

Jlife

SGPV JEWISH LIFE

OCTOBER 2026
Tishrei - Cheshvan 5787

EMBODYING THE
JEWISH LEGACY
AS THE PEOPLE
OF THE BOOK

A NEW
(AND VERY
FUNNY) POV
ON DEATH

JEWISH FEDERATION'S
28TH ANNUAL
JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

Let the Stories Begin!

GOT KIDS?
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NOVEMBER 8, 4 PM
University of La Verne



JANET BOND BRILL
Little Edna's War



"They tried to erase her.
Instead, she became a legend."
-Good Reads

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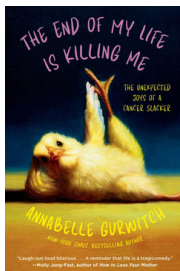
28TH ANNUAL JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

OCTOBER 27, 7 PM
Hillcrest Meeting House



**ANNABELLE
GURWITCH**

The End of My Life is Killing Me



"A very funny writer tackles the ultimate
unfunny topic: lung cancer."
-Kirkus Reviews

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PUBLISHERS

MODY GORSKY, LL.M., MBA

MANAGING EDITOR

TRACEY ARMSTRONG GORSKY, MBA

FOOD EDITOR

JUDY BART KANCIGOR

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

JLIFE DESIGNS

PHOTO EDITOR

CHARLES WEINBERG

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

JUDY BART KANCIGOR,

JON KRANZ,

JONATHAN MASENG, DEBORAH NOBLE,

ILENE SCHNEIDER,

DAVID SINGER, CANTOR JUDY SOFER,

TEDDY WEINBERGER

COPY EDITOR

MARILYN ITURRI

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS/ARTISTS

ALLEN BEREZOVSKY, PEPE FAINBERG, JANET LAWRENCE



ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

DIANE BENAROYA (SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE)

MARTIN STEIN (SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE)

ILENE NELSON (ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE)

EDITORIAL

(949) 230-0581 (TRACEY ARMSTRONG GORSKY)

OR (949) 734-5074 EDITOR.JLIFE@GMAIL.COM

ADVERTISING

(949) 812-1891, MODY.GORSKY@GMAIL.COM

CIRCULATION & SUBSCRIPTIONS

MODY.GORSKY@GMAIL.COM, (949) 734-5074

ART

ARTSGPV@GMAIL.COM

JLIFE IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY

MOTAN, LLC & JEWISH FEDERATION OF

THE GREATER SAN GABRIEL & POMONA VALLEYS

21 PASTO RICO,
RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA,
CA 92688

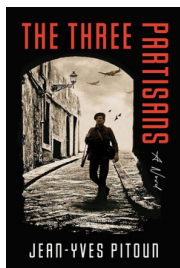
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28TH ANNUAL
JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

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28TH ANNUAL
JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

SHOSHANA NAMBI

*Slow Down, Shoshi!
It's Shabbat in Uganda*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 1
10 A.M.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL
OF HIGHLAND PARK & EAGLE ROCK

FAMILY
EVENT



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and occasionally,
that's precisely
what we need."
-Netzach Ekwunife
African Jewish Voices



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CONTENTS

JLIFE | Tishrei - Cheshvan 5787 | OCTOBER 2026

ON THE COVER:
Jewish Federation's
28th Annual
Jewish Book Festival
Let the Stories Begin!

VIEWPOINTS

- 7 FROM WHERE I SIT**
Embodying the Jewish legacy
as the People of the Book

FEATURES

- 8 THERE'S NO ENGLISH
TRANSLATION FOR THIS
LOVELY JEWISH
FAMILY CONCEPT**
In Jewish tradition, when two
people marry, it is not only
the couple that are entering
into a lifelong relationship—it
is their parents, too.
- 10 COVER STORY:
PRESENT! JEWISH FEDERATION'S
28TH ANNUAL
JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL
Let the Stories Begin!**
- 18 A NEW (AND VERY FUNNY)
POV ON DEATH**

**Kiddish (insert publication for
Jewish youth) begins on page 19**

LIFESTYLE

- 20 COOKING JEWISH**
Recipes with
Judy Bart Kancigor
- 23 PARASHAT BEHAR:
ADVANCE PLANNING**
Having some logistics in place
can alleviate some of the
anxiety surrounding a loved
one's death.
- 24 CALENDAR**
Community Calendar
- 26 NEWS & JEWS**
SGPV Jewish Scene
- 27 LAST WORD**

EMBODYING THE JEWISH LEGACY AS THE PEOPLE OF THE BOOK

As important as reading is, I didn't truly appreciate it until my late 20s or early 30s. I think it began when my dad and I started reading the same authors, and we would talk about where each of us was in our respective books or whether we had found a new author we thought the other would like. And since then, over the years, my appreciation for reading has only deepened.

One of my favorite nicknames the Jewish community has pertains to us being referred to as "the people of the book". Whether that refers to our belief in or adherence to the Torah, or our faith's commitment to education, I appreciate that the "name" carries a few different meanings.

Over the years, our Jewish Federation has embraced this idea and, in fact, much of our programming is rooted in books. We begin our community's youth (and their families) very young through the offering of our PJ Library program. When they sign up, they begin receiving age-appropriate books monthly, and the program grows with them until they are about to turn 13. For adults (and others), our Jewish Book Festival (held during National Jewish Book Month) brings authors to our community to share and discuss their literary works and provide our community an opportunity to ask questions and delve deeper into the subjects our authors have written about. We are also turning the recipes from our Jewish Cooking Connection videos into a special cookbook, which we anticipate will be available for sale during the Jewish Book Festival.



Our 28th Annual Jewish Book Festival kicks off on Sunday, October 25 and runs through Sunday, December 6. This year's lineup of authors and their books is mind-blowing. Take, for instance, Merryl Goldberg's book *Notes of Deception*, which captures the story of how a quartet of American musicians outwitted the KGB by devising a way to hide messages in their sheet music. Or *Playmakers*, written by Michael Kimmel, that explores how Jewish entrepreneurs created some of our favorite toys and helped revolutionize the toy industry.

Or Uganda's first female rabbi, Shoshana Nambi's children's book that explores how Shabbat is celebrated in Uganda.

I hope you'll join us during this year's festival to hear from our authors, possibly even pick up a book or two to curl up with as the weather *eventually* turns cooler, and you might be able to turn down your air conditioning, curl up in a blanket, and read a new favorite. ☆



JASON MOSS IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE GREATER SAN GABRIEL AND POMONA VALLEYS.



THERE'S NO ENGLISH TRANSLATION FOR THIS LOVELY JEWISH FAMILY CONCEPT

In Jewish tradition, when two people marry, it is not only the couple that are entering into a lifelong relationship—it is their parents, too.

BY RUTH KAPLAN, MY JEWISH LEARNING

In Jewish tradition, when two people marry, it is not only the couple that are entering into a lifelong relationship—it is their parents, too. There's even a special word for the new co-in-laws: They become "*machatunim*."

The term has no direct English translation because, sadly, this relationship concept doesn't exist in America. According to the Jewish Chronicle, the Yiddish word "*machatunim*" derives from *chatan*, meaning bridegroom or son-in-law, and also has the connotation of "guest of honor." As a verb, it means to tie, connect or covenant. "We can see from this etymology the sense of a marriage being not just a holy covenant between two people, but also an alliance between two families."

My grandmothers, who were *machatunim*, set the bar high. They had a very close relationship, which was so seamless that it never occurred to me that it was unusual. While they were both Jewish, their religious practices were very different. One kept kosher and the other prepared lobster. One attended synagogue services fairly regularly and the other hardly ever. Still, their shared Jewish identity facilitated an overall family cohesiveness and sense of solidarity. Perhaps more importantly, they lived near one another and shared a passion for bridge and canasta, which they often played together.

While my parents also gained Jewish *machatunim* after my husband and I got married, the two couples came from very different backgrounds, lived a fair distance from one another, and had little in common. Nevertheless, they spoke the same Jewish language, which gave them a common bond.

These days, it's a lot more common to have non-Jewish *machatunim*—I have two sets myself. Over the years, I've learned a fair bit about navigating—and nurturing—this modern twist on a traditional relationship, and am happy to report that despite our different backgrounds, we've been able to honor this special relationship.

While we don't live near each other, over the course of five years we've developed a very warm relationship with our younger daughter's in-laws. Each side makes a concerted effort to honor and respect the traditions and sensitivities of the other. They've attended Passover seders and Rosh Hashanah dinners, and we've visited them in Vermont to partake in the Christmas season. Moreover, we now share a cherished grandson.

I hope to forge a similar path of inclusivity and mutual respect with our new set of in-laws. Last month, while toasting my elder daughter and new son-in-law at their wedding, I inadvertently welcomed my new *machatunim* to our family, using that expression. It slid out of my mouth organically. I don't think many people noticed,



including our daughter's new in-laws, who aren't Jewish. In any event, I promised to follow up with an explanation at a later date; I'd already spent a fair amount of time explaining all the unfamiliar aspects of the Jewish wedding to them, and felt that I should take it slow so as not to overwhelm them.

The very fact that I used the term demonstrated to me that I already felt affection toward them. And I hope that having a designated, specific role will help them feel more comfortable and included in our family's Jewish traditions.

But ultimately, a healthy *machatunim* relationship is aspirational. Let's face it: There have been plenty of Jewish *machatunim* over the years who don't get along, or who live far apart from each other and have little in common. But there's always some common ground. We share the most precious gift life has to offer: our children and their offspring. This relationship is so valuable and important because it enriches family unity; a couple's parents are an integral part of the larger family unit.

My non-Jewish *machatunim* may never actually use this difficult-to-pronounce word, but my husband and I will continue to think of them in those terms. We will continue to reach out and nurture our relationship, which, in turn, can only serve to strengthen our children's futures together. I encourage you to celebrate and enhance the traditional *machatunim* relationship, regardless of the backgrounds of your new co-in-laws. It's time for this wonderful, worthwhile, uniquely Jewish concept to grow and expand. ☆

RUTH KAPLAN IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND JLIFE MAGAZINE.

COVER STORY



Rachel Cockerall answers audience questions



Delicious reception

PRESENTING JEWISH FEDERATION'S 28TH ANNUAL JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL

Let the Stories Begin!

