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Members of Portland's Jewish community gather at Tom McCall Waterfront Park for a picture alongside the Morrison Bridge, illuminated in white and blue in solidarity with Israel after the Simchat Torah attacks. (Regina S. for Oregon Stands with Israel)

A bridge in white and blue

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

Across the globe in the days following the Simchat Torah terrorist attacks in Israel, civic monuments and government buildings were turned into illuminated displays of solidarity with Israel. Portland was no exception, with blue and white light bathing the support towers of the Morrison Bridge over the Willamette River. But the process to get there, and what came after, was hardly

as simple as flipping a switch.

It started shortly after the news of the attacks broke to the world. Antonel Urdes, an Israeli and member of the Jewish Community Relations Council's Israel Advocacy Committee, was thinking about the illumination of San Francisco's city hall and wanted to see if Portland could do something similar. He emailed city officials

See **BRIDGE**, page 6

Federation raises \$1.85M for Israel aid

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

In the wake of the Simchat Torah attacks, Portland's Jewish community responded to support Israel in a major way.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Israel Emer-

gency Fund has raised \$1.85 million to date far exceeding an initial fundraising goal of \$1 million. This total includes the \$500,000 matching challenge grant by the Stern Family announced shortly after the attacks.

"We are so grateful for the tremendous outpouring of support from our Jewish community and beyond to care for the people of Israel at this critical time," Federation President and CEO Marc Blattner said. "Our

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AID (continued from page 1)

ability to provide needed social, financial, and support services is greatly appreciated. We are proud to stand with Israel.”

Of those donations, \$1.376 million has already been distributed to groups supporting those affected by terrorism in Israel and their families. This includes:

- \$816,000 sent to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Jewish Agency for Israel through the Jewish Federations of North America's Israel Emergency Fund. JFNA announced Friday that they had exceeded their initial Emergency Campaign fundraising goal by nearly 11 percent, raising \$554 million for Israel.
- \$125,000 to United Hatzalah, Israel's national volunteer emergency medical services and ambulance agency.
- \$100,000 to Dror Israel, an educational charity whose emergency efforts are supporting children who have evacuated from near the Gaza border, day care programs for hospital staff and other essential workers, and support for underprivileged families in affected areas of Israel.
- \$75,000 to the Israel Trauma Coalition, which manages 12 national resilience centers in Israel to aid psychological trauma victims and train caregivers to support victims of trauma.
- \$75,000 to Magen David Adom, Israel's national Red Cross agency, providing ambulance and emergency medical service and blood bank services throughout Israel.
- \$75,000 through a donor-directed contribution to Friends of the Israel Defense Forces, an organization providing services to IDF personnel, wounded veterans and the families of those who die defending Israel.
- \$50,000 to ZAKA, a nationwide search and rescue service which also ensures proper Jewish burial for victims of large-scale attacks.
- \$50,000 to OneFamily Fund, a non-profit assisting families of terror attack victims with therapeutic and rehabilitation programs.
- \$10,000 to Neve Michael Children's Home, which provides a variety of services to at-risk children in Israel.

As donation pledges continue to be received, more funds will be sent overseas to aid Israel.

ISRAEL AT WAR

Where Does The Jewish State Go From Here?

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 6

7:00 PM BY ZOOM

HERB KEIRON

Herb Keiron is a senior contributing editor and analyst at The Jerusalem Post, writing extensively on diplomacy, politics and Israeli society. He has been at the paper for 30 years, twenty of those as its diplomatic correspondent. During this time, Keiron has covered the major stories that have shaped Israel.

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Israel Bake Sale set for Nov. 12

The Jewish Review staff

Organizations from throughout Portland's Jewish community are coming together to support Israel and one another through the power of baked goods!

Gather your family and friends in your homes to bake your favorite dairy/parve Jewish pastry recipes, and then bring them at 10:30 am on Sunday, Nov. 12 to Congregation Neveh Shalom. Stay until 11:30 am when participants can "purchase" everyone's delicious treats in a "take what you want, give what you can" Community Wide Bake Sale for Israel Aid. You can "purchase" treats for yourselves or gift them to people you know

who need a sweet treat. All donations contributed to this "sale" will be sent to Israel through the Israel Emergency Fund of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. Signup form available at forms.gle/BfNycvWd5vkmLtJK9.

If you are looking for an opportunity to bake together with others, there is a community-wide baking event for kids in first grade and up, with their parents, Friday, Nov. 10 (a non-school day), from 10am until noon, with packaging to follow. To RSVP for the Friday event or for more information about either program, contact Meira Spivak at Meira@ncsy.org or call 503-757-3037.

Klezmer Festival kicks off Nov. 2

The Jewish Review staff

The second annual Portland Klezmer Festival returns to celebrate the music of Central and Eastern European Jewry Nov. 2-5, presented by Co/Lab and traditional music non-profit Bubbaville.

An opening night concert with The Bieszczady Mountain Boys and The Carpathian-Pacific Express kicks off at 7:30 pm Thursday, Nov. 2 at the Alberta Street Pub, 1036 NE Alberta St. in Portland, with a jam session to follow

at 9:30 pm. The music continues Friday with a nigun session with Cantor Aaron Vitells on Friday evening, a kids' workshop Saturday afternoon, an evening concert on Saturday featuring Brivele and New Fidl Kapelye, and a day of workshops on Sunday culminating with an evening concert and dance party at the Eastside Jewish Commons.

