

TULSA *Jewish Review*

Cheshvan/Kislev 5785
December 2024



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HANUKKAH

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— Asher Patel '24

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Happy Hanukkah and New Year!



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CORRECTION: The November article BBYO: A Shining Beacon for Jewish Teens misspelled the BBG teen groups' name. The correct spelling is Nona Bloch Salomon. Additionally, Marge Rubin was also the mother of an AZA member and both Marge and her husband Herschel were advisors for many years.

December Hours	
CSJCC and SMMJA	
Tuesday December 24	- CSJCC OPEN 6 am - 5 pm - SMMJA CLOSED
Wednesday December 25	- ALL CLOSED
Tuesday December 31	- CSJCC OPEN 6 am - 5 pm - SMMJA CLOSED
Wednesday January 1	- CSJCC Open 12-5 pm - SMMJA CLOSED

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Front Cover



“Dreidel and Stand”

by Judaica Artist Gary Rosenthal
Gift of the Assistance League of Tulsa to
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JEWISH FEDERATION OF TULSA

MISSION:

The mission of the Jewish Federation is to preserve and enhance Jewish life and well-being in Eastern Oklahoma, Israel, and the entire world. The mission is being addressed by pursuing charitable, humanitarian, cultural, educational, health, and social service needs of the Jewish community as well as by engaging in community relations, outreach, and providing a variety of services to the broader Tulsa community. The Jewish Federation supports the Charles Schusterman Jewish Community Center, The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art, and Mizel Jewish Community Day School.

VALUES:

Kehila – Community

Fostering a connected and collaborative Jewish community, characterized by respect, empathy, and understanding.

Tzedek – Justice

Continuously improving the quality of life of all Tulsans, as well as our partners in Israel and abroad, through philanthropic giving of our resources and time.

L’Dor V’Dor –

From Generation to Generation

Sustaining the culture, traditions, and collective memory of the Jewish people, through innovative intergenerational programming that is meaningful, educational, and fun.



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DIRECTOR’S CORNER

by Joe Roberts, Executive Director

I’ve just returned from the General Assembly in Washington, D.C., where thousands of Jewish Federation leaders and professionals from across North America gathered to exchange ideas, discuss challenges, and unite in our shared mission. This was no ordinary conference. The energy was palpable, the conversations were bold, and the future of Jewish life in North America was front and center.

But it wasn’t all celebratory. Amid the optimism and shared goals, we found ourselves confronted by a sobering reality: the challenges facing Jewish communities, large and small, are more pressing than ever. In fact, the challenges we face in Tulsa are not unique. Across the continent, Federations are grappling with rising antisemitism, shifting demographics, and the complexities of engaging younger generations. But here’s the crucial point I took away from the GA: it’s not the challenges that define us—it’s how we choose to respond to them.

In Tulsa, your Federation is committed to addressing these challenges head-on.

We are not waiting for the future to unfold. We are shaping it.

Your Jewish Federation is developing transformative programs that will not only sustain our community but propel it into a vibrant, flourishing future. From educational initiatives to outreach programs and support for Israel, we are laying the groundwork for a stronger, more resilient Jewish community in Tulsa. But none of this is possible without your support.

Our Annual Campaign is not just about raising funds—it is about fueling our future. It is about ensuring that we have the resources to make our vision a reality and to respond to the needs of our community with innovation and purpose.

Born out of the aftermath of October 7th, the theme of our Annual Campaign—the engine that powers our Federation’s ability to drive change—is “**Proud To Be ...**”. And we have so much to be proud of. And, so much yet to do.

We have a rich history that stretches back to the early 1900s, when Tulsa’s Jewish community helped shape the economic and cultural development of our city. Today, our community is more than just a reflection of the past. We are a living, evolving force—poised to play a central role in the future of Jewish life beyond the city limits, across the country, and across oceans.

Our vision is to establish the Jewish Federation of Tulsa as a hub of innovation in Jewish communal life. The programs and strategies we are building now are designed to serve as a blueprint for others, and as we continue to lead by example, we are setting the stage for Tulsa to be recognized as a pioneer in Jewish communal life, driving positive change and inspiring others to follow our lead.

But we need you. Your participation in the Annual Campaign is an investment in our shared future. Every contribution, no matter the size, is a vote of confidence in the direction we are headed. Together, we can embrace the challenges we face and forge them into opportunities for growth and renewal.

I promise you that with your support, we will deliver on our vision. We will continue to build a Jewish community in Tulsa that is strong, vibrant, and resilient—a community that leads with innovation and heart. ■



UPCOMING EVENTS



**YJP Torah on Tap | Wednesday, December 11 | 7 pm
Inner Circle Vodka Bar**

Join us for a thought-provoking evening of learning and conversation with Rabbi Weg from Chabad as we dive into the topic of the Jewish afterlife. We'll explore what Jewish customs say about life after death, including what happens to the soul and the traditions surrounding respect for the body. This open and inclusive event is a chance to ask your burning questions and engage in meaningful dialogue with fellow young Jewish professionals (ages 21-40).

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/yjp-dec



Chaverim Xtreme | Saturday, December 14 | 7 pm | Wick and Flame Candle Bar

Celebrate the Festival of Lights with Chaverim Xtreme! Join us for a cozy and creative evening of friendship and candle-making, where you'll craft your own 7 oz candle to light up your Hanukkah celebration. Chaverim Xtreme is for adults ages 40-65 years old. Cost is \$20/person which includes snacks and all candle making materials. An open bar will be available for individual purchase.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/CX-Hanukkah



Sisterhood Social Action Project: *Cooking Up New Beginnings* | Sunday, December 15 | 10:30 am Nosh, 11:00 am program begins | Women in Recovery

The sisterhood groups from Congregation B'nai Emunah, the Jewish Federation of Tulsa's Pearl Society, and Temple Israel are partnering to support the Women in Recovery program with a meaningful social action project. Together, we're *Cooking Up New Beginnings* by gathering essential kitchen supplies for women as they rebuild their lives.

