

TULSA *Jewish Review*

Tevet/Shevat 5781

January 2021

GRIT

GROWING
RESILIENT
INNOVATIVE
TULSA

2021



Small class sizes.



162-acre campus.



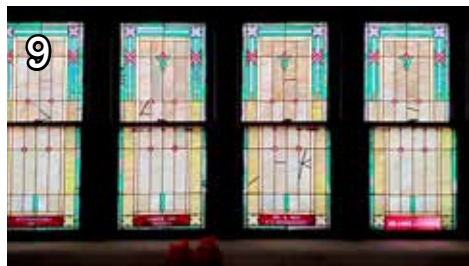
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Tulsa's PreK through Grade 12 Independent Episcopal School



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GRIT: 2021 Campaign Opening Event

by **ALIX LIIV CAPLAN**, DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS

THE JEWISH FEDERATION of Tulsa's 2021 Campaign Opening event is on Tuesday, January 26, via Zoom. The theme is GRIT. Grit is how one perseveres and achieves success. Grit is about courage. Grit is about passion and strength of character. The Jewish people have grit. Tulsa has grit. The Jewish Federation of Tulsa has grit.

Grit is also an acronym launching us into the new year for growing, resilient, innovative, Tulsa. The year 2021 seems like the year to focus on this acronym and the meaning behind it.

The Campaign Opening event will showcase how the Jewish Federation of Tulsa has grit. Along with grit, we need to laugh. It's now more important than ever. Jews have always used comedy to get through the tragedy. So we bring you Noah Gardenswartz, a Jewish comedian and writer, currently writing for Amazon's Emmy and Golden-Globe winning show, *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*. Let's head into 2021 with smiles on our faces and a new mindset.

We hope you will join us for an exciting evening to energize the community about the passion, strength, and success of the Jewish Federation of Tulsa. ■

*This event will only be one-hour long.
ZOOM: 2021 Campaign Opening Event
Meeting ID: 813 4630 6435
Passcode: 428824



Programming During a Pandemic

by CHEN SHOVAL, ISRAELI EMISSARY



THIS YEAR HAS been one of the most challenging years, not only for me on a personal, family, and financial level, but on a global level. In fact, there have been so many variables that the most stable thing is the constant change.

How do you create a process when the ground is continually changing? When no one knows what the endpoint of COVID will be and what the world will look like after it? It's definitely a challenge. After some consideration, I realized that my way of dealing with this challenge is to break it down into factors and act step by step.

In the three and a half months my family and I have been here, we have gotten to know a little bit about the city, the nature surrounding it, the community, and the people. There is no doubt that making personal connections during the pandemic era is perhaps the greatest challenge of all.

However, we have managed to create friendships and take part in interesting conversations and exciting encounters. At the Jewish Federation, the events calendar is not stopping for a moment. We work a lot on how to think outside of the box, diversify the zoom tool, and how, despite everything, we manage to bring the sense of Israel to our new community.

My upcoming plans are going to focus on our partner community in Israel – Kikar Sedom. Nearly once a month we will bring unusual and diverse speakers as part of the Israel and the Diaspora program. We will continue with the virtual tours and the geopolitical lectures on Israel and the Middle East and meet with Israelis in workshops, lectures, and the new podcast that I am about to launch. In the podcast we will go on a trip to Israel, and through the stories of the common people we will meet the complex story of Israel again.

There are many things to look forward to. There are many challenges to deal with, but from the little I know, Tulsa's Jewish community is a strong, warm community with a desire to give and contribute. I am sure that together we will make it through this period, and, who knows, maybe in a year from now we will raise a glass of wine together in Israel and bless "She'echianu."

Wishing us all a good, healthy, and stable year. Chen. ■

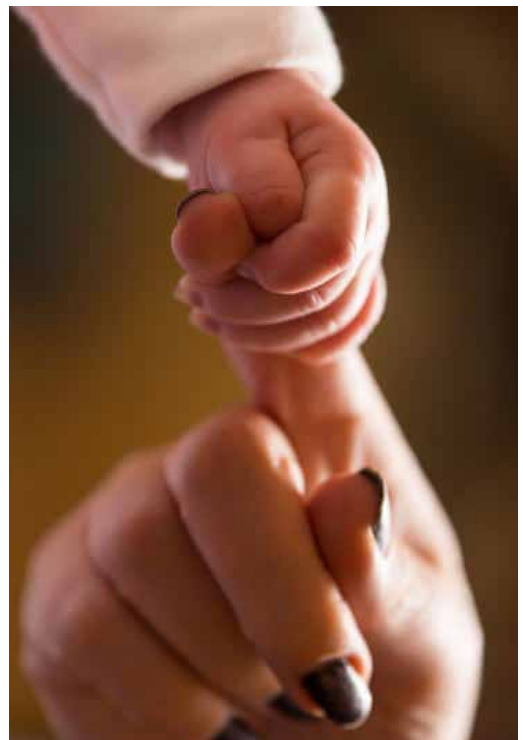
A Jewish Mother Primer

inspired by SHERRI GOODALL

MOTHERHOOD IS TOUGH—NO question about it. To better support our mothers, the Jewish Federation of Tulsa launched JMOMS, co-chaired by JFT Board member Terrie Shipley and Israeli Emissary Chen Shoval. For more information, contact Chen at emissary@jewishtulsa.org.

Here are some words of wisdom from one mother to another:

1. Take 15 minutes for yourself every day.
2. If you can, get a second freezer in the garage or the basement.
3. Forget talking on the phone, e-mail, or texting. At a certain age it isn't cool to talk to your mom. Your favorite phrase is, "You haven't called me since ten minutes ago, yesterday, last week, last month..." Anything longer and your kid's picture goes on the back of a milk carton.
4. Worry most when your kids DON'T have problems.
5. Consider "suffering" an inalienable right, with "whining" close behind.
6. Favorite threat: The oven is a place to stick your head.
7. Buy on sale, whether you need it or not, for everyone in your family.
8. Understand from birth, "You get what you pay for." KARMA!
9. Raise your children to be kind.
10. You may do everything you can to NOT be your own mother, but you will end up like her anyway. ■



JFT Event Recap

Rosh Chodesh "Women in Politics" | Tuesday, November 10th, 2020

Rosh Chodesh is a time when we, as Jewish women of the community, come together under the new moon to discuss current issues and topics through personal, spiritual, and ritual celebrations. Abby Broyles joined us for this session as November was a significant month for our state and country as we ended the election season. Abby is the first woman in Oklahoma to run for senate. We heard from Abby as she shared her story of why she chose to run, what she is passionate about, and that her biggest female role model is her mother. Abby shared with us that throughout the election she was criticized for being a woman in politics. She combated this with perseverance, pride, and strength, and, as a result, she gave hope to girls and women in our state and beyond.



