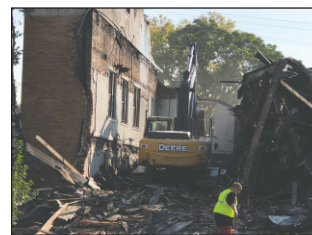


JEWISH LOUISVILLE COMMUNITY



INSIDE:
Old KI comes down
Historic synagogue razed
following destructive fire
STORY ON PG. 10

FRIDAY Vol. 47, No. 10 | October 29, 2021 | 23 Cheshvan 5782

Ready to help Jewish Louisville assists Afghan families



Jeff Jamner, JCC creative consultant for arts & ideas, accepts a donation of necessities for Afghan families during a drop-off day at the Anshei Sfard building. The activity was part of a community-wide effort by synagogues and agencies to support Afghans, recently evacuated from their country, who are being resettled in Louisville. (Community photo by Robbyn McClain)

By Lee Chottiner
Community Editor

Jewish Louisville is helping to settle and acclimate new arrivals from Afghanistan as the city prepares to accept hundreds of people recently evacuated from the war-ravaged country.

Kentucky Refugee Ministries (KRM) is settling as many as 200 individual Afghans in the Derby City.

KRM, a local non-profit organization that provides resettlement services to refugees through faith- and agency-based co-sponsorships, is affiliated with the U.S. State Department and Church

World Services.

It's not yet clear how many family units the new arrivals will constitute or where in the United States they are now. What is clear is that Jewish Louisville is playing a major role in their resettlement.

See **AFGHANISTAN** on page 18

John Yarmuth set to retire from the House

By Lee Chottiner
Community Editor

Rep. John Yarmuth has supported Israel during his 15 years in Congress, though he hasn't always walked in lock-step with Israeli leaders.

He has condemned former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for using violence to quell demonstrations but has reaffirmed Israel's right to defend itself.

He has assailed rocket attacks on Jerusalem and southern Israel by Hamas but opposes forced evictions of Arab residents from East Jerusalem and favors a two-state solution.

He has endorsed the 2015 nuclear agreement with Iran, despite Israel's opposition.

In other words, the Louisville Democrat, a descendant of Russian and Austrian Jews, backs Israel on his terms in Congress.

That will end on Jan. 3, 2023.

Yarmuth, 73, announced Tuesday that he will not seek reelection next year, setting the stage for a wide open, nationally watched campaign that could leave someone less or more supportive of Israel as Kentucky's 3rd congressional district representative.

Yarmuth, who met the press recently at Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport, said he debated his decision for months. After all, Congress is a tough habit to quit.

"I've been saying for some time, if I
See **YARMUTH** on page 19



John Yarmuth

Different venue, different setup, but CenterStage wowed with 'Joseph'

By Lisa Hornung
For Community

CenterStage just had its first opening night since February 2020, but it wasn't in its usual location.

The Oct. 4 opening of *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* was held before a smaller, though sold-out, masked and socially distant crowd at Farmington Historic Plantation.

The show went on under the pavilion, staged after dark and lit by strings of lights hanging from the ceiling with CenterStage chairs spaced out in pods of guests who sat with their friends and

family.

Ushers lit the gravel walkway for guests walking to their cars, which were parked next door at Sullivan University. Those who couldn't walk far could be dropped off in front of Farmington.

Erin Jump, J arts and ideas program director, said she was pleased with the outdoor setup.

"I think that all the elements came together in the best way," she said. "Everyone came ... ready for a show.... Everyone was just brimming with a buzz, and it just made it all so magical in the end."

Before the show, guests discussed the
See **CENTERSTAGE** on page 19



A cast scene from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. (Community photo by Lisa Hornung)

Demographic survey started this month

Brandeis University officially launched its 2021 demographic survey of Jewish Louisville on Monday, Oct. 18.

The survey, which is co-sponsored by Jewish Heritage Fund for Excellence (JHFE) and the Jewish Federation of Louisville, is intended to provide a better understanding of the makeup of Jewish Louisville – its size, composition, attitudes, behaviors and needs.

Those whose names are on the rep-
See **SURVEY** on page 12

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THE DASHBOARD

Word of the Month

What’s so bitter about Cheshvan?



D’var Torah
Cantor Sharon Hordes

It’s not unusual to see rabbis, cantors and synagogue administrators joke about how we are in their favorite month right now ... *Marcheshvan* or “Bitter Cheshvan,” the month devoid of any holidays.

What’s bitter about a month that gives busy, stressed-out professional Jews a four-week break from having to master challenging music, write sermons or simply summon up the energy to stand before their congregations, imparting wisdom and inspiration?

In Judaism, it seems as though we are always focused on the next special day on our calendar, even if it’s a mournful fast day. But according to the Kabbalah, every significant day affords us the opportunity to come closer to God, either in joy or in sadness.

Therefore we refer to the month that we’re in now, the only month in the Jewish calendar without any type of holiday, as *Marcheshvan*.

But what about the month of Av, the month with the day we mourn for the destruction of both holy temples, as well as the other tragedies that befell our people on that month throughout history? Shouldn’t we refer to it as bitter?

The kabbalists teach us that even on a day as sad as the 9th of Av (Tisha B’Av), we are granted 24 hours to take a break from the mundane activities of our world, focus on empathy for those who are suffering as our ancestors did, and look inside ourselves to become better people.

What can we focus on during this month in the absence of a holiday or public fast day? According to Kabbalah student and psychotherapist Melinda Ribbner, Cheshvan is a time to start working on those personal challenges we vowed to improve upon during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

In her book, *Kabbalah Month by Month*, Ribbner writes, “if we celebrated the holidays of Tishrei in their true spirit and depth, we have opened and received many blessings. We have been inspired to make changes in ourselves and in our lives.” Ribbner acknowledges that changing course in our lives can be difficult and that we may be tempted to give up. There’s a reason why New Year’s resolutions barely survive their first few weeks. But she reminds us that when our resistance to change kicks in, we need to “contact the even deeper resolve of the soul to go forward in our lives, even if it is painful and difficult.”

The time to do this work is when we don’t have any other holidays to distract us. As Ribbner writes, “When we recognize that there is no escape, nowhere to run, there are not even any holidays to help us transcend, we will settle down to do the work of this month. This is the spiritual opportunity and challenge of this month.”

If we truly do the work of Cheshvan, it may prove to be even more difficult than the soul-purifying, repentance-seeking efforts of Tishrei, but the rewards that come with this sense of accomplishment – this personal growth – are well worth it.

With that in mind, ask yourselves this question: What will be my self-improvement project this month and what do I need to finally let go of for it to happen?

(Cantor Sharon Hordes is the hazzan of Keneseth Israel Congregation.)

Snapshots



A new Habitat for Humanity house, built with help from Jewish Louisville, was dedicated on Oct. 16 at Oboe Drive. Temple Shalom and the Federation supported the project and contributed volunteer builders. Rabbi Beth Jacowitz Chottiner offered a blessing for the Matan family, who will live in the dwelling. (Community photos)

Candles

Here are the candle-lighting times for Shabbat in November:

- Nov 5 @ 6:21 p.m.
- Nov 12 @ 5:14 p.m.
- Nov 19 @ 5:10 p.m.
- Nov 26 @ 5:06 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

Got a news item for *Community*? Deadlines matter, especially for newspapers. Send in your news by Friday, Nov. 17 (though sooner is better). The paper should be in your mailbox by Friday, Nov. 26.

Submitting an item for *Community*’s weekly eblast? Please submit it by Friday. The eblast is sent out every Monday afternoon.

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If you read on the run, *Community*’s social media is just the thing. Follow us on Facebook at [facebook.com/JewishLouisville/](https://www.facebook.com/JewishLouisville/) or on Twitter, [Twitter.com/CommunityLou](https://twitter.com/CommunityLou), for the latest Jewish news from Kentucky and around the world.

Corrections/Clarifications

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NEWS

Bornstein to retire from LJFF; Siegwald named successor

By Lee Chottiner
Community Editor

For the first time in 18 years, the Louisville Jewish Film Festival (LJFF) is about to change hands.

Marsha Bornstein, director of the LJFF since 2005, has announced her retirement in November, but will assist in preparation for the next festival in February.

She will be succeeded by Tricia Kling Siegwald, who was recently hired to be the Jewish Community Center's senior director of festivals and special projects, a new position that includes responsibility for the LJFF and planning for the opening of the new Trager Family JCC.

For Bornstein, the upcoming film festival marks the end of a 37-year career at the JCC, in which she ran not just the LJFF, but CenterStage, the book festival, camp programs – basically anything involving, arts and humanities.

Her career was capped by the 2021 LJFF that had to be screened virtually since the COVID pandemic had forced cinemas to go dark.

Nevertheless, that festival made a profit – the most in 18 years – and Bornstein kept her perfect record: In her time running the LJFF, they never lost money.

"I wanted to go out on top, and last year was very successful," she said.

Siegwald, who most recently served as vice president of events for the Kentucky Derby Festival (KDF), knows well what it's like to plan annual events.

The University of Louisville graduate spent 25 years working at the KDF, managing the Pegasus Parade, the Basketball Classic, Kroger's Fest-a-Ville and the Great Steamboat Race.

And though she's never actually run a film festival, she knows how get up to speed on things – fast.

For instance, she had to learn how to book concerts for the KDF.

"I became a music person," she said. "I learned about all the genres and I followed all these different news outlets. I became very well versed in every type of music and had to know what was hot out there. I'd like to do the same with films."

Bornstein said the film festival is in good hands.

"She (Siegwald) is going to bring her own creativity to it, and she has new thoughts. She's looking at it objectively. I can sometimes get bogged down in my



Marsha Bornstein (left), says the Louisville Jewish Film Festival is in good hands with her successor, Tricia Kling Siegwald. (Community photo by Lee Chottiner)

own head with what hasn't worked in the past."

