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# Jewish Exponent

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KleinLife's

# Andre Krug

keeps abreast of the local  
Ukrainian community

Page 6



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# PHILADELPHIA Jewish Exponent

2100 Arch Street, 4th Floor, Philadelphia, Pa. 19103

Vol. 134, No 46 Published Weekly Since 1887

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**JEWISH EXPONENT**, a Mid-Atlantic Media publication, is published weekly since 1887 with a special issue in September (ISSN 0021-6437) ©2022 Jewish Exponent (all rights reserved). Periodical postage paid in Philadelphia, PA, and additional offices. Postmaster: All address changes should be sent to Jewish Exponent Circulation Dept., 11459 Cronhill Drive, Suite A, Owings Mills, Maryland, 21117. A one-year subscription is \$50, 2 years, \$100. Foreign rates on request.

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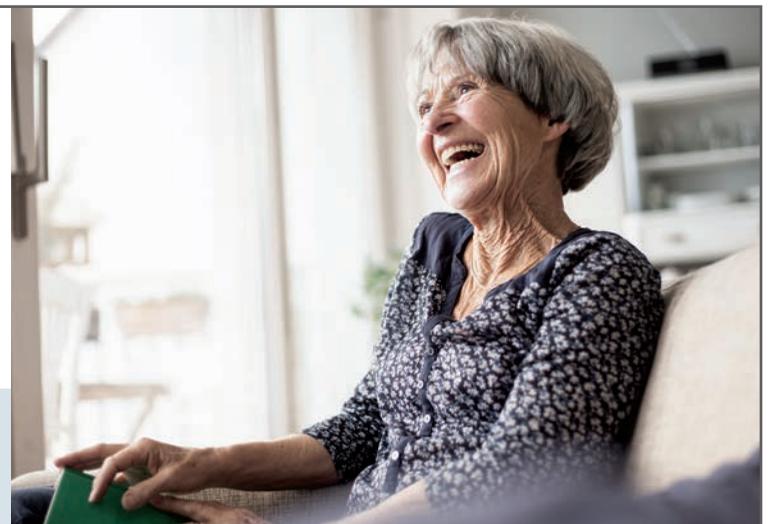
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Courtesy of Andre Krug.



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## Israeli-Canadian Hockey Star Shares Dramatic Escape from Ukraine

Israeli-Canadian hockey player Eliezer Sherbatov detailed his harrowing experience fleeing Ukraine on Instagram and in an emotional interview with Canada's The Sports Network.

Sherbatov, a longtime captain of Israel's national hockey team, made headlines in 2020 when he joined a Polish team that plays in Oswiecim, or in English, Auschwitz, the town where the Auschwitz concentration camp is located. He has played for HC Mariupol in the Ukrainian Hockey League since last summer, and his team was staying in a hotel in Druzhkivka, Ukraine, when Russia's invasion began Feb. 24.

Sherbatov spent the next five days traveling through Ukraine by train, ultimately reaching Lviv, where he connected with the Israeli consulate.

Sherbatov, who was born in Rehovot, Israel, joined a busload of refugees that crossed into Warsaw, Poland. The 30-year-old credits the

Israeli consulate and volunteers with getting him out, calling them "amazing people, amazing organization."

He was made de facto head of the bus, he told TSN.

"They got us on a bus with kids and elderly people," he said. "They made me responsible for that bus because nobody at the consulate was coming with us because they had to wait for others. They made me responsible for those 17 people and it was the hardest thing I've ever done in my life, to be responsible for 17 people when it's a matter of life and death."

Sherbatov made it home to Montreal on March 1 — where his wife and two young children were waiting. He had not yet met his son, who was born while he was playing in Mariupol.

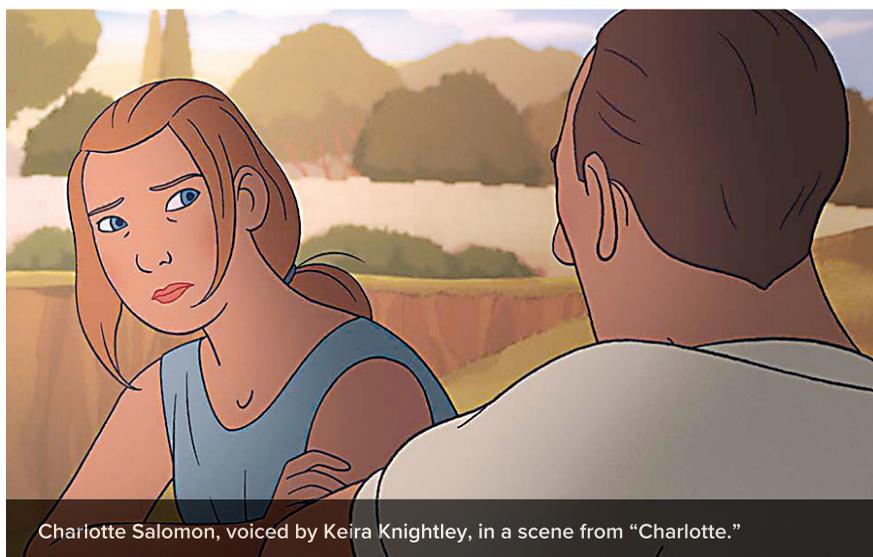
"When I got home to my family, it's emotions. It's crying," he told the Canadian network. "I met my son for the first time, and I thought I would never see them. I thought I would never see my family."

— Jacob Gurvis



Eliezer Sherbatov plays for HC Mariupol in the Ukrainian Hockey League.

## Keira Knightley to Voice German-Jewish Painter Charlotte Salomon, Who Died in Auschwitz, for Animated Film



Charlotte Salomon, voiced by Keira Knightley, in a scene from "Charlotte."

Keira Knightley is lending her voice to an animated film on the story of Charlotte Salomon, a German-

Jewish painter who produced hundreds of works in hiding during World War II before being deported

to Auschwitz.

"Charlotte," set for release in theaters on April 22, follows Salomon from her early years growing up in Berlin, her aspirations to become a great artist and her escape to the south of France where she lived until her deportation and death.

While in hiding with her family, she painted approximately 800 works, which became an autobiographical series titled "Life? or Theater?: A Song-play." Amsterdam's Jewish Historical Museum showcased them all in a 2018 exhibition, which it has kept online in digital form. (The museum previously showed many of them in 1981 as well.)

The works were inspired by her own life, which was full of tragedy before the Holocaust — several fam-

ily members had committed suicide. In hiding, her grandfather turned predatory, and she poisoned him, admitting the deed in a 35-page letter.

"Only by doing something mad can I hope to stay sane," says an animated Salomon, voiced by the two-time Academy Award nominee Knightley, in a released clip from the film.

Her paintings were saved by family members who survived the war.

The film also stars Academy Award winner Jim Broadbent, Academy Award nominee Brenda Blethyn, Sam Claflin, Eddie Marsan, the late Helen McCrory, Academy Award nominee Sophie Okonedo and Mark Strong.

— Caleb Guedes-Reed

Sherbatov: WOJTEK BRADWANSKI/AFP via Getty Images via JTA; Film: Screenshot from YouTube via JTA



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# Area Jews Champion Efforts to Help Fleeing Ukrainians

BY SASHA ROGELBERG

**T**he harrowing scenes of Russia's invasion of Ukraine have hit close to home for many area Jews in past weeks.

For Jennifer Ferd, a member of Philadelphia's Russian Speaking Jewish Moishe House, news of the war made her "furious."

"There really is no need for this," she said.

Ferd's best friend is from Ukraine and her stepfather is from Odessa. Knowing her family and friends are in danger overseas made Ferd feel "helpless."

Moussia Goldstein, who co-directs the Chabad Jewish Center at Drexel University with her husband, is in a similar position.

Her uncle and aunt, Rabbi Avraham and Chaya Wolff, moved to Odessa 20 years ago to rebuild the Jewish community there after decades of Soviet oppression. They set up the Mishpacha Children's Orphanage — home to 120 children — a senior home for Holocaust survivors, Jewish schools and a synagogue.

On March 2 at 4 a.m., the orphans left Ukraine and arrived in Berlin on March 4 after nearly 60 hours of travel. Many of the children, including a 5-week-old dropped off at the orphanage three weeks prior, had no paperwork. Buses to transport them cost \$4,000 each, which the family was able to finance with the assistance of the Ukrainian Chabad community.

Because of Odessa's proximity to the Moldovan border, the Wolff family was able to assist other Ukrainians in crossing the border, only just fleeing the country themselves on March 4.

"The ways these people are getting out are pure, pure miracles," Goldstein said.

The emotional proximity of the crisis in Ukraine has motivated Philadelphia Jews to double down on efforts to support loved ones and strangers alike overseas.

The Mishpacha Chabad Odessa

Emergency Campaign organized by the Wolff family has raised more than \$491,000 as of March 7, still only 50% of a \$1 million goal.

Ferd tried to set up a GoFundMe campaign to support the Philadelphia-based United Ukraine Relief Committee, but the campaign was rejected. She has opted to donate to efforts led by the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania.

Jewish organizations in the area have organized larger campaigns as part of a national effort to raise dollars for Ukrainian refugees and families.

Andre Krug, president and CEO of KleinLife, who provides support to Russian and Ukrainian immigrants and refugees, many of whom are Holocaust survivors, is not new to this work.

Originally from Kharkiv, Ukraine, Krug, now a Huntingdon Valley resident, has heard the news about bombs detonating near the schools he attended growing up and by the city's mayor's office. His wife, originally from Kyiv, had her childhood neighborhood bombed.

"Frankly, I've lived in this country



Chabad Jewish Center at Drexel University co-director Moussia Goldstein's uncle Avraham Wolff holds a month-old orphan at Mishpacha Children's Orphanage in Odessa.



Children from the Mishpacha Children's Orphanage flee from Odessa across the Moldovan border.

Courtesy of Moussia Goldstein

for 30-some years, but I never expected it to hit this hard psychologically,” he said.

In addition to continuing trauma-informed counseling to restless Ukrainian immigrants in Philadelphia, Krug has encouraged others to donate to the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia’s Ukraine Emergency Fund.

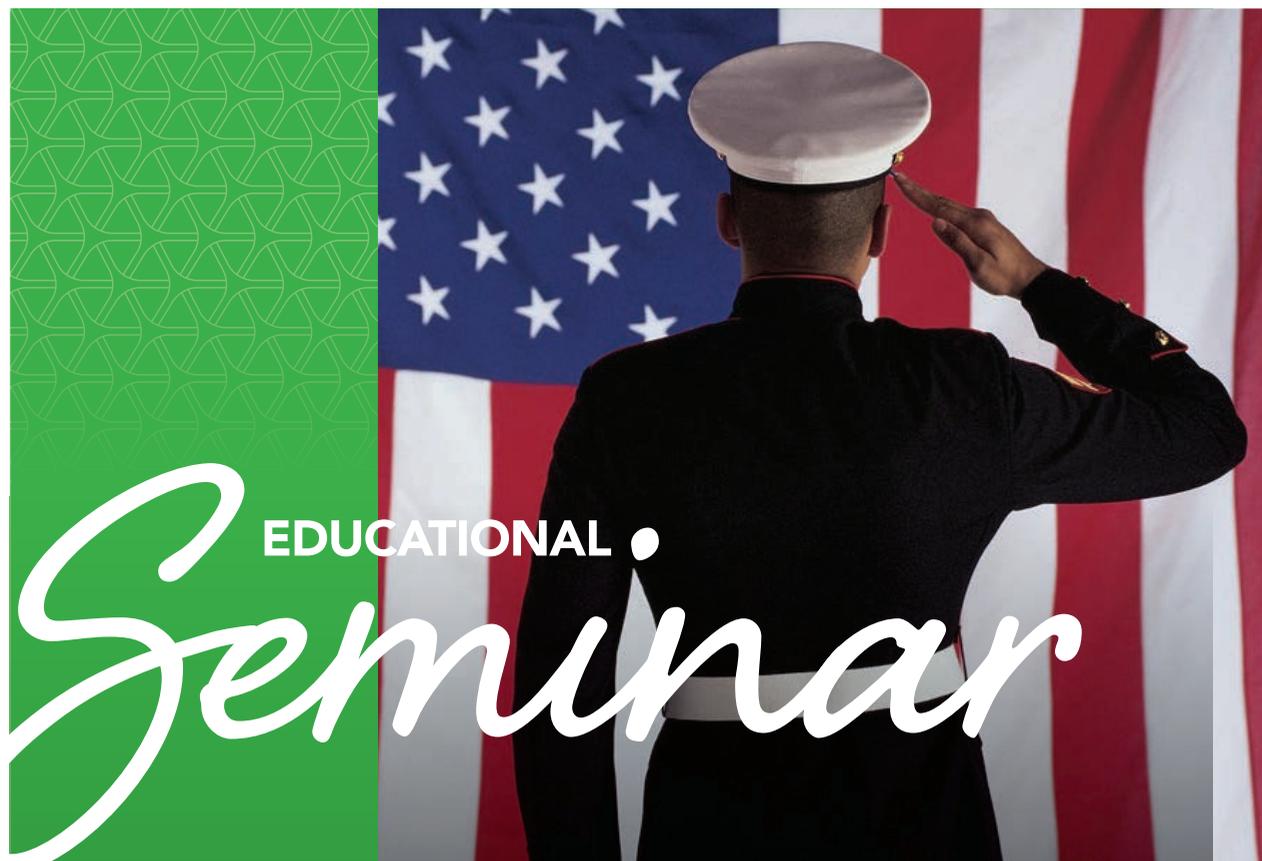
“I prefer to do monetary support because it’s cheaper to buy stuff there [in Ukraine]. So if you give money to reputable sources like [Jewish] Federation, like JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee), it’s going to get where it’s supposed to get.”

The emotional proximity of the crisis in Ukraine has motivated Philadelphia Jews to double down on efforts to support loved ones and strangers alike overseas.

The Jewish Federations of North America, in partnership with JDC, the Jewish Agency for Israel, World ORT and other organizations, identified a goal of \$20 million to raise to support the estimated 200,000 Ukrainian Jews. Forty- to 50,000 of those Jews are “vulnerable populations,” and 10,000 are Holocaust survivors, according to Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia President and CEO Michael Balaban.

As of March 4, the Jewish Federation’s campaign exceeded \$400,000 in donations.

“The needs are only escalating throughout this crisis,” Balaban said. “We’ve got pillars of the community [and] people that we’ve never heard of just stepping forward to provide



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- How to apply for this little-known financial benefit



**Scott Ferguson** is a Gulf War Veteran and founder of Veterans Benefits Assistance Program.

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assistance.”

But beyond sending money to reliable sources, many advocates for Ukrainian refugees have their hands tied, warned HIAS Pennsylvania Executive Director Cathryn Miller-Wilson.

“Unfortunately, right now, there’s very little that we’re able to do,” Miller-Wilson said.

HIAS PA is unable to begin resettling Ukrainians until the U.S. government grants Temporary Protected Status to those who have already fled to the U.S. and asylum to those still trying to leave the country.

For Ukrainians in the U.S. on a temporary visa, the lack of TPS puts them at risk of deportation. Though Ukrainians here permanently can petition for relatives to immigrate, the process can take years, and many of the U.S. consulates in Ukraine are now closed.

Additionally, petitioning occurs through the Lautenberg Amendment, a federal law created in response to the attacks on Soviet Jews, and the amendment needs to be reauthorized every

year, which has not been done in 2022.

