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SGPV JEWISH LIFE

January 2022
Tevet/ Shevat 5782

EVERY PERSON HAS A NAME

4th Annual Holocaust Name
Reading Vigil to Honor
Thousands Lost in Nazi Massacre

Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys

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OF MIKVAH**
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**THE YEAR
IN REVIEW**
The Top
Jewish Pop
Culture Stories
from 2021

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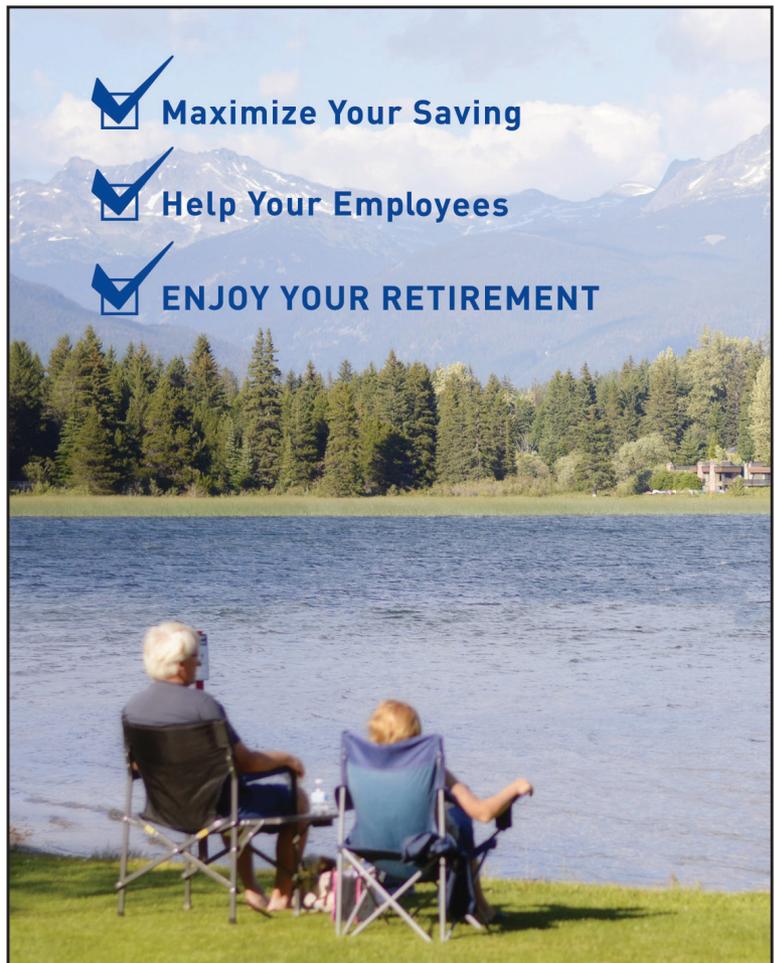
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OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

A chance to be the most responsive to change

To say that 2022 was a challenging year would be one of the biggest understatements I have ever made.

The challenges, ups and downs, and starts and stops that took place were enough to drive many of us a bit batty.

And yet we got through it and find ourselves in 2022. A new year, full of opportunities as well as uncertainty and potential challenges that may once again find their way into our daily lives.

Doesn't the old adage go something like, "Challenges are only opportunities in disguise"? Or is it, "Every challenge is a new opportunity"? Whatever the actual phrasing is, when challenges arise, we need to figure out the best way to confront and get past them.

I bring this up because the Jewish community has been confronted by many challenges over the course of thousands of years. Today, we find ourselves at another crossroads... confronted by many challenges converging and affecting the Jewish community all at one time.

While some of these challenges presented themselves in the past differently than they do now, in most cases we were able to get past them or adapt to the new reality they brought. And yet, some of them we have never experienced before.

At the Jewish Federation's 27th Annual Meeting, on Sunday, January 9, I am going to have the distinct honor to talk with Dr. Steven Windmueller, one of today's preeminent scholars, thought leader and leading expert on this very subject.

The two of us will be discussing the future of the Jewish community. In preparation for the meeting, Dr. Windmueller put together a list he has called The Ten Great Challenges facing American Jewry. Any one of these challenges would be important and take a considerable amount of thought and careful guidance to manage. And yet, we are confronted with many at the same time.



Here is his list:

1. Virtual Judaism and the Rise of National (International) Synagogues
2. Privatized Judaism and the Celebration of Choice: The Changing Character of American Judaism
3. Downsizing and Closures: End of the Legacy Age
4. Generational Change and Cultural Transitions: What this may mean for American Jewry
5. Diaspora-Israel Recalculation: After Bibi, what can we expect
6. Anti-Semitism and the Political Divide: A Game Changer
7. Jewish Political Behavior: The Rise of the Independent Voter and is this the end of the Jewish encounter with America? The impact of the Alt Right and the Rise of Progressive Democrats
8. Economic Prowess and the Nature of Work: The Changing Economy and the American Workforce
9. Jews and Urban America: The Great Move--Jews are on the move, but why and what does it all mean?
10. Peoplehood, Communalism vs. Individualism: What do all of these concepts mean today?

While some of these challenges are specific to the Jewish community, others are affecting other

religions as well, as was illustrated in the latest Pew Research Center's most recent survey on religion as a whole.

And what I think is important to understand is that in many cases, COVID didn't bring about the challenges; they have been festering below the surface for some time.

No matter where or why these challenges have arisen, they need to be further discussed, analyzed and addressed by the organized Jewish community. And remember, some of these challenges can be a great opportunity for the Jewish community to better understand and address the needs of today's American Jews.

It will require Jewish organizations to evolve quicker and operate more efficiently. As Charles Darwin once famously stated, "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change."

☆



JASON MOSS IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE GREATER SAN GABRIEL AND POMONA VALLEYS.

“Israel is the one country in the world where Jewishness is not tied to Jewish religious ritual or tradition.”

JEWISH IDENTITY

Natalie Merchant, Mordecai Kaplan, and the “Real Jewish”

BY TEDDY WEINBERGER

The other day, I happened upon an NPR Tiny Desk concert from 2016 featuring the wonderful Natalie Merchant (of *10,000 Maniacs* fame and since then a successful solo artist). Merchant was accompanied by three musicians: an accordionist, a bassist, and a guitarist. It was an excellent set, and toward its end, Merchant invited the audience to a sing-along. She chose a Protestant hymn, but then she seemed to feel that she needed to assure her audience that it was ecumenically friendly. As proof of this, she noted that neither she nor any of the three musicians was Protestant (she said of herself, “I’m Catholic, so that just shows my open-mindedness”). When she turned to the accordionist, she said: “Uri’s Jewish, the real Jewish, like Israeli Jewish.”

I immediately wondered what Uri thought of being categorized in this manner. After all, Israeli secular Jews are not known for their strong Jewish identity (Jewishness is implied in Israel and if you are not religious you may identify more as Israeli than Jewish). I was happy to discover that unlike many successful Israeli musicians who work abroad, Uri Sharlin’s home remains in Israel. He lives in Rehovot where, according to his Facebook page, he is a “musician and music teacher.” I whatsapped Uri to see if he wanted to comment on Merchant’s statement (I prefaced my query by writing: “this is surely one of the strangest notes that you ever received”). Uri wrote back in a friendly manner (“Nice to meet you; yes, one of the strangest”), but he said: “this sounds like a question for Natalie and not for me. By the way, I’m not sure that there is a need to delve too deeply precisely into my Jewish identity.”

Despite Uri’s reticence, and despite the fact that Merchant clearly made her comment in a humorous spirit, I believe that there is deep significance to her words. Merchant’s remark was in essence a classic statement of Reconstructionist



thought, as outlined by Mordecai Kaplan in his magnum opus *Judaism As A Civilization* (1934). Kaplan maintained that Judaism is not just a religion but includes all aspects of the Jewish people’s culture. While the Jewish religion is a crucial part of this culture, other elements include Jewish food, music, literature, sports, languages, and art. This is why Kaplan was an ardent Zionist and why he chose to live out the last years of his very long life in Israel (he died in 1983 at the age of 102): Israel is the only place in the world where Judaism is not just the Jewish religion but is the aggregate of the cultural endeavors of the Jewish people.

Natalie Merchant, though unintentionally, validated and proved the wisdom of Mordecai Kaplan. Uri Sharlin is “the real Jewish” because Judaism is not just a religion—and only in Israel is Judaism not relegated and pigeonholed into a narrow religious culture. I think it is incredible that Natalie Merchant identified Uri Sharlin as “the real Jewish” solely on the basis of his being Israeli.

Ironically, perhaps Uri has a narrow view of Judaism and so he is not comfortable speaking about his Jewishness.

But Merchant did not connect Uri’s Jewishness to anything having to do with the Jewish religion; she connected it to Uri’s being “Israeli Jewish” i.e., a citizen of the one country in the world where Jewishness is not tied to Jewish religious ritual or tradition. This is why Natalie could make her statement so assuredly without necessarily ascertaining whether or not Uri observed Shabbat, kept kosher, or fasted on Yom Kippur. It was enough for her to know that Uri is Israeli in order to speak of him as “the real Jewish.” I’d like to imagine that somewhere, at the end of that Tiny Desk concert <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOdsAE8Mq7I>, Mordecai Kaplan was smiling and singing along. ✨

TEDDY WEINBERGER IS DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT FOR A CONSULTING COMPANY CALLED MEANINGFUL. HE MADE ALIYAH WITH HIS FAMILY IN 1997 FROM MIAMI, WHERE HE WAS AN ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES. TEDDY AND HIS WIFE, SARAH JANE ROSS, HAVE FIVE CHILDREN.

