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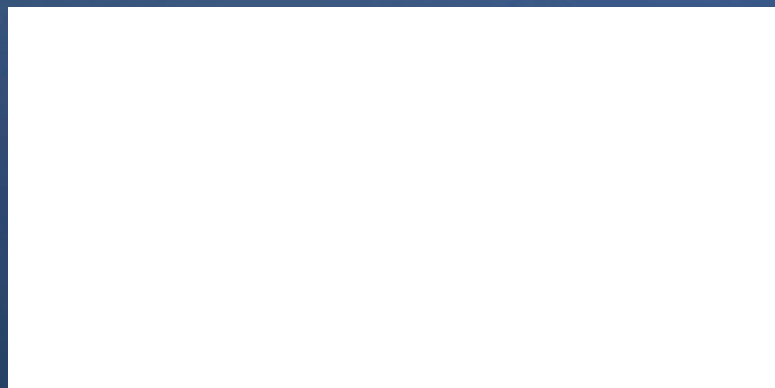


# Crescent City *Jewish News*

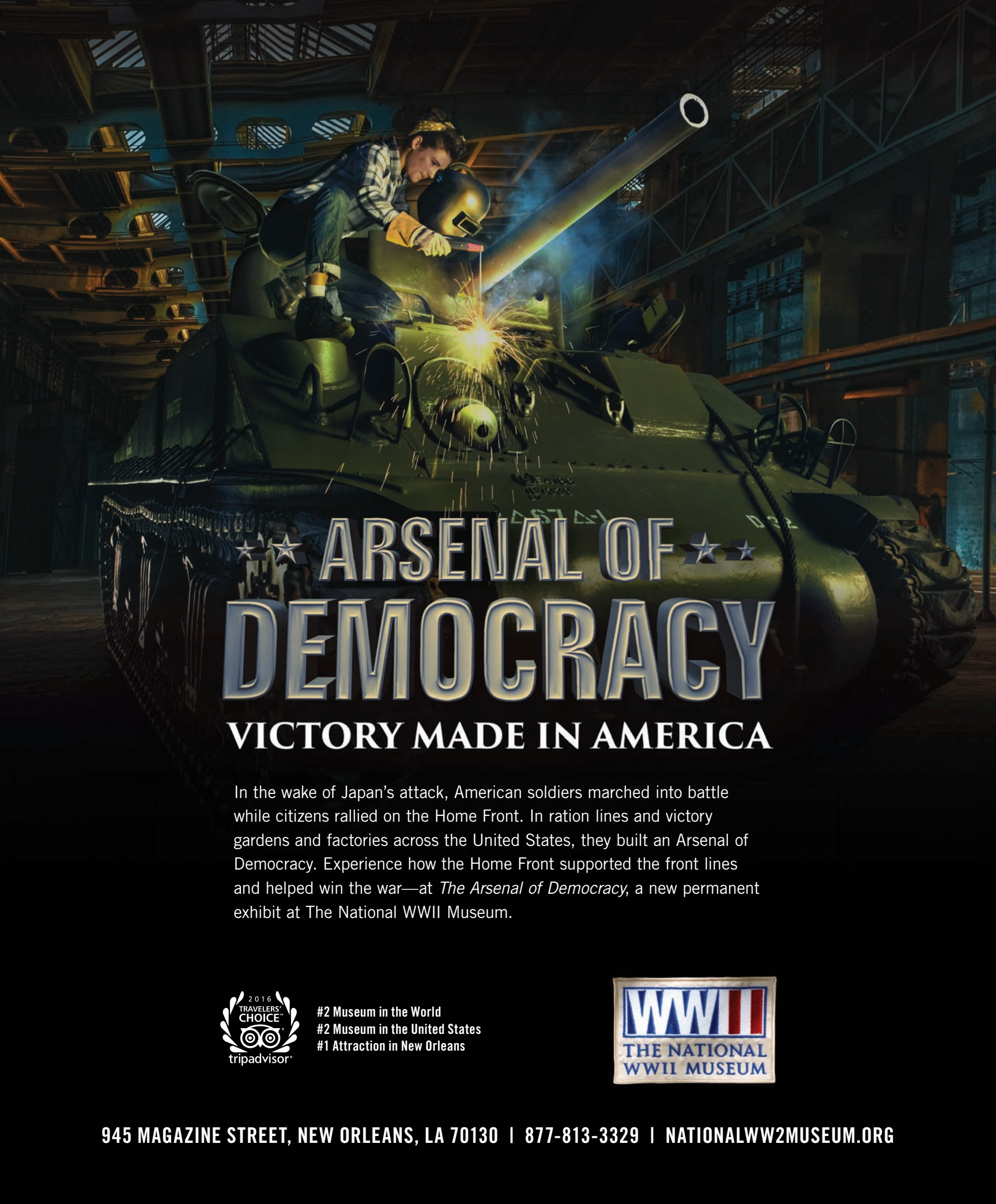
THE VOICE OF NEW ORLEANS' JEWISH COMMUNITY

**YEARBOOK**

**2017**





A welder wearing a mask and gloves is working on a large tank in a factory. Sparks are flying from the welding point. The tank is olive green and has a large gun barrel. The background shows the industrial structure of the factory.

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# 2017/5777

## The Year in Review

**W**ith New Orleans gearing up for its tricentennial celebration, 2017 might have been just a temporary stopover – a mere placeholder – for what was to come in 2018. But, as you will see in the remaining pages of our annual yearbook, 2017 was clearly a memorable year for many reasons.

First of all, in our own Jewish community, we saw the appointment of Arnie Fielkow, as the new CEO of our Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans. Fielkow's appointment represented a radical departure for Federation *vis a vis* aligning its stars with a well-known political actor, whose previous service on the New Orleans City Council had firmly established him as an excellent community builder. Fielkow had enjoyed sterling credentials while working with many disparate groups, easily making him the most recognizable head of Federation in its more-than-a-century history. His return to New Orleans also represented the dawning of a new era of cooperation and partnership with the nascent Crescent City Jewish News, a website ([www.crescentcityjewishnews.com](http://www.crescentcityjewishnews.com)) established for the benefit of the far-flung New Orleans Jewish community in 2010.

This is the second of our two annual Best of the Crescent City Jewish News publications, which have been mailed into our area's Jewish homes. Last fall you received our award-winning Best of the Crescent City Jewish News SOURCE resource

guide. You will receive our newest SOURCE around the beginning of the Jewish High Holidays in September. This new distribution guarantees that every Jewish home will no longer have to seek our publications, but will just have to open their mailboxes.

Locally, the city was divided over the decision to remove four monuments and statues that glorified the Confederate era, even after they came down. The city's infrastructure also became a major issue, especially after a freak storm flooded much of the Mid-City area. We breathed a sigh of relief when we escaped a major hurricane in 2017, but our sister city of Houston was not so lucky. Hurricane Harvey dumped the largest amount of water over a municipal district in the nation's history. Just as they came to our aid following the floods associated with Hurricane Katrina some 12 years previous, our local community mobilized to come to their benefit.

Meanwhile, the Saints implemented a running game and registered an amazing record in 2017, advancing into the NFL playoffs after having dropped their first two games.

Nationally, 2017 presented a challenge as our nation sought to come together in the wake of the divisive presidential contest of 2016. With the new Trump administration in place, an overhaul of the tax system passed through Congress, Wall Street continued to make impressive gains and the

unemployment rate continued its downward cycle. Yet, with all of these measures, there were controversial executive orders that impacted immigration and those that intended to reverse the strides made under the Affordable Care Act. Las Vegas was the scene of the nation's worst mass shooting attack that killed 58 and injured more than 850. While many in law enforcement refused to classify that event as a terrorist attack, there was no such equivocation when a truck-ramming attack killed eight in New York City.

Internationally, we also kept tabs on incidents of anti-Semitism, although it was remarkable that terrorist actions were down from the years before.

In Israel, we commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War and the reunification of Jerusalem one year before the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Jewish State. The Trump administration announced they were moving their embassy to Jerusalem.

Yes, all in all, 2017 was an interesting year. The CCJN was there for you and we'll be here to keep you informed throughout the year to come.

**All our best,**

**Alan Smason, Editor**  
**Arlene S. Wieder, Marketing**





# The Crescent City Jewish News *presents*

## The Best of...

2017 Yearbook

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# Molthrop entertains JCC crowd with Lafitte lecture

By ALAN SMASON, SPECIAL TO THE CCJN

With his clean cut hair that suggestively droops over his right forehead, Morgan Molthrop looks more like an All-American football player than an author. The dashing figure in a dark blue blazer and a red power tie, bears more than a passing resemblance to TV's Michael Weatherly as he moves across a canvas backdrop of two colorful maps he has painted of early New Orleans as well as pirate den Grande Terre.

Holding onto his wireless microphone, he stops in front of a list he has painted of "Lafitte's Code," which he uses to explain the mindset and business acumen of the Jewish privateer Jean Lafitte.

"I'm not a historian, but I'm the guy who reads all the footnotes," he admitted to the room filled to capacity to hear him talk about Jean Lafitte, a man Molthrop laughingly refers to as being in the "import/export business."

Molthrop gave away copies of his previous work "Andrew Jackson's Playbook: 15 Strategies for Success" that was published two years ago in time for the bicentennial of the Battle of New Orleans. He sold copies of his new book on Lafitte, but also made a pitch for his newest work, a study of Alexander the Greek, whom he used as a launching off point for his examination of Lafitte.

"In the search for Alexander it is wrong to suggest that the man must be disentangled from the myth," Molthrop maintained, "for the myth is sometimes of his own making and then it's the most direct clue to the mind."

He countered that "the myth is important. People get so tied up in trying to prove one point or another that they forget that history is story," he continued. "When you forget the story and you bore a bunch of people, then you don't do your job."

Dashing about the room to make point after point, Molthrop was never out of breath, but occasionally ran out of words, trying to convey the essence of the legendary buccaneer, who raided Spanish cargo ships on a regular basis



Morgan Molthrop reveals Lafitte's Pirate Rules. (Photo by Alan Smason)

at first for France and later for Columbia. Molthrop considered him "a legendary figure."

Foremost was his control of munitions and gunpowder, according to Molthrop. "This is a man with his ammunition who supplied the Battle of New Orleans, both sides. It was the seminal battle in all American history."



Molthrop's rendering of old New Orleans during Lafitte's time. (Photo by Alan Smason)

## Rabbi Loewy announces decision to become emeritus rabbi

Rabbi Robert Loewy, the senior rabbi of the New Orleans Clergy Association with 33 years of service as rabbi at Congregation Gates of Prayer in Metairie, announced on January 3, 2017, he would be stepping down and assuming the position of rabbi emeritus, effective June, 2018.



Rabbi Robert Loewy (Photo by Alan Smason)

"During the next 18 months, I will continue to serve as your Rabbi (sic) in all ways," he wrote in an open letter to his congregation members. Loewy stated he had already informed synagogue leaders of his decision.

Loewy went on to praise his congregation and to say "how truly blessed" he has been as the process begins to find his replacement. "I look forward to my new status as Rabbi Emeritus (sic). In that capacity, I will continue to be linked to the congregation, but primarily by helping my

successor succeed."

A statue in Loewy's honor will be dedicated to him during Shabbat services this Friday, January 6 at 6:15 p.m. It is being given to the synagogue by the rabbi's sister and brother.

## JCDS kids STEAM'ed Jan. 8

Jewish Community Day School and PJ Library hosted a well-attended STEAM SUNDAY on January 8, 2017 from 12 noon - 2:00 p.m. This event encouraged all attending children to experience the hands-



Young and old experiencing hands-on science activities

on science explorations that are offered at the JCDS and many other districts throughout the country.

STEAM is an engaging educational approach that combines the disciplines of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics. Children become active learners in a fun and sometimes even messy child appropriate experience.

Activities included creating magnetic slime, engineering bubble wands and creating impromptu fireworks in a jar. The cost of \$6.00 per person included pizza, salad, and ice cream from the mad scientist's lab.



# Changing of the guard



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## OP-ED: An open letter to the President

By ALAN SMASON

**T**he dust has settled from the contentious election of 2016 and we have now sworn into office our nation's 45th President. It is not true to say there has never been as colorful a character as Donald J. Trump to be selected as president. Theodore Roosevelt and Andrew Jackson are probably great examples of figures also cut from an uncommon cloth.

What disturbs us most at this momentous juncture is the tremendous disconnect that many Americans have for the man who is now the leader of the Free World and in whom we will entrust with the unthinkable nuclear option as our Commander in Chief. Whether we recognize him as "My President" or not, the reality is that he will be the face of our nation for the next four or, possibly, eight years.

Our hope is that he will grow into the presidency and that he will give up some of the petulance that has marked his campaign and his transition. All presidents should be aware that their every action is recorded for all time and that every decision they make will be examined under the lens of scrutiny by future generations.

President Obama's greatest legacy, the Affordable Care Act, which he was able to see passed despite tremendous opposition, appears dead on arrival now that President Trump has been sworn in and the Republican Congress prepares to gut it. Replacing it with something that approaches the current law may take some time and gaining agreement on both sides of the aisle may be a daunting task. Nevertheless, we remain hopeful.

As we say goodbye to the administration of President Barack Obama, we can think on the events of the last eight years – a financial crisis and housing market collapse not seen since the Great Depression that was somehow righted, a disengagement from the Iraq war and the death of Osama Bin Laden and the dismantlement of Al Qaida and rampant unemployment rates in double digits brought down to under five per cent. Then there were his failures: a significant chill in relations with Israel and no progress made in furthering the prospect of peace in the Middle East, the shaky implementation of the Affordable Care Act (known colloquially as Obamacare) and rising costs associated with keeping it in place, gridlock on Capitol Hill, no end in sight on deficit spending and the inability to get Congress to accept his final appointment to the Supreme Court. Of course, much of the latter difficulties ranged from pushback from the Republican controlled Congress.

No matter how many times critics vilified his name, the constant questions as to his faith and practice or whether he was actually a native-born American citizen, the one thing he always displayed was grace under pressure. It was always clear that he was a family man, first and foremost, and that he grew in understanding about a number of issues by seeing how they affected his daughters and his supportive wife. Along with Vice-President Joe Biden, who helped push the President's acceptance of the right for gays and lesbians to marry, our nation's 44th President will be judged by the image he presented to the American people and to history.

As the dawn of a new presidency greets us, let us all hope that when this incoming administration is remembered in the past that it shall share a measure of the same kind of respect now enjoyed by the Obamas and the Bidens. Yes, there are those who are delighted that today is their last day in office, but the ax swings both ways. Four years or eight years from now, will we be feeling as secure? Time will tell.

The hallowed office of the President should be open and above board. We are hoping that journalists will be treated with respect by the new administration and that the antipathy that exists at present will mellow in the years to come.

The American people wanted change in November and the Trump campaign, despite overwhelming odds against, knew how to win in the states where it counted and achieved a victory in the Electoral College. Beginning today, the incoming President needs to bring the majority of Americans who voted against him into his camp by his words and his deeds. It doesn't matter if he builds a wall or who pays for it. It doesn't matter if he repeals health care legislation. It doesn't matter if he closes America's borders to immigrants.

There are a great many people in America today who are scared. These include the poor and disenfranchised, but it also includes a great many gay Americans, Latinos, Muslims and Jews, who see a rise in racist activities and hate crimes by many supporters of the President-Elect.

If Donald Trump wants to truly make America great again, he needs to bring us all together with vision and statesmanship, not rhetoric and grandstanding. Mr. President, millions of Americans are keeping their minds open. They want you to be presidential and lead, not react. We need more laws passed to protect us and less mean-spirited tweets on Twitter that make you feel better.

That said, we welcome you to the White House, the symbol of the highest office in the land which you have earned, and we wish you a successful term to come. God bless you and God bless the United States of America.



45th President of the United States, Donald J. Trump.  
(Photo via Wikimedia)





# Huge crowds attend New Orleans Women's March Jan. 21

The Women's March in New Orleans was an extension of an organized nationwide and worldwide protest regarding women's equality issues, immigration, healthcare, environment, racial equality and LGBTQ rights. More than four million participants in the U.S. held numerous and peaceful women's protest marches throughout the country. Many of these were marches designed to show dissatisfaction against the incoming administration of President Donald Trump.

The more than 10,000 multi-generation marchers in New Orleans began their protest in the Faubourg Marigny marching from Washington Square. They moved up Decatur Street and crossed Canal Street onto Magazine Street, moving onto Poydras Street and finally ending on Loyola Avenue at Duncan Square across from City Hall.



New Orleans National Council of Jewish Women members, from left, Sylvia Finger, Judge Miriam Waltzer and Barbara Kaplinsky marched with other women's religious groups. (Photo courtesy Greater New Orleans Section, NCJW).



Dr. Kristi Soileau

## Esthetic and Regenerative Periodontics

Dr. Kristi Soileau has had a private practice in periodontics located in Uptown New Orleans for 30 years. Dr. Soileau volunteers in many local organizations, including the Louisiana Mission of Mercy, Donated Dental Services and serves as a pro bono dental provider for the New Orleans Musicians' Clinic and Notre Dame Hospice. She was named the 2016 LSU School of Dentistry Alumna of the Year. She is president-elect of the Louisiana Dental Association, president-elect of the Southwest Society of Periodontists, is one of two New Orleans delegates to the American Dental Association House of Delegates, and serves on the Boards for the American Academy of Periodontology Foundation as well as for the LSU Health Foundation.

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# Dansker lecture features opera star, cantor

By ALAN SMASON

For the seventh time, George Dansker, an opera enthusiast and Broadway musical expert, presented a lecture on one of the major Jewish composers of popular and theatre music, this past Friday, January 20, at Touro Synagogue.

Dansker corrects himself and admits that he has actually done nine lectures. “Two of them were on opera and Russian and Yiddish music,” he says “so this is the seventh Broadway Jewish composer.”

Dansker admits that Richard Rodgers, his choice for the lecture, took some time in coming, primarily because he was the least Jewish in his connectivity to religion and practice. “He had the least amount of Jewish life,” he concedes. Rodgers, who wrote with Lorenz Hart early in his career, achieved his greatest success with Oscar Hammerstein II, beginning in 1943 with *Oklahoma*.

In addition to the lecture titled “All the Sounds of the Earth Are Like Music,” Dansker invited Cantor David Mintz to take part in the program. He sang three

pieces. The first was the opening song to *Oklahoma*, “Oh What A Beautiful Morning.” He followed up with a previously unheard of rendition of “Soliloquy” from *Carousel* in which two pages of material cut from the original were restored. Dansker had secured that rare piece with the help of Rodger Grodsky, the music director from Summer Lyric at Tulane University and a member of the faculty at the University of Cincinnati Musical Theatre department.

Mintz also closed the program by playing “Edelweiss,” fittingly the very last song on the program and the last song Rodgers wrote with Hammerstein before his death in 1960.

The lion's share of the program, however, was recited by opera star Sarah Jane McMahon, a Loyola University graduate, who became a protégé of Plácido Domingo several years ago and has appeared on opera stages around the world for the last decade.

She performed selections from *Carousel*, *South Pacific*, *The King and I*, *Allegro*, *Me and Juliet* and *Flower Drum Song*. McMahon closed her portion of the program with the immortal “Climb Ev'ry Mountain”



Opera soprano Sarah Jane McMahon sings Richard Rodgers music at Touro Synagogue on Jan. 20, 2017. (Photo by Alan Smason)

from *The Sound of Music*.

Dansker boasts this was McMahon's fifth outing with him, which includes his lectures on Kurt Weill, George and Ira Gershwin and Leonard Bernstein.

“Actually I would like to get Bernstein again because it's his centenary year,” he muses.

# Shepards receive L'Chayim Award at Touro

By JOSH AXELROD, CCJN Staff Reporter

Touro Synagogue honored husband and wife power duo Hal and Kathy Shepard with the presentation of the congregation's annual L'Chayim Award on Sunday evening, January 29. The gala event held in the social hall was catered by Shaya, the Israeli restaurant named both by the James Beard Foundation and Esquire magazine as “the best new restaurant in America.”

A lively crowd of approximately 170 community members were on hand, eager to honor the Shepards, both considered important synagogue leaders there.

“Kathy and Hal are synonymous with Touro Synagogue and perhaps the Greater New Orleans Jewish community as well,” said Touro president Susan Good. “To my knowledge, they do not know the word ‘no’ and for all of us that has been our good fortune.”

The Shepards' long list of positions and accolades include Hal's service as president of both Touro Synagogue and Brotherhood. He serves as the president of the Touro Foundation and is considered the temple's expert on facilities, advising them on all roofing, construction and HVAC needs.

Currently a teacher at the JCC Nursery School, Kathy is a former president and current member of the JCC's Board of Trustees, and a current co-chair of the 2017 Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans' annual campaign.

Rabbi Alexis Berk began the evening with an introduction praising the couple for all their behind-the-

scenes work at the synagogue.

“Kathy and Hal Shepherd, from the moment they arrived here, until this night...do the work that makes it so that each of us can enjoy the beautiful labor that a place like this requires, without barely even thinking about it,” said Berk.

Touro Synagogue board secretary Gary Silbert gave a more personal reflection. “I'm delighted to be here tonight to honor mine and Nancy's oldest friends, Hal and Kathy,” Silbert said.

He recounted their deep bond, adding personal anecdotes including mentioning how he and Hal first met, playing racquetball at the JCC. Kathy worked there as the receptionist.

Silbert commended Hal on his reliability as the temple's structural guru. “This makes Hal a rare commodity,” Silbert quipped. “He's a handy Jew.”

Silbert went on to honor Kathy for her service on every New Orleans Jewish organization imaginable and her supposed recipe for the best bundt cake in the world. “Kathy is a whirlwind of passion,” Silbert said.

“It is truly a privilege to celebrate Hal and Kathy, both of whom are so deserving of tonight's L'Chayim Award,” Silbert said. “Not only are Hal and Kathy devoted to each other and their family, their love and devotion to the metro New Orleans area Jewish community is very evident as well. Their values and integrity are exemplary.”

Hal and Kathy's children, Rachel and David Shepard presented their parents with the award, which is an engraved and special designed glass Kiddush cup.



Kathy and Hal Shepard, right, accept the L'Chayim Award from their children David and Rachel. (Photo by Josh Axelrod)

Accepting the award Hal spoke first, acknowledging the temple for the honor and humbly explaining their attitude towards community service.

“These were not chores we felt obliged to do, but opportunities to make a difference with people we truly cared about,” he said.

His wife spoke next, conveying the integral role Touro played throughout her Jewish upbringing and that of her children.

“Touro Synagogue has been a part of our families for our entire lives,” Kathy Shepard said. “From our own Sunday school experiences, to those of our children — we were married in this beautiful sanctuary, our children were b'nai mitzvah here,” she elaborated.

She ended the evening, expressing the stages of emotions associated with receiving such a distinguished award. “[I feel] amazement, appreciation, fear, excitement, gratitude, and now a determination to continue to work to earn this honor we have been given,” she concluded.





# New exhibit on Nazi propaganda opens at WW2 Museum

By ALAN SMASON

**H**ow did Adolf Hitler and the Nazis, a ragtag group of rough and tumble disenfranchised citizens, use propaganda to transform themselves from a political joke to the supreme political party in Germany in just a few short years?

This question and several others are posed with the arrival of the latest traveling exhibit from the National Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., “State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda,” which opens next Friday, January 27, at the National World War II Museum.

Steven Luckert, the current senior program curator of the Levine Institute of Holocaust Education, worked as the curator on permanent exhibits at the Holocaust Museum in 2009, when the exhibit opened, eventually seen by more than 1.7 million visitors. A member of the museum’s staff for more than two decades, Luckert spoke via telephone with the CCJN in an exclusive interview about the traveling exhibit that was culled from his original exhibit.

“What we wanted to do was to show in the exhibit here (in Washington) and with the traveling exhibits was really to show how the Nazis used propaganda in a democracy, because this is something that scholars and others have tended to forget,” Luckert noted. “But it was during a democracy when the Nazi Party had to compete against 30 other political parties that they honed their skills as message makers.”

Luckert suggested that Hitler and his cronies took advantage of dissatisfaction with the status quo and a power vacuum. “The Nazis never won a majority of the votes under any free election,” he said.

“His (Hitler’s) cabinet was made up of mostly conservatives with a few Nazis, but he was able to eradicate the democratic system in a matter of months,” Luckert observed.

As a scholar, Luckert is impressed with what the Nazis were able to do in their application of propaganda to paint themselves as champions of the downtrodden, while ignoring their hidden agenda of murdering Jews and others.

“What they did in many ways was astounding,” he exclaimed. During the last decade of the German Weimar Republic, the Nazis were considered an oddity, capturing just 12 seats in the German Parliament out of 500. That number increased nearly ten-fold in 1930 when they were able to capture 107 seats and more than doubled again



“In the Beginning Was the Word,” a painting by Hermann Otto Hoyer, ca. 1937, US Holocaust Memorial Museum/National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.

in 1932, when they amassed 230 of the available seats, he considered.

“They were able to develop techniques (and) strategies to distinguish themselves from their rivals and to win millions of votes and supporters,” Luckert continued.

“Hitler’s a guy that never held political office in his life. He (first) ran for president in 1932. He had only become a German citizen shortly before that,” the curator said. “He didn’t win, but he got 13 million votes. Hitler very skillfully crafted an image of himself as a persona and as a politician that worked.”

Luckert pointed out that Hitler started in the party as its propaganda chief, before rising to its chairman and replaced by ardent supporter Josef Goebbels. “(It’s) only the Nazi Party that’s able to do this in German history: to go from obscurity to prominence in such a short time,” he said. “I don’t think any party in world history has done that.”

The Nazis achieved these gains while operating under a democratic regime. They took advantage of unchecked and rampant unemployment and political instability at the top that translated into dissatisfaction at the polls, he observed. Hitler and Goebbels were careful to downplay their anti-Semitic agenda, particularly in areas where they might have received pushback.



“He is to blame for the war!” The Nazis sought to provoke hatred and mistrust of Germany’s Jews. *Mjölneur* [Hans Schweitzer], artist; 1943.—Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

WWII | 10





## WWII | 9

"Voters who would never have voted for the Nazi Party in the past cast their vote for this new party," Luckert stated.

"We want visitors to really reflect upon themselves and think about propaganda. Even when the Nazis were defeated after 1945, propaganda didn't disappear," Luckert asserted. "We're constantly bombarded with messages, most of them benign, but some that are dangerous."

This aspect of the exhibit takes on added meaning for today with the charges of so-called fake news leveled at the media by President Donald Trump. "This is a very contemporary concern that we all have and how we address that," Luckert continued. "One avenue is to use education and to really think about that and how propaganda works, how it appeals to you and functions."

Despite America's reluctance to do so, the Nazis used the word propaganda ubiquitously. "At the creation of the Nazi's Ministry of Public Enlighten-

ment and Propaganda, he told Hitler 'Let's not use that term,'" Luckert revealed. "People associate that with lies and exaggerations and things like that." Hitler countered: "No, it's a good word and we'll use it."

Starting with the Soviet Union in the 1920s, governments began to develop the use of radio as a propaganda tool, which Luckert described as the Internet of its time. "Radio became an important vehicle for disseminating propaganda, both good and bad, across the airwaves," he said.

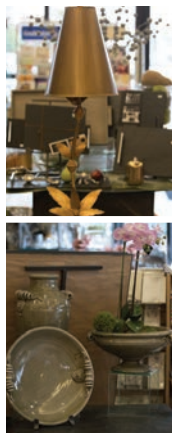
This practice exploded during the decade of the 1930s. "Nazi Germany began broadcasting in English in 1933," he said. "By 1938 they were broadcasting in 12 different languages and then that expanded."

At the same time, the BBC in England was experiencing the same kind of growth and trying to get its messages broadcast globally, Luckert added, and the same could be said with Radio Bari in fascist Italy.

Luckert, who joined



The poster by Mjölner [Hans Schweitzer] for the film "Der ewige Jude" (The Eternal or Wandering Jew), 1940, US Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Museum für Deutsche Geschichte



## CHATEAU DRUGS & GIFTS Unexpected Elegance

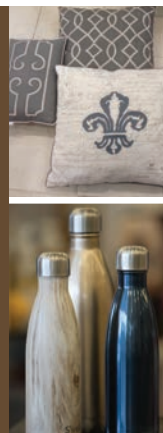
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the museum staff in 1994 only six months after its opening, noted there will be three simultaneous exhibits traveling to different cities. Besides New Orleans, traveling exhibits will open simultaneously in Paris and at the United Nations in New York.

While he will miss

the opening of the exhibit in New Orleans, Luckert will be in New Orleans for the first time in April when he is scheduled to deliver a talk in April on "Fueling Extremism."

"A number of my colleagues have been there," Luckert mentioned. "They kind of prepared me for the

great artifacts that are there. I'm very excited about it."

"State of Deception: The Power of Nazi Propaganda" follows the 2012 touring exhibit from the United States Holocaust Museum "Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race." This exhibit closed on June 18, 2017.





# Local clergy react to Orthodox Union ruling that bars women clergy

By JTA and CCJN Staff

Local clergy reacted to a new policy from the Orthodox Union (OU) barring women from serving as clergy at its 400 member congregations across the United States.

Adopted at a board meeting Feb. 1 and reported Thursday in the *Forward*, the ruling cites Jewish law, or halacha (Jewish legal tradition), in declaring that “a woman should not be appointed to serve in a clergy position.”

The ruling bars women from holding a title such as “rabbi,” or even from serving without title in a role in which she would be performing “common” clergy functions. It lists those functions as ruling on halachic matters, officiating at lifecycle events, “delivering sermons from the pulpit during services, presiding over or ‘leading services’ at a minyan and formally serving as the synagogue’s primary religious mentor, teacher, and spiritual guide.”

Seven leading modern Orthodox rabbis contributed to the ruling — a response to a small number of synagogues that have hired female clergy ordained by institutions representing a left-wing, or “open” faction, within modern Orthodoxy. Yeshivat Maharat, a New York-based yeshiva, has already graduated 14 female Jewish clergy.

Congregation Beth Israel’s Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg, who has been supportive of efforts to engage females as Orthodox clergy elsewhere, responded in an email to the CCJN. “I have deep respect and admiration for the Talmidei Chachamim (noted Torah scholars) whose opinions and psakim (renderings of Jewish law) are described in the OU statement,” he began. “That being said, I think a key line within it is the following: ‘many Orthodox Union synagogue rabbis, and their lay leadership, have requested the Orthodox Union to serve as a conduit for definitive guidance in this complex arena.’”

Greenberg continued: “I think it is powerful that many OU shuls in the country have reached out to the OU for guidance here, and I am sure that it is appropriate for many of them. However, Congregation Beth Israel in Metairie was not one of these shuls who asked for such a ruling (nor were many of our sister synagogues around the country). We neither requested a psak on the matter, nor were we consulted as to the particular circumstances and situation of our community.”

“As such, Beth Israel will continue to follow its tradition of the last century in articulating its own shul policy — on this and all matters — in accordance with both the halacha and the context of our own particular communal circumstances, makeup, and environment,” he concluded.

Rabbi Yochanan Rivkin, the interim rabbi at

Congregation Anshe Sfard, the New Orleans Orthodox synagogue, declined to comment on the record, but did acknowledge that the ruling would have little effect on his congregation. Rivkin, who is the son of Rabbi Zelig Rivkin, the head of Chabad-Lubavitch of Louisiana, did acknowledge that the Chabad model of *shluchim* (emissaries) accepts women as spiritual partners with their rabbinic spouses, which might be at odds with some of the far-reaching aspects this ruling may have.

Touro Synagogue’s Rabbi Alexis Berk, one of two female senior New Orleans area rabbis, responded to the ruling via email stating “Sadly, I feel this is just something I can’t really comment on with any insight or nuance.”

“I have two things to say,” said Rabbi Deborah Silver from Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation. “The first is that obviously this is not my movement. Nonetheless, I am sad to see things move in this direction and my concern is for the women who are actively working as clergy within the movement.”

According to the *Forward*, at least four synagogues that are members of the Orthodox Union currently employ women in clergy roles.

Representatives and champions of such groups expressed disappointment at the new policy.

“There are various ways of practicing Judaism, halachic Orthodox Judaism,” Sharon Weiss-Greenberg, executive director of the Jewish Orthodox Feminist Alliance, told the *Forward*. “We are disappointed, however, that the OU is attempting to squash that healthy debate and impose their [religious ruling] on hundreds of synagogues, thus centralizing power ... and not giving autonomy to communities’ lay and professional leaders.”

In a statement accompanying the ruling, the Orthodox Union asserted that the “synagogue experience would be enhanced by ... an even greater presence of women functioning as educated, knowledgeable and halachically committed role models, teachers, and pastoral counselors,” and that it would encourage dialogue in order for women within Orthodoxy to “assume greater lay and professional roles” and to remove “barriers that impede women from further contributing to our community, in halachically appropriate ways.”

Rabbi Robert Loewy of Congregation Gates of Prayer wanted to read the actual ruling before making any further statements on his own behalf or that of his assistant rabbi, Alexis Pinsky, the only other local area female pulpit rabbi.

He noted that the statement issued by the OU shows a struggle within. “Clearly they are not there yet, but the fact that they are struggling is positive,” he wrote in an email to the CCJN, “Just as Reform and Conservative Judaism have been enriched in numerous ways by professional equality, with outstanding rabbis, cantors



Rabba Ramie Smith was ordained in 2016 and is now a clergy member at the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale, an Orthodox synagogue in New York. (Courtesy of Smith)



Leah Sarna, due to receive ordination in 2018, opposes the O.U. decision but appreciates the Jewish legal process that guided it. (Courtesy of Sarna)



Lila Kagedan, the first Orthodox woman to use the title “rabbi” and a graduate of the Maharat yeshiva in Riverdale, New York. (Photo courtesy of Kagedan) and educators of all genders, the same could be true for the Orthodox Jewish world.”



# Rabbi Silver prepares for her installation weekend

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

It is not by accident that Rabbi Deborah Silver, the first female Conservative pulpit rabbi in New Orleans, is having her installation occur over the upcoming Shabbat weekend that also corresponds to the celebration of Tu B'Shevat.

Part of the Friday night dinner for her synagogue members at Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation, 3737 West Esplanade Avenue, involves taking part in a special seder for the holiday also known as "The New Year of the Trees." The seder service will pay attention to various species of foods and will feature both purple and white concord grape juice that begins with plain white and then advances to the darker variety as the service continues.

"I'm excited and I'm also very, very grateful. The people at my shul have put in so much work in creating and planning this event," she acknowledged in an interview with the CCJN.

"Tu B'Shevat is a meaningful festival to me. I've always found it inspiring to turn outwards to the natural world," she continued.

The Haftorah is also "The Song of Deborah," another happy coincidence that occurs this weekend.

Silver will be installed by Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, the associate dean at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies in Los Angeles, following the Torah reading and that Haftorah reading this Saturday morning at Shir Chadash.

To share the event with the person

she describes as her "mentor," Peretz, Silver says is even more special for her. "I've known her since before I came to the Ziegler School in 2005," Silver stated. "She has been my guide since I met her. We picked the date very deliberately."

Silver's route to assume the pulpit at Shir Chadash could best be described as circuitous. Originally hailing from London, England, she received a master's degree in Hebrew from Cambridge University. Silver first worked in publishing, specializing in theatre at one point in her career. Later she served as the senior English editor of the Oxford Hebrew-English Dictionary of Current Usage. Her second career move came when she qualified as an attorney and worked for Mishcon de Reya, a high profile London law firm, which famously represented Diana, princess of Wales, in her divorce suit. Later she became an associate professor at BPP Law School.

Silver credits her involvement in Limmud UK with reigniting her passion for Judaism, which led to her abandoning her legal career and pursuing her dream job of becoming a rabbi. After her ordination from the Conservative movement seminary in Los Angeles in 2010, she served as the assistant rabbi at Adat Ari El in North Hollywood. Silver took over the pulpit this past August, following the departure of Rabbi Ethan Linden.

"The primary emotion there is pride," Silver confides. "The school trains us not only for the pulpit, but also for building and sustaining Jewish community in these days where synagogues



Shir Chadash Rabbi Deborah Silver welcomes Rabbi Cheryl Peretz to the bimah prior to the Shabbat services as the installation and Tu B'Shevat weekend gets underway. (Photo by Alan Smason)

are changing significantly from previous models."

And Peretz's personal contribution? "She has taught me to remain grounded in the tradition, while developing the ability to grow an organization in the most modern and contemporary way."

Peretz, who spoke to the CCJN by telephone prior to her arrival here is also highly complimentary towards Silver. "I've learned a tremendous amount from Deborah," she noted. "She has the ability to bring text to light...and making it more than just something on the page. That's what makes her such a great teacher."

Her mentor continued. "She has such a great facility of Hebrew and understanding of the text. I learn so much from her when we read a text together. It's pretty amazing."

Peretz said that she will take charge of the official installation on Saturday morning with a speech to the congregation. Following that selected synagogue

members will hold various Torahs at the bimah and add to the "sweetness" of a Kiddush cup, from which Silver will drink.

Then the congregation will read a prayer composed by its members especially for this date, which reads:

Our God and God of our ancestors, Source of all life, we pray that Rabbi Silver shall lead Shir Chadash with the blessing of your spirit. Grant her a wise heart, candor in speech, the courage to act decisively and the strength to respond to every challenge with dignity. Give her a full measure of Your compassion so that she becomes the instrument of Your ancient promise to the prophet Jeremiah, *V'natati lakhem ro'im ke-libbi* – I will give you shepherds after my own heart who will nurture you with knowledge and understanding. And let us say, Amen.

A Kiddush luncheon will follow the completion of the Musaf service and the recitation of Kaddish.

## Mitzva Makers bring Carnival to the infirm for 38th year

For the 38th year in a row, the Mardi Gras Mitzva Makers, a group of musicians and revelers brought Carnival to shut-ins and the infirm as part of what originally began as a project of the local B'nai B'rith chapter. Dozens of participants took part in the event held last Sunday, February 5, at three locations: the rehabilitation floors of Touro Infirmary, Cura Health Hospital and Homelife in the Gardens.

The original parades were held on the pediatric floors of Charity Hospital and later moved to Hotel Dieu (later University) Hospital. After University Hospital suffered flooding associated with the landfall of Hurricane Katrina, the event moved to Children's Hospital (Uptown) and moved to its present sites a few years later.

Some 30 people took part in the event this year, which was run by Dr. Hilton Title. Title has organized this annual event since 2005 after local B'nai B'rith



Mardi Gras Mitzva Makers pose at Touro Infirmary. (Photo by Hunter Thomas)

leader Dr. Emil Koretzky moved out of town and the chapter ceased to function. Since Title took the helm he has billed the event as the Mardi Gras Mitzva Makers to brand it a broader community event inclusive to everyone.





# Metairie Jewish clergy unites with Muslims against travel ban

**M**embers of the Metairie Jewish clergy stood last night, Thursday, February 9, in a show of support for area Muslims, some of whom are affected by the now vacated travel ban from seven Mid-East Muslim countries.

The rally, which was held at the Muslim Education Center, 2420 Illinois Street in Kenner, drew a number of ecumenical leaders from Jewish, Christian and Muslim quarters, all of whom objected to the travel ban, which had been issued as an executive order by President Donald Trump.

The controversial executive order was struck down yesterday by a panel of three judges in Washington state, but is pending appeal, according to sources in the Trump administration.

Appearing at the rally were approximately 100 supporters from various religious backgrounds who heard Metairie clergy members Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg of Congregation Beth Israel and Assistant Rabbi Alexis Pinsky from Congregation Gates of Prayer speak on the issue.

The two rabbis were joined on the panel by two priests and two imams. A female Muslim representative, Jenny Yanez, acted as emcee, introducing each religious leader.

"We learn in Jewish tradition: 'Do not oppress the stranger, for you were strangers.' This is one of the most repeated commandments that we find repeated in the Torah and it is this lesson that we are told to live by," Pinsky began her address. "From the beginning of Judaism until today, there has been an emphasis of standing up for others because we know what it means to be 'the other.' We know what it means to be oppressed."

"We are called out to speak against oppression whenever and wherever we see it," she continued.

Pinsky received tumultuous applause when she said: "America is great because of our diversity and so if one group is under attack, we are all under attack. We are here because we know that the executive order signed almost two weeks ago is wrong. We know and now – we got good news today – that a ban on refugees and a ban on Muslims is wrong. It is not acceptable. We



Rabbi Alexis Pinsky of Congregation Gates of Prayer speaks to the anti-travel ban rally. (Photo by Alan Smanon)

don't accept it and we will not accept it."

After a Christian leader spoke, Greenberg also expressed his support for members of the Muslim community. "The sages teach us that the Torah can either be a sam hamavet or a sam hachaim – an elixir of life, or an elixir of death. It depends on how it is used," he stated.

"This is certainly true of all the world's religions: there will be people who will use the teachings of their faith for good, or for bad. It is up to us to empower those within our own communities who use our teachings for good, and to partner with those in other communities who do the same."

Following the talks, light refreshments were served.

## Israel star Tal Brody in person for viewing of 'On the Map' at JCC

**T**al Brody, the famous basketball player who was the hero of Tel Aviv's Maccabi basketball team that won the 1977 European Cup Basketball Championship, was on hand at the Uptown JCC on February 16. Also in attendance were NBA and WNBA legends Dave Cowens, Rick Barry and Nancy Lieberman for this special meet and greet.

The players were in the Grant Board Room at 6:00 p.m. as part of the pre-show activities sponsored by Maccabi USA and the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana. The film "On the Map" was shown at 7:00 p.m. in the Mintz Auditorium. It featured footage from the championship series.

Former New Orleans City Councilperson Arnie Fielkow also joined the dignitaries in town as well. Fielkow is the current president and CEO of the National Basketball Retired Players Association.

The event was free and open to the public.



Basketball legend Tal Brody, the man who put Israel on the map. (Photo by Alan Smanon)



# Tulane 'Shabbat 1000' biggest to date

By JOSH AXELROD, Special to the CCJN

**A**t Tulane University, a school where 27 percent of the student body is comprised of Jews, Shabbat, is no minor matter. Yet, despite the hundreds of students who show up to weekly dinners, Rabbi Liebel Lipskier, the undergraduate director of the Rohr Chabad Student Center decided to raise the bar.

For the ninth year in a row, Shabbat 1000, an annual Chabad-sponsored event, was held at 5 p.m. last Friday. This year over 1100 students were present on the Newcomb Quadrangle, establishing a new attendance record.

"Our motto is that there is always space for you at our Shabbos table," Lipskier said. "Shabbat 1000 is the epitome of that."

Preparations were also the biggest to date. Most of the food was prepared by students, including a Chabad student group, the Pi Beta Phi, Sigma Delta Tau and Alpha Epsilon Phi sororities as well as the Zeta Beta Tau and Alpha Epsilon Pi fraternities.

Chabad served a four-course meal starting with Caesar and Asian cabbage salad, matzah ball soup and challah with hummus and baba ghanoush. The main course was barbecue chicken, followed by cakes and pastries for dessert.

Sophomore Gabi Schwartz, a Sigma Delta Tau member, helped prepare for the event and thoroughly enjoyed it. "I thought it was an amazing event and I was so happy to be a part of it," Schwartz said. "I thought it was awesome how so many Jewish students came together to celebrate Shabbat and just created a really great atmosphere and it was just cool to see how the whole thing came together."

