

JEWISH LOUISVILLE COMMUNITY

INSIDE:

Phase 1 of ceasefire begins with hostage releases

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The 27th Annual Louisville Jewish Film Festival wants to wow you

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor



Nobody can say that the Louisville Jewish Film Festival is one-dimensional.

The 27th edition of Kentucky's largest Jewish cinema celebration, which opens Feb. 8 and runs through Feb. 23 at the Trager Family JCC and elsewhere around town, offers 11 live and virtual film events. Add to this a smattering of special programs, and it becomes clear there's something to tantalize pretty much any moviegoer – Jewish or not.

"Our audience is as varied as we are, so we need to match that," says Janet Hodes, co-chair of the film selection committee. "We have some very serious films, and some very silly films. We have fiction and documentaries, films about contemporary and historical issues. There's something relevant in all of these. It's why we have a Jewish Film

Festival – to explore and help people learn something new about Jewish life."

Take, for example, "Sabbath Queen" (Feb. 23 at the Speed Museum) – director Sandi Simcha DuBowski's 2024 documentary filmed over the course of 21 years that – as its synopsis relates -- "follows Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie's epic journey as the dynastic heir of 38 generations of Orthodox rabbis including the Chief Rabbis of Israel."

"Lau-Lavie, an Israel-born gay man who just a few years before entering New York's Jewish Theological Seminary had been a pillar of a 'God-optional' community," New York Times reviewer Elisabeth Vincentelli wrote this past November.

"How he went from the Radical Faeries' joyous, transgressive vision of queerness — which led to creating his drag alter ego, Rebbetzin Hadassah Gross — to embracing Conservative Judaism is the subject of Sandi DuBowski's fascinating look at the act of questioning yourself and your family, your surroundings and your decisions."

"It's part of our messaging – building bridges," explains Tricia Kling Siegwald, Senior Director, Adult Programming at the Jewish Federation of Louisville and the Trager Family JCC. "That's part of



Film still from *Bad Shabbos*.

our mission: being inclusive."

DuBowski will participate in a post-showing virtual discussion at the Speed.

Want something a bit breezier (that also has Shabbat in its title)? Then check out the festival's opening film, "Bad Shabbos" (Feb. 8, in which a Friday night dinner devolves into a murder mystery – well, sort of).

"This goes along with our opening night event's 'whodunnit' theme," Siegwald says, declining – with a bit of a wink – to elaborate. "I don't want to give

away all the surprises right now about that night," she teased, adding that some fortunate film buff will walk away with a gift card to Louisville's high-end beef emporium, Repeal Oak Fired Steakhouse.

And before "Bad Shabbos" hits the screen at the Trager Family JCC's Shapira Foundation Auditorium, ticket holders can sample hors d'oeuvres, and Siegwald promises, "a mocktail related to the theme of the event."

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For Louisville Orchestra CEO Graham Parker, Judaism is very much a family affair

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

Once upon a time there was a young Jewish man growing up in northwest London who liked to sing. And pray. And when circumstances dictated, to question God.

His name was Graham Parker – the same Graham Parker who's now CEO of the Louisville Orchestra. His Jewish journey has included dynamics on both sides of the Atlantic, in Israel – extending as well to an embrace of spirituality beyond the norms of nominal Judaism. He is a U.K. native married to a psychologist living in New York City with their two adopted, multiracial children. In other words, life is conspicuously, vigorously, and more often than not, joyously full.

He's also been largely responsible for

nurturing an imaginative relationship between the LO and Louisville's Jewish community. Just days ago, the orchestra acknowledged International Holocaust Remembrance Day with a rare performance of Viktor Ullmann's opera *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, which was sponsored in part by the Jewish Heritage Fund.

"Graham is a great asset for our community and has been an excellent partner to the Jewish Federation of Louisville and local synagogues in the past," says Matt Golden, General Counsel & Chief Impact Officer at the Federation and the Trager Family JCC.

Two years ago, as director of the Jewish Community Relations Council, Golden was the Federations point person in organizing meetings between area synagogues and Black churches – alongside

See **PARKER** on page 4

After the gunshots, *Room 1214* dares us to look away

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

It was a spasm of carnage all too familiar amid the annals of American gun violence: a teenager brandishing an assault rifle strides into a school, opens fire and within minutes renders a place of quiet study into a scene of unfathomable horror.

So it was on the afternoon of February 14, 2018 — Valentine's Day — when a 19-year-old former student returned to Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., shooting 17 people to death while wounding 17 others. That was terrible enough.

Yet somehow even more terrible – as if that were even possible – was that several victims were gunned down as they sat in a classroom learning about the Holocaust. Out of that supreme irony emerged *Room 1214*, playwright Mi-



Actress Anabelle Gurwitch with fellow cast members in a scene from New Light Theater Project's original production of *Room 1214* that opened off-Broadway in November 2024 (photo by Hunter Canning).

chelle Kholos Brooks' self-imposed imperative to make sense out of what can only be called senselessness.

The play, which had its premiere in 2024 in a staging by the New York City-

See **ROOM 1214** on page 14

We stand with the people of Israel

Jewish Federation of Louisville | Trager Family JCC
jewishlouisville.org/StandWithIsrael

THE DASHBOARD

Word of the Month

The empowering delight of learning Hebrew



D'var Torah

Cantor
Sharon Hordes

When my sister and I were little, we loved travelling to Maryland to visit our grandparents. They would always have our favorite foods ready for us, take us to see the sights in Washington, D.C. and basically spoil us rotten. One of our least favorite parts of visiting them, however, was the scary portrait of our great-great-grandmother hanging in my father's parents' basement. It was a larger-than-life, faded, sepia-toned image of an old lady, sitting in an even older wooden chair, her head covered, scowling at the camera with her fists clenched. For years I thought of her only as this stern, frightening ancestor – despite not having any other information about her, including why this giant portrait was displayed in the first place.

We are fortunate to have a professional historian in our family: my father's brother, Dr. Stanley Hordes. Over the years, his dogged research has allowed us to connect a name - Rochel-Leah Cohen - to the grim-faced lady in the basement. And as it turned out, Rochel-Leah was also a pioneer in girls' literacy. Back in the heavily Jewish town of Jakobstadt (then Russia, now Latvia) during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, she taught generations of boys and girls how to read Hebrew. Those students included a young girl -- my great-grandmother Sara Wasserman - who grew up to marry Rochel-Leah's grandson, my great-grandfather Harry Morewitz.

Just a few years ago, my sister shared the story of Rochel-Leah with our cousin, the award-winning (and incredibly prolific) children's book author Jane Yolen, who had no idea that our shared ancestor was a respected Hebrew teacher at a time when women often didn't have access to a formal education. Jane brought the story to life in a delightful picture book that was published last September, *The Many Problems of Rochel-Leah* (Behrman House). Although Rochel-Leah herself never left Jakobstadt to come to the U.S., her legacy lives on through numerous descendants who have made Jewish learning and amplification of Jewish voices a top priority.

I've been thinking about Rochel-Leah recently as I teach my latest cohort of adult Hebrew classes, including the preparatory class for the Adult B'nai Mitzvah. Just as has been

the case before, many of my students are grown women who had little to no access to Hebrew schooling when they were younger. This has always puzzled me, since I do not know of any halachic reasoning for denying girls and women a Hebrew education. While there are verses in the Gemara (rabbinical commentaries) supporting the idea that women are not obligated to spend time away from their domestic duties to fulfil the mitzvah of Talmud Torah (the study of Torah), I could not find anything from the Mishneh Talmud prohibiting women from learning how to read and understand Hebrew. Sadly, I believe this is yet another example of scholars interpreting our texts to support gender bias.

I have long been inspired by these adult women's desire to learn to read and translate the Hebrew prayers, and I have always enjoyed watching them work hard to master a skill they had been denied so long ago. Once my students are able to decode the letters and vowels and learn a few shorashim (Hebrew roots) for some of the main prayer vocabulary words, the meanings of the prayers and blessings start to rise off the page.

Rochel Leah will certainly be on my mind as I host the 2025 Women Cantors Network (WCN) conference here in Louisville this June 8-12. The WCN was founded in 1982 by a small but determined group of women who were trained as cantors but were not yet welcome to join the existing professional cantors' organizations. Over the last 43 years, the WCN has been a place for continuing education, inspiration, music sharing, commissioning of new liturgical pieces, and mentorship. If you are interested in volunteering and/or attending some of the few events that will be open to the public, please let me know.

Learning more about my great-great-grandmother has enabled me to view that once-feared portrait through a new lens and a softer filter. I am proud to be her descendant and to carry on her mission of unlocking the doors of Hebrew mastery for anyone who is interested. If she were alive today, I wonder what she would think about the sheer numbers of female rabbis and cantors within the more progressive Jewish communities. Meanwhile, if you have always wanted to learn how to read Hebrew but were not given the opportunity, please contact me at shordes@kenesethisrael.com for more information about our Introduction to Hebrew for Adults class schedule.

Sharon Hordes is hazzan at Keneseth Israel Congregation

Snapshots



One of the goals of the Senior Social Club at the Trager Family JCC is to help seniors make friendships and socialize. We are thrilled that Wanda Bohannon and Bud Waski not only found a community, they also found love! Bud and Wanda met through the Senior Social Club and got engaged. We wish them mazel tov to a lifetime full of happiness.

Candles

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

- February 7 @ 5:55 p.m.
- February 14 @ 6:02 p.m.
- February 21 @ 6:10 p.m.
- February 28 @ 6:17 p.m.

Contacts

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

Send it along to *Community* at community@jewishlouisville.org.

Not getting your paper? Want to subscribe? Putting your subscription on hold? Gayle Shoemaker can handle

all circulation questions. She can be reached at gshoemaker@jewishlouisville.org or 502-238-2770.

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, February 17** (though sooner is better).

The paper will be published on **Friday, February 28**.

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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That also is where you can find breaking news ahead of our print deadline.

Maybe you like the look of a real paper without the, er ... pa-

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If you read on the run, *Community's* social media is just the thing. Follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/JewishLouisville/ or on Twitter, twitter.com/JewishLouNews, for the latest Jewish news from Kentucky and around the world.

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NEWS

PARKER

Continued from page 1

the LO's "Journeys of Faith" concert series featuring works by Jewish and Black composers.

"We so appreciate him and the Jewish Heritage Fund's investment in the Louisville Orchestra's continued stewardship of Jewish stories," Golden says.

Parker grew up in the London neighborhood of Edgemere, which in the 1970s and 1980s of his youth was solidly Jewish. His father was an accountant; his mother became an accomplished hairdresser.

Mom "was a natural saleswoman," Parker recalls. Alongside styling hair, she worked in retail selling books to schools, an enterprise perfectly suited to what Parker says was her "very chatty" disposition. He says his father was more reserved, at least outwardly.

"It was a very traditional kind of environment," he says. "My parents were not practical, observant Jews in the strictest sense, but Jewish values were incredibly important. My mother grew up in a more observant household than my father, so she was a bit more of the enforcer about what she didn't want us to do on Friday night. We watched TV, but she didn't want us to do our homework or look at the time.

"I didn't really understand why she made those distinctions," Parker acknowledges, "but looking back on it, that was her way of creating a Friday night environment for the family."

As he grew older, Judaism became a defining conduit to adulthood. Where some adolescents regarded religious studies more as a burden than a blessing, Parker saw his looming Bar Mitzvah as something to revel in. It marked a period when "my interest in Judaism really started to grow. My parents organized what they used to call a 'bar mitzvah breakfasts,' where they'd have Sunday mornings where learn to bench (prayers of thanks recited after a meal) and go to shul."

At the same time Parker was studying piano and flute. He sang in his school's choir – a practice he continued decades later when living in New York. Eventually, though, the pressures of too many outside activities prompted him to cease his piano lessons. "I was spread very thin," he says.

In 1988 he enrolled in Oxford Brookes University, located in the same town as the unrelated University of Oxford. For a time, he considered majoring in music – but soon realized he wasn't quite gifted enough. "I was told – and I think it was right -- 'You're good, but you're not *that* good.'"

What Parker was exceptionally good at was "management and leadership."

"I took one of those career aptitude tests when I was, I think, 16 – it came back and said, 'Hotel Management.' And I was like, 'Huh?' I hadn't really thought about it, but I did love to cook. All my weekend and summer jobs were working in kitchens, or working in a food truck, whatever. I was very adept in the kitchen."

(One such job had him managing an Oxford sandwich shop, where a regular customer was Tom Parker-Bowles – whose mother, Camilia Parker-Bowles, is now Queen Camilla to Britain's King Charles III.)

Hotel Management... "I was like, 'Actually, that sounds kind of cool,' Parker says. "So, I did it."

What was principally responsible for his revelation: nature or nurture? Some of both, Parker believes.

"It's not something I seem to work at," he says. "I definitely have read a lot about leadership. But I feel like it's an instinct for me. I will say that both of my parents were very leaderful people. Maybe not on the business side, but in their community service. My father and my mother were very involved in the Rotary movement – my mother was district governor; my father was district governor, and my father was on the national committee."

Graham Parker also found inspiration as a Boy Scout, crediting his scout leader – a fellow named Alan – for instilling an enduring set of values. Later on, as a college student fulfilling a work-study requirement, he gained further insight.

"It was the first time I worked with a boss," he says. "I used to spend a lot of time observing him – how he led, how he'd lead a meeting. He took the time to mentor me. If I asked him questions – 'How would you approach this?' – he'd spend time explaining it to me. And later in my career, once I moved to the States, I had some very powerful mentors who are still close to me."

Parker made that move in 1995, when he was 25 and eager to broaden his professional horizons blending music and management. He landed in New York City with only a vague idea of what would come next.

Initially he fell back on the familiar: managing a restaurant. But that wasn't much of a career boost, not for a guy pointing himself toward the classical music business.

Six weeks later he spotted a classified ad in the New York Times that read, "prominent arts organization seeks marketing assistant," with a P.O. box attached. "So, I sent in my resumé and a cover letter, and about a week later I got a call from the New York Philharmonic. And after a couple of interviews, they offered me the job" – title: Operations Coordinator.

It was the beginning of what would evolve into a rapid professional trajectory that would include senior positions with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Brooklyn Philharmonic, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and NYC classical radio station WQXR. Then he moved on to what would be his most prominent gig: president of Decca Records U.S., part of the Universal Music Group conglomerate, where (in his own words) he was "responsible for the classical labels of the largest music company in the world."

But the classical record business was buffeted by the not-so-brave new world of streaming services, and after five years Parker was ready to move on. It was then – in the fall of 2021 – that he was hired as the Louisville Orchestra's interim executive director, working alongside the young, innovative (and Jewish) music director Teddy Abrams. One year later he was named the orchestra's full-time CEO.

