

October 8, 2026 | 27 Tishrei, 5787 | Volume 61, Issue 28

Three years later



Conductor Don Appert leads the Jewish Community Orchestra in their performance of "Tkuma" at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Oct. 7 commemoration event Wednesday, Oct. 7, at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center. The evening marked the third anniversary of what Congregation Beth Israel Senior Rabbi Michael Cahana called "The Black Sabbath." Find a recording of the evening on the Federation's website tomorrow and read full coverage of the evening in next week's edition. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

Posters on UO campus attack Oregon Hillel

By **ROCKNE ROLL**
The Jewish Review

A poster spotted on the University of Oregon campus attacking the head of Oregon Hillel has drawn condemnation from campus leaders, elected officials and Jewish community leaders throughout the state.

Early in the afternoon of Saturday, Oct. 1, Oregon Hillel Executive Director Lenny Steinberg learned that a poster has been spotted near the intersection of East 13th Avenue and Kin-

caid Street at the western edge of the University of Oregon's Eugene campus, branding him an "enemy of the people," accusing him of supporting genocide and demanding the exclusion of Hillel from the university campus. Steinberg received a message from a colleague who had learned about the poster from a student.

"Sadly, one of the feelings and things that went through my head was, 'Not too surprised here. This is the world we live in,'" Steinberg said.

Then you start thinking to yourself, 'Am I safe? Am my family safe? Are students safe? What needs to be done? Who do I need to contact? Who do I need to let know? What's the play-book for this? Because this kind of antisemitism and hate, it's happened, but I am one of very few Hillel professionals that this has ever happened to.'"

Steinberg said he later learned from the University of Oregon Police Department that security camera

footage identified a pair of individuals post the flyer in the location where it was observed by the Hillel student, near the Lillis Business Complex, and at additional locations on campus before leaving UO property. The two individuals were dressed entirely in black and were wearing masks that concealed identifying features.

"There's a very good likelihood this is community members and outside peo-

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ple from the university,” Steinberg said. “They’re completely masked up. They know what they’re doing. They know that there’s cameras on site. We’ll never be able to identify them and actually know who these people are.”

By that evening, Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and Rep. Val Hoyle, whose district includes the UO campus, released a joint statement on Facebook condemning the flyers.

“We should all unequivocally condemn the antisemitic targeting of Oregon Hillel and its Executive Director on the University of Oregon campus. Targeting Hillel and its leadership with this hateful rhetoric is a blatant effort to intimidate and demonize a Jewish organization and the Jewish students it represents. We stand firmly with Oregon Hillel and Jewish students across Oregon,” the statement read in part. “Hate, intimidation, and antisemitism have no place on our college campuses, in our state or our country.”

Sunday morning, Jewish Federation of Greater Portland President and CEO Marc Blattner said in an email to community members, “We want Lenny, Oregon Hillel’s professional team, and students to know they are not alone. The Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, and our community, stand behind them, and we are ready to offer whatever support they need.”

“All Oregonians should be deeply disturbed by this,” the email continued. “Hillel is a home for Jewish students, a place to gather for Shabbat, celebrate holidays, find community, build life-long friendships, and, most of all, spread Jewish joy.



(Courtesy Oregon Hillel)

When that home and the people who lead it become targets of open hostility, the message to Jewish students on campus is unmistakable.”

On Monday, UO President Karl Scholz said in a statement that “this type of language on our campus—language that targets based on religious and ethnic identity—is reprehensible. People have the right to speak freely, and we uphold that right. The posted flyers did not invite dialogue; instead, they promoted isolation and fear, and fear erodes the foundation of our community.”

Steinberg was quick to point out that calling to exclude Hillel from campus is a blatant attempt to erase Jewish community from the university.

“When we try to help under, help people understand why anti-Zionism is just a facade and a placeholder for antisemitism, this is it right here,” he told *The Jewish Review*. “I try very hard to

walk this careful line of ‘Are we in the 1930s again? Are we seeing the writing on the wall?’ Because they’re telling the Jews to get out. That’s one of the most hurtful pieces to all of this.”

While the experience of being targeted has been hurtful, there has also been an outpouring of support from all corners of the community, Jewish and otherwise.

“I never thought that, no matter what position I held, I would be getting calls from senators and congresswomen and just people with much more highly visible profiles than I have, coupled with family and friends, current students, former students, alumni that I never met, parents, people in the Jewish community and Jewish professionals that I have no connection with other than we all work in the Jewish professional world reaching out,” he said. “I’ve been so inundated by love and support and it’s overwhelming.”