Senior Brittany Gerstein took on a leadership role within the Chabad student board, heading up registration. She recruited over 100 table heads who in turn invited 10-12 of their friends. Over 90 percent of students were Jewish, but many non-Jews were also in attendance.

Freshman Jacob Morris is not Jewish, and Shabbat 1000 was a novel experience for him. He found it exciting to learn about the culture and felt welcomed. "It was cool to be at such a large scale event," Morris said. "The sense of community was as strong as the matzah ball soup was delicious."

Lipskier, a former New Yorker who has been at the center since 2015, was pleased with the student turnout, encouraged that students enjoyed a wonderful evening of community and ritual.

"The feedback that has been coming after Shabbat 1000 is just mind-blowing," Lipskier said. "People have been excited about it even after it was over for days."

In the upcoming weeks Chabad will continue to host weekly Shabbat



Sorority sisters display "It's Lit" T-shirts for the Shabbat 1000 event. (Photo by Rebecca Fenn)



Rabbi Liebel Lipskier, second from left, with student participants. (Photo by Rebecca Fenn)

dinners, and will also have unique celebrations for Purim and Passover, two significant Jewish holidays in the spring.





## JCC Bomb Threat

By **ALAN SMASON**

**D**espite trying to keep a low profile, the New Orleans Jewish Community Center finally joined the ranks of dozens of other JCCs across the country that have been hit by multiple bomb threats. Like all of the other threats that have hit switchboards and receptionist desks over the course of the past two months, this threat also proved to be a hoax.

The call to the Uptown facility on St. Charles Avenue was received shortly after 9:10 a.m., according to JCC executive director Leslie Fischman, who was in Metairie at a meeting when the threat was phoned in. Members of the New Orleans Police Department reported they received the initial call at 9:14 and responded with officers on the scene at 9:19. After an assessment that it was an active threat, both police officers and JCC senior management staff then ordered the evacuation of the building at 9:24 as a safety measure, while a sweep was made.

According to Fischman, the call was either a pre-recorded or "robo" call or a live person using software or a device that altered their voice. That would coincide with reports from other JCCs who have also received bomb threats. "It was similar," she said.

Alerted to the threat, Fischman left her meeting and arrived on scene at 9:35 during the time when the evacuation was still ongoing. An N.O.P.D. spokesman reported that after the threat was determined to be a hoax and that it was safe, occupants were allowed back into the JCC at 10:52.

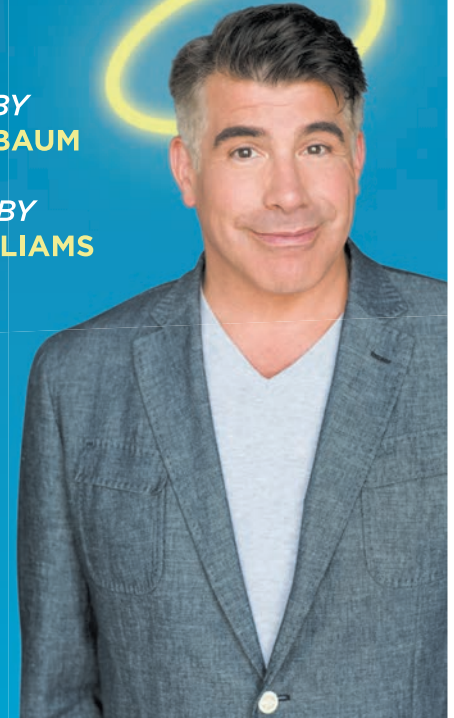
Fischman complimented the N.O.P.D. on their rapid response and indicated she had been in touch with Paul Goldenberg and Secure Community Network, the company that has been dealing with these threats for the Jewish Community Centers Association (JCCA). "I've been in touch with them and I've had a conversation," she said. "The F.B.I. is investigating," Fischman added.

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# It was 'Beautiful' at the Saenger

By **ALAN SMASON**, Theatre critic,  
WYES-TV ("Steppin' Out")

In 2014 when *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* opened at the Stephen Sondheim Theatre in New York, critics and pundits were applauding Jessie Mueller for what seemed an impossible role to fill. Not only did the actress have to emulate the singing style of an iconic American singer; she had to also play piano on stage in time with a live orchestra and make it seem like second nature to her.

In addition, the actress literally ages from a carefree teenager of 16 into a young woman, wife and mother and, eventually, into an established and assured star of the American music scene able to stand on her own. So, aside from an innate talent on the keyboards and great acting ability, the role requires great agility and focus too. In all these qualities and talents, Julia Knitel proves she has more than learned her craft and the titular role while playing as part of the Broadway company under Mueller's replacement.

Knitel takes command of the opening number, recalling the night in 1971 when King performed for the first time before a live audience at, where else? Carnegie Hall.

Knitel plays a joyful and energetic teenager, eager to become a songwriter despite her mother's strong insistence she become a teacher, a lesson we should all be glad she did not learn. Along the way she is introduced to a string of singers of popular song – among them the Shirelles, the Drifters, the Coasters – all of whom hung at the building at 1650 Broadway, where impresario Don Kirshner and others held sway. In almost all the cases of the principals from Kirshner on down are Jewish.

Hired by Kirshner as a songwriter, she meets her writing partner Gerry Goffin (Liam Tobin) and her almost immediate love interest. King (whose actual last name was Klein) falls hard for Goffin, a chemist who imagines himself a playwright. Tobin plays a difficult role in which he moves from unexpected caring lover to husband to infidel and, eventually, to a pathetic loser with mental disorders and drug addictions.

Even while the musical is subtitled *The Carole King Musical*, the book revolves a good bit on King's professional life and competition with another famous Jewish boy-girl writing team, that of Barry Mann (Ben Frankhauser) and Cynthia Weil (Erika Olson). Kirshner, played with glee by James Clow, pits the two team against each other in the hopes of eliciting hit after hit for his company. And they do. And he does.



Left: Julia Knitel stars as Carole King in "Beautiful," now playing at the Saenger Theatre through Sunday. (Photo by Joan Marcus)



Right: Carole King (Julia Knitel) meets Gerry Goffin (Liam Tobin). (Photo by Joan Marcus)

The level of competition aside, the two couples have genuine feelings of friendship for each other, even while they hope to better the other in the Billboard charts.

The musical songs encompass the tail end of the 1950s and the cream of the early 1960s performers. A Song like "It Might As Well Rain Until September," a simple anthem of plaintive teenage love, gives way to "Will You Love Me Tomorrow," and "You've Lost That Lovin' Feeling," two songs which show tremendous aptitude for bringing an emotional arc into the lyrics that help transcend the other simpler music of the era.

The cast who portray the Drifters, the Shirelles and others like Little Eva, the Goffins' babysitter who went to the top of the charts with "The Locomotion," all do a splendid job of singing the songs of the era and are choreographed beautifully by Josh Prince. A special note is that New Orleans native Ximone Rose, a graduate of NOCCA and the University of Michigan returns to the Crescent City as a first-time cast member of this national tour.

The entire production, directed by Marc Bruni, is sleek with set changes accomplished very smoothly.

The second half opens with "Chains," one of the songs covered by The Beatles in their early career. It shows a line of demarcation between the two couples' songwriting successes and the eventual breakup of King's marriage and writing partnership with Goffin, as he swung out of control in a series of mental breakdowns and acts of infidelity. With the exception of a short reprise of "Will You Love Me Tomorrow," the last Goffin-King song that is heard is "Pleasant Valley Sunday," an indictment of suburban life, which proved to



Carole King (Julia Knitel) compares notes with Cynthia Weil (Erika Olson), Barry Mann (Ben Frankhauser) and Gerry Goffin (Liam Tobin). (Photo by Joan Marcus)

be a hit for the Monkees. Mann and Weil's "We Gotta Get Out of the Place," made popular by the Animals, may have been a perfect choice to express the breakup between the mother of two girls and her philandering husband.

It is after that final break that King is able to rise up on her on two artistic feet and break away from writing for others and begin to write the songs and lyrics that have meaning for her and for those who love her music.

At the end of the second act, we are moving into the era of the 1970s as songs like "It's Too Late," "You've Got a Friend" and "(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" are performed by Knitel as a more resolute and determined King. When she plays the title song "Beautiful" at the end of the show, the audience has taken a full emotionally-charged journey with her.

The natural tendency to rise on "I Feel the Earth" is hard to resist as *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical* comes to an end.





# From Meyer Lansky to Myron Sugerman: the Jewish mob revealed

By ALAN SMASON

To hear Myron Sugerman tell it, the Jews were a tough bunch who made their bones in their own mob just the same as the Italians and the Irish before them. With an almost romantic nostalgia, Sugerman regaled the crowd at Congregation Beth Israel with his own take on the Jewish involvement in famous crime syndicates on Thursday evening (March 16).

Sugerman should know. He was a connected mob guy, who was primarily involved in the illegal slot machine business. He described how his father knew mob figures like Meyer Lansky and Bugsy Siegel. Sugerman followed in his father's footsteps and eventually spent seven years behind federal bars on one major prosecution. But he either pleaded out to lesser crimes or skated on other charges, largely spending most of his life as a free man.

Sugerman's talk was full of witty asides. He declined a "formal introduction" because, as he explained, "I had too many of those in front of the federal prosecutors."

Sugerman has a book of his memoirs about to be released in two months. Titled "From Meyer to Myron," it details the Jewish mob and the part he played in it.

Sugerman revealed that, like him, many of the Jewish mobsters were very patriotic and proud supporters of the State of Israel. He said part of the attachment to other Jews came from their roles in the protection racket. But, it also stemmed from a pride in their Jewish heritage and when the Jewish State was formed, many of the supplies of weapons and cash came from the Jewish mob, he said.

Besides Meyer Lansky, Sugerman mentioned other highly visible Jews who held sway in Jewish



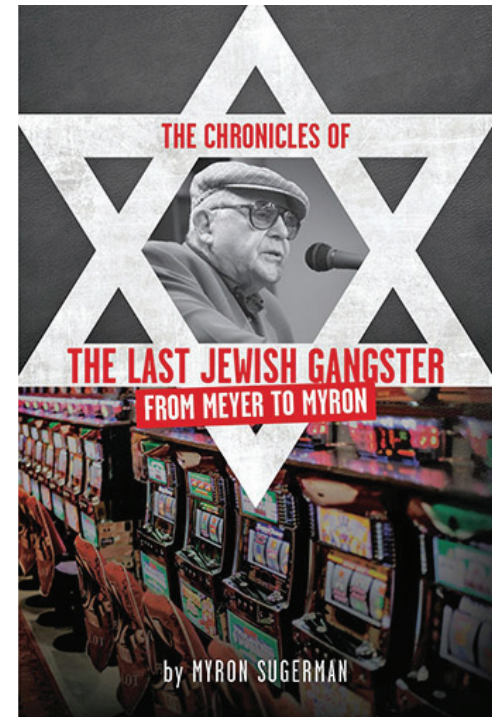
Former mobster Myron Sugerman. (Photo by Alan Smason)

and Italian crime syndicates like Dutch Schultz (Arthur Fleggenheimer), Louis Lepke Buchalter of Murder, Inc., Arnold Rothstein, Abner Longese Loman and Mickey Cohen. Many of these gangsters were tough, he said, but when it came to Israel, they had a soft heart.

"Had the Jewish patriot that was born in Palestine or born in Europe that fought in Israel's war of independence, had in turn been born in the United States, he probably would have been a gangster," Sugerman postulated. "And by the same token, if a Jewish gangster had been born in Palestine or Europe, he probably would have ended up a Jewish patriot."

Sugerman noted that Jews were especially noted as prizefighters, according to his reckoning some 26,000 Jews. "We dominated one-third of the championship prizefighters in the world because we produced tough kids, tough Jews coming out of the ghettos," he noted. "And you had kids who formed their own gangs."

While Sugerman had the benefit of his father's work as a gangster to make connections to higher



ups as a young man, he was for the most part, a low level mobster. His insight into the workings of the mob was quite keen.

Sugerman related it was Charles "Lucky" Luciano who convinced the Italian members of the Black Hand to work with the Jews. According to Sugerman, Luciano was reputed to have acknowledged that the Jews knew how to make money.

Luciano worked closely with Lansky and Siegel to enrich the coffers of the mob, despite the fact that none of them left behind what might be regarded as huge estates.

## Adloyadah held indoors at Uptown JCC

The annual community wide Purim celebration was held at the Uptown Jewish Community Center on Sunday, March 12. Due to the construction in the rear of the building, the event was confined to the building's interior.

The doors to the JCC opened at both the front and the rear of the building. Wrist bands to ride unlimited turns cost \$12.00. The indoor rides included a giant slide, bounce houses and a giant obstacle course. The indoor rides included

a giant slide, bounce houses and a giant obstacle course. A \$2.00 discount was offered to those that brought in a non-perishable food item earmarked for the Broad Street Food Pantry.

In addition to the number of games being held in the Mintz Auditorium, a puppet show was held at 12:30 pm. Food selections included Hamantashen, snoballs, kosher food from Kosher Cajun and Middle Eastern fare from Casablanca Restaurant. The event ended at 3:30 p.m.





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JEF executive director Sandra Levy, left, with Annual Event chair Cathy Bart. (Photo by Alan Smason)

## JEF Annual Event celebrates 50th year

By ALAN SMASON

**T**he Jewish Endowment Foundation (JEF) of Louisiana celebrated a half century of service to New Orleans and, more recently, to other



regions in Louisiana, at its Annual Event on Sunday, March 19.

The event held at the Westin Hotel, 100 Iberville Street, saluted all past and especially all living presidents of what was first dubbed the Jewish Endowment Foundation of New Orleans. Begun in 1967 with a \$100,000 initial donation, the fund's assets have grown to over \$50 million as of 2017, according to executive director Sandra Levy.

Levy, who has served in the same capacity for the past 26 years, noted that when she began her duties, the total amount of assets held by JEF was \$12 million.

Event chair Cathy Bart led the crowd in a toast to honor the living past presidents on hand in the audience. These included Max Nathan, Joel Mendler, Leon Rittenberg, Jr., Linda Breen Wiener, Sanford Maslansky, Joe Pasternak Jr., Rickie Nutik, Ellen S. Yellin, Carole Cukell Neff, Joyce Samuelson Putlitz, Charles A. Levy III, Carol B. Wise and Richard Cahn.

Levy made presentations to each of the JEF past presidents on hand.

Cahn was also presented with a commemorative plaque earlier by current president Andrea S. Lestelle to thank him for his immediate term of office which expired last year.





# Neil Simon's 'Biloxi Blues' – a nostalgic look back

By ALAN SMASON, Theatre Critic, WYES-TV ("Steppin' Out")

When it was announced last year that the National World War II Museum would be producing a full-scale production of Neil Simon's *Biloxi Blues*, there was little doubt that this first full-blown non-musical production would be up to the exacting standards of Victoria Reed, the entertainment director, who is responsible for setting all of the shows at BB's Stage Door Canteen.

Reed has drafted some surprisingly experienced choices in the nine-member cast playing the roles in this middle chapter of the trilogy of plays Simon loosely based on his life growing up in New York that started with *Brighton Beach Memories* and concluded with *Broadway Bound*. One third of the cast is composed of AEA (Equity) players.

It is 1943 and *Biloxi Blues* transplants New Yorker Eugene Morris Jerome into the steaming swamps of summer in Mississippi as he and his fellow recruits endure ten weeks of basic training prior to their shipping out for combat in World War II.

Playing Jerome is Logan Halliburton, a University of Southern Mississippi theatre major, whose easygoing style and self-assured manner on stage makes him a charming narrator for the play.

"The entire time he is writing his memoirs," mused Halliburton about the character he plays in an interview with the CCJN. "What better time to write his memoirs than starting basic training in Biloxi, Mississippi?"

At one point in the play, the character of another fellow Jew, Arnold Epstein (Stephen Stanley), accuses Jerome of being an uninvolved and detached observer, writing his observations in his notebooks.

"The character really hit home for me because Eugene barely says anything to anyone nor has a side and is non-confrontational," the actor admitted.

We are introduced to three other characters who travel to Mississippi together on the same transport. They are the hulking Joseph Wykowski (David Lind), a Polish anti-Semite with a thick head, but a soldier's manner; the simple-minded, but passionate Roy Selridge (Todd D'Amour) and Don Carney (Reed Luckett Wiley), a man who has

a hard time making up his mind about everything.

The quintet soon becomes six with the addition of James Hennessy (Cooper Bucha), a well-liked soldier who gets along with everyone.

Patrick Ryan Sullivan plays the pivotal role of Sgt. Merwin Toomey, whose job it is to whip these young upstart recruits into fighting soldiers. A head injury has sidelined him from taking part in active combat duty, so he takes out some of his frustration in the grueling way he trains the men under his charge.

Sullivan, who has played major roles on Broadway, has returned to his Louisiana home and so was available to play this gruff and ready character. His is an essential role for several reasons.

Simon uses the opportunity for the disparate men to bond together over a common enemy, not the Nazis, the Japanese or the Italian fascists, but Toomey. During the ten weeks, Jerome and the others experience growth in many ways, but having to satisfy the exceedingly demanding orders of Toomey prove to be too much for them to stand.

Toomey, who actually whips the men into fighting shape, has one thorn in his side – a recruit who refuses to yield to him and constantly questions his authority, Epstein.

Meanwhile, Jerome has set out at the start of the play to do three things: 1) lose his virginity, 2) fall in love for the first time and 3) become a real writer.

*Biloxi Blues* addresses how Jerome achieves each one of these goals, often with the help or assistance of another character in this play, which contains more than its share of comedic moments. It does, however, also possess several serious scenes dealing with aspects of anti-Semitism, homosexuality, physical and mental abuse, interfaith relationships and love.

Key scenes with the defiant Epstein character help push the narrative forward and reveal much about the nature of his Jewish identity. Part of what fuels the ways he views life is his "Talmudic reasoning." In the end we see that Jerome has been transformed by the Army into one of the boys, but Epstein is largely unchanged. Simon may be making the case



Logan Halliburton stars as Eugene Morris Jerome in "Biloxi Blues" at BB's Stage Door Canteen at the National World War II Museum. (Photo courtesy of National World War II Museum)



Jewish privates Jerome and Epstein (Logan Halliburton and Stephen Stanley) in "Biloxi Blues." (Photo courtesy National World War II Museum)



Broadway veteran Patrick Ryan Sullivan, who portrays Sgt. Merwin Toomey. (Courtesy of National World War II Museum)



Kate Kuen (Courtesy of National World War II Museum)

here that unlike many of the European Jews who strove to assimilate, but were never truly accepted, many American Jews were different. In the end their defiance may have been a strength of character the Army could not recognize as efficacious in fighting the Nazis and fascists or the imperialist Japanese.

"All of the boys in *Biloxi Blues* are from New Jersey, New York or Connecticut," Halliburton added. "I'm sure it was very easy for him to relate, having known people like that."

As a counterpoint to the males on stage, Kate Kuen as Rowena and Shelby Kirby as Daisy Hannigan have great presence during the key scenes they play opposite Halliburton. Kuen is the object of his lust, while Kirby plays the object of his heart's desire.

The large turntable used for the set is an effective scenic device by David Raphael. It moves the action from the opening and closing scenes in a

railway car to the base barracks to the mess hall and beyond with ease. Alex Quimby's lighting design is also effective in scenes that take place on and off the stage throughout the show.

While many other productions now playing across town are vying for attention, this is one show that should be considered. It is a nostalgic look back at the era of "The Greatest Generation" that is part of the *raison d'être* for the National World War II Museum. That is certain. But the writing here is insightful about America of that time and this coming of age tale has a universal appeal to it.

*Biloxi Blues* puts its audience through two hours of humor and pathos and in the end we know that the characters are all changed from how we perceived them at the start. As they begin to meld into a combat unit, we see how they face the uncertainty of life with trepidation and the reality of war with determination.



# JCRS presents 'Jewish Roots: Past, Present and Future' at Hyatt Regency

By ALAN SMASON

The Jewish Children's Regional Service (JCRS), the nation's oldest children's charity, held its annual event on April 1, with "Jewish Roots: Past, Present and Future" at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

The "Jewish Roots" event was the sixth such annual event and has become the largest Jewish community event with a record number of 500 attendees, who hail from within the seven-state region that JCRS serves.

A cocktail reception with hors d'ouevres provided by Creole Cuisine was held beginning at 6:00 p.m. Spirits were donated by Republic Distributors and Sazerac Inc.

A seated dinner followed, also catered by Creole Cuisine, the restaurant group that owns Broussard's, the Bombay Club, Kingfish, Tommy's Cuisine and Marché Restaurants.

JCRS executive director Ned Goldberg and event chair Mark Rubin both addressed the crowd. Rubin introduced a special promotional video JCRS had worked on for the past six months showcasing some of the work they do in the Jewish community.

Originally founded as the Jewish Orphans Home, JCRS honored 17 of its past presidents who were in the audience. Honorees present were Harriet Aguilar-Netto, Gayle Baer, present president Marc Beerman, Joan Berenson, Marcie Goldberg, Warren Goldstein, George Greenberg, Lisa Heller, Betsy Threefoot Kasten, Bruce Miller, Julie Wise Oreck, Ken Paillet, Leon Rittenberg, Dr. Mark Sands, Lee Scharff, Shirley Seelig and Marjorie Weiner.

A previous recipient of JCRS aid, Amanda Abrams spoke on how much the JCRS meant to her while growing up and how it made her



Amanda Abrams, a recipient of JCRS aid, speaks on how JCRS affected her life. (Photo by Alan Smason)

feel to have such needed support at an early age. "Unfortunately, some parents and some children are dealt cards that they didn't intend or that they didn't ask for and they have to make the best of a situation," Abrams noted. "That's what happened to my mom and to me when I was a child."

The emotional and financial support Abrams and her single parent mom received enabled her and her siblings to attend summer camp at Henry S. Jacobs Camp in Utica, Mississippi and for her to attend college at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business; the University of Southern California, where she received an MBA; Hebrew Union College, where she obtained a Master's degree in Jewish Non-Profit Management Time; and Harvard University Business School, where she completed performance management studies for non-profit work. "Time and time again we had to turn to the Jewish community for help," Abrams continued.

"I know that I wouldn't be the person I am today had it not been for the experiences that I had as a kid," she said. "I wouldn't have had those



Past presidents of JCRS honored at 2017 "Jewish Roots Past, Present and Future" event. (Photo by Alan Smason)



Ned Goldberg, left, accepts \$50,000 check from B'nai B'rith. (Photo by Alan Smason)

experiences had it not been for Jewish Children's Regional Service."

Because of the assistance she received, Abrams decided to become a non-profit Jewish professional working to provide help to other members of the Jewish community. Today, she is a married mother of two sons and the Chief Program and Innovation Officer for the Marcus Jewish Community Center in Atlanta.

Earlier, the regional B'nai B'rith organization presented a check to the JCRS that represented the \$50,000 in funds it had already donated this past year for Baton Rouge flood relief.

The NOCCA Jazz Ensemble provided entertainment throughout the early part of the evening. Silent auctions raised funds for JCRS during the meal.





# Jack Weiss is recipient of Isidore Newman's 2017 Distinguished Alumnus Award

Isidore Newman School selected 1964 graduate Jack Weiss as the recipient of its 2017 Distinguished Alumnus Award. Weiss, a prominent attorney and legal scholar is a nationally-known expert on First Amendment law. He has served as a law professor and chancellor at the Louisiana State University Paul M. Hebert Law Center, and most recently joined the law firm of Liskow & Lewis in New Orleans.

He accepted the award at an evening reception on Thursday, April 6, in Newman's Reynolds Ryan Art Gallery.

"Jack Weiss is known nationwide as one of our most brilliant legal minds, but he has always remained meaningfully engaged in improving our city, state, and region," said Head of School Dale

M. Smith. "We are proud to call him our Distinguished Alumnus and are grateful for his support of Newman."

Weiss attended Newman from kindergarten through his graduation in 1964. He was named the First Honor Student and served as President of the Student Council in his senior year. He was a member of the school's Board of Governors from 1983 to 1998, and served during many of those years as Secretary of the Board and Chair of the Educational Policies Committee.

Weiss has been married to his Newman classmate, the former Ann Robinson, for 47 years. He has three children—David, Eli, and Anne Weiss Delaporte—and five grandchildren.



Jack Weiss

## Metairie gala celebrates 120 years of NCJW

The Greater New Orleans Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) celebrated a major milestone—its past 120 years of local service, advocacy and volunteering for social justice. NCJW's achievements and the women who have led the organization over the decades were honored at an elegant dinner on Saturday, April 22, at the Metairie Country Club. The Yat Pack provided dance music through the night.

Earlier, a patron party, featuring Rhodes Spedale and his Live Jazz Group, preceded the event.

Retired WWL-TV anchor Angela Hill served as emcee. She presented NCJW's top accomplishments, decade by decade, accompanied by music from each period.

The NCJW was established in 1893 by Hannah G. Solomon. The New Orleans Section was created just four years later in 1897. New Orleans is unique in that it is the only city in the country that can boast having three national NCJW Presidents — Ida Friend, Gladys Cahn and Joan Bronk.

According to Hill, for a dozen decades, the Greater New Orleans Section has blended community services with community needs. It has established programs that demonstrate relevance and the need, in many cases, for social and legislative change.

"It is my honor to be hosting this extraordinary event to pay tribute to all of the past presidents of this illustrious organization — The National Council of Jewish Women," Hill said. "Congratulations on achieving such a major milestone — 120



Present president Susan Kierr, extreme left, with past NCJW presidents, (Photo by Michael Maples)

years of dedicated service to the Greater New Orleans Area."

More than 90 silent auction items were up for bid including an Alaskan Cruise, a diamond pendant and numerous hotel and restaurant certificates.

Incoming section president Barbara Kaplinsky and Eileen Wallen served as gala co-chairs.



Co-chairs Eileen Wallen and Barbara Kaplinsky (Photo by Alan Smaison)



# AVODAH honors Steeg, Cotton at Partners in Justice Brunch

By ALAN SMASON

**A**vodah, the Jewish Service Corps, held its sixth annual Partners in Justice Brunch on Sunday, April 22 at Temple Sinai. For the second year in a row, the event was housed at a URJ (Reform) house of worship and for the fifth consecutive year two members of the local Jewish community – Pamela Steeg and Deb Cotton – were selected to receive accolades from the organization for their dedication and leadership in promoting social justice in the area.

The event got underway at 11:00 a.m. with cocktails and food provided for attendees. Music was provided during the early part of the gathering by the Messy Cookers, two of whom are themselves former Avodah members.

Avodah maintains a beit or house in Uptown New Orleans. All of the members live, eat and share their experiences for one year there.

Avodah New Orleans director Dani Levine welcomed attendees to the event and spoke about some of the many volunteers who started their professional careers as volunteers with Avodah and who now work as social justice professionals giving back to the community. She later invited the national executive director, Cheryl Cook, to speak.

Cook noted the the importance of the New Orleans Avodah beit to the overall structure of the national organization following the devastation that followed the landfall of Hurricane Katrina. “I heard from many, many people of people about how many people came down right after the hurricane to help, to be part of rebuilding and then how many people left,” she reflected. “We stayed and we stayed here not because of me, but because of you. It was because we had an amazing, incredible Jewish community here that really saw the potential of having Avodah here.”

Kara Kuland, a current Avodah Corps member, spoke to the crowd about what her experience has



Simone Levine of Court Watch NOLA presents Avodah Partners in justice Award to Deb Cotton. (Photo by Alan Smason)

meant to her.

Event co-chairs Tamara Kreinin and Rosalind Hinton introduced Pamela Steeg first. Steeg has been involved in fighting for reproductive rights as the executive director of Planned Parenthood. Steeg was responsible for helping to erect the new building on S. Claiborne Avenue.

“There are people like me who look forward to working with people like you,” Steeg said in speaking about Avodah Corps members.

A special hand-drawn plaque showing “South Claiborne” was presented to Steeg by Levine for her work.

Deb Cotton, a writer and supporter of the “second line” community of street performers, was one of the 19 victims of the Mother’s Day shootings four years ago. She has suffered severe injuries, but managed to recover well enough to appear in court to advocate for one of her convicted assailants to not receive life in prison for his actions. “I was not a victim,” she boasted. “I was a survivor.”

Introduced by Simone Levine, executive director of Court Watch NOLA, Cotton spoke about her unique perspective as a member of both the Jewish and African-American communities. Cot-



Avodah New Orleans director Dani Levine makes presentation to Pamela Steeg. (Photo by Alan Smason)



Avodah national executive director Cheryl Cook speaks on the importance of the Avodah New Orleans House. (Photo by Alan Smason)

ton said that the tradition of Jewish commitment to repairing the world was one of the chief drives in her life.

She received her hand-drawn plaque from Simone Levine.





Henry Rosenblatt congratulates Holocaust Educators of the Year Christy Nelson, left, and Nicole Sidlovsky. (Photo by Alan Smaison)



JCC Jewish Family Life director Judy Yaellin lights the candle for survivor sisters Anne Levy and Lila Millen. (Photo by Alan Smaison)

# Annual Community-wide Yom HaShoah event held at Uptown JCC

**T**he Community-Wide Yom HaShoah Memorial event was held at the Uptown Jewish Community Center on Sunday evening, April 23.

As always, the event started with the Procession of the Survivors. These remaining local survivors of the Shoah that live in New Orleans entered the Mintz Auditorium holding memorial candles. They were joined by second- and third-generation Shoah decedents.

The large wooden menorah constructed by Holocaust survivor Isak Borenstein of blessed memory was lit followed by a short memorial service for those lost during the Shoah.

The evenings featured speaker was Martin Weiss. Weiss was born in Czechoslovakia in 1929 and was one of nine children. He spent time in the Munkacs ghetto before he was incarcerated in the Auschwitz and

Mauthausen concentration camps. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1946 and served as a member of the U.S. Army during the Korean War.

He shared his story in dialogue with his friend of many years, Tulane University Professor of Practice in the Jewish studies program, Dr. Sarah Cramsey. Weiss appeared in New Orleans courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum speaker's program

In addition, the 12th annual Holocaust Educator of the Year Award was presented jointly to Mandeville High School history teachers Christy Nelson and Nichole Sidlovsky for the outstanding work to integrate Holocaust studies into their curriculum through the creation of a virtual Holocaust museum. Also recognized were the members of the Donald Mintz Anti-Defamation League Washington Youth Delegation attendees.

A dessert reception followed the memorial program in the JCC lobby with commemorative photographs

and memorabilia from the WW2 exhibit, "Lawyers Without Rights: Jewish Lawyers in Germany Under the Third Reich."



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# Zydeco performance featured at Touro's annual Jazz Fest Shabbat

By ALAN SMASON

**C**all it expected. Call it overdue. Just don't call it Cajun. The 2017 Jazz Fest Shabbat held on Friday night, April 29, at Touro Synagogue starred accordionist Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes and the Louisiana Sunspots. This marked

the first time Zydeco performers were at the center of the annual music and religious celebration.

In a prior interview with CCJN, Touro Synagogue's cantor David Mintz shared that the selection of the genre was exciting! After more than 25 years of celebrating the local music culture, it occurred to the Jazz Fest Shabbat committee members that Zydeco was a genre of music that was never explored.

The evening's performance was a combination of new and beloved favorites. As in the past two years, New York composer and arranger Toby Singer was commissioned to write a world premiere piece that was performed at the Jazz Fest Shabbat. Singer composed a Zydeco-tinged Psalm 96 (Shir L'Adonai Shir Chadash).

The sanctuary crowd exceeded more than 900 attendees.







# Israeli paratroopers re-create iconic photo on 50th anniversary of the Six-Day War

By **ANDREW TOBIN**

JERUSALEM (JTA) – David Rubinger’s iconic photograph of three paratroopers at the Western Wall is the defining image of the 1967 Six-Day War.

The men in the photo — Dr. Yitzhak Yifat, Tzion Karasenti and Chaim Oshri — have proudly served as symbols of the historic Israeli victory for the past five decades. But in an interview with JTA, they said the war for them was just as much about loss.

“To liberate the Kotel was something amazing,” Yifat told JTA, referring to the Western Wall. “But we never celebrated. What was there to celebrate? We had lost many of our friends.”

Between June 5 and 15, in honor of the Six-Day War’s 50th anniversary, the three former paratroopers, now in their 70s, will re-create Rubinger’s photo in their first-ever tour of the United States. The tour, sponsored by Friends of the IDF, will stop at Jewish communities and other locations in the Cleveland, Detroit, San Francisco, Chicago, Atlanta, Boston and Baltimore areas. They will also recount some of the sacrifices that were made in the battle for Jerusalem.

This week all three spoke to JTA at Tel Aviv University in a spirited four-way conversation arranged by Friends of the IDF.

On June 5, 1967, the 55th Paratroopers Brigade was deployed to Jerusalem by bus. The official mission was to protect supply convoys headed to Mount Scopus, the only enclave in eastern Jerusalem that Israel had managed to hold on to in the 1948 War of Independence. But there was talk in the High Command and among soldiers about taking the Old City in Jordanian-controlled eastern Jerusalem.

As they approached the divided city, Yifat recalled being surprised by how loud were the sounds of Jordanian shells hitting Jewish neighborhoods. He, Karasenti and Oshri were reservists in their early 20s and had never seen serious combat. Soon after they arrived, Jews came into the streets to greet them, offering coffee and sandwiches and welcoming them into their homes. Some of the paratroopers accepted offers to make phone calls to wives, girlfriends and parents back home.

“It was amazing to see how everyone embraced us,” Karasenti told JTA. “All the sectors of Israeli society came together, it didn’t matter if you were Ashkenazi, Sephardi, religious, haredi, a kibbutznik, whatever.”

Following some hurried planning, the paratroopers crossed into no-man’s land after midnight. Dozens were wounded by Jordanian fire before they even entered eastern Jerusalem. Through the night and the next day, the paratroopers fought their way toward



From left, Israeli paratroopers Tzion Karasenti, Yitzhak Yifat and Chaim Oshri standing at the Western Wall after Israel captured the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, June 7, 1967. (David Rubinger/GPO)

Mount Scopus, the only Jewish enclave in eastern Jerusalem, and to the outskirts of the Old City.

The 66th division — to which Karasenti, Yifat and Oshri were assigned — faced the hardest fighting, hand-to-hand combat against elite Jordanian troops in the trenches at Ammunition Hill, which overlooked the road to Mount Scopus. Yifat narrowly avoided being impaled by a Jordanian bayonet — and still has a scar on his face to show for it.

“It was like a hell. The trenches were filled with bodies, and you couldn’t tell if they were friends or enemies,” Yifat said. “At one point, I jumped on an Arab and shot him dead. As I was reloading my magazine, another Arab attacked me with a bayonet, and got me right here. I kicked him between the legs and shot him dead, too.”

Nearly 100 of the paratroopers were killed and 400 wounded before they paused for the night.

The next morning, June 7, the paratroopers found that most of the Jordanian troops had retreated from Jerusalem. Israel’s Cabinet, long divided about whether to capture the Old City, finally gave the go-ahead. Motta Gur, the paratroopers’ famed commander, delivered the news over the radio, saying: “Fifty-fifth paratroopers brigade, we are sitting on the ridge overlooking the Old City, and we shall soon enter it — the Old City of Jerusalem, which generations have dreamed of and longed for. We will be the first to enter.”

The paratroopers rushed forward amid sniper fire from remaining Jordanian soldiers and rammed their way through the Lions’ Gate of the Old City. From there they made their way through narrow stone alleys and up to the Temple Mount and the Western Wall.

“The Temple Mount is in our hands,” Gur reported.

Religious and secular paratroopers alike were awed by their return to the heart of the ancient Jewish



From left, Tzion Karasenti, Yitzhak Yifat and Chaim Oshri standing on the Tel Aviv University campus in Ramat Aviv, Israel, May 7, 2017. (Andrew Tobin)

homeland.

“I didn’t realize where I was until I saw the Israeli flag flying above the stones, said Karasenti, an observant Jew. “I started to cry. Everyone was emotional. The whole nation of Israel was in ecstasy, euphoria. You can’t even imagine what it was like.”

While Yifat, Karasenti and Chaim Oshri were walking along the wall, Rubinger, who died in March at 92, lay on the ground and snapped the photo that would make them — and him — famous. Within days, the image had appeared in newspapers around the world.

After the war, Oshri became a chemist whose research was key in dairy production. In 1996 he worked for the minister of religious affairs. Karasenti, a director and choreographer, went on to found a dance troupe and performed all over Israel. Itzhak earned his medical degree from the Technion in Haifa in 1974 and specialized in gynecology.

Soon after the war — which saw Israel capture the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and the Sinai — the survivors of the 66th division returned to Ammunition Hill, where they stacked stones into a memorial for the paratroopers who died there. Atop of the pile, they placed a helmet. On the other side of the hill, they erected a smaller memorial for the Jordanian soldiers.

“We thought they fought very bravely, and many of them died,” Yifat said. “Somebody has since removed that memorial. I’m very angry about it.”

While Yifat has publicly expressed some ambivalence about Israel’s rule over Palestinians who live in the territories it took in 1967, he said he had no doubt that Israel must retain all of Jerusalem.

“We fought and lost so many friends to unite Jerusalem for the Jewish world,” he said. “There’s no going backwards.”



# Final figures give Federation top honors for Give NOLA Day

Despite initial reports to the contrary, the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans made it a three-peat at this year's Give NOLA Day! Final tallies showed that Federation garnered the top of this year's list of eligible small non-profit organizations with 156 donors giving \$121,626. That means it will receive an additional \$10,000 gift that it had also been awarded for its efforts in 2015 and 2016.

The gift giving campaign is run annually by the Greater New Orleans Foundation (GNOF) that takes in the monies and sparks competition from among its participating area non-profit organizations, offering incentives for the highest totals reached and the most donors during the course of the 24-hour event of giving. This year donations were accepted by GNOF for several days prior to the May 2 event.

Other Jewish community non-profits who bene-

fited from the campaign were the Jewish Community Day School with 91 donors and \$15,736. Tulane Hillel's 75 donors brought in \$11,968. Touro Informary Foundation's 143 donors raised \$10,944. Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans had 55 donations totaling \$9,742, while the Jewish Children's Regional Service had 66 donations for a \$4,612 total.

The Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana garnered 27 donors for a \$4,156 total, while the South Central Region office of the Anti-Defamation League acquired \$4,043 from 79 donors.

Other notable Jewish non-profit organizations that picked up sizable donations were Avodah with \$2,442 raised from its 39 donors and the National Council of Jewish Women, whose 35 donations totaled \$1,529.

The final three Jewish community organizations involved in the campaign – Hadassah, the



Northshore Jewish Congregation and Shir Chadash – together raised \$1,545, with Hadassah's 21 donors raking in 46% of that total.

## Horowitz releases new Russian book

Tulane University's Jewish Studies Department Sizeler Family chair Brian Horowitz has a new academic book featuring 12 different essays about the Jewish community connection to Russia. Horowitz, who was the first chair of the academic department that began first as a Jewish studies program, will step down as department chair in June, but remain on the Tulane faculty.

The book titled "The Russian-Jewish Tradition" is a scholarly work that contains essays from the beginning of his career as well as from archives in New York, Jerusalem and St. Petersburg, according to Horowitz.

"All of them are by me except for the introduction by William Brumfield, who is a scholar of Russian art and architecture at Tulane," Horowitz explained. "There might be something for everybody (in the book)," he promised.

Two of the essays are about Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the revisionist militant Zionist, he continued, while two more are about the old cheder (Hebrew school) system that existed in Russia until the government crackdown.

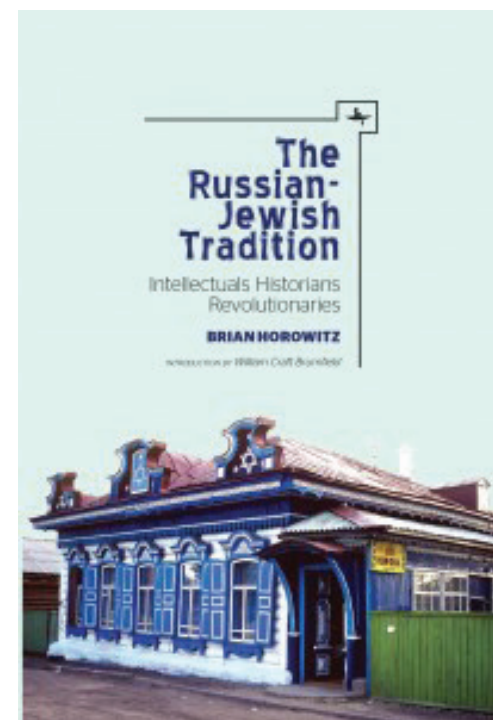
There's also an essay on Jewish historian Saul Borovoi from the Ukraine, who is noted as having survived both the Holocaust and Stalin's Doctors

Plot of 1952, in which he planned to expel all the Russian Jews in boxcars, Horowitz stated.

"Luckily after, Stalin's death in the spring of '53, the threats were rescinded," he remarked. Additionally, when the secret service – the MKDB-predecessors to the KGB came to arrest him and take over his apartment, they found he had lived in a communal one-room shared apartment. "He was a very modest person," added Horowitz. "They left disappointed."

Another essay is on Simon Dubnov and his attitudes towards Jews living in the Diaspora. He changed his attitude towards Palestine in the 1930s, Horowitz said. "Earlier he had been in favor of Zionism, but not as a political entity, as a sovereign nation," Horowitz said. "He was surprised at its survival and growth in the 1930s. and was surprised to see the use of Hebrew as a spoken language," he continued. "He was glad to see this cultural autonomy, this Jewish autonomy. He expected to see it happen in Poland or the United States, but not in Palestine."

Although the cost of the academic work is about \$80, Horowitz said that a number of the articles are free at his website. (<https://tulane.academia.edu/BrianHorowitz>)



Brian Horowitz's "The Russian-Jewish Tradition" published by Academic Press. - book jacket.jpg





# Bartons celebrated at Temple Sinai fete

**W**hile Herbert Barton has been celebrated for his many years of service as Temple Sinai administrator, both he and his wife had never been celebrated as a couple. That was until Saturday evening, May 13, when Temple Sinai held its annual gala and honored the Bartons for their more than 50 years of service to the temple, Louisiana's oldest Reform temple and the largest Jewish house of worship in Louisiana.

Herbert Barton is executive director emeritus, while his wife Sue is a Sisterhood member and former Temple Sinai president.

A cocktail party for gala patrons and underwriters, with hors d'oeuvres from Ruth's Chris and Galatoire's, opened the evening.

The formal program began with welcoming remarks from then-President Bob Brickman followed by words from Senior Rabbi Matthew Reimer, who delivered the opening prayer and blessing.

Dinner for the almost 200 guests was served courtesy of Rommel's Catering. Cakes donated by Antoine's Bakery, Dickie Brennan's Steakhouse, Dorignac's Food Center, Haydel's Bakery, Maurice French Pastries, Maple Street Patisserie, Melanie Blitz Catering, Melissa's Fine Pastries, Omni Royal Orleans, Robert Fresh Market, Royal Cakery, and Windsor Court Hotel were spread out among the tables and allowed guests to mingle as they sampled the different flavors.

Temple Sinai Cantor Colman and Cantorial Soloist Victoria May of Congregation Gates of Prayer, with accompaniment by pianist Marcus St. Julien, provided entertainment.

Raffles for a Roberto Coin gold and diamond ring and an Ida Kohlmeyer serigraph print proved to be amusing as well when president Brickman and Herbert Barton were announced as the winners.