Miller-Wilson encourages Philadelphia residents, particularly U.S. citizens, to call their Congress members to request that the Biden administration grant refugee status to Ukrainians. She hopes that as the crisis evolves, the U.S. will loosen more bureaucratic restrictions on those trying to flee their war-torn countries.

“Don’t keep being wedded to structures that, even in the best of times, were terrible, and now are useless,” she said.

For Jews in particular, supporting Ukrainian refugees goes beyond just showing solidarity for Ukraine, Krug believes.

“Although it plays out in Ukraine, it’s not about Ukraine at all,” Krug said.

Krug argued that Putin’s decision to invade Ukraine is part of a greater effort to rebuild a Soviet stronghold in the region, an attempt that more and more resembles the events of Nazi rule leading up to the Holocaust.

“Every Jewish person should be very sensitive to this issue,” he said. **JE**



Children from the Mishpacha Children’s Orphanage leave Odessa.

Courtesy of Moussia Goldstein

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# Residents Reflect on COVID Era Two Years in

BY JARRAD SAFFREN

In Philadelphia, the mask requirement for indoor establishments is no more, and the same is true across most of the United States.

It feels like a post-COVID moment, especially as the news cycle rushes thumb-first into a new memetic war: the literal war in Ukraine started by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

But in the Greater Philadelphia area, there's a feeling that is probably also common around the country: COVID may be ending, but we have changed, and we're not sure if that's good or bad. In reality, it's probably both.

Local Jews did their best to find clarity about this confusing time.

Lela Casey, a Doylestown resi-

dent and mother of three, said there were two big things she'd miss from pre-pandemic days — moving about in the world without a heavy feeling of risk and being able to talk to her neighbors without some political implication hanging over them.

Casey used to be able to travel without thinking twice. The writer's social life once existed in New York City, where she'd meet up with writer friends. Now, neither of those things are true.

The mom also used to be able to talk to her neighbors without grouping them into the mask or anti-mask categories. But in March 2022, she no longer can.

"It's become this identifying factor, and that's difficult to stop," Casey said. "I hope it goes away."

There may not be an upside to the political creep into neighborhoods that we've all experienced during the pandemic, but there is an upside to traveling less, according to Casey. She now focuses much more on local issues.

In November, Casey was part of a group of parents that lobbied the Central Bucks School District to condemn the antisemitism that was breaking out in the district. Central Bucks leaders listened and denounced antisemitism at a December school board meeting.

Casey said it's "healthy for all of us to take care of our communities."

"And not only to take care of our communities, but to have a community," she added. "When you're always running off to work or wherever, you don't pay attention to it."

Daniela Burg of Furlong has undergone a similar shift during the past couple of years.

Burg, who works for an insurance company, spent her weekdays in an office before March 2020. She also formed a tight bond with a group of female classmates at a local Orangetheory Fitness.

But COVID moved Burg's office to her kitchen table and her workout routine to the screen on which she takes her Peloton classes. (Burg has "hacked" the Peloton system by not buying the bike, she explains, paying only \$13 a month.)

"Sometimes, I do miss getting up and leaving the house," Burg said.

At the same time, the mother of two has a lot more time to finish work, attend to her children and talk to her

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“Relationships have become stronger and more meaningful. We’re very close now.”

DANIELA BURG



Furlong resident Daniela Burg now works from home, which has both good and bad points. Courtesy of Daniela Burg

friends on the phone. Plus, she feels closer with the fitness women who she has managed to keep in touch with and continue to see.

Burg’s relationships are now about quality over quantity, she said.

“Relationships have become stronger and more meaningful,” she added. “We’re very close now.”

In one sense, COVID has divided and/or isolated people; but in another, it has brought them closer together.

T.J. Kozin of Jameson believes it

might be more of the latter.

Even political polarization, usually considered a source of division, has connected people around mutual interests, according to Kozin. And these are often people who, in less political and local times, may never have spoken.

“A lot of people just went to work, cooked dinner and went to bed,” Kozin said of pre-pandemic times. “Now they might go to work, come home, go to a school board meeting and go to bed.”

Fred Poritsky, a Richboro resident



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Fred Poritsky of Richboro misses in-person meetings.

Photo by Lynn Goodwin of Photos by Lynn

“It’s easier to take care of your children, get your kids to preschool. It’s given people a better life-work experience.”

FRED PORITSKY

who runs a digital marketing agency, doesn’t see this new social dynamic changing, either.

Poritsky said he misses in-person meetings and interactions in general, and that he sees them as part of his company’s future. But he understands that work culture has shifted, and that the hybrid paradigm is likely here to stay.

He also called that a good thing.

“It’s easier to take care of your children, get your kids to preschool,”

Poritsky said. “It’s given people a better life-work experience.”

But in this new environment, as Poritsky and others explained, there are still questions that people need to start asking themselves.

When do you leave work? What’s important for you to go out and do? Who’s important to you to go out and see?

“Most people, in some way, are excited to get back to human contact,” Poritsky said. **JE**

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# South Jersey Synagogue Hires New Rabbi

BY JARRAD SAFFREN

**C**ongregation Beth El in Voorhees, New Jersey, has a new senior rabbi in David Englander.

Englander, 50, is moving to South Jersey after 22 years at B'nai Torah Congregation, a Conservative synagogue in Boca Raton, Florida. He is making the move because he likes what he sees in Beth El, also a Conservative institution; in addition, he wants to become a senior rabbi for the first time.

“Now’s my chance to take on a bigger leadership role,” Englander said. “But more so, it’s exciting to join a vibrant

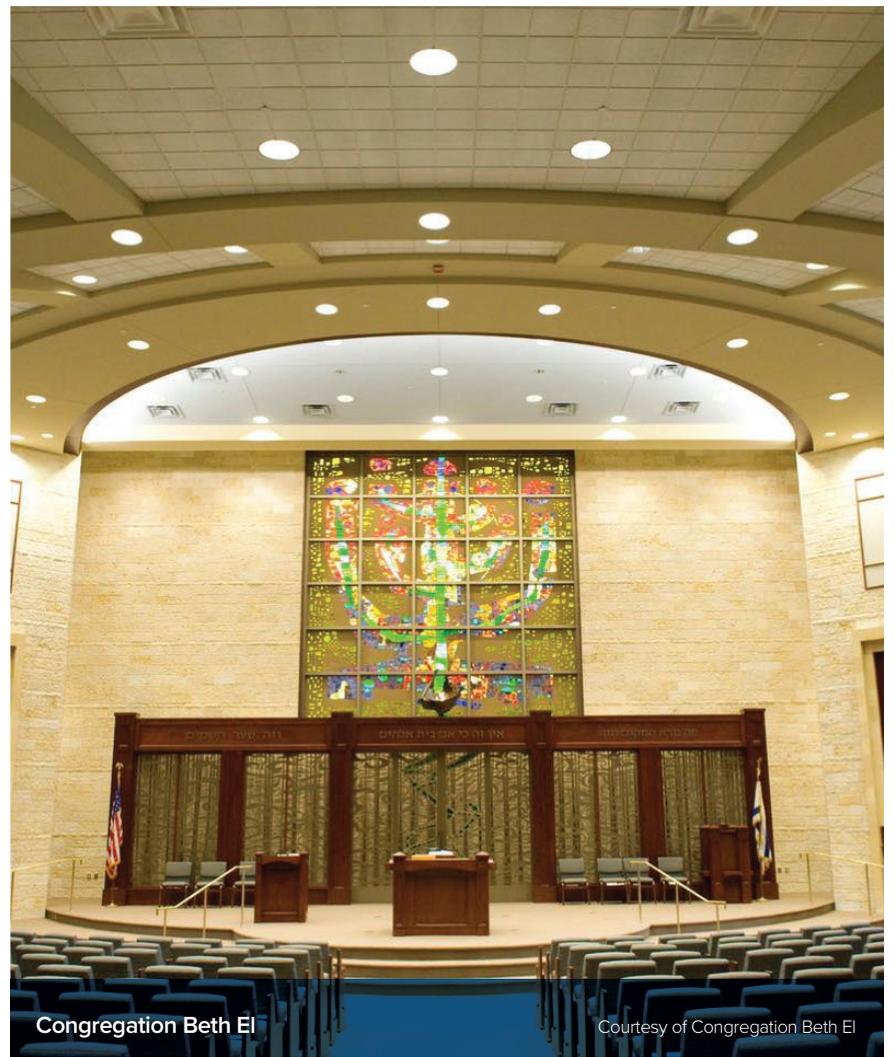
community.”

The rabbi will replace Aaron Krupnick, who will step down this summer after leading Beth El for 27 years. Krupnick is leaving behind a congregation with about 780 families, according to synagogue President Stuart Sauer.

Englander understands what it takes to serve a big community, as B'nai Torah counts roughly 1,000 families in its membership.

“The success of a rabbi in any size congregation is connected to relationships,” he said. “Making sure people can rely on you for a listening ear.”

Sauer believes Englander will be good at the relationship part. He said



Congregation Beth El

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the new rabbi connected with the congregation during his winter visit as part of the interview process.

Members submitted questions for a series of town meetings, and the rabbi's answers were "on point," Sauer said. During those same answers, he elaborated on potential aspects of his vision.

That vision part, according to Englander, is the key difference between his new role and his previous one. In Florida, the rabbi contributes ideas that could shape the direction of his synagogue. But in New Jersey, he will have the final say on the direction, although he is quick to say that he can't make those decisions alone.

**"The success of a rabbi in any size congregation is connected to relationships. Making sure people can rely on you for a listening ear."**

RABBI DAVID ENGLANDER

Englander intends to lean on Beth El's existing educators, professional staff members and volunteers to help run the synagogue's programs. The congregation offers education options for people of all ages, and its Early Childhood Center welcomes more than 100 students per year.

The new rabbi does not want to fix something that works.

"They educate from infants until our most seasoned members," he said. "They have a terrific religious school."

But there are some new directions in which Englander will have to take the lead.

New rabbis in the COVID era are asking themselves an existential question. What is a synagogue in a world with both physical and virtual dimensions?

Englander has a philosophical answer, which can become a foundation for a practical answer. He believes the Jewish community functions best



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in person, but he thinks it can function even better with a digital addition.

“We have two doors,” Englander said. “A physical door and a virtual door.”

He sees two ways in which a synagogue can use the digital space.

There’s the add-on option to Shabbat, High Holiday and other services, which Englander views as a more passive experience for people at home but still “high quality.” Then there’s the more active and personal use for “classes for all ages,” Englander said.

“There will be much more opportunity for interaction and for people to feel like they’re part of a conversation,” he added.

While Englander believes the virtual part is important, he thinks another frontier may even be more important. He said more and more people today are looking for volunteer opportunities and so, as a synagogue leader, he hopes to focus on “harnessing people’s desire to do good,” he said.

This means emphasizing volunteer opportunities that will make an impact



From left: Congregation Beth El President Stuart Sauer and Rabbi David Englander sign the contract for Englander to become Beth El’s new rabbi.  
Photo by Alicia Drozen

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“Saying Shabbat ends when three stars come out on Saturday night is different from saying it ends when we want it to end. We’re still guided by our understanding of Jewish law in those practices. We’re just more inclusive.”

RABBI DAVID ENGLANDER

on the community and help volunteers meet each other. Englander thinks community service may be the key to activating the younger generations that synagogues always need to court.

To do so, though, Beth El needs to take an inclusive approach, he said. Conservative Judaism no longer excludes women from certain roles, gays from full support in their Jewish journeys and Jews by choice in general, according to Englander. So, it’s incumbent upon Conservative institutions to

continue that ethos.

Inclusivity does not mean that a synagogue is no longer Conservative, either. As Englander explained, Conservatism is about following traditions, not only allowing certain people to follow them.

“Saying Shabbat ends when three stars come out on Saturday night is different from saying it ends when we want it to end,” the rabbi said. “We’re still guided by our understanding of Jewish law in those practices. We’re just more inclusive.” JE



## What’s going on in Jewish Philadelphia?

Submit an event or browse our online calendar to find out what’s happening at local synagogues, community organizations and venues!

Submit: [listings@jewishexponent.com](mailto:listings@jewishexponent.com)  
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# Three Ways to Celebrate Purim With Your Jewish Community

**T**he sweet smells of hamantaschen coming out of the oven, the raucous sounds of graggers cranking over the reading of the Megillah, the vibrant sights of children in costumes — you guessed it, Purim is just around the corner!

This year, Purim will take place on the evening of Wednesday, March 16 through Thursday, March 17. To get into the spirit of the holiday that commemorates Queen Esther saving the Jewish people, the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia's neighborhood Kehillot have planned pre- and post-Purim festivities for your whole family to enjoy.

"Right before the pandemic began, I attended the Kehillah of Old York Road Purim carnival. How joyous that now, two years later, we get to once again have in-person, community-wide Purim celebrations once again," said Addie Lewis Klein, the Jewish Federation's senior director of leadership development and community engagement. "Safety protocols are in place, and we can't wait to welcome you back to Kehillah celebrations."

See below for three in-person events to safely celebrate this beloved holiday:

## Old York Road Purim Carnival with an Israeli Twist

Sunday, March 13

Pre-K: 11 a.m.-noon | General: noon-2 p.m.

\$10 per family advance/\$20 per family at the door  
Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel

Join Old York Road for a festive Purim Carnival that the entire family will love! Enjoy delicious kosher food, exciting inflatables, Israeli-themed fun, a Magic Mirror photo studio, music, hamantaschen and prizes. Cost includes all activities. Food and drink available for purchase. Advanced online registration will close on Friday, March 11 at 10 a.m. **To register, visit [jewishphilly.org/purimcarnival](http://jewishphilly.org/purimcarnival).**

## PurimFest '22

Sunday, March 13, 2022 | 1-4 p.m.

\$18 per family

Kaiserman JCC; 45 Haverford Road

Don't you love Purim? The Lower Merion Jewish community sure does! Put on your costumes, and join the Kehillah of Lower Merion and Kaiserman JCC for a fami-



The Jewish Federation's Kehillah groups have fun and safe ways for your family to celebrate Purim this year.

Courtesy of Getty Images

ly-fun day of crafts, games and activities, theatrical performances and mask-making. Plus, there will be a moon bounce. Can't you smell the hamantaschen already?

**To register, visit [jewishphilly.org/purimfest](http://jewishphilly.org/purimfest).**

## Purim Car & Walking Parade

Sunday, March 20, 2022 | 1:15-3 p.m.

Parade starts at Beth Ami;  
9201 Old Bustleton Ave.

Don't put your costumes away just yet! Get dressed up — maybe even decorate your car — and join Northeast Jewish Life for a Purim car and walking parade. The day will include community, music, shalach manot goodie bags and even more fun. There will also be a contactless opportunity for matanot l'evyonim, char-

itable gifts to the poor. Please bring kosher canned or packaged non-perishable foods and toiletry items for a contactless donation to the Mitzvah Food Program. Advance registration closes on Friday, March 18. **To register, visit [jewishphilly.org/purimparade](http://jewishphilly.org/purimparade).**

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See the full Purim roundup at [jewishphilly.org/purim2022](http://jewishphilly.org/purim2022).

*The Kehillot are part of the Jewish Federation's neighborhood initiative to foster a vibrant Jewish community throughout the Greater Philadelphia region. To learn more about your Kehillah or community group, please contact Senior Director of Leadership Development and Community Engagement Addie Lewis Klein at [alewis@jewishphilly.org](mailto:alewis@jewishphilly.org).*

# YOU SHOULD KNOW ...

# Josh Weinberg

BY SASHA ROGELBERG

**J**osh Weinberg, 29, had his first big break on the set of Amazon Prime Video's "The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," not as an actor, but as the CEO behind the app Run A Better Set.

