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The JEWISH REVIEW

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Fran Drescher speaks at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Spotlight event Saturday, Dec. 2 at the Patricia Reser Center for the Arts in Beaverton. (Andie Petkus Photography for The Jewish Review)

The Nanny in the Spotlight

Drescher dazzles for fans at Federation celebration

By **DEBORAH MOON**
For *The Jewish Review*

Spotlight with Fran Drescher drew 325 people to the Reser Center for the Arts in Beaverton for the Dec. 2 Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's campaign event. (See related story page 5)

The evening began with a festive gathering featuring wine and beer, a kosher nosh and plenty of space to socialize.

"The energy that was in that room was unbelievable; everybody was smiling and enjoying those delicious hors d'oeuvres," said attendee Lidia Krivoy.

One woman shared that she came with her two adult daughters because they were so excited to hear Drescher speak. Another young woman convinced her mom to babysit so she could attend the event.

Applause and laughter interrupted Drescher throughout her keynote address and the fireside chat that followed with Jewish Review Editor Rockne Roll.

Creator and star of "The Nanny," Drescher spoke about the challenges and rewards of being Nanny Fine.

With starring roles for Jewish characters virtually nonexistent during her early career, Drescher decided she needed to create her own character. When she unexpectedly saw the president of CBS on a transatlantic flight, Drescher pleaded her case for several hours until he agreed to set up a meeting for her with the network's director of comedy development.

She pitched a series like "The Sound of Music" See **DRESCHER**, page 6



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TischPDX leads Jews of Color Northwest survey

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Tisch PDX is putting the call out to Jews of Color throughout the Northwestern United States: Stand and be counted.

Thanks in part to a grant from the nationwide Jews of Color Initiative, Tisch is conducting an expansive Cultural Shift Survey of Jews of Color in the Pacific Northwest, which they're defining as Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana and Alaska. The survey, which is open until Jan. 5, 2024, is also supported by Portland's Jews of Color Collective and Tiyuv, a national organization for evaluation of Jewish Communities of Color.

"We are basically just trying to figure out who's out here, as far as Jews of Color in the Pacific Northwest, what we're into and what we want to see," explained Tammy Metasabiya Habteyes, Program Director for TischPDX. "How do Jews of Color engage in both Jewish communal spaces, but also just with themselves? What kind of practices and rituals do they partake in?"

Brandeis University's Greater Portland Jewish Community Study, published earlier this year, indicated that around seven percent of Portland's nearly 57,000 Jews identify as People of Color. Habteyes said efforts to produce programming and resources for that community were running into unknowns and that asking the community what they wanted was a better alternative to guessing.

"Why try to imagine what the community wants?" she explained. "We can just ask them in a really organized way."

Habteyes worked with Gage Gorsky from the Jews of Color Initiative to craft the survey questions. Gorsky was one of the lead authors of "Beyond the Count: Perspectives and Lived Experiences of Jews of Color," published in 2021. The process of crafting the survey took months and tailored the questions to reflect the specific experiences of Jews of Color in this part of the world.

"We can contextualize the survey in the fact that the Pacific Northwest has a history, and it's not the greatest history, for people of color or for Jews," Habteyes explained. "It's just not the same as the East Coast."

Participation is by self-selection, and the survey is available for those interested at tischpdx.org/pnwsurvey. As an incentive, 100 participants will be randomly selected to receive a \$10 gift card at survey's end.

"I hope that every single Jew of Color over the age of 18 will get a chance to fill it out," Habteyes said. "I hope that we get thousands of people filling it out."

Once the survey concludes on Jan. 5, the team will begin breaking down the raw data and presenting their findings in March 2024. Habteyes said that once the data is digested and distributed, she and the groups that support Jews of Color can make plans and set goals that reflect what they see.



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17th Sephardic film festival begins Jan. 17

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

The combination of Sephardic culture and the silver screen has become a tradition in Portland, and that tradition returns for its 17th year in January.

Congregation Ahavath Achim once again presents its Sephardic Winter Film Series in four screenings, scheduled for Wednesday, Jan. 17 and Tuesdays, Feb. 13, March 12 and April 9, each starting at the synagogue at 7 pm.

"The idea behind the whole thing was to expose Sephardic culture to the general community," explained board member and series organizer Richard Matza, "and to expose our congregation to the general community."

Matza explains that the films the festival has shown have run the gamut of genres and styles, centering on Sephardic communities nearby as well as the lands around the Mediterranean that are the origin points of Sephardic Judaism.

"We have movies that are biographies. We have movies that are dramas. We have movies that are documentaries," Matza said. "We usually like to end the season with a comedy."

Setting the schedule of screenings is no easy feat, fellow series organizer and CAA board member Ron Sidis explained. Months of research and securing of screening rights begin in the summer of each year. Each film is also followed by a hosted discussion to dig into the topics addressed as moviegoers enjoy tasty Sephardic desserts.

"We research trying to find those movies. They're really hard to find," he said. "So sometimes we just have to throw a non-Sephardic movie in."

This year's series starts with "Conspiracy of Hearts." Directed by Ralph Thomas, the 1960 film depicts Italian nuns smuggling Jewish children out of an internment camp near the convent to escape the Holocaust. It was nominated for a Golden Globe for Best Film Promoting International Understanding. The post-screening will be led by Judy Margles, the retiring executive director of the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education.