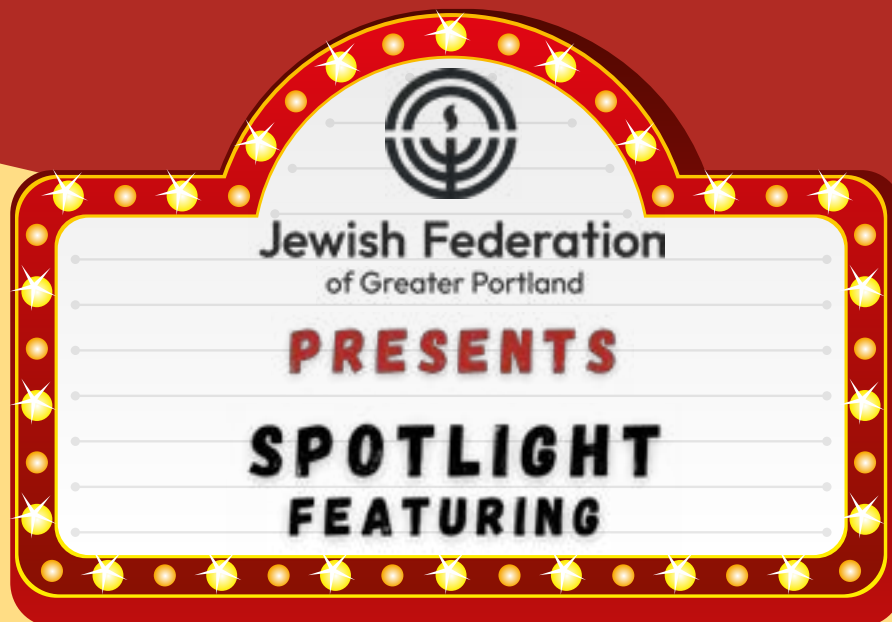
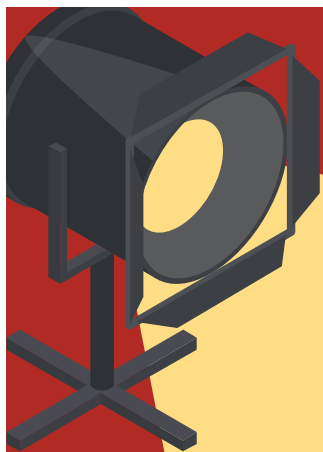
Sliding scale ticket prices vary by event. For more information, visit bubbaville.org/klezmer.

CBI Early Childhood Center now enrolling for Feb. opening

The Jewish Review staff

Congregation Beth Israel will open The Jennifer Barnum Luria Early Childhood Center (The Jennie) Feb. 12, 2024. Enrollment will begin this week, with two initial classrooms for infants aged six weeks to 12 months and two for toddlers aged 12 to 24 months. Those with older children are encouraged to apply to the waitlist to help gauge demand. Tuition will be \$2,150 monthly for infants

and toddlers, with lower rates for older children. A non-refundable registration fee of \$150 secures enrollment or waitlist placement and is waived for CBI members. Once classrooms are full, the waitlist placement will prioritize families who are members of Congregation Beth Israel, as well as those who already have a sibling enrolled at The Jennie. For more information, visit bethisrael-pdx.org/the-jennie/.



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"Birdman" brings Baskin to OJMCHE

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

The title of the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education's new exhibit of Leonard Baskin's work is, on the surface, descriptive of much of what is inside, but the reality of the exhibit runs much deeper.

"He had a fascination with winged creatures of all kinds," curator Kenny Helphand said. "He saw this as analogous to the human condition."

"The Great Birdman," on display at the museum through Jan. 28, 2024, shows a broad sampling of Baskin's work, much of it lent from the artist's niece, Judith Baskin and co-curated by her and Helphand. People, birds, and angels are all constants throughout Baskin's work, and the lines between them often blur.

"Many people talk about Baskin and the importance of his human figures, and how this really shows his connection to humanity," OJMCHE Executive Director Judy Margles said. "But it is these winged creatures for me that just soar, to use a bad metaphor."

Baskin was born in 1922 in Brunswick, NJ, the son of an Orthodox Rabbi. His knowledge of Judaism, furthered through a *yeshiva* education, often sprung up in his work.

"He was absolutely fascinated with the Binding of Isaac. Really, a continuing theme throughout his work," Margles said. "Similarly, he was fascinated with angels, both benevolent angels and death dwelling, death dealing angels."

A wall of the exhibit is devoted to his work on Jewish themes – on one end is a rendition of the Binding of Isaac which Baskin titled "The Sacrifice of Isaac," in which the two patriarchs, Abraham and Isaac, are two faces on the same head, opposite one another. There are portraits of other biblical figures and a whimsical rendering of Maimonides among other works.

Portraiture was a mainstay of Baskin's work and an outlet for his ideas of humanity. While Baskin rejected the abstract expressionism that was popular throughout much of his life, his representations are often inexact, with exaggerations and malformities that serve to humanize his subjects – even when he served that role for himself; a wall is devoted to Baskin's self portraits.

"Our enveloping sack of beef and ash is yet a glory," he wrote. "The human figure is the image of all men and of one man. It contains all and can express all."

"His portraits are incredibly insightful and also, I think, very directly trying to reveal something about the character of the



Museum-goers take in works from "The Great Birdman" at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education at a members' reception for the exhibit's opening Sunday, Oct. 8. (Mario Gallucci/OJMCHE)

individual that he's portraying," Helphand said.

While Baskin saw himself first as a sculptor – the center of the exhibit includes a two-foot tall bird sculpture with distinctly human features – he was also a printmaker, founding Gehenna Press in 1942 as one of the first American fine art presses. In addition to publishing his own work and others through the press, he illustrated other books, most famously "A Passover Haggadah" for the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinical assembly of the American Reform movement.

