

Be Incredible: Answer the Tzedakah Tzunday Call

“Not all Superheroes wear capes,” but some simply answer the call – or volunteer to make the calls.

On Feb. 10, be part of One Incredible Community for Tzedakah Tzunday, which will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Gordon Jewish Community Center. Volunteers will conduct the annual phoneathon for the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee’s Annual Campaign, raising funds that go toward local agencies and the Jewish community worldwide.

Fred Zimmerman, who is chairing this year’s Annual Campaign, urges community members to “show up. It’s going to be a great time” with some surprises.

While the calls made on Tzedakah Tzunday are a substantial portion of the campaign, Zimmerman said there are plenty of opportunities to make a pledge

in advance – one may make a pledge online, mail in a check or go ahead and call the Federation to make a pledge.

For those wanting to take part in the event, there are four two-hour volunteer shifts, starting at 9:30 a.m., 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. There are also a limited number of non-phone support positions. Kosher meals and drinks will be provided. Child care will also be available.

All volunteers will receive training, those making calls will receive scripts to guide their calls.

Joel Abramson, Federation financial resource development officer, said “two hours of volunteering can help strengthen and sustain our people today and tomorrow.”

The event is chaired by Ellie Flier, Hayley Levy and Sheri Rosenberg. For more information or to volunteer, go to jewish-nashville.org/tztz.



Seeing how the Jewish world can help Guatemala

Rabbi Flip Rice part of rabbinic leadership group that visited the struggling Central America nation

By **LARRY BROOK**

Rabbi Philip “Flip” Rice of Congregation Micah is one of 15 influential Jewish leaders who traveled to Guatemala this month as part of the prestigious Global Justice Fellowship run by American Jewish World Service, the leading Jewish organization working to fight poverty and promote human rights in the developing world.

The group met with leaders of nonprofit groups working to advance human rights in Guatemala, one of the Central American countries that residents are fleeing to seek work or asylum in the United States.

“We came with open hearts wanting to listen and learn,” said Rice. “We were exposed to real people undergoing real hardship – in a way that with our privilege as Americans, we’d have trouble conceiving of.”

He vowed to tell his community about the history of human rights violations in Central America, and will give a presentation during Shabbat evening services at Congregation Micah on Feb. 8. He will continue the effort during a visit to members of Congress and other officials in Washington in March in the next part of the fellowship.

“I’m a storyteller,” said Rabbi Rice. “Through the power of imagery and narrative, I’ll be able to share the stories of people whose voices would otherwise not be heard. It’ll be a chance to expose my community to AJWS and the struggles of the people of Guatemala.”

The rabbinic fellows arrived as Guatemala faced widespread condemnation for

Continued on page 5



ON ASSIGNMENT: Working on a crafting project in the Maker Space at Akiva School during the Jan. 27 Mission:Possible bus trip

Seeing What’s Possible

As Annual Campaign kicks off, Mini-Mission demonstrates what Federation dollars accomplish in the community

By **LARRY BROOK**

While Jewish Federations are well-known for organizing missions to Israel and other Jewish communities around the world, the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee organized “Mission: Possible” to examine the community’s own backyard.

As this year’s Annual Campaign begins, about 80 community members took bus tours around Jewish Nashville on Jan. 27 to get a sense of what the money raised by Federation does in the community.

Annual Campaign Chair Fred Zimmerman said “everyone sees a little piece of what Federation does,” but “it’s hard to get a feel for the full reach.”

Zimmerman started the afternoon with an overview of the Gordon Jewish Community Center, which he called “the community’s living room,” and he added that with some of the festivals, it’s the community’s kitchen as well.

As the community’s central address, “it’s hard to find someone who hasn’t been touched by the JCC,” he said.

But while the JCC is the living room, Zimmerman said “people are the focus of what we do,” and experiencing how the different Federation-funded agencies touch lives is the purpose of the mini-mission.

One recurring theme he introduced is how “there’s something uniquely Jewish about how we are concerned with the dignity of the individual” in giving assistance.

Mindy Hirt and Batia Karabel, who chair the Federation’s Grants Committee, spoke about the community funding process.

Hirt reported that in 2018, the Federation distributed around \$2.25 million,

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Jewish Federation & Jewish Foundation
OF NASHVILLE AND MIDDLE TENNESSEE

THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE.
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

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THE **STRENGTH** OF A PEOPLE.
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“One Voice” brings community together in song

On March 3 at 4 p.m., “One Voice: Songs of Social Justice and Community” will ring out from The Temple.

The groundbreaking event will include The Temple Cantor Tracy Fishbein, Cantor Sarah Levine of West End Synagogue, and Congregation Micah Cantorial Soloist Lisa Silver, joined by a community volunteer choir.

Fishbein said “we are very excited about it,” and the concert is a result of popular demand.

Silver has been a Nashville vocalist since the 1970s, and became cantorial soloist at Congregation Micah in 2002. Fishbein has been at The Temple since the summer of 2012, and with the arrival of Levine in Nashville after her ordination in the summer of 2017, Fishbein said there is “strong musical leadership” in the congregations, with the ability to “bring people together through music and prayer.”

They have looked for opportunities to sing together, because “we just enjoy each other’s company so much, and enjoy the music we’re making,” Fishbein said. After they perform together, people would come up to them after concerts and ask if they have recorded a CD or would perform together more often.

Last April, she submitted a grant to the Jewish Federation, “to bring our congregations together, to present a concert on something that matters in our community.”

A constant theme is social justice and “how do we make our world a better place,” so in addition to “word and deed” she said “we wanted to find a way to make it matter through music also.”

The concert will take place thanks to “a very generous grant” from the Federation.

The concert will also feature a community-wide choir, which Fishbein thinks is unprecedented in Nashville, “singers from all our synagogues, who are coming together to participate in the event.”

Volunteers “who enjoy music and recognize the power of group singing” are still welcome to join, and need not be affiliated with a congregation, nor have previous singing experience. The only commitment

is attending three rehearsals, Feb. 5, 12 and 26 at 7 p.m., and of course, the concert itself.

They will be joined by a group of “well-known and beloved musicians,” including Russ Davis, John Mock and Chris Patterson.

The selections “will touch on themes of hope, healing, community and unity” and will address through song what Jewish tradition has to say about social justice, and “how can we make our Nashville Jewish community, and hopefully our general community, stronger, in part through music.”

Fishbein said the music will cover a wide range of styles, from contemporary

singers and songwriters two songs from the civil rights movement, musical theater and pop culture.

She added, there “should be something in the concert for everyone.”

Part of the inspiration for the concert came from community reaction after the Nashville vigil following the massacre at Tree of Life in Pittsburgh. Fishbein said there was a strong sense “that we are stronger together.”

The concert will be “one big celebration of our community and how we can make ourselves stronger, and inspire each other into acts of Tikkun Olam.”

The concert is free and open to the community, and a reception will follow.

Pittsburgh synagogue members visit black church in Charleston

By **MARCY OSTER**

(JTA) – They didn’t share the same religion, but they shared the same pain.

Ten members of a Pittsburgh congregation who survived the October attack on their building, along with their rabbi, traveled to Charleston, S.C., to worship with the members of a church that suffered a similar shooting in 2015.

Eleven worshippers were killed in October in the Pittsburgh attack on the Tree of Life synagogue building, the deadliest on Jews in the United States.

The New Light Congregation congregants came to Charleston on Jan. 18 to meet members of the Emanuel AME Church, where nine African-American worshippers were killed in an attack by a white supremacist gunman. New Light is one of the three congregations that were housed at Tree of Life.

The Rev. Eric S.C. Manning of the Emanuel Church – the oldest African Methodist Episcopal church in the Southern United States – had flown to Pittsburgh shortly after the shooting there to comfort synagogue members and the Jewish community.

In his Jan. 20 sermon, Manning called on people to love one another and promised the New Light members that the Emanuel congregation will support them as they move through the challenges of healing from the deadly attack, the Charleston-based Post and Courier reported.

Members of the church surrounded the New Light visitors to share hugs and tears, according to the newspaper. On Jan. 18, they worshipped together at Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim, a local Reform congregation.

On Jan. 21, the synagogue members walked in the annual Martin Luther King Jr. Parade in downtown Charleston.

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Elections again?

A new perspective about the upcoming Israeli elections

By **SHARON BEN AMI**
Community Shlichah

The Israeli government adjourned on Dec. 26, and decided to dissolve the coalition and go for early elections on April 9. Yes, just like this, a last-minute decision and we are going to elections. This is how we Israelis function, and what may seem to a foreign eye as hasty, disorganized or impulsive may actually be perceived otherwise from an inside look. Allow me to explain.

When Israel was established some 71 years ago, nothing was certain. In an instant, the newborn state had to face war and protect itself from all the surrounding countries and everything was figured out

last second, trying to whip something out of basically nothing. It reminds me of my mom on 'Erev Pesach' (Passover eve) when uninvited (yet welcome) guests announce their arrival last minute and the poor thing grins at the phone and exhales a high pitch: "Of course you are welcomeeee." From that moment the house becomes a war zone, there is no mom — there is a commander who works in a specific order and you better not get in her way or otherwise you might get hurt.



Just like Israel at the War of Independence or my mom (and probably yours too) on holiday eve, the Israeli reality is somewhat chaotic and unexpected. The common denominator of Israelis is the need to look behind their shoulders for a bomb, a terrorist, a corrupted politician or the Israeli salesman (oy vey). This stressful environment makes the existential crisis much more dominant in our lives, knowing that tomorrow is not guaranteed, so people roll up their sleeves and do everything today, may it be the last minute.

Order is last on our priorities. In fact, order is a privilege alone. Backing my theory is the Israeli Shuk (market), street, dress code etc. so the inside look is different than what it may look to an outsider. Although aware of the chaos, the Israelis may perceive themselves as risk takers, no B-S, straight-to-the-point kind of people.

So election, here we go! We will now have three months of thriving media, heated living-room discussions, and reporters, analysts and comedians feeding off of the entire situation. And as for Israel? Leaders rise, leaders fall, Bibi (the current prime



Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu

minister) stays. Good or bad? You can decide for yourself.

