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More than just a birthday party

Young volunteers scoop chocolate chip cookie dough onto baking sheets at Chabad of Northeast Portland's Kitchen of Kindness event in honor of Rabbi Chaim Wilhelm's 40th Birthday Thursday, Aug. 13. Chabad of Northeast Portland had joined more than 100 Chabad operations worldwide in launching Kitchen of Kindness programs. Read the full story on page 4. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)



JGSO votes to dissolve

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Oregon has voted to dissolve.

The organization has struggled with board membership in recent years, an email to members ahead of their dissolution vote explained. The email was provided to *The Jewish Review* by a JGSO member.

While the JGSO's bylaws stipulate a seven-member board, the email said, "we have had two board members leave recently with only one being replaced.

Two other board members have provided notice of their intent to leave the board. Despite numerous appeals to the JGSO membership and program participants we have been unable to fill these positions."

"It has been building up for the past couple of years. We have had a lot of trouble getting new volunteers to take on anything," Board President Janice Sellers told *The Jewish Review*. "In particular, when our secretary needed to step down, we couldn't

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Local groups host anti-DSA events

The Jewish Review staff

A pair of local organizations are hosting events in early September focusing on the Democratic Socialists of America's potential influence in upcoming elections.

NW Oregon Unity in Action, a political action committee founded by Portland's Mike Leopold, is hosting Standing Strong Against Extremism on Tuesday, Sept. 1 at 6:30 pm at the Elsie Stuhr Center in Beaverton. Two days later, on Thursday, Sept. 3, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland and the Anti-Defamation League will host DSA Decoded at noon on Zoom.

"It occurs to me that too many people in our own community don't understand exactly who the DSA is," Federation Chief Community Relations and Public Affairs Officer Bob Horenstein said. "We want to make sure that everyone is educated. Obviously, we can't cross the line into endorsing or opposing, but before people cast their

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ballots, they better read up on all the candidates and know where they stand, especially DSA candidates.”

Horenstein said the ADL, which is the primary organizer for the event, hosted a similar and highly successful webinar in Washington, D.C. earlier this year and is now bringing to Portland. The Rose City is home to the fourth-largest DSA chapter in the country, he continued, with three of its members on

the DSA’s national steering committee.

“Just as we’ve always tried to be aware of any movements on the far right, this is a movement on the far left that is doing harm to our community,” Horenstein said, specifically referencing the commitment last year by four DSA members of Portland’s city council to investigate local connections to Israel and the removal of a *Jewish Review* journalist from the DSA-hosted press

conference announcing that commitment. (See “DSA city councilors to investigate Israel ties,” Oct. 22, 2025, page 11 and “[Jewish Review journalist removed from DSA event](#),” Oct. 22, 2025, page 1)

A flier for the Sept. 1 event by NWOUIA, Leopold’s PAC, said “The ideological platform of the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) threatens our local communities and democracy, making Oregon a hostile

place to live.”

“Our event will teach people who the extremists are running for their vote and we will present on how to elect normal, decent candidates through strategy and action-oriented support for their campaigns,” organizer Marcus Berger told *The Jewish Review*.

The Portland DSA chapter did not respond to a request for comment from *The Jewish Review* as of press time.

JGSO (continued from page 1)

get anybody else to do it and I couldn’t keep doing both jobs. Then my health took a turn for the worse and our vice president, who is our membership person, she had some health problems. So, we just ran out of oomph.”

Therefore, the email which was signed by at-large board member Julie Welch said,

“we are reluctantly recommending dissolution of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Oregon.”

Welch told *The Jewish Review* that “we’ve been requesting volunteers to step up and fill positions for well over a year, with nobody willing to take on those roles.”

Of 44 active members of the organization, fewer than 10 attended the final meeting on Zoom Sunday, Aug. 9, Welch said. The vote to dissolve was unanimous.

“It was definitely difficult because we certainly have built up a loyal group of people who were attending our presentations, interested in what we were doing,” Sellers said. “Unfortunately, like a lot of other groups today, [they’re] not interested enough to take on any of the responsibilities of keeping the organization alive.”

Sellers and Welch explained that JGSO’s plan moving forward is to work within the Genealogical Forum of Oregon as a “special interest group.” The JGSO library, totaling around a thousand volumes, has already been transferred to the GFO. The GFO’s organizational structure and rules would also allow a JGSO-derived special interest group to maintain its funding separately for future use.

