TULSA Jewish Review

Tevet/Shevat 5786
January 2026

Jewish Heritage Game

March 1 2026

Hockey Edition

January 2026
Tevet/Shevat 5786
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Tulsa Jewish Review

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Front Cover

The first Jewish Heritage Game
March 1, 2026
at the Tulsa Oilers Hockey
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JEWISH TULSA

MISSION:

The mission of Jewish Tulsa 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 engaging in community relations and outreach, and providing a variety of services to the broader Tulsa community. Jewish Tulsa comprises four entities: The Jewish Federation of Tulsa, Charles Schusterman Jewish Community Center, and The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art. Mizel Jewish Community Day School is located on the campus and supported in part by Jewish Tulsa.

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

This issue of the *Tulsa Jewish Review* is all about hockey, and I can already hear someone saying: Hockey? Jewish? We are a people of books, not boards. We are more likely to argue about a line in the Talmud than a line change. We think of hockey as cold rinks, missing teeth, and a culture that feels, at first glance, very far from the Jewish story.

And yet, that first glance is exactly the point.

If you want to understand Jewish life in America, you could do worse than to watch a hockey game closely. Not because hockey is "secretly Jewish," but because hockey is deeply American. And Jews, for better and for worse, for triumph and for heartbreak, are woven into the fabric of America. We are part of the story of America. We are America, and America is us.

Start with a name most people have never heard: Larry "The Rock" Zeidel. Zeidel was a Jewish player in an era when being Jewish in the NHL was not quaint but dangerous. In 1968, the NHL's president announced an investigation after Zeidel said he was provoked by antisemitic slurs, including a reference to gas chambers. And Zeidel, like so many Jews before and after him, absorbed the message: you will be tested here. You will have to decide what you are willing to endure, and what you are willing to fight for.

Now contrast that with a more recent headline. Adam Fox, a star defenseman for the New York Rangers, becoming the first Jewish player to win a major NHL award when he took home the Norris Trophy. There is something profoundly American in that arc. In one generation, "the only Jewish player" is being baited with gas chamber slurs. In another, a Jewish kid becomes the best in the world at his position and is honored for it. That is not a straight line. It never is. But it is real progress, built on grit, talent, and the refusal to disappear.

Or take Zach Hyman, a proudly Jewish player who wears number 18, a number that carries Jewish meaning through *chai*, life. Think about that for a second. On a stage where people are constantly told to blend in, a Jewish player chooses a symbol that quietly says, "I know who I am, and I am not leaving it at the locker room door."

And then there is Jason Zucker, who won the NHL's King Clancy Memorial Trophy for leadership and humanitarian work. That is Jewish too. Not because Jews have a monopoly on decency, but because Jewish tradition trains us to believe that responsibility is the price of being part of a community. The point is not only to succeed, but to use success for something beyond yourself. In hockey terms, it is about playing the whole sheet of ice.

Even today, the story keeps expanding. Zeev Buium stepped onto the ice as the first Israeli-American in the NHL. Buium's story is uniquely Jewish. It is the American promise, and the Israeli reality, existing in the same heartbeat. Jewish life is alive, moving, and showing up in new places, even places people once insisted were not "for us."

But the deeper lesson of hockey is not just a list of Jewish names. It is what the sport demands.

Hockey is a game of speed and decision-making under pressure. It is a game where you take hits, you get back up, and you keep your head on a swivel because you cannot afford to live in denial. That is a metaphor for American Jewish life if there ever was one. We have built extraordinary lives here. We have thrived. We have contributed in every field. We have helped shape culture, business, medicine, law, science, the arts, and public life. And still, we know that security is not something you assume. It is something you build, protect, and renew.

Hockey is also a game where no one wins alone. Lines matter. Chemistry matters. The bench matters. You can have the best player on earth, but if the team is fractured, you lose. That is also a Jewish lesson. Community is not a luxury. It is a survival strategy, and more than that, it is a sacred project.

"Community is not a luxury. It is a survival strategy, and more than that, it is a sacred project."

So yes, hockey might not "look" Jewish at first. But neither did America, once upon a time. And yet, here we are. Not as guests. Not as outsiders asking for permission. As participants. As builders. As people who belong.

And if you want to see what that looks like in real life, not as an abstract idea, but as something you can feel, come join your community on Sunday, March 1, 2026 at 3:00 pm, when Jewish Tulsa and the Tulsa Oilers will host the first-ever Jewish Heritage Game at the BOK Center. And it's not just "a theme night." The Oilers will wear a custom-designed Jewish Heritage jersey during an official professional league game, a first of its kind in North American sports history. You can even preorder a replica jersey through the Oilers' store. Bring your kids. Bring a friend who has never been to a Jewish event and doesn't know what to expect. Let them see Jews showing up confidently and joyfully as part of the American tapestry.

Because that is the quiet truth hockey can teach us. We don't need to become less Jewish to be fully American. The real American story is that we can be fully both.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mahjong Lessons | Sunday, January 4 | 1 pm | Jewish Tulsa

Inviting novice beginners for our next round of Mahjong lessons with Mahj918. This four-hour session is a deep dive into all things Mahjong, and includes the 2025 card, a handy booklet, and snacks throughout the afternoon. After this session, you will be invited to play with intermediate players, which can help sharpen your skills as you continue to play. This is a partnership between JFT and CSJCC. Mahj918 is a Tulsa-based group offering Mahjong instruction, open play, and special events. They aim to make the game approachable and fun for everyone! Cost is $72/per person

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/mahj918-Jan26

Hebrew Lessons | 10 weeks: Mondays/Wednesdays starting Monday, January 5 | 6 pm | Jewish Tulsa

Back by popular demand—beginner and intermediate Hebrew lessons! Starting on Monday, January 5, join us every Monday and Wednesday for a ten-week session to learn Hebrew. Taught by Israeli, Tali Kaplan, participants will learn the basics of conversational Hebrew. By the end of the class, you can have the confidence to speak with the locals the next time you travel to Israel!

Beginner lessons: 6-7 pm; Intermediate lessons: 7-8 pm

$180 per person for 10 weeks

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/Hebrew-Jan26

Torah on Tap | Tuesday, January 13 | 6:30 pm | Nothing's Left Brewing Co.