Want to hear more about the upcoming elections? Join me at one of my informative programs. Want to talk about it? Hear a perspective from an Israeli? Reach out! sharon@jewishnashville.org

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In Our Community

Tactical first aid course offered

In light of the recent tragedy in Pittsburgh, Sherith Israel will be sponsoring a course in Tactical First Aid designed to save lives in the first crucial moments after an active shooter situation, and before the arrival of the EMS. This specialized training will be taught by experienced combat medics from Agape Tactical, a Middle Tennessee security firm specializing in church and synagogue security. Anyone interested is invited to attend.

The course will be on Feb. 17 from 1 to 5 p.m. in the social hall. The cost is \$130 per person, and includes a tactical trauma kit designed to stabilize the wounded. For those who already have a medical kit and do not desire one, or who already took the course in 2016 and just need a refresher, the cost is \$80 with the coupon code medkit50.

Jewish Genealogy group meeting

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Nashville will meet on Feb. 17 at 2 p.m., at the Gordon Jewish Community Center library. The group is open to anyone interested in learning more about Jewish genealogy and tracing family histories. The meeting's agenda includes election of officers, approval of the organization's bylaws and the sharing of resources and ideas.

Correction

In last month's special section for Simchas and Celebrations, this profile was inadvertently left out. We apologize for the omission!

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Guatemala

Continued from front page

ordering a United Nations-approved team of corruption investigators to vacate the country. During a week in the country, the fellows met with advocates fighting for legal protections for human rights activists at risk of violence, midwives providing maternal health support for indigenous women, and members of an independent journalism collective led by young Guatemalans seeking to expose human rights abuses.

The rabbis learned from human rights advocates about working to improve life in Guatemala and how American Jews and others can support this work.

The rabbis, who were joined on the trip by AJWS Global Ambassador Ruth Messinger, also met with top leadership at the U.S. Embassy.

Rice first met Messinger when she spoke at Vanderbilt University over a decade ago, and was "very impressed with her... And how the organization partners" with non-governmental organizations around the world. The organization is active in 19 countries, working to pursue justice and fight poverty in the developing world.

He remembered how Christian colleagues and members of the Jewish community asked him about what the Jewish community was doing about Darfur after a genocide started there in 2003. When he learned about this rabbinic fellowship program, he jumped at the opportunity.

Before traveling to Guatemala, each rabbi engaged in six months of human



Rabbi Rice passes a display of victims of "forced disappearances" in Guatemala

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Editorial Submissions Policy and Deadlines

The Jewish Observer welcomes the submission of information, news items, feature stories and photos about events relevant to the Jewish community of Greater Nashville. We prefer e-mailed submissions, which should be sent as Word documents to editor@jewishnashville.org. Photos must be high resolution (at least 300 dpi) and should be attached as jpegs to the e-mail with the related news item or story. For material that can-not be e-mailed, submissions should be sent to The Jewish Observer, 801 Percy Warner Blvd., Suite 102, Nashville TN 37205. Photos and copy sent by regular mail will not be returned unless prior arrangement is made. Publication is at the discretion of The Observer, which reserves the right to edit submissions.

To ensure publication, submissions must arrive by the 15th of the month prior to the intended month of publication.

For advertising deadlines, contact Carrie Mills, advertising manager, at 615-354-1699, or by email at carrie@nashvillejcc.org.

Corrections Policy

The Jewish Observer is committed to making corrections and clarifications promptly. To request a correction or clarification, email editor@jewishnashville.org

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Guatemala

Continued from page 5

rights education and action, including training with AJWS staff in the United States.

They trained in New York, and while Rice said his rabbinic colleagues were impressive, "I thought the organization and staff were amazing." They are receiving additional advocacy training before their upcoming Washington trip.

Rice said an argument that should resonate with representatives from the area is how helping with conditions in Guatemala will help stem the flow of people heading to the U.S. border, a current contentious issue in American politics.

He said it was "powerful to see things first-hand" and hear the stories from Guatemalans.

While Guatemala rarely makes the headlines in the U.S., Rice pointed out that there are roughly 1,000,000 Guatemalans in the U.S., and "there's probably about 1 million Reform Jews."

Years after its civil war concluded, Guatemala continues to grapple with tensions over land, ethnicity and economic inequality. Indigenous communities make up a majority of the country, yet they have little power in government or in shaping decisions that affect their lives. They face intense discrimination and poverty — especially indigenous women, who are doubly disadvantaged, and who suffer from a lack of health care services. Guatemalan human rights activists and journalists who expose or speak out about these injustices often face harassment, intimidation and violence.

A powerful part of the trip was meeting with a group of indigenous women who traveled 24 hours by foot and by bus to meet with the delegation. "They put on a play about what it was like to be a female

representative trying to get a voice in city government."

Another connection was exploring the shared value of education. Rice said he told the story of the old man planting a fruit tree and how a passerby told him he was wasting his time because he would be gone before it bear fruit, and that he responded that he was doing it for future generations just as those before him planted for his generation. After telling the story, Rice said one of the indigenous women told him "we're doing our best to plant seeds."

They also learned about the difficulty faced by midwives, as they often have to go out at night when there is gang activity and other hazards, "risking their lives to deliver these babies." He added that the midwives want to receive more training so they can better deal with circumstances that arise during childbirth.

He also noted how journalists in Guatemala "risk their lives to document things going on in society."

Rice noted that "We are not helping people because they are Jewish, but because we are," and the Jewish community is compelled to help others.

"At a time when human rights in Guatemala are under attack and hard-working residents are fleeing the country and seeking a new life in the United States, it is crucial that these influential Jewish leaders learn first-hand from courageous advocates," said Robert Bank, president and CEO of AJWS. "Our fellows bring back what they learn to their communities and to the halls of Congress. Together, these rabbis will issue a moral call to action to their communities and persuade decision-makers in the United States to support human rights and end poverty in Guatemala and the rest of the developing world."

The Heart of Jewish Spirituality

West End Scholar in Residence addresses Generosity & Gratitude

Singled out as "one of the next generation of Jewish Sages" in the New York Jewish Week last November, theologian, scholar and educator Rabbi Shai Held will be the 2019 West End Synagogue Scholar in Residence. The community is invited to explore and engage topics pertaining to Jewish Spirituality. Learning with Rabbi Shai Held is a special treat!

Rabbi Held serves as president, dean and chair in Jewish Thought at the Hadar Institute. He holds a Ph.D. in religion from Harvard University and an MA in philosophy and rabbinic ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York. Rabbi Shai cofounded Mechon Hadar in 2006 with Rabbi Ethan Tucker and Rabbi Elie Kaunfer.

Attendance is complimentary, thanks to funding provided by the Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, the WES Janet Levine March Fund for Cultural Arts and the Albert and Evelyn Stein Scholar-in-Residence Fund.

Schedule of Lectures

Friday Evening, February 8
Kabbalat Shabbat Services, 6-7 p.m.
Shabbat Dinner, 7-8 p.m. Reservations \$22/adult; \$8/children 3-11; no charge for children under 3
Topic: "The Gifts of God Flow Through You: Grace, Gratitude, Generosity and the Heart of Jewish Spirituality," 8-9 p.m.



Shabbat Morning, February 9
Shacharit Service, 9:30 a.m.

D'var Torah: "Waiting for God: On Living and Loving in a Godless World"
Shabbat Kiddush Luncheon followed by Lecture: "Love Your Neighbor As Yourself: What Are We Actually Being Asked for?" appx. 12:45-2 p.m.

Sunday Morning, February 10
Bagels and Coffee after 9 a.m. Minyan Study Session, 10-11 a.m. "The God of Judaism Is A God of Love: Undoing the Pernicious Stereotypes"
Babysitting available upon request

STRONGER THAN HATE

Community Relations Committee Seder

Thursday, March 28th

6-6:30pm: Registration

6:30-8:30pm: Program and Dinner

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CRC Seder Chairs: Hilary Diskin and Justin Kanew
Led by: Rabbi Joshua Kullock, West End Synagogue

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Jewish community members of all ages participated in the Martin Luther King, Jr., Day March on Jan. 21. The sunny sky softened the very cold weather, and even our very young marchers had tremendous spirit of community.

We are proud to continue the tradition started by Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel who marched side by side with Dr. King carrying a Torah, and commented, "When I marched in Selma, I felt my feet were praying."

We in the Jewish community continue to struggle for justice and the end of anti-Semitism, racism and bigotry. It is heartening to be reminded that we have many valuable allies in this work.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

Thursday, March 28, 6-8:30 p.m.

Stronger than Hate: Community Relations Seder

For details please contact CRC Director Deborah Oleshansky, deborah@jewishnashville.org (615) 354-1637

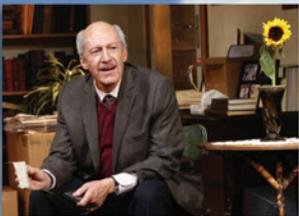
After the march, participants returned to the Gordon JCC to celebrate Marsha Jaffa's birthday



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Akiva School in National Study Exploring the Impact of Spirituality on Children's Health

By SAUL SOLOMON

Akiva School invests heavily in its students' spirituality. This emphasis on spiritual growth is evident not only in Judaic Studies, but also in language arts, music, social studies and many other areas of the curriculum.

This emphasis on spirituality has put Akiva at the forefront of new scientific studies exploring the impact of spirituality on children's health. Akiva is one of only 12 schools in the nation that have been invited to participate in a new program, The Collaborative for Spirituality in Education, that will help further the study of spirituality in education and foster its growth in the participating schools.

A leader in the study of the impact of spirituality on children's health is Dr. Lisa Miller, who is a psychologist and professor at Columbia University, Teachers College and serves as the president of the Collaborative. Miller's book, "The Spiritual Child," was published in 2015 and is a leading work exploring children and spirituality.

Miller is aware of the difficulties in defining "spirituality" — she speaks of it as a "personal relationship to higher power such as nature, God, spirit or the universe that is loving and guiding."

The findings of her research are remarkable. The research shows that children with a positive, active relationship to spirituality are:

- 40 percent less likely to be involved in substance abuse
- 60 percent less likely to be depressed as teenagers
- 80 percent less likely to have dangerous or unprotected sex
- More likely to achieve academic success.

The Collaborative has recently begun its work. Last year, the professional leaders of the Collaborative travelled to each of the 12 schools, including Akiva, to tease out the essential characteristics of a "spiritual" school. During Miller's visit to Akiva, she said, "You don't know it yet but you are literally saving children's lives."

