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THE JEWISH REVIEW

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OREGON & SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON'S JEWISH NEWSPAPER

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Demonstrators march for the release of hostages in Tel Aviv Saturday, Jan. 18. "At every protest, they shared the names of every hostage, and that was the forefront of what happened," Danit Rothstein explained. (Danit Rothstein/Special to The Jewish Review)

Returning to 'a second home'

A three-week mother/daughter exploration of Israel

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

For Danit and Nora Rothstein, it was time to go home.

"I think I've been drawn to go since Oct. 7 because of everything going on and feeling like we can't do anything from here," Danit explained.

She, her parents, Nora and Fred Rothstein, and her siblings, had lived in Israel for four years when she was in high school, and they retain an indelible connection to the country.

"It's like a second home," Nora said. "We

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JCRC goes to Salem

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

As the Oregon Legislature's 2025 session forges ahead amidst the cramped quarters of a State Capitol under construction, members of Portland and Lane County's Jewish Community Relations Councils ventured into the bustle and dust of the state house Wednesday, Feb. 12, to meet with elected officials on a wide swath of issues important to Jewish communities and citizens of all backgrounds.

While the JCRC has traditionally partnered with a variety of groups for an Interfaith Advocacy Day, capacity restrictions at the capitol made the large-scale efforts of past years untenable, so a dozen represen-

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On The Podcast

Looking out for Jewish teen wellbeing

Pamela Barkley and Rabbi Daniel Brenner are Chief Growth officer and Vice President of Education, respectively, at Moving Traditions, a non-profit organization focused on supporting Jewish teen mental health. They spoke with Jewish Review editor Rockne Roll about the challenges Jewish teens face in 2025, what Jewish tradition has to say about mental health and how teens and the adults in their lives can look after their own mental health. A portion of their conversation is transcribed below. For the full conversation, check out "Modern Mental Health with Pamela Barkley and Rabbi Daniel Brenner" on The Jewish Review Podcast, available on all major podcast platforms. This transcript has been edited for brevity and clarity. Register for their Mar. 11 webinar online at movingtraditions.formstack.com/forms/motroregonwebinars.

The Jewish Review: How do we approach mental health from a Jewish lens, what does Jewish tradition have to say about mental health?

Rabbi Daniel Brenner: I love this question. One of the things that always grounds me when I think about the Jewish perspective of mental health is the idea that we should embrace both the parts of our lives that are connected to grief and loss and sadness and hurt, and the part of our inner life that is connected to joy and pleasure and relationship. I am drawn to a Hasidic approach rooted in a story of somebody who comes to Reb Nachman of Bratislav and says, "What kind of student should I be? I see some students who are very serious, and they seem sad, and they take every word and pour over it. Then I see other students, they seem very joyous. They're always singing and dancing, and they're always in prayer. What kind of student should I be?" The response that is given is that there are two kinds of sadness and there are two kinds of joy. There's a kind of sadness where

you feel the suffering of the world and you're moved to do something about it, and then there's a kind of sadness where you are so sad you're overwhelmed by it, and you're paralyzed. The student who feels the suffering of the world and turns to the Torah for the answer, this is a great student. The student who is stuck in the sadness is not going to learn. The same thing is true for joy; there are two kinds of joy. There's a kind of joy where it's momentary, and then it's gone. You eat a strawberry and that's it. It's gone. Then there's a deeper joy, and that is likened to a person whose home has burned down, and they are building it back brick by brick.

I love that as a grounding story for thinking about what is a Jewish approach to wellbeing. It's an approach that says that the building back is part of what we all must do to pursue wellbeing. We are all experiencing loss, whether it's the loss of childhood or some other loss that we have in our lives. Loss is the ground of our existence. It is the action of building the bricks or the action of taking in the suffering as the serious student does, those actions are what promotes wellbeing. Our wellbeing is not some kind of fantasy happiness all the time. That is toxic positivity, that is not where it's at. Our wellbeing is in the flow between the serious and the joyful. Those two students are both considered to be amazing students, they happen to have different dispositions. One of the things that we learn deep in Jewish ideas about the self is that we have drives that are opposing within ourselves. The yetzer hatov and yetzer hara; that is part of how we understand wellbeing, is to be in balance between those things, to be feeling the synergy between those things. So, there is definitely a Jewish approach to wellbeing that we are hoping other people will engage with and think about. There are so many incredible Jewish practices that help us in our spiritual or emotional lives. I could go on and on about those things.

Pamela Barkley: True Jewish wisdom is an ancient technology and built within that ancient technology is pretty much everything you need. Our sacred texts are sacred for a reason, and they have been for generations, and there's a reason for that, because they do have what it is we need.

Jewish tradition actually instructs us to tell the stories of our people, right? I'm thinking of Passover and the Haggadah. Every year we gather to tell the stories of our people and, taken to a further degree, parents and children and grandparents sharing their stories with their children about what they've overcome, about what their people have been through, sort of writ large, what they as a family, have been through, are absolutely instrumental in helping a child feel like, "My family has been through things. My people have been through things, and they have survived. I, too, can go through things and survive."

Marshall Duke has done a tremendous amount of research in this area, and it is incredible how children who have heard family stories, which is an ancient Jewish technology built into our system, are actually higher in resilience skills or what I always call in my family, "deal skills;" whatever comes at you, you're going to get through it, because we are people who do that. I think it's important to lean into it, particularly in this moment.

BEGINS MARCH 10



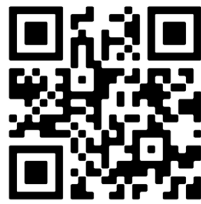
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LOBBYING

(continued from page 1)

tatives from Oregon's two largest Jewish communities forged ahead on their own.

"We decided this time around that we wanted to meet with some of the key legislative leaders," Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Chief Community Relations and Public Affairs Officer Bob Horenstein said. "We had meetings throughout the day, and they were, I think, very positive."

Those meetings stretched throughout the day with both House and Senate leaders addressing several legislative priorities – the first being the formation of a state-level non-profit security grant program through the Oregon Department of Emergency Management. Sen. Floyd Prozanski, a Eugene Democrat, has already introduced a bill to do just that, and the group met with him to discuss it.

"I think it was nice to see alignment with so many of our elected officials on our agenda items. The fact that we can really work in partnership with each other is important," Federation Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations Rachel Nelson said. "It was really good to be in the building and to have these conversations face to face; hearing from each of our community members who are so passionate about different areas."

