

Rosen teaches antisemitism history at PSU

By **ROCKNE ROLL**

The Jewish Review

Dr. Yosef Rosen, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Director of Jewish Life and Learning, is back in the classroom.

Rosen is teaching History of Antisemitism this term through Portland State University's Harold Schnitzer Family Program in Judaic Studies. The course, an upper-division undergraduate class which also covers one of the university's general education requirements, covers the origins of antisemitism in ancient times through the present day, with a substantial focus on the 20th and 21st Century.

"It is a panoramic history of antisemitism, and history is really the important operative term. We start off in the ancient world, but mostly we're exploring the trajectories of antisemitism within the Christian tradition and with the Muslim Arabic tradition. The course moves at a very fast historical pace to get us up to the 20th century," Rosen said.

Some of the history being covered is very recent history; the syllabus addresses events as recent as the Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville, Va. In 2017 and the anti-Israel campus demonstrations of 2024 and 2025. Rosen also points out that this is not a neutral examina-



Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Director of Jewish Life and Learning Dr. Yosef Rosen addresses his History of Antisemitism class Wednesday, Oct. 21 at Portland State University. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

tion of history.

"It's historical because we really can't understand contemporary antisemitism without understanding its roots," he explained. "But it does have a certain ethi-

cal comportment of being a course that is anti-antisemitism."

The course was developed by Dr. Natan Meir, the former head of PSU's Judaic Studies program, and is

being taught by Rosen this term through an agreement between the Federation and the department.

"We're happy to partner with the university, and we think Yosef is a wonderful addition to their faculty," Federation President and CEO Marc Blattner said.

Rosen is not new to teaching in a college environment. Rosen taught several courses at the University of California, Berkeley, from which he received his doctorate in Judaic Studies. He also previously served as an adjunct instructor at California State University and taught courses for a number of rabbinical school programs, as well as teaching at a Jewish high school and two decades of adult Jewish education.

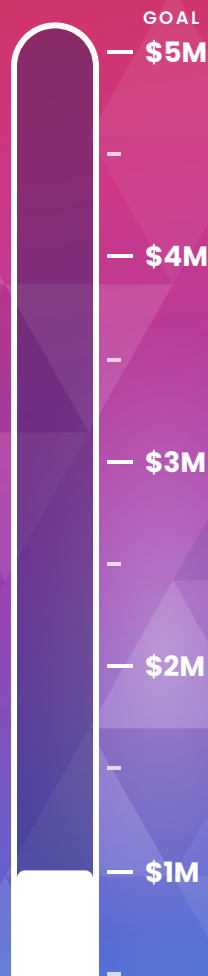
"It's exciting for me to be teaching this course because adult Jewish learning happens in many places in Portland," Rosen said, "and Portland State is a place that has a very prestigious Jewish Studies department."

This term saw nearly 20 students enrolled in the course, with at least one person auditing it, a term for when someone enrolls in and participates in a college course but does not receive a grade or academic credit toward a degree; Portland State permits those age 65

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Wisdom Without Walls conversations now available for free through JFGP partnership

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

Jewish learning nonprofit Wisdom Without Walls has partnered with the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland to offer its broad range of in-depth conversations on a variety of Jewish topics.

"The idea of bringing a myriad of world-class speakers to Portland was an investment well worth it to expand the amount of Jewish educational opportunities for our community," Federation President and CEO Marc Blattner said.

Founded in 2024 by Rabbi Ed Feinstein, Dr. Sandra Lilienthal and Rabbi Jeffrey Salkin, Wisdom Without Walls hosts virtual small-group conversations on top-

ics ranging from the practical to the esoteric, facilitated by experts in their fields.

"It's really framed as a conversation, not just a lecture," Federation Director of Jewish Life and Learning Dr. Yosef Rosen explained. "You get this intimate access with some of the leading Jewish thought leaders in America today."

Upcoming presentations include "Planning Ahead with Jewish Wisdom: Talking With Your Loved Ones About Healthcare Decisions" with Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Brody, executive director of Ematai, an end-of-life education resource in Israel, and a columnist for *The Jerusalem Post*, and "Reflections on a Lifetime

of Pioneering Theology, Activism, and Jewish Thought" with Rabbi Yitz Greenberg of the Hadar Institute.

