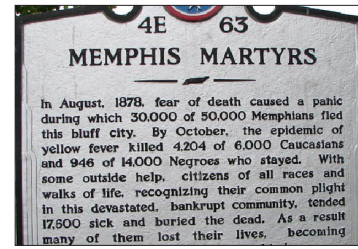


JEWISH LOUISVILLE COMMUNITY



INSIDE: Yellow Fever lesson

Jews have handled pandemics before

p. 4

FRIDAY Vol. 46, No. 04 | April 24, 2020 | 30 Nisan 5780

Federation starts emergency fund, calls for unity

By staff and releases

The Federation has launched the United Jewish Louisville Rapid Response Fund, an emergency answer to the coronavirus pandemic and the toll it is taking on our Jewish community.

Thanks to a lead gift from the Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence (JHFE) we were able to jump-start this urgent campaign. Agencies and synagogues all came together working to understand the immediate, short- and long-term needs of our community.

Contact www.jewishlouisville.org/RapidResponseFund for details.

"This collective effort will provide support to families and individuals and those on the front line serving our Jewish community," said Jon Fleischaker, chair of the JCL Board of Directors and Rapid Response co-chair.

Jewish Louisville is experiencing an increased struggle with food and job insecurity. Many are feeling the effects of

United Jewish Louisville RAPID RESPONSE FUND



The banner for the new United Jewish Louisville Rapid Response Fund

social isolation.

Ralph Green, task force co-chair, said, "We knew when all this started to intensify that our community was going to need some emergency relief."

To steward the Rapid Response Fund, the Federation convened a special Grants Task Force, to approve emergency allocations to the agencies and synagogues.

The task force identified core priorities for funding:

- **Human needs** – assisting the most vulnerable within the Jewish com-

munity. This may include individuals who can't afford food or pay their bills. Also, essential errands, home health care and mental health services.

- **Jewish connection** – Now more than ever, we know virtual connection is critical. Educational opportunities, religious services and social meetups and connection.
- **Organizational infrastructure** – Investing in and sustaining staff to provide needed programs, services

and support for long-term viability.

We know that many of you want to help. You can do so by volunteering or donating. As our needs grow in the future, many volunteer opportunities will become available to assist the agencies and synagogues. Please visit the Rapid Response web page to add your name to the volunteer list.

"It is vital that the families and individuals who are struggling with the impact of COVID-19 have a place to ask for and receive help," said Sara Klein Wagner, CEO and president of the JCL. "We anticipate the needs will continue to evolve over time; therefore, we are focusing on immediate, short-term and long-term needs."

The Rapid Response Fund has already allocated \$85,000 in grants across the community from a \$400,000 seed grant provided by the JHFE. Grant

See **UNITY** on page 15

Louisville marks Yom HaShoah with pre-recorded program this year

By Lee Chottiner
Community Editor

Every year, hundreds of Louisvillians gather somewhere in the city – a synagogue, a theater, a college campus – to remember the victims of the Holocaust.

That didn't happen this year, the 75th anniversary of the end of the most horrific genocide in history, because of the coronavirus pandemic. But the differences don't end there.

While there will be a Yom HaShoah program in Louisville this week, for the first time, probably ever, it won't be live, or even live streamed.

It was a pre-recorded video, which became available for screening on Wednesday, April 22, on YouTube and Facebook.

Matt Goldberg, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, said logistical problems with a live program streamed from several homes prompted the decision to go with a pre-recorded video his year.

"We thought it would be tighter and much easier logistically if it was all in the can already," he said.

A video also allows people to view it at their convenience. "It will stay up for

We light the first candle in memory of all the mothers who died with their children in their arms.

This year's community observance of Yom HaShoah is not only virtual but prerecorded to avoid logistical challenges of a livestreamed program from several different locations.

good," Goldberg said.

The 24-minute video, produced by Mike Fitzer at 180 Degrees, was three weeks in the making.

"This is one of the first [Jewish content videos] I was asked to do, so I'm very excited," Fitzer said. (He also made a documentary about last year's *Violins of Hope*, a traveling exhibit of restored string instruments that survived the Holocaust. It had been scheduled to premiere on March 23, but the onset of the coronavirus delayed that event.)

The video, simply titled Yom HaShoah, is structured around the lighting of 11 memorial candles, remembering the 11 million Jewish and non-Jewish victims of the Holocaust – a traditional fea-

ture of the annual observance here.

This year, though, there will be no actual candle-lighters. Instead, PowerPoint-style slides will display messages with already-lit candles flickering on the screen.

There will be actual participants, though. Cantor David Lipp will sing the Yiddish tune *Yidl Mitn Fidl*. Rabbi Michael Wolk will recount the Jews at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp who in 1944 managed to observe Passover. Cantor Sharon Hordes will chant *El Maleh Rachamim* and Rabbi Beth Jacowitz Chottiner will lead the Mourners' Kaddish, interspersing the names of death camps and modern-day acts of genocide between the lines of the prayer. Rabbi

Joe Rooks Rapport also is in the program.

A clip from a KET interview with journalist and Holocaust survivor Fred Gross and a message from Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer also are included.

"We tried to follow at least some semblance of tradition [of the ceremony] as best we could given the circumstances," Fitzer said.

The video also will include a sneak peek at his *Violins of Hope* documentary.

"We have not had a Yom HaShoah program since *Violins of Hope* and there is no scheduled premiere for the documentary," Goldberg said. "We thought it might be a nice addition to include some footage."

Before the coronavirus outbreak, the JCRC had been planning the screening of the documentary *Nobody Wants Us*, the story of the Portuguese steamship *Quanza*, which carried Jewish refugees, mostly from Belgium, to the United States in 1940. Like the S.S. *St. Louis* the year before, the passengers were initially denied entry into the country. Unlike the *St. Louis*, those aboard the *Quanza* eventually did get in.

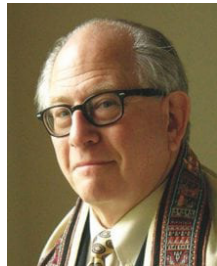
Goldberg said he plans to screen the film at next year's observance.



THE DASHBOARD

Word of the month

We needed a fifth question this Passover



D'var Torah

Rabbi
Stan Miles

I write this D'var Torah during Chol Ha'moed Pesach, the intermediate days of Passover. The Four Questions have already been asked, but perhaps we need an additional question this year.

Mah nishtana HA SHANA HAZE? Why is this YEAR different from all other years?

Sadly, during this year, 5780, this is the ultimate rhetorical question for all humanity. The coronavirus and the disease it causes, COVID-19, has turned our entire planet upside down. Now, more than ever, every living person is on a frightening voyage aboard spaceship earth. Our final destination is still a huge question mark. We are frightened, and rightfully so. May our fear not lead us down the path to panic, but to safety and survival for our families, our neighbors – indeed, all humanity.

I am a student of history, particularly American history. During the bleakest days of the Great Depression, President Franklin D. Roosevelt harnessed the technology of radio. Through his Fireside Chats, he calmed a frightened nation, sharing hope and reality.

Today, in the Commonwealth of Kentucky, we are fortunate that Gov. Andy Beshear has assumed this responsibility every single day at 5 p.m. His words

and demeanor bring us hope as he reminds us through word and sign: "We will get through this together."

At the outset, I was apprehensive about Passover this year. During the previous weeks of isolation, I missed being among people. In Judaism, it takes a minyan – a quorum of 10 people – to create a community for prayer. It always did – until this year.

The pandemic, so far, has led many people, not to panic, but to stimulating creativity. Our congregational rabbis and cantors are working overtime during this crisis to keep us connected with our Judaism and each other. Thank G-d for the miracle of Zoom and other technology. By means of these resources our minyanim survive. Via Zoom, many of us enjoyed the company of family and friends for Passover seder. Through the medium of YouTube, stars of stage and screen created a hip, entertaining and poignant Saturday Night Seder to benefit us in the battle against the coronavirus and COVID-19. If you haven't watched it yet, you still can by going to YouTube and searching Saturday Night Seder.

Hopefully, by Passover 2021, our current experience will be a sad memory. Please G-d, we will not be mourning the loss of a dear one.

May the worldwide struggle to cure this pandemic serve to bring us together as human beings of every faith, nation and ethnicity, striving together for the survival of all.

