

JEWISH LOUISVILLE COMMUNITY

INSIDE:

JCC Sports Reunion
Recap

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FRIDAY Vol. 51, No. 12 | December 26, 2025 | 6 Tevet 5786

TOGETHER WE GROW

10 Reasons to Give to the Jewish Federation of Louisville's 2026 Annual Campaign

By Lenae Price
VP & Chief Philanthropy Officer

The Jewish Federation Annual Campaign is the single most powerful way to strengthen Jewish life in Louisville, Israel, and around the world. When we give together, our impact multiplies.

1. Together, we strengthen the entire Jewish community

Your one gift fuels a coordinated, community-wide impact on education, advocacy, security, social services, senior care, youth engagement, Israel, and crisis response that no single organization can achieve alone.

2. Together, we respond in times of joy and times of crisis

The Federation mobilizes quickly and responsibly when needs arise, ensuring immediate and strategic community response.



Young adults Abigail Goldberg and Hillary Reskin participate in a NextGen Sukkot event

3. Together, we care for the most vulnerable

Ensuring seniors and adults facing isolation, health challenges, or financial hardship live with dignity, connection,

and support.

- 13,000+ meals served to adults 60+
- 26% increase AgeWell programming for seniors

See **YEAR-END GIVING** on page 5

You may be one cheek swab away from sharing the Gift of Life

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

If you're age 18-35 and wonder why you should head over to the Trager Family JCC this coming January 21 or 28 to run a cotton swab along the insides of your cheeks, consider the example of Eric Gurevich.

Not quite 11 years ago, Gurevich boarded a plane from Louisville to Washington, D.C. for the express purpose of saving the life of a man he'd never met.

That man was Ron Dreben, a 53-year-old D.C. resident suffering from myelodysplastic syndrome, a type of blood cancer in which bone marrow cells fail to mature and which sometimes develops into full-blown leukemia. He was deteriorating rapidly and needed a bone

See **GIFT OF LIFE** on page 15

Partners in love and liturgy

Cantor David Lipp and Rabbi Laura Metzger to be honored for 30-plus years of service at Adath Jeshurun

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

For more than three decades at Congregation Adath Jeshurun – working with three rabbis, preparing dozens of Bar and Bat mitzvah students, leading services for High Holidays, untold Shabbat mornings, plus many regular holidays and daily minyan services – there has been a stalwart presence on the bimah: Cantor David L. Lipp.

Alongside his wife, Rabbi Laura Metzger, Lipp has forged a legacy that has helped define the very essence of this congregation. It's no exaggeration to say that he is the Voice of AJ.

On Sunday, Jan. 18 at 5 p.m., Lipp will be honored with an evening of "hors d'oeuvres, desserts and entertainment" at The Gillespie, 421 Market St. The preceding Shabbat morning at AJ, congregants and guests will pay tribute



Cantor David Lipp and Rabbi Laura Metzger to Metzger during services and a Kid-dush lunch.

Sunday's celebration will feature guest vocalist Joanna Dulkan, hazzan of Minnetonka, Minnesota's Adath Jeshu-

See **TRIBUTE** on page 16

In Israel, a Reform rabbi finds healing energy amid crisis

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

Before Yael Karrie became Rabbi Yael Karrie, she was a young woman growing up during the 1990s in the Israeli city of Haifa amid a family environment that was unabashedly secular. True, there was a synagogue right below her mother's house – a Reform congregation, yet – but Yael paid it little mind.

Then came her obligatory IDF service, where she encountered women who'd come from Orthodox backgrounds and who provided something akin to a minor revelation.

"I got to know this beautiful face of Judaism that I didn't know before," Karrie recalled. "This was the first milestone in my journey – the one that opened the gate."

Her "journey" would eventually lead Karrie to embrace Israel's Movement for Reform and Progressive Judaism, dovetailing with her own imperatives for social action.



Rabbi Yael Karrie

As a rabbi and photographer, she's spent significant time in two of the nation's most sensitive areas: four years with the Sha'ar HaNegev Regional Council in the nation's Gaza Envelope, and later as rabbi of the Matte Asher Regional Council in the Western Galilee – the Jewish Federation of Louisville's Partnership2Gether region.

Rabbi Karrie will travel here next month, spending Jan. 12-14 speaking to small groups around town and an exhibition of her photographs will be featured at the Trager Family JCC. A list of these public sessions can be found at the bottom of this article.

Asked to define herself, Karrie -- who spoke via Zoom from her home in Israel --

See **Yael Karrie** on page 18



Featured Speaker,
Ambassador Daniel Shapiro

Israel in Focus

The Future of the Middle East:
The Secret Sauce of
Regional Integration

SEE PAGE 4

THE DASHBOARD

Word of the Month

You can't teach others until you've settled in their land.



D'var Torah

Rabbi
Yoni Rudansky

Last year, I wrote a D'var Torah in these pages. Many of you commented and enjoyed it, and I appreciated that (as my Zaidy used to say, "Flattery will get you...Everywhere!"). But it was premature.

My mentors taught me: "You can't teach others until you've settled in their land."

People don't learn from textbooks, curricula, or newspaper articles. People learn from people. From relationships and connections. That's why the model for passing down the secrets of the Torah has always been Rabbi to student.

In the classrooms of Montessori Torah Academy, we dedicate a significant amount of time to this. Developing relationships. Establishing rapport. Building support and safety, respect, and admiration.

Last year, when I wrote in these pages, my family was not yet settled. We were still establishing ourselves, just starting to meet people. Chanukah was the turning point. The Jewish community came out in force. The Trager Family JCC Chanukah event was the first time I attended a community event and felt comfortable -- like we belonged. My wife was genuinely excited to see the _____'s, a friendship that would soon blossom. Gradually, over time, events, meals, and parsha classes, those friendships have only deepened. I have found that as I get to know you, my heart has started to open. Relationships develop. Friendships are forged. And learning starts to take root.

This sounds like a nice idea. But how do you know if it's true? You can make anything sound deep and meaningful with the right amount of prose and alliteration. What changes a quote from being cute and pithy to one to live your life by? Experience and intuition are the go-tos for self-help professionals. However, we soon realize that intuition alone doesn't solve the world's problems. In today's polarizing world, there are plenty of well-meaning people (usually), on both sides of the aisle, whose moral compass leads them in completely opposite directions.

So how do we sort through the noise? How do we find our guideposts? Our North Star?

"You can't teach others until you've settled in their land." My Rabbis didn't make that line up. They learned it from a 16th-century Torah Scholar, Rabbi Shmuel Yaffe.

But where did Rabbi Yaffe get it from? Did he make it up? Was it based on his own understanding of the world? There are many ideas and theories from the 16th century that have been debunked, changed, or added to. Even if it was sound advice for the 1500s, maybe people have changed since then. Maybe it's no longer relevant?

Over the last few weeks, we have learned the fascinating story of Joseph being sold as a slave. Rising to prominence. Turning Egypt into a superpower. Leading up to the climactic moment when he reveals himself to his brothers. Reunited once again, they travel back to bring their father, Jacob, and their households to settle in Egypt.

Kids grow up learning how Jacob sent Yehudah ahead of his brothers to establish a "Yeshiva" (Advanced Jewish Day School) in Egypt. As a nation, we need Torah to survive. It has been the secret to our longevity. Every nation that has risen against us is no longer. And we are still here, thanks to G-d and His Torah. Jacob understood that. And he understood that before his family went into exile, he must ensure that there was an established Yeshiva for his children to learn in, and to spread G-d's teachings among the local population.

It's a beautiful lesson. But there's a glaring question. Joseph was in Egypt. He knew his father was coming. He knew how important Torah is. Why didn't he establish a Yeshiva? Why did Yaakov need to send Yehuda ahead?

The truth is, Yosef was building a Yeshiva. But he thought his father and brothers would be exhausted from their long journey. He thought he had three extra days while they recovered.

Yosef was wrong; the brothers were so excited to see Yosef that the journey wasn't difficult. They would be ready to learn on Day One. Even three days without an established day school was too much to bear.

But what about the Egyptians? When did Yaakov start teaching them?

From that, Rabbi Yaffe gleams a powerful insight.

"You can't teach others until you've settled in their land."

Joseph was second in command.

They all loved him.

His father taught him everything.

But Jacob was an ineffective teacher until he had settled in the land.

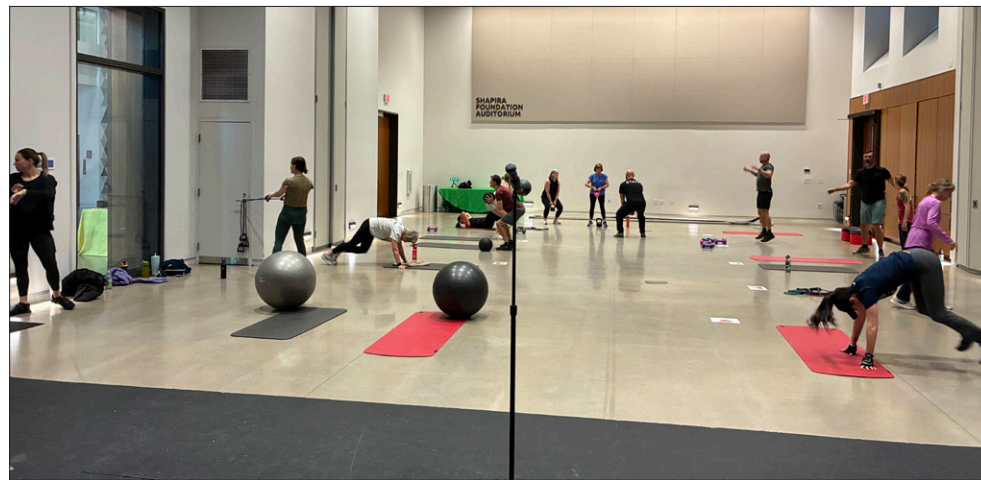
You can't teach without connection.

Last year's article emerged too soon.

This year, it's good to be here.

Rabbi Yoni Rudansky is the Head of School of Montessori Torah Academy.

Snapshots



On Thanksgiving Day, members of the Trager Family JCC were invited to join in several wellness programs, including a Gratitude Yoga session and a fast-paced, high energy Switch class.

Candles

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

- January 2 @ 5:16 p.m.
- January 9 @ 5:23 p.m.
- January 16 @ 5:30 p.m.
- January 23 @ 5:37 p.m.
- January 30 @ 5:45 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, January 19** (though sooner is better).

The paper will be published on **Friday, January 30**.

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.

Read Community Everywhere...

We have you covered, Louisville – online. *Community* stories are posted regularly at jewishlouisville.org/community/ or scan the QR code below.



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-

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

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.

Corrections/Clarifications

Due to an editing error, a story in the October issue of *Community* gave an incorrect last name for a former athletics director of the old Louisville YMHA. He was Maurice Richlin, not "Richmond."

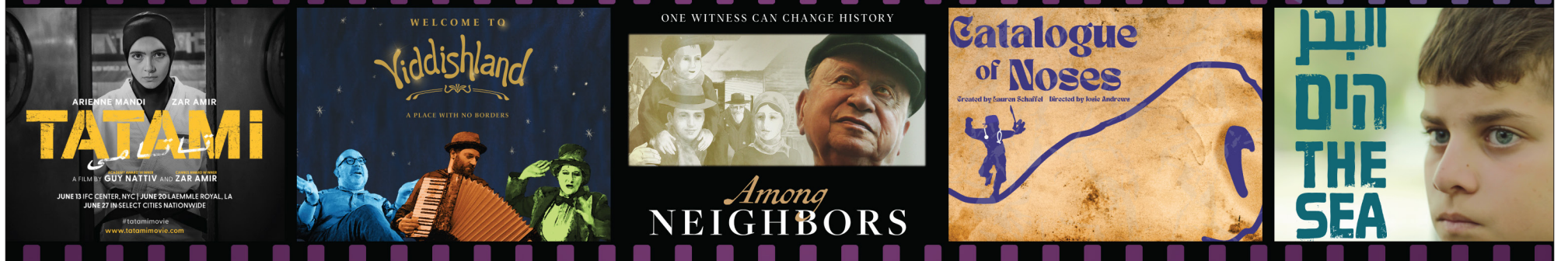
Have a correction? Send it to community@jewishlouisville.org



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NEWS

Former U.S. Ambassador to Israel Daniel Shapiro to speak at the Trager Family JCC as part of JFNA's 'Israel in Focus' speaker series

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor



Daniel Shapiro

Daniel Benjamin Shapiro is not exactly reluctant to share what's on his mind. The former U.S. Ambassador to Israel, who will speak next month at the Trager Family JCC in an event presented by the Jewish Federation of Louisville in partnership with Jewish Federations of North America and other organizations, is a man of frank opinions. Witness, for instance, what he writes in the current online issue of *The Atlantic*:

"Some are advocating, in light of the war in Gaza after October 7, to end U.S. support for Israel. I argue that would be a moral, political, and strategic mistake."