February features a pair of documentary shorts, starting with "In the Shadow of the Acropolis." This 2007 film by Laura Zelle and Maxine Davis and narrated by Jaime-Lyne Sigler documents the Romaniote Jews of Greece, little-known even before their near-erasure during the Holocaust. The second half of the double feature is 2006's "The Sephardic Jews and The Pike Place Market," director Stephen Sadis' look at the origins of one of North America's largest Sephardic communities. CAA members Mark Abolofia and Sol Varon will lead the discussion.

March will feature "Garden of the Finzi Contini," director Vittorio De Sica's 1970 historical drama. The use of a wealthy Jewish family's private tennis court sets the stage for intertwining friendships and love as the specter of World War II descends. It won an Oscar in 1972 for Best Foreign Language Film and took Best Film honors at the 1971 Berlin International Film Festival.

The series concludes in April with "Above and Beyond," the 2014 documentary about foreign pilots who travel to Israel to fly and fight for the fledgling Israeli Air Force in the War of Independence. Directed by Roberta Grossman, the film includes interviews with volunteer pilot Louis Lenart and former Israeli president and prime minister Shimon Peres and won an Audience Choice award at the 2014 Philadelphia Jewish Film Festival.

Discussion leaders for the final two screenings are yet to be determined. Screenings are free, RSVPs are appreciated. For more information or to RSVP, email info at [ahavathachim.com](mailto:info@ahavathachim.com).

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Spotlight shines on Federation programs

By DEBORAH MOON

For The Jewish Review

The spotlight may have been aimed at Fran Drescher, actor, author and union leader, but she and several other speakers at a Dec. 2 event highlighted the importance of standing up for what you believe in.

Best known as the title character on the Emmy Award-winning series “The Nanny” (1993-99), Drescher stood up to CBS when they asked her to make the Jewish character Italian. She didn’t back down when eight doctors failed to diagnose her uterine cancer for two years. And as president of Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, she led the successful negotiations to end the actors’ strike earlier this year. (See related story, page 1)

“Once you make a big commitment in life, things begin to happen,” Drescher said.

The theme started with the evening’s emcee, Max Forer, a Los Angeles native who played football at the University of Oregon before moving to Portland.

“I soon realized living in Oregon and being Jewish meant being intentional,” he said.

Forer joined PDX Pathways, a Federation program to integrate young Jewish professionals into the community, and then the Oregon Hillel board.

“The community in Portland embraced me tenfold,” he says. “My story is an example of what makes this community so special, so let’s celebrate and support our community. I invite each of you to step up and step in.”

Leslie Beard, who co-chairs the annual campaign with Jack Birnbach, said Federation makes her think of hope, compassion and courage. “But Federation is more than words – it is people.” Those people help build a safe and inclusive community “at home, in Israel and anywhere in the world someone wants to live Jewishly.”

Birnbach added that over its 103-year history, Federation



Above: Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Campaign for Community Needs Co-Chairs Leslie Beard and Jack Birnbach address the crowd at the Patricia Reser Center for the Arts in Beaverton during the Saturday, Dec. 2 Spotlight event. Below: Greater Portland Hillel Executive Director Hannah Sherman, left, and Lewis and Clark College student Maya Mazor-Hoofien speak to the support the Federation has provided for Jewish college students in the area. (Andie Petkus Photography for The Jewish Review)

has worked with nearly 50 Jewish agencies. “We collaborate to save and improve lives.”

Three speakers then shared moments when Federation had impacted their lives.

KGW News Director Greg Retsinas said being Jewish had been incidental in his life, and none of the Jewish communities he has served as a professional journalist had ever asked him to participate. Then when the news department met last winter with Federation staff members about local issues, they mentioned the March 2023 community trip to Israel. Loving global travel, Retsinas asked if he could join the trip.

“It was transformative in many ways,” he said. “It was so powerful... which makes the current situation (the Israel-Hamas war and hostages) so heartbreaking.”

When the [Community Study](#) came out soon after, he read it cover to cover, discovering 60 percent of the area’s 57,000 Jews have never belonged to a congregation. “I found myself.



I was not alone as an uninvolved Jew in Portland.”

Now Retsinas serves on the Federation Board. He focuses on two committees – climate change and geographic outreach to reach more people where they are.

“I saw an open door and I went through it,” he says of his newfound commitment to the community.

For Portland State University student Maya Mazor-Hoofien, the need for community support grew out of her decision to stand up to the rising antisemitism on campus after the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel and the resulting war. After writing an article for the campus paper about feeling abandoned by her school, she was invited to speak
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DRESCHER

(continued from page 1)

sic, but I come to the door (instead of Julie Andrews)." CBS bought the idea immediately. Drescher said that after she balked at an initial demand to make "The Nanny" Italian rather than Jewish, the network never asked her to tone down Nanny Fine's Jewishness.

However, during the fireside chat with Roll, Drescher said she did receive pushback early on from several Jewish organizations that objected to the "crass, uneducated" portrayal that they felt "did not represent our people well."

But Drescher said that Nanny Fine "brought her heart, her warmth, her Jewishness and Yiddishisms" into the house. "They were comforting to her."