Join us for another edition of Torah on Tap with Jewish educator, Michael Sachs, who will discuss the highly requested topic, Love Your Neighbor As Yourself. This is often called the "central principle of the Torah." Join us as we dive deeper into what it means to be a good neighbor, Jewishly. YJP programs are for young adults aged 21-40. This program is in partnership with Moishe Pod Tulsa.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/yjp-torah-on-tap

Dad's Night Out: Axe 'n' Snacks | Thursday, January 15 | 7 pm | A&R Axe Throwing

Take a swing at axe throwing with your JDad friends! This high-energy event is a great way to have some fun, engage in friendly competition, and catch up with other dads after the holiday. Expert coaches will be on hand to walk you through the basics and help perfect your throw. We'll have a lineup of tasty snacks to get you fueled up, with drinks available for purchase. No experience necessary.
$18 per person

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/axe-snacks

JEWISH FEDERATION OF TULSA

UPCOMING EVENTS

PJ Library: Frozen | Sunday, January 18 | 2 pm | Tulsa Performing Arts Center

Step into the enchanted world of Arendelle with a magical stage performance of Disney's Frozen, perfect for families and fans of all ages! Watch the beloved story come to life alongside your PJ Library friends. Join Anna, Elsa, Olaf, Kristoff, and Sven on an unforgettable journey filled with sisterhood, bravery, and a whole lot of icy fun! $18 per ticket

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/frozen

Jewish Theatre Musical | Sunday, January 25 | 2 pm | Oklahoma Shakespeare

A whimsical musical that brings the Garden of Eden to life. The Apple Tree follows Adam and Eve as they stumble through the trials of life, love, and paradise lost. Sweet, funny, and deeply human, this delightful musical offers an unforgettable night at the theatre. The Jewish Theatre of Oklahoma is graciously reducing the ticket price for Jewish Tulsa. Discounted tickets are $20/person. Transportation is not provided, but carpooling may be available.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/apple-tree

JMoms Self Defense Class | Thursday, January 29 | 7 pm | JCC Dance Studio

Join us for an energizing, confidence-boosting self-defense session designed specifically for moms! Inspired by the Israeli martial art Krav Maga, this 45-minute class teaches simple, effective techniques you can use to protect yourself and your family in real-world situations. Expect a fun, supportive environment where you can move, learn, and feel stronger than ever. Perfect for all fitness levels. Come as you are, leave feeling empowered! JMoms is for moms with children 18 and under, raising them Jewishly.

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/jmoms-Jan26

Tu B'Shevat Shabbat Seder | Friday, January 30 | 6:30 pm | Jewish Tulsa

Celebrate Tu B'Shevat through a culinary exploration dinner Shabbat Seder curated by Chef Tuck Curren of Biga. Learn about the seven species of Israel as we make our way through the courses. As we celebrate, we will reflect on what trees teach us—the potential of one tiny seed taking root and, through resilience and pure strength, growing a little bit each day. It sheds light on what we are meant to do in this world—work towards a better "us" every day until one day—we become a flourishing tree.

$36/per person
Babysitting $10/family

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/Tu-Bshevat26

UPCOMING EVENTS

Israel in Focus with Lahav Harkov | Sunday, February 1 | 12 pm | Jewish Tulsa

Join us as we welcome Israeli journalist Lahav Harkov to Tulsa. She will discuss the hot topic, "After the Earthquake: How October 7th Changed Israel Forever." October 7th and the subsequent war continue to leave deep scars on Israeli society. Learn more about what the impact has been and how this may create the potential for political and societal change. Lahav is an American-born Israeli journalist who currently serves as the Senior Political Correspondent of Jewish Insider, covering Israeli politics and diplomacy. Before this, she was the Senior Contributing Editor and Diplomatic Correspondent of The Jerusalem Post.
$13 optional lunch

RSVP: JewishTulsa.org/lahav-harkov

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fitness Challenge: Jumpstart January—Move, Reflect, Repeat!

This January, we're kicking off the new year with a fun, interactive challenge to get you moving with purpose. Welcome to Jumpstart January—a month-long fitness and wellness adventure throughout the JCC! Each week, you'll find three "Jumpstart Spots" placed around the gym. At each spot, you'll complete the simple exercise listed in the square *and* answer the reflective question posted with it. The questions are all about your new year goals, and what will help you "jumpstart" your wellness in 2025. Check off all three spots each week to stay consistent, curious, and connected to your goals. It's simple, fun, and a great way to explore the gym, move your body, and begin the year fresh with intention.

Open House | Wednesday, January 7 | 9 am – 12 pm

A new calendar year is a great time to jump-start your health and fitness goals! All are invited to attend the JCC Open House and tour our clean, welcoming, and affordable fitness center. **Refer your friends, family, and colleagues! If your referral joins and pays in full at the Open House, you will receive a $50 QT gift card.** Tours of the facility, pickleball, class demos, snacks, and more! All new guests will have a chance to win a free membership for a year! Please spread the word about Tulsa's best-kept secret fitness center. Senior memberships as low as $15/month and many insurance plans, including Medicare, cover fitness memberships.

Tzedek: Meals on Wheels | Monday, January 12 | 10:30 am | Meals on Wheels

Join us for a meaningful volunteer morning helping prepare important mailings. We'll be stuffing and sealing envelopes in a relaxed and seated volunteer opportunity. Please arrive a few minutes early so we can start on time at 10:30 am. We will volunteer until 12:30 pm.

RSVP at: csjcc.org/tzedek-Jan26

Wellness Series: Nourish Your Gut & Brain — Everyday Habits for Better Health | Wednesday, January 14 | 10:15 am | Dan Room

Join us as we hear from Jenna Fisher, MS, RD, LD, who will give participants simple nutrition strategies to support digestion, energy, mood, and longevity. You will learn how to eat a diverse diet rich in fiber, tips on how to include probiotic and prebiotic-rich foods, Omega-3 Fatty Acids, foods rich in polyphenols, strategies to stay hydrated, the importance of reducing sugar & processed foods, and how to build a gut- & brain-healthy plate. Jenna Taylor Fisher is a registered dietitian at Bailey Medical Center with a master's degree in exercise and nutrition science from Lipscomb University.

RSVP at: csjcc.org/wellness-Jan26

CHARLES SCHUSTERMAN JCC

UPCOMING EVENTS

Social: Line Dancing with Hannah | Wednesday, January 28 | 10:15 AM | Dance Studio

Join fitness instructor Hannah Bakewell for a fun line dancing activity! Learn traditional Israeli dances including the Hora and modern-day line dancing. Snacks and drinks will be provided after the activity, so please sign up in advance. All levels and ages are welcome.

RSVP: csjcc.org/social-jan26

JCC Family Programs

New Family Programming

Mini & Me Gymnastics | Music Together®

Starting January 2026

Mini & Me Gymnastics | 8 weeks starting Monday, January 5 5:30 pm | JCC Gym

Back by popular demand! Mini & Me gymnastics is a fun and engaging class designed for children ages 0–4 and their grown-ups. Children will explore movement, balance, and coordination through age-appropriate gymnastics activities taught by Legends Gymnastics. Parents will join the fun right alongside their little ones, making this a special bonding experience filled with smiles and play. Please note: one parent or caregiver is required to be present with their child for the duration of each session. This is not a drop-off activity. Each class is 45 minutes.