DIY Cheeseboard and Wine Pairing | Thursday, November 19th, 2020

This was such a fun and interactive presentation by Gabrielle Schacher, certified Sommelier. Gabrielle has worked in the wine industry in some capacity for 15 years. We heard the story of her passion for becoming a Sommelier began while she was on a trip to Israel. She is known for making wine approachable and food-pairing skills. Before this program, those who RSVP'd received a suggested grocery list to pick from based on their preference. The event began with Gabrielle teaching us how to make a visually appealing cheese board by explaining which cheeses and wines pair best and why. Throughout the program, participants were encouraged to engage and ask questions. It was a night filled with creativity and a delicious pairing.

Turkish-Israeli Cooking Class

On November 22nd approximately 30 people took part in a wonderful Zoom cooking class on traditional Turkish-Israeli cuisine. Each participant received a bag with special ingredients and recipes for participating in Israeli Chef Korin's class. Korin is from Kikar Sedom, the Tulsa Jewish Community partners in Israel. She taught us the secrets of her mother's kitchen. Her mother, Rachel, made Aliyah to Israel in the early 50s from Turkey and brought many new dishes to the Israeli cuisine. It was enjoyable to prepare the different delicious courses and meet and listen during the cooking class to the other friends from the Kikar Sedom community.



JMOMS

November 24th was the launch of a group from the community for moms with young children. The meeting took place on Zoom with more than 13 moms participating. Each mom received a "meeting bag," and during the meeting they were sharing, crafting, accepting, and listening to one another, talking about the essence of J-motherhood, the daily challenges, and rewards.



Feeding the Soul – Homemade Israeli Hummus and Pita | Friday, December 4th, 2020

We had an entertaining, hands-on presentation by Tal Yogev on how to make Israeli-style hummus. This was a great activity to do alone or with friends and family, safe in the comfort of your own home. Participants were given a list of ingredients to purchase before the program, and Tal led us through each step of making our own delicious afternoon snack. Throughout the presentation, he answered questions and told us about the Israeli tradition of hummus and pita as a typical lunch on Fridays while preparing for a big Shabbat dinner. We learned about the fun fact that the Guinness World Record of the biggest amount of hummus prepared at once leaps back and forth from Israel and Lebanon.

Virtual Jerusalem Tour

On December 9th, right before Hanukkah, we got the chance to visit Jerusalem on a virtual tour guided by Gadi Ben-Dov, a licensed tour guide in Israel, that came up with the idea of virtual tours as the pandemic started and tours to Israel stopped. During the virtual tour we entered the Old City of Jerusalem. We toured around the Western Wall and Temple Mount, trying to imagine our lives during the Maccabees period.



Young Jewish Professionals Hanukkrunk | Wednesday, December 9th, 2020

We had the opportunity to gather and celebrate the festival of lights together with our young Jewish adult community. In partnership with Rebekah Kantor and Tulsa Tomorrow, we put together kits available for pickup that participants used for this activity where we gathered on Zoom. This year had brought a lot of darkness, uncertainty, and suffering. We wanted to take a night and remind our community of the light that each of us adds to the world. While we made our candle, we asked everyone to reflect on the light they bring to the world. Chen gave an interactive presentation over the story of Hanukkah, followed by Rebekah's presentation of how to make your own candle, and ending with a fun game of bingo where we had three winners!

JFT Upcoming Events

Geopolitical Lecture Series | Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

A series of three geopolitical lectures will take place on January 6th, 20th, and February 3rd. The lectures will concentrate on Israel's geopolitics, its complicated location in the Middle East, and its role today. Contact Chen at emissary@jewishtulsa.org for the Zoom link.

Geopolitical Lectures

THREE-PART SERIES

WEDNESDAY, JAN 6 7:00 PM	WEDNESDAY, JAN 20 7:00 PM	WEDNESDAY, FEB 3 7:00 PM
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JEWISHTULSA.ORG 7

Virtual Men's Club | Wednesday, January 13th | Noon

Our speaker this month is Jim Jakubovitz, CEO of Zarrow Pointe. His topic is "How Zarrow Pointe is surviving during a pandemic." RSVP to isilberg@jewishtulsa.org for the Zoom link.



Zarrow Pointe Covid-19 Action Plan



Rosh Chodesh | Wednesday, January 13th | 7 p.m.

New Year Do You – What if you devoted this year to simply loving yourself? Rosh Chodesh is when Jewish women of the community come together under the new moon to discuss current issues and topics through personal, spiritual, and ritual celebration. Join us on Wednesday, January 13th, to discuss moving into the new year with realistic goals, resolutions, and learning the importance of self-care through it all. RSVP to Isabella at isilberg@jewishtulsa.org for the Zoom link.

PJ Library: Tu B'Shevat Celebration | Sunday, January 24th | 2 p.m.

We will have an activity kit prepared for a fun and interactive program for PJ families. The kits will be available for pickup at the front desk of the JCC the week of January 19th-22nd. We will gather together on Zoom for the activity at 2 p.m. on Sunday, January 24th. To reserve your kit, please email Isabella at isilberg@jewishtulsa.org.



International Holocaust Remembrance Day program | Monday, January 25th | Noon

The internationally recognized date for Holocaust Remembrance Day corresponds to Nisan's 27th day on the Hebrew calendar. It marks the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Please join us on Monday, January 25th via Zoom as we host Chaim Shoval. Chaim will share with us his life story as a second-generation Holocaust survivor, what it was like to grow up in a state founded by Holocaust survivors, and how it affected his life's perspective. RSVP to Chen at emissary@jewishtulsa.org for the Zoom link.

Men's Club and Ladies Who Lunch | Wednesday, January 27th | Noon

On Wednesday, January 27th, we will celebrate Tu B'Shevat. We'll have "Seder" dried fruits, and together with our Israeli emissary Chen, we'll learn about the holiday's tradition in Israel and what it has become over the last few decades. RSVP to isilberg@jewishtulsa.org for the Zoom link.

Ladies Who Lunch & Men's Club TU B'SHEVAT ISRAELI STYLE

Wednesday, January 27th
at 12pm

Restoring Community

by **REV. DR. ROBERT TURNER**, PASTOR, HISTORIC VERNON AME CHURCH

IMAGINE LOSING ALL you have in 18 hours - your home, business, loved ones, and every sense of security you ever thought you had. Then to be put in internment camps for months until someone of another ethnicity than yours came to vouch for you. Later, once you were released, you returned to your residence engulfed in ashes and destruction. You seek to file an insurance claim to no avail. While hundreds of your friends left, you remain to rebuild your home, business, and, yes, your place of worship.

This is the history of Historic Vernon AME Church and members of the Greenwood community. The survivors of the 1921 Race Massacre rebuilt the church I am blessed to pastor without the help of any community organizations or other places of worship. Virtually only black people helped donate to rebuilding our church after the 1921 Race Massacre. It was not even those whose fiduciary duty was to help - our insurance companies, law enforcement, or fire departments. The perpetrators got away with murder and the city watched Greenwood and Vernon burn. Yet, equipped with nothing but our faith in God and our members' benevolence, Vernon, like a Phoenix, rose from the ashes.

