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Mistral the Minstrel (Ayal Yariv) assures a young fairy (and her parent) that if one plays the piano, they can play any instrument - including this portative organ - at the Oregon Renaissance Faire in Canby Saturday, June 21. (Jenn Director Knudsen for The Jewish Review)

A minstrel's musical journey

From Jerusalem through Portland to the Ren Faire circuit, Ayal Yaviv remains driven by music and its unique joys

By JENN DIRECTOR KNUDSEN

For The Jewish Review

On a recent day at the Oregon Renaissance Faire, Mistral the Minstrel watches

a stream of pirates, kings, queens, vikings, warriors, witches, wizards, and even folks

See MINSTRAL, page 9

PDX Pathways applications due July 11

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

PDX Pathways is back – and bigger than ever.

Applications for the eighth cohort of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's signature young professional mentoring program are open now through July 11, with a new schedule based on feedback from the most recently completed cohort – specifically that they wanted more.

While previous cohorts have run for six months, Federation Associate Campaign and Engagement Officer Laura Jeser explained, “they wanted a nine month program. So we’re doing it like a school year, September to June.”

More time together means more of all the things that makes Pathways such a special experience.

“They love the friendships that they created,” Jeser

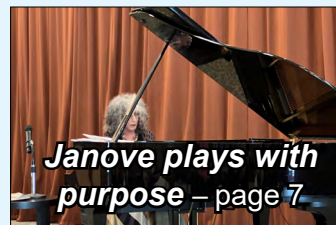
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The Jewish Review Podcast



Click the logo for the latest episode.

Portland Jewish Library launches at Shir Tikvah

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Resources for Jews in East Portland have grown significantly in recent years – the latest addition to which is a library.

The Portland Jewish Library, hosted by Congregation Shir Tikvah and the Eastside Jewish Commons, is now open to the public following a soft opening event on Shavuot.

“Rabbi Ariel [Stone] approached me about a year ago with this idea that she had that she wanted to do something with Shir Tikvah’s book collection, because it’s just kind of sitting here. Nobody really knew what we had or how to use it,” Librarian E.J. Pryor said.

He went on to explain that fulfilling that mission is something of “a dream job” for him.

“I think I was destined to be stuck in a library,” he said.

The answer to what they had was immense – the library currently has 1,500

volumes in circulation, with around 500 more in storage and approximately 200 donations in recent months.

“We had a spreadsheet with a list of titles and that’s pretty much all,” Pryor said.

The difference between a library and a pile of books is in its organization and usability. Fortunately, Pryor has a career in library work that he can call on to turn the latter into the former. Pryor selected the Elazar System, developed by Daniel Elazar in the 1950s specifically for Jewish libraries, over the complex Library of Congress system or the Dewey Decimal System.

“We would have all of our books in one number,” Pryor said of applying Dewey Decimal to a Jewish library.

The subjects covered in PJJ’s volumes are as vast as the Jewish experience.

“We have a big selection of Jewish history, a growing collection of Jewish fiction,” Pryor said. “We have a lot of

books for people who have any interest in Talmud or Torah study. I’m trying to grow our cookbook collection because I love cookbooks. We have a very large selection of books on Jewish life cycle, Jewish holidays and Jewish practice. We have hundreds of prayer books of various kinds. We have about 50 different Haggadot, if people want to look at a selection before deciding what to get for their family.”

There are also a few less-common items.

“We have a 200-year old Hebrew Bible from Germany,” Pryor said. “Just a month ago, somebody donated a rare and cool scroll of Esther, translated into Yiddish and printed with some cool calligraphy. I’m working with the conservator to see if we can make that actually usable and displayable; it’s quite fragile now.”

The next question was where to put

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Veteran Jerusalem Post Journalist

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PATHWAYS

(continued from page 1)

said of the participant feedback she received, “as well as the connections in the Jewish community; building community within Jewish peers was huge.”

Pathways pairs its participants with professional mentors, both long-time professionals in the area and Pathways program alumnae. The latter, and the smaller mentoring subgroups within the larger cohort that went along with, were new for last year’s cohort.

“We wanted to make the whole experience multi-generational and to give our next-gen mentors a leadership role,” Jeser said. “It ended up being a really valuable component to the program.”

Pathways helps participants forge new connections in their professional environments and gain skills and tools to navigate their work lives, but it’s also been a powerful tool for connecting young Portland Jews with the Jewish community and fostering a sense of belonging and engagement with Jewish life. That connection has, in many cases, endured beyond the official end of the program, as a number of last year’s mentor subgroups are continuing to convene regularly, Jeser explained.

“I find so much joy and happiness in



Participants in PDX Pathways' 2024 cohort greet their mentors at a reception at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education Thursday, Sept. 19. (Rockne Roll/Jewish Review file)

connecting people to one another,” she added. “Helping people find places and spaces where they feel they belong and can be heard is so beautiful.”

It was work that was impactful to her late husband, Michael Jesser, z”l, who founded the Pathways program during his time as Federation’s Chief Development Officer.

“Michael and I believe young adults are the future and that our power really

lies within the next generation,” Laura Jeser said. So, to build them up and to connect and engage with and support them is really important.

Due to the increased program length, this year’s Pathways cohort will have a \$118 programming fee attached. Financial assistance is available. For more information or to apply, visit jewish-portland.org/ourcommunity/young-adults/pdx-pathways.