RABS is a web application that functions two-fold: It acts as a digital check-in system for extras on set and is an accounting tool, tracking when extras on set clock in and out and providing all payment paperwork digitally.

When the app was tested on the set of season three episode two of "Mrs. Maisel" during a scene with more than 700 extras and background characters, everything went off without a hitch.

Weinberg remembers a production assistant saying to him at the end of the day, "You saved my wrists. Will you do this again tomorrow?"

The Fairmount resident, who grew up in Wynnewood and was bar mitzvahed at Beth David Reform Congregation in Gladwyne, didn't expect to build a software company for a living, but now he can't imagine doing anything else.

In 2022, four years after RABS' 2018 genesis, Weinberg hopes to have 100 simultaneous clients at RABS and continue to expand services the software can offer to industry businesses, such as creating a database of extras for casting companies and doing proprietary software development for studios.

## **You initially wanted to be a screenwriter or producer growing up. What was your first experience in the industry?**

My first real experience was, when I was in college, I took a few of what they call "day player" jobs; you come on as a temporary worker as a PA (production assistant).

The first real job that facilitated RABS' creation was facilitated by my cousin, another good Yid from Lower Merion, Scott Rosenbaum. He was filming a show called "Queen of the South," which is actually still on the air, and it was shooting its first season in Dallas.

And so I get this job through good old-fashioned nepotism, living in

Dallas. And they said to me, "Josh, you are going to be what's called the extras PA, which means, here you go, kid: Here's 80 extras; here's 480 pieces of paper; here's a folding table and some highlighters and Post-It pads. Figure it out."

So, really, day one, I just looked at this process, and I thought it was horrible.

I went up to the producers a few days later and said, "Do you mind getting me the app that deals with all of this?" And they looked at me like, "What? What are you talking about?"

They basically said that doesn't exist, so I said, "OK, I'll make it exist."

## **Where did your interest in the film industry come from?**

My family would watch "Curb [Your Enthusiasm]" together, we would watch Mel Brooks movies ... We'd watch Eddie Murphy on "SNL" ("Saturday Night Live"). Those experiences are moving in a lot of ways.

I was always an excellent performer, really good in front of a crowd for whatever reason. So it seemed like the right fit because when I was on stage, I could really make people laugh.

And then when you get older, you sort of get kind of caught in the idea of, "This is how I can impress people; this is how I can make money; this is how I can get famous." All that stuff, in a way, created the beginning of a trajectory for me to go into show business.

## **When did you realize RABS had taken off?**

There's a financial moment when that actually happened, and there was also an attitude.

The attitude was there from the beginning. I just believe that if you want to create something, there has to be a strong intention — let's just call it a spiritual sacrifice.

But the financial moment ... COVID genuinely altered the trajectory of the business because suddenly I had a proven service that was COVID-safe and solved a lot of new production problems, and it was already there and reliable. And



shows needed to go paperless; they needed to be COVID-safe; they needed to connect the remote accounting offices to the productions; they needed to be more efficient because there was a lot more payment information to track.

So COVID, in that first wave of July 2020 — after the pandemic had been around for a few months and the productions came back — that's when, suddenly, we had the accelerated growth of what some would expect to come five years down the line happening within the first two years.

## **Why stay in Philadelphia?**

I've chosen to stay in Philadelphia because the economy has changed. The business is totally remote. Business is all over the country. Philadelphia is not a show business town. The reality is that shows are in Atlanta, New York, British Columbia, Toronto, Calgary.

They're everywhere, so you might as well be where you want to be. That's why I'm here. **JE**



## Rep. Ted Deutch Leaving Politics to Lead AJC

GABE FRIEDMAN | JTA.ORG

**R**ep. Ted Deutch, one of Congress' most outspoken members on Jewish issues for over a decade, is leaving politics to become the next CEO of the American Jewish Committee, the advocacy group announced on Feb. 28.

Deutch, a Democrat, has represented three different South Florida districts since 2010, after a stint in Florida state government. His current district, Florida's 22nd, includes the heavily Jewish Broward County.

Deutch chairs the House's Ethics Committee and holds senior spots on

both the prestigious Foreign Affairs and Judiciary committees. He has been a leading pro-Israel voice in the Democratic Party, particularly in recent years as progressive newcomers have been historically outspoken in their criticism of the Jewish state.

At AJC he will succeed David Harris, who has led the organization since 1990. Harris is best known for his work in helping Jews leave the former Soviet Union and for combating anti-Israel rhetoric at the United Nations. Deutch will take over on Oct. 1.

In a statement announcing Deutch's appointment, AJC President Harriet P. Schleifer said that "Ted's deep and life-long commitment to the Jewish com-

munity, Israel, and to the protection of democratic values is obvious to all who know him."

After the Florida Holocaust Museum in Tampa was hit with swastika graffiti last year, Deutch partially blamed progressive colleagues who compare Israel to apartheid South Africa for an uptick in antisemitism across the United States.

"When we have colleagues whose position is 'Palestine from the river to the sea,' which includes no place for a Jewish state, and when our colleagues...wrongly and falsely describe Israel as an apartheid state, there is a context for all of this," Deutch said at a virtual event with fellow lawmakers.

He was also sharply critical of former President Donald Trump and other Republicans; he was particularly critical of Trump's repeated insinuations that Jews who vote for Democrats are disloyal.

Deutch was also heavily involved in House Middle East policy, taking several trips to Israel as one of a few Middle East specialists on the House's foreign affairs committee. He was one of only a handful of Congressional Democrats to oppose the Iran nuclear deal before it was signed, but he disagreed with Trump's decision to pull the United States out of the agreement in 2017.

In the wake of the Parkland school

shooting, which occurred in his district, Deutch joined the chorus of local and national Democrats who called for gun reform legislation. His two daughters launched a project that involved selling hamantaschen to raise money for groups that lobby for stricter gun laws.

Deutch, 55, is now the 31st Democrat retiring from Congress ahead of this fall's midterm elections, in what pollsters are predicting will be a big year for Republicans. His district's boundaries are in flux like many others across the country ahead of the midterms; there is a chance that if he campaigned in the fall, he would have had to face

## Deutch chairs the House's Ethics Committee and holds senior spots on both the prestigious Foreign Affairs and Judiciary committees. He has been a leading pro-Israel voice in the Democratic Party, particularly in recent years.

fellow Jewish Democrat Lois Frankel, who represents the 21st District, in a primary.

He said his work in Congress led him to the position at the American Jewish Committee, which is one of the

country's oldest Jewish organizations, founded in 1906. The centrist organization has become known in recent years as a sort of department of state of the organized Jewish community, cultivating ties with foreign govern-

ments, making Israel's case at home and abroad and fostering interfaith relationships.

"For me, this foreign policy work has been a natural continuation of my deep ties to the American Jewish community and my long-standing advocacy on behalf of the U.S.-Israel relationship," Deutch said in a statement. "Beyond foreign policy, we have also seen an unprecedented rise in antisemitism in our own country and abroad, and I have been at the forefront of the Congressional response as the founding co-chair of the House Bipartisan Task Force for Combating Antisemitism." **JE**

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**Saturday, March 19**  
**9:00-10:30 am "Poetic Midrash on the Words of the Torah"**  
 Our scholar will focus on interpreting ancient words with surprisingly contemporary meanings. *(In person and via Zoom)*

**1:00-2:30 pm "Hallelujah! The Biblical Basis of Prayer"**  
 We will examine together the Biblical basis of prayer and how the Torah's ancient words of yearning and praise "Hallelujah!" influence today's daily prayers. *(Zoom only)*

**4:00-6:00 pm "How Prayer Healed My Broken Heart"**  
 Our scholar will share his journey to becoming a liturgist and how hope, gratitude and prayer led him from tragedy onto a new path. *(In person and via Zoom)*

**Registration is required for all sessions: [mkorshalom.org/solovy](http://mkorshalom.org/solovy)**  
 This weekend is a gift to the community, free of charge, supported by the Helen and Leon Weinberg Scholar-in-Residence Endowment Fund. Donations to the Fund are appreciated to support future programming. Our weekend of learning will take place both in person and via Zoom (unless otherwise noted). Covid protocols will be followed, and proof of vaccination is required for in-person attendance.

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# Hard Choices

Americans are worried about the price of gas at the pump, fueled by the panic in the world oil market caused by the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Thus far, comprehensive Western sanctions meant to bring Russia to its economic knees have avoided measures relating to fossil fuels. This has allowed Russia to exploit its chief means of obtaining hard currency from seriously dependent customers in Europe and elsewhere, even as it struggles to cope with other increasingly debilitating economic constraints.

Which begs the question: Why have the West's sanctions against Russian aggression in Ukraine not included limitations on the lucrative oil and gas sales that keep Vladimir Putin and his cronies in power? And why hasn't the U.S. announced expanded production, further release of reserves and export of petroleum, and a plan to increase the availability of natural gas to make up for any Russian shortfall?

Economists and energy experts will argue both sides of the question. But from a political perspective, it appears that no one wants to risk a 1970s-like energy crisis, or force Americans to pay too much for wars and international crises. In other words, there is bipartisan reluctance to ask

Americans to sacrifice too much in pushing back against the Russian dictator. But if we are really serious about nonmilitary measures to stop a belligerent country from invading and attempting to swallow its neighbors, killing thousands of civilians and setting off a wave of millions of refugees, perhaps we need to consider taking some greater financial risk in order to achieve a moral result.

## *Why have the West's sanctions against Russian aggression in Ukraine not included limitations on the lucrative oil and gas sales that keep Vladimir Putin and his cronies in power?*

The analysis is even more complicated for Israel. As a Western democracy, Israel is being called upon to participate in the economic and political boycott of Russia. In the UN General Assembly, Israel was among 141 nations that voted to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine. At the same time, Russia's reach extends to Israel's northern border, where Iran works to spread its influence in Syria and Lebanon. From time to time, Israel launches air strikes into Syria, which Russia permits, and Israel cannot afford to lose

that cooperation.

In addition, there are 600,000 Jews in Russia and tens of thousands of Israelis, many of whom want to return to Israel. Their lifeline to Israel is twice-daily flights on El Al. But once the international sanctions began, insurers of those flights dropped their coverage. And so, at an unannounced 1 a.m. meeting on March 4, the Knesset

Finance Committee agreed to cover uninsured losses up to \$2 billion, so that El Al could continue to fly its Tel Aviv-Moscow route.

Then, in a surprising development last Shabbat, Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who was criticized for his initial lack of outrage over the Russian invasion, flew to Moscow to meet with Putin. Their three-hour meeting — reportedly preceded by consultations with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky and the Biden administration, among others — fueled speculation about Bennett serving as a mediator in the Ukraine conflict. That may be wishful thinking.

Either way, if Putin's merciless aggression continues in the rapidly deteriorating Ukraine war, the West is going to have to make some hard choices. **JE**

# Biden Leans Center

Russia's invasion of Ukraine properly got top billing in President Joe Biden's State of the Union address last week. It was the leading issue on everyone's mind. The president's forceful expressions of support for Ukraine earned applause and nods of approval from both Democrats and Republicans. In the moment, these signs of national unity were a welcome change from the toxic partisanship that has infected politics in our country.

But Biden's address was very much a speech in two parts. The first part focused on Ukraine, while the second was a more traditional address, focused on domestic policy. Yet, it was the second part of the speech that was most noteworthy. As expected, Biden's domestic discussion covered a wide range of topics — inflation, paid family leave, prescription drug prices, voting rights and more. And, also as expected, the second part mostly brought Democrats to their feet in applause while Republicans stayed seated. But there were moments that drew bipartisan support, in response to signals that Biden is moving his presidency to the center — somewhat reminiscent of Bill Clinton's successful triangulation strategy in the 1990s.

For Biden, the subtle shift was natural, as he is moving back to his centrist comfort zone. He talked about things both parties support, such as infrastructure, supporting veterans' health care needs and conquering cancer. And he spoke about his support for funding the police in the wake of the epidemic of police killings of Black Americans. "The answer is not to defund the police. It's to fund the police," Biden said to resounding applause. "Fund them. Fund them. Fund them with resources and training, resources and training they need to protect their communities."

The pitch was nothing new. Biden was already on record as disagreeing with his party's progressives who call for a new model for law enforcement that would transfer some public safety responsibilities to other agencies. But his staking out the centrist position of support for law enforcement in his most consequential speech of the year could be significant if it helps bring doubting independents and moderates back into the Democratic fold.

We heard in the SOTU a recognition that put-

ting the priorities of the progressive left over the center has not been a successful strategy. And we hope that the speech signals the beginning of a focused effort to work across the aisle to address important issues that both parties can support.

While we know that a speech is just a speech, it appears that voters are already signaling approval. Historically, presidents do not see a significant bump in their approval ratings after a SOTU address. But a NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist survey showed that Biden's approval rating went up to 47% after his SOTU address — an 8% jump from his 39% in February. Although some of the bump can be explained by Americans coming together in support of Ukraine, it also demonstrates that Biden was elected as a moderate Democrat, and that's what the American people want him to be. **JE**

Letters should be related to articles that have run in the print or online editions of the JE, and may be edited for space and clarity prior to publication. Please include your first and last name, as well your town/neighborhood of residence. Send letters to [letters@jewishexponent.com](mailto:letters@jewishexponent.com).



# Ukraine War Turned Empowered, Independent Jewish Women Into the Displaced

BY KARYN G. GERSHON

**T**his is not a drill. This is a disaster. In my 28 years of working with Jews in Ukraine, Russia and the surrounding region, I have not seen a humanitarian crisis of this magnitude, and I have never been so scared for the women of Ukraine.

The women I saw in Kyiv just two years ago who were starting businesses, getting their MBAs, creating art and building cultural and social institutions are now in a critical state.

Project Keshet, a feminist organization supported by a range of Jewish groups, trains women to build Jewish community and advance civil society in five Eastern European countries. In the 30-plus years that we have been working in Ukraine, we have developed a network of more than 300 trained leaders engaged in organizing and networking across 23 of the 27 regions of Ukraine. Prior to the war, we were engaging more than 50 women's groups, 15 interfaith coalitions and 1,100 nonprofits and academic, medical and government partners — a testament to the vitality of Ukraine's Jewish community.

Within the span of a week this war has turned empowered and independent women into the displaced. With most men banned from leaving the country and being urged to join the Ukrainian army, it is women who are carrying the responsibility for care and evacuation of children and the elderly.

Before the war, Project Keshet Ukraine volunteers donated nearly 100,000 hours per year to promote women's leadership and economic empowerment, vibrant Jewish life, diversity and tolerance, and social justice in women's rights, women's health and gender-based violence. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Project Keshet was pioneering Jewish life online.

Today, those aspirations for a civil, equitable society seem unfathomably distant. The same volunteers are identifying the needs on the ground, like medical supplies and food, but they are also anticipating the most basic immediate needs of those standing in line at the borders, like diapers and formula for babies, emergency mental health support and cash to survive until resettlement.

We are working with partners to get medical supplies and food into Ukraine. Russian-speaking Israeli psychologists are volunteering to provide pro bono emergency mental health

counseling and support new immigrants to Israel. The global Project Keshet staff is responding to requests from desperate and scared refugees and those who need evacuations, doing their best to make sure that no women and families fall through the cracks. In the United States, we are raising funds through an Emergency Fund for Women in Ukraine, and telling their stories, and we are praying. We are all praying for an end to war.