(Stanley R. Miles is the rabbi emeritus of Temple Shalom.)

Snapshots: Meal Deliveries



Senior Center Director Tara Stone and members of the JCC kitchen staff prepare meals for delivery to seniors. According to Stone, meal deliveries have nearly tripled since the coronavirus outbreak. (Community photos by Jessica Budnick)

Candles

Here are the candle lighting times for Shabbat in May:

- May 1 @ 8:17 p.m.
- May 8 @ 8:23 p.m.
- May 15 @ 8:30 p.m.
- May 22 @ 8:35 p.m.
- May 29 @ 8:41 p.m.

Contacts

Got a story idea? A letter? A gripe? A kudo?

Send it along to *Community Editor* Lee Chottiner at lechottiner@jewishlouisville.org. You can also call Lee at 502-238-2783.

Not getting your paper? Want to subscribe? Putting your subscrip-

tion on hold? Development Associate Kristy Benefield can handle all circulation questions. She can be reached at kbenefield@jewishlouisville.org or 502-238-2770.

Got an item for the Community eblast? Send it to weeklyupdate@jewishlouisville.org.

Deadlines

Deadlines matter, especially for newspapers. Got a news item for Community? Send it in by Wednesday, May 20 (though sooner is better).

Submitting an item for Community's

weekly eblast? Please submit it by Friday. The eblast is sent out every Monday afternoon.

Corrections

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NEWS

Rabbi: 'Something beautiful' can be born from the pandemic

By Lee Chottiner
Community Editor

Though tempting to compare Passover during the coronavirus to the plagues God sent down to Egypt, Rabbi Bailey Romano thinks we need not go back so far.

In fact, Romano, director of education at Beth El Hebrew Congregation in Alexandria, Virginia, said lessons can be learned from Jewish leaders who lived through more modern plagues, like the yellow fever epidemics of the 1800s.

Those lessons were acted upon this year, she said, at this Passover season.

"The plagues of Passover do not feel so close to us normally," Romano said, "except, for now, they do."

Romano researched the history of American Jews during disasters for her rabbinic thesis, *Who By Fire and Who By Water: Rabbinical Responses to Select Epidemics and Natural Disasters in American Jewish History*.

She studied Jewish responses to yellow



Left, Rabbi Max Samfield remained in Memphis during the yellow fever epidemic of 1873, ministering to the ill and helping to bury the dead. Right, Rabbi Bailey Romano has studied the history of American rabbis during times of epidemics and natural disasters. (photos provided by Historicmemphis.com and Rabbi Bailey Romano)

low fever in Memphis and New Orleans during the 19th century, the Galveston Hurricane of 1900, the San Francisco Earthquake of 1906 and Hurricane



Katrina of 2005.

Romano concluded from her research that the response of Jewish leaders to epidemics, likely tamped down hatred or distrust of Jews during

those times.

"They actually lessened the amount of anti-Semitism," she said. "When you think about it, you are interacting with each other; you are being forced to interact. You can no longer be siloed into Jewish or Christian; you have to interact with each other in order to survive."

For example, in Memphis during the yellow fever epidemic of 1873, which claimed some 2,000 lives, Rabbi Max Samfield stayed in the city when others fled, ministering to the sick, helping orphans, burying the dead regardless of race. Later, in the 1878 epidemic, he and his wife adopted two orphans whose parents succumbed to yellow fever, replacing two of their own children who had died.

Yellow fever laid bare the need for "infrastructure" in the Jewish communities to respond to emergencies, Romano said. Samfield became one of the founders of Hebrew Hospital and

See **HISTORY** on page 15

Passover Roundup Seder streaming connected community during the festival season

By Lee Chottiner
Community Editor

Why was this Passover different from all other Passovers?

On all other Passovers, the seder, a home-based ritual, brings family and friends together around the same dinner table to recount the story of the Israelites' freedom from bondage. Why on this night did families sit alone and livestream seders?

Because this is the first Passover in the time of the coronavirus.

Jews took their seders to the internet this year, using streaming platforms such as Zoom and Facebook Live as a substitute for guests.

There was a learning curve. Seder-goers got used to breaking their own middle matzos, building Hillel sandwiches, dipping leafy greens in salt water, contorting their faces while biting into the bitter herb, all while digitally linked to the seder they are "attending."

It didn't precisely fulfill the traditional statement, "let all who are hungry come eat." But in a time of pandemic, it was probably the best that could be done.

Most synagogues in Louisville planned their own virtual seders, either from the leaders' homes or their buildings.

There were also technical challenges to overcome. There was even the threat of hacking.

But there was also room for innovation, learning technical ways to enhance Judaism that could live beyond the pandemic.

"This whole thing is an experiment," said Rabbi Robert Slosberg of Adath Jeshurun. "We're in uncharted territory, which is a mixed blessing because some of things coming out of this [time] are unbelievable."

For instance, The Temple streamed parts or all of its first- and second-night



Rabbi David Ariel-Joel monitors a recent online class about Passover from The Temple's "Zoom Room." The Temple will use the facility to livestream its seders this year. (photo provided by Benji Berlow)

seders from a space in the building that it calls its "Zoom Room."

Rabbinic Assistant Benji Berlow said the Zoom Room, named for the platform most synagogues are using to stream their services and classes, is really The Temple's archives. It has been outfitted with multiple screens to give its rabbis "functionality" over adult education classes and the virtual services.

"We will be sharing a virtual haggadah through Zoom, so everyone can follow along together," Berlow said. "I will be monitoring the Zoom call from home to make sure everything is running smoothly logistically (helping people off screen, muting audio feedback, etc.)."

Other synagogue rabbis streaming their seders from home had their own hurdles to overcome.

Rabbi Beth Jacowitz Chottiner of Tem-

ple Shalom had spotty wifi in her house, so she strung a 60-foot cable from her upstairs router to her downstairs dining room.

Slosberg, who co-led AJ's virtual seder with Cantor David Lipp on Zoom and Facebook Live, was concerned about unmuting participants, which could lead to noise feedback.

"I'll probably have everyone on mute and have everyone around their own tables, and just guide them," he said.

Then some challenges were only indirectly related to the technology, like young families dealing with their children while on a live feed to the seder.

Rabbi Michael Wolk of Keneseth Israel who streamed his seder from home with his wife, Heidi, had just that challenge.

"Heidi and I have two young children who will not understand that there are

other people in the room with us," he explained. "Fortunately, they are cute kids."

On top of that, livestreaming a seder at all was troubling for the KI rabbi.

"As a Conservative rabbi, this poses a challenge because I do not use electricity on Shabbat and holidays," Wolk said. "I chose to do this because there are so many people who will be alone on Passover and even more who have no idea how to put on a seder."

Wolk's religious issue goes back to the prohibition against making fire on Shabbat and holy days. Orthodox Jews as well.

In fact, Anshei Sfard did not livestream a seder, though Rabbi Simcha Snaid held a virtual class to explain how it is done. He also called his members beforehand to offer help.

"This is an opportunity to have a seder with our children ... and really instill within them a pride in our heritage and traditions that we have done for thousands of years," Snaid said.

The Union for Reform Judaism and United Synagogue posted tips to its members, helping them move their activities online.

But there was a new threat to the virtual service: hacking.

The ADL warned against so-called "Zoom bombing," efforts to disrupt virtual services by hacking into them and leaving anti-Semitic, even pornographic, images and memes. The ADL posted a how-to checklist for thwarting Zoom bombing.

Adversity, though, is nothing new to Judaism.

"Jewish tradition has prepared us for this moment, said Rabbi David Ariel-Joel of The Temple. "In the haggadah, we say: 'In each and every generation, they rise up to destroy us.' We begin with the need to protect our families and our homes from external threats."

NEWS

Jewish funeral rituals drastically changed by the coronavirus crisis

By Lee Chottiner
Community Editor

When Rabbi Michael Wolk officiated at his first funeral of the coronavirus era, he found it... different.

"While the only people physically present were the gravedigger, the funeral director and myself," he said, "there were eight to 10 family members of the deceased participating through Zoom," the online conferencing platform made popular by the pandemic.

Normally, Wolk prepares a eulogy and invites specific mourners to make remarks. "This time, I provided space for any family member to speak of their loved one."

The hardest part of the service, for Wolk at least, came when he saw the casket sitting by itself at the gravesite. Jews traditionally accompany the dead until the body is buried.