Under Parker and Abrams, the LO has fostered programming that reflects its creative synergy with Louisville's Jewish community. In March of 2023 the orchestra presented a powerful installment in its four-year "Journeys of Faith" series – a collaboration with the Jewish Community Relations Council and several area churches that included a performance of Leonard Bernstein's Symphony No. 2 ("The Age of Anxiety").

"We had a good level of engagement from the JCRC and (Keneseth Israel Congregation) Rabbi Ben Freed," Parker



L-R: Graham Parker, Georgie Parker-Benson, Max Parker-Benson and Adam Benson (photo courtesy of Graham Parker)

says, "who was leading a kind of pan-community, pan-faith Christian-Jewish dialogue. They came to the concerts together – it was a powerful collaboration, and we were very grateful."

Freed recalls connecting with Parker about concerns that one of the "Journeys of Faith" concerts fell on Shabbat. "I asked to speak to someone at the orchestra." Freed says. So "Graham and I get on Zoom, and he asks me how my *chag* was – this was right after Passover. And I was like, 'Wait a second -- who's this guy? -- he speaks my language!' Since then, Graham has been a terrific thought partner and connector with the Jewish community."

Lipp, too, admires how the orchestra making its case to Jewish Louisvillians.

"I've been overwhelmed with the creativity of the Parker/Abrams team in ways far beyond outreach to the Jewish community," he says.

"Putting on (Gershwin's) *Rhapsody in Blue* and Bernstein's *Mass* were early highlights for me," Lipp adds, "as well as the many times the orchestra performed at synagogues, including ours, with incredible programs. As for the Black/Jewish initiative -- I was blown away with the multi-year vision, creativity and opportunity for learning that went along with it."

These days Parker splits his time between Louisville and New York City, where his husband – psychologist Adam Benson – lives with their adopted children, son Max, 17, who is black; and daughter Georgie, 15, who is biracial.

"When Adam and I met (in 1999 when they were both singing in the same NYC choir) we both wanted a family. Our Jewish background was very important to both of us. We quickly realized adoption was the way we wanted to go, but we waited a long time before doing it – at that time it was not as common to find guys who had successfully adopted."

From the start, "we have raised them as Jewish," Parker says. "We took them to a mikvah when they were each two or three.

"It's been a real eye-opener to raise black children as Jewish," he's observed, adding that their daughter has embraced her faith with particular fervor.

"Georgie has always been a little more interested in it," Parker says. "She also has taken a considerable interest in Israel, where she celebrated her Bat Mitzvah. (and where Benson lived for a year as a 19-year-old studying at a Jerusalem ye-

shiva, has family). "She's a real Zionist."

Typically alternating week to week between Louisville and New York, Parker realizes that parenthood carries its share of bumps. "To raise a family like ours and think it's not different from everyone else's would be foolish," he acknowledges. "So, we've adapted. We're lucky that in our neighborhood there's a very accepting, socially expansive, traditional shul we go to."

Parker is unabashedly curious about spirituality apart from Judaism – at one point he studied at One Spirit Interfaith Seminary for ordination as an interfaith minister.

"I felt called to build on my foundation as a very committed Jew to study many other religions, to learn how to be of service to people on many different spiritual paths and to create ritual for them," he remarked last year in a public Facebook post. "It is to this day, the greatest spiritual work I have ever done."

That much said, "Judaism has always been my foundational kind of path," he emphasizes. "But my spiritual journey has widened and become a bit more ecumenical."

Meanwhile, what are the prospects for further Louisville-based collaborations? "We will continue to do programming that both has musical relevance to the Jewish community...or messages that are important to that community," Parker says. "It's important that we reach out and try to build that relationship."

Kid's Night Out

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Drop off: 5:30 - 6 p.m.
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Questions? Contact Jesse at jbarfield@jewishlouisville.org
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J Trager Family JCC

FORUM

For 135 years, Louisville has had a place for Jews to gather



State of
The J

Thomas
Wissinger

Benjamin Harrison was president, Idaho and Wyoming joined the Union becoming the 43rd and 44th states, respectively, and Louisville was represented in the World Series where our very own Louisville Colonels, led by star pitcher Scott Stratton, TIED the Brooklyn Bridegrooms and their feared power hitter Oyster Burns, 3-3-1. And in that same year of 1890, while the Colonels were swinging away at Eclipse Park, just a few miles eastward the Young Men's Hebrew Association first opened its doors to Louisville's Jewish and general communities.

That's right -- six years before the Duryea Motor Wagon became the first automobile to hit the market, Louisville's Jewish community had the foresight to create a gathering place where individuals from all walks of life could join together and build community within community. Now, 135 years later, we continue that mission of creating communities within the Trager Family JCC's

walls. Indeed, embracing togetherness and unity is needed today as much as it was all those years ago.

Not having grown up in Louisville, I lacked a foundational connection to its JCC. But when I still lived in Virginia, I knew at least a few people from Louisville who'd spent part of their childhood summers at the JCC. The interesting aspect to their stories, which I did not understand at the time, was that none of these individuals who shared their stories of the JCC were Jewish. And my favorite story was about Jewish and non-Jewish children working together to make the JCC a part of their summer -- by sneaking through a hole in the fence to the outdoor pools! While I cannot endorse anyone sneaking into the outdoor pool next summer, this memory not only speaks to the fun of summer and kids simply being kids, it demonstrates how the Jewish Community Centers are a welcoming homes to people of all faiths and backgrounds, no matter which door, or hole in the fence, one comes through.

However, after being in Louisville and working at the former and now Trager Family JCC for the last 11 years, I have been able to experience firsthand the magic that happens within our walls. When we embarked on the journey to build the Trager Family JCC, it was inspiring to hear the community come together to understand that while we are building a new facility today, we are really creating a foundational component of both the Jewish community and general

community for decades to come. A place where the Jewish community can come together, in good times and not so good times, to create connections, be together and commune with one another. Where individuals from all walks of life, both Jewish and non-Jewish, can form community, and see each other as people instead of stereotypes. Each and every day, the more than 1,500 people who walk through our doors are giving themselves the opportunity not only to meet friends, but also to create new relationships with people that they'd never have met if not for the Trager Family JCC.

As I mentioned previously, not being born and raised in Louisville means that I cannot add to the stories that I hear from other people in which Louisville's JCC made such an impact on their lives. But I am thrilled that my kids do have that opportunity, where they will grow up understanding how pivotal a role the Trager Family JCC played during their formative years. My sons and daughter could tell you how much the JCC has meant to them, even if they truly don't understand the full scope of this influence at their young age. From preschool to CenterStage, summer camp and working in J-Play, my kids know that they have a second home at the J, and I couldn't be prouder to have the Trager Family JCC be a part of their personal journey.

Over this next year, you will hear quite a bit about our 135th anniversary (which we celebrated on January 14), and I for-

mally invite everyone reading this to come to the Trager Family JCC for any of the myriad celebrations that we have planned. However, when you do, I encourage you to think about everyone that has come before you to make this community as strong as it is today. Perhaps most importantly, think about what difference you can make in the community today, and how you can make the world a better place for the generations ahead.

While we at the Trager Family JCC are not able to solve the world's problems, we can, and do, make a positive difference in the corner of the world we call home. In 1890 the founders of the YMHA, led by Isaac Wolfe Bernheim, sought to do just that and created a home for Jews -- who were excluded from similar facilities -- and individuals from all faith backgrounds. They discovered that a defining truth: what they have in common is much stronger than how they differ. And while I don't know if Mr. Bernheim could have foreseen that the legacy of the YMHA would still be going strong 135 years later, I'd like to think that he and the other founders would look at us approvingly over a century later as we carry the banner into year 135 and for many, many years beyond.

Thomas Wissinger is Vice President of the Jewish Community of Louisville and Executive Director of the Trager Family JCC.

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Trager Family JCC

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Solidarity Mission
October 2025

Join us for meaningful experiences in the Western Galilee: volunteer with local Israelis, learn about new initiatives, and meet heroes of resilience. Additional travel opportunities available.

College Student Seminar
December 2025

Students and professors from the US and Budapest will engage with Israeli students and academics at the Western Galilee College during Winter Break 2025-26.

P2G Book Club

May 2025

Grab a copy and start reading *House on Endless Waters* by Emuna Elon, a fascinating tale of one man's journey to unlock his past and discover his true self.

Date for Zoom discussion and RSVP coming soon.

For more information, contact Amy Fouts, afouts@jewishlouisville.org.

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Jewish Federation
OF LOUISVILLE

COMMUNITY

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

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

Community reserves the right to refuse to publish any letter, to edit for brevity while preserving the meaning, and to limit the number of letters published in any edition. To submit items to Newsmakers, Around Town or Lifecycle, please email them to community@jewishlouisville.org.

Email your comments and letters to the editor to: community@jewishlouisville.org.

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FORUM



In the Middle East, hope is one thing, reality another



Mindful Ramblings

Andrew Adler

If the tortured history of the Middle East has taught us anything, it's that the transition from war and destruction to peace and tranquility is at best tenuous and at worst catastrophic.

How many times over how many generations have we dared to hope for conflict to be resolved, or at least substantially diminished, only to see those hopes dashed against the rocks of bitter reality (please forgive the ungainly metaphor). This is a region where violence begets violence with numbing regularity, and woe to anyone naïve enough to believe that good intentions alone are sufficient. They almost never are.

Emotions often get the best of us. A few weeks ago, when three female hostages were released after spending 471 days captive inside Hamas's Gaza tunnels (four more followed soon afterward), the Jewish world erupted in rapturous gratitude. And why not – we and their families had been waiting, praying, crying, imploring for so long – no wonder the news prompted joyful exultation. For a moment, we could nudge the horrors of October 7 to the side in favor of collective celebration.

For a moment.

Then it was time to come back to earth. True, there was a ceasefire in Gaza that appeared to be holding – but really, was a week or two of success cause for genuine optimism? Phase One of a three-phase agreement between Israel and Hamas

dangled the prospect of gaining freedom for 33 women, children and men over 50, but we all know that in this region, promises are broken as often as they are kept.

And as if to drive home the point that conflict begets momentum all its own, within days of the ceasefire in Gaza, Israel was conducting what prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu termed an “extensive and significant” operation in and around the West Bank city of Jenin.

Operation Iron Wall, eerily similar to Gaza's Operation Swords of Iron (not to mention the Iron Dome anti-missile defense system – “Iron” seems to be the Noun du Jour in these parts) represents yet another front for the overburdened Israel Defense Forces, who remain active in Lebanon. The West Bank – which the United Nations and much of the world considers to be under illegal Israeli occupation – has devolved from a flashpoint into a morass. Israeli settlers kill Palestinian civilians, Palestinian terrorists kill Israeli settlers (and now, IDF soldiers).

It never, never ends. In Gaza, Hamas looks nothing like an utterly defeated enemy. Israelis celebrated the IDF's October 16, 2024 assassination of Hamas leader (and October 7 principal architect) Yahya Sinwar, only to wake up not long ago to find Sinwar's brother, Mohammed, in charge of the organization. Hamas personnel crowded the streets, shouting their slogans and vowing to continue their resistance. As Yogi Berra liked to say, it's déjà-vu all over again.

So much for Bibi's vow of total victory. Yes, the IDF has killed thousands of Hamas fighters (along with thousands of Palestinian civilians), slashing the number of Hamas combat troops from 24 battalions to two, but there is a growing consensus that, within Gaza's shattered cityscapes, there are plenty of fighters-in-waiting eager to take their place. It's a variation on the truism that you can kill a man, but you

can't kill an idea.

What does this mean for us at home? More uncertainty, that's what. We can only speculate what Donald Trump and Marco Rubio, his newly-installed Secretary of State, will do in the realm of Middle East policy. Perhaps they'll devote their energies to building on the Abraham Accords achieved during Trump's previous term of office – a possible conduit to normalizing relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia (cue rustling in the halls of the Nobel Peace Prize). With Iran, Syria and Lebanon shadows of their former selves, opportunities abound.

Meanwhile, much of our attention remains on Gaza and the remaining hostages, living and dead. Phase One will likely inch forward, hostages trickling out, like the first three bearing Hamas's “gift bags” containing printed certificates of captivity – an irony that would be laughable were it not so utterly grotesque.

As to Phases Two and Three – well, right now they are mere ciphers. A substantial number of Israelis – not simply far-right politicians like ex-national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir and finance minister Bezalel Smotrich – want to resume the war in Gaza and, by extension, occupy the Strip permanently. Still others favor annexing the entire West Bank, shattering any prospect for a so-called “two-state solution.”

Here at the Trager Family JCC, a large banner bearing hostages' names remains standing in the Weisberg Family Lobby, next to an empty chair topped with yellow ribbons. If prayer, politics, fortitude and fortune hold out, the captive hostages eventually will return home, and we may at last consign that banner, and its ribbons, to our shared pangs of memory.

Andrew Adler is the Managing Editor of Community.

FORUM

The images of a homecoming



Impact

Matt Golden

When reason fails us, we must embrace the absurdity of hope. As I write this, seven Jewish women have just returned home to Israel after more than 470 days in Hamas captivity. Three were released on Jan. 19: Romi Gonen, Emily Damari, and Doron Steinbrecher. On October 7, 2023, Romi was abducted from the Nova music festival, where 364 people were killed and 40 people were taken hostage. Emily and Doron were kidnapped from Kibbutz Kfar Aza where 62 people were killed and 19 taken hostage.

Then, on Jan. 25, Liri Albag, Daniella Gilboa, Karina Arie, and Naama Levy, all aged between 19 and 20, were able to come home. All four were abducted from a forward operating base in Naral Oz where they served as new-recruit lookouts.

Like many of you, I feel we know these women personally. I have heard their names read in the streets at October 7 gatherings and memorials; I have read them out loud myself. Their names are emblazoned on banners where I work;

ribbons are wrapped around our trees calling for their release. I've been to countless briefings about their abduction.

Early on, representatives from the Israeli consulate in Atlanta briefed the Kentucky State Legislature over the October 7 attack and several of us were invited to attend. At the briefing, the Israeli consulate officials shared a video of the abduction of the women at Naral Oz. I remember watching that video of Liri, Daniella, Karina and Naama being taken hostage, lined up against a wall in their bloody pajamas, crying and huddled with their female comrades while Hamas men looked on and preened for the camera.