A partial list of selected films will be decided on Oct. 30. As in past years, the committee has been privately screening pictures from a strong pool.

"You could have two festivals of films and have two good festivals," Bornstein said.

Bornstein's career at the JCC began in 1984 as chair of the Middle School committee. She even staffed the program herself.

Bornstein worked with JCC youth for 12 years, including camps, after which then-Executive Director Howard Schultz placed her in charge of the Cultural Arts Department, with responsibility for the Patio Gallery, orchestra, classes and CenterStage.

She recalls CenterStage as the hardest job she had at the JCC, lacking the equipment today's shows have and dealing with some snafus.

"One time, I went home at 4 a.m. and we were opening that night," Bornstein said. Before the show started, though, "we had no lights. It was a miracle they came on."

Still, she managed to sell out many shows.

After time away from JCC to care for her mother, Bornstein returned to the

center to run the book festival, the Goldstein-Leibson Scholar-in-Residence and the LJFF.

At the time, the festival consisted of five movies and no post-screening programs.

Things have changed. The number of screenings has at least doubled. Speakers, including filmmakers, have been booked. Opening Night has become a

gala event.

And the films are better, especially the Israeli films.

"It is unbelievable what has happened to that industry in Israel," Bornstein said. "When I started doing this, being mailed 35mm reels, which weighed a ton, just all the logistics were really difficult, and it was really difficult to find an Israeli film that was good."

LJFF attendance also has grown, even during the pandemic. According to Bornstein, the 2020 festival – before the pandemic – drew 1,900 participants.

"Last year, we had 2,000," Bornstein said, "but it was households, so that could have been translated into well over 3,000.... That's a quantum leap."

The most satisfying part of the 2021 LJFF, though, was how it drew in people who had not been patrons.

"I looked every day at who signed up, who bought those tickets, who donated, and there were different names," Bornstein said. "That made the difference for me. We had broadened our scope, we had reached people that we did reach in the past 20 years, and a lot of them were Jewish; they had never come."

That is the benchmark from which Bornstein and Siegwald hope to grow this year's festival, whether it is all virtual or a hybrid with some live screenings. (The decision has not yet been made.)

"Learning under Marsha has been great," Siegwald said.

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NEWS

Report card

Local Hebrew schools weather COVID storm, but uncertainty remains

By Michael Ginsberg
For Community

When the COVID pandemic reached Louisville in early 2020, the leaders of the city's Hebrew schools responded the same way as most other U.S. educators: They switched to virtual learning and scrambled to find ways to salvage the rest of the school year.

Today, they are gradually reopening their doors to students and feeling cautiously optimistic.

There was little optimism in 2020.

"We were hard pressed to do activities that would keep the kids engaged and remembering they were Jewish," said Bev Weinberg, head of school for LBSY (Louisville Beit Sefer Yachad, Hebrew for "School Together"), which serves students from Adath Jeshurun, Keneseth Israel and Temple Shalom.

Weinberg said instruction improved last year, with one caveat:

"The instruction that was going on last year – the platforms – were top-notch," Weinberg said. "We've done all kinds of activities: drive-throughs, online, delivering materials, in order to continue to have a sense of community and connection with these kids. But, if the children didn't have someone at home monitoring them, they lost the year."

Weinberg is more optimistic this year,



LBSY students prepare their own shofars during a 2018 school event – before the pandemic. Religious school officials say classes are slowly returning to the in-person format after more than a year of virtual education. (LBSY photo)

even though LBSY classes continue to operate remotely until its school board determines otherwise.

"Our virtual classes are going well," she said. "We're doing whatever we've been able to do and still stay safe and educational."

Sarah Harlan, principal of both the High School of Jewish Studies and The Temple, echoed Weinberg's assessment of the improvement last school year and the startup this year. Attendance actually increased last year, she said.

This school year, The Temple started

with Grade 7 and 8 students in person for the first few weeks, brought the Grades 4-6 students back for Wednesday Hebrew School on Oct. 13 and the Kindergarten-Grade 6 students back in person on Sunday, Oct. 17. The High School of Jewish Studies had its first in-person session on Oct. 24.

Successful innovations last year bode well for the future, Harlan said. Among them, the recruitment of expert guest speakers remotely, including rabbinical students from around the country.

"We were able to bring in some amaz-

ing teachers who don't live here," she said. "Do I think that's the best way to teach? Obviously not. But we did it and were still able to connect. I was proud of what we were able to do."

David Bryfman, chief executive officer of the Jewish Education Project, a support organization for teachers in the Jewish sector, said the lockdown forced many students that had shunned online classes to embrace them.

Citing a study of adult Jewish students, Bryfman wrote, "there was a clear indication that as a result of the shift to online learning during the pandemic, the majority of these learners are interested in making online learning a prominent part of their weekly adult Jewish learning."

While Hebrew schools and adult education have weathered the COVID storm, the report card is less encouraging for the general school population, as reflected in a survey Voice of the Educator

According to the report, more than half of K-12 teachers in public schools queried said the pandemic and shift to virtual learning resulted in a "significant" learning loss for students, academically, socially and emotionally.

Which means, the report concluded, "nothing beats being in a classroom."

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COMMUNITY

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COMMUNITY DEADLINES

Deadlines for the next two issues of **Community** for copy and ads are: November 17 for publication on November 26 and December 22 for publication on December 31.

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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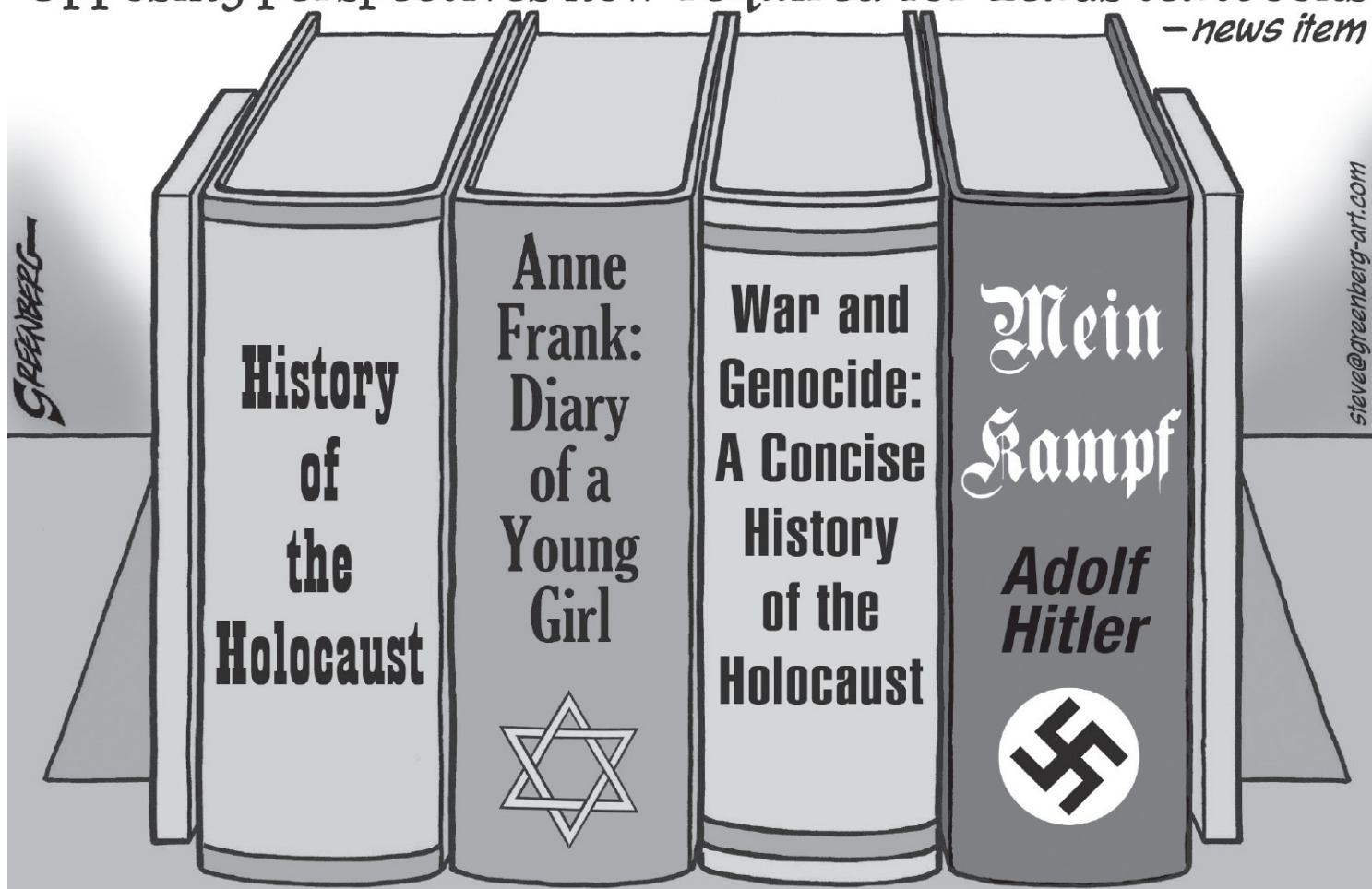
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FORUM

Opposing perspectives now required for Texas textbooks – news item



Texas law portends trouble for country



Human Resources

Lee Chottiner

Anita Zusman Eddy was not surprised by an Oct. 8 incident when a Texas school district official, explaining to teachers what a new law governing race-related subjects means to them, mentioned that they may have to offer books with an “opposing” view of the Holocaust.

The executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Dallas’ Jewish Community Relations Council, Eddy expected something like this to happen when the Texas Legislature passed the law, which she described as “vague,” requiring the teaching of opposing viewpoints on controversial subjects.

“Our worst fears were realized,” she said. “Our concern was that a historically factual event like the Holocaust, and antisemitism, would be treated as controversial subjects.”

