

THE JEWISH REVIEW

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Pride on parade this weekend

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland is marching in Portland's Pride Parade this year – this time, there's a pre-party!

Federation, along with A Wider Bridge, is sponsoring the pre-parade gathering Sunday, July 20 from 9:30-11:30 am.

"We're excited for our LGBTQ+ community to gather together for a pre-celebration in partnership with A Wider Bridge," Federation Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations Rachel Nelson explained "A Wider Bridge is a wonderful LGBTQ+ organization with a focus on strong, positive relationships with Israel.

Founded in 2010 by Arthur Slepian to support LGBTQ communities in Israel following the Bar Noar Youth Center shooting the year before, the organization has

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A version of the Pride flag bearing the Magen David flies over the 2024 Portland Pride Parade Sunday, July 21, 2024. Portland-area Jewish groups are marching together again in this year's event, with a pre-party sponsored by A Wider Bridge. (Rockne Roll/Jewish Review file)

Portlanders talk security in D.C.

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

More than 100 Jewish communities from around the United States came together in the nation's capital last month to discuss one topic – safety.

"Whatever other issues the Jewish community may care about, whatever differing opinions we may hold on some of those issues, we are united for security," Eric Fingerhut, President and CEO of the Jewish Federations of North America, told the hundreds of community leaders assembled on June 26.

Those leaders spent the day speaking with their elected officials – including visits to the Oregon Congressional delegation from Jewish Federation of Greater Portland President and CEO Marc Blattner, Rich Meyer, Michelle Bombet Minch, Rabbi Eve Posen and Randi Rosenfeld.

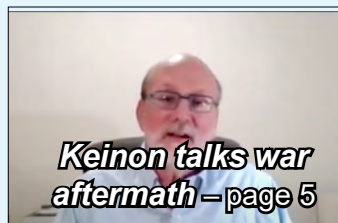
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The
Jewish
Review
Podcast



Click the logo for the latest episode.

How is Jewish Portland different these days?

The Jewish Review Podcast recently completed a series of interviews with long-tenured members of Portland's clergy who have recently stepped down from their roles – Rabbi David Kosak of Congregation Neveh Shalom, Cantor Ida Rae Cahana of Congregation Beth Israel and Rabbi Ariel Stone of Congregation Shir Tikvah. Each was asked the same series of questions, including “How do you think Portland's broader Jewish community has changed in your time here?” Their answers to that question are below, edited for brevity and clarity. For more from each, check out “The Exit Interviews” on The Jewish Review Podcast, available on all major podcast platforms.

- **Cantor Ida Rae Cahana:** [Jewish Portland]'s always been big and broad, with different sects of Judaism, different, right? We've always had the Orthodox. We have Reconstructing Judaism. We've had humanistic Judaism. It's so wonderful that in a community our size, that we have so many different ways to find our way into Judaism, and I think that's just increased. And I think that with the establishment of the Eastside Jewish Commons that we have more opportunities to gather. I think there's been more of an emphasis on the arts and on creativity in the Jewish community that's fabulous, with musicians like Michelle Aulani and Jack Faulk, and Sasha Wright and the Jewish Theater Collaborative. Maybe that's just my bias of always looking for the creative ways that we express our Judaism, but I do think the community has grown and expanded and expects that.

- **Rabbi David Kosak:** One of the things that we now know, and I think this is important, is that Americans are returning to religion. The pendulum has swung, and the pendulum I grew up in was very much influenced by the hippies and the boomers and all those who were trying to move away from maybe a too-rigid expression of religious identity in America; I'll leave the sociologist to define exactly what that was. There was a lot of rejectionism, a desire to create something new; also very, very American. David Brooks, who's an interesting, centrist New York Times columnist, had just talked about how the promise of the secular world was that it would supply the meaning needed to feel like your life was valuable. Ultimately, that collapsed.

Our clergy team has been involved in welcoming so many Jews of choice into this community over the decade, and it has grown incredibly even after Oct. 7; that actually confirmed some people's desire for that. So one of the changes is that people who were not Jewish by birth are seeking that religion, seeking a larger trans-personal narrative of meaning and connection. That's also true, though, for many people who are Jews, right? If, again, we go back to the 50s, the 60s, the boomer generation, the beatniks, the move away from religion and the rejection of it, those people had a Bubbe and a Zayde - Ashkenazic terms for the grandparents from the old world. They had that culture, and even when they rejected it,

they were deeply permeated by it. Then they raised their kids who didn't have it, and then the next generation is coming up, and they didn't have a Bubbe or Zayde, they didn't have even the cultural trappings of Judaism. In a certain sense, they were starting from nothing, and they want to reclaim and recover their Jewish identity, they want to explore it and what it means. You have people who are hungry for this sort of meaning and community and experience. That's really different.

We all know how much sociologically and economically, even politically, the city has changed. We moved here when Portland was having this beautiful moment in the sun. Everything was going up. It was the desired location everyone wanted to move to. In the intervening decade, all of that's disappeared. We've been set back. I don't know how many decades we've been set back, but Portland fell apart in a lot of ways.