On the morning of March 4, Project Keshet got a call from a young Ukrainian woman, an artist from Eastern Ukraine who needed evacuation with her small son, a child with physical disabilities. She reported that relief efforts are overwhelmed, and she could not evacuate from her home alone. Project Keshet leaders called from woman to woman in Ukraine until we found a volunteer to help this mother physically carry her child to safe transport and out of danger.

The poverty in Ukraine, before this war, was already pervasive. COVID-19 remains a great concern and there has been widespread unemployment in Ukraine and throughout the region. So when I hear that women are arriving at the border with children and elderly relatives, I know that they have come this far with nothing except what might fit in their backpacks.

These women are my friends. They have hosted me at their homes for meals with a dozen exquisite salads and visited me with gifts from their favorite artisans. Now they are in tears as they make impossible life-and-death decisions.

A friend I'll call Inna is a 40-year-old Jewish professional whose husband was conscripted to fight for Ukraine while she and her 10-year-old daughter were under heavy attack in an eastern city. Finally, on March 4, she made the difficult decision to evacuate by car, and she has even made arrangements to take two additional women, both pregnant, with her and her daughter. This same woman told me a few short weeks ago that she wouldn't evacuate until there were tanks rolling down her street. This is where we are. **JE**

*Karyn G. Gershon is the CEO of Project Keshet. She joined Project Keshet as its executive director in 1994 and was instrumental in growing its Jewish women's activist network to more than 180 communities in Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Israel.*

## Op-ed About Students Misses Real Issue

I agree with Samuel Abrams ("High School Should Be Upsetting," March 3); students must be exposed to a variety of ideas to learn the critical thinking skills required of citizens in a democracy. But he fails to address the real problem, instead blaming "leftist orthodoxy."

He's bothered by students deplatforming racists, sexists and homophobes. But he ignores state legislatures and school boards engaged in banning books and in ordering teachers not to teach real history.

A school district in Texas recently told teachers they needed to teach "opposing perspectives" about the Holocaust. (Public outcry forced them to recant.) The Florida House passed a bill that severely limits the way sexuality and gender can be mentioned in schools. Florida already passed a law banning the teaching of anything that might make students feel "discomfort, guilt, anguish or any other form of psychological distress."

Dozens of states have passed or are considering similar laws. (See [tinyurl.com/27jwwmc7](https://tinyurl.com/27jwwmc7) for a list.) It's only in states controlled by Republicans that such bills have passed or are likely to pass. Yet Abrams doesn't mention this, and instead blames the left.

The real challenge to critical thinking is this large-scale censorship, not students rejecting bigots and abusers.

Tamar Granor | Elkins Park

## What Were the Sale Details?

The sale of the Exponent makes good sense ("Jewish Exponent Sold to Mid-Atlantic Media," March 3). As Andy Gottlieb pointed out in his article, aside from the financial benefits to Federation and thus to the Jewish community, it is wise to remove Federation from the divisive issues of political orientation and organizational coverage. Federation should not be judged on these issues.

However, Federation should be judged on its stewardship of money and assets entrusted to it. I found it surprising, therefore, that the terms of the transaction with Mid-Atlantic were "not disclosed." They should be. If there are compelling reasons why they are not being disclosed, those reasons should be disclosed.

Steven Stone | Maple Glen

## Endorsement Omitted Key Details

I am saddened to see that you chose to endorse the nomination of Ketanji Brown Jackson to replace retiring Justice Breyer ("Ketanji Brown Jackson — A Republican Opportunity," March 3).

This is a woman who has had an extraordinary number of her judicial opinions reversed by higher courts. This is a woman whose LSAT and law school class standings have been vigorously shielded from the public by her handlers (presumably — if she had placed high in her class or done very well on the LSATs — they would have rushed to publicize the fact).

Most egregiously, she was chosen strictly for her gender and race, so that Biden could pay a debt to his supporters. Is this really who we want on the court for the next 30 years? **JE**

David L. Levine | San Francisco



# Jews and Blacks Need to Talk About ‘Race’ ... Together

BY JAMES ELAM, IV  
AND SHOSHANA SCHILLER

**A**t a time in human history when people can share their thoughts to a billion people around the world in a matter of seconds, the very simple and important art of listening seems to be in jeopardy more than ever.

Our nation was founded on the bedrock principle of free speech enshrined in the Constitution, and while it does not mean we are entitled to speech without consequences, a misunderstanding should be approached as an opening for discussion.

Recently, ABC suspended Whoopi Goldberg from “The View” for expressing her concept of “race” in the context of a discussion about the Holocaust. For many Americans, particularly Black Americans, the definition of race is informed by the history of the United States, from 1619 to the Thirteenth Amendment to the Civil Rights Act. It is an understanding based on skin color inseparable from the legal and moral history of our country, and from the current lived experiences of Black Americans.

The term “race” has a broader definition as well, one that underpins centuries of antisemitism in Europe and across the globe, that was the basis of the Holocaust, and that remains a foundation of modern-day antisemitism. Jews can look no further than the immigration records and the citizenship applications of their grandparents and earlier generations in which their race is identified, uniquely, as Hebrew. In addition, it was the racist Nuremberg Laws that enabled the Nazis to carry out the “Final Solution” and the murder of 6 million Jews in the Holocaust.

To disregard this definition is hurtful to many Jews. But American Jews also acknowledge and celebrate that there are Jews of all ethnic-

ities, races and backgrounds, such that modern Judaism is, at the same, at odds with the idea of race.

This is the subtlety of race as a word, as a concept, as a flashpoint of hate but also of pride. To get to this place of nuanced understanding, however, we need to listen to each other. We need not assume that others come from the same place of understanding, and we need not assume that our own experiences are either universal or widely known or taught.

As co-chairs of the Black-Jewish Alliance of the Anti-Defamation League Philadelphia, we have worked hard to forge stronger ties between the Black and Jewish communities by acknowledging our commonalities as opposed to focusing on our differences.

We created a safe space to learn and be heard, allowing ourselves to be open to making mistakes and to having misunderstandings. We are learning to listen to each other, to dash assumptions and preconceived notions, and to understand each other more deeply.

We stand united today and in the future as allies against the twin sins of antisemitism and racism. But standing together also means doing so when things are comfortable and when they are uncomfortable.

This approach stands in stark contrast to the current climate in America, where people seem to be retreating more and more into their own echo chambers or corners of social media where their own biased views are affirmed and there’s no willingness to experience discomfort. There’s a very real danger here that we will stop listening to each other altogether.

While there are instances where a person’s words or conduct might be beyond the scope allowable in a civilized society, we should not rush to cancel people for expressing themselves honestly without malice.

When a more complete understanding would

serve the greater good, rushing to judgment can, in fact, be harmful to the greater good, stifling conversation, dialogue and ideas. Here are some of the things we’ve learned from our conversations together, that can easily apply more broadly to the world we live in:

- People need to listen actively in order to understand. You are hearing another person’s words, trying to comprehend the intent and meaning behind them, and, if you don’t understand, ask a clarifying question.
- We all must communicate to be understood. If we are as honest and open as possible, we are genuinely speaking from our own point of view.
- We all need to commit to better understand the other person’s perspective.
- Anticipate that emotions may run high. Discussion on topics like racism, antisemitism, privilege and discrimination can be painful and challenging. Try to understand the source of the emotion that the person is feeling.
- Consider the relationship. As you engage in conversations with people with whom you disagree, it’s a good idea to remember that they come to those positions with their own unique history, background, perspective and experiences.

It is only by truly listening and learning together that we will ever find a path forward. The art of listening can go a long way to improving our outlook as a decent and civil society. **JE**

*James Elam, IV and Shoshana Schiller are co-chairs of the Black-Jewish Alliance of the ADL. Elam is the managing partner of Elemental, a multidisciplinary agency focusing on technology, media, sports and social action. Schiller is an environmental attorney in the Philadelphia area. For more information on the Black-Jewish Alliance visit: [philadelphia.adl.org/black-jewish-alliance/](http://philadelphia.adl.org/black-jewish-alliance/).*





# Jews and Non-Jews Share a Bloody History in Ukraine. But There Are Reasons for Hope

BY SARA J. BLOOMFIELD

The Russian invasion of Ukraine, justified by Vladimir Putin as necessary to “denazify” the country and stop “genocide,” outraged me for its blatant assault on a people, and on truth. But as I thought about his previous misuses of history, I should not have been so surprised.

In 2019, marking the 80th anniversary of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, Putin sought to downplay the significance of this agreement in starting World War II and its secret protocols that divided Poland between Hitler and Stalin — two other masters at rewriting history.

This invasion also brought back the overwhelming sense I had from various visits to Ukraine, best summarized in a familiar adage originally about the Balkans, that Ukraine has had more history than it can consume. As I traveled to big cities and small towns, aspects of its many layers of complicated history were on view everywhere.

In Kiev, I was greeted each morning outside my hotel by an enormous statue of Bohdan Khmelnytsky, the revered Cossack leader who commanded a 17th-century uprising to promote Ukrainian independence from Poland. He was also a vicious antisemite responsible for the killing of at least 40,000 Jews. I was appalled that the statue existed and wished that at the very least it might be accompanied by information about the innocent victims of this Ukrainian nationalist. Today, I find myself reflecting on this symbol of an independent Ukraine that also symbolizes its complex past.

As I would drive around the country, I would encounter common themes. You had the impression that one could stop in almost any town or village and ask, “Where were the Jews buried?” Someone would take you to a forest or a piece of land near a farmer’s field to see the mass grave. Over one and a half million Jewish men, women and children were murdered in Ukraine by the Nazis and their local collaborators. Unlike other European Jews, they were not deported to distant killing centers like Auschwitz but shot, one by one, in the places they had lived for centuries.

We now know so much more about “the Holocaust by bullets” because, ironically, of the fall of the Soviet Union and the opening of massive archives as well as the important work of Fr. Patrick Desbois, who identified many of the mass graves and inter-

***Ukraine has suffered from extraordinary external threats such as German Nazism and Soviet Communism and serious internal problems like extreme nationalism and antisemitism. But in recent***

***decades it has begun to face its past, confront important truths and create a pluralistic democracy. “Hope” hardly feels like the right word for this moment. But given a chance, the Ukrainian people have given us reason to believe that in the long term, freedom and dignity might prevail.***

viewed locals who saw these horrible crimes. On one visit to Ukraine Fr. Desbois and I went to a wooded area, now a mass grave, where we met an elderly woman who shared her memories as a young girl witnessing the killing of her neighbors.

Another stark recollection is walking around towns and seeing on door after door an indentation that once held a mezuzah — the small case that traditionally marks the entrance to Jewish homes. The Jews were long gone, but the unintended marker of where a people had once lived remained, speaking to us across the decades.

I will also never forget that in practically every town and village one would see the same memorial: an angel, her head lowered, her face drenched in sorrow, holding a stalk of wheat in one arm and a dead baby in the other. No explanations required. One only needs the most superficial sense of Ukraine’s history to know the statue mourns Stalin’s deliberate starvation of at least 3.5 million Ukrainians, both Christians and Jews, in 1932-33, now known as the Holodomor.

In summer 2014 I visited in the aftermath of Putin’s annexation of Crimea and the Dignity Revolution that preceded it. The revolution had overthrown Ukraine’s Russian-backed president,

Viktor Yanukovych. Makeshift memorials and anti-Russian sentiments were everywhere. I met government officials, public intellectuals, directors of archives, Holocaust scholars, Jewish community leaders and American diplomats. All of them saw this as a moment to write a new chapter in Ukrainian history. One described to me a burned-out bus with this declaration written in the ash: “One day spent fighting here is a life worth living.” The people I met were filled with similar defiance and resilience, although sometimes tinged by understandable anxiety or cynicism. But, overwhelmingly, the word I kept hearing everywhere was “hope.”

Ukraine has suffered from extraordinary external threats such as German Nazism and Soviet Communism and serious internal problems like extreme nationalism and antisemitism. But in recent decades it has begun to face its past, confront important truths and create a pluralistic democracy. “Hope” hardly feels like the right word for this moment. But given a chance, the Ukrainian people have given us reason to believe that in the long term, freedom and dignity might prevail. **JE**

*Sara J. Bloomfield is the director of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.*

feature story

# Unmasking

THE  
ORIGINS  
OF

# Purim

The Philadelphia-based Solis-Cohen family at their Purim party, circa 1890

SASHA ROGELBERG | JE staff

A hot dog, an emoji and Superman walk into a synagogue — and there’s no punchline. It’s the reality for Allan Rosenblatt, owner of Purim Mega Store in Brooklyn.

Every year, Rosenblatt sells hundreds of costumes, which he sees donned by the children at his synagogue, riding their Hamantaschen sugar highs and giving grown-ups headaches with their graggers.

Purim Mega Store is only open for a couple months every year — much like the secular Spirit Halloween stores that crop up all over the country come Oct. 1 — and the two Sundays leading up to the 14th of Adar (this year, March 16-17) are his busiest.

“I can’t even begin to tell you — there’s hundreds of costumes,” Rosenblatt said.

But Purim has not always had themes of costumes and merriment interwoven in its traditions, and the introduction of costumes to the holiday was not without controversy.

The first mention of the use of costumes to celebrate Purim was by Rabbi Yehuda Minz, a 15th century Italian rabbi who made the argument that costume-wearing, even crossdressing, is permissible because it serves the purpose of creating joy, according to Ori Z. Soltes, professor at Georgetown University’s Center for Jewish Civilization.

Others speculate that the wearing of costumes on Purim coincided with and was inspired by the medieval Catholic tradition of dressing up on Mardi Gras, said Rabbi Shlomo Brody, author of “Guide to the Complex: Contemporary Halakhic Debates” and founding director of the Tikvah Overseas Student Institute.

“Sometimes you adapt religious meaning to broader customs that fit the holiday as well,” Brody said of the costume-wearing. “I don’t think it would have been if it didn’t fit with the holiday, but it could have just been a coincidence.”

Scholars agree that the story and themes of Purim lend themselves to costuming. In addition to general revelry felt during the holiday, examples of being hidden or disguised are replete in the Purim megillah: For much of the Purim story, Esther does not disclose her Jewish identity to King Ahasuerus or Haman; Haman conceals his plot to kill Mordechai. Purim is also one of the few Jewish stories where God does not make an explicit appearance.

Dressing up for Purim also aided in fulfilling the Purim mitzvah of matanot l’evyonim, giving directly to the poor. With everyone masking their faces or dressing in disguise, those in need could maintain

their dignity and not disclose their identity, but still receive direct aid from others.

Today, mishloach manot, Purim baskets, are given to everyone as a way to prevent those in need from disclosing their socioeconomic position.

In the 17th century, Purim spiels developed, and the use of not only costumes, but allegory, served to create a sense of “comedic catharsis,” Soltes explained.

While the Purim spiel traditionally tells the story of Purim, it also draws heavily on the political topics of the day and popular culture. When Jews in Europe were not able to overtly criticize Christian hegemony, spiels allowed them to express their grievances publicly, without drawing the attention of their oppressors.

“We’re making fun of these bastards who are treating us so poorly, but we’re doing it in a disguised manner, so they don’t even realize this,” Soltes said.

Though costumes have been baked into Purim traditions for over 600 years, some Jewish thinkers are reluctant to fully embrace the role of disguises in the holiday. Dissenting from Rabbi Minz’s opinion,

20th century Rabbi Ovadya Yosef urged Jews to avoid crossdressing and other costumes that could be seen as debauchorous. Shmuel Abuhav, a 17th century Italian scholar, believed costumes detracted from the joy of the holiday.