- **Volunteer on December 15th:** Help us fill kitchen baskets with items and essential tools that help make a house feel like a home. We will assemble the baskets with love and care this day.
- **Donate now:** Shop our Amazon wishlist or drop off new or gently used items at Congregation B'nai Emunah, Jewish Federation of Tulsa, or Temple Israel. Suggested items include kitchen towels, pots and pans, measuring tools, and cutting boards.

More info and RSVP: jewishtulsa.org/sisterhood



UPCOMING EVENTS



Lunch Bunch: Giving While Living | Wednesday, December 18 | 12 pm | Jewish Federation of Tulsa

This season of giving, join us for a timely and informative session titled *Giving While Living: Creating Impact Now and for the Future*. As the year draws to a close, many of us are thinking about how we want to leave our mark on the community. We'll be joined by an expert panel featuring Craig Silberg, founder of EverPar Advisors, Mitchell Rozin, Attorney at Law, and Joe Roberts, Executive Director of the Jewish Federation of Tulsa. This panel will answer your questions about the logistics and process of making a legacy gift to a nonprofit organization. Whether you are beginning to consider your legacy or seeking ways to make a lasting impact in Tulsa, this discussion will provide valuable insights and guidance. Don't miss this opportunity to explore how you can give back and shape the future!

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/lb-dec18



**PJ Hooray for Hanukkah | Thursday, December 19 | 5-7 pm
Jewish Federation of Tulsa**

Kick off the Hanukkah season with us! Join PJ Library for a festive family hangout and craft night. We'll make holiday decorations to bring the Hanukkah spirit into your home! Wear your favorite Hanukkah gear or cozy pajamas to celebrate PJ Library style. Cost is \$20/family and includes food and all craft supplies.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/pj-hanukkah24



YJP Hanukkah Happy Hour | December 20 | 4-6 pm | Bar 473

Celebrate the season with your YJP community at Bar 473! Swing by anytime from 4-6 pm to meet, network, and hang out with other young Jewish adults (ages 21-40). As a Hanukkah gift, each guest who RSVPs will receive a set of driplless Hanukkah candles to bring light into their holiday. RSVP is required to receive your candles, so be sure to secure your spot in advance by 12/16.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/yjp-hanukkah24



To RSVP for ALL Events visit: JewishTulsa.org/event



FIGHTING ANTISEMITISM ONE CLASSROOM AT A TIME

by Chloe Chappell, Director of Community Relations and Outreach

Another impactful year of the Student to Student Program is underway in Tulsa! This nationwide program—now in 25 cities across the country—is in its second year here in Tulsa. Student to Student is a peer-to-peer education program where small teams of Jewish high school students bring personal and relatable perspectives about their Judaism to local classrooms. Presentations cover numerous topics including the Jewish life cycle, Jewish history, Shabbat, kashrut, Israel, the Holocaust, and antisemitism. Our program reduces prejudice and bigotry, fosters understanding among peers, and introduces students (who 43% of the time have never met someone Jewish according to our post-presentation surveys) to Jewish teens from different backgrounds. We facilitate discussions that help dismantle antisemitism and put a human face to Judaism.

For the 2024-2025 cohort we have 9 Jewish high school students participating in the program, an increase of three from 2023-2024. We began the year with our orientation training session in August, where the teens learned presentation and public speaking skills, how to answer challenging questions they may face from peers, and the structure and content of presentations. The goal is to show authentic Judaism through our teens, who are real people sharing their personal connections and experiences as Jews. Our presenters explain their individual Shabbat practices, share stories of their b'nai mitzvah and visits to Israel. Some of our presenters even know their family's history in the Holocaust and share that background with classes.

Student to Student presentations are always interactive. Presenters bring their own Judaica to each presentation, such as the tallit from their bar mitzvah, the kippah they wear to services, family Shabbat candles, photos of their parents' ketubah, etc. bringing educational content to life in a personal, relatable way. Questions and discussions with peers are always encouraged and we get some incredible engagement! We measure our impact with post-presentation surveys for both teachers and students.

So far, this academic year, our teens have visited 6 classrooms at three different schools, and presented to over 90 students in grades 7, 8, 11, and 12. Our presenters love visiting schools and sharing their Jewish lives with others. I am so proud every time I watch a presentation of how confident they are, how much they know about Judaism, and how

strong their Jewish identities are. Not only do we aim to combat antisemitism through this program, but symbiotically we are fostering a deep-rooted Jewish identity in our teens as they become adults.

Students and teachers receiving presentations love our program as well. When asked, "Would you invite Student to Student back into your classroom in the future?" 100% of teachers said "yes". 100% of teachers also said their students' awareness of Judaism and Jewish people increased as a result of our presentation.

We ask students to share some of the things they learned in our presentation that they didn't know beforehand. They responded: how small the Jewish population is throughout the world, how to know if something is kosher, the Hebrew language, how many people hate Jews, and how dangerous it can be to be Jewish. We end our surveys by asking students to share any other thoughts they have about our presentation. Some comments included: "I want to learn more about the Holocaust" (7th grade student); "Looking at the books written in Hebrew was pretty cool" (7th grade student); and "I will stop anyone from bullying other people for being Jewish!" (12th grade student).

As the fall semester draws to a close and our teens take a well-deserved winter break, I am already lining up presentations for the spring semester. My presenters are anxiously excited to know where they will be presenting next. Our work is far from complete, but our motto holds true, these incredible teens are changing the world one classroom at a time. ■



Jewish students demonstrating the wedding chuppah.

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Fitness Challenge: Better Together

All December, join us for any 9 am or 12 pm fitness class and be entered to win one of five \$50 gift cards! The benefits of group fitness classes include finding motivation and inspiration, learning proper form, adding variety to your workout, holding yourself accountable, and being a part of a community. Try something new and *Better Together* this December!



