

**THE BEST OF THE**



# Crescent City<sup>TM</sup> *Jewish News*

THE VOICE OF NEW ORLEANS' JEWISH COMMUNITY

**YEARBOOK**

# 2018





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## INTRODUCTION

The past year began with the Tricentennial of New Orleans winding down, but controversy ramping up. A controversial, non-binding pro-BDS (and anti-Israel) resolution passed the New Orleans City Council in an unusual manner, eliciting protests on both sides as the matter was debated and eventually withdrawn. Thus the journey began, but it was a year that was rocky in other ways.

Newly installed Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans CEO Arnie Fielkow, who was at the front of the battle over the City Council, experienced a serious health issue that forced him away from the Crescent City, but by year's end, he had been reinvigorated and restored to a thankful Jewish community.

The ongoing assault of anti-Semitism that had been building in recent years burst upon our community in an ugly way later in the year as we assembled to decry the white supremacist epithets that had been spray-painted on the exterior of the Northshore Jewish Congregation's sanctuary.

Then, the unthinkable happened in Pittsburgh, as hate spilled into the Tree of Life /L'Or Simcha Synagogue and 11 innocent victims were slain, the worst incident of anti-Semitism ever experienced in the United States. Our community came together in a meaningful fashion, but feeling vulnerable and threatened as never before.

The revolving door of the New Orleans rabbinate was also on the minds of many. Following the retirement to emeritus rabbi

status for longtime Congregation Gates of Prayer leader Robert Loewy and the installation of Rabbi David Gerber there, Senior Rabbis Matthew Reimer of Temple Sinai and Alexis Berk of Touro Synagogue also announced their plans to move away. Congregation Beth Israel's popular Gabriel Greenberg also indicated he would not be returning to another term in Metairie.

The year was also one of extreme loss as evidenced in our obituaries section at the rear with many great community leaders, family and friends.

**Once again, it has been a pleasure to serve you. We appreciate your support.**

**Alan Smason, Editor**

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# City Council withdraws controversial pro-BDS Resolution

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

**I**t took the New Orleans City Council a little over an hour and a half to undo what they had passed two weeks earlier on January 11.

Mayor-elect and Councilperson LaToya Cantrell, the author of the resolution, R-18-5, said she intended its passage to be supportive of “our city’s commitment to human rights.” She added, “After extensive discussion and deliberation about the impact of this resolution, I can say that the unintended impact does not reflect my commitment to inclusivity, diversity and respect for all in support of civil rights, human rights and freedoms for all New Orleanians.”

Cantrell, the District B representative, added: “The unintended consequences I am very apologetic for,” she said. “Statements from outsiders now claim that New Orleans is one of the largest cities in the United States supportive of BDS, a movement aimed at delegitimizing the State of Israel.”

Cantrell then retorted: “This is totally inaccurate, untruthful and does not reflect the values of New Orleans. We are a city that is welcoming and open to all.”

Speakers Aaron Ahlquist, the South Central Region director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), Rabbi Ed Paul Cohn (Temple Sinai emeritus rabbi), Barbara Kaplinsky (local president of NCJW), explained why they called for the withdrawal of the resolution.

Rounding out the forces opposed to the resolution was Arnie Fielkow, CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans. Fielkow, a former City Councilman-at-large himself, respectfully addressed the members of the council, even as protest signs were placed suggestively above his head by pro-BDS supporters.

Fielkow acknowledged that his own council leadership had

several missteps while trying to recover from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina and related flooding. “I believe this council made such a misjudgment two weeks ago with this resolution and I applaud all of you for now taking corrective action to reverse what was and is a harmful result to the City of New Orleans,” he said. Fielkow continued by adding that the Jewish community has always exercised a commitment to human rights, especially when considering the concept of tikkun olam (repairing the world).

He reeled off a number of past positions the Federation has taken including opposing the discriminatory travel ban to six Muslim countries, advocating for DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Act) and the Dream Act and other pro-immigration reforms as well as other programs to erase racism and injustice. “Unfortunately, on the topic of BDS, we must respectfully disagree with the resolution proponents as we strongly oppose the BDS movement and feel does not in any way advance, what I hope is a common goal that everyone in this building and everyone watching on TV, a peaceful resolution of a historic complicated conflict, so that all forces can live with peace, security and prosperity,” he said.

“Being labeled a BDS city is not beneficial to New Orleans in any way,” Fielkow said as time ran out.

The speakers who spoke in support of the resolution were Chicago Rabbi and Cantor Michael Davis of Congregation Makom Shalom, Tabitha Mustafa, a member of the New Orleans Pro-Palestinian Solidarity Council (NOPPSC) and Chloe Segal, a woman who identified herself as a Jew and whose family had fled pogroms in Lithuania.

Council President Jason Williams stated that he and the



Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans CEO Arnie Fielkow speaks as protestors hold signs behind him from the outside lobby. (Photos by Alan Smason)

NOPPSC have worked on issues like battling the proposed travel ban from six Muslim states by the Trump administration. He stated for the record that they have agreed on many issues and disagreed on others. “We need to define what an ally is,” the councilman said. “Allyship, friendship, whether it’s personal or political, it is not ownership. It does not mean that you own my voice on every vote. I think we all need to realize that there is a difference between a friend you are in disagreement with and a mortal enemy.”

More to the point, Williams seemed to be perturbed that the council had become part of a global discussion on human rights and Israel and Palestinians. “I’m certain that folks on both sides agree with the black and white words on that resolution. However, how the New Orleans City Council is reflected internationally and how we are reflected nationally, that is up to the members of the City Council,” he contended.

“No one else is going to interpret a resolution that comes from this body,” William warned. He then moved to withdraw the resolution, which received immediate and unanimous approval.

Three hours after the meeting,

Fielkow, Ahlquist and others joined to thank the City Council for the withdrawal. “By withdrawing the resolution, it allows the opportunity for a clean slate to begin to engage in meaningful, transparent and inclusive dialogue on how this community advances issues of civil rights and human rights, and how we collectively build a better New Orleans reflective of our commitment to these values,” the statement read. “The Federation, ADL, and the Jewish Community Relations Council stand-by as willing partners and participants in this discussion. The withdrawal of the resolution in no way reflects a lack of commitment to human rights, from either Federation, ADL or the City Council. Rather, this important conversation can now happen in the light, with transparency and inclusivity.”

As the author of the resolution, Mayor-elect Cantrell added her own statement late in the day: “After extensive discussion and deliberation about the impact of this resolution, I can say that the unintended impact does not reflect my commitment to inclusivity, diversity and respect and support for civil rights, human rights and freedoms for all New Orleanians.”





# Dansker musical focused on Leonard Bernstein

By ALAN SMASON

For scholar and music enthusiast George Dansker, this year's annual lecture on a Jewish musical figure has greater significance than in some of his previous years. For starters, the figure is Leonard Bernstein, the celebrated Broadway and classical composer, whose birthdate is enjoying a centennial this year. The title of the program was "Bernstein: Broadway and Beyond." But, it's also a return of sorts for Dansker, who featured Bernstein in his sophomore presentation in 2010 at Touro Synagogue.

With the exception of two presentations, which concentrated on operas with Jewish connections like "La Juive," all of his other seven lectures have concentrated on musical theatre figures like last year's Richard Rodgers presentation or his very first outing in 2009 on Kurt Weill. Other famous composers and lyricists have included Irving Berlin, George and Ira Gershwin, John Kander and Fred Ebb and Stephen Sondheim.

This year's program included New Orleans native and heralded soprano Sarah Jane McMahon, who has been featured in many

of his lectures, Megan Kuckro, a soprano, and Jesse Reeks. Jesse is a talented player, composer and arranger with a New Orleans musical pedigree. His father John, a clarinetist, was a founding member of the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, while his mother was a singer and piano player for more than three decades at the piano bar at Pat O'Brien's in the French Quarter.

Reeks provided accompaniments and also has a few moments to shine on his own.

One of this year's highlights was a piece from "The White House Cantata," a work that holds most of the music from Bernstein's ill-fated musical "1600 Pennsylvania Avenue," a musical about the history of the White House and the Presidents and First Ladies, who occupied it from the 19th to the 20th centuries. The show enjoyed 13 previews and 7 performances before Bernstein angrily closed the show because of a very poor reception from critics and audiences.

McMahon also performed the longest piece of the night "Island Magic" from Bernstein's rarely-performed opera "Trouble in Tahiti."



Lyric soprano Sarah Jane McMahon performs next Friday night, Jan. 12, at Touro Synagogue as part of the "Bernstein: Beyond Broadway" lecture and program being led by George Dansker. (Photos by Alan Smason)



George Dansker, right, sings a tune with Jesse Reeks on piano.



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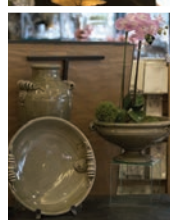
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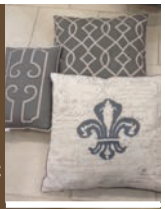
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# French-Jewish spy recalls many close calls in talk at WW2 Museum

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

Lying face-down in a field on the Swiss-German border, Marthe Cohn was frozen with fear. As a French-Jewish spy serving in the French Army during World War II, she had already made 14 unsuccessful attempts to infiltrate enemy territory. Now, on Cohn's 15th attempt, with dusk falling and nothing obstructing her from Nazi Germany, she dreaded not only the tremendous danger of her assignment but also the consequences of aborting a mission. In the end, Cohn writes in her memoir "Behind Enemy Lines," "I only did it . . . because the fear of being called a coward was worse than the fear of dying."

After sneaking into Nazi Germany, Cohn neither died nor was called a coward. Disguised as a German nurse desperate for news of her fiancé, supposedly a front-line Nazi soldier, she gathered and relayed crucial intelligence in 1945 to the French Army regarding a planned German ambush in the Black Forest. Cohn, now 97, received numerous awards for her daring and effective espionage, most notably France's *Médaille Militaire*, a medal bestowed on Winston Churchill and one of the country's highest honors, and Germany's Cross of the Order of Merit, a similarly prestigious honor.

Cohn recounted her stint in the French intelligence service at the National World War II Museum, attracting a crowd that filled the Louisiana Memorial Pavilion. Following her chronicles of espionage, she signed copies of "Behind Enemy Lines," which was published in 2002.

Born in 1920 in Metz, a

city in northeast France near the French-German border, Cohn grew up speaking French and German fluently. While Cohn initially intended to serve in the army as a nurse, her bilingualism proved to be more valuable. After receiving numerous rejections on account of her Jewishness, and then, in an unfair and ironic turn, enduring various reprimands for her lack of involvement with the organized resistance, Cohn was granted a position as a social worker, and then as a spy, in the French army.

At the National World War II Museum, Cohn regaled the audience on Thursday, January 25, with her stories of subterfuge in the final year of the war. While walking with a cadre of German women one day, Cohn listened to a noncommissioned SS officer boast about his slaughter of Poles and Jews. When he unexpectedly fainted, Cohn tended to him on the side of the road, and, after earning his trust, coaxed information regarding the upcoming German ambush out of him. She bicycled across Germany gathering intelligence wherever she could, concealing her communication with the French army by sending coded messages embedded in her favorite Baudelaire poems.

Prior to Cohn's successful breach of Nazi Germany's border, she survived several precarious incidents. In an attempt to infiltrate the enemy, a French officer confused Cohn's intended path with a frozen canal. In the middle of winter, Cohn recalled, she fell through the ice and only barely managed to climb out. A short time later, German artillery bombarded a file of tanks Cohn was traveling in. Every Frenchman



Marthe Cohn, with several of the medals she earned for her work as a spy during World War II, at the National World War II Museum on January 25. (Photo by Nicholas Hamburger)

in the tank directly in front of her died. Cohn escaped unharmed.

But though Cohn survived the war, thirty members of her immediate family did not. Her fiancé, Jacques, was an active member of the French Resistance, and his involvement in the murder of a collaborationist French doctor, as well as his sabotage of an enemy supply train, precipitated his arrest and execution. Cohn's younger sister, Stéphanie, perished in Auschwitz following her deportation on the day of Yom Kippur.

As a Holocaust survivor, Cohn's Jewishness underlies much of her personal story. "I'm not very observant, but that doesn't matter," Cohn said in an interview with the CCJN before the event. "I never lost my Jewish identity." Cohn's grandfather was an Orthodox rabbi, and she described her mother's religiousness as a devout and "authentic faith." To this day, Cohn honors her sister on Yom Kippur as well as before every event she participates in while touring her memoir across the

United States and Europe.

Given the losses she has suffered, Cohn suggested she places a particular importance on remembrance. "For me, remembrance is every day. It's not just one day a year," she stressed. "I am constantly dreaming. I always daydreamed as a child, too. My husband asks me very often 'Where are you now?' I always think about my past — always."

Cohn, however, was quick to point out that far-right nationalist politics has surfaced beyond Europe, too. "What's happening here with Trump is very close to what happened in the '30s in Germany," Cohn said, referring to the rapid rises of President Donald Trump in 2016 and Hitler's National Socialist German Workers' Party in the early 1930s. "You cannot accept it. You have to fight it from the first day," she continued. "If you don't fight it from the first day, you will lose the fight."





## 'L'dor v'dor': Jewish women's exhibit opened at Longue Vue

A new exhibit highlighting the accomplishments of generations of New Orleans women opened on February 1 with an early evening reception at Longue Vue House and Gardens, # 7 Bamboo Road. The exhibit is titled "L'dor v'dor: From Generation to Generation: Jewish Women and Their Impact on New Orleans" and is intended to showcase the influence of Jewish women as part of the tricentennial period being celebrated this year.

The exhibit is part of a community-wide effort to speak to the importance and influence of more than two dozen women, many of whom were leaders and organizers of Jewish organizations like the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) and others who worked behind the scenes as mentors to others in the visual arts or in the area of public justice. Its focus is from the years 1895 to 2005.

Longue Vue House and Gardens benefactress Edith Rosenwald Stern is among many of the women who are singled out. The pastel colors for the walls of the exhibit were based upon "Snake Lady," a vibrant 1975 acrylic painting of Luba Glade by Peter Dean. Glade was a major influence on fellow gallery owners like Arthur Roger and Joshua Paillet and her own eponymous gal-

lery in the Vieux Carré is listed as especially noteworthy.

National leaders from New Orleans like Gladys Cahn and Edna Weis Friend, both NCJW national presidents, are pictured along with more recent community leaders like Sara Stone, Flo Schorenstein and Joan Berenson.

Early documents from the Touro Infirmary Ladies Auxillary and the Jewish Children's Home are also on display.

Political leaders like Tulane University's Florence Schorenstein Andre and politicians such as now-retired Judge Miriam Waltzer are among those whose influence is listed in the exhibit.

A photo of three of the past and present Jewish Family Service executive directors – Julianne Issacson, Deena Gerber and Roselle Middleberg Ungar – is also prominently on display.

Poetess Maxine Kaplan Cassin and potter Joanne Greenberg are among the artists represented in the exhibit. Three of Cassin's love poems to New Orleans and a photo of three examples of Greenberg's highly collectible pieces of pottery are both mounted on the walls.

The exhibit is sponsored in part with support from the Jewish Endowment Foun-



Margi Bissinger in her guise as the story telling elf from "Let's Tell a Story" over WDSU-TV. (Photo via Longue Vue House and Gardens)

dation of Louisiana, Newcomb College Institute of Tulane University, the Greater New Orleans Section of the NCJW and NOLA4Women, a group whose focus is on promoting the accomplishments of local women.

## Ned Goldberg celebrated at JCRS gala

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

Ned Goldberg, the executive director of Jewish Children's Regional Service (JCRS) for the past three decades, found it hard to be the center of attention last Saturday night. If the truth be known, the very serious and longtime Jewish community volunteer was uncomfortable in the spotlight, where JCRS honored its leader and organizer.

The event coordinated by JCRS staffers with development director Mark Rubin giving overall attention to details, was held at the New Orleans Marriott Hotel, 555 Canal Street, in the Grand Ballroom on the third floor.

Goldberg's grown son, stand-up comedian Adam served as an impromptu master of ceremonies. He acknowledged that many members of his family had traveled from out of town including his grandmother, Ned's mother.

Adam Goldberg called up his Uncle Brian Goldberg, Ned's brother, who also acknowledged the family members who were at the front table including some from Cincinnati,



Margie Steinberg, left, and Hess Steinberg, right, frame honoree Ned Goldberg, who holds B'Nai B'Rith certificate. (Photo by Alan Smason)

from where the family originally hailed.

"There are so many people in Cincinnati now in their fifties and sixties who mention that Ned was a big part of their life when he

was at the Jewish Community Center," he recalled. "I tell people all the time that Ned's my idol."

**Story continues on page 8**



# Florida synagogue holds healing service after mass school shooting; Jews among 17 dead

(JTA) — The Jewish community in Parkland, Florida, held a healing service after a mass shooting at a high school attended by many of the teenagers in the community.

Rabbi Bradd Boxman of Kol Tikvah, a Reform congregation in the town inland from Boca Raton, said he knew of at least four Jewish high school students among the wounded, including three from his congregation. They were in area hospitals and had undergone surgery.

Jaime Guttenberg and Ayssa Alhadeff, both 14, were among the first Jewish victims identified. Meadow Pollack, an 18-year-old senior was also identified along with adults Scott Beigel, 35, and Alex Schachter, 49.

Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel had refused to list the names of the victims until all of their next of kin had been contacted.

"A huge number went to that school," Bosman said of his congregants.

A gunman identified as Nikolas Cruz, 19, armed with a semiautomatic rifle killed

at least 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on Wednesday, police said.

Another 17 wounded were in local hospitals, The New York Times reported. Cruz, a former student at the school who was expelled, was in custody.

Health professionals who gathered at Kol Tikvah walked the high school students through the beginning stages of coping with the trauma, Boxman said.

"Within our own community we have many mental health professionals to rely on," the rabbi said, and many of them rushed to the synagogue to set up counseling services. "It was a place to come for refuge."

"We just pulled together as a community, the surrounding congregations, to be there for our kids and families, getting the kids to have an opportunity to speak to their experience and begin the healing process in the community," said Geri Pomerantz, the president of Kol Tikvah.

The session lasted 3 1/2 hours, and was organized by Kol Tikvah and other synagogues



A look at the aftermath of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., Feb. 14, 2018. (Joe Raedle/Getty Images)

from nearby towns, as well as the local Jewish federation.

Rabbi Jonathan Kaplan of the nearby Temple Beth Chai spent the evening at the local Marriott Hotel, where parents had gathered to reunite with their children, counseling parents whose children are still missing. One child from Kaplan's congregation is among the dead, and another is missing.

Beth Chai plans to hold a service Thursday in response to the shooting.

"It's chaos here and devastation," Kaplan told JTA on his way to console the bereaved parents in his congregation.

"Everyone is just waiting and praying. No words can describe what happened here."

Kol Tikvah will also open up to families on Thursday, as schools in Parkland will be closed, Boxman said.

"The children will be able to come and be there with counselors," he said. "On Shabbat we'll have a service of healing and unity."

## Story continues from page 7

B'Nai B'rith International made a presentation recognizing Goldberg for his work by Hess and Margie Steinberg, JCRS board members. "We've had several opportunities to work with you as you deliver the vital services that JCRS provides," said Hess Steinberg in making the presentation through a B'nai B'rith International vice-president. "You have made a personal commitment to those in need," he read. "The occasion of your 30th year of service is an especially appropriate time to say 'thank you' for your selfless dedication. May you continue your efforts in good

health and continue to go from strength to strength."

Goldberg's daughter Jodi reminisced about her dad's long career and how his service to Jewish community has informed her own path towards being involved as a Jewish community professional in New York City. "I'm trying to channel Ned's spirit," she confessed, just before she called her father to the podium.

Deflecting all the attention, Goldberg admitted "I am proud of these lovely people, who spoke on my behalf," he began. "However, I apologize to you all that you now know more things

about me than you ever cared to know. As for myself, I now know more things about me than I care to know or realize."

Ned Goldberg's next referred to the concert across town at the Smoothie King Center featuring former members of the Grateful Dead. "I really wanted to be there, but here's my response," he confessed. "In response to their concert and how I feel about sharing this evening with my extended family, my friends from near and far and the staff, boards, success stories of the Jewish Family Regional Service, I'm calling my brief comments tonight — and I'll try to be brief — the 'Grateful Ned.'"

Goldberg had his former

presidents and staff stand to receive acknowledgement from the crowd.

Finally, JCRS president Neil Kohlman presented Goldberg with a plaque expressing his and others thanks for all that Goldberg has done in his tenure at the agency.

The "Queen of New Orleans Cabaret," Leslie Castay performed along with support from bassist Gary Lehmann, pianist and music director Jefferson Turner and drummer Bruce Miller, himself a former JCRS president.

The group performed a number of songs written by Jewish composers such as Irving Berlin and George and Ira Gershwin.





# Temple Sinai dances and dines through decades

By **ALAN SMASON**

**A**s a professional who is used to making predictions for a living, weather forecaster David Bernard could not have predicted just how many wig changes and costume adornments he would make as part of his volunteer gig as the emcee for the Temple Sinai annual gala held Saturday, March 3.

The festive celebration held in the Teal and Stephen Goldring Pavilion at 6227 St. Charles Avenue, celebrated the synagogue's past with pictures depicting past leadership in its rabbinate and its administration.

As Bernard recounted the decades through music and photos, pianist Harry Mayronne played accompaniment for Angie Z, the French Quarter Fairytale, an internationally-renowned singer and jazz performer, who specializes in songs of the past. Dancers Tammy Clark Duke and Alex Thomas provided visual emphasis with dazzling dance displays of popular dances from each decade.

As the decades of the 1940s gave way to the 1950s, Bernard placed an Elvis wig on his head and continued to recount the history of Temple Sinai during that decade. Various headware of varying descriptions followed – from an Afro wig to a disco-styled wig to a sideways worn baseball cap

evocative of the hip-hop generation of the 1990s.

Clark and Thomas enthusiastically danced as entertainment for the crowd, while Angie Z and Mayronne performed popular songs from each decade.

Earlier in the evening, Rabbi Matthew Reimer presided over the presentation of awards to honor three Temple Sinai couples for their dedication to the synagogue over the years. Jennifer and Jack Benjamin, Jr. were noted for having served in various capacities at the synagogue, but additionally in other Jewish and civic endeavors.

Amy Gansiburgh-Haspel and John Haspel were recognized for their volunteer activities that have benefited a wide cross-section of charities including Second Harvest Food Bank, Bridge House/Grace House, the New Orleans Recreation Department and KaBOOM!

Pamela and Rob Steeg were cited for their dedication to Planned Parenthood, the New Orleans Early Education Network and the Oschner Health Foundation as well as other city and cultural boards like the New Orleans Museum of Art and WWNO Radio.

A silent auction benefited the synagogue. The dinner was catered by the Marriott Hotel on Canal Street.



WVUE Fox 8 TV's meteorologist David Bernard dons an Elvis wig to reminisce about Temple Sinai in the 1950s. (Photo by Alan Smason)



Harry Mayronne at the piano with singer Angie Z. (Photo by Alan Smason)

## JEF honors Goldring Family Foundation, Morton Katz & Joan Cox

By **ALAN SMASON**

**T**he Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana (JEF) held its Annual Event on Sunday, March 11, in the opulent setting of the Grand Ballroom of the Westin Hotel in Canal Place. The occasion proved to be a time to honor the Goldring Family Foundation for its many philanthropic endeavors throughout the New Orleans community-at-large and especially within the Jewish community.

Macy Hart presented the Tzedakah Award to the members of the Goldring family and in particular to Alan Franco, who accepted on behalf of his father-in-law Bill Goldring.

Earlier, Joan Brooks Cox was acknowledged by JEF executive director Sandra Levy for her work as a professional financial planner and in working with clients, earmarking JEF for their investments and legacy gifts.

Maury Herman, the law partner of Morton Katz, was called upon to make the presentation to Katz for his work as a volunteer with JEF. Katz is the current JEF vice president.



Goldring family members accept Tzedakah Award with Macy Hart, right. (Photo by Alan Smason)



## LimmudFest New Orleans Returns

**L**immudFest weekend, a biennial celebration made a successful return to the Crescent City on March 16-18, 2018. The weekend festival brought local Jews from all backgrounds together to share in all areas of Jewish arts, culture and spirituality. The event is planned and run by a community of volunteers.

LimmudFest 2018 featured over 90 presentations across 10 learning tracks. Featured presenters included renowned au-

thor Rabbi Dayna Ruttenberg; writer, professor and curator Joel Dinerstein; New Testament scholar Rabbi Michael Cook; and food expert and radio personality Poppy Tooker.

This year the festival included a Shabbaton at Congregation Gates of Prayer on Friday and Saturday. More learning and cultural programs continued at the newly expanded Uptown JCC on Saturday night and Sunday.







# Tall ship boasts of Jewish crew member

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

With her dirty blonde hair trussed in a long, braided ponytail, her T-shirt and her strong Ashkenazic features, Inbal Newman could easily be mistaken for a camp counselor at a Jewish summer camp. She has a remarkable air of self-confidence and of being totally at home in her own space. But this is a place few others have enjoyed or will ever experience.

When the four tall ships came into New Orleans to help usher in the tricentennial celebrations, Newman and her shipmates aboard the Barque Picton Castle, were there to take part in the series of tours and training afforded them by the city and the non-profit organization Tall Ships New Orleans.

Based in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, the Picton Castle is a 179-foot, three-masted, barque-rigged ship and Newman is poised to be on its seventh world cruise. The tall ship departs on April 29.

Working as a volunteer onboard the ship, the 26-year-old is interested in traveling and seeing exotic ports of call from the unique vantage point aboard the Picton Castle.

How she came to be part of this crew is an interesting tale.

"I was working in Manhattan at the South Street Seaport Museum, which has original tall ships, working vessels," she explained. "They have some that

are not going out; they just stay at the dock. They have some that go out on sails in New York harbor; they go out in front of the Statue of Liberty."

She learned how to coil ropes and how to tie off the sheets, or sails. When she mastered one skill, she would be taught another. Eventually, she worked on the Pioneer, one of the ships that sailed into New York Harbor regularly. "You learn from the very bottom," she continued. "When you show them, like I know how to curl this line, they'll say 'Okay, we'll show you how to do this.'"

While aboard the Pioneer as an unpaid volunteer, her love for sailing increased. It was there she met two fellow crew members, one of whom became the Picton Castle's chief mate and the other who works as a lead seaman.

After returning from a trip aboard the Picton Castle, the two met up with Newman at a restaurant in New York. The two offered Newman a chance to go on the world cruise, which included the trip to the Gulf Coast – Pensacola – and the event last weekend in New Orleans with the other tall ships.

"They're paid crew," she noted. "I'm just here for fun. I go where the ship goes."

She is planning on using funds she has saved to pay for the trip, but since the ship has a fully functioning kitchen and galley, she doesn't have to pay for food and her lodging on board is more than adequate.



The tall ship Barque Picton Castle with crew member Inbal Newman. (Photo by Alan Smason)

Meanwhile, she gets to see the world from a perspective few will ever see all while keeping several of her graphics art clients.

Newman uses the Internet and emails to communicate with the outside world.

"I come from a family of wanderers," she noted. "They're all moving around all the time, either unintentionally like my grandfather or Holocaust survivor like my parents deciding to

move to Israel and then deciding to move to the States."

Newman stated that her parents were idealistic "hippie-types" with a Zionist mentality when they were living in Israel, a country she has visited twice, once with her parents and then later on a Birthright trip as a 20-something.

"I feel like them also," she concluded. "I have roots in all of these places, but I also want to go out and see the world."



# Whitbourn's 'Annelies' premieres at Touro Synagogue

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

**T**ouro Synagogue served as the setting for the regional premiere of an oratorio based on "The Diary of Anne Frank," following Friday evening worship services there on April 13. Members of the Symphony Chorus of New Orleans (SCNO), along with several soloists, performed James Whitbourn's "Annelies," an oratorio for chorus written in English and based on the best-selling documentation of the Holocaust that is subtitled "The Diary of a Young Girl."

Featuring a libretto by Melody Challenger that was culled directly from the English translation of the diary, the musical work was performed in the main sanctuary on the day following the observance of Yom Ha'Shoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day. The title refers to the real Dutch spelling of the first name of the girl known to the world as Anne Frank.

Steven Edwards, the executive director of SCNO conducted the score, which included solos for soprano RuthAnn Chadwick as well as accompaniment by violinist Kate Withrow, clarinetist Christopher Pell, pianist Brian Hsu and cellist Jonathan Gerhardt.

"Annelies" was first performed in 2005 in Whitbourn's native England. The oratorio opens with a short prelude and is followed by 13 vocal selections, including several passages dedicated for a soprano soloist, who acts as the voice of the girl who hid away with her family and others in an attic in Amsterdam for more than two years during the Nazi occupation of Holland.

