

THE JEWISH REVIEW

THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST'S JEWISH NEWSWEEKLY | EST. 1959

May 14, 2026 | 27 Iyar, 5786 | Volume 61, Issue 10

Segev's Project Heroes tonight at MJCC

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

When is a concert more than just a concert? Portlanders have a chance to find out for themselves tonight.

Israeli singer-songwriter Gilad Segev will present Project Heroes at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center tonight at 7 pm.

Project Heroes was born in the aftermath of Oct. 7.

"I was shocked from the atrocities," Segev said of that day, "but I was also in a very deep state of shock from the acts of heroism."

Segev's own brother had previously been killed during his service in the Israel Defense Forces. This combined with the heroism he witnessed on Oct. 7 to flip the script on Jewish identity.

"Our people tell their story from a victimized way, rather than the heroic story. It's not only that the world is telling it this way, but also us," Segev said. "Project Heroes is all about changing the narrative of the Jewish people from victimhood to heroism for the first time ever, because it was never done."

Segev wrote 10 new songs for the project. When trying to reverse an entrenched his-



Gilad Segev, second from left, performs at a Project Heroes concert in this undated promotional photograph. (Abraham Joseph Pal for Project Heroes)

torical narrative, sometimes it takes more than just songs. That's why Project Heroes is more than a concert.

"It's a concert that combines storytelling, music, AI, animation and documentary," Segev said, "mixed together into a visual, multi-sensory project concept."

There's also a book with 40 more songs as poems, along with a forward by Israeli President Isaac Herzog.

Like many musicians, Se-

gev played college campuses – a tough place to express Jewish identity in a post-Oct. 7 world.

"When [students] encountered the content of Project Heroes, something amazing happened," Segev said. "It really helps them; it makes them stronger. It helps them deal with antisemitism. So, we created a program called The Hero Within, which is all about helping the students to connect to the hero

within them."

Segev has now launched a nonprofit to support all these efforts – thus a concert has become so much more.

It's not the first time in his career that Segev's music has become more than just music. Born to a Holocaust survivor family in the eastern suburbs of Tel Aviv, Segev broke onto the Israeli music scene in 2004 with

See **HEROES**, page 2

INSIDE

Security – page 12

Events – page 14

Obituaries – page 14



Sharaka visits CNS
– page 4



Art/Lab hosts pair of events
– page 5

The
Jewish
Review
Podcast



Click for the latest episode

HEROES (continued from page 1)

the hit song “Achshav Tov,” written about his brother shortly after his death. It was the most-played song on Israeli radio that year. Four albums and 10 number-one hits later, Segev created his Passerby project, which “stands for music without borders, shared creativity, cultural exchange and self-expression,” according to his website. Passerby is still active, Segev explained, but he feels the moment global Jewish community is experiencing demands of him a singular focus.

“Since [Oct. 7], my passion is to share this light, to reflect this light. I’m still Passerby; I still have the thing I developed. I’m still an active musician in Israel, but Project Heroes took me over,” he said. The heroism of our people, and not only

of our people, the values of this heroism that are shared with other people, kind of made it impossible for me to do anything else but reflect this light.”

The Portland concert comes at the tail end of a North American tour that has ventured from Florida to Alberta, Canada, with stops seemingly everywhere in between. Bess Butterworth, the Development Events and Community Programs Manager at the MJCC, heard about Project Heroes from a colleague at another Jewish Community Center and started working with the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland and their Community Shlichah.

“We really haven’t hosted anything quite like it before,” Butterworth said. “It is a musical performance, but it’s so



Segev (Courtesy photo)

much deeper than that.”

Tickets are \$15 per person, \$25 for families, and

available at jewishportland.org/community-calendar/heroes-music-show.

CAA, PJC host Sephardic dessert class Sunday

The Jewish Review staff

Congregation Ahavath Achim and Portland Jewish Connection are teaming up for a little Italian fun.

The groups will host their Young Professionals Quarterly Cooking Class Sun-

day, May 17 at 4 pm at the synagogue, with a menu centered on Sephardic Italian desserts. Participants will prepare three different desserts, with an emphasis on connection over perfection, as well as a signature

cocktail formulated just for this event. A non-alcoholic version is available. PJC Happy Hour in Hillsdale will follow for those interested.

While the event will be hosted in CAA’s Kosher

dairy kitchen, no vegan option is available. Registration is \$25 and available online at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/sephardic-cooking-young-professionals.html.



Click the logo to download the latest episode of The Jewish Review Podcast

May 17 is Day for The J at MJCC

The Jewish Review staff

The Mittleman Jewish Community Center will host its annual Day for The J community celebration this Sunday, May 17, from 11:30 am-3 pm at the Center.