LIBRARY (continued from page 2)

all these books? The East-side Jewish Commons has plenty of rooms, fortunately, and to avoid packing any of them too full, the collection is spread out throughout the building. The entire catalogue is searchable through the library’s website – portlandjewishlibrary.org – and holds can be placed through the website. The feasibility of open operating hours is still being worked out due to security concerns, but individuals who are visiting EJC for other events also have access to the collection.

“I hope that we get people who aren’t necessarily wouldn’t go to a Jewish library but are here for other things and think, ‘oh, hey, that looks like a cool book,’ and then learn about this resource and take advantage of it,” Pryor said. He added that “I think of the physical collection as just the root of something bigger; I want it to be a hub for learning and culture.”

In that vein, Pryor is looking forward to the library hosting events of its own – Shir Tikvah counts a number

of published authors among its membership, he noted. And while the library is a great resource for those looking for Jewish reading material, it’s also a valuable opportunity for those who have too much of that on their hands.

“The goal that Rabbi Stone wanted to implement here was that the library could be a resource for people who have collections of books, often left of them by a loved one, that they just don’t know what to do with and they don’t want to just give

them to Goodwill,” Pryor explained. “So, I want this to be a place where people can donate their books and know that they’re going to find a good home, whether it’s part of our collection or passed on to other libraries. I’m also working with the Intro to Judaism class from the Oregon Board of Rabbis to help those students build their own Jewish libraries.”

The Portland Jewish Library is free to use. For more information or to make an appointment, email Pryor at library@shirtikvahpdx.org.



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

OJCF unveils new brand at annual meeting

Entrepreneurs Robert and Ann Sacks inducted to Diamond Legacy Society

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

The Oregon Jewish Community Foundation had plenty to share at its annual meeting at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Monday, June 16; A slate of new board members, new members of its executive committee and the induction of Robert and Ann Sacks into the Julie Diamond, z"l, Legacy Society. But perhaps the biggest announcement of all was visible before the meeting even began.

Signs, nametags and even cookies greeted attendees with the Foundation's new logo – part of a comprehensive rebranding effort rolled out at the meeting and the result of a just-as-comprehensive process.

"This reveal has been about three years in the making, which may sound a bit absurd for a nonprofit rebrand," OJCF Executive Committee Member Emily Kahn explained, "but throughout the process, the team, everybody involved, was very consistent in our desire to spend the time and the effort do it right one time, rather than rush through it."

This process started back in 2022 with research that found that while OJCF was positively perceived, there was significant room for improvement in terms of messaging around its functions and programs. Last year, the design process took off in earnest, resulting in the new logo, typefaces and color scheme that greeted guests. Much of 2025 has been devoted to preparing the Foundation's extensively remodeled website, which was shown to guests during the presentation.



From left, Robert and Ann Sacks are inducted into the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation's Julie Diamond, z"l, Legacy Society by President and CEO David Foreman and Past Chair Jonathan Singer at the Foundation's annual meeting Monday, June 16 at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

"This is a culmination of community input strategy and creativity, and it's centered on making OJCF clearer, more inclusive and more connected to our mission," Kahn explained.

That mission, also summarized on signage at the meeting, is "Connecting people, passion, and philanthropy since 1989."

The logo is a mixture of some of Judaism's most prominent symbols – a blue mezuzah, a white braided Havdalah candle, and a gold ner tamid (eternal flame).

"Being a rabbi, I don't just see shapes. I didn't just see a hexagon and a bar and some squiggles," Rabbi Eve Posen, a member of OJCF's Board and Senior Rabbi at

Congregation Neveh Shalom, explained of seeing the logo for the first time. "This logo and this brand beautifully capture who we are, what we've inherited, and where we're headed."

"This new brand provides a better platform and runway for OJCF to serve the community and implement our mission and vision," OJCF Director of Community Relations Noah Rosenberg added. "We're excited about putting this into action. Continue to build a culture of giving the philanthropy in Oregon, Southwest Washington, and we invite you to be on this journey with us."

Before the journey continued, Jonathan Singer came on stage to recognize the

efforts of two people who have long been a part of that mission.

"Robert and Ann Sacks came to our community nearly 50 years ago, so I guess they're newcomers in that way for Robert to attend law school after the two met and got married while at University of Michigan," Singer said, joking that "Yes, we chose the colors of the Foundation to honor them."

Since their arrival, Ann Sacks has launched a trio of highly successful businesses, the most recent of which, Fetch Eyewear, donates all its profits to The Pixie Project animal welfare non-profit started by the couple's daughter, Amy. Pixie Project

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has facilitated over 10,000 animal adoptions – including to Singer, he said – and provides low- and no-cost veterinary services as well as social services to pet owners of limited means. Robert Sacks represented labor organizations in Portland for 25 years before moving to real estate development, achieving parallel success through revitalizing Portland neighborhoods.

“The Torah says of Moses that he was a very humble man, and Jewish tradition teaches that humility is one of the greatest virtues that a person can have,” Singer said. “Robert and Ann are incredibly understated in their philanthropy and their service to the community, even as the impact of their good deeds cannot be overstated.”

Like all Legacy Society members, the Sacks have committed to contributing a significant portion of their estate to the Foundation. The society bears the name of its founder, former OJCF Executive Director Julie Diamond, z”l, who founded it in 2009 with 12 members – a roster that’s grown to nearly 180 today.