BY SHELLEY KLEIN



Adeena Sussman with the Jewish Book Festival Committee

We are the “people of the book”, and have we got books for you! Please mark your calendars for the 28th Annual Jewish Book Festival of the Jewish Federation of the Greater San Gabriel and Pomona Valleys. Once again, we will come together as a community and listen to authors who will entertain and educate us as they present their terrific books.

Our first presenter will be Jean-Yves Pitoun, who as a young boy in France heard his father and friends emotionally reminisce about their time in the French Resistance. His novel, “The Three Partisans”, a historical romance based on these childhood memories, is the tale of an Algerian

Jew, an American pilot and a French woman in the resistance, their love triangle and their bravery in the face of almost unimaginable peril. This program will be held on Sunday, October 25 at 10 a.m., hosted by the Sisterhood of Temple Sholom of Ontario with their traditional bagel brunch.

Author, actress, comedienne Annabelle Gurwitch has published a hilarious, laughs-on-every-page series of autobiographical essays titled “The End of My Life is Killing Me”. Subject matter includes her diagnosis with non-smoking lung cancer, her divorce over zoom, UTI’s... and it is really, really funny. Really. She will be presenting at a new venue for our Festival, Hillcrest Meeting House in La Verne on Tuesday, October 27 at 7 p.m. This is



Making Welcome signs



Concert post Author Presentation

a catered soiree with wine and/or nonalcoholic beverages, assorted appetizers, and desserts. The fee is twenty-five dollars, and pre-registration is required.

For our family event, held at Temple Beth Israel of Highland Park on Sunday, November 1 at 10 a.m., we are pleased to feature Rabbi Shoshana Nambi presenting her charmingly illustrated second book for young children, "Slow Down Soshi! It's Shabbat in Uganda". Rabbi Nambi, who now serves as Assistant Rabbi at Temple Beth Am in Los Altos Hills, California, is the first woman from her Abudaya community in Uganda to be ordained as a rabbi.

Edna Szurek saw the Warsaw ghetto built around her family home, smuggled food through cracks in the wall, changed her identity and survived by busking on the streets with her sister, and was the youngest decorated soldier in the Polish resistance, all before the age of 10. Every year the University of La Verne commemorates Kristallnacht, the night of broken glass, by hosting an event in conjunction with the Jewish Federation Book Festival. On Sunday, November 8, at 4 p.m., author Janet Bond Brill will present her book "Little Edna's War", based on her mother-in-law's recordings for the Shoah Foundation.

As is our tradition, we enjoy a festive Saturday

night at Temple Beth Israel of Pomona. This year on November 14 at 7 p.m., Merryl Goldberg will discuss her memoir "Notes of Deception", preceded by a reception with the author for members of the Literary Circle, whose contributions make our Book Festival possible. The author, a founding member of the Klezmer Conservatory Band, was asked in 1985 to visit refuseniks in the Soviet Union with three other musicians. Although hounded by the KGB, and expelled from the country before completing their mission, they managed to smuggle out vital information by encoding it in sheet music. Years later, after casually mentioning her adventures at a dinner party, she was asked to be the keynote speaker at a cybersecurity conference. Her coauthor, Vince Houghton, is the Director of the NSA's Cryptologic Museum. Of course there will be klezmer music, and refreshments following the talk.

After World War II, approximately 50,000 survivors of the holocaust were interned in Cyprus when their ships were intercepted on the way to British Mandate Palestine. More than 6,000 of these survivors were orphaned children. M.Z. Daskal's novel, "The Teacher of Lost Orphans" is based on meticulous research, as well as a personal connection. The author's grandparents were married in a Cyprus internment camp. This event, at 4 p.m. on Sunday, November 15 at Temple Ami Shalom of





Israeli Herbs for Smelling Experience

West Covina, is sponsored by the family of Lynn Zeller (z"l), beloved member of the Book Festival Committee from 2001 to 2009.

Chef Beejhy Barhany will join us in Pasadena on Monday, November 16 at 7 p.m. with her recently published cookbook "Gursha". A member of the Beta Yisrael community from Ethiopia, she arrived in Israel as a young child and visited America after her service in the IDF. Falling in love with New York, she opened Tsion Café in Harlem, but was forced to close after October 7, 2023 in the face of unrelenting antisemitic and anti-Zionist harassment. This program, followed by refreshments (sponsored by the PJTC Sisterhood), will be cosponsored by the Pasadena Jewish Temple and Center's Adult Education Program and Jewish Equity Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Now largely forgotten, Anna M. Rosenberg was "in the rooms where it happened", creating and implementing policies such as Social Security, the G.I. Bill, the National Institutes of Health and the Fair Employment Practices Commission with Presidents FDR, Truman, Eisenhower and LBJ, except when she was sent to visit the troops in Europe just after D-Day, and to Korea after Heartbreak Ridge. She was featured on the cover of every major magazine, as well as in articles in the New York Times and other prominent

newspapers, but journalists of the period first noted her attractive face and figure, perfect grooming, well-tailored suits, noisy bangle bracelets and clever hats. Please join us on Tuesday, November 17, at 7pm on Zoom with author Christopher Gorham as he discusses Rosenberg's first biography, "The Confidante".

Michael Kimmel, related to the family who created the first toy Teddy Bear, has written "Playmakers" wherein he recounts the stories of the first-generation Jewish immigrants who developed the American toy industry. As a retired Professor of Sociology, he puts this in the context of the redefinition of childhood in the twentieth century. Come join the fun at Temple Beth David on, November Sunday 29 at 6:30 p.m. and listen to the author followed by a reception provided by Temple Sisterhood.

For our final event, Temple Sinai of Glendale hosts Brian Schaefer and his new book "Town and Country" on Sunday December 6, at 4 p.m. This novel tells the story of changes to a small rural community in upstate New York when wealthy urbanites move in. Not all of the changes are welcome, and misunderstandings with unintended consequences ensue. Join us at the reception sponsored by Temple Sisterhood as we toast the end to another wonderful Book Festival.



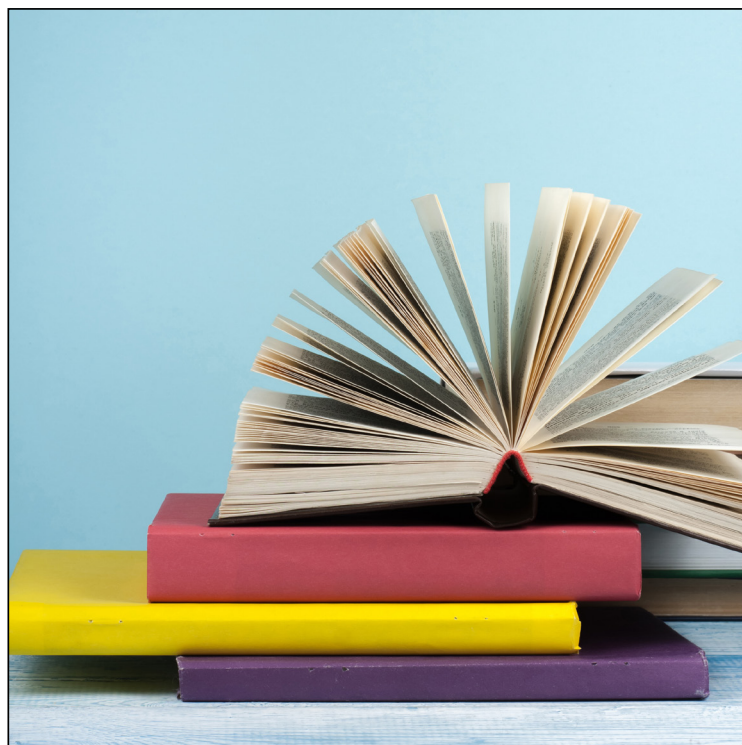


Jewish Book Committee selling books

Now in our 28th year, our Book Festival continues to support Jewish literature, encourage cultural understanding, promote pride in our history and heritage, and make a lasting impact on our community. Using the resources of the Jewish Book Council (JBC), which sends authors to over 130 communities across North America, the Book Festival Committee watched over 200 authors via Zoom. After spirited discussion among our dedicated Committee members, and some complex negotiations by our talented Federation Program Coordinator, Rebecca Russell, we have once again assembled a fabulous list of presentations guaranteed to enlighten, educate, inspire and entertain.

Festival books are sold at every in-person event, giving attendees the opportunity to have their books signed by the authors. Our book sale area at in-person events is designated "The Myra Weiss Bookstore" (ז"ל) in memory of our beloved committee member who was one of the Festival founders.

Pre-registration is required for the Zoom program and the October 27th soiree, and greatly appreciated for all other events. Registration information is available in this issue of JLIFE and at the Federation website www.jewishsgpv.org. ☆



SHELLEY KLEIN IS THE CHAIR OF THE JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL COMMITTEE AND A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO JLIFE MAGAZINE.



A NEW (AND VERY FUNNY) POV ON DEATH

BY TYNA ORREN

The arc of the universe, says actress, humorist and bestselling author Annabelle Gurwitch, bends toward irony. And who would know better than Annabelle Gurwitch? Since mid-2020, the height of the Covid pandemic, Gurwitch's life has been a progression of ironic gyrations, as she relates in her new memoir, *The End Of My Life Is Killing Me: The Unexpected Joys of A Cancer Slacker*, a featured book in the 2026 Jewish Book Festival.

The adventure began one June 2020 afternoon when Gurwitch went to a clinic for a Covid test. She tested negative... for Covid. But a chest x-ray revealed a "concerning mass" on one lung, and that discovery led to a diagnosis of stage-4 lung cancer. The cancer was caught in time for Gurwitch to benefit from a then-new therapy that would hold the cancer in check while allowing her to live a normal, active life. But only temporarily. And how temporary could not be predicted. The challenge the diagnosis threw at Gurwitch's feet, then, was this—how to co-exist with cancer, knowing every minute that at the next, the therapy could stop working, letting the cancer resume its course.

Gurwitch credits her Jewish background and values with helping her overcome the paralyzing dread that followed her diagnosis and find purpose and unexpected joy in a life with cancer. She will talk about how that happened when she discusses *The End Of My Life Is Killing Me* with our community on Tuesday, October 27.