Brody said that ultimately, the argument against costumes on Purim came from the fear that Purim was becoming more associated with frivolity than Jewish resistance and the lessons made available from the Purim story.

Costume contest participants at Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel’s 2020 Purim celebration, just days before the first wave of pandemic restrictions

Courtesy of Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel

BACKGROUND: FLUPERAZAO / ISTOCK / GETTY IMAGES PLUS; COURTESY OF TEMPLE BETH ZION-BETH ISRAEL

# Costumes



Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel's 2020 Purim celebration

Courtesy of Temple Beth Zion-Beth Israel



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“People love the costumes, as far as what people associate [Purim] with,” Brody said. “The wisdom of the people won out.”

The commercialization of the holiday — and holidays in general — particularly in the United States, adds weight to this argument.

Similar to Purim costumes coinciding with early Mardi Gras celebrations, in 19th and 20th century America, holidays such as Purim and Hanukkah — which were in close calendar proximity to Easter and Christmas, respectively — began to mirror commercial traditions of their Christian counterparts. It was “in part, a function of all the developments in the 19th century, in which Judaism tries to adapt itself to the reality and the illusion of being abused, being accepted into the mainstream,” Soltes said.

Purim really began becoming commercialized in America during World War II; the rise of Halloween-esque costumes in Israel took place in the following decades, after the founding of the state and in the 1960s and ‘70s, when it was gaining its economic sea legs.

Brody, who lives in Israel, is experiencing the Purim-craze firsthand: “Every

children’s store, they’re selling costumes; they’ve been selling hamantashen for a few weeks. Israeli schools, they’re not learning too much this month. There’s a lot of costume wearing, for better or for worse.”

But area synagogues rehearsing their spiels for the upcoming holiday are confident in their ability to balance frivolity and the meaning of the holiday.

Philadelphia-based Congregation Rodeph Shalom will have a spiel this year based on the 2022 Disney film “Encanto,” which Rabbi Eli Freedman said is a popular spiel theme this year both because of the ease with which one can adapt Disney songs and because of its popularity among young people. (The movie’s original song “We Don’t Talk About Bruno” is only the second song from a Disney film to reach the top of the Billboard Top 100 chart.)

Drawing heavily from popular culture can help Jewish children connect with an otherwise-distant story, the rabbi said.

“It’s sometimes hard for especially students, younger folks to be able to relate to a story which took place thousands of years ago in Persia,” he said. “The same is true for the stories from the Torah. Ultimately, as a rabbi, when I give a

sermon on Shabbat, the main purpose of my sermon is the same thing...taking this text from thousands of years ago and making it relevant to today.”

Rodeph Shalom’s spiels have also worked to build community. In 2015, the congregation merged with an LGBT congregation Beth Ahavah. Since the merge, one of Beth Ahavah’s founders, Jerry Silverman, dresses up in drag as Queen Esther, an effort that Freedman described as “a gift to the rest of our congregation.”

For Rabbi Abe Friedman of Temple Beth-Zion-Beth Israel in Philadelphia, the mixing of joy and the seriousness of the holiday was felt first hand in 2020. BZBI hosted their Purim celebration just days before the first wave of pandemic restrictions.

“Emotionally, it’s really associated with the move to the pandemic,” Friedman said.

After putting out an open call to congregants to send in pre-recorded videos to compile for a 2021 Zoom Purim spiel, Friedman was blown away by what his congregants came up with. One spieler chanted the contents of his CVS receipt using the megillah-reading tropes.

“The frivolity is, I think, actually very serious because it asks us to see the absurd in life,” Friedman said. “It asks us not to take ourselves too seriously. It asks us not to take our institutions too seriously, not to take our leaders too seriously.”

Particularly during the pandemic restrictions last year, Purim allowed the congregation to not lose perspective of life, Friedman said. The laughter and joy is a vital piece of Jewish life.

As Purim approaches this year, Friedman is drawn to the images in the news of Ukrainian grandmothers lecturing Russian soldiers, invoking similarities between Esther standing up for the Jewish people, an image that can only be understood by fully immersing oneself in Purim’s traditions.

“Purim is about more than just a party,” Friedman said. “The party is a means to actually understanding the power that we have in the world...and I don’t know that there’s a more important message for us to be dealing with right now.” **JE**

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# A Persian Purim Menu

LINDA MOREL

**D**uring childhood, when many of us ate hamantaschen and dressed in costumes at Purim, we learned the story of Queen Esther, a nice Jewish girl from ancient Persia.

Her uncle Mordecai implored Esther to enter a contest run by the king of Persia, who was selecting a wife. The king chose lovely-looking Esther for his bride.

Because Mordecai knew that Haman, the king's trusted adviser, was plotting to annihilate the Jews of Persia, he had intentionally steered his niece into this pivotal position. When she revealed Haman's wicked plot, the king hanged Haman and spared the Jews.

Celebrations have ensued ever since, and menus have varied among Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews.

Although Queen Esther may be a fictional character, Jews actually lived in the Persian Empire, mostly in Iraq, Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Iran, the modern successor state of ancient Persia. Jews trace their heritage in Iran to the Babylonian exile of the Sixth century B.C.E. The Purim story dates to the Fourth century B.C.E., some two hundred years later.

Because the Purim story takes place in ancient Persia, it is fitting to celebrate the holiday by eating Persian food. The Jewish cuisine that evolved from ancient Persia is iconic. Seasoned with cardamom, turmeric, cumin, oregano and other spices, these foods fill kitchens with intoxicating scents. Typical dishes entail combinations of meat and rice.

Because conditions for Jews in this part of the world are harsh, the Jewish population there is dwindling. Today, the vast majority of Persian Jews live in Israel and the United States, mostly in California and Long Island but also in Baltimore and the Twin Cities.

By cooking and eating their foods this Purim, you are in for a treat but also keeping the memory of their presence in Persia alive.

## Shorba Bi Djaj (Iraqi Chicken Soup) | Meat

Serves 6

This soup is so beloved by Iraqi Jews, it is often called simply shorba, meaning soup. Although rice makes this soup appear milky, it contains no dairy.

- ¾ cup jasmine rice
- 1 medium onion
- 1 garlic clove
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt, or more, if needed
- Freshly ground black pepper to taste
- ½ teaspoon each: turmeric, cardamom and cumin
- 4 chicken thighs, with bones and skin
- 10 cups chicken broth

Fill a bowl with cold water. Submerge the rice, and soak it for 90 minutes. Drain it in a fine sieve. Reserve.

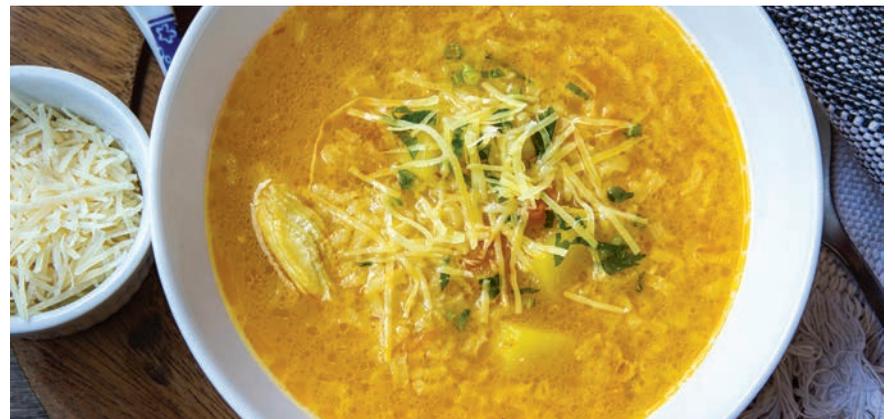
Dice both the onion and garlic,

then chop them finely. In a large, deep nonstick stockpot, heat the oil on a medium-low flame. Add the onion and garlic and stir. Sprinkle in the salt, pepper, turmeric, cardamom and cumin. Mix until combined. Sauté until the onions soften and the mixture is fragrant.

Add the chicken thighs, rice and chicken broth. Bring it to a rolling simmer on a medium-low flame for 2-3 hours. Stir the broth often to make sure the rice isn't sticking to the pot. Reduce the flame if the liquid is absorbing too quickly. Taste and add more salt, if needed.

Shorba is ready when the rice has absorbed so much broth that it expands, appearing as if the soup is made with cream.

Cool the soup briefly until it is safe to remove the chicken without burning yourself. Using a slotted spoon utensil, move the thighs to a plate for 5-10 minutes. Remove and discard the skin and bones. Shred the chicken and return it to the soup. Stir



Leila Melhado / iStock / Getty Images Plus

to combine, and heat it briefly. Serve immediately.

## Khoresh Bademjoon (Persian Lamb Stew) | Meat

Serves 6

Among Iranian Jews, this stew has become the signature dish at Friday night Shabbat dinners, crossing borders and spanning decades. Ironically, khoresh was an everyday dish back in Iran.

- 1 medium onion
- 4 garlic cloves
- 3 baby eggplants
- 6 plum tomatoes
- 2 teaspoons olive oil, plus 2 tablespoons and 2 tablespoons
- 3 pounds lamb shoulder, trimmed of fat and cut into stew meat cubes
- Kosher salt to taste, at least 1 teaspoon added a little at a time
- 1 teaspoon each: ground turmeric, cumin and oregano
- 2 cups chicken broth
- Juice of 2 lemons
- Accompaniment: jasmine rice, below

Peel and chop the onion and garlic. Reserve it in a small bowl. Peel the eggplants. Dice the eggplants and tomatoes. Reserve them in a medium-sized bowl.

Drizzle 2 teaspoons of olive oil into a large deep pot and heat it over a medium flame. Add the lamb and sprinkle it with some salt. Brown the lamb on all sides. Add more oil, if needed. Move the lamb to a plate, and cover it with aluminum foil. Reserve. Discard the oil from the pot. Wipe it clean with a paper towel.

Drizzle 2 tablespoons of oil into the same pot. Add the onion, garlic and a sprinkle of salt. Sauté until wilted. Add the eggplants and tomatoes, plus an additional 2 tablespoons of oil and sauté. Add the turmeric, cumin, oregano and more salt, if needed. Stir to combine.

When the veggies sweat and begin to emit a sauce, add the lamb, chicken broth and lemon juice. The ingredients should be submerged by two inches. If not, add enough water or more chicken broth to achieve that.

Cover the pot, and simmer for 1 hour or until the liquid reduces from soupy to stew-like. During cooking, test it to see if there's enough salt and add more, if needed. Serve it with jasmine rice.

## Jasmine Rice | Pareve

Serves 6

In Persian cuisine, rice is often placed around the edges of platters, surrounding the main course in the middle.

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Kosher salt to taste
- 1 cup jasmine rice
- 3 tablespoons cilantro, chopped

Heat the oil in a medium-large pot over a medium flame. Pour in the rice, and stir to coat each grain. Sprinkle on salt. Heat for 1-2 minutes until the rice looks translucent. Add 2½ cups of water and stir again. Cover the pot with a lid, and reduce the flame to low.

Check every 5-10 minutes to make sure the water isn't boiling away. If

so, lower the flame so the rice simmers slowly. Add more water if the rice starts sticking to the pot.

Simmer for 20-25 minutes or until the rice is cooked through. Remove the pot from the flame. Let the rice rest for 5 minutes with the lid still on the pot. Spoon the rice around the edges of a rimmed platter. Move the lamb stew to the center, with some of the stew sauce. Sprinkle cilantro over the stew. Serve immediately.

**Hadgi Badah (Cardamom Almond Cookies) | Pareve**

Yield: 48 cookies

Popular with Iraqi Jews, these domed cookies are served at Purim and as a sweet following the Yom Kippur fast.

- 2 cups blanched almonds
- 4 sheets of parchment paper
- 2 cups flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon baking powder
- 4 eggs
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- ¼ teaspoon cardamom

Grind the almonds in a food processor until they resemble coarse

sand. Reserve.

Preheat your oven to 350 degrees F. Line four cookie sheets with parchment paper.

Sift the flour, salt and baking powder into a medium-sized bowl and reserve.

In a large mixing bowl, use an electric beater to beat the eggs, sugar, lemon zest and cardamom until the mixture is light and foamy. Add the flour mixture, a little at a time, beating on a low speed until moistened. Add the almonds and mix until combined, scraping down the bowl a couple of times.

Roll the dough in your palms, form-

ing 1-inch balls. Rinse your hands in warm water a couple of times, as they will get sticky.

Place 12 balls on each prepared cookie sheet. Place two cookie sheets in the oven. Bake for 6 minutes. Move the top cookie sheet to the bottom and vice versa. Bake for another 6 minutes until the cookies are golden brown.

Repeat with the second two cookie sheets.

Cool to room temperature. These can be made three days ahead if stored in airtight containers. The recipe freezes well. **JE**



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Irish author John Boyne poses for photographs at the launch of Northern Ireland's One Book Project in Finaghy, Belfast in 2007. Boyne's "The Boy in the Striped Pajamas" has been heavily criticized by Holocaust historians and educators in the years since its release. Paul Faith - PA Images/PA Images via Getty Images

# 'The Boy in the Striped Pajamas,' Decried for its Holocaust Inaccuracies, Is Getting a Sequel

BY ANDREW LAPIN

**A** best-selling children's novel that the Auschwitz Memorial and Museum has said "should be avoided by anyone who studies or teaches about the history of the Holocaust" is getting a sequel.

John Boyne, the Irish author of "The Boy in the Striped Pajamas," announced Wednesday that he would be publishing a follow-up to the 2006 blockbuster about a 9-year-old German boy's friendship with a Jewish child imprisoned at Auschwitz.

The new book, he said, would be told

from the perspective of the German boy's sister, Gretel.

The announcement comes just weeks after "The Boy in the Striped Pajamas," which has sold 11 million copies and spawned a movie adaptation that grossed \$44 million, faced a fresh round of scathing criticism over its historical inaccuracies amid a controversy over Holocaust education in Tennessee. There, a local school board removed "Maus," the Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic memoir, from the local curriculum, sparking a national conversation about how to teach children about the Holocaust.

"Maus" author Art Spiegelman

said he'd be fine with students reading another Holocaust book instead — just not, he said, Boyne's. "The guy didn't do any research whatsoever," Spiegelman told a Tennessee audience.

The new book, "All The Broken Places," will be published in September in the United States by Doubleday and Penguin Random House and in the United Kingdom by Transworld. Global rights in more than a dozen other countries already signed, Boyne tweeted.

Set in the decades between 1946 and the present day, the book will follow a 91-year-old Gretel, older sister to the first book's protagonist Bruno, as she

reflects on her life "scarred by guilt and grief" and the ways in which "her complicity dishonored her life," according to the publisher's release. In the first book, Gretel and Bruno's father was an S.S. commandant, and Bruno eventually walked into the extermination chambers in Auschwitz so he could be with his Jewish friend Shmuel.

The follow-up will be set in Paris, Sydney and London, and will initially follow Greta and her mother's escape from Poland at the end of the war "after a cataclysmic event which tore their lives apart," according to the book description.

Boyne told The Bookseller that, since

the publication of the first book, “I’ve regularly made notes in a file that I called ‘Gretel’s Story.’ It was a book I hoped to write one day, telling the story of Bruno’s older sister Gretel who, at the end of her life, looks back at the experience she was part of and is forced to examine her conscience regarding her guilt and complicity in those times.”

