

FRIDAY Vol. 50, No. 2 | February 23, 2024 | 14 Adar I 5784

A Louisville teen employs virtual reality to let the Holocaust speak anew

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

It is a gray, cheerless winter day. A road stretches in front of you, covered in snow, as are the seemingly endless rows of low-slung buildings clustered on one side. In the near distance there is a gate bearing the words *Arbeit macht frei* – *Work sets you free*.

You have arrived at a place of murderous infamy. You have arrived at Auschwitz.

But you are not *physically* there. Instead, you are sitting in an ordinary chair in an ordinary room, with a device resembling oversized ski goggles strapped to your face. Ahead, behind, to the left, to the right – wherever you look, a different perspective is revealed. You stand next to three women, death camp survivors, as each recounts the daily horror that was Auschwitz. A few minutes later, you sit across from an elderly man who tells you a story of how family’s beloved dog somehow transcended the despair of life in a Nazi-controlled Polish ghetto.

It is a Holocaust narrative rendered in virtual reality, brought to you by an ingenious 17-year-old high school junior named Parker Friedman.

Friedman, who attends duPont Manual, is a young man who plays football (a placekicker who dabbles in punting) and is a keen observer of

the world around him. As he became increasingly aware of anti-Jewish sentiment, he also realized that too many Kentucky teenagers have only the barest knowledge of the Holocaust.

He was determined to, literally, change that reality.

“I’m a big history buff,” he says, “and I saw rising antisemitism in the US and around the globe. I was watching *60 Minutes* and there was a segment on the USC Shoah Foundation and their virtual reality (installation), which I thought was pretty cool. Up in Chicago my family and I went to the Chicago Holocaust Museum, and I saw their virtual reality exhibit – a really immersive experience – which inspired me to bring it to Kentucky.” Those encounters also prompted him to create his own website: historicalreality.org, whose mission is “Bringing history to life by providing educators and students with immersive virtual reality content and equipment.”

Friedman was not exactly a virtual reality neophyte – he once owned a VR headset – “but I wasn’t familiar with the educational benefits until I saw the USC Shoah exhibit and the *60 Minutes* segment. Then it made complete sense to me. And it just took off from there.”

With input from Louisville Holocaust educator Fred Whittaker and the University of Kentucky’s Holocaust Education Initiative, Friedman set to work. Through Facebook, he connected



Students from Lexington’s Mary Queen of the Holy Rosary school wearing virtual-reality headsets gather around a table at the Scott County Library to view Parker Friedman’s VR Holocaust narrative.

with entrepreneur Shel Mann, CEO of Firefly VR, a Minneapolis-based company that specializes in adapting virtual reality to the needs of healthcare. Firefly has donated more than 50 surplus VR headsets, each of which is now programmed with an approximately 20-minute presentation.

“Parker’s creation embraces the idea that the great wisdom of the Shoah is multifaceted,” says Whittaker, who teaches at St. Francis of Assisi Catholic School. “Much of it can be taught using maps, diagrams, and narration. But much of its wisdom -- perhaps its greatest wisdom -- remains beyond the scope of words.”

Its main component is *Inside Auschwitz*, a nine minute, 37 second “virtual reality documentary” produced by the German broadcasting service WDR in 2018. The documentary provides viewers with a 360° drone-photographed tour of the extermination camp, and includes testimonies from Holocaust survivors Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, Philomena Franz and Walentyna Nikodem.

“It’s not easy to explain to a normal person what it was like in Auschwitz,” says the narrated introduction. “Because you didn’t believe you would ever get out of there. In Auschwitz, everything you can

See **VIRTUAL REALITY** on page 23

In Israel’s Western Galilee, neighboring Arab and Jewish community centers share a mission of hope

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

This is a tale of two community centers in Israel. It’s also the story of two men – one Jewish, the other Bedouin – who have forged a connection based as much on friendship as it is on profession.

Golan Rosenberg and Ahmed Samniya are bound up in service to their respective constituencies that, whether Israeli or Arab, are far more alike than different. Each boasts a community ranging from toddlers to seniors, who regard their facilities as an anchoring presence

amid a fraught, potentially threatening environment. Rosenberg heads a network of five community centers administered by the Mateh Asher Regional Council, located in the Western Galilee area of northern Israel -- and the core of the Jewish Federation of Louisville’s Partnership2Gether region. Rosenberg lives on Kibbutz Yechiam, only a mile south of the Lebanese border. Samniya’s home is in the nearby Arab village of Sheikh Danun.

It is, to say the least, volatile territory. Indeed, residents of the nearby Bedouin village of Arab al-Aramshe had to be

evacuated to elsewhere in Israel because of the threat of rocket barrages from Hezbollah, following the October 7 attacks by Hamas in southern Israel.

Before that terrible day and continuing even now, there’s been a concerted effort to address particular needs of the Arab population.

“We took those two villages and made a specific program of communication that belongs only to them,” Rosenberg says, “because it’s unique in culture, in education, in the typical things they are doing in their communities.”

See **WESTERN GALILEE** on page 20

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See ISRAEL FUND on page 21

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THE DASHBOARD

Word of the Month

Even in difficult times,
we can infuse our lives with joy



D'var Torah

Rabbi Ben
Freed

*A human must hate and love at the same moment,
To cry and laugh with the same eyes."*

When times feel difficult it is all the more critical that we tap into Judaism's directives for infusing our lives with joy. We must utilize the tools at our disposal to allow our crying eyes a chance to laugh.

While it is true that this time of year asks us to tie our joy to the calendar, we know that one cannot set a timer and say, "This will be my joyful moment." So what does this time of year ask of us? If we can't simply decide to be joyful, we must actively set the stage for joy and allow ourselves to revel in it if and when it arrives. We cannot force joy, but we can beckon to it.

Our Sages prescribe certain things to help bring joy: eating meat, drinking wine, singing songs, and Torah study were all ways various rabbis brought joy into their lives. During Adar we traditionally also dress in costumes, eat meals with guests, interrupt synagogue by yelling at a villain (that one is very fun!), and give gifts to friends and to those who are less fortunate than we are. Hopefully one of those practices sounds compelling to you and has the potential to spark your joy. If not, the rabbis don't have a monopoly on joyous activities. Maybe you'd rather take a walk or ride a bike outside, curl up with a good book, play with a pet, or finish a puzzle. The month of Adar is your Jewish reminder to make time for those things that increase YOUR joy.

Beckoning to joy can also require assistance. For those struggling with their mental health or with substance abuse, setting the stage for joy can also include a call to a mental health professional.

In *Inside Out*, Joy has to learn to step back and make space for Sadness, Anger, Disgust, and Fear. As the latter emotions take hold of our psyche, let us remember the words of Psalm 30: "One may lie down weeping at nightfall; but joy comes in the morning." Let us collectively embrace the radical Jewish call to set a spot at the table for Joy, and to welcome her with open arms.

Ben Freed is Rabbi of Keneseth Israel Congregation

There is a popular Hebrew saying, משנכנס אדר, מרבין בשמחה, "when one enters the month of Adar, their joy increases." This expression is the subject of many popular children's songs in Israel and around the world that are sung this time of year. Right now we are in the midst of the first of two months of Adar—we're in a Jewish leap year, so we get two whole months of joy!

And yet, it can feel very hard to be a joyous Jew in 5784 (or 2024). Any perusal of headlines, TV news, or perhaps most especially social media, quickly shows us plenty to not be joyful about—and the loss of life in Israel and Gaza and the continued captivity of more than 100 hostages has been incredibly painful to witness.

So with all of that in the background, how do we follow the instructions of the rabbis from 1,500 years ago who told us that our joy must increase during the month of Adar? I believe there are two things we must do: First we must recognize that joy is not exclusive of all other emotions, and then we must find increased ways to invite joy into our lives.

As anyone who's seen the Pixar movie *Inside Out* is aware, one emotion trying to dominate all others is not healthy, even if that emotion is joy. We must recognize that we are full humans, and it is possible to experience and revel in joy and even increase its presence in our lives without shutting out all bad news or more difficult emotions that we might be feeling.

The great Israeli Poet Yehudah Amichai appreciated the impossibility of compartmentalizing and separating our joy from our pain. In his poem *A Man in His Life*, Amichai writes:

קהלת לא צדק כשאמר כך.
אדם צריך לשנוא ולאהוב בבת אחת,
באותן עיניים לבכות ובאותן עיניים לצחוק.

"Kohelet was wrong [that there is a time for every purpose]."

Snapshots



Volunteers asked you to "Answer the Call" when they gathered for the Super Sunday telethon Feb. 4 at the Trager Family JCC's Federation Meeting Room. Phone calls were made between 10 a.m. and noon, with proceeds going toward the Jewish Federation of Louisville's 2024 Annual Campaign. (Photos by Community Staff)

Candles

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

- Mar 1 @ 6:19 p.m.
- Mar 8 @ 6:26 p.m.
- Mar 15 @ 7:32 p.m.
- Mar 22 @ 7:39 p.m.
- Mar 29 @ 7:46 p.m.

Contacts

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

Deadlines

Got a news item for *Community*? Deadlines matter, especially for newspapers. Send in your news by **Monday, March 18** (though sooner is better).

The paper will be published on

Friday, March 29.

Submitting an item for *Community's* weekly eblast? Please submit it by Friday to **community@jewishlouisville.org**. The eblast is sent out every Monday afternoon.

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er ... paper. Then check out *Digital Community* at **jewishlouisville.org/community/community-newspaper/print-version/**.

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OF LOUISVILLE

NEWS

Plans for Louisville chapter of the Cardozo Society shared during Feb. 1 talk by attorney John Rosenberg at the Trager Family JCC

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

There was a double purpose to attorney John Rosenberg's Feb. 1 appearance at the Trager Family JCC.

First and foremost was to hear from Rosenberg himself: a 92-year-old Holocaust survivor who moved to Prestonsburg, Kentucky more than half a century ago to establish himself as one of the nation's foremost civil rights lawyers.

Purpose number two was to talk up a planned Louisville chapter of the Cardozo Society. "Cardozo Societies are societies of Jewish lawyers and their affiliates who are dedicated to the task of public good," Matt Golden, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, told the audience -- gathered in the Shapira Foundation Auditorium -- at the close of the event.

"Cardozo Societies are, at their heart, the embodiment of the Jewish command, tzedek, tzedek tirdoff! -- 'justice, justice shall you pursue,'" Golden added. "So I'm really excited about what we've heard from John Rosenberg. The gift he gave us about his story and his presence and the work that he's done -- it can't end right there. We have to take his gift and do something with it. So again, engage with the Cardozo Society and the Louisville Bar Association. I'm really excited about

the next partnership we will have with John Rosenberg."

Rosenberg's talk coincided with "Lawyers Without Rights: Lawyers under the Third Reich," an exhibition cosponsored by the American Bar Association (ABA) and the German Federal Bar that was on view the Trager Family JCC. The ABA was holding its semiannual meeting in Louisville, and a healthy representation of attending lawyers was present on this early Thursday evening.

Over the course of about 45 minutes, Rosenberg recalled being with his father on Kristallnacht -- "The night of broken glass" Nov. 9-10, 1938, when Nazis and their sympathizers destroyed synagogues and shops throughout Germany.

He recounted how his family barely managed to get on a ship bound for the United States, where he eventually earned a law degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

From there, Rosenberg embarked on a career as a civil rights lawyer with the Justice Department, before moving to Prestonsburg and launching a partnership with attorney Ned Pillersdorf in a practice that bears the promise: "We represent underdogs." His work with AppelReD Legal Aid has largely defined public service law in Appalachia.