But there was one abduction that really stood out for me: Naama Levy. Right after October 7, a video surfaced of Naama being dragged by her hair at gun point out of the back of a black jeep. Her hands were bound, her ankles cut, she was shoeless, the back of her sweatpants was covered in blood. Whenever I thought about the hostages over the last year and half, that video of Naama was the first thing to come to mind. I simply could not have fathomed she would still be alive.

And yet, Naama is alive. She and Doren, Emily, Liri, Daniella, Karina and Nomi are now home. When my friend and colleague Sara Wagner said, "as a Jewish mother, to see them coming home, it's my family coming home," I understood her completely.

More than 26 more hostages are set to be released over the course of the next several weeks. We know them in the same way, from Kfir Bibas, aged 2, to Shlomo Mansour, age 86. There are phases set for even more to be released if this ceasefire holds. And it has to hold. There is too much at stake.

I watched the ceremony choreographed by Hamas for the hostage turnover. Hamas set up a raised stage in the middle of Palestine Square in Gaza City. As a backdrop for the stage, it erected a 40-foot-long printed banner lambasting Israel and claiming victory over the "Nazi Zionists." Hundreds of Hamas soldiers were there, in full uniform wearing masks and their "trademark" green headbands. They marched or drove in on clean motorcycles or freshly washed cars.

The women had lanyards around their necks like they were just leaving a convention in the Midwest, not leaving a year and a half of captivity. They were paraded before the crowd of thousands, mostly men, who were whistling and screaming like they were at a political rally. Just before they climbed the stairs to the stage, the hostages were given gift bags which apparently included hats, keychains and certificates memorializing their "stay." The hostages gave a thumbs up and waved to the crowd and then walked hand-in-hand to a Red Cross vehicle to be taken home.

At one point during the ceremony, an old Palestinian woman walked on the

stage with what I can only describe as a white frilly Easter basket filled with glitter bombs which she showered on the Hamas soldiers. The thousands of Gazans standing around on rubble whistled and shouted in celebration as the Hamas army raised their hands in victory.

Clean cars. Gift bags. Glitter bombs. Screen-printed stage backdrops. Hamas was conveying a message of capability. It sickened me to watch the parading of Jewish women like this, turning the last 477 days into a staged photo op over who "won." Casualty estimates from the Hamas-run health ministry would indicate around 47,000 Palestinians are dead in the conflict. There are wide ranges of estimates as to how many of those were combatants and how many civilians. Much of Gaza is destroyed and Israeli society will never be the same. Rational thought is out the window, there are no winners here.

There is a philosopher that I like, a Jew named Benjamin Fondane, who said, "When reason pushes us into the abyss, it is the absurd that saves us in every instance. . . absurd reality is the only one that has an emergency exit." Let's embrace the absurdist's dream of bringing hostages home.

Matt Golden is Chief Impact and Strategy Officer of the Jewish Federation of Louisville and the Trager Family JCC.

Flavors of Israel

A NIGHT WITH TWO CHEFS & TWO SHINSHINIM

March 4, 2025

A DINNER AT MEESH MEESH MEDITERRANEAN



PREPARED BY



Chef Uri Arnold
UMAMI PR and Consulting
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&



Chef Noam Bilitzer
Meesh Meesh Mediterranean
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Louisville, Kentucky, USA

THIS EVENT BENEFITS LOUISVILLE'S SHINSHINIM PROGRAM.

HOSTED BY: DARA WOODS, CHAIR; BECKY ADMONY, ANGELA KATZ, LISA KLEIN, ROBERT KLEIN, TAMAR SCHWARTZ, LINDA SPIELBERG, AND HOWARD WAGNER

Two seatings with limited availability. Tickets are \$180 per person.

For more information and to register please visit jewishlouisville.org/meeshmeesh.
Registration will open on February 10, at 10 a.m.







J ENRICHMENT

<p>Mondays <i>Lego Club</i> Bricks4Kidz</p>	<p>5 - 6 p.m. For children grades K-5 11 Sessions February - April</p>
<p>Tuesdays <i>Chess Club</i> Urban Chess League</p>	<p>5 - 6 p.m. For children grades 1-5 11 Sessions February - April</p>
<p>Wednesdays <i>Dance/Creative Movement</i> Jane Biek</p>	<p>4 - 4:30, 4:30 - 5 p.m. For pre-k children (ages 3-5) 11 Sessions February - April</p>
<p>Thursdays <i>Monk-Y Warrior</i> Angelica Ortega parkour, gymnastics, calisthenics, yoga, breath work, meditation, & capoeira</p>	<p>4 - 4:30, 4:30 - 5 p.m. For pre-k children (ages 3-5)</p> <p>5 - 6 p.m. For children grades K-5 11 Sessions February - April</p>

*Holiday closures may effect these dates.



Questions? Contact Jesse at jbarfield@jewishlouisville.org
jcclouisville.org/enrichment



PICTURE THIS: TILES & TASTY BITES



On January 16, community members gathered in the Trager Family JCC's Kohn Family Town Square for an evening of MahJong, Rummikub, and friendship. A good time, with a side of friendly competition, was had by all.

(Photos by Trager Family JCC Staff)





Tu B'Shvat Program and Seder

February 23, 2025 | 1pm - 3pm



PJ Our Way will be hosting a Tu B'Shvat activity led by Waylon Riley, our JOFEE Educator, at the Trager Family JCC! Please RSVP below if you are able to attend. This program is geared toward children ages 8-12 and their grown-ups, however younger and/or older siblings are welcome to attend.

Scan to RSVP!
Or visit tinyurl.com/pj-tubshvat









HIGH SCHOOL MUSICAL

FEB. 20 - MAR. 9, 2025

S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				20 7:30 P.M.		22 7:30 P.M.
23 2 P.M.				27 7:30 P.M.		1 7:30 P.M.
2 2 P.M.				6 7:30 P.M.		8 7:30 P.M.
9 2 P.M.						

Tickets On Sale Now!

To Purchase



Scan the QR code or visit jclouisville.org/centerstage

Questions? Contact us at JARTSideas@jewishlouisville.org, or call (502) 238-2797.



PICTURE THIS: SENIORS' NEW YEAR PARTY

On Sunday, January 19, the Trager Family JCC hosted the annual New Year's Party to celebrate and thank our Senior Social Club members. Dara Cohen, Senior Programming Director, gave a special thank you and recognition to our dedicated Senior Program volunteers, whose work makes the program so special to so many seniors. The celebration included a delicious meal from the Trager Family JCC's own Chef Helen and a performance by comedian, Keith McGill.

(Photos by Mackenzie Lynch)



CLUB J Before & After School Program

Club J is a before & after-school program set in our fun Camp J environment run by our Camp J Staff. Children enrolled in Club J will play games, participate in a variety of activities each week including swim, receive homework help, and spend time with their friends.

*Transportation available. We will still accept kids even if we cannot transport them.**

Optional Add-on Enrichment Classes:

Legos, Chess, Monk-Y Warrior

CLUB J BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM MONTHLY RATES

Schools & Times	Times	Member	Non-Member
Club J Before Care Field, Alex R Kennedy	7:30 – 9:30 a.m.	\$356.00	\$442.50
Club J After School 2:30 St Matthews, Bloom, Holy Trinity	2:30 – 6:00 p.m.	\$529.00	\$615.50
Club J After School 3:30 Hawthorne	3:30 – 6:00 p.m.	\$459.80	\$546.30
Club J After School 4:30 Field	4:30 – 6:00 p.m.	\$356.00	\$442.50

*** PRICING WILL BE PRORATED BASED ON THE DATE OF REGISTRATION. WE ARE LICENSED BY THE STATE AND ACCEPT CCAP.**

Questions?

Contact Jesse Barfield
Youth Program Director
jbarfield@jewishlouisville.org



Learn more and register with the QR code or at JCCLOUISVILLE.ORG/CLUBJ

**The JCC is able to transport to the schools listed above, but childcare is available to any child K-5.*

Pool Parties

at the  Trager Family JCC

The Best Way to Spend a Special Day!

- 90 minutes of play time in the water
- 30 minutes in the party room
- Complimentary party coordinator and gift bags

To learn more, scan the QR code or visit jccloouisville.org/poolparties

PICTURE THIS: MLK SHABBAT



Each year The Temple celebrates MLK Shabbat, honoring the late civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. with worship, contemplation and music. This year's service was held on the evening of Friday, Jan. 17, and featured the St. Stephens Baptist Church Praise Team. "It was a powerful celebration of Dr. King's vision and the vibrant connection between our two communities," Associate Rabbi Matt Derrenbacher remarked, "fueling our collective pursuit of a brighter future."

(Photos provided by The Temple)



An Evening of Friends & Conversation

ACCIDENTAL ACTIVIST

A TALK WITH LINDSAY PINCHUK

It's Never Wrong to Do What's Right

Tuesday, March 18
6:30-8:30 p.m.
West Sixth Nulu

Cocktails & Small Bites

Hosts: Shane Shaps, Chair
Keren Benabou, Michelle Brooks Cha,
Kenya Chambers, Tracy Geller,
Karen Sherman, Kristin Shapira,
Samantha Simon, Abby Tasman,
and Julia Wall

Event Registration: \$36

RSVP:
jewishlouisville.org/accidentalactivist

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- **Second-year grants**
\$2,000 for 4 weeks or \$1,250 for 2 weeks
- **Third-year grants**
\$1,500 for 4 weeks or \$1,000 for 2 weeks
- Additional financial needs-based assistance available

Application Process

- Visit JewishLouisville.org/Grants to learn more or complete a grant request form.
- Rolling applications. Awards will be sent directly to camp.

For more info, scan the QR code or visit JewishLouisville.org/Grants
Email questions to Alison Roemer at aroemer@jewishlouisville.org.

PICTURE THIS: PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

The Trager Family JCC Goldberg Family Gym came alive on January 22 for two Pickleball tournaments - one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

(Photos by Mackenzie Lynch)



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 - 5 Private Lessons in 5 Days!
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 - 90 minutes of play time in the water
 - 30 minutes in the party room
 - Complimentary party coordinator and gift bags

To learn more, scan the QR code or visit jccloouisville.org/youthaquatics

Trager Family JCC | SWIM SCHOOL
WHERE YOUR SWIMMING JOURNEY BEGINS!

NEWS

FILM FESTIVAL

Continued from page 1

The most emotionally resonant program of all may well unfold on the evening of Feb. 11, when the Trager Family JCC hosts a showing of "The Very Narrow Bridge." Here director Esther Takac tells the stories of two Jews and two Palestinians, all of whom has lost a child to the ensuing conflict. The four participants are members of Israeli Palestinian Bereaved Families for Reconciliation and Peace – also known as the Parents Circle Family Forum -- described as "a controversial grassroots movement of broken-hearted people, who stand side-by-side to end the violence and build a future based on dignity and equality."

Ranen Omer-Sherman (JHF Endowed Chair of Jewish Studies at the University of Louisville) and Trent Spoolstra (director of the Jewish Community Relations Council) will moderate a post-showing discussion reflecting how, Siegwald says, "there are people out there working towards peace."

As in past Festivals, the Louis Levy and Wilma Probst Levy Film and Theater Arts Fund is Founding Partner and a principal sponsor, along with the Rosa Gladstein Fund and such supporters as the Federation, the Jewish Heritage Fund, Jewish Family & Career Services, LEO Weekly, Louisville Public Media and Louisville-Jefferson County Metro.

Potential films are evaluated initially by a five-member "pre-selection" committee, with the full, 15-member committee making the final decisions.

"There's a whole process of research," Siegwald says, "before we share anything with the committee."

"Sometimes we know about a film, but there's no distributor," says committee co-chair Keiley Caster. Or "there's a film that is so popular that it's really a commercial film, like 'The Brutalist.'"

"Actually, we did try to get that early on," co-chair Hodes added, "but the distributors knew this was going to be a big thing, so they held us off."

Numerous committee members have served for much of the festival's 27-year history. "They love it," Siegwald says. "They're just incredible, passionate people."

Hodes – who's one of those stalwart committee members – recommends paying special attention to *Kidnapped: The Abduction of Edgardo Mortara*. The film, directed by Marco Bellocchio, tells the

true story of how a six-year-old Jewish boy living in 19th-century Italy was taken from his family (by order of the Pope) and brought up as a Catholic.

"This was a chapter in Jewish history that many people, including me, were not familiar with," she says.

The Feb. 15 showing at the Trager Family JCC will be followed by a Q & A session with Pulitzer Prize-winning historian David Kertzer (participating virtually), who chronicled this extraordinary narrative in his 1997 book *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara*. The discussion, moderated by Solange Minstein, is sponsored by Wilma Probst Levy.

This year's Festival will be spread among five venues: the Trager Family JCC, Baxter Avenue Theatres Filmworks, Adath Jeshurun, The Temple and the Speed. Some films will be viewable only virtually, and because of location restrictions, out-of-area viewers are likely to be out-of-luck viewers.

Aficionados may want to take advantage of a Virtual Festival Pass, which allows you to view all seven virtual films (six full length and one short). Note that these passes don't grant access to live events, for which you'll need to purchase separate tickets.

Happily, you won't need to pay anything to watch *I See You*, this season's short film, which will be shown virtually. This 20-minute cinematic nugget tells of Danny Layani, who after 25 years of being totally blind, regains his sight long enough to finally see his wife and four children.

Call it another example of reaching out to a fan-base-in-waiting. "We're opening minds to more new people," Siegwald says. "We love doing that."

With that dynamic in mind, "we have a community outreach subcommittee," Siegwald says, "because we want to grow different segments of the community" – even beyond the festival's customary spot on the calendar. This past September, for example, "we had an outdoor film shown on a huge inflatable screen" adjacent to the Camp J building.

The event featured *Hotel Transylvania* and was free to Trager Family JCC members. It was consistent with the Trager Family JCC's ongoing imperative: engage with members of the Jewish community wherever they may be and regardless of their background, telling their stories from one generation to another.

In other words, the bridge-building never stops. Or as Siegwald puts it: "We're always looking for opportunities."

Passes and Tickets

OPENING NIGHT, \$22

Saturday, Feb. 8 at 7:30 p.m.

Join us on opening night for award-winning comedy *Bad Shabbos* beginning with a "Who Done It?" themed reception at 7:30 p.m. with light hors d'oeuvres and treats. Your ticket to the event includes a chance to win a gift card for dinner at Repeal Oak Fired Steakhouse.

IN-PERSON FILM PASS, \$89

\$118 value

Includes all in-person films, special programs, and opening night special event.

