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An officer and a rabbi

Rabbi Orenstein commissioned as Ore. National Guard's first Jewish Chaplain

There are lots of ways to greet a rabbi, but Rabbi Menachem Orenstein of Tigard Chabad will have to get accustomed to an atypical greeting – a salute.

Rabbi Orenstein officially became the Oregon Army National Guard's first Jewish chaplain when he was commissioned as a Captain in the National Guard Sunday, Aug. 18 in a ceremony at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas.

As a part-time soldier, Rabbi Orenstein will continue his work with Tigard Chabad, reporting for monthly drill weekends and a two-week summer training exercise with his unit, the 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion. The idea of a Chabad rabbi in the army may seem strange to some, but Rabbi Orenstein is far from the first Chabad rabbi to serve in uniform.

See **CHAPLAIN**, page 8



Tigard Chabad Rabbi and Oregon Army National Guard Capt. Menachem Orenstein, right, takes his oath at his commissioning ceremony Sunday, Aug. 18 at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas. Rabbi Orenstein is the first Jewish chaplain to serve in Oregon's National Guard. (Aaron Perkins/Oregon Military Department)

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New episodes resume Sept. 4



Click the logo to catch up on Season One.

Sunshine Pantry founder Sharon Straus dies at 75

The Jewish Review staff

Sharon Straus, 75, founder of the Sunshine Pantry Food Bank, passed away Wednesday, Aug. 21 at the age of 75.

Straus founded the Sunshine Pantry in 1981. While storing food donations for one of her sons' Cub Scout food drives, she had the realization that families faced hunger all year. She launched her project with a simple objective: "We believe no child should go to bed hungry."

The Sunshine Pantry operated from Straus' garage in Beaverton, serving hundreds of families every month, until 2007 when the operation moved to an industrial space. Straus went above and beyond the usual food pantry basics; she ensured she had ingredients for people from minority communities to cook the foods they knew and loved. She maintained an ample stock of kosher foods. She also stocked school supplies and other essentials – and some fun stuff for kids, including birthday cakes.

"I want the children to feel

normal," she told *The Oregonian* in 2007. "So yes, they get milk and cheese and bread, but also chips and candy. Those are what make a child smile."

Straus received the Governor's Award for Outstanding Lifetime Volunteer Achievement from Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski in 2009, the Service to Beaverton Award in 2008 and the Rabbi Joshua Stampfer Community Enrichment Award in 2017.

"I want people who come here to feed their stomachs and their souls," Straus told *The Oregonian* in 2007.

She is survived by her husband of 54 years, Stewart Straus, and her four sons: Brian, David (Irina), Eric (Hiliary) and Robert (Jennifer), and grandchildren Maiya, Maksim, Markus, Oliver and Cecily. She was preceded in death by parents Milton & Ilene Rosenthal, 71.

Her funeral was Sunday, Aug. 25 at Shaarie Torah Cemetery.

Learn more about about Sunshine Pantry at [facebook.com/SunshinePantry.org](https://www.facebook.com/SunshinePantry.org).

Walking Beside You to focus on partner loss for fall sessions

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

Losing a spouse or partner is a unique kind of grief—deep, complex and farther reaching than one may anticipate. It's also the subject of the latest edition of Jewish Family & Child Service's Walking Beside You grief group.

Meeting at 10:30 am on Tuesdays from Sept. 10 through Oct. 29 at Congregation Beth Israel in Portland, this specialized session of Walking Beside You is the product of feedback from past clients and Walking Beside You participants and is funded in part by a grant from the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Women's Giving Circle.

Lead facilitator Missy Fry, who is JFCS's Lead Aging and Adult Services Clinician, said that partner loss often comes with financial concerns, issues of how to support children, both young and grown-up, and intense feelings of loneliness and isolation. Additionally, as survivors have often served as caregivers when their partners were sick, the sudden disappearance of those responsibilities can lead to questions around identity and purpose.

"There's also a lot of things in our culture that are designed for couples, that speak to couples or families," Fry said. "If you're finding yourself all of a sudden in an empty home, it can feel really overwhelming."

On top of these feelings of loss is often fear.

"We may have planned for things to look a certain way or just been unable to even imagine what things would look like beyond this, so there's a lot of unknowns," Fry explained. "What will the future look like? Will I be alone from here on out? Will I feel alone? If I spend time with other couples, will I feel like the third wheel?"

Rabbi Sarah Rensin, JFCS's community chaplain, will serve as a guest facilitator for some sessions.

"The question that sometimes comes up is 'How do I grieve Jewishly?'" Fry said. "The wonderful thing about Rabbi Sarah is that she has a lot of experience working in hospice and also working with families."

This is the seventh session of Walking Beside You – a project Fry took on wanting to replicate the group that supported her when she experienced grief as a child. After transitioning to Zoom and hybrid sessions due to the COVID pandemic, Walking Beside You is now fully in-person again.

"We're not made as a species to look at each other through a screen," Fry said. "We are meant to have these deep, meaningful connections to one another."

Participation in Walking Beside You is free. For more information or to join, contact Fry at (503) 226-7079 ext. 133 or email MissyFry@jfcs-portland.org.