The show became a big hit around the globe, including surprisingly in Arab nations such as Egypt and Syria, inspiring Israel to honor Drescher in the Knesset.

"I'm proud I stood my ground," said Drescher, adding that Nanny Fine "normalized women like that to the world."

Drescher stood up for herself again when doctors dismissed her symptoms when she knew her body was not healthy. After two years, the eighth doctor she visited finally did a simple pro-



Fran Drescher and Rockne Roll, Editor of *The Jewish Review*, converse in their fireside chat following Drescher's keynote address at Spotlight Saturday, Dec. 2 in Beaverton. Drescher discussed bringing "The Nanny" to life, her experience with cancer and the power of female leadership. (Andie Petkus Photography for The Jewish Review)

cedure that diagnosed uterine cancer. A hysterectomy cured her completely. But the experience gave her a new mission in life.

She wrote the bestseller *Cancer Schmancer*, which evolved into an organization promoting early detection for all cancers.

"Listen to your body," said Drescher. "Challenge your doctors. If they aren't listening, move on."

She said that when she was elected president of the Screen Actors Guild in 2021, it was a highly partisan, dysfunctional union.

"It was a microcosm of Congress – very partisan and angry," she said.

She shifted to a nonpartisan approach, and through optimism and listening, soon had people "coming together in a healthier way."

That paid off when contract talks stalled, and the actors' strike began earlier this year.

"I was raised in a home where the working class and middle class were the backbone of America," she told Roll when he asked about how her Jewish values affected SAG negotiations. "Respect hard-working people and treat them well with a lot of respect and never cross the picket line."

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to the student government, where "I was dehumanized to my face."

Facing the tough Shakespearean question "to be or not to be" – to stand up in a public advocacy role or to step back – she turned to Hillel.

Greater Portland Hillel Executive Director Hannah Sherman said that her small staff of three has been overwhelmed by students in need of support.

"The Jewish Federation's critical financial support enables us to be there every day on the ground meeting those needs," Sherman said.

Following the speakers, Birnbach said, "I am inspired by

these incredible stories. This is our opportunity to make great things happen." He encouraged attendees to give generously to take advantage of a matching gift from Scott and Elena Shleifer. The couple pledged to double match all increases of 20% or more and to match increases of 10%. In addition, they will match the full gift of all pledges by anyone attending a Federation event for the first time.

People listened. Twenty five percent of those donating took advantage of the match, with an average donation of \$512 on the evening and a 28 percent average increase for previous donors. In total, the event raised nearly \$51,000 for the Federation's annual campaign.

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Lighting up Portland's living room

Clockwise from top left: Nearly a thousand people gathered Thursday, Dec. 7 at Pioneer Courthouse Square in downtown Portland to celebrate the first night of Chanukah at Chabad of Oregon's Chanukah 1800 program. The event culminated in Rabbi Moshe Wilhelm lighting the 12-foot tall public menorah. Attendees danced in the season following the menorah lighting; this is the 40th year that Chabad has maintained a public menorah in Portland. Chanukah themed activities for children, seasonal merchandise and plenty of latkes also highlighted the event. Portland's famous "Allow Me" sculpture, often known as the "umbrella man," overlooks the tent and security perimeter set up for the celebration. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)



'The Museum is part of my life'

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

Judy Margles has been part of the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education since its inception.

After initially joining the museum as an advisor and later as a board member, Margles will retire at the end of this month at the conclusion of 24 years as the executive director of Oregon's center for Jewish Art.

When the idea for the Oregon Jewish Museum just started coming together, Margles was there, and she's been there through expansions, relocations, and broadening of the institutions focus – every step of the way.

"There was talk in the community of building a Jewish museum," she recalled of the project's beginnings in the early 1990s. "I got involved just because I'm a museum worker."

"Museum worker" has been Margles' calling for a long time.

Margles is the youngest of four siblings, raised in rural Ontario, whose mother picked out their careers for them from an early age. All the siblings fought like crazy against this predestination, but then Margles completed an internship at the Royal Ontario Museum. She was hooked.

"The idea of taking an object and figuring out ways to interpret it and teach someone what they can learn from this object always fascinated me," she said.

She studied at the University of Toronto and pursued graduate work at New York University. Along the way, she married Steve Wasserstrom, who went on to accept a position teaching Jewish Studies at Reed College, bringing Margles to Portland. On arrival, she found her position at the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry. – quite the change in subject matter from her decorative arts work at the Royal Ontario Museum.



Outgoing Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education Executive Director Judy Margles, pictured in the museum's "Human Rights After The Holocaust" exhibit Monday, Nov. 20. Margles will retire at the end of this month after nearly a quarter century at OJMCHE's helm. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

"I used to say, 'I'm here to humanize everything you do,'" she recalled. "I had no science background, but I was there for a decade. I did some great exhibits."

Margles served as an advisor to the "museum without walls" and came to sit on the board while continuing to work at OMSI. When the organization's original executive director departed in 1999, Margles decided to take the leap – she applied for and got the job. Her children, who had come to know the child-oriented OMSI as "Mom-sy," were not thrilled.

"I had a two-headed calf in my office, I had a moon rock," she recalled, "and then I went to this thing that didn't exist."