The Champaign, Illinois native (and 1991 Brandeis University alum) Shapiro will share his thoughts on this and other relevant topics during a talk slated for Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 6:15 p.m. at the Trager Family JCC's Shapira Foundation Auditorium.

Titled, "The Future of the Middle East: The Secret Sauce of Regional Integration," his program will draw on his ex-

perience as ambassador from 2011-2017 under President Obama.

The event is part of the "Israel in Focus" speakers tour, which seeks "to provide timely updates and insights" on matters related to the situation in Gaza and related topics. Additionally, the tour "connects national expertise with local action, empowering communities to deepen understanding, strengthen relationships, and stand united in support of Israel and the Jewish people."

Shapiro will also speak about his more recent tenure as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, leading the Pentagon's response to the October 7, 2023 attacks and advancing regional integration through the Abraham Accords.

Asked during a Sept. 25, 2025 CBS News 24/7 interview about whether the United States should formally recognize a Palestinian state, Shapiro had this to say:

"Well, the U.S. in the past has supported a two-state solution," he said. "I'm not sure that's the current policy of the Trump administration, but they didn't join Western countries like France and the U.K. in recognizing a Palestinian state this week. I don't think those recognitions actually do very much to change the situation on the ground or advance the prospects for peace."

As his extensive résumé indicates, it's

no surprise that Shapiro devotes much of his attention to the relationship between Israel and the U.S. A geopolitical pragmatist, he acknowledges its often-fraught nature, a dynamic inevitably intensified by October 7 and its aftermath in Gaza.

In his Dec. 17 online column for *The Atlantic's* Ideas section, Shapiro references attending the 2025 Doha Forum, which ran Dec. 6-8 in the Qatari capital city. Unsurprisingly, he says, anti-Israel rhetoric dominated the proceedings.

"No one," Shapiro said, "attends the Doha Forum to hear balanced discussions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

Shapiro credits Donald Trump for his role in securing a Gaza ceasefire and the release of all but one of the hostages, alive and dead.

"But implementation of the second phase of Trump's plan has stalled," Shapiro says. "The plan calls for the full disarmament of Hamas—relinquishing its weapons, the means of producing or smuggling new ones, and tunnels. And that is the sine qua non for every other element of the plan—deployment of an international stabilization force, releasing tens of billions of dollars in reconstruction funds, standing up technocratic transitional Palestinian leadership, achieving a full Israeli withdrawal. None of those other steps—or the better life for Palestinians in Gaza they promise to provide—will happen unless Hamas is fully

removed from power and disarmed."

Indeed, Shapiro observes: "If others at the conference shared this focus, we were a distinct minority. There were plenty of calls for treating Israel as an international pariah, labeling the country's response to the October 7, 2023, Hamas invasion as a genocide, criticizing the United States for its support for Israel, and even treating Hamas as a legitimate "resistance" organization rather than a violent terrorist group.

Crucially, Shapiro argues, "the story of the attack and its aftermath—so often ignored in commentaries about the past two years—affirms that what the United States was dealing with was not a genocidal nation out to destroy all Palestinians but a deeply imperfect democratic partner beset by enemies, actual genocidal enemies, and terrorists sworn to its physical destruction."

Want to hear more? Then come hear Shapiro on Jan. 20. (a dessert reception will follow) Space is limited, however, so please register early. RSVP by Jan. 19 at tinyurl.com/mr23ft6z.

Ambassador Daniel Shapiro's Jan. 20 talk at the Trager Family JCC is being presented by the Jewish Federation of Louisville in partnership with Jewish Federations of North America, the American Jewish Committee, the Conference of Presidents of Major Jewish Organizations, and the Anti-Defamation League.

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NEWS

YEAR-END GIVING

Continued from page 1

4. Together, we grow Jewish life and Jewish journeys

- Nearly 400 children receive PJ Library books monthly
- 190 students supported in Hebrew Schools

5. Together, we build the next generation of Jewish leaders

- \$269,000 in Jewish camp scholarships
- 70 children attended Jewish overnight camp
- 72 teens participated in BBYO leadership experiences
- 112 teens engaged through Teen Connect programming

6. Together, we protect our community

Antisemitism is rising, and security is essential to vibrant Jewish life. Annual Campaign dollars support community-wide security and preparedness.

- 76 security consultations and assessments completed
- 500+ community members trained in safety, emergency response, and preparedness

7. Together, we fight antisemitism through advocacy and education

Through the Jewish Community Re-

lations Council (JCRC), the Annual Campaign amplifies our community's voice—advocating with elected officials, educating schools and universities, and building strong interfaith coalitions.

8. Together, we grow a thriving Jewish future

Brandeis and 502.0 research show thousands of Jewish individuals in Louisville remain unconnected. The Annual Campaign fuels strategies to reach the 73% who are minimally engaged, creating new on-ramps into Jewish life.

9. Together, we connect Louisville to Israel and global Jewry

- 15,000+ Israel engagement experiences through ShinShinim
- 26+ years of Partnership2Gether with the Western Galilee
- Emergency and rebuilding support following October 7

10. Together, we grow stronger than any challenge

The Annual Campaign ensures Jewish Louisville remains welcoming, inclusive, secure, and vibrant, today and for generations to come.

The need is great. Together, the strength of our community is greater.

Give to the Jewish Federation of Louisville Annual Campaign by Dec. 31.

Together, we grow.

Lenae Price is VP & Chief Philanthropy Officer at the Jewish Federation of Louisville.



LEARNING WITH

Rabbi Yael Karrie

FROM MATTE ASHER, ISRAEL

"With Kind Eyes" Workshop

Tuesday, January 13 at 12:45 - 2 p.m.
Trager Family JCC Fleischaker Greene Family Community Room

Discover how photography can open the heart in an interactive workshop that invites you to see yourself, and others, with greater kindness. To RSVP, please contact Janet DeArk at jdeark@jewishlouisville.org. *Space limited. Smartphone required.*

Renewal Sound Bath

Tuesday, January 13 at 6 p.m.
Trager Family JCC Fleischaker Greene Family Community Room

Start the new year with the healing power of singing bowls in a relaxing Sound Bath experience, enriched by Rabbi Yael's meaningful teachings. Price: \$18
Mats provided. Bring blankets and pillows.



Temple Scholars

Wednesday, January 14 at 9:30 and 10:50 a.m.
The Temple, 5101 US-42

In collaboration with The Temple. Rabbi Yael will be the guest speaker at Temple Scholars' classes, focusing on The Mussar Movement and Jewish Mysticism. *Open to all, with both in-person and Zoom participation available.*





Rabbi Yael Karrie is the regional rabbi of the Matte Asher Regional Council. Born in Haifa, Israel, and raised in a pluralistic, socialist, and secular environment that emphasized interfaith and coexistence, she grew up valuing knowledge, social engagement, and Zionism. During her military service, she encountered the Jewish religious bookshelf for the first time—an experience that sparked a lifelong passion for study and research.

She first encountered the Reform movement while working as a tour guide for Birthright Israel groups. In her rabbinic work, she strives to combine the four themes that are dearest to her: love for one another, love of nature, love of art, and love for the written word. She enjoys sharing her passion for Jewish texts by teaching in a Beit Midrash format and regularly integrates art, nature, and hiking in her teaching.

Her commitment to social justice in Israel and around the world led her to work with the Bedouin community, interfaith groups, asylum seekers, the LGBTQ community, and youth in distress.

Learn More and RSVP at jclouisville.org/karrie






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To learn more about leaving a legacy, contact Frances Skolnick at fskolnick@jewishlouisville.org.

*Seek advice from a financial advisor, attorney, or tax professional to discuss your personal situation.

COMMUNITY

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COMMUNITY DEADLINES

Deadlines for the next two issues of **Community** for copy and ads are January 19 for publication on January 30 and February 16 for publication on February 27.

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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The appearance of advertising in Community does not represent a kashruth endorsement.

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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



On Bondi Beach, the most brutal of reality checks



Mindful Ramblings

Andrew Adler

Anyone who still harbors doubt as to the sheer vehemence of worldwide anti-semitism need only have been on Sydney, Australia's Bondi Beach during the afternoon of Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025.

In what was to be a festive Chabad-organized prelude to the first night of Hanukkah, a pair of gunmen took position on a footbridge, aimed their rifles at crowd goers below, and opened fire. By the time the gunfire finally ceased, 15 victims lay dead or dying, with another 39 wounded along sands that, once pristine white, were now dark with the blood of murdered Jews.

The episode was all the more perverse given that the murderers were a father and son, acting in the name of the Islamic State. It speaks to the ubiquitous hatred of Jews and Jewishness that we've become accustomed to spasms of antisemitic violence, just not on this scale. Not on a sun-splashed beach on the eve of Hanukkah. Not when the slain include a 10-year-old child.

Yet here was a wanton demonstration of antisemitic evil, unabashed in its intensity. For many of us, the Islamic State has receded as a palpable, immediate threat: relegated to secondary status compared to the contemporary extremist surges of Hamas and its terroristic brethren. Radicalization may be

an ever-present dynamic, tempting certain weak-minded individuals steeped in delusion and desperation, but when it erupts like this, it shocks us.

It's also startling to encounter a gun-driven homicidal rampage in a place like Australia. That nation's gun laws, while not as restrictive as, say, the UK, still guard against unfettered access to firearms. You can't stroll into your neighborhood retailer and, a few minutes later, stroll out with all manner of weaponry.

Even so, the elder Bondi Beach shooter had, legally, amassed a collection of at least six long guns. Equipped with a sizeable cache of ammunition, the 50-year-old father and his 24-year-old son were able to unleash round after round.

Terrible as the death toll was, it could have been considerably worse had 43-year-old Ahmed al-Ahmed not crept up behind the father, tackled him and wrested the rifle from his hands, compelling the gunman to retreat from the scene. An Islamic fruit seller, armed with nothing but his bare hands, fortitude and immense courage, acted selflessly to come to the aid of citizens, *Jewish* citizens, he'd likely never encountered before that terrible December day.

The dead ranged in age from that 10-year-old girl, Matilda, to 87-year-old Alex Kleytman, a Holocaust survivor. The murdered also included Rabbi Yaakov Levitan, Chief Operating Officer of Chabad of Bondi. Each year he organized and presided over the "Chanukah by the Sea" festivities on Bondi Beach.

He was fulfilling Chabad's imperative of outreach, wrapping his spiritual arms around Jews of all persuasions -- from the most rigorously observant to

the most resolutely secular. The afternoon along Sydney's most celebrated playscape was supposed to be suffused with joy and anticipation. Instead, it became a killing ground.

There were other examples of selfless acts, such as one couple who confronted one of the gunmen, hurling bricks at him before being shot to death. The elder shooter was eventually killed by police; his son, critically wounded, has survived to face 15 counts of murder.

Within days came the expected demands for stricter gun laws, the typical after-the-fact reaction to events such as these. What also emerged was a renewed cognizance of how Jews are increasingly under siege. Sometimes that siege is expressed nakedly, as it was in Sydney. But often it is insidious, percolating underneath a seemingly tranquil surface.

It has been this way for generations, centuries, millennia -- an endemic component of our collective Jewish circumstance. But more and more frequently, we are witnessing (indeed, experiencing) outbreaks that are unforgiving in their brutality.

Viewed through that aperture, the leap from October 7 to Bondi Beach is hardly a leap at all. It is the inevitable consequence of regarding antisemitic hatred as intrinsic to Jewish existence: transcending time and space, heaven and earth. It falls to each of us then, not to concede that apparent inevitability, but to confront and battle it with all our might.

Andrew Adler is Managing Editor of Community.

GLOBE

'The most Australian name': Matilda, the youngest victim of the Bondi Beach attack, embodies a nation's grief

By Grace Gilson
JTA

The youngest victim of the Bondi Beach Hanukkah massacre is known by just one name — but it's all that's needed to make her a symbol for her fellow Australians.

"I named her Matilda because she was our firstborn in Australia. And I thought that Matilda was the most Australian name that could ever exist," her father Michael, a Jewish immigrant from Ukraine, said at a vigil earlier in the week. "So just remember — remember her name."

The poem and song "Waltzing Matilda," written in 1895, is considered an unofficial anthem in Australia, which has been rocked by the terror attack on Bondi Beach that killed 15 people attending a Hanukkah celebration.

