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The JEWISH REVIEW

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Working for the world



Participants in the Work For The World Fair make bracelets that were sold to support Israeli food bank Leket and Shalva, a group supporting Israelis with disabilities, Sunday, Mar. 10 at Portland Jewish Academy. Over 900 bracelets were made by participants in the event, postponed from Martin Luther King Jr. Day and cosponsored by PJA, B'nai B'rith Camp, PJ Library, and the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. See more photos on page 11. (Laura Jeser/The Jewish Review)

PAT promotes one-sided narrative on Gaza

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

While waging a successful strike for a better member contract, the Portland Association of Teachers was making a foray into another conflict; this one larger, more divisive and infinitely more complex than teacher pay and benefits.

This time, it was the War in Gaza. And like their campaign against Portland Public Schools, they were definitely taking sides.

That decision has left Jewish teachers feeling betrayed, Jewish parents concerned over what their children might be subjected to in school and those advocating on behalf of the Jewish community feeling “played.”

The first signs were literally that – signs that popped up among picket lines throughout Portland. The same sign, over and over.

“They’re all the same sign, accusing Israel of genocide,” Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Director of Community Relations Bob Horenstein explained. “They were allowing either teachers who were picketing or outside activists to infiltrate their picket lines to hold these signs. I think mostly they were teachers.”

Noga Vilan is an Israeli, the leader of ongoing demonstrations for the return of Oct. 7 hostages from Gaza (See [“That’s my approach” – Vilan stands for hostages,](#) *The*

See PAT, page 8

Applications open for new program to help mixed heritage couples 'Reset and Refresh'

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Navigating life as a Jewish couple of mixed heritage is challenging. But a program designed to make that process easier, pioneered in Seattle and expanding with the help of the Jewish Federations of North America, is coming soon to Portland.

Reset and Refresh, a seven-session program centered on Shabbat practices for youngish (28-45) mixed-heritage couples, is kicking off in Portland this May.

"Reset and Refresh is about inviting couples of mixed-heritage background into a warm and welcoming Jewish space for self-discovery, rejuvenation, deepening of relationships and building community," explained Rachel Nelson, Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations for the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland who is facilitating, explained, "It's using Shabbat as a compass to explore Jewish life."

Reset and Refresh was developed in 2018 by Rabbi Samuel Klein, the Director of Jewish Engagement at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle. He's been working with what are often referred to as "interfaith couples" for a decade, often through "introduction to Judaism" classes, but saw a need for something else.

"It seemed to me that there was a real thirst to engage in Jewish life," he said. "It also wasn't necessarily as much

about joining institutional Jewish life as it was building friendships, making connections between couples as a peer group, and exploring what does it mean to do Jewish."

Klein expanded his focus beyond interfaith couples, where one partner is Jewish while the other is not, to incorporate couples where both partners are Jewish but come from different backgrounds – one partner is Ashkenazi and the other is Sephardic, for example, or where one partner is Orthodox and the other is not, as well as partners of different races or Jewish upbringings.

Seattle participated in the Honeymoon Israel program, a cohort-based 10-day trip to Israel for young Jewish couples looking to more deeply engage in Jewish life, but had far more applicants for that program than there were available slots. What's more, Rabbi Klein wanted to develop something that went beyond introductory Judaism courses, most of which are geared toward conversion.

"The conversation that was interesting to the couples is, 'What does it mean, to come at a partnership through a Jewish lens from different perspectives,'" Rabbi Klein said. "The common story, with all the couples, is two people coming together to figure how to co-author a life together."

The program's seven sessions explore a wide variety of different Shabbat themes and rituals, from candle lighting on Friday night all the way through Havdalah, with a focus on slowing down

and connecting – to one's partner, to the community of similar couples and to Judaism as a whole.

The program was wildly successful in Seattle, and JFNA is now helping broaden its reach with five pilot program cities across North America – Portland among them.

Elan Kramer, JFNA's Senior Director of Community Engagement, explained that study after study of communities across North America found that the vast majority of non-Orthodox Jews marry non-Jews and those couples are looking for entry points into Jewish life that not only feel welcoming, but provide a sense of belonging.

"There's a clear need for more programming for this demographic," Kramer said. "It's also clear that quality programming that is uniquely designed for this specific audience is just as critical. To address that need, we're excited to embark on the process of scaling a specific tested and proven model of a Federation original program from Seattle."

Portland's Reset and Refresh cohort will incorporate eight to 10 couples aged 28-45 who do not have children and are not co-parenting, live in the Portland metropolitan area, have been together for at least a year and have at least one partner that self-identifies as Jewish.

Prospective participants can apply at jewishportland.org/resetandrefresh no later than April 15. For more information, email Nelson at rachel@jewish-portland.org.

JFGP wraps up twice-extended Israel webinar series

The Jewish Review staff

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland finished its "Voices from Israel" webinar series at the end of February –incorporating more voices than originally anticipated.

Beginning Nov. 29, 2023 with a conversation with staff from Dror Israel, an organization focused on empowering young people to help build a shared society in Israel, "Voices From Israel" was initially scheduled

to run through the end of the year before being extended twice, eventually incorporating 13 sessions with a broad variety of perspectives on events in Israel following the Oct. 7 terror attacks.

"We felt it was important to bring voices from Israel regarding the ongoing war and conflict since October 7th so that our community would continue to feel the connection with what is happening in Israel," explained Rachel

Nelson, the Federation's Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations. "It is complex. It is horrendous. It is sad. But as we saw throughout the series, there were glimmers of hope and community coming together and sharing. Growth sharing. Joy, amid ongoing pain and sadness.

The series incorporated presentations from Dror Israel, a briefing from Israel

Defense Forces staff early in the war, Kibbutz Be'eri survivor Sofie Berzon Mackie, the team behind the widely popular Israel Story podcast, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, best-selling author Dan Senor, former Israeli Minister for Diaspora Affairs Nachman Shai, the Jewish Agency for Israel, former Israeli Ambassador to Portugal

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SUPER SUNDAY MARCH MADNESS

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Jewish Federation
of Greater Portland

Answer the call - Super Sunday is Mar. 17

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

You can help make Sunday, Mar. 17 super. It's as easy as picking up the phone.

Mar. 17 is Super Sunday, the biggest day of the year for the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's annual Campaign for Community Needs. Volunteers will assemble at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, to call donors from 10:30 am – 1 pm. and ask for their support.

Your support.

"We all know that in today's day and age, people are less inclined to answer their phone from a number that isn't in their contacts," Federation Chief Development Officer Wendy Kahn said, "but we are asking for an exception for

the good of the community."

There's extra motivation to pick up this year – all increases in donations over previous years and all contributions from new donors will be matched dollar-for-dollar.

Birnbach went on to explain that because of the Federation's scope and responsiveness, it is able to address needs that other organizations cannot meet, whether that is emergency support in Portland or around the world, or by addressing the future needs of Jewish life in Portland through the Community Study and the thoughtful process of how to turn that data into actionable steps to improve Jewish life in Portland.

"When there's a massive need for events like COVID, Ukraine, Israel, natural disasters," he said. "We jump right on it."

What's more, volunteers aren't just about asking for support. It's an opportunity for Federation staff and volunteers to connect with donors, to learn what's important to them and to share the common experience of participating in Jewish community.

"I think what makes our community strong is that we are all connected," Birnbach said. "We are here to help each other."

That help is needed, and it will go farther than ever, thanks to the Federation's matching donation.

"There's an old expression; 'You can't do tomorrow's work with yesterday's dollars,'" Birnbach said. "So, we're asking not only for people to give, but we're asking them to give more in order to do that."