The day kicks off with a lunch buffet and the MJCC’s

Community Awards Ceremony, and continues through the day with family-oriented activities throughout the center.

Registration is free and available online at oregonjcc.org/arts-culture/upcoming-events/day-for-the-j.

EARLY DEADLINE NOTICE

Due to the Shavuot and Memorial Day holidays, submissions for the May 28 edition of *The Jewish Review* must be received by **THURSDAY, MAY 21**



Jewish Federation
of Greater Portland

HADASSAH



One Night Only

Hadassah Portland and the
Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Present

LABORS OF LOVE

The Life and Legacy of Henrietta Szold

*A film by Peabody Award Winner Abby Ginzberg
with Tovah Feldshuh as the voice of Henrietta Szold*



Monday, May 18 at 7pm
Apost-screening discussion with director
Abby Ginzberg will be moderated by
Rockne Roll, Editor of the Jewish Review.

PURCHASE TICKETS TODAY!

**A visionary leader and one of history's most influential,
yet under-recognized, American Jewish women,
Henrietta Szold left an indelible mark on the 20th century.**

Henrietta founded Hadassah in 1912, an organization that has played a pivotal role in the modern healthcare system of Israel for more than 114 years, built on a mandate to treat all people equally.

Questions? Contact pnwinfo@hadassah.org

HADASSAH, THE WOMEN'S ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA, INC

©2026 Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc. Hadassah®, the H logo, and Hadassah the Power of Women Who Do logo are registered trademarks of Hadassah, The Women's Zionist Organization of America, Inc. In accordance with IRS tax laws, only the amount of your gift that exceeds the value of goods and services received in consideration of your gift is tax deductible as a charitable contribution for Federal income tax purposes. The amount of the individual ticket to the event that is tax deductible is \$0. Charitable deductions are allowed to the extent provided by law, please consult with your personal tax advisor. Hadassah shall have full dominion, control, and discretion over all gifts (and shall be under no legal obligation to transfer any portion of a gift to or for the use or benefit of any other entity or organization).

'I was hugged by someone I am supposed to hate'

Sharaka promotes shared vision of peace at Neveh Shalom presentation

By BECCA WEINBERG

For *The Jewish Review*

Dalia Ziada grew up with an exceptionally small bookshelf in her parents' house in Egypt. Aside from a few dusty school textbooks, its surface held the two prominent scripts of her childhood: the Quran and Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, translated into Arabic. Ziada grew up believing in constant hateful propaganda about the Jewish people and Israel's existence because it was a product of her society, and she lost countless friends after deciding to take on the mission of educating herself beyond the media's portrayal. While she was eventually forced out of Egypt due to her contrarian beliefs that Israelis were not her enemy and that Hamas was a terrorist organization, she sought new ways to educate others and was met by Sharaka with open arms.

Sharaka, meaning "partnership" in Arabic, is a non-governmental organization that was established directly following the signing of the Abraham Accords in 2020. With a mission of promoting peaceful dialogue between Israel and multiple Arab nations, the organization brings representatives from different Middle Eastern countries together to normalize collaboration and human-to-human connection surrounding complex political issues.

Four representatives from Sharaka produced an intriguing panel at Congregation Neveh Shalom on Tuesday evening to share insights and experiences from their lives amid conflict. Youssef Elazhari, an entrepreneur



Noam Meirov, Dalia Ziada, Youssef Elazhari and Fatima Al Harbi speak at Sharaka's presentation at Congregation Neveh Shalom Tuesday, May 12. The four represent an organization which promotes diplomatic normalization between Israel and Arab countries. (Isaac Babus for *The Jewish Review*)

and activist from Morocco; Fatema Al Harbi, an author and peace advocate from Bahrain; Noam Meirov, the managing director of Sharaka from Israel; and Dalia Ziada, a writer and geopolitical expert from Egypt.

Each speaker came from a unique relationship with Jews and Israelis in their own lives but have felt a newfound drive for peace after learning more about a culture and nation they were told to hate. Al Harbi grew up in a beautiful co-existence of many different religions in Bahrain but was not immune to the propaganda circulating her country. Ziada had been surrounded with complicated layers of hate since it was ingrained in her earliest years. Elazhari spoke on the welcoming nature of Morocco to the Jewish people

since the destruction of the first temple but also noticed a divide continuing to form.

"I was welcomed in Israel by the Moroccan diaspora community, and for the first time, I was hugged by someone I am supposed to hate," said Elazhari of his first trip to Israel. "Zionists were portrayed as enemies in Morocco when I was growing up."