At a vigil on Thursday night at Bondi Pavilion — a public space now transformed into a memorial flooded with flowers and displays of solidarity — hundreds of mourners gathered and sang the song to memorialize Matilda, who at 10 was the youngest among the dead. (A clip from the vigil can be seen at youtube.com/watch?v=U52AfCqj-LI)

Matilda had been filmed shortly before the attack admiring as her father put on tefillin, the phylacteries used in prayer that emissaries of Chabad, the group that organized the Hanukkah celebration, routinely help Jewish men put on to fulfill a religious commandment. She was shot while standing with her mother Valentyna and 6-year-old sister.

Seeking to protect their privacy, the family has asked that their last name not be published in the media. Instead, Matilda has become associated her middle name, Bee.

At the somber memorial, all of the attendees were given stickers with Matilda's name alongside a smiling

bumblebee clutching a menorah, a symbol that has become a quiet emblem of remembrance in the days since her death.

At her funeral on Thursday, held at the Chevra Kadisha Memorial Hall, mourners clutched bee balloons and placed bee posters on the exterior of their cars.

A giant plush bumblebee was placed on Matilda's small white casket at the funeral, one similar to the many that now adorn the Bondi Pavilion flower memorial alongside illustrations of bumblebees.

On social media, parents and schools around the world have posted children's illustrations and photos of bees at the request of Matilda's parents, a tribute that has spread widely as a way of remembering her. On Facebook, Matilda's father, Michael, has reposted many of the online memorials.

Build a Bear Workshop Australia also announced the production of a limited-edition plush bee in memory of Matilda, with all proceeds going to her family. A GoFundMe page set up by her language teacher has also drawn over \$550,000 in donations.

"She loved the outdoors, animals, she went to school, she had friends, everybody loved her," Rabbi Yehoram Ulman, whose son-in-law, Rabbi Eli Schlanger, was also killed in the attack, said during his eulogy for Matilda. "The tragic, so totally cruel, an unfathomable murder of young Matilda is something that's painful to all of us as if our own daughter was taken from us."

Valentyna said at the vigil that until Sunday, she had been happy that her family had moved from Ukraine, which has been at war with Russia since Russia invaded in 2022.

"I came from Ukraine. I brought from Ukraine my oldest son, with him, and I was so happy that he's



A portrait of 10-year-old Matilda, victim of the Bondi Beach shooting, sits on a flower memorial beside Bondi Pavilion on December 17, 2025 in Sydney, Australia. (James D. Morgan/Getty Images)

not there right now. He's not fighting for his land, and he's safe here," she said as she broke down in sobs. "I couldn't imagine I would lose my daughter here."

Chris Minns, the premier of New South Wales, the Australian state that includes Sydney, quoted from "Waltzing Matilda" at Matilda's funeral.

"She bore the name Matilda to

honor this great land, Australia's heart and spirit forever hand in hand," said Minns, who wore the bumblebee sticker on his lapel, according to ABC. "Her spirit like a swagman's will never fade away. She's waltzing with the angels, where love will always stay."

JCC'S 135TH ANNIVERSARY

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Trager Family JCC

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NEWS

JCC Sports Reunion brings nostalgia and the return of sports banners

By Amy Joseph Landon
Senior Director of Marketing and Communications

For so many in our community, the past 135 years of the JCC have been filled with memories of sports, from the games played to the friends made along the way. On Friday, November 28, the Trager Family JCC celebrated that rich legacy and history of sports -- in this and all buildings -- with a JCC Sports Reunion. Nearly 150 members of our community -- and one who came into town from Virginia -- came together to reunite with old friends, compete in basketball challenges, and be on hand as the championship banners from the old JCC building were unveiled in the Goldberg Family Gymnasium, where they now have a permanent home.

As soon as guests walked into the hallway leading to the gym, they were greeted by nostalgia. A timeline of the 135-year history of the JCC/YMHA highlighted photos of many celebratory moments in sports, accompanied by myriad trophies, plaques, and other memorabilia from both the JCC collection and from community members who shared their treasures for the reunion. Athletes who have been inducted into the JCC Sports Hall of Fame were featured alongside the memorabilia display, highlighting their athletic accomplishments.

Inside the Goldberg Family Gymnasium, sports alumni quickly gathered with friends, old and new to reminisce and

catch up. Throughout the event, conversations continued to flow, leading up to some of the event's biggest moments. Some guests participated in a basketball contest, testing out their old skills in shooting baskets from different areas of the court to see who could make all the designated shots the fastest. There were two winners -- Camden Evans and Aaron Tasman.

The day culminated with a brief ceremony in which Event Co-Chair Mark Behr honored some of the athletes who are no longer with us and spoke about what participating in sports at the JCC meant to so many people over the years. Emotions were high as the championship banners that hung in the old JCC building finally found their place in the new Trager Family JCC. Guests whose names were featured on the banners gathered at center court to watch as each banner was individually unspooled from the railing on the track above the court.

The event was an exceptionally meaningful way to honor the rich history of the JCC in our new home. Just as the memories of the event will find a permanent place in each guest's heart, the banners will find their permanent place in the Trager Family JCC for all to celebrate.

"So many people came up to me and thanked me for putting this event on," said Evan Rowe, who played on several JCC basketball teams during the 1990s. "Seeing the banners once again brought back a lot of wonderful memories -- reuniting with old friends and teammates



Members of the 1976 championship team (pictured L to R) Steve Trager, Maury Kommor, Tami Penner, David Michel, Lisa Barnes, Gary Spivak, Joel Garmon, Rick Greenberg, Wayne Isaacs, Mark Behr, Rick Shay

as we spent the afternoon reminiscing about, as the Bruce Springsteen song says, our 'glory days.'"

Behr, whose 1977 JCC basketball squad made it to the national semifinals, was struck by the power of the reunion's collective camaraderie.

"Everyone seemed to have a great time seeing old friends and teammates," he

said, cherishing being present "to see all the banners find a new home in the Goldberg Gym where they belong."

It was a promise long contemplated and richly fulfilled.

"To get so many individuals together representing so many generations," Behr observed, "is exactly the definition of l'dor v'dor."

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PICTURE THIS: JCC SPORTS REUNION



Andrew Tuvlin, Bennett Schramko, Ethan Goldberg, Ethan Grossman, and Charles Bessen



Mark Behr and Barry Stoler



Three generations; Spencer Geer, Buddy Kaufman, and Joel Kaufman



Jeff Evans, Evan Tarbis, Ray Kline, Evan Rowe, and Wayne Isaacs



Basketball Challenge winners, Camden Evans and Aaron Tasman



Todd Teitel and Barry Stoler reminisce with sports memorabilia



Spencer Geer, Justin Bass, Hillary Reskin, and Evan Rowe



Sharon Glogower, Thomas Glogower, Ed Rosen, and Linda Rosen



Howell Niren in his vintage Pi Tau Pi jersey



Michael Russman, Howard Kaplan, Evan Tarbis, and Jeff Evans



Harvey and Buddy Kaufman



Todd Teitel, Rick Shay, and Ken Schikler



Jeff Elliott, Evan Rowe, and Jordan Elliott



Wayne Isaacs, Darryl Isaacs, Steve Trager, and Debbi Greenberg

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PICTURE THIS: HANUKKAH AROUND TOWN

Throughout the month of December, organizations across town celebrated Hanukkah with community gatherings. From lighting menorahs and spinning dreidels to eating doughnuts and latkes, community members of all ages found a way to celebrate the festival of lights.

The Trager Family JCC held its annual Hanukkah celebration on Monday, December 22. Families enjoyed latkes, the dreidel den, gaga ball along with other Hanukkah crafts and activities.



Julia Wall gathered friends and family for MAJ Menorah Making with the support of Jewish Federation's Gather Grants.



Young adults gathered at the Evan Williams Bourbon Experience on Saturday, December 20 for a night of lights, bourbon tasting, dreidel, casino-style games and more.

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PICTURE THIS: HANUKKAH AROUND TOWN



Adath Jeshurun held its "Great Debate: Latkes vs. Hamantaschen" on Sunday, Dec. 21.



Chabad of Kentucky presented its annual lighting of Kentucky's largest Menorah on Tuesday, Dec. 16 at 4th Street Live.



(Above) Montessori Torah Academy got a jump on the holiday with its Pre-Chanukah Family Celebration on Dec. 7.



Keneseth Israel hosted its annual Hanukkah Carnival on Sunday, Dec. 21.

(Right) The Temple Brotherhood's annual Hanukkah Celebration on Sunday, Dec. 14 featured an exceedingly busy photo booth.



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PICTURE THIS: GRANDPARENTS' MUSIKGARTEN



On Friday, November 28, the Trager Family JCC Shapira Foundation Auditorium was filled with music and excitement for a special Grandparents' Musikgarten. Grandparents, parents, and children gathered for bagels and nosh and a music session with Cathy Dreszer. The joy of music came alive as generations of families sang together and with other families.

(Photos by Amy Joseph Landon)



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From December 11-21, CenterStage Academy students showed off their hard work with performances of Shrek Kids and Shrek Jr. This full-length, fully produced musical theatre production marked the completion of an immersive, enriching theater experience for children in grades 2-8.

(Photos by Kathryn Harrington and Mackenzie Lynch)







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Sunday, Jan. 11, 2026
Performance Dates:
March 12, 14 & 15, 2026

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NEWS

Baxter Avenue Theatres, a staple of Louisville filmgoing, will close for good on Dec. 31, 2025

By Andrew Adler
Community Editor

After months of speculation about its future, Baxter Avenue Theatres Filmworks (BAT) – a regular screening site for the Trager Family JCC’s annual Louisville Jewish Film Festival -- has made the difficult decision to close permanently.

“With heavy hearts, we announce that December 31 will be our final curtain call,” Apex Entertainment, BAT’s parent company, said in a Dec. 22 statement.

Apex’s Les Aberson, Jr., who owns Baxter Avenue Theatres, told *Community*: “Apex Entertainment was proud to partner with the Louisville Jewish Film Festival at Baxter Avenue and Village 8 over the decades. We were honored to offer screenings where Louisvillians could connect with the richness of Jewish culture and observe the perspectives found in Jewish films and appreciate all the support from our patrons, including the JCC, The Temple along with many other organizations who supported us.”

The facility’s continued existence has been under threat ever since the owners of Mid City Mall, which houses BAT at its rear, announced in November 2024 that they were putting the 11.5-acre mall up for sale. Redevelopment possibilities have centered on converting the Highlands complex – lying along Bardstown

Road in front and Baxter Ave. in back -- to a mixed-use residential/commercial complex.

Nothing is definite, however.

“The future of Mid City Mall is uncertain,” Apex acknowledged in its statement. “While Apex Entertainment would prefer to continue operations and serve its loyal patrons, that is not possible at the present time. We have not received any indication that the developers wish to incorporate Baxter Avenue Theatres into their plans. We disagree but respect their decision.”

Aberson told *The Courier Journal* last February that his current lease ran through the fall of 2026, and that “we have no intention of closing or moving anywhere.” But this past November, Apex recognized the need for “evaluating the future of Baxter Avenue Theatres within the evolving local real estate landscape.”

Housing eight screens, BAT “has been home to Louisville Exclusives, Independent Films, Blockbuster New Releases, Cult Classics, and Midnight Screenings, including countless nights of entertainment since our theatre opened its doors in 1996,” Apex’s statement said.

“They’ve been wonderful partners,” Tricia Kling Siegwald, Senior Director of Adult Programming and Special Projects at the Trager Family JCC, said of Apex. Looking ahead to the 2026 Louisville



Moviegoers have just a few more days to walk through these doors before Baxter Avenue Theatres closes permanently.

Jewish Film Festival, which runs Feb. 7-26, she added that the two films originally slated for the Baxter will instead run elsewhere.

Meanwhile, Apex says “we would like our final week of business to be a celebration of the past three decades...As we

say goodbye, we hope you will take this opportunity to visit us one last time to catch a show. Please share your favorite Baxter memory in person or on social media. Thank you, Louisville, for all of your love and support! We will miss you.”

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NEWS

GIFT OF LIFE

Continued from page 1

marrow stem cell transplant if he was to survive.

Seven years earlier, Gurevich was on a Birthright Israel trip when his group heard a presentation by Gift of Life, prompted by a scarcity of Jewish bone marrow donors. Quickly he volunteered to have his cheeks swabbed -- after all, the procedure took only a few seconds -- and once his tissue sample was entered into a donor registry, someday he might match with a potential recipient.

At the time of his donation on March 9, 2015, Gurevich knew nothing about his recipient other than the broadest parameters.

"I knew that it was a gentleman. I knew his age and I knew the condition he had," Gurevich, Director of Community Relations at Parks Alliance of Louisville, said during a recent Zoom interview. "I really didn't know any details."

