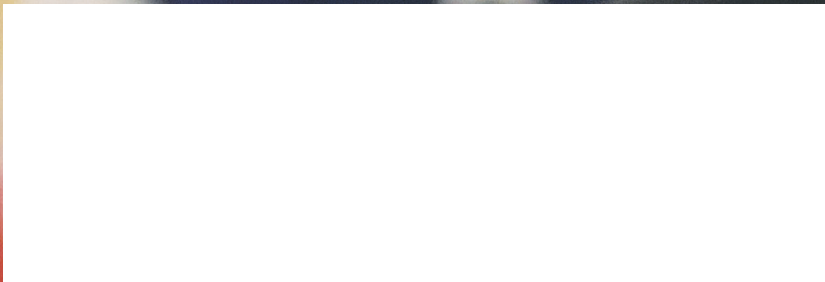




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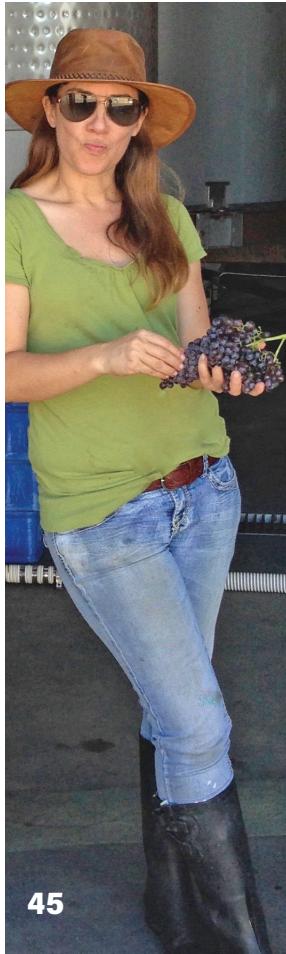
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State school board agrees ethnic studies curriculum must address Jewish concerns

NEWS | GABE STUTMAN | J. STAFF

Following an outcry from local and national Jewish groups, and coast-to-coast press scrutiny that included criticism in the editorial pages of the Los Angeles Times, the Wall Street Journal and other news outlets, California education officials have distanced themselves from a draft curriculum in ethnic studies that Jewish lawmakers said reflected an “anti-Jewish bias.”

The officials, including leaders from the State Board of Education and the state’s school superintendent, last week pledged that the more than 300-page model curriculum, developed by an 18-member state-appointed advisory committee in a series of daylong meetings earlier this year, would see “substantial” revisions before its final approval in March.

The curriculum “falls short and needs to be substantially redesigned,” State Board of Education president Linda Darling-Hammond, vice president Ilene Straus and board member Feliza Ortiz-Licon said in a statement issued Aug. 12.

Ethnic studies, the interdisciplinary study of race and ethnicity with a focus on people of color, “can be an important tool to improve school climate and increase our understanding of one another,” the statement read. “A model curriculum should be accurate, free of bias, appropriate for all learners in our diverse state, and align with Governor Newsom’s vision of a California for all.”

Following its public release in June, the curriculum — meant for high school students — was roundly criticized by a diverse coalition of Jewish groups, including the Anti-Defamation League, Progressive Zionists of California and JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa. It also received pushback from secular groups that criticized it for being overly dogmatic and inhospitable to dissenting viewpoints. An L.A. Times editorial on Aug. 4 called the curriculum “jargon-filled,” “all-too-PC” and “designed to proselytize and inculcate more than to inform.”

Specifically, Jewish community leaders took issue with the model’s exclusion of the American Jewish perspective and its cursory mention of anti-Semitism, despite the focus

on racism, Islamophobia and other forms of bigotry. The curriculum also was sharply critical of Israel and unequivocally supportive of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement, and it appeared to include an anti-Semitic trope embedded in a rap lyric from a Palestinian artist suggesting that Israel supporters “use the press so they can manufacture.”

Following an open letter from state Jewish lawmakers, an avalanche of press coverage and public feedback, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond said the draft should be changed significantly before being greenlighted for high school use.

“You can bet that our staff is making all kinds of recommendations to the IQC,” Thurmond told J. in an interview on Aug. 13. The IQC, or Instructional Quality Commission, is the body responsible for making edits.

Some Jewish groups also took issue with the curriculum’s use of the term “Nakba,” Arabic for “catastrophe,” in reference to the 1948 creation of the State of Israel and the subsequent displacement of Palestinians. Thurmond said he did not know

the word and was circling it in pen on his draft. “As far as I’m concerned, there should be no reference to the creation of anyone’s homeland as being catastrophic,” he told J.

On Aug. 14, Thurmond convened a press conference with members of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus at the Department of Education in Sacramento. He acknowledged that historically, ethnic studies has focused on four groups: African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, and indigenous people. He said “there was no intentional omission of the experiences of Jewish Americans” but that “we think the contributions of Jewish Americans should be mentioned.”

In an earlier interview with J., Thurmond said he wanted the curriculum to include “the

contributions of Jewish Americans in the struggle for civil rights and human rights.”

He was flanked at the press conference by Jewish caucus chair Ben Allen of Los Angeles County, vice chair Jesse Gabriel and other Jewish lawmakers.

Thurmond noted “the high levels of anti-Semitism that have existed historically, and that still do now” in discussing changes he would propose. A report from the California Department of Justice released earlier this year showed that anti-Semitic incidents increased 21 percent statewide in 2018. “We believe that the recommendations we are making to the IQC will address

have received from state leaders in response to our concerns about the flawed draft curriculum,” he said in a statement. “While there is much more work to be done, we are confident that the State Board of Education is committed to developing an inclusive and accurate ethnic studies curriculum.”

Others were more skeptical. While Thurmond can make recommendations to the State Board of Education, which sets state-wide academic standards, the board has final authority over the model curriculum.

The Amcha Initiative, a Santa Cruz-based nonprofit that investigates reports of anti-Semitism in American schools and



(From left) Sen. Ben Allen, Sen. Hannah-Beth Jackson, Assembly member Marc Berman, State Superintendent Tony Thurmond, Assembly member Jesse Gabriel (Photo/Courtesy JCRC)

these concerns in a significant way,” Thurmond said.

Assembly member Marc Berman of Palo Alto also spoke at the event, offering hope for unity and expressing gratitude to Thurmond for his efforts.

“It is critically important that we don’t pit groups against each other,” he said. “I want to thank the superintendent ... for making sure that the final draft of the curriculum represents the experiences of Californians.”

Allen, who supported the original 2016 law signed by then-Gov. Jerry Brown that mandated the creation of a high school ethnic studies curriculum, said in a statement that there was more to do, but that he was hopeful about the final product.

“We appreciate the strong support we

colleges, urged legislative action, not only an administrative fix, to prevent future attempts to “indoctrinate students with political, religious and ethnic hate.”

“We are pleased that the State Board of Education has recognized the severe problems with this curriculum and agreed to go back to the drawing board,” an Aug. 14 statement from director Tammi Rossman-Benjamin said. “However, merely revamping the curriculum is like going after the symptoms while ignoring the underlying illness.”

The Instructional Quality Commission will be revising the curriculum, based on public input and department recommendations, during public meetings on Sept. 19 and 20. By law, the State Board of Education must approve a model curriculum by March 31. ■

Our Crowd

Spotlight on the Community

HAPPENINGS

The movie "Wrestling Jerusalem," an adapted version of an **Aaron Davidman** one-man play that premiered in San Francisco in 2014, is headed to Europe for the first time with showings on Sept. 5 in London and Sept. 10 in Paris. "Largely autobiographical, 'Wrestling Jerusalem' recounts Davidman's vagabond journey across Israel and the West Bank," Dan Pine wrote in a 2016 review in J. "Along the way he meets a stubborn religious Zionist settler, determined Palestinian activists, a commander in the Israel Defense Forces, an Israeli emergency room physician and even an Israeli stoner at the Dead Sea traumatized by the suicide bombing death of two friends ... Davidman plays them all, male and female, young and old. He not only nails the Israeli and Palestinian accents right down to the last phoneme, but he also captures every nuanced, heartbreaking emotion in that strife-torn land."

The Jewish Community Free Clinic, the only completely free medical clinic in Sonoma County, will celebrate 18 years of service at "Taste & Toast L'Chaim Harvest Celebration" from 2 to 6 p.m. on Sunday, Sept. 8 at Shone Farm in Forestville. The event will feature wood-fired pizza, paella, local wine, craft beer, yoga, massage, face painting and live music. For details, visit tinyurl.com/jcfc-celebration.

Karen Glenn, a 12-year-old student at Gideon Hausner Jewish Day School in Palo Alto, has completed her required tzedakah project after a trip to Israel to visit the beneficiary of her project, World ORT Kadima Mada. Throughout the year, Hausner students raise money for a cause of their choosing and do a presentation to



Karen Glenn with her tzedakah project presentation (Photo/Courtesy Sari Berkovich)

Aaron Davidman in 'Wrestling Jerusalem'



their classmates about it. ORT is an Israeli educational organization, which works to "bridge the gap between aptitude and opportunity" for students from less affluent families and communities. Along with her parents, Orit and Jeffrey Glenn, Karen visited ORT's Mada Park (Science Park) near Haifa, which features an oceanarium and planetarium. "I visited the Mada Park and I was able to see some classrooms as well," Karen said in an ORT press release. "We were very impressed by the park and the impact ORT has had on education in Israel. I was really able to see firsthand some of the things ORT does and it felt really good to know that I was able to help such an incredible organization." ORT graduate Matan Levi attended her presentation at Hausner. "I saw her presenting her work with a lot of confidence, knowledge and passion," Levi said in the press release. "I was blown away by Karen's knowledge, maturity and ability to articulate complex topics at such a young age. She truly sees the importance to the world of ORT's cause."

HONORS

Israeli American artist, architect, designer and MIT professor **Neri Oxman** has been awarded the 2019 Contemporary Vision Award by SFMOMA. "Oxman boldly steps forward to address contemporary environmental concerns and existing systemic issues through science, technology and design, but mostly through imagination," SFMOMA curator of architecture and design Jennifer Dunlop Fletcher said in a press release. "Her vision of the future is one of hope and possibility, which we need." Tickets are available at sfmoma.org/cva for an Oct. 30 award dinner featuring a conversation between Oxman and Dunlop Fletcher.



Neri Oxman



Daniel Chesir

At Shabbat evening services on Friday, Aug. 23, Congregation Sha'ar Zahav in San Francisco will honor its founder, **Daniel Chesir**. "In 1977, three Jewish men put an ad in the paper that they were starting 'a gay synagogue,'" reads an ad for the event. "Forty-two years later, our community is thriving ... It will be a fabulous walk down memory lane for our earliest members, and our many new members [will] get a feel for how groundbreaking this community really was ... and continues to be." Former Sha'ar Zahav **Rabbi Yoel Kahn**, who now serves Beth El in Berkeley, will deliver the sermon. Services will be led by current Sha'ar Zahav **Rabbi Mychal Copeland**, **Cantor Sharon Bernstein** and **Ron Lezell**, another early member of the synagogue.

COMINGS & GOINGS

The S.F.-based Jewish Community Relations Council has announced the election of its new board officers: **Paul Resnick** of Mountain View, president; **Russell Cohen** of San Francisco and **Jennifer Wolfe** of Mill Valley, vice presidents; **Neil Tuch** of Los Altos, treasurer; and **Aaron Danzig** of San Francisco, secretary. There are also some new at-large board members: **Sandi Brager** of San Francisco, **Col. Peter Gleichenhaus** of San Francisco and **Joshua Reynolds** of San Francisco. In a press release, the JCRC said, "Serving as an officer of JCRC is a meaningful way to support and guide JCRC to achieve its vision of a more just society and a secure and vibrant Jewish community."

The JCC East Bay's new Shamash Resident is **Sara Kupor**. "The Shamash Residency is a special opportunity for a local rabbi, scholar or educator to offer Jewish learning with the JCC staff and community," the JCC said in a press release. Kupor, who has taught and run educational programs at congregations Beth El (Berkeley) and Kol Shofar (Tiburon), as well as at several other synagogues around the country, "uses Jewish music, dance and humor to explore and celebrate Shabbat and other Jewish holidays as well as Torah study in all its dimensions."

Raphael Magarik, newly minted Ph.D. at UC Berkeley, begins teaching as an assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago this month. His work combines biblical studies with the



Col. Peter Gleichenhaus



Sara Kupor

history of Protestant theology and modern literary theory. As he said in a recent Q&A with the Berkeley Center for the Study of Religion: "My dissertation argues that Protestant Bible commentators invented the idea of the biblical narrator. That is, starting with Luther and Calvin, Protestant readers started to imagine the biblical text as reflecting both a divine author and a human, mediating, narrating presence." ■



Raphael Magarik

State's Jewish, Latino caucuses visit ICE detention center in SoCal

NEWS | GABRIEL GRESCHLER | J. STAFF

In a show of united concern by the Jewish and Latino caucuses in the state Legislature, 11 lawmakers representing both groups toured Otay Mesa Detention Center in San Diego on Aug. 9 after increasing scrutiny about conditions at the facility.

The legislators conducted interviews and met with detainees at the center, which is overseen by private prison company CoreCivic and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

"Visiting the Otay Mesa detention facility was powerful and profoundly sad," said Assemblyman Marc Berman (D-Palo Alto), a member of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus. "We all have a responsibility to highlight what is going on at the border. But I do think Jews have a unique history and experience that allows us to empathize with today's migrants that much more."

Berman likened the conditions at the detention center to a prison. "I can say with certainty that I would go crazy if I were in their place, with little if any access to legal aid and unable to understand what was happening with my case."

Multiple reports have detailed alleged mistreatment at Otay Mesa, where more than 900 migrants are being held. In August 2018, detainees made complaints to immigrant

rights group Pueblo Sin Fronteras about uncomfortably high temperatures. Last April, 70 detainees signed a letter claiming medical neglect, safety issues and racism at the facility.

Members from both caucuses also visited the Jewish Family Service Migrant Family Shelter in San Diego. The shelter supports asylum-seeking families who are awaiting a court date after being released from centers such as Otay Mesa. They are provided with food, clothing, health services and legal aid. The center was established with the San Diego Rapid Response Network, a coalition of human rights organizations, attorneys and community leaders.

"Where the federal government is failing, JFS is stepping up," said Assembly member Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (D-Orinda).

Bauer-Kahan said she had family members who were resettled by the Jewish immigrant group HIAS in the wake of the Holocaust, making last week's visit especially personal. "The Jewish caucus has a tikkun olam mission," she said. "This is part of that effort."

The shelter visit also made an even "stronger connection" between the two caucuses, she said, pointing to statements made by Latino caucus chair Lorena Gonzalez after the shooting at Chabad of Poway synagogue north of San Diego.

"We know that the Jewish community put itself at risk by



California Jewish and Latino legislative members at the Otay Mesa detention center (Photo/Courtesy California Legislative Jewish Caucus)

becoming undeniable partners in our attempt to welcome refugees from Central America," Gonzalez said in a press conference after the April attack.

The visit to Otay Mesa coincided with more than 50 protests around the country on Aug. 11 by progressive Jewish organizations condemning the government's immigration policies. The national protests were held on Tisha B'Av, the Jewish holiday of public mourning.

On Aug. 12, South Bay Jewish organizations gathered at the Santa Clara County government offices in San Jose to "share stories, sing lamentations, stand with those impacted, and call for a new vision of healing and justice," according to the event's Facebook page.

Bay Area Jewish groups and others have organized a monthlong, daily protest in August in front of the ICE field office in San Francisco's Financial District.

"The Jewish experience is that of wanderers, of refugees in a foreign land," said Berman, whose family members faced Nazi persecution, "and we should be the first to welcome those that are fleeing persecution in their homelands." ■

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from Residents of the
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The Hungary Games

Jewish athletes convene in Budapest for Maccabi competition

SPORTS | MAYA MIRSKY | J. STAFF

Michael Lipton of San Rafael was sitting in a hotel in downtown Budapest a few days before his fencing competition in the European Maccabi Games. The hotel was steps away from the Jewish quarter, where 70,000 Hungarian Jews were confined during World War II; some 550,000 were killed in the Holocaust. Their fate was on Lipton's mind as he prepared to compete in the all-Jewish, international sporting event held this summer in Budapest.

"It's very different from just a vacation," he said. "It's very different from just a fencing tournament."

Lipton was one of 18 athletes from Northern California on the 237-member U.S. team. They came from Stockton, Mill Valley, Palo Alto and other cities, and together helped the American contingent — one of 42 countries represented at the games — scoop up the highest number of medals over nine days.

For some of the participants, it was the first time they'd really been able to represent different parts of their identities at the same time — as athletes, as Americans playing for Team USA, and as Jews competing against fellow Jews.

Alyssa Fagel, 21, who played with the gold-medal women's soccer team, said she is used to the paucity of Jews in her sport. Growing up in San Carlos, she said, her Judaism and her soccer were always separate. She remembered her bat mitzvah as being a revelation to her soccer friends, who had never been to one before.

"I was the only Jewish player on my club team growing up," said Fagel, who plays soccer at Yale.



competed in a Maccabi event before, found meaning in an all-Jewish competition, there was the added significance of convening in Europe, where millions died during the Holocaust and where even today Jews are a target of attacks.

The two-member team from Poland at the opening ceremony was a sobering reminder of just how hostile history has been to the Jews of Europe.

"It makes you think a lot, especially when you're in a city like Berlin or Budapest, where all these atrocities happened," Lipton said. "It's a stark reminder."

The event organizers were clearly leaning hard on the message that Hungary supports its Jewish athletes and Jewish citizens, perhaps pushing back against the charge that the country's influential prime minister, Viktor Orbán, has made anti-Semitic attacks on Hungarian American financier and liberal cause-backer George Soros.

At the opening ceremony in Budapest on July 30, the atmosphere was celebratory as each country's team trouped in as part of the "parade of nations." It was a diverse crowd. The North Macedonians were serious, the Belgians raucous, the Scots stylish in kilts. But no matter what their nation-

"The sporting events have a lot more camaraderie than just an international competition, because we're all Jews."

Alyssa Fagel

"To me this is not just another sporting event filled with athletes, not at all. What I see is the future. The future of the Jewish people."

Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress

For Lipton, 58, an épée competitor, it's a different atmosphere from a regular fencing event.

"The sporting events have a lot more camaraderie than just an international competition, because we're all Jews," he said.

The European Maccabi Games are the smaller European counterpart to the Maccabiah, the Olympic-style competition for Jewish athletes held every four years in Israel.

Water polo player Miller Geschke of Palo Alto, a sophomore at MIT, said that while the Jewish element to the games definitely sets it apart from other international competitions, when he gets in the pool he forgets all of that.

"It's the same game. You're going to play with the same intensity."

That intensity was good enough to earn the team a silver medal. Overall, the Americans looking for wins didn't have much to complain about, topping the table with 155 medals:



75 gold, 43 silver and 37 bronze. Host country Hungary was second in the medal count.

Based on the Maccabi club movement promoting sports for Jewish men starting in 1895, the games were first held in Prague in 1929, followed by Antwerp in 1930. But there wasn't another European Maccabi until Copenhagen in 1959. Then came another gap before Vienna in 2011, Berlin in 2015 and then Budapest.

Though the U.S. athletes, especially those who had never



Top: Alyssa Fagel, women's soccer (Photo/Macabbi USA Staff)

Left: Michael Lipton, épée fencing (Photo/Maya Mirsky)

Above: An advertisement for the Maccabi Games in the Budapest metro (Photo/Maya Mirsky)

ality, all of the athletes had Judaism in common.

The opening ceremony was held at the stadium of a Budapest soccer team known for its Jewish history, and the team's Jewish president, politician Tamás Deutsch, chaired the board of the games. Deutsch is a longtime ally of Orbán, whose government spent around 9 million Euro (about \$10 million) to host the games, according to local news reports. The event brought nearly 2,500 athletes plus coaches, volunteers and fans to the city.

"You Maccabim bring the light," Motti Tichauer, chairman of the European Maccabi Confederation, said at the opening ceremony. "All of us together here are the proof of Jewish continuity here in Europe."

Ronald Lauder, president of the World Jewish Congress and the grandchild of a Hungarian Jew through his mother, Estée Lauder, also brought a hopeful message.

"To me this is not just another sporting event filled with athletes, not at all," he said at the ceremony. "What I see is the future. The future of the Jewish people." ■

Jewish Alameda man found dead in East Oakland

NEWS | GABRIEL GRESCHLER | J. STAFF



Eric Batzdorff was 42.

Missing Jewish Alameda resident Eric Batzdorff, 42, was found dead inside his vehicle on Aug. 18, the Oakland Police Department confirmed.

The death appears to be a suicide, Oakland Officer Johnna Watson said.

“As many of you know by now, my beautiful brother is gone. He was an amazing son, father, brother, friend and colleague. May his memory be a blessing. Please do not define him by the last thing he did, but rather think of all the light he spread,” Lisa Kearns, Eric’s sister, posted on Facebook.

“He was always very kind and very sociable,” said Eric’s grandfather, Alfred Batzdorff, in a phone call with J. “He was a pleasure to be with.” He said he saw Eric for the last time one week before he disappeared on Aug. 11.

Alfred and his wife, Susanne, are both 97 and Holocaust survivors who have long been active in their synagogue, Congregation Beth Ami in Santa Rosa. “The entire community was moved to tears. There is such love for his family,” said Beth Ami Rabbi Mordecai Miller.

“Everyone who was close to Eric knew that his first priority were always his children,” said Eric’s father, Jon Batzdorff, in an interview with the Santa Rosa Press Democrat. “So, we were very hopeful that he was going to be found alive.”

Batzdorff’s body was found on the 8600 block of Skyline Boulevard, on the edge of the Roberts Regional Recreation Area in East Oakland. The Alameda County Coroner’s Office will determine the official cause of death, Watson said.

Batzdorff worked for the Pleasanton-based cloud computing company Veeva as a software developer.

In lieu of flowers, the Batzdorff family asks that donations be made to the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention in Eric’s name. ■

IsraAid launches Bay Area lecture series on humanitarian aid, disaster relief

The Bay Area office of IsraAid will launch its Humanitarian Professionals Network next month, kicking off with a lecture series on global humanitarian aid and disaster relief. The eight-part program begins Tuesday, Sept. 17 with Voni Glick, co-CEO of IsraAid, delivering a lecture titled “How to Respond Like the World Depends on It: The IsraAid Methodology.” Glick will speak in San Francisco and Palo Alto.

The Humanitarian Professionals Network is an international collective concerned with local and global humanitarian aid, and with IsraAid’s recovery work. Members receive briefings and trainings on humanitarian relief, international development and disaster response topics from Israeli experts. Founded in 2001, IsraAid has done emergency rescue and recovery work in 50 countries, helping disaster-stricken regions with

medical care, water and sanitation, education and other forms of humanitarian aid.

Glick will speak twice on Sept. 17: at 8:30 a.m. at the Kaiser Family Foundation, 185 Berry St., S.E., and at 7 p.m. at the Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. He will also speak at 11 a.m. Sept. 19 in an online webinar. To register, go to israaid.org/events. ■



IsraAid co-CEO Voni Glick (left) will speak in the Bay Area next month. (Photo/Courtesy IsraAid)

Arts & DIALOGUES

at Schultz Cultural Arts Hall

The Oshman Family JCC is proud to present outstanding artists and speakers as part of the Jewish Luminaries Series for the 2019–2020 season.



photo by Dario Acosta

Yefim Bronfman – Piano Recital

The internationally-recognized, GRAMMY Award-winning pianist plays Beethoven.

Sunday, September 8 | 7:30 PM

Shulem in Concert The Perfect Dream

The first Hasidic singer signed to a major record label makes the soul soar and the spirit rise.

Sunday, September 22 | 5:30 PM



photo by Baruch Azogu

Here All Along | An Evening with Speechwriter Sarah Hurwitz

The renowned former White House speechwriter rediscovers Judaism and shows us why it matters.

Monday, September 23 | 7:30 PM

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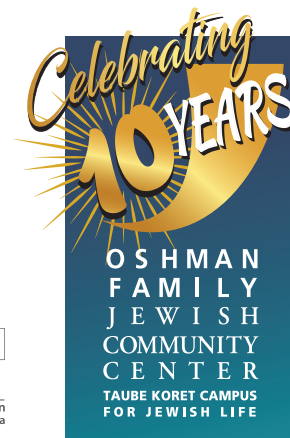
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In face-to-face with Gov. Gavin Newsom, strong support shown for Jewish concerns

COVER STORY | DAN PINE | J. STAFF

From his office in the Capitol building, Gov. Gavin Newsom last week made a full-throated apology to California's Jewish community for a controversial ethnic studies draft curriculum that erases the Jewish story in America and takes unsubtle digs at Israel.

The draft, said Newsom, "will never see the light of day."

The proposed high school curriculum sparked a national controversy, rallying groups such as the Anti-Defamation League, the Jewish Community Relations Council and the California Legislative Jewish Caucus to register their objections, charging bias about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, among other things.

"It's going to be taken care of," Newsom said. "We are united in our resolve to make sure the advisory committee

"It wasn't difficult for me, having been a Tawonga kid, to look at the Woolsey and Tubbs fires and say, you know what, Jewish camps changed my life. I remember like yesterday how they shaped who I am."

draft is only that, a draft, that will be substantially amended. And let me also apologize on behalf of the state for the anxiety that this produced. It was offensive in so many ways, particularly to the Jewish community."

That was but one topic addressed in a wide-ranging interview in Sacramento with the former San Francisco mayor. The conversation with J. covered everything from climate change to wildfires, anti-Semitism, President Trump — and one youthful summer at Camp Tawonga.

A longtime supporter of Israel, Newsom touted the memorandum of understanding that California and Israel inked together five years ago. He says Israel, with its success in drip irrigation, wastewater recycling and other technologies, has a lot to offer the state.

"The climate crisis creates a sense of urgency that requires people to get out of their own way," he said. "The old ways of doing business just don't apply when the hots are getting hotter, the dries are getting drier and the wets are getting wetter. Israel experienced this decades before California, and there are so many lessons learned. Take an arid nation without an abundance of water, and based on ingenuity and the entrepreneurial spirit, they looked at the ocean anew and revolutionized irrigation and desalinization."

The unabashed progressive has been on the job just eight months, inaugurated in January after serving as lieutenant governor under fellow Democrat and two-time California governor Jerry Brown (whom Newsom calls "a master of his craft"). Benefiting from a humming state economy, Newsom proposed all kinds of initiatives in his \$215.5 billion budget, including for housing, public pensions and health coverage for undocumented immigrants. The budget projects a \$21.5 billion surplus over the next fiscal year.



Gavin Newsom, then S.F. mayor, speaks out against Proposition 8 at UC Berkeley in 2008. (Photo/Wikimedia Commons)

According to the Sacramento Bee, Newsom also proposed new taxes on businesses to fund an increase of the income tax credit for low-income families, as well as taxes on water, fertilizer and dairy.

But the taxing-and-spending fights so far have taken a backseat to more volatile issues, such as coping with wildfire devastation across the state, the impact of climate change and a troubling uptick in acts of hate, including anti-Semitism.

Those issues thrust Newsom, 51, into the national spotlight once again, especially after the November 2018 fire that obliterated the town of Paradise. The newly elected governor stood side by side with Brown and Trump, surveying the ruins.

In an on-site press conference, Trump said Finland was better at forest management than California because "they spend a lot of time on raking and cleaning and doing things. We've got to take care of the floors, you know the floors of the forest, very important."

Newsom, governor-elect at the time, stood there stone-faced.

He won't say today what went through his mind as Trump extolled the virtues of raking. Newsom insists he has a "framework of a relationship" with the president that "has allowed me to pick up the phone and call him directly and

vice-versa."

He said he received a call from Trump about a month after that moment in Paradise.

"He is talking to me about once again raking and what we have done to rake. I kept trying to push the president, [saying] defensible spaces are incredibly important, Mr. President, I appreciate your focus on defensible spaces, and he kept going back to rakes.

"I can assure the president that we're doing more than ever on forest management, vegetation management, but he substantially cut those from the [federal] forest management budget. Fifty-seven percent of all land in this state is federal land. We will not be able to achieve our goals by handing out rakes."

Newsom noted that the wildfires over the last two years damaged or destroyed three Jewish summer camps, including Camp Newman in Santa Rosa. His budget, which passed in June, authorized \$23.5 million to rebuild all three camps.

Despite that largesse, Newsom worries about drought and wildfire becoming the new normal in California's changing climate. Trump's frequent disparaging of the state and threats to withhold federal firefighting aid do not sit well with him.

"It's our money," he said. "We're a net-donor state, and

we're not asking for anything we haven't already provided from California's abundance. In the long term, I sleep well as long as [House Speaker] Nancy Pelosi is healthy. She is principal because of her ability to claw back any of these resources that may be held in abeyance. She has our back, and I have confidence in her ability to deliver."

Newsom thinks the president takes shots at California because "it resonates with his base." Trump is "still raw about the extraordinary defeat he experienced at the hands of [California] voters, and as a consequence, he suggested voter fraud and the like," the governor said. "It doesn't surprise me that he seeks to pay us back, so to speak. But I think he's more interested in the headlines than actually achieving the stated result."

Even though it was a wet season last year, Newsom knows the state is vulnerable to drought. He said he has tasked agencies to put together a water portfolio project. "By the end of this year," he predicted, "we will have a detailed strategy to address the water needs not only of today but the future, and then begin to finance that vision."

