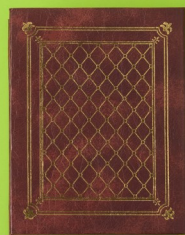
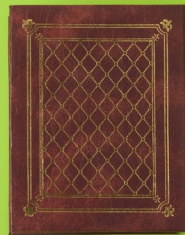
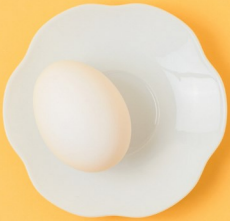


Spring 2023

ILLIANA NEWS

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER OF NORTHWEST INDIANA





Presidents' Corner *With Mark & Judy*

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Judy and I are honored to have been selected as Co-Presidents this year. We have been meeting frequently to work with our outstanding Executive Director, Emily Benedix to put together a great year of programs. I have been asked, "Why do you want to be President?" the answer for both of us is easy. Leading the Board, staff, and volunteers of the premier Jewish Agency in Northwest Indiana is a great honor and privilege. Being able to interact with the leaders and members of our congregations gives us the opportunity to learn about the needs and interests of the Jewish community. We have benefited from an excellent staff at the Federation office. They work hard every day to provide support, information, and resources to every age group. From Atid and Noar to the Senior Grief group, we provide outstanding service to this community.

We have focused on many cultural programs, youth and adult programming, community services, films, book studies, and holiday events to present during this year. Our talented Board Members and all volunteers have provided leadership to many of these events. It's a great feeling to walk into our building and see our Social Hall full of people coming to one of our many programs. Already this year, we've had a Tu B'Shevat Seder, a security briefing, Youth and Senior activities, and ended a very successful campaign to fund all of these programs and more.

On Holocaust Remembrance Day, my wife, daughter, and I were in Poland at Auschwitz. If you have ever visited a concentration camp, it's a sobering experience. Visiting the cabins where so many lived with minimal resources for cleanliness and health, the gas chambers and crematoria where so many died many within 24 hours after their arrival. The rooms full of suitcases, shoes, and the gold from teeth that were taken from the victims of the Holocaust terror. I was struck by the pictures of many of the victims of Auschwitz, with hair shorn and wearing the Jewish uniform. Nowhere else but at the camps would one see so much horror. Then a visit to Birkenau or Auschwitz 3, built next door to Auschwitz when they needed more room to house prisoners who were doomed. A few days earlier we visited the Majdanek Concentration camp located in Lublin, Poland. Just as sad with thousands losing their lives there from all parts of Eastern Europe. Even though I taught History at the High School level, no history book can adequately describe what our eyes saw during our visit.

Our Federation will be hosting a meaningful program in remembrance of Yom HaShoah called The Suitcase on Sunday, April 16. You can read more about The Suitcase on page 10. Please join us. Judy and I are looking forward to a great year ahead and welcome all of you to play an active role in the Jewish Federation of Northwest Indiana!

**Our Mission is to Enrich Jewish Life in Northwest Indiana,
Israel, and around the world through service, programming,
advocacy, and fundraising**

Executive Director's Desk with Emily Benedix

I thought I knew everything there was to know about Fiddler on the Roof. I was child number 7 in the high school production of Fiddler when I was in 2nd grade. I know that there are two versions of Tradition. One where they debate a horse's age and one where they question if the horse is really a mule. I even named a stray box turtle Tevye. I was a bit of a fan.

So, when I recently saw a documentary on the creation of the play, I was a bit confused when they played "When the Messiah Comes." Turns out the cute little song was part of the original score but didn't make it past the initial trial run in Washington. It is now saved on my favorite playlist.

We watched the documentary, *Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles* on February 26. The day after antisemitic extremists called for a "Day of Hate" to make their numbers known. With this fresh in my mind, the documentaries descriptions of the pogroms represented in Fiddler, and the clips of Tevye being "warned" by a "friendly" constable hit a bit too close to home. Tevye learned that there would be an "Unofficial demonstration" during Motel's wedding. We learned that one could occur on the 25th.

I'd like to add that I had planned for a happy topic. Unfortunately, those who dislike Jews don't give us a break at Pesach. Though there is a positive point to be found because we aren't in Anatevka.

Unlike Fiddler, the warnings for February 25 didn't materialize. On Tuesday, February 28, our partner Secure Community Networks released a statement saying that as of

the time of distribution, no antisemitic or criminal activity was being reported as part of the day of hate campaign. Something else happened though. Something that we would have never seen in Anatevka, and many Jews still don't experience in their communities.

Federations and congregations nationwide reached out to their civic leaders and law enforcement agencies. As we all went into Shabbat very aware of the potential threat, friends of the Jewish community were holding their breath with us. The same internet where the "Call to Action" by the extremists found a foothold was flooded with messages of support and prayers for our safety.

Locally, we saw just another example of the support our community receives from Chief Steve Scheckel and the Munster Police Department. Although our Federation is closed on Shabbat, our building, as well as the synagogues received amazing coverage and support. Services were held without disruption, and a visible police presence was seen throughout the entire weekend. I found myself once again wondering how extrem-

ists always seem to miss the fact that their threats are the best unifier for Jews and the non-Jewish community.

Every spring we see holiday after holiday that highlights the challenges of antisemitism and oppression that the Jewish people have faced, and overcome. We celebrate Ester's bravery at Purim and teach the Exodus from Egypt at Passover. We remember those murdered during the Holocaust and celebrate the strength of our people that led to the creation of Israel.

With *Fiddler on the Roof*, we remember the heartbreaking panic of the wedding guests. But it's not the first thing we think of. We think of Topol z"l clucking like chickens as Tevye dreams of being a rich man. We hum Sunrise, Sunset, and find ourselves randomly yelling "TRADITION" with our hands raised in joy. And next year, when February 25th comes around again, I won't be thinking of the anniversary of the empty threat of a day of hate. I'll remember it as another example of how our community stood behind us, and the weekend I downloaded a cute little song from Fiddler.

Todah Rabah

The Jewish community of Munster extends our gratitude to the Munster Police Department. The department's dedication to protecting our community is invaluable to keeping our congregations and community spaces safe and secure. The Federation was thrilled to join Temple Beth-El and Congregation Beth Israel in showing our appreciation by providing lunch for the department on Tuesday, March 7th.

We look forward to continuing to partner with our local officers as we work to ensure a safe and welcoming Jewish community.