It may be indicative of the country as a whole, but the great story of American progress or hope or improvement disappeared, and I think that's also part of the reason for that return to religion. If the social forms that are supposed to hold us and help us aren't working, where do I find the support I need for my life? I don't think of religion as a panacea for the people or opiate for the people in a Marxian sort of way, but as another source of meaning, because we're not just physical beings. We think, we care, we feel and we need answers to those issues.

- **Rabbi Ariel Stone:** Shir Tikvah was very small at the beginning, but as we started to grow, we were confronted with a couple of realities. One was that nobody used to believe there were any Jews on the East Side, but we sited ourselves on the East Side, and we found out that there were Jews coming out of the woodwork and they were coming through our doors, and some of them weren't coming through our doors, because just the idea of a synagogue is already off putting. What we realized was not only did we need to figure out a way to get a little bit more space, which, of course, we couldn't afford, but we also needed to accommodate for the reality that an awful lot of Jews who need community are not interested in us as a synagogue, just because we're a synagogue. I'm not going to argue with it. Not every Jew needs a synagogue. Not every Jew who's in a synagogue needs it every day. Almost every Jew who doesn't have a synagogue is going to want it sooner or later, maybe for a wedding or for a funeral. But there has to be some understanding that there are many ways to be a Jew. And so Shir Tikvah began to explore this idea of what would a community space look like. A whole lot of people thought it might be very convenient to have a little space on the East Side. Neveh Shalom found out that something like 20 percent of their membership lives on the East Side. PJA leadership found out for the first time that leadership in this community weren't bringing their kids to

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PORTLAND * PORTLAND * PORTLAND * PORTLAND * PORTLAND * PORTLAND



2 WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

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or

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Docu-series on Aigners moves toward launch

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Many in Oregon know the stories of Eva Aigner and Leslie Aigner, z"l. Now an effort is underway to bring their story to a much wider audience.

"Plight" is the title of a documentary series being developed by their son, Rob Aigner, and Diane Harris, with a first season, "Love and the Holocaust," set to focus on Eva and Leslie. The idea stems from a podcast called "Clear Choices" that Rob Aigner created to tell his family's story and moved on to others who overcame great challenges.

"It ran the gamut from professional athletes to quadriplegics to people who had to flee war-torn countries; anyone who turned something really horrible into something positive," he said. "About two years ago, my mother and I were introduced to a film producer, Diane Harris. I told her about my parents, all that they've done, and then I told her about my podcast concept, and she said, 'There's something there for a series.'"

While the series will lay the background of the Aigners' journey by explaining their Holocaust experiences – Eva's in the Budapest Ghetto and Leslie's at Auschwitz, Dachau, and other camps – most of the focus will be on their escape from Communism to Portland, starting a family, and making the choice to speak publicly about their experiences in the face of Holocaust denial in the late 1980s.

"They went through the Holocaust, and it would be



A screenshot from the look book for the documentary series in development covering the experiences of Portlanders Eva Aigner and Leslie Aigner, z"l. The couple's son, Rob Aigner, is leading the effort to secure a production partner for the series. (Courtesy White Dove Productions)

very easy to hate; to hate in general, hate Germans, or hate whatever," Rob Aigner explained. "But instead, they chose a different path. They chose a kind of glass-half-full path. That's inspiring to people, and it still has historical context."

Eva Aigner still remembers when her husband announced his decision to take that approach.

"The minute our first child was born, he picked up this baby, and he said, 'I've made a decision: From now on, I'm going to focus on love instead of being concerned about the time that I went through. I want to focus on that,'" she recalled.

The project has a look book (a compilation of the visual aesthetics and themes for the work) and a sizzle reel (a short tape that explains the project) ready to go, and Eva and Rob Aigner, along with Eva and Leslie's daughter,

Sue, staged a reading of the script at a sold out theater in Los Angeles last month.

"It was sort of a combination of a play and a table read, where we showed excerpts of the documentary that had been shot, coupled with my mom reading from her diary and then my sister and I, representing my father's story, we would put on a hat and a scarf of his and then read some highlights or, if you will, low lights of his experience."

The plan is to film portions of the series in Portland, naturally weaving in elements of the Jewish community the Aigners were and are such beloved parts of. But first, the project needs backing and a production partner to get off the ground.

"We're just trying to get the word out," Rob Aigner said. "All it takes is one, right? We might talk to 100 people, but it's going to be one person

that goes, 'I believe in this,' or one studio, or one grant."

Sooner is much preferable to later – especially for Eva Aigner, who is 88 and one of four first-generation survivors remaining that participate in the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education's Speakers' Bureau.

