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## Elaine Cogan passes at 92

By ROCKNE ROLL  
*The Jewish Review*

Elaine Cogan, z”l, a life-long leader in the Jewish and broader Portland communities, passed away Wednesday, Dec. 18, 2024 at the age of 92.

Among other accomplishments, Cogan was the first woman elected president of Congregation Neveh Shalom in Portland in 1978. She was the third member of her immediate family to serve as president of the Conservative synagogue, following her husband, Arnold Cogan, z”l, and her brother-in-law, Gerald Cogan, z”l.

“Her philosophy was, ‘If I’m going to be part of it, I might as well be chair’ or ‘I might as well be president,’” her daughter, Sue van Brocklin, said.

It was a trend Elaine Cogan established early on as editor of the student newspaper at

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## Lighting up the city



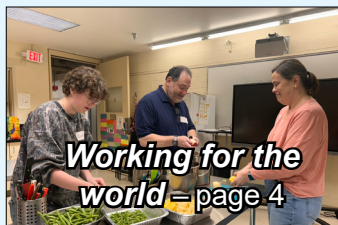
Chabad of Oregon Director Rabbi Moshe Wilhelm prepares to light the menorah at Chabad's Chanukah 1800 celebration at Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland Wednesday, Dec. 25. More than 800 gathered downtown for Chabad's annual observance of Chanukah's first night enjoying latkes, music and a brief address from Judith Raanan, who was taken hostage by Hamas in the Oct. 7 terror attacks and was the first hostage released by the terrorist organization in Gaza. See more of photographer Solomon Cohen's images from the evening on page 5. (Solomon Cohen for The Jewish Review)

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# Three generations of Cahana art come to OJMCHE

By ROCKNE ROLL

*The Jewish Review*

Art often runs in families, but it's rare to see three generations of artists' work together, side-by-side. The Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education will be presenting just such an opportunity – with a local connection.

“Survival and Intimations of Immortality: The Art of Alice Lok Cahana, Rabbi Ronnie Cahana, and Kitra Cahana” opens Jan. 26 and will be on display through May 25 at the museum in downtown Portland. The trio of artists are the mother, brother and niece of Congregation Beth Israel Senior Rabbi Michael Cahana, respectively.

Alice Lok Cahana, z”l, was a Holocaust survivor from Hungary. Ori Soltes, the guest curator for the exhibit, explained that she is known to have said of her art, “I promised myself that if I survive this, I am going to be an artist and I’m going to transform the gray and the mud into color.” She became an artist as she moved in sequence from Sweden to Israel, where she met her husband, Rabbi Moshe Cahana, z”l, and then to Houston. A visit to Hungary catapulted her into making good on her promise to herself – and the work she produced was profound.

Soltes, a professor at Georgetown University’s Center for Jewish Civilization, described her paintings as encompassing far more than pigment on a surface.

“I’m talking about dirt, about sawdust,” he said. “I’m talking about very gritty and very textured paintings, sometimes layered so they’re almost like relief sculptures.”

She also produced semi-abstract sculptures, including a series titled “Rainbows from the Ashes.” Soltes first curated Alice Lok Cahana’s work when he was at the now-defunct Benevolent National Jewish Museum.

Both her sons followed their father into the Rabbinate –

Michael here in Portland and Ronnie in Montreal. Ronnie’s trajectory changed, though, when he suffered a debilitating stroke that left him almost fully paralyzed.

“Ronnie’s poetry covers a range of conversations with his mother to conversations with his daughters, to conversations with his own condition,” Soltes said. “There’s this sense that he’s expressed almost of release because his body is tied down, but that’s freed up my mind to sort of float.”

His poetry is moving for its content, but also for the effort it took to make it. Ronnie movement was limited to his eye-lids; Kitra, realizing this, amassed a rotation of individuals to transcribe her father’s work from blink to page.

“Every letter of the alphabet is done with eye blinks, so you can imagine how painstaking that process is,” Soltes said.

Meanwhile, Kitra blazed her own artistic trail as a documentary photographer and filmmaker. Her photographs have appeared in *National Geographic*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and *ProPublica*, among other outlets, and she is the winner of a Peabody Award and a World Press Photo Award, among other distinctions.

“There is this comment that Kitra once made, just in passing, to me,” Soltes recalled. “When I turn 14, I suddenly thought, oh my G-d, what have I done with my life?” Of course her grandmother, at 14, she was already in her first concentration camp, fighting for survival. ‘What have I done?’”

The question has driven her to document the U.S.-Mexico border, genocide in Chile, and create a film about an Inuit community on the edge of Hudson’s Bay that uses dance to try and combat a startlingly high suicide rate. Her photography project “Still Man” covers her father.

Blending three generations of art, in a variety of mediums, is certainly a challenge. Soltes has arranged the show conceptually, with essays and other text panels to guide the viewer through.

“In the larger of the two galleries, I have embedded walls that create what we’re calling a ‘Temple of Healing,’” Soltes said, in which I have these very large photographs that Kitra did of her father. The walls were painted black so you’re just seeing these large images, not as if they’re on the wall, but almost as if they’re floating in space.”

Soltes curated a series of exhibitions earlier in his career, each around the High Holidays, examining the question of immortality and how it can be achieved. It’s a question he sees a beautiful explanation of how that can be done.

“Alice was a Holocaust survivor. So, she defeated Hitler in three ways. She survived, of course. She produced children and grandchildren and then she produced art that turned the gray and the brown and the mud and the dirt and the grime into rainbows of color,” Soltes said. “As it turns out, both her sons became rabbis, one who sustains this extraordinary tragedy physically and becomes even more focused on poetry than beforehand. So now we’ve got another generation but working in a different medium from his mother. Then, in turn, Kitra [creates art] in a different medium still.”

“Survival and Intimations of Immortality” will be open during museum hours. For more information, visit [ojmche.org](http://ojmche.org).



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# WORK FOR THE WORLD FAIR

*A Day of Service Honoring  
the Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

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(No strollers, please.) Children must be accompanied by an adult.*

**Register at [pjaproud.org/wftw-fair](http://pjaproud.org/wftw-fair)**



# Israel360 brings leading Israeli doctor to Portland

*The Jewish Review staff*

One of the leading Israeli pediatric physicians is coming to Portland.