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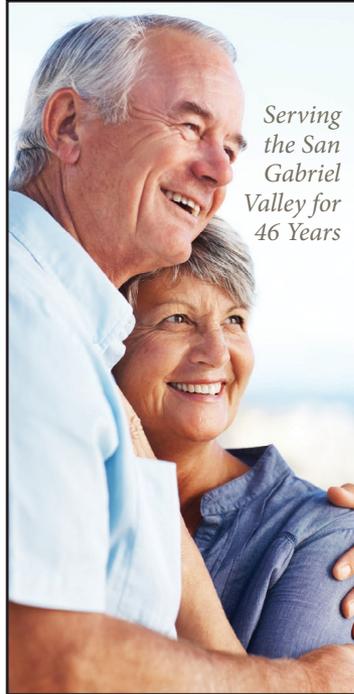


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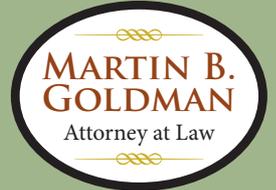
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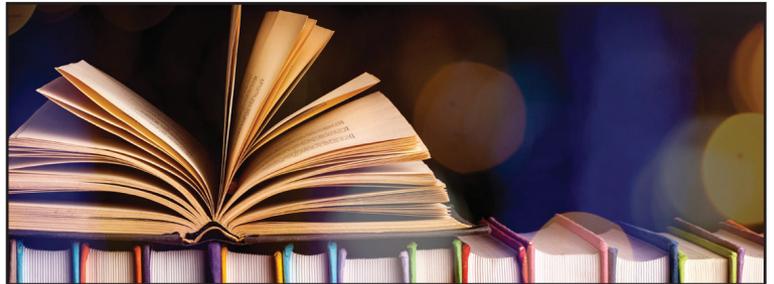
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“If this is what a “cut above” looked like, Mom would continue to debase herself by exhibiting grace, respecting others and being kind.”

UNINVITED

When Being Left Out is a Badge of Honor

BY ANDREA SIMANTOV

Covid has taught that attempting to manipulate outcomes is futile. A recent conversation with my 92-year-old mother caused me to consider the weight of judgment. Her upscale senior residence boasts a lovely wood paneled, carpeted dining room. She'd recently been invited to join a table of dining regulars, consisting of six women. Mom felt flattered. Inclusion feels so welcoming and, as in high school, there is popularity in numbers. She had previously bemoaned not having a regular dining partner and wasn't content. Finally, she'd been chosen. Her new table mates were accomplished, well-read and, as Mom initially stated, "a cut above". Elitist or not, Mommy had been selected by the In Crowd.

A few days after joining the table, our nightly phone conversation felt unnaturally subdued. Was something wrong? Some health issue she wasn't ready to share or, perhaps, was she just fatigued after an Intro to *Wheelchair KickBoxing* class?

I probed. 'What is it, Mom? What's bothering you?'

"I'm ashamed to say it. But these women complain constantly. The lamb chops are too fatty. The pie crust is impossible to cut. Everything is either too cold or too hot. They make nasty comments about everything and everyone and the food is getting stuck in my throat. I keep my mouth shut but I'm so unhappy. And if I change tables, I'll become the next object of their ridicule. I made a mistake. Mealtime is a torture." How could I help from 6,000 miles away in Jerusalem? I offered benign remarks but ached to scold those ladies, give a heavy-duty lecture about *lashon hora* (Evil Speech), and protect my 'child,' my mother. But I couldn't.

The acidic meal-times were otherwise uneventful until one evening, a woman at mom's table noticed another two residents at a table for two that had



fallen asleep at supper. The dozing-duo rested their respective heads against the wall and were snoring. On cue, mom's table mates alerted the entire dining hall with finger-pointing and unbridled laughter. Their cheeks were wet with tears and one elbowed Mom to *yuk-yuk* along with them. But she'd had enough. Despite landing at a table of geezer Mean Girls, this wasn't her. If this is what a "cut above" looked like, Mom would continue to debase herself by exhibiting grace, respecting others and being kind.

Muttering that she didn't see what was so funny and that she'd eaten enough, she slowly lifted herself from the chair and, decisively grasping the handles of her walker, left the dining room. And her table mates. And the cruelty. If this was 'inclusion,' she wanted out.

Which brings me to the New Year. Resolutions are only useful if others benefit as well because we exist as part of a tapestry called Mankind. What if,

this January, we added something to the standard list of resolutions (giving more charity, getting in shape, being more devoted to a spouse) to include sitting with our discomforts and/or disappointments, refraining from complaining and waiting for gratitude to fill the vacuums? Too hard? What if we attempt to try it for an hour a day? I'd venture to guess that the cosmic repercussions of said endeavor would be earth trembling.

When I spoke with Mom last night, she reported that the lamb chops were tender, the pie crust delicious and that her new table mates were dull and lovely. She wished me a Happy New Year. I answered, 'You, too. I'm proud to be your daughter.' ☆

NEW YORK NATIVE **ANDREA SIMANTOV** HAS LIVED IN JERUSALEM SINCE 1995. SHE WRITES FOR SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS, APPEARS REGULARLY ON ISRAEL NATIONAL RADIO AND OWNS AN IMAGE CONSULTING FIRM FOR WOMEN.

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THE MITZVAH OF MIKVAH

New facility is first of its kind in San Gabriel Valley

BY CHANI HANOCA

Frida Kiguelman, a married mother of two who lives in Pasadena, used to have to trek to Los Angeles to use a mikvah, a ritual pool in which married Jewish women immerse themselves seven days after their menstrual cycles.

It was, as she describes it, “a three-hour process. I’d have to drive 40 minutes to the mikvah, 40 minutes back. It was pretty late by the time I got home.”

But now, with the grand opening of Chabad of Pasadena’s Mikvah Bina & Leah, the first mikvah in the San Gabriel Valley, Kiguelman can fulfill the mitzvah of *taharat hamishpacha*, or family purity, by simply driving—or even walking—down the street.

“It’s convenient now,” says Kiguelman. “I’m excited to

be going to the mikvah. It’s peaceful and at the same time exciting. The ambiance at the Pasadena mikvah makes the whole process so royal. It’s like a private spa experience every month.”

Named after Leah Raichik and Bina Hanoka, beloved mothers (z”l) of Chabad of Pasadena’s Rabbi Chaim Hanoka and Rebbitzin Chani Hanoka, the mikvah has been a “dream in the making for the past 15 years.”

“Things got underway in earnest about three years ago,” says Rabbi Hanoka, who estimates the cost of building the mikvah at around \$1.3 million. “But we started raising money about 10 years ago. It took a while. We had members of our community that participated and then various people from outside the community as well. It took a lot of hard work and dedication, and eventually we made it a reality.”

Chani Hanoka, who oversees the appointments for mikvah visits, notes that “our mikvah enables each woman to discover the spiritual mystery in this life-fulfilling mitzvah in a tranquil and supportive setting. While immersing in the mikvah, a woman is enveloped by its living waters and becomes another link in the chain of generations of women who have kept this beautiful mitzvah.”

Danielle, who recently used the mikvah as a bride before her wedding, “What a beautiful and peaceful mikvah experience. I felt so comfortable. My mom came with me and it was a special moment for her as well.”

“It’s gorgeous,” adds Danielle. “The bathrooms have Jacuzzis in them. All the fixtures and tile are so modern



and beautiful.”

But more than its state-of-the-art spa-like atmosphere, Chani stresses the theological and cultural importance of the mikvah as a link that has bound the Jewish community together for more than 2,000 years.

“The mikvah is the cornerstone of the Jewish community,” she says. “It is what helps sustain Jewish life, Jewish purity, and it has been that way throughout the ages for thousands of years. In fact, building a mikvah trumps the importance of building a shul in a community. Technically speaking, it has to come first.”

There are several mikvaot in Los Angeles—including Orthodox ones on La Brea Avenue and Pico Boulevard—but given their distance from Pasadena, as Rabbi Hanoka notes, “it was a challenge even for those fully committed to this special mitzvah.”

“It was definitely a new concept for our community,” he says. “It was not something with which a lot of people were intimately familiar. They may have known about it to some degree, most likely in regards to immersing in a mikvah when undergoing conversion to Judaism, but it’s far more than that.”

“There’s been an extensive need for a mikvah in the area, and it’s a growing one,” he says.

Since its August opening, between 20-30 women from the San Gabriel Valley Jewish community have



immersed in the mikvah monthly, and it’s not just women one might consider as frum, or religious.

“There are women that have never gone and this is their first time because the mikvah, given it is now so close, has piqued their interest,” Chani says. “They are interested in knowing more about this unique mitzvah. I’ve been told by a number of people that it’s the nicest mikvah they’ve ever gone to. It looks like a spa and creates that spa-like experience for the community.”

Mikvah Bina & Leah is the only mikvah between Pasadena and Palm Springs along the 210 freeway, and it has already attracted interest and visitors from communities outside the San Gabriel Valley.

Building a mikvah during a global pandemic was not an easy feat.

