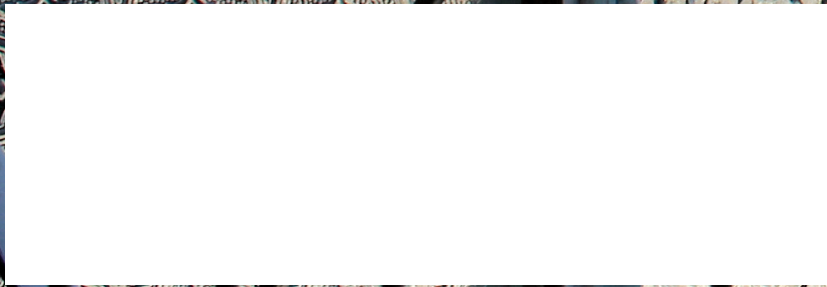


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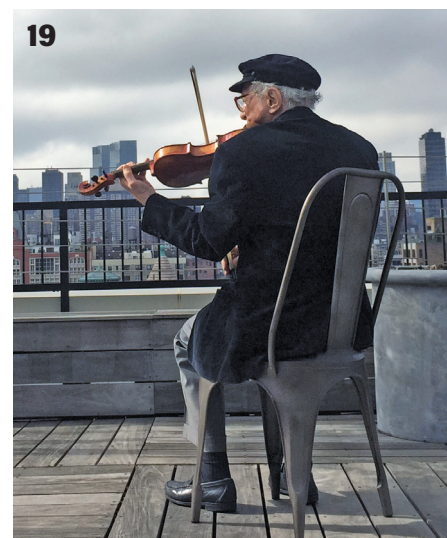
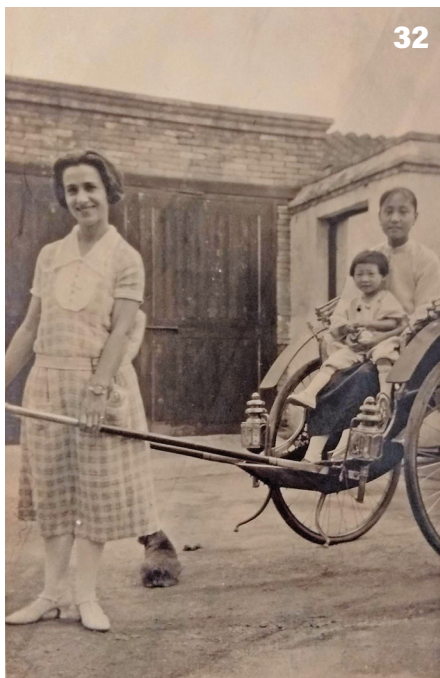


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ON THE COVER: Looking out from inside the Guantanamo synagogue (Photo/Laura Paull)

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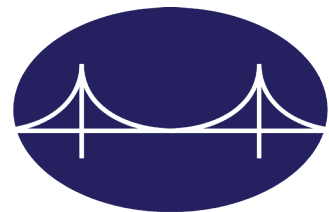
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JCC accused of censorship in art exhibit

NEWS | GABE STUTMAN | J. STAFF

An art exhibition at the JCC of San Francisco that confronts the U.S.-Mexico border crisis has sparked controversy after administrators removed two works deemed inappropriate for children. Both either directly or obliquely referenced Palestinians. In response, some of the 36 artists in the exhibit have claimed censorship and threatened to withdraw their pieces.

"La Frontera: Artists Respond to the U.S.-Mexico Border Crisis" opened April 22 at the Katz Snyder Gallery. The exhibit features about 60 artworks, mostly from artists of Mexican and Latin American heritage. The work reflects on "global turmoil, migration, and border issues," an exhibit synopsis says. Overlooking the atrium's seating area is the phrase "A sanctuary is a home away from home" written in large blue lettering.

David Green, JCC chief program officer for cultural projects, called "La Frontera" one of the center's most "boundary pushing" exhibits in recent memory, depicting sensitive and difficult subject matter, including desperate migrants, encounters with police and overtly political themes. Curated by David J. de la Torre, a freelance curator with the JCC since 2015 and former director of San Francisco's Mexican Museum, the exhibit is meant to study "one of the

most challenging humanitarian crises of our day," Green said.

But less than a week after opening, the JCC felt it had pushed boundaries too far.

After receiving complaints from a "handful" of visitors, and after internal deliberations with JCC leaders and early-childhood teachers, the two artworks were removed.

"Borders," by 31-year-old San Francisco muralist Lucía González-Ippolito, is a colored pencil drawing that imagines the U.S.-Mexico border wall morphing into the West Bank barrier, along a body of water. It shows migrants paddling to shore, a dead child lying face-down in the sand — a reference to the highly publicized photo from the Syrian refugee crisis — and a kaffiyeh-clad woman in chains who is Palestinian, according to the artist.

The second work, a painting by San Francisco artist Christo Oropeza called "Untitled," shows a soldier pointing a military-grade weapon in the direction of a child. The child, drawn with a halo, is standing before a wall that looks much like the West Bank barrier, although Green said the piece is a reflection on the artist's experiences crossing the U.S.-Mexico border to visit family.

According to Green, both "Untitled" and "Borders" were removed because their depictions of violence toward children

were unsettling for summer campers and preschoolers who travel through the hallways every day.

"We decided to remove the piece because it is inappropriate to show an image of a soldier pointing a gun at/near a child in an open space preschool and camp children regularly use," Green said.

Green and a selection committee initially approved "Untitled" but did not fully appreciate its possible impact.

"When we selected it we knew it was going to be a hard piece," he said. "But we didn't realize we would be showing it to little kids on a regular basis."

A third artwork that did not make it into the exhibit is a woodcut in triptych showing a man wearing a kaffiyeh under-



"Borders" by artist Lucía González-Ippolito

neath the word "Gaza," standing alongside a striking worker and a Zapatista militant. Green said the piece, titled "Triple Thread," was not in the show because it was not directly related to the subject matter, but that other works by the artist, Juan Fuentes, were included.

Fuentes said he opposed the JCC's decision not to show his print, and thought it was politically motivated. But he decided not to withdraw his other works from the show.

"I was not happy with the work being excluded, and I knew it was because it depicted an image of a Palestinian," he wrote in an email to J.

"I did not take out any of the other works I had contributed," Fuentes continued. "I wanted to support David de la Torre and the issue of the border needs to be addressed in a dialogue with the community at large."

In an letter to the JCC after the pieces were removed, Josué Rojas and Oropeza, two of the artists in the exhibit, criticized the decision without consulting the artists as "severe and unnecessary," and said doing so "block[s] the noble mission of these works — to create dialogue."

"We believe art is a powerful tool to connect with other human beings, and to shine a light on things that are unseen," Rojas and Oropeza wrote in the letter, signed "We the Artists."

"Art can go where other things cannot."

Ippolito was more pointed in a statement posted to Facebook. She noted that the three works in question, including hers, seemed to either overtly depict or subtly evoke Palestinian issues.

"Since the removal of the piece, other works have been removed as well," she wrote, referring to the Oropeza and Fuentes works. "Both of these two other works also depicted imagery of Palestine," she said, calling the JCC's choices "unacceptable censorship."

Ippolito said she was honored to be included in the exhibition but shocked when she learned her work was removed.

"My piece does not actually depict anything graphic or obvious and is certainly not violent," she wrote in a public statement titled "Censorship at the Jewish Community Center in San Francisco."

"The child is in the background and only someone who

"We didn't realize we would be showing it to little kids on a regular basis."

David Green

remembers the news of that child's death would understand the context," she said. "It would be irresponsible to depict this humanitarian crisis and not address the violence against children."

Submitted artwork was reviewed by the curator and JCC staff before being selected, Green said. He did not want to get into the details of the deliberative process, but he said going forward, more input would be sought from a wide range of JCC community members.

"We didn't have enough stakeholders from the different communities that we serve," he said. "We need to be clearer with the artists that that's a process we're going through. And we need to bring more voices and eyes in from our community."

The Ippolito piece was a late addition to the exhibition, Green said, and did not go through a full round of vetting.

The JCC did not wish to make de la Torre available for comment. In an interview on the KQED website, the curator said he stood "in solidarity" with the artists.

In a letter of apology to Ippolito, Green called the incident a "disappointing outcome" and that the JCC made a mistake.

"We must prioritize the well-being and emotional safety of our children and community members," he said. "Depictions of violence against children and dead children in our common areas is not acceptable, even in dedicated gallery space."

He said he regretted the sequence of events that led to the controversy, and offered the artists the opportunity to submit different works to replace the pieces that were removed.

"This is out of order," Green said. "We need to be doing this work in advance, and in dialogue with the artists." ■

Our Crowd

Spotlight on the Community



(From left) Vicki Buder, Ron Brachman and David Kaufman

HONORS

Robert D. Haas will be honored with the Pride Freedom Award at the San Francisco Pride Parade on June 30. According to sfpride.org, "In 1982, as a senior executive at Levi Strauss & Co., Bob joined in the effort of a group of employees handing out leaflets alerting fellow employees to a still-unnamed disease fatally impacting gay men." Later, as CEO, Haas established Levi Strauss as a corporate leader in responding to AIDS. In 1992, it became the first Fortune 500 company to offer benefits to same-sex partners. To date, the Levi Strauss Foundation has provided \$70 million to HIV/AIDS organizations. While he was a board member of the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund, established by his parents, the fund became an early donor to efforts to pass marriage equality.



Robert Haas

Lucy Beckett, 17, of Elk Grove, is among the recipients of the 2019 Diller Teen Tikkun Olam Awards and will receive the \$36,000 prize that goes with it. She is one of the founders of Camp Nefesh, a project of Congregation B'nai Israel in Sacramento, a day camp for refugee children living in the area. "Our synagogue is very passionate about immigrant and refugee rights," Beckett told J. last year. "I also am passionate about helping children." The award is given annually to 15 teens across the country.

Bend the Arc: Jewish Action, a national Jewish social justice organization with a strong local presence, announced that five Bay Area residents have been chosen for the first national cohort of Jeremiah Fellows: **Rebecca DeHovitz**, an educator at Peninsula Bridge, a nonprofit college access program for low-income students; **Maya Joshua**, Kehilla Community Synagogue's program and communications manager; **Maya Katz-Ali**, who works at Be'chol Lashon, a Bay

Area-based organization focused on Jewish diversity; **Levi Ramer**, a transgender man representing his community as a force for positive social change; and **Hannah Trumbull**, an interfaith organizer at Youth Spirit Artworks.

HAPPENINGS

Ron Brachman, director of the Jacobs-Technion Cornell Institute grad school in New York, spoke to a group of American Technion Society Bay Area board members and supporters in San Francisco on May 2. The event was hosted by board member **David Kaufman** of Tiburon, who opened with a prayer for Yom HaShoah. Brachman spoke about the impact of the Technion in New York, which is home to the institute he leads, and around the world.

COMINGS & GOINGS

Rachel Brodie is the inaugural senior educator at the Jewish Studio Project in Berkeley. She has been a participant in JSP programs and a consultant for the organization for two years. Her previous Bay Area positions include chief Jewish officer at the JCC of San Francisco and executive director of Jewish Milestones. "Rachel's brilliance as a facilitator, passion for learning, and collaborative nature make her the perfect leader to join us in bringing this work more fully in the world," JSP cofounder and creative director Rabbi Adina Allen said in a press release.

Rabbi Richard Address is the new dean of the Berkeley-based Gamliel Institute, which educates Jewish leaders in burial and mourning practices. He will take over from **Rabbi Stuart Kelman**, who founded the institute as well as Berkeley's Congregation Netivot Shalom. Address is the founder of the organization Jewish Sacred Aging. "We have spent more than a year searching for an individual who

is both an excellent teacher and a visionary; Rabbi Address is both," Kelman said in a press release. "Having devoted much of his life to teaching about Jewish aging, his work directly complements the work to date of the Gamliel Institute."

Sam Berrin Shonkoff is the new assistant professor of Jewish studies at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley. This fall he will teach "Modern Judaism: Religion, Culture, or Nationality?" and "Hasidic Mysticism." Shonkoff was born in Berkeley and served most recently as a visiting assistant professor at Oberlin College. "The GTU fosters such a holistic approach to religious and Jewish studies in uniquely powerful ways," he said in a press release. "I am thrilled to participate in these conversations about what it means to study religions in the twenty-first century."

Irène Hodes is the new film festival director at JCC Sonoma County. She lives in Healdsburg, working in the wine industry. Hodes has lived in five countries, including seven years in Israel, and has been a writer, performer and arts administrator around the world. The 24th annual Sonoma County Jewish Film Festival will take place in October.

Yael Krieger is the new cantorial soloist at Temple Beth Abraham in Oakland. "I was born on Kol Nidrei night, the daughter of a cantor, who welcomed me into the world with a song," she said in the Beth Abraham newsletter. Since she was 18, Krieger has held High Holiday pulpits at congregations around the country. Since moving to the Bay Area in 2011, she's served as director of educational support at the Jewish Community High School of the Bay in San Francisco.

Rachel Dubowe is the Union for Reform Judaism's new California camps assistant director, supporting URJ Camp Newman in Santa Rosa, as well as two URJ sports and science-tech camps in Southern California. As part of the position, Dubowe will also serve as regional



Rachel Brodie



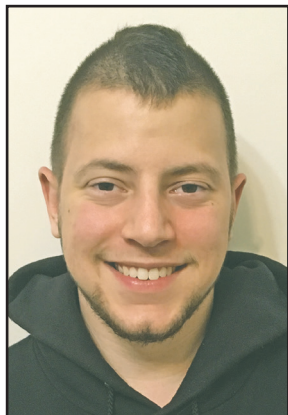
Sam Berrin Shonkoff



Rebecca DeHovitz



Maya Joshua



Levi Ramer



Hannah Trumbull



Rachel Dubowe



Luba Troyanovsky

adviser to the Southern California branch of NFTY, the national Reform youth organization. "I could not be more thrilled to return to the world that shaped me as a Reform Jewish teenager from Los Angeles," she said in a press release. "I am so excited for what this new position ... will bring!"

Luba Troyanovsky is the new president of the board of Jewish Family and Children's Services based in San Francisco. She grew up in Soviet-era

Ukraine, surrounded by anti-Semitism and practicing Judaism in secret. When Troyanovsky and her family came to the Bay Area in the '70s, JFCS helped them settle in and acclimate. She got involved with JFCS as a volunteer in 2001 when she helped plan JFCS' first Emigre Community Gala, now an annual event. "Being a part of JFCS' leadership feels like somewhat of a homecoming for me," Troyanovsky said in a press release. "It has allowed me to celebrate my culture, to remember and bear witness to our shared past, and to further the dreams of immigrants like me."

Cantor Risa Wallach is stepping down from Congregation B'nai Shalom of Walnut Creek. A congregational committee will search



Barbara Powell



Rabbi Misha Clebaner

for a new cantor over the next year. In the meantime, High Holiday services will be led by **Cantor Jeremy Lipton**, head of school at Minneapolis Talmud

Torah. Berkeley-based musician and writer **Ben Kramarz** will lead alternative High Holiday services. And **Cantor Barbara Powell**, of Congregation Beth Jacob in Redwood City, will fill in as b'nai mitzvah tutor. B'nai Shalom has also received a grant from the Contra Costa JCC to support family Shabbat programs; veteran Bay Area song leader **Isaac Zones** will lead Friday night family services periodically.



Ben Kramarz



Isaac Zones

Rabbi Misha Clebaner recently was ordained at Hebrew College in Boston. He was born in the Soviet Union and moved to San Francisco with his family in 1993. Clebaner will soon depart for Sydney, Australia, where he will start a position at North Shore Temple Emanuel. He is a blogger and host of the "Raising Holy Sparks" podcast. Clebaner's family is involved with S.F. Congregation Emanu-El, where he and his sister became b'nai mitzvah.

The Creative Spirit of San Francisco

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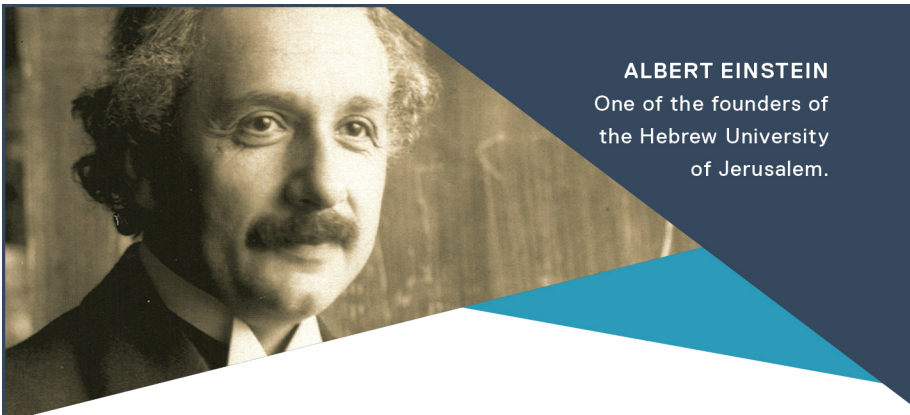
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TALI SIEGAL

Pacific Northwest Region Executive Director

New rabbi known for activism — and leading Temple Isaiah

PEOPLE | MAYA MIRSKY | J. STAFF

Rabbi Jill Perlman won't have to worry about a slip of the tongue when she leaves her Massachusetts synagogue to take up a new position in the East Bay.

"There's not that many Temple Isaiahs," she said. "So it's really funny."

Perlman, currently associate rabbi at Temple Isaiah in Lexington, Massachusetts, will take the helm at Temple Isaiah in Lafayette at the beginning of July. It's the culmination of Isaiah's yearlong search to find a new senior rabbi for the large Reform congregation, and Perlman is looking forward to meeting her new congregants.

"I want to know folks," she said. "I want to know their stories. I want to know what they're passionate about."

Ordained in 2010, Perlman grew up in central Massachusetts and just hit her eight-year anniversary at the Lexington synagogue.

Offering her the job in Lafayette was a "unanimous and very enthusiastic decision" by the Temple Isaiah search committee, according to Jasmine Tarkoff, the temple present.

"I'm really excited to meet my 'new' Temple Isaiah."

Perlman will replace interim rabbi Steven Chester, rabbi emeritus of Temple Sinai in Oakland, who spent a year at Isaiah to steer the ship after the retirement of longtime leader Rabbi Judy Shanks. During that time, congregants and leaders decided just what kind of senior rabbi they were looking for, Tarkoff said. The congregation has 904 families, so there were a lot of opinions. But ultimately there was consensus, as well.

"There were certain things that bubbled to the top," Tarkoff said.

She said Temple Isaiah wanted a confident rabbi, one with vision and a willingness to be collaborative. And Perlman's ideals also spoke to the community. "We're also very excited about work she's done as a social justice champion," Tarkoff added.

Perlman was one of the rabbis who participated in the NAACP-organized march from Selma, Alabama, to Washington, D.C., on the 50th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act in 2015. Rabbis took turns carrying a Torah scroll, and jointly were awarded the Maurice N. Eisendrath Bearer of Light Award by the Union of



Rabbi Jill Perlman will join Lafayette's Temple Isaiah in July.

Reform Judaism. This year, Perlman spent 10 days in Guatemala as part of Global Justice Fellowship run by American Jewish World Service.

She said she recognizes that same spirit of activism at her new synagogue.

"I think there's a real search for justice work and that's something I'm really passionate about, and always have been," she said.

The congregation doesn't change its clergy often. Rabbi Roberto Graetz held the position for 25 years before retiring in 2016, and Shanks was there 26 years before retiring last year (they become co-senior rabbis in 2008). Cantor Leigh Korn has been in the job since 2005 and is staying on.

"Longtime senior rabbinic leadership is amazing for a congregation," Tarkoff said, adding that the transition period took time and care. "People have to go through a process."

But once that process was completed, there was a firm consensus around Perlman, who was one of three top candidates who traveled to Lafayette to meet the community and put their leadership and teaching credentials to the test.

"Once I put my foot on the ground there, people were so friendly and so welcoming," Perlman said.

And now it will be her new home. Perlman is preparing for the big step, along with her husband and three elementary school-age children.

"I'm really excited to meet my 'new' Temple Isaiah," she said. ■

A warm, haimish goodbye to East Bay Federation

EVENTS | SUE FISHKOFF | J. EDITOR

It was the last annual meeting of the East Bay Federation, and like all good Jewish events, it began with food. Really good food, from Epic Bites.

And then, surprisingly, things got even better.

I'm sure I wasn't the only one somewhat dreading the June 19 event that would mark the end of the Jewish Federation of the East Bay and Jewish Community Foundation, which are being more or less absorbed by the much larger S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation and Endowment Fund. As one longtime Federation stalwart told a colleague beforehand, "Why would I want to come to that wake?"

Instead, the evening was filled with warmth and camaraderie. Organizers hit just the right tone, selected just the right speakers. There was celebration of the Federation's 100 years serving the East Bay Jewish community, but it was done without self-congratulation. Gentle jokes broke the tension, but mainly there was quiet, thoughtful reflection. "It's a bitter-sweet moment, no question about it," said Dr. Miles Adler, a past president.

If you have to end a legacy institution, this was the way to do it.

The theme of the evening was "change – good for the Jews." Marc Dollinger, Jewish studies professor at S.F. State, delivered a romp through historical moments of Jewish achievement that came about because of great, sometimes devastating, change. He pointed to the Talmud (which followed the destruction of the Temple) and the creation of

"We have the most creative Jewish community in the United States, right here in the East Bay."

Danny Grossman
S.F. Federation CEO

the State of Israel (which followed the Holocaust) as examples.

"Change, however painful, has always defined what it means to be a Jew," he said. "It's created space for creativity and invention to occur."

Rabbi Adina Allen of the Jewish Studio Project — itself an illustration, it was noted, of the East Bay Jewish community's creativity and invention — called all past and present presidents of the Federation and Foundation onstage, where they were vigorously applauded for a full minute.

Allen had been tasked with creating a Jewish ritual to mark the occasion, and found herself ruminating on the "awkwardness" one can feel during times of change. Comparing the East Bay Federation's transition to Abraham's painful uprooting from his father's home in Ur, she asked everyone to stand and recite tefilat haderech, the traveler's prayer, in unison. It was a powerful yet tender moment.

One after another, leaders came to the microphone to speak from their hearts. There were a few tears, but mainly smiles, hugs and moments of levity. As she introduced Foundation president Joel Kreisberg, Foundation executive

director Lisa Tabak noted that he's also an ordained Zen Buddhist priest, and "you can't get any more East Bay than that."