Additional speeches were made by Rabbi Emeritus Edward Paul Cohn and Herbert and Sue. In their speeches to the audience both of the Bartons shared fond memories and expressed their love for Temple Sinai.



Temple Sinai honorees Herbert and Sue Barton. (Photo by Alan Smason)

"I must say that Temple Sinai has been not only a major part of my life, but a most important part," said Herbert. "I have been blessed to have worked with Rabbi Feibelman, Rabbi Blackman, both of blessed memory, with Rabbi Cohn, and now, for almost a year, Rabbi Reimer. Of course, there were several other rabbis along the way," Herbert said to the laughter of the crowd.

The Bartons were joined by their children Barbara, Chip, Rozanne, Sherry, and Gus.

# Jewish rapper Drake receives 13 honors at Billboard Music Awards

**A**ubrey Drake Graham, the Jewish rapper known as "Drake" received 13 honors at the Billboard Music Awards. The most prestigious of his awards included being named the top male artist, top Billboard 200 artist and the top rap artist.

As a young child, Drake attended a Jewish day school and celebrated his Bar Mitzvah in Canada. At the age of 15, he was chosen for his break-out role as Jimmy Brooks in the successful Canadian series, *Degrassi: The Next Generation*. In 2006 he began to concentrate on his music and released his first mixtape, a free download. Within three years he had gained popularity and financial success with the release of his debut commercial album, "Thank Me Later."

In 2006 he began to concentrate on his music and released his first mixtape that was a free download. Within three years he began to gain popularity and financial success after the release of his debut commercial album, *Thank Me Later*.

He identifies himself as being Jewish and celebrates many major religious holidays.



Drake posing with his trophies at the T-Mobile Arena in Las Vegas during the Billboard Music Awards, May 21, 2017. (David Becker/Getty Images)



# Arnie Fielkow tapped as next Federation CEO

**T**he Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans announced on May 17 the selection of Arnie D. Fielkow as its new chief executive officer. Fielkow was selected after a comprehensive national search and will return to New Orleans, where he and his family previously resided from 2000-2011. Fielkow will begin his new duties on August 15, succeeding executive director Michael Weil, who officially goes on leave prior to Fielkow's arrival.

"I am extremely excited to join the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans as its new executive officer," said Fielkow. "For more than 100 years, the Federation has been a major part of bettering the greater New Orleans Jewish and non-Jewish communities—and it is an absolute honor and a privilege to be afforded the opportunity to work with Federation's dedicated Board of Trustees, other organizational leaders and Federation's constituent and beneficiary agencies in once again giving back to a community my family and I dearly love. The Jewish Federation has tremendous untapped potential and we are so excited to return home!"

Weil has been the Federation executive director since 2006, following the interim term of Roselle Ungar, the present Jewish Family Service executive director. Last year he announced his intention to leave his position in order to move to Israel and be closer to his extended family there.

Fielkow is quite familiar with Federation and its constituent agencies. "Through its extensive development efforts, the Federation supports more than a dozen Jewish affiliate agencies throughout the New Orleans area, collaborating with those organizations to strengthen the New Orleans community at large," he stated. Fielkow previously served as Councilman-at-large for the New Orleans City Council and was elected the president of the Council during his six-year term of office. Working closely with Federation, Councilman Fielkow was involved with many of the

outreach and community partnerships Federation has forged with the New Orleans area African-American, Catholic, and Muslim communities. Fielkow also established ties with Nourish, a community-wide partnership who mission is to combat homelessness and poverty in the city.

Since his departure from New Orleans, Fielkow moved to Chicago, his former home, where he served as president and CEO of the National Basketball Retired Players Association (NBRPA). According to the Federation statement, "Fielkow helped the Association reach unprecedented financial success, doubled the NBRPA membership levels, and helped grow membership programming and key business and community partnerships, including with the NBA, the NBRPA's long-time supporter."

Prior to his election, Fielkow was the highly visible executive vice president of the New Orleans Saints, who was responsible for the NFL team's marketing, business, regional sales and interface with local government. Following the devastation from Hurricane Katrina, when the Superdome was destroyed and the future of the NFL franchise was unknown, Fielkow urged Saints owner Tom Benson to keep the franchise in New Orleans. With Benson contemplating a move to San Antonio, where he had other, more viable business interests, Fielkow famously fought so fervently that he was fired by Benson. Fielkow's stance earned him the admiration of thousands of Saints fans and eventually led to his popularity at the polls on his inaugural run in politics a few months later.

"Arnie's return to New Orleans as our chief executive gives the Federation an experienced community leader to continue the dynamic progress we've achieved in the decade since Katrina," said Federation president Dr. Edward Soll. "We welcome Arnie and his family back home and celebrate Arnie's new leadership role in our community."

Henry A. Miller, the Federation's president-elect,



Former New Orleans City Council president Arnie Fielkow at an event to urge the return of Hamas prisoner IDF soldier Gilad Shalit. (Photo by Alan Smaon)

thanked the members of the search committee who interviewed prospective candidates over the course of the last several months. "I look forward to working with Arnie as he assumes the office of chief executive," he concurred. "His professional accomplishments are stellar and I am highly confident he will lead the Federation and community to unprecedented success in the coming years."

"Arnie has done a tremendous job taking the National Basketball Retired Players Association to the next level," said NBRPA chairman of the board Dwight Davis. "He has had a strong presence with our business partners, whose respect he quickly earned, and he has well served our members. We thank Arnie for his outstanding and tireless contributions to our association and wish him continued success."

Dr. Susan Fielkow, Arnie's wife, will also be returning to New Orleans as the new head of Developmental Pediatrics at Ochsner Health System. She begins her term of office during the summer.

## OP-ED: The Fielkow Era beckons

**T**he news this week is very good. Good for the Jewish community. Good for the New Orleans community. And especially good for the future of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans.



After an exhaustive nationwide search, the committee charged with finding the replacement for the retiring executive director of Federation, Michael Weil, has finished its work. They announced the news on Wednesday.

Arnie (as in former NFL Saints franchise executive vice president, former New Orleans City Council president and National Basketball Retired Players Association CEO) Fielkow is coming home to New Orleans.

We can't be more overjoyed or optimistic about what this means for Federation and in particular what it will mean for the way Federation could potentially interface with the outside community.

What Arnie has done all of his career is build bridges rather than erect walls. He is a masterful organizer and a charismatic leader who considers all sides of an issue rather than be arbitrary or capricious. His work on the City Council was exemplary.

We believe this is a change that will bode well for

New Orleans and will enhance the position of the Jewish community for some time to come.

While the term of his office doesn't begin for another few months (mid-August), we were pleased to hear that he will be arriving in New Orleans next month to begin the laborious process of getting up to speed prior to Weil's eventual departure for Israel in September.

The CCJN pledges all of its resources to help make this transition bright, easy and transparent. We know that Arnie Fielkow and his wife Susan, a renowned pediatrician, will once again enhance the New Orleans landscape with their presence. We can't wait.

Welcome home, Arnie and Susan.





# Wainer, Teen Life Counts celebrated at JFS 'Rhythm & Soul Gala' at Audubon Tea Room

By ALAN SMASON

After 25 years as program coordinator of Teen Life Counts, Ellie Wainer was happy enough to know that the program she helped to bring to schools across the metropolitan area had probably saved dozens if not scores of suicidal teenagers' lives. Both strong-willed and sympathetic, she never sought any gratitude or public acknowledgment from her peers at Jewish Family Service or from the community she served. It was something she felt compelled to do, was squarely part of her character and makeup and she was more than happy to do so.

At a gathering of 500 community members on Sunday, May 21 at the Audubon Tea Room, Wainer was personally saluted by Jewish Family Service at its 2017 annual Rhythm and Soul Gala. Wainer, who has worked with the program since its founding, has seen it grow to the largest suicide prevention program in south Louisiana, housed at approximately 40 area private, parochial and charter schools. The program now annually reaches more than 2700 students, ages 12-18.

On accepting a beautiful hand-crafted glass award to commemorate the occasion, Wainer explained that part of her commitment to suicide prevention was due to the effect that a cousin's suicide had upon her. She remembered her cousin Gail as having it all. "She was beautiful. She was smart. She was funny," Wainer recalled. Her cousin was pursuing a law career at a time when women were still in relatively rare numbers practicing law.

Then, she shot herself in her psychiatrist's driveway.

"She had just graduated from law school. I remember asking myself 'Why? Why didn't she reach out for help? And why (when) she was so close to achieving all of her life's dreams?'" Wainer questioned.

"Gail seemed to have it all, yet her

depression made her seem alone, isolated and worthless," she continued.

"But there is hope. The truth is that you are never alone. There's always help out there. That is the core message of Teen Life Counts," she averred. "We all know how many we lose, but we'll never know how many we save."

Wainer credited the extraordinary volunteers who help to shape and deliver the program, many of whom were in attendance at the event. "Suicide is never an option," she pronounced. It is what she has said in every classroom that she has entered, Wainer stated.

She read a letter from a teenager, who had been diagnosed with a brain tumor two years earlier and who had contemplated suicide, holding a gun up to his head. In his letter he expressed thanks to Wainer, especially when he considered the phrase "Suicide is never an option." According to the letter, he decided his life right then that he would be dedicated to helping similar young adults with brain injuries by becoming a psychologist.

"Thank you for being such an inspiration to me because I believe God puts people here for a reason," Wainer recalled the words from the letter.

At the beginning of the evening, JFS executive director Roselle Ungar stated that the turnout was the largest gross in dollars ever raised by JFS. She noted that the generosity of JFS volunteers had helped the organization reach over 5,500 individuals in need of care, 3000 of them through Teen Life Counts. She credited her staff and the board of directors for making the event such a success. "Because of you JFS will continue the compassionate life-changing work that has been accomplished by this agency for almost 70 years," Ungar boasted. "I firmly believe that when we reach out to someone in need, as we do every day at JFS, it allows us to touch someone's life and shows that we care



Ellie Wainer accepts the thanks from Jewish Family Services at the Rhythm & Soul gala on May 21. (Photo by Alan Smason)



JFS executive director Roselle Ungar, left, with former executive directors Julianne Issacson and Deena Gerber, right, framing honoree Ellie Wainer. (Photo by Alan Smason)

as individuals and as a community."

Ungar read a congratulatory email from incoming Federation executive director and CEO Arnie Fielkow congratulating Wainer. Ungar also acknowledged her predecessors, former JFS executive directors Julianne Issacson and Deena Gerber.

In her speech Wainer also credited Issacson and Gerber for their help and support through the years. She also acknowledged the scaling of the summit of Mt. Everest by local mountain climber Monica Kalozdi, who raised more than \$100,000 for Teen Life Counts with her climb in 2005.

Wainer thanked her husband Bruce and children for their support through the years. She concluded with an admonition to tackle the dark subject of suicide as a way of combating it. Ignoring it only allows it to happen, she stated.

"By talking about suicide, we can take away the power. By shining a light on these issues, we can bring these kids out of the dark. Thank you so much and I am so humbled to be recognized for this honor," said at the conclusion of her acceptance speech.

Jazz music was provided by Jewish musician Joe Krown on piano with Tom Fitzpatrick on saxophone.



# It was 50 years ago today: Bruce Spizer releases 'Sgt. Pepper's' book

By ALAN SMASON

For those of a certain age, it was 50 years ago today that The Beatles' "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" was released in both Great Britain and the United States, heralding the legendary "Summer of Love" and forever changing the musical landscape.

The release of this album with its unusual cover art featuring the band members costumed in military wear amid a sea of faces drawn from entertainment, pop culture and literature, became a defining moment for most of the Fab Four's fans. It is against this backdrop of fan appreciation that renowned Beatles expert Bruce Spizer again found the need to document and expound the phenomenon in a book, his latest self-published volume titled "The Beatles and Sgt. Pepper: A Fans' Perspective."

Spizer, a local tax attorney by day, has just published the 170-page work, which includes a number of remembrances and essays by himself, noted Beatles authorities and other fans. The cover includes part of the artwork used in the interior sleeve that protected the original albums and the font is designed to emulate that found on the drum where the album's title appears. It was selected by Spizer's graphic designer, Diana Thornton, with whom he has worked on every one of his previous books.

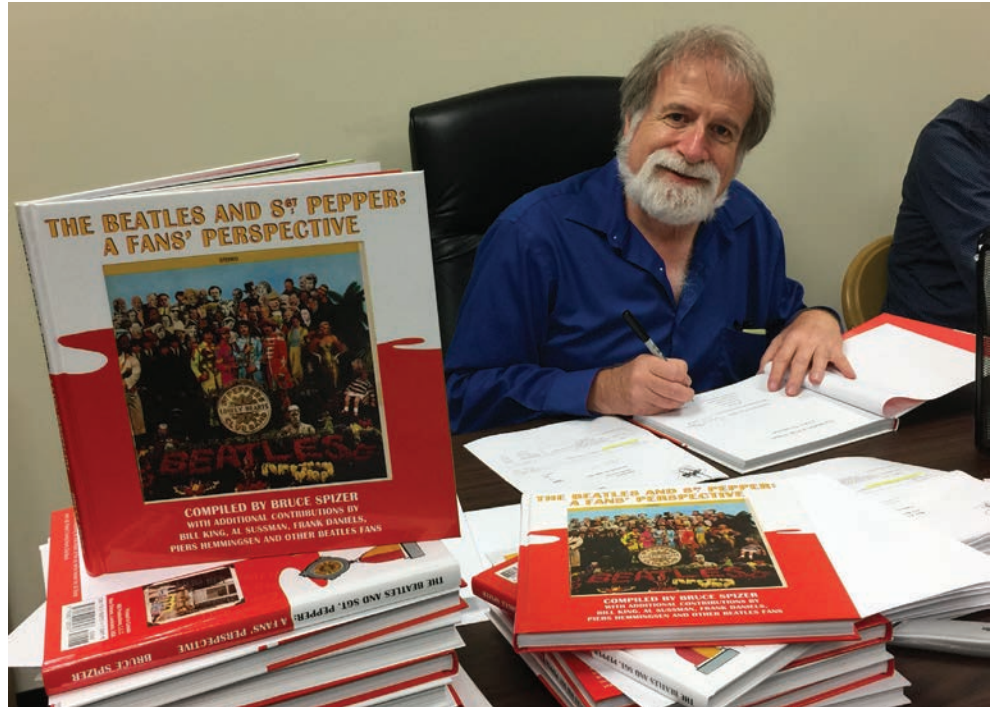
"She and I both have a view that we like to have a simple design that is not overly cluttered," he stated. "Having worked together for many years, she kind of anticipates what I'm looking for." Spizer is comfortable with having her layout the entire cover design and allowing him to add a "tweak" or two afterwards.

Spizer's photo of his own stereo Capitol Records release serves as part of the design work Thornton used for the book, which is published through his 498 Productions company.

Among the cardboard cutout figures seen on the album cover are several wax figures including all of The Beatles as they appeared in their early careers with mop tops and boxer Sonny Liston and British actress Diana Dors, whom some fans confused with the more well-known luminaries Cassius Clay and Marilyn Monroe.

While Spizer doesn't have a key to the cover figures in the book ("It's been done many times."), he is so well-informed that he can rattle off a number of facts or point to figures who are partially obscured without so much as looking at the cover.

"Shirley Temple is on the cover three times,"



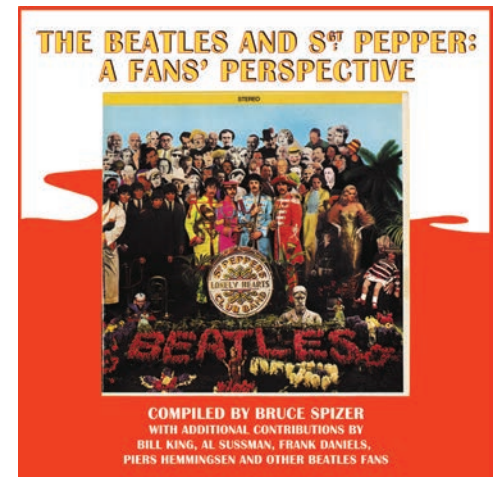
Author Bruce Spizer signing copies of his latest work. (Photo courtesy Bruce Spizer)

he noted, adding that in one case she appears as a doll. "Albert Einstein is on the cover, but John's left shoulder blocks him, so you really don't see Einstein."

Not only does he know who is in the eclectic group. He knows who didn't make the cut. "It's not so much who was included. The most controversial figures were excluded," he pointed out. "That was Gandhi, because EMI was concerned that their Indian affiliate would be offended; and Hitler was excluded. There are pictures where you can see the cutout of Hitler off to the side."

The project began last year when Spizer prepared an essay on the effect the album had from the perspective of American fans. He had initially considered sending it into a magazine, but because he was afraid that it might be edited in a way that might diminish it and that it might not have the right images to accompany it, he thought instead about publishing a 40-page magazine of his own. That project became much larger when he asked several of his friends and fellow Beatles authorities to contribute their own articles or essays about their Sgt. Pepper's experiences.

Both Bill King, the editor and his associate editor Al Sussman of Beatlefan magazine were asked to contribute their thoughts. Piers Hemmingsen, a Canadian Beatles authority, provided a Canadian



Bruce Spizer's latest Beatles book on the "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" album. (Cover photo courtesy 498 Productions)

perspective. Noted Beatles discographer Frank Daniels added his collection of rock groups and solo musicians who through the years in interviews had claimed direct influence from the "Sgt. Pepper" album.

Then, Spizer decided to expand the book even more and open it up to fans from all walks of life.





## SPIZER | 30

"On my website I asked for people to send in fan recollections about 'Sgt. Pepper,'" he said, indicating the response was almost crushing.

"Where I was expecting a few dozen, I ended up with over 80 fan recollections in the book," he continued. While many of the responses were from unknown fans, Spizer was taken aback that other Beatles authorities like authors Mark Lewisohn (a renowned Jewish-British Beatles expert), Jude Kessler and Chuck Gunderson wanted to add their reflections to his work.

But it wasn't long before other well-known musicians like songwriter and rocker Billy Joel, Monkees bassist and keyboardist Peter Tork and Wings drummer Denny Seiwell joined in the procession of fans sending in submissions.

"The interesting thing is there were a lot of different themes that did crop up such as people who recalled listening to the album with one or both of their parents or a relative going out and getting the album for them and that this gave more meaning to the album," Spizer elaborated. "In many ways 'Sgt. Pepper' was bringing the generations together...in contrast to song 'She's Leaving Home.'"

Spizer said many fans had deeply-felt reactions to the song "When I'm Sixty-Four" because of the connections it registered with them as teenagers and how they regard that song in many ways. In some cases, the song represents their parents and in other cases, the song reinforces the notion as to the length of years they now own.

Because very little of the book has to do with the documentation of the recording sessions or the famous musicians themselves, but refers instead as to how the album affected popular culture and individuals, several graphics choices proved daunting. How would he document the fans and their connections?

As it turned out, several fans also sent in photos of them holding the "Sgt. Pepper" album in a variety of locations and situations. "But there were not a lot of pictures with them and the album cover," he noted. Another reason that so few were around is that photos 50 years ago required camera and film that needed to be processed or an instant photo process like a Polaroid.

Spizer did manage to collect about a half-dozen photos, which he considered essential. "I think they add a lot to the book," he reflected. The book came together very quickly. He describes the work as being in three sections: the first section is comprised of essays about the effect the album had on fans in America, Canada and Great Britain. The second section contains over 80 fan recollections from as far away as Russia by someone who had listened to a copy that had been smuggled behind the Iron Curtain. The final section contains a breakdown of the album and goes song by song



An image of fans with the Sgt. Pepper album. (Photo courtesy of 498 Productions)

detailing the personnel on the recordings.

Spizer began executing the publishing phase in February and the work was finished in short order. Initial copies of the work began to be released in late May with a targeted release date of the anniversary of the release of the album. "I had this book done in Canada and so it took about a month from the time I sent it in," he said.

Spizer was invited this week to appear in Los Angeles at the Grammy Award Hall of Fame in ceremonies to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the release of the album.

After each of his most recent books were released, Spizer has steadfastly maintained he does not plan to release any future books. And then something happens and he is deep into yet another project. "If I find the project worthy of doing, then I probably will do it, but I don't have any plans to do any additional books at this time," he deflected.

Meanwhile, he continues to act as a consultant to both Apple Records and Universal Music Group, quite the acknowledgment that he has grown from an admiring fan into a formidable source of information.



Young Beatles fans with their album. (Courtesy 498 Productions)

Who knows? When he's 64 – in two years – he may be ready to release yet another book. But as for now, he is happy to release this, his ninth detailed work on The Beatles.

"The Beatles and Sgt. Pepper: A Fans Perspective" is available online at <http://www.beatle.net>.





# Waffles on Maple opens second location in Metairie

Owner Rotem Dahan, announced a second, expanded location for his Waffles on Maple dairy kitchen in Metairie at 4650 West Esplanade Avenue South. However, the new location will have some differences from his original Uptown location.


"We've developed more waffles," he explained in an exclusive interview with the CCJN. "The concept got bigger and the feedback that we get from the people is good. We always come up with new waffles."

"Here it's not Cholov Yisroel. It's not Pat Yisroel, so I have more to play with the products that I'm buying," he said. "I have more choices."

While the level of kashrut is not as high at the newest location, it still bears certification from the Louisiana Kashrus Committee headed by Rabbi Yossie Nemes.




The interior of the newest location of Waffles on Maple. (Photo by Alan Smaison)



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Owner Rotem Dahan seen at his latest location, 4650 West Esplanade Avenue in Metairie. (Photo by Alan Smaison)

Hours of the newest Waffles on Maple, 4650 West Esplanade Avenue South are 7:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Friday hours are 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. and closed on Saturdays and religious holidays.



Outside dining opportunities at the newest Waffles on Maple. (Photo by Alan Smaison)





# UPDATE: Chicago LGBT march expels 3 Jews carrying rainbow flags with Star of David

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

Three people carrying Jewish Pride flags, rainbow-striped flags with a Star of David at the center, were asked to leave a pro-LGBT march on Saturday, June 24, in the Chicago neighborhood of Little Village.

Representatives of the Dyke March Collective approached Laurie Grauer, the Midwest manager of A Wider Bridge, a Jewish LGBT advocacy group for Israel, and two of her associates, about the flags in question before the march began.

The march was part of the final celebrations for Pride Month, which is celebrated every June to recall the 1969 Stonewall Inn riots in Manhattan, considered the tipping point for the gay and lesbian movement in the United States. The last Sunday of the month has also been designated as Pride Day.

"It was a flag from my congregation which celebrates my queer, Jewish identity which I have done for over a decade marching in the Dyke March with the same flag," she told the Windy City Times, a Chicago area LGBT website.

According to Grauer, one Dyke March Collective member inquired if she was pro-Zionist, and when she responded affirmatively, she was told to leave. A Windy City Times reporter who reached out to a spokesperson from the Dyke March Collective for comment was told that the flags "made people feel unsafe" and that the march was "anti-Zionist" and "pro-Palestinian."

"They were telling me to leave because my flag was a trigger to people that they found offensive," Grauer told the reporter. She pointed out that on all those previous occasions "I had never been harassed or asked to leave and I had always carried the flag with me."

Eleanor Shoshany-Anderson, who identifies as an Iranian Jew, was also asked to leave, according to the newspaper's website.

"I was here as a proud Jew in all of my identities," she told them. "The Dyke March is supposed to be intersectional. I don't know why my identity is

excluded from that. I feel that, as a Jew, I am not welcome here."

A statement on a Dyke March Chicago social media account posted yesterday, June 25, added:

"Sadly, our celebration of dyke, queer and trans solidarity was partly overshadowed by our decision to ask three individuals carrying Israeli flags superimposed on rainbow flags to leave the rally. This decision was made after they repeatedly expressed support for Zionism during conversations with Dyke March Collective members."

Grauer elaborated: "People asked me if I was a Zionist and I said 'yes, I do care about the state of Israel but I also believe in a two-state solution and an independent Palestine.'"

"It's hard to swallow the idea of inclusion when you are excluding people from that," she told the paper. "People are saying 'You can be gay but not in this way.' We do not feel welcomed. We do not feel included."

Dyke March Collective organizers specifically accused A Wider Bridge for what they termed as "provocative actions at other LGBTQ events," although they did not specifically name those events and dates. They also pointed to the organization's touting of Israel's liberal attitudes towards gay and lesbian tolerance as a means to "pinkwash the violent occupation of Palestine."

Pinkwashing is a portmanteau of the words "pink" and "whitewashing" that LGBT activists have coined in order to bash companies or states like Israel that tout their queer-friendliness so as to be perceived as tolerant, modern or progressive.

A Wider Bridge issued a release concerning the affair that read in part: "The Dyke March has failed to live up to their goal of 'bridging together communities.' That the organizers would choose to dismiss long-time community members for choosing to express their Jewish identity or spirituality runs counter to the very values the Dyke March claims to uphold, and veers down a dangerous



Laurie Grauer from A Wider Bridge, right, holds one of two "Jewish Pride" flags that forced her ouster from the Chicago Dyke Collective March on Saturday, June 24. (Photo by Dorit Jordan Dotan)



Laurie Grauer, right, at the Tel Aviv Gay Pride Parade in 2015. (Photo courtesy Laurie Grauer and Oy! Chicago, JUF)

path toward anti-Semitism."

They demanded that the Dyke March issue "a full public apology for dismissing LGBTQ Jews from the March" and that they affirm "their own values as a safe place for all LGBTQ people, including the Jewish Community."

According to the Windy City Times, one marcher, identified as Ruthie Steiner, said the decision to eject the three Jewish participants was "horrific."

"This is not what this is community is supposed to be about," the newspaper reported. "I'm German-born. Am I pinkwashing by being here and supporting my community? Is every nation which does not have a clean civil-rights record and also hosts a pride

parade guilty of pinkwashing? With all the people that so hate the LGBTQ community, for it to tear itself apart in self-hatred makes no sense at all."

The statement from the Chicago Dyke March Collective attempted to explain their actions. "The Chicago Dyke March Collective is explicitly not anti-Semitic, we are anti-Zionist," the statement read. "The Chicago Dyke March Collective supports the liberation of Palestine and all oppressed people everywhere... From Palestine to Mexico, border walls have got to go!"

The New Orleans Pride Festival held a similar parade on Sunday, June 18. The executive director has been contacted, or anti-Zionist stances exist for the local parade.



# Rabbi Yochanan Rivkin assumes permanent pulpit at Anshe Sfard

By ALAN SMASON

**W**ith his acceptance of the interim rabbinical post last year, Rabbi Yochanan Rivkin became the first rabbi in the New Orleans Jewish community's history to assume a rabbinic seat previously occupied by a sibling. More local Jewish history was marked two weeks ago with the acceptance of a new contract establishing Rabbi Yochanan as the permanent rabbi at Congregation Anshe Sfard, the last remaining non-Chabad Orthodox Jewish synagogue in New Orleans.

Rabbi Mendel Rivkin served in the same post for seven years from 1998 until 2005, when the flooding from Hurricane Katrina forced the premature termination of his contract slated to end later that year.

While details of the new contract between Rabbi Yochanan and the members of the board of directors of the congregation are not a matter of public record, president Gary Remer was able to verify that the terms of the contract run more than one year.

"Things have obviously changed a lot since my brother was there," the younger Rabbi Rivkin told the CCJN in an exclusive interview. "I think probably 75 percent of the people that were going to shul when my brother was there, are no longer there and 75 percent who are going now weren't going when my brother was there."

Rivkin and other candidates interviewed for the position over the course of the previous six months following the resignation of Rabbi David Polsky in 2016. The extension of a contract gives Rabbi Yochanan Rivkin permanent status as a rabbi and symbolically affords him the full faith and confidence of the board in his ability to act as its spiritual head.

Rivkin feels he is qualified to lead because of the past 18 years of experience he and his wife have enjoyed at the Rohr Chabad Jewish Center at Tulane. "A lot of people that live in that area (near Anshe Sfard and I have a lot of experience with that demographic," continued. "I have a lot of relationships with Tulane alumni who live in town and I think that's good for Anshe Sfard."

While he may have ceded some of his daily work to Rabbi Liebel Lipskier (and his wife Mushka) over the course of the past two years, Rivkin will still maintain his position at Tulane with his wife Sarah. "I'm not giving up my job at Tulane Chabad," he chirped up. "I'm the director of the overall program and administrator, but in addition to that we have a program for undergrads, which the other rabbi is in charge of and Sarah and I are doing a program for college graduates and recent college graduates."



Rabbi Yochanan Rivkin in the Anshe Sfard sanctuary. (Photo by Alan Smason)

In that capacity, he already hosts Friday night Shabbat meals and gatherings for that demographic, which he feels has a certain synergy with a push by Anshe Sfard to increase new members living geographically nearby. "It was actually a really good fit to continue to do the work Sarah and I have been doing with that demographic," he stated. "Down the road, when they are ready to make a synagogue decision, they might choose Anshe Sfard as a synagogue."

Rivkin envisions creating a vibrant Jewish community at the synagogue. "Our plan is try to make dinners at the shul and to definitely continue with the Saturday afternoon kiddushes," he continued. "But also to possibly have the synagogue be a place where even non-members feel like it's a great place to experience Jewish life. Most importantly what I am trying to do is find out what the community wants and try to do that."

Because of its proximity to downtown New Orleans and convention centers, the congregation frequently receives out-of-town visitors looking to keep Shabbat in an observant fashion. "Every week we get a handful of people from out of town and that's why it's really important for us to have the weekly lunches that we have every Shabbat. We want to raise the profile of our shul in our demographic and try to get that information out about the shul



Rabbi Yochanan Rivkin outside the Congregation Anshe Sfard building in New Orleans. (Photo by Alan Smason)

because that's a very important part of what Anshe Sfard does for the Jewish community."

He looks forward to leading the congregation in prayer for the High Holiday period "We've always had a chazan for the High Holidays," he pointed out and expects that one will be hired by Remer for the religious period again.

"Just right now, if you ask me what my plans are, it's to focus on Judaism," he concluded. "What I really want to do is listen to the people – all the members and the non-members – and get a better sense of what they'd be interested in and try and implement that."





# Shir Chadash Nearly New Sale continues

**F**or the past month, a dozen workers have been accepting lightly used clothing, goods, furniture and appliances in anticipation of yesterday's and today's annual "Nearly New" sale at Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation, 3737 West Esplanade Avenue in Metairie.

Working under congregation president Lisa Finkelstein, the volunteers and co-chair Diane Schleifstein inspected and catalogued all of the items. Those that passed muster were slated for sale and placed on racks or atop tables. Those deemed not up to their exacting standards were donated in advance to Bridge House or, in the case of several well-worn linens, to the Louisiana Chapter of the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA).

But don't worry. There was plenty to go around this year when the doors opened yesterday morning, according to Finkelstein. While many of the best bargains are gone, there will still be a lot to be had when the doors reopen this morning at 10:00 a.m.

"We have more furniture than we've ever had before," she points out. She can't exactly say why some years they get a modicum of furniture and in other years, they are overflowing with furniture items. "For one thing, we got a bunch of mid-20th century modern furniture from a congregant who died."

But that can only explain part of the abundance of furniture this year. "Some years some people give you very interesting stuff," she



Shir Chadash's social hall is brimming with items to go on sale this Sunday. (Photo by Will Samuels)

confides," and at other times you wonder why you pay for the truck."

Workers who have been accepting and cataloguing the items have noticed the quality this year. Finkelstein admitted that she has already sold three bedroom sets to workers from within the congregation.

The congregation president believes that, given all the hours they have put in to ensure the success of the sale, they are entitled to have the

opportunity. "In fact, their money is better than others, because they deserve to have first crack," she says.

Among the items available for bargain hunters were dining room furniture and what she described as "beautiful French chairs."

There will also be a plethora of art works for sale. However, somewhat surprisingly, there will not be any Judaica art. Again, it fluctuates from year to year, Finkelstein says.

This year, she has also been impressed with several pieces of Asian art, most of which has been donated to the congregation to help fund the religious education at Shir Chadash.

After the sale ends on Sunday, there will be another day of full pricing on Monday from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Next week, Sunday, July 16, the sale items will be sold at half price. Eventually, the final sales will be priced by the bag. Whatever pieces

are left after the sale will again be donated to Bridge House, the ASPCA or other charitable organizations.

The Nearly New sale began as a project of the Shir Chadash Sisterhood, but in the last three or four years, the congregation's administration has taken it over as a major fundraiser.

According to Finkelstein, Rabbi Deborah Silver, who was on a fortnight vacation in England, was impressed with the sheer number of articles donated. "She was astounded at how much stuff we had," Finkelstein adds. "And that was three weeks ago." She was even more astounded upon her return, Finkelstein says.

Finkelstein expects at least 60 volunteers from the congregation to help with the sale. She says they will have a lot of small appliances this year as well as lots of housewares and plenty of clothes in very good to excellent condition.

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# Glenfiddich ambassador Allan Roth repours here

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

When Tales of the Cocktail opened its 15th annual conference earlier in the week, it beckoned for a number of closely-connected Jewish members of the spirits industry to arrive in the Crescent City. One of those is Allan Roth, who holds the current position of the Glenfiddich Brand Ambassador.

Having been named one of a handful of label ambassadors, Roth represents that specific brand of single malt Speyside Scotch whisky as part of the massive portfolio of spirits offered through the William Grant and Sons labels.

While last year was his first time as a participant with Tales of the Cocktail – the annual series of seminars, tastings, spirited dinners and competitive events revolving around the spirits industry – that was not the first time Roth had been to New Orleans.

It turns out a well-known and respected member of the local Jewish community – jeweler and Judaica boutique owner Dashka Roth – is his aunt. Over the course of several years Roth has visited New Orleans to see her and her husband, attorney and estate planner Larry Lehmann.

His father and his aunt were raised in a kosher home. “I attended Conservative synagogue when I was a child, but my home was a bit more flexible, I would say,” the younger Roth recounted.

It was after graduation from Yale University that he first made his way to Louisiana without his parents. Roth enrolled in the Teach for America program and was a teacher at a rural school in Maringouin, some 35 minutes out of Baton Rouge. “I taught there for two years, from ’02 to ’04,” he recalled.

This prepared him for his graduate school work at Columbia University in New York City, where he was employed for a time in the non-profit sector. But, it was then that his interests took him on a path he was not expecting.

While he was in graduate school, he developed a really strong interest in food and cooking. He surveyed where his food came from and this led him to also study wine and spirits.

“I actually spent more time learn-

ing about food and whisky than I did actually did about Political Science,” he admitted. “That was the beginning of that transition.”

Taking on a side job as a server at a fabled Bourbon and American spirits pub in Brooklyn known as Char No. 4, his past experience as a teacher opened a door for him unexpectedly. Just before his hiring, the staff member with the deepest teaching experience had left the pub. With his ongoing study of food, wine and spirits, he was a natural to fill in the void by offering courses, tastings and seminars to the other servers and bar staff.

“When you really love the category as much as I really love whisky, it’s hard to enjoy just one without learning and enjoying all about all the others,” continued. “Ironically my affair with single malt Scotch whisky began at an American whiskey bar.”

In discussing what the future might portend for him, a friend of his from the wine industry early on confided that the way his career trajectory was headed clearly indicated that a brand ambassador job might be his next step.

For the first time in his life, Roth followed his passions first, plunging deeper into the study of spirits without a specific program to guide him. It consumed him. “I loved teaching, but I didn’t love the day-to-day. I loved grad school, but I didn’t love the day-to-day. But working in the restaurant, I loved the day-to-day as well as the thing itself,” he explained.

His weekly classes became a daily passion. “Initially it was just one or two classes that I was very knowledgeable about and over the next year and a half, I put myself through what I call ‘whisky grad school,’” Roth added.

Within a relatively short period of time, he became the beverage manager there. His classes became an important extension of his job and his engaging teaching skills got him notice.

“All I was doing was associating with people who were similarly passionate about whisky,” Roth said. One of the associations he made was with Jonathan Wingo, whom he first met at an establishment called The Whiskey Shop in



Glenfiddich brand ambassador Allan Roth pours a 14-year-old Bourbon barrel special reserve. (Photo courtesy William T. Grant and Sons)



Allan Roth in 2007 with aunt Dashka Roth, left, and her husband Larry Lehmann. (Photo courtesy Larry Lehmann)

Brooklyn. Wingo went on to become W. T. Grant & Sons’ Balvenie Ambassador for Central and Southern U.S.A.

He kept Roth’s star status in mind and encouraged him to interview for the position of Glenfiddich Brand Ambassador, especially after Char No. 4. closed in the summer of 2015. William Grant and Sons is a family-owned company and Wingo explained to Roth what it meant to be involved with their hands-on approach to ownership.

“He really brought me into the family,” Roth commented.

Ambassadors have the responsibility of promoting and marketing their brands in a variety of ways. Roth’s strong skill set of teaching has been manifested in his teaching courses on spirits at the Astor Center in New York since 2014. But it is his numerous industry contacts and his outreach to managers, buyers and owners that makes him particularly influential.

William Grant and Sons maintains a sharp division between marketing and sales and ambassadors occupy space in the marketing world, he noted. “It’s quite a special thing. We’re really there to establish a relationship and really help them see why we love the brands we represent so much and hopefully encourage them to do the same,” he mused. “We just get to share the love of the brand.”

The company is concerned with sales, but ambassadors are rated on how strongly they engage with industry personnel. “We get to explore building that relationship in different ways,” he continued. “Honestly, every bar is unique. Every restaurant is unique, but the relationships that we establish now may lead to something later.”

On most days he holds classes and tastings, Roth covers the various differ-





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ent Glenfiddich products. These include the entry level 12-year old and 14-year-old Bourbon barrel aged varieties. But there are also the 15-year-old Solera Reserve and the special 21-year rum cask finished varieties too. These are the main Glenfiddich products he speaks about and entreats others to sample.

"Occasionally, when we're all lucky, we get to do the 26-year (-old). It's true," Roth said, almost choking up as to how rare that experience is.

There are other varieties that involve taking out product from the Solera vat and finishing in a variety of ways including placing into sherry casks.

"The content is always fun. The whisky is always delicious," he went on. "The important thing for me is one for me to give people an opportunity to taste the whisky in a pretty judgment-free environment. Over time the single malt Scotch whisky world has sorta gotten caught up in following certain procedures and the correct ways to enjoy the spirit."

To that end Roth says there is no right or wrong way to taste Scotch whisky and enjoy it in whatever fashion they might desire. "If you want to add water to your single malt, that's great – it helps open it up. I'm not going to sit there and suggest that if they added more than a drop, they've somehow ruined it. First of all, it's not true," he said.

Roth also leads the U.S. ambassador team in coming up with innovative and new cocktails using Glenfiddich products. "The whole point is to encourage people to fall in love with the spirit the way I have," he concluded.

Roth was on hand for the massive party given at Crescent Park, located at 400 N. Peters, on Wednesday night, July 19, by William Grant and Sons. Representing Glenfiddich afforded



Allan Roth and CCJN editor Alan Smaison at the William Grant and Sons party. (Photo by Alan Smaison)

him the opportunity to mix with other ambassadors from the William Grant and Sons family of labels and to greet a plethora of bartenders, bar owners and spirits industry distributors.

With the title "Love Supreme," the party was one of the most coveted of invitations for the week with thousands crowding onto the area near a bend overlooking the Mississippi River. Musical acts and deejays kept the night filled with music, while spirits flowed for hours with an unusual array of cocktails prepared just for the party.



As a brand ambassador, Roth oversees numerous tastings of Glenfiddich varieties. (Photo courtesy William T. Grant and Sons)

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# Museum of Southern Jewish Experience moving here; opening slated for 2019

By DEAN M. SHAPIRO, Special to the CCJN

**T**he Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, founded in 1986 at the Union for Reform Judaism's Henry S. Jacobs Camp in Utica, Mississippi and recently shuttered, will reopen within two years in larger, more centrally located quarters in New Orleans, it was announced last week.

The museum will be located on the edge of the Warehouse Arts District at 818 Howard Avenue with a projected opening slated for some time in 2019. Its prime location is within a few blocks of several other museums, including the National World War II Museum, the Civil War Museum and the Ogden Museum of Southern Art.

In a presentation during Shabbat services at Temple Sinai on July 28, Corporate Realty director Russell "Rusty" Palmer and the museum's incoming director, Kenneth Hoffman, made the official announcement. Officiating Rabbi Emeritus Edward Paul Cohn introduced the two principals.

The move, it is hoped, will enable the museum to expand beyond the limited space it had at the Jacobs Camp and will also allow it to be visited by many more visitors than was possible in a rural, off-the-beaten-track town with less than 1,000 people. In addition to its sizable Jewish population, New Orleans is a popular travel destination drawing as many as 10 million visitors a year. A significant uptick in attendance is confidently expected when the new facility opens its doors.

The Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience included artifacts, vintage photographs, Jewish family histories, religious objects and other memorabilia from 13 Southern states ranging from Virginia to Texas and Oklahoma. The inventory from the shuttered location in Utica will be eventually shipped to New Orleans and reassembled in the museum's new home and new acquisitions are expected to add to the collection's holdings.

As described in its mission statement, the museum's objective is "to tell the unique stories of Jews who immigrated to the South, established deep roots and acculturated to a new way of life, while never relinquishing their Jewish heritage."

Hoffman, who has been the director of education for the National World War II Museum since 1998, officially assumes his new position on Monday, August 14. Born and raised in Baton

Rouge, he has lived in New Orleans since 1984 and he and his wife and two young daughters are members of the Touro Synagogue congregation. He is also a board member in the local chapter of the Anti-Defamation League.

Expounding on the museum's mission, Hoffman suggested that its official title should probably pluralize the word "Experience." As he explained, "There isn't just one 'experience.' Everyone has their own experiences. A German immigrant coming over in 1848 is going to have a different experience than a Russian immigrant coming over in 1903. And a boy in the '70s growing up and going to Jacobs Camp – like I did – is also going to have a different experience."

"And I think that's part of the beauty of the story is that it's not one experience," Hoffman continued. "It's a lot of experiences and I think visitors to the museum, whether they're Southern, whether they're Jewish or not, will see some of themselves and see that everyone has their own experiences. Even when you're in the minority you have the ability to contribute to your community in unique ways; in ways that make that community better."

Hoffman said that the museum will occupy the ground floor of the building at 818 Howard and half of the second story. He noted that, after inspection of the current museum's inventory and assessments are made of the needs of the new museum, appeals will go out regarding what other types of materials are being sought for the collection's expansion.

One major historical event that took place in the South – the case of Leo Frank – is expected to be highlighted in some manner in the new facility, Hoffman said. A pencil factory superintendent in Atlanta in 1915, Frank was convicted on flimsy evidence of the rape and murder of one of his 13 year old employees. He was later dragged from his jail cell and lynched. His death sparked outrage among the American Jewish community and it resulted in the formation of the Anti-Defamation League.

"Certainly the Leo Frank story is one that has to be told here," Hoffman said.

Hoffman was emphatic in noting that the museum is not limited to just one denomination of Judaism, nor is it limited to just Jews. Toward that



Kenneth Hoffman, the executive director of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience speaks at Temple Sinai on July 28, 2017. (Photo by Dean M. Shapiro)



Rusty Palmer, one of the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience's vice presidents speaks on behalf of the museum with details on a slide presentation. (Photo by Dean M. Shapiro)

end, he created a survey on the museum's home page, asking people for their opinions on what they would like the museum to include and "what kinds of things would [they] like to learn about?" But, most importantly, he emphasized that he is looking for a broad demographic cross-section among the respondents.