The Jewish Federation
OF NORTHWEST INDIANA

Celebrating Israel at 75!

ISRAEL SOLIDARITY DAY



***Sunday, April 30, 2023
Beginning at 10:00 AM***

Join us at the Jewish Federation of
Northwest Indiana as we celebrate the
75th Anniversary of Israel's
Independence!

Please RSVP by visiting
Federationonline.org or by calling our
office at 219-301-0960

Highlights

Our Speakers:
Retired Israel Defense
Forces Officers from
Partnership2Gether
Western Galilee
Central Area Consortium

Community
Photography Exhibit

Israeli Shinshinim from
Chicago

Sing Along with
Vocalists from Our Local
Congregations

Children's activities led
by the Shinshinim

Community Lunch
Hot Dogs, Falafel, and
Israeli Salad
\$5 person / \$20 a family

Join us after the
celebration for a film
screening

With Support From



Mark your calendar now to join us on Sunday, April 30th beginning at 10:00 am for this year's very special Israel Solidarity Day event. We will be celebrating Israel's 75th birthday with four guests from our Partnership region in Israel, two Israeli Shinshinim from the Chicago area, a special sing-along featuring local talent, lunch, and a photography exhibit featuring YOUR photography!

During our morning Yom Hazikaron program, four retired IDF officers will join us to talk about their years of service to the great State of Israel and those who sacrificed their lives for their country. Following the morning program, we will celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israeli Independence Day, with a community lunch!

Celebrating Israel at 75! ISRAEL SOLIDARITY DAY

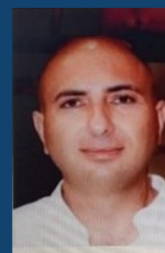
Our Speakers



Billy Harel



Eli Efrati



Avi Michaeli



Golan
Rosenberg



Community Photography Exhibit

Share your Israel experience with our community!

Have you taken a trip to Israel? We want to see it!

We are excited to show off our community photographs at our Israel Solidarity Day. We will be creating a gallery for the community to enjoy as we celebrate the 75th Anniversary of Israel's Independence!

Please send your photo to Emily at The Federation by April 10th. Photos should be emailed to Emily@federationonline.org with a description of who is in the picture, where you are, and when the picture was taken



Israel Solidarity Day Host Families Needed!

We are looking for host families for 6 Israelis who will be visiting our community for Israel Solidarity Day. We will be providing home hospitality from Friday, April 28th until Sunday afternoon April 30th, or Monday morning May 1st. If you would be interested in hosting either a young Israeli high school graduate or a former IDF officer from our Partnership region, please call the office at 219-301-0960 and let us know.

This is a great way to connect and make a friend for a lifetime!

Keeping up with K'TonTon



Erin Nowakowski



As I sat down to write about K'TonTon for this issue of the Illiana News, it occurred to me that it will be my last. For those who may not yet know, my family is relocating to Florida at the end of the school year. It is with a very heavy heart that I leave K'TonTon. The last eight years have been an incredible, irreplaceable experience, and leaving my K'TonTon and Federation Family is harder than I can possibly share.

I anxiously await being able to work together with the next director to ensure a smooth, positive transition for our children, families, and staff. In the meantime, life at K'TonTon continues as always! We celebrated Tu B'Shevat by planting seeds, had a wonderful Family Breakfast, and most recently, enjoyed a joyous Purim! We baked hamantaschen, made crowns and graggars, had a silly hamantaschen snack, wore our costumes and had a dance party!

As we approach the end of the year, we look forward to our Passover Seder, parent breakfast, and annual family picnic. We end the year with our Graduation celebration and head into Camp K'TonTon!





Chocolate Seder w/Rabbi Isaacs
Tuesday, April 4, from 7-8:30 pm
Location: Temple Beth El

Last Event of the School Year
@ Zig-E's Funland!
Thursday, May 18, at 5 pm




Library®


SING-A-LONG

WITH JORDY NOVAK
 OWNER OF THE GREAT LAKES MUSIC COMPANY, LLC

SUNDAY, APRIL 23 @ 3PM

585 Progress Ave, Munster, IN 46321

RSVP online by April 14 at
federationonline.org/pjlibrary

This event is for parents and children from 6 months - 7 years old.

snacks & refreshments provided

Adult Friendship Club

Wednesday, April 5 & 12 - No AFC (Passover)

Monday, April 10 - No Coffee & Connection (Passover)

Wednesday, May 10- Friendship Day, 11:30 am at Theo's Steakhouse

Monday, May 15 - Linda Curley Presentation

If you want to be a part of this social group, please send your dues of \$10 to the Federation to be added to the mailing list.



Prime Timers

Thursday, April 20

Chicago History Museum and Manny's

Save the Date

Thursday, June 29

Chicago Botanical Gardens
(more information to come)

Be on the lookout for upcoming trips!

If you want to be a part of this fun group,
please send your dues of \$10 to the
Federation to be added to the mailing list.



**Mail dues to Jewish Federation of Northwest Indiana, 585 Progress Ave, Munster, IN 46321
Checks should be made out to the Jewish Federation**

Save The Date!

2023 Summer Picnic
Sunday, June 25th

Campaign Kickoff
Headlining Lazer Lloyd
Sunday, August 20th

For more information on
our upcoming programs
visit federationonline.org!



The Jewish Federation
OF NORTHWEST INDIANA

NEXT BOOK CLUB

Thursday, April 20th at 7pm via Zoom



JEWISH FEDERATION
OF NORTHWEST INDIANA

PRIME TIMERS TAKE
ON CHICAGO!

Thursday,
April 20th
Bus leaves from The
Federation at 8:30am
Est return 3pm
\$40 per person
(lunch not included)



CHICAGO HISTORY
MUSEUM & MANNY'S DELI

"Highlights of Chicago" Tour

Features both World's Fairs & gives an overall history of Chicago

RSVP & Payments due by April 6th

Register at federationonline.org/upcoming-events



JEWISH FEDERATION
OF NORTHWEST INDIANA

Presents

FUNNY
OLD
Broad
COMEDY SHOW



\$25 per ticket

Purchase your tickets online

federationonline.org/upcoming-events

Let's Celebrate the Amazing
women in our lives! Come out for
an afternoon of laughs at
The Federation!