That was a second theme for the evening — the claim that the East Bay does Jewish better than anyone. It's got its lefties and right-wingers, its scholarship and its minyans. An eruv has brought young Orthodox families to Berkeley, and the day school in Contra Costa, noted Dollinger, shows that quality Jewish education can thrive "even in the white, middle-class suburbs, one of the most challenging places in America."

"We have the most creative Jewish community in the United States, right here in the East Bay," said Danny Grossman, CEO of the S.F.-based Federation and Endowment Fund, before joking quickly that he hoped he wasn't on the record.

He was.

And while every speaker urged the audience, made up mainly of East Bay donors and Jewish professionals, to keep involved and work together with colleagues on the other side of the bay, there was a note of caution as well: Don't shove us aside. Make sure our needs continue to be met.

"Not having a separate East Bay Federation is sad for many of us. We feel the loss," said Eileen Ruby, a longtime donor and past president. The coming transition can be "a real opportunity," she said, adding, "We will only be successful if we in the East Bay engage as partners and funders, not just as recipients." ■



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Guantanamo's Jews stay and pray together for 90 years

JEWISH WORLD | LAURA PAULL | J. STAFF

GUANTANAMO, CUBA | The road to the city of Guantanamo is an unfinished highway that bisects the island of Cuba for more than 500 miles, all the way from Havana. Unfinished because, to put it plainly, the revolution is unfinished, or at least out of money.

At a certain point past the tiny airport of Holguin, where I landed one night in late April, our taxi drops off the concrete pavement into asphalt and then potholed gravel. There are fewer cars and more horse-drawn carts, and families walk in tight clutches from one unlit destination to another.

Sugar cane fields flank the road, disappearing into the hulking darkness of the Sierra Maestra. During the three-hour ride from the airport, our taxi jukes through village intersections where people gather, talk and play music outdoors in the cooling relief of night.

"There, down that road, is the house where Fidel and Raul were born," our driver signals in a place called Biran, where the Castros' Spanish father owned a sugar plantation before his sons fought for change.

It's hard to see history in the dark. But it was something I had traveled 3,000 miles to witness firsthand.

It was 90 years ago, in 1929, when 33 prominent Jews formally organized the Comunidad Hebrea de Guantanamo, signing a decree that is still in the possession of their descendants. I came with tour guide Ariel Goldstein to take part in the anniversary celebrations of this Jewish community, which thrived and then persisted for most of a century.

Before there was a highway, or even a republic of Cuba, Jewish immigrants were among the enterprising peddlers who wore a trail from one side of the island to the other to supply the needs of the populace. The Jews who followed that route in the late 19th and early 20th century were from Turkey and, later, from Eastern Europe. Most settled in Havana. Some of them, including a man from Constantinople

Kelly and her daughter, Textia Lia, (left) perform Jewish folk dances at the community gala event. Below right, a local group presents songs typical of Guantánamo. (Photos/Laura Paull)



Sometimes it's the smaller things that lift morale, like the shoes and tambourines donated by Bay Area groups.

with the last name Mizrahi, made it all the way to Guantanamo — the end of the road. And there they stayed, as the outpost grew into a bustling port city, shipping coffee, cotton and sugar to whomever would buy it.

Most Americans are familiar with this area because of Guantanamo Bay, a harbor that the Cuban government has leased to the U.S. for a naval base since 1903, after the Spanish-American War.

After the revolution in 1959, the great majority of Cuban Jews left the country. But not all. Small Jewish communities remained in Camaguey, Santa Clara, Santiago, Sancti Spiritus and Guantanamo, with the largest in Havana, whose Jewish population of 15,000 shrank over the next few years to just 1,500.

The once-flourishing Jewish community of Guantanamo today comprises only 80 or so people among a population of some 215,000. Many of them are related, by blood or marriage, to the original Señor Mizrahi. Somehow, they have carried on, living in the fading architecture of the past.

In 1995, I made a documentary film, "Havana Nagila: The Jews in Cuba," which opened that year's San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, and then made the rounds of other Jewish film festivals and was shown on public television. It was around the time when restrictions on U.S. travel to Cuba were relaxed, allowing Americans to visit for educational and humanitarian purposes. For the next decade and a half, a steady stream of American Jews passed through Havana's three congregations, bringing food, medicine and other supplies.

By contrast, almost no one went to Guantanamo. That changed in 2012 during a trip to Jewish Cuba organized by the JCC of San Francisco.

"I heard about the Jewish community of Guantanamo when I was in neighboring Santiago," says Ariel Goldstein, then director of the JCCSF travel program and now owner of the travel company Tiyl Jewish Journeys. "And of course I was curious, having only heard of the American base and prison there."

So he decided to add a leg to that year's tour, taking the group to Guantanamo. The Uruguayan-born Goldstein easily bonded with the struggling community and its acknowledged leader, Rodolfo Mizrahi, great-grandson of the community's first immigrant.

Mizrahi had built a second floor onto his modest home to use as a synagogue, welcoming the community for weekly Shabbat services.



Above, a street scene in Guantanamo. Above left, tour guide Ariel Goldstein (l) and Rodolfo Mizrahi at the cemetery. Above right, the community gathers for Shabbat at the Mizrahi home and synagogue, wearing 90th anniversary T-shirts.

But there was no railing along the outdoor staircase or upstairs porch — a safety concern given the numbers of kids and elders who made their way up and down. Goldstein asked the Americans on the tour for personal donations to fix it, and quickly raised enough to do so.

The following year, Goldstein returned with a new tour group, including the JCCSF's then-executive director Barry Finestone and his wife, Ellen. The community had finished the safety renovations, and the visitors joined them in affixing a mezuzah and a plaque acknowledging the assistance of their Bay Area friends — followed by a shared meal, live music and a dance performance.

"It was very much an uplifting experience," Finestone, now president and CEO of the S.F.-based Jim Joseph Foundation, recently told J. "I was excited to see a Jewish community that I had never known before. Particularly because almost nobody goes to visit them."

Also in the 2013 group was New Yorker Sylvia Weiner, then 79, who heard about the impending JCC trip and called Goldstein to ask if she could come along. Weiner was on a quest to locate the grave of her father, William Zukerman, believed to be one of the 33 founders of the Guantanamo community.

Mizrahi confirmed that Zukerman's name was on the community's founding document. "Wow," was Goldstein's response. "Then we will find him."

The story of that search, and its outcome, remains one of the sustaining legends of the Guantanamo Jewish community.

Four Cuban cities have Jewish cemeteries, but Guantanamo is not among them. Its Jewish deceased are sent some



The Zukerman story has galvanized the Guantanamo community's sense of belonging in the larger Jewish world. When we arrived for the anniversary celebration this April, Mizrahi met us at the Hotel Martí, where he explained there would be a gala theatrical event the first night, and a Shabbat service and dinner the next night that he and his wife would host. In between, the community would visit the cemetery to memorialize Zukerman and reinforce the international bonds that resulted from the recovery of his grave.

"Together, we located a long-forgotten member of our community," declared David Tacher Romano, leader of the Santa Clara Jewish community, at the graveside service. "And we should continue this effort, of remembering who we were and who we are, for there are probably others waiting to be claimed. This should be our work."

The solemnity of that memorial was a contrast from the celebratory atmosphere

followed by a trip to Israel. With international support, he went to Israel two more times, taking part in leadership workshops for diaspora Jews. His efforts at self-education are visible in his capacity not only to lead a Shabbat service, but to pass his knowledge to the next generation. Teenagers, including his elder daughter, confidently took turns leading the Shabbat prayers the next night.

After the service, several congregants shared that having this connection to their roots means everything to them, that they cannot imagine life without their Jewish community. But the outside support has been a critical link in their ability to sustain it.

In the last 10 years, Goldstein has taken 20 trips to Cuba, accompanying some 450 people, he says, and the last few have included visits to Guantanamo. Over time he has channeled donations from the travelers to help Cuban communities obtain critical material needs, from a freezer for the Sephardic synagogue in Havana to medical supplies, vitamins, toiletries and a minivan for transportation to and from services. Americans who come to visit quickly realize how far their dollars will go to help the people they've met.

"There is a lot of need, and their decision to maintain their community is amazingly challenging," says Ken Einstein, 70, a retired software consultant from San Mateo who went on Goldstein's 2016 trip to Guantanamo with his wife, Christina, a former associate dean at the Stanford Graduate School of Business. "But the ongoing connection with outside visitors is helping to make Guantanamo a real, functioning group that is both a living community, and a community of worship."

Sometimes, those connections can save lives.

That was the case for Mizrahi's young daughter, who was born with a small hole in her heart. Despite his work as a purchaser in the city's electricity department, where he was familiar with the supply chain of goods and services, Mizrahi could not get the medicine his daughter needed. But Goldstein could, and he brought it on a previous visit from the United States.

"She is fine now," Mizrahi assured Goldstein, who asked about the girl's health in the first five minutes of our meeting. Textia Lia is now an assertive little princess of 5 who loves to dance.

Other times, it's the smaller things that lift morale, like the shoes and tambourines that Bay Area groups have donated to Guantanamo's Jewish folkloric group. Members of Einstein's 2016 tour group lugged a large set of Shabbat silverware purchased by people on the previous tour.

We ate with that very silverware at the simple Shabbat dinner hosted by Mizrahi and his wife on the final night of the anniversary celebrations. On the terrace outside the second-floor synagogue, that meal mirrored the first: a ball of rice, a small chicken leg and fries. Everyone wore light blue T-shirts bearing a logo commemorating the anniversary. Designed by one of the young men of the community, they were printed in the Bay Area and transported to Guantanamo in Goldstein's suitcase.

Recalling his journey three years ago, Einstein described the experience as "inspirational" and praised Mizrahi for his "sustained effort to nurture that community and maintain their existence." In the absence of rabbis, cantors or mohels, "it's such a story of hope and persistence, in a Jewish community so far removed from the mainstream. It's a different kind of spirituality than I encounter here in the U.S., day to day."

Finestone, who traveled there in 2013, called the community's efforts to sustain itself "remarkable."

"In Cuba, in general, you got a glimpse into how people were trying to keep their religion and tradition alive in a place where it was fundamentally not easy to do so," he says. "But in Guantanamo, in particular, I was struck by the incredible pride of everybody with whom we interacted. They were a small group, but punched well above their weight." ■



Somehow, the Jews of Guantanamo have carried on, living in the fading architecture of the past.

at the gala the evening before, where Mizrahi's wife, Kelly, and his two daughters, 18-year-old Jennifer and 5-year-old Textia Lia, performed with a Jewish folkloric group. The dancers taught themselves the movements from what they could find on YouTube. There was also a simple dramatic reenactment of the formation of the Jewish community, and musical performances by some of the top singers in Guantanamo, including an authentic rendition of Cuba's most well-known song, "Guantanamera." In another number, the singers

poignantly proclaimed their dual identities as "Cubanos" and "Judíos."

I spoke to people who have never lived anywhere but Guantanamo, or even traveled to Havana. I learned that some had grown children who made aliyah and bore their own children in Israel — grandchildren these Cuban grandparents have never seen.

I asked Mizrahi's cousin Elias, who came from Santiago for the celebration, why members of the older generation don't follow their kids to Israel.

While there is nothing prohibiting them, other than the cost, "it's not so easy to go," he said, hinting at the reluctance of people habituated to Cuba to so radically change their lives. But the elders understand the urgency felt by many young Cuban Jews to live in a place where they can envision a future.

The gala presentation was followed by a formal sit-down dinner at our hotel, where we were serenaded by musicians playing Changüí, the Cuban music typical of the region. Conversations died down when dinner was served: Each guest received one fish fillet, a ball of plain rice, fries, sliced tomatoes and a scoop of chocolate ice cream. There was a bottle of sweet kosher wine from New Jersey on every table.

As a leader of his community, Mizrahi has made it a point to visit Jews in other countries. In 2006 he participated in the March of the Living, visiting Holocaust sites in Poland,

40 miles to Santiago, where the cemetery is named, ironically, El Cristo. In advance of the 2013 trip, Goldstein had asked Mizrahi to locate Zukerman's gravestone. But word came back that it wasn't there.

Weiner dug back into her documents and discovered that her father in fact had been interred in the nondescript municipal cemetery of Guantanamo, probably due to the cost or inconvenience of transporting a body by horse and cart in the humid heat. But Zukerman's gravestone did not turn up there, either.

It took days, many visits of the perplexed and much digging to solve the mystery: It was a question of neglect. Earthquakes and severe tropical rainstorms afflicted the eastern part of the island, and with no one to care for Zukerman's grave, it had been buried under several feet of earth for 80 years.

Cemetery workers excavated the coffin, and the Guantanamo Jewish community restored the site, affixing new tiles and freshly demarcating Zukerman's grave. The American and Guantanamo communities met at the cemetery and together said Kaddish for the father Weiner scarcely knew.

"It was truly an emotional and unforgettable moment for each of us," recalled Larry Polon, a retired schoolteacher from Albany, who made the trip from the East Bay with his wife, Ernestina Carrillo.

Hello Mazel subscribers appear to be out of luck

NEWS | GABE STUTMAN | J. STAFF

Hello Mazel, the Jewish subscription box service that became the most popular Jewish Kickstarter of all time after raising over \$150,000 in less than a month in early 2016, has stopped operating, according to multiple customers and would-be customers who have tried to reach the company online.

The service, which sought to “make doing Jewish cool again,” according to a promotional video, was developed at The Kitchen, an independent congregation in San Francisco. It operated the business as a

father in October 2018, but the box never came, and she received no response when she tried to contact the company at the end of November.

“@HelloMazel Are you guys still in business? No response to my numerous emails,” she wrote despairingly on Twitter. “Please help!”

“I tried to contact them via several different email addresses and no response,” she said in a message to J. “I finally requested a charge back from my credit card company.”

“Please direct me to someone who can help.”

Twitter user @TeamTurner12

nonprofit for about a year, delivering carefully curated packages filled with bespoke, “Jew-ish” items like pistachio halva spread, hand-carved dreidels and Passover Bingo cards to recipients all over the country.

In the summer of 2017, The Kitchen transferred ownership of Hello Mazel to Angel Alvarez-Mapp, a Jewish nonprofit professional based in San Francisco and a member of The Kitchen. On Aug. 2, 2017, he registered the company as a for-profit LLC, according to state business records.

Complaints about the company began to proliferate on social media around November 2018 from customers who said they had made payments online but never received boxes.

Eli Thacker Taylor, a theater director in New York City, said he purchased a subscription in late 2018, never received a box and could not reach the company to get his money back.

“I never got a hold of them, through Tweet or multiple email addresses,” Taylor wrote in a message to J. “My credit card company reimbursed my money.”

Susan King was living in the U.K. in 2016 when she signed up on Hello Mazel to send gift boxes to her daughter Zoe. She saw it as a way to keep her daughter in Michigan connected to her Jewishness. Thus began a two-year, “very happy relationship” with Hello Mazel, King said, with Zoe enjoying her boxes delivered four times a year.

But then in the 2018 fall quarter, there was no delivery. Nothing came for the winter quarter, either. King said she tried to contact the company to get her money back, but to no avail.

Danielle Hayman, a digital marketer in San Diego, had a similar experience. She purchased a subscription online for her



Subscribers say Hello Mazel took their payments but didn't deliver.

Multiple attempts to interview Alvarez-Mapp were unsuccessful.

The company's last Twitter post came on Aug. 18, 2017. On Sept. 30, 2018, a company account posted to Instagram saying it would be “laying low (digitally speaking) for the Yom Tovim of Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah.” The Hello Mazel Facebook page has been removed.

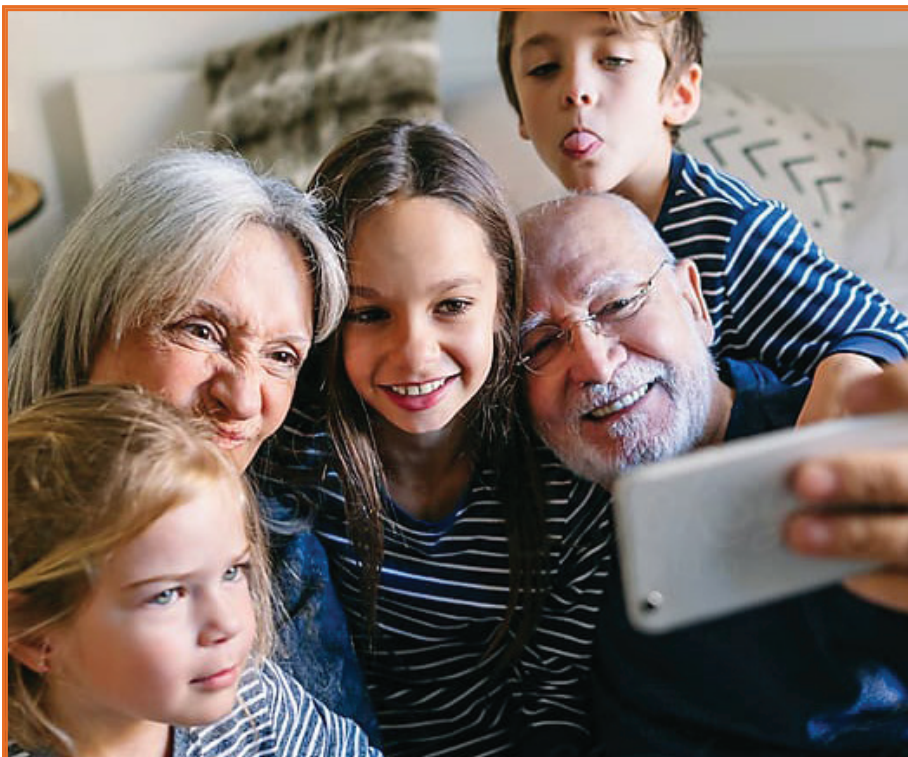
Rabbi Noa Kushner of The Kitchen said that the congregation was happy to create Hello Mazel, and wishes it the best.

“We had a great time incubating Hello Mazel and loved building the brand at The Kitchen,” she said by email. “We then handed it off so that it could grow and be even better. Since then, we've moved on, and only wish the project moves from strength to strength.”

As of this week, the company's website remains active and appears to be accepting payments. It offers quarterly gift boxes — \$50 plus shipping for one quarter, \$95 for two quarters, and \$180 for all four quarters.

On June 10, Twitter user@TeamTurner12 wrote that she had purchased a subscription in November but had not heard anything back.

“I emailed with no response and didn't see any contact info on your website,” she wrote. “Please direct me to someone who can help.” ■



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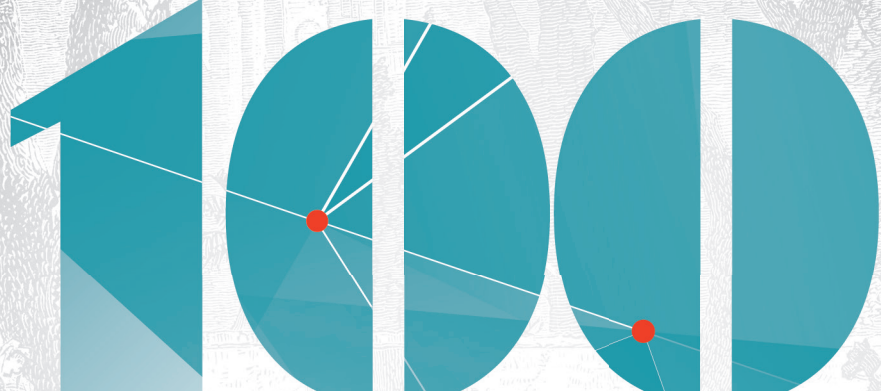
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THANK YOU TO ALL WHO JOINED US ON JUNE 19 FOR OUR CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION!

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to serve the East Bay Jewish community for all these years. We appreciate each and every one of your contributions to our organization. May you all go from strength to strength, and may our community continue to thrive for future generations.



CELEBRATING



YEARS IN THE EAST BAY



Q&A: An advocate for less scientific health care — sometimes

TALKING WITH | ROBERT NAGLER MILLER | J. CORRESPONDENT

In her career as a medical anthropologist, Sharon Kaufman has done extensive research into why individuals, their families and physicians often choose to take a more intervention-heavy, technology-laden approach to care. Kaufman wrote “... And a Time to Die: How American Hospitals Shape the End of Life” and “Ordinary Medicine: Extraordinary Treatments, Longer Lives, and Where to Draw the Line” and is professor emerita and former chair of the Department of Anthropology, History and Social Medicine at UCSF. The lifelong Bay Area resident and her husband, Seth, raised a son and daughter and have been married for 46 years.

J.: Though medical science and technology have advanced patient care, why do you say they’ve been a default response in cases when less intervention would have proved more effective?



NAME: Sharon Kaufman
AGE: 71
LOCATION: Marin County
POSITION: Medical anthropologist

SHARON KAUFMAN: We have huge expectations of medical technology. Scientists push the boundaries, such as in fertility treatments and in the ways in which a family can now be constructed. And hospitals are structured to promote life-saving technology. The ethical priority is to save life at all costs, and in many instances, this has been positive. Look at defibrillator technology and the advances in kidney transplants. But the system has gone overboard in one direction. “... And a Time to Die” came out of many conversations [and] complaints about too much technology and not enough comfort.

J.: But now there’s more of a focus on palliative care and on making sure that people have living wills, health-care directives and durable powers of attorney so that extreme measures will not be taken, right?

SK: Unless patients are proactive or have relatives available to speak on behalf of them — and many do not — durable powers of attorney are either overridden or ignored. This is such a huge problem. The policy is to apply CPR and intubate. Hospital legal teams are worried [about

litigation]. And anxiety, discomfort and guilt also often collide. You don’t want to say, “Don’t intubate my mother.”

There are large cultural expectations [that hospitals and doctors] can fix the very frail individual [who illustrates] the revolving-door scenario: coming to the hospital with shortness of breath, getting stabilized there, being discharged to a nursing home and then returning to the hospital with the same problem. Sometimes, you can only “fix” a problem to a certain extent.

J.: So how do we actually fix seemingly unfixable problems?

SK: Hospice care and palliative care are important and really good. They are institutional, organized structures that are ameliorative. We need to support and mentor young physicians who want to know more about palliative care. We also need to support teamwork that focuses on pain management. And we need more beds in hospitals for palliative care.