Gentle Yoga for Stress Relief | Thursday, December 5 | 10:30 am | Dance Studio

Join us for our final Gentle Yoga class this year with Dr. Sarah-Anne Schumann. This gentle, therapeutic yoga class is for all ages and abilities. We will use mindful movement and breathing techniques to help relieve stress. Yoga plays an important role in reducing stress, decreasing blood pressure, improving a sense of well-being, and decreasing anxiety levels. No prior experience is needed. All props are provided. Dr. Sarah-Anne Schumann is an Advanced Teacher of Therapeutic Yoga from the Kripalu School of Integrated Yoga Therapy.

RSVP: csjcc.org/yoga-dec



Tzedek Project | Monday, December 9 | 10:30 am Meals on Wheels

We are heading back to Meals on Wheels to volunteer! Join us as we help stuff and seal envelopes for important mailings to support this valuable program. Please arrive by 10:20 am so we are ready to start our shift which runs from 10:30 am – 12:30 pm. We will be sitting the majority of the time. 12 spots available. Please RSVP in advance.

RSVP: csjcc.org/tzedek-dec



Wellness Series: Oklahoma Parkinson's Alliance | Wednesday, December 11 | 10:15 am | Dan Room

This month we will learn about Parkinson's Disease and the therapy, education, and support provided in Oklahoma. Guest speaker, Matthew Morton, Development Director at the Oklahoma Parkinson's Alliance will discuss the disease, developments in research, and resources available. The Oklahoma Parkinson's Alliance is the largest and most active nonprofit in the state supporting patients and their families.

RSVP: csjcc.org/wellness-dec11

UPCOMING EVENTS



Bagels and Brain Games | Friday, December 20 | 10:15 am Dan Room

Join us for a fun social with bagels and brain games. The weather may be cold outside so let's warm up those brains and activate different neurons by learning new games or perhaps honing in on your skills of previously played games. Feel free to bring your favorite game to share. Bagels and drinks are provided. Please RSVP so we have enough food.

RSVP: csjcc.org/social-dec



Shalom and Shine: A Hanukkah Celebration | Sunday, December 22 | 3 – 5 pm | Barbara & Dave Sylan Auditorium

As the Festival of Lights approaches, Camp Shalom is gearing up to celebrate Hanukkah in style! Open to all Camp Shalom families, we will experience the magic of the season in an inclusive and welcoming space. Together we will light the menorah, craft beautiful dreidels, and taste delicious latkes and sufganiyot. Expect lively games and fun contests, music, and performances as our campers dive into the rich customs that make Hanukkah so meaningful. At Camp Shalom, we believe that every light counts, and together, we'll share the bonds of friendship and community, light up each other's lives, and make lasting memories!

RSVP: csjcc.org/shalom

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Did You Know?

Did you know that the CSJCC accepts medical insurance reimbursement from most medical insurance plans, including Medicare, for your fitness membership? Check with your insurance now to see if they will cover your 2025 CSJCC membership!



SAVE THE DATE
▶ January 8, 2025 ◀

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9 AM - 12PM

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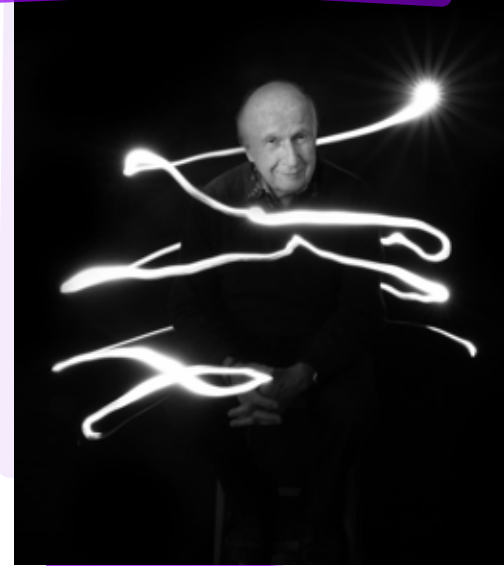
Opening Reception Invited to Life

with
Artist Gallery Talk

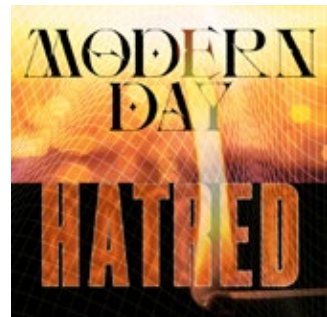
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5 | 6 PM

Invited to Life | December 5 - June 9, 2025

In *Invited to Life*, award-winning author and photographic artist B.A. Van Sise explores the varied and sometimes complicated lives of Holocaust survivors in the United States, including three living in Tulsa, after their hardships. It is an exploration of their strength and endurance after overcoming their hardships. Through Van Sise's elegant photographs and stunning prose the mosaic of American experience is exemplified.



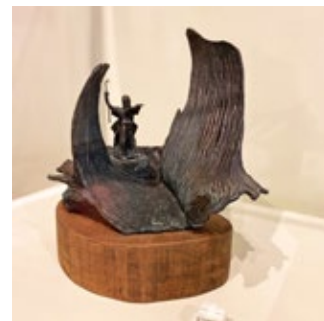
CURRENT EXHIBITIONS



Modern Day Hatred | Through February 28, 2025

Modern Day Hatred examines how racism, antisemitism, homophobia, and other forms of hate have manifested in Oklahoma from the past to the present. By using the Holocaust as a case study, we emphasize the principle of "never again" for all persecuted people. The exhibition focuses on the historical events of Kristallnacht, the Tulsa Race Massacre, and the Osage murders of the 1920s, as well as the ongoing global responses to them. Viewers will see objects from the SMMJA, images from the Tulsa Historical Society, and items that survived the Tulsa Race Massacre.