“The hope is that maybe sometime in the future, the next generation will want to

resurrect the group,” Welch said, “and the resources will be in place.”

For Sellers, the JGSO’s story is one entry in a broader, unfortunate trend.

“This is the same kind of problem that’s happening to lots of groups across the country with lots of different interests. The younger generation doesn’t participate in the same way, and that shift is what’s causing this to happen to a lot of groups without having a younger generation to take over, the groups go away. We found a way to survive because GFO has this mechanism, but a lot of groups don’t have that available. There’s another group in Sacramento, another genealogy group; there isn’t a society near them that does the same kind of thing with outreach, and they’re probably just going to end up dissolving, period,” Sellers told *The Jewish Review*. “If people want this kind of information and support to be available, somebody needs to help it survive.”



Achalti ota | אכלתי אותה

Literal translation: "I ate it"

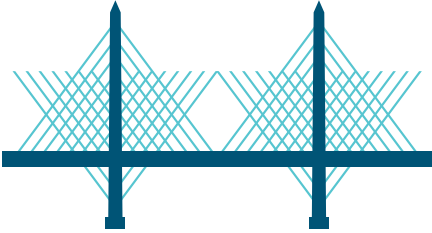
Meaning: "I'm screwed," "I'm in trouble," or "I got myself into a bad situation."

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Jewish Federation
of Greater Portland

TICKETS:



Kindness is on the menu at NE Chabad

Words and Photographs by
ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

Rabbi Chaim Wilhelm wanted to do something different for his 40th birthday.

"I wanted to do something for the whole community," he said.

So, he threw a party. About 70 people came. There was music, sushi, dessert, even a gift for Rabbi Wilhelm.

But what made this party special was that there weren't the usual party games. Instead, kitchen equipment came out, and the guests – ranging in age from preschool to elders – started peeling and chopping vegetables for stir fry. Because this was still a Thursday night at Chabad of Northeast Portland, which means the deliveries needed to be prepared; the deliveries that have gone out each week since the Chesed Connection program was launched in 2020.

Now volunteers, like the partygoers, can have a bigger role in preparing the food that goes into those deliveries as Chabad's international Kitchen of Kindness program expands to Portland.



"Getting people to come make food, that part of the joy, we've been trying to get more into that aspect of it," Rabbi Wilhelm explained.

There was plenty of joy to go around as three long tables turned bowls of carrots and bell peppers into the makings of chicken stir fry. Away the vegetables went, and out came bowls of chocolate chip cookie dough, sheet pans and scoops.

One of the people helping coordinate the exercise was Susanne Wendrow, who's been delivering food for Chesed Connection nearly since its inception and is helping administer the Kitchen of Kindness program, which is growing thanks in large part to a grant from the Robison Foundation for Jewish Elders.

"I think what drew me in originally was that, as a busy mom of four and someone

who's working, it was a nice way for me to be able to do something that was outside of my own world," she said. "To do something for the greater community at large."

What better thing to do for Jewish community than to help foster it, one interaction at a time? That's been Chesed Connection's goal from the start – Rabbi Wilhelm discussed epidemic loneliness when *The Jewish Review*

continued on next page



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visited Chesed Connection in late 2023 (See “[Forging connection through food](#),” Nov. 15, 2023, page 5) and how the simple act of delivering food before Shabbat can help. Now, with Kitchen of Kindness, the connections between the people preparing that food are similarly fostered.

“[We’re] creating something that’s a little bit more streamlined that can actually grow the volunteer portion of the program, because I think that’s the root,” Wendrow said. “I think it’s less about the food and more about the connections that people make.”

As the cookies headed to the oven, paper bags and sheets of stickers came out, the latter to be applied to the former. As that was finished, freshly baked cookies were loaded into paper pouches (though a few naturally made their way into the mouths of the youngest volunteers), tubs of rice were topped with now-cooked vegetables and chicken and the whole lot were assembled into the sticker clad bags – 50 in total – to head out before the candles were

lit the next evening.

Laureen Zisa, who was among the celebrants-turned-chefs, has been delivering food packages since before Chesed Connection began, bringing holiday nosh to those in need on Rosh Hashana and Pesach.

“it’s always been the highlight of my week,” she said of her deliveries. “It’s a way to connect, and it’s just us being *mishpachah*, family.”