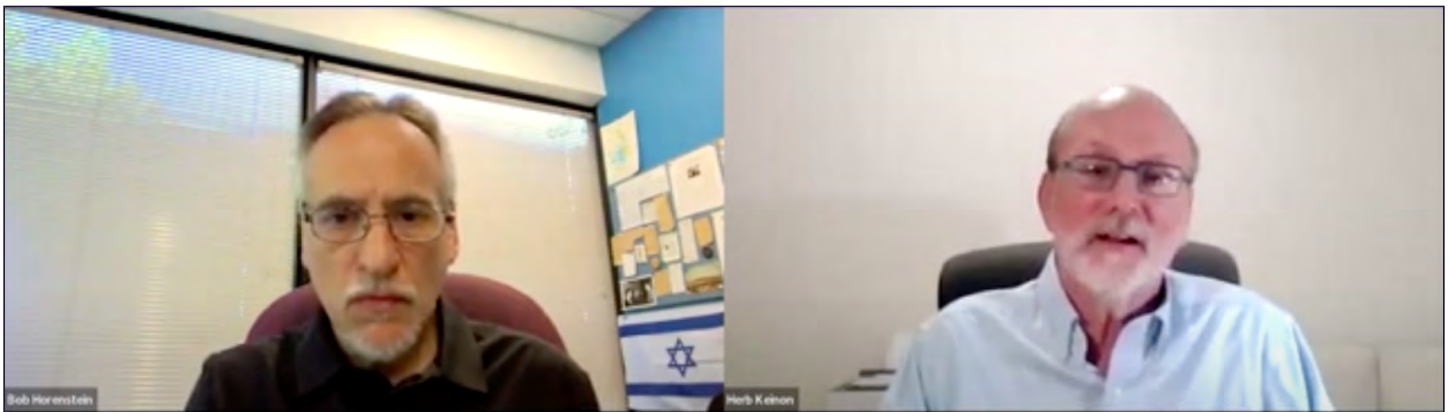
"There are so few of us survivors left, that I feel that this has to be done before they are all gone," she said. "That's what keeps me going."

"We want to do this project very badly, but only if the right organization or person wants to get behind it," Rob Aigner said. "We just need to find the funding so we can really make it into a professional project that we think can have a long term impact on society, specifically for educational purposes."

Learn more about the project at loveandtheholocaust.com.



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



Jerusalem Post Senior Contributing Editor Herb Keinon, right, fields a question from Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Chief Community Relations and Public Affairs Officer Bob Horenstein during a webinar sponsored by the Federation Thursday, July 10. (Courtesy JFGP)

Keinon covers latest following Israel-Iran war

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

"I often wondered what it was like to be here during the Six Day War," Herb Keinon, a senior contributing editor at *The Jerusalem Post*, explained to a webinar audience Thursday, July 10. "I think that to a certain extent, what it felt like during the Iranian operation gives you a sense of what it was like back then, in '67."

The webinar, hosted by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, was an opportunity for Keinon, who has worked for the *Post* for 39 years and has been its head diplomatic correspondent for 20 of those years, to explain events on the ground to an audience in the country of his birth. There was a lot of ground to cover.

In 12 days, the Israel Defense Forces eliminated a significant number of nuclear research facilities in Iran and killed a significant number of both senior Iranian military commanders and nuclear scientists – a campaign that was capped off with United States Air Force strategic bombers dropping 30,000-pound "bunker-buster" munitions on three nuclear facilities that were buried underground beyond the reach of Israeli weapons.

"I'm going to go with the Israeli intelligence assessments, and the Israeli intelligence assessments is that the program has been set back a number of years," Keinon said. "Many of [the Iranian scientists who were killed] were involved in the program for 20,30 years, giving them institutional knowledge along with the scientific knowledge. The fact that [Israel] took them out right as well as the physical facili-

ties will have an effect."

Iran retaliated with hundreds of ballistic missiles and approximately 1,000 explosive drones aimed at Israeli population centers. The IDF intercepted 83 percent of those missiles and a staggering 99 percent of the drones launched by Iran during what has become known as the "12-Day War." And while public opinion on the conflict has been strongly divided in the United States and elsewhere, that has not been the case in Israel.

"A poll found that 88 percent of the Jewish public back the war, and if you factor in the Arab public, it was 73 percent of the country backed Netanyahu's decision," Keinon explained. "To get 88 percent of Israeli Jews to agree on anything in this country is no less a miracle than what Israel was able to do during the war."

And while Israel remains divided on a great many issues, Keinon said that the nation has a renewed willpower to forcefully preempt external threats.

"For 20 years before Oct. 7, the country sanctified quiet. Israel was doing good. The economy was booming. Our diplomatic relations around the world were blossoming. We didn't want to we didn't want to tip the apple cart," he said. "I think one of the major lessons we've learned from Oct. 7 is you can't do that and survive."

Along with that has come the confidence, as a nation, to take action – a change from what Keinon perceived as a lack of national self-confidence to confront external threats head on. Meanwhile, Iran and its proxies throughout the Middle East have endured another in a string of defeats. Hamas' leadership has

been decimated, their arsenal exhausted and their capabilities beyond guerilla operations in Gaza have vanished. In the north, Hezbollah is taking direction from the Lebanese government, instead of the other way around, and Syria is considering a non-aggression pact with Israel. Thus, a proxy strategy that Iran had spent three decades building was unwound in less than two years.

"The supreme irony in all this," Keinon said, "is that it's all a result of a decision that Yahya Sinwar made on Oct. 7. Sinwar believed the massacre on Simcha Torah would set off a chain of events that would redraw the Middle East map. It did, but thank G-d, not in the way that he imagined."