Today we face a new challenge, the COVID-19 crisis and the aging of our rapidly decaying building. Nearly one hundred years later our basement that survived the Race Massacre and the sanctuary built on top of it is in great need of repair. We have begun our Bless the Basement Restoration campaign.

At the beginning of this campaign, God told me this one would be different from 1921 and not to limit my outreach to just the church membership alone. God encouraged me to share the embarrassing physical state of our historic architecturally beautiful place of worship. We welcomed help from everyone. For this first phase alone we have received pledges from several foundations in the Tulsa Community: primarily the Schusterman Family Foundation and a grant from the National Trust African American Action Fund. David Charney has volunteered his time and expertise in a major way to assist me in orchestrating this effort. And as of December 1, 2020, history took place as the work on our original stained glass windows began; the same stained glass windows built by the survivors of the race massacre and whose names are placed there because of their kind donations during an extremely turbulent time. It is our prayer and expectation that we will have them completely restored by the centennial commemoration of the 1921 Race Massacre.

Within this first phase, we will have our restrooms and plumbing renovated, display room in the basement done, work on the "Prayer Wall of Black Wall Street" began. The second phase, for which we are still raising development, will include replacing the roofs on the sanctuary and Faith Hall, becoming more compliant with the American with Disabilities Association, renovating the "Refuge Room" which is the place in the basement people hid during the massacre in 1921, and completing the prayer wall. Vernon has been awarded a \$250,000 matching grant from the National Fund for Sacred Places in collaboration with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, but to receive it we must raise \$500,000. The Episcopal Church of Oklahoma has pledged to match any gift up to \$50,000. The 1921 Race Massacre Commission has also pledged support in reaching our match, along with other philanthropists in the community.

God is proving true to His word to me. The 2021 Blessing the Basement Campaign is allowing us to see the true children of God. These individuals from various backgrounds have reached out to assist this noble, beautiful but aging "Grandmother of Greenwood." By their virtue and service, they are exemplifying the community that was not exhibited in 1921. I am so thankful to be a witness and watch God at work in the lives of all of His precious, benevolent, considerate children! ■



Historic Vernon African Methodist Episcopal Church Stained Glass Windows. Photo courtesy of AME Church

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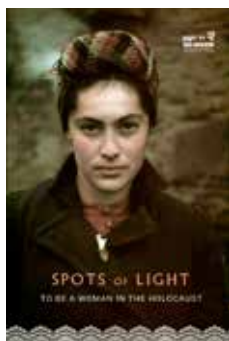


See JFT Happenings
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Sanditen/Kaiser Holocaust Center

The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art Sanditen/Kaiser Holocaust Center doubled the size of the Museum's Holocaust Center space and provided for new state-of-the-art displays, greatly enhancing the Museum's Holocaust education capacity. The new Holocaust Center is the cornerstone of what goes on at The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art and will continue to bring in new visitors every day to learn why and how the Holocaust occurred and how to make sure it never happens again. The center showcases over 250 artifacts from soldiers and survivors never before seen to the public. The horrifying events are told through the experiences of five Holocaust survivors who made Oklahoma their home. Their first-hand accounts, along with the artifacts and documents, will help you walk into the history and lessons learned during the Holocaust. Also featured in the only Holocaust Center in the region is a one-of-a-kind art installation from local Oklahoma artists. The Museum's Sanditen/Kaiser Holocaust Center honoring Mildred and Julius Sanditen & Herman and Kate Kaiser showcases the effects of hate locally and worldwide.



Spots of Light: To Be a Woman in the Holocaust

Now-Jan.

Our newest exhibit from Yad Vashem in Israel, *Spots of Light, To Be a Woman in the Holocaust* is now open! This exhibition gives expression to the unique voice of Jewish women in the Holocaust: their choices and responses in the face of the evil, brutality, and relentless hardships with which they were forced to grapple. Featured are nine facets of daily life during this period of history: Love, Motherhood, Caring for Others, Womanhood, Resistance and Rescue, Friendship, Faith, Food, and the Arts. Each segment is accompanied by a poignant narrative related in the first person, documenting and highlighting the survivors' faces and voices liberated from the darkness and silence.



Women's Art from the Collection

Now-Dec.

Although 60 percent of Master of Fine Arts students are women, female artists only make up 30 percent of those shown in galleries. Work by women artists makes up only 3-5% of major collections in the United States and Europe. The SMMJA would like to showcase the women's art we have in our collection as a dedication to promote and collect more Jewish art by women.



Reuven Rubin

Now-Dec.

Reuven Rubin is celebrated as a pioneer in the Israeli art world. Born on November 13, 1893, in Romania, Rubin served as Israel's first ambassador to the country of his birth. His paintings use radiant, earthy colors and

simple techniques, reminiscent of the work of French-Russian artist Marc Chagall, to explore the biblical landscapes of his home in Israel and its folk history. He regularly drew the countryside and people who inhabited it, transforming his observations into more fantastical and dream-like scenes through his unique artistic vision.



Sacal: A Universal Mexican, Sculptures by the late José Sacal

Now-Feb.

José Sacal is undoubtedly one of the most prominent representatives of contemporary sculptural art. Known for his experimentation and freedom, Sacal recognized no boundaries in his sources of inspiration and was not afraid to find new meaning in old forms. Sacal's work has been showcased in more than 40 individual exhibitions and dozens of collaborations in Mexico and around the world. In 2006, he became the first Mexican to have his sculptures permanently displayed in the country of China. Today, more than 20 Sacal sculptures can be found in public spaces across Mexico, Israel, and the United States, including Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. The sculptures featured at the Sherwin Miller Museum comprise two series: The Paraphrase, inspired by distinguished artists like Michelangelo, Frida Kahlo and Picasso, and Characters of Impact, in which Sacal recreates unmistakable historical figures like Einstein and Churchill.



Witness: The Art of Samuel Bak

Now-Apr.

Samuel Bak is an American painter and writer who survived the Holocaust and immigrated to Israel in 1948, but has lived in the U.S. since 1993. Much of Samuel Bak's art is influenced by his experiences of surviving the Holocaust as a child in Vilna, Poland. Bak explains: "I certainly do not make illustrations of things that happened. I do it in a symbolic way, in a way that only gives a sense of a world that was shattered."



Temple Israel



Brotherhood Virtual Breakfast

Sun., Jan. 3 • 10 a.m.

Log on and tune in together with Temple Israel Brotherhood for a virtual breakfast from the comfort of your own home. Brotherhood is pleased to announce that Anne Bogie, Executive Director of Oklahoma Project Women, will be our speaker.

Young Adult Happy Hour on Zoom

Sun., Jan. 3 • 5:30 p.m. & Wed., Jan. 20 • 8 p.m.

Young adults are invited to attend "Virtual Happy Hour." Just grab your favorite beverage, login, and we'll chit -chat away!