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For additional information and questions, please contact Wendy Kahn at wendy@jewishportland.org
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With Presenters



TAYLAR LEWIS

*Civil Rights
Specialist
at the Oregon
Department of
Education*



**JULIA BRIM-
EDWARDS**

*Member, Portland
Public Schools Board*

Additional Presenters to be Confirmed

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'Planting seeds' at Preschool Educators' Day



Above Left: Participants in the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's second annual Preschool Educators' Day Wednesday, Aug. 21, take in a keynote address from American Jewish University's Dr. Tamar Andrews at Congregation Neveh Shalom. Above Right: Participants received succulants with the message "Planting the seeds of Jewish growth" to recognize their work in developing tomorrow's Jewish community. (Rachel Nelson/The Jewish Review)

Horenstein marks 30 years at Federation

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

While much has changed in Jewish communal life in Portland over the last three decades, one constant has been Bob Horenstein – even if his day-to-day work has changed dramatically in that time.

Horenstein marked 30 years as the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Director of Community Relations earlier this month, providing professional support to the work of Portland's Jewish Community Relations Council.

"I can't describe my average day because my day has changed so many times," Horenstein said. "Depending on the issues we're working on, there is no typical day at the Federation office with JCRC. Who could have imagined when I started that we would be dealing with some of the things we're dealing with now?"

After a bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon, a master's in political science focusing on Arab and Israeli politics, roles in state government and two stints as a *kibbutznik*, Horenstein was ready for something new in 1994 when a part-time professional role at the Federation came open. He'd

already been volunteering with the JCRC and had begun writing for *The Jewish Review*, which he continues to do today. Horenstein recalled that even with a leg injury that had him showing up on crutches for the job interview and the location of the interview getting mixed up, the interview went very well and he was offered the position shortly thereafter.

His role and work has only grown from there. When he was hired, Horenstein was also managing the Super Sunday fundraising telethon – he later worked to support the allocations process – all in a part-time capacity. Today, he works full-time on the community relations front, work which has expanded to include an Associate Director, Rachel Nelson, and a contracted lobbyist in Salem to support legislative goals in state government.

Combatting antisemitism dominates Horenstein's time today in a way it didn't back then, though there's always been incidents that popped up, sometimes out of nowhere. He recalled picking up *The Oregonian* from his driveway one morning to read allegations of Jewish-led conspiracies from a Portland Public Schools' board member.

"I looked at my wife and I said, 'You see this story here? This is my next three weeks,'" Horenstein recalled.

The board member, who was Black, was roundly denounced by leadership in Portland's Black community – thanks to relationships Horenstein was instrumental in building. That work has grown, and it's paid off, particularly the dialogue that Horenstein, Nelson and the JCRC have built with the Hindu community in the area.

"They've become some of our best allies, especially during this difficult time post October 7," Horenstein said. "They've shown up for us, and we want to be able to show up for them, as well."

It's work that Horenstein remains committed to, 30 years in, and it's work that people have taken notice of since Oct. 7.

"People have come up to me and said, 'now we really understand why there's a Federation,'" Horenstein said. "Some of these people don't relate to the other things that we do, but when they saw what was going on in our own backyard and that we were responding to it, they very much appreciate it."

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Friedland, Weiss join Portland Hillel staff

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

Greater Portland Hillel is gearing up for a new academic year with a new – and expanded – staff.

Andy Friedland has joined the staff as Director of Jewish Student Life, while Jesse Weiss is PDX Hillel's new Springboard Innovation Fellow, taking over for Maddie Herrup after the completion of her term and her departure for rabbinical school. They join Executive Director Hannah Sherman and Jewish Agency for Israel Fellow Linoy Yechieli, who has extended her fellowship role through the end of the upcoming academic year.

"There truly could not be two better people for growing our staff team and expanding the work that we're doing," Sherman said of Friedland and Weiss.

Weiss, a California native with family in Israel, recently graduated from Reed College, where she was president of the Jewish Student Union. She recalled working extensively with Herrup to grow and revitalize Reed's JSU and looks forward to engaging with those who look to make similar strides in campus Jewish life.

"I didn't feel like my job was done in terms of supporting Jewish students in the city," Weiss said. "If I had known about [JSU and Hillel] when I was a freshman, I think I would have had a significantly different time in college. I probably would have had a much more positive experience."

Friedland has been a Portlander since 2023, working as an in-house substitute teacher at Portland Jewish Academy. His path has taken him from his bachelors degree to teaching English in China, leading AmeriCorps disaster relief efforts in Mississippi to five years at the Anti-Defamation League in Connecticut, culminating as its associate director and playing a major role in responding to antisemitic incidents throughout the state. He left the ADL to get his master's degree in education from University of Connecticut, followed by teaching humanities at secondary schools in Connecticut before relocating to Oregon with his wife, who is a family medicine resident at Oregon



Weiss (Courtesy Photo)



Friedland (Courtesy Photo)

Health and Sciences University.

In his new role, Friedland is looking forward to expanding Hillel's impact for students – from supporting more programs on campuses to enhanced Jewish education projects.

"We're here to create space where everyone can be a member of this community, whatever background they come from, whatever their beliefs are, and we can communicate across those differences and make space for everybody," Friedland said.

Expanding PDX Hillel's professional team has long been one of Sherman's goals. She said that Hillels all measure engagement through both breadth – how many students are coming through the door – and depth – how many students are coming through repeatedly. As PDX Hillel looks to expand the number of campuses it services this year, having the staff resources to focus

on both those areas will be an immense plus.