"I don't want just Jews to take the survey," Hoffman said. "I want non-Jews to take it too because this museum is not only there for Southern Jews. It's there for everybody. And we want and need for everybody to come and we want to hear their voices as we are making this museum happen."

For more information about the Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience go to this link: <http://www.msje.org/>.





# Dr. Joseph Caspi: Saving Young Lives Through the HeartGift Foundation

By DEAN M. SHAPIRO, Special to the CCJN

**D**octors, especially heart surgeons who save lives, are blessed with rewards that go beyond monetary compensation. The gratitude from the families of those whose loved ones are saved is priceless and it can sometimes translate into something greater and more personal – like the naming of child.

Dr. Joseph Caspi knows firsthand what that experience is like. The family of a Nicaraguan baby whose life he saved named their next child after him.

Caspi, a pediatric cardiothoracic surgeon at Children's Hospital of New Orleans who has performed several thousand heart operations on children during his 20 year tenure there, has generously donated his skills toward saving the lives of 41 children from some of the world's less developed countries, thanks to HeartGift Louisiana, a division of the Austin, Texas-based HeartGift Foundation.

Since its founding in 2000, the HeartGift program has served over 300 children from 30 medically underdeveloped countries, including the 41 here in New Orleans. Caspi has been the chief surgeon for the New Orleans-based Louisiana chapter since its establishment six years ago.

Born and raised in Israel where he received his medical training at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Caspi has been affiliated with Children's Hospital since his arrival in New Orleans in 1996. He and his family – consisting of his wife of 30 years, Tali, and their four children ranging in age from 17 to 27 – are active members of Touro Synagogue. The Caspis' three daughters and their son all attended religious school there.

While awaiting the arrival of a Mongolian child with a serious heart defect, he took some time from his other duties at the hospital to share his feelings about the HeartGift program and his key role in it.

"I have been involved with HeartGift Louisiana since it began here," the surgeon said. "I met with some of the community leaders of New Orleans and we met with some of the other chapters in Texas. They wanted to start a new chapter here. We discussed this with Children's Hospital and the hospital was very enthusiastic and supportive. The agreement was that we would operate on six patients every year. The hospital would subsidize the physicians and they would waive their fees. So all the work provided by the physicians, the nurses, the therapists and everyone else is voluntarily

done."

Explaining how the program works – from the review process through the operation and beyond – the doctor said, "The first part of the process is the application (to a HeartGift selection committee) and then they refer all the data to us and our surgical team. We review the data and, based on certain criteria, we choose the patient that can come here. The HeartGift criteria is that this will be a corrective operation because it would be impossible to bring these babies or children back from their own countries for another surgery."

According to the latest statistics, about one percent of the world's population is born with some form of heart disease, making it the most common birth defect in children. Many countries are not equipped to provide pediatric cardiac surgery or even access to adequate medical diagnoses. An estimated 93 percent of the world's population falls into this category. HeartGift was formed to address this disparity, providing lifesaving surgery to repair congenital heart defects in children who live in those countries where this necessary medical care is not available.

The ages of the children treated here through HeartGift have ranged from four months to 14, Dr. Caspi noted.

He also noted that although there are multiple types of congenital cardiac defects with medically technical names, they basically break down to congestive heart failure resulting from a diminished blood flow. An echocardiogram (ultrasound) is performed on the child to determine more precisely where the blockage is occurring. Once that more precise diagnosis is made, a treatment plan can be formulated and the corrective surgical procedure can commence.

Recovery time in the hospital, Dr. Caspi pointed out, usually ranges from 7-10 days. After that, when the children are physically stable, they are often introduced to the community and given opportunities to interact with children their own age before returning to their home countries. The average stay per child is 4-6 weeks.

Following the surgery, most of the young patients are put on special low-fat, high-protein diets, Dr. Caspi explained. However, a good number of them may be in need of nutrition prior to surgery, he added. "Many of these babies are coming here in relatively malnourished condition because they didn't get the optimum care before the surgery. So many of them come here in need of a tuneup



Dr. Joseph Caspi with one of his young patients. (Photo courtesy HeartGift)



Dr. Caspi checking out a young heart patient. (Photo courtesy HeartGift)

before and after the surgery."

Children treated through the local chapter of the HeartGift program have come from China, Russia, Serbia, the Philippines and a number of nations in Africa and Latin America.

In addition to subsidizing the costs of the actual surgery and hospital stay for the children, HeartGift also pays the costs of round-trip airfare for the young patients and their accompanying adult caretakers, plus the costs of local transportation, medicine and related expenses. The HeartGift stipend is \$15,000 to the participating hospital; services that would normally cost in the \$175,000 range. With the addition of travel and other non-medical care costs, the average expense for each HeartGift child is \$25,000.

Volunteers from the community offer to greet and receive the children and an accompanying



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family member at the airport and provide a safe, caring home for them while they are in the United States. The volunteers also provide transportation and meals, make hospital visits, plan recreational outings, and introduce the children and their accompanying family members to the community.

HeartGift has earned a sterling reputation within the international pediatric cardiac care industry. Medical professionals visiting developing countries are aware of HeartGift and its program criteria. These professionals refer children to HeartGift based on diagnoses made in the field.

Additionally, HeartGift collaborates with non-governmental organizations and international humanitarian agencies such as Rotary's Gift of Life, the Chinese Agape Foundation and Samaritan's Purse.

In addition to Austin and New Orleans, HeartGift has chapters in Houston, Dallas and San Antonio.

For its funding HeartGift has enjoyed the support of many individuals, businesses, civic groups, corporations and foundations in the New Orleans area community. Other funds are raised from HeartGift's participation in the annual GiveNola Day each May, plus the "HeartGift Heroes" Golf Tournament in October and an "Eat, Drink and Be Giving" Gala each November.

For his efforts, Dr. Caspi has received a number of awards recently, including being named as a "Health Care Hero" by the New Orleans City-Business publication. However, while expressing gratitude for the honors, in a gesture of humility



Dr. Joseph Caspi, third from right, with his staff and colleagues and a young family forever in his debt. (Photo courtesy HeartGift)

he was quick to give credit to the members of his surgical team.

"It's not just me," he said. "It's a team. A big team that has worked with me for many years and they're very passionate about these babies. I'm the surgeon but I get a lot of help from the anesthesiologists, cardiologists, nurses and everyone else involved. It's a very big team that cares for these babies."

Wrapping up with his feelings about HeartGift,

Dr. Caspi said, "I think this is a great program. It helps us to learn about other cultures. I'm glad that the families who come here go back home and they become good ambassadors for New Orleans and Children's Hospital. It's a nice feeling to know that."

To view a short video on Dr. Caspi go to: <https://vimeo.com/187692653>

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# Keepers of the Gate hold tea at Windsor Court

**H**adassah's Keepers of the Gate, those members who donate at least \$1,000 per year in committed funding to the women's Zionist organization, held its annual event on Sunday, August 6 at the Windsor Court Hotel.

This year's event was a classic high tea with three separate pours of different teas and an assortment of sandwiches, scones and chocolate desserts. It was open to all current Keepers of the Gate and other rank and file Hadassah members interested in learning more about becoming a part of the Keepers' select membership.

The tea was chaired by Patty Ungar and Joy Feldman. Ungar took the opportunity to inform the members in attendance of some of the recent medical advances being achieved at the two Hadassah research hospitals in Jerusalem supported by the charity.

While Feldman passed out special luggage tags adorned with the Hadassah logo as a thank you to current Keepers of the Gate members, Ungar asked her daughter Evette to give details to members about the upcoming "Free the Tatas" Disco Ball on September 9 that she will co-chair with Cheryl Mintz Bauman as a benefit for breast cancer.

The event, which is being held on the anniversary of the Greater New Orleans Chapter of Hadassah's centennial at The Cannery, 3803 Toulouse Street will honor Cathy Bart and Judy Lieberman. Time for the event is 8:00-11:00 p.m.

Evette Ungar explained that part of the excitement of the event will be unique pieces of photographic artwork that will be auctioned off on the night



Keepers of the Gate event co-chair Patty Ungar welcomes members and prospective members to the Windsor Court Hotel. (Photo by Alan Smason)



One of the photos taken of cancer survivors that will be auctioned off at the "Free the Tatas" Disco Ball on September 9. (Photo courtesy Hadassah/Alan Smason)

of the event. Eighteen survivors of breast cancer gathered on "Paint Day." They were invited to disrobe and body painting artists transformed their naked bodies into photo-worthy pieces. High resonance photos of each of their bodies, some transformed by breast cancer surgeries, have been taken and those will be auctioned as a means of raising money to fight breast cancer.

Entertainment will be provided by Jewish burlesque performer Trixie Minx, Crescent City DJ and the Black Tie Auctioneer.

## JCRS ramps up Chanukah project

Jewish Children's Regional Service's (JCRS) ongoing program of providing Chanukah gifts to needy Jewish children and youth from the Midsouth will continue this year with help from an enhanced gift from the Oscar Tolmas Charitable Trust.

In 2016 the program reached nearly 300 Jewish youth and institutionalized Jewish adults. Thousands of gifts were shipped to these families.

Last year, department store gifts cards were also added to the gift bags. The JCRS annually secures, stores, wraps and ships, for the holiday, thousands of gifts, as each recipient receives eight small gifts, one for each night of Chanukah.

August 14 was the deadline for JCRS to receive electronically submitted applications for 2017 Chanukah.

Begun in 1855, the JCRS is the oldest Jewish children's agency in the United States, serving over 1600 Jewish youth from the states of Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas.



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# OP-ED: Make America grate again?

By **ALAN SMASON, CCJN Editor**

**T**he hate coming out of Charlottesville is regrettable. But the levels of incitement and violence have proven to be far more concerning from the voices of the alt-right, fascists, neo-Nazis and KKK members than those which have come from the protestors on the left, who are far more reactionary than incendiary.

Perhaps more telling was that one misguided alt-right member was compelled by rhetoric or demagoguery into the criminal act of murder. He drove his muscle car into a crowd of helpless protestors to prove a simple point. It's a point many of us learned during the era of lynchings that took place between the Civil War and the Civil Rights era. It's the same point that was evident during the rise of the Nazi Party on the streets of Germany when hooligans and street toughs beat, maimed and killed those that got in their way.

With might there is right. Or, perhaps, with might there is alt-right.

It is true that many of these white supremacists, anti-Semites, neo-Nazis and xenophobes are hold-overs from the philosophy of Tea Party politics. Rightly or wrongly, they were credited with helping to secure the election of Donald Trump as the nation's 45th President.

Many of their numbers were emboldened when Steve Bannon was selected to be the President's chief strategist and policy adviser. When Bannon was editor at Breitbart, that website catered to the alt-right blogosphere and advocated for their peculiar brand of politics.

Despite denials from many quarters of the White House that they did not support these purveyors of hate, there had been little in the form of specific pushback from President Trump. Even when the events of confrontation at Charlottesville turned ugly and then deadly, the rhetoric from the President reflected that the violence came from "many sides." He neglected to honor the memory of the young woman whose life had been senselessly taken away. After both his daughter Ivanka, a convert to Judaism, and his vice-president Mike Pence, a fundamentalist Christian, came out publicly to deplore the actions of the white nationalists and anti-Semites, Trump was mute. He appeared in no hurry to call out the KKK and the neo-Nazis



Clergy pray at the scene where a car ran into counterprotesters in Charlottesville VA. who were protesting white supremacists gathered in the city on August 12 2017. (Ron Kampeas)

specifically.

Then, after two days, he apparently changed his mind this afternoon. "Racism is evil and those who cause violence in its name are criminals and thugs, including the KKK, neo-Nazis and white supremacists, and other hate groups who are repugnant to everything we hold dear as Americans," the President said.

Finally, after two days, the moral compass of the Chief Executive has risen to where he can now condemn those whose philosophies we fought both a Civil War and a Second World War to defeat.

Thank you, Mr. President. We could not have expected this ineffectual moral leadership, especially coming from a man some have labeled a firebrand. You told us you would make America great again. Instead your lack of words and moral leadership grates on the sensibilities of all forward-

thinking Americans who had expected more from you. You are, after all, the President of all Americans, not alt-Americans.

It's not about it being too little too late. It's more to the point that it should be "Not on My Watch" and "Never Again."

Meanwhile, more alt-right protests are scheduled for this weekend. Will we Americans see more of this new Donald Trump or will his rhetoric slide back to what we saw on Saturday, just after attacks? Even The Daily Stormer, a neo-Nazi publication, was compelled to comment: "Trump comments were good. He didn't attack us. He just said the nation should come together. Nothing specific against us."

That is one statement on which both we and the Nazis can agree.





# Meryl Zimmerman a finalist in Stage Door Idol competition

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

**T**he third time is apparently the charm for local singer, teacher and musician Meryl Zimmerman as she will be competing as one seven finalists for the title of 2017 Stage Door Idol at the National World War II Museum.

Zimmerman, an attractive brunette who hails from Long Island, sings regularly at the Mahogany Jazz Hall in the French Quarter on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and came to New Orleans several years ago after completing her studies in jazz at the Manhattan School of Music and Washington State University in St. Louis. Currently, she is a teacher at the Jewish Community Center and also teaches at Lafargue Pianos. She also helps to lead Tot Shabbat services at Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation, where she formerly worked as part of its religious school faculty.

While she was working at Shir Chadash several years ago, she competed in two previous Stage Door Idol competitions in back-to-back years. While her performances got her raves from the panel of judges, she did not receive the votes necessary to advance to the finals.

The daughter of CCJN Jewish Trivia contributor and New Orleans native Mark Zimmerman, Meryl was one of 40 contestants this year who auditioned for the museum's entertainment director Victoria Reed at in early July and then navigated through four rounds of competition. Three rotating celebrity judges voted each week along with one collective vote from audience members during the preliminary competitions held four consecutive Tuesday evenings from July 11 to August 1.

On two occasions – the first week and the last week – two of the three judges voted together, while one judge voted the same as the audience's vote tally. That resulted in two ties. Zimmerman's August 1 performance of a Yiddish song made famous by the Andrews Sisters - "Bei Meir Bist Du Schoen" – at BB's Stage Door Canteen netted her a tie with another female vocalist assuring her of an appearance at the finals being held this Tuesday, August 15 at 6:00 p.m.

"I'm in a different place in my music career than I was in the last two times I auditioned," Zimmerman told the CCJN in a phone interview. "I've been much busier. I've been gigging more and performing three or four times a week, so instead of looking at it like 'This is my one big opportunity to bust out and introduce myself as

a singer in New Orleans,' I feel like I'm already established as a singer at this point." She finished a stand at Buffa's on Esplanade Avenue on the edge of the Vieux Carré last week and is back on their schedule to reappear in October, she said. She also has performed at Nosh on several occasions.

Zimmerman's position to appear was tenth on the card and so she was backstage for the entire competition and did not have a chance to hear any of the others with whom she competed. "I'd never been the last one, but I had been the last one before the intermission before," she continued. "I think it is a nice place to be because you're more fresh in the judges' minds."

She said she prepared more for this year by being more relaxed and having lower expectations as well as being mindful of how she held her hands, how she moved and her placement on the stage. "Now that I've done this contest before and I've seen I've seen the types of performances that tend to win, I know that that's a very big part of the whole package," the jazz singer confided.

Zimmerman called on her sister in New York, who is an actress there, to get feedback from her on different movements and poses she should strike. "That was very hopeful," she admitted.

The final four judges for the August 15 final will be Leah Chase, Lena Prima, Delfeayo Marsalis and radio personality Scoot from WWL-AM. Audience members will not be afforded a vote for the finals, but Zimmerman, who specializes in jazz stylings, said she was pleased by the number of jazz enthusiasts on the panel as judges for the finals. The cost for the competition is \$10.00 per person. Drinks and a limited menu will be available that night.

Previously, all competitors performed with accompaniment by pianist Harry Mayronne. For the finals they will all sing with special arrangements written for them and perform with the museum's Victory Six Swing Band.

Should Zimmerman win the competition and emerge as



Meryl Zimmerman after making it into the final round of competition for 2017 Stage Door Idol at the National World War II Museum. (Photo by Alan Smason)



Meryl Zimmerman on stage at BB's Stage Door Canteen. (Photo by Alan Smason)

the 2017 Stage Door Idol, she would be the first Jewish performer to receive that honor. "I'll do my best," she concluded.

*(Editor's note: Zimmerman came in second with her rendition, beaten by the eventual 2017 title winner, Margi Cates, the same woman who tied with her the night of her initial round of qualifications with the Gershwins' "But Not for Me.")*

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The American solar eclipse viewed from Chamois, Missouri. (Photo by Barry Simon)

# Amateur astronomers flock to catch sight of rare solar eclipse

By ALAN SMASON

For only the second time in his life, Pontchartrain Astronomy Society president Barry Simon, caught sight of a rare total solar eclipse this past Monday, August 21, and the first totally American eclipse in 99 years.

The last time Simon was able to view this celestial phenomenon was in 1991 while aboard the Carnival Jubilee, a luxury cruise ship with his wife. Plagued by persistent clouds that clung over the coastline of Mexico, the ship's captain announced he was sailing off to find a spot at sea where the clouds would have parted, affording them an unobstructed view. So it was that Simon, his wife and several hundred others anchored off the coast and, buoyed by the ocean's waves, took in the rare natural spectacle.

Now some 26 years later, Simon and several of his fellow astronomers this week plotted two likely spots along the curved path stretching from Oregon to South Carolina on which the moon's shadow or umbra would block out the disc of the sun. Simon and his colleagues booked hotels in a primary site in, but made contingencies to be located to a secondary site in the case of inclem-

ent weather. Each of the two were within driving distance of the 70-mile wide swath of totality.

Unlike here in New Orleans, where 71% of the sun was obstructed by the moon's shadow, Simon and his group actually saw the skies darken and the bright sun blotted out in the sky for up to two minutes and 39.5 seconds. Using Google Earth they selected a picturesque spot nestled along a small sleepy river to be their primary location within an easy drive of Jefferson City, Missouri, where they had elected to stay. Chamois (rhymes with Hanoi), Missouri, a town of only 396 residents, turned out to be an especially good choice as the moon's shadow raced along at a speed of 1900 miles an hour and gave their party spectacular views of the heavenly sight.

"Way back we were thinking about Tennessee, but where I wanted to be for reservations, they didn't have any," Simon told the CCJN over a telephone interview. "That was in September, so we shifted the focus further west, where we settled on Jefferson City."

As the date of the eclipse drew near, room rates shot up in recent weeks along the path of the eclipse to as much as four times regular nightly

rates. The entire city of Nashville, Tennessee, the closest major city that would lie under the path of totality, was solidly booked. A single night in a luxury hotel that regularly listed for \$386 there went for almost \$1,000 on Sunday, the night before the event. By booking their rooms 11 months in advance, Simon and his group paid very reasonable nightly rates.

As Simon and his party knew, the closer they set up to the center line of the path of totality, the longer the duration of the eclipse would be. Nashville residents were on the southern edge of the path of totality and so the amount of totality for them was nearly a minute less than those who were only 30 or 40 miles further north.

The location Simon and his crew had selected was remote and only about 150 others were at the small park they had chosen. They arrived at 8:30 a.m. and waited until 11:13 for the eclipse to begin as larger chunks of the sun's disc were replaced by the moon's shadow. Totality began at 1:13 p.m.

"We were a little off the center line," Simon admitted. "I think we could have gotten another three-tenths of a second (of totality), but that's



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really irrelevant.”

“One of the other guys had a telescope with a (sidereal) drive,” Simon continued. This allowed for continuous photos to be snapped with solar filters, without which the image of the sun would have been seen as a bright mass of light. Solar eclipse viewing glasses were also required in the minutes leading up to and beyond totality. The sun’s ultraviolet rays would have damaged the retinas of those attempting to view the event without such protection.

“Then we had photo tripods, binoculars and filters. We had a ten-foot by ten-foot canopy we set up,” he added.

Simon videotaped much of the crowd and uploaded images of the crowd in full sunlight and then witnessing a gradual dimming of the sun’s brightness. The almost unnoticeable sounds of cicadas at the beginning of the event became overwhelming at the height of totality, he noted. Shouts arose from the crowd as the darkness began, stars appeared in the sky and the temperature dropped by 15 degrees at their location.

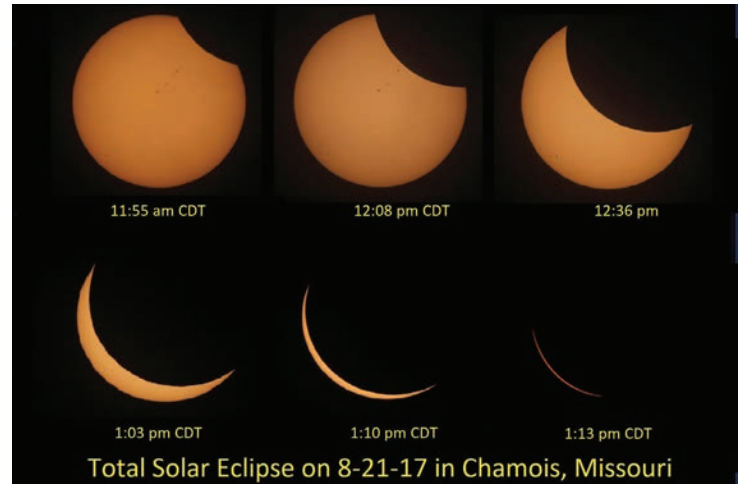
“We talked to most of these people from all over,” he said, explaining that more than ten states were represented by the license plates of the cars they saw there. “There were even some astronomers from the McDonald Observatory in West Texas.”

The group stayed there for six hours while the sun’s disc retreated from behind the darkness until a regular summer day had returned.

Simon has served as president of the Pontchartrain Astronomy Society for many different terms including the last three years and he has been a spokesman for the group at many events and viewings.

The last time New Orleans was in the path of a solar eclipse was on May 31, 1984. However, the moon was further away from the earth at that time and so the disc did not completely cover the sun, resulting in what is termed as an annular solar eclipse. The sun’s corona, a vast aura of plasma that surrounds it is only visible during a total solar eclipse.

The next total solar eclipse will be visible across the United States in 2024 and will be viewable in major cities like Dallas and Cleveland.



The disc of the sun is covered by the moon’s umbra in a series of photos. (Photos ©2017 Barry Simon)



Barry Simon, right, with members of the Pontchartrain Astronomy Society in Chamois, Missouri. (Photo courtesy Barry Simon)

# RASHI, RAMBAM and RAMALAMADINGDONG

## A Quizbook of Jewish Trivia Facts & Fun

By New Orleans native, Mark Zimmerman



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under multiple investigations that may lead to criminal charges. Echoing Donald Trump, Netanyahu has called the charges “fake news” and the investigations “a witch hunt.” What else has Netanyahu said in the past that seems

to echo Donald Trump?

**A.** “Will we surround all of the State of Israel with fences and barriers? The answer is yes. In the area that we live in, we must defend ourselves against the wild beasts.”

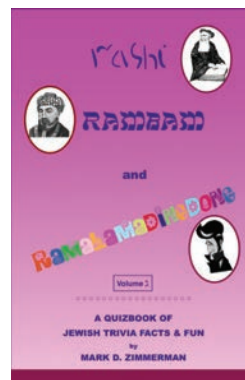
**B.** [Prior to the passing of the Iran deal]. “Let the Ayatollah and his government understand that regardless of any deal they may make, Israel will never tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran. And if there is even a hint that Iran is going to threaten us, I assure you, fire and brimstone will rain down upon them like the world hasn’t seen since Sodom and Gomorrah.”

**C.** “I always lose the election in the polls, and I always win it on election day.”

**D.** “My level of intervention in the press, trying to control stories, is zero. Subzero.”

**E.** “If Miri Regev weren’t my minister of culture, perhaps I’d be dating her.”

The correct answer are A, C and D.



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# Hundreds attend interfaith gathering to hear religious leaders denounce hate

By **NICHOLAS HAMBURGER**, Special to the CCJN

**S**ix members and an additional representative of the East Jefferson Interfaith Clergy Association (EJICA) addressed a crowd of several hundred people on Monday, August 21, at Congregation Beth Israel in Metairie, LA, calling for a unified denunciation of neo-Nazism and white nationalism. The community event was organized in the wake of a large-scale neo-Nazi and white nationalist march in Charlottesville, VA last week, which turned violent and resulted in the death of one female counter-protester. The seven religious leaders, including three reverends, a church Elder, an imam, and Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg, the head rabbi of Beth Israel, urged those gathered to speak out against white supremacy and anti-Semitism while also emphasizing the importance of a tolerant and multicultural community.

President Trump's response to the deadly violence in Charlottesville, in which he said "there is a blame on both sides" and defended the existence of standing Confederate statues, served as a backdrop for the interfaith gathering, which was titled "Breaking the Silence: Multifaith Clergy Prayer Vigil and Speak Out Against White Supremacy and Anti-Semitism."

The event began a few minutes after its scheduled start time of 6:30 p.m., as dozens of people continued to arrive. When Greenberg began his opening remarks, every seat in the sanctuary was filled, and people also lined the walls of the room. The religious and ethnic diversity of the crowd was readily apparent, as different attendees clad in yarmulkes, taqiyahs, hijabs, and nun's habits populated the synagogue's sanctuary.

EJICA leaders each took brief turns speaking at a podium placed in front of the aron hakodesh, which houses the Modern Orthodox congregation's sefer Torah scrolls. Together they meditated on issues of country, faith, and national ideals, presenting a starkly different vision of the United States than the one imagined by the hate groups.

Ron Unger, a pastor at Christ the King Lutheran Church, cited the commitment in the Pledge of Allegiance to "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." He asked the crowd, "Are we really one nation? Are we truly indivisible? Do all in our country experience the same degree of liberty and justice?"

Similarly, Fernando Guzman, an elder from Journey Christian Church, referenced Thomas Jefferson's words in the Declaration of Independence to make his point. "In recent times like this we need to be reminded of the strong spiritual and visionary leader-



Members of a religiously diverse East Jefferson community hold a candlelight vigil to protest anti-Semitism and racism. (Photo by Nicholas Hamburger)

ship of our country's founding fathers, who said, 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'"

Imam Abdul Hakim reiterated the importance of striving for national equality before offering a pointed condemnation of bigotry. "We must be able to step out in this multicultural, diverse society that we have and be able to condemn hate for what it is, be able to condemn the ugliness and the injustice apparent in our societies," he said.

The necessity of speaking out against religious and racial discrimination was at the core of the messages delivered by the speakers. As the EJICA Convener, Pastor Susan Lassalle of United Church of Christ was the principal organizer of the rally. She quoted German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who perished in the Holocaust: "Silence in the face of evil is itself evil. God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak; not to act is to act." Lassalle also refused to gloss over the history of prejudice in the United States, asserting, "We cannot deny history. But we can and must, from this day forward, say 'This is not who we will be.'"

The acknowledgement and contemplation of an errant history – personal, communal, or national – was likewise suggested by Greenberg, who concluded the night with an evocation of the Jewish month of Elul, the month that leads into the High Holiday season. "Elul is a month of introspection and self-analysis," the rabbi said. "We think about how in the past year we have failed, how we must return to the right, correct path. This process is called teshuva, which is often translated as 'repentance.'"

Following Greenberg's remarks, a candlelit vigil was performed. Upon entering, every attendee was



Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg at Congregation Beth Israel. (Photo by Nicholas Hamburger)

given a white candle. The lights were turned off, and soon the sanctuary was filled with hundreds of small flames, burning as a symbol of solidarity against bigotry and hate.

Just moments after the lights were turned off, a woman standing in the back of the room began singing the gospel spiritual, "This Little Light of Mine." After a few seconds, the diverse and multi-faith crowd joined in, participating in an improvised and collective act of singing. The crowd continued





# New Orleans community mobilizes for Houston as Harvey bears down on LA

By ALAN SMASON

**O**n the ignoble anniversaries of the twin landfalls of Hurricanes Katrina and Issac, the New Orleans Jewish community mobilized for action to help rain-soaked sister city Houston recover from record setting floods brought about by Hurricane Harvey.

Harvey retreated into the Gulf of Mexico waters late Monday night from the East Texas coastline where it had dumped nearly nine trillion gallons of water since late Saturday night, inundating the area and causing at least three deaths. Dozens of residents were reported missing and massive evacuations and rescue missions were conducted on Monday. Officials estimate at least 30,000 residents of the city have been displaced, while at least 9,000 were housed at the Houston Convention Center. That figure is expected to increase as two reservoirs – the Addicks Dam Reservoir and the Barker Reservoir – both began to overtop, sending massive floodwaters towards populated areas.

Reorganized as Tropical Storm Harvey, the system is expected to continue to draw moisture in from the gulf, but not to restrengthen significantly. Forecasters expect it to make a rare second landfall overnight in Calcasieu Parish, bringing it closer to New Orleans, where officials warned that heavy rains between five and ten inches could threaten the heavily taxed Sewerage and Water Board pumps and drainage system that failed during the August 5 flood.

Widespread reports indicate that the largely Jewish section of Houston suffered catastrophic flooding for the third year in a row. Sunday and

Monday's storm totals helped push the total amount of rainfall for August to more than 16 inches over any previously recorded month of record keeping. The totals were so high that the National Weather Service created a new color designation of dark purple to indicate the amounts it had recorded.

Houston's Federation, JCC and Jewish Family Service communicated through telephone conference calls on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday to help coordinate relief efforts in their area. Nationally, the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) established a fund to channel donations directly to communities affected by the storm including those in Houston, Corpus Christi and Galveston.

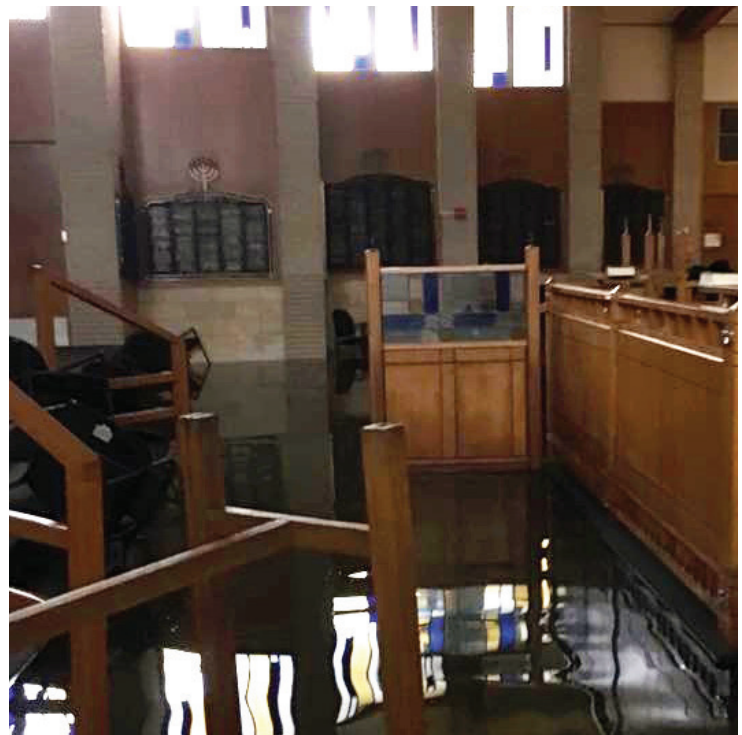
The Jewish Federation of Houston was forced to abandon its offices on the campus it shares with the Evelyn Rubinstein Jewish Community Center. President and CEO Lee Wunsch, who is winding down a career of more than 25 years at the helm of the Houston Federation, spoke with the CCJN over telephone on Monday. "Our building, we think, is fine. The JCC got 10 feet of water in their bottom of their building," he reported.

"The rain has not stopped," Wunsch continued. "There was a river that crested overnight and they were concerned about flooding in our neighborhood, so my wife and I are living in a hotel till Thursday."

While viewing live remotes of helicopters rescuing people stranded on rooftops on his TV, Wunsch said he was reminded of the very same images he had seen 12 years ago following the passage of Hurricane Katrina here.



People making their way out of a flooded neighborhood after it was inundated with rain water from Hurricane Harvey in Houston, Tex., Aug. 28, 2017. (Scott Olson/Getty Images)



Waters inundate the United Orthodox Synagogue in Houston for the third year in a row. (Photo courtesy JNS.org)

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## HOUSTON | 47

"The high-density Jewish neighborhoods in '15 and '16 are not the only ones affected," Wunsch explained. "The entire city is under water."

Locally, Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans is organizing its own drive for funds to directly target the Houston Jewish Federation. They are accepting dry goods and supplies like diapers and cleaning supplies. They also are soliciting donations of new or lightly worn clothes to replace the wardrobes of those who have lost theirs. New Orleans Federation CEO Arnie Fielkow initiated a \$50,000 donation to the Houston Federation, which is the largest donation made over the course of the past three years.

In an email sent to the entire community on the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's landfall near New Orleans, the most costly natural disaster to strike the United States, Fielkow congratulated those residents who had returned and helped the city become better than it had been before. "Even today, given the tragedy befallen upon our brethren in Houston, the New Orleans community continues to pave the way and demonstrate our appreciation to our Texas neighbors, who in 2005 and beyond, ensured that New Orleanians had a welcoming place to call home," he wrote.

Meanwhile, Wunsch indicated that the Houston Federation has its own link for direct donations.



A suburb in Houston is cut off from the rest of the city completely encircled by impassable water. (Photo by Jacob Kamaras)

Temple Sinai's Rabbi Matthew Reimer announced that Cantor Joel Colman will be coordinating efforts through the United Way and Walmart for a truck filled with supplies to be dispatched to the Houston area soon. In previous years similar trucks full of supplies were sent to Birmingham following its recovery from a rash of tornadoes in 2011 and to Baton Rouge following the torrential downpour and flooding one year ago.

Chabad Lubavitch of Louisiana is also requesting cash donations through its own network. To donate directly to their Chabad organization in Houston, click here.

Nechama, the team of Jewish volunteers that has helped New Orleans in its recovery from Hurricane Katrina and the flood that followed it as



Cars are submerged in murky waters near Braeswood, a suburb of Houston. (Photo by Jacob Kamaras)

well as helping in Houston with the two previous years worth of floods, is also soliciting donations and volunteers to help those stricken in the area.

On Monday, the Jewish Community Day School (JCDS) accepted the first transfer from Texas in what may be a stream of Jewish students displaced by the storm. JCDS head of school Sharon Pollin indicates the staff and her board are prepared to accept as many students as needed.

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to sing several more songs, ranging from "America the Beautiful" to other spirituals like "Down by the Riverside," to, finally, Woody Guthrie's classic folk song "This Land is Your Land."

After the event, as drinks and refreshments were served, speakers and attendees alike discussed their reactions both to the violence in Charlottesville and to President Trump's subsequent remarks, which many felt failed to rise to a position of moral authority. "I felt horror for a few days afterward," Lassalle admitted. Meeting only days after the violence, EJICA quickly decided to hold the multi-faith prayer

vigil at Beth Israel. Given the number of people who attended, Lassalle expressed optimism. "The turnout and response tonight is very encouraging," she said.

Other attendees echoed her hopefulness. Jennie Lavine, a local Jewish musician who initiated the impromptu singing during the candlelight vigil, expressed her pleasant surprise at the size of the crowd, which Beth Israel estimated at 250 people. Judge Sol Gothard, the Ben Katz Post commander of the Jewish War Veterans of America, concurred. "Coming together like this, everybody is reaffirmed," he reflected.



Led, by EJICA leader Susan Lassalle, clergy members stand in unity. (Photo by Nicholas Hamburger)

Nevertheless, Gothard was critical of Trump, who he claimed is "responsible for this hatred," a perspective various attendees agreed with. Gothard

added, "Since he campaigned, he's had a problem denouncing the David Dukes and the Nazis of this world. I hold this president accountable."





# Cantor, son return after 2 days in Texas

Cantor Joel Colman and his son Josh returned to New Orleans with an empty truck on Thursday, but with their heads full of joyful memories. The duo had driven almost 300 miles on Wednesday morning with a 26-foot long enclosed truck bed full of much-needed supplies for Hurricane Harvey relief in hard-hit Port Arthur, Texas and then another near-300 miles on the return trip Thursday.

With a sign emblazoned with the Temple Sinai logo and the words "Hurricane Relief" prominently displayed on its driver's side, the white and blue Penske truck was filled with toiletries and other goods in late afternoon and evening on Tuesday at the Wal-Mart store at 1901 Tchoupitoulas Street.

A contingent of the synagogue's members as well as other Jewish community members at large delivered personal donations to the truck including bottled water, baby formula, wipes, diapers for adults and babies, towels, pet food, pillows, blankets, washcloths, trash bags, combs and brushes and over-the-counter medication. Toiletries such as soap, deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste and toothbrushes were also collected and placed on board.

The collection was organized by the United Way of Houston and coordinated through Temple Sinai.

The Colmans drove on Wednesday to the small Texas town known to music fans as the birthplace of rock legend Janis Joplin, but which also is an important industrial center, producing more than 50% of the nation's jet fuel. Hammered by powerful hurricane winds and relentless rain that totaled more than 47 inches after five days, some roads still remained impassable.

"I-10 was clear all the way to Texas, but as we got close to East Texas, the exits off I-10 were flooded," the cantor responded via an email exchange with the CCJN. "As soon as we crossed into Texas, the Welcome Center... was virtually underwater. When we got into the city of Port Arthur, a smell that was all too familiar to those who were here in 2005 was very obvious, the smell of mildew."



Sinai hurricane relief truck on Wednesday. (Photo courtesy Joel Texas National Guardsmen offload the Temple Colman)

The Colmans watched as they saw hundreds of people clearing out their homes, abandoning damaged furniture and other items on their front lawns for eventual pick-up.

The distribution was made with the help of Texas National Guardsmen, assisted by Josh Colman, a veteran of the Israel Defense Forces, who made himself helpful in getting items offloaded. "Being an IDF veteran he fit right in with the soldiers in unpacking the supplies," said his father.

While Houston has garnered most of the media's attention, Port Arthur was hit by destructive flash flooding that covered the entire town with millions of gallons of rainwater. Unlike New Orleans, there are no pumps in the city to remove water once it has collected there.

Another truck full of supplies pulled in right after the Colmans had offloaded theirs and so they set their sights on a return trip, but stopped in Sulphur, LA. for the night. They were back on Thursday afternoon.

Meanwhile, even as Hurricane Irma prepares to slam



Cantor Joel Colman, rear, stands in the Wal-Mart lot during the collection phase of Hurricane Harvey relief. (Photo courtesy Joel Colman)

into Florida, Temple Sinai continues its hurricane relief efforts, accepting gift cards in increments of \$25 up to \$100 as well as soliciting financial contributions to the Temple Sinai Social Action Fund by clicking here.

"Temple Sinai also thanks the United Way here in New Orleans who were so helpful in establishing contacts with those in East Texas, making sure that we were gathering the appropriate needed supplies," Colman added.

## Touring Jewish NOLA with Julie Schwartz

Jewish New Orleans tour guide Julie Schwartz conducted the second of two tours sponsored by JNOLA and the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans on Sunday, September 3.

The three-hour air-conditioned bus tour was intended to help local Jewish residents learn more about the influence of the Jewish community that existed in the city since the days of Le Code Noir, the so-called "Black Code" that forbade Jews from living here.

Schwartz, an attorney and writer, has researched the history of Jewish New Orleans extensively and included information about regular New Orleans sites and their Jewish connections. The tour began uptown and traveled throughout the city.

The \$10 fee included the tour and a breakfast that offered bagels, smears and mimosas.



With Touro Synagogue visible through the bus windows, Jewish history tour guide Julie Schwartz talks about the historic congregation. (Photo by Alan Smason)



# Hadassah disco gala rings in disco dollars

By ALAN SMASON

If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, John Travolta reaped hearty helpings of admiration at last night's "Free the Tatas" Disco Ball given as a gala fundraiser and social event at the Cannery in Mid-City by the Greater New Orleans Chapter of Hadassah.

A crowd of 330 turned out to help the women's Zionist organization raise thousands of dollars to fight breast cancer in an unusual fashion. The central fundraising efforts came about in the live and silent auctions of 18 canvasses rendered from special photographs taken months ago. At that event 18 breast cancer survivors – some bearing the scars of radical surgery – consulted with body painting artists to render unique artistic expressions, which were then photographed.

The event served to highlight the advances made by Hadassah Hospital and others in determining the BRCA1 genetic mutation that has led to the successful implementation of aggressive therapies used in preventing the onset of breast cancer.

Two of the honorees – sisters Cathy Bart and Judy Lieberman – were honored as pioneers who chose the then-unproven aggressive therapy path more than 15 years ago in the hopes of staving off the onset of possible cancer. They were hailed for their thoughtful actions on behalf of all those who might learn from genetic testing that they too have the BRCA1 mutation.

Colorful costumes from the disco era complemented the theme of the event, while mirror ball lighting and popular dance tunes from the disco era permeated the social hall at 3803 Toulouse Street.

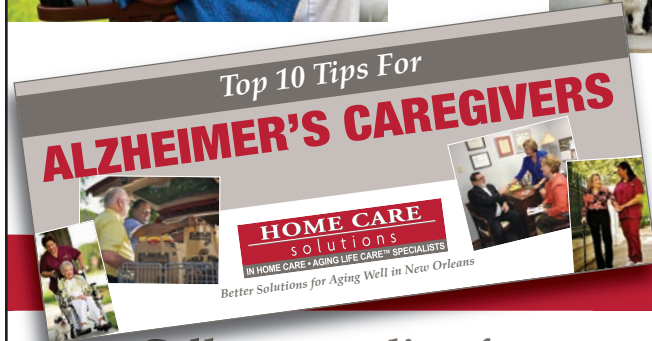
Jewish burlesque performer Trixie Minx freed much more than tatas, while



Jewish burlesque performer Trixie Minx at the "Free the Tatas" Disco Ball Hadassah fundraiser. (Photo by Alan Smason)

performing twice before the crowd, disrobing to musical numbers to the delight of the partygoers.

Meanwhile, more than 30 area restaurants donated food for the event co-chaired by Evette Ungar and Cheryl Bauman.



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# Federation's Soiree its biggest event to date

By **ALAN SMASON**, Special to the CCJN

Outlining his vision for a newly energized and committed Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, CEO Arnie Fielkow ascended to the podium for the first time at an annual meeting held Tuesday, September 12, at the Audubon Tea Room.

Speaking to a sold-out room and before a crowd of 335 attending what was billed as the "Starry Soiree," the former New Orleans Saints executive vice president and New Orleans City Councilman recalled a time when he was about to travel with his family to Chicago and become the CEO of the National Basketball Association Retired Players Association. "Almost six years ago to this night I stood before you at the Federation's Annual Event at the JCC and said I hoped that our family would one day return to New Orleans," Fielkow began. "Well these three words never sounded so good: We are home!" he beamed to enthusiastic applause. "We are home!"

Fielkow spoke glowingly of his family's attachment to New Orleans, a city he, his physician wife Susan and their children called home for 12 years. "New Orleans is a truly special place comprised of the warmest, most genuine people I have ever encountered," he continued.

"I am honored to stand before you tonight as Federation CEO just before the start of the Jewish High Holidays to share my vision of our organization," Fielkow beamed. "It seems so timely because, as we approach Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, it is a time to reflect on what has transpired in the past while at the same time looking forward to what we hope the New Year will bring."

