

THE
CHRONICLE

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Aviv
The Spring Issue

The Hope That Follows Despair

By Rabbi David Kosak



Spring is a season, but it is more than that. It is a reminder that hope follows despair, that endings bring beginnings, which lead to more endings. At a certain point, with sufficient experience, this ancient, almost trite teaching is felt in the body. In those moments, it moves from cliché into something far more profound. I have a meditation bowl, and when it is struck, it produces a series of wavering notes so that one can feel the crest and trough of sound, almost at the same time. The ups and downs of life. Most of us tend to experience a rising joy when spring comes. The long march of a gray Portland winter begins to fade like a bad dream, and we begin to wonder about next chapters for ourselves. This past winter, when my mother died, I knew that January would never be the same, for we lost my father then also. In this little poem with a peculiar rhyme scheme, I reflect on these themes of permanence and impermanence and connect them to the Passover *seder*.

One of the names for Passover is *Chag HaAviv*, the Festival of Spring. More than most of our holidays, Passover is a reminder that we never stay free, that we all endure unavoidable periods where we feel shackled, but that this is also temporary. Spring puts all of this into perspective; its own mercurial weather patterns don't let us imagine that life is only about the ups (what we hope) or the downs (what we dread). It's the package deal.

Rabbi's Corner

Chag HaAviv

The festival that is Spring,
Isn't it Winter's dreams come knocking
against the last frosted earth
pushing, pushing against all that was
until a profligacy of color
rises, periscope-like, from subterranean darkness?
Flower! Daffodil! Crocus!

The winter when we buried mother, father,
the ones who made our hearts sing—
it seemed like life was locking
itself within death's hearth.
That heavy silence, far from the buzz
of joy, left us without rudder
drifting in grief's sparseness
till once again Spring woke us.

At the bottom of each breath
nothing remains
except the will to rise again.
We'd be forgiven at our lowest
for losing even that urge.

Yet up life rises against death.
This embrace of opposites contains
an impossible reminder, like a Zen
koan, we're more-and-less-than road dust.
Purged, spirit again emerges.

At the long table, where they once sat
cracking matzoh and blessing wine
—itself a contradiction—
we gleaned the lessons of time,
how everything is a circle,
that bondage and freedom intertwine.
From this lean and rich benediction,
we learned to watch for the divine
until we realized we *were* that,
scattered breaths of the universal.

Nothing and Everything

Rabbi's Corner

By Rabbi Eve Posen

Reader discretion advised: this article mentions depression.

Over the last month, many of you have asked me what I did over my sabbatical. The answer is simple: nothing and everything. OK, maybe it's not so simple. Let me explain by way of one of the books my children loved to read when they were smaller, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, by Eric Carle.

On the surface, this is a story about a caterpillar who ate and grew until it underwent its transformation into a beautiful butterfly. But what's the real message behind this classic tale? Is it possible the caterpillar was eating emotionally because its life felt out of control? Was the caterpillar experiencing depression, and the food was a method of self-medicating? Is it a story of the power of stopping to rest so we can change and grow? Maybe the cocoon and metamorphosis are the author's way of accepting change without being in control? Or is the book a commentary on a society that asks us to take note of everything we do every day as a way to prove our worth? I think the answer to all these questions could be yes. But where does my sabbatical come in?

Let's go back to the summer of 2021, the second summer where much was dictated by a pandemic. Late that summer I found myself in an extremely deep depression that had come to a head after months of teetering on the edge. At first, I was like the caterpillar, eating my feelings a little bit at a time, not noticing the toll this behavior was taking. But I continued to forge ahead, pushing myself to keep moving, working, producing. The result was more of the

same; I continued to turn to food and unhealthy habits to push down my feelings. It turns out that, just like the caterpillar, this behavior caused a stomachache as well as a headache, and finally the recognition that things weren't okay.

Over the last 18 months, and in particular during the sabbatical month itself, I have focused on understanding myself and my needs, balancing the work that I love in our community with those needs. My sabbatical gave me the opportunity, for a full month, to make this my purpose instead of just an occasional project to chip away at.

So, what did I do? I'll answer by saying that for most of my life, I have been constantly producing and doing, and it has been exhausting. I went into my sabbatical with the goal of doing "nothing." And I succeeded.

I went into my sabbatical with the goal of doing "nothing." And I succeeded.

On the other hand, I also did "everything" by allowing myself to be present with my family, both here in Portland as well as in Detroit and Chicago. I took



short walks and long walks. I cooked dinners and did our bedtime routine without rushing. I binge-watched shows and went to therapy. I was me. I allowed the world to embrace me and envelop me in its beauty, pain, wonder, and people. Of course it helped that I also turned off my computer and phone.

In the spirit of Purim, I allowed the masks I use to be productive to be taken off and ripped up. In the spirit of Passover, I allowed myself to break out of the narrowness of my own making into the expansiveness of being me.

May we all be blessed to know the joys of nothing and everything simultaneously. To get to know ourselves first, so that when the chrysalis finally opens up, we can show our true, unique, authentic beauty to the world. What did I do on my sabbatical? Nothing and everything.

Springtime at CNS

President's Corner

By Liza Milliner, CNS President

Purim, Peasch and spring, oh my! I feel as if it was just yesterday that I was sitting down to write my acceptance speech for the annual meeting and now March is upon us! You may recall, back in June, I compared my prep work, labor, maintenance, and rewards of my garden to our activities and efforts at Neveh Shalom. I don't know about all the other gardeners out there, but I'm starting to get excited about spring and planning what I'm going to grow. I have my list out from last year of what grew well, and what didn't grow at all, and will soon start my seedlings and ground prep.

At Neveh Shalom, spring is a great time to look back on the first half of our fiscal year. Throughout this past summer we all enjoyed Shabbats on the Plaza, our clergy lead meaningful Shabbat services, and **Brian Suher and Barbara Atlas** led the team in putting together fun themed dinners. We had a great turn out for Back to Shul and High Holiday services. In person programing fully returned and so did each of you! It's been so heartwarming to see so many of you

back in person at events and services.