Even before cancer, Gurwitch was well-acquainted with life's twists, turns and bad breaks, and had been writing funny, inspiring books about them since 2006. Before 2006, Gurwitch had a successful and fulfilling career as an actress and comedian, appearing on *Seinfeld* and *Murphy Brown* among other television series, and serving as the longtime co-host of the fan favorite "Dinner & a Movie" show on TBS.

Then came a twist.

Gurwitch's comedy idol, Woody Allen, cast her for a play. Gurwitch was ecstatic. But then, two weeks later, Allen fired her, telling her, to boot, that she "look[ed] retarded." Gurwitch found comfort in learning that many in the cutthroat entertainment business had survived firings and had thrived afterward. And that discovery led her to reflect that many, many in all lines of work might find comfort in learning they're not alone. So Gurwitch made

lemonade of her situation. She created a theatrical comedy production about being fired, then a film documentary. Then she wrote her first book, *Fired!*, a collection of very, very funny (in hindsight) first-person tales of firings suffered by folks famous and less famous. The message—it's never the bounce that counts, it's the bounce-back.

There followed four more funny and well-received books about life's absurd vagaries and the human foibles that often make them worse than they need be. Two of these were finalists for the Thurber Prize for American Humor in Writing: the bestsellers *I See You Made an Effort* (2015) and *You're Leaving When?* (2023). Gurwitch's essays and op-eds regularly appear in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and *Hadassah* magazine, among other publications; she is a frequent commentator on NPR. Gurwitch is a contributor to the 2026 essay collection, *On Being Jewish Now*. *The End of My Life Is Killing Me*, Gurwitch's sixth book, became an instant bestseller upon publication in March 2026 and has since been optioned for film adaption by a major production company. Her books are widely praised in reviews as "hilarious," yet moving and inspiring at the same time. One reviewer described Gurwitch's stories as ones that "shift life's viewfinder."

Few things are as likely to shift a person's viewfinder as a terminal disease. Gurwitch shifted hers by resolving to become a cancer slacker. That meant rejecting "performative wellness," the "cancer warrior" persona that patients often feel compelled to affect, and instead, shifting her attention away from cancer and toward things that give life meaning—the beauty under the surface of ordinary things and the joy of expressing love or simple friendship. Gurwitch resolved to practice "radical curiosity," to make choices that sent her outside her comfort zone, recognizing that when chance throws us, against our will, out of our comfort zones, outside the comfort zone is precisely where hope of a new kind of comfort is to be found.

In *The End Of My Life Is Killing Me*, Gurwitch hilariously, and at the same time, movingly, describes her explorations outside her comfort zone. Among the most impactful in bringing meaning and joy into life with cancer were her relationships with other cancer patients—"fellow residents of Cancerland," she calls them. Especially through her relationship with one extraordinary woman, Gurwitch's assigned mentor in a cancer support group, she found a path to meaningful work in post-diagnosis life. Gurwitch never met the

woman face-to-face, but for two years, by speed-dial from afar, she held Gurwitch's hand through some of cancer's worst moments. Then she died of the same cancer Gurwitch was, and is, living with.

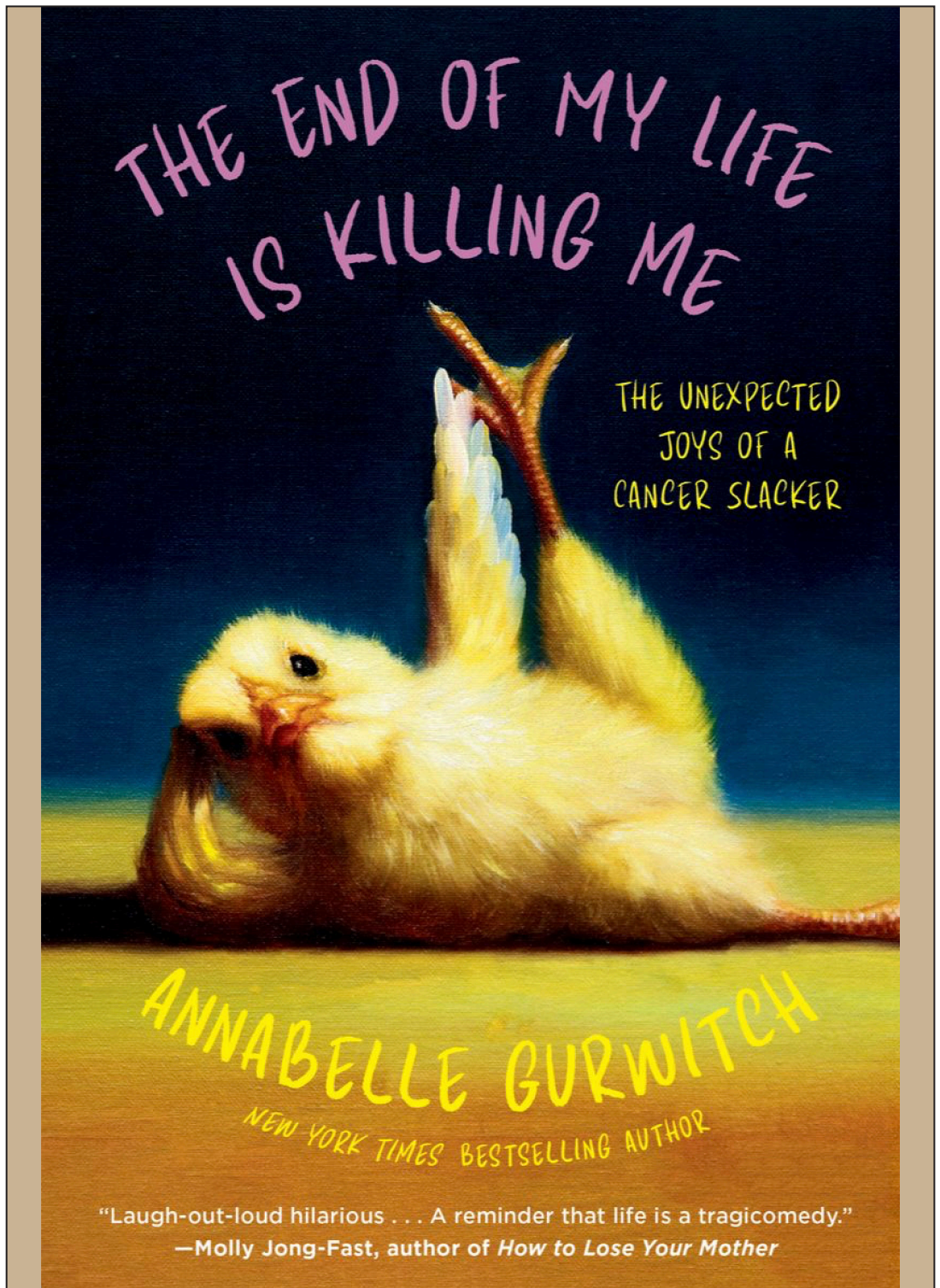
Writing about her cancer mentor in *Hadassah* magazine, Gurwitch said she modeled Gurwitch's most deeply held Jewish value: tzedakah given with no expectation of thanks or recognition. Gurwitch decided she had to follow her mentor's lead, and she did. First, she took on the mentoring of another Cancerland newcomer. Then she took on another and then more. Then she moved into broader forms of patient support and advocacy.

Today Gurwitch continues to mentor cancer patients one-on-one, and she offers general advice through the podcast, *Ask Me Anything about Living with Lung Cancer*. She leads writing workshops for people in treatment plus separate writing workshops for The Campfire Project, a therapeutic arts project for refugees and migrants. Applying her own spot-on skills as a writer and speaker, she advocates for patient rights in op-eds in the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, and *Washington Post*, and she speaks at medical conferences worldwide. For her advocacy work, Gurwitch received the 2026 Gilda Award (named for fellow funny-woman and cancer patient Gilda Radner) from the Cancer Support Community, Los Angeles. *The End of My Life Is Killing Me* is part of Gurwitch's cancer activism. Her hope is that the book offers comfort, community and laughter to others living with cancer or any of life's

calamities.