The first book, which uses the British “Pyjamas” spelling in its U.K. edition, was adapted into a 2008 movie and has proven an enduring international bestseller and perennial Holocaust education tool in the United Kingdom, despite scathing criticism from Holocaust researchers and other Holocaust authors. It has been dinged for inaccuracies including Shmuel’s continued survival in a camp that would have gassed him with the other children upon arrival, and the lack of youth-centered Nazi propaganda directed at Bruno, who is depicted as utterly ignorant of the Jewish genocide project despite his father’s position as

an Auschwitz guard. According to British education observers, the book’s prominence in classrooms may perpetuate myths and fallacies about the Holocaust; many children who read the book believe that it is based on a true story.

The book has also been criticized for depicting Bruno’s death, and his German parents’ grief, as the true tragedy at the heart of the story, while the dead Jews serve largely as window dressing.

For his part, Boyne has defended his book, which he said was inspired by the works of Primo Levi and Elie Wiesel, from critics. In response to the Auschwitz museum’s criticisms, he told The Guardian that because his novel is fiction, it “by its nature cannot contain inaccuracies, only anachronisms, and I don’t think there are any of those in there.”

Boyne is the author of more than a dozen novels on various subjects, and more recently came under fire for a 2019 book that contained controversial depictions of transgender characters. **JE**



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LEV HARRISON SEGAL

Jane and Steven Segal of Elkins Park announce the birth of their grandson, Lev Harrison, born to Lauren and Julian Segal of Upper Montclair, New Jersey, on Feb. 3.

Sharing their joy are Lev's maternal grandparents, Helene and Norman Hirsh of West Orange, New Jersey, and his fraternal great-grandfather, Dr. Nathan Schnall of Abington. He is the great-grandson of the late Dolly Beechman Schnall.

Lev is named in loving memory of his fraternal great-aunt Laurie Beechman and his maternal great-grandfather Howard Drucker.

Photo by Julian Segal



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What's happening at ... Congregation Kol Emet

## Kol Emet Prides Itself on Inclusivity

BY JARRAD SAFFREN

**B**rian Hanck has been a member of Congregation Kol Emet for 15 years.

He had his three daughters go through preschool and get bat mitzvahed at the Reconstructionist temple; he's still a member with his wife, Sherry Hanck, even though their girls are older now; he even said that many of his good friends come from his synagogue life.

Yet Hanck is not Jewish.

The Yardley resident grew up Lutheran and, while he doesn't practice Christianity today, he never converted to Judaism, either. But at Kol Emet, a Reconstructionist synagogue, no one asks.

"It's just a welcoming community," he said.

That culture is one that Rabbi Anna Boswell-Levy, Kol Emet's spiritual leader since 2014, and President Jill Gordon, a congregant since 2001, are proud to have cultivated along with hundreds of other members over the years.

Boswell-Levy and Gordon grew up in the Reform tradition. Both women switched to the Reconstructionist denomination as adults due to its openness and emphasis on democratic decision-making. Kol Emet gives members a say in how committees work and in larger community decisions.

The Yardley institution counts about 185 individuals and families in its membership, according to Gordon. That's an increase of about 10 congregants from Boswell-Levy's first year in 2014.

"It's possibly more reflective of Judaism today," Gordon said of the Reconstructionist approach. "It offers a lot of flexibility about how to be Jewish."

The rabbi agrees with her president; there are many ways to be Jewish.

Some Jews prefer to focus on tikkun olam, or healing the world, others about going to services and still others about the religion's philosophy and history. Some, though, are just searching for community.

Kol Emet tries to offer all of those things, according to Boswell-Levy.

Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan, the father of the Reconstructionist movement, believed that Judaism "was the evolving civilization of the Jewish people," the Kol Emet rabbi said. It's "of the Jewish people, by the Jewish people," she added.

Boswell-Levy sees her congregation as part of that evolving civilization, as well as a community of and by its members.

"There's less emphasis on what you believe and more about being part of a people," she concluded.

That approach has been successful, too.



Kol Emet members help out at a recent food drive.

Courtesy of Congregation Kol Emet

Kol Emet is now a 40-year-old synagogue with an increasing congregation. Twenty-six new families joined in the past year alone, Boswell-Levy said.

It also has a religious school program with 82 students and a preschool program with 72 kids, 60% of whom are not Jewish. The rabbi calls those enrollment numbers "big for our size."

For those reasons, Boswell-Levy and Gordon are confident in the temple's future. In just the past few years, they've welcomed new members in their 80s and new members who just married.

Come June, the rabbi will officiate the wedding of a same-sex, interfaith, interracial couple. The pair started attending services at Kol Emet in 2019, and their relationship with Boswell-Levy grew from there.

"We're going to see that increasingly," she said of the couple's diverse identity.

To continue to live its values and perhaps attract more young people, Kol Emet plans to maintain its focus on issues of the day.

After George Floyd's murder in 2020, the temple started an "undoing racism" group, as Boswell-Levy described it. At a recent event, Kol Emet welcomed Rabbi Sandra Lawson, the director of diversity, equity and inclusion for the national Reconstructionist movement.

The synagogue also plans to host a communi-

ty-wide conversation, including congregants and other Yardley residents, about transitioning the township to more sustainable practices.

"What if Yardley could transition to a more sustainable, connected and flourishing community?" asked Boswell-Levy, outlining the event's core theme.

In addition, a successful \$650,000 capital campaign should allow the temple to replace its roof, buy a new Torah and build an "outdoor contemplative space," as the rabbi called it.

"We saw some nice growth this year," Gordon said. "That's reason to be hopeful."

Longtime members, like Hanck and others, want prospective members to know that Kol Emet is true to its word.

Morrisville resident Julie Asplen joined Kol Emet in 1995.

Her son has autism, but synagogue educators never had an issue teaching to his specifications. Her daughter couldn't attend confirmation classes because she was too busy with other activities, but since she wanted to, she was able to get a curriculum she could complete from home.

Kol Emet Education Director Carrie Shames-Walinsky created it for her.

"It's all these things that make me want to help it continue so it'll be there for the future," Asplen said of the synagogue. "L'dor v'dor." **JE**

# Holocaust Survivor Kurt Schoen Dies at 94

BY JARRAD SAFFREN

**K**urt Leo Schoen was a Holocaust survivor who didn't call himself a Holocaust survivor.

He fled Nazi Germany in 1939 at age 11 before ever setting foot in a concentration camp. But while Schoen avoided the worst years of Nazi Germany, he could never escape the experience of living under it.

Like many Holocaust survivors, Schoen used his appreciation for life as motivation to focus on the important things and achieve success. He built a family with three children. He also became a patented food flavor chemist at David Michael and Co. in Philadelphia, according to family members.

Through it all, he focused intensely and daily on his kids. After being separated from his sister and father during their respective passages to the United States, Schoen made sure to arrive home in time for dinner every night as an adult. His advice to his children was

always to appreciate their opportunities in life.

Schoen died on Feb. 24. He was 94.

The Philadelphian is survived by his children Marcia Cherry, Michael Schoen and Karen Schoen; four grandchildren; his sister-in-law Alice Schoen and nieces, nephews and their families.

"He had a good, long life," said Marcia Cherry of Dresher. "He truly did a lot, despite the rough beginning."

"He did everything he wanted to do," Karen Schoen said.

Schoen was born on Dec. 14, 1927, and grew up in Kassel, Germany, according to Schoen's 2002 oral history interview with the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. His father owned a shoe wholesale and retail business. His family lived in a mixed neighborhood, including non-Jews, and attended a local synagogue.

"Everything was fine until 1933," said Schoen in the oral history interview.

That was the year when Hitler was



Kurt Schoen with his wife Berta Cooper Schoen

Courtesy of Karen Schoen

appointed chancellor of Germany and later made himself the rule of law.

Shortly thereafter, Schoen's father was forced out of his store by a boycott; Schoen was no longer allowed to associate with non-Jews; and the young boy often had things thrown at him, both objects and profanities, by other kids.

Schoen's sister got to the United States first, in the late 1930s, with help from a group of Jewish women in the U.S., according to the oral history. Then his father received an affidavit, or a pledge of financial support, from family members in New York City. By 1939, Schoen was able to escape with the rest of his family.

In the U.S., according to the notice, he learned English, served in the Army and earned bachelor's and master's degrees from City College of New York and the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, respectively. He "proudly married Berta Cooper Schoen" and moved to Philadelphia to launch his career.

Cooper Schoen, an American from Connecticut who died in 2016, balanced out her direct and often brutally honest husband, according to Cherry.

"If he thought you were doing something wrong, he had no problem telling you," she said.

Later in life, Schoen didn't talk much about his childhood. But at times, it would come up.

When Cherry was in college, she hosted a friend at the Schoen house. The friend's father was German, and after he came to pick his daughter up, Schoen told Cherry that the man

reminded him of the kids who used to throw rocks at him.

Another time, Cherry's piano teacher gave her a song to play. But Schoen couldn't listen to it. It reminded him of Germany.

"It haunted him a little," Cherry said.

But the experience also molded Schoen into a man who pushed his kids to work hard.

They went to Hebrew school three times a week plus Shabbat services. They had to get jobs in their teens. And "it was assumed we would go to college," Cherry said.

But more than anything, the kids remember their father being there. At 5:15, he walked in from work, according to his daughter. By 5:30, the family was eating dinner.

Michael Schoen also remembers driving to New York and Connecticut to see extended family. These weren't holiday trips, either. They were just on random weekends.

"It wasn't typical for my friends. They'd see their families a few times a year," Schoen said. "For him, it really was a priority."

Schoen's family also had a way of bringing out his lighter side. His daughter said he could be very funny. Michael Schoen said he talked to his father every day; they had the same dry sense of humor.

And after Cherry had her own two children, grandpa was always available to run them around.

"He did very well for himself. He has an estate," Cherry said. "But honestly, family was always first." **JE**



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**AMITAI**

Diane F. (nee Fagan) on February 26, 2022. Beloved wife of Amiram Amitai. Loving mother of Pamela and Abby (George Parigian). Adoring grandmother to Halle Parigian. Sister of Ellen Zipin (Arthur), nieces Janet Zipin Goldenberg (Richard) and Melissa Zipin, great nephew Joshua Goldenberg and many cousins. Pre-deceased by parents Maurice Fagan and Beatrice (Wald) Fagan. A memorial service was held on March 3, 2022. A Celebration of Life will be held at a later date. Contributions in her memory can be made to Planned Parenthood and/or Public Television.  
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**BARSON**

Barbara "Bobbie" Barson (nee Lichter), age 84, passed away peacefully at her home on February 18, 2022. Beloved wife of the late Joseph Stanley Barson. Devoted mother of Lee (Paula) Barson and Eric Barson. Adoring Mom-Mom of Molly, Noah and Jeremy Barson. Proud godmother of Steven Cherry. Loving daughter of the late Allan and Mildred Haftel Lichter. Barbara was an only child growing up in Oxford Circle with loving grandparents and many aunts, uncles and cousins nearby. A graduate of Olney High (class of 1955), she never missed a reunion. She earned her Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education at Temple University and dedicated her career to teaching children in District 8 of the Philadelphia public school system. Bobbie was very active. She made friends easily and kept many throughout her life. She had Camp Big Pocono friends, high school friends, college friends, teaching friends, bowling friends, Forest Acres and Dolphin Swim Club friends, weekly dinner friends, Las Vegas friends, Fountain Pointe Condo friends and more. Family was Bobbie's top priority and greatest joy. She traveled every year with Joe and the boys for winter vacation. After retirement in 1999, she and Joe enjoyed eight glorious winters in Las Vegas. Later on she continued to spend as much time with family as possible, never missing a grandchild's performance, traveling to New York for shows, taking cruises with the kids and grandkids, touring Israel, vacationing

in Las Vegas every year and spending the last three winters in Florida. Contributions in her memory may be made to the Lewy Body Dementia Association, 912 Killian Hill Road S.W., Lilburn, Georgia 30047 or [www.lbda.org](http://www.lbda.org) or to your favorite charity.  
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**BERKOWITZ**

Starr Berkowitz (nee Molotsky), March 3, 2022, of Cherry Hill, NJ. Loving Wife of Bruce Berkowitz. Devoted Mother of Michael (Erin) Bitman and Wendy (Harris) Cohen. Adored Bubbie of Sam, Jack, Ethan, Luke and Jared. Cherished Sister of Dwight (Debbie) Molotsky. Beloved Aunt, Cousin, and Friend to many. Born and raised in South Philadelphia, she lived nearly 40 years in Chery Hill. She loved to spend her summers on the beach in Ventnor and Margate, NJ. Her greatest joy was being with her friends and family anywhere, any time. Interment Crescent Memorial Park, Pennsauken, NJ. Contributions may be made to the Lewy Body Dementia Association (<https://www.lbda.org/donate/>) and Tay-Sachs (<http://www.tay-sachs.org/donations.php>)  
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**GINSBURG**

Vivian Ginsburg (nee Kravitz), age 97, passed away on February 28, 2022. Wife of the late Manuel Ginsburg; father of Barry (Nancy) Ginsburg and the late Marlyn (Steven) Lieberman; grandmother of Larry (Caryn) Lieberman and Stacey (Chad) Blum; also survived by 4 great-grandchildren Asher, Joey, Austin and Drew. Contributions in her memory may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.  
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**GOLD COUSINS**

Rita Ann Gold Cousins (nee Kostick) age 94, passed away peacefully and gracefully on February 22, 2022 surrounded by her children. Beloved wife of the late Albert Gold and the late Herbert Cousins. Loving mother

of Benita Gold (Frank Schaeffer), Elizabeth Gold (Mark Glickman), Jeremy Gold (Shiva Gold) and the late Benjamin Gold. Adoring grandmother of Trevor, Sebastian, Layla, Matteo, Juliana, and Ava. Dear sister of the late Joan Andrews. She is also survived by her "brother" Peter Andrews and her numerous nephews and nieces. Born in Buffalo, New York, she moved to Philadelphia after marrying Al Gold and raised their four children in West Mt Airy. Later she lived in Wayne, Maine and Sarasota, Florida. She acted both professionally and in community theater in Philadelphia and Maine and met her husband Herb while acting in a play directed by her son Jeremy. Rita Ann was one of a kind. She greeted each new person she met as if they were a book recommended by The New York Times. She is warmly remembered by her legions of friends and fans for her joie d'vivre, optimism, humor, glamour and loving heart and her signature big hats, blue nails and red convertible. Anyone wishing to honor Rita Ann may make a contribution in her memory to Save the Children <https://www.savethechildren.org/> or to Inner City Arts <https://inner-cityarts.org/>.