He also illustrated a guidebook for the Little Big Horn Battlefield historic site in 1968 for the National Park Service, which led him to dig further into Native American life. He came to view the treatment of North America's indigenous populations as a genocide on par with the Shoah (Holocaust). He went on to complete two collections of portraits of Native Americans, released nearly 20 years apart.

"He was a person who was learning his whole life and willing to acknowledge, to change his views as he learned more," Margles said. "He never took his eyes off of world history and the history of the Jewish world, and this struck him as such an injustice and led to a lifelong pursuit of Native American art and culture in a profound way."

Also on display at the museum is "Yishai Jusidman: Prussian Blue" through Nov. 26. Prussian Blue is named after the blue

pigment that is used exclusively in the photorealistic paintings that make up the exhibit. It was one of the world's first artificial blue pigments; it was also a byproduct of chemical reactions between Zyklon B and the brick walls of the gas chambers at the Nazi death camps. Judisman traveled to Dachau, Sobibor and Mauthausen, creating photographs which he rendered into large scale paintings.

The selections, curated by Christian Viveros-Fauné, are almost scenic; woodlands, a lake, a low-slung building in a clearing. The starkness of the compositions combined with the blue tones, and the knowledge of that pigment's history, is evocative of the horrors of the Holocaust without being over-the-top gruesome.

"We can't forget what these are. What are we looking at? We're looking at pictures of genocide. We're looking at images of the destruction of European Jewry," Margles said. "I'm thankful we have work like this, frankly. It doesn't wound us. It doesn't necessarily crush us to look at these. They're chilling, but there's something so hauntingly beautiful about them. But you have to keep looking and you have to keep thinking."

Prussian Blue is on display as part of a city-wide exhibition "Social Forms: Art As Global Citizenship" put in by Converge 45, which aims to improve access to art discourse across communities.

For more information, visit omjche.org.

Schmoozapalooza "celebrates older adults"

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

Corsages, a dance floor, a DJ and a photo booth – the Mittleman Jewish Community Center had all the trappings of a modern prom Sunday, Oct. 22. But this party wasn't for high schoolers.

Instead, it was a more mature crowd on hand as Jewish Family & Child Service hosted Schmoozapalooza, a "senior prom" for those over 60.

"We wanted an opportunity to celebrate all of the new connections we've made and really to celebrate older adults and survivors in our community," explained Missy Fry, JFCS's Aging and Adult Services Clinician. "We wanted to do something that's fun where people can just come and be together."

Schmoozapalooza comes as part of two years of programing for older adults put on by JFCS through a grant from Jewish Federations of North America's Center on Holocaust Survivor Care and Institute on Aging and Trauma that have focused on socialization. A number of those programs have centered on the needs of Holocaust survivors in the community, and this was no exception.

"We ran with the prom idea and I think part of it is that a lot of survivors did not get to have a prom," Fry said.

Planning started in May, with a "prom committee" of volunteers doing much of the work to bring things together. Kristin Lawson was on the committee and at Schmoozapalooza on Sunday; she didn't attend her high school prom, making this her first.

"It is beyond special. It's very touching, you know, especially with things going on right now in the world," she said. "There's no better time to honor people, remember and celebrate as we can."

Lawson was alluding to the terror attacks in Israel just two weeks before the prom. There



Above: Myra Siegel, left, stands for a photo at the Schmoozapalooza photo booth operated by Avery Phillips of Flash Photography at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Sunday, Oct. 22. Below: Couples cut a rug on the dance floor in the MJCC ballroom. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

was a consideration of postponing or cancelling altogether, but the event went forward.

"With everything going on, I think it was even more important to have an opportunity to gather with other Jewish people and to be in a Jewish space hosted by a Jewish organization where folks could be together," Fry said. "I think it is its own form of protest; terrorism won't shut us down, we are going to continue to live our lives. Having a room with Holocaust survivors who literally did that and have generations of families, sometimes with them at these events, it's another way of kind of. Honoring them."

Snacks and a bar were available, and the DJ played songs ranging from swing classic "In The Mood" to "Boot Scoot Boogie," as well as "Hava Nagila."

"There were a couple of people there that I think danced almost the entire time there was music playing," Fry recalled.

Fry said the experience for her surpassed her own high school



prom, even if the planning was stressful

"My high school problem was fine," Fry recalled, "Once we were there though, it was just looking around and seeing people smiling and laughing and eating the food and having so much fun with the photo booth, which was such a hit, it just it felt much more, much more fun and enjoyable than my own school prom."

Myra Siegel was first in line for the photo booth – she wanted to have her picture taken

while she had her nerve up, she said. She stood in front of the camera wearing a "Prom Queen" sash and smiled, then smiled again when the print came out a few minutes later.

Siegel said the row of corsages arranged next to the name tags at the entryway reminded her of the corsage her prom date pinned on her at her own high school prom years ago.

"That brought back very nice memories," she said. "It reminds me of being 17 again."

BRIDGE

(continued from page 1)

who replied that they couldn't make that happen – they simply didn't have the equipment.

"But then they said, 'you know, in the past, the bridge was lit up,'" Urdes recalled.

"The bridge" is the Morrison Bridge, built in 1958. Like most of Portland's bridges, it is owned by Multnomah County. Its concrete piers are illuminated by 16 lamps, installed by the Willamette Light Brigade in 1987 and upgraded to LEDs in 2007. Willamette Light Brigade, a nonprofit organization that aims "enhance and beautify the city of Portland by lighting the bridges that span the Willamette River," continues to operate the lights. Anyone can pay WLB to set the lights on the bridge to whatever color or scheme they choose, but the county government has the authority to override WLB or its donors and dictate the colors of the bridge lamps.