$120 for JCC members, $150 for non-members

RSVP at: csjcc.org/mini-gymJan26

Music Together® | 8 weeks starting Friday, January 9 | 3 times to choose from: 9 am, 10 am, 11 am | JCC Dance Studio

In a Music Together® class, we move, sing, clap, and dance! We are instilling a love of music—bonding families—and beginning your child's journey in speaking and creating with the language of music. Children 0-5 and their caregivers make music in a supportive environment where creation is valued over achievement. Bottom line- get ready to have fun and MAKE some music! Sibling babies 7 months and younger at the start of the session are free! Each class is 45 minutes.

$155 for JCC members, $180 for non-members

To receive the member pricing, families will need to use the code: **JCCMEMBER**

RSVP at: csjcc.org/music-together-Jan26

L'DOR V'DOR – A TREASURED GAME PASSED DOWN THROUGH GENERATIONS

by Sarah Howman, Director of Community Engagement

Bam! Crak! Dot! The sounds of mahjong tiles are once again sounding through the CSJCC. After a break in both lessons and open play, mahjong is officially back in full swing in our building. Mahjong has gained a huge following with people saying it is the generation of millennials' new bunco. There are multiple groups in Tulsa alone that plan daily meet ups for group play!

Last summer, we held our first lesson with Mahj918, a Tulsa-based group offering Mahjong instruction, open play, and special events. It sold out within two weeks of being publicized, so I knew we had to host another lesson quickly. Thankfully, Candace and Nicolle, founders of Mahj918, were able to fit us on their calendar for our second lesson in September and another in November. Again, these sessions were big hits.

I remember watching my grandma, Judy Winkelman, of blessed memory, play when I was growing up. I always wished I understood what was going on at her table with friends. Although she said mahjong was too complicated for my 6-year-old self, she taught me Rummy 500 instead. Little did I know that twenty years later, I would feel more connected to her than ever, playing her favorite game in a room with 20+ women at the Jewish Community Center.

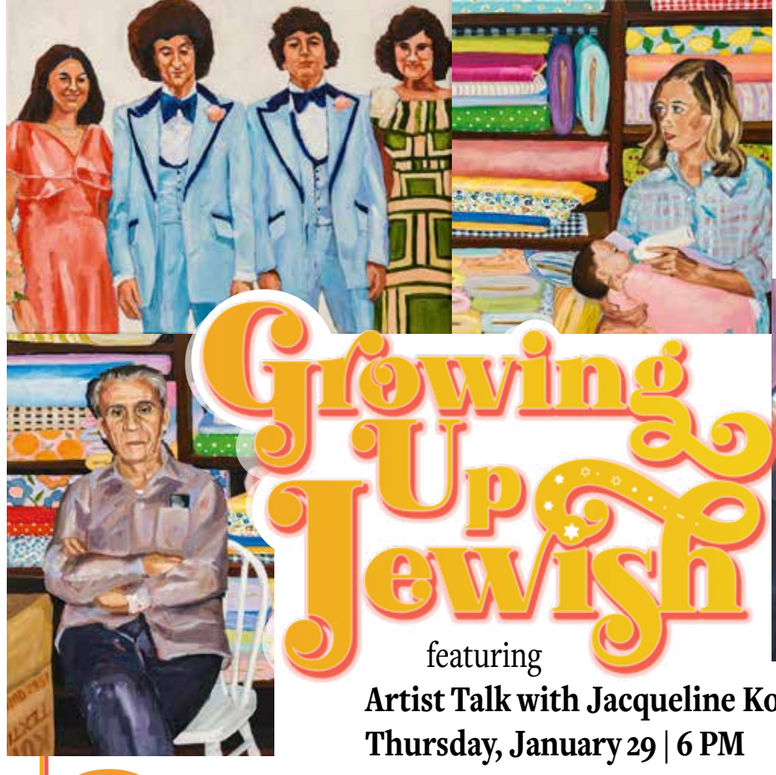
Mahj918 starts their lessons with a short history of the game. In 1937, a group of Jewish American women created the National Mah Jongg League (NMJL) to revive and standardize the game into the American version that we play today. The game was pivotal in fostering community among Jewish women moving to the suburban areas. It became more than a pastime, but a way to socialize, form bonds, and stay connected in tight-knit circles.

Every participant began the lesson feeling they were at a 0–1 skill level. By the end, everyone felt confident in their understanding of mahjong fundamentals and well-equipped to join other beginners at open play. One participant noted, "The teachers and helpers could not have been clearer in their explanations. They were extremely patient and helpful." Another attendee said, "I can't say enough GREAT THINGS and appreciation for the leaders of the class. They are some of the most patient people in the world!" The lessons are a one-time, deep dive into all things mahj. The four-hour instructional lesson may sound overwhelming, but participants agree that if it were any shorter, they would have left with far more questions. The original goal, to give players a solid foundation to confidently join open play, has been a great success.

After completing lessons, new players are invited to attend open play sessions offered on our campus. Each Sunday, we host at least two tables with games ranging from beginner to advanced. Starting in October, we began offering weekday open plays for those with flexible schedules. Now, players can join in the fun three days a week at the JCC: Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 2 – 5 pm. Open plays are free, but registration is required. You can sign up on **meetup.com/csjcc-mahjong-meetup-group/**, scanning the QR code, or calling Laura Allen at 918-935-3661.

If you missed out on the other lessons, don't worry! Our next Sunday lessons are scheduled on January 4, March 8, and May 17. Learn more and sign up at: JewishTulsa.org/event.

Beginners playing Mahjong as part of the Mahj918 Lesson



Please join us
for an
Opening Reception

Growing Up Jewish

featuring

Artist Talk with Jacqueline Kott-Wolle

Thursday, January 29 | 6 PM

Painted in a fresh palette of color, *Growing Up Jewish – Art & Storytelling* traces the story of one North American Jewish family through five generations from 1925 to the present. Kott-Wolle's Jewish identity was informed by the experiences of her parents and grandparents, who arrived in Canada in 1949 after the Holocaust. As a member of the *Second Generation*, the artist reflects on how her forebears faced the enormous task of starting over upon surviving one of modern history's darkest chapters. Drawing upon decades of family photos for inspiration, the exhibit includes this colorful cast of characters as they rebuild their lives and flourish in North America's vibrant Jewish communities, navigating a painful past, contending with tradition, and summoning optimism for the future. Paired with the artist's own narration, Kott-Wolle asks, "What does it mean to be Jewish for past, present, and future generations in North America?"