Heroes Along The Way:

The Americans Who Built the U.S.—Israel Bond

In celebration of America's 250th Anniversary

Monday, November 2 | 7PM

Congregation Neveh Shalom | 2900 SW Peaceful Ln.



Join us for a fascinating talk by Yuval Malchi, a prominent Israeli-American storyteller, public historian, and familiar voice in Israeli media

Discover the extraordinary, unsung Americans who helped shape and defend the State of Israel. From frontline nurses and social workers to covert intelligence operatives and military commanders, this talk brings history to life through gripping personal accounts.



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'Through the Darkness' comes to Neveh Shalom for Oct. 22 screening

The Jewish Review staff

Sebastian Inouye was born in Portland, graduated from Cleveland High School, but the stories in his latest film are from the other side of the world.

"Through the Darkness: Two Peoples, One Future" is Inouye's look at Israelis and Palestinians who are still committed to peaceful coexistence and will be screened at Congregation Neveh Shalom Thursday, Oct. 22 at 7 pm in a program put on by the synagogue's Israel360 program and joined by the filmmaker via Zoom.

"Filmed in Israel and the West Bank in May 2025," the groups announcement of the event said, "it shares deeply personal stories from Israelis and Palestinians who have endured profound loss, and choose peace, not in spite of their pain, but because of it."

Born to an Israel mother, Inouye travelled with her to the region to explore his personal connection to it and to examine its complexities. "Through The Darkness" is his first feature-length work. It was selected for the Vancouver Jewish Film Festival earlier this year.

"This is not a film about politics; it's a film about people," the film's description on YouTube reads. "Israelis and Palestinians whose lives have been torn apart by violence and loss. And yet, instead of turning towards hatred, they have chosen another path: one of compassion and coexistence. Because peace begins with listening. And change begins with us."

Preregistration for the Israel360 screening is required, free and available online at members.nevehshalom.org/form/i360-through-the-darkness-10/26.html. Learn more about Inouye at sebastianinouye.darkroom.com.

Rosen, Hogland lead new chapter at Rachel's Well

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

The new (Hebrew) year is shaping up to be one of significant change for Rachel's Well Community Mikvah.

The *mikvah* (Jewish ritual bath), owned and operated by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, is now under the management of Dr. Yosef Rosen, the Federation's Director of Jewish Life and Learning. In addition, Federation Director of Community Programs and Engagement Jamie Hogland has become the primary point of contact for mikvah scheduling and coordination, taking over for Sarah Evans in that work.

Evans, who had worked with former Federation Chief Planning and Engagement Officer Caron Blau Rothstein to open the mikvah as the first federation-run facility of its kind in the country at the time, was first introduced to mikvah practice shortly after her wedding in observance of Judaism's traditional family purity laws.

"It's a very special, very *kedusha* (sacredness)-filled embodied Jewish ritual that really is the center of family life. It's a mitzvah that I have always really held close and has been very special," Evans said. "When there came an opportunity to enable that practice for Jewish women across Portland, I jumped at the chance."

In addition to its use by observant women, observant men traditionally immerse in the mikvah before holidays. Immersion in the mikvah is also the final step in the process of conversion to Judaism. Additionally, contemporary mikvah practice has

grown to encompass immersion in the living waters of the mikvah to mark a variety of milestones and transitions in life. Evans has been there for all of it.

The honor of the last 10 years in this role has been connecting all types of Jews to this practice," Evans said. "Our mikvah is a mikvah for all Jews in the Portland metro area; In fact, even beyond that, we have users who are visiting from far-flung places. We have users who drive up from Eugene. It's all stripes of Jewish men and women who use our mikvah."

Evans helped build the procedures Rachel's Well operates by from the ground up – an important consideration given the vulnerability of regular mikvah practice and the modesty and privacy concerns for those engaging in it.

"One of the elements that we put in place to keep people's privacy is, as I would connect a user to an attendant. The user would always know who the attendant was going to be so that she could reach out to her if she wanted to before," Evans said. "But I never told the attendant until that afternoon so that the mikvah user wouldn't have to see her attendant in the community and know that the attendant knew that was her mikvah night."

Those responsibilities now fall to Hogland.