Hot Topics with Rabbi Weinstein on Zoom

Thurs., Jan. 7 & 14 • 2 p.m.

Join us as we continue our weekly learning series exploring some of those hot topics which continue to come up in our lives. Some topics include abortion, euthanasia, capital punishment, and the ethics of war.

Shabbat Service w/Torah on Zoom & Facebook Live

Fri., Jan. 8 • 7:30 p.m.

Zoom in to participate with the Temple Israel Clergy Team as we welcome in Shabbat with the chanting of Torah.

Havdalah with Cantor Laurie Weinstein & Cantorial Soloist Jenny Labow on Facebook Live

Sat., Jan. 23 • 6 p.m.

Join your Temple Israel Music Team as we separate the sacred from the sublime and begin the week anew. They will offer the prayerful songs of Havdalah and their soulful music of the new week.

Z'amru L'Shabbat Shirah Service Zoom & Facebook Live

Fri., Jan. 29 • 6 p.m.

Temple Israel celebrates Shabbat Shirah with a joyous and festive service led by Cantor Weinstein and Eliyahu's Minor Prophets. Zoom in and join us!

Sunday Movie Series with Jesse Ulrich - Part One

Sun., Jan. 31 • 7 p.m.

Zoom in with Jesse Ulrich for part one of a three-part Sunday Movie Series.



Two Rabbis And...

Every Fri. • 11 a.m.

Every Friday Rabbis Fitzerman and Kaiman convene a weekly conversation to reflect on pertinent topics of the day, interview special guests, and talk about ideas relevant to Synagogue life. They hope you'll join them. This month, the sessions will take place on January 8, 15, 22 and 29. Zoom meeting ID: 918-583-7121.

Panim el Panim Shabbat Morning Service

Every Sat. • 10 a.m.

Our tradition speaks of a special power that exists when a group of people gathers together for prayer. "Panim el Panim" is a live broadcast service led by Rabbis Kaiman and Fitzerman. Rooted in our in-person Shabbat morning service, we spend time singing, reflecting, studying Torah, and connecting. This month, Panim el Panim services occur on January 2, 9, 16, 23 and 30. Zoom meeting ID: 918-583-7121.

Shabbat Together

Fri., Jan. 1, 15 and 29 • 6 p.m.

As days and weeks go by, our tradition asks that we take time to pause, reflect, and enjoy time together. Shabbat Together is a short, digital gathering where we take a few moments to pause with community as we enter Shabbat. The content is songs for the Shabbat table, and we'll conclude in time for you to enjoy a Shabbat meal at home. Zoom meeting ID: 918-583-7121.

Shabbat For Everyone

Fri., Jan. 8 • 6 p.m.

This is an expanded version of Shabbat Together with more opportunities for song and storytelling. Services begin at 6:00 p.m. and close before 7:00 p.m. As always, you can take yourself from the link on the Synagogue webpage to the Synagogue Zoom Room, or use the Synagogue's Zoom Meeting ID directly: 918-583-7121. See you then!



Climate Change Learning Series

Sun., Jan. 10, 17, 24 and 31 • 4 p.m.

If learning about climate change's causes and effects, its problems and its solutions, and what you can do to help today piques your interest, this is the series for you! Every January Sunday starting on the 10th, we'll be learning from experts in the field. Whether it's the economic effects on the energy industry, the food system's failures to reach sustainability, or how to practice climate activism in your own family circles, this series will inspire and inform everyone present. Reach out to Simon Lowen at slowen@bnaemunah.com to reserve your spot!



MLK Parade

Mon., Jan. 18 • 11 a.m.

Join the Synagogue as we participate in this year's MLK Parade. 2021 marks the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Race Massacre and the Synagogue community feels deeply motivated to begin the year on a strong note – praying with our feet. Check our monthly Messenger newsletter for details, COVID safety guidelines, and more!

Blatt and Blue

Thurs., Jan. 21 • 7 p.m.

The Synagogue's ongoing program on Jewish cinema and television will continue in January with a discussion of *51 Birch Street*. Blatt + Blue spotlights film and television enthusiasts David Blatt and Alice Blue, who first summarize the featured material and then field questions and comments from the Zoom Room audience. Join the discussion on the film in the Synagogue's standard Zoom room: 918-583-7121.

Bibi-Dibi Online

Fri., Jan. 22 • 6 p.m.

It's our monthly Shabbat gathering for little ones designed to enhance your home-centered experience of Shabbat. The experience is particularly focused on our toddler cohort, but all are welcome; no toddler necessary! We'll wrap up in plenty of time for you to enjoy a Shabbat meal at home. Zoom meeting ID: 918-583-7121.

ToGather at Home

Sun., Jan. 31 • 3 p.m.

Our monthly Sunday morning series for families with young children is coming to your home! Each month a ToGather Toolbox will be delivered to your door and will include recipes, blessings, activity ideas, materials for a project with a link to a demo by our own Morah Tona, Peninah the Peacock, and much more. We'll also offer ToGather Live for families to come together live for singing and a story online. Can't make it to the scheduled session? No problem! Sessions will be recorded and easily accessible for viewing at a time that is convenient for you. January's theme is all about Grandparents and special people! Participants should invite their grandparents or other special people in their lives to join us for our Zoom session. We hope that this program will give families the tools they need to "do Jewish" at home, connect to other families and their Synagogue community. Please be sure to be in touch with Morah Sara at slevitt@bnaemunah.com to receive a ToGather Toolbox.

Baker's Dozen

Tuesday and Thursdays

Our cookie-baking program is in full swing, and we need bakers! We're collecting cookies, bars, and other single-serving baked goods every Tuesday and Thursday morning and delivering them right away to frontline workers around the city. Any donation of baked goods is deeply appreciated. Reach out to Simon Lowen at slowen@bnaemunah.com and we'll work you into the schedule as smoothly as we work our pastry dough! All of our recipients have been deeply grateful

The Most Important Letter in American Jewish History

by © PHIL GOLDFARB

THE ORIGINAL OF President George Washington's iconic Letter to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island is small in size, but its impact on American life is immense. In 340 well-chosen words, the Letter reassures those who had fled religious tyranny that life in their new nation would be different, that religious "toleration" would give way to religious liberty, and that the government would not interfere with individuals in matters of conscience and belief.

Following his inauguration in April of 1789, Washington received many letters of congratulation from religious organizations (particularly those that had experienced discrimination in this country) each praising his leadership in the fight to maintain religious liberty in the new country.

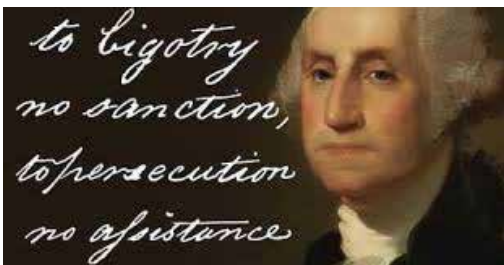
When he wrote this particular letter on August 21, 1790, the new President must have been aware of the effect it would have on the fledgling nation. He could not have known the extent of its influence today. The history behind Washington's Letter not only gives us an understanding of the values of the early colonists and our Founding Fathers, but also insight into two fundamental principles of American democracy: the separation of church and state, and the right of individuals to believe in and practice their religion.