Sunday,
May 7th at 1pm

Spotlight on Tim Lorsch

A conversation between Tim Lorsch and Emily Benedix



Our team first heard of Tim Lorsch while we were looking for a speaker for our 2022 Campaign Kickoff. While we were excited about his program “The Suitcase”, we knew it wouldn’t be the right fit for our fundraising event. We also knew we needed to find a way to bring this program to our community.

Tim Lorsch is the first born son of Jews who fled from Nazi Germany in the late 1930s. On his website, he shares that at one point, Germany was a golden paradise for the Jewish people and his relatives lived in the same environment that produced Sigmund Freud, Gustav Mahler, and Albert Einstein. In less than a decade, that all ended.

In 2016, a suitcase was found in a small antique store in the Czech Republic before making its way to Tim in Nashville. Inscribed inside was a transport number and a familiar name. Julius Israel Lorsch was Tim’s Great-Uncle, and the suitcase had accompanied him to the concentration camps.

Even though I already anticipate being moved by the performance, I was honored to have a chance to chat with Tim and get a insider look at what we can look forward to on April 16th at the Jewish Federation.

Thank you so much for allowing me a chance to speak with you today. We are all very excited to see your show. On your website you share that you had wanted to tell the story of your families resilience, even before you received the suitcase. Had you planned to use your music from the beginning?

Yes, music was absolutely the focus for me, but I wanted to combine that with the story. I have a couple of big boxes full of old family albums, going back to late 1800s Germany. My photographer cousin picked photos that might be workable, and I had them scanned. So now I have a kind of slide presentation that I do while I’m speaking. And then when I play the music, people are just listening to the music.

Music has always been my focus for me and it’s all pretty amazing how one person can do it. And I’ll be honest, I didn’t think I could get this project off the ground and get it to people to hear it. I needed a lot of people to make it happen. Without the looping technology, it would just be way too expensive, too cumbersome, and too hard to figure out all those things. I would need five to 10 musicians to create what I do musically. To try to coordinate something like that would be just, without having a huge pocketbook, would be just really impossible.

So what are the instruments we can look forward to hearing you play?

I bring a violin, and this violin is the violin my grandmother brought with her when she fled the Nazis. I call it my own violin of hope. It’s like I always say I got the best inheritance.

Well, that’s very interesting because our community rabbis generally do an actual memorial service program. And they are doing it this year with Prairie State College on

Monday the 17th prior to a Violins of Hope Concert, because they actually have the Violins of Hope the week that you’re here.

Wow. The Violins of Hope came to Nashville a few years ago and I went to a few of the events, and it was really, really powerful. A really memorable, very gratifying experience. It was a magnificent event. I play the violin. And then I have an octave violin, which kind of plays the role of the viola. Personally, it is kind of my favorite instrument to play. It’s just unusual, very atypical. It looks just like a regular violin. But you have octave strings on it. It’s halfway between the viola and a cello, and then a cello. So basically, using the instruments of a string quartet. I don’t know how many parts is the most I ever have had looping, somewhere between five and ten parts are going to be playing.

That’s amazing. But how did you even approach telling such a personal story so publicly? How did you decide what the important pieces were and what was too personal to share? How did you approach that with such an open and giving mind that you felt comfortable sharing it, to begin with?

The best way to answer that question is you don’t do it all at one time. I had about 10 hours of interviews that were transcribed from my family and I’m just kind of doing a storyboard of big sheets of paper in my studio, just looking at everything. Eventually, you just kind of start somewhere and it wasn’t that much of an issue for me. I guess initially, the way I approached it was that these were the stories of my ancestors, and I was going to leave myself out of it. That was my original thought.

Then after the massacre in 2018, at the Tree of Life synagogue, I kind of changed how I ended the program. I no longer

“Uncle Julius did not outlast the atrocities of the Holocaust, but like the suitcase, my family, and the stories, have survived.”

er kept myself out of it. And I have a soliloquy that I do at the end of the show, talk about my feelings, and bring it back home. So the piece actually did change after that, but you know, these stories are really those of my ancestors, what their life in Germany was like, during the good times. There is a brief synopsis of, what their life was like, and it really starts around 1900. Shows the good times, the coming of the Nazis, how my mother and father each got out. All my parent's friends were German and Jewish. They all bonded over their shared experience of loss and disruption. And then finish with bringing it home to what it's been like for me to be an American Jew.

It's hard to imagine their experience. I don't have any relatives that experienced the horror of the Holocaust in the same way yours did, the way so many others did. But I know I frequently think back to the fact that Germany was welcoming to Jews until it wasn't. Even without that family history, it hits you as a Jew.

You hit the nail on the head, because, my grandfather's both fought for Germany in World War One. They were highly assimilated at one point, I say. My grandfather said to me that before Hitler, he was a German first and a Jew second. That's how he looked at it. And that's really the whole question. We're always going, no, it can't happen here. But that's the question for us. That's the question.

You mentioned the Tree of Life shooting hit differently, and you've adjusted your program a little bit. Has telling your story over and over, and your experience and interactions of telling your story changed you? Your personal feelings about what happened to your family or even how you view your program since the very first performance you did?

That's still in process, is the best way that I can put it because it's just there. It's so complex. You know what I mean? It just really is and with all the things that are going on in Israel right now, I it just adds another whole layer of complexity to this, it's constantly evolving. I think for me, certainly the Tree of Life really altered things and I think in a lot of ways if I look back, I'm kind of surprised that here in the latter stages of my career at least. You know, these things didn't really interest me. I lived in Montana and Wyoming for many years where I was the only Jew and I was completely fine with that.

I really never had those feelings of needing the support of that particular kind of community around me. Now, I'm much more part of that world just doing this work and I feel like the luckiest guy on Earth. I have the stories and these amazing relatives. I have the suitcase and my grandmother's violin that I can share that story with. I had been a musician my whole life. I'm really just kind of completely enamored and so

fulfilled by doing this. To be able to combine, all my musical knowledge with stories that are so personal and close and meaningful to me about my family. I just feel like I am truly the luckiest guy on Earth. I just can't tell you.

People and songwriters are always saying they're just making stuff up. That's what a song is. It's just made up. Whereas all my stuff, you couldn't make it up if you tried. It's that stories are just that incredible.

I feel like many of the stories that we hear of families coming out of the Holocaust, not only surviving but also rebuilding their entire world. Being able to share that and then add music and storytelling, which is a whole separate challenge. It sounds like an amazing experience and it is that beautiful expression.