"While it was sad that the family could not be there," Wolk said, "I also felt a sense of responsibility that this person should have a Jewish burial even under terrible circumstances."

Wolk isn't alone. Across America, rabbis, funeral directors and cemetery officials are reconciling Jewish funeral rituals to fit the coronavirus pandemic. Many are taking to social media to share their experiences and concerns.

Of course, mourners are struggling even more with the new normal.

Dr. Steven Bloom of Louisville couldn't even be with his mother, who just passed away in New Jersey. Her facility was in lockdown, he said.

"They're not allowed to leave their apartments," Bloom said. "Their meals are delivered to their doors. They even had security at the elevators to make sure no one got out."

Were it not for an iPad Bloom sent to his mother, she would not have seen her children and grandchildren during the last 10 days of her life.

The Jewish funeral process includes ancient customs:

Tahara (ritual washing) and *shmira* (guarding the body) happen prior to the funeral itself. The burial traditionally happens 24 hours after death and calls for mourners to fill the grave themselves.

Finally, there is *shiva*, the traditional seven day period of mourning when guests call on the family, bring food and help them make a *minyan*, the quorum of 10 worshippers that halachically enables mourners to recite Kaddish.

All these customs have been upended by the coronavirus.

Keneseth Israel, for example, has instituted its own guidelines for funerals



Above, Jewish funerals must be modified to keep mourners safe during the coronavirus pandemic. Right, Roberta Bloom, mother of Drs. Steven and Karen Bloom, grandmother of Sarah and Rabbi David Bloom, all of Louisville, communicated with her family by iPad during the last 10 days of her life. The facility where she was did not permit visitors. (photo provided by the Bloom family)

at this time: "All funerals will be held at the graveside; only the immediate family may attend (digital platforms may be used to allow communal participation) and shiva will be observed privately at home with condolences offered by phone. Instead of minyans at the shiva house, the family is encouraged to join online services to say Kaddish."

Some families are electing to hold memorial services later when the pandemic passes.

Rabbi David Ariel-Joel has one such family at The Temple. "The family is waiting with the remains to do the memorial service when this is over," he said.

Where services are still happening, funeral directors and cemeteries have instituted rules that once could be described as draconian.

But not now.

In some places, only clergy, funeral home staff and cemetery workers are allowed. Others may permit one or two relatives to represent the rest of the family. Some cemeteries say either clergy or family may attend, not both.

In some cemeteries, only staff may carry the casket to the gravesite – doing away with pallbearers. Frequently, the mourners – when they may attend – must wait in their cars until the casket is in place at the grave.

Funeral directors are spacing chairs for mourners six feet apart at the grave-



side, if family members may attend. One cemetery, not in Louisville, was described online as "BYOS" (bring your own shovels).

Soil from Israel is still sprinkled into the graves, though some funeral directors have taken to sanitizing the packets before use.

Of course, funeral homes no longer permit hugging, handshakes or any type of physical contact. Louisville is no exception to these rules.

Herman Meyer & Son Inc., Louisville's only Jewish funeral home, has released its own guidelines for the foreseeable future.

"We will not have a funeral chapel service and we are only conducting graveside services, with limited family at-

tendance, at this point," Meyer Funeral Director John Proffitt said in a statement. "A public service can and will be conducted at a later date."

The rules result in funerals that are quicker, lonelier affairs.

Rabbi Beth Jacowitz Chottiner of Temple Shalom just officiated at her first funeral during the pandemic at Meyers. Just three mourners were present.

The traditional washing and guarding of the bodies can still be done during the pandemic, but even these rituals must conform.

The Louisville Chevra Kadisha may continue to wash and watch over bodies during this time, according to Proffitt, but it won't be business as usual.

"We have all the necessary PPE (personal protective equipment) and guidelines in place, Proffitt said. "They will use proper sanitary practices and procedures. We will be adhering to the CDC recommendations, along with state and local authority recommendations and mandates. We will leave it up to the individuals of our CK society, if they wish to participate or not."

The work of the *shomrim*, those who watch over the bodies until the funeral, should not be affected.

"That will be okay," Proffitt said, "as the individual sitting will not be in close contact to the deceased loved one."

While social distancing has made Jewish funeral rites more challenging, some families think something good might result.

The Rothstein family, which just buried their sister-in-law and aunt, Ruth Anne Myers, in the KI Cemetery, think Zoom and other conferencing platforms will make funerals more accessible, even after the crisis passes.

"Under a terrible circumstance, Zoom made it better," said Michael Rothstein, who grew up in Louisville but now lives in Chicago, along with his brother, Jack. Neither could be here for the burial.

"We stayed on for quite a bit of time, remembering, reminiscing," Michael said. "We had a family gathering on Zoom... We have committed to doing it again."

Their father, Joe Rothstein, who still lives here, said 25 people attended via Zoom.

Father and sons think conferencing platforms are proving their worth at funerals, even when social distancing is no longer necessary.

"It would be a wonderful thing," Michael said, "if we had the ability to participate in funerals around the world via Zoom when we are not able to participate in person."



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COMMUNITY DEADLINES

Deadlines for the next two issues of **Community** for copy and ads are: May 20 for publication on May 29 and June 17 for publication on June 26.

Community publishes Newsmakers and Around Town items at no charge. Items must be submitted in writing. Please include your name and a daytime telephone number where you can be contacted in the event that questions arise. **Community** reserves the right to edit all submissions to conform to style and length requirements.

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Community accepts letters to the editor for publication. All letters must be of interest to the Jewish community or in response to an item published in the paper. They must be no longer than 300 words in length and signed. Name, address and daytime phone number must be included for verification purposes only.

Community reserves the right to refuse to publish any letter, to edit for brevity while preserving the meaning, and to limit the number of letters published in any edition.

Email your comments to: **Community**,

Letters to the editor, Lee Chottiner, at

lchottiner@jewishlouisville.org.

To submit items to Newsmakers, Around Town or Lifecycle, please email them to newspapercolumns@jewishlouisville.org.

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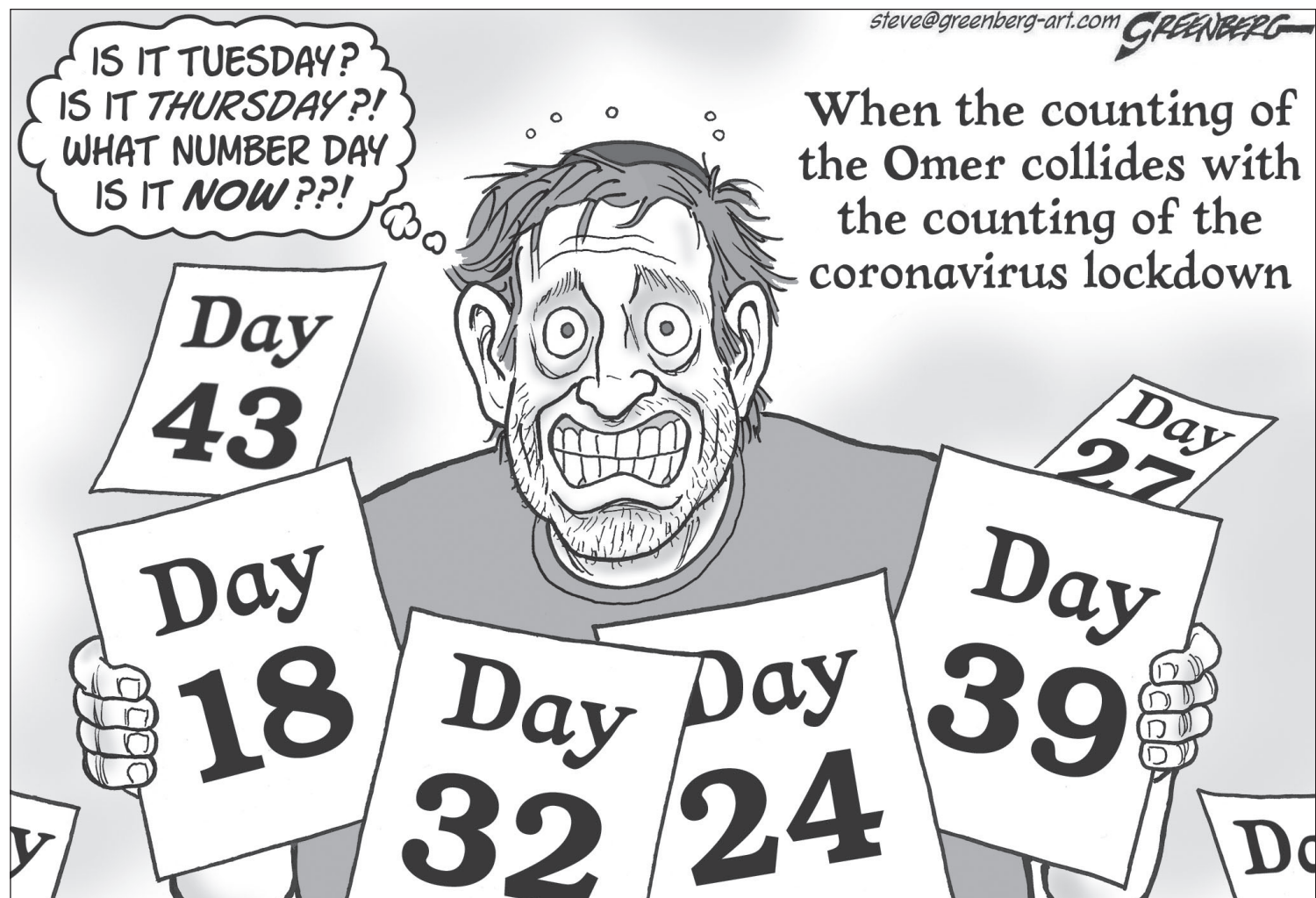
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FORUM