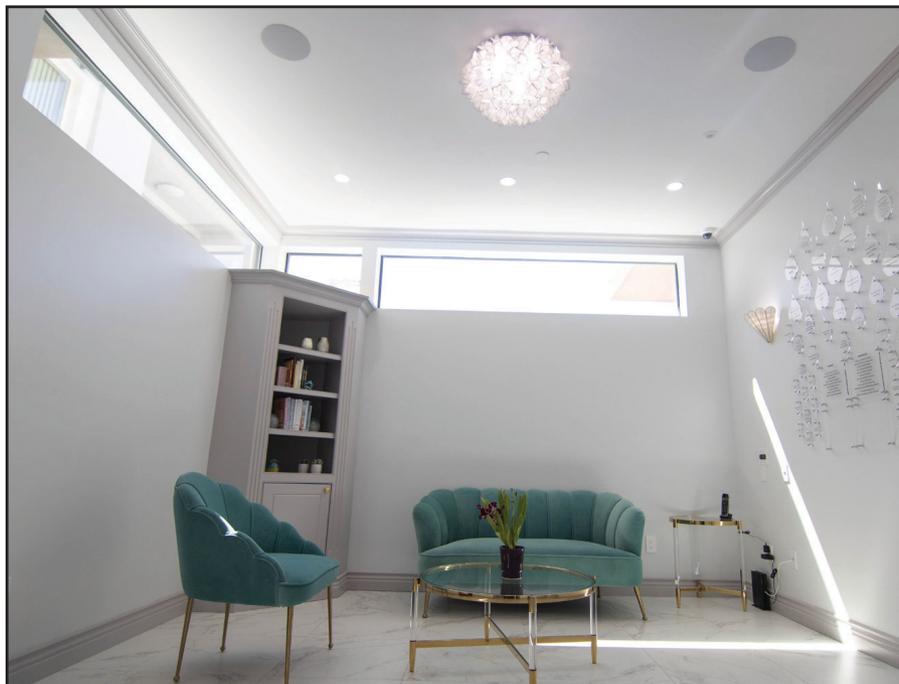
Rabbi Hanoka gives credit to the members of the Pasadena and Los Angeles communities who generously stepped in and helped, including Nicholas G. Rodriguez, Assistant City Manager, and Yoav Debasco, owner of YD Construction, who donated the company’s construction services free of charge.

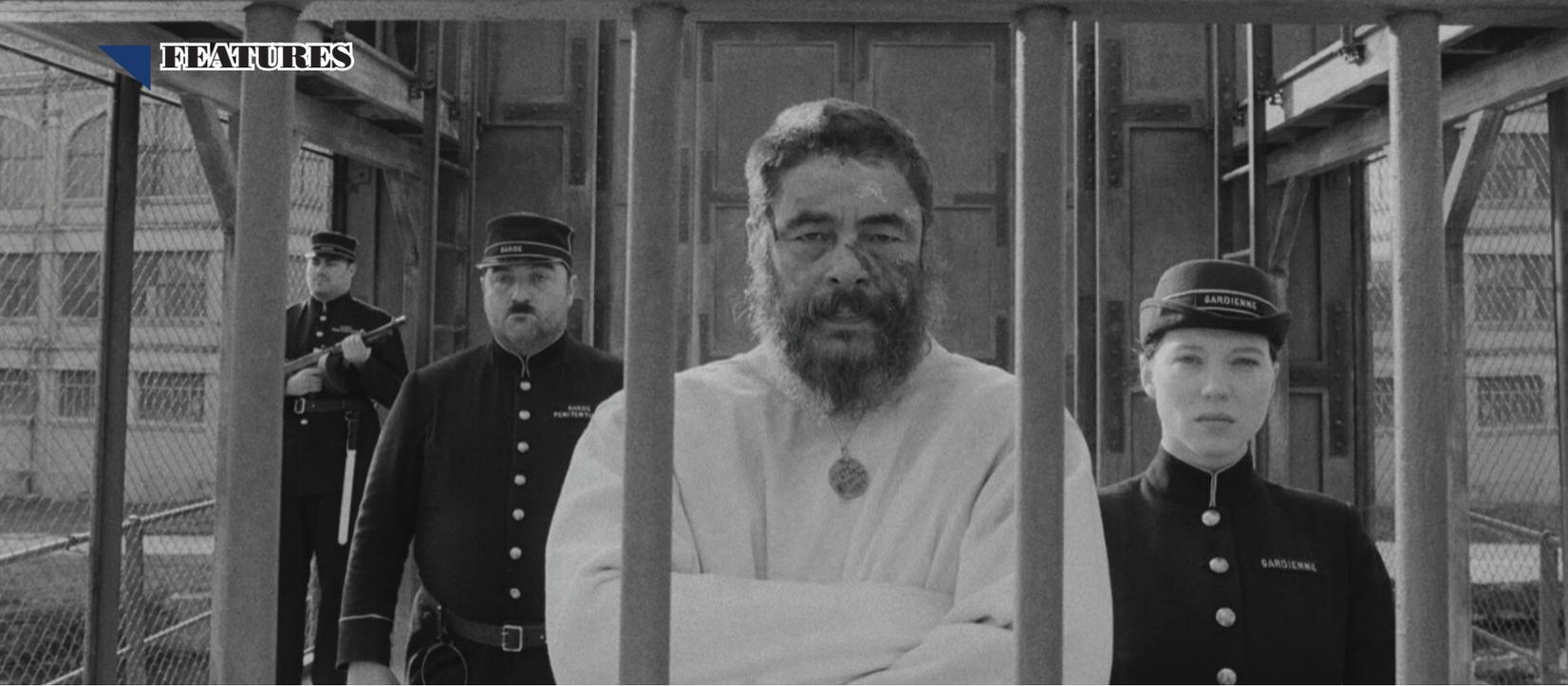
“I literally lived that project for two years,” says Rabbi Hanoka. “I spent more time in that mikvah than I did in my own house. I was living it, breathing it.”

“During COVID, it was far more challenging to get workers, to get material, there were so many people laid off. We worked furiously to make it happen. And we completed it against the odds. Seeing it come to life, watching it happen was a very moving experience.”

For more information, contact Chani Hanoka at mikvah@chabadpasadena.com. ✨

CHANI HANOKA IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JLIFE MAGAZINE.





Benicio del Toro, center, as painter Moses Rosenthaler, and Léa Seydoux, right, as the prison guard Simone in "The French Dispatch."
(Searchlight Pictures)

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The top Jewish pop culture stories from 2021

BY ANDREW LAPIN, JTA

Jewish pop-culture had quite the "Unorthodox" year.

A new reality-TV sensation, a raunchy indie-film spin on shivas and a rare glimpse into Turkey's Jewish community made a big splash in 2021, while elsewhere, old favorites ("Curb Your Enthusiasm," "Jeopardy!," "West Side Story") made big impacts in the Jewish world. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency covered every twist and turn that kept us entertained and enlightened during this difficult year.

Below, you can find the greatest hits of 2021's Jewish pop-culture coverage.

Movies

A bold new voice in Jewish filmmaking emerged this spring: Emma Seligman's independent dark comedy "Shiva Baby" follows a drifting college student who attends a shiva along with her clueless family, disapproving strangers, bitter ex-girlfriend ... and sugar daddy. The future cult hit has been nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for best microbudget feature of the year, and successfully launched the career of its 26-year-old writer-director. Our sister site Hey Alma interviewed Seligman about the film last year. She was also one of The New York Jewish Week's 36 Under 36 for 2021.

"Minyan," directed by Eric Steel, was another fresh take on a Jewish story: a queer coming-of-age tale set among the Soviet Jewish refugee communities of 1980s Brighton Beach. Starring Broadway star Samuel H. Levine, it was—in my estimation—the best Jewish movie of the year.

Three major Oscar contenders this year have Jewish ties: Steven Spielberg and Tony Kushner's remake of

"West Side Story" once again poses the question of who should make the musical; "Licorice Pizza" stars Jewish rock musician Alana Haim as a young Jewish aspiring actress in the 1970s; and "The Tragedy of Macbeth" marks the solo directing debut for Joel Coen, one-half of the greatest Jewish filmmaking duo of the modern era.

Wes Anderson's "The French Dispatch," a celebration of midcentury print journalism and Francophilia rendered in the filmmaker's distinctive style, included its fair share of nods to real-life Jewish intellectuals—and an explicitly Jewish character.

"The Vigil" is a horror movie set in the Orthodox community, focusing on the mazzik, a Biblical demon. Director Keith Thomas spoke to JTA about how the film's Talmudic terrors came together.

A filmed version of the smash-hit Broadway musical "Come From Away," a September 11 story created by Jews and featuring Jewish themes, premiered on Apple TV+ for the 20-year-anniversary of the attacks.

A real-life Jewish gangster gets his due—and is played by Harvey Keitel—in "Lansky."

The top prizewinner at this year's Berlin Film Festival was an angry satire about sex tapes, COVID, history education and antisemitism. "Bad Luck Banging Or Loony Porn" depicts Romanian citizens angry over a teacher's private transgressions, but blind to their own ignorance about how their country has historically treated Jews.

Israeli film imports to the U.S. shone brightly this year, with the disability family dramas "Asia" and "Here We Are"; melancholy comedy "Golden Voices"; and intergenerational, cross-continental LGBT+ drama "Sublet."

As Israel and Gaza burned this summer and national

dialogue around the conflict turned ugly, Israeli filmmaker Ra'anana Alexandrowicz's documentary "The Viewing Booth" explored how one American Jew's preconceived views about the conflict impacted her interpretation of video footage from the region.

In the world of Holocaust cinema, the documentary "Final Account" interviewed elderly former Nazis about their memories of the Third Reich; the documentary "Love It Was Not" depicted the unsettling relationship between a Jewish prisoner of Auschwitz and her SS guard; the Slovakian drama "The Auschwitz Report" told the story of two camp escapees who tried to warn the world about the horrors inside; documentary "The Meaning Of Hitler" tried to break down fascism's appeal in the modern age; and the documentary "Speer Goes To Hollywood" explored the lifelong denialism of Hitler's architect (though its methods have been criticized).