Sherman had hoped to recruit Weiss to take on the Springboard Fellowship, only for Weiss to initially announce her plans to return to Southern California after graduating.

"It was truly the best turn of circumstances when she decided to stay here," Sherman said of Weiss. "Having that institutional knowledge and the relationships she already has with everyone [at Reed College]; the president, all of these different people on DEI staff. Being able to carry on those relationships, especially in this political movement, is so important."

Sherman was very particular about finding the right candidate for the Director of Jewish Student Life role – it's a new position that's being built from scratch, and unlike the Springboard and Israel fellowships, it's not a temporary gig. When Friedland's application came in, Sherman had a feeling she had found the right fit.

"From the minute I saw his resume, I thought this is already, on paper, exactly what I'm looking for," Sherman said.

That continued on through interviews.

"He's the nicest, friendliest person in the world," she continued. "Combined with his skills, all of the antisemitism work that he did, his work as an educator; all of those different pieces together make him the perfect fit for this role."

The additional staff resources will be indispensable for PDX Hillel as classes resume, along with a likely resumption of the issues that seemed to make each day an all-hands-on-deck scenario post Oct. 7. Sherman is looking forward to being better able to respond to student needs and promote an uplifting, forward-looking version of Jewish life on campus with this expanded team.

"We've talked about goals for this year and our overarching goal and theme is reclaiming Jewish joy. I think that we missed so much of that last year because we had to," Sherman said.

Learn more about Greater Portland Hillel's work in the coming academic year at pdxhillel.org.

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Nova survivor Reiner to speak at Neveh Shalom

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

Like so many Israelis, Ofri Reiner's life changed dramatically on Oct. 7, but she's determined to not let the horror and sorrow of the day define her life.

She'll bring that determination to Portland at her presentation "From Darkness to Light: Stories of Resilience with Nova Massacre Survivor Ofri Reiner," Wednesday, Sept. 11 at 7 pm at Congregation Neveh Shalom, presented by Israel 360 and StandWithUs.

As the title says, Reiner was at the Nova Festival in Southern Israel when Hamas terrorists came pouring over the Gaza border the morning of Simchat Torah. She and four of her friends drove away from the site until the car got stuck in a potato field. On foot and under rifle fire from terrorists, the group fled an additional 11 miles to a kibbutz that had not been attacked. Eventually, she made her way to her family's home to learn that her stepbrother, a soldier in the Israel Defense Forces Golani Brigade, was missing in action after he and others from his unit responded to the festival site.

"There were 24 soldiers in front of 1,500 terrorists," Reiner said. "He was the one defending me."

Days later, it was confirmed he was killed on Oct. 7.

"My entire belief system was completely broken," Reiner said. "I couldn't see beyond the next day."

She took to drawing – something she had not done at all before Oct. 7 – as a way to process events. Then she started talking about her experience. Her first public address was a somewhat spontaneous presentation to a Jewish high school in Los Angeles.

"I felt like speaking about the story again and being so vulnerable in front of a crowd that really wants to hear my voice was something that helped me through," she said. "I felt like I'm doing good, and since then it is a mission."

"She's not only somebody who can talk about the pain of what she's experienced, but her focus is on life moving forward," added Randy Kessler, Northwest Regional Director for StandWithUs. "She's not trying to sugarcoat the past. She's still deeply affected by what happened, but she's also trying to make sure that it doesn't define her life, and it doesn't prevent her from seeing the full color and beauty of life."

Registration for this free event is available online at members.nevehshalom.org/event/I360SoR24.

"I just want to invite people to create a community of people that care and want to hear this story as something that will build us up together," Reiner said.

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OneTable turns 10

The Jewish Review staff

For a decade, Shabbat tables have been set across the country to connect young folks with each other and with their Judaism thanks to OneTable.

"As OneTable turns 10, I am extremely proud of all we have accomplished and humbled by the OneTable communities that have brought our world closer," OneTable board chair Rob Orley said.

"Like love, Shabbat is an ever-replenishing resource for living a life of meaning and connection. Over the past ten years our lives have been turned upside down many times over — and OneTable Shabbat has been a constant," Co-founder and CEO Aliza Kline added.

Formed in 2013 through a collaboration of The Steinhart Foundation for Jewish Life and The Paul E. Singer Foundation, OneTable began as a way to answer the question "How might we invite Jewish young adults to create a meaningful, lasting Shabbat dinner practice at scale?" The answer, it turns out, is to provide those willing to open their Friday night tables with a way to connect with those looking to celebrate Judaism's most frequent holiday and with resources to support the shared celebration.

The first dinners were held in Brooklyn in 2014 and spread from there; throughout New York, then to Chicago, San Francisco and beyond – reaching Portland in 2016. OneTable has supported more than 2,000 dinners in Portland since then, hosting more than 12,000 total attendees – each one bringing something special to the table on Friday night.

"We gathered around the

table, sharing stories and laughter as we went around discussing the highlights of our week," Portland OneTable host Sam Greene said. "It was a beautiful moment of connection, each person adding their own unique touch to the conversation."