The bill in question is House Bill 3979, which became state law in September. It requires teachers to present multiple perspectives when discussing “widely debated and currently controversial” issues.

The law is causing confusion among Texas educators, who are trying to understand what it means for the way they teach, hence the Oct. 8 incident in the Carroll Independent School District

(CISD).

It is one of several similar bills making their ways through state houses around the country.

While opponents to 3979 claim it is a veiled effort to stifle the teaching of issues important to Black, LGBTQ and other minorities, the Holocaust appears to be an exception to the law.

Soon after NBC broke the news about what happened in the CISD, in suburban Ft. Worth, a state senator sponsoring an update to the law and the Texas State Teachers Association said the law does not require teaching Holocaust denial. The CISD superintendent apologized for his administrator’s remark and met with Jewish leaders. He stated that there was no opposing view to the Holocaust.

All of which was consistent with the longtime support the Jewish community has enjoyed from Texas state lawmakers, Eddy said. “We as a Jewish community are lucky that way. They are not as supportive of other minority groups.”

This incident is not the first time CISD, where Eddy lives and her daughter attends the eighth grade, has made headlines for racially charged incidents. In 2019, videos of high schoolers using racial slurs went viral, prompting the school board to form a committee to consider ways to promote diversity.

The result was the proposed Cultural Competence Action Plan (CCAP), a plan designed to promote diversity and inclusion, and reduce bullying.

But opponents called it overreach by the district, claiming that it would shame kids because of their skin color, that the existing code of conduct is sufficient, and that CCAP is being pro-

mulgated by supporters of critical race theory.

Those same opponents have organized rapidly – and effectively – to fight CCAP. They formed a political action committee, raised a substantial war chest and are running their own candidate for the school board.

Meanwhile, the climate in CISD has turned “toxic,” Eddy said.

“Lots of accusations going back and forth between parents, between parents and school board administrators, attacks even on students,” she said.

“There may even have been – I’ll say threats – nothing that I believe is life-threatening, but horrible insults that have made people feel threatened.”

So why did a regrettable Holocaust reference stir mea culpas while a racial diversity proposal spur hostility?

Hard to say, but the spread of laws like 3979, will likely have a chilling effect on what young people may learn in schools about their country and its people.

That chill is already happening in the CISD, where teachers have been given scoring sheets to evaluate their classroom books for compliance with the law, the Texas Tribune reported. Further, a CISD teacher was recently reprimanded for having an anti-racism book in her classroom after one parent complained.

Eddy called such developments “very dangerous for the Jewish community, very dangerous for other minority communities, and ultimately extremely harmful and dangerous to our society as a whole, and to democracy.”

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

FORUM

Iron Dome – a defensive missile system – protects Israel and Gaza



JCRC Scene

Matt Goldberg

We have probably heard more about the Iron Dome system in the past month than we ever have, owing to the politics surrounding its continued funding.

So what is Iron Dome and how did it become a political flashpoint?

Iron Dome is an Israeli missile defense system built to deal with incoming missiles, rockets or mortars. Specifically designed to counter short-range threats (Israel has different systems for enemies further away) it is a shield against Hamas and other Gazan terror groups.

Iron Dome is always deployed somewhere, but this system is particularly useful during times of conflict when hundreds of rockets are launched daily.

Each rocket defensively launched by Iron Dome costs roughly \$100,000, so Israel depends on U.S. financial support to replenish its stockpiles after a con-

flict. It is this financial support that has knotted Israel's missile defense system with American politics.

When a congressional continuing resolution containing funding for several unrelated items, including \$1 billion for Iron Dome, was introduced in the House of Representatives, a handful of lawmakers, including "The Squad," a group of progressive Democrats that has been mostly critical of Israel, defeated it. However, when the funding was reintroduced as a stand-alone bill, it passed by a 420-9 vote.

This is an amazing achievement, one that shows the still-overwhelming support Israel's wellbeing has in Congress, even among those who might be critical of her.

Among the nine House members voting against the funding was Republican Thomas Massie of Kentucky. When the bill passed to the Senate, only Senator Rand Paul, also a Kentucky Republican, opposed it, again showing the support Israel has in Congress.

The reasoning behind the lack of support from Massie and Paul is flawed. This money is such a small sum (relative to our GDP) that allocating it is far from fiscally irresponsible. Israel is our greatest ally in the Middle East; despite its increasing strength and prosperity,

though, it still depends on the United States for security assistance.

U.S. troops are stationed around the world protecting our allies at a cost exponentially larger than what it costs to provide Israel with security assistance, and no U.S. soldier has ever died defending the Jewish state. We have let both Massie and Paul know of our disagreement with their stances.

As for the other eight House members who voted against the funding, their attempts to demonstrate support for the Palestinians through this vote rings hollow. Iron Dome is entirely defensive and has saved thousands of Israeli lives.

It has even saved thousands of Palestinian lives. Without this system, Israel would be forced to invade Gaza to stop the missile attacks, leading to a much worse outcome for the Palestinian residents there.

The overwhelming congressional support for Iron Dome also demonstrates the success of pro-Israel advocates. BDS (the Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement) is predicated on economic pressure on Israel so severe that it must make national concessions it wouldn't normally consider. Though BDS has a few high-profile accomplishments, it has been generally ineffective in influencing U.S. policy.

Iron Dome is an amazing piece of life-saving *defensive* technology, shared with several armies around the world, including the United States'. Israel and Gaza are safer because of it.

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



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Letter to the Editor 'Disturbing' cartoon assailed

The Steve Greenberg cartoon in the Sept. 24 issue disturbs me greatly, particularly in light of the editorial directly below it ("Weaponizing Holocaust not OK, not even for Jews").

The message of the cartoon is fine. The imagery for the terrorist is not. The banner the person is carrying clearly suggests that the terrorist is Islamic or a Palestinian. It vilifies an entire people for the acts of a few.

If we object to the trivialization of Holocaust comparisons, as we certainly should, how can we condone such blatant racism against others?

Shiela Wallace
Louisville

(The author is the editor emeritus of Community.)

(Community reached out to Steve Greenberg about the content of the cartoon. Here is his response: "The character in reference is holding an ISIS flag. It seemed when I drew this that this was an acceptable image for terror, but I will think about such depictions a bit more going forward.")

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FORUM

Rabbi: I got arrested at the White House while fighting for the planet



Guest
Columnist

Rabbi Jennie
Rosenn

On Tuesday, Oct. 12, I was arrested in front of the White House, arm in arm with clerics of other faiths: Imam Saffet Catovic and Rev. John Rogers.

We were among 155 people arrested that day, as part of the **#PeopleVsFossilFuels** week of action – five days in a row of mass civil disobedience, led by Indigenous communities, calling on Presi-

dent Biden to stop the harmful extraction and burning of fossil fuels.

As we marched to the White House, I carried a sign that said “Our Faith is stronger than Fossil Fuels” – and it is.

As a Jew, I understand that we are partners with God, and so my faith is not only in divinity, but also in our ability to come together and create the world we envision. I believe it is our moral imperative to do everything in our power to address the climate crisis, and the magnitude of the crisis demands that all of us step up, and step outside of our comfort zone, which for me, that week, meant risking arrest, in an act of civil disobedience.

If we have any chance of building a just and sustainable future for all people for generations to come, now is the time. Passing a robust \$3.5 trillion climate and

recovery bill is a crucial step that would set the United States on a path to swiftly transition away from fossil fuels and toward a clean energy future. Throughout the month of Elul and the High Holy Days, many of us showed up our members of Congress’ doorsteps, urging them to hear the call and pass this legislation.

And yet, the fate of the bill still hangs in the balance.

Fossil fuel companies have poured millions into lobbying efforts designed to undermine our chances of passing a climate and recovery bill at the scale we need. If they have their way, critical investments may be cut, including funds for a just transition for frontline communities whose testimony we bore witness to at the White House.

We need to give it all we’ve got. So

please, keep calling. Make a ruckus. Organize your friends, family, and community to call their members of Congress and demand no cuts in the reconciliation bill to climate, jobs, or justice.

While we make those calls this week, the mass civil disobedience will continue. You can follow along with **#PeopleVsFossilFuels** for updates as Indigenous elders, young people, faith leaders, and many more rise to the occasion, and demand a better future – one without fossil fuels.

(Rabbi Jennie Rosenn is the founder and CEO of Dayenu: Jewish Call to Climate Action. The organization is a movement of American Jews confronting the climate crisis with “bold audacity and bold political action.” More information is available at dayenu.org.)

Indiana judge, ‘hero,’ lives up to Jewish teaching, writer recalls



Guest
Columnist

Michael
Ginsberg

Viola Taliaferro has earned an exalted place in Bloomington, Indiana, where she and her late husband, George, stand as civic royalty.

Judge Taliaferro’s actions fit Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks’ description of the ethics of responsibility. In “To Heal a Fractured World,” Rabbi Sacks writes:

We are here to make a difference, to heal the fractures of the world, a day at a time, an act at a time, for as long

as it takes to make it a place of justice and compassion where the lonely are not alone, the poor not without help, where the cry of the vulnerable is heeded, and those who are wronged are heard.

Viola Taliaferro has made a difference. Her actions have changed my life by saving the life of a young man who had become part of our family.

My wife, Jeri Swinton, and I moved to Bloomington in the fall of 1985, when Jeri was hired as CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Bloomington, and I enrolled in a Ph.D. program at Indiana University.

The following spring, I volunteered as a Big Brother and was matched with 10-year-old Donald, who lived in a run-down trailer court outside of town. We remained officially matched for two years, at which time Jeri and I moved to Louisville, where she became CEO of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Kentuckiana, and I was hired as a professor at Jefferson Community College.

Although I was no longer officially Donald’s Big Brother, we remained close and visited each other often. About the time he turned 20, however, he grew distant, and Jeri and I worried that he didn’t want us to know what had changed in his life.

