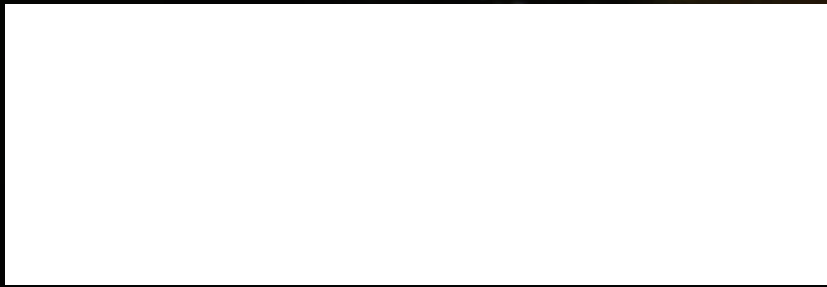




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Local man linked to North Bay hate flyers

NEWS | DAN PINE | J. STAFF

Flyers claiming that Jews masterminded the 9/11 attacks, discovered Aug. 16-17 in downtown Novato and at San Marin High School, have been linked to a man who posted the same flyers about 10 days earlier in Santa Rosa.

A series of videos posted Aug. 6 on the “Handsome Truth 5” YouTube channel, since removed, showed the man putting up the flyers in Santa Rosa while boasting about it. Another video posted on a YouTube channel called “Handsome Truth Channel Updates” showed a reprint of J.’s report about the Novato flyers, with the same man’s voice reciting from it in a mocking tone. After reading that “no group has claimed responsibility for them,” the voice said, “I’m not a group, dude. I’m just a concerned American person who’s tired of Jewish supremacy.”

In that second video, the man invited people to email him if they wanted copies. “You can print them out yourself and tape them up,” he said, “and wake up the other people who are sleeping.” Comments on the video suggested that some people did just that.

A recent study by the Anti-Defamation League found that extremists use fringe online social networks “to spread hate and encourage like-minded followers to head down the path to violence.”

“Extremist groups use social media to crowdsource,” Oren Segal, director of the ADL Center on Extremism, told J. in May. “They put up flyers available for anyone to download. That’s why you see similar wording in flyers” in different cities.

The flyer in question, titled “Are Jews responsible for 9/11?” repeats conspiracy theories suggesting that Jews and Israel were behind the World Trade Center attacks. It claims Israelis were seen dancing on the site of the collapsed twin towers, that New York Jewish real estate developer Larry Silverstein made billions in insurance money, and that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised the attacks. At the bottom of the page it says, “Wake up USA!”

Capt. John Cregan of the Santa Rosa Police Department confirmed that on Aug. 7 the department received a report that a “hate flyer” was posted in the Santa Rosa Junior College neighborhood. An officer who went there found one of the flyers, took it down and wrote up a report. “There is no information as to who is responsible,” Cregan told J. this week.

Novato Police Chief Adam McGill told the Marin Independent Journal that the flyers are protected by the First Amendment and there would be no investigation.

The ADL, however, is following up on the incidents. Seth Brysk, Central Pacific Region director, told J. on Aug. 23, “The ADL is aware of this and investigating. They are consistent with efforts to propagandize in and around universities with an aim toward recruitment of young people, a trend we have seen around the country.”

Nancy Appel, the ADL’s senior associate regional director, said the local office received multiple calls about the flyers posted in Novato. “These are hoary old stereotypes about 9/11,”

she told J. “It’s of a piece in the rise of anti-Semitism we’re seeing generally.”

So who is the man in these videos? He never says his name, but an ad appeared on June 14 in the Community Voice, a local Rohnert Park-Cotati newspaper, announcing that Handsome Truth Enterprises was now doing business at a Petaluma address; it listed Jon Minadeo II as owner. It is not known whether Minadeo is the real name of the man who ran the Handsome Truth channels. (He still appears as Handsome Truth on other channels.)

“These are hoary old stereotypes about 9/11. It’s of a piece in the rise of anti-Semitism we’re seeing generally.”

Nancy Appel, ADL

J. reached out to the email address provided on the Handsome Truth video and received a response indicating the addressee was willing to be interviewed, but further attempts to contact him proved unsuccessful.

A Google search revealed the man behind Handsome Truth is linked to a group called the Goyim Defense League (GDL). Last November, the GDL duped former NFL quarterback Brett Favre and other celebrities into recording a promotional video via the Cameo app, through which users can pay celebrities to make personalized videos.

Favre was paid \$500 to read a script that included coded anti-Semitic language. Reading from the script, he gives a “shout-out to the Handsome Truth and the GDL boys. You guys are patriots in my eyes. So keep waking them up and don’t let the small get you down. Keep fighting, too, and don’t ever forget the USS Liberty and the men and women who died on that day. God bless and take care.”

In this case, “small” is a reference to “small hats,” or yarmulkes, a term commonly used by anti-Semites. The USS Liberty mention refers to a Navy ship that was accidentally attacked by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War. More than 30 servicemen were killed. Israel apologized for the incident and paid out millions of dollars to the victims.

Once he realized what had happened, Favre released a statement saying he was “sickened [by] anti-Semitic” groups that duped him and that he would donate the \$500 he received for the recording to charities that “fight hate and bigotry.”

The Handsome Truth YouTube channels contained plenty of hateful anti-Semitic material. Although the content has been removed, one page still has a photo at the top showing Chabad rabbis posing with Russian President Vladimir Putin; a Donald Trump-like caricature is inserted into the photo as a hook-nosed Jew rubbing his hands — an image reminiscent of those published in Der Sturmer in Nazi Germany.

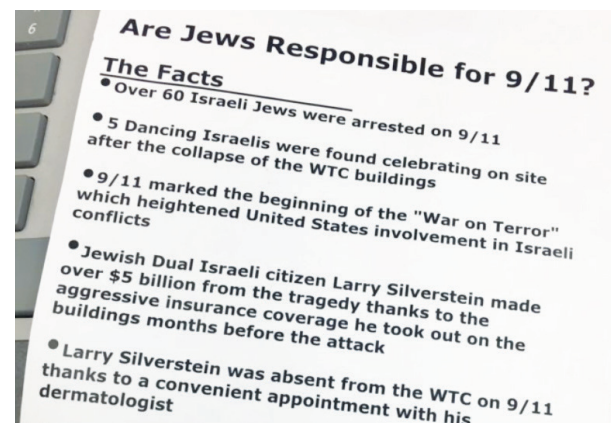
Elsewhere, the man featured in the Santa Rosa videos was

shown holding a button that said #Name the Jew or Die.

In Novato, after the flyers were discovered, the local community responded by coming together to oppose their message.

“There is no room for this type of hate speech” in Novato, the Marin Independent Journal reported the town’s mayor, Eric Lucan, as saying. Novato Police Chief McGill urged citizens to “stand up to hate.”

On Aug. 20, the mayor, police department, the Novato Unified School District and the anti-hate group Not In Our



A portion of the flyer found in Novato (Photo/Courtesy Matt Elkins)

Town published an open letter condemning the flyers. It read in part: “The hate rhetoric on this flyer was an indication we must continue our work to stand up to hate in our community. We must show strong community support for those who have been targeted by this flyer and other minority or marginalized groups affected by similar hate speech.”

Rabbi Menachem Landa of the Chabad Jewish Center of Novato said the incident was “not something I felt overly alarmed by. This doesn’t stand for who we are” in Novato.

But he added that although he has received unwavering love and support from the community, there have been other disturbing incidents in town. For example, a young Jewish teen he knows received a text last year reading, “Hitler should have finished the job.”

In the wake of that incident, Landa met with concerned community members and San Marin High School administrators. They pledged to do something, he said, including organize a Holocaust survivor speaker series, which has not yet taken place. “We’re still working on it,” he said.

Nevertheless, Landa is looking on the bright side, calling the flyers “a reminder of what an incredible community we live in, that a couple of flyers are causing a ruckus and people are standing up to it. It reminds me how lucky we are to be living here that something like this will cause an outcry.” ■

J. editorial assistant **Gabriel Greschler** contributed to this report.

Modesto shul takes leading role protesting 'Straight Pride'

NEWS | GABE STUTMAN | J. STAFF

Few people in the Central Valley city of Modesto have experienced anti-gay hate more directly than Matthew Mason. For Mason, a nursing student and community activist, it came from his own mother.

"I was raised very conservatively, very Christian, very far right," Mason told an audience of about 100 people who gathered on Aug. 24 at Congregation Beth Shalom, the city's lone synagogue. "I had been told my entire life that all gay people go to hell."

Mason was speaking as part of a day of "solidarity, education and sanctuary," held to counter a so-called Straight Pride March going on just blocks away.

The event featured a panel discussion about free speech and diversity, with Mason, Beth Shalom Rabbi Shalom Bochner and Sikh city councilor Mani Grewal among the speakers. It was followed by a viewing of "Dear Freddy," a documentary about a gay Auschwitz prisoner who became a hero to doomed children.

Mason told the audience that he came to terms with his sexuality in his teenage years. When he was 19, he finally came out to his adoptive parents, Mylinda and Ron Mason.

"When I came out of the closet and told them I was gay," he said, "I was no longer welcome at home."

The scene at the synagogue provided a stark contrast to what was going on minutes away at a Planned Parenthood, where about a dozen anti-abortion, anti-gay and anti-immigrant protesters faced off in 95-degree heat with scores of pro-LGBT and far-left counterprotesters. Police, some on horseback, tried to corral the protesters, preventing them from spilling into the nearby five-lane highway. News reporters and television cameras were on hand to capture the ruckus.

Modesto is a town of about 200,000, located some 90 miles southeast of San Francisco. The Straight Pride March, organized by the months-old California Straight Pride Coalition, was hotly anticipated by the local press, commanding the attention of television news and the Modesto Bee newspaper in the preceding weeks. The coalition claimed on its website that it would be the first straight pride event "in the nation's history."

The march, whose motto was "normal, natural, healthy, sane," was organized by fundamentalist Christian anti-gay and anti-abortion activists Don Grundmann — a former long-shot U.S. Senate candidate — and Mason's now-estranged adoptive mom, Mylinda Mason.

In a Facebook post, Mylinda said the purpose of the march was to "celebrate the inherent superiority" of heterosexuality, the "natural nuclear family," "masculinity," "femininity" and "babies." Her post said those "foundational principles" are "under unprecedented, sustained, and coordinated attack within our society." The demonstration also sought to promote Western civilization, Christianity, "nationalism" and "whiteness."

After the Straight Pride marchers announced their plan, a counterprotest quickly came together, spurred by Chris Holland, a 46-year-old cable installer. He started a Facebook group that elicited some 300 comments and attracted local and statewide interest.

"I expect it to dwarf theirs," Holland said of his counterprotest, speaking to J. days before the event. He was right.

The counterprotest began on the shaded grass at Enslens



Park, in a quiet upscale neighborhood. It was a colorful affair, with chants, rainbow everything, tie-dye clothes, confetti and signs ("If being gay were a choice, I'd be gayer!"), drawing a wide range of people united in their opposition to the Straight Pride March.

Tiffany Thompson, 39, wore a wide straw hat and rainbow socks. She held a sign that read "Modesto stands united against hate" on one side and "free mom hugs" on the other.

Amid chants like "No hate, no fear, straight pride is not welcome here," state Sen. Scott Wiener of San Francisco addressed the crowd and expressed support for the counterprotest.

"I came here from San Francisco to say that we stand in complete solidarity with the people of Modesto," he told the crowd. "We are all here together to fight this hate, this homophobia, transphobia and white supremacy."

Not everyone at Enslens Park supported the counterpro-



"I'm proud to be straight, the way God ordained me."

Ron Mason, Straight Pride supporter



test. Two far-right demonstrators, wearing kneepads and helmets, captured the activity using head-mounted cameras and another video camera on a tripod. Some far-left protesters yelled at the two men and tried to block their lenses with rainbow flags, banners and screens, pushing them farther away from the center of the counterprotest.

A man and woman walking a German shepherd thanked the police and then offered their support to the right-wing videographers. "You can smell them from here," the man said about the left-wing protesters.

Whether the Straight Pride supporters were racist, or just anti-gay, came up frequently throughout the day.

In a phone interview with J. days before the event, Straight Pride organizer Grundmann said that his group came to Modesto "to defend all races and colors." He pointed a finger at Planned Parenthood for terminating the pregnancies of black women, which he referred to as "black genocide."

"People who call us racists — it's the opposite," he said.

Grundmann is not a big fan of Jews, and he told J. they are not in his camp. He is on record as saying that one of the greatest challenges facing the country is a "private banking cartel" represented by the Federal Reserve, and an "unelected

Top to bottom: State Sen. Scott Wiener addresses counterprotesters; Straight Pride demonstrators in Modesto; Tiffany Thompson (holding sign) challenges the Straight Pride message (Photos/Gabe Stutman)

elite of plantation masters” who “rule us.”

“Jewish people have their place in history,” Grundmann told J. “But we’re defending Caucasians.”

Jesse Lee Peterson, an African American man, said he had traveled from Los Angeles to attend the Straight Pride rally. He held a sign that read “build the wall” in bright red letters outside of Planned Parenthood. He came to stand for “God, family, country and Constitution,” he said.

“The Torah commands us to love our fellow. Everyone. As we love ourselves.”

Rabbi Shalom Bochner

Asked whether he thought the march and rally promoted white supremacy, Peterson said that in fact he did not believe that white supremacy existed at all.

“There is no such thing as white supremacists,” he said. “There is no such thing as slavery. It’s a made-up lie in order to try to intimidate people with words, because they don’t have the truth on their side.”

Another Straight Pride supporter — Ron Mason, Mylinda’s husband — said his motivation was preventing abortion and opposing homosexuality. “I’m proud to be straight, the way God ordained me,” he said.

Friday evening, an interfaith service was held at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church called “Embrace, Accept, Change:



(On left) Rabbi Shalom Bochner and (above) public defender Laura Arnold and Matthew Mason speaking at Beth Shalom on Aug. 24

Celebrating the Richness and Beauty of Our Diversity.”

Rabbi Bochner was one of a number of religious leaders who spoke, along with NAACP branch president Wendy Byrd and Modesto Mayor Ted Brandvold.

Interspersed with the singing of American folks songs like “This Little Light of Mine” and “America the Beautiful,” Catholic Bishop Myron J. Cotta quoted Pope Francis, who said it was “deplorable” that gay people should be subjected to violent

speech and actions.

“One is condemned not by one’s orientation, but by sin,” Cotta said.

Bochner, who was first in the lineup before heading out to Kabbalat Shabbat at his synagogue, said the Torah “commands us to love our fellow. Everyone. As we love ourselves.” He received an enthusiastic “That’s right!” and applause from the pews.

Mary Lee, a white-haired Unitarian Universalist who’s lived in Modesto for 20 years, stood alone in a pew, clutching an electric tea light in her left hand as she sang along with “This Little Light of Mine.”

“All around my town, I’m gonna let it shine,” she sang.

Charmed by St. Paul’s pastor Nick Lorenzetti, who peppered the evening with jokes and anecdotes, Lee said she came that night because she was “concerned about the feeling in the country.”

The next afternoon at Beth Shalom, the panel event was winding down when Bochner asked everyone to close their eyes. “Think

of your own identity, in all its variety. Take a moment to take a deep breath and to think of your own family identity, sexual identity, spiritual identity, political identity, ethnic or cultural identity,” he said.

“Now, remind yourself that you are made in the image of the Creator, who when humanity was formed, announced it was ‘very good.’

“We are all very good,” he said. ■

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Bill to make ethnic studies mandatory is put on hold

NEWS | GABE STUTMAN | J. STAFF

Following widespread controversy and complaints of anti-Semitic bias in a proposed high school curriculum in ethnic studies, state Assembly member Jose Medina (D-Riverside) announced on Aug. 22 that until the complaints are addressed, he would put the brakes on a bill he wrote to make the course a graduation requirement.

"I strongly believe in the tenets of Ethnic Studies and continue to assert that it is time for California to make the subject a requirement for all students," the statement read. "This underscores the importance of taking the time necessary to ensure we get the curriculum right."

Medina, who represents a majority Latino district encompassing the Riverside area, is also one of the few non-Jewish members of the California Legislative Jewish Caucus.

In an interview with J. on Aug. 26, he said issues relevant to the Jewish community are deeply meaningful to him, both professionally and personally, because he has two Jewish children.

"Their mother is Jewish, from Panama," he said. "I will be at High Holidays this year, as I have been for many years."

Medina was a member of Temple Beth El in Riverside for years, he said. Earlier this month he hung a mezuzah on his office door celebrating the passage of a bill to protect the right of Californians to display them in apartments and condos.

His announcement followed the June release of a 350-page model curriculum, recommended for statewide instruction in high schools, that drew condemnation from Jewish groups and secular critics.

Dozens of Jewish organizations, from the Anti-

Defamation League to the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation to JIMENA: Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa, took issue with the draft. They were troubled by the fact that it did not deal meaningfully with anti-Semitism; left out a discussion of the Jewish American experience; was supportive of the boycott, divestment and sanctions movement; and was otherwise sharply critical of Israel.

Medina said he shared many of the concerns expressed by Jewish groups. In July, he signed onto a letter with Jewish lawmakers that said the proposed curriculum, developed by an 18-member committee over a series of daylong meetings earlier this year, reflected "anti-Jewish bias."

"There were many things about it that seemed to be anti-Semitic," he told J. "I think the omission of the Jewish experience in the United States is glaring. I don't really think BDS should be included. And I also have an issue with the fact that anti-Semitism is not addressed."

He also said he had trouble with some of the "academic jargon" that was used, echoing an Aug. 4 editorial in the Los Angeles Times critiquing the curriculum as "jargon-filled"



Assembly member Jose Medina (left) helps affix mezuzah on office door.

and "all-too-PC."

As a former high school ethnic studies and Chicano studies teacher, Medina said he believes firmly in the benefits of teaching ethnic studies, the interdisciplinary study of race and ethnicity with a focus on people of color. Studies have shown it can lead to improved attendance and higher grades for struggling high school students.

"I saw firsthand the value of students seeing themselves included in the curriculum," he said.

In his own family, he said, his children are taught to be proud of their dual heritage.

"Just as my own children were proud of their Jewishness, they were, at the same time, proud of being Latino," he said. "I think that's what ethnic studies can do."

The bill had already passed the Assembly overwhelmingly on May 23 and was approved by the Senate Education Committee on June 26, before Medina decided to delay it and make it a "two-year bill" that would extend discussion into next year.

In the statement, released through his press office, Medina said there is "consensus" in support of ethnic studies, but uncertainties surrounding the curriculum.

"How do we ensure the curriculum is comprehensive, rigorous, and inclusive enough?" the statement read.

"Very basically," he told J., "I want to give the Department of Education the time that they need to get the curriculum right." ■

State Democrats pass three pro-Israel resolutions

NEWS | DAN PINE | J. STAFF

Pro-Israel Democrats found something to cheer about after the California Democratic Party's executive board passed resolutions condemning anti-Semitism and decrying anti-Zionism as a form of anti-Semitism.

The three-day meeting brought hundreds of state party activists, delegates and politicians to the Hilton DoubleTree Hotel in San Jose on Aug. 23-25. Among the attendees were members of Progressive Zionists of California, an organization that routinely attends party gatherings to fight what they consider anti-Israel resolutions.

This time, the group put forth a resolution of its own, one that "sailed through," according to PZC co-founder Susan George.

"It was a direct pushback on what oftentimes boils down to very demeaning and harmful language that can occur, particularly from BDS advocates," she told J.

The resolution, which passed Sunday in a 75-25 vote, articulates "how anti-Semitic hate speech harms Jews and other Zionists in the California Democratic Party." It defines Zionism as "the human right to self-determination of the Jewish people in their homeland of Israel," and notes that anti-Semitic hate speech has been "regularly employed by anti-Israel activists both inside and outside the [party] using demeaning and degrading language about Jews and supporters of Israel."

Among other points, the resolution condemns statements that "dehumanize or employ stereotypes about Jews, such as that Jews control or wield unusual power over the economy, government or media" as well as assertions that "Jews do not have a right to self-determination or protections from discrimination accorded to others."

The Progressive Zionists group also applauded passage of a separate resolution that offered support for "diverse voices targeted by the Trump Administration," including Jews, and which cites ADL statistics that note "anti-Semitic hate crimes increased 70% in 2017 and 37% in the first half of 2018."

A third resolution that was approved defines anti-Semitism using criteria created by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (the United States is a member). Among the criteria: denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor, and applying double standards to Israel by requiring behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.

All three resolutions passed on Aug. 25.

The weekend's results mirrored a similar outcome at the California Democratic Party State Convention held in San Francisco in June. At that time, multiple proposed resolutions deemed hostile to Israel by PZC members and others were rejected by the Resolutions Committee and on the floor

of the convention.

Not everything in San Jose this past weekend went as PZC members would have liked. The party's Legislative Committee voted to endorse H.R. 2407, a bill sponsored by Rep. Betty McCollum (D-Minnesota), which promotes "the human rights of Palestinian children living under Israeli military occupation and [requires] that United States funds do not support military detention, interrogation, abuse or ill-treatment of Palestinian children."

The objections to the bill stem from the contention that such action "imperils a two-state solution by connecting U.S. military funding to Israeli security practices regarding the detention of minors," according to a PZC press release, and for "presenting a one-sided and dishonest picture of Israel's security issues."

Overall, however, pro-Israel party activists were happy with the weekend's outcome.

"Overall we did very well," said Andrew Lachman, a Los Angeles-based member of the Resolutions Committee. "We're very pleased with the way things turned out. It was all of us coming together."

Added PZC co-founder George: "The [anti-Semitism] resolution that was passed is something we consider groundbreaking, because that type of language was never used in a resolution before." ■



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Dorothy Saxe is passionate about hand-crafted art. (Photo/Norm Levin)

Dorothy Saxe

LIZ HARRIS | J. CORRESPONDENT

Dorothy and George Saxe never had “the talk” with their children, she confided recently.

They didn’t have to, explained the 93-year-old mother of three, because philanthropy was simply part of family life. It was a given.

“The kids told us that they observed” the contributions she and her late husband made to the Bay Area Jewish community and the arts through volunteering and donations. “We led by example,” she said.

The couple have been donor-advised fundholders with the S.E.-based Jewish Community Federation for decades, and George served on the Federation board (and others). Dorothy helped solicit funds for the Federation, served on the board of Jewish Family and Children’s Services in San Francisco and AIPAC, and is still a trustee of the Contemporary Jewish Museum and Pilchuck Glass School in Washington state.

Their son Loren served on the board of the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto and as president of Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills. Daughter Ellen Saliman sits on the board of the Peninsula JCC. Son Joel volunteered with the nonprofit Geshet.

The Saxes even set up funds for their six grandchildren, so they too would become philanthropic. No doubt Saxe’s six great-grandchildren will follow suit.

“I’m very proud of them,” Saxe said of her family.

Saxe learned the importance of giving — and Judaism — as a child. She grew up in a Reform household, following traditions such as lighting Shabbat candles and attending weekly religious services. “Jewish holidays were a big deal,” she said.

Her father was president of their synagogue in Michigan City, Indiana, for 18 years and volunteered as a board member of Jewish agencies. Her mother was active in the synagogue sisterhood. Their goodwill spread beyond the synagogue: During the Depression, people would come to their door seeking assistance. Whether providing food or money, her family would help.

“My father never told me the importance of giving back,” Saxe said, “but I knew he was very generous. He did so many things I was aware of. He was a sterling example of a philanthropist.”

For Saxe, Judaism is “being involved, caring, helping and doing. Mitzvahs and tikkun olam,” said the longtime member of Reform Congregation Beth Am. “I love being Jewish — everything about it.”

Her other great passion is art.

Dorothy and George began exploring the world of art in the 1970s. It was something they could do together, and it quickly captivated them both. “It changed our lives, how and where we traveled,” she said. They’d visit studios and artist communities locally and abroad. “All of my good friends from around the country I met through art,” Saxe said.

Though she doesn’t consider herself artistic, “I was always interested in art.”

Saxe recalled taking the train to Chicago with a cousin to go to the Art Institute as a young teen, and “as soon as I could, taking art appreciation courses” as a student at Northwestern University.

She and George began their collection with glass art, eventually expanding into other media. “I’ve always liked anything made by hand,” she said.

Nearly 70 pieces from their collection are on permanent display at the Dorothy and George Saxe Collection of Contemporary Craft at the de Young Museum in San Francisco. And her Menlo Park home is bursting with hand-crafted art. Pieces of all shapes and sizes and expressions decorate the walls, occupy shelves and tables, even hang from the ceiling. With the exception of a few couches, all of the furniture was commissioned.

There is also Judaica — a Kiddush cup, tzedakah box, hanukkah, Shabbat candlesticks. All are one-of-a-kind. There are also pieces from every Dorothy Saxe Invitational at the Contemporary Jewish Museum. The exhibit, endowed by her husband the year before he died in 2010, invites artists of all faiths to reinterpret a Jewish ritual or ceremonial object, and allows collectors to purchase pieces at the close.

“It’s very informative for non-Jewish people,” Saxe said, adding, “a lot of the artists have told me that they are lapsed Jews and it helped them reconnect with their roots.”

Among her favorite invitations: “Sabbath” in 2017 (“the submissions were fascinating”), and “Do Not Destroy: Trees, Art, and Jewish Thought” in 2012, inspired by the holiday of Tu B’Shevat.

Saxe has deep ties to the museum, going back to its founding as the Jewish Museum San Francisco on the bottom floor of the Federation building on Steuart Street. She believes the CJM has been “very successful” in achieving its mission to bring a diverse audience through its doors. The museum “is a delight — it’s very exciting,” said Saxe, who provides financial support to other museums and cultural institutions, as well.

Eventually, most of the art in her home and San Francisco apartment will be shared with the public. “We wanted to build a collection of important art that we knew we were going to give to a museum someday.”

In the meantime, Saxe keeps busy. She enjoys attending art openings, traveling in search of art, sharing her art expertise and lending a helping hand to worthy causes. Lately, “I’m zeroing in on specific things,” she said. “I am getting more involved in advancing special projects at various places.” She serves on the arts committee of the Campus for Jewish Living in San Francisco, finding art for the buildings; is involved in an art project at the Oshman Family JCC in Palo Alto, commissioning a new sculpture; and sits on a committee that is selecting art for the new Stanford Hospital in Palo Alto.

“She is indefatigable,” effused Lori Starr, the CJM’s executive director. Saxe is chair of the museum’s governance committee and board secretary. “She understands the role of trusteeship and fiduciary responsibility, understands the process ... that every voice counts,” Starr said.

Noting that Saxe’s grandson David also serves on the board, Starr said of Dorothy Saxe: “She is the paradigm of lay leadership, setting an example and opening portals of new leadership ... She has a good eye, an ayin tov, for art and for all good things.”

In addition to making meaningful gifts to the CJM, Oshman Family JCC, Federation, JFCS, Camp Newman and Beth Am, “I think I belong to most of the Jewish organizations,” Saxe said.

“They used to say that giving to charity is very altruistic, but I think that anyone who gives gets personal pleasure out of it. They certainly benefit from their generosity.” ■

“They used to say that giving to charity is very altruistic, but I think that anyone who gives gets personal pleasure out of it.”



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Free and low-cost services for the High Holidays 2019

No place to go for the High Holidays? Welcome to our annual list of free and low-cost Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services open to the public.

Everything listed here is \$40 and under. Some synagogues offer free services for students or new attendees, some offer a sliding scale, some have child care, and some have dinners and meals along with services. Almost all welcome donations, and many say they won't turn anyone away for lack of funds. But reservations are required by almost all (no drop-ins).

Many Bay Area Chabads offer services at no cost; check Chabad.org for details and registration.

Another option is to attend a tashlich ceremony, the ritual of casting away one's transgressions, which takes place outdoors and is free and open to the public.

For a full list of synagogues in the Greater Bay Area, check out J's Resource Guide at jweekly.com/jewishresourceguide/.