They're resilient. I'm just always amazed because they really had so much, the Jews of Germany. It wasn't a Fiddler on the Roof story. Germany was a very different kind of place. The history of it with the republic's coming together. Jews were positioned to kind of do well there. To have all that taken away and for none of my great-grandparents to get out. And for, you know, half of them to be murdered or commit suicide, to be able to get out but if your parents were left behind. Trying to get them out and not being able to get them out. Then making a life in the new world is pretty amazing. You know, and I'll tell you all these books, I mean, you know, you read about Frank and Wiesel, their experiences in the Holocaust. I think that's one of the great stories where you realize the strength of their mind in being able to deal with these situations that most of us would find unfathomable and give up hope. But these people, in the most trying circumstances, never gave up hope. It's just, it's unbelievable.

Then you think all the stories you don't hear because so many people don't talk about it until it's too late. Was your family open about it?

My immediate family, my parents, my brother, and sister, absolutely not. They never talked about it and would never talk about it. But two cousins of mine, my aunt was a very unusual person, extremely outspoken and rebellious. And when she went to South Africa during the war and got married and got divorced, and she brought her two kids here in the early 1950s. They live with my paternal grandparents, their whole lives growing up and it was talked about a lot because they were living with my grandparents. Especially with my grandmother, who also was a very outspoken person.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

Spotlight on Tim Lorsch, Continued



So, I really owe it to my cousins, and one of them was a journalist and, you know journalists, they will not take no for an answer and they just probe and probe and penetrate. For whatever reason, they were able to, and you listen to the tapes they made

Sharing this story repeatedly, how do you prepare for that? Do you just walk into it, or is there a routine to ground yourself? How do you approach that you're revisiting this story once again and opening it up to everyone?

It's very much off-script. I mean, there is a script of course, and there are always minor edits though the music is pretty much the same. It's, it's kind of a show in that kind of way. I mean, I think it's really worked at best but I have to say, I've kind of learned just through doing this programming, how to find that place in myself where it's not becoming rote in a really draining way. I'm just telling the story. The strength of the stories is just so strong that I have complete trust and faith in just those stories that people will just respond to it. It's just a very authentic place and experience. A very moving experience for me to present it. And I love doing it. I love sharing it with people.

That's great. And we're very grateful. It's stories such as your families that I think are so vital yet absent in so many conversations these days.

Yeah, I mean you know, the survivors, they're not many left. And most of the ones here in Nashville, don't really remember much. A lot of them were just so young during that time. There aren't that not many left that actually remember a great deal. Some were even so young, they were born in the displaced person camp afterwards. In another 10 years, I don't know that any of them will still be alive. I feel very honored to kind of carry forth the torch, have these personal stories, be the son of survivors and be able to do this. I keep saying I feel lucky because I feel like all this just looks I obviously wrote all the music and I learned how to do the music and you know, people love the music, but I still feel like this whole thing just kind of landed in my lap.

So if you had one thing that you want people to be thinking about as they come in the door for your performance here at the Federation, what would you want them to either know ahead of time or what would you want them to be thinking about to open their mind up to your program?

I think in the Jewish community, I don't know that there's anything they need to know to prepare because this is so much a story that you know, aspects of, which people have heard before. I always think that for people not in the Jewish community, what I want to say is that this is what happened to my family. Here's the story. Just listen and take it in. I've been a professional musician, my whole life, and even

though this is a very sacred subject I still have a responsibility to make it appealing, it's got to work. It's my responsibility to give something that's really got an impact and the way the show works with just telling the story, supported by photographs, and doing a musical piece based on that story, which really opens up people and lets people take in the story in their own way, is just a very powerful experience. That's my responsibility as an artist, right? Doing this is to honor these stories and give them impact.

Given the fact that you've received this amazing gift of the violin. It sounds like music was a large part of their lives before the Holocaust. So I think it's very fitting and a great tribute to them to be using it to tell their story.

Exactly, exactly. Both my maternal grandmothers came from very high art families, both fairly well off and music. They all learned violin and piano and knew how to speak several languages, understood art, one grandmother would have been a Sculptress if she hadn't gotten married young. I'm continuing the tradition. I was the oldest grandchild of my maternal grandmother and there was never any doubt that I would play the violin. It was just understood. Music was always around. My sister became a professional cellist. My father said he didn't understand why the two of us became professional musicians. His intent was that this was to become a serious hobby, he never thought we'd take it to this extent.

It's an amazing legacy to embrace.

Oh, absolutely. That's the whole thing, I mean, this is what they gave me. Think about it, to be able to have a life in the arts. You've got to have been given an incredible foundation and opportunity. I mean, that's, you know, that's a life of privilege. You know what I mean, you're not having to dig a ditch to put food on the table. My family could afford violin lessons. It took me to concerts. It's remarkable that this was important to them.

Well, we are very grateful they did. And very grateful that you will be sharing that gift with us. All of us are looking forward to your visit on April 16th.

AJC University & Secondary School Administrators' Training on Antisemitism

***Thursday, May 11, 2023, 2 to 4:30 pm
at the Jewish Federation of Northwest Indiana
585 Progress Ave, Munster, Indiana***

**Why should your college, university, or
secondary school consider a training on antisemitism?**

“

Antisemitism in America is rising and, in recent years, becoming more violent. Universities and secondary schools are in the forefront of shaping young people's minds and tomorrow's thought leaders. University and secondary school administrators have a critical role to play in fostering a positive and inclusive campus environment and fighting all forms of hatred, including anti-Jewish hate.

”

There will be a plenary session for the whole group followed by separate interactive break out sessions for principals and superintendents, and for college/university educators.

If you know of any superintendents, principals or college presidents who would benefit from this program, please share this information or ask them to contact the Jewish Federation at 219-301-0960

Get Ready! This Summer...

JCY is going back to its roots!

JCY has long been regarded as a premier day camp in Northwest Indiana. For many years, it was one of the only summer camps in the area to offer seamlessly cohesive programming since its campers spent so many weeks together. Somewhere along the crazy COVID way, JCY drifted from that close-knit sense of community a little, but this year, we're BACK!