Eventually, we found out that he became involved with some unsavory characters, turning to small-time crime. He also became a father, and the mother of his child died under suspicious circumstances.

We rarely heard from, or about, Donald during that chapter in his life, until we received a telephone call that he had been shot in the head (also under suspicious circumstances) and was comatose. He survived, with a serious brain injury, and Jeri and I resumed a more active role in his life, remaining suspicious of his activities. Through another phone call, we later learned that Donald was about to be sentenced for serious crimes that were never fully explained to us. Jeri and I agreed to make an offer to the court to take custody of Donald. We had known a different young man than “convicted criminal” and were confident he posed no risk to us.

I drove to Bloomington and asked Donald’s public defender to explain our offer to the sentencing judge. That was my introduction to Viola Taliaferro, whom I had known only as the wife of George

Taliaferro, an IU football star, first black football player to sign an NFL contract, and, later, a teacher at IU and a civic leader. He died in 2018.

I did not meet Judge Taliaferro at the sentencing, but I watched as she first read Donald the riot act, then explained what Jeri and I had offered. In a tone equal parts parental and judicial, Judge Taliaferro told Donald she would agree to the arrangement, under the strict condition that he never again step foot in Indiana. If he did, she warned him, she would send him to prison.

I drove Donald to Louisville, where he lived with us for a year. A lawyer friend of ours said the judge had no authority to ban Donald from Indiana. Still, we decided the bogus banishment was a good idea, and we never told him. He had to think he was leaving Bloomington behind forever.

The arrangement worked out far better than we expected. Donald attended substance abuse sessions, got a job, and earned his GED diploma, an achievement we celebrated at our house with Donald and his family. His mother and young son, Chris, moved to Louisville and Donald did a wonderful job raising Chris as a single parent. He became an international ju-jitsu champion and now is part owner of a gym in Nashville, Tennessee.

(I drove Donald to Nashville, Indiana, once to visit his grandmother. We never discussed the judge’s order to stay out of the state and he has since further “violated” her order without incident.)

I have told Donald many times that he is a hero to me, for the life he has built for himself and Chris. Now married and devoted to his wife, who suffers from multiple health problems, Donald also is devoted to Jeri and me, thanking us on every possible occasion for every possible reason.

About five years ago, during one of our occasional visits to Bloomington, Jeri and I called Judge Taliaferro and asked if we could visit to tell her a story from her courtroom. She graciously invited us to her house, where she and George were wonderful hosts. I told the now-retired jurist about Donald and asked her if she knew she had no authority to ban him from Indiana.

With a full-throated laugh, the judge replied, “It was my courtroom; I could

See **GINSBERG** on page 19



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FEDERATION

Ted Lasso and the Trager Family JCC have much in common



Sara's View

Sara Klein
Wagner

On Oct. 27, 2016, the family of staff at our Jewish Community of Louisville (JCL) gathered in the JCC board room with Jeff Goldberg and Karen Sherman.

Jeff and Karen were two of the first community volunteers enlisted by the JCL board to share their leadership and expertise as we began to move forward with an audacious dream.

This gathering had a unique energy. We set the stage with a video that Karen shared of a sports team chanting "WE BELIEVE."

Of course, we are all used to sports teams generating passion and spirit and approached the introduction of J Tomorrow with the same enthusiasm. This was the moment our family of staff collectively shared their hopes and their dreams for the next JCC. It was the starting line for our team.

The dreams progressed into realities that included charettes, building de-

signs, program needs, discussions.

The enormous positive response from partners, donors and supporters created momentum and excitement.

After four years of hard work, the project reached a major milestone, and a groundbreaking date was set.

This effort has been a labor of love. In just a few short months, the Trager Family JCC will open to all; the shared dream will become reality.

The Trager Family JCC fulfills our collective vision of a welcoming, warm and caring new hub – a Jewish space that is open and inclusive to our entire city.

The Emmy award-winning sitcom *Ted Lasso* has become a beloved series on Apple TV. It is capturing hearts and minds of viewers who watch the lead character, Coach Ted Lasso, guide a fictitious struggling British football team to great success. The show takes the audience through a journey that is often complex, sometimes funny and even sad, sassy and moving.

Perhaps you are wondering, "What's the JCC connection to *Ted Lasso*?"

Our team of staff and volunteers started the J Tomorrow journey with a shared vision to provide a new home for our community, creating a sense of family, connection to our Jewish roots and an intergenerational hub.

"WE BELIEVE" defined our journey and was printed on the backs of our

staff T-shirts that we handed out at that first gathering five years ago. Just like the team in *Ted Lasso*, which wanted to advance to the Premier League, the highest rung in British football, and whose players began their journey with the word "BELIEVE" taped to the wall of their locker room.

We now mark the five-year milestone of unveiling J Tomorrow. There are countless individuals, members, volunteers, donors and staff who believed

in our shared vision and have opened their hearts and souls generously to create a strong and vibrant future for our Jewish community.

I invite you all to continue the journey, learning more about the new Trager Family JCC and welcoming you home in 2022.

(Sara Klein Wagner is the president and CEO of the Jewish Community of Louisville.)

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PICTURE THIS: DEMOLITION OF THE OLD KI



Months after a fire tore through the roof of the old Keneseth Israel building at the corner of Floyd and Jacob streets, causing extensive damage, a demolition crew finally razed what remained of the historic synagogue on Friday, Oct. 8. “It was determined that there was structural damage, that couldn’t be corrected, and people were coming and going from the building,” said Ed Wampler, general manager of CDS Demolition, which razed the old synagogue. “It was really a hazard and a liability, so the decision was made to go ahead and take it down.” The building, which had been used as a church for many years after KI’s move to the Highlands, caught fire on March 13. (Community photos by Lee Chottiner)

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Hanukkah Helpers Family Mitzvah with JFCS



For more than 30 years, Hanukkah Helpers has provided children in our community with gifts at Hanukkah. This year, you can join us by donating gift cards to major retailers (such as Target, Walmart and Kroger) that will be distributed to families in need.

Bring your donation of gift cards to the front desk of JFCS during regular business hours or schedule a specific drop off time by emailing us at volunteer@jfcsloouisville.org. Currently, we are not accepting clothing or toys through the program.

To ensure families receive gift cards in time, all donations must be made by Friday, November 12 at 1:00 p.m.

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ARTS

Yiddish communist poetry the topic of November program at UofL

By staff and releases

The Jewish Studies Program at the University of Louisville will spotlight the history of Yiddish communist poets in November.

"Might the Waves Still Be Our Home: Yiddish Communist Poets and Their Legacy Today," featuring novelist and poet Moriel Rothman-Zecher, will be held at 1 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 14, in the Chao Auditorium of Ekstrom Library on the UofL campus.

The program will be a "hybrid poetry performance, literary analysis and political history" of the genre, according to the release.

Rothman-Zecher will talk about the work and legacy of specific poets from the era, including the orphan poet, Shmerke Kaczerginski.

Kaczerginski was beaten and arrested as a youth for his communist activism and writings in Vilna. He also took part in the "Paper Brigade," whose members risked their lives smuggling thousands of Yiddish literary works out of the Vilna Ghetto during World War II.

Rothman-Zecher also will discuss Malka Lee, the Galicia-born, New

York poet, who used religious Christian iconography in her poems to protest the treatment of Black Americans, and who published these poems, in Yiddish, in avowedly secular party-aligned journals; and Abel Meeropol, a communist poet and schoolteacher in New York who wrote the poem *Strange Fruit*, which jazz singer Billie Holiday made famous as a protest song against lynching.

In addition to discussing the lives and legacy of these poets, and others, Moriel will perform their work – translated and in the original Yiddish – and some of his own.

A native of Jerusalem, Rothman-Zecher is a 2018 National Book Foundation "5 Under 35" honoree. His awards include a MacDowell Colony Fellowship for literature and a Wallis Annenberg Helix Fellowship for Yiddish cultural studies.

He is the author of the novel *Sadness Is a White Bird* and his writing has been published in *The New York Times*, *The Paris Review* and *Haaretz*. Rothman-Zecher's second novel will be out in 2022.



Moriel Rothman-Zecher (Photo by Joanna El-dredge Morrissey)

SURVEY

Continued from page 1

representative sample list that Brandeis developed will soon receive letters and emails requesting that they complete the survey, followed by phone calls and texts over a period of weeks.

Not everyone in the Jewish community may be asked to participate. The list reflects a representative sample of the community.

The survey is being conducted by the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis, which is partnering with the University of New Hampshire (UNH) Survey Center to complete the project.

Participants who receive a call from UNH at 603-397-0660, or an email from the Cohen Center at noreply@gemailserver.com or louisville@brandeis.edu, may be assured that the contacts are legitimate and confidential.

"Their participation is a mitzvah," JHFE Program Officer Jaime Jorrich said in a statement. "The more we know about the community, the better organizations can bring meaning and value to its members."

Survey responses will be confidential, and the findings will be reported only in the aggregate.

Questions about the survey may be sent to Jorrich at jjorrich@jewish-heritagefund.com.

GLOBAL DAY OF JEWISH LEARNING

Special Jewish Peoplehood Online Theater Workshop



Sunday, Nov 7, 2021

1:00 p.m. ET | 20:00 ISL



Online: RSVP to get Zoom link



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PARTNERSHIP2GETHER'S CELEBRATION OF THE GLOBAL DAY OF JEWISH LEARNING

November 7, 2021 | 1:00-2:00 PM

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Register for this inspiring event on the P2G website: <https://tinyurl.com/P2GGlobal>

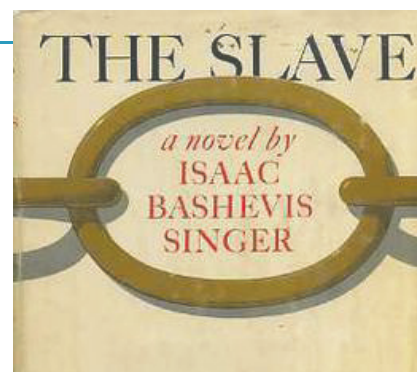
Other November Partnership2Gether events

to RSVP visit westerngalilee.org.il/calendar-of-events

INTERNATIONAL BOOK CLUB GATHERING

November 21, 1:00 p.m.