Rosh Hashanah begins at sundown Sunday, Sept. 29, and Yom Kippur at sundown Tuesday, Oct. 8. If you don't see your free or low-cost listing here, send it to events@jweekly.com. *Shanah tovah!*



San Francisco

Congregation B'nai Emunah—Free. Family service in the preschool 10:15 a.m. Sept. 30; family service in the sanctuary 3 p.m. Oct. 9. Conservative. 3595 Taraval St. (415) 664-7373 or bnaiemunahsf.org/celebrate/high-holidays

Congregation Emanu-El—Free family services. 5 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m., 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m. Sept. 30; 5 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m., 2:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m. Oct. 9. Reform. 2 Lake St. (415) 751-2535 or emanuelf.org/hhd

Congregation Ner Tamid—Free for students and first-time guests. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 9 a.m. Sept. 30; 9 a.m. Oct. 1; 6:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 9 a.m. Oct. 9. Conservative. 1250 Quintara St. (415) 661-3383 or nertamidsf.org

Congregation Sha'ar Zahav—Free. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 9:30 a.m. Sept. 30; 9:30 a.m. Oct. 1; 7:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 9:30 a.m. Oct. 9. Also, two free services for families with preschoolers through third-graders: 9:30 a.m. Sept. 30 and 9:30 a.m. Oct. 9. Reform. Sept. 30 services at 290 Dolores St., others at Herbst Theatre, 401 Van Ness Ave. (415) 861-6932 or shaarzahav.org/high-holidays-2019

Keneset HaLev—Sliding scale up to \$40, walk-ins welcome. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m. Sept. 30; 6:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m. Oct. 9. Independent/post-denominational. County Fair Building, Golden Gate Park, near Ninth Avenue and Lincoln Way. (415) 339-7485 or kenesethalev.org

Or Shalom Jewish Community—Free family services. 6 p.m. Sept. 29; 9 a.m. Sept. 30; 6 p.m. Oct. 8; 9 a.m. Oct. 9. Reconstructionist. First Unitarian Universalist Center, 1187 Franklin St. (415) 469-5542 or orshalom.org/high-holy-days

East Bay

Aquarian Minyan—Free for first-time guests. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29. All services free for full-time students with current student ID. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 9:30 a.m. Sept. 30, 9:30 a.m. Oct. 1; 6 p.m. Oct. 8; 9:30 a.m. Oct. 9. Hillside Community Church, 1422 Nave-liever St., El Cerrito. aquarianminyan.com/HHRRegister

Berkeley Community—Free. 7 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m. Sept. 30; 7 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m. Oct. 9. Cross-de-nominational. JCC East Bay, 1414 Walnut St., Berke-ley. (510) 917-5314 or highholidayservices.org

Chabad of Alameda—Free, some require regis-tration. 6 p.m. Sept. 29; 9:30 a.m. Sept. 30; 9:30 a.m. Oct. 1; 6:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 9:30 a.m., 5:15 p.m. Oct. 9. For location, call or register. (510) 640-2590 or jewishalameda.com/services

Chabad of the Tri-Valley—Free. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m., 6 p.m. Sept. 30; 10 a.m., 6 p.m. Oct. 1; 6:15 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m., 12 p.m., 6:15 p.m. Oct. 9. \$20 break-fast. 3370 Hopyard Road, Pleasanton. (925) 846-0700 or jewishtrivalley.com

Chochmat HaLev—Pay-what-you-can option, \$18 minimum requested. Under 13 free with paid adult. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m. Sept. 30; 10 a.m. Oct. 1; 6:15 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 4:45 p.m. Oct. 9. Renewal. One at 2215 Prince St., Berkeley, others at First Presbyterian Church, 2407 Dana St., Berkeley. (510) 704-9687 or chochmat.org/high-holy-days-2












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Congregation Beth El—Free. Check to see which services are for tots, teens or families. 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m., 3:30 p.m. Sept. 30; 10:15 a.m. Oct. 1; 10:30 a.m., 1 p.m., 2:45 p.m., 5:30 p.m., 6:15 p.m. Oct. 9. Reform. 1301 Oxford St., Berkeley. (510) 848-3988 or bethelberkeley.org/highholidays

Congregation B'nai Tikvah—Free. For families with kids 5 and under. 9:30 a.m. Sept. 30; 9:30 a.m. Oct. 9. Reform. St. Matthew Lutheran Church, 399 Wiget Lane, Walnut Creek. (925) 933-5397 or tikvah.org

Congregation B'nai Torah—Free. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m. Sept. 30; 7:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m. Oct. 9. Reform. 50 Sand Creek Road, Suite 150, Brentwood. (925) 754-2545 or bnaitoraheastbay.org

Jewish Gateways—Family services for \$25. 9 a.m. Sept. 30; 9 a.m. Oct. 9. Interfaith/nondenominational. Held in and around a big white tent at JCC East Bay, but not affiliated with center. 1414 Walnut St., Berkeley. (510) 545-9977 or jewishgateways.org

Minyan Dafna—Free. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 7:30 p.m. Sept. 30. Short services followed by dinner. Traditional egalitarian. Location TBA. minyandafna.org/#holidays

Reutlinger Community—Senior care and living facility. Free. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 9 a.m. Sept. 30; 9 a.m. Oct. 1; 6:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 9 a.m. Oct. 9. Nondenominational. 4000 Camino Tassajara, Danville. (925) 648-2800 or nasalati@rcjl.org

Temple Israel—Free for college students with ID. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m. Sept. 30; 10:30 a.m. Oct. 1; 7:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m. Oct. 9. Reform. 3183 Mecartney Road, Alameda. (510) 522-9355 or templeisraelalameda.org/high-holy-days

Tri-Valley Cultural Jews—\$20; free for kids under 13. 7 p.m. Sept. 29; 7 p.m. Oct. 8. Humanistic/secular. At Bothwell Arts Center, 2466 Eighth St., Livermore. (925) 485-1049 or tinyurl.com/tvcj-rosh-2019

North Bay

Camp Tawonga—Sliding scale includes \$18, \$36 and higher. In partnership with Keshet Marin and PJ Library. 3 p.m. Sept. 29. McNears Beach County Park, 201 Cantera Way, San Rafael. (415) 543-2267 or tawonga.org/events

Chabad of Novato—Free. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m. Sept. 30; 10 a.m. Oct. 1; 6:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m. Oct. 9. Sites in Novato vary: 7430 Redwood Blvd., Suite D; City Hall, 901 Sherman Ave.; Homeward Bound, 1385 N. Hamilton Pkwy. (415) 878-6770 or jewishnovato.com

Chabad of Solano County—Free. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m. Sept. 30; 10 a.m. Oct. 1; 6:15 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m. Oct. 9. 730 E. Main St., Vacaville. (707) 592-5300 or tinyurl.com/csol-hh2019

Peninsula and South Bay

Chabad North Peninsula—Free. 6:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 11:15 a.m. Sept. 30; 11:15 a.m. Oct. 1; 6:15 p.m. Oct. 8; 9 a.m. Oct. 9. Locations in San Mateo and Foster City given with RSVP. (650) 667-9556 or chabadnp.com/highholidays

Coastside Jewish Community—Free for ages 18-26 as part of Synagogue Connect. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 9 a.m. (family service), 10:30 a.m. Sept. 30; 7:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 9 a.m. (family service), 10:30 a.m. Oct. 9. Independent. United Methodist Church, 777 Miramontes St., Half Moon Bay. (650) 479-5252 or coastsidejewishcommunity.org

Congregation Beth Am—Free family services. 1:30 p.m. Sept. 30; 1:30 p.m. Oct. 9. Redemption Bay Area, 105 Nortech Parkway, San Jose. These and all other services (not listed) are free for full-time students and military, and \$36 for under 36. Reform. (650) 493-4661 or betham.org/hhd2019

Congregation Beth David—Donation-based tickets. 6 and 8 p.m. Sept. 29; 8:30 a.m. Sept. 30 and Oct. 1; 6 p.m. Oct. 8; 9 a.m. Oct. 9. 19700 Prospect Road, Saratoga. (408) 257-3333 or beth-david.org/hhd-5780

Congregation Beth Jacob—All services free for college students, military personnel and prospective members; Erev Rosh Hashanah and Rosh Hashanah Day 2 free to all. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 9 a.m. Sept. 30; 9 a.m. Oct. 1; 5 p.m. Oct. 8; 9 a.m. Oct. 9. 1550 Alameda de las Pulgas, Redwood City. (650) 366-8481 or bethjacobrwc.org/worship/high-holy-days

Congregation Kol Emeth—\$36 for nonmember young adults and Keshet families attending for the first time. See website for schedule. Conservative egalitarian. 2525 Charleston Road, Suite 204, Mountain View. (650) 948-7498 or kolemeth.org

Congregation Shir Hadash—Free family services. 3:30 p.m. Sept. 30; 3:30 p.m. Oct. 9. Reform. 20 Cherry Blossom Lane, Los Gatos. (408) 358-1751 or shirhadash.org

Jewish Baby Network—Free for families with newborns through age 3. Co-sponsored by three nearby synagogues, PJCC and PJ Library. 10:30 a.m. Sept. 29. Nondenominational. Briones Park, 609 Maybell Ave., Palo Alto. (650) 275-2215 or tinyurl.com/jbn-rosh-2019

Keddem Congregation—Free, RSVP requested. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 9:30 a.m. Sept. 30; 7 p.m. Oct. 8; 9:15 a.m. Oct. 9. Reconstructionist. Kehillah Jewish High School, 3900 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. (650) 494-6400 or keddem.org/#HHD

Los Altos Chabad—Free. 10 a.m. Sept. 30; 6:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m. Oct. 9. 3070 Louis Road, Palo Alto. (650) 241-8770 or tinyurl.com/cla-hh2019

Temple Emanu-El—Free for first-time attendees. 7:30 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m. Sept. 30; 7:30 p.m. Oct. 8; 10 a.m. Oct. 9. Children's services (preschool-K) 9 a.m. Sept. 30 and Oct. 9. Reform. Heritage Theatre, 1 W. Campbell Ave., Campbell. (408) 292-0939 or templesanjose.org/highholidays

Beyond the Bay Area

Temple Beth El—Free, but reservations required. 8 p.m. Sept. 29; 10 a.m. Sept. 30; 10 a.m. Oct. 1; 8 p.m. Oct. 8, 10 a.m. Oct. 9. 3055 Porter Gulch Road, Aptos. (831) 479-3444 or tbeapto.org/high-holidays.html



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Alternative Service

Ben Kramarz, a renowned Bay Area song leader, leads this service that focuses on warmth, participation and spirituality. Appropriate for families, the Alternative Service offers a contemporary blend of English and Hebrew.

Young Families' Service

Families with young children are invited to a brief service with kid-friendly songs on the first day of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. Led by accomplished educators, the Young Families' Service provides the opportunity for parents of young children to connect with the themes of the holiday in appropriate and accessible ways. After the service, childcare is available for children up to Kindergarten.

Tashlich, Family Service, and Picnic

Join us in Civic Park as we cast away our sins and join together for family services on the first day of Rosh HaShanah. Stay for a picnic dinner – we'll provide a festive dessert!

Due to enhanced security, preregistration is required for all events.

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Q&A: She helps choreograph intimate scenes for performers

TALKING WITH | PATRICIA CORRIGAN | J. CORRESPONDENT

Maya Herbsman, 23, is associate artistic director and education coordinator at Cutting Ball Theatre in San Francisco. She's an alum of Camp Tawonga, a graduate of the Urban School in San Francisco and Wesleyan University, and has worked for several theater companies since returning to the Bay Area.



NAME: Maya Herbsman
AGE: 23
CITY: San Francisco
POSITION: Theater director and teacher

J.: What drew you to a career in theater?

MAYA HERBSMAN: As a student at the Urban School of San Francisco, I had to take an art class, but I'm bad at visual arts. On a whim, I took an acting class and fell in love with it. In my senior year, during the school's One Acts Festival, I got to direct, and I felt like this is the thing.

And so it was — but why?

As an actor, you're thinking only about your own work, but directing is about the big picture, and you're thinking about how to show and tell the entire story.

Since college, you have worked locally with Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Idiot String, We Players, New Conservatory Theatre, Z Space, Shotgun Players, Bay Area Children's Theatre, TheaterFIRST and now Cutting Ball. How's your current job going?

I love that we do re-envisioned classics and experimental new works, and now we're starting to blur the lines between the two, taking staunchly feminist looks at old misogynistic plays in a way that feels exciting to me. It's a wonderful environment, especially as a young artist, and I feel lucky to be there.

You also are a teaching artist. Please talk a bit about that.

At one point, I was teaching 22 classes a week all over the Bay Area. Now I'm teaching just two or three classes a week in acting, improv and playmaking, working primarily with middle-school students. I love feeling that I can make a difference, maybe seeing a student who couldn't make eye contact with me at first but by the end of class is laughing, volunteering, taking the lead. That means the whole world to me.

You grew up in San Rafael, and you've

said spending summers at Camp Tawonga helped shape your body positivity and your self-confidence. How so?

I went to Camp Tawonga seven or eight years as a camper and for two as a counselor. It's a wonderful institution that prioritizes building positive self-esteem, gives kids a space to feel comfortable about who they are, and also emphasizes tikkun olam, the importance of helping others.

I was a fairly shy kid, but I had counselors, mentors and peers who pushed me out of my comfort zone a little and shaped a lot of who I am today. It's an amazing thing that now I can help kids get through whatever they're coping with, and help them find the best version of themselves.

In the theater world, you also work as an intimacy choreographer, a relatively new field. What does that entail?

It's about creating safe and consensual choreography for actors working on intimate scenes, whether they are sexual, romantic or familial. We talk about what the character would do, and that takes the emotional charge, the personal intensity, out of it. That helps actors feel safe and be comfortable setting their limits. It's like fight choreography — it wouldn't be reasonable not to break down fight scenes

into specific, repeatable steps.

How did you get interested in this specialty?

I learned about it while studying directing in college, when the field was just starting to get big, right on the heels of the Times Up and MeToo movements. I studied under Intimacy Directors International, learning from the first intimacy director working on Broadway. I was in the inaugural classes of apprentices, about 15 or 20 of us in six countries, all now well on our way to certification. I'm lucky I get to help push forward this movement, which is just about treating other humans with the dignity and respect they deserve.

Every aspect of your work sounds intense. What do you do to relax?

Intimacy direction is a lot of holding space for other people, and I do have to take time to separate myself from that afterward. Even a car ride or a trip on BART can do it, or to come down I'll call a friend, listen to music or a podcast, dance a bit in the street or play cards. Otherwise, what do I do in my spare time? I see theater. It feels like work a little bit, but it's what I want to do. ■

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

Chabad of North Peninsula to break ground on new home

Sure, there will be a bouncy house, live music and a petting zoo at Chabad of the North Peninsula's Groundbreaking Hoedown on Sunday Sept. 8. But the key to the event is the groundbreaking.

After 17 years of serving San Mateo and the North Peninsula area without a permanent home, the Chabad center is ready to launch an estimated \$23.9 million building project that will include a sanctuary, social hall, large rooms for its preschool classes, a rooftop garden and a kosher cafe.

"This has been a long journey, and a lot of work," said Rabbi Yossi Marcus, who with his wife, Esty, launched Chabad of the North Peninsula in 2001. "And there's a lot of excitement in the community. People are thrilled thinking about what this building is going to be, and to finally break ground is really exhilarating."

The new 14,000-square-foot complex — to be known as the Lent Chabad Center — will be located just a few blocks north of downtown San Mateo, on North San Mateo Drive at Monte Diablo Avenue.

With a 14- to 18-month timeframe for construction, the facility should be open by the end of 2020, leaders expect.

The construction project was kicked off by a \$6 million gift from Bobby and Fran Lent, a Hillsborough family that's been attending the North Peninsula Chabad and donating

for about a decade. More than \$19.8 million has been raised so far, and construction is scheduled to start in October, just about three years after the land was purchased in 2016.

"For all of our programs, either we didn't have enough room or we had to go to an offsite location," Marcus said. "We will finally have a place that will be a home for all the celebrations and lifecycle events, and welcome more people to partake of the education opportunities."

In addition to shovel hitting dirt, the Groundbreaking Hoedown event will include arts and crafts, a shofar-making workshop and a demonstration from a local beekeeper. There also will be some education

sessions with Rabbi Reuven Goldstein, who will show artifacts from his private Judaica collection and give a lecture on the history of synagogues. The Ferris Wheels, a band fronted by Rabbi Yehuda Ferris of Chabad of the East Bay, will play a couple of sets.

The event is set for 3 to 5 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 8, and the



Rendering of new Chabad North Peninsula, designed by Studio Bondy Architecture

public is invited for free, although online registration is requested. To take part in the shofar workshop (you get to keep your shofar), the cost is \$10 in advance or \$15 at the event. For details, visit chabadnp.com/groundbreaking. The precise address of the event will be provided after you register. — J. Staff ■

Survivor and immigrant saved from eviction

NEWS | MAYA MIRSKY | J. STAFF

A vote by Alameda's City Council has saved Musiy Rishin, an 87-year-old disabled Holocaust survivor from the former Soviet Union, from being pushed out of his apartment.

"He's happy and he's basically very exhausted," said his daughter, Svetlana Rishin.

The council voted Sept. 3 to rescind a rule that would have allowed Rishin's out-of-state landlord to evict him from the apartment he's lived in for 17 years.

Prior to the council vote, Rishin's family feared the worst. "This is the first really negative thing he ever encountered in this country, and he cannot believe that this is happening to him," his daughter said at the time.

Rishin rents through the housing voucher program known as Section 8, under which the federal government pays the bulk of the rent directly to landlords as a way to help low-income, elderly and disabled people.

Alameda prohibits landlords from evicting regular tenants so they can raise the rent to market rate. However, the city was one of only a few in California with an exemption allowing Section 8 tenants to be evicted without cause, said Sarah McCracken, a staff attorney with Centro Legal de la Raza, who represented Rishin.

"This is an extremely rare and unusual exemption, and it causes this kind of abuse," she said.

Eviction would have been particularly traumatizing, Svetlana Rishin said, because of her father's history. Musiy Rishin was 9 years old in 1941 when he and his parents fled the Nazi invasion of Ukraine.

"The train was being bombed and people were being killed in front of his eyes by shrapnel," she said.

Rishin, his parents and brother ended up in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where he became an attorney, living there until 1998 when the family emigrated to California because of unrest in the country.

"Everything he made, he built, he loved, he had to walk out on it and leave everything behind," said Svetlana Rishin, who is also an attorney.

His craving for stability is part of what made the eviction notice particularly heartbreaking, Rishin's daughter said. And it was only made worse because of the recent death of her brother Yaraslav, Musiy

Rishin's son, who lived with him during a long battle with cancer until he passed away in April.

"In the midst of it, my father got struck by this very cruel behavior by the landlord," Svetlana Rishin said.

According to Rishin, who is currently staying with and taking care of her father, the landlords had been trying to get rid of him since a few years after he moved in,

considering him an undesirable tenant. They were looking to upgrade, she said. "They started remodeling the building to position it as a 'luxury' building."

Then this year he was given a notice to pay an additional \$700 in rent, and, on the heels of that, an eviction notice.

In an interview with the Guardian, the landlords, Margaret and Spencer Tam, said the building is a business

venture for them and they want to charge market rate for the two-bedroom apartment. Rishin's subsidized rent is currently \$2,540 a month.

"That's still not good enough for them," McCracken said of the owners.

J.'s attempts to contact the Tams were unsuccessful.

Svetlana Rishin said that the issue for her father was not that he would become homeless, but that he was being forced out of a place where he felt safe.

"For older people, they cannot be moved easily," she said. "It's one of the most traumatic events."

Alameda Mayor Marilyn Ezzy Ashcroft called what was happening to Rishin "heartbreaking," but also said that it was important to consider ways to ensure that landlords will continue accepting Section 8 tenants in a city already suffering from a tight housing market.

"Part of the dilemma is we don't want people to be discouraged from becoming Section 8 landlords," she said.

Public opinion was on Rishin's side: A pro-rent control group held a rally outside Rishin's Alameda apartment complex, drawing several dozen people to support him on Aug. 24. And the final 4-1 vote at the City Council was resounding.

"They were very nice," Svetlana Rishin said of the council and the citizens who turned out. "They were very sympathetic. There was not one person in the room who was not sympathetic." ■



Musiy Rishin



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Celebrating unique Jewish traditions at Karaite gathering

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

“It’s like Judaism from an alternate universe,” said my friend Taeer. “So much is the same — but different.”

I’ve witnessed a lot of different Judaisms, and I’ve had that feeling in plenty of synagogues — but never more so than in my visits to the Karaite synagogue in Daly City. This small community, the only significant outpost of Karaite Judaism in North America, represents a road not taken by most of our ancestors.

Karaite Jews are the other half of a 10th-century schism, in which their ancestors rejected rabbinic authority, electing to rely solely on the written Torah. (Hence the name, from the Hebrew *kara*, write. They call the rest of us Rabbanites.) The 800 who live in the Bay Area are part of an ancient community of Karaite Jews who lived in Egypt until the outbreak of the Six-Day War in 1967, when all Jewish men were imprisoned as possible Israeli spies. After their release, the Karaites left Egypt. Most headed to Israel, but some settled in the Bay Area. Many still live here, along with their children and grandchildren.

A year ago, their synagogue reopened after a significant remodeling and expansion, with the promise of a reinvigorated community, a building in which to ensure a Karaite future in America.

That reinvigoration was on display last weekend at the very first Karaite Convention, a gathering of several dozen Karaite Jews — mostly from the Bay Area, but some from as far as Boston, Australia and Israel, where there is a Karaite community of around 30,000. There were Shabbat services, workshops and learning sessions on Karaite music, Karaite kashrut, Karaite texts and more. And food. Goodness me, the food. When old Egyptian ladies are preparing a big communal meal, the wise among us show up.

I arrived late Friday afternoon, just as a group conversion ceremony was wrapping up. By that time, several married couples converting to Karaite Judaism had just been remarried and were signing new marriage documents. “Anyone who wants, go and sign,” announced Shawn Lichaa, a second-generation American Karaite who has become a pillar of and advocate for the

community. Karaite marriage documents require signatures of 10 witnesses — a whole minyan!

Before dinner, around 70 people gathered around a long table for some singing, featuring the results of the Karaite Mantra Project. The mantra is a new liturgical composition by two Israeli Karaite hazzans, including Nir Nissim, who was present teaching the song. The singing had a call-and-response, kirtan-like feel.

Services were led by America’s foremost Karaite hazzan, James Walker. He has a phenomenal, powerful voice. It was one of the best hazzanut experiences of my life.

Services are conducted in a sanctuary that looks like a typical sanctuary — an ark at the front, shelves of prayerbooks at the back, rows of pews, etc. But it’s also different. One must remove shoes before entering, as Moses did when he approached the burning bush. There is lush, comfortable carpeting underfoot. Between the pews and the bimah is an open space where many of the men sit and children squirm.

Most of the service is conducted

standing. When they bow, they go all the way down, touching their heads to the floor, including old men clearly struggling to get all the way down and back up.

The liturgy is composed almost entirely of Biblical passages, including long blocks of text cobbled together from many lines and phrases from disparate books of the Bible. It’s heavy on Psalms, of course — the Bible’s own built-in liturgy.

The next morning, I returned in time for the Torah service. This was the most recognizable part of the liturgy and had a familiar structure — the Torah is divided into the same portions, and each one gets several aliyot, as in any Jewish service — but the blessings over the Torah reading are different.

Unlike most Jewish communities today, the person receiving the aliyah actually reads or chants the passage of Torah. Nissim stood by to check that they were reading it just so — often stopping them to interject some explanation of what was being read or to loudly correct a mistake and explain to everyone why that mistake mattered. ■



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All of those involved in leading the service were men. Women are allowed to participate, I was told, but that's a recent development, so most aren't knowledgeable enough yet to do it. Sure. There is no mechtza, but there are three sections of pews. This resembles the "trichitza" arrangement seen in communities like San Francisco's Mission Minyan, but the boundaries were a little more porous. Most women sat in the left column. The middle section was mostly men, with a sprinkling of women. Taeer and I sat on the right, filled with men, except for our friend Mariyama who joined us, and one old woman who sat with her husband for a little while. The women in the sanctuary were mostly younger and/or converts. The old women who came from Egypt shmoozed and arranged food in the next room.

I returned in the afternoon for lessons on Karaite hazzanut and kashrut. According to Walker, Karaite musical traditions go way back, perhaps all the way to the Temple in Jerusalem. "Our sages saw this musical tradition as a continuation of the Psalms themselves," Walker said. Certainly, it is at least 1,000 years old, he said, dating to the beginning of the Karaite synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem, which may be the oldest synagogue in continuous use in Israel.

When old Egyptian ladies are preparing a big communal meal, the wise among us show up.

Walker is one of a handful of black Americans who have converted to Karaite Judaism. After converting, he took a deep dive into Karaite music and is now considered an expert. He demonstrated the basics of reading trope the Karaite way — their take on the mini-melodies for Torah reading that apply to individual syllables or words. There is an Eastern tone to it that, to my Ashkenazi ear, almost sounds Muslim. Indeed, he said, "If you've heard a Muslim call to prayer, some of these same elements are there."

Next up was Travis Wheeler, also a black convert and America's only Karaite *shochet*

(kosher butcher). He is a food processing professional by trade, working in sanitation and product development for large meat-processing operations. Wheeler lives in Kentucky and speaks with a charming Southern accent.

I'll spare you the gory details (though he didn't spare us), but Karaite butchering is somewhat stricter than the OU would have it. At the same time, meat and cheese were served together at lunch earlier in the day — after all, they follow the Bible, which does not explicitly prohibit mixing meat and dairy. The complete prohibition is just some Rabbanite nonsense.

There isn't enough Karaite meat business for Wheeler to make his full-time living at it. Around Passover, he goes into kosher mode and provides meat for America's Karaite community. It's not very profitable, "but I'd rather the community have meat than make money," he said with a smile.

Then it was time for Havdalah. Like other Karaite traditions, this one had the same purpose — to distinguish between Shabbat and the rest of the week — but used totally different words. Looking around at the 30 hearty souls still around at that hour, Nissim said, "I think this is the biggest Havdalah this synagogue has ever seen." ■



Shabbat dinner at the Karaite Convention in Daly City, Aug. 30, 2019 (Photo/David A.M. Wilensky)

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'Auschwitz-themed' Burning Man camp catches ADL's eye

NEWS | GABE STUTMAN | J. STAFF

The San Francisco-based office of the Anti-Defamation League is investigating a macabre art display it called "offensive" and trivializing of the Holocaust at Burning Man, the eight-day saturnalia of built art, mind-bending drugs and social experiments in "radical self-expression" that ended on Labor Day.

Even for the famously brazen Burning Man, held annually in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, the display at the "Barbie Death Camp and Wine Bistro" was controversial, offending some "Burners," as festival attendees are called, and even sparking an altercation on Aug. 31 that led to an arrest and a smashed vehicle taillight, a camp leader said.

Photos sent to J. show a large-scale diorama that one person described as

"We started off small. Just 11 miserable Barbies stuffed into an Easy-Bake Oven."

James Jacoby, Barbie Death Camp creator

"Auschwitz-themed" made with Barbie dolls. A sea of nude Barbies is seen moving toward three full-size kitchen ovens. Some are "crucified" on bright pink crosses. Other photos show toy soldiers with semi-automatic rifles "marching" the Barbies from the rear. A banner strapped to an RV proclaims the Barbie Death Camp "the friendliest concentration camp" at Burning Man. Another reads "arbeit macht plastik frei," a reference to the message over the Auschwitz gate meaning "work makes you free." It also says the camp is presented by "Auschwitz Inc." and "The Mattel Co."

Mattel, however, had nothing to do with the project.