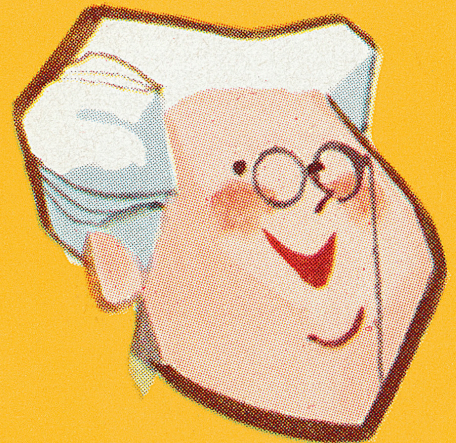
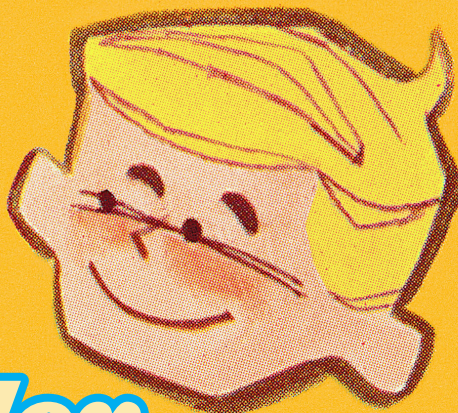
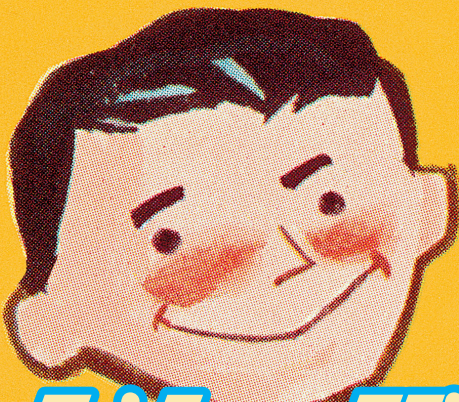
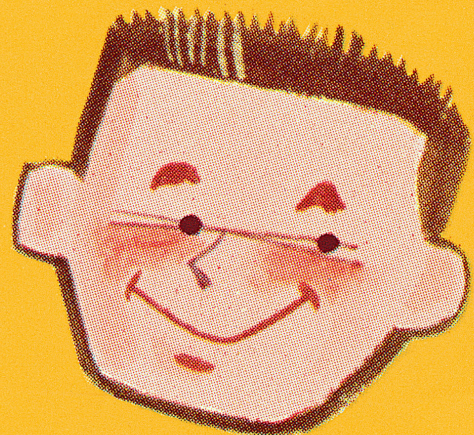
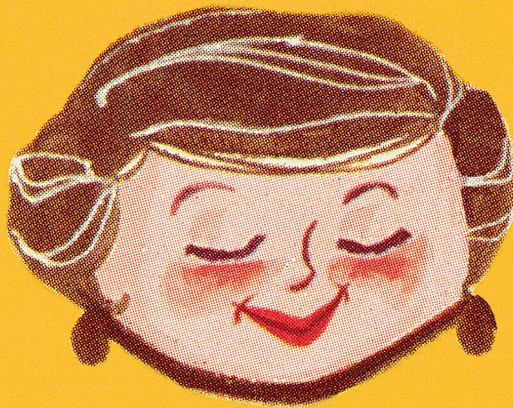
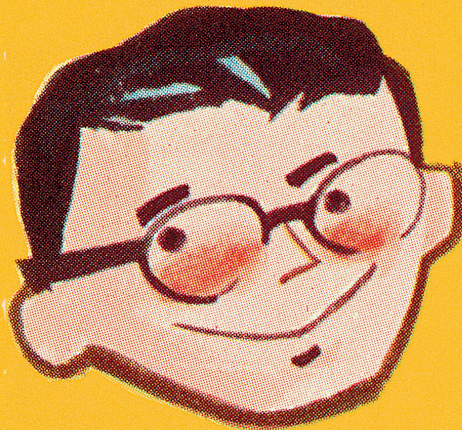
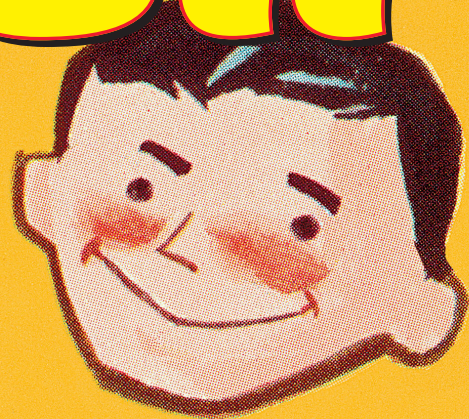
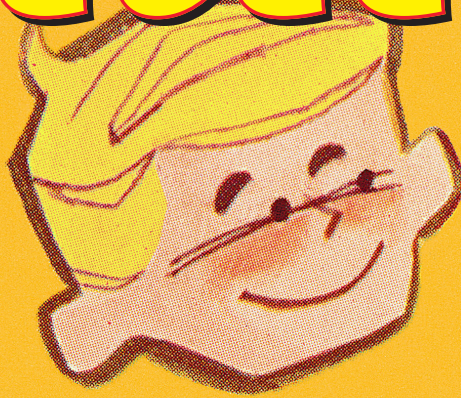
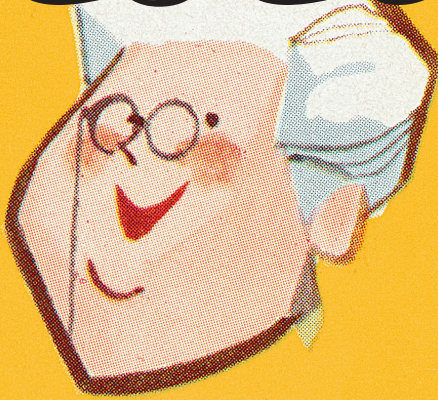
Gurwitch will discuss *The End Of My Life Is Killing Me: The Unexpected Joys of A Cancer Slacker* at The Meetinghouse at Hillcrest in LaVerne on Tuesday, October 27 at 7:00 p.m., followed by a wine and hors d'oeuvre reception and book signing. For more information and to register, please visit the Jewish Book Festival web page (www.jewishsgpv.org/jbf) or call the Jewish Federation office at (626) 445-0810. ☆

TYNA ORREN IS A JEWISH BOOK FESTIVAL COMMITTEE MEMBER, FREELANCE BOOK REVIEWER, AND RETIRED APPELLATE ATTORNEY.



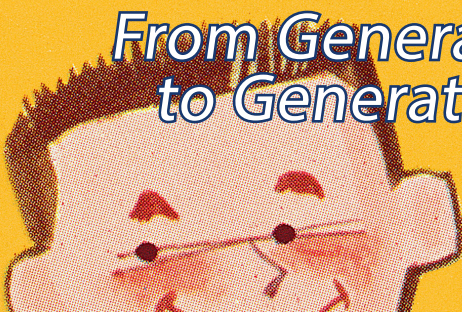
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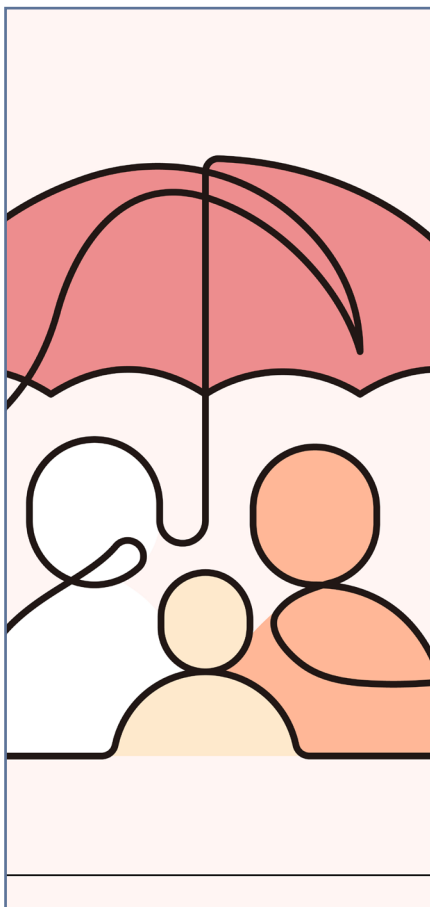
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From Generation
to Generation



OCTOBER 2026

- 3 **HANUKKAH
BARBIE IS HERE
AND SHE
ACTUALLY
GOT THE JEWISH
HOLIDAY RIGHT**
- 4 **MAY SUNKIST
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CARRIED (AND
THROWN) FROM
GENERATION TO
GENERATION**
- 6 **I WANTED MY
JEWISH SON TO
HAVE BLUE EYES.
HERE'S WHY
THAT'S
PROBLEMATIC.**



kiddish

PUBLISHERS

MOTAN, LLC

EDITOR IN CHIEF

TRACEY ARMSTRONG GORSKY, MBA

CREATIVE DIRECTOR

JLIFE DESIGNS

COPY EDITOR

MARILYN ITURRI

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

SUE PENN, M. ED.,
AVIV PILIPSKY, YARDEN PILIPSKY,
DIANA SHABTAI, PSY.D., ATR-BC



ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

MARTIN STEIN (SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE)

EDITORIAL

(949) 230-0581 | EDITORJLIFE@GMAIL.COM

ADVERTISING

(949) 812-1891 | MODY.GORSKY@GMAIL.COM

ART

ARTOC@GMAIL.COM

JLIFE IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY MOTAN, LLC
21 PASTO RICO, RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, CA 92688

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Hanukkah Barbie Is Here—And She Actually Got the Jewish Holiday Right

BY EVELYN FRICK, MY JEWISH LEARNING

The miracle of Hanukkah came early this year: Hanukkah Barbie is here. Mattel would like us to call her “Holiday Sweater Barbie.” Respectfully, no. This is Hanukkah Barbie.

She is dressed in the blue-and-yellow color palette that retailers have apparently decided belongs exclusively to Hanukkah. Her sweater is covered in Jewish stars and dreidels, with a light-up hanukkiyah built right into the front.

As if the sweater isn't Hanukkah enough, she also dons blue-and-white gingham pants. And then there are the tiny tan shearling boots, because Hanukkah Barbie understands comfort.

Naturally, I bought her immediately.

Unboxing her involved approximately 613 tiny plastic ties, but once I finally freed her, I was even more delighted than I expected to be. I have spent an unreasonable amount of my adult life thinking about Hanukkah merchandise, and holding an actual Hanukkah Barbie feels slightly surreal.

This story also has a wonderfully Jewish twist: Barbie was created by Ruth Handler, the daughter of Jewish immigrants, who co-founded Mattel and introduced Barbie in 1959.

It feels almost bashert that a doll created by the daughter of Jewish immigrants, which became woven into American childhood, is finally celebrating a Jewish holiday—more than six decades after her debut!

I'm not sure Handler ever imagined this particular outfit, but I like to think she would have loved it.

And judging by the frenzy around her, plenty of people seem to agree.

She has repeatedly sold out at major retailers, sometimes within hours of appearing online. Clearly, I wasn't the only one determined to bring her home.

I understand the impulse.

There are few shopping instincts stronger than a Jewish person unexpectedly encountering genuinely good Hanukkah merchandise. You see it. You buy it.

Which is why I was particularly disappointed when some other outlets decided that the big Hanukkah Barbie story was apparently her nose.

The articles drew on a handful of Reddit comments questioning whether Mattel had intentionally given its Jewish Barbie a larger nose. Hanukkah Barbie had barely arrived, and somehow the conversation had already turned to one of the most tired stereotypes about Jewish appearance.

So, for reasons I absolutely did not anticipate when I ordered this doll, I have now become familiar with Barbie face sculpts.

The Barbie face many of us probably picture is known in collector circles as the Millie sculpt. Another existing Mattel face sculpt, known as Violet,



dates to 2018 and has appeared on other Barbies for years. It has pronounced dimples, fuller cheeks and a somewhat more prominent nose.

To my eye, Hanukkah Barbie's face looks like an iteration of Violet, but it does not appear to be the exact same sculpt. When I put her next to a Barbie with the Violet sculpt, Hanukkah Barbie's face looks more petite. And while Violet dolls are marked “2018” on the backs of their heads, the back of Hanukkah Barbie's keppe reads “2026.”