"I'm excited because I get to learn about something I've never known about, and is a newer concept to me," she said. "What can I do to create a meaningful experience from my end for every

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Ma hamatzav | מה המצב

Literal translation: "What is the situation?"

Meaning: "What's up?" or "How are things?"

OSU sukkah stolen; rapid replacement boosts holiday spirit

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

Sukkahs don't disappear by magic, and they don't reappear magically, either.

The Oregon Hillel Sukkah at Oregon State University – the first built at the group's new premises in Corvallis (See [“New space, staff for Ore. Hillel,”](#) Aug. 13, 2026, Page 1) – disappeared the evening of Monday, Sept. 26. Security camera footage revealed it had been stolen. But by the end of the day, a stand-in sukkah had been erected with the help of Congregation Beit Am's Rabbi Phil Bressler. By the end of the week, more than \$7,000 in donations had poured in to replace the stolen Sukkah and make security improvements to Hillel's Corvallis facilities.

“As a Jewish community, we're unfortunately relatively used to when something bad happens, the community is there to support. But the resiliency, the courage, the dedication to just say, ‘we're not only going to give you our money, but we're going to give you our blood, sweat, and tears as well, and we're going to come give your students hugs and we're going to come build the sukkah,’” Oregon Hillel Executive Director Lenny Steinberg said, “it's been really beautiful.”

The Corvallis Sukkah, itself a generous donation from a couple in Corvallis, had just been erected on Thursday, Sept. 24, in preparation for the Sukkot holiday. It was the site of the first Shabbat dinner hosted at the new space.

“A group of students and our rabbi and some other staff took many hours building and decorating it beautifully last Thursday, having it up and ready,”



From top: The original Oregon State University sukkah, pictured shortly after its construction. More than 40 students gather in the new sukkah for the first Shabbat held at Oregon Hillel's new location in Corvallis. (Courtesy Oregon Hillel)

Steinberg said. “We had another program in the Sukkah on Monday evening with our students. Between that program ending and our staff coming into the building on Tuesday morning, at some

point someone had stolen the entire sukkah.”
In the parking lot behind the building, where a 12-foot square sukkah had held 40 people for a standing-room-only Shabbat ob-

servance just days prior, now sat a couple of small plastic pumpkins; the only evidence of what had been there.

“it's not like they just like picked it up and moved it down the street,” Steinberg said. “There's just no trace of this thing anywhere.”

While Corvallis Police searched – with no success as of press time – for the Sukkah and its kidnappers, Steinberg put out the call for donations to help replace what had been taken. The response was beyond what he expected.

“Less than 10 minutes after sending that e-mail, we had a very generous donor, who's actually a UO alumni, not even a Beaver, call me and say that he and his wife want to give us \$2,500 right now and meet our goal,” Steinberg said. By Friday morning, “another 82 have come in, amounting to just a little over \$7,500. So even though people saw that we met our goal very early on, the love and support kept coming in.”

Those donations, however, would not be able to overcome the logistical hurdle of getting another sukkah up for the rest of the holiday. That's where Rabbi Bressler came in.

“Rabbi Phil called me up; ‘I saw what's going on. How can I help? What do you need?’” Steinberg recalled.

An arrangement was originally planned for Hillel to host the remainder of their Sukkot programs at Beit Am's sukkah, but Rabbi Bressler decided to do him one better.

“This is a problem I feel like I can solve,” he recalled thinking. “I know how to put together a sort of a pop-up Sukkah out of materials you can get at the hardware

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The replacement sukkah at the Oregon Hillel facility in Corvallis, constructed by Rabbi Phil Bressler, Ellie Larison and other Oregon Hillel staff members and students and members of Corvallis' Congregation Beit Am. (Courtesy Oregon Hillel)



SUKKAH (continued from page 5)

store. That's kind of what I do in my own yard a lot of the time with limited space."

He and his 8-year-old son headed off to Home Depot, where they found everything they needed but the roll-up bamboo panels that Rabbi Bressler liked to use to create a halachically-porous roof. These were sourced from a supply of spares sourced at the synagogue. With some help from Ellie Larison, Oregon Hillel's Wellness Director and a Beit Am member, as well as some students and other members of Beit Am, the new Sukkah was erected and ready within 10 hours of the old one's theft being reported.