"It is a way that we're trying to empower people to do Jewish in their homes on their own time," Rosen said. "If you register, even if you can't attend it live, you can watch the recording."

Created to support meaningful connection with Jewish community and ideas, Wisdom Without Walls partners with local organizations like the Federation to offer its programs as a community resource. The organization also offers individual memberships, which provide access to the entire catalog of previous conversations recordings.

"If you go to all of these, you're just going to get this amazing overview of both the who's who in contemporary Jewish thought," Rosen said, "and also this immersion in a variety of topics that are important to contemporary Judaism."

Learn more at wisdomwithoutwalls.org and sign up for any upcoming conversation with code JewishPortland2026.

CLASS

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and over to audit any of its courses for free. Rosen said that most of his students this term are not Jewish.

"It's really amazing to be teaching this material to such a diverse audience," Rosen said, and it's just been wonderful to get to know them. At the end of today's class, a few of them said, "Why can't all our classes be so interesting?"



Ein matzav | אין מצב

Literal translation:
"There's no situation."

Meaning: "No way,"
"Impossible," or "Absolutely not!"



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ElevatEd program takes off to support ECE

By ROCKNE ROLL
The Jewish Review

Early childhood education can be a challenging field; putting “Jewish” in front of that doesn’t change that. Jewish early childhood education is, however, a huge part of Jewish life for many children and their families, as well as the entirety of Jewish community.

“There’s so many families that grow up Jewish, but they may not have entered a synagogue since the bar mitzvah, and they’re getting reintroduced to a different type of Judaism,” Sasha Kopp Hass, the Senior Director of Education and Engagement at ElevatEd, explained, “a very sensory-based, hands-on model through their children.”

Helping educators in Jewish early childhood spaces thrive is where ElevatEd comes in. Launched as a partnership between the Jewish Community Centers Association of North America, Jewish Federations of North America and the Union for Reform Judaism, ElevatEd launched in Portland as part of its third cohort of communities. As part of that rollout, Kopp Hass and ElevatEd Executive Director Dr. Orna Siegel were in Portland meeting with stakeholders about the work they’re embarking on.

In their visit, Siegel explained, “We’ve seen really high-quality education here, and that’s not the case in every community. So that’s exciting and extraordinary, and it’s very affirming to do this work because you want to support excellent schools and help them just get better.”

Both Siegel and Kopp Hass are longtime early childhood educators – Kopp Hass re-



From left, ElevatEd Senior Director of Education and Engagement Sasha Kopp Hass and ElevatEd Executive Director Dr. Orna Siegel, pictured Tuesday, Oct. 20. The pair visited the area as part of the kickoff for Portland’s participation in ElevatEd’s third cohort of communities. (Jamie Hogland/The Jewish Review)

called that her first experience in the field was while she was practically still in early childhood herself, creating Passover activities for her younger cousins as a 4-year-old before going on to serve as the assistant preschool director at Central Synagogue in New York and working with the Jewish Education Project.

“At each one of these steps, I really saw that my peers weren’t going into this field, and it was really hard to hire new teachers,” she said.

Finding and retaining teachers remains a major issue in the ECE world – Jewish and otherwise. ElevatEd provides tools to make that process a little easier.

“We have lots of national resources, but then we also have people like [Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Director of Community Programs and Engagement] Jamie [Hogland], who is our Community Coordinator, to help translate those services locally and to also be a voice back to us to say, ‘Hey,

this isn’t working for Portland. We need more of this for Portland,’” Siegel said. “Every community coordinator is really our translator in both directions to make sure that we are serving the needs of each community in the way that they need to be served.”

These include tools to streamline hiring processes so qualified candidates aren’t snapped up by other operations while hiring managers – usually preschool directors – are supporting children and their staffs. These also include tools for current teachers to feel more empowered and knowledgeable in their work because, even in states where there are coursework requirements for early childhood educators (Oregon is not one of those), a lot of the job’s skills have to be picked up in the field.

“Our interventions are helping recruit and helping upskill those people new into the field, so they feel confident and competent,” Siegel said. “Adults don’t like to come to work every day and not know what they’re doing and feel overwhelmed, right? That’s not a good feeling.”