That doesn't tell us exactly what changed, or why. Mattel has not identified Hanukkah Barbie's face sculpt publicly, as far as I can tell. But based on my own side-by-side comparison, I see similarities to a face already used on other Barbies, not evidence that Hanukkah Barbie was designed around a stereotypically Jewish nose.

If we're going to scrutinize the choices Mattel made with Hanukkah Barbie, I'd rather focus on the ones the company actually got right.

The Hebrew letters on the dreidels are accurate. Her hanukkiyah has the correct number of branches. The sweater lights up. Technically, the illumination reads more like three glowing sections than nine individually blazing candles, but I'm willing to give Barbie a pass for imperfect light-up-sweater technology.

Those details may seem small, but Mattel itself knows how quickly one mistake can become the story. In 2023, packaging for its Barbie honoring the Cherokee Nation's first woman principal chief famously contained an error in the Cherokee text that turned “Cherokee Nation” into “Chicken Nation.”

This time, Mattel did its homework. And maybe that's part of why the response from the Jewish community has been so extraordinary. There's something pretty powerful about finally feeling seen.

I just have one more pressing question for Mattel: When are we getting the Hanukkah Dreamhouse? ☆

RABBI Yael BUECHLER IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.



May Sunkist Fruit Gems Be Carried (and Thrown) From Generation to Generation

BY SOPHIE BRAVO, MY JEWISH LEARNING

Before I headed off to my friend's wedding, I had one very important stop to make. My sister and I drove to the local candy store on a mission: find Sunkist Fruit Gems for the *aufruf*.

We searched the whole store until we finally found a large bag of the sugary, chewy candies. When I handed my basket to the cashier, she looked quite confused. Though I was also purchasing an entire box of jumbo Smarties, she had many questions about the Fruit Gems.

"You need this big of a bag? What are you possibly doing with all of these?"

I told her they were for a wedding. Despite us being in a very Jewish part of Cleveland, that only furthered her confusion.

Though just a regular candy to the majority, Sunkist Fruit Gems hold a very special place in the North American Jewish community. Developed in the 1930s as a way to use the overabundance of citrus fruits, they have become a quintessential part of bar and bat mitzvahs, weddings, Purim mishloach manot bags and Hebrew school treats.

Affectionately called "temple candies" by my family, they are synonymous with North American Jewish culture. When brought up in conversation with fellow Jewish people, the topic is always met with a burst of excitement regarding their seemingly universal adoration and importance. They became popular in synagogues as they contain all the perfect attributes for their very specific job: small, individually wrapped, kosher, delicious and, most importantly: soft enough to throw at people on the bimah.

When I walked into the synagogue for the *aufruf*, I ran up to my friend and gave her a big hug. Then I pulled out the candy bag. She squealed with delight and hugged me harder. She exclaimed how her bridesmaids were panicking the night before, realizing no one had bought any, but now we were prepared. I explained to my non-Jewish friends before the ceremony exactly how it would go—the rabbi would bless the couple, we would sing "Siman tov u'mazel tov" and then we would shower them in temple candies.

Sunkist Fruit Gems have always had a special place in my life. When I was younger, they were a treat from the rabbi following the "Torah parade"—our Shabbat tradition where after the ark is opened, kids carrying stuffed Torahs follow the adults with the real Torahs around the sanctuary, and then return to the bimah to get candy from the rabbi. We would run back to the kids' sanctuary and compare flavors, fighting over who would get the red ones.

When I became a teenager, Fruit Gems were the candy we threw at my friends celebrating their b'nai mitzvah following the Haftarah and their completion of leading the service. And now, I am buying them for

my friends' weddings, continuing to mark each life milestone with a little token of sweetness.

My sister says Sunkist Fruit Gems will always taste best out of that random drawer on the bimah our rabbi kept them in. Others would argue it's out of a tallis bag, a purse, or picked up off the floor post-candy shower. My cousin reminded me how her grandfather—my great-grandfather—always kept one in his suit coat pocket.

Their belovedness across all generations is widespread, which made candy manufacturer Ferrara's recent announcement that they were discontinuing Sunkist Fruit Gems even more jarring. With their perpetual existence in Jewish spaces, it never occurred to me that one day, they would just cease to exist.

The sentiment towards this tragedy was felt by so many—but especially those in the Jewish community. Last week, my social media was filled with people posting their disbelief, sadness and anger at the news. I saw a flyer of someone hosting an actual Mourner's Kaddish for the candies. One rabbi was launching an event to help identify the candy's successor. Parents all over wondered what they would do for the children's future b'nai mitzvahs.

In my grief, I decided to create a petition to Ferrara in hopes of recontinuing production. Their reasoning for discontinuation was "due to lack of consumer demands across the country," but also likely part of Ferrara's revamp of the Jelly Belly brand (the most recent owners of the candy, whom Ferrara purchased in 2023). I wanted to prove that there is indeed a demand, and I very quickly got nearly 1000 signatures. Within the petition are many comments of support, though I feel Teri's speaks for us all: "...This is a niche market, but it's an important one."

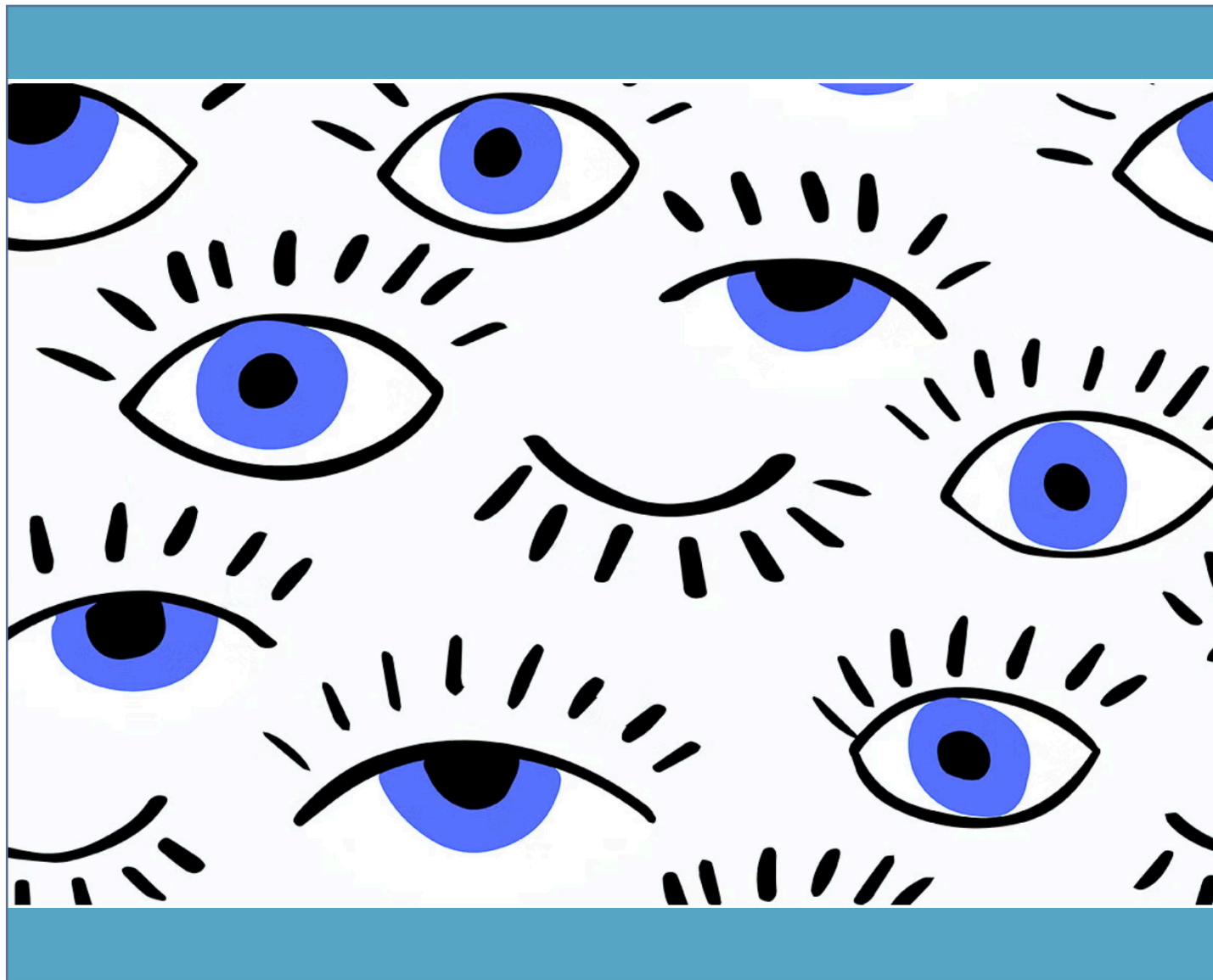
Teri's sentiment voices what we all feel inside: that even though the Jewish community is small, we are a consumer demographic that matters. Thankfully, our pleas were heard. It's hard to say whether it was because of the petition, journalists decrying the news, or thousands of Jewish people across all denominations having a collective breakdown on social media, but this past weekend, Sunkist announced that Fruit Gems are only temporarily unavailable. As they explained in a statement to social media, they are returning to the candy's family-owned business roots and joining forces with a small candy company. They promised that when they do come back, they'll have the same great flavor and kosher certification.

So fear not. Sunkist Fruit Gems will continue to be present, as they have been over the years from my great-grandfather's suit jacket to next weekend's b'nai mitzvah. May we continue to create memories of the aerodynamically delicious temple candies to carry with us for generations to come. ☆

SOPHIE BRAVO IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.

I Wanted My Jewish Son to Have Blue Eyes. Here's Why That's Problematic.

BY ELIZABETH MICHAELSON MONAGHAN, MY JEWISH LEARNING



When he was born, my son had my husband's bright blue eyes. Four months later, I asked my son's pediatrician when they would turn brown, like mine.

She peered at my baby's blueberry-colored irises. "They probably won't change now," she said. I was thrilled: They were such a pretty color! I was also ashamed, because, duh, blue eyes are a potent symbol of the racialized beauty standards I, like so many others, internalized long ago, and clearly never fully outgrown.

My weakness for blue eyes is common, at least in the U.S. Almost half of people surveyed by

1800contacts would choose to have blue eyes. More than 22% would like green eyes. Just 7.6% would want brown, though more than a quarter of brown-eyed people would have chosen a different eye color. Sad, no?