JCY's true roots lie in fostering close relationships among campers and counselors. It's watching your child jump out of bed in the morning, ready to go to camp to see their favorite counselor they've spent every hot summer day with. It's the friendship bracelets around your camper's wrist that they've made with their new best friends over the past 6 weeks. Or maybe it's hearing your camper talk nonstop about how they can't wait to get to JCY to see their friends—in January.

So how does JCY create this sense of community? The secret is in offering camp in either 3 or 6-week sessions. In doing this, bonds and relationships are fostered naturally. Campers spend lots of time together, so friendships become stronger. Counselors work with campers for longer periods of time, which means they truly get to know your children. And this powerful sense of community generates a thriving camp culture.

An added bonus of fewer camp sessions and more time spent together is the safety and well-being of campers. We don't have campers on and off the roster, which lends to more continuity and a stronger sense of security. Since safety has always been a priority at JCY, it's a win-win for all of us.

In short, we're more than excited to get back to the basics of either 3- or 6-week sessions this summer. Sure, you can expect tons of that good old-fashioned JCY fun—our annual Fishing Trip, Zig-E's, Lincoln Park Zoo... the list goes on! But you can also expect some new things in our lineup: the Environmental Education Center, a Game Truck, and even the Purdue Northwest Challenger Center!

We are so excited to be revisiting our roots with you this year. Are you ready for the summer?!



JOIN OUR TEAM!



NOW HIRING FOR SUMMER 2023 CAMP COUNSELOR POSITIONS

6 Weeks!

**June 19th
through
July 28th**

**M-F
7:45am to
3:15pm**

Apply Today!

www.federationonline.org/JCYcamp

Must be 18 years of age or older

585 Progress Ave. Munster, IN 46321

More Information

Camp Director Rachel Sieffert

219-688-9693

Tributes and Community Announcements

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In Memory of

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Phyllis Joseph
Allan Feferman
Philip Doran
Eva Koltun
Mary Ann Somers
Abe Ordman
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Eva Kolton
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Speedy Recovery

Renee Berkowitz
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If you would like to make a tribute or memorial donation, please visit our website at federationonline.org, or contact our office at 219-301-0960.

Tributes received after March 18th will appear in our summer Illiana Issue.

Mazel Tov to Simon Nirenberg!

Simon Nirenberg, son of Dr. Michael Nirenberg and Miriam Marcus and a junior at Munster High School, recently earned the highest possible ACT composite score of 36.

About one-quarter of 1% of students who take the ACT earn a top score. In the U.S. high school graduating class of 2022, only 3,376 out of 1.34 million students who took the ACT earned a top composite score of 36.

“Earning a top score on the ACT is a remarkable achievement,” said ACT CEO Janet Godwin. The ACT consists of tests in English, mathematics, reading and science, each scored on a scale of 1–36. A student's composite score is the average of the four test scores.

Chabad of Northwest Indiana

Rabbi Eliezer Zalmanov

FREE YOURSELF

There are times in life that we feel limited and restricted. We can't always do what we want, go where we want, or have what we want. Life is full of do's and don'ts, laws that require us to behave in certain ways and avoid various activities. Many restrictions are good, since discipline is important to be able to properly function in society. When people around us understand society's limitations, usually everyone benefits and things run smoothly.

But not all restrictions are beneficial. Often, we feel that we would function better and achieve more without the limitations placed upon us. We can have the urge to break free and not conform to the rules around us. When that happens, we must examine within ourselves whether these limitations we are trying to shrug off are indeed external, or perhaps they are internal restrictions, placed upon us by our own inhibitions and uncertainties.

Once we discover that the only factor in preventing us from growing and accomplishing great things is our own self-imposed restrictions, we can then focus on breaking free of them and going all out. This doesn't mean breaking rules, it means breaking norms and expectations. Yes, some of these norms and expectations come from beyond our own selves, but they can only affect us if we choose to allow them to. The fear of being different and not conforming starts and ends within ourselves and only you and I can decide to break free of it.

The first time this concept is mentioned in the Torah is in the context of actual bondage. The Jewish people were enslaved in Egypt, and G-d sent Moses to set them free. The Hebrew word for Egypt is "Mitzrayim" and Hebrew being a language with many layers of depth and meaning, the same letters also spell the word "meytzarim" – boundaries. The root of that word is "meytzar" which can mean constriction or narrowness. That's what boundaries do, the constrict and narrow one's space to a very limited area.

So when the Jews were finally freed from Egypt, they not only left their physical bondage behind; they also managed to break free from their spiritual restrictions and limitations, which prevented them from functioning as a full-fledged Jewish society. And once they achieved that, they passed this ability on to their descendants, Jews throughout all generations and this attitude became a permanent Jewish quality.

Sure, living Jewishly in today's contemporary society has its challenges. Keeping kosher can be difficult, not to mention costly. Avoiding forbidden activities on Shabbat seems to be impossible and extremely limiting. Making time to

pray every day, even once a day and not to mention three times a day, is really burdensome. And there are many more examples.

But these challenges can be overcome with one simple step: You decide to free yourself of them. Once you recognize that these inhibitions come from within rather than being imposed on you, you can decide to focus on breaking free. And when that happens, when you make the initial choice to not allow the world to prevent you being the best Jew you can be, everything else will begin to fall into place.

Making big changes in life doesn't happen overnight, but the initial resolve to be free can happen at any time. And that's the biggest step, and the more you continue to leave your inhibitions and restrictions behind, the freer you will be.

And even more, the happier you will be!



ב"ה

PASSOVER *Seder*

DELICIOUS. MEANINGFUL. FRIENDLY.