Touro Synagogue Senior Rabbi Alexis Berk welcomed congre-



Executive director of the Symphony Chorus of New Orleans Steven Edwards bows following the performance of "Annelies." (Photo by Alan Smason)

gants who had taken a break between a Shabbat meal and the time the program was slated to begin at 7:45 p.m. She introduced the work by alluding to a recent column by CCJN commentator Rabbi David Wolpe, which spoke to the "ghosts" of former Jewish communities in Spain and how to honor them by remembering them.

The 70-minute long presentation was underwritten with support from the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana, the Department of Jewish Studies at Tulane University and the Arts Council of New Orleans.

# Issacson speaks at Newman for Bernard Herman Memorial Lecture

**I**sidore Newman School distinguished alumnus Walter Issacson returned to his alma mater as featured speaker at the tenth annual Bernard Herman Memorial Lecture on Tuesday, April 17.

Issacson, who recently returned to the city to become a professor at Tulane University, spoke on a number of the subjects of his recent biographies, most notably those of Apple founder Steven Jobs, founding father Benjamin Franklin, physicist Albert Einstein and Renaissance painter, sculptor and inventor Leonardo di Vinci.

Issacson spoke before a nearly-full auditorium of Newman students on the connectivity of team-building and the importance of listening to others in finding ways to invent items to advance science and benefit mankind.

"Over and over again you see that ability to apply intelligence in a collaborative effort and to team," Issacson stated.

Issacson, the former head of CNN and editor of Time Magazine, most recently left his position as CEO at the Aspen Institute in order to join the faculty at Tulane.

Issacson said that the intersection of the humanities and science is where visionaries like Jobs excelled in eventually making products like the iPhone and iPod that were user friendly and enhanced life through the application of science.

"Whenever Steve launched a product on stage on a big screen behind him," Issacson noted, "the last slide would always be a street sign intersection – the intersection of the liberal arts and the sciences. If you stand at that intersection, that's where creativity occurs."



Walter Issacson speaks at his alma mater, Isidore Newman School at the 10th annual Bernard Herman Memorial Lecture. (Photo by Alan Smason)

Issacson also spoke with awe of Di Vinci's ability to see patterns across nature in which his passion would help be "a fundamental part of turning intelligence into creativity." Many of the patterns he predicted were proven right in the 20th century, he added.

Issacson concluded his talk with a brief question and answer period.





# Israel's 70th birthday celebrated at JCC

By DEAN M. SHAPIRO, Special to the CCJN

Despite rumors of a protest demonstration by an anti-Israel fringe group outside the Jewish Community Center on St. Charles Avenue, this past Sunday's Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration of Israel's 70th birthday at the JCC went on unimpeded.

The fringe group, which advocates boycotting Israeli businesses and products and which urges those that do to disinvest in them, was reportedly planning to picket the event. However, none of their members – which reportedly includes a number of Jewish Palestinian sympathizers – showed up. Two uniformed New Orleans Police Department officers were standing by, posted at the building's front entrance, to ensure that no incidents occurred and none did.

Inside the hall, the air was festive with speeches by JCC and Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans officials, plus live musical performances, Hora dancing, activities for the children, a photo booth and a vast array of Yemenite food prepared by a Jewish Yemenite chef now living in Israel.

Brief welcoming speeches were given by JCC president Peter Sperling, Federation chairman of the Board of Trustees Henry Miller, Federation board member and Partnership Together Committee chair Michele Gelman and Rosh Ha'Ayin Partnership chair Hadar Shapiro. Just as he had done at the Yom Hashoah Community-Wide Memorial a week before, Temple Sinai Cantor Joel Colman sang "The Star Spangled Banner," while young Israeli singer Maya Rose sang "Hatikvah," the Israeli national anthem.

Accompanied by a three-piece band from Rosh Ha'Ayin – New Orleans' Israeli "sister city," Rose sang rock songs in

Hebrew, plus local favorites in English like "What a Wonderful World" and "When the Saints Go Marching In."

The free event attracted about 150-200 people during its four-hour duration.

Outside in the hallway, representatives for Israel Bonds handed out investment packages and other informational materials. Jennette Ginsburg, a program specialist for PJ Library, administered by the Jewish Children's Regional Service, staffed a table covered with short children's books featuring Jewish bedtime stories and songs.

"We are celebrating Israel's big birthday N'Awlins style," Sperling said in his opening remarks, which were greeted by enthusiastic applause. "So today we thank you, Israel, for making our world a better place. We are so happy to share this day with our extended family in Israel," he added, as he introduced Miller to the podium.

In his brief remarks, Miller thanked the organizers of the event and the audience for attending the function. Prior to introducing Gelman, he praised her for "her dedication to Israel, the Federation and the local Jewish community. Michele has re-energized our Israel overseas programs," he added.

Briefly describing the background of the organization she chairs, Gelman said, "The Jewish Agency for Israel's Partnership Together platform has connected us directly with Israeli communities since 1994. The program spans more than 500 communities around the world, building living bridges and relationships."

Speaking about Rosh Ha'Ayin, Gelman explained that it was founded in 1949 on the site of a former British Army base located about 15 miles from Tel Aviv. "The city



Despite the threats of rain and anti-Israel protest, Jewish community members danced the hora at the JCC on Sunday. (Photo by Dean Shapiro)



Maya Rose sings "Hatikvah" with Cantor Joel Colman, who led the singing of "The Star Spangled Banner." (Photo by Dean Shapiro)

boasts a large Jewish Yemenite community, hence the theme of today's celebration," she noted, praising the chef and his staff "for all their hard work and dedication."

The next and final speaker, Hadar Shapiro, said, "I am very excited to be here today and celebrate Israel's 70th Independence Day. Our partnership has been active for the past ten years and it is a platform from which to create connections and show people both sides of the ocean." She then introduced the visiting

members of the Rosh Ha'Ayin delegation.

Although Israel's official Independence Day is May 14 on the Gregorian Calendar, Yom Ha'atzmaut more correctly corresponds to the much older Hebrew Calendar. Israel's re-emergence as an independent nation took place on May 14, 1948, which is the 5th of Iyar, 5708 on the Hebrew Calendar. Celebrations are held on both dates in Israel and in Jewish communities around the world.



# Yom Hashoah event draws near capacity crowd

By ALAN SMASON

As it has done for the past 13 years, the New Orleans Jewish community came together to remember the lives of those lost during the Holocaust and to honor those who survived the ordeal and made the Crescent City their home. The Community-Wide Yom Hashoah Memorial was held on Sunday, April 15 at the Uptown Jewish Community Center.

The hour-long keynote address was given by Holocaust survivor Irene Miller, author of "Into No Man's Land: A Historical Memoir." Miller described how she and her sister were kept alive by her parents and others who put their lives at risk to hide them during the Holocaust. She described how she went from a playful girl of five with long brunette braids to being housed in an orphanage, where her hair was shaved off her head to prevent the spread of lice and disease.

"Horrors like the Holocaust don't come on all at once," Miller considered. "They start off with one small example of social injustice, which people willingly or unwillingly accept and then, through increments, become such monsters (they're) difficult to control."

Miller noted that Germany was considered the most intellectual and elitist nation in Europe at the time that the Holocaust began. She stated that most of the country could not believe their society was capable of exacting the horrors of the Nazis. "They were all bystanders," she acknowledged.

Miller's story of survival included her living on boiled grass and onions while sequestered in Uzbekistan or freezing in a labor camp in Siberia. Along the way, she recounted shivering from malaria and feeling the unimaginable pangs of hunger that drove her to despair.

Eventually, she found her way to Israel and to the United States, where she lived in Cincinnati. It was there she achieved a bachelor's degree in Psychology and, later, a master's degree in Social Psychology. She followed those degrees with a master's degree in business administration, which led her to a career in hospital administration.

Miller spent most of the rest of her career living in the Detroit area, where she is now a retired healthcare executive and HMO administrator. Her work in the area of drug addiction was heralded around the country and she served in Washington, D.C. for a short time as a consultant.

Miller was the first of several designated guests and members of the New Orleans Holocaust Memorial Committee to light six candles designated to memorialize the six million Jewish lives lost during the Shoah. The candles were lit on a special wooden menorah constructed by Holocaust survivor Isak Borenstein of blessed memory.

A memorial service led by Congregation



Ruth Loeffelholz and her brother Henry Rosenblat frame honoree Melanie Boulet. (Photo by Alan Smason)



One of three area survivors remaining, Anne Levy is escorted by her grandsons to the Holocaust memorial. (Photo by Alan Smason)

Gates of Prayer Rabbi Robert Loewy, son of survivors Leopold Sher and Chabad Center of Metairie's Rabbi Yossie Nemes concluded the program. All the names of the New Orleans area survivors were read aloud.

The evening began with solemn music playing by Armand St. Martin to accompany the three remaining area Shoah survivors, who were accompanied by the children and grandchildren of survivors who have passed away and the members of the latest class of the Anti-Defamation League's Donald Mintz National Youth Leadership Mission.

Former ADL South Central Region director Cathy Glaser, the chair of the New Orleans Holocaust Committee, served as the emcee for the evening. Glaser first called upon Touro Synagogue Rabbi Alexis Berk to offer an opening prayer. Berk referred back to a commentary by Rabbi David Wolpe, who wrote in the CCJN of his traveling to Spain and being confronted

by the "ghosts" of the past, those former Jewish community sites that no longer exist.

Following the singing of the national anthem and Hatikvah by Temple Sinai Cantor Joel Colman, Heidi Winston was called upon to introduce the individual members of the ADL mission that returned from Washington, D.C. earlier in the year. They each read pieces written by New Orleans area survivors and others and then identified their identities after all were read aloud. Winston, an advisor to former Tulane University president Scott Cowell, was one of the chaperones for the group on their trip to Washington.

Henry Rosenblat and his sister Ruth Loeffelholz, the offspring of New Orleans survivors Ralph and Gertrude Rosenblat of blessed memory, introduced the Holocaust Educator of the Year, Melanie Boulet, a world history teacher at New Orleans Charter Science and Math High School.

She accepted the certificate and the cash award that came with the honor with grace and humility.





# George Porter funks up Jazz Fest Shabbat

By ALAN SMASON

**F**unk, the quintessential New Orleans export from the 1970s and 1980s, found a home at the 27th annual Jazz Fest Shabbat at Touro Synagogue on Friday evening, April 27. Featured headline performer George Porter, Jr., bass player with the renowned Meters, appeared along with Panorama Jazz Band, the Touro Synagogue Choir and other featured performers during the religious service that began at 7:30 p.m.

It was nearly an hour later that Porter and the group he has fronted for decades – Runnin’ Pardners – ascended the stage and performed a short concert to entertain the sanctuary audience prior to the final prayers for the evening.

Senior Rabbi Alexis Berk welcomed back former Touro Cantor Billy Tiep, who led much of the liturgy as the guest cantor for the evening. Tiep who had been at Touro for the first two years of Berk’s term, has been living and working at Temple Solel in Cardiff By the Sea, CA. since then.

Last year’s departure of Cantor David Mintz left a notable void for this year’s service, as it is traditional that the Reform temple’s cantor is the figure who takes the lead with implementing the Jazz Fest Shabbat. Tiep had led the event featuring Kermit Ruffins and the BBQ Swingers during Rabbi Andrew Busch’s last year at Touro before heading up the two Jazz Fest Shabbat services with headliners Marcia Ball and Allen Toussaint under Berk. With three years experience under his belt, Tiep was delighted to step up and volunteer to be a part of a Jazz Fest Shabbat again and was even more pleased to have the opportunity to work alongside local legend Porter.

It was apparent that Berk was pleased he was back and Tiep also expressed his admiration for the rabbi.

At the beginning of the liturgical portion of the evening, Tiep adorned the specially-embellished white tailcoat he was presented by the congregation in 2010. He



George Porter at Touro Synagogue’s Jazz Fest Shabbat. (Photo by Alan Smason)

called the garment his “tallit” to the delight of the sanctuary crowd.

Conducted by music director Terry Maddox, the Touro Synagogue Choir set the tone for prayer as the cantor led them in prayer. A specially-commissioned composition by Toby Singer, Shiru Ladonai (“Sing a New Song to God”), was one of many pieces sung through the service, which began with the traditional blowing of the shofar by David Bernstein.

Readily recognizable pieces such as Craig Taubman’s “L’cha Dodi” (“Welcoming the Sabbath Bride”), “Mi Shebeirach” (“A Prayer for Healing”) and “Romemu” (“Exalt Adonai, Our God”) were pivotal points of prayer throughout the night. Blessings over the Shabbat candles, led by Charlene Gubitz, and the Kiddush over wine, led by Jazz Fest Shabbat Committee chair Aaron Ahlquist, were written by well-known Jewish music composers Abraham Wolf Binder

and Kurt Weill.

Rabbis Alexis Berk, Todd Silverman and Alexis Pinsky joined Tiep on the bimah to lead several of the prayers or to provide spiritual guidance into moments of silent prayer.

Following Porter’s well-received performance, the congregation recited the Aleinu prayer and recalled the memories of those who had recently passed or whose yartzeits were being observed with the recitation of the Mourner’s Kaddish.

The concluding prayer “Adon Olom” was sung in Hebrew to the accompaniment of the jazz classic “When the Saints Go Marching In.” At the end of the composition, the musicians and choir members joined in a rousing second line into the social hall, where a dessert Oneg Shabbat was held featuring baked goods made by choir members.



# Elliott Raisen turns 90 in grandiose style

By DEAN M. SHAPIRO,  
Special to the CCJN

The air was festive and the crowd was exuberant at Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation's social hall on the evening of April 28 as Elliott Raisen celebrated his 90th birthday vaudeville-style.

It was a showcase of singing, dancing and poetic tributes paid to a well-known, well-loved arts patron and longtime Israeli dance instructor who, when asked how it feels to be 90, replied, "Same as it did at 40."

A familiar presence at cultural and social events in and around the New Orleans area for many years, with his long black hair tied back in a ponytail and his distinctive Bronx accent, the man everyone knew simply as "Elliott" was the focal point of the event. Surrounded by his siblings, adult children, grandchildren and his wife of 68 years, Sandy, he was clearly reveling in the joyous occasion.

Standing at the microphone in front of a long "Happy 90th Birthday" banner stretched the length of the stage behind him, Elliott recounted many of the landmark events that occurred during the nine-plus decades of his life. An estimated 200 people from all over the local area and even some from out-of-state listened in awe to his stories, applauding at the appropriate moments.

Born on April 24, 1928 in the New York City Borough of The Bronx, Elliott recounted memories of a youth spent primarily among many other Jews of Eastern European descent. At the age of 8, he campaigned for Norman Thomas, Socialist Party candidate for president who ran against Franklin Roosevelt in 1936 and several other times.

A year or two later, he recalled having a fourth-grade teacher who was the sister-in-law of Major League Baseball



Bon Operatit! members perform the Verdi "Anvil Chorus" with honoree Elliott Raisen at right. (Photo by Alan Smaison)

star, Hank Greenberg, who nearly equaled Babe Ruth's then-single season home run record. "We were all cheering for him to break the record," he said, adding that the teacher took the class to a game at Yankee Stadium that got rained out in the fifth inning. "I never went to another ballgame after that," he laughed.

One day in 1937 (May 6), Elliott said he and his friends were playing stickball in the street as the zeppelin Hindenburg passed over them, "so close we could see people through the windows." Several hours later it exploded and crashed in Lakehurst, New Jersey, killing 35 of its 97 passengers. A year later another disaster struck: the powerful, unnamed Hurricane of 1938. On December 7, 1941, Elliott was playing in the street again with his friends; this time in a touch football game, when news came of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. "None of us even knew where it was," he recalled.

"During World War II everybody participated," Elliott continued. "Everyone was involved. Nothing was disposed of. Everything was recycled and put toward the war effort. It made people feel proud that they contributed to the war



Elliott Raisen at his 90th birthday celebration. (Photo by Alan Smaison)

effort. Everything was rationed — especially food and gasoline."

Too young to serve in the armed forces during World War II, Elliott was married with a child and in graduate school during Korean War, so he didn't serve in that one either. "Then there was the sexual revolution. I didn't participate in any of that," he said, eliciting laughs from the audience.

A graduate of the prestigious Bronx High School of Science (from which, he proudly noted, six Nobel Prize winners emerged), Elliott went on to complete his post-graduate work at the University of Cincinnati. A chemist and engineer,

he moved on to highly technical jobs in Niagara Falls, NY and Chicago, "at the dawn of the space age," before settling in New Orleans in 1976. He and Sandy joined Shir Chadash, then known as Tikvat Shalom, the same year.

Leading off the evening's live entertainment was Bon Operatit!, a vocal quartet consisting of opera and Broadway-style singers in all four voice categories. After a sequence of individual arias and ensemble numbers, Elliott and one of the members, mezzo-soprano Mary Penick Akin, reenacted a scene from Camille Saint-Saens' most famous opera, "Samson et Dalila."

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With Elliott pretending to be a sleeping Samson on the stage, Akin sang Dalila's love aria to him before wielding a sharp blade and pretending to cut off his long hair. The audience erupted with laughter when she triumphantly waved a lock of fake hair over him.

Following Bon Operatit! was the Komenka Dance & Music Ensemble, performing a series of lively Israeli dances. Other featured performers included vocalist Natasha Ramer, founder of the Moscow Nights Russian culture ensemble; Suzaune McKamey, who sang several numbers including a birthday tribute to Elliott; and a Jesuit High School theatre student dressed as Tevye from "Fiddler on the Roof" singing "If I Were a Rich Man." Ramer's husband, Sam, read an original poem about Elliott that he composed especially for the occasion.

Shir Chadash Rabbi Deborah Silver conferred the Priestly Blessing as members of the audience and Elliott's family formed a circle around him. "The more you love the younger you get and the more you are able to share your heart with people. And so we bless you with many more years of laughter and growth," the rabbi said as she administered the blessing with outstretched hands.

During a break in the entertainment, birthday cake was served to all the guests. The event went on till after midnight.

Commenting on the occasion several days afterward, Elliott said, "It went great. I loved it. I've gotten over fifty emails from people who were there, telling me how much they loved it also. I want to thank everybody who came out, especially the performers."

One of the highlights he cited was the blessing offered by Rabbi Silver. "It was so nice of her to do that," he said. "One of my younger friends in my dance group who's not Jewish commented that she really enjoyed it too."

Reflecting on reaching nonagenarian status, Elliott said he draws inspiration from others in the same age group, particularly those who are active in the performing arts. In the emailed invitation he sent out prior to the party, he directed recipients to a 28-minute YouTube video from 2017, titled "If You Aren't in the Obit, Eat Breakfast." In the video, Dick Van Dyke, Carl Reiner, Mel Brooks and Norman Lear discuss their lives and how they are staying active in their 90s.

"I hope that this movie . . . and me . . . will upset all your conceptions of being 90," he wrote.

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## Gates of Prayer holds 'Shalom Rav' sendoff weekend for Rabbi Loewy

When Congregation Gates of Prayer, Metairie's sole Reform temple, gets ready to celebrate the retirement of its senior rabbi, they do so in a very big way. As Rabbi Robert Loewy prepared to retire and move on to the revered status of emeritus rabbi, the congregation turned out in big numbers for the Friday night and Saturday morning Shabbat services and other activities including a picnic and concluding with a Saturday night gala.

Rabbi Howard Laibson, a friend of Loewy's since their days as young leaders of the Reform movement and an assistant rabbi to Loewy in Houston at Temple Emanuel, used the opportunity on Friday evening to extol the virtues of his colleague and mentor.

"Let me make it clear to all of you here that your rabbi became and remains one of the most outstanding and respected rabbis throughout the Reform Movement," Laibson said, himself an emeritus rabbi out of Temple Shir Chadash in Lakewood, CA.

"Bob (Loewy), as you were probably aware," Laibson added, "was born to be a rabbi. Even as a young child, he had that rabbinic neshoma, that rabbinic soul."

In referring to the weekend, titled "Shalom Rav," Loewy pointed out it had many meanings to him, including the song he learned as a young man and a version of it he and Cantorial Soloist Victoria Cohen

May sing at Shabbat worship services. It also can mean a goodbye and a reference to a job well done after 34 years on the pulpit, he admitted.

Earlier in the evening, the congregation honored the rabbi by naming the lobby in his honor. "The Loewy Lobby? I like the alliteration," he began. "I'm truly appreciative that our Board of Trustees has chosen to name the lobby in my honor, recognizing not only my rabbinate, but the congregation. I love this particular expression"

Loewy continued: "Our lobby is where we welcome all who enter," pointing out that it is the place where congregants first assemble to pray and to connect with one another.

Loewy estimated that he had officiated at 430 baby namings and brisses, 172 weddings and 607 funerals during his term of office.

But lifecycle events, while important, he said, are a way for him to connect with the members. "In truth, I love the rabbinate as a profession," he explained. "It has allowed me to be a fulltime Jew and placed me in position to try and make a difference. And I have loved being rabbi for this kehilat kedoshah, this holy congregation."

The theme carried over into a picnic on Saturday afternoon at Lafreniere Park and a "Jerusalem Under the Stars" themed gala at which Middle Eastern fare was on the menu and Panorama Jazz Band performed. Loewy



Rabbi Robert Loewy of Congregation Gates of Prayer. (Photo by Jack Schulman)

was further honored that night with the performance of a specially-commissioned song by Jewish songwriter Julie Silver of the Oseh Shalom prayer derived from the Kaddish. A choir sang the song for Loewy as he, his wife, family members and friends looked on.

Loewy will continue to perform as senior rabbi for the next few weeks, leading the congregation in worship until the end of May, whereupon he will retire as incoming Rabbi David Gerber ascends to the pulpit on July 1.

## United States formally dedicates embassy on anniversary of Israel's independence

By ALAN SMASON

Amidst a sea of friendly faces, representatives of the Trump administration formally dedicated the site of the new United States Embassy in Jerusalem on the anniversary of the date Israel declared its independence in 1948.

"The United States recognizes the sensitivity surrounding Jerusalem, a city that means so much to so many," said Jared Kushner, the special American peace envoy and son-in-law of President Donald Trump.

Kushner alluded to protests along the Israeli border with Gaza

in which 37 had reportedly been killed. "Those provoking violence are part of the problem and not the solution," he said.

Kushner spoke after a video message from the President, who affirmed his campaign promise to move the embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

With the passage of the Jerusalem Embassy Act in 1995, Congress authorized moving the location of its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. However, every President from Clinton to George W. Bush to Barack Obama had postponed that action until



Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu speaks at the dedication of the U.S. embassy on May 14. (Photo via JBS)

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# Author Edith Sheffer to speak on Asperger, autism in Nazi Vienna today at WW2 Museum

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

Author Edith Sheffer has researched the period in Vienna prior to and during the Nazi annexation known as the Anschluss in Austria. In her book, "Asperger's Children: The Origins of Autism in Nazi Vienna," she has concluded that Dr. Johann "Hans" Frederich Karl Asperger, the medical theorist and pediatrician whose name was formerly given to a syndrome used by behaviorists to describe some high-functioning autistic adults, was directly responsible for the deaths of dozens of children deemed not worthy of living by the Nazis.

Sheffer is in New Orleans today to deliver a talk with a reception this afternoon at 5:00 p.m. at the National World War II Museum.

Prior to the Anschluss, Asperger wrote that he didn't believe that children should be diagnosed differently than others. However, following the Nazi takeover in Vienna in 1938, Asperger released the first of his papers dealing with what he termed autistic psychopathy and refined it finally in 1944, all under the period of the Nazi administration there.

"He considered himself an Austrian nationalist, but he joined several National Socialist (Nazi) organizations," Sheffer said in a phone interview with the CCJN. "He himself never joined the Nazi Party and that's why people have seen him as a heroic figure."

But not joining the Nazi Party was a fairly common practice among Viennese physician, she noted. "Only three in ten joined the party, so it was not unusual," she said.

Asperger applied to work for a doctors' organization that was an arm of the Nazi Party as well as for the Hitler Youth, Sheffer added.

"There's a range of responses to Nazism between resisting, going along and joining organizations in a kind of a minimalist fashion," she continued. "I guess what I'm trying to say is that Asperger went above and beyond, not only in his joining the organization but with his involvement with the child euthanasia program. It was definitely not something that was coerced; he was acting as a very conscious participant."

Because he was a minor figure and did not actually kill any children, Asperger escaped detection as a willing participant in the plot to euthanize more than 120 children. He and dozens of doctors who transferred children were ignored at war's end. The Allies put the doctors on trial who actually worked at the killing center.

"He was of little interest until scholars began digging into his history at the turn of the 21st century and these victims got more attention," Sheffer stated.

Asperger enjoyed some celebrity when the American Psychiatric Association designated Asperger's Syndrome as a term for certain high-functioning adults. However, in 2013, the association discontinued the use of that term, instead referring to them simply as being on the high end of the autism spectrum.

The term Asperger's Syndrome is still in use by other countries and is a colloquial



Author Edith Sheffer. (Photo courtesy of author)

expression used by laypeople to discuss adults who seem to fit within that part of the spectrum. Some of these people have speculated that the distant and somewhat anti-social pattern of behavior exhibited by Microsoft's Bill Gates and Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg might be indicators of what was formerly referred to as Asperger's.

Sheffer, who hails from San Francisco, became interested in the topic of autism after her own child was diagnosed with being on the autism spectrum.

Sheffer came to the National World War II Museum to promote and discuss the research of her book. Signed copies were available to purchase at the museum's gift shop.

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President Trump last December, saying it was a way to honor its promises and to advance the stagnant peace process.

"The pursuit of peace is the noblest pursuit of humankind," Kushner continued. "I believe peace is within reach if we dare to believe that the future can be different from the past, that we are not condemned to relieve history and that the way things were is not how that must forever be. It will not be an easy road and it will be filled with tough and difficult decisions, but if we dream big – if we lead with courage – we can change the trajectory for millions from hopeless to boundless."

Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was jubilant. "Dear Friends, what a glorious day," he began his remarks. "Remember this moment. This is history. President Trump, by recogniz-

ing history, you have made history. All of us are deeply moved. All of us are deeply grateful."

Netanyahu praised the American delegation and their families who had assembled to witness the dedication amongst pomp and ceremony. Among the dignitaries present were U.S. Ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, Secretary of the Treasury Steven Mnuchin, several U.S. Senators and Representatives, peace broker Jason Greenblatt, Kushner's wife, Ivanka Trump, and most of the Israeli Knesset.

"This is a great day for Israel. It's a great day for America," he said. "It's a great day for our fantastic partnership, but I believe it's also a great day for peace."

On a personal note, Netanyahu recalled how the very spot the embassy resides upon was formerly forbidden access to him and his fellow Jews when he was a small boy. He referred to the

historical connection of Jerusalem to the Jewish people as an immutable truth.

"The truth and peace are interconnected," the prime minister continued. "A peace that is built on lies will crash on the rocks of Middle Eastern realities. You can only build peace on truth and the truth is that Jerusalem has been and will always be the capital of the Jewish people, the capital of the Jewish State."

Netanyahu quoted from Zechariah 8:3: "I will return to Zion and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem and Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth," he noted.

"May the opening of this embassy in this city spread the truth far and wide and may the truth advance a lasting peace between Israel and all our neighbors," he concluded. "God bless the United States of America and God bless Jerusalem, the eternal, undivided capital of Israel."



# A Tribute to the Iron Lady of New Orleans

By ALAN SMASON

When news reached me of the death of Jackie Pressner Gothard, the very first thing that went through my mind was that it must have been a trick or some sort of fantastic jest to test me. There was no warning. No bulletin rang out in advance preparing me for her sudden disappearance. She was a pillar of the New Orleans community one moment – a woman of indomitable will and gracious Southern charm – and then she was a memory.

But what a memory she leaves behind.

Jackie Gothard was the consummate cheerleader, the never-say-die, larger-than-life character who, quite literally, saved my synagogue and embodied renewed hope for Jewish New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina. Jackie was the spirit of the new Congregation Beth Israel, erected phoenix-like on the ashes of more than 100 years of Orthodox Judaism in New Orleans.

It was her life's mission to never let anyone forget the history of Beth Israel or its tragic demise beneath the murky floodwaters from the breached 17th Street Canal following the landfall of the monster storm. She made the decision to bring the lifeless synagogue back from the dead, even while she was an evacuee in Houston and the news out of New Orleans was nothing less than bleak.

That was Jackie. She was always organizing and planning. She made certain that there was only one High Holiday period that the members of the synagogue under whose shadow she had grown up near the heavily Jewish corridor along Dryades Street, would be without a building in which they could assemble, pray and, let us not forget, eat.

Jackie employed her son Eddie, himself a former Beth Israel president, to get on the phone with the Orthodox Union, the United Jewish Communities (now the Jewish Federations of North America) and anybody else who would listen. Beth Israel was coming back, she would tell them. Orthodox services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur were planned and executed at a Houston hotel and many bewildered and depressed former New Orleans residents gathered to daven and begin to consider that a move back to the city and Modern Orthodoxy might again be possible.

