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In this undated photograph, Comedian Dotan Malach performs under the stage name Erik Angel at a Comedy for Peace show. Comedy for Peace, founded by Malach, will put on a pair of shows in Portland on Nov. 17. (Courtesy Comedy for Peace)

'The universal language of humor'

Comedy for Peace shows to offer respite, community

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

We could all use a reason to laugh. A list of the reasons could go on endlessly, but the above statement rings truer in this time than for most of recent memory.

Thankfully, such an opportunity to have a laugh – and experience Jewish community – is coming to Portland very soon.

Comedy for Peace, the brainchild of

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Candidates, groups inject Middle East issues into city and county races

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

Throughout the summer, candidates for elected office in Portland and the surrounding region have been making their case to voters and talking about the issues that affect their lives. Meanwhile, a handful of individuals – on the ballot and off it – have been working to make local government elections about another set of issues entirely.

In Portland, 118 people are candidates for 12 seats on the restructured City Council while 19 more are running for mayor. In April, 18 of those candidates signed on to a letter advocating for a ceasefire in the armed conflict between Israel and Hamas terrorists in Gaza. In late September, City Council District Four candidate Andra Vltavin sent an edited

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On the latest Podcast:



"Sukkot Subtleties" with Adinah Miller

"Go at 40" this Breast Cancer Awareness Month

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

"On April 11, 2016, I went in for what I thought would be another annual check-up," Michelle Caplan told a crowd of over 1,000 at the Susan G Komen More Than Pink Walk Aug. 24 at the Oregon Zoo. "Instead, my doctor found a lump in my breast. Ten days later, I received the call none of us want to get."

The walk raised more than \$66,000 for breast cancer research, a cause that Caplan, the Assistant Executive Director of Congregation Neveh Shalom, has been active in since shortly after that April doctor's appointment eight years ago. The phone call told her she had breast cancer, which was treated with a double mastectomy that has helped keep Caplan cancer-free since.

It was a big crowd, for sure, but nothing Caplan isn't comfortable with. She's been speaking to just such crowds since her days with B'nai B'rith Girls.

"A lot of people get nervous and freaked out about it, but I very much enjoy doing it," she said. "It's a cause that's very near and dear to my heart. I'm very passionate about it, and if I can share my story and it impacts someone else to go and get their mammogram done or to go into the doctor to get a checkup, then my job is done."

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and with new medical guidance that encourage all women ages 40 and over to get regular mammograms, it's a story Caplan wants to repeat.

"For a long time, it was 50," Caplan said. "Go when you're 40, get your baseline

mammogram."

Caplan also encouraged folks with family histories of cancer to consider genetic testing for gene mutations that are associated with increased cancer risk. Mutations in what are known as the BRCA1 and 2 genes are associated with a 60 percent lifetime chance of developing breast cancer, as well as increased risk of ovarian cancer and with aggressive forms of prostate cancer in men as well as pancreatic cancer across sexes. These mutations are present in approximately one in 400 American adults, but that frequency is 10 times higher in the Ashkenazi population.

Stephanie Goettl, a genetic counselor with Oregon Health and Science University in Portland told *The Jewish Review* last year that the genetic testing procedure is as simple as a blood draw or a saliva swab, and more affordable than one might think.

"We have pretty good luck with having insurance cover genetic testing, especially when people meet the criteria," Goettl said. "Probably about 90 percent of people end up paying \$100 or less for testing."

For those who wouldn't otherwise qualify, the Healthy Oregon Project offers free testing for 30 genetic disease risk factors, including both BRCA mutations, for free as part of an ongoing research project at OHSU. More information is available at Healthyoregonproject.com.

Caplan also emphasized that, for those going through their own cancer journeys: You are not alone, and community is an essential part of

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Rosen joins JFGP in new Life and Learning position

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Yosef Rosen has worn various hats over his career. Starting Nov. 1, he'll add another one that merges many of the hats he's worn into one as he begins his new role as the Director of Jewish Life and Learning at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

"Our Jewish community study talked about 'comfort with one's Jewish literacy' as a barrier to Jewish involvement. It is our hope that Yosef will provide a variety of educational opportunities to increase people's interest in Jewish history, texts, and ideas," Federation President and CEO Marc Blattner said. "Much of his focus will be on those individuals who are currently not involved in Jewish organizations, and these programs will be in addition to educational opportunities already happening in Jewish Portland."

Rosen grew up in a large Orthodox family back east. While his parents were more modern in their outlook – his father is a college professor, while his mother is a software engineer – Rosen grew up in a haredi, sometimes referred to as "ultra-Orthodox," neighborhood, exposing Rosen to advanced Torah study from a young age. It's not an environment he remained in, however.