For much of its early existence, OJM had no permanent facility. When merged with the Jewish Historical Society in 1996, it kept the society's extensive archive in a borrowed space at the Oregon Historical Society. OJM later moved to a borrowed space in Montgomery Park, then rented space at

Northwest Third Avenue and Davis Street, before moving close by into a 6,000 square foot space at Northwest 19th Avenue and Kearney Street, where the museum started to truly come into its own as an institution.

Some of the first exhibits there were "The Power of Memory," which displayed items from the JHS archive along with photographic interpretations, and an exhibit on Sephardic culture. There was more to come.

"We did this exhibition just looking at car culture amongst Oregon Jews. We even had a section about German cars," Margles recalled. "In the exhibit we actually talked about Henry Ford because, of course, he was a virulent antisemite; he brought 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion' to the United States. That was a great exhibit. We did an exhibition about Mel Blanc, the voice of Bugs Bunny. We did an exhibition about the composer Ernst Bloch who lived at Agate Beach for the last 20 years of his life. We did a number of local artist exhibitions. We did

some great stuff there, but it was small."

OJM had been, in part, the brainchild of longtime Congregation Neveh Shalom Rabbi Joseph Stampfer, z"l. It adopted its current name upon merging with the Oregon Holocaust Resource Center, another organization founded by Rabbi Stampfer, along with Alice Meyer, who was also the first President of OJM. By 2012, OHRC was pursuing a merger with another local organization. A number of groups were interested, but Margles saw a union of the two groups as an essential extension of what OJM's mission should be.

"I felt that we had an obligation to think about teaching about the Holocaust," she said. "Because if we weren't doing it, who would?"

The merger, completed in 2014, gave the newly-dubbed OJMCHE stewardship of the Oregon Holocaust Memorial in Washington Park, the OHRC's Speakers Bureau, a cadre of

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Survivors and descendants of Survivors available to speak to groups about the Holocaust, and an impetus to pursue greater Holocaust education. The museum, thanks in large part to Melanie Birnbach, Margles, notes, started pushing for the legislature to take up a mandate for Holocaust education in public schools. When the moment came, OJMCHE helped draft and advocate for the bill. The work was rewarded.

"In June of 2019, Governor Kate Brown was in our auditorium signing the bill with survivors at her side," Margles. "Such a high point in my life. Huge accomplishment."

Another huge accomplishment was getting OJMCHE into a permanent space of its own. Margles says that any time she would drive through Portland with her children, they would point out the buildings that OJMCHE had tried unsuccessfully to purchase.

They had gotten close before, close enough that an architect and construction contractor had already been selected. Things finally came together in 2015 when the Museum of Contemporary Crafts was closing and the Pacific Northwest College of Art, which had been the museum's steward for the last years of its history, was putting the building up for sale.

Margles was in Rome on vacation when she learned of PNCA's intent to sell.

"We have to go home right now, we've got to go," she recalled saying to her husband. "Obviously, we didn't cut our vacation short, but I did dash off a few emails."

PNCA told Margles that if she could come up with their asking price - \$5 million - within 45 days, they would skip taking other offers and move directly to sale.

"I wasn't grey[-haired] until then," she recalled.

Grey, but successful - with the purchase, with a second, smaller capital campaign to get the building ready to open in 2017 and with a campaign to



"As obligated as we felt in 2014 to expand our regional lens by educating about the Holocaust, I feel the same obligation that the story didn't end in 1945," Margles said of "Human Rights After The Holocaust. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

raise \$2.4 million to purchase the former Charles Hartman Gallery space at the southwest corner of the property and integrate it into the rest of the museum.

"We did it because this community is extraordinary. I'm going to tear up," Margles said. "What a blessing to work in this amazing community and have the support of this community. People really understood the importance of the Jewish community being represented with the museum. And again, go back and credit Rabbi Stampfer and Alice Meyer for understanding that."

That expansion paved the way for OJMCHE's newest permanent exhibit, "Human Rights After The Holocaust." In the wake of the Holocaust, the expression "Never Again" came to prominence, but Margles realized that the kind of human rights abuses that spawned "Never Again" have, in reality, been more along the lines of

"Again and Again and Again."

"Would we have done that exhibit 10 years ago? I don't know," Margles said. "But we know the more you study 1933 to 1945, and the more you understand 1945 to now, you recognize that this expression, 'never again,' is false."

"Human Rights After The Holocaust" documents the successes and failures of the efforts to protect human rights around the globe since World War II. The exhibit is meant to inspire hope while also being honest about the horrors that have happened around the world - including here in the United States.

"As obligated as we felt in 2014 to expand our regional lens by educating about the Holocaust, I feel the same obligation that the story didn't end in 1945," Margles continued. "And all the rhetoric, in a positive way, that came out after 1945; 'crimes against humanity,' the word 'genocide,' the human rights declaration, all these

came out to try and put some framing around this most horrific 20th century event. And yet, there's still unspeakable genocide."

In a perfect world, Margles explained, "Human Rights After The Holocaust" would become a relic of a meaner time in human history. In reality, Margles hopes the exhibit inspires each person to something, however little it may be, to make the world better and move toward that better world.

"Change can happen," she said, "and we all have the ability to make change."

Margles will be making a change in her lifestyle very soon. In addition to her own retirement, Wasserstrom will be retiring from Reed College at the end of the year. She's looking forward to traveling together, reading, and doing nothing.

