

# TULSA *Jewish Review*

Iyar/Sivan 5785  
May 2025



# L'CHAIM!

*2025 L'Chaim Campaign Dinner*  
**MAY 15**



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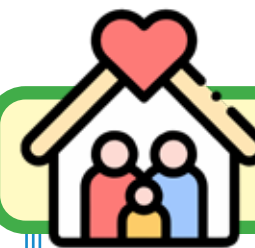
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## ~Host Families Wanted~

Camp Shalom is welcoming two female shlichim this summer! We are seeking host families to help make this a reality!



Roni and Adi

Host family requirements:

- House one (or both) young ladies for one or more weeks between May 19 – August 3
- Provide breakfast and dinner
- Provide transportation to and from camp (arrive 8:30 am; depart 4:30 pm)
- Include the young women in weekend and evening activities with your family and the Jewish community

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if you are interested in hosting.



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— Asher Patel '24



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Front Cover



2025 L'Chaim Campaign Dinner  
May 15

## JEWISH FEDERATION OF TULSA

### MISSION:

The mission of the Jewish Federation is to preserve and enhance Jewish life and well-being in Eastern Oklahoma, Israel, and the entire world. The mission is being addressed by pursuing charitable, humanitarian, cultural, educational, health, and social service needs of the Jewish community as well as by engaging in community relations, outreach, and providing a variety of services to the broader Tulsa community. The Jewish Federation supports the Charles Schusterman Jewish Community Center, The Sherwin Miller Museum of Jewish Art, and Mizel Jewish Community Day School.

### VALUES:

#### *Kehila – Community*

Fostering a connected and collaborative Jewish community, characterized by respect, empathy, and understanding.

#### *Tzedek – Justice*

Continuously improving the quality of life of all Tulsans, as well as our partners in Israel and abroad, through philanthropic giving of our resources and time.

#### *L'Dor V'Dor –*

#### *From Generation to Generation*

Sustaining the culture, traditions, and collective memory of the Jewish people, through innovative intergenerational programming that is meaningful, educational, and fun.



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## DIRECTOR'S CORNER

### THE LIBERATION WE CHOOSE

by Joe Roberts, Executive Director

The candles were burning low. Crumbs of matzah still covered the table. My two sons were curled up beside me — one half-asleep, the other wide-eyed, still buzzing from too much grape juice and the thrill of asking the Four Questions.

"Tell it again," he whispered. "Tell how we got out." So I did.

One more time.

I told him how we were slaves. How we cried out. How G-d answered. How we ran from Egypt under a sky split open by thunder. How the sea parted — and we walked through it, barefoot and breathless, holding on to each other, holding on to hope.

He leaned against my arm, quiet. I looked down at his hand, resting on mine and something in my chest caught.

Because I realized: I'm not just telling *him* the story. We're living it *for* him.

Passover is more than memory. Liberation isn't a page in a book or a line in a song.

Liberation is a choice — a decision we make, again and again, day after day, in every generation.

And right now, that choice feels heavier than it has in my lifetime.

I look at my sons — proud, joyful, so sure of who they are. They belt out Hebrew songs in the car. They dance when we light Shabbat candles. They wear their kippot without a second thought.

They love being Jewish with a kind of pure, unfiltered joy.

And I ask myself: *Will the world love them back?*

Will they be safe?

Will they still be proud when they're older, when the world grows louder and more complicated?

What will liberation look like for *them*?

Here's what I hope:

That they'll never feel the need to shrink or hide.

That they'll walk through the world with heads held high, hearts anchored in tradition, and a deep sense of belonging.

That they'll know where they come from — and that they'll know they are never, ever alone.

I hope they'll know Israel not just as a word in a prayer, but as a living, breathing part of who they are. I want them to walk the streets of Jerusalem, to swim in the Kinneret, to laugh with cousins over falafel and sing "Am Yisrael Chai" with thousands

of others who feel just like they do — connected, rooted, alive.

I want them to *feel* what it means to be part of something eternal.

That's why we do what we do at the Jewish Federation of Tulsa.

We're not just running programs. We're building lifelines.

We're not just raising money. We're raising generations.

We're not just remembering the Exodus. We're writing the next chapter.

Every camp scholarship we provide. Every time a family new to Tulsa walks through our doors. Every act of kindness, every dollar that connects Tulsa to Israel, every effort to keep our community safe, strong, and proud — it's all part of the story.

It's all part of the choice.

One day, my boys will sit at a Seder table with children of their own. They'll pour the wine. They'll ask the questions. They'll tell the story.

And when their children say, "Tell me again how we got out."

I want them to answer without hesitation:

*Because we chose each other.*

*Because we stood together.*

*Because even when the sea looked impossible to cross, we walked forward anyway.*

That's the liberation we choose.

And it's the future we're building — As One. ■



*"We're not just running programs. We're building lifelines.*

*We're not just raising money. We're raising generations.*

*We're not just remembering the Exodus. We're writing the next chapter."*

As One



## UPCOMING EVENTS



**Yom HaZikaron | Thursday, May 1 | 6:00 pm Hors D'oeuvres; 6:30 pm Program | Jewish Federation**

Join us in the Barbara and Dave Sylvan Auditorium as we come together to honor the memory of IDF soldiers, law enforcement officers, and first responders who gave their lives to defend the State of Israel, as well as the innocent victims of terror. At a time when Israel continues its fight against radical terror organizations to protect its citizens and bring home the hostages, we will gather in unity to remember the sacrifices made to ensure a free and independent Jewish state. The program will include a tribute to those who have served, as well as personal stories of resilience from Israeli guests. Light hors d'oeuvres will be served.