Burning Man began as a small gathering on Baker Beach in San Francisco in 1986 and has since exploded into a global attraction, bringing about 70,000 people who erect a "temporary city" in the Nevada desert in late summer. With roots in modern and contemporary art movements like Dadaism and performance art, the gathering boasts more than 1,000 camps, many constructed around themes.

Some people, particularly experienced Burners, saw in the Barbie Death Camp a bit of boundary-pushing gallows humor, social commentary, or even a daring critique of American materialism. Others, though, saw baffling tone deafness, sheer insensitivity or worse. "I don't think I've ever seen anything so offensive," said one Bay Area festival attendee who was shocked by the display. He asked not to be named because he said he is a

witness in an ongoing criminal case involving the broken taillight.

"We have received a number of complaints," said Seth Brysk, the ADL's regional director. "Certainly individuals have a right to free expression. But using that free expression to trivialize the Holocaust for the sake of political, social or artistic ends is still deeply offensive and inappropriate. And we would ask people not to do so.

"It tarnishes the memories of those who died, including the 6 million Jews and 5



Barbie Death Camp has been at Burning Man for 20 years; here's a scene from 2014. Mattel Corporation is not involved in this exhibit. (Photo/bowers8554-Flickr)

million others," Brysk said. "Particularly in the current environment, where we have a confluence of survivors no longer around to tell their stories, and increased extremism and hatred, we think it's more important than ever to preserve and respect the memory of the Holocaust."

Burning Man, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit headquartered in San Francisco, did not respond to a request for comment.

The creator of Barbie Death Camp, 65-year-old James Jacoby, wonders what all the fuss is about. He's staged the same camp at Burning Man for the past 20 years. A photo from 2009 shows almost the same scene as the one depicted this year, with hundreds of Barbie dolls being led toward ovens by armed soldiers and a nearly identical banner strapped to an RV reading "Arbeit macht plastique frei" and "Auschwitz Inc."

Jacoby is a retired financial manager living in Meadow Vista in the Sierra Foothills. He said he specialized in 401K rollovers until retiring last year, but at Burning Man he goes by the name "Doc Pyro" or, simply, "Doc."

Jacoby, who spoke with J. on Sept. 3, said that he is Jewish and that his father was a World War II Air Force pilot who was shot

down over Berlin and captured.

Jacoby said he is sensitive to the possibility that the Barbie Death Camp might be offensive. But that is part of the point.

"We certainly don't want to trigger anybody," said Jacoby. "But Burning Man is not a safe space. It's not Yale University. You don't get to run and hide from something you don't like. There's 1,100 theme camps. If you don't like ours, go to another one."

Barbie Death Camp is a part of the "Barbie Death Village," a Burning Man camp-

for its over-the-top display in past years, Jacoby and others said, but this year, the negative response was taken to a new level. One Barbie Death Camp organizer who goes by the name "Felony" offered an explanation: "As Burning Man becomes more of a party and less of a cultural experiment, we see less tolerance," Felony said in an online chat. "Nothing like this year, though."

Jacoby said he was accused of being a "f*cking Trump supporter" and a "Nazi white supremacist." That is "nonsense," he said. "We've been doing this since Clinton was president." Others took photos of the camp, which they said they would be sending to the ADL. Some did.

On Aug. 31, the confrontation turned violent. Jacoby said protesters who were leaving the festival in the afternoon "began to smash our property" and threaten him. In the fracas, Jacoby admitted, someone with the Barbie Death Camp smashed one of the protesters' car taillights with a mallet. He was arrested and charged with two counts of assault with a deadly weapon, and Jacoby bailed him out.

"These people were violent beyond imagination," he said about the protesters.

While some Burning Man attendees were put off or deeply offended by Barbie Death Camp, others found it to be firmly within bounds, particularly since Burning Man bills itself as a "laboratory" for pushing the limits of social acceptability.

"There are a lot of potentially offensive things at Burning Man," said Ron Feldman of Berkeley, a longtime Burner who this year went to Shabbat services at Milk and Honey, the Jewish-themed camp. He said he did not hear any talk there of Barbie Death Camp.

"It's not as if somebody had put this out in their front yard," he said. "Given the context [of Burning Man], this may not be so outlandish."

Feldman, who said he donates to the ADL, thinks claims of trivializing the Holocaust are spurious. He referenced depictions of the Holocaust in art, like "Springtime for Hitler," a parody from the musical "The Producers." "It's ironic. It's political critique and commentary," he said. "It's definitely not anti-Jewish in any way."

Barbie Death Camp is "very well known" at Burning Man, Feldman said. "I find it very much in keeping with" the spirit of the event.

Said Jacoby about his project: "Is it a little dark? Yeah, it's a little dark."

"Part of the magic of [Burning Man] is that it's not vanilla, Disneyland, pro-family, Jacoby said. There's a lot of nudity. A lot of sex. A lot of drugs. It's not a family-friendly environment. And our camp isn't, either." ■

East Bay JCC hires a professional 'lifer' for CEO position

NEWS | MAYA MIRSKY | J. STAFF

For Melissa Chapman, who became the JCC of the East Bay's new CEO on Sept. 3, this is familiar ground.

"I am a lifer when it comes to being a Jewish professional," she said. "This is my 22nd year."

That love for the nuts and bolts of organized Jewish communal life will come in handy at the JCC. She replaces interim CEO Samantha Kelman, the JCC's chief operating officer who stepped in a year ago after Amy Tobin left the post after nearly five years at the helm.

The JCC, which was founded in 1978, has its main site in North Berkeley along with a satellite Oakland location. It's known for its children's programs, Jewish education and lively offerings of music, lectures and events. During Tobin's run, the JCC doubled its annual operating budget to \$6.5 million, increased its donor base, expanded its number of after-school sites and completed a long-term strategic vision process.

This is a remarkable comeback for an institution that was on the brink of collapse 10 years ago. At the time, a \$500,000 shortfall triggered layoffs of seven full-time staff, programming cuts and desperate public appeals for funds. But 18 months later the JCC had righted the ship and has flourished ever since.

Julie Elis, a longtime board member who co-chaired the search committee, said the JCC was looking for someone who had passion but also the practical skills to grow the



Melissa Chapman, incoming CEO of the East Bay JCC

center and put it on firm financial footing. "Our programs are full," Elis said. "We're busting at the seams of our Berkeley site." Chapman has a background in development and fundraising as well as management. She comes to the East Bay from San Diego County, where she was chief development officer at the Jewish Federation. Before that, she was CEO of the Jewish Federation of the Sacramento Region, where she helped the organization eliminate its deficit, buy a building and revive its social services. And back when Barack Obama was an Illinois senator, Chapman, a Chicago native, planned the future president's first trip to Israel in her position as assistant vice president of campaigns for the city's Jewish Community Federation.

"The JCC really is a place of happiness and joy."

Chapman is used to serving Jewish institutions, but this is her first time working at a JCC, and she's excited.

"We really get to focus on all the wonderful, powerful moments," she said. "The JCC really is a place of happiness and joy."

Given Chapman's background, one of her goals is to familiarize herself with how the JCC is funded. Right now, its revenue comes largely from its popular preschool and afterschool programs, which are filled to capacity. "It's not going to be a sustainable model," Chapman said. "Especially if the space itself limits how much service you can provide."

But she's not going to make big changes right away. Instead, Chapman said she will first get to know the JCC community and the larger Bay Area Jewish community. "I can't even begin to fundraise until I understand what the community needs are," she said.

Elis said the board was won over by her enthusiasm, skills and commitment. "She has found her life calling," Elis said. "And that was so clear to the entire committee."

Chapman loves her profession so much that she even called it a "beshert moment" when she graduated from college and first applied for a job at a Federation. Something clicked for her, and since then she's been firm in her desire to help her community through organizational work.

"This is my Jewish identity," she said. ■



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Brain researcher is willing to wait for 'wow' moment

SCIENCE | GABRIEL GRESCHLER | J. STAFF

The brain, with its 100 billion neurons, is the most complicated thing in the universe.

Well, according to the brain, anyway.

This complexity, unfortunately, grows once the brain starts to develop neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and Huntington's.

Itamar Kahn, an Israeli brain researcher, thinks he and his team are on track to figuring out something big — no, not curing these disorders, but something that's perhaps even better: identifying them years before their effects are visibly noticed.

Kahn, who recently met with various researchers in the Bay Area on a U.S. tour sponsored by the American Technion Society, is well suited for such a task. He's an associate professor of neuroscience and the director of the Prince Center for Neurodegenerative Disorders of the Brain at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa.

The Prince Center's team of 12 investigators is up against many diseases that have been puzzling researchers for decades. There's a reason: Unlike other ailments, neurodegenerative diseases can progress undetected for years within the brain. Even an MRI exam won't catch them.

"By the time you've noticed something, it's already at a very advanced stage," said Kahn, who was a visiting scholar at Stanford University 15 years ago while completing his Ph.D. at MIT. He lived in San Francisco at the time.

According to the Harvard University NeuroDiscovery Center, Alzheimer's affects 5 million Americans, while Parkinson's and Huntington's affect more than 1 million.

Kahn said researchers' lack of progress has, in turn, led pharmaceutical companies to take fewer risks in trying to find treatments. In June, for example, it was revealed that, in 2015, Pfizer opted against conducting an estimated \$80 million clinical trial on a drug that may have helped reduce the risk of Alzheimer's. Kahn said he believes that decision was made, in part, because of Pfizer's skepticism about new treatments for neurodegenerative disorders (although others believe the almighty dollar sign was the reason behind the decision).

There have been other setbacks, as well. Axovant Sciences, for example, announced in 2018 that an experimental drug had failed to produce results for Alzheimer's. One day later, the Journal of the American Medical Association said a

different experimental drug for the same disorder didn't work.

But Kahn tries to look on the bright side.

"I was excited to learn about the deep commitment individuals have to supporting medical research," he told J., referring to his tour in the U.S. "It shows that we all understand that for progress to be achieved, it will require a sustained effort."

There are fluctuations in the health of brain cells, he explained, and if researchers are able to develop a test that can ascertain



Itamar Kahn (Photo/Courtesy The American Technion Society)

if cells are struggling, they can identify a neurological disease much earlier than previously possible. In turn, this could help accelerate progress on potential medications.

Kahn said his pursuit of brain research isn't because he has relatives afflicted with these diseases. Rather, he is simply passionate about the research and about achieving a victory, no matter how long it takes.

Kahn said he considered going to medical school and becoming a physician — helping a patient deal with a particular ailment would lead to more "immediate gratification," he admitted — but he eventually chose research after seeing the day-to-day workings of both.

"A researcher always has a delayed gratification outcome," Kahn said. "Nothing that we do provides immediate results. You're not going to get a lot of these big wow moments."

Kahn said the pace of his work matches other parts of his personality. "I like to run for long distances," he said with a smile. ■



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Jewish groups provide emergency help to the Bahamas in wake of Hurricane Dorian

The Israel-based humanitarian group IsraAID, B'nai B'rith International and Chabad are among those pitching in to help the Bahamas in the wake of Hurricane Dorian's devastation, which killed at least seven people.



An aerial view of houses in the Bahamas from a Coast Guard aircraft, Sept. 3, 2019. (Photo/JTA-Getty Images-U.S. Coast Guard by Petty Officer 2nd Class Adam Stanton)

"We are in the midst of a historic tragedy in parts of the northern Bahamas," Prime Minister Hubert Minnis said at a news conference on Sept. 4, adding the "devastation is unprecedented and extensive."

The hurricane stalled over Grand Bahama Island for nearly two days, leaving whole neighborhoods, as well as airports and hospitals, submerged. At least 13,000 homes have been damaged or destroyed on Abaco and Grand Bahama islands.

IsraAID, a humanitarian aid agency that responds to emergency crises and engages in international development around the world, announced on Sept. 3 that it would send emergency support to the Bahamas.

Its emergency response team planned to distribute relief supplies, offer psychological first aid and deploy water filters to restore access to drinking water while conducting further needs assessments in affected communities, the NGO said in a statement.

In 2018, IsraAID said its emergency response teams reached 26,300 people with safe

water, psychological and community support, and relief following nine disasters in seven countries. The group has opened an Emergency Response Fund to pay for its work.

B'nai B'rith is accepting donations to its Disaster Relief Fund to assist those affected by Dorian. Donations will go to assist local recovery and rebuilding teams, the group said in a statement.

Rabbi Sholom and Sheera Bluming, directors of Chabad of the Bahamas in Nassau, have been in touch with the Jewish community in Nassau, which was relatively unscathed by the hurricane. As of press time they had not been able to reach some of those living on Abaco, who still remain unaccounted for, according to Chabad.org.

The rabbi said that about 1,000 Jewish expats live in the Bahamas, and more than 100,000 Jews visit the islands each year.

The Blumings have joined in the official government relief effort, calling on the Jewish community to help, and is coordinating a shipment of supplies from South Florida including food, drinking water and mosquito nets for Abaco.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee said in a statement that it would provide emergency medical supplies through its partner the Afya Foundation, and is raising funds for the supplies as well as for recovery and reconstruction initiatives. To tailor its response to the evolving situation on the ground, JDC said it has activated its network of partners and is assessing the situation in consultation with these local and international agencies.

JDC's disaster relief programs are funded by special appeals of the Jewish Federations of North America and tens of thousands of individual donors to JDC. Relief efforts of JDC are coordinated with the U.S. Department of State, USAID, the Israeli government and the United Nations, as well as local and international partners. — JTA

New York measles outbreak declared over

The measles outbreak concentrated in Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods in New York City is considered over.

There have been no new infections over the last two incubation periods, signaling the end of the outbreak, city health officials said on Sept. 3, according to the Associated Press. This means that an emergency order mandating vaccines will be lifted, according to the report.

The order required residents of those neighborhoods to be vaccinated or pay fines of up to \$1,000.

The outbreak began in October 2018 and was mostly concentrated in Orthodox neighborhoods in Brooklyn. There were 654 cases reported since then, which is the most in 30 years, according to the report.

In June, New York state lawmakers revoked the religious and personal-belief exemptions for vaccines. Unvaccinated students have 14 days from the start of school to prove they received the first dose of each immunization.

The Brooklyn outbreak has been tied to an unvaccinated child who contracted the disease during a trip to Israel. — JTA ■



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ROSH HASHANAH FOOD

Bay Area innovates Jewish food, and people are eating it up

COVER STORY | ALIX WALL | J. CORRESPONDENT

In all my years of covering the Bay Area Jewish food scene, I've never seen a frenzy like the one happening over Boichik Bagels. I can't go anywhere in the Jewish community without being asked when it's opening or why it's taking so long.

Proprietor Emily Winston, who is hoping for a fall opening in Berkeley, is well aware of the community's anticipation. In fact, she's had people she barely knows volunteering to help move the process along.

"It happens all the time," she said. Recently, when a large table was delivered to the store and had to be moved inside, "a guy was walking by, a big, strong dude, and he helped us. He told me his wife was a huge fan and was stalking me on Instagram." The wife has since given Winston her husband's phone number, in case she needs to call upon him again.

In 2015, the New York Times claimed it was near impossible to find a good bagel in California. But the article was focused entirely on the Bay Area, and its implication was this: If we couldn't produce a decent bagel, then we might as well be written off the Jewish culinary map.

Studies have shown the Bay Area Jewish community to be one of the least affiliated in the country. But the desire for a decent bagel is universal. In fact, for many Jews, food is what connects them most deeply to their heritage. "There truly is such thing as a lox and bagel Jew," Winston said. "It's part of their cultural or religious practice."

True, the Bay Area has never been known as a Jewish food destination. But that has started to change, with an unmistakable uptick over the past few years in Jewish food eateries, including many offering Israeli cuisine.

In just the last year or two, mainstays like Saul's Restaurant & Delicatessen in Berkeley and Wise Sons Deli in San Francisco have been joined by high-profile restaurants like San Francisco's Che Fico, where Jewish chef David Nayfield's Italian menu includes interpretations of Roman-Jewish cuisine. Last year also saw the opening of Augie's Montreal Deli in Berkeley, where latkes and matzah ball soup are on the menu alongside the star attraction, smoke meat, introduced and made famous in Montreal by Romanian Jewish

immigrants. Solomon's Delicatessen opened to great fanfare in Sacramento in July, while San Francisco saw the openings of AL's Deli and Daily Driver around the same time.

Israeli cuisine has shown impressive staying power in its own right: Israeli American chef Guy Eshel has two downtown San Francisco locations of Sababa, a gourmet falafel joint with house-made pita; Flying Falafel, established in San Francisco by Israeli American Assaf Pashut, later opened in Berkeley; and Israeli chef Mica Talmor's Ba-Bite, which took Israeli cuisine to new heights in Oakland for three years until it closed last summer, reopens in the fall with a new name, Pomella. Oren's Hummus, a standard-bearer of authentic Israeli-style hummus that first opened in Palo Alto and added two more South Bay outlets, expanded to San Francisco last year and is doing well near the Contemporary Jewish Museum. And on the Peninsula, Village Hummus in San Mateo, Falafel Stop in Sunnyvale and Izzy's Brooklyn Bagels with two Palo Alto locations (both kosher)

continued on page 22

The desire for a decent bagel is universal. In fact, for many Jews, food is what connects them most deeply to their heritage.

(Clockwise, from right) AL's Deli opened in S.F. in July; chef and co-owner Aaron London; and some of the cutting edge culinary offerings. (Photos/Molly DeCoudreaux).



continued from page 21

have the bagel/falafel/fresh pita market covered. Oakland's Holy Land is still holding its ground, too.

Israeli pop-ups are going strong, with Balagan in Napa by Israeli chef Itamar Abramovitch, and multicourse historical Israeli dinners by Aliza Grayevsky Somekh, chef and owner of Bishulim SF. Shuk Shuka is a partnership between an Israeli of Yemenite descent, Inon Tzadok, and two Palestinian Americans, Odai Ammar and chef Mona Leena Michael, whose food skews more Palestinian than Israeli. They hope to open a restaurant by early next year.

Israeli cuisine's emphasis on vegetables, rather than meat and starch, has struck a chord with the American diner and is showing up in "traditional" Jewish restaurants as well.

"When I started making hummus, people would complain and say, 'You're an Ashkenazi deli, why are you doing this?' Now it's half my sales," said Peter Levitt, chef-owner of Saul's, which has been around for decades in Berkeley. "Anything I do that's inspired by [Israeli American chef] Michael Solomonov is more in tune with how people want to eat every day. They want more salads as opposed to heavy meat dishes. Our pastrami is still the most popular dish, but the sabich (an Iraqi-Israeli eggplant and hard-boiled egg sandwich) has quadrupled in sales."

Even kosher establishments, which historically haven't done well in the Bay Area, are getting a little traction. The

long-running Sabra Grill on Grant Avenue in San Francisco has been joined by Flying Falafel (only its Berkeley location is certified) and the Israeli bakery Frena, with two S.F. locations. Limonana, a kosher shwarma, falafel and hummus place, should open on Sixth Street in San Francisco in the next few weeks, according to owner Ariel Sharabi, and of course Boichik Bagels will join the pack soon.

Arguably, the restaurant that put San Francisco Jewish food on the map was Wise Sons, which opened its first brick-and-mortar establishment seven years ago. Glowing reviews in *Bon Appétit*, the *New York Times* and other publications made the rest of the country sit up and notice.

Soon Wise Sons was opening secondary locations throughout the Bay, plus one far-flung branch in Tokyo.

Co-owner and chef Evan Bloom sees local Jewish food offerings continuing to evolve. He says it's "less about a specific ethnic group, and more about a genre of food that

national chain that started in Sacramento, and it is named after its Jewish founder, Russ Solomon. Just as Tower Records was once a gathering spot for music lovers, Solomon's is creating a similar sense of community. Goldstene has been thrilled to be part of a new Jewish gathering spot downtown, in an area with a rich Jewish history.

"We learned recently that a block away was the first synagogue on the whole West Coast," said Goldstene about Congregation B'nai Israel, which dates back to 1852. "There's a plaque for it on Capitol Mall. Because of the Gold Rush, there were lots of Jews in this area. [In the early 20th century] there was Weinstock's, a big Jewish-owned department store, and I. Magnin was also here."

The deli is a short stroll away from the new Golden 1 Center, home of the Sacramento Kings, making it a perfect spot for a pre-game meal.

"Many people coming in are Jews that I've never run into," said Goldstene. "They're coming from the entire region. Their eyes light up and they make a beeline to me. They start telling me their stories, that they're from Chicago or Detroit or New York and how much they miss this food." She hears it from non-Jews, too, who grew up in Jewish areas and are excited to find a Jewish deli.

And with good reason. Solomon's pastrami (my must-try at any Jewish deli) was tender and flavorful, and I particularly liked the happy hour offering of Reuben eggrolls in a Thousand Island dipping sauce, and fried pickles with

"Many people coming in are Jews that I've never run into. Their eyes light up and they make a beeline to me."

Jami Goldstene, Solomon's Delicatessen



(From left) Jami Goldstene of Solomon's Deli (Photo/Kelley Sousa); Emily Winston can't wait for Boichik Bagels to open (Photo/Jessica Bulmer); and Daily Driver proprietor David Jablons and his wife, Tamara Hicks, on their farm in West Marin (Photo/Brian Desimone).

can sit in the pantheon of other types of food, whether it be Chinese, Japanese, Indian or whatever. The more Jewish restaurants that open or the more Jewish food there is, the more I think we're closer to that goal."

The most exciting recent news on the deli front was the opening of Solomon's Delicatessen in Sacramento in July. With the state capital's dining scene gaining prominence, perhaps it was only a matter of time before the city got its own Jewish deli. An outpost that opened in Davis in 2018 will be closing, it was just announced, but the downtown Sacramento location is considered the flagship — and is worth the drive.

The restaurant is a business partnership among Jami Goldstene, a PR executive who used to run Sacramento's Jewish Food Faire, Andrea Lepore and Sonny Mayugba. As the only Jew of the three, Goldstene is "the heart and soul of the whole thing," according to Lepore.

The deli is located on the site of the old Tower Records, a

z'hug aioli. There is a full bar, and clearly the staff had a lot of fun designing the cocktails menu with Jewish elements. Not only is there a boozed-up version of an egg cream with bourbon, but a Man Oh Manischewitz (gin, house-made sweet and sour, Blackberry Manischewitz); a Bloody Miriam rather than a Bloody Mary with harissa mixed into it; a pickletini (vodka shaken with pickle juice); and a Mazel Tov Mule, which has Blackberry Manischewitz mixed into the lime, ginger beer and vodka.

Solomon's also carries Dr. Brown's sodas, a detail that East Coast deli fans will appreciate.

But today's dietary trends certainly are taken into account. A smoked mushroom vegan Reuben has been very popular, said Goldstene, and there's a cauliflower kale quinoa salad with pickled onions and lemon-tahini dressing on the menu, too, signifying that offering a cuisine known for its artery-clogging fatty meats is much more appealing — not to mention profitable — if the menu includes some

vegan options.

"We're definitely a destination, and we're hitting a nerve," Goldstene said. "There is nothing else like it near here."

The same can be said of AL's Deli, another highly anticipated newcomer that opened in July. Chef-owner Aaron London, 36, boasts a Michelin star for his other San Francisco restaurant, AL's Place, named best new restaurant of the year by Bon Appétit in 2015.

London grew up in Sonoma County, the son of a Jewish father and Catholic mother. His family ate latkes and lit Hanukkah candles, but he said his only real connection to Judaism has been through food. Much of his cooking experience comes from working in restaurants in Montreal and New York, where he fell in love with smoke meat and Jewish deli.

"I lived about a block away from Schwartz's Deli in Montreal, and I ate there on my way to work most days and sometimes on the way back," he said. "I've eaten an obscene amount of smoke meat in my life, so perfecting it was something I started working on while at AL's Place. We cure it for 11 days and smoke it and cook it for 12 hours very slowly and get a great product."

In New York, he went to more Jewish delis, where he was smitten with "the delicious, salty, fatty brisket, luscious silky salmon and crispy potatoes." He also discovered Israeli cooking there, and it took root, both in his mind and on his palate.

"I came back to the Bay Area hungry, and searching for these two foods I couldn't easily find. So I had an epiphany: If I can't find it, maybe I can make it myself."

But he didn't want to just reconfigure traditional East Coast Jewish deli. After all, he made his name and earned his Michelin star for his innovations with vegetables. Israeli cuisine was more in line with his style, but opening a falafel joint wasn't quite right for him, either.

"Opening Boichik has become the biggest expression ever of my Jewish identity."

Emily Winston, Boichik Bagels

"Then I thought, what if I mixed the two together, and cooked this new food that I've created that's been heavily influenced by East Coast deli and Israeli street food? It's very me, and very San Francisco. That gave me a feeling of excitement," he said.

London decided to go to Israel to research his ideas and got even more inspired.

Bowled over by the tartness of amba, the pickled mango sauce found on such Israeli street foods as falafel and shwarma, and z'hug, the Yemenite spice paste, he decided to create his own versions. London makes his amba with locally grown peaches, which his staff is canning now for use throughout the year.

Other innovative menu items are stuffed latkes (one with smoked salmon and cream cheese) and falafel crossed with a mini corn dog, served with his peach amba. Chicken shwarma and smoke meat brisket both are served on a plate or in pita with a garnish of onions doused in sumac, a tart, popular Middle Eastern spice.

London's trip to Israel influenced the overall look of the deli, too. The colors are sunny and bright; he is trying to evoke the communal tables of the restaurant scene in Jaffa, he said, and a Hebrew-like font is used both in the sign out front and on the paper liners that the food is served on.

"This is the food I've been wanting to do for three years," he said, "and this is when it finally happened. Israeli food is the hot thing now, but it's a coincidence and good timing. I found the right place and the way to express it, and here we are."

Appreciation has come from many admirers, including Bloom.



(Above) The entrance to Solomon's Deli in Sacramento; (on left) the trend in Jewish food is vegetables, more vegetables. (Photos/Kelley Sousa)



"It's been cool to see AL's Deli, which is not really deli, creating its own thing," he said. "It's pulling Jewish flavors from around the world. I'm not sure that could have existed five or 10 years ago and been successful, but the groundwork has been laid."

When it comes to bagels, though, people still debate whether the Bay Area has broken the code. Maybe it's the nature of the beast and there will always be differences of opinion.

There are options: Wise Sons, Baron Baking, Beauty's Bagels (it opened a second Oakland location last year) and numerous others. Grand Bakery entered the market with a new partner from the old Authentic Bagel Company. But some East Coast transplants remain less than satisfied.

The latest arrival on the scene is Daily Driver, which opened in San Francisco's Dogpatch neighborhood in June. With its in-house coffee roastery and creamery where butter is churned and cream cheese made, Daily Driver's vibe is definitely more California than Jewish, but reviews for the wood-fired bagels are overwhelmingly positive.

The fact that Daily Driver was inspired by the owners' dairy farm — cheese was at the forefront and the bagels were almost an afterthought — still leaves room for a real East

Coast-style bagelry to open. Boichik plans to fill that gap.

When the store finally opens (Winston is looking at late fall), it will inhabit the space formerly occupied by the original Noah's Bagels on College Avenue in Berkeley. Winston's goal is to provide not only a bagel modeled on the beloved H&H bagel from her childhood, but also traditional schmears and a fish selection reminiscent of New York City's "appetizing" stores like Zabar's and Russ & Daughters.

"Like if H&H and Russ & Daughters had a love child and moved to California," is how Winston describes it. The fish will be shipped from the East Coast, including less common varieties like sable and kippered salmon. "I want to try to capture the essence of those stores I grew up with, with the big pieces of fish in the glass case," she said.

"It's partly because [appetizing shops] were such a formative experience in my past, and I've been really sad for them not to exist here at all since moving here," said the New Jersey native. "In a lot of ways, they're not faring very well back at home, so it feels like I have this opportunity to try to save them. I know it sounds grandiose, but I want to bring it here and keep it preserved and alive and going."

Then she adds, half-jokingly, "I'm doing God's work."