The Slave, by Isaac Bashevis Singer



PARTNERSHIP SOCIAL WORKERS ZOOM SEMINAR

November 18, 9:00 a.m.

The Galilee Medical Center's Director of the Social Work Department will present the intriguing "Six Cs Model," an intervention that provides psychological first aid immediately after a trauma event.

to RSVP email Heidib@jafi.org



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HERE for GOOD

NEWS & NEWSMAKERS

Abramson named to UofL BOT



Jerry Abramson

Former Louisville Mayor Jerry Abramson has joined the University of Louisville Board of Trustees.

Abramson, who attended his first meeting of the board in September, was named to the panel in late July by Gov. Andy Beshear. He replaces Matthew Barzun, whose unexpired term will end on Jan. 13, 2027.

Abramson, who currently serves as executive-in-residence at Spalding University, said he consulted with Spalding President Tori Murden McClure and the school's leadership team before accepting the appointment. "No one saw a conflict," he said.

As a trustee, Abramson plans to support UofL President Neeli Bendapudi and her leadership team "in expanding UofL's excellence in academics, the quality and diversity of its student body and enhancing the student experience while on campus."

"A great city needs a strong research university, and a great research university needs an economically and culturally vibrant great city," he added.

A Louisville native, Abramson, 75, was the 47th mayor of Louisville from 1986 to 1999, and the first mayor of Louisville Metro from 2003 to 2011. He went on to serve as lieutenant governor of Kentucky under then-Gov. Steve Beshear from 2011-14 when he left to become White

House director of intergovernmental affairs under President Barack Obama.

Newsweek honors Republic Bank

Republic Bank & Trust Company has been named one of America's Best Banks for 2022 with assets up to \$10 billion in *Newsweek's* ranking, "America's Best Banks 2022."

Republic is owned and operated by the Trager family, a leading contributor to the Capitol Campaign, for whom the new Trager Family Jewish Community Center has been named.

"We are thrilled to be recognized by *Newsweek*," Republic Bank President and CEO Logan Pichel said in a statement to the *Building Kentucky* electronic newsletter. "This reflects the great work happening in all areas of the bank. Our people, from our associates to the customers we serve, are the reason we're at the top of the list and I'm so proud of our entire team for making this recognition possible."

The *Newsweek* list includes one banking institution from each state.

According to *Newsweek* Senior Reporter Kerri Anne Renzulli, the magazine, partnering with Lending Tree, assessed thousands of FDIC-insured banks and credit unions, and the savings and checking accounts they offer, to compile the list.

To read the complete list and story, go to [newsweek.com/americas-best-banks-2022/best-small-banks-state](https://www.newsweek.com/americas-best-banks-2022/best-small-banks-state).

Nearly New Shop's 45th Fashion Encore slated

The Nearly New Shop's 45th annual Fashion Encore event will be held from Oct. 23 to 30. This is the resale store's largest event of the year to debut the fall and winter merchandise.

Norton Healthcare has been on site sponsoring a free COVID vaccination clinic.

Additionally, the Nearly New Shop is celebrating its 65th anniversary.

Established in 1956, the Nearly New Shop receives donations of clothing, accessories, home furnishings and furniture from the community. Proceeds from the sale of merchandise funds programs and projects run by National Council of Jewish Women, which advocates and supports issues affecting women, children, and families of all religious affiliations.

The Nearly New Shop also offers store vouchers and in-kind donated items to other organizations, shelters, and religious groups in need.

Chack presents at online equity, social justice series



David Y. Chack

David Y. Chack, artistic director of the ShPIeL Performing Identity, is one of the online presenters at DePaul University's Courageous Dialogue Series, a media-based dialogue project regarding race, equity,

and diversity models.

The title of Chack's presentation is "The Power of Stories for Meaning." The SHPIeL is a troupe dedicated to the presentation of Jewish theatre.

The project highlights the narratives of students, faculty, staff and alumni with Chicago-based DePaul. Using testimonies and storytelling, the series will center on social justice and equity issues through personal testimonials, promoting dialogue on diversity literacy.

The Courageous Dialogue Series is supported by The Office of Institutional Diversity and Equity (OIDE) at DePaul. The project was created and directed by Associate Professor Chi Jang Yin, DePaul presidential fellow for 2020-2021. For more information, contact Chi at cyin1@depaul.edu.

Mazel Tov to...



Rabbi Sarah Tasman

Rabbi Sarah Tasman, originally from Louisville, daughter of Dr. Allan and Cathy Tasman, for being the subject of a feature story in the *Washington Jewish Week*, "Rabbi Sarah Tasman on creativity without productivity."

The story can be read at

[washingtonjewishweek.com/rabbi-sarah-tasman-on-creativity-without-productivity/](https://www.washingtonjewishweek.com/rabbi-sarah-tasman-on-creativity-without-productivity/).

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Contact Jennifer Tuvlin at 502-238-2719 or jtuvlin@jewishlouisville.org to endow your Jewish values.



AROUND TOWN

Adath Jeshurun

AJ's *Sunday Night Live* program at 7 p.m., Nov. 14, will feature vocalist Robyn Helzner performing "Back in the U.S.S.R." The performance will focus on the struggle to free Soviet Jews. A link is provided in AJ's weekly emailed newsletter. Subscribe at adathjeshurun.com.

The Nov. 21 *Sunday Night Live* program, at 7 p.m., will feature food & travel journalist Adam Sachs speaking on "A Consuming Passion: Adventures of a Wandering Eater!" Sachs will share stories and insights into restaurant changes over the past 20 years. He also will suggest a foodie getaway. The link is provided in AJ's weekly emailed newsletter. Subscribe at adathjeshurun.com.

Due to the pandemic, all AJ minyan and Shabbat worship services are continuing to be live-streamed. In-person Kabbalat Shabbat services on Friday evenings will resume on Nov. 19 at 5:45 p.m. In-person Shabbat services on Saturday mornings will resume on Nov. 20 at 10 a.m. Proof of vaccination is required, and masks must be worn. Links to join these services are provided in AJ's weekly emailed newsletter. Subscribe at adathjeshurun.com.

Rabbi Bob and Deborah Slosberg will lead a Melton Travel trip to Prague and Berlin next year. For more information, visit meltonschool.org/travel-seminars/prague-berlin.

Anshei Sfard

In-person Shabbat services begin at 9 a.m. Attendees not vaccinated are asked to wear a face mask and practice social distancing.

Rabbi Simcha Snaid will teach a crash course, Jewish Essentials, on Oct. 27, and Nov. 3 and 10. All sessions will be live and on Zoom beginning at 7 p.m. Email rabbisnaid@ansheisfard.com to register.

Talmud Trek II continues Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. Call 502-451-3122 or Rabbi Snaid for information.

Chabad of Kentucky

A new four-session course, Outsmarting Antisemitism, will be held at 7 p.m., Wednesdays, beginning Nov. 3, at the Jewish Learning Center, 110 Dupont Circle. Using history, Talmud, mysticism and contemporary analysis, the course looks at why antisemitism persists, how hate can go away, countering Israel-focused antisemitism and preventing young people from unwittingly supporting antisemitic agendas. The cost is \$80, including the textbook. Continuing education credits for medical and legal professionals are available. Email Rabbi@chabadky.com for details or register at myjli.com/learn/louisville.

Chavurat Shalom

Lunch is held Thursdays at noon in the Heideman Auditorium unless otherwise

noted. The program starts at 1 p.m. In-person participants must be fully vaccinated and wear a mask while inside, except while eating or drinking. All programs will also be available via **ChavuratShalomZoom**.

Nov. 4: Singer, songwriter, guitarist Tyrone Cotton will perform (lunch: chicken pot pie, quinoa salad, mixed green salad, fresh fruit and caramel spoon cake).

Nov. 11: Beth Olliges will perform a fall sing along (lunch: meatloaf, green peas and carrots, roasted potatoes, Caesar salad, fresh fruit and triple chocolate cake).

Nov. 18: Classical pianist Nada will perform. (lunch: Chef Z's soon-to-be-famous chili, grilled cheese, mixed green salad, fresh fruit, and bread pudding with a bourbon caramel sauce).

Nov. 25: off for Thanksgiving.

Keneseth Israel

Shabbat services are held outdoors in the tent; during inclement weather, in the main sanctuary. Services also are streamed on Zoom, as are weekday minyans and classes, unless otherwise noted. Visit kenesethisrael.com for details. Introduction to Reading Hebrew meets at 5 p.m., Sundays on Zoom, followed by a Learner's Minyan at 6 p.m.

Text Me Back with Rabbi Freed: Encountering Judaism from Torah to today,

meets at 6:30 p.m., Mondays on Zoom. The survey class explores the foundations of Judaism, and other topics, through its texts.

Mid What? Midrash! Exploring Torah Between the Lines with Artist-In-Residence Ariane Barrie-Stern is held at 6:30 p.m., Tuesdays in person at KI.

Jews and Brews with Rabbi Freed is held Wednesdays at 11 a.m. on Zoom.

Torah Yoga is held the third Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. in person at KI.

A Chanukah family scavenger hunt will be held Sunday, Nov. 28, in person at KI. Candle lighting, sufganiyot, latkes, and gifts will follow. RSVP to mott@kenesethisrael.com.

Artist-In-Residence Ariane Barrie-Stern will make a presentation to the community about Mid What? Midrash! at 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, Nov. 30, in person at KI and on Zoom.