CLOSING SOON:



Jacob's Ladder
Through December 31



Curator's Curios
Through December 31



by Tracey Herst-Woods, Chief Museum Officer

On October 27, the Museum transported itself again with an immersive experience at '50s Tulsa: A Stroll Down Memory Lane Museum Gala. Event chair Andy Cagle was up for the challenge with his keen sense of humor along with his amazing ideas right from the start. Along with the dedicated committee, we transported patrons and guests to a time not long ago by celebrating the beauty of what Tulsa offered during that decade. To add to the festivities, many guests pulled out their poodle skirts, greaser outfits, pink lady and leather jackets adding a lively sense of playfulness to the evening.

The '50s Tulsa committee enthusiastically transformed the space into a 1950s cocktail and dinner party. The committee recreated Renberg's, OTASCO, Sooner Pipe, Froug's, Tulsa Beef and Provision, Avery Butcher, Pennington's, a 1950s kitchen and backyard along with a map of Tulsa from 1957, and The Admiral Drive-in Theater. The walls adorned many other businesses in Tulsa along with imagery from our Museum collection and Tulsa Historical Society and Museum. Moving into the Barbara and Dave Sylvan Auditorium the space jumped off the pages of a magazine with furnishings for a midcentury living room along with décor adorning the walls with images of a time passed. A high point of the auditorium décor included a 1950s Thunderbird loaned by Linda Jones. Committee members contributing to the 1950s vibe were Allan Avery, Alin Avitan, Laurie Berman, Brian Brouse, Andy Cagle, Katie Falk, Lynn Goldberg, Miranda Kaiser, Judy

(Continued)



Andy Cagle, Gala Chair



Tracy La Louisianne, Gala Hostess



Guests enjoyed participating in the Gala theme



Courtesy of Rob and Kim Coretz

(Continued)

Kishner, Stephanie Krautheim, Betty Lehman, Carol Miller, Liz Pounds, Brina Reinstein, Isabella Silberg, Barbara Sylvan, and Sofia Thornblad.

With the support of the Tulsa Community, guests were greeted outside the Museum with a showcase of classic cars from the Kim and Rob Coretz collection and the Tulsa Roadster Club. Guests were welcomed by roller skaters and pinup girls. After entering the Museum, a '50s Tulsa Exhibit specifically made for this event, displayed images from the Museum archive collection. Reminiscent of the time appetizers were handed out from the

night's caterer, The Meat and Cheese Show, Joel Bein and Amanda Simcoe. After moving into the Sylvan Auditorium, the crowd was entertained by the fabulous hostess, Tracy La Louisianne. Her style and wit were second to none. She moved the evening along with grace, wit, and personality. Throughout dinner, patrons and guests purchased raffle tickets for a chance to win many fabulous items generously donated by Tulsa businesses. The evening wrapped with a live auction that had some exciting back-and-forth bidding.

Wholehearted thank-you goes to those who made the evening so special: our tireless Gala committee chair, Andy Cagle, patron chair, Carol Miller, Ranch Acres Wine & Spirits, who provided the donated alcohol for the evening, Nothing's Left Brewing Co. who partnered with the Museum to create two signature drinks, an apple and honey beer (Brew Mitzvah) along with a etrog hard seltzer (Shake Your Little Lulov), the Jewish Federation of Tulsa, Rabbi Dan Kaiman, Rabbi Michael Weinstein, Museum staff, the many donors that gave to the raffle and live auction, and to event patrons and donors for their generous contributions.

Funds raised from the annual gala support Holocaust education, cultural and historical programs, and Museum operations along with furthering the mission of preserving and promoting Jewish heritage, culture, history, and community through art and education.

The supporters of The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art are the reason for the Museum's continuing success and why it continues to thrive. ■

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Angeline Borum (Roller Skater)
Megan Brenner (Brenner's Mens Clothing)
Congregation B'nai Emunah
Kim and Rob Coretz (Thunderbird car)
Lisa and Phil Goldfarb (Froug's Department Store)
Dixie Honeybee (Pinup)
Linda Jones (Classic car)
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Brina Reinstein (Vintage items)
Brad Sanditen (OTASCO)
Robb Shay (Roller Skater)
Temple Israel
Tulsa Historical Society and Museum (Use of images)
Tulsa Roadster Club (Classic cars)



Thank You!

MIZEL & THE MUSEUM

A CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP CELEBRATING JEWISH ART AND VALUES

by Angela Smith, Art & STEM teacher & Amanda Anderson

Mizel Jewish Community Day School is delighted to announce our continued partnership with The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art. During the 2023-2024 school year, our students' artwork was prominently displayed in the Sharna Frank Education Gallery. The collaboration was so enriching that it will continue through 2024-2025. This partnership provides a unique opportunity for Mizel students to experience art through a Jewish lens, blending artistic techniques with the exploration of Jewish history, holidays, and values.

For our first exhibit, aligned with Simchat Torah, students explored the Seven Days of Creation. This project, filled with diverse artistic approaches, included acrylic paintings on canvas for our older students, yarn landscapes and upcycled animal creations for our middle grades, and engaging paper arts and crafts for our youngest students. Through these activities, students delved into new and inspiring artistic techniques. They encountered artists like Piet Mondrian, mimicked classic styles from Bob Ross, and experimented with brush blending and molding paste—developing not only their creativity but also fine motor skills, patience, and focus.

While any art class teaches technique, incorporating Jewish values and holiday discussions deepens the experience for our students. This Jewish connection infuses each project with meaning, encouraging students to connect emotionally and spiritually with their creations. Knowing their work will be displayed to the public in such a revered museum setting adds a sense of pride and motivation, inspiring students to persevere through challenges and enhance their skills, while showcasing Mizel's vibrant community to a broader audience.