While it wasn't part of the plan initially, Boichik Bagels will be kosher. Winston is not observant herself, but the community's plea for more kosher establishments won her over. It will be certified by East Bay Kosher, a new Berkeley-Oakland operation whose kosher standards are more relaxed than those of the national certification agencies like the OU. For example, Boichik Bagels will be open on Shabbat, with Winston out front with the customers rather than baking.

"When I started this [as a pop-up], it was a hobby. I wanted my bagel, I had no plans to sell them whatsoever," Winston said. "Then things changed. And then when I thought about being kosher, it seemed easy enough, since a bagel is inherently kosher."

While she admits that the process has put more demands on her than she initially thought, she still feels good about her decision.

"Opening Boichik has become the biggest expression ever of my Jewish identity," she said. "This is meaningful for a whole bunch of people."

The New York Times article that set off the great bagel debate in 2015 drew the conclusion that "California bagel bakers are too hooked on innovation and culinary self-expression for the bagel's good." The Bay Area clearly does not agree. Indeed, things just keep getting better. ■

Get a Jewish deli fix in Tokyo at Wise Sons

ANDY ALTMAN-OHR | J. CORRESPONDENT

If you find yourself in Tokyo for the Olympics next summer, you might want to check out Wise Sons, the Jewish delicatessen from San Francisco. It's been open in Japan for 18 months, and I made damn sure to stop by when my wife and I were visiting recently.

It's not as if I was jonesing for matzah ball soup, corned beef or an everything bagel with cream cheese and lox. (Well, I sort of was, because I always am.)

It was more the novelty factor. Real Jewish deli in Japan. And the familiarity factor. It's Wise Sons! The place I first sampled nine years ago when it was a once-a-week pop-up on Valencia Street. The place that became an early beating heart of a national Jewish deli scene that had been pronounced all but dead.

Fortunately, the Wise Sons Tokyo experience didn't disappoint.

bagel and a pastrami sandwich with cheese and lettuce (*lettuce?*). And there they are, in a display cooler a few feet away: packaged to-go bento boxes. Each contains an open-faced bagel sandwich, a small green salad and a little tub of coleslaw, potato salad or pasta salad for \$6.50 to \$7.50.

Packaged items abound. There are veggie, schnitzel and pastrami sandwiches, and corned beef and chicken-salad sandwiches for \$8 that include either french fries (odd choice) or two dollops of a potato salad that's chunkier than the super-smooth version the Japanese are used to. Packaged but homemade rye bread, "challah bread," rugelach, coconut macaroons and individually wrapped bagels are available, as well.

Don't fret! Not everything is premade and packaged. But the strategy is wise, I think. Putting these highly unfamiliar items on clear display helps show potential customers what

The decor is sleek, modern, simple and very Jewish deli-like. There's a souvenir area with T-shirts, coffee beans, tumbler sets, pins and water bottles (written at the bottom of the price list: "Eat something, you look skinny").

There are framed photographs from some of Wise Sons' five locations in San Francisco and Marin, including one that shows diners at the 24th Street flagship with black-and-white family photos on the wall. Similarly, Wise Sons Tokyo also features old family photos and a framed California state flag. Bottles of Kedem grape juice, six-packs of S.F.-brewed Anchor Steam, Bazooka gum from Israel, klezmer album covers, and a box or two of matzah complement the deli-good feel of the space. Cool jazz plays in the background.

One wall is dominated by a mural of the S.F. skyline — flanked by Victorian houses and the Golden Gate Bridge — with iconic Mount Fuji in the background instead of Twin



(On left) The dining area at Wise Sons Tokyo; (above) explaining Jewish food to the locals. (Photos/Andy Altman-Ohr)

The typical Japanese customer has no idea what matzah balls are.

First, a couple of things to know. No. 1, nowhere is it called a "Jewish deli," not on signs, not on the menu, not on the souvenir T-shirts. Rather, it's marketed as a San Francisco eatery, as Tokyo hipsters/eaters have a certain fascination with the city (though they do love Portland more).

No. 2, the place isn't easy to find. It's only a couple of blocks from three subway stations, but if you take the wrong exit, good luck. It's on the basement level of the 37-story Marunouchi Building, in an underground maze of stores and restaurants, part of a squeaky clean, semi-swanky, gourmet food arcade. The signs read "Wise Sons San Francisco Delicatessen," and a door emblem announces "Quality foods since 5771" (in English, no explanation).

One thing that hits you right away is a poster advertising bento boxes, with pictures of such items as an egg salad

Jewish, er, San Francisco deli food actually looks like.

Customers line up along a display case loaded with honey cake, rugelach, macaroons, and slices of chestnut, lemon and chocolate babka. Nearby are dozens of bagels on trays: plain, sesame, poppyseed, pumpernickel and everything — all of them softer than Wise Sons' S.F. offerings in order to suit the Japanese palate.

During the lunch hour when we were there, the line to order never got more than two or three people deep, and only about two-thirds of the 42 seats were filled, mainly with solo women in business suits rather than with the packs of "salarymen" one sees everywhere. Most were eating open-face bagel sandwiches with a side of, yes, *french fries*. Nobody seemed too confused, although one Japanese woman ate her pickle with a fork.

Peaks or Mt. Tam. San Francisco muralist Amos Goldbaum, whose work can be seen in Wise Sons' local venues, created it, and if you look closely, you can see a bagel-chomping, Godzilla-like creature near the dome of City Hall.

The deli goes to great lengths to educate its patrons. For example, in a couple of spots, there are small placards with photos and descriptions of bagels and rugelach. The dual English-Japanese menu has a large Japanese-only section that explains matzah ball soup, bagels, babka, challah, and how minced pastrami and corned beef create a hamburger patty that's packed with umami (a savory taste that's revered in Japan).

Choices on the all-day menu include big, American-size salads, a patty melt, the "Big Macher" burger and bagels with lots of toppings and fillings: crispy pastrami, avocado schmear, chicken salad, egg and cheese, etc.

There's even a pizza bagel topped with your choice of schmear, tomato sauce, mozzarella and basil — though many S.F. menu options, such as chopped liver, latkes, bialys and pastrami cheese fries, are nowhere to be found.

Since I had only the one visit, I went the traditional route: matzah ball soup; bagel, lox and cream cheese; a "classic" corned beef sandwich; and a "Hot No. 19" with pastrami, coleslaw, cheese and Russian dressing. You can upgrade any sandwich or burger to "S.F. size" for 500 yen, about \$4.75.

The bagel was like a U.S. chain bagel: soft, a bit too big, and not nearly as good as Wise Sons makes on Fillmore Street. I'd even suggest getting it toasted, which goes against everything I stand for, though Tokyo Weekender wrote that it "was easily the best bagel we've had in Tokyo, hands down." And the matzah ball soup (served in a paper cup, by the way) could have used a little more salt, though overall it was quite tasty and the kneidlach were of an excellent consistency.

What really shined was the pastrami and corned beef, as good as what Wise Sons serves in the Bay Area — and that's saying something! The smoked salmon was amazing, too.



Pastrami with cheese and lettuce. Almost like home.

I sort of didn't expect it in Tokyo, where Wise Sons hooked up with a local restaurant management company that operates several Italian restaurants, including a branch of S.F. favorite A16. (Non sequitur: There are also 14 Blue Bottle Coffee locations in Tokyo.)

"It's been wild," Wise Sons co-owner Evan Bloom told me. "Who on earth would have thought that we'd have a Jewish deli from San Francisco in Tokyo? We're serving both locals and expats while expanding on the idea of making Jewish deli mainstream across the globe.

"Generally speaking, we're learning about operating in Japan as we go. Nobody has done this before, at least that we know of. So every step from Day 1 has been a departure from how we do business in San Francisco, and it's been a lot of fun."

Bloom and his crew had to deal with some unique challenges. For example, when it came time to launch the brining and curing processes, Bloom snuck a good amount of pastrami and corned beef into Japan in his suitcase to give his local staff something to go by. It worked. The 70-year-old factory outside of Tokyo that makes Wise Sons' meats is doing a fantastic job.

Another problem was the absence of matzah meal in Japan. So the Tokyo crew makes its own matzah, grinds it up and turns it into matzah balls. Finding the right kind of flour took a lot of work, as did locating a Japanese mustard that's close in consistency and flavor to what Wise Sons serves in the Bay Area.

But that's only the half of it. The typical Japanese customer has no idea what matzah balls are. "They've been tough to explain," Bloom said, "but the matzah ball soup does seem to be catching on."

Then there's customer education that

Nobody seemed too confused, although one Japanese woman ate her pickle with a fork.

goes beyond the food. "It's also the service. The American style, fast-casual experience is still new in Japan ... We're also up against a Japanese customer that doesn't always eat a large breakfast, and the idea that coffee is still more of an afternoon pick-me-up than morning fuel."

Maybe things were a bit clunky at the outset, but Wise Sons Tokyo has rounded into fine form. Everything I tried would make for what one would call a medium- to high-level Jewish deli experience, and the space really feels like a Jewish deli (though, sadly, it doesn't smell like one).

Though the deli scores only 3.8 from 67 Google reviews, many comments are along the lines of "You can't find this stuff in Tokyo" and "Best pastrami sandwich I've had in Japan."

The Japanese are great at replicating dishes, and there is a high level of craftsmanship and perfection in their food culture, and all of that shines through at Tokyo's first Jewish deli. ■

Wise Sons Tokyo, Marunouchi Building, Tokyo. Weekdays 7:30 a.m.-9 p.m. Weekends and holidays 8:30 a.m.-8 p.m. wisensonsdeli.com/location/tokyo

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SPECIAL SECTION

ROSH HASHANAH FOOD

This gluten-free apple cake will please everyone

RACHEL PATTISON | JTA VIA THE NOSHER

In recent years, it seems that more and more of my family members and friends have developed food allergies and food intolerances. This can make it difficult to determine what to serve at holidays and family events.

So a gluten-free, dairy-free apple cake for Rosh Hashanah is a delicious way to celebrate the holiday while also suiting everyone at my table.

Nut allergy? You can absolutely leave out the walnuts.

My preferred gluten-free flour to use is Bob's Red Mill Gluten-Free 1-to-1 Baking Flour, which can be used as a direct substitution for all-purpose flour and doesn't require additional thickeners such as xanthan gum.

GLUTEN-FREE APPLE CAKE

Serves 6 to 8

¼ cup coconut sugar or brown sugar	1 tsp. baking soda
1 cup extra-virgin olive oil	1 tsp. ground cinnamon
2 large eggs, room temperature	1 tsp. salt
⅔ cup honey	⅛ tsp. allspice
1 tsp. vanilla extract	3 apples, peeled, cored and chopped into ¼-inch pieces
2½ cups gluten-free baking flour	⅔ cup walnuts, finely chopped (optional)
1 tsp. baking powder	Unsweetened plain almond milk (optional)

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Grease and lightly flour a 9-inch bundt pan, nonstick if you have one. In a stand mixer, beat together the sugar and olive oil. Beat in the eggs, then the honey and vanilla. Turn off mixer.

In a separate large bowl, stir together the gluten-free flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, salt and allspice.

Turn the stand mixer back on, and very slowly add the flour mixture to the wet ingredients. Use a spatula to scrape down the sides of the bowl, ensuring that all the ingredients become well incorporated. Fold in diced apples and walnuts; I recommend using a mix of green and red apples.

If you find that the mixture is too thick, you can add some almond milk, 1 Tbs. at a time, not to surpass ¼ cup.

Pour batter into prepared bundt pan and bake in oven for 1 hour. Check cake at 50-minute mark. It is done when a toothpick inserted comes out clean.

Once done, allow the cake to cool in the bundt pan for 15 minutes. Then place a cake plate on top of the bundt pan, and while holding the pan and the plate together, very carefully flip the bundt pan so the cake lands on the plate. Allow cake to cool completely, then dust lightly with confectioners' sugar. ■

Rachel Pattison is a healthy food blogger in Los Angeles. Find more at littlecchefbigappetite.com.



Gluten-free apple cake



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Honey dishes for a New Year



Faith Kramer is a Bay Area food writer. She blogs about her food at clickblogappetit.com. Contact Faith at clickblogappetit@gmail.com.

COOKING FAITH KRAMER

Honey is closely associated with the wish for a sweet New Year, which is why it'll be in so many Jewish homes in the coming weeks. Rosh Hashanah starts the evening of Sunday, Sept. 29, and I'll say shanah tovah this week with two honey-based recipes.

The first is Honey-Curry Popcorn with Apples and Nuts, a spicy snack inspired by a recipe on the website of Z Specialty Foods. J. food writer Alix Wall wrote about the Jewish-owned Northern California honey producer last year, and included a honey cake recipe; for details, visit tinyurl.com/zfoods-j2018.

My second recipe is Honey-Plum Baked Chicken Thighs, which combines honey, plums and Near Eastern spices. Serve it over mashed potatoes or noodles to sop up the tangy sauce, and you can substitute chicken breasts if you want to (but be careful not to overcook).

HONEY-CURRY POPCORN WITH APPLES AND NUTS

Makes 8 Cups

½ cup coconut oil	2 cups raw pecan halves
½ cup honey	6 cups plain popped popcorn
Spice mix (see below)	1 to 1.2 oz. packaged freeze-dried apple slices (see notes)

Line two baking sheets with foil. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Pour oil and honey in large pot. Stir. Cook over medium heat until hot. Stir in spice mix. Add nuts and popcorn, stirring until well coated.

Spread popcorn mix in single layers on prepared baking sheets. Bake 25 minutes. Turn with spatula, separating clumps. Bake about 25 minutes more until popcorn is dry and somewhat crisp and nuts are toasted (popcorn will continue to crisp up as it cools). Remove from oven. Separate clumps. Let cool. Break freeze-dried apple slices into ½-inch pieces and mix with popcorn and nuts in a large bowl. (Store airtight at room temperature for up to a day.)

Spice mix: Mix together 1 Tbs. onion powder, 1 Tbs. garlic powder, ¼ to ½ tsp. cayenne (or to taste), 2 tsp. kosher salt and 1 ½ tsp. curry powder.

Notes: Freeze-dried apple slices, often in bags of 1 oz. or 1.2 oz., are available in many supermarkets. If your custom is to avoid nuts during the holiday, replace pecans with 2 cups popcorn.

HONEY-PLUM BAKED CHICKEN THIGHS

Serves 6

2 lbs. medium large plums (about 6 or 7), unpeeled	1 tsp. finely chopped garlic
½ cup honey	3 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs
1 Tbs. lemon juice	½ tsp. salt
Spice mix (see below), divided	½ tsp. ground black pepper
2 Tbs. oil plus more as needed	Chopped mint
1 cup chopped onion	

Cut plums in half. Remove pit. Cut plums into ½-inch slices. Place in large bowl. Stir in honey, juice and half the spice mix. Reserve. Heat oil in large fry pan. Sauté onions over medium-high heat until softened. Add garlic. Sauté until golden. Scrape into bowl with plums and stir well. Do not clean fry pan. In large bowl, toss chicken thighs with salt, pepper and remaining spice mix. Reheat fry pan over medium-high heat, adding oil as needed. Working in batches, brown both sides of the thighs. Set aside.

Strain plum mixture, separating solids and liquid. Reserve liquid. Add oil, if needed, to chicken fry pan. Add plum solids. Cook over medium-high heat, stirring often, until any juices are very thick and plums are softened but still intact. Oil a deep 9-inch by 12-inch baking dish. Spread plums on bottom. Top with single layer of chicken. Brush chicken with 1 to 2 Tbs. of reserved liquid. Bake for 20 minutes, or until chicken is just cooked through.

Make glaze by boiling remaining liquid in a small pot until reduced in half (it should coat the back of a spoon and will continue to thicken as it cools). Brush or drizzle on top of the cooked chicken before serving garnished with mint and some of baked plums.

Spice mix: Mix together 1 tsp. salt, ¼ tsp. ground cardamom, ¼ tsp. ground cumin, ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon, ¼ tsp. ground black pepper and ⅛ tsp. ground cloves. ■

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Opinion

Can it happen here? Sadly, it already is

EDITORIAL

There was a time when Bay Area Jews took cold comfort in the belief that the rising tide of anti-Semitism was not lapping at our own shores. Despite the murder of Jews in a Paris kosher market, neo-Nazis marching in the streets of Stockholm and Charlottesville, and even the incomprehensible horror of the massacre at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue nearly a year ago, we continued to hope and believe it could never happen here.

Then we bore witness to the deadly shooting in a Poway Chabad center in Southern California a few months ago. And now comes the so-called "Straight Pride Parade" in Modesto and the posting of blatantly anti-Semitic flyers in Santa Rosa and Novato.

Truth be told, no place today is immune from the world's oldest hatred, not even our famously tolerant and open Bay Area.

Truth be told, no place today is immune from the world's oldest hatred, not even our famously tolerant and open Bay Area.

That Aug. 24 Straight Pride rally was, ostensibly, not unlike countless such gatherings of evangelical Christians opposed to abortion, same-sex marriage and other perceived social ills. But this group had an additional agenda. They showed up to defend "whiteness" and to rail against a "private banking cartel," according to one organizer using classic coded language to describe Jews.

Thankfully, as our story points out, members of the Modesto Jewish community and their interfaith allies inside and outside the area turned out in force to counterprotest the event and make their feelings known. With songs, chants and prayer, they pushed back against the haters, outnumbering them by orders of magnitude.

At least the Straight Pride organizers had the chutzpah to appear in public and identify themselves. Not so with the cowardly vandals who went out in the dead of night to paper two North Bay towns with idiotic flyers claiming Jews masterminded the 9/11 attacks. The perpetrator, who goes by the moniker Handsome Truth, never reveals his true name, though he's only too happy to spread lies about Jews and throw in with an outfit called the Goyim Defense League, which pranks celebrities into unwittingly reciting anti-Jewish messages.

This week, YouTube shut down Handsome Truth's channels, but he appears on other channels, spewing the same lies.

We draw two lessons from this recent spate of hate. First, we must remain ever vigilant. We cannot let our guard down in protecting our physical safety, especially with the High Holidays approaching.

The second lesson is that this is still America. While the haters have First Amendment rights and can freely assemble, the same is true for those of us who oppose their message. We must always call out anti-Semitism and other forms of bigotry whenever and wherever we see them. They may never stop, but neither will we. ■



PICTURE THIS

A participant in the Aug. 24 Straight Pride rally in Modesto shows his love for America — and his hatred for gay Americans. (Photo/Gabe Stutman)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lehrhaus, you make me laugh

Let me make a couple of comments about the rebranding of Lehrhaus to "HaMaqom | The Place."

First, I am offended by the name change of Lehrhaus to HaMaqom — one of the designations for God. I wonder if the new management bothered to solicit any outside input before making the change.

That said, my offense is tempered by laughter by the addition of "The Place" to the new moniker, which is the height of hubris and absurdity. Who's going to use it? As in, "For breakfast I had a big bowl of Cheerios | The Cereal." "I don't feel well — I think I may have Pneumonia | The Disease." I can't think of anything more ridiculous.

Finally, the website FAQs state that "Q is also the proper English letter with which to transliterate the Hebrew letter quf (ק): Funny thing, in my ArtScroll siddur it's always "k." Same for the U.N., the American Library Association, the Academy of the Hebrew Language, the Orthodox Union, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the Union for Reform Judaism. Rather than

be inclusive or instructive, the explanation just comes off as smug.

KEMUEL LEVI | SAN FRANCISCO
(OOPS, I MEAN "QEMUEL LEVI | THE JEW")

March of the Living 'propaganda'

I'm writing in response to Ulrika Shragge's opinion piece ("How a trip to Poland and Israel changed my life," July 29). Ms. Shragge describes her experience on a trip organized by March of the Living, as she tells it, a week spent visiting sites of concentration and death camps in Poland and then a week going to concerts and parties, swimming in the Dead Sea and playing with camels in Israel. The Poland portion of the trip is a litany of horrors, and the Israel portion a nonstop party (in Ms. Shragge's words: "The March of the Living organization made it very clear that they had taken us to Israel to show how much fun modern Jews could have.")

I have lived in Poland since 2017, when I moved from the Bay Area to Krakow. I am a

The High Holidays are a time to find safe haven for the wandering refugee inside each of us

LOCAL VOICE | RABBI LEE BYCEL



The refugee experience is one of loss: of family, friends, language, history, culture, work, home, really everything they had known. The journey to find a safe haven involves leaving behind the familiar and struggling with uncertainty, trauma and angst, and entering a new life in a totally unfamiliar culture.

Many never find that safe haven and are left to wander the Earth.

For those who find it, many overcome extremely difficult obstacles and shape a new life.

On Passover, the goal is to connect with the existential reality that we were, in fact, refugees. This task is not easy as our life in America is so far removed from our historical narrative.

However, the High Holy Days are different — a season of the heart, the soul, a time for self-examination, honesty and personal change. Are we too not looking for a safe haven, a way to grieve our losses, a way to reshape a meaningful life in a tumultuous and unstable world?

The refugee's struggle with loss and efforts to create life anew is also the human experience. As we progress through life, we go through many stages. We lose the wonder of childhood, we lose the protection of the school environment, we lose the exaltation of first love, we lose dreams, we lose our loved ones, and many lose themselves. We grapple with ambiguity, lack of clarity about our future (both personally and as a country) and try to adjust to the fast-changing world around us. And many of us wonder what the future will bring and how to thrive in it.

On a superficial level, we have very little in common with refugees. However, at a much deeper level, there is much we share.

The High Holy Days offer us an opportunity to explore the refugee within our own souls, heart and conscience. Like

the stirring sounds of the shofar, the overarching goal of the High Holy Days is to alarm us, awaken us to our inner lives and help us reconnect to our values, our history, our ideals, our purpose, our sense of self-worth.

The liturgy is about evaluating our lives and asking difficult questions, like who shall live and who shall die? This is not a literal question, but one with far deeper meaning. How shall I live in these turbulent times and how do I infuse my life with meaning, even when life did not turn out as I expected?

The journey of life, even in the best of circumstances, for those who wander this Earth as refugees is horrifying. Many will never find safe haven. Many will never have all that we take for granted. Yet their journeys do not diminish the challenge of our journeys. We face health issues, personal challenges, loss of loved ones, and a constant state of confusion and tumult in the current political climate, all impacting us greatly.

The refugee experience offers a paradigm of how to grapple with our own challenges.

Some refugees end up scarred for life, never able to move on from the horrible traumas they survived. But many find incredible ways to build a new life, always carrying the past with them but living in the present with courage, resilience and hope.

Over the years, I have had the chance to "bear witness," being present in many refugee camps in sub-Saharan Africa. Yes, they are sobering places, but each time I meet people who teach me a great deal about my own journey on this Earth and how I can better make the most of my life.

Meron Semedar, a refugee from Eritrea who survived horrific brutality, offers some great insights that we can certainly use as we welcome in the new year 5780. A teaching assistant at the University of San Francisco while he earned

a master's of art in international studies there from 2015 to 2017, Meron quotes an African proverb: "He who does not know where he came from, does not know where he is going."

He goes on to say, "It is not an easy road — but hope is the oxygen of my life. I have hope in humanity."

On the High Holy Days, and especially Yom Kippur, we pause and withdraw from the world to go deep within to see where we have been, where we are now and where we might be headed. We read the prophetic words of Isaiah: Is this the kind of fast I delight in? A fast merely to deprive one's body? The answer is emphatically no. The fast, we are told, should lead to action — to helping the oppressed, to freeing the shackles of all those who are enslaved.

When we welcome in the new year, no matter where or exactly when, it is a time of humility and honesty. It is a time of finding the best in our nature and not losing ourselves in this tumultuous culture that demeans so many people, is filled with violence and often offers little hope.

It is reclaiming what is good, uplifting and the best of human nature.

Like with Meron, it is finding hope, even when it seems like it has disappeared, and knowing that if we do better, so will humanity.

Only through serious self-reflection can we emerge into the new year with broader perspective, renewed strength and a deeper resolve to uplift the most vulnerable in our midst. ■

Rabbi Lee Bycel is the Sinton Visiting Professor of Holocaust, Genocide and Refugee Studies at the University of San Francisco. He is the author of the recently published "Refugees in America: Stories of Courage, Resilience and Hope." Details at refugeesinamerica.com.

Polish-American Jew, a guide and educator for the Taube Center for the Renewal of Jewish Life in Poland Foundation, and a co-director of Festi-vALT, a festival of critically minded Jewish art and activism in Krakow. Each spring, my colleagues and I have watched in dismay as hundreds of March of the Living buses paraded through Poland, unloading at ghetto monuments and memorial sites, then whisking off to the next stop. With their own guides and educators, a schedule chock-full of death camps and going "from one somber place to another," and little to no interaction with anyone currently living in Poland, the trips might as well have taken place in a separate universe, a traveling bubble that offered only the most narrow and curated glimpses of the country around them. Ms. Shragge describes nothing of Poland, outside of sites of Jewish memory. There are no meetings with members of the Jewish community, no engagement with contemporary Poland and certainly no parties.

It is deeply frustrating to see that March of the Living (or indeed any Jewish organization)

continues to organize trips with such an overwhelming bias and lack of nuance, casting Poland exclusively as a land of Jewish death and Israel exclusively as a land of Jewish life. This formula wildly skews the realities of both countries, confines Jewish existence in Poland to a relic of the past, and disturbingly warps Holocaust memory into little more than an emotional hotspot and political tool — victimhood as the cornerstone of Jewish identity, of blind love for Israel.

Not all March of the Living events are like this. I myself worked with a group from March of the Living UK that insisted on hiring local and Polish guides, visiting sites that reflected the 1,000 years of Jewish life in Poland, and meeting members, young and old, of the Jewish communities here today. Other groups, I'm sure, have made similar efforts to provide a more balanced education to their participants. I should also add that I'm not blaming Ms. Shragge for what I see as the shortcomings of the trip or asking her to feel bad for the positive experiences she has had. My issues

are not with the participants but with the organizers of such trips.

Trips like the one Ms. Shragge describes are doing a disservice to Jewish youth, not trusting them to form their own opinions and depriving them of the opportunity to think critically about Poland, Israel and Jewish identity today. These trips are not educational, they are not building a constructive path forward. They are propaganda, pure and simple.

ADAM SCHORIN | WARSAW, POLAND

Trump is baiting us

We fell for it again. This time it's about Jews' loyalty to Israel and the Republicans, in Trump's attempt to turn Israel into a partisan election issue.

Perhaps Trump's greatest political asset is how much he is underestimated by his political opponents. Nowhere is this truer than in Trump's handling of the media, where he is a master of control and manipulation.

In the movie "The Devil's Advocate," Al Pacino,

as the Devil, gleefully sticks his finger in the church holy water and sets it boiling. In the same way, Trump sticks his finger in the media pool and sets it boiling anytime he wants to, with outrageous comments that play to his base while provoking outrage across the liberal media. Thus does Trump's news take center stage.

By the time of the Jewish High Holidays, every rabbi in America will have his holiday moral message made for him, thanks to Trump's newest controversy, with him at the center, once again dominating the news cycle. Trump follows PT Barnum's dictum that there is no such thing as bad publicity.

At the same time, the news will swirl around him, with conservative Jews arguing that Trump has been Israel's best friend, with the wealthiest contributing to his campaign, backed up by fundamentalist Christians, while liberal Jews fight against the president's latest outrage.

What that also means is that Trump's newest controversial comments also control media cycles, *continued on 31*

Up close and personal with Poland's Jewish revival

LOCAL VOICE | SUSAN MOLDAW



Susan Moldaw is a gerontologist and writer living in San Francisco. She is a Jewish chaplain at Congregation Emanu-El.

Holocaust survivor Zofia Radzikowski lights Shabbat candles at the JCC in Krakow, Poland. I'm seated with 20 members of my synagogue, along with Krakow community members and other visitors. Non-Jewish volunteers pass plates of kosher hummus, baba ganoush and roast chicken. The multipurpose room where we sit is cheerful with brightly colored posters of Jewish holiday images: apples and honey, a seder plate, a shofar, the lulav and etrog.