YBC's Bronson to visit Portland for Yiddish events

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

Susan Bronson, the Executive Director and President-in-waiting of the Yiddish Book Center, will visit Portland for a pair of events on the history and future of the Yiddish language next month.

"We're very excited to have Susan in Portland," Yiddish Book Center board chair Ira Wagner said. "I think it's

a great opportunity for the Jewish community here, to get up to speed on [YBC] and really see what they're doing.

Bronson will first be part of a discussion panel following a screening of "Ver Vet Blaybn?" (Who Will Remain?), a feature-length documentary film from the center's Wexler Oral History Project Saturday, April 6 at

7pm at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education. She'll be joined by colleague Christa Whitney, the project's director. The film follows Israeli actress Hadas Kalderon's efforts to trace the path of her grandfather, poet Avrom Sutzkever, across Europe during the Holocaust and eventually to Israel.

She'll then present a lecture titled "From Yiddish Book Rescue to Yiddish Renaissance" at 4 pm Sunday, April 7, at Congregation Beth Israel.

Bronson will assume the presidency of the Yiddish Book Center, a nationwide organization for the archiving, distribution and digitization of Yiddish written work, upon the retirement of founder Aaron Lansky on June 25. Lansky will move to a part-time consulting role after 44 years at the head of the group. Bronson has been executive director of

the Center for 14 years and holds a PhD in Russian history and Jewish history from the University of Michigan.

"The [Yiddish] Book Center is a thriving, dynamic educational institution that is far more than just about saving books and teaching the language," Wagner explained. "They are translating the books. They are digitizing the books. They've created a textbook. They have programming for everyone from high school kids all the way through college, kids and adults."

Tickets for OJMCHE's screening "Ver Vet Blaybn?" are \$12, \$10 for museum members, and can be purchased at ojmche.org/events. CBI's lecture is free and will be livestreamed. More information is available at bethisrael-pdx.org/joinus. More information about the center is available at yiddishbookcenter.org.



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Lefty's returns under Sweet Lorraine's

By KERRY POLITZER

For The Jewish Review

A museum visit isn't complete without a good nosh. Rachel and Aaron Brashear of [Sweet Lorraine's Latkes & More](#) are now ensuring that your trip to the [Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education](#) will end on a tasty note.

The musical duo, who have been performing in Portland since 2016, found themselves compelled to enter a new profession during the pandemic, when much of their teaching and gigging work came to a halt. Says Rachel, "In 2020, we were unemployed. We still wanted to be connected to the community, but we didn't know if music would come back." Starting Sweet Lorraine's was a bit of a lark. One day Rachel thought, "We should have a food cart that just sells latkes, people would love it!"

Like many Oregon freelancers, the Brashears suddenly received all of their unemployment checks at once. Rachel explains, "It was like, oh my goodness, I've never had this much money, we should do something smart with it. So, we bought the food cart and hit the ground running in the beginning of 2021; in February 2021 we opened Sweet Lorraine's."

The cart eventually found an indoor home at the Labyrinth Forge Brewery, where the Brashears developed an enticing dairy menu that expanded from latkes to many other Jewish favorites: knishes, vegetarian matzo ball soup, kasha varnishkes, and whitefish salad sandwiches.

When Chef Noah Jacob, former operator of Lefty's Café at OJMCHS, left to pursue a partnership with Zupan's, he recommended Sweet Lorraine's as his replacement. Says Gail Mandel, chief operating and advancement officer at the museum, "I can say that the museum is thrilled to welcome Sweet Lorraine's to Lefty's Café. Rachel and Aaron's food truly captures the spirit of what a Jewish delicatessen should be, and people have been raving about it... their knishes are to die for! I'm looking forward to tomorrow because I'm going to go get some lunch there."

Customer input has always been essential to the Brashears. Rachel laughs, "Shoutout to Ken Rosenberg, one of our most devoted customers – he came for knish-



Sweet Lorraine's, the purveyors of Jewish delicacies, have taken over management of Lefty's Cafe at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education downtown. The space now serves a selection of Sweet Lorraine's favorites, bottom left. (Kerry Politzer for The Jewish Review)

es and told us all about the book *The Dairy Restaurant* by Ben Katchor. It's an illustrated book about the history of kosher food." The other element that is important to the couple is sustainability. The Brashears not only make as much from scratch as possible, but they try to source as many ingredients as possible from local, mom-and-pop businesses.

Aaron explains, "Our smoked whitefish salad we make from scratch, and we make our own challah. We get very good albacore from a family in Washington for our tuna salad, and we make our own half-sour pickles. We use lox from Michael Jacobs' smokery, he sells his smoked salmon at the PSU farmers' market." Chimes in Rachel, "We're very big on sustainability - not just environmental, but also community and lifestyle. We're not trying to just get rich on these things; we want to enrich our community."

The couple is continuing operations at the brewery and adding Lefty's as a satellite. Due to the absence of a full kitchen, Lefty's is offering an abbreviated menu of sandwiches, salads, soups, knishes, and baked goods. Rachel adds, "We'll do some things that you can't get at the brewery. So, there's no reason not to eat at both places in the same week!"



'We need to take care of each other'

Portland's community Jewish burial society is no secret

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Jaimie Harper has worked in geriatrics and end-of-life care for over 20 years. For much of that time, she hadn't experienced the next step; what happens in Jewish tradition after death. She knew about it but hadn't witnessed it or met the people who perform it.

"I thought, honestly, it was like a secret society, and you had to have like some special invitation to be part of it," she said. "I had a lot of experience with the end of life, and this was one part that I felt like was untouchable to me."

While there is a society, it's not a secret, and no invitation, expertise in Torah nor particular level of "holiness" is required.

"You just have to want to show up and be present," Harper said.

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The "society" is a *chevra kadisha* – the Hebrew translates to "holy society" but in modern usage, specifically refers to a burial society.

These societies are established to perform the ritual of *tahara*, the washing of the body and its preparation for burial in accordance with Jewish tradition. In this process, three or four members of the *chevra* gently wash and dry the body of the deceased while reciting prayers over it. After washing, water is poured over the body as an act of ritual purification.

Harper sees this process as akin to immersion in a mikvah.

"The body is completely covered in water as if it's their last immersion," she said.

There are two *chevra kadisha* operating in Portland. The *Portland Hevra* attends to the Orthodox community. Harper is a member of *Chevra Kavod HaMet*, which translates to "The Society for Honoring the Dead," which identifies itself as Portland's community *chevra kadisha*, which draws its membership from across Portland's Jewish community and makes space for all levels of religious observance as well as supporting varying gender identities.

No invitation is required – the group is looking for volunteers, in fact.

"The only requirement is to be a Jew," Sharon Fendrich, coordinator of *Chevra Kavod HaMet*, explained.

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Chevra Kavod HaMet was founded in 1979 through the work of Congregation Neveh Shalom's Rabbi Joshua Stampfer, z"l. Seeking to take care of his congregation's own deceased, he asked a group of CNS members to take up the study of Jewish end-of-life rituals. By the next year, *Chevra Kavod HaMet* was providing *tahara* and *shmira* (the accompanying of the body from the time of death until burial) for CNS families. By 1994, the society was also serving families from Havurah Shalom and Gesher.

Today, *Chevra Kavod HaMet* serves families from, and its board consists of members from, Congregations Beth Israel, Kol Ami, Neveh Shalom, P'nai Or and Shir Tikvah as well as Havurah Shalom and the unaffiliated Jewish Community. Approximately 40 volunteers help form the ad-hoc assembled teams for each *tahara* – an email goes out shortly after

a passing, and members respond if they are available.

While many *chavarot* perform *tahara* the night before the funeral, *Chevra Kavod HaMet* typically does their work early in the morning due to access issues at the site of more than 90 percent of their *taharoth*, Holman's Funeral Home in Southeast Portland.