“Hope and Reality: Lessons Learned from a Practice of Pediatric Rehabilitation,” presented by Congregation Neveh Shalom’s Israel360 group, will host Dr. Maurits Beeri, the director general of ALYN Hospital Pediatric Rehabilitation Center in Jerusalem, Wednesday, Jan. 22 at 7 pm in the Stampfer Chapel at CNS and on zoom.

Dr. Beeri received her medical degree from Hebrew University Hadassah Medical Center, and later earned a Master’s in Public Administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University as a Wexner Israel Fellow. She’ll discuss ALYN’s status as Israel’s first culturally competent hospital --treating children - and employing staff - regardless of their religion, ethnicity, or gender. The facility is a leader in pediatric rehabilitation and hosts an Innovation Space which fosters inclusive design and helps enable patients to receive assistive devices at minimal cost.

Registration is free, required, and available online at [nevehshalom.org/I360A-LYN](https://nevehshalom.org/I360A-LYN)

[jewishportland.org/subscribe](https://jewishportland.org/subscribe)



Volunteers assemble meals for Blanchet House at Portland Jewish Academy's Work For The World Fair Sunday, Mar. 10, 2024. This year's event, scheduled for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, will include expanded volunteer opportunities and connections to local service organizations. (Laura Jeser/Jewish Review file)

## This Jan. 20, "Work For The World"

By **ROCKNE ROLL**  
*The Jewish Review*

Portland Jewish Academy is once again turning a day off from school into an opportunity for kids and families to make the world better.

Work for the World returns on Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Monday, January 20, from 10 am-1 pm at PJA – even bigger than before.

“It’s a bigger production. We’re partnering with more organizations,” explained PJA’s Director of Admission, Retention and Engagement Sarah Glass. “It’s great to have so many other people around the table helping organize this.”

So far, Portland Backpack, Community Warehouse, Jewish Family & Child Service, Path Home, Blanchet House, Store to Door, Meals on Wheels, Westside Watershed, Resource Center, P:ear have all confirmed their participation, along with the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, PJ Library, which is run through the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland’s Mitzvah Makers program for family community service. Some of these organizations will be there to reach out to potential volunteers interested in helping out, but most will have stations with

hands-on opportunities to serve those in need.

The expansion in programming this year is thanks in part to a grant program through the Prizmah Center for Jewish Day Schools and PJ Library’s national headquarters to boost engagement with both local day schools and PJ Library programs.

“This is our big program,” Glass said. “We really want it to attract a lot of new folks to both PJ library and to PJA who maybe haven’t been part of our communities before, haven’t even been aware of us before.”

Work for the World launched in 2019 at PJA and, following a pandemic pause, resumed last year – though not on MLK Day due to severe weather. It’s certainly not unusual for community service programs to occur around the holiday established in observance of the civil rights leader’s birthday – for good reason.

“It’s a great opportunity to give people something to do on a day off,” MJCC Youth Programs Manager and PJ Library Professional Holden Regnier said. “I think it’s really important to offer young families the opportunity to volunteer in this way.”

That last part is key – the event is open to children of all ages and their families.

See **VOLUNTEER**, page 10



# Chanukah comes to Pioneer Courthouse Square



Photographs by SOLOMON COHEN  
For The Jewish Review

Chabad of Oregon celebrated the 40th anniversary of their first Portland menorah lighting with a celebration of Chanukah's first night Wednesday, Dec. 25 at Pioneer Courthouse Square. Rabbi Moshe Wilhelm lit the 12-foot menorah while former Hamas hostage Judith Raanan (below, top right) and Rabbi Motti Wil-

helm (above right) spoke to the crowd of over 800.

*Solomon Cohen is a Portland-based photographer and videographer whose work focuses on turning moments into lasting memories. Known for his involvement with the local Jewish community, he specializes in capturing meaningful and candid moments that tell powerful stories. Find his work online at [solomoncohenphotography.com](http://solomoncohenphotography.com).*



# Antisemitic violence and Oregon

Acknowledging the past, monitoring the present, defusing the future

By ROCKNE ROLL  
*The Jewish Review*

Antisemitic political violence is, sadly, nothing new. In the world, in America, in Portland.

While Oregon is noted for its history as a haven for antisemitic extremists, that support looks to have run even deeper than previously imagined. It's still a threat today, in some ways. Just as professionals are hard at work to protect the Jewish community from these threats, there are also those who are working to stop the next generation of violence before it springs up.

Much of Portland's history with racially motivated political violence is seen through the lens of the skinheads of the 1980s – a movement that burst into the spotlight in 1988 with the murder of Ethiopian student Mulugeta Seraw by a trio of members of East Side White Pride, Kenneth Mieske, Kyle Brewster and Steven Strasser. But there was another cadre of extremists beginning to take root in the area. There were no protest marches for these folks – far from it.

“The story involves a number of counterculturalists who lived in Portland and had a part in promoting, directly and indirectly, Neo-Nazi terrorism, and who were in turn, feted and defended by numerous sycophants, collaborators and apologists in Portland,” author and sociologist Spencer Sunshine said at a book talk with Steve Wasserstrom at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education Thursday, Nov. 14, 2024. “This all allowed these fascist counterculturalists to function openly in the city, to become popular figures and to have a much greater influence than they could have ever had without this help.”

Sunshine has been documenting far-right movements in America since 2005. His latest book is “Neo-Nazi Terrorism and Countercultural Fascism: The Origins and Afterlife of James Mason's *Siege*.” “*Siege*” is a fascist political treatise and guide for right-wing terrorism, advocating the abandonment of political processes and the embrace of violence to accelerate the development of an American fascist state. Sunshine covers the influence that Mason's work

had on those connected to it. Many of them were right here in Portland.

“People know that there are these open Neo-Nazis in Portland and I think part of why what I'm doing is so different is that these are people who weren't open Neo-Nazis,” Sunshine told *The Jewish Review*. “These are people who had access to the cultural mainstream.”