FIRST SEDER WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5 · 7:00 PM

SECOND SEDER CONTACT FOR DETAILS

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Congregation Beth Israel

Rabbi Cantor Mariana Gindlin

I wanted to share with you an excerpt from Midrash Tanchuma Bo, Siman 5, which explains the logic of the plagues. “All that the Egyptians planned against the Israelites, the Holy One brought upon their own persons. The Egyptians intended Israelites to draw water for them. So, “He turned their rivers into blood” (Ps. 78:44). The Egyptians intended Israelites to carry wares for them. So, He brought frogs, which chewed up those wares. The Egyptians intended Israelites to till the soil for them. So, He made the soil swarm with gnats. The Egyptians intended Israelites to carry their young children about in the manner of tutor escorts. So, He sent against the Egyptians wild beasts—lions, wolves, leopards, bears, and serpents. For example, an Egyptian with five sons would customarily put them under the care of an Israelite, who would escort the five in the street. A lion would snatch one, a wolf another, a bear another, a leopard another, and a fiery serpent still another, so that the Israelite would come back to the house of the Egyptian alone. The Egyptian would ask, “Where are my children?” and the Israelite would reply, “Sit down, and I will give you an accounting—a lion took one, a wolf another, a bear another, a leopard another, and a fiery serpent still another. “The Egyptians intended that Israelites tend their cattle. So, He sent murrain upon their cattle. The Egyptians intended that Israelites serve as bathe attendants for them. So, He brought boils upon them. The Egyptians intended to stone the Israelites. So, He brought hail upon them. The Egyptians intended that the Israelites be their vintagers. So He brought locusts, which consumed their vines. The Egyptians intended to put them in prison. So, He brought darkness upon them. The Egyptians intended to slay them. So, “the Lord smote all their first in rank” (Exod. 12:29). The Egyptians intended to drown them in water. So, He “hurled Pharaoh and his host into the Red Sea” (Ps. 135:15).”

The plagues were understood as G-d’s punishment to the Egyptians for the sadism inflicted on our people for hundreds of years. Whatever form of abuse the Egyptians actively forced upon the Hebrews, with each plague, G-d retributed the suffering... and divine justice was served! In conclusion, the Egyptians brought the plagues upon themselves.

Each Passover we are presented with the opportunity to think about contemporary plagues, and how we are bringing them upon ourselves.

Just to mention some of them,

- The lack of governmental oversight on what we eat and drink. The food we eat has chemicals which can cause all kinds of sicknesses including cancer. The water we drink has metals which contaminate us.

- Hate, white supremacy, racism, misogyny, and xenophobia, is on the rise worldwide and threatens the security and well-being of all people.

- More hate- Gun violence- So many people lost their lives to it, and unbelievably, there are people who still oppose to the necessary reform in the legislation so this doesn’t continue happening.

- More and more hate- Human trafficking- There are modern forms of slavery today. According to the international Labor Organization, approximate 50 million people were living in modern slavery in 2021. 28 million were in forced labor, and 22 million were trapped in forced marriage.

- Climate change- Hurricanes, droughts, superstorms, flooding, and wildfires killed thousand of people and destroyed people’s homes and livelihoods.

- Health crises- Mark Jerome Walters released a book called Six Modern Plagues, which explicitly connects six epidemics such as the West Nile Virus, the mad cow disease, the HIV/AIDS, the hantavirus, Lyme disease, and a new strain of salmonella, to human-induced environmental change. In fact, Walters believes that humans "are bringing these epidemics on ourselves through radical changes in the environment."

- Broken healthcare system- which is full of inequities, and makes difficult and even prevents people from accessing quality care.

These are just a few of our present-day plagues. Can you think of others? What are those who are close to your heart?

The good news is that unlike the Egyptians our hearts are not yet so hardened that we cannot reverse our ways.

May Pesach inspire us to contemplate plagues, ancient and modern, and learn our responsibility in their manifestation. May this help us realize how powerful we are, and may we choose to affect our world constructively instead. There’s no doubt WE NEED LESS HATE IN THIS WORLD— TOWARDS OURSELVES, ONE ANOTHER, AND OUR PLANET—AND MORE LOVE. Let’s embrace it!



Sinai Temple

Rabbi Suzanne Griffel

My favorite line in the Haggadah is *b'chol dor vador chayav adam lir'ot et atzmo k'ilu hu yatza miMitzrayim*, somewhat freely translated as "in every generation, we are each obligated to see ourselves as if we had gone out of Egypt." One effective way to help us identify with our ancestors' experiences of oppression and liberation is by adding new items to our Seder plates. Pesach is unique in its encouragement of questioning, and adding symbols of issues affecting us today can inspire new questions and rich discussion.

Many households already have the custom of adding an orange to the Seder plate, which represents advocacy for

full inclusion of women and LGBTQ people in Jewish life. Other modern Seder plate symbols that have been incorporated into some Haggadot include potato peelings to remember and honor those who suffered in the Shoah, a chocolate bar to represent child labor in the chocolate industry, and olives to express the need for peace between Israel and the Palestinians. Some even newer symbols have included sunflower seeds (or beets) in solidarity with Ukraine and a bottle of hand sanitizer (or any number of other creative things) to represent the changes that COVID-19 has brought about in our lives.

As you prepare for Pesach this year, what issues - whether painful, frightening, or hopeful - are uppermost in your mind? And how might you symbolize them on your Seder plate in order to bring the experience of leaving Egypt into your home?



From the Office of Sinai Temple

Shabbat Services at Sinai Temple are conducted every Friday evening at 7 pm CT, September –June, (except on the Friday after Thanksgiving) and at 6:00 pm in July and August. Rabbi Suzanne Griffel conducts services twice a month and our lay leaders fill in on the other 2 or 3 Friday nights of each month.

Shabbat morning Study class with Rabbi meets on Saturday mornings, twice a month, following the Friday night she is here to conduct our Service. It is open to anyone who is interested in learning and engage in discussion. The class meets in person at the temple, and a zoom option is available for those who prefer to join virtually. For information call the office at 219-874-4477.

For security reasons, all non-members who are newcomers, must contact the temple office at least a week prior to their intended visit on which they wish to attend a Shabbat service.

Programs coming up in April:

Our annual Jewish Mini Film Festival on April 1st from 1:00 – 4:45 pm. It is Free to all, and will be presented at the Michigan City Public Library. Featured films are: "The Levys of Monticello" and "Neighbors" Both rated PG.

1st night Community Seder will take place on Wednesday, April 5th at 5:30 pm. Cost: \$25.00 for members; \$30.00 for non-members. Reservation with payment up-front is a must by March 24. Sponsored by and payable to the Sinai Temple Sisterhood.

Check out our new website for more information at: www.sinaitemplemc.org



Temple Beth-El

Rabbi Gidon Isaacs

“In every generation one is obligated to see one’s self as one who personally went out from Egypt.” This quote from the Talmud, charging us to experience the Exodus firsthand is the driving force of the Passover Seder. The Seder is filled with rituals that help us fulfill this command by replicating the emotional toll of slavery. We eat bitter herbs to taste the bitterness of slavery, dip greens in salt water to remember the tears of sorrow.. We use those rituals as a jumping off point to then reflect on the “enslavements” that we experience in our daily lives. Noticing our modern day enslavement, the Seder reminds us draw strength from our past. Just as the Israelites were liberated long ago, we are now empowered to liberate ourselves.