I'm on a Jewish heritage trip to Krakow, Warsaw, Budapest and Vienna with my synagogue. As I watch the candles flicker, I think about how hours earlier our group paid homage at Auschwitz-Birkenau, where we stood on muddy ground at the Pond of Ashes, a small pond fringed by birch trees, where Nazis cast ashes and small pieces of bone from people burned in the crematoriums. We chanted Kaddish, the Jewish prayer recited for the dead.

A few days later, we are on a Danube dinner cruise with Sasha Freidman, camp director of Szarvas, an international Jewish youth camp in Hungary founded in 1990. Friedman tells the story of a young camper preparing to get on the camp bus when his mother says to him: "You're Jewish. You'll learn all about it at camp!" When I return to Poland the following year, to interview Jews integral to the coun-

"You're Jewish," her mother called back. That's how Marcjanna found out.

She's proud to be Jewish, and proud to say it out loud. "It's safe to wear a kippah in Krakow," she says, "but maybe that's just Krakow."

Marcjanna's story is of Jewish pride, the excitement of discovering and reclaiming one's Jewish past. Religious observance in her home is informal — the family tells the story of Hanukkah and Passover, and also celebrates Easter and Christmas.

Marcjanna made a deal with her non-Jewish Polish boyfriend. They won't baptize their future children, and they won't circumcise them, either. She wants to raise them "smart with choice." They will know they're Jewish, she says. "Our job is to pass [Judaism] on to the next generation so the community won't be smaller." There are "50 shades of Judaism" in Poland, she adds.

Talking to Marcjanna, I think of my own story. On any given Friday night in our home, my non-Jewish husband and I light Shabbat candles, then he fires up his tablet as the sun sets. My Jewish mother drives from her home to entertain friends at a very non-kosher crab dinner at her club. My Orthodox son living in Tel Aviv turns off his phone in obser-

their religions, I came face-to-face with how little I knew about mine. And it wasn't just the chaplains' knowledge I wanted — it was their faith, grounded in knowledge, rituals and tradition. I joined a Torah study group, entered a two-year adult education program at our synagogue, started attending Friday night services and began lighting my own candles.

My sons' father (my ex-husband) wasn't Jewish, and before marriage we agreed to raise our children in the Jewish religion. After our sons were born, I waged a constant mental contest with myself to make sure their religious training matched, if not bettered, mine. They went to a Jewish preschool — I hadn't. They had bar mitzvahs — I had an Anshei Mitzvah in adulthood. We sidestepped Christmas with an annual vacation to Hawaii, and always celebrated Hanukkah. I cooked Passover favorites, and our family seder was no more or less religious than my childhood experience, when my father once asked, "What are these books doing on the table?" and ate the boiled egg from the seder plate before we all sat down.

...

Before the Holocaust, the Jewish population of Poland was 3.5 million. Three million were murdered. Of the half-million survivors, about 280,000 Jews returned to communist-led Poland after the war, or came out from hiding. Post-war pogroms led to more than 100,000 Jews leaving Poland by the end of 1946. In 1948, thousands departed for the new state of Israel.

A communist-led anti-Zionist campaign in 1968 led to additional emigration. By 1970, only about 30,000 Jews remained. The Ronald S. Lauder Foundation and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee began rebuilding Jewish institutions only after 1989, when Poland broke up the communist system.

Estimates of today's Polish Jewish community range between 7,000 and 40,000. The exact number is difficult to pinpoint. Rabbi Michael Schudrich, the New York-born Chief Rabbi of Poland, once asked in Haaretz: Should we count as Jews those who are halachically Jewish but don't want

to affiliate? What about practicing Catholics who are Jewish by birth and feel Jewish? To me he says, "Anyone seeking to engage Jewishly, in an honest way, I welcome." Uncertain genealogies and the community's small size make necessary a broad Jewish tent.

In Warsaw, we meet for interviews at a Boker Tov kosher vegetarian brunch at the 6-year-old JCC. It attracts up to 200 Jews and non-Jews on a Sunday.

Karina Sokolowska, 45, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's Poland director, has a Jewish father and a mother with an "unclear Jewish history." Karina always knew she was Jewish. At university in the 1990s, she met other young Jews and together they formed the Polish Union of Jewish Students. The 30 or so students had one thing in



◀ View from inside the Warsaw JCC (Photo/Susan Moldaw)



JCC Krakow ▶ director Jonathan Ornstein shows off the center's preschool books. (Photo/Gunda Trepp)

try's Jewish revival, I hear versions of this story again and again.

My grandparents emigrated from Ukraine in the early 20th century; our family didn't experience the Holocaust directly. And yet I'm drawn to the stories. By understanding Polish Jews' return to Judaism, I hope to better understand my own renewed embrace.

...

I am sitting in a small conference room in the JCC in Krakow, talking with Marcjanna Kubala.

In her mid-20s, Marcjanna is founder and director of the JCC's student club. Researching her family's history at 13, she Googled her mother's name. Something caught her eye and she asked her mother, who was in the next room, a question.

vance of the Sabbath. Another son, also living in Tel Aviv keeps his phone on, and the third son, living in Colorado, has all but forgotten Shabbat.

I'm a Reform Jew, raised in the 1950s and '60s in the Bay Area. My father was a real macher, one of the founders of my childhood synagogue, Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills. He was a philanthropic, assimilated Jew with a big-hearted Jewish identity and deeply held Jewish values. My mother grew up in a small Jewish community in Maine and attended services at a tiny shul in Old Orchard Beach.

My father died 11 years ago and his death moved me to begin a program of clinical pastoral education at a local hospital, with the goal of becoming a lay chaplain. As I listened to the five other chaplains-in-training talk about

common — they all knew they were Jewish.

Karina says the idea of being Jewish among the young people was very serious — it wasn't a passing fancy. Her husband, the father of her two children, is Protestant, and the family identifies as Jewish, but she has "no problem" with her children going to church. Her son didn't have a bar mitzvah because she didn't want him to choose between parents. Her kids will make their own choice about religion.

Warsaw fashion designer Antonina Samecka, 36, always knew she was Jewish. Her mother was open about the family's Jewish roots. Her father isn't Jewish. "It's cool to be Jewish in Poland," says Antonina, noting that people she knows aspire to be Jewish, aspire to have Jewish roots. She doesn't plan to raise her 2-year old daughter religiously, though she put her in a Jewish kindergarten and she'll tell her that she's Jewish. Her daughter's father isn't Jewish, but she believes he is; it's "a secret in his family," she says.

Agata Rakowiecka, 36, director of the JCC Warsaw, grew

Jewish," she says, knowing that Poles trust a Jew in business. She says Poles claim, "A Jew will never go bankrupt."

After the Pittsburgh synagogue shooting in October 2018, I put on my Star of David as an act of defiance. My husband and I attended services at our synagogue, Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco, on #ShowUpForShabbat (organized by the American Jewish Committee).

I listened intently to the rabbi discussing anti-Semitism, state power and the emboldening of the alt-right in the United States. Jews here "can't hide as just another white [group]." We must be "proud and loud" Jews, because in history, "that's the only thing that ever worked," he said.

I've had just one personal experience of anti-Semitism, more than 40 years ago. A friend's mother, who didn't know I was Jewish, made mention of "those people." Then, I said nothing. Today, I'd tell her I'm Jewish.

Given that most Polish Jews are intermarried and many advocate giving their children a choice regarding religion,



Susan Moldaw (far left) interviewing Malgorzata Kozera Topinska in Warsaw (Photo/Gunda Trepp)

up with a Catholic father and a Jewish mother. Her first Jewish experience was at Lauder Camp; her father wanted her to go and embrace her Jewish roots. The message at camp was: We know you don't know about Judaism, but you can learn. At the beginning she wondered if she was just playing at being Jewish. She felt scared. Was it honest? She was afraid of doing the wrong thing; she didn't know how to behave.

Katarina Jachnicka, 38, learned Hebrew at university and wrote her thesis about Jewish women. She can't explain why. She didn't know she was Jewish until she was 28 and her mother said, "We need to talk." For two years, she wondered what to do with this information. Now, she and her Jewish partner light Shabbat candles, and Katarina occasionally goes to the progressive Warsaw synagogue. "I have to regain everything," Katarina says.

...

In early 2018, a law was passed in the Polish parliament making it a crime to blame the Polish nation for complicity in Nazi crimes against Jews. Uproar ensued, and there was an upsurge of anti-Semitism in Poland, though mostly on social media. Six months after the law's passage, its criminal penalties were eliminated.

Shortly after the law passed, JCC Krakow Director Jonathan Ornstein said Jewish families were asking if there was a place for them in Poland.

Anti-Semitism exists in Poland, Ornstein says, and it's based on old stereotypes, but it's not a physical threat. It's safe to walk around Krakow being visibly Jewish. Polish Jews, says Ornstein, are not looking to leave.

When fellow Poles ask Antonina Samecka why she is successful in business, her answer plays into stereotypes. "I'm

one might be tempted to draw comparisons to the concerns of Jewish continuity that surfaced in the findings of the 2013 Pew Report, where the majority of Jews married between 2005 and 2013 intermarried, and less than half of those raise children Jewish or partly Jewish.

But, cautions Rabbi Schudrich, the Jewish community in Poland is a "work in progress."

Polish Jews are in the "early stages of rebuilding Jewish life," says Shana Penn, executive director of Bay Area-based Taube Philanthropies, which gives mightily to Jewish life in Poland. The country's Jewish communal structure is growing: JCC, Hillel, Jewish studies, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews.

The further the community gets from the Holocaust, Ornstein says, the harder it will be to feel the excitement of discovering you're Jewish. There's a window now of 10 to 20 years, he believes, adding that we must "do everything we can while we can still do it."

Overseas support is crucial, as well as sharing ideas. Krakow's JCC is financed 90 percent by outsiders, Ornstein says. His primary concern is that the community needs people to visit and participate and believe that the revival is real. "We must never again be isolated from the Jewish world."

As my husband and I light the Shabbat candles, I watch the candles flicker, just as I did at the JCC Krakow. I think of Zofia Radikowski at the JCC and Katarina Jachnicka with her partner. "I have to regain everything," I hear her say in my mind. Though starting from a different place, I feel a kinship. ■

Some interviews were conducted by Moldaw's traveling companion Gunda Trepp, a San Francisco-based writer and journalist.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

continued from 29

by providing ever-new "shock wave" political comments that overwhelm all other news headlines. Thus, Trump not only subsumes the news but in many ways he is the news. Is it just coincidence that the sensational Epstein scandal, one that just may involve Trump, has now moved to the back page while disloyal Jews are now the headlines?

When will we ever learn that we're being played? The proper response to our Provocateur in Chief is to refuse the bait of rising to his arguments, and in so doing, deny him the public attention he so desperately craves.

ROBERT BERKE | OAKLAND

Breathing a little easier

We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to Susan George and Matthew Finkelstein for the frontline work they are doing in saving the soul of the California Democratic Party ("State Dems pass three pro-Israel resolutions," Aug. 26).

As co-founders of Progressive Zionists of California, they are doing the important work of educating Democrats about the natural alliance between Zionism and progressive values, and pushing back against the pernicious attempt to pit one against the other.

Thanks to their efforts and those of their colleagues, the California Democratic Party has now adopted language that validates that Jews are a people who, like all other peoples, have a right to self-determination; explicitly acknowledges that anti-Zionism can be a form of collective anti-Semitism, in which Israel is targeted as a symbol for the Jewish people; and spells out in detail the many guises in which anti-Semitism masks itself.

These are historic achievements and I for one breathe a little easier knowing that California Democrats have my back.

MALKA WEITMAN | BERKELEY

Cherry-picking the Constitution

There is more to the Constitution than the Second Amendment, which two letter-writers in the last edition of this esteemed journal, like many on the right, find it convenient to ignore ("Flawed reasoning on gun control," "The point of the Constitution," Aug. 26).

There is the 14th Amendment, which gives the right of citizenship to anybody born on American soil, under attack from the current administration. There is the right of the president to appoint justices to the Supreme Court (Article II, Section 2, Clause 2), which the U.S. Senate, under the leadership of Mitch McConnell, flouted when it refused to consider Merrick Garland for the court almost nine months before the 2016 election.

About the Second Amendment, Mr. Astrachan in his letter states that the ownership of firearms is a right under the Constitution. Like all the people who put their so-called right to own whatever weapon of mass destruction they want over the public's right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness (which might include going to the Gilroy Garlic Festival without fear of being shot), he conveniently ignores the first part of the amendment, which talks about the need for a militia. It is the militia's right to bear arms that the amendment is about.

On another note, our president talked about Jewish loyalty. My question would be this: Who is more disloyal to our heritage than the Jew who supports a man who continues to spew racist lies, anti-Semitic and otherwise? That is not only disloyal to the Jewish people, but to the United States, where Jews have been given the freedom to live freely and safely, able to achieve more than anywhere before in history.

DANNY YANOW | SAN FRANCISCO

BOOKS

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

MONDAY | September 9

"THE LAST TRAIN TO LONDON"—Book launch party for Meg Waite Clayton's fact-based novel about the Kindertransport rescue of 10,000 children from Nazi Europe. At Books Inc., 74 Town & Country Village, Palo Alto. 7 p.m. Free. See website for many other local talks and appearances. tinyurl.com/megwaite-clayton

TUESDAY | September 10

ADEENA SUSSMAN—Two appearances by author of "Sababa: Fresh, Sunny Flavors from My Israeli Kitchen": At 12 p.m. at Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission St., S.F. Free. tinyurl.com/adeena-cjm. Also at 7:30 p.m., in conversation with J. contributing editor and food writer Alix Wall, at Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. \$30 includes book. tinyurl.com/adeena-cook

"REFUGEES IN AMERICA"—Two appearances by Rabbi Lee Bycel, who will discuss his new book about refugees, their hardships and how they adjusted to life in the U.S. At Fromm Hall, University of San Francisco, 2497 Golden Gate Ave. 6 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/bycel-usf. Also Sept. 22 at Congregation Beth Shalom, 1455 Elm St., Napa. 4-5:50 p.m. Free; registration required. tinyurl.com/bycelnapa-refugees

"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

SUNDAY | September 15

"THE RESTLESS HUNGARIAN"—Documentary filmmaker Tom Weidlinger reads from his new book, subtitled "Modernism, Madness, and the American Dream." Accompanied by short film. At Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis St., S.F. 1:30-3 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/tom-weidlinger

SUNDAY | September 22

TIFFANY SHLAIN—Marin-based author discusses her new book, "24/6: The Power of Unplugging One Day a Week." At JCCSF, 3200 California St., S.F. 11 a.m.-12 p.m. Also Sept. 26 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Congregation Emanu-El, 2 Lake St., S.F. Free. tinyurl.com/shlain-book

MONDAY | September 23

"HERE ALL ALONG"—Former Obama speechwriter Sarah Hurwitz discusses her new book about rediscovering her Jewish roots. At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 7:30 p.m. \$32 includes book. tinyurl.com/speechwriter-book

TUESDAY | September 24

"ILL WINDS"—Local author Larry Diamond talks about his new book on threats to American democracy. At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 7 p.m. \$18-\$20, \$25 includes book. tinyurl.com/larry-diamondbook

TALKS & WORKSHOPS

SUNDAY | September 8

"THE JEWS OF SHANGHAI"—Talk about the Shanghai Jewish community with Manli Ho, whose father was a Chinese diplomat who helped save Jews during the Holocaust, and Jews who fled to Shanghai. At Congregation B'nai Emunah, 3595 Taraval St., S.F. 3-4 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/shanghai-landers

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; RSVP required. tinyurl.com/sfforum-jcrc

THURSDAY | September 12

"SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE"—Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian reps discuss their community's relationships with the state. Moderated by a Santa Clara County supervisor. At Mountain View Center for the Performing Arts, 500 Castro St., Mountain View. 6:30-8:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/interfaith-simintian

SUNDAY | September 15

"RESTORATION OF JEWISH CEMETERIES IN POLAND"—Kol Hadash member Bill Brostoff describes his

personal project restoring his family's plot in the town of Trzcianna, Poland. Kol Hadash Bagel Brunch. At Albany Community Center, 1249 Marin Ave., Albany. 11 a.m. \$10 donation. kolhadash.org

"ISRAELI ELECTIONS: DEJÀ VU?"—SFSU professor Eran Kaplan previews the Sept. 17 Israeli elections. Under One Tent event. At Congregation B'nai Shalom, 74 Eckley Lane, Walnut Creek. 7 p.m. \$10-\$15. tinyurl.com/israel-election

TUESDAY | September 17

ISRAELI ELECTIONS—Visiting instructor Ziv Rubinovitz from Israel leads an analysis and discussion of early results and scenarios. Hosted by Sonoma State Jewish studies. At SSU Student Center, 1801 East Cotati Ave., Rohnert Park. 3-4:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/israel-ziv

WEDNESDAY | September 18

"POWER OF WOMEN 2.0"—Kara Goldin, founder and CEO of hint, and Darya Henig Shaked, founder of Wonder Ventures, speak about community and lifting up women. At Levy Family Campus, 14855 Oka Road, Los Gatos. 5:30-7:30 p.m. \$75. tinyurl.com/women-20power

THURSDAY | September 19

"THE UNBROKEN PAST"—Professor Kevin Ostoyich of Valparaiso U. talks about a German family's unique Holocaust-era journey to Shanghai, based on his interviews with Rudy Nothenberg, former S.F. public official. At Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis St., S.F. 7-9 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/ostoyich-shanghai

"A NEW YEAR OF NEW JEWISH FLAVORS"—Cookbook authors and chefs Leah Koenig, Adeena

Sussman and Einat Admony in a moderated discussion on the nuances of Jewish food and culture, and the evolution of the Israeli food scene. At JCCSF, 3200 California St., S.F. 7 p.m. \$30. tinyurl.com/jccsf-foodpanel

SUNDAY | September 22

"CLIMATE FAIR"—Information from government reps and community groups about local happenings and what one can do about climate change. With children's activities, tabling and giveaways. At Addison-Penzak JCC, 14855 Oka Road, Los Gatos. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/climate-penzak

MONDAY | September 23

LIVE PODCAST WITH BARI WEISS—New York Times op-ed editor and writer joins the hosts of Tablet magazine's "Unorthodox" podcast for a live recording. At JCCSF, 3200 California St., S.F. 7 p.m. \$20. Discount for members. tinyurl.com/bari-weiss

TUESDAY | September 24

"JEWS, SAN FRANCISCO AND VAUDEVILLE"—Author-performer Trav S.D. on the city's entertainment scene, from 19th-century saloons to today's burgeoning burlesque scene. At JCCSF, 3200 California St., S.F. 1-2 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/jews-sf

WEDNESDAY | September 25

JEWS OF COLOR DISCUSSION—Ilana Kaufman of the Jews of Color Field Building Initiative leads a conversation about the newly released demographic study on U.S. Jews of color. At JCCSF, 3200 California St., S.F. 1-3 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/joc-demographic

ART

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

"ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF HATE SPEECH"—Reception, tour and panel about Robin Atlas and Nancy Current's exhibit about hate speech and its consequences. Exhibit through Nov. 24. At Peninsula JCC, 800 Foster City Blvd., Foster City. 6:30 p.m. reception, 7:30 p.m. panel. Free. RSVP recommended. tinyurl.com/hatespeech-opening

WEDNESDAY | September 18

"THE SHABBAT PROJECT"—Opening reception for Laurie Wohl's textile art that visually interprets the wonder and sanctity of Shabbat. Through Jan. 3, 2019. At Osher Marin JCC, 200 N. San Pedro Road, San Rafael. 7-9 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/shabbat-wohl

SATURDAY | September 21

ROY DAHAN—Reception for photo exhibit "Nothing But Miracles" includes a happy hour and a solo concert by the Israeli photographer, who is also a singer-songwriter. Show includes wine and snacks in a pub setup. Exhibit through Oct. 6. At Addison-Penzak JCC, 14855 Oka Road, Los Gatos. 7:30-10 p.m. \$30-\$40. tinyurl.com/dahan-soloconcert

THURSDAY | September 26

"THE PARSHA PROJECT"—Opening reception of Christopher Orev Reiger's exhibition of 112 illustrations inspired by the weekly Torah portion. Exhibit through Nov. 14. At Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis St., S.F. 6:30-8 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/parsha-project

September 6- September 26

Calendar

For more listings see jweekly.com/calendar



BENEFITS & SOCIAL EVENTS

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

"GROUNDBREAKING HOEDOWN"—Chabad of North Peninsula and Chai Preschool celebrate the start of construction for their permanent site. Live folk music, blessings, petting zoo and a presentation of the future building. Refreshments provided. At Chabad of North Peninsula, 1670 S. Amphlett Blvd., Suite 125, San Mateo. 3-5 p.m. Free. chabadnp.com/groundbreaking

THURSDAY | September 12

"BABKA BAKE"—A Jewish Women's Circle event for women and girls 10 and over. Includes tea, coffee, refreshments and baking guidance. At Chabad Jewish Center, 205 Keller St., No. 101, Petaluma. 6:30 p.m. \$18, or \$30 for two. tinyurl.com/babka-bake

SATURDAY | September 14

"TURNING JAPANESE"—A benefit party for the Oshman Family JCC features a Japanese theme, with sake, sushi and karaoke. 21 and over. Los Altos location given with RSVP. 7-10 p.m. \$175. tinyurl.com/ofjcc-japanese

SUNDAY | September 15

SACRAMENTO JEWISH FOOD FAIRE—Congregation Beth Shalom hosts 42nd annual event. With deli-style sandwiches, matzah

ball soup, kugel, veggie options and more for sale. Also arts and crafts, used books and live music. At Beth Shalom, 4746 El Camino Ave., Carmichael. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. No admission fee. tinyurl.com/sacramento-faire

"CONNECTING ON THE TRAIL"—A hike for South Peninsula Jewish women, followed by a provided picnic. Bring sunscreen, water and picnic blanket. No dogs. At Rancho San Antonio Preserve, 22500 Cristo Rey Drive, Cupertino. 10 a.m.-1 p.m. \$15. tinyurl.com/hiking-southbay

TUESDAY | September 17

ISRAAID BREAKFAST—Inaugural event of the IsraAid Humanitarian Professionals Network lecture series features speaker Voni Glick, co-CEO of IsraAid in Tel Aviv. At Kaiser Family Foundation, 185 Berry St., S.F. 8:30-10 a.m. \$18. tinyurl.com/israaid-launch

HEBREW FREE LOAN MIXER—An after-work Business Circle mixer on a rooftop terrace. Open bar and appetizers. At 50 Osgood Place, Suite 500, S.F. 5:30-8:30 p.m. \$25. tinyurl.com/mixer-hebrewloan

THURSDAY | September 19

"NIGHT AT THE JEWSEUM: KABBALAH FUNHOUSE"—Night exploring the mystical strain of Judaism, including Philip Greenleaf and Claudia la Rocco performing improvisational jazz to accompany Annabeth Rosen ceramic sculpture exhibit, a pop-up by the California Institute of Integral Studies and a performance by Izidora Lever LETHE. At Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission St., S.F. 6:30-9 p.m. Free. thejcjm.org/programs/537

FILM & TV

SUNDAY | September 8

"SCHOOL TIES"—A 1992 family-friendly drama set in the 1950s about a Jewish high school football player who hides his religion. Under One Tent and East Bay Int'l Jewish Film Festival event. At Temple Isaiah, 945 Risa Road, Lafayette. 3 p.m. Free. RSVP requested. tinyurl.com/movie-schoolties

THURSDAY | September 12

"PERSONA NON GRATA"—Dramatic biopic 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

FRIDAY | September 20

"FILM FESTIVAL ON AGING"—Lineup includes "Age without Ageism" (directed by and starring local biologist Josh Kornbluth) and "Eve" (directed by Susan Bay Nimoy, widow of Leonard). Through Sept. 22. At New People Cinema, 1746 Post St., S.F. Various times. \$10. tinyurl.com/aging-festival

WEDNESDAY | September 25

"HEADING HOME: THE TALE OF TEAM ISRAEL"—Documentary about Israeli baseball team in 2017 World Baseball Classic. Under One Tent and East Bay Int'l Jewish Film Festival event. At Vine Cinema & Alehouse, 1722 First St., Livermore. 7 p.m. \$8-\$12, under-21 free. tinyurl.com/teamisrael-movie

MUSIC

SUNDAY | September 15

"ELIJAH'S VIOLIN"—Interfaith Center at the Presidio hosts a family opera adapted from a Jewish folktale about young people overcoming fears and discovering the healing power of song. At Presidio Chapel, 130 Fisher Loop, S.F. 4 p.m. Free, reservations required. tinyurl.com/elijahs-violin

WEDNESDAY | September 18

S.F. YIDDISH COMBO—Members of local klezmer group present an intimate show. At Bazaar Café, 5927 California St., S.F. 7 p.m. reception, show at 7:30 p.m. Free, donations appreciated. sfyiddishcombo.com

THURSDAY | September 19

"TSVEY BRIDER" (TWO BROTHERS)—Songwriting duo Anthony Mordechai Tzvi Russell and Dmitri Gaskin perform Yiddish-language music in diverse styles and genres. Sonoma State Jewish Music Series. At Schroeder Hall, SSU, 1801 E. Cotati Ave., Rohnert Park. 6:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/sonoma-series

SUNDAY | September 22

CHANTICLEER—Award winning male chorus performs "Trade Winds," a mixture of compositional and poetic works from China. At Osher Marin JCC, 200 N. San Pedro Road, San Rafael. 5-7 p.m. \$20-\$62. tinyurl.com/chanticleer-osher

"SHULEM IN CONCERT"—Tenor from Brooklyn, reportedly the first Hasidic Jew signed to a major record label, performs songs from his debut album, "The Perfect Dream." At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 5:30 p.m. \$20-\$25. tinyurl.com/shulem

TUESDAY | September 24

"JEWS IN IRISH MUSIC"—Blogger Riggy Rackin leads a talk on high level of Jewish involvement in Irish music scene. Concert by Rackin, Marla Fibish and Lewis Santer. At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 1-2:30 p.m. \$10-\$15. tinyurl.com/irishjew-music

KIDS & FAMILY

SUNDAY | September 8

DROP-IN ART STUDIO—Arts and crafts session inspired by apples and honey, the traditional food of the Jewish New Year, in conjunction with Annabeth Rosen exhibit. At Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission St., S.F. 11 a.m.-3 p.m. Included with admission. thejcjm.org/programs/516

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

SATURDAY | September 14

"SHABBAT UNPLUGGED"—Rosh Hashanah edition features a shofar showdown, Riveropolis, PJ Library story time and hard cider for 21 and over. At Peninsula JCC, 800 Foster Blvd., Foster City. 3:30-5:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/yahy24jz

SATURDAY | September 21

ROSH HASHANAH FOR KIDS—Cantor David Frommer leads a musical service with Torah toys, crafts and

snacks. Grandparents welcome. Co-hosted by Jewish Baby Network, PJ Library and Sherith Israel. At Lafayette Park, Laguna and Washington streets, S.F. 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/family-rosh

SUNDAY | September 22

"NEW YEAR FAMILY FESTIVAL"—Apple tasting, card making, yoga, deli food and more. Book signing with filmmaker Tiffany Shlain; first 100 get a free copy of her upcoming debut book. Music by Alphabet Rockers. At JCCSF, 3200 California St., S.F. 11 a.m.-1 p.m. Free; RSVP requested. tinyurl.com/hashtah-festival

"TEEN TRANS DAY OF VISIBILITY"—Workshop to celebrate and provide visibility for trans and non-binary teens. Hosted by Keshet in partnership with BBYO, JCCSF and others. At The Lab, 2948 16th St., S.F. 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/trans-keshet

THURSDAY | September 26

HELPING CHILDREN COPE—Workshop with focus on informing children about world developments and violence. Co-sponsored by Peninsula JCC and Wornick Jewish Day School. At Wornick Jewish Day School, 800 Foster City Blvd., Foster City. 7-8:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/children-cope



(From left) Shayna, Peter and Noah Blum delivering holiday bags. (Photo/Courtesy Jewish Family and Children's Services)

A Rosh Hashanah mitzvah

Wondering how to reach out to those in need for the High Holidays? One way is to help Jewish Family and Children's Services assemble holiday gift bags for San Francisco, Marin and Peninsula seniors. There will be volunteer opportunities in four JFCS locations, with refreshments provided. To RSVP, or make a donation if you can't attend, visit the below link.