He also spoke to the resilience of the New Orleans community-at-large, especially after enduring the tragedy of the flooding following Hurricane Katrina and what he called "the largest man-made disaster in our country's history."

The Federation CEO noted the important function the Federation

had in helping to draw newcomers to the city following Katrina and to help longtime residents return through its various programs. He pointed with pride to the population estimates that now show a larger Jewish population than existed prior to the storm's landfall and catastrophic levee breaches and floods.

"If Katrina taught us anything, it was to take nothing for granted, to count our blessings for what God has given us, to live each and every day to its fullest, and to treasure those special people around us," he said.

Fielkow expressed empathy with the communities who are now facing similar challenges from dealing with Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. "Tonight, our hearts go out to our Texas, West Louisiana, and Florida neighbors, who are regrettably experiencing what is all too familiar to us," he considered. "Please know that the Greater New Orleans Jewish community and Federation stand with you and are prepared to help in every way possible."

To that end Fielkow acknowledged that \$70,000 had been raised already for hurricane relief efforts initially in the Houston and East Texas area and, now, also being targeted for communities in Florida hit by the latest storm. "Candidly, given the help we received after Katrina," Fielkow reminded the crowd "it is our ethical obligation to do everything we can to help!"

Fielkow expressed optimism and hope for the future of the New Orleans Jewish community. He outlined three key points to his administration.

First, he underscored the importance the Jewish community played in helping the at-large community recover from Hurricane Katrina and, given its diversity, Fielkow stated that it is essential to the future of Federation to re-define who and what comprises the Jewish community. "It's corny, but we clearly cannot be our 'zeyde's Federation' anymore," he quipped. "Put another way, I hope we can elevate and enhance our Federation 'brand' both within and



Arnie Fielkow, second from right, with wife Susan to his left and his family members. (Photo by Alan Smason)



Outgoing Federation president Dr. Edward Soll accepts a tzedakah box from new president Henry Miller. (Photo by Alan Smason)

outside our Jewish community."

He also noted the Jewish community's connection to the core Jewish principle of *tikkun olam* ("repairing the world") and the effect members of the Jewish community have had on government and private work during the recovery efforts.

The Federation CEO also suggested that the Jewish community must be ready to step up its commitment to the annual campaign and suggested that new revenue streams through sponsorships and grants should be considered in the coming

years. "Why is this important?" he asked. "Because the dollars we raise are not about putting money into Federation coffers, but rather directly helping and impacting people's lives!"

Third, Fielkow, pointed again to the diversity of the New Orleans Jewish community as being one of its strengths. He suggested this will enable its many members to come together on a host of different topics. "Our Federation mission is to retain our core values, but at the same time create quality initiatives so that every member of our community –



# Reese Johanson: Making art happen in New Orleans

By DEAN M. SHAPIRO, Special to the CCJN

When Reese Johanson arrived in New Orleans in 1999 she was pleasantly surprised to learn that the rabbi of the Atlanta synagogue she attended as a child, Edward Paul Cohn, was the rabbi at Temple Sinai on St. Charles Avenue. In the years that followed, she would become active in the Sinai congregation and her two sons would become *bnai mitzvahs* there with Rabbi Cohn's assistance.

Fast forwarding to the present, Johanson now heads up one of the city's most active, extensive and inclusive performing and fine arts collective – The Art Klub – which she founded ten years ago. Housed in a former grocery store, warehouse and private residence complex – coincidentally located on Arts Street (corner of North Johnson) in the St. Roch neighborhood, the Art Klub will be staging its fall showcase and fundraiser on Saturday evening, September 16.

The Saturday event, titled RISE, will run from 7:00 p.m. to 1:00 a.m. and will feature a wide range of musical and dance performances. Among the slated musicians are the Preservation All-Stars; bassist James Singleton; the Ole Man River Band featuring keyboardist Sherman Bernard Jr.; and singer/theatrical artist MC Sweet Tea,

along with her backup dancers, The Tastee Hotz. Jimbo will be the deejay.

Dances and other live performances will be staged by Art Klub's resident company, Artivism Dance Theatre, plus FLOCK Dance, Daniel Masterpiece Jones, Radical Buffoon(s), the Reese Johanson Collective, Rockfire Theatre and Vagabond Inventions.

There will also be fine art exhibits that include a sneak preview of "Scavengers," the Art Klub's installation in the Prospect 4 citywide visual arts project that opens on November 16 and runs through February 25, 2018. Visual artist, Jacqueline Ehle Ingelfield who recently exhibited at the Ogden Museum of Southern Art, will unveil her creation. Other members of the Scavengers Artist Collective will also be in attendance.

"We are going to be announcing Art Klub's programming for the 2017-18 Cultural Season and showcasing the many art forms and cultural opportunities offered by the Art Klub," Johanson said. "We're also trying to raise funds needed to stage, teach and promote the parent organization's offerings in accordance with our mission for New Orleans and surrounding communities."

Johanson explained that Art Klub is the producing



Reese Johanson, the proprietress of Art Klub. (Photo by Kat Alyst)

body of Artist Inc, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization founded in New Orleans in 2007. "As the organization celebrates its 10th anniversary, the Art Klub family re-

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## FEDERATION | 51

irrespective of age, synagogue affiliation, gender or political belief – feels that Federation offers at least something which is personally appealing and beneficial."

Incoming board president Henry Miller accepted his position and spoke briefly following remarks and thanks from Dr. Edward Soll to Kathy Shepard and Maury Herman, the chairs for the past annual campaign. Both Shepard and Herman received special commemorative streetcar *tzedakah* boxes as a token of Federation's esteem.

He presented outgoing Federation board president Soll with yet another *tzedakah* box to the amusement of the crowd.

He also introduced the 2017-19 members of the Katz-Phillips Leadership Development Class and their advisors and professional liaison, chief operating officer (COO) Sherri Tarr. Miller stated he looked forward to working with these future Federation leaders.

"Federation and our Jewish community must always be viewed as an inclusive organization, a community that's welcome and friendly," he also stated. "A pillar of ethos of our Jewish community for generations has been supporting equal rights for all people," Miller continued. To that end, he announced the establishment of Federation's LGBT Division to be headed up by Dr. Marc Behar. "Marc, thank you for accepting this important mission and I look forward to working with you to

build and develop this division," he acknowledged.

Miller also announced a mentoring program in which businessmen and other experienced members of the community can be paired with up-and-coming business interests. "By sharing with new entrepreneurs and professionals in an ongoing basis, our mentors' many years of business and professional experience and contacts here in New Orleans, we can help both New Orleans and our Jewish community prosper," he noted.

Earlier in the evening Soll spoke to the crowd and thanked them for the support he had received over the course of his past two-year term. He called upon previous board president Morton Katz to present the nominating slate of officers for the ensuing year, which was accepted by the membership.

Andrea Lestelle presented a nominating slate for the Jewish Endowment Foundation for the ensuing year. A motion to accept the slate was made and seconded and a vote by the membership accepted the slate.

Prior to the dinner awards were presented to community volunteers. Lisa Heller and John Haspel received the Anne Goldsmith Hanaw and J. Jerome Hanaw Tikkun Olam Award. Ashley Merlin Gold was presented the Herbert J. and Margot Garon young Leadership Award. The Roger Bissinger Memorial Award was presented to Joan Berenson, while the Cohen-Jacobs Emerging Leader Award was presented to Nicole Harvey.



Federation CEO Arnie Fielkow addressed a packed crowd at the Starry Soiree annual meeting and campaign celebration on Sept. 12. (Photo by Alan Smaison)



Arnie Fielkow addresses the Starry Soiree, the first sell-out event for the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans. (Photo by Alan Smaison)





## JOHANSON | 52

mains committed to offering an inclusive space aimed at cultivating creativity and engaging communities through artist residencies, performances, events, affordable rehearsal and meeting spaces, classes, workshops and community programming for all ages," Johanson said.

Further expounding on the organization's mission, she added, "Through our services and programming, artists tap into resources and opportunities to expand their careers, gain experience, widen their audience base and connect with other artists. Aiming to benefit the community through greater access to the arts, we offer productions at affordable prices in non-traditional, easily-accessible spaces."

Born in Atlanta and raised in a suburb in which Johanson and her family were the only Jewish residents, Johanson left home at 21 to study theatre arts at New York City's National Shakespeare Conservatory. After about six years in New York, she went to France for a year, then landed in Boston where she started a company called Open Faucet. "We worked in collaboration with live musicians and writers to create short works of original theatre and performance," Johanson explained.

"This is pretty much what I've done over the years, creating contacts and collaborating with other artists to create works that are poignant and moving," Johanson said. "I've collaborated with many different disciplines from stage to film to visual arts and music. I get very inspired to be around the disciplines of art creators and working with all different kinds of artists to create pieces of work that will be moving to the community."

Coming to New Orleans in 1999 with her two young sons, Johanson started an event planning company she called Party Girl Productions. Hiring local entertainers and creating what she termed "fun experiences for the public that were often creatively charged performances in music and art," they performed in art galleries, boutique parties in private homes, nightclubs and other public and private events. She was also a special events coordinator for the Contemporary Arts Center and hosted promotions for local liquor and wine companies.

Forced to evacuate by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, Johanson and her sons

— then aged 9 and 7 — returned to the Atlanta suburb where she still had family living. She was soon joined by renowned New Orleans artist, James Michalopoulos, who she later married and with whom she had a daughter, now aged 9.

On their return to New Orleans, Michalopoulos offered Johanson the use of space in the large studio he owned on Elysian Fields Avenue to pursue her artistic ambitions and endeavors and she welcomed the opportunity to return to her acting and performing roots.

As Johanson explained, "Between the time I moved here in 1999 and 2005 I might have done three tiny little cameo appearances in productions, but mostly I had done special events during that time. After Katrina I went back to being an artist and I felt like I was starting from scratch."

Taking acting classes at Southern Rep Theatre, Johanson also joined the now-defunct Chard Gonzales Dance Theatre where she was one of the featured performers for about five years.

"Through working with Chard, I really started to develop the physical theatre side of my work," Johanson said. I hadn't worked on that since I was in my 20s and in school. So I would have to say that I started my professional dance career at age 41. I tell people you can do it at any age if you just go for it. It recharged my creative life."

Finally, in 2007, with the help of Kelly Leahy, Johanson fulfilled her dream of having a nonprofit arts organization in the community to support artists. Artist Inc was created, which gave birth to the Art Klub. They remained in the Michalopoulos studio until two years ago when they moved into the present facility on Arts Street.

Following the end of her marriage to Michalopoulos (with whom she is "still good friends who support each other") Johanson was considering leaving New Orleans but, as she explained, "When I found the building on Arts Street, it was everything I was looking for."

With several thousand feet of space for performances and parking, plus two apartments that are now used to temporarily house artists in residence, Johanson and a work crew she recruited began the task of repurposing the struc-



Reese Johanson, right, working on a performance art piece with her cellist collaborator Susan Millar Boldissar. (Photo by Alan Smason)

tures. They renovated the main facilities and created the infrastructure needed to stage performances and art exhibitions, including stage lighting and a removable dance floor. Several weeks ago she finally obtained all the necessary permits and approvals from the city to operate a business in the location.

But there is still work to be done on the facility, Johanson explained. "It's still in a very rough state but it's in use. People ask me when is it going to be ready and I tell them it IS ready, although it's still a work in progress. From the point of view of a scrappy artist, I've always been able to make things happen out of nothing and use alternative spaces to the best of their potential for performance or for art. So, for me, it's been ready from the day I bought it."

In addition to offering space for visual arts, art classes, a gallery, an art studio, artist residencies, pop-up dinners, an art market and a farmer's market, Johanson is also considering offering counseling services to members of the New Orleans community.

"There are so many issues that need to be dealt with," Johanson said. "People being incarcerated, family members who've been victims of shootings. Things like that. There's a lot of poverty in New Orleans. A lot of really scary stuff we need to deal with and I would love to open the doors to some sort of sanctuary and counseling for people who need it. This is more than just an arts center for me. It's a community building and connection through the arts."

"There's still so much more I want to do in that space, so it may take a few more years," Johanson continued. "It's just going to keep evolving based on what kind of needs the community and the artists say they have."

Johanson also said that, hopefully in the near future, they can partner with neighborhood public schools to host more after-school dance, theatre and visual arts classes, both at the schools themselves and at the Art Klub facilities.

Art Klub also hopes to offer more residencies for visual and performing artists in need of space and facilities in which to create new works.

In what little free time she has, Johanson takes part in the activities of several Jewish organizations and she is looking forward to attending Yom Kippur services at Temple Sinai with members of her family on September 30. She is also planning to start preparations for her daughter's bat mitzvah four years from now.

Summing up her feelings about what it means to be Jewish, Johanson said, "I tell my kids, this is your culture and your heritage. The cultural and racial family connection is thousands of years deep. That will always be there. That's why you have a bar mitzvah and why you learn about Judaism. And if you go anyplace in the world and need to find a connection, you can go to any temple and you are family. You're Jewish and that's it. You're connected. You go to temple and someone will help you. That's powerful."



# Area rabbis reflect on meaning of Rosh Hashanah

By **NICHOLAS HAMBURGER, SPECIAL TO THE CCJN**

**I**n anticipation of Rosh Hashanah, four prominent New Orleans area rabbis discussed their thoughts about the holiday, noting in particular its unique relationship to personal change and time. Rosh Hashanah, which marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year, is celebrated on the first and second days of Tishrei, the seventh month of the Jewish calendar and begins at sundown tonight, September 20. The holiday commences the period of ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur known in Judaism as the High Holy Days or the Days of Awe.

Rabbi Robert Loewy, the rabbi of Congregation Gates of Prayer, the Reform synagogue in Metairie, emphasized that the concept of change is central to Rosh Hashanah. “Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are all about change, adjusting to change, and changing ourselves,” Loewy said in a phone interview with the CCJN. Loewy, who will be stepping down from the pulpit at Congregation Gates of Prayer in 2018 after 34 years to become an emeritus rabbi, stated he will discuss this particular shift when he addresses his congregation on Rosh Hashanah.

“While much of this congregation and many of the congregants are linked to me personally, when the next year comes I hope they are going to be open to a new rabbi who will bring different qualities, values, characteristics, and enthusiasm to the congregation from where my priorities may have been,” Loewy remarked before adding, “The concept of teshuvah is: are we willing to change?”

“Teshuvah,” which in

Hebrew literally means “repentance,” is a period of intensive self-reflection undertaken by many Jews during the High Holy Days. But as Rabbi Deborah Silver, the rabbi of Metairie’s Shir Chadash Conservative Synagogue, points out, the word carries other resonances.

“My preferred translation of ‘teshuvah’ is change,” said Silver, who holds a degree in the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation from the University of Essex, England.

Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg, the rabbi of Congregation Beth Israel, a Modern Orthodox synagogue also located in Metairie, expanded on this idea. “We often find that our struggles from year to year remain the same, whether spiritual, personal, individual, or collective. We pray that this year will finally be the one where we are able to change our lives for the better in whatever way we need to,” Greenberg wrote via email.

Many of the rabbis interviewed also discussed the complex experience of time during Rosh Hashanah and the High Holy Days. Though Rosh Hashanah celebrates the beginning of a New Year on the Jewish calendar, the holiday also marks a period of remembrance. “Rosh Hashanah is a great example of Judaism’s approach to time more generally,” Greenberg wrote. It is, according to Greenberg, an “intersection between the spiral and cyclical nature of time” and the “linear nature of time we’re more used to.”

Rabbi Matthew Reimer, the senior rabbi of Temple Sinai, one of two Uptown Reform synagogues, elaborated on a similar idea. “Time is both always moving forward and

cyclical. Our Jewish calendar is the perfect example of that. We repeat everything, right down to our very text – we read it every single year,” Reimer offered in a telephone interview.

Reimer probed the holiday’s approach to time by posing a question. “Knowing that time is always moving forward, how do you then address the fact that you’re doing a review of the year that was in order to look ahead?” he asked.

In Judaism this remembrance is referred to as “zichronot,” which is sounded by the second of three blowings on the shofar. The blowing of the shofar is performed in services on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Loewy described “zichronot” as the moment when “we remember the moments of interaction over time” with God and, furthermore, as when “we remember the sense of a covenant that we have with God.” Commenting further on Rosh Hashanah’s relationship with remembrance, Loewy stated, “Honoring memory is a way not only to honor those that went before us, but it also is a reminder of who we are as a result of who they were.”

Each of the rabbis indicated they will speak about a variety of topics when they address their respective congregations on Wednesday night. Reimer plans on emphasizing the importance of personal happiness to his congregants at Temple Sinai before he transitions to a sermon against anti-Semitism. “The first sermon I am giving on Erev Rosh Hashanah is a fairly simple sermon, yet I hope it resonates with people: there are things that we can do, that we have full control over, to be happier. Happiness is as much a part of who we should be as Jews and as humans as anything else,” Reimer said.

Silver plans to center her



Shir Chadash Rabbi Deborah Silver and Gates of Prayer Rabbi Robert Loewy at Federation Starry Soiree. (Photo by Alan Smason)

sermons at Shir Chadash around the concept of renewal. “I feel that over the past year it’s been a difficult world to live in. Our sensibilities are getting pummeled over and over again. The idea that this is a season in which we renew our hearts will be running as a theme throughout everything that I talk about,” Silver said.

While Loewy plans to discuss the imminent change in rabbis at Congregation Gates of Prayer, down the street at neighboring Beth Israel, Greenberg’s sermons will focus, in part, on the recent hurricanes that have devastated various communities in the United States and Caribbean islands. In the wake of the destructive natural disasters, Greenberg noted, “it makes sense to say that in the Rosh Hashanah liturgy God is a god of mercy.”

Twelve years after the catastrophic flooding of Hurricane Katrina, Greenberg’s discussion of the recent hurricanes will likely be a poignant subject for his congregation, which moved to Metairie after Katrina floodwaters destroyed the congregation’s former location in the Lakeview neighborhood of New Orleans.

On that note, Silver offered insight into the significance of



Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg of Congregation Beth Israel.



Temple Sinai Senior Rabbi Matthew Reimer. (Photo by Alan Smason)

celebrating Rosh Hashanah and the High Holy Days in New Orleans, observing that New Orleans is a place that has “the capacity to celebrate what is here and to take joy in what is ephemeral. And that flows from a deep familiarity with what it means to be fragile.” That feeling, Silver added, is “very High Holy Days.”





# Federation, Tolmas Trust reach agreement on naming rights for 3rd floor lobby

**T**he Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans and the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust jointly announced an agreement to name the third floor lobby of Metairie's Goldring-Woldenberg Jewish Community Campus as the Oscar J. Tolmas L'dor V'dor Lobby.

An exhibit detailing the life of Tolmas with several photos as well as highlights of his posthumous philanthropy administered through the trust will be curated, according to the announcement.

The Hebrew words "L'dor V'dor" translates as

"from generation to generation." This is especially appropriate, since the trust will be a major contributor to the Federation's JNOLA initiative intended to engage and inspire the younger generations of Jewish adults, according to Jewish Federation CEO, Arnie Fielkow.

"What better way to memorialize Oscar Tolmas' life for generations to come than through a progressive exhibit exploring this life? We're so grateful to Lisa Romano and Vincent Giardina, trustees of the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust,

for their ongoing commitment to both sharing Oscar's legacy and enhancing the outreach of non-profit organizations right here in New Orleans," Fielkow stated.

Federation president Henry Miller concurred. "We are thrilled to create a permanent memorial to Oscar's life. It's our hope that his life story and the impact he made on our community, both Jewish and non-Jewish, will be celebrated through this exhibit for generations to come."

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# Metairie Chabad Center holds celebration for new sefer Torah

**A** new sefer Torah was officially dedicated at the Gerson Katz Chabad Center of Metairie on Tuesday night, September 26. A crowd of approximately 150 turned out to welcome the new addition to the aron hakodesh (holy ark) at the center, making it the third sacred Torah scroll to be housed there.

The event featured enthusiastic dancing, traditional hafganot prayers, a street parade and a festive meal that followed the completion of the scroll, which arrived in an incomplete state. Once the required ten letters were filled in by a sofer (scribe) as an honor for several Chabad leaders and sponsors, the scroll became a sefer Torah and deemed a holy object.

The scroll was sponsored by several members of the Chabad community, but most especially by Moshe and Ilanit Shargian in honor of the New Orleans Jewish children. Children were among those called up to the location of the scroll prior to its being finished.

Following the completion of the sefer Torah, a



Need cutline (photo #8 in slide show below article)

procession carried the holy scroll beneath a chupah and onto Lake Villa Drive down to the levee and back. Once back inside, eight hafganot were sung and dancing separated by a mechitzah (separation) took place for nearly a half-hour.

The buffet meal cooked by the volunteer staff at the Chabad Center was then served.



Rabbi Yossie Nemes, the leader of the Chabad Center in Metairie, acts as the gelilah, holding the new Torah scroll high after its completion on September 26.



# Artz Bagelz, Puerto Rican Coffee set to appear at Fat City Farmers Market

**T**wo Jewish-owned food firms make appearances at the Fat City Farmers Market on Sunday, September 24 from 9:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Artz Bagelz, a former brick and mortar store located in the Upper Garden District area on Magazine Street offered five different varieties of bagels, according to co-owner Kim Zacharczyk. “The five varieties right now are plain, everything, sesame seed, asiago cheese and cinnamon raisin,” she revealed in an exclusive CCJN telephone interview.

Zacharczyk’s husband, Art, came to New

Orleans via New Jersey, where he had been a bagel baker for many years in northern Pennsylvania. Since giving up their space on Magazine more than two years ago, the firm now leases commercial space in the Riverbend area to meet demand for its clientele.

Also, joining the Fat City Market was Julie Gillis and her Puerto Rican Coffee Company. Gillis reported that her coffee plantation on the U.S. island territory was in harm’s way due to Hurricane Maria. Hurricane Irma had given the storm a glancing blow, but Maria was expected to deliver a catastrophic amount of heavy wind and cataclysmic

flooding in the area where her crop is farmed and harvested.

The Fat City Farmers Market is located at the corner of 18th Street and the intersection of Edenborn Avenue (3215 Edenborn Ave.)



# JCRS hosted a dual Chanukah Wrap-a-thon and Houston relief effort

**O**n Sunday, September 10 the annual Jewish Children’s Regional Service (JCRS) Chanukah wrap-a-thon had volunteers to help ready hundreds of bags of Chanukah gifts for regional needy families. Additionally, in the wake of the historic flooding in Houston and other areas in East Texas and Louisiana, the program will be doing more for these families than just Chanukah bags this year. (photo)

JCRS executive director Ned Goldberg pledged to give more to the needy families this year, as they recover from the historic and devastating floods there.

Goldberg will be collecting specific funds through the JCRS Disaster Relief Fund. A place is available to indicate the size of the donation and where it is to be directed. He is also soliciting donations to purchase gift cards that victims can easily use and is also accepting gift cards in denominations of \$25 and above.

“JCRS will be doing more for these families than just Chanukah bags,” he continued, “but the wrapped gifts are the most personalized help, and are

needed and deeply appreciated.”

This event took place on the first floor of the Goldring-Woldenberg Jewish Community Campus at 3747 W. Esplanade Ave. in Metairie from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. The volunteers were offered muffins, snacks, pizza and other refreshments throughout the day. In addition a special children’s card-making art project, led by artist Margo Moss, was held. JCRS provided all wrapping materials and supplies. Volunteer students received community service hours for their efforts.







# Yom Kippur insights from area rabbis

By JOSH AXELROD, Exclusive to the CCJN

While the holiest day of the Jewish year, Yom Kippur, looms large, New Orleans rabbis indicated how their congregations will be commemorating the holiday that begins at sundown tonight. Also, known as the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur takes place on the 10th day of Tishrei on the Jewish calendar.

Rabbi Leibel Lipskier, who serves students at the Rohr Chabad Jewish Student Center at Tulane, is approaching the holy day ready to engage Tulane's campus.

"Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the Jewish calendar year. It's a day of introspection, a day to connect to the innermost part of your soul...at the core we all have a spark of God inside."

He is preparing for the holiday by attending the mikvah (ritual bath), giving tzedakah, and studying relevant Torah passages that relate to Yom Kippur. Lipskier promises that students who want to get involved in any of these non-official Chabad events can always contact him. He hopes to make all students feel at home and make any ritual accessible on Tulane's campus.

"At Chabad, at Tulane we're a family; we're not just an organization. We invite students to everything that we do, including (into) our personal space," Lipskier said.

Also addressing non-traditional Jews, Lipskier hopes to provide a space for all through student services. The Kol Nidrei and Neilah services are both designed to be accessible to any denomination, including melodies, translations, and English explanations of the service.

"We just want to encourage everybody to remember tomorrow as Yom Kippur, and get involved in any way that you find meaningful," Lipskier said. "At Chabad our doors are always open."

Rabbi Yonah Schiller, the executive director of Tulane Hillel, is offering the The Goldie and Morris Mintz Center for Jewish Life as a space to students to fill in whatever way they want.

The Tulane Hillel building will be hosting students who want to study, relax, or just hang out, taking time to reflect on the holiday. In an unusual offering, the center will be hosting yoga as a way to include the body in the spiritual process of introspection.

Schiller is attempting to create an inviting and amenable environment. There will be separate Reform and Conservative services held.

"We are not prescriptive in how we try to promote different holidays, rather we try to create space and relevancy..." Schiller said.

Instead, Tulane Hillel is striving to open access points to students who are learning more about their Jewish identity. Schiller identifies that college can be a



Tulane Hillel Rabbi Yonah Schiller. (Photo by Alan Smaison)

turbulent time in students' lives when they are piecing together the meaningfulness of their religion.

The break fast is free to all students and will be provided by the kitchen of Rimón, the latest addition to the kosher restaurant scene run by Chef Daniel Esses. It has replaced the former Hillel's Kitchen.

Rabbi Todd Silverman, the rabbinic director of lifelong learning at the Touro Synagogue, has been prepping for Yom Kippur for days, thinking about repentance and holiness leading up to the holiday.

"Specifically for Yom Kippur, it is messaged that the time to make teshuvah (repentance) is not the night before or the day-of, but rather over the course of the entire Elul/High Holidays season," Silverman said.

Silverman is able to achieve this through a process of introspection.

"I make mental lists, and then consider three questions for everyone I plan to reach out to: what were the specific things I did that I am acknowledging... what can I say to show my apology, and what can I do to show my intent to atone," Silverman said.

He hopes that congregants will find the holiday meaningful and serious. Touro Synagogue hosts Kol Nidrei, as well as morning services, Yizkor and Neilah. Silverman uses Kol Nidrei to activate a sense of awe and gravitas.

"Kol Nidrei itself frames the entire experience for me," Silverman said. "I find that the head-space and heart-space that I am in at the conclusion of Erev Yom Kippur is what carries throughout the rest of the holiday."

Congregation Anshe Sfard will be holding a traditional Orthodox service, commencing with Kol Nidrei on Friday night and continuing all day with the services made even more holy by the confluence with Shabbat. The congregation will be led by Rabbi Yochanan Rivkin in the prayer services, aided by chazan Daniel Feld, who has been with the synagogue to share



Touro Synagogue Todd Silverman, one of three members of the clergy there. (Photo by Alan Smaison)



Rabbi Yochanan Rivkin at Congregation Anshe Sfard aron hakodesh. (Photo by Alan Smaison)

the High Holidays for the past two years.

Originally from northern California, Feld now resides in Jerusalem.

Rivkin reflected on the holiness and the importance of Yom Kippur in an email exchange with the CCJN. "For me, Yom Kippur is the day on which the people of Israel are closest to G-d," he explained. "Rather than focus on this day being the 'Day of Judgement,' I prefer to think of it as a day on which we enjoy G-d's complete embrace."

Rivkin is enjoying the beginning of his second year as the spiritual leader of the Orthodox synagogue and his first after being named the permanent rabbi by the congregation. The forgiveness that happens on Yom Kippur is the result of the uncovering of the essential relationship between the Jewish nation and G-d, which overcomes any distance that may have been created through a sin that was committed.

"The forgiveness that happens on Yom Kippur is the result of the uncovering of the essential relationship between the Jewish nation and G-d, which overcomes any distance that may have been created through a sin that was committed," he concluded.



# Las Vegas Jewish community rallies to help in aftermath of shooting

(JTA) — Two Las Vegas synagogues held special evening prayers and a GoFundMe page raised over \$50,000 for an injured Jewish woman as the city's Jewish community rallied to help in the aftermath of the mass shooting on the Strip.

Chabad Rabbi Mendy Harlig, a chaplain with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, told the Chabad.org website that he spent time on Monday at a local hospital with the husband and mother-in-law of Natalie Grumet, a Jewish California resident who was injured in the shooting, The Times of Israel reported.

The GoFundMe page established to help Grumet return to California for further treatment had surpassed its \$50,000 goal by Tuesday.

Samantha Arjune, daughter of the recently retired superintendent of the Ramaz Jewish day school in New York City, also was injured in the attack. On Monday, she underwent surgery on her leg; Arjune is not in a life-threatening situation.

The two women were among the

more than 850 injured in the attack by a lone gunman shooting Sunday night at a concert from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino. At least 58 were killed.

Harlig said he spent Sunday night at the scene of the attack offering support to police officers in dealing with the horrors they witnessed and the following day at hospitals providing support to victims and their families. He also worked with Israel's consul general to help find Israelis visiting or living in Las Vegas who had been unaccounted for; they have all been found and none were injured.

Temple Sinai in Las Vegas on Monday evening held a special service to help the community come to grips with the attack. More than 100 members, young and old, attended the service, the Forward reported. Synagogue members said they planned to visit the injured and their families at local hospitals.

Midbar Kodesh Temple also held special evening prayers and a night-time vigil.

Todd Polikoff, president and

CEO of Jewish Nevada, the state's Jewish community federation, told The Times of Israel that his staff had been bringing supplies to the blood service sites and sending food to the trauma center.

"Once the physical wounds heal, there are going to be a lot of people who need a lot of care dealing with this in a mental way," he said. "There were 22,000 people there. We know there were a number of members of (the) Jewish community who were there who got out unscathed physically, but know they're going to need help."

A post on the Jewish Nevada Facebook page from Monday said, "As the sun rises on Las Vegas today, we will be a changed city. What will not change is our compassion for one another, our ability to embrace millions of visitors every year, and our resilience in the face of challenging circumstances. This is the greatness that we know persists, in spite of the tragedy that we saw this evening.

"We must now turn to our attention those friends, family, and stran-



ers who are in the most need. They are the ones who will need to see and experience all of the greatness that we embody in our community. Now, more than ever, we need to remind our fellow community members, the rest of the country, and the world that we are #VegasStrong."

A Facebook post by the Jewish Community Center of Southern Nevada read: "Our collective hearts are filled with sadness over the senseless act of violence carried out last night. Our prayers are with victims and their families and we thank first responders and everyone that gave support and comfort to those experiencing this horror. #VegasStrong."

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# Ed Asner interview: The star of 'A Man and His Prostate' speaks

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

A fixture on TV and film screens for six decades, actor Ed Asner made a rare stop in New Orleans to star for two nights only in a one-man play "A Man and His Prostate" at Le Petit Theatre du Vieux Carré on October 8 and 9. The play, written by nine-time Emmy and Peabody Award winning writer and director Ed Weinberger ("The Cosby Show" and "Taxi"), allowed Asner an opportunity to play a character based on Weinberger's own experiences as a man fighting prostate cancer.

Most TV viewers recall Asner from his many roles, especially his comedic turn as gruff, but lovable news director Lou Grant in "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." That role and the dramatic CBS series spinoff "Lou Grant," produced by Moore's MTM Enterprises production company, garnered Asner five of his seven Emmy Awards. Nominated for a total of 20 Emmy Awards, he is one of only two actors – and the only man – to have played the same character in both a comedy and a drama, a rare honor. He won his two other Emmys for his work in the two award-winning mini-series "Rich Man, Poor Man" in 1976 and "Roots" in 1977.

An actor who has never stopped plying his craft, Asner was recently featured in a role as a homophobic billionaire on CBS's "The Good Wife" and was famously heard in the role of the old man, Carl Frederickson, in the Academy Award winning animated feature "Up" in 2009.

Born Yitzhak ("Etze") Edward Asner in Kansas City, Missouri, he was raised in an Orthodox Jewish family and still maintains a Jewish identity. After a stint in the U.S. Army, Asner attended the University of Chicago in the late 1940s. He soon became involved with acting and was a member of the Chicago Playwrights Theatre Club and a founding member of the Second City Television group

before a move to New York City. He cut his teeth in early TV productions, many of which at the time were broadcast live. That led to his first Broadway role in 1960 opposite Jack Lemmon and Sandy Dennis in "Face of a Hero." The entire run including two preview performances was 31 days long and 38 performances.

His first Hollywood film role was in a small part in "Kid Gallahad," a 1962 vehicle that starred Elvis Presley. After featured roles in several other films in the intervening years, he was cast as a police lieutenant in "Change of Habit," Presley's last starring role as an actor in 1969. Playing opposite the rock and roll icon in the leading female role as a nun was Moore. It was the first time that Asner and Moore worked together, although they did not share any scenes. The following year Moore began her iconic role as single female TV news producer Mary Richards working in the WJM newsroom for Asner's curmudgeonly character. The rest is TV history.

Asner's many film roles have included his leading role opposite Maureen Stapleton in "The Gathering," his portrayal of a volatile police chief with Paul Newman in "Fort Apache, the Bronx," his many roles as Santa Claus in a succession of films, a small part in Oliver Stone's "J.F.K.," his depiction of Warren Buffett in "Too Big To Fail" and even playing himself in the Richard Dreyfuss-Raúl Juliá comedy "Moon over Parador."

He is a well-known and popular voice actor, who will be featured in the new documentary "I Know That Voice" about voice-over actors and narrators of film.

A member of the Democratic Socialists of America, he is a longtime union and political activist, a vehement opponent of war and served two terms as president of the Screen Actors Guild.

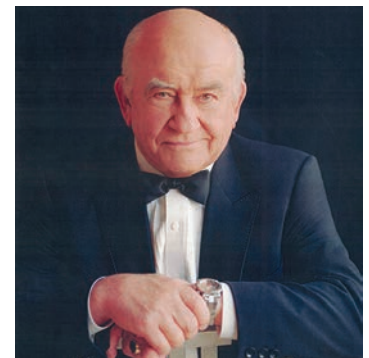
Prior to this latest work, Asner



Ed Asner in his New Orleans performance of "A Man and His Prostate." (Photo courtesy Le Petit Theatre)

returned to the Broadway stage in 2012 to play a featured role in "Grace" opposite Paul Rudd. It was his first stage work in 23 years. He followed up with a one-man show on President Franklin Delano Roosevelt ("FDR"), but was forced to cancel the tour when he was hospitalized for exhaustion. "A Man and His Prostate" represents his latest foray into theatre.

In September, the CCJN caught up with Asner as he was driving from Nashville, Tennessee to Greenville, South Carolina to play his latest role there. He was accompanied by his daughter Liza, one of the twins he had from his second marriage, who will accompany him on his journey to the Crescent City after his October



TV's Ed Asner will be arriving here for two nights on Oct. 8-9 starring in "A Man and His Prostate" at Le Petit Theatre. (Photo courtesy Le Petit Theatre)

ber 6 show in Chicago.

**CCJN:** Can you tell us a little bit about the particular play, "A Man and His Prostate"? You and Ed Weinberger (the playwright) knew each



# CGOP announces hire of Rabbi David Gerber

**M**etairie's Congregation Gates of Prayer chose its next spiritual leader on Wednesday evening, Oct. 18, as the board of trustees unanimously voted in favor of Rabbi David Gerber to assume the rabbinate on July 1, 2018. Gerber, one of two rabbis presently serving Congregation Beth Or in Maple Park, Pennsylvania, will take over for Rabbi Robert Loewy, who will assume the rabbi emeritus position there, after 33 years.

Gerber has been with his present congregation since July of 2012. A native of St. Louis, he attended Indiana University, graduating with a telecommunications degree in 2002. Following a brief period where he worked as a financial advisor, Gerber enrolled in Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion (HUC-JIR) in Cincinnati.

During his rabbinic studies at HUC-JIR, Gerber was noted as having engaged an impressive number of young adults and young families. Additionally, he worked as a chaplain at The Christ Hospital. He joined Temple B'nai Israel as a student rabbi in Kokomo, Indiana, where he also served as a chaplain at the nearby Miami Correctional Facility. Additionally, Gerber spent time in his hometown of St. Louis serving Congregation Shaare Emeth.

Rabbi Gerber is an accomplished singer and guitarist and a proponent of using modern technologies to engage Jewish community life.

He is married to his wife Lauren, who hails from Cincinnati. The couple has two young daughters, Paige and Tessa.

Rabbi Alexis Berk of Touro Synagogue will become the longest-serving senior Reform rabbi in the New Orleans area next year when Loewy joins ranks with fellow Rabbis Emeritus David Goldstein, also from Touro, and Ed Paul Cohn from Temple Sinai.



Rabbi David Gerber from 2016. (Photo via Congregation Beth Or website)

## ASNER | 59

other from your days working in TV production, correct?

**Asner:** Yes. (The) Mary Tyler Moore (Show)

**CCJN:** How was it that this particular piece was written? Was it something he wrote as cathartic piece for him to deal with his own health crisis?

**Asner:** It was his own and he waxed eloquent about it. It's a beautiful piece filled with laughter and at the same time it conveys a lot of important information about prostate cancer, which thereby serves a public interest.

**CCJN:** They (doctors) say that if men live long enough, they will all develop prostate cancer.

**Asner:** Yeah. Yeah.

**CCJN:** That's not something we necessarily like to hear, but it is something we have to live with. So, did he come to you and tell you he was writing this? Was he in the middle of writing this and was thinking of writing it for you??

**Asner:** Yeah, I gather he did.

**CCJN:** That's an honor then.

**Asner:** Yes.

**CCJN:** What do you think it was of you as an actor that made him want to write it for you?

**Asner:** Well, the character bitches a lot in the course of the play and I think he thinks I'm a good biter.

**CCJN:** (Laughing) Or if it's a Jewish character a kvetcher.

**Asner:** Oh yeah. yeah. I kvetch very well.

**CCJN:** Does the character have any Jewish resonance or is he a generic male?

**Asner:** No, no, no. He reflects his "Judaic-ness" ...every five pages.

**CCJN:** You've been doing this how long now?

**Asner:** We've done about 20 performances.

**CCJN:** How long is the run scheduled?

**Asner:** We'll finish this particular leg in Flat Rock, North Carolina and be home on Wednesday and then

we'll go out later in the year. We've got a couple of performances in New Orleans (October 8 and 9).

**CCJN:** (Excited) Which is where we are.

**Asner:** Oh, yeah, yeah. You'll see us.

**CCJN:** We're looking forward to it. I guess the title ("A Man and His Prostate") pretty much sets the tone for the piece. It does have a lot of comedy in it, but it is a serious subject.

**Asner:** Yeah.

**CCJN:** Do you enjoy the work on stage? We know you had done "Grace" prior and several other pieces, but this is a one-man show so you don't get to play off any other characters.

**Asner:** Well, I deal with them on the phone and through my descriptions of them, but nobody on stage with me.

**CCJN:** Is that something you find more challenging to remember all of your lines rather than playing in an ensemble cast like when you were in "Grace"?

**Asner:** Well, I did four years touring with a one-man show on F.D.R. We hit every little burg in this country. After four years, Ed came along with this script and it was a very joyful replacement.

**CCJN:** We know New Orleans is looking forward to seeing you. Have you been to New Orleans prior?

**Asner:** Yeah, but I can't remember when.

**CCJN:** That could be an indication that you had a good time. The fact, though, is that the work has a Jewish star and is written by a Jewish writer, so it naturally has interest in our small, but dedicated Jewish community.

**Asner:** Yes. It has a Jewish prostate.

**CCJN:** Yes. It's like the Jewish State. We have the Jewish prostate.

**Asner:** (Laughs)

**CCJN:** Thank you for your time. Please drive carefully and L'Shana Tovah.

**Asner:** Thanks. L'Shana Tovah is right.





# Rhonda Shear back in NOLA to promote book

By **ALAN SMASON**, Special to the CCJN

**T**he phone rings right on time as it has for countless other interviews. The Caller I.D. prominently displays the name Van Fagan, but I know right away who it is. It is not Van Fagan, but rather his lifelong obsession, the girl he fell in love with in a New Orleans junior high school and the Hollywood starlet and cable TV star he married 26 years later, breaking the hearts of billionaires, moguls and lustful teens across several generations.

It is Rhonda Shear: The statuesque former Miss Louisiana title holder three times over. The Floral Trail Queen who had appeared in *Playboy* fully clothed, only to be stripped of her title and who posed twice more in *Playboy* with substantially less on years later. The former candidate for Register of Conveyances, who almost beat the incumbent office holder. That Rhonda Shear.

She is the hometown girl who took Hollywood by storm as the quirky and funny star of USA's "Up All Night," only to abandon the glitz and glamor of Tinseltown to become a home shopping phenomenon: a multi-million dollar manufacturer of women's intimate apparel and an advocate for women's causes.

That voice could easily belong to anyone from New Orleans, but her voice is unmistakable. It's part no-nonsense and part-teasing. It's a voice which she has used over the course of many years to deliver snappy rejoinders as a stand-up comic and to great effect in small, often sexy roles in films like Mel Brooks' "Spaceballs" and "History of the World, Part One."

And now the sultry blonde is using that voice to promote her latest endeavor, a book she has penned about her life along with invaluable lessons and advice for women and men. Titled "Up All Night: From Hollywood Bombshell to Lingerie Mogul, Life Lessons from an Accidental Feminist," the book's cover shows her seductively spread across a red sofa in a leopard-skin outfit while holding a fluted glass of champagne. One thing Rhonda Shear knows full well is how to sell. The book is only the latest of her sales efforts.

At first, I remind her that we are of similar ages, but that she always seemed to date older boys, her eventual husband notwithstanding.

She laughs and recalls two brothers from Sigma Alpha Rho, the Jewish high school fraternity, who dated her, one to whom she was engaged for a time, that is, until she caught him cheating.

What an idiot, I think to myself.

"I went out with a lot of Jewish guys, but I was never part of the Jewish female clique," she disparages. "Jews really shunned me in New Orleans. They really did."

Perhaps that was true for her fellow female Jewish counterparts, I consider, but there were few Jewish men who would discount her as anything less than one of the most attractive and charming women of her generation. Despite her reputation as an empty-headed blonde – an image she milked to be disarming to others – she was nothing less than a very intelligent woman who saw opportunity and took advantage of it.

"In this book I wanted women to know that I had – men too, (because) men have enjoyed the book for sure – I wanted people to know because people look at your life as a whole and they go: 'Oh, you were lucky.' or 'You were on TV.' 'Or you were this or that.' But, there was never one moment of anything I did where it was easy and I was always told 'No,'" she says.

This negativity has informed much of her life. "I basically was told: 'No, you can't run for office. You can't be Miss Louisiana; you're too short. You can't be a comic; you're too sexy,'" she recalls. "You can't start a business at 46. What do you know about the intimate apparel business or the fashion industry?"

She has proved all of them wrong. In New Orleans. In Hollywood. And now in Florida, where she oversees her busy manufacturing plant headquartered near the Home Shopping Network (HSN) offices in St. Petersburg. Sales of her lingerie line, mostly hawked over HSN include the popular Ahh Bra and now register over \$100 million annually. Now she's the one saying no.