-

The idea of secrecy around *chevra kadisha* stems from the circumstances of Jewish communal living.

"It had to be a little bit more of a secret because we were in tiny little villages," Fendrich said, "and family members are not supposed to know who has prepared their loved one because it makes their relationship forever uncomfortable. So, you were selectively invited in by a leader in the community."

The sense of secrecy has deepened as society has grown more uncomfortable talking about death, dying and the end of life, and those processes have been moved out of common view and common conversation.

"[Death] just became something that people didn't talk about. So therefore, death wasn't taught about anymore anywhere," Fendrich explained. "And especially I think after the Holocaust, we don't talk about death anymore."

-

Fendrich didn't even know what a *chevra kadisha* was until her grandmother died in 2011. The immediate aftermath of her passing was dramatic and lacked compassion, she said, so she told her rabbi that she would like to see her grandmother again.

"He said he would ask the *chevra* and I still didn't know what that meant," she said. She ended up seeing her grandmother's body just before the *tahara*.

"I was completely taken that these people who didn't even know her were about to give her all of this love," she said. "So, I said, when the time comes, I'm going to do this work."

She moved back to Portland in 2014 and connected with Sandy Axel, who was coordinating *Chevra Kavod HaMet* at the time. Axel had been involved in the group since the mid-2000s and now leads the Shroud Crowd, the group within *Chevra Kavod HaMet* that sews the traditional Jewish burial garments and shrouds used by the society.

Axel's journey to *Chevra Kavod HaMet* began when her infant child passed away and she was forced to confront death head on.

"We need to take care of each other," she explained. "My hands are needed; my skill set is needed. That's why I do this work."

Jewish burial garments are a five-piece set: a head covering that is different for men and women, a shirt, footed pants, a robe and a belt. The garments are meant to resemble the garb that the High Priest would don when entering the Holy of Holies in the Temple on Yom Kippur each year. A large, square shroud is used to wrap the dressed body up neatly – in burials that do not use a coffin, two shrouds are used.

"When a baby is born, the baby is washed and swaddled," Axel said. "So, too, at the end of life, we lovingly wash and swaddle people who are leaving this place and going on to

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whatever comes next.”

The garments are made from plain white cloth, linen traditionally, cotton in modern days. In Portland, the burial garments – *tachrichim* in Hebrew – used by Chevra Kavod HaMet since 2016 have all been made from recycled bed-sheets donated by the Sentinel Hotel.

Many in Axel’s family who are not Jewish have remarked to her about the beauty and meaning they see in Jewish rituals around death and burial.

“I really believe that Jewish death practices are the most supportive for mourners and makes the most sense,” Axel said. “Over the millennia, we’ve found ways to comfort those who remain and care for this holy vessel that held a soul. The soul has now left that house and gone on to the next place, but we still need to treat this holy vessel, this body, with care and love and respect.”

Care, love, and respect are at the heart of every *chevra kadisha*. Traditionally, during *tahara*, those performing the ritual uncover only the parts of the body they are immediately engaged with preparing and apologize for the intrusion. Other than this, the recitation of prayers, and any other speech directly related to the task at hand, the *tahara* is conducted in silence.

As part of joining Chevra Kavod HaMet, volunteers meet with a current member of the society, and then witness a *tahara*. It’s a process that leaves quite an impression.

“You’re kind of accompanying the soul,” Harper said. “There was something that I felt, something tangible about placing the person into the coffin and covering them and preparing them and then putting the lid on. It’s very powerful.”

“After you do your first one, you are forever changed,” Fendrich said. “There’s no going back. It’s not about seeing death. It’s really about cradling the dead. Everybody says it’s a deep experience.”

Much as the family doesn’t know who performs the *tahara*, the members of the team typically don’t know the person they are preparing, though this isn’t a rule. Regardless, the members of the *chevra kadisha* approach the task the same way.

“It doesn’t matter who they were in the world,” Harper said. “We care for each person the same.”

While religious observance or knowledge of Torah are not requirements to join a *chevra kadisha*, there is a certain something required.

“It takes a compassionate giving heart,” Fendrich explained. “When we are in that room, there’s a covenant that is different from any other because doing *tahara* is considered one of if not the highest acts of lovingkindness.”

Chevra Kavod HaMet is seeking volunteers, both for *tahara* teams and for the Shroud Crowd. For more information about the society, their work, and how to be a part of it, visit chevrakavodhamet.org.

For Fendrich, it’s important for the community to know that the society is there, not simply to attract volunteers, but so that people know that they will be supported in their worst moments.

“What we care about the most, without question, is that our community knows that when the end comes, and they are in deep, deep mourning,” she said, “there is someone in your community who is completely giving of their heart.”

Cross-cultural family party for Purim and Holi is Mar. 17

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Purim is a joyous occasion, celebrating the triumph of the Jewish community over the genocidal designs of Haman. Holi is a joyous occasion in the Hindu culture – otherwise known as the Festival of Color, it marks the beginning of spring in India.

Why not celebrate them together?

Portland’s ongoing Hindu/Jewish Community Dialogue is doing exactly that with a party Sunday, March 17 from 2-4 pm.

“We came up this idea to celebrate some festivals together as an exchange of cultures,” explained Hiral Pandya, one of the Hindu participants in the dialogue process. “What is the Hindu culture? What is the Jewish culture? How do you celebrate your festival? How do we celebrate our festival?”

Like Jews, Hindus traditionally use a lunar calendar, which places Holi in early to mid March in the Gregorian calendar.

“It is the beginning of the spring harvest in India,” Pandya said, “because winter is pretty much over, so that hardship is done now, and spring is a new beginning.”

The two communities will come together to display and share the customs of their holidays: mask and gragger making for Purim, the brightly colored powders thrown in celebration for Holi. Both festivals incorporate celebratory foods, which will be on display as well. The event is family-oriented and a fun experience in learning and celebration for all.

“I’m excited to learn about Holi and the and what it means to the Hindu community,” Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations Rachel Nelson said. “It is an opportunity for us to continue to grow our relationship with the Hindu community and expand beyond the initial dialogue group and create intersections where our kids and our families can learn from each other and with each other.”

The event is co-sponsored by the Federation and Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, a cultural non-profit for Hindus living outside India. The event is free, but preregistration is required at jewishportland.org/purimholi.

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PAT (continued from page 1)

Jewish Review, Feb. 14, 2024) and is the parent of two Portland Public Schools students. When she saw strikers in her neighborhood suddenly carrying signs and Palestinian flags, she was alarmed.

"They asked us, 'come join us every morning and every afternoon and we will march in the neighborhood'" she recalled. "And then, when they decided to take that on, then I'm like, 'Are you kidding me?'"

Meanwhile, at a meeting of the union's Representative Assembly in November, attendees were greeted by what David Goldstein, a teacher at Robert Grey Middle School, described as "activists" with pro-Palestinian signs. Goldstein was handed leaflets demanding the union call for a ceasefire, deploring "75+ years of genocide," and encouraging teachers to utilize a curriculum program called "Project48," which includes a session that "addresses the pervasive Zionist narrative that continues to 'justify' the Nakba, despite clear and compelling facts, historical documentation, and experiences of Palestinians."

"Teachers told me they didn't recognize who they were," Horenstein said of the meeting. "They didn't believe them to be building representatives, but they were all passing out fliers that one could consider anti-Israel."

Days prior, the union's executive board had signed on to a letter calling for a ceasefire.

"It's not horrible," Horenstein said of the statement, crafted by a national coalition of labor unions which also advocated for the return of hostages held by Hamas. "If that was the only thing they had ever done, we wouldn't have made an issue of it."