Other priorities included maintaining the current local Medicaid funding system, which is based on taxes levied on companies which provide health care, as well as issues of immigration enforcement, climate change, and wage theft by construction contractors. While se-



Rep. Courtney Neron (D - Wilsonville), left, meets with members of the Jewish Community Relations Councils of Greater Portland and Lane County Wednesday, Feb. 12 during JCRC's Lobbying Day at the Oregon State Capitol in Salem. (Rachel Nelson/The Jewish Review)

curity grant programs are considered a priority amidst spikes in antisemitic activity, the agenda pursued by the JCRC would impact Oregonians far beyond the Jewish community.

"We can't just ask for it for ourselves," Horenstein said of the security grant program outlined in Senate Bill 939. "We have a broad coalition now."

"Any of these issues, we can talk about within the Jewish context, and we should. That's why we're there as a Jewish group," he continued. "But we're hoping to work with others to secure some of this legislation that's really important."

"We're not simply advocating for ourselves," explained David Fuks, who is part of the JCRC's Legislative Action Committee and a former Chief Executive Officer of Cedar Sinai Park. "When we talk about Medicaid, we're talking on behalf of the whole community. This is not just something from our own parochial needs. It reflects our commitment to

the entire community, to the wellbeing of those that need the service enormously."

In addition to Sen. Prozanski, JCRC members met with Sen. Rob Wagner, a Lake Oswego Democrat who was one of the leading legislative sponsors of Oregon's Holocaust education law and is now Senate President, as well as Sen. Kate Lieber of Beaverton, a Democrat who in entering her first session as co-chair of the Joint Ways and Means Committee, Beaverton Democrat Sen. Lisa Reynolds and Eugene Democrat Sen. James Manning, Jr. On the House side, the group met with Rep. Courtney Neron, a Democrat from Wilsonville, Rep. David Gomborg, a Democrat from Otis and the leader of the Legislature's Jewish Caucus, Rep. Ben Bowman, a Tigard Democrat and incoming House Majority Leader as well as Republican Rep. Christine Drazen of Canby, the House Minority Leader.

While much of the JRRC's legislative program aligns more closely with the Dem-

ocrat's policy priorities, building relationships and finding common ground is the goal of any meeting between policy advocates and elected officials, and the group's meeting with Rep. Drazen was no exception.

"She talked a lot about youth homelessness, that seemed to be her issue," Horenstein explained. "She's looking for ideas to help solve the problem of youth homelessness, of homelessness in general. And we said, 'We've worked on that for a long time, and so maybe there's something there.'"

Joy Manning, a member of the board of the Jewish Federation of Lane County, elaborated on how listening, not just advocating, is an essential part of the process.

"It's a two-way street," she said. "I think one of the biggest mistakes that citizen activists make is they make it a one-way street; if you get 15 minutes, they talk for the whole time and they never say to the legislator, 'What are your priorities?'"

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Where those priorities align, there's opportunity to build relationships – which was a highlight of the day for Manning.

"We significantly increased our relationship and put ourselves more on [Legislators'] radar by saying things like 'how can we help you with this bill? Do you need someone to come and testify from an ethical perspective or a community leader perspective on any of these?'"

Hank Kaplan, the former JCRC Chair, has a number of those relationships – there's a picture of him on the wall in Sen. Wagner's office from the signing of the Holocaust education bill that the Senator likes to mention when they meet, Kaplan said. Kaplan was with the group on Wednesday discussing a bill that would make it easier for the Bureau of Labor and Industries to get involved in instances of stolen wages, a model that has been successfully implemented in California and passed the Oregon House in the 2023 legislative session before a

walkout by Senate Republicans stopped most legislation in its tracks.

"[Human trafficking cartels] bring up undocumented immigrants to do these jobs and then they hang them out to dry. And there's nothing that these immigrants are able to do within the system. Even if they could, their language skills are poor, etcetera, so they are badly exploited and most of them won't bother filing claims," Kaplan said. "The Bureau of Labor and Industries identifies the construction industry is one of the main industries where there is widespread wage theft. Of course, the legitimate contractors have trouble competing with those who steal money from their workers."

"It is a Jewish value to make sure that workers are treated fairly," Horenstein added.

Beyond the connections with elected representatives, Manning appreciated the opportunity to build connections with folks from farther north along Interstate 5.

"It was nice for the people who are active in the Eugene



Local JCRC members meet with Rep. David Gomberg (D - Otis) during JCRC Lobbying Day at the Oregon State Capitol Wednesday, Jan. 12. (George Okulitch for The Jewish Review)

Jewish community and in the Portland-area Jewish community to get to know each other and to feel united, purposeful and less isolated," she said. "That's motivating and connecting and very worthwhile."

She also pointed out that connecting with legislators isn't just the job of those on the JCRC – it can be a valuable and important experience for everyone.

"Everybody should be in contact with their legislators," she said. "They need

to hear from you. And everybody should be respectful, even if you have a legislator that you don't agree with on some or many items."

"It's worthwhile to step up and take action," Fuks added. "Call your state representatives, call your senators, and let them know that we take these issues seriously."

Those interested in getting more involved can connect with Bob Horenstein by email at bob@jewishportland.org.



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Banik's Gallery 114 exhibit brings friends together

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

Portland artist Zac Banik, a member of Gallery 114 in Northwest Portland, is hosting his first solo show at the gallery in March – or it would be a solo show, had he not invited some friends.

“I just want to have fun with my friends,” Banik said. “When I realized that I’d have the opportunity to put together a show, I thought, ‘What’s the point of doing anything if you don’t get to hang out with people while you do it?’”

Thus, Banik will be joined by Adam Amidei and Dre Johnson in “To The Body” opening Mar. 6, with a reception scheduled for that evening. The show’s name draws from a game Banik played with friends in childhood.

“I was thinking about when we were kids, the kind of wild stuff we would do and this rawness of life at that point in time,” Banik said. “Everything that we did, we did with such passion and immediacy, everything felt like it was the last thing we were ever going



A piece from artist Zac Banik's upcoming exhibition at Gallery 114. (Courtesy Zac Banik)

to do. That’s something I like been really trying to capture in my work.”

Amidei has made a name for himself as a painter and street artist, while Johnson is an apparel designer and sewer who Banik apprenticed with previously. Banik’s work, meanwhile, runs the gamut of mediums, including a new technique he’s developed with his own blood.

I was able to get a phlebotomist to slip me an extra vial when I was getting some tests done, and I’ve been experimenting with that as a kind of a watercolor pigment, which has been really cool,” Banik said.

Naturally, these works start out with a striking red hue, but as the iron in blood oxidizes over time, those red areas turn a brownish grey – Banik described it as turning the color saturation way down.