In October 2018, the heads of the participating schools met with the staff of the Collaborative in a workshop setting. "It continues to be humbling to be a part of this collaborative," reported Akiva Head of School Daniella Pressner. "The schools involved are intentional about bringing meaning and light into the lives of their students. There is no question our world needs more people committed to our children's sense of identity and their collective future; I returned uplifted by the intellect and heart so present in each of these schools. The hardest work remains ahead: sharing and implementing the flexible yet clear vision in schools across the country."

While each of the 12 schools continues to take its own path toward incorporating spirituality into the lives of its students, they left having created rough guidelines for the Collaborative to continue to work on as templates for schools across the country. The Collaborative will help further define how best to make spirituality a core principle in increasing schools and to guide and support each school as it begins addressing children's spirituality as part of its vision.

According to Pressner, the Akiva community is thrilled and honored to be on the forefront of studying spirituality and children's health. Pressner also indicated that the learnings of the Collaborative will enhance the Akiva experience and will further its already successful mission of providing its students the tools they need to succeed in life.

"Legacy Options" concludes LIFE & LEGACY series

The Professional Advisory Council series of seminars on legacy giving concludes this month with a Feb. 28 program on "Legacy Options."

The series supports the LIFE & LEGACY™ program of the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee, in partnership with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. The PAC is supported by the Joe Kraft Professional Advisory Program Fund housed at the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation.

The Feb. 28 program, which will be held at the Gordon Jewish Community Center on Feb. 28 from 7 to 8:30 p.m., will discuss life insurance, IRAs and bequests. Presenters will include Michael Levine and Rodney Rosenblum, with panelists Ralph Levy and Eva Pulley.

Three previous sessions were held from November through January, discussing financial planning, estate planning and

philanthropy.

LIFE & LEGACY™ was developed to help Jewish organizations and congregations assure their financial futures through a systematic plan for community members to commit to and set up legacy gifts. Since it began in May 2017, over 250 people in Nashville have made commitments for after-lifetime gifts to participating organizations in the Nashville Jewish community.

The PAC seminars were set up to offer community members educational tools to formalize their commitments to make these gifts. The PAC includes professionals in accounting, law, tax, estate planning, life insurance and investments, providing networking opportunities to the professionals and information to those attending seminars. There is no charge to attend.

Go to www.jewishnashville.org/waystogive/life-and-legacy for more details.

LIFE & LEGACY™ participating organizations

Thirteen Nashville congregations and Jewish organizations participate in LIFE & LEGACY™: Akiva School, BBYO Nashville, Chabad of Nashville, Congregation Micah, Gordon Jewish Community Center, Hadassah Nashville, Jewish Family Service, Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation, NCJW Nashville Section, Congregation Sherith Israel, The Temple, West End Synagogue and Vanderbilt Hillel.

Vanderbilt Jewish Studies presents

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THE RADICAL MUSICAL LIFE OF LIN JALDATI



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Save the Date: Wednesday, March 13 at 7pm

For more information contact jewishstudies@vanderbilt.edu

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Vanderbilt's Ingram Hall
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7 PM
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chatterbird.org



At Our Congregations...



Join the World Wide Wrap on Feb. 3

The World Wide Wrap is an initiative of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs. It was conceived as an effort to encourage more Conservative Jewish men to partake in the mitzvah of Tefillin. The WES Men's Club has sponsored this effort each year, provided instruction on how to wrap and has joined with our religious school to encourage our boys and girls to purchase Tefillin. Please join rabbi, cantor, Men's Club and Sisterhood members, together with our religious school students, on Sunday, Feb. 3 at 9 a.m. in the Hassenfeld Minyon room.

WES forum to address the immigration crisis in the U.S.

Immigration issues are in the news nearly every day. People from one end of the political spectrum to the other agree that the immigration laws in this country need to be updated. The question is, how do we come to a consensus on the way in which to do it?

A West End Synagogue community forum, "The Immigration Crisis: Where Have We Been? Where Are We Going?" will address this issue, on Feb. 28 at 7 p.m.

The synagogue presents an annual community forum to explore current issues of importance to Nashvillians. Past topics have included the school-to-prison pipeline, refugee resettlement as well as the opioid crisis. The event is free and open to all Nashville area residents.

At press time, the following panelists have been announced:

Paul A. Kramer, associate professor of history at Vanderbilt University, will give a historical background to immigration laws and regulations in the United States.

James Hollis, immigration attorney and member of the law firm Siskind Susser PC, will address what is being called a "broken system" and the ideas being put forward for comprehensive reform measures.

Andres Martinez, director of communications and policy at Conexion Americas in Nashville, will give an overview of immigration and the immigrant community in Nashville, its economic impact on the city and how the process of integrating immigrants into our culture works.

There will be ample time for questions from the audience, followed by a dessert reception.

WES Sisterhood to deliver Purim treats to friends and family

Costumes will be on display. Haman will be booed. The Megillah will be read. All this will mark Purim celebrations in Nashville on March 21.

West End Synagogue Sisterhood will help you observe another Purim tradition by distributing mishloah manot (Purim goodie bags) to local friends and family. It is a way to let them know you appreciate them.

Anyone may purchase these bags to give to West End members, non-members and the synagogue administrative staff. The cost per bag to go to a synagogue member is \$8; to a non-member, \$10; and to every staff member, \$50. Sisterhood members will personally deliver each bag to the designated home or office.

Proceeds from the sale help support Beit Miriam religious school, USY and other Sisterhood projects.

The deadline for orders is March 7. To place an order, send your list, with addresses and a check made out to West End Synagogue Sisterhood, to Sisterhood, 3810 West End Ave., Nashville, TN 37215. Synagogue members can place orders online at HappyPurim.com.

For additional information, contact Phyllis Helderman at phelderman@comcast.net or Lynne Rosenblum at lynner@comcast.net.



Shabbat Evening with Eric Stillman

Executive director of the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee Eric Stillman speaks at the Feb. 1 Shabbat services. Wine Down starts at 5:30 p.m., with services at 6 p.m.

Women's Grief Group

If you are a woman and managing grief due to loss of some kind, you are invited to join us at Congregation Micah. This group meets twice a month on Thursday afternoons, this month's meetings will be Feb. 14 and 28 at 2 p.m. E-mail Rabbi Laurie for more information at lrice@congregationmicah.org

A Woman's Circle

A monthly opportunity to grow your soul, meet with other women and engage with sacred text. Rabbi Laurie challenges your intellect through study and conversation on Jewish and other relevant topics. All are welcome to the Feb. 15 class. Bring a friend. Lunch is provided. RSVP to Rabbi Laurie Rice at lrice@congregationmicah.org

Documentary Film Series: "The Flat"

As a documentarian cleans out the flat that belonged to his grandparents — both immigrants from Nazi Germany — he uncovers clues pointing to a complicated and shocking story. The screening is Feb. 17 at 1:30 p.m.

Room in the Inn

Room in the Inn is a national program that provides food and shelter for the homeless in houses of worship throughout participating cities in the United States. Help us prepare food, serve the evening meal, set up the sleeping area or overnight as hosts with our guests on Feb. 17. To volunteer, sign up on our website via our Social Action Projects page.

Consecration and Kabbalat K'Tan

Join us for a special Shabbat service on Feb. 22, especially for kids and young families. Wine Down starts at 5:30 p.m., with services following at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Shal-Om

Calling young adults! Join us on Feb. 23 at 11 a.m. for a Yoga class led by Rabbi Laurie of Congregation Micah and yoga teacher of Shakti Power Yoga. No matter where you are in your yoga practice or Judaism, we are inviting you to reconnect body and soul through gentle flow yoga and Jewish learning. This is also a chance to learn about Yogis in Israel through our community Shlichah, Sharon Ben Ami.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

Micah will be hosting an American Red Cross blood drive in the social hall from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Feb. 24. To schedule your appointment, log onto redcrossblood.org, and enter sponsor code: CHAI.



Golden Lunch Bunch

Join the Golden Lunch Bunch for lunch, entertainment and fun at 11:30 a.m. on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at The Temple. This month's gatherings are Feb. 5 and 19. To reserve, call Anna Sir, 354-1686.

Crafternoon at The Temple!

Come join the Caring Connection Committee one Sunday a month for an afternoon of fun, creativity and a way to give back to our congregation.

Our first Crafternoon will be on Feb. 10 from 1 to 4 p.m. Come for as long as you wish! We'll have a craft each month, such as handmade note cards, knitting hats, blankets, etc., for people to work on together, or you can bring your own project to work on. Refreshments will be served. We look forward to crafting with you!

Social Action Shabbat

Each year, the Social Action Allocations sub-committee sends Requests for Proposals to community organizations which meet our guidelines, and then evaluates the resulting proposals. Recommendations are approved by the Social Action Committee, and then by the Board of Trustees, for allocations to be made from funds earmarked for Social Action.

At the 6 p.m. Shabbat service on Feb. 1, we will honor these agencies by providing them an opportunity to display information about their organizations in our Oneg area both before and after services.

Interfaith Dental Clinic CEO Dr. Rhonda Switzer-Nadasdi will be the speaker that evening. We encourage you to join us as we celebrate the wonderful works of the organizations The Temple supports.

Tot Shabbat

On Feb. 16 at 10 a.m., come help us celebrate Shabbat for children up to 6 years old and the big people who love them! We'll have songs, crafts, a story, and yummy treats!

At Our Congregations...

Chabad

New course: Biblical Tales of Kings, Warriors and Prophets

Last winter, Chabad of Nashville offered a most successful course on the Biblical Book of Joshua, that was attended by many students from a cross-section of the Nashville community. Due to the great success of this course and by a great demand from many participants, Chabad will be presenting a new course on Biblical Tales of Kings, Warriors and Prophets, on the Book of Judges. This will take place over eight Wednesday evenings, beginning Feb. 13, at 7:30 p.m.

The Book of Judges records the ups and downs of a turbulent and eventful 355-year period of Jewish history. Travel back in time between the conquest described in the Book of Joshua and the establishment of a kingdom in the Books of Samuel, during which Biblical judges served as leaders, including Deborah the prophetess and Samson the Warrior.