This particular evening, however, was devoted to Rosenberg's relationship with

the legacy of Nazi Germany.

"Kentucky is now one of 30 states that requires Holocaust education," Rosenberg told his listeners. "There are a couple of teachers that would call me annually to talk to their high school class," he said. "I think there's a proposed amendment that's supposed to survey how well school districts are implementing that. So I'm just going to start and pretend that you're all in middle school or high school."

Rosenberg turned and pointed to a slide projected on a screen behind him, in all black and white photograph of his father wearing his World War I uniform. "Many people don't realize that many Jewish men fought for Germany in the First World War," he said. "And when the Nazis came to power, they introduced legislation that said, 'No more Jewish lawyers.' They did have an exception for those lawyers who fought in World War I -- at least on the battle line. So some lawyers would claim that exception and were able to continue practicing."

When Rosenberg speaks to students about the Holocaust, "I usually spend a little bit of time in the beginning talking about Judaism, because there are very few Jews in Eastern Kentucky. I will ask them, 'Have you ever known anybody else who's Jewish?' Most of the time they'll say, 'no.' So I will try to encourage them to go to a synagogue Friday night

or Saturday morning. Where we live, Huntington, West Virginia is the nearest congregation. I'll talk a little about that the oldest monotheistic religion the world is Judaism, and that Jesus was Jewish. I want children to know that we are talking about destroying a culture of six million Jews."

Several guests attending Rosenberg's talk spoke afterward. Among them was JCRC member Farrah Alexander, a third-year law school student at U of L, who read remarks prepared by law school Dean Melanie Jacobs that lauded its namesake's Jewish heritage and legacy.

"It is especially fitting that the Brandeis School of Law would co-sponsor an event about the challenges Jewish lawyers faced under the Third Reich," Jacobs wrote. "I believe that were Brandeis here today, he would use his voice to fight against antisemitism. I anticipate that he would advocate for the importance of the rule of law and warn against the erosion of long-standing principles that erode the strength of our democracy, such as access to voting and free, public, uncensored education. I think he would be dismayed that antisemitism is growing, not waning. May his memory be a blessing."

For more information on the Cardozo Society, email Matt Golden at mgolden@jewishlouisville.org.



Holocaust survivor, Department of Justice lawyer, and civil rights advocate John Rosenberg was the featured speaker at a special program February 1 at the Trager Family JCC. The event was offered in conjunction with the American Bar Association's traveling exhibit, also on display at the Trager Family JCC titled *Lawyers Without Rights: Jewish Lawyers in Germany Under the Third Reich*.

Pictured L-R: Top row: Jewish Federation of Louisville and Trager Family JCC Board Chair David Kaplan; German Federal Bar Executive Director Stephan Göcken, John Rosenberg and German Federal Bar President Ulrich Wesels; Farrah Alexander and Beth Salamon. Bottom row: Charlene Buckles, Jessica Loving and John Rosenberg; David Andrews and Ben Potash; Donna Gollmer and guest; Jon Fleischaker and Fred Joseph. (Photos by Community Staff)

NEWS

Shalom Hartman Institute's Joshua Ladon is coming to Louisville to discuss the Israel-Hamas war and its effect on American Jews

By Lisa Hornung
For Community

The Israel-Hamas war in Gaza has cost thousands of lives, including soldiers, civilians and journalists. The bloodshed is devastating.

But the mental trauma and suffering of American Jews since Oct. 7 is also very real.

To address this pain, the Jewish Federation of Louisville and Trager Family JCC are hosting *A Conversation with Rabbi Dr. Joshua Ladon* of the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America on Feb. 29 at The Temple.



Joshua Ladon

"There has been an entire set of responses that have happened in America since (Oct. 7)," Ladon says. "The Jewish people, because there's this sense of being part of a Jewish peoplehood, (means) there is some psychic pain for my people in Israel that I didn't know but feel like part of my broader family. There have been a whole set of responses in America that have caused the Jewish community to feel very concerned and feel like victims themselves."

Ladon is Director of Education at the

Hartman Institute of North America, where he guides the content and curriculum of national and regional programs. Ladon completed a master's degree in Jewish Thought at Tel Aviv University and received rabbinic ordination from the Shalom Hartman Institute and a doctorate in Jewish Education from the Jewish Theological Seminary. He lives in the San Francisco Bay area.

Ladon says that American Jews have been struggling emotionally since the war began. "There has been sort of a cracking in the self-perception of the American Jew since Oct. 7, and there's been a realignment and a set of questioning around core central values. And all of a sudden, a good portion of the Jewish community feels like their allies have been quiet. ... The better metaphor is that the ground on which you've been standing feels like it's shifted, and you're trying to grasp at, 'What are the sort of core ideological conversations that may have been implicitly part of the Jewish people?'"

Ladon typically works with smaller groups of people, such as rabbis, Hillel directors and Jewish Federations. In most cases they come to one of Shalom Hartman's regional locations, including Jerusalem or New York, Boston, Chicago and California. The organization's focus with Jewish leaders is to "think through core questions that are not simply tactical questions like, 'Oh, how do we get more people to come to our ...'" Instead, the

Institute is more concerned with, "What are the big existential questions of the Jewish people, and how do we make sure that in our building and maintaining thriving Jewish community we're thinking about these major questions?" Ladon says.

So, lectures in places like Louisville aren't what Ladon usually does, but he says he looks forward to visiting and having this open discussion with Louisville's community.

The event in Louisville will be a lecture, but it will also be a conversation. "It's interactive but not like community therapy," he says. "It's getting to spend some time together and (suggesting), 'Here is a set of frameworks to think through what the Jewish community is going through,' and to think out loud with fellow community members about where one fits into those frameworks."

Americans aren't used to seeing war up close, Ladon adds. "Because of both YouTube and the deep ties that the Jewish community has with Israel and that the Palestinian diaspora has, it's a felt war in a way that we don't see. We're not seeing other wars going on elsewhere in the world right now in the same way."

Israel's controversial leadership adds to the internal angst. "Until Oct. 6, 55 percent -- if not more -- of the Israeli public was engaged in a deep campaign of protests against its leadership. So it itself is conflicted ... and you have a deeply unpopular leader," he says. The contrasting

ideologies in Israel spill over to Jews in the United States, making for conflicting thoughts.

A considerable number of Jews have felt markedly lonely since this war began, he adds. It's because of the broader views Americans have on the conflict or because their own views don't match what other Jews in their communities believe, he said. Coming together to discuss this loneliness and ways to handle it together will hopefully help people sort through this trauma.

Shalom Hartman also produces several podcasts aimed at the general public. *For Heaven's Sake*, hosted by Donniel Hartman, Yossi Klein Halevi and Elana Stein Hain, is one of the most popular Jewish podcasts, Ladon says. And his own podcast, *Perfect Jewish Parents*, which he hosts with Masua Sagiv, discusses Jewish parenthood and how to handle the challenges of raising Jewish children. "Spoiler Alert," he says. "We're not perfect."

Want to go?

A Conversation with Rabbi Dr. Joshua Ladon takes place Thursday, Feb. 29 from 6-7:30 p.m. at The Temple, 5101 U.S. Highway 42. Registration is required by going online at jewishlouisville.org/Ladon. The event is free, but donations will be accepted when registering.

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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.

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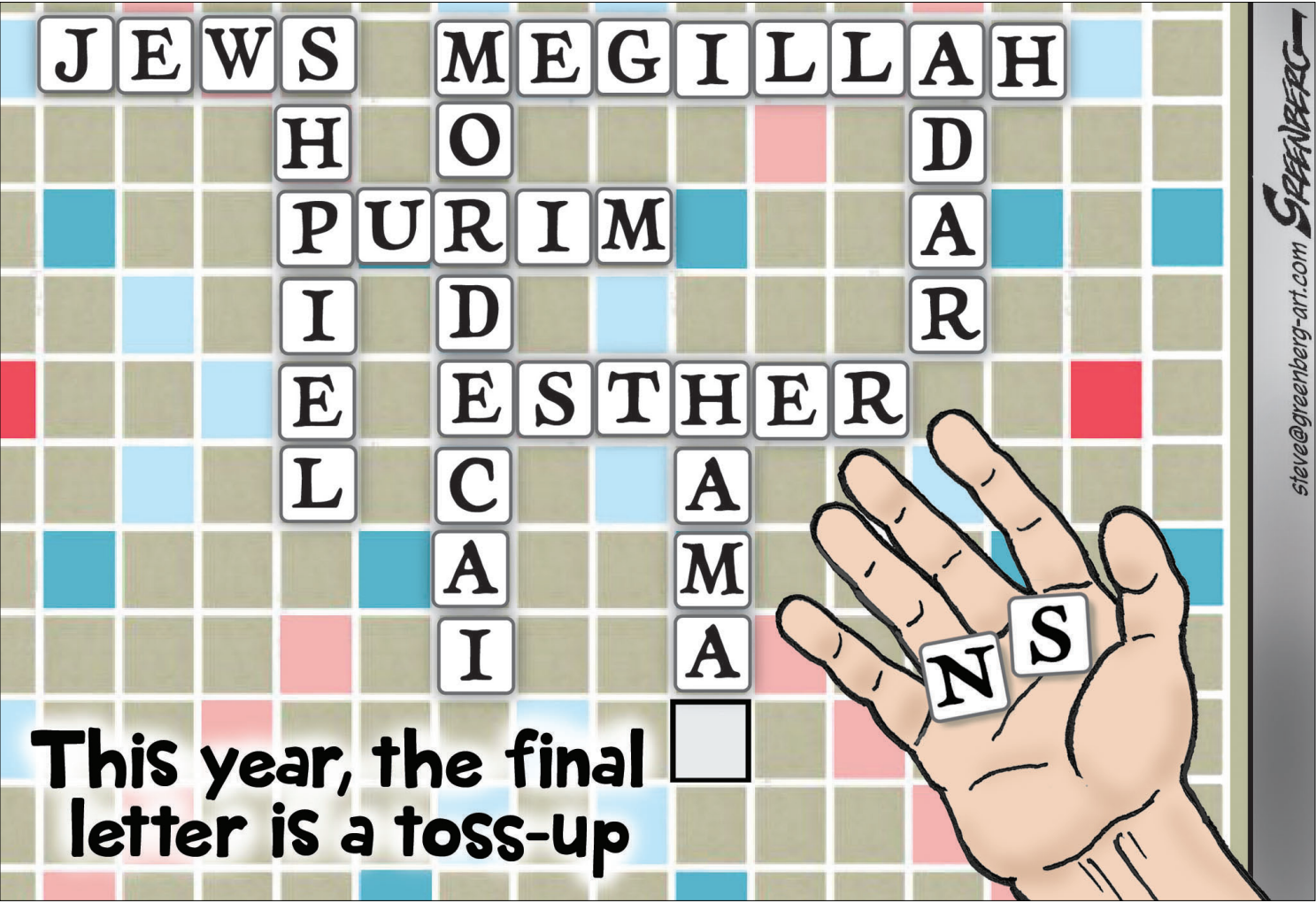
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FORUM



It may take a village to show a nation how to act



Mindful
Ramblings
Andrew
Adler

The front page of this issue of *Community* features a story of mine telling how two community centers in Israel – one Arab, the other Jewish – work in close cooperation to best serve their respective populations. Two months ago I wrote another story about an elementary school in Israel in which Jewish, Muslim and Christian students learn and play together inside a repurposed bomb shelter.