Newsom expects California to take greater advantage



"There are so many things I take from the values of the Jewish community."

of the kinds of water technologies developed in Israel over the decades. He learned about those firsthand during a visit as mayor in May 2008. Joining a mission sponsored by the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation, Newsom and his then-fiancée Jennifer Siebel met with business and governmental leaders and toured Jerusalem's Old City, the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and other sites.

Newsom, who is Catholic, has personal Jewish connections, as well. He recalled as a kid attending Hanukkah parties hosted by Jewish extended family members. He also went to a JCC preschool in San Francisco for a time, and to one session at Camp Tawonga, the Jewish summer camp near Yosemite.

"There are so many things I take from the values of the Jewish community," he said. "Being dropped off every day by my mother at the JCC on California Street, the values I learned, the universal values of tikkun olam."

He credits those values in part to propelling him in his meteoric career, first in business as owner of PlumpJack

wine store, then in politics as a San Francisco supervisor and a two-term mayor.

Newsom grabbed the national spotlight early in his first term in 2004 when he directed city clerks to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples. The lines snaked around the block at City Hall, and ultimately 4,000 couples were married. Within months the State Supreme Court annulled those unions, but the stage was set for marriage equality and Newsom instantly became a hero to progressives.

Though the Supreme Court ruled that same-sex marriage was a constitutional right in 2015, Newsom worries that the Trump administration is working to strip away hard-earned rights for the LGBTQ community, women, minorities and all Americans.

He is just as concerned about the rise in anti-Semitism and white nationalism. The massacre of 11 Jews in a Pittsburgh synagogue last year, and the more recent murder of a woman in a Chabad center in Poway, spurred the new governor to action.

"We are actively monitoring over 80 hate groups in California," he said, referring to a joint task force made up

(Clockwise from left) Then-Mayor Newsom in Jerusalem's Old City in May 2008 (Photo/Sam Lauter); Gov. Newsom in his Sacramento office today (Photo/Steven Styles-Belator Media); Then-Lt. Gov. Gavin Newsom with Jennifer Siebel Newsom at San Francisco Pride in 2015. (Photo/Flickr-Thomas Hawk)



of the Office of Emergency Services, state and local law enforcement. "We have been active in this space since the day I got into office. In my first meeting with the OES, I expected the conversation to be about wildfires; it was a conversation about white supremacy."

He said the issue of anti-Semitism recently hit home in a personal way when his 7-year-old son — one of four Newsom children — came home one day and asked his father if he was Jewish. A good friend had asked him that same question at school, and then said he "hates Jewish people."

A shocked Newsom told his son, "Yes, we are ... just not 100 percent," given that there are Jewish cousins in the extended Newsom clan. "I wanted him to feel the assault, and appreciate that it wasn't right."

As governor, he converted his outrage into policy.

"When it came time to look at the budget, it wasn't hard to put \$15 million into hardening [synagogue security]," he said. "It wasn't difficult to look at the Holocaust museum in L.A. and say we need \$6 million more. It wasn't difficult for me, having been a Tawonga kid, to look at the Woolsey and Tubbs fires and say, you know what, Jewish camps changed my life. I remember like yesterday how they shaped who I am."

Though Newsom paints a positive picture of California's health, he acknowledges that the bitter political divisions and seeming paralysis when it comes to issues like gun violence, immigration and climate change present serious challenges nationwide.

But the governor is upbeat about the country's ability to recover. "We'll work through Trump and Trumpism. We are California. The future happens here first." ■

Officials still seeking clues on fire at Chabad in Pleasanton



Rabbi Raleigh Resnick surveying the damage on Aug. 12. (Photos/Gabe Stutman)

NEWS | GABE STUTMAN | J. STAFF

Police and fire department officials are still looking for the cause of a fire that struck Chabad of the Tri-Valley in Pleasanton in the early morning hours of Aug. 9. The fire badly damaged the building's exterior, shocking Rabbi Raleigh Resnick and many of his congregants right before Tisha B'Av, the holiday mourning the destruction of the ancient Temples in Jerusalem.

"The sentiment is not lost on us," Resnick said. "We experienced a Tisha B'Av here like I've never experienced before."

The blaze was reported around 12:45 a.m. Video shared with a local CBS affiliate showed a towering inferno multiple stories high, as fire trucks descended on the Jewish center on Hopyard Road.

Several days later, one could see that multiple trees had been burned to a stump, wooden shingles that once hung off the sides of the building were reduced to piles of ash on the ground, a plastic basketball hoop was melted, and mangled folding chairs and other debris were scattered on a back patio.

The fire was still being investigated as of press time. Officials from local police and fire departments looking into the cause of the midnight blaze said they have found no direct evidence of arson. Sgt. Aaron Fountain with the Pleasanton Police Department told J. there were no "obvious signs of a hate crime."

Deputy fire chief Ryan Rucker, with the Pleasanton-Livermore Fire Department, told J. that police were still

conducting interviews and reviewing photographs.

"I'm not sure exactly how long that's going to take," Rucker said.

The center, containing one of two synagogues in Pleasanton, is housed in a former Masonic Temple Chabad purchased in 2017. The building itself dates to the 1970s and much of the infrastructure is worn, Resnick said. There are a few outdoor lights and a power line running along the back of the building where the fire began. The trees near the line were destroyed.

The rabbi said the night of the fire, he was woken up around 1 a.m. by police and raced to the Chabad center, which is not far from his home. His first instinct was to run inside the building to save the three Torah scrolls. But officials "said I would be arrested," he said.

Firefighters gained control of the fire within 30 minutes, battalion chief Jason Solak told a local reporter. They stopped the flames from spreading to the inside of the building, keeping the interior intact. They also were able to salvage the Torah scrolls.

"They were really amazing," Resnick said about the firefighters.

The center, which is being renovated, does not have security cameras installed — Resnick said he has been planning to do so with a grant he recently received from the Department of Homeland Security.

Dr. George Elbaum: LEADING BY EXAMPLE



The first time George Elbaum spoke publicly about surviving the Holocaust was on Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2010, some 65 years after the defeat of Nazi Germany. He had kept an emotional distance from those memories until watching *Paper Clips*, a documentary film on how students in a small rural Tennessee school responded to lessons about the Holocaust. "The camera panned the audience and many of the students and teachers were crying," he says. "For the first time in my life it occurred to me that my story has value."

Since that epiphany, he has penned

two books, *Neither Yesterdays Nor Tomorrows* and *Yesterdays Revisited*, and given more than 200 presentations to teenagers at schools and organizations across the U.S. and in Poland, stressing the need to confront bigotry and to uphold the dictum "Never Again."

As a child, Dr. Elbaum was smuggled out of the Warsaw Ghetto and lived with Polish families who hid his Jewish identity from the Nazis. So it comes as little surprise that his commitment to educate future generations is his number-one priority. Because he was trained as an aeronautical and nuclear engineer, the Technion

— Israel's premier scientific and technical university — is a close second.

"Israel's economic and military security rests more on the shoulders of the Technion than on any other single institution in Israel," says Dr. Elbaum, explaining his steadfast support. "It's like when I used to go hang gliding — I always wore a parachute just in case. Israel is world Jewry's parachute, and we need to keep it strong."

Dr. Elbaum has been instrumental in the success of the American Technion Society, with the mantra, "If I'm going to talk with potential ATS donors about the benefits of planned giving, I want to lead by example."

In March 2018, he made a substantial bequest commitment through the Whiteman International Foundation, named after his mother, which currently funds graduate fellowships in the Grand Technion Energy Program. The bequest comes with a provision for releasing its funds at any time, should he decide to do so. "In the

U.S., everything is three times more expensive. So every dollar given to the Technion goes a lot further in education and research than it does at an American university."

That business sense led Dr. Elbaum to a successful career in aerospace, international business, and commercial real estate and development, after he immigrated to the U.S. in 1949 and earned his four degrees, including a Ph.D. in nuclear engineering, from MIT. He has been married to Mimi Jensen for 45 years, a commitment that trumps even his philanthropy. "She's my number-one passion."

To learn how to include the Technion in your estate plans, contact Judy Sager, Executive Director of Planned Giving, at judy@ats.org or 781.531.0441. For more information, visit ats.org.



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Resnick showing photos of synagogue community members and the burnt exterior of Chabad of the Tri-Valley in Pleasanton.

Without video footage, investigators are relying on physical evidence and interviews to determine how the fire started. On Aug. 7, the town of Pleasanton, an exurban city with a population of about 83,000, held a number of neighborhood block parties, and a fire department spokesperson said police officers would interview some of the people who attended one at the Chabad center.

“Hopefully that will produce more insight for a theory as to the point of origin,” said Rucker, the fire marshal.

Police are also “making contact with neighbors” to see if anybody heard or saw anything, according to Fountain.

Resnick said the blaze appeared to have started on the rear, exterior wall of the building, and spread to the soffit – the wooden shingled overhang. One police official speculated that it was an electrical fire.

Resnick said he’s received an outpouring of support since the incident. Emails from Muslim, Sikh and Christian leaders have peppered his inbox. A non-Jewish man who

attended an event at the center dropped by to deliver a \$500 check. Altogether, Resnick said, “around \$20,000” has come in from private donations.

Damage estimates are in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, however, and the rabbi said he was “still dealing” with an insurance carrier. “It’s going to take a little time,” he said. ■

Donations can be made via the center’s website, jewishtrivalley.com.



Phyllis Friedman ז"ל

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JYCA launches first affinity program for Jewish youth of color

NEWS | TOVA RICARDO | J. INTERN

“Being with each other as Jews of color is a radical act,” says Sarah Gladstone, a black Jew helping to implement a budding initiative that highlights the voices of young Jews of color.

Jewish Youth for Community Action is piloting a program called JAM, or Jews Against Marginalization, in which teens of color participate in bonding activities and discussions about their cultural and religious identities.

JAM is for Jewish youth ages 13 to 18 who identify as black, Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, Native American, Mizrahi, Sephardic and/or mixed. A JAM flyer says the program will allow teens “to chill, chat and smash systems of oppression.”

“JYCA is a safe space where young people from any walk of life and affiliation with Judaism can come together and be led by adults who care about them,” said Jennifer Esteen, a board member at JYCA, which serves the East Bay and Peninsula.

“My youngest son likes JYCA, but traditionally he has felt like an outcast,” added Esteen, who is black. “He has felt isolated in white spaces at synagogue. He went to religious school and he didn’t know anybody. He totally felt ostracized by the big group” of students at the religious school.

JYCA is a social justice organization that empowers Jewish youth with social action education, leadership training and protest involvement. Participants mobilize around

issues such as land fracking, voting rights, community problems or bullying.

Gladstone, JYCA’s East Bay program coordinator, said Jewish community engagement typically centers on the involvement of white Ashkenazi Jews, even though there are many other identities on the Jewish spectrum.

According to the 2018 “Portrait of Bay Area Jewish Life and Communities,” a study sponsored by the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation, there is a non-white adult (Jewish or not) in close to 25 percent of Bay Area Jewish households.

Thus, with a local Jewish community that is more racially diverse than popular assumption, JAM is aiming to provide an environment where Jewish youth of color can be “laid back and have a healing, conversational space to explore identity,” Gladstone said.

“The main thing that we’ve heard is that they are looking for space to have community with other Jewish people who



JYCA board member Jennifer Esteen with sons Barry and Jalen

share their identities,” she added.

JAM is hosting informal meetings to generate program ideas from teens. The first was in July at Mosswood Park in Oakland, where teens talked over an afternoon picnic. Gladstone said students expressed interest in outings such as bowling and having Shabbat dinners together.

Eitan Camacho of Oakland, a high school freshman, said he wants JAM to be a place where he can “hold down my roots and stay grounded in my culture. My mom is Mexican and my dad is Jewish.”

Nathan Hasegawa, a JYCA youth leader, said he wants JAM to focus on “identity development” and intercultural education. “I want to be aware of being a Jew of color, and

I want to be more knowledgeable about other Jews of color.”

Ultimately, JAM organizers want to build a community where youth are free to be themselves with no explanation.

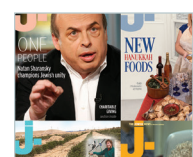
“I think JAM is trying to fill the gap,” Esteen said. “Young people can show up and not feel that what they see around them is different.”

To find out more about JAM, visit jycajustice.org/jam, or contact Gladstone at jyca.sgladstone@gmail.com or (510) 646-6595. ■

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Q&A: The target is zero waste, starting with school supplies

TALKING WITH | SUE BARNETT | J. STAFF

It's back-to-school season, a \$27.8 billion industry and the second largest shopping season in the U.S. after Christmas. Most of what parents buy is made of plastic and often winds up as landfill. Heather Itzla and Nikki Kozlowski are business partners in San Francisco with a mission to eliminate "plastic pollution" by providing schools and families with innovative and recyclable alternatives.

J.: Your company, Wisdom Supply, is trying to change the back-to-school culture of buying products made of plastic, vinyl and other non-recyclable materials that become "forever-lasting waste," as you put it. How do you identify which products are the biggest culprits, and how do you remedy that?

HEATHER: At the end of the school year, we do what we call a locker cleanout. We'll do a waste audit and document what the students are throwing out. It's the same every single year — mostly unused stuff. The culture is, you're going to go right back out to Target or Staples the next year and buy it brand-new again. They make it look fun and shiny and sparkly. The marketing is set up that way, and the teacher lists are set up that way, and it's trashing the planet. We stock and ship plastic-free, recyclable school supplies, all designed to stay out of the waste stream.

When and how did you start?

HEATHER: Seven years ago, when my two sons were in middle school. Every day when I was out walking my dogs, I'd pick up every piece of plastic I found and then document it on my blog (thereisnoaway.net). Everyone knew I was on my plastic awareness campaign. Because the school was so small, they allowed me to purchase all of the supplies for all of the students, and the families reimbursed me. Another school got wind of it and asked if we could do that for their school. That's when it went from being a volunteer effort to having a website and a way to take payments. Now we're on our third year of doing deliveries.

How did you two meet?

NIKKI: The world of ocean conservation in San Francisco is pretty small and we just kept running into each other. We got together and agreed that our main goal is to reduce as much plastic pollution as two humans possibly can. We got to work the next day and have been working every day since.

So this is a full-time endeavor for both of you?

HEATHER: It's full time plus-plus-plus extra. We personally pack every order, drive



NAME: Heather Itzla
AGE: 50
CITY: San Francisco
TITLE: Founder, Wisdom Supply Co.

the delivery trucks to the schools, receive all of the shipments and handle all of the inquiries, write the website copy and tend to all of the web maintenance and sweep the warehouse floors. We take big plastic crates filled with the supplies the schools ordered, help them get set up, and a few days later we circle back and collect the bins so they're left with no trash, no boxes to break down, no plastic, no packaging.

And teachers can create custom kits of zero-waste supplies for their classes on the website?

NIKKI: We've built the system in such a way [for parents] that you can add a kit to your cart and delete what you already have or don't need or don't want to purchase.

What are some earth-friendly alternatives to typical supplies like highlighters and pencil cases?

HEATHER: We had a tough time figuring out pencil boxes. The plastic pencil boxes and zipper pouches are so big. When you have a big vessel like that, you tend to fill it up, so you have kids walking around with



NAME: Nicole Kozlowski
AGE: 27
CITY: Oakland
TITLE: Operations, Wisdom Supply Co.

big boxes in their backpacks filled with colored pencils and fidget spinners and doodads and weird stuff. To have a fully recyclable aluminum pencil tin, we had to have them made. It was the first time we developed our own product. We had it sized specifically to fit just a few things — one pencil, a sharpener, your nonplastic highlighter, a pen, and that's it.

When kids are given their own daily planner, every one of those is going to landfill. It's dated and trash by the end of the year no matter what. So we designed and made our own that would be 100 percent recyclable. They're stripped to the barest part of what you need, and you get pages as you need them.

We found a recyclable binder that you can take the cover off, put it in paper recycling and replace it with a new cover, so none of it goes to landfill.

At the end of the school year when we're going through the garbage, we see those marble-covered composition books, which are typically 100 or more pages. If they have 15 pages written on them, it's like a miracle. We're developing a range of notebooks that are 20 or 24 pages.

I still have a stack of those barely used composition books because I feel bad about getting rid of them. My kids are 20 and 23!

HEATHER: We hear this a lot from parents, this guilt about not wanting to throw things away. A lot of people want to donate half-used supplies to communities that need them. Somehow there's a transference of guilt. But just because you're giving it away doesn't fix the problem. You should be buying better stuff, period.

You have 20 Bay Area schools participating, including Brandeis Marin. How do you make those connections?

HEATHER: Schools are like fortresses, there's no way of getting in from the outside as a vendor. Our saying is "It just takes one" — one parent, one student, one teacher who understands what we're doing and can open the door for us. Once we're in, it all starts moving quickly.

You've mentioned the Jewish concept of "ba'al tashchit," or "do not destroy." What are some of your other spiritual motivations?

NIKKI: My grandmother is a Holocaust survivor, and I actually have a tattoo of tikkun olam, fixing the world. That's the DNA and core of this company. If we can repair what little portion we have on this Earth, then we're going to just work on that wholeheartedly.

How does this work affect you emotionally?

HEATHER: It's devastating, but if I weren't working on it every day, it would be overwhelming. And then to be working with a business partner, there's a great deal of therapy in that, and honestly a lot of dark humor comes from it.

What would you recommend to people who want to do their part?

NIKKI: The most environmental thing you can do is use what you already have at home. That's the message we're trying to get across to folks: Don't buy it if you don't need it. And pick one thing. It doesn't have to be a whole systems change, it doesn't have to be an entire school and every single product or a whole office. It could just be highlighters, it could just be one thing, and that makes a difference. ■



Plastic folders thrown away at the end of the school year. (Photo/Courtesy Heather Itzla)

"Talking With" focuses on local Jews who are doing things we find interesting. Send suggestions to sueb@jweekly.com.

Lehrhaus Judaica sheds its name, expands its educational mission

NEWS | SUE FISHKOFF | J. STAFF

The organization formerly known as Lehrhaus Judaica has a new name: Hamaqom|The Place.

The Berkeley-based Jewish educational institution, which has offered adult classes to the public since 1974, is undergoing its first major overhaul in 45 years.

The new name — pronounced “ha-mah-comb,” Hebrew for “the place” — reflects a shifting focus, says Rabbi Jeremy Morrison, who took the helm as executive director two years ago.

“The term emerged after the destruction of the Second Temple to refer to God,” he said. In the absence of a physical temple, the term suggests that “sacred space is formed by individuals gathering together.”

While Lehrhaus will continue its signature lecture series, travel programs and Jewish text circles, there will be an increased emphasis on creating community among participants that will, ideally, extend beyond the classroom.

“The focus will be on building community” rather than providing content or programs, Morrison said. “I want to build a network of microcommunities throughout the Bay Area. That’s why we acquired Kevah last year,” he said, referring to the 20 or so small-group study circles that became part of Lehrhaus in July 2018.

Renaming an organization to reflect an operational

change or more accurately describe a mission is something other local Jewish institutions have done in past years. In 2012, the Bureau of Jewish Education became Jewish LearningWorks, and in 2015, Jewish Family and Children’s Services of the East Bay became Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay.

Morrison is only the second executive director of Lehrhaus, replacing founding director Fred Rosenbaum, who created the institution fresh out of grad school at UC Berkeley. Rosenbaum based it on the Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus, which was founded in 1920 by Franz Rosenzweig in Frankfurt, Germany, and closed by the Nazis in 1938.

The central principle of both the German and Berkeley Lehrhaus models is that learning happens through dialogue between students and teachers, and among students themselves. It must be active, not passive, demanding “dynamic engagement with the material,” Rosenbaum told J. in a 2017 interview.

The changing focus and the new name are in keeping with that original intent, said Morrison. Hamaqom looks to bridge gaps among younger Jews and those who don’t fit the traditional mainstream model, “helping people to navigate Jewish opportunities in the Bay Area, or create their own



A 37° North Shabbat dinner this summer.

communities.”

This spring, as part of the overhaul, Lehrhaus launched 37° North, an initiative more consciously aligned with its new focus (the name is the latitude/longitude of the Bay Area). Aimed mainly at interfaith couples and young adult Jews with little Jewish background, the group meets monthly for Shabbat dinners in members’ homes, where participants enjoy Jewish ritual and learning along with the food. Most of the 20 to 30 regulars are graduates of Morrison’s introductory Judaism course.

There is no set curriculum, said Lehrhaus associate director Jason Harris, who runs the gatherings with Morrison. Instead, at the end, they ask the participants what they’d like to focus on next. “We keep asking them, is this what you want to learn?” Harris said.

For now the 37° North gatherings are in the East Bay. That’s because the 2018 Portrait of Bay Area Jewish Life and Communities reported Jews are moving there, said Morrison.

So why the “q” in “hamaqom”? It’s for “questioning,” Morrison reports. And because, he notes, it’s the correct transliteration for the Hebrew letter “kuf.”

Just in case you wondered. ■

Shalom Hartman gifted \$20 million by S.F. foundations

NEWS | DAN PINE | J. STAFF

If it’s true that money talks, the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America is about to get an earful.

In a joint announcement this month, the Koret Foundation and the Jim Joseph Foundation, both based in San Francisco, said they will give \$10 million each over the next five years.

The \$20 million total is one of the largest gifts in the history of the institute, a center of Jewish thought and education with a mission to “strengthen Jewish peoplehood, identity

and pluralism,” according to its website.

A headline on InsidePhilanthropy.com called it a “record gift” that will “help navigate an unprecedented crossroads of Jewish history.”

The funding, mostly for general operations, will accelerate North American expansion of the Jerusalem-based institute, which now has offices in New York City, San Francisco, Boston, Toronto, Los Angeles, Detroit and Washington, D.C. It will also be used to hire new scholars, open offices in additional cities, host more events, beef up the Institute’s digital presence, establish more research groups and expand training.

The \$20 million will “allow us to build up across the country and put the right tools in front of the right leaders to fight the right challenges, and do it in a serious, sustainable way,” said Dan Friedman, Hartman’s North America director of content and communications.

“Koret does not make a lot of \$10 million grants,” said Jeff Farber, CEO of the Koret Foundation, which has been funding a Hartman pilot program in the Bay Area since 2013. “This is basically a \$20 million business plan to expand what has been successful in the Bay Area.”

Since 2013, that pilot program has engaged in a variety of events, such as bringing in Shalom Hartman scholars to

give public lectures and to meet with Jewish community leaders to help them further ground their organizations in Jewish values. The list of scholars has included Rabbi Donniel Hartman (Shalom Hartman president) and Yehuda Kurtzer (North American president).

Barry Finestone, president and CEO of the Jim Joseph Foundation, said his organization has funded numerous Hartman initiatives over the years, such as its iEngage Fellowship for Student Leaders, which helps college students address issues surrounding Israel. This donation marks the foundation’s first large-scale general operating grant to the organization.

“We were already familiar with their work and the quality of it,” Finestone said. “It became clear to us that a number of other grantee partners we work with were using [Hartman] services for their own learning and education. Also, we have as one of our major strategic priorities supporting exceptional Jewish leaders and educators — and we view this [\$10 million] grant as a signature grant in this arena.”

Rabbi Joshua Ladon, West Coast director of education, said the grants will allow him to “move toward a vision of San Francisco being the hub city” for Hartman’s work in North America. Part of the plan is to build what he called “cohorts of learners and leaders.”

This fits with the Hartman model of having deeply intellectual collective conversations about issues of concern to Jews today, something Ladon says is part of the organization’s DNA.

“We’re grabbing a group of Bay Area senior educators,” Ladon said. “We already have groups of rabbis meeting on a regular basis, groups of executive directors [of Jewish nonprofits] meeting, trying to increase cross-communal congregating at all levels of Jewish life, both to strengthen those organizations and also help build a group of Jewish thought leaders.”

Finestone eagerly sings the praises of the institute, largely because he has participated in sessions facilitated by its scholars.

“While they are deeply pluralistic, their ability to bring diverse Jewish thinkers and teachers together to talk about critical issues sets them apart,” he said.

While the \$20 million will open up plenty of new options for Shalom Hartman’s presence in North America, Friedman said some things about the approach to scholarship will not change.

“We are able to elevate and deepen the conversations to go both broader and deeper, and take people into a place where they can bring an understanding of their local communities into sharper effect,” he said. ■



Rabbi Donniel Hartman

Jewish groups condemn Trump's disloyalty remarks

Centrist and left-wing Jewish groups panned President Donald Trump for accusing Jews who vote for Democrats of disloyalty, with some calling his remarks “dangerous,” “divisive” and displaying “textbook anti-Semitism.”

“I think any Jewish people that vote for a Democrat, I think it shows either a total lack of knowledge or great disloyalty,” Trump said at a Aug. 20 news conference.

A reporter had asked Trump about remarks by Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., that

“If this is about Israel, then Trump is repeating a dual loyalty claim, which is a form of anti-Semitism.”

Halie Soifer, Jewish Democratic Council of America

the United States should reconsider its aid to Israel after the Jewish state denied entry to her and Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., both supporters of the Israel boycott movement.

Nearly 80 percent of Jews voted for Democrats in November's 2018 midterm elections, polls found, mirroring a long history of supporting the party in large numbers.

American Jewish Committee CEO David Harris called on Trump to “stop such divisive rhetoric and to retract his disparaging remarks.” He called the president's remarks “shockingly divisive and unbecoming of the occupant of the highest elected office,” and said that American Jews “have a range of political views and policy priorities.”

Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt said in a tweet that it is “long overdue to stop using Jews as a political football,” and that charges of disloyalty have long been used to attack Jews.

Trump's comments are “unsurprising given his record of abhorrent and dangerous remarks, as well as his efforts to leverage Israel as a wedge issue in U.S. politics,” David Halperin, executive director of the Israel Policy Forum, said in a statement that called on Republicans to join Democrats in condemning the comments.

The comments show a “total lack of knowledge about Jewish people,” Daniel Sokatch, CEO of the New Israel Fund, said in a statement. “Trump wants to weaponize Israel and anti-Semitism to attract Jewish support, all while aiding and abetting Israel's ultranationalist right, coddling white nationalists, fawning over dictators, and engaging in the worst kind of divisive racial politics at home. But it won't work. In fact, it is a sure-fire way to alienate the American Jewish community even further ... SAD!”

Stosh Cotler, CEO of Bend the Arc: Jewish Action, said that “President Trump's abhorrent statement today accusing the vast majority of Jewish Americans who oppose him of ‘disloyalty’ is textbook antisemitism and should be called out as such, without hesitation.”

Halie Soifer, the executive director of the Jewish Democratic Council of America, slammed the president's comments.

“If this is about Israel, then Trump is repeating a dual loyalty claim, which is a form of anti-Semitism,” she said in a statement. “If this is about Jews being ‘loyal’ to him, then Trump needs a reality check.”

Meanwhile, the Republican Jewish Coalition defended Trump's comments.

“President Trump is right, it shows a great deal of disloyalty to oneself to defend a party that protects/emboldens people that hate you for your religion,” the group said on Twitter. “The @GOP, when rarely confronted w/anti-Semitism of elected members always acts swiftly and decisively to punish and remove.” — JTA ■



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USF taps Jewish coach to lead hoops program back to glory

SPORTS | GABE STUTMAN | J. STAFF

University of San Francisco head basketball coach Todd Golden was sitting in his corner office at War Memorial Gym, known to USF students as “the Hilltop,” and tapping on his phone last Friday morning.

Golden, a former Maccabiah Games gold medalist, two-year pro for Maccabi Haifa and college point guard at Saint Mary’s College in Moraga, was ordering an Uber for one of his players who was arriving back on campus after summer break.

“Hey buddy. You’re going to have to walk a little bit. I’ll request it and text you back,” he said over the phone.

A freshman? “No,” Golden said. “European.”

Helping players get situated on campus — including recruits from places like Australia, Helsinki and Belarus — is just one of many responsibilities now under Golden’s purview. In March, he was promoted to head coach from an associated position, making him the

“The experience of living in Israel is one that I’ll never forget.”

Todd Golden

second youngest head coach in Division I men’s basketball.

And he’s just 34.

Golden, a dual Israeli-U.S. citizen from Phoenix who grew up playing pickup at the local JCC, said he has no trouble remembering his bar mitzvah Torah portion: Beresheet.

“In the beginning,” he said with a smile.

It’s a fitting allusion now for Golden, who’s looking to usher in a new era for USF basketball. He says the team is on the right track, posting winning seasons for the past three years. But his vision for the future of USF basketball is not just to be good — it’s to be great.

“I tell people this all the time, and they think I’m crazy,” Golden said. “But I want USF to be the No. 1 team in the country.”

Many fans don’t remember the glory days of USF basketball when the team was perennially one of the best in the nation. The Dons — named after Don Francisco de Haro, the first mayor of San Francisco when it was still a pueblo in Mexican territory — won national championships in 1955 and 1956, a time when even prisoners at Alcatraz reportedly tuned in to the games on the radio. The team was led by then-Oakland resident Bill Russell, a center who would go on to win 11 NBA championships with the Boston Celtics and become one of the greatest players of all time.

Though the Dons were regulars in the NCAA tournament in the ‘60s and ‘70s, a

cheating scandal in the early 1980s led then-president Rev. John Lo Schiavo to shutter the program. The team hasn’t been the same since; it has made the NCAA tournament only once, in 1998, losing in the first round.

Today Golden and USF president Rev. Paul J. Fitzgerald pride themselves on recruiting not only good players, but good students. “We had a 3.35 team GPA this past year,” Golden said. “That’s just unheard of, really.”