A big part of this is ElevatEd’s mentorship program – which ends up often being as valuable for the mid-career teachers ElevatEd trains to be mentors as it is for the newer mentees.

“One of the challenges with early childhood is there’s not a tremendous career path for growth, and this offers that career path and that growth so that they can learn to be reflective practitioners,” Siegel said. “They might want to stay in the field longer and certainly add back, give back

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to their community. They see themselves differently as leaders in their community.”

“They’re getting the opportunity to have deep learning,” Kopp Hass added. “How to have relational conversations, give and receive feedback, do observations, collect data and work with someone to help them grow. What we’re seeing is it’s not just improving the new emerging educators’ ability to be confident in the classroom, but we’re also seeing more reflective practice and just renewed energy in our in our mentors who are trying this new methodology of how to be a mentor in this classroom. It’s been really

exciting to see their growth.”

This mentoring and opportunities for growth are also a boon for the approximately half of early childhood educators working in Jewish spaces who are not themselves Jewish.

“What we really want is that ElevatEd can be a resource for everyone, no matter what their background is, to learn about Judaism, to feel comfortable asking questions and to connect with others who are like them,” Kopp Hass said. “I feel like many people think it’s an anomaly that they are a non-Jewish person working this Jewish space, and it’s really something that’s happening everywhere across the country.”

That pays dividends far outside the walls of a preschool classroom.

“What we’re really doing is building allyship, and the Jews need allies right now. We always need allies, but right now, it’s really important,” Siegel added. “It’s a tremendous boon to the Jewish community to have these individuals working in our community, and to even have the non-Jewish families in our schools learning with us and becoming excited about Judaism and the Jewish people, and to become tremendous allies.”

That leads to stronger communities – both within preschools and beyond.

Quality Jewish early child-

hood education “creates community,” JFGP Chief Planning Officer Rachel Nelson said. “If you have teachers that are happy, they stay. You have families that are happy, that stay long-term, and that leads to continuity, and that leads to deeper engagement on both sides of the community, both the professional side and families.”

“I really do believe that early childhood is the engine for communal vitality,” Siegel added. “If we want to have strong day schools, strong camps, strong JCCs, strong synagogues, strong federations, it starts when we serve a family when their first child goes into care.”



Lewin Legacy Trail cleanups continue



Seth Healy of the Westside Watershed Resource Center demonstrates ivy removal techniques during a Jewish Volunteer Corps cleanup project at the Al Lewin Legacy Trail on the Cedar Sinai Park campus Tuesday, Oct. 20. Jewish community volunteers, along with area middle and high school students, removed ivy from along the trail and from the trees surrounding it; the ivy is an invasive species and can starve trees of resources, damaging the ecosystem and leading to fallen trees which can cause injury and damage. JFV runs regular cleanup and maintenance projects on the trail; for more information, email Jewish Federation of Greater Portland Volunteer Coordinator Merit Pinker at merit@jewishportland.org. (Rockne Roll/The Jewish Review)

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NEXT ISSUE

Issue date Deadline

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Turn It Over and Over

A weekly look at the Torah portion

Judaism's original trailblazer

By DR. YOSEF ROSEN

Lech Lecha (Genesis 12-17) - Recap

This week's parsha shifts both focus and style: from the sweeping story of humanity across generations to the detailed lives of Abraham and his household. God calls Abram to leave home for Canaan, promising him descendants, land, and a future as a source of blessing. The new beginning quickly gets complicated. Famine sends Abram and Sarai to Egypt, where his attempt to pass her off as his sister lands her in Pharaoh's household. They emerge with their lives and considerable wealth, but back in Canaan, their growing flocks lead to conflict with Abram's nephew Lot who had accompanied him and Sarai on their quest for a new life. The two separate, though Abram soon has to rescue Lot after a regional war. Meanwhile, God keeps promising descendants, and Abram keeps wondering when parenthood will enter the picture. God compares his future offspring to the stars and seals a covenant with him. Sarai tries to secure a child through her enslaved Egyptian woman, Hagar, who conceives a child with Abram, suffers Sarai's harsh treatment, and flees with her son, Ishmael. An angel encounters Hagar and promises a great future for her son. Finally, God re-names Abram and Sarai as Abraham ("father of many nations") and Sarah and announces that Sarah herself will bear the promised descendent. God then commands circumcision, and Abraham circumcises him-

self and Ishmael, who bears the covenant's sign even as God names Isaac as the son through whom the covenantal family will continue.