"By the time I was a teenager, I was feeling estranged," Rosen said. "I really wanted to disentangle Judaism from power."

As a young adult, he found his deepest connection with other young adults who had left Orthodoxy but felt himself drawn to what he described as "the part of Judaism that no one ever talks about" – Kabbalah. The study of Kabbalah propelled Rosen's academic studies, culminating in a doctoral dissertation on the Zohar, one of the foundational works of Kabbalah, at the University of California, Berkeley. By this point, Rosen was done with academia and took a position at Jewish Community High School in San Francisco. It gave him a crash course in teaching in a way that his time as a graduate student simply couldn't – both in-person and, when COVID struck, virtually.

"With teenagers, you darn well better think about your methodology," Rosen explained. "You really need to be thinking about their experience as learners."

Rosen had already begun building adult engagement programs by this time; he played a key role in a longstanding Jewish encampment at the annual Burning Man Festival in Nevada's Black Rock Desert and had led programs at Moishe Houses in the Bay Area. For all he learned and enjoyed in his experience at JCHS, he was drawn to a different audience – an older one.

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THE JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER PORTLAND
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COMEDY FOR PEACE

**If you haven't already, all attendees will be invited to
make a gift to the 2025 Campaign for Community Needs.**

Comedy for Peace is a project that aims to unite Jewish and Muslim communities through humor and mutual understanding. They bring together the best Jewish and Muslim stand-up comedians for an inspiring, funny, and unforgettable experience.

Modern Mishkan: A fleeting but enduring embrace

By JENN DIRECTOR KNUDSEN

For The Jewish Review

Just as a sukkah is temporary, so, too, is an embrace. But the feeling of it can last.

“Embrace” is a common theme of the “The Modern Mishkan” installation by silk artist Diane Fredgant. Debuting at the Eastside Jewish Commons for an event that purposefully coincided with Sukkot, Fredgant’s literally and figuratively expansive piece remains on display through Simchat Torah (Friday, Oct. 25).

The Thursday, Oct. 17 event, “From the Belly of the Mishkan: Art and Performative Poetry,” included music by members of the band DownStairs, the poetry of Brian Rohr from his recently published “Shaken to My Bones: A Poetic Midrash on the Torah” and an artist talk-back.

Last August, Rohr approached Fredgant about holding a joint event weaving together his poetry and her art. Eric Stern, the EJC’s arts curator and events coordinator, said that he jumped at the opportunity to offer an “uplifting” affair that would occur after Oct. 7 “to remind us of our collective neshama (soul) with art, poetry and song.”

During the mid-October evening’s talk-back, one member of the standing-room-only audience said, “I felt like the branches enfolded and enveloped me.” Said another: “I felt like I was being hugged by the scrolls, like they could wrap around me.”

The Hebrew word mishkan has many meanings, including a reference to the tabernacle in which G-d – via G-d’s words in the scrolls of Torah – dwells. After the destruction of the Temple in ancient times, the Torah’s dwelling place became transitory if not temporary, a venue that could and did move, from community to community.

At the EJC, The Modern Mishkan is composed of 71 square yards of painted silk that Fredgant inked with the 613 commandments in both Hebrew and English. Its centerpiece is a primarily blue chuppah-like structure whose



Diane Fredgant, a self-taught silk artist, engages the standing-room only audience at the Eastside Jewish Commons Thursday, Oct. 17 during the talk-back portion of the event, “From the Belly of the Mishkan: Art and Performative Poetry.” Twelve years and counting in the making, her hand-painted silk piece is festooned with Hebrew and English, a tree, branches, leaves and many layers of meaning. (Jenn Director Knudsen for The Jewish Review)

key feature is a brown tree with many branches and green leaves that reach up and over the canopy to form an opaque roof that light filters through.

Flowing like two outstretched arms from the left and right of the three-sided structure are the proverbial pages of Torah. Each side ends in a wooden spindle; the display reaches eight feet in height.

A self-taught silk artist, Fredgant, 64, believes the seed of her Modern Mishkan idea was planted more than a dozen years ago. She credits P’nai Or’s Rabbi Aryeh Hirschfield, z”l, as its gardener. She recalls his retelling of Exodus 25-27 that minutely details the construction and adorning of the original tabernacle.

“For most people, it’s a snorefest,” she said of the Torah text. “But for me, for some reason, I loved it” as the rabbi brought to visual life the original structure destroyed in 586 B.C.E. “I am so visual, that that really spoke to me,” she

said.

Fredgant says The Modern Mishkan is not yet completed; she doesn’t know when – or if – it ever will be. But she does know it holds people and community tight.