The summer musical "In The Heights" told the stories of Dominican residents of a historically Jewish New York neighborhood.

TV

The biggest Jewish TV phenomenon of the year was the Netflix reality series "My Unorthodox Life," following the controversial exploits of "ex-Orthodox" fashion designer Julia Haart and her family; Haart pushed back against her critics in our interview with her. The show spawned a new tabloid feeding frenzy; one of Haart's daughters split from her husband, starting an internet obsession.

The year was also dominated by "Jeopardy!" hosting drama, with Jewish actress/presenter Mayim Bialik eventually being crowned co-host of the long-running quiz show through 2022... after a former executive producer's attempts to finagle the job for himself blew up in his face. (Among would-be host Mike Richards' myriad troubles: he made antisemitic remarks on a podcast.)

The HBO phenomenon "Succession" introduced a Jewish character (played by Adrian Brody) who causes business trouble for the beleaguered Roy family. The mansion Brody's character lives in is actually owned by a Jewish billionaire.

A smash-hit podcast about a therapist's obsession with his troubled client inspired the Apple TV+ miniseries "The Shrink Next Door," starring Paul Rudd and Will Ferrell. The show has deep New York Jewish roots; a Brooklyn politician even had something to say about sharing a name with the real-life patient.

"The Club," a surprise-hit Turkish drama series from Netflix, explores Istanbul's Sephardic Jewish community of the 1950s, and features a surprisingly large amount of spoken Ladino. Read our profile of the show.

The very Jewy "Curb Your Enthusiasm" returned to HBO for its 11th (and, some might say, Jewiest) season of Larry David's legendary complaints. Plotlines this season included Larry fending off a Klansman with a shofar, and Jon Hamm learning Yiddish so he could deliver a fake eulogy for Albert Brooks. Read our interview with series co-star Susie Essman and our review of an HBO documentary about departed cast member Bob Einstein.

"Curb" co-star Jeff Garlin got into some hot water at his long-running ABC sitcom "The Goldbergs," about a Jewish family in the 1980s; he's exiting the show midway through its ninth season following an investigation into allegations of on-set misconduct.



Fashion mogul Julia Haart, top center, and her children are featured in the Netflix reality series "My Unorthodox Life." (Netflix)

"Shtisel," the slow-burn drama about Israeli haredi Orthodox Jews, released a long-awaited third season, to familiar acclaim. And it was announced that respected director Kenneth Lonergan will helm an American remake of the series.

The second season of "Dave," the heady sitcom from Jewish rapper Lil Dicky (Dave Burd), aired on FX and established its creator as a new force in TV comedy. It contained plenty of Jewish jokes, and an entire bar mitzvah episode.

Israeli TV showrunner Hagai Levi resurrected the Ingmar Bergman classic "Scenes From a Marriage" for an HBO miniseries starring Oscar Isaac and Jessica Chastain, in which Judaism played a significant part of the story. Read our profile of Levi.

"Foundation," a big-budget science-fiction series on Apple TV+, sparked renewed interest in author Isaac Asimov—whose relationship to Judaism was complicated.

The hosts of Showtime's "Desus & Mero" visited a New York synagogue and, with the help of Jewish actor Eric Andre and a rabbi, had a bar mitzvah of sorts.

Netflix's academia satire "The Chair" featured a professor who causes controversy by jokingly performing a Nazi salute in class—an incident possibly based on real life.

The PBS genealogy show "Finding Your Roots" welcomed Mandy Patinkin, and revealed that he had lost family in the Holocaust.

New Jewish faces abounded on small-screen comedies. Celebrated alt-comedian Sarah Sherman joined the cast of "Saturday Night Live"; HBO's "Hacks," based loosely on the career of Jewish comedian Joan Rivers, features a star-making turn from Hannah Einbender; "Ted Lasso" features the work of Haitian Canadian Jew Moe Jeudy-Lamour and Emmy winner Brett Goldstein; and "Reservation Dogs," a sitcom set on a Native American reservation, features a breakout performance by Jewish Indigenous actress Sarah Podemski.

In the world of food, Padma Lakshmi explored the Jewish culinary traditions of the Lower East Side in her Hulu series "Taste the Nation," while the latest season of "The Great British Baking Show" featured fan-favorite contestant Jürgen, whose recipes are frequently inspired

by his Jewish wife.

“American Ninja Warrior” featured a contestant, Liba Yoffe, who is an Orthodox mom.

And on “South Park,” proud antisemite Eric Cartman did the unthinkable—he converted to Judaism.

Books

Novelist Dara Horn’s essay collection, “People Love Dead Jews,” probed the ways in which murdered Jews have been fetishized in global culture – and provoked months of discussion and debate. Watch my interview with Horn conducted for the 2021 Detroit Jewish Book Fair.

Mark Oppenheimer delved into “Squirrel Hill,” the Pittsburgh Jewish community’s efforts to heal in the aftermath of the Tree of Life synagogue shooting, for his acclaimed nonfiction book; read the Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle’s interview with the author.

Whistle, Gotham City’s newest superhero, is Jewish, and her secret identity is Willow Zimmerman – courtesy of her creator, secular Jewish comic-book artist E. Lockhart. Read our feature on the significance of Whistle’s debut in the Jewish superhero canon.

Satirical Jewish novelist Joshua Cohen took a big swing at Israel’s most powerful family with “The Netanyahus,” a fictionalized account of Bibi’s father’s attempts to break into American academia. Read Alma’s interview with Cohen.

The beloved Jewish children’s-book series “All-of-a-Kind Family” and its author, Sydney Taylor, are lovingly profiled in the biography “From Sarah to Sydney: The Woman Behind ‘All-of-a-Kind Family,’” by Jane Cummins and Alexandra Dunietz. Read the NYJW’s feature on the woman and her pioneering books.

“Morningside Heights,” Joshua Henkin’s very Jewish New York novel, chronicles a marriage challenged by Alzheimer’s and the cultural divide between Orthodox and secular Jews. Read the New York Jewish Week’s interview with Henkin.

“Plunder,” a memoir by Menachem Kaiser, chronicles his efforts to reclaim his grandfather’s property in pre-war Poland – and his run-ins with Nazi-obsessed treasure-hunters along the way.



From left: Comedian Eric Andre, Desus Nice and The Kid Mero are seen in The Village Temple in New York City during an episode of “Desus & Mero.” (Screenshot from YouTube)



Ezra Furman performs at the O2 Forum Kentish Town in London. (Robin Little/Redferns/Getty Images)

Music

Ezra Furman, acclaimed trans Jewish punk rocker, entered rabbinical school this year. Read our profile of her Jewish journey.

Black and Jewish rapper Doja Cat became one of the world’s most-streamed artists with the release of her Grammy-nominated third album, “Planet Her.”

In a first, an Ethiopian-Israeli represented Israel at the Eurovision international pop song contest. Eden Alene, who became a sensation in her home country for winning the Israeli version of “The X-Factor,” didn’t win — but she became a symbol of representation, and her song had lyrics in four different languages.

Jack Antonoff, the Jewish-day-school-grad-turned-in-demand-pop-producer, won a Grammy for his work with Taylor Swift on her acclaimed “Folklore” album, and was nominated in the fall for more, for subsequent work with Swift.

Hanukkah brought us more than eight days’ worth of musical joy: Jewish a cappella group Six13 produced a “West Side Story” inspired Hanukkah parody; Jewish pop rock group Haimupdated Adam Sandler’s iconic “Chanukah Song” with some new names and fun facts; the song also got remixed by Jewish hip-hop stars Nissim Black and Kosha Dillz; the Foo Fighters’ non-Jewish frontman Dave Grohl, along with his Jewish producer friend Greg Kurstin, brought back their “Hanukkah Sessions” series of fun cover songs by Jewish artists; and previously disbanded pop group Cobra Starship, led by Jewish frontman Gabe Saporta, returned for the holiday with a bop titled “Party With Jews.”

Podcasts

A prominent fashion podcaster apologized to the Jewish community after saying “some really crass and reductive things about Jewish people.”

And finally (horn-tooting alert), I made “Radioactive,” a podcast about Father Coughlin, the antisemitic Detroit radio preacher from the 1930s whose rise anticipated decades of America’s hate-fueled media landscape. ✨

ANDREW LAPIN IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JTA AND JLIFE MAGAZINE.

“I LOVE NY”

New exhibit honors Milton Glaser, the Jewish design icon who invented the logo

BY JULIA GERGELY, JTA

Most New Yorkers recognize the “I Love New York” logo, which can be found on everything from coffee mugs to snow globes to boxer briefs. Fewer, however, might recognize the man behind the logo, Milton Glaser. One of the most prolific graphic designers of the 20th century, his designs helped shape the experience of New York for the last half century.

A new exhibit at the School of Visual Arts’ Gramercy Gallery, “SVA Loves Milton: The Legacy of Milton Glaser,” attempts to capture the process and the legacy of the designer, who was a professor at the school from 1960 until 2017.

The exhibit invites visitors to explore just how much graphic design—and Glaser’s designs, in particular—shapes our every day. Among the displays from Glaser’s impressive body of work are album covers, a “Mad Men” poster, New York Magazine covers (Glaser co-founded the magazine in 1968), the Brooklyn Brewery logo, the DC Comics logo, the Celebrate Israel Parade logo and much more.

“There’s some stuff that people have interacted with continually over the course of their lives—you know, a million time—but maybe didn’t even realize it was Milton Glaser’s work,” said Beth Kleber, head of SVA’s Milton Glaser Archives, which opened in 2003.