“It’s always been embarrassing and awkward to be the honoree at an event. As Jonathan said, given the choice, I think Ann and I would both rather lie low,” Robert Sacks said. “But we also know that these events serve multiple purposes, and one of those purposes is to provide small examples, often for people just entering their most productive earning years and maybe thinking about philanthropy and how they want to go about it, and also for people in our age group who may be considering how best to structure their philanthropy in their later years and in their

estate planning.”

Robert told the audience how they structured the sale of Ann’s second business, a tile company, so that half of the shares went to the buyer from the Ann and Robert Sacks Family Fund at OJCF – a structure which saved them a significant tax bill and helped enable the philanthropy they practice today.

“The purpose of this story is not to demonstrate any cleverness on our part, because frankly, it wasn’t even our idea,” Robert Sacks explained. “Rather, it’s to tell you that what I have made pretty simple tonight was actually very complicated and had a lot of moving parts. And the OJCF was involved in every step of that process. They played an integral part in accomplishing the best possible result.”

“The country of our birth is searching for its soul, and the country of our hearts is struggling for its survival, and we’re asking ourselves how we can help,” Ann Sacks said. “I feel very optimistic we can help, and we will help because we will think, we will use our compassion and our competence, we’ll continue to work hard and give of ourselves generously, and then everything will be better for it.”

David Foreman, OJCF’s President and CEO, shared a quote from Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks which reminded him both of Robert and Ann Sacks (no relation) but of OJCF’s ongoing mission.

“The moral life is the one we share with others. We are, in some sense, responsible for the society of which we are part. It is not enough to be good. You must encourage others to be good. There are times when each of us must lead,” Foreman read. “These words of Rabbi Jonathan



Above: From left, Rabbi Eve Posen, Emily Kahn and Noah Rosenberg introduce OJCF's new logo. Right: Attendees received cookies bearing the foundation's new branding. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

Sacks capture something profound, something we in this room know instantly. They remind us of who we are as a Jewish people and what our shared responsibility looks like in action.”

Among those increasing their leadership contribution are Stefan Ostrach, who was elected as an at-large member of OJCF’s Board of Trustees at the meeting. Ostrach is treasurer of Eugene’s Temple Beth Israel and is the first person living outside the Portland Metropolitan Area to serve on OJCF’s board. The meeting also elected Rabbi Posen to a second term as an at-large trustee, welcomed David Bean and Jason Zidell to the board upon the designation



of Congregation Beth Israel and Portland Jewish Academy, respectively, and recognized Arlene Cogan and Lisa Fasolo Frishman, who were elected to the executive committee at the board’s previous meeting.

“With your partnership, your trust and your leadership, the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation will continue to be a force for moral good for now and for generations to come,” Foreman concluded, “because Rabbi Sacks is right; the moral life is shared. It is not lived alone; it is built together.”

Janove plays with a purpose at local facilities

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

Marjorie Janove has played piano with Joseph Silverstein and the Utah Symphony Orchestra. Today, she frequently plays for different audiences.

"I really feel committed to bringing music to shut-ins, to people who otherwise wouldn't have it or people who are either immobile altogether or have memory issues or those who live in assisted living situations and can't get out as much as they used to," she said.

Janove, now a Portlander, frequently travels to retirement communities around the area, including Courtyard Village, the Rose Schnitzer Manor, and the Robeson Jewish Health Center, to bring music to those very people. It's a practice she started in her days in Salt Lake City with her three children – a cellist daughter and two violinist sons. She is planning a future performance with her younger son, with whom she practices weekly over Zoom, but most of her playing today is solo.

Her hour-long programs are split in two parts. The first is some of her favorites from her classical repertoire – Chopin, Debussy and Beethoven, among others. The second half, however, gets more modern.

"I want the programs to have broad appeal, and I feel like if I just do classical music, it's a little limiting," Janove said. "People like pop music, and there's a reason for it."

Inspired by the work of Francesco Tarino, Janove has worked with a high school friend, David Lovett, to bring classic pop and Broadway tunes to the piano. Lovett a researcher by trade, locates videos and recordings of classic songs



Pianist Marjorie Janove performs at Cedar Sinai Park's Rose Schnitzer Manor in this undated photograph. (Courtesy Marjorie Janove)

and Janove transcribes them – that is, she writes them out for piano, by ear, one note at a time. From "As Time Goes By," from the classic film, "Casablanca," to the Beach Boys, to 1920's dance tunes and so much more (including a bit of Frank Sinatra at her husband's request) – much of the 20th century's music has made its way from recording to ink to the ivories under Janove fingers. It's a painstaking process, but the payoffs are immense.

"The whole idea is to play music that brings back memories because the last part of the brain to deteriorate is the part that holds music," Janove explained. "So even people with severe memory loss, that part of their brain is still very much alive, and so it excites me to see their response."

Janove and her children would visit aging friends in retirement communities around national holidays,

bringing cookies and smiles.

"We enjoy our older people," Janove said of her family. "I was raised that way. I was around a lot of older people, so it wasn't a strange thing to go over and visit. My daughter would give manicures to some of the residents, but I thought, 'They don't need a manicure, they need music.'"

In Portland, Janove became friends with Noreen Farnham, z"l, quickly after moving to town. When Farnham entered memory care at Robeson, Janove would visit her and play some of her favorite pieces – Debussy's "Clair de lune," and songs by George Gershwin. After Farnham's passing, Janove played a concert at Robeson in her honor.