Deep Dive: Completing the journeys of our ancestors

Long before Deni, Abraham was the original Jewish trailblazer. We remember him as the man who left everything behind to set the Jewish story in motion. We tend to forget that his father had already packed the family bags and was already blazing new trails. How then should we understand the original divine call that opens this week's Torah portion? "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you." It sounds like the ultimate fresh start. Leave home. Journey to a new land. Make a clean break with your family. Begin again. But turn back a few verses to the conclusion of last week's parsha. Abraham's father, Terah, has already gathered the family and set out "for the land of Canaan" (the original name for the Land of Israel). They reach Haran and settle there. Migrating to Canaan was already a family plan. Haran, in what is now southeastern Turkey, stood at a major crossroads connecting Mesopotamia, Syria, and Anatolia. For travelers coming from Ur in southern Iraq, where Abraham's family first lived, it was a sensible stop along the routes toward Canaan. It was also a commercial center where a family could build a life. Abraham and Sarah



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

apparently did: the Torah describes the possessions and household they accumulated there before leaving. Their stopping place became their home; Canaan was set aside as an unfinished dream.

This geographical context opens two profound possibilities about what God's call really meant. First, perhaps Abraham was being called to go ahead of his father, opening a path that Terah might later follow. The ancient Jewish Book of Jubilees imagines just such a departure. Rather than Abraham sneaking away from home before dawn, his father, Terah, blesses Abraham's journey, asking God to guide and protect him. Then he asks his son to return and bring him along if he finds a good place to live. Even as Abraham prepares to leave, his father imagines a future they might share. We usually imagine parents helping their children cross into new territory. Here, an ancient Jewish text leaves room for the child to extend a hand back and

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Photos: Schmoozapalooza swings in 2026



Photographs by ROBYN TAYLOR
Jewish Family & Child Service

The fourth annual Schmoozapalooza Senior Prom, hosted by Jewish Family & Child Service and the Mittleman Jewish Community Center Sunday, Oct. 18, was all that jazz—and so much more! The music was swinging, the dance floor was hopping, and the smiles were absolutely contagious! More than 100 community members joined in for a celebration of music, friendship, connec-

tion, and Roaring '20s magic! The phenomenal Carroll Raaum Swing Orchestra brought down the house with their incredible big band sound, keeping spirits high and toes tapping all afternoon! From dancing and laughter to fabulous photo booth moments, delicious treats, and new friendships, the room was bursting with energy and joy. This is what community looks like—coming together, celebrating life, making memories, and sharing moments of pure joy.



PDX-patterned kippah now available at Oasis

The Jewish Oasis

From airport carpet to sold-out fleece to Jewish headwear, Portland's iconic pattern keeps finding new ways to express local pride.

If you've spent time in Portland, you probably know the carpet. The distinctive teal-and-navy geometric pattern that once covered the floors of Portland International Airport became an unlikely local icon, inspiring everything from souvenirs to the latest buzzworthy Columbia Sportswear fleece. When Columbia brought the beloved design to its signature Helvetia fleece this month, Portlanders snapped it up, with the early release selling out in minutes.

Now, that iconic pattern has found its way onto something with a much longer history: a Jewish kippah.

The new PDX kippah brings together two kinds of identity: the pride of being part of Portland and the timeless con-

nection of being Jewish. It's playful, unmistakably local, and a reminder that Jewish life can feel right at home in the heart of the city.

A kippah may be small, but its meaning runs deep. Worn by Jews around the world, it serves as a reminder that there is something greater than ourselves. Covering the head expresses an awareness of G-d above us, encouraging humility and mindfulness in everyday life. For many, it is also a visible expression of Jewish identity, a simple way to carry that connection wherever they go.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, z"l, encouraged Jews to take pride in their Jewish identity and express it openly and confidently. Wearing a kippah can be a simple yet powerful way to do just that, not only in a synagogue or at a Jewish gathering, but out in the world,

wherever the day takes you.