When the floodwaters had receded and residents were allowed back into the city, Jackie beat a path to the once magnificent structure on Canal Boulevard the synagogue had called home since 1970. She gasped in between tears as she beheld with her own eyes what 10-12



Jackie Gothard speaks at the dedication of the reburial of seven Torah scrolls in 2011 as her son Eddie, center, and Gabbi Irwin Lachoff, rear, look on. (Photo by Alan Smason)

feet of toxic waste laden and sewage-filled floodwaters had done to the exterior and interior of her shul. The Torah scrolls had been rescued famously by an Israeli search and rescue team from ZAKA. They were destroyed. In some cases, the parchment had been eaten away by whatever microbes and chemicals were in that water. Jackie contacted Becky Hegglund (see page 32, Best of the CCJN SOURCE 5776), a former receptionist who hadn't worked at the synagogue for several years, as soon as she returned home. The synagogue was in ruins, but the Torah scrolls needed to be buried in a reverent fashion, according to Jewish law. Jackie didn't know who else to call. Like so many others who had been charged with a task by Jackie, Becky – a non-Jew – agreed. Jackie gave her the contact number for ZAKA's Rabbi Issac Leider and she arranged to pick up the seven sefer Torahs, dig a four-foot by six-foot plot by herself and deposit them in a makeshift grave.

Upon her return home, Jackie renewed her conversations with Reform Congregation Gates of Prayer's (senior) Rabbi Robert Loewy. Out of a gesture of kindness and charity, he offered Jackie and those Orthodox community members an opportunity to re-establish the congregation in the back chapel, a room that by divine coincidence had an aron hakodesh for prayer services. Beth Israel began to meet there and went on to establish a unique partnership

with the Reform temple, eventually purchasing land from them and building a new structure there.

Over the course of the several months and years of recovery, Jackie was at the helm of leadership, retrieving religious articles from the old synagogue and overseeing the burial of thousands of siddurim, tallitim, tefillin, and Machzorim. One of the items she was most proud of saving was the synagogue's giant Chanukiah – the special brass menorah used during the celebration of Chanukah. That menorah was scrubbed and polished to a new luster by Jackie and others who would see it used in a synagogue again. Not only was it used again at Beth Israel, but it was prominently displayed in 2011 at the official White House Chanukah ceremony at which President Barack Obama lit the Chanukah candles.

The young rabbi who carried that menorah to the White House was none other than Rabbi Uri Topolosky, a visionary figure who, along with his wife Dahlia, were charmed by Jackie on a tour of the old synagogue and decided almost immediately to move to the Crescent City and its tiny Jewish minority from their heavily-Jewish neighborhood in Riverdale, New York. It was Rav Uri, who along with Jackie, became the public face of recovery from Hurricane

**Story continues on page 21**





# Avodah New Orleans marks 10 years of social justice, activism

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

The New Orleans chapter of Avodah celebrated its tenth year of existence on Thursday, May 17, honoring Fran Lake, Josh Lichtman, and Dana Keren for their commitment to social justice and community activism. The event, which was held at Martin Wine Cellar, also marked the tenth anniversary of Avodah New Orleans' partnership with the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center (GNOFHAC), a nonprofit organization devoted to ending housing discrimination.

Each of the three honorees represents a leading member of New Orleans' Jewish community. Lake, a first-generation American whose parents fled Europe during the Holocaust, is a former president of the Greater New Orleans Chapter of Hadassah and has served on the boards of numerous local Jewish institutions. For Lichtman and Keren, Avodah New Orleans was their introduction to each other — Lichtman directed the program during Keren's year as an Avodah corps member in 2010.

Avodah began operating in New Orleans in 2008 after Hurricane Katrina devastated much of the city. The regional site has since partnered with 30 local nonprofits, focusing on issues that today extend well beyond disaster recovery. The organization, which to some degree resembles AmeriCorps, recruits young adults on an annual basis to spend a year working for little to no pay with nonprofits serving underprivileged and at-risk communities.

New Orleans corps members live together in a single house on Jefferson Avenue, though each individual corps member works with a different organization. According to Lynne Wasserman, chair of the Avodah New Orleans Advisory Council, "93 percent of Avodah New Orleans alums are still involved in social justice work past their Avodah year."

In addition to New Orleans, Avodah operates chapters in New York, Chicago, Washington D.C. and, starting this winter, Kansas City.

Founded in 1998, the national organization describes its mission as strengthening "the Jewish community's fight against the causes and effects of poverty in the United States." Avodah, a Hebrew word, translates to "work" (connoting a kind of "service"), though in Hebrew it can also mean "slavery."

In keeping with the sense of service echoed in the organization's name, various speakers on Thursday evening referred to the Jewish concept of tikkun olam, which can be translated as "repair of the world." It is often



Michelle Morgan of the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center speaks at the Avodah 10th year anniversary at the Uptown location of Martin Wine Cellar. (Photo by Nicholas Hamburger)

interpreted as an impetus for community service or philanthropy.

Avodah New Orleans receives its funding through individual donations as well as from sources like the Goldring Family Foundation, the Woldenberg Foundation, and the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans.

This financial support, suggested Michelle Morgan, Coordinator for Investigations at GNOFHAC, enables Avodah New Orleans not only to reach more people in need but also to collaborate with organizations like her own. "We would not be able to be in the position we are today without your continued support and partnership," Morgan said. "We look forward to another ten years with Avodah."

Martin Wine Cellar offered a selection of fine Israeli wines that were sampled by the 80 attendees throughout the night.

## Story continues from page 20

Katrina. Even while the property was for sale, she constantly gave tours of the old synagogue to groups that wanted to see what destruction the structure had suffered.

Jackie told the story of her family's kosher delicatessen and other businesses run by Jewish merchants along Dryades Street that became known as "the second Canal Street." Two Orthodox congregations had sprung up there — Beth Israel and Congregation Anshe Sfard — and only a few blocks away was the original location of Temple Sinai, the first synagogue formed under the branch of Reform Judaism.

She never tired of answering questions to the many different groups who inquired as to what Jewish communal life was like in the old days and what was in store for the congrega-

tion.

Jackie and others who followed her, including another female president — Roselle Middleberg Ungar — saw to it that Beth Israel was restored with a magnificent new building that was dedicated on the anniversary of Hurricane Katrina's landfall seven years later. Over the last five years, Jackie continued to be a mainstay at the synagogue, celebrating her 60th wedding anniversary only a few months ago with close relative and the third female president, Lee Kansas, looking on proudly. On many a Thursday, she helped others organize and prepare the meal that would be served after Shabbat services on Saturday.

A tireless force of nature, she never seemed to slow down, bragging on the accomplishments of her grown professional children, her

grandchildren and even her great-grandson. That's why her sudden passing is so hard to believe.

Elected in 2003 as the first female president of Congregation Beth Israel, Jackie Schowed her extraordinary skills to lead and serve. Jackie enjoyed the high of celebrating the synagogue's 100th anniversary in 2004 to be followed by that difficult period of recovery from the hurricane. She was a dynamic leader who was faced with numerous challenges that she met and defeated with ease. She possessed a tenacious spirit along with fierce determination that helped Congregation Beth Israel survive!

There was no one like Jackie Gothard and there probably never will be.

Today rabah, Jackie. Today rabah.



# NCJW installs new officers, board members at year-end event

By DEAN M. SHAPIRO, Special to the CCJN

Signing on for another year or, in some cases, another two years, a new slate of officers, board members and nominating committee members was officially installed by the Greater New Orleans Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) on Tuesday, May 22.

Prior to the installation, those gathered at the Audubon Tea Room for the organization's annual closing event and dinner heard keynote speeches by two local women holding at-large seats on their respective governing bodies. Newly elected New Orleans City Council member, Helena Moreno, and Jefferson Parish Council member, Cynthia Lee Sheng, spoke about their legislative priorities and gave encouragement to the audience members to speak out and take action on issues that most concern them.

Also on the evening's agenda was the presentation of the NCJW Emerging Leader Award to Sarah Casey Covert.

NCJW president Barbara Kaplinsky emceed the event and delivered the section's annual report. Ina Davis, past president and NCJW Washington Office Policy Liaison, formally installed the officers, board members and nominating committee members. Sue Singer, program co-chair, introduced the guest speakers.

In her opening remarks, Moreno, a former investigative reporter for WDSU-TV and State Representative from District 93, spoke about her experiences in the Louisiana Legislature and some of the battles she fought for issues she felt most strongly about. "Over the eight years I spent in the legislature I focused on a variety of issues from criminal justice

reform to the opioid crisis, healthcare, child education and improvement of care for the disabled and the elderly, just to name a few."

But an issue that was especially close to her heart was that of rectifying the way the justice system treated women who had been physically or sexually abused. Moreno detailed how she focused on efforts to change the laws and mandate stronger punishments for those convicted of domestic violence offenses.

"When I entered the legislature I really didn't have a lot of these issues in front of me," Moreno said. "It wasn't until my fourth year in the legislature in 2014 that I had two women (United Way's Charmaine Caccioppi and Kim Sport) come into my office and want to specifically talk about domestic violence laws and some of the loopholes that were in them."

"Both of them sat across from me and put this huge stack of paper in front of me and it was all these different statutes and bills that they had drafted," Moreno continued. "I started to go through all the different proposals of what they wanted to change. These included enhanced penalties for domestic violence offenders, firearms rules, protective orders and provisions for immediate divorce from those convicted of domestic violence. I told them this would be a very heavy lift, especially the firearms prohibition because, as you all know, the NRA is a very powerful lobby. I have seen one firearms prohibition after another die in the legislature."

Moreno said that, with assurances from Caccioppi and Sport they would stand firmly behind her, she proceeded to introduce legislation they requested. To



Sarah Covert, right, accepts the Emerging Leader Award from Celia Katz. (Photo by Dean Shapiro)



Helena Moreno at NCJW event at Audubon Tea Room on May 22. (Photo by Dean Shapiro)



Jefferson Parish Councilmember Cynthia Lee Sheng. (Photo by Dean Shapiro)

show widespread support for these bills, the two women rallied United Way members from all over Louisiana to pack the legislative committee hearing chamber. The massive turnout convinced the Criminal Justice Committee to pass the five bills Moreno introduced and all five of them were unanimously passed by the state legislature, she told the audience.

"At the end of the day, we created the strongest domestic violence laws in the country," Moreno proudly declared. "And so what these two women did was, by being ever-present and

working so hard, they ended up being change-makers."

From that point, Moreno began focusing on the laws governing sexual assault which, at that time was only classified as a misdemeanor for the first offense. She also joined forces with an advocacy organization to attain state funding sources to help sexual assault victims pay for medical exams and treatments. To that end she recalled bringing a sexual assault victim into the hearing room of the House Appropriations Committee to testify about her traumatic experiences.





"Just a few weeks later (after the assault), she received thousands of dollars in medical bills that she could not pay for," Moreno said. "She brought the stacks of bills with her (to the hearing) and she looked every member of the Appropriations Committee in the eye as she told her story. By the time she finished there was not one member of the committee who was going to vote against her. Her story made a difference. She was also a change-maker."

In her new position on the New Orleans City Council, Moreno pledged to continue fighting for the same reforms she advocated while serving in the legislature, in addition to tackling issues unique to the city like crime, re-entry programs for those released from incarceration, flood protection and upgrading the Sewerage & Water Board.

"The more I dig into it the more I realize it (the S&WB) is truly broken from top to bottom and there are unbelievably large numbers of improvements that are necessary," Moreno said. "We really have to work on upgrading a lot of the inefficiencies in technology, as well as improving communications and engagement with the public."

Moreno called on the S&WB to make better use of social media to immediately alert citizens about dangerous flooding conditions and other issues relating to water quality.

Concluding her remarks, Moreno said, "I'm going to be pushing a very strong agenda over the next few years. I'm going to need all of you to help me advocate on these issues."

Up next, Sheng, the daughter of the late, longtime Jefferson Parish Sheriff Harry Lee and a Jefferson councilmember since 2009, spoke briefly about her strong affinity for issues related to immigration, being the descendent of immigrants from China. After attaining a Masters Degree in Public Administration from George Washington

University and graduating from the Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, she served ten years as a federal law enforcement officer with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Washington, Baltimore and Newark.

Tying in the immigration theme with the American Jewish experience, Sheng launched into a seven-minute history discussion about how the game of mahjong traveled from its ancient origin in China to the U.S. where it became a favorite pastime in Jewish communities, especially among Jewish women. She cited this as an example of how the two cultures merged through a byproduct of the immigration process.

During her annual President's Report, Kaplinsky announced that the state legislature recently passed House Bill 265 which restores voting rights to formerly incarcerated citizens and is expected to be signed into law by Governor John Bel Edwards next week. The new law will go into effect in March 2019. Kaplinsky praised NCJW Advocacy Chair Miriam Waltzer and NCJW State Policy Advocate Maddie Fireman for their work in pushing for the bill's enactment.

"Potentially this means many thousands of new Louisiana voters," Kaplinsky said. "Now we're going to have to work to get all of them registered. As Helena said, this victory is a demonstration of what can happen when we educate, engage and mobilize our constituents to contact their senators and representatives."

Next up on the agenda, Celia Katz presented the Emerging Leader Award to Sarah Covert who, she said, "has become a leader, dedicated to advancing the well-being of women, children and families by working with like-minded people in a volunteer capacity." Covert, a vice president on the NCJW Executive Committee, was further praised for "a career dedicated to improving the



Former NCJW Section presidents and current president Barbara Kaplinsky. (Photo by Dean Shapiro)

quality of life for those in need."

In the evening's final order of business, presided over by Section Past President Susan Kierr, the slate of officers, board members and nominating committee members was put up for a vote after two nominations were taken from the floor and unanimously approved by the membership. Liz Yager was elected to fill a vacancy for a fifth vice president on the Executive Committee and Gail Chalew was elected to fill the vacancy created by Yager's elevation to the Executive Committee. Chalew will serve during the 2018-20 term.

Continuing the second year of their two-year terms are Section Executive Committee members are Kaplinsky, president; Kathy Shepard, treasurer; Tricia Kirschman, assistant treasurer; Jennette Ginsburg, financial secretary; Fran Dinehart, recording secretary; Gail Pesses, corresponding secretary; and Rollie Rabin, vice president. Other vice presidents continuing for another two-year term are Covert and Barbara Greenberg and beginning her first two-year term through 2020 is Simone Levine.

Nominated and elected to their second two-year terms on the Board of Directors were Fireman and Dana Keren. Nancy Timm, Ann Thompson and Karen Sher were nomi-

nated and elected to their first two-year terms. Other board members serving through 2019 and approved by voice vote were Robin Giarusso, Patty Barnett, Millie Kohn, Jenny Nathan Simoneaux, Robin Goldblum and Eileen Wallen.

The 2018-19 Nominating Committee was also approved for a unanimous vote. Chaired by Florence Schornstein, its ex-officio members are Kierr and June Leopold. Committee members from the Board of Directors are Barnett, Pesses, Shepard and Simoneaux and representing the general membership on the committee are Vivian Cahn, Phyllis Feran, Joyce Pulitzer and Waltzer.

Following the election, the committee and board members were formally installed by Davis. Praising members of the outgoing leadership and wishing the newly elected officials well, she read several quotes from NCJW founder Hannah G. Solomon.

"Today, the reported news, both real and fake, is filled with threats of violence, war and retribution," Davis said. "Over a hundred years ago, Hannah said, 'I have long dreamed about being able to plant a better world, one promising freedom from the tyranny of wars forever.' What a foundation she created for us," Davis concluded.



# Hadassah bestows honorary title on Lazelle Alexander

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

With grace, charm and her usual efficiency, Lazelle Alexander was honored by her fellow Greater New Orleans Chapter of Hadassah members in a grand gesture granted only three times previously. By accepting the title of honorary vice president, Alexander became the only living member of Hadassah to be so recognized.

The event held on Sunday, June 3 at Ralph's at the Park honored Lazelle, a past president, for her tireless work through many decades and especially for all of the mailings she has handled for the chapter in more recent years.

Previous honorary vice president titles were bestowed by the local chapter to three former presidents – Rosalie Cohen, Libbye Gordon and Cecile Levine, – all of blessed memory. Patti Ungar, a former Hadassah president herself, recounted the heralded work of all the previous honorees and then spoke about Alexander's remarkable and dedicated career.

Ungar credited Lazelle's outreach through mailings with having been responsible for Hadassah reaching a goal of \$70,000 for breast cancer research and other women's programs they have shepherded.

Alexander, with the aid of "her extremely capable daughter Becky," Ungar acknowledged, has also been responsible for sending out copious emails too. "Our communication is only as good as our ability to reach out to our members," Ungar stated, pointing out that Alexander's efforts have been stellar through the years.

Hadassah members bestowed several gifts upon Alexander including a commemorative plaque and a piece of Judaica which incorporated the Magen David and the all-seeing eye. "You're an extraordinary woman who has served Hadassah New Orleans during extraordinary times," Ungar said.

Ungar noted Alexander's previous awards as a Woman of Valor, the National Leadership Award and the Southern Region Woman of the Year.

Alexander called the title "an incredible honor." She said she considered the three previous recipients. "I was fortunate to know all three (previous recipients): Roasalie, Cecile and Libbye," she acknowledged. "They had many things in common: their love for Israel, their love for Hadassah, their love for their family and their love for their community," she continued.

"I also want to point out they all lived into their nineties," she joked with the crowd. "I'm taking this as a very good sign."



Lazelle Alexander thanks Hadassah members for chapter naming her as an honorary vice president. (Photo by Alan Smason)

Alexander revealed that a number of her cherished possessions had been lost to the floodwaters associated with the levee breaks caused by the passing of Hurricane Katrina. One of these was a letter from her mother advising her that a young Dan Alexander, the man destined to become her future husband, was interested in seeing her.

"I really think Hadassah made a good investment with me," she admitted, describing how she helped spearhead the B'not Shalom women's professional auxiliary group members to all become life members of Hadassah. "I really was a fan of Henrietta Szold, our founder," Alexander stated. "She was a Jewish scholar, an editor, a pioneer Zionist and she was a dreamer and a doer."

Finally, she shared a letter, stating it was from someone who could not be with them today. The letter stated how special she was for her years of dedication to the organization. "Mazel tov from me and Saul," Alexander read, stating they hoped to be at the luncheon. "Your children and grandchildren are most proud of you. Hugs. Love, Jackie."

As she ended her talk, Alexander became emotional along with the crowd, who recognized the words had come from recently deceased Jackie Gothard, herself a tireless worker for Hadassah.

## JCC dedicates its building with Cantor Azi Schwartz concert

Cantor Azi Schwartz, one of the most highly-regarded and respected Jewish musicians and interpreters of cantorial music today, was the guest star at the dedication of the Uptown Jewish Community Center's building on May 24.

The concert, which included participation with local Temple Sinai Cantor Joel Colman and Gates of Prayer cantorial soloist

Victoria Cohen May, was the JCC's way of thanking those who had contributed to its major building campaigns over the course of the last three years.

Among the many leading contributors was William Goldring with the Goldring Family Foundation and the Woldenberg Family Foundations, who spoke about the need for upgrading the JCC's fitness center. The numbers of clients

being served at the fitness center has more than tripled since the first upgrade to the facilities back in the late 1990s.

The leading contributor was the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust that built the aquatics complex named for him. Bryan Katz was the capital campaign chair.

JCC executive director Leslie Fischman presented several recognition gifts that noted the

important financial contributions Goldring and others like Cathy and Morris Bart and Richard Buschbaum had made in upgrading various portions of the building or through their leadership. In addition, longtime employee Dennis Ranson was honored on the recognition of his service for four decades.





## Jewish editor among 5 killed in Annapolis newspaper shooting

(JTA) — One of the five victims killed in a shooting at a newspaper in Annapolis, Maryland, was Jewish.

Gerald Fischman, 61, the editorial page editor at the Capital Gazette, was killed Thursday along with four others — sales assistant Rebecca Smith, 34; editor Rob Hiasen, 59; reporter and editor John McNamara, 56; and reporter Wendi Winters, 65 — by a lone gunman.

Jarrold Ramos, 38, of Laurel, Maryland, was arrested and charged with five counts of murder, the Baltimore Sun reported. The report did not say how he pleaded. Police said Ramos had been the subject of critical coverage in the paper.

Fischman, who worked for the Capital Gazette since 1992, was known for his annual editorial on Christmas, despite the fact that he was Jewish, the Sun reported. Colleagues described him as a quiet, committed professional who was humorous, extremely knowledgeable and polite. He always wore a V-neck cardigan, regardless of temperature, and often would work a midnight to 5 a.m. shift. Colleagues typically would arrive in the morning to find sticky notes from Fischman on their desks asking them to fact-check his editorials.

“He was kind of a mysterious guy,” reporter Joshua Stewart told the Sun. “He wasn’t social, and this was the most interaction we had with him. It was a testament to

his work.”

The Sun also said he married late in life, to a Mongolian opera singer he had met online. At an awards event shortly after he wed — Fischman won many regional prizes for his work — he was asked how he met his wife.

“I typed ‘Mongolian opera singer’ into a dating site,” he replied.

Ramos’ dispute with the Gazette began in 2011 when a columnist wrote about a criminal harassment case against him. He brought a defamation suit against the columnist and the organization’s editor and publisher. A court ruled in the Capital Gazette’s favor and an appeals court upheld the ruling.

Police said 170 people were inside the Gazette’s building during the attack. Staffers scrambled to find cover from the bullets, some diving behind desks, witnesses said. At least three people sustained serious injuries in the shooting, Radio WMFE reported.

Smith, the sales assistant, “was kind and considerate, and willing to help when needed,” her boss, Marty Padden, told the Sun. “She seemed to really enjoy to be working in the media business.”

Smith lived with her fiancé in eastern Baltimore County and actively posted images documenting her social life.

Hiasen’s wife, Maria, told NBC that her late husband “loved being a dad, an editor who helped shape young talent, and a cre-



Gerald Fischman was an editorial page editor who was respected by his colleagues. (The Baltimore Sun Media Group/Facebook)

ative writer and humorist.” The couple had three children together.

McNamara was a veteran reporter and editor. On his LinkedIn page, he described himself as a beat reporter for University of Maryland athletics and the Baltimore Orioles minor league system. He also helped put together the daily sports section.

Winters “was in many ways the best part of the newspaper in that she cared so much about the city,” said former Gazette editor Steve Gunn. Winters worked as community reporter for the paper. She had four children.

## Oscar J. Tolmas L’Dor v’Dor Lobby dedicated

The Oscar J. Tolmas L’Dor V’Dor Lobby was dedicated this week, an opportunity by the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans to emphasize the importance of tzedekah (charity) and to recount the life, career and loves of Oscar Tolmas.

In simple ceremonies on the third floor of the Jewish Federation Campus building on West Esplanade this past Tuesday evening, June 12, Federation president Henry Miller stood in for CEO Arnie Fielkow to welcome members of the local Jewish community in dedicating the walls of the lobby there in Tolmas’ honor.

Tolmas, of blessed memory, was represented by Vincent Giardina, president, and Lisa Romano, vice president, of the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust.

Tolmas graduated from Tulane University’s School of Law in 1943 with a J.D. degree and his career as an attorney and member of the Louisiana Bar was more than 70 years long.

Following his graduation from Law School in 1943, Tolmas served as a Lt. Commander in the Pacific campaign during World War II. Various panels depict his war record and service to his country as well as his successful construction company. One panel describes the so-called Tolmas Tract, considered one of the most valuable parcels of land in Metairie.

However, the one endeavor in his life about which he was most passionate was thoroughbred horse racing. Through the creation of Tolmas Racing Stables, he became a major racing figure. In 1992, he was elevated to the chair of the Louisiana Racing Commission in 1992 upon the recommendation of Governor Edwin Edwards in his fourth term of office.

“Oscar was raised to believe in the Jewish value of tzedakah, which encourages charitable giving to those most in need” Miller stated.

Following his passing in 2013, Tolmas’ entire estate passed to the trust and it now

supports innumerable organizations in their quest to help others. Some of the agencies that have benefited from the Tolmas trust’s largesse are the Jewish Community Center, the Jewish Children’s Regional Service, the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, the Jewish Community Day School, Jewish Family Service, the Oscar J. Tolmas Community Mikveh, JNOLA, the National Council of Jewish Women, St. Michael’s Special School, Kingsley House, Volunteers of America and many others.

Miller thanked Jennifer Hughes as the designer and Neil Rabin with Goldline Graphics for the excellent renditions applied to the walls of the lobby, which will remain a permanent fixture of the third floor lobby. He also acknowledged the work of Cait Muldoon Gladow, the Federation’s marketing chair, who helped coordinate the installation of the lobby.



# Tulane president visits Israel to explore collaboration opportunities

By **BARRI BRONSTON**, Courtesy Tulane University Publications

Leaders from Technion – Israel Institute of Technology and other Israeli universities are meeting this week with a delegation of American university presidents to exchange ideas and discuss opportunities for collaboration.

Tulane University President Mike Fitts is among a delegation of presidents of American universities and colleges visiting Israel this week to learn about technological innovation and boost bilateral academic research and exchange opportunities.

“This visit is an exciting opportunity to explore ways in which Tulane can collaborate with Israeli universities and other institutions around the world to address longstanding societal problems in the environment, healthcare, energy and numerous other areas,” Fitts said.

Organized by the American Jewish Committee (AJC) Project Interchange, the trip encourages university presidents from the United States to exchange ideas with their Israeli counterparts and explore opportunities for collaboration similar to such academic partnerships as the Jacobs Technion-Cornell Institute and the University of California and Israel Innovation Authority Partnership.

The university presidents will meet with

leadership at Israel’s Bar Ilan University, Ben Gurion University, Tel Aviv University and the Technion in order to explore opportunities for bilateral cooperation and learn about Israeli universities’ world-leading expertise in transfer technology.

“The world-class research and educational facilities at Israeli universities and colleges provide a fitting setting for great minds to share information, discuss research partnerships and explore opportunities for mutually-beneficial collaboration,” said Robin Levenston-Kudisch, executive director of the AJC Project Interchange.

The Project Interchange delegation will provide higher education leaders with a first-hand understanding of Israel, its vibrant democracy, diverse society and regional challenges. During their visit, the university presidents will engage a variety of perspectives from Israeli Jewish and Arab experts across the political and social spectrum. Discussions will focus on Israel’s high-tech and entrepreneurial landscape, security challenges, diversity in Israeli society and Israel’s approach to global humanitarian aid.

The delegation also will travel to Ramallah to meet with Palestinian experts on society, higher education and entrepreneur-



Tulane University president Michael Fitts (Photo via Wikimedia)

ship in the Palestinian Authority.

In addition to Fitts, the 17-member delegation includes the presidents of Cornell University, California State University at San Bernardino, Northern Arizona University, Illinois Institute of Technology, Sonoma State University, Tufts University, University of Minnesota, University of San Diego and University of Vermont.

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# Neal Bodenheimer stirs up Tales of the Cocktail for 2018

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

In less than a decade, bartender Neal Bodenheimer went from a scrappy spirits enthusiast to an industry sensation and a James Beard Award recipient earlier this spring. Bodenheimer, a local member of the Jewish community, is one of two principals who have taken over the annual conference of the spirits industry held in New Orleans, Tales of the Cocktail.

Now in its 16th year, Bodenheimer and his partner and promoter Gary Solomon, took over the Tales of the Cocktail parent organization in February following a series of scandals that rocked the organization. Social media pushback was especially severe over statements made by Tales of the Cocktail co-founder Paul Tuennerman about his wife Ann during last year's Zulu parade when she rode in blackface. Paul Tuennerman resigned immediately, but his wife stayed with the organization trying to right the sinking ship.

It was announced in September that both Tuennermans were leaving the organization and selling off MOJO 911, the company that produced the series of seminars, tastings and wild parties that have been held in the French Quarter and selected venues for more than a decade.

Bodenheimer and Solomon elected to alter the mission of what was an educational non-profit and to change its mission to that of a true foundation where they give all of their proceeds back in the form of grants to selected, needy recipients.

"We took over the Tales team," Bodenheimer explained in an exclusive interview with the CCJN earlier this week. "We have some new members and some existing members and we're putting it on with a lot of support from the Solomon Group that supported the old owners as well."

Bodenheimer said it was just a change in leadership. "Ann and Paul built something really special and we just consider ourselves as the next shepherds of the foundation, of the organization," he continued. "You

can see all these people who are here. They know the drill. They know what they are doing."

Because of the transition, several of the larger parties associated with the Tales of the Cocktails conference are fewer in number this year and Bodenheimer says that's to be expected. The biggest party of the week, for example, the one sponsored by William Grant and Sons on Wednesday night at Mardi Gras World, was – for the first time ever – a non-alcoholic event.

"I think it's really brave," he acknowledged. "If you're in the business of selling something and you say 'We're not going to focus on what we're selling. We're going to focus on community.' I think that's really special. It sets an amazing tone."