Then again, there's evidence that conforming to prevailing notions of attractiveness unfortunately offers a lot of benefits. For one, you're more likely to reap the economic beauty bonus (read: people regarded as good looking earn more money). And in America, where beauty ideals have historically included light skin, people who meet this standard have real advantages—white privilege—denied those with darker skin. Do light eyes get so much

love here because they are a marker of whiteness, and announce higher status in a society that's implicitly racist, and sometimes dangerously so?

The preference for light (blue, green, or hazel) eyes extends beyond the U.S. In a study of Jewish recipients of donor insemination in Israel, while 40% of women married to brown-eyed men preferred a donor with the same color eyes, a good number—31.7%—preferred a donor with light-colored eyes. And 76% of single women donor recipients with an eye color preference favored light-eyed donors. (Doctors match donors to recipients in Israel, so these preferences are hypothetical.)

Such inclinations don't develop in a void: The authors note that the results reflect "an appearance considered more attractive in terms of Israeli Ashkenazi hegemony." Of course, some Jews might have a good reason to find light eyes more attractive: Jews with light hair, eyes, or both were more likely to survive the Holocaust. Hoping your child has light eyes in order to increase his odds of surviving a genocide is understandable. On the other hand, wanting one's child to have light eyes because you find them more appealing than your own brown eyes—me—well, that's just affirming Nazi aesthetics, isn't it?

My own looks are absolutely typical: I have brown eyes, like up to 79% of people in the world. My hair is also brown, which is second only to black hair in its ubiquity. On the Fitzpatrick Scale, which categorizes skin based on color and response to sun exposure, I'm type III (I burn, then tan, both moderately). This is also, coincidentally, the most common skin type in the U.S.

As a kid, I wanted red hair and green eyes, or black hair and blue eyes—really anything at all but brown hair and brown eyes. This may be due to the fact that in the novels I read growing up, eye color often served as clues to personality. Brown eyes meant that a character was down-to-earth, friendly, and not at all original. I longed to be (or at least to appear) ethereal, self-contained, and creative. A voracious and literal-minded reader, I thought that artistic talent, not to mention the confirmation of that talent by others, required light eyes.

(I blame Anne of Green Gables for my unquestioning belief in the distinction and superiority bestowed by light eyes. In case you did not spend your childhood obsessed by literature's most beloved Canadian orphan, artistically gifted Anne has gray-green eyes. Both of these eye colors are uncommon, occurring in only 2 to 3 percent of the population. To an Anne-centric 9-year-old me—the very rarity of Anne's eye color symbolized her unusual talents and virtues.)

On the other hand, I like sharing my hair and eye color with much of the world's population. While I always thought my looks—which also include thick, kink-prone hair and a broad nose—clearly

identify me as an Ashkenazi Jew, apparently this is not the case. I know this because before Covid-19 turned me into a hermit, fellow subway riders would regularly ask me about my ethnic heritage. Was I Italian? Greek? Puerto Rican? Spanish? Indian? Iraqi? The people who approached me also had brown hair and brown eyes, and I was always sorry to tell them no. It was clear to me that these strangers thought I looked familiar: I, or rather my looks, reminded them of someone they knew. I liked the idea that fellow New Yorkers saw me on the 6 train and thought we might share collective memories, attitudes, and tastes in soup.

As it turned out, the pediatrician was wrong. My son's eyes darkened, and when they did, my husband crooned, "Are you going to break daddy's heart?" I sympathized with my husband's desire to have the baby he doted on resemble him, but I did feel obliged to chastise him for buying into Eurocentric beauty standards. I did not confess my own sentiments, having decided that blaming my husband for attitudes I shared was a prerogative of marriage.

Our son's eyes were navy for a while, but when he was about 18 months old, they settled into a mix of colors I identified as hazel. I found this a reasonable compromise between my cringe-y reverence for light eyes, and the realities of genetic inheritance.

But recently I had to apply for a passport for my son, and I was asked to supply his eye color. His eyes are looking brown these days, I thought. As I hauled my now almost 6-year-old into the brightly-lit bathroom, where he obliged me by trying to open his eyes wide so I could be sure. They were definitely lighter than mine, but were they hazel? I was inclined to think they were light brown.

I felt disappointed—and, once again, ashamed of myself. Did I think that having unusual-colored eyes was literal, visual evidence that my son was as remarkable as I believe him to be? Yes, it seems I did. Was I projecting my weird hang-ups about eye color onto my kid? Possibly.

Of course, all children are remarkable, especially when they're not being total jerks. My son is bright, chatty, exuberant, and silly. He is also currently blowing an ear-piercing whistle while running through the apartment. Maybe I think that if he has hazel eyes, it will be easier to remember that my son is remarkable as well as a total jerk.

Presumably, the next time I'm asked to identify my son's eye color, it won't trigger an existential crisis. I hope I will come to terms with the fact that however extraordinary my son is, his coloring will likely be ordinary, like mine. And maybe one day he, too, will experience the same hopeful sense of kinship when someone unfamiliar approaches him, a person whose features remind a stranger of home. ☆

ELIZABETH MICHAELSON MONAGHAN IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND KIDDISH MAGAZINE.



COOKING JEWISH

Lifestyle

ADVENTURES ON THE LOWER EAST SIDE

Following the trail of
pastrami.

BY JUDY BART KANCIGOR

Pastrami Hash with Poached Eggs,
Chives, and Espelette Pepper

I hadn't been back in decades, but the Lower East Side has a way of making family history taste better.

On a recent trip to New York with my son and granddaughter, we wandered the streets where my grandfather, Harry Rabinowitz, began his American life in 1906. We found the fabric store where my mother and aunt once shopped, and then, naturally, we followed the trail to pastrami.

Lunch at the legendary Katz's Delicatessen was a must. Katz's history dates back to 1888, when Morris and Hyman Iceland opened a delicatessen on Ludlow Street; the Katz name appeared in 1903. Its location near Second Avenue made it a hangout in the days of Yiddish theater. World War II brought a clever promotional slogan: "Send a Salami to Your Boy in the Army," but probably nothing has increased the deli's popularity more than the 1989 film "When Harry Met Sally." Today the legendary deli is still run by fifth-generation owner Jake Dell.

What else can you do with pastrami besides pile it high in a sandwich? Katz's features creative recipes on its website like Pastrami Egg Roll, Kung Pao Pastrami and the Pastrami Hash featured here, and it asks others to share.

If it's lox, sable, sturgeon or herring you crave, Russ & Daughters remains the Lower East Side's landmark appetizing shop. Founded in 1914 by Polish immigrant Joel Russ, who began by selling herring from a pushcart, it became the first U.S. business to put "& Daughters" in its name. Four generations later, the family business is still going strong – and it inspired cookbook author Dorie Greenspan

to create her Lower East Side Brunch Tart from her cookbook "Everyday Dorie" (Houghton Mifflin, \$35).

My connection to this neighborhood goes back to 1906, when my grandfather, Harry Rabinowitz, arrived from Slonim, in what is now Belarus, at 21, carrying little more than his carpentry tools and hopes for a better life. Drafted into the czar's army, he had faced a 25-year stint as a Jewish recruit. As he loved to tell us grandchildren, the czar put Papa Harry on a horse, and the army went this way and he went that-away.

He landed on the Lower East Side, where he shared a room with another immigrant who worked nights. Papa Harry slept in the bed at night; his roommate slept in it during the day. Within a year, he had saved enough to send for my grandmother, Mama Hinda, who arrived in 1907, baby in tow.

More than a century later, I was back on those same streets with my son and granddaughter. I was happy to see Yonah Schimmel Knish Bakery, operating since 1910, is still there. (Schimmel began selling knishes from a pushcart in Coney Island in 1896.) But many of our prior haunts, alas, were gone: Fein & Klein Handbags, which opened in 1945 and closed its doors in 2007. Legendary Ratner's kosher dairy restaurant, which operated for nearly a century before closing in 2002. Schmulka Bernstein, the deli turned first kosher Chinese restaurant in America, which opened in 1957 and closed in 1992.

But then we turned a corner, and there it was: Mendel Goldberg, 72 Hester Street, still in business. My mother and my aunt Estelle often brought my

cousin Joyce and me here on their frequent shopping expeditions in the 1950s. Sewing was their passion; they bought fabric not by the yard but by the bolt, and the Lower East Side was where the bargains were. Founded in 1890 by Polish Jewish immigrants Mendel Goldberg and his wife, Chana Henna – Mendel having begun his career selling thread out of a pushcart – by the time of our frequent visits in the 1950's, the store was a thriving fabric destination. It was, however, not yet what it is today, great granddaughter Alice having turned it into a mecca of "high end couture."

β The Lower East Side may have changed dramatically since my grandfather arrived, but its food traditions have proved remarkably adaptable. Pastrami can become hash, and bagels and lox can become a tart—but the flavors still carry the neighborhood's immigrant history. ☆

“
The Lower East Side may have changed dramatically since my grandfather arrived, but its food traditions have proved remarkably adaptable.”

JLIFE FOOD EDITOR JUDY BART KANCIGOR IS THE AUTHOR OF "COOKING JEWISH" (WORKMAN) AND "THE PERFECT PASSOVER COOKBOOK" (AN E-BOOK SHORT FROM WORKMAN), A COLUMNIST AND FEATURE WRITER FOR THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS AND CAN BE FOUND ON THE WEB AT WWW.COOKINGJEWISH.COM.



Lower East Side
Brunch Tart Sauce

Pastrami Hash with Poached Eggs, Chives & Espelette Pepper

Katz's advises: Purchase whole pastrami for best results – do not have it sliced. Using your hands and/or a fork, pull or shred the meat and the fat (do not discard the fat).