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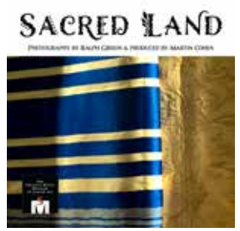

Sacred Land

Legendary American photographer Ralph Gibson and producer Martin Cohen have created a unique photographic exhibition and publication that captures the soul of Israel, both ancient and contemporary. The photographs convey the fundamental humanity and underlying affinities that connect all who deem this land as sacred and express aspirations for mutual understanding and peace. At a time when the war and suffering in Israel and Gaza overwhelm us, Gibson's images offer a compelling and hopeful outlook for the future.

The Big Beautiful Fried Exhibit

See our display of some of our largest works by Jewish-Hungarian painter, Theodore Fried! He painted a wide variety of subjects and objects, such as musicians and city scenes.

(Continued)

(Continued)

Sunrise Sunset: The History and Legacy of *Fiddler on the Roof*

Tradition! *Fiddler on the Roof* is an international classic that has made its way into the hearts and homes of generations of people—and not just theater kids! This exhibition has a little bit of everything—history, Judaica, art, and even set pieces and costumes from the Tulsa Performing Arts Center's most recent production of *Fiddler*. Join us for a celebration of this much-loved story and be prepared to learn a thing or two about this timeless classic.

Theodore Fried: Art in Hiding

This exhibition is a celebration of the survival of art in dark times with Theodore Fried's work that was hidden in Europe during the Holocaust. SMMJA is honored and privileged to house the largest collection of Fried's work.

60 YEARS 1966-2026
The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art

JEWS IN HOCKEY ©

by Phil Goldfarb

While ice hockey may not immediately come to mind as a traditional Jewish sport, the history of Jewish involvement in the game is a story of integration, resilience, and identity. It evolved from early immigrants in Canada to modern-day NHL stars and the growth of hockey in Israel.

The tale begins in Canada, the birthplace of hockey, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As Jewish families immigrated to cities like Montreal, Toronto, and Winnipeg, they brought a strong sense of resilience and ambition. For many working-class Jewish boys, picking up a hockey stick was a way to integrate into Canadian society and find their place in their new home. Despite facing persistent antisemitism and being excluded from certain clubs, Jewish players found ice time wherever they could, on outdoor rinks and in community leagues.

This journey towards acceptance was marked by quiet but significant milestones. In 1924, Sammy Rothschild became the first Jewish player in the NHL, debuting with the Montreal Maroons. His presence at the highest level of the sport was a historic moment, happening at a time when Jews were often barred from other social institutions.

Through the mid-20th century, Jewish players began to make a more noticeable impact on the game. Defenseman Hy Buller, playing for the New York Rangers in the 1950s, became an idol for Jewish New Yorkers. Fans enthusiastically supported him, and his success offered a sense of pride and connection for a community that was not often reflected in mainstream sports.

Off the ice, Jewish figures also helped shape the hockey world. Montreal journalist Red Fisher covered the Canadiens for decades and became a respected voice in Canadian hockey. Jewish owners and executives contributed to the business side of the sport, while passionate Jewish fans helped fill arenas in major cities.

As the decades passed, Jewish involvement became less of a novelty and more a part of the sport's fabric. Bob Nystrom, who was of Swedish-Jewish background, famously scored the overtime goal that won the New York Islanders their first Stanley Cup in 1980. Mike Cammalleri, a standout forward, proudly acknowledged his Jewish heritage, even lighting a menorah in the locker room during Hanukkah.

Today, the visibility of Jewish players is more prominent than ever. Zach Hyman of the Edmonton Oilers is not only one of the league's top forwards but also a children's book author who embraces his heritage. Other active Jewish players include Adam Fox of the New York Rangers, Jason Zucker, Luke Kunin, and the Hughes brothers (Jack, Luke, and Quinn), who were featured on the cover of the NHL 25 video game. The growing number of Jewish players and prominent figures like analysts Elliotte Friedman and Steve Levy reflects how integrated the Jewish community has become within the hockey world.

The Jewish hockey story has also expanded beyond North American rinks. Since joining the International Ice Hockey Federation in 1991, Israel has fostered a passionate hockey community. While many players are immigrants or their children, the sport is gaining traction among native Israelis. Arenas in cities like Tel Aviv host youth leagues and tournaments, and when Team Israel competes internationally, its blue-and-white jerseys and Star of David emblem embody the same underdog spirit that has long defined Jewish perseverance.

Recently, Zeev Buium took the ice for the Minnesota Wild, becoming the first NHL player born to Israeli parents and one of more than a dozen Jewish players to feature in a game this season. He might also be the first in the league with a tattoo featuring Jewish calendar dates! Buium, a highly touted defenseman prospect picked 12th overall in that draft, logged 13 minutes, 23 seconds in the Wild's 4-2 loss to the Las Vegas Golden Knights.

His parents, Sorin and Miriam Buium immigrated in 1999 from Ashdod, a city in southern Israel, to San Diego.

(Continued)

Zach Hyman on the Edmonton Oilers

Miriam played basketball professionally in Israel before working as a general manager in the sport.

All three kids—Ben, Shai, and Zeev—eventually joined a youth hockey development program run by the Los Angeles Kings. That meant Miriam driving 112 miles each way, three or four days a week for two years, to bring the boys to practice. The family eventually moved closer to LA to make the drive easier. Ben hung up his skates after high school, but the younger two brothers teamed up at the University of Denver, where they won the NCAA Frozen Four championship in 2024.

Israeli-American Zeev Buium

Hockey players can continue their college careers after they get picked, and Zeev, like Shai, had continued his. It was not until his signing with the Wild that his college career officially came to an end.

Both Buiums are known as offense-minded defensemen. As a freshman, when he was the second-youngest player in college hockey, Zeev had 50 points (11 goals, 39 assists) and 41 blocked shots in 42 games. He followed that up with 48 points (13 goals, 35 assists) as a sophomore—a season that ended with him taking home the National Collegiate Hockey Conference (NCHC) Player of the Year award.

Zeev also said he fasts every year on Yom Kippur and sits out any practices or games that fall on the holiday; once, when Shai had skipped the fast in high school to practice, he ended up breaking his ankle on the ice.

For many, the connection between Jews and hockey is about more than just the game. It represents a story of inclusion, perseverance, and identity. For a people whose history is marked by migration and adaptation, a sport built on motion and resilience is a perfect fit. Whether on frozen ponds or professional ice, Jewish players continue to show that Jewish life and identity can thrive anywhere.