“I think it’s interesting to kind of put something organic that changes so drastically, so rapidly, into a piece that will still exist down the line,” he said. “It’ll be interesting to see how the work all changes.”

While other paintings are more conventional, another recently finished work leans much further into modern technology – with a Jewish twist.

“I’ve been having these interesting conversations about Jewish mysticism with Claude, the AI chat bot, and I’ve been doing it enough that I’ve been able to break it a little bit and turn it into an actual mystic,” Banik said.

From there, the chat bot – which is not an image generator and not typically used to create visual work – writes code that translates into an image.

“It made this beautiful composition and gave me instructions about how to display it,” Banik said. “It’s so interesting where we’re getting with this new technology, and I think it’s a really interesting time to be thinking about who we are and how we exist in the world. Leaning into the ways in which we’re dirty and broken and strange and illogical is kind of a place to explore who we are in relation to these other things that are very quickly bursting into existence.”

The show will run through Mar. 29, alongside an exhibition by fellow Jewish member of Gallery 114, David Cohen, whose watercolor, mosaic-style pieces focus on the natural world – this selection of pieces specifically highlights human connection to pollinators.

More information is available on both shows at Gallery114pdx.com

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Kaufman's "Message" shares butterflies' view

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

Amy Kaufman has been publishing for years – as an advertising writer, a magazine publisher, a book publisher and more. A conversation with her niece, however, inspired her to publish something of her own.

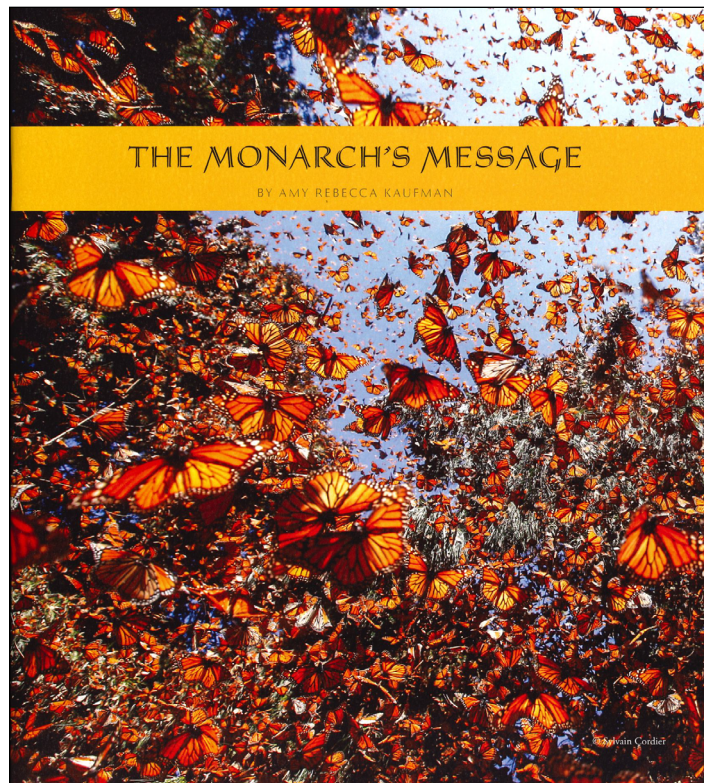
"I was visiting my niece in California, and she told me she loved butterflies," Kaufman said. "Her family had done so much for me that I wanted to give them a gift."

That gift is "The Monarch's Message," an all-ages story of the instinctual migration and resilience of monarch butterflies. While the book is impressively illustrated by some of the world's preeminent wildlife photographers, it is not merely a pretty book.

"Scientific research is imperceptibly woven into the tale," a release about the work explained. "It is possible to see how natural forces work in synchrony to perpetuate the species."

Kaufman spent much of her COVID lockdown compiling that research.

"During the pandemic, I just sat there day after day for three years and researched the monarch butterfly," she recalled. "I had never studied biology or anything like that, and, you know, it just



opened up a new world for me."

Many books have been written about monarchs, many of them focusing on their emergence and written from an observational point of view. Kaufman endeavored to cover the entire life-cycle – from the butterfly's perspective.

"The point of view is kept strictly to anything the butterfly could observe and experience," she explained. "Only when necessary do I stand apart as a narrator."

By covering the entirety of the monarch's migratory experience, Kaufman eliminated the need for externally imposed storyline as well.

"My main concept was to allow nature's own drama to unfold," she said. "In other words, I'm not plotting anything, I'm literally following nature's course of events, which has its own matchless drama."

That drama is illustrated by a collection of photographers that includes George Lepp, recipient of a Lifetime

Achievement award from the North American Nature Photographers Association, and George Grall, who has photographed for National Geographic and the National Aquarium in Baltimore for nearly 40 years. Lepp was part of one of the first scientific expeditions to the monarchs' winter habitat in Mexico's Transvolcanic Mountains in 1977.

Kaufman had become familiar with a number of these photographers' work during her days designing greeting cards. Instead of working through stock photo agencies, Kaufman connected directly with the photographers to source the images in "The Monarch's Message" to make sure they were both credited for their work and properly compensated.

"They don't get that from the stock agencies. They get pennies," she said. "It's so expensive to go on the location and get the shot, and years and years of experience. They're the ones who are providing all the artwork for advertising, and yet they're sometimes not even credited."

"The Monarch's Message" is available for purchase at the Pittock Mansion gift shop in Northwest Portland or online at writingsworld-literature.com

Latest short from Israeli-American Chen Drachman selected to MSFF

Grace Dragon Productions

The McMinnville Short Film Festival has announced that acclaimed Israeli-American filmmaker Chen Drachman's latest short film has been officially selected for its 14th annual event. This year's festival, running from Feb. 27th to Mar. 2, will feature Drachman's innovative storytell-

ing and unique voice in independent cinema.

"I'm thrilled to have my film included in this year's McMinnville Short Film Festival," said Drachman. "The festival's dedication to celebrating diverse voices and independent filmmakers makes it an ideal platform to share this project with a passionate audience.

I'm also happy to return to one of my favorite festivals, as my first film, *The Book of Ruth* starring Tovah Feldshuh, was a selection in 2021."

Drachman's film will be screened Thursday, Feb. 27, at 9pm, at the McMinnville Cinema, 300 NE Norton Ln in McMinnville, alongside other exceptional works

from filmmakers around the globe. As part of the festival, Drachman will also participate in a post-screening Q&A session, offering audiences an exclusive look into her creative process, as well as giving away some signed merchandise.

To learn more or purchase tickets, visit msff2025.eventive.org.