Participants will be immersed in the richness of the Jewish Scriptures and discover the hidden meanings that have been lost over centuries of translations, and delve into the fascinating world of the ancient prophets of Israel. This new learning opportunity explores the dramatic stories and powerful messages contained in the Book of Judges.

The lessons will take place on Wednesday evenings, starting Feb. 13, until Passover, in the Oak Library at Chabad of Nashville.

For more information or to register go to www.chabadnashville.com or call (615) 646-5750.

Two TGIS events in February

Start your Shabbat off right with good friends, great conversation and excellent kosher cuisine, all seasoned with the perfect amount of spirit and joy. TGIS is a Club Med Shabbat: An all-inclusive Shabbat experience. Enjoy a Friday night Shabbat dinner replete with traditional dishes, blended with spirited singing, a Chasidic tale, and a chance to meet some wonderful new people. TGIS will be held on Feb. 8 and 22, at 6:30 p.m. at Chabad of Nashville.

There is no cost to attend the TGIS Shabbat experience, however we kindly request that you RSVP by letting us know you will be attending, at chabadnashville@gmail.com.

Chicken Soup Squad

As it is cold and chilly outside, an Rx of chicken soup can perk up anyone under the weather.

Chabad of Nashville's chicken soup squad is on call to deliver a fresh dose of chicken soup with a blessing for good health to anyone who needs it.

Call Chabad at (615) 646-5750 for your dose of Chicken Soup and the squad will be right over.

Sherith Israel

Torah Mitzion Community Shabbaton

Join us on the Shabbat of Feb. 1 and 2 for a special, spirit-filled Shabbaton with dozens of representatives of Torah Mitzion, the organization that sent us the amazing Bar-Or family. On Friday night there will be a delicious dinner at 6 p.m. after services, with singing and the lecture. Advance reservations are \$15, \$7 for ages 4-12, \$50 maximum for a family. On Shabbat day there will be inspiring davening, a community lunch and breakout learning sessions.

Scholar in Residence Rabbi Jeff Fox

Join us on Feb. 15 and 16 for an incredible weekend of learning with Rabbi Jeff Fox, Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Maharat. Yeshivat Maharat is the first yeshiva to ordain Orthodox Jewish women, and Rabbi Fox is a leader in promoting open and inclusive Orthodoxy.

Macabeenies Play Group

This fun, casual Sunday morning play group for infants through pre-school-aged kids is a great way for kids to have fun, and parents to connect. We'll sing, dance, bounce, play in the ball pit, and more! Free and open to the entire community, at Sherith Israel, from 10 to 11 a.m., the first and third Sundays of the month, Feb. 3 and 17.

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NISSAN NASHVILLE PROUD

Mission Possible

Continued from front page

representing over 90 percent of the funds raised. “We’re really seeing these dollars put to work.”

The committee makes 83 funding decisions in five areas – Israel and overseas; regional, national and international organizations; local core programs, the JCC campus and New Initiative grants.

Karabel explained the New Initiative process, which funds innovative projects in the community.

The committee makes its grants in the spring, and Hirt urged everyone to make their pledge early, because “the sooner it is done, the better we can make more accurate” grants.

The mission participants were then divided onto three buses, led by Abby and Jason Sparks, Tara and Brian Axelroth, and Erin and Micah Coleman.

Touring the City

One of the stops was Akiva School, which has roughly 70 students in Kindergarten to sixth grade. Erin Coleman said the school reflects the diversity of Nashville’s Jewish community, with approximately one-fourth of the students from each of Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and unaffiliated backgrounds.

But that isn’t the only kind of diversity, she said. “People tend to think Akiva is one kind of kid,” Coleman said, but there is cultural diversity, with Israeli, Persian, South American, Asian, Canadian and Russian students, as well as every economic demographic.

Mission participants visited the Maker Space, where student creativity is encouraged, and using craft materials, were asked to come up with representations of the school’s mission.

Julie Fortune, director of admissions and outreach, said without Federation support “we would not be able to do all the different things we do.”

She said while tuition is rough-



Embarking on the journey: Participants in the Mission:Possible tour

ly \$12,500, the real cost per student is \$23,000 annually. The school’s goal is to make it possible for all those who want to attend.

Another stop was the Hillel at Vanderbilt University. Bob Nemer, president of the Hillel board, said that when the building opened in 2003, Vanderbilt’s enrollment was 3 percent Jewish. Now, the Jewish student population is over 1,000, about 15 percent of the student body.

That is reflected in the daily activity level at Hillel, he said. “We could not do what we do without the Federation supporting Hillel in many ways.”

He added that the Hillel also supports Jewish students at Middle Tennessee and Belmont.

Ari Dubin, Hillel executive director, said one aspect of Hillel is to help Jewish students navigate holidays. For example, while they hold Reform and Conservative services on Rosh Hashanah, they

also do short “pop-up” services elsewhere on campus between classes. Last year there were 550 participants in Rosh Hashanah events, including a Rosh Hashanah Seder, which was modeled for the mission.

The Seder was created by Vanderbilt Hillel with funding from Federation’s New Initiatives, and as Federation funds “allowed us to do this,” Dubin said, it was a good way to show mission participants “how the dollars are spent.”

One stop wasn’t at a Jewish institution – it was Publix. Pam Kelner, executive director of Jewish Family Service, explained that of the 18 programs and services provided by the agency, four are economic in nature, and one of those is the kosher food box program.

The program began in 2009 when some of the agency’s social workers recognized that some in the community on fixed incomes had difficulty making ends meet. The boxes are a monthly food supplement, and mission participants went into Publix in groups to shop for a box, based on a list they were given, and a \$50 Publix gift card.

When the program began, there were 15 households identified. At the peak of the economic downturn, 39 were enrolled; today roughly 20 families qualify.

Items in the boxes are all kosher, and the boxes can be given monthly “because of the generous support of the community,” Kelner said.

With the monthly pickup of the boxes, the families meet with JFS social workers, who can then identify any other needs family members may have.

Each year, JFS serves roughly 1,700 people with economic, social and emotional needs, from every demographic in the community.

Micah Coleman said it is “a testament to how much they do and how they do it... and how many people in the community need some support.”

Other Projects

Besides the site visits, there were additional presentations on the buses.

On one of the buses, Ellie Flier de-



Shaliach Max Ryabinin leads part of the Rosh Hashanah Seder at Vanderbilt Hillel

scribed how NowGen started after Best Jewish Nashville 1.0 determined that young Jewish professionals ages 22 to 40 were not being served.

When she came to Nashville 6 years ago, she “did not know a single person.” After a couple of weeks, she went to the JCC so she could get involved, and was invited to become part of NowGen.

“It’s not just a place to go, it’s really a community,” she said. “I felt immediately so welcome by everyone who was going to the events, and the events were happening all the time.”

Five years ago, she suggested a Rosh Hashanah dinner for those in the community who don’t have local family, and “it’s been happening every year since then.”

Through NowGen, “you feel like you are part of something, not just visiting Nashville.”

Flier also spoke of the more recent Jewish City Shabbat, which came about with five people who “really missed being at Jewish camp and wanted to replicate the experience” of the spirit-filled Shabbat “as young adults.”

From the initial five, the group took off and “grew to where we couldn’t handle it on our own.” The group is now in



Filling a Kosher Food Box for Jewish Family Service at Publix

the second year of a New Initiative grant, and they had 60 at their last event. It is “something we are able to do because of Federation.”

They still meet in homes, and are “in need of bigger spaces.” Once a month, they go to someone’s home for the 45-minute service and a catered dinner. The group includes a large number of unaffiliated Jews, and is open to anyone, “not just young people.”

Jack Simon, director of youth and family services at the GJCC, spoke about the “unique gem in the Nashville community” that is Camp Davis.

The day camp, located at the GJCC, served approximately 330 campers last summer, and the camp is “directly impacted by Federation dollars,” through scholarships and the Israeli staff.

He said unlike some JCC day camps which downplay the Jewish aspect to appeal to a wider audience, in Nashville “we really embrace” the Jewish aspect.

With the camper population around 60 percent Jewish and 40 percent non-Jewish, he said non-Jewish families are exposed to Judaism “in a very positive way,” as the camp “introduces spirituality and how to be a good person in a universal language.”

For Jewish campers, they have the rare opportunity to be a majority, but unlike in a situation where everyone is Jewish, the mix gives them the opportunity to explain Judaism to their peers.

Christie Wiemers spoke of the overseas Federation missions, having been on the community-wide Israel trip in 2016 and an Argentina mission in 2017.

She described the Israel trip as “super crazy and busy,” with wall-to-wall activities. They visited Nashville’s Partnership-2Gether community, Hadera, where they attended the opening of an art exchange between Israeli artists and artists from the Southeastern U.S. They also stayed on an optional extension that included a global celebration of the 20th anniversary of P2G. “We got to see what P2G does all over the world” with partnership communities.

A highlight of the Argentina trip was seeing an ORT school in Buenos Aires, a Jewish tech-based school that was “absolutely incredible.”

Ruth Klar spoke of the benefits of Shalom Taxi, a Federation-funded taxi service for those age 65 or older, providing vouchers that lower the round-trip taxi charge to \$5.

While Klar said she thought it was a great idea when it started, she wasn’t ready to use its services – until two years ago, when she and a friend wanted to attend a downtown event at night, and neither drives downtown at night.

Adding that nobody can anticipate when they will need that service, Klar called it “a wonderful thing that Federation does.”

To underscore the benefit to seniors using the service, it was pointed out that a taxi from the GJCC to the first stop on the tour would have cost \$11 in a conventional taxi, while the one-way charge for Shalom Taxi is \$2.50.

Sarah Rose Schifftan spoke of BBYO, as she is in her second year as advisor of the Jewish high school youth group. A four-year member when she was in high school, when she came back to Nashville she wanted to find her avenue for being involved in the community, and advising BBYO “really is that for me.”

Through her work, she sees “what the future of our community will look like.”

Currently, an emphasis is integrating

the teens in Williamson County into the larger group.

The last stop was an opportunity to talk about the afternoon, what was learned and to have an opportunity to sign pledge cards for the year’s campaign.

Erin Coleman said the mini-mission “is the first day of the Federation Campaign,” and the Campaign “is the way the Federation gets the dollars to fund the programs you saw today.”