It took a series of letters -- sent through a Gift of Life clearinghouse -- for each man to learn the other's identity. The program "has grown by leaps and bounds," Gurevich said, "and part of that has been connecting their donors with their recipients. They've done it hundreds, if not thousands of times by now."

Then, about 18 months after his donation, Gurevich traveled to Miami to attend a Gift of Life event -- the long-sought opportunity for he and Dreben

to meet in person.

"It was like meeting a long-lost family member," Gurevich said, recalling how he was filled with "anticipation and excitement, and also a bit of the unknown. It was easily one of the top moments of my life in terms of how surreal and transformative it felt."

Was his act of donating his stem cells fulfilling a mitzvah?

"Candidly, growing up Jewish, I'm sure I saw it through that lens," he said. "But it was the totally human thing to do. If you see someone in need, you're going to try to help them. And this was a very direct way you could help someone in a profound way."

The Trager Family JCC will host a swab event on two consecutive Wednesdays: Jan. 21 from 4-8 p.m., and Jan. 28 from 7-11 a.m. Participants should be age 18-35. Tissue samples collected from the swab will be entered into a bone marrow registry that may match them with a potential recipient.

Also, Congregation Adath Jeshurun is seeking a potential match for a congregant in need of a kidney donation. An information box in the synagogue's current newsletter reads as follows:



Eric Gurevich (pictured at left) finally meets Ron Dreben -- the recipient of Eric's bone marrow donation -- at a Gift of Life event in Miami.



About a decade ago Eric Gurevich gave the Gift of Life -- stem cells extracted from his own bone marrow -- that saved another man's life.

"We recently learned that a member of our AJ family is in urgent need of a kidney transplant. As our community has always done, we want to rally together, spread the word, and help connect them with potential donors.

If you or someone you know has ever considered becoming a living kidney donor, this could be a life-changing gift. We are still gathering information, but the National Kidney Registry offers an excellent starting point for learning more about the process: kidneyregistry.com"

The synagogue notice continues: "As we learn more details about how our congregation can best support this effort, we will share updates. In the meantime, please keep this individual and their family in your thoughts.

If you believe you may be able to help or would like to learn more, please reach out to Rabbi Scott Hoffman or Adath Jeshurun's Executive Director."

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Scan the QR code or visit jewishlouisville.org/shalomlouisville to get registered!



NEWS

TRIBUTE

Continued from page 1

run Congregation (yup, they've got an AJ, too) and one of Lipp's favorite cantorial colleagues. Jonathan Wolff will be the evening's pianist.

"David is one of those people who's extremely thoughtful and mindful, and whose empathy and wisdom meet that mindfulness," Dulkan said during a recent Zoom interview.

"He's not the kind of leader who's going to be shouting from the front of the room," she said. But "when he speaks, everybody listens. And he is an example of a cantor who is an exceptional artist in terms of musicality, but who's also intellectually rich: someone who loves to learn and loves to teach. He's a cantor who can speak -- which sounds so silly, but many of us are conditioned so that our only job is to be the jukebox."

Next month's dual tribute has been taking shape gradually.

"People started talking about it several years ago, and when Covid happened, everything got put on the back burner," recalled Andy Epstein chair of the tribute weekend planning committee.

"Then we went through a period when we didn't have a rabbi for a couple of years, and things were a little chaotic," Epstein continued, alluding to Rabbi Joshua Corber's brief tenure as Rabbi Robert Slosberg's successor.

"The idea of an anniversary party had been discussed and floated, but no one had taken charge of it," Epstein ex-

plained. "And I just said, 'Hey, we're through with our craziness and things are back to normal, so we need to make this party happen.'"

After Corber departed AJ in mid-2023, and with the retired Slosberg being named Rabbi Emeritus, Lipp became the congregation's sole full-time clergy member. He shouldered that taxing portfolio until the fall of this year, when Scott Hoffman came on board as interim rabbi.

It was a markedly different leadership dynamic compared to what was in place in the spring of 1994, when Lipp and Metzger arrived in Louisville. He was fresh out of cantorial school at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City; she had recently been ordained as a Reform Rabbi after completing the rabbinic program at Hebrew Union College -- also in Manhattan.

They'd met several years earlier, when both were studying in Jerusalem. "The rabbinical school of HUC and the cantorial school at JTS did their first year in Israel," Lipp recalled, "and the HUC students invited the JTS students over for kosher turkey -- because in Israel, the one thing you miss about America, at least for me, is Thanksgiving. Afterward we went down to one of the preschool classrooms (on) the HUC campus, and we watched 'Field of Dreams' -- we were the only two who could fit on those tiny preschool chairs."

Lipp's mother and father had made *aliyah* when their son was in elementary school; he lived in Israel from age 10 to 15 until his parents divorced and he

returned to America with his mother.

After high school, he attended the University of Minnesota as a voice major, envisioning a career as a musical theater actor. For a time after graduation, he found acting jobs in Minneapolis and Chicago with various semi-professional companies, scratching out a living doing temp work ("I never waited tables, but I'm a pretty good typist," he quipped).

Lipp has especially strong memories of one role: Arnold Epstein in "Biloxi Blues" -- Neil Simon's quasi-autobiographical play about undergoing Army basic training in Biloxi, Mississippi.



Cantor David Lipp

"I still remember what I read for the audition," Lipp said. "The scene they had me do is the one where Arnold Epstein gets anti-semitized in the barracks. When I read that scene, I remembered my father telling me almost the identical

story of what happened to him -- which basically means to me that Neil Simon was working from a common Jewish experience in the service."

Raised in a predominantly secular household, "I wasn't particularly religious," Lipp said. But gradually, almost without realizing it, something about his Judaism clicked.

"Little by little I started thinking, 'I'm going to stop taking phone calls on Shabbat,' just one little thing. I don't

want to say, 'I found God' -- it wasn't that. It's more that I just felt comfortable. It felt right, somehow. And I had a couple of dear friends who said, "you should really be a cantor." Not long afterward, he gained a spot at JTS's H.L. Miller Cantorial School -- launching what would be his defining career.

Metzger's pathway was even less traditional. Growing up in Philadelphia, she graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and spent 15 years as a rising executive with Bank of America, Crown-Zellerbach, Grey Advertising and Ogilvy & Mather (the advertising behemoth now known simply as Ogilvy).

All the while, she was contemplating a life change harkening back to her years at Penn, when she'd contemplated majoring in religion. Like her future husband, she realized that genuine happiness lay elsewhere.

With cantorial school behind them, Lipp and Metzger found themselves exchanging Manhattan for Louisville. At AJ, he took over from longtime cantor Marshall Portnoy, continuing Portnoy's annual Music Festivals while taking on leadership roles nationally with the Cantors Assembly and locally via the Louisville Board of Rabbis and Cantors.

Adath Jeshurun created a hybrid role for Metzger. As a Reform rabbi working for a Conservative congregation, she could not officiate at lifecycle ceremonies. So she became the synagogue's

Continued on page 17

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Trager Family JCC

TILES AND TASTY BITES

Join us for a fun evening of Mahjong, Rummikub, and Canasta!

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Kohn Family Town Square at the Trager Family JCC

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We can't wait to see you there!

Cost: \$6 per person; \$24 for a 4-person team

Register at jccloouisville.org/tiles-and-tasty-bites

*Space is limited

NEWS

Continued from page 16

outreach director, counseling interfaith couples and individuals wanting to learn about becoming Jews by choice. Metzger also served as Rabbi for the (now closed) Four Courts Senior Center and was a principal force in bolstering the Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning when the Jewish Federation of Louisville hired her for the program.

Her formal synagogue staff position ended about a decade ago, and now she's probably best known for her bimah-based commentaries during High Holiday services. She became an accomplished painter in watercolors, though now – battling advanced ocular melanoma, an exceedingly rare form of cancer that's left her unable to discern color – she's returned to her first love, drawing.



Rabbi Laura Metzger

Metzger recalls a moment some time ago when their daughter, Natania Lipp (now a Ph.D.-holding psychologist) "said something that was so important to me: 'I'm lucky to have a mother who re-creates her career over and over.' And I was able, for the first time, to think, 'This isn't failure after failure after failure. This is re-creation after re-creation after re-creation.'"

Looking back at his more than three decades as AJ's cantor, Lipp hasn't been

immune to occasional what-might-have-been musings on a life in the theater.

"Sometimes I have second thoughts even to this day," he acknowledges, "but it's not so much an issue of regret. It's more that there is a certain thing I gave up -- wanting to be the next Joel Grey or Dustin Hoffman. But the truth of the matter is, I figured out when I was 28 years old, that I either didn't have the talent or the grit to make it happen."

Indeed, as a cantor "I've gotten to use some of those skills I would've wanted

to develop as an actor or as a singer-actor, in teaching, speaking, and singing. One of my friends – who urged me to consider this as a career path – said, 'listen, they're going to pay you to sing every week.'"

Call it an affirmation – whether of profession or intrinsic personhood – of Hazzan David L. Lipp.

"If I lose my voice, it's not just, 'Oh, I can't work this week.' I get emotionally depressed," he said. "If I can't physically sing, I don't feel good as a human being. It's just part of who I am, and to not be able to do it is just a horrible

feeling. So the fact that there's a Jewish organization that wants me to sing so much that they'll pay me a reasonably good salary – and they've done so for 31 years and counting – is something I don't take for granted. And as much as I might have liked to be the next Joel Grey or the next Dustin Hoffman, that's not a bad spot."

There's still time to register for the Tribute Weekend events. Go online at <https://www.adathjeshurun.com/form/celebration>

AJ Rabbi Emeritus Robert Slosberg, who retired in 2023 after 42 years as the congregation's senior rabbi, had this to say about Cantor David Lipp and Rabbi Laura Metzger:

Cantor Lipp is the Cantor every Rabbi dreams of working with. He is one of my most gifted colleagues. His davening, as expected, is beautiful, and spiritually uplifting. His knowledge of traditional cantillation and his Torah reading are unparalleled. What makes Cantor Lipp so unique is his love of and breadth of learning. He is a lifelong student whose *divrei Torah* are inspiring and often fun. For me as a Rabbi, Cantor Lipp has given me wise counsel. He is the consummate team player. Cantor Lipp's teaching in Melton and commitment to *bikkur holim*, visiting the sick, have touched the lives of many in our community.

Rabbi Metzger is a community treasure. She has been a true community

rabbi serving the unaffiliated and for years her congregation at Four Courts. Rabbi Metzger serves as Adath Jeshurun's Guest Rabbi on the High Holidays. Her sermons are masterful and moving.

Rabbi Metzger is among the most gifted thinkers I know. She is visionary in her insights to Jewish life and living and is a true philosopher. Many in the community know Rabbi Metzger as a Master Teacher from her Melton Classes.

I do not know anyone who is gifted in so many areas -- marketing, teaching, speaking, gardening, and painting. My nickname for her says it all: *Rabbeinu (Our Rabbi and Teacher par excellence) Laura Metzger*

FLOURISH: THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS

January 7 at 6:15 p.m.
Trager Family JCC
Fleischaker Greene Family Community Room
Led by Paula Kommor, M.Ed., NBC-HWC, ICF

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Interested in updates on our Adult Swim Programs? Email us at swimschool@jewishlouisville.org for more information!

NEWS

Yael Karrie

Continued from page 1

el's Kibbutz Rosh HaNikra -- paused for a few seconds before answering. "There's a word that means different things in English and in Hebrew: 'creator.' Not in the way God created the world, but to be creative in how to join people together, how to invent events and ceremonies that will answer people's needs or solving problems."

Here Karrie hearkened back to her time as rabbi of Sha'ar HaNegev, where she arrived shortly before the November 2013 Gaza conflict between the IDF and armed Palestinian groups.

"I had to think on my feet about how to serve this community in the best way, to calm them and bring them some sort of comfort," she recalled. "A lot of times, creativity comes with courage -- when you know how to be creative and be able to get out of difficult situations."

It was, despite myriad challenges before her, a period of marvelous possibility.

"I really wanted to be our community rabbi," Karrie said, adding that "there were a number of positions open, and the movement suggested I try and see if (one) might work for me. There was a rabbi there who led Shabbat services something like once a month, so I joined her."

Karrie had discovered her special

place.

"I just fell in love with the people in Sha'ar HaNegev," she said. "They're so sweet and grounded; it's very peaceful and beautiful. I feel connected to the huge, wide spaces -- wheat fields. I was already tired of living in the city, so I just said, 'Let's do it.'"

Karrie found the prevailing social structure especially appealing. In a nation where normative Jewish worship is orthodox, Reform Judaism's egalitarian ethos proved a natural fit.