She said, “I’m hoping that people will feel connected – to each other, their Source, their sacredness. To not feel alone. This is my way of putting this out there.”

“My space is set up as self-reflective, surrounded and embraced by Torah.”

Learn more about Fredgant’s work at silksbydiane.org

A self-described dinosaur who still keeps a hand-written daily calendar, Jenn Director Knudsen has published work in The Boston Globe, The Oregonian, the San Francisco Chronicle, The Forward and HuffPost, among other outlets. Her most recent personal essay is available at [The Mother Chapter](http://TheMotherChapter.com). Find her on [Substack](http://Substack.com).



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



Mayoral candates speak at VAFBC

Above, Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Chief Community Relations and Public Affairs Officer Bob Horenstein addresses voters and candidates at a Portland Mayoral Candidate Forum sponsored by the Federation and the NAACP Monday, Oct. 21 at Vancouver Avenue First Baptist Church in Portland. KATU-TV reporter Tanvi Varna, right, served as moderator and posed questions about homelessness and other pressing issues in Portland to the five leading candidates (bottom row, from left) City Commissioner Mingus Mapps, Liv Osthus, City Commissioner Rene Gonzalez, City Commissioner Carmen Rubio and Keith Wilson . A recording of the event is available through the church's YouTube channel at [youtube.com/watch?v=sJfCrtlp6Hw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJfCrtlp6Hw). (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)



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COMEDY (continued from page 1)

Dotan Malach, will perform a pair of shows Sunday, Nov. 17, at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center in Portland at 3 pm and 7 pm. Hosted by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, the shows serve as a fundraiser for the Federation's annual campaign.

"These two shows will give our community the space to be together and be inspired through laughter, witnessing diverse communities of comedians on stage 'making a difference' through comedy while making an impact of their own with support of our community's needs and giving to our 2025 Campaign for Community Needs," Federation Chief Development Officer Wendy Kahn said.

Malach was raised in Israel and pursued a career in music before shifting to comedy, initially under the stage name Erik Angel.

"All my life people told me that I should do comedy. I used to tell funny stories between my songs," he said.

As an Israeli Jew, Malach had limited exposure to Israel's non-Jewish population early in life. His travels for music and comedy changed that.

The meetings were very friendly, very. We were very curious about each other, and I felt that one day I want to do something artistic about it," Malach recalled. "When I arrived in New York and became part of the comedy scene here, I met very talented Muslim comedians and Arab Christian comedians. They loved the idea."

Comedy for Peace's first show was in 2019 in New York and was an instant success.

Laura Jeser, the Federation's Associate Campaign and Engagement Officer and a former comedian, can see why.

"I think the Comedy for Peace comedians aren't just funny; they're cultural ambassadors," she said. "They've mastered the art of breaking down barriers and bringing people together through the universal language of humor. They take these complex, sensitive topics and turn them into hilarious, relatable experiences for everyone in the audience, proving that laughter truly is the best medicine."

Comedy for Peace's tagline is "no politics, just laughs." While some of the material certainly comes from parts of the

world in crisis, the point is to bring people together – all people.

"The idea of Comedy for Peace is not to be a political show or Israel/Palestine show. It's about being together, about different communities under one roof," Malach said.

A recent addition to Comedy for Peace's shows has been a Q-and-A period after each performance.

"We still get people that never asked a Muslim a question, never met one, or vice versa with a Jewish guy, especially from Israel," Malach said. "I really love those shows that, at the end, some of the audience stay to speak with us, to take pictures and also to speak with each other."

"We often don't know people different from us, with varying opinions, backgrounds, or beliefs. Many listen, read, and speak to those who reinforce our viewpoints," Kahn said. "As American Jews, we are living in the most polarized time of our lifetimes. Comedy for Peace is a meaningful project that shows the power of laughter to rise above suffering, conflict, and not knowing who our neighbors are."

There are few better ways of expressing shared humanity than laughter – and those, at the end of the day, are the whole point.

"The people that are really involved," Malach said of the many conflicts around the globe, including in Israel and the surrounding region, "most of them just want to live and to find a peaceful way. Politics, religion and all kind of financial interests come in between, but we just want to live."

The quest for common ground – and a break from the challenges of life in 2024 – were major motivating factors for the Federation to invite Comedy for Peace to Portland as part of the group's West Coast tour.

"Comedy and tragedy are intertwined, painting a fuller picture of the human condition. We knew that Comedy for Peace was the right for the Greater Portland Jewish community – post-election and post-10/7 commemoration. We need to look forward; this project demonstrates a hopeful way to do just that," Kahn said.