Reflecting on the day’s journey, Zimmerman said “to me, this is a lot of what a successful, strong, growing community looks like.

“What we are doing is a direct reflection of what people want to see, the kind of community they have envisioned” through the Best Jewish Nashville process, he added.



Micah Coleman leads the Blue bus

One Voice: Songs of Social Justice & Community

For the first time, the musical voices of our Nashville Jewish community will gather together as one for an uplifting and inspiring concert. We hope you can join us for this special afternoon of music, tikkun olam, friendship, and hope.

Sunday, March 3 ~ 4:00 PM
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A Free Concert Featuring:



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Sarah Levine**
West End Synagogue



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Reception to Follow

This Program is Generously sponsored by the:



The Temple is located at 5015 Harding Pike • This event is open to the community without charge.

Spin Zone: Akiva hosts Dreidel Design contest



Akiva School hosted the 2nd Annual Dreidel Design Challenge (#doyoudreidel?) during the Chanukah season. This year's theme was "Jewish Change Makers for Love, Liberty and Light." Students from across the country were invited to build a dreidel from scratch and to reflect and research Jewish role models, including Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Emma Lazarus, Harry Houdini (Ehrich Weiss), and Rabbi Akiva.

Criteria for the dreidels included the length of the spin, design parameters, and an artist's statement to connect the dreidel to their understanding of the leader's impact on our world.

The contestants, Kindergarten through 8th grade, used a panoply of inventive materials for their creations. Students showed their passion, creativity and ingenuity as they designed dreidels made from wood, paper, Legos, fidget spinners, recycled CDs, solar panels and other materials. Winners demonstrated their deep understanding of the heroes through their sensitive artist's statements that connected to their designs in a meaningful way.

Winners and honorable mentions for the contest included:

Milton Gottesman Jewish Day School of the Nation's Capital in

Washington: Eleanor Brosowsky, Gideon Brosowsky.

Krieger Schechter, Pikesville, Md.: Rebecca Guth.

Akiva School: Batya Coleman, Hirsch Coleman, Seth Ferguson, Noam Friedman, Wolff Holtz, Mark Kocourek, Abi Kullock, Iara Kullock, Meital Kullock, Avi Shuman, Hannah Mackler, Sylvie Mackler, Julianna Miles, Ruvi Rothstein and River Rjke-Epstein.

The Akiva Dreidel Design Challenge's national panel of judges included Rabbi Malka Drucker, author of "Jewish-American Heroes." Other distinguished judges included Rabbi Flip Rice, artist Carrie Mills, artist Leila Altman, and educators Yael Steiner and Alana Kotler.

The judges were impressed with the creativity of the contestants. Judge Rabbi Malka Drucker remarked "I was so impressed to see how these young students thought 'outside the box' and connected our Jewish leaders to their unique dreidel designs."

Schools or families interested in hearing more about the #doyoudreidel 2019 contest should contact acalloway@akivanashville.net for more details.



LaFrance, Bogard and Whitver featured at Gordon JCC Galleries

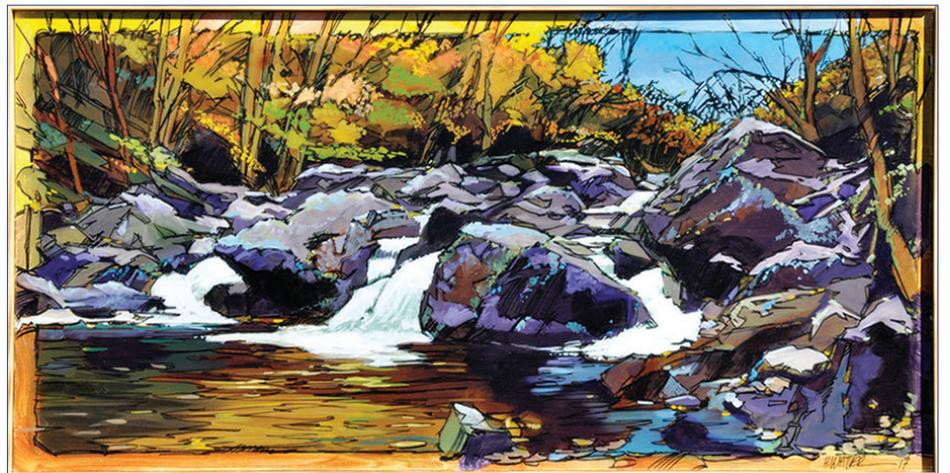
The Gordon Jewish Community Center's February art exhibit will feature the work of Helen LaFrance, Harry Whitver and Whitney Bogard. In addition, the "Under One Roof - Welcoming the Stranger" exhibit is still on display.

The Janet Levine March Gallery will feature the work of Helen LaFrance. Bruce Shelton, ISA Appraiser / Shelton-gallery.com, has been representing Helen LaFrance since November 1991. Curator Carrie Mills said "the J galleries are honored to show this special exhibit of Helen LaFrance's work."

She added that American female artists are now being recognized as a force in art history, and LaFrance, at 99 years of age, "is taking her place as a modern self-taught contemporary artist who has been making art most of her life." Her works are in notable private collections such as Oprah Winfrey, Red Grooms, Gayle King and Bryant Gumbel just to mention a few.

The JLMG2 Gallery will feature the work of Whitney Bogard. Bogard is a Nashville-based painter of powerful, contemporary themes.

The Sig Held Gallery will feature the work of Harry Whitver. Born in Iowa in 1943, Whitver moved with his family to



"Little River" by Harry Whitver

Nashville in 1946, and, like most 4-year-olds, began his artistic career. After graduating from Hillsboro High School in 1961, he earned a B.A. from Peabody College in 1965. During the Vietnam conflict, he served as a combat artist in the U.S. Navy from 1966 to 1969.

After discharge, he attended Art Center School in Los Angeles through 1970. Returning to Nashville, he worked for Bob Hitt at Illustration Design Group through the 70s, setting up his own studio in 1979. Along with his commercial illustration career, he continued drawing, painting and printmaking, producing mostly photorealistic and whimsical work. As his second career in fine art took over his studio, he has pushed his graphic design and technical skills into unexplored areas, producing paintings that are as surprising to him as they are to the viewer. He is a member of the Tennessee Art League and a former member of The Chestnut Group.

"Under One Roof: Welcoming the Stranger," which opened in October, con-

tinues at the J House Gallery. The exhibit features collaborative works of art created by a multitude of organizations and individuals in Nashville, exploring this year's theme, Welcoming the Stranger. Jews are reminded 36 times in the Torah to treat strangers with kindness and love them as ourselves. This exhibit explores what "loving the stranger" means for the invited artists, the Jewish community and the City of Nashville. The project aims to bring together diverse people, organizations and ideas from the local community to unify Under One Roof and collectively exhibit artworks prepared by each organization, based on the theme.

The reception for the artists is on Feb. 6 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the GJCC. There will be music by DJ Joseph Harris, henna painting by Seemi Rivzi, along with complimentary food and beverages to accompany the event. The event is free and open to the public.

The changing exhibits will be displayed throughout the month.

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B'nai Mitzvah

Eleanor "Laney" Drew Hirt Laura Grace Hirt

Eleanor "Laney" Drew Hirt and Laura Grace Hirt will become B'not Mitzvah on Feb. 23 at The Temple.

Born on Jan. 27, 2006 in Nashville, they are the daughters of Andy and Laura Hirt and the granddaughters of Doug and Melanie Hirt of Nashville; John Davis of Chatawa, Miss.; and Emily Zimmerman of Murray, Ky.

For their Mitzvah project, the girls have been collecting cash donations for Lovie's Legacy, an animal welfare program which helps to end animal suffering. They are also collecting dog leashes and collars for dog owners who do not have these essentials items or are using improper leashes and collars.

Both girls are in seventh grade at University School of Nashville. In Laney Drew's spare time, she enjoys reading, anime, art, traveling, and spending time with family and friends. Laura Grace loves reading, history, traveling, and hanging out with her friends and family.



Eleanor "Laney" Drew Hirt



Laura Grace Hirt

Isabella Beatriz Hodes

Isabella Beatriz Hodes will become a Bat Mitzvah on March 2 at West End Synagogue. Bela is the daughter of Amy Gibbs and Peter Hodes, and sister of Nali Hodes.

Bela goes to Ensworth Middle School and is in the seventh grade. Bela like to sing, do cheer, play soccer and hang out with her friends. Bela's Bat Mitzvah project is "Kids4Kids" that she began last year while at the Akiva School. This project helps kids affected by hurricanes in the Caribbean.



Isabella Beatriz Hodes

Obituaries

Elizabeth Meisels

It is with great sadness that West End Synagogue announces the passing of Elizabeth Meisels, sister of WES member Wayne Meisels.

Elizabeth "Lizzy" R. Meisels was born on Sept. 20, 1954 in Buffalo, N.Y., to Murray and Frances "Faigy" Meisels. Lizzy attended school in Buffalo and went on to graduate from Syracuse University, receiving her degree in Nutrition. After beginning her career on the East Coast, she escaped the cold by moving to a place she grew to love and spent the remaining three-plus decades of her life — Hawaii. It was there that she attended the UH School of Public Health and received a M.P.H., after which she worked for the Hawaii Department of Health and, eventually, as a pharmaceutical representative for Glaxo Smith Kline. During her long career, Liz developed many lifelong friendships. Liz's passions included nature and travel, and she ventured to countries around the world. She maintained

New information service

Observer readers who wish to receive email notification of obituaries as the newspaper receives the information may be placed on a new e-mail list being created for this purpose by the Jewish Federation and Jewish Foundation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee. Please send your request via e-mail to obits@jewishnashville.org.

a lifetime commitment to various local and international non-profit organizations, providing immense support to the causes in which she believed. Lizzy's decades-long union with Bruce Berger brought into her life her beloved step-daughter Bianca and Bianca's husband Russell. Lizzy passed away after a prolonged illness and is survived and blessed by her older brother Wayne and her nephew Matthew, both of Nashville; relatives in the North East and Canada; and hundreds of friends across the globe.

The funeral was held on Dec. 19 in Hawaii.