It is no coincidence that I chose to focus on these initiatives. Nor is it a coincidence that each is located in northern Israel's Western Galilee region, where our Federation is an active participant in the Partnership2Gether program. In other words, a locus of interest for all of us here.

Consider two words in the above paragraphs: *cooperation* and *partnership*. They express the potential – no, the *imperative* – of putting aside parochial interests in favor of embracing a common good. Instead of antagonizing, opposing and defying, the parties involved choose to fashion a new paradigm of mutual benefit. It's a variation of thesis + antithesis = synthesis – opposing forces creating a novel solution to issues previously

held to be intractable, irreconcilable and ultimately, incapable of being successfully resolved.

There is method in my metaphor. I'm coming back to the two stories I referenced above -- Arabs and Israelis, Muslims and Jews, declaring that they will not allow historical enmity to get in the way of what is right and proper in this region. They are demonstrating, in everyday, concrete terms, what it means to do what is just, formidable as that task may be.

And if it works here, why not elsewhere? Are Israelis and Arabs so bound up in discord and distrust that they cannot see a pathway toward living next to each other as cooperative neighbors? They don't have to be best friends, or even casual friends. All that is necessary, all that must be put into place, is a framework that acknowledges certain cultural foundations, and allow those foundations to be anchored in peace.

I am not naïve. I fully appreciate that there are entities both inside and outside Israel that will never agree to such terms. Terrorist groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, bearing their own murderous agendas, must be dealt with cold pragmatism. A country like Iran, defined by its almost pathological hatred of Israel, cannot be left to its own insidious devices. We live in the real world, and the real world is often harsh and unforgiving. Sitting in a circle and singing *Kumbaya* will not deter such bad actors from their destructive intentions.

That is the big picture. The more modest picture, one which can serve as a basis for genuine progress, is

rooted not so much in nations and virulent nationalism, but at the level of villages, neighborhoods and likewise examples of modest proportion. It is staked in the soil of two community centers, a school, in families who want nothing more than to live in security and prosperity.

We all want what is best for our children, and our children's children. They should not have to bear the indignities heaped upon them by the previous generation. Perhaps I have no business making these kinds of pronouncements seated at a desk in Louisville, Kentucky. I am not on the ground in Israel. I am not personally steeped in Israeli society, history and tradition. I write from the comfortable, unthreatening vantage point of an American Jew who does not have to contend with the omnipresent threat of annihilation.

Still, as I have enjoyed the privilege of speaking with some of those who are on the ground in Israel – Israelis and Arabs, Jewish and Muslim – I have come to understand in a small but resonant way, that destiny is not an imovable value. I have to believe, and I do believe, that eventually those who have everything at stake, from their livelihoods to their very lives, will translate the elusive promise of lasting peace and trust into enduring actuality. In this instance, it may indeed be that it takes a village to show a nation how to act.

Andrew Adler is Managing Editor of *Community*. To contact Andrew, email him at aadler@jewishlouisville.org.

FORUM

The Price of Admission



JCRC

Matt Golden

There is a phrase in Dara Horn's most recent article in the Atlantic that I've been stewing over since I read it. The entire article is fascinating, but about halfway through, Horn wrote something that hit me really hard. She said that before a Jew can discuss Israel, they are required to utter humiliating qualifiers, "as the price of admission to public discourse about their own demonization." Her words have been front and center to my thinking as we, as a community, weigh into Louisville Metro Council's "ceasefire" resolution filed earlier this month.

Louisville is nowhere near the first city to file such an ordinance. Ceasefire resolutions have been filed all over the country, in school boards, in city councils, in tiny townships. There have been 161 by recent count; from Alameda, California, to South Lake, Texas, to Providence, Rhode Island. Some have passed, others have failed, still others were tabled and even more ended without consideration. In almost every instance, the legislative bodies that voted were divided and their constituents were upset. For example, the Lawrence, Kansas, City commission was widely criticized for passing a resolution without the word, "ceasefire."

Lately, Councilmembers and Mayors have begun to realize that no matter what happens with these resolutions, the divisive nature of them—coupled with the meaninglessness of them—warrants that they not be considered at all. Just this week as I write this, progressive Mayor Aftab Purveal, together with the Cincinnati City Council, determined

that there was simply no consensus language available to allow Cincinnati to weigh in on the war in Gaza, "an issue that is among the most nuanced and complicated in international affairs."

Mayor Purveal is similar to San Francisco Mayor London Breed, who said, regarding the San Francisco ceasefire resolution, "The Board of Supervisors should never have put our City in this position. [I]t was naïve to think two hearings and last-minute amendments were adequate to forge San Francisco's official position on a crisis as fraught as this. We should be creating opportunities for conversation, for people to rally around our common values, advocate for peace, and support human life. We should be coming together, supporting each other, seeking the cohesion at home that we hope for abroad. The Board has done the opposite. . ." In short, smart people have begun to realize that if you cannot say something good, do not say anything at all.

So this is where Dara Horn comes in. When some local councilmembers decided to file a ceasefire resolution, each of our synagogues and Jewish institutions responded and asked, simply, that they consider whether this was the best option for Louisville. We asked the councilmembers to reflect that resolutions like this are not within the purview of a city council, and that, perhaps, some of the Jewish institutions should be consulted before these matters go forward. We pointed out that these resolutions were divisive to the community, wherever they went.

We went further to say, "The organizations we represent want to be clear. We support the concept of a structured ceasefire, an end to hostilities, and a permanent peace. It has been nearly four months since Hamas attacked Israel and, amongst other atrocities, took men, women and children hostage. More than 130 have not yet returned home. Thousands have been killed in Gaza as this war has progressed. Many innocent

women and children are among them. The organizations we represent want an end to this war just like everyone else. We all desire and look forward to the day when Israel lives in peace with all her neighbors. We hope for a speedy return of these hostages, alive, and a meaningful and permanent peace for those in Gaza and in Israel. We believe in the diplomatic process at the national level and a dialogue about how two peoples can live side by side in peace." However, we concluded our letter that, perhaps, "Metro Council is not designed to weigh into this matter in a way that will bring Louisvillians together."

Pretty horrible stuff, right? The "demonization" Horn referred to came quickly. Despite our careful words, we were immediately vilified as not wanting peace. One of the lead activists behind the drive to bring the resolution to Council said, "You may have been told that people in our Jewish community do not support a ceasefire, but this is not true." She went further to say, "It is essential to recognize and respect the voices of Jewish people in Louisville advocating for peace and reconciliation, even if they may not be formally affiliated with established organizations."

Take just a minute to think about that. The organized Jewish community issued a letter asking for peace, but politely suggested that perhaps Metro Council's one-sided local ordinance wasn't the best. The response was to mischaracterize that letter to say that we didn't want peace. Further, Metro Council was asked to recognize some Jewish voices that "agreed" with the position, but by implication, any other Jewish voices could simply be ignored. In so doing, it artificially pitted groups of Jews against groups of Jews over whether they wanted peace when, in fact, many of us merely contested whether a Metro Council resolution was the best vehicle to get there.

As for the resolution itself, there are a number of things that are patently

offensive and one-sided. The resolution equates all the hostages taken by Hamas on October 7, with all the individuals held in Israeli jails, including the terrorists captured on October 7. The resolution calls for stepped up efforts by the U.N. to deliver aid, without mentioning that UN workers in the UNRWA were also working as Hamas militants that invaded Israel and took captives on October 7. In fact, there is not even a mention of Hamas' acts, the murders, rapes, kidnappings or torture in the resolution, only that they are a legitimate "side." The dog whistles are all there.

Here's why I have been stewing over Dara Horn's phrase, about "the price of admission to public discourse about [Jews'] own demonization." I know that it seems everything we can say—whether it's to demand peace, whether it's to call for structured cease fires, whether it's to recognize and mourn for the deaths of others—will be twisted for the benefit of someone else's point about how bad we are or simply erased as inconvenient. More and more, the price of admission to any discourse involving Jews is getting steep.

Yet, we must continue paying it. Giving up is simply not within our nature and every step we take towards the positive is worth it. So, no matter what, even if it means stepping foot into uncomfortable spaces and fighting for what we believe in, we will pay the cost of admission.

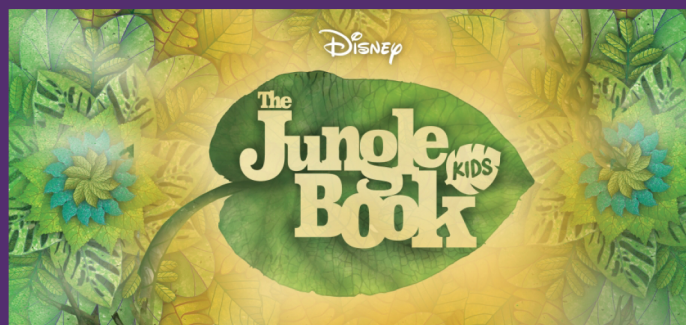
Matt Golden is a lawyer and the Director of the Jewish Community Relations Council. In his opinion, the JCRC is the most august body in the Jewish Community, seeking justice and doing tikkun olam. He is admittedly very partial and biased in this regard. He invites comments, suggestions or good stories at mgolden@jewishlouisville.org.

Editor's Note

In last month's issue, we published a cartoon by freelance contributor Steve Greenberg. Greenberg's cartoons are usually provocative. His last cartoon addressed antisemitism on college campuses and contained an implication suggesting that Muslim and Palestinian student groups were solely responsible for the vilification of Jewish students. After publication, a few readers wrote to us objecting to the cartoon, particularly regarding this implication. While we believe that it is appropriate to include a range of editorial viewpoints in Community, we also acknowledge that reasonable boundaries are sometimes crossed, and that we meant no disrespect whatsoever to the Muslim community here or elsewhere. In review, we can see how the cartoon unfairly stereotypes, and we will continue to reflect on how to make our work better. Thank you to those readers for that input.

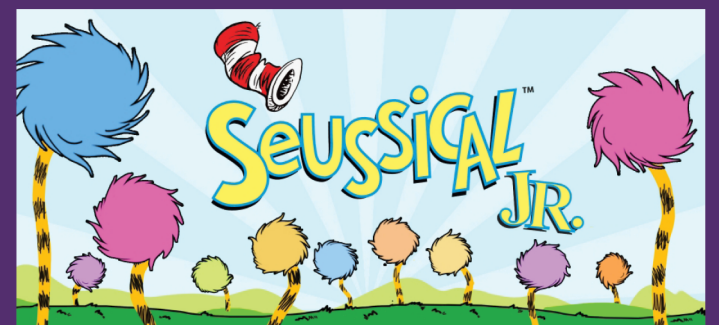
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Recognizing the Resilience of our Older Adults

February is National Senior Independence Month, a time dedicated to recognizing the resilience and autonomy of our older and aging adult community. This month serves as a reminder of the invaluable contributions seniors have made and continue to make to our families, communities, and society as a whole.

A crucial component of senior independence is long-term planning. Long-term planning is vital in fostering senior independence by addressing various aspects of their well-being and ensuring they maintain control over their lives as they age. By proactively addressing their financial stability, healthcare needs, housing options, social support, and legal and estate planning, seniors can feel more confident and in control of their lives, even as circumstances change.

Another crucial component is often played by caregivers. These compassionate individuals dedicate themselves to ensuring that their aging loved ones can maintain their autonomy and best quality of life. From assistance with personal care tasks to managing medications and household chores, caregivers provide the necessary support to

help seniors navigate their daily routines with confidence and as much independence as possible.