More information is available online at jewishportland.org/community-calendar/comedy-for-peace-a-time-to-be-together.

ROSEN

(continued from page 2)

"I had a sense that this is great but this is not my heart's calling because I really wanted to engage with adults," Rosen explained.

So, Rosen, his wife and their then 1-year-old son left San Francisco and hit the road for a few months. They found themselves in Jerusalem on Oct. 7 of last year, then in Greece and Spain, before landing in his wife's hometown – Portland.

"It's not the Bay Area, but it's got some West Coast vibe," Rosen recalled of coming to Portland. "We did a six-month sublet in the winter, and we thought, 'Wow, this actually feels good.'"

Rosen assembled an amalgamation of roles, in Portland and online, during this time. He became the temporary spiritual leader of Congregation Ahavath Achim, the Sephardic synagogue his wife's great-grandparents helped found. He's been teaching classes through Co/Lab and online. He's been DJ'ing – another passion of his – for events around town. Then the Federation announced this new role.

"It feels like someone designed a job for me. Where the education is at the front, but there's also a real sense of life and engagement," he said. "It's not just, 'we want you to give lecture series to the smart Jews,' but how do you bring disconnected Jews into new types of connection and community?"

Rosen is available after Nov. 1 at yosef@jewishportland.org.

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JFCS' Schmoozeapalooza returns Oct. 27

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

Get your party shoes ready-- Jewish Family & Child Service's Schmoozeapalooza senior prom is back for a second year, and you're invited!

This year's Schmoozeapalooza for adults ages 60 and up is Sunday, Oct. 27 at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center from 1-4 pm and builds on the success of last year's inaugural event.

"We got overwhelmingly positive feedback from the event," explained Missy Fry, JFCS's Lead Aging and Adult Services Clinician. "We didn't have any suggestions for changes except that they asked for it to be an annual event."

Last year's program was mainly aimed at JFCS's client base, primarily Holocaust survivors, to keep attendance manageable. With the experience and the success of the inaugural prom, however, it's onward and upward.

"We wanted to expand it and grow," Robyn Taylor, Marketing and Events Manager for JFCS said. "This year [JFCS is] really focusing on building community and connections, not just within JFCS, but also out into the community."

As part of that community building, this year's event is co-sponsored by the MJCC.

"It's a free event for folks to come to and to get them engaged with others of the same age and just to have a good time in the afternoon listening to music and hav-



Promgoers cut a rug at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center during the inaugural Schmoozeapalooza senior prom Sunday, Oct. 22, 2023. The prom, now co-sponsored by the MJCC and Jewish Family & Child Service, returns Sunday, Oct. 27. (Rockne Roll/Jewish Review file)

ing refreshments," MJCC Assistant Executive Director Jenny Robinett said. "It's a fun gathering for folks that may not be able to get together. So, we wanted to be a part of it."

That focus – a pure emphasis on being together in community – is a departure from many of JFCS's programs and highlights that community is essential – for everyone, but especially for older adults who often grow isolated as they age.

"One of the things I really like about it is that there's not another thing attached to

it," Fry said. "It's purely to go and have fun and to engage as much as you want or don't want to. There's dancing, there's the photo booth. People can bring a friend with them if they want."

As Robinett said, the event is free – thanks in large part to the MJCC's co-sponsorship as well as a large donation from Marcy Tonkin.

"She wanted to support different types of programming to develop opportunities for socialization or other ways for older adults specifically to engage," Fry said of Tonkin's gift "We wanted

to make this as accessible as possible for folks; one of the pieces of that is cost."

There's also been a significant amount of volunteer support for the event.

"We call it the Prom Committee, which they love," Taylor said. "Our prom committee are very wonderful volunteers from the community who are helping with everything from putting together goodie bags to helping with the decorations."

More information about this year's Schmoozeapalooza is available online at jfcc-portland.org/senior-prom-2024.

CANCER (continued from page 2)

getting through a challenge as weighty as a cancer diagnosis.

"It's not just cancer. I think it's any kind of crisis, whether it's a mental health crisis or whether it's some kind

of medical crisis," she said. "Especially in today's day and age with technology, those communities are out there in a way that they haven't been out there before

for us."

Breast Friends, an organization Caplan has also worked with, is hosting a survivors' lunch at the end of the month.

"If people have questions, they can reach out to me," Caplan said. "I am happy to be that resource for people in our in the Jewish community as well."

ELECTION (continued from page 1)

version of this resolution to an email list that included the majority city council candidates – a list that has been at the center of an investigation by the Oregon Secretary of State’s office into a donation-swapping system intended to manipulate Portland’s public election funding mechanisms.