J.: In addition to four books, you have written many articles, such as “Losing My Self: A Poet’s Ironies and a Daughter’s Reflections on Dementia,” about your late mother, Shirley Kaufman, a renowned American Israeli poet. Did you encourage good writing during your tenure at UCSF?

SK: Through UCSF’s Office of Medical Education, I brought in outstanding researchers in sociology, anthropology, history and other fields to talk about the clinical issues addressed in their books.

Many students and faculty would read the books [beforehand]. The authors included some UCSF faculty, including Kelly Ray Knight (“Addicted.pregnant.poor”), Seth Holmes (“Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Indigenous Mexican Farmworkers in the U.S.”) and Carolyn Beth Sufrin (“Jailcare: Finding the Safety Net for Women Behind Bars”).

J.: How did your father and grandfather influence your work?

SK: My father, Bernard Kaufman Jr., who was born in San Francisco, was a physician for many years at what was then Mount Zion Hospital, where he served the Jewish and African American communities from the Western Addition neighborhood. He retired when he was 83, and he lived to 93. And my grandfather was also a physician in San Francisco. He was originally from Melbourne, Australia.

J.: Serving the community and Jewish community, in particular, is a trait in your family.

SK: One of my sisters, Deborah Kaufman, founded the San Francisco Jewish Film Festival [in 1980]. And my son, Jacob, an attorney, is called Jacob “Muffin Man” Kaufman, because he started making muffins for the homeless in San Francisco and turned his baking into National Muffin Day to support homeless services. For me, my work is all about trying to make a better society. ■

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



Kaufman with her father at his last seder before he died at age 93

Two local students chosen as Bronfman Fellows

Two Bay Area Jewish high school students have been selected for the 33rd cohort of the Bronfman Fellowship, a five-week educational program in Israel followed by a year of learning back at home focused on Jewish principles and text.

Diana Somorjai will enter her senior year at Crystal Spring Uplands School in her hometown of Hillsborough, and is a member of Peninsula Temple Beth El and Peninsula Temple Sholom. She’s been active with the North Peninsula Jewish Teen Foundation and the Jewish Teen Grant Initiative, and served as president of her school’s French Club and captain of the volleyball team.

Molly Weiner, of San Mateo, is entering her senior year at Lick-Wilmerding in San Francisco and is a graduate of

Wornick Jewish Day School in Foster City. A Camp Tawonga alumni, she volunteers at Clinic by the Bay, a free medical clinic for the uninsured, and has been a summer camp counselor at a transitional housing program for homeless families in San Mateo.

Their five weeks in Israel begin on July 1, when they will take college-level seminars taught by scholars from a range of fields, including Evan Parks, Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Germanic Languages at Columbia University, Rabbi Yehuda Sarna, university chaplain at New York University, and Gila Fine, editor-in-chief of Maggid Books.

Fellows also will have opportunities to learn about the state’s history and geography outside of the classroom by traveling



Diana Somorjai



Molly Weiner

to Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, the Negev Desert and other locations. The North American Bronfman Fellows will collaborate and interact with young Israelis in a similar program.

After completing the fellowship, Somorjai and Weiner will be part of a network

of accomplished alumni, including Israeli filmmakers, political advisers to Knesset members, four former Supreme Court clerks, 18 Fulbright scholars, and a San Francisco author — Daniel Handler, who wrote “A Series of Unfortunate Events” children’s books.

More information on the program is available at bronfman.org; applications for the 2020 fellowship will be available in the fall. — J. Staff ■

CORRECTION

In our story about the 1999 Sacramento synagogue firebombing, we listed the date of the incident as June 18. It was in fact June 19.

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FIRST PLACE



Alix Wall

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*Sentenced to life for murder, he helped
1500 fellow inmates earn degrees*

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*At SF's hot new Che Fico, Italian Jewish
food is a political statement*

WRITING ABOUT WOMEN

*Neshama Carlebach speaks about her
famed father's legacy of sexual abuse*



Laura Paull

ARTS REPORTING

*CJM turns 10: Is it contemporary, Jewish
or a museum?*

SPORTS

*Bay Area Uruguayan Jews (who knew?!)
look for World Cup win*



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*'People are still suffering': the North Bay
fires, six months later*



Joe Eskenazi

AMERICAN JEWISH HISTORY

*Name of anti-Chinese SF Jew may be
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SECOND PLACE



Sue Fishkoff

FEATURE WRITING

*One year later: Trump's Bay Area Jewish
voters are proud, but not loud*



Maya Mirsky

SENIORS

*The last of the Shanghailanders, S.F.'s
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Yoav Potash

PERSONAL ESSAY

*How I learned all Israelis are not my
father*



David Waksberg

SINGLE COMMENTARY

*You know who else separated families
trying to cross borders? The Soviets*



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J. wins 11 American Jewish Press Association awards

J. The Jewish News of Northern California has won 11 awards in the annual Simon Rockower Awards for Excellence in Jewish Journalism, including seven first-place awards. It is the most awards J. has received in any one year.

The American Jewish Press Association presented the awards June 25 at its annual conference, held in St. Louis this year. The awards were all for work published in 2018. The AJPA is a professional association for Jewish media in North America, and the Rockower awards have been presented for 38 years. J. competes in the category of mid-size publications.

“There has never been a more important time to report the news of our incredibly diverse Jewish community in the Bay Area,” said J. publisher Steve Gellman. “We are so proud of this recognition. It’s humbling to know that our work is also appreciated by our peers in journalism throughout the country.”

Alix Wall, J. contributing editor and Organic Epicure columnist, won three first-place awards. In the personality profiles category, she won for her piece headlined “Sentenced to life for murder, he has helped 1,500 fellow inmates earn degrees” — a moving profile of Jewish prisoner James A. White. In the category of food and wine writing, Wall took first place for her profile of Chef David Nayfeld, “At SF’s hot new Che Fico, Italian Jewish food is a political statement.” And in the category of writing about women, she was recognized for “Neshama Carlebach speaks about her famed father’s legacy of sexual abuse.”

Culture Editor Laura Paull took home two first-place awards. In the category of arts and criticism reporting,



she was recognized for her cover story “CJM turns 10: Is it contemporary, Jewish or a museum?” In the sports writing category, she took first place for “Bay Area Uruguayan Jews

(who knew?!) look for World Cup win.”

Former J. copy editor Shoshana Hebshi, a freelance writer who lives in Sonoma County, took first place in news reporting for “People are still suffering: the North Bay fires, six months later.” Freelancer and former J. staff writer Joe Eskenazi won first place for writing about American Jewish history with “Name of anti-Chinese SF Jew may be stripped from playground,” his article on the campaign to rename San Francisco’s Julius Kahn Playground.

J. also took home four second-place awards. J. Editor Sue Fishkoff was recognized for excellence in feature writing for her cover story “One year later: Trump’s Bay Area Jewish voters are proud, but not loud.” Staff writer Maya Mirsky was honored in the category of writing about seniors for “The last of the Shanghailanders, S.F.’s unique Holocaust refugee community,” a story about the city’s dwindling population of European Jews who came to the Bay Area after spending World War II in Shanghai.

Two non-staff members also took second place: East Bay filmmaker Yoav Potash in the personal essay category for “How I learned all Israelis are not my father” and David Waksberg, CEO of S.F.-based Jewish LearningWorks, in the single commentary category for “You know who else separated families trying to cross borders? The Soviets”.

To read all 11 of J.’s winning articles, visit jweekly.com/rockowerawards.

For a full list of this year’s Rockower winners, visit ajpa.org/page/2019Rockower. — J. Staff ■

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Israeli, U.S. teens connect during Bay Area 'encounter'

NEWS | GABE STUTMAN | J. STAFF

On a bright Monday morning, dozens of American and Israeli 11th-graders spilled onto the lawn behind Coit Tower in San Francisco. Backdropped by panoramic views of the bay, the teenagers mingled in groups, making it hard to tell who was American and who was Israeli. Several practiced a dance routine they'd been working on, while one boy sprang backflips on the grass.

"The first day we were here, I just tried it, and I landed it," said Israeli Dan Rave, a rollerblader with a sweep of straight brown hair, about learning to backflip on Baker Beach. "I was really hype."

It was the start of the eighth and final day of Mifgash 2019 (Hebrew for "encounter") — the first American-Israeli teen exchange program put together by educators at Contra Costa Midrasha.

The event, which organizers hope to make an annual tradition, brought 28 Israeli teenagers to the Bay Area to live with host families and tour the area in two charter buses along with U.S. teens from the East Bay Jewish community. The number of U.S. teens varied by day, but one day the total number of kids and staff was 72, organizer Julia Babka-Kurzrock said.

A teacher at Contra Costa Midrasha and the Mifgash 2019 program coordinator, Babka-Kurzrock served as a full-throated troupe leader, shepherding the students from one activity to the next. She counted off one to 57 as the students descended the seemingly endless staircase from atop Telegraph Hill.

"It's amazing. We have teens from every Jewish community in the East Bay," Babka-Kurzrock said, of the American cohort. "We had kids join in the middle of the week because their friends told them it was awesome."

A recurring motif from the week was a hand gesture that everyone agreed captured the feel of the program. Offering to demonstrate was counselor Israel Lev, a basketball coach



(From left) Israelis Maya Bramli, Liel Paz and Noa Rosario, with American teens Tamar and Adee Franbuch on Contra Costa Midrasha's Mifgash adventure. (Photos/Courtesy Contra Costa Midrasha)

at the Israeli kids' high school (part of Mosenson Youth Village in Hod HaSharon, outside Tel Aviv).

As Lev held his hands up, palms facing out, he explained. "We started like this," he said, his hands representing the Israeli group and the American group. Then he interlocked his fingers into a web. "Now we're like this."

Enabled by support from the S.F.-based Jewish Community Federation's Teen Initiative and the S.F.-based Jim Joseph Foundation, Mifgash has a simple aim: to help spark a connection to Israel for Bay Area teenagers, said Devra Aarons, executive director of Contra Costa Midrasha. "We want to connect our teens to Israel by bringing Israel to them," she said, gesturing to the dancers. "And look how connected they are."

The Israeli students arrived June 17, greeted with a welcome message from Ravit Baer, S.F.-based Israeli deputy consul general. The Israeli government, via the consulate

"We want to connect our teens to Israel by bringing Israel to them."

Devra Aarons

in San Francisco, lent support to the program, as did congregations B'Nai Tikvah and B'nai Shalom (Walnut Creek) and Beth Chaim (Danville), the Buttercup Diner of Walnut Creek, the JCC of Contra Costa and the federations on both sides of the bay. Semifreddis donated pastries.

The trip saw the teens visit the Golden Gate Bridge, Lombard Street, Chinatown and the Mission District. They also toured the Google and Apple campuses, visited Stanford and UC Berkeley and toured a 170-year-old congregation in San Francisco (Sherith Israel).

And took photos with the sea lions at Pier 39, of course. "Oh my God," said Babka-Kurzrock. "Their reaction was great. A lot of the kids had never seen [sea lions] before."

Many of the U.S. students said they never had met Israelis their age, and were struck by their similarities. The Israelis were wowed by the beauty of San Francisco, the look of its houses ("so many colors") and by its often cartoonish topography.

"You really have to be in shape to live here," Israeli Roni Dor said with a laugh.

Dor was on U.S. soil for the first time. A talented pianist who serenaded the group whenever possible, Dor attributed her sparkling English to reading books and watching American TV shows. She said the highlight of her trip was Shabbat, which she spent hanging out with her host family.

"It was just me, my friend and our host [East Bay teen Berrydal Moshe-Hayat]. We went shopping and it was really fun."

Rave couldn't name just one moment that stuck out to him. "The highlight of my week is just being with other Jewish teens my age," he said.

Abby Lusherovich, an incoming high school junior in Walnut Creek, said one of her favorite moments was the first time they met the Israelis.

"They had just gotten off the flight, but they were so open and excited," she said. "I'm usually not that much of a talker, but they just started so many conversations."

The Israelis and Americans shared foods that they can't get in their home country, such as Hi-Chew fruit chews (available in the U.S.) and Israeli chocolate bars.

Shannah Saul's family somehow ended up hosting four Israeli girls, which was "chaos," she said. The San Ramon student cherished the "crazy deep connection" that formed between the two groups of teens.

Saul said she and her fellow Americans especially got a kick out of seeing the Israelis experience things she and her friends see all the time.

"Like seeing the bridge for the first time. They were like, 'Oh my God!' she said. "And we were standing there like, 'It's just a bridge.'"

Saul and many others said they were surprised by how close they had become with their Israeli counterparts. On the last day, the students made each other promise to stay on the WhatsApp group they'd created. Some took sand from Ocean Beach as a keepsake.

Later this year, organizers hope to send the U.S. students to Hod HaSharon, to complete the exchange.

"We always say, it went from this," Saul said, before interlocking her fingers, "to this." ■

"It's amazing. We have teens from every Jewish community in the East Bay."

Julia Babka-Kurzrock



Israeli and American teens come together in San Francisco in the Mifgash Program

ARTS, CULTURE & JUDAICA

'SNL' star Vanessa Bayer pens children's book about illness

BOOKS | DAN PINE | J. STAFF

Though she made America laugh for seven years as a cast member on "Saturday Night Live," Vanessa Bayer has a serious side, including a not-so-secret soft spot for sick kids.

That's because many years ago, she was one.

"How Do You Care for a Very Sick Bear?" is Bayer's new picture book for young children and their parents. It tells the simple story of a little bear suffering from a grave illness, and how friends cheer up the cub by bringing snacks and get-well cards and, most important, offer their loving presence.

Essentially, the book is a colorfully illustrated lesson in the Jewish mitzvah of *bikur cholim*, or visiting the sick.

"Yeah, I did that on purpose," she says with a laugh.

Bayer grew up in Cleveland's tight-knit Jewish community, where her mom worked at the local JCC. She attended so many bar and bat mitzvahs as a teen, it wasn't hard for her to later develop her signature "SNL" character, Jacob the Bar Mitzvah Boy.

But when she was diagnosed with leukemia at age 15 and frequently had to stay home from school over the 2½-year course of treatment, she discovered the importance of human interaction.

"Obviously it was a really difficult time," she recalls, "but friends and family really did rally around me and always made me feel included. Friends would come visit and give me the ninth-grade gossip. I wanted to write this book because I noticed as I've gotten older that when someone is sick, people don't know what to do to help them."

Even though the book is written for children, Bayer didn't shy away from the more unsettling aspects of consoling sick friends: seeing them out of sorts, in pain, sad and sometimes wanting to be alone.

"It's scary to have a friend who's sick," Bayer says, "but what I'm trying to teach people is that the best thing to do is reach out and be there for them."

That wasn't the only lesson Bayer learned during her illness. She also discovered that humor helped her heal. In fact, she traces her desire to make people laugh to the jokes and laughter that buoyed her during her illness.

In college she tried her hand at improv comedy, later moving to Chicago. In 2008 she co-starred in Second City's "Jewsical! The Musical," which featured an all-Jewish cast. Among other characters, she played an edgy Virgin Mary with a New York accent.

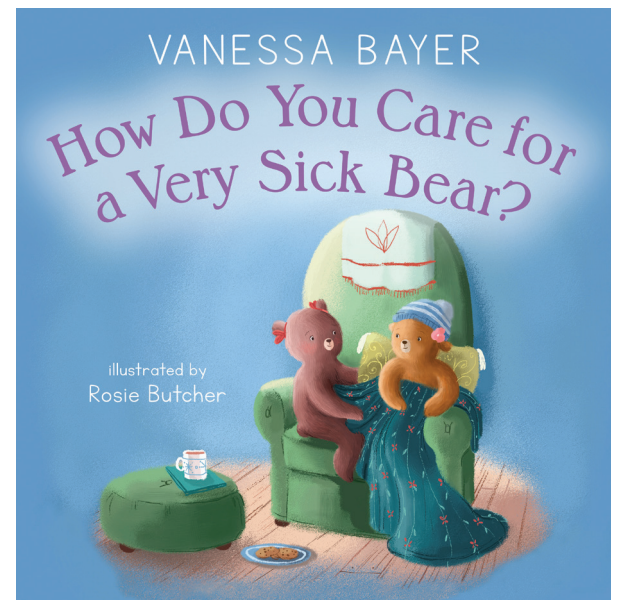
"When someone is sick, people don't know what to do to help them."



Vanessa Bayer's book comes out of her own experience of childhood leukemia.

In 2010 she joined the cast of "SNL," where she enjoyed a stellar run. Characters included her spot-on Miley Cyrus and Jennifer Aniston (she had the chutzpah to do the impressions in front of both stars on live television), and her overeager, overachieving, bad child actor Laura Parsons.

But her most memorable character was Jacob the Bar Mitzvah Boy, who usually appeared around the time of a Jewish holiday. In his ill-fitting suit and New York Yankees kippah, Jacob would painstakingly read prepared remarks, not unlike a stilted bar mitzvah speech, expounding on the holiday, making bad jokes about his big brother Ethan and looking terribly awkward.



Jacob has a place right up there in "SNL's" Jewish hall of fame, alongside Jon Lovitz's Hanukkah Harry, Adam Sandler's "Hanukkah Song" and Gilda Radner's "Jewess Jeans" commercial.

"He was probably my favorite character," Bayer says. "He's very similar to my personality. He was based on my brother [Jonah], so it was very natural to do the character, but also nice to do it at 'SNL' and to do it for the Jewish community."

How did she capture the supreme awkwardness of a 13-year-old boy so well?

"There is something so funny about boys at that age," she says. "A bar mitzvah is so young for a boy to have to be so formal. Girls are already more evolved. But boys don't know what to do with their hands, they can't handle any distractions."

Bayer left the show in 2017, but she has also appeared in the movie "Trainwreck" and TV shows including "Will & Grace," "Single Parents" and the Netflix sketch comedy "I Think You Should Leave."

Right now, though, she's all about her book and spreading its message of healing. Her recent book tour took her to the Cleveland hospital where she was treated years ago. This time, she read to children experiencing the same things she did.

"It was just a reminder that everybody is going through something," she said of the visit, "so let's all just be there for each other." ■

"How Do You Care for a Very Sick Bear?" by Vanessa Bayer (Feiwel and Friends)



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HBO's 'Chernobyl' resonates in Israel

TV | JOSEFIN DOLSTEN | JTA

The HBO historical miniseries "Chernobyl," which dramatizes the events surrounding the 1986 nuclear explosion in the now-Ukrainian city, has generated buzz around the world. While garnering critical acclaim, its five-episode run has renewed conversation about the incident and even spiked tourism to the area of the disaster.

The show is getting a second run on Israeli TV next month. In the United States, the series' initial run on HBO ended June 3, although it can now be streamed online on Amazon Prime or HBO.com.

Estimates of the event's death toll vary from 4,000 to 93,000. More suffered adverse health effects as a result of radiation poisoning. Today the area remains one of the most contaminated by radiation in the world.

Chernobyl's aftermath also can be felt in Israel. Some 5,000 "liquidators" — those called in to deal with the explosion's aftermath — moved to Israel in the early 1990s, and 1,500 are still alive there today.

There's an Israeli law that gives the liquidators rights to public housing, a one-time grant and medical treatment in a special facility. But while the Knesset passed the law in 2011, the government has yet to implement it, former Knesset member Ksenia Svetlova wrote in an article earlier this month in the Times of Israel.

During her Knesset tenure, Svetlova sought to understand why.

"Deputy Health Minister Yaakov Litzman...told me that 'research does not prove that the Chernobyl disaster liquidators suffer from illnesses as a consequence of their work at the reactor,' Svetlova wrote, and that "Most of them are smokers, and it is possible that cancer in their cases is a consequence of that smoking."

Svetlova, an immigrant from the former Soviet Union, has called on Israel to address the needs of the liquidators.

The series also has raised questions in Israel about the country's nuclear research center outside the city of Dimona, in the Negev Desert (Israel has long denied that the plant houses nuclear weapons). As the Times of Israel points out, some worry about Dimona's aging nuclear core.

But experts say its scale and the type of work done there differs from that of Chernobyl, so any potential damage would be nowhere near the 1986 incident. ■

DARIA MARTIN: TONIGHT THE WORLD

The Contemporary Jewish Museum

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Daria Martin: Tonight the World has been commissioned by Barbican, London and co-commissioned by The Contemporary Jewish Museum, San Francisco. The exhibition is curated by Heidi Rabben, Senior Curator, The Contemporary Jewish Museum.

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Image: Daria Martin, *Tonight the World*, 2019. Live action film, anamorphic 16mm film transferred to HD, 13.5 minutes. © Daria Martin, courtesy Maureen Paley, London.



barbican

Tickets on sale for San Francisco Jewish Film Festival

FILM | LAURA PAULL | J. STAFF

Tickets are on sale for the 39th annual San Francisco Jewish Film Festival, the popular cinematic gathering of the Bay Area tribe. The festival opens on July 18 at the Castro Theatre and runs through Aug. 4 at venues in Palo Alto, San Rafael, Oakland and Albany.

The 18-day festival will present more than 65 films from 13 countries at 135 individual screenings, performances and ticketed events around the Bay. At a community Shabbat dinner at San Francisco City Hall the first Friday, July 19, the public will be able to mingle with filmmakers, producers and actors from around the world.

On opening night, film lovers can line up outside the Castro with Karl the Fog to see the West Coast premiere of "Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles," a rousing reminiscence of the making of the 1964 Broadway musical "Fiddler on the Roof" and its film version a few years later. The party will continue at the Contemporary Jewish Museum.

The San Francisco portion of the festival will wrap July 28 with a sneak preview of the action thriller "The Red Sea Diving Resort." A star-filled cast (Chris Evans, Sir Ben Kingsley, Greg Kinnear and others) re-enacts the true story of a Mossad operation to funnel Ethiopian Jews to Israel through a defunct diving resort on the coast of Sudan.

The East Bay portion of the festival opens July 25 at the

Albany Twin with another aquatic-themed film, "The Picture of His Life." The documentary by Israeli filmmakers Yonatan Nir and Dani Menkin focuses on the world-famous underwater photographer Amos Nachoum, who left Israel after fighting in the Yom Kippur War of 1973 and settled in Pacific Grove — "settled" being a relative word, as he travels the seven seas to get close-up still photography of the world's most dangerous and elusive creatures of the sea. In this unsettling documentary, Nachoum goes in search of the most dangerous subject of all: the Arctic polar bear.