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

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MIZEL
FLO AND MORRIS MIZEL JEWISH COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL

FINDING HOME AT MIZEL JEWISH COMMUNITY DAY SCHOOL

by Shira Sachs, Hebrew and Judaic Studies Teacher

Michael, Desi, Shira and Izzy Sachs

The move from Canada to this new place called Tulsa was a big deal for our children. Starting at a new school was earth-shattering. Our son, Izzy, is currently at a public middle school while Desi, our second born, is in 5th grade at Mizel Jewish Community Day School. Attending this school has been the best experience of her move. The teachers have been nothing but kind, patient, understanding, gracious, and overall amazing! They have truly tended to her needs, helping with her weaknesses and cheering on her strengths. I was lucky to have the opportunity to join the MJCDS family as their Judaic studies and Hebrew teacher. Working here has been nothing short of a gift. The heimish feeling, my wonderful colleagues, and the awesome kiddos have made my move not only easier, but special too.

As a teacher for the past seven years, I have worked in a variety of educational settings, but Mizel is unlike any school I have ever been part of. What stands out most is the individualized attention each child receives. The small class sizes create an environment where every student is known, supported, and celebrated. It is a privilege to watch students grow, not only academically, but also spiritually. The culture of the school truly encourages teachers to nurture each child's unique strengths, and that commitment is visible every single day.

Another aspect I adore about Mizel is that students experience a beautifully well-rounded education that includes music, art, PE, Judaic studies, prayer, and learning how to read and write Hebrew. As a Judaic Studies and Hebrew teacher, it is incredibly meaningful to help students connect with their heritage and identity in such a joyful, hands-on way. Our classroom is filled not only with learning, but with singing, creativity, movement, curiosity, and pride.

The sense of community at Mizel is another reason I love working here. The special events that involve the entire school: parents, grandparents, siblings, and extended family, create a warm and inclusive atmosphere. Whether we are celebrating holidays, honoring traditions, or simply gathering for learning, the emphasis on family and togetherness is always present. For a family that has just moved across the continent, this means a lot.

Shira Sachs, Hebrew and Judaic Studies Teacher with students

"Watching young children and elders learn from one another is heartwarming, and the benefits for both groups are immeasurable."

One of the most unique and meaningful parts of working at Mizel is our connection to Zarrow Pointe Retirement Center. The interactions between our students and the seniors are incredibly powerful. Watching young children and elders learn from one another is heartwarming, and the benefits for both groups are immeasurable. It reinforces the importance of intergenerational relationships and shows our students the value of compassion, patience, and respect.

Perhaps the biggest blessing of all is that my daughter is a student hereSeeing her thrive, making connections, building confidence, and improving academically, fills me with gratitude every day. Knowing she is surrounded by caring teachers, an amazing admin, and friends gives me peace as both a parent and an educator.

Mizel Jewish Community Day School has truly become our home. It is a place filled with kindness, connection, purpose, and joy. I feel honored to teach here, proud to be part of its mission, and deeply grateful for the ways it has welcomed my family with open arms.

GENERATIONS AFTER: A BRIEF HISTORY AND A CALL TO ACTION

by Susanna Ginsburg, Member, Council for Holocaust Education

Every day we hear of another Holocaust survivor dying. As fewer and fewer survivors live, who will continue the legacy and continue to bear witness?

In the 1960s and 70s, children of Holocaust survivors (known as 2Gs) began exploring what it meant to be the child of a survivor and how it impacted their lives. Influenced by Helen Epstein's "Children of the Holocaust, 2Gs established awareness groups to mutually explore their shared experiences. In 1979, a United States conference of 2G groups was held in New York, followed by an international gathering of over 1000 2Gs in Israel in 1981. The International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors was established to continue Holocaust commemorations and education. I was privileged to be a member of the initial Board.

In 1985, the organization became part of the newly established Federation of Jewish Child Survivors of the Holocaust and Descendants, which continues to hold an annual conference. The organization's mission is to bring together Survivors and Descendants to share their families' unique histories and to keep alive the memory of the six million murdered Jews.

"The organization's mission is to bring together Survivors and Descendants to share their families' unique histories and to keep alive the memory of the six million murdered Jews."

In the US, the number of groups of descendants of Holocaust survivors has increased over time. Initially, 2G groups were established, primarily in cities with several Holocaust survivors. Over time, the groups expanded to include their children (3Gs). Groups continue to increase and represent different approaches that include separate 3G groups as well as all generations. The groups have taken different approaches and activities, including supporting commemorations such as Yom HaShoah, helping members learn more about their histories, establishing speaker's bureaus, and social and support efforts. They may be freestanding, part of Jewish Federations, Jewish museums, and congregations.

3G groups have represented the most recent expansions, including areas that have not had previous groups. With support from the Shoah Foundation, a collaborative effort of 3G chapters has developed, known as Living Links, which supports the continued growth of chapters around the country. The organization has developed a training program that helps individuals develop their family story in order to share those stories with others.

In Tulsa, the Council for Holocaust Education supports educational and commemorative efforts, including annual community-wide Kristallnacht and Yom HaShoah events. At the 2024 Yom HaShoah event, the candle lighting ceremony honored survivor families with their second, third, and fourth generation descendants lighting the candles. Since the event, there has been interest in exploring potential efforts in Tulsa. Plans are underway for an initial gathering of 3Gs in February. ■

3rd and 4th generation descendents, A.J. and Oliver Finer at Yom HaShoah 2024 program

EVA UNTERMAN'S REMARKABLE NIGHT OF MEMORY, MUSIC, AND MISSION

by Nancy Pettus, SB1671 Professional Development Consultant

Our own Eva Unterman traveled to Washington, DC on Nov. 9 for a program sponsored by the Defiant Requiem Foundation to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Theresienstadt. The program began with dinner honoring Wolf Blitzer, who spoke about discovering his grandparents' murder in Auschwitz, and the impact of that history on his life and career.

Guests then enjoyed the premiere of Murry Sidlin's newest work, *Defiant Voices: A Terezin Medley in Seven Episodes*, which transported the audience through folk music, cabaret, and narrative to a night in Terezin. The emotionally moving music and storytelling highlighted the resilience and creative spirit of those imprisoned in Terezin.

The evening's most poignant centerpiece was the presence of Holocaust survivors including 93-year-old Eva Unterman, who traveled from Tulsa with her family members, and a group from the Jewish Social Service Agency (JSSA) in DC. One JSSA survivor shared through her care manager these thoughts, "She most of all enjoyed the concert. She was fighting back tears from hearing the beautiful voices of the singers…She asked me to share her deepest gratitude with the organizers."

"The experience was very meaningful to me as it was the 80th anniversary of my liberation from Terezin Concentration Camp by Russian soldiers on May 8, 1945."

