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'Be strong and courageous'

Author Dara Horn delivers galvanizing message to packed MJCC ballroom

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

"This is our Queen Esther moment."

Dara Horn, the award-winning author of "People Love Dead Jews," carried this message to a sold-out ballroom at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Monday, Oct. 28 at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Spotlight event. The intensification of antisemitism in American life has, she elaborated, left Jews with no choice but to emulate the heroine of the Purim story and speak up on behalf of our people.

"We no longer have the luxury of not rising to the occasion. Our enemies have already discovered that it only takes a few loud voices to pass a resolution at a school board meeting or shout someone down in a city council or slander somebody online," Horn said.



Dara Horn speaks at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Spotlight event at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Monday, Oct. 28. (Andie Petkus Photography for The Jewish Review)

"Many of you are in positions of leadership. All of you have the power of your own voices. Now is the time

to spend your social capital." After publishing five novels and teaching Jewish literature at several prominent

universities, Horn released "People Love Dead Jews" in 2021 and became what

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On the NEXT Podcast:



Making a Mikvah with Naomi Malka

On The Podcast

Oregon Jewish political history in three phases

Prof. Ellen Eisenberg is the Dwight and Margaret Lear Professor of American history at Willamette University in Salem, an expert in American Jewish history, and the author of five books, including a two-volume history of Jews in Oregon. She spoke with Jewish Review Editor Rockne Roll about the history of Jewish involvement in Oregon electoral politics, from the territorial days up to today. A portion of their conversation is transcribed below. This transcript has been edited for length and clarity. The full conversation is available in "Our Political Past with Ellen Eisenberg," from The Jewish Review Podcast, available on all major podcast platforms.

The Jewish Review: Your assessment of Jewish involvement in Oregon political life is best understood in three distinct phases. Can you explain those three phases to me?

Ellen Eisenberg: The first is a phase that's really characterized by inclusion; being Jewish is not an issue for many of the early office holders, and there are a number of Jews that are involved in politics in Oregon, and that persists throughout the 19th century. Then we get to a phase when national levels of antisemitism and xenophobia rise, in part in response to the [late 19th century large scale] immigration of Eastern Europeans. We get to a phase where there's a lot less security within the community, and the community starts to take on more of what we could call an ethnic character. At that phase, there are Jewish issues that that are perceived as ethnic issues, and there's also a lot less involvement of Jews as political office holders and public lives. There are some varying exceptions to that. Then in the post-[World War II] period, we see direct engagement of Jewish communities publicly with issues of public concern, with controversial issues, and really moving into a leadership role in the Democratic Party as it reemerges in Oregon as a powerful party in the second half of the 20th century, and with a real focus on issues connected to civil rights in particular.

JR: Let's go back to that the first phase. Who were some

of the perhaps memorable figures in Jewish Oregon politics from that period?

EE: There are a lot of people engaged in politics all over the state, in the most unlikely places that you would never associate with Jewish life. Julius Durkheimer was mayor in Burns, of all places, in the 1890s. Henry Blackman was an 1880s-era mayor in Hepner, southwest of Pendleton. These are places that we don't at all associate with Jewish life, but in that early period, starting in the 1850s, there are Jewish merchants in virtually every small town in Oregon, and they're extraordinarily well-accepted, in part because they're considered pioneers. They have a stake in these growing communities.

Portland has two Jewish mayors in the 19th century, Bernard Goldsmith and Philip Wasserman, who follow each other in office. Goldsmith was elected in 1869, and he serves until 1871, immediately followed by Wasserman. Like a lot of the other Jewish office holders at that time, what I think really characterizes them is that while they're Jewish, they're not at all perceived of as Jewish. They're perceived just as generic civic leaders.

I was fortunate enough to be doing the research on this at a time when newspapers were already digitized, and so I was able to search the newspapers for all of their names in proximity to words like 'Israelite,' 'Hebrew,' 'Jewish,' to see if they were tagged because that was very commonplace in earlier newspapers in New York and other places, if they talked about a Jewish politician, they would note their Jewishness right, kind of marking them as other. That didn't happen in Oregon. They're just talked about as pioneers, for the most part, unless they happen to be doing something Jewish. If they get married in a synagogue, that might be noted in the wedding announcement in the paper. But when they're running for mayor, for state legislature, it doesn't say 'the Jewish candidate from such and such a place.'



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JFGP joins Building Bridges summit

The Jewish Review staff

Building Bridges of Understanding in Our Communities, a nine-year-old project to connect minority communities to law enforcement, featured a recent addition to their lineup of participating organizations this year.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

Building Bridges, led by the Muslim Educational Trust, held its annual summit Wednesday, Oct. 30, with Federation Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations Rachel Nelson speaking on a panel about community outreach and engagement.