From January 2022 to January 2023, our membership increased by 24 family units! Our Membership Committee, co-chaired by **Dann Horowitz** and **Alex Menashe**, has been very busy delivering new member care packages and making birthday calls. The goal is to ensure everyone receives a birthday call. Please contact Dann or Alex if you would like to volunteer to make birthday calls. Simultaneously, our Development Committee, chaired by **Raul Kivory**, has raised approximately \$216,000 towards our annual giving program (AGP)! This campaign is extremely important to our congregation as basic membership commitments provide less than 50% of our costs; funds from AGP allow congre-



gants the opportunity to be part of the *kehillah* without the worry of cost.

While I'm still not certain which vegetables I will grow, I do know that the ongoing commitment and efforts of our clergy, staff, and volunteers will continue to grow Neveh Shalom in the second half of our fiscal year, so we will all be able to reap the rewards!

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Upcoming B'nai Mitzvah



Charles Rogson | March 4

Charles Rogson is the son of Ariel and Jennifer Rogson. Charles is a big brother to Benjamin Rogson and is the grandson of Joel and Gail Semler and Mike (z"l) and Miriam Rogson. Charles is in the 7th grade at Portland Jewish Academy. He spends his time studying history, playing video games, and playing with his younger brother. He wants to travel to several countries when he is old enough.



Josiah Binder | March 25

Josiah Irving Binder, named after his late great Uncle Irving, is proud to be Black and Jewish. He enjoys reading about world history, wars, black history, and his ancestry. Josiah has been wrestling since he was three years old but was on the wrestling mat with his big brother since he was five days old. His mom, Cedar, loves him to death; so does his bubbe, Doreen, and his brother, Navene, who was a bar mitzvah here just twelve years ago, and enjoys beating him up with wrestling moves. When he can, Josiah likes to go visit his Grandpa Gilbert and Grandma Linda on the coast. He really loves his cats, x-box, and cooking too.



Yoav Shuall | April 1

Yoav is the son of Keren and Nimrod Shuall, brother to Tamar and Naama, and grandchild of Bella and Eliezer Tal, Ahva Shuall, and Oded Shuall, z"l. He is a 7th grader at the Portland Jewish Academy. Yoav likes to create models from wood and LEGOs and enjoys playing Minecraft with friends.



Noah Ickes | April 22

Noah is the son of Aaron Ickes and Jill Pelavin and is the younger brother to Hannah. He is the grandson of Edward and Arlene Pelavin, Steve & Barb Ickes, and the late Mary Ickes. Noah is a 7th grader at Beaumont Middle School. He enjoys basketball, playing on his Xbox, and traveling.



Sarina Oved | April 29

Sarina Oved is the daughter of David and Beverly Oved, older sister to Jo and Jayne Oved, and granddaughter to Jack and Marilyn Silver, and Pinhas (z"l) and Nina Oved (z"l). Sarina is a 6th grader at Sherwood Middle School. Sarina loves playing clarinet and all things Anime. She also enjoys drawing, video editing, music, and spending time with her friends and family.

The Experience of Awe

By Mel Berwin, Director of Congregational Learning

I recently listened to an interview with Dacher Keltner, professor of Psychology at UC Berkeley and host of the podcast “The Science of Happiness.” He researches human emotions and has just published a book on the science of “awe.”

It turns out that awe is a common human experience that has been shown to boost our immunity and bring us into sync with others—experientially and also physically. Studies show that our nervous system, heartbeat, and breath sync in our own bodies and with other bodies around us when we experience this emotion.

After interviewing thousands of people across the globe, Keltner and his team created a “taxonomy” of awe, which they call the “eight wonders of life.” Interestingly, at the top of those eight wonders, what most commonly leads people around the world to feel awe, is an experience of other people’s “courage, kindness, strength, or overcoming.” Keltner calls this “moral beauty.” The other seven categories, in order, include “collective effervescence,” e.g., gathering energetically with a group of people for a com-

mon cause, nature, music, visual art, spirituality, mortality, and epiphanies.

Keltner himself is not religious, and he demonstrates the many ways that we can seek out experiences of awe in our everyday lives. But he also notes that the best of religious life—honoring the attributes of ancestors, gathering in community, singing, dancing, and focusing on important life-cycle and spiritual moments—is organized around bringing humans together to experience these wonders.

When CNS member and ALIYAH parent **Jordan Mercier** greeted our K-6 families last month in Stampfer Chapel with a soul-stirring drum and chant from the Grand Ronde tradition, I felt the same heart-rending awe as I do when I hear the shofar. We invited Jordan to join us in ALIYAH as part of a program we called “Jewish And...,” to learn about our families who bring more than one tradition, heritage, or identity to their family and connection with Judaism.

Jordan is an educator with the Grand Ronde community. His wife, **Amanda**, is Jewish, and they are raising their kids in both cultures. “We’re busy,” he said, explaining that they participate in holidays, traditions, and education in both their Jewish community and on the Grande Ronde Reservation. Their kids are learning Chinuk Wawa as well as Hebrew.

Jordan shared the stories, crafts, and culture of his community with our ALIYAH families, bringing baskets, musical instruments, and videos. Our students and families could easily relate to many aspects of the Grand Ronde culture, including his people’s deep-rooted connection to their land and their ongoing struggle against oppression.



ALIYAH parent, Jordan Mercier, shares his traditions from The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde

This program was inspired by one of our students. **Adina Shane** is 12th grader this year in our Tichon program and a *Madricha* in our art classes in ALIYAH. She moved to Portland with her family in 2021 and joined CNS. Her dad is Jewish and her mom is Native American. We decided to organize a program to focus on the experience of families who are of dual heritage, in this case, Jewish and Native American. In her part of the presentation, Adina talked about her great-grandmother, a celebrated potter from the Acoma Pueblo community in New Mexico, whose works are displayed in museums around the U.S. Our students got to see this pottery and participate in a pottery-making project with Adina.