RSVP: [jewishtulsa.org/yomhazikaron25](https://jewishtulsa.org/yomhazikaron25)



**Yom HaAtzmaEAT Brunch | Sunday, May 4 | 10:30 am | Jewish Federation**

Celebrate Israel's 77th Independence Day with a family-friendly morning of meaning, community, and festivity! Enjoy a classic Israeli brunch, made by Alin Avitan and Itzik Levin. This fun morning will uplift and connect us all, as we celebrate Israel's Independence together. Come for the food, stay for the community, and leave feeling inspired! No cost to attend but please RSVP so we can prepare the correct amount of food.

RSVP: [JewishTulsa.org/yomhaatzmaut25](https://JewishTulsa.org/yomhaatzmaut25)



**Lunch Bunch with Author Liz Hirsh Naftali: Saving Abigail | Monday, May 5 | 12 pm | Jewish Federation**

Join us for a powerful conversation with author Liz Hirsh Naftali as she shares the gripping true story behind *Saving Abigail*. This extraordinary account follows the events of October 7, 2023, when three-year-old Abigail Mor Edan was taken hostage by Hamas after terrorists launched a brutal attack on Israel. Determined to bring her home, her great-aunt, Liz Hirsh Naftali, embarked on an international mission—engaging U.S. officials, bipartisan congressional leaders, and global allies in a relentless effort to free her niece from captivity. This event is open to the entire community. Join us for an engaging discussion on resilience, advocacy, and the power of one person's determination to make a difference. \$13 optional lunch. Read more on page 9.

RSVP: [JewishTulsa.org/lb-May5](https://JewishTulsa.org/lb-May5)



To RSVP for ALL Events visit: [JewishTulsa.org/event](https://JewishTulsa.org/event)



## UPCOMING EVENTS



**L'Chaim Campaign Dinner | Thursday, May 15 | 5:30 pm | Mike Fretz Event Center**

We're raising the stakes for Jewish Tulsa with a casino-themed celebration filled with delicious food, lively Dueling Pianos entertainment, exciting casino-style games, silent auction and raffle prizes—all while supporting the important work of the Jewish Federation of Tulsa. We are honoring Brina Reinstein for her years of dedication to our community. She's been "all in" for Jewish Tulsa, and now it's our turn to honor her! Purchase your table or seat by **May 9th**. Read more about the night on page 8.

Event Chairs: Sandi Tilkin and Debbie Zelkind

RSVP: [JewishTulsa.org/CampaignDinner25](https://JewishTulsa.org/CampaignDinner25)

PLEASE RSVP BY MAY 9TH



*Here's the Deal ~*

**2025 L'CHAIM CAMPAIGN DINNER**

**THURSDAY, MAY 15 | 5:30 PM | HONORING BRINA REINSTEIN**

**MIKE FRETZ EVENT CENTER**  
11545 E. 43rd St., Tulsa, OK 74146

*Chairs: Sandi Tilkin and Debbie Zelkind*  
RSVP TO [JEWISHTULSA.ORG/CAMPAIGNDINNER25](https://JewishTulsa.org/CampaignDinner25)





# HERE'S THE DEAL!

by Sandi Tilkin & Debbie Zelkind

Jewish Federation's L'Chaim Campaign Dinner 2025 is sure to be a hit! Get ready for an unforgettable evening on Thursday, May 15, 2025 at the beautiful Mike Fretz Event Center (11545 E. 43rd St, Tulsa).

## CASINO FUN & PRIZES

Kick off the night with blackjack, craps, and roulette from 5:30 – 6:30 pm and test your luck with \$1,000 of “Brina Bucks.” After dinner and the campaign presentation, casino games will resume, giving you a chance to trade your winnings for raffle tickets for exciting prizes. Plus we have several amazing silent auction items including:

1. A private wine dinner for four at Duet
2. A four-course dinner for 10 with Catering by Orr in your home
3. Golf experience at The Patriot

## LIVE ENTERTAINMENT: DUELING PIANOS

Enjoy a high-energy performance by Tom Basler & Tim Georgeff, also known as The Dueling Pianos! Their unmatched talent, humor, and showmanship will create an interactive experience with:

- Lively sing-alongs
- Playful competitions
- Song requests spanning classic hits, show tunes, and today's favorites

## DELICIOUS ITALIAN DINNER

We will serve a delicious vegetarian Italian meal, including your choice of lasagna or stuffed shells complete with a cannoli for dessert!

## HONORING BRINA REINSTEIN

We are proud to honor Brina Reinstein for her many years of dedicated service to the Tulsa Jewish community. She's been “all in” for Jewish Tulsa, and now it's our turn to honor her! This “Campaign Dinner Extraordinaire” will be a celebratory evening of gambling, music, dinner, and prizes! We can't wait to share this special night with you!

## RESERVATIONS & TICKET INFORMATION

- INDIVIDUAL TICKETS: \$72 EACH
- RESERVED TABLE OF 10: \$650

RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY AT:

[JewishTulsa.org/campaigndinner25](https://JewishTulsa.org/campaigndinner25) or by calling Isabella Silberg at 918-935-3690.

# L'CHAIM!

## SAVING ABIGAIL

by Sandy Sloan, Editor Tulsa Jewish Review

Liz Hirsh Naftali's book *Saving Abigail* is the true story of a little girl taken hostage on the morning of October 7, 2023. The book is a sobering account of one family's horrific loss and the dedication and determination to bring 3-year-old Abigail home safely.

When Hamas attacked Israel in the early morning hours of October 7th, one of the hardest hit communities was Kibbutz Kfar Aza. Terrorists smashed through the border fence and launched a murderous rampage, going from house to house and killing, raping, and abducting civilians. Smadar and Roei Mor Edan were murdered in their home. After witnessing the murders, two of their children survived the attack by hiding inside a closet for 14 hours. Three-year-old Abigail was taken hostage by Hamas.