Sunshine's book is built from Mason's archive of personal correspondence, which is held by the University of Kansas, with a wide variety of individuals of the era, including Charles Manson. One of them is Michael Moynihan. A vocalist for the band Blood Axis, Moynihan also corresponded extensively with Mason, encouraging to assemble the collection of his writings that would become “*Siege*,” wrote its introduction and promoted the book after its release, including an interview in which he claimed that it was “probably a gross exaggeration” that six million Jews were killed in the Holocaust.

By 1999, Moynihan was on a Southern Poverty Law Center list of leading figures in American Neo-Nazism. The next year, he was the subject of the cover story of *Willamette Week's* Aug. 16, 2000, issue, titled “Lord of Chaos.” Within, reporter Zach Dundas wrote “That Moynihan has some unusual ideas and interests is clear.”

The piece quotes Moynihan denouncing consumerism as more dangerous than fascism, saying “Everyone buys the same clothes at the mall no matter what their heritage is. That's a far more immediate threat to racial justice or identity than anything emanating from Neo-Nazis.”

No mention is made of Moynihan's involvement in the publication of “*Siege*,” though his quote from the book's promotional tour is dismissed by Dundas as “general misanthropy rather than specific bigotry” and the Coalition for Human Dignity, in which Wasserstrom was instrumental, is described as waging a “jihad” against Moynihan.

Before Moynihan founded his own publishing company, he worked for

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Spencer Sunshine discusses his new book about the influence of James Mason's Neo-Nazi manual “*Siege*” at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education Tuesday, Nov. 14, 2024. Sunshine's research found that supporters of Neo-Nazism were able to freely move in Portland cultural circle throughout the 1980s and 90s. (Rockne Roll/*The Jewish Review*)

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Feral House, founded in Portland by Adam Parfrey.

“I knew many people who knew [Parfrey],” Sunshine told the audience at OJMCHE. “He was the kind of guy who was everything to everyone; that is to say he was a pathological liar. This came in very handy to him, as he denied his Neo-Nazi connections throughout his life.”

Parfrey’s 1986 book “Apocalypse Culture” included pieces by Mason. His company published works by Manson, Joseph Goebbels, and Timothy McVeigh, one of the perpetrators of the Oklahoma City federal building bombing. Parfrey also once wrote for *White Aryan Resistance*, managed by former Ku Klux Klan leader Tom Metzger, who was found civilly liable in Seraw’s death after lawyers for the family proved that Seraw’s killers has been inspired by Metzger.

“I read probably thousands of pages of letters to Mason from all kinds of people, and Parfrey’s were by far the most racist and antisemitic,” Sunshine said at his book talk.

This information did not make its way into coverage of Parfrey’s works around Portland. It did not factor into *Willamette Week* reporter Audrey Van-Buskirk’s coverage of his appearance at Powell’s Books on Mar. 13, 1992, (“Readings from the Apocalypse,” Mar. 19, 1992, page 19) other than to give him space to brush off the actions of his friend Boyd Rice, a fascist with connections to Mason, Metzger, and Moynihan. When Parfrey died in 2018, *Willamette Week*’s Aaron Mesh gave more consideration to mentions of self-castration in “Apocalypse Culture” than to his associations with Neo-Nazis.

“While the Willie Week was promoting him,” Sunshine said of Parfrey, using a nickname for *Willamette Week*, “he was encouraging Mason, and Mason was encouraging his readers to commit racist and antisemitic murders.”

Mesh’s obituary quoted Jim Redden, a former *Willamette Week* writer who went on to found *PDXS*, a competitor to *Willamette Week*, before joining the *Portland Tribune*, describing “Apocalypse Culture” as “a mix of really wacko conspiracy theories.” Sunshine



Participants from TischPDX and Co/Lab participate in a facilitated dialogue session with Cure:PNW. The organization, an offshoot of violence reduction efforts in Chicago in the 1990s, seeks to provide communities with de-escalation tools to prevent ideologically driven violence. (Courtesy Cure:PNW)

explained that, in a 1994 story about an art show in Seattle that involved Moynihan, Parfrey and Mason, *PDXS* described “Siege,” Mason’s book, as “one of the better written and more interesting books on political theory I have read in a long time.”

- Those theories live on.

“We have approximately a dozen known white nationalist groups that operate in Oregon and southern Washington,” explained Jessica Anderson, Portland’s Regional Security Director through Secure Communities Network and the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. “In the past 10 years, we’ve seen a continued uptick in far-right activity in ebbs and flows. There are periods of time where we see up ticks and other times where it remains fairly static.”

While specifically neo-Nazi viewpoints were in vogue in the 1990s, Anderson characterized the far-right activity of today as mostly “generalized white nationalism.”

The threat of antisemitic violence doesn’t purely come from the right, though. Left-leaning antisemitism has taken on greater prominence and can also be dangerous.

“What I also see is that the small segments of the far-left are willing to engage in property damage and vandalism, and while the argument has been made that that’s not dangerous because

they’re not carrying guns, it still creates a feeling of a lack of safety,” Anderson said. “There are a number of ways in which that can create situations that still make people feel very unsafe, even if there are not guns visible.”

While organized, publicly active hate groups can be concerning, the most dangerous threat remains from individual actors who do not announce themselves – like the murders of Ricky Best and Taliesin Namkai-Meche by Jeremy Christian on a light rail trail in 2017 or the truck ramming attack on New Year’s Day in New Orleans. Anderson, her colleagues at SCN, and the local law enforcement agencies she coordinates with are continually monitoring for potential signs of such activity to hopefully head off disaster before it strikes.

“The biggest threat is lone actors who are motivated by an ideology and who believe so strongly in it, who have gone so far down that rabbit hole that they think they need to take action,” Anderson said. “Thankfully, that activity is still very rare.”

- Keeping it rare is the challenge of our time. It’s where folks like Sarah Rohr come in.

Rohr works with Cure:PNW, a group that works to address political and ideologically driven violence through

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a public health approach. This includes workshops for community organizations on de-escalation, creating space for individuals across ideological lines to feel seen and heard and providing mechanisms to stop potential incidents before they happen. It's an offshoot of Cure Violence Global, which was founded in 1995 by Dr. Gary Slutkin, a former senior executive at the World Health Organization, to reduce violence in the West Garfield Park neighborhood of Chicago, then one of the most violent neighborhoods in the city. After a year, CVG's work had reduced the number of shootings in the neighborhood by 67 percent, and the approach spread to some of the most violent places on earth, including post-invasion Iraq, cartel-dominated areas of Mexico, and in Kenya's Rift Valley.