This “Jewish And...” program sparked important conversations among our students about heritage and identity, qualifying as an awe-inspiring day of learning and connection. I look forward to bringing the idea of “awe” into more of our conversations with our youth so we all can bring our attention to those experiences within the walls of our Jewish community and beyond.



12th grader Adina Shane sharing her great-grandmother's Pueblo pottery

Resisting the Hate... and Having Fun!

By Sarah Rohr, YAFE Associate

I was 8 years old the first time I attended a protest against the KKK. They were giving speeches at the Capitol of the State of Texas in their white robes, hiding their visages and standing on the steps of the Capitol with a wall of National Guardsmen who were tasked with protecting them from the mass of people who had come to shout down their hateful rhetoric and drown out their verbal bile with soulful songs.

That moment has stayed with me. Along with growing up in a strong Jewish community, it helped to teach me the importance of fighting against hate and advocating for justice.

My Jewish community in Austin, Texas, was at the center of my family's life. We felt safe, yet we were very aware that we resided in a place where hateful people felt comfortable standing on the steps of the Capitol, and where racism has had and still has a very real and tangible cost.

In this backdrop, hearing the Purim story every year was a boon. We'd boo Haman like the protestors I gathered with had booed the KKK. We sounded our dissent out loud and together with Jewish communities worldwide. It was powerful and prepared me for a future with a social justice focus.

This year I am helping to direct the Purim Shpiel along with Cantor Bitton. We have twenty-plus children ranging from K to 12th grade who are involved with the acting and set design. In this way, a whole new generation of Jewish children is rising up to celebrate the bravery of Vashti, Esther, and Mordechai.

Along with the Shpiel, Purim also coincides with our Annual Spring Fundraiser this year.

Preschool children and their siblings can participate in the Young Family Purim Carnival, which was the brainchild of CNS member and Foundation School parent, **Simone Myers**.

"It will be a blast!" Simone says. "We will have games, crafts, face painting, snacks, and even a bouncy house."

"As it is a fundraiser, we are selling tickets to experience these activities. All funds raised will go to our Foundation School to help our preschool grow and meet the needs of our families."

After the carnival, a community dinner will be open for everyone to enjoy. Mid-dinner, at 5:30pm, everyone will be entertained by a costume contest. Kids and adults are invited to enter.

The Shpiel will be at 6:15pm, followed by a moving Mitzvah Moment ask; then we will have our annual Megillah reading.

"We all know the impact the past three years of Covid has had on communal ties, so we are hoping the entire CNS community will support this effort to restore some of that lost connection to our incredible community and to bring the joy of Purim back to life," said **Michelle Caplan**, Assistant Executive Director, who has been leading the charge for the Purim events and fundraiser.

Michelle stated: "Along with the day of event, we are so proud to have offered a Mishloach Manot basket to every member of our Neveh Shalom community. That includes Foundation School families as well. We were able to do this due to the generosity of our Purim Patrons,



who also helped raise the needed funds to help our education programs thrive."

Michelle had the idea of creating a fundraiser while also providing the families with the Purim gift baskets when talking to a friend and colleague, Katie Babin, who ran a similar program at a congregation in Dallas, Texas. "It sounded like the perfect way to engage the whole congregation in a way we have never been able to before. It is an opportunity to let our kehillah know that we value each and every one who we call our community."

As I mentioned at the beginning of the article, I love this holiday. Underneath the play and the fun, the boisterousness and excitement, is a very serious story of confronting hate, using bravery and cunning to combat the worst parts of our human nature. So let us gather this Purim to boo Haman, admire Vashti, bless Esther, celebrate the wisdom of Mordechai, and teach our children as well as remind us adults to speak up, shout out loud, and resist the hate... while having a whole lot of fun.

Learn more about the Purim festivities at nevehshalom.org/purim2023.

Mimouna - Hospitality, Liberation, and Hope

By Cantor Eyal Bitton

Terbah!" This is the greeting you hear expressed enthusiastically by Moroccan Jews at the Mimouna. The Mimouna is a unique and joyous celebration at the conclusion of Pesach observed by Jews from the Maghreb - western North Africa - principally by Moroccans. "*Terbah*," is an Arabic word meaning "may you prosper," a greeting that might well be appreciated by many *StarTrek* fans who have been moved or inspired by Mr. Spock's greeting, "Live long and prosper."

Traditionally, people would go to each other's homes to wish them well, share some time with each other, and eat some *chametz*. ALIYAH and Foundation School educator **Etti Segal**, who was born and raised in Israel to Moroccan parents who made Aliyah, points out that families wouldn't visit each other during Pesach itself, so the Mimouna was the first opportunity to re-engage with one's community.

My father, Albert Bitton, has fond memories of the Mimouna in his hometown of Marrakech, Morocco. He remembers

people coming to his family's open house, where his mother, Nina, had prepared delicious sweets for guests. He nostalgically recalls people coming into the Bitton household calling out, "*Alallah Mimouna, ambarka mas'uda!*" This translates roughly as, "Upon this Mimouna, we bless you with abundance." The evening would then begin with Moroccan mint tea. They'd enjoy various cookies, cakes, other pastries, buttermilk, and the staple of the festive occasion: *mouffetas*.

A mouffeta is a small and simple, yet delicious, dairy-free *crêpe*. It is customary to drizzle some honey, butter, or even powdered sugar over it. **Maya Nissan**, an Israeli educator and CNS member with Moroccan heritage, comments that her children like to top it with Nutella (a modern twist!). My father explains that Arab neighbors would return a Jewish family's flour and dough so that his mother could make bread and other pastries. Etti Segal remarks that Moroccan "traditional cookies are made of tahini or sesame, with almonds and dates, and are served alongside tea with mint leaves. Traditionally, many of the cookies are adorned with marzipan flowers. You'll also find plenty of candy, dried fruits, and nuts." Maya Nissan says that, in addition to all the sweets, one finds "Mahia, a Moroccan alcoholic drink flavored with anise."