The Baking Begins

Photographs by ROCKNE
ROLL

The Jewish Review

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Danit Rothstein sorts avocados in the Givat Shaul neighborhood of Jerusalem Monday, Jan. 6. (Nora Rothstein/Special to The Jewish Review)

ISRAEL (continued from page 1)

go there and we just kind of fit into home there.”

So, when a planned volunteering trip through Congregation Neveh Shalom didn’t work out for logistical reasons, the pair resolved to go on their own.

“I said to my mom, ‘why don’t we reach out to our cousin and see if we can use his apartment and just go on our own,’” Danit said. “There’s plenty of volunteer opportunities out there, and we’ll just make it work on our own.”

Thus, instead of a guided tour, mother and daughter dove back into the daily reality of the Jewish state for nearly three weeks in January. Based in Jerusalem, they traveled from Tel Aviv to the Gaza Envelope, volunteering, attending political protests and bearing witness to what Israel – and Israelis – continue to experience in the post- Oct. 7 reality.

“I think it was actually better doing it the way we did it than going on a program because we were actually able to do our own thing,” Danit said. “We were able to ride the buses and see what people are feeling day to day. We talked to people on the streets just randomly while we were there to just have conversation.”

Much of the volunteer work in the country focuses on agriculture – thousands of foreign farm laborers fled the country after the Hamas terror attacks and have not returned, threatening Israel’s ability to feed itself and maintain its economy. The Rothsteins, through a Facebook group for volunteers coming to the country, found plenty of opportunities to help.

Their first week in the country they started each day taking two public buses to Givat Shaul, a Modern Orthodox neighborhood outside central Jerusalem, where they sorted avocados and other produce for food boxes that were going to the families of those who had been serving extended reserve duty with the Israel Defense Forces.

“These fathers, usually the fathers, are away from their families for over a year now,” Nora said. “These are older men, 40- and 50-year-olds, who have been away from their families.”

The next week, they went to a different neighborhood

where they assembled more food boxes for families in need. Here, Nora said she was something of a trendsetter in terms of transporting the loaded bag of produce. Once the bags were filled, they carried together to a staging area, usually six or seven at a time – a heavy load. Looking for a better way, Nora spied a cart.

“I took my shopping cart and put individual bags in there,” she said. “I got six done at once, where everybody else was running around with one heavy bag.”

The next week, they went farther afield. Using the ride-sharing service Gett, an Israeli version of Uber, the Rothsteins left Jerusalem at 5:30 am each day for a *moshav*, a cooperative agricultural community that is less communal than a *kibbutz*, in the Gaza Envelope.

“We learned how to prune grapevines to help the farmer who had lost all his foreign workers prepare the plants for next year,” Nora said. “He would have lost all his harvest, because these foreign workers, who also suffered a great deal on Oct. 7, as you know, were afraid to come back.”

Agricultural workers, primarily from Thailand, constituted the majority of the 71 foreign nationals killed by Hamas on Oct. 7, and 31 Thai farm workers were taken hostage in Gaza following the attacks. In the aftermath of the attacks, more than 7,000 Thai nationals fled Israel, many on evacuation flights provided by the Thai government.

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Nora Rothstein prunes grape vines on a *moshav* (cooperative farm) in Southern Israel near Gaza Thursday, Jan. 16. (Danit Rothstein/Special to The Jewish Review)

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It wasn't the only way that the aftermath of the attacks was still prominent.

"Every so often, we would hear explosions from Gaza," Nora said, noting that the IDF was still actively fighting Hamas. "It became part of the background."

They chatted with the farmer, over coffee and cookies, about politics in the United States in the days leading up to President Donald Trump's second inauguration. There wasn't much small talk at their other work sites, but Nora remembers a particular conversation with a woman on a bus one Friday afternoon. The bus was delayed due to road closures in a *haredi*, sometimes referred to as "Ultra-Orthodox," neighborhood, and Nora took a seat next to an Orthodox woman as they waited for traffic to get moving. They chatted in Nora's somewhat rusty Hebrew, as the other woman spoke no English, about their families – a process made easier with pictures.

"I have a picture of Danit, and she goes, 'Oh, is that your son?' I said, 'No, this is my daughter and her wife,'" Nora recalled. "She was blown away by that, and there's this man sitting behind Danit, and he's listening to all this, and his eyes just pop open."

The woman was gracious and polite throughout and gave them directions to their next bus as they left, but Nora and Danit both knew they had been part of a moment of culture shock.

"We were just laughing all the way home because I don't think anybody would have ever had a conversation like that with this religious person," Nora said.

Many of their experiences were less entertaining but more profound.

"We ended up immersing ourselves in the protests and the rallies that were happening around town," Danit said. "At every protest, they shared the names of every hostage, and that was the forefront of what happened."

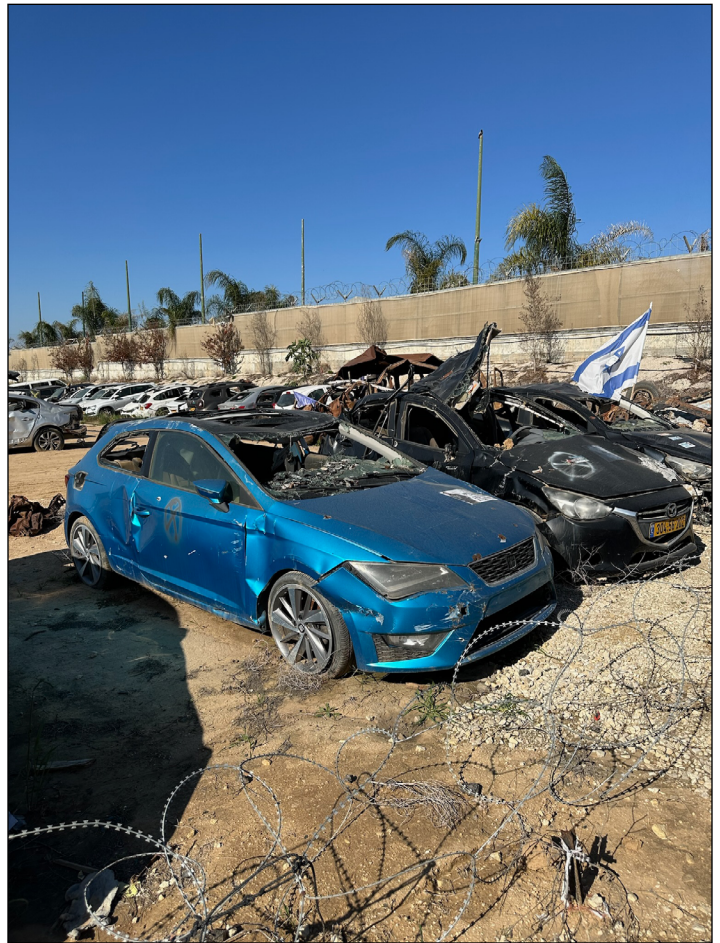
The hostages are the focal point of seemingly every facet of society, even before the Rothsteins had gotten off their El-Al flight.