Abigail's great aunt, Liz Hirsh Naftali, decided to make it her mission to speak out against the attack and bring young Abigail, a dual Israeli-US citizen, home. With no prior experience or roadmap for hostage rescue, Liz launched an international campaign to share Abigail's story with the U.S. government, bipartisan congressional leaders, and world leaders—finding unlikely allies along the way. Though not a diplomat, politician, or military expert, Liz's relentless efforts helped secure Abigail's release from captivity.

“Freeing Abigail seemed an insanely ambitious goal most of the time,” Liz told the Times of Israel. “She was part of events far bigger than the kidnapping and captivity of one tiny three-year-old child.”

The book details the family's relentless efforts to secure Abigail's release, including high-level meetings with US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, culminating in her freedom after 51 days in captivity. “Knowing that Abigail's fate was on the president's desk every day gave me hope,” Liz told the Jewish Journal. Liz's account not only sheds light on the personal trauma endured by Abigail but also underscores the broader implications of terrorism and the resilience required to overcome such adversity.

Liz Hirsh Naftali is an investor, philanthropist, and the host and creator of The Capitol Coffee Connection podcast. She is the mother of five children and has lived between Israel and the US since 1992. Liz is a proud Zionist and considers Israel her second home. She raised her five children there, and although she never fully made Aliyah she has two children that have.

Liz was raised in Los Angeles, where *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam* were an important part of her upbringing.

Her father, Stanley Hirsh, was the publisher of the Jewish Journal, president of the Jewish Federation of Los Angeles, and chairman of the Los Angeles Community

*“Liz was raised in Los Angeles, where **tzedakah** and **tikkun olam** were an important part of her upbringing.”*

Redevelopment Agency. Her mother, Anita, was a leader in the Soviet Jewry movement and Jewish Family Service in Los Angeles.

We are thrilled to welcome Liz Hirsh Naftali as the guest speaker for our monthly Lunch Bunch on **Monday, May 5**, to share her story behind *Saving Abigail* and the strength, courage, and determination that led to her success. Liz continues to advocate for the release of the remaining hostages.

**To sign up for Lunch Bunch visit:**  
[JewishTulsa.org/lb-may5](https://JewishTulsa.org/lb-may5)





## UPCOMING EVENTS



### May I Join You? A Community Fitness Challenge

This May, we are celebrating movement, friendship, and fun! We are inviting all members to try a new workout or sport with another member or friend. Whether it's a yoga class, a walk around the track, a game of pickleball, or a strength session—everything's more fun with a buddy!

Snap a pic together while you're getting active and email it to: [fitness@jewishtulsa.org](mailto:fitness@jewishtulsa.org)

We'll fill our Fitness Bulletin Board with your photos to highlight how wellness isn't just physical—it's social too. Connecting with others while being active can boost your mood, reduce stress, and increase motivation. Research indicates that individuals who make strong social connections tend to experience better overall health, including enhanced heart health, improved immune function, and better mental well-being. So, don't be shy and ask someone, "May I Join You?" and let's move together this May!



### Yoga Series with Sarah-Anne Schuman | Fridays, 10:15 am | Dance Studio

- May 2 Restorative Yoga
- May 16 Chair Yoga

Limited space available.

**RSVP required – Sign up at the Fitness Desk or call 918-935-3681**

### Evening Hatha Yoga with Holly Hughes

Tuesdays and Thursdays at 6 pm



### Gathering Place Walk and Social | Friday, May 9 | 10:30 am

We will meet at the Gathering Place Main Lodge and enjoy walking on the trails in the May sunshine (hopefully). Walk as little or as much as you would like. We will end at the Redbud Cafe (inside the Main Lodge) for a sweet treat and fellowship. Remember to bring money if you want to make to purchase a treat. For those wishing to carpool, meet at the CSJCC front desk at 10:00 am.

**RSVP at: [csjcc.org/social-may25](https://csjcc.org/social-may25)**



### Volunteer Opportunity Planting Spring Flowers | Wednesday, May 21 | 10:30 am

Do you have a green thumb and love the idea of beautifying the JCC campus? Join us as we come together to add some colorful flowers to the JCC entrance and at the Sharna and Irvin Frank Aquatics Center. Bring a small garden shovel and gloves if you have them. We will provide the soil and flowers! All volunteers will receive a CSJCC volunteer t-shirt! RSVP to Laura at [lallen@jewishtulsa.org](mailto:lallen@jewishtulsa.org) or 918-935-3663.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Wellness Series: GERD with Dr. Chris Lynch | Friday, May 23 | 10:15 am | Dan Room



Are you experiencing heartburn or waking up at night with regurgitation? Are you avoiding foods you love or taking medications to prevent these symptoms? Learn about heartburn and gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD) from Dr. Chris Lynch, gastroenterologist with Utica Park Clinic. Heartburn is a common symptom of GERD, which may cause many other problems such as chest pain, regurgitation, swallowing troubles, or chronic cough. GERD can also lead to more serious conditions including esophageal cancer. Dr. Chris Lynch will discuss what causes GERD, how to prevent and treat it, and what to watch out for if GERD is part of your life.

**RSVP: [csjcc.org/wellness-May25](https://csjcc.org/wellness-May25)**



### Health and Fitness Day | Wednesday, May 28 | 10 – 11:30 am

Sign up for your spot to participate in the Standardized Senior Fitness Test. Hannah and Laura will walk you through a series of strength, endurance, and balance exercises. You will walk away with your scores and have a benchmark score to compare yourself to the average for your age. These scores are kept private and are for your information and use.