"They just got that new building, they finally have their own space on campus after always sort of borrowing for years," Rabbi Bressler said. "I felt like they really deserved to have that. So, this felt like a much happier solution to

help them construct a new sukkah and let them be in their own space instead of continuing to have to borrow."

"Just out of the pure generosity of local community members' hearts, they said, 'all good and great that you're raising the funds. We need to get something up sooner. Let's make this happen,'" Steinberg said.

Those funds will help provide new sukkah for next year – perhaps even a larger one – and support programming and security at the facility to try and make this particular brand of community generosity a one-time event.

"The people that gave, we had Ducks, we had Beavers, we had parents, we had students, we had folks that have never given to Oregon Hillel or probably even knew we existed. but saw this story and felt compelled to give," Steinberg recalled. "It's really, really incredible."

MIKVAH

(continued from page 4)

person utilizing Rachel's Well?"

Rosen, meanwhile, takes over the administrative aspects of the mikvah – a role which had been occupied by Blau Rothstein since she was project manager on the mikvah's construction until her departure from Portland earlier this year. This includes community outreach and education, interfacing with the Oregon Board of Rabbis, recruiting and training mikvah guides and more.

Rosen first engaged with mikvah practices when he was living in Israel – an ancient, natural mikvah was just a short hike outside the community in the south where he resided. Though the waters were quite cold and there were occasionally fish in the mikvah pool, he recalled; he began immersing regularly – sometimes even daily.

"It was beautiful, and it really woke me up to how this could be a sacred thing," he said.

Both Rosen and Hogland hope to educate and engage with as many community members as possible to let them know that despite stereotypes and misconceptions, mikvah practice is available and accessible to all Jews.

"Mikveh is this weird paradox where it's simultaneously such an accessible ritual. You just go in the water; you make a blessing. On the other hand, for many Jews, it's seen as a very inaccessible ritual, because you can't do it at home, and then you need a guide, and a lot of people have these assumptions about it's only for these people. The whole point of a communal mikvah is that it's for anybody, for any purpose," Rosen said. "It's not that people need to come to the mikvah, it's rather making sure that people in Portland know that this is an available, accessible resource for them for whenever they want to have a mikvah experience."

To schedule an immersion at Rachel's Well, email mikvahpdx@gmail.com. For more information about Rachel's Well, visit jewishportland.org/ourcommunity/rachels-well-portland-mikvah. You can also email Rosen at yosef@jewishportland.org or Hogland at jamie@jewishportland.org.

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Abolofia brings 'The Jewish Clarinet' to EJC

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

While most people know the clarinet's place in Jewish music primarily by its influence on Klezmer, the instrument is so much more, as Portland's Rey Abolofia can attest.

He'll demonstrate the expansiveness of the clarinet's impact on Jewish music in his aptly titled recital, "The Jewish Clarinet," Saturday, Oct. 17 at 7 pm at the Eastside Jewish Commons in Portland.

Abolofia, a product of Congregation Neveh Shalom and Camp Solomon Schechter, came to the instrument at the age of 10 and hasn't stopped since.

"I actually started because my mother had played clarinet and had one in our basement because my grandfather had bought her a clarinet," he said, "He bought her the clarinet and then she stopped playing it, but we had one. I was like, 'I'll play it.'"

He played it through Portland State University, eventually earning a masters' degree magna cum laude in clarinet performance. Abolofia also studied at the Eastman School of Music, the prestigious music institute in Rochester, N.Y., and is today the Principal Clarinet of the Salem Philharmonia Orchestra and bass clarinetist with the Sunnyside Symphony Orchestra. However, it was sometime before his love for the clarinet and his love for Judaism intersected.

"Music that we know as the like Western classical tradition came out of two places; It came out of the church and it came out of the royal courts, which are two places that Jews either didn't want to go to or were not allowed to be," he explained. "You play Bach and you study Bach and everything's a cantata about Jesus. I would say it's been kind of challenging actually to bring the two together and part of this recital is to bring the two together in a deliberate way and then invite others to be a part of that connection as well."

While the program leads off with a clarinet and piano arrangement of "La Forza Del Destino" by the non-Jewish Giuseppe Verdi, the rest of the pieces together comprise an exploration of the full influence of clarinet on Jewish



Abolofia (Norm Eder/Courtesy of Rey Abolofia)

melody. "Four Hebraic Pictures," by composer and former New York Philharmonic clarinetist Simeon Bellison, leads into a trio of pieces by George Gershwin for piano and clarinet and will be followed by French-Jewish composer Darius Milhaud's "Duo Concertant." Lee Melaugh will perform on the piano.