Through COVID, OneTable pivoted to the online realm to keep Jewish connection – and human connection – alive amid isolation protocols. The technology that helped make that possible is now available to other organizations through Powered By OneTable. In 2023, OneTable expanded to Canada and to those age 50 and over through OneTable Together. The togetherness of a Shabbat dinner has been more important than ever in the last year – and OneTable has continued to facilitate that connection.

"Since Oct. 7, Shabbat has offered us both an oasis and a reminder of a better future. Ahad Ha'am's infinite wisdom feels truer and truer every week, 'More than the Jewish people keep Shabbat, Shabbat keeps the Jewish people,'" Kline said. "In the eleven months following Oct. 7, more than 75,000 Jewish young adults have gathered at OneTable Shabbat dinners, which is 40 percent more than the previous year."

In its 10 years, OneTable has supported more than 137,000 dinners in more than 100 cities drawing, in total, over a million attendees. And there's more to come.

"Just imagine what the creative connections and embrace of Jewish life and wisdom OneTable can inspire in the next ten years," Orley said.

Learn more online at onetable.org.

Rohr's 'Shaken' looks at Torah through poetry

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

What started as a yearlong project has become a four-year journey culminating with the release of Brian Rohr's first book, "Shaken To My Bones."

Rohr's book is a collection of poems, each inspired by one of the *parshiyot*, the weekly Torah portions. It started on *Simchat Torah* in 2020 as Rohr embarked on a mission to journey through the entirety of the Torah, one *parsha* at a time.

"I had never, as a Jewish adult or as a Jewish storyteller, read the entire Torah the whole way through and I'd always wanted to," he said.

Amidst COVID lockdown, he joined an online Torah study group. Before their first meeting, he sat down to read the first section, *Parsha Bereshit*, and felt inspiration; fittingly, its first words are "In the beginning."

"I wrote a poem and I brought it to that first class and I read it and people seemed to like it," Rohr recalled. "So I wrote another one for *Noach*, which is the second week, and people liked it, too."

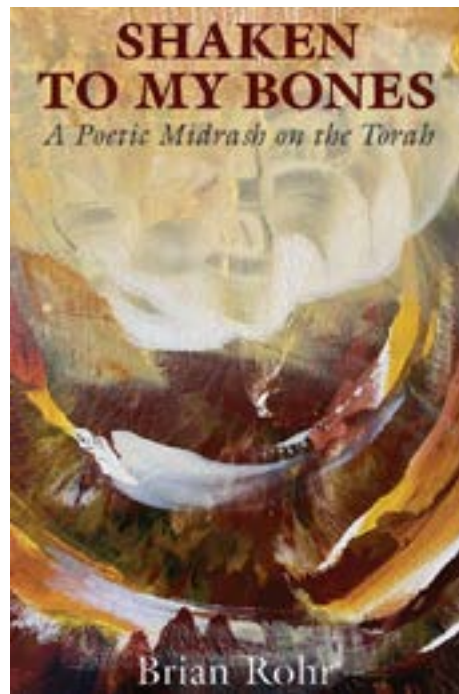
A few weeks in, Rohr made the commitment to himself to see out the whole year.

"I did not have any intention of writing a book or anything like that. It was just a kind of a personal creative endeavor, one that I really appreciated because it got me back into writing," he said.

The commitment to complete the project created a series of natural deadlines that produced inspiration where there might not otherwise have been any.

"I'll be honest, there were days where I was like, 'Oh, the class is coming up in an hour. I've got to write my poem,'" Rohr recalled. "Sometimes, those were my best poems."

Each poem naturally springs from its associated *parsha*, but also incorporates the circumstances that stemmed from Rohr's life – the isolation of COVID, the tumult of the 2020 presidential election and events that followed, and the joy of his wife's pregnancy and the birth of their second child. Some are



personal, some look through the eyes of characters Rohr creates to tell the story, and the 54 works are as stylistically diverse as the Biblical stories that inspired them.

"It's impossible to separate my life from the poems," Rohr explained, "because I was the one who wrote them."

"My Longing," the poem Rohr penned from *Parsha Vayeira*, contrasts the welcoming of Hashem's messengers by Abraham to the isolation of COVID – "Blue and red birds appear in my Birch tree; Squirrels run as I open the door. They are charming, not my kin. Truth is, I rarely welcome these days," the poem reads.

"There's so many things that were moving through me as I'm reading these ancient stories and ancient texts and trying to understand them and have a conversation with them," Rohr said. "All of it dances together to create this body of work, and sometimes it's more obvious than others."

By Simchat Torah 2021, Rohr had competed the Torah – and had assembled a manuscript of his own. But the journey was just beginning.

"In the editing process, you know, there were poems that I just threw out

completely, when you're writing, you know that much, not all of them land.

He set to the work of revising and polishing, soliciting feedback from friends and colleagues and eventually connecting with Marcela Sulak, the Director of The Shaindy Rudoff Graduate Program in Creative Writing at Bar-Ilan University just outside Tel Aviv, Israel.

"Her notes and feedback were invaluable to help me turn what was what I would consider a pretty rough draft into something that I felt comfortable with sending out," Rohr said.