The panelists tackled many complex issues during their discussion, including the reactions of their home countries' governments to their involvement with Sharaka and the challenges of involving Palestinians with their organization due to dire safety risks – a subject which drew a pointed question from an audience member, which the broader crowd responded negatively to. Through each

difficulty mentioned, there was an echo of hope for the progress that has and will be made in coming together for a shared vision of harmony.

"It is a fundamental Jewish value to not believe in the afterlife but belief in this life, to believe in humanity and reach out to people we don't agree with," said Meirov. "We need to find ways to build bridges and work together."

Associate Editor Caron Blau Rothstein contributed reporting.

Becca Weinberg is a recent graduate of the University of Oregon currently based in Portland, and a staff writer for [Lookout Landing](#) and [Circling Seattle Sports](#) covering the Seattle Mariners and Seattle Reign FC. Find more of her writing on [her portfolio website](#) or via [LinkedIn](#).

jewishportland.org/subscribe

Art/Lab to open exhibition, host Zamru Ensemble

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

Art/Lab is kicking off summer with a pair of early June events cultivating Jewish culture and artistic expression in Portland and beyond.

The group will host its Exhibition Opening + Music, Poetry, Prose at the Eastside Jewish Commons Thursday, June 4 at 6:30 pm. The opening kicks off the fourth group exhibition for Art/Lab's annual fellowship cohort, which has been meeting together for nine months to study Jewish texts, dialogue and create work centered on this year's theme: *Zachor* (remember).

"We have drawn from biblical texts, more contemporary texts, Jewish thought, academics and rabbinic thinkers, all kinds of people who have written about [memory]," Art/Lab Director Shoshana Gugenheim Kedem said.

In addition to welcoming a new cohort of artists for the year – writer Rachel Attias, writer Rachel Baskind, photographer Zalmy Berkowitz, photographer Brenda Bingham, visual and performance artist Stashia Cabral, writer Andrew Cohen, performance artist Julie Hammond, interdisciplinary artist Stephen Lorber and musician David Rosman – the program has also welcomed new teachers, such as Alicia Jo Rabins and Dr. Yo-sef Rosen, to the program's study sessions in addition to Art/Lab co-founder Rabbi Josh Rose. The artists in this year's cohort represent a diversity of Jewish expression that would likely be impossible to find under one roof anywhere else in Portland – and many other locales.

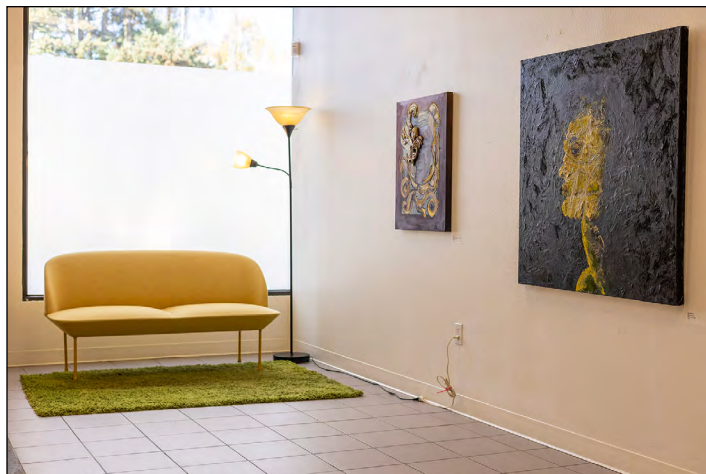
"Our artists are across the spectrum from very obser-



Above: Jerusalem's Zamru Ensemble will conduct a three-day residency in Portland, including a public concert Tuesday, June 9. (Courtesy Art/Lab) Below: The gallery space at the Eastside Jewish Commons which will host Art/Lab's latest cohort exhibition through June and July. (Rockne Roll/Jewish Review file)

vant to totally secular and everything in between. I always say the same thing about their relationship to Israel, and that's a really unusual and exciting point of interest about this fellowship, is that we come from such diverse backgrounds, politically, socially, religiously, and we create this really beautiful community that supports and nurtures each other along the way, because art is the connecting factor here," Gugenheim Kedem said. "They're never at odds with each other; there's space for everyone. I think it's one of the most magical things about Art/Lab."

The event, which is free but requires preregistration, begins in the EJC's gallery, where the visual work the cohort has created will be on display through July, before moving to a performance for those artists whose work is best expressed in that format. What that work looks



and sounds like is still being decided, in some cases.