It wasn't the only thing.

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When the strike ended, the union's involvement in events in Gaza did not.

Days after their contract was ratified, the Portland Association of Teachers' Facebook page encouraged members to attend a Children's March for A Ceasefire Saturday, Dec. 2, wearing union apparel. The march, from Grant Park in Northeast Portland to the home of Rep. Earl Blumenauer, decried "unspeakable atrocities at the hands of the Israeli military" on their website.

The following week, a similar post

was made promoting a "Palestine 101 Joint Struggle Panel" at the Portland Institute for Contemporary Art. The event was organized by the Oregon to Palestine Coalition and included among its topics a discussion of "how to support the fight for Palestinian liberation from the belly of the beast."

Someone forwarded these posts to Mel Berwin, the director of congregational learning at Congregation Neveh Shalom and the parent of a PPS student.

"I was really horrified by what I was seeing," she said. "I was aware from teacher friends of mine that it hadn't been put to a vote, that these were social media posts were being put up without having consulted the teachers that they were supposedly representing and also obviously that they're weighing in on a topic that is so complex and that has deep roots in history."

In a conflict as multifaceted and with as many layers as this one, and with the ramifications that have already been seen in the United States in terms of violence toward Jews following Oct. 7, such promotion is threatening.

"It doesn't feel benign," Berwin said. "It doesn't feel like these statements, taking a side, even if it's couched as concern around Palestinians, which most of us feel, but without appropriate condemnation of Hamas and without any recognition that this started with the brutal murder, rape and kidnapping of Jews and Israelis by Hamas, it feels like it has the potential to incite more violence and more antisemitism."

That's not lost on Goldstein – his grandfather fled Vienna, Austria in 1938 in the wake of the Anschluss and he himself experienced significant antisemitism while studying at Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash. Goldstein said that he hadn't seen anything from the organizations promoted on PAT's feed that suggested they had any interest in condemning Hamas.

"I have yet to hear of a pro-Palestinian advocacy group that isn't glorifying resistance and essentially justifying violence," Goldstein said. "Except for the most extreme people, they're not going to say things like, 'What happened on Oct. 7 was good,' but they will downplay it. They will deny it. They will say, 'What do you expect? It's justified.'"

Berwin emailed the President of the Portland Association of Teachers, An-

gela Bonilla. She received no response.

Goldstein has also emailed Bonilla asking her not to use the union's social platforms to advertise marches. He, too, received no reply.

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Horenstein had, by this point, emailed Bonilla twice.

After the first message, Horenstein said, "She wrote back within a couple days and said, 'We're in the middle of the strike. I'll get back to you.' OK. So, I waited. The strike ended, and I wrote to her the day after the strike ended and said 'OK, strike's ended. We'd like to meet.' I didn't hear from her."

By the time Horenstein received a reply, *Willamette Week* published a story on the union's pro-Palestinian advocacy. The piece ("[Fresh Off a Strike, Portland Association of Teachers Turns Its Attention to Israel](#)," Dec. 14, 2023) details a "teach-in" held Dec. 10 at the union's headquarters, though not sponsored by the union, which addressed "U.S.-backed war crimes in Palestine, the Philippines, and around the world." Goldstein told *Willamette Week* about a truck that was part of a Nov. 3 strike march in Southwest Portland which bore Palestinian flags and people chanting, "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free," a popular protest chant that is widely considered to advocate for the destruction of the Jewish state.

Bonilla emailed Horenstein the day the *Willamette Week* story was published. A meeting was arranged for Dec. 21.

"We [Horenstein and several members of the Jewish Community Relations Council] made our case why this was inappropriate," Horenstein said. "Why would a teachers' union be taking sides in a complex conflict knowing there's going to be an impact on a local community? What impact do you think you're having in the first place? Why haven't you ever done this on any other conflict before?"

The meeting felt positive at the time, Horenstein recalled. Bonilla mentioned that PAT was planning events for Jewish and Muslim constituencies. It concluded with hugs.

"She seemed like a very nice person. She listened; she took notes. She said she was going to share her notes with her executive committee. She couldn't make any promises about not promoting

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these rallies, but she told us there'd be a moratorium on social media posts at least till the end of the year," Horenstein said. "We didn't know what that meant."

On Jan. 2, 2024, PAT announced a "social media break" on its platforms.

"The volunteer run PAT social media team is taking a break to recharge and plan new content in the new year," a post on Facebook said.

That break lasted through January. During that time, *The Oregonian* reported on the situation, including the meeting between Bonilla and the JCRC and the union's social media absence. (["After strike and criticism over posts on Palestine, Portland teachers union presses pause on its social media presence,"](#) Jan. 10, 2024, paywalled)

"Bonilla did not directly respond to questions about whether the social media pause was in response to the group's concerns," the newspaper reported.

Goldstein attended the "Jewish Community Night" organized by PAT. Bonilla was in attendance as well.

"There were probably 20 of us that showed up and we were able to talk about how this situation makes us feel," Goldstein said. "We were able to connect with one another. But it wasn't really well advertised, and it was just for Jewish PAT members."

By Feb. 16, PAT was again posting about pro-Palestinian activities. One was the counterpart event to the union's Jewish Community Night, an event called "Centering Palestinian Experiences," held Mar. 7 at the union's headquarters. The event was promoted as "highlight[ing] the necessity of teaching about Palestine" and was open to "all educators, community members, and students interested in advocacy for Palestine."

Another was a panel discussion titled "What are our Responsibilities to Gaza," held Feb. 22 at Portland State University. The panel included a co-founder of Students United for Palestinian Equal Rights, which affiliates with Students for Justice in Palestine, a group which has been barred from several college campuses nationwide for antisemitic activities including harassment of Jewish students, a "Palestinian rights advocate," a co-founder of Portland's chapter of the anti-Zionist organization Jewish Voice for Peace

and a "former Zionist youth activist."

Horenstein wrote to Bonilla again, asking why advocacy for pro-Palestinian events had resumed on the union's social channels.

"I write you out of growing frustration," his email, dated Feb. 21 begins; it concludes with "Please help me understand why our community's concerns have been completely ignored."

Bonilla's reply, dated Feb. 26, says that she had committed the union to internal discussions for the Social Justice and Community Outreach Committee, internal discussions around processes for which events the union promotes, and the social media pause.

"What we were asked was that we have a time for folks to connect to other Jewish members to hear concerns and talk about the impacts of the events happening in Gaza and Israel, and how it has impacted their communities and sense of safety," Bonilla also wrote. "We also reached out to Palestinian and SWANA (Southwest Asian and North African) members of our union, they asked for a chance to share their experiences."

Bonilla also asserted that "PAT is part of a broader tradition of unions across the country that have spoken out against injustice across the world."

Goldstein said that Bonilla had told him that PAT would no longer be promoting pro-Palestinian events on the Union's social media feed.

"I had her confirm that she is the one that approves all social media posts. So ultimately, all social media posts go through her," he said. "So, she either lied or changed her mind."

Bonilla's office did not reply to multiple emails from *The Jewish Review* as of press time.

The end result is a situation that's very concerning to parents like Vilan.

"I started to question 'What else do those people teach my kids?'" she said. "That Israel is the enemy, and that Zionism is the devil and that we are causing a genocide?"

She questions PAT's decision to put so much emphasis on advocacy around this particular conflict.

"There are many other tragedies around the world that you don't really put any effort into taking any stand or even informing my kids about," she said.

Even if that were the case, the out-

comes would look different, Berwin pointed out, because of the nature of antisemitism.

"We're not seeing people condemning Russian Americans," she said. "You're not seeing Russian kids on campuses being beaten and being terrorized and being tormented."