Her introduction was itself unconventional. "I didn't (get to) know the Reform movement from Israel," she said. "I got to know it because I was leading Birthright tours. I remember standing up (near) the Western Wall and telling them: 'This is the women's section; this is the men's section.' And they were asking, 'Where is there a place where men and women can pray together?'"

That moment was a tipping point. "From then, I started learning more about the Reform movement and saying, 'This is Judaism I can fit into



Photographs of pomegranates by Rabbi Yael Karrie

without compromising the values I was raised in."

But there was deeper motivation of a highly personal kind: the death of Karrie's father, who'd been told he had three months to live but who succumbed after only a week.

"After he passed away, I went through the grieving process for the first time in my life with God," she said. "I didn't admit to myself that I believed in God until that moment."

Karrie had recently earned an undergraduate degree in Jewish thought and comparative religion. She remembers saying to herself, "Okay, I've studied this and I love it, and now

believe in God. So, what are the next steps?"

Her initial plan had been to emulate her father, who'd been a university professor. Yet after her jump of faith, "that didn't work for me anymore -- it wasn't enough." Instead, barely a year later, she enrolled in the rabbinic program at Hebrew Union College's Jerusalem campus.

Later, after spending her four years in the Gaza Envelope, Karrie was at something of a crossroads, trying to figure out where her life was headed -- or should be headed.

Continued on page 19

Israel in Focus

Join Us

The Future of the Middle East: The Secret Sauce of Regional Integration

Tuesday, January 20, 2026
6:15 p.m., Trager Family JCC

Dessert Reception to Follow

Featured Speaker, Ambassador Daniel Shapiro



Daniel B. Shapiro is a distinguished diplomat and foreign policy expert with over two decades of service in senior U.S. government roles, including U.S. Ambassador to Israel during the Obama Administration. Most recently, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, leading the Pentagon's response to the October 7, 2023 attacks and advancing regional integration through the Abraham Accords.

RSVP required
by January 19



Scan to register or visit
jewishlouisville.org/shapiro

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NEWS

Continued from page 18

“I think it’s important, once in a while, to go on a long journey and just look for answers -- or to have the answers come to you.” With that goal in mind, she embarked on the Camino de Santiago, a storied Christian pilgrimage the winds along routes in Spain, Portugal and France.

“It’s a very spiritual path,” Karrie said. “And although it’s a Christian pilgrimage, there are people from different religions. People say that there’s a river of love flowing below the Camino.”

Love, literally, came her way when she met her future husband while tromping through Portugal. Once in Matte Asher and seeking to be its official regional rabbi, Karrie had to collect at least 250 signatures (she got 320). She now works with 28 of 32 *kibbutzim* and villages, two of which are made up predominantly of Bedouin Arabs. There is also an Orthodox rabbi, “but does mostly *kashrut*, weddings and funerals -- which I do as well,” though each has their distinctive approach.

October 7 and its aftermath forced Karrie, like many other Western Galilee residents, to evacuate to safer areas in central Israel.

“I was so concerned about the people I served in the Gaza Envelope,” she said. “Some of them I couldn’t reach on the phone, and I heard that the reason was because they were

murdered.” Karrie and her family became itinerant Israelis, living in eight successive apartments before returning to Matte Asher.

Those experiences led to one of her signature initiatives: “Reclaiming Red,” spurred by the practice of substituting a woman’s voice declaring adom -- Hebrew for the color red -- instead of sirens when a rocket attack was imminent.

“They thought that would be more soothing,” Karrie explained. “I said, ‘Red is my favorite color, and I don’t want this to be the connotation of ‘red.’ So I invited my friends on Facebook to send me happy pictures of red things -- and it spread, and spread, and spread. It was like an art project.”

So, too, are her photographs. During her Louisville visit she’ll display her detailed images of pomegranates -- some ripe and whole, others torn open as though by acts of war.

Karrie has been travelling to the U.S. more frequently, leveraging her Partnership2Gether connections to bolster causes she holds dear. Last year she attended the Austin, Texas Conference of Communities, where one of the attendees was Amy Fouts, who coordinates P2G activities for the Jewish Federation of Louisville.

“I was touched by her stories about being a Rabbi in the Gaza envelope prior to the war and having to be evacuated from her home in the north during the war - having many current

and previous “congregants” who wanted/needed her spiritual guidance, while she was also grieving and a trying to understand this new normal,” Fouts said.

“When I was recently in Israel for the P2G Summit, Yael provided me with comfort after hearing a Nova Festival survivor’s testimonial; she encouraged me to befriend the darkness, supported me to feel my feelings, while simultaneously reminding me there is light to also be seen, when I am ready. I am excited for the Louisville community to meet her and experience her calming way to seamlessly weave Jewish values and teachings into modern day lessons.”

Rabbi Karrie’s public events include:

Tuesday, Jan. 13 at 12:45 p.m. at the Trager Family JCC -- “With Kind Eyes,” an amateur photography workshop open to all.

Tuesday, Jan. 13 at 6 p.m. at the Trager Family JCC -- “Renewal Sound Bath

Wednesday, Jan. 14 at 9:30 and



Photographs of pomegranates by Rabbi Yael Karrie

10:50 a.m. at The Temple – Guest speaker at Temple Scholars adult education classes. RSVP for one of these sessions by going online at thetemplelouky.org/special-class.

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Kid's Night Out
Saturday, January 24
5:30 - 9:30 p.m.
Swim, Pizza, and Watch a Movie
For Children K-5

Questions? Contact Waylon at wiley@jewishlouisville.org

SCAN HERE FOR DETAILS AND PRICING
or visit jccloouisville.org/youth

Life & Legacy: Building a Future for Generations to Come

For more than a century, Jewish Family & Career Services has stood as a place of support and hope for individuals and families navigating life's most challenging moments. While our programs and services have evolved to meet changing needs, one thing remains constant: the generosity of those who believe deeply in our mission—not just today, but for generations to come.

The members of the 1908 Legacy Society, also known as our Life & Legacy donors, are individuals and families who have taken a meaningful step to ensure that JFCS will always be here for those who need us most.

The 1908 Legacy Society recognizes supporters who have informed us of their intent to leave a bequest to JFCS, those of blessed memory who have already made such a gift, and those who have chosen to strengthen our future through a lifetime contribution to the JFCS Endowment. Their commitment is both deeply personal and profoundly impactful.

By joining the 1908 Legacy Society, donors make a promise—one rooted in shared values and a belief in long-term community care. It is a promise that neighbors facing crisis will always have somewhere to turn. A promise that JFCS will continue to have the ability to adapt to the social, emotional, and economic challenges facing our community. And a promise grounded in the timeless principle of L'Dor Va Dor—from generation to generation—that compassion and responsibility are values meant to be carried forward.



We proudly recognize those whose generosity is helping shape the future of JFCS.

We do so with deep appreciation and respect—for their foresight, their trust, and their enduring commitment to our community.

To those listed, and to those of blessed memory who continue to inspire us through their legacy, we offer our heartfelt thanks. Your belief in JFCS strengthens our foundation and affirms that no matter what challenges arise, compassion and care will remain at the center of our community.

For those who may be considering their own legacy, there are many ways to make a planned gift that aligns with your values and goals. A legacy gift can reflect a lifetime of caring and ensure that what matters most to you continues to make an impact.

Together, we are building a future where help, dignity, and hope endure—today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

JFCS 1908 Legacy Society

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To learn more about becoming a member of the 1908 Legacy Society or making a planned gift to JFCS, please contact Courtney Evans, Director of Advancement, at cevans@jfcslouisville.org or (502) 452-6341 x223. We would be honored to begin that conversation with you.



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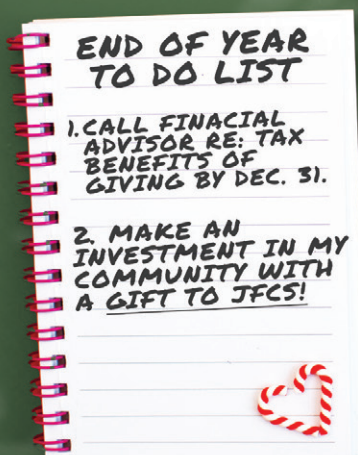
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2025



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NEWS & NEWSMAKERS

Apply now for NCJW college scholarships



National Council of Jewish Women
Louisville Section

Did you know that NCJW, Louisville Section, has a scholarship fund administered through the Community Foundation of Louisville?

In 1921, NCJW Louisville Section established a student loan fund to help defray college expenses of students who are of Jewish faith. The loan, over the course of more than 100 years, has helped hundreds of deserving Louisville community students pursue their academic goals. In 2017, the loan was converted into the NCJW Scholarship Fund to provide scholarship assistance in the form of grants to these scholars.

As one of its core values, NCJW strives for social justice by improving the quality of life for students and using progressive ideals to promote education, leadership, and opportunities in both school and community life. As we celebrate the 130th anniversary of the Louisville Section this year, we are extremely proud of the more than 100 years we have financially invested in our Jewish students and the committed investment to the local Jewish community.

We're honored to help offset college expenses by awarding scholarships to Jewish students pursuing undergraduate degrees. For more information, see the details below or contact Sarah Harlan at executivedirector@ncjwlvou.org.

Description: The National Council of Jewish Women Scholarship Fund was established to provide scholarship assistance in the form of grants to help defray college or university expenses of students who are of Jewish faith.

Eligibility: Jewish faith; Resident of Kentucky or Southern Indiana; Student must have completed at least one semester of college or university; Cumulative college GPA of at least 2.5. Must demonstrate financial need. The General Scholarship Application, which includes the National Council of Jewish Women Scholarship, will

close for submissions March 2, 2026 at 5 p.m. EST.

The application is available via the Community Foundation of Louisville's website: tinyurl.com/yc32ju8. Scholarships are renewable.

The Lost Song Café: Lost Communities Remembered in Song & Spoken Word, will unfold at UofL on Jan. 27



In honor of International Holocaust Remembrance Day, commemorating the liberation of Auschwitz/Birkenau on January 27, 1945, a cohort of cantors, musicians and guests will present "The Lost Song Café" on that date – Jan. 27 – at 7 p.m. at the Red Barn on the University of Louisville's Belknap Campus. The event is free.

Participants include Cantors David Lipp of Congregation Adath Jeshurun and Sharon Hordes of Keneseth Israel Congregation; flutist Kathy Karr and bassoonist Matthew Karr of the Louisville Orchestra; and the family duo of Miranda and Gabriel Crowdus.

There will be additional contributions from Robert Eric Shoemaker – a poet, translator and interdisciplinary artist who holds a Ph.D in Humanities from the University of Louisville – plus accompanists Gareth Jones and Ann Niren. Andrew Rabin, a professor in UofL's English Department, will act as master of ceremonies.

Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Visitors may park for free in the School of Music's lot.

You can get more information by emailing UofL's Natalie Polzer at natalie.polzer@louisville.edu.

"The Lost Song Café" is sponsored by Congregation Adath Jeshurun, Jewish Community Relations Council; the University of Louisville's Office of Access and Opportunity, School of Music;

A&S - International, Engagement, and Access Programs (IEAP), Dept. of Interdisciplinary and Public Humanities, Liberal Studies Visiting Scholars Project, and Jewish Studies Program.

Mazel Tov To...

Barbara Gordon

Barbara Gordon is retiring her Kentucky Dental Hygiene license, effective December 31, 2025, after 67 years of being in practice. She was active in the Louisville District Dental Hygienist Association, and has been honored for her longevity and work ethics by



Barbara Gordon

the University of Louisville School of Dentistry's Dental Hygienist program.

Barbara is the wife of the late David Gordon and the daughter of the late Libby and Manuel "Manny" Friedman, all of Louisville.

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Learn life-saving water safety, rescue, CPR & first aid skills.
Lifeguarding and CPR certifications are valid for 2 years from completion.

American Red Cross Lifeguarding Class
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Jan. 24, 25, 31 and Feb. 1

Time: 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.
Yarmuth Family Aquatics Center

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Trager Family JCC

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Trager Family JCC members receive a 25% discount on ad placements!

AROUND TOWN

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

Adath Jeshurun

Start your year off right at the first AJ Shabbat Social of 2026. Join us on Friday, Jan. 9 for Happy Hour at 5 p.m., then Kabbalat Shabbat services at 5:45 p.m. Dinner will begin around 6:45 p.m. and will be catered by Chef Maureen Hartmann. The cost is \$15 per person with children 12 and under free of charge. Make your reservation at adathjeshurun.com/reservations by Jan. 5.

AJ Shabbat-Luck Dinners are an evening of food, friends, and fun. Join us on Friday, Jan. 23 at 5 p.m. for Happy Hour followed by Kabbalat Shabbat services at 5:45 p.m. Dinner, beginning around 6:45 p.m., will feature a chef-prepared entrée and delicious sides prepared by you. For more information and to RSVP, visit adathjeshurun.com/shabbat-luck.