On the morning of August 17th, 1790 George Washington arrived in Newport, Rhode Island. He was accompanied by Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Governor George Clinton of New York, U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Blair of Virginia, and U.S. Congressman William Loughton Smith of South Carolina.

Newport, Rhode Island had established one of the first Jewish Communities in America when in 1658, fifteen Spanish and Portuguese Sephardic Jewish families arrived and in 1677, the Jewish Community of Newport purchased land for the first known Jewish Cemetery in North America. The Congregation Yeshuat Israel (after 1822 called "Touro's Synagogue") is a synagogue built in 1763 in Newport. It is the oldest surviving synagogue building still standing in the United States dating to the colonial era and was led by the leadership of Cantor (Chazzan) Isaac Touro.

Washington and his group were greeted by Newport's leading citizens and representatives from the many religious denominations present in the city, including the Jews. In the throng that greeted Washington may have been some of Newport's slaves, for individuals of African descent made up one-quarter to one-third of Newport's population during the colonial period. Politicians, businessmen, and clergy read letters of welcome to the President. Among them was Moses Seixas, one of the officials of Yeshuat Israel.

The address read by Seixas was an elegant expression of the Jewish community's delight in Washington as leader and in a democratic government with words of gratitude and asked him to ensure the Jews' continued freedom:



"Deprived as we heretofore have been of the invaluable rights of free Citizens, we now (with a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty disposer of all events) behold a Government, erected by the Majesty of the People—a Government, which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance—but generously affording to All liberty of conscience, and immunities of Citizenship: deeming every one, of whatever Nation, tongue, or language, equal parts of the great governmental Machine."

A few days after leaving Newport, the President wrote to the citizen groups who had addressed him at Newport, thanking them for their hospitality and graciousness. First among them was his letter to the Jews. More than simple courtesy, the letter reflected the policy of the new government toward those whose religious beliefs were perceived as different. The President's words also helped to define the role of the Federal Government in matters of conscience.

Washington's response to the Newport group's address, the Letter to the Hebrew Congregation of Newport, Rhode Island, was sent August 21, 1790. As in other letters to Jewish congregations, the President explicitly acknowledges Jewish participation in the new nation. However, the Newport letter stands out for its clear and unequivocal language. Washington writes, "May the Children of the Stock of Abraham, who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants." He goes on to oppose the mere "toleration" of religious differences and instead emphasizes religious liberty in "the exercise of inherent natural rights," echoing the Declaration of Independence.

Washington's commitment to religious liberty, the involvement of all people in the new democracy and the campaign for passage of the Bill of Rights combined on that August day in Newport, Rhode Island. The result is the Letter to the



Touro Synagogue dedicated in 1763 in Newport, RI.
Photo courtesy of the Touro Synagogue Foundation

Hebrew Congregations of Newport, a profound statement of the values that make America an example to the world.

Gentlemen:

While I received with much satisfaction your address replete with expressions of esteem, I rejoice in the opportunity of assuring you that I shall always retain grateful remembrance of the cordial welcome I experienced on my visit to Newport from all classes of citizens.

The reflection on the days of difficulty and danger which are past is rendered the more sweet from a consciousness that they are succeeded by days of uncommon prosperity and security.

If we have wisdom to make the best use of the advantages with which we are now favored, we cannot fail, under the just administration of a good government, to become a great and happy people.

The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy—a policy worthy of imitation. All possess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship.

It is now no more that toleration is spoken of as if it were the indulgence of one class of people that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights, for, happily, the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

It would be inconsistent with the frankness of my character not to avow that I am pleased with your favorable opinion of my administration and fervent wishes for my felicity.

May the children of the stock of Abraham who dwell in this land continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other inhabitants—while everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig tree and there shall be none to make him afraid.

May the father of all mercies scatter light, and not darkness, upon our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in His own due time and way everlastingly happy.

G. Washington

Some information contained in this article is from “George Washington and his Letter to the Jews of Newport”, *Touro Synagogue National Historic Site*, <https://www.tourosynagogue.org/history-learning/gw-letter>, Dec. 2020.

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





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Great Things are Happening at Mizel Jewish Community Day School

A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF MJCDS

WHILE BATTLING COVID-19 has certainly presented challenges both foreseen and unforeseen for our small community, MJCDS has persevered. The school has been able to maintain in-class instruction of a limited nature. Out-going director Dr. Cathy Kass did an amazing job guiding the school through the pandemic by taking the lead on getting the school up-and-running in a computer-based, virtual setting. The teachers and staff have all stepped up to overcome each challenge of operating a school during a worldwide pandemic.

We are also immeasurably thankful to all our friends and community partners who continue to support the vision and mission of Mizel. In addition to the funding received from the Heritage Academy Foundation, the Jewish Federation of Tulsa, and other foundations, Mizel has benefited from individual donor support. In particular, the school Board recognizes the continued support of Larry Mizel and Steve Mizel who honor their parents, Flo and Morris Mizel, through a generous donation to the school.

As we begin this new year, as well as the second half of the school year, MJCDS has many exciting changes and additions on the horizon:

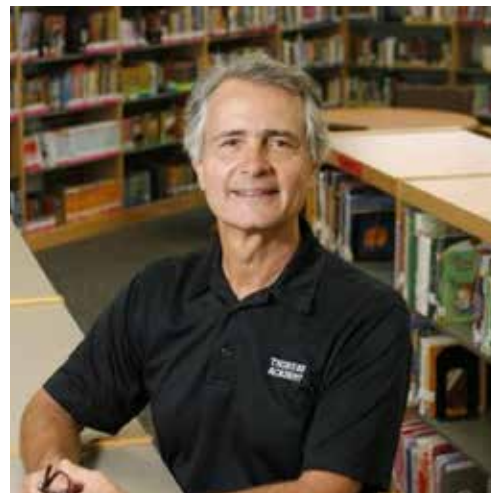
- Acting President of the Board of Directors Katrina Klar has enlisted the aid of Mizel MJCDS graduate Sarah Waller and Northeastern State University in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, to bring an exciting new STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) curriculum to our students in the day school. This educational track will be available to all students, and only serves to reinforce our desire to provide our children with the best possible education to secure their future success, both in education and in life.

- The Board of Directors itself, under the leadership of Katrina, has undergone significant changes and has been infused with new life, with a mission to serve the school – teachers, students, and staff – with the singular focus of success. Tapping into various resources both within the Jewish community as well as outside of it, the newly revamped board is prepared to meet the challenge of securing the future success of the school for years to come.