Jeanette Mize

It is with great sadness that West End Synagogue announces the passing of WES member Jeanette (Curtis) Mize, 70. Jeanette passed away suddenly at Vanderbilt Medical Center on Dec. 30.

She was born in Clarksville to the late Seymour and Hannah Heimansohn on July 16, 1948. She attended Clarksville High school and graduated with a BA from Memphis State University. She was the secretary/treasurer of Heimansohn Inc., which was started by her grandfather in 1896. She loved her family, friends, country, and religion. She served as the volunteer Jewish Lay Leader at Ft. Campbell, Ky., for 20 years meticulously organizing Shabbat services, high holiday services, and life cycle events for the Jewish soldiers and families who were stationed there. Survivors include husband Curt Mize and son Lawrence Bradley Mize.

A graveside service was held on Jan. 2 at the Sherith Israel and West End Synagogue cemetery in Nashville. In lieu of flowers, donations to her favorite charity, the Clarksville-Montgomery County Humane Society, would be appreciated.

Nathan Braunstein

It is with great sadness that West End Synagogue announces the passing of Nathan Braunstein, 91, father of WES member Amy (Greg) McCoy. Nathan passed away on Jan. 9.

Born in Linden, N.J., he was a son of the late Isadore and Bertha Braunstein. Nathan was co-founder and co-owner with his late brother, Harry Reitars, of Bethlehem Lynn Sportswear for 44 years until retiring in 1997. He was a past president of the Jewish Federation of Allentown and also served as its honorary vice president. In addition, Nathan served as national vice chair of United Jewish Appeal. In 1983, he was awarded for his outstanding leadership and service to the Jewish community by the Jewish Day School, Allentown. He was honored as a fundraising advocate for the Deborah Heart & Lung Center. Nathan was a member of Temple Beth El, Allentown.

He is survived by his loving wife for the past 68 years, Marilyn (Kobrovsky) Braunstein; daughters Cherie Zettlemoyer (Rick), Laurie Horton (Gregory) and Amy McCoy (Gregory); grandchildren Evan, Jesse, Dan, Amber, Brett, Eve, Caleb, Dylan and Jake; great-grandchildren Aria, Josephine, Elijah and Anna. The funeral was held on Jan. 10 in Allentown, Pa.

David St. John

With great sadness, West End Synagogue announces the passing of David St. John of Broomfield, Col., on Jan. 16. David is survived by his parents, Samantha and Jim St. John of Birmingham; siblings, Anne Fidanzato (Rick) of St. Petersburg, Fla., and Dr. Jason St. John of Chicago, Ill.; nephew, Riley Fidanzato of St. Petersburg, Fla.; and many loving aunts, uncles and cousins.

Funeral services were held on Jan. 22, at West End Synagogue in Nashville, with burial at Ivy Bluff.

The family requests that, in lieu of flowers, donations may be made in David's memory to Pocahontas Community Center (1441 Pocahontas Rd, Morrison, TN 37357-3027) or the charity of your choice.

Jack Winfield Ross

The Temple notes with sorrow the passing of Jack Ross. Jack, 72, was born in Marion, Indiana, to Thelma Phyllistine (Phyllis) Belville and Glen Wilson Ross. His parents named him Jack in reference to the code they used in letters to each other during Glen's service in World War II. When Glen had been in battle, he wrote to Phyllis that he had seen "Jack," but all was well.

Jack was full of energy, mischief and intellectual curiosity. Always an entertainer, Jack was in drama clubs and choral groups in high school. He introduced improv to the Marion drama scene when he decided to go completely off script for a production of "Pirates of Penzance," playing

to the audience with any witty remark that came to mind. That his performance was not well received by fellow cast members nor by the director did little to dampen Jack's enthusiasm for theater.

While in high school, Jack performed folk music. During his college years at Indiana Wesleyan University, he toured regional clubs and colleges, and spent summers playing venues on Martha's Vineyard. After graduation, Jack moved to Nashville and formed a singing duo with Woody Bowles. In 1973, they released an album named "Sedalia." Jack wrote songs for Glaser music, and his album, "Quite the Handyman," was released in 1975. By the mid-1980s, Jack left the music business, but he never stopped taking pleasure in music. He loved a song with a good hook.

After his years in music, he went back to school in the 1980s, first to Belmont and then to Vanderbilt where he earned an MBA. Next, he became a nature photographer, spending a decade shooting landscapes and wildlife in national parks. Later he cared for his aging parents and managed their financial interests. More recently he returned to school again, this time to study graphic art. His pieces are distinguished by uninhibited color and layers of complex texture — not unlike the man himself.

Jack's ready humor could be deceiving. He was at heart a deeply spiritual person of strong principles who found great comfort in his Jewish faith. He asked that in lieu of flowers, gifts be sent to The Temple or to the humane society. He also requested that we all go out and vote.

Jack's illness was swift, and he regretted leaving many projects unfinished, many books unread, trails unhooked and movies unseen. But there is much he did finish. He created music, rich images and laughter. He loved well, enriching the lives of his friends and family.

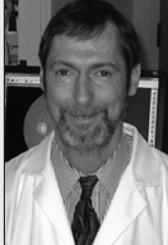
He is survived by his fiancée, Amy Lynch, and her extended family who had adopted him as their own, and by many dear friends who will remember him with love. Jack was an independent man — most himself, perhaps, just minutes before dawn, his camera ready, mountains or glaciers around him. He was willing to wait for hours, just to catch the light.

Services were held at The Temple on Jan. 22, followed by burial at The Temple cemetery.



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Maintaining a Chain of Tradition

By **RABBI PHILIP "FLIP" RICE AND SHAI RICE**

For several thousand years now, the Jewish people have maintained a shasheet shel kabbalah – a chain of tradition. We light candles on Shabbat, we circumcise our newborn sons, give our daughters Hebrew names, and stand under a chuppah when we marry. We do things not because we know why, but because they are our tradition. Such acts link us back to those who came before us and connect us to community. And if we have mazel, they can also link us to the Divine.

What helps us keep the chain of tradition intact? Education. Nashville's most vital Jewish institution, the Akiva School, teaches the "secret hand-shake" of being Jewish. In a nurturing and communal environment, students learn the rituals, texts, practices and ethics of Judaism. As opposed to a parent requiring that their child observe the Jewish calendar – especially if that parent is a rabbi – kids at Akiva are excited about the Jewish holidays, because everyone at school gets into it. Regardless of movement or observance level, Akiva students gain a better understanding of the wonders and wisdom of Judaism, learning how Judaism can be a thread which weaves meaning and joy into the tapestry of their lives.

Akiva graduates are highly sought after by local private schools. The dual commitment to general and Jewish studies prepares them for the challenges ahead in the classroom, and also for life. Students are given tools to engage in the broader world with the confidence of knowing who they

are and where they come from. What also sets Akiva apart are the role models – teachers and older students – who demonstrate how to be sensitive people, capable leaders and ambitious students.

The principal religious and social activity of Judaism is education, which has deep and ancient roots. What did God find so special about Abraham? Was it that he was fearless? Visionary? Faithful? No. God says Himself: "He is dear to me, because I know that he will command his children and his household after him to follow in the ways of Gd, to do charity and justice." (Genesis 18:19)

The Granddaddy of the Jewish people was first and foremost an educator. Same with Moses; the 10 plagues and splitting the Red Sea were impressive, but his principal task in life was teaching the people. Effectively, he created a society that could only work through education. Over and over, he insists, "People! Teach your children!" (Exodus 10:2)

For Jews, the most impressive thing you can say about someone is not that they are rich, attractive, or powerful, or even that they became a doctor. The best thing you can say is that "they know how to learn."

Akiva caters to a diverse set of students with different interests, socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. It is a place where all are accepted and loved. Want your kid to learn to how to be a mensch? Enroll them for next year today!

Rabbi Phillip Rice is co-senior rabbi at Congregation Micah, and Shai Rice is a junior at the University School of Nashville.

ART on the West Side announced for April

ART on the West Side will hold its sixth consecutive juried art show on April 6 and 7, showcasing 41 local and nationally recognized artists at the Gordon Jewish Community Center, and representing mediums including paint, sculpture, jewelry design, clay and fiber, wood and glass.

This year's curators, Robin Cohen, Rae Hirsch and Martha Nemer, reviewed close to 1,000 pieces submitted by more than 200 artists. The show will appeal to a wide audience of art enthusiasts and collectors with art at many price points. Artists also will be present and available to speak with attendees and art enthusiasts.

"In a city with a strong artistic history and community, and a wide array of art-centric events, ART on the West Side has become the place to see one of the best curated collections, spanning styles and mediums," said local art enthusiasts Julie and Frank Boehm. "We love coming every year, seeing and being surrounded by, some of the best, most exciting pieces across the board."

The featured artist this year, Paul Harmon, is an internationally-exhibited artist who, from 1986 to early 1998, divided his time between permanent studio/residences in Paris, France and Brentwood, Tenn. "My work is a personal journal of my life. It is therefore both serious and frivolous. Joyous and melancholic. Spiritual and erotic. The continuity is in the fact that it tracks a real life."

The event begins the evening of April 6 at the GJCC, with a cocktail reception from 6 to 9 p.m. There is a suggested donation of \$15 per person, and valet parking will be provided.

On April 7, the event opens with Morning Jazz with Lite Bites and Mimosas, from 10 a.m. to noon, and the show will be open until 4 p.m.

This year, ART on the West Side will also feature JPOP: a fabulous pop-up market featuring jewelry, accessories, childrens' items, home and paper goods, and food items. This event is free and open to the public. A percentage of all sales from ART on the West Side benefits art programming at the Gordon JCC.

Find a full list of artists at www.artonthewestside.org, and for more information regarding the show, contact event chairs Robin Cohen, Rae Hirsch or Martha Nemer at (615) 481-8300 or artonthewestside@nashvillejcc.org.



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Financial Aid available for Jewish Overnight Summer Camp



Many of us remember those summers at camp that inspired our connection to Judaism - the singing after dinner or Havdalah on the edge of the lake at sunset. The Jewish summer camp experience creates community for life, not just for a summer.

Year after year our children return from camp with stories, memories and friendships. For many of them it is the first time they're surrounded by all things Jewish. Overnight Jewish camping is wonderful way to introduce children to the joy and celebration of Jewish traditions.

