

Wood River Jewish Community

THE SHOFAR Summer 2020



THE SUN VALLEY JEWISH FILM FESTIVAL
IS ON

President's Message

Susan Green

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It may be a cliché to say this but this has been a year like no other! At the WRJC the fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30. We typically begin our “new year” with our annual meeting and our celebratory annual picnic. The first half of the year went as planned...the second half, we, like all of you, were sidelined!

The year 2019-20 was off to a great start. We had a wonderful picnic at the botanical garden. It was great to see so many of you there. Summer is the time we have our biggest census, most of our part timers are back and it is time for renewal of friendships both old and new. The annual Jewish Film Festival followed and that is one of our premier events of the summer as well, with record attendance of WRJC members and the general community as well. We sponsored several outdoor services and they were very well received. High Holidays, Sukkot, Simchat Torah were all celebrated with Rabbi Robbi. We were especially pleased with the participation of our young families. Chanukah party had the biggest attendance in many years and we were a happy crowd!

Just as we were making plans to have our first seder at the Limelight Hotel the corona virus made itself known in Blaine County...and all communal gatherings came to a screeching halt! While we were so disappointed that we could not have our traditional seder in a brand new venue, we quickly made plans to have a seder accessible to all who wanted to gather on Zoom. This was our first Zoom event and it went well. Since March we have held several Shabbat services on Zoom and it is very nice to see one another and to have that one hour of communal prayer and lovely music. We, like everyone else, have had to adapt to changing circumstances and figure out new ways to keep in touch. Our goal is to continue to reinforce the communal and spiritual ties of the WRJC. We are beginning to consider how we might hold services in a socially responsible way and how to include people who might not yet be comfortable in attending in person. Same will be true for Shabbat services this summer which will only be held outdoors. Our office makes it impossible to gather and maintain a proper social distance. Stay tuned as plans evolve.

We are still working on plans to acquire a permanent home. The building committee has gotten us through the permitting process and now will be turning their attention to raising the funds necessary to complete the purchase. As always, if you have any questions or concerns about this, please do not hesitate to call me or Marty Lyon. We will be happy to hear from you.

Finally, we have several long serving board members whose terms are expiring this year. We all need to thank them for their service and the time that they spent on behalf of the WRJC. They are Joanne Mercer, Eileen Prager, Neil Seigel and Scott Rogel. Shortly you will be receiving a new slate of people who are nominated to serve on the board going forward. We will be voting on new board members at our annual meeting in July. As of now we the annual meeting will be on Zoom.

This is my final year as President. While these are challenging times, I feel that the WRJC is in a strong position to meet the challenges that the future holds. We have strong leadership, with a new generation to help us shape that future. As always we value each and every one of you as members of this vibrant community. So again, I want to thank you for the opportunity to be of service. Wishing us all well in the years to come.

Susan Green
President



**A Showcase of Movies, directly to your home.
Each movie will stream for 48 hours for your
convenience and the three movies will be
spaced a few days apart. ENJOY!..**

July 12-13 / July 18-19 / July 23-24

*Film Festival Committee : Linda Cooper, Chair. Jay Cooper. Buzz Coe. Penny Coe. Stan and Harriet Joseph.
Fran Michael . Karen Saks. Ken and Vonnie Molkner. Ellen and Joseph Fastow. Lois Rosen . Bob Safron.*

**Your support this year of our Film Festival is important as we strive to keep our
programs going under the present circumstances.**

Your contribution, large or small, is the key to the Festival's success.

BECOME A FILM FESTIVAL SPONSOR

Producer: \$1,000

Director: \$500

Actor: \$250

Screenwriter: \$100

Supporter: \$50

Donations can be made on line (website www.wrjc.org/donate)
or by mail to **Sun Valley Jewish Film Festival /WRJC**
P.O.Box 837. Ketchum, ID 83340
208-726-1183. wrjc@wrjc.org

Rabbi Robbi Sherwin 's Message

Jewish Life Under COVID: Half Sweet/ Half Sour

Shalom, Y'all!