Another East Bay highlight will be a Sunday morning "Film and Feast" on July 28, with the West Coast premiere of "Abe," a gentle, family-friendly drama about a 12-year-old Brooklynite who is mentored by a compassionate Brazilian cook in his neighborhood. The boy is known as Abraham by the Israeli side of his family and Ibrahim by the Palestinian side, and the two groups of relatives bicker constantly over how to raise him. But he wants to be known simply as Abe the chef. The screening will be followed by a lunch reception (separate ticket) at Zaytoon Middle Eastern restaurant, up the block from the theater. "Abe" also screens at the Castro on July 20.

The centerpiece narrative film is a quirky comedy set in Israel called "Tel Aviv on Fire." That title is the name of



Noah Schnapp stars in "Abe."

a fictional television soap opera produced by a Palestinian production company in Ramallah and watched obsessively by Israelis and Palestinians alike. This show-within-a-show conceit sets up an almost Shakespearean plot of obscured identities and manipulations. Rueful social commentary ensues. It has its Bay Area premiere at CinéArts in Palo Alto on July 24, with other screenings in San Francisco, Albany and San Rafael.

The centerpiece film, "The Amazing Jonathan Documentary," also plays with layers of deception and perceptions of reality. Its Jewish subject, the outlandish Las Vegas magician and stand-up comic John Szeles, is an unreliable performer addicted to drugs who makes his living through the art of deception. He may or may not be dying of a heart condition, and may or may not show up for his appointments with the filmmaker. The film will screen four times during the festival.

A full schedule of films and events is online at sfjff.org. Contact the SFJFF by email at boxoffice@sfjff.org or by calling (415) 621-0568. ■

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**More
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An outpouring of work from Bay Area artists

A sampling of the submissions of cover art for 'Resource,' our guide to Jewish life in the Bay Area

ART | LAURA PAULL | J. STAFF

Everyone knows the Bay Area is full of artists, but when J. put out a call in January for original art to grace the cover of our annual "Resource" catalog, the response was overwhelming.

We received a total of 173 submissions from 52 different Bay Area artists who were eager to see their work on the cover of our 2019 guide to Jewish organizations, services and businesses in the greater Bay Area.

Whether figurative or abstract, water color or photography or collage, symbolic or secular, all of the submissions were worthy.

But we could only choose one. That honor went to Sonoma county digital artist Deborah Garber for her work "Tree of Life."

To display the range of artistry in our community, here is just a sampling of the other submissions we received, along with the thoughts of the artists who created them. You can read about Garber in "Resource", which is being mailed to subscribers and Jewish agencies this week, and online. Most people keep "Resource" close at hand all year, as it serves as a valuable reference book.

We will continue to welcome contributions in the years to come. Watch for our next call for submissions in January 2020.

Ellen Tobe: "Floating Hearts" (below)

"The Jewish mystical tradition teaches that there are four levels of perception, the worlds of action, feeling, thinking

and being," writes Millbrae-based graphic designer Ellen Tobe on her website. "Good design speaks to all four levels."

As an artist, Tobe works primarily in mixed media, which may include collage, day-to-day ephemera, image transfer, paint and ink. All of them are antidotes, she says, to the computer-centric work she does when designing for business.

Her collage "Floating Hearts" is a magenta-saturated visual delight that is open to interpretation. "A lot of my artwork has Jewish themes," she says. "I'm a fluent Hebrew speaker, having lived in Israel for many years, and I often incorporate Hebrew typography in my artwork. The Hebrew language and the letters themselves are a source of inspiration in much of my artwork."

The work she submitted, however, came from some other spark. "I work intuitively — and I usually don't know where the artwork will take me when I begin," she says. "This is a perfect example."

To see more of Tobe's work, visit 4wdesign.com.

Sonia Melnikova-Raich: "Jerusalem Pomegranates" (right)

"If you are in Israel in the fall, pomegranates are

everywhere, on and under the trees, in the street stalls sold as juice, and even among the architectural ruins," Sonia Melnikova-Raich writes in describing the photograph, "Jerusalem Pomegranates," she submitted.

"I was fascinated by the accidental juxtaposition of this ancient fruit, that came to signify Jewish holy days, and the remnants of the ancient structures. The pomegranate sitting on the top of a Doric column looked right out of a biblical text: 'And he made the pillars, and two rows round about upon the one network, to cover the chapiters that were upon the top with pomegranates' (1 Kings 7:18)."

It is not surprising that Melnikova-Raich's eye is drawn to things architectural. She was trained and worked as an architect and artist in Moscow before she came to San



Francisco, where she has lived since 1987.

But photography is her chosen medium of expression. "I believe that photography is the best medium to express feelings" she says, "as each photograph is inherently an image of disappearance, an ocular connection to the past forever stamped by time."

Her photographs have been exhibited locally and nationally, including several solo shows, and have won competitions. Her works are held in private and public collections and have been featured in professional photography journals.

"I look for poetry and mystique in common things and enjoy the challenge of creating an image out of the ordinary and the familiar, interpreting it in a unique way," she explains. "In that, I feel a strong affinity with the Japanese philosophy and the aesthetic of wabi-sabi, with its reverence for the subtle beauty in old and simple things and their fleeting and transient nature."

To see more of Melnikova-Raich's work, visit art.sonia-melnikova.com.



"Each photograph is inherently an image of disappearance, an ocular connection to the past forever stamped by time."

Sonia Melnikova-Raich



Stanley Goldstein: "Playground" (above)

When looking at Stanley Goldstein's submission, we saw realism: a warm, life-filled, San Francisco landscape, rich in detail both physical and human. There are helmet-wearing kids on tricycles, an athletic mom with a Fitbit on her wrist, a watchful dad enjoying his time with his son.

In the mix, there is also a group of Hasidic Jews.

"Playground," says Goldstein, a San Francisco resident, "was inspired on a sunny day in the park. I loved seeing parents and children from all walks of life and all races and, possibly, faiths, joining together in this neutral zone of a children's playground, united by the space and the wonderful light. But the most fun for me — and the reason I submitted it to [J.] — was the Hasidic family playing football."

A Los Angeles native, Goldstein is now an established Bay Area painter who teaches at the San Francisco Art Institute, City College of San Francisco, College of Marin, California Academy of Sciences, Idyllwild Arts and privately. He has had numerous solo exhibitions in San Francisco, Los Angeles and New York City, and has works in the Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts' permanent collection at the Fine Arts Museums in San Francisco.

To see more of Goldstein's work, visit stanleygoldstein.com.

Cynthia Pepper: "Beetles" (below)

Cynthia Pepper's joyful, colorful abstract "Beetles" has absolutely nothing about it that says "Jewish" in a direct way. And yet, one could make the case that there is nothing



"The lighting of the candles was an important part of her identity."

Rita Sklar



not-Jewish about her love of nature or visual joie de vivre.

"I submitted my print," she says, "because I felt whimsy would be a nice direction for the J... a rare and underappreciated quality in all aspects of life. It is a hand-painted monotype. The bugs are playing musical chairs."

Pepper, who lives in San Rafael, is a multifaceted artist who likes to keep her life whimsical.

She teaches dance to children with several Bay Area arts organizations, including the San Francisco Ballet, Young Imaginations in San Rafael and Young Audiences of Northern California. Xanadu, her production company, creates short films and dance media for commercials, TV, operas, the internet, theater and other outlets.

She also has produced short films for "Sesame Street," Nickelodeon and HBO, and her current film, the 29-minute "Pixie & Dust" (described by one fellow artist as "a colorful, sprightly, kaleidoscopic adventure into creativity") is currently on the film festival circuit both in the U.S. and abroad.

To see more of Pepper's work, visit cynthiapepper.com.

Rita Sklar: "Sparks of the Holy" (top right)

J. was very taken with Rita Sklar's sensitive water color of an older woman lighting Sabbath candles, a skilled example of figurative painting.

"Sparks of the Holy," Sklar tells us, "is one of a series of nine paintings that I did, challenging myself to use a completely different palette and style in each one."

At the time, she says, she was working on a series she called "Mom Lighting the Candles."

"Ruth was already in her 90s and I was struck with the realization that, although she had never gone to Hebrew school and didn't know how to read a prayer from a book, she had maintained this Jewish ritual with her family for so many decades," Sklar says. "She kept a kosher home, celebrated all the Jewish holidays in her home, sent her children to Hebrew school — and the lighting of the candles was an important part of her identity."

Sklar, who studied water colors with a master painter in Madrid after graduating from Rutgers University in New Jersey, has received wide exposure locally, including eight paintings commissioned by the Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford. This summer, some of her work can be seen at New Museum Los Gatos. She is a member of the California Watercolor Association, San Francisco Women Artists and the Valley Art Gallery in Walnut Creek, in addition to other galleries and associations, and she has received an award of distinction from the National Museum of Women in the Arts in 2013, among many other awards. Sklar lives and works in Oakland.

How the future in 'Handmaid's Tale' echoes our Biblical past

TV | ESTHER D. KUSTANOWITZ | J. COLUMNIST

Whether you're a longtime fan of Margaret Atwood's 1985 imagining of a dystopian world in which women are oppressed and strong-armed into child-bearing servitude, or if you're watching Hulu's original series bringing that dark vision to life, "The Handmaid's Tale" presents a future to avoid. But even if our future doesn't resemble this fictional tale — which has begun its season 3 run on Hulu, with new episodes every week — there are elements in our Biblical past that do.

"The Handmaid's Tale" is set in a post-United States country known as Gilead. After a civil war, fertility rates have severely declined. The ruling class, the commanders and their wives, forcibly impregnate handmaids, fertile women who have already had a child.

This premise is inspired by Biblical stories and text, particularly surrounding the matriarchs. Sarah was fertility-challenged, so she offered her husband, Abraham, her handmaid Hagar as a *pilegish* (concubine) to birth children who would be credited to her. This happened again with Rachel, who gave husband Jacob her handmaid Bilhah; Leah followed suit, offering Zilpah. (Hammering home the Biblical inspiration, Hulu's handmaids are trained and, between assignments, housed in a building known as the Rachel and Leah Center.)

Gilead's version of this story is a sanctioned rape: during what is known as "the ceremony," the wife restrains the handmaid on the marital bed; the commander reads Biblical text from Genesis 30 — from the story of matriarch Rachel — and then rapes the handmaid.

Babies are Gilead's most precious currency, but the caste system does not give the handmaids any recognition for their contributions. Their babies are raised by the commanders' wives. They are demeaned, stripped of their names and referred to as "of" the man of the house. June, the protagonist of "The Handmaid's Tale," is called Offred after her commander Fred.

Atwood's Gilead as depicted in the Hulu series is a messed-up place. In the Bible, Gilead, a hilly region east of the Jordan River that witnessed the covenant between the Biblical Abraham and his uncle, Laban the trickster, also has

its share of disturbing stories.

For example, one of the Bible's most fascinating and sketchy characters, Yiftach (Jephthe), is referred to as "a Gileadite," rather than by a family name, indicating he may not have known who his father was. His mother, the Biblical text says, was a prostitute. Yiftach vowed that if he won a battle,

The language of "The Handmaid's Tale" also hearkens back to Biblical times.

"Under his eye," a standard greeting among handmaids in Hulu's Gilead, indicates that God is always watching. But it also recalls the phrase *ayin tachat ayin*, "an eye for [literally, "under"] an eye," a style of extremist punishment familiar to

"The Handmaid's Tale" holds up a mirror, so we can see how easily our sacred text can be co-opted to justify oppression in a dystopian future.



Handmaids rehearse "the ceremony" in Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale." (Photo/George Kraychyk)

he would sacrifice to God "whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me on my safe return," which turned out to be his only child, his daughter. Naturally, he blamed this on her — "you have become my trouble" — and after granting her request for a mountain retreat with her friends to bemoan her virginity, he "did as he had vowed."

Later in life, the Bible tells us, Yiftach died and was buried "in the cities of Gilead" — the use of the plural, commentators posit, means that Yiftach likely suffered from a skin disease that made his limbs fall off in different cities: wherever the limb fell off, it was buried. This is the Biblical Gilead.

citizens of Gilead.

The fertility blessings of "Blessed be the fruit" and "May the Lord open" — recalling the idea of a *peter rechem*, a firstborn who "opens the womb" of its mother — are uttered constantly in Gilead in conversations with handmaids, reinforcing their roles as procreative bodies and nothing else.

It's a relief that Gilead isn't more deeply based on our Biblical tradition. But "The Handmaid's Tale" does hold up a mirror, so we can see how easily our sacred text can be co-opted to justify oppression in a dystopian future. By imagining it, we can take the necessary steps to prevent it from happening. ■

TV doc 'Adolf Island' explores Nazi camps on British soil

TV | CURT SCHLEIER | JTA

Many people are familiar with the names of the larger Nazi concentration camps such as Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen. But some estimate the Nazis had as many as 40,000 satellite camps around Europe.

Several existed on the only British soil conquered by the Nazis: Alderney, one of the Channel Islands, where the Nazis imported thousands of slave laborers to build fortifications in hopes of conquering more English land.

Caroline Sturdy Colls, a British professor and forensic archaeologist who is perhaps best known for her 2013 documentary on Treblinka, explores the island in a new documentary called "Adolf Island."

The one-hour doc made its debut earlier this month on the Smithsonian Channel, but it has been shown multiple times since then, with the next airing at 8 p.m. Monday, July 1. It will also run at 10 a.m. on July 3, and 5 a.m. Sunday, July 7. To watch the documentary online, visit tinyurl.com/adolf-isle.



Caroline Sturdy Colls, a world-renowned forensic archaeologist, in "Adolf Island." (Photo/JTA-Snap TV)

Colls started her research for "Adolf Island" at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. The most notorious camp on Alderney was Sylt, built and run by the SS-Totenkopfverbände, or Death's Head squads.

The Nazis burned most of the records, so there was no telling how many prisoners were killed there. But a couple of clues survived a last-minute Nazi attempt at a cover-up.

One was a Royal Air Force aerial photo that seemed to indicate disturbed ground near the official cemetery. The other was a letter from Nazi leader Heinrich Himmler to the camp commander ordering "no surrender," and to "shoot all the prisoners without hesitation" if the Allies attacked.

Colls' original plan was to study and then excavate some promising areas; then she brought in some high-tech gadgets, but the government foiled both efforts.

You cannot imagine, she says, "how angry and absolutely horrified I am at the character of these people," who "want to forget." ■

The Books section is supported by a generous donation from Anne Germanacos

Books on Arab Jews, Latin Jews and fractioned identity

OFF THE SHELF HOWARD FREEDMAN



Howard Freedman is the director of the Jewish Community Library, a project of Jewish LearningWorks, in San Francisco. All books mentioned in this column may be borrowed from the library.

The attention paid to identity politics in the past decade has made the word identity a fraught one. But questions of identity are very real and deserving of discussion, notably for Jews. Several very different new books illuminate some of the complexities in how we understand ourselves.

Jews with roots in Latin America form a significant subgroup in this country, composing about a third of the

Jewish population of Miami-Dade County and the Bronx, and 14 percent of the Jews in Los Angeles County'. But this group has received inadequate attention and study. Laura Limonic's "Kugel and Frijoles: Latino Jews in the United States" helps ameliorate that situation.

Limonic, who teaches sociology at SUNY Old Westbury, was born in Argentina. For her research, she interviewed 85 Latino Jews living in the United States, primarily immigrants from Argentina, Mexico and Venezuela.

What emerged overwhelmingly from the interviewees is a sense of alienation in their adopted communities — of feeling like outsiders among fellow Latinos, whose family heritages are often deeply flavored by Catholicism. They often feel estranged from their larger Jewish communities, with whom they may feel inadequate commonalities due to factors such as culture and language.

And Latino identity complicates how we understand race in the United States, for it is a cultural designation, rather than one defined by skin color. Indeed, in the countries from which most Latino Jews came, Jews functioned as a small ethnic minority. But upon coming to the United States, many discovered that Jews are often seen as a subset of the dominant white majority, which is not how this predominantly immigrant group tends to view themselves.

Because neither the Jewish community nor the Latino community tends to offer an adequate home for Jews from Latin America, Limonic writes, a pronounced new group identity — that of Latino Jews — has

emerged that did not exist in their native countries. But it is tough for that identity to blossom, as relatively small numbers make it difficult for most Latino Jews to establish institutions or organizations, except in a small number of communities (notably Miami and San Diego).

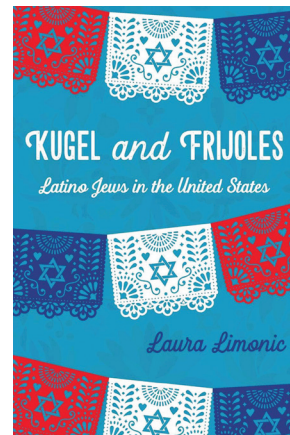
I am grateful that Limonic wrote this book, although I would love to see similar subject matter presented in a work that feels less like an academic study.

An unusual mixture of history, family history and diatribe, L.A.-based journalist Massoud Hayoun's provocative debut "When We Were Arabs: A Jewish Family's Forgotten History" functions as something of a manifesto urging Jews with roots in the Middle East and North Africa to consider themselves not as Mizrahi (Eastern) Jews, but as Jewish Arabs — essentially reclaiming their Arab identity, while maintaining their Judaism.

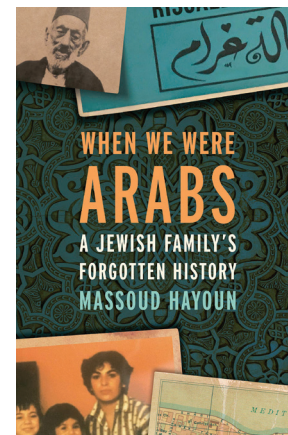
For Hayoun, there are two malevolent forces in modern history that changed the self-conception of Jews in the Arab world and led to Arabness and Jewishness becoming binary identities. The first is European colonialism. Hayoun holds that, along with other ills, the ruling French actively divided Jews from their neighbors in their North African colonies for political purposes. This impact was furthered by the large network of schools run by the Paris-based Alliance Israélite Universelle, which emphasized the French language and encouraged Jewish identification with France, rather than Algeria, Tunisia or Morocco.

And the second was the Zionist movement. Zionism encouraged Jews to establish solidarity foremost with other Jews worldwide, rather than with their compatriots. But, as Hayoun notes, the movement's Ashkenazi leadership was often privately contemptuous of the Jews of the Arab world, and emigrés frequently found themselves treated as second-class citizens upon arriving in Israel, with unequal housing and employment opportunities.

Hayoun was raised by a grandfather from Egypt (but with roots in Morocco) and a grandmother from Tunisia, both of whom kept detailed journals for decades. Most of the book consists of a narrated reconstruction of their lives, which included years in Egypt, Tunisia, Israel, France and the U.S. And Hayoun adds many recollections of his own upbringing and experiences — some of which are quite affecting, such as his bar mitzvah and his family's experiences in the aftermath of 9/11.



"Kugel and Frijoles: Latino Jews in the United States" by Laura Limonic (264 pages, Wayne State University Press)



"When We Were Arabs: A Jewish Family's Forgotten History" by Massoud Hayoun (304 pages, The New Press)



"Good Talk: A Memoir in Conversations" by Mira Jacob (368 pages, Random House)

Because I'm an Ashkenazi Jew, the questions of identity that Hayoun evokes are not mine to decide. But I did frequently take issue with the book, and particularly with its expressions of contempt for Israel and European Judaism that felt gratuitous or marred by reductivism.

In speaking of identity, I want to briefly mention a final book, Mira Jacob's graphic memoir, "Good Talk." After Jacob, an Indian American from a Christian background, and

her Ashkenazi Jewish husband had a son, questions about his race soon emerged and led to the writing of this book. It's a lengthy reflection on race and identity, capturing both Jacob's own past and the increasing apprehension she experiences concerning what her dark-skinned, "half Jewish" son will experience in this country. I love Jacob's insistence on the importance of conversation, if we are to understand ourselves and each other. ■

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Opinion

Confirmation of J.'s value in our Jewish community

EDITORIAL

Normally when we make an error in a story, it is a circumstance of some embarrassment for us. But when we reported in May that J. had won nine 2019 Rockower Awards from the American Jewish Press Association, it turned out we were wrong.

And we're so glad.

We actually won 11, shattering our previous record number of Rockower awards, practically doubling any previous year's tally.

Needless to say, we are immensely proud of the writers who crafted so much excellent work last year. The winners are:

- Editor Sue Fishkoff
- Culture editor Laura Paull
- Staff writer Maya Mirsky
- Contributing editor Alix Wall
- Former J. staffer Shoshana Hebshi
- Former J. staff writer Joe Eskenazi
- East Bay filmmaker Yoav Potash
- Jewish LearningWorks CEO David Waksberg

Check out page 16 for more details about these award-winning articles and columns.

These awards speak for themselves: We work with the best in the business. But we want to impress on readers that putting out this publication truly is a team effort; it could not be done without the essential input of editors, designers, ad reps, our publisher, board members and support staff.

So feel free to view this editorial as a collective pat on the back. Moreover, it's worth remembering that J., as a nonprofit enterprise, depends on donations for its survival.

It is by now common knowledge that the rise of the digital age resulted in the concomitant decline of print newspapers. We've lost count of all the daily metropolitan papers that have folded across the country in the last 25 years. Left standing are a few stalwarts fighting for every ad dollar they can get. And it's never enough.

Thus, in a time when the financial squeeze on the media has never been greater, and

when attacks on the press and First Amendment have never been so menacing, it is vital that community publications such as J. get the support they need to bring you the news you need to know.

So mazel tov to all our Rockower winners. Now it's back to work. ■



PICTURE THIS

The Sushi Kingdom & Asian Fusion kosher restaurant in Queens, N.Y. serves a sushi dish called the "gefilte fish roll," where the Passover whitefish loaf is wrapped in seaweed and rice and topped with carrot and horseradish. Why? Just why? (Photo/JTA-Josefin Dolsten)



Stories about singer Neshama Carlebach (above) and Uruguayan Jewish sports fans (below) were among the award winners.



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So mazel tov to all our Rockower winners. Now it's back to work. ■

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Keeping Yiddish alive

Thanks to Andrew Muchin for shining a spotlight on the San Francisco Jewish Folk Chorus' June 23 concert ("Bay Area's Jewish Folk Chorus celebrates Yiddish music and social values," June 14).

For me as a script-writer for the show, the challenge was to connect the dots between our songs: from lyrics of "the street" (early protest songs pushing back against oppressive garment industry working conditions, with lyrics by the likes of "sweatshop poet" and Czarist refugee Dovid Edeshatat) to those of the "stage" (later, popular songs of New York's Second Avenue Yiddish theater district and beyond).