Bodenheimer added that the party was still very special, because "they know how to throw a good party." The idea, though, was to give industry attendees a night away from alcohol so they wouldn't feel pressured to drink their way through each event.

Bodenheimer, Solomon and their executive director Caroline Rosen took turns at a podium on Tuesday, July 17, to announce the awarding of \$250,000 in grants to eleven recipients "to educate, advance and support the global spirits industry." The eleven recipients had been decided through a process in which they were winnowed from 144 letters of intent and 52 full proposals by a committee of industry professionals under the Tales of the Cocktail Foundation's guidance.

Despite the changes, Bodenheimer said ticket sales were amazing and that final figures had yet to be determined. In previous years events had been spread out across two hotels – The Hotel Monteleone and the Royal Sonesta. This year, the Tales team elected to hold ticketed events exclusively at the Monteleone and, according to them, had only registered a 25% loss in sales. "That to me is an indicator that we are going to have a great year," he said.



Neal Bodenheimer, proprietor of Cure, at the Tales of the Cocktail kickoff. (Photo by Alan Smason)

Local community support has been pretty substantial, according to Bodenheimer. He estimated that the overall impact of Tales of the Cocktail results in at least \$18 million in economic impact in July, a month that traditionally lacked much in tourism due to high heat and humidity.

"People have to choose to be here and to choose to spend their dollars here," he noted. "It makes a lot of sense for bartenders because it doesn't cost a lot of money to be here. So, they can pay their way here."

"This is the premier international cocktail festival," Bodenheimer added. "In New Orleans, we have preserved and revered the cocktail for generations. It makes sense that we would have a world-class cocktail festival here."

Bodenheimer credits the Solomon family for stepping up at a time when there were questions as to whether the festival could continue. "I'm excited that this is happening," he concluded. "Nobody knows how close this was to falling apart and going under and what it would have meant. So, to me just to be here makes me extraordinarily happy."



# CCJN draws top honor at Press Club Awards

The Crescent City Jewish News drew a rare honor Saturday night when it was selected as the first place recipient of the Breaking News category, defeating WWL-TV. Surprised CCJN editor Alan Smason accepted the award on behalf of the website, which publishes the Best of the Crescent City Jewish News Yearbook and SOURCE guide annually.

Smason was cited as the author of the story "New Orleans Community Mobilizes for Houston as Harvey Bears Down on LA," which detailed the local Jewish community's response to the unprecedented rain event in Houston, east Texas and the Lake Charles area.

The online article was republished in the Best of the CCJN 2017 Yearbook earlier this year and can be found on pages 47-48.

As a result of its win in the Breaking News Category, the CCJN was also presented with a Best of Show Award, the Bill Rainey Memorial Award, given out annually to the top print organization that captures the Breaking News category.

Smason also received a second place award for his critical review of "Thrill Me,"



CCJN editor Alan Smason with first place award for Breaking News and Bill Rainey Award for Best of Show. (Photo by Margo DuBos)



Lee Zurik with the Jim Metcalf Award for Best of Show. (Photo by Alan Smason)

a musical based on the Leopold and Loeb thrill murder of the 1920s. That story was also republished in the Best of the CCJN 2017 Yearbook on page 71.

In addition to the CCJN, Jewish TV broadcaster Lee Zurik of Fox 8 WVUE-TV took home five first-place Press Club Excellence in Journalism Awards in the categories of Crime Reporting, Government Political Reporting, Business Reporting, Environmental-Science Reporting and Investigative Reporting.

Because of his win in the Investigative Reporting category, Zurik also took home a Best of Show award, the Jim Metcalf Memorial Award, for the best in broadcast writing.

Fellow Jewish investigative reporter David Hammer took home several second and third place awards in TV broadcast categories for his work as well as being part of the WWL-TV staff.

The 60th Annual Excellence in Journalism Awards Gala sponsored by the Press Club of New Orleans was held at the newly-opened Jung Hotel on Canal Street from 6:00 – 10:00 p.m.

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# Small story looms large in 'The Band's Visit'

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

For the past seven weeks, Broadway history has been made through a spectacular bit of casting that only rarely occurs when the world of celluloid intersects with that of the Great White Way.

Hollywood has frequently contributed to the Broadway scene. Interestingly, over the past two decades, many outstanding Broadway productions have been gleaned from independent British movies with cult-like followings. *"Billy Elliott,"* *"Once"* and *"Kinky Boots"* were first small films prior to their becoming smashes on Broadway.

More times than not, though, the original actors from Broadway productions will find their way to being preserved on film. Robert Preston perfected his Harold Hill in *"The Music Man"* opposite Barbara Cook before he reprised his role in the movie version opposite Shirley Jones five years later. Robert Morse found similar fame when he took his J. Pierpont Finch from the stage in 1961 to the movie screen in 1967 with *"How To Succeed in Business Without Really Trying."* Entire casts from *"1776"* and *"Rent"* made it to the big screen intact with only a few cast changes a few years after finding fame on Broadway.

However, it is a supremely extraordinary event when a character created on film by a specific actor is reprised on the stage by that one and same actor. This has happened only once before on Broadway. That was when Anthony Quinn and Lila Kedrova, were both invited to recreate their original roles of Zorba and Madame Hortense in the film *"Zorba The Greek"* for the musical revival staged in 1983. (Kedrova, who won the Oscar two decades before, also received a Tony Award for her efforts.)

It is against that backdrop that we consider Sasson Gabay, the Israeli actor who won a slew of international awards in 2009 in his role of a prim and proper Egyptian military bandleader whose troupe mistakenly books passage to a remote town in the Negev desert.

This small international film – an Israeli, French and American venture – was transformed into a musical with music by David Yazbek and a book by Itamar Moses. Just like *"Hamilton: An American Musical"* did in 2015 prior to its transfer to Broadway the following year, *"The Band's Visit"* swept the Drama Desk Awards and Outer Circle Critics Awards last year. When it was time for the Tony Awards this year, it took home



Katrina Lenk (Dina) and Sasson Gabay (Tewfiq) share a moment in "The Band's Visit." (Photo by Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade)

a slew of coveted trophies – ten in all – including the one for Best Musical.

Successful TV actor Tony Shalhoub (*"Monk,"* *"Wings"*) won his first Tony Award earlier this year when he was selected as Best Leading Actor in the role of Tewfiq. But like many busy TV actors, Shalhoub was unable to stay in the role he had originated. He left to film several episodes of *"The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel"* for Amazon and returned to the Ethel Barrymore Theatre prior to the Tony Awards.

The role requires more acting than singing skills. With only a few exceptions, when Tewfiq does sing on stage, he usually does so as part of the ensemble of other talented cast members. When Shalhoub departed the role for good, the producers offered Gabay an opportunity to step into the role and make his Broadway debut.

Gabay has negotiated that leap with self-confidence and, like his on stage counterpart, with tremendous resolve. It may be the most logical of all Broadway casting choices for Gabay truly is Tewfiq and vice versa.

Where Gabay interacts with his fellow actors there are small, but important moments. The book famously states that when the Egyptian band showed up "Nothing important happened." We see, however, that statement is far from truthful.

When the Alexandria Ceremonial Police Band arrives in Israel, it is scheduled to perform in Petah Tikvah for an Arab cultural event, but because there is no "p" sound in Arabic, they end up in the similar sounding town of Beit Hatikva. Arab linguists frequently substitute "b" sounds for instances where a "p" occurs in translation.

This charming premise allows us to see the intersection of two cultures and two



Sasson Gabay as Egyptian band leader Tewfiq. (Photo by Evan Zimmerman for MurphyMade)

peoples, each brimming over with loneliness, compassion and despair. This unexpected arrival creates a blip in an otherwise mundane existence for the Israelis and the opportunity for the Egyptians to connect to them and each other.

Gabay is a perfect focus for Katrina Lenk, the Tony Award winner for her role as café owner Dina. Her demeanor and diction are spot on, but her voice, which floats the notes of Yazbek's ethereal music into the air, is nothing short of exquisite. She is fearless in her depiction of a woman who longs for companionship and wishes to peel away the many layers of this mysterious stranger, who exercises his power over the musicians with quiet efficiency.

In *"Omar Shaif,"* a song which tells of Dina's attraction to the tall and dark hero of her past imagination, Lenk's sensual voice and emotion rise. Later, though, in *"Some-*

**Story continues on page 30**



# Granddaughter interviews grandmother, great aunt for school's film project

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

Rebecca Brown always knew that her grandmother, Lila Millen, was a Holocaust survivor, but it wasn't until she interviewed her for her Memphis religious school's film project, "Names, Not Numbers," that she began to understand how very young she was at the time.

Brown, the daughter of Joel Brown and Natalie Brown of blessed memory, became involved with the project with her fellow classmates at the beginning of the calendar year as part of the Jewish history project promoted by the Margolin Yeshiva there.

This Jewish history project continued last year's film project, where members of the school traveled to Poland to interview Holocaust survivors. This year the students were encouraged to interview their own family members who were survivors. In addition to her grandmother, Brown was also able to interview her great-aunt, Anne Levy, who was Millen's older sister.

The project was coordinated by their teacher, Talya Suna, and Tova Rosenberg, the founder of the organization Names Not Numbers, for which the film is also titled. The organization, which also maintains a website,

has sponsored several film and other multi-media projects to record interviews with Holocaust survivors.

At the beginning of the year, the students were trained by a member of the Names Not Numbers organization as to best practices for interviewing. "They got a new lady to come and she taught us how to correctly interview," Brown recalled. "We practiced with her (and) she would critique us."

Then, Millen and Levy made the journey from New Orleans to the Memphis school, where they were filmed digitally and interviewed by Brown.

The class also benefited from a videographer, who came down and showed the students proper techniques for capturing images. The organization brought in all the cameras and all of the technology needed to film and edit the interviews.

The challenge was met rather quickly by the students, who filmed the interviews in the winter, but thought about how the final work might best be rendered. "We waited a few days," Brown noted. "It might have been a week later."

The interviews fall into three



Rebecca Brown interviews her grandmother Lila Millen, whose doll is seen at center of the table. (Photo courtesy Rebecca Brown)

categories: before the war, during the war and post-Holocaust.

One of the most compelling and famous stories Brown learned more about involved a doll. "She didn't know she was Jewish," Brown explained. "She really thought she was Christian. Her dad gave her this doll, if she was going to give up her Christian books."

Brown was pleased that she was able to see and hold that very doll today. "That's kinda like her token," she mused.

Brown noted that her grandmother was very fair and looked more Aryan than Jewish, which

was why she was able to pass as a Christian child. She said she was sad to hear how her great aunt (Levy) had an entirely different time during the Holocaust, because of her dark, Semitic features.

Levy spent most of her days secreted inside a custom made bureau, making certain to be as quiet and still as possible, so as to prevent discovery.

"She saw her sister going out and living this somewhat normal life," Brown noted. "And she had to sit in the dark all day. It wasn't fair to her."

## Story continues from page 29

thing Different" the two sing a duet that allows their characters to relate to one another, but there is still a disconnect that looms large.

Gabay's Tewfiq is the stern, icy disciplinarian, while Lenk's Dina is a rebellious, hot-blooded woman with undulating currents of lustful desire. These two should never meet, nor have anything in common. But when they do share several quiet moments together, we glean much of their humanity.

Supporting cast members John Cariani (Itzik), as a new father, and Etai Benson (Papi) as an awkward, inexperienced lover provide more than their share of comic relief. Tony winner Ari'el Stachel is charming as the member of the band who thinks he is worldly, but has much to learn about women.

Not nearly enough can be said about the impressive live perfor-

mances gendered by the band's members. While individual band members lend support on various songs, there is an electricity that flows through the performance when they play together in "Soraya," "Haj - Butrus" and the final piece "The Concert."

David Cromer received a Tony Award for his direction of this small, but impressive work. The mantra for this musical should be "Less is more." For 100 minutes we are transported to a world where small actions have big consequences. In the end, when the performance, ends we yearn for more.

But that is a show business adage, after all. "Always leave them wanting for more." With "The Band's Visit," there is much to be admired and the casting of Gabay brilliantly continues what should be an enduring Broadway classic for many years to come as well as to offer an unusual side note for movie enthusiasts.





# NCJW president Beatrice Kahn appears at Temple Sinai

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

Beatrice Kahn, the president of the National Council of Jewish Women's (NCJW) board, was in New Orleans to address the Greater New Orleans Section members on Monday, August 27.

Kahn, who hails from New York, said that very few of her fellow New Yorkers have held the NCJW's presidency and was surprised to learn that three New Orleans members had previously served in her role as president. They were Ida Weis Friend and Gladys Cahn, of blessed memory, and Joan Bronk.

Kahn spoke lovingly of her association with the organization. "In the past year, thousands of NCJW activists visited and called decision makers. They published letters to the editor, wrote op-ed pieces, signed petitions, joined amicus briefs and sign-up letters and we've succeeded in protecting key rights," she announced before the crowd.

Some of these include protecting the right to vote, family leave for pregnancies, equal and fair pay as well as protecting the rights of low-income and underprivileged groups, she said.

"We marched against gun violence, racism, anti-Semitism, sexism, xenophobia and homophobia just as NCJW women have been doing for 125 years," Kahn added.

The work they have been tasked with finds its inspiration in the Torah, as the NCJW seeks justice in myriad ways, she continued. The three areas in which they continue to advocate for change on a federal level

are the courts, women's health and reproductive rights and civic engagement, Kahn said.

To increase their effectiveness and impact in civic engagement, Kahn said there is an ongoing membership campaign to elicit new members. "To increase our impact we are training leaders across the country in the fundamentals of community organization and movement building. The New Orleans Section is actively involved with this," she said.

Kahn stated the NCJW has monitored recent moves by the Trump administration to expand the ability to discriminate against certain groups, she added. These include expanding rights of religious groups and companies to discriminate against women, members of the LGBT community or to deny health benefits based on religious beliefs.

This also includes limiting access to birth control choices. "This is not abortion," she pointed out. "It's limiting access to contraception. Those rulings were open for public comment and NCJW activists submitted over 1,000 comments and, happily, not one of those rulings was implemented."

Their work towards ensuring a fair and independent jury system continues today with respect to the United States Supreme Court nomination of Brett Kavanaugh by President Trump, she said. "Everything we care about is stake," Kahn said. "Given the chance, Brett Kavanaugh would overturn Roe v. Wade, undermine our health care system including protec-



NCJW national president Beatrice Kahn speaks to Greater New Orleans Section members. (Photo by Alan Smason)



Holding yellow and orange card to be sent to Louisiana senators are members of the Greater New Orleans Section of the NCJW. (Photo by Alan Smason)

tions for those with pre-existing conditions and there's still a lot we don't know."

Kahn called for the release of tens of thousands of records on Kavanaugh's past judicial record. She encouraged members to send yellow and orange cards atop each table to protest the Supreme Court nomination.

She also recalled the important work NCJW accomplished welcoming Holocaust survivors as immigrants to the country,

especially that done by members in the Greater New Orleans Section. This underlines the work of the past to welcome immigrants, unlike what is going on in certain areas of the country where fewer asylum seekers and refugees are being admitted. "This is at a time when there are more refugees than ever before," she noted.

The luncheon was catered by Andy Adelman of Casablanca Restaurant.



# Northshore Jewish Congregation hit with anti-Semitic graffiti

By ALAN SMASON

The Northshore Jewish Congregation (NJC) was hit by anti-Semitic graffiti spray painted on the rear of its building either late night on September 5 or sometime on Wednesday morning, September 6. Two different spray paints – one red and the other black – were used to stain hate messages onto the brick building.

The matter was reported on Wednesday afternoon to the Mandeville Police Department, who immediately responded to

the scene at 1403 North Causeway Approach. The graffiti consisted of two swastikas, one in red and the other in black; a long red cross; the symbol 14/88, which has been linked to two white supremacist phrases surrounding the so-called “14 words” and a shorthand numerical reference to the repeated eighth letter of the alphabet (“h”) for “Heil, Hitler”; the phrase “Synagogue of Hate,” which was spelled correctly and the word “burn,” which was misspelled.

In a statement issued by Mandeville Police Chief Gerald



Hate messages were sprayed on the rear of the Northshore Jewish Congregation. (Photo courtesy of the Mandeville Police Department)

Story continues on page 33

## Anti-Semitic graffiti removed by Absolute Pressure Cleaning

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

Stephen Landeche, the owner of Absolute Pressure Washing in Sildell, was so sickened by the reports that he read of the anti-Semitic slogans, white supremacist references and swastikas that had been spray painted on the rear of the Northshore Jewish Community’s (NJC) building that he decided to take the matter into his own hands.

On Friday morning, armed with his pressure washing machine and chemicals that had been supplied to him gratis by one of his suppliers, Service One, Landeche removed the offensive material from the bricks that had been spray painted late Tuesday night or early Wednesday morning. He did so without permission, but no one at NJC is upset at his taking the initiative. They had already vowed at a meeting of their board last night to remove the anti-Semitic graffiti today.

“It made me mad,” Landeche said in a telephone interview with the CCJN. “I had the capabilities to do something about it.” Landeche explained he had previously used the same chemicals to remove so-called tags by graffiti artists on walls adjacent to Children’s Hospital near Audubon Park.

Service One donated the chemicals and Landeche donated the equipment and time through his company.

“I don’t have the money to give to



Stephen Landeche, the owner of Absolute Pressure Cleaning, removes offensive graffiti with a power spray gun and special chemicals. (Photo from the CCJN via WWL-TV image)

people that donate to this, but I do have the time, the knowledge and the materials to take care of it,” he continued. “That’s just wrong on so many levels. If you don’t agree with somebody, you don’t agree with somebody. You take your opinion and you go on your way.”

When informed that what he did would be considered a righteous act, a mitzvah,

Landeche expressed thanks, adding “I’m not Jewish, but that’s just wrong.”

The removal of the graffiti ended the initial discussion and pushback of the NJC, the victims of anti-Semitic slogans and Nazi symbols painted on their building. However, it is only the beginning of what they intend to do in response.





# Rosina and Joseph Slater Torah Academy dedicated

By ALAN SMASON

**T**he Rosina and Joseph Slater Torah Academy was officially dedicated on Thursday afternoon, September 13, in ceremonies at the school located at 5210 Esplanade Avenue. Rosina Slater, who donated \$1.8 million for naming rights to honor both her and her late husband, was on hand to personally accept the thanks of the school's administrators, parents and children.

Sarah Attias, a parent and event committee member, served as the emcee for the event that started shortly after 5:30 p.m. She introduced two speakers from Chabad Lubavitch of Louisiana. The first was Rabbi Zelig Rivkin, who spoke about the past Jewish schools of which he was familiar. Next was the school's director of development, Yossi Chesney, who thanked Slater for her gift and also acknowledged donors.

"Torah Academy is part of the revitalization and continuing growth of the New Orleans Jewish community over the course of the last 13 years," Chesney stated. Following Hurricane Katrina, the school was down to just 20 students, but as of this year, now boasts more than 70 students.

Rabbi Chesney's wife, Rivky, presented a 24-carat gold plaque with the "Eishet Chay-



Rosina Slater listens as the children of the Slater Torah Academy perform for her. (Photo by Alan Smason)

il" ("Woman of Valor") prayer to Slater.

Board president Henry Miller represented the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans. "Jewish education is one of the top priorities in our community and the Slater family donation will ensure the continued education of future generations of our com-

munity," he said.

A special song composed by Nechama Kaufmann was sung by the school's children to the Yiddish tune "Ofen Pripichik," reportedly Slater's favorite song. Later, entertainment was provided by the Panorama Jazz Band.

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Striker, he said "The Mandeville Police Department is taking this incident very seriously and we are actively investigating this case as a potential hate crime until proven otherwise."

Chief Striker confirmed that his detectives have reached out to the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other "surrounding law enforcement partners" in an effort to determine the identities of those who may have been involved in the incident. His detectives confirmed to him that this is an isolated incident and that no similar incidents have been reported at other area synagogues.

In a joint statement issued Thursday afternoon by the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans and the South Central Region of the Anti-Defamation League, ADL regional director Aaron Ahlquist noted, "This odious act of anti-Semitic vandalism invoking white supremacist ideology comes at a time when we, as a society, are seeing a significant rise in anti-Semitic incidents — there was a 77% increase in anti-Semitic incidents last year alone. Hate of any kind

must not be normalized, thus we hope that the entire community roundly condemns the vandalism at the Northshore Jewish Congregation."

Ahlquist also announced that "ADL is offering a reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the perpetrator or perpetrators of this crime."

Jeremy Shalett, president of NJC, spoke with the CCJN in a phone interview. "We are meeting tonight as a board along with ADL regional director, Aaron Ahlquist to see how we are going to address the incident and how we are going to address it as a congregation moving into the High Holidays," he said.

"We have increased the amount of security we will have during the High Holidays," he added, noting that officers of the Mandeville Police Department will be on heightened patrol outside of the synagogue.

Shalett also added this was the first anti-Semitic attack at the temple of which he was aware.

"I was taken aback. We usually don't have this kind of activity that I've ever seen," he admitted. "As far as it being vis-

ible or an attack on the congregation, it just kind of shocked me, but anything is possible."

Shalett confirmed that the board will be considering implementing video surveillance of the building, but nothing along those lines has been decided yet.

In speaking with the CCJN, Striker conjectured it might have been kids who were responsible because the incident occurred when schools were closed due to the potential landfall of Tropical Storm Gordon as well as the misspelled word.

Shalett responded: "Does it matter? I don't think who did it is as important as what was done and the message that we have to deliver as a community," Shalett responded. "If it was a five-year-old or a 45-year-old, I don't think that matters."

Both Federation CEO Arnie Fielkow and board chairman Henry Miller fired back with their joint statement: "Our community remains unified in opposition to white supremacy. Hate for one is hate for all, and as such, we condemn all forms of bigotry and discrimination."



# Popular Beth Israel Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg announces departure

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg, the popular Modern Orthodox rabbi, who ascended the bimah at Congregation Beth Israel in Metairie four years ago announced his reluctant decision to leave New Orleans this week.

The unexpected announcement was issued initially by congregation president Lee Kansas on Monday, October 8. Kansas acknowledged the importance the congregation had placed on him since 2013, when a contract was offered to Greenberg, but delayed by one year in order for him to fill out the remainder of his term at the Hillel at the University of California at Berkeley.

"He has become more than merely our congregation's rabbi," she wrote. "He's become a friend, spiritual guide, teacher, community leader and so much more." Kansas added that just as the Torah cycle had become complete at Simchat Torah, so, too, must the congregation grapple with its "own cycle" now and begin to institute a search for a new spiritual leader.

Like his predecessor, Rabbi Uri Topolosky, Greenberg, who prefers the shortened form of his name as "Gabe," was ordained from Yeshivat Chovevei Torah (YCT) in Riverdale, New York, the seminary founded by Modern Orthodox leader Rabbi Avi Weiss. Weiss has become noted as a visionary leader for Orthodoxy, advocating for the rights of women to assume aspects of spiritual leadership not sanctioned in most of the Orthodox world. Weiss was instrumental in the founding of a second seminary, Yeshiva Maharat, the first yeshiva to ordain women as Orthodox rabbis and other spiritual leaders.

Greenberg also serves as the kosher inspector (mashgiach) for Café du Monde's four local outlets through the Louisiana Kashruth Council. He is serving as the current president of the New Orleans Clergy Council, formerly known as the New Orleans Rabbinic Council.

The rabbi also famously played a rabbi in his first year in New Orleans in a closing scene for the TV series "NCIS: New Orleans." The scene had Greenberg reciting the Kaddish prayer over a Jewish character who had died in an episode.

Greenberg issued his own letter to the congregation on Tuesday, October 9. He began by stating that he had held lengthy conversations with his wife Abby and other family members and that he had arrived at his decision after "deep introspection and prayer."

"This is a difficult decision, and though it is ultimately the correct one for our family, that doesn't mean it doesn't bring with it strong



Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg inside Congregation Beth Israel. (Photo by Alan Smason)

emotions and sadness," Greenberg added. "It has been a true honor, and a deep pleasure, to serve as rabbi of Beth Israel, and I will forever treasure all of the relationships that I have formed during our time here."

Greenberg went on to outline the accomplishments of the previous five years, including the first year in which he commuted once a month while serving out his term at the Berkeley Hillel House. "We have danced together at weddings, cried at funerals, learned much Torah together, and empowered our children to grow as Jews and people," he acknowledged. He promised that the remaining time together – through June of 2019 – the congregation will continue to more of the same.

"I want to thank all of you for teaching me how to be a rabbi and welcoming our family so fully into your community," he concluded, thanking the leadership at Beth Israel for their respect and collaboration.

The congregation's annual meeting and elections will be held Sunday, October 14. It is expected that plans for a search committee to be set up by its executive board will be announced at that time. Kansas and the other officers will be stepping down or moving to other positions after elections are held that day.





# Susan Hess accepts NCJW Hannah Solomon Award

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

Community activist, volunteer and philanthropist Susan Hess accepted the 2018 Hannah G. Solomon Award from the Greater New Orleans Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) on Monday, October 15 at the New Orleans Marriott Hotel.

The award is chosen by an NCJW committee and presented to a member or couple of the Greater New Orleans community who embodies the commitment to social activism and political engagement promoted by Solomon, the founder of the NCJW.

The Hannah G. Solomon Award itself is a bust of the galvanizing figure's head and, with the exception of 1980 has been presented every year since 1966.

Event chair Kathy Shepard introduced Hess saying she "chooses projects that she can 'get in on the ground floor' and, therefore, have a great impact." Shepard cited Hess' involvement with several projects during the post-Katrina period in which she helped to rebuild or bring stability back to the flood-ravaged city.

Shepard noted that Hess has served as president or board chair for the following groups: New Orleans City Park, the SPCA Board Foundation, the Trust for Public Land, the University of New Orleans Foundation, the Louisiana Nature and Science Center, the New Orleans Film Commission, the Community Service Center, the Jewish Federation (Annual) Campaign and the State of Israel Bonds Campaign,

She added that Hess was also involved with the local NCJW section in many capacities working on past events and projects and had additionally served on boards for the Jewish Endowment Foundation, Tulane Hillel, Temple Sinai and the Longue Vue Foundation among many others. Shepard also acknowledged Hess' establishing the first Victory Ball for the National World War II Museum. She was a recent recipient of the museum's "Spirit Award" this past spring.

Hess was also cited by Shepard for her dedication to her own family and for her work in adopting elderly shelter animals from the SPCA, knowing that these animals are among the most difficult to place in homes.

Three NCJW leaders – Ina Davis, Vivian Cahn and Susan Kier – added their own personal insights that Shepard quoted, each crediting Hess with various aspects of her being a dedicated leader and tireless volunteer.

Prior to receiving the award and speaking to the gathering, Hess was given a proclamation sponsored by City Councilman Joe Giarusso



Susan Hess, left, holds the Hannah G. Solomon Award with NCJW event chair Kathy Shepard at her left. (Photos by Alan Smason)

III and signed by the entire New Orleans City Council recognizing her achievements in being named the 2018 Hannah G. Solomon Award.

After Shepard had presented the award, Hess laughingly complained that Shepard had had already said everything about her. Soldiering forward, she did produce a prepared speech.

"As you can see," she began her talk, "I am dripping with jewelry today," pointing to a large diamond-encrusted pin she wore on her right shoulder. The reason she explained was that the piece had been presented to her by Edith Stern, whom she identified as her "grandmother-in-law" on the occasion of Stern's 80th birthday.

"Edith was my friend and my mentor and also she was the 1971 recipient of the Hannah G. Solomon Award," Hess explained. "She was a great judge of character and she taught me a lot including how to be comfortable and empathize with all kinds of people."

Hess also pointed out a jeweled representation of a four-leaf clover, which Hess stated belonged to her late mother. It was her mother's signature. "My mother valiantly struggled to teach me to be a lady at all times," Hess continued. "The combination of these two important influences probably put me here today before you. I suppose you could say I am the living legacy of these two terrific women."

After more than 50 years as a member of NCJW, Hess acknowledged how important the organization had been in shaping her ideologically and prepared her for all of the work she has done thus far.

From "Hannah G.'s" book "The Fabric of My Life," Hess read a quote: "The most enduring ratification results not so much the actual attainment of the goal as from the work that educates us along the road to that goal."

Hess then added, "and that is exactly what this organization has done for me."

The moral and ethical values derived from the Jewish religion and expressed through the influence of the NCJW help to form the lives of its members, Hess said. "We are provided with roots and wings," she continued. "The roots are our identity, which is the collective memory of our shared past. The wings give us courage to live lives of purpose and meaning, being fully present in the moment and also being a conduit for the future."

Hess characterized her involvement with NCJW as pushing her towards a sense of destiny and community that unveiled in her the best of her potential. "Without NCJW my life would have been a meaningless march towards my own mortality," she said. "I wanted more and I got it."