"The Museum is part of my life, and I want to stay connected in whatever way makes sense," she said. "I think until you actually retire, you have no sense of what it's going to look like. But I do have a stack of books that I hope I just lie on the couch and read."

In addition to her gratitude for the Jewish community the museum serves, Margles also expressed appreciation for the arts community in Portland that has helped OJMCHE to thrive.

"It's just a phenomenal arts community. I've had wonderful collegial relationships with my fellow directors, fellow curators, fellow museum people," she said. "I think the relationships we forged even more during the pandemic have stayed."

Those colleagues feel similarly - the Western Museum Association presented Margles with their 2023 Leadership Award.

"We ask visitors the question, how do you turn hope into action? As I prepare to end my tenure as OJMCHE's director, I urge all of all of us to create opportunities that testify to our hope so that we can all work together to create our better future," she told the WMA's annual conference upon receiving

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her award.

Even as she reflects on her career and the lengthy list of exhibits she's assembled, Margles is not fully done yet.

"I still want to do an exhibit about the history of the Jewish ghetto, starting with the Vene-

tian ghetto and then looking at ghettos in the United States," she said.

After a career like Margles', its understandably hard to take the museum out of the director, even if the director will no longer be at the museum every day.

Frankenthaler exhibit, open through Mar. 24, serves as Margles' colorful farewell



"Madame Butterfly" (Courtesy OJMCHE)

The final exhibit before Margles' retirement is a recently opened collection of prints by Helen Frankenthaler, on display through March 24, 2024.

Frankenthaler, born to an upper-class New York family, started painting in high school but moved on to printmaking, becoming a frontrunner in technical developments in the medium and leading the charge of abstract expressionism and the revival of American print making.

By 1965, Co-Curator Bruce Guenther explained to a recent members' tour, Frankenthaler was "the most important woman artist in America. She never loses that distinction."

The exhibit, on loan from the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation, is a chronology of her major prints, from "First Stone," her initial foray into the medium, and encompassing her 2000 masterpiece, "Madame Butterfly," which uses an astounding 102 colors applied with 46 wood blocks of four different species on three sheets of paper assembled into an almost seven-foot-long collection of tone, shape and space that leaves room within its transitions, subtle and stark, for the viewer's mind to wander. Guenther described it as "probably one of the most important prints of the late 20th century."

The exhibit of Frankenthaler's pure abstract expressionism serves, for the first part of its run, as a stark contrast to the representationalism of her contemporary, Leonard Baskin, on the other side of OJMCHE's first floor. But in a dark time of the year in what has been a dark year, Guenther said that the Frankenthaler exhibit serves as a chance to escape into a refuge of color and form.

"It's a place to come and experience beauty without agenda," he added.

For more information on hours and admission, visit ojmche.org.

PDX Cross Collaboration launches with "L'Chaim and Laughter" Jan. 3 at EJC

Portland's newest young Jewish adult community development group is taking flight with laughter.

PDX Cross-Collaboration will host "L'Chaim and Laughter" with The Sklar Brothers Wednesday, Jan. 3 at 7 pm at the Eastside Jewish Commons in Portland. The event serves as a public kickoff for the Collaboration, a group of 11 Portland-area groups focused on serving younger Jewish adults.

"We meet monthly to share and collaborate about our events and what we're doing for young adults in our community," explained Laura Jeser, Associate Campaign and Engagement Officer for the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland and organizer of PDX Cross Collaboration. "As we know, [young adults] are a significant percentage of the adults in our Jewish community, but the least represented as far as attending events and their involvement in organized Jewish life."

The Collaboration includes Congregation Beth Israel's Jews Next Dor, Moishe House, MOTs (Members of the Tribe), Congregation Neveh Shalom, OneTable, Greater Portland Hillel and Portland Jewish Connection.

Young adult engagement has been a focus for Jeser since she joined the Federation's staff earlier this year. As she met with organizations around town, the need for an opportunity to coordinate efforts, exchange ideas and highlight one another's work became a priority. The process grew organically; a meeting for one group included another, another was looped in from there, and a broader coalition started to form.

"The idea is that we share and we see the particulars that are amazing about each individual organization, promote each other and help each other out," Jeser said. "We want everyone to have their own spaces where they feel comfortable, where they get to fully express whatever Jewish life means to them."

The Sklar Brothers, Randy and Jason, have appeared on a variety of television shows in addition to their own podcast, "Sklarbro Country," which ran until 2017. They've also produced and starred in a number of streaming video series, winning a pair of Streamy Awards for their work. Jeser, who has a background in comedy, recalled seeing them perform while she was active on the stand-up circuit. When she saw that the brothers were playing a show at Portland's Helium Comedy Club, she reached out about the possibility of an additional performance at EJC.

"They were great," she recalls of seeing them perform, "and they have such an amazing following. They get the Jewish community. It's nice to have that connection and that relatability, which is what you want when you go to a Jewish comedy show."

Hors d'oeuvres and cocktails will be served.

In addition to serving as a public launch opportunity and a chance to connect organizations with potential constituents, L'Chaim and Laughter serves as an early example of the kind of benefits the Collaboration can provide. A number of groups were plotting comedy-focused programs in the coming weeks and months, but instead of offering different, smaller, possible overlapping events, they've come together to put on one big show.