What killed the Yiddish theater?

Not simply assimilation, but a 1924 U.S. law that actively barred immigrants from Eastern Europe. Sound familiar?

Today, alongside the klezmer revival (spearheaded by the late Oakland native and Yiddish diva Adrienne Cooper), there are a number of

excellent Yiddish choruses beyond the Bay Area. There's the A Besere Velt Workmen's Circle chorus in Boston and the kvell-inducing Jewish People's Philharmonic Chorus" (Binyumen Schaechter, conductor) in New York City, to name two.

We hope our future concerts will inspire amateurs to help us keep this richly diverse legacy alive.

DIANA SCOTT | SAN FRANCISCO

As a Zionist, I feel 'muzzled'

I share Laura Ishai's sinking heart as progressives increasingly embrace anti-Zionism and even consider it a litmus test for being a progressive ("A longtime progressive and a committed Zionist," June 14).

But how much more heartbreaking that Ms. Ishai felt compelled to write this opinion piece for J. under a pseudonym, lest she be attacked for her beliefs.

I share Ms. Ishai's beliefs regarding Israel,

Revisiting Cape Town reinvigorated my Jewish soul

LOCAL VOICE | MERVYN DANKER



Mervyn Danker is a program associate at the MZ Foundation and the past Northern California regional director of AJC. He lives in San Mateo.

The waiter at the Beacon Isle Resort in beautiful Plettenberg Bay, South Africa, turned to me after taking my order, a chicken sandwich, and in her Xhosa-accented English said, “But not with butter?”

It was more of a rhetorical question, as she was clearly familiar with the eating habits of South African Jews. The chicken may not be kosher, but meat and dairy shall never mix!

“South African Jews — like all whites — are anxious about the future. Indeed over the last few decades there has been a steady exodus of Jews.”

Milton Shain

After an absence of several years, I was back in the land of my birth to celebrate milestone birthdays, renew friendships and feel the pulse of the South African Jewish community.

It’s an embattled community that has seen considerable migration and felt intensely the antagonism of the government toward the State of Israel. In addition, with a considerable Muslim population, South Africa is regarded as ground zero of the boycott, divestment and

sanctions movement.

The Jewish community primarily descends from Litvak (Lithuanian and Latvian) Jews who immigrated to the southern part of Africa in the late 19th and early 20th century. At its peak in the 1970s, it was 120,000 strong, making it the eighth largest Jewish community in the world.

Today that number stands at 55,000, according to Wendy Kahn, executive director of the Jewish Board of Deputies based in Johannesburg. Most of the Jewish emigrants have gone to Australia, Canada, Israel, the United States and the United Kingdom.

My youth and early adulthood years in Cape Town were

a halcyon time.

From first grade through 12th, I attended a Jewish school (Herzlia) that was close to where I lived, and my neighborhood was predominantly Jewish. So all the pieces were in place for one’s Jewish identity and love of Zion to emerge proudly and strongly. And they did for me and for many of my contemporaries.

I left South Africa in 1986. I was a reluctant émigré, but the prospect of leading Jewish schools and institutions in Australia and the United States was compelling. For the past 30 years I have resided in the U.S., but the memories of my mother country — of the sights and sounds, of people and places, of food and fragrances coupled with the aesthetic pleasures — remain vivid and undimmed. Always there and always luring.

The concerns of the South Africa Jewish community are well reflected by Milton Shain, professor emeritus in historical studies at the University of Cape Town, author of several books on South African Jewish history and a leading media commentator. He writes, “South African Jews — like all whites — are anxious about the future. Indeed over the last few decades there has been a steady exodus of Jews. Yet, President Cyril Ramaphosa remains a beacon of hope. At the same time, Jews are angered that the ANC [African National Congress] government wishes to downgrade ties with Israel.”

We spent our last Friday evening at the impressive complex of the Cape Town Jewish community. Situated close to the city, it houses the imposing Great Synagogue as well as the South African Jewish Museum, the Cape Town Holocaust and Genocide Center, a Jewish library and a meeting center. We passed through the tight security, and a young woman invited us to affix a blue and white ribbon to our lapel “in support of Israel,” she said, reminding us that Yom Yerushalayim (Jerusalem Day) was in two days.

The synagogue’s rabbi is Osher Feldman, a young Australian married to Sarah, a daughter of Rabbi Yossy Goldman,

doyen of the South African rabbinate. Rabbi Goldman was sent to South Africa in the 1970s by the Lubavitcher Rebbe. He has been the spiritual leader of congregations in Johannesburg since then.

His son-in-law, Rabbi Feldman, has brilliantly resuscitated an ailing community, with sizable crowds now showing up to services, programs and functions. On this particular Shabbat, we enjoyed the monthly “Friday Night Live” service, which featured a distinguished Israeli cantor followed by a lavish Kiddush.

The spacious pews were well filled and the rabbi’s sermon was enthusiastically focused on the upcoming Jerusalem Day. As a poignant addition, he read out the names of congregants who had fought for Israel in her wars from 1948 onward. (In the 1948 War of Independence, the South African contingent of 802 fighters was proportionally the largest from the diaspora.)

The pièce de résistance was the singing of “Hatikvah” by the congregation at the service’s conclusion. The stirring words of Israel’s national anthem filled the stately synagogue. It evoked thoughts and memories for me of occasions in the past when the entire community, to a person, would gather and celebrate Israel’s Independence Day, wave flags and rejoice in the birth of a Jewish state resurrected after 2,000 years.

Undoubtedly that still happens, albeit in a diminished community that’s fewer in number but still resilient, active and steadfast to the traditions of the past. It’s a testimony to the unflinching Zionism of the community, first brought to the shores of the country by Jewish souls more than 100 years ago. ■

and I too have experienced the intolerance of the left. I support AIPAC, and I try to understand the conflict from the Israeli vantage point, not my American one.

I think Palestinian intransigence is the main obstacle to resolving the painful stalemate we call the Occupation. It is beyond me how these views get interpreted by progressives as “supporting the Occupation” or not caring about the suffering of Palestinians.

Those of us who identify as progressives and Zionists feel muzzled here in the Bay Area. We are routinely met with judgment and often with hostile pushback. I would urge those on the left who value truth and critical thinking to listen more and leap to conclusions less.

MALKA WEITMAN | BERKELEY

Dems who demonize Israel

News editor Dan Pine should be commended for his detailed and substantive report regarding the California Democratic state convention

held May 31 to June 2 in San Francisco (“Activists at convention spar over resolutions affecting Israel,” June 14).

The convention clearly reflected the glaring division within the Democratic Party between the forces aimed at demonizing Israel and those of the old school who feel that defending Israel is crucially important for the future of the Jewish people.

Fortunately, the pro-Israeli camp, by procedural maneuvering and quick thinking, managed to win the battle this time. But the war is far from over.

The anti-Israel resolutions may sound as mere stand-alone concerns for the rights of the Palestinians facing discrimination, oppression and other evils committed by the Jewish state. But there is always an elephant in the anti-Israeli halls where Israel is dehumanized and lied about, and the name of this elephant is anti-Semitism.

No wonder that the Anti-Defamation League, whose prime mission is fighting hate and

bigotry like anti-Semitism, was vocal against the anti-Israeli resolutions at the Democratic convention.

Distorting historic facts, blaming Jews for the fate of their neighbors and absolving aggressors from any responsibility for their attacks are equally anti-Semitic, whether they are cast at the Jewish state or the Jews as people; it is impossible to decouple vilifying Israel from vilifying Jews.

Democratic leaders, from the Congress to local officers, together with the Jewish establishment should recognize the words of one pro-Israel activist, quoted by Mr. Pine: “There is a hostile discourse in the water of the progressive movement ... There is a flood coming.” And the flood may wash away a lot of traditionally loyal Jewish votes.

VLADIMIR KAPLAN | SAN MATEO

Flag debate marches on

Lois Pearlman argued in a letter to J. that it is

“insensitive” to carry an Israeli flag, even one made into a multi-colored pride flag, at the Dyke March (Letters, June 14). Her reason is that it might offend people who hate Israel.

But everything Jewish offends anti-Semites; everything about Israel offends those who deny our right to a homeland.

Pearlman’s position is that Israel-hatred is somehow legitimate and that Israel-haters have a right to be seen and heard, but that Israel supporters do not.

It would seem that, to Pearlman, supporting Israel is just bad manners.

In the same spirit, I assume that Lois Pearlman will demand that the dykes not march at all because it will offend homophobes.

Of course she won’t, because Pearlman thinks there is something wrong with homophobia. But she apparently finds Israel-hatred legitimate and appropriate. It isn’t.

JACK KESSLER | SAN FRANCISCO

Israel, Africa and Tikkun Olam

LOCAL VOICE | SHLOMI KOFMAN

In 1956, Golda Meir was appointed as Israel's second foreign minister. To the surprise of many in the Foreign Ministry, she very quickly decided to travel to Africa to build friendships with nearby countries. This is what she wrote in her autobiography:

"We couldn't offer Africa money or arms, but on the other hand, we were free of the taint of the colonial exploiters because all that we wanted from Africa was friendship. Let me at once anticipate the cynics. Did we go into Africa because we wanted votes at the United Nations? Yes, of course ... But it was far from being the most important motive ... The main reason for our African 'Adventure' was that we had something we wanted to pass on to nations that were even younger and less experienced than ourselves."

Readers may be surprised, but the concept of tikkun olam, repairing the world, goes back to Israel's very early days. Yes, friendship and the concept of tikkun olam, which began this long-lasting connection to Africa, continues on until this very day.

For decades, Israeli researchers, scholars and experts in disciplines such as water, irrigation and agriculture travelled to different countries in Africa to continue Golda's vision and assist those who may need it. Thousands of African professionals in different areas have been trained in Israel in various fields with one main goal: to help others.

This wide-ranging program has been managed for more than 60 years through a small department within the Foreign Ministry called MASHAV — the Agency for International Development Cooperation. This department has managed hundreds of training sessions not only across Africa but around the globe. It has brought thousands of experts to Israel to be trained in professional centers, each focusing on one of four main sectors: education, agriculture and water, management or medicine.

Since its establishment, MASHAV has trained close to 270,000 participants from approximately 132 countries and has developed hundreds of aid projects worldwide.

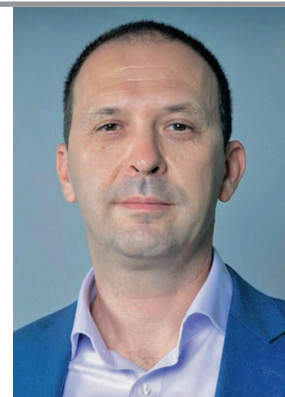
Internally, Israel has more than 40,000 different nonprofits working in various areas — educating those with limited access to schools, working with disadvantaged populations, taking care of Holocaust survivors and the elderly, fostering abandoned animals, etc. All of this comes from a country of only 9 million people, roughly the population size of New York City.

Many of the nonprofit names are well known, such as IsraAid, Save a Child's Heart or Desert Stars. These are only a few among thousands that work to promote dialogue between Jews and Arabs, help educate about and defend LGBTQ rights, assist children with special needs and many more. All these organizations and people do incredible work

to make Israeli society better.

I had the privilege to witness the work of one of these amazing organizations this past January when I accompanied a group of rabbis to Aleh Negev, a rehabilitation village for disabled children and adults in southern Israel. The aim is to empower those with disabilities so they can feel confident and independent wherever they may go in life. While there, we took an intensive look into the advanced and innovative medical, educational and rehabilitative care given to those with disabilities. They have everything from hydrotherapy and art therapy to communication classes and more. The work being done there is phenomenally heartwarming.

The story of Israel making the world a better place is a lesser known story. Although a few organizations and nonprofits were briefly mentioned, I urge you to explore all the wonderful Israeli organizations, nonprofits and people working to make Israel, and ultimately the world, a better place. ■



Shlomi Kofman has been Israel's S.F.-based consul general to the Pacific Northwest since August 2017. A diplomat for more than 20 years, he was born in the Soviet republic of Georgia and made aliyah at age 9.

Putting the 'Jewish' back into Jewish organizations

VIEWPOINT | DAVID CYGIELMAN

Since its inception, Moishe House has always been engaged in Jewish work, but it has only been within the past five years that we have transitioned into a Jewish organization.

Growing up, my context for Jewish learning and literacy revolved around only two purposes: Either it was a means to accomplish a specific goal, such as the b'nai mitzvah, or it was a mechanism to become more religiously observant. This was my Jewish context and reality. Since I have never had a desire to increase my observance and looked at my bar mitzvah as a memorization program, I never felt a reason to Jewishly learn. Even in the creation of Moishe House, when it was time to ensure there was strong Jewish content, we outsourced it to a rabbi. If the goal is to do Jewish work and provide Jewish programming, this model works just fine. But if the goal is to be a Jewish organization, it falls very short.

My shift in thinking and action began in separate conversations with two prominent philanthropists and businessmen. In each conversation, we got to the topic of why we do this work. For me, it has always been my connection with my family and the Jewish people. Spending every Sunday with my grandparents, hearing their stories of surviving the Holocaust, knowing my dad was born in a displaced persons camp and having it instilled in me that my duty as a Jew is to keep our heritage alive, I have always felt a deep connection. My connection grew in the summer of 1997 during my 10 weeks in Israel and continued on through college. For these two leaders, their deep connection did not develop in childhood, but rather, later in life; it came through Jewish learning, thought and, eventually, literacy. The connection was not lost on me that these two leaders, for whom I have great admiration, started by learning one-on-one with a teacher. They shared with me how they have

become better parents, husbands, businessmen and philanthropists through Jewish text. No tests. No final exams. No end goal. Just the simple notion that because Judaism has so much to teach us through its thousands of years of history and evolution that by continuing to learn, we will become better informed on how to be better human beings.

For these two individuals, hiring a teacher was a simple thing. But for me, it would have been cost prohibitive. Thankfully, the board of directors at Moishe House and one of these two philanthropists decided to support me in finding a teacher. It has been the greatest gift.

What started as a once-a-month lesson to learn basic Jewish vocabulary several years ago has evolved into a weekly session. While I get tremendous benefit from the learning, the real beneficiary is Moishe House. More than an organization serving the Jewish community, we have evolved into a Jewish organization. By capturing 2,000-plus years of wisdom, we are making much better decisions than if we simply applied data from the past decade. The Jewish people have been struggling through the same issues of leadership, combating anti-Semitism, family structures, spirituality and all the rest since Abraham and Sarah.

Today, at Moishe House, when we work to build an inclusive environment, it is not enough to just look at studies of millennials and Generation Z. We are also diving into the impact and strategy behind Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah, who opened the doors to the academy in Yavneh, and Rabbi Gamliel, who eventually followed suit. When we talk about the importance of work-life balance and the value of being a good parent, wife, husband or the importance of proper succession planning, we turn to Harvard Business Review case studies but also to the

Book of Samuel.

Once I understood that it is not about how much Jewish knowledge is stored in one's vessel but rather, that Jewish learning and literacy are a part of who we are and how we build a Jewish organization, I recognized it couldn't stop with just me. We now provide one-on-one Jewish learning to every staff member of Moishe House and in 2019, we extended this gift to the board of directors. It is not a "nice" thing — it is a necessary one that is critical to the work we are doing. To be a Jewish organization, we must utilize Jewish thought and wisdom in how we make decisions, in what direction we go and in how we best serve one another.

If we are serious about building Judaism and Jewish life, then we must unlock the thousands of years of wisdom and guidance in a way that is accessible, consistent and enriching, and which serves as a guide for the leaders of our Jewish community. It cannot be outsourced only to the clergy and Jewish educators. We need to adopt this model for bringing Jewish literacy and wisdom into all our organizations. If we want a strong, vibrant Jewish community, we need to invest the time and resources to make it a reality. ■



David Cygielman is founder and chief executive officer of Moishe House. He founded the first Moishe House in Oakland in 2006. This essay first appeared at eJewishPhilanthropy.

Thanking the German family to which I owe my life

LOCAL VOICE | ANDREW STRAUS

"After 70 years, our families are finally reunited," Andrea Trippen wrote to my mother four years ago.

Andrea is the granddaughter of Johann Trippen, a man who helped my mother's family flee Hitler and his Nazi regime in 1939. My mother, Marlene, is now one of the last living Jews who ever resided in Rommerskirchen, a small German village about 20 miles from Cologne.

My wife and I spent this Passover in Germany with Andrea, her parents and her son, and with my mother and four of her grandchildren. We were there to honor the late Johann Trippen, a Righteous Gentile, although not recognized as such by Yad Vashem.

My grandfather, Otto Roesberg, was a successful cattle dealer in Rommerskirchen. He had proudly served in the Kaiser's army during World War I. Johann Trippen, who was not Jewish, was a successful farmer in the same town; he was also a lawyer and a leader in his community. Otto and Johann were best friends.

The Roesberg and Levy families (my grandmother's family) had lived in Rommerskirchen and the surrounding villages for generations. For more than a

My grandfather, Otto Roesberg, was a successful cattle dealer in Rommerskirchen. He had proudly served in the Kaiser's army during World War I.

century, Jews had been an integral part of the community: They were shopkeepers and cattle dealers living side by side and doing business with their non-Jewish neighbors. Typical of small towns, the synagogue was located near the town square.

At the end of October 1938, Otto's and Johann's lives changed forever. On Oct. 30, Otto's wife, Erna, died after a short illness. When Otto rose from shiva, he took the train to Stuttgart, home to the closest U.S. consulate, to have his wife's name removed from the family's U.S. immigration visa. He left his children (my mother Marlene, age 7, and her brother, Herman, 11) with relatives.

On Nov. 9, Otto was on his way back home. But Johann got a message to him, warning, "Otto, do not come back to Rommerskirchen! If you do, you will never get out of here." My grandfather never went back to Rommerskirchen again. Johann saved his friend's life — and my mother's in the process.

After getting the message to my grandfather, Johann rushed to Otto's home and boarded up the windows while the synagogue burnt to the ground across the street. He kept the marauding Brown Shirts away from the house, saying, "No one is home. Go somewhere else." After they

left, he found Otto's father-in-law hiding in the hayloft. He put him in the back of his truck, covered him with hay and took him to a train station in a neighboring town where no one would recognize him. On that night, Kristallnacht, Johann Trippen saved at least two lives.

My mother landed in the United States on March 31, 1939, so the anniversary of her arrival often falls during



(From left) Carly Straus, Elana Straus, Hans-Gerd Trippen, and Julia Straus in front of the church where Jakob Trippen celebrated his communion.

Passover. For my family, Passover is a reminder both of the story of her escape from oppression and that many members of the family were not so lucky.

Johann saved other members of my family. Beno Berlin, another relative, was married to a non-Jewish woman, so they thought they would be safe staying in Germany. But by 1944, it was clear they were not safe, and so they went to Johann's farm to find refuge.

By day, Johann hid them in the attic, but when the Nazis came, only a spot in the basement no bigger than a small cupboard was safe. They survived thanks to Johann.

In addition, each week Johann brought food to my grandfather's sister, who had remained in Cologne. Each basket contained a slip of paper: "Next week we will meet you. Please come to us. We will hide you." But my relatives did not want Johann to be in such jeopardy. Of course, they perished.

Johann risked his life and endangered his family to

save members of my family and many others. When Nazis resorted to drafting 15- and 16-year-old boys, Johann pulled local farm boys off the trains, saying "We need these boys to work on the farms, to provide food for the Fatherland," thus saving their lives.

After the war, Johann wrote to his dear friend Otto, asking him to come back to Rommerskirchen. Otto wrote back, saying, "Thanks for inviting me. I have resettled here in the United States, the country that opened its doors to me. I am remarried. I have never worked so hard nor been so happy. I am not coming back. But please do me a favor, don't let anyone in Rommerskirchen know that you heard from me. You were the only one who was good to me and my family."

Over the years they lost touch. Then, five years ago, Josef Wisskirchen, a Rommerskirchen area historian, wrote to my mother to say he was writing a history of the Jews of Rommerskirchen. Their correspondence ultimately led to my reconnecting with the Trippen family.

My mother and Andrea now speak almost every week.

This is truly a unique relationship, a 50-year-old German woman and an 87-year-old German American Jew, the descendant of a Righteous Gentile and a refugee. Andrea visited my parents in October to say goodbye to my father before he died. Getting to know Andrea's family has helped my mother make peace with her past and with Germany.

Two months ago, with Josef's help, we were able to go inside my mother's childhood home. The memories flooded back. Here she had celebrated Passover seders. We went up into the attic and my mother told us, "I remember they smoked and dried sausages here and my brother and I would sneak up and steal a bite ... Our extended family from all of the surrounding villages would be with us most weekends ... My grandmother was Orthodox; I remember tearing toilet paper for her before Shabbat."

As we sat around the Trippen dinner table in Johann's home, Hans-Gerd, Johann's son born after the war, said, "For over 150 years our families have been friends." Seated at Johann's table were the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of both families — 150 years of friendship in spite of Hitler. We were happy to honor Johann's family by attending the first communion of Jakob, the youngest Trippen, at a beautiful, old Catholic church.

I share this story as we watch the rise of nationalism, anti-Semitism and racism around the world, here in the United States, and in Israel, Hungary and Brazil (just to name a few). We live in a world that at times feels like it is going back in history. Meeting the Trippen family and hearing their stories brings me hope in these dark times. ■

ADD YOUR VOICE

J. welcomes your local voice on timely Jewish issues and events of the day. If accepted, submissions are subject to editing. Approximate length: 750 words. Email to editors@jweekly.com.



Rabbi Andrew Straus is the Northwest deputy regional director of J Street. Previously he served as a rabbi at Temple Sinai in Oakland and Peninsula Temple Sholom in Burlingame.

ART

TUESDAY | July 2

"MINDFULNESS MEDITATION IN THE GALLERY"—Steven Tierney leads meditation sessions inspired by works of art from the CJM collection. **Also Aug. 6.** At Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission St., S.F. 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free. theejm.org/programs/524

WEDNESDAY | July 10

"OUTGROWING THE EMPEROR'S OLD CLOTHES"—Robert Conway discusses the influence of Roman art in American civic art. Part of JCCSF Older Adults series. At JCCSF, 3200 California St., S.F. 1-2 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/jccsf-conway

ONGOING

ADDISON-PENZAK JCC
14855 Oka Road, Los Gatos
"Stories of Courage and Resilience"—Exhibit on IsraAid's humanitarian work. Ends July 15. apjcc.org

CONTEMPORARY JEWISH MUSEUM
736 Mission St., S.F.
"Show Me as I Want to Be Seen"—Works by and inspired by French Jewish artists Claude Cahun and Marcel Moore. Ends July 7. "In That Case: Havruta in Contemporary Art, Oxossi Ayofemi and Risa Wechsler"—Collaboration between visual artist and Stanford physicist. Through July 30. "Tonight the World"—Interactive exhibit by Daria Martin explores her survivor grandmother's memories. Through Feb. 9, 2020. theejm.org

JEWISH CALENDAR

SHABBAT

June 28, 2019 | Sivan 25, 5779
Light candles at 8:17 p.m.
Shabbat ends at 9:22 p.m.