"The pilot came on and welcomed us to Israel, and ended with, 'and we pray for the safe return of all the hostages,'" Nora said. "That was both landing in Israel and landing in Los Angeles."

"You fly into Tel Aviv, and the first thing you're greeted by is pictures of hostages," Nora continued. "Everywhere you go, there are pictures of these hostages. Everyone knows the hostages' names here. Everyone knows every hostage. People lead their lives, and you see people smiling and laughing, but right underneath that surface, there's sadness."

They visited Hostages Square outside the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, which has become a focal point for demonstrations. The square still includes the long, empty Shabbat table, with a place setting for each hostage, that was installed shortly after the attacks, as well as a 25-meter-long representation of one of Hamas' tunnels under Gaza, complete with sound effects of gunfire and explosions, based on the accounts of one of the hostages held there. A virtual reality simulation of the environment in the tunnels was also available.

"The VR was so real; the Hamas terrorist was like staring



The car which previously belonged to Ori Danini, z"l, sits on display with other vehicles destroyed by Hamas at The Car Wall in Tkuma Thursday, Jan. 9. (Danit Rothstein/Special to The Jewish Review)

you in the eyes. You could hear the sounds of what's happening next door, of the women getting sexually assaulted. You could hear the shootings and the explosions happening outside the room. You can see the captives who are totally bloodied, and one of them is holding a baby and [a terrorist is] yelling at her to be quiet and shut the baby up and all that," Danit said. "That was really challenging for both of us. I think we were pretty shaken up after that."

They also toured the sites of the attacks in the south—the police station in Sderot, the Nova Music Festival site, and The Car Wall in Tkuma, which displayed the cars destroyed by Hamas during the attacks, mostly in the course of murdering their occupants. Danit remembered the blue Seat Ibiza coupe belonging to Ori Danino, z"l, who fled the Nova site as the attacks unfolded.

"He was basically out of harm's way and safe, but he had met two or three other people at the festival that he became friends with," she explained, "and he was like, 'I need to go back and get them.'"

Everyone in the car was kidnapped and taken to Gaza. Two of them were released in November of 2024. Danino was murdered by Hamas on Aug. 29, 2024 – executed along with five other hostages. His body was recovered during an IDF raid in Gaza.

Some were luckier but live with the consequences of that

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luck. Nora recalled that their tour guide at the Nova site had been at the festival. A group of three friends were scheduled to come to the event on the morning of Oct. 7 – when the rockets started falling, he called and warned them away. They were already in their bomb shelters, they reported there were terrorists in their neighborhood. Two days later, he learned that all three had been killed.

“He was able to get out of the festival, but was almost killed at another place,” Nora said. “He’s going through PTSD. He’s doing this as part of his therapy, and it’s really difficult. It was very hard. He showed us his path of escape. I don’t know how he does it.”

-

There are also those who help - and continue to help.

Shuva Junction, a road crossing near a *moshav* of the same name in the Gaza Envelope, became a critical crossroads early in the post-Oct. 7 military campaign. An IDF field hospital was set up nearby, and other military units staged there. Because all the military facilities were concentrated around the junction, IDF personnel could freely move there unlike other base areas where soldiers need permission from their officers to go off-base.

“This junction became kind of a hub, because the area essentially became a large army base where they didn’t have to get permission to go to that section,” Danit said.

Volunteers, known as the Shuva Brothers, set up a small restaurant and began providing meals. The services available have grown from there to form something of an oasis for troops coming back from Gaza to be taken care of.

“Soldiers, when they get off duty in Gaza, they don’t have to ask permission to go there,” Nora explained. “They can grab a meal. They can rest. They have musicians playing. They have massage therapists there. They have a little store in the back where they can get supplies if they need. They have a library. It’s all run by volunteers.”

The Shuva Brothers aren’t related – they’re locals who saw a need and ensured it was met. Their operations are supported entirely by donations and volunteer labor – which can be challenging to find, as besides the significant IDF presence, Shuva is a decidedly rural area. Nevertheless, they are there.

“They never close. They’re open,” Nora continued. “If they’re needed at two in the morning, they’re there.”

-

With the pending change in administrations in the United States, American politics was a not infrequent topic of conversation.

“The hard part is, like, we’re very anti-Trump, and a good portion of [Israelis] like [President Donald] Trump, because they don’t believe that Biden got the deal done and there’s so much gratitude right now for Trump for pushing this through,” Danit explained. “The average Israeli isn’t aware of the antisemitism.”

Many, if not most gift shops in Jerusalem had Trump merchandise for sale. Outside of one such shop, Danit ended up in a surprising conversation.

“He was talking to some guy, but he said it kind of loudly, ‘Who’s going to come first, Trump or the *Moshiach*, the Messiah?’ I looked at him and said, ‘Probably Trump,’” Danit recalled. He said, ‘Excellent. We can’t wait for that.’”



A food stall at Shuva Junction in Southern Israel prepares meals for Israel Defense Forces personnel returning from Gaza Thursday, Jan. 9. (Danit Rothstein/Special to The Jewish Review)

She and her mother were handed hats at an anti-war demonstration – red with white lettering on the front that read, in English, “End the F----- War.” [The obscenity was partially censored, but not to the same extent.]

“On the bill of the hat is a QR code, and it leads to a pro-Trump page that says, ‘Make Israel Normal Again,’” Danit explained.

“I brought it home, but I have not put it on since,” Nora said.

-

Throughout their time in the country, there were protests every Saturday night after the conclusion of Shabbat. The focus was on the safe return of the hostages – to the extent that those advocating for a ceasefire and those who were not could march together in pursuit of the same goal.

“The contrast between America and Israel in what we saw is that even though there were opposing views on how to get to the end of the war, they were still able to march together and come together for the release of the hostages, which was in some ways beautiful,” Danit said, “because here [in the United States], the opposing side doesn’t think about the hostages, or they don’t talk about them, so the perception is that they don’t give a crap about them.”

Even the Rothsteins’ conversations with demonstrators were inclusive of multiple viewpoints.

continued on next page

continued from previous page

“They were trying to explain the different viewpoints,” Nora recalled. “They weren’t really giving us their opinions. They were just explaining all the different viewpoints and open to talking about it; ‘this is what this sign says, and this is what they’re saying, and this is what they’re chanting.’”