Out it went to a pair of publishing houses, including Ben Yehuda Press in New Jersey. The home of the Jewish Poetry Project, Rohr was hopeful that Ben Yehuda would be interested in the work. They took their time making a decision – nine months, through which Rohr had other works rejected for publication to the point that he felt almost pre-defeated upon receiving an early morning email from the press almost a year ago. He debated reading it at work but decided to open it immediately.

It was two sentences long and had an attachment – a draft contract.

He reread it, aloud, to his wife and children downstairs.

"I read it to them and we all just started dancing and screaming and laughing and cheering," he said, reminiscent, perhaps, of the celebrations of the *Simchat Torah* holiday that marked the start of the journey. "It was such a beautiful moment."

The journey wasn't over then; contract negotiations and more revisions followed. The final step is the book's official release on Sept. 3, and a celebration of that release, along with a reading from the book by Rohr, at Congregation Neveh Shalom on Sept. 17 at 6:30 pm.

Pre-orders of the book are available from Ben Yehuda Press at benyehuda-press.com/books/shaken-to-my-bones and signed copies can be purchased along with registration for the launch party at members.nevehshalom.org/event/rohr-booklaunch.

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CHAPLAIN (continued from page 8)

“I actually see it as a natural progression,” he said. “Our mission is to serve the Jewish people, wherever they are and whatever context they may be in. Our mission is also to make the world a better place.”

While a Jewish rabbi will, of course, tend to the spiritual needs of Jewish soldiers and their families, chaplains are called upon to serve personnel of all faiths or no faith.

“I’ve always wanted to be a chaplain, but I also wanted to be a Chabad rabbi,” Rabbi Orenstein said. “So here I am, taking care of the community here in Tigard, and then I found out about the National Guard and how in the National Guard, you can do both. You can serve your community, you can do your quote-unquote day job, but then also serve our state and our country.”

The process has taken about a year to get to commissioning – Rabbi Orenstein applied, went through an interview process and a medical examination. He also had to pass a physical fitness assessment because while he’s a rabbi and a chaplain, the uniform is not merely decorative – Rabbi Orenstein is also a soldier.

“While a chaplain might not carry a weapon, you’ve got to be able to do all the physical things that any soldier would be asked to do,” he said.

Beyond monthly drill and summer training exercises, National Guard soldiers are called upon to provide aid in disasters. Oregon units have played important roles in suppressing major wildfires in the Pacific Northwest in recent years. Additionally, Rabbi Orenstein’s unit, the 741st BEB, is attached to the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, which was federalized and deployed to Louisiana and Texas in the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005.

“As a soldier National Guard, I serve the state first, but there is obviously that chance that we would have to serve the country in some sort of capacity,” Rabbi Orenstein said. “I love our country. I love being able to serve the United States and serve our soldiers.



Rabbi Capt. Menachem Orenstein speaks at his Oregon Army National Guard commissioning ceremony Sunday, Aug. 18 at Camp Withycombe in Clackamas. After completing the Army’s Basic Officer Leadership Course in the coming months, Rabbi Orenstein will continue his work at Tigard Chabad Jewish Center while participating in monthly drill weekends and annual training exercises with his unit, the 741st Brigade Engineer Battalion. (Aaron Perkins/Oregon Military Department)

I particularly love the National Guard because I like the idea of serving your community and your state first; I think that’s really cool.”

There’s also the remote possibility of being called to duty that’s farther afield and more dangerous – elements of the 41st IBCT have deployed twice each to Iraq and Afghanistan as part of the Global War on Terror.

Rabbi Orenstein said of the possibility of a combat deployment, “We’ll cross that bridge when we get to it.”

Rabbi Orenstein is not the first of his family to serve in uniform – both his grandfathers fought in World War II, one as a bomber crewman in Europe, the other as a Naval officer in the Pacific theater, while one of his grandmothers served in a Coast Guard medical unit.

“It was always a great sense of pride for me and for my family,” Rabbi Orenstein said of his grandparents’ service.

Now he gets to carry on that legacy while still serving the Jewish community in Tigard.

“It’s definitely something that complements what you’re doing on a regular basis. The average National Guard soldier has a regular civilian job,” Rabbi Orenstein said. “I know many people don’t really understand how the National Guard works and if I’m going to be honest, I might have not completely understood before I started this journey.”

That journey will continue in the next couple months when Rabbi Orenstein attends the Army’s Basic Officer Leadership Course, a program that orients new officers to the details of the Army and their jobs within it and stands in for the more typical Basic Combat Training. There, Rabbi Orenstein will have to get used to being saluted and addressed as Captain Orenstein.

“It goes both ways,” he said. “I’m not used to saluting people either and I’ve got to salute my superiors. The army culture and the military discipline is definitely something that could take a little bit of getting used to but I have confidence that I’ll be fine.”

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Shabbaton shines with young adult fun

The Jewish Review staff

Moishe Pod West PDX and Portland Jewish Connection partnered to host an Inaugural Young Adult Shabbaton at the Pod in Southwest Portland Friday through Sunday, Aug. 16-18.

Moishe Pod residents Sam Greene and David Stein organized the weekend to bring Jewish young adults in Portland together in a way that was reminiscent of the overnight camp experiences that many Jews find formative but others weren't able to experience in their childhoods.

The goal, Stein said, was to "recreate that in a more young adult way that still captures the magic of that kind of experience but also is very laid back, and everyone can kind of participate in whatever level is comfortable."

