

Teams Are Set as Latke-Hamantash Showdown Looms

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Victor Wishna, Special to the Chronicle

When the Ruth Fredman Cernea Great Latke Hamantash Debate ensues on December 11, at 11:30 a.m. in the White Theatre, the opposing teams will feature a distinguished rabbi, a prominent bioethicist, a prolific author, a D.C. correspondent, and not one, but two Sam Feinbergs.

“We do all of our preparations in secret,” says Team Hamantash’s **Samantha Feinberg**, an English teacher at Shawnee Mission East, who will face off against her husband, **Samuel Feinberg**, a big data solutions expert for the software services firm Amdocs and a debater for Team Latke. Samantha also happens to be an assistant coach for the 2015 National High School Debate Champions. “I don’t want Samuel to feel intimidated,” she says.

Sponsored by Congregation Ohev Sholom, the Great Debate takes place in the White Theatre at the Jewish Community Campus, on Sunday, December 11. A Vaad HaKashruth-supervised reception at 11:30 a.m. precedes the big showdown, which will begin promptly at high noon. Joining Samantha on Team Hamantash are **Josh Allmayer** and **Dr. John Lantos**, while **Loring Leifer** and **Rabbi Jeffrey Shron** round out Team Latke alongside Samuel.

And while not every debater can claim the “ability to cultivate and inspire national champions,” each team packs plenty of brainpower and a number of pedigrees.

Team Hamantash’s Allmayer is a correspondent for *The Capitol Forum* in Washington, D.C., where his work focuses on how public policy affects markets. He is also the grandnephew of Ruth Fredman Cernea, who edited *The Great Latke Hamantash Debate*, the definitive volume on the event/phenomenon that originated 70 years ago at the University of Chicago.

Dr. Lantos is the Director of the Children’s Mercy Bioethics Center - and former professor of pediatrics at the University of Chicago, where he took part in the Great Debate in 1993; his argument - on behalf of the latke, what he now dismisses as “a youthful indiscretion” - appears in essay form in Cernea’s book.

Team Latke’s Leifer has written several books - including the recently published *Angels with Angles: The Rogue Nuns behind Operation Breakthrough* - and hundreds of magazine articles and success stories for corporate clients; she began her career as a reporter for *The Kansas City Jewish Chronicle*.

Rabbi Shron has served Kehilath Israel Synagogue for more than 16 years, first as hazzan, and now as senior rabbi. He also serves as a chaplain in the Overland Park police and fire departments, and helps emergency responders cope with post-traumatic stress as a member of the Johnson County Critical Incident Stress Management team.

Arguing the merits of each Jewish holiday staple—calling upon professional expertise, comedic skills, technology, and even ridiculous props—the teams will attempt to win over the audience and a panel featuring rabbis **Beryl Padorr**, **Linda Steigman**, and **Scott White**. The very funny **Professor Chris Kelts** will return as emcee.

There is a modest cover charge of \$5 per person ages 13 and older, and all attendees are encouraged to bring canned goods to donate to the JFS Food Pantry. Reservations are encouraged on the event's Facebook page. More information is available at greatdebatekc.org.

HIGHLIGHT BOX:

The Ruth Fredman Cernea Great Latke Hamantash Debate

Sponsored by Congregation Ohev Sholom

Sunday, December 11, 2016

Refreshments* at 11:30 a.m. / Debate begins at noon

The White Theatre at the Jewish Community Campus

5801 West 115th Street / Overland Park, KS 66211

**Under supervision of the Vaad HaKashruth*