"Some of the work is in progress. It's hard to put a time frame on work from start to finish. So, we really encourage artists, if they have work in progress, that can also be shown. People actually really enjoy seeing works in progress, how an artist's work unfolds," Gugenheim Kedem said.

Days later, Art/Lab will welcome the Zamru Ensemble from Israel to the EJC for

"Jerusalem Sound | Portland Night" Tuesday, June 9, at 8 pm. The Zamru Ensemble is a musical group formed by the Fuchsburg Jerusalem Center, who are co-sponsoring the event along with the Conservative Movement's Rabbinical Assembly, Congregations Neveh Shalom and Shaarie Torah, Nehama Jewish Chaplain Services, Keshet HaMayim and the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

See ART/LAB, page 6

ART/LAB (continued from page 5)

“This is a group of musicians who specialize in performing contemporary, interesting, engaging kinds of spiritual Jewish music,” Fuchsburg Jerusalem Center CEO Dr. Stephen Arnoff explained. “It’s also a teaching group which helps communities think about how they use music in their own spiritual endeavors. Includes new melodies, but also different ways of thinking about what it means to bring music and spirituality deeper into community.”

The ensemble will be working with a cohort of Portlanders in a residency format for the two days surrounding their performance at EJC, which those Portland musicians will be a part of. The local musicians’ cohort was selected by the sponsoring organizations.

“Each of those communities are bringing people inside the community because the idea is that they’re already integrated and they will help lift up and build the musical capacity and relationships and presence in those spiritual, religious places,” Gugenheim Kedem said.

The Zamru Ensemble consists of Dov Weider, Yaara Samina, Talia Erdal, Amitai Maan and Itamar Zakai. Their sound is a blend of the full spectrum of traditional Jewish music, from Sephardic songs to Hasidic melodies, with contemporary rhythm, instrumentation and vocal sounds.

“It is a combination of many strands of Jewish culture, both traditional and contemporary, which is something that’s happening in Israel in a very interesting way, and also in North America,” Arnoff explained. “This is a kind of music that draws on a pool of tradition. It’s meant to be sung in a community experience, rather than performed for a community.”

The ensemble is just one of many musical programs the Fuchsburg Jerusalem Center hosts under the name Zamru, which translates from Hebrew to “Let us sing.” These programs expanded dramatically across Israel, and then to North America, following Oct. 7. The center already has deep connections with Art/Lab thanks to the latter’s selection to the Jerusalem Biennale, so

when the Zamru Ensemble was organizing a West Coast tour, Portland became a natural stop.

“We felt that there was so much brokenness and upset and loss in our part of the world, certainly not limited to Israelis, and that music and prayer which is pluralistic but deep, which is authentic but accessible, is a way to bring people together without politics, without having to take a side, without having to pick up an armament other than an instrument or your voice,” Arnoff said of Zamru’s expansion post-Oct. 7, “and in that sense, while we are a proudly Zionist institution and deeply embedded in human rights at the same time, which we think is essential to Zionism, we see music and prayer as being one of the best ways to counter the violence and the misunderstanding that has defined the region in so many places around the world.”

Tickets for the Zamru Ensemble’s June 9 performance are available on a \$12-18 sliding scale and can be purchased at artlabpdx.org.

SHAVUOT EVENTS

Upcoming Shavuot opportunities gathered by Jewish Federation

jewishportland.org/shavuot



SUBSCRIBE: jewishportland.org/subscribe

106TH ANNUAL MEETING

2025
REVIEW

**WEDNESDAY
MAY 27**

4:30 PM - 6:00 PM

**MITTLEMAN JEWISH
COMMUNITY CENTER**

6651 SW CAPITOL HIGHWAY

The evening will include sharing highlights of the past year, electing and welcoming new board members, thanking our outgoing board members, giving out several awards,

AND MUCH MORE!

REGISTER HERE:



Jewish Federation
of Greater Portland

EJC to host concert for Ukraine relief June 6

The Jewish Review staff

A band with a mission to support Ukraine is bringing their Klezmer-infused sound to the Pacific Northwest.

Kommuna Lux, a band from Odesa, Ukraine that merges the sounds of traditional music from throughout their home region, will perform at the East-side Jewish Commons Saturday, June 6 at 7:30 pm as part of their West Coast tour raising funds for victims of the ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Volodymyr Gitin, the band's leader and clarinetist, explained that the band initially came together in 2014 to play a variety of the region's folk styles, including music from his own Jewish background, but changed their name in 2021 (it means "community light") and began focusing on supporting relief efforts when Russia invaded in 2022 and one of the band's members left to serve on the front lines of the war.