"This isn't just political, it's violent, right? It's not just expressing a political opinion," she continued. "Even when it does express care for victims, the victims are only seen to be on one side of the border, and that's problematic."

Goldstein feels for those parents, and he echoes their concerns.

"I know that there is a significant number of teachers in this union who are strongly pro-Palestinian," he said. "What are they teaching and what are they doing in their classes? If a student is Jewish or is Zionist, then they may feel unsafe with those teachers, and that is something that is really upsetting and wrong."

Horenstein agreed in no uncertain terms.

"It's not appropriate," he said. "How do you trust that a teacher is going to teach this topic objectively if this is what they're doing?"

Goldstein wanted to make clear that he has no interest in bashing his union.

"I'm a passionate union member. I care about my union," he said. "I care about the public and I care about our students deeply. And the reason I am advocating so hard is because there are kids who are being marginalized, and teachers who are being marginalized, including myself."

There are those within PAT's membership who perhaps aren't as passionate about the union.

"I'm friendly with Jewish teachers who work in Portland, who are horrified at what's happening, who feel very unsafe, who feel misrepresented, who feel like they're not necessarily going to stay working at Portland Public Schools," Berwin said, "and I don't blame them. They're not being represented properly."

Horenstein, meanwhile, feels like the concerns of the Jewish community have been brushed aside.

"I feel like [Bonilla] played us, to be honest," he said.

To report similar incidents or to discuss antisemitism in schools, email Horenstein at bob@jewishportland.org.

Photos: Working for the World

More than 150 volunteers came to Portland Jewish Academy Sunday, Mar. 10 to "work for the world" at the school's hands-on community service fair, co sponsored by B'nai B'rith Camp, PJ Library and the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. Counterclockwise from top left, participants prepared meals for homeless youth and shelter residents of Blanchet Farms, designed challah covers for residents of Cedar Sinai Park in an activity led by Jewish Family & Child Service's Sammy Monk (center), constructed *mishloach manot* bags for Cedar Sinai residents in an activity led by BB Camp staff, decorated their bags, and prepared desserts for homeless youth served by p:ear. Other activities included making cat toys for the Oregon Humane Society, multiple bake sales, and collecting donations of essentials for local nonprofits. (Laura Jeser/The Jewish Review)



Jobs Board

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

'Everyone belongs in this space' for grief and healing

'Walking Beside You,' JFCS grief support group, resumes Mar. 28

By JENN DIRECTOR KNUDSEN
Jewish Family & Child Service

"Grief is one of the most universal experiences we have as human beings," says Missy Fry, LCSW, Jewish Family & Child Service's aging and adult services clinician. "If we love someone, we will at some point grieve for them, or they will grieve for us."

This mentality inspired Missy to create "Walking Beside You," a grief-processing support group for adults that she developed two years ago. Missy has co-facilitated the group five times, and community members continue to request joining a cohort.

This spring, JFCS again offers "Walking Beside You," and it will run on Thursdays, from March 28 through May 16, from 10:30 a.m. to 11:45 a.m. The eight-session grief-processing support group, limited to nine participants, meets at Congregation Neveh Shalom. Synagogue membership is not required.

The series costs \$200. However, no one will be turned away for inability to pay. Registration is required, and Missy requests participants commit to six of the eight gatherings. For more details and to register, visit jfcs-portland.org/walking-beside-you.

Co-facilitating the group alongside

Fry is Nicole Walters, JFCS' aging & adult services MSW intern. To Missy's long-term expertise with grief counseling and older adults, Nicole brings experience in the medical field.

In addition to their joint passion for grief care and work, Walters says, "Together, we bring compassionate care and provide a safe and comfortable place to talk about and explore people's experiences with grief and loss."

Fry adds that experiencing grief can feel so isolating, to the detriment of our overall health.

"We live in a culture that doesn't talk about grief or acknowledge that loss is an emotional trauma," she says. "It makes sense that we yearn for spaces where we can connect with others with shared experiences. While there's no cure for grief, it can normalize what we're going through and help guide us through this experience of loss."

Client voices from prior "Walking Beside You" groups support these notions.

Said one participant: "When I walked out (of the gathering), it felt palpable: Did I forget something? My bag feels lighter... no, my body feels lighter! I need to do this, as hard as it is."

Shared another: "Each week I took

away a little gem from every participant and all of you. I am so grateful to have found this group."

While losing a loved one often draws people to "Walking Beside You," Fry says people experiencing different types of grief from all over greater Portland's Jewish community seek this group.

"The different types of grief we see ranges from recent losses to those that occurred 30 years ago; from anticipatory grief to disenfranchised grief; to grieving good relationships and more complicated ones," she said.

This spring's group will welcome special guest Associate Rabbi Eve Posen of Neveh Shalom, who brings the perspective of ritual that many also crave.

"My expertise comes in Judaism's rich ritual basis surrounding grief and how to bring the somewhat familiar aspects of those rituals into a practice that can lead to healing and processing," Rabbi Posen said.

She adds, "The 'Walking Beside You' group with JFCS encompasses a greater swath of our Jewish community, especially those who perhaps do not have a support community yet."

Says Fry: "Everyone belongs in this space."



Rose Schnitzer Manor residents give back through knitting

Elizabeth Sheiman from Positive Charge, left, helps Rose Schnitzer Manor Active Assisted Living Resident June cast on as she crafts a project for a facility initiative to provide knitwear to nonprofits including Rose Haven and Raphael House for people in need. "My mother-in-law taught me to knit when I was 25," said June. "I used to make things! But it's been so many years, and I want to get back to it." Knitted pieces will ultimately be joined for blankets donated to the houseless. (Sydney Clevenger/Cedar Sinai Park)



Counter-protestors target downtown hostage rally

Protesters demonstrate for the release of hostages held by Hamas in Gaza, calling particular attention to Hamas' documented use of sexual violence against female hostages, at Pioneer Courthouse Square in Portland on International Women's Day, Friday, March 8, in an event organized by Oregon for Israel. Organizers told The Jewish Review that counter-protestors attempted to shut down their event, shouting antisemitic slurs at Jewish protestors and engaging in other aggressive behavior until Portland Police Bureau officers were forced to intervene. A press release from Oregon for Israel stated that a Jewish rally participant was stalked and harassed as she returned to her vehicle following the event, behavior which she documented in a cell phone video, and that five counterprotestors were arrested, one for allegedly assaulting a police officer. "We urge authorities to take decisive action to address antisemitism and ensure the safety of all citizens," the release said. "We also call on our community to stand together against hate and extremism, and to support one another in creating a more inclusive and safer environment for all." (Courtesy Oregon for Israel)

OJCF Scholarship apps due Mar. 29

Oregon Jewish Community Foundation

The Oregon Jewish Community Foundation is pleased to offer scholarships for the pursuit of formal education and Jewish overnight camps. Eligible applicants must be Jewish residents of Oregon (some programs open to residents of Southwest Washington) and demonstrate financial need. Applicants for college scholarships must also demonstrate merit.

The programs include The Albert J. Kailes Memorial Scholarship, The Julie Diamond Memorial Scholarship, The Rebecca and Sada Tarshis Memorial Scholarship, The Gus and Lola Rosenblatt Memorial Scholarship, The Lester & Annette Goldschmidt Hillel Scholarship and The Arthur P. Krichevsky Memorial Scholarship, The Michael Simon Scholarship Fund and The Jerome M. Reich Memorial Scholarship Fund. Applications are due by March 29, 2024. Details are available at <https://ojcf.org/grants-and-scholarships/receive-a-scholarship>.