“I think this is a really great opportunity to hear from impacted communities and find common ground amongst those communities and create relationships with law enforcement and government officials,” Nelson told *The Jewish Review* about the event.

Nelson spoke about some



Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Director of Educational Initiatives and Associate Director of Community Relations Rachel Nelson, third from left, speaks on a panel at the Building Bridges of Understanding in Our Communities summit at the Muslim Educational Trust in Portland Wednesday, Oct. 30. (Courtney Neron for The Jewish Review)

of the incidents of antisemitism and bigotry that have been directed at Oregon’s Jewish community in recent months, and described how the Federation, through the Jewish Community Relations Council, addresses those incidents. She also directly addressed key issues

of support – or lack thereof – for the Jewish community in the wake of last year’s Hamas attacks and the ensuing war in Gaza.

“I have to take a moment and be honest here, since last October, we have often felt that many of the allies that we have worked with

and supported through our actions and words over a long period of time have abandoned us in a time of vulnerability,” she said at the summit. “We know that as marginalized communities, we are stronger when

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JFCS, Neveh Shalom host Medicare workshop

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

It’s a *mitzvah* to go to the doctor, Mara Woloshin explains. And if you’re over 65 or living with disabilities, Medicare can help make that cost effective. Medicare is, however, immensely complicated. So Woloshin has partnered with Jewish Family & Child Service, through a grant from Marcy Tonkin and Congregation Neveh Shalom to help make it a little easier.

Woloshin will lead “Navigating Medicare and Medicaid: Your Questions Answered” tomorrow, Nov. 7, from 1-3 pm at Neveh Shalom and via livestream.

The program is free for participants.

Originally signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson in 1965, Medicare has changed dramatically over the years, Woloshin explains, making navigating its intricacies a challenge under the best of circumstances.

“The federal government continues to experiment with Medicare because it costs money,” she said. “It’s expensive and they keep on finding ways to find ways to save dollars with it.”

There have been a variety of changes to Medicare’s programs in the last year, particularly in the realms of dental coverage and pre-

scription drug benefits. Woloshin, a licensed Medicare consultant who worked as a spokesperson for the launch of Medicare’s Part D in 2006 and 2007, founded a firm dedicated to helping Medicare beneficiaries make the most of their plans.

“It’s important that people know what their benefits really are, and know what to ask for,” she said, “so if a doctor prescribes medication for you and your health plan says, ‘We’re not going to pay for that, it’s too expensive,’ you know how to advocate for yourself and get a prior authorization so you can get a certain brand medication.”

Newer programs offer ben-

efits that go beyond the kinds of care dispensed at a doctor’s office – for example, assistance in buying fresh produce to ensure proper nutrition for those dealing with certain illnesses that are controlled with diet.

“The plan in Oregon that serves people with chronic conditions, they’re over the counter card is over \$200 a month” for fresh fruits and vegetables, Woloshin said. “Which is a life changer for some people. That that plan is available whether you have limited income or not.”

Woloshin regularly produces similar workshops for

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Rachel's Well celebrates seven years

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

The child of one of Jewish Portland's greatest cross-organizational collaborations has turned 7 years old.

Rachel's Well Community Mikvah marked seven years of immersions on Nov. 1 – and with more than 2,000 immersions in its seven years, despite COVID-related shutdowns, it has become a foundational pillar of Portland's Jewish communal life.

Rachel's Well is an atypical space – it is the first *mikvah* in the United States built, owned and operated by a Jewish Federation. Rachel's Well is the fourth community *mikvah* in Portland; the first was built in South Portland in 1902 as the Jewish Ritualarium of Portland. Relocations came in 1929 to Southwest Third Avenue and Lincoln Street and to Southwest Harrison Street in 1959 in the wake of urban renewal.

By 2016, the building was in disrepair and its live-in caretakers were looking to retire out of the area. Many of its primary users, Orthodox women who strictly observe the Torah's family purity laws (*Taharat HaMishpacha*), had moved out of the neighborhood, meaning immersions on Shabbat or other holidays were impossible.

After a series of discussions amongst community stakeholders, a decision was reached – the old *mikvah* on Southwest Harrison Street would be given to the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland to be sold, with the proceeds used to construct a new *mikvah* in Southwest Portland. Rabbi Tzvi Fischer was *Rosh Kollel* of the Portland Kollel at the time,



Rachel's Well Community Mikvah, the fourth community mikvah built in Portland, marked its seventh anniversary on Nov. 1. (Benjamin Ariff for Rachel's Well)

and was one of the leaders spearheading the process, along with members of the Oregon Board of Rabbis and the Federation, which took on the role of leading, managing and underwriting the project.