Touching base with an old friend during the quarantine, we got to talking the way Jews do: bragging about our kids/grandkids, reminiscing about how lucky we have been in our professional and personal lives, and, as we are wont to do: kvetching just a little bit. I was telling her how much I missed being in Idaho and in the mountains; she was missing her mahjongg group's beach trip. It occurred to both of us that Jews all over the world are experiencing a loss at the same times. The loss isn't chalah baking – we have all enjoyed that delicious resurgence (although try as I might, I still can't imitate Judy Teller-Kaye's excellence!). We are all in the same pickle – we are missing serious Jewish pickles.

The commercial brands of Claussen, Best Maid, Mt. Olive, Vlasic (no matter how funny the Groucho Marx imitating bird is), or even Bubbies don't really spear it when you are looking for a true Kosher pickle. There is nothing like the crunch of the half-sour overflowing in the bowl on the table. It's always right there: next to the kraut and the Nathan's or Gold's or Katz's mustard at your favorite deli. If you are really lucky – and you know to ask for it – you can get pickled green tomatoes, as well. But, alas – no one has been able to go to delis, lest we forget. And, there's no heading down to the Lower East Side and to pick them out of barrels. We are bereft.

Many cultures also have pickles, of course, but the ubiquitous Kosher dill and its cousins have been synonymous with our gastronomic history and many of our memories. Cucumbers, or immature pickles, are so Jewish that they are even mentioned in our holy texts, as are the brines they are made in:*

Numbers 11:5

"We (miss) remember the fish we ate in Egypt: also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic." (What? Jews complaining in the wilderness about the food?)

Isaiah 1:8

Daughter Zion is left like a shelter in a vineyard, like a hut in a cucumber field, like a city under siege.

Berakhot 48a:

It is as the popular saying goes: A cucumber can be recognized from its blossoming stage. Similarly, a great person can be recognized even from a young age.



Mishna Yoma 8:3

If he ate and drank in one state of unawareness, he is not obligated to bring more than one sin-offering. But if he ate and performed labor while in one state of unawareness he is obligated for two sin-offerings. If he ate foods unfit for eating, or drank liquids unfit for drinking, or drank fish-brine or pickling liquid, he is not liable.

Shabbat 42b

Rabbi Yehuda says: One may place spices into anything on Shabbat except for a vessel that has in it something containing vinegar or brine of salted fish.

But, to get serious for a moment, there are many things we may be missing, but we have also gained so much as a Jewish community: overflowing classes and Shabbat services; the ability to be with our WRJC friends and family from around the country; great concerts of Jewish musicians from around the world; the opportunity to study with incredible scholars and much, much more. Our "new normal" still means that we are coming together to be and do Jewish. Our synagogue is not closed; only the building is – the heartbeat of who we are is in each and every one of us, and we won't let this virus change the vibrant, fun, devoted community that is the WRJC.

I look forward to seeing you this summer – I arrive in mid-July and am mostly in the Valley through mid-October. Although we have yet to figure out exactly what we will do for Shabbats together, we will have many, many opportunities to learn, to laugh and to enjoy life in this beautiful place.

* Special thanks to Avram Mandell, Director of Tzedek America, for piquing my interest in pickle making and its Jewish history.

For a great article on the Lower East Side Pickle Wars of the 1930s: <https://food52.com/blog/8520-a-history-of-the-lower-east-side-pickle-wars>.

Rabbi Cantor Robbi Sherwin

RABBI ROBBI WILL BE IN TOWN JULY 18 TO AUGUST 22

Rabbi Robbi's Offerings

Rabbi Robbi hopes to bring some very special learning and gathering opportunities to us this summer. Location and more details to be announced.