The Jewish Federation of Nashville and Middle Tennessee realizes the importance of building Jewish life and makes financial assistance available on a need basis for students to attend Jewish summer camps. If you know someone who could benefit from this information, please share it. **To request information on summer camp opportunities or for a scholarship application, please contact Becky Gunn at the Jewish Federation at becky@jewishnashville.org or 615-354-1624 and send completed applications to campscholarships2019@jewishnashville.org.**

All inquiries are confidential. The deadline for submitting applications is March 15, 2019.



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Ramah Darom Introduces Lacrosse, Rowing Specialties

Welcome to a place where laughter abounds, where friendships are formed, where everyone is welcome, and where each day brings new opportunities to celebrate Jewish life. Welcome to Ramah Darom. Here children have fun, learn new skills, gain independence and build lifelong friendships. In this space, campers from the Southeast join with staff members from around the United States and Israel to create an exceptional Jewish community.

This summer, Ramah Darom is opening Athletic Edge Lacrosse and Rowing Specialty Tracks at Camp Ramah Darom. This new program for rising 6th thru 10th graders is for campers with a passion for sports and a desire to play and train all summer long. Participants will spend four fun-filled weeks of skills, drills, conditioning and training with renowned coaches. Athletic Edge allows campers to pursue their sports passion while being part of Ramah Darom's vibrant, diverse and inclusive Jewish summer camp community.

Ramah Darom's beautiful 122-acre campus is nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and surrounded by the Chattahoochee National Forest. Ramah Darom's world-class amenities, top-notch accommodations, delicious food and dedicated staff have made us a camp and retreat center that's second to none. But it's our heart and soul that make Ramah Darom a magical place, one that leaves a mark on all who spend time here.

We look forward to seeing you soon at Ramah Darom.

Learn more about all that we offer: Summer camps, year-round programs for adults, families, and communities, and rental opportunities at ramahdarom.org.



Ramah Darom

Jacobs Camp – Nashville Jewish Youth's Home Away from Home

We are counting down the days to another incredible summer, and we hope to open our camp gates even wider for Nashville families. Jacobs Camp, a Reform Jewish summer camp in Utica, Miss., has been home to thousands of Jewish youth from the Deep South for 50 years! Each summer, we create a fun, loving and meaningful community for rising 2nd through 10th graders. Jacobs campers get the chance to try new activities, build friendships, and grow their Jewish identity. Our campers return home feeling more confident, independent, and deeply connected to Judaism.

Throughout the years, our programs have evolved to meet the ever-changing needs of our community. We've expanded our specialty programs by hiring highly-trained staff to develop and teach our sports, creative arts, and adventure programs. Additionally, our waterfront activities in the lake and pool continue to be a true highlight of the summer for our campers. With Summer 2019 quickly approaching, we are excited to unveil new and exciting features to make this summer the best yet!

Enrollment for Summer 2019 has surpassed previous summers, and we want to make Jacobs Camp your child's home away from home this year! Our July session is subject to limited availability in many age groups. Our June session still has space available! There



Henry S. Jacobs Camp

also are incredible scholarship opportunities for new Nashville campers which award as much as \$2,000 off your first summer's tuition.

We offer a rich, active, welcoming community that celebrates Judaism in every moment of every day, and we hope to welcome your child to the Jacobs Camp Family this summer!

Creekside: Where Horse Lovers Come to Camp

Creekside Riding Academy and Stables, for ages 6 and up, is where horse lovers come to camp! Campers ride each day in lessons, games on horseback or trail rides. We focus on safety, proper riding techniques, grooming, care and tacking horses, all geared to the rider's level, ability and age.

Barn activities include scavenger hunts, horse related arts and crafts, making homemade horse treats. Connecting with and caring for these magnificent animals has been shown to give riders confidence in many areas of life.

Camps are offered weekly throughout June and July. Half or All Day Camps start at \$250 per week. Both camps include: Daily riding lessons, ground safety and handling, grooming and care. All day camp includes more ride time, games on horseback, tacking English and Western, hoof care, feeding, horse health lessons and more!

For more information, call (615) 595-7547 or visit creeksideridingstables.com.

Hit the Runway at Fashion Camp

Seven years ago, Carrie Mills, a Parsons School of Design alumna, was asked to start a Fashion Camp for Camp Davis at the Gordon Jewish Community Center. What started as a crash course in fashion design has blossomed into a full-blown week of learning fashion design from the bottom up, culminating with a fashion show for the entire camp, complete with original designs from the enthusiastic up-and-coming budding designers.

This exciting camp covers everything from sketching, designing with fabric, repurposing, accessory design, modeling, fashion photos, styling, and as stated before... a full blown fashion show. This is truly a one-of-a-kind exciting camp that takes place July 8 to 12.

Please see the Camp Davis brochure or online registration for enrollment.

Camp Davis- Getting Kids Dirty Since 1930!

If it's time for summer, it's time for Camp Davis! The flagship summer program of the Gordon JCC, Camp Davis has another incredible summer in store for 2019. At the center of the Camp Davis experience are six values pulled from Jewish tradition: Love, Righteousness, Holy Community, Nature, Growth, and most importantly, Fun.

A combination of our time-tested Traditional Camp and top quality Specialty Tracks mean that there is something for everyone. No matter who you are or where you come from, the Camp Davis family welcomes you.

More than just something to do in the summer, Camp Davis is a place where all campers are pushed to go just a little bit further. We believe that true growth can only be achieved through the taking of risks. Failure is not to be avoided, but embraced as a part of the learning process. Through a community of support, Camp Davis campers are able to set their own goals and achieve incredible success.

This year is sure to be especially incredible, now that our partnership with The Adventure Park at Nashville is in full swing. Traditional campers in grades 3-6 will have weekly trips to the Adventure Park to test

Harpeth Hall's Range of Summer Offerings

For nearly 20 years, Harpeth Hall has offered the best summer opportunities for girls in Middle Tennessee. This year is no exception, with 16 new offerings added to our camp catalog.

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Harpeth Hall Summer Programs offer the same excellence in teaching, leadership and coaching that is found throughout the school year. Our Summer Programs are a proud extension of our innovative school curriculum, and we provide a safe and exciting environment for girls of all ages to try something new, to reach outside of their comfort zone to learn and grow, to meet new friends, and to have fun!

We invite you try our Summer Programs at Harpeth Hall this year, where we honor our school's mission to educate girls to think critically, to lead confidently, and to live honorably.

Register today and view our full camp catalog at HarpethHall.org. Email our Director of External Programs, Kelsy Mugele, with any questions: Kelsy.mugele@harpethhall.org.

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Over thirty years of research on the impact of the Israel Experience has shown that teens are at a critical time of development when they are shaping their patterns of adult Jewish identity and loyalties. An Israel program can enhance or complement a formal Jewish education. It can also affect those who may have been deprived of a rich Jewish life. Positive moments and memories are central factors in the development of affirming group identification. The purpose is to strengthen Jewish identity.

The next generation's commitment to the Jewish people can be greatly affected by the experience of being in Israel as a teen. The Jewish Federation of Nashville realizes this benefit and encourages families to consider sending their young people to Israel by offering incentive grants. These grants are available to 9th-12th graders as well as college students through the Mary & Harry Zimmerman Youth Exchange Endowment Fund. Programs that may qualify for partial scholarship grants include March of the Living, JCC Maccabi Xperience, NFTY, Ramah, USY, Volunteers for Israel, High School in Israel and BBYO.

For more information please contact Tania Bukengolts, office administrator at tania@jewishnashville.org or at 615.354.1668.



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their aerial skills. Additionally, our Tzofim campers will be going on two incredible white water rafting trips on the Ocoee river! These trips are not to be missed.

At Camp Davis we are committed to providing our campers with positive and meaningful interactions with their peers, staff members and the natural world. We do this not just because it's fun – but to actively participate in Tikkun Olam.

To learn more, visit us at www.campdavisnashville.com, or swing by the Gordon JCC. If you're lucky, Mr. Jack may even give you a ride in the ruach rover!

JCRS accepting applications for need-based summer camp aid

Southern Jewish families seeking financial assistance to send their children to Jewish overnight camp, and families in search of funds to pay the costs of undergraduate college education, have a special friend in the Jewish Children's Regional Service, the oldest and only regional Jewish children's social service agency in the United States.

Applications for need-based camp scholarship aid from Jewish Children's Regional Service are now available online for summer 2019.

Last year, the New Orleans-based social service agency provided partial scholarship funding for over 300 Jewish youth in a seven-state region to attend a non-profit Jewish sleepaway camp.

Campers must be entering grades 3 to 12 in the fall of 2019, and must reside in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Tennessee or Texas. The priority consideration deadline is Feb. 15, and the application process is done entirely online at jcrs.org.

In addition to the online application, several documents need to be uploaded – a PDF of the most current Federal tax return for the parents or guardians, the most current W2s and 1099 forms and a copy of the final 2018 pay stub if the 2018 W-2 has not yet been received.

Financial information is required from all legal parents and guardians, and permission must be given for JCRS to work with other local organizations that give camp scholarship assistance.

Applications for siblings can be combined if all legal parents or guardians are the same. There is a different, shorter form for returning campers.

A similar procedure is in place for college aid, with around 140 students receiving an average award of \$2,000 each year. The college application deadline is May 31.

JCRS typically receives 450 to 500 applications each year, just for these two programs, and has provided annual funding to approximately 450 of the applicants. In all seven JCRS programs combined, over 1600 unduplicated Jewish youth receive annual funding, and over 1700 are served. Many youth served are from single-parent or grandparent-led families, or possess family members with serious health, mental health, unemployment or disability concerns.

Applications received after the deadline dates will be considered, but will fall into a lower range of priority from those received by the published application deadlines.

The \$1.6 million annual budget of JCRS is supported primarily through general donations, as well as from the annual income that results when dedicated scholarship funds are created by donors, past aid recipients and JCRS "success stories."

Jewish Rapper HARDCHARLiE will be performing in Nashville

Chabad of Nashville will be hosting renowned Jewish Rapper Charles Goldberg, a.k.a. HARDCHARLiE, at Café Chabad on Saturday night, Feb. 16, at 7:30 p.m.