Beyond the practical aspects of caregiving, the emotional bond between caregivers and seniors is equally essential. Companionship and social interaction are fundamental aspects of overall well-being, particularly in later stages of life. Caregivers offer companionship, emotional support, empathy, and a listening ear, fostering meaningful connections that combat loneliness and isolation. While JFCS offers a wide range of services for seniors, our Klein Older Adults Program is also a resource for caregivers. From counseling services, to support groups, case management, and even respite services, JFCS recognizes that, like all of us, seniors need others to maintain independence.

As February comes to a close, we want to express our gratitude to caregivers and all those who dedicate themselves to supporting our aging loved ones and their commitment, compassion, and unwavering dedication to empower seniors to live life on their terms, with dignity, respect and independence.

Society owes a great debt to our senior citizens. Their knowledge of



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Senior Crime Victims Services - Trained and professional staff advocate for older adults who have been the victims of crime or elder abuse.

Care Coordination - Case managers assist with identifying and accessing critical resources while planning for future care needs.

Support Groups - Groups such as our "Grandparents Raising Grandchildren" offer supportive environments to speak about the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of aging and caregiving.



the past guides us present day and they enrich our future by showing us that life is worth living beyond the present tense.



If you would like more information on JFCS services for caregivers and families seeking long-term planning, contact JFCS at (502) 452-6341, or email services@jfcsloouisville.org.

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PICTURE THIS: JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL



L-R: Top row: Guests at Shorts & Shots event held at Louisville Slugger Museum; Film Festival Community Relations Chair Solange Minstein, Kentucky ACLU Executive Director Amber Duke and Senator Karen Berg speaking after the presentation of Bella; Alan and Jan Glaubinger winning the golden ticket on opening night. Bottom row: Executive Bourbon Steward Phil Kollin peaking to guests at Shorts & Shots event; Guests at Shorts & Shots event held at Louisville Slugger Museum; Robyn Kaufman and Sherry Kaufman; Cantor David Lipp and Karyn Moskowitz; Frank Schramko speaking with Bill and Carlyn Altman on opening night (Photos by Kathryn Harrington and Community Staff)



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PICTURE THIS: TEDDY ABRAMS WINS GRAMMY

Louisville Orchestra music director Teddy Abrams had a big night at the Feb. 4, 2024 Grammy Awards in Los Angeles. He's shown at top right with LO Executive Director Graham Parker, and below with singer/songwriter Rufus Wainwright, and violinist Anne Akiko Myers (photos courtesy of the Louisville Orchestra).



Best Classical Instrumental Solo Winner

Yuja Wang, Teddy Abrams, Louisville Orchestra

A large, detailed image of a Grammy award trophy, which is a gold gramophone on a clear glass base.

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Jewish Heritage Fund

NEWS

The Maccabi Experience

By Abigail Goldberg
Guest Columnist

JCC Maccabi and Maccabi USA are connected through their shared mission of promoting Jewish identity, community engagement, and athletic excellence. JCC Maccabi Games serve as a grassroots-level initiative organized by local Jewish Community Centers via the support of JCCA, with the goal of bringing together Jewish youth for sports competitions, cultural activities, and community building. Maccabi USA, on the other hand, is a national organization that focuses on representing the United States in international Maccabi competitions, including the Maccabiah Games, a major global event. The connection between JCC Maccabi and Maccabi USA lies in their mutual commitment to fostering Jewish pride, unity, and athleticism.

Rose Geller and Sadie Hyman of Louisville participated in the Pan American Games in Buenos Aires in December 2023 as field hockey youth athletes with Maccabi USA.

"What I imagined would be a fun way to meet new people and visit a new country over winter break turned into an experience of a lifetime," Rose says. "Staying in a hotel with 800 Jewish athletes from all over the United States and meeting new players from all over the world that share our religion was amazing. It was like summer camp for athletes, only better. The sportsmanship,

friendships, and culture of Maccabi USA was an experience that I will forever be grateful for."

"Going to Argentina was one of the coolest things I have ever done," Sadie says. "While in Argentina, I met lots of amazing people from all around the world. Although the USA Delegation stayed at one hotel, we got to share meals with the other international delegations. My favorite part of the trip was meeting new Jewish people and hearing their stories. If I ever have the chance to go back, I would love to explore more of Buenos Aires."

Elijah Harper of Louisville participated in the Pan American Games in Buenos Aires in December 2023 as a Under 18 Futsal athlete with Maccabi USA.

These games serve as a gateway for Jewish peoplehood to come together, fostering a sense of community, camaraderie, and cultural connection. But beyond the athletic endeavors, participants engage in a variety of activities, workshops, and events that promote personal growth, leadership skills, and a deeper understanding of their heritage.

The JCC Maccabi Games not only provide an opportunity for young athletes to showcase their talents, but also encourage values such as teamwork, sportsmanship, and resilience. In a spirit of friendly competition, participants build lasting friendships, learn from diverse perspectives, and develop a strong sense of pride in their identity. Ultimately, involvement in the JCC Maccabi Games

offers a holistic experience that combines athletic achievement with cultural enrichment and personal development, making it a compelling and rewarding opportunity for Jewish youth.

Levi Gladstein participated in the JCC Maccabi Games in Fort Lauderdale, FL in the summer of 2023 as a lacrosse player on a mixed team. His team comprised athletes from Memphis, Houston, Charlotte, St. Louis, Philadelphia, and Louisville. "My Maccabi experience was amazing," he says. "I met so many new people, created memories, and had a Jewish experience while playing sports. I highly recommend attending the JCC Maccabi Games."

The next JCC Maccabi Games take place in Detroit July 28-August 2, 2024. The Trager Family JCC will be featuring



Pictured R-L: Rose Geller (Louisville) and Sadie Hyman (Louisville), Melanie Watson (Charlotte), Maddie Miller (Ann Arbor), and Kate Miller (Ann Arbor) smile together as fellow teammates on the field hockey team for Maccabi USA in Buenos Aires."

athletes in individual and mixed teams' sports competitions including Baseball (14U and 16U), Boys' Basketball (14U and 16U), Girls' Basketball (14U and 16U), Flag Football (16U), Ice Hockey (16U), Boys' Soccer (14U and 16U), Girls' Soccer (14U and 16U), Girls' Volleyball (16U).

Additionally, there will be events in Competitive Dance, Star Reporter (social media/sports journalism), Swimming, Table Tennis, Tennis, and Golf. The 2024 JCC Maccabi Games will also include Olympic-style opening and closing ceremonies, plus a community-service day.

If you are interested in participating in the JCC Maccabi Games in Detroit, please reach out to Team Louisville Delegation Head, Abigail Goldberg, at agoldberg@jewishlouisville.org or go online at jewishlouisville.org/maccabi.

Abigail Goldberg is Teen Director at the Jewish Federation of Louisville



At right: "Levi Gladstein (#40) with his lacrosse teammates after winning the Silver Medal at the JCC Maccabi Games in Fort Lauderdale, Florida during summer 2023.

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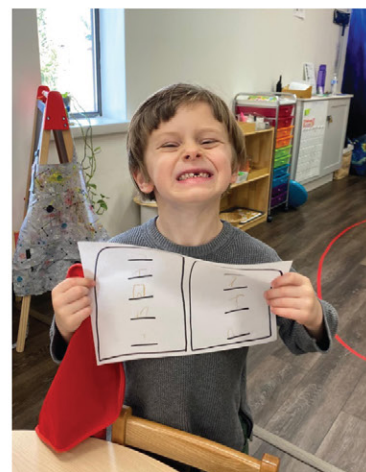
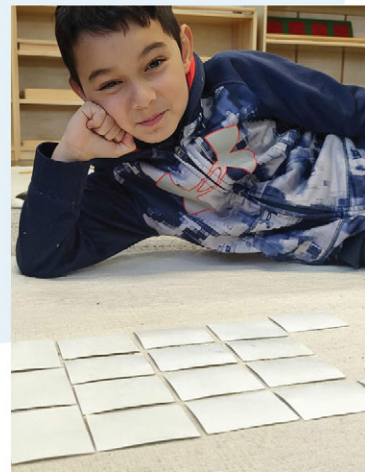


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NEWS/NEWSMAKERS

Pianist Yuja Wang, Music Director Teddy Abrams and the Louisville Orchestra win Best Classical Instrumental Solo Grammy Award

The Louisville Orchestra shared the below release following the Feb. 4, 2024 Grammy Awards, which recognized an exceptional collaboration involving the orchestra, Music Director Teddy Abrams, and pianist Yuja Wang.

The Louisville Orchestra, under the baton of Music Director Teddy Abrams, won the award for “Best Classical Instrumental Solo” at the 2024 GRAMMYS, showcasing their collaboration with world-renowned pianist Yuja Wang on her album *The American Project*. This landmark achievement was announced at today’s GRAMMY Awards ceremony, marking a significant milestone in the Orchestra’s illustrious history with its first ever GRAMMY win. The *American Project* was released on Deutsche Grammophon, the oldest and most prestigious classical record label in the world.

The American Project is an ambitious and innovative album that combines the rich musical heritage of America with the virtuosic talent of Yuja Wang, under the creative guidance of composer and conductor Teddy Abrams. This award-winning performance has been praised for its artistic excellence, innovation, and contribution to the classical music landscape. The Piano Concerto at the

center of this album was written by Teddy Abrams for his Curtis classmate and close friend, Yuja Wang. Initially intended as a companion piece to Gershwin’s *Rhapsody in Blue*, the work evolved in scope during the composition process to become a masterpiece in its own right. The Piano Concerto is inspired by multiple musical stylistic sources and offers Yuja a singular virtuosic showcase of her unending talents.

“First, a huge congratulations to the incredible Yuja Wang, who soloed on this extraordinary album and is one of the most talented musicians in the world right now,” Abrams said during the Premiere Ceremony. “A giant congratulations to all of my colleagues at the Louisville Orchestra – an orchestra that is famous for its innovation, for putting out so many albums of living composers since it was founded in

1937. I am so proud of everyone at the orchestra, to the people of Louisville and to everybody that made this all happen. Thank you very, very much.”

Graham Parker, Chief Executive of the Louisville Orchestra, expressed his elation: “We are thrilled to have been a part of the 2024 GRAMMY Awards, and this win is a testament to the hard work, creativity, and passion of our musicians, staff and board. This accolade is a beacon of artistic achievement and recognition on the global stage. We are immensely proud of Teddy Abrams, Yuja Wang, and everyone involved in making *The American Project* a resounding success.”

The Louisville Orchestra’s Grammy win not only highlights the exceptional

talent within the Orchestra but also reinforces its reputation as a leading force in the world of classical music. Starting in the 1940s with the First Edition Records, the Louisville Orchestra is one of the leading commissioners of orchestral new music, with over 500 commissions from such luminaries as Elliot Carter, Chou-Wen Chung, Alberto Ginastera, Witold Lutoslawski, and other 20th century luminaries. The Orchestra’s commitment to innovation, community engagement, and artistic excellence continues to resonate with audiences both locally and internationally.

This GRAMMY Award is a milestone in the Louisville Orchestra’s journey, and it paves the way for future artistic endeavors and collaborations. The Orchestra extends its heartfelt thanks to its supporters, patrons, and the Louisville community for their unwavering support. The commission of the Piano Concerto by Teddy Abrams for Yuja Wang was underwritten by a generous grant from Justus and Elizabeth Schlichting.