An introduction panel into the exhibit explains Glaser’s pedagogy, “Art for Life”—his belief in building a common experience in art diffused throughout the city. A lifetime New Yorker, Glaser was born in the Bronx in 1929. He attended the High School of Music and Art (what is now LaGuardia High School of Music and Performing Arts) and graduated from Cooper Union College in 1951. He co-founded the influential Push Pin Studios in 1954, and throughout his career, Glaser showed his love for the city through his designs.

“It’s really profound,” Kleber said as she considered how much of his work shaped New York and its culture over the last half-century. “New York City was so important to him. It gave him excitement, all the intellectual and cultural stimulation you get from living here. It’s the basis for a lot of his work.”

Glaser was Jewish, although he didn’t discuss it often. Still, many of his design ideas came from his Jewish



In a tribute to his life and work, the School of Visual Arts’ Gramercy Gallery puts Milton Glaser’s love for New York on display, complete with a wall covered in the iconic logo which he famously designed in the back of a taxi cab in 1976. (Julia Gergely)

background, and the idea that he never felt “at home in any culture,” as he said in a 2009 interview with Hadassah Magazine.

A recreation of Glaser’s desk takes up a large portion of one of the rooms in the exhibit, and showcases the way Glaser found design in everything, from shells to a box of pencils to coins and stamps. In a section titled “The Work Behind the Work,” viewers get to see early drafts of different poster prints made throughout Glaser’s career. The city—all the different objects and ideas it contains—comes to life on Glaser’s pages through this visualization of his creative process.

Glaser died on June 26, 2020, on his 91st birthday.

“It was so hard when we were all dispersed and mostly working from home to celebrate him in a way that really felt meaningful,” Kleber said. “Once we were back in the office, we felt like we had an opportunity to present his work in a way that most people could benefit from.”

Another part of the exhibit is set up almost like a miniature city block, so that all of Glaser’s designs can be given their own context. A makeshift book stand showcases his book jackets; nearby is a restaurant-like booth that holds his food and wine labels. A faux record store features dozens of the album covers he’d done over the years.

“It’s a really fun way to experience his work, putting it into real world context,” Kleber said. “It was a way to better introduce him, or reintroduce him to students and to people who might recognize some of the stuff but not know who was responsible for it.” ☆



Alana Haim and Cooper Hoffman in "Licorice Pizza." (Paul Thomas Anderson/Metro-Goldwin-Mayer Pictures Inc.)

JEWISH BEAUTY

'Licorice Pizza' captures the moment when pop culture finally started to see Jewish women as beautiful

BY STEPHEN SILVER, JTA

This year, everyone seemed to have an opinion about how the entertainment industry views Jewish women.

The comedian Sarah Silverman and others openly inveighed against what she deemed "Jewface," or the trend of casting non-Jewish actresses as (Ashkenazi) Jewish women; a plotline on this year's "Curb Your Enthusiasm" season mocked a similar idea by having Larry David cast a Latina actress as a Jewish character on a show about his childhood

Whether you agree with Silverman or not, it's hard to hear a term like "Jewface" and not think about the way Jewish characters have historically looked onscreen. For much of the 20th century, show business and popular culture considered stereotypical "Jewish" traits—curly hair, olive skin, a prominent nose—either "exotic," comic or worse, inspiring countless Jewish women to undergo rhinoplasty. It wasn't until Barbra Streisand flaunted her "Jewish" looks beginning in the late 1960s — as Bette Midler would a few years later—that the culture began to shift. Streisand, writes her biographer Neal Gabler, "had somehow managed to change the entire definition of beauty."

At the end of last month, along came a film, set in the 1970s with a female Jewish protagonist who is not only played by a Jewish actress, but is also portrayed as a sex symbol.

The film is "Licorice Pizza," the latest from acclaimed writer-director Paul Thomas Anderson, and it opened wide in

theaters on Christmas after several weeks of limited release. And the character is Alana Kane, played by singer Alana Haim of the band Haim, making her screen debut.

In the film, Alana is an aimless, guileless San Fernando Valley twenty something who gains maturity and an entrepreneurial spirit after befriending Gary Valentine, an overconfident child actor (Cooper Hoffman, son of Philip Seymour Hoffman) who enlists her in various business schemes and convinces her to make a go at acting. The two of them enter a teasy, flirty codependency — Gary, not even 16, makes his attraction to Alana known early and often, especially when the two open a waterbed business together and he instructs her to "act sexy" when selling the kitschy relics over the phone.

But it's not just Gary. Seemingly everyone in the movie, from lecherous older industry veterans to upstart young politicians, is obsessed with Alana—not in spite of her obviously Jewish appearance, but because of it. Anderson plays up Haim's physical parallels to the Jewish beauties of the era: a casting director (Harriet Sansom Harris) gushes over her "Jewish nose," which she notes is a very in-demand look, while real-life producer Jon Peters (played by Bradley Cooper as a manic, sex-crazed lunatic), gets very handsy with Alana—after pointedly bragging that Streisand is his girlfriend.

"Licorice Pizza" is in line with ideas espoused in Henry Bial's 2005 book "Acting Jewish: Negotiating Ethnicity on the American Stage and Screen," particularly its chapter on the



Barbra Streisand in the 1968 movie "Funny Girl," when she was beginning to be embraced as a Jewish sex symbol. (John Springer Collection/CORBIS/Corbis via Getty Images)

'70s, which Bial described as the period when "Jews became sexy." Streisand, at the time of her Broadway debut in the early '60s, was described in reviews as a "homely frump" and "a sloe-eyed creature with folding ankles." But by the '70s, bolstered by her immense charisma and no-apologies attitude toward her own stardom, she was one of popular culture's greatest sex symbols, even appearing on the cover of *Playboy* in 1977—the year after starring in and producing her own "A Star is Born" remake. Her physical appearance didn't change in the intervening time; only the public's reactions to it did.

Anderson himself was born in 1970, so the teenaged adventures in the film aren't his memories specifically—they're mostly those of his friend Gary Goetzman, a former child actor who lived through many of the episodes depicted in the movie. And Anderson himself is not Jewish, though his longtime partner Maya Rudolph, who has a small part in the film, is. Yet perhaps by virtue of being born into a world in which Jewish women were suddenly being considered sexy, Anderson seems to innately understand the period-specific sexual, cultural and spiritual dynamics that would lead to someone like Alana being celebrated for her looks.

Anderson wasn't immune to those dynamics. As a child he had a crush on Alana Haim's mother, Donna Rose, who was his art teacher: "I was in love with her as a young boy, absolutely smitten," he told *The New York Times*, waxing rhapsodic about her "long, beautiful, flowing brown hair."

For much of the film, Alana is unsure whether or how to leverage her sex appeal, as she also tries to figure out what she wants to do with her life. An attempt to respect the wishes of her traditional family (the other Haims, including their real parents, play the Kane clan) by dating a nice,

successful, age-appropriate Jewish guy ends in disaster at a Shabbat dinner when the guy himself, Lance (Skyler Gisondo), refuses to say the "hamotzi" prayer.

The scene also touches on the debate over "religious" vs. "cultural" Judaism that has been raging in American Jewish circles since at least the time period when the film is set. While acknowledging he was "raised in the Jewish tradition," Lance cites "Vietnam" as the reason why he now identifies as an atheist and can't bring himself to recite a blessing. In response, Alana gets him to admit he's circumcised before declaring, "Then you're a f—king Jew!"

The moral of the scene might be the movie's biggest lesson to impart about Judaism: It's not just a belief system. It's an innate part of you, affecting everything from your hair to your nose to your genitals. It can make you be perceived as ugly in one decade, and a bombshell in the next. ✨

“The scene also touches on the debate over “religious” vs. “cultural” Judaism that has been raging in American Jewish circles since at least the time period when the film is set.”

STEPHEN SILVER IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JTA AND JLIFE MAGAZINE.



CITY HALL

JEWISH FEDERATION

100

BABI YAR: NEVER FORGET

Holocaust Memorial reading to honor thousands lost in Nazi massacre

BY KIM BANAJI



The main memorial monument at Babi Yar Memorial Park in Kiev, Ukraine

No monument stands over Babi Yar.
A steep cliff only, like the rudest headstone.
I am afraid.
Today, I am as old
As the entire Jewish race itself.--From "Babi Yar,"
a poem by Yevgeni Yevtushenko

This year we remember the Babi Yar Massacre.

For me, "Every Person Has A Name," Jewish Federation's annual Holocaust Memorial program, is a defying act against those who would rather forget. And reading aloud a single person's name is an act of acknowledging that they lived.

When I think of Babi Yar, I see a woman holding her child while a Nazi soldier points his gun at her. By remembering that she had lived and was murdered, and now reciting her

name, I acknowledge her humanity. The humanity that her murderer tried to deprive her of.

Eighty years ago, in late September 1941, the Ukrainian capital Kiev had fallen to German forces. Shortly after occupying the city, the Nazis started rounding up the Jews. They ordered:

"All Yids[a] of the city of Kiev and its vicinity must appear on Monday, 29 September, by 8 o'clock in the morning at the corner of Mel'nikova and Dokterivskaya streets (near the Viis'kove cemetery). Bring documents, money and valuables, and also warm clothing, linen, etc. Any Yids[a] who do not follow this order and are found elsewhere will be shot."

And on Sept. 29, 1941, by 8 a.m. the Jewish men, women and children who hadn't fled the city did gather near the



Children's Memorial at Babi Yar Memorial Park in Kiev, Ukraine

Jewish cemetery. They were taken in groups of 10 to the ravine known as Babi Yar, stripped and shot. From Monday the 29th to Tuesday the 30th of September 1941, approximately 33,771 Jews were murdered in what came to be known as "the largest single massacre in the history of the Holocaust."