My father goes on to explain that guests would stay for a while, talk, and eat. They'd bless each other with that traditional greeting "*Terbah!*" and



Maya Nissan and Etti Segal

then leave to visit another family. People would visit house to house, visiting several families through the course of the evening to celebrate the conclusion of the holiday.

The joy of having pastries after Pesach was particularly pronounced and appreciated because, at the time, Moroccan Jews did not consume sweets, cakes, soft drinks, or even buttermilk during the holiday.

My father underlines the fact that the main part of the Mimouna was not the concluding night of Pesach but the next day. He recounts, "Most of the Jews in Marrakech would go to the Menara Gardens and have a picnic. They'd come in their cars, by taxi, on bicycles, or by *calèche* (horse and carriage)." His father, Nissim, would buy fresh baguettes and the whole family would head out. "We would have baguettes with sardines and my father would have some beer as well. The place was full of Jewish people."



Jabane, a Moroccan sweet often enjoyed during Mimouna

Origins of Mimouna

The first time an outsider noted this custom was in 1792, by the Italian-Jewish traveler, Samuel Romanelli, but no one knows how old the custom really is. As for the origin of the name, there are three common theories. Some say that the name “Mimouna” is in honor of Maimonides’ father, Maimon, who lived in Fez, Morocco. Some believe that the name is derived from the word *mammon*, which means riches or prosperity. Others hold that the name is drawn from the Hebrew word for faith, *Emunah*, the faith that the messianic redemption will occur in the month of Nisan, the month when we celebrate our liberation from bondage.

Mimouna Today

After the Jewish communities of Morocco and neighboring North African countries fled the Maghreb and moved to such places as Montreal, Paris, and Israel, they made sure to preserve the tradition of the Mimouna. Today, in addition to individual Mimouna parties, you will also find large Mimouna events organized at the community level. In addition to the traditional foods and drinks, you’ll find Moroccan decorations (red and gold dominate the color scheme, Etti Segal says) and festive music, sometimes with a live band.

Etti Segal explains, “Mimouna is big and loud. The music is in Arabic or Moroccan, and sometimes people play the darbuka, and then dance and sing. You will see a colorful feast with traditional clothing.” Traditional Moroccan attire consists of a *djellaba* for men and a *kaftan* for women, gold and sparkly fez hats, and *babouches* (Moroccan slippers). The Mimouna table will often include coins and jewels, symbolizing the hope of good fortune for themselves and their guests.

The Mimouna is celebrated most widely in Israel, by Maghrebi and Mizrahi Jews. The largest gathering is in Jerusa-



Menara Gardens in Marrakech where Jews would gather for a picnic after Pesach

lem in the public park *Gan Sacher* where as many as 100,000 Jews gather to celebrate.

My father concludes, “The Mimouna has no religious meaning. It’s just that we Moroccans make any excuse to have a good time!” Indeed, the Mimouna is neither a Biblical nor a rabbinic holiday. It is not associated with any particular liturgy. Yet it does have meaning. As joyous as Pesach may be, it is also a period of deprivation; we are deprived of *chametz*-based foods. As such, the Mimouna is an occasion to celebrate the liberation from that deprivation.

Neveh Shalom's Mimouna Celebration Sunday, April 16, 5-8pm

Everyone is invited to learn about and participate in this traditional Moroccan celebration to end Passover. Enjoy delicious treats (kosher/dairy baked goods), festive crafts, music, dance, and henna. Fun activities for all ages. \$5/per person, \$20/family max.

RSVP to nevehshalom.org/mimouna.

Beyond that, it is a strong community of Jews taking the opportunity to celebrate a joyous moment together, as a community. It is a message to each other that the holiday of liberation, Pesach, is an ongoing celebration. Pesach begins with a powerful and joyous event, the Seder.

Moroccans decided, organically, that it should not simply fade away at sundown on the concluding night but that it should conclude with joy and celebration, with the message of hospitality, liberation, and hope for good fortune.

Maya Nissan contends that an additional value in celebrating the Mimouna in America is that it expands the understanding within the Jewish community of what a Jew is, ethnically. “In America, there is still a concept of a Jew that is limited to being of Eastern European descent. Discovering that there are many different Jews who look different from

each other and have different traditions can help people feel more secure in their own Jewish identity without feeling as though they have to conform to some view that doesn’t fit who they are.”

This year, I am excited that Neveh Shalom will be hosting a community-wide Mimouna celebration. Etti, who is coordinating this event, expresses hopefully, “I would love that the Mimouna will take place at Neveh Shalom every year so that we can expose as many people as possible, Jewish or not, to this beautiful tradition.”

So, to everyone, and in advance, “*Terbah!*” Or as they say in Israel today, “*Tirbahu vetis’adu*” I wish you success and luck!

New CNS Members: Jacob & Sons, and a Culinary Legacy

By Nadine Menashe

If you're looking for hand-sliced smoked fish, perfect plump hamantaschen, or matzah ball soup just like your mom used to make, call up the Jacobs. Jacob & Sons promotes themselves as a "Jewish culinary lifestyle brand," and here at Neveh Shalom, the members behind this new delicatessen have become familiar faces.

Noah and Dori Jacob, along with their two sons, moved to the Portland area at the start of the pandemic and got in touch with Neveh Shalom before they had even packed up their house back in California. Noah called CNS home for much of his childhood before bouncing around to different states as a young adult. The couple met in New York and started their family in the Bay Area but are happy to now be in Portland with Noah's family. Dori admits that it was difficult to acclimate to a new congregation during Covid times, but after connecting with the supportive clergy and

finding a welcoming home for their son, Oscar, in Foundation School, everything just fit. Dori has solidified her niche at CNS as well, serving as a b'nai mitzvah tutor.

