INSIDE

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Among those recognized at Thursday night's Joplin Schools Alumni Hall of Fame ceremony were Peggy Fuller (left) Scott Vorhees; Leon Kassab, whose award was accepted by Will Blanchard; and Fred and Hank Taucher, whose awards were accepted by family members.

COURTESY | AMANDA STONE

5 inducted into Joplin Schools Hall of Fame

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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Five people were inducted Thursday night into the Joplin Schools Alumni Hall of Fame during a ceremony that filled the school's Performing Arts Center banquet room with supporters.

This was the fifth year that the Joplin Schools Foundation hosted the ceremony and banquet to recognize and honor the achievements of outstanding alumni who were nominated by residents and school supporters for their accomplishments.

The Joplin Schools Alumni Hall of Fame honors distinguished graduates from Joplin High School, Parkwood High School, Lincoln School and Memorial High School.

This year's Hall of Fame class consists of:

- **THE LATE LEON KASSAB**, who owned and operated Kassab's Clothing Store in downtown Joplin working with his brother, the late Anthony Kassab.
- **RETIRED U.S. ARMY MAJOR ERNEST HENRY "HANK" TAUCHER**, a World War II refugee and U.S. Army veteran.
- **ALFRED "FRED" TAUCHER**, a World War II refugee, technology entrepreneur and U.S. Army veteran.
- **SCOTT VORHEES**, a Joplin personal injury and trial attorney.
- **PEGGY COOPER FULLER**, who was named the recipient of the Meritorious Award for commitment to public education and local community service.

In opening the event, the foundation's president, Kelli Perigo, said, "I firmly believe that communities thrive when we invest in our people. Tonight's inductees are proof of that."

Kassab, a 1942 graduate of Joplin High School, attended college and then enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps cadet program. He became an officer as a bombardier in Italy during World War II, completing 50 missions. After returning from the war, he graduated from Washington University in St. Louis and then joined his father, Ralph L. Kassab, at the family store.

During his life, he was a member

SEE **FAME**, 7A

Challenging waters

Residents meet to work on stopping Missouri American reservoir

BY JOHN HACKER
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NEOSHO, Mo. — Recent letters from Missouri American Water, which is seeking temporary easements to access properties that would be affected by a planned reservoir in Newton County, prompted many of those landowners to meet recently and talk about how to prevent the reservoir's construction and save their homes and land.

About 60 people attended the meeting Monday, Oct. 12, at the Hilldale Baptist Church to hear from scientists at the Ozark Underground Lab and attorney Bruce Copeland, who specializes in condemnation cases.

Rodney Butts, who owns two pieces of land that are projected to be inundated, said he had received no word about the reservoir from anyone, including Missouri American, for more than a year, and he had hoped the project wouldn't happen.

"This has been going on since 2018 and we kind of feel like a football just getting thrown around from one end of the field to the other," Butts said. "They don't inform us enough of what's going on and who knows if they're telling us the truth when they do? If you want to make an improvement to your property you're afraid to do it. So, it's kind of limbo you're sitting in all this time."

Mike Hunley leads a recent meeting of about 60 landowners who may be directly affected by Missouri American's plans to build an 828-acre reservoir in Newton County. GLOBE | JOHN HACKER

A reservoir has been proposed for Baynham Branch in Newton County. GLOBE FILE

Mike Hunley, who ran the landowner meeting, shared the letter he received from Missouri American Water on Oct. 7.

The letter starts off with background on the project, explaining that Southwest Missouri faces "increasing pressure on its drinking water supplies due to changes in population, periodic and predicted severe drought conditions and the reliance on declining aquifers and wells."

Missouri American has in the past described a reservoir that would provide up to 20 million gallons of drinking water a day for the company's service area.

The utility is seeking to build an 828-acre reservoir with a maximum normal pool depth of 80 feet on Baynham Branch, an intermittent tributary to Shoal

SEE **WATER**, 7A

Brothers who escaped Nazis among those enshrined in hall of fame

BY DEBBY WOODIN
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Family and friends of a pair of Jewish brothers who escaped Nazi Germany and made it safely to Joplin after World War II met here this week to see where Fred and Henry Taucher grew up and went to school.

Though the two brothers have died after living and working for years in the western United States, the stories of their association with Joplin and escape from German persecution were celebrated Thursday night at the Joplin Schools Foundation's Alumni Hall of Fame.

Moira Taucher, Henry Taucher's wife of 58 years, was given a plaque in honor of Henry, who graduated from Joplin High School.

"He was a wonderful guy, the best of the best, and I miss him so much," Moira told the Globe on Thursday afternoon as she and others visited the Jewish synagogue that Henry Taucher had attended when he lived here.

Walter Taucher, Fred Taucher's son, also visited and found his father's nameplate on a memorial plaque in the synagogue. He accepted the hall of fame honor for his father.

Fred Taucher was the younger of the brothers, Walter Taucher said.

"They got sent over here to live with Alfred and Felix," who were cousins who lived at 204 S. Jackson Ave. One of the cousins worked at Miller Manufacturing then and the other worked at Newman's Department Store where City Hall is now located.

The boys did not know the two older cousins when a placement organization arranged for them to come here and live with Alfred and Felix Taucher. The organization also found another relative, a woman, who immigrated from Palestine to come to Joplin to help take care of the boys.

Joplin friends Claudine Kloss and Clara West lived within blocks of the boys.

They said that growing up they didn't know about the ordeal of Fred and Henry Taucher escaping Germany. A Jewish relief organization arranged for the boys to get passage on a ship to resettle in the United States.

The Taucher brothers, after going to Joplin High School, did return to Joplin a few years ago for a class reunion.

"We were all so surprised that we knew them all those years and they never said a word about going through all that to us," Claudine

SEE **ESCAPE**, 2A

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