A number of factors made it possible for Golden to take the helm at USF. “A lot of things had to fall into place for this to work out,” he told J., sitting at his desk wearing

Golden said. “Now the challenge for myself and our staff is to recruit better talent while maintaining the integrity of the program, in terms of the culture and the types of kids that we have here.”

Golden, whose 3-year-old son goes to Marin Day School at Congregation Sherith Israel (he also has a 1-year-old daughter), had a successful playing career himself. In his senior season at Saint Mary’s, he shot 46 percent from behind the three-point line and helped lead the college to a 25-7 record and a trip to the NCAA tournament.

Golden said he never dreamed of playing professional basketball. “I wasn’t highly

in Alabama. Years later, Pearl would offer Golden his first coaching job at a major Division I program. “I would not be here today if I didn’t go on that trip,” he said.

Of moving to Israel at 22 straight out of college, Golden said it was an “incredible life experience.”

He said he remembers the enhanced security at shopping malls, and the first time he saw soldiers carrying semi-automatics when he first arrived in Haifa. “I’m like, holy smokes,” he said.

“I had some really special Israeli teammates on our team, who were really awesome about helping me get comfortable over there,” he said, “having me over for meals, introducing me to folks. The experience of living over there is one that I’ll never forget.”

In an interview with J., Father Fitzgerald, as he’s called on campus, said Golden is an “amazing young man” and a natural fit for the head coaching job after spending three seasons as an assistant.

“He has a great basketball mind,” said Fitzgerald, a fan of the game who remembers watching Golden during his college years. He cited Golden’s “tremendous emotional intelligence” and said he “exudes a kind of warmth,” helping him in recruiting efforts and in building rapport with players.

Earlier this month, USF released its schedule for the upcoming season, which includes tough non-conference games against Stanford, UC Berkeley and Arizona State, and against conference juggernaut and national title contender Gonzaga in Spokane, Washington. The Dons lost two starters who graduated last year, 6’8” forward Nate Renfro and point guard Frankie Ferrari, who recently signed with the Utah Jazz. Golden says the team will be “different” this year, but believes it will still be a contender in the West Coast Conference. Guard Charles Mineland, a junior who averaged 15 points per game last season, and 7-footer Jimbo Lull will have to step up.

“I think we’ll be pretty good,” Golden said. “I really like our team.”

“Some guys who didn’t have as big a role as last year are going to be asked to step up, and take on more responsibility,” he said. “I think we have the coaching staff in place to lead these guys the right way. I’d be disappointed if we don’t have a successful season.”

Still, Golden’s vision for the Dons extends well beyond the 2019-2020 season. He’s looking to rebuild a dynasty the Hilltop hasn’t seen for decades.

“Can it be done? Yeah,” he said of becoming one of the top programs in the country. “Is it going to be incredibly difficult? Sure.”

“With the momentum that we have,” he said, “two, three years out, I’d like this program to be a perennial NCAA tournament team.” ■



USF’s new basketball coach, Todd Golden (Photo/Courtesy USF Athletics-Christina Leung)

USF-branded Nike athleisure wear, just paces from the gleaming gym located in the Sobrato Center, named after the family who donated \$15 million for a renovation. “But this was always the vision.”

Former head coach Kyle Smith, Golden’s mentor who gave him his first coaching job years ago at Columbia University and brought him onto the USF coaching staff in 2016, accepted a job at Pac-12 powerhouse Washington State University in March, creating the vacancy.

“Kyle did an amazing job getting the right people in the program, both in terms of players and coaches. The heavy lifting is done,”

recruited. But as my career went on I started having success,” he said. After college, he received interest from Maccabi Haifa in part due to a rule by the Israeli Basketball Premier League requiring two Israeli players on the court for each team. Because he was Jewish, Golden could easily acquire Israeli citizenship and provide roster flexibility.

“Having me on their team was like having an extra American,” he said.

Golden played for two seasons with Maccabi Haifa. In between, in 2009, he helped lead Team USA to a gold medal at the Maccabiah Games in Tel Aviv, playing under head coach Bruce Pearl, of Auburn University

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THE SYNAGOGUE TODAY

Can psychedelics save the Jewish people?

JEW IN THE PEW | DAVID A.M. WILENSKY | J. STAFF

When the rabbi begins with “I do not condone the use of psychoactive substances regulated by the FDA,” you know you’re in for something special.

Thus began Rabbi Zac Kamenetz’s Aug. 14 talk at Afikomen Judaica in Berkeley, titled “Psychedelic Research and the Future of Judaism.” Yes, please. Thank God for Berkeley.



David A.M. Wilensky is the online editor of J. and Jew in the Pew columnist.

Despite the far-out subject matter, Kamenetz, 37, has a rather establishment-y rabbinic job: director of Jewish Living and Learning at the Jewish Community Center of San Francisco. He is disarming, warm and ready to answer any question about himself: about his spiritual path, his family — and, oh yeah, that time he was one

Hopkins University study dosed clergy of various traditions with psilocybin, the psychoactive compound found in Psilocybe mushrooms (aka magic mushrooms, shrooms, etc.).

The study, which is still ongoing with the results yet unpublished, recruited clergy to undergo psychedelic trips in controlled environments in the hopes that people with pre-existing spiritual conceptual frameworks would have new ways of talking about psychedelic experiences.

One challenge facing people who do research on these substances — which have a variety of legitimate medical uses, mainly around mental health, such as healing from traumas, serious anxiety and clinical depression — is that our culture and our language lack adequate ways of describing the feelings and experiences that ensue.

Kamenetz first heard about the study from another rabbi who had been rejected from it. It seems that a large percentage of clergy who applied to participate were rabbis — but a large percentage of the clergy rejected from the study were also rabbis. One of the requirements was that subjects not have previous experiences with these substances. And, as it turns out, a large percentage of the rabbis who applied did not meet that criterion.

Kamenetz’s first trip took place in a comfortable room at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore with a couch and various religious symbols — a cross, a small statue of Buddha, etc. — and he was accompanied by a guide, one of the researchers. He put on a sleep mask and headphones outfitted with a playlist of classical music, was given a dose of psilocybin, and off he went.

Though it was his first psychedelic-assisted mystical experience, it was not Kamenetz’s first mystical experience.

That occurred in Israel, at Tel Gezer, during Kamenetz’s junior year of high school.

A tel is a mound that contains centuries of off-and-on



Rabbi Zac Kamenetz as a subject in the Johns Hopkins University study.

human habitation. Tel Gezer is a breathtaking archaeological site about halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv (which, despite its name, is not a tel at all). There, you can stand in one spot and see thousands of years of human history all at once — dating back from the 4th century BCE all the way to the Arab village Abu Shusha, which was destroyed by Israeli forces in 1948.

“I had never experienced time that way before,” Kamenetz told me. “I felt a bolt of lighting. I felt like I had an encounter with the Divine that was unrehearsed and unmediated.”

At this point, I had to stop him to say that I, too, had an unexplainable experience at Tel Gezer during a high school semester in Israel.

In my experience, I told him, I felt time dilate as if thousands of years of human history were within reach all at once. It wasn’t a divine encounter (I think?), but it was certainly mystical, though I would’ve bristled at that word at the time.

“I became religious on the spot,” Kamenetz said. “I bought a kippah, I started reading ‘The Jewish Catalog,’ someone gave me a pair of tefillin — and I stole an ArtScroll siddur from the Kotel.” When he returned home to Southern California, he started walking every Shabbat to a Conservative synagogue and observing Shabbat and kashrut in his otherwise nonobservant household.

Years later, he had another mystical experience, this time on the Johns Hopkins couch.

The playlist blew his mind, as he considered the limitless genius of the composers. He saw the lights and swirling visions we often picture when we think of psychedelics. He gave birth to his daughter.

“I saw images of my wife and daughter, and I felt the release of oxytocin from my brain in incredible detail and how it went through my entire body, tears welling up, joy

and gratitude,” he told me. “We had gone through two years of infertility. My daughter was only just born at the time. The intensity of love and gratitude that I felt for my wife and daughter was overwhelming.”

And there was one explicitly Jewish moment: “I had the image of a very large tree, where I saw these two branches of red and blue coming out from the trunk, the energy moving back and forth, from side to side, and I was able to immediately understand that this was about the integration between *chesed* and *din* — generosity/compassion and boundaries/power.”

It was as prototypical a Jewish mystical vision as possible, drawing on the kabbalistic Tree of Life, a diagram of God’s various attributes and qualities (called *sefirot*), including *chesed* and *din*, arranged loosely in the shape of a tree.

Six months later, the study required him to return for a second trip, this time with a higher dose of psilocybin.

“I expected more of the same, but bigger — bigger lights, bigger insights. Will I make contact with God?” Instead, it turned out to be an experience of nothingness.

“It was dark, there was no frame of reference inside, I felt like I was stuck in a hole with no light, I was incredibly bored and disappointed.”

When the experience was over, he was sad and upset. “I felt like I had failed.” But the researchers told him that the immediate experience of a trip isn’t necessarily the point. “It is also about the ongoing integration of the experiences, processing and reflecting over time,” Kamenetz said.

Now that he has read more about psychedelic experiences, “I’ve come to learn that this nothingness is a totally normal experience,” he told the Afikomen crowd of about 30 people.

“Yes, there is the bliss and color and light, but then there’s a higher reality that falls away to experiencing the void. In

“I felt a bolt of lighting. I felt like I had an encounter with the Divine that was unrehearsed and unmediated.”

Rabbi Zac Kamenetz

kabbalistic language, there is a point at which there is no imagery, no words, nothing that can be experienced,” he said. “We call that the *Ein Sof*, that which is without end.”

I asked him: Should more Jews try psychedelic substances? He hesitated, then said, “Should? I wouldn’t put it like that.”

His opening disclaimer about psychoactive substances aside, Kamenetz does have a nascent plan to bring the joy and healing of psychedelics to the Jewish people.

By and large, “the rational tradition has won out in American Jewish circles,” he said, visibly saddened by that fact. “Judaism as a vehicle for occasioning mystical experience seems to be a reality for very few American Jews.”

experience seems to be a reality for very few American Jews.”

Kamenetz sees this as a big problem. So here's his plan: “I would like to be the first rabbi to become certified as a psychedelic-assisted therapist.” Which, as it turns out, is a real thing. And, naturally, one can earn such a certification right here in the Bay Area, at the California Institute of Integrative Studies in San Francisco. Kamenetz is applying to be in the next cohort of students.

Beyond that, he has some big, if so far only half-formed ideas. He sees an entire new field of Jewish psychedelic research and experience.

“The idea that there is a non-ordinary state that you can learn from, heal from, experience the unity of all creation and maybe the divine — doesn't seem to be on the forefront of current Jewish imagination,” he said.

But that doesn't have to be true. Our tradition is not bereft of mysticism and esotericism, and Kamenetz wants to bring that to American Jews by establishing a place where they can try psychedelics in a Jewish context.

“Someday, I see a space, maybe in the East Bay, where people can have safe and supported psychedelic experiences individually, and then integrate those experiences in a community that is invested in the application of mystical experiences with other people. This is total science fiction because it doesn't exist. Or it exists underground,” Kamenetz said.

“The last person to talk extensively about this in American Judaism was Reb Zalman” — Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, founder of the Jewish Renewal movement — “and that was a long time ago. He called MDMA [now known as the club drug ecstasy] just as sweet as

Shabbos.”

I've long been psychedelic-curious, but also psychedelic-terrified. Temporary death of the ego? Sounds awful. Nevertheless, I'm sure my curiosity will someday get the better of me.

I hope by then Kamenetz and his someday-maybe-psychedelic-shul-ish-thing will be ready.

That so many rabbis were rejected from the study because they had already tried psychedelics tells Kamenetz that, “something is going on here, something indicative of a larger trend, and a longing among Jews for these experiences.”

Psychedelics increasingly are being used in clinical settings to heal intense psychological trauma. And the Jews, Kamenetz believes, could use some of that: “How can we understand years of exile, diaspora, anti-Semitism? How can we heal multi-generational traumas? Maybe through these substances, we can heal our people.”

In any case, Kamenetz admits that he's still in the early stages of understanding his own trip experiences and the



Kamenetz at Afikomen Judaica in Berkeley, Aug. 14 (Photo/David A.M. Wilensky)

potential of psychedelics in the Jewish community.

As he learned from the study, “integration,” the process of making sense of psychedelic experiences and making them a part of one's life in an ongoing way, is a lifelong process.

“You are part of my integration just by being here tonight,” he told the crowd at Afikomen.

By reading this column, I suspect you're a part of it now, too. ■

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Mindfulness, tai chi and more at unorthodox N.Y. yeshiva

BEN SALES | JTA

If you walked into Romemu Yeshiva in New York on a weekday morning, you would be forgiven for thinking it's an urban ashram.

Students sit on cushions, in rows, atop a faded Persian rug, backs erect, legs crossed, eyes closed, hands resting loosely on their knees. Soft grins cross a few of their faces. Many are wearing prayer shawls. A few are wearing tefillin. The A/C is turned to 65 degrees.

Usually these 20 or so students meditate silently for up to 45 minutes at the beginning of each day. One recent day, because they were hosting guests, meditation — or “sitting,” as they call it — was abbreviated to 10 minutes. Still, for Jews, 10 minutes of sitting silently feels like a long time.

In one way, Romemu Yeshiva, launched by the Manhattan congregation of the same name, is the latest of several initiatives to provide an inclusive, egalitarian space for adults to study Jewish text at a high level. It has 22 students, mostly in their 20s and 30s, meeting from June through August.

Other schools of that kind — such as Yeshivat Hadar, the Pardes Institute and Svara — generally emphasize the study of Talmud and Jewish law that has long dominated the yeshiva world.

But Romemu Yeshiva is the vanguard of a larger project to infuse American Judaism with concepts traditionally considered Eastern — meditation, mindfulness and mystical philosophy, for example.

It wants to show American Jews that those concepts are authentic to Judaism, even if they've been de-emphasized in favor of mainstream prayer and study.

Rabbi David Ingber, Romemu's founder, called it “fully neo-Hasidic.”

“This yeshiva is the culmination of a revolution in the West of mindfulness and contemplative practice,” he said. “It's not foreign to Jewish life. Endemic to Jewish spiritual work is intentionality, mindfulness, cultivating states of awareness and cultivating the kind of person who is full of love and compassion and those types of things.”

At most yeshivas, or advanced schools for adult Jewish study, prayer follows a nearly identical daily routine, with set liturgy that is mostly murmured semi-quietly, occasionally sung. Romemu turns that custom on its head.

The morning prayer consisted of a series of six chants — most of them a line or two from the prayer book repeated over and over rhythmically with rising volume and three-part harmonies. A rabbi introduced each chant with a series of softly spoken instructions, and each was followed by another minute or so of meditation.

But even that routine was broken. Before saying the Shema, the group broke off into pairs to do a “gazing exercise” in which they stood opposite each other, made eye contact and said to one another, “You are made in the image of God” or “You are made in the image of Shechina” (the traditional Hebrew feminine form of God's spirit). Some riffed on that.

“You are made in the image of love, care, service, kindness and joy,” one student said to his partner. “You are made in the image of the strength, power, kind words spoken from the heart.”

The goal of integrating mindfulness and Judaism is not new.

The late Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan offered a traditional Jewish alternative to Eastern practices in his 1985 guide



At the Romemu Yeshiva in New York City, each day begins with silent meditation. (Photo/JTA-Ben Sales)

“Jewish Meditation.” The Jewish Renewal movement, founded in the 1970s by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, has the same ethos and counts Romemu as one of its congregations.

This yeshiva, however, aims for an expansion of Renewal's mission to more mainstream spaces. Ingber envisions shorter-term seminars for Jewish clergy and other leaders of all denominations, as well as a greater range of classes to be offered to the public. The yeshiva already has weekly public events.

“It's a kind of place where you can have this kind of amazing laboratory,” said Rabbi James Jacobson-Maisels, the head of the yeshiva. “You come together, you do intensive practice together, you create the kind of model for

“People want their religious lives to speak to their basic human needs.”

Rabbi James Jacobson-Maisels

what Jewish life might look like. People want their religious lives to speak to their basic human needs.”

The yeshiva's students do learn Jewish law and Talmud, which Romemu styles as “contemplative rabbinics.” But they also have time cut out for Kabbalah and Hasidism. A recent class studied the Torah commentary of Menachem Nachum Twersky of Chernobyl, an 18th-century Hasidic rabbi.

“It was exciting to be able to do meditation in my own tradition, to not step into someone else's tradition as a guest,” said Sarah Hurwitz, a former speechwriter for Michelle Obama and now a student at Romemu. She says her favorite class is Hasidism because “it's so infused with

love, it's so infused with joy, it's so infused with this real yearning for connection with the divine. There's a real sense of emotion behind it that can sometimes feel like it's missing in Jewish spaces.”

The curriculum also aims to merge study with spiritual practice. One day, students meditated on what it feels like to give and receive love from people in their lives.

A teacher of qigong, a movement system similar to tai chi, is onsite. One weekend, a silent retreat was held at the yeshiva.

“Parts of it feels radically different,” said Lily Solochek, a rabbinical student who began studying at the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary and is now a student at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. They are at Romemu Yeshiva for the summer.

“It's not solely about ‘can we learn it and learn out a rule,’ ‘can we learn it and learn out some truth about the world around us,’ but ‘can we learn it in a way that it can really touch us on a deep spiritual level and then put that into practice,” Solochek said.

The yeshiva's daily schedule begins at 7:30 a.m. and lasts as late as 9 p.m. Some students pay a tuition of up to \$5,000.

Almost three hours a day are set aside for prayer, including an hour for the afternoon service after lunch — a kind of spiritual siesta. But Romemu's faculty doesn't expect the students to be able to sustain the yeshiva's rigorous lifestyle when the program ends in a few weeks.

“We want them now to start to be able to translate and help other people see how this can be accessible to them as well,” Jacobson-Maisels said of the students. “To help people see, oh, this is a possibility. I can find a really deeply meaningful Judaism, a deep connection to my roots [that] makes me operate in this contemporary world in a way that feels much more open to me.” ■

After deadly shooting, El Paso Jews reach out to Latino community

JOSEFIN DOLSTEN | JTA

Joseph Charter, a Jewish man married to a Mexican American woman, used to feel safe in El Paso. But after Aug. 3, when a gunman killed 22 people and injured 26 at a Walmart store, everything changed.

"I had to go to Target the following day, and for the first time ever I kind of looked around," he said in a telephone interview Aug. 7. "You have to start second-guessing."

In part because a relative of his ex-wife was among the victims, and one of his coworkers was present at the Walmart but



(From left) Rabbi Ben Zeidman, Rabbi Scott Rosenberg and Monsignor Arturo Banuelas at an interfaith vigil on Aug. 4, a day after the El Paso mass shooting. (Photo/JTA-Frontera Studio-Jordyn Rozensky)

escaped, Charter has reason to feel ill at ease.

His wife, Fabiola, however, feels especially vulnerable. She is "a little more self-conscious about 'I'm Mexican and there are people here who do not welcome me here,'" Charter said.

He said the shooting has sparked new discussions. "She has now talked about 'I want to get a gun. I don't feel safe. I want to make sure if I was ever put in that situation I would have at least some means to try to protect our children,'" he said.

Prior to the shootings, the suspect is believed to have posted a manifesto in which he railed against immigrants and Latinos.

Charter, 33, and his wife belong to the city's Reform synagogue, where they are one of many Latino-Jewish couples.

"A lot of the families at Temple Mount Sinai include people who have chosen Judaism, who were local people and fell in love with Judaism as they were falling in love with a future spouse, and it includes a lot of interfaith families as well," explained Rabbi Ben Zeidman, the congregation's rabbi since 2015.

There are approximately 5,000 Jews in El Paso, and the shooting hit hard. The Jewish community is close with the Latino community, which makes up 80 percent of the city.

"There's this feeling like we've lost a part of ourselves in a way because of what our city is and how we relate to everybody else who is here," Zeidman said.

The rabbi helped organize an interfaith vigil the night after the shooting. He was there alongside Rabbi Scott Rosenberg of B'nai Zion, the city's Conservative congregation, and Temple Mount Sinai's choir sang.

The 121-year-old Reform synagogue, which has nearly 400 member households, began raising money for the victims and their families.

El Paso is also home to a Jewish federation, a Chabad house, a Jewish preschool and a Holocaust museum.

"Historically, there's been a close relationship between the Jewish community and the Hispanic community," said Stephen Leon, rabbi emeritus of 119-year-old B'nai Zion, which has 250 member families.

Leon was at the mall with his family when the shooting took place three days earlier. "You just say ...

but for the grace of God that could've been us," he said.

At B'nai Zion, 20 to 25 percent of the congregation is Latino — mostly families who grew up Catholic but discovered they have Jewish roots.

Since arriving in El Paso in 1986, Leon has reached out to people in the local Hispanic community who believe they are the descendants of conversos, Sephardi Jews who were forcibly converted to Catholicism during the Spanish Inquisition.

Only days after he arrived in the city for the first time, a man from Juarez, Mexico, sought him out to tell him that his grandmother would light candles every Friday night and say a prayer in a foreign language.

That week, two others approached Leon with similar inquiries. It turned out they had Jewish heritage. In all, 70 families have returned to Judaism through his work, Leon said. Most live in El Paso.

"This has become my passion," the rabbi said.

Charter said the tragedy united the city.

"I'm used to having a very close-knit support system in the Jewish community," he said shortly after the shootings. "And now I'm seeing it as a greater El Paso community." ■



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I wish I didn't need to prove myself as a patrilineal Jew

SHOSHANNAH TIKVAH | JTA

I almost walked out of my first college Shabbat. Not only did I miss the close Jewish community from high school, but I also remained convinced that my new peers would view me as a “fake” Jew.

Why?

Because my mother isn't Jewish. Only my father is. I feared saying that openly would evoke chuckles from my peers, as well as staff, and automatically place me into a

category of “second-class Jew,” something I'd encountered in the past. So I avoided the topic of my parents altogether.

It's because of my non-Jewish matriarch that I realized how women in many ways are at the core

of our tradition. After all, though Abraham sacrificed Isaac, it was Sarah who, after much trouble, gave birth to him.

The centrality of women, particularly via motherhood, continues today. Rabbinic Judaism, in fact, traditionally recognized only children born to Jewish mothers as Jewish. The father could not confer halachic Jewish status, only tribal affiliation.

It was only in 1983 that the Reform movement recognized patrilineal descent (Reconstructionist Judaism had

gone first, in 1979), and the Conservative and Orthodox movements still do not recognize patrilineal descent as a valid means of passing on Judaism.

So where does that leave people like me?

Born in the mid-1990s, I am not part of the first generation of Jews to be the product of an interfaith union. I am, however, part of the cohort who struggles to find their place in the Jewish world today.

I remember driving home from large family holiday parties, where we decorated cookies for Santa, only to detour through the Jewish neighborhood to admire the many menorahs and grab some Chinese takeout. I was a mash-up child in an interfaith family, and who I was, and how I celebrated, was normal.

Until it wasn't.

Seventh grade rolled around, and I attended b'nei mitzvah after b'nei mitzvah, waiting in anticipation for mine. It never came. The ritual was too one-sided, my parents told me when I asked why I wasn't having one. To have a bat mitzvah would be choosing my father's traditions over my mother's.

This push and pull over my two identities continued on as a young adult.

Though many Jews from all backgrounds doubt if they're Jewish “enough” based on practice, for myself, and for my patrilineal peers, it's an issue of identity as much as

belonging. Patrilineal Jews are welcomed in many congregations as long as they are Reform, Reconstructionist, Renewal and/or Humanist. These groups recognize our Jewish identity and welcome us as Jews — not as almost Jews or, even more insultingly, as non-Jews. Remaining in these communities are comfortable and safe.

Yet for those like myself, who have found homes in more observant communities or venture out into the non-American Jewish world, our Jewishness is always in question.

I am an enthusiastic and active Jew. I speak and read decent Hebrew. I attend synagogue for Kabbalat Shabbat almost weekly and am often at Saturday services, too. I study the Torah portion each week. I studied abroad in Jerusalem during college, and I've even thought about becoming a rabbi.

Yet I still needed to take an extra step to prove to the wider Jewish community that I'm a Jew.

So after nearly eight years of reflection and unease over being “just” patrilineal, I decided to affirm my Jewish identity according to Jewish law. As college ticked away and the greater Jewish world followed, I wanted all doors to be open. ■

This article originally appeared on Alma, a website for millennial women under the auspices of 70 Faces Media, JTA's parent



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Should your shul try its best to imitate ... Trader Joe's?

ANDREW SILOW-CARROLL | JTA

You know that thing when you pick up the leash and the dog runs to the front door, ready for his walk?

That's me when my wife asks if I want to go to Trader Joe's.

I'm not alone in this. The grocery chain has a big, almost cultish following. The lines in the Manhattan stores are DMV length, and a bouncer is often outside letting customers in one at a time. People regularly tweet about the store's products. I actually listen to the "Inside Trader Joe's" podcast.

I could spend hours chatting on the "Kosher Trader Joes" Facebook page. Come join 36,500 members as they heatedly debate whether the frozen Shakshuka Starter is the best or worst idea ever.

Why am I so devoted to a grocery chain? Is it the friendly Margaritaville vibe? The free coffee and samples? The workers who actually stop what they are doing and walk you to the product you can't find?

The answer is yes, yes and yes — and if you are suggesting that I need a hobby, know that I am not alone in pondering how the Pasadena-born, now German-owned chain earns more revenue per square foot than any of its competitors. The Freakonomics radio program recently reran an episode devoted to the topic.

So no, it's not just me. But I am perhaps the first to wonder how the lessons of TJ's success could be applied to making Jewish life better.

Here's what Freakonomics found out when it asked academics and former TJ's employees about what makes it successful:

The employees are friendly and available. Freakonomics host Steven Dubner explains that Trader Joe's stocks its shelves during business hours, so the staff interacts

with customers.

"You are going to initiate conversations with these people, and we want you to be friendly, we want you to be chatty, we want you to be empathetic," Mark Gardiner, a former TJ's employee, says he was told by his supervisors. "And more than anything else, we want you to do what it takes to make customers feel appreciated and wanted."

The stores are familiar and distinct. TJ's tiki bar aesthetic was developed for its first store in Pasadena, in 1967, but each store reflects its particular locale.

Can a spirit of experimentation and novelty — even whimsy — live alongside the traditions that are non-negotiable?

TJ's offers choice ... but not too much choice. "We don't want ... choice to be too hard or too conflict-ridden or too burdensome," explains Sheena Iyengar, a professor at Columbia Business School who has done studies showing that people want variety, but in moderation. A typical supermarket has 35,000 items. The biggest TJ's has 4,000. "They don't overwhelm you with choice, which is why you're more willing to examine each novel choice," Iyengar says.

It mixes tradition and novelty, the familiar and the new. Customers have their favorite products, but TJ's is "famous for constantly introducing new products — experimenting with them, really," Dubner explains.

Iyengar compares it to a treasure hunt. "It doesn't give me the boring stuff. It keeps me excited because I want to see, what do they have?" she says. "And what do they have that might get me thinking about something I don't

ordinarily think about? So they also maintain the mystery of novelty for me."

They mix the high and the low. Dubner calls it "a rather unsubtle blend of healthy, or at least healthy-seeming, and hedonistic." So the Organic Green Vegetable Foursome sits across the freezer aisle from the Cookie Butter Ice Cream.

TJ's honors your aspirations to feel better about yourself, even offers the goods to help you, but also says you are entitled to cut loose a little.

TJ's relatively low prices are a big draw. People will always complain about the high price of being Jewish, although how a synagogue can keep its dues low and keep its lights on is beyond my expertise as an English major.

But TJ's has figured out a way to turn a dutiful chore into something resembling a community. There's a lot to work with there.

Can Jewish institutions be friendlier and do more to make their members and constituents feel more welcome? Do they pay enough attention to the physical environment — the design cues that reflect the values of the congregation or the organization? Can a spirit of experimentation and novelty — even whimsy — live alongside the traditions that are non-negotiable?

Michael Roberto, a business professor at Bryant University, says it's difficult to replicate the way TJ's does business. But certainly, places that are trying to engage people spiritually and intellectually can emulate what he calls the "soft things" — "Not just the kind of people you hire, but the way you train them and the culture you create."

Am I saying Jewish institutions need to treat average Joes like Trader Jews? No. I would not stoop to so low a pun. ■

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Calling Jewish Dems disloyal is divisive and dangerous

EDITORIAL

Mr. President, what did you mean this week when you said Jews who vote for Democrats are disloyal?

We ask, because we know that when Jews are accused of disloyalty, it is not just an anti-Semitic dog whistle. It is a sonic boom.

When Trump made these offhand remarks on Aug. 20, he sparked a maelstrom of outrage from just about every Jewish corner in the country.

American Jewish Committee CEO David Harris called on Trump “to stop such divisive rhetoric and to retract his disparaging remarks,” calling them “shockingly divisive and unbecoming of the occupant of the highest elected office.” Anti-Defamation League CEO Jonathan Greenblatt correctly said that charges of disloyalty and dual loyalty have long been used to attack Jews.

Only the Republican Jewish Coalition publicly defended Trump’s comment, saying the president was referring to “disloyalty to oneself.”

What does that mean? That because a few congressional Democrats endorse BDS, that means any Jewish Democrat is disloyal to Israel? And that disloyalty to Israel equals disloyalty to oneself as a Jew?