Films Included: *Bad Shabbos*, *The Very Narrow Bridge*, *The Boy in the Woods*, *Kidnapped*, *Where Life Begins*, *No Name Restaurant*, *Running On Sand*, *Come Closer*, *Sabbath Queen*

VIRTUAL FILM PASS, \$54

\$72 value

Includes 6 full-length virtual films plus 1 virtual short film.

Full-length Films Included: *The Boy in the Woods*, *Where Life Begins*, *No Name Restaurant*, *Running On Sand*, *Come Closer*, *The Milky Way*
Short Film Included: *I See You*

INDIVIDUAL TICKETS

Full-length films: \$12

Excludes opening night event featuring *Bad Shabbos*.



Film still from *Kidnapped: The Abduction of Edgardo Mortara* featuring Barbara Ronchi and Enea Sala. (photo courtesy of Cohen Media Group)



Film still from *Come Closer*.



Film still from *The Milky Way*.

PJ Library

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PJ Library sends curated, award-winning storybooks and activities to Jewish children from birth through age 12. The program sparks meaningful conversation and provides opportunities to explore and celebrate Jewish life together.

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For questions about PJ Library contact
Jordan Leanhart at jleahart@jewishlouisville.org.

FILM FESTIVAL

This year's film festival at a glance

Here are the synopses for the films and special programming for the 2025 Louisville Jewish Film Festival

The following films are being featured in-person. Many of these films are also being featured virtually.



Bad Shabbos – In-person Only

United States, 84 minutes, English. In this off-beat comedy, two couples – Abby and Benjamin, and David and Meg (freshly converted to Judaism) – gather for a traditional Shabbat dinner, but things spiral faster than you can say “hamotzi” when an accidental death (or is it a murder?) derails the evening entirely.

Saturday, Feb. 8: The film will be shown at the Trager Family JCC at 7:30 p.m. beginning with a “Who Done It?” themed reception with light hors d'oeuvres. Your ticket to the event includes a chance to win a gift card for dinner at Repeal Oak Fired Steakhouse.



The Very Narrow Bridge – In-person Only

Australia, 80 minutes, Arabic/Hebrew/English - English Subtitles. *The Very Narrow Bridge* is a journey into the souls of four people – two Jews and two Palestinians – who have lost a child or parent to violent conflict as they transform their grief into a bridge for reconciliation. They all belong to Israeli Palestinian Bereaved Families, a controversial grassroots movement of broken-hearted people, who stand side-by-side to end the violence and build a future based on dignity and equality. Despite fierce political and family opposition, they refuse to

give up.

Tuesday, Feb. 11: The film will be shown at the Trager Family JCC at 7 p.m. Immediately following the film, join us for a Q&A session with Shiri Ourian, Executive Director of the American Friends of the Parents Circle, a joint Israeli-Palestinian organization working towards peace. Ms. Ourian will be joining us virtually at the Trager Family JCC. Moderated by Dr. Ranen Omer-Sherman, JHFE Endowed Chair in Judaic Studies at the University of Louisville, and Trent Spoolstra, Director of Jewish Community Relations Council.



The Boy in the Woods – In-person & Virtual

Canada, 100 minutes, English. *The Boy in the Woods* follows the true story of Max, a Jewish boy escaping Nazi persecution. After he is separated from his family, Max finds temporary refuge with a Christian peasant (Richard Armitage). After a tense stand-off with Nazi police, Max must live in the woods and learn to survive alone in a landscape crawling with Jew-hunters and, partisans and haunted by ghosts. He and Yanek, another boy in hiding like Max, rescue a baby girl, but their heroic act comes at a tragic price. Based on the best-selling memoir

by Holocaust survivor Maxwell Smart.

Thursday, Feb. 13: The film will be shown at Adath Jeshurun at 7 p.m. Light hors d'oeuvres and beverages will be served.



Kidnapped: The Abduction of Edgardo Mortara – In-person Only

Italy, 134 minutes, Italian/Hebrew - English Subtitles. Legendary Italian director Marco Bellocchio's film tells the scandalous true story of a six-year old Jewish boy who, in mid-19th century Bologna, was abducted from his family by the church under the Pope's orders and raised as a Catholic. With cinematography evoking the masterworks of Caravaggio and Delacroix, the film follows the harrowing fight of the boy's parents to have their son returned and their unrelenting confrontation with the Vatican. Their efforts garner support and elicit outrage from the international Jewish community and Italian liberals, all complicated by the boy's whole-hearted acceptance of Catholicism as he matures into adulthood.

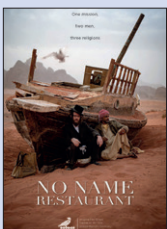
Saturday, Feb. 15: The film will be shown at the Trager Family JCC at 7:30 p.m. Immediately following the film, Join us for a Q&A session with Dr. David Kertzer, Award-Winning Author of the book *The Kidnapping of Edgardo Mortara*, who will be joining us virtually at the Trager Family JCC. Moderated by Solange Minstein.



Where Life Begins – In-person & Virtual

Italy, 100 minutes, Italian/French - English Subtitles. An ultra-orthodox Jewish family from Aix-les-Bains comes to a farm in Calabria for a brief stay every year to carry out a sacred mission: harvesting etrog citrons for Sukkot. When Elio, the farm owner, meets Esther, the rabbi's daughter, who is tired of the constraints imposed by her religion, their relationship sparks a lasting change for each of them.

Sunday, Feb. 16: The film will be shown at Baxter Avenue Theater at 2 p.m.



No Name Restaurant – In-person & Virtual

Germany, 120 minutes, English, Hebrew, Arabic - English subtitles. In this spirited and absurdist culture-clash comedy, two very different men must work together to survive in the Sinai Desert. One is the lost and befuddled Ben, an ultra-Orthodox Jew from Brooklyn who has missed his flight to Alexandria, where he is to help the dwindling Jewish community in need of a 10th man for its Passover celebration. The other is the dyspeptic Adel, a Bedouin man trying to track down his runaway camel. The men travel across the desert on foot, sharing details of their personal lives and love of food, giving their plans a chance to go increasingly haywire.

Tuesday, Feb. 18: The film will be shown at The Temple at 7 p.m.



Running On Sand – In-person & Virtual

Israel, 104 minutes, Hebrew/English - English Subtitles. Eritrean refugee Aumari is slated for deportation from Israel on a technicality. After ducking immigration authorities at the airport, he becomes the unlikely and very perplexed recipient of a hero's welcome. He is mistaken for an eagerly anticipated Nigerian soccer player who is supposed to arrive at the same time. Though lacking a fundamental knowledge of the sport, he finds himself the face of the franchise. Caught between his new identity as the up-and-coming star invigorating the team and

fanbase, and his true identity as a refugee with expired papers, Aumari must keep his identity under wraps long enough to secure safe passage out of the country to reunite with his beloved younger brother.

Thursday, Feb. 20: The film will be shown at Baxter Theater at 7 p.m. Immediately following the film, Kristina Mielke, Career Counselor for Refugees and Immigrants with Jewish Family & Career Services, will join us for a discussion with a nurse who fled Eritrea as a child. The discussion will encompass challenges refugees and immigrants face. Moderated by David Finke, CEO of Jewish Family & Career Services.



Come Closer – In-person & Virtual

Israel, 107 minutes, Hebrew - English subtitles. In this poignant drama, a young woman's life is shattered by her beloved younger brother's tragic death. Consumed by grief, Eden takes increasingly desperate measures to fill the void left by her brother's absence. Her journey takes a passionate and dangerous turn when she discovers her brother had a secret girlfriend. With stunning cinematography and compelling performances, the film explores the depths of grief and the lengths people go to hold onto those they've lost.

Saturday, Feb. 22: The film will be shown at Baxter Avenue Theater at 7:30 p.m. Immediately following the film, Joseph Ferry, Grief Counseling Program Manager, will join us for a thoughtful conversation about grief perspectives and healing. *If you are in need of support, contact the Hosparus Health Grief Counseling Center at 888-345-8197 or <https://hosparushealth.org/grief-counseling>.*



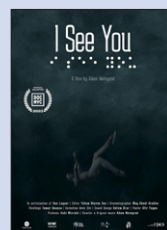
Sabbath Queen – In-person Only

United States, 105 minutes, English. This feature documentary, filmed over 21 years, follows Rabbi Amichai Lau-Lavie's epic journey as the dynastic heir of 38 generations of Orthodox rabbis including the Chief Rabbis of Israel. He is torn between rejecting and embracing his destiny and becomes a drag-queen rebel, a queer bio-dad and the founder of Lab/Shul—an everybody-friendly, God-optional, artist-driven, pop-up experimental congregation. **This film is being shown in-person ONLY.**

Sunday, Feb. 23: The film will be shown at The Speed Cinema at 4 p.m. Immediately following the film, the director of *Sabbath Queen*, Sandi DuBowski, will join us virtually for a Q&A session at the Speed Cinema.

Moderated by Cantor David Lipp

The following films are virtual ONLY.



I See You – *Israel, 20 minutes, Hebrew - English subtitles.* A poignant portrait of Danny Layani, who, after 25 years of total blindness, regains his sight and sees his wife and four children for the very first time. However, the newfound light in Danny's life begins to dim. Through intimate family archives and meticulous animated paintings, Danny shares his captivating story of resilience, self-discovery, and the profound power of perspective.

View the FREE short film virtually Feb. 8 - 23



The Milky Way – Israel/France, 94 minutes, Hebrew - English Subtitles.

Desperate to support her baby, single mother and offbeat musician Tala takes a job at the Milky Way, producing breast milk sold to new mothers who cannot or do not produce their own. In this dystopian dark comedy, Tala juggles motherhood and employment, while sneaking a glimpse into the wealthy lives of those who buy her breast milk.

View the film virtually Feb. 8 - 15

Virtual Film Schedule

Feb. 8 - 15

I See You - Free Short Film
Where Life Begins
Running On Sand
The Milky Way - Featured Virtually **ONLY**

Feb. 16 - 23

I See You - Free Short Film
No Name Restaurant
Come Closer
The Boy in the Woods

NEWS

ROOM 1214

Continued from page 1



Michelle Kholos Brooks

based New Light Theater Project, is coming to Louisville for performances Feb. 13-16 at the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts. It will mark the second collaboration between Brooks and Louisvillian David Chack's ShPIel Performing Identity theater company, which two years ago produced Brooks' *H*itler's Tasters* – another example of history reconsidered through the lens of audacious imagination.

Yet where *H*itler's Tasters* is rooted in events from the There and Then, *Room 1214* is unmistakably a product of the Here and Now. Brooks based her memory drama on a series of conversations with history teacher Ivy Schamis, who on that February afternoon was guiding her students along the terrible byways of the Shoah. Two of those students perished after the gunman began firing into her classroom.

When she learned about what had occurred, Brooks almost immediately recognized the potential for creating a potent act of theater. For her, it was an inevitable declaration of expressive intent.

"There's something in me that connects to these very specific stories," she

explained during a recent Zoom interview from her Southern California home, "when I'm crossing paths with something I feel I need to point out or pay attention to. What happens is that I land on a story, and I go: 'Wait – what?' Hitler had used young German women to taste his food for poison; or 'Wait – what?' – this woman was teaching a Holocaust history class when this 19-year-old kid shot into her classroom with swastikas on his bullets and his boots."

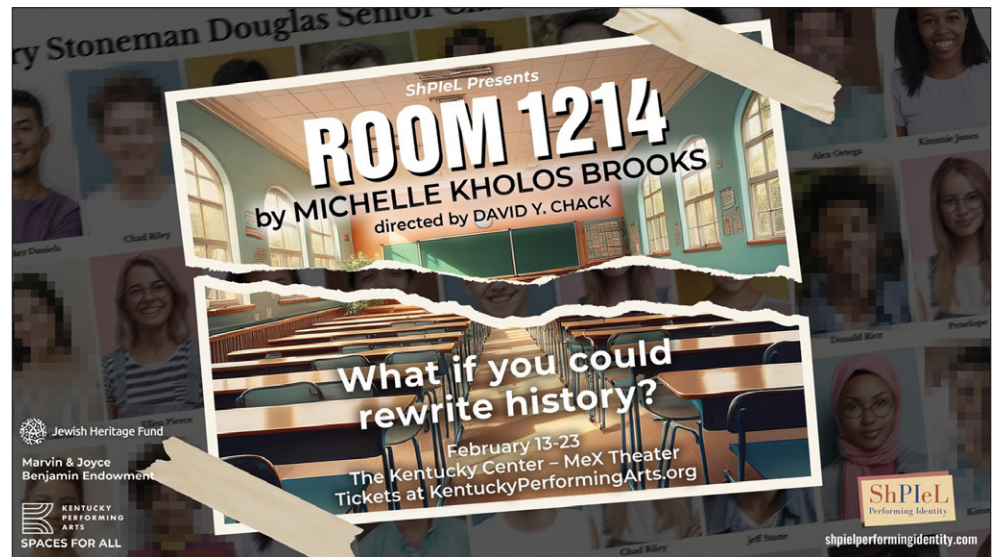
Room 1214 posits an intriguing scenario: What if that teacher could return to her classroom and revisit that awful day, but with the murdered students restored to life? How would she channel the collective energy around her? Would it make any difference that the school itself, bound up in the misery of recollection, was about to demolish the area that housed the classroom?

The immediacy – the proximity of history -- was itself the point. And in many respects, it reflected Brooks' foundational imperative as a writer: How can a playwright take the germ of an event and apply a kind of creative alchemy, rendering fact into fiction and ultimately, into a declaration of essential truth?

"I think I'm – and this is one of my fatal flaws – a very, very impulsive writer. I don't think about a whole lot before I start. I just dive in, and a lot gets revealed to me. Once my fingers hit the keyboard, that seems to be the conduit for me.

So it was when Brooks was done writing *Room 1214*.

"I remember where I was, and I remember sort of sweating, and I remember how I felt when I was finished," she



Tickets: 502-584-7777 or online at kentuckyperformingarts.org

recalls. "I looked at it and said, 'Okay, I did it.' But I said, 'No one's ever going to produce this play. There's no way anybody is going to want to touch this play, because it's very confrontational.'"

Momentum, however, ended up being on her side.

"We don't have a lot of time for these stories to simmer for 10 years down the road," Brooks says. "This is a critical issue for our society. Anybody who thinks their lives will not be affected by gun violence at some point is delusional."

Indeed, "all the young people I know – the first thing they do when they walk into a classroom is look for the chair where they're least likely to get shot. They look for exits. They think about movie theaters before they go into them. I do it, too. It colors everything we do."

Even so, "I don't think there's any time to wait and wonder if we're doing the right thing," Brooks acknowledges, "or if we're doing enough."



David Y. Chack

And what are audiences to make of this potentially unsettling play?