The Jacobs had a catering business in the Bay Area, but business dropped off rapidly at the start of the pandemic. With enough money to pay their staff but not themselves, Noah and Dori gifted the business to their staff; the business remains open to this day. Upon their arrival in Portland, Noah started a subscription-based meal delivery program out of their new home. The program grew from 18 families to 100 in a matter of weeks; it featured a different theme and personalized story every week. Noah reminisced on how the meals would bring families together who were separated by the Covid lockdown; they could then reunite over Zoom to share the same meal and discuss the accompanying story. When the delivery program

got too big for their house, they began looking for kitchens, first adopting Beth Israel as a new home and then moving to a factory in Old Town so they could expand their offerings.

The name Jacob & Sons was not only inspired by the Andrew Lloyd Webber song from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*, but also by the couple's vision of creating a legacy for their children that appreciates the delis of the past while at the same time looks towards the future. The business plan for Jacob & Sons was always multi-prong, straddling the line between caterer, manufacturer, and brick-and-mortar deli. Dori and Noah agreed that the "restaurant lifestyle" wasn't conducive to raising a young family and were passionate about offering a more sustainable 9-to-5 job within the food service industry. They pride themselves on their deep business values that are founded in Judaism, offering an equitable experience for their staff with fair pay, benefits, and work-life balance.

With 10,000 square feet at their disposal now, the family is always testing new recipes and gaining inspiration from anywhere they can. Whether it's infusing recipes from Dori's childhood or bringing in classic New York deli vibes, the Jacobs feel that it's important to create a local culture and identity through the food that they make. They're currently hard at work on their kosher *hechshers* and look forward to offering their goods at CNS very soon. Noah and Dori also want to encourage patrons to come to their storefront at 337 NW Broadway, not just to check out their secret menu that is only found in the shop, but to show up for the Old Town Portland that they know as safe and welcoming. And don't worry – there's a parking lot. Head to jacobandsonspdx.com to get started.



Noah, Oscar, Dori, and Reuben Jacob

For 'Officer Rob,' Protecting Neveh Shalom is a Joy, Not Work

By Jenn Director Knudsen

Robert Steele rarely enters the building and yet attends more services, special events and classes – preschool through adult ed – than any member of Congregation Neveh Shalom. Robert, also known by the shul's youngest congregants as "Mr. Robert" or "Officer Rob," is Neveh Shalom's full-time security officer.

Standing at just over 6 feet tall, donning combat-style boots, a thick black jacket, and the utility belt of a law-enforcement officer, Robert, 58, knows his presence is commanding. He uses it and his decades of training to ensure all people entering the building feel safe and secure, which is reassuring to the parents of every young congregant.

How did Robert make his way to Neveh Shalom? As the youngest of four brothers and the son of a career military father, Robert at first hadn't considered following in his dad's armed-forces footsteps, but then at 16 and a junior in high school, Robert fathered a child out of wedlock. The teens' private school

expelled Robert and his girlfriend, who became his first wife.

"I had limited, if any, resources and by joining the Army, that was really the only resource I had," said Robert, who wanted to provide for his very young family. He left town that summer for basic training and then returned home, graduating from Parkrose High School soon thereafter.

The young, growing family experienced tragedy when their third child, Kylie, died only one year after birth. As a result, his marriage collapsed. To combat confusion, depression and uncertainty, Robert still "marched on," he explains, and completed his military career, eventually attaining the rank of First Sergeant.

Upon reentering civilian life, he threw himself into work, much of it physical and revolving around protecting others and enforcing the law. "I can pick up on things that other people can't; I really read certain people," he said. Perhaps that's why he was tapped for Neveh Shalom's detail.



Officer Robert with the Grizzly Bear Pre-K class

On Oct. 27, 2018, 11 congregants were massacred at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. On its heels, Robert got called to Neveh Shalom. Out of town at the time in Fort Benning, Georgia, to attend his son's graduation as an Army Cavalry Scout, he raced back to Portland and headed straight to CNS from the airport. With few exceptions, Robert has been a



Zolly Kahn and Officer Robert

Neveh Shalom constant ever since.

The product of a Jewish mother and Catholic father, Robert considers himself Jewish and his shul post no coincidence. His job "is a way for me to honor my people and those before me and make sure that never happens again, not here," he said, referencing the slayings at Tree of Life.

Although Robert never lets down his guard, he also finds moments of levity with the *kehillah*. He throws in some Yiddish with older congregants and has really endeared himself to the youngest folks.

"I'm a magnet to many kids," he said, and wants them all to feel comfortable around him. "Even if this coat looks scary," Robert says, gesturing to his ballistic vest, "I'm not scary." But sometimes he *is* silly.

"Robert thought of Silly Hat Day," said

Continued on page 19

The 48 Hours That So Define Israel

By Emily Silverman

Sunset in Jerusalem is magic. The sun drops behind the stone walls, kisses the hilltops of the Judean Hills with pinks, oranges, and purples, and as the skyscape fades to deep navy, the world shifts. There is the weekly sunset of Friday evening, as the city slows down and the scent of challah and chicken soup waft through the alleyways. There is the sunset of Yom Kippur, the moment that begins 24 hours of unearthly stillness. The crisp, early sunsets of Chanukah fill the streets with light, laughter, and a sticky sweetness.



Emily, Alma Tsafia, Ori Simcha, Shira Leah, and Ariel Silverman

But there are two particular sunsets that hit just a little differently, one right after the other—Yom haZikaron (Israel's Memorial Day) and Yom haAtzma'ut (Israel's Independence Day). The memorial siren plays at nightfall on the eve of Yom haZikaron. We all hold our collective breath. The siren pierces the soul metaphorically and practically in the same moment: reminiscent of the mother's wail of disbelief and mourning, it is also literally the siren the State uses to notify the public that the country is at war.