The book is her story, but it's more than that. "When I first wrote it – I guess everyone has a book or wants to tell their story – it was more autobiographical," she says.

After reading the initial draft, her book agent in Los Angeles called her. "He said: 'Rhonda Shear has done more than anybody I know, but –'" She begins to laugh out loud as an acknowledgment that she still can't take herself very seriously.

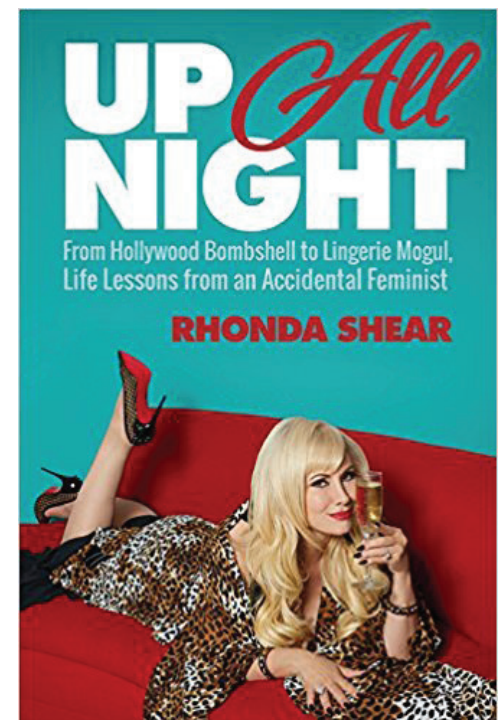
"I feel that you need to do something in it that speaks to women and has a little bit more of a feminist slant," she continues. "That's when I went back and added the life lessons; kinda like the bubble over my head."

The book has numerous "Fourth Wall Breaks" in which she breaks the narrative of the book to make comments or to elucidate an item she has raised. Her "Shear Honesty" pieces are scattered throughout the work with editorial comments on a variety of topics like women's body images and achieving success in business.

With levity, self-deprecation and stories no one else knows, Shear recounts the fun times and the lecherous occurrences in Hollywood as she tried to achieve her career goal of landing a situation comedy gig, while performing as a stand-up comic



A glamour shot during her starlet days in Hollywood, hometown beauty Rhonda Shear never lost her love of New Orleans. (Photo courtesy Rhonda Shear)



The book jacket from Rhonda Shear's "Up All Night."

and acting as a beauty queen and model.

Along the way, she met Hollywood royalty. One of her biggest early supporters was comedian Bob Hope, who had her appear with him on one of his "Starmakers" specials. Being a stand-up comedienne, she made appearances at Hollywood roasts for other celebrities like Muhammad Ali. Soon, she was seen next to stars like Sammy Davis, Jr., George Burns and other up-and-coming per-



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formers like Alan Thicke (She appeared on every program in which he starred including "Growing Pains.")

Thicke recently passed away due to a sudden heart attack, which she regrets.

Meanwhile, another one of her staunchest supporters also recently died of natural causes: Hugh Hefner of Playboy Magazine fame. Her initial pose in 1977 featured Shear in a pictorial with other scantily-clad ladies, but she resisted overtures to remove any of her clothing. Despite this, the fact she had appeared with nudes on the same pages led to her dismissal as Floral Trail Queen, a position paid for by her parents.

She blames the dismissal on the women in the organization, whom she labeled as hypocritical. "That's the funny thing about New Orleans that cracks me up," she notes. "You can show everything at Mardi Gras for beads, but woe is me! It's kinda still like that. New Orleans has such a dichotomy."

She sued the Floral Trail organization, headed up by Gaspar Schiro, the local Register of Conveyances, but lost the case despite local celebrities Jimmy Fitzmorris and Blaine Kern, Sr. speaking on her behalf at the six-hour trial. In response, she threw her hat into the political ring when Schiro sought re-election and he narrowly missed defeat by a mere handful of votes.

But the hoopla over the Playboy pictorial kept the magazine and Hefner interested in her career. "That led to a lifetime of an amazing relationship with Playboy," she recounts. "If there was anybody who helped my career more than anybody – who was my champion – it was Playboy." She recalls Hefner was very supportive of her comedy and invited her on numerous occasions out to the Playboy mansion.

Shear is not very happy with the recent fallout over the Harvey Weinstein sexual abuse scandals in which the Hollywood mogul has fallen in disgrace, lost the company he founded and been booted permanently from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

"I haven't been in Hollywood in years and I thought, well, at this point, it can't be as prevalent, because nowadays with social media, people could just blurt it out there," she muses. "There was no voice when I was out there. On top of that, there was that whole sexual period where it was a jiggle world when I was in L.A."

But the days of serial sexual abusers may be over for power brokers like Weinstein. "He had the power and the audacity to feel like what he did to hundreds and hundreds, probably thousands of

women," she considers. "I hope a lot of people go down with him and I hope that at least it puts the fear of God into guys who do this."

Several Hollywood stars like Courtney Love, Angelina Jolie and Gwyneth Paltrow, whom Shear describes as "Hollywood royalty," don't escape her critical eye either. She blames them for not speaking out about Weinstein years earlier when they had a chance. "One tweet from Angelina Jolie," she says, "One tweet and that man would've been brought down."

Indeed, the book speaks about her being propositioned on numerous occasions, but she maintains that she never did succumb to the casting couch philosophy of getting ahead. She does name names of some of her more intimate relationships.

Some of the stories of recalcitrant sexual behavior border on the unbelievable. One time, for example, a Hollywood figure called her parents to admonish them to have her engage in sex with him in order for her to achieve stardom. When that failed, he threatened to destroy her. She recounts instances where she literally had to outrun executives.

After performing in several films, a misunderstanding led to her firing from the set of "Happy Days" when star Henry Winkler was not informed that she had been given permission to miss a rehearsal. Filmmakers Garry Marshall, Ron Howard and others were all associated with a number of series that Shear wanted to be a part of ("Laverne and Shirley," "Joanie Loves Chachi" and "Mork and Mindy" among them). "I was really getting in with those people and that was my dream," Shear recounts. "They never used me again. It took the casting director ten years before he called me in again for a soap opera after "Happy Days" was off the air."

When the USA Network was looking for a replacement for its late-night female host in Hollywood, she fit the bill. The slot, which she shared with Gilbert Gottfried, who shot his show out of New York, taught her about the business. "I got to learn about TV, and directing and writing," she claims. "That gave me everything and also being on a show, the money I made as a stand-up comic was awesome. All my male friends were so mad at me and jealous."

After eight bountiful years, "Up All Night" was canceled and she began examining her life and career opportunities. After some missteps with relationships, she decided to rekindle her relationship with her first boyfriend, Van Fagan, who by now was divorced with two grown children.

Eventually, they were married. It was her first



Rhonda Shear shows off one of her products. (Photo courtesy Rhonda Shear)

marriage and she was 45 years old. That first year was a rough one as the couple assumed each other's debts and lived for a time in Lafayette.

After working off some debt they had accrued, they seized upon the opportunity to sell repurposed ladies undergarments over what became HSN. In order to cut the bottom line, they began to outsource the sewing of the garments and Shear Enterprises was born.

Later, they sold both his home in Lafayette and her Hollywood apartment as their business became more profitable. They relocated to St. Petersburg near the HSN broadcasting complex, when their company's knitted Ahh Bra became the darling of the industry and the two of them set out to erect a business empire built upon Lycra and lace.

To date, they have sold 34 million Ahh Bras in 40 countries. She claims it is the largest selling brassiere in the world and credits the success of their business to Fagan's acumen and to her tireless promotions. "Van is an amazing businessman. At the end of the day that's the teamwork that we are," she points out. "He understood the financial side of the business, which was different for me and I understood the marketing side, the P.R. side."

The company was listed as one of Inc. 5000's list of "Fastest Growing Companies" and has consistently racked up awards for outstanding business sales. All along Shear has become an advocate for women and the way they feel when using her products. She has been the chair of the local run for the American Cancer Society in St. Petersburg and been cited as a major donor to women's causes in the area.

To purchase a signed (with a kiss) copy of Rhonda's personal story, go to [www.rhondashear.com/up-all-night-book/](http://www.rhondashear.com/up-all-night-book/).





# Kim Sport honored at NCJW Hannah G. Solomon Award Luncheon

By DEAN M. SHAPIRO, SPECIAL to the CCJN

**H**onored for her work on behalf of battered and abused women and for survivors of cancer – especially breast cancer, of which she is one – Kim Sport was choked up with emotion as she began her acceptance speech. She had just been presented with the Hannah G. Solomon Award from the Greater New Orleans Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) on Monday, October 16.

Sport, the 2017 honoree, joined a distinguished roster of community leaders and elected officials – men as well as women, Jewish and non-Jewish – who have received the prestigious award since it was started locally in 1966. In its mission statement, the organization states “This award is given annually to a community leader who exemplifies the qualities of Hannah G. Solomon (1858-1942), founder of the National Council of Jewish Women. These leaders have brought about important community programs and services through their leadership in a volunteer capacity. Each has been a catalyst for social change.”

Guests at the luncheon were welcomed by Barbara Kaplinsky, president of the Greater New Orleans NCJW Section, followed by the hamotzi, the blessing over the challah bread by Rabbi Deborah Silver of Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation.

Though diminutive in physical stature, Sport was (and still is) widely respected – feared, even – by legislators and others who may have attempted to stymie the objectives she sought to accomplish as an advocate for justice and fair play for others less fortunate, both as a practicing attorney and a community activist.

“I talked with some of those legislators and told them, ‘You cannot tell Kim, no,’” said attorney Timothy S. Madden, one of the four presenters of the award. “You might as well just



Honoree Kim Sport accepts the Hannah G. Solomon Award from Mimi Schlesinger. (Photo by Dean Shapiro)

move on and accept it and help pass legislation that betters the community. She is the type of person who recognizes that you must do the things that others say cannot be done, and she does it. She recognizes that hard work and heart will get the job done. She recognizes that what you do makes a difference.”

The other presenters, Barbara Turner Windhorst, Dr. Frank J. DellaCroce and Charmaine D. Caccioppi, were equally effusive in their praise of Sport and her accomplishments.

Introduced by Award Selection Committee Chair Mimi Schlesinger, Sport made her way to the podium and was presented with proclamations from New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu, the Jefferson Parish Council and Jefferson Parish President Mike Yenni, citing and praising her on receiving the award.

The award itself, a cast likeness of Hannah Solomon mounted on a solid base, was presented by Schlesinger to Sport who was given a standing ovation. The inscription read, in part, “. . . to Ms. Kim Sport for her tireless



NCJW New Orleans Section president Barbara Kaplinsky congratulates Kim Sport. (Photo by Dean Shapiro)



New Orleans District Attorney Leon Canizarro, left, with Mike Sport and wife Kim. (Photo by Dean Shapiro)

commitment to improving the quality of life for women, children and families.”

Taking a minute to compose herself before a crowd of several hundred well-wishers in the ballroom of the Marriott Hotel, including three generations of her own family, elected officials and other dignitaries

and friends, Sport humbly thanked the local chapter for selecting her for the award. During her speech, she recalled many of the experiences she encountered – both good and bad – striving to reach her goals.

“Before coming up here I read Hannah Solomon’s 277-page autobiography and found her to be excep-

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tional in every way,” Sport said. “Especially for improving the lives of women and children. I realize that there are still some issues that we’re focusing on today,” she continued, citing human trafficking, poor housing, gun violence, juvenile justice reform and other serious issues. “All have their genesis in the early days of the National Council of Jewish Women. I have no doubt that if Hannah G. Solomon was born in 1958 instead of 1858, she would be sitting right now in the Oval Office as the first female President of the United States.” A thunderous round of applause greeted that comment.

Quoting from Solomon’s book, Sport read Solomon’s words of praise for her husband of many years who supported his activist wife in her ongoing and multifaceted endeavors. “Her words could be my words,” Sport said. “And I have a strong suspicion it couldn’t have been any easier for Henry Solomon to be married to Hannah Solomon than it is for Mike Sport to be married to me,” for which she received another round of applause as her husband was acknowledged at one of the head tables.

“Thank you ‘Sport’ for always being my biggest cheerleader,” she added. “Of everyone who has supported me over the years, you are a real beacon and the reason I am standing here today.”

Sport then recounted her early childhood. “My own convictions stem from a humble upbringing in a home touched and troubled by family violence,” she said. She recounted a tragedy involving one of her grandfathers, a sergeant in the Jefferson Parish Sheriff’s Office, being shot and killed in the line of duty when she was nine years old.

After leaving home and studying nuclear medicine at Charity Hospital, she noted that she was “witnessing, up close and personal, the tremendous poverty and human suffering of people in our community. I learned firsthand how, in an instant, life could be changed or ended because of a preventable accident or a senseless act of violence.”

Sport fondly recalled meeting her husband and beginning the study of law at Tulane University after finishing her Health Sciences degree at Our Lady of Holy Cross College (now the University of Holy Cross). Upon graduation from Tulane, she clerked in the Louisiana Supreme Court under former Chief

Justice Pascal Calogero Jr., whom she praised effusively.

Then she began describing her harrowing experiences fighting back against breast cancer and two other cancer diagnoses within a nine-year period. Those experiences sharpened her sensitivities to the battles fought by women against, not only the stigmas of what they were going through, but the legal, medical and insurance issues they had to contend with. “This is why Breastoration was created,” she said, citing a support organization she co-founded with two other breast cancer survivors.

Thanks to her efforts and the organization, laws were passed “requiring physicians to both verbally and in writing inform their patients of all of their treatment options, including reconstruction, at the time of a breast cancer diagnosis,” she explained. “And this is why we now have laws to require insurance companies to cover every single phase of women’s breast reconstruction and which further prohibits the designation of any phase of those surgeries as cosmetic surgery.

“My own cancer journey is hopefully over,” Sport continued, “but the reality is that I survived and so many others did not. Women who’ve had cancer only once . . . much younger women . . . women with children. I knew there had to be a reason for my survival. Something even bigger than helping fellow breast cancer survivors. But I did not figure it out, really, until the fall of 2013. That is when I became chair of public policy with the United Way of Southeast Louisiana.”

Moving on to another cause in which she played a prominent role, Sport said, “That’s when I also learned that a member of my own family has been suffering in silence for the stigma of domestic violence for over twelve years. This knowledge truly changed the trajectory of my life. I’m ashamed to admit that I knew nothing of the public health crisis of domestic violence, which affects one in four women in intimate partner relationships.

“I decided at that point, like Hannah G. Solomon, to become a woman of action and I educated myself,” Sport continued. She studied “every single Louisiana statute containing the words ‘domestic violence,’ ‘dating violence,’ ‘domestic abuse’ and ‘family violence.’ And, with the enormous help of a fired-up coalition of individuals and organizations, over seventy provisions of law have been changed during the past four legislative sessions to provide more protections for victims, and more punishment for those who would abuse them.”

Concluding her remarks, Sport praised all of those with whom she has worked to help correct the abuses in today’s society, including law enforcement personnel, professional counselors and scores of volunteers like herself. “Not a single law would have been changed in this state without committed groups full of ticked-off women and the courageous testimony of boots on the ground advocates. People unafraid to take bold actions against the very powerful special interest groups,” she said.

“Every policy initiative take in recent years was driven by a courageous victim,” Sport said. “Someone willing to come forth and tell her story in the face of unrelenting coercion, intimidation and harassment by her abuser.” She issued a warning to any “abusers” who attempt to intimidate her into backing off from representing her clients: “It’s not going to work.”

She went on to praise the work of other volunteers, including legal professionals who donated their time and expertise toward crafting protective legislation. “It all reminds me that I’m not in this alone. That others share my values and my outrage and they stand with me in passionately defending and protecting victims of domestic abuse. We will not back down,” she declared.

“I feel exactly as Hannah G. Solomon must have felt: honored to be part of the family of the National Council of Jewish Women. Being here today, surrounded by friends and loved ones and a remarkable galaxy of brilliant women, is a day I will cherish for the rest of my life.”



## Hazelnuts at JCC Succot Celebration

**T**he Hazelnuts, a close harmony vocal group from Israel made an appearance at the Uptown Jewish Community Center for the annual Succot celebration. Greatly influenced by the recordings of the Boswell Sisters of New Orleans, the Hazelnuts use a similar style of jazz and swing harmonies for their own unique sound.





Having a great time with fellow members of the Gates of Prayer sisterhood is Amy Thomas.



Bonnie Lustig and Gail Pesses take a photo break while mixing their ingredients.

## Chabad, Hadassah host Mega Challah Bake

**O**n Wednesday evening October 25th the women of the New Orleans Jewish community met the challenge and engaged 200 locals to participate in the nation-wide Mega Challah bake. The event was held at Gates of Prayer in Metairie. The double chai participation fee included

a personalized apron, ingredients to prepare a challah and refreshments of sushi, salads, Kosher wine and desserts! (Photography supplied by Chabad of Louisiana)

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# JTS honors Dr. Thomas Oelsner at Mardi Gras World

By **NICHOLAS HAMBURGER**, Special to the CCJN

**T**ouro Infirmiry Foundation held its annual gala at Mardi Gras World this past Saturday night, November 4, honoring Dr. Thomas Oelsner, a retired nephrologist who served as Touro Infirmiry's first Chief of Nephrology. Oelsner, who worked at the hospital from 1967 to 2006, received the 2017 Judah Touro Society (JTS) Award, which is considered to be the hospital's highest honor.

Moments before presenting the award to Oelsner in front of a crowd of roughly 300 guests, Dr. Jay M. Shanes, the 2015 JTS Award recipient, explained that the award "is given annually to an individual who has made outstanding contributions to the welfare of Touro Infirmiry." Oelsner, who was the first nephrology fellow at Tulane University, served as Chief of Nephrology at Touro Infirmiry for the duration of his forty-year career, helping to pioneer a field of medicine that, at the time, was new. Nephrology is the study and practice of medicine focused on the kidney.

In a speech during the gala's main event, Rabbi David Goldstein, the rabbi emeritus at Touro Synagogue, emphasized Oelsner's unique ability to connect with patients on a personal level. Drawing a connection between Dr. Oelsner's medical practice and the Oath of Maimonides, a 12th-century doctrine for physicians composed by the Jewish philosopher Maimonides, Goldstein said, "[This] credo for physicians in many ways personifies Tom Oelsner, and the way in which he has always viewed the art of healing." Rabbi Goldstein proceeded to read an abbreviated version of the oath, which is centered around the following concept: "may I never see in the patient anything but a fellow creature in pain."

In this sense, Dr. Oelsner seemed to embody a fundamental tenet of Touro Infirmiry – the institution's intimate medical care. "Touro is an exceptional hospital. It's not like going to a big community or county hospital. It's much more personal, it's warm. It's a feeling that somebody cares about you. And it's home. It was home for forty years," Oelsner offered in an interview with the CCJN before the main event.

Later, when she addressed the guests in attendance, Touro Infirmiry President and CEO Susan E. Andrews stressed that "quality of care will always be our highest priority."

Accordingly, the benefits from this year's gala will fund the development of the Touro Wellness Center, a rehab facility designed to assist individuals with spinal-cord injuries. Jonathan Brouk, a health care lawyer who serves on the board of the Touro Infirmiry Foundation, commented on the significance of upgrading the facility, explaining, "Current patients can come in if they need treatment but also people who, if their insurance will no longer pay for them to receive treatment, they're opening up this Wellness Center so that people will be able to come in and still use the same machines they need without having the burden come out of pocket."

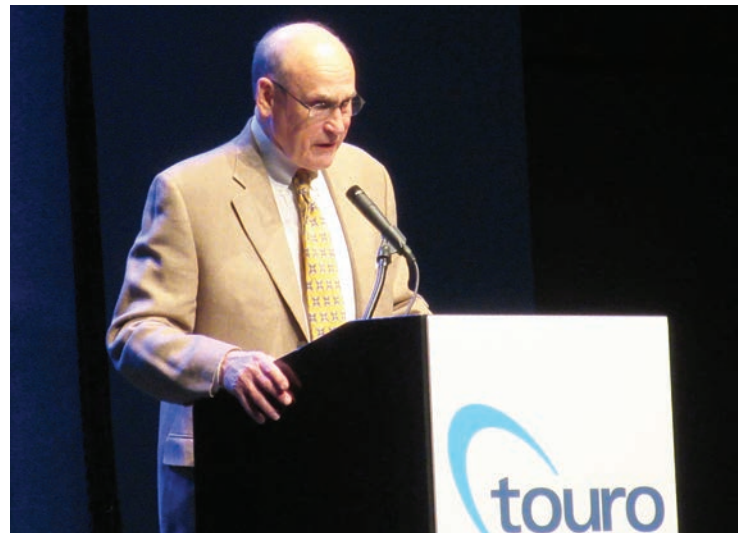
The Touro Infirmiry Foundation, which organized the gala, is an auxiliary body of Touro Infirmiry created in 1989 to raise money for the non-profit hospital. It is separate from the Judah Touro Society, which is comprised of prominent benefactors. Brouk spoke candidly about the foundation's emphasis on the future. Several years ago, "the foundation identified there was a gap in its donor and supporter base," Brouk said, adding, "it was like a bunch of 80-year-old white guys who were the ones who were on the foundation board."

According to Brouk, that discrepancy led to various initiatives intended to connect with a younger and more diverse base of supporters, such as Touro Tomorrow, which sponsored the gala's after-party, and the Paul S. Rosenblum Healthcare Institute.

Nancy B. Timm, who serves as chairwoman of the foundation, echoed Brouk on the importance of the future. In her remarks during the main event, Timm laid out the ambitions of the foundation: "To rebuild and to build new relationships, to listen to your thoughts and feedback and put them into action where and when we can.



Dr. Thomas Oelsner accepts the Judah Touro Society Award on November 4, 2017. (Photo by Nicholas Hamburger)



Rabbi emeritus David Goldstein at Touro Infirmiry Foundation gala. (Photo by Nicholas Hamburger)

"We're thrilled and we're excited about the future."

The event began at 5:00 p.m. on a balmy Saturday evening with a patron party hosted on the second-floor of Mardi Gras World, overlooking the Mississippi River and the Crescent City Connection.

More guests began to arrive around an hour later, and the official cocktail reception began at 6:00 p.m. Drinks were served, a live jazz band played, and attendees had the opportunity to place silent bids for various paintings and photographs.

Around 7:00 p.m., the guests moved downstairs to the capacious River City Ballroom, where a dinner of braised beef short ribs, potato dauphinoise, and glazed vegetables was served. Numerous speakers addressed the crowd, culminating in the presentation of the 2017 JTS Award to Oelsner.

In his speech upon receiving the award, Oelsner used an extended metaphor of a Mahler symphony to contextualize the need for compassionate physicians within the technological developments in medicine over the last half-century. "We must use technology to enhance medical diagnosis and treatment, not to replace the humanity in medicine. Therein lies the art of medicine," Oelsner stated before concluding, "Touro is like the symphony hall where all this comes together. Touro provides the feeling of a concert hall, where all your care is provided in a harmonious manner."

To read more about Dr. Oelsner and his accomplishments go to <https://www.crescentcityjewishnews.com/interview-dr-tom-oelsner-speaks-outs-prior-to-his-acceptance-of-jts-award/>





# JCDS held impressive gala on Nov. 5

The Jewish Community Day School (JCDS) held its annual gala fundraiser Nov. 5 at the Goldring-Woldenberg Campus in Metairie, the building in which it holds its classes and other events throughout the year. However, the gymnasium was transformed into a glittering and sparkling hall decorated in a grand manner as an enchanted forest and punctuated by beautiful music.

The basketball court, usually occupied by the sights and sounds of athletes bouncing basketballs or runners advancing around the upper track, instead became a showcase of trees spread the word of the many varied programs at the school like the many branches in an enchanted wood. The event was also held to honor two benefactors who have helped JCDS achieve their present level of success, Dr. Gerald and Joan Berenson.

The Berensons have been advocates and financial supporters of JCDS since the 1990s. Joan has been a perennial supporter of Jewish education, an active board member for many terms, and instrumental in securing funds for facility and operations of JCDS. Both Berensons have made it their priority to ensure the long term success of the JCDS.

Guests were treated to a sit down dinner by Chef Daniel Esses of Hillel's recently-opened Rimon at Tulane Hillel. The decorated venue featured crystal chandeliers, sparkling vines, glittering butterflies, and life-size cypress and oak trees. Live opera tunes were performed by renowned local group, Bon Operatit and live-action painting



Joan and Dr. Gerald Berenson at the JCDS gala on November 5, 2017.

by local artist, Emory Nolan provided wonderful keepsakes to our supporters.

Mitzvah Moment was introduced where guests raised their paddles auction style, not to bid on a particular item, but to publicly place monetary pledges by raising their paddles to benefit the school. The sponsorship support, patron and guest tickets, and auction items coupled with the Mitzvah Moment allowed for record breaking success in funds raised. The success of the Enchanted Evening Gala kicked off the school's Watch Us Grow! Campaign on a very positive note.

As event chair, Green gushed, "It is a privilege for me to work with such a tremendous group of volunteers and passionate supporters. Together, we created an extraordinary evening honoring our dear friends, Joan and Gerald."



Attendees at JCDS gala, from left to right, Sheryl and Peter Title, Carol and Dale Newman. (Photos by Alan Smason)

"The evening was a beautiful reflection of our accomplishments, and dreams as we move forward," stated Oscar J. Tolmas Head of School, Sharon Pollin. Previous honorees Lis and Hugo Kahn each delivered speeches in praise of the Berensons. Lis Kahn presented a special piece of art that depicted a pomegranate tree.

A very honored Joan Berenson noted, "There was such a feeling of warmth and joy felt by all. Seeing the Jewish Community Day School thrive is so important. Our next generation truly needs a place where they can learn and grow, not only with language, science, math, technology, and the arts, but also as future leaders connected to Israel and rooted in Jewish values. Gerald and I are so proud!"

## JCC Annual Gala honored Leslie Fischman

The Jewish Community Center presented a creatively planned and well attended event on Saturday, November 11, 2017. The highlight of the gathering was to show-off the newly expanded Uptown JCC facilities. Additionally the board chose to honor Leslie Fischman, the longtime JCC executive director.

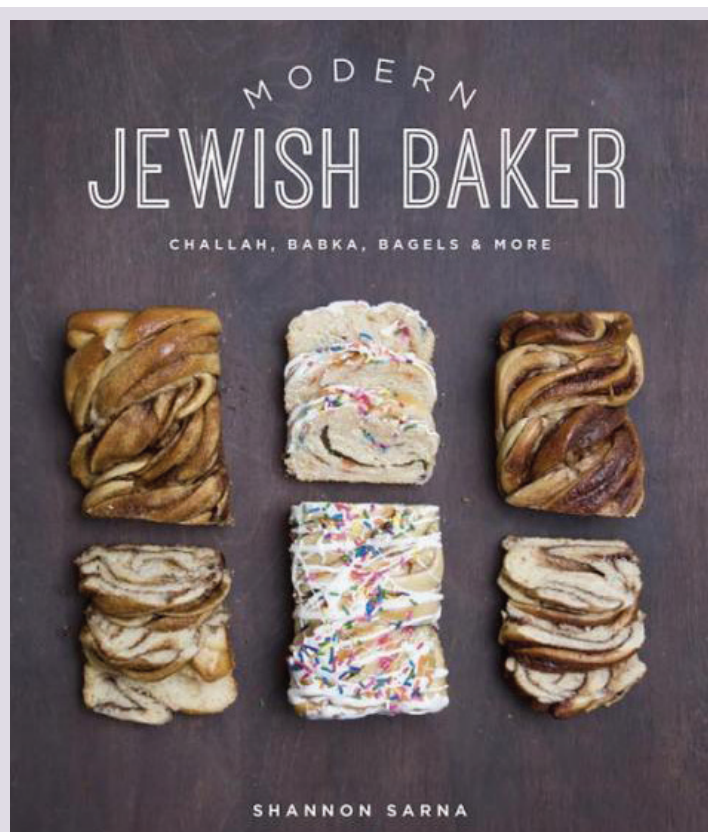
The evening began with a sold-out Shaya Restaurant-catered patron event at the home of Walton and Jeff Goldring. After the cocktail hour ended, the patrons "second-lined" with the Preservation Hall Jazz Band to the JCC, one block away.

The guests were treated to a Mediterranean style buffet prepared by Rimon's chef Daniel Esses.

After the special presentation of appreciation to the long-term executive director Leslie Fischman a live auction was held.

All proceeds from this event will support the numerous programming and services offered by the JCC.





## Queen of Challah, Sarna

## Presented New Cook Book at JCC

**T**he editor of the The Nosh blog, Shannon Sarna shared her recipes and secrets of effective Jewish baking at the Jewish Community Center on November 6, 2017. Her book, MODERN JEWISH BAKER: Challah, Babka, Bagels and More contains detailed instructions for the novice as well as the experience baker. Sarna shared her secrets on how to make ahead recipes, ideas for leftovers and many other practical tips.

Sarna had a special on site presentation which was followed by a book signing. This event was sponsored by the Cathy and Morris Bart Jewish Cultural Arts series.

## JCRS held 2nd Chanukah Wrap-a-Thon

**T**he Jewish Children's Regional Service (JCRS), the oldest children's charity in the nation, held a second round of wrapping of Chanukah gifts for those children in the Houston area affected by Hurricane Harvey.

The event was held on November 12, 2017 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the Goldring-Woldenberg Jewish Community Campus, 3747 West Esplanade Avenue in Metairie.

Students, families and volunteers of all ages helped wrap thousands of gifts with wrapping materials to be supplied by JCRS.

As in the previous Wrap-a-Thons, also made possible by a grant from the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust, pizza and other refreshments were served throughout the day. In addition, the Saints away game against the Buffalo Bills at Ralph Wilson Stadium in New York was shown.

## Marlene Trestman returned to the WW2

## Museum to discuss mentor Margolin

**T**he National World War II Museum sponsored a talk on the evening of November 26 by homegrown attorney-turned author Marlene Trestman. Trestman who has lived in Maryland for more than three decades, returned to New Orleans to share her insights on her mentor and inspiration, Bessie Margolin.

Trestman, whose opus is a biography, "Fair Labor Lawyer: The Remarkable Life of New Deal Attorney and Supreme Court Advocate Bessie Margolin," counted Margolin as a friend. She credits Margolin as being helpful in preparing her for her own legal career.

Trestman's talk at the museum centered on Margolin's work as a lawyer after the end of World War II.

Just after the initial Nuremberg Trials were held during which the most infamous of Nazis had been placed on trial for war crimes against humanity, Margolin was summoned to Nuremberg. Loaned by the Labor Department to the U.S. Army Judge Advocate Corps, she drafted the rules for the American Military Tribunals that would eventually try more than 200 second-tier Nazi criminals.

Although she returned to Washington, D.C. before the second-tier criminal trials began, the rules she helped institute prosecuted the criminal activity of doctors, lawyers, accountants and other civic leaders.



Bessie Margolin photographed on the steps of the Supreme Court building with the Capitol in the background. (Photo courtesy Marlene Trestman)

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# 'The King and I' livens up Saenger Theater

By DEAN M. SHAPIRO, Special to the CCJN

In the mid-1800s, when the then-superpowers of Great Britain and France were amassing their vast overseas empires and hungrily swallowing up the smaller enclaves of Southeast Asia, only one of those nations managed to maintain its independence: the Kingdom of Siam.

It was largely by adapting itself to Western ways that Siam, ruled by King Mongkut from 1851 to 1868, was able to keep its autonomy as it gradually morphed into the present-day parliamentary democracy now known as Thailand. In order to learn more about Western ways and incorporate some of them into his kingdom's culture, Mongkut hired a British teacher to educate some of his 82 children for the final six years of his reign.

The story of that teacher, Anna Leonowens, and her often-contentious but mutually respectful relationship with Mongkut, was told in a 1944 book that was adapted into two movies and an award-winning Broadway musical which its creators titled *The King and I*.

The 1951 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, replete with all of the musical and ornate splendor of the Bangkok Royal Palace, arrived at the Saenger Theatre as the season's second offering in the Broadway in New Orleans series on Tuesday evening. From the opening scene of a passenger ship arriving in the port of Bangkok through the final farewell, with only a few technical speed bumps along the way, the overall production is a colorful feast for the eyes and ears.

The chemistry between the King (Jose Llana) and Anna (Laura Michelle Kelly) is not exactly what one could call "compatible" throughout most of the production. In fact, it could be better termed a "culture clash." Western values butt up against Eastern customs nearly every step of the way, and it is that very interplay between the two principals that keeps the progression moving forward full steam. Each of them, being set in their ways, stubbornly insist on having certain things their way, but they also know when they have to concede on a particular protocol and let the other one have his or her way. And, in

typical Broadway fashion, there is an eventual meeting of the minds at the end, bringing the conflict to a mutually amicable conclusion.

Comparisons in formula to some of R&H's later works, especially *The Sound of Music*, can't be avoided.

Llana brings outstanding depth and conviction to his character's persona, being every bit as regal, dignified and convincing as the role demands. He insists that no one, including Anna, raise their head above his when they are not standing up, and the interplay between them as this ritual is played out makes for some of the production's funniest moments. He's the boss and he wants to make sure she and everyone else knows it. And he vehemently resents being called "barbaric" by those fully clothed Western nations that would seek to turn his bare-chested rule into one of subservience to their own ruling despots.

Kelly's personification of the dignified and semi-liberated Englishwoman is equally convincing and endearing to the audience. Her stubborn insistence on doing the job she was hired to do her own way is anathema to the King's frame of reference, but it somehow commands his grudging acceptance and respect. And though there never was – in the play, the movie or in real life – any romantic involvement between them, when they finally come together in their famous dance number ("Shall We Dance"), all barriers between them have been broken down and the audience cheers.

Also excelling in their roles are Joan Almedilla as the officious, stiff and formal Lady Thiang; Brian Rivera as Kralahome, the King's boisterous but obsequious prime minister; Anthony Chan as Prince Chulalongkorn, the stand-offish and surly Crown Prince; and Patrick Boll as Captain Orton who brings Anna and her young son Louis (Ryan Stout) to Siam with warnings about what they can expect, and then later reappears as the British ambassador, Sir Edward Ramsey, who loves Anna in vain.

Hatching up the subplot with romantic tenderness are the young lovers, Tuptim (Q Lim), a slave girl sent by



Laura Michelle Kelly and Jose Llana star in "The King and I" now playing at the Saenger Theater. (Photo by Matthew Murphy)



Laura Michelle Kelly arrives in Siam on a ship early in the show. (Photo by Matthew Murphy)

the king of Burma to the Siamese King's court as a pawn in a game of royal diplomacy, and her true love interest, Lun Tha (Kavin Panmeechao). Their continually thwarted efforts to enjoy their brief, clandestine trysts result in sweet renderings of two of the production's signature musical pieces, "We Kiss in a Shadow" and "I Have Dreamed."

The 36-member cast includes eight Royal Children, among whom the very young Keira Belle Young stood out for cuteness and lovability as Princess Ying-Yaowalak. Also on stage were numerous ensemble members, colorfully attired as Royal Wives (of which the real Mongkut had 39), townspeople, Buddhist monks and palace guards.

The Act II ballet production of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" (billed as "The Small House of Uncle Thomas") was skillfully and creatively choreographed by Christopher Gattelli from the original work by Jerome Robbins, but it did, at times, drag out the action a little too much.

The orchestral accompaniment of mostly New Orleans musicians – several of whom are members of the Louisiana Philharmonic – were spot-on during the production numbers, thanks to the skilled baton wielding of Maestro Gerald Steichen. Our "locals" represented the New Orleans cultural talent base very well to this national touring company and we can be proud of them.

All of the other key production elements – the sets, lighting, sound, costumes, props, wigs and hair design were well-crafted and in keeping with the period in which the story took place. Thankfully there was nothing in any of these components that would have appeared anachronistic or out of place, unlike many contemporary musical adaptations (including opera) that seem to take a perverse pleasure in mixing milieus.

And, of course at the end, everyone, including the audience, was "whistling a happy tune."



# Masorti leader Hess warns of threats to Israeli democracy

By **NICHOLAS HAMBURGER**, Special to the CCJN

Israel's influential ultra-Orthodox contingency is threatening democracy in the country, Yizhar Hess, the chief executive of the Conservative Judaism movement in Israel, said at a talk on Wednesday, November 15 at Shir Chadash Conservative Synagogue in Metairie. In Israel, the Conservative movement is referred to as Masorti, which in Hebrew means "tradition."

According to Hess, Jewish pluralism, or the free practice of various systems of Judaism, is currently at risk in Israel. Hess pointed to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "tricky" freezing of an agreement last June that would have substantially improved the egalitarian prayer section of the Western Wall, also known as the Kotel.

Hess, who helped negotiate the Western Wall agreement with Netanyahu in January 2016, delivered an impassioned diatribe against the privileges Orthodox Judaism enjoys in Israel. "The unholy connection between religion and state in Israel has financial ramifications," he said. "The Israeli government invests, every year, 3.7 billion shekels in Orthodox religious services and institutions." 3.7 billion shekels is equal to roughly \$1 billion. In comparison, Masorti and Reform combined receive a mere \$200,000 from state funding, according to a New York Times article published in 2012.

In addition to the sizable financial backing Orthodox Judaism nets from the state, the Orthodox rabbinate wields significant control over marriage laws in Israel. Current law requires an Orthodox rabbi to oversee any marriage or divorce.

"If you marry outside of Israel – no matter how – it will be recognized in Israel when you enter the country," Hess said. Despite this fact, the state does not recognize a Masorti or Reform union performed in Israel. "If Elvis Presley marries you in Las Vegas, it will be recognized by the state, but if Rabbi Silver marries you in Israel it will not be recognized. Can a Jewish state really accept this?" Hess asked, referring to Rabbi Deborah Silver of Shir Chadash.

Conservative is the second-most popular form of Judaism in the United States, after Reform. In Israel, however, only between 5 to 10 percent of the population identifies with Masorti or Reform. Masorti's scarcity of state funding and exclusion from Israeli marriage laws, Hess suggested, contribute to its minority status.

"There are multiple opportunities for the Jewish Orthodox narrative to be manifested in Israel. It's a challenge that's more relevant than other challenges because it jeopardizes our ability to tell our story," he said.

Hess became chief executive of Masorti in 2007 after a manifold career in the military, academia, and law. He served as a lieutenant in the Israeli Defense Forces before earning his bachelor's degree in Political Science and Hebrew Studies. He is also a member of the Israeli Bar. He later went on to



Yizhar Hess speaks at Shir Chadash Conservative Synagogue on Wed., Nov. 15. (Photo by Nicholas Hamburger)



Masorti Israel leader Yizhar Hess. (Photo by Nicholas Hamburger)

earn a master's degree in Jewish Studies from the Schechter Institute and, hours before speaking at Shir Chadash, submitted his Ph.D. dissertation to Sussex University.

Speaking before a crowd of several dozen congregants, Hess concluded his remarks with a blunt repudiation of Israel's ultra-Orthodox faction. "I think we have a decade that will determine if Israel will stay a country that we can be proud of, a vibrant democracy that balances nicely between Jewish values and democratic values, or, God forbid, a country that is taken over by Jewish fundamentalists," he stated.





# Timm, Fitzpatrick play Leopold and Loeb in 'Thrill Me'

By ALAN SMASON, Theatre Critic, WYES-TV ("Steppin' Out")

While the Jazz Age produced headlines that proved titillating and provocative, none captured the nation's attention more than the thrill-seeking murder of an innocent 14-year-old by two Jewish college graduates, Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb. In the anything-goes period marked by the lawlessness of the bootleggers and rampant laissez-fairism in industry, Leopold and Loeb defined a line where society would dare not cross and "a crime of the century" it could not condone.

Chosen completely at random by the killers, Bobby Franks was kidnapped and murdered by the pair of 19-year-olds just to experience the thrill of the kill. Defended by no less a galvanizing figure and orator than Clarence Darrow, the two escaped the death penalty and were sentenced to life in prison after a shocking police investigation and trial.

Admittedly lovers, Leopold and Loeb's story sent shock waves across the country as details of their co-dependent relationship were revealed. The two, who otherwise might have gone on to have established brilliant legal careers, were heavily influenced by philosopher Frederick Nietzsche, whose concept of a "superman" above society and not bound by limitations imposed upon him from society also inspired Adolf Hitler and his Nazi cronies with their crimes against humanity.

This unlikely subject for a musical and theatrical work might seem preposterous. See Em On Stage Productions, a company that has

cut its proverbial teeth on splatter zones in less serious works like *Evil Dead: The Musical* and *Terminator: The Musical* and achieved Big Easy Awards for its production of the rock-tinged *Lizzie: The Musical*, steps up its game again in presenting *Thrill Me: The Leopold and Loeb Story* by composer and lyricist Stephen Dolginoff.

Starring John Fitzpatrick as Leopold and Eli Timm as Loeb, *Thrill Me* is a very powerful work and is, in reality, a psychological thriller. With only occasional voiceovers of other actors to move the action along, the two leads are together on the stage of the Allways Theatre almost the entire time connecting with one another.

Perhaps most menacing of the two is Timm, who as Loeb, suavely convinces Fitzgerald, the entitled issue of a rich family, to take part in more and more involved criminal acts in order to strengthen their relationship. "We are above society. Murder is the only crime worthy of our talents, Nathan," he coldly pronounces.

This is not just a homoerotic tale. It is a psychological study in just how far one person in a relationship will go in order to make a partner happy. And on the other hand, this is not just a simple relationship. The two draw on each other in order to continue the relationship and satisfy each other's needs. They are co-dependent sociopaths, but just who is in charge and directing the action remains to be seen.

With just a simple piano accompaniment by music director Ainsley



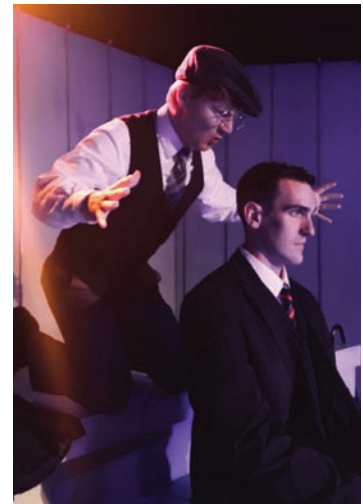
David Fitzpatrick plays rich and entitled Nathan Leopold while Eli Timm is wealthy and privileged Richard Loeb. (Photo by Christopher Bentivegna)

Matich, this aptly named piece is full of Dolginoff's very interesting music and lyrics that advance the motivations of both characters.

It is a musical that is not intended for youngsters and will probably offend more than a few people who are turned off by their anti-social and psychopathic actions. Clearly, Leopold and Loeb were more than sociopaths. Their twisted actions were directed to prove their superiority over the ordinary and mundane. In the end, the question remains: were they taken in by their own misguided philosophy or was each one taken in by the other?

Surprisingly, it is easy to enjoy this dark work, which is directed by See 'Em On Stage's Christopher Bentivegna. Both actors do a delicate dance with each other as they unpack their character's feelings and motivations. As the story develops and their complicated relationship is revealed through the songs and in flashback scenes, we experience a very dark patch of man's psyche and a contempt of the privileged for normalcy.

While the crime took place more



David Fitzpatrick and Eli Timm in "Thrill Me." (Photo by Christopher Bentivegna)

than 90 years ago, the concept of the wealthy and entitled class being above the law and society-at-large is still prevalent in today's headline. The 2016 Texas case of the 16-year-old, who drunkenly killed four and used "affluenza" in his defense is a startling reminder that the sentiments held by Leopold and Loeb in *Thrill Me*, still echo in the present.