"I wonder if I could throw in something Michelle said to me the other day," Chack says. "This is raw, so intense, that it kind of stops them from immediately wanting to come see it."

Compare that to works about the Holocaust "that are rising up everywhere,

selling out. People are going to plays and performances about the Holocaust – why is that? Why is that something people will turn out for, but (not) they're seeing massacres happening on our own soil. What is so off-putting I can't see that – but it's easier to go to a performance about genocide of six million Jews."

Perhaps it's a function of how historical distance tends, even subconsciously, to insulate us from that aforementioned rawness. The Holocaust unfolded 80-some-odd years ago, and time has a way of rendering its own kind of judgment.

"People cry; people feel self-satisfied about what they attended," Chack says, "yet there are horrible things happening right now in America. That's what Michelle's play does." Not surprisingly, the core follow-up question, Chack says, is "what are we doing to apply those lessons to what's happening today? And why can't we see theater and performance that exposes that?"

On this subject Brooks is unapologetically didactic. She's sick and tired of rampant mass shootings in America, and wants you to be sick and tired, too.

"What I said to people in New York, where we just did *1214*, if we can get just one person at every show who wants to do something – who'll write to their congressperson, who'll donate some money, who will march – then maybe we'll have done something besides just talk about how horrible it is, and then move on. Until it becomes our kid or our parent or our synagogue or our community."

In conjunction with the Kentucky Center's upcoming production of *Room 1214*, the Jewish Community Relations Council will host a post-performance panel discussion on Feb. 16. JCRC director Trent Spoolstra remarked:

It is a true pleasure to partner with David Chack on a panel discussion for Room 1214. This play touches on so many topics that are at the forefront in today's society including the Jewish community: the tragedy of school shootings, the need for continued Holocaust education, and recovering from the trauma of violence. Our Jewish Community Relations Council has a responsibility to partner with those across our city to help bring awareness and tackle key social issues that continue to afflict our world. I look forward to sitting on a panel with key community leaders after the show on February 16 to discuss these issues and what we can do together to make our communities safer.



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NEWS

For our ShinShinim, it's been another month of go, go, go

By *ShinShinim*, Kyla and Eden
Guest Columnists

This past month has been filled with exciting meaningful activities and lots of snow!

We began the month celebrating Hanukkah with our community by attending Hanukkah parties, leading Israeli dances, and doing all kinds of fun crafts! Later on, we kept the celebrations going by leading Hanukkah activities at the Trager Family JCC's winter camp, where we taught the campers more about the background of the holiday and made crafts.

Experiencing snow in Louisville has been fun and very cold. We had an awesome time with BBYO at the regional kickoff event snow tubing at Perfect North! It was great hanging out, making new memories, meeting new people, and getting to know KIO (the Kentucky

Indiana Ohio region of BBYO) better. It was such a cool way to bring the teens together and strengthen the sense of community among them.

One of our more special moments this month was our baking event at AJ, where we baked cookies using Dekel Swissa and Yael Libusho's favorite recipes through an organization called Recipe in Memory. Dekel and Yael are fallen soldiers who died on October 7. Just like us, Dekel was a ShinShinim in Atlanta during 2019. This event meant so much to us -- it was such a meaningful way to honor their memory, and we're so thankful to everyone who came and helped make it happen.

This January, we'll be giving a presentation to the seniors here at the Trager Family JCC, where we'll share stories about our families' immigration to Israel. We are also participating in Temple Shalom's monthly Lunch and Learn se-

ries leading conversations about Israel.

Looking ahead, we've got so many more events and activities planned! We're very excited for our New Year's Women's event on February 11 (see below), focused on setting goals and making vision boards. Also starting in February, we'll be leading monthly cooking lessons for adults, where we'll make Israeli food from different cultures. On February 6, we'll be making Ethiopian Dabo bread and hearing Eden's family's story.

During February, we will be taking a two-week break to go home to Israel. We are very excited and invite you to leave a note for the Western Wall in the box in the lobby of the Trager Family JCC for us to carry back.

We can't wait for all the amazing things still to come and are looking forward to seeing you at one of our next activities or events!



COOKING

with Kyla & Eden

Monthly cooking classes hosted by Kyla and Eden – our Shinshinim! Each month they will be teaching a new recipe and different style of cooking. Everyone attending will participate in making the dish, and then take it home to cook or bake. This class is intended for adults.

2/6, 3/27, 4/22, and 5/14
7 – 8:30 p.m.
Kohn Family Town Square
Price: \$7 each or \$25 for all 4
Scan the QR Code to RSVP



tinyurl.com/cookingwithshinshinim



February
11
7 - 9 p.m.

Women's 2025 Vision Board Night

Price: \$10

Hosted By: Kyla & Eden Our Shinshinim





Join us for an inspiring evening with mocktails and meaningful conversation as we gather to set our intentions for the new year. This event is designed for Jewish women to reflect on their goals and create vision boards for the year ahead.

Scan to RSVP!



tinyurl.com/visionboardshinshinim

Kohn Family Town Square
Trager Family JCC

JFCS Supports Senior Independence Year Round

February is National Senior Independence Month, a time set aside to highlight the ability of seniors to live fulfilling and dignified lives. It helps us emphasize the need and advantages to communities when more seniors have this ability.

There are many things we as a community can do to improve the lives of seniors. Individually, we can check in on the older adults in our lives to ensure they are safe and have the stability and resources they need to be healthy as well as the social and emotional fulfillment they need to be happy. On a larger scale, we truly have the duty as a community to ensure seniors a greater level of autonomy.

JFCS strives to play a role in providing seniors and their caregivers with the tools, programs and services that help our older population live with dignity, purpose and as independently as possible.

Our Klein Older Adult program is solely dedicated to assisting seniors with a wide range of age-related needs. Mental health counseling and case management can help them navigate the changes of life that comes with aging. Our care coordination program helps seniors in determining needs and finding the resources which will address those needs. Our PALS transportation services help provide mobility around town for non-emergency medical appointments, personal appointments, grocery shopping, general errands, and more.

Our Senior Crime Victim Services assist older adults (a demographic highly at risk of crime victimization) with re-

ceiving justice in events of elder abuse and other criminal victimization.

Along with these programs and other for that directly help seniors, JFCS has services for caregivers including support groups to help them navigate the world of caring for an aging loved one or family friend.

JFCS' success in helping our community's senior population was recognized last year when the Humana Foundation awarded JFCS a three year, \$250,000 grant specifically focused on combating isolation and loneliness in Louisville Metro Districts 5 & 6.

Over the past year, this grant has allowed JFCS to set up education, recreation, and exercise programs for the residents of Community Towers, Hillebrand House, The Puritan, and Neighborhood House. The goal is to improve seniors' mental wellness by providing socialization activities in the communities where they live, removing the barrier of seeking out activities that require special access and/or transportation.

"Knowing someone is there to help when needed is reassuring for older adults and their family members," said Whitney Boswell, who oversees the Klein Older Adults program at JFCS. "We want to help enable them to stay in their homes longer, remain connected to loved ones and maintain a sense of purpose and autonomy."

In celebration of National Senior Independence Month, let's remember the importance of empowering seniors to lead independent, fulfilling lives. Let's work together as individuals, and as a



community, to ensure that our seniors receive the support, resources, and opportunities they need to thrive. Whether through simple acts of kindness, such as checking in on a loved one, or through larger initiatives like those offered by JFCS, every effort contributes to building a stronger, more inclusive community.

JFCS is proud to play a role in this mission, offering programs through the Klein Older Adult program, and with the support of the community, and organi-

zations like the Humana Foundation, we are actively combating isolation and loneliness while fostering a sense of purpose and connection for older adults.

This month, as you think about the older adults in your life, we hope you'll please keep in mind the ways that JFCS might be able to help. Together, we can honor and support the senior members of our community and help ensure they live as independently as they can, and with continued dignity and purpose.



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- Career Assistance
- Match Savings Program
- CDL Certification
- Youth Needs Assessment
- Youth Career Programs

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Need A Ride To Religious Services?

Rides now available for Adath Jeshurun Saturday morning services and The Temple Friday night services. Call JFCS (Jack Schaver) (502) 322-1915 by Thursday morning each week to reserve your spot.

Limited space is available. You will receive a return call within 24 hours to confirm your ride and schedule your pick-up time.

NEWS & NEWSMAKERS

JFCS launches its Refugee & Immigrant Services Pillar of Service



It was frigid outside but warm and welcoming inside this past Jan. 21, when several dozen guests (and one very large pair of scissors) gathered at Jewish Family & Career Services for the ribbon cutting launching its newest Pillar of Service: Refugee & Immigrant Services.

"I'm reminded of a timely quote from the Jewish sage Hillel," JFCS board chair David Kohn remarked. "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? and 'If not now, when?'"

"This is really a thrill for us to be here at JFCS as they open this new department," Amos Izerimana, Director of International and Immigrant Affairs for Louisville Metro Government, told his audience. "We've worked with JFCS a number of times, with many of our newcomer families that need services to start a business, or if they're looking for a career or working on their skills. This is going to be an incredible service enhancing our community."

Joni Jenkins, the former longtime District 44 Kentucky State Representative, was on hand in place of U.S. Representative Morgan McGarvey (3rd District) – "who's in D.C. and would much rather be here," she quipped.

Metro Councilman Ben Reno-Weber, whose District 8 includes JFCS's campus off Dutchmans Lane, lauded the foundational relationships between Louisville and its diverse immigrant population.

"Whether you care about the issues of how our community engages with newcomers because it's an important human right, because you care about the dignity of humans, or because you care about the economic development and vibrancy of our city," he said, "you recognize the important role immigrants and newcomers have played and continue to play."

David L. Finke, JFCS's CEO, spoke

about how JFCS has been "guided by our Jewish values for over 117 years." For all that time, "one of our main priorities has been serving immigrants and refugees."

Finke cited key grants and support from such partners as the Jewish Heritage Fund, the Gheens Foundation, the Kentucky Office of Refugees, and others.

"This funding has allowed us to grow existing programs and develop new programs," Finke said. "Among these programs are a collaborative effort with other nonprofits to do a need assessment of immigrant refugee youth, a match savings plan for refugees so they can potentially save for a house... We have our long-established refugees and career services program, and also our Mosaic Awards which we've been hosting for nearly 20 years, during which we have honored 90 immigrants from 43 countries."

In these respects, JFCS is rooted in a persuasive blend of compassion and pragmatism. and "As it states in the Torah: Moses was a stranger in a foreign land," Finke said. "We recognize and embrace our vision to be a welcoming presence and to show kindness, support and hope to newcomers in our land."

The Filson looks at "Der Kaiser von Atlantis"

Opera, art and the Holocaust were the subjects at hand Jan. 21 at the Filson Historical Society, which hosted an hour-long panel discussion pegged to the Louisville Orchestra's performance of Viktor Ullmann's "Der Kaiser von Atlantis" four days later.

Cantor David Lipp of Congregation Adath Jeshurun moderated the session, which included remarks by LO music director Teddy Abrams, Filson Curator of Jewish Collections Ann Niren, and others.

Abrams spoke first about Theresienstadt, the so-called "model" concentration camp the Nazis constructed as an elaborate exercise in cynical propaganda. It was there that Ullmann and librettist Peter Kien created their one-act opera, which was rehearsed but never performed before the two men were transported to Auschwitz, where they ultimately perished. Indeed, only two of the original Theresienstadt prisoners survived – one of them being violinist Paul Kling, who'd go on to become LO concertmaster.

"This was supposed to be the concentration camp that the Nazis used to show the rest of the world that, 'See things are

okay,'" Abrams told his Filson listeners.

"People are making art. They are producing theater and opera and performing. There are composers; there's a newspaper. There are all these things that you would expect to have in a functioning community. So this was the best that one could hope for, especially if you were a Jewish artist or Jewish elite, and you were sent to a concentration camp. And I was shocked. I was shocked to find out about the music-making that took place in this unthinkable circumstance."

Referring to Kling, "When I saw that name listed on the group of (Der Kaiser) performers – a 14-year-old violinist who escaped the Holocaust...I could not believe it. He's a part of our history here in Louisville. And I said, 'We have to do this work, just as a starting place to honest his legacy.'"



After an interlude where bass-baritone Ryan McKinny and soprano Emily Albrink sang excerpts from the opera, David Maass, writer of the graphic novel Death Strikes: The Emperor of Atlantis, offered decidedly lively remarks. He recalled first leaning about the opera as "kind of a teenage mall rat into punk rock, walking around a Best Buy in Paradise Valley, Arizona."

"On the shelf there was this box set – a VHS and CD sampler called Music Survives – music suppressed by the Nazis. And I'm like, 'What's more punk rock than music suppressed by the Nazis?'"

Der Kaiser "really stuck out for me," Maass recalled. "Because to the popular mindset of teenagers who are aren't exposed to classical music, opera is either women with Viking helmets or very complicated love stories that are hard to figure out. What they're not is set in alternative universes with science fiction and fantasy and zombies that punches fascism in the belly."

Acknowledging the connection between the Filson event and International Holocaust Remembrance Day on Jan. 27, Niren noted the prominence of a looming tyrannical figure in Der Kaiser.

"Jewish history has been filled with tyrants," she said, "and for over 4,000 years we've overcome each one of them." Indeed, "we live in a discordant and fragmented world. Despite some very obvious differences, it's not difficult to see parallels between today and events of over 80 years ago." Which is why, Niren reminded her audience, "we must call out bigotry and hatred when we see it."

"Eight Guiding Principles" poster exhibit opens Feb. 6 at the Trager Family JCC

"Eight Guiding Principles on Accessibility and Inclusion" – a series of posters highlighting JCC Association of North America's commitment to being accessible and welcoming to people of all backgrounds and abilities – will be on public display at the Trager Family JCC beginning Feb. 6. The exhibit is in honor of Jewish Disability, Awareness, Acceptance and Inclusion Month.

Toronto-based artist Sharoni Sibony created these vividly colored posters, which affirm the JCC Movement's eight core values: Shlemut (Wholeness), B'tselem Elohim (Inherent Worth), Arevut (Interdependence), Negeshut (Accessibility), Al Pi Darko (Inclusive Education), Kavanah (Act with Intention), Svivat Avodah Tovah (Positive Work Environment), and Tzedek (Justice).

"Guided by the wise words of Psalm 133 – 'Behold how good and pleasant it is when all people live together as one,' -- JCC Association of North America commits to build, nurture, and elevate a culture of belonging in which we welcome, affirm, and celebrate all community members throughout the JCC Movement," JCCNA explains.