- New interim director Tom Padalino has been brought on board to continue with the path of growth and success pioneered by Dr. Cathy Kass, who left the school at the end of December. Mr. Padalino is a 26-year veteran of Tulsa Public Schools, and he has had extensive experience with successfully administering both well-established schools as well as schools experiencing various levels of transition. Mr. Padalino's work at Cascia Hall, Thoreau Demonstration Academy, and Booker T. Washington High School is well known throughout the greater Tulsa educational system, and his addition to the MJCDS staff speaks volumes to the Board's commitment to making our school the best it can possibly be.

And the most exciting thing of all is that this is just the beginning. With the continued support of our parents, the Jewish community, and Tulsa at-large, many more great things are in store for Mizel Jewish Community Day School in the months and years to come!

Mizel JCDS is ready to accept new students. Interim director Tom Padalino is available for tours and conversations with prospective families. Call the school at 918-494-0953 and speak to Mr. Padalino to learn how Mizel School can be an exceptional educational program for your children! ■



New interim director Tom Padalino
Photo courtesy of the *Tulsa World*

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We Must Participate in the Dialogue

by **NANCY PETTUS**, DIRECTOR OF HOLOCAUST EDUCATION

A**FTER 23 YEARS** with the Jenks district, 16 of those years spent teaching Holocaust Studies at Jenks High School, it was time to pass the torch. As difficult as it was to leave the teaching profession, it would have been doubly difficult to leave a class on which I had spent countless hours in my endeavor to share the lessons of the Holocaust. However, I was comforted by the fact that my “baby” would be in good hands. Enter Christina Henson, our featured Holocaust educator, whose passion for and love of teaching were the perfect combination to keep the lesson of the Holocaust alive. As a Social Studies teacher, Christina is able to bring an organized, historical perspective to the class. In addition, the relationships she forges with her students and the accepting atmosphere in her classroom promotes safe, open discussion. Please enjoy the words of this true professional.

Why teach about the Holocaust?

The circumstances that led to the Holocaust did not happen in a vacuum. I’m sad to say that there are still events and beliefs that reflect similar stereotypes, discrimination, biases, and hate. I believe discussions of these topics must be an integral part of students’ learning, and a Social Studies classroom is the perfect place for this to happen.

What inspired you to become involved with Holocaust Education?

As a History nerd, I’ve always been interested in WWII, but it wasn’t until college that I attended an educational conference about the Holocaust. I was shocked! I couldn’t believe this event had happened within the last 50 years, and that I hadn’t really learned about it in my History classes. I started to seek out books, documentaries, articles, and movies to study more about these atrocities. I’ve always incorporated a brief study of the Holocaust into my regular History classes, but when the opportunity came to teach an entire class dedicated to the topic, I jumped at the chance.

How has your experience with Holocaust Education affected your worldview?

I realize that as Americans, we CANNOT sit back and be quiet. We can’t just assume that because it seems impossible that our government would allow atrocities to happen that they won’t. Inaction did not work to prevent what happened during the Holocaust, and there is historical evidence to support the danger of inaction around the world. We must participate in the dialog, and we must VOTE what we believe. Holocaust is as much a Current Events course as it is a History course.

What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of teaching about the Holocaust?

Oh goodness! There are so many answers and conflicting answers to this question. The internet is an incredible tool; my students have grown up in an age of endless information at their fingertips. This is both awesome and terrifying. Some are skeptical of facts, yet trust obscure cult personalities that line up with what they already believe or hear at home. Some teenagers listen to politicians scream at each other, decide they want nothing to do with any of it and become apathetic to “what the adults have done to the world.” There is a rise in Nationalism, and when we begin to talk about the refugee problem of the 1930s and 1940s, it starts to sound familiar to the world today. Students then question whether or not the U.S. was justified in preventing Jewish refugees from entering the country. That is scary to me, and it is a belief that must be overcome.

What has been the most rewarding aspect of this endeavor?

In regards to teaching, the “a-ha moments” are the most rewarding. Every year I have students who sit in my classroom and assume that racism no longer exists. Many believe stereotypes are not harmful and the actions of the Holocaust are so far in the past they no longer pose a problem. The moment they realize some of these actions are still taking place today and they can be a part of the solution, that’s when I feel like I’ve accomplished something. In the recent events since the murder of George Floyd, I’ve had students from around the country contact me to let me know how they were participating in positive movements. Their involvement in these just causes makes me feel like my job is worthwhile. ■



Christina Henson



The Most Precious Gift I Never Received

by EVA UNTERMAN

IT HAPPENED IN Concentration Camp Stutthof in late October 1944.

The word found its way to our barrack that a Polish man, possibly an electrician, had on occasion smuggled items into our barrack. In fact, one day he brought to my mother a tattered, floor-length, dark-maroon dress for me which she hoped would make me look older and cover my skinny legs.

On another occasion he brought the message to my mother that my father, who was in the men's barrack on the other side of the electrically-charged fences, would, when the guards in the towers were changing shifts, throw a small wooden spoon over the fences, a gift for my Oct. 29th birthday. This gift may seem insignificant in today's world, but in the concentration camp world having a spoon meant the difference between eating one's soup like a human or lapping it up like a dog. Since the SS did not consider us humans, we were not given spoons. Animals do not use spoons.

When the time came my mother ran close to the fence, but unfortunately my father's toss fell short. The little spoon landed between the two fences. Shots from the tower rang out, my mother began to run back towards our barrack, and fortunately she escaped the bullets.

The guard promptly reported to his superior officer that the woman who ran toward the fence wore a scarf on her head. The search for my mother began. When the guard finally reached our barrack, he found not one woman with a scarf on her head. To protect my mother, all the women who normally wore scarves removed and hid theirs. Once again, we were lucky!

After the war I found out that my father had saved up and traded his meager bread rations for someone to carve this spoon for me. Had the guards been able to find my father and the man who carved the spoon, both would have been severely punished, or worse.

Looking back, this was the most precious birthday gift that I never received.

I told this story during my Shoah Foundation interview to my interviewer and friend, Michelle Wiens. A few years ago, she surprised me on my birthday with a most thoughtful gift: a little hand-carved wooden spoon. ■



Eva's spoon from M. Wiens



Eva Unterman, shortly after liberation.


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Norm Simon: Helping Boomers Become Zoomers

by NANCY PETTUS

“Patient,” “Kind,” “Life-Saver,” “Technology Expert”... these and similar words have been used to describe Norm Simon who stepped up at the beginning of the quarantine, selflessly volunteering to guide many of us through the perplexing and often exasperating process of using Zoom. A self-taught computer enthusiast, Norm describes himself as a “pretty tech-savvy guy who loves gadgets.”

A 40-year veteran of the medical and teaching profession, Norm credits his mother and father for instilling in him the love of teaching. Without question his target pupils are the over-50 crowd who obviously did not grow up with a computer at their fingertips. His public offer to help anyone was widely welcomed by many who needed guidance joining meetings, celebrations, synagogue services, educational programs, doctor’s appointments, etc. In fact, many seniors were able to attend the Sherwin Miller Museum Gala because of Norm’s support.