Janove also plays at home; her living room is more of a piano room, being built around a nine-foot-long concert grand with space for 40

or so seats. It's space she's used to host fundraising performances for Hadassah, the Portland Kollel, and Chabad of Oregon. She also regularly plays at Kaiser Permanente's Beaverton offices, which features an open, three-story lobby equipped with a piano that reverberates sound beautifully throughout the building. But the retirement facility concerts are special – the reason can be summed up in one listener's experience at one of Janove's performances at Robeson.

"She's just sitting there and she's completely in her own world, just smiling and immersed in the music," Janove said of this particular concertgoer. "I didn't see it because I was playing the piano. But my husband did."

Janove will perform two shows at the Cedar Sinai Park campus Thursday, Aug. 7 – at Rose Schnitzer Manor at 1 pm and at Robeson at 2:15 pm.

Comfort's marriage memoir stresses empathy

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Dr. Bonnie Comfort knows a thing or two about being married.

Comfort, a Portland-based psychologist, has been practicing marriage therapy for more than 30 years. She was also married for 33 years – a marriage that weathered many storms and only ended with her husband's passing. Those stories are woven together in "Staying Married is the Hardest Part: A Memoir of Passion, Secrets and Sacrifice," now available from Simon & Schuster.

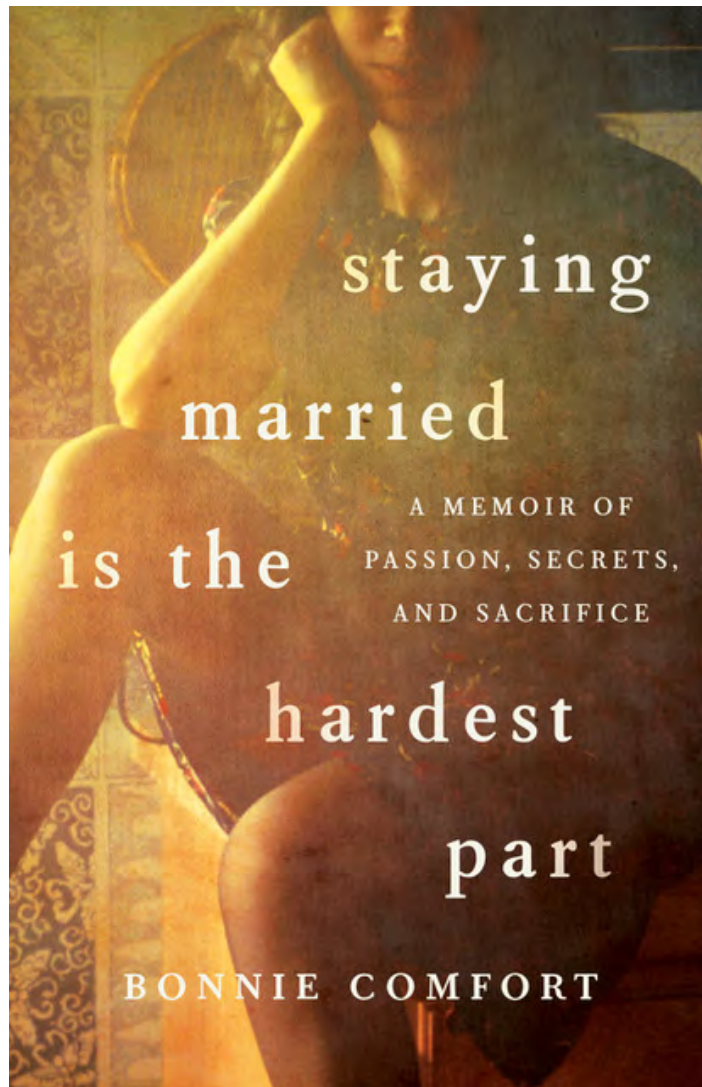
"I really felt compelled to write a memoir about our relationship and what I thought people could learn from it," Comfort said. "Also, it was necessary for me to kind of process my grief and my feelings about my marriage."

Comfort grew up Jewishly and said she still feels deeply connected to her Judaism but does not practice religiously. This proved a good fit for her husband, Bob, who's fundamentalist Christian childhood led him to reject anything religious. As a comedy writer working in Los Angeles, where the couple met, Bob was well-acquainted with Judaism and even got Bonnie's mother's stamp of approval.

"My mother, when she met him, had been obsessed with me marrying a Jewish man," Comfort recalled, "she said to him quietly. 'Bob, I know you're not Jewish, but you have a Jewish heart.'"

There was a lot more than that which made their relationship so special.

"From the first night we were together, we felt very in tune with each other. We had, in an odd way, a lot in common. He was soulful and insightful and in a lot



of ways. He felt very familiar to me in that Jewish way of being interested in philosophy, interested in reading, interested in truth, and in honesty and devotion," Comfort recalled. However, it was not perfect – the pair had major conflicts that had them on the verge of splitting up, including where to live and sexual struggles that manifested in different ways over the course of their relationship in ways that were painful for both of them. But their ability to weather those challenges was what made their marriage last, and it's what drove Comfort to document her experiences.

"We had conflicts that were difficult to navigate and that's one of the reasons I

wrote the memoir, because I saw through experience and through my work with couples that even if you have serious incompatibilities, you can bridge those incompatibilities, if you are respectful, if you offer kindness and empathy to your partner," she said. "That helps you in some ways over the rough times."