The convoluted thinking here is mind-boggling, but not as troubling as the fact that Trump’s comments suggest he supports the dual-loyalty canard that anti-Semites have long used to justify their sentiments — and actions.

It also underlines his encouragement of divisive tribalism, of “me-and-mine” politics, rather than the universalist, democratic norms that are foundational to this nation, and that have been bedrock values for the American Jewish community.

Perhaps, indeed, he meant that certain Jews are disloyal to America. In the past he has labeled Democrats “enemies of the state,” and since more than 70 percent of American Jews vote Democratic — the figure approached 80 percent in last year’s midterms — then according to his logic, most American Jews must be disloyal to the state.

Let’s be clear: He also surely meant Jewish Democrats have been disloyal to him personally. As Trump has made evident throughout his business career and political tenure, above all else he values loyalty in his underlings, and he gets rid of those who don’t comply.

Whatever he meant, we are still left with that incendiary word “disloyal.”

Using such a term to describe Jews could further incite neo-Nazis and white nationalists with itchy trigger fingers. Inspired by the man in the Oval Office, this guerilla army of haters has already committed mass murder of Jews worshipping in Pittsburgh and Poway, and of Latinos shopping in El Paso. Multiple recent arrests of several fellow travelers bent on racist slaughter prevented the next massacres.

A groundswell of hate-fueled fear and violence is forming, and comments like those made by the president this week do nothing to discourage it. ■



PICTURE THIS

During a one-hour walk with her dogs, Heather Itzla found this collection of plastic garbage in the streets, gutters and parks of San Anselmo and Fairfax. More photos can be seen on her blog, thereisnoaway.net. She is the founder of the zero-waste Wisdom Supply Co.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Attack on American democracy

I write to register my protest over the decision by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, with prompting from President Trump, to deny entry to Israel to U.S. congresswomen Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar. That the State of Israel would not allow two members of Congress to visit is for Israel to show extreme disregard — indeed contempt — to a democratically elected body central to the practice of American democracy. This is a slap in the face to the people who elected these individuals to Congress. What does this decision mean for Israel’s future as a liberal democracy?

There is no question that any fair-minded person would conclude — if that person had access to the full record — that the Israelis have treated the Palestinians unjustly. Land has been stolen from them and given to Israeli settlers, upending Palestinian families and villages. Palestinians are left with little hope that these injustices will be ended and restitution made to them. That hope got even fainter with the

full-scale attack on American democratic institutions and, by extension, on Israel’s as well.

STEVEN M. DELUE | PETALUMA

Fighting for America’s soul

With some regularity, the letters column in J. contain harsh condemnations of the “ugly” words of President Obama, labeling him — and by extension, those who might support agendas other than those of the current president and his party — as a hater of Israel or even anti-Semitic. The authors of these letters seem to fancy themselves as the brave vanguard of the defenders of Israel and appear willing to trade anything to achieve this end, including a clean environment, women’s rights, marriage equality, the right to attend schools and places of worship in safety, the need to regulate corporate greed, and the rights to vote, earn a living wage or have affordable health care.

As 2020 approaches, Jewish voters will need to decide whether Israel’s perceived need for

How my internship at a Jewish funeral home taught me to think about the unknowable

LOCAL VOICE | JACOB ISAACS



Jacob Isaacs, a resident of San Jose, is a rising senior majoring in English at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. This summer, he worked as a Kohn intern at Sinai Memorial Chapel in San Francisco.

The first death in my family that I remember came when I was 15, in the fall of my sophomore year of high school.

It came and went so fast that I never got a chance to come to terms with it. I focused so much on the sheer shock of losing my grandfather that I did not stop to reflect.

Our tradition is meant to support us in moments of adversity, but I did not know where to begin. Without understanding how to respond to death, I felt lost. That sense of disorientation has never quite left me.

Six years later, working as an intern this summer at Sinai Memorial Chapel, a Jewish funeral home, it amazes me how close I am to death every day. I take my lunch break with a few feet (and a wall) between me and corpses.

Mortality feels real to me in ways that it never did before.

And the more real it has become, the more questions I've formulated, the less I've suppressed the subject, the more I've seen it as another part of existence.

But accepting the fact of death provides little comfort and few answers.

It is a cliché of Jewish thought to say that we ask many questions. These questions very seldom receive complete answers, but we ask them anyway, because they

are too pressing to ignore.

This spirit of mind led me to my boss Sam Salkin's self-published 2018 book, "Reflections on Jewish Death and Mourning," a collection of 23 essays by contemporary Jewish thinkers, many of them in the Bay Area. Reading it helped me put words to the issues I was already grappling with.

A summary of the many different ideas the book raises would not do each essay justice. I was pleased to find that other Jews have struggled with the same questions I have often felt about death.

Drawing on a wide variety of experience in the Jewish professional world, secular life and family experiences, the authors call attention to new perspectives and old traditions alike. I came away from the book reeling with thoughts — if not answers, certainly more ways to relate to mortality than I ever had before. The sheer variety of approaches the book takes impresses me. No matter how you understand death, "Reflections"

offers a new way to think about it.

As I read about Jewish practices like *tahara*, the ritual cleansing of a body, and *k'vurah*, the symbolic placement of earth over a grave by mourners, I thought back to my own experiences with death.

Memories I'd suppressed flooded back to me. My grandfather's death, long an inaccessible haze, began to seem less remote. I felt, for the first time since the events themselves,

a sense of connection, a through line between my own life and my tradition.

In the practices prescribed for any Jewish funeral or burial, I recognized my own experience. It no longer felt so isolated. I had a vocabulary of memories and ideas with which I could understand what I have often tried to overlook.

I cannot make much more sense of his death, or anyone else's, now than I could when they died. But I do see a bigger picture than I did before.

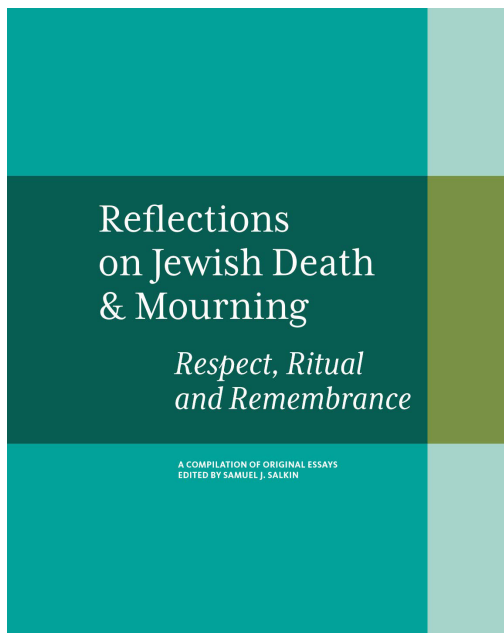
Working within the routines of Jewish mourning this summer has given me a broader perspective, where one death is not an isolated event but another tile in the chaotic, beautiful mosaic of our communities.

I see all the buildup to a death, all the fallout. I've looked through the archives of death records for people who died years or decades ago. They don't go away.

One day when I was commuting home on Caltrain, the conductor said somebody died on the tracks in Burlingame. Other passengers complained about the delays, but all I could think was how this large sliver of the world did, in fact, stop for an hour on a Monday.

We're all connected. Death is one more part of that connection. A scary part, and an absurd one, but a part of it nonetheless.

Death is messy. It doesn't have a miracle cure or magic solution. But Jews have thought about it for thousands of years, are still thinking about it, and always will be, in uncountable, beautiful ways, and I find comfort in that. ■



defense at all costs will justify sacrificing these values, and with them the soul of America.

CHARLES BRUMMER | MOUNTAIN VIEW

Climate is an existential crisis

I totally agree with Jackie Garcia Mann ("A call for unified Jewish action on climate," Aug. 5) that we must act now to avert the catastrophic effects of climate change. Climate change is an existential crisis. It is also a matter of social justice as it most adversely affects those who can least afford it and who contributed the least to bring it on.

People need energy to lead healthy, productive lives, and currently about half of the world's population does not have access to adequate energy. Social justice demands that the global supply of energy be increased to rectify this situation. However, burning fossil fuels, which are the easy source of energy, aggravates climate challenges.

Most leaders of social justice movements call for rapidly expanding renewable energy sources like wind and solar. However, these

intermittent, low-energy density sources cannot meet the energy demand while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Germany's experience with *Energiewende* makes that clear. Further, wind and solar require inordinate amounts of materials. Meeting the global energy demand by renewables would require more than doubling the global production of basic commodities such as copper, steel, cement, and rare-earth metals with enormous environmental degradation from mining.

Nuclear power can produce vast quantities of carbon-free energy. It has resulted in the fewest fatalities per unit of energy delivered than any other system, including wind and solar. It also has the smallest environmental footprint. Our unfounded fear of radiation, reinforced by decades of fearmongering, has prevented us from building any new plants in the U.S. for decades and has exacerbated the climate challenge.

Given the urgency to reduce carbon emissions, it is foolish to shut down working nuclear power plants. Instead, we should support their

continued operation, and promote building and exporting new walk-away safe nuclear power plants.

RIPUDAMAN MALHOTRA | SAN CARLOS

'70s firestorm over ethnic studies

Your article "Draft high school ethnic studies curriculum 'anti-Jewish,' say California Jewish orgs" (Aug. 6) reminds me of the time in the mid-'70s when Oakland's Merritt College, where I was teaching, instituted a graduation requirement for all students to take a course in ethnic studies.

Since I was planning a course in Jewish studies, I proposed that this course qualify to meet the requirement.

Little did I expect the firestorm that met my proposal! At public meetings, faculty members and administrators dragged out the ancient, scurrilous attacks on Jews: Jews are rapacious landlords, Jews suppress black people and other minorities, etc. The only two faculty members who came to my defense were my

African American department chair and a devout Christian instructor.

My course was approved, but it failed to qualify for the ethnic studies requirement.

RENATA POLT | BERKELEY

Army's forward thinking

Thanks to the thoughtfulness and generosity of retired Col. Peter Gleichenhaus, a West Point graduate, on Aug. 7 some 80 people at the Lake Merced Golf Club in San Francisco were able to listen to Dr. David Frey, director of the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies at the United States Military Academy at West Point.

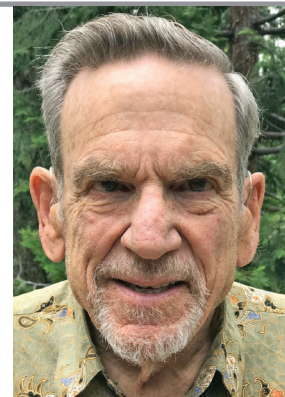
It was enlightening and encouraging to learn that the future leaders of the U.S. Army are being thoroughly briefed about why mass atrocities occur and inspire them to think creatively about what can be done to prevent them, according to the center's mission statement.

Imagine what might have happened if our

continued on 28

Two-state solution not as hopeless as you think

LOCAL VOICE | STEPHEN JACOBS



Stephen Jacobs is CEO of Soleil Insulation, an attorney and avid environmentalist. He is a J. Street member in Davis and strong supporter of its work to promote Jewish and Arab relations and understanding.

There is general agreement that a free, independent Palestinian state is a moral imperative to maintain the integrity of Israel's founding principles. However, practical solutions for establishing a Palestinian state, such as with settler inclusion, are rarely presented, generally unknown and not even on the scheduled agenda for J Street's national conference in Washington, D.C., Oct. 26-29. Discussions of two-state solutions have been tabled indefinitely because proponent organizations have no strategy for overcoming the following major barriers:

Hamas. Some polls show that if a West Bank parliamentary election were held, Hamas would defeat the Palestinian Authority. Following a full Israeli military and settler withdrawal, the rule of law and civil rights almost certainly would be overwhelmed by Hamas, the PLO, the Muslim Brotherhood or a terrorist organization. Israel's withdrawal from Gaza resulted in tyranny, misery and periodic destruction.

Jewish settlements. Conventional two-state solutions require the removal of all Jewish settlements from the interior of the West Bank. There are tens of thousands of ultra-conservative Israelis, armed and ready to defend to the death the right to live in "God's promised land." It is extremely unlikely an Israeli government would order the army to starve or attack the large, well-armed West Bank settlements.

Israel security. A majority of Israelis and many Palestinians dread violence following independence. Israel has not been able to stop rockets from Gaza landing in Israel since its occupation ended. A much longer border with a potentially hostile Palestinian state would compromise Israeli security.

The Palestinian Authority. The PA will probably never negotiate in good faith because the necessary concessions in any agreement with Israel would almost certainly result in its fall from power. Conventional two-state solutions call for the removal of all Jewish settlers, a negotiated agreement with the PA, and the acquiescence of Jewish settlers and Hamas. These

solutions are delusional.

Distinctly possible are solutions that call for existing Jewish settler inclusion as a constituent minority in a Palestinian state. Following is a strategy for one such solution.

Hamas. Allowing Jewish settlers with equal rights to remain within the Palestinian state is perhaps the only way both Palestinian civil rights and Israeli security can be preserved from the threat of Hamas or the like. Israel will not allow a hostile usurpation or an elected government to abrogate the constitutional rights and legal protections of Jewish citizens, thus preserving the rights of all.

Required are a strong constitution and legal system that would guarantee all Palestinians the civil and commercial rights, freedoms and legal protections that Jews and Arabs enjoy in Israel. A consortium of recognized leaders and scholars, representing the Palestinians, the United States, the European Union and the United Nations, as well as Jewish settlers, working with the Israel government, would write a constitution. Freedom from racial, religious and gender discrimination, complete separation of church and state, and limitations to amending the constitution would be clearly spelled out.

Similar, smaller consortiums would also make recommendations concerning boundaries, the capital, reparations, officials' ethical conduct and other issues requiring resolution. Once the Israeli government and two-thirds or three-quarters of the consortiums agree upon their completed work, it would be widely publicized within the West Bank and offer persuasive incentives for West Bank Arab cooperation.

Jewish settlements. Jewish settlers having dual citizenship in a few consolidated areas would eliminate the prospect of disastrous civil warfare. Relocating settlers from many small settlements is a formidable task, but minor in comparison to a total removal of all interior settlements, which becomes increasingly improbable as the settlements rapidly grow. Upon

independence, all citizens could purchase or lease property anywhere, while new entries would be subject to laws governing visitation, immigration and customs. Palestinians live peacefully in Israel, and have lived peacefully with Jewish minorities for hundreds of years.

Israel security. The constitution would prohibit the establishment of a military force and the possession or use of military weapons and supplies. Israel would secure borders. Any Palestinian government would have the self-preservation incentive not to precipitate Israeli action to protect the rights of all citizens.

The Palestinian Authority. Settler inclusion does not require a PA-negotiated agreement. In fact, the PA might realize its continued relevance and government participation requires at least its acquiescence, and possibly the good-faith negotiation that some settler inclusion solutions anticipate. Israel, in concert with Palestinian leaders and supporting Arab students and public, with concurrence of the U.S., the E.U. (and hopefully the PA, the PLO and the U.N.), could institute the new constitution and legal system, which would protect human and civil rights and Israeli security, pursuant to a carefully monitored election process.

In conclusion, there are ample Jewish and Palestinian organizations and scholars independently calling for an end to the current "administration" or "occupation" of the West Bank. Independently, and in concert, they could begin drafting settler inclusion solutions now. Palestinian independence could occur in months, rather than many years or decades. ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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armed forces had such a background during World War II or the Korean War!

In this time of rising tensions, to know that such a center is working on training our future Army leaders on this matter is, at the very least, a comfort.

RITA R. SEMEL | SAN FRANCISCO

Trip designed to embarrass

In reversing its position to disallow entry to Ilhan Omar and Rashida Tlaib, Israel exercised its sovereign right, as any country would, to bar enemies of the state from the country. For those who are indignant with Israel for not allowing the congresswomen to enter the country, consider that once their itinerary was submitted there were no meetings with Israeli representatives and the trip was labeled a visit to Palestine, in support of BDS, with no mention of Israel.

What a missed opportunity for Omar and Tlaib to use this trip for becoming influential

with both Israelis and Palestinians or highlighting the plight of Palestinian children who need assistance regardless of politics. The trip was designed to embarrass and antagonize Israel. These congresswomen refused to join the bipartisan congressional delegation that recently visited Israel, when they could have developed positive relationships with their colleagues and learn about the complexity of the Middle East security situation. Instead they decided to act as "legislator attack tunnels" rather than advocates for bridge-building between both parties to facilitate positive Palestinian-Israeli peace efforts.

Israel deserves the same respect that any sovereign nation would expect. Just imagine if a congressional delegation would deign to visit only separatists in Kashmir, India; Tibetans in China; or separatist Kurds in Turkey. None of these countries would allow for antagonists calling for economic warfare to enter their countries. So why should Israel?

JEFF SAPERSTEIN | MILL VALLEY

Tlaib and Omar posed a threat

Whatever decision the Netanyahu government made concerning a proposed visit to Israel by U.S. congressional representatives Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar, it would have been wrong according to someone. In a situation like that, Netanyahu's first consideration is the protection of every Israeli life.

Tlaib and Omar are hateful anti-Semites who promote BDS. The goal of BDS is to make Israel disappear. There is no doubt they intended to incite civil disobedience during a visit to the country that they want to destroy. Civil disobedience means different things to different people.

The extreme violence of the Arab Spring and its aftermath, including the rise of ISIS, provide recent examples of what civil disobedience means in Arab society. Conversely, you don't see Jewish mobs murderously rampaging through the streets or engaging in civil wars.

Given Tlaib and Omar's clear intent, if you think it is worth one injury or death to allow

them to incite Arab Palestinians to riot, then Netanyahu made a mistake. I don't.

DESMOND TUCK | SAN MATEO

J Street's fiction-based world

J Street U's trip to Israel under the banner "Let our people know" has been advertised as an alternative to Birthright trips ("Unlike Birthright, J Street's trip shows the toll of occupation on both sides," Aug. 5). The Birthright vision is "to ensure a vibrant future of the Jewish people by strengthening Jewish identity, Jewish communities and connections with Israel." So, where is J Street's beef? Where does J Street see a need for an alternative approach? Whatever the answers are, they are based on fiction, not facts.

First, what is this new notion of "Israel-Palestine"? There is no such country, confederation nor other world-known entity under this name. This is a pure J Street invention.

Second, the Israeli "privilege" may resonate with the American left, but it has nothing to do

'We know the soul of the immigrant' — let's act like it, and help those who are hurting

LOCAL VOICE | RABBI AMY EILBERG



Rabbi Amy Eilberg serves as the coordinator of Jewish community engagement at Faith in Action Bay Area. rebamy@eilberg.com

I have been to many demonstrations at Palo Alto City Hall. But there was something special about the one I attended on Aug. 11 alongside 280 people, most of them Jews.

We came at the suggestion of T'ruah: Rabbinic Call for Human Rights, which urged Jewish communities around the country to organize pro-immigrant vigils on Tisha B'Av. The Ninth of Av is a day of mourning for our experiences of persecution, exile and genocide over 2,500 years. The day is traditionally spent fasting, in mourning and chanting sacred laments.

But in recent years, we have opened our minds and hearts to the parallels between our experiences of suffering and the plight of immigrants and refugees in our own time. Just as we have been hated, targeted and expelled for being who we are, so too are the refugees and immigrants of today. Just as we sought and were denied safe haven in one country after another when we were in danger, so too are the refugees and immigrants of our day.

We know the soul of the immigrant intimately, because we have been there countless times. And so we gathered to express our deepest commitment to champion the needs of the oppressed.

We were one of nearly 60 Jewish communities around the country who performed this act of public prayerful resistance with multifaith partners. In Palo Alto, the "Multifaith Lament and Public Worship for Immigrants and Refugees" concluded three weeks of daily vigils held at Page Mill Road and El Camino Real led by Bend the Arc activists.

On Tisha B'Av, we sang songs of exile and hope, chanted laments over the plight of immigrants in the style of the Book of Lamentations and heard from immigrant leaders, including

Latino and Muslim. The sounding of the shofar to conclude the vigil was followed immediately by a public Quaker Meeting, in which we were invited to rest in the silence in which Spirit expresses itself and then to rise, if we were so moved, to share thoughts that had come to us in the sacred silence.

Like grief rituals so often are, the experience was at once moving, encouraging and sad as we shared our pain over cruel policies perpetrated by our own country. It was good to be together, speaking the language of our tradition and of our heart's commitments clearly and boldly in the public square.

But our work does not end there. Traditionally, the mood lightens toward the end of Tisha B'Av, giving us hope for a better future. (The Talmud actually teaches, remarkably, that the Messiah was born on the Ninth of Av.) Jewish tradition does not want us to be trapped in our grief nor paralyzed by it. So, the work of these past weeks must now shift to engaging more people to act on behalf of immigrants in our communities, as well as to change the heartless policies of our government. It is time to rise from our private anguish and help those who are directly impacted. We must do what we wish non-Jews had done when governments turned against us.

There are many concrete ways to help that can make a difference in the lives of immigrants. Here are some of them:

- 1) Donate to organizations that support immigrants at the border, such as Jewish Family Service of San Diego (jfssd.org) and HIAS (hias.org).
- 2) Donate to pay the exorbitant bail costs to allow immigrants to be released from detention while awaiting trial, such as the Bay Area Immigrant Bond Fund (bayareaimmigrationbondfund.org).
- 3) Write, call and visit your members of Congress, even if

you know they agree with you. Constituents who disagree make their phones ring off the hook. We must do the same.

4) Attend or sponsor a Rapid Response Training, which trains citizens to show up when ICE is conducting a raid and document the action, in order to support attorneys doing immigration defense work. These trainings are run by Faith in Action Bay Area in San Francisco and San Mateo counties (tinyurl.com/faithinaction-bayarea) or Sacred Heart Community Service in Santa Clara County (tinyurl.com/sacredheartcs-rapid), among others.

5) Contact organizers at one of the organizations named above to ask how you and your synagogue, club or friendship circle can connect with local immigrants personally, including accompanying them to court hearings or simply expressing interest in their lives.

6) Urge your synagogue to declare itself a sanctuary congregation, either to house immigrants in need of shelter or to provide personal support in other ways. T'ruah (tinyurl.com/truah-sanctuary) and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (tinyurl.com/rac-sanctuary) provide resources to support you in this work.

It is time to stand up and act. We will continue to feel stabs of existential pain over a country we no longer recognize. But we must summon our efforts to make a real difference in the lives of people who are being persecuted in our own day. Only then can we turn our mourning into meaningful and impactful action. ■

with everyday Israeli life. A privilege of being constantly threatened by maniacs obsessed with annihilating your own country from near and far? Or a privilege of incessant racial bigotry rooted in the millennia-old anti-Semitism? Jewish privilege gives a bad name to the word "privilege."

Third, and most important, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is too complex to narrow it down to several personal stories, albeit emotionally convincing and touching. Of course, there are two sides to the conflict. But paraphrasing George Orwell's famous maxim, one side here is more right than the other.

VLADIMIR KAPLAN | SAN MATEO

Flawed reasoning on gun control

J. has done well in calling for new measures to prevent further acts of active/mass shootings with the Aug. 8 editorial "Cowardly politicians allow domestic terrorism to flourish." Unfortunately, your case is compromised by factual

errors and a casual dismissal of anyone on the other side of the issue.

Your obsessive, or obligatory, attack on President Trump completely ignores the administration's decision last December to ban bump stocks that convert semiautomatic weapons to fully automatic weapons.

As J. was coming to print, the Wall Street Journal reported that President Trump and Sen. Mitch McConnell were seriously discussing the implementation of expanded background checks and red-flag laws when the Senate comes back into session.

Your discussion of the Second Amendment, and by extension the Constitution itself, was also seriously flawed. I fully agree that there is a compelling public interest in regulating the sale and ownership of firearms. Nevertheless, the ownership of firearms is a right under the Constitution and should be recognized as such. How we balance these competing legitimate interests should be a topic for respectful debate. But there is nothing respectful in

describing any part of the Constitution as "outdated 18th-century nonsense."

Language, the words we use, matters. Such incendiary language can set off those who inhabit the far extremes of the polity. Let's try to debate issues while showing respect for those with whom we may disagree.

STEVE ASTRACHAN | PLEASANT HILL

The point of the Constitution

Defining reasons for the mass shootings across the USA in recent years is difficult. There are clearly many contributing factors, ranging from violent video games to psychiatric issues, a disappearing "strong family unit" to teach children "right and wrong" and the easy access of guns. Your recent editorial considers only one of these contributing factors and includes the self-righteous statement, "We are sick of pathetic Second Amendment arguments that sanctify outdated 18th-century nonsense."

The initial 10 amendments were added to

the Constitution to assure the document would be adopted by the independent states, in their attempt to unify as one nation.

President Obama openly stated that he could have made many unilateral edicts and run for (and won) a third term, except for those darn limitations imposed by the Constitution. That is the point of the Constitution: to limit the power of the central government and maximize the liberty of the individual.

Today's political left would like to eliminate the Constitution so they could do whatever they pleased in an all-powerful, central government. That is called tyranny! Next, eliminate the "nation-state" concept, which spread across the globe in the 19th and 20th centuries. No more national boundaries!

We have seen the left's "Congressional Squad" position on Jews/Israel: open anti-Semitic tropes and hatred. Political consequences of their anti-Semitism? None!

Be careful what you wish for, lest you get it.

FRED KORR | OAKLAND

With Judaism's future at stake, here's my survival plan

LOCAL VOICE | ARI HOFFMAN

If you care about the fate of the Jews, it is past time to start worrying. But worrying is not enough. The signs of distress are everywhere: right and left, Israel and the diaspora, campus and cities, a cloudy present and an increasingly dark future.

This is not to say that there isn't an abundance of Jewish pleasures and Jewish joys, or that the 21st century has not brought great Jewish success. But that only increases the urgency to protect what we've built against external threat and internal decay. Things are more precarious than they look.



Ari Hoffman is a writer and lawyer with a Ph.D. in English literature from Harvard and a J.D. from Stanford. He writes on culture, Jewish ideas, law and politics, and is the author of the forthcoming book "This Year in Jerusalem: The Israel Novel and Why it Matters."

In the United States, the world's largest diasporic community, right-wing anti-Semitism has made blood run in the streets, and left-wing anti-Semitism denies Jews the right to political and cultural self-determination. In addition, Islamist terror menaces Jews everywhere, but particularly in the tiny Middle Eastern strip of land where most Jews live.

What is to be done?

I propose appropriating an approach from what initially appears to be an impossibly different context. Two years ago, the Catholic writer Rod Dreher released a remarkable book, "The Benedict Option." It was his answer to what he saw as an increasingly desperate set of circumstances for traditional

Christians besieged by a secularized society.

Lifting the name from a saint who reformed and reinforced the church amid the cascading wreckage of the Roman Empire, Dreher proposes a retrofitted project in analogous circumstances. Believers need to find each other and form communities of strength and purpose. The job of changing the world is built on the imperative to survive its ravages. The task is no longer to change minds, but to build resilience.

Dreher calls for "a strategic withdrawal — a limited kind of culture-war Dunkirk operation ...in which to regroup, retrain and re-engage in the long struggle." The pressures of modern life mean that "we are going to have to change our lives, and our approach to life, in radical ways." To win a struggle Dreher sees as both protracted and marked by long odds, he advocates a dramatic turn in strategy.

Jews need to heed this advice.

There will be those Jews who resist taking guidance from approaches embedded in a theology and worldview alien to their own. This is shortsighted. Dreher explicitly cites the shape and structures of Orthodox Jewish communities as models; thickly woven, physically concentrated and world-building units able to encounter modernity with enough ballast as to avoid falling apart.

But there are even deeper reasons to borrow and build. The original Saint Benedict saw Rome collapsing around him and intuited that what was falling was not just a city but a

civilization. In this he echoed the Jewish sage Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai, who snuck out of Jerusalem in a coffin as the Romans were poised to sack Jerusalem. His retreat led to a reinvention that created rabbinic Judaism, which has been durable enough to make meaning for two millennia.

Contemporary Jews need to envision what a Benedict Option looks like for them today.

Jews should not wash their hands of a world increasingly seamed by hate and prejudice. On the contrary; it is for the very love of that world that Jews must realize that they must preserve themselves and what they have built.

Zionism was one such effort. Theodor Herzl looked around Europe, and what he saw was unsustainable. The Jewish State was an answer to a very pressing Jewish Question. Some part of the Jews needed to leave Europe because the continent could no longer be trusted with them.

Herzl was right, but now the state he envisioned is part of the global Jewish landscape and defending it, and being defended by it, are baked into the Jewish condition.

The Jews are still under assault everywhere, and their friends are precious few.

As difficult as it is to say, the question that needs asking is no longer "How do we build?" but rather "How do we preserve what has been built?"

Jews, more than anyone else, know that once anti-Semitism appears in a society, it rarely dissipates — there is always a storm.

A Jewish Benedict Option would be the shelter against that coming storm. It would refuse to modulate the essential Jewish convictions under pressure from any external ideology. It would refuse to engage in the sinister exercise of debating Jewish whiteness more than 70 years after Auschwitz. It would reject the distinction between anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism, because both threaten Jewish lives. It would forgo convincing others in favor of securing the convictions that have ensured Jewish flourishing and survival.

It would not be lachrymose, but it would be alert. It would affirm that all Jewish lives matter equally, from Petah Tikvah to Park Slope to Pittsburgh. It would not only remind Jews that the struggle is joined regardless of whether they opt in or out; it would teach them how to fight.