Eva Unterman responded, "The experience was very meaningful to me as it was the 80th anniversary of my liberation from Terezin Concentration Camp by Russian soldiers on May 8, 1945. The music, narratives, and images brought back memories from when my mother and I were reunited with my father. I feel very fortunate to still be alive 80 years after my liberation."

With 170 guests at dinner and more than 225 at the concert, the evening was described by board members as "perhaps the best event we have held since the 2010 Kennedy Center performance"—a powerful confirmation of the Defiant Requiem Foundation's mission in a time of rising antisemitism, Holocaust denial, distortion, and extensive historical ignorance.

Eva Unterman and Wolf Blitzer

Most importantly, the evening reaffirmed why The Defiant Requiem Foundation exists: to preserve and illuminate the stories, courage, and artistic defiance of the prisoners of Terezín, and to confront the rising tide of antisemitism and historical distortion with truth, education, and the power of art. ■

David Dopp

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CELEBRATE SIMCHAS!

Upon Eva Unterman's 93rd birthday in October, Governor Kevin Stitt and Tulsa Mayor Monroe Nichols issued commendations recognizing her many years of work with teachers and others on Holocaust education, as well as her dedication to climate advocacy. Pictured here, Oklahoma Senator Jo Anna Dossett visited Eva to present Mayor Nichols' commendation. Mazel Tov, Eva!

Celeste Noelle Gebhardt, daughter of Erika Stone DuBose, will become a Bat Mitzvah on January 31st at Congregation B'nai Emunah.

Celeste, known as Sunny to her friends, is a student at the Union Freshman Academy. She is part of the Union Marching Band program, Renegade Regiment, that recently placed 9th in the Oklahoma Bandmasters Association 6A state championship. Celeste is also on the Union Varsity Winter Guard team, which will compete in Class A World Championships in April. She is President of Union's National Junior Honor Society, and is currently working toward her Gold Award in Girl Scouts. On Sunday mornings, Celeste works as a Madrichim at Temple Israel during Shorashim alongside Sarah Downing, her previous teacher. Over the last year, she has studied under the guidance and care of the incredible Jackie Lasky. Celeste is happy to celebrate her day with family, friends, and the Tulsa community. Mazel Tov, Celeste and family!

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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Z3 AND ME: A DIVE INTO OUR COLLECTIVE DNA

by Michael Sachs, Senior Director of Philanthropy

The Z3 Conference has become one of the most meaningful gatherings in the Jewish world today. It is built on a simple but ambitious idea: to renew and redefine the relationship between Israel and the Diaspora. To do that, it brings together a broad spectrum of voices, including policy experts, educators, rabbis, activists, lay leaders, and community professionals.

It is not a conference built around one narrow vision of Zionism. It is intentionally built around many. At the same time, it is not a free-for-all. There are clear red lines that frame the space. Israel has the right to exist. Hate speech is not tolerated. Within those boundaries, we commit to working together for the sake of Jewish peoplehood and communal growth.

This year's theme felt especially aligned with the moment we are living through. Unity without uniformity. Belonging across real differences. A shared responsibility to strengthen Jewish life in a rapidly changing world.

At the heart of it all were Jon and Rachel Polin. Hearing them speak about their son Hersh(z"l), and how he naturally befriended people from all backgrounds and perspectives, was both heartbreaking and grounding. Their courageous conversation capped a day of discussion, insight, and debate, and it shifted the emotional center of the whole experience. It reminded all of us that behind every big idea and every policy conversation there are actual people whose dignity and lives are why this work matters.

One of the most inspiring parts of Z3 for me was seeing the full spectrum of Jewish life show up and stay in the room together. Progressive and conservative. Reform and ultra-orthodox. Deeply traditional and deeply secular. All sharing the same space, arguing, listening, sometimes bristling, but ultimately coalescing around a shared sense of destiny and peoplehood.

At one point, I watched a spontaneous mincha service form in the courtyard. Just a few feet away, a group was engaged in a deeply secular, policy heavy conversation about geopolitics and communal strategy. Two very different expressions of Jewish life, side by side, both grounded in a shared vision that the Jewish future is worth fighting for and worth building together. That moment, more than any slide or plenary session, captured what Z3 is trying to do.

The breakout sessions carried that same spirit. They did not exist to reassure us. They were not echo chambers. They were spaces to wrestle with hard and essential questions.

How do we build communities that can hold multiple identities at once?

What does leadership look like in a polarized world?

The voices were varied. Some were big picture thinkers focused on geopolitical realities and the global Jewish story. Others were educators and local leaders speaking from the trenches of day-to-day community life. Some pushed us to think boldly about new models and risk taking. Others reminded us that small, concrete acts of care in our local communities are just as revolutionary.

There is something uniquely powerful about putting more than 1,500 Jews in one place and giving them permission to debate, to disagree respectfully, and to dream together. It builds momentum. It reinforces that even when our viewpoints diverge, we are still bound by a shared mission, to secure and enrich Jewish life, here and in Israel.

The most meaningful moments, at least for me, happened between the sessions. Conversations spilled into hallways, restaurants, hotel lobbies, and buses. People compared challenges, traded stories from their communities, and shared practical strategies they could bring back home. Those informal exchanges were as impactful as the formal programming, and in some ways even more so.

(Continued p. 25)

Michael Sachs, Sarah Howman, Amanda Anderson, and Joe Roberts at the Z3 Conference in Palo Alto, CA.

CHARLOTTE SCHUMAN RECEIVES NANCY DAY AWARD FOR ADVANCING HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

by Ginnie Graham

Charlotte Schuman thinks a lot about the state of the world. She sees the same darkness everyone does in the wars, divisions and mean words so callously and easily thrown about.

But, she's not a skeptic. She's a woman of action and a believer in youth.

Schuman accomplished what few in Oklahoma politics can do: She passed near unanimous education-related legislation. She did this without lobbyists, public relations firms, or coordinated political machinations.

For her effort in securing a Holocaust education curriculum requirement, Schuman was honored with the Nancy Day Spirit Award by the Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice on Nov. 8.

Around 2020, Schuman started informally talking to key leaders about the benefits of having Holocaust lessons in public schools. This is not just a Jewish subject, she says, but an examination of man's inhumanity against man. She believes the study of that atrocity can lead future generations into a more peaceful world.

Those talks led to gatherings and networking. She sought national and international experts on the subject and introduced their information to lawmakers.

Through her tenacity, a bipartisan group of legislators in 2022 sponsored Senate Bill 1671 that added Holocaust education in public schools for grades six to 12. It passed unanimously in the Senate and only seven lawmakers voted against it in the House.

To support the curriculum, the SB 1671 Oklahoma Holocaust Legislation Coalition was formed. It hosts free teacher trainings throughout the state - the Eva Unterman Conferences for Holocaust Education. Schuman serves as founder and chairwoman of the coalition.