“For me, Every Person Has A Name, our Holocaust Memorial Program, is a defying act against those who would rather forget. And naming a single person’s name is an act of acknowledging that they lived.”

22 JANUARY 2022 @JLIFE

This year marks the 80th anniversary of the Babi Yar massacre, a massacre that the Nazis tried to hide and the Soviet Union tried to forget. But a handful of people survived. And in 1961, the Russian poet Yevgeni Yevtushenko wrote the Poem "Babi Yar." The poem echoed through Soviet Russia and then out to the world.

This past September, Israeli president Isaac Herzog traveled to Ukraine to mark the anniversary and said, "Commemoration and remembrance are vital for the whole of humanity, against evil, cruelty and apathy."

In honor of the lives of the people lost at Babi Yar, the Jewish Federation of Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys will dedicate this year's *Every Person Has a Name* Holocaust memorial name reading to the lives of the Jews of Kiev.

The public is welcome to join in reading names on Jan. 22-23, 2022, at Pasadena City Hall and virtually.

To register for the name reading, go to: <https://jewishsgpv.org/calendar/every-person-has-a-name-2022>. ☆

KIM BANJAI IS THE JEWISH FEDERATION'S PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH COORDINATOR AND A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JLIFE MAGAZINE.

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JANUARY 2022

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Keep Smiling

Sarah Silverman's Very Jewish Podcast Has Thoughtful Advice for Moms and Daughters

BY MADDY ALBERT, KVELLER

Jewish comedian Sarah Silverman always has a refreshing take on life's conundrums. What's more, we love just how open she is about her Jewish identity. Silverman proudly discusses her Jewishness in whatever she's doing—whether she's posting on social media, being interviewed by someone (see: her recent conversation with Howard Stern about how Jewish women should play Jewish characters) or hosting her own podcast.

Jewish content is a regular feature of the Sarah Silverman Podcast. In March of this year, she hosted an episode that addressed Jewish stereotypes head-on and implored non-Jews to be allies of the Jewish community. "I feel bad, because I feel like this podcast has become very Jew-heavy," she began, before addressing the dangers of antisemitism.

This week's episode ("E46 Tootsie Teeth, Braless, Vulva") continues the Jewish trend. This recent episode is chockablock with Jewish content: she calls her father a Yiddish-sounding endearment, "shleppie;" she describes her partner, comedian Rory Albanese, as being a mensch ("he's the shit and I'm knee-deep in it," she says); and she points out how a photo of Jewish comedians Carl Reiner and Mel Brooks help form the background of her set. (Silverman's podcast is also available on YouTube; you'll see the photo of the iconic duo to the left of where she sits.)

But what we're really kvelling about today is the incredible advice about mothers and daughters that Silverman gave to a fan. A 20-year-old woman named Elizabeth—who had recently had breast-reduction surgery—called in to ask her advice about how her mom was dealing with her choice to not wear a bra.

Evidently, Elizabeth's mom said this choice made her look "trashy and bad." (Oof!) She confides: "I don't want to wear a bra just to appease her because I find them so uncomfortable, but I don't want there to be more problems. I don't think she should be talking to me like that."

OK, can we take a moment to say WE FEEL THIS. There's been a noticeable anti-bra movement making waves these past few years; *Vogue*, *FWIW*, declared that 2020 may be "the end of the line for the bra." During the pandemic, many of us decided to stop wearing things that are uncomfortable—you know, things like heels, pants and, of course, bras. We're already under more than enough stress, thank you very much, so if something isn't comfortable, why wear it?

Silverman, however, smartly realizes the problem here isn't really about bras, and she comes back with a much more thoughtful response about the conflict between Elizabeth and her mother. "I mean listen, we all have our



Emma McIntyre/Getty Images

mishegas with our mothers," she says, using the Yiddish term for "craziness."

"This is for some reason important to her," Silverman continues. "It seems to be important to many moms." We have to agree here—many of us can relate to comments that our moms may have made about our bodies in the past, and the damage it does to our self-esteem. (We'd also like to take a moment here to celebrate those moms who are trying their hardest not to pass body-image issues onto their own children. We see you!)

"Your mom is not a bad person, this is what moms do," Silverman tells the caller. "I promise it has less to do with you and more about how she feels about herself."

Silverman then shares some advice that can only be summarized as "pick your battles." She concludes: "You can get really upset or you can just laugh and kiss her forehead and say 'I love you mom, and I'm sorry my boobs are not high enough for your comfort, but you're going to have to find a way to love me anyway.'"

Silverman may not be a mom herself, but we love how she displays empathy to both parties here. Sometimes, she notes, parents say things that are more a reflection of themselves than about us; sometimes, kids need to go against their parents' wishes for their own best interest. And unlike many comedians—who may be tempted to insert a Jewish mother joke here—it's refreshingly mature to see Silverman conclude that the bond between mothers and daughters is far stronger these small-scale disagreements. In short, bra or no bra, love is what matters most—and we love you, Sarah, for reminding us of this important truth. ✨

MADDY ALBERT IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO KVELLER AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.

King Solomon

Where One Jewish TikTok Exec Gets Her Parenting Advice

BY MICHAL OSHMAN, KVELLER

When my daughter was born, I remember looking at her, worried that I would fail her as a mom. She was so delicate and fragile. It turns out I failed her almost immediately.

One of the most traumatic experiences of my life was my complete failure to breastfeed my first child. All the other new moms on the ward were gushing milk, and I was dry. My baby screamed day and night because she was hungry. I felt so inadequate. She had just been born and I was already disappointing her.

It is so easy as a parent to fall prey to bad thoughts. All of us are susceptible to feeling helpless and exhausted; some of us suffer from anxiety or postpartum depression, and almost all new mothers have to deal with hormone imbalances, which make early parenthood a very difficult time. My daughter was in my arms, screaming for milk that I didn't have.

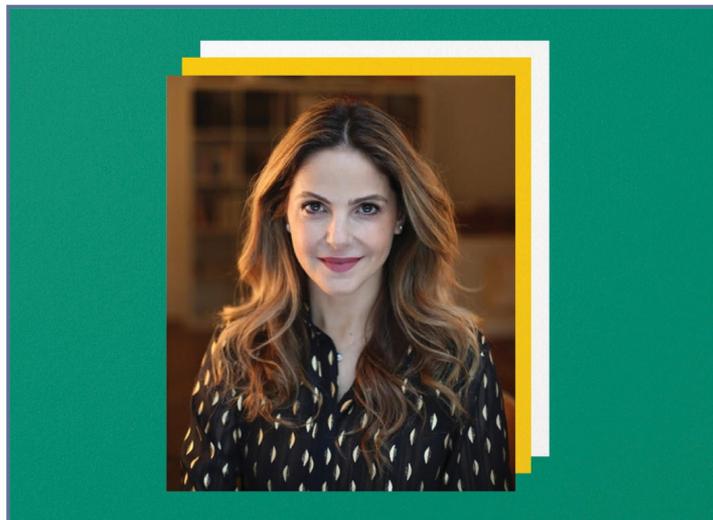
I know now that my body—and probably hers, too—was adjusting to this new reality, and I just needed a bit more time. But I had disappointed myself and feared I was already disappointing my 3-day-old daughter. I cried almost non-stop. Yet often, just when everything seems dark, an unexpected light shines. In this instance, hope came from my dear father.

He is a man who doesn't often show emotion. However, in that hospital, he showed his inner self. He stroked my baby's tiny head, looked at her with tears in his eyes and said, "Another miracle." I started crying. I felt like such a failure, a mother without milk, and here was my reserved father reminding me that I was his miracle.

My father held my hand with his warm, delicate, professor's hands and—although he avoided my eyes—he saw into my broken heart. He intuitively understood my fear and pain and said, "Michal, your daughter will grow to be a wonderful girl regardless of what milk she drinks—yours or formula. What she needs is a happy mother, and you're not happy now. Give her a bottle, go to sleep, and everything will be fine."

And that's what I did. I didn't breastfeed my firstborn. And she grew up to be everything my father promised she would be. This was one of the strongest parenting moments I experienced as a daughter. My father assured me that I would be a good mother and that the known and unknown challenges ahead of me could be overcome.

Donald Winnicott, a British pediatrician and psychoanalyst, coined the phrase "Good Enough Mother" in his 1953 book, "Playing and Reality." Winnicott found that babies and children don't need a "perfect" parent or caregiver in order to become healthy, happy young people.



Header image via Michal Oshman

His surprising findings showed that babies actually benefit when their mothers fail them in manageable ways, and in some cases may grow more from their parents not rushing to them the second they need something. This might mean not changing a diaper the moment it is full or responding instantly when a baby starts crying. These small and measured delays that cause minor frustrations actually help the baby develop well and adapt to the world.

I learned that being "good enough" means that you are still caring, loving, supportive, but at the same time you don't meet every single expectation your child may have. It means that your child won't always get what they want or what they think they need. Those delays or "dissatisfying" experiences actually help the child develop because—let's be honest—life doesn't always live up to what we want from it. After I read about the "Good Enough Mother," I realized that I needed to take the word "perfect" out of my new motherhood vocabulary.

Fast forward seven years, and by now I had not one child to worry about, but three. At this point I had already let go of my perfection fantasy. Still, I was parenting my children with the belief that my role was to tell them who they are and who they should become. I still assumed they were born a "blank canvas," and that it was up to my husband and me to draw on that canvas and paint their path for them.

At the same time, I was searching to learn the essence of being a parent. I approached a friend whose parenting I found inspiring, and she shared a piece of advice from a rather unusual source: the third king of Israel, King Solomon. He reigned during the 10th century BCE and was famous for his great wisdom. He composed, for example, Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes.