It would refuse to stand in solidarity with those who hate us, even as it would demand a public square informed by our values.

The Jewish Benedict Option must ensure survival in other ways, as well.

Against the deluge of Jewish illiteracy in America and elsewhere, it would prioritize the sensibilities rooted in Jewish tradition, religious or secular. It would have to concede that the glories of Jewish American civilization exist alongside the catastrophes of a melting Jewry, falling away from treasures they never saw in the first place. It will look with clear eyes at "culturally Jewish" Jews and see the ground vanishing beneath their feet. It would do the hard work of rebuilding that ground.

The underlying insight of the Benedict Option applies seamlessly to the current Jewish moment.

A community cannot afford to be naive about its own future, nor thoughtless about its own preservation. The persistence of tiny Jewish minorities in the diaspora and in the broader Middle East is by no means assured. As the storm brews, we best learn how to build our ark. ■

FROM THE J. ARCHIVE

AUG. 23, 1929

Editorial: Henry Ford's Bible

Henry Ford says he reads the Bible every day. In an interview with Cameron Wilkie for the current issue of *The Christian World*, Mr. Ford further says that he has a Bible in every room of his house so that he can read the Bible daily.

I am wondering in which of Mr. Ford's Bibles can be found the verses that so eloquently inspired him to publish in his Dearborn Independent "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion."

In which Bible can be found one verse that stimulated him to continue his seven years' persecution of the Jews?

In which Bible can be found one verse that justified Ford to lay off 60,000 men for an indefinite period? Which Bible sanctioned their loss of wages; that directly affected 500,000 Detroiters and added \$600,000 to that city's charity budget last year?

The Old Testament, the New Testament, the Koran, Confucius, Buddha, Zoroaster, etc., etc., all preach the brotherhood of man.

Which Bible does Mr. Ford read?



Ad from Aug. 22, 1947 issue

AUG. 23, 1929

New director of Berkeley Hillel Foundation predicts awakening of Jewish consciousness of Jewish students

After a successful career in the rabbinate, Rabbi Max John Merritt, for 15 years spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Israel in Evansville, Ind., and more recently successor to Rabbi Jonah B. Wise in Portland, has been appointed director of the Hillel Foundation in Berkeley.

Rabbi Merritt brings to his new post a profound knowledge of religious ideals as well as moral and intellectual culture. Since his graduation from the Hebrew Union College and the University of Berlin, he has identified with social and welfare work, wherein he displayed his learning and keen understanding of philosophy and Semitics.

In speaking of the possibilities of the Hillel Foundation, Dr. Merritt said: "I expect to see a new awakening of the Jewish consciousness of Jewish students in the colleges and universities and the reclamation for Jewish service of that section of our Jewish youth from whom we have reason to expect the finest fruits and the inculcation of the desire to make their own contribution to the resources of Jewish leadership."

Dr. Merritt is an optimist who disagrees with the pessimist believing that the youth of our day is not equal in every respect to the youth of any other generation. "Freedom has made the young folks stronger, more self-possessed, and has given them a finer restraint and self-control," asserted Rabbi Merritt. "The youth of the present time is 'sound to the core' and need give us no anxiety." ■

J's print editions go back to 1895, and have not yet been digitized. We seek funding to make this precious history available online for future generations. If you're interested in furthering this project, please contact sue@jweekly.com.

SENIOR LIFE

Preparing for the end: never too early, authors urge — it's part of living

BOOKS | LAURA PAULL | J. STAFF

You'd think "the end is nigh" the way Shoshana Berger, co-author of a new book about our last days, is in demand these days. On media platforms, in bookstores and at all kinds of public venues, people are leaning in to ask the Bay Area journalist: How should we do death?

As if death were a new phenomenon.

One reason for all the attention is that Berger and BJ Miller's new book, "A Beginner's Guide to the End," is really about living. "Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death" is the revealing subtitle. And the book delivers.

"If you knew that you were going to die tomorrow, would you still be holding on to those grudges? Have you healed the old wounds with people that you love in your life?" Berger asked during a talk at the Commonwealth Club in San Francisco not long after the book was published in July.

Were those rhetorical questions? Who among us doesn't live with some painful accommodation to a subpar relationship? Is there a family in existence that has no wounds, no challenges, no broken links?

Acknowledging the fact that we're all going to die — and that time is precious — is the starting point from which healing can flow and a better quality of life can begin, the authors assert.

Berger pressed the audience: "Are you showing up in your life? Are you putting down your phone and looking at the person you're talking to in the eye? Or saying goodbye like you really mean it? Because ... none of us really ever knows. [Learning how] to be really present in your life is a big reason why we wrote this book. We want people to think through these issues."

For Berger, a former senior editor at Wired whose first published book was the 2005 do-it-yourself primer "Ready-Made: How to Make (Almost) Everything," death was not something she much considered — until her beloved father, a former UC Berkeley professor, slid into dementia.

Berger and her sister found themselves totally unprepared for his decline and eventual death. It was, she told J. at an interview in San Francisco at the design firm and idea incubator IDEO, where she is now a global editorial director, "a harrowing experience. We really had little clue how to navigate it" practically or emotionally.

She found solace in the traditions of her father's Conservative Judaism and the support of Congregation Netivot Shalom, the Berkeley synagogue with which she associated in her youth and adulthood. Her mother's secular Jewish culture, with which she was also comfortable, left a gap for her in that regard.

"There's a reason why religion exists, and part of it is to help us through these big life cycle moments," she said. "Because in the absence of a community — and a ritual to participate in a practice of mourning and grieving — we can feel like we're in free fall. And grief can be terribly isolating."

But she felt frustrated by the rigidity of the medical system she had encountered, by the demands of caregiving, and by her utter lack of knowledge about death and dying.

"We didn't even know what you were supposed to do first, at the moment when a person dies," she told J.

So when Miller, a palliative-care physician at UCSF, came into the IDEO office to consult about how society could benefit from a shift in the U.S. approach to death, Berger was "completely lit up."



BJ Miller, MD (Photo/Todd Hido) and Shoshana Berger (Photo/Nicholas Zurcher)

That meeting happened to occur three months after Berger's father had died. "I so desperately wanted to find a way to redeem my experience," she said.

Many of the younger people at IDEO were equally motivated to get involved, she added. It's not just an "old persons" issue. It's important at all stages of life.

"More people than you'd think are dealing with death at an early age," Berger said. "One in three people will lose someone in their immediate family before they turn 17. So this is not an unfamiliar experience to people. And I think the moment you're touched by it is the moment of opening, when you have this window to start thinking about your own life, and how you take care of the people you love."

Earlier, Berger had helped Miller write his own poignant story for a TED talk, "What Really Matters at the End of Life?" Presented in 2015, it has reached 9.5 million views online.

In it, Miller recounts how he started down this path at 19 when, on a lark, he and his Princeton University classmates climbed onto a parked commuter train — and 11,000 volts of electricity shot through his metal wrist watch into his body. His didn't die, but he lost both legs below the knee and his left forearm.

"Inspiring" doesn't begin to describe his story of recovery and how he reset his life to become a medical doctor specializing in hospice and palliative care. He was the executive director of the Zen Hospice Center in San Francisco when he walked through the door at IDEO on his carbon-fiber prosthetic legs to talk about how they could reframe death.

Part of IDEO's response was the End of Life Challenge, a prototype social initiative that evolved into an annual nonprofit event, "Re-Imagine End of Life," a community campaign to engage all sectors of society in new conversations about death and dying. Hugely successful, with its third annual event set for October, the nonprofit is looking to expand to New York next year.

Today, Miller is a hospice and palliative care physician at the UCSF Medical Center, where he continues to see patients and their families, honoring the indissoluble link between life and death.

"He gave me a way to see that a lot of people need help with this, and if we could give people that help it would be a great service," Berger said. "I suggested to him that there was a book in it. And three years later, here we are."

"A Beginner's Guide to the End" has a lot to say, and strives to say it in a universally accessible language that avoids preachy tones or cultural bias.

"BJ and I are pretty enthusiastic agnostics," she said at the Commonwealth Club, "but we want to hold space for people for whom their faith is key in this conversation."

Its 24 chapters glide crisply through many topics, such as: the process of planning for death (it's never too early to fill out an advance directive); dealing with extended and/or terminal illnesses; relationships toward the end of life; and finding help of all kinds (from medical to financial to household to emotional).

It also tackles decisions that need to be made around how (and when) to die, celebrating the life of the deceased and dealing with grief. A final chapter, "What's Left," deals with the physical (and virtual) remnants of a person's life, from possessions to passwords.

One valuable offering is a 22-page listing of resources that might be useful at any stage during the process of death. It's a journey, the 544-page book reminds us over and over, that includes all the life that leads up to our last breath. That is the time we have to love and heal and do our business on Earth.

"I think there's so much to be said for just normalizing death," Berger said. "We all die. It happens to us at different times in life. Let's get to know it a little bit better so it's not so exotic. If we talk about things openly, we tend to be less afraid." ■

"A Beginner's Guide to the End" by Shoshana Berger and Dr. BJ Miller (Simon & Schuster, 544 pages)

Osteoarthritis can be a pain

HEALTH | DR. JERRY SALIMAN

A 32-year-old mom with pain in her thumbs. A 40-year-old executive with pain in her neck and numbness down her right arm. A retired attorney with pain in both knees.

What do these patients have in common? Osteoarthritis.

According to the National Institute on Aging, osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis, and one of the most common causes of disability in older adults. But this disease does not strike only with age; young adults are at a greater risk of developing osteoarthritis if it runs in the family, in addition to other factors such as:

- Previous trauma to a joint
- Repetitive stress on joints
- Diabetes
- Unhealthy weight leading to arthritis of the spine, hips, knees and ankles

When I found arthritic evidence in the thumbs of a young mom, she admitted that she texts all day long. She also had a family history of osteoarthritis of the hands, which further predisposed her to developing arthritis in her thumbs.

Likewise, the executive with neck pain typically used her laptop with her head bent down. The repetitive stress resulted in osteoarthritis of her cervical spine, manifested by cervical disc and nerve compression.

Treatment options vary.

Move it or lose it: Physical therapy and aerobic exercise are among the limited ways to slow down the progression of

arthritis by increasing flexibility and muscle strength. For example, physical therapy can help with neck pain by improving posture and range of motion in the neck to lessen the pressure on cervical nerves.

Recommended choices for low-impact exercise include swimming, water aerobics, tai chi, biking and elliptical training. Although the prevailing wisdom that osteoarthritis of the knees and hips is a matter of aging and excess weight, more recent thinking is that the cause may be a sedentary lifestyle. Like the Tin Woodman from "The Wizard of Oz," our joints get rusty when they don't move.

A good home remedy for osteoarthritic joint pain is the application of heat or cold packs for 15 to 20 minutes at a time. Often, I'll recommend a splint, brace or cane to lessen the stress on a particular joint.

Capsaicin: This is the ingredient that makes chili peppers hot. As a counter-irritant (like camphor oil or menthol), it blocks pain. It can be used topically, but the FDA has just fast-tracked an injectable form for treating knee arthritis based on an early trial showing significant reduction in knee pain.

Medications commonly used to treat OA include:

- Acetaminophen (Tylenol): Don't take more than 3,000 mg of acetaminophen in 24 hours, and avoid it if you drink more than two alcoholic beverages per day because the combination can lead to serious liver damage.
- Non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs): If

over-the-counter medications such as ibuprofen or naproxen don't help, your doctor may consider a prescription NSAID, although there are risks.

Neither acetaminophen nor NSAIDs change the progression of OA; they only treat the symptoms.

Cortisone shots can provide relief for as long as 2 or 3 months, enough to walk comfortably for brief periods, such as on vacations.

OA progression is not inevitable. The 32-year-old mom with thumb pain was able to cope with her symptoms by limiting her texting and taking OTC ibuprofen periodically. The 40-year-old with neck pain and numbness in her arm elected to try physical therapy instead of cervical disc surgery. The middle-age retired attorney joined Weight Watchers and took up cycling, which helped OA of his knees.

To maximize the welfare of your joints, watch your posture, particularly when using a laptop, avoid repetitive activities that result in joint pain, and maintain a lifestyle of healthy diet, regular exercise and weight control. What is your plan to keep your joints in optimal shape? ■



Dr. Jerry Saliman, a former internist for Kaiser South San Francisco, is a contributing wellness writer for the Peninsula JCC

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Ailing while abroad? You'll need more than Medicare

Planning to travel abroad soon? Medicare usually does not cover health care services or supplies while you're outside the U.S.

But that doesn't mean you have to travel abroad without health coverage.

If you have a Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy, Medicare Advantage or another Medicare health plan (instead of Original Medicare), check your policy to see if it includes coverage when traveling abroad.

Also consider buying a travel insurance policy that includes health coverage.

In some cases, Medicare may cover medically necessary health care services you get on board a ship within U.S. territorial waters. It won't pay for services you get when a ship is more than six hours away from a U.S. port.

Medicare also may pay for inpatient hospital, doctor, ambulance services or dialysis you get in a foreign country in rare cases: 1. You're in the U.S. when a medical emergency occurs, and the foreign hospital is closer than the nearest U.S. hospital that could treat your medical condition; 2. You're traveling through Canada by the most direct route between Alaska and another state when a medical emergency occurs, and the Canadian hospital is closer than the nearest U.S. hospital that could treat the emergency; 3. You live in the U.S. and the foreign hospital is closer to your home than the nearest U.S. hospital that could treat your medical condition, regardless of whether it is an emergency.

Medicare drug plans (Part D) don't cover prescription drugs you buy outside the U.S. If you get sick or injured while abroad, in most cases you'll pay 100 percent of the costs. In the situations described above, you pay 20

percent of the Medicare-approved amount, and the Part B deductible applies.

In the situations above, Medicare pays only for services covered under Original Medicare.

Medicare Part A (hospital insurance) covers hospital care when you've been admitted with a doctor's order to the foreign hospital as an inpatient. Part B covers emergency and non-emergency ambulance and doctor services you get immediately before and during your covered foreign inpatient hospital stay.

Medicare generally won't pay for services if it didn't cover your hospital stay, or you got ambulance and doctor services outside the hospital after your covered hospital stay.

You pay the part of the charge you would normally pay for covered services. This includes any medically necessary doctor and ambulance services you get in a foreign country as part of a covered inpatient hospital stay. You also pay the coinsurance, copayments and deductibles you'd normally pay if you got those same services or supplies inside the U.S.

The 50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and American Samoa are considered part of the United States.

Foreign hospitals aren't required to file Medicare claims for your medical costs. You need to submit an itemized bill to Medicare for your doctor, inpatient and ambulance services if you're admitted to a foreign hospital under one of the situations above ■

This article is courtesy of Medicare's S.F.-based western regional office. For Medicare questions, call (800) 633-4227, or 1-800-MEDICARE.

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Early memory loss, coping and engagement

FAMILY MATTERS | RITA CLANCY

Dear Rita: My 74-year-old partner has struggled with forgetfulness for the past two years. He was recently diagnosed with early stage Alzheimer's disease. I am struggling with these changes. I feel like I am no longer in the flow of things and starting to feel alone with the responsibility of caregiving. Are there programs we could connect with to get support and not feel so isolated?

— F.N., Oakland

This diagnosis and the responsibilities that come with it put you on a challenging path. As our country ages, more and more of us are experiencing cognitive decline. Most people have all good intentions to be supportive of those who are affected, but there is a tendency to draw away from impacted individuals, couples and families.

As irrational as it is, some people experience anxiety and fear that mere association may predispose them and they may “catch” this condition. Others are uncomfortable with the personality and behavioral changes that are often part of the disease.

Here are some support programs that you may find helpful.

The Alzheimer's Association offers an early stage program with support groups for both people with the disease and their partners. The group for people with the disease provides information, emotional support and socialization with peers. The atmosphere is accepting and stigma-free. This program also encourages and works on communication and coping between individuals with memory loss and their families.

The partner support group meets nearby and at the same time as the other group. It engages in discussions about safety, family issues, and concerns for the future. Information and resources are shared, and guest speakers are invited. Judy Filippoff, director of early stage services at the Alzheimer's Association, can be reached at (800) 272-3900.

Another program that might be of interest is the Memory Café. In 1997, Dutch psychologist Bere Miesen developed the idea of meetups for people diagnosed with dementia and their caregivers. The meetings occurred

in restaurants, coffee shops, museums and other supportive environments. He believed that shared acknowledgment of living with dementia by patients and their caregivers would lead to empowerment in coping and living with the disease.

At a Memory Café, families and caregivers who live with dementia get the opportunity to socialize, draw inspiration from one another and just be. The program gives people some respite from the challenges of living with and caring for someone with a disease that robs people of their memories. This might be a place that you and your partner will enjoy and find supportive.

As memory loss progresses, going out in public grows increasingly stressful, but it's important for people to feel part of their communities as long as possible. Being in the moment with other people going through similar experiences breaks the isolation that many people feel. Even if people don't recognize names or faces, they will be impacted by the kindness and love of these gatherings. Examples of Memory Café activities include lunches, musical programs, games, museum tours and dancing. Participants experience a sense of normalcy and acceptance, and build friendships.

In the Bay Area, Memory Café was originally organized by Patricia Ris and Debora Tingley at Memory Care Life, and is now being adopted by Seniors at Home. For more information, visit seniorsathome.jfcs.org/memory-cafe.

In Alameda and Contra Costa counties, Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay is in the process of developing its own Memory Café program, with the aim to launch in the fall. For information, visit jfcs-eastbay.org or memorycafedirectory.com. ■

Rita Clancy, LCSW, is Director of Adult Services at Jewish Family & Community Services East Bay. Her columns appear regularly in J's Seniors sections. Have questions about your aging parents? Email rclancy@jfcs-eastbay.org or call (510) 558-7800 ext. 257.

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GENEALOGY RESEARCH

Winner of 10 Olympic medals in 1950s still an icon in Hungary

PEOPLE | CNAAN LIPSHIZ | JTA

When journalists ask Agnes Keleti about her health, she smiles and slowly extends her right hand in apparent gratitude for the question.

Keleti yanks anyone who is foolish enough to grasp her hand with enough force to throw them off their balance.

Then she replies: "I'm fine, thanks. Yourself?"

Agility, defiance and humor are traits that helped Keleti, 98, survive the Holocaust in hiding and become Hungary's most successful living athlete.

According to the International Olympic Committee, she won five gold, three silver and two bronze medals as a gymnast in the 1952 and 1956 Summer Games — all after she reached the relatively ripe age of 30. With 10 medals total, although one source says she won 11, she is the second-most decorated female Jewish Olympian of all time, behind only swimmer Dara Torres, who won 12 over five Olympics from 1988 to 2008.

Keleti, who left Hungary in 1957 and lived in Israel, is now celebrated as a national hero here in Budapest, where she returned three years ago to be with one of her two sons. Keleti leads a comfortable life in a central apartment that she shares with a female caretaker.

"I have a good life here. I feel at home," Keleti said after lighting the Olympic flame on July 30 at the European Maccabi Games, a quadrennial Jewish sporting event that was held recently in Budapest. The last competition was in

Agnes Keleti, in her mid-90s, performs a split in front of young Hungarian gymnasts in Budapest in 2016. (Photo/JTA-AFP-Getty Images-Peter Kohalmi)



2015 in Berlin, Germany.

Keleti is entitled to a monthly stipend of \$13,000 in accordance with a law that compensates Olympic athletes proportionately to the number of medals they won.

She is interviewed regularly on national television here and invited to official events. A giant portrait of her adorns the side of a building in Budapest alongside those of other living Olympic champions.

She didn't always feel this secure.

Keleti has dementia that impacts her short-term

memory, but has not changed her positive outlook and cheerful disposition. Nonetheless, she did recall leaving Hungary in 1957 because "there was a lot of anti-Semitism."

"It wasn't a good atmosphere to be Jewish, even for a star athlete," she said.

Growing up in a well-to-do family, Keleti delighted her parents with musical talent that emerged at age 3 and led her to become a gifted cello player. Her athletic capabilities emerged at 4, when her father taught her to swim during a vacation near Lake Balaton.



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"My father had two girls, and he raised me like a boy," she said.

The outbreak of World War II, when Keleti was 18, halted her athletic development.

She survived the Holocaust thanks to falsified identity papers, pretending to be from the countryside and having little education.

She worked as a maid ("I was strong and I worked hard. Nobody asked questions," she recalled) at an estate and later at a munitions factory. Keleti's mother and sister were saved by the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg. Her father and uncles were murdered at Auschwitz.

Keleti, born in 1921, resumed her training as a gymnast in 1946, but a broken collarbone during training kept her out of the 1948 London Olympics.

Four years later she won her first Olympic gold medal, in the floor exercise, at the 1952 Helsinki Games. Keleti was 31 and competed against athletes 10 years younger. She also won a silver and two bronze medals.

That would have been a respectable pinnacle for the career of any professional athlete.

But for Keleti, it was merely the warm-up to her spectacular performance at the 1956 Olympics in Melbourne. At 35, competing against gymnasts half her age, she collected four gold medals and two silver.

"I drove myself hard," Keleti said in reply to a question about the secret to her success. "I drove the girls I taught hard, too," she added, referencing her years as the head coach of Israel's national gymnastics team. "It's the only way to get performance. Being nice and motherly doesn't do it."

Sergiusz Lipczyk, an Israeli former professional boxer

who attended the Maccabi Games, recalled watching Keleti motivate her trainees at the Wingate Institute near Netanya in the 1960s.

"She was a tough cookie," he said. "I remember her correcting one girl's exercise by saying in front of everybody, 'Don't open your legs like that. It's not nighttime just yet.'"

Two years shy of a century, Keleti still has a sharp tongue that makes it challenging to find suitable caretakers, her younger son, Raphael, said.

"It took a while to find someone who was emotionally unshakable," he said.

"I drove myself hard...being nice and motherly doesn't do it."

Gymnast Agnes Keleti

Dismissing him with a wave of her hand, his mom said, "Never mind him. You're not here to interview him. Direct your questions to me."

In retrospect, Keleti said the girls she trained were too young and that the teenagers competing internationally today are a crucial two years younger than they ought to be for their own physical and mental health.

"The girls begin too early in life and the exercises they do are too straining," she said. "It's become a circus. Training needs to begin at 16 and the earliest competing needs to happen is at 18."

Keleti is credited with essentially founding the national

gymnastics team in Israel. She said her arrival there was largely circumstantial.

While competing in Melbourne, the Red Army quelled an anti-communist uprising in Budapest. Keleti fled for asylum and stayed in Australia, where Zoltan Dikstein, a former teacher from the Jewish Gymnasium in Budapest, looked her up and persuaded her to attend the 1957 Maccabi Games in Israel.

The country was so poor and Keleti's sport so undeveloped that she had to bring her own bar and rings.

Her arrival was a rare feather in the cap of Maccabi organizers and the Israeli media couldn't get enough of Keleti. Her stardom helped secure her teaching position at the Wingate Institute, where she trained several generations of gymnasts.

It was in Israel that she met her late husband, Reuven Shofet, with whom she had two boys.

"I grew up knowing my mother was Wonder Woman," Raphael said. "She ran the household, she taught us music, helped with our homework, cooked meals so tasty that all the neighbors' kids wanted to stay for dinner. Oh, and in her spare time she was an international and local celebrity who traveled to coach athletes at the Olympic Games. No biggie."

In 2017, she won the Israel Prize, the Israeli government's highest civilian distinction, in the sports category.

Keleti still was able to perform a leg lift and a split that year, but she said her skin has since become too thin to safely attempt such feats now. The problem is keeping her from exercising for the first time in her life.

"But who cares," she said. "There's more to life than sport." ■

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Rare illustrations of 'One Little Goat' song at Magnes reflect early Soviet Jewish life

ART | ROBERT NAGLER MILLER | J. CORRESPONDENT

An upcoming exhibit at the Magnes museum in Berkeley brings to light a fascinating yet little-known slice of modern European Jewish history.

"El Lissitzky's Chad Gadyo at 100" focuses on a recent gift to the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at UC Berkeley: a



One of 11 lithographs about the song by El Lissitzky. (Photo/Courtesy the Magnes)

complete set of 11 colorful lithographic images by El Lissitzky, a Russian Jewish avant-garde artist born Eleazar Markovich Lisitskii in 1890.

The works illustrate the popular Passover seder song that starts off, "One little goat, one little goat, which my father bought for two zuzim."

The exhibit opens Tuesday, Aug. 27 and will be on display through May 29, 2020.

A show highlighting the song, perhaps better known in modern times as "Had Gadya," is significant, says Magnes curator Francesco Spagnolo, if for no other reason than that these El Lissitzky illustrations are quite rare. The artist published an edition of just 75 copies a century ago, and only about a dozen of them have made their way into public collections worldwide.

Also noteworthy, Spagnolo says, are the contributions of the artist in the cultural world of the early 20th century and the context in which he worked.

As New York's Jewish Museum makes clear on its website, El Lissitzky may not

have been as widely known as Marc Chagall, a contemporary with whom he worked at the People's Art School in Belarus, but he was a leader in the artist movement called Suprematism, a Russian abstract form that favored geometric shapes and patterns.

Before he embraced Suprematism, El

El Lissitzky was part of a group of Jewish artists who flourished in the early days following the Russian Revolution.

Lissitzky was part of a group of Jewish artists who flourished in the early days following the Russian Revolution, Spagnolo notes.

Unlike their predecessors, the czars, whose dynastic rule was often marked by flagrant and numerous examples of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish violence, the Revolution's early leaders encouraged Jewish artists to honor their heritage with works that touched on their religion's rich culture and history.

Contrary to the Communist regime's later anti-Semitic policies, the initial post-1917 "Soviet leadership was open to Jews and their emancipation," Spagnolo says. "There was a coexistence of Jewish ethnographic work," including folktales, music and art.

"It was a time of great hope for many Jews," he adds. "Jewish artists were allowed to express themselves in a Jewish vernacular."

El Lissitzky's "Chad Gadyo" is a striking example of Russian Jewish art being produced at that time. The beautifully rendered illustrations of the "goat song" — whose provenance, Spagnolo says, is decidedly not Jewish, but rather old Provençal French of the Middle Ages — are accompanied by Yiddish and Aramaic text.

Instead of stressing any kind of divine intervention in relating the song's tale of the "cat eating the goat" and the eventual slaying of the Angel of Death by God, El Lissitzky focused on the "Soviet message" of "socially

engaged art," such as the image of a water carrier that exalts "human labor," Spagnolo points out.

"Chad Gadyo" was El Lissitzky's last known Jewish-themed work before he fully immersed himself in the Soviet avant-garde, says Spagnolo, who calls this work his "swan song" to his Jewish heritage. Plagued by poor health for many years, he died in 1941 at age 51.

The gift of the "Chad Gadyo" illustrations was made by the family trust of a Berkeley couple, Ira Fink and Paula "Penni" Hudis, soon before Fink's death at age 82 in April. The gift was made in honor of the late Seymour Fromer, the founder and director emeritus of the Magnes, to mark the 10th anniversary of his death, and the official name of the exhibit is "A Tsigel / One Little

Goat: El Lissitzky's Chad Gadyo at 100 (1919-2019)." In Yiddish, a tsigel means "a little goat."

Hudis says the Magnes was "the perfect place for the 'Chad Gadyo,'" in part because Fink, an architect and urban planner, was delighted when the museum in 2010 became affiliated with UC Berkeley, where he earned his master's degree and doctorate.

During his lifetime, Fink amassed an extensive collection of architectural books about synagogues, Hudis says. Approximately half of these books, numbering in the thousands, also have been donated to the Magnes. ■

"El Lissitzky's Chad Gadyo at 100" Gallery hours are 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays at the Magnes, 2121 Allston Way,

Jewish Music Series returns to Sonoma State

MUSIC | GABRIEL GRESCHLER | J. STAFF

What makes music Jewish?

Sonoma State University's fifth annual Jewish Music Series, a collaborative effort between the university's music and Jewish studies programs, attempts to answer that question by hosting six Thursday evening performances between Sept. 5 and Nov. 21.

The artists and their genres come from many corners of Jewish life, from Yiddish songwriting to Armenian folk singing.

"One of my primary goals is to present a wide variety of what we call 'Jewish music,'" said series organizer Brian Wilson, director of the Jewish studies program and an SSU music professor. "Most people think klezmer. I love klezmer music. But there's a lot more."

The series begins Sept. 5 with "Yiddish Songs at an Exhibition." Cantor Sharon Bernstein, a Palo Alto native and hazzan at Sha'ar Zahav in San Francisco since 2007, will perform a multimedia show that includes projected images of paintings by Toronto-based artist Mayer Kirshenblatt, whose works showcase life in Poland before the Holocaust.

On Sept. 19, Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell and Dmitri Gaskin will take the stage as Tsvey Brider, Yiddish for "Two Brothers." The duo will play songs about modern life and explore a variety of genres, including classical, cabaret, blues and pop.

In "Days of Awe" on Oct. 3, Old World trio Veretski Pass will add the sound of a shofar (by Wilson) to its regular lineup of accordion, violin, cimbalom and double bass instruments.

On Oct. 17, "Love Songs and Lullabies to Lost Homelands" will feature Armenian singer Hasmik Harutyunyan and the U.S. women's vocal ensemble Kitka in a salute to Armenia.

On Nov. 7, soprano Carol Menke will perform songs from "Breath in a Ram's Horn," a song cycle by composer Daniel Asia that includes words from American poet Paul Pines.

The series will wrap up Nov. 21 with a showing of the 1920 silent film "The Golem: How He Came into the World" while an quintet plays an original jazzy score.