As an educator, this partnership allows me to guide students beyond typical arts and crafts. I introduce them to classic artists—like Degas, Warhol, Chagall, and Seurat—and find ways to make these artists' styles accessible and meaningful across all ages and abilities. Through this approach, Mizel's art program becomes a multi-layered experience that cultivates students' creativity, emotional growth, spiritual connection, and intellectual curiosity.

The ongoing collaboration with The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art reflects Mizel JCDS's dedication to inspiring students to see the world, and their heritage, in colorful, transformative ways. This journey of art and discovery will not only enrich our students but also contribute to the greater Tulsa community by sharing the diverse beauty of Jewish art and tradition. ■



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LOOKING TO OUR NEXT QUARTER-CENTURY: ZARROW POINTE, 2024 AND BEYOND

by Jim Jakubovitz, Executive Director, Zarrow Pointe

In the last decade, Zarrow Pointe has made deliberate decisions to implement more environmentally friendly options, when facing projects related to facilities management and improvement. It started with the campus-wide recycling program that remains in effect. Following that, our residents' carport parking facilities required updating and overhaul. It was determined that rooftop solar panels could be included in their renovation design. That upgrade has not only benefited our residents in an obvious, practical way but it has contributed to real savings in our utility consumption and costs. All this, while reducing Zarrow Pointe's overall carbon footprint. These examples serve to introduce the next phase of the Zarrow Pointe 2024 capital improvements initiative, described below.

A reflection of Zarrow Pointe's reputation for quality senior living is the fact that our waitlist for open apartments in the Retirement Center is routinely quite lengthy. It's the age-old situation of demand exceeding supply. In an attempt to alleviate this imbalance, we've taken steps to create additional apartments at the North end of the existing RC complex. This addition will provide ten individual residences of one-and-two-bedroom apartments in a new, four-floor structure, visually similar to the existing building. However, these units will be larger and designed with a more modern layout to further meet the needs of today's active seniors. This North structure will also include a much needed

and anticipated, freight elevator. While not as slick an idea as the rest, this element will be a welcome tool to relieve our two existing elevators of the burden and inconvenience of moving freight. These additional elevators will allow for more seamless resident moves, and provide our facilities management teams less disruptive access to and from the many departments in our buildings.

One of the more ambitious goals of this 2024 improvement campaign, weaves together three important areas of concern: expanding our emergency power capabilities, roof replacements on existing buildings, and furthering our solar power collection/and utility savings. One can readily understand how each of these proposed projects relates to one another. Last June's disastrous wind storm in Tulsa, dramatically

*“Ambitious goals often depend
on perseverance, commitment,
and, sometimes even, sacrifice.”*

underscored our need for augmented emergency power for our facilities, not already supplied. Currently, the Health Care Center and only a few other public spaces have emergency generated power, in the event of electrical failure. Expanding this often-vital service to other residents on campus is a high priority for basic comfort needs and to power, in some cases, essential medical equipment.

Again, in terms of power, when looking to expand our solar collection capabilities, it's been determined that existing roofing replacements must be completed prior to the installation of additional solar panels. This is a huge and expensive undertaking. However, upon completion, this solar equipment atop refurbished roofs will give not only the expected fiscal and environmental results but also

(Continued)



Gail Richards, Judy Kishner, Irene Burnstein, Dan Burnstein, Jane Katz, Mickey Katz



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Executive Director Jim Jakubovitz addresses the crowd at a groundbreaking ceremony for new apartments at the retirement center

provide weather protection, potentially extending roof life to between fifteen and twenty percent.

These, and other relatively minor maintenance issues create a picture of ambitious and costly improvements to our physical plant. But planning such as this is a requirement, if we're to maintain our reputation in the larger community of Tulsa's senior living population. Ambitious goals often depend on perseverance, commitment, and, sometimes even, sacrifice. I look forward to working together to accomplish these goals for the enjoyment of our residents, their families, and our dedicated staff. ■

THE SEVEN DWARFS OF AUSCHWITZ ©

by Phil Goldfarb

The Ovitz family was a family of Hungarian Jewish actors/traveling musicians originating from the village of Rozavlea, Transylvania (now Romania), who survived imprisonment at the Auschwitz concentration camp during World War II. Most of them were dwarfs. They were the largest family of dwarfs ever recorded and were the largest family to enter Auschwitz and survive intact.

They were descended from Shimson Eizik Ovitz (1868–1923), a badchen entertainer, itinerant rabbi, and himself a dwarf. He fathered ten children in total, seven of them dwarfs (born with pseudo achondroplasia), from two marriages, the largest recorded family of dwarfs.

The children from his first marriage to Brana Fruchter (she was of average height), Rozika (1886–1984) and Franzika (1889–1980), were both dwarfs. Shimson's second wife, Batia Bertha Husz, also of average height, produced the following children: Avram (1903–1972; dwarf), Freida (1905–1975; dwarf), Sarah (1907–1993; average height), Micki (1909–1972; dwarf), Leah (1911–1987; average height), Elizabeth (1914–1992; dwarf), Arie (1917–1944; average height), and Piroaska (a.k.a. "Perla"; 1921–2001; dwarf).

Their mother, anxious for her children's future, guided them towards a common skill, a profession in which they could together make a living and would be neither isolated nor ostracized. As the five sisters and two brothers were all good-looking and musically gifted, the stage seemed the perfect choice—for where else could they be applauded, courted, honored?

Throughout history, dwarfs had been entertainers, often part of a circus or vaudeville show, but the Ovitzes wanted the stage all to themselves. They appropriately named their musical ensemble the Lilliput Troupe, and



The Seven Dwarfs of Auschwitz

for 15 years had a flourishing career in central Europe. Their two-hour show consisted of popular hits of the day, skits, and music. Perla had a tiny, four-string pink guitar that looked like a toy, her sisters Rozika and Franziska played on quarter-sized violins, Frieda struck on the cimbalom, Micki played both a half-sized cello and accordion, while the energetic Elizabeth took on the drums. Their elder brother Avram was the scriptwriter, actor, and general manager.