Rabins premieres latest at Revolution Hall in Portland Apr. 11

By CLAUDIE JEAN FISHER

Portland-based composer, musician, and author Alicia Jo Rabins joins sonic forces with 130 singers from the award-winning Camas High School Choir, string players from the vaunted Third Angle New Music, and a trio of top-tier rock musicians for the dynamic world premiere of "I Was a Desert: Songs of the Matriarchs."

Composed by Rabins, this richly textured multimedia song cycle explores ancient stories of women from the Torah in a contemporary musical language blending

indie rock, folk, chamber music, and the thrilling sound of 130 youthful voices joined in song. This one-night-only performance takes place Apr. 11, 2024, at 7:30 pm at Revolution Hall in Portland and will feature a surprise guest opener. \$20 tickets are on sale now at revolutionhall.com.

"Stories of women are often seen as peripheral when we read ancient sacred texts," said Rabins of the project. "This project asks what would happen if we put these women at the center instead using the com-

bined power of choir, rock band, and strings to explore the bravery, resilience, and vulnerability at the heart of these ancient stories."

This ambitious, large-scale collaboration is intergenerational, intercultural, interdisciplinary—and seeks to blend musical genres while opening dialogue across faiths, ethnicities, and perspectives. "I Was a Desert" builds upon Rabins' long-running music project "Girls in Trouble," which explores the complex and fascinating stories of Biblical women and how their lives

overlap with contemporary experiences. Fans of "Girls in Trouble" will be delighted to hear some familiar songs resonate and breathe in fresh ways with the lush, expanded arrangements for choir, as well as take in brand new compositions. Throughout the process, Rabins has worked closely with the Camas students, inviting them to anonymously contribute their own personal reflections on vulnerability, power, loss, and their hopes and dreams. These collective

See **RABINS**, page 16



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A Jewish Review Purim Party Podcast
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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

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Chaplain's Corner

Sisyphus and gratitude

By RABBI BARRY COHEN

When I was an undergraduate, young, idealistic and optimistic, I had my first encounter with existentialist philosophy. What is the point of being? Where can we find meaning and purpose? What is our motivation to wake up in the morning and live yet another day?

The writings of the giants of existentialism challenged me, humbled me and inspired me: Jean Paul Sartre, Friedrich Nietzsche, Albert Camus, Hannah Arendt, Soren Kierkegaard, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber ... among others. All these years down the road, that first encounter continues.

One character I keep returning to is Sisyphus. The gods condemned him to push a boulder to the top of a mountain ... day after day ... with no possibility of ever pushing the boulder to the other side. Every day would pose the same challenge. He was condemned to stress and strain with all of his energy to push the boulder up, up, up. But at the very instant when at last it would fall to the other side, it rolled back to where he started. Then he would walk down the mountain, go to sleep, wake up and do it again. How did he resign himself to such a fate? How did he keep waking up, morning after morning, knowing what lay ahead?

Years into my rabbinic career, I chose to depart from the conventional path. After serving as a congregational rabbi, I chose to do a Clinical Pastoral Education internship, to gain specialized training of how to offer spiritual, pastoral care. My starting premise? To obtain chaplaincy skills. My ultimate goal? To become a chaplain.

My yearlong internship was a daily dose of humility. Every time I thought I was getting close to my goal – to become a chaplain – I would experience something completely humbling. I would have an encounter with a patient, a patient's family or a member of the hospital staff, and I would feel completely out of my comfort zone. I struggled emotionally to connect. I struggled to offer support or solace. I struggled to walk by their side during their nuanced, complicated journey.

But during that intense yearlong internship, I finally learned lesson number one. There is no endpoint to chaplaincy training. There is no ultimate goal, when we at last earn the title of "chaplain" and have all the skills we need to provide pastoral/spiritual care to



Rabbi Barry Cohen is the Jewish community chaplain of the Greater Portland area. chaplain@jewishportland.org

those in need.

I wonder what it felt like when Sisyphus had the moment of clarity that he would never, ever push the boulder to the other side. What would be the purpose of waking up in the morning to do it again? I imagine he learned to derive meaning and purpose with every step he took to drive the boulder forward and with the way he balanced the rock on his hands or shoulders. I imagine his stopping periodically, the rock resting on his back, as he wiped the sweat from his forehead, face, neck and arms ... when he paused to take in the view. And then I imagine that fleeting second at the top, when the rock neared the tipping point, when he was almost free of the weight of the massive stone. But then the rock fell back on his hands and shoulder, and he had no choice but to let go and watch it tumble down the mountain.

How did he feel then? I imagine that walk down the mountain, free from the massive stone, free from the struggle against gravity, must have felt transcendent. He could take his time, enjoy the view or sit down for a while. Step by step, free from stresses, strains and struggle, he could look forward to a good meal and a refreshing night's rest.

I may carry the title of "chaplain," but I know in my heart that my process of becoming a chaplain will never end. There will always be struggles, doubts and times I could have done better. I will consistently live in a state of self-critique and growth. But every attempt to have an encounter, interaction or conversation can reveal meaning and purpose.

I will soon be leaving Portland to move to Houston to begin the next chapter of my career. I will be Chaplain Manager – The Velva G. and H. Fred Levine Jewish Chaplaincy Program – at the Joan and Stanford Alexander Jewish Family Service. I am grateful

See **CHAPLAIN**, page 17

Security Corner

Oregon's unique resources make reporting hate easy

By JESSICA ANDERSON

In my last column, I talked about the importance of reporting antisemitic incidents to me through my incident reporting form at <https://jewishportland.org/security>. Continuing that thread, I want to share information about a unique resource we have here in Oregon. Oregon was the first state in the US that funded a Bias Response Hotline. Illinois is the only other state I'm aware of that has since developed one. Our hotline is funded by the state and serviced out of Oregon's Department of Justice (DOJ).

I'm going to take a step back for a moment and talk about the difference between a bias incident and a bias crime. As described on the Bias Response Hotline website, a bias incident is "any hostile expression that may be motivated by another person's actual or perceived protected class, meaning their race, color, disability, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, or gender identity." In this example, there does not have to be an actual violation of a law. Name-calling, using an ethnic or racial slur, and creating racist or derogatory images are all examples of bias incidents.

A "hate crime" in Oregon is called a bias crime. These are crimes that are "motivated in part or whole by bias against another person's actual or perceived protected class." People often think bias crimes are only prosecuted under federal laws, however, there are also state and tribal hate and bias crime



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.

laws. Bias crimes can be verbal, physical, or visual. Examples include assaulting, injuring, or touching someone offensively, vandalizing private property with racist or derogatory graffiti or threatening to physically harm someone or their property based on their perceived protected class.

It's important to understand the difference so victims can develop appropriate expectations around police response and incident resolution. Know that you don't have to figure out what type of incident occurred. The most important thing is for the incident to be reported and then I or the Hotline personnel can help victims determine what kind of incident

See SECURITY, page 17

Israel Stories

Dispatch from the epicenter - my IDF service

Editor's Note: With many members of the Portland Jewish community visiting Israel to volunteer, support the Israeli people and bear witness to the ongoing war, The Jewish Review is making space available for those who wish to share their stories of visiting the region. If you would like to share a 400-500 word account of your recent journey to Israel, please email editor@jewishportland.org for more information.

By JOSHUA SAFRAN

Two weeks ago, I found myself in a grove of bullet-scarred eucalyptus trees, explosions from across the border cracking the air around me. I stood in the open countryside just northeast of Kibbutz Re'im – the epicenter of a historically seismic event that threatens to swallow the entire world. I was there, in the words of King David, to train my fingers for battle.

The *Midrash* teaches that when the Red Sea was split, the energy at work was so profound that all waters split. Every sea, every lake, every drop of water split. For me, October 7, 2023, was the same – a rift so profound that it ran a fault line through everything – Israel, the Diaspora, my friends, my family. Nothing remains unfractured.