4-6 p.m. Friday, Sept. 13 in S.F.; 1-3 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 15 in San Mateo; 2-4 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 15 in San Rafael; 4-6 p.m. Monday, Sept. 16 in Palo Alto. At the offices of Jewish Family and Children's Services. tinyurl.com/bags-roshhashanah

Cheers to 18 years!

The Jewish Community Free Clinic in Santa Rosa is turning 18 and throwing a big, outdoor party for the occasion. The "Taste & Toast L'Chaim Harvest Celebration" will include local wines, craft beer, wood-fired pizza, paella and other treats. There'll be music by folk trio T Sisters and bluegrass guitarist Ben Morrison, plus yoga, massages and face painting.

2-6 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 8 at Shone Farm, 7450 Steve Olson Lane, Forestville. \$72 VIP, \$36 general, \$18 students, under 12 free. tinyurl.com/jcfc-celebration

T Sisters (Photo/Elena Kulikova)

JEWISH CALENDAR | SHABBAT

September 6 | Elul 6, 5779

Light candles at 7:13 p.m.
Shabbat ends at 8:10 p.m.

September 13 | Elul 13, 5779

Light candles at 7:03 p.m.
Shabbat ends at 7:58 p.m.

September 20 | Elul 20, 5779

Light candles at 6:52 p.m.
Shabbat ends at 7:47 p.m.

HOLIDAYS & SPIRITUAL

FRIDAY | September 6

KABBALAH POETRY—Torah scholar 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. theejm.org/programs/534

"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

SUNDAY | September 8

HIGH HOLIDAYS Q&A—Rabbi Dan Goldblatt answers questions about Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services. Send ahead of

time to rabbidan@bethchaim.com. At Beth Chaim Congregation, 1800 Holbrook Drive, Danville. 10:15 a.m. Free. tinyurl.com/qaa-rabbidan

MONDAY | September 9

"MINDFUL MEDITATION"—First session in 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

THURSDAY | September 12

"KABBALAH AND CREATIVITY"—Second of three classes led by historian Yosef Rosen on the Kabbalistic theory of breaking and repairing in the creative process. **Also Sept. 19.** At Contemporary

Jewish Museum, 736 Mission St., S.F. 5:30-7 p.m. \$36-\$90. tinyurl.com/yosef-rosen

FRIDAY | September 13

KABBALAH TALK—Rabbi Peretz Wolf-Prusan of Hamaqom | The Place, formerly Lehrhaus Judaica, gives a gallery talk on 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. tinyurl.com/hamaqom-prusan

WEDNESDAY | September 18

"RABBIS' ROUNDTABLE"—Discussion with multiple local rabbis about meanings and teachings for the High Holidays. Led by Rabbi Lavey Derby, the Peninsula JCC director for Jewish life. At PJCC, 800 Foster Blvd., Foster City. 7:30-9 p.m. Free. RSVP required. tinyurl.com/rabbis-roundtable

SATURDAY | September 21

"WARM UP FOR THE HOLY DAYS"—Storyteller Joel ben Izzy shares traditional and modern Selichot and High Holiday-themed tales. At Congregation Shomrei Torah, 2600 Bennett Valley Road, Santa Rosa. 7 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/stories-izzy

DANCE PERFORMANCE—Arts organization DNAWORKS presents "HaMapah/The Map: Finding Forgiveness" for a Selichot program. Service to follow. At Congregation Emanu-El, 2 Lake St., S.F. 7-9:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/selichot-2019

THURSDAY | September 26

"MINDFULNESS MEDITATION"—Rabbi Lavey Derby leads a session with four individuals in mind: a neutral person and someone we're having difficulties with. **Also Oct. 31.** At Peninsula JCC, 800 Foster City Blvd., Foster City. 1:30-2:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/meditation-love

ON STAGE

WEDNESDAY | September 18

"CIRQUE MEI"—Chinese circus and acrobatic show with colorful costumes and music. At Palo Alto JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 7:30-9:30 p.m. \$30-\$55. tinyurl.com/cirque-mei

FRIDAY | September 20

"TOVAH IS LEONA!"—Star of TV, stage and screen Tovah Feldshuh performs highlights from Broadway musical "Queen of Mean" about Leona Helmsley. **Also on Sept. 21.** At Feinstein's at the Nikko, 222 Mason St., S.F. 8 p.m. \$50-\$90, plus food-beverage minimum. tinyurl.com/tovah-feldshuh

ONGOING

"CABARET"—New musical production of story set in prewar Berlin during the rise of the Nazi regime. At San Francisco Playhouse, 450 Sutter St. Ends Sept. 14. \$35-\$125. sfplayhouse.org



Get your classical music fix

As part of its Jewish Luminaries Series, the Palo Alto JCC is bringing in quite a luminary indeed: internationally recognized Soviet-born Israeli American pianist Yefim Bronfman. See (and hear!) him perform a recital of Beethoven sonatas in celebration of famous Russian conductor Yuri Temirkanov's 80th birthday.

7:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 8 at Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. \$95-\$120, \$65 for students, \$55 for ages 6-18, \$180 for premium seats and reception. tinyurl.com/yefim-bronfman

Yefim Bronfman (Photo/Dario Acosta)

THANK YOU FOR VOTING

It's coming! Don't miss our OCTOBER 4 Readers Choice issue where the winners will be revealed.

'Crickets Would Sing'

Local survivor's story to be brought to screen in animated film project

FILM | LAURA PAULL | J. STAFF

It was something of a miracle.

Frances Fabri, born Sárka Frances Ladányi in Hungary, was only 14 when she was deported to Auschwitz with her parents. Her father perished, but she and her mother survived the notorious camp and four others. At 15, she was the youngest of 400 slave laborers at Altenberg. They were on a Nazi death march when they were liberated by American forces.

The unanswerable questions — about who lives, who dies, how and why — consumed Fabri for the rest of her life. A quiet, studious person who briefly married and never had children, she helped to found the Holocaust Center in San Francisco, where she had come to live in the 1970s. She devised a method for collecting survivor testimonies and recorded some 50 local interviews, including her own.

When Fabri died in 2006 in San Francisco, her close friends discovered a manuscript she had quietly worked on throughout her adult years. They published the collection of related stories, part memory and part fiction, as "Crickets Would Sing."

It is also a kind of miracle, on a smaller scale, that several years later a Bay Area filmmaker would discover that little-known book. And that he would find a few well-placed people who saw in Fabri's work a vehicle to address the rising tide of hate and anti-Semitism around the world.

They are now collaborating to bring "Crickets Would Sing" to a wide audience as a stop-motion animated film, produced in the Bay Area.

Fabri's book offers a view of Holocaust survival from her perspective as a teenager, deepened by adult insights about what she witnessed and lived through. Vividly described and psychologically perceptive, the stories relate the incredulity of deportees as they were thrust into the dark reality of the camps, their struggles to survive, and the human spectrum of good and evil.

Her stories are also profound works of imagination. In attempting to enter into the minds of others who played parts in the tragedy — how the patient of a beloved Jewish doctor might have felt when the Gestapo took him away, or how a Nazi camp commander dealt with his own conscience in compiling his death lists — she tried to penetrate the inner worlds of both victims and perpetrators.

These are stories that can nurture the seeds of awareness and empathy in today's younger generation, says Rick Hirschhaut, a former director of the Anti-Defamation

League's San Francisco office and now senior adviser on the nonprofit film project that aims to screen "Crickets" for millions of youth across North America and beyond.

"The power of a single act of humanity, a simple gesture of decency, is never lost upon her," Hirschhaut writes in describing the film.

The story of how Bay Area animation and visual effects artist Mauricio Baiocchi came to spearhead this project testifies to the power of Fabri's writing.

It was happenstance how he ended up in that role. Growing up in a middle-class American family, he was practically a stranger to Judaism and the Holocaust. Then, as an adult, he experienced a personal tragedy, which led him to Fabri's therapist, who gave Baiocchi a copy of "Crickets Would Sing."

One day he pulled the book out of his backpack to read on the train.

"I got through the first story and my universe kind of collapsed on itself, it was so powerful," Baiocchi recounted in an interview. "My rational mind couldn't grasp it. What she described ... I had a strong feeling of 'Not on my watch. I can't be a part of a world where this is allowed to happen.'"

He got off the train in tears, determined to "make something beautiful."

He left his job in advertising and devoted himself to the creation of a stop-motion animated short, "Cicada Princess," released in 2013.

As an award-winning veteran of Lucasfilm in San Francisco, Baiocchi had prior experience with the technique, in which three-dimensional figures are created for the characters, then photographed on real sets to simulate movement.

"It's a whole different way of reaching you before you even realize you've been reached," he said.

When the Berkeley Art Museum invited him to show the film to school groups, he found that children were very responsive and open to the questions it raised. Baiocchi became convinced that the technique could convey the experiences of Fabri's characters amid the horrors of the Holocaust without making viewers turn away.

Even though he was not a screenwriter, he decided to embrace the challenge of adapting the book for film. It took him nine months to complete the script, during which he biked every Saturday to the Jewish section of the Mountain View Cemetery in Oakland.

"It was the only place I felt safe writing it," he said. "I



Writer-director Mauricio Baiocchi with the model of Frances Fabri created for the animated film.

would settle down somewhere between the gravestones and say, OK, you guys have to help me."

He focused on two of the stories, while borrowing characters from the others to construct a narrative. "The film is not so much a biography of Frances as her witnessing of the human spirit in the camps," Baiocchi explained. "That is the theme that flows through her stories and what I consider to be the message that she left for us."

Baiocchi brought his script to L.A.-based producer Vince Beggs, who had produced educational media for the Holocaust Museum in Skokie, Illinois. Beggs signed on as executive producer and brought in Hirschhaut, founding executive director of that museum, as an adviser.

Hirschhaut said Fabri's story "speaks to the individual choices that we make and the consequences that can come from those decisions. It is universal and very contemporary."

Stop-motion animation is expensive; the budget for the 24-minute film plus an accompanying educational package is \$4 million. The producers' intention is to distribute the film for free so that "we can tell this story, change lives, influence people's behavior and start healing our country," Beggs said.

The film's creative team has already designed the prototypes of eight principal characters, including that of the young Frances. Dark-haired and thin-armed, she is "all eyes," Baiocchi said, and it's hard not to fall in love with her. It is an emotional connection that will help reach "that empathic place" in the hearts and minds of the audience.

"Frances was a magnificent, talented writer, and the world needs to know her, now more than ever," Hirschhaut said. "We believe this film is a gift to the entire Bay Area community and a special opportunity to claim her legacy and celebrate the tremendous contribution she made to the preservation of memory. It's a *bashert* project. It was meant to be." ■

For more information or to make a contribution toward the film, visit cricketswouldsing.com.

Can't break free from your devices? '24/6' offers guide for healthier living

BOOKS | LIZ HARRIS | J. CORRESPONDENT

Unplugging builds character, helps us reflect on our lives and allows us to better connect with others.

Huh?

Mill Valley filmmaker Tiffany Shlain can explain. "Early on, I was gung-ho" about the internet, says the 49-year-old. Indeed, she founded the Webby Awards (for websites), co-founded the International Academy of Digital Arts and Sciences, and is the executive director of Let It Ripple, a nonprofit that harnesses media and technology to engage people in conversation and action on complicated topics.

So much information right at our fingertips!

But it's gotten out of control, Shlain warns. We're addicted, distracted, overloaded.

That's why she has written "24/6: The Power of Unplugging One Day a Week," a book about her and husband Ken Goldberg's tech journey — from unplugging their electronic devices one day (under the auspices of a program run by Jewish nonprofit Reboot) to her family's 24-hour "Technology Shabbat" every week for the last 10 years.

Shlain, Goldberg and daughters Odessa, 16, and Blooma, 10, have created a deeply meaningful ritual that begins with baking challah and having Friday-night dinner at home with friends, followed by quiet time for journaling and family time fun on Saturday. "We do feel that it's our favorite [time] of the week," Shlain says.

To be released on Tuesday, Sept. 24, "24/6" will jumpstart Let It Ripple's sixth annual Character Day on Sept. 27-28. Character Day, which has more than 50 organizations on board, last year reached more than 4 million people worldwide in schools, companies, congregations and homes, according to Let It Ripple's website.

The event's focus, the website says, is "on the relationship between character and technology," with an added aim this year, Shlain says, of growing a global no-tech Shabbat movement.

"We have, as Jews, this incredible gift right in front of us — Shabbat — that is thousands of years old," says Shlain, a

member of two San Francisco congregations, Emanu-El and The Kitchen. Paraphrasing 20th-century philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel, she says, "It's creating a temple in time. We really need to create sacred spaces."

But one needn't be Jewish to observe an unplugged Shabbat.

"It can work for anyone, from any background or belief," Shlain writes in her book. "As concerns about the effects of excessive tech use on our individual well-being, our relationships, and our democracy come to a head, it's never felt more urgent to share this idea."

We are on information overload, she says. "We have to have a day where we're not influenced by every single other thing. We need to reclaim that space for ourselves, for our kids."

Her book gives not only a personal account of the benefits she and her family have derived from "pulling the plug" on Shabbat, but offers a societal perspective. Shlain cites a multitude of studies and brings in many outside voices — rabbis, philosophers, academics — to reinforce her contention that we really do need a day off.

She even has a how-to guide for all different ages, with ideas for "having fun without screens" for folks 5 to 65 and up.

"I am trying to make people look at how they are living," she says. "I think more people now realize they're on their screens too much. I think the pendulum has swung way too far."

Don't get her wrong: "Tech is good," she says. "It's just not good 24/7."

Some of the downsides: "I think we are distracted to the point where we can't focus. Also, our data is being stolen. People need to understand how you give your data away for free."

She is especially concerned about our youth, writing about the linkage between social media and depression among teens. But she is hopeful the tide may be starting to turn.

"I think you're starting to see pushback," she says. "There's a wave coming, and it's reaching out."



Tiffany Shlain (Photo/Lauri Levenfeld)

Shlain notes that France has banned smartphones in school and — much closer to home — San Mateo High School has implemented a new policy prohibiting cellphone use on campus.

She is on the advisory board member of Wait Until 8th, a national organization that empowers parents to delay giving children a smartphone until at least eighth grade. Even some tech CEOs, she says, are on board with the concept.

On the local level, Shlain is involved with ScreenSense, a Mill Valley resource for families and educators wanting to create healthy tech usage.

"I think there needs to be a major conversation between tech companies, parents, people without kids and government," she says. "It's a multipronged issue."

There's plenty individuals can do for starters. For example, leading up to Character Day is a series of weekly challenges, beginning this week with turning off your smartphone for 30 minutes in the morning, at meals and at bedtime. Each challenge will be accompanied by articles, videos and activities designed to develop awareness and practices around the connection between screen use and character development; for details, visit Characterday.org. "It's really about bringing boundaries into our lives," Shlain says. ■

Tiffany Shlain will sign books 11 a.m.-noon Sept. 22 at the JCCSF, 3200 California St., and will be in conversation with her family 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Sept. 26 at Congregation Emanu-El, 2 Lake St., S.F. Free with registration. Details and more events at 24sixlife.com/events.

One Bay One Book picks novel about Hasidic community

A novel about a 57-year-old Jewish grandmother unexpectedly pregnant with twins is Jewish LearningWorks' selection for its next One Bay One Book program.

"On Division," which will be published Sept. 17, was written by Goldie Goldberg, a 54-year-old Australian-born author who had great success with her first novel, "The Paperbark Shoe" in 2011.

"On Division" set in the contemporary Hasidic community of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, explores the midlife awakening and empowerment of a married woman who didn't ask many questions about her life before her biological twist of fate.

Already the mother of 10 children and grandmother to 32, Suri Eckstein is embarrassed to share her pregnancy with her own husband, Yidel, much less with the deeply religious community in which they live.

As she navigates her situation, she starts working secretly in a maternity clinic and is exposed to ideas and realities outside of the domestic world in which she has existed. A reckoning with how the couple and the community treated their gay son is one of the results of her awakening.

"In this intimate novel of a woman at a crossroads, Goldbloom deftly portrays the relationships of individuals to a close-knit community," S.F.-based Jewish LearningWorks wrote in making the book announcement.

Goldbloom, who was born and raised in Australia and is Hasidic, has eight children and teaches creative writing at the University of Chicago and Northwestern University. "The Paperbark Shoe" was named the Literary Novel of the Year by ForeWord Magazine and was a National Endowment for the Arts Big Reads selection, among other honors.

The annual One Bay One Book program invites the public to join in book talks and other conversations around a single book and its themes. Events and discussions relating to "On Division" will take place at the Jewish Community Library and at synagogues and other venues around the Bay Area from September through June.

Commenting on this year's selection, Howard Freedman, director of the library and the author of J.'s "Off the Shelf" book column, said, "The popularity of the [Israeli TV series] 'Shtisel' indicates a broad curiosity about lives that are off

limits to most of us."

One of the strengths of "On Division," he said, "is that it's showing what's attractive in having an insular community — and also what can be toxic or problematic about it."

Freedman said he was drawn to this book "because it delves into the life of a woman in the midst of gaining insights about herself." While the majority of book club members tend to be women, he said, "I think it's important that men learn to grow out of our conditioning and be attentive to the inner lives of women."

The book for the 2018-19 program was Philip Roth's "The Plot Against America." Previous selections were "What We Talk About When We Talk About Anne Frank" by Nathan Englander, "A Guide for the Perplexed" by Dara Horn, "The Betrayers" by David Bezmozgis, "The Periodic Table" by Primo Levi, "Moonglow" by Berkeley resident Michael Chabon and "The Septembers of Shiraz" by Dalia Sofer.

For more information about this year's book and related events, or to join the One Bay One Book mailing list, visit tinyurl.com/obob-201920. — J. Staff ■

When zombies invaded my childhood synagogue

TV | DAVID A.M. WILENSKY | J. STAFF

Warning: Spoilers ahead for season 5, episode 12 of "Fear the Walking Dead."

A lone rabbi lights a Havdalah candle in an empty synagogue. He says the blessing over the wine, then the spices, then the distinctive braided candle.

Then zombies begin banging on the door of the sanctuary. The rabbi extinguishes the candle in the wine, picks up a bayonetted assault rifle, opens the door and stabs a lone zombie in the head with it. Outside, he encounters a teenage girl, Charlie, and saves her from more zombies.

"I'm Rabbi Jacob Kessner," he says. "Welcome to Temple B'nai Israel."

Charlie tells him she was drawn to the synagogue by the sight of an electric light, a rare sight in a world overrun by zombies. "It's the *ner tamid*," he tells her. "It's the presence of God. She led you here."

That's the opening scene of "Ner Tamid," the Sept. 1 episode of "Fear the Walking Dead" on AMC. Charlie is one of the series' main characters, evidently (I've never seen an episode before). Rabbi Kessner is a new character. And B'nai Israel is actually Congregation Beth Israel of Austin, Texas — my childhood synagogue, the place where I attended religious school and had my bar mitzvah, and my dad's current workplace.

"Fear the Walking Dead" is a spinoff of "The Walking Dead," a TV show based on a comic book of the same name. "Fear" is about a convoy of cars and trucks, a small community of people trying to make their way in a world in which most people have been turned into zombies (or "walkers" in the parlance of this franchise).

At one point, there is a shot looking down from the synagogue balcony — where my bar mitzvah portrait was taken. The sanctuary is my sanctuary. I can see the row where my family likes to sit. Seeing zombies surround my first spiritual home, a place I know like the back of my hand, is surreal and a little disturbing.

Jarringly, our synagogue's god-awful *ner tamid*, or eternal light (a twisted, red-stained-glass monstrosity — the eternal lobster, my family calls it), has been replaced by a big silver plot device of a lamp. With an unspoken nod to the miracle of Hanukkah, keeping the eternal light on is a constant source of worry for the rabbi. He keeps it connected to a car battery — but he's on his last one.

The next morning, after welcoming Charlie inside, Rabbi Kessner takes a Torah from the ark. (Time for a *Sunday* morning Torah reading? Torah is not typically read on Sundays. But it is read on Rosh Hodesh, the first day of the Hebrew month, regardless of the day of the week. Luckily, the episode actually aired on Rosh Hodesh!)

"Why do you still do that?" Charlie asks. "Tradition," he says, quoting pop culture's most famous Jewish line. "Tradition is very important. Now, more than ever."

Later, though, Kessner admits that he has lost his faith — that the rituals are just "the rhythms of a life I'm trying to hang on to." It's clear he can't keep going the way he has. He's alone, weary (more so than your average rabbi) and his makeshift fortifications are no longer sufficient.

After two others from the convoy come looking for Charlie, he reveals that not only is he trying to keep zombies out, he's

of *techiyat hametim*, the belief that in the world perfected, the messianic age-to-come, the souls of the dead will be resurrected.

The Jewish actor playing Kessner is Peter Jacobson. He's a great choice for the role, with a strong off-screen Jewish identity. "It's just a part of me that I bring to any role," he told the Jewish Journal in 2016. "Unless I'm told otherwise, I will be Jewish."

The thrust of the show is about the search for a promised land, a place to stop wandering and settle down. It's a wonder it

Clockwise: Proof that David A.M. Wilensky had his bar mitzvah in a zombie-infested synagogue; zombie extras get playful with the real-life son of the real-life synagogue's real-life executive director; Rabbi Jacob Kessner confronts his zombified congregants on "Fear the Walking Dead"



also keeping a few of them in. They are his congregants. They holed up there together in the early days of the zombie apocalypse, but now he's the last one still alive.

Kessner can't bear to kill his congregants-turned-walkers and keeps a number of them locked up in Cohen Foyer, where I have often hung out, snacked and shmoozed. In one scene, he says Kaddish for them. I shed a couple of tears for Rabbi Kessner.

He's not so different in temperament from the synagogue's real rabbi, the rabbi of my youth, Rabbi Steven Folberg, who also served as a consultant on the episode. Kudos to him for a job well done; there's a lot of Judaism in this episode, rendered with accuracy and sensitivity.

There are a number of nice touches, small details that bring verisimilitude to the episode's Jewish moments. One of the convoy heroes hands Kessner a candy bar. The rabbi checks for a K on the back before eating it. He also has a small vineyard in the back where he makes his own wine. "Mogen David isn't so easy to come by anymore," Kessner says. Upon hearing that there are 36 people in the convoy, he jokingly wonders if he's found the 36 *tzadikim*, the 36 righteous persons that our tradition imagines living in the world at any given time. And, during Havdalah, he observes the custom of looking at the candlelight reflected in his fingernails.

At one point, with dark irony, the rabbi notes the idea

took several seasons to introduce a Jew.

Charlie wants to stay at the synagogue. She thinks it's the place they've been looking for. "There isn't a water source for miles," says one of the group's leaders. (Actually, the synagogue is on Shoal Creek Boulevard, with the namesake creek just across the street. Not to mention the rainwater that periodically floods the sanctuary.)

During the episode's climax, a couple of people are being attacked by zombies in the parking lot. Kessner stands on the bimah, blowing a shofar repeatedly, drawing the walkers inside and away from Charlie's friends. (Apparently, loud noises attract zombies.) The Battle of Jericho echoes in my mind — except here, the shofar is a means of escape from home, rather than conquest of a new place to call home.

Rabbi Kessner and Charlie run from the room, most of the zombies now inside the sanctuary. They lock the doors. The zombies stumble around the bimah. One of them knocks over the treasured car battery. The eternal light goes out.

Finally, the rabbi leaves his sanctuary and joins the convoy. With a cabinet full of Judaica — a Torah, a Kiddush cup, the whole megillah (so to speak) — he joins their search for a place to call home. ■

"Fear the Walking Dead" airs on Sundays on AMC and can be streamed on iTunes, Amazon, YouTube and the AMC app.

Tovah Feldshuh to play the 'Queen of Mean'

THEATER | PATRICIA CORRIGAN | J. CORRESPONDENT

Tovah Feldshuh — you may know her from TV, Broadway and movies — is keen on “The Queen of Mean,” the late New York hotel magnate and convicted tax evader also known as Leona Helmsley.

When the full-length show of the same name reaches Broadway, Feldshuh will play the title role, but for now she’s offering a sneak preview in her cabaret act “Tovah Is Leona!” — which Feldshuh will perform on Friday, Sept. 20 and the next night at Feinstein’s at the Nikko in San Francisco.

“In the show, Leona comes back from purgatory to prove her innocence and sing a few show tunes,” Feldshuh quipped during a recent phone interview. “It’s not my job to judge Leona Helmsley. My job is to play her — and she’s my first felon.”

Feldshuh did cross paths with a few felons in her longtime role as defense attorney Danielle Melnick on NBC’s “Law and Order.” She also appeared on AMC’s “The Walking Dead” (as a survivor) and on the CW’s “Crazy Ex-Girlfriend” (as Rebecca’s mother).

On Broadway, she was in “Lend Me a Tenor,” “Golda’s Balcony” (as Golda Meir) and “Pippin.” Her previous one-woman shows include “Full Gallop,” “Tallulah Hallelujah!” and “Aging Is Optional.” Her film credits include “Kissing Jessica Stein” and “A Walk on the Moon.”

Some of the songs in “Tovah Is Leona!” are American standards (“pillars of familiarity,”

Feldshuh calls them), and some are from “The Queen of Mean,” with music by Ron Passaro and lyrics by David Lee and Alex Lippard. The show, based on Ransdell Pierson’s 1989 biography of Helmsley, has some funding in place, but no opening date or venue as yet.

“At Feinstein’s, audiences will get an intimate look at Helmsley,” Feldshuh says. The show explores all aspects of the Jewish hotelier’s life, including her career path from office temp to Queen of the Helmsley Palace. Even her real estate rival, one Donald Trump, is mentioned. “They had a terrible relationship. She considered him just a blip on the real-estate scene.”

Feldshuh is well aware of Helmsley’s flaws, but also notes her virtues. “She overstepped her bounds. She charged everything to her business, didn’t pay her contractors and didn’t treat people with empathy,” she says. “But she transformed the hospitality industry, showing us what it means to be a five-star hotel in New York City. Talent is the ability to hit a target no one else can hit, but genius is the ability to hit a target no one else can see.”

In her own career, Feldshuh has collected many prestigious awards, and she sometimes wonders whether she would have accomplished as much under her birth name, Terri Sue, as she has under her Hebrew name, which she switched to early in her career.

In 1975, she played the title role in “Yentl” on Broadway. Her triumph in “Golda’s

Balcony,” which opened in 2003, helped set the record for the longest-running one-woman show in Broadway history. Now the 2019 film version of “Golda’s Balcony,” a multi-camera showcase of Feldshuh on stage, has been winning awards at film festivals around North America. And earlier this year, Feldshuh played Holocaust scholar Esther Feinman in Jeff Cohen’s play “The Soap Myth.”

“From the beginning, I’ve had the honor of playing substantial roles in substantial pieces, and some of those roles happen to be Jewish,” Feldshuh says. “What the roles all have in common is that I perceived in each one something that makes a difference to me.”

Born on Manhattan’s East Side, Terri Sue Feldshuh grew up in Scarsdale, New York, in an intellectual, Conservative Jewish family. Her upbringing in the late 1950s and 1960s included “the Suzuki approach to Judaism,” she says, laughing, “because you learn the prayer book in Hebrew.”

She also was taught the value of hard work by her parents. “There is great pleasure in working hard,” she says.