July 5, 2019 | Tammuz 2, 5779
Light candles at 8:16 p.m.
Shabbat ends at 9:21 p.m.

July 12, 2019 | Tammuz 9, 5779
Light candles at 8:15 p.m.
Shabbat ends at 9:18 p.m.

TALKS & WORKSHOPS

FRIDAY | June 28

LIMMUD BAY AREA—Weekend Jewish learning retreat features 60 sessions and more than 300 speakers and participants. **Continues Saturday, June 29 and Sunday, June 30.** At Sonoma State University, 1801 E. Cotati Ave., Rohnert Park. \$200 and up. limmudbayarea.org

"PRIDE SHABBAT"—Tyler Gregory, executive director of S.F.-based A Wider Bridge, speaks about the importance of Israel's LGBT community. At Congregation Emanu-El, 2 Lake St., S.F. 5:30 p.m. Free; RSVP required. awiderbridge.org/pride-shabbat-emanu-el

MONDAY | July 1

"WISDOM & WINE"—First of four classes, each paired with a kosher wine and led by Rabbi

Mendel Wolvovsky. Various topics. Mondays through July 22. At Chabad of Sonoma County, 2312 Bethards Drive, Santa Rosa. 7-8:30 p.m. \$50 for series. tinyurl.com/wisdom-wine-sonoma

SUNDAY | July 14

"RUN, HIDE, FIGHT!"—The Santa Clara County Sheriff's office hosts a presentation on what to do when confronted with an active shooter. At Congregation Beth David, 19700 Prospect Rd., Saratoga. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/cbd-shooter

WEDNESDAY | July 17

ANDREW FRAKNOI—Noted astronomer discusses the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing. At Commonwealth Club, 110 the Embarcadero, S.F. 6:30 p.m. \$10-\$40. tinyurl.com/andrew-frak

KIDS & FAMILY

SUNDAY | June 30

FAMILY PICNIC AND BBQ—Face painting, bounce house, bingo. Hosted by Congregation B'nai Shalom. At Concord Community Park, 3501 Cowell Road, Concord. 12-3 p.m. Free; donations welcome. bshalom.org

FLOAT NIGHT POOL PARTY AND BBQ—Inner tubes and other flotation devices allowed, but no water

wings. At Addison-Penzak JCC, 14855 Oka Road, Los Gatos. 4-7 p.m. Free. apjcc.org

THURSDAY | July 18

NEWBORN PLAYDATE—Jewish Baby Network event for babies born January through July. At Congregation Beth Shalom, 301 14th Ave., S.F. 10-11:30 a.m. Free. tinyurl.com/jan-jul-baby



Buckle up: Jewish films ahead

The 39th annual San Francisco Jewish Film Festival kicks off on Thursday, July 18 with a documentary about the origins of the classic musical "Fiddler on the Roof" and continues through Aug. 4 at five main venues. In all, there will be some 65 films and 135 separate screenings. It's the oldest Jewish film festival in the country, and still one of the best. Nah, let's be realistic — it *is* the best.

July 18-28 at Castro Theatre, S.F.; July 25-Aug. 1 at Albany Twin Cinemas, Albany; July 20-25 at CinéArts at Palo Alto Square; Aug. 2-4 at Piedmont Theatre, Oakland; Aug. 2-4 at Smith Rafael Film Center, San Rafael. \$395-\$425 for festival passes. For ticket prices, special events, lineup of guests and the full schedule, visit visit.sffjff.org.

HOLIDAYS & SPIRITUAL

FRIDAY | June 28

YOUNG ADULT SHABBATON—Two-day Sephardic Shabbat experience for young adults includes dinner, Torah readings and walk through

Golden Gate Park. At Congregation Magain David, 351 Fourth Ave., S.F. 6:30 p.m. **Continues Saturday, June 29.** 9 a.m.-7:45 p.m. Free; RSVP required. info@magaindavid.com

Calendar

June 28- July 18

For more listings see jweekly.com/calendar



MUSIC

WEDNESDAY | July 3

KURT HUGET—Veteran Bay Area musician and guitar teacher performs. Part of JCCSF Older Adults series. At JCCSF, 3200 California St., S.F. 1-2 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/jccsf-huget

SATURDAY | July 13

"AN EVENING WITH THE RIC-CARDIS"—Cabaret duo known for their political satire songs performs a benefit for Ner Shalom. At Congregation Ner Shalom, 85 La Plaza, Cotati. 7:30 p.m. \$25-\$35. nershalom.org

BENEFITS & SOCIAL EVENTS

FRIDAY | June 28

"PRIDE SHABBAT, COCKTAILS & TRANS MARCH"—Cheer on participants in the 16th annual San Francisco Trans March, followed by cocktails/mocktails and a joyous service at 7:30 p.m. At Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 290 Dolores St. 6 p.m. Free; RSVP required. shaarzahav.org/pride2019

SATURDAY | June 29

S.F. DYKE MARCH WITH SHA'AR ZAHAV—Cheer on participants in the 27th annual march and hand

out water to keep them going. At Congregation Sha'ar Zahav, 290 Dolores St., S.F. 4 p.m. Free. shaarzahav.org/pride2019

SUNDAY | July 14

FARM TOUR AND WORK PARTY—Take a hands-on tour of Urban Adamah, then volunteer at the urban farm. Ages 12 and up. At Urban Adamah, 1151 Sixth St., Berkeley. Tour 1-2 p.m., work party 2-5 p.m. Free; RSVP required. urbanadamah.org

FILM & TV

THURSDAY | July 18

SFJFF OPENING NIGHT—S.F. Jewish Film Festival opens with documentary "Fiddler: A Miracle of Miracles," about the famed musical and its genesis. Director Max Lewkowicz to appear. Followed by catered, 21-and-over party. Film at Castro Theatre, 429 Castro St., S.F. 6:30 p.m. Party at Contemporary Jewish Museum, 736 Mission St., S.F. 9 p.m. \$30-\$35 for film, \$65-\$75 for both. tinyurl.com/sfjff-fiddler

BOOKS

SUNDAY | July 7

SHELDON GREENE—Author reads from his historical fiction novels, which often feature Jewish themes. At Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis St., S.F. 1:30-3 p.m. Free. jewishlearningworks.org

"THE EMPRESS OF WEEHAWKEN"—Facilitated discussion of Irene Dische's 2005 novel about her family history, told from the perspective of her anti-Semitic German grandmother. At Jewish Community Library, 1835 Ellis St., S.F. 2-3:30 p.m. Free. tinyurl.com/jewishlearningworks-weehawken

THURSDAY | July 11

"HOW SAFE ARE WE?"—Former Secretary of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano talks about her new book with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Anne Kornblut. At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 7 p.m. \$10-\$30. paloaltojcc.org/events/how-safe-are-we

THURSDAY | July 18

"THE CODE"—Margaret O'Mara talks about her new book, subtitled "Silicon Valley and the Remaking of America," with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Anne Kornblut. At Oshman Family JCC, 3921 Fabian Way, Palo Alto. 7 p.m. \$18-\$30. tinyurl.com/code-ofjcc

PART-TIME DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANT

J. The Jewish News of Northern California is a leader in nonprofit journalism and one of the most respected Jewish community media outlets in the country, reaching over 150,000 readers per month via its print edition, website, newsletters, and social media. The Development Assistant will join J. at an exciting moment and play an important role in our efforts to reach the next level. We are seeking a dynamic, passionate, talented individual to help us get there.

The Development Assistant will work with the Development Director providing general administrative support.

Key Job Responsibilities Include:

- Processing donations
- Data entry of donations into Little Green Light, J.'s donor database
- Generating and sending thank you letters for donations
- Helping maintain the donor database

Fundraising Campaigns:

- Work with the Development Director on all aspects of fundraising campaigns including direct mail, eblasts and social media

Ongoing Development Tasks:

- Update development and marketing and PR materials
- Donor research
- Work with the Development Committee and Board

Job Qualifications:

- Ability to work independently as well as in close coordination with others
- Excellent organizational skills with attention to details and accuracy in data entry
- Basic knowledge of Excel, Word and Google docs
- Passion for the mission of J. and nonprofit community journalism.

Desirable Qualifications:

- Previous development experience or an interest in pursuing a career in development
- Some knowledge of the Bay Area Jewish community

This part-time position is available immediately in our San Francisco office. Days and hours negotiable.

To apply, email a cover letter and your resume with **Development Assistant Position** in the subject line to jobs@jweekly.com.

If you have questions about this job, please contact Allison@jweekly.com.



ADVERTISING SALES ACCOUNT MANAGER

J. The Jewish News of Northern California has an opening in our sales department and is seeking an account executive to sell both print and digital advertising. We are one of the most respected community media outlets in the country, reaching over 150,000 readers per month via our print edition, website, email newsletters, and social media.

Having recently taken a major digital leap forward with a redesigned web presence, we are looking for someone with an established record of sales success, preferably with local Bay Area businesses. The Account Manager reports directly to the Publisher and will be joining our team at an exciting and critical moment in our long history, and will play a key role in the transformation of community-based media in the Bay Area. We are seeking a dynamic, passionate, talented individual to contribute to this next chapter. The position is based in our San Francisco Financial District office.

The Account Manager will be responsible for calling on local clients in the Bay Area, with a focus on nonprofits, real estate, food, travel, retail and the arts, with an emphasis on expanding our digital revenue. Experience selling local media is preferred. You will start with an established book of running business. This position can be full or part-time. Compensation is commensurate with experience.

Key Job Responsibilities:

- Identify new potential advertisers and develop marketing strategies to help them reach J.'s audience
- Develop presentations that incorporate digital, email and print products in our suite of marketing opportunities
- Collaborate with our art department on creating ad campaigns
- Work closely with the Publisher on new business development, with a plan and strategy to achieve desired results

Job Qualifications:

- General sales or media sales experience preferred
- Print and digital ad sales experience is a plus
- Strong and persuasive presentation and writing skills
- Excellent interpersonal skills and a commitment to relationship building, internally and externally
- Ability to work independently as well as in close coordination with others
- Passionate commitment to the mission of the organization and nonprofit journalism
- Some knowledge of the Bay Area Jewish community

To apply, email a cover letter and your resume with **Ad Sales Position** in the subject line to jobs@jweekly.com.



Mitzvot on Market Street

The JCC of San Francisco and Congregation Sha'ar Zahav are organizing a big contingent of Jewish marchers for San Francisco's 49th annual LGBT Pride Parade on Sunday, June 30, and so is the Union for Reform Judaism. The JCC group is even offering two VW buses to ride in for those who wouldn't be able to participate otherwise. Make your presence known!

9 a.m. Sunday, June 30. Meet-up locations given with registration. Parade starts at 10:30 a.m. For JCCSF and Sha'ar Zahav info, visit jccsf.org/guide/pride. For URJ, visit tinyurl.com/urj-pride19.

SENIOR LIFE

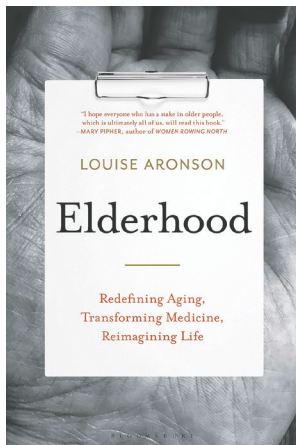
In new book, S.F. doctor says 70 is 70, not 'the new 50'

BOOKS | ROBERT NAGLER MILLER | J. CORRESPONDENT

Almost midway through Dr. Louise Aronson's new book, "Elderhood," the S.F.-based geriatrician-author describes a chance meeting with a kind, thoughtful, older woman who suffered from quite a number of physical, psychosocial and pragmatic problems.

A lack of medical attention, however, was not one of them. Quite the opposite, in fact.

Aronson, an M.D. and professor of medicine at UCSE, soon learned that Eva "had made 30 visits to our medical center" over the past few years: "nine ophthalmology appointments, five visits for radiology studies, four appointments with her lung doctor, four visits to the incontinence clinic, three appointments with her cancer doctor, two emergency department visits, and one appointment each with her cardiologist, a nurse in the oncology clinic and her primary care doctor."



"Older patients often are cared for as if they were just like younger patients."

Louise Aronson

Eva is hardly an isolated case of an older person getting the short end of the stethoscope, as Aronson makes abundantly clear.

There are many reasons for this problem, she said, but one of the greatest, most salient causes is the overall failure to acknowledge that people in the latter part of their lives are experiencing a developmental stage that



And this was not even accounting for Eva's missed appointments, Aronson notes in "Elderhood," part memoir, part meditation on her 25-plus years caring for older patients, and part call for a new mindset and paradigm for elder care.

You don't have to be a Harvard Medical School-trained physician, as Aronson is, to apprehend pretty quickly that Eva (not one of her patients) wasn't getting optimal care. Her well-meaning, often excellent physicians seldom coordinated her treatments, and Eva was taking a number of medications that exacerbated some of her pre-existing conditions.

On top of that, Aronson noted, Eva was severely arthritic and could barely make it up and down the several dozen steps to her rent-controlled apartment in San Francisco, and she was lacking home services that would have made staying in place safer and saner.

is as potent and distinct as childhood and adulthood. Significant physical and cognitive changes take place as people age, Aronson points out in "Elderhood," and the way that an 80-year-old responds to a medication often differs vastly from a 50-year-old's response.

But that reality is not frequently a consideration in hospitals, clinics and doctors' offices across the country.

"Older patients often are cared for as if they were just like younger patients," Aronson writes, noting that "drugs and treatments developed in studies of middle-age adults are given to old patients irrespective of age, other medical conditions, incapacity, or life expectancy."

Improving senior care, Aronson said in a recent interview, "starts with medical training."

With a few exceptions, she said, "students get 12 hours

on older adults" during their medical school training. The upshot of giving short shrift to geriatric medicine is that in a country with a fast-growing aging population and a stagnant-to-declining birth rate, there are "5,000 to 7,500 geriatricians and 15 to 20 times as many pediatricians."

The medical establishment must also confront its own age-related bias, she said, a topic she covers amply in her book. It's not uncommon these days to hear that "70 is the new 50." Yet the truth is that no matter how fabulous a 72-year-old may look on the outside, and how "vital" she may feel, her "kidneys and liver are still 72," Aronson said.

There is a bitter irony in this country in relation to older people, said Aronson. On the one hand, "we often write them off too soon," failing to recognize that many people well into their 80s and 90s can lead active and productive lives, she said. On the other hand, we "don't let them go" when compassionate, life-extending treatment options have been exhausted for those suffering from painful illnesses, she said.

Throughout the book, Aronson, 55, shares her own journeys with aging and writes openly about her family, which she described as "secular but decidedly Jewish in sensibility." She chronicles the decline of her father, the late Dr. Samuel Aronson, who had been an ophthalmologist and researcher, and writes lovingly of the intellectual influences from both her father and her mother, Mary Ann Goldman Aronson, 85, who is descended from an old German and French Jewish family in the Bay Area.

"My mother is a big reader," she said, and before Aronson ever considered medicine as a career, she was a diehard bibliophile, devouring the works of Maxine Hong Kingston, Bharati Mukherjee, John McPhee and Peter Matthiessen, among others.

Aronson also wrote the 2013 short story collection "A History of the Present Illness," which, according to a publisher's blurb, "takes readers into overlooked lives in the neighborhoods, hospitals and nursing homes of San Francisco."

On and off the page, the love that Aronson expresses for her family, which includes her wife, British-born Jane Langridge, a nonprofit professional, extends to the thousands of patients she has served over the years.

"There is a depth of intimacy in our interactions," she said. They give me their affection and their stories ... and they are trusting me with their lives and health. I feel an affinity to them." ■

"Elderhood: Redefining Aging, Transforming Medicine, Reimagining Life" by Louise Aronson (Bloomsbury, 464 pages)

PEOPLE IN THE LATTER PART OF THEIR LIVES ARE EXPERIENCING A DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE THAT IS AS POTENT AND DISTINCT AS CHILDHOOD AND ADULTHOOD.

New study suggests ordering the egg-white omelet

HEALTH | DR. JERRY SALIMAN | SPECIAL TO J.



Dr. Jerry Saliman is a contributing wellness writer for the Peninsula JCC in Foster City. He retired from Kaiser South San Francisco after a 30-year career and is now a volunteer internist at Samaritan House Medical Clinic in San Mateo.

I'm not very adept at separating egg whites from their yolks. At least half of the time, an entire yolk slips right into my mixing bowl.

That's why I was relieved by a statement issued in 2015 by the National Dietary Guidelines for Americans that said, "Cholesterol is not a nutrient of concern for overconsumption."

According to the guidelines, there was "no appreciable relationship between consumption of dietary cholesterol and serum cholesterol." It didn't seem to matter if the egg yolk — the place where all the cholesterol resides — spilled accidentally into my bowl with the rest of the egg.

I thought I was off the hook! That is, until I read the latest research study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association two months ago.

Cardiovascular disease (CVD), such as heart attack and stroke, is the leading cause of death in the United States. The main culprit of CVD is high blood cholesterol that leads to a buildup of plaque in arteries called atherosclerosis. This, in turn, can lead to heart attack, stroke and peripheral vascular disease.

The average egg contains 186 mg of cholesterol, making it a major source of dietary cholesterol.

Previous studies about diet and cholesterol have conflicted, but the March study is much more comprehensive and convincing. It had many more participants and was of a longer duration; consequently the results are more definitive.

The study pooled patient data from almost 30,000 participants from six long-term studies; participants were followed for a median of 17.5 years.

The main finding was that there was a "dose-response" relationship between the number of eggs consumed (dietary cholesterol) and cardiovascular disease, and with total mortality. What was noteworthy about this study was that the connection between eggs and cardiovascular disease remained despite other factors, such as: tobacco use, physical activity, blood pressure, saturated fat consumption, diabetes or body mass index.

One could wonder if the adverse effect of eggs was due to the effect of foods that could be eaten with eggs (such as bacon), but the association persisted. Remarkably, eating a heart-healthy diet, such as the Mediterranean diet or the DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension) was not protective from the adverse effect of eating eggs.

The association of dietary cholesterol with CVD was even stronger in those with a BMI lower than 25. It was also stronger in women than in men.

The average person in the United States consumes three to four eggs per week. In this study, for every half egg consumed per day, cardiovascular disease was found to rise significantly. The presumed cause of this increased risk is thought to be due to higher levels of LDL cholesterol (the "bad" cholesterol).

Everyone responds differently in their response to dietary cholesterol, but after reviewing this study, I would err on the side of caution. The only certain way to learn your own response is to compare your dietary cholesterol intake with your blood cholesterol level.

So what is the actual risk when comparing the infrequent consumers of eggs against people who eat a lot of eggs? The risk is real, but modest. The absolute increase in cardiovascular disease and mortality from eating a diet high in cholesterol and eggs ranged from 1 to 4 percent. Eggs are not toxic, but it's wise to consume them in moderation.

I anticipate the 2020 U.S. dietary guidelines — the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Health and Human Services publish a nutrition report every five years — will reflect the latest research about the association of increased egg consumption with increased CVD and mortality.

Since I enjoy the occasional omelet, this latest study has inspired me to perfect my egg-separating technique. You might want to consider doing the same. Bon appetit! ■



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Treasured letters recall Berkeley 99-year-old's adventurous aunt

PEOPLE | MAYA MIRSKY | J. STAFF

"I had a talk with a few people the other night, who have the stupid attitude of hate towards the Arabs and think of the Jew only in terms of the highest eulogy. I told them that because we criticized, they had no reason to assume that we were disloyal Jews. (That seems to be their attitude.) But that it was because we cared terribly that something fine should come of Palestine."



Marion Shapiro looks through her aunt's documents. (Photo/Maya Mirsky)

The young woman from San Francisco who wrote those words in 1934 — in a letter home from pre-state Israel — was 36 and already a world traveler.

Anne Brodofsky, born in 1898, left her family behind in 1924 to see the world. She taught in Shanghai, traveled through Europe and Japan, and ventured to Palestine.

And all along, she wrote reams of letters to her beloved family. The 1934 letter is one of a trove of documents and photos that Berkeley resident Marion "Mickey" Shapiro, 99, has kept as remnants of a political and social world that has long vanished — and as treasured relics of the adventures of a dear aunt.

"My mother held her up," Shapiro said. "She was a model. I should model myself after my Aunt Anne."

Anne Brodofsky's parents immigrated from Lithuania, first to rural Canada and then, after an older daughter married, to San Francisco. Anne and her brothers and sisters were brought up in a warm, tightly knit family. Their mother saved money so Anne — the baby of the working-class Brodofsky clan — could go to college, though her father was skeptical.

"My grandfather said, what does a *maidel* [girl] want in college?" Shapiro said with a laugh.

Brodofsky graduated from UC Berkeley, but she had a travel itch to scratch, with no funds to do it. "With some girlfriends, they decided that they were going to go around the world," Shapiro said. "But they would have to work."

Brodofsky and her friend Grace set sail for Japan in 1924. They arrived soon after the devastating 1923 earthquake and tsunami, and were eyewitnesses to the aftermath. From there, they went to Shanghai, where Brodofsky taught English at Kwang Hua University.

She ended up staying nine years, a span that covered the tumultuous events surrounding the birth of the Republic of China, the rise of the Communist Party and the government of Chiang Kai-shek, all of which she described in vivid letters home that were typed up and put into binders by her sister Belle for safekeeping.

"Schools are closed; thousands of Chinese workers in ships and factories are on strike; Chinese shops are closed in protest

"My mother held her up. She was a model. I should model myself after my Aunt Anne."

Mickey Shapiro

over the shooting of several students the city is under martial law and foreign destroyers are in the harbor and landing men to maintain order," she wrote in 1925. "Could any venturesome being wish for greater thrills?"

As a teacher, she engaged with her students, argued politics, and in her letters discussed everything from news reports about Hitler to the disgusting nature of racism. "She was very astute," Mickey's daughter Tobie Shapiro said. "Really insightful."