Kitchen of Kindness is helping the circle of that connection grow just a little broader.

“People want to feel viscerally like they’re doing something. They’re chopping that carrot for somebody else. It’s just a good feeling. And it’s all part of the concept of *zedakah*,” Rabbi Wilhelm said, using the Hebrew word that literally translates to “justice” but is often used in reference to charitable giving. “If you look in the Torah, many of the *mitzvot* (commandments) around *zedakah*, are food based. They’re agriculturally based. The idea of tithing is food.”

For more information about the Kitchen of Kindness program, email Rabbi Wilhelm at chaim@chabadoregon.com.



Share your thoughts on the Jewish Federation's Israel programming through a short survey at

tinyurl.com/JFGPIsraelSurvey

'Peddlers' examines rise, fall of KKK in Oregon

By ROCKNE ROLL

The Jewish Review

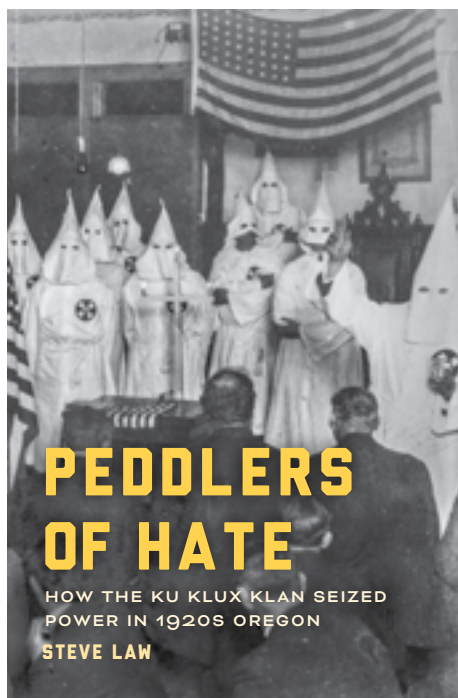
After 33 years in Oregon newspaper, Steve Law decided to give back to his community by getting involved with Friends of Mount Tabor Park. From there, he found the subject of his book.

"Peddlers of Hate: How the Ku Klux Klan Seized Power in 1920s Oregon," published by Oregon State University Press, details the rise, prominence and eventual downfall of the notoriously racist and antisemitic organization in Oregon politics. Law will discuss the book and its subject matter at Powell's Books in downtown Portland Wednesday, Aug. 26 at 7 pm.

Mount Tabor was a hub of Klan activities during its heyday, including cross-burnings and an attack on immigrant laborers from China. Inspired by a podcast from Alabama civil rights leader Brian Stevenson, Law began working on signage for the Mount Tabor area alongside the Oregon Remembrance Project marking the first lynching in the state of Oregon. That process spurred further research and, eventually, a six-part series of features published by the *Portland Tribune*, from which Law had retired, in 2022 – the centennial of elections that gave the KKK a decisive grip on political power in the area.

"They convinced voters to ban private schools and knocked off a sitting governor and sitting congressman and took over the legislature," Law said of the Klan's impact on the 1922 elections. "They took over Multnomah County Commission, and the mayor of Portland was a collaborator and did whatever they wanted."

Law said the series got perhaps the best reception of anything he had written in his career, which included time in public radio and smaller papers in the Portland suburbs leading to positions at the *Portland Business Journal* and the *Statesman Journal* before closing on an



11-year stint at the *Tribune*. Once the series concluded, someone suggested to Law that it would make a good topic for a book.

"It's the first book length treatment of the Klan in Oregon, Law said. "There's been three or four theses for master's and even a bachelor's thesis about the topic, but nothing published in book form that's a comprehensive look at what the Klan did in the 1920s in Oregon."

Covering events a hundred years after they've occurred poses a challenge for traditional reportorial methods, with hardly anyone living who remembers events and memories known to get fuzzy with time. Law was undeterred.

"I scoured everything at the Oregon Historical Society," he said "The University of Oregon has some archives, the historical archives in Medford. I called some other museums and talked to them about their collections."

Law also realized that those century-old occurrences would have been covered by the reporters of their day.

"I decided that the best source was

probably going to be stuff written at the time," he said. "A lot of people don't call that a primary source, but I kind of think they're kind of pretty close to primary because these people were writing right as events were happening, and that's as good a documentation as we often get."

