



THE ORACLE

APRIL 2024

A Biannual Newsletter of the
Oak Ridge Institute for Continued Learning



Our American Roots Part 4

From Peddlers to PhDs - The Jewish Experience in East Tennessee

- Thursday, May 16, 2024
- CNS New Hope Center, Scarborough Rd.
- Speaker: Wendy Besmann -
Author of *A Separate Circle:
Jewish Life in Knoxville*

For nearly 170 years, Jews have flourished within the broader East Tennessee community, while still maintaining the rituals and traditions that define them as a separate people. Drawing on interviews and documentary sources, Wendy Besmann offers a vivid portrait of this tiny society over the decades, showing the complex bonds of kinship, ethics, and culture that have united its many colorful characters. This is the story of itinerant peddlers, wheeler-dealers, and struggling shopkeepers; a poor Knoxville newsboy who turned the *New York Times* into a flagship newspaper; a quiet record store owner who helped make Elvis a star; the northern businessman who built a furniture industry in Morristown and the young Jewish scientists who poured into Oak Ridge for the Manhattan Project. Over time, this small circle of East Tennessee Jews evolved from a “cousins club” of merchant families into a geographically diverse and

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INTRODUCTIONS OF NEW ORICL INSTRUCTORS

DALE ROSENBERG - GETTING TO KNOW THE HEBREW BIBLE



Hi I'm Dale Rosenberg and I'm new to ORICL, Oak Ridge, and Tennessee. I'm the new Rebbitzen, which means rabbi's wife. We moved to Oak Ridge at the beginning of 2024 when my wife, Rabbi Ahuvah Loewenthal, took over as spiritual leader of the Jewish Congregation of Oak Ridge (JCOR). I'm a Jewish educator and have taught in a variety of synagogues. I also worked for several years at Keene State College in New Hampshire, teaching undergraduates and also in a program similar to ORICL. I volunteer at JCOR in a variety of capacities and expect to teach there as the adult education program comes to fruition.

This semester I'm teaching "Getting to Know the Hebrew Bible" at ORICL as well as taking ORICL classes. I think it's a wonderful program and I'm thrilled with the enthusiasm and insights of my students! I'll be teaching about Jewish mysticism in the summer.

I'm very happy to be living in Oak Ridge and am enjoying the natural and cultural opportunities this area has to offer!

MARILYN MASCARO - AROUND EAST TENNESSEE



Teaching for ORICL is satisfying for me because of the participants' willingness to learn and interact. I find the discussions to be enjoyable and enlightening as lifelong learners, myself included, engage with each other. Also, my expertise is focused on East Tennessee, and I'm gratified at the number of participants who are interested in this region. I enjoy my time spent in ORICL classrooms!

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influential population of doctors, lawyers, high-tech workers, and educators. Besmann places these stories in the larger context of American Jewish history, patterns of immigration, and the phenomenal growth of southern university towns.

As with the previous presentations, this event is open to the public, there is no charge for attendance, and light food will be served starting at 5:00 PM with the presentation beginning at 6:00 PM.

Our American Roots is made possible by a partnership between the **Oak Ridge Institute for Continued Learning (ORICL)** and the **Oak Ridge Breakfast Rotary Club (ORBRC)**.

ORICL CALENDAR

Tuesday, April 16	Registration for summer term opens
Monday, May 27	Holiday, RSCC and ORICL closed
Thursday May 30	Deadline for fall class submissions
Monday June 3	Summer classes begin
Wednesday, June 19	Holiday, RSCC and ORICL closed
Thursday, July 4	Holiday, RSCC and ORICL closed
Friday, July 26	Summer classes end
Tuesday, August 6	Registration for fall term opens
Monday, September 2	Holiday, RSCC and ORICL closed
Monday, September 9	Fall classes begin
Thursday, October 3	Deadline for winter/spring class submissions

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