"It was actually quite a balancing act to get everybody to work together," Rabbi Fischer said.

"When people say, 'Well, what does Federation do?' I actually love to give this example," *mikvah* manager and Federation Chief Planning and Engagement Officer Caron Blau Rothstein said.

The challenge, as Rabbi

Fischer explained, was to create a structure that worked for everyone. Jewish law dictates that a *mikvah* must contain naturally flowing water, either from a spring or from collected rainwater. A hole in the ground filled with rainwater can technically be a kosher *mikvah*, he said, "but nobody wants to go into a muddy pool of rainwater as their *mikvah*. So, it's got to be aesthetically appealing, clean and meaningful in that way as well."

This was the challenge for Blau Rothstein, who was project manager for the construction of Rachel's Well – a first for her.

"Home Improvement and building a community building are two very different things, and it was a steep learning curve," she said, "In order for the *mikvah* to be accessible, it not only had to be located in a certain place, but it had to be constructed to the highest standard, so it has to be constructed to Orthodox specifications, because that's what makes a *mikvah* kosher for everyone. It's how it's constructed and how the water is collected and how it's maintained, irrespective of who uses it and for what purpose."

This is where Rabbi Fischer and the Kollel were indispensable. Rabbi Fischer explained that the *mikvah* became something of a "hobby" for him while he was in Portland and that its success remains something he is very proud of.

"I think all of the people coming together were able to accomplish a place that's appealing, it's pleasing, it's inviting, and as a result, I think many more people see *mikvah* as something that they can approach, whereas *mikvah* definitely was taboo for many people outside the Orthodox community," he said. "Seeing so many members of the community connect to something that is so deeply a part of our tradition is also very rewarding."

Beyond the design and construction of the space, preparing to operate the *mikvah* was another step. Fortunately, there was also support on that end.

"We were fortunate in getting connected with Naomi Malka, and she really helped us a lot with 'What does the volunteer structure look like for guides? How do you

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MIKVAH (continued from page 5)

train them? What do the operations look like?” Blau Rothstein explained.

At the same time as Rachel’s Well was preparing to open, the Rising Tide Open Waters Mikveh Network, founded by Mayyim Hayyim Community Mikvah in Newton, Mass., in partnership with other community *mikvaot*, such as one in Washington, D.C. run at the time by Malka, was beginning to take shape. Rachel’s Well soon joined the network, and the collaboration has paid dividends, particularly as a resource for those immersing as a spiritual experience outside of the *mikvah*’s traditional *halachic* uses.

“It has really been helpful for us in maintaining the space and then offering resources to people who come and immerse,” Blau Rothstein said.

The only requirement to immerse at Rachel’s Well is to identify as Jewish (or to be coming there as the final step in a conversion to become Jewish), and the creation of immersion rituals for those experiencing a wide variety of transformations and transitions in life has made Rachel’s Well – and the concept of *mikvah* in general – a cherished part of many Portland Jews’ spiritual life.

“I have been delighted and honored to guide the immersions of those with whom I study for conversion to Judaism, as well as many other transition moments in a person’s spiritual life,” Rabbi Ariel Stone told *The Jewish Review* in 2022. “Those with whom I’ve

talked about it all express the feeling that this is a powerful ritual to support gender transition, transition from menstruating woman to menopausal woman, retirement, significant birthdays and recovery from trauma. I’m so pleased that our *mikvah* is truly a spiritual space for anyone who seeks to mark the turning of a page in their life.”

For its contributions to Rising Tide, JFGP received the Collaborative Community Partner Wellspring Award from the network in 2023.

“Rather than doing different trainings for different kinds of guides, we came together because the learning was as much about the people in the room as the content we were sharing,” Blau Rothstein said, accepting the award on behalf of the Federation. “We learned from each other that there is value and meaning, dare I say holiness, in sharing a sacred space. The way we share isn’t necessarily to be in the space altogether at one time. The magic is in different people making the space what they need it to be when they occupy it.”

Immersing at Rachel’s Well is also impactful for those whose immersions are more traditional in nature. Devora Fleshler is a volunteer guide for women who immerse monthly following their menstrual period in observance of Judaism’s family purity laws. These immersions are very personal, and Fleshler’s discretion is prized. The process has meaning for her, as well.

“I get to have a very moving and spe-

cial interaction with the women in our community,” Fleshler told *The Jewish Review* in 2022. “Since I retired, I have missed that interaction with women.”

Beyond monthly immersions for Orthodox women and preparatory immersions before Shabbat and other holidays for men, Rachel’s Well has become the destination for those immersing for conversion in the area – and for the rabbis that supervise those conversions. Conversion candidates will sometimes make their appearance before the *beit din*, the rabbinical court that signs off on the process, in a room next to the *mikvah* pool.