- **Torah Study:** Thursday evening . More details and location to be announced
- **High Hits of the High Holidays:** A class on prayers, their purpose, history and melodies.
- **Torah Treks:** Hiking with the Torah: reading, discussion and lunch.
- **Midrash & Mahjongg:** Midrashim about strong Jewish women through history and for those who want to stay, mahjongg, if possible.
- **Trope Redux:** Would be very happy to repeat /continue with our Trope class (6-8 sessions.) Trope is the magical way that Torah and Haftarah are sung.
- **Interfaith Project/Class TBD:** Partnering with Interfaith Council for joint class or project offering.
- **Book Club:** We will be reading The Weight of Ink by Rachel Kadish. Winner of the 2017 National Jewish Book Award. Set in London of the 1660s and of the early twenty-first century, *The Weight of Ink* is the interwoven tale of two women of remarkable intellect: Ester Velasquez, an emigrant from Amsterdam who is permitted to scribe for a blind rabbi, just before the plague hits the city; and Helen Watt, an ailing historian with a love of Jewish history.
- **Aleoh Adults Hebrew Class:** 4 modules over a year, taught by Dana Berntson and Rabbi Robbi.
 - \$250 per module. Weekly classes on Hebrew, Prayers, Cantillation/Trope
 - Modules can be taken separately – for example, if you can already decode Hebrew, you can take just the Prayers module, etc.



Pickle Puns by Mark Levin and Mark Jordan:

I'll be pickled pink to be back in Sun Valley this summer!
Have you heard the Smithsonian is renaming Lindburgh's plane "The Spearit of St. Louis?"
Pickledilly Circus is all the rage for delis in London.
The new fall lineup on the Pickleodian channel is awesome.
Let's make a dill!
Did you hear about the pickle-lover who got a nose job? It was a brine-o-plasty.



Half Sour Pickles Recipe

Ingredients

- 5 kirby "pickling" cucumbers or however many you can fit into your jar
- 1/2 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon mustard seeds
- 1/2 teaspoon black peppercorns
- few pieces of fresh dill
- 3 bay leaves
- 6 cloves garlic minced
- 1/4 cup sea salt
- 6 cups water
- additional whole coriander seeds and peppercorns to add on top

Add a grape leaf or oak leaf to keep the pickles crisp and also use it to keep them below the water. Anything above water will rot. Loosely place the jar lid on the jar and leave away from a window or heat source on your counter.

As the cucumbers ferment, CO2 will be created which will

in turn push the seasoned 3.5% saltwater brine out of the jar. Placing the jar in the bowl will catch the brine. You don't tighten the lid because then your cucumbers will ferment AND start to become carbonated.

After 1 to 4 days on the counter, away from the window, your pickles will be ready to be eaten. Once they have reached the right "sourness" for your tastes, tighten the lid completely and place them in the refrigerator. You'll know it's the right amount of sour because you try a little bite. Refrigeration slows down the fermentation process exponentially.

If all of this is too confusing and sounds like too much work, simply refrigerate the pickles with the lid on tightly and they will be ready to eat in 3 to 5 days. They will not be as sour this way. They will be more like marinated cucumbers.

This recipe is based on this website: <https://brooklynfarmgirl.com/2013/07/15/half-sour-pickles-5/>

Congratulations to our Graduates

Zoe Simon graduated from Wood River High School in May and will be attending Princeton University in the fall. Zoe is intending to study Operations Research & Financial Engineering.

Zoe has recently been named as a National Merit Scholar, Coca-Cola Scholar, Presidential Scholar, National AP Scholar, Academic All-American, and her class's Valedictorian.

Besides her studies, Zoe spends a great deal of her time running STEAM On, the equitable education nonprofit that she launched last year to provide underserved and disadvantaged students with free tutoring and mentorship. Zoe also coaches younger students as the captain of her school's debate team, fosters cross-partisan political discourse as president of her Next Generation Politics chapter, leads her school's Model United Nations club, plays Varsity tennis for Wood River High, works to protect and preserve the local ecosystem with the Wood River Land Trust's Student Conservation Council, and promotes civic participation as a fellow for the local Democratic party.

Zoe has been a part of the WRJC since she and her family moved to the Valley in 2006. As far as Zoe's involvement in the Jewish community goes, she has prepared two students for their Bar Mitzvahs and helped with Sunday School classes.

In her free time, Zoe enjoys playing tennis, watching stand-up comedy, and hiking with her dogs.

Zoe Simon is the daughter of Stuart and Tracy Simon and the sister of Jake Simon, who was Bar Mitzvahed in 2017.



Olivia Levitan

Graduated from Seattle Academy, WA and going to Duke University, North Carolina.