“As we approach the one-year mark of Israel’s response to the events on October 7th, 2023,” Vltavin’s email begins, “Palestine is back in the forefront of the global consciousness.”

The attached resolution, which asks candidates to commit to “a permanent ceasefire resolution and arms embargo, call for entry of all humanitarian aid required to end the human suffering in Gaza, and advocate for reparations for the Palestinian people” within three months of taking office, was initially signed by mayoral candidates Durrell Javon Kinsey Bey, Liv Osthus and Shei’Meka As-Salaam, City Council District 1 candidates Cayle Tern, David Linn and Thomas Shervey, District 2 candidates Antonio Jamal PettyJohnBlue, Chris Olson, Jennifer Park and John Middleton, District 3 candidates Ahlam Osman, Angelita Morillo, Chris Flanary, Kelly Janes, Luke Zak, Theo Hathaway Saner and Tiffany Koyama Lane and District 4 candidates Vltavin, Chris Henry and Mitch Green.

Not everyone was onboard.

“I was pretty upset, pretty distressed by it,” Stan Penkin, a candidate for City Council District 4, told *The Jewish Review*. “It’s one thing to want a ceasefire. I think we all want to see peace there. But the letter was so divisive.”

Penkin and one of his opponents, Bob Weinstein, came together to issue a response.

“As Jews, we are both devastated by the loss of innocent lives and want to see a ceasefire, a return of the hostages and peace in the region. We also do not appreciate the inflammatory nature of the letter which only serves to divide candidates before the election and does not bode well for a collaborative new City Council,” the pair said.

Weinstein and Penkin also called out the choice to focus on foreign policy issues in city elections and to apply that focus purely to the Jewish state.

“If City Council wants to focus on international politics, it could expend valuable time on the atrocities in Ukraine, Sudan, Yemen or other hot spots in the world, but the letter writers have chosen to focus only on Israel,” they said.

In an email that was obtained by *Willamette Week*, Sam Sachs, a candidate for City Council District 2, said, “As a Jew whose grandparents immigrated to Portland in the 1940’s I am honestly disgusted and offended that you would choose to send this out now at this time and that you refer to the massacre that occurred on October 7th as ‘events.’”

Morillo, one of the signatories to the initial letter, responded that she did not support an updated resolution, writing “we have a responsibility to acknowledge Jewish pain on that day without negating that a genocide is happening. We can hold both, but I don’t think this letter adequately addresses that nuance as it’s written now.” Her email, as well as messages from Green, Koyama Lane, and Osthus endorsing her position, were also obtained by *Willamette Week* and they were removed from the list of signatories, along with

Timur Ender, a more recent signatory and a candidate for City Council District 1.

Jewish Federation of Greater Portland President and CEO Marc Blattner was not so equivocal in his reference to the letter.

“No mention of October 7. No mention of the Israelis killed or those sexually assaulted. No mention of the hostages. No understanding that Israeli families in Portland have been impacted, including a woman whose brother is still being held hostage,” he wrote in his weekly email newsletter. “I respect everyone’s personal thoughts/views on a ceasefire, the Hamas-Israel war, etc. The Jewish Federation, however, stands steadfast that our local elected officials should focus on issues facing our city and issues they have jurisdiction over.”

Weinstein, the District 4 candidate who co-authored the response statement with Penkin, put his summation bluntly.

“I viewed it as a distraction and not an appropriate distraction,” he told *The Jewish Review*.

Meanwhile, outside groups had already taken a run at injecting issues around Israel – and their own spin on them – into the race.

The Portland Association of Teachers sent out an initial endorsement questionnaire that focused on local issues, but followed it up with a supplemental questionnaire that asked: “Do you believe Portland elected officials have done their due diligence in responding to the ongoing genocide in Palestine? Has Portland ‘done enough’ for Palestine? Or does work remain to be done?”

Weinstein recalled the issue did not come up in his endorsement interview with PAT, but he was asked about the Portland Police Bureau’s use of force against “non-violent protesters,” specifically referencing anti-Israel demonstrators that had taken to Portland streets and taken over the library at Portland State University earlier this year.

“I was pretty surprised,” about PAT’s line of questioning, he said. “I did not get endorsed.”

Vadim Mozyrsky, a candidate Multnomah County Board of Commissioners District 1, got the same supplemental questionnaire. He didn’t say whether he found the question surprising, but he was decidedly not pleased to get it.

“Rather than asking people questions relating to what kids need or for that matter, what teachers might need in order to help kids study, they asked, in order to endorse candidates for office, what they thought about the Middle East,” he said.