Teaching one to become a participant in a Zoom meeting is much easier now as the “one-link click” reduces the number of steps that were required early on. However, teaching one how to schedule and host a meeting or to share slides is another story, especially when working with someone who never learned to type!

Norm’s greatest delight is helping seniors who are self-isolating. Their pre-pandemic world has been reduced to a fraction of its former self, and in-person contact has disappeared. That “light-bulb moment” when one of Norm’s pupils connects to a meeting or a family gathering is a generous payback for his time investment.

With the many heroes who have emerged during this unprecedented time in our current society, I feel it fitting to acknowledge and thank Norm Simon for opening up to many of us a virtual world we may have never experienced. ■



Norm Simon



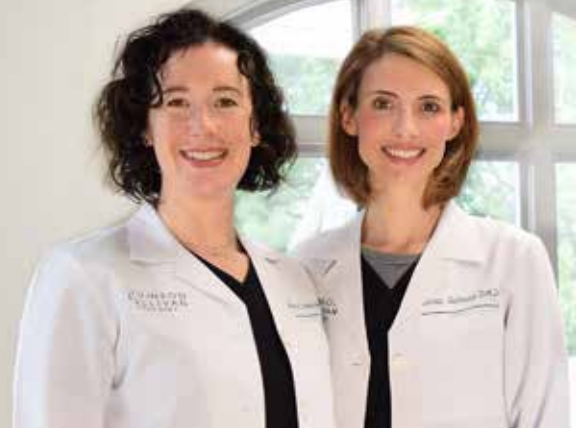
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Women Artists in Museum Collections

by **MICKEL YANTZ**, SMMJA DIRECTOR OF COLLECTIONS & EXHIBITIONS

CAN YOU NAME five Jewish female artists? It doesn't seem like an odd question until you're tasked with the difficulty of actually naming them. In contrast, can you name five Jewish male artists? I would bet you can. The bigger question is why?

Studies have shown that although 60 percent of women earn the Master of Fine Art degree, female artists only make up 30% of those shown in galleries. Of that, only 3–5% of major collections in the United States and Europe feature women. Between 2007-2013 there were 590 major exhibitions in nearly 70 institutions in the U.S. However only 27% were devoted to women artists.

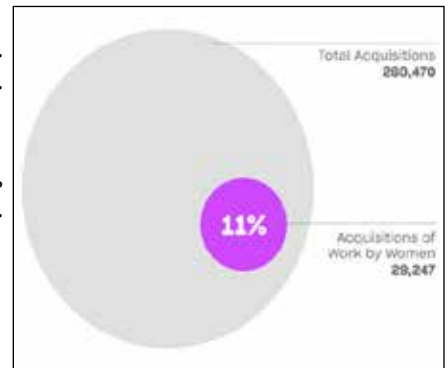
An example of this is found in a famous advertisement in 1989 from the Guerrilla Girls, a female artists awareness group. It asks, “Do women have to be naked to get into the Met museum?” The Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York City has less than 3% women artists in their collection, however, approximately 85% of their permanent collection features female nudes.

A 2019 report by *artnet News* and “In Other Words,” a Sotheby’s podcast, suggests several reasons for the gender imbalance. It seems most museum committees tasked with acquiring work were often preoccupied with name recognition and wary of spending money on a female artist who didn’t have a recorded reputation for selling at auctions. The bias of the collectors who donate works to museums is also at issue which upheld the longstanding bias toward male dominance in art history books within the education system.

Another limiting factor is a lack of research about female artists. Their work was often not collected by major institutions while they were alive and are tracked by historians, or conserved by art dealers later on. This is proven in the 2019 study of Yale School of Art students. Researchers found that even after graduation rates reached equality in the early 1980s, female alumni were written about in books and scholarly publications two to three times less frequently than their male peers. What museums bring into their permanent collections and exhibits ultimately form the education of a community. Museum collections are how history gets recorded for posterity and also the place where bias is most deeply entrenched.

How do these statistics tie in locally? The SMMJA has 850 pieces considered fine art (paintings, illustrations, sculptures, etc.) in its collection with 27 pieces from 13 female artists equaling only 3 percent representation. Although this is exactly the global norm, we want to break from that mold and do our part to feature female Jewish artists. Our hope is through exhibitions we will attract donations for our collection to balance representation in our local collection. One way we have already done this is in our new Sanditen/Kaiser Holocaust Center. We showcase multiple women artists including Fran Lew and new work from local artists Kendra Shinn and Tracey Bewley.

The museum is already making plans to bring more female Jewish artists to Tulsa through exhibitions beyond 2021. This year we will showcase almost all of our women’s art in an exhibit *Women Artists from the Collection* that will be displayed all year in the Sanditen Gallery. Artists represented will include Donna Matles, Fran Lew, Giti Newman, Grace Lubell Borgenicht and Jules Morris. Once you’ve experienced this exhibit, our hope is that you’ll be able to name more than five Jewish female artists when asked the question. ■



Museum Acquisitions of Work by Women vs. Total Collection
Courtesy of *artnet News* and “In Other Words” at Art Agency



Courtesy www.guerrillagirls.com

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The Surprising US City Where Israeli Tech is Heading Next

by JONATHAN FRENKEL

As cities between the coasts become tech centers, Tulsa, Oklahoma, will help Israeli startups with remote hiring and US market entry.

FOR ISRAELI COMPANIES considering US market entry, the United States they believe existed pre-Covid is a far different place than the country they wish to access now.

While the pandemic has caused a lot of pain and suffering, opportunities have also arisen. And Israeli entrepreneurs are good at spotting opportunities in chaotic situations.

One of those opportunities is the rise of US cities with newly robust tech ecosystems fueled by the work-from-home (WFH) trend and the exodus of highly skilled professionals from densely populated urban areas such as New York and the Bay Area.

Now is the time for US cities between the coasts to cement their status as tech centers. Tulsa, Oklahoma, is one of those cities.

To build a strong diverse ecosystem with the potential for economic development, a city needs to be a landing pad for international startups. Therefore, Tulsa is looking to engage Israeli companies and to include them as part of the fabric of the ecosystem it has been building for the last few years.

Tulsa, which is home to a large Jewish community, is seeking to help Israeli startups with remote hiring and US market entry. This initiative, shepherded by Atento Capital and other local partners such as the Tulsa Innovation Labs and working space 36 Degrees North, includes a presence in Israel to help startups with the move.

The trends

Places like Tulsa are now attractive alternatives to densely populated urban centers. Professionals still want the amenities and lifestyle of living in a big city but for safety reasons cannot deal with the density of a place like New York.

Furthermore, WFH is going to continue in some form or another for the foreseeable future. And that means people can choose to live and work where they want, have a better work-life balance, and still be effective.

Community is an important part of working remotely, and Tulsa invested in building a remote worker community through its Tulsa Remote program.