Many papers of the day were either controlled by the Klan or afraid of losing subscribers by going after them, but the *Catholic Sentinel* and *Oregon Northwest Labor Press* proved valuable, along with the *Portland Telegram*, one of few mainstream papers that took on the KKK.

While the Klan is best known for anti-Black racism in the American South, the group tailored its focuses on whatever would play locally. In Oregon, they directed much of their ire at Asian immigrants and Catholics; the Klan-supported ban on private education passed in the 1922 election was conceived as an attack on parochial schools run by the Catholics. The KKK was also, of course, wildly antisemitic, but Law's research found that the level of social acceptance Jews had found in Oregon at that time deterred some of the Klan's worst rhetoric. Nevertheless, the KKK did lobby against Portland hosting a World's Fair exposition almost solely because it was supported by Meier & Frank department store scion, civic leader and future Governor of Oregon Julius Meyer.

"The interesting thing is their antisemitic line was kind of schizophrenic," Law said of the Klan. "Jews were either Bolsheviks trying to overthrow capitalism, or they were Shylocks, ripping people off because they were such successful capitalists."

"Peddlers of Hate" is available at Powells and other major booksellers. For more information about Law's upcoming appearance at Powell's, which is free to attend, visit powells.com/events/steve-law-9781962645706.

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

AUG 27 AUG 24

Security Corner

A safe, secure Jewish Festival

By JESSICA ANDERSON

The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland is very excited to be hosting Portland's first-ever Jewish Festival on Sunday, Aug. 30. Jewish festivals are celebrated throughout the United States year-round, with great success and community joy. It's time we brought that here.

The question of security is an important one – I hear daily about people concerned about safety at our festival, and I'm here to say that we have identified all the vulnerabilities and addressed and mitigated each one. I promise you, we have thought of everything and even some things you haven't! Security planning for the event started day one. Before there was even a festival, there was the question: can we hold one safely? The answer was an absolute yes. Jewish communities celebrate publicly all over the US without any incidents. Thousands of public Jewish events are held yearly - everything from small community festivals to the annual Maccabee Games involving 3,000 teen athletes.

Every festival space has vulnerabilities. A good security plan identifies them and develops a mitigation strategy. The concern I hear most about for our festival is the bridges and the pos-



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.

sibility of an attack from above. To address this, we have coordinated security to be on both bridges and monitoring activity throughout the festival. In addition, you will see our contracted security company, several Portland Police officers, foot patrols, and a dedicated screening team conducting bag checks and metal detection within and beyond our fenced-in festival space. All will be working together to reassure folks that they are safe and to address any issues. Some security measures will be obvious, and others you won't see at all, but know that our layered approach is thorough and effective.

How can you help keep the festival safe? Be sure to say something if you see anything concerning or suspicious. Staff will be visible in yellow t-shirts, and guards patrolling inside the festival

will be ready to help. Allow staff or security guards to handle any issues, rather than addressing them yourself. This is to be a festival space for all Jews and non-Jews alike, representing a wide range of beliefs, opinions, and views. All who want to contribute to a joyful day are welcome. Our attendee policy reinforces the festival as a safe space for all, with no tolerance for harassment, intimidation, hate speech, or disruptive behavior. Guests who violate this policy will be asked to leave. Note that festival staff will not be policing people's clothing other than to ensure clothing is family friendly.

We have a great lineup of food, music, vendors, and activities, and we'd love to see you out there on the 30th! If you have any questions about security, please reach out to me at janderson@securecommunitynetwork.org.

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MJCC hosts Chabad families day Aug. 2

Editor's Note: This story was originally published by Anash.org, an independent media outlet serving the Chabad-Lubavitch community, at anash.org/portland-jcc-opens-its-doors-for-state-wide-shluchim-family-day. It is reproduced here with permission.

By ANASH.ORG

An atypical scene unfolded this week at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center in Portland as *shluchim*, *shluchos* (emissaries) and their families from across the state gathered for an afternoon of bonding and togetherness, hosted in cooperation with the local JCC.

The event, titled “JCC at the JCC – Join Chabad Community at the Jewish Community Center,” was organized by Chabad of Oregon as a special afternoon of appreciation for *shluchim*, *shluchos* and their families. The afternoon included swimming, basketball, food and a special children’s rally.