Adath Jeshurun will honor 2025 Community Minyanaires of the Year Ed Bornstein and Larry Snyder on Jan. 30-31. All are invited to celebrate the award winners at a festive dinner Friday, Jan. 30 at 6:45 p.m. Reservations are required at adathjeshurun.com/reservations by Jan. 26. Saturday, Jan. 31, the celebration continues at Shabbat Morning Service beginning at 10 a.m. Minyanaires will participate in the service and have special honors, followed by a special Kiddush lunch. We are delighted that Dr. Bruce Tasch will once again deliver a lively and insightful D'var Torah.

The 2026 Adath Jeshurun Music Festival is coming Sunday, March 15 at 7 p.m. Cantor David Lipp is welcoming Cantor Abbie Strauss, composer and recording artist, for a concert titled From the Heart, featuring music that resonates deeply with the soul, harnessing the transformative power of music to reach and inspire the heart. Make plans now to join us for the concert and a dessert reception. Tickets are \$10 in advance; \$15 day of show. To learn more about Cantor Strauss and purchase tickets, visit adathjeshurun.com/musicfestival.

Anshei Sfard

Congregation Anshei Sfard has open study time every weeknight (Sunday-Thursday) 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 are served.

Shabbos Davening at 9 a.m. including Rabbi's Parsha outline and sermon, followed by a delicious 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. Talmud Trek Sunday mornings at 9:30 a.m. led by Rabbi Lederman. For more information, email rabbilederman@ansheisfard.com.

Our Community and Family Events committee is in full swing. Keep an eye out for our calendar of events for 2026. Contact Carla at Carla@Ansheisfard.com for reservations and details.

Welcome back, Sisterhood of Anshei Sfard. Annual Membership Fee is \$72 (membership not required to participate). Email Jenniferd5748@gmail.com for more information.

The Men's Club is ready for you. Stay tuned for more fun events for next year. \$72 Annual Membership Fee. (membership is not required to participate).

Chavurat Shalom

This month we'll learn with our favorite rabbis and get to enjoy some wonderful music. Lunch will start at Noon in The Temple's Heideman Auditorium, unless noted below, and our program will start at 1:00 pm. All programs will also be available starting at 1 p.m. via ChavuratShalomZoom for those who need to join us remotely.

Thursday, Jan. 1 and 8 - No Chavurat Shalom while we're still hibernating over winter break.

Thursday, Jan.15 - Rabbi David will present, 2026 Israel Status Update: Reform Judaism, Politics, and Peace. Lunch will include salmon cakes, macaroni and cheese, broccoli, mixed green salad, fresh fruit, and chocolate bread pudding.

Thursday, Jan. 22 - Rabbi Matt will lead us into The World of Kabbalah: An Introductory Dive into Jewish Mysticism. Lunch will include a sandwich platter, matzah ball soup, salad, fresh fruit, and cupcakes.

Thursday, Jan. 29 - David Shapero will return to tickle the ivories for our entertainment. Lunch will include pot roast mashed potatoes, green beans, Caesar salad, fresh fruit, plus cookies and brownies.

If you're not "a regular," please RSVP by 5 p.m. Tuesday if you'll be attending that week in person by calling or emailing Sarah at 502-423-1818 or sarah-harlan86@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

Did you know JFCS offers mental health counseling for individuals, families, and couples?

Our licensed clinicians are here to help you navigate life's challenges and find healing. All major health insurance plans are accepted, and a sliding fee scale is available to make counseling accessible to all clients. Call today to schedule your first appointment at 502-322-1905 or email services@jfcsloisville.org.

Jewish Federation of Louisville

Tuesday, Jan. 20 at 6:15 p.m. at the Trager Family JCC; Israel in Focus The Future of the Middle East: The Secret Sauce of Regional Integration Featuring Daniel Shapiro, former U.S. Ambassador to Israel in the Obama Ad-

ministration

Daniel B. Shapiro is a distinguished diplomat and foreign policy expert with over two decades of service in senior U.S. government roles, including U.S. Ambassador to Israel during the Obama Administration. Most recently, he served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, leading the Pentagon's response to the October 7, 2023 attacks and advancing regional integration through the Abraham Accords.

Space is limited, so please register early. RSVP by Jan. 19. Register at tinyurl.com/mr23ft6z.

Keneseth Israel

Join us at 5:00 p.m. every Saturday at Rabbi Freed's home for Seudah Shlishit (the third Shabbat meal), where we'll mark the end of Shabbat with singing, a warm meal, l'chaims, and study of Pirkei Avot. Call the KI office for the address - 502-459-2780.

Intermediate and advanced Hebrew speakers are invited to practice their conversational skills with Louisville's new Shinshinot from Israel, Yael and Rona. The next few classes are on Mondays, January 5, January 25, and February 9 at 6:30 p.m. at KI.

Torah Yoga this month is on Thursday, January 22 at 6:30 p.m. Come practice your sun salutations through the lens of Torah, with Cantor Hordes.

Jews & Brews: After Hours

Enjoy a beer and Torah on tap with Rabbi Freed at Jews & Brews: After Hours on Thursday, January 22, at 7:30 p.m. at Big Rock Bar & Brew. This event is free but we do ask that you RSVP to info@kenesethisrael.com or call 502-459-2780.

Join Rabbi Freed every Wednesday at 11:00 a.m. at the JCC for Jews & Brews to discuss the weekly Torah portion over coffee and cookies.

KI is excited to announce a movie night! On Saturday, January 24 at 6:45 p.m. we will be showing "Bad Shabbos" for adults and "Prince of Egypt" for kids. We'll be starting with havdalah, and will have popcorn, snacks and more! Please RSVP to tinyurl.com/movienightKI.

Have a toddler in your life? Come join us for our Tot Shabbat! Join us every second and fourth Saturday at 11:00 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.

Come join us every Shabbat at 10:30 a.m. for our Shabbat Shalom club - a space for kids grades 2 through 7 to experience Shabbat every week - as they learn Torah, play board games, and learn the beautiful melodies of Shabbat songs.

Keneseth Israel Congregation offers Daily Minyan services at 6:00 p.m. Sunday through Thursday at KI, 8:45 a.m. on Sunday with 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 6:00 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 Jewish Renewal Community of Kentucky

Saturday mornings, Dec. 27, Jan. 10 and 24
Please join us as we celebrate Shabbat as "Adat Ha'Araphel- Congregation of the Cloud" on Zoom or Facebook.

Join many of our Jewish Renewal leaders for our innovative, musical and inspirational service. We gather at 10:15 a.m. for greeting and schmoozing on Zoom. The service will begin at 10:30 a.m. sharp. Call or text 502-277-0555 or email KollIsraelKy@gmail.com.

Monday, Jan. 5 at 8 p.m.

"Community-Wide Jewish Meditation: Inner Peace for Challenging Times"
Gather with Jewish Communities around the country to experience inner spaciousness and healing. Free and open to all. To register for the Zoom link, call or text 502-277-0555 or email KollIsraelKy@gmail.com.

Sunday, Feb. 1 at 5 p.m.

A "Tu Bishvat Seder for the Love of our Earth"
A reflection of humanities role as stewards of the Earth, Torah and Nature, and sharing with our Bahai, Buddhist, Islamic, and Christian friends.

Location: Archdiocese Historical Museum, 424 South Fifth Street.

Free but reservations are required by texting 502-277-0555 or emailing KollIsraelKy@gmail.com.

Louisville Vaad Hakashruth

Recently, the Vaad sent its annual fundraising letter to members of the community asking for support for the upcoming year. Our twin missions are supporting the availability of kosher food in Louisville and maintaining the only mikvah in Kentucky. This year we are beginning a long overdue renovation of our mikvah. If you'd like to make a donation: iatspayments.com/saaura/PA209D1D8D4B05E4B4.

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

National Council of Jewish Women - Louisville Section

Join Us in Our Important Work
Though the Nearly New Shop is now closed, NCJW Louisville is not slowing down. We are excited to carry forward our work together, advocating for women, children, families, marginalized groups, and individual rights and freedoms, just like we've been doing for the past 130 years. If you're not already involved, please join us—whether you're interested in reproductive rights advocacy, voter engagement, organizing NCJW get-togethers, bringing smiles to the faces of kids served by Gilda's Club, or other NCJW projects, we would love to have you join us in our meaningful

AROUND TOWN

and impactful work. Please reach out to Executive Director Sarah Harlan at executivedirector@ncjwlou.org or 502-458-5566 and let us know how you'd like to get involved.

NCJW, Louisville Section College Scholarships
Did you know that NCJW, Louisville Section has a scholarship fund administered through the Community Foundation of Louisville? We're honored to help offset college expenses by awarding scholarships to Jewish students pursuing undergraduate degrees. For more information, see the details below or contact Sarah Harlan at executivedirector@ncjwlou.org.

Description: The National Council of Jewish Women Scholarship Fund was established to provide scholarship assistance in the form of grants to help defray college or university expenses of students who are of Jewish faith.

Eligibility: Jewish faith; Resident of Kentucky or Southern Indiana; Student must have completed at least one semester of college or university; Cumulative college GPA of at least 2.5. Must demonstrate financial need. The General Scholarship Application, which includes the National Council of Jewish Women Scholarship, will close March 2, 2026 at 5 p.m. EST. The application will be available via the Community Foundation of Louisville's website: tinyurl.com/yc32jju8. Scholarships are renewable.

2026 Mah Jongg Cards

It's time to order your National Mah Jongg League 2026 Mah Jongg cards and support your NCJW section at the same time. Prices are the same as last year: \$14 for standard print cards and \$15 for large print cards. We'll be taking orders now through Jan. 30, 2026, so call the NCJW office at 502-458-5566 to order your cards today. An online order form will be available soon.

Interfaith Forum on Reproductive Rights

NCJW, together with the Kentucky Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice (KRCRC) and the Justice Center at All Peoples invite you to an Interfaith Forum on Reproductive Rights, Sunday, Feb. 2, at 2:30 pm at All Peoples Unitarian Universalist Church, 4934 Brownsboro Rd. Register at bit.ly/interfaithreproforum.

Temple Shalom

BLT (Bagels, Lox, and Torah), Saturday, Jan. 10, 10:30 a.m. at the Trager Family JCC

The community is invited to participate in Torah Study as we learn and discuss the weekly Parsha. Bagels, lox, and juice are provided. Please note: There will not be services at Temple Shalom that morning.

MLK Shabbat, Friday, Jan. 16, 6:30 p.m. at Temple Shalom

We celebrate the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a special service, including special guests and music. Oneg to follow.

Shabbat Services, Fridays at 6:30 p.m. and Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. All are welcome at our weekly Shabbat

services. Friday nights are streamed on YouTube. Call the office at 502-458-4739 for more information.

The Temple

The Temple invites congregants to attend Shabbat services Friday nights and Saturday mornings. More information at thetemplelouky.org.

Adult Education continues at The Temple. Torah Study with Rabbi David is on Saturdays at 9 a.m.; Temple Scholars is on Wednesdays at 9:30 a.m. with Rabbi David and 10:45 am with Rabbi Matt; and Monday night classes include Hebrew Bet with Rabbi Matt, Text Study with Rabbi David, and our next semester of Intro to Judaism with Rabbi David. 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. For a full schedule and descriptions, please go to thetemplelouky.org/adult-education for more information.

It is time to order your 2026 National Mah Jongg League Card(s). Prices are the same as last year: \$14 for standard size cards and \$15 for large print cards. Ordering from Women of Reform Judaism will help support us. Orders will be taken until Jan. 31. Please send or drop off your check (made out to The Temple Gift Shop) to The Temple, 5101 US-42, Louisville, Kentucky 40241, with the names & addresses of everyone for whom you are ordering. Any questions? Please call Sheila Lynch at 502-896-9736.

Join The Temple Brotherhood Jan. 3 at 10:30 a.m. for our Torah Celebration, featuring the inclusive Brotherhood No-Rehearsal Choir singing during regular Saturday morning services. The oneg will include homemade matzah, gravlax, and bourbon.

Come join Rabbi Matt and Ellen Shaikun for Tot Shabbat Friday, Jan. 9 at 6 p.m. Our Tot Shabbat will be a monthly, 15-minute service with our youngest members in mind, but will also provide an opportunity 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 all the families to stay for dinner. Tot Shabbat is free, but if you plan to stay for dinner, please RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/shabbat-dinner.

Join us for a family-friendly dinner Friday, Jan. 9 at 6 p.m. and Erev Shabbat Services at 7 p.m. led by our Grade 4 students. Dinner is \$5 for Members who register by Jan. 6 and \$10 at the door. Non-Members are \$18 per person, with children 12 and under free. Please make your reservations by calling 502-423-1818 or registering at thetemplelouky.org/shabbat-dinner.