While much of her work, both with clients and in her own marriage, focused on the challenges that are internal to relationships, many of the same tools can be used to tackle external challenges. The Comforts had those challenges, too; the largest of which was Bob's diagnosis with Lewy Body Dementia, from which he died in 2010.

"Sometimes the external

events influence your relationship in ways that are sometimes a challenge," she said. "If there's a resilience in your relationship, you can weather those things, and I believe that empathy and kindness are the magic bullets that can repair a rift in a relationship in a marriage. But I also think that the marriage has natural ebb and flow; times when you're distant, times when you're close, and that it's important to expect that."

Comfort makes a point to discuss the importance of women speaking up for themselves – a dynamic she saw play out in her parents' marriage to positive effect – and for men to be willing to be open about their feelings – something she has seen to be less of an issue for Jewish men, she noted. The book is an entirely new way of writing for Comfort, who has previously published a novel, "Denial," but is venturing into nonfiction for the first time.

"I have tried to look for the universal in my particular story: recognizing the rhythm of being farther apart and closer together, women encouraging women to have more courage and being outspoken about what they need because even though we've come a long way, women are afraid to disappoint their partner. I believe that in order for you to really be yourself, you have to be able to tell your truth to your partner and do it in that kind way," she said. "But I also wanted to talk about sexual shame, because Bob and I both struggled with that."

"Staying Married is the Hardest Part" is available from Powell's Books, Barnes & Nobel, Amazon and other retailers. Learn more about the book and Comfort's other work at bonniecomfort.com.

MINSTRAL (continued from page 1)

in 21st century street garb wander past.

Mistral the Minstrel, a one-man-medieval band, stakes a small claim between a blacksmith and a textile vendor. There, he toggles between playing one of a dozen instruments from centuries past, eyes trained on the crowd.

"I bring them in with my music, and then I kick off a conversation," says Mistral, sporting striped breeches, a white tunic, dark-gray vest with metal clasps and a jaunty multi-colored cap.

Striking his hammered dulcimer that reverberates harp-like tunes from the 16th century, he explains that at the Faire – in Oregon and elsewhere around the country – his job is to interact with passersby, snag their interest and invite them along for a musical journey.

Soon, a child wearing fairy wings and elf-shaped ears tentatively approaches. The minstrel, now playing a portable organ, bends to the child's level. "Do you play piano?" he asks.

"Yes," she says, cautiously eyeing the hand-held mini-piano and accordion combo.

"Do you want to try playing this?" he asks as the kid steps closer. "If you can play piano, you can play anything."

When Ayal Yariv first learned piano at age 8, morphing one day into professional Renaissance Faire musician Mistral the Minstrel was but a pipe dream.

Yet on further analysis, it's possible to draw a (nearly) straight line from the second-grade boy using music to attract girls' attention to the literal Renaissance man he is today.

The eldest of four siblings



Surrounded by and holding only some of his roughly dozen medieval instruments, Mistral the Minstrel (Ayal Yariv) engages a young Oregon Renaissance Faire attendee in conversation about music. (Jenn Director Knudsen for The Jewish Review)

and the son of an American mom and Iraqi dad, Yariv is Jerusalem born, raised and musically trained. In the 70s and 80s, his native city played host during the Pass-over break to a day camp for all Israelis desiring to learn Renaissance and Baroque music. Instructors from all over the world taught there, Yariv said in a recent interview in a Portland cafe.

He describes a musical idyll.

"We had hours and hours of playing music together and learning by watching others play instruments of the period," he said of instruments like the recorder, lute, viola da gamba, harpsichord and more. "People planted themselves and just played."

He went on to study at The Jerusalem Academy of Music and Dance High School, where he dreamed of becoming a concert pianist. Until his three-year IDF stint sans

instruments took the tune off his keys.

For a while, Yariv felt stuck: "If I'm not going to be a concert pianist, then what can I do?"

Yet he remained tethered to music. While working toward degrees in Musicology and Hebrew Literature from Hebrew University, Yariv became a caregiver of people requiring a gentle touch and a good ear: older adults, people with autism, and those with physical disabilities.

In one facility, a keyboard beckoned. Playing it brought him and his charges joy. Soon he returned to school to become a music therapist.

"Its combination of music and psychological theory improves everyone's quality of life," he said. "It's about using something you have that comes through you to improve other peoples' lives."

Soon, his life was about to improve.

One night in 2001, Yariv briefly stopped by an engagement party before heading to work. He knew the bride, and Portland native, Linda Maizels, knew the groom. Shortly thereafter, he and his future wife were thumb-wrestling on a sofa.

The twosome then relocated many times, including to Portland. Here, Rabbi Ariel Stone married the couple in 2005, Ayal taught Hebrew at Portland State University for six years and he regaled crowds as a founding member of Congregation Beth Israel's Def Schlepper.

"We would not be schlepping if it weren't for him," said Ida Rae Cahana, CBI's recently retired senior cantor.

Around this time, Yariv recalls saying to himself, "I

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need to be a musician, I need to figure out a way to make it work.”

And he did. Whether living in Long Island, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, or Waterville, Maine.

He took gig after gig, tickling the ivories for high school musicals, in coffee shops, at summer camps, in churches and synagogues, at retirement homes and, today, at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, a music and dance conservatory in his adopted city of Baltimore.

There, a friend took the couple to the 2021 Maryland Renaissance Festival. At Revel Grove, he met a fellow Jewish musician who invited him to play music he’d composed for harpsichord. Yariv promptly sight-read the notes, leaving his new friend agape.