How exciting it was to discover that this great king had parenting advice. I decided that if the wisest man in Jewish history had given a tip, I surely wanted to hear it. "Teach a child according to his way," said King Solomon, "even when he grows old, he will not turn away from it."

When I first encountered these words—possibly the oldest parenting advice on the planet—I thought I had misread them. The essence of parenting described here is so very different from how I, or most of the other parents I know, had been parenting. It counsels that, instead of steering our children into the people we think they should become, we should teach them according to their nature.

The ancient Hebrew language holds great significance and meaning in its combination of letters and words. Often there isn't a straightforward translation of certain Hebrew words for exactly this reason. The word "chinuch" is used in everyday conversation to mean "education." However, there is a much deeper meaning to the word—one that reveals the absolute essence of the act of educating.

The root of the Hebrew word chinuch literally means "initiation" or "inauguration." In the Torah, chinuch is used to describe the act of dedicating people—or objects—to their particular purpose. A parent's role then isn't to "fix" their children or to define for them an exact track, but rather to help them discover their own paths in life. A parent's role is

to guide their children, not to mold them. Children are not "blank." They have a unique soul—their neshama—which carries its own purpose on Earth. Each unique soul has arrived here for its own personal journey.

Does this mean parents should sit back and allow their child to choose a dangerous or self-destructive path? Or that they now have no expectations for them? Absolutely not. Children must be encouraged to forever grow and develop in a positive way while journeying along their own positive paths. Telling children that they have a unique path to follow, and that you will help them find it, will make them feel special and one-of-a-kind — just as they really are.

This discussion applies just as much to parents. You are here because the world needs you. Being your child's guide is not easy or straightforward. There is still uncertainty, frustration, and concern. At times you will need to be more involved in your child's path and their decisions, and at others, it's better to step back. The challenge is understanding when. The good news is that there's no need to map out your child's future. That will come around naturally after your child finds their way.

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MICHAL OSHMAN IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO KVELLER AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.

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COOKING JEWISH

Lifestyle

PRESERVING TRADITIONS

**Keeping Our
Culinary History
Alive**

BY JUDY BART KANCIGOR

PHOTO COURTESY OF SAMANTHA KANGIGOR

Salmon Timbales
(wink, wink) with
Homemade Horseradish

We Jewish cooks walk a perilous tightrope. We want to keep our culinary traditions alive; yet times have changed, and the delicacies lovingly prepared by our bubbes just do not suit today's lifestyle.

Case in point: chopped liver. My grandmother, Mama Hinda, of course, used schmaltz (chicken fat) for its unbeatable flavor. No wonder it was so good! The dish is a history lesson on a plate. Our thrifty shtetl ancestors used every innard and organ; no part of the animal was wasted. So rich, so silky...so heavy, so fattening! Cholesterol was a far off future scientific enigma, like moon landings and DNA. How to capture the spirit of the dish without jeopardizing our health or diet regimen.

Some years ago I was asked to do a cooking demonstration at the Palo Alto Jewish street festival called "To Life!" A man picked up my cookbook and turned immediately to the vegetarian chopped "livers." "Mine is better," he announced. "So where's the recipe?" I countered. (I love a challenge.) He sent it, and when I saw the peanut butter, I was hooked! Where many vegetarian chopped "livers" call for green beans or peas, the version presented here relies on lentils, substantial and meaty but bland by themselves, the perfect backdrop for the rich peanuty/garlicky flavors. This is Steve Kaplowitz's adaptation of the dish from the old Ratner's Dairy Restaurant on Manhattan's Lower East Side. Serve it with crackers or cocktail rye as a schmear, or on lettuce with a radish garnish as an appetizer. It also makes a great sandwich.

We've all heard stories about fish swimming in our bubbes' bathtubs awaiting their metamorphosis into another shtetl favorite, gefilte fish, a labor-intensive process calling for much chopping

and grinding. Who's got that kind of time? Add to that the bad rap the dish has gotten over the years due in part to the canned and bottled preparations, which, while convenient, cannot compare to authentic homemade. Although preground fish is available at kosher food markets and the food processor does the job easily, just hearing the word "gefilte" sends shivers down some spines.

Since the Middle Ages the serving of gefilte fish has been a Sabbath tradition, fish being seen by Jewish mystics as signaling the coming of the Messiah. Fish was expensive in Europe, and the recipe was developed as an economical way to stretch it so that every family member could get a taste. It became a particularly traditional Sabbath dish, made on Friday because to remove the flesh from the bone was viewed by the devout as "work."

The word "gefilte" is actually German for "stuffed." The original recipe called for seasoned, ground boned fish mixed with eggs and fillers, such as vegetables and crumbs, which was then stuffed back into the fish skin and cooked. Over the centuries the skin was eliminated, with cooks shaping the mixture into balls or patties and poaching them.

For years I denied myself gefilte fish at holiday time because my kids would turn up their noses. Then I created a variation of Marlene Sorosky's recipe from "Fast and Festive Meals for the Jewish Holidays," using salmon and baking the fish as individual "muffins." I called them Salmon Timbales—the word "gefilte" never crossed my lips—and not a nose turned up. (It's all in the packaging.)

They make a lovely presentation on a bed of greens, surrounded by thinly sliced cucumber, a few grape tomatoes, and horseradish, preferably my Uncle Lou's homemade. (For Passover I add haroset, a Yemenite haroset truffle, parsley

and a quail egg to the plate, as shown in the photograph.)

Horseradish root is not a radish at all. According to rabbi and food historian Gil Marks in the "Encyclopedia of Jewish Food," the English name is a mistranslation of the German "meerretich" (mare radish). In Yiddish it is known as "chrain," and today Ashkenazi Jews use it as the maror (bitter herbs) on the Seder plate, although it is neither bitter nor an herb. This use was a late development, notes Marks. "Horseradish was unknown in Israel in Talmudic times and was not among the five vegetables cited by the Talmud as acceptable for maror."

To quote Sholem Aleichem's Tevye, the dairyman, "Horseradish that does not bring a pious tear to the eye is not G-d's horseradish." Sure, you can buy horseradish in the jar, but it's easy enough to make it yourself. Chopping fresh horseradish is famously billed as a curative for sinus conditions, but you'll be fine unless you remove the lid of the food processor, as I did the first time I made it, and lean directly over it to turn on the light. Actually, the hardest part is peeling the stubborn horseradish root! Then it's a simple matter to whiz the ingredients and fill little jars to give to friends or freeze for future use. Once you've tasted the fresh, you'll never go back to store-bought. ✧

“We want to keep our culinary traditions alive; yet times have changed.”

JLIFE FOOD EDITOR **JUDY BART KANCIGOR** IS THE AUTHOR OF "COOKING JEWISH" (WORKMAN) AND "THE PERFECT PASSOVER COOKBOOK" (AN E-BOOK SHORT FROM WORKMAN), A COLUMNIST AND FEATURE WRITER FOR THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEB AT WWW.COOKINGJEWISH.COM.



Steve Kaplowitz's
Vegetarian Chopped "Liver"

Steve Kaplowitz's Vegetarian Chopped "Liver"

Yield: 6 cups

- 1½ cups (10 ounces) green lentils
- 2 bay leaves
- 3 large onions (8 ounces each), chopped
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 large cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 tablespoons smooth peanut butter
- 1¼ teaspoons kosher (coarse) salt, plus more to taste
- ½ teaspoon black pepper, plus more to taste
- 3 large eggs, hard-cooked and chopped

- 1.** Prepare lentils according to package directions, adding bay leaves to cooking water. Do not overcook. Drain, remove bay leaves, and set lentils aside to cool.
- 2.** Set aside about ½ cup chopped onions. Heat oil in large skillet over low heat. Add remaining chopped onions and cook very slowly until rich, dark brown, 20 minutes or more. Add crushed garlic and cook, stirring, a few minutes more. Cool.
- 3.** Place cooled lentils, cooled onion mixture, peanut butter, reserved ½ cup raw onion, 1¼ teaspoons salt, and ½ teaspoon pepper in food processor and pulse. You want some texture, not a smooth paste. Transfer mixture to bowl, fold in eggs, and add salt and pepper to taste. Chill, covered with plastic wrap, at least 4 hours to allow flavors to meld.



Salmon Timbales (wink, wink) with Homemade Horseradish

Yield: 24 timbales

- Vegetable cooking spray
- 2 medium-size onions, cut into chunks
- 5 medium-size carrots, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 2 ribs celery, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 cup curly-leaf parsley leaves
- 3 pounds skinless salmon, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 3 large eggs
- ½ cup vegetable oil
- ¼ cup sugar, or to taste
- 2 teaspoons kosher (coarse) salt, or to taste
- 2 teaspoons freshly ground black pepper, or to taste

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350°F. Spray 24 standard muffin cups.
- 2.** Place onions in food processor and pulse until minced. Transfer onions to very large bowl.
- 3.** Process carrots, celery, and parsley together until ground. Add to onions.
- 4.** Process about two thirds of the salmon, adding 1 piece at a time through feed tube, until ground. Add processed salmon to onion mixture.
- 5.** Process remaining salmon, adding it through feed tube. Then add eggs, oil, sugar, salt, and pepper, and process until well blended. Add mixture to onion-salmon mixture, and combine well.
- 6.** Divide salmon mixture evenly among prepared muffin cups. Bake until top feels set when touched, 25 to 30 minutes. Let fish cool in muffin cups; then unmold. Serve with horseradish (recipe follows).