"I think that the energy was out there to have this kind of comedy experience," Jeser said. "We've definitely been through a lot of difficult months, a lot of hardships and negativity. I think people just kind of need to find the space to be with community and people need to laugh. That's still important."

Tickets are \$36 and available at jewishportland.regfox.com/lchaim-and-laughter.

Chaplain's Corner

Ever changing dreams

By RABBI BARRY COHEN

I am intrigued by dreams. One reason is that dreaming is a universal phenomenon. My frustration is that I almost never remember what I dreamt about. Another reason is I wonder why we dream in the first place.

According to an article from the Cleveland Clinic, "the prevailing theory is that dreaming helps you consolidate and analyze memories (like skills and habits) and likely serves as a 'rehearsal' for various situations and challenges that one faces during the daytime." ("Why Do We Dream?" Aug. 18, 2022)

But what is the psychological purpose of dreaming? The article continues, "one study suggests that dreams stem more from your imagination (the memories, abstract thoughts and wishes pumped up from deep within your brain) than from perception (the vivid sensory experiences you collect in your forebrain)." Therefore, even when we are asleep, our brain continues to process the experiences and emotions from the previous day. In effect, the brain uses this valuable down time to problem solve, navigate emotions and recuperate.

Of note, this week's Torah portion, *Mikeitz*, focuses upon dreams and Judaism's most famous dreamer, Joseph. He was not only experienced in remembering his own dreams, but in interpreting the dreams of others. When he was a youth, he dreamed of being more powerful and authoritative than his siblings and even his father. This caused his brothers to hate him, sell him into slavery and create a cover story that he had been attacked and killed by wild animals.

Transported to Egypt, Joseph ultimately finds himself imprisoned. But even in this setting, he successfully interprets the dreams of Pharaoh's officials and Pharaoh himself. This enables a two-fold result: Not only is Egypt able to prepare for a famine that will afflict the land, but Joseph rises to second in command under Pharaoh, in charge of food collection and distribution.

In this way, Joseph's childhood dreams became a reality. And at the same time, through his taking action, he was able to interpret other people's dreams to ensure the safety and security of an empire.

But as a result, I wonder how Joseph's dreams for his future changed? Though now in a position of power, he lived far from home, completely separated from his father



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and family. Joseph responded by starting a new family. He married Asenath, an Egyptian, and they had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. What dreams did he now have as a father? What dreams did he have for his children?

As all of us go through life and navigate both celebrations and tragedies, joys and pains, our dreams, hopes and expectations change. Most of this happens beyond our control. And like our brains dreaming at night, we are left to problem solve, navigate our intense emotions and recuperate.

In this process, how often do we remain passive, hoping that everything will work out? How often do we choose to be active and take tangible steps to live life to the fullest and recover from the random challenges that we face?

Speaking candidly, let me talk about the "American Dream." From when I was a little kid, I was taught by parents, teachers and politicians that with hard work, discipline and dedication, I would inevitably be more successful financially than the older generation. This came to feel like my birthright.

Not so fast. Forces, events and decisions beyond my control prevented this dream from coming true. But that being said, I am not asking for pity or sympathy. Millions of Americans can say the same thing.

Through the years, I have responded by recalibrating my dreams, hopes and expectations for me and for my children. We have all persevered, and I am proud of how my family has responded to forces beyond our control to build a meaningful and hope-filled life.

I imagine that for all of us, some of our dreams may have been fulfilled, but some of our dreams had to be revamped if not even discarded. We never know with certainty what we will experience in the future. One way to navigate is not only to keep dreaming, but to keep working to fulfill our dreams, however much they may change.

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OJCF seeking grant proposals

The Oregon Jewish Community Foundation's Community Endowment Fund (CEF) exists because of the generosity and foresight of the many donors who leave legacy gifts to the Foundation. These gifts allow the Foundation to respond to the changing needs of our community over time.

Through this discretionary fund, OJCF supports vital and impactful community organizations and initiatives in Oregon and SW Washington that further the Foundation's mission and, through philanthropy, support members of our community in their personal exploration of Jewish identity and their personal efforts to find meaning in connecting with the Jewish community.

For fiscal year 2024 (July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024), OJCF will implement a grant process to use the CEF to seed innovative and collaborative organizations and programs in Oregon and SW Washington that remove or lower one or more of the four main barriers to Jewish participation identified in the community study commissioned by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland: programming, geography, cost, and "feeling Jewish enough."

Our priority through this grant process is community engagement over organizational needs. Organizations applying for a grant should demonstrate how their proposal creates compelling ways to engage in Jewish life in Oregon and SW Washington, thereby serving our community and the pressing needs of our community while demonstrating how the initiative builds for the future and moves our community forward over time. Emphasis will be given to organizations collaborating in creative and/or new ways and organizations working together for the first time.

OJCF will consider one, two, or three-year grant proposals. For multi-year grant requests, OJCF will commit to funding the proposal for the specified period based on a set of criteria and conditions that OJCF and

the applicant establish to measure the progress of the program. Any accepted multi-year grant proposal will not be eligible for additional funding from the CEF after the final year of the grant.