"Almost all of the pieces are 20th century, and all of the composers lived, at least for the latter part of their lives in the United States," Abolofia observed, "I think that alone tells a very, very interesting story."

The star of the program, however, is Steve Reich's "New York Counterpoint." Written in 1984, it is written as a solo performance for 11 clarinets, realized through prerecording.

"You pre-record 10 clarinet parts and then play those through speakers while you then perform the 11th part live," Abolofia said. "Originally, [Reich] conceived it as two speakers plus the performer. But we're going to take it one step farther. We're going to do 10 speakers plus a performer. This is why I'm really excited we're doing it at EJC is because that space is perfect for it... We're going to put them in a circle around the audience, and have each clarinet part piped to its own speaker."

"New York Counterpoint," written to capture the vibrancy of its namesake,

is around 11 minutes in length, but required multiple hours of finished recordings by Abolofia. Sound designer Cory Johannsen helped assemble the tapes and design the speaker array.

"My mom ended up buying me the score for it and at the time, in 2005 or whatever, it was quite expensive. So, thank you, Mom. It's basically sat on my shelf for the next 20 years until I was able, until now," Abolofia said. "The barrier that's always been there for me has not been the music or the notes or anything like that, it's been the speakers and audio setup."

EJC isn't just the ideal venue from a sound design standpoint, he explained. Many of the audience members at his recitals at Portland State University were friends of his mother's from Neveh Shalom, and he wanted to create an event where they would feel welcomed – not always the easiest sell for many modern classical recitals, which are often held in churches.

"Churches are very open to you hosting a music recital in them," Abolofia said, but "there's some type of uncomfortability in that. I specifically want to put this on in a Jewish space."

Tickets for "The Jewish Clarinet" are \$18 per person, with ages 12 and under admitted for free, and are available at events.humanitix.com/rey-abolofia-the-jewish-clarinet.

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

OCT 15 OCT 12

Turn It Over and Over

A weekly look at the Torah portion

Let's begin 'In the beginning...'

By DR. YOSEF ROSEN

Many a Jewish wrist is on ice this week, after synagogues across the world rolled their Torah scrolls from the last verse all the way back to the first verse. We're back at the beginning now: the beginning of the text (the Torah) and the beginning of time (the Jewish creation story). As we begin a new year with Torah, this weekly column is here to aid you in engaging with our founding text in new ways.

The Torah is divided into weekly portions, each called a *parshah*. The Hebrew root of the word carries two meanings: to separate and to explain. That double sense is exactly what this column hopes to do. Each week I'll offer a quick recap of the Torah portion, marking out its place in the larger story, followed by a short deep dive into one surprising, lesser-known aspect that can, hopefully, bring new light to a very-ancient text. As the sage Ben Bag Bag (lit. "son of Bag Bag"—when your dad has such a good name, you just run with it) teaches in the rabbinic text, Pirkei Avot, "Turn it over and over, for everything is in it."

Bereshit (Genesis 1-6) - Recap

We begin not with a bang, but with speech. The opening two chapters of Bereshit offer two quite different accounts of creation. In the first chapter God creates the world—stars, shrubbery, starfish and mankind—piecemeal, in six stages, one per day, each through the power of words alone. And on the seventh day God rests and honors what has now be-

come our planet. This is the earliest historical mention of a seven-day week, which is not a natural unit of time and not one most ancient cultures adhered to. Throughout the account, God surveys creation and declares the goodness of each part. Unlike most ancient creation mythologies, no one resists God's creation. Instead of mythic strife, we are welcomed into a world with a single, supreme creator who builds the cosmos with a coherent, systematic blueprint; "and it was very good."

The second chapter, though, offers a very different tale of creation. Instead of beginning with "and it was good," it begins with a desolate world where nothing yet grows and there is no one to tend the land. God solves these ecological and agricultural crises through moisture; a mist rises from the earth and wets the surface, allowing flora to sprout. From the wet humus of soil, God shapes the first human (the name Adam comes from the name for soil, *adamah*). But with the emergence of humanity a new crisis emerges, "And God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone' (Gen. 2:18). The first chapter emphasizes the goodness of creation, while the second begins in ecological and existential problem-solving. (Biblical scholars view these as two distinct, ancient Jewish accounts of creation, while the traditional rabbinic approach is to harmonize them as two perspectives of the same story.)