"To address the importance of inclusion in the JCC Movement, it was paramount that we first build a foundation around which our inclusion work could take root. Developed collaboratively with professionals throughout the field—including those with lived experience of disability—we identified eight Guiding Principles that embody core values around disability and inclusion to drive our efforts."

"JCC Association collaborated with Sharoni Sibony, an artist who captured our vision and created eight distinct pieces of art, one for each Guiding Principle. The art truly encapsulates the meaning of the Guiding Principles and brings them to life in an inviting and accessible way."

"Sharing the eight posters with JCCs gives the Js opportunities to showcase beautiful art, visibly demonstrate the agency's commitment to the values associated with inclusion, and engage community members as active participants with the art and in the mission to welcome, affirm, and celebrate all."

Sibony, working in watercolor, pen and acrylic markers, has also created a signature poster image: Windows into Accessibility.

"The main image for the campaign is a rose window, evocative of synagogue stained-glass windows, featuring excerpts from each of the other images and surrounded by joyous bubbles of color and decorative floral motifs," Sibony says in an Artist's Statement. "The frame of the window is an architectural reference to a style of Moroccan doorways, a scalloped entryway that was common in my father's home city of Marrakech."

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AROUND TOWN

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

Adath Jeshurun

The AJ Social Committee invites you to a Shabbat Social on Friday, Feb. 7 after Kabbalat Shabbat services. Come to Happy Hour before 5:45 p.m. services, then stay for dinner with friends. Chef Maureen Hartmann will prepare the delicious meal. All are welcome. The cost is \$15 per person, with children 12 and under free. Reservations are due by Friday, January 31 at www.adathjeshurun.com.

There's nothing quite like a potluck for good food and fun conversation. Join us for the next Shabbat-Luck Dinner at Adath Jeshurun on Friday, Feb. 14. We gather at 5:45 p.m. for Kabbalat Shabbat services and the dinner begins around 7 p.m. There's always a chef-prepared vegetarian entrée and we ask participants to bring an appetizer, salad, side or dessert to share. Visit www.adathjeshurun.com/shabbat-luck for more information and to RSVP.

The 53rd annual Adath Jeshurun Music Festival presents BASYA SCHECHTER X DARSHAN X PHARAOH'S DAUGHTER on Sunday, March 2 at 7 p.m. Basya Schechter has been a creative force in Jewish music and life for the past two decades. From her groundbreaking world music ensemble Pharaoh's Daughter, to her Songs of Wonder project which sets the Yiddish poetry of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel to stunning neo-Hasidic compositions, to her Hazzanut for the Romemu community in NYC—Basya is a vital wellspring of song and spirit. In this performance, Basya will be performing songs from her beloved Pharaoh's Daughter project, as well as from Darshan, a genre-bending collaboration with polymathic poet and rapper Eden Pearlstein (ePRHYME). Also taking the stage will be Cantor David Lipp, Cantor Sharon Hordes, and the Community Choir. Tickets are \$10 in advance, \$15 at the door. Visit www.adathjeshurun.com/music-festival to make a donation or purchase your tickets.

Anshei Sfarad

Congregation Anshei Sfarad has open study time every weeknight (Sun-Thu) from 7:45-8:30 p.m. All are invited to come and study with the Rabbi, with a friend or by yourself. You are welcome to study whatever topic you choose and have your personal questions about Judaism answered. Refreshments served.

Shabbos Davening at 9 a.m. including Rabbi's Parsha outline and sermon, followed by a delicious hot Kiddush. Every Wednesday night at 7:45 p.m., Judaism in Action. Current series: Laws of Shabbos. Every Saturday Night at 7:15 p.m., Parent-Child Learning -- enjoy family study time where parents are encouraged to study any Jewish topic with their Child(ren). Study session is followed by pizza, a story, and raffles.

Talmud Trek Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. led by Rabbi Lederman. For more information, email rabbilederman@ansheisfarad.com.

(Stay tuned for details about Anshei Sfarad's Purim celebration.)

Chabad of Kentucky

Chabad Introduces New Class to Decode the Talmud and Make It Accessible to All Most Jews. Most Jews have heard of the Talmud,

but precious few have ever delved into the mysteries of this 60-volume set of Jewish knowledge. Chabad is now providing an introduction into this classic Jewish work with a class entitled Decoding the Talmud. The class will be held at the Trager Family JCC on six Thursday evenings beginning on Feb. 5 at 7 p.m. The cost of the entire six-week course is \$89 (including textbook).

Dr. Leib Moscovitz, Professor of Talmud at Bar-Ilan University writes: "Decoding the Talmud seeks to open the door to this remarkable work for students of all ages and backgrounds. As such, it makes an educational contribution of the highest importance for anyone who is and who should be interested in understanding and appreciating the Talmud."

The Talmud is a fascinating array of Jewish knowledge. It was written by hundreds of Sages over 1500 years. In 1240, King Louis IX put the Talmud on trial in Paris, ordered France's rabbis to defend it against an antisemitic provocateur, and burned thousands of volumes. Antisemites still misconstrue the Talmud today. But what does it say? In 2011, South Korea's ambassador went on Israeli TV with a book named "Talmud." "Every Korean family has at least one copy," he said. "Mothers want to know how so many Jews became geniuses." It turns out the Talmud has gone through seventy printings in Japan.

If the Talmud is a mystery to you, you're not alone. It's written in unpunctuated Aramaic, held together by intricate logic, and composed in a cryptic style. This is the chance to decode it for yourself. Decoding the Talmud will provide an insider's view of what the Talmud really is, what purpose it serves, and why it matters. and you'll taste Talmud study for yourself.

For more information, email chabadky@gmail.com or call Rabbi Avrohom Litvin at 502-235-5770.

Chavurat Shalom

February promises to be an entertaining and intellectually engaging month. Lunch will start at Noon in The Temple's Heide-man Auditorium, unless noted below, 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, Feb. 6 - Bernie Schweickart will play all of our favorites on the piano. Lunch will include Hot Browns, mac and cheese, broccoli, fresh fruit, and chocolate bread pudding.

Thursday, Feb. 13 - Rabbi David will illuminate the mysteries of Jewish mysticism and the secrets of Kabbalah. Lunch will include salmon cakes, mashed potatoes, green peas and carrots, coleslaw, fresh fruit, and lemon blueberry trifle.

Thursday, Feb. 20 - Saxophonist Mike Tracy, retired director of the Jamey Aebersold Jazz Studies Program at U of L, will entertain and teach us at the same time. Lunch will include pasta and meatballs, Caesar salad, fresh fruit, and cookies and brownies.

Thursday, Feb. 27 - Paul Troy, Senior Crime Victim Advocate at JFCS will return for "Crime Victims Bingo," Part 2. Lunch will include beef pot pie, green beans, mild green salad, fresh fruit, and banana pudding..

If you're not "a regular," please RSVP by 5 pm Tuesday if you'll be attending that week in person by calling or emailing Sarah at 423-1818 or 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.

Jewish Family & Career Services

Do You Need A Ride to Religious Services? JFCS is now offering rides for Seniors to Adath Jeshurun for Saturday morning services and The Temple for Friday night services. Call our PALS Transportation line at 502-322-1915 by noon on Thursday each week to reserve your spot. Rides are wheelchair accessible, but limited space is available. You will receive a return call within 24 hours to confirm your ride and schedule your pick-up time.

Do you have strong business analysis and business development skills? JFCS has an immediate opening for a Business Advisor to help aspiring entrepreneurs in underserved communities fulfill their dreams. This position is part of JFCS's Navigate Program in the Career & Economic Opportunities service pillar. For information about this full-time position, go to: www.jfcsloouisville.org/about-us/careers.

Jewish Federation of Louisville

Save the Date! Super Sunday is March 2 -- calls begin at 10 a.m.

Help us create a stronger Jewish community. Whether you donate, volunteer, or both -- we want you on our team. To donate or volunteer, go to jewishlouisville.org/supersunday.

March 4: Join us for an unforgettable evening of exceptional Israeli cuisine at MeeshMeesh Mediterranean. Chef Uri Arnold of Roots Restaurant in Akko, Israel and Chef Noam Biltzer of MeeshMeesh Mediterranean in Louisville, will collaborate on a unique, one-night-only dinner event. This event is a fundraiser benefiting the Jewish Community of Louisville's ShinShinin program.

Seating is limited. Registration opens Feb. 10 at 10 a.m. -- so don't miss your chance to secure a seat. For more information and to register, please visit jewishlouisville.org/meeshmeesh. For questions, please contact Amy Fouts by emailing afouts@jewishlouisville.org. We look forward to seeing you there and supporting a great cause.

March 18: Women's Philanthropy presents Accidental Activist -- A Talk with Lindsay Pinchuk: It's Never Wrong to Do What's Right -- Tuesday, March 18, 6:30-8:30 p.m. at West Sixth Nulu, 817 E Market St, Suite 101

Join us for an evening of friends and conversation with Lindsay Pinchuk, an award-winning entrepreneur, community builder, connector, storyteller, social media maven, small business champion, and Mom. Enjoy cocktails and small bites. Event registration is \$36. RSVP at jewishlouisville.org/accidentalactivist.

Hosts: Shane Shaps, Chair
Michelle Brooks Cha, Kenya Chambers, Tracy Geller, Karen Sherman, Kristin Shapira, Samantha Simon, Abby Tasman, and

Julia Wall.

One Happy Camper grants and camp financial assistance are open to Kentucky residents under the age of 18 identifying as Jewish and attending an approved camp. First-year campers: Youth attending camp for the first time are eligible to receive up to \$2,500 for a session of 19 days or more, and up to \$1,500 for an 11-18-day session. Second-year campers: Kentucky campers who received a One Happy Camper grant in Summer 2024 may be eligible to receive up to \$2,000 for a session of 19 days or more, and up to \$1,250 for an 11-18-day session. Third-year campers: Campers attending camp for third year may be eligible for a \$1,500 grant.

If additional financial assistance is needed beyond the One Happy Camper grants, or for children past Year 3 of camp, we want to help. Please note, all applications and inquiries are confidential. No financial documentation will be requested. Funding is provided through the generosity of individual donors, the Jewish Heritage Fund and the Federation's Annual Campaign. For more information, reach out to Alison Roemer at aroemer@jewishlouisville.org.

Tickets are on sale for the Louisville Jewish Film Festival's 27th season, which opens Feb. 8. The festival is showcasing a spectacular season featuring 11 top-rated, thought-provoking films. In addition, the festival will present six special-event programs. Our 27th season will open on Feb. 8, with tickets for in-person and virtual showings now on sale. For more information, go online at jewishlouisville.org/filmfestival.

Tickets are still available to the Louisville Ballet's upcoming production of "A Time Remembered" -- co-sponsored by the Federation

To commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Louisville Ballet will present A Time Remembered: Two Holocaust Survivor Stories -- Feb. 1-2 at the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts. The Federation is partnering the production -- comprising Jake Heggie's one-act operatic song cycle Another Sunrise and choreographer Stephen Mills' Light / The Holocaust & Humanity Project -- with Kentucky Opera in memory of Minx and Sy Auerbach. The production is made possible by generous gifts from the Jewish Heritage Fund and the Auerbach family.

Performances are Saturday, Feb. 1 at 8 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 2 at 2 and 8 p.m. (There will also be a special pre-performance dinner honoring Minx Auerbach Feb. 2 at 5 p.m. at The Galt House.)

For more information and to purchase tickets, go online at <https://www.louisvilleballet.org/a-time-remembered/>.

Keneseth Israel

Join Cantor Hordes as she takes you on a journey through the sun salutations, and meditations of Torah Feb. 6 at 6:30 p.m. Some yoga mats are available, but please bring your own if you have one.

Come join Rabbi Freed again Wednesdays at 11 a.m. at the JCC for coffee and cookies on him and some insights into that week's Torah portion. Not enough Torah learning? Join Rabbi Freed at Atrium Brewing, 1154 Logan St, 40204 Feb. 13 at 7:30 p.m. for a beer and a lesson about Tu B'Shvat at this tree-rific installment of Jews & Brews:

AROUND TOWN

After Hours.

Have a toddler in your life? Come join us for our Tot Shabbat Feb. 8 and 22 at 11 a.m. to enjoy a toddler-friendly shortened service and a sweet treat followed by coming into the main sanctuary to dazzle everyone with their rendition of closing Shabbat service song.

Join Keneseth Israel and Adath Jeshurun at our shared Shabbat service Friday, Feb. 14 at 5:45 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 15 at 10 a.m. at AJ.

Join Keneseth Israel and the National Council of Jewish Women – Louisville Section for Repro Shabbat Feb. 22 at 9:30 a.m. Repro Shabbat takes place annually on Parshat Mishpatim, which contains the verses used to outline Judaism's approach to reproductive health, rights, and justice.

Want to help KI fund-raise? Want to participate in the mitzvah of Mishloach Manot? Have KI do it for you. Sign up at tinyurl.com/KIMishloachManot by Feb. 21 to send a local family/person a gift bag. For out-of-towners, we will send a lovely card saying that a donation has been made in their honor. In addition, we have sponsorships available that help towards the cost of the gift bags. As part of the sponsorship, your business name and logo or personal name and message will be highlighted on the scroll sent out in every gift bag.

Purim is around the corner. This year Keneseth Israel is excited to host a Purim carnival Sunday, March 16 at 12 p.m. This Purim carnival is in partnership with all the synagogues in Louisville. Keneseth Israel will also have Purim services Thursday, March 13 at 6:30 p.m. and Friday, March 14 at 10 a.m.

Keneseth Israel Congregation offers Daily Minyan services at 6 p.m. Sunday through Thursday, 8:45 a.m. on Sunday at Adath Jeshurun, and 7:30 a.m. Monday and Thursday at Keneseth Israel. Minyan services are offered in person and on Zoom at tinyurl.com/kiczoom. Join us for Shabbat services Friday at 6 p.m. and Saturday at 9:30 a.m. Shabbat services and Holiday services are offered in person and on YouTubeLive at tinyurl.com/KICyoutube-live. Please visit kenesethisrael.com for information.

Kol Israel "Renewal" Community of Kentucky

Dear Kol Israelites,

It is an Honor to announce our Renewal Congregation's personal Invitation to celebrate the Lunar New Year with our friends, the Vietnamese Buddhist Community. Together we will bestow Jewish Song and Blessing to the assembled at a traditional meal following Ceremony and Rituals: Sunday, Feb. 2 at 10 a.m.

Buddha Bless Temple, 7748 Third Street Rd. As we will be attending as a group, please contact Avram Kahn for reservations at kollisraelky@gmail.com or call/text 502-277-0555.