Each concert begins at 6:30 p.m. and will run for about 90 minutes. The venue is Schroeder Hall at Sonoma State's Green Music Center in Rohnert Park. Admission is free; parking is \$5. For more information, visit tinyurl.com/ssu-jms2019 or call (707) 664-2324. ■

Incubator for Jewish culture to launch in East Bay

ARTS | LAURA PAULL | J. STAFF

Can classic Jewish texts inspire today's artists and writers? The experience of a New York arts incubator called LABA, hatched at the 14th Street Y in the East Village a dozen years ago, definitively shows they can.

Some of those whose creative work came out of the LABA artist fellowship program went on to be published in the New Yorker, to perform Off-Broadway and at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and to present at large-scale art fairs around the world.

The program — officially named LABA: A Laboratory for Jewish Culture — expanded to Buenos Aires in 2015, and now it's getting ready to open its first West Coast branch, at the JCC East Bay in Berkeley. And the call has gone out for its first cohort of local artists.

LABA East Bay is looking for eight to 10 fellows for its 2020 House of Study program. Applicants ideally will be a mix of visual artists, writers, dancers, musicians, actors and — why not? — chefs, landscape architects, video-game designers and others. They will come together to study Jewish texts in a non-religious, open-minded setting throughout the year. The hope is that the readings and dialogue will spark new, creative works that can be featured on the LABA website and in “LABALive” events and performances. Previous scholarly knowledge of Judaism is not required.

The application states that “anyone who is curious about

classic Jewish texts; wants to study them in a non-religious, non-moralistic, and non-academic manner; and has a desire to use ancient Jewish texts to enrich their creative endeavors” is invited to apply for the fellowship, which comes with a small stipend.

In the New York and Buenos Aires programs, each year of study has been focused around a theme, such as paradise, beauty, eat, mother and time. The theme for LABA East Bay's inaugural year will be humor, to be explored through writings from the Torah, Talmud, Mishnah and Zohar as well as some contemporary texts.

The works created by LABA East Bay fellows will be read, exhibited and performed at a handful of public JCC East Bay events combining culture with a text teaching, a nosh and wine.

“The goal of LABA East Bay is for the ideas, feelings and contradictions of Jewish texts to inspire new work. Sometimes this yields work that is identifiably Jewish, other times it is not,” the project description explains.

Sarah Wolfman-Robichaud, director of public programs at the JCC in Berkeley, is working closely with Elissa Strauss, former co-artistic director of LABA in New York. Strauss led LABA for seven years.

“As an arts programmer and performing artist, surrounding myself with creative energies is a dream part of my role

at the JCC,” Wolfman-Robichaud said. “I firmly believe that LABA East Bay can be an answer to the need for an East Bay Jewish cultural hub.”

The application deadline for the 2020 fellowship is Monday, Sept. 30.

LABA East Bay will launch in two months with “DRUNK,” a public event on Nov. 23 that will explore the complexities and contradictions of inebriation through teachings, wine tastings and performances. Organizers are hoping it follows in the footsteps of an identically named LABA New York event that pairs Jewish text scholars, artists and a sommelier — and has sold out for five straight years.

LABA was founded in 2007 by Stephen Hazan Arnoff, the former executive director of the 14th Street Y, and his wife, Basmat Hazan Arnoff, a writer and teacher, along with artist Anat Litwin.

In 2014, the Slingshot Guide named LABA one of the most innovative Jewish organizations in North America, and the National Endowment for the Arts awarded a \$10,000 grant to support its LABALive series.

For more information on submitting an application, visit labaeastbay.com. For other details, including information about being on the mailing list and the “DRUNK” event, visit jceastbay.org/laba-east-bay. Questions may be sent to laba@jceastbay.org. ■

Richmond poet laureate keeps hope alive in face of conflict

PROFILE | TOVA RICARDO | J. INTERN

Poet Rob Lipton has witnessed violence in the Middle East — and in his East Bay hometown of Richmond. They are not the same, but both drive him to commit poetry.

His literary efforts and resistance activities — such as the one that took him to Israel and the West Bank with the International Solidarity Movement in 2002, during the Second Intifada — come together in the way he engages with communities struggling with conflict and pain.

Poetry and social activism have the power to “bring peace to dangerous places,” Lipton said. “I’ve seen things change. You have to have hope.”

Since 2017, he has served as one of Richmond's poet laureates, a literary honor awarded to highly accomplished resident poets. They are expected to perform at local poetry events and to facilitate the creation of poetry by others in the community.

“I want poetry to become a comfortable part of the surround, whether through spoken word, on the page, producing the work or appreciating the work,” said Lipton. “I want it to be normal.”

Lipton said the poet laureate program has been a personally enriching experience, giving him the opportunity to contribute to Richmond's literary scene through workshops, writing contests and panel discussions.

Lipton currently shares the title with

two other laureates, Ciera-Jevae Gordon and Daniel Ari.

Richmond is a multiracial, industrial city in the East Bay that boomed in the World War II era but suffered economic decline in the following decades, resulting in issues with gangs, rampant gun violence, drug abuse, neglect and poverty.

Lipton also has observed some of these conditions in Israel and the West Bank, where he has engaged in anti-occupation work for many years. He contributed an essay called “Bearing Witness in the Promised Land” to the 2003 anthology “Live from Palestine,” which also included contributions from Hanan Ashrawi, Edward Said and Rachel Corrie.

In addition to graphic descriptions of violence he has seen, Lipton tracks his own responses in his poems. In the aftermath of a 2002 Israeli military operation in the West Bank town of Nablus, near where he was visiting, he wrote:

“It is not my blood running out my mouth/ and it is not my smile stuck to my face/like paper donkey's tail./I am still telling this story/ an insightful, and more to the point, living narrator/who lets you believe death/is for someone else/in some other place.”

The poem “Not Me in Nablus” is included in his 2006 collection “A Complex Bravery,” which covers a wide range of personal experiences and incidents observed: children



Poet Rob Lipton.

cursing at police officers, tension between lovers, ruin in the West Bank.

“I have an absurdist sensibility on the page where you are unsure if you're supposed to laugh or feel awful,” said Lipton.

Raised in a Conservative Jewish family of Eastern European and Sephardic Jews, Lipton affiliated with the anti-occupation organization Jewish Voice for Peace decades ago. “I’ve always been anti-Zionist or non-Zionist,” he said.

And while he feels he has been on the receiving end of discrimination by the mainstream Jewish community for holding these political views, he is also cognizant of his racial privilege in Richmond, a city predominantly populated by black and Latino communities. He keeps that in mind as he mentors local youth, helping them to cultivate their own voices.

“I have to step gently because I am a white guy,” said Lipton. “My laureate status has to be a very inclusive and participatory thing. I don't want to be the fearless leader. I want to be part of the group.”

In the spring, Richmond poet laureates judged a West Contra Costa public school arts competition called “Richmond Writes! Poetry Contest,” organized by the Richmond Arts & Culture Commission. Student winners had the opportunity to read their work alongside the city's poet laureates at a local café.

Despite the ideological battles and social inequalities that absolutely exist in Richmond, Lipton told J. that he wants the poet laureate program to inspire diverse generations to share their stories and help the city heal.

“We are trying to make it so that they can have a place to express themselves and see themselves represented,” said Lipton.

“My voice is a voice, but there are others.” ■

A revealing desert seder for the gorgeous ladies of 'GLOW'

TV | ESTHER D. KUSTANOWITZ | J. CORRESPONDENT

"GLOW," the fictional series based on the real lives of the "Gorgeous Ladies of Wrestling," continues to delight with inventive character turns, exploration of cultural stereotypes and pushing at the boundaries of good taste.

It is a show-within-a-show, set in the 1980s, with a large ensemble cast. The first season featured Ruth (Alison Brie) attending the adult circumcision of a young man who had emigrated from the Soviet Union. If there were Jewy moments in Season 2,

I don't remember them. But the current season, just released on Netflix, takes another celebrated Jewish ritual and uses it as a space for character exploration and conflict resolution.

In the Season 3 opener, the women are considering whether their Las Vegas show — and the opening-night party, which unfortunately is space-themed — must go on in the aftermath of the space shuttle Challenger explosion. The Vegas show

becomes a hit; toward the end of its three-month run, the group members decide to shake things up by shuffling the characters they play in the ring.

Tammé (Kia Stevens), secretly suffering from a serious back injury, swaps with another wrestler who plays an old lady and uses a walker. Ruth switches her trademark Soviet caricature Zoya with Debbie Eagan's (Betty Gilpin) hyperpatriotic Liberty Belle. Melanie Rosen (Jackie Tohn), aka Melrose, swaps her party girl persona for Fortune Cookie, originally played by Jenny (Ellen Wong), who is Cambodian American. Jenny resented the stereotypes of her character even when she was playing it herself, but when Melrose assumes the Fortune Cookie role, amping up the racism ("I fly you like lice"), Jenny gets upset, saying it's different when a white girl is invoking the racist stereotypes.

It's challenging with such a big cast to give so many characters their due, but co-creators Liz Flahive and Carly Mensch pull it off, in the grand tradition established by Jenji Kohan, executive producer of "Orange Is the New Black."

This season, we get deeper glimpses of "GLOW's" more minor characters. When Jenny goes to Debbie, now a producer, and asks for a salary increase because she's also been doing the costumes, it's a moment that can inspire those of us who deserve more than we're getting. We also get more information about what makes Melrose tick, and spoiler alert: She's got some Jewish baggage.

When the women go out into the desert overnight, staying at Red Rock Canyon, tensions emerge. They're on a journey. They're in the desert. So Melrose suggests they do a Passover seder.

One character points out a similarity between Pharaoh, "a power-hungry dictator who was terrified of losing his slaves," and Bash, the show's producer and the women's boss. Melrose — as played by Tohn, who is Jewish — recites the Ten Plagues, dipping her finger into her tin cup of wine, starting at *dever* (often translated as pestilence), and Tohn really sells it with her pronunciation of *hoshech* (darkness). She tells the story of the Exodus, the origin of matzah and the four children.

Melrose says she identifies with the wicked child and launches into a comedic monologue about her family's belief that she's a bad Jew; Jenny accuses Melrose of using the seder as an excuse to talk about herself. Melrose says it's a parable about freedom,



(From left) Rebekka Johnson as Dawn, Jackie Tohn as Melrose and Kia Stevens as Tammé in "GLOW" (Photo/Courtesy Netflix-Ali Goldstein)

and Arthie (Sunita Mani), an Indian American woman, says, "It's about the immigrant experience, right? How the first generation wanders the desert and then the Promised Land is for their children." Another says it's about Jewish slaves "from like a bajillion years ago," leading Melrose to snap back: "Trauma and mass oppression are still a pretty recent thing for my people. Anyone ever hear of a little thing called the Holocaust?"

In fact, Tohn has family members who were killed in the Holocaust, including her Aunt Pestel, who was written into the script. (See an interview with Tohn about her Jewish family and the seder scene at tinyurl.com/jta-tohn-glowseder.)

As things get real at the seder, another teammate, Cherry Bang, suggests they call it a night. "Oh, just jokes, huh?" Melrose says. "Not really get into the trauma that's behind all the shit we don't want to talk about?" She tells them about her relatives who died in Treblinka, and her dad who "won't live in a house without a basement or an attic in case we have to hide again."

"We hid on a boat," Jenny says, revealing for the first time that while she, her father and uncle managed to get on one of the last flights out of Cambodia. "Everyone else we knew died... So I know what it's like to survive a genocide and not talk about it all the time." She understands how lucky she is, but "now I'm jumping out of a fortune cookie every night pretending everything's fine." Melrose apologizes and hugs her, and everyone else joins the group embrace.

This scene in Season 3 positions the seder — with its themes of Exodus, slavery and redemption, of immigrants escaping persecution seeking a better life — as the inciting incident that reveals traumatic stories hidden away beneath jokes and silence.

Toward the end of the 10-episode season, post-Exodus, some characters' paths are diverging. With so many characters, there is no one Promised Land they can wander toward together. But since the use of Jewish ritual here proves very effective at exploring the deeper moments of character backstory, can we suggest a Yom Kippur theme for Season 4? Confession would be a great motif for so many people living with so many secrets. Just a thought. ■

The New York Times, A.O. SCOTT
"SHARP-EYED AND FUNNY"

Los Angeles Times, KENNETH TURAN
"DELIGHTFUL! DELICIOUSLY WALKS A FINE COMEDIC LINE. A COMPLETE TREAT TO EXPERIENCE."

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No time for a summer tome? Try these short stories

OFF THE SHELF HOWARD FREEDMAN



Howard Freedman is the director of the Jewish Community Library, a project of Jewish LearningWorks, in San Francisco. All books mentioned in this column may be borrowed from the library.

With autumn approaching, some of us find the idea of “summer reading” more aspirational than real. Indeed, it can be difficult to set aside the time for the novels we wish to tackle.

Enter the glory of short stories, which can provide us with powerful reading experiences that don't require us to carve as much time from the rest of our lives.

Etgar Keret's new collection of stories, “Fly Already,” has been anticipated with excitement, for it has been more than six years since the publication of his last collection of fiction. That's a long time for those who regard the idiosyncratic Israeli author as a source of guidance for absurd times.

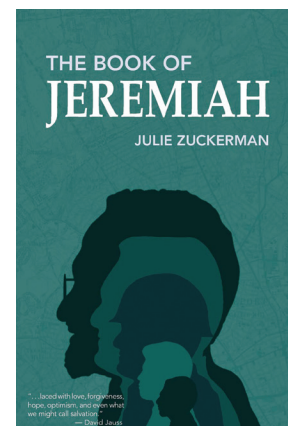
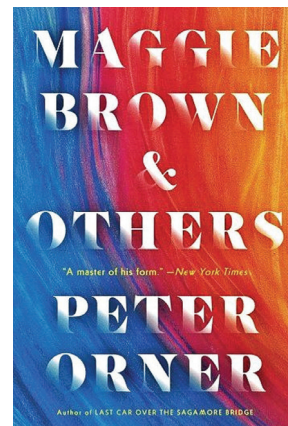
Fans of Keret know to expect brevity, cleverness and an especially Israeli gallows humor from his writing. But “Fly Already” also carries a striking tenderness. I don't know whether it reflects Keret's aging or my aging, but I felt more emotionally affected by a number of the stories here

than I had by his earlier works.

The opening story establishes the stakes. The narrator is walking with his young son when they see a man standing on the ledge of a building. Convinced that he is witnessing someone blessed with superpowers, the son encourages the man to take flight. But the narrator, who is himself still healing from tragedy, grabs the boy and darts up the building's staircase to attempt to save the man from himself. Anyone versed in Keret's work knows that it's unlikely to turn out rosy, but it's a tale that carries measures of both tragedy and hope.

There are other poignant tales, including one about young siblings who are convinced that their otherwise absent father has transformed into a rabbit; and a long piece about an unambitious young man who is paid by a stressed attorney to show up daily at sunset to smoke marijuana with her.

Keret's stories have developed a strong international following (they have been translated into more than 40 languages) partly because of their universality, but they are sometimes quite insightful about Israel. A case in point is an email exchange, interspersed serially among other stories, between the manager of an escape room in an Israeli mall and a man who is looking for an activity for his mother, a Holocaust survivor, on Yom HaShoah. As the two correspondents compete for higher ground in the scale of familial suffering, Keret exposes a particularly Israeli pathology.



Peter Orner has been an especially important figure in the Bay Area literary world, both as an author and as a professor at San Francisco State University. Many people felt a sense of loss when he left last year to take a post at Dartmouth College.

With his new collection, “Maggie Brown & Others,” Orner continues to specialize in the very short story that goes deep. A tremendous observer, he creates memorable characters in concentrated strokes, zeroing in on their loneliness, their fraught relationships to the past or other consequences of being human.

The stories here are presented in suites, tied loosely to each other by geography or theme. But there is also a welcome haphazardness to their being bundled together: By the end of the book, we have come to know and care about characters whose lives have little in common with one another's beyond the meaning Orner has found in them.

If the book lacks the pronounced Jewish dimension of Orner's debut, “Esther Stories,” that changes with its concluding novella, “Walt Kaplan Is Broke.”

Set in the declining Jewish community of the declining city of Fall River, Massachusetts, it is, like the rest of the book, a

series of smaller stories (some less than a page in length). Set across time, they offer different lenses on Kaplan, a failed furniture dealer who has appeared as a character in a few of Orner's earlier stories, and the people in his life. It's a wonderfully compassionate piece of writing.

Much like Orner's novella composed of parts, Julie Zuckerman's debut, “The Book of Jeremiah,” is billed as “a novel in stories,” revolving around the life of college professor Jeremiah Gerstler. Like Orner, Zuckerman, a U.S.-born writer now living in Israel, seeks to elevate the lives of everyday people. Jeremiah is not the sort that one would expect to be at the center of a literary work, and that's part of the book's charm. In fact, it got me thinking about how I'd envision the book of my own life. Some of us may have lives like plot-driven novels, but I suspect that most of us are a collection of stories. ■

“Fly Already” by Etgar Keret (224 pages, Riverhead)

“Maggie Brown & Others” by Peter Orner (336 pages, Little, Brown and Company)

“The Book of Jeremiah: A Novel in Stories” by Julie Zuckerman (202 pages, Press 53)

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TALKS & WORKSHOPS

SUNDAY | August 25

"HANDS-ON MUSIC AND MEZZE"—Cookbook author Leah Koenig leads a drop-in Middle Eastern Jewish cooking class from 1-2 p.m. Followed by music from Yoshie Fruchter's Sandcatchers. At JCC East Bay-Berkeley, 1414 Walnut St., Berkeley. 1-3:30 p.m. \$10-\$15. tinyurl.com/jccestbay-cooking-music

TUESDAY | August 27

J. STREET ISRAEL DISCUSSION—Tomer Persico, Koret visiting assistant professor at UC Berkeley, leads a talk on Israeli society, the two-state solution and the upcoming election. At Osher Marin JCC, 200 N. San Pedro Road, San Rafael. 7 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/israeltalk-persico

COOKING CLASS—Learn how to make tomato and spinach shakshuka, borekas, baba ganoush and Israeli pickles with Holy Land Restaurant's owner Miri Levy. 7:15-8:45 p.m. \$40. At Holy Land Restaurant, 677 Rand Avenue, Oakland. tinyurl.com/holyland-restaurant

TUESDAY | September 3

"CREATIVE AGING: DANCE FOR LIFE"—Class to help maintain movement and avoiding degenerative disease. In conjunction with Free First Tuesdays. At Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission St., S.F. 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/dance-aging

FRIDAY | September 6

KABBALAH POETRY—Rabbi Dorothy Richman of Makor Or: Jewish Meditation Center gives a gallery talk about Judaism's mystical strain, in conjunction with Annabeth Rosen

exhibit. At Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission St., S.F. 12:30-1 p.m. Free with admission. thejcm.org/programs/534

SUNDAY | September 8

ISRAEL AND U.S. JEWS DISCUSSION—Rabbi Amitai Fraiman of Z3 Initiative at Palo Alto JCC looks at understanding and ties between U.S. Jews and Israel. At Congregation Netivot Shalom, 1316 University Ave., Berkeley. 10 a.m. Free. More information ddorenz@gmail.com

MONDAY | September 9

"SECURITY IN HOUSES OF WORSHIP"—Workshop on security measures for faith-based organizations. Hosted by S.F. Interfaith Council in collaboration with ADL, JCRC and other organizations. At St. Mary's Cathedral, 1111 Gough St., S.F. 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/security-interfaith

TUESDAY | September 10

S.F. DISTRICT ATTORNEY CANDIDATES—In a forum hosted by JCRC, candidates Chesa Boudin, Nancy Tung, Leif Dautch and Suzy Loftus square off. At Jewish Community High School of the Bay, 1835 Ellis St., S.F. 7-9 p.m. Free, but RSVP required. tinyurl.com/sfforum-jcrc

THURSDAY | September 12

"THE THIRD WAVE"—A 10-week course for teens 14 to 17 based on a social experiment in the 1960s that asked questions like: How could the Holocaust happen? How could a nation commit such heinous crimes? Culminates in a play and discussion. At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 6-8:30 p.m. \$360-\$380. tinyurl.com/third-wavetheater

BENEFITS & SOCIAL EVENTS

FRIDAY | August 23

TU B'AV CELEBRATION—Live music, dancing and dinner in celebration of the Jewish holiday of love. At Oshman Family JCC's Pavilion and Park, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 5:30-7:30 p.m. \$9-\$18, \$48 for two adults and kids; 2 and under free. tinyurl.com/tubav-oshman

SATURDAY | August 24

"TACOS, MARGS & PING PONG"—A benefit party for the Oshman Family JCC includes a ping pong tournament with tacos and margaritas. 21 and over. Los Altos location given with RSVP. 7-11 p.m. \$150. tinyurl.com/ofjcc-margs

"LOVE, LIFE AND TORAH"—Sing-along with musician and song leader Bruce Fager and palindrome master Alan Wald. At Congregation B'nai Emunah, 3595 Taraval St., S.F. 7-9 p.m. Free. RSVP required. tinyurl.com/lovelife-torah

SUNDAY | August 25

JEWISH FOOD FESTIVAL—Congregation Beth Israel hosts Jewish culinary celebration with corned beef, pastrami, latkes, matzah ball soup and more for sale. Plus music, arts and crafts. At Congregation Beth Israel, 5716 Carmel Valley Road, Carmel. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free admission. tinyurl.com/carmel-festival

"BENEFIT FOR PRISON REFORM"—The Qirvah Community in Oakland will perform sacred Jewish and Sufi music along with a speech by formerly incarcerated inmate Michael Brodheim. At Qirvah Community, 1635 Tacoma Ave., Berkeley. 4 p.m. \$20. tinyurl.com/qirvah-reform

THURSDAY | September 5

"MEGA CHALLAH BAKE"—Chabad of Contra Costa's fifth annual night of connecting, sharing and kneading for girls and women 12 and older. RSVP required. At Lafayette Veterans Memorial Center, 3780 Mt. Diablo Blvd., Lafayette. 6:30 p.m. \$18. tinyurl.com/challah-class

SATURDAY | September 7

"A NIGHT IN BOLLYWOOD"—A benefit party for the Oshman Family JCC features a Bollywood theme, with Indian food and music. 21 and over. Location in Menlo Park given with RSVP. 7:30-11 p.m. \$150. tinyurl.com/ofjcc-bollywood

SUNDAY | September 8

JEWISH COMMUNITY FREE CLINIC ANNIVERSARY—Santa Rosa non-profit celebrates 18 years with food, local wine and beer, yoga, face-painting and music by folk band T Sisters. Food and non-alcoholic drinks included. At Shone Farm, 7450 Steve Olson Lane, Forestville. 2-6 p.m. \$36-\$72; under 12 free. tinyurl.com/jcfc-celebration

ON STAGE

SUNDAY | September 8

PIANO RECITAL—Acclaimed Soviet-born Israeli American pianist Yefim Bronfman performs in celebration of Russian conductor Yuri Temirkanov's 80th birthday. At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 7:30 p.m. \$55-\$150, \$250 premium seats include reception. tinyurl.com/yefim-bronfman

FILM & TV

SUNDAY | August 25

MOVIE NIGHT—"Heading Home," a documentary about the Israeli national baseball team playing in the 2017 World Baseball Classic. At Congregation Beth David, 19700 Prospect Road, Saratoga. 7-9 p.m. \$5. RSVP required. tinyurl.com/movie-baseballisrael

THURSDAY | September 12

"PERSONA NON GRATA"—Dramabioptic about Japanese diplomat Chiune Sugihara, who saved thousands of Jews during the Holocaust. 139 minutes; in Japanese and English, with English subtitles. With director, plus ambassadors from Japan, Israel. At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 6-9:30 p.m. \$10-\$20. tinyurl.com/persona-screening



Jewish music to your heart's content

With paintings of an old Jewish town in Poland projected behind her, Cantor Sharon Bernstein will play the piano and sing in "Yiddish Songs at an Exhibition," the opener of Sonoma State University's fifth annual Jewish Music Series. Five additional free, 90-minute concerts — featuring klezmer, jazz, Armenian lullabies and other styles — will be held through Nov. 21.

6:30 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 5 at Schroeder Hall, Green Music Center, Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park. Free. tinyurl.com/ssu-jms2019

August 23- September 12

Calendar

For more listings see jweekly.com/calendar



ART

MONDAY | August 26

"ART AND ALZHEIMER'S TOUR"—Guided museum tour of Annabeth Rosen exhibit for those with early stage Alzheimer's. Includes art-making, storytelling and poetry. At Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission St., S.F. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. RSVP required. thejcj.org/programs/529

TUESDAY | August 27

"CHAD GADYO' AT 100"—Opening of exhibit showcasing a rare copy of Russian artist El Lissitzky's century-old illustrated version of the Passover song. On display through May 2020. At the Magnes, 2121 Allston Way, Berkeley. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. magnes.berkeley.edu

"SOUVENIRS FROM UTOPIA"—Opening of exhibit of Jewish art from Jerusalem between 1906 and 1932. Through May 2020. At the Magnes, 2121 Allston Way, Berkeley. 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. magnes.berkeley.edu

WEDNESDAY | September 11

ART LECTURE—Rabbi Batshir Torchio leads a discussion about "Judith Beheading Holofernes," a European painting theme inspired by the Old Testament's Book of Judith. At JCCSF, 3200 California St., S.F. 1-2 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/judith-painting

ONGOING

CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MUSEUM 736 Mission St., S.F.
"Fired, Broken, Gathered, Heaped"—20 years of Annabeth Rosen's work in ceramics. Through Jan. 19, 2020. **"Peristyle"**—Site-specific installation-performance by Oakland-based artist Izidora Leber LETHE that explores the Yugoslavian-born artist's diaspora experiences. Through Jan. 19, 2020. **"Tonight the World"**—Interactive exhibit by Daria Martin explores her survivor grandmother's memories. Through Feb. 9, 2020. **"In That Case: Havruta in Contemporary Art"**—Visual exhibit by Oxossi Ayofemi and Stanford physicist Risa Wechsler. Through Jan. 14, 2020. thejcj.org

JEWISH HERITAGE MUSEUM AT THE REUTLINGER COMMUNITY 4000 Camino Tassajara, Danville
"Israeli Street Life: Through the Lens of Dick Hyman"—Photos from Israel. Concurrent exhibit with the museum's Jewish artifacts, "A Visit to the Holy Land." Through Oct. 31. rcj.org/jewish-heritage-museum

OSHER MARIN JCC 200 N. San Pedro Road, San Rafael
"The Spaces Between"—Site-specific mural by Israeli artists Maya Gelfman and Roie Avidan, plus photos of their "Mind the Heart!" global art project. Ends Aug. 25.