**Sign up for your 20-minute Fitness Test at the Fitness Desk.**

## SHARNA & IRVIN FRANK AQUATICS CENTER OPENS **MAY 24!**



**SATURDAY, MAY 24**

from 12 pm - 8 pm

### New Vending Machines!

- snacks
- candy
- drinks
- ice cream

**CSJCC WILL BE OPEN**   
**MAY 26, MEMORIAL DAY**

CSJCC Fitness: 12 pm - 5 pm

Aquatics Center: 12 pm - 8 pm



## EVENTS


**Special Display: Collections Chronicles  
Month of May**

The *Collections Chronicles* is a monthly history lesson from the Tulsa Historical Society & Museum, bringing unique and interesting artifacts from THSM's archives directly to their members. This edition gives a lesson on the 13th Armored Division in World War II, known for its role in the liberation of Buchenwald concentration camp. The display, in collaboration with the SMMJA, includes a replica of the 13th Armored Division insignia patch, donated from a Tulsa family.

## ~ ON VIEW NOW ~


**Invited to Life | Through June 9**

Award-winning author and photographer B.A. Van Sise explores the often-complicated lives of Holocaust survivors in the United States, including three living in Tulsa. *Invited to Life* is an exploration of strength, endurance overcoming and, in particular, the mosaic of American experience, told in elegant photographs and stunning prose.


**Bashert: The Art of Jewish Love**

Love is in the air! Grab your sweetheart and join us for a celebration of love as depicted by works in our permanent collection. This multi-media exhibition includes prints, oil paintings, sculpture, and Judaica. The opening reception includes the sharing of Jewish love stories from local couples.


**Theodore Fried: Art in Hiding**

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


**Temple Israel Songbook  
Illustrations**

Ready for a trip down memory lane? Revisit the charm of Sunday school at Temple Israel with these delightful, vibrant illustrations by Tulsa native Carmelita Avery. Created in 1945, these pieces capture the playful spirit of the era. Donated to the Museum in 2002 by the artist's daughter, Sharon Avery, these works are proudly on display for the very first time.

## EXHIBITIONS SPONSORED BY:

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Carol Miller  
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Barbara Sylvan

**Holiday Hours**

Monday, May 26  
(Memorial Day)

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## SAVE THE DATE

OCTOBER  
26, 2025



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# HISTORY OF THE JEWISH AMERICAN COMMUNITY

Courtesy JewishAmericanHeritage.org

## SO WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE JEWISH?

IN THE WORDS OF RABBI YEHIEL POUPKO OF THE JEWISH UNITED FUND OF METROPOLITAN CHICAGO:

*“JEWS ARE A FAMILY THAT BECAME A FAITH THAT STAYED A FAMILY.”*

Jewish tradition has religious, cultural, historical, culinary, linguistic, social, and ethical aspects. Not all members of our Jewish family believe or practice in the same way, but we all care about each other – wherever we are and whatever branch of the family we are from. It means that Jews from Morocco care about Jews from China and Jews from Israel care about Jews from America (and vice versa). Familial connection and diversity of that family are strengths that have helped us remain a vibrant and living tradition for nearly four millennia.

Jews first came to what are now the United States before we were even a country. Jewish refugees from what is now Brazil fled the Portuguese and their renewal of the Inquisition against the Jews in their colonies as early as the 17th century. These Sephardic Jews came to New Amsterdam (the Dutch colonial precursor to New York City) by boat in 1654,<sup>1</sup> but were kept offshore by the antisemitic governor of New Amsterdam, Peter Stuyvesant. Only after their coreligionists in the Netherlands intervened did these Sephardic Jews disembark and begin putting down roots.

The Jewish population remained rather small in the newly founded United States until the 1820s, with Jews settling in northeastern cities like New York and Philadelphia and southern cities like Charleston and Savannah. When German Jews began to immigrate<sup>2</sup> in search of opportunity, many settled in New York and became successful in business and contributed socially and philanthropically to the United States. These immigration patterns shifted as pogroms and antisemitism in Eastern Europe and Russia increased; the growth of railways and steam-powered boats along with open immigration laws enabled 2.5 million Jews<sup>3</sup> to come to the United States between 1880 and 1924.

These Eastern European Jews were poorer and more poorly educated on average than their German and Sephardic predecessors but rapidly acculturated, adding greatly to American culture, society, business, politics, labor organizing, civil rights and feminist movements, and higher education. Some scholars have suggested that these Eastern European Jews conformed to German Jewish ideals and institutions – joining education, hard work, family, and social progress with Jewish tradition, practices, and values.

Yet Jews in America eventually came up with specific practices, prayer books, and norms. They have risen in every area of American life, showing a unique combination

of a love of country and a sense of unique belonging in the Jewish family of families. With nearly 7.5 million Jews in America today, we celebrate some who have made transformational contributions to the country they call home.

## HISTORY OF JAHM

Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM), established by a Presidential proclamation in May 2006, honors and celebrates the contributions of Jewish Americans to society. During this month, we are reminded that discrimination against Jewish people—or any group—undermines the core principles of justice, inclusion, and liberty that define the American identity, making antisemitism inherently anti-American. JAHM offers a chance to celebrate the rich diversity within the Jewish American community while reflecting on its significant impact on society. It fosters education and awareness, promoting a deeper understanding and appreciation of Jewish American culture among people of all backgrounds. Through events, discussions, and activities, JAHM encourages community engagement and brings people together to celebrate shared values of inclusivity, tolerance, and respect. Additionally, JAHM provides an important platform for outreach and collaboration in the fight against antisemitism and other forms of hate. ■

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.newamsterdamhistorycenter.org/bios/levy.html>  
<sup>2</sup> <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/german-immigrant-period-in-united-states>  
<sup>3</sup> <https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/haventohome/haven-century.html>

IN CELEBRATION OF


# JAHM

JEWISH AMERICAN  
HERITAGE MONTH



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TULSA	BROKEN ARROW	OWASSO
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<b>Tulsa Hills</b> 7858 S Olympia Ave 918-986-9250	<b>Kenosha</b> 1801 E Kenosha St 918-449-4150	<b>SAND SPRINGS</b> 102 S Main St 918-246-5750
<b>South Memorial</b> 10506 S Memorial Dr 918-943-1050		



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\*If you are experiencing severe illness, a major injury, symptoms of a heart attack, stroke or shortness of breath, please call 911 or visit your nearest emergency room.