"Gary became concerned in 2020, seeing what was happening, and targeted the Pacific Northwest because of how our communities host a considerable number of white nationalists," Rohr said.

Cure:PNW's team includes folks from across the ideological spectrum – from Antifa and Black Block activists to conservative pastors with connections to participants in the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. Their intervention work is based on the idea of "credible messengers;" that de-escalation is most effective when it's done by people who a potentially violent individual can identify with and connect to. What it turned out that group was missing was an understanding of Jewish experience.

"Part of the reason I was hired is because when [Portland Association of Teachers] got specific about their desire to support the Palestinian sovereignty movement, that's when my colleagues got wise to the fact that there was actually a lot of antisemitism operating," Rohr said. "They were looking for specifically a Jewish voice to speak to that, to give them grounding in that."

Rohr brought a pair of the pastors that are involved with Cure:PNW to an event hosted by the Anti-Defamation League, which left a distinct impression.

"They were like, 'whoa. Your community is in a lot of pain and people are understandably scared,'" Rohr explained, "and they became credible messengers for us. That was my intent of bringing them in. Now we have credible messengers in these Christian communities who can speak more soundly."

Cure:PNW was initially funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, funds which they have been able to pass on through their own grant making process, including to Tisch PDX and Co/Lab to bridge divisions within the Jewish community.

"We did a conflict resilience training, and a lot of the people came into the room, I didn't know this, but they didn't really want to be there," Rohr said. "Some of them even said it to me afterwards, 'I didn't really want to be here. This was great. Can we do it again?'"

Conversations like these are not about convincing anyone of anything other than the human dignity of those sitting around the table – those they disagree with.

"It's really trying to rehumanize because it's so easy to cancel, so easy to dehumanize, but that's pretty much the playbook of authoritarianism: get people isolated, get people siloed and get people not talking to each other in hard situations," Rohr said.

Outside of a mediated workshop environment, the credible messenger model doesn't hinge on convincing those you disagree with of your humanity, but upholding the humanity of those you disagree with to those you agree with.

"The way to reach them is by finding the shared issues. Talking about their fears, talking to the misinformation and disinformation continuums that are on all sides. Doing tacit teaching and implicit teaching," Rohr said. "Sometimes our work is couched in just getting a cup of coffee with someone."

It's not for the faint of heart.

"I really think of it as is that love for my fellow human beings, even the ones that I can't stand their particular viewpoints," Rohr explained. "And I think that is actually really rooted in my Jewish tradition."

Learn more about Cure:PNW's work online at [cure-pnw.org](http://cure-pnw.org).

Sunshine's book, "Neo-Nazi Terrorism and Countercultural Fascism: The Origins and Afterlife of James Mason's Siege," can be found at Powell's Books, on Amazon, or through its publisher, Routledge. Learn more about Sunshine's work at [spencersunshine.com](http://spencersunshine.com).

If you have any safety or security concerns, please reach out to Anderson via email or cell, at [janderson@securecommunitynetwork.org](mailto:janderson@securecommunitynetwork.org) or 872-273-9214.



## Changemakers applications open now

*Jewish Federations of North America*

The Jewish Changemakers Fellowship engages young Jewish adults, ages 21-27, in a six-week online leadership experience. We are now recruiting for the Winter 2025 session, beginning Feb. 11, and Spring 2025 session, beginning Apr. 22.

Participants will meet inspiring professionals and peers in a national fellowship that aims to expand their networks, hone their leadership skills, and jumpstart their careers. Nominate someone to be a Fellow at <https://jfna.addaptation.com/nomination> or apply yourself at <https://changemakers.jewishfederations.org/>

## Sen. Wyden brings *chutzpah* to Newmark

*The Jewish Review staff*

Sen. Ron Wyden's new book identifies a central attribute in his career: *chutzpah*.

Wyden will discuss his volume, "It Takes Chutzpah: How to fight fearlessly for progressive causes," alongside Port of Portland Commissioner Rukaiyah Adams Wednesday, Jan. 22 at 7:30 pm the Newmark Theater in Portland in an event hosted by Powell's Books. The book explores the meaning of *chutzpah*, a Yiddish word that roughly translates to "audacity," Tickets are \$40, include a copy of the book, and can be purchased at [portland5.com](http://portland5.com)

**SUBSCRIBE:** [jewishportland.org/subscribe](http://jewishportland.org/subscribe)

## COGAN (continued from page 1)

Lincoln High School and as President of B'nai B'rith Girls in Portland. It was during this time that she met Arnold, who became her husband of 70 years, at a B'nai B'rith dance when the pair of them had recently arrived in the area – Arnold from Maine, Elaine from Brooklyn. The pair married when they were juniors at Oregon State University. They returned to Portland where they both set to work to serve their community. Arnold is well known as an architect of Oregon's Senate Bill 100, the foundation of the state's land use planning system which is still seen as a model of land use planning nationwide and was the state's first land use planning director. Elaine was there every step of the way, her expertise in communications paving the way for the state's groundbreaking policies.

"They did everything together," van Brocklin said of her parents. "That was what kept them going."

Elaine Cogan was a stay-at-home mom to her three children, but that was far from all she was doing. She wrote a public affairs column for the *Oregon Journal*, which continued after the paper's absorption by *The Oregonian*. She became involved in the League of Women Voters – becoming its President – and later sat on the Portland Development Commission and the board of directors of Providence Medical Center, eventually chairing both. Later, when she resided at Miramont Pointe Assisted Living, she chaired the residents' council – naturally.

Her work connected her with Gov. Tom McCall's efforts to stave off political violence in 1970 through the Vortex music festival, and President Lyndon Johnson's Model Cities program; work that put her on the leading edge of civil rights work in the city and led to the development of the Portland's neighborhood associations – work which Cogan called "one of the most pivotal experiences of my life."