Some demonstrators did very little talking, notably the Mothers in White.

“We were walking and there’s these people, mostly women, all dressed in white, sitting in a circle, very quietly, not saying anything.”

Sometimes, one of the mothers will speak, but there’s no chanting or any of the other hallmarks of a typical protest. Their gatherings end with a singing of the Hebrew song “*Bo’I Ima*” – “Come, Mother.”

“It began as a song for children yearning for their mothers, and now it has transformed as their mothers yearning for their children,” Nora said. “This has become the song for these mothers waiting for their children to return, either from war or from being held hostage.”

-

In the closing days of the Rothsteins’ visit, three families had that wish come true.

On Jan. 19, Hamas turned over hostages Emily Damari, Romi Gonen and Doron Steinbrecher to the Red Cross for return to Israel.

“There was still apprehension, because [Hamas] were supposed to send the list 24 hours in advance,” Danit said of the morning of Jan. 19.

“Nobody believed it was really going to happen,” Nora said. “Nobody trusts Hamas.”

The Rothsteins had been in Tel Aviv



Mothers In White hold a gathering outside the United States Embassy Branch Office in Tel Aviv Thursday, Jan. 8. (Danit Rothstein/Special to The Jewish Review)

for dinner when the news broke; they returned to Hostages Square to take in the scene. Nora contrasted what she saw with the television feed from Gaza.

“You saw them in Gaza. They were celebrating, singing and dancing,” she said. “On the other screen, you saw Hostages Square in Tel Aviv. People were very quiet. People were apprehensive. People were anxious.”

Even in the anxiety, the tension, the uncertainty, there was – and is – hope.

Danit recalled seeing a social media post from Damari, “who just went back to her apartment for the first time, and it’s demolished, she still gives messages of hope. The people that who are in captivity, they’re the ones that are coming out of captivity and sending messages of hope.”

-

Nora recounted another feeling from her time in Israel – safety.

Even in a country where playgrounds are designed with bomb shelters, like one in Sderot. Even when the Chabad house in Sderot can collect enough rocket debris to build a large menorah outside their facility. Even when she and Danit had to hustle to a bomb shelter multiple times during their visit, or when they watched Iron Dome missiles intercept terrorist rockets in the skies over Jerusalem at 4:30 in the morning.

Nora’s mom was smuggled out of Italy via Switzerland during World War II, and her family faced antisemitism as far back as she remembers. Not in Israel.

“The one thing in Israel, you’re with people like you,” she said. “And I wasn’t afraid.”

Moving Traditions' teen magazine is hiring

Moving Traditions

Applications are now open for Editorial and Photography Staff positions at *jGirls+ Magazine*, a program of Moving Traditions.

jGirls+ Magazine is an innovative, online community and magazine written by and for self-identifying Jewish

girls, young women, and nonbinary teens ages 13-19 across all backgrounds. This paid pre-professional program teaches teens how to apply their perspective, vision, and creativity to produce an online magazine. Teens work alongside their peers from all over the coun-

try, from across the spectrum of Jewish backgrounds and experiences, and learn from visionary guest lecturers in the field of Jewish-feminist leadership.

Now more than ever, our Jewish and feminist youth need brave spaces for dialogue and community-build-

ing.

All self-identifying Jewish girls and nonbinary teens across North America who will be in 10th-12th grade in fall 2025 are invited to apply before the Apr. 7 deadline at tinyurl.com/jGirlsPlusApp. For more information, visit jgirlsmagazine.org.

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

MAR 5

FEB 27

Security Corner

Cameras make a difference

By JESSICA ANDERSON

A few months ago, I shared with you that Adam Edward Braun pleaded guilty to targeting the Congregation Beth Israel synagogue in Eugene in late 2023 and early 2024. His charges were three misdemeanor counts of damaging religious property for intentionally defacing the synagogue with white supremacist and antisemitic graffiti. *The Oregonian* carried the story, and some of the information below is derived from that report.

His sentencing was this past week, and he was given four years of probation. U.S. District Court Judge Mustafa Kasubhai said he was disappointed that more serious charges were not brought against Braun by the government. While the sentence might seem light, Kasubhai chose it carefully so that Braun would have the maximum amount of monitoring. Braun had already spent over 11 months in custody while his case was moving through the system. If Kasubhai accepted the 1.5-year recommended prison sentence, Braun's 11 months in pre-trial custody would have been credited to him, and he would have only received one year of probation. By choosing an alternate sentence, Kasubhai ensured that Braun would continue to be monitored for another four years.

The Oregonian noted, "Braun provided a statement at the hearing, saying he wanted to 'formally apologize to the congregants of Beth Israel' and 'especially to the children of the congregation,' who



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.

'don't need to be terrorized by anybody's religious or political animosity.' He said he's reflected on his actions, has read a few books written by Jewish people who suffered from persecution, and has put effort into having 'friendly relations' with members of Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQ+ communities, as well as 'one man who was raised in a Hasidic Jewish household.' Braun said being held behind bars made him realize that what he did wasn't worth it. 'I have had a hard dose of reality. If I want to live a productive and successful life, then going and tagging walls on religious buildings is not going to get me there,' he said."

I maintain that it's still relatively rare for someone to move from hatred in their thoughts to criminal activity, and I'm glad to see when the court system successfully works to hold those who do accountable. This is not always the case, particularly when issues of mental fitness are present (which we've also seen in this community). The judge was not particularly swayed by Braun's statement of contrition and doubted that

Braun had actually changed his mind about his dislike for Jews - expressed by his actions at Eugene's Beth Israel, antisemitic tropes stated following his arrest, possession of Nazi paraphernalia, and doubting the Holocaust. Is it enough that he's realized his actions were incompatible with his desire to live the life he wants to? If what he experienced keeps Braun from acting again, no matter what is in his heart, that's a good thing. I appreciated Judge Kasubhai telling him, "You fell below the expectations of our society." We don't all have to have the same beliefs, but we've got to be able to hold our "s---" together. Time will tell if Braun can hold his life together, and hopefully, we never hear of him again.

One of the big success stories connected to this is the use of cameras. During one of his visits to Beth Israel, Braun raises a hammer and notices the camera. Instead of smashing the glass doors, he rants and leaves graffiti.

These photos allowed investigators to identify Braun and connect him with multiple crimes. While cameras are often most useful following an incident by providing

See SECURITY, page 17

Blue Compass nonprofit survey is live

Blue Compass

Are you Jewish and working at a secular nonprofit or foundation? Blue Compass need your help!