The merging of these missions – traditional and contemporary – was a foundational goal of the construction of Rachel’s Well, and it remains at the core of its mission seven years later.

“The space is for you,” Blau Rothstein said. “The only thing that you need to have is a belief that immersing in this pool of water is a transformative experience; that it’s going to heal you, it’s going to celebrate you, it’s going to mark this change in your life.”

Art inspired by Rachel’s Well will be on display at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center in the “Waters of Life and Peace” exhibit, with an artist reception Thursday, Nov. 7, at 6 pm at the MJCC.

Learn more at jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/rachels-well-portland-mikvah and follow the *mikvah* on Instagram at @rachelswellpdx.

BRIDGES (continued from page 4)

we work in partnership. We are appreciative to those communities who have continuously reached out and offered their support and simple words of comfort when we have felt scared and alone. We will continue to do the same for our fellow community members.”

This year was not the first appearance for Federation

staff. Director of Community Relations and Public Affairs Bob Horenstein spoke at the 2019 summit. This marked the second year for the Federation as an officially participating organization and the first where Nelson and Horenstein participated in the planning meetings leading up to the summit. Other participating organi-

zations include the Korean American Coalition, Latino Network, LULAC (a Latino advocacy organization), Joining Hands Against Hate, the Coalition of Communities of Color and Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, among others, as well as municipal governments, district attorneys and law enforcement agencies from

throughout the Portland metropolitan area, the Department of Homeland Security and the state and federal departments of justice.

“I think it’s important that people know what the experiences are of marginalized communities in every way, shape or form,” Nelson told the *Review*.

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Schnitzer's collection of Serra prints at OJMCHE

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

Richard Serra was one of the late 20th century's most prominent sculptors. But his prints constitute a sizable – and influential – body of work all on their own. It's that work which will be on display at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education in "The Only Way to Hold a Weight: Richard Serra Prints from the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation" through Jan. 12, 2025.

The exhibit, guest curated by Reed College art professor Daniel Duford from the collections of Jordan Schnitzer and the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation, draws its title from a quote from Serra about his drawing practice.

"He considered black not as a color, but as weight," Duford explained. Serra drew and printed exclusively in black, mirroring the often-monochromatic nature of his sculptures. "He talks about how these drawings are working in a way that they're not site-specific in the way the sculptures are, but they are places where there's a kind of bodily experience."

The 18 pieces on display are among 142 of Serra's prints owned by Schnitzer or his foundation. Schnitzer first encountered Serra's print making in the 1990s, he said, and started building the collection.

"I just saw his work and just started buying it," he said. "These works on paper have that same movement and energy and weight and depth to the work, just as those big sculptures do."

"Weight" is an apt word to describe any of Serra's works, whether the



Richard Serra's "T.E. Which Way Which Way?" is on display at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education now through Jan. 12 as part of "The Only Way to Hold a Weight: Richard Serra Prints from the Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation" exhibit. (Strode Photographic, Courtesy of Jordan Schnitzer Family Foundation)

room-specific (and often room-sized) sculptures. Only one piece depicts human form, a representation of a famous photograph of US military detainees from the Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq that marked a rare detour into the overtly political for Serra. While some, such as his "Venice Notebook 2001" series or "Ishmael's Edge" include thin, almost delicate shapes, many consist of solid, black, blocky shapes that dominate, if not fill, the frame. "Muddy Waters" takes this to an extreme – a six-foot by five-foot sheet of paper consumed almost entirely by a solid black rectangle – but its tilted edges and the texture of the process still invite the viewer in,

particularly as it is displayed without glass.

Much of Serra's print work was done at Gemini G.E.L. in Los Angeles, where printmakers Jim Reid and Xavier Fumat worked extensively with the artist.

"He often mentioned to me that black did not detract from the work. You can make a pig look really pretty if you paint it really bright, right? But black allowed you to just see the work," Fumat explained.

"He gives us a depth, a simplicity with these abstract shapes and forms," Schnitzer said, "amidst the powerful black that just seems to envelop us in this aura of his making. That's why he's as good as he is."

With his monochromatic

palette, Serra's manipulation of the printing process became one of the key ways he pushed his ideas through to the viewer.

"In some cases, he would print maybe two or three layers on there, maybe a very dark blue-black, or something that's just off black or transparent black, and they could build up layers," Reid recalled of Serra's early prints. "He was constantly changing whatever the matrix was going to be, and I think in the last 15 years, he really found his sweet spot, and that's why he's continued to make these pieces."

While the sculptures and prints often spoke of similar themes in a similar language, Serra did not intend them to be approached the same way by the viewer.