"The tremendous power for good that is in the hands of the Chinese students and from which everything is to be hoped for China, may certainly come to naught if guided by Soviet theories," Brodofsky wrote in 1925. "And that's the tragedy that always lies before a country, whose government is controlled by so many outside influences."

Brodofsky changed her last name to Bradley — not to hide her Jewish heritage but to avoid being taken for a Russian agitator. But the letters weren't all political. Anne also talked about clothes, gossiped about her landlady and described the new and unusual foods she tried.

She inserted a recipe for curry into one of her letters, in which she also mentions a new-to-her ingredient called a prawn ("about 20 times as large as an ordinary shrimp and tastes like a lobster").

After nine years in Shanghai, Anne was ready for something new. So in 1933 she set out for Palestine, writing: "I do not expect to find an ideal people ... but I do feel that the whole experiment is fraught with such great possibilities that I want to be part of it."

In the beginning, she was surprised at how dull it was compared to Shanghai, but slowly the beauty of the landscape and the history seduced her. As she roamed through Jerusalem and trekked through Gaza, she made trenchant observations on everything from the poverty of the Kurdish Jews to the way the British authorities "do everything (at least, that is my impression) to keep the Jews and Arabs at swords points. It is the same type of politics that you find in India."

Her letters also always managed to find the humor in life: "Of course, I always mix up Chinese and Hebrew. I started to say, 'she went.' I began with *ta* and was going on when the teacher said, 'ma se, ta? What is ta?'"

After a year in Jerusalem, during which she did manage to learn Hebrew, Anne headed for home — but characteristically, she went the long way, meeting Grace for a trip



Anne Brodofsky in Shanghai

through Egypt, Turkey, Syria and parts of Europe.

She came back to California in 1934, but her adventures weren't over. Shapiro remembers one family gathering in 1945 at which Anne got an interesting call. "The phone rang and Anne was called to the phone," she said. "And she came back and said, 'Those damn Chinese!'"

The man on the phone was Kuo Ping-Chia, a high-ranking adviser to Chiang Kai-shek and Brodofsky's former student from Shanghai, who was currently in San Francisco. He was calling because he wanted to marry Anne.

"He took a class in English from my aunt," Shapiro explained. "And he developed — this is my interpretation — a monumental crush on her."

So serious was this crush that Kuo, who was 10 years younger than Anne, tracked her down in California and courted her assiduously. They were married in 1947.

"She didn't know what her father would think of this interracial marriage," Shapiro said.

But the family loved the tall, handsome, Harvard-educated Kuo, a diplomat and academic. En masse, they accompanied Anne and Kuo to Mexico for the wedding, as under anti-miscegenation laws the couple could not legally marry in the U.S. at that time.

The remainder of Anne's life was spent in the U.S. She and Kuo tried poultry farming in Northern California (the local industry was known for being a Jewish one) then reverted to academic life in Illinois. But even in America, for Anne, who spoke Mandarin, the influence of her Shanghai years was clear.

"She would say sometimes, 'we Chinese,'" Shapiro said with a laugh. "But she was very Jewish."

Anne lived to be 104 and passed away in 2002, two years before her husband. But her words live on in the cardboard boxes that hold the treasured letters and photos that Shapiro, as the last of her generation, is guarding with hopes that Anne's keen observations will prove useful to scholars of a long-past prewar era. As old as those words are, once the notebooks are opened, Anne's personality and beliefs come through as strongly as ever.

"How can anyone believe that a nation will ever be rebuilt on a foundation of hatreds?" she wrote in 1933 from pre-state Israel to her family in San Francisco. "This will always be a nation of Jews and Arabs — never one or the other." ■



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At Moldaw, a resident and chef share an Egyptian past

When Ginette Lisbonne-Young moved to Moldaw Residences in Palo Alto two years ago, it didn't take long for Zak Elattma to introduce himself.

A chef at the senior living community for nearly 10 years, Elattma had heard their journeys to California both originated some 7,600 miles away in Egypt, albeit at different times and under different circumstances.

"He looked for me," said Lisbonne-Young. "He's such a warm and genuine person, we just immediately connected."

When she was 19, Lisbonne-Young and her family fled Alexandria, a city on Egypt's Mediterranean coast, following a rise in anti-Semitism. But it wasn't a departure without consequences.

"We paid a high price," Lisbonne-Young recalled. "We had to leave my grandparents behind. My grandmother passed away six months later, and my father died within a year of our departure. My father was a staunch American without ever coming to this country."

Forced to leave Egypt virtually penniless, the family made its way to Paris, where they worked with embassies and through official channels to apply for refugee status in the United States. After two years there, Lisbonne-Young, her mother, brother and grandfather received refugee status and immigrated to New York City, where they had relatives. The family settled in the Bronx. Lisbonne-Young picked up the thread of her higher education at Hunter College and eventually married the brother of her



Chef Zak and Ginette Lisbonne-Young (Photo /Laine Bryce).

best friend and raised three children.

"We truly had to start from the bottom of the ladder again and work our way up," she said.

Lisbonne-Young eventually found work with Avianca, a Colombian airline in Manhattan. By that time, she could speak six languages.

"The U.S. is amazing for hardworking people who are determined to climb their way up," she said. "This country really blessed us."

These days, the retired Lisbonne-Young is always on the lookout for Chef Zak in Moldaw's dining room, where he shares greetings and his positive energy with residents as they arrive for dinner.

Though Elattma and Lisbonne-Young have differences in faith (he is Muslim) and circumstance, their relationship (like that of cousins, she said) is one she values deeply.

"There's only admiration between us," she said. "We share this sense of kinship. He's a wonderful man. He really adds an extra bit of sunshine to our community."

For Elattma, whose dream of a better life and educational opportunities for his children brought him to the United States 35 years ago, the feeling is mutual.

"We're like family," he said. "She's a good friend. I feel very happy to see her. I share this happiness with her." ■

Moldaw Residences, a continuing care retirement community, is located on the Taube Koret Campus for Jewish Life in Palo Alto. For details, visit moldaw.org.



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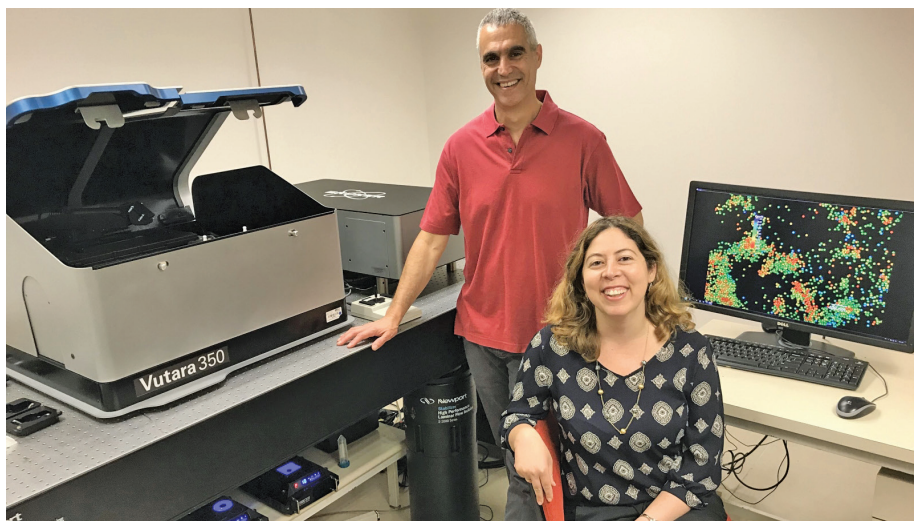
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Prof. Uri Ashery, left, and Dr. Dana Bar-On of Tel Aviv University. (Photo/Courtesy Israel21c)

Israeli team finds biomarkers to detect Parkinson's earlier

HEALTH | ISRAEL21C

An Israeli-British-German study published in the journal *Acta Neuropathologica* has revealed a novel method for detecting a condition that is a hallmark of Parkinson's disease.

Earlier detection of the aggregation of the protein alpha-synuclein could enable more effective treatment for Parkinson's.

"This is a significant step forward in the world of Parkinson's research," said Tel Aviv University professor Uri Ashery, co-author of the study.

The incurable, progressive neurodegenerative disease affects the speech, posture,

"We hope that this research can be implemented for use in the early diagnosis of Parkinson's in patients."

Dana Bar-On

gait, digestion, sleep, impulse control and cognition of an estimated 1 million Americans and 10 million people worldwide.

By the time a patient is diagnosed with Parkinson's, up to 80 percent of the dopaminergic cells in the substantia nigra part of the brain are already dead, possibly due to toxicity resulting from alpha-synuclein aggregation.

"We have developed a new method for tracking early stages of aggregation of alpha-synuclein using super-resolution microscopy and advanced analysis," said Ashery, head of the Sagol School of Neuroscience and Wise Faculty of Life Sciences at Tel Aviv U.

"Together with our collaborators at Cambridge University, who developed a special mouse model for Parkinson's disease,

we were able to detect different stages of the aggregation of this protein," Ashery explained. "We correlated the aggregation with the deteriorating loss of neuronal activity and deficits in the behavior of the mice."

Co-author Dana Bar-On said the new early detection method also can be used to monitor the effects of drugs on alpha-synuclein aggregation.

Researchers from TAU and two institutions in Germany were able to illustrate the effect of a specific drug, anle138b, on this protein aggregation and correlated these results with the normalization of the Parkinson's phenotype in the mice.

"We hope that this research can be implemented for use in the early diagnosis of Parkinson's in patients," said Bar-On, of the Sagol School of Neuroscience. "We're currently working to implement the methods in a minimally invasive manner with Parkinson's patients."

The scientists are planning to expand their research to family members of Parkinson's disease patients.

Said Ashery: "By detecting aggregates using minimally invasive methods in relatives of Parkinson's disease patients, we can provide early detection and intervention and the opportunity to track and treat the disease before symptoms are even detected."

Ashery has led several other groundbreaking studies on neurological diseases. In 2013, his teams identified microRNAs that detrimentally regulate protein levels in the brains of mice with Alzheimer's disease. Four years later, he published a study showing that hyperbaric oxygen treatments may ameliorate symptoms experienced by people with Alzheimer's. ■

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Be cognizant of your fears, but don't be overpowered by them

TORAH | RABBI AMY EILBERG

Sh'lach
Numbers 13:1-15:41
Joshua 2:1-24

The Israelite spies were sent on a sacred mission and they failed spectacularly. Why? Because they let fear overpower them, overwhelming their capacity for nuanced thought, hopefulness and sacred purpose.

In preparation for the Israelites' entry into the Land of Israel, God instructed Moses to send 12 scouts, one leader from each of the tribes, to survey the land of Canaan, to "see what kind of country it is. Are the people who dwell in it strong or weak, few or many? Is the country in which they dwell good or bad? Are the towns they live in open or fortified? Is the soil rich or poor?" (Numbers 13:17-20)

The assignment was to prepare for the possibility that the people of the land would violently resist the Israelites' entry. Would the resistance be manageable or overwhelming? And was the land rich and beautiful enough to be worth the fight?

After a 40-day journey, the scouts returned with a mixed report. The land does indeed flow with milk and honey and its fruit is beautiful, they said, but the people of the land "are powerful and the cities fortified and very large" (Numbers 13:28), including multiple threatening tribes such as the "Anakites" (the giants) and the dreaded Amalekites.

Two of the scouts, Joshua and Caleb, tried to temper the



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others' terrifying report, saying, "Let us by all means go up, and we shall gain possession of it, for we shall surely overcome it" (Numbers 13:30). But this attempted suppression of their fear unleashed an even more frightened reaction among the other 10 spies, who proceeded to spread exaggerated lies about the terrors of the land to all of the Israelites. Panic ensued.

In the end, God declared that none of the people of this generation, except for the faithful Joshua and Caleb, would be permitted to enter the land that they had rejected, based on the spies' report. This generation would have to die out in the desert, and only a new generation would be granted the blessing of entering the land.

How are we to understand the sin of the spies? In their defense, it was completely reasonable for them to evaluate the level of danger the Israelites would face. They had been asked to assess the military realities on the ground, so reporting their findings could not have been considered sinful. Rather, the scouts erred in exaggerating the threats, letting fear consume them and block out the reality of God's promised protection. In panic, they turned away from God, completely losing touch with the divine blessing underlying their mission. Fear overpowered a sense of faith, possibility and connectedness to the divine nature of their journey.

In our lives as well, there are surely times when it is appropriate and prudent to exercise caution before jumping into unknown territory — be it a journey, a new project or a difficult human encounter. Failing to assess risks and thoughtfully prepare for them can be foolhardy. But when the brain's ancient instinct for self-preservation goes unchecked, there is no room for nuanced thought, for weighing multiple possibilities and for letting in faith, hopefulness and love.

The Sefat Emet ("The Language of Truth," translated and interpreted by Arthur Green) cites an ancient midrash: "Nothing is beloved before God like an emissary sent to do a mitzvah who risks his life for the mission to succeed." He then comments that, "We are all emissaries to do mitzvot; we were sent into this world by God in order to fulfill His commandments."

Professor Green writes that this spiritual logic applies not only to mitzvot in the narrow sense. Our "ordinary" pursuits are also infused with the Holy, if only we attend to the sacredness of the work and orient ourselves toward our desire to be of service.

Fear is a powerful force in our psyches. This is for good reason: We depend on realistic fear to protect us from harm. But when fear displaces our other capacities of mind and heart, we become unable to recognize when a challenge that stands before us is compelling and manageable.

We need our fear. But we also need our love, our desire to serve and our sense of sacred possibility to guide us to do the sacred work that is ours to do. ■



"The Grapes of Canaan" by James Tissot, ca. 1900

CELEBRITY JEWS

HERE, COMING, AND BROOKS' FUNNIES

The animated Pixar film "Toy Story 4" opened in theaters last week. Bay Area native Tom Hanks again voices Woody, the cowboy toy who is the star and hero of the whole series. **RANDY NEWMAN**,



Randy Newman

75, wrote the musical score and songs. He has written the music for all four "Toy Story" movies and he won an Oscar in 2011 for a "Toy Story 3" song. Eight screenwriters are credited, including **RASHIDA JONES**, 43, and her writing partner Will McCormack. Jones and McCormack left the project in 2017, explaining later: "We remain enormous fans of [Pixar] films, but it is also a culture where women and people of color do not have an equal creative voice."

The large voice cast includes: **WALLACE SHAWN**, 75, as the voice of Rex, a dinosaur. Shawn now has a regular role on "Young Sheldon" as Dr. Sturgis; **ESTELLE HARRIS**, 91, as Mrs. Potato Head's voice. She's best known as Mrs. Costanza in "Seinfeld"; the late **DON RICKLES** voices Mr. Potato Head. In his memoir, Rickles said that his young grandsons were more impressed by his Mr. Potato Head role than by anything else he ever did. The "Toy Story 4" credits dedicate the film to Rickles; **MEL BROOKS**, 92, as the voice of Melephant Brooks; **CARL REINER**, 97, as the voice of Carl Reineroceros; and **JEFF GARLIN**, 57, as the voice of Buttercup, a unicorn. Is there another film in which three Jewish actors over 90 appear?



Mel Brooks

Brooks was in New York recently for a two-night performance of his show "Mel Brooks on Broadway." The New York Post reports that a Discovery channel executive asked him the "key to longevity." He replied: "Keep on living." In an audience Q&A segment,



Benjamin 'Bugsy' Siegel

Brooks was asked: "Do you wear boxers or briefs?" He replied, "Depends."

HARVEY KEITEL, 80, will play **MEYER LANSKY** (1902-1982) in a bio-pic about the famous Jewish gangster that begins filming in August. Lansky is a familiar screen character. The gangster character Hyman Roth in "The Godfather, Part II" was based on Lansky and he was a prominent character in the film "Bugsy," about gangster **BENJAMIN 'BUGSY' SIEGEL**.

The new film will cover the latter part of Lansky's life and is based, in part, on interviews he gave in 1973 to **ROBERT ROCKAWAY**, now 80. Rockaway is professor emeritus at Tel Aviv University, and the author of "But He Was Good to His Mother: The Lives and Crimes of Jewish Gangsters" (2000). The new film is directed by Robert's son, **EYTAN**, 35ish.

JOSH CHARLES FEST

"The Loudest Voice" is a limited (seven-episode) Showtime series that premieres on June 30. It stars Russell Crowe as the late Roger Ailes, the creator and head of the Fox News Network. He was ousted from Fox in 2016 accusations that he had sexually harassed many female employees. **JOSH CHARLES**, 47, plays Bill Shine, Ailes' long-time top aide who took over Ailes' job only to be ousted in 2017 when lawsuits claimed he abetted Ailes' sexual harassment.

The documentary "Framing Delorean," has been playing in just a smattering of theaters nationwide. But it's available, now, on most pay-per view streaming services. The film is about John Delorean (1925-2005), the auto executive who headed-up the short-lived Delorean car company. Also dramatized is (real life) attorney **HOWARD WEITZMAN**, now 77, who lead the legal team that successfully defended Delorean on charges of cocaine trafficking.

Columnist Nate Bloom, an Oaklander, can be reached at middleoftheroad1@aol.com.

The tale of Goldielox and the tasty Jewish vegan deli pop-up

THE ORGANIC EPICURE | ALIX WALL

Alix Wall is a contributing editor to J. She is also the founder of the Illuminoshi: The Not-So-Secret Society of Bay Area Jewish Food Professionals.



food most of her life. She was “obsessed with vegetables” and started cooking for herself as a teenager; she also became a vegetarian as a teen. (Today she is willing to taste non-vegetarian foods in service to her profession, but she still eats a mostly vegetarian diet.) In college, she threw dinner parties for friends, which sometimes meant baking 10 loaves of challah. They were devoured within minutes, Podair said.

Sometime after leaving her recruiting job, she connected with a personal chef who needed an assistant. Podair learned the ins and outs of cooking for families, and she began cooking privately for clients under the name Kismet Kitchen (kismet-kitchen.com). She later met Sarah Waxman, founder of At the Well, an organization that facilitates Rosh Hodesh women’s circles. Waxman was orga-

If a Jewish deli has no animal products, can it be called a Jewish deli?

Julie Podair clearly thinks the answer to that question is a resounding “yes.” She’s the proprietor of Goldie’s Vegan Deli, a startup that features vegan lox made from carrots — called Goldielox, of course. Currently she sells her food at popups and to a few clients.



Goldielox are made from carrots (Photos/Courtesy Julie Podair)

“I started to make everything vegan because I couldn’t deal with all the Israelis requesting more vegan options. People were freaking out over it. They were so happy.”

Julie Podair

Podair’s story starts like so many others who work in the food industry — in other words, nowhere near it.

Raised in New Jersey and Wisconsin, after college she moved to San Francisco to work in biotech. Even though she excelled in science, she realized this cutting-edge field was not where she wanted to spend her life, and she moved on to a job in the recruiting department of a tech startup. There she learned about hiring and sales and communications, skills that later proved to be helpful for launching a food business.

In the meantime, she was spending half of her day picking out recipes to cook elaborate meals for herself and her boyfriend after she got home.

Podair, 28, has been interested in

nizing regular events and needed a chef.

“I grew my business at these Jewish events,” said Podair. “I had had a bat mitzvah, but this was a whole other type of Judaism that Sarah brought me into.”

Podair noticed that many of those who attended were vegan, and upon further observation, she saw that most of them were Israeli. That’s where she got the idea for the vegan specialty items.

“I started to make everything vegan because I couldn’t deal with all the Israelis requesting more vegan options,” she joked. When she served vegan lox for the first time, “people were freaking out over it. They were so happy.”

While there are those who will never use the words “vegan” and “deli” in the



same sentence, the trend is growing as more people adopt plant-based diets. The Butcher’s Son, a vegan deli in Berkeley, has lines out the door every weekend. It was only a matter of time before someone in this food-obsessed region thought to veganize Jewish deli.

Podair’s menu is compact. What stands out is her lox made from carrots, or Goldielox. While the technique has been around for several years, she experimented until she came up with her own unique recipe (other recipes for it abound on the internet).

Naysayers, hold your tongues until you try it. While very few things can mimic the mouthfeel and taste of silky lox, the carrots make for an incredible stand-in, both

visually and in taste. Roasted whole in salt and then marinated for hours in a mixture that includes liquid smoke, the carrots are completely transformed in flavor and texture.

Podair also makes her own cashew-based cream cheese, pickles, tuna salad (made from hearts of palm and chickpeas), and healthy cookies that are an ode to a black and white. She also makes miso matzah ball soup and offers a celery spritz as a beverage option.

Podair sells her lox at pop-ups and other events (to find out where, follow her at [instagram.com/goldieloxsf](https://www.instagram.com/goldieloxsf)), and she packages it in lunchboxes for the Assembly, a women’s coworking space in the city, as well as for Uber Eats. She is always looking to spread the vegan lox love to more outlets. ■



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This spice from Israel, via Yemen, adds a nice taste



COOKING FAITH KRAMER

Yemen was a center of the spice trade for centuries, so it's no surprise its residents developed a taste for exotic-flavored seasonings — which the Yemenite Jews then brought with them when they immigrated to Israel.

Cumin-accented versions of Yemenite hawajj (“what is needed”) are used in Israel in soups and as rubs for chicken and meat. I’m using it here in a marinade for grilled chicken. There is also a version of hawajj traditionally used for coffee, which provides hints of cinnamon, ginger and other flavors. I’m using it here in a baked custard featuring sweet potato and coconut milk.

For each recipe, I used certified kosher hawajj from Pereg Gourmet, which sells spices and a variety of other products in kosher and other markets and online. You can use Pereg or your preferred brand of hawajj, or see the recipes for easy substitutes.

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

YEMENITE GRILLED CHICKEN

Serves 4-6

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Tbs. Yemenite hawajj soup spice mix (see note) | 3 Tbs. diced onion |
| ½ cup olive oil | 1 Tbs. minced garlic |
| ½ tsp. salt | 3 lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs |
| ½ cup fresh lemon juice | Vegetable oil for grill as needed |

Combine hawajj, oil, salt, juice, onion and garlic in large bowl. Place chicken in marinade, turning to make sure the chicken is coated. Marinate for 1 to 2 hours, turning occasionally. Remove chicken. Place leftover marinade in saucepan and bring to a roiling boil.

Oil your outdoor grill, indoor grill or a grill pan. Heat to medium-high. Grill chicken, turning occasionally and brushing with heated marinade (no need to let cool) as needed until chicken is cooked.