Mozyrsky also received endorsement questionnaires from Street Roots, the weekly newspaper and homeless advocacy group, and the Portland Metro People’s Coalition, a coalition of activist groups and political organizations advocating around progressive issues, asking about issues in the Middle East. Street Roots used one of its five questions to ask, after referencing the County’s ceasefire resolution, “How can the county continue to support community members, including county staff, who are impacted by the war” in Gaza, while PMPC asked candidates to endorse a platform of issues, including a demand by coalition member Jewish Voice for Peace for local governments to divest from “Israel Bonds

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and companies that profit from the occupation.”

Mozyrsky pointed out that no mention was made of Hamas’ attacks on Israel or of the hostages still being held in Gaza.

“[They’re] not discussing the other side of the coin there but talking about Israel’s campaign and how they can support people impacted by it. I’m seeing this more and more,” he said. “Obviously I’m Jewish, but my family came here as refugees from the USSR. Back then, in the paperwork, it would actually say that you were ethnically Jewish, so that when people, authorities or otherwise, looked at your paperwork, they would know that they could discriminate against you.”

Mozyrsky had just received the inquiry from PMPC when he spoke with The Jewish Review. He declined to answer the questionnaire from Street Roots – “I Just feel that’s abhorrent.”

“Asking people to show support for Gaza, it’s free speech in some ways,” he said. “But when it becomes a litmus test for people getting into office, you have to wonder who was actually coordinating this and for what reasons?”

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Oregon Jewish Voices celebrates quarter century with Oct. 30 reading

Oregon Jewish Voices

Started in 1999 and organized by writer Willa Schneberg, Oregon Jewish Voices’ annual event features readings by prominent Oregon Jewish poets and writers. This year, the annual series celebrates a quarter-century of showcasing Oregon Jewish writers with a public reading Wednesday, Oct. 30 at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education in Portland. Doors open at 6:30 pm, with the program to begin at 7 pm.

The writers in the 2024 program, David Axelrod, Jan Baross, Marat Grinberg, Willa Schneberg and Jodi Varon, span a range of genres, including fiction, poetry, non-fiction, and essays and will share selections from their work.

Axelrod is the author of ten collections of poems, most recently *Skiing with Dostoyevsky: New & Selected Poems*. His poems and essays appear in many journals, including: *About Place*, *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *American Poetry Journal*, *Crazy Horse*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Kenyon Review*, *New Letters*, *Poetry Northwest*, *Quarterly West* and *Verse Daily*. He taught at Eastern Oregon University in La Grande from 1988 to 2020. He now teaches letterpress printing at the University of Montana on a 1935 Hacker Test Press and founded Bear Scratch Press, and lives in a former gravel pit where he tends a small native plants nursery.

Baross is a novelist, documentary filmmaker, photographer, screenwriter, playwright, cartoonist, journalist, film critic and librettist. She has made more than thirty documentaries, some of which aired on A&E and OPB, and was a film critic for Oregon newspapers. One of her plays, *Mata Hari*, was turned into an award-winning opera, for which she wrote the libretto. Her debut novel, *José Builds a Woman*, was released in 2006 by Ooligan Press with blurbs by Ursula K. Le Guin and Molly Gloss. Her second novel, *Bye-Bye Bakersfield*, won first place in the San Miguel Writers Competition. Her many illustrated travel guides were published by MPOLO Press.

Grinberg immigrated to the United States from Ukraine in 1993, and received a PhD in Comparative Literature from the University of Chicago in 2006.

A scholar of modern Jewish and Russian literature and culture, and of cinema, he is a Professor of Russian and humanities at Reed College. A prolific writer, Grinberg’s latest book, published by Brandeis University Press’s Tauber Institute Series for the Study of European Jewry, is the widely reviewed *The Soviet Jewish Bookshelf: Jewish Culture and Identity Between the Lines*. He is also the translator and editor of the just-published *Mikhail Goldis, Memoirs of a Jewish District Attorney from Soviet Ukraine*. His most recent essays have appeared in *Tablet Magazine*, *Mosaic*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, and *Jewish Journal*. He is currently writing a book about Jewishness and the Holocaust in Soviet and East European science fiction.

Schneberg is a poet, multi-disciplinary artist, ceramicist, curator and psychotherapist in private practice, and has authored six poetry collections including, *The Naked Room* (2023), and *Rending the Garment*, about the lives of her parents, native Brooklynites. She has received the Oregon Book Award. During the pandemic, she presented a reading of her poetry and ceramic sculpture on Zoom, sponsored by the Israel Association of Writers in English. Her sculpture is in the permanent collection of OJM-CHE and Havurah Shalom. Willa, along with former OJM-CHE executive director, Judy Margles, founded “Oregon Jewish Voices,” which she still curates.