The evening siren ends after two minutes, but the collective breath is held for the next 24 hours. We visit graves, hear the second siren, listen to mournful Israeli music on the radio, watch the names of the fallen scroll by on the TV.

As the hours pass, the second sunset approaches. The mood slowly begins to shift. The silence starts to fade, the excitement gently heightening. Communities gather for a "Transition Ceremony." As the sun sets gracefully behind the hills, we tell the closing stories, the final poems, the last few verses of mournful songs for our fallen. The hues of light disappear; as the darkness settles in, the flag rises from half-mast to its rightful place, flying high and proud. The

singing and dancing begin, and it seems never to stop. If yesterday was deferent silence, today is an explosion of joy, blue and white swag, parties, barbecues, music, laughter, and connection. Fireworks erupt from the celebration at Mt. Herzl. Rooftop parties go on all night long. The day is spent outside with family and friends, each group with their own *mangal* (grill): the air is thick with the smell of charcoal and chicken skewers. It's a beautiful and much needed release from the emotion of the day before. Some call it horrific, some call it poignant; either way, there is no denying that these 48 hours of emotional upheaval are just so... Israel.

Here in Portland, the sunsets are just as beautiful, but they just don't carry quite the same weight. More than any other holiday, the observance and celebration of Yom haZikaron and Yom haAtzma'ut feel defined by the collective movement of an entire nation stopping, standing, listening, mourning, transitioning, and celebrating as one—in the same moment, hearing the same siren, the same fireworks, watching the same sunset. For us, it's one of the times we feel the furthest away and yet also the closest to our home country. These are the most nostalgic days of the year.

We listen to the siren and the mournful music streaming on *Galei Tzahal*, the Israeli army radio. We live-stream the official transition ceremony from Har Herzl into our living room. We sing, we dance, we cry at the torch-lighting ceremony, and our Zionist hearts burst with pride and love with every song. We jump up and down waving Israeli flags with our kids, over-enthusiastically singing along with the highly-produced live show. So far from our home, we spend the days of Yom haZikaron and Yom haAtzma'ut tuning in to the soundscape of Israel in any way we can. But the truth is, the observance of these days for us is in all the small ways we remember and connect to Israel throughout the year. It is in the prayer my husband offers each Friday night during kiddush for the safety of the Israeli soldiers. It is in the stories that we tell our children of the army and the friends we have lost. It is in the Israeli nursery rhymes and music we sing with our children, in the Israeli flags we have in our home, the Hebrew language that we speak, and in the Zionism that we proudly teach our children. Yom haZikaron and Yom haAtzma'ut, for us, are the two sides of the coin of our cultural identity, no matter where we are. We are grateful. We are proud. We are Israel.

Member News



Linda Nemer Singer, Irving Potter, and Priscilla Kostiner

Mazel tov to Priscilla Kostiner and Irving Potter on receiving a Milt Carl Way Award presented by B'nai B'rith Camp and Congregation Shaarie Torah. They received this along with Linda Nemer Singer at the community gathering on December 15. Each of these individuals do it "Milt's Way;" they care deeply about the Jewish community and do profound work for numerous organizations. At the awards, each honoree designates a \$1,000 contribution from the evening's proceeds to go to an organization of their choosing, in loving memory of Milt Carl (z"l). Priscilla Kostiner split her designation between Eastside Jewish Commons and the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland's Dignity Grows Fund. Irving Potter and Linda Nemer Singer designated Portland Jewish Academy and Mittleman Jewish Community Center, respectively. Way to go Priscilla and Irv!

Mazel tov to Merridawn Duckler whose play, *Mystery of the Glass Ceiling*, was selected as the winner of this year's Arts & Letters Drama Prize at Georgia College in Milledgeville, GA. The play will be put on at the Birdhouse Theater April 7-8.

Mazel tov to CNS member Susan Greenberg! In honor of School Board Recognition Month, the Beaverton School District honored Susan for her dedication and work on behalf of the community. This is Susan's tenth year on the School Board, representing Zone 1. Visit here to watch their video of recognition: www.facebook.com/BeavertonSchoolDistrict/videos/497431242517379

Yihi Zichram Baruch – Our condolences to CNS members who have recently lost loved ones.

We regret to inform you of the passing of Judith Kosak, z"l on January 2nd in Massachusetts. She was the beloved sister of Michael (Phyllis) Shankman, mother of Deborah (Jeff) Gussoff, Andrew (Jennifer) Kosak and **Rabbi David (Laura) Kosak**. Judith is also survived by countless nieces, grandchildren, and a loving extended family.

We are saddened to inform you of the passing of **Delphine Davis, z"l** on Monday, December 26 at the age of 98. She is remembered by her son Barry (Laura) Davis, daughter Shelley (Jim) Burnham, grandchildren Alicia Brooks, Jason Davis, Zachary Davis, Jocelyn Rho, and Jessica McGuire, and 8 great-grandchildren.

We are saddened to inform you of the passing of **Sander Lipman, z"l** on Wednesday, December 28 in Michigan. He was the beloved husband of Lynn Tarnoff Lipman; father of Dr. Brooke (fiancé Ben Handelsman) Weingarden, and Alexa Lipman; grandfather to Maya Weingarden, and Gavin and Shane Handelsman; brother of Shelley (Stuart, z"l) Schochet and FAYANNE (MITCHELL ZIDEL) KUTTNER; brother-in-law of Cindy (Steven, z"l) Posen and Andee (David) Liberman; **uncle to Rabbi Eve (Duncan Gilman) Posen** and many other nieces and nephews; son of Rabbi Max Lipschitz, z"l and Miriam Lipschitz, z"l. He is also survived by his former son-in-law, Mathew Weingarden, his caregiver, Vicki Litelton, and his faithful canine companion, Ari.