More than 30 participants joined over the course of the weekend, which started with Shabbat dinner on Friday night and continued into Saturday with camp-inspired "Jew-lympics" which included kickball, tennis, basketball and other sports. A live band and a backyard firepit capped off Saturday night, as well as meals cooked by Stein and Greene's mothers. While a number of participants came and went through the weekend, some camped out in the Pod's half-acre backyard.

"We had so many people come and participate, and a lot of joy was spread around," Greene said. "I feel like this weekend made a lot of people excited for future events, and it gave them an experience that they've never had."



Participants in the Moishe Pod West PDX and Portland Jewish Connection young adult Shabbaton take in live music and dinner at the pod in Southwest Portland Saturday, Aug. 17 (Courtesy Moishe Pod West PDX)

Learn more about future events by following Portland Jewish Connection on Facebook at facebook.com/groups/portlandjewishconnectionyoungadults and Moishe Pod West PDX on Instagram at instagram.com/moishepodwestpdx.

Oregon Holocaust Memorial, now 20 years old, a community achievement

By **DEBBI MONTROSE** and **SUE WENDEL**

Next Generations Group

As the 20th anniversary of the Oregon Holocaust Memorial in Washington Park approaches, and as daughters of its founder's dream, we pause to reflect, remember, to share its origin story; and to acknowledge all the individuals and private and public groups who made the dream of a Holocaust memorial in Portland a reality.

The dedication ceremony of the Oregon Holocaust Memorial took place on August 29, 2004, but its origins began 10 years earlier, in 1994, when our mother and Holocaust survivor Alice Kern, z"l, initially shared her dream with local survivors, Jane Rosenbaum, z"l, Eva Aigner, Chella Kryszek, z"l, Miriam Greenstein, z"l, Regina Langfus, z"l and others, as she said to them, "Most every major city has a Holocaust memorial, and Portland should too!"

This small group of survivors grew to a group of many, and together they created the Oregon Holocaust Survivors, Refugees and Families (OHSRAF) Steering Committee. The committee was dedicated to creating a memorial

and worked tirelessly for 10 years with many other individuals and groups to make their dream a reality.

At first, the Steering Committee's ideas included elements such as a "plaque of sorts" to be placed in their synagogues, or maybe a fountain at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center. Little did they ever imagine what would happen next and for the following 10 years.

After a *Jewish Review* article was published, a couple of City of Portland attorneys responded with their desire to help the Steering Committee, noting that Portland's outgoing Mayor Bud Clark had also wished for there to be a memorial to the Holocaust located somewhere in the city. Soon after, the city recommended a more public site for a memorial, and gifted the beautiful grassy field in Washington Park, the site of the original Washington Park caretaker's house.

The American Jewish Committee's Portland chapter and its national organization agreed to become the 501(c)3 sponsor and to oversee the memorial project, and the Oregon Holocaust

Memorial Coalition was assembled. OHMC consisted of professionals including a design team, which consisted of local survivor and structural artists, City of Portland landscape architects, attorneys, a historian, a typographer, a construction liaison and a land-use attorney.

Representatives from Portland's ecumenical and Jewish organizations were then contacted, and many joined the OHMC. With initial approvals from Portland Parks Bureau and local and state agencies, design and construction began. All the while, Rosenbaum, who now chaired the OHMC, and others from OHSRAF Steering Committee and OHMC contacted prospective donors. Eventually, thousands of individuals and community businesses and organizations would contribute donations to fund the memorial's construction and later an endowment that would support the costs of subsequent future upkeep.

Meanwhile, the design team interviewed each survivor from the Steering Committee and took to heart their

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MEMORIAL (continued from page 9)

memories and visions for a memorial. From those interviews, the Design Team and construction crew created and built the most eloquent representation of the survivors' visions and hopes.

There were a few tugs at the progress along the way, but due to the careful planning process, passion, generosity, dedication, and patience of all individuals and groups involved, the enduring legacy of the memorial that began as a desire in August of 1994, was finally completed. The dedication ceremony on Aug. 29, 2004 was attended by city and state dignitaries, other stakeholders including survivors, their descendants, and the community at large. The memorial would indeed become a place of contemplation and inspiration for all, for generations to come.

After the dedication in 2004, the OHMC and Design Team were dissolved, and the Oregon Holocaust Resource Center (OHRC) became the official memorial steward. In 2008, the Friends of the Memorial (FOM) was formed, consisting of members from the dissolved OHMC and Design Team. Its mission was to oversee the Memorial's financial needs such as maintenance, security, and outreach to promote awareness of and to commemorate the memorial's milestone anniversaries. FOM created the Oregon Holocaust Memorial Endowment and Education Fund that is held at the Oregon Jewish

Community Foundation.

In 2014, OHRC merged with the Oregon Jewish Museum to become the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education; the new institution became the official steward of the memorial. Upon that merger, OHSRAF Steering Committee combined with OJMCHE's Speakers Bureau, and FOM was dissolved, with OJMCHE taking on FOM's mission.

Today, the Next Generations Group, formed in 2009 with the mission to keep personal histories of survivors relevant for today's world, consists of survivors, descendants and community supporters, and helps to continue the memorial's legacy as well. Many NGG members participate in the OJMCHE Speakers Bureau and are trained OJMCHE Memorial Docents. Each year, NGG's programming includes gatherings at the memorial to commemorate Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Memorial Day) and for the memorial's anniversary every August.