The seder rituals are thousands of years old, and they have all aged well. Unfortunately, for many, the Haggadah has not. While it was created to facilitate these experiences of slavery and liberation, many find that its archaic language and unfamiliar style no longer achieves this goal of inspiration. For them, faithfully reading page after page of outdated language has become its own kind of slavery.

If the traditional Haggadah does work for your family, great! If it isn’t broke, don’t fix it. If it isn’t meeting your needs, then find a Haggadah that works for your family and friends. Even better, find your own readings, create your own rituals to help bring the story to life. Maybe your Seder participants are all adults. Invite everyone to bring a short reading or poem that inspires; discuss the ones that are most moving. Maybe your Seder is filled with small children. You can march around the table while carrying the matzah, singing “Let My People Go;” a fun way to recreate the exodus to freedom. The bottom line, you can use the Talmudic dictum of “seeing one’s self as personally going out from Egypt,” as your guiding principle. Pick things to read, do, or say, that help you meet that goal.

Passover enriches our lives by offering rituals and experiences that help us make sense of our daily struggles; that give deeper meaning to our triumphs and celebrations. Let the spirit of Passover drive your Seder celebration so that you too can experience the cathartic power of seeing yourself as if you personally went out from Egypt.

Temple Israel of Miller Beach

Rabbi Diane Tracht

I remember being quite young, visiting family for seder, watching my grandfather dramatically pick up a piece of matzah. He read from our haggadah, "*Ha Lachma Anya; this is the bread of affliction that our ancestors ate in the land of Egypt. Anyone who is hungry should come and eat, anyone who is in need should come and partake of the Pesach sacrifice. Now we are here, next year we will be in the land of Israel; this year we are slaves, next year we will be free people.*"

Even as a child, I felt a dramatic transformation with these words. I saw the matzah and I knew that this was not just a large cracker, but the bread of affliction. I was a girl on our annual pilgrimage to New York, but I was also an Israelite leaving Egypt. A few pages later, when we read that each and every person must view themselves as personally leaving Egypt, it seemed obvious since I had already fully embodied that role.

For how real the rest of the passage felt to me, the invitation, "all who are hungry, let them enter and eat," troubled me. My large extended family had planned the trip for months. This invitation was not for us, but there was no one else to hear it. We invited all who were hungry to join us, but ensured that no one would get the invitation. How could the same passage that had an enormous spiritual impact on me also offer such an empty offer of material support? This invitation seemed all the more insincere when we would invite Elijah to join us, with a full cup of wine and a wide open door, even though all that joined us was a gust of cold air.

Most scholars believe that *Ha Lachma Anyah* became a formal part of the seder in the 800s. Rav Matityah, the

leader of a major rabbinic academy around the same time, explained that the custom of opening doors and inviting those passing by had already fallen out of favor as more Jews and non-Jews lived in mixed neighborhoods. They continued to say that traditional passage, but they made arrangements for those in need further in advance. Still, it is reported that Isaac Abarbanel (1437-1508), sought to revive the practice. He was a Jewish intellectual who served the monarchs of Portugal and Spain. Those rulers, however, also supported the Spanish Inquisition. At times, Abarbanel could use his influence and wealth to protect himself and others, and at other times, he too could focus only on survival. How did his experiences of both wealth and poverty shape this practice? What did it mean to him to be loudly Jewish when it was dangerous to be Jewish? What would he advise American Jews to do today?

It is probably unlikely that you could open your door to find, at that exact moment, a hungry person wanting to join your seder. In order to make the invitation in *Ha Lachma Anyah* real, we have to be all intentional about caring for those in need well before seder night. We have to be like Rav Matityah, who planned ahead. We can be like Abarbanel who tied explicit action to the words, to remind us that our words have real power.

If you are hosting a seder, consider inviting someone that you suspect would particularly appreciate an invitation. If you would like an invitation, please remember there is no shame in asking: we will all be together in Jerusalem eventually. Or, take this year to celebrate with your community hosted by a local congregation; I know that Temple Israel would love to have you and I am sure the other congregations feel similarly. Wherever you land, may you find both joy and freedom at your table and with your community.





Temple Israel of Valparaiso

Rabbi Shoshana Feferman

It is hard to believe that the Jewish world will celebrate Passover very soon. It is one of the 3 pilgrimages to Jerusalem, which the Jewish People were required to do during the existence of the Temple, beside Sukkot and Shavuot. It is one of the most popular Jewish holiday, where families and friends get together to celebrate, whether they are religious or not. As we read the Haggada, we notice a fascinating feature - the repeated appearance of the number 4 (four) – so let us see why.

The holiday has 4 names:

Chag Ha'Aviv - the holiday of Spring, since the Exodus from Egypt happened during Spring time. This is a season of rebirth, renewal, birth of a nation, which resulted in giving the Torah to the Jewish People and all humanity.

Chag Hacherut – the holiday of Freedom – commemorating the freedom from Egyptian slavery.

Chag Hamatzot – the holiday of Matzah – commending us to eat matzah for 7 days, as a reminder of the unleavened bread that our forefathers ate before they fled from Egypt.

Chag Hapesach – The holiday which translates to: “passing over”, since during the last plague (the killing of the 1st born) the Angel of Death “passed over” the houses of the Israelites, which were marked with blood.

During the Seder we drink 4 cups of wine, a reminder of the

4 promises and expressions of Israel’s redemption from Egypt

1. I will bring you out of Egypt
2. I will deliver you from bondage
3. I will redeem you with an outstretched arm
4. I will take you to be My people.

We sing the 4 questions – Originally it was sung by the youngest in the family after the meal, following the different customs that a child observed during the meal. What do I mean? – First the child noticed the eating of the matzah, symbolizing the poor man’s bread, and then we dipped it as rich people did. We ate bitter herbs, as slaves, then we reclined as royals did – very confusing to a child. Later the reading of the Haggada was done before the meal, but tradition remained, and we still ask questions (like every good Jew).

The 4 Sons - Like the 4 species we shake together on sukkot, the 4 sons of the Haggad are present all kinds of people in a community: The wise, the wicked the naïve and the one who doesn’t even know what to ask – and only when we are united we complete and complement each other, and we are strong!!!