More problems soon arise in the shape of the snake, as



Dr. Yosef Rosen is the Director of Jewish Life and Learning at the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland.

chapter three tells the famous story of the Garden of Eden, where seduction, sin and shame enter into humanity's tale. The problems don't end with the expulsion from Eden. The following chapter tells the tragic tale of the first two children, Cain and Abel, who get into a brotherly disagreement that ends in Cain murdering Abel; A rough start for the beginning of mankind. The last two chapters offer a lengthy family-tree, tracing ten generations from Adam through Noah. By the conclusion of the parsha (chapter six), human wickedness has become so pervasive that God regrets creating humanity. The portion that began with divine declarations of goodness ends with divine grief. Yet one person, Noah, finds favor in God's eyes, leaving a small opening for the story to begin again next week.

Deep-Dive: The Ancient Waters

One aquatic element of the creation story has long

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Cedar Sinai presents Oregon History Month lectures

The Jewish Review staff

Cedar Sinai Park and the Robison Foundation for Jewish Elders will host the Oregon History Month Lecture Series in Zidell Hall at Rose Schnitzer Manor this month, encompassing seven presentations each beginning at 7 pm.

The series begins tonight, Oct. 8, with a talk titled “Beyond the Gate: A Tale of Portland’s Historic Chinatowns” by the Portland Chinatown Museum, followed by a two-part series by the Oregon Historical Society titled “A Step Back

into Oregon’s Past” Monday, Oct. 12 and Thursday, Oct. 15. Alex Lugo will present “The History of Drag Performance, Politics and Protest” in two parts Monday and Tuesday, Oct. 19-20.

The Oregon Black Pioneers Museum will present “450 Years in 45 Minutes” Thursday, Oct. 22 and the series will conclude with a talk from the Japanese American Museum Monday, Oct. 26.

For more information, visit cedarsinainpark.org.

ROSEN (continued from page 8)

stood out to readers: the waters seem already to exist when creation begins. The Torah’s second verse describes the world before the first creative act of light-making: “The earth was unformed and desolate ... and the breath of God hovered above the surface of the water.” The waters enter the narrative as a primordial presence whose origin goes unexplained. When the narrative returns to them on the second day, God does not say, “Let there be water.”

Instead, God divides the existing waters into an upper realm, above the sky, and a lower realm, beneath it. Creation proceeds through the separation and arrangement of waters whose creation is never narrated. Genesis does not explicitly formulate the later doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, “creation from nothing,” whose emergence in Jewish and Christian thought remains a matter of scholarly debate. Nevertheless, the apparent priority of the waters raises a question within a narrative that so emphatically celebrates the creator’s power: did God create the materials of the world, or fashion the world from materials already there?

This puzzle animates an exchange preserved in the late antique rabbinic collection *Genesis Rabbah* (1:9). A philosopher tells Rabban Gamliel: “Your

God is a great artist, but he found excellent raw materials that helped him: formlessness, chaos, darkness, wind, water and depths.” Rabban Gamliel responds sharply: “May the spirit of that man depart from him! Regarding all of them, creation is written.” The philosopher does not single out water; it is one of several apparently primordial elements mentioned in *Genesis*’s second verse. Rabban Gamliel answers by assembling passages from elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible that attribute their existence to God. For the waters, he invokes Psalm 148: “Praise Him, highest heavens, and waters above the heavens,” followed by the explanation: “For He commanded and they were created” (148:4-5).

The psalm includes the waters among the heavenly things summoned to praise their maker. Rabban Gamliel brings this poetic declaration to bear on *Genesis*’s narrative silence: what *Genesis* does not explicitly say about the waters’ origin, *Psalms* supplies. His response exemplifies the intertextual practice essential to midrash, in which one biblical passage becomes the key to interpreting another. Yet the same rabbinic collection preserves a strikingly different reading. In *Genesis Rabbah* 1:5, Rav Huna says: “Had the

matter not been written, it would be impossible to say it: ‘In the beginning, God created’ ... From what? ‘The earth was unformed and desolate.’” Here, the second verse supplies the material from which the creation announced in the first verse proceeds. Rather than using other biblical passages to explain away the primordial scene, this interpretation allows that scene to describe creation’s starting point. The waters thus expose a tension that the creation story leaves unresolved: God orders the world into shape, but the narrative never tells us where its watery starting point came from, leaving open the possibility that water is the most ancient thing we can touch.