Hess thanked the members of the event and selection committee. "I'm very proud to accept the Hannah G. Solomon Award and to take my place among so many other fabulous recipients," she concluded. "Of all the recognitions that I have received over the years, this is the one that has truly touched my heart. However, awards are never earned in a vacuum. There's always help from many others. You, NCJW members are many others and I thank you."



# UPDATE: 11 dead, 6 others injured in Pittsburgh synagogue shooting

By ALAN SMASON

In the deadliest attack on the Jewish community in U.S. history, a gunman killed 11 people and injured six others, two critically, at a Pittsburgh synagogue Saturday morning. Of the six injured, four were police officers and SWAT members who had responded to the shooting. None of those injuries are considered life-threatening.

Authorities announced that initial reports of a shooting were received by police at around 9:50 a.m. CDT. The attack occurred during regular Shabbat services at The Tree of Life, a 150-year old Conservative movement congregation in the heavily-Jewish Squirrel Hill neighborhood. Police were dispatched to the scene at 9:54 a.m. and reported eight dead as they cleared the scene and moved in the direction of the shooter.

Initial reports suggested that a bris ceremony was occurring there at that time. However, the bris was not being held at Tree of Life Synagogue, but at Dor Hadash, a Reconstructionist congregation that rents space in the building. No children were listed among the fatalities or injured.

Authorities on Sunday morning released the names of the victims killed as Joyce Feinberg, 75; Richard Gottfried, 65; Rose Mallinger, 97; Jerry Rabinowitz, 66; Cecil Rosenthal, 59; David Rosenthal, 54; Bernice Simon, 84; Sylvan Simon, 86; Daniel Stein, 71; Melvin Wax, 88 and Irving Younger, 69. Cecil and David Rosenthal were brothers and Sylvan and Bernice Simon were husband and wife.

The suspect, who was captured on the scene after a shootout, was identified as Robert Bowers, a 46-year-old



A view of the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pa. (Google Street View)

white male. After surrendering to a SWAT team on the scene, Bowers was placed in custody and taken to a nearby hospital for injuries he suffered in the gunfire exchange. Late on Saturday evening, the Justice Department filed 29 charges against him, establishing the government's case of hate crimes against him.

"All these Jews need to die," the suspect was reported to have said, according to reports at the same time as his attack. Several reports indicated Bowers had a history of anti-Semitic rants, but law enforcement officials emphasized he was not on their radar as a known anti-Semite.

Bowers reportedly posted "Can't sit by and watch my people get slaughtered. Screw your optics. I'm going in" just prior to his arrival at the synagogue in response to a post by HIAS, an organization that helps place Jewish refugees with jobs. That post on the social media site GAB has since been removed

and his account deactivated.

GAB claims to be a social media site that allows free speech, although critics claim the site permits thinly-veiled hate speech.

Authorities said that Bowers had carried an AR 15 assault rifle and three pistols with him into the synagogue and that he had barricaded himself in a room there before being apprehended by the police. Law enforcement sources said he did have a license to carry firearms and was listed as having made six different weapons purchases over several years.

"This is my worst nightmare," Jeff Finkelstein, the CEO of Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh told the network. "We at the Jewish Federation over the last two years have looked at hardening facilities and have conducted multiple trainings under our new Jewish community security director."

Speaking to reporters at the scene, Governor Tom Wolf said the shooting was an "absolute tragedy."

President Donald Trump responded to the shooting at first over Twitter, saying that it "looks like multiple fatalities." He later described the account as being worse than he had initially been led to believe.

Responding to reporters at Andrews Air Force Base on his way to Air Force One, Trump suggested that penalties for these kinds of acts – in particular, death penalty laws – need to be stiffened.

The president repeatedly referred to Bowers, whom he did not specifically name, as a "wacko," a "maniac" and "crazy." He suggested that an armed guard "inside the temple" might have been able to deal with an attack "if they had someone to protect people."

Trump's comments drew fierce condemnation on social

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# Rabbi Reimer announces decision not to renew contract at Temple Sinai; departure slated for June, 2019

By **ALAN SMASON**

**R**abbi Matthew Reimer, the senior rabbi at Temple Sinai, announced his intention on Wednesday, October 24, not to renew his initial three-year contract with the synagogue. That contract will expire at the end of June, 2019.

The surprise announcement was issued through Temple Sinai president Judge Robin Giarrusso, who informed her fellow congregants in an email of the rabbi's reluctant decision.

"Though we have had an exciting, productive and energetic two years together, the Reimers miss living near their family. For that reason, Rabbi Reimer has started his search for a new opportunity," Giarrusso stated. Re-

imer and his family hailed from New Jersey.

She added: "As our spiritual leader, he has been instrumental in enhancing the Temple Sinai experience. Rabbi Reimer enriched Sinai's Shabbat culture with Saturday morning Torah study, live music on Friday nights, and birthday and anniversary blessings. Throughout his tenure, Rabbi Reimer has fostered significant community outreach through inclusive programs, such as Passover seders for young professionals and the LGBTQ+ community, and the Temple Sinai Cares Committee."

Giarrusso also recognized the rabbi's interfaith outreach with many of the churches found along St. Charles Avenue and his many past opportunities to engage the community-at-large.

Under standard protocol of the temple's

bylaws, a search committee will be appointed by the executive board, who will begin to interview a slate of candidates provided through the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the rabbinic arm of the Union for Reform Judaism (UFI).

Reimer's decision to leave New Orleans comes on the heels of a similar announcement two weeks ago from Modern Orthodox Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg of Congregation Beth Israel that he also would be leaving the city at the end of his current contract.

Both Reimer and Greenberg are considered among the most popular rabbis and rising stars within the Jewish community and are also highly respected in the outside New Orleans community.

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media from many who saw him as blaming the synagogue for the incident. Virginia Democratic House Rep. Don Beyer criticized the president for a "lack of empathy."

The Tree of Life Synagogue merged with Ohr L'Smicha, another Conservative congregation five years ago. The building in which it is housed also is home to two other synagogues: another Conservative synagogue, New Light, and Dor Hadash.

Locally the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans CEO Arnie Fielkow added: "We are horrified by this act of wanton bloodshed and grotesque anti-Semitism. While this appears to be an isolated incident, the effects are far-reaching. We urge all Americans to stand together with their neighbors

against senseless violence and hateful rhetoric."

Fielkow described the hate crime as "a despicable act of hate and violence."

Aaron Ahlquist, the South Central regional director of the Anti-Defamation League prayed for peace and healing in the aftermath of the tragedy. "We must do everything in our power to combat hate and extremism so that acts of violence like this do not become normalized," he said. "Our heart goes out to the community in Pittsburgh, and to the families of the victims of this terrible act, including the families of the police officers shot in today's violence."

Barbara Kaplinsky, the president of the New Orleans Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW),

released a statement condemning the shooting. "Hate has no place in this country and we are devastated to see that it has once again claimed members of our community. Let me be clear. This act of terror will not break our spirits. We will continue to practice our faith with joy and pride even as our community comes together to once again grieve."

Victoria Coy, the director emeritus of the Louisiana Violence Reduction Coalition and an NCJW member added: "Today's gun violence has touched a community that means so much to me and to my home city of New Orleans. I fight every day to end gun violence here and around the country, and I know that the U.S. deserves better than this. We will work with our Jewish friends and with all faith leaders to disarm hate once and for all."



Jewish Federation CEO Arnie Fielkow. (Photo by Alan Smason)



Local NCJW president Barbara Kaplinsky. (Photo by Alan Smason)



# Community vigil draws hundreds to stand against hate

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

Hundreds of members of the Jewish community and friends from the outside community at large assembled at Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation on Sunday evening, October 28, to hear rabbis and elected officials speak out against the tragic shooting in Pittsburgh on Saturday.

The event organized by Shir Chadash with coordination from Metairie Rabbis David Gerber of Reform Congregation Gates of Prayer and Gabriel Greenberg of Orthodox Congregation Beth Israel was sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans to rally the city after the horrific events at the Tree of Life Synagogue that left 11 dead and six wounded.

Understandably, with news reports still fresh and the names and descriptions of the deceased only having been released nine hours earlier, the first speakers – Reform Rabbi Alexis Berk of Touro Synagogue and Orthodox Rabbi Yossie Nemes of the Metairie Chabad Center – expressed anger and outrage at what had occurred, the worst attack on American Jews in the country's history.

"I just feel really angry, right now," Berk began, "Angry that we are gathering again as citizens and members of communities that mourn and grieve atrocities at the human hand." Berk cited sources in the Talmud and by poet Nathan White that suggest anger is a form of care connected to powerlessness.

Nemes suggested that Jews should flock to temples and synagogues in the weeks ahead to show a sign of solidarity with the victims in Pittsburgh. "An attack on the Etz Chaim, Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, is an attack not only on Shir Chadash, but on Gates of Prayer and Beth Israel and Chabad Center and all the other synagogues in New Orleans," proclaimed Nemes.

One of the most emotional of the moments was when United States Representative Steve Scalise



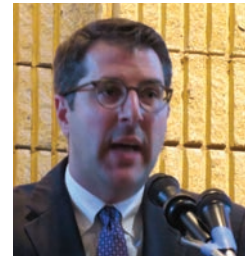
U. S. Representative Steve Scalise (R), himself a victim of violence through gunfire, speaks to the hundreds gathered at Shir Chadash. (Photos by Alan Smason)



Rabbi Yossie Nemes of the Gerson Katz Chabad Center of Metairie.



ADL regional director Aaron Ahlquist.



District A City Councilman Joe Giarrusso III.

(R), the Republican Whip in the House of Representatives, ascended the bimah to address the crowd. Scalise, who now walks with the assistance of a cane, was the target of gunfire himself last year that nearly killed him. "This was clearly an act against the Jewish people," he began. "It was a clear display of anti-Semitism, of the bigotry that's still out there and unfortunately still persists."

Scalise called upon the entire community to come together in the face of the tragedy and join together as an expression of fighting the hate and bigotry and to support the law enforcement officers who apprehended the suspect. "As we also see evil, we reflect and confront evil with unity. We are a united people who continue to stare down the evil that's out there."

Aaron Ahlquist, the South Central Region director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) followed Scalise. "We're living in a society where that narrow space between words of hate and acts of violence feels like it's shrinking, where the impact of hate is now being counted in the number of lives lost" he said. "We all have the right to feel safe when we are in our houses of worship. The act of prayer in a sacred place should not put one's life at risk. ADL stands with the people of Pittsburgh, the Jewish community of Greater New Orleans and all communities that are vulnerable to hate." Coucou

Six of the seven New Orleans

City Councilpersons spoke individually but stood together in solidarity with one another on the bimah. Council president Jason Williams words resonated strongly as he recalled how she died. "A 97-year-old... was killed for being Jewish. This week. In this country," he began. "And that is horrid and that is shameful and it makes me angry."

Williams continued: "An attack on a synagogue is an attack on any house of faith. An attack on a Jewish home is an attack on my home. An attack on a Jewish person is an attack on me. In the end, we don't remember the words of our enemies. We remember the silence of our friends."

District A Councilman Joseph Giarrusso III, a member of the Jewish community, said "I stand here before you tonight not only as a member of the New Orleans Jewish community, but here with all my brothers and sisters on the council, and that if there is one thing I am heartened by is by the outreach of other faith leaders who stand together with us. We stand committed to work with you and we know we share the sorrow of the people who perished in Pittsburgh. May their memories be a blessing."

Jefferson Parish Sheriff Joe Lopinto made an impassioned promise to the crowd. Since the attack on Saturday, October 27, he said he had been asked to show support for the various Jewish

houses of worship and other structures situated along the West Esplanade corridor. "We can't let evil take that place. We have to make sure that we can come together (and) continue our worship, because if that happens, evil wins. It's not acceptable," the sheriff said.

Arnie Fielkow, the CEO of the Jewish Federation of New Orleans spoke on behalf of the Jewish community along with the incoming chairman of the Federation Board of Trustees, Joshua Force. Force added his thanks for the showing of unity and also spoke to Federation's implementation of a new committee whose mission is to provide better protection and security for area synagogues. This new committee headed up with co-chairs Ahlquist and Irwin Lachoff, the rabbi at Congregation Beth Israel, will be charged with working with the national Jewish Federations of North America's (JFNA) dedicated security network and to provide the best practices moving into the future.

Rabbi David Gerber of Congregation Gates of Prayer added his own insights about the Jewish people. "If you don't know Jews, I will tell you we are a stubborn people," he mused. "We are stiff-necked. We are strong. We are small, but we are mighty. We are adherents to a sacred tradition handed down to us by a storied past. We are no strangers to the fall, but we are masters to the rise."

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# Officers elected, Pittsburgh victims mourned at 105th Annual Federation Meeting

By DEAN M. SHAPIRO, Special to the CCJN

With the tragedy at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue hate crime still fresh in people's minds, the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans and the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana (JEF) went on with their 105th annual meeting at the Uptown Jewish Community Center on Tuesday evening, October 30. The meeting began with tributes were paid to the 11 victims and a moment of silence and prayer was observed in their memory. The election of the new Federation Board of Trustees and director immediately followed the silent prayer.

R. Justin "Bobby" Garon was next on the agenda and he made the presentation of the Herbert and Margot Garon Young Leadership Award to Bradley Bain, the current chair of the Federation's Community Relations Council. The award is named for his parents of blessed memory.

As to Bain, Garon termed him "a shining star in our Jewish galaxy" and "an incredibly valuable member of this community." Among other accomplishments, he praised Bain's work to reverse the New Orleans City Council's rescission of a pro-BDS (Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions), anti-Israel resolution earlier this year and his assistance in persuading Louisiana Governor

John Bel Edwards to renounce the BDS movement statewide.

In his brief acceptance speech, Bain thanked Garon family, the Federation, the Jewish Community Relations Council and members of their staffs and volunteers for "this incredible honor."

Arnie Fielkow, the Federation's CEO, presented a 20-minute report on the status and ongoing mission of the 105-year-old organization.

During his talk, Fielkow spoke of a "New Federation," noting that when he assumed his current position he felt that, "It's time for change. The Federation needed to look inward and outward and not be afraid to change to reflect the realities of the time. Change would lead to a new Federation in terms of how we do our business, who we interact with, how we interact, and how others perceive us. With new lay and professional leadership coming on board a year ago, I think the time was right for that change."

On the fundraising side, Fielkow proudly noted a \$100,000 increase in the annual campaign for 2017, adding that it was the largest increase in the years following Hurricane Katrina. He also spoke of a threefold increase in sponsorships and grants over the past year de-



R. Justin "Bobby" Garon, left, presents the Herbert and Margot Garon Young Leadership Award to Bradley Bain. (Photos by Dean Shapiro)

signed to help constituent agencies and hinted at an announcement in the coming days of another large grant.

"I would like to believe that the new Federation is a more friendly constituent organization than it has been seen as in the past," Fielkow said.

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New Orleans City Council vice president Helena Moreno.



New Orleans District B Councilman Jay Banks.



Jefferson Parish Sheriff Joe Lopinto.



Rabbi David Gerber of Congregation Gates of Prayer.



Shir Chadash Rabbi Deborah Silver.

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We are in a dark time, he said, but during the darkest times, Jews are commanded to find a blessing and seek out a spark of light wherever it may be found. "For the Tree of Life congregation in Pittsburgh, we mourn with you. We stand beside you. Lean on us. We will hold fast to you, as the Book of Proverbs commands. May the divine spark reside inside every person of goodness, chase away the shadows."

After all the other speakers had finished, Rabbi Silver added her own comments. She summoned up the imagery of a tall tree with a broad trunk, its uppermost leaves rustling in the wind. "She is a tree of life to those who hold fast to her and all who support her are happy. Etz chayim hi lamachazikim bah, v'tom'cheha m'ushar," Silver said, reciting the original passage from the Book of Proverbs

which rabbinic scholars have compared to the sum of Jewish learning and tradition, especially Torah.

Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg of Congregation Beth Israel read the names of the dead aloud and sang the El Mole Rachamim prayer typically sung as graveside services or during the Yizkor memorial service.

The Kaddish prayer, a prayer for the living that is recited in memory of a deceased loved one was led by Rabbi Reimer of Congregation Gates of Prayer. Bor-

rowing portions of the prayer he used passages to help give a better understanding of a Jewish perspective on mass shootings.

Following the recitation of Kaddish, Temple Sinai Cantor Joel Colman, Touro Synagogue Cantor Kevin Margolius and cantorial soloist Victoria Cohen May sang the final portion of the Kaddish prayer that seeks peace, "Ose Shalom" by which the singers and rabbis led the assembled mass, speakers and guests out of the sanctuary.



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I have met with every constituent agency in the city and its beneficiaries, if for no other reason than just to say 'we're here' as partners. Your success is our success and vice versa and hopefully we can continue that type of partnership together," he added while thanking the heads of the various organizations.

Fielkow also discussed what he called "the changing nature of philanthropy" from what it had been for previous generations. "People are more astute now about what and how they give. We have to put programs and services in place where people would want to be part of this organization and I believe that we are doing just that," he said.

In the broader scope, Fielkow proclaimed, "We are a Zionist organization. No doubt about it. I am proud that we fought against the BDS resolution on the council and at the state level. And, although there is not always agreement on Israel, we need to at least ensure there is a dialogue going on that is respectful. We support programs to bring to light the beauty and culture of Israel so that people can see it in a non-political way," referencing an initiative called "Re-setting the Table" that, he said, directly talks about Israeli-Palestinian issues with people in a very dignified, respectful way. "We've had a couple of sessions and I think they've been very positive."

In addition, Fielkow cited initiatives citywide with key members of the African American community. Indirectly referencing the Civil Rights Movement, he spoke of "a historic bond between our communities. There was fracture in those communities and we need to not have that. We're working to establish new partnerships and renew ongoing ones."

Wrapping up his remarks, Fielkow alluded to his former employer, the New Orleans Saints by saying, "The organization used to work for is 6-1 and vying for another Super Bowl. I can say this to you: I already represent a championship organization."

Following Fielkow at the podium, Miller spoke on issues related to security, in light of the Pittsburgh tragedy.

Then he spoke about the "brain drain" affecting the local Jewish community and what steps are being taken to keep young professionals from relocating to other places where there might be greater opportunities and financial rewards. Programs are being designed to give online mentorship to those considering leaving the city and offer financial incentives to retain them, including grants to help out with professional licensing, certification courses, membership fees and professional conference attendance.

In addition, Miller detailed outreach efforts the Federation is making toward the city's LGBTQ community. Then, redirecting attention

toward the subject of anti-Semitism, he addressed the defacing of the Northshore Jewish Congregation (NJC).

The evening began with an invocation by Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg of Congregation Beth Israel, during which he also paid tribute to the Pittsburgh victims. The slate of Federation candidates was then elected unanimously via a voice vote.

The evening concluded with Savannah Cutliff, a 17-year-old NJC member and senior at Mandeville High School, delivered a closing inspirational message in which she spoke out against the anti-Semitic images and words that were spray-painted on the congregation's walls this past September.

Cutliff's remarks were warmly received by the predominantly older members of the audience. Recounting the slogans and symbols painted on the side of the building, Cutliff said, "These vicious acts are not rare occurrences." She went on to reference similar defacements at a synagogue in Carmel, Indiana and a Holocaust memorial in Madison, Wisconsin.

"It may be easier to bite our tongues and bury our heads in the sand and pretend these are anomalies, but doing so would be foolish and detrimental," Cutliff said. "We've been taught that, in the midst of tragedy, we must stand our ground. We must take pride in our faith. We must speak up because the last time we neglected to do so six million of us were slaughtered."

"I am unable to comprehend such intolerance but, in spite of this hateful act, we've grown closer as a community," Cutliff added. "The love and outpouring of support from throughout the state is proof that there are more well-intentioned people in this world than ill-intentioned ones. And that gives me hope."

She concluded: "If I have learned anything in my 17 years of living it's that life is a storm that cannot be weathered alone. So I thank everyone who did so for linking arms with us to stand tall against the wind. Love always trumps hate."

The Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana's annual report was given by its president, Andrea "Andi" Lestelle. During her report, Lestelle praised donors, board members and their staff for "another remarkable year." She thanked Miller, Fielkow and Levy and also praised Garon, terming him a "visionary leader who will guide JEF into the future. We are looking forward to a seamless transition as JEF continues to assist our donors and our community in charitable giving," Lestelle said.

Getting into the numbers, Lestelle said 2017 established a new local record for giving. The total of \$8.5 million in growth brought JEF's total assets up to nearly \$62 million, which continued to build in 2018. She also announced that, in 2017, JEF disbursed more than \$4 million to a range of



Federation CEO Arnie Fielkow speaks at the 105th annual Federation meeting.



Henry Miller, outgoing Federation chairman of the Board of Trustees.

500 Jewish and non-Jewish charitable organizations, and so far this year it has distributed close to \$3.5 million.

Lestelle said that 2017 saw about \$111,000 in grants given from the general fund and about \$95,000 so far in 2018 to create new programming and continue existing programming. She also announced that JEF has received about \$25 million in promised legacy gifts.

"We may not be a large Jewish community but we certainly provide a lot of philanthropy throughout it," Lestelle said.

JEF was created in 1967 to be a source of support to the community and provide a future for Jewish legacy giving. "However, despite the success, many more commitments are needed if we are to secure the future of the Jewish community for generations to come," she warned. She then thanked outgoing board members Reuben Friedman, David Kushner, Seth Levine, Ann Lowenberg, Betty Meyers, Melinda Mintz and Max Tobias for their service.

Nominations were placed on the floor for new JEF board members. Selected to serve two-year terms were Robin Giarrusso, John Haspel, Howard Hirsch, Harry Lowenberg, Sidney Pulitzer Jr. and Mark Stein.

Re-elected to a two-year term beginning in 2019 were Robert Brickman, Susan Hess, Jill Israel, Keith Katz, Julie Wise Oreck, Dana Shepherd, Rose Sher and James Spiro.





## Eva Schloss talk at JCC is largest indoor Jewish event

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

An evening with Holocaust survivor Eva Schloss drew a record crowd for a Jewish indoor event on Tuesday, November 6, at the Uptown Jewish Community Center.

Sponsored by Chabad-Lubavitch of Louisiana, the event drew more than 600 persons, so many that some had to watch the interview in the Donald Mintz Auditorium via a live video feed in the smaller, adjacent Board Room.

A contemporary of Anne Frank, Schloss lived in the same Amsterdam neighborhood and was a childhood friend of the iconic victim of the Holocaust at the time of the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands. She was separated from her family during the war and lost both her father and

brother at war's end. Miraculously, her mother survived and the two returned to Amsterdam after the war. When her mother remarried Otto Frank, Anne's father, Schloss became her posthumous step-sister.

Schloss was interviewed for an hour by Rabbi Yossie Nemes. She recalled her own struggles to survive the Holocaust and told of her association with Otto Frank, first as a neighbor and later as a step-father. She told of how he came home one day with a parcel that held his daughter's famous diary that was later to be translated and published worldwide as "The Diary of a Young Girl."

Earlier in the evening, Rabbi Mendel Rivkin welcomed guests to the JCC. He called upon Cathy Glaser, the



Eva Schloss is interviewed by Rabbi Yossie Nemes. (Photos by Alan Smason)

president of the Holocaust Memorial Committee board to speak about upcoming activities.

Following the talk, Rabbi Zelig Rivkin added his own closing comments. Schloss signed copies of her book "Eva's Story" throughout the remainder of the evening.



Eva Schloss at the Jewish Community Center on November 6, 2018.

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# Gates of Prayer installs Rabbi David Gerber

By A.K. BRUNINI, Exclusive to the CCJN

In praising his successor, Congregation Gates of Prayer's Emeritus Rabbi Robert Loewy cited nothing short of divine intervention being responsible for the arrival of Rabbi David Gerber, whom he installed publicly last Friday, November 16, in the Metairie synagogue's main sanctuary.

It was a real case of "l'dor v'dor" ("from generation to generation") as Gerber was welcomed with open arms by Loewy, the rabbi who had served the Metairie congregation for 34 years as its only spiritual leader.

Before symbolically passing a Torah scroll to Gerber, Loewy gave a brief speech, "I often look back at how the search process unfolded and I know, I know in my heart, there was more than a little of divine intervention at work," he said.

Loewy became emotional during his speech. "Rabbi Gerber, on behalf of everyone here, mazel tov on your installation tonight," he said, as he teared up. "You join a distinguished line of rabbis who have guided this congregation and helped it thrive over many years."

With his formal installation, Gerber becomes the ninth rabbi to serve Gates of Prayer, which was founded in 1850 in New Orleans and located on Napoleon Avenue before moving to its present site in Metairie, 4000 West Esplanade Avenue, in 1975.

Together, the two rabbis read a passage from Pirkei Avot (Ethics of the Fathers), first Loewy in Hebrew and Gerber repeating in English. Afterwards, the holy ark was opened and a prayer was read by the congregation in unison. Loewy then symbolically passed a sacred Torah scroll, draped in purple, to Gerber.

"May this Torah be sweet to you. May this congregation embrace you. Together, may you move us forward to be a kehilah kedoshah – a holy congregation," Loewy began. "A congregation filled with love and light, a congregation with the opportunity to grow with spirit. May our community

be a stronger place because of us. May you lead us into the future."

Cantorial soloist Victoria Cohen May accompanied herself on guitar as she sang the Birkhat Cohanim, the priestly blessing, in Hebrew. Loewy translated the Hebrew words into English to conclude the formal installation ceremony.

A touching word was given by Marion Wolfert, a woman who served as a religious mentor and close companion to Gerber at his previous synagogue Beth Or in Maple Glen, PA.

"Surely the Lord is in this place, I do not know it yet, but I feel it," Wolfert said. "And in attending this service with Rabbi Gerber for all the congregants I've been with, and for as long as Rabbi Gerber was our leader, our religious leader, we knew that."

Throughout the earlier Friday night Shabbat service, members offered many traditional prayers for peace and the well-being of the world. Loewy concluded saying, "I hope and pray you find your work to be satisfying and fulfilling and that you and Lauren enjoy raising your family in this congregation of family. Always know we are here for you."

Several dozen people attended the service, including members from Uptown's Temple Sinai congregation as well as members from Beth Or, who made the trip to witness the installation of their former rabbi.

During the ceremony, several attendees were swept away by their emotion, wiping away tears of joy. Gerber, in perfect keeping with his humorous personality, made a comment about how he insisted Gates of Prayer officials fly his wife out to his interview to make sure he got the job. "My wife is really easy to get along with so she has made more friends than I have," he said.

Born and raised in St. Louis, Gerber attended Indiana University where he studied media design and production. After five years in the workforce, he enrolled at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of



The ninth rabbi at Congregation Gates of Prayer; Rabbi David Gerber. (Photo by Dean Shapiro)

Religion (HUC-JIR) in Cincinnati.

The search committee for Gates of Praise shared with the audience their immediate desire for Gerber to join the community when screening resumes. Both Rabbi Gerber and the Committee committed to each other only days after the initial interview.

"It felt like such a natural fit, and for them too, for them to cancel their search and for me to suspend mine, it just clicked and since we've gotten here it's felt that way," said Gerber.

The Gerbers have two daughters, Paige and Tessa. The family sat in the crowd surrounded by friends from Beth Or and Gates of Praise.

Gerber boasted of the joy he has experienced since moving to New Orleans, saying, "I came here in January and felt this wonderful embrace of the congregation ... and it doesn't feel like it's new anymore, and it hasn't felt new in a really long time," he exclaimed. "It just feels like I'm in the right place."

A. K. Brunini is a senior communications major at the Loyola University School of Communications.





# JCDS honors Sharon Pollin at 'Butterfly Ball' gala

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

The Jewish Community Day School (JCDS) marked its 23rd anniversary by honoring outgoing head of school Sharon Pollin for her accomplishments during the past six years. The gala, entitled the "Butterfly Ball," was held Sunday, November 18, in the gymnasium of the Goldring-Woldenberg community campus in Metairie.

The interior of the gymnasium was strewn with glittering string lights and ornamented with iridescent paper butterflies as part of the theme. Organizers for the event told the CCJN that expectations for both attendance and funds raised were far surpassed by the record number of guests that turned out in attendance to support the school.

The theme of the evening was inspired by "An Invitation to the Butterfly Ball: A Children's Counting Book" that JCDS board vice president Susan Green used to read to her children. Green, who co-chaired the gala with Fran Lake, presented Pollin with a glass butterfly platter as a parting gift, and also announced a new addition to the school's campus — a butterfly garden, dedicated in Pollin's honor.

Pollin came to JCDS in 2013 after occupying two prominent positions in Jewish education in Portland, Oregon: as head of school at Maimonides Jewish Day School and later as assistant principal at the Portland Jewish Academy. She received a doctorate in Education Leadership from North-

eastern University and also possesses a doctoral certification in Jewish Education Leadership from Hebrew College.

Speaking before a crowd of several hundred attendees, former JCDS board president Dashka Roth cited Pollin's tireless work ethic as one factor underlying her effectiveness as Head of School at JCDS. "She works nonstop. And when I say 'works,' I mean she gets things done," Roth said.