That spirit is at the heart of Jewish Oasis: making Judaism accessible, relevant, welcoming, and fun. Jewish identity can be expressed in ways that are deeply traditional or distinctly Portland, and sometimes the two come together in a way that makes you smile.

The PDX kippah is one example. Alongside it, Jewish Oasis carries a variety of kippahs and other Judaica, helping people find meaningful ways to bring Jewish tradition into their everyday lives.

The PDX kippah is a little bit of Portland, a little bit of Jewish pride, and a reminder that Jewish identity belongs everywhere.

The PDX kippah is available for \$18 at Jewish Oasis, Portland's Urban Chabad House, centrally located in the Pearl District at 1218 NW Glisan Street. Stock is limited.

ROSEN (continued from page 6)

bring a parent along with them into their success.

The second possibility is that God calls Abraham to complete his father's unfinished journey. Terah had already dreamed of relocating to Canaan. He had already uprooted the family and begun the journey. Whatever prompted him to leave,

his destination remained beyond his reach. But his son could arrive there. Read this way, God's calling asks Abraham to recognize something worth carrying forward in the life he inherits. He must leave his father's household yet pursue a possibility his father first imagined. His independence

and his inheritance travel together. Which journeys did our parents or grandparents begin but could not complete? Which of their dreams still asks something of us? "Go forth" may call us toward a future that is ours to discover, along a road someone we love first had the courage to take. In

this view, Abraham is less a rebel than a son who makes his father's unfinished journey his own. Perhaps then, our parsha wishes to teach us a fundamental lesson: To belong to the Jewish story is to inherit a journey already underway and take responsibility for its next steps.

Jewish Jobs

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

Events

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

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.

Oct. 22: Through The Darkness

Film screening presented by Israel360 at Congregation Neveh Shalom at 7 pm. More information at nevehshalom.org/israel360.

Oct. 24: Intro to Biblical Hebrew

Weekly class at Congregation Ahavath Achim at 9:30 am. More information at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/adult-learning.html.

Oct. 24: Women's Torah Study

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

Oct. 24: Sephardic Foundations

Weekly class at Congregation Ahavath Achim at 12:45 pm. Learn more at ahavathachimpdx.weebly.com/sephardic-foundations.html.

Oct. 25: Shalom Snuggles

Music program for children ages 0-2 and families at Maayan Torah Day School at 9:30 am. More information at fs29.formsite.com/yqKYQG/zobti9emkj/index.

Oct. 25: PJA K-8

Grade Open House

Open house event at Portland Jewish Academy at 10 am. RSVP at pjaproud.org/openhouse.

Oct. 25: Mitzvah Makers

Volunteer service project for young families at Family Promise of Tualatin Valley in Tigard at 10 am. More information at jewishportland.org/the-mitzvah-makers-families-with-young-children---october-25-2026.

Oct. 25: Maayan's Ilan Katan Preschool Open House

Open house at Maayan Torah Day School at 11 am. More information at maayanpdx.org.

Oct. 25: The Mitzvah Project

Volunteer service project for young adults at Family Promise of Tualatin Valley in Tigard at noon. More information at jewishportland.org/the-mitzvah-project-nextgen-young-adults-18-45---october-25-2026.

Oct. 25: Bellows & Squawk

Musical performance at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 2 pm. Tickets at ejcpdx.org/events.

Oct. 25: Israeli Dancing at the J

Israeli folk dancing at the Mittleman Jewish Community Center at 2 pm. More information at sites.google.com/site/pifdnews.

Oct. 25: Every Force Evolves a Form

Poetry workshop with Daniela Naomi Molinar at 3 pm, presented by Art/Lab. More information at events.humanitix.com/copy-of-every-force-evolves-a-form-poetic-forms-with-daniela-naomi-molinar.

Oct. 28: Monkey Business

Film screening and discussion at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 1 pm. More information at ejcpdx.org/events.

Oct. 29: Art, Heart, and Soul

Two-part art workshop event at Congregation Neveh Shalom at 6 pm. More information at members.nevehshalom.org/form/art-heart-and-soul-chagall-windows1.html.