Israel's successes against Iran have also impacted its own domestic politics. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had been wildly unpopular following the Oct. 7 attacks, being blamed for policies that allowed Hamas to develop the capability to stage such an attack, the intelligence failures that let the attack happen and for the enduring war in Gaza that continues to cost Israel in blood and treasure without bringing home the remaining hostages. After the Iran offensive, Keinon notes, the Prime Minister's polling numbers are up 20 percent, placing him back in a competitive position ahead of elections which are required by next fall at the latest.

"When it comes to Iran, Netanyahu, for years, viewed himself as a man on a mission. I mean, he's not a religious guy, but I think even he thinks that he was divinely placed in this position to protect Israel from Iran," Keinon ex-

continued on next page

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plained. “Now, if that mission is achieved, if Iran’s nuclear program is indeed set back in a meaningful and lasting way, then that mission, I think, is going to become his legacy.”

Keinon said that rumors are beginning to circulate of a negotiated plea arrangement in the Prime Minister’s ongoing corruption trial, in which he would resign and potentially be pardoned by Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

American actions against Iran also mark a dramatic shift in U.S. policy in the region – a willingness to use force to preempt threats rather than simply retaliate against them.

“I wrote the other day that it was as if the Begin Doctrine had come to come to Washington,” Keinon said, referencing the policy instituted by former Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin that Israel would use force preemptively to prevent its enemies from developing weapons of mass destruction. “It also marked a moment of unprecedented strategic convergence between Washington and Jerusalem.”

This could extend to Gaza as well. While some have posulated that Hamas may be willing to compromise in order to affect a ceasefire now that it’s patron, Iran, has been crippled, Keinon thinks that it is more likely that Prime Minister Netanyahu is the one willing to make concessions because that was the price of getting the United States to strike Iran.

“Bibi,” Keinon said, using the Prime Minister’s nickname, “wanted to get Trump involved in Iran. That was very important. If in order to do that, he would have to compromise some of his conditions on Gaza, that I think would be a move

that he would be willing to take. But his coalition partners, not necessarily so.”

While Israel is quite popular in the White House, it’s standing amongst the broader American public is waning – recent polling of U.S. Democrats shows that support for Israel is down not only amongst young voters, but also with voters over age 45. That may not be permanent, however.

“One of the explanations I heard for that was that this had to do with Trump, because Israel is now so tightly connected to Trump,” Keinon said. “I think a lot of what you’re seeing in America, as far as Israel, has to do not so much with Israel as with what’s going on in America. It’s the fissures in America are being played out on Israel. [Israel’s] capability of healing that, I think, is very limited.”

Israelis will have the chance to try and influence that situation at the ballot box next year – if not sooner.

“I personally think that during the elections, or after the elections, you’re going to see a changed Israeli political environment,” Keinon said. “The country is hurting. The country is angry. It’s mad at its leaders. It’s mad at the discourse that we’ve had. We need a new kind of discourse. We need new leaders. I think that when we do go to new elections, I think you could see some new faces out there who will be talking about a new type of discourse, and that there’s a need for compromise in this country, which, in the past has kind of been seen as weakness.”

The full webinar can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/1xmur-Q02E3Y>.



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StandWithUs stands at NEA

Photographs by ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Demonstrators rallied outside the Oregon Convention Center Wednesday, July 2, to protest the National Education Association's annual Representative Assembly. Late in the week, the NEA, the largest labor organization for teachers in the United States, voted to sever its connections with the Anti-Defamation League over the ADL's materials around antisemitism.



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PRIDE (continued from page 1)

expanded its work to combat both homophobia and antisemitism in Israel and the United States while connecting the two countries queer communities together.

The pre-parade event offers paradegoers a chance to connect with fellow marchers while loading up on coffee and bagels for the parade, which winds its way through Northwest Portland before arriving at the Pride Festival's main site at Tom McCall Waterfront Park.

JFGP will be marching alongside the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, Cedar Sinai Park and Congregations Beth Israel, Kol Ami and Neveh Shalom in this year's parade.

"Any community member that would like to march with us is welcome to join us. They can reach out to me for more details," Nelson said; she can be reached at rachel@jewish-portland.org.

Nelson has also worked closely with Secure Communities Network and their Regional Security Director Jessica Anderson to ensure the safety of all involved – a concern that has become more prevalent in recent years.

"We're always keeping an eye when we have large events, we're looking at social media and we're staying in touch with law enforcement. We are not seeing anything related to Pride events for the Jewish community," Anderson said. "Any community event like this warrants additional situational awareness and paying attention, but we're going to be out there supporting our friends and colleagues and family members."

"Last year, we felt safe and very lucky that it was a very positive experience and we look forward to it being a similar experience," Nelson said. "We don't have any known threats, anything like that."

Though Portland's Pride Parade is not during the traditional Pride Month of June, it's still an important moment for the Jewish community to step up for inclusivity and acceptance.