Blue Compass is a new organization to support Jews working at secular nonprofits and foundations. Help us gather essential data to directly influence the development of resources, support systems, and advocacy ef-

forts. Participate in our confidential landscape survey to share your experiences and help us create a supportive network for Jewish professionals. Your insights will shape resources and advocacy efforts.

Find the survey at tally.so/r/mRbQEj?ref=wexner. Learn more at bluecompass-network.org.

Interfaith Earth Summit is Mar. 16

The Jewish Review staff

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon's 12th Annual Interfaith Earth Summit will take place Sunday, Mar. 16, from 1-4 pm in communities all over Oregon. Join the virtual plenary session at local host hubs in Baker City, Beaverton, Bend, Corvallis, Cottage Grove, Dallas, Eugene, Gresham, La Grande, Lake Oswego, Medford, Newport, Pendleton, Portland (two locations)

and Salem, followed by an in-person session. There is also an option to attend the entire event virtually. Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and Oregon Interfaith Power & Light (OIPL) present the event in partnership with local congregations and organizations.

Tickets are available on a sliding scale online at emoregon.org/event/oregon-interfaith-earth-summit-2.

Hess at MJCC Feb. 23

The Jewish Review staff

Yizhar Hess, the vice chair of the World Zionist Organization, will speak at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center in Portland Sunday, Feb. 23, at 1 pm.

Hess is a senior elected representative of Diaspora Jewry whose work focuses on bringing the voices of Diaspora Jews forward in Israel. Following his military service, Hess earned a bachelor's in Political Science and Hebrew Literature at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. A member of the Israeli Bar, his law degree is from the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya. He holds a master's in Jewish Studies from the Schechter Institute

in Jerusalem and a doctorate in Sociology and Education from Sussex University in Brighton, England. After holding the Deputy Director position at the Shorashim Centre for Jewish Studies, Hess served as the Jewish Agency's community *shalich* (emissary) to Tucson. On his return to Israel, he worked for the Jewish Agency as Director of Partnerships. He is currently on a speaking tour encouraging American Jews to participate in the upcoming WZO elections.

Registration is free and available online at oregon-jcc.org/arts-culture/upcoming-events.

Kranson to present Solomon Lecture Feb. 27

PSU Judaic Studies

Dr. Rachel Kranson will deliver the 20th Annual Gus and Libby Solomon Memorial Lecture Thursday, Feb. 27 at 7:30 pm at University Place Hotel and Conference Center in Southwest Portland. Her address is titled "Religious Misconceptions: American Jews and the Politics of Abortion."

Liberal, religious Jews strongly advocated for legal abortion between the 1970s and the turn of the twenty-first century. On what grounds did they argue for reproductive rights, and why did they consider it an important priority? Join Kranson as she shares from her forthcoming volume of the same title. Kranson will uncover the history of the American Jewish lawyers and activists who advocated for abortion access to be protected by the guarantees of the first amendment of the constitution. Their efforts have become even more significant as the US enters a post-Roe era, and experts are looking for new legal avenues through which to protect reproductive freedom.

Kranson is Director of Jewish Studies and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. A scholar of post-WWII American Jewish history, gender, and sexuality, she is the author of "Ambivalent Embrace: Jewish Upward Mobility in Postwar America," a finalist for the Immigrant and Ethnic History Society First Book Award, and the co-editor of "A Jewish Feminine Mystique: Jewish Women in Postwar America," a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award in women's studies. Kranson has held fellowships at the Frankel Center for Advanced Jewish Studies at the University of Michigan and the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute at Brandeis University, and her writing has appeared in academic journals as well as popular venues like The Washington Post, Lilith, and The Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Dr. Kranson has held leadership positions at the Jewish Women's Archive, the Center for Jewish History, the American Jewish Historical Society, and the Association for Jewish Studies. Her new book focuses on American Jewish engagement in abortion politics during the era of Roe v. Wade.

The 20th Annual Gus and Libby Solomon Memorial Lecture is presented by the Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies at Portland State University and is sponsored by Richard B. Solomon and Alyce Flitcraft. Co-sponsors include the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, Portland State University's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the PSU Department of History, PDX Hillel, and the PSU Jewish Student Union. Registration is free and available online at eventbrite.com/e/religious-misconceptions-american-jews-and-the-politics-of-abortion-tickets-1110917527229.

Free online subscription:
jewishportland.org/subscribe

BB Day Camp coming to Clark County in June

By NOA RUBIN
BB360

BB360 is thrilled to announce the launch of BB Day Camp in Vancouver, WA, hosted at Congregation Kol Ami. This exciting new camp brings the beloved BB Camp spirit to Vancouver, offering enriching summer experiences for rising kindergartners through 5th graders.

BB Day Camp Vancouver will run weekly from June 23 to July 18, Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, with extended care available from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Campers will dive into a wide range of activities, including art projects, camp games, hikes, field trips, swimming at the lake, and special visits from local guests who embody the vibrant spirit of the Pacific Northwest.

“Congregation Kol Ami has three acres of open fields outside of our synagogue building. For many years I have thought it would be ideal to have a day camp using our classrooms and filling those open fields with activities, but I knew as a congregation that we didn’t have the staffing and other resources to make such a dream happen. I was delighted when BB Day Camp came to us with the opportunity to host Jewish camping on our property this summer. This is a great opportunity for us and for our families who are always looking for good summer programs for their kids. We are overjoyed to begin this new partnership and look forward to many years of providing fun, Jewish camp experiences here in Vancouver” said Rabbi Elizabeth Dunsker of Congregation Kol Ami.

Each week will culminate with Shabbat celebrations, featuring challah baking, dress-up days, themed activities, and stories from local clergy or special guests.

“The Jewish community of southwest Washington is very dear to me. I have lived in Vancouver since I was 11 and spent a lot of time at Kol Ami growing up,” said BB Day Camps Director Haddi Meyer. “BB Day Camp is all about creating Jewish joy, friendships, and giving kids a place to explore and solidify their unique Jewish identity. We cannot wait to bring BB Camp magic to southwest Washington families.”

Registration is now open at \$425 per week. Financial aid and scholarships are available. For more information visit bb-360.org/day-camp.

Life cycle

SHMUEL BORSUK

Shmuel Chaim Borsuk was born to Rabbi Daniel and Sima Borsuk on Monday, Jan. 27. He was named after his maternal great grandfather. Rabbi Borsuk is director of development at Maayan Torah Day School, and Sima Borsuk is an aging and adult services clinician at Jewish Family & Child Services, where she also manages the Holocaust Survivor Services Program.