Urdes realized he had a friend who worked in the county's government: Commissioner Sharon Meieran. A member of Congregation Beth Israel, Meieran is the board's lone Jewish member. Urdes sent her a text Monday night after the Greater Portland Jewish Community Gathering in Solidarity with Israel.

"It was late; It was past 10 pm," Urdes said. "She said, 'Can I just call you?' I think it was close to midnight and she called me."

They planned to submit a resolution to the Board of Commissioners that Thursday at their regular meeting, expressing solidarity with Israel and directing County Chair Jessica Vega Pederson to light the bridge in blue and white, the colors of the Israeli flag. Such a resolution needed three yes votes from the five-member Board. Urdes thought time was of the essence.

"I said that I think we need to do it sooner rather than later," he explained, "because I think that there's a momentum to everything."

Michelle Bombet Minch, the chair of JCRC's Israel Advocacy Committee, was keeping in touch with Urdes throughout the process. On Thursday morning, she received a message from Urdes saying they needed two people to provide public comment to the Board of Commissioners meeting – which was about to get underway. Urdes had an unavoidable schedule conflict, so Minch took on the task.

"The problem is you normally have to submit your request for testimony the Wednesday before," she said. "This was Thursday morning, so we had missed the deadline."

With Commissioner Meieran's help to overcome technical difficulties, Minch was able to appear virtually for the public comment period alongside Israeli Deputy Consul-General Matan Zamir.

"Over 1,200 Israeli women, children, elderly have been killed, slaughtered, burned, and beheaded by Hamas terrorists," Zamir told the Board. "Holocaust survivors, 85-year-old women in their wheelchairs were taken by Hamas terrorists into Gaza. It is very difficult for a person to digest, to comprehend what has happened on Saturday in Israel."

"Israel is suffering tremendous loss. We are suffering deeply. This is our family, our friends," Minch told the Commissioners. "At a time like never before, we need to know we have the support of our country and the people surrounding us."

It was not Minch's first time appearing in front of a public body, but this time was different – both in terms of immediate circumstance and the scale of events she addressed.

"When I give testimony, I usually write it out and read it out loud a few times," she said. "And here I am in my pajamas. I went into the Zoom meeting and I was talking from the heart."

The process did not become more streamlined after the public comment period ended.

The Board spent most of its

meeting discussing natural disaster mitigation plans, circling back around to discussing their response to the terror attacks at the end of the agenda.

Commissioner Julia Brim-Edwards moved to direct Pederson to light the bridge for seven days, while Meieran proposed a statement condemning the attacks in addition to the bridge lighting.

Pederson said that she would be lighting the bridge, a move that was within the purview of the County Chair as the county's chief executive officer, which she saw as rendering Brim Edwards' proposal moot. The commissioners debated for over an hour on the issue, eventually not voting on Meieran's proposal and voting down Brim-Edwards' motion three to two; Meieran and Brim-Edwards in favor, Pederson and Commissioners Lori Stegmann and Susheela Jayapal in opposition.

"I feel like it would be tone-deaf not to acknowledge our community members who are Palestinian or Middle Eastern," Stegmann said. "While this is a horrific act that has been committed, there has been a long-standing conflict of colonization and displacement of Indigenous people."

Jews are indigenous to the area.

Stegmann suggested that those interested review information from Amnesty International and Democracy Now to learn more about the conflict. Amnesty International accuses the State of Israel of apartheid and war crimes. Democracy Now is a left-wing media outlet that has also accused Israel of apartheid.

"I don't think I can acknowledge loss of one group when there are Palestinian lives being lost as well," Jayapal said. "I think it's very difficult to draft this kind of amendment in the moment."

Later that day, Pederson ordered the bridge to be illuminated in solidarity with Israel for five days, beginning Oct. 12; a 14-day lighting for Breast Cancer awareness sponsored by the Pink Lemonade Project was cut short.

Pederson, Meieran and Brim-Edwards issued a statement that day, saying "We know the situation in the Middle East is complex and nuanced, and this statement does not reflect our individual or collective views on the broader history and the suffering of the people in the region. But we cannot stand silent in the face of the deadliest day for Jewish people since the Holocaust. We stand for peace."

The county also issued statements from Jayapal and Stegmann.

"I unequivocally condemn Hamas's appalling terror attack on Israel. I support lighting the Morrison Bridge as a symbol of our absolute condemnation of violence in all its forms, and of our solidarity with the people of Israel in this moment of their grief," Jayapal's statement said in part. "No single statement can capture the complexities of the region's history and current situation. What is clear is this: all people deserve to live in peace, safety and freedom."

Stegmann also condemned the attacks by Hamas.

"Multnomah County is home to individuals and families with connections to both Palestine and Israel," she said. "While the future remains uncertain, collective efforts toward liberation and justice can cultivate hope, drive impactful change, and ultimately pave the path toward peace."

Minch and Urdes were happy with the outcome of the process. Both are active in Oregon Stands With Israel, a grassroots effort that has sprung up in the wake of the Simchat Torah attacks to organize support for Israel in the area. A large group hired a photographer to capture them in front of the illuminated bridge one evening. Urdes said Israelis living in Hillsboro would drive into Portland at night to take selfies next to the bridge, and people headed to the airport would snap pictures from their car windows to send to friends in Israel.

"At the end of the day, I didn't care exactly how it was done.

continued on next page

continued from previous page

I was just very happy to put it there,” he said. “It means everything for a lot of people.”

“We accomplished the goal, which was to get it lit up,” Minch said.