"We have a plurality of identities within our community, just like the general community. We learned from our Community Study that about 10 percent of [Portland-area Jews] identifies as part of the LGBTQ+ Community, so we want honor all our community members with multiple identities," Nelson said. "Our Jewish values are deeply rooted in *tikkun olam* (repairing the world), social action and being part of



Jewish community members parade through Northwest Portland in the 2024 Portland Pride Parade. The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, Cedar Sinai Park and Congregations Beth Israel, Kol Ami and Neveh Shalom will be marching together in this year's event. (Rockne Roll/Jewish Review file)

causes that lift up all voices."

Preregistration is required for A Wider Bridge's pre-parade celebration – location will be provided after registration – and is available online at awiderbridge.org/event/portland.

PODCAST (continued from page 2)

PJA because they couldn't face the bridges in the morning, that's when they started a bus service. And I've even met Jews who've never been across the river; more West Side Jews who just haven't been east, although that's crazy now, because all the good food is on this side, right? So what we discovered is that there's a lot of Jews all over Portland. It's time there was a

little bit of bricks and mortar, a little bit of space, on the East Side as well. The East Side Jews felt a little bit like they weren't really considered to be important because there was nothing over here. We knew we needed space we couldn't afford. We knew not every Jew wanted a shul. What an elegant solution to create a multipurpose space, which the EJC has done bril-

liantly with Howie Bierbaum, who's just now retiring the same day I am, which is kind of weird, but I think we both have phenomenal successors, and the response to the EJC has shown that we were right, that there really is a need to get together and not everybody who gets together wants to do it in a shul and there's nothing wrong with that.

LOBBYING (continued from page 1)

The trip was an abrupt return to reality for Minch, who returned to Portland following a month of volunteering in Israel just days before flying to Washington.

“When I came back from Israel, as you might imagine, it was very difficult coming back; obviously excited to see my family and everything, but it’s like, ‘Oh my gosh, I’m going back to a world of combating anti-Semitism and not being able to see the results.’ So that DC trip gave me sort of a positive, more tangible, hands-on way to make a difference,” she said.

For Meyer, it was a chance to offer a unique perspective to lawmakers on an issue which he had first-hand knowledge of – the amount which Jewish organizations have to spend to keep themselves safe.

“Having chaired the Allocations Committee the last three years, I’ve been surprised how much more each agency is having to spend on security,” he said. “So, this opportunity to go meet with lawmakers and talk to them about those issues was important to me.”

“I actually I fell in love with lobbying when I was a global justice fellow with American Jewish World Service, but I don’t get to do it quite enough because D.C. is far away,” Rabbi Posen explained. “It was a really important moment to come together as a Jewish community and share our voice and the concerns that we have for our own safety. And to know that we were doing it with 400 other people in 200 meetings in one day, it was pretty phenomenal and powerful.”

“If you have never done it, there is something meaningful and very American about visiting Capitol Hill and lobbying our elected officials on issues of importance,” Blattner said in an email.

It was of special importance for this group of Oregonians – a plan for a state-level Non-Profit Security Grant Program that the Federation’s Jewish Community Relations Council had joined with numerous groups across the state did not pass the legislature during the recently adjourned session; Thus, there will be no cavalry coming from Salem to alleviate the ever-increasing security expenses that Meyer noted.

The group met with Sen. Jeff Merkley and Reps. Suzanne Bonamici, Maxine Dexter and Andrea Salinas, as well as a staff member from Rep. Janelle Bynum’s office. They also chanced upon Sen. Ron Wyden in the hallways between meetings of the Senate Finance Committee, of which he is the ranking member and which was then handling the budget reconciliation bill known as the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act.”

“I was heartened to see that everyone was receptive to what we were saying, and they understood the challenges our community faces,” Meyer said. And we were speaking to them not just about the Jewish community but all minority communities that are facing increased threats of one type or another.”

It was valuable, Rabbi Posen said, “to give them a face and to be able to speak both as rabbi of a large congregation but also as a parent who has children in day school and at summer camps, the expense there and the effects on mental health, was really important because they don’t know that.

While the group unsurprisingly came away with positive feelings from their meetings with Sen. Wyden and Rep. Bonamici, the fellow Jews in the delegation, there was also universal appreciation for the conversation they had with Rep. Salinas, a freshman Democrat representing southern Washington County along with all or parts of Marion, Polk and Yamhill counties.

“We could walk away knowing that Salinas has our backs and she understands the need for security and why this funding is so important,” Minch said. “It’s clear to her the rise in antisemitism and why this funding is so important.”

“Listening to Andrea Salinas and her knowledge of different groups working on bias in our area and the ways in which she would like to see faith groups working together to build change was really inspiring,” Rabbi Posen said.

“She really got it,” Meyer said of the congresswoman. “I didn’t know a lot about her, but she understood the challenges we face. She understands issues around Israel, what Israel is facing and how events far away can impact us locally.”

Though every member that the group spoke to agreed on the importance of security funding, finding it in the federal budget is another matter.

“In this case, our job was to show up with a number of different solutions to the problem and open their eyes to the different ways this could be addressed, which isn’t always the case when you go to lobby,” Rabbi Posen added. “It was largely focused on already existing structures that need to be reworked, which is not usually what I do when I go to lobby.”

It’s not easy, but it’s essential – sadly. Meyer feels the need for security finding acutely when he leads morning prayers at Congregation Neveh Shalom.