Varon is the author of two memoirs in linked essays: *Your Eyes Will Be My Window*, published in September of 2023 by the University of Georgia Press and *Drawing to an Inside Straight: The Legacy of an Absent Father*, a WILLA Award finalist from *Women Writing the West*. A translator of the Tang Dynasty Chinese poet Li He, Varon’s translation is entitled *The Rock’s Cold Breath: Selected Poems of Li He*. Jodi is a professor emeritus of English and Writing at Eastern Oregon University, a founding editor of *basalt: a journal of fine and literary arts*. She lives with her husband, Axelrod, near Missoula, MT where they raise native plants.

Tickets to this year’s reading are \$13, \$8 for museum members, and can be purchased at ojmche.org/events.

Tips for international travel

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

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OCT 31

By JESSICA ANDERSON

With High Holidays winding down, many of us may be getting ready for Fall and Winter travel – perhaps somewhere warm? Secure Community Network recently developed a Traveler Safety program, guiding folks on how to stay safe during domestic and international travel. The Traveler Safety Training was designed by a team of national professionals with critical real-world experience and deep instructional design backgrounds. The breadth of experience ranges from local to federal law enforcement professionals who themselves have traveled all over the world conducting investigations, operations, and personal travel. They have first-hand knowledge of best practices that will proactively enhance your safety and prevent making yourself an easy target.

I'll focus on international travel today. Moving beyond the basics of getting familiar with your destination, there are some basic steps you can take to minimize hassles. Before you head out make sure someone has your itinerary and do not share information on social media or with people outside of your trusted circle before you go. I've personally known people whose houses were broken into while on travel because they were too open about how long they would be gone. Also, consider hard-sided luggage which offers more protection for your items as well as securing an AirTag or other



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.

inexpensive tracking device inside your suitcase. Ensure you have a luggage tag, but only write your name and phone number, never your home address.

The overarching goals are to be aware, blend in, and have a plan. This might involve downloading maps ahead of time perhaps even printing some out in case there you have phone issues. Avoid the “overly helpful” offers of assistance and even in ride-shares, have a sense of where you're going and the general routes of travel. Make sure everyone in your group knows what to do if you get separated and keep the phone number of the closest US Embassy handy as well as the local emergency number.

Be knowledgeable about the area or neighborhood you're in and consider how you look to others – do you blend? What do your clothes, carried items, and behavior say about you? Do you appear confident, even when you're lost?

Cultural knowledge is also a way to improve your safety – what are the norms of the area you're traveling to? Be aware of the laws and any

potential protest activity. Also consider how Americans are viewed in the area.

Lastly, the State Department recently launched an updated traveler program. According to their information, the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) (<https://my-travel.state.gov/s/step>) is a free service for U.S. citizens living or traveling abroad to receive safety and security alerts and other local updates by email from the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Enrolling in STEP also makes it easier for the State Department to contact U.S. citizens during an emergency. All U.S. citizens traveling or living abroad are strongly encouraged to enroll (or re-enroll) at www.step.state.gov. If you do end up calling the embassy for any reason, they'll already have you on record as a traveler.

These are just a few of the topics covered in this traveling course, if you're interested in getting more information and best practices about your upcoming travel, please contact me at janderson@securecommunitynetwork.org or 872-273-9214.

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OJCF's Leikam named to Mandel cohort

Oregon Jewish Community Foundation

Sonia Marie Leikam, Director of Outreach at the Oregon Jewish Community Foundation (OJCF), has been selected by the Mandel Institute to participate in Cohort VI (2025–2026) of its Executive Leadership Program. This 18-month fellowship aims to support midcareer professionals in the Jewish community in refining their leadership and management skills while clarifying their visions for Jewish communal life.

David Forman, OJCF's CEO, noted, "This is a great opportunity for Sonia Marie to enhance her knowledge and skills

to strengthen her impact on our Oregon and SW Washington Jewish community. I look forward to her bringing what she learns from the program into her role at the Foundation."

The program includes seminars in the United States and Israel, virtual workshops, small peer group meetings, and individualized advising sessions. Leikam is one of 18 participants chosen from various Jewish nonprofits, including Federations, JCCs, Hillels, and other educational and advocacy organizations. The cohort includes diverse representatives from communities across the United States and Canada.

Show Us Your Sukkah!



The Jewish Review is holding a Sukkot photo contest - send us a picture of you and your family building or enjoying your sukkah for a chance to win a Sukkot-themed prize pack and be featured in The Jewish Review!