Filson Jewish collections curator Abigail Glogower is leaving next month

The Filson Historical Society has announced that Abigail Glogower – the Filson’s Curator of Jewish Collections and Jewish Community Archives since 2017 – is leaving on March 8 to take a position as Research and Instruction Archivist at Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass.

“I’ll be getting back to the teaching part

of my résumé I’ve really been missing,” she said in an email.

“Dr. Glogower has played a pivotal role in shaping the Jewish Community Archive at the Filson, leaving an indelible mark on our institution,” the Filson said in a statement released earlier this month. “She has not only defined the trajectory of our archive but has also led us in establishing a more engaged and community-focused approach to our programming, collections, and scholarly pursuits. Her impact as a public scholar and archivist will resonate throughout our city for years to come.

“As we bid farewell to Dr. Glogower, we want to assure you that her legacy and the Jewish Community Archive will continue to thrive. We will soon launch a search for Dr. Glogower’s successor. We are committed to continuing to grow the Archive and expand our partnerships within the Jewish community. Additionally, we are honored that Abby will continue to assist us in hosting the Southern Jewish Historical Society conference this fall. This conference will be a testament to the relationships, exhibits, collections, and community collaborations fostered by the Jewish Community Archive. We are proud that the Filson will be the first institution in Kentucky to host this prestigious event.”

The Filson also announced that after a six-year stint as President and CEO, Richard H.C. Clay will retire at the end of this year. Patrick Lewis, currently the Filson’s Director of Collections and Research, will take over as President and CEO effective Jan. 1, 2025.

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AROUND TOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, all events are free and open to the community.)

Adath Jeshurun

Talmud and... TikToks? Miriam Anzovin, creator of the popular #DafReactions series, will visit Congregation Adath Jeshurun on Saturday, February 24, 2024. She will give three talks in which she shares her practice of daily study of the Babylonian Talmud in the Daf Yomi cycle from the viewpoint of a formerly Orthodox, now secular, Millennial feminist. Go behind the scenes with Miriam as she shares her process for creating authentic, heartfelt, hilarious commentary which puts ancient discourse in direct communication with modern internet culture, pop culture, and current events. This event is cosponsored by the Louisville Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning, The Charles & Jean K. Erskine Fund of Congregation Adath Jeshurun and the Jewish Heritage Fund Endowment. Reservations are open now at www.adathjeshurun.com.

The 2024 Music Festival, endowed by the Adolf & Sara van der Walde and Israel Rosenblum Charitable Fund, will be held on Sunday, March 3, 2024 at 7 p.m. at Adath Jeshurun. Our featured performer this year is Cantor Danny Mendelson. For those who were at the Cantors' Convention in Louisville in 2019 he sang with his dad Cantor Jack Mendelson. He is an amazing talent and I hope you'll come hear Mendelson Mayhem & Friends! Reservations are open now at www.adathjeshurun.com/musicfestival.

Anshei Sfar

Classes are held weekly by Rabbi Simcha Snaid: A Night Kollel Ahron V'Leah – open learning from 8 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Monday – Thursday for anyone to come & learn; Spice of Life, Wednesday 7 p.m.; Discussion on the timeless lessons from Mishlei – the Book of Proverbs, Sunday mornings 7:45 – 8:30 a.m.; Talmud Trek II, Sunday 9:30 a.m. Women's learning Sunday evenings 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Chabad of Kentucky

Chabad of Kentucky is pleased to announce that all services are now being held at the Camp J building at 3700 Dutchmans Lane (formerly Congregation Anshei Sfar). We extend our thanks to Jewish Family & Career Services for allowing us to use their building to hold services during the summer. We also extend our thanks to Jewish Community of Louisville for allowing us to use the Camp J building and we invite the community to share in all our services, classes and programs.

Jewish Unity Feast and Celebration in honor of Purim
Chabad of Kentucky will host an Israeli themed evening of Jewish unity on Purim - March 24 at the Standard Club. The event will begin at 5:00pm with dinner at 6:00pm. The evening will include Israeli dinner, activities and entertainment for the entire family. All are welcome. Adults \$20. Children under twelve \$12. Family cap at \$72. Reservations are required by March 19 by contacting Rabbi Litvin at chabadky@gmail.com or 502-459-1770.

Chavurat Shalom

March will be all about terrific musical entertainment. Lunch will start at Noon

in The Temple's Heideman Auditorium and our program will start at 1 p.m. All programs will also be available via Zoom for those who need to join us remotely.

Thursday, March 7 - Bernie Schweickart will return to play all of our favorites on the piano. Lunch will include grilled salmon, mashed potatoes, green peas and carrots, cole slaw, fresh fruit, and chocolate trifle.

Thursday, March 14 - Jeff Springer, our favorite piano playing doc, will entertain us. Lunch will include vegetable lasagna, Caesar salad, fresh fruit, and chocolate spoon cake.

Thursday, March 21 - The Silver Notes return with a delightful selection of golden oldies tunes. Lunch will include barbecue chicken, roasted potatoes, green beans, mixed green salad, fresh fruit, and apple cobbler.

Thursday, March 28 - Singer, songwriter, guitarist Tyrone Cotton will share his wonderful music with us. Lunch will include bowtie pasta with smoked salmon, steamed broccoli, mixed green salad, fresh fruit, and caramel spoon cake.

If you're not "a regular," please RSVP by 5 p.m. Tuesday if you'll be attending that week in person by calling Sarah at 503-423-1818 or emailing sarahharlan86@gmail.com.

Chavurat Shalom is a unique opportunity for Jewish senior adults to meet socially and share ideas. Chavurat Shalom is funded through the generosity of the Jewish Heritage Fund, The Temple, The Temple WRJ/Sisterhood, The Temple Brotherhood, NCJW, and many other generous donors.

Filson Historical Society

Join the Filson for upcoming events! For more information, visit FilsonHistorical.org.

Jewish Family & Career Services

Grief and Loss Support Group
Coping with the loss of someone you love is one of life's biggest challenges. JFCS offers a Grief and Loss support group for adults who have experienced the death of a spouse, partner, parent or other loved one. Groups are facilitated by a trained professional and meet bi-weekly. Call (502) 452-6341 or email services@jfcslouisville.org for more information.

Support for Caregivers

Being a caregiver to a loved one or friend can seem overwhelming at times. Providing the necessary support to someone who, due to age, illness, disability, or some other factor, cannot care for themselves is a big undertaking. JFCS has several programs to assist caregivers and can provide guidance, coping strategies and other resources. Call (502) 452-6341 or email services@jfcslouisville.org for more information.

The 2024 JFCS MOSAIC Awards – Corporate Sponsorship Opportunity
The 2024 JFCS MOSAIC Awards ceremony will be held May 14 at the Mellwood Art Center. Join us as we celebrate individuals from the refugee, immigrant, or first-generation American community who have become leaders, changemakers or humanitarians here in Greater Louisville. We're also excited

to announce GE Appliances as the first-ever recipient of the new "Corporate Changemaker" award this year. If your business or company would like to be part of this annual gala event, hosted by WLKY's Rick VanHoose, sponsorships are available by contacting Courtney Evans at cevans@jfcslouisville.org.

Jewish Federation of Louisville

The Federation and Trager Family JCC will host A Conversation with Rabbi Dr. Joshua Ladon: North American Jews' Response to Oct. 7 Attacks and the Impact on Our Local Community, Thursday, Feb. 29 from 6-7:30 p.m. at The Temple. Together, we'll examine how the Jewish community's sense of self and agenda have shifted since Oct. 7. Our discussion will focus on how the American Jewish Community has been and continues to be impacted, and what this means for our local Jewish community. Rabbi Ladon is the Director of Education for the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, where he guides the content and curriculum of national and regional programs to help to ensure its offerings speak to the realities of the Jewish community and the challenges of the Jewish people. Registration is required. For more information and to register, go online at jewishlouisville.org/ladon. Funded in part by the Goldstein Leibson Cultural Arts Fund

Trivia Night

Bring your friends to enjoy a lively evening of trivia competition to benefit the Jewish Federation of Louisville Saturday, March 9 at the Trager Family JCC. It'll be cocktails at 6:45 p.m., with competition (teams of six or eight vying for prizes) getting under way at 8 p.m. Cash bar, with appetizers and desserts from Mayan Cafe. Tickets are \$50/person. Register online at jewishlouisville.org/trivianight (Scoring provided by Last Call Trivia).

Keneseth Israel

Keneseth Israel Congregation offers Daily Minyan services at 6 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, 8:30 a.m. Sundays, and 7:30 a.m. Monday and Thursday. Minyan services are offered in person and on Zoom at tinyurl.com/kiczoom. Join us for Shabbat services Fridays at 6 p.m. and Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. Shabbat services and Holiday services are offered in person and on YouTubeLive at tinyurl.com/KICyoutubelive. Please visit kenesethisrael.com for information.

Join Rabbi Freed for Jews & Brews every Wednesday at 11 a.m. at the Trager Family JCC.

You're invited every Saturday morning at 10:30 a.m. for Shabbat Shalom Club -- a space for kids K through 5 to experience Shabbat. From Torah to games - there is something for every child.

Have a toddler in your life? Come join us for our Tot Shabbat Saturday, Feb. 24 at 11 a.m. to enjoy a toddler-friendly shortened service and a sweet treat, followed by coming into the main sanctuary with their rendition of a closing Shabbat service song.

Louisville Vaad HaKashruth

Kosher for Passover on-line food ordering and delivery to Louisville from Kansas City Kosher is being facilitated by the

Louisville Vaad HaKashruth. To place an order, go to kckoshercoop.com and if you don't have an account, create an account, and start ordering/requesting split orders (to create an account, Do not select Join a Co-op; instead, select Account in upper right corner of Homepage, then Create an account, and select Louisville, KY as your Co-op). Order deadline is March 13. Delivery is anticipated to take place on April 7. For additional details/questions not answered on the co-op's website, contact Myrle Davis at mdavis5748@aol.com.

The following venues are supervised and certified by the Vaad: Trager Family JCC (Nancy Abrams Kitchen) and Krispy Kreme, 3000 Bardstown Rd.

Kol Israel Community of Kentucky

Kol Israel will celebrate Shabbat as Adat Ha' Araphel – Congregation of the Cloud, Saturday Feb. 24 on Zoom. We invite you to join our Jewish renewal leaders and seekers from across the country for our participatory innovative, musical and inspirational service. Services are made possible by our continued partnership with the Renewal Congregation of Bloomington, Ind. We will gather at 10:15 a.m. for greeting and schmoozing on Zoom. The service will begin at 10:30 a.m. sharp. To join, please contact us at KolIsrealKY@gmail.com or call 502-277-0555 to register.

Louisville Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning

Ready to flex your spiritual muscles? A new six-week course Soul's Cycles: A Ride Through the Chapters of Life will lead you through a focused, high-intensity journey through the Jewish perspective on some of life's milestones: birth, Bar/Bat mitzvah, marriage, divorce, mikvah, conversion — a fascinating ride that will deepen your understanding for when these moments happen to you, your family, or your friends. Crossing the finish line will leave you energized and inspired by the depth and complexity of Jewish values, concerns, expectations, and hopes. The course is taught by Cantor David Lipp (Tuesdays from 6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m., beginning February 27, via Zoom) and Rabbi Laura Metzger (Thursdays from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., beginning February 29, in person at AJ). AJ members in good standing are eligible to receive a \$36 discount; please email sisham@adathjeshurun for the coupon code. To register or find out more, go online at tinyurl.com/2p83vjra.