"Portland was practically an all-white city," Cogan told Anne LeVant Prah in an oral history interview for the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education in 2015. "I became part of the steering committee. The chair was a wonderful black businessman who became a very good friend of mine. He told me when he met me, 'Elaine, I know I can trust you. When I grew up in Cincinnati, I was a young, poor boy. I got a job at for a furniture store run by a Jewish family. They were so good to me; they helped me buy clothes for school. They fed me...' He said, 'You're Jewish. That's all I need to know.'"

That Judaism was an enormous part of her family's life. Van Brocklin recalled that Friday night dinners in the Cogan home near Mount Tabor were mandatory, and that she was one of the first girls to have a *bit mitzvah* at Neveh Shalom. Cogan also wrote (and re-wrote) her family's Passover *haggadah*, amended Dore Schary's "Hanukkah Home Service" for her family's use, and even led Neveh Shalom's effort to rewrite their prayer book to remove gendered references to G-d – a passion project of hers.

"With people today using pronouns, giving their pronouns, and doing other things to be aware of language and the way we speak about ourselves and others," van Brocklin said, "I thought her interest in doing that regarding references to G-d was definitely ahead of the curve here in Oregon."



From left, Elaine Cogan, z"l, and her husband, Arnold Cogan, z"l, display their family *haggadah* in this undated photograph. Elaine wrote - and re-wrote - the volume, as well as helping craft a prayer book for Congregation Neveh Shalom and her three books on public communications. (Courtesy Sue van Brocklin)

"I was critical for some time over the reference to G-d as a 'he,' as a 'him.' So, I'm talking to [Rabbi Joshua Stampfer, z"l] one day, and said I had looked at other prayer books and there was nothing that was satisfactory," Cogan told OJM-CHE in her oral history. "Rabbi Stampfer said, 'Well then let's write our own.'"

Of course, Cogan was chair of the committee that produced "*Oneg Shabbat*," (The Joy of the Sabbath) but her most widely known written works are almost certainly "You Can Talk to (Almost) Anyone about (Almost) Anything: a Speaking Guide for Business and Professional People," which she co-authored with Portland State University's Ben Pardow, "Successful Public Meetings," which is in its second edition and "Now That You're on Board: How to Survive and Thrive as a Planning Commissioner." She also served as interim editor of *The Jewish Review* and, in what her daughter called her proudest literary achievement, self-published the collected childhood stories of her husband in "The Boyhood Adventures of Jimmy & Arnold."

In 1975, Cogan and her husband founded their own firm, Cogan and Associates (eventually Cogan Owens Greene), bringing his planning expertise and her communications talents under one roof. While they each had their individual clients, they also collaborated on a variety of projects. Van Brocklin explained they went to the office together, ate lunch together and came home to make dinner together.

Cogan remained engaged in public affairs. For seven years, she hosted a program on KGW-AM radio, interviewing elected officials and other leaders, and continued to offer political commentary for local TV stations long after. She was much more than a local light – her reputation in the fields of public speaking and strategic communications was national. She continued her column in *The Oregonian* for 15 years and regularly wrote for the national trade publication

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*Planning Commissioners' Journal* for almost two decades.

"Elaine leaves an indelible legacy of accomplishment that transformed both the Jewish community in Portland and our entire city into better places for everybody with her many civic contributions and skills as an author and journalist," Sen. Ron Wyden said. "But my lasting memories of Elaine are just as much of her grace, good humor and kindness that made her like a second mom to me. She was always there for me and countless others to offer both a nosh and her good counsel."

"Initially through her incredible assistance with the Clackamas County Complete Communities project, and ongoing through much of my career, Elaine became a friend and a mentor," Portland City Administrator Michael Jordan said. "Elaine was quite small in physical stature, but a giant in the world of public engagement. I learned so much from her."

Cogan and her husband were motivated to work so hard to leave so much impact in so many areas by a most fundamental Jewish value, her daughter explained, recalling a reception the couple hosted at their home, one of a regular series of gatherings for their various professional and personal circles that, naturally, attracted quite the guest list.

"They spoke of *tikkun olam*, of repairing the world," van Brocklin recalled.

"I think above all, that was their philosophy; we are going to give back more than more than we've been given so that we can leave this place a little better."

There was also time for family – the Cogans went as a bunch to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland each year prior to the COVID pandemic. When they eventually had grandchildren, they celebrated them, too. As van Brocklin's middle daughter's birthday almost always landed around the weekend of the Portland Rose Festival Grand Floral Parade, Cogan and her husband made a party of it, staking out a spot at the crest of the Burnside Bridge, the very center of Portland, and even paying the neighborhood kids to go mark off space at 3 am before the parade to secure a large enough area for 50 or so guests. The birthday cake was homemade, like almost every other baked good in the family, as Cogan was a prolific baker.

Beyond her devotion to her work, her community, her husband and her family, Cogan was also passionate about tea. In 1983, Cogan was in New York on a work trip and tried to get a cup of tea at a restaurant. She was disappointed with the results, particularly compared to what she had become accustomed to back home. Ever the writer, she expressed her disappointment in a letter to the editor of *The New York Times*. In November, the paper published her letter – a week later, the paper's editorial

board weighed on the subject – firmly in agreement with Cogan.

"Mrs. Cogan has a point," the *Times* said. "Her prior, implied point concerns Coffee Bigots. They are people who think it is somehow un-American or unmanly or troublemaking to drink tea - and scorn those who do as Tea Snobs."

Looking to fix the problem, Cogan set about crafting and marketing her own tea by mail order under the banner "Elaine's Tea Company." The venture lasted three years, but one of her blends of Keemun, Darjeeling, Ceylon, and Assam black teas is still available from Connecticut's Harney & Sons as "[Elaine's Blend.](#)"

"We had orders, but we just couldn't sustain it. I had to make a decision, did I want to be a consultant, or did I want to be a tea maven?" Cogan told OJM-CHE in 2015. "I should have chosen the tea maven!"

Cogan is survived by her three children, Mark Cogan (P.J.), Sue van Brocklin (Robert) and Leonard Cogan; her six grandchildren, Joshua and Annabelle Cogan; Elizabeth (Bryan Rahija), Kate and Meg van Brocklin; and Rodrigo Cogan Ponce; and two great-grandchildren, Jovie and Remy Rahija.