Feldshuh practices what she preaches. When she performs in San Francisco, at the same time she will be in previews for Jonathan Shapiro’s play “Sisters in Law” at the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Beverly Hills. Feldshuh will fly north on Sept. 20, transform into Helmsley for two shows and then fly back to Southern



Tovah Feldshuh as Leona Helmsley (Photo/Courtesy Feinstein’s at the Nikko)

California to resume her role as Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

“It’s very wild, this schedule,” she says. “How do I do it? Delusional optimism, which I have benefited from for so many years. I prefer heavy responsibility, and this is not the first time I’ve done shows in more than one city at a time. I just buckle down and do my work.” ■

“Tovah Is Leona!” 8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 20 and Saturday, Sept. 21 at Feinstein’s at the Nikko, 222 Mason St., S.F. \$50-\$90, plus \$20 food/drink minimum. FeinsteinsSF.com or (866) 663-1063

Connecting with Martin Buber in ‘String Theory’

THEATER | LAURA PAULL | J. STAFF

Dan Schiffrin, an award-winning writer of short stories and essays and a writing teacher as well, is undergoing a conversion. Immersed in the written word all his life, he’s turning to the stage.

“For me, improv is almost a religion,” he said about his upcoming performances at the Marsh San Francisco. “You are responding to people in real time. In my metaphysics of theater, I’m trying to break down performance into a unique thing that happens between the performer and the audience, instead of [the writing] being imposed on them.”

Schiffrin will perform the first part of his play “String Theory” on Sept. 9 and Sept. 23 as part of a Monday series in which five artists present works in progress.

His piece, which he describes as “an existential comedy,” is at its essence a commentary on a central idea of Austrian Jewish philosopher Martin Buber — that we are all yearning to connect in a deeper way, Schiffrin said.

Buber described this deeper connection, in which we treat other people as if they reflected the divine spirit, as the “I-Thou” relationship. This is distinct from routine connections in which people often are treated as objects or instruments, which Buber called “I-It.”

“I have been very curious about the hyphen between I and the It and the Thou,” Schiffrin said. “What happens — positively and negatively — in that connective tissue, the

string or sinew of relationship? What might relationships look like if we assumed there were literally strings connecting us all?”

His play explores the theme of connections, from the personal sphere to social media to physics.

“I’m no scientist, just as I’m not an actor, but there’s something about string theory that is so interesting for me,” he said. “It provides a framework for how the universe wants to connect with itself, or how God might want to connect with



Dan Schiffrin’s original one-man play “String Theory” is coming to the Marsh. (Photo/Courtesy Hagit Caspi)

it. For me, it has a spiritual resonance.”

Given the weighty topic and the staging, he describes his play as “something like a TED Talk meets performance piece.”

Schiffrin, 50, has been a J. contributor, a creative writing teacher at San Francisco State University and UC Berkeley and a visiting scholar at Stanford University, and he was last year’s runner-up for the Anne and Robert Cowan Writer’s Prize, an award established by the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation.

He made the pivot from writing to performance only recently.

“It was something I always wanted to do as a kid but I was too shy,” he said. He did some improv training with Second City in New York, becoming more comfortable as a moderator of onstage conversations around the Bay Area.

Schiffrin will perform with four others, including Lauren Mayer (described in the flyer as a “suburban Jewish mother/political comedy songwriter”) and Scott Cohen (performing excerpts from a one-person show about his grandparents).

“But if you are afraid of string — or it may be yarn,” he warned, “do not come to my show!” ■

“String Theory,” 7:30 p.m. Monday, Sept. 9 and Monday, Sept. 23. \$8-\$15. At the Marsh San Francisco, 1062 Valencia St. themarsh.org/runs/monday-night

'Our Boys' challenges perception of heinous murders

TV | ESTHER D. KUSTANOWITZ | J. CORRESPONDENT

Since "Our Boys" premiered on HBO on Aug. 12, it has sparked conversations marked by dissent and discomfort. It's a hard show to watch. It's hard to enjoy something that's so brutally emotional and tragic, so based in recent memory. It's hard to see bystanders, coached by faith leaders and goaded on by zealots, turn into extremists.

But the face of contemporary Israel is marked with scars, wounded as it is by social, religious and ethnic issues both before and, especially, after the kidnapping and murder of four of its boys.

The 10-part series is based on real events. Importantly, it is a joint production between the Israeli Keshet Studios and HBO, and was produced by a creative team at Movie Plus

We should watch 'Our Boys' precisely because it raises questions and creates discomfort.

that included prominent Jewish Israelis Hagai Levi ("In Treatment") and Joseph Cedar ("Footnote") and Arab Israeli Tawfik Abu Wael.

"Our Boys" depicts not just the explosive inciting incident but the resultant aftermath, the pain and destruction left in the wake of the tragedy. Many viewers, especially those conversant in the complicated dialogue about Israel, have active memories of this time period, just five years ago. As with other "based on a real event" dramas, "Our Boys" pokes at memories with a nagging question: How much of this narrative, punctuated by actual news reporting and riot footage, is fact, and how much is fictionalized?

So, first, the facts. "Our Boys" is based on the events following the kidnapping of Naftali Frenkel, 16, Gilad Shaar, 16, and Eyal Yifrach, 19, on June 14, 2014. While their families, Israelis and Americans maintained hope that the teens would be found alive, their bodies were discovered on June 30. On

July 2, in a revenge act, a Palestinian teen, Mohammed Abu Khdeir, 16, was kidnapped and killed — burned alive in the Jerusalem forest.

A number of arrests were made in connection with the murders of the Israeli teens, and in January 2015, mastermind Hussam Qawasmeh was sentenced to three life terms in prison. The main perpetrator of Abu Khdeir's murder, Israeli extremist and settler Yosef Chaim Ben-David, was sentenced to life plus 20 years. One of his two minor accomplices



Shlomi Elkabetz plays the lead investigator in "Our Boys." (Photo/Courtesy Ran Mendelson-HBO)

received a sentence of life in prison; the other, 21 years.

As for the story, much of the narrative is subjective and reflects the extreme level of emotion and religious nationalism that accompanies any interaction in the region. The series is less about the three Israeli teens and much more a crime procedural charting the investigation into Abu Khdeir's murder. Some charge that this focus negates the pain of the Israeli families. Right-leaning news outlets have claimed that the series is prejudiced and sympathizes with Palestinians. Rachel Frenkel (Naftali's mother), the Shaar and Yifrach

families have all spoken out against the series, and an organization known as the "Choosing Life Forum," a project of the Zionist group Im Tirtzu, demanded that HBO issue a statement admitting an imbalance in the narrative. (HBO instead defended the production.)

The title of the HBO series challenges viewers to define "us" and "them." In the story of these murders, who are the villains, the heroes, the victims? Who are we willing to claim as "our" family? Are we more outraged by the murders of our own, or by our own murdering others? Are we able to see victims and perpetrators for who they are, and if so, how do we assimilate that in our daily lives and attitudes toward Israel and the occupation? Is our faith corruptible? Are our faith leaders fomenting rebellion or encouraging extremism? We should watch "Our Boys" precisely because it raises these kinds of questions and creates this kind of discomfort.

As in other "based on a true story" film projects, like "Chernobyl" and "Red Sea Diving Resort," some of the characters here are likely composites. The process of investigation depicted, while based on the real process, is probably also a composite, filled in with creative strokes that may or may not correspond to actual events. It is up to us whether we trust the world that the series creators are presenting onscreen. But both stories — or, if you prefer, both inciting incidents that became a single, intertwined story — were grisly, heartbreaking and illustrative of the worst human impulses.

Those who can hold only one set of beliefs will pick a side and justify why their pain is worse or holier than someone else's. But during the shiva for her murdered son, Rachel Frenkel issued a statement about Abu Khdeir's murder. "There is no difference between blood and blood. Murder is murder. There is no justification and no atonement for murder," she said.

We can, and should, be horrified by the kidnapping and murder of three Israeli teens and the revenge killing of a Palestinian teen. All four are the "our boys" of the title — forever boys, for the worst possible reason. We should say their names — Naftali, Gilad, Eyal, Mohammed — so that we remember them. ■

J. Views & Opinions
The Jewish News of Northern California

World Refugee Day is tomorrow. What will you do to help?



According to the United Nations, there are 65 million displaced people worldwide — including the families being unjustly separated along the US-Mexico border. What are you going to do this World Refugees Day to take action? [READ MORE ...](#)

J. Arts & Events
The Jewish News of Northern California

Berkeley's Ari'el Stachel and Itamar Moses win big at Tonys



Two Berkeley High grads took home top honors at the Tony Awards. Both won for "The Band's Visit," the story of an Egyptian band's visit to Israel. Stachel won for best featured actor and Moses took home the award for best book. [READ MORE ...](#)

J. Best of the Week
The Jewish News of Northern California

The essential Jewishness of Harvey Milk
Yes, Harvey Milk is an icon of San Francisco politics and the fight for gay rights. Less discussed: his Jewish identity. He hung his bar mitzvah photo at Castro Camera, once considered opening a Jewish deli in S.F. and was guided in his work by Jewish values.

Why are Jews abandoning S.F.?
Since 2011, about 25,000 Jewish adults have left San Francisco. In a recent study, nearly a third of Jewish households in the city report they will "definitely" or "probably" move away in the next two years.

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ART & ABOUT Responding to hate, sacred texts and shrooms

LAURA PAULL | J. CULTURE EDITOR

For me as a native New Yorker, September has always signaled the start of the busiest cultural season. The Bay Area is no slouch either in that regard. Here are three top picks for art events in the South Bay, East Bay and San Francisco.

Make Art, Not Hate

Last spring, the Peninsula JCC in Foster City put out a call for artists to submit works to illuminate the subject of hate speech. Art poured in from all over the country, and from as far away as Israel.

On Wednesday, Sept. 11, "On the Consequences of Hate Speech, III" opens at the PJCC Art Gallery. An iteration of an earlier New York show also curated by Jewish Art Salon members Robin Atlas and Nancy Current, this exhibit includes some 55 works by about 20 participating artists, including Current, Atlas and Bay Area artists Ruth Waters and Pearl Kruss. It will be at the gallery through Nov. 24.

PJCC Cultural Arts Director Kimberly

Gordon described the selections, which include paintings, sculptures, graphics and even some jewelry, as "timeless and intensely personal."

"So many artists drew from their personal histories and are interested in how the current political climate manifests," Gordon said. "It is a very striking show."

The exhibit is one arm of a multidisciplinary program of PJCC events running through the winter called "Words Hurt, Words Heal."

The gallery show opens with a free public reception at 6:30 p.m. There will be a panel discussion moderated by Rabbi Lavey Derby at 7:30 p.m., followed by a gallery tour. Advance registration recommended.

"On the Consequences of Hate Speech, III" Sept. 11 through Nov. 24, Peninsula JCC, 800 Foster City Blvd., Foster City. tinyurl.com/hatespeech-opening

Art 'Beyond Words' at GTU

Whereas hate speech instigated the art in the PJCC show, the new fall show in the Doug Adams Gallery at the Graduate

Theological Union in Berkeley is inspired by sacred texts.

The show, which opened Sept. 5, features four artists from different faith traditions. Works relevant to Judaism include David Maxim's oversized sculptural paintings "The Rib" and "Esau" and Meg Hitchcock's work in which letters from the Torah transform into an English interpretation of a Quranic *surah*, or chapter.

Hitchcock, who received a BFA from the San Francisco Art Institute, seems fascinated by the very forms of written language, arriving at her art by cutting out and combining letters from different holy texts. The effect is to emphasize the commonalities found in diverse scriptures.

Maxim, a San Francisco artist, veers toward the visual depiction of stories and passages from the Hebrew and Christian bibles. Scripture is dramatic, and his works incorporate sculptural elements that allude to the hidden workings of stagecraft.

Also in the show are Mohamed Hafez, who creates intricate Middle Eastern street-scapes integrating Quranic calligraphy, and Bay Area artist Eleanor Creekmore Dickinson, who shows us Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in the carefree time before their expulsion. The artists will appear at a panel discussion in the gallery on Oct. 27 from 5 to 7 p.m.

"Beyond Words: Art Inspired by Sacred Texts," Sept. 5 through Dec. 13. Doug Adams Gallery, Graduate Theological Union, 2465 LeConte Ave., Berkeley. tinyurl.com/gtu-beyondwords

In the beginning, there was fungi

And let us not neglect the natural world.

"My passion for capturing imagery that inspires wonder and awe ... is what led me to filmmaking," says nature cinematographer Louie Schwartzberg, whose feature-length documentary "Fantastic Fungi" will have its Bay Area premiere at the Castro Theatre in San Francisco on Oct. 10.

Schwartzberg, who started his celebrated career doing time-lapse photography in Northern California, described the upcoming event, at which he will share the stage in a post-film discussion with famed mycologist Paul Stamets, as "a homecoming."

Berkeley's Michael Pollan, best-selling author of a 2018 book on psychedelics, is one of the film's interviewees. This stunning film explores the power, beauty and complexity of the fungal world (also known as the mycelial network), its place in the biosphere and the hope it offers for solutions to humanity's many environmental and medical challenges. It features actress Brie Larson as the voice of the mushrooms.

The film is being released in tandem with "Fantastic Fungi: How Mushrooms Can Heal, Shift Consciousness, and Save the Planet," a new book from Northern California publisher Earth Aware Editions. I've previewed the film, and think this may be the one case where I can allow myself to describe a work of art as "mind-blowing."

"Fantastic Fungi," 7 p.m. Oct. 10 at the Castro Theatre, S.F. \$25-\$35, VIP including pre-film meet-and-greet \$150. fantasticfungi.com/castro. ■



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Peninsula novelist brings Kindertransports to life

BOOKS | ILANA DEBARE | J. CORRESPONDENT

Meg Waite Clayton knew she was writing a novel about the Kindertransports — organized rescue efforts that took 10,000 mostly Jewish children out of the Third Reich on the eve of World War II — but she didn't know whether to focus on the transports out of Vienna or Prague.

Clayton had made a research trip to Vienna but was not feeling connected to the city. Then she visited an exhibit there featuring the contents of suitcases taken by the children — items such as storybooks, doll clothes, family photos, Band-Aids and a hairbrush.



"I was fascinated by the idea of parents turning over young kids to the hands of total strangers."

Meg Waite Clayton

"I expected the photos. I didn't expect the hairbrush and Band-Aids," said Clayton, a Palo Alto resident whose novel "The Last Train to London" is being published this month by HarperCollins. "You imagine a mother brushing that child's hair. Seeing that exhibit in Vienna rooted me and the story in Vienna."

"The Last Train to London" centers on three characters during the years 1936-38: a teenage Jewish boy in Vienna, a non-Jewish girl with whom he is developing a shy, tender romance, and a courageous Dutch woman who faces down Nazi border guards and even Adolf Eichmann himself to spirit Jewish children out of Germany.

The boy and girl are fictional. The Dutch woman is based on a real-life figure, the late Geertruida "Truus" Wijsmuller-Meijer, a Christian who had no children of her own but made rescuing Jewish children from the Nazis her life's work.

The novel paints a vivid picture of life in Vienna in the weeks before the Nazi annexation — a time when 15-year-old Stephan Neuman nurtures adolescent dreams of becoming a famous playwright, when Jews like Stephan's parents play a prominent role in Viennese society, and when few people imagine that Hitler might take over what was then a proudly independent country. Within the span of a year, everything changes and the Kindertransport becomes Stephan's sole hope for survival.

The idea for "Last Train" took root more than a decade ago. Clayton's son was involved in an effort by the Palo Alto Children's Theatre to interview local Kindertransport participants and write a play about their experiences. The play never materialized, but the stories kindled her imagination.

"I was fascinated by the idea of parents turning over young kids to the hands of total strangers, to live in a city where they didn't know the language," she said. "It was so compelling, so moving, so fraught."

For a long time, Clayton didn't think she could write this

story. She was raised Roman Catholic, and though she's had close Jewish friends throughout her life, she felt it wasn't her story to tell.

Then — in the course of researching the Kindertransports — she learned about "Tante Truus," as Wijsmuller-Meijer was called by the children she rescued.

"When I read that, I knew this was my story," she said. "Truus was Christian like me, someone I could inhabit as my way into the story."

Clayton, a history major, was determined to be historically accurate. She did research in Vienna, Amsterdam, Salzburg and London. When she learned of a 50-year-old biography of Tante Truus that was out of print, not for sale on the Internet and only available in Dutch, she enlisted a friend in the Netherlands to obtain a copy through inter-library loan and scan it for her. Then she used Google Translate to turn the PDF into English, one paragraph at a time.

Clayton started work on the book in earnest in 2015. The changes in U.S. politics over the following four years transformed her sense of the story and gave it a new sense of urgency.

"When Trump was elected, even before we had kids in cages at the border, I could see parallels between his rise and the rise of Hitler," she said. "I don't want to overstate it ... but many of the techniques Hitler used are things I see Trump using, like calling the media 'lügenpresse,' or 'lying press.'"

"One moment Austria voted to repudiate Nazism, and two months later Hitler walked in. I felt I needed to get this

done now, so people could see how fast and dramatically things can change."

Clayton has received more marketing support from her publisher for "Last Train" than for any of her previous six novels, including "The Wednesday Sisters," which Entertainment Weekly named as one of the 25 essential best-friend novels of all time. Already "Last Train" is being translated into 18 languages; the first foreign rights to be sold were for a Hebrew translation, in an auction with multiple bidders. She has no fewer than seven Northern California bookstore readings coming up this month, and later this fall will speak at Jewish book fairs in Atlanta, Detroit, North Carolina and Toronto.

For Clayton, the story's appeal lies not only in the wrenching drama of parents relinquishing children to save them, but in the courage that fueled the Kindertransport.

"I wanted to write a book that is fundamentally hopeful and inspiring, which is why it was important to have a rescuer character like Truus," she said. "At the same time, I didn't want to end the book in a completely happy place, because there is no completely happy outcome here." ■

"The Last Train to London" by Meg Waite Clayton (451 pages, HarperCollins). Meg Waite Clayton book launch is 7 p.m. Sept. 9 at Books Inc. (Palo Alto). She also will appear at 7:30 p.m. Sept. 10 at Mrs. Dalloway's (Berkeley), 7 p.m. Sept. 11 at Copperfield's Books (Sebastopol) and 7 p.m. Sept. 12 at Book Passage (Corte Madera). For full schedule, visit megwaiteclayton.com/events.

Young, gifted and Hasidic: Tenor to sing at the OFJCC

Once in a while, excelling in one musical tradition will catapult an exceptional talent into success in other musical genres. Shulem Lemmer, a young tenor from Brooklyn's Hasidic community, may be that kind of a rising star.

With the recent release of his debut album "The Perfect Dream," the 29-year-old, who goes by the stage name "Shulem," has become the first singer from the Hasidic community to be signed to a major label, Decca Gold. Produced by Jon Cohen, the album announces the arrival of a musical voice that, while new to many, is already seasoned by years of performing for his congregation and the Hasidic community.

On Sept. 22, Shulem will perform songs from the album at the Oshman Family Jewish Community Center in Palo Alto.

In "The Perfect Dream," Shulem embraces a broad range of material reflecting his varied musical tastes. His vocal talents are showcased not only in his style of singing prayers, psalms, and more traditional songs, but in two singles from the album: "Bring Him Home," from the Broadway musical "Les Misérables," and the Naomi Shemer song "Jerusalem of Gold."

"I am looking forward to being able to sing for more people and develop as an artist. I am so grateful to have been given this opportunity," Shulem said in an announcement of this new step in his career.

Growing up in Brooklyn's Boro Park neighborhood, Shulem was exposed primarily to Jewish cantorial music; his older brother is a synagogue cantor in Manhattan, and Shulem was a featured child soloist in his religious community.

"There are many different kinds and forms of cantorial music. I was hearing a wide variety of styles and approaches which broadened my awareness," he recounts. Opera, particularly Luciano Pavarotti, also became an important influence, along with Michael Jackson, Billy Joel, Elton John, Stevie Wonder, Andrea Bocelli and Josh Groban.

"I listened to a lot of different things," Shulem says. "I will look up certain people and study what they do — how they achieve certain things either with their voice or in their career. I listen to their voices and think, 'Oh, I can do that or fit that in' and try to make that happen somehow. Music, like any creative endeavor, is fluid and a river of influences that constantly evolves."

— J. Staff ■

"Shulem in Concert" 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Sept. 22 at Oshman Family JCC, Schultz Cultural Arts Hall, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. \$20-\$35. paloaltojcc.org/events/shulem-in-concert



Brooklyn-born tenor Shulem (Photo/Shimmy Rubinstein Photography)

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Good idea: Holding our leaders to a righteous standard

TORAH | RABBI STACY FRIEDMAN

Shoftim
Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9
Isaiah 51:12-52:12

Ben Bag Bag famously said of the Torah, "Turn it over and over because everything is in it." These words from Pirkei Avot are as true today as they were when they were first written more than 1,700 years ago.

In Shoftim, Moses exhorts the Israelites to establish fair systems of judgment and leadership, and implores them to pursue justice themselves. Aware that his death is imminent and that he won't be alive to lead the Israelites, he offers comprehensive instructions for creating a new society in the Land of Canaan.

Central to these instructions are those pertaining to Israel's rulers, and it is here where Ben Bag Bag's enduring words, as well as those of the Torah portion, find particular relevance today.

For the Torah is not just a spiritual and ethical document. It is also a political one. And much of Shoftim concerns itself with proper conduct and comportment for ancient Israel's political leaders.

Clearly, in the Torah and in the Jewish tradition, leadership and governance are inextricably tied to our values and ethics. Today, at a time of such extreme political discord and moral fraying of our society, the essential lessons of Shoftim are as indispensable today as they were thousands of years ago.

Moses instructs the Israelites that once they enter the land and establish themselves there, they are free to set a king over themselves, as the other nations do. The king, however, is to govern by a powerful ritual that serves both to hold him accountable and keep him humble.

In Deuteronomy 17:18-20, we read, "When the king is seated on his royal throne, he shall have a copy of this Teaching written for him on a scroll by the levitical priests. Let it remain with him and let him read it all his life, so that he may learn to revere God, to observe faithfully every word of this Teaching as well as these laws. Thus he will not act



Rabbi Stacy Friedman is the senior rabbi of Congregation Rodef Sholom in San Rafael. She and her husband Frank are the proud parents of two teenage sons.

haughtily toward his fellows or deviate from the Instruction to the right or to the left, to the end that he and his descendants may reign long in the midst of Israel."

The value inherent in this instruction is reverence, reverence for God, for the people and for the land itself.

It serves as a constant reminder both to the king and his people that, above all else, he serves God and is accountable to God. Providing necessary checks against corruption and haughtiness, this ritual grounds political governance in holiness, humility and righteousness.

For centuries, rabbinic commentators have explored the meaning and power of this commandment. According to the Mishnah, Sanhedrin 21b, it is not enough for the king to keep a Torah scroll next to him, but he must actually write it himself. When he goes out to war, he must bring it with him. And when he comes home from war, he must bring it back with him.

When he reclines to eat, it is with him. Ein Yaakov adds that when he sits on his throne to judge the people and their disputes, the Torah is beside him, as well.

The commentators teach that the king must possess two Torah scrolls, one that he keeps in his treasury (back home) and one, in the form of a small amulet, which hangs on his right arm and is with him always, referencing Psalm 16:8, "I have set the Lord always before me; God is at my right hand, that I shall not be moved."

And according to a Midrash, only when the king does all that is written in this regard is he worthy of sitting on the throne of his kingdom (Sifrei Devarim 160:1).

Why would the Torah command such a painstaking ritual?

Is it not enough for the king to possess a Torah without having to scribe it himself?

Only through studying and learning the law could the king truly know the law. And in knowing the law, he could no longer be above the law.

As Ramban (Nachmanides) teaches, "The Torah restrains the king from arrogance and haughtiness of heart ... it warns him that his heart must be low and humble like his fellows. Because arrogance is abhorrent to God and to God alone is praised."

The Torah holds our leaders to a righteous standard of accountability and responsibility, to uphold the highest values of justice and compassion, and to embody the noble characteristics of humility and reverence. We must demand nothing less of our own leaders and of ourselves. ■



Statue of King David by F.A. Jerichau

CELEBRITY JEWS

Funnyman as an Israeli spy



Sacha Baron Cohen

"The Spy," a six-episode series premiering Friday, Sept. 6 on Netflix, is about **Eli Cohen** (1924-1965), a real-life Israeli spy. I won't disclose his most important espionage assignment, but I will give you a little background: Cohen was born and raised in Egypt and was fluent in Arabic. His family was secretly Zionist, and he aided Israel from Egypt. He avoided detection for a long time, but when his position became untenable, he escaped to Israel in 1956.

"The Spy" was created by **Gideon Raff**, 46, an Israeli producer and writer who is most famous for creating "Prisoners of War," which was remade as the Showtime hit "Homeland."

British actor-comedian **Sacha Baron Cohen**, 47, plays Eli Cohen; since his mother is an Israeli and he is fluent in Hebrew, it probably helped Baron Cohen give a more authentic performance. U.S. actor **Noah Emmerich**, 54, co-stars as Dan Peleg. Netflix describes Peleg this way: "Dan is a charming, ruffled and brilliant Mossad trainer. He is wise, wary and stubborn, and has a tendency to blur the boundaries between the personal and professional." Emmerich co-starred as FBI agent Stan Beeman in the FX series "The Americans," and I'll always remember him as Jim Carrey's faux best friend in the 1998 fantasy-drama hit "The Truman Show."

Jews in country music?

On Sunday, Sept. 15, most PBS stations will air the first of eight episodes of the Ken Burns documentary series "Country Music," and a week earlier, they'll air "Live at the Ryman," a concert taped earlier this year that celebrated the release of the Burns series.



Ray Benson

While there aren't many Jewish country artists, the biggest Jewish country musician of all (literally) was part of that concert. I speak of **Ray Benson**, 68, a 6-foot-7 guy who has been the leader of the popular Texas swing band Asleep at the Wheel since 1970.

At the Ryman concert, Asleep at the Wheel played "New Rose of San Antonio" by Bob Wills, the late "King of Western Swing" and a subject of Burns' series. The concert airs on KQED on Sunday, Sept. 8 at 8 p.m., with a repeat at 2 a.m.

The Creative Arts Emmys

The Creative Arts Emmy Awards will be presented over two days in mid-September, with an edited show airing at 5 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 21 on FXX.

In my next column, I'll cover the Primetime Emmys, but here are some Jewish nominees in the Creative Arts Emmys.

Documentary filmmaking: "RBG," a film about Justice **Ruth Bader Ginsburg**, 86, directed-produced by Betsy West and **Julie Cohen**, 55; "Divide and Conquer: The Story of Roger Ailes," directed-produced by **Alexis Bloom**, 44; and "Three Identical Strangers," a film about Jewish triplets separated at birth.

Outstanding informational special or series: "Parts Unknown," hosted by the late **Anthony Bourdain**; and "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee," hosted by **Jerry Seinfeld**, 65.

Animated program: "BoJack Horseman," created by **Raphael Bob-Waksberg**, 35, who was raised in Palo Alto and profiled a year ago in J. (tinyurl.com/jweekly-bojack); and "Big Mouth," created by **Nick Kroll**, 41, **Andrew Goldberg**, 41, **Mark Levin**, 51, and Jennifer Flackett. ■



Raphael Bob-Waksberg

Columnist Nate Bloom, an Oaklander, can be reached at middleoftheroad1@aol.com.

Mary Tyler Moore's wise-cracking neighbor Valerie Harper's Rhoda embodied a very Jewish type

TV | ANDREW SILOW-CARROLL | JTA

Theater folk in England are debating a recent revival of the musical "Falsettos," asking whether non-Jews should be playing its Jewish characters. In an open letter, critics of the religion-blind casting complain that non-Jewish actors can at best portray only a "secondary understanding" of Jewish mannerisms but have no awareness of the "psychology, geography, culture and history that have framed these outward signifiers of Judaism."