4 medium-sized scrubbed, whole, and unpeeled waxy potatoes (for example, Yukon gold)
Salt
2 thinly sliced Spanish onions
Canola oil
Pepper
1 pound pulled pastrami* (see note above)
4 tablespoons distilled white vinegar
4 large eggs
Chives, finely chopped
Espelette pepper or paprika
Yield: 4 servings

1. Place potatoes in medium-sized pot, then fill until just covered with cold water; add lots of salt. Bring water to a boil, and reduce to a simmer to cook potatoes until fork-tender all the way through (about 15 to 20 minutes). Pour off water and let potatoes cool enough to handle, then smash them with back of spoon or spatula. Put potatoes in refrigerator to cool.
2. In a large sauté pan over medium heat, melt 2 tablespoons canola oil until sizzling, then start to add in the sliced onions one handful at a time. Cook, stirring each handful for 1 to 2 minutes until they begin to soften and turn translucent, then add another handful and repeat until all onions are added. Reduce heat to medium-low and continue stirring every so often. Once they start to get a little color, lightly season onions with salt and pepper. Continue to stir to prevent burning or sticking for 30 to 40 minutes or until golden brown. Once caramelized, place onions on a sheet tray, spread them out, and cool in refrigerator.
3. In large mixing bowl, combine potatoes, caramelized onions, and pulled pastrami. Mix well until fully incorporated. Season with salt and pepper.
4. Bring 4 quarts water to a boil in medium-sized pot, then turn down to a simmer and add vinegar.
5. In large skillet or cast-iron pan, heat canola oil, then add potato and pastrami mix, preferably in one large patty. Press down with a spatula and let cook until browned. Flip and cook the other side until browned.

Lower East Side Brunch Tart Sauce

Makes 6 servings

You can prebake the crust up to 2 months ahead and keep it, wrapped airtight, in the freezer.

One 9- to 9 1/2-inch tart shell made with Pâte Brisée (recipe below), partially baked and cooled
1 1/2 ounces cream cheese, cut into small bits or chunks
3 ounces smoked salmon, finely chopped (about 1/3 cup)
1/4 cup thinly sliced red onion, rinsed and patted dry
3 tablespoons capers, rinsed, patted dry and chopped if large
1 tablespoon chopped fresh dill
3/4 cup heavy cream
2 large eggs
1/2 teaspoon fine sea salt
1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
12 to 15 cherry tomatoes, halved

1. Center rack in oven and preheat to 350 degrees F.
2. Place partially baked tart shell on baking sheet lined with parchment paper or silicone baking mat. Scatter cream cheese over bottom of crust, followed by salmon, onion, capers and dill.
3. Beat cream and eggs together with salt and pepper in bowl until smooth. Pour this into crust, stopping when you're just below rim (you might have a few drops left over). Top with tomatoes and very carefully slide baking sheet into oven. Bake tart 40 to 45 minutes, or until puffed and set. A skewer inserted into center will come out clean. If center of tart has risen as much as the sides, you can be certain it's baked through. Transfer baking sheet to rack and let rest at least 15 minutes before serving — it's best just warm or at room temperature. (For Pâte Brisée recipe, go to jlfisgvpv.com)

6. While hash is browning, crack eggs, one by one, into a ramekin or small bowl, then create a gentle whirlpool in the vinegar water to help the whites wrap around the yolk. Slowly tip the ramekin into the pot, whites first, then add additional eggs. Cook each egg for 3 minutes, then remove with a slotted spoon and place on a paper towel. Place eggs on top of hash, then garnish with chives and a pinch of Espelette.

Source: katzsdelicatessen.com ☆

**MAKE
ME!
EASY TO
FOLLOW
RECIPE**

PARASHAT BEHAR: ADVANCE PLANNING

Having some logistics in place can alleviate some of the anxiety surrounding a loved one's death.

BY VANESSA OCHS, MY JEWISH LEARNING

Among the laws the Israelites observed is the requirement to provide for a sabbath every seventh year for the land they will one day inhabit. This practice is called *shmita*, and it continues to this day in the land of Israel.

Six years the Israelites may sow, prune and plant, but work stops in the seventh year, just as diverse forms of work cease for individuals on the weekly seventh day. This practice is understood as both a sacred discipline and good land stewardship, allowing the earth to rest and reinvigorate.

I imagine that this was a source of anxiety for our ancestors. How would they ensure that they and their livestock had enough to eat in the seventh year? The plan Moses communicates comes with an assurance: Every sixth year, there will be a miracle of sorts. Through divine intervention, Moses promises the people, there will be an exorbitant harvest sufficient for three years.

A divine promise was surely comforting, but in practice, the Israelites did plenty of advance planning of their own to be sure they had enough to sustain them in the seventh year. In Israel, archeologists have unearthed remains of ancient materials—sacks, storage jars and storage pits—which indicate how busy they were in their preparations. They were drying fruits, pickling fish and vegetables, drying grains and legumes, making grapes into wine and storing honey and oil.

These extensive preparations remind me of how advance planning before death can alleviate the intense burdens of planning for a Jewish funeral and the subsequent mourning period. This isn't always possible of course. Sometimes deaths are untimely, or drained emotional and mental resources don't allow for advance preparations. And for some, planning for death can be uncomfortable and even unlucky, as if, through some kind of magical thinking, having no plans might keep death at bay.

An Open Door for Everyone

On Sukkot, guests are welcomed into the *sukkah*—a tradition of hospitality that's central to the holiday. My Jewish Learning holds that same door open all year, welcoming anyone curious about Jewish life and community. Your gift keeps it open.

Given all that, I am grateful that some planning was already in place by the time my mother died. It meant that at the time of our greatest grief, my sister and I weren't additionally overwhelmed by needing to look for records. My mother had already made lists of all the important financial information for us. She had a funeral plot already selected in a Jewish cemetery. All of this was an enormous relief when she passed away.



For families that practice Judaism in traditional ways, the logistics of planning are streamlined, for much that will transpire ritually can generally be assumed. You give yourself over to the mores of the community. You know the body will be washed and prepared for burial by a *chevra kadisha*, or Jewish burial society. You know it will rest in a plain pine box, obviating the need to choose a casket. The particulars of the ceremony are largely prescribed. Your rabbi will probably officiate at the funeral. There will be a meal of consolation at the home of the mourners, followed by seven days of *shiva*, when mourners remain home and are fed and comforted by their community.

Not all families can consider such practices as givens. Secular families, interfaith families, or those with any number of complicated scenarios—it can make it hard to know which rituals would most honor the wishes of the deceased, let alone whom to turn to. When the paths ahead cannot be taken for granted, all the more so, it will come as such a relief if even some decisions have been made beforehand, or at least discussed. This might include researching which Jewish cemeteries will allow for Jews to be buried alongside an interfaith partner, or which rabbis are willing to hold a funeral service before or after a cremation. If preliminary contacts can be made, all the better.

Just as it was a blessing to receive an abundant harvest before the sabbatical year, and just as our ancestors were blessed with the common sense to set food aside, it is a blessing when we have the time and emotional capacity to make some plans before a death. We cannot know in advance of a death if our grief, or the complex family dynamics that might emerge, will impede our ability to make decisions. But having any logistics in place can alleviate at least some sources of anxiety and can help the mourners move forward. ☆

VANESSA OCHS IS A CONTRIBUTING WRITER TO MY JEWISH LEARNING AND JLIFE MAGAZINE.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SUKKOT (FESTIVAL OF TABERNACLES)

**SUNSET OF FRIDAY,
SEPTEMBER 25 –
NIGHTFALL OF FRIDAY,
OCTOBER 2**

JFed Players Presents:
Murder on the Orient Express

PERFORMANCES

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1,
7:30 PM**

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4
3:00 PM AND 7:00 PM**

TICKETS

\$35 General | \$25 Students /
Groups 10+

LOCATION

Lineage Performing
Arts Center

920 E. Mountain St.
Pasadena, CA 91104

For more information, contact
Cantor Judy Sofer at jsofer@jewishsgpv.org.
JFGSGPV

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1
10:00 - NOON**

Sukkah on Wheels is coming
Chabad of the Inland Empire,
CIE

SHEMINI ATZERET

**SUNSET OF FRIDAY,
OCTOBER 2 –
NIGHTFALL OF SATURDAY,
OCTOBER 3**

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2
7:00 PM**

Shabbat Service
with Russell Mark
Temple Beth David, TBD

SIMCHAT TORAH

**SUNSET OF SATURDAY,
OCTOBER 3 –
NIGHTFALL OF SUNDAY,
OCTOBER 4**

**SUNDAYS, OCTOBER 4, 11,
18 & 25**

8:45 - 9:15 AM

Men's Club
Weekly Zoom Chat

Breakfast Get-Togethers
Selected Dates at Nearby
Restaurants
Other events include annual
Sukkah building, Super Bowl
Party, Museum and other
places of interests, The Quakes
minor league baseball games,
BBQs, and more.
Temple Beth David, TBD

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 11,
18 & 25**

9:30 AM - 12:30 PM

Jewish Adventure School
(every Sunday until
November 1)
Temple Beth David, TBD

**SUNDAYS, OCTOBER 4, 11,
18 & 25**

9:30 - 10:30 AM

Adult Hebrew Intermediate
Temple Beth David, TBD

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 5
4:00 - 6:00 PM**

Sukkot Crafternoon
Arroyo Seco Regional
Branch Library
6145 N Figueroa St
Los Angeles, CA 90042
JFGSGPV

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 8
11:00 - NOON
ON ZOOM**

(Second Thursday
of the month)
Caffeine for the Soul
Chabad of the Inland Empire,
CIE

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9
7:00 PM**

Simchat Torah Celebration
Temple Beth David, TBD

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM**

Shabbat Mevarchim
Chabad of the Inland Empire,
CIE

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11
9:30 AM - 12:30 PM**

Adult Education
Bagel Breakfast
Temple Beth David, TBD

**SUNDAY,
OCTOBER 11, 18 & 25**

2:00 - 3:30 PM

**EVERY WEEK UNTIL
JANUARY 24, 2027**

Jewish Music Youth Orchestra
Pasadena Conservatory
of Music
100 N Hill Ave.
Pasadena, CA 91106
Contact
Cantor Judy Sofer
jsofer@jewishsgpv.org
JFGSGPV

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16
7:00 PM**

Our Youngest Cochavim
(Stars) Jewish Adventure
School students
Temple Beth David, TBD

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25
10:00 AM - NOON**

Mini Mensches:
Music and Play with TSG
Temple Sinai of Glendale, TSG

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 25
10:00 AM - NOON
OPENING JEWISH
BOOK FESTIVAL EVENT**

Jean Yves Pitoun's
The Three Partisans
Temple Shalom of Ontario,
TSO

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 27
7:00 - 9:00 PM**

Jewish Book Festival-
Annabelle Gurwitch's
The End of My Life
is Killing Me
Hillcrest Meeting House
2705 Mountainview Dr
La Verne, CA 91750
Contact
Rebecca Russell
russell@jewishsgpv.org
JFGSGPV

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 30
7:30 PM**

Special 5th Friday
Shabbat Service
Temple Beth David, TBD

We encourage our readers
to visit our community's
synagogue websites to get
information on services and
scheduled programs and
events.