A memorial service was held Sunday, Dec. 22, at Congregation Neveh Shalom in Portland. Donations in Cogan's memory can be directed to the Congregation Neveh Shalom Tribute Fund and the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education.

## VOLUNTEER (continued from page 4)

"A lot of organizations do not allow children, even middle-school-aged children; they don't have the opportunities for them to come in and volunteer directly," Glass noted. This is a really nice way for PJA and PJ Library to offer opportuni-

ties that are geared toward younger children; a way to do some of that service that they can't traditionally do."

Those families can do as much or as little as they want or as their schedule allows – activities will be open throughout the event

to drop in and lend a hand. Glass also emphasized that all children and families are welcome.

"If you're not involved already with PJ Library, PJA, the JCC or Federation, we still want you to come and participate and feel

like you've been able to do something for our community on that day," she said.

More information and registration is available at [pjaproud.org/prospective-families/k-8th-grade/service-learning/work-for-the-world-fair](http://pjaproud.org/prospective-families/k-8th-grade/service-learning/work-for-the-world-fair).



Click the logo for the latest episode of The Jewish Review Podcast

# Fuks' "Alma de Luna" to premier in August

Playwright, author and actor David Fuks is having a particularly active, creative year. His play, "Alma de Luna," will have a world premiere at Hillsboro Artist's Regional Theatre during the first three weekends of August 2025.

"Alma de Luna" was first written by Fuks as a novella in 2015. The play had a staged reading during the Fertile Ground Festival in 2019. In the play, Luna Gomez has grown up in a house laden with her parents' unresolved grief over the death of her older sister Alma. Alma was nine years old when she died protecting her then three-year-old sister. Alma has been haunting and protecting Luna since that day more than twenty years ago. Luna must confront her parents and help them face their loss to set her sister's spirit and herself free.

The production of the play is a collaboration with [Hillsboro Artist's Regional Theatre](#) (HART) a 501c3 charitable corporation and [Invisible Friend Productions, LLC](#), Fuks' production company. The production of this play provides HART Theatre with an opportunity to expand its audience and reach out to the growing Latino community in Hillsboro.

HART Theatre has been an asset to Hillsboro for 30 years. Its work as a community theatre has been a resource for generations and its productions have reflected a history of volunteerism and community. By seeking to undertake this new collaborative project Hart will: Share a beautiful fable with the community; Make the tickets available to under-represented community members on a "pay as you wish" or complementary basis; Broaden the scope of HART Theatre to include Equity-level productions.

His most recent play, "Conciliation" is focused on two families impacted by the Holocaust. It portrays a fictional therapy session taking place in Berlin where a German family (who are descendants of Nazis) and an American Jewish family (who are descendants of Holocaust survivors) work together in an effort to develop mutual understanding. This play will have a staged reading in collaboration with the Fertile Ground Festival in April of 2025. The event will be video recorded and made available to OJMCHE as a teaching tool.

"Alma de Luna" was inspired by the Dybbuk, a remarkable Yiddish Theatre ghost story about unresolved grief. "I am thrilled to have this opportunity to create this world premiere. Our Director, Nelda Reyes and the Artistic Director of Hart, Harrison Butler, have been a delight to work with," Fuks shared. "I hope our community will join us in August for this unique production."

Those wishing to make a charitable contribution to this production can contact HART Theatre (185 SE Washington St., Hillsboro, OR 97123 or online - <https://hart.ludus.com/donate.php>).

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# State Treasurer Steiner achieves many firsts in political career rooted in Jewish values

By JENN DIRECTOR KNUDSEN  
*Congregation Neveh Shalom*

Newly inaugurated State Treasurer Elizabeth Steiner has built a career on her Jewish values – a career that has seen her achieve a litany of "firsts."

Her 2024 victory over Republican opponent and former fellow state Sen. Brian Boquist means Steiner, a Democrat, is Oregon's first female, first physician and first openly LGBTQ+ treasurer since statehood was enacted in 1859.

She's also the first Jewish treasurer since the 1800s, confirmed Kerry Tymchuk, executive director of the Oregon Historical Society (and a personal friend of Steiner's). During the Civil War, Louis Fleischner, born in present-day Czech Republic, became Oregon's first Jewish treasurer during the Civil War. In this role, Steiner is the state's banker and chief investment officer.

Steiner entered politics in December 2011, when she was tapped to fill the state senate seat vacated by Rep. Suzanne Bonamici after her election to Congress. Steiner won reelection four times – serving thirteen years as an Oregon senator, representing District 17 – before resigning her seat the day after Election Day 2024.

"I felt strongly before entering politics that I could use my skills to be in service to people in a different way than I did when primarily practicing and teaching medicine," says Steiner, who has been a family physician for almost 35 years.

She says that many of her legislative victories include "introducing, championing and building a coalition for" bills that became law in the name of *pikuach nefesh*, saving a life.

They include protecting young people from cancer, heart and lung disease by ensuring no one under 21 can legally purchase tobacco products or e-cigarettes; implementing a voluntary Universal Home Visiting program for new parents; and safeguarding reproductive rights and gender-affirming care for all Oregonians.

In her new four-year position, her big-picture plans include implementing a child savings account that young adults can access upon their 18th birthday; working to reduce the carbon footprint of Oregon's investment portfolio by 50 percent; and launching a plan to help every family in Oregon build at least \$1,000 in an emergency savings account.

"It's an ambitious goal, but I think it's doable," she said. "It would be transformative."

Ambitious, transformative – and completely in keeping with Steiner's approach to government.

"It's clear to me that Elizabeth entered the public-service arena for the same reason she became a physician – and that's a total commitment to helping people and improving their lives," said Tymchuk, whose institution played host to Steiner's Jan. 6 inauguration ceremony.

"It's how I've always understood *tikkun olam* (repairing the world)," Steiner said.

A version of this article originally appeared in the January 2025 edition *The Chronicle* – A publication of *Congregation Neveh Shalom*, available online at [nevehshalom.org/chronicle](https://nevehshalom.org/chronicle).