I knew a COVID stat; his name was Barry



Human
Resources

Lee Chottiner

As of last weekend, the U.S. death toll from COVID-19 had surpassed 35,000 – the highest in the world – and I had not known a single one of them.

Until Sunday.

That was when Barry Berlin, 71, a member of my synagogue and a frequent lunch companion, passed away after battling the disease for the better part of a month.

With that piece of news, the coronavirus, which has spread across the globe, infecting millions, crashing economies, isolating nations and likely changing the world for good, became more than just a stampede of facts, figures and headlines.

The veil of the disease had fallen away, reviewing a familiar face, that of a friend.

A Massachusetts native, who had lived and worked around the world, Barry, along with his wife, D.J., resided just a few doors from Temple Shalom. The short walking distance made Barry and the family service dog, Sonny, regulars at the Friday and Saturday Shabbat services.

He would always sit at the back of the sanctuary, offering fist bumps instead of handshakes to those who were part

of the Torah processional.

A stout guy with gray hair and round-frame glasses, Barry was always ready with his go-to answer whenever the rabbi asked the worshippers what they were grateful for that week. “Family, health,” he would say.

Something else he was grateful for: food.

A veteran of the food and beverage industry, who had worked with the likes of celebrity chef Wolfgang Puck and had been on the staff of Louisville’s Seelbach Hotel, Barry’s knowledge of food and restaurants was nothing short of astounding. You could be forgiven for thinking he had eaten at every bistro, deli, pizza parlor and sushi bar in town. Of course, he hadn’t, but his knowledge of restaurants and the catering business seemed encyclopedic.

It wasn’t just the food end of the business that fascinated him. He loved to tell stories about the characters he knew behind the counters or in the kitchens of his favorite places. He noticed the ambience at restaurants, the table settings. He loved planning menus and preparing a variety of dishes.

Which is why he became a central figure at Temple Shalom, planning every detail of High Holy Day onegs and other events. I last saw him at the Purim comedy night and dinner. The social hall was set up cabaret style, two bottles of wine on each table and Barry in kitchen, where he was at home.

There were times over the past two weeks when we thought Barry would beat this thing. At one point he recovered so much so that doctors at Norton Women’s and Children’s Hospital,

where he was being treated, removed him from his ventilator and transferred him from the ICU to a regular floor – a moment that went viral when a video of nurses wheeling his gurney to his new room, doctors and nurses lining the hallway and cheering, was posted online. Even CNN picked it up.

Days later, though, he was back in the ICU. He would rally one more time when he became conscious enough to ask his nurse for ice, telling her his name when she asked for it.

After that, though, his condition worsened until it was over.

Every night, many of us watch the news, which is overwhelmingly consumed with the pandemic. We filter the headlines, looking for nuggets of good news – anything on which we can hang our hopes for a return to normal.

But we can’t help but hear the numbers of those infected and the deaths.

The networks do their best to tell the stories behind those numbers, broadcasting images of doctors, nurses, first responders, grocery workers, delivery drivers – essential employees who succumbed to COVID-19. They show New Yorkers applauding these heroes every night at 7 p.m.

Still, for many of us, the statistics remain nameless and faceless.

Not for me, not anymore. I have learned the hard way that each infection figure comes with an identity. Now, I can say that I knew one of them, and I am better for it.

(Lee Chottiner is the editor of the Jewish Louisville Community.)



FORUM

Israel finally gets a government... and praise for its pandemic response



JCRC Scene

Matt Goldberg

After three elections costing hundreds of millions of dollars, Israel has a new government.

Under the newly signed coalition agreement, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will be PM for the next 18 months while Gen. Benny Gantz, leader of the opposition Blue and White Party, will be the defense minister. After 18 months Gantz will become PM and Netanyahu will be Vice-PM.

The two leaders, who signed the agreement this week, are calling this an emergency unity government, coming together to deal with the unpre-

cedented coronavirus crisis. Gantz had decided that the country needs an emergency unity government and has been negotiating with Netanyahu on doing just that.

Many of Gantz's coalition partners are outraged to see him actually share power with Netanyahu, a man they simply cannot reconcile with, and have abandoned him, deciding to sit in the opposition instead.

But Netanyahu has become more popular over the past few weeks for his handling of the pandemic. Polls indicate that if another election were held tomorrow, his right-wing Likud bloc would win resoundingly. Apparently, this news gave Netanyahu the confidence to play hardball during negotiations, extracting some serious concessions from Gantz.

Of course, Israeli politics are notoriously difficult to forecast and anything can happen in the coming months (including a conviction for Netanyahu at his corruption trial, which could put

him in jail). Stay tuned.

This political saga is being resolved as Israel is being widely praised for its response to the coronavirus. One of the first countries to enact a stay-at-home order, the shutdown is being credited with saving many lives.

Israel strictly enforced the order, prohibiting people from straying more than 100 meters (109 yards) from their homes except for essential trips.

Israel has also functionally shut down its airport. There is now about one flight landing a day, usually a chartered aircraft filled with homebound Israelis who were stranded in countries as far away as Peru and New Zealand.

In fighting the coronavirus, Israel has unleashed every apparatus of its security forces. Its top-secret weapons research division is working on finding a vaccine. Military special forces have been mitigating the impact of the disease and the Mossad, the national intelligence agency, has been secur-

ing necessary equipment from abroad such as ventilators and PPE.

Israel has several pharmaceutical companies working on both treatments and vaccines, and they are reporting promising results with both. One company plans human vaccine trials by June 1.

With its mortality rate from COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus, low compared to other countries, Israel's efforts are something we should be proud of.

But they are not perfect.

Israel's economy has collapsed, just as the rest of the world. It may even be more acute since the Israeli economy is significantly dependent on tourism. The tourist industry aspires to be well positioned when the economy reopens; limited activity has already begun. Hopefully, the turnaround will come sooner than later for Israel.

(Matt Goldberg is director of the Jewish Community Relations Council.)

MOSAIC Awards canceled for 2020; honorees to be feted next year

By staff and releases

The last major Jewish event of the year that was still scheduled, despite the coronavirus pandemic, has finally been canceled.

Jewish Family & Career Services has announced that the 15th annual MOSAIC Awards, which had been slated for Thursday, May 14, at the Louisville Marriott Downtown, will

not take place after all.

"We have made the difficult, but only possible, decision to cancel this year's MOSAIC Awards," JFCS Chief Executive Officer Deb Frockt said.

This year's honorees – University of Louisville President Neeli Bendapudi, entrepreneur and professor Di Tran, educator Berta Weyenberg, distiller Kaveh Zamanian, and chef and restaurateur Bapion Ziba – have all accepted invitations to be the 2021 MO-

SAIC honorees.

"We're thrilled that each honoree has graciously accepted," Frockt said.