“Even at seven in the morning, we have an armed guard there,” he said. “I just wish we didn’t live in a world where we need an armed presence for us to go and pray or be with our community.”

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Kehilla High back for fall with two courses

PDX Kehilla High School

After a successful launch in 2024, PDX Kehilla High is proud to announce the expansion of its accredited teen education program. Now entering its second year, the initiative will offer two college-credit courses for all Jewish students in grades 9-12 across the Greater Portland area. Designed to inspire meaningful learning, real-world skill-building, and deep Jewish connection, these courses are open to any interested high school student—no previous Jewish education required.

With one course returning to the Portland Jewish Academy (PJA) and a second course launching at the Eastside Jewish Commons, PDX Kehilla High continues its commitment to accessible, high-quality Jewish learning for teens citywide. Each class awards three transferable general studies college credits upon successful completion.

Introduction to the History, People, and Culture of Israel

Back by popular demand, this three-credit college-level course offers students a nuanced, multidimensional understanding of Israel's past and present. Through text, discussion, and critical inquiry, students will explore the founding of the modern State of Israel, Jewish historical presence and the many forms of Zionism, wars, peace processes, and shifting borders, lived experiences of both Israelis and Palestinians and Israel's culture, including music, language, art, food, and poetry.

This course meets most Mondays through the academic year from 6:30-8:30 pm at Portland Jewish Academy. Dinner is provided.

Introduction to Community Dialogue

New this year, our second course meets on the Eastside

and focuses on Jewish values and practical tools for building strong, respectful communities—especially during disagreement. Inspired by *machloket l'shem shamayim* (argument for the sake of heaven), students will explore Jewish approaches to debate, disagreement, and sacred dialogue, communication strategies including active listening, managing emotional triggers, and conflict resolution, Talmudic study as a model for thoughtful discourse and tools for engaging in real-life difficult conversations with confidence and empathy.

This course meets most Tuesdays through the academic year from 6:30-8:30 pm at the Eastside Jewish Commons. Dinner is provided.

Rabbi Gary Ezra Oren, who teaches both courses, said, "PDX Kehilla High is for every Jewish high schooler looking to grow—as a thinker, as a communicator, and as a Jew. Whether a student is curious about Israel or passionate about building community, these classes offer college credit, meaningful conversation, and a great group of peers."

Tuition for each course is \$1,300. Financial assistance is available.

PDX Kehilla High is made possible through the collaboration and support of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, Oregon Jewish Community Foundation, Portland Jewish Academy, Mittleman Jewish Community Center, Eastside Jewish Commons, and committed educators, families, and community leaders.

To learn more or enroll your student, visit pdxkehillahigh.org. Interested students and families can also email pdxkehillahigh@gmail.com or follow @pdxkehillahigh on Facebook & Instagram.



Community Calendar

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Community Calendar contains information on local events, speakers, webinars, the arts information for young families and much more!

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

JULY 30 JULY 24

Security Corner

Bivins guilty on all counts

By JESSICA ANDERSON

It has been a very long road for those invested in the outcome of the Michael Bivins prosecution. Readers are now very familiar with the case against Bivins, who vandalized Shir Tikvah, Beth Israel, Everybody Eats PDX and set fire to the Muslim Community Center of Portland with people inside. For those who didn't know or have forgotten, there was a time between April 30 and May 4 in 2022 when the community was very aware that they were being actively targeted by someone not yet identified. We're thankful those crimes were mostly property damage, but his arson charges and other crimes not yet charged show he was capable and willing to take actions that could have caused great physical harm to people.

Prosecutions can take time for many different reasons, and this case was peppered with starts and stops, defense lawyer changes, and defendant challenges. Finally, the case went to trial last week, and on July 10th, Bivins was found guilty on 11 charges. The prosecuting attorneys worked tirelessly on this case, even when it seemed that it would never go to trial. It's an important reminder that targeted communities have strong advocates in the government who believe passionately in their anti-bias work.

If you attended any part of the trial, THANK YOU! It was important for community members to be present – both to support victims and demonstrate community care and attention to this



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.

topic. This will also hold true at sentencing. Bivins will remain in custody until Sept. 19, when he will be in front of the same judge to be sentenced. He had multiple opportunities to plead guilty and receive a lesser sentence, and it's not clear to me right now what sentencing minimums would be for this collection of crimes. The arson will carry the most weight.

"It [the crime spree] was definitely scary, and I think it adds to the fear ... it stokes fear that nobody knew who was going to be the next victim," Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Charlie Weiss told KGW. "What we heard at trial and what came in in the evidence is he told reporters, 'I'm not gonna stop this,' so it's incredibly important that someone intervened in this case."

The sentencing portion of the prosecution is when the judge evaluates, in part, the impact of the crimes on their victims. For court purposes, the view of who is a "victim" is limited to those directly affected by the crimes. Of course, we know that bias crimes impact whole communities – the court knows this too and has significant discretion in who it chooses to hear from. In this

case, there are indications that the court may be inclined to allow additional community impact statements, which are made publicly and on the record.