On that day, the 75-year promise that the State of Israel could keep Jewish people safe from the horrors of mass massacre shattered. On that day, a diverse, multicultural

hippie gathering of young people dancing for peace in a magical little eucalyptus forest – on land even the UN has recognized as part of the sovereign State of Israel since 1948 – were raped, tortured, murdered, and kidnapped by a brigade of deeply religious male soldiers who broke through an international border – from an area unoccupied by Israel – for the express purpose of killing innocent people. On that day, the world cynically dismissed the victims as "Zionists" and celebrated the perpetrators as "the Resistance." Another shattering.

As the Portland Jewish community went into a defensive posture with credible threats flowing in against it as a "Zionist" target, it felt like there was little we could do but shelter in place and watch helplessly what was unfolding 9,000 miles away in Israel. Eventually, I could no longer ignore Hillel the Elder's question "If not now, when?" I took a month leave of absence from work and left my family to volunteer for the Israeli army.

On my first day in the tank depot, muscles that hadn't been used in 30 years, and hidden muscles that had never been used, protested loudly. My posting was in a world of giant wrenches, arm crushing machinery, and endless concatenations of metal that were denser

See ISRAEL, page 17

Events

More upcoming community events online at jewishportland.org/community-calendar

Mar. 13 “The Counterfeit Countess” book signing

Signing of Elizabeth B. White and Joanna Sliwa’s nonfiction work on “Countess Janina Suchodolska” at Powell’s City of Books Wednesday, Mar. 13 at 7 pm. More information at powells.com/events-update.

Mar. 13: Inside the Middle East

Presentation from Avi Melamed on ongoing situation in Israel and Gaza at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Wednesday, Mar. 13 at 7 pm. For more information, visit oregon-jcc.org/arts-culture/upcoming-events/inside-the-middle-east-series

Mar. 13: “Matter of Mind: My Parkinson’s” screening at EJC

Indie Lens Pop-Up screening of documentary “Matter

of Mind: My Parkinson’s” Wednesday, Mar. 13 at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 7 pm. Free, registration required at tinyurl.com/r2mfpp2.

Mar. 14: The Cost of Free Land

Lecture with author Rebecca Clarren on land appropriation at Rose Schnitzer Manor Assisted Living Thursday, Mar. 14 at 7 pm. Free. For more information, email sydney.clevenger@cedarsinaipark.org

Mar. 14: Cafe Shalom Israeli Folk Dancing

Weekly open Israeli dance session Thursdays, 8-10 pm at CHCC, 8936 SW 17th Ave in Portland. All experience levels and ages welcome. \$7. For more information, contact Allison Victor at al-lisuev@gmail.com.

Mar. 15: EJC Friday Noontime Concert

Klezmer trio Kochleffel

Syndrome perform at the Eastside Jewish Commons Friday, Mar. 15 at noon. Free. For more information, visit ejcpdx.org/events.

Mar. 16: CBI Mini Mensches Tot Shabbat

Children’s Shabbat program at Congregation Beth Israel for children age 0-5 and families Saturday, Mar. 16 at 9 am. For more information, visit bethisrael-pdx.org/community/mini-mensches.

Mar. 16: The Jennie Open House

Preschool open house at Congregation Beth Israel Saturday, Mar. 16 from 2-5 pm. For more information, visit thejenniepdx.org/.

Mar. 17: Nibbles & Narratives: A Haggadah-Making Workshop

Haggadah-making workshop for ages 12 and up at Congregation Neveh Sha-

lom Sunday, Mar. 17 at 2 pm. \$8 for CNS members, \$10 for non-members. RSVP at members.nevehshalom.org/event/N&N2024.

Mar. 17: Purim/Holi Celebration.

Cross-cultural holiday festival Sunday, Mar. 17 at 2 pm. See story, page 7.

Mar. 17: Hoffman-Lemish Quartet

Jazz fusion concert at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Sunday, Mar. 17 at 6 pm. \$20 for MJCC members, \$30 for non-members. For more information and for tickets, visit oregon-jcc.org/daxko.

Mar. 21: Braids

Presentation by cookbook author Sonya Sanford at Rose Schnitzer Manor Thursday, Mar. 21 at 7 pm. Free. For more information, email sydney.clevenger@cedarsinaipark.org

See EVENTS, page 18

RABINS (continued from page 13)

reflections will be woven throughout the piece, creating a tapestry of the young singers’ personal stories alongside ancient source material.

Following the world premiere in Portland, “I Was a Desert” will make its New York City debut on May 23, 2024, at the Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust.

Throughout the show, Rabins explores the meaning of spiritual texts in a secular world, and what it means to center women’s experiences in historically patriarchal traditions. A celebration of both diasporic Jewish culture and deep intercultural connections, this show is not to be missed!

This project is made possible thanks to generous support from The Ronni S. Lacroute Fund of Oregon Community Foundation, Peleh Fund, Arts for Learning Northwest, CMA Foundation, The Emily Georges Gottfried Fund of the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, Friends of Camas Arts, Museum of Jewish Heritage—A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, Revolution Hall, and Third Angle New Music. This program is supported, in part, by a grant from the Washington State Arts Commission and by funds from the Oregon Arts Commission.

For more information, visit aliciajo.com.

WEBINAR (continued from page 2)

Collete Avital, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, Honest Reporting Executive Director Gil Hoffman and IDF Reserve Col. Kobi Marom, in addition to a drone-captured aerial tour of Gaza.

“There were just so many opportunities to hear from such incredible people that we just couldn’t pick,” Nelson explained. “So, when we had the opportunity to bring more voices in, we felt that it was important to continue to share.”

She pointed out that while Israel is physically far from Portland, it is very close to the hearts of many in Portland’s Jewish community.

“Whether it’s our Israelis community members and others in our community who have family members who have been taken hostage or who were killed on Oct. 7, folks who have friends and family who are serving in the military right now and any of us who care deeply about Israel; for us to be able to hear first-hand what is happening, it was an opportunity to keep those voices foremost in our minds as we continue to think of them every single day.”

Each conversation from the series can be viewed at any time at jewishportland.org/israelwebinars.

jewishportland.org/subscribe

ISRAEL (continued from page 5)

and heavier than physics should allow. Every day ended with my arms and back and legs howling. But I hadn't felt that good in years. The sense of purpose and mission was uplifting and the feeling of finally being useful to the defense of Israel from unspeakable evil was infinitely empowering. The most enriching and powerful part of the experience was the comradery – between volunteers like me and the young, proud, and eager enlisted women and men, and between the volunteers. The six of us volunteer “tankers” were from Venezuela, Denmark,

Germany, France, Oregon, and North Carolina. Despite the language differences, we worked like a well-oiled machine (we were also literally always drenched in machine oil), driven by a shared sense of purpose. Together we made ready about 30 tons of material for 160 tanks.

We joked that our service was the cheapest therapy we'd ever received. What surprised me most was the realization that our service was also a form of therapy for the Israelis around us. Everyone I met there – Jews, Arabs, Druze, and Bedouin – struggled with some sense

of abandonment by the world community. Seeing our rainbow coalition of international volunteers signaled that Israel is not forgotten. Cab drivers gave me free rides. Random women brought me food. Young soldiers gave me their combat patches. Strangers gave me hugs. This is not normal. I've been coming to Israel for 30 years and the prickly-exteriored Sabra simply doesn't treat strangers like this. But there it was. In times of war there are no strangers.

Two days after my return to Portland, while wearing a kippah and walking with

my family, I was assaulted by keffiyeh-wearing strangers screaming “Get Out of Portland!” and “From the River to the Sea!” Another shattering.