The MOSAIC Awards is the signature fundraising event of the JFCS.

Even though the ceremony is canceled, Frockt said many sponsors of the MOSAIC Awards have already agreed to continue supporting the agency's services during the pandemic.

"We are gratified that so many MO-

SAIC supporters, including corporations, foundations and individuals, have generously converted their sponsorships to donations that support the essential services JFCS is providing our most vulnerable community members during this historic crisis."

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FORUM

LHOME creates loan products for its neediest borrowers during the coronavirus crisis



Guest
Columnist

Amy Shir

When the coronavirus pandemic reached Louisville, its low-income residents and very small businesses were among the hardest hit.

They endured business closures, job losses and the elimination of child care and schooling for their kids.

These are the clients of The Louisville Housing Opportunities and Micro-Enterprise Community Development Loan Fund, Inc. (LHOME), a nonprofit low-interest lender with Jewish roots (more on that later) that assists people and businesses in need.

We have had to pivot to serve these people during the crisis. Their expenses, rent, utilities, food and medical care continue, though without the corresponding revenue.

So, LHOME, the city's only nonprofit certified community development financial institution (CDFI), has created two COVID-19 pandemic emergency loan products. It also shifted its business model from in-person lending and financial coaching to completely virtual lending and financial coaching.

On April 6, LHOME launched its new loan products: The Lifeline Loan, which pays bills for community members up to \$500 for emergencies (utilities, water, rent, prescription medicine) and the Small Business Continuity Loan.

The Lifeline Loan is a vital alternative to predatory lenders that set up shop in neighborhoods underserved by traditional banks, making so-called "payday loans." Those lenders charge about 400 percent interest, so someone who borrows \$500 for emergencies can end up paying up to \$2,000 in interest and fees when all is said and done.

By contrast, LHOME's loan charges 15 percent over 12 months so that a \$500 loan ends up costing a total of approximately \$542.

The Small Business Continuity Loan provides up to \$25,000 to very small businesses (fewer than 10 full-time employees) within a few days, paying for wages, rent and equipment. It



LHOME, which provides low-interest loans to small businesses and individuals in underserved neighborhoods, is now offering emergency loan products to help their clients through the pandemic. (LHOME photo)

also provides working capital. In just the first week of launch, LHOME approved 16 small business loans worth \$346,110 to help entrepreneurs not only survive but hopefully thrive long past this current crisis.

LHOME approved 11 Lifeline (anti-payday) loans totaling \$5,300 with about \$32,000 in the pipeline. We have paid bills for vulnerable community members for prescription drugs, rent, gas, electric, and water. LHOME also is providing online financial coaching via Zoom and FaceTime.

You may have heard about Federal assistance for small business owners and the \$1,000 available to low-income families. LHOME knew that these programs would take a while to launch. Several people would not have the tools to apply and it would take time to receive the financial assistance. We developed these products to serve as bridges for the other funding.

Additionally, LHOME is providing financial coaching and reports timely repayments to the credit bureaus. So, instead of creating a debt trap, LHOME's small loans help Louisvillians pay their bills, have some breathing room, create a viable repayment plan and raise their credit scores so consumers can pay less interest on future debt.

LHOME is actively raising funds for both of these loan funds: For the Small Business Continuity Loan Fund, Louisville Metro has provided \$500,000; LHOME has committed \$500,000; Render Capital, \$150,000, with other funds provided by Endeavor Board Chairman Brook Smith and others. This loan fund is offered in partnership with GLI, Louisville Forward,

Render Capital and Lenderfit. The partnership also has challenge other individuals and banks to invest.

LHOME was co-founded in 2012 by Judy Tiell, retired executive director of Jewish Family & Career Services (JFCS) and Cathy Hinko, executive director of the Metropolitan Housing Coalition (MHC) – two visionaries who knew that Louisville was under-invested in CDFIs – lending institutions serving communities that typically lack access to affordable, accessible loan

products.

The St. Louis Federal Reserve Bank shows CDFI Investment in Louisville to be far below comparable cities, including Cincinnati, Nashville, Indianapolis, Memphis and Columbus.

Over the past three years, LHOME has expanded its offerings and heightened its impact. To date, we have made more than 110 loans, with over \$2 million lent primarily to low-income minority small business owners and families needing to make critical home repairs, elderly homeowners on fixed incomes to pay property taxes and small investors of color in West Louisville needing capital to flip or rent affordable housing.

The work LHOME is doing during this crisis is consistent with its Jewish roots. This is tikkun olam (repair the world) in action.

I am thankful for this opportunity to reflect on how my organization is benefiting our greater community, especially during the coronavirus pandemic.

(Amy Shir is president and CEO of LHOME.)

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GLOBE

Benjamin Levin, 93, dies Last surviving member of the legendary Avengers partisan group

By Sam Sokol
JTA

Benjamin Levin spent much of his early life fighting.

At just 14, he joined a militant group fighting the Nazis in his native Lithuania. After the war, he worked to smuggle Jewish refugees to pre-state Israel. And in 1948, he arrived on the shores of the newly established Jewish state aboard the Altalena, a cargo ship whose sinking by the nascent Israel Defense Forces is considered a turning point in the country's early history.

Levin died of COVID-19 on April 13, just two days after his 93rd birthday, in Westchester County, New York.

Born in 1927 in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius, Levin was reportedly a wild youth, taking up smoking at age eight and running with a local gang, The Times of Israel reported. After his family escaped the city following the Nazi invasion in 1941, Levin's father encouraged him to join the resistance. At just 14, Levin joined The Avengers, a Jewish militant organization led by the legendary Yiddish poet and Zion-

ist activist Abba Kovner. According to multiple media reports in Israel, Levin was the last known surviving member of the group.

"I saw a lot of things," Levin recalled in a video interview years later. "I saw very noble people who became animals, and very much animals who became noble people."

Despite surviving the Holocaust, Levin's parents were killed by Lithuanians after the war. Following their murder, Levin moved to Palestine and joined the right-wing Irgun militia, which was then involved in a bloody struggle with the British authorities. His activities on behalf of the group involved clandestinely smuggling European Jews into what was soon to become the state of Israel. He was arrested by the Soviet Union and sent to a Siberian gulag but managed to make his way back to southern Europe in order to rejoin the Zionist underground.

He returned to Israel in 1948 as a crew member of the Altalena, an Irgun weapons ship which was sunk by the IDF because it would refused to tolerate an independent fighting force not

under government control.

Levin eventually moved to New York in 1967, opening a gas station and spending years lecturing about the Holocaust at local schools.

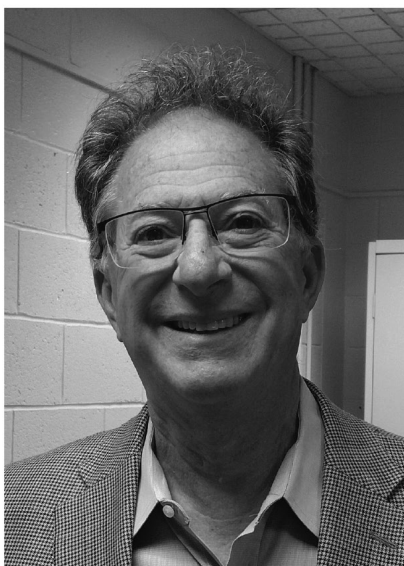
"He was a mild mannered happy person who radiated a can-do attitude and convinced all who knew him that

anything is possible with individual determination," Levin's son Chaim told The New York Post. "He repeatedly emphasized his mantra, 'That's life,' because in his view life is full of peaks and valleys, successes and failures but is always interesting and should be appreciated."



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Seventy-one years after Israel fought for its independence, **Magen David Adom** is helping the country battle a different enemy.

The coronavirus pandemic is indeed a war. Even if Israel can keep mortality rates for those infected to 1 percent, it will still mean the death of more than 30,000 people — more than all of Israel's wars combined.

Magen David Adom has been on the front lines against the coronavirus, but the fight has taken an extraordinary toll on MDA's resources. We need your support to keep saving lives. Observe Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's independence day, by keeping the people of Israel strong.

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THE J

CENTERPIECE

VIRTUALLY CENTERED

JCC moves online with new portal during coronavirus; staff say it has a future after pandemic

By Lee Chottiner
Community Editor

When Susan Kwasny migrated the JCC's physical fitness classes online, she discovered that there was a learning curve.