Join us Wednesday, Jan. 14 as we welcome Rabbi Yael Karrie for teaching two special Temple Scholars Classes at 9:30 a.m. and 10:50 a.m. Born in Haifa, Israel and raised in a pluralistic, Socialist, and secular environment where the educational emphasis was on interfaith, coexistence, Yael was instilled in seeking knowledge, being socially active, and Zionism. It was during her mili-

tary service where she was introduced to the Jewish religious bookshelf for the first time. This sparked the beginning of a process of study and research that became her greatest passion. Her commitment to social justice in Israel and around the world led her to work with the Bedouin community, interfaith groups, asylum seekers, the LG-BTQ community, and youth in distress. Please RSVP for these special classes at thetemplelouky.org/special-class.

Please join us Friday, Jan. 16 at 7 p.m. for A Celebration of the Life and Influence of Martin Luther King Jr. with Gregory Emanuel Rahming, an internationally known opera singer from CHBC.

Please join the Mitzvah Makers Sunday, Jan. 18 at 12 p.m. as we make sandwiches that will be given to the Louisville homeless community in need. Before the event, please bring donations to The Temple to help us with this tikkun olam project including: bottles of water, individual bags of chips, loaves of bread, and sandwich bags. Additionally, if you have some small hotel/sample size toiletries (shampoo, bars of soap, lotion, mouthwash, toothbrushes and toothpaste), we will be making bags to hand out.

Join Rabbi Matt Saturday, Jan. 24 at 10:30 a.m. for our monthly Learner's Service and Lunch & Learn. In this discussion-based service series, we will be learning about the history and function of the blessings in the Shabbat Morning Service, translating them together, and learning some of the special melodies that accompany many of these prayers. At 11:30 a.m., directly after services, everyone is invited for a special Lunch & Learn to continue the conversation from services. The service and Lunch & Learn are open to all and no background knowledge is needed. If you would like a Zoom link for the Lunch and Learn, email rabbinatt@thetemplelouky.org. Please RSVP at thetemplelouky.org/learner or by calling 502-423-1818. Cost is \$5 for Members by Jan. 20, \$10 for Members at the door, \$18 for Non-Members. Children 12 and under are free.

Join us for the annual WRJ-sponsored Tu B'Shvat Seder Monday, Feb. 2 at 6 p.m. as we celebrate the birthday of the trees. There will be varieties of tree fruits to sample, a meaningful and inspiring service and music, plus the always anticipated chocolate fondue. All are welcome. Please RSVP by calling 502-423-1818 or go to thetemplelouky.org/trees.

Trager Family JCC

Flourish: The Science of Happiness
Jan. 7, 6:15 p.m.

Trager Family JCC Community Room
Led by Paula Kommer, M.Ed., NBC-HWC, ICF

Positive emotions aren't just pleasant—they're essential. In fact, they're one of the five key ingredients for a fulfilling life. If stress and routine have left you feeling stuck, this interactive workshop offers a refreshing reset.

Join us to explore five evidence-based techniques that boost well-being, in-

crease energy, and strengthen relationships. You'll leave with practical tools to cultivate happiness in your daily life—starting now. Happier people are more productive, more connected, and more resilient. Let's help you become one of them. To register, go online at jclouisville.org/happy.

Tiles and Tasty Bites

Thursday, Jan. 8, 6 - 8 p.m. at the Kohn Family Town Square
Join us for a fun evening of Mahjong, Rummikub and Canasta.

Enjoy a selection of light appetizers and refreshing drinks. Sign up as a team, or if you're coming solo, no worries; we'll assign you to a group. This is an adult-only event and you must already know how to play the games. Cost: \$6 per person; \$24 for a 4-person team. To register, go online at jclouisville.org/tiles-and-tasty-bites. *Space is limited

Flights & Flix

Jan. 15, 7 p.m. at Monnik Beer Company

Join us for a night of beer tasting and short films. The tasting will be led by Monnik's head brewer, Buddy McHagan. Space is limited, and food will be available for purchase. Get your tickets now by visiting jewishlouisville.org/flights-and-flix. Non-alcoholic options will also be available.

Kid's Night Out

Join us Saturday, Jan. 24 from 5:30-9:30 p.m. at the Trager Family JCC. Kids will get to swim in the indoor pool, eat a pizza dinner, and watch a movie. Cost: JCC Members: \$37; Non-members: \$47. For more information and to register, go online at jclouisville.org/kids-nightout.

AgeWell Choir Interest Form

Interested in joining the AgeWell In Harmony Choir? Go online for more information at tinyurl.com/hdt8h8ju.

University of Louisville Ekstrom Library

Through February
Jewish Artists of Louisville Series, featuring Multi-Media Works by Rabbi Laura Metzger
The Jewish Studies Reading Room, Ekstrom Library, 3rd Floor.

Rabbi Laura Metzger of Congregation Adath Jeshurun is also an accomplished artist, working in pen-and-ink alongside various flavors of complementary media. "Drawing teaches you to see," she explains in an Artist Statement -- and beginning at the end of this week, you can view a selection of her works as part Louisville Jewish Artists Today -- an ongoing series of exhibits in the Jewish Studies Reading Room of the Ekstrom Library on U of L's Belknap Campus. The series is organized and guided by Natalie Polzer, a professor in U of L's Department of Comparative Humanities.

"Constant discovery thrills me," Rabbi Metzger says, adding: "I hope, in looking at these pieces, you see something in a way that's new to you."

LIFECYCLE

Births



Davis Jack Fine & Milo Gordon Fine

Lindsey and Max Fine proudly announce the arrival of identical twin boys on November 30, 2025, in Chicago. Their big sister is Raya Drew Fine. The boys' names are

Davis Jack, who weighed 6 lbs, 7 oz; and Milo Gordon, who weighed 6 lbs, 1 oz. Their grandparents are the late Miriam and Dennis Fine and the late Florence and Bob Fine, all from Louisville. The very proud grandparents are Barbara and the late David Gordon, also of Louisville.



Wesley David Gordon

Kaylin and Alec Gordon of Denver, Colorado (formerly of Phoenix, Arizona), proudly announce the arrival of their first child, Wesley David Gordon, on October 23,

2025. The proud grandparents are Jane and Phillip Gordon, formerly of Louisville, Kentucky. Great-grandparents are Barbara and the late David Gordon of Louisville.

B'nai Mitzvahs



Melody Sofia Schuhmann

Melody Sofia Schuhmann will be called to the Torah on Shabbat morning, January 3, 2026 at Keneseth Israel. She's the daughter of George Schuhmann and Cantor

Sharon Hordes, the sister of Leah Schuhmann and the granddaughter of Donald and Elaine Hordes of Cincinnati, OH and Jo Ann Burke of Louisville, KY.

Melody is a 7th grader in the Montessori magnet program at Westport Middle School. She enjoys baking, ice skating, reading, and spending her summers at Camp Livingston. For her mitzvah proj-

ect, she is raising money for both the food pantry at JFCS and the Kentucky Humane Society. She is also collecting yarn to make cat toys to donate to local animal shelters.

Obituaries



Sharon Lee Caster

Sharon Lee Caster (née Wasserman), 74, died peacefully on December 4, 2025, surrounded by the love and warmth of her family at home. Her life was full of tenderness, devotion, and

an unwavering presence for those she held dear.

Sharon's greatest joy was her family. She poured her heart into nurturing hers with boundless love. Her husband Keiley, her steadfast partner for 52 years, knew her as a woman of kindness, wisdom, and quiet strength. Her children, Ryan and Dawn, were a source of pride and happiness. The loss of Ryan in 2001 left her heartbroken, but love from family and friends allowed her to find joy again. The arrival of her grandchildren, Noah and Caleb, brought her an even deeper kind of happiness, and she embraced her role as their "Bubbe" with a spirit that lit up every room.

Sharon received her bachelor's degree in elementary education with an emphasis on special education from the University of Missouri. She spent her college summers as the camp director at Camp Sunshine, a camp for children with special needs. After graduation, she turned her compassion into a career, spending several decades as a special education teacher. She touched the lives of countless children, seeing potential where others saw challenges and offering care with an open hand and a gentle smile. After moving to Louisville in 1987, she taught at several JCPS elementary schools before retiring from Hite Elementary. At Hite, she met her beloved "Sunshine Gang," a team of teachers who became lifelong friends. It is fitting that Sharon, always a source of light, began and ended her teaching career with sunshine.

Sharon lived her faith actively. A devoted member of The Temple and the Sisterhood, she found purpose in com-

munity and service. She was equally passionate about justice, advocating through the Women of Reform Judaism and the League of Women Voters, with determination and grace, always standing firm for what she believed was right. In recent years, her volunteer work pivoted to her grandchildren -- she was a founding member and co-president of the Walden School Grandparents Club, which brought her immense joy in recent years.

Sharon leaves behind many dear friends. She met others with a rare openness and warmth that made lasting connections. Her family was her greatest story, but it was also tinged with loss. She was preceded in death by her son Ryan, whose love she carried close, and her brother Mark Allen Wasserman.

Sharon is survived by her husband, Keiley -- co-chair of the Louisville Jewish Film Festival planning committee; her daughter, Dawn Caster (Justin) Cartwright; her grandchildren, Noah and Caleb Cartwright; her brother, Larry Wasserman (Harlene); and her sister, Michelle Goldstein (Richard).

Funeral services were held on December 7 at Herman Meyer & Son, followed by the burial in The Temple Cemetery. The family requests that donations be made in honor of Sharon to Hosparus, PKD Foundation or Brown Cancer Center.

May her memory be a blessing, and her legacy of love continue to inspire us all.



Frances "Fran" Diamond

Frances "Fran" Diamond, 84, passed peacefully on December 15, 2025, in Louisville, Kentucky, surrounded by loved ones. Born on January 24, 1941, in

Richmond, Indiana to Frances and Robert Moormann, her childhood was spent in Orlando, Florida. She was a loving wife, mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great grandmother. She was a recruiter for Sullivan University before retiring early in life to become a homemaker for her beloved husband and to assist in the care of her grandchildren. She was a member of The Temple, Women of Reform Judaism, Standard Country Club and Louisville Tennis Club.

Fran was an avid and skilled tennis

player who found great joy on the court. She also loved snow skiing, especially at her favorite destination, Vail, Colorado, where she cherished time spent in the mountains. Traveling was one of her great pleasures, as was reading—she was an enthusiastic and devoted reader of fiction novels.

At home, Fran found peace and happiness in tending her flower gardens and lovingly caring for the fishpond in her backyard. Animals held a special place in her heart, and throughout the years she adored many pets, including several dogs, cats, and birds, all of whom were treated as cherished members of the family.

Above all, Fran was devoted to her husband, Rabbi Chester Diamond, and her children. Her grandchildren were more like her own children, and they, in turn, regarded her as a second mother -- one who provided unwavering love, guidance and support.

She was preceded in death, earlier this year, by her husband or nearly 37 years, Rabbi Chester Diamond; her parents, Frances and Robert Moormann, and her sister Janet Anderson.

Fran is survived by her children, Cathy King, Greg Bowles, Chris Bowles (Billie Jean); and her stepchildren, Jack Diamond (DeeAnn), Debra Reaguer, and Jennifer Diamond; her sisters, Nancy Adkinson and Shirley Punshon, and her brother Richard Moormann; grandchildren, Gloria Gray, Nicole Stallings (Chris), Michael King, Shelby Bowles, Alexis Bowles, Jackson Diamond (Nicole), Madison Diamond, Samantha Maloney (Brad), and Taylor Reaguer; six great-grandchildren and two great-great grandchildren, along with numerous nephews, nieces and cousins.

A Celebration of Life was held December 22 at The Temple, followed by inurnment in The Temple Cemetery. Donations in Fran's memory may be made to The Temple-Chester Diamond Religious School Education Fund.



Samuel K. Hendrick

Samuel K. Hendrick, 84, of Louisville, Kentucky, died December 10, 2025.

Sam Hendrick's bright "mega-watt" smile was only the

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LIFECYCLE

Continued from page 24

first clue to a heart made of pure gold. For decades he shared that heart, across the Commonwealth: loading boxes at Dare to Care, delivering hope through Meals on Wheels, sitting bedside with Hosparus patients, and lending a hand to every group that asked. Wherever someone needed warmth, Sam simply showed up.

A born tinkerer, Sam spent his working years keeping the pin setters humming and the lanes gleaming at Thelma Lanes. After retirement he traded toolboxes for treasure maps, joining his beloved husband on cross-country hunts for rare antiques and Asian furniture, and the perfect slice of sunshine. Eighteen of those sun-kissed years spent in Ft. Lauderdale. Jewish by choice and boundless in spirit, he was a proud member of Congregation Adath Jeshurun, finding in its rituals another way to serve.