This is a key part of what makes mikvah so powerful. We immerse ourselves in the element that the Torah places at the threshold of creation. Before there were days, before dry land appeared, before the world took its familiar shape, there was water. Entering the mikvah, we return symbolically to that primordial beginning. We briefly release the boundaries of our ordinary lives and emerge ready to begin again. The waters’ ancientness becomes a source of renewal: they connect us to a world before its possibilities had settled into form.

Jewish Jobs

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Bronfman Fellowship applications open now

The Samuel Bronfman Foundation

The Bronfman Fellowship is pleased to announce that it is now accepting applications for its 41st cohort. Every year, The Fellowship selects twenty-six outstanding North American teenagers from a wide range of Jewish backgrounds for a free, intellectually challenging year of programming and community building, beginning with an immersive summer experience in the U.S. and Israel in between the Fellows' junior and senior years of high school. During a time of rising polarization, isolation, bigotry, and threats to democracy around the world, the Fellowship is committed to cultivating young Jewish leaders who can build a more interconnected, courageous, and pluralistic future. The nonprofit Fellowship was founded by Edgar M. Bronfman, z"l, formerly CEO of the Seagram Company Ltd. and a visionary Jewish philanthropist.

Applications for the 2027 Fellowship are due Dec. 1, 2026, and are available online at bronfman.org. High school students in the U.S. and Canada who identify as Jewish and who are in 11th grade in the fall of 2026 are eligible to apply. The Bronfman Fellowship is a pluralistic program for Jews of all backgrounds; prior Jewish education is not required. The Fellowship seeks young people eager to engage deeply with others, build trust through nuanced discourse, and see through a lens broader than their own.

"The Fellowship is an opportunity for dynamic person-

al and intellectual growth in a group of carefully chosen teens," said Becky Voorwinde, CEO. "In a world that is increasingly divided, we seek to increase communication and understanding between young people from across the spectrum of Jewish life, including fostering bonds between Jews in North America and Israel. This program serves as a creative force that has inspired some of our best Jewish young adults to become leaders in their communities, and to develop their unique talents to change the world for the better."

"My father, Edgar M. Bronfman, placed enormous faith in young people's ability to see the world not just as it is, but as it ought to be," said Adam R. Bronfman, President of The Samuel Bronfman Foundation. "He believed that young people energized by their Judaism were best equipped to both shape a Jewish 'Renaissance' and improve the world."

For the past four decades, Bronfman Fellows have built a pluralistic community and expanded their perspectives through a transformative, intellectual, and deeply personal journey. Inspired by a stellar faculty of rabbis and educators, Fellows explore a wide range of Jewish texts, from classic religious works to contemporary poetry and philosophy, using these sources to engage with stimulating existential questions and achieve a deeper, enduring understanding of themselves and one another. Bronfman educators craft a welcoming space where Fellows learn to trust them-

selves and one another, explore ideas freely, share diverse perspectives, and have complex conversations built on openness and respect.

Fellows also have the unique opportunity to engage with speakers who are leading intellectuals, artists, and religious and cultural leaders. Past speakers have included Rabbi Adina Allen, founder and president of Jewish Studio Project; award-winning journalist Matti Friedman; Israel policy expert Michael Koplow; and poet and literary scholar Joy Ladin. Additionally, Fellows engage creatively through intensive artist workshops in literary, performing, and visual arts, taught by leading innovators in the field of Jewish art. Requiring no previous training, the workshops serve as reflective points, further elucidating the lives and narratives of others and empowering Fellows to add their voices to the rich tapestry of Jewish culture and ideas.

The Fellowship year begins with a summer of extensive programming in the U.S. and 10 days in Israel, where the Fellows interact with a group of exceptional Israeli peers, chosen through a parallel selection process by the Israeli branch of the Fellowship, Amitei Bronfman. Following their immersive summer, Fellows have monthly virtual meetings and two in-person seminars in the U.S., in which they continue to explore major themes in Jewish life, and embark on "Beyond Bronfman" projects that integrate the ideas and questions from

their Bronfman summer with their daily lives and home communities.