Grants will be awarded through a request for proposal (RFP) process using OJCF's grant portal (click here). The information requested by the application can be found at OJCF.org. OJCF will accept grant applications from December 11, 2023, through January 26, 2024. For more information or questions please contact Samantha Skipton, Accounting Assistant and Office Administrator, at samanthas@ojcf.org or call (503) 248-9328.

End-Of-Year Giving Deadlines

OJCF hopes to receive year-end gifts from donors in accordance with the following schedule:

- Registered (publicly traded) securities: On or before December 22, 2023.

- Checks mailed: Postmarked on or before December 30, 2023, mailed to: Oregon Jewish Community Foundation DEPT LA 25298 Pasadena, CA 91185-5298

- Checks delivered to OJCF's office: Received by OJCF on or before December 30, 2023.

Donors have several charitable options for implementing efficient year-end tax planning that may help to decrease taxes, including using appreciated assets to make a charitable gift, donating to a Donor-Advised Fund, an IRA charitable rollover or accelerating non-charitable gifts.

Disclaimer: Please consult with your professional advisors before making any tax planning or investment decisions. The Oregon Jewish Community Foundation does not provide investment, legal, or tax advice. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact David Forman, OJCF's President and CEO, at davidf@ojcf.org or 503-248-9328.

Events

Dec. 13: Niggun Event at Moishe House

Join Moishe House for snacks and songs Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 6 pm. For more information, email moishe-housepdx@gmail.com.

Dec. 14: Lighting and Latkes

Cap off Chanukah with songs, games and Latkes at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Thursday, Dec. 14 from 5-6:30 pm. Enjoy a playlist of Hanukkah songs from PJ Library, games and latkes, which will be available for purchase at the Cafe at the J. For more information, email bbutterworth@oregon-jcc.org.

Dec. 14: Drag Trivia w/ Polly Poptart

Join us for a fabulous night of Hanukkah Trivia with your favorite Jewish drag artist, Poly Poptart Thursday, Dec. 14 at Leikam Brewing Company, 5812 E Burnside St. in Portland, from 7-9 pm. Ages 18+ welcome. Free to play-come alone or with a team. For more information, email info@leikambrewing.com.

Dec. 14: Cafe Shalom Israeli Folk Dancing

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

Dec. 15: Strategies to Manage Depression

Jewish Family & Child Service offers Mental Health Spotlight Friday, Dec. 15, 10 am on Zoom to shine a light on areas where all people – children through older adults, including self-identified disabled members of our community – can seek help. Mental Health Spotlight's goal is community outreach and pro-

viding pertinent information about topics our clinicians are tuned in to through their client work. Mental Health Spotlight is not one-on-one therapy. It offers groups, workshops and presentations — spaces for anyone in the community to connect with others and share what's on their mind. For more information or to register, visit jfcs-portland.org/services/counseling/mental-health-spotlight.

Dec. 15: EJC Noon-time Concert

Join Eastside Jewish Commons for our free monthly concert with top Portland musicians Friday, Nov. 17 at Noon. Pack a lunch or stop by one of the many eateries at NE 24th and Glisan, bring your food in (no pork or shellfish, please) and come and listen to the music. EJC welcomes seniors, parents and kids, students, and all others. Steve Cheseborough plays the harmonica, guitar, percussion, sings, and tells stories while he plays. For more information, visit ejcpdx.org/events

Dec. 15: Hostage Advocacy on Zoom

Following up on the Empty Shabbat Table event on Nov. 10, the Oregon Israeli community and beyond continues to advocate for the safe return of all hostages to Israel with weekly 30-minute Zoom sessions Wednesdays, 3:30 pm. The Zoom will be a live stream of those in attendance in addition to a short program that will vary from week to week. Register online at tinyurl.com/Hostage-Advocacy. Your link will be individually yours, please do not share it with others. For more information, email dorice-horenstein@gmail.com.

Dec. 15: Light Up the Night at Leikam Brewing

As the evenings are getting longer and darker, 'Light Up

See EVENTS, page 12

SHABTAY LEVY

Shabtay Levy, z"l, passed away Nov. 15, 2023. Born April 25, 1939, Levy earned a degree in Industrial Design from Portland State University and, throughout his life, became a prominent figure in the world of Science Exhibit Design and Fabrication.

Shab is survived by his former wife, Shoshana (John) Antonovic; his two children, Roneete (Jeff) Lynas and Ariel (Deborah) Levy; his five grandchildren, Kayim, Val, Olivia, Kalanit, and Matthew; and his partner, Diane Rulien, her daughter, Adrienne (Dustin) Donner, and her grandson, Morgan. Shab was known for his love of learning, creating, and experimenting. He had a quick wit and enjoyed subtle banter. Those who knew Shab will remember him for his intellect, quiet demeanor, and attentive gaze.

DIANNE MAHAN

With great sadness, Chabad of Oregon announces the passing of Dianne Mahan, z"l, Friday, Dec. 1. She is survived by her son Yishai Mahan. The funeral was held Monday, Dec. 4 at Riverview Cemetery in Portland.

HARRIETT LENOWITZ

With sorrow, Congregation Kol Ami announces the death of Harriett Lenowitz, the sister of Ed Frankel. Harriett was 96 years old and will be buried in Florida. Our condolences to Ed and his extended family.