Sam is survived by his husband William Murphy; daughter Kimberly Leanhart (Sheila); son Kelly Hendrick (the late Karen); grandchildren Shaun, Richard, Cory, Crys, and Ashley; and great-granddaughter Kylee, whose giggles will always carry an echo of his laugh.

In honor of the man who never let a stranger stay one for long, the family welcomes memorial gifts to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Congregation Adath Jeshurun, or Dare to Care, each cause a thread in the fabric Sam spent 84 years weaving.

Funeral services were held December 12 at Herman Meyer & Son, followed by burial in Adath Jeshurun Cemetery. May his memory be for a blessing.



Kevin Lee Jenkins

Kevin Lee Jenkins passed away on December 12, 2025, at Jewish Hospital in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky. He was 71.

He is survived by his wife, Marian; her daughter, Andrea Heck (Terrell Heck III); his step-grandchildren, Madison, Tyler, Terrell Heck IV, and Tate; his sister, Lisa Kaelin, and her spouse, Walt; his cousin, Barbara Shacklett, of Davis, California; his nieces and nephews; and other extended family members including his brothers-in-law, Jim (Marilyn) and George Doucette.

Kevin earned his master's degree in psychology from the University of Chicago. He dedicated much of his professional life to education, serving as a Special Education teacher and later as a substitute teacher, with Jefferson County Public Schools and at Ahrens Trade School. Deeply committed to his students, Kevin brought learning beyond the classroom by guiding Special Education students into the community, helping prepare them for independence and a successful transition into adulthood.

In addition to his work in education, Kevin spent many years working in high-end retail, a field that reflected his appreciation for style, service, and Louisville's architectural beauty. He worked at some of the city's most iconic department stores, including Ben Snyder, Hess's, and Dillard's. These experiences remained close to his heart and were lovingly re-

flected in his extensive collection of snow globes featuring those cherished stores.

A man of faith and community, Kevin was a member of The Temple and the AgeWell community at the Trager Family JCC, and formerly of Keneseth Israel Congregation, Chicago Sinai Congregation, and Temple Emanu-El of New York. Our AgeWell community sends love to his friends and family.

Funeral services were held December 18 at Herman Meyer & Son, followed by burial in Keneseth Israel Cemetery. May his memory be for a blessing.



Conrad Jay (CJ) Pressma

Conrad Jay (CJ) Pressma, son of Boris and Naomi Pressma (née Schneider), passed away on December 14, 2025. He was born on February 17, 1944, in Louisville, Kentucky.

As a lifelong resident of Louisville his family served as leaders of the Jewish community and helped build the Jewish Community Center of Louisville. Pressma was a noted artist, art educator, and leader within the local arts community and a founding member of Pyro Gallery. He served as a board member of various Louisville arts institutions, including Louisville Visual Art and Louisville Photo Biennial.

Pressma was a graduate of Antioch College and received an M.F.A. in Photography from Indiana University. He studied as a special graduate student with Minor White at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and with Henry Holmes Smith at Indiana University.

In 1970, he founded the Center for Photographic Studies. During its eight-year existence, the Center provided an alternative learning experience for students from across the nation seeking to explore photography as creative expression. The Center made an enduring impact on the photographic arts through its collaborative arts and lecture series at the Speed Museum and its program for publishing original works by such prominent photographic artists as Henry Holmes Smith

and Ralph Eugene Meatyard.

Pressma received numerous national and local awards for his work over his celebrated career. In 1978, he was awarded a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship in Photography in recognition of his artistic achievement in visual arts. He also received several national awards for excellence and innovation in documentary production for his seven-part multimedia documentary *Witness to the Holocaust* (released in 1984). *Witness to the Holocaust* is one of the first productions to use survivor interviews as the exclusive content to tell the story of the Holocaust. In 1997, he won the Silver Medal Award, a top industry honor, from the American Advertising Federation. In 2001, he received an Al Smith Fellowship from the Kentucky Arts Council, recognizing artistic excellence and contribution to the arts in Kentucky.

In 2001, Pressma was selected as one of 84 artists worldwide for the landmark exhibition *Digital Printmaking Now* at the Brooklyn Museum and is included in the permanent collections of several museums, including the Speed Art Museum. In 2024, he was honored by the Louisville Visual Art organization with a Legacy Award for his longstanding influence on the visual arts community.

CJ is survived by his wife of 48 years, Marcelle Gianelloni; his two daughters, Michelle Pressma (Steve Rackett) and Elise Pressma (Scott Lasensky); and five grandsons, Jacob and Eli Grassi, Alex, Evan, and Gabriel Lasensky, as well as his sister, Diane Gordon. He is also survived by Yarima Hernandez and Karel Fernandez and their son, Ethan. He was predeceased by his brother, Stuart Pressma.

CJ lived with diabetes from childhood and faced his life and illness with equal measures of tenacity, courage, and competence. The family is so grateful to many loving caregivers, including Cal, Andrea, Hailey, Savannah, and Teresa, as well as others who have guided the family over the years.

The family will be gathering privately and would be honored if contributions were made in CJ Pressma's memory to the Trager Family Jewish Communi-

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JOIN US FOR THE JCC'S
136TH BIRTHDAY PARTY
JANUARY 14, 4:30 - 6 P.M.

Stop by the Weisberg Family Lobby at the Trager Family JCC to celebrate our 136th birthday! There will be cake, refreshments, musical performances, & the 135 Membership Raffle drawing.

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

JUDITH BENSINGER SENIOR ADULT FUND

In memory of Carl Bensinger

Linda & Lenny Bell Family Foundation

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LIFECYCLE

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ty Center of Louisville and Hosparus Health.



Sandra W. Tasman

Sandra W. Tasman passed away December 8, 2025. Known for her warmth, humor, generosity, and unmistakable spunk, she lived life with independence, resilience, and a full heart.

She had a remarkable ability to make people feel seen, valued, and welcomed, and she carried that gift through every chapter of her life.

She was very proud of raising her four children as a single working mother, setting a strong example of determination and a tireless work ethic. Sandra graduated from Atherton High School in 1956 and took classes at the University of Illinois before returning to Kentucky, where she began a long and varied career. She worked in her family's business, Bennett's, during holidays and busy seasons, later holding roles in the Olin Powder Plant's secretarial pool and at Wood-Highbaugh Mortgage Company. She went on to become an accomplished mortgage underwriter and trainer for the Kentucky Housing Corporation, where her intelligence, precision, and professionalism were widely respected.

A lifelong learner, Sandra returned to school at age 65 to earn her pharmacy technician certification and worked for

Wishes Pharmacies for the next 23 years. She took great pride in her work and loved helping people, forming lasting friendships with customers and coworkers who relied on her bright spirit and steady presence.

Adventurous and spirited, Sandra loved roller coasters and even rode one at age 80 to celebrate Karen's 60th birthday. She also traveled to Israel after turning 80 to visit the Holy Land, fulfilling a lifelong wish, and embracing new experiences with curiosity, joy, and gratitude.

Family was at the center of her world. She adored her great-grandson Bennett and proudly followed all of his athletic and academic achievements. She cherished her many first cousins, nieces, nephews, and extended family, staying connected through frequent visits, celebrations, and phone calls. Some of her happiest memories were simple ones—Sunday drives with her parents and grandmother, or taking her children to see Christmas lights, sharing moments of wonder and togetherness.

Sandra enjoyed reading, online solitaire, celebrating holidays with thoughtful small gifts, and cheering for the University of Kentucky basketball team. She loved living in her condo community, where she had many close friends, served on social committees, and often cooked for others. She was shopping the day before she passed, preparing for Hanukkah—active, generous, and full of spirit to the very end. Her energy, kindness, and humor never faded.


She was preceded in death by her parents, Ben and Fanny Weitz; her sister-in-law, Sarah Weitz; her niece, Emily Weitz; and

her brother-in-law, Dr. Mark Sexter.

Sandra is survived by her children, Harriet Spivey (Larry), Darrell Tasman (Jackie Harrison), Gary Tasman (Karen), and Elayne Havens (Frank Chaknine); her grandchildren, Josh Havens (Vita) and Jake Havens; and her great-grandson, Bennett Havens, who brought her immense joy. She is also survived by her brother, Edwin Weitz; her sisters, Sharon Sexter (Howard Berman) and Lynne Weitz; and a large extended family she dearly loved.

Funeral services were held December 10 at Herman Meyer & Son, followed by burial in Adath Jeshurun Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to Congregation Adath Jeshurun or WHAS Crusade for Children.



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GLOBE

Rob Reiner urges resilience in video address for Holocaust survivor event — recorded just weeks before his murder

By Grace Gilson
JTA

At a virtual Holocaust survivor event on Dec. 18, beloved Jewish film director Rob Reiner gave a pre-recorded address where he urged those watching to be “resilient.”

For the survivors, families and advocates who tuned into the virtual event hosted by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, or Claims Conference, Reiner’s words carried added weight, having been recorded just weeks before he and his wife, Michele Singer Reiner, were killed in their home on Sunday.

Ahead of Reiner’s pre-recorded remarks, Greg Schneider, the executive vice president of the Claims Conference, said that Reiner had begun working on the organization’s annual International Holocaust Survivors Night a few years ago, including appearances in the virtual screening in 2023 and 2024. The organization has disbursed restitution money to survivors since 1951.

Schneider then read a quote from a 2017 Jewish Telegraphic Agency interview with Reiner.

“Yes, all this is reflected in my work. It’s my sensibility. I’m a Jew. I was raised a Jew. I value honesty and integ-

ity and knowledge and education and all those values I was raised with,” said Schneider, quoting Reiner.

Concluding his introduction to Reiner’s address, Schneider said, “Rob and Michelle, we will carry on your values of acting with honesty, integrity, knowledge and education.”

As Reiner came on the screen, surrounded by posters from some of his most acclaimed films, including “The Princess Bride” and “A Few Good Men,” he began by describing his family’s “personal connection” to the Holocaust.

“Thank you again for asking me to join your evening, I can tell you that what you’re all about means a lot to me,” Reiner said in the video. “Personally, my wife, her mother, was in Auschwitz, and her whole family died there. Her mother was the only survivor, and my aunt was also in Auschwitz.”

On Wednesday, the USC Shoah Foundation shared a 1994 video of Singer Reiner embracing her mother, Holocaust survivor Nicole Silberkleit, who described her children as “very understanding, loving, and affectionate.”

<https://www.instagram.com/p/DSYmPLmEshI/>



Rob Reiner gives a posthumous address at the annual International Holocaust Survivors Night hosted by the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany on Dec. 18, 2025. (Screenshot)

In his address, Reiner then shifted his focus to urging “resilience,” which was the theme of the virtual event to honor Holocaust survivors.

“I know the theme of the evening is resilience, and if ever we needed to be resilient, it’s now,” he said. “We’re living in a time where what’s happening in our country is scary and reminiscent of what we’ve seen happen in the past, and we just hope that we can all survive this and that we can hold on to our democracy, but I want to just thank everybody for being there, and let’s be resilient.”

The Claims Conference’s event was part of an annual menorah lighting ceremony on the fifth night of Hanukkah to honor survivors. It concluded with around 100 survivors lighting candles at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

This year, Claims Conference officials also used the event to draw attention to antisemitism, with the survivor event taking place just days after 15 were killed during an antisemitic attack on a Hanukkah event in Sydney, Australia.

“Even in these difficult days, when antisemitism is rising and Jewish communities around the world are under attack — this very week on the first night of Hanukkah in Sydney, Australia — we draw strength and inspiration from you, the survivors, from your personal and collective resilience,”

Schneider told the group of survivors in Jerusalem.

One of the victims of the attack, Alex Kleytman, was a Holocaust survivor who had passed World War II living with his family in Siberia.

“Lessons from the past should have protected Holocaust survivor Alex Kleytman — a husband, a father and a grandfather,” the Claims Conference wrote in a post on Facebook Sunday. “Educating about how words of hate can turn into violence must not be a hollow promise.”

The couple’s 32-year-old son, Nick, briefly appeared in a Los Angeles court Wednesday after he was charged in connection to his parents’ killing. He has been charged with two counts of first-degree murder with a special circumstance of multiple murders.

The other Reiner children, Jake and Romy, shared a statement with People on Wednesday expressing their grief over the loss of their parents.

“Words cannot even begin to describe the unimaginable pain we are experiencing every moment of the day,” the statement said. “The horrific and devastating loss of our parents, Rob and Michele Reiner, is something that no one should ever experience. They weren’t just our parents; they were our best friends.”

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