"The majority of our classes are posted on Facebook Live and some of our instructors did not even have Facebook, so we had to get them on there and teach them how to use it," she said.

Even then, the senior director of health & wellness at the JCC said, there were "growing pains."

"The [camera] angle of the class could have been better or the lighting or orientation of the camera were not the best," Kwasny recalled. "But now, I think we have it down."

In fact, instructors are doing the filming from their homes, with the kids and dogs getting in the act.

"It adds a comical, personal aspect to the class that most of our members enjoy," she said.

Physical fitness has been one of the success stories of Virtual JCC, the new online portal used to channel members to their particular interests or host videos and other content.

During the coronavirus pandemic, Virtual JCC has kept The J open for business – virtually speaking.

"We are getting great feedback from our members about the

classes that we post on Facebook and online," Kwasny said. "We are also doing virtual personal training, which is going rather well, too. Our members are staying engaged with our trainers and instructors, which is one of our main goals."

A quick visit to Virtual JCC shows that the web page is divided into five major tracks: Group Fitness Online, Arts & Ideas, Personal Training, Jewish Life & Learning, and Camp, Youth & Youths.

Depend on which track you click, you will be directed to videos, project ideas, live programming, calendars, even an auction.

It isn't just Group Fitness that's making the most of Virtual JCC.

"I have been posting links about shows and dance classes, musical theater and dance workouts," said Frank Goodloe III, CenterStage artistic director. "People seem to really like it."

Goodloe, along with Erin Jump, CenterStage education program director, have also worked together on Daily Dose, a talk show about soundtracks they're listening to, Broadway trivia and events happening in the community. The talks are posted every Monday on the Virtual JCC page, under the Arts & Ideas label.

"Coming up, I will be doing a weekly vlog, if you will, called *Getting to Know You*," Goodloe said. "I will be interviewing

CenterStage cast members, directors, choreographers and musical directors. It's a chance for our audience to get to know some of their favorite performers."

Camp J also is on Virtual JCC posting links to projects for children, other kid-centric websites and an exercise video for young people.

The Early Learning Center isn't using Virtual JCC as extensively to protect their pupils, said its director, Jessica Bush.

"We have to keep all content that includes the children on our closed page," she said, though the ELC staff is thinking about new ways to engage its families.

"Each class has created a daily routine," Bush said. "They [teachers] Zoom with their families in the morning, and then in the afternoon post a Facebook Live video with an activity, a story time, or a check-in. It has been great to engage our families in this way; I think they have gotten to know the teachers so much more than in regular school times."

Not all departments are using Virtual JCC.

"A lot of our seniors are not necessarily tech savvy," said Senior Center Director Tara Stone. "We have almost tripled our meal deliveries, so I am more focused

with that."

For now, clients are accessing the JCC virtually, though what happens to the portal when the building reopens remains an open question.

But Tom Wissinger, vice president and COO of the Jewish Community of Louisville, sees some place for the portal once the pandemic passes.

"I do think that the roots the Virtual JCC has currently grown will not be entirely uprooted, even when we are back to our 'next new normal,' he said. "Having the ability to connect with the community in person, but also virtually, seems to be a win-win situation for all. It allows us to more greatly diversify how we can connect with individuals, but as part of a larger community."

The problem with describing the future role of Virtual JCC, he said, is that no one really knows how much the community will have changed once the crisis concludes.

Goodloe also believes that Virtual JCC is here to stay.

"I do feel that in some type of way we will continue with this Virtual JCC once things come back up," he said. "I think this is a way that we can continue to stay connected to those that aren't able to make it out due to illness or whatever it may be. It will give people a chance to still feel as if they are connected."



VIRTUAL JCC

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Thursdays, 3 – 4 PM

Are you caring for someone with Parkinson's Disease? Join others for mutual support, problem solving and education. *Facilitated by Naomi Carrico, CSW*

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3rd Monday 12:30 – 1:30 PM | 3rd Wednesday 10 – 11 AM

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CORONAVIRUS

Home at last

Louisville man, world traveler, back from India after harrowing experience

By Lee Chottiner
Community Editor

After three weeks in an Indian hospital, recovering from sepsis and organ failure in a country under lockdown due to the coronavirus, a Jewish Louisvillian has finally come home.

Matthew Lemberger's flight from San Francisco landed at Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport late Tuesday night – the last leg on the 77-year-old world traveler's arduous homeward journey.

Confined to a wheelchair, Lemberger endured a 17-hour flight from Delhi, India, a long layover and a 15-hour road trip by ambulance from Trivandrum at the southern tip of the subcontinent, where he had been hospitalized since March.

Before the journey home, Matthew "fought for his life," in the ICU while hospitalized in Trivandrum, tethered to an IV medicating him with antibiotics, said his daughter, Erica Lemberger.

His homeward odyssey may not have started at all, were it not for a help of rabbis, lawmakers, community leaders, journalists and hundreds of other donors to her GoFundMe page, many of whom have never met Matthew.

He also benefitted from the compassion of two Muslim men – Umar and Kaiser – owners of the guesthouse where he stayed before his illness. They cared for him day and night while he was hospitalized. The men brought him food when nursing services were not available.

Erica, a nurse practitioner in Louisville who started the GoFundMe account to pay for her father's journey home, flew to San Francisco Monday to greet him. She texted *Community* that he could not walk when he deplaned.

Erica said Matthew's ordeal, and the many people who came to his aid, have brought her closer to God.



Erica Lemberger kisses her father, Matthew Lemberger, during their reunion in San Francisco. (photo provided by Matthew Lemberger)

"I've been reading tehilim (psalms) daily," Erica said. "It talks about all the ways we have not done well by HaShem (God) and all the miracles HaShem has done for us. So it's connected me. This has rejuvenated my spiritual connection to HaShem."

The Lemberger family's ordeal began in March while Matthew, a retired teacher and author of 13 books, was taking a winter trip through India.

This trip turned from adventure to ordeal when, shortly after his arrival, the Indian government put the country on "lockdown," to control the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by the coronavirus.

Matthew decided to ride out the lockdown in India instead of finding a way home. But he soon became ill due to lack of food and water. When he went into the town of Varkala to find groceries, he collapsed in a street, severely dehydrated.

Erica said people were afraid to help him, fearing that Westerners were bringing COVID-19 to India.

A social worker got him to a hospital,

where was treated for dehydration. He returned to his guesthouse, but his condition deteriorated. Days later he was hospitalized again. Umar and Kaiser continued to look after him.

Erica had been informed of her father's illness, but communicating with him directly was difficult.

"There was no internet and no phone service," she said. "So I would record videos and send them to these two men (Umar and Kaiser). They would show my dad the videos and then record him and send them back to me, so we could communicate."

Umar and Kaiser cared for Matthew "as if was their own father, without asking for anything in return" Erica added. "And they hardly knew him when my dad got sick."

Matthew's health continued to decline, forcing him to miss two repatriation flights out of the country. He was finally transferred to a private hospital, where he arrived with urosepsis – an infection of the urinary tract – and multi-organ failure.

"They had to slow-code him to keep him alive," Erica said, "provide advance cardiac life support and get his organs to maintain themselves. He ended up in the intensive care unit ... for several days."

He was also isolated in the ICU until a COVID-19 test could be performed. All told, he had three such tests – all negative.

He was transferred to a regular room and showed strong signs of healing, but he was still sick and getting out of India was still a problem.

Sen. Mitch McConnell helped facilitate two repatriation flights, neither of which Matthew could get on because of his condition. Erica then approached Rep. John Yarmuth's office, which she

said "took the lead" on his case.

"Initially, they helped with insurance, reimbursement and covering his medical costs," Erica said, "because in India you cannot be released from the hospital until you pay your bill upfront."

She also been in touch with the State Department and the U.S. Embassy every day since her father got sick, to arrange another repatriation flight. At one point she was told there would be no more such flights because of the national lockdown, which would have left her father stranded.

Even if another repatriation flight could be arranged, getting Matthew out of the country – ground transport and the flight – would be expensive.

Enter Tara Bassett, a longtime Louisville TV journalist and "livecaster" on Facebook who posted an interview with Erica "within five minutes of talking to me."

Bassett's interview got picked up by the news outlets, garnering support (and funds) for Erica's GoFundMe account. took.