HOLIDAYS & SPIRITUAL

FRIDAY | August 23

"MIZRACHI MYSTICAL SHABBAT"—Composer-musician Yuval Ron and his drummer present a service with Mizrahi music and storytelling. At Congregation Shir Hadash, 20 Cherry Blossom Lane, Los Gatos. 7:30-8:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/sh-shabbat

"OPEN DOOR SHABBAT"—San Francisco Interfaith Council and Grace Cathedral partner with Emanu-El to host Yemeni refugee and "The Fox Hunt" memoirist Mohammed Al Samawi. At Congregation Emanu-El, 2 Lake St., S.F. 5:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/opendoor-samawi

SUNDAY | August 25

TALMUD AND ZOHAR—Lehrhaus educator Rabbi Peretz Wolf-Prusian and Zohar scholar Daniel Matt discuss why these two religious texts are relevant today. At Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis St., S.F. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/talmud-zohar

TUESDAY | September 3

"SURVIVING CRISIS"—Maggid Jhos Singer teaches a Jewishly infused course on how to survive, and thrive, in the face of disappointment, catastrophe, etc. At Chochmat HaLev, 2215 Prince St., Berkeley. 7-9 p.m. \$5-\$15. tinyurl.com/crash-survive

THURSDAY | September 5

"KABBALAH AND CREATIVITY"—Historian Yosef Rosen discusses the Kabbalistic theory of embracing the ideas of breaking and repairing in the creative process. **Also**

Sept. 12 and 19. At Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission St., S.F. 5:30-7 p.m. \$36-\$90. tinyurl.com/yosef-rosen

FRIDAY | September 6

"BLUE JEANS SHABBAT"—Buy your dinner from a food truck, followed by a casual service. At Congregation Shir Hadash, 20 Cherry Blossom Lane, Los Gatos. 5:30 p.m. dinner, 7 p.m. service. Free. tinyurl.com/shabbat-foodtruck

SATURDAY | September 7

"SOULFUL SHABBAT"—Morning service led by teacher-musician Arik Labowitz with singing, dancing and Torah reading. Bring vegetarian potluck dish to share. At Urban Adamah, 1151 Sixth St., Berkeley. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/shabbat-soul

MONDAY | September 9

"MINDFUL MEDITATION"—Four-week course, steeped in Jewish wisdom, to help get ready for the High Holidays. Also Sept. 15, 23 and Oct. 7. At Osher Marin JCC, 200 N. San Pedro Road, San Rafael. 1-2:30 p.m. Free; RSVP required. tinyurl.com/meditation-highholidays

WEDNESDAY | September 11

"ELUL DAY OF REFLECTION"—Educator Rachel Brodie and artist Adina Polen lead a Jewish Learning-Works event during the month for reflection before High Holidays. At Google Community Space, 188 The Embarcadero, S.F. 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. \$36 half day; \$72 full day. tinyurl.com/shul-reflection

BOOKS

WEDNESDAY | August 28

"THE CHINESE AND THE IRON ROAD"—Gordon H. Chang and Shelley Fisher Fishkin discuss their new book, subtitled "Building the Intercontinental Railroad." At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 7 p.m. \$15-\$20, \$30 includes book. tinyurl.com/railroad-chang-fishkin

THURSDAY | August 29

"ON GOD'S RADAR"—Author and theologian Robert Schoen reads from and discusses his book about his walk across America. At A Great Good Place For Books, 6120 La Salle Ave., Oakland. 7 p.m. Free. ggpbooks.com/event

THURSDAY | September 5

"REFUGEES IN AMERICA"—Rabbi Lee Bycel discusses his new book about refugees, the hardships they survived and how they adjusted to life in the U.S. At Ocean View Lodge, 526 Main St., Half Moon

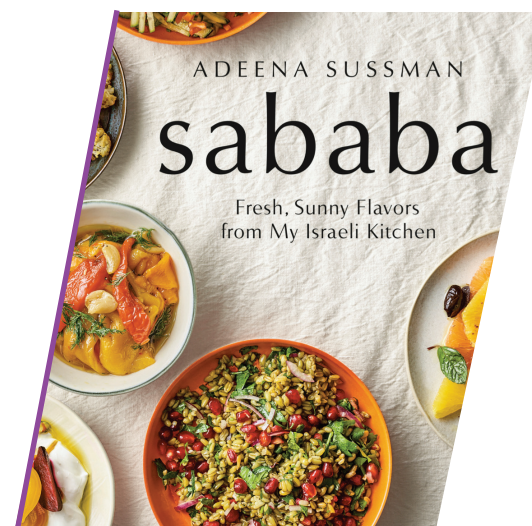
Bay. 7 p.m. **Also Tuesday, Sept. 10.** At Fromm Hall at University of San Francisco, 2497 Golden Gate Ave. 6:30 p.m. Free. refugeesinamerica.com

SATURDAY | September 7

"NEWCOMERS IN AN ANCIENT LAND"—East Bay resident Paula Wagner discusses her new book about leaving home at 18 to live in Israel in the 1960s. At Book Passage, 51 Tamal Vista Blvd., Corte Madera. 4 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/paula-wagner

TUESDAY | September 10

"GONZO JUDAISM"—Rabbi Niles Goldstein of Beth Shalom in Napa, and founder of New Shul in New York City, discusses his book about combating out-of-touch Jewish institutions with bold, new visions for the future. At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 7:30-9 p.m. \$15-\$18, includes book. tinyurl.com/gonzo-judaism



(Photo/Courtesy Penguin Random House)

Sunny Israeli food

It's probably a good idea not to come to this event hungry — food writer and recipe developer Adeena Sussman will be describing some of the tantalizing recipes in her new cookbook "Sababa: Fresh, Sunny Flavors from My Israeli Kitchen," which celebrates the bold flavors of Israeli cooking. Sussman will be in conversation with J. food columnist Alix Wall.

"An Evening with Cookbook Author Adeena Sussman," Tuesday, Sept. 10 at Oshman Family JCC. 7:30 p.m. \$30, includes copy of book. tinyurl.com/adeena-cook

KIDS & FAMILY

FRIDAY | August 23

"SHABBAT SHA-BOOGIE"—Includes music, dancing and stories, with light dinner and dessert. For families with children in third grade or younger. At Congregation Shomrei Torah, 2600 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa. 5:15-6:15 p.m. Free; RSVP required. tinyurl.com/shaboogie

SATURDAY | August 31

"SHABBAT AT THE BEACH"—Cantor David Frommer leads a morning Shabbat service for families. Kosher snacks provided. Meet at West Bluff picnic area near Warming Hut. At Crissy Field, S.F. 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/beach-shabbat

Beat the D'backs!

Need something to cheer about? Attend the San Francisco Giants' Jewish Heritage Night, when the team faces the Arizona Diamondbacks on Aug. 27. Each special ticket includes a Jewish Heritage Night T-shirt and admission to a pre-game party featuring live entertainment, food and drink, and the chance to decorate your own rally schmatta.

S.F. Giants' Jewish Heritage Night, Tuesday, Aug. 27 at Oracle Park. 6:45 p.m. \$15 and up. tinyurl.com/j-giants19

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JEWISH CALENDAR | SHABBAT

August 23, 2019 | Av 22, 5779
 Light candles at 7:34 p.m.
 Shabbat ends at 8:31 p.m.

August 30, 2019 | Av 29, 5779
 Light candles at 7:24 p.m.
 Shabbat ends at 8:21 p.m.

September 6, 2019 | Elul 6, 5779
 Light candles at 7:13 p.m.
 Shabbat ends at 8:10 p.m.

The Torah column is supported by a generous donation from Eve Gordon-Ramek

In these trying times, what are we to do? Here's one answer

TORAH | RABBI AMY EILBERG

Eikev
Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25
Isaiah 49:14-51:3

"These are the times that try men's souls." Those powerful words were written by Thomas Paine during our nation's first existential crisis. The times in which we live may not be quite as perilous as those first days of our nation's history, but many of us feel that we live in a society in rapid decline, beset by a crisis of leadership, law, character and communication.

We witness rifts in the social fabric more serious than any in the last 50 years, if not longer.

Navigating these times with wisdom and awareness is immensely challenging.

How do we balance our need to be well informed with the toxicity of consuming news? When do we engage in advocacy on issues of fundamental importance and when do we listen to those with views different from our own? When do we indulge our anger and fear about the state of our country and its future, and when do we cultivate equanimity and hope to sustain ourselves for the work ahead?

This week's parashah brings us teachings with remarkable resonance for these daily struggles.

In Moshe's address to the people, we find the following luminous statement: "And now, O Israel, what does Adonai your God ask of you? Only this: to fear Adonai your God, to walk only in God's paths, to love God, and to serve Adonai your God with all your heart and soul." (Deut. 10:12)



Rabbi Amy Eilberg serves as the coordinator of Jewish Community Engagement at Faith in Action Bay Area. She can be reached at rebamy@eilberg.com.



"Walk only in God's paths," says this week's Torah portion. (Photo/Pixabay)

If we read this exhortation carefully, we find a beautiful summary of Jewish religious practice. First a view of a relationship in which God invites us to listen and respond with committed action. Then the central importance of reverence for our Creator, for a life spent emulating God's ways of being, and the centrality of love. And perhaps most of all, a life of whole-hearted service to God and to Life.

Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev is intrigued by the question that begins this passage: "What does Adonai your God ask of you?"

The question evokes his awareness of our radical limitation and dependence on forces beyond our control, by comparison with the infinity of God. If God called out and said, "Here is what I ask of you!" your response might be awestruck silence and self-doubt. (Most of the prophets responded this way when first approached by God.)

The answer to the question, it seems, should be to prostrate ourselves before the grandeur of God (as we do during the High Holy Days).

But as the verses continue, it is clear that there is much for us to do. We must arise from our posture of humility in order to practice reverence and transformative love, to emulate God's ways and to spend our lives in service with courage and vigor.

Levi Yitzhak senses a tension. We are human, and so we are to be humble, aware of how small a part of the universe we are. Yet the practices in these verses require boldness and audacity. To act in the world, to practice love when we may be mocked for doing so, we must believe that living in this way will make a difference. To engage in deeds of service, we must believe in our own power and efficacy, stepping up to right wrongs, working for change, striving to correct that which is broken in our world.

We must believe that, in living this way, we are acting in response to the highest call. We cannot do any of these things sitting at home contemplating how small and insignificant we are! These deeds require us to step up and step out into the world, expressing the divine as best we can.

Levi Yitzhak brings us a powerful piece of wisdom, essential for the times in which we live.

Our practice in these difficult times includes contrasting traits. We must be bold, confident and hopeful as we join hands with others to speak out and fight for what is right. And, on the other hand, we must also cultivate humility. Humility requires that we open ourselves to the wisdom of others (including those with whom we profoundly disagree).

It also involves remembering that we can only do the part of the work that is ours to do, leaving the rest to others and to the One.

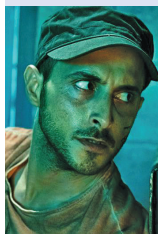
Either way — cultivating our sense of efficacy or remembering how limited we are — we are seeking to live more fully in the presence of the Divine. ■

CELEBRITY JEWS

WORTH CHECKING OUT

I'm four episodes into "The Boys" on Amazon Prime, and so far it's very good. Critical reviews for the eight-episode series, which dropped on July 26, are mostly favorable, and a second season has been ordered. (By the way, don't confuse "The Boys" with the current HBO offering "Our Boys," a limited series filmed in Israel, in Hebrew and Arabic, about the kidnapping of three Israeli boys in 2014.)

The premise is that people with superpowers pop up around the U.S. and are recruited by a corporation to foil crimes, while at the same time the corporation heavily markets them for big bucks



Tomer Capon

(cereal boxes, action figures, reality TV shows, etc.). The corporation keeps hidden that these superheroes are not saints and sometimes do bad things. **Eric Kripke**, 45, who created the TV series "Supernatural" and "Revolution," is one of the series' creators and wrote the first two episodes. The first episode is directed by **Dan Trachtenberg**, 38. **Seth Rogen**, 39, and **Evan Goldberg**, 39, are executive producers.

Jack Quaid, son of Meg Ryan and Dennis Quaid, plays hero Hughie; Karl Urban plays mysterious tough guy Butcher; and Israeli actor **Tomer Capon**, 34, plays Frenchie, who is skilled in munitions, ordnance, infiltration and communications. You might know Capon for his portrayal of an Israeli soldier in "Fauda" and an Israeli ex-commando in "When Heroes Fly" — two Israeli series on Netflix. Capon's service in the Israel Defense Forces included being a squad commander in the Paratroopers Brigade, an elite unit.

AT THE MOVIES

"Angel Has Fallen," which opens on Friday, Aug. 23, stars Gerard Butler as a Secret Service agent who is framed for the attempted assassination of the president. The vice president is portrayed by **Tim Blake Nelson**, 55, who starred as Buster Scruggs in the 2018 Netflix offering "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs."

"Ready or Not," which also opens Friday, Aug. 23, follows a young bride (Samara Weaving) as she joins her new husband's rich, eccentric family — portrayed by **Adam Brody**, 39, Henry Czerny and Andie MacDowell. T Brody is still best known for his work on "The O.C.," a teen/young adult primetime soap opera that ran from 2003 to 2007.

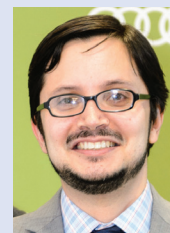


Tim Blake Nelson

LOOKING BACK AT ROBIN WILLIAMS

Has it really been five years since Robin Williams' suicide on Aug. 11, 2014? When he was 16, Robin's family moved to Tiburon and he graduated from Redwood High School in Larkspur. He honed his comedy chops on the streets and in the comedy clubs of San Francisco, and at the time of his death he was living in the city's Sea Cliff neighborhood.

In the 2018 Williams biography "Robin" by **Dave Itzkoff**, 43, there's a section devoted to the 1999 film "Jakob the Liar," in which Williams played a Jew. Itzkoff summed up Williams' connection to the Jewish community: "There might seem to be little common ground shared by an impoverished Holocaust victim [Jakob] and the Episcopalian son [Williams] of a wealthy Midwestern auto executive. But in his mind, Robin could justify it: He had grown up around Jews, worked with them and embraced them as some of his closest friends; he liked to boast that he knew so much Yiddish, 'people tend to think I'm Jewish.' He was fascinated with the otherness of Jews, admired them for their tenacity, and was furious with how they'd been treated."



Dave Itzkoff

Columnist Nate Bloom, an Oaklander, can be reached at middleoftheroad1@aol.com.

Israeli cookbook showcases country's culture through its surprising flavors

THE ORGANIC EPICURE | ALIX WALL

Alix Wall is a contributing editor to J. She is also the founder of the Illuminosh: The Not-So-Secret Society of Bay Area Jewish Food Professionals.



For those who already have Yotam Ottolenghi and Sami Tamimi's "Jerusalem" on their shelves, along with Einat Admony's "Balaboosta" and Michael Solomonov and Steven Cook's "Zahav" and "Israeli Soul" — well, one might ask, is there really a need for another Israeli cookbook?

In the case of Adeena Sussman's "Sababa: Fresh, Sunny Flavors from My Israeli Kitchen," the answer is a resounding "yes."

Even Solomonov says so himself, in the foreword: "The pages of this book ooze with her passion for the romance and beauty of Israeli cuisine ... She is Israeli by choice, and in that I think she has a unique perspective on what is special about this culture and cuisine."

Israelis are taking notice, too. In a recent phone conversation, Sussman said that much to her delight and surprise, a few Israeli press outlets had contacted her. She assumed they'd have no interest in what an American immigrant had to say about their cuisine.

Sussman was raised in an Orthodox home in Palo Alto. When Sabbath-observant visitors came to town and were looking for a place they could eat a kosher Shabbos dinner, it was often her parents, Stan and Stephanie Sussman, who offered to host.

"Food was always something that was around, obviously to nourish but also to entertain and make people feel at home," Sussman said from Tel Aviv. "The food I grew up eating was delicious but very homestyle. My mom worked full time, but we did have a lot of guests, and so my mom kept the food simple and streamlined but really delicious."

It's a style that Sussman often emulates. While her mom would roast a chicken rubbed with paprika, onion and garlic powder, Sussman's Israeli version is rubbed with za'atar, served over sumac-tossed potatoes.

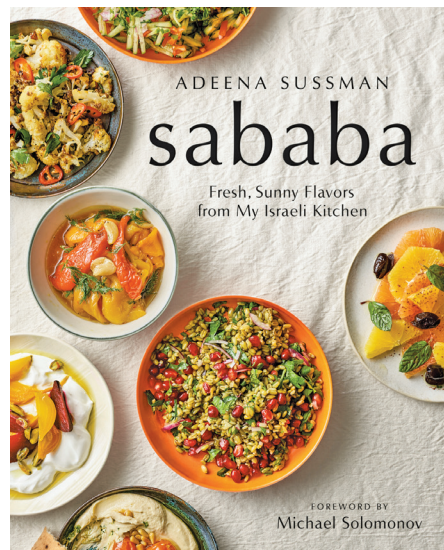
"It's simultaneously very homey and very yummy, but adding an element of

surprise," she said.

Sussman spent five years living in Jerusalem in her 20s, when she left to join the culinary industry in New York. She had a suspicion that she might return some day.

"Having grown up in a religious Zionist household, that love of Israel never left me," she said. "But the way I approached that love and the place definitely changed in interesting ways." Even though by her 20s she was no longer observant, "I still understand why people love to go to the Kotel. But Mahane Yehuda [open-air market] is my spiritual home in Jerusalem."

In a nod to her heritage and in memory



of her mother, Sussman made "Sababa" a kosher cookbook. It also allows her sister, Sharon, to cook from it. (For many years, the sisters did a Thanksgiving pie fundraiser for ovarian cancer prevention in honor of their mother, who died in 2006; it was the topic of this column in 2013).

She did return to Israel in 2015 after she met her now-husband, Jay, an American expat who has made Tel Aviv home for years, and she split her time between Israel and New York for the next few years. By then Sussman had already co-authored 11 cookbooks, including two that made the New York Times bestseller list: "Cravings: Hungry for More" with model and actress Chrissy Teigen. In between cookbooks, Sussman had long followed and written about the constant evolution of Israeli cuisine, authoring one cookbook about tahini and the myriad ways it can be used.

She said the hardest part of writing "Sababa" was relearning how to write in her own voice, since she was so used to writing

in the voices of her coauthors.

When she decided to make the permanent move to Tel Aviv in 2018, it was her literary agent who suggested she write an Israeli cookbook. It wasn't a tough sell, especially since she lives so close to the Shuk HaCarmel in Tel Aviv. She quickly became a regular at the market. "I guess you could say I came to Israel for love but stayed for the shuk," she writes.

On the other hand, she wondered whether she was legit enough to add to the growing canon of Israeli cookbooks — a matter, she joked, she could spend hours discussing in therapy.

"I was uncomfortable with being an interloper," she said. "But I had a sense of belonging very quickly. I embraced the Carmel Market and it embraced me. What ended up working the best was allowing myself the platform to have my cooking be the star, even though it's been influenced by other cuisines."

That describes her recipe for Israeli street corn — Mexican street corn gone Israeli. Za'atar, labneh and feta are substituted for the chili powder, crema and Cotija (see recipe with this column online). And her tahini caramel tart, garnished with labneh whipped cream, is "the Gal Gadot of tarts," she said.

Sussman will talk about "Sababa" in several Bay Area appearances in the next month. On Sept. 8, she'll be at Omnivore Books in San Francisco at 3 p.m. (free). On Sept. 10, she'll be at the Contemporary Jewish Museum at 12 p.m. (included with admission) and the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto at 7:30 p.m., interviewed by me (\$30 entrance fee includes a book). She'll also appear with fellow cookbook authors Einat Admony and Leah Koenig in an evening called "A New Year of New Jewish Flavors" at the JCCSF on Sept. 19 at 7 p.m. (\$30).

SMALL BITE: Erin Gleeson, whose "Forest Feast" cookbook series combines her nature-based photography with simple recipes, has a new book inspired by her family's travels in Europe. "The Forest Feast Mediterranean" features vegetarian recipes inspired by Portugal, Spain and France. Gleeson will be appearing at public and private events through October, including at Omnivore Books in San Francisco on Sept. 14 and Emily Joubert in Woodside on Sept. 21. See full list at theforestfeast.com/cookbook. ■

"Having grown up in a religious Zionist household, that love of Israel never left me."

Adeena Sussman



Adeena Sussman (above) and Israeli street corn from "Sababa" (Photo/Courtesy Penguin Random House)

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TOP 10 AMERICAN RESTAURANTS IN THE U.S. ~Gayot Guide

Try this tabbouleh salad on for size — extra large



COOKING FAITH KRAMER

What happens when you cross tabbouleh with an Israeli-style chopped vegetable salad and a green salad and top it with tahini-lemon dressing? You get A Very Large Salad perfect for entertaining — with options for adding feta cheese, chicken, fish or tofu to make the salad a meal.

On a smaller scale — but still packed with flavor — is the Cucumber and Radish Salad with Yogurt-Dill Sauce. The salad reflects Eastern European traditions and has the nip of horseradish in the sauce.

The cucumber salad is best if made in advance and chilled until cold. For A Very Large Salad, you'll need a very large mixing bowl. If that's not available, use a large soup pot and transfer it to a large serving bowl when assembled.

A VERY LARGE SALAD

Serves 8+ depending on serving size

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2½ cups cooked bulgur, couscous or quinoa (cooked to package directions) | ¼ cup ¼-inch pieces of Persian or English cucumber (unpeeled) |
| 3 cups baby spinach | ¾ cup fresh corn kernels (cut from corn on the cob) |
| 3 cups arugula | ¾ cup ¼-inch pieces of peeled carrot |
| 1½ cups thinly sliced green onions (scallions), white and light green sections only | 15½ oz. can chickpeas, rinsed and drained |
| ¾ cup chopped mint | 2 cups chopped tomato (cut into ¼-inch pieces), divided |
| 1½ cups chopped parsley | ½ tsp. salt |
| ¾ cup ¼-inch peeled jicama cubes | Optional toppings (see below) |
| ¾ cup ¼-inch yellow bell pepper pieces | Tahini-lemon dressing (see below) |
| ¾ cup ¼-inch red bell pepper pieces | |

Spread out cooked bulgur to cool to room temperature. (If cold, remove from refrigerator and allow to come to room temperature.)

Tear spinach and arugula leaves coarsely and put in a very large bowl. Add green onions, mint, parsley, jicama, yellow and red bell peppers, cucumber, corn, carrots and chickpeas. Toss thoroughly. Refrigerate if not serving immediately.

Just before serving, fluff and separate grain and toss thoroughly with vegetables. Add half of the tomatoes. Add salt. Toss thoroughly.

I normally pass the dressing and let folks dress their own salad to taste.

Optional toppings: Top individual servings with portions (about 3 oz.) of grilled chicken, fish or tofu. Or serve topped with slices of feta cheese.

Tahini-lemon dressing: Stir together until well blended 1 cup olive oil, ½ cup apple-cider vinegar, ¼ cup fresh lemon juice, 1 cup tahini and ½ cup cold water, 1 tsp. salt, ½ tsp. ground black pepper, ½ tsp. paprika, ½ tsp. crumbled dried mint and 1 Tbs. minced fresh garlic. Taste and adjust seasonings as needed. Store any leftover airtight in refrigerator.

CUCUMBER AND RADISH SALAD WITH YOGURT-DILL SAUCE

Serves 3 to 4

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 cups thinly sliced Persian or English cucumber (unpeeled) | ¾ cup thinly sliced green onions (scallions), white and light green parts only |
| ½ tsp. salt | ¼ tsp. ground black pepper |
| ⅛ tsp. sugar, optional | 3 Tbs. finely chopped dill, divided |
| ½ cup thinly sliced red radishes | Yogurt-dill sauce (see below) |

Place cucumber slices in medium large bowl. Sprinkle with salt. Let sit for a few minutes. Drain any liquid. Taste. Stir in sugar if bitter. Add radishes, green onions, black pepper and 2 Tbs. chopped dill. Toss well. Make sauce and stir in. Chill until cold or overnight. Taste and adjust seasonings if needed. Stir well. Garnish with remaining dill.

Yogurt-dill sauce: Stir together 3 Tbs. grapeseed oil or other neutral oil; 3 Tbs. distilled white vinegar; ½ cup plain, unflavored Greek-style yogurt; 1 Tbs. finely chopped fresh dill and ¼ tsp. salt. Stir in ¼ tsp. of jarred, prepared white horseradish. Taste. Add more horseradish and/or salt as desired. ■

Q&A: She nourishes people's minds with food for thought



Orly Jaffe enjoying the fruits of her labor.

FOOD | ALIX WALL

Orly Jaffe, 47, is the founder of Food Wine Speak, a new speakers' bureau for food and wine industry professionals. Her roster includes culinary historians, food and wine writers, cookbook authors, restaurateurs, artisan purveyors, vintners and brewers.

J.: You have an interesting Jewish background, so why don't we start with that?

ORLY JAFFE: My mother is a Holocaust survivor. My father's family moved to Israel from Egypt, but his family was from Turkey and Greece. I had a very diverse home food-wise as a first-generation American. I was the first kid to go to school with pita and hummus way before they were popular.

You pursued a career in marketing for high-tech firms before you switched gears to wine and food. What made you change your path?

Even though my first jobs were always in food, I didn't realize that I had an opportunity to pursue that vocation. The path was not so clear to me, even though that's where my passion was. But some years ago, I found out firsthand how healing cooking could be, and I created a food blog called Yumivore. I connected with the most amazing community and group of women. A bit later, I realized I was surrounded by wine and knew nothing about the history of wine in California, and this propelled me into learning about it. For me, that meant feeling the grapes and learning how to make wine.

And how did you make that happen?

I started helping out at harvest at Woodside's Thomas Fogarty and they adopted me. I found friendship and warmth and something so exciting in the cellar. I felt so engaged and alive that I eventually studied with master sommelier David Glancy and was certified a California wine appellation specialist. Later, I was approached about selling the rights to the name Yumivore by someone working with chef Tyler Florence, who wanted the name for his recipe app. I was intrigued and flattered but said I'm not parting with it.

took a lot of negotiation, and finally we came to an agreement. For a food blogger like me to be recognized by someone of that status is beyond heartwarming, it was like a fairy tale. Having that relationship with them gave validation to my passion.

And is that how you ended up starting Food Wine Speak?

I was exploring what do I want to do and had clarity over a sip of sake with a friend in New York. I read constantly, and my topic of choice is often wine history or the culinary arts. I'm so appreciative of culinary and wine professionals and I love connecting with people, so I thought, "What if I worked with food professionals around events and speaking?" I started researching the subject, and while there are a lot of speakers' bureaus focused on business speakers or motivational speakers, none are home to the food and drink and hospitality community. I thought this was a brilliant opportunity to create one. I want to celebrate people and deliver food for thought and intellectually nourishing talks.

Who are some of the people on your speakers' roster? Are any of them Jewish?

Of course! San Francisco-based food writer Amy Sherman, Berkeley-based journalist and wine historian Frances Dinkelspiel and Sonoma-based restaurateur Sondra Bernstein are all part of the speakers' bureau. I have a few people based in Israel, too, like Israeli wine critic Itay Gleitman and Israeli master of wine Eran Pick.

It's interesting to see how many food industry professionals start in another field before their love of food wins out.

Yes, I started in the tech world, and my path wasn't always clear, but I knew this was where my heart was taking me. I was in marketing before, working with people and developing business relationships, so this isn't that different.

"Talking With" focuses on local Jews who are doing things we find interesting. Send suggestions to sueb@jweekly.com.



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B'NAI MITZVAH

SEBASTIAN ACKERMAN Son of Becca Ackerman, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Beth Jacob in Redwood.

SOPHIA ALBERGA Daughter of Suzanne and Jeremy Alberga, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Congregation Kol Emeth in Palo Alto.

ABIGAIL BARTFELD Daughter of Michele and David Bartfeld, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Peninsula Temple Sholom in Burlingame.

RACHEL BERNARD-PEARL Daughter of Lisa and Deirdre Bernard-Pearl, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Kehilla Community Synagogue in Piedmont.

VIRGINIA TURNER BERNSTEIN Daughter of Nancy and Gideon Bernstein, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Rodef Shalom in San Rafael.

ADAM BEST-LEUNG Son of Larry Best, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Congregation Sha'ar Zahav in San Francisco.

TALIA AVIVA BRADY Daughter of Mark and Theresa Brady, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Rodef Shalom in San Rafael.

HAYDEN BURTON Son of Carol and William Burton, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Temple Sinai in Oakland.

COLLIN GLICK Son of Sandra and Micah Glick, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Temple Isaiah in Lafayette.

BEN GOUDGE Son of Janet Poses, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Congregation Beth Jacob in Redwood City.

JACK HOCHSCHILD Son of Jennifer and Lenny Hochschild, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

SAM HOKKANEN Son of Nicole Silverman and Gary Hokkanen, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Kehilla Community Synagogue in Piedmont.

ANNABEL AND DAN HONIGSTEIN Daughter and son of Sarith and Emanuel Honigstein, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Congregation Kol Emeth in Palo Alto.

BINNIE KENVIN Daughter of Mina and Seth Kenvin, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Congregation Sherith Israel in San Francisco.

PHILLIP KORNBERG Son of Susan and Joel Kornberg, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Peninsula Sinai Congregation in Foster City.

MILES KRIM Son of Lisa and Brian Krim, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

NOAH LERMAN Son of Pamela Lyss-Lerman and Jason Lerman, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

SOPHIE LEVY Daughter of Rosenda and Asher Levy, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Temple Isaiah in Lafayette.

LILLIAN LUTTERKORT Daughter of Tamara Troy and David Lutterkort, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

EMILY MAREMONT Daughter of Eve Maremont, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

NOAH PRICE Son of Laura Bloch and Paul Price, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Congregation Rodef Sholom in San Rafael.

JULIANNA ROSS Daughter of Lucy and Lloyd Ross, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Temple Sinai in Oakland.

DARYN SCHELL Daughter of Steven and Heidi Schell, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Peninsula Temple Sholom in Burlingame.

ALEXANDRA AND SAMUEL SUMSKI Daughter and son of Marci and Bill Sumski, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Congregation Rodef Shalom in San Rafael.

LEO SUSSER Son of Rebecca and Phil Susser, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

ADEN SWARTZBERGER Son of Neil Swartzberger and Loreli Cadapan, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Etz Chayim in Palo Alto.

JESSICA AND JOSEPH WALTZER Daughter and son of Lori and Joshua Waltzer, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Temple Sinai in Oakland.

ASHER WESTON Son of Maacah Marah and Stephen Weston, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Rodef Shalom in San Rafael.

SAMUEL YOUNG Son of Catherine Nelson and Todd Young, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo.

KYLIE ZELDIN Daughter of Sheila and Craig Zeldin, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo.

OBITUARIES

MILA FELDBRILL
July 9, 1925–August 14, 2019



Mila Feldbrill, born in Częstochowa, Poland, passed away peacefully on August 14, 2019 at the age of 94. She is survived by her two sons, Leon and Bill, daughter-in-law Michelle and granddaughters Elexis and Ashley. She was a beloved wife to Mendel Feldbrill, who passed away two years ago. They were inseparable for their 72 years of marriage.

Mila was a Holocaust survivor and was liberated from a labor camp in Poland in January 1945. In Germany after the war, Mila and Mendel started a candy business in order to make enough money to allow them to move to Israel with their son Leon in 1948. When they immigrated to the newly formed State of Israel, their four years there were difficult as the state was establishing. They cherished the freedom of living as Jews in Israel. In 1952 relatives made arrangements for the three of them to relocate to Canada. In 1956 Mila's brother made arrangements for them to relocate to San Francisco. In 1957, she gave birth to her second son Bill.

Mila's passions included her beautiful garden, cooking and most importantly family.

The family is deeply grateful to Mimi who for the past year has been Mom's loving friend, kind companion and caregiver.

A memorial service was held on Aug. 20 at Hills of Eternity Memorial Park. In lieu of flowers the family requests donations to Peninsula Temple Sholom Holocaust & Projects Fund.