To the perennial debate over whether

she once said in an interview, "All I could do was, not being as pretty, as thin, as accomplished, was say: 'I'm a New Yorker, and I'm going to straighten this shiksa out.'"

"Listen," she would tell such fans, according to her 2013 memoir "I, Rhoda," "in my heart, I'm Jewish. And if you go back far enough, we're all Jewish. The Jews are an ancient people."

In the history of that people, Jews always served as a convenient foil for gentiles, a tradition that began with the Gospels and continued in "The Mary Tyler Moore Show," which debuted in 1972.

she once said in an interview, "All I could do was, not being as pretty, as thin, as accomplished, was say: 'I'm a New Yorker, and I'm going to straighten this shiksa out.'"

"The Mary Tyler Moore Show" is remembered as a feminist breakthrough in television, depicting women who were single and career-minded and not defined only by their relationship to the men in their lives. The Rhoda character was groundbreaking too — the first Jewish leading character on TV since Gertrude

Jewishlessness, like Valerie Harper playing Rhoda."

But her Jewishness was nonetheless out there, by the standards of the day, no more so than in the season 2 episode titled "Some of My Best Friends Are Rhoda." Mary makes a new friend, Joanne, leaving Rhoda feeling snubbed. The friendship sours, however, when Joanne invites Mary to a club that prohibits Jews, and Mary defends Rhoda.

When CBS spun off the character for Harper's own show, "Rhoda," some of her recognizably Jewish attitude didn't survive the transition. Although she moves back to New York and gains a stereotypically



Valerie Harper (left) as Rhoda with Mary Tyler Moore in television's "The Mary Tyler Moore Show." (Photo/JTA-Bettmann-Getty Images)

"There's a certain amount of guilt that goes with that. My mother wants the people she loves to feel guilty."

Rhoda Morgenstern

non-Jewish actors can or should play Jews, I have a two-word answer: "Rhoda Morgenstern."

Valerie Harper, who died last week at age 80, starred in "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" as the earthy, wise-cracking, Bronx-born neighbor and best friend of the WASPy, reserved, carefully coiffed TV producer played by Moore. She was so convincing as Rhoda that many viewers

Rhoda was Mary's opposite, in looks and temperament. Considered plump only by the body-shaming perspective of a television sitcom, she envied Mary's figure and her poise, but also served Mary by helping her shed some of her Midwestern reserve. Her Jewish neuroses balanced Mary's gentile insecurity. She said out loud what Mary had a hard time admitting to herself. She threw Mary's character into high relief, and Mary returned the favor.

"You're talking about Midwestern love. I'm talking about Bronx love," Rhoda tells Mary in the show's first season. "There's a certain amount of guilt that goes with that. My mother wants the people she loves to feel guilty."

Harper was very much aware of how Rhoda's Jewishness informed her relationship with Mary. Describing her character,

Berg starred as Molly Goldberg on CBS from 1949 to 1951.

And just as Mary represented a soft feminism, Rhoda represented soft ethnicity: Although her Jewishness was rarely made explicit (except perhaps for that last name, which the protagonist of Herman Wouk's 1955 novel "Marjorie Morningstar" had shed in the name of assimilation), her outward Jewish signifiers were apparent.

This has earned the show's creators both praise and criticism. Marlene Marks wrote in the Jewish Journal in 1991 that Rhoda proved "there was more to the Jewish woman than the stereotype. She was not a princess. She was not a shrew. Yes, she was an underdog, but not a loser."

By contrast, a character in a Francine Prose short story, "Electricity," is described as "assimilated to the point of

"Listen, in my heart, I'm Jewish. And if you go back far enough, we're all Jewish. The Jews are an ancient people."

Valerie Harper

Jewish mother, Rhoda herself sheds some of her Jewish tics (and more than a few pounds). The ethnic burden, like many of the best lines, was given to Julie Kavner as her younger sister, Brenda.

When Rhoda marries — more than 50 million viewers tuned in for the episode — the fact that her husband wasn't Jewish was barely treated as a plot point. Maybe that's why so few Jews objected to this much-hyped portrayal of interfaith marriage. Rhoda left her Jewishness, along with her best friend, back in Minnesota. And for anyone who has never felt more Jewish than when they leave the Jewish "ghettos," that's a familiar feeling.

In the absence of positive expressions of Judaism — ritual, language, dress and what the sociologists call "propinquity" — ethnic Jewishness only becomes apparent in the things that we are not: New York, not Minnesota; loud, not reserved; carnal, not buttoned up; wittily self-deprecating, not morbidly self-lacerating. It was how a rapidly assimilating Jewish community began to think of what it meant to be Jewish.

Rhoda wasn't the first Jewish character to be understood in contradistinction to the non-Jews with whom she shared a stage. But never before was that stage so large, nor the character so delightful. ■

Lifecycles

B'NAI MITZVAH

SEBASTIAN ACKERMAN Son of Becca Ackerman, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Beth Jacob in Redwood City.

NOAH BABEL Son of Lisa and Chris Babel, Saturday, Sept. 21 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

ABIGAIL BARTFELD Daughter of Michele and David Bartfeld, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Peninsula Temple Sholom in Burlingame.

AARON BELIKOFF Son of Moira Belikoff, Saturday, Aug. 3 at Temple Beth Abraham in Oakland.

SOPHIE BERKOVITS Daughter of Nina and Ron Berkovits, Saturday, Sept. 14 at Peninsula Temple Sholom in Burlingame.

VIRGINIA TURNER BERNSTEIN Daughter of Nancy and Gideon Bernstein, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Rodef Sholom in San Rafael.

TALIA AVIVA BRADY Daughter of Theresa and Mark Brady, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Rodef Sholom in San Rafael.

TALI BRUCE Daughter of Deborah Schneider, Saturday, July 13 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills.

HAYDEN BURTON Son of Carol and William Burton, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Temple Sinai in Oakland.

JOSEPH CHARLESWORTH Son of Amy Moscov and Richard Charlesworth, Saturday, Aug. 17 at Temple Beth Abraham in Oakland.

HANNAH DAVIS Daughter of Jessica Nenner and Josh Davis, Saturday, Sept. 14 at Congregation Rodef Sholom in San Rafael.

NOLA DERRICK Daughter of Jennifer and Mike Derrick, Saturday, Sept. 21 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

SAM ENGEL Son of Didi and Greg Engel, Saturday, Aug. 24 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills.

ETHAN FRIESEL Son of Staci and Jonathan Friesel, Saturday, Sept. 21 at Congregation Beth Jacob in Redwood City.

ALEXANDER GANI Son of Elisabeth and Marcel Gani, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills.

ORI GILLAI Son of Saar and Barchi Gillai, Saturday, Sept. 21 at Congregation Kol Emeth in Palo Alto.

JARED AND JUSTIN GLADFELTER Sons of Kim and Rick Gladfelter, Saturday, Aug. 3 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills.

ALLISON GOLD Daughter of Audrey and Garry Gold, Saturday, July 6 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos.

ALEXA GOLDMAN Daughter of Elaine and Tyler Goldman, Saturday, Sept. 21 at Peninsula Temple Sholom in Burlingame.

SASHA GORDON Daughter of Aliya and Gil Gordon, Saturday, Sept. 14 at Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo.

JAKE SAMUEL HAKIM Son of Dawn Ratner Hakim and Rob Hakim, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Addison-Penzak JCC Los Gatos.

JACK HOCHSCHILD Son of Jennifer and Lenny Hochschild, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

ZANDER KORAN Son of Kim and Joshua Koran, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills.

ANSEL KLUCSOR Son of Michelle Kluczor and Naomi Marks, Saturday, Sept. 14 at Congregation Netivot Shalom in Berkeley.

NATHAN LEVY Son of Laurie and Philip Levy, Saturday, July 20 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills.

SHAUNA AND ZACHARY LINDHEIM Daughter and son of Melissa Schwartz-Lindheim and Michael Lindheim, Saturday, Sept. 14 at Temple Sinai in Oakland.

EMILY MAREMONT Daughter of Eve Maremont, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

VIVIAN MILLER Daughter of Katya and Jesse Miller, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Beth Sholom in San Francisco.

BRENNA MOORE Daughter of Leslie Reckler and Cameron Moore, Saturday, Sept. 21 at Congregation Kol Emeth in Palo Alto.

AUDREY ORUM Daughter of Caren and Nick Orum, Saturday, Sept. 14 at Congregation Rodef Sholom in San Rafael.

ZOE PARKER Daughter of Michele and Nathan Parker, Saturday, Aug. 17 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos.

ELEANOR PORTER Daughter of Diane Epstein-Porter and Ken Porter, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Or Shalom Jewish Community in San Francisco.

JUSTIN ROSENBLATT Son of Marci and Michael Rosenblatt, Saturday, Sept. 21 at Temple Isaiah in Lafayette.

HENRY ROSS Son of Bryna and Daryl Ross, Saturday, Sept. 14 at Temple Beth Abraham in Oakland.

JOSEPH SPIER Son of Mimi and Marc Spier, Saturday, Aug. 31 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos.

ADEN SWARTZBERG Son of Loreli Cadapan and Neil Swartzberg, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Etz Chayim in Palo Alto.

NOAH WAXMAN Son of Lisa and Jared Waxman, Saturday, Sept. 14 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills.

ZACKARY WEINBERG Son of Sharon and Joshua Weinberg, Saturday, Sept. 14 at Congregation Beth Sholom in San Francisco.

ASHER WESTON Son of Maacah Marah and Stephen Weston, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Congregation Sherith Israel in San Francisco.

GABRIELLA YU Daughter of Shari and Bing Yu, Saturday, Sept. 21 at Temple Sinai in Oakland.

BENJAMIN ZEITZER Son of Jamie and Monica Zeitzer, Saturday, July 6 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos.

KYLIE ZELDIN Son of Sheila and Craig Zeldin, Saturday, Sept. 7 at Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo.

TAYLOR ZWEBEN Daughter of Bonnie and Seth Zweben, Saturday, Sept. 14 at Congregation Kol Emeth in Palo Alto.



RAFAEL PLAWNER Son of Talia and Patrick Plawner, Sunday, Sept. 1 at Chabad of the North Peninsula in San Mateo.



JONAH GABRIEL FRENKEL Son of Andi and Rick Frenkel, Saturday, Aug. 31 in Palo Alto.

ROSH HASHANAH GREETINGS ISSUE

ISSUE DATE:
September 20

AD RESERVATION DATE:
September 10

THE
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Contact **STEVE GELLMAN** | 415.263.7202 | Steve@jweekly.com

OBITUARIES

STANLEY C. LICHTENSTEIN

June 5, 1926-Aug. 21, 2019



Stan Lichtenstein passed away peacefully after a brief illness. Stan was born and raised in San Francisco. He served in the U.S. Navy from 1944-1946. After his Navy service, Stanley

enrolled in University of Pacific on the GI Bill, graduating in 1949. From there, he embarked on his first career in broadcasting.

In 1956, Stanley married Diane Claire Dietz, beloved wife for 61 years. After completing a master's degree at San Francisco State University in 1970, Stan began his second career, as a professor at Chabot College in Hayward, where he created a broadcasting degree program. Stan exercised throughout his life, completing two marathons and 10 half-marathons; he worked out three times a week at Mariner Square Athletic Club until his death at age 93. Stan also enjoyed the ukulele and performed with the Trinity Lutheran "Uke Group" in Alameda. Stan was president of Temple Sinai in Oakland from 1980-1982. Alameda residents for over 20 years, Stan and Diane participated in many civic activities before moving in 2014 to Oakland's Lake Park Retirement Community.

Stanley deeply loved his wife, Diane, their 4 sons: Gary (wife Kaye), Moshe (wife Rachel), Benjamin and Scott (wife Sarah); 12 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. Those who knew Stan will deeply miss his warmth, humor, sensitivity and joyful spirit. Donations may be sent to the Sotomayor Advancing Women's Leadership Fund, University of Pacific

Advancement Services, 3601 Pacific Ave., Stockton, CA, 95211.

ISAAC B. NITTENBERG

Sept. 18, 1927-Aug. 30, 2019

Isaac B. Nittenberg, age 92, passed away on August 30, 2019. Isaac was born in Łódź, Poland, to Dora and Fiszal Nitenberg who, along with his sister Rachel, perished in the Holocaust. Isaac was the only member of his family to survive.

From ages 13 to 18, Isaac endured great suffering under Nazi internment. In the early years of World War II, Isaac was subjected to hard labor in the Łódź Ghetto. After four years of back-breaking work and near starvation, he and his family were shipped to Auschwitz on the last transport out of the ghetto. At Auschwitz, all but Isaac were gassed. Isaac was subsequently transferred to four other camps until finally arriving at Türkheim where, during the last days of the war, he and a friend escaped with help and compassion from a commanding officer who heard of the coming death marches and wanted to get the two boys out. While escaping, Isaac was shot in the leg but managed to hide on a farm until the boys were given ID papers from an American convoy. With documentation, they then were able to bike, hike and hitchhike toward safety. Initially heading toward Switzerland, they got a tip to go to Memmingen where MPs took them to a hospital. Here Isaac was treated for gangrene that had developed in his leg and recuperated for six weeks. After the war, Isaac spent a few years in Germany helping American Intelligence identify Nazis. Then in the 1980s, he testified at the war crime tribunals at the International Criminal Court in The Hague.

Although at last physically free, Isaac would never be released from the memories of unimaginable suffering and loss. What made life bearable were laughter, soccer, good food, acts of kindness and compassion that he noticed with outsized gratitude, and the lasting friendships he made after coming to the United States.

Upon immigrating to the U.S., Isaac first settled in Patterson, New Jersey, where he joined the U.S. Army in hopes of getting an education. After his military service, he moved to Los Angeles where, through employment, he learned how to upholster furniture. Eventually, he settled in the Bay Area where he started his own upholstery business, played soccer, and was an assistant coach for the Hakoach soccer team. He met and married Denise Dakin and lived in the Richmond District of San Francisco with their son, Philip. Isaac and Denise started a gourmet food line called B and K Gourmet which sold at local retailers such as Neiman Marcus. Some years after Denise's death, Isaac married Sue Jones. They resided in San Rafael, California, until her death in 2018.

Isaac is survived by his son, Philip, two grandchildren, and the great many lives he touched and people he cared about. He led an extraordinary life and will be remembered for his fierce, unstoppable spirit and strong will. Isaac was the ultimate survivor. Per his wishes, he will be buried at the Home of Peace Cemetery next to his first wife, Denise.

Many thanks to Café by the Bay, SFVA, Brian Brown at JFCS, Rhoda Goldman Plaza, and the Negoesco Family, especially Steve and Steve Jr.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the ACLU, Southern Poverty Law Center, and/or the Steve Negoesco Soccer Fund at USF.

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ARI MCGUIRE

July 19, 1996-Aug. 21, 2019



Stricken with grief, we say goodbye to our singular Ari McGuire, who suffered an accidental death on Aug. 21 at the age of only 23.

Ari was a member of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne, where he

made close friendships and entertained others with his humorous stories and easy, distinctive laugh. His commanders uniformly assessed him to be a top reconnaissance scout and soldier. He was awarded the Army Commendation Medal for exceptional meritorious service.

Still, he was a little bit of everything. During down time, everyone knew Ari could be found in a corner, reading classic literature or a fantasy novel. He was a creative thinker, who enjoyed being on the move both intellectually and physically. He loved to run across his native city of San Francisco, often to class at the School of the Arts, where he graduated in 2015.

One of Ari's biggest assets was his heart of gold. Friends, family, soldiers and commanders loved him as he so loved and cared for them. He is mourned most by his mother, Carole De Nola, and his father, Joseph McGuire.

Extended family and friends, too many to mention here, will hold him in their hearts eternally.

Services were held at Sherith Israel on Aug. 25, followed by a military ceremony.

Anyone who wishes to make a donation in Ari's memory may consider these three organizations: Army Emergency Relief (aerhq.org), Fisher House Foundation (fisherhouse.org) and Project Rozana (projectrozana.org).

SHERMAN RUSSELL "RUSTY" SELIX JR.

Sept. 23, 1950-Aug. 27, 2019



Sherman Russell "Rusty" Selix Jr. passed away peacefully on Aug. 27 in San Francisco at age 68, after an inspirational three-year battle with ALS. He was surrounded by his family.

Rusty was born on Sept. 23, 1950, to Doré and Sherman Selix Sr. in San Francisco. He attended Town School for Boys, Lick Wilmerding High School, Northwestern University, where he received a degree in economics, and University of California at Davis, where he was awarded a Juris Doctorate. Most of his professional life was spent in Sacramento, where he initially practiced as an attorney for the League of California Cities. Later, he served as a lobbyist and Executive Director for the Mental Health Association of California and the California Council of Community Behavioral Health.

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Agencies for over 30 years.

Notably, Rusty collaborated with Darrell Steinberg to launch Proposition 63, which became the California Mental Health Services Act of 2004, one of the first such acts in the U.S. to provide funding for mental health services. Rusty devoted his professional life to serving others, giving a voice to those whose voices were unheard. Once he was diagnosed with ALS, he used his political acumen to garner significant state funding for wrap-around clinical care for those with ALS.

Rusty is survived by wife, Nancy Whittington Selix, his three children, his stepson, and their partners whom he loved so much: Amy Selix (Ryan Little), Shae Selix (Jason Lillie), Sydney Selix and Daniel Green. He is survived by his siblings, step-siblings, and their partners: Joan Selix Berman (Mitch Berman), John Selix (Dena Selix), Greg Gabby, Maria Gabby and Tina Gabby (Daniel Moynihan). He is survived by his mother, Doré Tonkin Selix Gabby, and numerous cousins, nieces and nephews. His father, Sherman "Sherm" Selix, and stepfather, James Gabby, preceded him in death.

Rusty will be remembered for the tireless work that he has done in mental health and his never-ending devotion to the underserved. He was an avid hiker, golfer, Skylake Yosemite Camp counselor, a world traveler, and a lifelong Grateful Dead, 49ers and Giants fan. His life will always be remembered by the good he has done in the world, the love he had for helping others, and his devotion to his family and friends.

A memorial service was held on Aug. 30 at Congregation Emanu-El.

In lieu of flowers, Rusty requested donations to two charities: ALS Association, Golden West Chapter, 28632 Roadside Drive, No. 173, Agoura Hills, CA 91301, (web.alsa.org/goto/shae) or Mental Health America, 500 Montgomery St., No. 820, Alexandria, VA 22314 (mentalhealthamerica.net)

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CAROL SHIVEL

Nov. 12, 1933-Aug. 20, 2019



On Aug. 20, 2019, Carol Shivel, Shira Leah bat Avraham v'Sara, breathed her final breath on Earth, leaving behind a legacy of playfulness, spirituality, intellect and effusive love for her family and friends. Those who knew her will recall the ever-present sparkle in her eye — for she met the world with joy and curiosity. Whether dancing to the Rolling Stones' "Wild Horses" or buying orange juice at her corner market, Carol emanated warmth and sharpness.

Carol was born in Kalamazoo, Michigan, Nov. 12, 1933, to parents Ralph B. Shivel and Ruth

(Wilbur) Shivel. Carol and her older sister, Jean (1929-2014), spent their childhood summers enjoying their family lake cabin, a tradition that has persisted. After Carol's freshman year of college, she married Bob Cubberly. With two little boys, they moved to Oberlin, Ohio in 1959. In 1965, they divorced and Carol became the single mother of an 11- and 8-year-old. The house resonated with the sounds of the Beatles, Bob Dylan and Aretha Franklin.

In 1969, Carol married Mark Papworth, a college professor, and in 1972, the family moved to the deep forest of Delphi Road in Olympia, Washington. In Olympia, Carol opened a bookstore with Carol Mckinley, and completed her bachelor's degree at the Evergreen State College. Once her sons were grown, Carol's intellectual and spiritual passion led her to pursue a master of theology at Church Divinity School of the Pacific, part of the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley.

Shortly after completing her degree, Carol converted to Judaism and was a member of Congregation Kol Emeth in Palo Alto and worked at the Jewish bookstore Bob and Bob. She then moved to Berkeley, where she became an active member of the Orthodox synagogue, Congregation Beth Israel. It was there, in Berkeley, that Carol lived some of the best years of her life surrounded by friends, a strong spiritual life (including many trips to Israel), a condo full of flowers and two grandchildren. In 2016, when she had advanced dementia, her sons moved her back to Olympia, to an assisted-living facility. Burial was at Temple Beth Hatfiloh's historic cemetery in Tumwater, Washington.

Carol was a strong woman, a responsible, loving mother and a wonderful friend. The world has lost a shining light of kindness and grace. Her legacy lives on in the hearts of her friends, and the family who survive her: Scott W. and Annie Cubberly of Olympia, and Robert B. Cubberly of San Francisco, and two grandchildren, Jessie E. and Henry S. Cubberly.

IN MEMORIAM

MATOOK R. NISSIM

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Deceased: Walnut Creek, Aug. 8, 2018

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PARENTING | JULIE LEVINE | J. COLUMNIST



Julie Levine is a Bay Area writer. She lives in San Francisco with her husband and two children.

I love how the new school year aligns so closely with the new Jewish year. And as summer winds down, in our house, we begin to get ready for both.

The kids and I clean out their closets and tidy up their rooms. We'll donate clothes that no longer fit. (They'll also toss in a few old items that may still fit but don't quite feel like them anymore.) We find a missing shoe, throw out socks with holes and T-shirts with noticeable stains, and get rid of some tchotchkes that no longer hold meaning. The empty boxes, paper bags and tote bags that have been accumulating in the corner of their rooms all year I'll flatten out and fold up ... and save in a closet for use another time.

They'll go through last year's schoolwork and save the books they read that inspired them, papers they were especially proud of from classes they loved and from teachers that stretched them. They'll keep some tests and textbooks that they may want to refer to this year. They'll recycle the rest.

I clean out the pantry and wipe down the shelves. That half-uneaten bag of pretzels that's been sitting on a shelf since last spring will get tossed, along with the open bag of marshmallows and the seaweed snacks no one has touched since last fall.

We'll do a big back-to-school grocery shop, and my son will join me. We'll brainstorm about new snack, lunch and dinner ideas.

I'll clean out the fridge and freezer, too, and make a list of winter house projects: We'll finally get that squeaky door fixed; I'll have that light in the kitchen that keeps burning out looked at; we'll clean the garage.

I buy a new datebook. I'll start to fill it with dentist and doctor appointments, meetings and deadlines and back-to-school nights. This year there will be a shift in our family as our daughter starts college. I note her school breaks in my calendar not as "spring break" or "winter break" but as "Sophie

comes home" dates.

I file my old datebook with all the others, even though I know I won't refer to it. What I want to remember from this past year isn't even in my calendar. It's the family Bananagrams games we played for hours on end; the weekend we drove to the Northern California outpost of Elk and stumbled upon a private, little cove along the river off the side of the road (where the kids spontaneously rolled up their pants and dove right in); movie nights at home with a big bowls of popcorn; and family walks in our neighborhood when we have nothing on our schedules and no agenda, and somehow always end up at Green Apple Books, where we find gems in the dollar bins.

Soon enough, late summer peaches will make way for apples. I'll start to think about brisket. I pull out my apple cake and round challah recipes from my Jewish holidays recipe folder. I'll check my son's suit to make sure it's clean and not wrinkled, and I'll check his tie for stains.

My hubby will get a haircut. He'll wash his car. A few days before Rosh Hashanah, I'll put my synagogue clothes to the front of the closet because I don't want to think about what I'm wearing the day of services. Plus, I like to get ready before everyone else, in case someone needs help with something (usually it's finding a missing shoe).

It's a new year and a new beginning, a promise to do things better, to be better.

All the cleaning and back-to-school organizing is important, but it's easy. The real work that comes a few weeks later during the holidays, a different kind of housecleaning, is more difficult. Once the kids are settled back at school, it will be my time to pause and reset as I internally reorganize, declutter and take stock of this past year. ■

It's not your son's girlfriend's job to seek Judaism. It's your son's.

ADVICE | DAWN KEPLER | J. COLUMNIST



Dawn Kepler leads Building Jewish Bridges, a program of Hamaqom I The Place that embraces Bay Area interfaith families. "Mixed & Matched" offers advice for Jews in interfaith relationships and families. Send letters to dawn@buildingjewishbridges.org.

Dear Dawn: *How many times do I have to hear a Jewish parent worry about the future of their child's romance with a non-Jew? At a recent lunch with several Jewish girlfriends, one worried out loud about her son's non-Jewish girlfriend. There is always this focus on the non-Jewish girlfriend/boyfriend's perceived level of interest (or lack thereof) in Jewish life. The reality is few people connect to Judaism and the Jewish community (and all that entails) and begin to feel at home without enthusiastic, consistent and sincere encouragement from one's partner and others. I wanted to ask my friend: Where's your son in this picture? It would be normal for him to be fairly disconnected at his age; having children pulls most of us back into religious communities. If he's not that involved now, it's hard to expect that she would take it on by herself. For me, it was my marriage to a Jewish man that motivated me to convert to Judaism. I wanted our family to be unified in our practice. As I got more involved, I developed friendships and connections that have drawn me deeply into my Jewish identity and practice. Why are parents talking about the boyfriend/girlfriend? The real question is: How does your child relate to their own Jewishness? This conversation really hurt my feelings. Here I sat, a non-Jew when I married my Jewish husband, now deeply committed to Judaism, and I identified with the poor non-Jewish girlfriend who wasn't "good enough." — Chava bat Sarah v'Avraham*

Dear Chava: I am sorry that your friend was so oblivious to what she was saying and how it would impact you. Gaining your involvement and passionate work for the Jewish community is a huge blessing for the Jewish people. I wish your friend could have noted that and asked, "How did you become so committed? Do you have any suggestions for what I can do to engage both my son and his girlfriend? I don't want to overstep, but I do want to share my own love of Judaism. I feel like my son somehow missed the boat and I feel guilty."

You are right that Jewish parents have a laser-like focus on non-Jewish romantic partners. It's as if they were unable or uninterested in influencing

their child while they were raising him, and now desperately hope to secure him a partner that will "make" him interested in being Jewish.

For some there is guilt: I didn't do enough, I didn't do the right things, I should have been more involved, I shouldn't have forced Hebrew school, etc. Unless you are running an observant home, and living a traditional life in which your children's friends are primarily other traditional Jews, chances are great that your child will be influenced by U.S. culture.

Many Jewish parents are so Americanized they don't know how to point out Jewish culture. Many find practicing Judaism too much trouble. Others want to fit in. With their ambivalence, it is not surprising that they have not shared any significant reason with their child about why be Jewish.

Until recently, Jewish parents didn't have to do anything. The dominant culture, be it Christian, Muslim or other, never let Jews forget they were Jewish, and they didn't let their own children marry Jews.

Now things have changed. If you want your child to embrace Judaism, they have to see a value in that; how much more so, their romantic partners.

I doubt your friend was self-aware as she bemoaned her situation. She was thinking about her own fear and saw you as another Jewish mother who would sympathize.

As a Jew-by-choice, you were hit hard by her comments, but there are born Jews who would have felt offended, too.

In any case, you should speak to her and say what you wrote to me. In order to preserve your valued friendship, she needs the opportunity to understand your hurt feelings and to apologize. As you stated, you sympathize with her and understand her anxiety, and you are a person who can be of help to her.

Speak with her. When you do, ask her if she considered how she intends to support this new person in her son's life? Share with her your wisdom and experience. For starters, she should invite her son and his girlfriend over so everyone can get to know each other and value each other as individuals. ■

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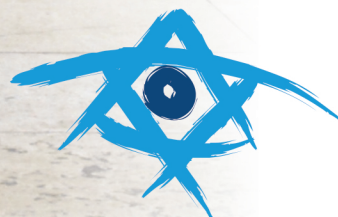
Together, we are building the Jewish future... one Birthright Israel participant at a time. This gift impacts all of us, today, tomorrow and for generations to come.

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