The JCC reserved its pool for the Chabad community, with separate swimming sessions for men and women and separate lifeguards for each session. A basketball court was also available throughout the afternoon, while the kosher J Cafe provided each guest with a meal.

For families with young children, childcare was arranged for children from six months through six years, allowing parents to enjoy the afternoon as well.

The program also included a special children’s rally, where the children gathered together and recited the 12



Chabad families gather at Portland’s Mittleman Jewish Community Center Sunday, Aug. 2, for JCC at the JCC. (Anash.org photo)

Pesukim (verses), adding a special Chabad atmosphere to the afternoon.

“Life on *shlichus* (emissary service) can often be demanding, and an opportunity for *shluchim* and *shluchos* from different parts of the state to spend time together in a relaxed setting was especially meaningful,” one of the organizers told Anash.org.

The families were able to meet, socialize and enjoy an afternoon in which they themselves were being taken care of.

The *shluchim* also had the opportunity to meet with an individual involved with the Oregon Jewish Foundation and learn

about ways *Shluchim* can potentially benefit from the foundation’s programs and resources. For the women, a speaker who travels internationally to speak with corporate employees about bringing joy into their work shared her message of doing things with *simcha*. (joy)

The organizers noted that the event created a sense of unity that went beyond the afternoon itself. The *shluchim* and *shluchos* felt that they were being appreciated and thought of, while the JCC staff had the opportunity to do something meaningful for another part of the Jewish community.

Jewish Jobs

**Check out the latest Jewish community
job opportunities online at
jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/jewish-jobs**

Aug. 20: Beyond Reward and Punishment

Elul Learning Series class at Congregation Ahavath Achim at 6:30 pm. More information at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/2026-elul.html

Aug. 21: Hossein Salehi

Free Iranian music concert at the Eastside Jewish Commons at noon. More information at ejcpdx.org.

Aug. 21: Jan Baross and Estelle Meadoff Opening Reception

Art opening at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 1:30 pm. More information at events.humanitix.com/gallery-reception-and-art-opening-jan-baross-and-estelle-meadoff/tickets

Aug. 22: Women's Torah Study

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

Aug. 22: Sephardic Foundations

Weekly class at Congrega-

tion Ahavath Achim at 12:30 pm. Learn more at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/sep-hardic-foundations.html.

Aug 23: StoryTime for Young Children

Interactive story time at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 3 pm. More information at events.humanitix.com/storytime-for-young-children/tickets

Aug. 23: Israeli Folk Dancing

Open dancing at the Southwest Community Center in Portland at 3:30 pm. More information at sites.google.com/site/pifdnews.

Aug. 23: Summer BBQ at Gresham Chabad

Social event at Gresham Chabad at 4 pm. More information at jewishgresham.com/bbq.

Aug. 25: B-Ready, B-Resilient, BINGO!

Social event for adults with disabilities at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 5 pm, sponsored by Jewish Family & Child Service and Upstream Access. RSVP re-

quired at jfcs-portland.org/bingo.

Aug. 26: Jewish Business Owner's Forum

Discussion Group for Jewish business owners at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 10 am. More information at events.humanitix.com/copy-of-ongoing-discussion-group-for-jewish-business-owners/tickets

Aug. 26: Israeli Film Series - Kichka

Film screening at the Mitelman Jewish Community Center at 6 pm. More information at oregonjcc.org.

Aug. 27: Aging with Elegance

Interactive aging workshop at Congregation Neveh Shalom at 1 pm, sponsored by Jewish Family & Child Service. RSVP required at jfcs-portland.org/senior-social-hour.

Aug. 27: JFCS Community Connection

Biweekly virtual support group at 2 pm via Zoom. More information at jfcs-portland.org/community-connection.

Aug. 30: Portland Jewish Festival

Community cultural festival at Zidell Yards in South Portland at 11 am. More information at jewishportland.org/jewishfestival.

Sept. 1: JFCS/OJM-CHE Community Reception with KAVOD

Organizational reception at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education at 4:30 pm. More information at jfcs-portland.org/kavod.

Sept. 3: DSA Decoded

See story, page 1.

Sept. 3: Improv for Writer's Block

Writing workshop at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 2 pm. More information at events.humanitix.com/improv-for-writer-s-block/tickets.

Sept. 3: Courageous Teshuva

Elul Learning Series class at Congregation Ahavath Achim at 8 pm. More information at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/2026-elul.html

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