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**GORDON**

Marvin Aaron Gordon, passed away on February 27, 2022. Beloved husband of 62 years to Marlene (nee Hendel); loving father of Howard (Robin), Mindy (Brad) Seiver and Amanda (Scott) Jacobson; adoring grandfather of Erika, Ashley, Scott (Danielle), Sammi, Maverick and Logan. He was loved by all that knew him and will never be forgotten. Contributions in his memory may be made to Shriners Hospital For Children, [www.shrinerschildren.org](http://www.shrinerschildren.org) or to Old York Road Temple-Beth Am, Rabbi Robert Leib's Discretionary Fund, [www.oyrtbetham.org/donate](http://www.oyrtbetham.org/donate)  
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**KATES**

Melvin Kates, February 25, 2022; of Voorhees NJ; formerly of Pennsylvania; beloved husband of the late Carole E. Kates (nee Krow); loving father of Ellen Cohen

(Peter) and the late Brett Kates (Shawna); cherished grandfather of Andrew Cohen, Sheri Zabolotsky (Andrew), Emily Steiner (Martin), Dara Kates Segal (Ivan), Cameron Kates (Gabrielle); great-grandfather of Nate, Jack, Dylan, Bryce, and Layla. In lieu of flowers, contributions in Melvin's memory may be made to Lions Gates CCRC ([lionsgateccrc.org/donate](http://lionsgateccrc.org/donate)).  
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**KOPET**

Sondra R. Kopet, age 82, passed away February 28, 2022. Loving aunt of Rhonda Newmark-White (the late Frederick), and greataunt of Seth Abraham (Camila). Dear sister of the late Ida Ruth Newmark. Also survived by many friends and her sweet cat "Simba". Contributions in her memory may be made to any animal rescue or a charity of the donor's choice.  
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**RAFFEL**

Harold, February 25, 2022 of Langhorne, Pa. Devoted husband of Constance (nee Diamond). Beloved father of Julie Raffel and Lawrence (Melissa) Raffel. Loving brother of Neil (Joan) Raffel. Proud grandfather of Max Raffel.  
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**SCHOEN**

Kurt Leo Schoen beloved husband, father and grandfather passed away on February 24, 2022, he was 94. He was born in Kassel, Germany and came to the United States in 1939 at the age of 11 to flee the Nazi's. He settled with his family in New York City, learned the English language, served in the US Army, and obtained bachelor's and Master's degrees in Organic Chemistry from City College of New York and Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute. He became an accomplished and patented food flavor chemist and spent most of his career building and working at David Michael and Company in Philadelphia, PA. He proudly married Berta Cooper Schoen and created with her a beautiful family and life together

in Philadelphia, PA and Delray Beach, Florida. He was most recently a resident of Ann's Choice in Warminster, Pennsylvania. Kurt is survived by his children Marcia Cherry (Steven), Michael Schoen (Suzanne) and Karen Schoen (Keith Canter), 4 grandchildren Brian Cherry (Talia), Lauren Beebie (Kevin), and Ellie and Cooper Schoen, and by his sister in law Alice Schoen; Kurt is also survived by many nieces, nephews and their families. Contributions in his memory should be made to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024-2126, [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)  
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**SHUMAN**

Labron Kaiser Shuman, age 89, passed away on February 6, 2022, of natural causes. He was born and raised in Philadelphia. He was a proud graduate of Central High School, Haverford College and University of Michigan Law School (Go Blue!). After many years in private practice, he found his true calling as a professor at Delaware County Community College where he helped found the school's paralegal program. He also spent over 20 summers teaching in Prague. Whether in Philly or the Czech Republic, he loved teaching and helping students succeed. Labron is survived by his truly adored wife of 31 years, Penny (Pamela), his children, Suzanne, David, and Melissa, and his greatest pleasure, his seven grandchildren: Rachel, Samuel, Daniel, Chloe, Quintin, Miranda, and Madeline. He was interred at Roosevelt Memorial Park in a private ceremony. Contributions in his memory may be made to the Interfaith Council of Philadelphia, [interfaithphiladelphia.org](http://interfaithphiladelphia.org) or the Jewish Relief Agency, [jewishrelief.org](http://jewishrelief.org).  
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**SPECTOR**

In loving memory of Arthur L. Spector, March 8, 2020 at age 80, attorney, past president of Kehilat Hanahar. Loving spouse of James A. Mokry, beloved son of the late Harvey and Rose Spector, nephew to the late Anna Abramson.

**WENGER**

Shirley (nee Cooper). March 2, 2022 of Philadelphia, Pa. Devoted wife of the late Irving. Beloved mother of Michael (Marcy) Wenger, Rhona (Lenard) Brown and Abbe Jo (Scott) Kessler. Also survived by six loving grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. Contributions in her memory may be made to the Alzheimer's Association or the Jewish Federation Ukraine Fund  
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# Lessons of Love from the Torah

BY RABBI GREGORY S. MARX

## Parshat Vayikra

**M**any of us find it hard to relate to the Torah portion of Vayikra. It focuses on a practice that is no longer in use today. We learn of various types of sacrifices and how they were to be fulfilled on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.

One of my now-favorite books, “Eternal Life” by Dara Horn, describes the tone of the sacrificial cult. The ceremonies were full of joy, beauty and community. As an aside, it’s a wonderful book.

We call the worshiping of God on the Temple, “sacrificing.” But the more accurate word is “connecting.” The Hebrew word used in the portion is *korbanot*. It comes from the Hebrew word *karav* which means “to approach” or to get close. The Hebrew word seems to mean that if we wish to get close to someone, we have to sacrifice something.

We cannot become close to anyone else when we are focused on our own needs and our own desires. Only when we set ourselves aside and focus on the other can we truly love them. Or put another way, “We possess only that which we give away.” If we are in search of love, the only way to find it is to love.

If we need a real friend, the only way to find one is to be a sincere friend. We get close to others by making ourselves vulnerable and come close to them.

Love begins with sacrifice. Real love means sacrificing our own needs to focus on the needs of the other. A wise rabbi taught long ago, “When love depends on achieving a certain goal, love vanishes when that goal is achieved. But when love is not dependent on any goal, that love never vanishes” (Avot 5:18). If we love someone with the goal of fulfilling our own needs and desires, that love will disappear when our needs are fulfilled.

Real love means setting aside our own ego. It is directed toward the other, which means our own self has to be set aside. In a sense, when we love another we are imitating God. According to the Kabbala, when God was ready to create the universe, God contracted to make room for this world. Until that time, God’s essence filled everything.

Until the contraction, there was no room for anything else. This is the notion of *tzimtzum* “contraction,” and without it there would not be room for a world. The lesson is, you cannot create a world until you contract, give up a little of yourself.

We learn in the Torah of Isaac’s love for his son Essau. It was conditional. Essau brought his father game to eat from the field. Imagine, for a moment

what would have happened if Essau came to his father and said, “I’m vegan. Enough with hunting.” How quickly that love based on performance would evaporate.

On the other hand, Rebecca’s love for Jacob was unconditional. She was focused on her son’s needs, not her own. This is the love that will flourish. While it is difficult to see these manipulative parents playing their children against each other, there are lessons to be learned about love.

When we love, we give up ourselves to focus on the needs of the other. We may even have to sacrifice our own needs. But through sacrifice (*korbanot*), we grow close (*karav*) to our beloved, whether our neighbor, our spouse, our child, our God. Love demands a personal *tzimtzum*.

A man had a very strange dream — he saw a house that was giving off a great deal of light. When he walked into the house, he saw all sorts of candles all over the place. Some of the candles were burning bright, some were dim, some were almost flickering out. He found the keeper of the house and asked, “What is this?”

The keeper replied, “Each candle is a different soul living in the world. The ones burning bright are in the prime of life. The ones low on oil and flickering are people who are dying. When the candle goes out, the person dies.”

The keeper of the candles turned his back for a moment, and the man quickly searched for his own candle. He found the candle with his name flickering in the corner. It looked as if it was about to be extinguished. The man panicked and looked around for some more oil to pour into his candle so it would burn brighter. He started to take oil from another candle burning bright. But a hand stopped him.

“That is not how it works here. Your candle does not burn brighter when you take oil from someone else. On the contrary, your candle burns brighter when you give oil to someone else.”

The man picked up his flickering candle and poured oil into several other candles. When he put it down, the flame started burning brighter. Too much wax can smother the flame. By sharing what we have, with a little self-sacrifice we enhance our own light and life. **JE**

Rabbi Gregory S. Marx is the senior rabbi at Congregation Beth Or in Maple Glen. The Board of Rabbis of Greater Philadelphia is proud to provide diverse perspectives on Torah commentary for the Jewish Exponent. The opinions expressed in this column are the author’s own and do not reflect the view of the Board of Rabbis.



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MARCH 10 — MARCH 17

# CALENDAR

## FRIDAY, MARCH 10

### JEWISH SIGNS EXHIBIT

The Signs of Our Jewish Times exhibit at the Temple Judea Museum at **Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel** will be on display until March 31. What constitutes a “sign”? Admittedly, our definition is quite broadly interpreted. See for yourself. 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park. **For more information: [TJMuseum@kenesethisrael.org](mailto:TJMuseum@kenesethisrael.org); 215-901-2656; 215-887-8700, ext. 416.**

### PARSHA FOR LIFE

Join Rabbi Alexander Coleman, Jewish educator and psychotherapist at the **Institute for Jewish Ethics**, at 9 a.m. for a weekly journey through the Torah portion of the week with eternal lessons on personal growth and spirituality. **Go to [ijethics.org/weekly-torah-portion.html](http://ijethics.org/weekly-torah-portion.html) to receive the Zoom link and password.**

### VIRTUAL CLASSES

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## SUNDAY, MARCH 13

### ART AUCTION

**Tiferet Bet Israel Men’s Club of Blue Bell** will host a virtual art auction in collaboration with Marlin Art. Between 160 and 175 art pieces in various sizes and price ranges will be made available to the public through a virtual auction starting at 7 p.m. **Anyone interested in participating should contact Ben Simkin at 610-761-3090 or Fred Katz at [4csons2@aol.com](mailto:4csons2@aol.com).**

### COMEDIAN PERFORMANCE

Join Israeli-born comedian **Modi** at City Winery Philadelphia at 8 p.m. for a night of laughs. Featured on HBO, CBS, NBC, ABC, Comedy Central, Howard Stern and E! Entertainment, Modi has received rave reviews in The New York Times, Time Out NY and The New York Post. **990 Filbert St.**

## TUESDAY, MARCH 15

### JEVS WORKSHOP

At this virtual **JEVS** workshop at 11 a.m., learn how career assessments can give you new ideas about occupations that align with your personality preferences, interests and aptitudes. **[jevshumanservices.org/event/how-career-assessments-can-help-you-choose-your-new-path-2/](http://jevshumanservices.org/event/how-career-assessments-can-help-you-choose-your-new-path-2/).**

## MONDAY, MARCH 14 MAHJONG GAME



pengpeng / gettyimages

**Melrose B’nai Israel Emanu-El Sisterhood** invites the community to join our weekly mahjong game at 7 p.m. Cost is \$36 per year or free with MBIEE Sisterhood membership. **For more information, call 215-635-1505 or email [office@mbiee.org](mailto:office@mbiee.org). 8339 Old York Road, Elkins Park.**

### BINGO WITH BARRY

Join Barry at **Tabas Kleinlife** for an afternoon of bingo from 12:30-3:30 p.m. on March 15, 16 and 17. Free parking and free to play, with snacks available on March 16. **For more information, call 215-745-3127. 2101 Strahle St., Philadelphia.**

### HOARDING SUPPORT

**Jewish Family and Children’s Service** is offering online support to help individuals struggling with a hoarding disorder. Sessions will be held from 4-5 p.m. on Zoom on the third Tuesday of the month. **To register or for more information, contact Rivka Goldman at 267-256-2250 or [rgoldman@jfcspshilly.org](mailto:rgoldman@jfcspshilly.org).**

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16

### PURIM CELEBRATION

**Congregation Mikveh Israel and Mikveh Israel Association** invite you to join us for our 2022 Purim celebration. Fun begins at 6 p.m. with puppets, food, games and prizes provided by David Zeidman Entertainment. **Call the synagogue office at 215-922-5446 to make your reservations. 44 N. Fourth St, Philadelphia.**

### SISTERHOOD MEETING

**The Congregations of Shaare Shamayim Sisterhood** will host a Zoom event, “Learn How to Make Sushi”, at 7:30 p.m. The cost for this program is \$5 per person. **To sign up, send your check for \$5, payable to CSS Sisterhood,**

**Congregations of Shaare Shamayim, 9768 Verree Road, Philadelphia, 19115, Attn: Sushi Program. Call Lynn at the synagogue office at 215-677-1600 for more information.**

## THURSDAY, MARCH 3

### BEREAVEMENT GROUP

**Jewish Family and Children’s Service** is offering an eight-session online support group for individuals who have suffered the loss of a loved one. **Sessions will be held from 10:30 a.m.-noon until April 21 on Zoom, and the cost is \$144. Contact Rivka Goldman at 267-256-2250 or [rgoldman@jfcspshilly.org](mailto:rgoldman@jfcspshilly.org) for more information.**

### JEVS WORKSHOP

At this virtual **JEVS** workshop at 11 a.m., learn how to stay motivated throughout your job search, even when it is challenging. **[jevshumanservices.org/event/staying-motivated-and-setting-goals-for-your-job-search-3/](http://jevshumanservices.org/event/staying-motivated-and-setting-goals-for-your-job-search-3/).**

### HOARDING SUPPORT

**Jewish Family and Children’s Service** is offering an online support group to help individuals find community and connection with those whose partner, parent or loved one is struggling with a hoarding disorder. **Sessions will be held from noon-1 p.m. on Zoom until March 24. To register or for more information, contact Rivka Goldman at 267-256-2250 or [rgoldman@jfcspshilly.org](mailto:rgoldman@jfcspshilly.org). JE**

# Out & About



1 Abrams Hebrew Academy's third- and fourth-grade students dressed up for the school's annual wax museum event. Courtesy of Abrams Hebrew Academy  
2 Perelman Jewish Day School fourth-graders read from the Torah at the school's morning tefila. Courtesy of Perelman Jewish Day School  
3 Drexel University freshman cartoonist Andrew Galitzer did a session with seventh-graders and senior congregants at Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El's Sylvia F. Lodesh Religious School. Courtesy of Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El  
4 Kasriel and Shani Kay, family members of murdered lone soldier Eli Kay, spoke at Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El. Courtesy of Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El

## LAST WORD

## Charles Birnbaum

BY JARRAD SAFFREN

When Charles Birnbaum was 13, he tuned his first piano, a beat-down baby grand that Birnbaum said looked like “it came from the inside of a fraternity house.”

Fiddling and fixing things came naturally to him.

“A lot of natural instincts and curiosity of how stuff works ... was kind of built into me that I think they can’t really necessarily teach,” Birnbaum said. “You have to have that curiosity.”

What was once a skill that emerged from necessity for Birnbaum later became his livelihood.

Birnbaum, 75, has tuned thousands of pianos during his 40 years as a piano tuner, including the likes of those played by Frank Sinatra, Tony Bennett and Stevie Wonder, and he doesn’t plan on retiring anytime soon.

Birnbaum knew he was going to pursue a career in music from a young age. His parents were both Holocaust survivors; they both lost their respective spouses in the Shoah and met while surviving in the Polish forests.

Birnbaum was born in Neu-Ulm, Germany in 1947 and moved to San Francisco in 1952 before arriving in Philadelphia five years later, where he would grow up and go to school.

Both he and his brother had a knack for music. His brother received a scholarship to attend the Curtis Institute of Music, while Birnbaum got more serious about his studies at the Settlement Music School.

“From the time I was 10-years-old, [music] was not something we did for fun. We took it very seriously,” Birnbaum said.

Per their parents’ upbringing, once they had found something they were good at and interested in pursuing, “the die were cast,” Birnbaum said.

But Birnbaum’s arrival at the Settlement Music School was kismet. It was there that he met mentor Marian Filar, a Polish pianist, virtuoso and



Holocaust survivor who accounted for his time in seven concentration camps in his 2002 book “From Buchenwald to Carnegie Hall.”

Filar took Birnbaum under his wing and pushed him musically. At 11, Birnbaum won a children’s competition to play piano with the Philadelphia Orchestra and three more competitions after that.