They sang and played music using small instruments and performed all over Romania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia in the 1930s and 1940s. The Ovitzes sang in Yiddish, Hungarian, Romanian, Russian, and German. When they were not touring, they lived in a single house with their spouses.

The Ovitzes lived a communal life in one big house in the village. When any of them got married, the spouse moved in and joined the enterprise. While the dwarfs basked in the limelight, the average-height family members worked behind the curtains as stagehands and wardrobe mistresses. It was the only all-dwarf ensemble with a full show of their own in the history of entertainment.

When the Nazis came to power, the Ovitzes were doubly doomed: under the Aktion T-4 euthanasia program, the Germans set out to kill people who were physically or mentally disabled, whose lives were considered “unworthy of living”, “a burden on society”; and, as Jews, the Ovitzes were the target of the Final Solution. When Hungary seized Northern Transylvania in September 1940, the new racial laws banned Jewish artists from entertaining non-Jews.

Though the Ovitzes were observant Jews, they obtained papers which omitted the fact that they were Jewish and continued going on their tours until 1944. On May 12, 1944, all twelve family members were deported to Auschwitz. One average sized brother, Arie, escaped the round up but was later arrested and executed in 1944. On May 19, 1944, they arrived at the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. Descending the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau, the seven dwarfs and their five average-height family members were immediately separated from the others in the transport.

The infamous German camp doctor there, Josef Mengele (known as the Angel of Death) who collected curiosities for pseudoscientific experiments on heredity was fascinated by the family and had them housed in better conditions within the camp, only to keep them healthier for his unethical research and experiments. He was curious about the fact that the family included

(Continued on page 25)

JEWISH GENEALOGY SOCIETY PRESENTS INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED GENEALOGIST

MARLIS HUMPHREY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2 PM ON ZOOM

The next meeting of the JGS of Tulsa will be held via Zoom in the comfort of your home on **Sunday, December 15 at 2:00 pm**. The subject will be: **"JCat and More - Innovative Tools for Jewish Ancestral Discovery."** The entire Jewish Community is invited to this free virtual event. It is very exciting to be able to secure someone of this caliber as the internationally recognized genealogist Marlis Humphrey to speak to our Genealogy Society.

ABOUT MARLIS

Marlis Humphrey is CEO and President of the L'Dor V'Dor Foundation (LDVDF), and LDVDF Canada and is a professional genealogist. She serves as President of the Florida State Genealogical Society (FSGS), Past President of the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS), and Director of the National Genealogical Society (NGS). Humphrey is leading the charge in bringing AI and other technology innovations to rescuing our Jewish documentary heritage. Humphrey is a senior executive who drives global growth through innovation in the face of disruptive technology in both the commercial and non-profit sectors. She has served on and led national and international non-profit and trade association boards and conducted business in more than 30 countries. She has an MS in Management of Technology and a BA in Russian Language with a minor in Math and Computer Science.

To attend, please go to the following link:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83924515681?pwd=eqKyNg4swlC5VvgC2NzxfAxInbQX.1>

Meeting ID: 839 2451 5681

Passcode: 346361

THE PROGRAM

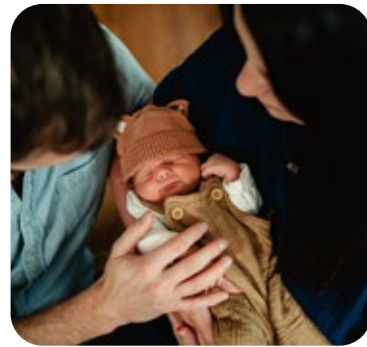
Initiated by the International Association of Jewish Genealogical Societies (IAJGS) as a big, bold, and urgent project, Documentation of Jewish Records Worldwide (DoJR) is documenting Jewish records worldwide and building JCat, the most comprehensive catalog of historical documents of Jewish lives. Marlis Humphrey, CEO of L'Dor V'Dor Foundation (LDVDF), the parent nonprofit organization for the DoJR project, will showcase tools and resources available to researchers now: JCat-Phase 1, JDays, News Nosh, Taxonomy/Checklists, Essentials Guides, and share what is in the development pipeline and what the future will bring. **In a recent study, 77% of people who identify as Jewish have interest in knowing their ancestors. However, it has been estimated that only 15% of Jewish records and documents have been located and translated. The LDVDF utilizes artificial intelligence to locate, translate and post the other 85%! Don't miss out on her fascinating presentation!**

Please join us for this most interesting and educational meeting! Questions? Contact Phil Goldfarb, President of the JGS of Tulsa at: phil.goldfarb@cox.net

Rose Estelle Finer was born on October 18 at 11:51 am weighing in at 6 lbs 9 oz. Rose, the daughter of AJ and Carly Finer, is named in honor of Carly's grandma Roz, and in loving memory of AJ's grandmother, Estelle. Mazel Tov!



Mazel Tov to Alex Gavern and Laura Jones. They welcomed their first child on Thursday, October 10, 2024. Ari Justice Gavern-Jones was born at 6 lbs 14 oz. The whole family is healthy, happy, and are thrilled to begin the next chapter in their lives!



CELEBRATE SIMCHAS!

Share your simchas with the entire community! Send us your b'nai mitzvah, wedding announcement, birth of a child, graduation, or other milestone for our "simchas" section each month.

Send submissions for the Tulsa Jewish Review to Sandy Sloan, sandy@jewishtulsa.org



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CHANIUKAH on the GREEN

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29TH

~ GUTHRIE GREEN ~
111 RECONCILIATION WAY, TULSA



Shema: Jewish Music Class for Babies

Sunday, December 8 | 10:30 a.m.