Standing on the west bank of the Willamette River, facing west toward the Pacific Ocean, I realized that, in this war, our enemies will not stop until Jews have no place between any river and any sea. It is unfortunate but, as King Solomon says, there is a time for war. The faster we roll up our sleeves and get down to the business of winning, the faster this will be over.

SECURITY (continued from page 11)

you experienced and connect you with law enforcement if appropriate and desired. I also often help victims obtain resources through the Bias Response Hotline program following an incident. For instance, the Hotline offers funds to help victims recover from incidents. The fund pays up to \$1,000 for emergency costs and covers expenses such as home security cameras, video doorbells, changing locks, and repairing windows and doors. Funds might help re-

locate a victim, assist with rent or moving expenses, repair property, or clean up vandalism.

Oregon DOJ has also partnered with the Oregon State Bar to provide free legal advice for low-income residents. Questions are submitted online, and lawyers log on to the system and provide advice, answers, and resources. If you are a lawyer and would like to participate in this program, please reach out to them as they are actively looking for

lawyers in the areas of consumer, family, immigration, employment, and housing law. In one instance, I helped an individual identify legal resources following a series of hostile work issues due to his Jewish identity.

The Bias Response Hotline is a wonderful resource. I meet with Hotline administrators regularly and am always astonished at how often people in the far corners of Oregon are dealing with antisemitic activity. I'm going to continue to encour-

age local victims to let me know first about incidents in our Portland area. However, if you're more comfortable reaching out to the hotline, you should do so – it's confidential and staffed with culturally specific specialists. Incidents can be reported through a web portal at justice.oregon.gov/CrimeReporting/BiasCrime or by calling 844-924-BIAS (844-924-2427). They offer services in nine languages and have access to interpretation for another 240 languages.

CHAPLAIN (continued from page 12)

for these past 5-plus years in Portland. Unlike Sisyphus, I have not been alone. I interacted with so many people as collaboratively we pushed the boulder up the mountain in pursuit of spiritual/pastoral health and healing. I have

done my best to derive meaning and purpose from every step we took. You inspired me, supported me and encouraged me.

So, in a short while, once again, I will wake up in a new city, the boulder

awaiting me. My next mountain awaits in Houston, despite the geographical flatness of east Texas. I only hope that my experience there will be as rewarding, fulfilling and meaningful as I have had

in the Pacific Northwest.

Following Rabbi Cohen's departure, those needing chaplaincy services should call JoAnn Bezodis with the Oregon Board of Rabbis at 971-248-5465.

Free online subscription:
jewishportland.org/subscribe

LARRY KANER

Dr. Larry Kaner, z"l, passed away at 92 in Portland on Mar. 1, 2024. Born Seymour Lawrence Kaner in a Manhattan hospital on Oct. 4, 1931, Larry lived in The Bronx, N.Y., with his parents, David and Bertha Kaner. When he was eight, they moved to Superior, Wisc., where his father owned a small grocery store. After attending public schools in Superior, Larry completed his undergraduate work and earned his medical degree from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. While there, he met his wife, Betty Payne, who he married in 1955. The Kaners remained enthusiastic Badger fans.

In 1957, after his medical internship at St Luke's Hospital in Duluth, Larry took a "temporary" position with a family practice group in Two Rivers, Wisc., while expecting to report for duty after being drafted to serve as a physician in the Korean War. When the war ended shortly thereafter, he and Betty decided to remain in Two Rivers, where Larry continued his family practice for the next 40 years.

In 2023, Larry and Betty moved to Portland, where they joined the community at Rose Schnitzer Manor.

Larry was most proud of his children and grandchildren and their accomplishments. Family and friends will miss Larry's wisdom, good humor and kindness.

He is survived by his wife Betty, children Robert and Ellen, Ric and Sara, Lisa and Peter, and grandchildren David Kaner and his husband Brennan O'Rear, Jolie Kaner, Jordan Edelson, Fara Kaner, Rhody Kaner and her spouse Jake Palanker, Zoe Edelson and Gilon Kaner.

Services were held at Ahavai Shalom Cemetery on Monday, Mar. 4.

Remembrances can be made to the Wisconsin Medical Alumni Association; Lester Public Library, Two Rivers, WI; The Neshotah Charitable Foundation, Inc., Two Rivers, WI; The Jewish National Fund.

JEFFREY FUNES

With great sadness, Congregation Ahavath Achim announces the passing of Jeffrey Nissim Funes, z"l. He is survived by sister Reyna Gustav, and brother of Gary Funes. He passed on Monday, Mar. 4, 2024, in Phoenix, Az.

FREDERICK BLANK

Congregation Beth Israel mourns the loss of Frederick Alan

EVENTS (continued from page 18)

Mar. 24: Acoustic Ecology with Aaron Kahn

Introductory course on sound in environments with trumpeter Aaron Kahn at the Eastside Jewish Commons Sunday, Mar. 24 at 1:30 pm. \$45. For more information, visit ecjpdx.org/events.

Mar. 27: City of Roses Death Café at EJC

Open community conversation about end-of-life facilitated by City of Roses Death Café at the Eastside Jewish Commons Wednesday, Mar. 27 from 1:30 -3:30 pm. Free. Space is limited, please pre-register at ecjpdx.org/events.

Blank, z"l, who passed away on Mar. 8, 2024, at the age of 73.

Fred is survived by his wife, Bettina Blank, daughter, Lisa Blank Wynn (Brent Wynn), son, Alexander Blank (Natasha Blank), grandchildren, Carson Wynn, Charlotte Wynn, and Wyatt Blank, brothers, Bruce Blank (Jan Casey) and family, and Owen Blank (Lynn Blank) and family.

Fred is preceded in death by his parents, Phil and Fay Blank, z"l, and grandson, Henry Blank, z"l.

The funeral was held at the Congregation Beth Israel Cemetery on Sunday, March 10, 2024.

Donations in Fred's memory can be made to local organizations he was passionate about: Central City Concern, Dougy Center, and Ethos Music Center.

MICHAEL DIXON

With sorrow, Congregation Kol Ami announces the death of member Michael Dixon. Michael died Friday, Mar. 8. Condolences to wife Carolyn Dixon and their sons Martin and Alex, and their extended families during this difficult time.

SUZANNE LIBERMAN

Suzanne Rita Liberman, z"l, died in Portland, Ore., Feb. 10, 2024, aged 94. Suzanne was born in 1930 in Brooklyn, N.Y. While training as a nurse at Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, she met Dr. L. Eric Liberman, z"l. Wed in 1949, they remained devoted to each other for 62 years.

As a young mother of two sons and a severely disabled daughter, Suzanne took on the many challenges of caring for her family. Much later in life, Suzanne returned to work for a time as a nurse with Kaiser Permanente. She loved to sing, and cherished her connection with the Congregation Neveh Shalom choir. Suzanne's many friends will remember her generosity, her affectionate concern for others and her impish sense of humor.

Suzanne is survived by sons Lev and Adam Liberman, daughters-in-law Joan Liberman and Gemma Whelan, and grandchildren Max and Melantha Liberman and Corey and Brianna Whelan-Liberman.

Family and friends will gather to remember and celebrate Suzanne's life at 1 p.m., Thursday, March 14, 2024, at Rose Schnitzer Manor. Those wishing to make donations in her memory are invited to contribute to Doctors Without Borders or the Oregon Food Bank.

Life cycle

MAYA ADI MAZOR

Maya Adi was born Feb. 24 to Hadas Horenstein and David Mazor of Philadelphia. Grandparents are Dorice and Bob Horenstein.

Submit births, b'nai mitzvah, engagements, weddings, anniversaries and landmark birthdays to The Jewish Review's new online portal at form.jotform.com/JFGP/jr-life-cycle