Yariv has been a Ren Faire obsessive (his word) ever since. The draw is musical and social, much like the musical idyll in which he grew up. Faires foment inclusivity and fun.

“Politics stop at the gate,” Yariv said.

He’s added new instruments like the crumhorn and the ocarina to his repertoire and the alter ego Mistral the Minstrel. (The Mistral is a powerful wind that blows through the south of France; a clever wordsmith won Ayal’s naming contest last year.)

Yariv’s Renaissance persona was a huge hit at the recent Canby-based Vale of Dunrose that welcomed about 70,000 revelers – and more than 25 musicians – during its 2025 season that ended June 29.

“Mistral the Minstrel is more than a musician,” said Kristin Maher, the Oregon Renaissance Faire’s marketing director. “With every pluck of his instruments and clever turn of phrase, he draws passersby into a shared moment of joy, nostalgia, and connection.”

She added, “Mistral reminds us that music is not just background—it’s a bridge between souls in the realm.”

To catch the roving musician before his return to Baltimore, find him at the Sherwood Robin Hood Festival (July 18 to 20), followed by the Washington Midsummer Renaissance Faire in Snohomish, Wash., (weekends from July 26 to Aug. 17). For more information, visit mistral-theminstrel.com.

A self-described dinosaur who still keeps a hand-written daily calendar, Jenn Director Knudsen has published work in The Boston Globe, The Oregonian, the San Francisco Chronicle, The Forward and HuffPost, among other outlets. Her most recent personal essay is available at [The Mother Chapter](#). Find her on [Substack](#).

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OJCYF grants \$80k, opens applications for 2025

Oregon Jewish Community Foundation

This spring, the Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation (OJCYF) awarded \$80,000 in grants to a range of nonprofit organizations. The youth-led foundation, composed of 30 high school students from across the Portland area, prioritized support for local Jewish organizations and nonprofits addressing the rise in antisemitism in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Grants focused on fostering understanding, resilience, and support for Israel through education, community engagement, and compassionate aid for those affected by hate and conflict.

OJCYF is a nationally recognized program of the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, now entering its 23rd year. The program provides Jewish high school students in grades 9–12 with

a meaningful opportunity to build leadership skills and explore Jewish values through philanthropy. Participants gain firsthand experiences serving on a youth board, fundraising, organizing a youth-led benefit dinner, reviewing grant applications, and engaging in thoughtful discussions about pressing issues and community needs.

Applications are now open for the 2025–26 OJCYF cohort, which meets for 12 Sunday afternoon sessions throughout the school year. Teens interested in making a difference through tzedakah, community service, and leadership are encouraged to apply. Early bird registration is open through July 7. More information and the application link are available at ojcf.org/programs/ojcyf. For questions, contact Susan Berniker, Director of Collaborative Giving, at susanb@ojcf.org or 503-974-3805.

Applications open for 2025 Kol Kolehnu teen fellowship program

Moving Traditions

The Meyer-Gottesman Kol Kolehnu Teen Feminist Fellowship is a year-long program for female, non-binary and trans teens, entering 9–12th grade, who want to dive into the idea of community through a Jewish, feminist, and activist lens. Fellows spend the year meeting online and at two in-person retreats building inter-generational relationships with other teens and mentoring adults, filling their activist toolbox, and creating a capstone project that impacts their local community.

“I loved being able to fos-

ter the connections with everyone inside and out of my cohort,” a second-year program participant said. “Through the program I was able to have constructive conversations and connect on a deeper level even if we didn’t have the same opinions. Kol Kolehnu has provided me with support when it comes to being the only Jew in my school, or when I need someone to talk to who will understand my concerns about Israel and where I’m coming from.”

For more information and to apply, visit movingtraditions.org/programs/trips-fellowships/kol-kolehnu

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As One

We Inspire. We Protect. We Rebuild.

Combating Antisemitism
through advocacy and action

Strengthening Jewish life
here at home

Rebuilding Israel
for lasting peace and prosperity



Jewish Federation
of Greater Portland





BB Camp dedicates new center

BB360 marked Friends and Family day at camp in Lincoln City Sunday, June 22, with the dedication of the Harold "Hal" Mink Community Building, which will host day-camp programs on the coast. (Noa Rubin/BB360)



B'nai Tzedek group wraps yearlong program

Oregon Jewish Community Foundation

On June 8, the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation celebrated the successful conclusion of the inaugural year of its B'nai Tzedek Youth Program, a new initiative designed to empower young fundholders to explore charitable giving, community service, and Jewish values in a meaningful and hands-on way.

The B'nai Tzedek Program brings together Jewish youth, ages 12 to 18, who hold charitable funds at OJCF for quarterly sessions that connect Jewish holidays, service projects, and philanthropy. Each gathering is rooted in Jewish learning and focuses on real needs within both the Jewish and broader community.

The year began with participation in the Jewish Federation's Dignity Grows initiative, where the teens learned about the issue of period poverty and put the value of kavod (dignity) in action by packing hygiene kits for those in need. In the winter,



B'nai Tzedek participants tour the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education in Portland. (Courtesy OJCF)

participants visited Cedar Sinai Park and took part in a scavenger hunt that highlighted the Jewish connection to CSP and the values-based care it provides. They ended that visit by hosting a Hanukkah gathering for residents at the Robison Jewish Health Center/Harold Schnitzer Center for Living.