Join us for the next gathering in a series of Jewish music classes for babies and their adults! We'll blend the best of what we know about early childhood education and the joy of Jewish music for this class geared towards kiddos 2 and under with their adults. We'll sing, dance, move, and explore together at the Synagogue. Please register at www.tulsagogue.com/events.

Blatt + Blue: Avalon
Thursday, December 12 | 7:00 p.m.

Largely based on the Jewish family history of director Barry Levinson, Avalon follows the immigrant Krichinsky clan as they settle in Baltimore during the early 20th century. While Sam Krichinsky (Armin Mueller-Stahl) establishes roots in the city and finds a wife (Joan Plowright), his ambitious son, Jules (Aidan Quinn), who changes his last name to Kaye, tries to live the American Dream by opening an appliance store. The movie is an extended, touching meditation on cultural and generational gaps. The film can be seen on Amazon Prime for a modest fee on your home screen. Join the moderated discussion in the Synagogue Zoom Room. The Zoom meeting ID is 918 583 7121, and the session will conclude at 8:00 p.m.

Shabbat Shalom: Musical Circle and Dinner

Friday, December 13 | 5:30 p.m.

Experience a musical Shabbat evening with songs and storytelling starting at 5:30 p.m. This inclusive and accessible event is an ideal introduction to Shabbat traditions, welcoming participants of all ages and backgrounds. Following services, we'll enjoy a beautiful Shabbat dinner together starting at 6:15 p.m. Reserve your spot at the Shabbat table by registering at tulsagogue.com/events.

Chanukah Maker's Workshop

Tuesday, December 17 | 7:00 p.m.

Join us for this quarterly workshop to create your own ritual object related to Chanukah. Secure your spot today by registering at tulsagogue.com/events and let the magic of our holiday traditions come to life in your own hands!

24 for 24

Tuesday, December 24 | 9:00 a.m.

Volunteers will help prepare and deliver 24 complete turkey Christmas meals for families in hospice care who may not have the ability to provide a festive holiday meal for themselves. Kitchen volunteers will cook a meal worthy of the season, and later a separate group will make delivery of the hot Christmas Eve meals to the homes of the recipient families. If you are interested in volunteering to cook or make deliveries please contact Richie Bolusky at (918) 583-7121.

CookieBake 2024

Tuesday, December 24 | 9:00 a.m.

We invite all community members to bake their favorite cookies and bars at home for this project any time during the month of December. If you begin early, please wrap your contribution securely and freeze it at home. Please drop your baked goods at the Synagogue on December 24, before 10:00 a.m. We will tray everything for eventual distribution to hospital emergency rooms, waiting rooms, police and fire stations, the Ronald McDonald house—wherever essential services

are offered on Christmas Day. If you are interested in making cookie deliveries please contact Richie Bolusky at (918) 583-7121.

Chanukah Communal Dinner Celebration

Friday, December 27 | 6:15 p.m.

There are few things better than a traditional Chanukah feast of latkes and sufganiyot enjoyed with family and friends. Let us do the cooking and cleaning so you can relax and enjoy. Reserve your spot at the Shabbat table by registering at tulsagogue.com/events.

Chanukah Winterlight Festival at WeStreet Ice Center

Wednesday, January 1 | 6:00 p.m.

Celebrate the Festival of Lights with your friends and family as we glide across the ice, enjoy delicious treats, and spin the dreidel together at WeStreet Ice Center. Whether you're a seasoned skater, a beginner or just a spectator from the sidelines, all are welcome to join in the fun and festivities. It will be an evening filled with music, laughter, and the warmth of community. Please let us know if you are planning on attending by registering at tulsagogue.com/events.

Afternoon/Evening Services

Join us on Wednesdays and Fridays at 5:30 p.m. in the Davis-Goodall Chapel for traditional prayer and community Mourner's Kaddish. Both in-person and Zoom participation are available. Please register for in-person attendance on our website.

Shabbat Morning Services

Every Saturday at 9:30 a.m., we celebrate Shabbat through song, Torah study, and fellowship. These services, available both in-person and via Zoom, offer a chance to mark anniversaries, celebrate milestones, and engage in our congregation's ritual life. ■

(Continued from page 20)

both dwarfs and taller members. Mengele hurried out to see his new acquisitions. He was delighted, "I now have work for 20 years." He was also picking out twins, as well as hunchbacks, hermaphrodites, giants, dwarfs, obese men, and corpulent women—in general, anyone suffering from a growth disorder.

Mengele arranged to have special living quarters built for them, so they could be monitored. To keep them healthy for his human experimentation, he arranged for them to have more hygienic living conditions, better food, and their hair was not cut because he needed it for his experiments and allowed them to wear their own clothes because prisoners' uniforms did not fit. Mengele forced the taller members of the group to carry the dwarfs to the experimentation sites.

The Ovitzes, like many other camp inmates, were subjected to various tests. Mengele's physicians extracted bone marrow, pulled out healthy teeth, and plucked their hair and eyelashes to find signs of hereditary disease. They poured hot and cold water in their ears and blinded them with chemical drops. Mengele carried out psychological and gynecological tests on all of them.

Mengele was looking for a research niche of his own and he found it in dwarfism. Mengele was aiming not only to discover the biological and pathological causes of the birth of dwarfs, but to demonstrate the racial theory that in the course of its long history, the Jewish race had degenerated into a people of dwarfs and cripples.

It was rare that one person from an entire family survived the camp, let alone two, but all 12 members of the Ovitz family—the youngest baby boy just 18 months old, the oldest his 58-year-old dwarf aunt—emerged alive.

They expected to be killed after Mengele had finished his experiments, but the seven dwarfs, as well as their entourage, all survived the war and the entire family was liberated from Auschwitz on January 27, 1945. The Red Army took them to the Soviet Union where they lived in a refugee camp until they were released, emigrated to Israel in May 1949 and settled in Haifa. Three months later, the Lilliput Troupe was back on stage. In 1955 they made their last bow, but dwarfism did not affect their life expectancy. The first-born, Rozika, reached the age of 98 and her sister Franziska died aged 91. The youngest, Perla Ovitz died in September 2001.