ALEPH -- the Alliance for Jewish Renewal -- has a full slate of virtual events scheduled over the coming months. You can get information and registration links by going online at <https://aleph.org/virtualprograms>.

Congregation of the Cloud bi-monthly renewal service
Shabbat mornings as we gather to participate, kiddish following. The next services

will take place Feb. 8 and 22.

Louisville Vaad HaKashrut

Kosher food delivered to your city! Join our Louisville, Ky. co-op today at <https://kckoshercoop.com/register>. The next deadline to order is Feb. 26 -- last delivery before Passover. Contact Jennifer Davis at 502-553-0176 to join the WhatsApp group for pickup updates. Also visit the Vaad website at: <https://www.louisvillevaad.org/happenings-in-town>.

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

National Council of Jewish Women -- Louisville Section

2025 Mah Jongg Mania Event

Make sure you mark your calendars now for NCJW's annual Mah Jongg Mania Event Sunday, Feb. 9, starting at 10 a.m. at the Trager Family JCC. Registration is only \$12/person for a fun morning of friendly mahjong games, plentiful snacks, and prizes.

Want to learn to play mahjong? Register for our fun day of play and you can sign up for free lessons at the same time. Lessons will be offered on Sunday, Feb. 2, at 10 a.m., in the Community Room at the Trager Family JCC.

Have a Voice in Frankfort

NCJW, Louisville Section leaders met with some of our Louisville-based Kentucky legislators ahead of the upcoming legislative session. Our goal was to learn about the issues that will be on the agenda so that we can take a proactive approach to advocating for reproductive freedom and other issues impacting women, children, and families. As we identify the issues we want to address, we'll be looking for members who'd like to step up their advocacy game and join with us to plan a lobbying day in Frankfort during this legislative session. Contact Executive Director Sarah Harlan at executivedirector@ncjwlou.org or 502-458-5566 if you're interested in joining this effort.

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 Rd. 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-Saturday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. All proceeds help to serve women, children, and families in the Louisville community.

Temple Shalom

HIAS Refugee Shabbat, Friday, Feb. 14 at 7 p.m.

Temple Shalom will celebrate the contribution of refugees with a special service that includes readings from the members of the Tikkun Olam committee. Oneg to follow.

Shabbat Services, Fridays at 7 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m.

The community is invited to participate in Shabbat services at Temple Shalom. Services are led by Rabbi Beth Jacowitz Chotiner and members of the congregation.

The Temple

Discover the secrets of the perfect brisket. Join us for The Science of Brisket with cooking teacher Jess Kalb Friday, Feb. 2 at 10 a.m. Learn about the techniques, flavors, and methods that make this clas-

sic dish unforgettable. Don't miss this delicious and educational experience. All are welcome to attend, but RSVP is required so we can make sure to have enough supplies. RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/brisket.

Come join Rabbi Matt for a special Tot Shabbat at 6 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 7. Our Tot Shabbat will be a monthly, 15-minute service with our youngest members in mind, but will also be a chance to meet other families. This event is open to all. After Tot Shabbat ends at 6:15 p.m., we will have a family dinner and will welcome everyone to stay for dinner. Tot Shabbat and the dinner are free to attend, but if you plan to stay for dinner, an RSVP is required at thetemplelouky.org/family-shabbat, so we have enough food.

Join us Friday, Feb. 7 for a family-friendly dinner at 6 p.m. and Erev Shabbat Services at 7 p.m. led by our Grade 7 and 8 students, who will chant from all five books with the entire Torah rolled out. Please make your reservation for dinner by calling 502-423-1818 or registering online at thetemplelouky.org/family-shabbat. Dinner will be gluten, dairy, and nut-free.

Everyone is invited to join us in the Klein Center Monday, Feb. 10, at 6 p.m., for the annual WRJ/Sisterhood Tu B'Shvat Seder, when we'll celebrate the birthday of the trees and enjoy beautiful music, many of the delightful fruits of the trees, and WRJ/Sisterhood's legendary, and always greatly anticipated, chocolate fondue (because... chocolate). Please RSVP no later than Friday, Feb. 7 at thetemplelouky.org/trees.

Please join The Temple Brotherhood Thursday, Feb. 13 for a dinner and a special musical performance by famed cellist Cecilia Huerta-Lauf, director, co-founder and cellist of the NouLou Chamber Players, a substitute cellist for the Louisville Orchestra, and an electric cellist in Electria. Business meeting at 6:30 p.m., dinner at 7 p.m., with the program beginning at 7:30 p.m. RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/brotherhood-dinner.

Please join us for a special Interfaith Shabbat Friday, Feb. 14 at 7 p.m. with our guest speaker, Rev. Dr. Tyler Mayfield, talking about Holy Envy, the Midianite Priest, and Learning From Difference - Jethro, the Midianite priest, blesses the God of Moses and offers Moses great advice about practicing faithful leadership. What might we learn from our religiously diverse neighbors? Tyler Mayfield is a teacher-scholar, United Church of Christ minister, and administrator. At Louisville Seminary, he teaches courses in ethical readings of Scripture, prophetic literature, and interfaith engagement.

Our next semester of Intro to Judaism begins February 17 featuring Jewish Beliefs & Practices with Rabbi David and Rabbi Matt. The Intro to Judaism class is a wonderful way for people who are considering becoming Jewish, interdating, and intermarried couples to learn together about Judaism. More information at thetemplelouky.org/adult-education.

Tuesday, Feb. 18 at 7 p.m., join the Louisville Jewish Film Festival as The Temple hosts a showing of No Name Restaurant. In this spirited and absurdist culture-clash comedy, two very different men must work together to survive in the Sinai Desert. Limited Offer for Temple Members only: RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/film for reduced tickets.

Join us Friday, Feb. 21 at 7 p.m. for Reproductive Rights Shabbat. Repro Shabbat falls on the Shabbat when Jews read Mishpatim, the Torah portion with verses that form the basis of the Jewish approach to reproductive freedom. Repro Shabbat is an opportunity for congregations, organizations, and communities to celebrate the critical importance of reproductive health access, reproductive rights, and reproductive justice, and to learn more about Judaism's approach to these issues.

Temple Trager ECEC's annual silent auction and fundraiser, Night at the Arts: Paintings for a Purpose, is Saturday, Feb. 22 at the Mellwood Art Center. This cherished event brings together our community in support of our Jewish faith and early childhood education, which directly impacts the growth and enrichment of our students. To purchase tickets, go to thetemplelouky.org/ECEC-fundraiser.

Join the Women of Reform Judaism and interfaith congregations around Louisville for our annual Interfaith Coffee at The Temple Monday, Feb. 24 at 9:30 a.m. Rabbi David and Rabbi Matt will present Judaism at Home. This is our opportunity each year to welcome our friends from area churches, mosques, and other faith communities to learn about Judaism and to share in a delightful and sumptuous breakfast. We hope you'll be able to join us. Please RSVP on our website thetemplelouky.org/Interfaith-Coffee or give us a call at 502-423-1818.

Trager Family JCC

Triathlon Swim Training begins Sunday, Feb. 2

A 4-week, focused triathlon swim training session with a certified triathlon coach. This program will provide swim practice for triathlon athletes of all abilities. The course instructor, Terri Friel, is a very experienced triathlon coach. Note: This course will focus on swimming only. More information and registration at jclouisville.org/triathlon.

Cooking with Kyla & Eden begins Feb. 6
Monthly cooking classes hosted by Kyla and Eden - our Shinshinim. Each month they will be teaching a new recipe and different style of cooking. Everyone attending will participate in making the dish, and then take it home to cook or bake. Sessions are: Feb. 6, March 27, April 22 and May 14 -- 7-8:30 p.m. at the Kohn Family Town Square. Cost: \$7 each or \$25 for all four. RSVP online at tinyurl.com/cooking-withshinshinim Please note: This class is intended for adults.

Women's 2025 Vision Board Night -- Feb. 11, 7-9 p.m. at the Kohn Family Town Square

Join us for an inspiring evening with cocktails and meaningful conversation as we gather to set our intentions for the new year. This event is designed for Jewish women to reflect on their goals and create vision boards for the year ahead. Hosted by Kyla and Eden, our shinshinim. Cost: \$10. RSVP at tinyurl.com/visionboard-shinshinim.

University of Louisville

Now through March 1, Louisville Jewish Artists Today is displaying the work of versatile local textile artist Felice Sachs (M.A. from U of L). A color and texture-rich array of her recent small pieces is on view in the Jewish Studies Reading Room of the Ekstrom Library on U of L's Belknap Campus. This is the first of many planned exhibits of contemporary Jewish art in Louisville.

LIFECYCLE

B'nai Mitzvah



Fay Evie Davidson

Fay Evie Davidson will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah February 1 at 10 a.m. at Congregation Adath Jeshurun. Fay is the daughter of Shoshanna Goldfine, Jeffrey Gold-

berg, Jerad Davidson, and Katie Reese. Her grandparents include Karen Cox, Martin & Debbie Davidson, Lois Davidson, Dan Alley, Barbara Glassberg, and Linda & Stuart Goldberg.

Fay attends Kentucky Country Day School where she is involved in theater, archery, and music. She recently starred in KCD's production of Yo, Vikings! and enjoys attending the theater, reading, and learning about languages & mythology. Since Kentucky Shakespeare Camp was a formative experience, Fay founded Puck's Scholars, a scholarship fund for underserved children attending Kentucky Shakespeare Camp. She is committed to growing this scholarship fund over the next few years through fundraisers and events.



Lila Grace Roth

Lila Grace Roth will be called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah Saturday, Feb. 22 at 10:30 a.m. at The Temple. Lila is the daughter of Mark and Melissa, sister of Alex, and granddaughter of

Dr. John and Bonnie Roth and Joel and Sue Kaufmann.

Lila is in the seventh grade at Francis Parker School, where she plays field hockey and basketball. Lila enjoys creative writing, photography, video games, and reading. Her favorite stories include all of the Percy Jackson books, the Keeper of the Lost Cities series, and watching anything Marvel. For her Pledge 13 project, Lila volunteered at JFCS's food pantry and the Friendship Corner.

Obituaries



Stanley W. Bayersdorfer

Stanley W. Bayersdorfer, 96, passed away peacefully on January 5, 2025.

Born in Steubenville, Ohio, he grew up in Louisville, where he was a member of Castle-

wood Athletic Club. He was a graduate of Riverside Military Academy, the University of Louisville, and served as a staff sergeant in the United States Army Air Corps during the Korean War.

With his wife, Ellen, he founded The Fashion Post in 1959, where he continued working until just weeks before his death.

He was a board member of Actors Theatre of Louisville, the city of Rolling Fields, Frazier Rehab Institute, and the University of Louisville Board of Overseers. He was past president of the University of Louisville Associates and Standard Country Club, as well as past chairman of the March of Dimes and Jewish Hospital Healthcare Services.

He was predeceased by his wife of 66 years, Ellen; his parents, Dr. Silas and Helen Starr; and his sister, Ruth Sobel.

Survivors include his children Carol Cohen (Ed), Bill (Emily Trader), Bob, and David; grandchildren Ellie Cohen (Julian Groover), Andy Cohen (Julia Katzman); and great-granddaughter Caroline Groover, along with many cousins, nieces, and nephews -- plus his extended Fashion Post family of alumni and friends.

A memorial service was held at The Temple on January 8. Expressions of sympathy may be made to the donor's charity of choice.



Hans Isaac Bensinger

Hans Isaac Bensinger of Louisville, Kentucky, died peacefully and surrounded by family on January 7, 2025, at the age of 96. He is predeceased

by his loving wife of 41 years, Chava Poznanski Bensinger; parents Salomon and Eugenia Bensinger; sister and brother-in-law Idel Bensinger Simon and Andras Simon; and niece and nephew Barbara Simon and Johnny Simon. He is survived by his devoted and loving daughter Karin (Daniel Appelbaum) and adoring grandchildren Nathan, Noa, Tess, and Mabel Appelbaum; loving niece Irene Simon Friedmann; and many wonderful cousins in Louisville and around the world.

A native of Pforzheim, Germany, Hans was 10 years old when he witnessed and survived the tragic events of Kristallnacht (the November 1938 pogroms that the Nazis unleashed against Germany's Jewish population and which many historians consider the beginning of the Holocaust). This began a chain of events resulting in his father's imprisonment in the Dachau concentration camp and his family's eventual escape and resettlement in La Paz, Bolivia.

As a young, penniless refugee in Bolivia, Hans worked several jobs to support his family, but always prioritized his education by attending night school, a tradition he continued in Louisville, to where—with the support of his Louisville-based uncle Fritz Bensinger—he eventually moved, receiving his B.A. in Accounting and Economics and MBA from the University of Louisville evening program. His financial acumen and fluency in German, Spanish, and English provided him with many employment opportunities, including serving as a U.S. Army auditor in Germany and as a finance executive for the Louisville,

Managua, Guatemala City, and Buenos Aires subsidiaries of the London-based British American Tobacco Company.

Despite working around the world for many years, Hans felt most at home in Louisville, where he permanently relocated to with his family in the 1980s and established a real estate business. Hans and Chava enjoyed Louisville's thriving art scene, and were active long-time subscribers to the Louisville Orchestra, Broadway in Louisville, and the Louisville Ballet. They were also proud 40 year-plus members of Congregation Adath Jeshurun and what's now the Trager Family Jewish Community Center.

Hans's experiences as a Holocaust survivor, which led to the deaths and worldwide dispersal of his large extended family from their German homeland, made him acutely aware of the importance of preserving family connections, and he spent his adult life maintaining those relationships with relatives in Europe, Latin America, Israel, and the U.S., long before the internet and social media made this type of communication routine.

Hans was also passionate about history and world affairs, routinely staying up late into the night reading the NYT, Wall Street Journal and various magazines from cover-to-cover and watching cable news. He also relished following and educating himself about the most important inventions and trends that arose during his almost 100-year-old lifetime. This wealth of knowledge, coupled with his economic know-how and prodigious memory, led to a life-long interest

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THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF LOUISVILLE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES DONATIONS TO THE FOLLOWING:

JCC MEMBERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP FUND

*In honor of Angie Fleitz
Sara & Howard Wagner*

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LIFECYCLE

Continued from page 20

in studying and investing in world markets, something he wryly referred to as "educated gambling."

Hans will be remembered as a consummate gentleman and elegant dresser, a man who felt most comfortable when he was wearing a starched button-down shirt, front pocket handkerchief and sports jacket, accompanied by a heavy 1950s-style briefcase. Yet despite his conservative outward appearance, Hans was easygoing and down-to-earth person -- a man who recognized a person's natural talents and who encouraged and helped people to advance themselves professionally and personally.