Yemenite chicken kebabs: Cut chicken into 1½-inch chunks. Marinate. Have ready 8 to 10 long skewers. If desired, prep cherry tomatoes and chunks of onions. Thread chicken and vegetables on skewers. Boil marinade and grill as directed above.

NOTE: Sometimes, hawajj is labeled simply “Yemenite spices for soup” or “Israeli spices for soup”. If you can't find it, replace with garam masala or curry powder.

SWEET POTATO AND COCONUT MILK SPICED BRÛLÉE

Serves 6

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1 large orange-fleshed sweet potato | 1 tsp. vanilla extract |
| 13½-oz. can regular coconut milk | 3 large eggs |
| (do not use low fat) | ¼ cup sugar |
| 1 tsp. hawajj spice mix for coffee (see note) | ¾ cup brown sugar |

Steam sweet potato until soft. Peel. Mash. Set aside 1 cup. Save remainder for another use. Bring coconut milk to simmer on low heat in saucepan, stirring often. Add hawajj and vanilla extract and simmer, stirring, 1 minute. Let cool slightly. Stir in 1 cup mashed sweet potato. Purée in food processor or blender (working in batches) until smooth. Return to pot. Set a 9- to 10-inch pie pan flat inside a larger baking dish. Heat oven to 325 degrees. Boil a kettle of water.

In large bowl, whisk eggs with ¼ cup sugar until combined. Slowly drizzle coconut milk mixture into eggs, whisking the entire time. Pour into pie pan. Pull out middle oven rack slightly. Place baking dish with filled pie pan on oven rack. Carefully pour in hot water from kettle into outer baking dish until it reaches about ¾ of the way up the outside of the pie pan. Gently slide rack back into oven and close door. Bake about 50 to 60 minutes or until a knife inserted in center of brûlée comes out mostly clean and the custard is set but still has some jiggle. Carefully remove baking dish with pie pan from oven. Let cool slightly. Carefully remove pie pan. Cover brûlée. Refrigerate 2 to 24 hours.

When ready to serve, sift brown sugar evenly across top of brûlée. Broil in oven until sugar is just browned (or use a kitchen torch). Serve immediately.

NOTE: If hawajj spice for coffee is not available, substitute pumpkin-pie spice mix. ■



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Q&A: Chocolate connoisseur has raised the bar for 25 years

ALIX WALL | FOOD

Jack Epstein is the owner of *Chocolate Covered*, an artisanal chocolate bar boutique in Noe Valley. The store just celebrated its 25th anniversary, a milestone.

J.: You aren't such a chocolate lover yourself. How did you become a chocolate connoisseur?

JACK EPSTEIN: One day in 1994, I was walking down the block and saw a basement store for rent for \$700 a month. I thought there might possibly be a niche for a chocolate store. After Alice Medrich's Cocolat closed here, there was no good chocolate in Noe Valley, and that gave me the inspiration to say 'Let me try to be that chocolate person here.' Two and a half years later, I moved to the current location. That was the year that the craft chocolate movement really started. Either Robert Steinberg or John Scharffenberger came in and sold me their chocolate themselves.

J.: Tell me a bit about your collection.

JE: At any given time, I have over 1,000 unique bars from all over the world. I just started carrying a brand from Poland, we'll see if it sells. I have a craft chocolate bar from Israel called Holy Cacao [with beans sourced from Ecuador and Peru]. I get visitors all the time from local chocolatiers, who spend hundreds of dollars in the name of research. I'm like a library.

I'm also a destination store; I get many chocolate-loving

visitors from around the world who know about me, thanks to the internet. I don't claim to have everything or the best, but what I claim is to have the most good in one place.

J.: Does that explain the success of your business?

JE: I did an event last year where I thanked the "bean to bar" makers. I'm 66. Without them, I'd be living on Social Security in some godforsaken hot place. It's being in the right place at the right time. I've worked 70-hour weeks for 25 years. You have to be committed. I had no choice but to make this work.

J.: What's your background?

JE: I'm from Washington Heights, in Upper Manhattan. My parents were wonderful people who gave me everything. They had a lower-middle-class income, but I lived an upper-middle-class life. I don't know very much about my ancestors but I've been told that back in Russia, there were some rabbis among them who were Cohens.

J.: How did you end up in Noe Valley?

JE: I first followed my brother to L.A. My partner Marilyn and I moved to Noe Valley in 1983. We started by selling clothing, first at festivals. We still have a clothing store a block away, Ocean Front Walkers, that she runs. We also live another block away from the store, so our whole lives are



Jack Epstein with a cyanotype photo of his bar mitzvah imprinted on a metal box. (Photo/Alix Wall)

within these three blocks.

J.: You have an incredible display of metal boxes with cyanotype photos on them. What's the deal with those?

JE: It started as a hobby. I went around and took photos of nearly every street sign in San Francisco and also did many landmarks and famous people and put them on boxes. I also do custom boxes, if people bring me their own photos. I can put any photo on a box. Some people buy boxes without chocolate,

and some buy chocolate without boxes, but many fill boxes with chocolate. Behind the register, I have boxes with my own family members, and this one (gestures) is my bar mitzvah photo. ■

Chocolate Covered is at 4069 24th St., S.F. chocolatecoveredsf.com



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Lifecycles

B'NAI MITZVAH

DINA BERG Daughter of Lisa Joy Rosner and Sheldon Berg, Wednesday, July 3 at Peninsula Sinai Congregation in Foster City.

HARLEY BERG Son of Lisa Joy Rosner and Sheldon Berg, Wednesday, July 3 at Peninsula Sinai Congregation in Foster City.

AMICH BROOKS Daughter of Jocelyn Fabello and Avi Brooks, Saturday, June 29 at Kehilla Community Synagogue in Piedmont.

GABBY DAR Daughter of Dianna and Youval Dar, Saturday, June 29 at Congregation Beth El in Berkeley.

ALIYA DILLICK Daughter of Stephanie and Steven Dillick, Monday, July 1 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

MAYA DILLICK Daughter of Stephanie and Steven Dillick, Monday, July 1 at Congregation Emanu-El in San Francisco.

JORDAN FEUCHTWANG Son of Julie and Ilan Feuchtwang, Saturday, July 6 at Peninsula Temple Sholom in Burlingame.

ELLIOT GOLDSTEIN Son of Angela and David Goldstein, Saturday, June 29 at Congregation B'nai Tikvah in Walnut Creek.

CASSIDY KAPLAN Daughter of Janey and Randy Kaplan, Saturday, July 6 at Congregation Rodef Sholom in San Rafael.

MAYA POTTEBAUM Daughter of Jane and Warren Pottebaum, Saturday, July 6 at Congregation Beth El in Berkeley.

EVAN ROSE Son of Deborah Postal and Scott Rose, Saturday, June 29 at Peninsula Temple Beth El in San Mateo.

ARI STROBER Son of Joanna and Jason Strober, Saturday, June 29 at Congregation Beth Am in Los Altos Hills.

SHAINA ZBRIGER Daughter of Adina and David Zbriger, Saturday, July 13 at Peninsula Temple Sholom in Burlingame.

ISAAC ZUCKER Son of Jennifer Foster and Sam Zucker, Saturday, June 29 at Congregation Kol Emeth in Palo Alto.

ZALMAN ZUCKER Son of Jennifer Foster and Sam Zucker, Saturday, June 29 at Congregation Kol Emeth in Palo Alto.



BIRTHS

Laila Shoshana Rubin was born in Berkeley, CA on May 16, 2019. Her Chinese name is 周吉娜. Daughter to Wendy and Raviv Rubin.

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OBITUARIES

George Rosenkranz, inventor of birth control pill, dies at 102

MARCY OSTER | JTA

George Rosenkranz, a chemist who synthesized the key ingredient in the birth control pill, has died.

Rosenkranz, a Hungary native who fled the Nazis, died June 23 at his home in Atherton, just south of San Francisco. He was 102.

He and two Jewish chemists — Carl Djerassi, a refugee from Austria, and Luis Miramontes — synthesized the progesterone that was to be used in one of the first two combined oral contraceptive pills. Norethindrone, which the three chemists developed in 1951, at first was used as a fertility treatment, only demonstrating its effectiveness for birth control after five years of trials, according to the New York Times. Rosenkranz's team also achieved the first practical synthesis of cortisone, in 1951, according to the Times.

Gyorgy Rosenkranz was born in Budapest on Aug. 20, 1916, the only child of Bertalan and Etel (Weiner) Rosenkranz, a prosperous Jewish couple.

At 17, he enrolled at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, where he studied organic chemistry, earning his doctorate in 1940. With the Nazis threatening all of Europe, he and some other Jewish students set out for Ecuador, but he was stranded in Cuba in December 1941 by the United States' entry into World War II, according to the Times.

After the war he was recruited by Syntex Corporation, a pharmaceutical lab in Mexico. He eventually became chief executive and chairman of Syntex, which grew into a diversified international pharmaceutical and biotechnology company. He wrote hundreds of articles and scientific papers and was named in 150 patents,



George Rosenkranz

and became a Mexican citizen before retiring in 1981.

Rosenkranz was a world-class bridge player and won a dozen North American championships. He contributed to bidding theory and invented the Rosenkranz double and Rosenkranz redouble. He also wrote 15 books on bridge.

In July 1984, Rosenkranz's wife, Edith, also an Austrian refugee and one of Mexico's top bridge players, was kidnapped at gunpoint at the summer North American Bridge Championships in Washington, D.C. She was ransomed for \$1 million. The FBI captured the kidnappers and the money was returned.

Rosenkranz is survived by his wife, two of his three sons, and nine grandchildren. ■

JOSEPH AMBRUS



Joseph was born in Budapest on May 7, 1940. His father was conscripted into the Hungarian Labor Battalions and was later killed during a deportation on Nov. 21, 1944. His mother died of typhoid fever in 1942, and

he was sent into hiding with his maternal grandmother. He and his grandmother were hidden by a Christian family whose home was



protected by the Swiss state. Toward the end of the war, the area was liberated by Russian soldiers.

After the war, Joseph lived in a Jewish orphanage in Buda. He was allowed to visit his grandmother in Pest on weekends. In 1952, she was killed in a car accident, and he went to live alone in her vacant apartment.

Joseph continued going to school and became very physically active and excelled in canoe racing. He left Hungary in 1957 after the revolution, together with five of his older canoeing partners. They ended up in a refugee camp in Gerovo, Yugoslavia, where a Hungarian canoeing coach who had coached in Italy arranged for them to move to a refugee camp in Rome. In 1966, Joseph's friends obtained Canadian visas and immigrated to Canada.

However, Joseph was 16, he was an orphan, and there was no one to give permission for him to leave Italy. The canoeing coach got him a job in a canoeing club house, where he raced and worked for the club while trying to get an appointment with the Canadian Consul in Rome.

After several failed attempts, Joseph took matters into his own hands. He dressed up "as an American in a Hawaiian shirt" and told the receptionist that he was an old friend of the Canadian consul. It turned out that the Canadian consul had canoed for the Lachine Canoe Club in Canada where Joseph's friends were now racing. The consul granted Joseph a Canadian visa that listed him as having Italian citizenship. Joseph was finally able to join his friends in Canada and he continued to train hard for canoe club races.

Eventually, Joseph came to the United States. He worked in construction in Rochester, New York, and Chicago, and then he settled in San Francisco. At first, he sold life insurance and then he went to work in the printing business.

Joseph was married and later divorced. The couple had no children. At the time of Joseph's death, he had no next of kin. However, Joseph had good friends with whom he had worked in the printing business or with whom he canoed or

with whom he hung out and played poker. Joseph was also very dear to the medical staff who were his caregivers.

Joseph was buried at Eternal Home Cemetery in Colma on June 24, 2019 surrounded by friends, his physician and caregivers, congregants of San Francisco Congregations B'nai Emunah and Ner Tamid and the staff of Sinai Memorial Chapel.

To learn more about Joseph's life, visit <https://rememberme.ushmm.org/updates/joseph-ambrus-identified>

ROBERT ERSEPKO

August 30, 1938 - May 29, 2019



Robert Ersepko was born on Aug. 30, 1938 to Gertrude and Edmund Ersepko in San Francisco. As a boy Robert stood out for his dependability and eagerness to help, qualities that would endure throughout his

life. He also had a knack for repair work. At a young age he would assist his parents with work on the house and other projects and became a young handyman. Robert would not shy away from any task.

He graduated from George Washington High School, was called by the United States Army and was assigned to Europe during the height of the Cold War. There he served in the field as an artillery surveyor. He was honorably discharged from the Army and attended San Jose State University. He formed many lifelong friendships while at San Jose State, joined the flying club, and eventually became a pilot.

After graduation Robert became a licensed contractor. A tall, powerfully built man, he was known for incredible feats of strength on job sites. In one case, many decades ago, someone saw him carry a refrigerator strapped to his back up many flights of stairs. Robert had an unstoppable work ethic. He went into business for himself and built by his own hand a thriving garage door installation company. He would work all day and late into the night and always insisted on doing physical work himself.

Robert had a hunger for life and was successful at many interests and businesses. He was an owner of the bar Fox and Hound in Cupertino. He owned a vineyard in Templeton. He was a commercial and residential landlord. Robert loved hunting for new real estate opportunities and buying and selling real estate. He was always dreaming and searching for a new piece of land, someplace new where his horses could roam. He was also a daring motorcyclist, unafraid of riding on California freeways. Later in life his favorite vehicle was a huge red Dually truck, which he maneuvered on narrow San Francisco streets with no problem.

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OBITUARY

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His passion in life was his animals. He owned many horses, a ranch and a team of dogs. He loved caring for them all and insisted on personally picking up the bushels of hay for the horses. Robert lived the values celebrated in his favorite genre of movie: The Western. He was our hero. A rugged individualist, daring, charming, courteous, fearless and unflinching in the defense of his friends and family.

Robert lost his loving wife Pat from cancer at a young age. He is survived by his sisters Evelyn Krimen and Marilyn Ersepke, and his brother Arthur Ersepke; cousin Leonard Martin and wife Kathy; his nephews Robert, Gerald, Edmund, Eric, Tommy, and Randall; and his nieces Elizabeth and Nancy.

And also his beloved close friends: Nancy Burdick, Barry and Rosemarie Mirkin, Nigel Endersby, Keivan Ehsanipour, Grace and Jan Pedersen, Bob and Melinda, Pam Hessey, Eugene Moriguchi, and also Carmen, Francisco, Jocelyn, Paco and Emily who became part of his family and made his last year in life so joyous. And many other friends too numerous to name.

He is also survived by his many horses, his pack of dogs led by a Belgian Malinois named Ziggy... and a vocal cockatoo named Bill.

DOLORES ANNETTE KRUMAN RUDOW

February 9, 1938 - June 13, 2019

Dolores Rudow passed away peacefully on June 13, 2019. Dolores was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to Harry and Minnie Kruman. She was a devoted and loving wife to Fred Rudow for 72 years; beloved mother to Gail Rudow of Burson, California and Mark Rudow (Barbara Elliott)

of Santa Rosa, California; and sister to Jerome Kruman of Boyton Beach, Florida. Dolores was so delighted to watch her granddaughter Zoe Rudow of Oakland, California grow up and become all that she is today.

She is mourned by her extended family of friends whom she played bridge with, tirelessly volunteered with and learned to knit from. She was an avid reader and had a lifelong love of participating in Jewish ritual and community events in her chosen home of San Rafael, California.

Dolores had a long career as a teacher. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Brooklyn College, part of the City University of New York (CUNY). Once in California she received her teaching accreditation at San Fernando Valley State College, now known as California State University, Northridge (CSUN).

The family asks that donations be made to Homeward Bound of Marin, which works to end homelessness through training, housing and hope. <https://hbfofm.org/donate/>

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I've made peace with my kids' clutter, and I'll miss it

PARENTING | JULIE LEVINE



Julie Levine is a Bay Area writer and the editor of the Jewish lifestyle blog Florence and Isabelle. She lives in San Francisco with her husband and two children.

Our kitchen table is not used as a place to gather for meals (that happens elsewhere). Instead it's become a place for the kids to put their things. Currently it's a flute and some sheet music, college brochures, a couple of textbooks, a Spanish test from last week, rough drafts of a final paper, laptops when not in use, a thank-you card waiting to be signed, some permission slips, various computer charger and my daughter's favorite sweater that I promised to take to the dry cleaner because I tried and failed to get a stain out.

The kids like to save all of their old high school notebooks in case they need to refer to them. I've found a shelf in a closet in the kitchen that is full and overflowing. There are so many pencils, Sharpies, rulers, assorted tape and glue, and all kinds of paper in various kitchen cabinets and drawers. One day I'll sort through it all.

I've saved almost all of the kids' books: leisure reading and required school reading. I don't have a system or a methodical way of putting them on the shelves. "The Keeping Quilt" (one of their favorite childhood stories) shares a shelf with "All of a Kind Family," "A Wrinkle in Time" (the first "big" book I read to the kids — it took us an entire summer to get through), "The Odyssey" (which our son read in a freshman English seminar) and "Exit West" (which our daughter read on vacation last year). This grouping becomes its own kind of story — my children's story.

There's the clay pinch pot our son made in middle school — he didn't like it, but I thought it was beautiful and it now sits on my bedside table alongside the macaroni self-portrait he made in elementary school and the Valentine's Day card my daughter drew for me in fourth grade. A beach rock we all liked from a Stinson weekend shares space with these hand-made art treasures.

Marie Kondo says to "keep only the possessions that bring you joy." But so much of the kids "stuff" brings me joy. Sure, I can do without the half-eaten cereal bowls in their room, the socks randomly strewn throughout the house, the plastic lunch container (with some lunch still in it) I find under the seat in my car, the water bottles that seem to live everywhere and the candy wrappers. But I don't mind the kitchen table being used as an everyday catchall, the overflowing notebooks when I open a drawer in the kitchen, the arbitrarily grouped books on our bookshelf, all the art projects.

Then there's the endless pile of clothes on the floor in my daughter's room that seems to grow then shrink then grow again. It used to bother me, but it doesn't anymore; she's off to college soon. The desk that was supposed to be used for homework is filled with birthday cards, souvenirs from trips, a book about Madeleine Albright's pins, a photo of Michelle Obama, hair ties and more.

In our son's room, there are other piles — on his desk, on the floor and on his bookshelves. Among them are star maps and a cool flashlight, a museum brochure, a book about milk, some old graphic novels and lots of books about nature. It's like him: interesting, curious and smart.

Too much order, I am convinced, can squash creativity, and I'd rather my kids be creative than orderly. Besides, soon enough the kitchen table will be free of papers, cords and textbooks. Shelves in the kitchen will empty for other things. Bedrooms will be tidy. I imagine then I'll be ready to donate some books from our own bookshelves, which are almost full to capacity. Maybe when the kids are grown, I'll miss all of their stuff around the house. For now, it's all staying put right where it is, and that's just fine with me. ■

This whole 'adulthood' thing is not for the tender-hearted

THE MATZO CHRONICLES | KAREN GALATZ



Karen Galatz is the author of Muddling through Middle Age, a weekly humor blog. She lives in Berkeley.

As a teenager, I saw the Barbra Streisand movie "The Way We Were" and cried. As the theater lights went up, my mother looked at my tear-streaked face and commented dryly, "You really don't know true sadness yet, do you?"

In that moment, I thought my otherwise kind mother was hard-hearted and unfeeling. But decades later I realized she was speaking the truth. I, a beloved child, the only daughter born years after three sons, was untouched by the harsh realities of the world, unscathed by sickness, poverty or war.

Now I am an adult. I know sickness, anger and cruelty. I also know, although not firsthand, many people who have suffered from poverty, violence and oppression. I have, in sum, become an adult.

I rarely cry at movies anymore. Like most people my age, I have wept at too many funerals to have tears to spare. It's a shame, really. A good movie or book cry is a delight. A simple luxury of youth. One of the pleasures given up along the path to "adulthood."

When my oldest brother, 21 years older than me, died, I could not delete his phone number, address and birthday from my iPhone. At unexpected moments, reminders of his life popped up. A week before his birthday, I got a reminder to send him a card. Then, a week later, the day of his birthday appeared on my calendar — as if I'd somehow forget. Whenever I scrolled through my phone numbers, his would appear, a jagged reminder of the person I so loved, and, in fact, spoke to at least once every single day of my life.

When my second brother died five years later, it was a different matter. The day he passed, I immediately deleted all of his information from my phone. It wasn't that I loved him less. I just needed that sense of finality. He had suffered from cancer for a horribly long time. Now it was over. Delete.

Today, instead of phone numbers, addresses, and anniversary and birthday reminders, my smartphone's calendar notes *yahrzeits*. This is the ultimate form of a Jew's passage to adulthood. Where most people mark the seasons by the traditional spring, summer, fall and winter calendar, I mark

the end of winter and the start of spring by the last of the five familial *yahrzeit* candles I light on April 26.

This whole adulthood thing has taken a toll on my relationships, as well. When I was young, I viewed popularity as a paramount goal. "How many people signed your yearbook?" was a fierce competition among the girls I knew in high school. "How many boys invited you to the prom? And what prom? Junior? Senior?" Friendships were communicated — in the abbreviated language of the yearbook — "I ♥ U4-ever."

Now I know forever doesn't exist. Sometimes it is not even desirable. As a result, I am less willing to tolerate people's bad habits and quirks. If someone's behavior disappoints or if our interests diverge despite many years of friendship, "Adult Me" is willing to say goodbye. I do not cling to the past. I am civil, but I can, dry-eyed, move on.

Thinking about all this brings to mind Pete Seeger's song, "Turn! Turn! Turn!" and its lyrics, which come slightly rearranged but almost verbatim from the Book of Ecclesiastes, albeit the King James version: "To everything (turn, turn, turn) there is a season (turn, turn, turn), And a time to every purpose under heaven..."

But for all this adulthood, I sometimes yearn for the respite of a good, simple, impersonal cry. Ironically, I got one just the other night.

Spoiler alert! My husband and I were watching HBO's "Deadwood: The Movie," and I got all weepy as Al Swearengen, the immoral, moral heart of the popular series-movie died.

Why I found the passing of a murderous saloon-brothel owner and occasional good guy the occasion for my retro "child-like" good cry I cannot tell you. But this I can say: The tears I shed for this fictional character delighted me. I was pleased I could react so simply, so "purely" in the moment. It made me nostalgic for the old days, when tears could be shed for people I didn't know, people who never lived, people I would never mourn. ■

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