In the spring, the group gathered at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education, where they engaged in a Purim-themed session featuring a museum quest that explored hidden identity and Jewish

pride. During the session, participants learned they would receive \$500 from OJCF to collectively grant to a local Jewish nonprofit, an OJCF partner organization, or a nonprofit in Israel.

The year concluded with a Cheesecake and Choices celebration for Shavuot. Participants learned about impactful organizations in Israel and engaged in reflective activities to prepare for their role as grantmakers. Guided by the Jewish value of tzedek (justice), the group chose to award their grant to Outside the Frame, an OJCF partner

organization that empowers youth experiencing homelessness through filmmaking, offering job skills, creative expression, and dignity.

The B'nai Tzedek Program is open to any youth who holds a charitable youth fund at OJCF. With an initial \$250 contribution, OJCF matches it with an additional \$250, opening the fund with \$500. Each year, youth recommend grants from their funds to eligible Jewish nonprofit organizations in Oregon, Southwest Washington, or Israel. Opening a fund in conjunction with becoming a b'nai mitzvah is a meaningful way to mark this important milestone. Friends and family can also contribute to the fund in honor of simchas such as birthdays or graduations.

To learn more about opening a B'nai Tzedek Fund or participating in the B'nai Tzedek Youth Program, visit ojcf.org/bnai-tzedek-youth-philanthropy or contact Susan Berniker, Director of Collaborative Giving, at susanb@ojcf.org or 503 974-3805.

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

JULY 16 JULY 10

Security Corner

Bivins trial - *finally* - begins Monday

By JESSICA ANDERSON

Many in our community have been following the saga of bringing Michael Bivins to trial for his bias crimes - in Spring 2022, Bivins set fire to the Muslim Community Center of Portland with congregants inside of it, shattered windows of Congregation Shir Tikvah and Everybody Eats PDX, and spray painted "Die Juden" on Congregation Beth Israel. He is also believed to be responsible for an additional arson, but has not been charged for that act.

At long last, his trial to determine guilt for the charged crimes is set to begin Monday, July 7, and will likely run through Thursday or Friday, July 10 or 11.

We are encouraging community attendance at the trial to support the victims of his crimes, demonstrate the community's attention to the jury and, of course, to show our opposition to bias crimes. Witnesses will probably begin testifying on Tuesday, July 8. Monday will likely be a mix of pre-trial motions, jury selection, and possibly opening statements.

The trial will take place at the Multnomah County Courthouse, located at 1200 SW 1st Ave. in Portland, with the trial generally going from 9am-5pm with a lunch break of noon - 1:30pm. Courtrooms are open to the public, and you are welcome to come and go as your



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.

schedule allows.

There may be some media there. With the court's permission, media can film/take photos of what is happening in the courtroom, but they are typically focused on the actual action in the courtroom and not on observers.

If you're interested in attending the trial and want to share with victims when you might be there, please feel free to let them know through this Doodle calendar. (<https://doodle.com/sign-up-sheet/participate/05942127-c71a-437b-bc51-b6939fa9995c/select>) It's anonymous, and you don't have to share any personal information.

If Bivins is convicted, the sentencing hearing will likely follow weeks or months later. The sentencing hearing is a critical stage, and community participation will be vitally important. The Community Impact Statement that many community members anonymously signed will be presented to the court at that time, and the

judge will hear about the impact on the community from affected members. Please consider signing the Community Impact Statement, and feel free to pass it on to others. You can also sign up to be notified about the sentencing dates following the trial at docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSe2y-1qyaKMtfFhrrCKd0qagnl-ql0N9GGuX0vTgseSmqRW6XQ/viewform.

Reporting remains critical in stopping bias crimes, and we know incidents are underreported. Please report and encourage others to do so as well. Incidents can be reported on the JFGP Security page at jewishportland.org/security or to me directly at janderson@securecommunitynetwork.org. Resources for victims can also be found through the Oregon Department of Justice's Non-Emergency Bias Response Hotline at 1-844-924-2427 or report online at justice.oregon.gov/CrimeReporting/Bias-Crime.

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'Teaching Palestine' teaches a far different lesson

By BOB HORENSTEIN

For decades, the Israeli government and pro-Israel advocates in the US and Europe have sounded the alarm about the textbooks used to teach Palestinian children in Gaza and the West Bank. This past March, a study done by the London-based Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education revealed that “revised” textbooks produced by the Palestinian Authority for Gaza continue to promote antisemitic tropes, glorify violence against Jews, and even celebrate the Oct. 7 Hamas massacre in Israel.

Despite international demands for reform, the curriculum still dismisses Jewish national identity as a fabricated justification for colonization. Israel is erased from all of the textbooks’ maps, which depict the entire territory as Palestine, thus reinforcing the notion that the Jewish state’s existence is illegitimate. Even more disturbing, Jews are portrayed as deceitful, depraved, and hostile toward Islam.

It’s troubling enough to observe Palestinian children being indoctrinated and radicalized. However, it’s not only a problem in Gaza and the West Bank. Increasingly, American middle school and high school students are being exposed to anti-Israel propaganda masquerading as social studies curriculum.

It’s called “Teaching Palestine,” a glossy book containing lessons and articles whose editor is a former Portland school teacher (only \$34.95 on Amazon). The name alone is a good indicator that the content is biased. But “biased” doesn’t go nearly far enough in describing the harm to Jewish students caused by the use of this so-called curriculum.