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## NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

JAN 22

JAN 16

# Practice makes prepared

By JESSICA ANDERSON

The news from this past week only reinforces our knowledge that things happen - anytime, anywhere. Our communities are well aware of the importance of safety. However, despite this, it's not uncommon to encounter complacency or a lack of action when it comes to actually implementing security measures and following best practices. This is where the importance of emergency drills and having a plan becomes crucial. And I challenge you with this - When was the last time your community or your family conducted (or even discussed) a drill or what you would do in an emergency?

Emergency drills are more than just a routine task; they are a tool for breaking through complacency and ensuring that individuals are not only aware of potential dangers but are also prepared to respond effectively. Regular emergency drills can provide the motivation, practice, and framework needed to ensure that safety protocols are followed when it matters most. Unfortunately, in our day and age, they may also provide a degree of legal protection when an organization can demonstrate it shared these protocols with community members.

### Turn Awareness into Action

It's easy to acknowledge the importance of security and safety in principle, but when a crisis arises, people often fail to act because they haven't internalized the necessary procedures. Some community members may think, "The chances of any-



*Jessica Anderson is the Portland-area Director of Community Security. She was previously an FBI agent for 24 years. This position is funded by SCN (the official safety and security organization of the Jewish community in North America) and a local three-way partnership of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, Oregon Jewish Community Foundation Endowment Fund and multiple Jewish organizations in the region.*

thing happening are so low," or "I'll just follow what everyone else is doing," but when an actual emergency occurs, responses can lead to confusion and delays. In emergencies, humans naturally look to each other to figure out what to do, and if no one knows what to do or nobody has a plan, this uses up valuable time. This is why Secure Community Network (SCN) has such a focus on training. We know training builds the skills that help you react efficiently - in ANY kind of big or small emergency.

Emergency drills help bridge the gap between awareness and action. Drills offer a structured and repetitive opportunity to practice responses - ideally, with enough frequency that they become instinctual. The more frequently people rehearse security protocols the more likely they are to follow protocols in a real situation. Even running small, informal tabletop discussions can help.

### Cultivate the Muscle Memory of Safety

In high-stress situations, panic can set in, and individuals might be paralyzed by fear or indecision. It's

hard to know how emergencies get processed in the brain and everyone reacts differently. By increasing familiarity with a process, we increase the chance that someone will step in and lead during a situation. It's precisely in these moments that instinctual reactions and well-rehearsed behaviors can make the difference. By participating in drills, even ones executed methodically and slowly, we can build up our skills. I'm confident that nobody who has experienced an emergency and previously had training ever said that the training didn't help.

### Overcome Complacency and Build a Culture of Safety

Even in our communities, complacency can arise—particularly in places where there hasn't been a direct threat for some time - and we've been relatively lucky here in the PNW for a long time. This is a natural human tendency that we need to be aware of and actively push back upon. This is not about creating a culture of fear but rather developing matter of fact, routine approaches to the realities of living in this era.

Regular drills or even the discussion of procedures

See SECURITY, page 14

## The Zionist Exception to free speech

By BOB HORENSTEIN

In September 2015, a 124-page report was issued by the far-left Center for Constitutional Rights and an organization called Palestine Legal. Entitled “The Palestine Exception to Free Speech,” the report described a movement in support of Palestinian rights that is “under attack in the US.” It alleged that pro-Palestinian activists were being systematically silenced by “Israel advocacy groups.”

Although the report garnered little attention from the American Jewish community at the time, the claim that Palestinian voices are being suppressed should sound very familiar nine years later. Notably, both the CCR and Palestine Legal, which vocally supported the Hamas-friendly protests that erupted on college campuses after October 7, 2023, are continuing to allege that an organized (read: Zionist) campaign is censoring pro-Palestinian faculty and student speech.

The claim has gained traction. A petition initiated in Dec. 2023 by the Faculty for Justice in Palestine at Syracuse University denouncing “the increasingly repressive climate on our campuses across the US” has been signed by over 1,150 scholars. In November, several schools and departments of Portland State University cosponsored a screening of “The Palestine Exception,” a film directed by two PSU professors about university policies that are purportedly stifling pro-Palestinian activism.

And it’s not just the college campuses. Teachers’ unions, such as the Portland Association of Teachers, are organizing “Know Your Rights” programs to counter what they say are efforts to suppress pro-Palestinian voices in middle and high school classrooms. Accordingly, teachers have the right to wear a keffiyeh or put up a large Palestinian flag in their classrooms whereas Jewish parents and students have absolutely no right to complain about anti-Israel bias.

In fact, the notion that the voices of

pro-Palestinian activists are being suppressed is patently absurd. According to a study by Harvard and the University of Connecticut, in the first eight months after the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, there were 12,400 pro-Palestinian protests throughout the US, more than five times the number of pro-Israel events, many of which were vigils or protests for the release of the hostages.

Additionally, there are now over 300 active Students for Justice in Palestine chapters on college campuses. Their protests are often amplified by pro-Palestinian faculty, anti-Zionist Jews, and radical local labor unions. While it’s true that a small number of SJP chapters have been suspended by their universities, it’s because of repeated harassment of Jewish students, including threats of violence.

The claim that the pro-Palestinian movement is being silenced isn’t merely unfounded, it’s truly the height of hypocrisy. After all, just who is trying to silence whom? What about the Zionism exception to free speech?

The National SJP and many SJP chapters have called for “Zionists”—any Jewish students who identify or have any association with Israel—to be removed from campus spaces or from universities altogether. SJP chapters have also called on universities to ban Hillel from campus and terminate Israeli visiting scholar programs.

For years, the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions movement, of which SJP is a chief driver, has routinely disrupted pro-Israel speakers on college campuses, organized campaigns to boycott Israeli academic institutions, and engaged in actions that impede the ability of Jewish university students to freely express their Zionist identities. Their activism and tactics have undermined and threatened to erode well-established principles of academic freedom and free speech on a growing number of US campuses.

In one particularly egregious case,



*Bob Horenstein is the Director of Community Relations and Public Affairs for the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.*

Law Students for Justice in Palestine at the University of California, Berkeley voted in 2022 to adopt a bylaw in their constitution stating that they “will not invite speakers who have expressed and continue to hold views—or host/sponsor/promote events—in support of Zionism.” Twenty-two other law student groups followed suit. No exception was made even for Berkeley Law School Dean Erwin Chemerinsky, who considers Zionism integral to his Jewish identity.