Uncle Lou Bower's Homemade Horseradish

- 1 pound horseradish root, peeled and cleaned
 - 1 can (16 ounces) sliced beets, undrained
 - 1 tablespoon kosher (coarse) salt, or to taste
 - 3 tablespoons sugar, or to taste
 - 1/4 cup distilled white vinegar or red wine vinegar
- Yield: about 3 1/2 cups

- 1.** Cut horseradish root into 1-inch pieces and process them in food processor until uniformly shredded.
- 2.** Add beets with their liquid, salt, sugar, and vinegar, and process until mixture is finely chopped and well mixed.
- 3.** Add up to 1/4 cup water, until desired consistency. Do not overprocess or mass will liquefy.
- 4.** Serve with gefilte fish (but you knew that), any fish at all, brisket, or—my personal favorite—boiled chicken from the soup.

Source: "Cooking Jewish" (Workman) by Judy Bart Kancigor ☆

**“Chopped liver,
a history lesson
on a plate.”**

NYC HONORS PERES

An intersection on Manhattan's Upper West Side to be named in honor of Shimon Peres

BY SHIRA HANAU, JTA



Shimon Peres at a press conference during an official visit to France in 1986. (Keystone/Getty Images)

Shimon Peres will soon receive a major honor for a non-New Yorker: the late Israeli prime minister will have a New York City street corner named in his honor.

The intersection of West 95th Street and Riverside Drive will be renamed “Shimon Peres Place” after the New York City Council recently approved nearly 200 new street names to honor various people.

Peres, who died in 2016, served three times as Israel’s prime minister in addition to serving as president of the country from 2007 to 2014. In 1949, he and his wife Sonia and their young daughter moved to an apartment on the corner of West 95th Street and Riverside while Peres studied at New York University and the New School.

In his memoir, “No Room for Small Dreams,” Peres remembered his years in New York fondly, despite the

challenge he faced in learning English.

“I loved, too, the myriad accents that punctuated the city—so many of us still learning to speak English. It seemed the ambitious promise of the United States was alive in the minds of all who had come there—as though the ‘American Dream’ were its own force of nature,” he wrote.

Peres is far from the only notable Jewish figure to get a street named for him in New York City.

Among the streets named for Jewish historical figures in New York City and catalogued by the unofficial “NYC Honorary Street Names” blog are: a section of 33rd street named for the Yiddish author Sholom Aleichem in 1996; the corner of Bank Avenue and Greenwich Avenue named for the liberal activist and politician Bella Abzug; an area near the Museum of Jewish Heritage named after the banker and philanthropist Edmond J. Safra. ✨

SHIRA HANAU IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JTA AND JLIFE MAGAZINE.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

TUESDAYS

11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

(Every First Tuesday of the Month)
Caffeine for the Soul -
Chabad Women's Circle, CIE

WEDNESDAYS

8:00 - 10:00 AM

Pirkei Avot Discussion Group

FRIDAYS

7:30 PM

Shabbat Service, PJTC

7:30 - 8:30 PM

Virtual Shabbat Services, BSW

SATURDAYS

10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Temple Ami Shalom Shabbat Service In-Person, TAS

FRIDAY, JAN. 7 & 21

9:30 - 11:30 AM

(every month on the 1st Friday and 3rd Friday until June 3, 2022)
Gan Katan- In Person, JFSGPV

All events listed here are virtual unless otherwise noted. Please visit www.jewishsgpv.org/virtual-calendar for details.

SUNDAY, JAN. 9

10:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Jewish Federation's Annual Meeting, PJTC

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14

9:30 - 11:30 AM

(every month on the 2nd Friday until June 10, 2022)
Gan Katan- Online, JFSGPV

SATURDAY, JAN. 22 TO SUNDAY, JAN. 23

7:00 - 8:00 PM

Every Person Has a Name,
Pasadena City Hall
100 Garfield Ave
Pasadena, CA 91101

Beth Shalom of Whittier (BSW)

www.bethshalomofwhittier.net

B'nai Simcha Community Preschool
www.bnaisimcha.org

Chabad of Arcadia (CoA)
www.jewisharcadia.com

Chabad of Pasadena (CoP)
www.chabadpasadena.com

Chabad of the Inland Empire (CIE)
www.chabadinlandempire.com

Congregation Hugat Haverim (CHH)
www.hugathaverim.com

Jewish Federation of SGPV (JFSGPV)
www.jewishsgpv.org

Pasadena Jewish Academy (PJA)
www.pasadenajewishacademy.com

Pasadena Jewish Temple & Center (PJTC)
www.pjtc.net

Temple Ami Shalom (TAS)
<https://templeamishalom.org/>

Temple Beth Israel of Pomona (TBI)
www.tbipomona.org

Temple Beth David of the San Gabriel Valley (TBD)
www.templebd.com

Temple Beth Israel of Highland Park and Eagle Rock (TBILA)
www.tbila.org

Temple B'nai Emet (TBE)
www.templebnaiemet.org

Temple Sinai of Glendale (TSG)
<http://temple-sinai.net>

Temple Sholom of Ontario (TSO)
www.templesholomofontario.org

Tree of Life Preschool (formerly TBI Preschool) (ToL)
www.tbipomona.org ☆

Keeping our Community Connected We applaud our community and the tremendous effort to transition to virtual events. If you have a virtual event that you would like to share please send an email to federation@jewishsgpv.org



EVERY PERSON HAS A NAME

25-HOUR HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE PROGRAM

PASADENA CITY HALL & ON ZOOM

JANUARY 22, 2022 7 P.M.

COMMEMORATION CEREMONY

JANUARY 22, 2022, 8 P.M. - JANUARY 23, 2022, 8 P.M.

READING OF THE NAMES

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"HE WHO DOES NOT LEARN FROM HISTORY IS DOOMED TO REPEAT IT." - GEORGE SANTAYANA

THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE GREATER SAN GABRIEL AND POMONA VALLEYS INVITES YOU TO JOIN US FOR EVERY PERSON HAS A NAME IN OBSERVANCE OF UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY.

THE PROGRAM WILL ONCE AGAIN BE HELD AT PASADENA CITY HALL AND WILL BE STREAMED VIRTUALLY. THIS YEAR'S EVENT WILL HONOR THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BABI YAR* MASSACRE AND WILL INCLUDE A COMMEMORATION CEREMONY, IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BY READING THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO WERE KILLED AT BABI YAR.

IF YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN READING THE NAMES OF THOSE WHO DIED DURING THE HOLOCAUST PLEASE VISIT WWW.JEWISHSGPV.ORG OR CALL 626.445.0810

***BABI YAR WAS THE SITE OF ONE OF THE LARGEST MASSACRES OF WORLD WAR II. IN A TWO-DAY PERIOD, OVER 34,000 JEWS WERE ROUNDED UP, SHOT, AND KILLED BY SS AND GERMAN POLICE UNITS.**

NEWS & JEWS

SGPV Jewish Scene | January 2022



Bob Einstein, the Jewish comic who died in 2019, is celebrated by his famous friends in "The Super Bob Einstein Movie." (HBO)

A new HBO documentary profiles the late 'Curb Your Enthusiasm' actor Bob Einstein

By Andrew Lapin, JTA

Bob Einstein, the cult-favorite Jewish comedian best known for playing Marty Funkhouser on "Curb Your Enthusiasm" and the popular "Super Dave Osborne" character on various TV variety shows, is given the biography treatment in a new HBO documentary which aired Dec. 28.

"The Super Bob Einstein Movie," directed by Danny Gold and provided to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in an advanced screener, is a sentimental journey through the life and career of Einstein,

who died in 2019 shortly after being diagnosed with cancer. The film features a heavy rotating lineup of famous funny Jews, including Jerry Seinfeld, Larry David, Sarah Silverman, Susie Essman, Jeff Garlin, childhood friend Rob Reiner and Albert Brooks – Einstein's brother.

Initially reluctant to enter show business after his father, radio comedian Harry Einstein, had a heart attack onstage, Bob was lured into comedy writing after playing college basketball at Chapman University. The film details how he got his start working on pioneering sketch shows "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour" and "Bizarre" before breaking out on his own with the incredibly popular character Super Dave, an Evel Knievel-type daredevil whose stunts routinely go haywire.

Gold, who also directed the HBO documentary "If You're Not In The Obit, Eat Breakfast," about famous nonagenarians, takes a chummy approach to his depiction of Einstein's life. He films his interviewees as they watch clips from Einstein's comedy, mining them for explanations as to why his deadpan delivery, imposing physical presence and laborious sight gags land so well. This is clearly a passion project, with a low-budget, home-movie feel – it aims to celebrate the life of a "comic's comic," a funnyman whose greatness is most vocally affirmed by other comics.

As such, biographical details that might have benefitted from more fleshing out are merely glazed over, such as the fact that Einstein and Brooks only worked together once (in a single scene from Brooks' 1981 comedy "Modern Romance"), or Super Dave's unlikely star power in the '90s hip-hop world (Tupac, A Tribe Called Quest and Ice Cube all had verses nodding to him).

"Curb" fans, though, will be pleased by the amount of space devoted to the show's Funkhouser years. While Larry David himself is unsurprisingly taciturn, the other cast members gush about their improv experiences on set with Einstein.

In other "Curb" news this week, David penned his own guide to "celebrating" Christmas alone, which, as you might imagine, includes a not-very-kosher order from his local Chinese restaurant. ☆



LAST WORD

**“For all with the courage
to explore, G-d awaits.”**

*— David J. Wolpe,
Why Be Jewish?*

WHAT DO WE WANT? CHANGE!

WHEN DO WE WANT IT? AFTER MY NAP!



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THEM
ALL**