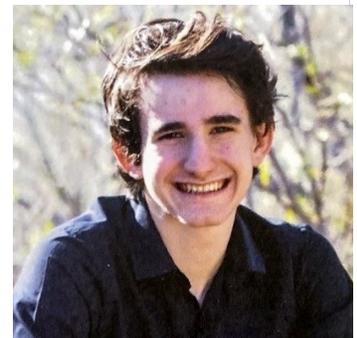
Olivia is the daughter of Dan and Stacey Levitan



Justin Carey

Justin graduated from Arizona Conservatory for Arts and Academics on May 2020. Justin was accepted in the Hergerger Institute for Design and the Arts at Arizona State University and will major in Musical Theater.

Justin is the grandson of Myrna Oliver.



Congratulations to our Graduates

Garrett Rawlings , Dartmouth College class of 2020

I am currently finishing my senior year at Dartmouth College and will graduate on June 14th.

I spent the last four years studying Environmental Engineering and Earth Sciences, training and competing with the Dartmouth Ultimate Frisbee Team, and enjoying the sun from the banks of the Connecticut River in Hanover, NH.

In December, I traveled to Israel with Birthright and spend 10 days exploring the country. What a time! I will be spending the summer in Ketchum and in the fall, I will be returning to campus to pursue a Bachelor of Engineering in Sustainable Design.

Please say "hi" if you see me around!

Garrett is the son of Greg and Enid Rawlings



Danielle Elizabeth Smith

Undergrad: B.S. in Biological Sciences from University of Vermont
Medical school: Robert Larner MD College of Medicine at the University of Vermont.

I graduated with my MD on May 17th, 2020.

I will be moving to Seattle, Wash., for a residency in Emergency Medicine at The University of Washington and Harborview Medical Center.

I will be living in the Wallingford neighborhood near Greenlake and the zoo. I am moving there with my cattle dog mix Sage

Danielle is the daughter of Cindy and Scott Smith.



WRJC STANDS WITH ISRAEL

Jews On The Couch

BUNKER FRANK

As I start this note, it is 40 days and 40 nights (just seems like years) of wandering through Shelter in Place in Washington State with no apparent target date for our wandering to cross into Ketchum. Instead, couch floating, neighborhood walks, catch-up keep-up phoning, reading, and cooking adventures seem to fill the day while the long list of “things I will do if I ever have time” seem to stay on hold.

For each of us, this was likely a Passover like no other. For me, a Zoom to the delightful seder designed by Rabbi Robbi with music and member participation was like a tech miracle. Our family Zoom conferences across three states, three generations, and many traditions led to family seder warmth, gratefully limited to the free 40 minutes plus an extension and, again this year, no one to share the leftover gefilte fish in the fridge. The Dayenu board book sent to the younger sets is now referred by the parents as the gift that keeps giving as rousing renditions can still be heard at odd times. We had a memorable, quarantine highlight sing-a-long with Bim-Bam on YouTube. It is all a wonder that will have a lasting impact.

As time has churned, we observed our daughter and her writing partner work through the quarantine impacted May

5th publication launch of their well-received first book Tiny Imperfections by Alli Frank and Asha Youmans. As scheduled local and national book appearances faded, their maturity, innovation and relentless dedication to re-inventing communication in the book world is impressive. Iconoclast or Chapter 1 books just may have a copy of this fun, quick read to deliver curbside.



When I see you again, we will ask how this arrested time has treated one another and, hopefully, the responses will all be good. Meanwhile, google “These 10 Yiddish words will get you through quarantine” submitted by Ellen Scolnic and Joyce Eisenberg, May 22, The Jerusalem Post and have a laugh or two while updating vocabulary. Covid-19 tsuris! We must use our sekhel and stay well.

CANDICE STARK

Richard and I feel like we dodged a bullet with the virus. We know many people here in the Valley that were seriously taken down and, as I hear from more friends, we’re finding that even more folks were sick than we had originally known.

For us, we were not seriously impacted. No family members have been sick. We cook together a lot which we enjoy and have had a few Zoom cocktail hours with friends from around the country. Richard has been able to continue to work from home, I’ve taught a little online yoga, and, in this valley, we’ve been able to continue to get out and hike with our young dog, Wallis. It truly is easy to social distance here and live a somewhat “normal” life.