"Odesa, it's a unique culture. a lot of Jewish people live there and that's why Odessa's music includes klezmer music, songs about Jewish people," Gitin said. "We started from that point, but maybe in a new modern style; but some traditional [songs], too."

Tickets are \$25 and available at events.humanitix.com/kommuna-lux-ukrainian-klezmer-band.

Kommuna Lux will also perform at Unity of the Valley in Eugene on Saturday, May 30 at 7:30 pm as part of the Turning Tides Music Festival. Tickets available at turningtidesmusic.org/ticketing.

JADE launches summer cohort

The Jewish Review staff

The Jewish Association for Death Education is launching a six-week learning cohort centered on end-of-life planning this summer.

Applications are now open for the L'Dor v'Dor End of Life Learning Cohort, which will meet on Sundays, July 26 through Aug. 16, at 11am at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center. The sessions will feature speakers from the Portland area with subject matter expertise in areas ranging from Jewish ritual to financial planning and advanced care directives – participants will be able to arrange one-on-one follow up time, if needed,

Young Kashinskys make pro theater debut in 'X'

The Jewish Review staff

The next generation of Kashinsky kids are making their professional theatric debut.

Rose Kashinsky, 13, and Fiona Kashinsky, 11, are alternating performances as Young Mattie in Third Rail Repertory Theater's production of "X," running May 22 through June 7 at the CoHo Theater in Northwest Portland. Both have long been involved in the youth company at Third Rail, where their mother, Michelle Kashinsky, is an Associate Producer. Both Michelle and her husband, Congregation Beth Israel Executive Director Josh Kashinsky, have professional theater experience.

In a press release, Fiona Kashinsky said she's "excited about getting this new experience and getting to work with some of these really tal-

ented actors." Directed for Third Rail by Rebecca Lingefelter, Alistair McDowall's "X" is described as "science fiction meets cosmic horror meets psychological drama." The girls play a younger version of one of a group of astronauts trapped on a space station near Pluto, where a series of problems begins to unravel their reality.

Registration is \$36 for the six sessions, with scholarships available upon request. Those interested can apply online before June 30 at tinyurl.com/JADECohortApp. For more information, email JADE Death Educator Rachel Crawford at rachel@jadeinfo.org.

enters." "It'll be fun when the whole play starts to come together," Rosie Kashinsky said in a press release, "and though I'll probably be nervous, I know once opening night has happened, there will probably be like a bunch of happiness and relief cause you've done all the work and it's time to show off for the rest of the show."

For more information and tickets, visit thirdrailrep.org

HCAT film series continues Sunday, May 17, with 'Inhabitants'

Havurah Shalom

Join Havurah Shalom's Climate Action Team, Racial Justice Committee, and Community Partners as we continue the Earth Justice Film Series-Stories to Inspire with the showing of "Inhabitants: An Indigenous Perspective" on Sunday, May 17, 3-5pm. Doors open at 2:30 to allow time for people to connect with community organizations that will be tabling. A discus-

sion will follow the showing of the film. Popcorn will be served. The event is Free. Register at havurahshalom.org/event/ip-hcat-film-series-3.html.

For millennia Native Americans successfully stewarded and shaped their landscapes, but centuries of colonization have disrupted their ability to maintain traditional land management practices. "Inhabitants: An Indigenous Perspective," directed by

Costa Boutsikaris and Anna Palmer, follows five Native American tribes across deserts, coastlines, forests, and prairies as they restore their traditional land management practices. As the climate crisis escalates, these time-tested practices of North America's original inhabitants are becoming increasingly essential in a rapidly changing world.

With many crises roiling our world these days, and many of us working hard in response,

this series enables us to gather in community to be uplifted by stories of people making a difference, and to connect with others who share our concerns and determination to work for a better future. Our goal is for these films to give us hope and inspiration to make a difference.

Learn more at inhabitants-film.com. For details about the film series, including a flier, go to: linktr.ee/earth-justicefilms

JFCS shines at Brighter Together celebration

Photographs by ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Jewish Family & Child Service shone in the spring sunshine at the Brighter Together: A JFCS Celebration of Care Thursday, May 7 at Nordia House in Tigard. The evening featured samples from local food and beverage vendors as well as remarks by JFCS staff and board members along with Holocaust survivor Eva Aigner.



jewishportland.org/subscribe



THE SHUK

A MARKETPLACE OF JEWISH
IDEAS, CONTEMPORARY ART & CULTURE



EXPLORE | LEARN | MAKE

- Talks by Scholars & Artists
- Panel Conversations
- Text Study Sessions
- Arts Workshops
- Cooking Classes
- And more to discover

June 21, 2026
10am–6pm

Eastside Jewish Commons

EAT | DRINK | DANCE

- Catered Kosher Lunch
- Pop-Up Food Vendors
- After-Hours Bar + DJ

CO-SPONSORS



Jewish Federation
of Greater Portland



with generous funding from



OJCF
Oregon Jewish
Community Foundation

REGISTER AT

theshukpdx.com

\$15-36



HEROES

ג'וימ'ים

Don't miss acclaimed Israeli musician Gilad Segev and his band in a powerful evening of music, storytelling, and hope.