## THANK YOU for a Fabulous Film Festival!

On behalf of the Oklahoma Jewish Film Festival, a partnership between the Jewish Federation of Tulsa and Circle Cinema, we want to extend a heartfelt thanks to our community, sponsors, volunteers, guest speakers, event chairs, OKJFF committee, and Circle Cinema's staff for a fantastic 11th Oklahoma Jewish Film Festival, which saw a **35% increase in ticket sales** from last year.

The Oklahoma Jewish Film Festival's mission is to use the power of compelling stories to bring people of all religions and cultures together to enrich, educate, and entertain about the global Jewish experience. The festival offers films that bring people together, spark conversations, and combat antisemitism and all forms of hatred.

### • Festival Sponsors •

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11th Edition

OKLAHOMA JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL

## THE TURTLE ROOM: A LITTLE SPACE FOR BIG GROWTH

by Amanda Anderson, Executive Director Mizel JCDS

The introduction of Mizel JCDS's 2-year-old program has been an overwhelming success, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the Jewish Federation of Tulsa, Charles Schusterman Jewish Community Center, and Mizel JCDS. Parents have expressed their appreciation for the program's warm, small-community feel, where each child receives individualized care and attention. The multilingual environment—where teachers communicate in English, Spanish, and Hebrew—creates an immersive language experience that naturally fosters early language development and cultural appreciation.

What truly sets this program apart is the way it respects and empowers young learners. Teachers treat the children as capable individuals rather than infants, encouraging independence, curiosity, and confidence. This approach aligns beautifully with Montessori principles, which emphasize self-directed learning, hands-on exploration, and respect for each child's developmental journey. Montessori classrooms encourage children to make choices, develop problem-solving skills, and engage in meaningful, practical activities that build independence and curiosity.

The excitement surrounding the new classroom began even before it officially opened. As we set up the space, a few curious three- and four-year-olds wandered in to explore. My son, Eisen, who is in pre-kindergarten at Mizel, quickly became fascinated with the room. For no apparent reason, he started calling it the **"Turtle Room."** The name stuck, and soon, everyone on campus—students, teachers, and parents alike—embraced the name. Now, the Turtle Room is more than just a classroom; it's a beloved part of the Mizel community, filled with discovery and joy.

At the heart of the Turtle Room is its dedicated lead teacher, Lauren Vicario. With six years of experience teaching children from infancy through age 12, Lauren brings a deep passion for guiding young minds. Her homeschooling background and appreciation for Montessori principles shape her teaching approach, creating a nurturing yet structured environment where children feel safe to explore and grow. As both a mother and an educator, she seamlessly balances her professional life with her love for cooking, self-development, and family time—values that naturally influence her teaching style.

Lauren's dedication to early childhood education extends beyond the classroom. She completed her early childhood coursework for her degree this spring, and by October, she will be fully certified in Montessori methodologies. Her commitment to continuous learning enriches the Turtle Room's environment, ensuring that students benefit from the most effective, research-based teaching strategies. As Lauren shared, "Teaching in the Turtle Room has been a great experience, as I get to see the children develop and

*"I enjoy being able to support each child's individual needs and create an environment where they can express themselves and grow."*

*Lauren Vicario, Lead Teacher*

interact with one another. I enjoy being able to support each child's individual needs and create an environment where they can express themselves and grow."

With its thoughtful approach, dedicated educators, and strong sense of community, the Turtle Room has already become a cornerstone of early childhood education at Mizel JCDS. This program provides our youngest learners with a nurturing foundation that fosters independence, curiosity, and a love for learning—ensuring they are not only prepared for the next stages of education but also empowered to thrive. ■





# THE MOST FAMOUS HOME MOVIE IN HISTORY ©

by Phil Goldfarb

Abraham Zapruder (May 15, 1905 – August 30, 1970) was a Ukrainian-born American clothing manufacturer who witnessed the assassination of United States President John F. Kennedy in Dallas, Texas, on November 22, 1963. He unexpectedly captured the shooting in a home movie while filming the presidential limousine and motorcade as it traveled through Dealey Plaza.

Zapruder was born to a Ukrainian-Jewish family in the city of Kovel, Ukraine, the son of Israel Zapruder (1875-1960) and his wife Chana Sammett Zapruder (1879-1936). While living in Ukraine, he received only four years of formal education. In July 1909, Israel left for North America and arrived at Ellis Island on the SS Cincinnati. Abraham Zapruder, his mother and two sisters emigrated to the United States, arriving at Ellis Island on the SS Rotterdam on July 12, 1920. Settling in Brooklyn, they were reunited with Israel Zapruder, who had worked and saved for 11 years as a carpenter to bring his family over.

Studying English at night, Abraham found work as a clothing pattern maker in Manhattan's garment district. On June 18, 1933, he married Lillian Schapovnik (1913–1993), and they went on to have three children.

In 1941, Zapruder moved to Dallas, Texas, to work for Nardis, a local sportswear company. In 1949, he co-founded Jennifer Juniors, Inc., producing the Chalet and Jennifer Juniors brands of dresses. His Jennifer Juniors offices were on the fourth floor of the Dal-Tex Building, across the street from the Texas School Book Depository.

Zapruder's movie camera was an 8 mm Bell & Howell Zoomatic Director Series Model 414 PD—top-of-the-line when it was purchased in 1962 and is now in the collection of the U.S. National Archives. Zapruder had planned to film the motorcade from his office window but opted for a better spot in Dealey Plaza where the motorcade would be passing. He stood atop a 4-foot concrete abutment extending from the John Neely Bryan concrete pergola on the grassy knoll north of Elm Street on the opposite side of the Texas School Book Depository. Zapruder's secretary, Marilyn Sitzman, offered to assist Zapruder as he had vertigo and was apprehensive about standing even at a small height of a few feet alone.