Since the launch of the program in late 2018, 30,000 applicants have applied and nearly 400 participants have moved to the city with their families, ranging from Google software engineers to McKinsey consultants to former professional athletes.

What is relevant from an Israeli tech perspective is that the city is actively investing in a professional tech workforce as well as in roles such as sales development representatives (SDRs), software engineers, and customer success talent through programs like the Holberton School and Satellite.

With the decentralization of talent, capital, and customers because of Covid, highly skilled remote talent at costs lower than in coastal cities becomes even more important.

While most people still want to meet face to face, physical location does not matter anymore. People are also asking themselves what is truly important in life, and many of the tradeoffs we made in the past may not be worth it.

The community and ecosystem

Tulsa has a vibrant Jewish community and strong pro-Israel sentiment. Tulsa is home to the Schusterman Family Foundation, which supports Israeli initiatives that engage entrepreneurs and social entrepreneurs such as the ROI Community and REALITY.

Engaging young Jewish professionals is also key. Local philanthropists created the Tulsa Tomorrow program to bring them into the city.

The future of remote

With travel limited for now, Israeli companies must consider hiring remotely. Over the next few years, there will most likely be a hybrid approach with both WFH and work in the office. Hiring talented sales professionals in the US is even more difficult than usual, which is why Tulsa's offering is valuable. ■

Reprinted in part by permission of Jonathan "Yoni" Frenkel with Atento Capital. He is a regular contributor to ISRAEL21c on the topics of tech, venture, and US-Israel tech relations. He is currently in Israel leading the effort to assist local companies with US market entry and remote skilled worker employment in Tulsa. The full story can be found on our Facebook page.

Editor's note: Tulsa is home to a "small" Jewish community.



Downtown Tulsa, Oklahoma. Photo courtesy of VisitTulsa

Menorah Procession Kicks Off Chanukah

IN AN EFFORT to help share the Chanukah events available to you in Tulsa, Chabad hosted a Chanukah Menorah Procession in honor of the Festival of Lights. Participants started at The Golden Driller and ended with a spectacular Menorah lighting at Zarrow Pointe. ■



Photographs provided by Chabad



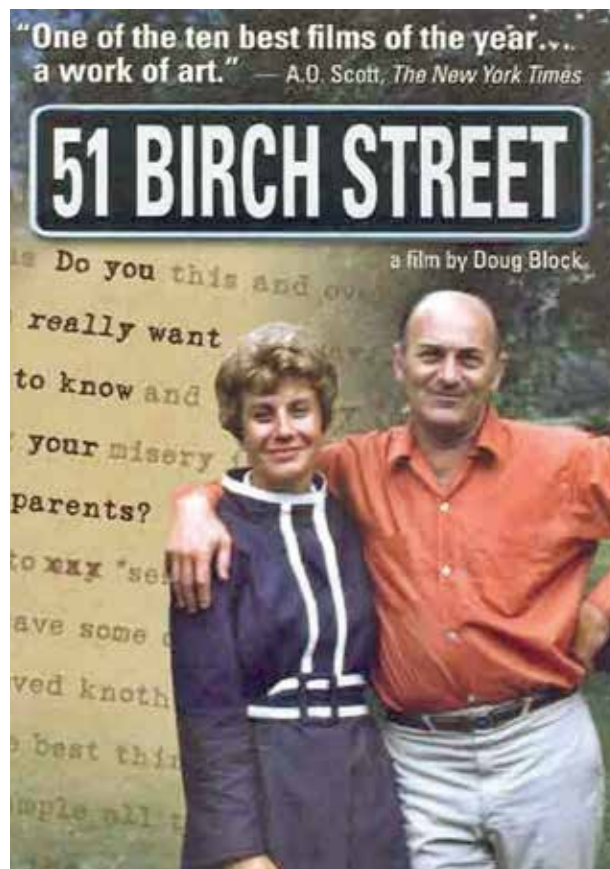
Blatt + Blue Review “51 Birch Street”

SPECIAL TO THE REVIEW

THE SYNAGOGUE'S ONGOING program on Jewish cinema and television will focus in January on *51 Birch Street*, an extraordinary documentary by Doug Block. A few months after his mother's sudden death from pneumonia, Block's 83-year-old father, Mike, calls him to announce that he's moving to Florida to live with “Kitty,” his secretary from 40 years before. Always close to his mother and equally distant from his father, Doug and his two older sisters were shocked and suspicious. The film is about the universal themes of love, marriage, fidelity, and the mystery of a suburban Jewish family. Lauded by A.O. Scott of The New York Times, the film made his top ten list the year it was released.

Blatt + Blue spotlights film and television enthusiasts David Blatt and Alice Blue, who begin each session with a summary of the featured material. It means that you'll be able to follow the conversation even if you have to delay your viewing of the film itself. After that, it's questions and comments from the Zoom Room audience.

The film is readily available on Amazon Prime for those who have already chosen that platform as their primary streaming service. If you haven't done so already, there is an option for a trial subscription at www.amazon.com. Access *51 Birch Street* for a token fee the way you would any other program on Prime, and join the Zoom event for a stimulating discussion on the film. The Zoom meeting ID is 918-583-7121. If there is a film you'd like to see in these sessions in the future, reach out to Simon Lowen at slowen@bnaiemunah.com. ■



TEMPLE ISRAEL Brotherhood VIRTUAL BROTHERHOOD "BREAKFAST"

**SUNDAY
JANUARY 3, 2021
10:00 AM**

**with Anne Bogie
Executive Director
Oklahoma Project Women**



"EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT"

Temple Israel Brotherhood is pleased to have Anne Bogie as our featured speaker for our virtual "breakfast" on January 3, 2021 at 10 a.m. Anne has been the Executive Director of Oklahoma Project Woman since 2004. Oklahoma Project Woman is a statewide organization that provides free mammograms, diagnostic procedures, and other much needed health services to Oklahomans with limited financial resources. It helps uninsured low-income Oklahomans find a comprehensive clinical program who may not otherwise be able to afford medical care.

So sit back and relax with a cup of coffee as you Zoom into our virtual breakfast/presentation!

ZOOM LINK: [HTTPS://TINYURL.COM/BHOODBREAKFAST](https://tinyurl.com/bhoodbreakfast)

MEETING ID: 845 3820 4974
PASSCODE: BREAKFAST

TEMPLE ISRAEL SISTERHOOD

**FREE
INGREDIENTS
WITH RSVP
BY 1/25**



Hamantaschen Cooking Demo for Purim

with Jackie & Leah Karpman

SUNDAY, JANUARY 31, 2021 @ 1 PM

rsvp@templetulsa.com





Jewish Federation of Tulsa
2021 East 71st Street
Tulsa, OK 74136

Jewish Federation of Tulsa
Ensuring a vibrant Jewish future



SUNDAE FUNDAY

2021 SUPER SUNDAY

Join us in the JCC parking lot for
phone calls and sundaes
to help raise money for JFT!

Sunday, February 21st 2021
1pm-3pm