Louisville Vaad HaKashruth

The annual meeting will be held at 7 p.m., Monday, Nov. 15. The 2022 slate of officers will be elected: Ayala Golding, president; Nathan Goldman, vice president; Steven Goldstein, secretary; Myrle Davis, treasurer. The meeting is open to the public and will be held via Zoom. Contact Ayala Golding at ayagolding@gmail.com for the link.

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AROUND TOWN

Temple Shalom

The Shabbat Experience with Rabbi Beth Jacowitz Chottiner and a song leader is held Fridays at 6:30 p.m. Email information@templeshalomky.org for the link.

Rabbi Jacowitz Chottiner teaches an introduction to Judaism class for those interested in conversion. Email information@templeshalomky.org.

The Book Club will next meet at 2 p.m., Thursday, Dec. 2, on Zoom. The club is reading *The History of Love* by Nicole Krauss and *Nightwork* by Irwin Shaw. Contact Carol Savkovich at savkofam@bellsouth.net for details.

The Tikkun Olam committee is organizing participants for this year's Out of the Darkness Louisville Walk, sponsored by the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, on Saturday, Nov. 6, on the Great Lawn of Waterfront Park. Activities are all day with staggered walk times of 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 2 p.m., 4 p.m., and 6 p.m. (Registration opens at 9 a.m.) Contact information@templeshalomky.org for details.

The next Chailands Chavurah will be held at 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 18 at 80/20@Kaelin's. Corey Buckman of Bend the Arc will discuss what BTA does and its current 40 Weeks of Teshuvah program. Email chailands@templeshalomky.org for more details.

The Temple

The Women of Reform Judaism/Sisterhood Gift Shop is open by appointment. Visit its Facebook page at [facebook.com/wrjgiftshop](https://www.facebook.com/wrjgiftshop). An online shop is coming. Contact Sheila Lynch, 502-896-9736, Marlene Ornstein, 502-329-2276 or Karen Waldman, 502-425-4360 for appointments.

Adult education continues at The Temple. Monday night's classes are Advanced Hebrew at 6 p.m. with Rabbi Joe Rooks Rapport teaching the vocabulary of the most common Hebrew words; Basic Judaism at 6 p.m. with Rabbi David Ariel-Joel teaching life cycle events; and Text Study at 7 p.m. with Rabbi Ariel-Joel teaching "When God was Young." Temple Scholars on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. learn "Torah of Optimism for an Uncertain Future" with Rabbi Ariel-Joel and at 10:45 a.m., learning "Jewish Art and Artists" with Rabbi Rapport. Saturday Torah Study starts at 9 a.m. on Zoom and in person. For more information, go to thetemplelouky.org/adult-education.

Indoor Shabbat services are held Friday nights and Saturday mornings. Go to thetemplelouky.org for details.

Grades 7 and 8 students will help lead the Family Shabbat service at 7 p.m., Friday, Nov. 5.

Veteran's Day Shabbat will be held at 7

p.m., Friday, Nov. 12.

Mitzvah Makers will make sandwiches for the homeless at 12:30 p.m., Sunday, Nov. 14. RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/sandwich-making.

The Temple's Women of Reform Judaism will hold its second Virtual Havdalah Family Trivia Night at 7 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 20. Following Havdalah, four rounds of family-friendly trivia will be held with prizes for the top three teams. The event is limited to 10 families. The Zoom link will be shared closer to the

date. Go to thetemplelouky.org/wrj-trivia for details.

Rabbi Rapport's next Movie Night will be on Sunday, Nov. 21 in person or on Zoom. *Dough* will be screened. Go to thetemplelouky.org/movie-night for details.

The Temple will light candles for Chanukah at 5:15 p.m. Monday, Nov. 29 and at the same time on Sunday, Dec. 5. For more details on the activities, go to thetemplelouky.org/hanukkah closer to the holiday.



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LIFECYCLE

B'nai Mitzvah



Levi Joseph Tasman, son of Abby and Barrett Tasman, brother of Blake and Jude, will be called to the Torah as a bar mitzvah at 10 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 30, at Adath Jeshurun.

Levi is the grandson of Marda and Ronnie Tasman and Gretchen and James Bickle of Dataw Island, South Carolina, and great-grandson of Martha Frockt. At Highland Middle School, Levi enjoys singing in the choir and running for the track team. He performs in musical theater at CenterStage Academy and StageOne. Levi was recognized as a "Super Kid in Louisville" by *Louisville Magazine* for starting and directing a musical theater program at Bloom Elementary. Levi also enjoys volunteering with his grandmother at Gilda's Club and collecting donations for the Kentucky Refugee Ministries as it welcomes Afghan families to the community.



Katerine and Aryeh Benjamin, daughter and son of Jonathan and Rebecca Cohen, siblings of Joseph, Leah, Inanna, Dia, Nicol, Asher and Amari, will be called to the Torah as bar and bat mitzvahs at 10 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 13, at Adath Jeshurun. The grandparents are Stuart and Bonnie Co-

hen and Richard and Nancy Lasky (z"l). A seventh grader at Highland Middle School, Katerine plays field hockey and sings in the school's choir. She has attended Camp Livingston for two years and looks forward to returning next summer. Ari is a seventh grader at the Waldorf School. He enjoys spending time outdoors and playing D&D. Kate and Ari participated in the JFCS Pledge 13 program, volunteering with New Roots at the Gendler Grapevine Fresh Stop.



Brody Hanover Bailen, son of Caren and Michael Bailen, brother to Zoe, will be called to the Torah as a bar mitzvah at 10 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 6, at Adath Jeshurun. Brody is the grandson of Sandy and Jim Bailen and the late Betty and David Carney, and a great-grandson of the late Shirley Bailen. A seventh grader at Kentucky Country Day School, Brody plays on the football team. He enjoys sports with friends, collecting sports cards, being with his puppy, Scarlett, and spending time with his cousins.



Maximus Springer, son of Jeffrey and Jessica Springer and brother of Samuel, will be called to the Torah as a bar mitzvah at 10:30 a.m., Saturday, Nov. 6 at The Temple. Max is the grandson of William and Karen Gladstone of Mechan-

icsburg, Pennsylvania, and of Jennifer Doane Springer and Robert K. Springer of Allentown, Pennsylvania. A seventh grader at Oldham County Middle School, Max is a member of the GATES program (Gifted And Talented Educational Services) and Beta Club. He plays baseball and football, enjoys solving Rubik's Cubes, and racing go-karts. He attended URJ 6 Points Summer Sports Academy and plans to go back next summer. Max's volunteer project is to collect gently used shoes to support a fundraiser for Adopt Me! Bluegrass Pet Rescue, an animal rescue with which he and his family are involved.



Lila Jane Shapira, daughter of Kristin and Andrew Shapira, sister of Molly and Josephine, will be called to the Torah as a bat mitzvah at 5 p.m., Saturday, Nov. 13, at The Temple. Lila is the granddaughter

of Ellen and Max Shapira of Louisville, and Dr. Vincent P. Lawrence of Natrona Heights, Pennsylvania. A seventh grader at Meredith Dunn School, Lila loves tennis, her dogs Ruby and Coco, *Hamilton*, and anything *Harry Potter*. She has attended Camp Livingston in Vevay, Indiana, for three years and will go back next summer. For her Pledge 13 project, Lila is collecting items for the Humane Society.

Obituaries



Captain Joseph Ervin Ballew

U.S. Air Force Captain Joseph Ervin Ballew died at his home in Haltom City, Texas, on Saturday, Sept. 18, 2021.

The military called him Joe. His family called him Ervin.

Born in Magnolia, Mississippi, on Aug. 25, 1938, a son of Elsie W. and James Ellis Ballew, the family moved to Paducah when Ervin was 14. He graduated from Heath High School in 1956 and joined the Air Force that same year.

Ervin served in the Air Force Security Intelligence Service and was in the Vietnam War. After the war, he attained two bachelor's degrees and rose to the rank of captain. He retired in 1977 and went to work as a procurement specialist for Bell Helicopter, a job that sent him to many countries.

When Ervin fully retired, he became reacquainted with his enjoyment of golf, which he learned while caddying for Kayo Mullen as a teen at Paxton Park in Paducah.

In his 60s, Ervin returned to Paducah and lived with his mother, whom he loved dearly. Elsie loved her Jewish faith and helped Ervin become involved in his religion. He took his mother to Sabbath services at Temple Israel, and he became more spiritual himself, learning to read Hebrew.

Ervin loved his family, his children, grandchildren, animals and nature. As he aged, he became connected to nature. He would tell stories about his children's antics, and he would throw his head back with true deep enjoyment and laughter. Ervin will be missed by all who knew and loved him.

In addition to his parents, he was pre-

ceded in death; his ex-wife and good friend, Carolyn Ballew; his oldest daughter, Debbie Ballew; and two brothers, Leonard Ballew (E-ling) and Alan Ballew (Phyllis).

His surviving family are two sons, Joey Ballew of Haltom City, Texas, and Kevin Ballew (Jori) of Buda, Texas; one daughter, Serena Ballew of Denver, Colorado; two sisters, Suzanne Ballew of Jerusalem, and Dr. Laurie Ballew (Joyce Sims) of Paducah; his "baby brother" Michael Ballew (Debbie) of Alon Shuvut, Israel; several grandchildren whom he adored and many nieces and nephews.

Graveside services were held at the Temple Israel Cemetery in Paducah. Memorial donations may be made to one's local Disabled American Veterans chapter. Arrangements were by are entrusted to Herman Meyer & Son, Inc., Dallas Jewish Funeral Home of Plano, Texas, and Milner & Orr Funeral Home of Paducah.

Ellen Newman Bayersdorfer

Ellen Newman Bayersdorfer died unexpectedly at Baptist Hospital on Sunday, Sept. 18, 2021.

Born in New Orleans, she married Stanley W. Bayersdorfer in 1956, before moving to Louisville in 1959. She worked in sales and was the ladies accessory buyer at The Fashion Post.