"He didn't like when someone would view a sculpture as a picture, because he wanted it to be a thing that you had to approach from multiple directions," Duford said.

"In his mind, I think each individual medium was its own thing, even though they could share visual clues," Fumat added.

Schnitzer's art passion stems from his mother's contemporary gallery in Portland and, through his foundation, has grown to encompass more than 22,000 artworks that have curated into 180 distinct exhibitions and have been additionally loaned out to more than 120 museums free of charge. This exhibition also includes a drawing workshop on Nov. 16, a curatorial talk on Nov. 21 and a curatorial walk-through on Dec. 6, all hosted by Duford.

For more information about the exhibition and its associated events, visit ojmche.org.



A packed ballroom at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center takes in the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Spotlight event with author Dara Horn Monday, Oct. 28. (Andie Petkis Photography for The Jewish Review)

SPOTLIGHT (continued from page 1)

her sister once labeled to her as “the Antisemitism Lorax” – even serving on a panel on antisemitism convened by her alma mater and former employer, Harvard University.

“I actually think that the focus that so many of us have had on college campuses for this past year is actually a psychologically protective measure that we are using to tell ourselves that this problem is localized. Unfortunately, it’s not localized. It’s everywhere,” Horn said. “I also have a front row seat to that train wreck, because I now have total strangers contacting me every single day to tell me about the antisemitic harassment that they are personally facing.”

The problem is both widespread and old – and while it has taken many forms throughout history, Horn cited David Nirenberg’s book, “Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition,” in explaining the common thread that antisemitism has had across history.

“Societies have all defined themselves through their opposition to whatever they call ‘Judaism,’ and these air quotes are deliberate, because this idea of ‘Judaism’ has almost nothing to do with actual Judaism and everything to do with whatever evils these non-Jewish societies aspire to overcome.” Horn explained, “Jews become this blank screen onto which societies project whatever they consider evil.”

While some society’s responses to this have been outward violence, expulsions and mass murder – what Horn refers to as “Purim antisemitism” after Haman’s attempt at mass murder – others have responded by attempting to eliminate Jewish culture and society rather than Jewish lives, which Horn refers to as “Chanukah antisemitism” after the Greek attempts to replace Jewish culture with Greek culture in the run-up to the Maccabean revolt. A more modern example, Horn explains, is the insistence that their anti-Zionism was not antisemitic.

“This is in 1918, 30 years before the founding of the State of Israel. It’s probably not about Netanyahu,” Horn said. “By the way: they’re Marxist, so they’re also anti-religious. So, what they’re basically saying is, ‘We love Jews! You just can’t practice Judaism or support Zionism or study Hebrew, but we love you!’”

This later evolved into mass imprisonment, torture and mur-

der, but it was also an intellectual playbook that the Soviet Union leaned on throughout its existence and exported to its Cold War client states in Southwest Asia – the very countries that spent much of the second half of the 20th century at war with Israel and now serve as platforms for the terrorism that threatens Israel today. Through those countries, that ideology has made its way on to college campuses in the US.

“All of that same material has been recycled by the various dictatorships supplying American universities with billions of dollars, so it’s not terribly surprising in 2024 when an antisemitic cartoon directly from KGB propaganda is posted on Instagram by faculty at Harvard,” Horn said. “Students and faculty can scream whatever racist things they want... but this avoids the deeper question: ‘Why is Harvard filled with screaming racists?’”

A valid question, considering the diversity efforts major universities have pursued. Horn went on to explain why these efforts have failed to address antisemitism: they’re designed to combat social prejudices, which she defines as the belief that a particular group is inferior. Antisemitism is rooted in a belief that a particular group, Jews, are superior. In this context, antisemitism isn’t a social prejudice, it’s a conspiracy theory.

“If your worldview is that there is a hierarchy of power that really needs to be disrupted and that some people have too much power, too much privilege and are overrepresented,” she said, “you’re going to fall feet first into antisemitism, because the antisemitic conspiracy theory since ancient times is that Jews have too much power, Jews have too much privilege, and Jews are overrepresented. You know how old this idea is? It’s in the Torah.”

Like all conspiracy theories, antisemitism is built on lies, Horn explained; from the ancient blood libel to Holocaust denial to the modern ideas that Jews are settler colonialists and Zionism is a racist ideology.

“These lies are all part of the foundational big lie. The Big Lie is that antisemitism itself is a righteous act of resistance against evil, because Jews are collectively evil and have no

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right to exist,” she said.

Following Horn’s remarks and a fireside chat with Federation Chief Community Relations and Public Affairs officer Bob Horenstein, Steve Netter took the stage to share his family’s story of those lies in action. His son, Ari, started sixth grade in 2022 and immediately became the target of antisemitic bullying in his public middle school. It began as references to the Jewish “South Park” character Kyle Broflovski, but quickly advanced to epithets and support for Nazi Germany.