At the end of the evening, when we sing “Who Knows One”, we sing about **The 4 Mothers**- and give credit to our 4 matriarchs and to all the mothers and wives in Egypt and throughout history, who have kept the spirit of our people alive.



Hadassah

Laurie Serber

Matanah Boosts Hadassah's Life-Saving Healing and Research!

Matanah, our annual mail-out fundraiser, arrives soon in your mailbox. Please respond with a generous gift to support Hadassah Medical Organization (HMO). Continue reading to learn how your donation funds miracles in Israel every day.

Here's an example of HMO's miraculous life-saving treatment: The 69-year-old patient rushed to Hadassah Hospital Ein Kerem was suffering from a pulmonary embolism, a blood clot that travels to the lung, blocking blood flow and often proving fatal.

Deeming the patient too seriously ill to wait for drug therapy or risk open-heart surgery, doctors at Hadassah turned to a new system called the Flow-Triever that captures and removes blood clots. The technique, the first such system to receive approval of the US Food and Drug Administration, had never been used in Israel before.

"In the past, we could have only helped him with open-heart surgery, but we decided to use a new option," said Dr. David Planer, director of Hadassah's Catheterization Department.

Now, two weeks after the procedure, the patient is recovering well at home. The technology will be used in the future to help more patients whose conditions make open-heart surgery too risky.

Here's an example of HMO's miraculous life-saving research: Scientists at Hadassah Hospital Ein Kerem have become the first in the world to create male and female stem cells from the same person, with the exact same genetic code, a breakthrough that will allow researchers to study how gender differences affect health.

The results of the study, led by Dr. Benjamin Reubinoff, a pioneer in the field of embryonic stem cell research, recently appeared in *Stem Cell Report*, the journal of the International Society of Stem Cell Research. Dr. Reubinoff is director of the Stem Cell Research Center at Hadassah's Goldyne Savad Institute of Gene Therapy.

"This is a breakthrough in the field of gender medicine. The world of medical science today recognizes the great importance of the differences between women and men," said Dr. Reubinoff. "The National Institutes of Health in the US has changed its policy in recent years, now requiring that all medical research that it funds be conducted on both sexes equally."

He continued, "The unique stem cell system we have developed will lead to new discoveries about gender differences, can help compare the efficacy and toxicity of drugs and can contribute to the development of better medicine adapted to men and women."

In 2022, we raised almost \$3,600 for HMO through Matanah. Let's see if we can surpass that amount for 2023! Didn't get one in the mail? Contact Laurie B. Serber to donate at LBSerber@gmail.com or 703-232-6330. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Illiana Hadassah wishes the entire community a Happy Passover!

Jewish Federation Passover Hours

Wednesday, April 5

First Seder Office Closes at 3pm

Thursday, April 6 & Friday, April

Pesach - Federation CLOSED

Wednesday, April 12 & Thursday, April 13

Pesach - Federation CLOSED

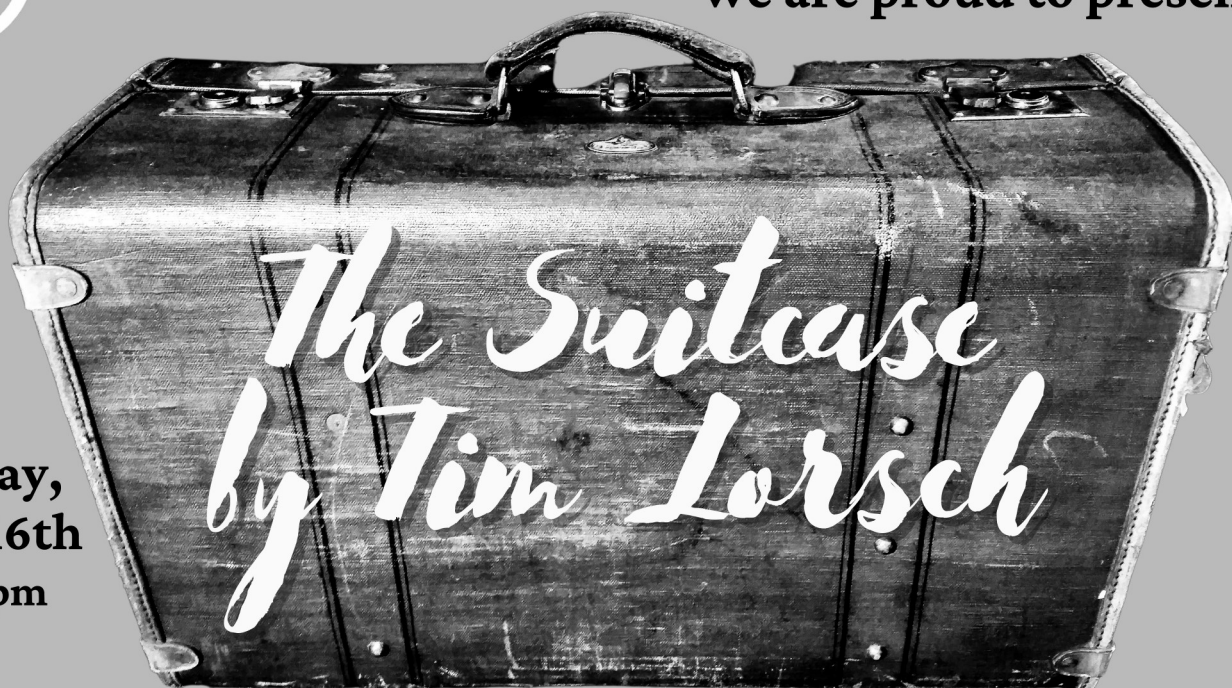




The Jewish Federation
OF NORTHWEST INDIANA

**In honor of Yom HaShoah,
we are proud to present...**

**Sunday,
April 16th
1:00pm**



**Reserve your seat today at
www.federationonline.org/upcoming-events**

The Suitcase is a one-man multimedia show that blends narrative storytelling, photos, video and music to tell of one family's experience before, during and after the Holocaust. The music is all original and performed live using looping technology to weave layered story elements through classical string instruments. The project serves to reflect on what one family endured as antisemitism grew in Germany, when nationalism, intolerance, and dehumanization were allowed to prosper. Ultimately, it is a meditation on the hope and resilience of immigrants determined to thrive and forge new lives for themselves and their children when forced to leave their homeland to survive.