Thursday, May 14

7:00 - 9:00 pm Concert at the MJCC

PROJECT HEROES

Sponsored by



Jewish Federation
of Greater Portland



JCC Association
of North America

Project Heroes
Website



THE JEWISH REVIEW

THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST'S
JEWISH NEWSWEEKLY
EST. 1959

Published weekly by the
Jewish Federation of
Greater Portland
9900 SW Greenburg
Road, Suite 220
Tigard, OR 97223
503-245-6219

Editor

Rockne Roll

editor@jewishportland.org

Associate Editor

Caron Blau Rothstein

Assistant Editor

Rachel Nelson

Circulation

To receive the Jewish
Review in your email
inbox, fill out the form at

[jewishportland.org/
subscribe](http://jewishportland.org/subscribe)

OPINIONS printed in *The Jewish Review* do not necessarily reflect those of the *Review*, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, its governing board or the staffs of either the newspaper or the Federation.

Jewish Federation of Greater Portland online

Website: jewishportland.org

Instagram: [instagram.com/
jewishfederationpdx](https://www.instagram.com/jewishfederationpdx)

Facebook:

[facebook.com/JewishPDX](https://www.facebook.com/JewishPDX)

Jewish Review:

[jewishportland.org/jewish-
review](http://jewishportland.org/jewish-review)

NEXT ISSUE

Issue date **Deadline**

MAY 21

MAY 18

Security Corner

Rammings are (fortunately) rare

By JESSICA ANDERSON

The recent vehicle ramming at the Multnomah Athletic Club (MAC) was a reminder to me about the increasing commonality of this type of violence. Thankfully, in this case, no one was in the building, and perhaps the timing was carefully chosen to avoid injuring others. I'm not here to contemplate the whys or motivations, but simply the fact that they are occurring more frequently. I'll also take time to note that vehicle ramming, like any active threat, is extremely rare, an important point I try to reinforce in all my trainings and community discussions.

I touched on the topic of ramming in December 2024 when I wrote about bollards, which we see in front of many organizations in our community, and will continue to see more of. They've been in the news a lot recently, particularly following the March 2026 attack on Michigan's largest synagogue, Temple Israel. In this case, the attacker drove around the bollards, repositioned the vehicle to be pointed into the building, and drove 200 feet down a central hallway before getting wedged. Armed, trained, and coordinated security officers created a situation the attacker knew he could not get out of, and he took his own life, the only casualty of the incident.

There's no end to the creativity of humans, and in this case, the attacker found a vulnerability that perhaps hadn't yet been identified. Organizations can do everything logical, practical, and fundable and still leave



Jessica Anderson is the Portland-area Director of Community Security. She was previously an FBI agent for 24 years. This position is funded by SCN (the official safety and security organization of the Jewish community in North America) and a local three-way partnership of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, Oregon Jewish Community Foundation Endowment Fund and multiple Jewish organizations in the region.

exploitable vulnerabilities. And it's not only Jewish organizations. Besides the January 2026 vehicle ramming of the Chabad-Lubavitch Headquarters in Brooklyn, NY (allegedly by someone who had been refused conversion, no one was injured), the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Grand Blanc Township, Michigan, was another significant ramming in which four church members were killed, and eight were injured.

It's been reported that these types of attacks appear to happen in clusters. One event gives an idea to someone else with a grievance. When events happen against religious spaces in the US, we're always aware that it could trigger a copycat event elsewhere. And while vehicle ramming isn't the most lethal tactic, it can be an easy method for people who can't get guns or bombs, so cars become a weapon of opportunity in that they are readily available.

Mineta Transportation Institute, associated with San Jose State University's Lucas Graduate School of Business, recently updated its research on vehicular attacks in September 2025.

Since 2012, the U.S. has recorded the highest number of vehicle ramming of any country — 85 total — followed by Israel/Palestinian Territories, China, the U.K., and France. The volume of vehicle ramming attacks is gradually increasing over time in the U.S., and the number of fatalities is also rising. The seven-month period from November 2024 to May 2025 saw a surge of 27 attacks worldwide, including four in the United States, and although we lead in incidents, the U.S. ranks third in fatalities behind China and France.