But just as the process wasn’t smooth, neither is it over. Two days after the Board of Commissioners meeting and her initial statement, Pederson directed that for the next five-day block, Oct. 17-21, the bridge would be illuminated in all white “representing our collective call for peace.”

“In recent days, we have seen tremendous harm and suffering inflicted on the Palestinian population in Gaza by the Israel Defense Forces, including the terrifying call to remove more than one million people from northern Gaza with only 24-hours notice,” her statement read.

“It was sort of a veiled attempt, in my opinion, to not support Israel,” Minch said.

Oregon Public Broadcasting later reported that bridge operators, who are employees of the county, asked through their union that the county change its policies regarding the lights on the bridge. OPB’s story also indicated that a bridge operator refused to work a scheduled shift to protest the lighting of the bridge in solidarity with Israel.

“We are writing to request that in the future you refrain from using the bridges for any political displays that might cause moral offence [sic] to the operators working there, or which might cause them to feel unwelcome in their workplace, or which might make the bridges or the operators a target for political violence,” the operators’ letter, delivered through AFSCME Local 88, said.

Text messages to Commissioner Meieran were not returned as of press time.

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JFCS hosts survivors for Sukkot celebration

From left, Rabbi Sholom Skolnik of Congregation Kesser Israel, Celia Perelstein, and Jewish Family & Child Service Case Manager Helen Pevzner, shake the lulav and etrog at the Sukkot Café Europa event attended by about 30 Holocaust Survivors Wednesday, Oct. 4 in the Ahavath Achim and Kesser Israel sukkah. Beneath a *schach* (roof) that kept them dry from the drizzle, clients enjoyed a catered lunch, some holiday ritual and community. Rabbi Skolnik said Sukkot is a time to celebrate the divine care and protection that is always with us, linking that message to his grandmother’s experience escaping Nazi-occupied Germany. The holiday lunch was made possible thanks to funding from the Conference On Jewish Material Claims Against Germany. (Marina Milman/JFCS)



Rising Tide recognizes JFGP for community mikvah work

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland has been recognized by the international open mikvah network for its leading role in the establishment and operation of Rachel’s Well Community Mikvah.

The Federation received the Collaborative Community Partner Wellspring Award from the Rising Tide Open Waters Mikveh Network for its operation of Rachel’s Well, which opened in 2017.

“In partnership with the Oregon Board of Rabbis and the Portland Kollel, JFGP co-created Rachel’s Well Community Mikvah, providing overall leadership, vision, and funding to get the project started,” the award announcement read. “Embodying the value of *shutafut* (partnership), JFGP convened community leaders, businesses, diverse stakeholders, and city officials to ensure the new mikveh was shaped by the voices and visions of every-

one in the community.”

Rachel’s Well is the fourth community mikvah in Portland; the first was built in South Portland in 1902 as the Jewish Ritualarium of Portland. Relocations came in 1929 to Southwest Third Avenue and Lincoln Street and to Southwest Harrison Street in 1959 in the wake of urban renewal. In 2016, concerns over maintenance and accessibility led to the desanctification and sale of the old building and the beginning of the effort to build the new mikvah on the Schnitzer Family Campus.

“The JFGP convened a diverse group of Jewish community leaders, businesses, stakeholders, and city officials to create this important and much-needed resource,” Federation board member Sarah Rosenberg Brown said at the virtual award ceremony. “In addition, JFGP took the time to listen to people from all parts of the Jewish community and created a mikvah that is truly a place for everyone.”

Federation Chief Allocations and Engagement Officer and mikvah manager Caron Blau Rothstein accepted the award on the Federation’s behalf. She thanked the Oregon Board of Rabbis, Portland Kollel, Oregon Kosher, Federation President and CEO Marc Blattner, and the volunteer immersion guides of all backgrounds that make the mikvah run.

“Rather than doing different trainings for different kinds of guides, we came together because the learning was as much about the people in the room as the content we were sharing,” Blau Rothstein said. “We learned from each other that there is value and meaning, dare I say holiness, in sharing a sacred space. The way we share isn’t necessarily to be in the space altogether at one time. The magic is in different people making the space what they need it to be when they occupy it.”

To learn more about Rachel’s Well visit jewishportland.org/mikvah.

QCDs can give giving a tax advantage

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

For those looking to reduce tax burdens and support charitable causes, the IRS is here to help.

For those who own “qualified retirement accounts” like 401ks and Traditional IRAs, just to name a couple, the Internal Revenue Service permits “qualified charitable distributions” from those accounts beginning at age 70 ½ of up to \$100,000 per person per year. These distributions are tax-free but must be made directly to eligible charitable organizations.

“People often think they cannot be philanthropists or contribute at a particular time during their lifetimes,” Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Chief Development Officer Wendy Kahn said. “However, with knowledge comes the opportunity to contribute, create impact, and grow one’s engagement with the Jewish community.”

The recently passed SECURE Act 2.0, which made numerous changes to tax-advantaged retirement plan rules, notably left the age for charitable distributions untouched.

“I love that they kept the QCD [minimum age] at 70 1/2,” Kim Rosenberg, a wealth manager at Coldstream Wealth Management.

For those qualified account holders aged 73 and older, up from 72 in 2019 and 70 1/2 prior to that, charitable distributions can also count toward the annual required minimum distributions of four percent of account value. Whatever amount is routed to a charitable distribution, up to the \$100,000 cap, reduces the required distribution, dollar for dollar, while also not counting as income because it goes straight from the pre-tax account to the charitable organization – an added perk for those near the thresholds between marginal tax rates, Rosenberg explained.