Nancy Day, former Director, Oklahoma Center for Community and Justice (OCCJ); Charlotte Schuman, Chair, SB1671 Oklahoma Holocaust Legislation Coalition; Phillip Armstrong, President and CEO, OCCJ

Schuman has a mantra that has become the coalition's mission: Fight hate. Respect diversity. Protect democracy. Teach these values to future generations through study of the Holocaust.

The award namesake, Nancy Day, introduced Schuman at the event with a string of adjectives: "Compassionate. Passionate. Determined. Generous. Amazing. Tireless. Courageous. Kind. Inspiring. Sincere. Committed. Thoughtful. Gracious. Principled. Resilient."

Schuman did not waste her moment at the microphone.

"There are defining moments when the force of history demands action. This is one of those moments," Schuman said. "Can we restore what has been lost? Are we destined to live evermore with divisive politics, evermore with divided society? Where is our social conscience?"

She challenged those in attendance—including legislators, CEOs, nonprofit leaders, and past city mayors—to stand up to the normalizing of hate.

"We've lost our commitment to righteousness and duty and consideration for others," Schuman said. "Today, hate is louder than respect and love. It's time to use our Tulsa power to eliminate hate in our city. Tulsa is a warm and welcoming community."

Schuman grew up in Corsicana, Texas, attended the Hockaday School in Dallas and earned an arts degree from Sophie Newcomb College in New Orleans. She worked in the bond department at a bank before marrying Tulsa attorney Jerald Schuman. The couple raised their three children in Tulsa, where she became a community leader supporting the arts and Jewish causes. She was particularly involved in the Tulsa Opera, becoming the first woman to serve as chair of its board. She was also the first woman to chair the Jewish United Fund Campaign for the Jewish Federation of Tulsa.

She serves on the National Council of the American Jewish Committee and on the advisory board of The Ackerman Center for Holocaust Studies at the University of Texas in Dallas. Her slew of honors include the Governor's Arts Award, Jewish Federation's Woman of Distinction, and Alfred Aaronson Community Relations Award.

She credits her strong family upbringing in the Orthodox Jewish traditions for her social conscience, community service and dedication to education.

The coalition asks for feedback from teachers and students after going through the curriculum, which is approved by the Oklahoma State Department of Education. One student said the lessons reinforced the importance of treating others with kindness and respect. Another student said the Holocaust "was one of the greatest examples of manipulation and propaganda" by the Nazi Party.

"That was an 11th grade student who understands that now. Will our adult population understand to speak up when something is wrong?" Schuman asked.

The evening closed with a performance from the Tulsa Youth Opera. They sang "Let There Be Peace on Earth" and "What the World Needs Now is Love."

"I hope you'll think about their message—and at other times in the future—and remember this message through their beautiful voices for they are the future who will fight hate, respect diversity, and protect democracy," Schuman said. ■

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Please visit www.tulsagogue.com/events for more information and to register for Synagogue services and events.

Blatt + Blue: Stay With Us
Thursday, January 8 | 7:00 p.m.

French-Jewish actor and comedian, Gad Elmaleh, moves back home to Paris after a life in America and a conversion to Catholicism. Dumfounded by his obsession with the Virgin Mary, Gad's family tries everything in their power to bring him back to Judaism for fear of losing him forever. The film is available to rent on AmazonPrime for a modest fee. Join us for our conversation at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom (918 583 7121). Newcomers are welcome to join the dialogue.

Bibi Dibi – Shabbat for Little Ones
Friday, January 9 | 5:30 p.m.

Join us for a Shabbat gathering crafted for babies and their families. Revel in the joy of singing songs, playing games, and savoring a delightful Shabbat dinner. It's an excellent opportunity to establish and embrace your own family traditions. While no reservation is required for the celebration, please secure your spot for the meal through event registration.

Behind the Lifecyle: Birth and Babies
Sunday, January 11 | 10:00 a.m.

Too often, we only think about Jewish lifecycle events when they arrive at our doorstep. Behind the Lifecycle is a new series designed to take a step back and explore these moments before we encounter them in real time. Each session will focus on a different stage of life, weaving together traditional sources, contemporary practice, and practical guidance to help us make thoughtful, informed choices.

Lifelong Learners at Zarrow Pointe
Wednesday, January 14 | 1:00 p.m.

Lifelong learners from all over the community are invited to join Rabbi Kaiman for a learning session at Zarrow Pointe. Please check in at Zarrow Pointe Town Center, and you will be directed to the Theater Room. Light treats and refreshments will be served. There is no cost to attend the learning series, but please indicate your attendance through website registration.

Sisterhood Shabbat
Saturday, January 17 | 9:30 a.m.

Sisterhood invites the community to join in a morning of celebration, connection, and community as the women of B'nai Emunah lead the annual Sisterhood Shabbat Service. We'll be joined by special guest speaker, Emily Kaiser, who will present the Dvar Torah, "The Power of Storytelling". Emily, a media consultant and investor in local news, is a former Reuters journalist with 20 years of experience covering stories from two dozen countries. Emily's commitment is to building newsrooms that reflect the diversity of the communities they cover. Sisterhood Shabbat is chaired by Jodi Finer Zalk, and will be led by Nina Fitzerman Blue. Sisterhood invites those in attendance to remain after the service to enjoy a light luncheon. Please indicate your attendance through website registration.

Tulsa MLK Parade
Monday, January 19 | 10:00 a.m.

The Synagogue is proud to continue its ongoing sponsorship of the Tulsa MLK Parade. We're delighted that this event is one of the largest such parades in the country and encourages all to march, attend, or tune in on TV from home. The parade begins at 11:00 a.m., but we'll be gathering for hot drinks, a bite to eat, and the distribution of Congregation B'nai Emunah merch starting at 10:00 a.m. From our preschool families to those involved in the Altamont Bakery and Refugee Resettlement, we're excited to march as one organization representing The Synagogue. For more details, including parade map and participant registration, please visit our website.

Shabbat Shalom Musical Circle, Dinner, and Shabbat Talks
Friday, January 23 | 5:30 p.m. service, 6:15 p.m. dinner

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. After services, we'll enjoy a beautiful Shabbat dinner together at 6:15 p.m. The evening will conclude with a special Shabbat Talks presentation, starting at 7:00 p.m. Reserve your spot at the Shabbat table through website registration.

Family Jewish Cooking Club
Sunday, January 25 | 12:00 p.m.

Join the club and embark on a flavorful, family adventure. The club will meet for lunch, schmoozing, and a hands-on kitchen session as we explore the origins and diversity of Jewish cuisine. Each family will leave with their prepared dish in hand, along with a recipe and instructions to recreate the experience at home. Visit our website for more information and event registration.