# Former sportscaster, now Israeli broadcaster set to return to NOLA

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

Surrounded by sports figures who demonstrated their athletic prowess on American fields of green and atop courts of woods, Mike Wagenheim has led an entire life of serendipity. Along the way, the award-winning sportscaster spent nearly a decade here in New Orleans and in nearby Thibodaux as a top college broadcaster, but even he could not have imagined the improbable play-by-play call his own life would have taken these last three years.

Fortuitously and with no real explanation behind the decision, Wagenheim, a mostly secular Jew, left behind a successful sportscaster career and made aliyah in 2015, landing in Israel single and with no job prospects. “I have a fairly unique personal story about making aliyah. I really wasn’t in touch with Judaism much for a number of decades after my bar mitzvah,” he related in a CCJN telephone interview. “I hadn’t been to synagogue at all and wasn’t practicing.”

Initially, he decided that he wanted to make a difference in the world and opted to shelve his successful sports career and volunteer as a member of the Peace Corps. He was slated to move to an assignment in Ukraine when Russia attacked its former Soviet partner. The downing of the unarmed Malaysian airliner during that summer also made him think twice about relocating there.

The process of change had him reconsider where he wanted to spend his time and energy. “It led me to Israel,” he continued. “I had no connections here. I didn’t know Hebrew. I didn’t know anyone.” But, as fate would turn out, there were unseen forces at work. In only a few short weeks, he found an Israeli woman who helped set him on a new path. The two fell in love and Wagenheim learned the meaning of at least one Hebrew word – *besheret* (“destined”).

Today, he is a married man with a newborn who no longer covers sports figures, but instead reports on the interplay among Israeli politicians from the noisy chambers of the Knesset for i24NEWS, an English-speaking Israeli TV station.

“Wags,” as his fellows sports cronies dubbed him, returned to New Orleans to make two speaking appearances as a well-informed member of Israel’s media. The first was at the uptown JCC to talk on the differences in perception of President Donald Trump by Americans and Israelis. Titled “Trump, Israel and American Jews: What’s to Come,” the talk, was sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, the Jewish Community Center and the Jewish Community Relations Committee.

But more on that later. The reasons behind Wagenheim’s appearances here can only be explained by delving back into his storied sports career.

Growing up in his native Philadelphia, Wagenheim was exposed to all manner of professional and college level sports. “I was a sports fan since the day I came out of the womb,” he exaggerated. There was little doubt in his mind that his love of sports, a talent for writing and his gifted voice would predestine him for a career as a sports broadcaster, possibly in a coveted role as a play-by-play announcer.

After picking up a mic at the University of West Virginia, he studied broadcast journalism securing a bachelor’s degree first in news reporting and followed with a master’s degree in sports management. In his final years at student radio station WWVU, he was named sports director and called his first games for the baseball and women’s basketball teams. Around the same time, he was tabbed to announce the action for both men’s and women’s soccer over the Mountaineer Sports Network.



Israeli diplomatic correspondent Mike Wagenheim in his newest gig at i24News. (Photo courtesy Mike Wagenheim)



Interviewing U.S. Ambassador David Friedman, left, for i24News is Mike Wagenheim. (Photo courtesy Mike Wagenheim)

An award-winning broadcaster of the year at the top of his game in college, he embarked on a professional career with two brief stops in San Bernadino and Battle Creek, Michigan, before arriving at the University of New Orleans, where his broadcasting star began to ascend even higher.

Wagenheim was hired by UNO to be the school’s director of broadcasting and he became the play-by-play announcer for all of the baseball and men’s and women’s basketball and volleyball games. He also started working with the local Cox Cable sports channel as the host of the coaches’ shows and regularly appeared over local radio as the voice of the Privateers. His broadcasts helped him earn spots to call other games and he received the inaugural Sun Belt Conference Sportscaster of the Year Award nine years ago.

While working with UNO, Wagenheim had several opportunities to befriend a fellow sports enthusiast, Arnie Fielkow, who was initially working as executive vice-president with the New Orleans Saints before his election to the New Orleans City Council. Fielkow, now the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans CEO, worked with Wagenheim on a committee to prevent the





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school from moving from NCAA Division I to Division III. Once a baseball standout himself, Fielkow also originally hailed from the area of Wisconsin where Wagenheim called games for several teams as Northwoods League Play-by-Play Announcer of the Year. The two maintained a friendship even after Fielkow left the city to become NBA Retired Players Association CEO.

Wagenheim had his own career change in 2010, moving to Thibodaux to become the voice of the Nichols State University Colonels as its director of communications. In short order, he became responsible for creating internships with the Communications Department, in essence teaching students how to do many aspects of his own job. Within two years of his arrival, Wagenheim was named assistant athletic director at the college.

All of this would seem to have made him very happy. But the restless nature of his character seemed to be calling him away from sports. He no longer had the same fire that drove his passion during college and at the start of his career. The prospect of moving to Israel took on greater urgency and he reached out to Fielkow to draft a letter of recommendation to the Jewish Agency, which was required for him to make aliyah. In July of 2015, he traveled on a plane full of American and Canadian olim (new immigrants) to begin a new life there.

To get a foot in the door, he accepted work as an intern at i24News and was pleasantly surprised when a paid position became available and he was offered it. How an olim who barely spoke Hebrew could find a place on an Israeli TV network within a few short months of arriving is a tale that seems more like fiction than reality. "I was always a political junkie with my minor in college, but I didn't know anything about Israeli politics when I got here," he admitted. "I honestly didn't know Bibi from Ben Gurion. I didn't have a clue. I had to catch up fast."

But catch up he did. These days Wagenheim is constantly on guard for his viewers, letting them know about Diaspora Jewry and what other nations are saying about the Jewish State. His talk on President Trump covered the divide between American Jews and Israelis. "I've kinda seen a split here between how Israelis feel about Trump and American initiatives now, especially in regards to the peace process," he explained. "Even though some of his promises have been broken or put on hold, it still seems like he's viewed positively here in Israel, especially by the government, while American Jews, generally speaking – because they don't speak with one voice – have a fairly dim view of him."

Meanwhile, Wagenheim has gotten involved with sports again in a peripheral way. This past summer he served on the umpire staff for the Maccabi Games held in Israel. Along the way he also became more immersed in speaking and understanding Hebrew. Wagenheim indicated it is very important for his job. "I have to think in two different voices when it comes to government politics here, because oftentimes the message that is given to the rest of the world is not the same message that's given to the base back home," he pointed out.

Wagenheim's second speaking engagement was part of the Hall of Fame Lunch program at the 2017 Louisiana Business Women Leaders Business Conference run by the Louisiana Center for Women in Government and Business, an organization that was created under the aegis of Wagenheim's



Mike Wagenheim, left, interviews U. S. Congressman David Brat for i24News. (Photo courtesy Mike Wagenheim)



Wagenheim, second from left, at the Maccabi Games. (Photo courtesy Mike Wagenheim)

former employer, Nicholls State University. The all-day conference was held Saturday, December 2 at the Marriott Hotel.

Wagenheim joined the panel via a teleconference link with Israel Knesset Member Sharren Haskell, the second youngest member of the Knesset and the youngest member of the Likud Party. The two contrasted the different opportunities for women in government that exist in Israel, and the U.S. "She'll be the star of the show," he said. "I'm just going to lead the question(s) and answer(s)."

"There are many more women in power here in the Israeli government than there are in the American government," he noted. "I think it's a really inspirational story to tell."

And that inspirational remark comes from a man whose own story is itself no less inspirational.



# ADL honors Merrick, Roger & Goodman at awards dinner

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

**T**he South Central Region of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) honored two local philanthropists and champions for social action as well as handing out recognition for its own local leadership at a lavish dinner at the Hyatt Regency on Tuesday night, Dec. 5.

The 2017 A. I. Botnick Torch of Liberty Award Dinner was the largest such attended event, according to newly installed South Central Region executive director Aaron Ahlquist.

Named for its first director, A. I. "B" Botnick, the Torch of Liberty Award has been presented every year since 1973 (with the exception of the 2005 Hurricane Katrina year) to at least one deserving individual whose commitment to community and public service has established them as adhering to the highest traditions of the ADL. In most years it has been given to two individuals or groups who have made a difference.

This year's recipients were Robert Merrick, the CEO of Latter and Blum Realty Company and Arthur Roger, an arts advocate, humanitarian and LGBT community leader.

In an emotional address, Merrick noted that the award meant so much to him because of his family's German background. Few people in the room knew that his family name was

Cohen or that they had been forced to flee the Nazi aggression in the early 1930s.

In addition, the ADL honored two of its younger leaders – Rachael Kansas Feder and Carrie Bart Marks – with the presentation of its Barney Mintz Leadership Award. Mintz, the first recipient of the Torch of Liberty Award, has been considered a model of leadership within the local ADL chapter during the 25-year period time when Botnick served as director and beyond.

Ahlquist addressed the crowd with a speech designed to highlight the important work being done by the ADL to combat hate in schools and in workplaces across the nation. Titled "ADL: Now More Than Ever," Ahlquist pointed to the promise of his new associate regional director Lindsay Baach Friedman as well as to the legacy left behind by former South Central Region director Allison Padilla-Goodman, who now serves as the regional director for ADL's Southeast Region. Located in Atlanta, the Southeast Region oversees the Scout Central Region that covers Louisiana, Mississippi and Arkansas.

Nancy Timm, the past advisory board chair, presented Padilla-Goodman with a gift and invited her to



Mayor-elect LaToya Cantrell, left, with communication specialist Karen Carvin Shachat, center, attend the ADL's A.I. Botnick Torch of Liberty Dinner on Tuesday, Dec. 5 with South Central Region ADL director Aaron Ahlquist. (Photo by Alan Smason)



Lou Good, president board of governors of Touro foundation, Jonnie L. Honse, executive director, and Josh Freedmann. (Photo by Alan Smason)



ADL volunteers Casie Davidson, Emily Shaya and Allison Kupperman. Cathy Glaser at rear. (Photo by Alan Smason)

address the crowd.

Padilla-Goodman outlined many



Newly installed ADL South Central Region director Aaron Ahlquist. (Photo by Alan Smason)

of the ongoing programs the ADL is shepherding and echoed Ahlquist's topic of "Now More Than Ever."

## Jewish New Orleans Council issues support for Jerusalem status change

**T**he Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans issued a statement welcoming the decision yesterday by President Donald Trump that the United States now recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital and that the U.S. embassy will eventually move from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

"This decision affirms the 3,000-year relationship the Jewish people

have with Jerusalem. The Israeli government, its parliament, courts, and prime minister, have been located in Jerusalem since just after the birth of the State and, like all countries, Israel has the right to determine the location of its capital," read the statement.

The statement continued in support of a two-state solution. "We believe that only through bilateral negotiations can this region reach

a final, internationally-recognized resolution to borders and issues currently within dispute," it continued. "Official recognition of Jerusalem must not preclude or prejudice these negotiations or affect the status quo at sites such as the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif."

The statement ended by acknowledging the diversity of the Greater New Orleans Jewish community and the wide-ranging

opinions that exist on this decision. "We ask for all, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, to exercise civility when discussing these matters. Open, respectful dialogue fosters the path for answers and we condemn the threat of violent protests, the delegitimization of Israel as a sovereign state, and inflammatory calls for 'days of rage' recently issued around the world."





# Trump recognizes Jerusalem as Israel's capital

WASHINGTON (JTA) — President Donald Trump signed a proclamation recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, but emphasized that he was not pre-empting negotiations over the final status of the city.

"It is time to officially recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel," Trump said in a televised address from the White House, with Vice President Mike Pence standing behind him.

"While previous presidents have made this a major campaign promise, they failed to deliver. I today am delivering."

Trump in the proclamation also directed the State Department to start planning an embassy in Jerusalem. The U.S. Embassy is currently in Tel Aviv.

The president said the decision should not impinge on efforts led by his son-in-law and adviser, Jared Kushner, to bring about a peace agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinians. Trump said the proclamation does not presume the outcome of Jerusalem's status in negotiations.

"We are not taking a position on any final status issues, including the boundaries of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem," he said.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who welcomed the announcement, has said repeatedly that Jerusalem will remain undivided as Israel's capital. Palestinian officials hope to establish the capital of a Palestinian state in the city's eastern sector.

Trump also made a point of urging the preservation of the status quo on the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism and the third holiest in Islam.



President Donald Trump delivering a statement on Jerusalem from the White House as Vice President Mike Pence looks on, Dec. 6, 2017. (Saul Loeb/AFP/Getty Images)

The controlling authority on the Temple Mount now is the Muslim Waqf, and Jews are forbidden to pray on the site.



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# Rabbi Yonah Schiller makes Forward's '50' list of most influential

By **JOSH AXELROD**, Exclusive to the CCJN

Some weeks ago, Rabbi Yonah Schiller, executive director at Tulane Hillel, received a mysterious email from a colleague wishing him congratulations. He had to wait until Shabbat was over to follow up.

After the holiday ended, Schiller was given some clarification. He had been chosen as one of The Forward's 50 most influential American Jews of the year.

"It's funny, I had no idea that this was going to be happening," Schiller said in an interview with the CCJN.

The Forward, formerly the Jewish Daily Forward, is a Jewish-American monthly magazine centered in New York with a circulation of over 27,000 people. Originally published in Yiddish, it still publishes a Yiddish edition titled Forvets, which is also known as Yiddish Forward. The Forward maintains and updates English and Yiddish websites. Each year they select 50 American Jews to highlight in categories like community, culture, politics and sports.

This year's article of profiles was titled "Forward 50: Finding Inspiration in the Year of Trump." The profile on Schiller was sub-titled "The Hillel Leader Who Puts Students in the Driver's Seat."

Schiller was chosen largely due to his transformative work with student leadership at Tulane. Upon arriving at Hillel in 2008, the executive director began the Tulane Jewish Leaders program, giving students the opportunity to create their own programs related to Jewish identity and funding their proposals through a microgrant pool.

"Tulane Jewish Leaders is all about enabling and activating students around their interests and passions and bring them into reality," Schiller said.

He was tasked with finding ways to engage students in Jewish life and combat low attendance. Since then Hillel has gone on to host the Nice Jewish Boy pageant, an architectural competition for succah design and the Green Wave Community Market.

"We responded by dissolving the existing student leadership board and sought students who would have never been involved with organized Jewish life," Schiller wrote, in a 2013 op-ed for the Huffington Post. "And we gave them the keys to the car."

Since Schiller's tenure began, Hillel's budget has doubled and attendance at weekly Shabbat dinners has tripled.

Tulane Hillel now reaches 90 percent of the Tulane Jewish population and 30 percent of the total student body through their programs and events. There are over 300 Jewish student leaders in the program.

"The proudest moments for me are always watching students take on the mantle of determining, dictating, and defining what Jewish life should be for them," Schiller said. "When I see that happen through the hundreds of events that I've witnessed, there's nothing more amazing and prideful than that."

Schiller is also the founder of the Jewish Design Initiative as well as the recipient of the 2013 Mortar Board Excellence in Teaching Award and the Helen A. Mervis Jewish Community Professional Award from the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana.

Schiller is also considered the driving force in the \$3 million dollar campaign that built the Goldie and Morris Mintz Center for Jewish Life in 2011. The two-story building houses Tulane Hillel's offices and the kosher Rimom Restaurant run by chef Daniel Esses, but, in an unusual partnership, is used by Tulane as an academic building for many different and diverse courses.

The award-winner feels grateful to his team at Tulane Hillel, especially chief operating and programming Officer Liza Sherman and her program team.

"I think that success comes in the form of having great partners and a lot of luck and I feel like I've had both," Schiller said. "And I think most importantly, if anything, for me, it underscores the fact that we have a lot to do. I see this more as a



Rabbi Yonah Schiller, one of the Forward 50 for 2017. (Photo courtesy Yonah Schiller)



Rabbi Schiller in familiar surroundings at the Goldie and Morris Mintz Center for Jewish Life. (Photo by Alan Smason)

beginning than anything else."

*(Editor's note: This is the first of two articles on Tulane University leaders. A story on Jewish Studies Department head Michael Cohen follows.)*





# Tulane's Jewish Studies Dept. chair Michael Cohen

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

When the fall semester began in August at Tulane University, a familiar face was occupying a new position as chair of the Jewish Studies Department. Michael Cohen, who has been one of five Sizeler Professors of Jewish Studies, since the department was still a program, took over the chair from fellow endowed professor Brian Horowitz after 14 years of his guidance and leadership.

The Jewish Studies program was founded in 1981 by Professor Joseph Cohen. From its infancy when it had just a few students and a small teaching staff until 2012, when it achieved department status, it grew to service the needs of more than 400 students for each semester. It was during that latter period of change that Cohen served as director of the program interacting with students.

As chair of the department, though, he is responsible to both students and faculty members. Although enrollment is slightly down from previous years, he feels that Tulane is more than holding its own academically with other Jewish Studies departments and programs elsewhere.

"We're doing really well," he said. "Our courses are generally full, which is bucking a lot of national trends. For most Jewish Studies programs across the country, enrollment is a big issue."

Cohen believes part of the reason is a pushback from students in enrolling in the humanities and liberal arts, choosing instead to concentrate on professional degrees that will generate more earning capacity. "I don't know why Jewish Studies is struggling around the country, but it is," he conceded.

A native of Maine, Cohen attended Ivy League school Brown in Providence, R.I., from where he obtained his undergraduate degree with honors. He took a year off to essentially teach high school students in New York at the Edward Blank YIVO Vilna Collections Project, a position which afforded him unfettered access to the massive collection

begun in Lithuania decades before the Holocaust and then later sent to the U.S. to be digitized and archived after the war.

Despite his original intention to obtain a law degree from Northwestern University ("They still have my deposit," he confided), Cohen liked delving into Jewish history so much that he elected to pursue a doctorate degree at Brandeis University in Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, which he finished prior to his arrival at Tulane in 2002.

Cohen credits his predecessor and colleague Horowitz as having put the former program and now department on a very strong footing both academically and financially. "He has won grant after grant and I give him credit because he wrote the grant that brought me here," he chuckled. "But, he's made this very popular for students." Horowitz took over his chairmanship from Chris Brady, who followed Cohen.

According to figures compiled for a 2017 article on the most Jewish-friendly college campuses published in the Forward magazine, Tulane engages 92% of its Jewish population and 35% of its non-Jewish students and is tied for sixth best Jewish campus. With major influential Hillel and Chabad programs operating near campus, it is perhaps not that surprising that an estimated 30% enrollment in the Jewish Studies department is, in fact, not Jewish.

"We don't cater to just Jewish students," he explained. "One of the things that we've done is we've said 'We're going to look at the human experience from the perspective of the Jewish experience. We're going to look at history. We're going to look at sociology, anthropology, economics and look at it from all different angles.'"

While current Tulane president Michael Fitts is not, his immediate predecessor Scott Cowen is Jewish. Cohen recognizes that the Jewish Studies Department saw its greatest period of growth during the Cowen administration. The Goldie and



Tulane University Department of Jewish Studies chair Michael Cohen. (Photo by Alan Smason)



Rabbi Alexis Pinsky of Touro Synagogue, a graduate of Tulane's Jewish Studies program. (Courtesy Alexis Pinsky)

Morris Mintz Center for Jewish Life, which houses the Tulane Hillel offices, Rimmon Restaurant and several academic classrooms, was built in 2011.

Cohen admits the department is building on what Rabbi Yonah Schiller and Hillel is bringing into the mix. "The type of Jewish student that Tulane is attracting is a very engaged student (and), you know, interested in building community," he added.

"The level of discourse in terms of Jewish life particularly here at Tulane is very strong, I think," the professor pondered, praising Schiller for his efforts, which have generated him national attention.

"What we're doing is also strong and our numbers are higher than the national trends and I think the two really sort of build off one another,"

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Cohen stated, adding that he believes the students are attending the classes because his department has made them interesting.

The proximity of the Jewish Studies Department building to two prominent Chabad-Lubavitch of Louisiana structures next door on Freret Street is also not lost on Cohen. The Rohr Chabad Student Center for Jewish at Tulane was constructed during the Cowen administration in 2008 and the Btresh Family Chabad House was refurbished, renovated and dedicated in 2014.

All of this has contributed to a blossoming of Jewish enrollment at Tulane with a Jewish population now estimated at 30% of its overall numbers.

Fresh off a sabbatical year that ended at the beginning of his term in August, Cohen is also now attempting to reach out to alumni from the past as an integral part of keeping alumni engaged.

One of the students he takes

considerable pride in is current Touro Synagogue Associate Rabbi Alexis Pinsky, who completed a stint at Congregation Gates of Prayer in Metairie as well. Pinsky started out as a graduate from the Jewish Studies program at Tulane and was associated with Hillel when Cohen first arrived there.

"Alexis is the only one that I'm aware of, at least in my term, who has gone on to rabbinical school," he noted. "It's not the track that most Jewish students go in, but it's great. She obviously found a passion for that here and it's really neat to speak to her at Touro and to have these conversations with her now that are intellectually stimulating."

He points to other alumni, who have used their undergraduate work in Jewish Studies to assist their academic load in graduate or professional school. One Jewish Studies graduate enrolled in law school had worked with the American Red Cross and was used to show how the response to the Holocaust or lack thereof has shaped their methods of dealing with

ongoing civil emergencies. "Now she's doing a lot of work with human rights through her law practice," he beamed.

In addition to his teaching duties and his administrative workload, Cohen also manages to lecture on topics of interest to Jewish Studies programs across the country. He is a former scholar-in-residence of the Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives in Cincinnati, where he was a Bernard and Audre Rapoport Fellow. A recipient of the American Jewish Historical Society's Ruth B. Fein Prize, Cohen also a Monroe Fellow at the New Orleans Gulf South Center at Tulane.

Earlier this year, Cohen published a new academic volume titled "Cotton Capitalists: American Jewish Entrepreneurship in the Reconstruction Era" through New York University Press in which he exposes the private credit network held by Jews prior to and following the Civil War. The network existed, he explained, because no one was willing to trust the Jews with credit.

"After the war, the banking system in the South absolutely collapses," he continued. "No one has access to credit, except for the Jews because they had their own little networks." Because of their positions in the markets as a primary source of credit, Jews did really well for a period of time during Reconstruction, he said.

His previous academic volume "The Birth of Conservative Judaism: Solomon Schechter's Disciples and the Creation of an American Religious Movement" was published in 2012 by Columbia University Press.

Cohen is also the chairman of the Directors Group of the Association of Jewish Studies. He has seen first hand that one of the biggest challenges facing other college campuses is declining enrollments. He feels blessed to be at Tulane.

"The fact that we're not declining, but growing and the interest is continuing to build is something that is not happening everywhere and is in no way given," he concluded.

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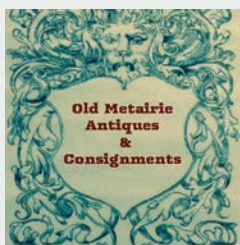
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**Engineer Irwin Issacson, Jr. dies at 91**

IRWIN ISSACSON, JR., an engineer and consultant, who helped transform much of the New Orleans skyline and whose consulting engineering firm was considered one of the finest in

the nation, died at Touro Infirmary on Wednesday, January 11, 2017, of a heart attack. He was 91.

Issacson served as both the president and chairman of the board of Weil and Moses Inc. and chairman of IMC Consulting Engineers. He was an engineer on many prominent building projects in New Orleans, including the Louisiana Superdome, the International Trade Mart and the Rivergate. IMC designed and redesigned several Whitney Bank locations and was involved in the building of the East Jefferson Hospital campus in Metairie.

A native of New Orleans, Issacson was a graduate of Fortier High School and Tulane University. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1944 to the end of World War II.

He was on the building committee of the World Trade Center, a member of the Board of Electrical Examiners for the City of New Orleans, and a member of the Mayor's Committee to write a new Building Code for New Orleans. Issacson was also a board member of the Alliance for Affordable Energy.

Active in many neighborhood and civic organizations, Issacson served on the boards of Touro Infirmary and the Jewish Community Center, and was co-chair and vice president of the Broadmoor Improvement Association.

He is survived by his wife, Julianne Isaacson; two sons, Walter Isaacson (Cathy) and Lee Isaacson (Cynthia Knight); a sister, Marjorie Bissinger; a nephew, Allan Bissinger (Nancy); and a granddaughter, three step-children and five step-grandchildren. He was predeceased by his first wife, Betsy Seff Isaacson, in 1985.

The family suggests that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Irma Isaacson Scholarship Fund at the National Council of Jewish Women of Greater New Orleans or the Julianne Isaacson Fund at Jewish Family Service of Greater New Orleans.

A visitation followed by a memorial service was held on Sunday, January 15, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. in

the sanctuary of Temple Sinai, 6227 St. Charles Avenue. Rabbi Edward Paul Cohn officiated. Arrangements were handled by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.



**Private burial for retired furniture store owner Leonard 'Boo' Katz**

LEONARD "BOO" ABRAHAM KATZ, the retired owner of Katz Furniture, was buried on February 9, two days after he passed away peacefully. He was 89.

A native of New Orleans, Katz was a graduate of Alcee Fortier High School and attended Tulane University until he was inducted and proudly served in the U.S. Army from 1945-1946. Upon returning home, he began his career as owner of the family business, Katz Furniture, on North Rampart Street opposite historic Congo Square and Municipal Auditorium. He maintained the business until his retirement several years ago.

Katz was a member of Congregation Beth Israel and more recently he affiliated with Temple Sinai Reform Congregation. He particularly enjoyed bowling and pursuing thoroughbred horse racing. He was a passionate sports advocate for his entire life.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Claire Smolensky Katz; his sons Philip Katz (Ruth) and Larry Katz (Nita) of Mandeville and three grandchildren.

Private graveside services were held on February 9, 2017 at Hebrew Rest Cemetery III. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations to the American Heart Association or Temple Sinai were requested.

Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home, 1600 N. Causeway Blvd.

## **Former businesswoman Gail Rubin succumbs to cancer in Birmingham**

GAIL FANTL RUBIN, the former president of ProCreations Publishing Company, noted for its catalog of collectible posters and clothing sold at worldwide revues including the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, and the Newport Jazz Festival. She died peacefully at her home in Birmingham, AL, on February 15, 2017, following a hard, two-year-fought battle with cancer. She was 75.

Rubin moved to New Orleans in 1969. She worked professionally for various companies, ultimately retiring at ProCreations Publishing Co. She found great fulfillment in volunteering for the United Way, Touro Infirmary Gift Shop and many other not-for-profit organizations. One of her greatest commitments was to the National Council of Jewish Women. She served as the New Orleans president and was honored with the Hannah G. Solomon Award in 1984.

Born in Chicago, she grew up in Hyde Park and graduated from Hyde Park High School. She continued her education attending both the University of Wisconsin and, later, Roosevelt University, where she completed her undergraduate and graduate degrees in social work.

Rubin met her future husband while he was finishing his studies at Northwestern University Medical School. After their wedding, they lived in Chicago for a short while and then lived in North Carolina in the communities of Goldboro, Chapel Hill, Durham and Asheville. Following a short time living in Philadelphia, the family moved to New Orleans, where they spent 35 years. After Hurricane Katrina her family relocated to Birmingham, Alabama. She enjoyed traveling and loved experiencing other cultures and food.

She is survived by her husband of 54 years, Samuel E. Rubin, M.D., her three sons, Phil (Debbie) of Atlanta, GA, Jeff (Katy) and Mark (Andrea) and six grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers, the family requested memorial donations to the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) Comprehensive Cancer Center, 1824 6th Ave S., Birmingham, AL 35233 or Temple Emanu-El, 2100 Highland Ave, Birmingham, AL 35205.

## **Photographer, arts supporter Nancy Robinson Moss expired**

NANCY ROBINSON MOSS, an arts enthusiast and photographer, who worked with what is now referred to as The Historic Collection of New Orleans on Royal Street, died peacefully at her home on Saturday morning, February 25, 2017.

A well-known photographer, she is also credited for having worked with the eminent late photographer Clarence John Laughlin, who died in 1985. She was a supporter of many arts organizations and mentored many New Orleans artists.

Known as a generous person, Moss was passionate about New Orleans culture and traditions. She supported The Pirate's Alley Faulkner Society and KID smART.

Born and raised in the Boston, MA area, she moved to New Orleans after meeting her future husband, Hartwig Moss, III.

Predeceased by her husband in 2014, Moss is survived by a son, Robby Moss (Leigh); two daughters, Marcie Gelfand (Dean) of Santa Monica, CA., and Stefanie Baker (Josh) of San Francisco, CA; a sister, Lynne Bookstein of Chestnut Hill, MA; and five grandchildren.

A celebration of her life took place at The Labyrinth in Audubon Park, on Friday, March 3, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. Rabbi Alexis Berk officiated.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home coordinated the services. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations were suggested to the Multiple Sclerosis Society.





## Chabad leader, Tulane professor David Kaufmann expired in Houston

(Photo by Chabad Lubavitch)

DAVID KAUFMANN, a Tulane professor and leader of the Chabad Lubavitch community for the past four decades died on Thursday, March 2, in Houston, where he had been living while receiving continuing medical treatment at M.D. Anderson Clinic for the past two months.

Kaufmann, considered a shaliach (emissary), was a professor of English and a member of the Jewish Studies department at Tulane University. He was involved as a youngster in the Boy Scouts, because his father of blessed memory, Ray Kaufmann, was a Scoutmaster for a short time for Troop 48, charter-partnered with St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.

He was noted as a great storyteller and a competitive chess player. Kaufmann spent his time avidly studying Torah or teaching and sharing his knowledge with others. Following his marriage to his wife Nechama, he joined the staff of Chabad in New Orleans. Along with his wife, he co-directed Camp Gan Israel and the two were the first directors of Chabad's activities on Tulane's campus.

Kaufmann spearheaded the highly popular Chanukah at Riverwalk program and coordinated it until recent years when his health began to fail and he sought treatment in Houston 2 years ago. He underwent a protracted surgery and went into remission during 2016. He hoped to help coordinate the return Chanukah celebration to the Riverwalk but due to the recurrence of his illness he was absent from the event.

Kaufmann influenced the growth of Torah Academy in Metairie and served on its board in many different capacities over the years. He was a noted Chess Club instructor, and led his club to the top of the city's rankings. Kaufmann was the author of many books spanning several genres. He was also a translator and an editor.

Kaufmann pioneered the use of the Internet and email for Jewish outreach, through which he developed a relationship with the legendary online Jewish figure, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Kazen. For years, Dr. Kaufmann authored the Slice of Life section in the weekly L'chaim Newsletter published by Lubavitch Youth in New York.

Graveside funeral services were held on Friday, March 3, at 10 a.m. in Houston at the Beth Jacob Cemetery, 2300 Almeda-Genoa Road.

He was survived by his wife of more than four decades, and children, Saadya (Chaya Sarah), Rachel (Mendy) Traxler, Shmuel (Rivky), Chaya (Berry) Silver, Yosef (Chana), Chana (Yaakov) Hellinger, and Devorah Leah and numerous grandchildren.

## Anshe Sfarad gabbi Saul Barber dead at 91

SAUL BARBER, the longtime gabbi of Congregation Anshe Sfarad, the last remaining Orthodox non-Chabad synagogue in Orleans Parish, died at his Metairie home on Wed., March 15. He was 91.

Barber was originally born and emigrated from Krakow, Poland to the United States at 3 years of age. He graduated from Fortier High School before serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II. Upon his return to New Orleans, he worked his way up to become vice president of Globe Savings & Loan. He was a very religious man and was a devoted member of Congregation Anshe Sfarad.

He is survived by his wife of more than a half-century, Rose Fernandez Barber; his step-daughter Jacqueline Gomes Dickson and step-son Terrence J. Gomez as well as his sister, Esther Barber Rosenberg.

Graveside services were held on Friday, March 17, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. at Anshe Sfarad Cemetery, 4400 Elysian Fields Avenue. Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg officiated.

Memorial donations were suggested to Anshe Sfarad Synagogue, 2230 Carondelet St., New Orleans, LA. 70130. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp of Metairie in charge of the arrangements.



## Former school counselor Dan Alexander succumbs at 91

DANIEL B. ALEXANDER, a former school counselor for the Orleans Parish School Board, died in the evening hours of March 26. He was 91.

A lifelong resident of New Orleans and Metairie, Alexander graduated from Alcee Fortier High School, and attended Loyola University before being inducted into the U.S. Navy. After his Navy duty, he returned to complete his studies at Loyola and earned his undergraduate degree in 1947 and his M.A. degree from L.S.U. in 1949. His career included 30 years of service to the Orleans Parish School Board. He retired in 1979 to begin a new career as a Property Lines inspector for Equifax Services and later A & B Inspection Services.

Alexander was a lifelong member of Congregation Gates of Prayer, serving both as a board member and recording secretary for many years. He was also a Hadassah associate of the Greater New Orleans Chapter.

He became a Master Mason of Union Lodge No. 172, F. & A.M. in 1960 and was elected as Worshipful Master before serving as the lodge Secretary for 27 years. In 2003 he demitted from Union Lodge to become a full time member of Etoile Polaire Lodge #1, F. & A.M. He also was a plural member of Sam B. Dreyfus Lodge #396 and Cervantes Lodge #5, F. & A.M.

Alexander joined the Valley of New Orleans,

Scottish Rite, in 1968 and became the Venerable Master in 1990. He was coroneted with the distinguished 33rd Honorary Degree by the Supreme Council, Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite, Southern Jurisdiction of the United States.

He was honored by being appointed to the Grand Lodge of the State of Israel as its Ambassador for the Grand Lodge of the State of Louisiana in 2010.

Alexander is survived by his wife of 57 years, Lazelle Watsky Alexander, his son Samuel M. Alexander, M.D. (Ellen Schneider, M.D.), his daughters, Amy and Rebecca Alexander and three grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Gates of Prayer Synagogue, 4000 W. Esplanade Ave., Metairie on Tuesday, March 28, 2017 at 11 a.m. and Rabbi Robert Loewy officiated.

A Masonic service and interment followed in Gates of Prayer Cemetery, 1400 block Joseph Street, New Orleans. In lieu of flowers, the family suggested memorials to the Congregation Gates of Prayer Endowment Fund. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.



## Rare coins, antique weapons dealer James Cohen laid to rest

JAMES H. COHEN, a renowned dealer in rare and valuable coins and antique firearms and swords, succumbed after a lengthy illness on Tuesday, March 27. He was 91.

As a child, Cohen worked with his grandfather, William S. Feldman, at the family antiques store that was founded in 1898. Following Feldman's death in 1958, Cohen opened his own business in the same location on Royal Street. His store was named James H. Cohen & Sons and it specialized in rare, valuable coins, currency and antique weapons.

Cohen's Royal Street store became a popular location for tourists to visit. Additionally, Cohen & Sons became worldwide authorities on rare coins and antique weapons. They possessed a valuable in-house collection and brokered many unusual pieces over the years.

During the height of the Mardi Gras doubloon craze that began in the 1960s, he and his sons became avid collectors and traders in all of the colorful collectibles. These included valuable doubloons struck in solid gold and .999 silver.

Guns sold at the location were technically considered antiques and so a federal firearms license was not required. Many of the rare swords on display were collected from the United States, Europe and around the world. He also sold rare maps, nautical instruments and weather instruments from his location.

Cohen served in the U. S. Merchant Marines



during World War II. He was appointed to the U. S. Assay Commission in 1975 by President Gerald Ford and was appointed by Governor Mike Foster to serve on the Louisiana Commemorative Coin Advisory Commission that designed the 2002 Louisiana quarter.

He was a longtime member of Congregation Beth Israel.

Cohen was survived by his wife of 70 years, Beverly Steckler Cohen, his two sons Jerry and Stephen (Julie Felix Cohen), two grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Graveside services were held at the (Old) Beth Israel Cemetery, 4321 Frenchmen Street, on March 30, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg officiated. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

Suggested memorial donations included either Congregation Beth Israel, 4000 W. Esplanade Avenue, Metairie, LA 70002 or the M. D. Anderson Cancer Center Foundation, P. O. Box 2558, Houston, TX 77252-8037.

## **Lorraine Martin Hurwitz funeral held on March 30**

LORRAINE MARTIN HURWITZ was a longtime New Orleans resident for more than five decades. She died on March 28, 2017. She was 82.

A Canadian citizen, Hurwitz was born in Estevan, Saskatchewan and then lived in Winnipeg where she resided before she married her husband, Dr. Lowell Hurwitz, in September of 1963. They were members of Congregation Gates of Prayer in Metairie.

Hurwitz suffered a heart attack some time ago, which led to her being diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD, shortly thereafter.

Hurwitz was predeceased by her son Ronald Hurwitz. Besides her husband, she is survived by her son Joshua, her sister Cheryl Babin and two grandchildren.

A graveside service officiated by Rabbi Robert Lowey was held at Metairie Cemetery, 5100 Pontchartrain Boulevard, at 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 30.

Lake Lawn Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.



## **Graveside services held for retired pediatrician Nathan Kern**

NATHAN KERN, M.D., a pediatrician and lifelong resident of New Orleans until 2008, passed away on Thursday, April 13, 2017.

Kern graduated from the LSU School of Medicine and was a member of the AOA honorary medical fraternity. Before he retired, he practiced pediatrics with the Rothschild Ochsner Pediatric Clinic.

Kern was also a member of both the Jefferson Parish and Orleans Medical Societies, a member of

the American Medical Association and a member of the Academy of Pediatrics. Kern was on staff at Children's Hospital, Lakeside Hospital and Touro Infirmary.

Kern loved the arts. He was the most passionate about photography and he was well respected fine art photographer.

He is survived by his wife, Bertha and their children Jeanne Kern Poe (Patrick Miller) and Michael Kern (Yukie), and two grandchildren.

Graveside services were held on Wednesday, April 19, 2017 at 10:00 a.m. in Tikvat Shalom Cemetery (in Jefferson Memorial Gardens), 11316 River Road, St. Rose, LA.

Memorial donations were suggested to Myasthenia Gravis Foundation of America (MGFA) or the charity of your choice. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## **Marc Cotlar, owner of Acme Roofing, dead at 58**

MARC J. COTLAR, the owner of Acme Roofing, died suddenly on Thursday, April 13 at the age of 58.

Cotlar was a native and a lifelong resident of the Greater New Orleans area. He was a member of the Jewish community with family roots in the Orthodox and, later, he associated with the Reform branch of Judaism.

He is survived by his mother, Janeth L. Cotlar, his son Sean Stanley Cotlar and siblings Lorraine Cotlar Kirkorsky, Jeffrey Cotlar and Dane Mindell.

Graveside services were held on Sunday, April 16, 2017, at 2:00 p.m. in (Old) Beth Israel Cemetery, 4321 Frenchmen Street. Rabbi Robert Loewy of Congregation Gates of Prayer officiated.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## **Deborah "Deb" Cotton, writer and community activist succumbs at 52**

DEBORAH "DEB" "BIG RED" COTTON, an activist with the "second line" African-American and Jewish communities with whom she identified, died on Tuesday, May 2, as a direct result of complications from gunshot wounds she received four years earlier in a shooting attack on Mother's Day. A native of California, she lived in Texas, Oklahoma and Los Angeles, where she discovered her Jewish roots as a young woman. She graduated from San Francisco State University with a major in African-American studies and a minor in journalism.

Cotton relocated to the New Orleans area shortly before the landfall of Hurricane Katrina and wrote journals about the recovery efforts, especially those affecting the local music community. In 2007 she self-published a book titled "Notes from New Orleans" and also began contributing to local papers such as the Gambit weekly magazine.

Cotton died two days after receiving one of two Avodah Partners in Justice Awards. (See related

story on page 22.)

She is survived by her mother, Carolee Loewy Reed of Pasadena, CA. and two sisters.

## **Businessman Lester Wainer dead at 92; private graveside held**

LESTER WEIL WAINER, a businessman whose various interests included real estate, mortgages, long distance phone services, pickle sales and fur trading, passed away on Wednesday May 3, 2017. He was 92.

A native New Orleanian, Wainer spent his entire life living in the city of his birth. He attended Cohen Elementary and Fortier High School before he enlisted in the U.S. Navy at the age of 17. When his tour of duty in the South Pacific as a radar man aboard the U.S.S. CLAY APA39 was over, he returned to New Orleans. He continued his studies and graduated from Tulane University.

Wainer then joined in his family fur business that mostly handled different qualities and grades of muskrat.

Following a six-week courtship in 1956, he was married to his true love, Beverly Smith, of Atlanta. They were together for just over 60 years.

Wainer's laidback personality paired perfectly with the warm and agreeable New Orleans climes. He particularly loved sharing unique New Orleans experiences with his wife and the three children that were to follow including grabbing sno-balls on a summer night, crabbing on Lake Pontchartrain, and playing games in the streets with them, extended family members and the other neighborhood kids.

He enjoyed a very positive outlook on life and often gave advice on how best to accomplish life's goals as well as where the best places and best items to eat. As a result, he maintained many long-lasting business and personal connections and relationships. Wainer was known as making friends easily and often shared a steaming cup of coffee or hung out in a neighborhood joint with those whose company he enjoyed.

The spirit of tzedakah was in his very makeup and his cheerful and gregarious disposition made him a man whose friendship was to be cherished. His generosity might best expressed in one of his many quotes: "If you are more fortunate than others, build a longer table to include more people." He worked with many organizations, served on many boards and helped fundraise for numerous Jewish and local causes.

Wainer enjoyed many hobbies, including golf, tennis, poker, bridge, maj, dancing, badminton, fishing, sailing, football, and of fine dining or casual eating. He traveled extensively and thought of Camden, Maine as his second home.

Beside his wife, Wainer is survived by his children Bruce Wainer (Ellie) and Teri Wainer Tanenbaum (Rian) and Kim Wainer Kline of Dallas and eight grandchildren.





A private graveside service was held in his honor on Friday, May 5. I

In lieu of flowers, contributions are welcome to the National World War II Museum, the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana or Gates of Prayer Synagogue.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## **Sylvia Rosenberg buried in Corpus Christi**

SYLVIA BERMAN "MAMOO" ROSENBERG, a former resident of Corpus Christi, Texas, who took up residence in New Orleans in 2004, died on May 4 at the age of 99, with her two daughters by her side.

Born in San Antonio, she lived most of her life in Corpus Christi, where she married her husband of 50 years and raised her family. She was a volunteer at Driscoll Children's Hospital, a Girl Scout leader for special needs girls, a volunteer at the Jewish Community Center and the Art Museum of South Texas, and the oldest Cub Scout den mother at that time in that area. She was an active member of Hadassah and was a longtime member of Temple Beth El, where she was a member of the first Confirmation class and actively engaged with the Sisterhood. During her stay in New Orleans, the 2 Texas Temples of Beth El and Congregation B'nai Israel formed into the new Congregation Beth Israel.

A frequent model for style shows, Rosenberg was also an enthusiastic visual artist.

Predeceased by her husband in 1991, she moved to New Orleans, her husband's birthplace, to be close to her two daughters. Throughout the last 13 years, she made new friends, and enjoyed exercise classes and programs at the JCC.

She is survived by three children, Nancy Rosenberg Kanher (Allan), Leona Rosenberg Stich and Ray Berman Rosenberg of Briarcliff, TX.; four grandchildren; two step-grandsons and three great grandchildren.