What do students learn from Teaching Palestine?

- Zionism is an oppressive, racist political ideology and the sole cause of Palestinian suffering. It emerged over a century ago when white European Zionists dispossessed the indigenous Palestinians of their land. Moreover, since Zionism is merely a political movement—not an integral part of Jewish religious and cultural identity—anti-Zionism cannot be

considered antisemitism.

- Before the establishment of Israel, a product of “settler colonialism,” Palestine belonged to the Palestinian Arabs, all of whom lived there “for generations.” The Jewish historical and religious connection to the land is conveniently omitted as is the fact that half the Arab population in Palestine at the beginning of the 20th century consisted of recently arrived immigrants.
- A stage-managed simulation using bags of candy—divided unequally among Jewish Israelis, who are privileged, and Palestinians, whom the Israelis oppress—helps students “gain an overview of the Israeli system of apartheid.”
- Historical revisionism: Israel acted as the aggressor that started the 1967 Six-Day War despite a lack of intelligence that Egypt was planning to attack. The second intifada (2000-2004) resulted from “frustrations with continued Israeli aggression.” The horrific wave of terrorism during which 1,000 Israelis were killed over those four years is described as “some Palestinians engaged in suicide bombings.” Out of frustration, of course.
- Jews are misguided when they claim the phrase “Palestine will be free from the river to the sea” is antisemitic.
- Oct. 7, the atrocities of which are completely erased, is significant in that it marked the beginning of the “genocide” in Gaza.
- Students should become advocates for the Palestinian cause; teachers should support the anti-Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement.

This extremely biased, inaccurate, and toxic content fuels antisemitism and normalizes hate. It gives license to students to harass and ostracize their Jewish, especially Israeli, peers, marking them as “dirty Zionists,” “baby killers,” and “genocide supporters.”

Yet, to challenge the use of Teaching Palestine is no simple matter. For starters, it’s published by Rethinking Schools, a nonprofit organization based in Milwaukee, Wisconsin that, according to its website, is dedicated to promoting education through “social jus-



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

tice teaching” and “activism” (another red flag). Rethinking Schools is highly regarded by many teachers around the country, thereby giving legitimacy to Teaching Palestine.

But that’s hardly the only impediment to confronting this propaganda. Because now, paradoxically, you can be accused of racism for calling out this curriculum as antisemitic.

Anti-Israel ideologues have devised a new narrative: “Anti-Palestinian Racism” (APR), which its proponents describe generally as the erasure, silencing, and maligning of Palestinians. Their definition of APR is ridiculously—and deliberately—broad. In other words, any account of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that rejects the idea of Israel as a racist, genocidal, and settler-colonial state, is to be considered APR.

It’s a clever ploy. By claiming “racism” (never mind that “Palestinian” isn’t a race), proponents of Teaching Palestine will seek to sway sensitive school administrators to allow their lessons into the classroom.

The American Jewish community can’t afford to let these insidious tactics deter us. We need to press superintendents and school boards to adopt, emphasize, and enforce policies requiring complex subjects such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to be taught fairly, impartially and from multiple perspectives. We must also provide curriculum specialists with teacher-friendly, pedagogically-sound resources on Israel. The well-being and safety of our Jewish students and families are hanging in the balance.

A version of this piece previously appeared in The Jerusalem Report magazine.

Obituaries

Submit obituaries to The Jewish Review's online form at form.jotform.com/JFGP/jr-obituary

IVAN INGER

Ivan Inger, z"l, passed away peacefully on May 19. Ivan was born in St. Louis. He graduated with a PhD in Clinical Psychology from Washington University. There he met and married Jeri (Nordenberg). In 1971 they moved

to Portland, where he practiced for over 50 years. Known for his wit, humor and warmth, he will be missed. He is survived by his wife, Jeri, his children Laurie and David (Leora) and grandchildren, Vivian (Caleb), Nova, Jake, Joe and Lexi.

Events

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

July 2: Ethics from Sinai

Weekly study series on Pirkei Avot at 1 pm in person at Chabad of Southwest Portland and on Zoom at 7 pm. Register online at tickettailor.com/events/jportland/1732201.

July 6: Israeli Folk-dance class and open dancing

Instruction and open dancing at Southwest Community Center weekly; class from 2:30-3:30, open dancing to follow. For more information,

email pifdnews@gmail.com.

July 8: Understanding Organ and Tissue Donation

Zoom session on Jewish approaches to organ donation by the Jewish Association for Death Education at 5 pm via Zoom. Registration available online at lu.ma/245d2jaz.

July 15: Gift of Life Virtual Volunteer Training

Training for volunteers for Bone Marrow Registry at 8

am via Zoom, hosted by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. For more information, email merit@jewishportland.org.

July 15: Choosing to Be Your Own Champion

Author reading by Dorice Horenstein at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 7 pm. Free. Register online at ejcpdx.org/events.

July 17: JFCS Senior Day Trip to Cannon Beach

Day trip for ages 60+

leaving Portland at 9 am. Preregistration required at jfcs-portland.org/senior-beach-trip-register.

July 17: Hester Street

Film screening at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 7 pm. For more information, visit ejcpdx.org/events.

July 18: Family Shabbat Dinner at the JI

Shabbat dinner at the Mitteleman Jewish Community Center at 6 pm. \$5 per person, \$15 for families. Preregistration required at oregonjcc.org/arts-culture/upcoming-events.

Jobs Board

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

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