Bat Mitzvah of Celeste Noelle Gebhardt
Saturday, January 31 | 9:30 a.m.

Celeste Noelle Gebhardt, daughter of Erika Stone DuBose, will become a Bat Mitzvah on January 31, 2026, at 9:30 a.m. at Congregation B'nai Emunah.

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. .

(Z3 Conference Continued from p. 21)

As those conversations unfolded, I kept thinking about Tulsa. Again and again, I heard ideas that sounded familiar. New models of engagement. Fresh approaches to Israel Diaspora connection. Experiments in leadership development and community building. In many ways, Jewish Tulsa is already working on the very questions that Z3 is asking. That was both validating and motivating. It confirmed that the work we are doing is not happening in isolation. It is part of a broader, global effort to reimagine Jewish life.

Our Tulsa group started jokingly referring to the "3 Ps" of Z3—people, purpose, and possibility. The joke landed because it felt true. People—the relationships and trust that make real collaboration possible. Purpose—the shared belief that Jewish life and Jewish peoplehood are worth investing in. Possibility—the sense that we are not stuck with the institutions and assumptions we inherited, and that we can build something new.

Walking away from the conference, my takeaway is clear. Our strength as a people comes from our diversity, not despite it, but because of it. The goal is not to erase differences. The work is to stay in relationship through them. To commit, not just in language but in practice, to listening, learning, and staying connected even when we disagree.

Z3 reminded me that the future of Jewish life will not be shaped by a single voice or a single camp. It will be shaped by many voices, sometimes in tension and often in partnership. When we come together with intention, openness, and courage, and with a shared understanding that there are red lines we cannot cross, we create something larger than the sum of our parts.

For me, Z3 felt like a call to action. A call to rethink and to recommit to building a community that is deeply rooted in purpose.

And it offered something hard to measure but easy to feel—hope.

Hope formed in conversation.

Hope grounded in shared values.

Hope strengthened by the conviction that the Jewish future is ours to build together.

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

Shabbat Service in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Jan. 2 • 6:00 p.m.
Join us as we welcome in Shabbat. Come at 5:30 p.m. for our joyous pre-oneg.

"Time" For Learning: Tevet* • Sat., Jan. 3 • 10:30 a.m.
Join us as Rabbi Appel continues our learning series. Through text study, we will explore the holidays for each month in the Jewish calendar. Please sign up by Friday, January 2. Learning will take place in the Activity Space at the Temple Offices.

Shabbat Service with Torah in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Jan. 9 • 7:30 p.m.
Join us as we welcome in Shabbat with the chanting of Torah. Stay afterwards for a sweet oneg.

Birthday Shabbat Service in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Jan. 16 • 6:00 p.m
Join us as we welcome in Shabbat and celebrate January birthdays. Come at 5:30 p.m. for our joyous pre-oneg.

Anniversary Shabbat Service in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Jan. 23 • 6:00 p.m
Join us as we welcome in Shabbat and celebrate significant January anniversaries. Come at 5:30 p.m. for our joyous pre-oneg.

Zarrow Pointe Shabbat Service* • Fri., Jan. 30 • 4:00 p.m.
We cordially invite all those who wish to join us for this meaningful Friday evening service, held in the Burnstein Auditorium at Zarrow Pointe. We welcome all friends in our community who would appreciate being together on Shabbat, in addition to Temple members and Zarrow Pointe residents.

Zamru L'Shabbat Shira in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., Jan. 30 • 6:00 p.m.
Celebrate with Elijah's Minor Prophets as we welcome in Shabbat Shirah. Come at 5:30 p.m. for our joyous pre-oneg.

"Time" For Learning: Shevat* • Sat., Jan. 31 • 10:30 a.m.
Join us as Rabbi Appel continues our learning series. Through text study, we will explore the holidays for each month in the Jewish calendar. Please sign up by Friday, January 30. Learning will take place in the Activity Space at the Temple Offices

SING A SONG

by Rabbi Batsheva Appel

In 1971, Joe Raposo wrote *Sing a Song for Sesame Street*. Its invitation remains simple: "Sing. Sing a song. Sing out loud. Sing out strong." The song reminds us that music and song are woven into who we are. It speaks to the power of our voices. All of us are encouraged to sing, both those with perfect pitch and those who cannot carry a tune in a basket and have been told to mouth the words, don't sing.

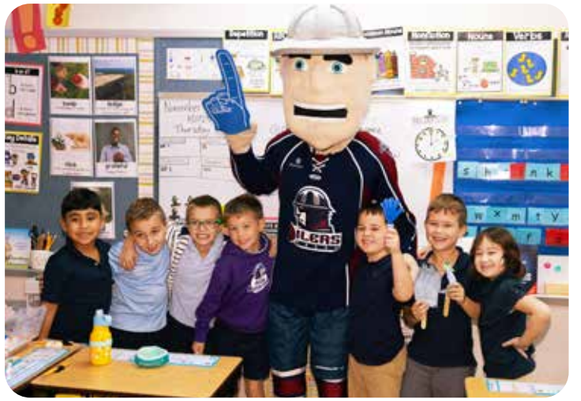
Our Jewish tradition has understood this. At the Sea of Reeds, after crossing into freedom, our ancestors break into *Shirat HaYam*, the Song at the Sea (Exodus 15:1–18). Moses leads the people praising God in song: "*Yah* is my strength and and might and has become my deliverance" [Exodus 15:2]. Everyone sings together.

Across centuries, Jewish song continued to deepen. The Psalms, which were part of worship in the ancient Temple in Jerusalem, give us songs for every human emotion: joy, fear, remorse, wonder, anger, thanksgiving, and hope. The haunting melody of Kol Nidre as it is sung for Yom Kippur, even though the text is more legal than spiritual. A pattern emerges: Jewish tradition is filled with song because music conveys emotions too expansive for speech alone.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel expressed this beautifully: "The primary purpose of prayer is not to make requests. The primary purpose of prayer is to praise, to sing, to chant, because the essence of prayer is a song, and man cannot live without a song." For Heschel, music is not just an embellishment; song is the spiritual core of prayer itself. Singing together expresses our spiritual longings, strengthens a sense of self when we find our voices, and builds community.

Which brings us to Shabbat Shirah, the Shabbat of Song, for Parashat Beshallach, which contains the Song at the Sea, this year on January 30-31, 2026. Temple Israel will have *Zamru l'Shabbat*, a Shabbat with our band, with music, with song. Come sing with us—with strength, with joy, and with whatever voice you have.

Press conference announcing the first Jewish Heritage Hockey game in Tulsa



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