**Beth Shalom
of Whittier (BSW)**
www.bethshalomofwhittier.net

**B'nai Simcha
Community Preschool**
www.bnaisimcha.org

**Chabad Jewish Center of
South Pasadena**
www.jewishsouthpasadena.com

**Chabad of Arcadia
(CoA)**
www.jewisharcadia.com

**Chabad of Pasadena
(CoP)**
www.chabadpasadena.com

**Chabad of the
Inland Empire (CIE)**
www.chabadinlandempire.com

**Congregation Hugat
Haverim (CHH)**
www.hugathaverim.com

Congregation Emanu El (CEE)
<https://emanuelsb.org/>

**Jewish Federation of the
Greater San Gabriel and
Pomona Valleys (JFGSGPV)**
www.jewishsgpv.org

**Pasadena Jewish
Academy (PJA)**
www.pasadenajewishacademy.com

Pasadena Jewish
Temple & Center (PJTC)
www.pjtc.net

Temple Ami Shalom
(TAS)
<https://templeamishalom.org/>

Temple Beth Israel of
Pomona (TBI)
www.tbipomona.org

Temple Beth David of
the San Gabriel Valley
(TBD)
www.templebethdavidsgv.org

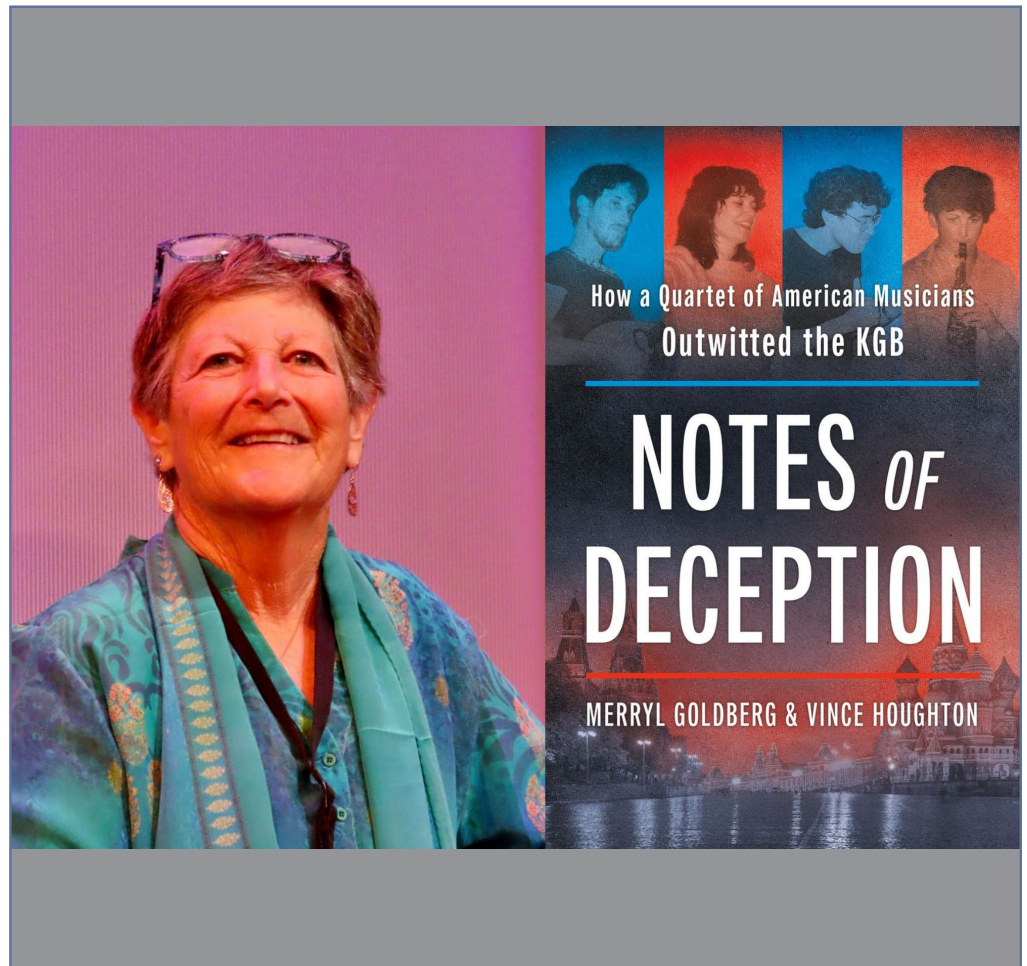
Temple Beth Israel of
Highland Park and Eagle
Rock (TBILA)
www.tbila.org

Temple B'nai Emet (TBE)
<https://templebnaiemet.org>

Temple Sinai of Glendale
(TSG)
<http://temple-sinai.net>

Temple Sholom of
Ontario (TSO)
www.templesholomofontario.org

Tree of Life Preschool
(formerly TBI Preschool)
(ToL)
<https://tbipomona.org> ☆



28th Annual Jewish Book Festival presents: Merryl Goldberg — Notes of Deception

Join author and music professor Merryl Goldberg for an engaging presentation about *Notes of Deception: How a Quartet of American Musicians Outwitted the KGB*. The book recounts the remarkable 1985 journey of a New England Klezmer band to Moscow, where the musicians secretly helped smuggle messages and information to Jewish refuseniks and dissidents in the Soviet Union. Saturday, November 14 | 7:00 p.m.
Temple Beth Israel of Pomona • Dessert Reception
RSVP at www.jewishsgpv.org/jbf

NEWS & JEWS

We need to take seriously the erosion of US support for Israel

**The Jewish state and American Jewry have
a shared future that the Israeli government
must protect.**

**By Benny Gantz,
The Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA)**

In the shadow-filled days that followed Oct. 7, 2023, few things were as clear as the solemn understanding that what was cannot be again, and that things must change.

Three years on, and ahead of the first elections since that day, with polls pointing toward yet another political deadlock, that realization has still not produced a clear collective answer to the question of how.

Israel stands at an extraordinary moment, rapidly approaching Election Day on Oct. 27. We face serious threats, among the most troubling since our nation's modern rebirth: a decline in our global standing, rising antisemitism, a weakening connection with Jewish communities abroad and, above all, a paralyzing internal divide over the questions that define who we are.

The leaders facing this moment cannot be those who deepen that divide. Israel now needs a broad, moderate Zionist government—stretching from the responsible right to the responsible left, and strong enough to govern without dependence on political radicals.

This is not simply an argument about coalition politics. It is a strategic necessity.

When it comes to Israel-U.S. relations, Israelis should take seriously California Congressman Brad Sherman's recent warning about the erosion of support for Israel in America, particularly because it comes from one of Israel's longstanding Democratic friends. The rhetoric and radical positions of figures such as Itamar Ben-Gvir, the national security minister in Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, can cause damage to Israel's standing even when they do not become government policy or are executed on the ground.

Israel does not have to agree with every criticism coming from Washington. We are a sovereign country and must make our own security decisions while working to reduce unnecessary external dependence. But when friends who have defended Israel for decades tell us that something is going wrong, we should listen. The U.S.-Israel alliance cannot be held hostage to partisan politics. Presidents change, congressional majorities change, and political generations change. The alliance must be strong enough to endure all of them.

The same is true of Israel's relationship with American Jewry. American Jews should never have to support every Israeli minister or government to demonstrate their support for Israel. Criticism of a political vision is not a rejection of the Jewish state. American Jews remain outside Israel's democratic arena, but Israel is the nation-state of the Jewish people, and we must protect the dialogue over our shared future. Governments come and go; Jewish peoplehood

does not.

That responsibility also has a religious dimension. The Western Wall should symbolize the shared history and destiny of the Jewish people. Instead, narrow coalition politics have allowed the question of how Jews can pray there to become another source of division between Israel and Jews abroad. I have said before that the Western Wall is large enough to accommodate everyone. It still is.

The consequences of disproportionate leverage for radicals do not stop at Israel's borders. The Abraham Accords demonstrated what the alternative can look like. They shattered the assumption that Israel was condemned to isolation from much of our region.

The next chapter could be even more consequential. A regional architecture connecting Israel, the United States and moderate Arab and Muslim countries through security, technology, trade and shared strategic interests could reshape Israel's position for generations.

But Israel needs the political room to pursue it.

We cannot make regional normalization a strategic priority while allowing political factions fundamentally opposed to compromise to exercise disproportionate influence over national policy.

Israel's problem is not that the majority of Israelis have become radical. It is that our political system repeatedly gives radical minorities power far beyond their public support.

After a decade of political struggles, I have concluded that this model cannot provide the broad base required to make and effectively implement decisions on Israel's fundamental national challenges.

That is why I believe Israel needs a broad Zionist government anchored by moderate forces. The purpose is to create enough political strength across the responsible Zionist center that extremists are no longer indispensable and no longer possess veto power over Israel's national direction.

Broad does not mean without principles. Such a government can and should contain serious disagreements between right, center and left. Zionism has never required political uniformity. But its members must share basic responsibilities: defending the country and sharing its burdens; preserving Israel as Jewish and democratic; respecting the rule of law; rejecting racism and political violence; and understanding that decisions made in Jerusalem affect Israel's alliances and the Jewish people as a whole.

For the sake of Israel's future and Jewish unity, we must restore political power to the broad moderate majority and ensure that narrow political interests do not outweigh the wider national interest.

Decisions made in Jerusalem do not stop at the doors of the Knesset. The political leaders who make them can and will determine how they echo in Washington, in synagogues, on campuses, in Jewish organizations and in families throughout the Diaspora.

Never has that responsibility mattered more.

Benny Gantz, the former Minister of Defense for the State of Israel, is the chairman of the Blue & White Party. ✳



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