JANICE ANCHELL

Congregation Beth Israel mourns the loss of Janice Anchell, who passed away Saturday, Nov. 25.

Janice is survived by her sister Diana Malat, her daughter Wendy Anchell, her sons Steve Anchell, Douglas Anchell, and James Anchell, her granddaughters Leslie Holling-

sworth, and Kayla Anchell, her grandsons Mark Oxman, Alexander Breskin, Jonathan Anchell, Brandon Anchell, and Grant Anchell, and her partner Dick Jerrels.

Janice was preceded in death by her husband Melvin Anchell M.D., z"l, her daughter Marilyn Anchell, z"l, and her brother Norman Levick, z"l.

Donations in memoriam can be made to the Mission Viejo Animal Services Center

GARY SAMPSON

It is with sorrow that Cultural Synagogue announces the death of Gary Steven Sampson on Nov. 18, 2023. Gary was born Jan. 8, 1939 in Bakersfield, Calif., graduated from U.C. Berkeley and became a reporter. Gary then earned a Master of Library Science and began a 30-year career at the Portland State University Library, retiring in 1999.

In 1977 Gary married Mary

Raskin who shared his love of travel.

Gary loved astronomy, history, languages, and politics and avidly followed current events.

Gary is survived by his wife Mary Raskin, sons Joaquin (Martha Lillie) and Nessim (Rebecca), daughter Atalia Raskin (Laurent Bonczijk), grandson Kieran Finn Sampson, granddaughters Safae Rose Raskin Bonczijk and Elodie Violette Raskin Bonczijk of Portland, and brother Ron Sampson (Vern Isakson) of Cambria, Calif. He was preceded in death by his father Raymond Sampson, z"l, of Portland, Ore. and mother, Helen Lawrence, z"l, of Globe, Ariz.

A graveside service was held at the Jewish Cemetery at Riverview on Nov. 22. Memorial contributions are suggested to Portland State University Millar Library Endowment Fund and Cultural Synagogue.

EVENTS

(continued from page 12)

the Night' is the ultimate way to celebrate community, create light, dance together, and connect in a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere! Shabbat Candle Lighting Ceremony at 6 pm; Dance Party from 7-10 pm at Leikam Brewing Company, 5812 E Burnside St. in Portland. Please RSVP at latke-sandlagers.com.

Dec. 15: Moishe House White Elephant

Join Moishe House Friday, Dec. 15 to exchange white elephant gifts from 6-9 pm. Maximum value \$15. For more information, email moishe-housepdx@gmail.com.

Dec. 16: Mini Mensches Tot Shabbat

Start your Shabbat off with some fun at Congregation Beth Israel's Tot Shabbat Saturday, Dec. 16 at 9 am at CBI. Tot Shabbat is aimed at kids 0-5 years old. This is a great way to introduce kiddos to Judaism and meet other Jewish families

with young kids. All are welcome. For more information visit bethisrael-pdx.org/community/mini-mensches.

Dec. 17: 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.

Dec. 18: Israeli Folk Dancing at Leedy Grange

Enjoy Israeli folk dancing with Sue and Donna, Mondays, 7:30 - 10:30pm with this friendly group in Cedar Mill (now in our 10th year). New attendees please email Sue at pifdnews@gmail.com prior to the session.

Dec. 19: Yoga for Renewal

Come and enjoy/explore your inner self in "Yoga for Renewal," a gentle yoga class Tuesdays, 10-11 am at the Eastside Jewish Commons. \$10. For more information or to register, visit ejcpdx.org/events.

Dec. 19: A Look Back

Join Beit Haverim, in person or via Zoom Tuesday, Dec. 19, 7-9 pm for A Look Back at 2023 With Carl Wolfson, part of our Kleinstein Scholars Series. Register at tinyurl.com/BeitHav-Look-Back-2023. For more information, email office@beithav.org.

Dec. 20: Voices from Israel

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland hosts a weekly webinar series featuring stories from people and organizations on the ground in Israel each Wednesday at 9 am through Jan. 10. For more information or to register for each webinar in the series, visit jewishportland.org/israelwebinars.

Dec. 21: Cahoots Hebrew Study

Join Moishe House as we better our Hebrew through the game Cahoots Thursday, Dec. 21, 6 pm. Snacks and tea will be provided. For more information, email moishehousepdx@gmail.com.

Dec. 22: JFCS Com-

munity Connection

Join Jewish Family & Child Service for weekly conversations Fridays, 10-11 am on Zoom. It is a space for anyone in the community to connect with others and share what's on their mind. Online at tinyurl.com/JFCS-Connection.

Dec. 31: New Year's at Noon

Join MJCC Day Camp and PJ Library for this fun family event as we ring in the New Year Sunday, Dec. 31 from 11am-12:30 pm at the MJCC. Arts and crafts, games, bounce house, dancing, snacks and our countdown to 2024 at noon with a beach ball drop! To register, visit oregonjcc.org/arts-culture/upcoming-events.

Jan. 5: CAA Sephardic Dinner

Join Congregation Ahavath Achim for a shabbat service followed by a delicious Sephardic dinner the first Friday of each month at 5:30 pm All are welcome, preregistration required. \$20 per person. Register online at ahavathachim.com.