Graveside services were held at Seaside Memorial Park in Corpus Christi on Wednesday, May 10, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. Rabbi Kenneth Roseman of Congregation Beth Israel officiated. Suggestions for memorial donations include the JCC Uptown Seniors Program, 5342 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA 70115 or the charity of your choice.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements of transporting her remains to Corpus Christi.

## **Anne Zitler laid to rest**

ANNE WEINSTEIN WEAKER ZITLER, a homemaker and the widow of former Holocaust community survivor leader Shep Zitler, died on April 28. She was 89.

Mrs. Zitler, a widow, married her second husband, the first president of the New Americans Club, in 1987 following the death of his first wife

Lillian in 1986. At the time of her passing, she was a member of Temple Sinai.

Zitler was predeceased by her husband in 2009. She is survived by her son Norman, two daughters Margo Sukewer (Benjamin) and Fran Weaker, her step-son Justin Zitler, three grandchildren and two step-grandchildren.

A private graveside service was held at Hebrew Rest Cemetery No. 3 and officiated by Cantor Joel Colman on Sunday, April 30. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

## **Sandy Shushan rites held on May 21**

SANDRA "SANDY" LYNN SHUSHAN, a native and former resident of New Orleans, died on Tuesday evening, May 16 in her adopted home of Miami, Florida. She was 69.

Shushan had lived in Miami for several decades, but still maintained relationships with a few lifelong friends in New Orleans.

Graveside services were held at Chevra Thilim Cemetery, 4800 block of Canal Street, on Sunday, May 21, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg officiated.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## **Clothier Tommy Godchaux, 93, dies; service to be private**

THOMAS P. "TOMMY" GODCHAUX, the former president of Godchaux's Department Store on Canal Street, passed away on Tuesday, May 16, 2017 at the age of 93.

Godchaux was an astute businessman and immersed himself in promoting commerce for New Orleans in general and his family's store in particular. He was active in community affairs both in and out of the Jewish community of New Orleans.

A native and lifelong resident of New Orleans, Godchaux graduated from Isidore Newman High School in 1942, briefly attending Lehigh University before volunteering to serve his country in the Army during World War II. He left active service in 1946.

Following his discharge, Godchaux attended Virginia Tech for several semesters, but returned to New Orleans in 1947 to begin what became a 41-year career at Godchaux's. He worked his way up the family clothing store business, retiring as president of the company.

Godchaux enjoyed merchandising and was often on business trips, traveling across the globe to determine the latest in fashions.

During his tenure at Godchaux's he also served on the boards and was president of the New Orleans Retail Merchants Association and the Specialty Stores Association of New York. He was also a member of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce.

His Jewish community service involved him

serving as a volunteer on both the boards of the Jewish Community Center and the Jewish Welfare Fund.

Godchaux was an active board member of the Friends of Music, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, the United Way, the National Association of Mental Health, the Louisiana Association of Mental Health, the Social Welfare Planning Council, the Mayor's Human Relations Commission and the Xavier University Presidential Advisory Board. He was the first president of Total Community Action, which was the vehicle for the "War on Poverty" in the city during the 1960's and 70's.

Following his retirement and the erection of what at first was billed as the D-Day Museum, Godchaux began volunteering at the National World War II museum in 2000. He was passionate about his work there and believed strongly in educating younger generations about World War II. Some of his most valued friendships late in life came from those he made during his years associated with the museum.

He was predeceased by his wife of 55 years, Carolyn Kartus Godchaux, and by a son, Paul Nathan Godchaux. Survivors include his daughter, Beryl Dandridge (Ernie) of Herndon, Virginia; his son, Alan Godchaux (Kathleen Grady); three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

A lay-led private service was held on Sunday morning, May 21 at Hebrew Rest Cemetery No. 3.

Donations in his honor are preferred to support the National World War II Museum.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## **Community volunteer Peggy Jane Goff Sapir laid to rest in May**

PEGGY JANE GOFF SAPIR, a considerate and passionate volunteer for a great many causes, passed to eternal rest on Friday, May 19, 2017 at her home surrounded by her family and friends. Her death at 63 followed a long, brave and courageous battle with cancer.

Sapir was an active member of the community and volunteered with many organizations in New Orleans. She especially enjoyed spending time with children, often in playgrounds and ballparks. One of her special delights involved taking children to concession stands for their favorite treats.

A private graveside service was held on Sunday, May 21, at Hebrew Rest Cemetery #3.

She is survived by her husband of many years, Judge Eddie L Sapir; her son John Paul Sapir (Charlotte); siblings Patricia Goff Hummel (Tim) and Michael Goff (Jackie) and two grandchildren.

The family suggests memorial contributions be sent to Children's Hospital, Office of Development, 200 Henry Clay Ave, New Orleans, LA 70118. Donations will support Children's Hospital's ongoing project to provide short-term



housing for parents of children being cared for in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit.

Arrangements were by Lake Lawn Funeral Home of Metairie.

## **Seymour Schram graveside rites held on May 24**

SEYMOUR SCHRAM, a longtime resident of New Orleans, died on May 23. Schram, was the son of the long-term Congregation Beth Israel's cantor, Bernard Schram. As a decorated WWII 2nd Lieutenant in the Army Air Corps, Schram flew 32 missions and participated in the Battle of the Bulge.

After the war, he graduated from design school and entered the garment business along with his brother Calvin. Their infant and toddler wear called Jolie was sold at all high-end retail stores. The Jolie factory was located in the New Orleans central business district and Schram relocated to New Orleans where he lived for the remainder of his life. Schram is survived by his wife Mary.

Graveside services took place on Wednesday, May 24 at 3:00 pm at the New Beth Israel Cemetery, 4400 Elysian Fields Avenue. Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg officiated and Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp handled the arrangements.



(©Jeff Strout Photography)

## **Community activist Nancy Marsiglia dead suddenly at 64**

NANCY MEYERS MARSIGLIA, a devoted New Orleans civic and political activist and a tireless advocate for issues relating to women, children and families, died suddenly at her home on Tuesday, May 30. She was 64.

Marsiglia championed virtually every worthy local cause and served on numerous boards and commissions. They included the Greater New Orleans Foundation, Women of the Storm, Agenda for Children, United Way's Women's Leadership Council, LSU Health Sciences Center Advisory Board, Dress for Success New Orleans, the Audubon Nature Institute, the Metropolitan Area Committee, the New Orleans Council for Young Children, the Tulane University Health Sciences Center, Steps to Success, Metairie Park Country Day School and many other organizations.

She also was a founding member of the Louisiana Children's Museum and the founding board chair of the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children.

A native of Richmond, VA, Marsiglia came to New Orleans to attend Newcomb College and quickly fell in love with her adopted city. It was here that she met and married the love of her life, local businessman and contractor Michael Joseph Marsiglia, and began a long career of civic and political engagement.

Known for her enormous generosity as well as her spirited tenacity, she was awarded the Hannah

G. Solomon Award by the New Orleans Section of the National Council of Jewish Women in 2010.

She is survived by her husband; two sons, Joseph Max and Michael Jay Marsiglia (Jennifer LaCorte Marsiglia); a sister Katherine "Kitty" Meyers Cohen of Atlanta and three grandchildren.

On June 1, 2017 a private graveside service was held by her family. This was followed by a visitation and memorial service lead by Emeritus Rabbi Ed Paul Cohn and Cantor Joel Colman at Temple Sinai.

In lieu of flowers, the family asked that donations be sent in her memory to the Louisiana Children's Museum and the Louisiana Policy Institute for Children.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## **Services held for Marilyn Rose Levy Horn**

MARILYN ROSE LEVY HORN, a former stewardess and community volunteer committed to making a difference in the world, passed away peacefully in her home on May 24, 2017, surrounded by her children. She was 84.

Following her work for Eastern Airlines in the 1950's, Horn did volunteer work with public TV station WYES and was a tireless worker for the Ozanam Inn. She also served in the Women's Auxiliary of the Jefferson Parish Medical Society and was a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1980 for then-candidate, Ronald Reagan.

Horn was most proud of her groundbreaking work to create and pass legislation to protect and assist children with learning disabilities.

A woman of beauty and grace her whole life, she had her own sense of style and elegance that permeated everything that she did. An opera enthusiast, she also enjoyed the popular tunes of Neil Diamond, Barbra Streisand and the Beatles, often belting out the songs as she traveled in her family conveyance.

She was an avid gardener, enjoyed planning parties and was a fantastic cook, making sure to pass these interests on to her children and others.

Preceded in death by her husband of 47 years Raymond (Jack) E. Horn, Jr. and by her grandson, Raymond E. Horn IV, she is survived by her children Stacy Horn Koch, (Thomas); Raymond E. Horn III; John Parker Horn; Michael Carroll Horn, (Angela); Mary Elizabeth Horn and Kathleen (Kappa) Byrnes Horn; and four grandchildren.

A memorial service took place on Friday June 2, 2017, conducted by Rabbi Robert Loewy at 3:30 p.m. at Lake Lawn Metairie, 5100 Pontchartrain Blvd. In lieu of flowers, please send donations to Ozanam Inn, 843 Camp St. New Orleans, LA 70130.

## **Businessman Albert Patent, 79, passes away**

ALBERT ELLIS PATENT, a local businessman, passed away peacefully on June 1, 2017 at his residence at Sunrise of Metairie, surrounded by his family members.

Patent was predeceased by his wife of 46 years, Gayle Karno Patent, and was survived by his children David Patent, Debbie Patent Miller, and Jill Patent and three grandchildren.

Born and raised in Houston, Patent moved to New Orleans following his graduation from Sam Houston College. He lived most of his life in the Crescent City and worked for Mansfield's for more than two decades.

A memorial service officiated by Rabbi Robert Loewy was held at Sunrise in Metairie, LA, on Sunday, June 4, 2017 at 1:30 p.m. Rabbi Robert Loewy officiated.

Memorial donations to Susan G. Komen New Orleans are preferred in lieu of flowers. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie is in charge of arrangements.

## **Oldest lawyer in LA., Marian Berkett, succumbs at 104**

MARIAN M. BERKETT, the oldest attorney in the state of Louisiana, died at her New Orleans residence on Monday, June 4, 2017.

Preceded in death in 2002 by her husband of many years, Dr. George David Bercovitz Berkett, she had no children, but is survived by a nephew, Dennis Mayer of Anacortes, WA. and two nieces, Bobette Cohn Sears of Bronxvil, LA and Margaret Mayer of Magnolia, MA.

Berkett completed her undergraduate studies in Journalism at LSU and she served as the editor of the Gumbo (yearbook) and summer editor of the newspaper, The Reveille. She was awarded a scholarship to the Geneva School of International Studies in Switzerland, and she returned to LSU to earn a master's degree in political science in 1935.

After securing her political science degree she enrolled at the Tulane University School of Law. She graduated first in her class in 1937. She passed her Louisiana Bar Exam, and practiced law at Deutsch, Kerrigan and Stiles for the following 72 years.

Although she was a pioneer in the field of practicing women attorneys, Berkett insisted that she be judged as any attorney, on the strengths of her case law.

According to an obituary written by John Pope in Nola.com and the Times-Picayune, Berkett was the last surviving member of The People's League, a group she founded with Lawrence Eustis to combat Governor Huey Long, while she was still a student at Tulane University. Pope listed other members of the group as Hale Boggs, James Coleman Sr., and other Jewish community members Bernard Mintz, Samuel Rosenberg and Moise





Steeg, Jr.

A memorial service was held at Temple Sinai, 6227 St. Charles Avenue on Friday, June 9, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. with Rabbi Matthew Reimer officiating. A reception followed. Burial was private.

Memorial contributions are suggested to the Southern Poverty Law Center of New Orleans, 1055 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA 70130. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## **Gerson Lachoff, 84, is laid to rest**

GERSON LACHOFF, a retired accountant, passed away peacefully June 12, 2017 at Willowwood in New Orleans. He was 84.

Lachoff is survived by his sister, Benah Klafert, and other extended family members like his nephew, Irwin Lachoff (Judith).

A graduate from Tulane University, he became an accountant for Lykes Brothers Shipping for more than three decades. Lachoff was also a veteran of the U.S. Air Force.

He enjoyed living life to the fullest and was a longtime member of the Krewe of Caesar, an avid bowler with B'nai B'rith, an inveterate bingo player, a world traveler, and a Saints season ticket holder from the very beginning.

Graveside services were held at the Old Beth Israel Cemetery, 4321 Frenchmen Street, on Thursday, June 15, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg officiated.

## **Local physician Peter Zimmerman suddenly dead; funeral held in NY**

PETER ZIMMERMAN, M.D., a pain management specialist with offices in Metairie, Slidell and Baton Rouge, died suddenly on Friday, June 23. He was 57.

Zimmerman was a physiatrist, whose work involved determining the cause of pain in his patients and treating them with medication, injections or other treatments to diminish or completely eliminate their pain response.

Many described Zimmerman's ability to treat patients as based on an almost encyclopedic knowledge of the root causes of pain, especially those dealing with spinal cord and peripheral nerve stimulators. He was associated with a number of hospitals, but for the past five years had been a clinical assistant professor in the Department of Anesthesia at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center.

Dr. Zimmerman worked in the Baton Rouge and New Orleans areas for Louisiana Medical Clinic, LA Health Solutions and SHIPS Medical/Louisiana Specialty Institute.

Zimmerman was born in New York City and graduated from the Waldorf School in Garden City on Long Island, NY before attending Dartmouth College. After obtaining a bachelor's degree there, he matriculated to Northwestern University in Evanston, IL to obtain the first

of his professional degrees, an M.D., from the Feinberg School of Medicine in 1988. Dr. Zimmerman enrolled in the Fordham School of Law in New York City in 1991. He received his J.D. degree in 1994.

Dr. Zimmerman began to serve his residency at the LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans in 2003. However, his work was cut short during the period after August of 2005, when the flooding that followed Hurricane Katrina shut down the medical facility. He was able to serve out the remainder of his residency in physical medicine and rehabilitation by December of 2005.

Zimmerman received additional training as a fellow in interventional spine/pain management at Emory University from January through December of 2006.

He returned to New Orleans in 2007 and worked for several years with his mentor and friend, Dr. Charles Aprill at Interventional Spine Specialists and also worked briefly for Jefferson Orthopedic Clinic on the West Bank in Marrero.

Dr. Zimmerman is survived by his father.

A funeral service was held on Wednesday, June 28 at 11:00 a.m. at Guttermans Funeral Home, 175 N. Long Beach Road in Rockville Centre, NY. Rabbi Jack Zanehaft of Temple Emanu-El of Long Beach, NY officiated.

## **Sandra Lehrer laid to rest**

SANDRA LEHRER, the daughter of Gila and Sam Lehrer, passed away at the beginning of the week of June 25.

Her parents had cared for her since her infancy and watched her as she grew into adulthood.

A graveside service was held on Tuesday, June 27, 2017 at 10:00 am at Tikvat Shalom Cemetery in St. Rose, LA. Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg officiated in lieu of Rabbi Deborah Silver, who was on vacation.

## **Bernard 'Bernie' Burk is laid to rest in FL**

BERNARD "BERNIE" BURK, a retired attorney who had lived most of his life in New Orleans, died in Ft. Lauderdale, FL on June 30. He was 80.

When he lived in the Crescent City, he was affiliated with Congregation Beth Israel.

Burk is survived by his wife of many years, Barbara Bienn Burk, his son, Kevin Burk of California, his daughter, Michelle Ligon, his sister-in-law Jeanine Burk and a granddaughter.

Funeral arrangements in early July were under the direction of Star of David Memorial Gardens Cemetery and Funeral Chapel of North Lauderdale, FL.

## **Portrait artist Fleurette Koltun passes; memorial on Friday**

FLEURETTE LURIE KOLTUN, a portrait artist and community volunteer, passed away peacefully at her home on July 31, 2017. She was 94.

Koltun was a graduate of Isidore Newman School and received her Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from Newcomb College in 1942. She was in-

ducted into the Phi Beta Kappa Society for academic honors, which emphasized for what her was a lifetime love of learning. She served as a French and Spanish translator at the Office of Censorship during WWII.

She was a past board member of Temple Sinai Sisterhood, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Anti-Defamation League, and Jewish Children's Regional Services.

Koltun was a sketch artist since childhood. She developed a late life career as a pastel portrait artist with work on display locally. She enjoyed participating in meeting with a monthly book group as well as exercising at the JCC. She also loved theatre and music and imbued a love for them within her family members.

Predeceased by her husband of 69 years, Allen Koltun, and her son Lawrence, she is survived by her daughter Fran Koltun Averett, her son Dr. Douglas Koltun (Eila) and three grandchildren.

A memorial service was held in her honor in the Feibelman Chapel of Temple Sinai, 6227 St. Charles Avenue, on Friday August 4 at 11:30 a.m. Rabbi Edward Paul Cohn officiated.

In lieu of flowers, kindly send donations to Temple Sinai of New Orleans, Jewish Community Center of New Orleans, or the charity of your choice.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.



## **Dr. Leonard B. Kancher, 70, dies; funeral Sunday at noon**

LEONARD "LENNY" BERRY KANCHER, M.D., a physician specializing in internal medicine for more than four decades, died on Friday, August 11, after a battle with pancreatic cancer. Dr. Kancher, 70, was surrounded by family members at the time of his passing at home.

A New Orleans native, Kancher founded and served as the medical director for a medical practice in Metairie, the Center for Longevity and Wellness. He was affiliated with East Jefferson General Hospital from 1981-2017.

Following his undergraduate career at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Kancher graduated with honors from the LSU School of Medicine in Shreveport and was one of only 32 students in its first graduating class in 1973.

Upon completion of his internship at St. Joseph's Hospital in Houston, he served as a captain in the U.S. Air Force from 1974-1976. He became board certified in family practice in 1979 and in 1981 became board certified in internal medicine.

Kancher served as chief of staff at East Jefferson in 1987. He was also on the Board of Directors of eQ Health Solutions, formerly the Louisiana Healthcare Review Board, from 1987-2017 and served as chairman of that board from 1993-2011. He was also a diplomat of the American Board of Internal Medicine, a member of the American Col-



lege of Physicians and a member of the American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine.

Dr. Kancher was a member of the Quality Council of East Jefferson General Hospital from 2008-2017 and a member of the Quality Committee of Gulf South Quality Network from 2011-2017. He was part of the East Bank Internal Medicine Group from 1981-2003.

A lifelong and active member of Congregation Gates of Prayer, he enjoyed spending time at the beach – both on Pensacola Beach and at Ft. Morgan/Gulf Shores. He loved good food and was a familiar face at many area restaurants.

A man with a unique sense of humor and a big heart, he is survived by his wife Kathy Whitaker-Kancher; his brother Allan Kancher (Nancy); his in-laws Roy and Ethylene Whitaker and two brothers-in-law Don Whitaker (Marcie) and Bruce Whitaker.

Funeral services were held at Congregation Gates of Prayer, 4000 W. Esplanade Avenue, in Metairie on Sunday, August 13, 2017 at 12:00 noon. Rabbi Robert Loewy officiated and interment followed immediately at Congregation Gates of Prayer Cemetery, 1428 Joseph St.

Memorial donations are requested to Congregation Gates of Prayer-Prayer Book Fund.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## **Deanna Jean Schoenfeld Spence celebration of her life held on Sunday, August 20**

DEANNA JEAN SCHOENFELD SPENCE, a retiree from San Diego, California, who moved to New Orleans several years ago, passed away peacefully at home on August 10 from Alzheimer's Disease.

A native of Portland, OR, she was predeceased by her husband of 54 years CE Spence.

Spence originally worked at Pacific Northwest Bell as a telephone operator, but later became a sales representative for hospitals and universities coordinating phone systems. When she retired, she was working for AT&T.

She enjoyed painting furniture and remodeling houses. During the years her children were in school, Spence was an active member in the PTA and helped lead Girl Scout units.

Spence's flair for the dramatic led her to create an alter ego, the "Lewis School Witch." She visited classrooms at Halloween time in search of children to "steal away." Despite the onset of her illness, her wicked sense of humor and her fondness for the work of Edward Gorey and Tim Burton remained with her as she costumed through the streets of New Orleans.

Survivors include her daughters Gretchen Zalkind (David), Jenifer Jackson and Jill Fontana (Michael) of California, her sister Karen Siri of

Portland and six grandchildren.

Friends and family attend a celebration of her life on Sunday, August 20 from 4:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Zalkind family home.

## **Former retailer Julie Nowak is buried on Sunday**

JULIE FAINE NOWAK, the former co-owner of Nowak's Menswear, passed away peacefully in her sleep on Thursday, August 24. She was 96.

Noted for her elegant taste and flair for fashion, Nowak was the buyer for the store she ran with her husband, Daniel of blessed memory.

A native of Memphis, Tennessee, she was married in 1941, and moved to New Orleans to explore business opportunities.

Once here, she and her husband raised their family while Julie also served as a member of the boards of the National Council of Jewish Women, Touro Synagogue and the Touro Infirmary Auxiliary. Nowak was the chair of the Lifeline committee for Jewish Family Service for many years.

She loved socializing with her many friends and especially loved playing competitive games of bridge and Mah Jongh.

Following the death of her husband in 1997 and her evacuation from New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, Nowak elected to stay in Atlanta for the remainder of her years. She is survived by her three children, Dale Nowak Singer (Alan), Hal Nowak (Claudia) and Randy Nowak Kornblith



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(Harvey), seven grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Graveside services were held at 12:00 noon on Sunday, August 27, 2017 at Hebrew Rest Cemetery No. 3. Rabbi Alexis Berk officiated.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## **Rosina 'RoRo' Kahn Sapir laid to rest**

ROSINA "RORO" MINNIE KAHN SAPIR, a homemaker and community volunteer, passed away on August 25, 2017 at the age of 83.

She is survived by her husband of 62 years, Franklin J. Sapir, daughters Judy E. Sapir, Debbie Sapir Tuck (Louis) and Susan Sapir-Fields, brother-in-law Judge Eddie L. Sapir and three grandchildren.

Sapir was a lifelong member of Touro Synagogue, a member of B'nai B'rith Women and worked at Woldenberg Village (Willow Wood) from 1981 until 2011. She was also a devoted member of the Circle of Friends Parkinson's Support Group and the Louisiana Walks for Parkinson's for the past six years.

Rabbi Todd Silverman of Touro Synagogue officiated over a graveside service on Monday, August 28, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. in Hebrew Rest Cemetery #3, corner Frenchmen and Pelopidas Streets.

Arrangements were made by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.

Memorial donations were suggested in her name to Davis Phinney Foundation for Parkinson's, 4730 Table Mesa Dr., Suite J-200, Boulder, CO 80305 or the charity of your choice.

## **Former Girl Scout professional, homemaker Shirley Schiffman rites were held on September 13**

SHIRLEY KOLTUN SCHIFFMAN, a homemaker and former Girl Scout professional, passed away on Wednesday, September 13, 2017. She was 91.

A native and lifelong New Orleanian, she attended Columbia University and graduated from Newcomb College in 1947 with a degree in child psychology. Schiffman worked as an executive and a counselor with the local Girl Scouts Council for many years. She chose to spend much of her time as a homemaker and was an active member of Temple Sinai and participated in its Sisterhood for over 50 years.

She was predeceased by her husband, Leopold "Red" Schiffman and her son-in-law, Frank Brauner. She is survived by her daughter Janet S. Brauner and her son Jerry M. Schiffman (Rita), three grandchildren and a great-grandson.

A memorial service was held at the Feibelman Chapel of Temple Sinai, 6227 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans on September 24, 2017 at 12:30 p.m. Rabbi Edward Paul Cohan officiated. Interment at Hebrew Rest Cemetery No. III was private.

Memorials were suggested to Temple Sinai in

her memory.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## **Teacher Cecille Friedler memorialized prior to Yom Kippur**

CECILLE MENKUS FRIEDLER, an early education teacher, passed away peacefully after fighting a lengthy illness on Monday, September 25, 2017. She was 75.

Cecille grew up in Little Rock, Arkansas but graduated from high school in Milwaukee, WI after the schools closed for a year in Little Rock. She graduated from Newcomb College where she was president of her senior class, a member of Mortar Board and of Alpha Epsilon Phi Sorority. She earned a master's degree in Early Childhood Education from Tulane University.

Cecille taught at Newcomb Nursery school and was active in the New Orleans Section of the National Council of Jewish Women. She later volunteered at Descanso Gardens in California and was an enthusiastic docent at the Arnold Arboretum in Boston. She was an active athlete and especially enjoyed swimming and playing tennis. As a senior she learned to play golf and enjoyed playing even after she had moved to the Poydras Home for care.

Friedler was preceded in death by her son Gregory Stephen Friedler and is survived by her husband, Gerald "Jerry" Frank Friedler, her son, David Friedler (Shawna), her sister Dana Menkus-Tlumak (Rob), her sisters-in-law Patsy Kanter and Ann Eisen, brother-in-law Robert Eisen and four grandchildren.

A memorial service was held on Friday, September 29, 2017 in the Forgotston Chapel at Touro Synagogue with Rabbi Alexis Berk officiating.

In lieu of flowers, please send donations to the Greg Friedler Fund for Creative Expression, c/o Jewish Endowment Foundation, 615 Baronne St., #150, New Orleans, La 70113.



## **Homemaker Marcelyn Pick dies at 87**

MARCELYN PICK, a homemaker, passed away peacefully at her longtime home at noon on Wed., Oct. 25, 2017. She was 87.

Predeceased by her husband Edward Pick of many years and daughter Deborah, she is survived by her two sons Edward and Rodney, her sister Elaine Mintz and a granddaughter.

She enjoyed swimming, dining out and entertaining. Pick was a silver life master in bridge and was noted for speaking frankly.

A graveside memorial service was held on Tuesday, Oct. 31, at 10:00 a.m. at Hebrew Rest III, Frenchman and Pelopidas Streets. Rabbi Robert Loewy of Congregation Gates of Prayer officiated.

In lieu of flowers, contributions to the Ameri-

can Cancer Society would be appreciated.

Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie, 1600 N. Causeway Blvd.



## **Investor James J. Altman passes; funeral in KY.**

JAMES J. ALTMAN, a retired investor, died on Shabbat morning, November 4, 2017 at Passages Hospice from complications of acute heart failure and dementia. He was 94.

A no-nonsense Republican, Altman was a tireless defender of the State of Israel and a former board member of Congregation Beth Israel until illness prevented his regular attendance at religious services there.

Born in Louisville, KY., Altman graduated from Louisville Male High School in 1941 and attended Louisiana State University, where he earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Management in 1944. While attending LSU, he met Naomi Theresa Gehr, a native of Alexandria, LA. Following his graduation, they married in January of 1945 and moved to Louisville. He became a communications officer of field artillery in Europe as World War II wound down and continued his service in the Kentucky National Guard for two additional decades. Following his return to Louisville, Altman was a businessman there and associated with Adath Jeshurun Synagogue, where he raised his family. He was active in the Boy Scouts of America in the synagogue's Troop 30 with his sons in the 1960s, serving as an assistant scoutmaster.

Following retirement, the Altmans moved to New Orleans, where he became an investor. Following the death of his first wife in 2000, he remarried the former Sabina Chapman and the two enjoyed maintaining a Jewish home and traveling together. They were students together at the now renamed Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning and attended a sponsored school summer course at Hebrew University in Israel in 2009. Altman was active in the Republican Party and was often seen riding his motorized scooter around town well into his late eighties.

He is survived by his second wife Sabina Altman; sons Joel G. Altman, 71, of Houston, TX., Ross S. Altman, 68, of Newtown, PA., and Benjamin C. Altman, 64, of Appleton, WI.; 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Graveside services were held at the Congregation Adath Jeshurun Cemetery on Tuesday, November 7, at 11:00 a.m. Donations are suggested to the American Friends of Migdal Ohr or to Congregation Beth Israel.



## Businessman Morris Lew is buried in Jewish Rites Cemetery

MORRIS "MARCOS"

LEW, a businessman and owner of Express Ship Supply, passed away peacefully Sunday morning, November 5, 2017 at his home, a few days short of his

82nd birthday.

A long-time resident of New Orleans and Metairie, he was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina and emigrated with his family to the United States in 1951, becoming a U.S. citizen in 1957.

He was honorably discharged from the United States Air National Guard in 1964. He was a founding member of Casa Argentina, a member of Beth Israel Synagogue and Chabad of Louisiana, supported Torah Academy and was a dedicated Saints fan.

As a 15-year-old, he attended Rabouin Vocational School part-time to learn enough English to pass the citizenship exam while working for Alec Trestman at Trestman's Ready-to-Wear/Casa Alejandro on Canal Street selling various goods to Latin American seamen and tourists visiting New Orleans. As a young man, he eventually became manager, then partner and finally bought the businesses.

When his brothers completed their military service, he took them in as partners. After a while, he opened Trestman's Electronics specializing in 220 electronics and appliances for the same customer base. He then taught himself to be a ship chandler and founded Antares Marine Supply. Morris retired briefly before going back to work for himself as Express Ship Supply which he continued to operate until his death.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 53 years, Marlene "Malka" Pactor Lew, his sons Alex (Toby) and Perry (Angelle) Lew, his sister Betty Leifer, his brothers Nathan and Elliott Lew and five grandchildren.

Graveside services were held on Sunday, November 5, 2017 at 3:00 p.m. in Jewish Burial Rites Cemetery. Rabbi Yosse Nemes officiated.

Memorials were suggested in his memory to Chabad of Louisiana, Torah Academy or Casa Argentina for acts of kindness to increase peace in the world. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.



## Esther Rosenberg service held at Gates of Prayer

ESTHER BARBER

ROSENBERG, a former retail merchant and longtime member of the New Orleans Jewish community, passed away on November 12, 2017.

Always coifed to the nines, she possessed an impeccable sense of style and fashion. She adhered

to many principles inculcated in the Jewish faith, establishing her as a woman of compassion and kindness.

Rosenberg was predeceased by her husband of many years, Simon Rosenberg, with whom she helped run the Rosenberg Furniture Store. The store achieved popularity through its TV ads, which closed with a young girl singing a catchy jingle advertising the store's name and address: "Rosenberg's...Rosenberg's...1825 Tulane!"

A longtime member of Congregation Anshe Sfard, she enjoyed bowling, Mah Jongg, reading, playing tournament bridge and traveling. Rosenberg was also an enthusiastic patron of gourmet cooking, who has a zest for living and enjoyed spending time with family members.

Born in Krakow, Poland, Rosenberg emigrated to the U.S. when she was just a three-year-old.

She is survived by her four children: Harry Rosenberg (Kimberly), Ricky Rosenberg (Laurie), Cindy Denn (Avrom), and Dr. Larry Rosenberg; seven grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on Tuesday, November 14, at Congregation Gates of Prayer, 4000 West Esplanade Ave in Metairie at 1:00 p.m. Rabbi Robert Loewy officiated. Interment followed immediately in Anshe Sfard Cemetery on Elysian Fields Avenue.

In lieu of flowers, donations were suggested to Congregation Gates of Prayer or Cancer Crusaders P.O. Box 7911 Metairie, LA 70010.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.



## Attorney, civic leader Warren Goldstein laid to rest

WARREN ALLAN GOLD-

STEIN, an attorney who was a leading member of the New Orleans Jewish community, died on Tuesday, November 14, 2017 at Touro Infirmary after a brief illness. He was 74.

A native of Houston, Goldstein moved to New Orleans as a 2-year-old. He was a graduate of Alcee Fortier High School, the Wharton School of Finance at the University of Pennsylvania and Tulane Law School where he graduated Summa Cum Laude. While at Tulane, he was a member of Phi Sigma Delta fraternity, the Tulane Law Review and Order of the Coif.

Goldstein served in the U.S. Army and was a member of the Judge Advocate General Corps. He was admitted to the Louisiana Bar in 1967 and proudly served as a practicing attorney for 50 years.

Goldstein served on various boards and committees in Greater New Orleans since he was a young man. He was elected president of the Jewish Children's Regional Service in 1995 and was a frequent spokesperson and advocate for those in

need, especially for individuals and families who suffered from illness, disability and despair. It was at JCRS that he established several special scholarship funds in memory of his parents and various friends and family.

Anyone who knew Warren Goldstein was well aware that he was a very generous person who had a heart of gold, and always strived to do "what he felt was right", regardless of whether his opinions were popular. If you met Warren for the first time, you instantly knew three things about him after the first two minutes: he was very bright, a very sensitive and caring person and he was passionate about his beliefs. He was seldom ambivalent about any issue. "He touched the heart of everyone!"

He is survived by his brother, Sanford L. "Sandy" Goldstein (Renee).

Graveside services were held on Friday, November 17, 2017 at 2:00 p.m. in Anshe Sfard Cemetery, 4400 Elysian Fields Avenue. Congregation Gates of Prayer Rabbi Robert Loewy officiated.

In lieu of flowers, memorials were suggested to Jewish Children's Regional Service, P.O. Box 7368, Metairie, LA 70010-7368.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## Homemaker, community volunteer Georga Reiss rites on November 21 at Hebrew Rest

GEORGA MAY YUSPEH REISS, peacefully passed away surrounded by family on Tuesday, November 21, 2017. She was 85.

A proud New Orleans native, Reiss was a volunteer for many community organizations including the Touro Sisterhood. She volunteered for the WYES-TV annual art auction and was a member of the Touro Synagogue Board of Directors.

Reiss graduated from Isidore Newman School in 1950 before attending a semester at Sophie Newcomb College. It was there she met and married her future husband.

An active parent at Sam Barthe High School, Reiss enjoyed raising her family and was also a sports enthusiast. She often referred to her NFL team as her "sweet Saints."

She is survived by her beloved husband of 65 years, Dr. Leon Reiss, her children Dr. Barbara Reiss Newman (Harry), Linda Reiss Grush (David), Michael Reiss, and Patti Reiss Micklin (David) and eight grandchildren.

Graveside services were held on Wednesday, November 22, 2017 at 4:00 p.m. at Hebrew Rest Cemetery III, 2100 Pelopidas at Frenchmen Streets. Rabbi Todd Silverman officiated.

In lieu of flowers, contributions to the Imagine! Foundation, 1400 Dixon Ave, Lafayette, Colorado 80026, were suggested.

Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.





## Retired T-P circulation supervisor Richard Ross dies at 62

RICHARD ALAN ROSS, a longtime circulation supervisor for the Times-Picayune, died Wednesday, November 29, 2017. He was 62.

Ross was a graduate of Benjamin Franklin, Sr. High School and received a BA from a four-year school in Baton Rouge.

A graveside service was held on Sunday, December 3, 2017 at 2:15 p.m., at Hebrew Rest Cemetery No. 3, 4100 Frenchman St. Rabbi Robert Loewy officiated.

Survivors include his mother, Barbara Stern Ross and his siblings Betsy Anderson (Rick) and Bob Ross (Shelly).

Tharp-Sontheimer Funeral Home was in charge of arrangements.

## Molly Aron Gordon funeral held on Dec. 4

MOLLY ARON GORDON, an artist and homemaker, died on Friday, December 1, 2017 after an illness. She was 97.

Gordon was a born artist. Her first place, award-winning work entitled her to a scholarship at the New York School of Applied Design in New York City, when she was 18. At the time she went on to the Art School League and attended classes at the Brooklyn Museum.

She met and married a fellow New York City native, Irving Gordon, and began traveling with him as part of his work with the U.S. Department of Public Welfare and, later, the American Red Cross.

The couple settled in New Orleans while Irving established a dental practice. While raising her family, Gordon continued to dabble in her art. In her later years, she had many shows of her work in sculpture and paintings in watercolor, oils and acrylics at various galleries. Like her namesake from the Broadway play and film, friends and family considered her "unsinkable" and admired her esprit de la vie.

She was preceded in death by her husband of 65 years, Dr. Irving Gordon, as well as her son, Dr. Charles Gordon (Jan). She is survived by her sons Dr. Bruce Gordon (Michelle) of Sacramento, CA; Dr. Richard Gordon (Helen) of Atlanta; her daughter, Lenore Gordon; and six grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Graveside services were held on Monday, December 4, 2017 at 10:30 am at Chevra Thilim Memorial Park, 5000 Iberville Street, New Orleans. Rabbi Deborah Silver officiated.

Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer Funeral Home of Metairie.

## Terry Stein rites held on Dec. 6

TERRY MARTIN STEIN, passed away on Monday, December 4, 2017. He was 79.

A native of Omaha, Nebraska, Stein spent most of his life in the Greater New Orleans area.

He is survived by his beloved wife of 51 years, Rachele Gaethe Stein; his two daughters, Stacey Myra Stein and Sandra Stein Price (Ronald) and an adored granddaughter. He is also survived by his sister, Phyllis Stein Tromer of El Paso, Texas.

Family and friends gathered for graveside services on Wednesday, December 6, 2017, at 3:00 pm at Chevra Thilim Memorial Park, 5000 Iberville Street. Rabbi Deborah Silver officiated.

In lieu of flowers donations are suggested to the Jewish Community Day School or Congregation Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation.

Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie, 1600 N. Causeway Blvd.

## Memorial and private burial for teacher Harriet Moore

HARRIET MOORE, a longtime teacher at John Quincy Adams Middle School in Metairie, died unexpectedly on Monday, December 11. She was 59.

A New Orleans native and lifelong resident, Moore was a member of Temple Sinai.

She is survived by her husband Mark Moore and her son Garrett Moore.

The funeral service was held at 2:00 p.m. on Friday, December 15 at Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home at 1600 N. Causeway Blvd. in Metairie.

Rabbi Matthew Reimer and Cantor Joel Colman officiated. A private interment followed the service.

## Mollye P. Smolkin died at 92

MOLLYE PLOTKA SMOLKIN, a former office manager in a successful and nationally-recognized real estate consulting firm and a homemaker, died Thursday, December 14 at Woldenberg Village. She was 92.

A native of Mobile, Alabama, she married her childhood sweetheart at the age of 19 as a war bride. Following her husband's service in World War II, the couple moved to New Orleans to raise their family.

She helped to found and manage her husband's real estate consulting firm and also used her financial management skills to benefit the Willow Wood Home (now Woldenberg Village) and freely gave back to other community institutions.

She enjoyed cooking and was happy to share gourmet meals with family and friends as they welcomed Shabbat. Considered a courageous woman of valor by many, she spent much of her last years battling Alzheimer's Disease at her beloved Woldenberg Village.

She was predeceased by her husband of 71 years, William Smolkin, in 2016. She is survived by her children Stuart Smolkin (Jeanne), Brad Smolkin (Melinda) and Shelly Hebert (John), and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

The funeral service was held on Tuesday,

December 19, in the Feibelman Chapel of Temple Sinai and jointly officiated by Rabbi emeritus Edward P. Cohn and Cantor Joel Colman.

A burial followed immediately at Hebrew Rest Cemetery #3, 2003 Pelopidas St.

Memorial donations were suggested to Temple Sinai, 6227 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118.

## Businessman and Attorney Gordon Klein Konrad dead at 76

GORDON KLEIN KONRAD, a retired attorney and successful businessman whose firms include Konrad Properties and Belle Chasse Marine Transportation Company, died unexpectedly on Sun., December 17. He was 76.

A New Orleans native, Konrad attended Alcee Fortier High School, graduating in 1959. He attended classes at Louisiana State University at New Orleans (LSUNO) for several years prior to transferring to Loyola University's School of Law. He graduated at the top of his class in 1965 before embarking on a career in law.

Konrad was a former prosecutor for the Jefferson Parish District Attorney's Office and founded the law firm of Konrad, Ernest and Michaelis. He was a member of both the Jefferson Bar Association and the American Bar Association.

While still working as an attorney, he founded Belle Chasse Marine Transportation Company in 1977. He retired from the field of law in order to devote his energies to the business, which today is the largest launch service on the lower Mississippi River and maintains offices elsewhere internationally. Konrad founded Konrad Properties, a commercial real estate firm, in order to manage his many properties.

He was also the owner of Maxum Oil Service de Panama and served as a director for the Bank of New Orleans. He was a former member of Congregation Gates of Prayer.

Konrad is survived by his second wife of 26 years, Lana Werner Konrad, with whom he ran Konrad Properties; his sons Ian Konrad, Shawn Michael Konrad (Anayansi) and Gordon "Rob" Konrad (Allison); a daughter, Courtney Konrad Asprodites (Phillip); a step-son, Dr. Blake Babcock (Jessica); and 10 grandchildren.

Relatives and friends attended a graveside service in Metairie Cemetery, 5100 Pontchartrain Blvd. New Orleans, on Tuesday, December 19, 2017 at 11:00 a.m. Rabbi Yossie Nemes officiated.



## Internist Dr. Irving Rosen memorial held on Friday, December 29

IRVING ROSEN, M.D., an internist who practiced in both Orleans and Jefferson Parishes for more than a half-century, died on Tuesday, December 26. He was 89.



A New Orleans native, Rosen was fondly known by his grandchildren as “Dr. Granddaddy” and was a passionate man about his practice of medicine, his family, and his love for exploring new horizons. He also ran Rosen Properties, a firm which specialized in non-residential real estate for more than 30 years.

He served as a captain in the Air Force during the Korean War, after which he returned to New Orleans for his residency at Charity Hospital. One of his greatest passions was teaching the next generation of physicians. Dr. Rosen possessed an unparalleled curiosity and desire to learn and teach, which did not end upon his retirement from medical practice. When he wasn’t busy taking history classes at Loyola University, the retired doctor also volunteered as a docent at The Historic New Orleans Collection and attended many lectures about the city he loved so dearly. He passed his love for learning to his children and grandchildren and spent many happy hours teaching them about some of his favorite topics, from travel, to food and wine, to the history of New Orleans.

For over 40 years, he was a devoted member of La Chaîne des Rotisseurs, an international gastronomic society and served as an officer in that organization. He was a member of the Orleans

Parish and Jefferson Parish medical societies and was proud to serve as a longtime staff member at both Touro Infirmary and East Jefferson General Hospital.

Dr. Rosen was predeceased by his grandson, Eli Murov. He is survived by his wife of six decades, Carol Lise; his daughters, Beth Murov (Ellis) and Edie Bender (Ralph); and five grandchildren.

A memorial service was held Friday, December 29, 2017 in the Feibelman Chapel at Temple Sinai, 6227 St. Charles Avenue. Interment was private.

Memorial donations were suggested to Jewish Children’s Regional Service or a charity of your choice.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of the arrangements.

### **Morgan City realtor Leon Kahn dead at 87**

LEON KAHN, a realtor from Morgan City, died on December 28, 2017. He was 87.

Born in Patterson, LA., Kahn owned his own real estate firm for a number of years.

He is survived by a son, Morris Kahn, a member of Temple Sinai.

A memorial service was held on Tuesday, January 2 at the Twin City Funeral Home in Morgan City at 5:00 p.m. Rabbi Matthew Re-

imer and Cantor Joel Colman jointly officiated.

### **CCJN joins in mourning the passing of Rabbi Silver’s mother**

ANNIE CHAUVEAU, the mother of Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation’s Rabbi Deborah Silver, expired in England after an extended illness.

The rabbi went to England for the funeral and the start of the shiva period. The funeral was held on December 29.

A special minyan was held at Shir Chadash, 3700 W. Esplanade Avenue on Thursday, January 4, at 7:00 am and was followed by a breakfast.

The Crescent City Jewish News extends its condolences to Rabbi Silver and her siblings Judith, Adam and Rachel Silver as well as their uncle Michael Chauveau (Phy), the brother of the deceased.

We hope the family and friends will be comforted among all the mourners in Zion and Jerusalem and that the memory of Anne Chauveau will be for a blessing.

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