“We were continuously told, unless Ari could identify the kids who were saying this, there was essentially nothing that they would be able to do,” Netter said. “But how’s the kid who’s new to the school hearing comments and passing surrounded by hundreds of other kids he doesn’t know, supposed to identify the people who are tormenting him? Furthermore, why is it his responsibility? He’s the victim.”

The Netter family tried for months to address the subject with the school to no effect. By happenstance,



JFGP Chief Community Relations and Public Affairs officer Bob Horenstein hosts the fireside chat with Spotlight speaker Dara Horn. (Andie Petkus Photography for The Jewish Review)

they ended up speaking with Horenstein at San Francisco International Airport en route to the Federation’s 2023 mission to Israel. Horenstein heard their story and offered to help.

Shortly after their return from the trip, the harassment escalated to direct threats of physical violence. When that harassment drove the family to pull Ari out of school, the Federation’s contacts with the school board finally got the district to act both to ad-

dress the issue and to ensure that Ari could continue his education at home through the rest of the year. Ari returned to the same school the next year, and while the initial weeks, including the aftermath of Oct. 7, was relatively calm, issues arose again when a teacher began labeling the war in Gaza as a genocide and compared Israel to Nazi Germany.

“We contacted the Federation again, which thankfully helped us at the district

level as we worked with the school principal to open an investigation,” Netter said. “HR was involved, and the teacher was spoken to.”

The comments ceased. “I feel confident that the work that we did with the Federation, the pressure we put on the school, finally delivered some of the actual results that we’re looking for over the last year and a half,” Netter said.

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Left: Spotlight attendees give a standing ovation to speaker Dara Horn. Right: Steve Netter, left, is thanked by JFGP Board Chair Mindy Zeitzer; Netter spoke about his son’s experiences with antisemitic bullying and how the Federation helped his family manage the situation. (Andie Petkis Photography for The Jewish Review)

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Part of why it's easy for societies to cast Judaism as whatever they want to oppose, Horn explained, is that there's limited understanding of what Judaism is.

"When I speak on college campuses, I'm often asked, 'Are Jews a religion? Are Jews a race? Are Jews a nationality?' And the answer is that Jews predate all of those categories," she said. "Every non-Jewish society has tried to fit Jews into whatever box they know best, but Jews always predate the box."

The actual answer?

"Jews are a joinable tribal group with a common history, homeland and culture," Horn said. "What I just said was a paragraph in English; in Hebrew, it is one word that is two letters long: *Am*. We are *Am Yisrael*, the people of Israel."

Jews are other things, too – things which confound efforts to include combatting antisemitism in traditional anti-bigotry education.

"Usually the message goes something like, 'you shouldn't hate those people, because they're just like you and me,'" Horn said. "The problem is that Jews have spent 3,000 years not being like everyone else. Uncoolness is Judaism brand. This goes back 3,000 years to the ancient Near East, when everybody else was worshiping a Marvel Cinematic Universe of sexy deities and the Jews are basically like the losers in the school cafeteria sitting in the corner with their bossy, unsexy, invisible God."

One of the fundamental aspects of Judaism has been its opposition to idolatry. Horn elaborated that this is often understood as not praying to statues, but ancient Israel's contemporaries often featured a panoply of deities with one being a dictator over the others – including Egypt's pharaoh, considered a deity himself.

"When the Jews said that they do not bow to idols, what they meant was that they do not bow to tyrants. People often have wondered how Jews have survived for so many thousands of years, and I feel that one answer is the refusal to bow to tyrants," she said.

The same relationship applies to the



Author Dara Horn signs copies of her book, "People Love Dead Jews," for attendees at the Federation's Spotlight event Oct. 28 at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center.

modern Jewish people and their current foes.

"We are now facing a campaign that is explicitly orchestrated by tyrants," Horn continued. "I think you can see evidence of that tyranny in how the language is identical in every boycott, every petition, every protest, every rally across this entire country and how that language is, in fact, taken directly from Hamas and Hezbollah."

In the face of this threat, there is a responsibility – and a necessity – to speak out.

"This moment is going to require us to stop bowing down before whatever is popular, and to tell the truth to ourselves and to everyone else about who we are and who we have always been," Horn said. "We are going to have to educate our friends and neighbors instead of being trapped in the boxes that they have put us in."

This is the most effective way to combat the fundamental lies of antisemitism, Horn said.

"Americans need to learn who Jews are, to learn the actual content of Jewish civilization instead of erasing Jewish life," she said. "There is no way to fight antisemitism, with its denial of Jewish identity, without actually investing in teaching people the truth."