While Sitzman stood behind Zapruder and held his coat to steady him, he began shooting the presidential motorcade as it turned from Houston Street onto Elm Street in front of the Book Depository. Zapruder's



Abraham Zapruder film still

film captured 26.6 seconds of the traveling motorcade carrying President Kennedy on 486 frames of standard 8 mm Kodak Kodachrome II film running at an average of 18.3 frames/second. It famously captured the fatal head shot that struck President Kennedy as his limousine passed almost directly in front of Zapruder's position, 65 feet from the center of Elm Street.

Zapruder later recalled that he immediately knew that President Kennedy's wound was fatal as he saw the president's head "...explode like a firecracker." Walking back to his office amid the confusion following the shots, Zapruder encountered The Dallas Morning News reporter Harry McCormick, who had been standing near Zapruder and had noticed he was filming the motorcade. McCormick was acquainted with Agent Forrest Sorrels of the Secret Service and offered to bring Sorrels to Zapruder's office. Zapruder agreed and returned to his office.

Zapruder agreed to give the film to Sorrels on the condition it would be used only for investigation of the assassination. The three then took the film to Eastman Kodak's Dallas processing plant later that afternoon, where it was developed around 6:30 p.m. As the Kodachrome process requires different equipment for duplication than development, the original print was taken to the Jamieson Film Company, where three additional copies were made; these were returned to Kodak around 8 p.m. for processing. Zapruder kept the original, plus one copy, and gave the other two copies to Sorrels, who sent them to Secret Service headquarters in Washington.

Late that evening, Zapruder was contacted at home by Richard Stolley, an editor at Life magazine. They arranged to meet the following morning to view the film, after which Zapruder sold the print rights to Life for \$50,000 (\$515,700 today). The following day, Life purchased all rights to the film for a total of \$150,000

(approximately \$1,547,100 today).

The night after the assassination, Zapruder said that he had a nightmare in which he saw a booth in Times Square advertising "See the President's head explode!" He determined that, while he was willing to make money from the film, he did not want the public to see the full horror of what he had seen. Therefore, the condition of the sale to Life was that frame 313, showing the fatal shot, would be withheld from the public. He later donated \$25,000 (about \$257,850 today) of the money to the widow of J. D. Tippit, a Dallas police officer who was shot and killed by Lee Harvey Oswald 45 minutes after President Kennedy was killed.

In 1975, Time, Inc. (which owned Life) sold the film back to the Zapruder family for \$1. In 1978, the Zapruders allowed the film to be stored at the National Archives and Records Administration where it remains. In 1999, the Zapruder family donated the film's copyright to the Sixth Floor Museum, in the Texas School Book Depository building along with one of the first-generation copies made on November 22, 1963, and other copies of the film and frame enlargements once held by Life magazine, which had since been returned.

Although it is not the only film of the shooting, the Zapruder film has been described as being the most complete, giving a relatively clear view from a somewhat elevated position on the side from which the president's fatal head wound is visible. It was an important piece of evidence before the Warren Commission hearings and all subsequent investigations of the assassination. It is one of the most studied pieces of film in history, particularly the footage of the final shot, which helped spawn theories of whether Lee Harvey Oswald was the lone assassin.

In 1994, the film was selected for preservation in the United States National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."

The November 29, 1963 issue of Life published 30 frames of the Zapruder film in black and white. Frames were also published in color in the December 6, 1963, "John F. Kennedy Memorial Edition."

In October 1964, the U.S. Government Printing Office released 26 volumes of testimony and evidence compiled by the Warren Commission. Volume 18 of the commission's hearings reproduced 158 frames from the Zapruder film in black and white.

Zapruder died of stomach cancer at the age of 66 in Dallas on August 30, 1970, and is buried in the Emanu-El Cemetery in Dallas. ■



David Dopp



Levi Olsen



Phil Goldfarb is the president of the  
Jewish Genealogical Society of Tulsa and  
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phil.goldfarb@cox.net.







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## STAND-UP COMEDY & AMERICAN JEWS

by Alan Levenson, Schusterman/Josey Chair of Jewish History, OU

**A**cross America, all ethnicities and orientations are trying “to kill” and not “die,” the almost biblical vocabulary for stand-up comedy success or failure. As we celebrate Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM), it’s worth remembering a time when the capital of stand-up was the Catskills, and many of the comedians were Jewish. My uncle Sam Levenson, who realized that comedy was more lucrative than public school teaching, was well known as an author and guest on the Ed Sullivan show and TV staples like “What’s My Line.” Sam often appeared with his brothers, all accomplished fiddlers (violins, ukuleles, mandolins, balalaikas). They played every Levenson family event, my bar mitzvah included, and would have been deeply offended by a hired band. Sam kept his whole name: his brother Mike, an accomplished WPA artist, dropped a syllable to become a Lenson.