"Just look at what she's accomplished in the six years that she's been here: the student population has doubled, the STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) program is exciting and excellent, we added a sixth grade this year, and we're adding a preschool next year in addition to the wonderful baby program that Sharon brought in a couple of years ago."

When Pollin assumed the podium on Sunday night, she stressed the importance of JCDS's teachers. "Our faculty and staff are the reason parents choose JCDS," Pollin said. "Without you, we would literally be an empty building of great ideas."

Founded in 1996, JCDS aims to provide a secular curriculum within the context of Jewish tradition and spirituality, emphasizing an ethical awareness inspired by the concept of *tikkun olam*. The school boasts low student-to-teacher ratios and prides itself on encouraging collaboration and creative expression in addition to more conventional approaches



Sharon Pollin accepts a butterfly platter given to honor her at the Butterfly Ball by event co-chair Susan Green. (Photo by Nicholas Hamburger)

to education.

In addition to the butterfly garden, JCDS also noted an addition of a different variety: a \$250,000 grant from the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana (JEF), which has been named the Charles Zucker JCDS Endowment Fund. Along with the JEF and individual donations, funding for JCDS comes from sources such as the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, the Prizmah Center for Jewish Day Schools, the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust, and the Legacy Heritage Fund.

The gala concluded at 9:00 p.m., several hours later than originally planned, after the gala committee decided it would be best to push the event's start time back in order to ensure that Saints fans could view the afternoon game against the Eagles prior to attending their event. Numerous attendees ar-

rived clad in Drew Brees jerseys, while one enthusiastic Zach Strief fan was spotted as well.

When the last of the desserts prepared by Casablanca Restaurant were scarfed down, guests began to file out. Various student-made artwork selling for as much as \$35 and, likewise, bearing images of butterflies, lined the perimeter of the gymnasium, while a number of attendees, including one who wore a sharp navy blazer over a tattered Deuce McAllister jersey, stopped to help themselves to one last "Monarch Martini" on the way out, perhaps as a final celebratory gesture, or perhaps in preparation to add to their art collection.

Following her departure from JCDS, Pollin intends to return to Portland, where her son and daughter and their families both currently reside. Both of her offspring were present at the Sunday night event too.



Members of the Jewish Media Summit gathered at the residence of President Reuven Rivlin (right center on front row). CCJN editor Alan Smason is in second row wearing hat behind third man from left.) (Photo by GPO)

## Jewish Media Summit focused on 'new' media

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

The third biannual Jewish Media Summit put on by Israel's Government Press Office (GPO) has ended, but the ramifications of the November 25-28 gathering and its sensory delights will reverberate for some time to come.

The initial outreach from the GPO was to focus on the so-called "new media" – bloggers and social media influencers – but in the final analysis, it was the more traditional editors and frontline journalists from across Europe, North America and Asia who listened and shared their stories that made the gathering in Jerusalem memorable.

The attempt by the GPO to connect to the "under 40" new generation of journalists was a deliberate strategy intended to fill spaces with new faces at this year's Jewish Media Summit. The GPO paid for the expenses incurred in housing and transporting members from the international Jewish media once the conference got underway. Invitees paid their way to and from the conference and paid for their own rooms at the Ibis Jerusalem Center Hotel off Yafo Street prior to the three and a half-day long series of events.

This gathering of 110 Jewish participants from 30 countries followed the first-ever summit for Christian-based media held in October. That conference drew 140 participants from across the globe and featured top-level ministers from the government including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Reuven Rivlin.

The schedule for the Jewish Media Summit only promised a videotaped welcome from Netanyahu and a reception at Rivlin's official residence. Naftali Bennett, who is both the Education and the Diaspora Affairs minister, was also scheduled to address the gathering.

The videotaped welcome by Netanyahu that had been promised was never shown and Bennett canceled his Monday night appearance, prompting concerns from attendees that they were being given short shrift. A Wednesday guided tour of the Knesset promised

that both Speaker Yoel Edelstein and opposition leader Tsipi Livni would address the crowd. It was late in the afternoon when GPO spokesman Nitzan Chen made the surprise announcement that the prime minister would address the crowd of journalists and answer questions directly.

The gathering at Rivlin's residence in the morning had the president giving prepared remarks with a coordinated PowerPoint presentation, but only two pre-selected members of the media were allowed to ask questions before an official photograph was taken. Referencing the attack at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life Synagogue, Rivlin's remarks first concerned addressing issues of hate against the Jewish people. He addressed the new media journalists directly stating they are on the "frontline" daily writing blogs and reaching out through social media in a relationship that "is complicated."

Rivlin called the Jewish people living outside of Israel as the "fifth tribe" and used his PowerPoint presentation to explain about the other four tribes that make up the State of Israel. He explained them to be secular Zionists, national religious Jews, haredi Jews and Arabs. Rivlin said the hope of the future of Israel is for all of the four tribes to maintain parity with each other and to get along.

"Israel is a Jewish democratic state, not less democratic than Jewish and not less Jewish than democratic," Rivlin said. "The two go together and cannot be separated."

In contrast, Netanyahu's press conference at the Knesset was shorter and had no such restrictions, allowing the media to interact directly with him without any filters.

His answers on issues such as anti-Semitism, a declining population within Diaspora Jews due to assimilation and an increase in the secular Jewish population in Israel were frank and off the cuff.

A cocktail reception was held on Sunday night in Zedekiah's Cave, also known as King Solomon's Quarries. Journalists descended down a cave lit by hundreds of small candles that illuminated

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the way to the cavern below. There the crowd was entertained by stand-up comedian Avi Liberman and the strange white-faced and white-clad Voca People.

In addition, former Israel Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Oren addressed the crowd in his role as a deputy minister in the prime minister's office. Oren pointed out how Israel had made historic visits to Oman and Dubai and had just hosted the President of Chad on that same day in an official state visit.

"These are extraordinary times for us. Israel's in a unique position," Oren said. "We have in the Trump administration, and I hope this won't be too controversial, the friendliest administration that this country has ever known since this country was founded in 1948."

Regardless of U.S.-Israel relations, Oren pointed out, Israel will have to deal with the peace process and that means dealing with Hamas and Gaza. "We want to do it while we have this friendly administration in Washington," he continued. "We want to do it now while we have these close relations with our Sunni neighbors in the region and to reach an understanding both with the United States and with major Arab country players about the day after, because I have no doubt the IDF (Israel Defense Force) can take care of Hamas. The question is: what happens the day after? What is the future of Gaza and how do we assure that another Hamas-like regime once again won't take over the Gaza Strip?"

As in past summits, the emphasis on Israel's progress as an impressive start-up economy and its troubled history with its neighbors dominated discussions and panels. Monday's day-long session at historic Mishkenot Sha'ananim, the first Jewish settlement built outside of the walled city, dealt with a variety of issues confronting Israel.

During the sessions on Monday, Israeli politics took center court as several Knesset members (MKs) were interviewed by Jerusalem Post journalist Lahav Harkov. The issue of anti-Semitism from both the right and left was discussed by a variety of scholars from institutions like Yad Vashem, the worldwide Holocaust Remembrance site. Recognizing bias against Israel was also discussed on a variety of topics.

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# Yad Vashem holds unseen memories

By ALAN SMASON

In my two previous visits to Jerusalem, I never allowed myself the time to visit Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center. I intuitively knew that a one- or two-hour tour of the facility would not be possible. Furthermore, I surmised it would also be insulting to the memory of the six million victims of the Shoah remembered there to not pay the proper amount of attention and respect.

So I waited until my most recent trip in November to make certain that I allow myself the necessary four to five hours minimal time needed to take in the exhibits and to gird myself for the experience.

Yad Vashem is unlike any other Holocaust memorial I have ever seen. It is expansive and incorporates many outside vistas overlooking Jerusalem. Small and larger, more impressive monuments are strewn about the grounds. No photos are allowed indoors. The pictures that are impressed are visually stamped upon one's grey matter, but are, nevertheless, as enduring.

I took the Mt. Herzl light rail from the center of Jerusalem to Yad Vashem. The train lets out a half mile or so with a slightly inclined walk to the facility. Along the way, I met an Israeli soldier named Daniel. I knew I needed to take my mind off the weight of what I would be seeing and experiencing, so I had a light conversation with him.

Daniel told me right away that he was born in the United States in Dallas. "Dallas," I asked as we walked up the hill. Were you a Tzofim... a Scout?"

"No," he answered.

"But that's where the headquarters for the Boy Scouts of the USA is... in Irving, Texas," I shot back.

"My parents moved to London when I was young," he explained.

"But that's the birthplace of Scouting," I continued, straining slightly to keep up with the 20-year old.

"No," he shook his head. "I never did join and we've now moved to Israel."

"I find that amazing," I told him and wished him well as we finished our five-minute walk. Just as we were ready to take off in different directions, I suggested: "Let's take a picture."

He stopped and I snapped a candid shot of the two of us.

As Daniel and I parted, I considered what an impressive lad and soldier he was. How young he was to have his whole life ahead of him and to have such promise.



Outside the Hall of Remembrance at Yad Vashem. (Photos by Alan Smason)

I then considered the 1.5 million children killed during the Holocaust, who never lived to see their full potential. I pressed onward to the reception desk, where I was directed to check my bag in downstairs.

Once outfitted with an English language audio guide, I was ready to start my self-guided tour. There was an option to pay for a guide to conduct me about the exhibits, but I really wanted the time to be by myself and reflect rather than be told where to go and for how long to stay in one particular area.

The Yad Vashem main exhibit hall was located a short walk from the reception hall and accessed via a walkway. The outside is stark stone. The interior of the exhibit is dark with some natural light coming in from above.

The first images are of a typical European apartment building whose windows are filled with images of people living normal lives in the Jewish world prior to the Nazis. Some tenants are singing. Others are preparing meals. This original footage of a mosaic of individuals is titled "Living Landscape" and credited to Michel Yugenir. I marvel at the time this one piece must have taken to assemble.

The hallway becomes more crowded as more people, some Israeli soldiers led by a female lieutenant and others from a tour group from Brazil, enter with their guide.

Photos are shown from Klooga Camp in Estonia, where 2,000 Jews, mostly from the Vilno Ghetto, were slaughtered and then set afire as human logs in a mass funeral pyre. Photos show their human remains as indistinguishable from the planks of wood upon which they were torched.

A number of personal possessions – pictures, papers and the like – are displayed and all of them are heavily signed. These were

found inside the coats and clenched fists of the victims of the fire, the description in the audio guide informs me.

Moving into the next room, the next image is of yet another fire. This one is of a Nazi-led book burning, where dozens of their minions gleefully toss banned books onto the burning heap. The curators have placed hundreds of banned books from Jewish intellectuals like Freud, Marx and Remarque as well as Jewish religious books beneath in a deep well. A sign bears a quotation from the poet Heinrich Heine.

"Where books are burned, human beings are destined to be burned," it reads.

The next hour of the exhibit takes in the historical beginnings of the Holocaust with the rejection of Judaism by the Christian Church and violence perpetrated against Jews for blood libel in which the blood of innocent Christian children is alleged to be used in the making of Passover matzoh.

The roots of anti-Semitism found in the Nazi movement go back far and the 1879 quote by Heinrich von Treitschke becomes a mantra for them: "The Jews are our misfortune." The Russian-authored "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," one of the greatest lies perpetrated against the Jewish people, is shown.

The story of Adolf Hitler and his recruitment into the Nazi Party is revealed. I learn, much to my chagrin, that Hitler was first the editor of the Nazi newspaper.

What clearly is established is a link between existing anti-Semitism and how it evolved into becoming the official policy of the state, which saw itself as a natural order of elites that depicted Jews as sub-human.

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The next two hours are spent examining the rise of the Nazis, the programs that took away the rights of Jews and others living in areas they controlled. I see detailed accounts of Kristallnacht on the day that corresponds to roughly two weeks past the 80th anniversary of the date that scholars consider the beginning of the Holocaust.

Next come secret plans towards “the final solution” and the institution of the Eastern European Ghettos coupled with discrimination and criminalization in Western Europe. The Warsaw Ghetto is sealed. Hunger and starvation set in. I learn of the term muscleman, the ironic term employed to describe those whose bodies are wasting away from starvation.

Then I learn of the death camps and the Einsatzgruppen death squads who roamed Eastern Europe killing myriads with pistols and rifles. The numbers of dead become higher and higher as the war moves on and countries are occupied. Greece. Yugoslavia. The Netherlands.

Herman Goring is quoted: “I would not like to be a Jew in Germany,” he says.

Deportations to death camps like Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka and others inspire some Jews to fight back. The death toll rises. The backs of the resistance are broken. There are lists of the numbers killed at Auschwitz-Birkenau that stagger the mind.

Then as I feel at my bleakest and most discordant, there are new numbers. Jews who were saved by Gentiles who would not stand idly by. There are numbers like in Denmark (7,200 saved) and in Bulgaria (50,000 saved) that give some consolation.

Several of the more prominent Righteous Among the Nations recognized by Yad Vashem are listed with their photos and stories. Among these are Raoul Wallenberg and Oskar Schindler.

There are beautiful vistas that bring me back to my present location in the hills outside Jeru-

salem. I walk towards the Hall of Remembrance, where world leaders come to pay their respect.

It is devoid of people. The hall is seen from a raised wooden platform that extends around half of the structure. When a dignitary comes to lay a wreath near the eternal flame that burns there, he is ushered down a set of stairs that is locked for all others. The darkness of the stone on the floor reflects back against the dimly-lit interior as the flame flickers.

By this time, I am ready to exit the main exhibit hall and check out several of the other smaller exhibits in other buildings on the site. Some revolve about the use of film as a propaganda device by the Nazis. Portions of Leni Riefenstahl’s “Triumph of the Will,” which depicts Hitler as an almost divine figure, and her documentary on the 1936 Olympics, “Olympia,” are shown with commentaries from her cameramen and assistant directors.

There is time for further reflection as I begin to move towards the exit. Just before the exit, I am upon the Children’s Memorial, a gift from a Los Angeles family in honor of their son. Inside the darkened exhibit is a number of memorial lights that are reflected by hundreds of mirrors that create the illusion of a million and a half lights as memorials for the children who were lost.

It is so dark that it takes consummate skill to negotiate the thin pathway to the interior. Once there, I am taken by the exquisite beauty of what a few simple mirrors and candles can achieve in a proper setting. But the thought of so many dead haunts me. I am compelled to move forward.

There is a dampness on the ground and the air is full of a light spray of rain. It is threatening to pour as I move from the outside into the reception area again. I reclaim my bag and drop off the audio guide. I thank the staff for their hospitality, but in my rush I fail to pick up a packet



IDF soldier Daniel with CCJN editor Alan Smaon.

ing to the rhythm of the rail as it barrels toward the city’s center.

None of the women will sit next to an observant man.

I’m not sure if it’s because they know he will complain or they have been trained not to sit next to a haredi man to prevent outbursts. I am struck by this dichotomy in Israeli society. There are secular Jews and there are observant Jews. They respect each other’s boundaries, it would seem.

I take my seat again, recognizing that only a man can sit where I am sitting.

As the train continued down the track, I reflected on the solemnity of having been to Yad Vashem and being witness again to the terrors of the Shoah. The Nazis carried out the most horrific campaign against the Jewish people and Yad Vashem exists to remind us all that we need to be vigilant against another attempted genocide.

Since the end of World War II, some 73 years ago, the State of Israel has been founded and Jews have established a homeland again, the first time in 2,000 years. More Jews live in Israel today than any other place in the world, including the United States. But even with all of the opportunities for Jews to live unmolested, there is still anti-

book that was written by Hitler, “Mein Kampf” (“My Struggle”), never realized its goal of a world without Jews. But, as its exhibits clearly show, it wasn’t for lack of trying.

As I got off the train, I had very little time to reflect, because the conference was getting ready to start. I needed to change into a suit, what Israelis call formal attire. As I did so, I thought about two traditional Jewish prayers, the Shema and the Shehecheyanu. The first prayer establishes the domain of the Almighty and the second one thanks the Lord for sustaining us from season to season.

In many cases, the Shema was the last prayer uttered by the six million Jews who were slain. How wonderful we can recite the Shehecheyanu today as an indication that they who would have obliterated us did not succeed. It is important that Yad Vashem and remembrances like World Holocaust Day and Yom Ha’Shoah exist for that very reason.

I am glad I had the opportunity to visit Yad Vashem this trip and would encourage anyone who has not gone before to take the time out to visit this important site. It’s as important today as it ever has been.



# Chabad's Chanukah at the Riverwalk marks 29 years

By ALAN SMASON, Special to the CCJN

**T**he Chabad Lubavitch of Louisiana organization ushered in the Chanukah holiday as it has done for the past 28 years with music, song and holiday food this past Sun., Dec. 2. The Spanish Plaza area now run by the Riverwalk Outlet Connection Mall and still undergoing some construction once again served as the site for the festivities for all but two years.

With an early 4:00 p.m. time for the event to start, but no conflict from a Saints or Pelicans game, Chanukah at the Riverwalk drew a respectable crowd of approximately 300 persons. The event began with a moment of silence to remember Chabad shaliach David Kaufmann of blessed memory, who was the original coordinator of the holiday event and died last year. Kaufmann's widow Nechama was present at the event.

U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District David Howard Sinkman served as the master of ceremonies that began after 5:00 p.m.

Councilman Joseph Giarusso III spoke first about the importance of "dedication" and "perseverance," especially in view of the deadly shooting in Pittsburgh, the nation's worst anti-Semitic act.

"Part of Chanukah is celebrating who we are as a people, but also reminding everybody of our perseverance and our dedication,

not only to each other but to our community," he said.

On behalf of the Riverwalk Outlet Mall, Frank Quinn welcomed back the Chabad Lubavitch group while Henry Miller, the immediate past president of the Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, remarked on the size of the crowd as the representative of Federation.

Meanwhile, the Federation CEO's wife, Dr. Susan Fielkow, filled in for her husband, who was away that night in North Carolina. The Fielkows have served as event sponsors for several years. "When we light this Chanukah menorah tonight, I hope that light not only fills this place but fills all of your homes and all of your hearts," Dr. Fielkow said. "When we kindle the lights, I hope it brings back wonderful memories, warm feelings in all of you as it does in us."

As one of the original Chabad shluchim, Rabbi Zelig Rivkin briefly commented on the concept of illumination. First, he said, it's important to illuminate one's own life and one's family before bringing light to the community. According to the rabbi, this will eventually usher in a time, according to the prophet Isaiah when "nation shall not make war" and "the lamb will lie down with the lion."

"In times of peace (and) in



Dr. Eitan Lang lights the shamash as part of the Chabad at the Riverwalk annual celebration. (Photo by Alan Smason)

time of community, it starts with us," he concluded.

Rivkin's son, Rabbi Mendel Rivkin, commented next, recalling the message "Am Yisrael Chai" (Israel lives). "This year, 80 years after the start of the Holocaust, over 40,000 public celebrations of Chanukah will take place under the auspices of Chabad around the world," said the younger Rabbi Rivkin.

Six participants on stage read the statement "A little light pushes away much darkness" in Hebrew, Russian, Spanish, French, Parsi and English before the official lighting ceremony.

Dr. Eitan Lang and his wife Chava also served as sponsors of the event. Dr. Lang was chosen to light the first light of the 11-foot wooden Chanukah, which was handcrafted by Holocaust survivor Isak Borenstein of blessed memory.

As Dr. Lang climbed the ladder, Barry Silver, the son-in-law of the Kaufmanns, recited the two Chanukah blessings and the special Shehecheyanu prayer that is only said the first night.

The shamash light in the center was lit first followed by the most outermost light, signifying the first night of Chanukah.



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## UPDATE: Touro announces Rabbi Berk is leaving

In an email sent on Tuesday, Dec. 4, Touro Synagogue president Teri Hunter and Senior Rabbi Alexis Berk have both announced that the rabbi has elected to take a new position as the senior rabbi at Temple Solel in San Diego, CA., effective in June of 2019.

Hunter confirmed that Berk is leaving prior to the end of her current contract and that the decision was “unanticipated.” Berk’s impending departure will occur at the end of her tenth year at Touro Synagogue.

In the letter to the congregation, Hunter emphasized that the congregation is anchored by its other clergy and that they are proceeding with a transition. “Although Rabbi Berk’s decision to leave Touro was unanticipated, we have been able to set in motion the immediate steps to begin the search for our next Senior Rabbi,” she wrote. A search committee has been established and the congregation has already been in touch with the placement office at the Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR), the rabbinic arm of the Union for Reform Jewry, according to Hunter.

The local Reform rabbinate has never seen as many exits and entrances in as short a period of time. Emeritus rabbi status was given last year to Temple Sinai’s Rabbi Ed Paul Cohn after 29 years and to Gates of Prayer’s Rabbi Robert Loewy after 34 years this summer.

Rabbi David Gerber, who followed Loewy, had just started the first year of his initial contract with Gates of Prayer when Temple Sinai Rabbi Matthew Reimer announced he was not renewing his initial three-year contract at Temple Sinai. Thus, Temple Sinai Cantor Joel Colman will be the longest-serving Jewish clergy in the Greater New Orleans area

next summer when Berk exits. Associate Rabbi Todd Silverman, who joined Touro three years ago, will be the area’s longest-serving Reform rabbi once Berk and Reimer leave. Associate Rabbi Alexis Pinsky served terms at both Gates of Prayer and Touro Synagogue in recent years and has filled in at Northshore Jewish Congregation (NJC) this past High Holiday season. She has since moved away from the area.

The revolving rabbinic door has been turning outside the Reform world as well. Recently, Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg of Congregation Beth Israel, who had been hired in 2012, announced his intention to leave his synagogue as well. Rabbi Deborah Silver began her current term at Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation in 2016.

While Rabbi Berk was the first woman selected to be selected a senior rabbi at a major New Orleans congregation, NJC chose Rabbi Julie Kozlow as the first woman to lead any area congregation in 2007. Rabbi Kozlow left NJC two years later, a year after Berk arrived in 2008 from Nashville, TN, where she has been the Hillel rabbi at Vanderbilt University and the director of congregational enrichment at Temple Ohabai Shalom.

Berk will be returning to San Diego, the home of the University of California campus from which she graduated with honors in sociology and where she met her husband Bob as an undergraduate. In the letter announcing her departure from Touro, Rabbi Berk acknowledged they have numerous family and friends in San Diego, the former home of her father of blessed memory. “We travel to San Diego several times a year to be with family and friends

there. I have felt a pull toward the possibility of living there for quite some time. I always knew that for this to happen, I would have to leave Touro,” she wrote.

She will be joining her former colleague, Cantor Billy Tiep, who left New Orleans to move back to his native California in 2010, where he has been the cantor at Temple Solel in Cardiff by the Sea, a suburban San Diego community, ever since. Cantor Tiep was featured at this year’s Jazz Fest Shabbat as the spiritual leader in charge, the task usually assigned to the congregation’s cantor. Touro filled its vacancy for the cantor position in August with the selection of Cantor Kevin Margolius.

Following her ordination from Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati in 2000, Berk relocated to Nashville, where she



Rabbi Alexis Berk

became an educator at Temple Micah for five years prior to being selected to lead Touro in 2008.

*(Editor’s note: The CCJN has reached out to Rabbi Berk to conduct an interview with her with regard to what will be an 11-year tenure at the synagogue, as we have done traditionally with every rabbi who has served our community. We hope to feature that in 2019.)*

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# ADL honors Steve Gleason, Ochsner's Warner Thomas

By ALAN SMASON, Exclusive to the CCJN

**T**he Anti-Defamation League's 2018 A. I. Botnick Torch of Liberty Award was presented to former New Orleans Saints safety Steve Gleason and Ochsner Hospital CEO Warner Thomas at a gala dinner on Wednesday evening, Dec. 5, at the New Orleans Marriott Hotel.

The dinner put on by the South Central Region of the ADL is its largest fund-raising event of the year and drew a crowd of over 625 people. "It was a great success," according to South Central Region director Aaron Ahlquist.

Gleason, who recently became a father for the second time, has been battling amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, for several years now. Also known colloquially as Lou Gehrig's Disease, the terminal illness atrophies muscles and eventually confines victims to wheelchairs and respirators in its final stages. Gleason accepted his award after moving onto the stage of his own volition during a video that told of his struggle and battle with ALS. A computer-generated voice delivered his acceptance speech via signals he sent to a special screen from commands of his eyes.

He accepted the award on behalf of the Team Gleason Foundation, which he and his wife set up to enable others battling ALS to be housed and to enjoy adventures at exciting destinations around the world.

Former Saints offensive tackle Zach Strief recalled meeting Gleason at his very first training camp and, because of his incredible energy, described him as "a lunatic," a phrase he said he believed Gleason would appreciate and to which the crowd responded in laughter. Strief went on to state that his first game in the Louisiana Superdome was the Monday night game against the Atlanta Falcons in which Gleason famously blocked a punt that was run into the end zone for a touchdown and symbolized that New Orleans was back from the devastation of Hurricane Katrina.

"In a moment of electricity, Steve gave hope back to the people and the

city he would come to call home," Strief said. "Thus, it's no coincidence that he has dedicated his life to giving hope to people afflicted with the terrible disease that's taken his body away from him. The formation of Team Gleason's foundation was the beginning of Steve's pursuit to change others like him, afflicted with this horrible disease."

Strief went on to list the eight core values of the ADL as courage, standing up (for others), respect, collaboration, inclusion, integrity, credibility and accountability.

"I can't imagine a better fit for the A.I. Botnick Torch of Liberty Award," Strief continued. "Few people in our society can claim the level of courage as Steve Gleason. He has shared his life with the world without fear of embarrassment that may accompany some of his realities. His drive to stand up for others while standing up for others is a privilege he no longer enjoys. He's demanded respect for those with physical disabilities and has caused many to question what is actually possible when dealt with life's difficulties."

Strief pointed to Team Gleason's collaboration with Congress and the unanimous passage of the Steve Gleason Enduring Voices Act, which he said will provide enhanced care for thousands of people in the years to come. "Steve and his wife Michelle's message of inclusion of people afflicted with neuromuscular diseases into all aspects of life has uplifted the spirits of countless patients around the globe," he continued. "The integrity and credibility of their foundation is second to none."

Gleason's desire to be the voice of those similarly afflicted with ALS, set him apart from others and makes him accountable, Strief added. "There is no triumph greater than the triumph of the human spirit. No couple I've ever met embodies that more than the Gleasons," he concluded.

"I wasn't familiar with Mr. Botnick. After learning who he was and the extent he went to in his fight for



Steve Gleason reads his acceptance speech with a special computer screen that allows him to speak. (Photo by Alan Smason)

the rights of others, I'm all the more honored to be part of this event. For over 100 years the ADL has been committed to ensuring inclusiveness across the nation. This is a nation where diversity is a great and powerful strength rather than a liability," Gleason's computer-generated voice explained.

Gleason added that every 90 minutes a person is diagnosed with ALS and that every 90 minutes someone dies from the disease. No effective medical treatment existed during the time Lou Gehrig was diagnosed in the 1930s and that remains the case today, he noted sadly.

He pointed to great strides he and his foundation have made since his diagnosis. Gleason has utilized innovative technology and respirators to keep him alive and in the meantime worked to help others. "Like the ADL, we believe inclusiveness. We believe everyone should be given the opportunity not only to live, but to live triumphantly. Thank you again for this honor and always remember: 'No white flags!'"

Thomas received his award as an acknowledgment of his work at Ochsner to fight prejudice and hate and support the ADL in his capacity as CEO.

"We have tremendous efforts going on in the workforce and in workforce development," Thomas said in his acceptance speech, trumpeting the programs he has implemented and overseen to improve acceptance and tolerance in the medical field.

"With the mission the history and the background of ADL, we align on so many different things," Thomas admitted. "The whole focus on promoting inclusion, unity and respect is vital to who we are as a community and as a community asset Ochsner is focused on how we can do that a better way."

Thomas admitted he was bullied as a youth and pointed to Ochsner's efforts in working with the ADL to push back against bullying, both in life and online. "I want to challenge you and everyone here. Let's seek unity. Let's seek common ground and make progress and it's not just that we have to be a unifier. We have to speak out against people who want to be dividers. We have to take them on and understand it is our role and our obligation, our responsibility to bring our community to bring our area together," Thomas said.

"Let's work together and make every day and our world a much better place," he concluded.

Earlier in the evening, Brook Bissinger and Sarah Vandergriff were given the Barney Mintz Leadership Award for their contributions by South Central Region associate director Lindsay Baach Friedmann.

Samantha Falgoust, a senior at Mt. Carmel Academy in Lakeview, was selected to read a poem she composed which was selected as the winner of a local contest to combat hate and to help bring about respect and inclusion among youth.





As long as we live, they too will live;  
for they are now a part of us;  
as we remember them.