It's an investment that requires cour-

age – the courage that Esther showed in the Megillah, appearing before King Ahasuerus at the risk of her own life.

"I have very good news for you from my travels around America, most people are not Haman," Horn said. "Most people are Ahasuerus, the guy who says, 'Oh, did I sign that decree? I must have been drunk.' There is so much more ignorance than malice, and that is a huge opportunity."

Horn shared the story of a college student who did not speak out in the face of antisemitic diatribes from professors and classmates but left college with deep regret over her silence and concluded with the classic Hebrew exhortation from the book of Joshua - *Chazak v'ematz*.

"Tonight, I want to offer you the words of the God of our ancestors, which all of us need as we meet this moment: *Chazak v'ematz*; be strong and courageous," she said. "Be strong and courageous enough to know what is worth defending. Be strong and courageous when you enter that uncomfortable place, when you say what no one else has the guts to say, when you refuse to bow to tyrants. Be strong and courageous as you carry forth with you this ancient tradition that insists on the most uncomfortable truths and carries with it the antidote to tyranny."

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PJA auction is Dec. 15

Portland Jewish Academy

Portland Jewish Academy's Annual Auction is the party of the year!

Get your head in the game for this year's All-Star sports-themed Auction Sunday, Dec. 15, 2024 at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center at 4:30 pm.

This annual event will be held in-person with dinner and a live Auction. The event includes a cocktail hour, games, schmoozing, dinner, costume contest, raffle, two silent auctions and a live auction. One silent auction will be online and will be open for several days prior to the event. There will also be an exclusive silent auction in-person for those who attend.

This year, all auction sponsorships and mitzvah moment donations will be 100 percent matched by The Jay and Diane Zidell Charitable Foundation. Funds raised support students. This is primarily in the form of financial assistance, as 53 percent of all Early Childhood and Day School students receive financial aid. In addition, the funds are used for educational technology, field trip subsidies, classroom supplies, library books, and other student materials.

For tickets and information visit pjaproud.org/auction.

Portland Jewish Adacemy open house set for Dec. 8

Portland Jewish Academy

Learn all about Portland Jewish Academy's values-based education at their upcoming admissions open house Sunday, Dec. 8 from 10 am-noon at the school.

Participate in interactive classroom activities with your child, meet some of PJA's extraordinary teachers, hear students, parents and staff share why they love PJA and learn more about PJA's comprehensive curriculum.

The event is free. RSVP today at pjaproud.org/openhouse.

MEDICARE (continued from page 4)

Portland Parks and Recreation and Portland Community College, but being able to serve as a resource for the Jewish community holds a special place in her heart because of the importance of health in Jewish tradition and her love for her people.

"It is a mitzvah," she said. "It's the obligation of taking care of your body. That goes back thousands of years."

Registration for tomorrow's workshop is available online

at jfcps-portland.org/medicare-answers. Woloshin is also happy to answer questions about Medicare-related issues – she can be reached at 503-310-4505 or mara@woloshin.com. Like all licensed Medicare consultants, Woloshin is barred by federal law from charging for providing Medicare-related information.

"Being a resource to the Jewish community is what's important to me," she said.

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Torah cover remembers terror victim



From left, Congregation Kesser Israel's Rabbi Sholom Skolnik, Leslie Elder and Charles Elder display the congregation's new *me'il* (torah cover) created in honor of Mapel Adam, a victim of the Oct. 7, 2023 terror attacks in Israel. Adam, a 26-year-old resident of Tel Aviv, was murdered by Hamas at the Nova Music Festival. The cover bears a quote from Ecclesiastes: "A time to mourn, a time to dance." The cover was first utelized at the shul's Yizkor service on Yom Kippur through the end of the High Holy Days. (Courtesy Congregation Kesser Israel)

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

NOV 20

NOV 14

By JESSICA ANDERSON

As I write this, I'm flying back from the 2024 Homeland Security Summit, an (almost) annual meeting of community security directors from across the US and Canada. This group consists of over 100 security professionals responsible for working with Jewish communities on issues of safety and security. It's been two years since we met, as the 2023 conference was canceled due to the 10/7 Hamas attack – a time when we all needed to remain in our communities. We stay connected during the year, but the conference is a unique time when we come together in person. I know that it makes a difference to me and that the time improves how I do my job throughout the year.

This group of security directors and analysts consists of Secure Community Network (SCN) employees and those employed directly by their Federations. As a combined group, we cover 78 different geographic regions, but with SCN's regional security director program, no Jewish community lacks access to security resources.

Our week together featured a variety of speakers and topics. We heard national law enforcement leaders speak on the current threat landscape. We were also briefed on the new standards we'll be expected to meet - a result of collaboration between the Jewish Federation of North America (JFNA) and SCN that established 57 industry standards related to quality security programs (stay tuned for a future article about this).