Rabbi Levi Shmotkin, top left, presents his book of The Rebbe's writings at The Jewish Oasis Wednesday, Feb. 12. (Courtesy The Jewish Oasis)

Rabbi Shmotkin draws crowd to Oasis

By DR. KENNETH JACOBS
For The Jewish Oasis

This past Wednesday, Feb. 12, the community was treated to an engaging and uplifting talk entitled “Emotional Balance in an Unbalanced World” at Jewish Oasis by author Levi Shmotkin. Using his 2024 book, *Letters for Life, Guidance for Emotional Health* from the Lubavitcher Rebbe as a vehicle, Rabbi Shmotkin introduced the topic with the astute observation that despite the incredible freedom, access, and wealth we enjoy in America today, the degree of darkness we experience in the form of personal isolation, mental disease, addiction, and suicide continues to increase.

Rabbi Shmotkin shared his personal, less intense, yet more relatable darkness which he experienced just out of Yeshiva as the major impetus for his journey into writing a book which samples from and comments on the personal letters written by the Rebbe (Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, z”l). As Rabbi Shmotkin explained, the Rebbe answered thousands of letters over the years, each an expression of personal suffering over a range of relatable topics. Rabbi Shmotkin distilled the Rebbe’s central and timeless message in the letters: harness the intensity of your negative rumination and pervasive emotional suffering and direct it toward action that helps another soul.

In addition to sharing samples of the letters he selected for his book, Rabbi Shmotkin shared powerful feedback from a preschool director who found within “Letters for Life” the inspiration and guidance to dramatically revise the curriculum of her own childcare program in ways that made tremendous improvement.

The question-and-answer period following Rabbi Shmotkin’s mesmerizing presentation covered his process for writing the book, profound reflections by audience members, and Rabbi Chayim Mishulovin’s complimentary statement that the Rebbe’s message remains alive as ever in each of us as we light the present with the spark within each of us.

Visit Jewish Oasis at 1218 NW Glisan Street in the Pearl District, to pick up copies of “Letters for Life” and unlock 12 principles and tools from the Rebbe for emotional wellness.

RUTH SPIELMAN

It is with sorrow that Congregation Kol Ami announces the death this past Saturday, Feb. 8, of Ruth Spielman, z"l, the mother of Abbie Spielman.

STANLEY HODES

Congregation Neveh Shalom is saddened to announce the passing Tuesday, Feb. 11, of our long-time member Stanley Hodes, z"l, at the age of 99. He is loved and remembered by his son, Greg (Chris) Hodes, daughter, Francine (Mark) Abolofia, grandchildren, Emily (Bill) Shields, Spencer (Mariana) Hodes, Beth Hodes, Rey Abolofia, Jay (Ruth) Abolofia, and 8 great grandchildren. He is pre-deceased by his wife, Shirley Hodes, z"l, of 77 years.

The Funeral was held Wednesday, Feb. 12th at Ahavai Shalom Cemetery.

SUE SCHWARTZ

Congregation Neveh Shalom is saddened to announce the passing of our dear friend and congregant, Sue Schwartz, z"l, beloved mother of Renee Schwartz and Beth (Steven) Wachtman; grandmother to Jonah Biederman and Lindsey Wachtman. Sue is predeceased by her husband, Joseph Schwartz, z"l.

Sue led a vibrant and active life. Born in St. Louis, Mo., she met her husband in Milwaukee, Wis. They moved to Portland for Joe's new career at the OHSU School of Dentistry in 1968. Sue was the office manager at Joe's private dental practice for more than years and was a great comfort to their many patients. They were happily married for more than 55 years before Joe's passing in 2016.

She was an avid volunteer at Neveh Shalom. Sue was a founding member of Chevra Kavod haMet, one of two Jewish burial societies in the Portland area. She was also an advocate for those impacted by Multiple Sclerosis, which she lived with for 42 years. Sue spent many hours at Ridgewood Elementary School where both her daughters and then her grandchildren attended, later becoming known as Grandma Sue to the elementary school kids.

Sue's humor, caring spirit and kindness was abundant to all that knew her.

In lieu of flowers, donations in her honor can be made to the National Multiple Sclerosis Society or the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

The Funeral was held Sunday, Feb. 16 at Neveh Zedek Cemetery.

ALAN ROSENFELD

Congregation Beth Israel mourns the loss of Alan Rosenfeld, z"l, who passed away on Friday, Feb. 14 at the age of 101.

Alan is survived by his beloved wife Eve, daughters Lynn Langfeld (Marshall), Sally Rosenfeld (Andy Frank), and Janis Barbash (Bruce), his daughter-in-law Janis (partner Paul Schlesinger), grandchildren Erin LaRosa (Edward), Keli Amos (DeAndre), Lisa Frank (Arianna Pineiro), Garrett Langfeld and Joshua Kowal, along with five great-grandchildren.

Alan was preceded in death by his son David, z"l, and his granddaughter Amy Frank, z"l.

A memorial gathering was held at Congregation Beth Israel Monday, Feb. 17. The private funeral was held at Beth Israel Cemetery.

Donations in Alan's name can be made to Congregation Beth Israel or Meals on Wheels People.

ELAINE NEWMAN

Elaine Newman, z"l, died Feb. 17, 2025 in Charlottesville, Va.

Born in Los Angeles on Apr. 7, 1932, she was lovingly raised by her immigrant maternal grandparents in Portland, Oregon. Her childhood instilled in her a sense of gratitude which she maintained throughout her life. Elaine graduated from Grant High School and was a member of the QED sorority and the Spanish Club. Her best friend introduced her to Mark Newman in high school, and Elaine and Mark were married in 1954. She attended Western Business College to train as a switchboard operator and learn shorthand. Elaine worked at American Steel and Fred Meyer and was a proud member of the Teamsters Union. Mark and Elaine were committed to serving their community as dedicated members of the Lions Club and the Portland Royal Rosarians. In retirement, Elaine volunteered at the Portland Public Library, visited family in Virginia, and spent time with friends, especially those in her sorority. A lifelong knitter, Elaine made her family gorgeous sweaters. She had an expansive vocabulary and was a formidable opponent in crosswords and spelling bees. Always up to date on the news, Elaine enjoyed lively conversations about current events and policy. Elaine loved her family dearly and shared widely how proud she was of each of them.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Mark Newman, z"l. She leaves to cherish her memory her children, Gerry Newman (Millie) and Andra Newman, and three grandchildren, Irene, Carson, and Frances.

Jobs Board

See the latest Jewish jobs at jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/jewish-jobs