On a personal level, I, too, have experienced BDS tactics firsthand. After I had been accepted to speak on antisemitism and anti-Zionism at the annual Northwest Public Employees Diversity Conference in Portland in October, I was informed by the organizers that the anti-Zionist group, Jewish Voice for Peace, had implored them to remove me from the schedule. When that failed, a group of JVP activists stood in front of the Oregon Convention Center, where the conference was held, urging attendees to boycott my talk (I had the highest attendance of all the morning breakout sessions).

The “Palestine exception” claim fits in with all the other false narratives perpetuated by the BDS movement—claims of apartheid, genocide, settler colonialism. The pro-Israel community needs to find more effective ways to counter these lies and distortions. It starts with vigorously challenging the Zionism exception.

*A version of this article was originally published in the Jan. 6 edition of Jerusalem Report magazine.*

**Free online subscription: [jewishportland.org/subscribe](https://jewishportland.org/subscribe)**

## ELAINE COGAN

See story, page 1.

## EMILY KIPNIS

Congregation Neveh Shalom is so sad to announce the unexpected and untimely passing of Emily Kipnis, z"l, daughter of Ellen and Paul Kipnis, sister of Allison Kipnis, after a 10-year struggle with mental health.

The funeral was held Tuesday, Dec. 24, 2024, at Neveh Zedek Cemetery. The family is asking for donations in memory of Emily be made to the Hesed Shel Emet fund through the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

## Events

More upcoming community events online at [jewishportland.org/community-calendar](http://jewishportland.org/community-calendar)

### Jan. 11: Spotlight on the Sacred

Congregation Kesser Israel spotlights the work of the traditional Jewish burial society with guest speaker Robin Meyerson at 7:30 pm at the Portland Kollel. Free, registration requested. For more information or to register, visit [kesserisrael.org/event/Hevra](http://kesserisrael.org/event/Hevra).

### Jan. 12: A Spiritual Path in Marriage

Tree-part workshop series at

Congregation Kesser Israel with Jacob Spillman, LMFT Sundays at 7 pm. Registration required at [kesserisrael.org/event/marriage](http://kesserisrael.org/event/marriage). For more information, email [mcarr@kesserisrael.org](mailto:mcarr@kesserisrael.org)

### Jan. 14: Winter Sephardic Film Festival

Screening of "Glickman" at Congregation Ahavath Achim at 7 pm. Free. RSVP at [info@ahavathachim.com](mailto:info@ahavathachim.com).

### Jan. 15: Legacy of Love

The family kindly asks members of the community to refrain from reaching out to them at this time.

## ELLA STERN

It is with deep sadness that Congregation Shaarie Torah announces the passing of Ella Stern, z"l. Ella passed away on Saturday, Jan. 4, 2025 at the age of 69.

She is survived by husband David; daughter Anna Stern (Michael) Lipke; and grandchildren Samuel and Alexis Lipke.

The funeral was held Monday, Jan. 6, 2025 at Neveh Zedek Cemetery.

Three-part series on ethical wills each Wednesday at 10 am at Congregation Neveh Shalom through Jan. 29. Register at [members.nevehshalom.org/form/eth25](http://members.nevehshalom.org/form/eth25).

### Jan. 16: Art, Heart and Soul

Drawing workshop sponsored by ORA: Northwest Jewish Artists and Congregation Neveh Shalom at 7 pm at CNS. \$30. Register at [members.nevehshalom.org/form/AHS25](http://members.nevehshalom.org/form/AHS25).

### Jan 17: Noontime

### Concert with Mavrothi T. Kontanis

Free concert at Eastside Jewish Commons at Noon. More information at [ejcpdx.org/events](http://ejcpdx.org/events).

### Jan. 17: "Shishi" Shabbat

Israeli-American Shabbat Dinner at Congregation Neveh Shalom at 6 pm. \$6 per person. Register at [members.nevehshalom.org/form/shishi-shabbat-dinner-2025.html](http://members.nevehshalom.org/form/shishi-shabbat-dinner-2025.html).

## SECURITY (continued from page 12)

promote a culture of safety within the community. When people see their leaders and peers taking emergency procedures seriously—whether it's practicing evacuations or discussing security measures—they are more likely to follow suit. For Jewish community leaders, regular drills provide an opportunity to model the behavior they want to see in others. If leaders demonstrate a commitment to safety by participating actively in drills, it sends a strong message that it's a shared responsibility and that they care about you.

### Reduce the Risk of Panic

In times of crisis, panic can spread wildly, clouding judgment and preventing people from making clear decisions.

This is especially true if people are unsure of what to do or where to go. When individuals are unfamiliar with the procedures and have not practiced responding to an emergency, the likelihood of chaos increases significantly. Emergency drills and safety communication teach people where to gather, where to go, and how to communicate, which significantly reduces the risk of confusion and panic. Drills can also reveal weaknesses in a plan and provide opportunities to improve and adjust processes.

### Ensure Community Resilience

Finally, regular emergency drills increase our resiliency as a community. While individual preparedness is

important, the effectiveness of any emergency response relies heavily on coordinated action. Drills allow individuals to practice working together as a team -whether it's evacuating a building or communicating with local authorities, knowing how to work in concert with others is essential for minimizing risk and ensuring the safety of all members. When members come together for drills, they reinforce the idea that everyone's safety is a shared concern, and that, in times of crisis, cooperation is key to surviving and recovering.

### 2025

My plan for the Federation offices this year is to complete two drills, and I ask you, your family, and your

organization to join me in this. Maybe it's a physical drill and maybe it's a tabletop discussion where you map out a response to a situation. It all counts! Unfortunately for us, the coordinated Great Shakeout drill always occurs in October. We may be unable to join because of High Holiday observances, but they offer a template for coordinated and reoccurring action. Let's build this muscle memory together, this year. Check out <https://www.shakeout.org> for earthquake drill and planning and reach out to me if you'd like help planning a drill or discussion in your community or family. I can always be reached at [janderson@secrecommunitynetwork.org](mailto:janderson@secrecommunitynetwork.org) or 872-273-9214.