Filar mentored Birnbaum through his arrival at Temple University in 1964, where he received his bachelor’s and master’s degrees studying music. He met his wife at Temple while he was studying for his master’s; she was getting her master’s in music education. The couple married in 1971 and moved

to Hammonton, New Jersey, where they could be close to Birnbaum’s parents.

Splitting his time as an adjunct professor at Temple University and a New Jersey community college, Birnbaum was beginning to think about a family. His first daughter was born in 1975, and the young family needed a supplement to their income.

Birnbaum began to sit in on classes from a piano rebuilder and technician, who every semester, tried to stump his class with an obscure question about music theory. Birnbaum was the only one to answer the question correctly.

“His jaw dropped,” Birnbaum said.

From there, Birnbaum’s career snowballed. He has always found joy in

tuning pianos for his musician friends, especially because many of the professional tuners would do a poor job.

“Ninety-nine percent of the people they’re doing it for don’t know the difference; it’s kind of sad,” Birnbaum said.

After stunning friends with his tuning work, Birnbaum made a career for himself tuning pianos at the up-and-coming resorts and casinos in Atlantic City, close to where he lived and where he was raising his family.

As his prominence in the local music industry grew, however, so did troubles in his personal life.

In 2012, his family’s property in Atlantic City, where his parents had lived since 1965 until they died, was under threat to be seized by the state through eminent domain. The property was on the fringes of the now-Ocean Resort casino. Birnbaum ultimately won the case, which was taken to a New Jersey appellate court in 2019, but the “emotional impact” of the case took its toll.

The Birnbaum family moved into the Atlantic City home after their Center City apartment was deemed “unfit for human habitation” by the city. The move severely impacted Birnbaum’s mother, as the relocation to the suburbs limited her freedoms.

“It was like putting Mom in Siberia,” Birnbaum said.

The story was different for Birnbaum. Shortly before graduating, Birnbaum suffered a psychotic break and, after receiving psychiatric care, the move to Atlantic City was a fresh start. The home there was where he introduced his wife to his parents and where they became engaged.

Despite the hiccups in Birnbaum’s life, Birnbaum hasn’t slowed down. He just finished tuning the piano at the Tropicana Showroom for a Fifth Dimension performance on March 4. Next month, he’ll be doing the tuning for a show with Steve Martin and Martin Short.

After tuning pianos for over half his life, Birnbaum still has a deep passion for it: “It’s like giving a piano its soul.” JE



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Pursuant to the requirements of section 1975 of the Pennsylvania Business Corporation Law of 1988, notice is hereby given that L&L ABSTRACT, INC. is currently in the process of voluntarily dissolving. Offit Kurman, P.C. 1801 Market Street Ten Penn Ctr., (2300) Philadelphia, PA 19103

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Estate of DANIELS, EVA MAE LETTERS ADMINISTRATION on the above estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same, and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay, to Nathan Daniels, Administrator, c/o Samuel Ben-Samuel, Esquire, 273 Montgomery Ave., Ste. 201 Bala Cynwyd PA 19004; Samuel Ben-Samuel, Attorney 273 Montgomery Ave., Ste. 201 Bala Cynwyd PA 19004;

**ESTATE OF ALAN NOTIS, DECEASED.**

Late of Philadelphia LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to ERIC GRUNFELD, EXECUTOR, c/o David S. Workman, Esq., 200 S. Broad St., Ste. 600, Philadelphia, PA 19102, or to his Attorney: DAVID S. WORKMAN ASTOR WEISS KAPLAN & MANDEL, LLP 200 S. Broad St., Ste. 600 Philadelphia, PA 19102

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**ESTATE NOTICES**

ESTATE OF CAROL M. SCHWINGER, DECEASED. Late of Philadelphia LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to DONNA M. SHAPLEY, EXECUTRIX, c/o Wendy Fein Cooper, Esq., 50 S. 16th St., Ste. 3530, Philadelphia, PA 19102 Or to her Attorney: WENDY FEIN COOPER DOLCHIN, SLOTKIN & TODD, P.C. 50 S. 16th St., Ste. 3530 Philadelphia, PA 19102

**ESTATE OF CYNTHIA LYNN FULTON a/k/a CYNTHIA L. FULTON, CYNTHIA FULTON, DECEASED.**

Late of Philadelphia LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to ROBERT D. FULTON, EXECUTOR, c/o Harry Metka, Esq., 4802 Neshaminy Blvd., Ste. 9, Bensalem, PA 19020 Or to his Attorney: HARRY METKA 4802 Neshaminy Blvd., Ste. 9 Bensalem, PA 19020

**ESTATE OF DOLORES MELISH, DECEASED**

Late of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to Edith Keller, Executrix c/o Michael E. Eisenberg, Esquire 2935 Byberry Road, Suite 107 Hatboro, PA 19040 Or to Attorney: Michael E. Eisenberg, Esquire 2935 Byberry Road, Suite 107 Hatboro, PA 19040

**PET SERVICES**

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## ESTATE NOTICES

Estate of Felice A. Erdreich, late of the City and County of Philadelphia, PA, Deceased.  
 Letters of Administration on the above estate have been granted to Howard Erdreich, all persons indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment, and those having legal claim to present the same without delay to the Administrator below: Howard Erdreich, 14 Juniper Drive Richboro, PA 18954, or Attorney: Robert L. Mercadante, Esq., 408 Fawn Hill Lane Penn Valley, PA 19072

ESTATE OF GRIGORY RAITER a/k/a GREGORY RAITER, DECEASED. Late of Philadelphia  
 LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to LINA MATLIS and MARINA POBIRSKI, ADMINISTRATORS, c/o Michael D. Rubin, Esq., 686 Gray Circle, Southampton, PA 18966.  
 Or to their Attorney: MICHAEL D. RUBIN LAW OFFICE MICHAEL D. RUBIN 686 Gray Circle Southampton, PA 18966

ESTATE OF HENRY J. WEISSMAN, DECEASED. Late of Philadelphia  
 LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to RONALD JAMES WEISSMAN, ADMINISTRATOR, 6036 Lawndale St., Philadelphia, PA 19111.  
 Or to his Attorney: HENRY A. JEFFERSON JEFFERSON LAW, LLC 1700 Market St., Ste. 1005 Philadelphia, PA 19103

ESTATE OF JOSEPH ELLIOT SANDERS (a/k/a Joseph E. Sanders; Joseph Sanders), DECEASED, late of Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County  
 LETTERS on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the Estate of the decedent to make known the same, and all persons indebted to the decedents to make payment without delay, to Co-Executors Charlene G. Sanders and Elissa M. Sanders c/o Heather C. Winett, Esq., 1515 Market Street, Suite 1200 Philadelphia, PA 19102-1932

ESTATE OF Avon Edward Wilson DECEASED, late of Philadelphia  
 LETTERS on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the Estate of the decedent to make known the same, and all persons indebted to the decedents to make payment without delay, to Executor Paul D. Wilson Gary E. Thompson, Esquire Carosella & Associates, P.C. 882 South Matlack Street, Suite 101 West Chester, PA 19382-4505

ESTATE OF JOSEPHINE J. McKEON, DECEASED. Late of Philadelphia  
 LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to Frances R. McDermott, Executrix, 1230 Bristol Rd., Southampton, PA 18966.  
 Or to her Attorney: BETH B. MCGOVERN Trevoise Corporate Center 4624 Street Rd. Trevoise, PA 19053

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## ESTATE NOTICES

Estate of June M. Pecura, Deceased Late of Philadelphia, PA.  
 LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same, and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay, to Richard S. Pecura, Executor, c/o Gary A. Zlotnick, Esq., Zarwin Baum DeVito Kaplan Schaer & Toddy, PC, One Commerce Sq., 2005 Market St., 16th Fl., Philadelphia, PA 19103 or to their attorneys, Gary A. Zlotnick, Esq., Zarwin Baum DeVito Kaplan Schaer & Toddy, PC, One Commerce Sq., 2005 Market St., 16th Fl. Philadelphia, PA 19103

ESTATE OF KATHLEEN INEZ BRUNER, DECEASED. Late of Philadelphia  
 LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to PATRICIA A. BELLEZZA, EXECUTRIX, 1008 Napa Circle, Pennsylvania, PA 18073

ESTATE OF LINDA HOWELL a/k/a LINDA SCOLAVINO HOWELL, DECEASED. Late of Philadelphia  
 LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to JOSEPH SCOLAVINO, EXECUTOR, c/o Kenneth R. Pugh, Esq., 5401 Wissahickon Ave., Philadelphia, PA 19144.  
 Or to his Attorney: KENNETH R. PUGH JERNER LAW GROUP, P.C. 5401 Wissahickon Ave. Philadelphia, PA 19144

ESTATE OF MARJORIE RICHMAN, DECEASED. Late of Philadelphia  
 LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay, to CHARLES JAY RICHMAN and ANN RICHMAN BERESIN, EXECUTORS, c/o Daniella A. Horn, Esq., 2202 Delancey Place, Philadelphia, PA 19103.  
 Or to their Attorney: DANIELLA A. HORN KLENK LAW, LLC 2202 Delancey Place Philadelphia, PA 19103

Estate of Martin M. Thorn Thorn, Martin M. Deceased Late of Philadelphia, PA.  
 LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same, and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to Doris V. Steinhagen, 743 Cornwallis Dr., Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054, Executrix. Keith Levinson, Esquire Boulevard Law Center 1730 Welsh Road Philadelphia, PA 19115

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## ESTATE NOTICES

Estate of Michael E. Probe Probe, Michael E. Deceased Late of Philadelphia, PA.  
 LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same, and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to Valerie Ferris, c/o Jeffrey S. Michels, Esq., 1234 Bridgetown Pike, Suite 110, Feasterville, PA 19053, Executrix. Jeffrey S. Michels, Esq., 1234 Bridgetown Pike Suite 110 Feasterville, PA 19053

ESTATE OF PAULINE ALLEN, DECEASED. Late of Philadelphia  
 LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to JULIE A. MCNAIR, ADMINISTRATRIX, c/o Nathan Snyder, Esq., 3070 Bristol Pike, Bldg. 2, Ste. 204, Bensalem, PA 19020, Or to her Attorney: NATHAN SNYDER LAW OFFICE OF NATHAN SNYDER 3070 Bristol Pike, Bldg. 2, Ste. 204 Bensalem, PA 1902

ESTATE OF THELMA LEE AYERS, DECEASED. Late of Lower Merion Township, Montgomery County, PA  
 LETTERS OF ADMINISTRATION on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to PHILIP E. FRANKS, ADMINISTRATOR, c/o Neal G. Wiley, Esq., 1880 JFK Blvd., Ste. 1740, Philadelphia, PA 19103, Or to his Attorney: NEAL G. WILEY ALEXANDER & PELLI, LLC 1880 JFK Blvd., Ste. 1740 Philadelphia, PA 19103

ESTATE OF TIMOTHY A. KASTNER, aka Timothy Alexander Kastner, DECEASED  
 Late of Montgomery County, Pennsylvania  
 LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to Erin Kastner, Executrix c/o Michael E. Eisenberg, Esquire 2935 Byberry Road, Suite 107 Hatboro, PA 19040  
 Or to Attorney: Michael E. Eisenberg, Esquire 2935 Byberry Road, Suite 107 Hatboro, PA 19040

Estate of WEAVER, ELVAYANN LEIGH  
 Late of Pennsylvania  
 LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same, and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay, to Savilla Jiles, Executrix, c/o Samuel Ben Samuel, Esquire, 223 Upland Road, Merion Station, PA 19066; Attorney: Samuel Ben-Samuel 223 Upland Road Merion Station, PA 19066

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## LEGAL NOTICES

COURT OF COMMON PLEAS - PHILA. COUNTY - CIVIL TRIAL DIV. - Nov. Term '20/No. 01917 - Maria Daly, Plaintiff vs. Kadeja Datts and DoorDash, Inc., Defendants - To: Kadeja Datts, Defendant, 2337 Griffith St., Phila., PA 19152. Take notice that a Complaint in Civil Action-Motor Vehicle Accident has been filed against you in the above-named Court. Said complaint arises from an accident that took place on or about 11/24/19 eastbound on Levick St. approaching the intersection with Keystone St., Phila., causing the front end of the Datts vehicle to violently collide with the Plaintiff's vehicle. NOTICE: YOU HAVE BEEN SUED IN COURT. If you wish to defend against the claims set forth in the notice above, you must take action within twenty (20) days after this Complaint and Notice are served, by entering a written appearance personally or by attorney and filing in writing with the Court your defenses or objections to the claims set forth against you. You are warned that if you fail to do so the case may proceed without you and a judgment may be entered against you by the Court without further notice for any money claimed in the Complaint or for any other claim or relief requested by the Plaintiff. You may lose money or property or other rights important to you. YOU SHOULD TAKE THIS PAPER TO YOUR LAWYER AT ONCE. IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A LAWYER GO TO OR TELEPHONE THE OFFICE SET FORTH BELOW. THIS OFFICE CAN PROVIDE YOU WITH THE INFORMATION ABOUT HIRING A LAWYER. IF YOU CANNOT AFFORD TO HIRE A LAWYER, THIS OFFICE MAY BE ABLE TO PROVIDE YOU WITH INFORMATION ABOUT AGENCIES THAT MAY OFFER LEGAL SERVICES TO ELIGIBLE PERSONS AT A REDUCED FEE OR NO FEE. Philadelphia Bar Assn., Lawyer Referral & Info. Service, One Reading Center, Phila., PA 19107, 215.238.1701. Ian S. Abovitz, Atty. for Plaintiff, Stark & Stark, P.C., 777 Township Line Rd., #120, Yardley, PA 19067, 267.907.9600

## ESTATE NOTICES

ESTATE OF William C. Avery, DECEASED  
 Late of Philadelphia County, Pennsylvania  
 LETTERS TESTAMENTARY on the above Estate have been granted to the undersigned, who request all persons having claims or demands against the estate of the decedent to make known the same and all persons indebted to the decedent to make payment without delay to Hope Avery Manes, Executrix c/o Michael E. Eisenberg, Esquire 2935 Byberry Road, Suite 107 Hatboro, PA 19040  
 Or to Attorney: Michael E. Eisenberg, Esquire 2935 Byberry Road, Suite 107 Hatboro, PA 19040

## FICTITIOUS NAME

FICTITIOUS NAME REGISTRATION - Notice is hereby given, pursuant to the provisions of Act of Assembly, No. 295, effective 3/16/1983, of the filing on 1/25/22, in the office of the Dept. of State, of the Commonwealth of PA, at Harrisburg, PA for an Application for the conduct of business in Phila. County, PA, under the assumed or fictitious name, style or designation of Center City Business Association, with the principal place of business at 1515 Market St., #1200, Phila., PA 19102. The name and address of the entity interested in said business is Center City Proprietors Assn., 1515 Market St., #1200, Phila., PA 19102. ROY YAFFE, Solicitor, GOULD, YAFFE & GOLDEN, 2005 Market St., 16th Fl., Phila., PA 19103

## PETITION NAME CHANGE

Court of Common Pleas for the County of Philadelphia, February Term, 20 22 No. 000421 NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on February 3, 2022, the petition of Chris Solomon Dayse was filed, praying for a decree to change her name to CHRISTINE SHAMEAN DAYSE. The Court has fixed APRIL 1, 2022 at 10:00 AM in Room No. 691, City Hall, Philadelphia, PA for hearing. All persons interested may appear and show cause if they have any, why the prayer of the said petitioner should not be granted.

## STATEWIDE ADS

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