For now, we'll continue to prepare a community impact statement with anonymous signatures from community members. You can read and sign the impact statement at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ZFShUFL67k-pne_I2VC4V8jhUAZU-Js82gb4yRefLrcXw/edit. We don't know whether the court will allow it to be submitted or submitted in the way we are planning, but as of this writing, 187 have signed on to it, and we'd love to have more.

Lastly, but in some ways most importantly, crimes like these do not get to trial if people don't report incidents. The Portland Police are deeply committed to working on bias incidents and tracking the number of incidents, and we know they are vastly underreported. Reporting to me can be made by email to janderson@securecommunity-network.org or the incident reporting form on the Jewish Federation website at <https://jewishportland.org/security>.

The power - and perils - of pollinators

By SARA SAFDIE

Most mornings, I step out on my small back deck to look for any new developments in the backyard. I generally see a honeybee searching amid the blooming oregano, or a hummingbird diving into bee balm flowers. I stand there, mesmerized by all this activity. Bees, besides creating hives that produce honey, are one of a group of creatures that are classified as pollinators. But who are pollinators? What roles do they play in the production of our fruits and vegetables? Finally, why should we be concerned about their continued health?

According to Wikipedia, "A pollinator is an animal that moves pollen from the male anther [pollen-producing part] of a flower to the female stigma of a flower. This helps to bring about fertilization of the ovules [eggs] in the flower by the male gametes [sex cells] from the pollen grains." The Latin root for the word pollen is "fine flour or powder." If one looks at the stamen, the male part of the flower protruding from its center, fine grains of a yellowish powder can be seen, mostly at the tip of the stamen. This powder needs to reach the ovule, or female part of the flower, to fertilize it. It is this process of fertilization that eventually produces the fruits or vegetables we eat. The main way this transformation takes place involves pollinators.

It used to be possible to see thousands of pollinators flying around, the essential workers for producing our food. Some pollinators, like bees, even get transported around the country during different seasons to maximize crop production, like bees moved every spring to California to ensure fertilization of almond tree flowers.

Though they might be the most familiar one, bees are not the only pollinators. Pollinators include bumble bees, wasps, small bugs, butterflies, and smaller birds. Hummingbirds, with their long beaks, are especially well-adapted for this

process. Every time I walk to my raised beds and see pollinators hovering around my tomato plants, I feel more confident that if every other element is favorable, I'll eventually be able to enjoy one of my heirloom tomatoes. All that these pollinators get out of the process is the nectar they survive on, or the pollen worker bees bring back to the hive.

I've seen estimates that easily 70 percent of our food depends on pollinators; we've relied on them for centuries. Unfortunately, we've seen drastic declines in pollinator numbers over recent decades. Without this symbiotic relationship, we would have drastically fewer fruits and vegetables. There are many reasons why we're losing so many of them, with the most severely diminished numbers seen in bumble bee populations. In some cases, the cause can be a virus that invades honeybee hives, or, surprisingly, too many backyard bee hives. One of the biggest causes, however, is due to the use of chemicals that harm pollinators' health, ultimately resulting in their death. Look for more about this in the next article, including ideas for what we can do to promote the health of these vital species. In the meantime, if you see almost any bird or insect hovering over your flowering tomato or bean plants, welcome them like the friends they are.

Sara Safdie has been a member of the Climate Action Committee since its formation in 2019. This is the first in a series on pollinators.

The Climate Action Committee of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Climate Corner shares tips and resources for healing the Earth. The group is committed to the important work of tikkun olam, repair the world. If you would like to join the Climate Action Committee, please contact Rachel Nelson at rachel@jewishportland.org.

OJCF Column

Yearning for Learning: Jewish Lunch and Learn Grants

Oregon Jewish Community Foundation

Are you yearning for learning? The Oregon Jewish Community Foundation is pleased to announce the opening of the Weitz Family Lunch and Learn Fund. The Weitz Family Lunch and Learn Fund is accepting grant applications to support kosher lunch and learn Torah study for groups of passionate and curious community members.

"What started as a few friends taking an hour to connect over kosher food and Torah has evolved into a collection of city-wide weekly gatherings that engender healthy debate, timeless wisdom, and perhaps most importantly, a deeper love and connection with our peers and the entire Jewish people," Gabe and Jeffrey Weitz explained. "Our goal is to foster Jewish communal growth through Torah and kosher food contributes to the unity and cohesion of the Jewish people as a whole. It also gives people an accessible and friendly environment to get to know their

Jewish selves and their friends in a more soulful way. We hope that the Weitz Family Lunch and Learn Fund will not only aid in helping Jews in Portland, America, and beyond bring more Torah and kosher food into their lives, but also bring a renewed sense of cultural appreciation, inspiration, and depth to those who seek it."

The program must be rooted in traditional Torah study and Jewish values. Each lunch and learn group are eligible for one grant per calendar year with a maximum grant size of \$1,206. Funds are intended to be used for kosher food and study resource materials only.

Apply for a Lunch and Learn grant at ojcf.org/apply-for-a-grant. For more information, contact OJCF at info@ojcf.org or 503-248-9328.

Oregon Jewish Community Foundation does not provide investment, legal, or tax advice. Please consult with your professional advisors before any tax planning or investment decisions.