Israeli music owes a lot to the artist Naomi Shemer. In many ways, Shemer helped define the tone and trajectory of Israeli popular music. For example, the genre "Shirei Eretz Yisrael" (Songs of the Land of Israel) would be far poorer without this sui generis singer/songwriter. Join Cantor David Lipp for Naomi Shemer: Beyond Jerusalem of Gold to get an overview of her lasting influence and legacy on the corpus of Israeli artistic expression. One session only, April 1 from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m., on Zoom. To register, go online at tinyurl.com/49bpfh95.

Moishe Pod: Louisville

The Moishe Pod: Louisville is a part of the international non-profit organization Moishe House, which aims to bring together young adult Jewish communities from around the world. Moishe Pod:

AROUND TOWN

Louisville is open to all young adult Jews regardless of observance level. It will be hosting three free events a month to bring the young adult Jewish community together in a welcoming environment. For more information or to pass along suggestions for an event Moishe Pod might host, email moishepod.louisville@gmail.com.

Come dressed in your masquerade best and get ready to celebrate Purim katan (little purim) at this festive Shabbat dinner Feb. 23 at 7 p.m. RSVP at tinyurl.com/MPShabbat.

National Council of Jewish Women, Louisville Section

Sonia and Dr. Ronald Levine Jewish Voice for Choice Award

Created in 2023, the Sonia and Dr. Ronald Levine Jewish Voice for Choice Award is presented annually by the National Council of Jewish Women, Louisville Section to an outstanding person, group, or organization who has demonstrated courage of action and/or made a significant contribution in the efforts of reproductive rights and healthcare justice in the commonwealth of Kentucky – guided by the Jewish values of tikkun olam, repairing the world, and kavod ha'briyot, respect for human dignity.

These actions may include:

- Direct care
- Advocacy
- Speaking up when others cannot
- Recruiting others to help
- Contributing ideas to grow the movement
- Showing perseverance in the midst of resistance

The award is named in honor of Sonia and Dr. Ronald Levine, long-standing members of NCJW, Louisville Section for their lifelong efforts to support women's reproductive healthcare. Sonia has been an active member of NCJW for many years, where she has chaired the Legislative Committee and Women's Issues Committee of NCJW and was appointed by the National Organization of NCJW as the Kentucky State Public Affairs Chair for over six years. Sonia and Ronald were both founding committee members of the Religious Coalition for Abortion Rights.

Dr. Levine served as an Obstetrician and Gynecologist for over thirty years in many different patient care, teaching, and leadership roles. Of note, he served as a Medical Director of the Louisville affiliate and then as Chair of the Medical Committee of the Southeast Region of the U.S. and as a member of the National Medical Committee of Planned Parenthood.

To submit a nomination, please contact the NCJW office at 502-458-5566.

ABCs of Birth Control in Kentuckiana Sunday, March 3, 2-4 p.m., The Temple Klein Center, 5101 US 42, 40241 Join representatives from NCJW, Planned Parenthood, medical specialists, and others committed to protecting our fundamental right to bodily autonomy. Featured speakers include Michelle Elisburg, M.D., Barbara Berman P.A.-C. and a Planned Parenthood Advocate. This is an educational program for people ages 10 and up of all genders and orientations.

A = Planned Birth Control (birth control pills, IUDs, implants, and others)

B = Plan B or emergency contraception (morning after pill - Plan B or Julie)

C = Plan C - Mifepristone and Misoprostol pills to end a 1st trimester pregnancy

In states like Kentucky and Indiana, where abortion is illegal even for rape and incest, it is important to be educated and protected. Please come with family, friends, and with your questions and stories. RSVP by emailing executivedirector@ncjwlou.org or calling 502-458-5566.

NCJW Wants YOU

Have you always wanted to get involved with the important work of our Louisville Section but weren't sure where to start? We've got something for everyone, whether you're interested in insuring women's reproductive freedom to educating and engaging voters to sharing your love of Mahjongg. Interested in helping launch a new committee that focuses on local political action related to public education, book bans, and other related issues? We want to hear from you! Contact Executive Director Sarah Harlan at executivedirector@ncjwlou.org or 502-458-5566 and let us know how you want to make a difference in our community.

Nearly New Shop

One way you can support NCJW's important advocacy work is by visiting our Nearly New Shop in the Mid City Mall, 1250 Bardstown Road. We have everything from gently used designer outfits to great gifts for kids to housewares and furniture and everything in between. We're open Monday through Saturday from 10 am to 5 pm. All proceeds help to serve women, children, and families in the Louisville community.

Temple Shalom

Drumming Shabbat

Join us for a special Shabbat Friday, March 8 at 6:30 p.m. featuring ASEYE Ensemble, a West African percussion group playing traditional drum rhythms from Ghana. The music is lively and upbeat while honoring its cultural roots and traditions. The group is led by master drummer and dancer, Charles Amewudah, native of Ghana. ASEYE will perform and participate. An oneg will follow.

The community is welcome at Temple Shalom's Shabbat services: Fridays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.

The Temple

Adult education continues at The Temple. Text Study with Rabbi David, Beginning Hebrew with Mark Goldstein, and Intro to Judaism with Rabbi David are on Monday nights; Temple Scholars on Wednesday mornings with Rabbi David; and Saturday Torah Study with Rabbi David starts at 9 a.m. on Zoom and in person will be every Saturday. For a full schedule and descriptions, go to thetemplelouky.org/adult-education.

The Temple's Shabbat Bop is a special program designed specifically for families with young children. We invite you and your loved ones to join us for an evening filled with joy, connection, and Shabbat ruach (spirit) on Friday, March 1 at 5:45 p.m. Join us for a special Shabbat Bop with Rabbi David and Buhbee Ellen Shaikun leading us for a short, kid-

friendly service in the Sanctuary. Then we will enjoy a family dinner in the Heideman Auditorium. More information and RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/Shabbat-Bop.

Temple Trager ECEC Parents Committee invites you to our 2024 Spring Fundraiser. Join us for a fabulous night of pizza, drinks, friends, and raising money for Temple Trager ECEC on Saturday, March 9, 2024, at 6:30 p.m. at Ten20 Butchertown. Tickets are \$55. Please RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/eccec-fundraiser. Unable to attend but still want to join the fun? Check out our online silent auction at 32auctions.com/templeeccec2024.

Join us for a special Nosh and Learn on Sunday, March 10 at 9:30 a.m. for Little Kids, Big Topics: Talking to Children About War (and Other Big Things). As we near six months since the start of the war in Israel, and with the increase in antisemitic attacks on Jewish people in the United States, children will likely have big questions and even bigger feelings about the state of the world. Dr. Clint Nowicke is a pediatric psychologist who works with kids and their grownups on how to talk about big, important topics. Please join us for a "Nosh and Learn" session on Sunday, March 10 from 9:30 am-11:00 am in the Levy Great Hall of the Klein Center to learn how to discuss the war in Israel with young kids all the way through adolescence. You'll also learn how to recognize traumatic stress in children as well as developmentally appropriate strategies for managing big emotions. RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/big-topics.

Please join the Mitzvah Makers on Sunday, March 10 at 11:30 a.m. as we make sandwiches for the Louisville homeless community. RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/sandwich-making. Before the event, please bring donations to The Temple to help us with this tikkun olam project including: bottles of water, individual bags of chips, loaves of bread, and sandwich bags. Additionally, if you have some small hotel/sample size toiletries (shampoo, bars of soap, lotion, mouthwash, toothbrushes, and toothpaste), we will be making bags to hand out.

Join us for a special Family Shabbat on Friday, March 22 with dinner at 6 p.m. for dinner and Purim Shpiel Shabbat at 7 p.m. led by our Grade 2 and Grade 3 students, who will be presenting their annual Purim Shpiel, It Happened in Shushan. Dinner is \$10 per person and free for children 12 and under. \$5 when you RSVP before Tuesday, March 19. Please make your reservation by calling 502-423-1818 or registering online at thetemplelouky.org/purim-shabbat.

Join the entire Louisville Jewish community for our Purim Carnival Extravaganza on Sunday, March 24 at 11 a.m. This special event is designed to bring our community together in celebration, fostering a sense of unity, and providing an opportunity for us to get to know one another better. This is a completely free event, open to all members of our community. Please note that due to limited space, we request that you RSVP to ensure we can accommodate everyone comfortably. You can RSVP at JewishCommunitySocial.com.

Trager Family JCC

CenterStage's season continues with The Prom, now running at the Trager Family JCC's Shapira Foundation Auditorium. It's the story of "four fading Broadway stars who are in desperate need of a new stage. So when they hear that trouble is brewing around a small-town Indiana prom—and the press is involved—they know that it's time to put a spotlight on the issue... and themselves. The town's parents want to keep the dance on the straight and narrow—but when one student just wants to bring her girlfriend to prom, the entire town has a date with destiny. Now, Broadway's brassiest are coming to join the fight and they are ready to kick-ball-change the world." Performances are Feb. 24-25 & 29; and March 2 & 3. For tickets and more information, go online at jcclouisville.org/centerstage.

You Bring the Audience, We Bring the Show. CenterStage Acting Out is a professional touring theatre troupe that travels to schools, community centers, and senior facilities to present educational and relevant musical theatre to audiences of any age. No buses, no chaperones, no permission slips: We bring the show directly to you. For more information, visit or contact Jesse Barfield at jbarfield@jewishlouisville.org.

Want to Work at Camp J?

We are looking for the best and brightest staff who want to spend their summer changing children's lives. We are hiring camp counselors to lead our groups, inclusion advocates to work with our campers with special needs, and specialists to lead activities. Staff will have the chance to become positive role models for children in our community while building invaluable professional and personal skills. To apply, go online at jcclouisville.org/campstaff.

All Trager Family JCC members are invited to join one of its many fitness classes, sign-up for personal training, join a basketball, futsal or pickleball game, or the new running club. Visit jcclouisville.org/health-wellness more information or email Member Services Director, Amy Stephen, at astephen@jewishlouisville.org. For those interested in memberships, visit jcclouisville.org/youbelong or email membership@jewishlouisville.org.

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LIFECYCLE

Births

Debbie and Dave Weinstein are proud to announce the birth of their fourth grandchild, **Meredith Rose Olsen**, born January 13, 2024. The excited family includes their daughter Suzanne Weinstein Olsen, Kyle Olsen, and big brother Hunter Olsen of Oswego, Illinois.

B'nai Mitzvah



Malcholm Robinson
Malcholm Robinson, son of James and Laura Robinson, will be called to the Torah as a Bar Mitzvah on Saturday, March 23, at 10:30 am at

The Temple. Malcholm is a seventh-grade student at West Middle School in Shelbyville, Ky. He enjoys spending time with his friends and his three younger sisters Emily, Natalie and Olivia.

Obituaries

Rolla H. Gladstein

Rolla H. Gladstein, age 78, of Prospect, Kentucky, died on January 17, 2024. Originally from Detroit, Michigan, Rolla was the only child of



Larry and Fern Herman. She attended Mumford High School and subsequently graduated from the University of Michigan with a Bachelor's degree in art history. She married the love of her life, Mark O. Gladstein, M.D., in 1968. After brief stints in New York City and Smyrna, Tennessee, Rolla and Mark ultimately settled in Louisville, where they raised their children.