We’re building an addition on our home and, though we had a couple of weeks of construction shut-down, we will be moving back into our “new” house in June. Recently, our son, JD, has returned home and hopes to find work in the valley for the summer.

Knowing the devastation of this virus, physically, emotional
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ly, and economically, for so many, it’s almost embarrassing to say that the downside for us has been limited socializing and travel, ordering our groceries on-line, and not being able to play tennis.

One positive for me that I don’t think would have happened without this situation is that a group of women in my new neighborhood reached out to me. We’ve been getting together once a week, outside around a firepit, social distancing, of course, for the last few weeks. I feel that this could be the foundation of several new friendships that will last well beyond this virus. As my mother always says, there’s so much to be thankful for.



Jews On The Couch

HARRIET PARKER BASS

We have all heard on multiple occasions that 'we are all in this together'. This is so very true. Yet some of us are carrying a much heavier load than others. Many of us are fortunate enough to be able to enjoy our time on lockdown... no young children at home, no lay-offs from work, no worries about paying a mortgage or rent and no concern for our ability to afford to buy groceries for our families. Putting aside these global issues for a minute, I have had the opportunity to slow down, relax and find joy and satisfaction in the calm of the day. We are so fortunate here in the Wood River Valley that the weather has cooperated with our lockdown by way of beautiful spring temperatures, perfect for hiking and biking on near empty trails and paths. Some of the things that I have enjoyed during this strange and troubling time are:

- Wearing sweatpants all day.
- Cooking through Melissa Clark recipes.
- Baking sinfully rich sweets from Smitten Kitchen.
- Reading for hours a day without the guilt of "I should be doing something else".
- Learning to play chess.
- Watching my yard burst into spring as each day the buds on the trees get bigger and bigger.
- Learning to be a novice gardener.
- Virtual visits and playtime with my grandchildren.
- Cocktail hour via Zoom with my children..sometimes it is coffee with the family in Israel....whichever it is, it is such a precious time.

- Speaking and 'seeing' my brother and sister more often than I usually do.
- Spending time with friends....via FaceTime or Zoom or socially distanced dates in my sunny driveway.
- Seeing my neighbors and my community reach out to those in need of help.
- Finding the time to think...or maybe rethink things that I have held to be true.

At a time when the ground has shifted under our feet, not unlike our recent earthquake, it isn't a bad time to reassess how we act as a society. What obligations do we each have to our neighbors and to our community? Is it right that the richest country in the world, alone among all the other developed western countries, allows people to fall through the cracks? Is it right not to provide a safety net for those who are the most in need and the most vulnerable? This is not at all a political issue....it is a cultural and humanitarian issue. I, like many others, have had the luxury of time to think about how we as a society have gone wrong. What is a 'society' that does not and cannot take care of its weakest and most defenseless members? I hope that after careful thought we, as a country, have a paradigm shift in our views on our responsibility to one another so that we can truly « all be in this together ».



**On THURSDAY, JULY 29 at 10:00am
at the office and via Zoom**

The Board convenes its Annual Meeting & Election. This is an opportunity to update the community on the status of the organization and to reflect on the past year of events and accomplishments.

Present the 2020-2021 Operation Budget .
Elect Board Members . Report of Committee Chairs.

Jews On The Couch

VICKI SHAPIRO MD

I'll bet my typical "Corona day" was similar to many members of the WRJC.

I spent the first hours of each day at the computer, reading more and more distressing and depressing news. I called my kids, I called my folks, I forwarded gallows humor emails and texts and YouTube videos to create a common bond. I cancelled a trip, I hiked a lot, I cooked even more and played with my dog.

I got to spend a found month with my younger daughter, home to quarantine with us. We skied, biked, drank a lot of wine and she again raided my closet for clothes (!). I cleaned the closets, encouraged my husband to tackle the garage and even fished. I camped, gardened and fretted about the upcoming outdoor wedding of my older daughter (which we hope can still happen).