To read full obituaries, go online to  
<https://tinyurl.com/y5dm7mw4>

## Joseph Hugo Epstein



JOSEPH HUGO EPSTEIN, a lifelong resident of New Orleans died following a long illness at home on January 1, 2018. He was well-known in advertising and commercial real estate circles.

Epstein was a graduate of Isidore Newman School and from the University of Michigan with honors in journalism. He served in the U.S. Navy aboard the U.S.S. PCE 904, as the Commanding Officer and after the war he returned to New Orleans. He established a highly respected and lucrative advertising career, which included teaching advertising and marketing classes at both Loyola University and Tulane University. He also enjoyed a subsequent second career as a commercial real estate broker.

He was an active member in the Jewish community and served on numerous Jewish, professional and civic boards. Additionally he authored a column (Blake Pontchartrain) that appeared in the *Gambit Weekly*.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years Margaret Blum Epstein, his children Katherine Seligman (Charles), Nancy Oswald (Mark) and Joseph Hugh "Jep" Epstein III (Tiffany Adler), and four grandchildren.

Burial took place on Friday January 5, 2018, (Metairie Cemetery) with Rabbi Matthew Reimer and Cantor Joel Colman officiating.

Donations were suggested to Isidore Newman School, the Greater New Orleans Foundation or any charity of your choice. Funeral services were provided by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.

## Shirley Gentcher Nowalsky

SHIRLEY GENTCHER NOWALSKY, a community leader who was involved with many Jewish and civic organizations, died on Tuesday, January 2, 2018, at the age of 92.

Nowalsky worked with the Better Business Bureau before her retirement. A longtime member of Congregation Beth Israel, she was active with the Sisterhood.

She was predeceased by her husband of many years, Harry Nowalsky, and is survived by children Paula Greenberg (Roy), Judith Nowalsky, and Leon Nowalsky (Ava) and two grandchildren.

Graveside services were held on Wednesday, January 3, 2018 (Old Beth Israel Cem-

etry) with Rabbi David Posternock officiating.

Memorial donations were suggested to Congregation Beth Israel or Chabad New Orleans.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie handled the arrangements.

## Sarah Esther Nowak

SARAH ESTHER NOWAK died on Monday, January 8, 2018, after a brief illness that resulted in congestive heart failure. She was 98.

For much of her married life, she worked long hours in the family clothing business. She enjoyed cooking, reading, gardening, cruises, and casino games, and participated enthusiastically in family activities until just weeks before her passing.

A native of New Orleans, Nowak had resided in the Lake Vista neighborhood since 1953. She was known as a supportive and caring mother. A selfless woman, she is remembered fondly as someone who always looked after the welfare of others, even ignoring her own self. She loved and adored her children and doted on her many pet dogs throughout her lifetime.

She was predeceased by her husband of more than 52 years Jacob Nowak in 1993 and her infant son Gerald Nowak. She is survived by her children Ronald Max Nowak, and Caren Bette Nowak, her daughter-in-law, Helena (Li) Nowak, her son-in-law, Allen Rosenzweig; a granddaughter and two great grandchildren.

A graveside funeral service was held at Gates of Prayer Cemetery with Rabbi Robert Loewy officiating.

Memorial donations were suggested to Zeus' Rescues, 2520 Napoleon Ave, New Orleans, LA 70015 or SpayMart, 6601 Veterans Memorial Blvd, Metairie, LA 70003.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home handled the arrangements.

## Isabel Herzog Winsberg

ISABEL HERZOG WINSBERG, a former retailer, died on Monday, January 8. She was 76.

A native of New Orleans, Winsberg was a graduate of Alcee Fortier High School and attended Tulane University. Beginning at age 13, she started her passion for working in retail. She was the manager for The Linen Registry and an owner of Linens, a fine linen store in Canal Place for a decade. She also worked at the Touro Infirmary Dialysis Unit.

Known for a generosity of spirit, she was caring, kind and supportive and devoted to her many close friends, many of which she nurtured since childhood. She was a leader of Recovery International, and she was a certified yoga instructor. She enjoyed walking, cooking and baking.

She loved spending time with her husband of 57 years and they traveled frequently.

Winsberg is survived by her husband, Judge Jerome Meyer Winsberg, her sons

Marc (Lori) and Michael Winsberg, her brother Mitchell Herzog (Ronda) and six grandchildren. A private graveside service was conducted by Rabbi Robert Loewy on Sunday, January 14, at Gates of Prayer Cemetery (Joseph Street.)

Memorial donations were suggested to Recovery International.

Funeral arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.

## Philip Louis Shushan

PHILIP LOUIS SHUSHAN, a lifelong New Orleans resident was an employee of the City of New Orleans. He died on Wednesday, January 24, 2018 at the age of 79.

Shushan graduated in 1955 from Fortier High School and continued he studies at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge where he received his undergraduate degree and a Civil Engineering degree. He worked for the City of New Orleans in the Finance Department until his retirement in 2007. He was a patron of the Ben Katz Post No. 580 of the Jewish War Veterans.

Graveside services were held at Chevra Thilim Memorial Park on Thursday, January 25, 2018. Rabbi Deborah Silver officiated.

Shushan was survived by a number of cousins.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations were suggested to Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation of Metairie.

## Lynne W. Goldman



LYNNE WEINBERGER GOLDMAN, a Southern Jewish doyenne and community leader, passed away peacefully at her home on January 24, 2018, at the age of 83.

A native New Orleansian, Goldman attended Isidore Newman School before studying drama at the Carnegie Institute of Technology in Pittsburgh. While attending the university she met her husband of 59 years, the late Jerome Goldman.

As an actress, Goldman performed numerous roles throughout the city which included *Le Petite Theatre du Vieux Carré*. She collaborated with three others in the writing and production of the play, *Cherries Jubilee*.

Goldman was a committed New Orleans community volunteer for multiple organizations, including WYES-TV, the Audubon Zoological Institute, the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, and the New Orleans Museum of Art.

She was predeceased by her husband, Jerome Goldman, a daughter Leah Goldman Karp, and a son, Scott Goldman. She was survived by her children: Anne Goldman Brinkley of Austin, TX (Douglas), Hope Goldman Meyer of New Orleans (James), and son-in-law Edward Karp of New Orleans (Anne-Marie Karp); and seven grandchildren.

A memorial service was held on Sunday,



January 28, at Temple Sinai, co-officiated by Rabbis Edward Paul Cohn and Matthew Reimer.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations were suggested to Court Watch NOLA (courtwatchnola.org), Liberty's Kitchen (libertyskitchen.org), Youth Empowerment Project (youthempowermentproject.org) or a charity of your choice.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of the arrangements.

## Sharyn R. Silverstein

SHARYN ROBBINS SILVERSTEIN, the owner of professional recruiting firms TempForce and Robbins Consultants, died Tuesday, January 30, 2018 after a valiant battle with breast cancer. She was 70.

She is survived by her husband, Dr. Seth Silverstein.

An avid traveler, Silverstein was a longtime member of Congregation Gates of Prayer and life member of Hadassah.

Funeral services were held on Friday, February 2, 2018 at Congregation Gates of Prayer where Rabbi Robert Loewy officiated. Interment was at Hebrew Rest Cemetery No. 3.

Memorial contributions were suggested to The American Cancer Society.

Arrangements were handled by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home.

## Sara Berenson Stone



SARA BERENSON STONE died at her home early on Saturday, February 3, 2018, surrounded by her family. She was 102.

Stone was the grand dame of the New Orleans Jewish community, whose commitment to others was

legendary and whose principles guided most of the top leaders who followed her. There was not one Jewish charitable organization that didn't know of her incredible largesse and generosity both philanthropically and spiritually.

Born in Bogalusa, Louisiana in 1915, Stone attended Duke University and was named one of six outstanding students in her senior year. She continued her studies as a graduate student at the Tulane School of Social Work and she dedicated herself to others for over eight decades.

She was committed to community service and she sat on numerous community boards. In 1946, she joined the board of the New Orleans Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW), where she served as president and other leadership roles. After WWII, she helped to resettle Jewish refugees that arrived in the city from Displaced Persons (DP) camps in Europe. She served for decades on the scholarship committee of the Jewish Children's Regional Service (JCIRS), which supplies tuition assistance to needy students, and where separate funds and awards were established in her name.

She supported, volunteered and sat on numerous Jewish organizations boards and

worked to raise money for the newly-established State of Israel. She was bestowed countless honors and her modesty in accepting these awards was well known.

Stone was a voracious reader, loved the arts and travel. She was known throughout Europe, across the United States and the Crescent City. Her pictures hang on the walls of many five-star restaurants where she achieved legendary patron status.

She was preceded by her husband of 62 years, Saul Stone; her son David L. Stone and her son-in-law John S. Wright. She is survived by her brother Gerald S. Berenson (Joan); her sons Richard B. Stone and Harvey M. Stone (Danna), her daughter Carol R. Stone (Patrick McNamara); her daughter-in-law Sophia H. Stone, ten grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

Funeral services were held on February 5, 2018 at Shir Chadash Synagogue with Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg officiating followed by interment at Hebrew Rest Cemetery #3.

Donations were suggested to the Sara and Saul Stone Scholarship Fund at the JCIRS, P. O. Box 7368, Metairie, LA 70010; the Sara B. Stone Educational Enrichment Fund at the NCJW, 6221 South Claiborne Ave., Suite 208, New Orleans, LA 70125; or the Sara Stone Chair in the Arts at Isidore Newman School, 1903 Jefferson Ave., New Orleans, LA 70115.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of all arrangements.

## Etta Charlotte Lurie

ETTA CHARLOTTE LURIE, a former nurse, who had retired with her now-deceased husband to New Orleans, passed away peacefully on February 12, 2018. She was born in Lawrence, Mass. August 5, 1921. She was 96.

A registered nurse, Lurie was married and lived for a long time in Carbondale, Illinois. The Luries raised their children before retiring to New Orleans.

A dedicated mother and loving wife, she was an avid reader and veteran bridge player.

She was predeceased by her husband Dan Lurie and is survived by her three children, Marlene Katz, Joan Album (Jerry) and Bruce Lurie (Martha), five grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Graveside services will be held on Wednesday, February 14, 2018 at 2 pm at Tikvat Shalom Cemetery, 11316 River Road in St. Rose, LA.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Shir Chadash Synagogue. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## Phyllis Rosenberg Nitzkin



PHYLLIS ROSENBERG NITZKIN, a former medical data analyst and bacteriologist lab technician, died at her residence on Friday, February 16. She was 74.

Nitzkin was a born leader and helped play a major role in the development and growth of the Krewe du Mishigas, a

Jewish-oriented Mardi Gras sub-krewe of the Krewe du Vieux, for the past 21 years. She served as the president of the New Orleans Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) from 2010 to 2012. In addition to her work with NCJW, she was active in a number of numerous Jewish community organizations.

A native of Detroit, she attended school and married her husband, Joel, three days after his medical school graduation in 1966. Prior to moving to New Orleans in 1989, her family lived in Dallas, Atlanta, Frankfort, Kentucky, Miami and Rochester, New York.

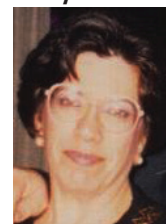
In 2008 Nitzkin was diagnosed with myelofibrosis, a bone marrow malignancy. She successfully survived her treatments and once in remission she took lessons and became an avid scuba diver and made dives throughout the Caribbean and the Pacific ocean.

She is survived by her husband of 51 years, Dr. Joel L. Nitzkin; her two children; Aaron Daniel Nitzkin and Rikki Jennifer Nitzkin.

A visitation and memorial service was held at Touro Synagogue on Sunday, February 25, 2018.

Memorial donations are suggested to the National Council of Jewish Women, Greater New Orleans Section, the Myeloproliferative Diseases Foundation and the Jewish National Fund.

## Marilyn Raskin Gaethe



MARILYN RASKIN GAETHE, who retired from the Mellon Financial Services, passed away peacefully, on Thursday, February 22, 2018.

A native of Leeds, England, she moved to the United States after marrying

her husband, who was in the military at the time. She was a longtime resident of New Orleans and an active member in Congregation Gates of Prayer Synagogue, where her son Philip was the longtime education director.

Predeceased by her husband Mervin Gaethe in 2008, she is survived by her children Stuart Gaethe (Christine) and Philip Gaethe (Faye), her sister Diane Cohen (Brian), a sister-in-law Rachelle Stein (late Terry), three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Graveside services were held on Sunday, February 25, 2018, at Gates of Prayer Cemetery with Rabbi Robert Lowey officiating.

Funeral arrangements were handled by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.

## Ralph Slifkin

Cantor Ralph Slifkin, who enjoyed a career as a cantor with Touro Synagogue for more than three decades died on Wednesday, February 28, 2018.

Slifkin had also been an operatic singer of some note, having sung five supporting roles in performances with the New Orleans Opera.





These featured roles from the mid-1950s until the early 1960s were in the opera productions of "Tosca," "Rigoletto," "La Traviata," "La Gioconda" and "Andrea Chenier," according to New Orleans Opera archivist Jack Belsom.

A native of California, Slifkin received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Southern California before winning a scholarship to continue his studies at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. While attending LSU, he was offered an opportunity to play a role in the Baton Rouge Civic Opera's production of Darius Milhaud's "Le Pauvre Matelo."

Slifkin was also a finalist in the Southern region for the Experimental Opera Theatre of America. He catapulted his excellent placement there into taking up additional musical studies at Loyola University with Elizabeth Wood.

Slifkin's booming baritone was also employed when he served as master of ceremonies for the Summer Pops.

Slifkin began his career as a cantor at Touro Synagogue in 1956, retiring in 1990 after having served as an emeritus cantor.

Touro Synagogue released a statement that read in part: "If we are lucky, we offer something during our short visit here on this earth that will endure – something that will live on in the hearts and minds of those we encountered. For Ralph Slifkin, this gift was the sound of prayer, elevated to the high heavens. May his soul join that echo there – and may he find eternal blessing."

## George Gershon Sterne

GEORGE GERSHON STERNE, M.D., 85, a retired pediatrician who practiced for over 50 years in New Orleans and was a leader in the field of early childhood through the American Academy of Pediatrics died in Seattle, WA on November 7, 2017. He succumbed from complications of multiple myeloma.

A memorial service was held at Temple Sinai on Sunday, March 7, 2018 just a few days before what would have been his 86th birthday. Rabbi Ed Paul Cohn led the service.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Sylvia Stahl Sterne, their children Mark Shabat Sterne (Pilar) of San Francisco; Steven Gary Sterne (Jennifer Lynn Dice) of Seattle, WA and Susan Sterne (Peter Kellers) of Portland, OR., siblings Lee M. Sterne, Jr., Pauline Sterne Schochet, and Carla Sterne Linn (Steve); and three grandchildren.

Memorials were suggested to the American Academy of Pediatrics (141 Northwest Point Blvd, Elk Grove, IL 60007-1098), Planned Parenthood (4636 So. Claiborne Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70125) or the New Orleans Public Library Foundation, (938 Lafayette Street, Suite 322, New Orleans, LA 70113.)

## Jane Walhorn Moses

JANE WALHORN MOSES, 96, died at Lambeth House on Friday, March 9, 2018. She was a lifelong resident of New Orleans.

She was predeceased by her husband, the Honorable Walter B. Moses, Jr., and was sur-

vived by her son Stephen A. Moses (Dee), her daughter Allyn M. Frohsin (Ralph) of Alexander City, Alabama and by two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Private family services were held at Hebrew Rest Cemetery on Sunday, March 11, 2018. Rabbi Matthew Reimer officiated.

Memorial donations were suggested to Lambeth House Foundation (150 Broadway, New Orleans, LA 70118), or any charity.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie handled all arrangements.

## Debbie Ravich Vorhoff

DEBORAH RAVICH VORHOFF, a visual arts painter, died Monday, March 12, 2018 at her home. She was 65 years old.

She is survived by her husband of 38 years, Dr. Gregory Vorhoff; her mother, Elaine Dworkin Ravich; her four siblings Evan, Jess, Rand and Samantha; her daughter Ariel Merritt (Christopher); her sons Max (Lorena), Harry (Sophia) and Jed; and three grandchildren.

Memorial contributions were suggested to be made to the Alzheimer's Association in her name.

A graveside service was held on Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 3:30 p.m. in Hebrew Rest Cemetery No. 3. Touro Synagogue Senior Rabbi Alexis Berk officiated.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## Jamie M. Ber

Jamie M. Ber, a New Orleans native who taught in many area schools died on Friday, March 30, 2018 at the age of 65.

She earned her Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood Education. She was a legendary baker and talented in needlepoint and knitting.

She was preceded in death by her father, James M. Ber. Her mother Rosemary L. Ber; brother Michael Ber (Tammy); and nieces and nephews.

A graveside service was held on Monday April 2, 2018 at Lake Lawn Metairie Cemetery where Rabbi Todd Silverman officiated.

Memorial donations were suggested to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation or the American Diabetes Association.

## Stanley Edward Sherman



STANLEY EDWARD SHERMAN, M.D., a pioneer in obstetrics and gynecology, passed away on Monday, April 2, 2018. He was 86.

Sherman was born and educated in New York City where he matriculated from New York University medical school in 1956. He moved to the Crescent City, where he became Chief of Obstetrics at the now-shuttered U.S. Army hospital. He maintained a private practice for nearly six decades.

Sherman was a well-respected area obstetrician and was first in the area to monitor patients

while in labor, apply stress testing for pregnant women and use chemical determination of the fetal well-being prior to the onset of labor.

Sherman was a resident of Kenner and is survived by his wife of 58 years, Joan Sherman, and his children David Sherman (Jane), Richard Sherman (Lisa), Peter Sherman, and Ruth Gottlieb (Jon) 11 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

A funeral service was held at Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home on Thursday, April 5, 2018. Rabbi Robert Loewy officiated. Interment followed in Lakelawn Cemetery.

## Ronald J. Levy

RONALD J. LEVY, an investment banker, who specialized in municipal bonds, and was a lifelong resident of New Orleans until his displacement from Hurricane Katrina, died on March 30, 2018 in his adopted home of Tallahassee, FL. He was 86.

Levy grew up in Uptown New Orleans and attended Alcee Fortier High School before graduating from Tulane University with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration. While at Tulane, he received the Wall Street Journal Student Award in Finance and was a member of Delta Sigma Pi fraternity.

Levy served in the U.S. Army from 1953 to 1955. He worked the majority of his career for Hattier, Sanford & Reynoir, a New Orleans investment banking firm and retired following his relocation to Tallahassee.

Levy was known for having a sharp sense of humor and a generous spirit. He also was a car enthusiast, a devotee of military history and was a noted photographer.

Levy is survived by two nieces, a nephew and four great-nephews.

## Joyce Brener Goldstein

JOYCE BRENER GOLDSTEIN, a former re-tailer and noted dance instructor, passed away peacefully at her residence on Friday evening, April 27, 2018. She was 91.

Joyce was a local pioneer in dance. She was featured on WDSU-TV in 1950 on the first local televised exercise program. She taught dance in her own studio for 18 years and along with her husband opened Dance-Ranch, a dance apparel and Western-wear store. She was an aspiring author, who loved writing.

She is survived by her husband of 73 years, Irving Goldstein, and her children Carolyn Joyce Loewenthal (Robert) and Sidney Leon Goldstein (Celeste), her siblings Sandra Rosenthal Bucholz and Milton Brener, three grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Services were held at Temple Sinai on Tuesday May 1, 2018 with Emeritus Rabbi Edward P. Cohn, Rabbi Matthew Reimer and Cantor Joel Colman officiating. Funeral arrangements are by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home.

## Elise Greenwald Jacobs

EUSE GREENWALD JACOBS, passed away peacefully on Friday May 11, 2018 at the age of 104.



Jacobs was born in Patterson, MS but was a 90 plus year resident of New Orleans. The first in her family to attend college graduating from Newcomb College with a Social Work degree. A passionate and talented duplicate bridge player, she achieved the rank of Life Master.

Predeceased by her husband of many years, Bernard S. Jacobs, she is survived by her two sons Barry Jacobs (Lois) and Rick Jacobs, two grandchildren and two great-grandsons.

A graveside service was held at Hebrew Rest Cemetery No. 3 on May 16, 2018 with Rabbi Matthew Reimer officiating.

Arrangements were handled by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home in Metairie.

## Dannie Seth Kleinberger



DANNIE SETH KLEINBERGER, a regional account executive in medical sales, initially trained as a nurse and a cardiopulmonary therapist, died suddenly on Monday, May 14. He was 60.

A native of New Orleans, Kleinberger was a 1976 graduate of De La Salle High School before training as a nurse at the Touro Infirmary School of Nursing. His career started in obstetrics and he earned certification as an exercise specialist and later a cardiopulmonary rehabilitation therapist that helped become the program director at the Mercy Hospital Wellness and Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation Center and later the director of Cardiopulmonary Rehabilitation at Egan Health Care.

In 2001, Kleinberger founded his own comprehensive outpatient rehabilitation business, C.O.R.F., which he operated as the owner and clinical director for several years. Later he joined the Sorin Group and ELA (now rebranded as LivaNova) as an independent regional account manager.

Kleinberger was a lover of sports and animals and passionate about politics.

A celebration of his life took place on Saturday, May 19, at 3:00 p.m. at the Monkey Hill Bar on Magazine Street at Vwebster.

He is survived by his wife of many years, Janet Rosen Kleinberger, his two daughters Niki and Lynn Kleinberger and his sister Saundi Kleinberger Casey.

Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.

## Jackie Gothard



JACKIE PRESSNER GOTHARD, the person the most responsible for saving the flood-damaged Orthodox congregation following the flooding associated with Hurricane Katrina, died as a result of heart failure following emergency surgery yesterday, May 21, 2018. She was 83.

A proud native of New Orleans, Jackie graduated from Fortier High School where she

was first violin chair and additionally excelled in various sports. She then attended Sophie Newcomb College, graduating second in her class with a bachelor's degree in Psychology. She then attended Western Reserve University Graduate School of Social Work. She earned her degree and met fellow MSW graduate student and future husband, Sol Gothard.

Jackie worked as a social worker for Child Protective Services at the New Orleans Department of Welfare for several years. Later she was an active travel agent, specializing in trips to Israel. She was also devoted to many volunteer organizations, including Hadassah, Jewish Family Services (where she was active in the Teen Life Counts suicide prevention program), Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans, and the Ben Katz Post of the Jewish War Veterans of America.

Honored with many awards throughout her professional and personal life, Jackie's proudest accomplishments were those of her children and grandchildren.

She is survived by her husband of 60 years, Judge Sol Gothard, her five children – Yaacov, Eddie (Blayne), Andy (Julie), Sander (Julie) Gothard and Shayna Gothard Kaufmann (Eric); a sister Freida Posnock (Leonard), 11 grandchildren and one great-grandson.

Services were held at Beth Israel on Thursday morning, May 24, 2018 with a burial followed at the (Old) Beth Israel Cemetery. Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg, with the assistance of Rabbi David Posternock, officiated. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## Nancy Koodish Kohlmeier

NANCY KOODISH KOHLMAYER, died at Poydras Home on May 29, 2018, of Alzheimer's Disease. She died two days shy of her 84th birthday.

A native of Cincinnati, she graduated from Smith College and was a resident of New Orleans since 1956.

She was survived by her husband of 61 years, Herman S. Kohlmeier; her children Susan Kohlmeier Morrall (Andrew) of Larchmont, NY, Emily Kohlmeier Birenbaum (Steven) of Berkeley, CA., Eleanor Kohlmeier Lane (Merritt) and Charles Kohlmeier III (Heather); and nine grandchildren.

Memorial services took place at Temple Sinai and followed by a private interment at Metairie Cemetery. Rabbi Edward Paul Cohn officiated.

Memorial donations were suggested to Jewish Children's Regional Service, Isidore Newman School or the charity of your choice.

## Bernard Marcus



BERNARD "BERNIE" MARCUS, an attorney and noted Jewish community leader, died on June 2, 2018. He was 94.

Born in Wilkes-Barre, PA., Marcus attended the University of Pennsylvania and Carnegie Tech, prior to

his enlisting in the U.S. Army. Marcus served in the South Pacific during World War II and was among the first troops to occupy Japan.

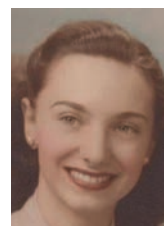
He graduated from Harvard Law School in 1948 and began a legal career. After moving to New Orleans he practiced at the Deutsch, Kerrigan & Stiles law firm, where he started as an associate and rose to managing general partner. In 2004, Marcus became of counsel at Lehman, Norman & Marcus and primarily served as a labor arbitrator, working on cases across the country.

Marcus was a member of numerous professional organizations and was a member of many charitable boards.

Preceded in death by his son, Aaron, he is survived by his wife of 64 years, Frances Marcus; his children Kate, Aaron, Charles and Mary Marcus, and 10 grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at Touro Synagogue on Tuesday, June 5, 2018, at 10:00 am. Rabbi Todd Silverman officiated. Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home.

## Pearl Feldstein Sackett



PEARL FELDSTEIN SACKETT, a long time resident of New Orleans, passed peacefully in her home on the morning of June 6, 2018. She was 91.

Sackett, born in Chicago, earned a degree from Northwestern University before settling in New Orleans. In her early years, she was a TV model and spokesperson as well as a world-class bridge player. She particularly enjoyed traveling.

Predeceased by her husband of many years, Mark W. Sackett, in 1999, she is survived by her two sons, Michael and Richard; three granddaughters and two great-granddaughters.

A graveside service was conducted at Hebrew Rest #3, 4100 Frenchmen, on Friday, June 8, 2018 with Rabbi Deborah Silver officiating. Memorial donations were suggested to Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation (3737 W.Esplanade Avenue, Metairie.) Arrangements were handled by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home.

## Joyce Goodwin Widowsky

JOYCE GOODWIN WIDOWSKY, a former chemist for Dow Chemical, passed away peacefully on Saturday morning, June 9, 2018. She was 80 years old.

A native of Los Angeles, Widowsky was a graduate of Mills College in Oakland, California before embarking on her chemical career. She moved to the New Orleans area in 1964. She was a longtime member of Touro Synagogue and an avid civic volunteer.

She was survived by her husband of over 58 years, Bernard Widowsky, her son Edward James Widowsky (Macala) and three grandchildren.





A funeral service was held at Touro Synagogue on Thursday June 14, 2018 followed by an interment at Hebrew Rest Cemetery No. 3. Emeritus Rabbi David Goldstein officiated the services.

## Gloria Gans Opatowsky



GLORIA GANS OPOTOWSKY died on Sunday, June 10, 2018. She was 88.

At the time of her passing, she was the wife of Albert Regenbogen. She was predeceased by her husband of many years, Ju-

lian Katz Opatowsky of blessed memory. In addition to her second husband, she is survived by her three sons, Randy Opatowsky (Kathleen Seither), Marvin Opatowsky (Linda), and Saul Opatowsky and by three grandchildren.

Rabbi Alexis Pinsky officiated at a private graveside service on Tuesday morning, June 12, 2018.

## Jack C. Benjamin



JACK C. BENJAMIN, a gentleman, scholar, community leader and renowned attorney, died peacefully in his sleep on June 11, 2018. He was 90.

A native New Orleansian, he attended Tulane University and Tulane

University Law School. He served on numerous alumni and advisory boards and received many professional and civic awards and achievements.

Benjamin practiced law as a U.S. Attorney and privately with the firm now known as Gainsburgh, Benjamin, David, Meunier & Warshauer, LLC for the past 60 years. He loved the law and enjoyed the camaraderie of the profession, with many of his closest friends being his professional adversaries. He exuded professionalism and counseled countless current lawyers and judges during his lifetime.

Benjamin always had time for his first priority – his family. He was predeceased by his first wife of 44 years, Emily Stein Benjamin, and his two children, Jan C. Benjamin and Jack C. Benjamin, Jr. (Jennifer). He is also survived by his wife, Clare Wolfson Benjamin; his stepsons Rob Wolfson (Lisa) and Michael Wolfson and two grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at Temple Sinai, on June 15, 2018. Interment was private.

Memorial donations are encouraged to contribute to the Jack C. Benjamin Scholarship Fund at Tulane Law School (6329 Freret Street, New Orleans, LA 70118), the Jewish Endowment Foundation of Louisiana, (615 Baronne Street, Suite 150, New Orleans, LA 70113), the Metropolitan Crime Commission (1615 Poydras Street, Suite 1060, New Orleans, LA 70112) or Temple Sinai (6227 St. Charles Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118).

Arrangements were made by Tharp-Son-

theimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.

## Elaine Brumer Kalka

ELAINE RUTH BRUMER KALKA, a social worker with Jefferson Parish, died in her New Orleans home. She was 70 years old.

A native of Springfield, MA., Kalka had earned a master's degree in social work before working for the parish. She is survived by her husband Morris Kalka and two children.

A graveside funeral took place on Sunday, June 17, 2018, at Chevra Thilim Memorial Park, where Rabbi Deborah Silver officiated.