Bassett also helped Erica facilitate contact with Yarmuth's staff, with whom she has close ties. Yarmuth's team held a stream of conference calls with the embassy in India, helping to arrange another repatriation flight, the one that finally got Matthew out.

Said Erica of Bassett, "She has been the greatest advocate and trusted friend that I have ever met."

Both Erica and Bassett credited Nicole Yates, Yarmuth's chief of staff, for her work in facilitating the flight.

Several Louisville rabbis, cantors and community leaders also stepped in to raise money to pay for Matthew's return home. All told, the GoFundMe account raised nearly \$20,000.

The author of 13 books, in addition to his travels, Matthew has visited many countries in Europe, Asia and South America, using his daughter and granddaughters' home in Louisville as "home base" between trips.

When he is home, though, father and daughter love to walk the Big Four Bridge together. It's their thing.

Not this time, at least for now, while Matthew recovers from his experience.

"He's a really well accomplished man, an interesting man," Erica said. "His mind was very strong, and his body was very strong before getting there (India). But the state he's in is very weak."

She hopes that will change now that he is home.

"He has a private duty nurse," she quipped.

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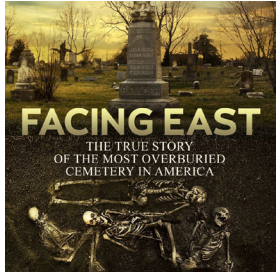
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NEWS & NEWSMAKERS



Flaksman worked on new documentary

A Jewish Louisville filmmaker was the cinematographer for a new feature-length documentary

about the historic neglect at Louisville's Eastern Cemetery.

Joe Flaksman, son of Sandy Flaksman, worked on *Facing East*, produced by Ronin Noir Films, which premiered on March 13 at the Village 8. It is available on iTunes, Amazon Prime, Vudu and Xbox.

According to Flaksman, Eastern Cemetery, which has been a place of burial since 1848 (former slaves, Odd Fellows, Free Masons, congress-

men, mayors, ministers, boxers, immigrants, musicians and veterans rest there), is also a cemetery where "something really went wrong."

Not so long ago, the cemetery was overgrown, with trees growing through gravesites.

Walking through the cemetery, "there was an ominous feel to it," Flaksman said.

Even worse, families were scammed with plots that were sold and resold. In some cases, he said, as many six bodies were found buried in one site.

"We thought it was going to take only three to four months of filming," Flaksman said. "It turned out to be three to four years. We started to follow a white rabbit and the rabbit went down a hole; it just got deeper and deeper. Every story got way worse."

To put it in perspective, a cemetery with a capacity of 30,000 (burials ceased there in the 1980s) actually has about 100,000 interred there, according to the Friends of Eastern Cemetery.

He said burial records weren't accurate and many families struggled to find out where their loved ones were laid to rest.

"We wanted to help these people out find out what happened to their loved ones," Flaksman said.

Flaksman was one of four executive producers on the film, the others being Tommy Baker, Paul Coffey, and Russ Allen.

In addition to *Facing East*, Flaksman has worked on music videos and short films. He has won two cinematography awards for his work at the Louisville competition of the nation-

al 48-Hour Film Festival.

KET featured Violins of Hope

The KET program Kentucky Life featured an episode on last year's *Violins of Hope* exhibit in Louisville during the month of April.

Violins of Hope is collection of string instruments – mostly violins – that survived the Holocaust. Israeli luthier (violin maker) Amon Weinstein, who received the instruments through various sources, has restored most of them. Today, they travel to cities around the world for exhibits and concerts.

Miriam Ostroff, a Louisville philanthropist who was instrumental (no pun intended) in bringing the collection here, was interviewed.

KET aired the episode aired on April 18, April 19., April 23, and April 23. It also aired on KET2 on April 20.

AROUND TOWN

Adath Jeshurun

Adath Jeshurun holds virtual minyan services twice a day via Zoom and Facebook Live. Minyan is held weekday mornings at 7:15 a.m., Sunday mornings at 8:45 a.m. and evenings at 5:45 p.m. Kabbalat Shabbat services take place on Fridays at 5:45 p.m. Visit adathjeshurun.com for more details.

AJ is presenting an online entertainment series, "Sunday Night Live at Virtual AJ," Sundays at 7 p.m. via Zoom and Facebook Live. The April 26 show features comedian Myq Kaplan performing "Small, Dork, and Handsome." Musician Brigid Kaelin will perform "Spreading a Little Joy on Accordion, Guitar, Piano, and Saw!" on May 3. And comedian Dan Perlman will perform "Jokes and Misdemeanors" on May 10. The Zoom audience is limited to 100 people. Visit adathjeshurun.com for access details.

AJ holds a "virtual coffee and real conversation" weekdays at 1 p.m. Each session, which features a topic led by a member of the community, will be streamed live via Zoom and Facebook Live. The next session on Wednesday, April 29, will feature Darren Kendall, AIPAC's southeast political director, speaking on the upcoming election. The Zoom audience is limited to 100. Visit adathjeshurun.com.

Chavurat Shalom

Contact Sarah Harlan at **502-212-2038** or sarahharlan86@gmail.com for details about future programming.

JFCS

During the coronavirus pandemic, the Sonny & Janet Meyer Food Pantry continues to provide weekly service to approximately 100 people through curbside pickup and porch delivery. The pantry continues to receive staples from Dare to Care, but additional items must be purchased from retail outlets. Donations can be made at jfcsloisville.org/donate/. The pantry also is accepting donations in need cleaning products, diapers and hygiene products.

Keneseth Israel

KI will host services and classes on Zoom until further notice. The link is <https://zoom.us/j/76637576>

Updates on service times and events will be posted at kenesethisrael.com.

NCJW-Louisville

While the Nearly New Shop is closed during the coronavirus pandemic, donations will be accepted once non-essential businesses may reopen.

Through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, individuals can take a \$300 charitable deduction for contributions made to qualified charities in 2020, regardless of whether they itemize deductions. Additionally, for individuals, the 50 percent of adjusted gross income ceiling on charitable contributions is suspended for 2020.

Sales at the Nearly New Shop support NCJW's advocacy efforts to advance and support women's and children's issues in Louisville. For more information, contact the shop at **502-454-6633** or nearlynewshop@ncjwlou.org.

Temple Shalom

A virtual No Shush Shabbat will be held at 6:30 p.m., Friday, April 24, on Zoom. Contact information@templeshalom.org for details.

The Temple

All services and programming are online. Shabbat services will be streamed at thetemplelouky.org/streaming/. Adult education and religious school will move to virtual classrooms. Visit thetemplelouky.org/virtual/ For details.

The Temple is organizing volunteers to provide support – grocery shopping, meal delivery, prescription pickup – to those in need. Visit thetemplelouky.org/help/ for details.

Members who would like to speak to a rabbi, including a home visit, can call The Temple at **502-423-1818** to make arrangements.

A virtual Yom HaShoah/Holocaust Memorial Shabbat, led by the sixth grade class, will be held at 7 p.m.,

Friday, May 1, at youtube.com/thetemplelouky.

The Temple will hold its Mother's Day Shabbat at 7 p.m., Friday, May 8, at youtube.com/thetemplelouky.

The Temple's first Take-Home Blue Jean Shabbat, Tot Shabbat, and Family Shabbat service will be held Friday, May 15. Rabbi Joe Rooks Rapport will lead Tot Shabbat at 6:45 pm and the main service at 7 p.m. The picnic-style dinner is free if ordered by May 8, \$10 afterwards for adults, still free for children under 13. All orders must be placed by May 13 at noon. RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/blue-jean/.

Shavuot services can be streamed at youtube.com/thetemplelouky: erev Shavuot, Thursday, May 28, 7 p.m.; morning services, Friday, May 29, 10:30 a.m. Tikkun Leil Shavuot will be held via Zoom on May 28. Asaf Angerman will teach at 8 p.m.; Rabbi David Ariel-Joel, 9 p.m. Email rabbidaj@gmail.com for access.



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Roberta Harriet Bloom

Roberta Harriet Bloom, of Pompton Plains, New Jersey, beloved wife, mother and grandmother, passed away Saturday, April 4, 2020. She was 87.

Born in the Bronx on Jan. 24, 1933, a daughter of the late Yetta and Nat Meisel, she was a full-time mom and did a great job at it.