We regret to inform you of the passing of Corey Daniel Felsman-Jaffe, *Leib Daniel Ben Abraham v' Yehudit Sivah* (z"l) on January 1, 2023 at the age of 32 years old. He was the dear nephew of **Bari and Robb Gilbert**; cousin to **Sophia, Ethan, Mickey, and Trevor**; son of Jennifer and Jay Jaffe of Flushing, NY, brother of Samantha (Yaacov) Belsky and Dassist Jaffe; and the oldest grandchild of Marcia Grado and John Grado (z"l) of Jacksonville, FL, and Morton and Carol Greenfield of Boyton Beach, FL.

We regret to inform you of the passing of Victoria Cordova, z"l on January 18th at the age of 81. Born in Seattle, WA, she passed away in Washington, DC where she lived since retiring from the State Department. Victoria is loved and remembered by her sister, Myrna Cordova of Seattle, and cousins Jack Cordova of Seattle and CNS Member **Lee (Sheri) Cordova** here in Portland.

We regret to inform you of the passing of longtime CNS member **Paul Norr, z"l** on January 25, 2023. He was the loving husband of **Helaine Gross**; the father of Aaron (Leanne) Norr; grandfather of Romi Norr; and brother of **Elaine (Edward) Newman** and Susan (Roger, z"l) Sunkle.

Neveh Shalom Happenings

Please enjoy this sampling of what is being offered at Neveh Shalom. The best way to get the latest information is through our weekly eblasts. You can sign up at: news@nevehshalom.org. Please visit the website for links at: nevehshalom.org/calendar.

Sisterhood Interfaith/BIPOC Meetings **Wednesday, March 1, April 5, 7:00pm**

Women of different backgrounds come together to discuss questions of faith and confronting social justice issues. RSVP: smallfryeterp@icloud.com.

Purim Dinner and Festivities **Monday, March 6, 5:00pm**

Join us for a young family carnival (3pm), a family-friendly community dinner, and a shpiel, mitzvah moment, and Megillah reading. More on page 7.

Wise Women Social Brown Bag Lunch **Thursday, March 9, April 20, 12:00pm**

Socialize and empower one another in a casual environment.

Israel360: Sharim (Singing) Together **Thursday, March 9, 7:00pm**

Linoy Yechieli, Young Israeli Fellow at PDX Hillel, will lead us in singing and learning Israeli cornerstone songs through a group sing-along.

Women's Torah Study

Saturday, March 11, April 8, 22, 12:30pm
Join Mel Berwin for an hour of uplifting study and conversation. In-person.

Cooking for Outside In

Sunday, March 12, April 23, 12:00pm
Cook a meal to feed homeless teens. Contact: 8888octopus8888@gmail.com

Wondering Jews: Genealogy 101 Part 2 **Date and time TBA in March/April**

Presentation by Jewish Genealogical Society of Oregon President, Janice Sellers, and Librarian Leora Troper.

Dance Emerge Class

Sunday, March 19, 10:00-11:30am
More info: mcaplan@nevehshalom.org.

Tikkun Olam: Kindness Farm Volunteering **Sunday, March 19, Time TBA**

Learn more and RSVP to Lisa Richmond: lrchmond@nevehshalom.org

Shroud Crowd

Sunday, Mar 19, Apr 23, 2:00-4:00pm
Help create traditional burial clothing

to be used by the Chevra Kavod haMet. Contact: sandyaxel@msn.com.

Sisterhood Board Meetings

Thur, April 27, 7:00pm (No March Meeting)
For details, please contact Michelle limori-Goldenberg: smallfryeterp@icloud.com.

Sisterhood Book Club

4th Monday of the month, 7:00pm

- **3/27** *Proof of Heaven* by Eben Alexander, MD
- **4/24** *The Jewish World of Alexander Hamilton* by Andrew Porwancher

RSVP: dianeandjosh@hotmail.com.

Mimouna Celebration

Sunday, April 16, 5:00-8:00pm

Enjoy a traditional Moroccan celebration to end Pesach, and enjoy festive crafts, treats, music, dance, and henna. Fun activities for all ages. More on pages 8-9.

Yom Hashoah Community Service

Monday, April 17, 7:00pm, Neveh Shalom
A service will take place with the participation of the Oregon Board of Rabbis, Holocaust survivors, and their descendants.

Israel360 – Israel at 75: Identity Crisis **Wednesday, April 19, 7:00pm**

Join Yossi Klein Halevi, author and senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem, to discuss the new Israeli government and the implications for Israel's future and its democracy. *A follow-up to this presentation will be on April 26 with Rabbi Isaak, hosted by Israel360 and Wondering Jews.*

Yom haZikaron: 75 Years of Sanctuary and Sacrifice

Monday, April 24, 7:00pm

Join us for an hour of story, song, and remembrance, commemorating Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror. Organized by CNS, PDX Hillel, and Keruv Levavot.

Pre-Noa Concert Sisterhood Meet Up **Sunday, April 30, 5:15 PM**

RSVP to this dinner to Michelle limori-Goldenberg: smallfryeterp@icloud.com by April 14.

Morning Minyan and Shabbat Services:

Please visit the website for more info: nevehshalom.org/current-services

Morning Minyan

Monday-Friday, 7:15am/Sundays, 9:00am

Kabbalat Shabbat Service **Fridays, 6:15pm**

Kol Shabbat

2nd Fridays, 7:15pm

Lay-led, voices-only service. All are welcome.

Saturday Morning Shabbat Service **Saturdays, 9:30am**

- **Meditation Shabbat, 1st Saturdays**
- **Learner's Shabbat, 4th Saturdays**

Downstairs Minyan Shabbat Service **2nd, 4th, 5th Saturdays, 9:30am**

Youth & Young Families

For more information, please contact Rabbi Eve at: eposen@nevehshalom.org.