Sam told great stories: of his mother bargaining for chickens on NYC’s Lower East Side, about an honorary invitation to Albert Einstein to join the Cousin’s Circle

(he accepted!), and his betrothal to Aunt Esther. The punchline in this exchange between Sam & Aunt Esther’s father: “Would you marry her even if she didn’t have a penny?” “I certainly would!” “Well, you’re a lucky boy. You got the right girl.” Sam had a slew of one-liners, too: “Insanity is hereditary; you get it from your children.” Sam was the opposite of Lenny Bruce and the “sick comics” celebrated on the TV show “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel.” Midge had some funny sets, with Rachel Brosnahan convincingly delivering this (Jewish) rebuke when she goes to drop her son Ethan off at Joel’s new apartment with his secretary/mistress:

***Midge:** You know, it’s funny. I thought I’d find you squatting in some downtown smoke-filled atelier, not two blocks away, living the Methodist version of our life. With the Methodist version of me [...] You know what’s funny? I don’t have my apartment anymore. You have my apartment. You have a lot of my things, actually. You’re welcome. [Timer dings] Dinner?*

(Continued)



The Levenson Brothers at play



(Continued from p. 21)

**Penny:** Yes.

**Midge:** What?

**Penny:** Pot roast.

**Midge** [turning to Joel]: The Methodist version of brisket.

**Joel:** Can we discuss this some other time, please?

[Ethan runs off]

**Penny:** Uh, where's he going? Where's he going?

[Penny follows Ethan, leaving Joel and Midge alone]

**Joel:** Boy. Do you know how to make an entrance.

**Midge:** So this is what you were missing Joel? Pot roast and Santa Claus?

**Joel:** I don't want to talk about this here.

**Midge:** Should we get lunch somewhere? Is there a mayonnaise and Wonder Bread café opening up somewhere we could try?

[...]

**Midge:** You said you didn't want our life. But this is our life. You didn't go somewhere exotic or different, you went across the f\*\*\*g street [...] Tell Ethan I'll pick him up tomorrow. Don't baptize him while I'm gone.

Lenny Bruce's own material hasn't worn well. His famous routine "Jewish and Goyish" leans on ethnic and geographic stereotypes that seem either unfunny, or, to my twenty-year-old OU students, incomprehensible. Here's a sample:

*If you live in New York or any other big city, you are Jewish. It doesn't matter if you're Catholic; if you live in New York, you're Jewish. If you live in Butte, Montana, you're going to be Goyish, even if you're Jewish ...*

*Celebrate is a goyish word. Observe is a Jewish word. Mr. and Mrs. Walsh are celebrating Christmas with Major Thomas Moreland, USAF) while Mr. and Mrs. Bromberg observed Hanukkah with Goldie and Arthur Schindler from Kiamesha, New York.*

Woody Allen's comic Jewish paranoia is best known from the scene in Annie Hall where the character imagines Annie's mother looking at him and seeing a Hasid. Allen was fascinated with this theme and poked fun at Jewish observance—and academics—in his "Hasidic Tales, with a Guide to Their Interpretation by the Noted Scholar."

Rabbi Zvi Yisroel, an Orthodox scholar of the Torah and a man who developed whining to an art unheard of in the West, was unanimously hailed as the wisest man of the Renaissance by his fellow Hebrews, who totaled a sixteenth of one percent of the population. Once, while he was on his way to synagogue to celebrate [the holiday] commemorating God's reneging on every promise, a woman asked him the following question: Rabbi, why are we not allowed to pork?" We're not? Reb Zvi said incredulously. "Uh-oh."

(For the Noted Scholars' commentary, see Moshe Waldoks *The Big Book of Jewish Humor*)

Not every great routine began in the Catskills. One started at a party in Hollywood, with Mel Brooks playing the Yiddish-accented 2000-year-old man to the Carl Reiner's straight-man. As Brooks tells it, Cary Grant pushed them to record a version, and they did. One bit describes the discovery of monotheism with Mel Brooks explaining that they all worshipped "Phil" until he was struck by lightning, leading to the epiphany, "There's something bigger than Phil!"

Jerry Seinfeld, Sarah Silverman, Larry David, Ilana Glazer continue the tradition of American Jewish humor which echoes in Tin Pan Alley hits, Broadway musicals, Hollywood films, and more. Like the majority of American Jews, my "ancestors" passed through Ellis Island from 1881-1924, after the conditions in Czarist Russia deteriorated and before the USA instituted new immigration laws. For my first forty years, I considered my family average, even boring. In retrospect, we were among the colorful tiles in the mosaic called American Jewry. ■

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### Moral Clarity in the Age of Confusion

**Thursday, May 1 | 12:00 p.m.**

As we move from Passover to Yom HaShoah, join us for the final meeting of a four-part in-person reading group, Moral Clarity in an Age of Confusion. Through the writings of political philosopher Hannah Arendt and Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, we'll explore how individuals and communities respond to moral crises, resist apathy, and uphold conscience in dark times. Each session will engage with short, powerful readings. Bring your lunch (vegetarian-only, please) and an open mind. Please register to attend at [tulsagogue.com/events](https://tulsagogue.com/events).

### Bat Mitzvah Service of Lyla Mackenzie Hammer-Woller

**Saturday, May 3 | 9:30 a.m.**  
The community is invited to join the family for services at 9:30 a.m. at Congregation B'nai Emunah or in the Synagogue Zoom Room—meeting ID 918 583 7121.

### Lifelong Learners at Zarrow Pointe

**Wednesday, May 7 | 11:30 a.m.**

Seniors from all over the community are invited to join Rabbi Kaiman for a learning session and lunch provided by Zarrow Pointe starting at 11:30 a.m. Reserve your spot by contacting the Synagogue at 918-583-7121 or registering at [www.tulsagogue.com/events](https://www.tulsagogue.com/events). Please

check in at Zarrow Pointe Town Center, and you will be directed to the Dining Hall for the learning seminar.

### Blatt + Blue

**Thursday, May 8 | 7:00 p.m.**

Visit [tulsagogue.com/events](https://tulsagogue.com/events) for more information regarding the movie selection and viewing options. Join us for our conversation at 7:00 p.m. on Zoom (918 583 7121). Newcomers are welcome to join the dialogue.

### Shabbat Shalom: Musical Circle, Dinner and Shabbat Talks

**Friday, May 9 | 5:30 p.m.**

Experience a musical Shabbat evening with songs and storytelling starting at 5:30 p.m. This inclusive and accessible event is an ideal introduction to Shabbat traditions, welcoming participants of all ages and backgrounds. After services, we'll enjoy a beautiful Shabbat dinner together at 6:15 p.m. The evening will conclude with a special Shabbat Talks speaker at 7:00 p.m. to discuss a relevant topic of interest to our community. Reserve your spot at the Shabbat table by registering at [tulsagogue.com/events](https://tulsagogue.com/events).