Ellen volunteered for many organizations. She chaired the Mothers March of the March of Dimes and served on board of NCJW, Louisville Section, and Children's Hospital Auxiliary.

She won the Volunteer of the Year Award recipient at Jewish Hospital and American Cancer Society-Louisville and was named Kentucky Volunteer of the Year.

Most recently, as a cancer survivor, she volunteered at Gilda's Club. She also was a longtime member of The Temple.

Ellen is survived by Stanley, her husband of 65 years; her children, Carol Cohen (Ed) of St. Louis, Bill Bayersdorfer (Emily Trader) of Columbia, Tennessee, Bob Bayersdorfer, and David Bayersdorfer both of Louisville; and by two grandchildren, Ellie Cohen (fiancé Julian Groover) of Chicago and Andy Cohen of St. Louis. She also is survived by her sister, Jane Kohlmann of New Orleans; her sister-in-law, Ruth Sobel of Louisville, and by numerous nieces and nephews.

In lieu of flowers, donations to Gilda's Club Kentuckiana, Dare to Care or The Temple Fund for the Homeless are preferred.

Per Ellen's request, her body was donated to the University of Louisville School of Medicine.

A memorial service was held on Monday, Sept 20, at The Temple. A celebration of life will be held at a later date.



Joshua Bachrach Fink

Joshua Bachrach Finke, 26, died unexpectedly on Monday, Oct. 11, 2021. His death has left family and friends broken-hearted. He was preceded in death by his grandparents, Carol Bachrach Finke and M. Carl Finke, Jr.

Born on May 16, 1995, in Lexington, Josh was raised in Louisville and attended Ballard High School.

His energetic presence lit the room, and Josh always drew people to him with a delightful sense of humor and a



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LIFECYCLE

generous and open heart.

He loved baseball and played in St. Matthews Little League and high school.

Those close to him will remember his big blue eyes, his broad smile that he only shared in his most sincere moments, and the incredible level of love and pride that he held for the members of his family.

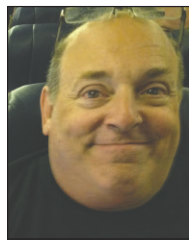
These last few years saw him seeking his place in the world, looking to be better and do better. Stuck at home during the pandemic, he found a love for superhero movies, and, having watched so many with his brother and mother, he found in them the inspiration to improve himself every day. And he was moving forward in his life.

Josh is survived by his mother, Marianne Finke; his brother, Connor; his girlfriend, Beth Moore; his uncles, Michael (Elizabeth Oyler), Bruce (Beth Coates), and David (Helene); his cousins, Cole, Jacob, Max, Rachael, Emma (Gray), Danny (Aminah), Sam and Rebecca; and his four-legged buddies, Andy and Chopper.

Services were held at The Temple on Thursday, Oct. 14. The cemetery gathering and burial service were private.

In lieu of flowers, donations in "Memory of Josh" may be made to Second Chances Wildlife Center, 487 Gentry Ln, Mt Washington, Ky 40047, or Jewish Family & Career Services, P.O. Box 32578, Louisville, KY 40232.

In honor of Josh's memory, please cheer on his now-favorite baseball team, the Los Angeles Dodgers. He rarely missed a game.



Michael A. Horvitz

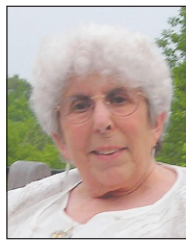
Michael A. Horvitz, 63 died Wednesday, Oct. 6, 2021, in Cincinnati, Ohio. He was preceded in death by his father, Myron Horvitz.

He is survived by his wife, Haviva; his children, Jason, Eliezer and Shira; his mother, Toby Horvitz; his sisters, Myrle Davis, Sheri Horvitz and Deborah Horvitz; his nieces, Jennifer and Rebecca Davis; and his nephews, Max Davis and Jacob Horvitz.

Michael's death was very sudden and a tragic loss for his entire family. He was much loved and will be missed by everyone who knew him.

A funeral service was held Friday, Oct.

8, at Herman Meyer & Son, Inc. Memorial donations may be made to Temple Beth Shalom of Middletown, 610 Gladys Drive, Cincinnati OH 45044 or Congregation Anshei Sfard, 3630 Dutchmans Lane, Louisville, KY 40205.



Dorothy Robenson Kaplin

Dorothy Robenson Kaplin, 92, died Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2021, in her Louisville home.

Born Nov. 1, 1928, a daughter of Mary, and Milton Robenson, a pharmacist, Dorothy went on to marry the love of her life, Merle. Together, they shared 66 years until his death in 2018.

Dorothy attended the University of Louisville and worked for years as a preschool teacher. Later, she followed in her mother's footsteps and became the synagogue secretary at Adath Jeshurun. When she retired from there, she started a new career as a unit secretary at St. Anthony Hospital. Upon her retirement from the hospital, Dorothy became a full-time grandmother. To everyone, family and friends, she was Grandma.

Dorothy is survived by her three children, Sheryl Gross (Mel), Marsha Skuller (John), and Myra Goldman (Nathan); and her 10 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Friday, Oct. 15, at Keneseth Israel Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations to Keneseth Israel Congregation, 2531 Taylorsville Rd, Louisville, KY 40205, on online at Donate K.I. are appreciated.



Scherrill Goodman Russman

Scherrill Goodman Russman, 88, passed away at his home on Monday, Sept. 27, 2021.

A professor at the University of Louisville Speed Scientific School of Engineering for 45 years, Scherrill also served as principal for many years at the religious schools of Keneseth Israel and Brith Shalom.

Scherrill was preceded in death by his loving wife, Barbara; his parents, Sara and Hyman Russman; his brothers, Milton and Raymond Russman; and his sister, Dorothy Russman Rosenblatt.

Scherrill is survived by his children, Stephanie Stein (Jeff), Michael Russman and Hilary Catapano (Richard); his grandchildren, Jeremy Stein (Emily), Mallory Bowles (Christian), Lilli Russman, Harrison Russman, Ryan Catapano, Jenna Catapano, Rick Catapano, Ashley Powell (Hunter).

Graveside services were held Thursday, Sept. 30, at Keneseth Israel Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, expressions of sympathy may be made to Keneseth Israel Congregation or charity of choice.



Ruth Bayersdorfer Sobel

Ruth Bayersdorfer Sobel peacefully passed away at her residence on Saturday, Oct. 9, 2021.

Ruth was predeceased by her husband, Louisville attorney Homer A. Sobel.

"Baby" Ruth was the daughter of the late Stanley W. Bayersdorfer, Helen Stein Bayersdorfer Starr, and Dr. Silas H. Starr.

Ruth is survived by her children, Susan Sobel Gorsen, Thomas Sobel (Susan), William D. Sobel (Martha-Jane), all of Louisville; her grandchildren, Starr Gorsen Crafton (Doyle) of Cannelton, Indiana, Lisa Sobel-Berlow (Benjamin) of Louisville, Matthew Homer Sobel of Denver, and Caitlan Page Morris (Brandon) of Albuquerque, New Mexico; her great-grandchildren, Sara, Jacob, Nathaniel Crafton, and Flora Starr Berlow; her brother, Stanley W. Bayersdorfer Jr. plus nieces, nephews and other loving family members.

Born in Steubenville, Ohio, on June 7, 1925, Ruth moved to Louisville in 1937, where she graduated from Atherton High School in 1941. She attended Marjorie Webster College in Washington, D.C., and the Oklahoma College for Women, having moved to Chickasha, Oklahoma, during World War II. There, she met Master Sergeant Homer Sobel. They married in February 1945 and moved to Louisville after the war.

Ruth loved throwing parties and was known for the many years she and Homer hosted Thursday evening galas in their home during Derby Week for owners, breeders, trainers and jockeys.

An accomplished golfer with an uncanny ability to make quality shots with long irons, Ruth won several Women's

Falls Cities Golf Association championships. She also was a devoted University of Louisville sports fan.

She was active with the National Council of Jewish Women and various other philanthropic organizations.

After working in retail sales at The Fashion Post, she volunteered for more than a decade at the Kentucky Museum of Art and Craft's gallery shop. She enjoyed traveling, reading and playing cards, including canasta with lifelong friends and later bridge.

She met early and midlife challenges with great dignity, setting an example for her children of how to maintain strength and balance through difficult times.

The family extends its gratitude, thanks and appreciation to Brandie Windsor-Shanklin, Janice Jagers, and their entire Sunrise of Louisville team, and Hosparus Health's Dr. Dustin Dillon.

Ruth led a long, genteel life, the perfect match for Homer – a gentleman and a gentle man. Known as Beau Beau by her grandchildren and great-grandchildren, she will be missed, but never forgotten. Long live Queen Ruth!

Expressions of sympathy to the donor's charity of choice are encouraged.

Alfred Weinberg

Alfred Weinberg, 88, passed away on Wednesday, Oct. 13, 2021, at Vanderbilt Hospital in Nashville, Tennessee.

An esteemed physicist, Alfred spent many years as a researcher at Vanderbilt University.

After graduating high school in Louisville, he pursued his undergraduate and graduate degrees from Purdue University, followed by his Ph.D. from Harvard University.

Alfred loved traveling and exploring new places with his beloved wife, Margaret. Family and friends will remember his smile and expressions of gratitude to everyone around him.

He is survived by his nieces; Barbara Weinberg, Ellyn (Weinberg) Langer, Susan (Weinberg) Guba, and Glenda Allen.

A graveside service was held at Keneseth Israel Cemetery on Monday, Oct. 18. To honor his memory and passion for giving, donations may be made to Vanderbilt University at onlinegiving@vanderbilt.edu, (800) 288-0082 or at Gift & Donor Services, PMB 407727, 2301 Vanderbilt Place, Nashville, TN 37240.