It’s important to note that Qualified Charitable Contributions must be taken in the calendar year they are applied to for tax purposes – meaning any distribution that will be noted on 2023 tax forms must be completed by Dec. 31, 2023.

“If you need to take a required minimum distribution from your IRA, this is a great opportunity to maximize your impact to the Jewish Federation and minimize your tax liabilities,” Federation Campaign Co-Chair and retired CPA Jack Birnbach said.

Even if someone needs some of the income from their retirement account, they can still benefit from a charitable distribution.

“Let’s say your RMD is \$50,000, you can give \$20,000 to charity and then collect the rest,” she explained. “It’s not all or nothing.”

The SECURE Act 2.0 also indexed the qualified charitable distribution cap to inflation, so the donation potential will grow over time.

Rosenberg said the tax implications of any individual situation are complex and should always be discussed with a tax advisor. In broad strokes, however, there are opportunities for those who wish to maximize their giving.

“From the charitable opportunity, yeah, there’s this terrific opportunity there and, if you save on your taxes, great,” she said. “The people I do QCDs for, they’re all super charitable.”

Rosenberg also strongly encourages those giving charitable distributions to receive documentation of the distribution and to keep that documentation.

“If you don’t receive it, that means it wasn’t acknowledged,” she explained. “That means you don’t get credit.”

The information provided in this article is for informational purposes only and should not be considered as professional financial or tax advice. It is not intended to substitute for professional financial or tax guidance. The content is provided “as is” and without any warranties or guarantees of accuracy or completeness. Past performance is not indicative of future results, and there are inherent risks associated with financial activities. We do not endorse or warrant any specific products or services mentioned. Your financial decisions are your responsibility, and you should conduct your research or consult a qualified financial and/or tax advisor as needed.



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BB Camp at Neveh Shalom is Nov. 10

B'nai B'rith Camp

Get ready to have a blast with your BB Camp pals Friday, Nov. 10, 9 am – 4 pm at Congregation Neveh Shalom. Kindergarten-ers through fifth graders are welcome for a school-free day filled with awesome camp activities. Dive into your favorite BB Camp activities like art projects, traditional camp games, nature exploration (*Teva*), music, and sports. We'll also have a chance to come together for a community care project supporting our friends in Israel. \$75 per camper. Register at bbcamp.org/vet-day. For more information, email info@bbcamp.org.



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Portland rallies for Israel

More than 200 people gathered at Portland's Salmon Street Springs Sunday, Oct. 22, for a rally organized by grassroots group Oregon Stands with Israel. Speakers addressed their connections to Israel and their hope that the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza since the Simchat Torah attacks will be freed, while Congregation Neveh Shalom Cantor Eyal Bitton led a rendition of the Israeli national anthem, "HaTikvah," bottom right. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)



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NOV 15	NOV 9
NOV 29 (Hanukkah)	NOV 22
DEC 13	DEC 7
JAN 3	DEC 28

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Chaplain's Corner

A time to embrace nuance

By RABBI BARRY COHEN

Can we hold these two truths at the same time? It is true that Israel has a right to defend itself against Hamas, AND it is true that we can feel compassion for the innocent Palestinians that get caught in the crossfire.

Whenever we talk about Israel, we find ourselves in a political-religious-cultural minefield. Inevitably, we will trip some wires.

Too many of us think in binary terms. Choose one side. It can only be "either-or." Subtlety and nuance are not allowed.

Just look at the rhetoric. Israel's critics accuse them of setting up an apartheid state, of committing genocide against the Palestinians and of being colonizers. Those who support Hamas call for the destruction not only of Israel (claiming that the land is theirs, "from the river to the sea"), but of Jews worldwide themselves (posters calling for the "gassing" of the Israelis).

This dredges up memories of the Yom Kippur War, the Six Day War, the War of Independence and of course, the Holocaust. How can the Jewish community respond to such incendiary claims and hateful rhetoric after Hamas massacred 1400 innocent Israelis and kidnapped more than 200 people from Israel and other nations, including the United States?

The intensity of this war is clearly ramping up. Who knows what will have happened by the time this column goes to press. How many more soldiers and civilians will have died?

I write these words at my own risk. Some may chastise me: Stay in your lane. Who are you to enter this conflict and share a contrarian opinion?

But don't we all have an obligation to enter this conflict? I can state that I definitely stand with Israel AND that my heart breaks for the innocents who will be injured and killed, both Palestinians and Israelis.

The overwhelming majority of Israelis and Palestinians just want to live their lives, send their kids to school, go to work and enjoy discretionary time with family and friends.

But Hamas clearly has a different, zero-sum agenda. They fervently believe that Israel has no right to exist. One cannot negotiate with such an enemy. Iranian leaders clearly have a different agenda. They continue to arm Hamas in the south and Hezbollah in the north, provide them with intelligence and let them do the dirty work and pay the price of Israel's justified response.

I shudder when I think of how this con-



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flict will proceed. How much more will the kidnap victims suffer? How many Israeli soldiers will be wounded or die? What pain and grief will their spouses, children, siblings, grandparents and extended families feel?

How many more innocent Palestinians will suffer and die because they had no control over being in the wrong place at the wrong time? How will their family and friends grieve, and how will they respond? Will animosity and hatred against Israel be passed to yet another generation?

Moreover, will this part of the world ever know true and lasting peace?

For decades, peace between Israel and Arab nations was a dream. But then Egypt's and Israel's respective leaders signed a peace treaty. Later, Jordanian leaders did the same. And recently, Israel made peace with the United Arab Emirates and with Bahrain.