The relationships and self-confidence that develop during the Fellowship year are built to last a lifetime. Bronfman alumni serve as changemakers across a wide range of fields including government, media, business, the arts, Jewish life, and academia. Leaders of note among Fellowship alumni include Rabbi Angela Buchdahl of Central Synagogue; authors Dara Horn and Jonathan Safran Foer; Raphael Rosen, co-founder and CEO of Carbon Lighthouse; Liba Wenig Rubenstein, director of the Future of Work Initiative at the Aspen Institute; and Ariel Pollock Star, founder of Lehem Zeh, a women's empowerment program in southern Israel. Alumni also include key figures at Jewish organizations such as Sefaria, Keshet, The Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, the Jewish Women's Archive, Hillel International, and The Foundation for Jewish Camp.

Our Israeli alumni have also ascended to positions of influence in government, civil society, the private sector, and cultural institutions. Amitei Bronfman alumni include attorneys at the State Justice Department, noted journalists, award-winning filmmakers, political advisers to Members of Knesset, members of elite IDF units, and top-university professors.

To learn more about The Bronfman Fellowship, and to apply or to refer a teen to the program, visit bronfman.org/.

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Downtown sukkahs celebrate season



Left: The Jewish Oasis brought Sukkot to people across Portland, from seniors and homebound community members to Cedar Sinai Park and OHSU. The first-ever Sukkah on the OHSU campus even drew a special visit from the university's new president, Dr. Shereef Elnahal, who joined the Jewish Employee Resource Group, Jewish Oasis and Chabad on Portland Campuses teams. Right: Nearly 60 feet of sukkah, music, food, drinks and a packed crowd turned the street outside Jewish Oasis into a wild Sukkah in the City celebration. It capped off a full week of the Portland Sukkah being open 24/7, with people from all over Portland stopping by, including many who had not celebrated Sukkos in years or ever before. (Courtesy The Jewish Oasis)

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Events

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

Oct. 10: Women's Torah Study

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

Oct. 10: Sephardic Foundations

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

Oct. 13: Wise Aging - Exploring Life's Next Chapter Together

Interactive aging workshop series Tuesdays at Congregation Neveh Shalom at 10 am, sponsored by Jewish Family & Child Service. RSVP required at jfcs-portland.org/wise-aging-2026.

Oct. 13: EJC Reads – 'Goodbye, Columbus'

Book discussion group at the Eastside Jewish Com-

mons at 11 am. More information at ejcpdx.org/events.

Oct. 13: Evening of Inspiration - Finding G-d in Gaza's Tunnels with Former Hostages

Oct. 7 survivor presentation at Chabad Jewish Center of Clark County at 6:30 pm. Tickets at jewishvancouver-wa.com/adult-education.

Oct. 15: What to Know about Age & Memory

Aging presentation by Jewish Family & Child Service at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center at 1 pm. First of a three-part series. More information at jfcs-portland.org/aging-memory-series.

Oct. 15: Rose City Mitzvah Meals

Volunteer service project at 5 pm. More information and registration at [jewish-portland.org/jewishportlandregfoxcom/rose-city-](http://jewish-portland.org/jewishportlandregfoxcom/rose-city-mitzvah-meals)

mitzvah-meals.

Oct. 15: Peddlers of Hate

Book presentation at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 7 pm. More information at ejcpdx.org/events.

Oct. 15: Radically Reasonable Watch Party and Teen Panel

Virtual film screening and discussion panel presented by Moving Traditions at 7:30 pm. More information at movingtraditions.org/event/israel-campus-conflict-radically-reasonable-watch-party-teen-panel.

Oct. 16: EJC Free Noontime Concert – Aaron Larget-Caplan

Concert at the Eastside Jewish Commons at noon. More information at ejcpdx.org/events.

Oct. 17: Mini Menses Tot Shabbat

Children's Shabbat service

at Congregation Beth Israel at 9 am. More information at bethisrael-pdx.org/action/mini-mensches.

Oct. 18:

Schmoozeapalooza

Senior prom at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center at 1 pm, presented by Jewish Family & Child Service. More information at jfcs-portland.org/senior-prom-2026.

Oct. 20: Al Lewin Legacy Trail Work Party

Trail cleanup at Cedar Sinai Park at 9 am. More information at jewishportland.org/al-lewin-legacy-trail-cleanup-crew.

Oct. 22: What Is Yiddishkeit?

Lecture at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education at 6 pm. More information at ojmche.org/events/what-is-yiddishkeit-with-danny-kraft.

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