Email entries to editor@jewishportland.org by Oct. 28



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Obituaries

Submit obituaries online at form.jotform.com/JFGP/jr-obituary

MARVIN KORACH

Congregation Beth Israel mourns the loss of Marvin Korach, z"l, who passed away on Oct. 7, 2024 at the age of 87.

Marvin is survived by his wife, Lesley Korach; children Aaron Korach (Sarah) and Jordan Korach (Cally), and grandchildren, Ben Korach, Mia Korach, Jacob Korach, and Leo Korach.

Marvin was preceded in death by his father, Morris Korach, z"l; mother, Leah Korach, z"l; and siblings, Gertrude Broner, z"l, Abe Korach, z"l, and Ruth Zwick, z"l.

The funeral was held at Landau Chapel at Beth Israel Cemetery Thursday, Oct. 10.

Donations in Marvin's memory can be directed to the Rabbi Rachel Joseph Discretionary Fund with Congregation Beth Israel

LILLIAN BURKA

It is with deep sadness that Congregation Shaarie Torah announces the passing of Lillian Burka, z"l, beloved mother of Lynne (Mitch) Cohen and Neil (Linda) Burka. Lillian died Thursday, Oct. 10, 2024. She was 96 years old.

She is survived by her children Lynne (Mitch) Cohen and Neil (Linda) Burka, grandchildren Kelli Cohen Tevet, Bennett (Anya) Cohen, Nicholas (Chelley) Burka and Jennifer (Dave) Burka and great-grandchildren Sofia Tevet, Lillian Tevet, Eloise Cohen and Willem Cohen. She was predeceased by husband Norman Burka, z"l.

The funeral was held on Tuesday, Oct. 15, 2024 at Temple Beth Ami in Rockville, Md.

Donations in Lillian's memory may be made to Portland Jewish Academy.

DONALD EICHMAN

It is with deep sadness that Congregation Shaarie Torah announces the passing of Donald Eichman, z"l. Donald died on Tuesday, October 15, 2024. He was 86 years old.

He is survived by his daughters, Jennifer Johnston and Rachel Carlson, grandchildren Abra and Sophia Carlson and Amelia and Reed Johnston, and cousins Rose and Art Bloom, Sandra Oster, Francis and Larry Policar. He was predeceased by his mother Elsie Goldfoot Eichman, z"l.

The funeral was held on Sunday, Oct. 20, 2024 at Shaarie Torah Cemetery.

JEFFREY STEVENS

Congregation Beth Israel mourns the loss of Jeffrey Stevens,

z"l, who passed away on Sept. 24, 2024 at the age of 81.

Jeffrey is survived by his wife, Wendy Lane Stevens; his son, Jacob Stevens (Danarae); two granddaughters, Sienna and Arianna; his sister, Judy Schwartz (Terry Marre); and his miniature poodle, Remy. Jeffrey was preceded in death by his parents, David and Myra Schwartz, z"l.

The funeral will be held at Pollin Chapel at Congregation Beth Israel Sunday, Oct. 27 at 4 pm. The funeral will be followed by a Celebration of Life at Multnomah Athletic Club.

Donations in Jeffrey's memory can be directed to Congregation Beth Israel.

ELAINE SAVINAR

Elaine Savinar, z"l, passed away peacefully on Oct. 14, 2024 at the age of 96.

Elaine was born in Vancouver, BC, in 1928 to Latvian and Lithuanian immigrants, Julius and Augusta Jaffe. She earned a BA in Music from the University of Washington, where she met her first husband, Robert Weil. They married in 1949 and moved to Hillsboro, Ore., where they raised their three daughters, Sharon, Marlene, and Dana. Elaine married Norman Savinar in 1990, they enjoyed more than 20 happy years together. In her later years, she cherished her time with her sweetheart, Herb Black.

Elaine was deeply engaged in her community, especially with Congregation Beth Israel. She served on Sisterhood's Board (1969-71), the CBI Board of Directors (1984), and co-chaired the 1993 CBI Capital Campaign. Elaine also served on the Jewish Federation of Portland Board (1972-75) and selected for the National Women's Division Board's mission trip to Poland, Romania, and Israel in 1974. She became a Lion of Judah in 1999 and, in 2022, honored with the Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award for her philanthropy.

Elaine was President of the Jewish Family and Child Service Board (1977-79), where she led efforts to support Russian immigrants in Portland. She also served on the Board of the Friendly Rosenthal Foundation and contributed to Cedar Sinai Park's Capital Campaign in the early 1980s, advocating for assisted living housing at The May Apartments.

Elaine is survived by her daughters, Sharon, Marlene and Dana; step-sons Tim and Tad; and grandchildren Alicia, Bryan (Kelly). In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Jewish Family & Child Service or the American Cancer Association.

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