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NEWS

AFGHANISTAN

Continued from page 1

Temple Shalom, Keneseth Israel, The Temple and Adath Jeshurun have all volunteered to sponsor Afghan families, while all Jewish agencies are collecting, or providing food, and other necessities the new arrivals will need.

The Jewish Federation of Louisville is coordinating the effort.

"It is very heartwarming to see the energetic response from the Jewish community," said Jeff Jamner, JCC creative consultant for arts & ideas, who is heading the effort for the Federation.

A son of Holocaust survivors, Jamner said he understands what it means to be a stranger in a strange land.

"This effort is very personal for me," Jamner said. "My parents came to the U.S. seeking safety and a better life. They had no resources. It was agencies like the KRM that helped them get a foothold on pursuing those dreams."

It's not the first time the Federation has assisted newcomers to the city, said Matt Goldberg, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council.

"The Federation has a long and distinguished tradition of assisting refugees in need, whether Jewish or non-Jews," Goldberg said. "It's important that we continue this tradition for Afghan refugees who have suffered so much."

...

Fleeing their country, which is now controlled by the Taliban, the Afghans

coming to Louisville are classified as emergency humanitarian evacuees, according to KRM. They are eligible for Medicaid and food stamps and must apply for asylum after two years in the country.

Each family is expected to have different needs, said KRM Caseworker and Sponsorship Developer Maha Kolko. "We will make sure all these families are taken care of, especially in the first three months of their settlement."

That's where faith-based sponsors come in.

Synagogues, churches and mosques are committing for three months, Kolko said. Volunteers from the sponsoring houses of worship are welcoming families at Louisville Muhammad Ali International Airport, providing "rental assistance" for one to two months or up to \$2,500, setting up apartments and stocking kitchens with enough groceries for up to one week.

They also are providing welcome meals for families on the night of their arrivals.

Kolko is encouraging volunteers to interact with the families as much as they can.

"I always schedule some visitations," she said. "Before COVID ... we would go to the family's house; we would be inside. Now, it's also possible to have outdoor visits because of COVID."

Each new arrival is at least partially vaccinated, Kolko said.

The synagogues have lined up volunteers and are collecting necessities for



Sara Klein Wagner and Stacy Gordon-Funk of the Jewish Federation of Louisville help unload donations from a community member.

the families. Rabbis included appeals for volunteers and donations in their High Holy Day sermons. Some have already collected money and items for the cause.

Some synagogues are even making their own collaborations. For instance, Rabbi Ben Freed, of Keneseth Israel, said his synagogue will jointly sponsor a family with KIP, its in-house pre-school.

...

As for the families' other needs, Jewish agencies are stepping up.

The Federation is collecting clothing and kitchenware for the Afghans from 1:30-3:30 and 6-8 p.m., Thursday, Nov. 4, at Anshei Sfar.

The Jewish Family & Career Services (JFCS) is offering food and personal care items from the Sonny & Janet Myer Food Pantry, case management and mental health counseling.

"We will continue to work closely with our community partners and expand possibilities for these individuals in the coming years," JFCS spokeswoman Kristi Quinn said in a statement.

KRM is scheduling furniture pickups at households with donations. Appointments can be made on the KRM website, kyrm.org.

While KRM has interpreters for the Pashtun- and Dari-speaking Afghans, members of the local Afghan community are offering their services, Kolko said.

And some Jewish Louisvillians who are trained therapists have signaled their willingness to help the Afghans cope with the trauma they likely have from fleeing a war-ravaged country and settling in a strange, new one.

Rabbi Freed said helping the stranger is a major Jewish tenet.

"Many people think 'love your neighbor' is amongst the most important commandments," he said, "but the Bible only tells us to do that once. It tells us to love the stranger 37 times."

While the newcomers are from a Muslim country, Kolko, herself a Syria-born Muslim, said that won't complicate relations with Jewish volunteers.

"When you give love, you receive love," she said. "These families, they just want to be here. They are not happy where they are now."

But she added, "This is a great opportunity for us to come together and help these families, regardless of the question of religion. I think all religions advocate for peace."

KID'S NIGHT OUT



Next Kid's Night Out is:
November 13, 2021!

Have a night out (or in, we won't tell) and let the kids have a night out! At JCC Kid's Night Out, children will have time to eat a packed dinner, play games in the gym, and watch a movie. A movie snack will be provided, but kids are welcome to bring extra snacks.

For dates and registration visit
jewishlouisville.org/youth

SCHOOL'S OUT DAYS

Next
School's
Out Day is:
November
12, 2021!

When schools are closed, bring your child to play at the J! School's Out Days are 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. All days include sports, arts and crafts, games, and more. Wear comfortable clothes, a mask, and bring a lunch, morning snack (an afternoon snack will be provided).

For dates and registration visit
jewishlouisville.org/youth

For children in Kindergarten through 5th grade



For more information, scan the QR code to visit
jewishlouisville.org/youth or contact Katelyn Graves at
kgraves@jewishlouisville.org or 502-238-2774.



NEWS

CENTERSTAGE

Continued from page 1

setup with anticipation.

Leah and Jerry Fulkerson came for their son, Matthew, who played Gad in the show. They came the night before to watch the dress rehearsal and were excited to see the opening.

"I'm going to get a season pass," Leah said.

Leah called the outdoor setup "absolutely beautiful" and praised the safety precautions.

"I feel safe and secure even though I'm vaccinated," she said. "I like how everyone's wearing a mask. You can't be in a safer area. It's well spaced, socially distanced."

Megan Corbett and Megan Daniels

came because they missed live theater. Their first CenterStage production, they appreciated the outdoor venue.

"We're horse girls; we love being outside," Corbett said. "If COVID's taught us anything, it's how to adapt and be flexible."

Daniels said she was "excited" to check out the CenterStage experience.

"I read about it a little bit," she said. "A lot of people are like, 'I can't believe this is community theater.'"

Sisters Sandy Peace and Serena Knautz came to the show to see their friend, Shea Leparoux, who played the narrator. Neither had seen a CenterStage production before.

Peace said she was impressed with the outdoor, floor level stage setup, and Knautz was thrilled to see a live show

again.

"This is our first show since COVID, and it feels obviously safe, Knautz said. "I like that we're in our little pod, but also just to be able to see the performers doing what they love because they have been off for so long. I think that is really, really good. And of course, you know, my sister even brought her coat of many colors. But it's too hot [to wear]."

The changes notwithstanding, the elements of the production came together, pleasing Jump.

"The parking was different, the seating was different, the concession stand was different," she said. "[But] every element, every variable was there, and people just took to it because the excitement was that real."

GINSBERG

Continued from page 8

say whatever I wanted."

Then she explained her judicial philosophy: "I considered the young people before me to be standing on a cliff. I could push them off or try to pull them back in. If I could save them, that's what I would do."

I am convinced that Donald would have died in prison. Judge Taliaferro saved his life. So, Donald, sorry but you are no longer my undisputed number one hero; you are tied for that honor with Viola Taliaferro.

(Michael Ginsberg, a retired journalist and writing instructor, is a copy editor for Community.)

YARMUTH

Continued from page 1

ever wrote a book about my experience, I would call it *House Arrest*," Yarmuth said. "Because once you get there, it's very difficult to leave. There is an addictive quality to it."

Despite disagreements over the years, Matt Goldberg, director of the Louisville Jewish Community Relations Council said Israel has always had Yarmuth's support when it counts.

"His commitment to the security of the State of Israel is rock solid," Goldberg said. "Even his criticism of Israeli actions, which we haven't always agreed with, is born of that affinity for Israel."

It's not clear whether his successor will have the same affinity.

So far, two candidates have announced they will run for Yarmuth's seat: Kentucky State Sen. Morgan McGarvey and State Rep. Attica Scott.

Appearing at a pro-Palestinian rally in May, Scott told the crowd, "We are anti-war, anti-oppression and anti-apartheid," the *Courier Journal* reported. Her remarks have irked Jewish residents.

But political observers, including University of Louisville Political Science Professor Dewey M. Clayton, think "kitchen table issues" – not Israel – will dominate next year's campaign.

"It may very well come up as an issue, but I don't think it's going to be a huge factor, given the other problems were dealing with," Clayton said.

Yarmuth agreed. "In terms of what voters in the 3rd District will base their vote on, I would doubt that's in the top 10."

A Louisville native and graduate of Yale University, Yarmuth cut his teeth in politics as a legislative aid for then-U.S. Sen. Marlow Cook, a Kentucky Republican, from 1971 to 74.

In 1976, Yarmuth ventured into jour-

nalism, founding *Louisville Today* and then the *Louisville Eccentric Observer* (LEO) in 1990, which is still publishing.

In 2006, Yarmuth ran against and defeated the incumbent congresswoman from Louisville, Anne Northup, a Republican.

He has since moved into leadership, currently serving as chairman of the House Budget Committee.

Arguably, Yarmuth is one Jewish congressman who need not depend on the Jewish vote to get elected. Approximately 8,000 Jews live in his district, which is home to about 700,000 people.

Still, Yarmuth's connection to the Jewish community has remained strong throughout the years. A member of The Temple, the largest synagogue in the city, he frequently speaks at community events and Men's Club functions. He also likes to mention how he learned to play basketball at the Jewish Community Center.

"Meeting with him and his staff ... has always been a pleasure," the JCRC's Goldberg said. "He has legislatively prioritized many of the issues that we care about so much, such as increasing funding to social safety net programs."

Yarmuth may not be the only Jewish congressman pondering retirement. During his briefing, he mentioned that his colleague and close friend, Rep. Steve Cohen, D-Tennessee, is facing the same decision.

"He's agonizing over whether to run right now," Yarmuth said. "He said, 'I'm losing my best friend.' And that's kind of how many of us feel."

But Yarmuth left open the possibility that another Jew could get in the race next year to succeed him: his son, Aaron Yarmuth, a former newspaper publisher who has not run for public office before.

"If Aaron gets in the race," he said, "I'm going to be 100 percent for him."

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