Sinai Memorial Chapel | 650.369.3636

LOIS E. FLAMM

October 1, 1944–June 5, 2019



Dr. Lois E. Flamm, a renaissance woman and pioneer in user-machine interface design, web interface architecture and usability, and in basic eye movement tracking, conspicuity and visual

stimulation of electroretinograms and evoked cortical potentials, died under hospice care at the Reutlinger Community in Danville, CA on June 5. She was 74.

According to Dan, her husband of 53 years, the cause was Lewy body dementia, which she had been fighting since a diagnosis in early 2014.

Several years back, Lois wrote for her Skidmore College class of '66 history, "Following my junior year, I roomed at Columbia University IHouse (International Student House) at Columbia University. Returning from a date one night, I met Dan Flamm, an MIT

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BIRTHS

Jonathan and Kerin Nash announce the birth of their second son, **Benjamin Ari**, on Aug. 1 at Stanford Hospital. Along with older brother Nathan, their nachas is shared with friends and family, including great-grandmother Flora Churnin of Sunnyvale, *savta* Dalia Chroman of Los Angeles (by way of Israel), and grandparents Drs. Carl and Sharon Nash of Los Altos Hills. All of Carl and Sharon's four children, respective spouses, and 13 grandchildren are part of the Bay Area Jewish community.

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student, playing his guitar near a stairwell (Dan had a summer job with Shell Chemical at Rockefeller Center). I dated Dan that summer, before we went to our respective homes for a couple of weeks, met up again in Cambridge, and married at the end of October, 1965. Our first son, Jonathan, was born in Saratoga Springs on May 17, 1966 during my senior year, and our second son Stephen was born three years later in Boston. Dan and I lived in Westgate, MIT married student housing in Cambridge while I was a graduate student at Northeastern University in Boston, and Dan at MIT. Dan jokes that our kids went through college twice, once with us and once without us."

22-year old Lois' Northeastern Ph.D. research in experimental psychology used a stimulator, eye movement detection system, and electrodes coupled to a PDP8I computer system to record and process electrophysiological responses to uncover relationships between visual evoked cortical potentials and paced saccadic displacements of stimuli. Later, as a professor at Texas A&M University during 1972-76, also a wife and young mother raising two young boys, she pioneered use of eye movement tracking cameras to investigate factors affecting conspicuity for pilot landing systems while a visiting faculty fellow at the NASA Ames Research Center in Moffett Field, California. Her research at Texas A&M spanned a diverse range of fields including perceptual stability, the relationship between eye movements and reversible figures, visual search, visual electrophysiology, and water use and water conservation.

In 1977 Lois left Texas A&M to join the Human Factors Engineering Group, Loop Transmission Division at Bell Laboratories in Whippany, New Jersey, as a Member of the Technical Staff (MTS) where she pioneered human factors support, and methods for overcoming interface problems in the engineering, development and evaluation of new apparatus for outside plant craft. She went on to join the Distributed Computer Systems Research Department of Bell Labs at Murray Hill, N.J., in 1982, earning a master's equivalent in computer science in the Bell Labs in-house curriculum. Her work with John O. Limb led to the seminal invention of protocols for simultaneously transmitting voice and data over a local area network or the internet (U.S. Pat. 4,581,735).

Lois went on to develop UNIX networking software as a member of the Unix Development Laboratory at Murray Hill. When divestiture finally split the Bell System, Lois became a Systems Engineer in the BELLCORE Integrated Planning and Engineering Department where she did engineering and user interface design for software tools and plant electronics inventory databases to mechanize the planning, and engineering of the parent Bell operating companies' network facilities.

In 1988 Lois joined Pacific Bell (Pacbell) in

San Ramon, California, and managed the company's human factors group until Pacific Bell was acquired by SBC Corporation (later AT&T) in 1997. Her group was a center for process reengineering, and user interface design of consumer, business, and internal support services. At Pacific Bell, Lois pioneered designs, systems and testing for customer care support centers, IT requirements processes, and numerous software design and evaluation methodologies for Windows, Apple, Unix, and Web-based products, and human interface design.

When Pacific Bell was acquired by SBC, Lois retired and joined Oracle to manage a team of graphics, interaction designers, and usability engineers charged with the design of data warehousing products. At Oracle she also played a lead role in usability engineering and designing HTML and Java-based applications for clinical (healthcare), CRM, credit management, and manufacturing.

Starting in the new millennium, Lois joined Charles Schwab's new Electronic Brokerage Enterprise in San Francisco as its Customer Experience Director, leading usability design for Schwab.com's new financial services and information architecture. In 2002 Lois became Vice President and Business Technology Manager for the National Wholesale Sales Division at Bank of America where she began initiatives to improve the usefulness and usability of BOA's Mortgage Network. She drove major user interface redesigns which integrated vendor CRM and mortgage transactional capabilities into a common framework, developed a nationwide technical desk for the division, and managed all usability testing activities.

Lois returned to Oracle as a user interface architect in the Communications Global Business Unit in 2007, then in 2010 she started her own business as an independent consultant providing usability and user-centered design services. Lois was a member of Sigma Xi, Phi Kappa Phi, SIGCHI/ BayCHI and the IEEE Computer Society.

Lois was born on October 1, 1944 in Springfield, Mass., to Bernard and Henrietta (Katz) Canter. Her father was a doctor. She attended Classical High School in Springfield, but spent her senior year studying abroad while in the care of her aunt Lolly and uncle Nathan Sanders (Sandy) Wall who was a professor of physics at MIT spending a sabbatical year at the Neils Bohr Institute in Denmark, and a short time at the Weizmann Institute in Israel. Lois returned to the U.S. and began her studies at Skidmore College in September 1962.

Lois understood what was happening to her and fought hard against her disease. She worked out vigorously at her gym and physical therapy, and jogged every day, until it eventually became necessary to enter a care facility. She participated in a number of early phase clinical and preclinical treatment trials. Despite eventual difficulty with her mobility, she did

not succumb to a wheelchair until the very last months of her life.

Throughout her life, Lois radiated kindness and grace. Her smile would light up a room and bring joy to others. That smile endured through her last days at the care facility. She will be sorely missed.

Lois is survived by her husband of 53 years, Daniel L. Flamm, B.S. Math, M.S. Ph.D. Chem. Eng. MIT, J.D. Golden Gate University, two sons Stephen (Stephen K. Flamm, B.S. EE MIT, M.S. UC Santa Barbara in Fremont, CA) and Jonathan (Jonathan E. Flamm, B.S. EE Cornell, M.S. Kings College, London, in San Francisco), her brother Mark Canter, J.D. (Cambridge, Mass.), and three grandchildren, Chloe, Emma and Alex.

Sinai Memorial Chapel | 925.962.3636

IRA STEPHEN FINK

April 22, 1937-May 27, 2019



Ira Stephen Fink, a Berkeley resident for more than 50 years, passed away at home on May 27, 2019. He was born in 1937 in Phoenix, raised in Denver, and fell in love with the Bay Area during the exciting and politically charged days of the mid-1960s.

Ira left Colorado after earning a bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado, service in the U.S. Air Force, and a brief career as an architect in Denver. He landed first in Pasadena, doing residential architecture, but soon left the balmy weather behind to pursue Master's and Ph.D. degrees in City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley. While carrying a full academic load, Ira also spent nine years as one of two senior planning officers with the University of California Office of the President. In that role, he was instrumental in helping plan nine campuses of the University. That experience led Ira to conclude that academic facility planning and programming were his real passion. He often told friends and colleagues that buildings are meant for the people — students, faculty and staff — who will use them, and user-focused planning is essential for successful buildings.

After leaving the university, Ira stepped out on his own, and for more than 40 years was President of Ira Fink and Associates, Inc., a national firm dedicated solely to university planning consulting. He was especially proud of the tremendous diversity of the higher education institutions where his firm worked. They included state universities in every part of the U.S., as well as mid-sized and small private institutions, many with religious affiliations. These faith-based client universities ranged from Brandeis to Gonzaga; from St. Mary's and Holy Names, both in the East Bay, to The Princeton Theological Seminary in Princeton, New Jersey; and from Soka University of America in

Southern California to BYU, Hawaii.

Ira was a prolific writer, conference speaker, and consultant to many dozens of universities. His impact on the design professions and higher education across the U.S. was recognized by the American Institute of Architects when they elected Ira to the AIA College of Fellows.

Ira always had an intense interest in learning about his family's history and Jewish roots. For decades he ardently pursued filling in the family tree through interviews with aging family members in Denver and searches for death records. This was long before dedicated internet websites made genealogy research accessible as it is today.

Ira's family history work led to a broader interest in preserving Jewish history. He became an avid collector of books and artifacts related to Jewish art and architecture, especially works related to synagogues and art from the pre-WWII period in Europe. In the months before his death, Ira and his wife, Penni Hudis, finally fulfilled a dream of securing good homes for his synagogue books and other artifacts through gifts to the Center for Jewish Studies at Duke University and the Magnes Jewish Museum at UC Berkeley. Probably the rarest piece in Ira's gift to the Magnes is a series of four lithographs by the Russian Jewish artist El Lissitzky, which vividly portrays the Passover song "Had Gadya." The Magnes will begin displaying the lithographs starting on August 27, with an opening reception on Tuesday, September 3, 2019.

While much of Ira's professional life since coming to Berkeley in the '60s followed a pretty linear path, at 80 years of age a great opportunity came along that led him in a new and unexpected direction. In the year before he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, Ira joined Penni in making a dream come true for thousands of women with cancer in the East Bay. In his last project, Ira volunteered as consulting project manager on the complete remodel of a newly purchased building in Berkeley for the nonprofit Women's Cancer Resource Center. This beautiful Berkeley Center carries on WCRC's 33-year tradition of enhancing quality of life with free psychosocial support services and education for women with cancer, especially individuals from underserved communities in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

Ira is survived by his wife of 26 years, Dr. Penni Hudis, sisters Norma Goldblatt and Judy Kippur (Stanley); sister-in-law, Iris Hudis; brother-in-law, Dr. Stephen Hudis; and nieces and nephews Sandy Barter (Dr. Jeff), Dr. Terri Tillis (Stacy Pocrass), Ron Catalan (Michelle), Rebecca Catalan, Lisa Kippur (Chad Bauer), Scott Kippur (Yelena), Loel Hudis (Dr. Shoshannah Levitt), and Suzanne Hudis. Contributions honoring Ira will be gratefully accepted at the Women's Cancer Resource Center, 2908 Ellsworth St., Berkeley CA 94705.

OBITUARIES

GARY MICHAEL GREENE

March 16, 1937-July 25, 2019



Gary Michael Greene of Tiburon died peacefully at home with his family at his side. He was born in San Francisco on March 16, 1937 to Alvin and Alice Greenberg. He attended George Washington High

School and graduated from San Francisco State University with a major in radio and television. He died July 25 after a brief illness.

He is survived by his wife Freddie, his daughters Alison and Tracy (Michael) and was proud grandfather of Sarah Moats, Maxine Mintz and Joseph Mintz.

Gary and Freddie met when they were 18 while skiing at Tahoe. They celebrated their 60th anniversary in April.

After working in the television industry, Gary became Western Region Manager for a college textbook publisher. He later owned California Cookware in San Rafael. He was a man of many talents. He built professional quality furniture. He could repair anything. One day, deciding he wanted French onion soup, he opened a cookbook and from then on did all the cooking for the family. He became a gourmet chef.

He was also a skilled skier, sailor and golfer. He was a fan of the Giants and the A's, whichever was doing better. Gary loved cars and driving. He and Freddie took many road trips, crisscrossing the United States several times. He enjoyed the drive between his homes in Tiburon and Palm Desert. He also enjoyed city life staying at their San Francisco apartment when attending the theater. He loved to travel. He and Freddie took over 30 cruises and visited over 75 countries and all the continents except Antarctica (too cold).

Gary was known for his sense of humor, his wit, kindness, generosity and integrity. A consummate gentleman and party guest, he was always ready with a joke (clean or not) or a witty retort. He had a phenomenal memory. Name a song and he knew the lyrics. Quote a memorable movie line and he knew who spoke it. He could tell you what you ordered the last time you ate at a restaurant with him.

Gary was devoted to his family. He would do anything for his "girls." He was a softie for cats,

especially his recently adopted rescue cat Frankie.

A celebration of his life will be held at a future date. Donations in his memory would be appreciated to Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) or Hopalong Animal Rescue.

GORDON KATZNELSON

September 10, 1929-August 7, 2019



Gordon Katznelson, MD, 89, passed peacefully with his family by his side on Wednesday, August 7.

Gordie grew up in Vancouver, BC, son of Russian immigrants Keva and Necha

Katznelson. He attended the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, and then graduated from the University of Washington Medical School. He completed an internal medicine residency at UCSF Mt. Zion Hospital, San Francisco, and a cardiology fellowship at Harvard Medical School. Gordie then returned to San Francisco in 1959 to start a practice in cardiology and general medicine until his retirement at age 81. He was a dedicated physician and was beloved by his patients. He loved to teach, and he enjoyed teaching medical students how to read electrocardiograms every Wednesday morning at San Francisco General Hospital, which he continued to do until just recently.

Gordie had a great passion for life, his family, his Judaism, and his friends. He loved the outdoors and would spend his time fly-fishing, playing tennis, and camping. Gordie loved to garden, tend to his flourishing orchid collection, and talk about the books and articles he had recently read. He was a huge fan of the Giants, 49er, and Warriors and was the best company with whom to watch a game. Gordie played the cello and loved classical and jazz music. Gordie had the most positive spirit and he was beloved as a dedicated husband, father, uncle, grandfather, and friend. He thrived in the presence of his children and grandchildren.

Gordie and his wife Doris had one of the most magical marriages imaginable, one that lasted 61 years. They met while Gordie was doing his cardiology training in Boston. Doris was the love of his life, and she, his.

Gordie is survived by his wife, Doris, his three

sons Larry (Palo Alto), Steve (and his wife Trudy, San Francisco), and David (and his wife, Barbara, San Anselmo), his grandchildren Ethan, Andy, Ben, Hannah, Kaya and Asher, and the entire Arrick family. Gordie was the patriarch of his family.

Gordie was predeceased by his sister Edie and brother Harry.

Funeral services were held on Aug. 11 at Sinai Memorial Chapel in San Francisco. Burial was private. The family requests that donations be made to a favorite charity.

Sinai Memorial Chapel | 415.921.3636

NATHAN LEWIN

September 26, 1932-August 13, 2019



Nathan Lewin, Ph.D., 86, died Tuesday, August 13, 2019, peacefully at home with family at his side. He leaves his cherished wife of 56 years, Anne I. Lewin; his sons, David A. Lewin and Matthew R. Lewin, daughter-in-law

Suzanne G. Sobel, grandchildren Noah Sobel-Lewin, Milo Sobel-Lewin, Daniel Z. Lewin and Daniel's mother Sunita Rao; and many close family members as well as others touched by his life.

Nathan was born September 26, 1932, in Poland to Rabbi Ezekiel Lewin and Rachel Reiss Lewin. He was indelibly marked by his early life in Poland, with his earliest years riding his grandfather's gentle draft horse, Tabata, on the family farm in Potoki. As war broke out, he was guided by his older brother, Kurt I. Lewin (1928-2014), and hidden by the venerable Metropolitan Andrey Szeptycki of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Formative memories included hiding with several other children, with whom he made lifelong friends, teaching himself to play the mandolin (the only "toy" they had), as well as finding many other ways to train his mind and hone his resourcefulness and the self-discipline that characterized his adult life.

Nathan arrived in England an orphan in 1946 and was an avid reader and student of literature and science. He earned his doctorate in chemistry from Birkbeck, University of London, where he elucidated the key chemical structures of shellac before advanced scientific instrumentation such as NMR was available.

After earning his doctoral degree, he emigrated

to New York City in 1958. There he was introduced to Anne Morgens, also a refugee and émigré from Poland, and married her on June 30, 1963, after a five-year romance. Anne and Nathan moved the family to Corte Madera in the summer of 1973, built a business together following his career in biotech, and there together retired in sight of beautiful Mt. Tamalpais, Ring Mountain, and the North Bay in the house where they lived together from 1975.

He was unfailingly grateful for his opportunity to live in the United States, and he frequently reminded family that the U.S. and our beautiful location is an "oasis within an oasis" never to be taken for granted. Throughout his life he relished knowledge, enjoyed its pursuit, and considerably shared it with humor, humility and patience.

A private funeral service was held Aug. 18 at Mt. Tamalpais Cemetery in San Rafael, California, where the view of Mt. Tamalpais will continue to be shared with all.

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SANDY OBERSTEIN

August 11, 1941-August 13, 2019



Sandy Oberstein, beloved daughter, wife, mother and grandmother, died peacefully at the age of 78. She lived a life filled with family, friends and faith and will be remembered as an enormously loving

and generous soul.

Sandy was born in 1941 in Des Moines, Iowa, the only child of Mickey Westerman Jacobson z"l and Ben Jacobson z"l. As a young girl, she and her parents moved to San Francisco to seek greater opportunities and to get as far away from the heat and humidity as possible! She was an outstanding student, finishing in the top of her class at Lowell High School and going on to UC Berkeley where she graduated with a degree in Social Work.

In 1963, Sandy married Barry Oberstein z"l the love of her life. After a brief stint in the Midwest as Barry finished his medical training, they returned to the San Francisco Bay Area where she devoted herself to family. As her children grew, Sandy ran the financial side of Barry and Linda's medical practice. In addition, Sandy dedicated herself to the Jewish Community. She shattered the glass ceiling at Peninsula Temple Shalom where she served as the first female president. She served as a Trustee of the Jewish Home of San Francisco and was very involved in the Women's Division of the Jewish Welfare Federation.

Most of all, she loved spending time with family and friends. Sandy is survived by her children Linda and Jeff; daughter-in-law, Sophie; and grandchildren, Lily, Evan, Avi and Zev Oberstein.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Peninsula Temple Shalom.

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FRANK STEIN

July 1927-April 20, 2019



Frank Stein died on April 20, 2019. He and his partner, Paul May, left this world a better place by their charitable deeds and extraordinary generosity. It is difficult to separate Frank's achievements, skills and industriousness in successive enterprises from Paul's, as theirs was a more than 60-year true partnership in love and support and in executing their joint enterprises.

Born in Brooklyn, Frank grew up in a family facing daily turmoil and financial challenges. As a youngster he helped earn money for the family shining shoes and delivering groceries. He met Paul after starting entry level work at Gimbels, who was also working there, thus beginning a lifelong, inseparable relationship. Their talent, creativity and strong work ethic at Gimbels was rewarded with promotions to the executive level. In the '60s they decided to move on to a new challenge, arriving in San Francisco, establishing what became a thriving motel supply business, and subsequently buying Bay Area real estate and building shopping malls.

Their successful business endeavors enabled them to help people in need, reflecting on their own difficult beginnings and later health issues. Late in life Frank was diagnosed with glaucoma, which Paul also had contracted. Frank funded the Pacific Vision Foundation. To advance treatment for others suffering from this condition, they generously funded the Glaucoma Research Foundation and established the Frank Stein and Paul May Low Vision Center at CPMC. They also funded the Paul May and Frank Stein Interventional Endoscopy Center at CPMC, Pancreatic Cancer Research at UCSF, Chabad's Residential Treatment Center for Substance Abuse, and Jewish Home for the Aged.

After Paul's death in 2013, Frank fulfilled a major gift they were considering to Jewish Family and Children's Services for improvement and enlargement of its Parents Place building, where professional staff provide services to parents and children ranging from prenatal counseling to helping parents and their children with difficult family issues to counseling youth at risk. Frank and Paul did far more than give money; they also gave of their time, for example, mentoring students at South San Francisco High School.

Frank and Paul were grateful to be able to give as much as they did to those institutions that could provide for the needs of so many. They will always be remembered as compassionate and thoughtful gentlemen with depth of character who spread the warmth of their relationship to all. Frank leaves us with the

inspiration to follow his and Paul's lead as role models of selfless generosity to make a meaningful difference in the world.

Donations honoring Frank's memory can be made to any of the nonprofits mentioned above or to a charity of your choice.

BENJAMIN WARWICK

April 12, 1932-July 5, 2019



Ben was born in Oakland on April 12, 1932. He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, where he was a member of Zeta Beta Tau fraternity, and attended Hastings College of Law where

he was a member of the Phi Alpha Delta legal fraternity. He opened his law office in Oakland on February 1, 1960, and practiced civil law in Oakland and San Leandro until his retirement on August 31, 1996.

Ben was active with the California Bar Association, serving on numerous committees at both the state and local level. He was chairman of the Alameda fee arbitration committee, and was a director of the Alameda County Bar Association. He served as Assistant Secretary of the California Bar Association handling initial complaints of professional misconduct, and served as chairman of the Alameda delegation to the California State Bar convention.

He served as Judge Pro Tem for the Alameda County Municipal Court, and handled numerous assignments as Judicial Arbitrator for the Alameda County Superior Court.

He was Past Exalted Ruler of the Oakland Elks Lodge, and served as president of Temple Beth Sholom in San Leandro.

Ben was an avid tennis player and was a long-time member of the Bayo Vista Swim and Tennis Club in San Leandro, where he formed longtime friendships with his fellow tennis players.

After retirement, Ben became an avid hiker and rarely missed hiking the trails of Marin County and the East Bay with his Wednesday hiking group.

He also enjoyed the many classes offered by the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC Berkeley and Cal State East Bay Concord, as well as the diverse classes offered by Rabbi Harry Manhoff of Temple Beth Sholom.

Ben is survived by his loving wife Gloria Eive, his children Keith (Patty), Linda, and Jeff (Marjorie), step-children Jason Feldman (Sabrina), Esther Feldman, and Reva Feldman, and numerous grandchildren and step-grandchildren.

A memorial service and celebration of Ben's life will be held at the Alameda Elks Lodge in Alameda on Sunday, August 25, at 1 p.m. (2255 Santa Clara Ave., Alameda, CA 945010.) For further information contact the Elks Lodge at (510) 522-1015 or elks1015@comcast.net.

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PARENTING | DREW HIMMELSTEIN



Drew Himmelstein is a former J. staff writer. She lives in Brooklyn with her husband and two sons.

I unrolled a scroll of butcher paper, tore off a piece and drew 10 empty boxes in a line, under the heading, "Nate and Harvey play nice together." Each time my kids could successfully play together for 10 or 15 minutes without fighting, calling for me or wreaking havoc in our home, I explained to them, I would draw a star in one box. Once every box was filled, they would earn a special trip to the carousel. With ice cream.

It's the middle of August, and this is where we're at. Don't worry, I also bribe my children with screen time.

Summer is both a magical and miserable time for me. I hate heat and humidity, and I now live in New York City, so that's awful. I never, ever minded cold, fog-filled San Francisco summers, where you forgot that it was summer at all and I would celebrate my August birthday in a sweater going to a bar or a movie on a gray evening. But now that I'm back on the humid East Coast, I have the privilege of spending a lot of my summer in Maine, where my mother's side of the family is from and which is a beautiful and, for me, nostalgic place in summertime. I had well over a month of perfect, temperate Maine days spent on hikes and lakes and beaches this summer. And now I'm back in New York, slogging it out through the steam and stew in the dog days of August when it seems that everyone else flees town.

As a parent, summer is also a mixture of pleasure and pain. I love seeing my kids enjoy the outdoors, run faster, swim stronger, eat heartily and just be more connected to the natural world. The change in routine from the school year is a challenge for my kids, and we thought long and hard this spring about what type of setting would be best for them, as summer camps have been fairly disastrous for us in the past.

We hit gold this summer with an art and nature camp that we found

in Maine for my 7-year-old, Nate. He normally takes weeks to warm up to a new environment, but within a day he fell in love with this camp, where he spent his time making art in a barn and playing tag in an outdoor sculpture park. It was a warm, intimate environment with excellent, caring teachers, and every single day I felt fortunate that we could give him five solid weeks being creative in this amazing place. My 3-year-old, Harvey, also went to a great camp at a local preschool where two of the main daily activities were eating popsicles and running through sprinklers.

So thanks in large part to my family's help and hospitality, we enjoyed a long stretch of summer wonderland. But now we're back to real life, in New York City, where the sidewalk emits its own heat and summer camp is way too expensive. My kids are going through a stage where they are completely wild in each other's presence, so the unstructured time stretching out before us until school starts feels very long.

I've developed a few personal strategies for managing parenting in the hot weather: I get up around 6 and go for a jog in Prospect Park, where it's beautiful and relatively cool. I take the kids outside to play for several hours in the morning, then we retreat home or somewhere air-conditioned for the hottest part of the day. I pack water bottles full of ice cubes and make Israeli salads for lunch. I try to rotate their toys and facilitate simple projects at home to keep their fighting and mischief under control. I read to them and have them play in separate rooms for a little afternoon "quiet time." We go to the playground after dinner when possible.

And of course, I offer them rewards for simply playing together in peace for a few minutes at a time. So if all goes well, I'll be taking them to the carousel before the summer's over. ■

To keep my possessions or declutter? I'm trying, really

THE MATZO CHRONICLES | KAREN GALATZ



Karen Galatz is the author of *Muddling through Middle Age*, a weekly humor blog. She lives in Berkeley and can be reached at karen@muddling.me.

What a difference three generations make. Our grandparents came to America with nothing. Now our generation owns so much, we are possession obsessed.

We contemplate downsizing, but cannot figure out how. Where to begin? What to keep? What to give away? Do we consign items or donate them?

And we fret — constantly — about the fact that our good china will come to no good when we die. Ironically, in our confusion, we clutter our bookshelves with books about ... decluttering!

Yes, our grandparents had nothing in the Old World, but made a good life in the New World, passing down to us their furniture, jewelry, and lovingly embroidered tablecloths and pillows.

Today we feel oppressed by our material well-being. Our homes are over-stuffed and our children proclaim — loudly — their disinterest in inheriting our cherished belongings.

Enough with our possession obsession! Enough with this worry about clutter and the fate of our inanimate objects once we animate beings pass on. Let's relegate Marie Kondo's "The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up" manifesto to the discount book bin where it belongs!

Yet I admit I am sad knowing my many sentimental items are not held in high esteem by my children. I cannot believe they don't cherish Grandma's musty antique furniture; the needlepoint pictures my mother stitched; the many fading photo albums I so carefully assembled through the decades; their own adorable artwork preserved in boxes and boxes from pre-K on, and their father's impressive array of awards and letters of commendation from U.S. presidents and congressional leaders.

And, yes, I'm amazed that my children don't even value the valuable stuff — the jewelry, the silver, the artwork. They're not just unsentimental, they're also not materialist. For them, if it isn't digital, it doesn't exist. If they have to pick up and move, most of what they'd need could be carried in a backpack, not a moving van or even Tevye's milk cart. Their lives are stored in tiny devices and "in the cloud."

For us "oldsters," life is very much rooted here on Earth. For me, possessions tell important stories about my life, the good and the bad times, the

birthdays, the anniversaries, the children's graduations — all of it.

For me, getting rid of even one of my late mother's 20-plus paperweights means making high-stakes decisions, like choosing between the one I gave her for her 50th birthday or the one my son bought to cheer her up in the hospital.

Yet, like many middle-age people, I feel a need to streamline and make some space in my admittedly congested space. Some months back, I got serious and took a monumental step forward: I gave an item of tremendous sentimental value, my mother's 140-piece fine china set, to a dear friend.

Emboldened, I then scanned/digitized all the family photos and home movies, and I gave away my collection of DVDs.

I kicked all my high-heeled shoes to the curb. That was easy. Footwear reality set in long ago. I know my achy arches will never again walk, much less dance, in spiky, pointed shoes.

And with heartless abandon, I tossed out four coffee mugs, three chipped Pyrex storage containers, several wooden spoons and a bottle opener. That doesn't sound like much at all, but it took me two hours of angst wading through the kitchen chaos.

Finally, after three months of sorting, tossing and agonizing, I finished. Overall, the results are impressive: The closets are streamlined, the drawers and cabinets no longer bulge.

And yet ... There still is an awful lot of stuff.

You see, the real problem isn't hanging onto unwanted, obsolete and sentimental items. It's clinging to the good "stuff," the "who knows, I might need it" items.

Oh no. I'm falling back down that possession obsession rabbit hole.

I need to take a deep breath and remember that Grandma, Grandpa and Tevye would be happy for me. They would tell me to celebrate having so many delightful objects. They would tell me to cherish the memories associated with these belongings. They would also tell me to stop kvetching and start dusting! The place needs a good cleaning!

So that's what I'll do. And afterward, maybe I'll watch "Fiddler on the Roof" again. Some things you can never get enough of! ■

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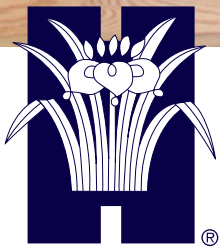
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A Kosher Kitchen for Two

Having grown up in a traditional Jewish household that followed strict kosher guidelines, there is no one more capable to design a kosher kitchen than Harrell Remodeling designer, Debra Winston. When we were approached by a couple to update their circa-1960s kitchen while incorporating solutions that would allow them to adhere to their kosher meal preparation, Debra was exceptionally qualified for the task. She designed a sleek kitchen for two, with creative kosher solutions, including designated areas for dairy (milchig), meat (fleischig), and Pesach storage. And by designing a well lit space with LED recessed cans for general lighting, and petite puck lights, there are no dark corners and her tchotchkes/cookbooks are illuminated on the floating shelves above the sink.

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