Behind the scenes, Israel and Saudi Arabia had been getting close to normalizing relations. But Hamas' barbaric actions put that on hold. However, it appears that talks will continue when the war between Israel and Hamas ends. And incredibly, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has welcomed ongoing efforts to secure the release of hostages held by Hamas and called for their immediate release.

As all this transpires, our local Jewish community will continue to offer various ways for us to navigate the Israel-Hamas war. We will encourage emotionally safe ways for us to interact friend to friend, professional to professional, parent to child, teacher to student, clergy to congregant and therapist to client.

In the coming weeks and months, I encourage all of us to embrace nuance and accept multiple truths. We can find a way simultaneously to stand with Israel wholeheartedly AND offer compassion to innocent Palestinians whose lives have been shattered.

After all, Jewish wisdom instructs us to recognize "the other" as fellow human beings, united in how we are all created in the image of God.

Clergy Corner

Place joy in the driver's seat

By CANTOR IDA RAE CAHANA

In our family, November is a highly anticipated month. A string of birthday celebrations begins November 2nd including my beloved sister-in-law, Rina who initiates the 30-day party, encompassing my brother-in-law, Rabbi Ronnie Cahana, his wife, Karen, three of my children, and my husband. Rina begins planning her celebration for the following year the very next day after her birthday. She loves to remind us, "I was born in fall weather!"

Although we think of the month of Cheshvan which this year encompassed part of October and November as "bitter" (*Mar* [Hebrew for "bitter"] *Cheshvan*, as it is called) because of that Hebrew month's lack of Jewish holidays, I am comforted by Rina's sweet reminder of life's preciousness which she never fails to recognize. As a people who have survived pogroms and plagues, we have learned that we must hold life's bitterness as well as sweetness. Just a week after Rina's birthday is the commemoration of Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass, a marker of the unfolding horrors of the Shoah. By mid-November, this year coinciding with our triplets' birthday, the Hebrew month of Kislev begins, the month of rededication, of increased light, of miracles, of Chanukah.

Your family may not have the wild confluence of birthdays all in one month, but your wider Jewish family celebrates and mourns together with the waves of recent tragedies in our beloved homeland overlapping with personal and communal simchas. Masechet Ketubot 17A of the Talmud teaches us, "If a funeral procession and a wedding procession meets at an intersection, the wedding procession goes first." As difficult as it may sometimes be for us, we are instructed to place joy in the driver's seat of our emotional train. Even as we navigate the emotional upheaval of our times, crying, as we need to and should, let us also find all the reasons to be glad, to be grateful, for our precious lives and for each other.

For some uplift, tune into this beautiful recording of Charles Osbourne's setting of Psalm 122 sung by the Zamir chorale, conducted by Dr. Joshua Jacobson "I rejoiced when they said, let us go up to Jerusalem, to the house of the Lord." Online at [youtube.com/watch?v=CO59aEazKAg&t=19s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CO59aEazKAg&t=19s)

Cantor Ida Rae Cahana is Senior Cantor at Congregation Beth Israel in Portland.

The Jewish Review regularly invites local clergy to share their insights with the community. These opinions do not necessarily reflect the views of the Review, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, or its staff.

Jobs Board

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JCRC Column

Israel's second front

By BOB HORENSTEIN

A few days after the Oct. 7 Hamas terrorist attack when 1,400 Israelis were brutally murdered and over 240 taken hostage, Multnomah County Commissioner voted against lighting



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

Portland's Morrison Bridge in the blue and white colors of the Israeli flag. Explaining her decision, she stated that such a move—which occurred the next day despite her opposition—would be "tone-deaf" to the sensibilities of the local Palestinian community given their history of "colonization and displacement of indigenous people." (See "story, page 1)

Around the same time, an op-ed in *The Oregonian* newspaper justified the Hamas massacre by claiming, "For 16 years, Palestinians in Gaza have been trapped by the Israeli government in what is effectively an open-air prison." In the ensuing weeks, local pro-Palestinian groups, including anti-Zionist Jews, organized multiple protests against Israeli military operations in Gaza, which, predictably, they portrayed as a "genocide."

Israel is waging war on two fronts: the ground war in Gaza and the court of public opinion. The first requires defeating a vast terrorist infrastructure deliberately embedded within a civilian population. The second necessitates not only refuting perpetual Hamas disinformation (see, Al-Ahli Hospital bombing), but also refuting false narratives long peddled by anti-Israel groups and now cited as the gospel truth in news accounts, op-eds, university student statements, and social media posts.

Anyone watching CNN's coverage of the war will hear its reporters consistently refer to Hamas terrorists as "militants" or "fighters." In a similar vein, John Simpson, the BBC News World Affairs Editor, gave this explanation for the BBC's refusal to label as terrorism the heinous Oct. 7 attack: "Terrorism is a loaded word... We don't take sides. We don't talk about 'terrorists.'"

This isn't about taking sides, however—it's about reporting the facts. If slaughtering entire families, beheading babies, burning alive young people, and kidnapping nine-month-old infants and Holocaust survivors isn't terrorism, what is?

Equally egregious is the media describing the Hamas terrorist attack as part of the "cycle of violence" between Israelis and Palestinians. Lost on the purveyors of this misconception is the fact that it's the Jewish state's very existence, not its actions, which provokes Hamas violence. If the terrorism were to cease, there would be no need for Israeli military actions in Gaza.

The longer Israel's ground offensive takes, the more we will see the "scoreboard" of casualties with the Palestinian death toll inevitably rising and the narrative shifting away from Israeli trauma. What is hard to comprehend is why media outlets merely parrot—rather than question—the statistics they receive from a health ministry run by a terrorist group.