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.

We received an overview of the security planning for the summer Maccabi games in Detroit which is the largest gathering of Jewish youth in the world; heard best practices from the Colleyville synagogue hostage-taking in 2021 and learned a cyber expert's take on virtual best practices.

The speakers who stood out were those who added tools to my toolbox that will improve how I approach my work. A standout was former White House Press Secretary Ari Fleisher, who provided recommendations on how to manage and respond to incidents (stay tuned for a future article about this, too!). I'm occasionally called upon to sit for interviews with local reporters, and I'm pretty much always terrified that I'll mess them up. But I'm going to start using Fleisher's recommendations and hope to up my game in that area.

SCN's Director of Security for Hillel provided an overview of the challenges students are having on campus. She contrasted last year with this year and noted that nationwide campuses have been much quieter. The anniversary of 10/7 saw only 75 campus incidents – a

total success in the eyes of the Hillel security program. SCN also developed a new safety and security training program focused on the needs of college students. The course highlights include working through scenarios of being followed, confrontations by fellow students, and being targeted in classes. I'll be rolling this out in the next couple of weeks and offering it to campus communities across the state.

Multiple breakout sessions (one by Federation size and the other by city size) were some of the most valuable. This is where we hear what's working for each security director – how they maximize training opportunities, how they improve their services, and all kinds of best practices they've developed. The other highlight is simply spending time together – checking in on how the family is doing, learning something new about them, sharing laughs, and deepening relationships. It was a great week of improving professionally and connecting personally. This is the best part of getting together in person, and I'm grateful you allow me the time away to attend.

You're never too old to schmooze



Schmoozapalooza, Jewish Family & Child Service's second annual senior prom for older adults, was a festive, fun afternoon enjoyed by nearly 150 community members who came out to the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Sunday, Oct. 27 dressed in style and ready to celebrate! The afternoon fest was filled with music, dancing, a photo booth, corsages, goodie bags and refreshments. One guest said it best: "It was a joyful, fun afternoon. Great people, delicious food & fellowship. We all enjoyed it!" This event was made possible thanks to our community partner, the Mittleman Jewish Community Center, and a generous donation by Marcy Tonkin. We are grateful to them and to all our wonderful volunteers who made this event so special. (Gary Martel/JFCS)



"A lender is greater than one who gives to charity."
Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 63a



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Events

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

Obituaries

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

RABBI LEIBEL NEW

With sadness, Chabad of Oregon announces the passing of Rabbi Leibel New, z"l, of Melbourne, Australia, on Wednesday, Oct. 9.

In 1995, Rabbi New dedicated the mikvah room of Mikvah Shoshanah, Portland's women's mikvah, in memory of his parents, Rabbi Yisroel and Rivkah New, z"l.

In the nearly thirty years since that dedication, hundreds of brides and soon-to-be mothers have immersed in the mikvah, establishing their families in the spirit of purity and the foundational beauty of the Jewish people.

He is survived by his children: Rabbi Avremi New of Brooklyn, N.Y., Rabbi Chezky New of Melbourne, Rabbi Sholom New of Brooklyn, N.Y., Rabbi Yitzchok New of Melbourne and Rivka Raskin of Melbourne.

SHELDON KRYS

Congregation Beth Israel mourns the loss of Sheldon Jack Krys, z"l, who passed away Friday Oct. 18 at the age of 90.

Sheldon is survived by his children Wendy Calvert (Scott), Madeleine Menashe (Jack) and Susan Krys (Ken Bocam) and grandchildren, Ella Krys Menashe and Edouard "Ted-

dy" Bocam. He was preceded in death by his beloved wife of nearly 50 years, Doris Krys (née de Hemptinne), z"l, and his sister, Sylvia Krys Nudelman, z"l.

Sheldon was laid to rest on Wednesday, Oct. 23, in Olney, Md.

Donations in his memory can be directed to the Senior Living Foundation of the American Foreign Service or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

GARY WEINSTEIN

Congregation Neveh Shalom is deeply saddened to announce the passing of Gary Weinstein, z"l, a third-generation Neveh Shalom congregant, on Wednesday, Oct. 30, at the age of 89. He is lovingly remembered by his wife, Carolyn Weinstein; his children, Robin Weinstein and Jeff (Erika Stohl) Weinstein; and his brother Stuart (Lee) Weinstein. Gary's family legacy with Neveh Shalom stretches back to his great-great uncle, who founded Neveh Zedek.

A private family funeral and public memorial service were held Sunday, Nov. 3.

Donations can be made to the Gary Weinstein Beautification Fund at Neveh Shalom.

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

Free subscription:
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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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