## William Mexic

WILLIAM "BILL" MEXIC, a prominent former New Orleans businessman and civic leader, passed away on Monday, June 18, 2018 in Dallas. He was 88 years old.

Mexic was a New Orleans native. Following his graduation from Tulane University, he served as a lieutenant in the U.S. Army during the Korean Conflict before entering the family business, Mexic Brothers Jewelers until it closed in 1989..

He was a volunteer for the many local organizations and served on my boards. In recent years, Mexic was a docent at the National World War II Museum before he relocated to Dallas, following Hurricane Katrina.

His lifelong hobby was playing clarinet and other music and he enjoyed traveling, too.

Predeceased in 2011 by his wife of 53 years, Lois Stillman Mexic, he is survived by his two daughters Sheryl Mexic and Melanie Morris (Jeffrey); his sister Selma Raphael, and two grandchildren.

The funeral took place on Wednesday, June 20 at 1:00 pm at the Sparkman-Hillcrest Funeral Home, 7405 W. Northwest Hwy, in Dallas, TX.

Memorial donations were suggested to the Lois S. and William Mexic Young Professionals Outreach Endowment Fund at Congregation Shearith Israel in Dallas or the Lois and William Mexic Endowment Fund at Jewish Family Service of Greater Dallas.

## Felicia Schornstein Kahn



FELICIA SCHORNSTEIN KAHN, a political icon of the Democratic Party, a civic leader, an advocate for feminism and an outspoken civil rights leader for decades, passed away on June 21, 2018. She was 91.

Kahn was heavily involved in political campaigns for decades, including the political efforts of Moon Landrieu for mayor, Mary Landrieu to the United States Senate, and recently John Bel Edwards for governor. On the national level, she attended ten Democratic National Conventions often as a delegate or alternate.

Kahn attended Newman School and graduated from Newcomb College in 1948. At Newcomb, Kahn's interest in political action was encouraged by several of her professors.

She was an active and lifelong Democrat. She was often seen with her children in tow as she promoted voter participation for the LWVNO.

She is survived by three children: Chip Kahn (JoAnn Willis), Elizabeth Kahn (Steve Seebol), and Felicia Kahn Michelson as well as three grandchildren. She was predeceased by two grandchildren, Saul and Seth Kahn, as well as a longtime companion of over 25 years, Dick Troy.

A funeral service was jointly conducted by Rabbi Matthew Reimer and Emeritus Rabbi Ed Paul Cohn at Temple Sinai, on Monday, June 25. Interment followed immediately at Hebrew Rest Cemetery No. 3.

Donations in her name can be made to Planned Parenthood or the Social Justice Fund at Temple Sinai.

## Elaine Marilyn Fisher



ELAINE MARILYN FISHER, a native of New Orleans and a medical clerk and office manager for the Fisher Pediatric Clinic, died on June 24, 2018. She was 71 years old.

Fisher was a graduate of Rugby Academy. She

attended college both at L.S.U. in Baton Rouge and at L.S.U.N.O. before completing a course in business administration at Soule Business College.

Fisher applied her business and office skills and beginning in 1967 to manage her father's pediatric clinic. After her father's retirement she continued her position when her brother took over the clinic over. She was a committed worker to the clinic until her health began to fail in 2010.

In recent years, Fisher had been a resident of Azaleas for Assisted Living, a part of the Woldenberg Village. She was a member of Congregation Beth Israel for her entire life, and she was a life member of Hadassah.

Fisher is survived by her brother Dr. Marc Fisher (Debbie), her nephew Dr. Jonathan Fisher, her niece Rebecca Fisher and numerous cousins.

A graveside funeral was conducted at the (New) Beth Israel Cemetery on Tuesday, June 26, 2018 and Rabbi David Posternock officiated.

Memorial donations were suggested to the Leo Fisher, M.D., Memorial Fund at Children's Hospital (200 Henry Clay Avenue, New Orleans, LA 70118) or Congregation Beth Israel (4004 W. Esplanade Ave., Metairie, LA).

## Betty RosenWeil

BETTY JEAN ROSEN WEIL, passed away on Sunday, June 24, 2018, at the age of 88.

A native of Ft. Worth, Miss Betty, as she was known to most of her students, graduated from Paschal High School before earning a bachelor's degree in Education from Newcomb College, where she was elected to an honorary organization in history and education. She later returned to Tulane to receive a master's degree in



Education with honors in history and education.

She was a teacher and consultant in the original Head Start program and taught kindergarten in several public schools. Most of her teaching career was spent at Isidore Newman and, later, Louise S. McGehee School. She also was director of the Jewish Community Center's Nursery School, overseeing the expansion of its hours into the afternoon. She developed the Early Childhood Certification Program for Loyola University while teaching there and created and opened the Child Care Center on campus.

Her community volunteerism was varied as she served as PTA president and also several leadership roles in the Sisterhood of Touro Synagogue and the Sisterhood of Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation. Weil was also a member of the National Council of Jewish Women and worked with the oldest synagogue in America, Touro Synagogue of Newport, Rhode Island.

She enjoyed music, theatre, and was especially taken with the New Orleans Ballet Association. She also served as a docent for 16 years. She was passionate about genealogy and traced her family roots back to the late 1400s. She also loved travel.

She is survived by her husband of 66 years, Donald M. Weil; her four children, Dr. Michael M. Weil (Dr. MaryJane) of Ft. Collins, CO., Lisa B. Weil of Boston, Leslie Weil and Dr. John Mark Weil (partner Dr. Dianne Perkowski); two grandchildren, one step-grandchild, one great-grandchild and three step-great-grandchildren.

Graveside services were held at Dispersed of Judah Cemetery at 4937 Canal Street. Rabbi Todd Silverman officiated.

Memorial donations were suggested to the New Orleans Museum of Art or the charity of your choice. Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## Betty Cohn Brown

BETTY COHN BROWN, age 93, died peacefully on Monday, June 25, 2018, surrounded by her family and loved ones.

Born in Waterloo, Iowa, she attended Newcomb College and became an accomplished artist. She lived in New Orleans most of her life, where she met her future husband and raised her family.

She enjoyed living life to the fullest, embracing her friends and family, listening to music, painting and dancing. She touched the lives of many people with her infectious smile, style, and magnetic personality, which she maintained until the end.

Brown was a longtime member of Congregation Gates of Prayer and a lifetime member of Hadassah.

Following Hurricane Katrina, Brown relocated to St. Louis, where she resided until her death.

Preceded in death by her husband of many years, Jordan Brown, she is survived by her three daughters Randee Jacobs (Myron), Debra Grossman (Leonard), and Janette Brown, six grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.

Led by Rabbi David Gerber, a memorial service was conducted on Thursday, June 27, 2018 at Congregation Gates of Prayer.

The family requests all donations be sent to Congregation Gates of Prayer or Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans. Arrangements were through Berger Memorial Chapel of St Louis with local coordination through Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.

## Stanley B. Marx

STANLEY B. MARX, a retired electrical engineer, passed away peacefully at his home on Tuesday, June 26, 2018. He was 89.

Born and raised in Bogalusa, Marx grew up under the shadow of his family-owned general store, the "Marx Million Article Store." He was the valedictorian of his graduating class at Bogalusa High. Stanley and also excelled as the most productive running back Bogalusa High ever had. Following his enrollment at Georgia Tech University, he also played running back there for two years.

Marx served in the Army during the Korean War and was honorably discharged as an officer in the Army Reserves in 1956. Thereafter, he pursued a career as an electrical engineer, designing electrical systems for oil rigs and chemical plants. After retiring from that career in the early 2000s, he served as a volunteer at Touro Infirmary Hospital, where he worked until the week before his passing.

In addition to his passion for family and fun, he was also passionate about the New Orleans Saints. He was a season ticket owner for 50 consecutive years. He went to every game in the 2009-2010 Super Bowl XLIV-winning year.

Marx is survived by his wife of 62 years, Carol Davis; his son, Stephen (Debbie), his daughter, Leslie Gersung, his sister Maxine Goodman and five grandchildren.

Rabbi Matthew Reimer officiated at a memorial service on Friday, June 29, at Temple Sinai.

In lieu of flowers, donations were suggested to go to Touro Infirmary, 1401 Foucher Street, New Orleans 70115 or the charity of your choice.

## Morris Bernard Phillips

MORRIS BERNARD PHILLIPS, an attorney who also served as a judge, passed away on Saturday, July 7, 2018. He was 89.

A New Orleans native, Morris graduated with a degree in Business Administration and a Juris Doctor degree from Tulane University. He practiced law in the greater New Orleans area for 65 years before retiring in 2016. He was chosen for Who's Who in American Law in 1980 and served as Judge Ad Hoc for the First City Court of the City of New Orleans.

Morris was an active leader at Touro Synagogue. He served as the congregation president and brotherhood, vice-president. Additionally he was a past president of the Hebrew Rest Cemetery board.

He was preceded in death by his wife of 27 years, Shirley Feldstein Phillip and was survived by his wife of 32 years, Anne Ellender

Phillips, his daughter Sydnee Phillips Kiebert (Martin), his son M.H. Phillips, his sister Patricia Phillips Weiss and a granddaughter.

His funeral service was held at Touro Synagogue on Tuesday, July 17, 2018 and was followed by interment at Hebrew Rest Cemetery #3. Rabbi Todd Silverman officiated.

Donations were suggested to the American Heart Association, or the American Cancer Society.

## Celia Weinstein

CELIA WEINSTEIN, the former owner and operator of a clothing store in Mississippi, passed away peacefully on July 10, 2018. She was 87.

She was predeceased by her husband, Harold Weinstein and her daughter Blaire Mossman. She was survived by her daughter Lisa Sackett (Michael), her sister Adele Orlansky (Melvin) and six grandchildren.

Graveside services were held on Friday, July 13, 2018, at the Tikvat Shalom Cemetery in Jefferson Memorial Gardens. Rabbi Deborah Silver officiated.

Memorial donations were suggested to Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation, 3737 W. Esplanade, Metairie, LA 70002.

Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie was in charge of arrangements.

## Sandra Lynne Grossman

SANDRA LYNNE GROSSMAN, whose passion for New Orleans inspired her to help in the rebuilding efforts following Hurricane Katrina, died on June 29, 2018, after a lengthy illness. She was 56.

Prior to Hurricane Katrina, she worked in a variety of managerial positions and possessed an unbridled spirit for business as an entrepreneur. After the hurricane she was devoted to helping to accommodate and create new housing for the displaced citizens.

Grossman graduated from Riverdale High School and she received her bachelor of arts degree from Loyola University in 1983.

She was survived by her brother Judah "Jay" Grossman (Paula) and two nephews, all of Houston, TX.

Rabbi Alexis Pinsky presided over the graveside services held at Anshe Sfarad Cemetery on Tuesday, July 3 which was just three days shy of what would have been her 57th birthday.

Memorial donations were suggested to any animal care and/or rescue organization.

Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.

## Charles A. Eakin



CHARLES A. "CHARLIE" EAKIN, an engineer who worked for a majority of his career in support of America's entry into the space race, the landing of men on the moon and the deployment of the Space Shuttle, died peacefully on





July 22, 2018, in Diamondhead, MS. He was 95.

A New Orleans native, Eakin graduated from Alcee Fortier High School in 1939 and then attended Louisiana State University. He graduated in 1943 with a bachelor's of science degree in Industrial Education and then attended Notre Dame where he was commissioned an ensign the U.S. Navy in January of 1944.

Eakin spent his entire active duty as an engineering officer and later as a commanding officer of an amphibious assault ship during World War II. He remained active in the Naval Reserve, retiring in 1982 with the rank of commander.

Eakin began a civilian career when he joined the New Orleans District Corps of Engineers as a mechanical engineer in 1948. In 1962 to begin work with the National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) beginning with the Mercury missions and culminated his career working on the Space Shuttle Task Group.

Throughout his lifetime he received numerous awards, certificates of commendation and appreciation, tributes, and honors including the Key to the City of New Orleans from Mayor Ernest "Dutch" Morial.

He was preceded in death by his wife, Jean Eakin and his daughter, Suzanne Eakin Vilemont Bruce. He is survived by his son, Charles W. Eakin II (Jenneane) of Biloxi; three grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Visitation was held at the Riemann Family Funeral Home in Gulfport, MS., on Thursday August 2, 2018. Interment followed immediately at the Biloxi National Cemetery.

Memorial donations were suggested to the SPCA of Diamondhead MS (PO Box 6481, Diamondhead, MS.).

## Samuel Teo Levitan

SAMUEL TEO LEVITAN, a banker and respected New Orleans community leader, died from cancer at his home in Raleigh, N.C. on July 31, 2018. He was 94.

He was survived by his wife, Gertrude Konarski Levitan, his two sons Tom and Scott and a number of grandchildren.

Levitan was a New Orleans resident until Hurricane Katrina. His earliest memories were as a resident of the Jewish Children's Home (now Jewish Children's Regional Service, JCRS) for about a decade as a "half orphan" after his mother's death when he was only two years.

Levitan was the valedictorian of his graduating class at Samuel J. Peters High School. He served in the US Army during World War II and returned to New Orleans where he began his lifelong banking. He retired in 1987 as a vice president.

Levitan was committed to the Jewish community in New Orleans and his generous and kind spirit was reciprocated by all who knew him. He served on the JCRS board from 1985 to 1999 and was the board's treasurer and the endowment trustee chair for a number of years.

Memorial donations were suggested to Jewish Children's Regional Service (3500 N.

Causeway Blvd, #1120, Metairie, LA 70002.)

## Ronald Gary Victor



RONALD GARY VICTOR, M.D., a cardiologist affiliated with the Hypertension Center at Cedars-Sinai Hospital, passed away on September 10 in Los Angeles after a battle with pancreatic cancer. He was 66.

Victor was a native of New Orleans and graduated from Isidore Newman School. He attended college at Cornell University, where he graduated summa cum laude with distinction. He earned his medical degree from Tulane University and completed two residencies at UCLA before completing cardiology fellowships at Duke University, the University of Iowa and the University of Uppsala in Sweden.

Dr. Victor joined the faculty of Cedars-Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles in 2009 as director of Clinical Research and director of the Hypertension Center, where he was noted for continuing his landmark research on high blood pressure in the male African-American community. His study was recently published in the New England Journal of Medicine.

A noted molecular biologist, he was also credited for pioneering stem cell research into the treatment of Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

Throughout his career Victor was recognized with countless awards for his outstanding and trailblazing research. He was the primary investigator on more than 140 studies published in peer-reviewed medical journals and was published four times in the New England Journal of Medicine.

Victor was a giant in the field of medicine, but was also noted for his big heart and his zeal for life.

He is survived by his wife Vicki Victor; his father Harold D. Victor; and his sister Sally Victor Siegel (Bill).

Memorial gifts were suggested to Cedars-Sinai Hospital in Los Angeles in memory of Dr. Victor, where gifts will be used to further his pioneering work in community intervention efforts to combat hypertension or donate to the charity of your choice.

Relatives and friends attended a graveside service at Hebrew Rest Cemetery #3 Sunday, September 16, 2018. Emeritus Rabbi Ed Paul Cohn of Temple Sinai conducted the service.

Funeral arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.

## Shirley Aronoff

SHIRLEY ARONOFF, a resident of New Orleans, died on Tuesday, September 18, 2018. She was 86.

Aronoff was an authority on antiques and collectibles for much of her life. At the time of her passing, she was a resident of the Poydras Home.

Aronoff worked with engineer Tommy Sands as a member of his administrative staff. A native

of Atlanta, she never married and fell in love with New Orleans. She worked on a number of projects dealing with environmental issues at Tulane University and joined Temple Sinai in 1976. She became a member of the synagogue's administrative staff in the late 1970s and returned to work there as an early member of Rabbi Ed Paul Cohn's staff.

Aronoff lived for a time in the French Quarter and the Irish Channel. Following the devastation from Hurricane Katrina, she relocated to Atlanta and lived there for five years. Missing New Orleans, though, she returned in 2010.

She is survived by a nephew, Terry Aronoff of Israel and a niece, Debbie Aronoff, and a sister-in-law, Marlene Aronoff, both of Atlanta.

A graveside service was held at Hebrew Rest Mausoleum. Rabbi Matthew Reimer officiated. Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp.

## Shelley "Mimi" Glazer Middleberg



SHELLEY "MIMI" GLAZER MIDDLEBERG passed away peacefully at her home surrounded by her loving family and friends on Monday, September 24, 2018. She was 68.

A longtime community volunteer and organizer,

Middleberg enjoyed various roles at the Contemporary Arts Center, where she was most recently involved as a director of sales and hospitality manager. A tireless arts enthusiast, Middleberg was president of the Louis A. and Lillian L. Glazer Family Foundation, which supports the arts, various Jewish institutions and other philanthropic organizations.

Born in Knoxville, TN., she moved to New Orleans as a child. She was an early resident of the Warehouse District and could often be found wearing one of her many bright scarves at any one of the neighborhood establishments.

She is survived by her sons Benjamin (Lauren) and Aaron (Kelley) Middleberg, her sister Carole Jacobson, her brother Jay Glazer and three grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at Beth Israel Synagogue on Wednesday, September 26. Interment followed at Jefferson Memorial Gardens where Rabbi Gabriel Greenberg officiated.

Donations were suggested to either Congregation Beth Israel (4004 W. Esplanade Ave. Metairie, LA 70002) or the Contemporary Arts Center (900 Camp St., New Orleans, LA 70130.)

## Arthur "Art" Silverman



ARTHUR "ART" SILVERMAN, M.D., a retired urologist and surgeon, who later in life became an important sculptor passed away at Ashton Manor in Luling, LA on Monday, September 24, 2018. He was 95.



Silverman was an intellectually curious man who developed fluency in Spanish so that he could talk without a translator to his many Spanish-speaking patients. Later, he became fluent in French and Italian. Silverman's curiosity extended to math. His art explored the representation of the geometry of tetrahedral, intriguing the national math-in-art community.

The Silvermans created and lived in an art-filled home and garden in a former neighborhood tavern in uptown New Orleans. Silverman's sculptures were rendered in aluminum, steel, bronze, stone and water; he also painted and drew tetrahedral forms. His most prominent sculpture is a 20-ton, 60-foot tall fountain on the corner of Poydras and Loyola Avenues. Other notable works were erected at New Orleans City Hall as well as on the campuses of the University of New Orleans, Tulane, Loyola and Xavier Universities. Silverman's work has been held in many private and corporate collections both locally and across the United States.

Dr. Silverman was predeceased in 2008 by his wife Merce Silverman, to whom he was married for 63 years. He is survived by his children, Linda Silverman Buczek, Jim Silverman (Vicki Whiting) and Jon Silverman (Lindy), and by four grandchildren.

Funeral services were private. A remembrance of his life was held on Saturday, October 6, 2018 at the Newcomb Art Museum on the campus of Tulane University.

Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home.

## Connie Cohen Tolmas



CONSTANCE "CONNIE" COHEN TOLMAS, passed away of natural causes on Monday, September 24, in her hometown of Dallas, Texas. She was 90 years old.

Although she had many connections to Dallas, she spent a significant amount of her time living in New Orleans, where she raised her family and was an active member of the local Jewish community.

Following her graduation from Highland Park High School, she attended Newcomb College, majoring in art. It was at Tulane University that she met the love of her life, Dr. Hyman C. Tolmas.

In addition to supporting her husband in his busy pediatrics practice, she was an active volunteer for many New Orleans area organizations. She was a two term president of Shir Chadash Sisterhood and she served as the president of the Southern Branch of the Women's League of Conservative Judaism too. Her commitment to promote the State of Israel Bonds earned her along with her late husband the 1993 Aliyah Award of the Year.

She was predeceased by her husband of 65 years, Dr. Hyman C. Tolmas. She was survived by her daughter, Dr. Jeanie Tolmas;

her son, Alan Tolmas (Gina) and two granddaughters.

A memorial service was held on Thursday, September 27 at 10:30 am at Tiferet Israel Congregation in Dallas and was followed by interment at the Sparkman-Hillcrest Cemetery.

Memorial donations were suggested to Tiferet Israel Congregation in Dallas, the Jewish Children's Regional Service, Congregation Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation, or any animal shelter/rescue organization.

## Igor Arkady Vizelberg



IGOR ARKADY

VIZELBERG, the owner and president of IV League International Ship Supply, died after a three-year battle with pancreatic cancer on October 19, 2018 at his home in Kenner. He was 58.

Vizelberg was born in Ukraine, but left Kiev with both of his parents in 1979. He became an American citizen in 1984. He attended the University of New Orleans and graduated first with a bachelor's degree and then a master's degree in Medical Statistics. He worked on the Bogalusa Heart Study as an employee at LSU School of Medicine under Dr. Gerald Berenson.

Vizelberg was a man of many talents. He worked in purchasing and delivery management in conjunction with his firm. He was fluent in Russian and Ukrainian and often served as a translator in the legal, medical, petrochemical, and shipping fields. He was a lover of soccer, talented comedy performer and played the guitar.

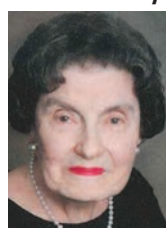
Because many of his family members had died during the Holocaust, Vizelberg was very involved with tracing the ancestry of his family through genealogy.

Igor is survived by his wife of 27 years, Heidi Graubarth Vizelberg; his mother, Anna Bat Vizelberg, and his son, Maxbetter Solomon Vizelberg.

Funeral services were conducted by Rabbi David Gerber on Sunday, October 21 at Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home. Burial followed at the Joseph Street Cemetery.

The family requested that donations be made in Vizelberg's name to the Lustgarten Foundation for Pancreatic Research in Woodbury, New York, Congregation Gates of Prayer's Tikkun Olam Fund for the New Orleans Women and Children's Shelter.

## Leona Bersadsky



LEONA BERSADSKY, M.D., died peacefully in her residence after a long battle with heart disease on Sunday, October 21, 2018.

She was predeceased by her longtime companion, Dr. Dorothy Bratsas, and is survived by a number of nieces and nephews.

Dr. Bersadsky was a practicing psychiatrist in New Orleans for over 40 years and was devoted to her work. She loved traveling the world, spending evenings with her friends.

A graveside service was conducted by Rabbi Ed Paul Cohn on Tuesday, October 23, 2018 at Hebrew Rest #3 Cemetery, (corner Frenchmen and Pelopidas).

Memorial donations were requested to the New Orleans Chapter of the American Heart Association, 110 Veterans Blvd, Metairie, LA 70005.

Arrangements were by Tharp-Sontheimer-Tharp Funeral Home of Metairie.

## Max Y. Rosenberg

MAX Y. ROSENBERG, M.D., passed away at his home in Dallas on November 17, 2018. He was 89.

Originally from St. Louis, Rosenberg moved to New Orleans in 1954, where he began his medical career practicing obstetrics and gynecology. In addition to loving the world of medicine and learning, Max enjoyed fishing with his friends and family, exercising and inventing various medical and other devices as well as being a great mentor in his field.

He also served as a captain in the U.S. Army, stationed in Paris, France in the late 1950s.

Dr. Rosenberg was predeceased by his wife of 47 years, Carol R. Rosenberg, in 2004 and moved to Dallas following his evacuation from Hurricane Katrina.

He is survived by his children Lisa Stern, Gary Allen and Karen Morgan; six grandchildren; a brother, Albert Rosenberg, brother-in-law of Jane Goldring, and father-in-law of Monique Allen.

A graveside service for the family was held on Friday, November 23, 2018. Memorial donations can be made to Cure Alzheimer's Fund.

## Gerald Sanders Berenson



GERALD SANDERS BERENSON, M.D., a leading researcher and internationally renowned academic specialist in cardiac studies and also acknowledged as one of the most dedicated New Orleans Jewish community leaders, died on

Thanksgiving, Thursday, November 22, 2018. He was 96.

Dr. Berenson was born in Bogalusa, Louisiana, the place where the so-called Bogalusa Study was created in which he and his dedicated staff of researchers traced the identifiable risk factors for cardiovascular disease due to biological and social factors beginning in childhood and adolescence. The study lasted for more than four decades and has been cited as foundational in establishing ways to identify and reduce risk factors such as hypertension and high cholesterol levels that would, in turn, minimize cardiovascular disease in older adults.

Berenson was an author of more than 700





academic and scholarly medical publications. He promoted the work of others above himself, a rarity in the academic world. Despite his key leadership in the many teams he participated in, he unselfishly insisted his name be listed last.

After receiving his medical training from the Louisiana State University School of Medicine, he began his studies, which led him to found his Heart Smart program instilling in youth self-respect and acceptance of others in addition to improved nutrition and other factors. Dr. Berenson definitively linked the high dropout rate to a higher incidence of cardiovascular disease. His work continued in Washington Parish for many years.

Berenson was married for 67 years to the former Joan Seidenbach, whom he met in New Orleans. Together they became inspirational leaders of the Jewish community. Their work across the length and breadth of Jewish New Orleans included giving generously to the annual Jewish Federation of Greater New Orleans campaign, and other highly visible institutions such as the Jewish Community Day School and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The couple were recipients of many high profile awards.

Besides his wife, he is survived by his children Les Berenson, Ann (Richard) Goldfarb, Robert (Irene) Berenson and Laurie (Dale) Maas, nine grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

A funeral service was conducted by Rabbi Deborah Silver at Shir Chadash Conservative Congregation, A private burial service followed.

## Jack Caron

JACK CARON, 97, a former resident of New Orleans, passed away on December 14, 2018.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Shirley Caron; his children, Stan (Debbie) Caron, Ron (Maury) Caron and Minette (Cory) Hillebrand; his sister, Zeline Klau; eight grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Caron was a longtime member of Temple Sinai.

A graveside service was held on Monday, December 17, 2018, at Hebrew Rest No. 3 Cemetery by Rabbi Mathew Remer.

Memorial donations in his memory were suggested to the American Cancer Society or Temple Sinai, 6227 St. Charles Ave., New Orleans, LA 70118.

## Joseph Konopny

JOSEPH KONOPNY, an investment banker died on Saturday, December 22, 2018. He was 73.

Konopny was a resident of New Orleans since the 1990s and regularly attended services at the Uptown Chabad House.

Born in a Displaced Persons camp in 1945 to Holocaust survivor parents, he emigrated to the U.S., living in rural Connecticut on his parents' chicken farm. As a youngster, he was enrolled in a nearby cheder (Hebrew school) where his Hebrew teacher was Israel Gordon, the uncle of Bluma and Zelig Rivkin and the great-uncle of Rabbis Mendel and Yochanan Rivkin.

A graveside service was conducted at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 23, at Ahavas Shalom Cemetery, 4000 Elysian Fields Avenue. Rabbi Yossie Nemes officiated.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations are suggested to the charity of your choice.

## Beth Bloch Issacson Rosenthal

BETH WRIGHT BLOCH ISSACSON ROSENTHAL passed away at her home on December 28, 2018. She was 92.

Rosenthal was active in community affairs, including The League of Women Voters, the United Way, and the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and served in many capacities with, and in the late sixties as the president, of the New Orleans Section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW).

She was reared in Eunice, Louisiana, part of a large family of six siblings. During her high school years she was introduced by family friends to her first husband, Ted Bloch, who at the time was a student at Tulane University. After graduating from high school she attended and graduated from Newcomb College with a degree in psychology. After graduation she married Bloch, who had just graduated from Tulane Medical School. The two spent their first

married years while her husband served in the Army in San Antonio, Texas and Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Ultimately, they chose to settle in New Orleans to raise their family.

After her husband's untimely death in 1975, she became instrumental in developing sorely needed EMS services in the city while working with Dr. Norman McSwain.

After marrying Herschel Isaacson of Atlanta, she moved there, where she lived for the next 20 years. She immediately made new friends and immersed herself in the many cultural activities that Atlanta had to offer. She particularly loved attending symphony concerts and taking in exhibits at the local art museum. She affiliated with the Atlanta Section of the National Council of Jewish Women and took part in its many social service programs.

After Isaacson died in 1995, she remained in Atlanta and later married Dr. J. William Rosenthal in 2000 and they resettled in New Orleans. Together with her late husband Dr. Rosenthal (died in 2007) she traveled the world. Her biggest regret in her final years was that it became too difficult to travel or to leave for an extended length of time.

She is survived by her children, Ann Bloch Kern (Stephen), and Dr. Ted Bloch III (Suzie); Robert Isaacson (Nancy), Dr. Keith Isaacson, D. G. Isaacson Klingensmith (Bob), Nancy Isaacson Gunter (Brian); 12 grandchildren; and eight great-grandchildren.

A memorial service was held at Temple Sinai on Wednesday, January 2, 2019. Emeritus Rabbi Ed Paul Cohn and Cantor Joel Colman officiated. Internment followed the service at Metairie Cemetery.

Contributions were suggested to the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra, or the Temple Fund at Congregation Temple Sinai of New Orleans.

Arrangements were by Lake Lawn Metairie Funeral Home.

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