Both intentional and unintentional vehicular attacks remain on the minds of our community leaders. They work hard to balance the safety of the community with costs, aesthetics, and community tolerance or wishes for additional observable safety measures.

Organizations also rely on community members to speak up if they see an issue, a vulnerability, or a gap that leadership may not be aware of. If you see something, don't assume leadership already knows about it. Say something! We're all in this together.

The Israeli far right's renewed war on pluralism

By **BOB HORENSTEIN**

Like thousands of non-Orthodox American Jews, I have enjoyed the privilege of participating in b'nai mitzvah and Shabbat services at the southern egalitarian prayer section of the Western Wall, or *Kotel*, in Jerusalem. These events were deeply spiritual and inspirational precisely because they took place at the holiest site in Judaism.

Yet, if enough Israeli lawmakers have their way, such meaningful experiences at the *Kotel* will become a thing of the past for those of us who practice non-Orthodox forms of Judaism.

In February, a bill that would strengthen the ultra-Orthodox Chief Rabbinate's control over the *Kotel*, introducing severe penalties for "desecration" of the holy site, advanced in the Knesset, Israel's parliament, with the support of nearly half of all lawmakers. For nearly three months, no action was taken on the legislation, but now, suddenly, it's headed to the Knesset's Constitution, Law and Justice Committee for consideration.

Under this legislation, religious services and celebrations that don't meet the approval of the Chief Rabbinate—i.e., practices associated with the largest denominations of American Jewry—would be prohibited. If enacted, anyone who publicly engages in conduct that contradicts the Rabbinate's directives and rulings could face up to seven years in prison.

How did we get here? In 2016, a previous Netanyahu-led government agreed to renovate a section of the *Kotel* for mixed-gender prayer where families and groups could gather and hold services in accordance with more liberal practices and traditions. However, due to pressure from his ultra-Orthodox coalition partners, Netanyahu set aside the agreement, which, ten years later, still has never been fully implemented.

In mid-February, the Israeli Supreme Court indicated it had had enough of the government's foot dragging and ordered the government to finally fulfill

its obligations. In response, far-right Member of Knesset (MK) Avi Maoz and Justice Minister Yariv Levin, author of the controversial judicial overhaul legislation that prompted nationwide protests in 2023, introduced a bill that would effectively ban egalitarian prayer even in the southern section of the holy site.

One can only imagine the outcry from Jewish leaders worldwide were any other country to pass a law restricting the rights of Jews to pray according to their customs and threatening them with arrest. I have no doubt that Prime Minister Netanyahu would condemn such a law in the strongest terms. Ironically, even MKs who voted to advance the *Kotel* bill would likely denounce it as blatant antisemitism.

As Yizhar Hess, vice-chair of the World Zionist Organization, put it, "How could it be that the only western democracy without freedom of religion for Jews could be the Jewish state?"

Over the years, ultra-Orthodox extremists have applied other means to try to prevent egalitarian worship at the *Kotel*. The summer of 2022, for example, saw a significant escalation in violence targeting non-Orthodox Jews, disrupting their mixed-gender or women-led services in the southern section. During one bar mitzvah, a Jewish family from Las Vegas, who traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate their son's coming-of-age, were overrun by a mob of ultra-Orthodox youth and vilified as "Nazis." Inexplicably, the police witnessed the attack yet did nothing to stop it.

Commenting on the incident, Deborah Lipstadt, the US antisemitism envoy at the time, tweeted, "Make no mistake. Had such a hateful incident—such incitement—happened in any other country, there'd be little hesitation in labeling it antisemitism."

Four years later, given everything the American Jewish community did to support Israel in the aftermath of



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

the Oct. 7 Hamas massacre—raising millions of dollars for an emergency campaign, keeping the hostages in the public eye, and vociferously contesting the false accusations of "genocide"—a proposal to ban egalitarian prayer represents a cruel gut punch. What message does it send, moreover, to the younger generation of American Jews, too many of whom are already becoming increasingly disillusioned with Israel?

Although the *Kotel* bill passed its initial reading with 56 MKs backing it, the vote seemingly didn't have the support of Netanyahu. That was significant, but Netanyahu is now reaping what he sowed, having buried the compromise agreement that was supposed to have established an upgraded mixed-gender prayer platform in 2016.

Maoz hailed his proposed legislation, saying it would "unify the Jewish people, both those in Israel and those in the Diaspora." He couldn't be more wrong. Jewish unity doesn't mandate uniformity of practice. To the contrary, Jewish unity can exist only when there is acceptance and celebration of religious pluralism.