Always stylish, entrepreneurial, and with a keen eye for design, Rolla pursued her passions in businesses where her creative talents could shine. She worked in advertising, dealt in fine art, and, most recently, created her own business, Daisy Hill, where she designed and manufactured luxury table linens and other home goods. Rolla's Daisy Hill designs were prominently featured in such magazines as *Oprah*, *House Beautiful*, and *Elle Décor*.

Rolla was a member of The Temple and the National Council of Jewish Women. Above all else, she was devoted to her family and adored her children and grandchildren.

Rolla was preceded in death by her husband, Mark, in 2018. She is survived by her daughter, Pamela Sole (Marc) of New York, NY, her son, Seth (Heather) Gladstein of Prospect, and four beloved grandchildren, Annabelle and Lucy

Sole, and Levi and Judah Gladstein.

Rolla's family extends their appreciation to the entire staff at Barton House for the warmth and care she received during the past several months.

Funeral services will be held at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 21, at The Temple, 5101 US Highway 42. The service will be live-streamed by The Temple. Burial will follow in The Temple Cemetery.

Heather and Seth Gladstein will host Shiva at their home from 5:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, January 21, Monday, January 22, and Tuesday, January 23, 2024.

Remembrances can be made to The Temple or the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation.

Esther J. Goldfarb

Esther J. Goldfarb, 99, passed away in Indianapolis, Ind. on February 10, 2024, with her eldest son at her side.

Esther was the eldest of three children, growing up with her sister and brother in Celadz, Poland. She would talk about how much, as a teen, she enjoyed going to Krakow to visit with older cousins who would show her the city's sights.

Esther frequently said that she had "many miracles from G-d" and among the first was that when the Nazi roundup began in her town, her cousin was visiting and the two of them were sent to the same labor camp where they were able to help each other survive. Most of the rest of her family perished. As the war was ending, she and her cousin endured a forced (death) march through Czechoslovakia. There was a brief stop in a town, and Esther and her cousin made a bold run for freedom. A local man and his brother took them in, hiding them through the duration of the war. After the war, Esther went to a displaced persons camp in Austria, where she met and married her husband, Melvin.

Another miracle brought the young couple to the United States when one of Melvin's uncles, who was living in the US, spotted an ad that Melvin had placed looking for family. The uncle, realizing that Melvin was his sister's son and that he had survived, asked his son to sponsor them to the US. They settled in Alice, TX, Melvin working in his cousin's hardware store, and Esther

learning English with the help of TV and movies. A few years later, Esther learned that her sister had survived the war and was living in Louisville, so the young family left Texas with the assurance that they would always have a home in Texas. Melvin owned a business in Old Louisville; he and Esther were proud members of Anshei Sfard synagogue for over 60 years.

Esther said that she "thanked G-d every day" for the many blessings in her life, especially her three sons and her grandchildren. Her kind ways endeared her to the neighbors she would talk with on her daily walks, her friends from her exercise and lunch groups at the JCC, and about everyone she met.

In 2014, Esther and Melvin moved into an independent living apartment at Marquette Senior Community in Indianapolis, where established residents invited them to join lunch or dinner conversations and where they were able to enjoy the community's events, meal outings, day trips, and parties. Following Melvin's death in 2018, Esther continued living in the apartment until two years ago when she opted to try one of Marquette's assisted living apartments, which allowed her to continue to see her friends and keep up her legendary walks.

Esther was preceded in death by her husband, Melvin, and a granddaughter. Left to cherish her memory are her sons: Charles (Nancy), David (Judy), and Perry (Luana) Goldfarb, five grandchildren, two great-grandchildren, nephews, a niece, and cousins.

Memorial contributions may be made to: Marquette Manor Foundation, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, or the charity of your choice.

Funeral services were private. May her memory be a blessing.



Dr. Ruth Greenberg

Dr. Ruth Greenberg was an amazing and loving wife, mother, grandmother, mother-in-law, sister, friend and volunteer who

passed away at age 78 on February 1, 2024, following a brief illness.

Continued on page 18

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LIFECYCLE

Continued from page 17

Ruth was born in Queens, New York, the middle child of parents who both fled Nazi Germany. She received her first degree from Queens College, where she met the love of her life, Ronald. Ron and Ruth spent the last 57 years together, first teaching together in the New York City public schools and eventually making the move from Long Island to her beloved home of Louisville, Kentucky in 1980. Ruth's passion for education, and grammar in particular, led her to go back to school to earn a PhD from the University of Louisville, teach English at Jefferson Community College, serve as Associate Dean for Medical Education at the University of Louisville School of Medicine and, most enjoyably, assist many people with their college, medical school and resident application essays.

Ruth's love of her family was known by all. She was the proud, glowing mother of Jennifer Tuvlin and Craig Greenberg; mother-in-law to Jeffrey Tuvlin and Rachel Greenberg; and grandmother to Andrew, Ethan and Jared Tuvlin and Daniel and Benjamin Greenberg. There was no such thing as too much family time for Ruth, from celebrating Jewish holidays to attending her grandchildren's events to spending time together at Ron and Ruth's homes in Louisville and Delray Beach, Florida.

Ruth stayed busy her entire life, with a passion for volunteering and advocacy. She focused her civic efforts on strengthening Jewish organizations in Louisville and protecting women's and abortion rights. From leading many organizations as its president to serving on committees to vociferously writing persuasive letters, Ruth was staunchly committed to every cause she pursued in Louisville and Delray Beach.

Ruth made a positive impact on the lives of so many. And, hopefully, there are no grammatical errors in this tribute.

Visitation was held, Sunday, February 4th, followed by the funeral at Congregation Adath Jeshurun, 2401 Woodbourne Ave., Louisville, KY 40205. Burial was in Adath Jeshurun Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Congregation Adath

Jeshurun or the University of Louisville Medical Education Program.



Helene Grossman

Helene Grossman died peacefully at the age of 93 on February 1, 2024.

Born on January 29, 1931 in Louisville, KY, to Samuel and Flora Steinfeld, she met her childhood friend, neighbor, and future husband, Howard Grossman, at the young age of 12. He was immediately smitten and knew she was his future mate. Helene attended Indiana University as a freshman, then returned to Louisville to fulfill her destiny and marry Howard. Howard served in the army during the Korean War, and Helene joined him when he was stationed in Columbus, Ohio, working as a secretary of a military unit. They returned to Louisville after his discharge.

Helene loved living in Louisville and devoted herself to raising her three children, caring for her husband, and being involved in the lives of her and Howard's aging parents. She attended Congregation Adath Jeshurun, was a member of the Jewish Community Center, and was active in Hadassah. Helene was always interested in retail so in her 50's she opened a boutique handbag store, The Bag Ladies. She had a wide circle of friends and would have been content to remain in her hometown her entire life. However, devoted to her husband, she moved in 1984 at the age of 55 to Boca Raton, FL, when Howard accepted a position with New England Life Insurance. Helene had always been an avid tennis player and was sought after as a partner due to her natural athletic ability. She quickly developed a new circle of Florida friends by joining a tennis team. She also volunteered as a tutor for special needs elementary school children. She regularly visited Louisville during her Florida tenure to visit family, especially her parents who lived to be over 100 years old.

In 2011, she returned to Louisville with Howard because he had developed dementia. She knew they would obtain a higher level of care and have the

supportive presence of their lifelong friends. She never faltered in her commitment to Howard during those difficult years and laid him to rest in January 2013.

Helene lived a full life and was adored by those who knew her. She upheld the belief that life was to be happy, and she remained active and youthful until the end. She is survived by her adoring children and their families: Ann Brewer, partner, Joe Huttie, and son Andrew Plisner; Jon Grossman and son, Adam; Tom Jourden and daughter, Lexi; she is also survived by her brother, Jim Steinfeld and wife, Joyce; and many loving nieces and nephews.

The family held an intimate graveside service to honor Helene's request. In lieu of flowers at the family's request, expressions of sympathy may go to the donor's favorite charity.



Lenore Speckter (Lennie)

Lenore Speckter (Lennie) died on 1/19/2024 at the age of 89 in San Diego, Ca.

She was born in Brooklyn, N.Y. on March 29, 1934 and graduated from Erasmus Hall High School. Lennie then married and moved with her husband to Louisville, Ky. at the age of 19. She made lifelong friendships that she cherished long after she moved to Chapel Hill, N.C. and San Diego.

Throughout her life she was devoted to her family which included her children Lisa Schick, Hal Speckter, her grandchildren Wesley Schick (deceased), Braden Schick (Cacey Thomas), Mitchell Schick, her sister Ruth Leopold, and nephew David Leopold.

Donations can be made to the American Heart Association and the Humane Society.

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Hostage expert Jared Genser explains why Israel’s hostage crisis is uniquely challenging

By Eve Kessler
JTA

Jared Genser, a Washington, D.C.-based international human rights lawyer, has extracted hostages and political prisoners from some of the world’s worst dictatorships — usually in one-off deals following years of negotiation and on a rare occasion involving large sums of money.

But he’s concerned that piecemeal dealmaking with rogue actors encourages more kidnappings.

So Genser is proposing a new multilateral approach to fighting hostage-taking by nations like Iran, Russia, China, Venezuela, and Syria: a pact, like Article 5 of the NATO treaty, that would pledge signatories to taken collective action, including targeted sanctions and diplomatic pressure, against hostage-taking countries.

“The only way you can disrupt hostage taking is to create dramatically draconian disincentives — up front and in advance,” said Genser, 51. “Once a hostage has been taken, it’s too late.”

Genser’s insights about hostage dilemmas are particularly salient given Israel’s current predicament.

More than 230 hostages from Israel were taken captive into Gaza during Hamas’s Oct. 7 attack, and over 130 are still being held following hostage releases in November. While Genser is not involved in the efforts to free them, his assessment is that Israel’s hostage situation is much more complicated

than the state-sponsored extortion with which Genser regularly deals.

For one thing, Gaza is an active war zone. Additionally, the number of Israeli captives is tremendously high; some are presumed dead and those still alive likely are being moved from place to place. On top of it all, dealing with non-state actors such as Hamas is very different from dealing with states, according to Genser.

“You don’t have the same levers or capabilities to influence their behavior,” Genser said. With the fighting in Gaza “dramatically overshadowing everything,” he added, it’s “difficult to maintain a focus on the need to recover the hostages.”

Some things remain true, however, whether the abductor is Hamas or Iran, said Genser, now managing director of the public-affairs law firm Perseus Strategies.

“Rogue nations must be convinced that they will face severe consequences” for hostage-taking, Genser wrote in The Wall Street Journal in an opinion piece detailing his argument for a multilateral approach to fighting hostage-taking.

“If there are 50, 60, 70 countries threatening disproportionate consequences,” Genser said, rogue nations may conclude, “Well, maybe I need to move to a different strategy.”

As things stand, Hamas calculated that it had much to gain from taking captives. In 2011, Israel freed more than 1,000 security prisoners in exchange for one Hamas-held captive, Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit. Many, including Genser, believe that deal

incentivized Hamas to take more hostages.

Genser has ample experience dealing with Islamist extremists.

Last September, Genser helped free a U.S. citizen held for years in Iran’s notorious Evin Prison: Siamak Namazi (his father, Baquer Namazi, was also held hostage and freed in 2022). The son, an international business consultant from a prominent family in Shiraz, Iran, was jailed in 2014. His father, who had been living abroad, was lured back to Iran in 2016 with a promise to see his son and then was imprisoned, too.

Over the course of more than 20 years, Genser has helped free 341 political prisoners, and he has been referred to by The New York Times as “The Extractor” for his success in liberating political prisoners.