Known as a friendly, bright light who wanted to be nothing more than a loving wife, mother and grandmother.

She was a long-time member of Temple Emanuel in Westfield, NJ, where her children grew up.

Roberta had an infectious childlike charm and optimism. She will live forever in the hearts of those who knew and loved her.

In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, William Bloom.

Roberta is survived by her son, Dr. Steven Bloom (Dr. Karen Bloom) of Louisville; her daughter, Teri Bloom of New York City; and her grandchildren, Sarah and Rabbi David Bloom.

Donations in honor of Roberta's memory can be sent to the Cedar Crest Staff Appreciation Fund, 1 Cedar Crest Drive, Pompton Plains, NJ 07444 Attn: Philanthropy Department.

Edwin H. David

Edwin H. David, 61, of Louisville, died on Friday, April 3, 2020, at his home.

Born on Nov. 3, 1958, a son of the late Simon and Emmy Kate David, Eddie attended Atherton High School and Bellarmine College.

He is survived by his sister, Peggy von Werdt, and his brother-in-law, Nicolas, of Bern, Switzerland; his brother, Stanley, and sister-in-law, Kimberlee, of Alpharetta, Georgia; and his nephews, Alexander and Benjamin of Bern, and Graham and Benjamin of Alpharetta.

A private graveside service will take place at The Temple Cemetery. A memorial service will be held in Louisville at a later date. Expressions of sympathy may be made to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) or the charity of the donor's choice.

Annette Kellem

Annette Kellem, 89, died in Wilmington, Delaware on April 16, 2020.

Born in Philadelphia, a daughter of the late Louis and Katie Tobin, she graduated from South Philadelphia High School for Girls and Temple University and went on to become a career English teacher.

In addition to her parents, Annette was preceded in death by her husband, Jacob Kellem.

She is survived by her children, Deborah Slosberg (Rabbi Robert), Andrea Oxman (Robert) and Aaron Kellem. She was a devoted grandmother to Aliza Weinstock (Stuart), Jacob Slosberg, Jeremy Slosberg (Emily), Karmi Gross (Aviel), Kobi Oxman and Aria Kellem; adoring great-grandmother to David and Ethan; and partner to John Crowley.

A private graveside funeral was held at Mt. Sharon Cemetery in Philadelphia. The family requests donations be made to the Edna Yarmuth Melton Scholarship Fund at Adath Jeshurun.

Ruth Anne Myers



Ruth Anne Myers, 80, of Scottsdale, Arizona, a pioneer for women in government service, passed away Tuesday, March 31, 2020, in Orlando, Florida.

Born in Louisville, a daughter of the late David and Eva (Zimmerman) Myers, she attended the University of Louisville before joining the U.S. Immigration & Naturalization Service with an entry-level position in New York City.

After postings to Cleveland, Los Angeles and Washington, she was ap-

pointed deputy director of the Chicago office and eventually rose to senior INS positions in Washington.

She became the agency's director during the transition from the Reagan to Bush administrations before finishing her 32-year career as the director of the District of Arizona and Nevada – the first female independently appointed director in the nation.

An avid traveler, Ruth Anne visited all 50 states and more than 30 countries, regaling family and friends with stories of her adventures. Most recently, despite having lost much of her eyesight, she visited Easter Island – a lifelong dream.

Ruth Anne was active in the Brandeis National Committee, the American Cancer Society, the Susan G. Komen Foundation for the Cure, KJZZ-KBAK pledge drives and the Girl Scout Arizona Cactus Pine Council.

She loved to play bridge and other games.

A constant in the lives of those she loved, Ruth Anne never missed a family event. She always had good advice, the latest joke and opinions on the issues of the day.

She took many of her nieces and nephews on trips when they were young, opening her home to them. She quietly provided financial support to those suffering lean times.

Ruth Anne delighted all who knew

her with her intelligence, tenacity, sharp wit and caring heart.

She was a mentor, confidant and friend.

Ruth Anne is survived by her brother, Allan Myers (Diane) of Orlando; her brother-in-law, Joe Rothstein of Louisville; her nieces and nephews, Shelley Barnes (Harry), Michael Rothstein (Doreen), Jack Rothstein (Debbie), Robin Anderson (Stewart), and Shari Massey (Kevin); her great-nieces and nephews, Eric Barnes, Hilary Soroosh (Tim), Evan Rothstein, Connor Rothstein, Nicole Rothstein, and Alex Rothstein; and her great-great niece, Eliana Soroosh.

She was preceded in death by her sister Elinor Rothstein.

In tribute to Ruth Anne, memorial gifts may be made to Susan B. Komen Foundation for the Cure and the Girls Scouts Arizona Cactus Pine Council. Interment was at Keneseth Israel Cemetery.

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NEWS

UNITY

Continued from page 1

support for the fund's highest priority, human needs, included increased homecare assistance, delivering senior meals, food pantry expansion, IT support to connect with individuals and counseling.

The task force will continue to evaluate needs based on incoming funding requests. The other two priorities are

Jewish connection and organizational infrastructure.

"The beauty of this [time], amid so much tragedy, is how it is bringing our community together ... in a thoughtful loving way," said Stacy Gordon-Funk, senior vice-president and chief development officer of JCL.

The task force members represent the JHFE, Jewish Community of Louisville, Louisville Council of Jewish Congregations, Jewish Family & Career

Services and at-large members. The representatives include Green, Fleischaker, Cheryl Small, Glenn Levine, Linda Schuster, Jane Goldstein, Larry Snyder, Matt Schwartz and Rabbi Beth Jacowitz Chottiner.

We know that the Jewish community's needs will outweigh our seed funding and will continue to grow as our community is affected by this pandemic.

All contributions will directly support

these individuals and Jewish organizations impacted by the pandemic. We need your help. The future of our agencies and synagogues depend on your support. A vibrant and stable Jewish Louisville depends on all of us.

Please make a donation or to get help today at www.jewishlouisville.org/RapidResponseFund or by calling Stacy Gordon-Funk at the Federation office **502-608-6519**.

HISTORY

Continued from page 4

Relief Association in Memphis.

And in New Orleans, following the yellow fever epidemic of 1853, Rabbi James Gutheim, who also remained in his city during the outbreak, became a founder of the Touro Infirmary and the Hebrew Widows and Orphans Home.

All these institutions were designed to respond to crises and communal needs where none previously existed.

"Out of these historic epidemics came both interfaith relationships, but also new infrastructure for the Jewish communities," Romano said.

(Gutheim also reached out to other Jewish communities for assistance during the epidemic. According to

Rabbi Joe Rooks Rapport of The Temple, records of Jewish Louisville's fledgling Benevolent Society mention a \$154 contribution – about \$4,000 in today's currency – to help yellow fever victims in New Orleans.)

Romano thinks today's rabbis are poised to develop new forms of infrastructure to serve their communities. Many are already taking to the internet to do so, starting Facebook pages where they share their coronavirus experiences and ways to respond.

In a piece of Passover-specific infrastructure, rabbis from around the world have created a virtual hagadah that speaks to the coronavirus experience. *The Middle Matzah Haggadah: A Digital Telling for time of Brokenness*, is a patchwork of videos by rabbis, lay leaders and their families, taking the

viewers through the Passover, infusing humorous and creativity in ways not possible with the printed word. Some of the videos are sadly serious, such as Rabbi Ari Plost's equation of The Four Questions with his father, who had been hospitalized for more than 60 days, tethered to a ventilator.

Everywhere, Romano said, rabbis are using portals and digital resources to create a "spiritual and emotional connection."

"Instead of visiting a bedside, we are having a FaceTime call and a Zoom call," she said.

Her interest in "disaster history" comes from personal experience. Romano was 15 in 2005, growing up near New Orleans, when Hurricane Katrina made landfall.

"I have vivid memories of evacua-

tion, sideways rain and the unbelievable images of my city in shambles," she wrote in her thesis. For one week, she didn't even know if her mother was still alive.

She believes rabbis are responding to the coronavirus the same way as their predecessors, responded to the own crises of their day.

Despite the rising death toll, the economic pain and the social distancing, Romano believes that "something beautiful" and lasting can come out of this experience.

"Rabbis in their communities will rally just as they have in the past," she said. "They will find new ways to create institutions and collaboration. We're already seeing it."

The Jewish Community of Louisville gratefully acknowledges donations to the following

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