Phil Goldfarb is the President of the Jewish Genealogy Society of Tulsa and can be e-mailed at: phil.goldfarb@cox.net ■



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Visit our Temple Israel website www.templetulsa.com and our events page for details about all we offer!

Repairing Our People: Israel and the Crisis of Liberal Judaism with Rabbi Weinstein on Zoom • Thurs., Dec. 5, 12, 19 & 26 • 2:00 p.m.

Contemporary Judaism is facing unprecedented challenges. Today's Jews have the opportunity—and the obligation—to reclaim a Jewish vocabulary of sanctity, activism, and the desire to stand apart from today's world. This course explores the ever-changing landscape of modern Jewish life through the lens of one of American Judaism's most prolific voices. The message: the role of faith is to challenge us as individuals and to challenge society.

Sociable Seniors at Philbrook • Sun., Dec. 8 • 10:30 a.m.

Spend the morning at Philbrook with TI's Sociable Seniors. Two groups will tour the exhibit "American Artists-American Stories, from 10:30 -11:30 a.m. The tour is restricted to 20 people and led by docents Sandi Tilkin and Judy Benarrous. Arrive before 10:15 a.m. Lunch will be at 12:00 noon at Charleston's on Peoria. RSVP by noon on December 3.

Sisterhood Canvas & Cocktails at Pinot's Palette • Sun., Dec. 8 • 3:00 p.m.

Join TI's Sisterhood for a private event at Pinot's Palette on Cherry Street. \$50 per person includes everything you'll need for a creative afternoon! All are welcome. RSVP online.

Family Shabbat in person • Fri., Dec. 13 • 6:00 p.m.

During Family Shabbat Rabbi Jasper creates a sacred space for our young families with songs and prayers. Stay for the complimentary dinner. RSVP by Thurs., Dec. 12. Contact Rabbi Jasper at rabbitzvia@templetulsa.com for more information.

Brotherhood Breakfast • Sun., Dec. 15 • 9:30 a.m.

Join us for breakfast at 9:30. Our speaker, Dr. Robert Donaldson begins at 10:00. Dr. Donaldson is a former University of Tulsa President, political science professor, and will share his knowledge of Russia and the Ukraine. RSVP for breakfast through our website.

Birthday Shabbat Service with Torah in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Dec. 13 • 7:30 p.m.

Join us as we welcome in Shabbat with the chanting of Torah. We will also celebrate December birthdays. Stay afterwards for a sweet oneg.

Shabbat Learning Through the Ages • Sat., Dec. 14 • 10:30 a.m.

Borrowing from our Temple Israel monthly Shabbat morning experience, we will join to study and learn from one another. We will explore Torah and Traditional Rabbinical texts based on themes of this week's Torah Reading. RSVP to rsvp@templetulsa.com for the Zoom link.

Shabbat Service in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Dec. 20 • 6:00 p.m.

Join us as we welcome in Shabbat. Come at 5:30 p.m. for a pre-oneg and time with friends.

Zamru L'Shabbat Hanukkah & Anniversary Shabbat in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Dec. 27 • 6:00 p.m.

Celebrate with Cantor Weinstein, Cantorial Soloist Jenny Labow,

and Elijah's Minor Prophets, for a special Hanukkah service. Bring your hanukkiah to light! We will also celebrate December anniversaries. Stay for a potluck Congregational Interfaith Dinner. We will provide the lakes; you provide a covered dish. RSVP online.

Brat Pack Hanukkah Potluck • Sun., Dec. 29 • 6:00 p.m.

The Brat Pack is back for Hanukkah! Location to be determined. Bring your best dish and your Hanukkiah! RSVP online.

7th Night Congregational Hanukkiah Lighting • Tues., Dec. 31 • 5:00 p.m.

Temple Israel lights the Hanukkiah on this 7th night of Hanukkah. Come for songs, hot chocolate and sufganiyot! ■

TEMPLE TEN COMMANDMENTS

by Randy Westbrook

The Ten Commandments on the front façade of Temple Israel have become an icon of the Tulsa Jewish community. When I learned that the NexDor leadership was committed to removing and relocating the Ten Commandments as part of the new Temple development, I was elated.

My father, Max J. Westbrook was in his twenties in 1957 when he worked on the construction of the new Temple Israel building. He worked as a sign installer, hired to install the Ten Commandment letters on the north facade of the building. I have a vivid memory of my father taking our family to see the Ten Commandments that he had installed. I was four years old at that time.

Fast forward to 1979, I converted to Judaism studying with Rabbi Sherman who was in his second year as the Temple Rabbi. In the coming years, Carolyn and I raised our four children: Jordan, Emily, Jules, and Max at Temple Israel and I served as Facilities Chair for many years. My family has a real sense of pride associated with the Ten Commandments on the Temple façade because of my father's work on the original building.

With the commitment of NexDor Leadership to remove and relocate the Ten Commandments to the new building, Temple Israel's Ten Commandments will remain as a timeless monument to Temple Israel's rich history and community connection. ■



Fresh Flicks Coming to the Circle in December!
 Daily starting Wed 12/25
At the Newport Folk Festival in 1965, a young Bob Dylan shakes up his act on the folk music scene by going electric and siring rock as the voice of a generation
 Daily starting Wed 12/25
A gothic tale of obsession between a haunted young woman and the terrifying vampire infatuated with her, causing untold horror in its wake.

Don't miss all the great Circle Cinema films and events this month, scan the code for up-to-date listings and showtimes.

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Camp Shalom

**WINTER BREAK CAMP
DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 3**

(excluding Dec 25 and Jan 1)

8:30 am – 4:30 pm

3-K and 1st-10th Grade

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CSJCC.Org/Camp-Shalom**