As we commemorate the 20th anniversary of the memorial this year, we believe that it not only represents how individuals working together can make a dream come true, but that every visit to the memorial will prompt commemoration, contemplation, reflection, and inspiration, just as our mom and the OHSRAF Steering Committee always dreamed.



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For more information on any of these events or programs, please contact Laura Jeser @ lauraj@jewishportland.org
Visit www.jewishportland.org for information about additional Federation programs and services.

Takeaways from Patkovic arrest

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

SEPT 11

SEPT 5

By JESSICA ANDERSON

Last week, I awoke to the news that a Portland resident, Domagoj Patkovic, aged 31, had been arrested by the FBI for making a series of false bomb threats against Jewish healthcare facilities in New York state. According to a federal indictment, his threats had triggered repeated emergency responses from local law enforcement as well as a partial evacuation. Beginning at least as early as May 2021, Patkovic and others made anonymous phone calls in which they made violent threats, including threats to detonate explosive devices, to Jewish hospitals and care centers in New York, among other targets throughout the United States. KGW-TV reported that he used antisemitic slurs on nearly all the calls.

The indictment stated Patkovic himself made threats in at least six separate calls to hospitals and on a call with New York local law enforcement who had responded to a 911 notification from one of the hospitals. The defendant also live-streamed the calls to others on Discord, an online social media service. No explosive devices were ultimately found in any of the locations.

A few things stood out to me regarding this case. First, it was a reminder that law enforcement is always working behind the scenes, and they are committed to trying to stop these incredibly disruptive "swatting" activities and those who promote bias violence. I have every confidence that the FBI would have alerted us had Patkovic posed a threat to our com-



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.

munity and that between the time he was identified and the time of his arrest, they were continually evaluating and addressing this issue.

It's also worth noting that for some reason, he targeted New York organizations and not any here in Portland (that I'm aware of). I don't know why that is, but it highlights the importance of reporting and documenting any threatening or suspicious calls/emails, or contacts. These swatting calls were made in 2021, and it took 3 years for the case to result in an identification and arrest. We can't know at the time incidents occur what relevance they might have to a future investigation – here or elsewhere.

Lastly, the current charges against him are limited to those related to conspiring to and making threats related to explosives. They don't include hate or bias charges but know that an evaluation for those will continue to take place. It's often quicker and more efficient to get the person arrested with the basic charges of what they did and take the time to develop the bias charges while the person is in custody. Bias charges go to underlying intent can be much harder to demonstrate.

His animus against Jews was clear in the threats and I'm confident it will be brought into the ongoing proceedings against him.

Meanwhile, SCN's national High Holiday training webinars continue. "Welcoming and Safety: The Role of Greeters, Ushers, and Volunteers," is set for Thursday, Aug. 29 at 11am PT. This webinar will focus on best practices and skills used by non-staff helpers at large events. "Accessibility and Emergency Preparedness," will be held Thursday, Sept. 5 at 11am PT. This informational webinar will cover the myriad of topics that should be considered to ensure that your High Holiday events successfully include those with mobility or accessibility issues. The complete webinar schedule, along with registration links, can be found at securecommunity-network.org/high-holidays.

As always, if you have incidents to report or want to discuss a safety or security issue, please reach out to me at 872-273-9214 or janderson@securecommunity-network.org. Incident reporting can be made through the JFGP website at jewishportland.org/security.

Events

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

Aug. 30: North Coast Shabbat Group feat. Cantor Bitton

Services with Cantor Eyal Bitton of Congregation Neveh Shalom at the Bob Chisholm Community Center in Seaside at 7:30 pm. For more information, email Avrel Nudelman at efraim-levi526@gmail.com.

Sept. 1: Free First Sunday

Admission is free to the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education the first Sunday of each month. For more information, visit ojmche.org.

Sept. 1: Israeli Folk Dance at SWCC

Weekly class and open dancing at Southwest Com-

munity Center Sundays; lessons at 2:30 pm, open dancing at 3:30 pm. \$6. For more information, email Rhonaf@comcast.net.

Sept. 4: Jewish Poetry Book Club

Poetry book club meets first Wednesday of each quarter from 12:30-2:30 pm at Eastside Jewish Commons. For more information, visit ejcdx.org/events.

Sept. 6: Sephardic Community Shabbat Dinner

Kabbalat Shabbat service followed by Sephardic dinner the first Friday of each month at Congregation Ahavath Achim. \$20. RSVP required to melissa@ahavathachim.com.

Sept. 6: Shabbat on the Plaza

Outdoor Kabbalat Shabbat service at Congregation Beth Israel at 6 pm. Email tracy@bethisrael-pdx.org for more information.

Sept. 7: Mini Menses Travelling Tot Shabbat

Congregation Beth Israel children's outdoor Shabbat program at 9 am at Peninsula Park in North Portland. For more information, email chelsea@bethisrael-pdx.org.

Sept. 8: Gresham Community BBQ

Community barbecue at Gresham Chabad at 4 pm. \$20. Learn more and RSVP at jewishgresham.com/bbq

Sept. 11: From Dark-

ness to Light: Stories of Resilience

See story, page 6.