Goldberg is not just a psychotherapist who specializes in helping people maintain recovery over debilitating addictions. He is also not just the husband of an Israeli soldier and clinical psychologist. He is not just a father of a 9-month-old boy, whom he is currently teaching thermodynamics and dragon slaying to. Goldberg is a rapper. But not just any rapper.

Goldberg, otherwise known as HARDCHARLiE, is a classically trained pianist, guitarist and drummer, who composes melodies and rhymes that leave people awestruck and moved to their very cores. Drenched in sincerity and rumbling with revelation, the honesty within Goldberg's music compels listeners to feel as if they're reading a diary rather than simply engaging in a musical experience.

While at the University of Kansas, Goldberg met the rabbi on campus, who lovingly placed a yarmulke on his head and tzitzit at his sides. Having reconnected with his heritage, Goldberg dove head first into teachings of Chassidic mysticism, and surfaced with hip hop masterworks.

On the mic, Goldberg creates percussive bliss through lyrics brimming with 5,000-year-old tradition, blended with coping strategies against modern day demands. Determined to bring his talents to the masses, Goldberg has performed in over 30 Jewish communities around North America, and leaves his audiences with a message of hope and Jewish pride.

HARDCHARLiE has far more than just the nerve to inspire and advise; he has the credentials to back him up as well. More than a musician, teacher and devout Jew, Goldberg holds a Master's degree in clinical mental health counseling and works with teens from Chicago's most dangerous neighborhoods.

Such a unique blend of abilities is an especially rare find in an over-saturated musical arena. As the Jewish world awaits his newest release "DiViDED," Goldberg hopes that he will make an impact on not only the hip-hop game at large, but on each and every one of his listeners, personally. As audiences around the country begin to nod their heads in approval, HARDCHARLiE will be performing his gig at Chabad of Nashville, in the Sonenberg Lounge. To reserve your ticket, go to www.chabادنashville.com. The first 50 people to RSVP will receive free tickets to the event.



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Bringing Jerusalem back to Nashville

By **RABBI YITZCHOK TIECHTEL**

Having just returned from a trip to the Holy Land of Israel, I reminisce here and share my thoughts on my journey. From the moment we landed at Ben Gurion Airport for our visit back, the land of Israel reached out its arms to embrace us. From the green, lush rolling fields, to the refreshing winter rains, to the palm trees that swayed an enthusiastic welcome, it seemed to say, "Am Yehudi, Jewish nation, come rest up from your weary wanderings. G-d hears your cries, as a parent comes to comfort a child. Come rest up in the land I have promised to you and to your ancestors."

Driving down Highway 6 was like going back to our hometown. Seeing the Jerusalem hills stirred our heart. One's eyes can never tire from taking in a place which just feels like family.

Walking down the twisting alleyways in the Old City of Jerusalem brought us face to face with the Kotel HaKatan – the small part of the Western Wall. Pre-1967 when the Old City was under Jordanian and British rule, Jewish people were denied entrance to the Kotel. That big plaza where Birthright teen groups dance and families meet by the flagpole and people celebrate their children's bar mitzvah with music, drums, and men garbed in billowing white with shofars held high – this place was sealed off to anyone Jewish! Their hearts could not be stilled, they still wanted to be a close as possible. There was just one tiny place they were allowed to access. Hard to imagine that a small sliver of stone wall was the place they could pray at!

We too turned the corner on the cobblestone road and saw the bright, green painted doorway and through it the Temple Mount. There was a Jordanian guard from the Wakf standing further inside the doorway. This was a place where the eyes of the whole world were focused.

We looked through the doorway with heartfelt longing. Just imagine that our forefathers walked on that same platform. We could imagine the Kohanim, regal and tall, gliding by to do their service at the Holy Temple. But we resigned ourselves to staying on our side of the path. The Israeli guards on our side were casually eating sunflower seeds; they motioned to us the small pathway that would take us to the small western wall that was used years ago. We bent our heads through the stone archway and entered a space that was totally enclosed. We turned and saw the small Kotel wall.

We could feel in that small 15 x 7 space the weight of thousands of prayers and

yearnings. There were names etched on the wall and little notes stuck into the crevices, and soft doves flew over us. A nearby tour guide showed us a photo of Jews in the 1920s praying in that spot. They would walk then in their multitudes, with their long dresses sweeping the floor, through the narrow pathways, just to have a chance to kiss those stones. Their garb might have been different but our words were identical. "Shma Yisrael!"

These emotions stayed with us as we walked back through the Jewish quarter and found a high spot overlooking the Kotel Plaza of today. We had come to watch the swearing in ceremony for the young soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces.

Even from our high vantage point, we could hear the soldiers singing. They were 18, barely our son Levi's age, and dedicated, with all the power, idealism and energy of youth, to protect and defend their people. They sang, many saluted, many gathered in huddles and they sang more, their voices rising in unison, filling the Kotel square. They sang of joy, they sang of belief and of love.

As the sky darkened, they went into formation behind tables that were specifically prepared for this event. Their families were gathered in rows around them, hearts in their hands as the Chief Rabbi quoted from the book of Joshua, "be strong and not afraid as you enter this land."

The general thanked the families who gave support and had raised their children to care and give of themselves selflessly. "We are together in this," he said.

Dearest soldiers, some are you are new immigrants, some of you are citizens always, some of you are religious, some of you not; tonight you are all equal – united in your resolve and dedication. You are ready to protect your people.

This moved me.

Our families and people have suffered so much just in these last generations. Esther's great grandfather was in Latvia when the Nazis herded the community into a synagogue and set it on fire. My great grandfather had his eyes gouged in Ukraine, his body thrown from a train after World War II was over. And here were children ready to defend their people, their families, the community without fear. After they received their Tanach and their machine guns, they broke out in huddles again and sang and sang.

We walked back through the safe and peaceful Jerusalem streets that Thursday night, past schools where the sound of Torah learning could be heard, past supermarkets where families were buying

food for Shabbat. We thought of you all in Nashville, building Jewish community, even in exile, living with Jerusalem while

in Nashville. We thought how proud we are to be a part of this nation. Am Yisrael Chai!



Photo by Rabbi Yitzchok Tiechtel

The swearing in ceremony of 1000 soldiers of the Israeli Defense Forces at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.



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Judge dismisses challenge to Arkansas anti-BDS law

By **MARCY OSTER**

(JTA) – A federal judge in Arkansas has dismissed a newspaper's lawsuit challenging a 2017 state law requiring state contractors to pledge not to boycott Israel.

Judge Brian Miller of the U.S. District Court in Little Rock on Wednesday dismissed the suit filed late last year by the Arkansas Times. The newspaper does not boycott Israel.

The publisher of the newspaper filed the suit after a regular advertiser, the University of Arkansas Pulaski Technical College, refused to place advertising in the newspaper unless it signed the pledge. If the college had decided to go ahead with the advertising, the newspaper would have been required to reduce its fee by 20 percent for not signing the pledge.

Miller said in his decision that the state's law does not violate the First Amendment right to free speech, as the lawsuit charged, because the boycott ban would apply to its commercial activities and not to its editorial copy.

At least 26 states have passed legislation that prohibits boycotts against Israel. Some of those states, including Texas, Kansas and Arizona, also are facing legal challenges to the laws designed to combat the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against Israel.

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Families of Space Shuttle Columbia crew visit Israel

Israeli Ilan Ramon was among crew lost in the disaster



Israeli President Reuven Rivlin and his wife, Nechama, with Space Shuttle Columbia family members on Jan. 27, 2019. (Amos Ben-Gershom/GPO)

By **MARCY OSTER**

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Israel's President Reuven Rivlin and his wife, Nechama, met with the seven families of the crew of the Space Shuttle Columbia.

The families, whose astronauts died in 2003 when the shuttle disintegrated while reentering the earth's atmosphere, are in Israel for Israeli Space Week.

They are visiting Israel at the invitation of Rona Ramon, who had asked them to attend for the first time the annual memorial ceremony for her husband, Ilan, Israel's first astronaut.

Rona Ramon died last month. Her children asked Rivlin to meet the families instead. The families presented Rivlin with a picture taken at the training compound in 2002, several months before the disaster, which shows the astronauts' space suits hanging next to each other with American flags on their sleeves, and the Israeli flag on the sleeve of Ilan Ramon's suit.

Space Week was the initiative of Rona Ramon and includes conferences for researchers and educational events for over 100,000 children.

Evelyn Husband-Thompson, wife of commander of the Columbia mission Rick Husband, thanked the president and said, "We are all so proud of you, and proud of the Ramon Foundation. It is difficult and emotional, but we also look forward to the future. On behalf of all the families, we are so happy to be here."

"I want to welcome you all here – not as guests but as family," Rivlin said. "When we think of the seven crew members of the Columbia, we feel deep grief, but also boundless pride. They flew to the heavens to push the boundaries of human knowledge."

Israel is 5th in Bloomberg ranking of world's most innovative nations

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Israel moved up to fifth place in the 2019 Bloomberg Innovation Index, an annual ranking of the world's 60 most innovative countries.

The index, unveiled on Jan. 22, reviews dozens of criteria using seven metrics, including research and development spending, manufacturing capability and concentration of high-tech public companies.

Israel was ranked 10th in 2018. The United States finished eighth after being 11th last year.

South Korea led the index, followed by Germany, Finland and Switzerland.

Israel was ranked first in the R&D intensity category and fell to second place from first last year in research concentration.

Malaysia loses swim competition over Israel ban

JERUSALEM (JTA) – The International Paralympic Committee stripped Malaysia of the right to host the 2019 World Para Swimming Championships over its refusal to allow Israeli athletes to enter the country to participate.

The IPC made its announcement on Jan. 27. Malaysia, it said in a statement, "failed to provide the necessary guarantees that Israeli Para swimmers could participate, free from discrimination, and safely in the Championships. This includes full compliance with the IPC protocols related to anthems and flags, and where required the provision of relevant visas."

In doubling down on his country's refusal to allow Israeli athletes into the country for any event, Malaysian Foreign Minister Mahathir Mohamad challenged the International Paralympic Committee to take away the world event, expected to draw hundreds of swimmers from 70 countries, from Malaysia.

Malaysia does not have diplomatic relations with Israel. Entry to Malaysia on an Israeli passport is prohibited.

The event, which had been scheduled from July 29 to August 4, is a qualifier for the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.



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