Genser represents most of these clients pro bono and with the help of Freedom Now, the human rights advocacy group he established two decades ago to advocate for prisoners of conscience. Freedom Now takes up their cases at the UN Human Rights Commission, gives them legal support, and advocates on their behalf in the press. Among the famous political prisoners on whose behalf Freedom Now has worked is Chinese democracy activist and Nobel Peace laureate Liu Xiaobo.

In 2010, Genser was honored by The Charles Bronfman Prize for his work to free prisoners of conscience worldwide. The Prize was established in 2004 by the children of Canadian philanthropist Charles Bronfman — Ellen Bronfman Hauptman and Stephen Bronfman together with their

spouses Andrew Hauptman and Claudia Blondin Bronfman — and is given to a Jewish humanitarian under the age of 50 whose work is grounded in Jewish values and benefits humanity universally.

Last September, Genser’s firm partnered with the REFORM Alliance, which works to change laws, systems and culture around probation and parole, to support the government of Costa Rica in presenting a joint statement from 74 countries on the importance of social reintegration of the formerly incarcerated as a matter of international human rights. The idea is to create global standards around measures needed to reintegrate formerly incarcerated individuals into society — including help with jobs, education, healthcare and housing. Interestingly, Genser said, both Israel and Palestine signed onto that statement.

Looking ahead, Genser said, Israel’s government has some tough decisions to make given the failure to date of its military campaign to free the hostages.

“At the end of the day, you need to cut a deal directly with the terrorists,” he said. “That means having to make very, very difficult and unpalatable choices.”

This story was sponsored by and produced in partnership with The Charles Bronfman Prize, an annual prize presented to a humanitarian whose innovative work fueled by their Jewish values has significantly improved the world. This article was produced by JTA’s native content team.

Jewish Lou

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NEWS

WESTERN GALILEE

Continued from page 1

Cooperative energy has been a key dynamic. “We have programs and activities were doing together, that bring Arabs and Jews together,” he explains, adding that post-October 7 realities made it necessary to pause some of these activities “because of the sensitivity of the situation that we are now in.”

Rosenberg is the first to acknowledge that Israel carries its own skewed sense of the routine. “Let’s say that on the normal days that we have – which are not ‘normal’ on any day in Israel – we have to bring people to the same table to be able to talk about connections between Arabs and Jews,” he explains. “We are trying all the time to find topics and to do deep work – between teens, mostly – and sometimes with adults and seniors. But now some of them are in the Army, so it’s difficult for them to continue with these programs, and in Sheikh Danun, which is Muslim.”

He is frustrated that outsiders, who obtain much of their information from sometimes unreliable media sources, don’t fully appreciate the complexities in play.

“They’re saying that there are Muslims, Israelis, Palestinians – and for some of them, it’s hard to understand the situation going on in Gaza and also in Lebanon,” Rosenberg observes, emphasizing that “we are trying not to bring the conflict to the table, which is very tough.”

The current imperative is to ratchet down tensions that might prove divisive.

“We’re saying that we’re going to leave it for a little bit,” he says, resuming certain programs “when the situation will make it much easier to be able to sit around the table.”

Samniya, in heritage and practice, is a lifelong proponent of Israeli-Arab cooperation.

“I grew up on a kibbutz,” he says. Nowadays, “you work on a lot of things inside your village, but it’s very important for me to be connected with other kibbutzim. So we make a lot of sports activities together; we make a lot of traveling together. It’s normal.”

He’s particularly proud of Sheikh Danun’s annual Coffee Festival, which attracts visitors from around the region and beyond – many of whom are hosted by village families. The festival provides an opportunity for people of diverse backgrounds “to meet each other around coffee – for Arabs, for Jews, for everyone in their homes – to sit and talk together. Last year 5,000 Jewish people visited Sheikh Danun. For some of them it was the first time they had visited an Arab village.”

The events of October 7 forced organizers to cancel this year’s festival, which was slated to get underway just a week afterward. Still, Samniya maintains an air of unfettered optimism about the power of human kinship. “If you know people, when you make friends, you have empathy for them,” he says.

Asked whether it became necessary to rebuild trust after October 7, Samniya answered this way: “What happened affected a lot of things between us. We are trying to understand these feelings. A



Girls gymnastic class at Mateh Asher community center (photo courtesy of Golan Rosenberg).

soldier – I know he has a son, he has a mother, he has family – the same people who are dying in other ways.”

Too many people, Samniya believes, treat all Arabs as if they were a single group, to be regarded as intrinsic enemies. He recalls talking by phone to his daughter – who’d been studying in Tel Aviv and was traveling that day by train – telling her to speak in Hebrew instead of Arabic to avoid drawing unwanted attention.

“What happened on 7 October nobody expected,” he says. For many Arabs who live in the Western Galilee, the weeks immediately following an eerie sense of unease. “After 7 October, we felt a little bit afraid,” he acknowledges. “We were a little bit afraid to speak Arabic, to travel, to study, to speak our language. We hide everything inside. If you put your Facebook status by mistake, there are a lot of Arab people who get arrested, like they were Hamas. I understand the feelings of those people: They are angry.”

The understandable reality is that “you are living in a Jewish country,” Samniya says. Still, not everything is defined by tension and unease, even in a time of war. “Golan is my boss and is also my best friend. He was trying to talk to me

about what his son is doing in the (IDF) Reserves, and he almost cried. I hugged him, and said I wished it was finished. And I know he cared about my daughter, and I take care of his son because it’s very, very dangerous.”

Lebanon, after all, is almost at their doorstep. “We have soccer fields that are something like 200 meters from the border,” Rosenberg says. “I’m sitting in my home, and we have (an installation) of artillery that’s sitting about 100 meters (away). And each night we hear the booms that go from it into Lebanon. It’s every night and every day. That’s our normal now.”

Given those circumstances, the community centers act as a refuge from the endemic, grinding anxiety. “We serve from birth until 99,” Rosenberg says. “It can be programs for seniors, sport activity, or just the library. It could be meeting to travel and walk in Israel on a Friday or Saturday. Everything is connected to the community. The mayor of Mateh Asher says that we are ‘a community of communities.’”

It may all come down to one indisputable fact: “We must live together,” Samniya says. “We don’t have any other choice.”



L-R from top: Karate fitness class at Mateh Asher community center; staff members at Sheikh Danun community center; L-R: Sheikh Danun community center head Ahmed Samniya next to Mateh Asher community center director Golan Rosenberg (photos courtesy of Golan Rosenberg).

Happy Purim!

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NEWS

ISRAEL FUND

Continued from page 1

Dear Chevre/Friends,

We will always remember October 7 - where we were when we heard the news, the days that followed as the enormity of the attack became clear, the uncertainty and fear. As the day-to-day pain and resolve for Israelis continues, the question of when the war will end has taken center stage.

Thank you for saying hineni - here I am - when tragedy occurred. You joined Jews across North America in supporting the Jewish people and our Jewish future by generously giving to the emergency campaign.

Our Louisville community has raised over \$1.5 million, while Jewish Federations together have raised over \$776 million. Our colleagues in Israel are working tirelessly to ensure your support will save and change lives.

Please know you are an integral part of writing the next chapter of our Jewish story.

On behalf of the Jewish Federation of Louisville, our board members and staff, I want to thank you personally for your commitment.

The report will provide some details highlighting how our funds are used and will support the resilience of the Jewish people.

Am Yisrael Chai,

Sara K. Wagner

Read the full report at jewishlouisville.org/IEC



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For more information about Partnership2Gether, contact Amy Fouts, p2g@jewishlouisville.org

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Fourth Session is April 16: The Current War

This session will look at the events that led up to the Hamas attack on the 7th of October 2023 and at some of the significant events during the war.

*The content of this session will be updated to reflect developments in the war.

More sessions to follow on a monthly basis through May 2024.

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NEWS

VIRTUAL REALITY

Continued from page 1

imagine happening as a result of insane, evil human behavior took place."

Friedman's presentation then segues from the pangs of despair to a declaration of hope via *Lala*, in which survivor Roman Kent "shares his story of a dog in Nazi-occupied Poland who taught him a timeless lesson: that love is stronger than hate." Here, VR mingles Kent's live testimony with animated sequences in which *Lala* ("doll") demonstrates unwavering devotion to her beleaguered family.

Next comes a USC Shoah Foundation interview with survivor Betty Gold, who tells how, through mere chance, her family escaped being executed by Nazi sympathizers. She recalls her father saying:

"Look, when they come here to kill us, this is what we're going to do. Don't wait. Get out and run. You'll get hurt on the run; you'll get shot -- but if they find us alive they'll cut us to pieces. Let them shoot you in the back; let them kill you, but don't stand there. And if anybody survives, we'll meet there, there, and there."

Last, and perhaps most immediately resonant, is *#WeRemember*, produced jointly by the Foundation and the World Jewish Congress.

"Man is capable of terrible things," says survivor Henia Goldman, "and at the same time, man is capable of very noble things."

"Because the Nazis are gone doesn't mean that evil is gone in this world,"

warns survivor George Papanek. There are recollections of genocide against Armenians, Rwandans, and other ethnic groups. We are challenged not simply to remember, but to confront such wrongs whenever and wherever we find them, to give true meaning to the phrase, *Never again!*

Friedman has organized demonstrations of his VR presentation for educators and has taken it to various classrooms around the state, and such locations as the Scott County Library, where student groups visited the United States Holocaust Museum's traveling exhibit, *Americans and the Holocaust*.

Whittaker was a key resource in molding what became the eventual VR package. "He allowed us to pilot it in his classroom," Friedman says, "and we got great feedback from the students that allowed us to improve our program before we rolled it out to more schools. We've had kids from Hazard come in, kids from Louisville -- from throughout the state."

"The experience was breathtaking," Whittaker recalls. "My students learned in ways which could never have occurred without their visit into the setting, which defines the Holocaust's greatest darkness, and creates some of that most powerful wisdom."

"Mr. Whittaker was really helpful," Friedman says, "especially with how to format it to make sure that it tells a story. The goal, especially with the last (segment), was to bring it all together into the modern day."

Asked how students typically react to the material, Friedman said that before



Parker Friedman

Impact is something Friedman appreciates first-hand. Last year, as the rain poured down, he and his family visited Auschwitz.

"It's massive," he says. "I had no clue before I went how big the actual camp was. But seeing it beforehand in virtual reality, I felt like I'd actually been in the places where I was now standing."

"The Shoah's lessons are spoken into

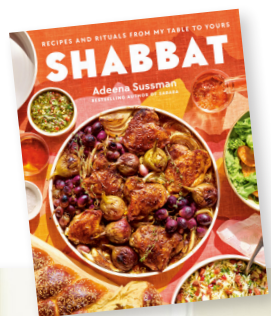
the presentation, "some of them might be laughing and joking, but at the end, it's all quiet and nobody's talking. Everybody's just processing what they just saw. I think that shows how impactful it is."

our souls," Whittaker says. "It is in this sacred space, in the geography of emotional landscape, where we learn some of life's most important lessons. So many people will never be able to travel to the killing fields in Poland -- most will never be able to visit Auschwitz. They can now through Parker's virtual reality, in a way that transcends what a teacher could ever do."

Indeed, "Holocaust educators ultimately hope that their students will be changed by what they encounter in the classroom," Whittaker emphasizes. "They hope the arc of their being will be bent towards compassion and justice and mercy. Bearing witness in the way that Parker's device allows is the closest thing to visiting. It blesses all who use it with the opportunity to create the kinds of interior journeys which allow us to learn with our hearts."

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