Kiddush Club (K-3rd Grade)

1st and 3rd Saturdays, 10:30am
Morah Sarah Rohr and Moreh Gershon Liberman alternate leading Kiddush Club.

Tot Shabbat (Ages 0-5)

1st and 3rd Saturdays, 10:30am
Join young families as we gather together for some Tot Shabbat fun.

4th Fridays Shabbat w/ Rabbi Eve

4th Fridays, 5:15pm
Rabbi Eve leads Shabbat for families (ages 0-10), with singing, a story, and blessings.

Young Family Purim Carnival (ages 0-5)

Monday, March 6, 3:00-5:30pm
Young families are invited for a fun Purim carnival: nevehshalom.org/purim2023.

Family Camp at Camp Solomon Schechter **April 28-30, 2023**

Families join together at Camp CSS to celebrate Shabbat with family friendly services, activities, and games. RSVP at: members.nevehshalom.org/form/family-camp-2023.html



Purim is a joyous holiday that is celebrated by Jews all over the world with feasts, costumes, and festivities. This year, Congregation Neveh Shalom is excited to announce a young families carnival, a delicious family-friendly community dinner with a costume contest, shpiel, and Megillah reading as part of our Purim celebration, all happening on Monday, March 6, beginning with the carnival at 3:00pm.

This event is not only a celebration but is also a fundraiser for Congregation Neveh Shalom. Our education programs are the foundation of our community, so the funds raised

through this event will help ensure that our children receive a top-notch Jewish education.

Finally, we would like to take this opportunity to thank our Purim Patrons who have helped every CNS member and Foundation School family receive a *Mishloach Manot* basket while also helping to raise funds for our education programs. Their generosity and support are truly appreciated and will go a long way in making this Purim celebration a success.

We look forward to celebrating Purim with our community and hope to see you all there!

Todah/Thank You to Our Current Purim Patrons!*

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Continued on page 19

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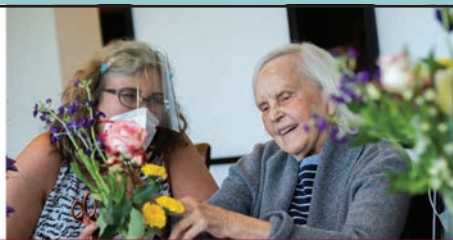


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get well wishes for

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in memory of

Victoria Cordova from Gary & Carolyn Weinstein

YONI SUHER FUND

in honor of

Randy & Yael Suher's 11 grandchildren from Randy & Yael Suher

Officer Robert *Continue from page 11*

Cory Willson, Foundation School director, "as a way to connect with families while still doing his important job of keeping us all safe."

Silly Hat Day, which has featured hats festooned with snow, kitties, crowns, Viking horns, and more, is impromptu and yet another way Robert "ensures that the children are not intimidated by his uniform and know him as a trusted friend," Cory said. That's certainly how **Gabriel Rohr**, 8, considers Robert, whom he calls "trustworthy." "He's my friend, he just is," Gabriel says.

Robert married his second wife, Aubrey, his "everything," he says, 24 years ago, and today is father of seven children and grandfather of two. He treasures time with family, fishing, and playing with his two dogs, Yoko and Zoë.

Robert does not consider his post at Neveh Shalom "work." It's much more than that. He adds, "This is a joy for me."

Sarah Rohr said, as she wrapped up a Sunday morning ALIYAH activity, "I know we're in good hands. Robert is a community and staff member as much as anyone who comes in or works in this building."



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**Thank you to everyone who participated in our hamentaschen baking projects.
This was wonderful community effort and we celebrate all the help!**



Foundation School Fun!



Visit to Kindness Farms





שבת Shevet

Jewish Meditation

**1st, 3rd, & 4th
Saturdays of the month
12:35pm, Stampfer Chapel**

SHEVET is a new meditation group at Neveh Shalom, melding ancient and modern Jewish meditation practices with traditional awareness practices.

Shevet is the Hebrew word for sitting. The same Hebrew root is also found in Shabbat, the day of rest, and the word for returning. As our awareness returns, like Shabbat, we are refreshed and restored.



All are welcome.



Congregation Neveh Shalom | 2900 SW Peaceful Ln, PDX | 503.246.8831

ISRAEL360

Diverse Perspectives on Israel,
Explored in an Atmosphere of Respect

Thursday, March 9, 7:00pm

Sharim (Singing) Together

Join Linoy Yechilei, PDX Hillel's Israel Fellow, for "The Memory Heals"—a full acoustic concert of her original music in Hebrew. Linoy feels, "Music is a way to happiness, to G-d and to myself. My music is a collection of true moments, completely vulnerable and open-hearted to whoever's willing to listen."

This program will be led by Linoy Yechieli, Young Israeli Fellow at PDX Hillel, who is a singer, songwriter, and music therapist.



Wednesday, April 19, 7:00pm

Israel at 75: Identity Crisis

Join Yossi Klein Halevi to discuss the new Israeli government and the implications for Israel's future and its democracy. Yossi Klein Halevi is a senior fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem. Together with Imam Abdullah Antepli of Duke University and Maital Friedman, he co-directs the Institute's Muslim Leadership Initiative (MIL), which teaches emerging young Muslim

American leaders about Judaism, Jewish identity, and Israel. Halevi's 2013 book, *Like Dreamers*, won the Jewish Book Council's Everett Book of the Year Award. His latest book, *Letters to My Palestinian Neighbor*, is a New York Times bestseller. Co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, Congregation Beth Israel, and StandWithUs



For more information and to RSVP, please visit: nevehshalom.org/israel360

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CONGREGATION NEVEH SHALOM'S

Mimouna Celebration

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Sunday, April 16, 5:00-8:00pm

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RSVP to nevehshalom.org/mimouna

יום הזכרון YOM HAZIKARON

Yom haZikaron commemorates
Israel's fallen soldiers and victims
of terror.

Monday, April 24, 7pm

Congregation Neveh Shalom

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