Sept. 13: JFCS Community Connection

Open community discussion group on Zoom at 10 am. For more information, visit jfcs-portland.org/services/counseling.

Sept. 15: The Mitzvah Project w/ Portland Backpack

Hands-on volunteer service opportunity for young adults from 1-3 pm and families with young children from 10 am-noon at Portland Backpack. For more information, visit jewishportland.org/themitzvahproject (young adults) or jewishportland.org/mitzvah-makers (families).

Jobs Board

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland is hiring a

Volunteer Coordinator (part-time)

To apply, visit jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/jewish-jobs/volunteer-coordinator

See more Jewish jobs at jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/jewish-jobs



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HOWARD LEVANT

It is with deep sadness that Congregation Shaarie Torah announces the passing of Howard LeVant, z”l, beloved father of Anne LeVant Prael, on Aug 16, 2024.

Howard spent his life pursuing beauty and art. As a band leader in high school and college, a folk singer in the early 60s, as a painter and photographer, and finally, as an advocate for the music and the arts in his final home of Penn Yan New York, Howard was endlessly generous with his talent and his knowledge.

Howard grew up in Chicago with his mother May Wolco LeVant, z”l, and two sisters, Pat LeVant Spranger, z”l, and Susan LeVant Roskin, z”l, surrounded by aunts and uncles and cousins in the West Rogers Park neighborhood. He studied at the Institute of Design, Chicago, and ran a successful commercial photography studio before becoming a professor at the Rochester Institute of Technology. His papers and photographs are archived at both the Institute of Design and the R.I.T. collections. A grateful student also established a fund in Howard’s name to aid students in the R.I.T. College of Art and Design. In retirement, he sat on the board of the Arts Center of Yates County and Finger Lakes Chamber Music, and the Yates Concert Series.

Howard married Nancy Hoffman LeVant in 1959 and was a devoted husband and father to Marjorie (Michael Gilman), Anne (Scott Prael), and David (Carla Stolnitz) throughout his life. His grandchildren William (Jenny Goldstein) Prael, Isaac Prael, Tristan and Quentin LeVant, and Jonah Gilman have inherited his generous spirit and easy sense of humor. His great grandchildren, Miriam Reyzl and Lev Simcha, will benefit from this legacy. Howard was predeceased by his sisters and mother, by his beloved daughter Margie, z”l, and his uncles and aunts.

Donations in his memory may be made to the Shaarie Torah General Fund.

ARLENE BRAUNSTEIN

Congregation Neveh Shalom is sorry to announce the passing of Arlene Braunstein, z”l, who died Aug. 11, 2024 at the age of 80. She is lovingly remembered by her children Andrew Braunstein and Amy Bancoes, and two grandchildren.

The funeral was held Sunday, Aug. 18, at Ahavai Shalom Cemetery.

ILENE GOLDBERG

Congregation Beth Israel mourns the loss of Ilene Goldberg, z”l, passed away peacefully on Aug. 17, 2024 at the age of 97. Ilene was born and raised in Portland, Ore. She was a graduate of Lincoln High School, and the University of California at Berkley. Ilene was preceded in death by her husband of 65 years, Maurice Goldberg, z”l; her daughter, Joan Ramsey, z”l; and her two siblings, Stanley Steinberg, z”l, and Thelma Schnitzer, z”l. She is survived by her son, Bruce Goldberg; and her two granddaughters, Carolyn and Jennifer Ramsey. Ilene was an avid golfer, enjoyed travel, the symphony, and served as a docent at Portland’s Japanese Garden. Donations in Ilene’s memory can be directed to Congregation Beth Israel.

SHARON STRAUS

It is with deep sadness that Congregation Shaarie Torah announces the passing Sharon Straus, z”l. See story, page 2.

SUSY HAMMEL

Congregation Beth Israel mourns the loss of Susan “Susy” Hammel, who passed away on Aug. 23, 2024 at the age of 84. Susy is survived by her two daughters, Marci Hammel & Katrina Gaynor and their families, and her cousin, Marilyn Penner Behrendt.

Susy was preceded in death by her husband, Jerry Hammel, z”l; mother and father, Sam & Sadie Kaufman, z”l, her in-laws, Goldie & Sam Hammel, z”l; her sister, Nancy Green, z”l; her great grandmother, Runi Hyman, z”l, and her aunts and uncles, Al Hyman, z”l, Natie Shapiro, z”l, Dinah Shapiro, z”l, and Willy Shapiro, z”l.

She lived a life full of fun, love and laughter, surrounded by friends and family. She will be greatly missed.

A funeral service was held on Monday, Aug. 26 at Congregation Beth Israel Cemetery.

Donations can be made to the following organizations that were close to her heart: Alzheimer’s Association of Oregon & SW Washington, Autism Society of Oregon, Mastocytosis Society, City of Hope, Congregation Beth Israel.

A celebration of her life will be held at a later date.

Life cycle

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

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Burial Societies

Portland has two holy societies of volunteers who prepare the deceased for burial according to Jewish tradition: Chevra Kavod haMet and the Portland Hevra Kaddisha.

For questions about end of life, death and mourning, email chevrakavodhamet@gmail.com, visit ChevraKavodHaMet.org, or contact the Portland Hevra Kaddisha at michael@cashcolan.com or 503-519-2454.



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