BERNICE GEVURTZ

Congregation Neveh Shalom is saddened to announce the passing of our dear friend and longtime congregant Bernice Gevurtz, z"l, on Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at the age of 92. Bernice is mourned by her grandson, Jacob Lynch; daughter-in-law, Diana (Rob) Eberlein; brother-in-law, Doug Goodman; and cousin Myra Jackson. Bernice is predeceased by her late husband, Burton Gevurtz z"l, and her son, Joshua Lynch z"l. A memorial service was held Wednesday, July 9 at Ahavai Shalom Cemetery.

BARNEY MILSTEIN

Congregation Beth Israel mourns the loss of Barney Milstein, z"l, who passed away on Tuesday, July 8 at the age of 89. Barney is survived by Susan Milstein, Benjamin Milstein, Isaac Milstein, Rebeca Cotera, Hannah Hendry, and Judy Altman. A memorial service was held Sunday, July 13, at Congregation Beth Israel. Donations in Barney's memory can be made to Congregation Beth Israel and Lift Urban Portland.

AL BENOLIEL

Sephardic Adventure Camp mourns the passing of longtime SAC grandparent Al Benoliel, z"l. 'Grandpa Al' was a light to our SAC community and offered his handmade wood-carved *mezuzot* and *hamsas* to our campers to paint on multiple occasions - most recently at Sephardic Day just weeks ago. Condolences to Al's sons Jeff (Jennifer), and Michael (Rinah) Benoliel, his grandchildren Rachel (Jacob), Andrew, Al (Estee), Anna, and Joe, and to their entire family; may

HaShem comfort them. The funeral was held Friday, July 11 at the Sephardic Brotherhood Cemetery in Shoreline, Wash.

JOSHUA SPIVAK

Congregation Kesser Israel extends our heartfelt condolences to Rabbi Chanan and Meira Spivak on the passing of Rabbi Spivak's beloved brother Joshua Spivak, z"l, of Berkeley, Calif, who passed away on Shabbat, July 12, 2025. Josh is survived by his wife, Amelia, and their two sons, Shalom and Chaim; his parents, Howard and Cheryl; his siblings, Rabbi Marc Spivak, Rabbi Chanan Spivak, and Devorah Benderly.

MARGIT JOHNSON

With sorrow, Congregation Kol Ami shares the recent death of Margit Johnson, z"l, the mother of our congregant Cindy Horenstein. We send our condolences to Cindy and Steve Horenstein, their son Rob, and their extended family.

BERNICE MENASHE

Congregation Ahavath Achim regrets to announce the passing of Bernice Notrica Menashe, z"l, on July 9, 2025.

Born in Los Angeles, beloved wife of Lou Menashe, z"l, daughter of Albert and Amelia Notrica, z"l and sister to Sarah (Nace) Treves, z"l. She is survived by her children Nace (Holly) Menashe, Renee (Randy) Langley, Emily (Rob) Ail, and Leanne Menashe. Bernice was a loving grandmother to nine Grandchildren and 10 Great-grandchildren and a proud Sephardic lady, loved by all. *Esta en gan Eden*. A private graveside funeral service was held Sunday, July 13.

Events

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

July 17: Hester Street

Film screening at Eastside Jewish commons at 7 pm. Learn more at ejcpdx.org/events.

July 18: EJC Noon-time Concert

Performance by Mary Flower at the Eastside Jewish Commons at noon. Free. Learn more at ejcpdx.org/events.

July 18: Family Shabbat Dinner at the JI!

Community Shabbat dinner at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center at 6 pm. \$5 per person, \$15 for families. Learn more and purchase tickets at oregonjcc.org.

July 20: Portland Pride

See story, page 1

July 20: 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 21: Nu! to Nigun: Musical Chassidic Workshops

Musical workshop at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 6 pm. Learn more at ejcpdx.org/events.

July 23: Dignity Grows Volunteer Summer Social

Social gathering at 6:30 pm - location provided upon registration. Learn more at jewishportland.org/summersocial.

July 23: Prose on the

Plaza

Adult story hour and cocktail event at Congregation Neveh Shalom at 6:30 pm. Learn more and register at members.nevehshalom.org/event/adultstoryhour.

July 24: Gift of Life Donor Registry Drive

Bone marrow donation registry event at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center from 11 am-4 pm. For more information, email merit@jewishportland.org.

July 24: Enemies, a Love Story

Film screening at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 7 pm. Learn more at ejcpdx.org/events.

July 26: The Sound of Music Family Sing-Along

Film screening at the Oregon

Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education at 6:30 pm. Register online at ojmche.org/events/family-movie-nights-the-sound-of-music-family-sing-a-long.

July 27: Mitzvah Makers and The Mitzvah Project

Volunteer service events with Lift Urban Portland in Northwest Portland; 9-11 am for young families, 11:30 am-2 pm for young adults. Register online at jewishportland.org/mitzvahmakersjuly.

July 29: Nice Jewish Runners Run and Walk

Group run walk at 6:30 pm at Breakside Brewing Slabtown in Northwest Portland, social to follow. For more information, email dustin.reisberg@gmail.com.