Alongside his many worldly interests, Hans's greatest joy in life was spending time with his immediate family. His love and generosity for them knew no limits, and he was so incredibly proud of all of their accomplishments and the upstanding people he helped them to become. A brilliant, generous, funny, sweet, and kind man, Hans always had a ready smile on his face and an uncanny ability to connect with people of all ages and backgrounds. A wonderful listener, he always made anyone he talked to feel important and heard. In short, everyone who knew him, loved him. His legacy lives on with his family, friends, and everyone who cherished and loved him.

Funeral services were held Sunday, January 12 at Herman Meyer & Son, followed by burial in Adath Jeshurun Cemetery. Contributions in memory of Hans can be made to Congregation Adath Jeshurun, the Louisville Orchestra, HIAS or the U.S. Holocaust Museum.



Howard Keith Block

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of Howard Keith Block, 89, born on October 16th, 1935, who left us surrounded by love. He is preceded in

death by his parents, Manual "Manny" and Gertrude "Gete" Block. Keith is survived by his two beloved sisters, Jacqueline "Jackie" Block Williams (Buddy) and Ruth Block Schneider; his nephews, Stuart Williams and David Williams; and his cherished nieces, Britney Schneider and Kenna Schneider.

Keith's journey through life began in Louisville, Kentucky, where he attended Male High School before furthering his education at the University of Louisville and the U of L Medical School. His lifelong connection to the city was evident in his daily walks around its streets, where he found joy and inspiration amid the vibrant community.

A familiar face at Starbucks in the Highlands, Keith was affectionately known as the "Mayor" among his friends and discussion group members, who gathered every Sunday to engage in lively conversations. He had a gift for schmoozing and was always eager to connect with people over coffee, sharing stories and laughter.

An avid reader with a particular passion for World War II history, Keith often frequented the library to discover new books and dive into the past. His curiosity and love for learning never waned throughout his life.

In the last six years of his life, Keith resided at Rivers Edge Nursing Home, where he found comfort and happiness. His family is deeply grateful to the dedicated nurses and aides who cared for him, with a special acknowledgement to Gigi, whose compassion and commitment went above and beyond.

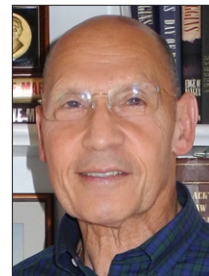
Keith Block will be remembered for his warmth, intellect, and unwavering spirit. He touched the lives of many and will be dearly missed by all who had the privilege of knowing him. Funeral services were held Friday, January 10, at Herman Meyer & Son. Donations can be made to NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), Dementia Society of America, and Congregation Adath Jeshurun. May his memory be for a blessing.

Michael Drutz

Michael Drutz, of Cincinnati, Ohio passed away unexpectedly on January 3, 2025 at Twin Towers, the assisted living facility in Cincinnati where he had been living for the last five years, since the death of his mother, Riva Drutz. He left behind a cat, Ginger, and 70 years' worth of paraphernalia in his various collections. Michael elected to donate his body to the University of Cincinnati medical school - he liked that he would be contributing to something greater than himself. That was his way of contributing to society.

Michael is preceded in death by his parents, Ben and Riva Drutz. He is sur-

vived by his sister Debbie Drutz-Lutkenhoff, of Cincinnati, Ohio, plus two nephews and their families. Donations in his memory may be made to the Dorothy & Henry Goldstein Gemilut Hasadim Fund at Adath Jeshurun Synagogue in Louisville.



Martin Klotz

Martin Klotz passed peacefully in Louisville, Kentucky, on Friday, January 17, 2025, at the age of 85. He was preceded in death by his father, Bernard; his mother, Noma; and his loving wife of 49 years, Mary.

Martin earned his bachelor's degree from Ball State Teacher's College and his master's degree from Indiana University. He began his professional career as a high school teacher and coach where he guided the Ahren's Trade wrestling team to back-to-back state championships in 1964 and 1965, a first for the KHSAA. He later taught and coached football and wrestling in Piedmont, California, where he met his future wife, Mary Weigel.

In 1971, Martin earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Louisville and subsequently practiced law with the U.S. Department of the Treasury in Los Angeles, San Diego, and Washington, D.C. After 30 years of service, he retired in 2003. Martin was an avid reader and a world traveler. In retirement, he indulged his lifelong love of horses and horse racing by serving as a tour guide at Old Friends Retirement Thoroughbred Farm in Georgetown, KY, and the Churchill Downs Museum in Louisville, KY.

He is survived by his sons, Kevin M. Klotz (Margarita) of Houston, TX, and David E. Klotz of Louisville; as well as his grandchildren, Rachel E. Klotz and Ryan W. Klotz, both of Louisville.

Funeral services were held January 22 at Herman Meyer & Son, followed by interment in Cave Hill Cemetery. The family requests that any donations in Martin's memory be made to the American Heart Association.

Donald Alvin Powell

Donald Alvin Powell, 91, died peacefully December 26, 2024, in Louisville, Kentucky. He was born in Virginia on April 9, 1933, to Horatio H. Powell and



Natalie (née Stultz) Powell.

As a child, the family relocated to Louisville. He graduated from Male High School and continued his academic pursuits at the University of Kentucky. He returned and graduated from the University of Louisville. He decided to further his education at the University of Louisville Medical School. Although he embarked on a path toward medicine, life led him to a different arena.

Don became well-known in the local community as an impeccably dressed and charming jeweler. For over 55 years, he dedicated himself to his craft as the manager of Merkley Kendrick Jewelers. His passion for exquisite jewelry and attention to detail earned him a reputation among customers and colleagues.

In addition to his parents, Donald was preceded in death by his brother, James H. Powell, and his sister and brother-in-law, Alyce and William Gannaway, II, who all held a special place in his heart.

Donald is survived by his loving partner of 47 years, Arnold Levin, who stood by his side through life's many adventures, and his five nieces and nephew.

Funeral services were held on December 30 at Herman Meyer & Son. Followed by a private interment.

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NEWS

Updates and Observations from the Filson Historical Society

By Ann Glazer Niren
Guest Columnist



Ann Glazer Niren

Welcome to this secular New Year, featuring all new Jewish programs sponsored by the Filson Historical Society. As promised in my last column, I will be bringing you quarterly updates from the Filson in terms of programming and other Jewish activities. As the Curator of Jewish Collections, in addition to meeting with donors, accessioning new donations, and helping with research questions, among other activities, I am responsible for planning and overseeing four programs per year. To make them more accessible to members of our Jewish community, some events may take place in other venues around the Louisville area.

I hope that you were able to attend our January 21 program, "Art and Memory: Louisville's Link to the Holocaust through Der Kaiser von Atlantis." It was the first of three Filson programs this year commemorating the 80th anniversary of the conclusion of the Holocaust and World War II. It featured Music Director, Teddy Abrams, Cantor David Lipp of Congregation Aduath Jeshurun, violinist Adam Millstein, graphic novelist Dave Maas, and yours truly. The in-person component of

the program sold out, but you can watch it soon on our YouTube channel, youtube.com/user/FilsonHistoricalKY.

This event was designed to serve as a prelude to the Louisville Orchestra's performance of the opera by Victor Ullmann, *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, which took place January 25 at the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts. Ullmann perished after he was transported to Auschwitz, but not before he gave the score of the work to a friend, Dr. Emil Utitz, who managed to smuggle it out of Terezin, according to musicologist, Julie Woodward. Woodward, who lives in New York, contacted me when she read information online about these programs. She and her then-husband, Kerry, staged the first performance of the work in 1975, but it has never been performed in Kentucky until now.

Coinciding with this program and other upcoming Holocaust-related events, I am curating my first exhibit, albeit a small one, which will be in our Carriage House beginning January 21. This display focuses on the Wolf family's journey from Germany to America on the eve of World War II. The items showcased are part of a new collection donated by Michael Widerschein, featuring material from Trude and Kurt Wolf, his grandparents, and from Lotte, his mother; many of you will remember Lotte Widerschein, of blessed memory. Included in the exhibit are family photographs, travel documents, and certificates.

Next on the agenda, the Louisville Bal-

let and the Kentucky Opera team up for "A Time Remembered," which consists of two parts, each recalling a particular woman's experience during the Holocaust. Hopefully, you have already seen information about this program, which includes three performances on February 1 and 2 at the Kentucky Center for the Arts. Act I consists of *Another Sunrise*, an opera that tells the story of Krystyna Zywulska, and Act II is a ballet entitled *Light/The Holocaust and Humanity Project*, which recounts Naomi Warren's story. This event is made possible in part by the Jewish Heritage Fund and the Auerbach family.

Warren's story is recounted in a documentary called *Finding Light*, directed by Paul Bloodgood, a former dancer with Ballet Austin, and who appeared in the world premiere of the ballet. The Speed Museum Cinema showed this documentary on Sunday, January 26, with a talk-back with Mr. Bloodgood and Stephen Mills, the ballet's creator and choreographer, and a question-and-answer session moderated by me. In addition, on February 2, there will be a pre-performance dinner in tribute to Minx Auerbach. Mr. Mills will also give a pre-performance talk in the Mary Anderson Room at the Kentucky Center for the Arts on February 1 before the first showing of the ballet, and I will serve as host. In a phone conversation with Mr. Mills, he stressed the importance of using art to combat bigotry, and he reminded me of Elie Wiesel's cautionary admonition, "When people

suffer, don't sleep." For more information on the ballet program, visit louisvilleballet.org/a-time-remembered/.

Looking ahead to spring, the Filson will host Dr. Alex Kor and Mr. Graham Honaker to commemorate Yom HaShoah, on Tuesday, April 22. They co-authored a book last year called *A Blessing, not a Burden*. Dr. Kor's parents were both survivors of the Holocaust, and he narrates their journey in his book. If the name "Kor" sounds familiar to you, it is likely because you have heard of Eva Kor, one of the twins on which Dr. Mengele performed his ghastly experiments in Auschwitz. Eva was his mother, and her sister, Miriam, was his aunt. Come to the Filson on April 22 at 6 P.M. to hear about the Kors' incredible story that focuses on forgiveness.

Stay tuned for more information in Community's weekly email blasts in the spring.

There are two other Filson programs later this year, including collaborations with Kentucky Opera and the Trager Family Jewish Community Center. I will share more details in my next column in April and in weekly email blasts. Also, in a future column, look for more information about the Filson's Jewish collections, including new arrivals. As always, if you have a question or comment, please email me at aniren@filsonhistorical.org or call me at (502) 635-5083, ext. 243.

Ann Niren is Curator of Jewish Collections at the Filson Historical Society

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GLOBE

Harvard settles antisemitism lawsuits with promises to police anti-Zionist speech

By Andrew Lapin
JTA

Harvard University has settled two lawsuits with Jewish groups accusing the school of fostering an antisemitic environment in the aftermath of the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attacks, as President Donald Trump retakes office with a promise to more heavily police universities for such cases.

As part of the settlements, Harvard says it has agreed to an unspecified monetary payout; to change its policies around anti-Zionist speech and devote more resources to study antisemitism; and to pursue a new partnership with an Israeli university.

It will also partner with the Brandeis Center for Human Rights Under Law, one of the groups that had sued the school, "to host a variety of events on campus."

"Today's settlement reflects Harvard's enduring commitment to ensuring our Jewish students, faculty, and staff are embraced, respected, and supported," a Harvard spokesperson said in a statement. "We will continue to strengthen our policies, systems, and operations to combat anti-Semitism and all forms of hate and ensure all members of the Harvard community have the support they need to pursue their academic, research and professional work and feel they belong on our campus and in our classrooms."

Harvard took fierce criticism over its handling of campus protests amid the Israel-Hamas war. Its president, Claudine Gay, resigned under intense pressure after being grilled by GOP Rep. Elise Stefanik, a Harvard graduate who is now Trump's nominee for United Nations ambassador and recounted the now-infamous hearing at her Senate confirmation hearing on Tuesday.

The school also briefly faced a Title VI investigation by the Department of Education until the lawsuits preempted it.

The agreement reflects a wish list of many pro-Israel groups that demanded a more forceful response from universities to the explosion of pro-Palestinian activism on their campuses. The Brandeis Center and Students Against Antisemitism, the groups that reached settlements with Harvard, praised the school for taking such steps.

"We are heartened that Harvard has agreed to take numerous important steps necessary to creating a welcoming environment for Jewish students," Kenneth Marcus, the Brandeis Center's founder and chair and a former Trump education department official, said in a statement. He added, "We look forward to working with Harvard on the important work in this agreement to ensure that the rights of all students are protected."

Harvard's move to consider some attacks on Zionists as violations of its

non-discrimination policy follows similar steps from New York University and some other schools. The Brandeis Center has urged changes of that nature, asserting that Zionism is an integral part of many Jewish students' Jewish identities.

In its statement, the Ivy League school said that rhetoric violating the policy could include "excluding Zionists from an open event, calling for the death of Zionists, applying a 'no Zionist' litmus test for participation in any Harvard activity, using or disseminating tropes, stereotypes, and conspiracies about Zionists (e.g., 'Zionists control the media'), or demanding a person who is or is perceived to be Jewish or Israeli to state a position on Israel or Zionism to harass or discriminate."

Harvard's promise to pursue a new partnership with a yet-unnamed Israeli university, on top of its existing ones, is a rebuke to a chief demand of pro-Palestinian campus activists nationwide: for schools to eschew working with Israeli institutions entirely. Some leading academic groups have also embraced that demand.

In its own statement on the settlement, Harvard Hillel did not explicitly praise or criticize the terms. Instead, director Rabbi Jason Rubenstein noted, "These lawsuits are not, and never were, the only avenue the Jewish community is pursuing as we assert our rights at Harvard."

Rubenstein said the school still needed



A graduate displays a Palestinian flag during the 373rd Commencement at Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 23, 2024. (Craig F. Walker/The Boston Globe via Getty Images)

to address "the entrenched anti-Zionist orthodoxy of certain academic fields" and historically low admission of Jewish students. He noted that a more thorough report from the school's internal task force on antisemitism was forthcoming — and that Harvard Hillel was hiring for a role to ensure that its recommendations were implemented.

Shabbos Kestenbaum, a recent alum of Harvard's Divinity School who had initially joined the Students Against Antisemitism lawsuit, did not join the settlement and is continuing his own separate suit against the school. Kestenbaum became an outspoken critic of the school after Oct. 7 and has entered the world of conservative politics, speaking at last year's Republican National Convention and endorsing Trump.



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