### Holy HoeDown

**Thursday, May 22 | 5:30 p.m.**

Dust off your cowboy boots and grab your Stetsons! The Synagogue is thrilled to announce the return of its annual fundraiser, **Holy Hoedown**. This high-energy evening will bring together community from all walks of life—our preschool families, supporters of our refugee resettlement work, and participants in our many programs—to celebrate and support the vital work of The Synagogue.

This **boot-scootin' event** will feature **live music by Jacob Tovar and his All-Star Band**, lively two-step dance lessons, and a **delicious fried chicken feast**. Families and friends will enjoy an evening filled with entertainment, kids programming, and a silent auction, all while honoring the incredible lay leadership that keeps our

community thriving.

Co-chaired by **Carly Finer** and **Brae Riley**, Holy Hoedown is The Synagogue's **only annual fundraising event**, making its success essential to our mission. **Sponsorships start at \$250**, which includes admission for **two adults and two children (under 13)**. Your generosity directly supports **every aspect of our work**, from education to social action initiatives and beyond.

So grab your **Western chic** and get ready for an **unforgettable night of music, dancing, and giving back**. **Tickets and sponsorship details** are available at [tulsagogue.com/hoedown](https://tulsagogue.com/hoedown).

### Bat Mitzvah Service of Mason "Maci" Olivia Zelkind

**Saturday, May 24 | 9:30 a.m.**

The community is invited to join the family for services at 9:30 a.m. at Congregation B'nai Emunah or in the Synagogue Zoom Room—meeting ID 918 583 7121.

### Afternoon/Evening Services

Join us on Wednesdays and Fridays at 5:30 p.m. in the Davis-Goodall Chapel for traditional prayer and community Mourner's Kaddish. Both in-person and Zoom participation are available. Please register for in-person attendance on our website.

### Shabbat Morning Services

Every Saturday at 9:30 a.m., we celebrate Shabbat through song, Torah study, and fellowship. These services, available both in-person and via Zoom, offer a chance to mark anniversaries, celebrate milestones, and engage in our congregation's ritual life. ■

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Visit our Temple Israel website [www.templetulsa.com](http://www.templetulsa.com) and our events page for details about all we offer!

**ARZA Shabbat • Fri., May 2 • 6:00 p.m.**

Plan to attend a special reception at 5:00 p.m. for two Israelis visiting Tulsa. They are here to personally share the challenges of bringing peace to the region since October 7th and will be speaking from the bimah during the Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

**Rabbi Jasper Farewell Picnic BYOP • Sat., May 3 • 12:00 p.m.**

Bring your own picnic and join us at Temple Israel to wish Rabbi Jasper farewell. Drinks and desserts provided. We will meet rain or shine!

**Birthday Shabbat Service with Torah in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., May 9 • 7:30 p.m.**

Join us as we welcome in Shabbat with the chanting of Torah. We will also celebrate May birthdays. Stay for a sweet oneg afterwards.

**Zamru L'Shabbat in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., May 16 • 6:00 p.m.**

Join us as we celebrate Shabbat with Elijah's Minor Prophets. Come at 5:30 p.m. for our joyous pre-oneg.

**Temple Israel Annual Fundraiser & Deconsecration • Sun., May 18 • 3:00 -5:00 p.m.**

Enjoy a Mediterranean grazing table; share your favorite memories of Temple Israel; share your hopes for our future; zoom with our architects for updates on

our future home; hear the Mayor's proclamation; participate as we deconsecrate our building. Your support is vital to our future.

**Anniversary Shabbat Service with Torah in person, on Zoom & Facebook Live • Fri., May 23 • 6:00 p.m.**

Join us as we welcome in Shabbat with the chanting of Torah. We will also celebrate significant May anniversaries. Come at 5:30 p.m. for our joyous pre-oneg.

**Zarrow Pointe Shabbat Service • Fri., May 23 • 6:30 p.m.**

We cordially invite all those who wish to join us for this meaningful Friday evening service, held in the Burnstein Auditorium at Zarrow Pointe. We welcome not only Temple members and Zarrow Pointe residents, but all other friends in our community who would appreciate being together on Shabbat.

**Bat Mitzvah Service of Maddy Katz • Sat., May 24 • 10:30 a.m.**

Join Temple Israel friends and family as Maddy Katz is called to the Torah as a Bat Mitzvah! ■

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## TEMPLE ISRAEL'S ANNUAL FUNDRAISER AND DECONSECRATION

by Lesley Bumgarner, Director of Congregational Life

Temple Israel was founded in 1914, only seven years after Oklahoma officially became our 46th state. In the 111 years since then, our congregation has had three different locations. For the past seventy years, we have been housed in our iconic mid-century building on 22nd Place. This building has served us well and has been the site of many meaningful events in the lives of so many of us in the Tulsa Jewish community. We look forward with great anticipation to the new building, our next congregational home, which will soon be constructed on our beloved 22nd Place site.

On May 18th from 3:00-5:00 PM, in conjunction with our 2025 Annual Fundraiser, we will gather to deconsecrate our current building. In addition to this ritual, the afternoon will be a busy one filled with Mediterranean snacks, a proclamation from Tulsa Mayor Monroe Nichols, a Zoom session with the architects from Feingold Alexander who have designed our new building, an opportunity for people to share memories, and more.

Anyone who participates in our fundraising effort at any level is welcome to join us for this special afternoon. To support us and to RSVP please visit our Temple Israel website, [templetulsa.com](http://templetulsa.com). We are filled with gratitude as we reflect and remember and with happy anticipation for our bright future to come as we go forth. Lech L'Cha! ■



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