Even if the *Kotel* bill never advances beyond the committee stage, the larger issue will remain. Israeli leaders need to decide once and for all what kind of Jewish state they want Israel to be—one that respects all streams of Judaism or one that will no longer feel welcoming to a majority of American Jews. For the sake of Israel's future, the choice couldn't be clearer.

SUBSCRIBE:
jewishportland.org/subscribe

IRENE WALTUCK

It is with deep sadness that Congregations Shaarie Torah and Beth Israel announce the passing of Irene "Renie" Barbara Waltuck, z"l. Renie died on Thursday, May 7, 2026 at the age of 78.

She is survived by Leland, her husband of 58 years; daughters Julianne (Craig) Bell, Michelle (Loren) Koplan and Shana (Ave) Galante; sisters Leslie (David) Cohen and

Cori Overlund; brother Jay Lebenzon; sister-in-law Bernda Berger; and grandchildren Ali and Lizzie Koplan. She was predeceased by her parents, Sidney and Anne Carl, z"l and step-mother, Sue Lebenzon Carl, z"l.

The funeral was held Monday, May 11 at Shaarie Torah Cemetery. The family requests that donations in memory of Renie be made to BB360.

Events

See all of Portland's Jewish community events online at jewishportland.org/community-calendar

May 7-17: 2026 Portland Jewish Music Festival

Details and tickets at ejcpdx.org/pjmf26.

May 14: Succulents for Holocaust Survivors Day

Drop in volunteer painting and potting event at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center from 3-7 pm. For more information, email merit@jewishportland.org.

May 14: Project Heroes

See story, page 1

May 15: Pre-Shavuot Mega Lunch & Learn – Guys' Torah Study

Celebration lunch at Chabad SW Portland at noon. Learn more at jportland.com/tools/events/register.asp?page=&eventid=22774&new=true.

May 15: Andalusia to Israel

Musician panel at Congregation Ahavath Achim at 6 pm. Learn more at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/maykabshab.html.

May 16: Intro to Biblical Hebrew

Weekly class at Congregation Ahavath Achim at 9:30

am. More information at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/adult-learning.html.

May 16: Spring Farmers' Market Tour with Sonya Sanford

Market tour hosted by Art/Lab at 9:30 am. More information at events.humanitix.com/spring-farmers-market-tour-with-sonya-sanford/tickets

May 16: Women's Torah Study

Weekly class at Congregation Ahavath Achim at 10:30 am. More information at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/adult-learning.html.

May 16: Sephardic Foundations

Weekly class at Congregation Ahavath Achim at 12:30 pm. Learn more at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/sephardic-foundations.html.

May 17: Krav Maga Introductory Course

Weekly self-defense course at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center at 10 am. More information at oregon-jcc.org/culture.

May 17: CNS Sisterhood Mah Jongg Madness

Mah Jongg tournament and brunch at Congregation

Neveh Shalom at 11 am. More information at members.nevehshalom.org/form/mah-jongg-2026.html.

May 17: Day for the J

See story, page 2.

May 17: Young Professionals Sephardic Cooking Class

See story, page 2.

May 18: Labors of Love

Film screening and filmmaker Q-and-A at 7 pm. Tickets at eventbrite.com/e/labors-of-love-the-life-and-legacy-of-henrietta-szold-film-screening-tickets-1985393140328.

May 19: Silver linings Casting Sessions

Art demonstration at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education at 10 am. More information at docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfRitDMTR96k8bsLB16ULkzM-i81ZzumUUNmb1WstZw0N-qP65w/viewform.

May 19: JFCS' Stretch and Schmooze Senior Yoga

Yoga class at the East-side Jewish Commons at 3 pm. More information at jfcc-portland.org/senior-social-hour.

May 20: Israeli Folk Dancing for Beginners

Weekly class at the Multnomah Arts Center in Southwest Portland at 7 pm. More information at sites.google.com/site/pifdnews.

May 21: Sephardi Shavuoth and Velada

Sephardic Shavuot observance at Congregation Ahavath Achim at 6:45 pm. More information at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/shavuoth.html.

May 21: Habitat for Humanity Build with the Jewish Volunteer Corps

Volunteer construction project in Southwest Portland at 8:30 am. More information at jewishportland.org/habitat-for-humanity

May 21: JFCS Community Connection

Virtual support group at 2 pm via Zoom. jfcc-portland.org/community-connection.

May 21: Standing Together at Sinai

Shavuot learning event at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center at 5:30 pm. More information at members.nevehshalom.org/form/shavuot26.



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