Oct. 29: Hyphen - Jewish Stories In Our Own Words

Book talk at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education at 6 pm. Tickets at ojmche.org/events/hyphenated-stories-exploring-mixed-jewish-identities-with-bechol-lashon.

Nov. 1: OJMCHE Free First Sunday

Free admission at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education. More info at ojmche.org.

Nov. 1: Public Tour of How We Show Up

Exhibit tour at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education at 12:30 pm. More info at ojmche.org.

Nov. 1: Portland Jewish Writers Circle

Monthly writers group at 2 pm. For more information, email Ben2schubert@icloud.com.

Nov. 1: Public Tour of One Nation

Exhibit tour at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education at 2 pm. More info at ojmche.org.

Nov. 2: Heroes Along The Way

Israel history program at Congregation Neveh Shalom at 7 pm. More information at jewishportland.org/heroes.

Nov. 4: Jewish Business Owner's Forum

Business owners group meeting at the Eastside Jewish Commons at 10 am. More information at ejcpdx.org/events.

Nov. 4: Rose City Mitzvah Meals

Volunteer service program at 5 pm. More information at jewishportland.org/jewishportlandregfoxcom/rose-city-mitzvah-meals.

Nov. 5: Oregon Jewish Voices 2026

Literary event and reading at the Oregon Jewish Museum and Center for Holocaust Education at 7 pm. More information at ojmche.org.

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HENRY WERCH

Henry Martin Werch, z"l, passed away Wednesday, Oct. 14, 2026 at the age of 83.

Born Apr. 10, 1943, Henry was the only child of Dr. Solomon Werch, z"l, and Agnes Sosnovik Werch, z"l. Born in the Logan Square area of Chicago, he grew up in Rogers Park, before the family moved to Miami during Henry's high school years. After high school, Henry returned to Chicago and first worked in a liquor store, where he cultivated his life-long interest in wine. He then entered the consumer electronics field, employed for nearly three decades in sales, marketing, and management for high-fidelity and computer-related firms. In 2004, Henry earned his M.S. in Human Services Administration from Spertus College, while directing program activities for the Palatine Township Senior Center. In addition to his professional careers, Henry was an active volunteer in community government. For the Village of Deer Park, he served on the planning commission from 1982-1989, and as an elected trustee from 1989-2004. He also sat on the Meadows Credit Union board of directors.

In 1970, Henry married Judith Gelinas, z"l, who died of breast cancer in 1996; they had no children. He married his second wife, Stephanie Reith, in 1997, and they celebrated their 29th wedding anniversary just three weeks before his death. With both Judy and Stephanie, Henry regularly indulged his passion for domestic and international travel.

In 2004, Henry and Stephanie moved to Port Townsend, Wash. ("while still young and healthy enough to have an adventure"), where they lived for 11 years. Henry once again

became involved in local planning and also served on the board of the local food co-op. In 2016, they moved to Portland, where Henry volunteered with the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, as well as serving as patient representative to a local health care system. They moved back to Chicago in September 2026 to independent/assisted living, as Henry's health declined.

Henry's Jewish heritage was an essential part of his being. While he did not consider himself observant or religious, he was thoroughly committed to Jewish ethical and social justice principles, intensely interested in Jewish culture and learning, deeply immersed in Ashkenazic culinary practice, generous in his giving to philanthropic causes, and was a passionate and loudly verbal practitioner of Talmudic debate. In his later years, he engaged in weekly Torah and Talmud study and participated in committees sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland. He taught himself to make challah, made the absolute best chicken soup, and was a master at traditional chopped liver, rendering his own schmaltz and frying up gribenes.

Henry is survived by his wife, Stephanie (Tivona) Reith; stepdaughter Shauna Reith; cousins Shifra Werch, Masha Werch Ferrara, Deb Porter, and Evan Schlaes; sisters-in-law Sandra Gelinas and Theresa Leyes; and brother-in-law Christopher Reith.

Donations can be made in memory of Henry Werch to the Congregation Shir Tikvah Library or Education Fund, the American Civil Liberties Union Foundation and the Health, Medical and Cancer Research Fund of the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel.

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