After all, Hamas has a well-documented record of inflating casualty numbers and claiming that nearly all of those killed by Israeli forces are "civilians." How, for example, could Hamas have reported an accurate death toll within minutes after the Al-Ahli

See HORENSTEIN, page 12

Events

More events online at jewishportland.org/community-calendar

Nov. 2-5: Portland Klezmer Festival

Celebration of Eastern and Central European Jewish music. See story, page 2.

Nov. 2: Cafe Shalom Israeli Folk Dancing

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

Nov. 3: Shabbat Community Israeli Dinner

Congregation Ahavath Achim invites you to join us for an Israeli Shabbat Dinner & Kabbalat Service from 5:30-8:30 pm Friday, Nov. 3, at the synagogue led by Rabbi Devin Villarreal. \$20. For more information, email info@ahavathachim.com.

Nov. 4: Moishe House Tikkun Olam Event

Join us to repair the world through prayers for Palestinians and Israelis and picking up litter from 2-4:30 pm Saturday, Nov. 4. For more information, email moishehousepdx@gmail.com.

Nov. 5: Alliance for Jewish Theater on Zoom

The Alliance for Jewish Theatre presents a free zoom event Sunday, Nov. 5 from 10 am – 2 pm. Featuring a performance excerpt of theatre dybbuk's "The Merchant of Venice (Annotated), or In Sooth I Know Not Why I Am So Sad" followed by live community conversation with Aaron Henne and company, moderated by Daniel Pollack-Pelzner. For more information or to register,

visit alljewishtheatre.org/fundraiser

Nov. 5: Dignity Grows Packing Party

Volunteer to pack with our Dignity Grows chapter Sunday, Nov. 5, from 1-3 pm at the MJCC. Each Dignity Tote provides comprehensive monthly personal and menstrual hygiene products to women, girls, and individuals who menstruate who cannot afford them. Preregistration required at jewishportland.org/packingevent.

Nov. 5: Israeli Folk Dancing at SWCC

Enjoy Israeli folk dancing at the Southwest Community Center with session leader Rhona Feldman Sundays, 2:30-4 pm. More information at sites.google.com/site/pifdnews.

Nov. 5: Listening Lab with Alicia Jo Rabins

Join Third Angle New Music from 2:30 -3:30 pm Sunday, Nov. 5, for a deep dive with musician, composer, writer, and Torah teacher Alicia Jo Rabins! She will share about her residency at Camas High School where she has been composing an expanded version of "Girls in Trouble." Address will be provided to confirmed guest. \$50. Registration at tinyurl.com/mrddy4v85.

Nov. 6: Herb Keinon via Zoom

Jerusalem Post Senior Contributing Editor Herb Keinon addresses "Israel at War: Where does the Jewish state go from here" Monday, Nov. 6 at 7:30 pm on Zoom (Note change from in-person event). Register at jewishportland.org/herb.

Obituaries

JACQUELINE PLITMAN

Jacqueline Plitman z"l, born in Agen, France, passed away peacefully, Oct. 8, 2023 in Toulouse, France. An artist, ever gracious hostess, lover of travel and proud mamina, she leaves behind a legacy of her three daughters: Sonia Marie Leikam (Theo), Catherine Fixe Chapin (Bill) and Isabelle (Rick) and five grandchildren Alexa, Nico, Alexandre, Benjamin and Daniel.

Family, friends and kehillah will gather to observe the thirtieth day since the passing of Jacqueline, daughter of Alexandre and Sonia z"l, in fulfillment of the mitzvah of *nikhum avelim* (comforting mourners) Monday, Nov. 6 at 6:30 pm at Leikam Brewery, 5812 E Burnside in Portland. Please join us in the Meal of Consolation afterward by bringing a vegetarian dish to share.

RENE VARON

With great sadness, Congregation Ahavath Achim the passing of Rene Emily Varon, a"h, also known as "Auntie Em," sister of Sol Varon. She passed away Oct. 19 in Seattle, Wash. The Funeral was Monday, Oct. 23 in Seattle.

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

Life cycle

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

HORENSTEIN (continued from page 11)

Hospital parking lot was hit by what they falsely claimed was an Israeli bomb?

These false narratives fuel the lie that Israel is—and has been—committing a genocide of the Palestinians. Unlike Hamas, which uses their own people as human shields to drive up the civilian casualty toll and thus inflame public opinion against Israel, the IDF goes to great lengths to avoid harming civilians. The only party to this conflict with genocidal intent is Hamas, whose charter calls for Israel's destruction and the murder of all Jews.

The absurd accusation that Israel is perpetrating genocide transcends the current war. Sadly, we Jews know what genocide looks like—during the Holocaust, two of every three Jews in Europe were murdered. By contrast, the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza has increased more than fivefold since Israel's establishment in 1948. If the Israelis were truly trying to commit genocide, they must be incredibly inept.

Those who condone the worst terror attack in Israel's history while seeking to undermine Israel's efforts to protect its people have also been propagating the fiction of Gaza as an "open-air prison." Does anyone still have to question why Israel (as well as Egypt, an Arab country) had to secure its border with the terrorist enclave next door?

And yet, despite Hamas's takeover following the total Israeli withdrawal from Gaza in 2005, Israel allowed daily hundreds of trucks carrying food, medicine, and other goods through the Kerem Shalom crossing. Before the attack, moreover, Israel had issued 20,000 permits for Gazans to enter and work inside Israel.

Facts matter. Context matters. But even if one believes the false narratives—including the misguided belief that Jews are "foreign interlopers" who aren't indigenous to the Land of Israel—to rationalize or excuse the appalling atrocities committed by Hamas is, at best, to lack moral clarity. Or at worst, to be altogether without moral values.