I miss the hugs from friends, the dinners out, the Argyros events we had tickets to and the freedom of travel. I worry about the world the children will inherit and the long term health of the planet. I am an optimist at heart, so decline to obsess over the stock market, and the horrors of the short term, in favor of what we as a species can gain from this pandemic – how we will innovate to create new markets and procedures and medical advances.

I also curated a few of my favorite Haikus for you from an article by Jennifer Nalewicki on SMITHSON- IANMAG.COM. "Social Distancing, Haiku and You," the project asks participants to write and digitally record haikus inspired by their own personal experiences during the pandemic. Upon receiving the digital recordings, Nakagawa will use Pro Tools software to create a sound collage that interweaves the multitude of voices into a single composition.

- ◆ *Schools closed, children home, running, screaming, crying loud. Not them, I meant me.*
- ◆ *The store shelves are bare. Has bath tissue turned to gold? That would be painful.*
- ◆ *Sting wrote our anthem: Don't stand so, don't stand so, don't stand so close to me*
- ◆ *Six feet between us, Sharing in one common goal. Apart, yet a part*
- ◆ *FaceTime with old friends. Feels good to catch up and laugh. We can still touch base.*
- ◆ *Global pandemic yet the birds sing joyfully -- two realities*
- ◆ *Covered nose and mouth. Bright eyes meet a gentle nod. Give a hidden smile*

- ◆ *At eight o'clock. Sound of howling and hands clapping. Not alone – Hooray*
- ◆ *A red-tailed hawk calls from a social distance, then the forest responds*
- ◆ *Gazing at the sky I cherish the smallest sparks, and watch the silence*
- ◆ *Your beautiful smile is hidden behind that mask? Try twinkling your eyes.*
- ◆ *Coronavirus. The world helping each other. We will survive this*
- ◆ *Looking through windows. Birds go on building small nests. In time we will too*
- ◆ *We open ourselves to what will come next in life, All vulnerable*
- ◆ *Human quarantine. Animals reclaim their space. No face masks needed*
- ◆ *Meeting by chance, we laugh in our masks at six feet, only our eyes touch*
- ◆ *We all took notice. Such strong powers you possess! Now, leave us alone*
- ◆ *Sun streams through the trees. I watch the birds on the feeder. A hawk circles near*
- ◆ *Please be safe, stay home! Then we can all be heroes..... For more than one day!*
- ◆ *I told the teller, I have a gun, give me cash, or I swear I'll sneeze.*
- ◆ *Seizing time to read, I'm catching up on classics, like "Cat in the Hat"*
- ◆ *Graduation cancelled. Now Dad doesn't need to know, that I flunked physics.*
- ◆ *Easter Sunday lunch —I asked what dish I could bring. Clorox wipes, she said.*
- ◆ *My hair is like a tree —its roots gray and branches black. Maybe time to go native.*
- ◆ *Sun streams through the trees. I watch the birds on the feeder. A hawk circles near*
- ◆ *Life's full of regrets. Charmin 12-packs were on sale, back in November.*
- ◆ *just touched my face! And eyes, nose, and mouth! Oh wait, I'm in the shower.*
- ◆ *Hi, Dr. Fauci, May I call you Anthony? Will you be my Dad?*

.../,,,

- ◆ *I cut my own hair —ends trimmed, top thinned, and sides shaped. Every day's hat day.*
- ◆ *I am 6 feet from insanity, but I still have TP and wine*
- ◆ *It invades unseen. Microscopic militia. We extend distance.*
- ◆ *Spring still blossoms, without witness, Quarantine*
- ◆ *Warmth in solitude Pause, feel, deep within the heart. All that we have missed*



Renee , Vicki's daughter with their dog Sage on the top of Colorado gulch, mid April,

Letter to that One Place Not Affected by Covid19 Shut Downs

Marlene B. Samuels, PhD

Dear New Kitchen in my Sun Valley home:

With so many businesses shut down during these pandemic times and, worse, all the restaurants now providing take-out service only, I can't for the life of me figure out why you, my nice new kitchen, refuse to shut yourself down if even for just a few hours a week? Did it ever occur to you that during these many months of a plague near Biblical in proportion, even I — a mere mortal could be given a brief respite?

Don't get me wrong. I'm not suggesting that you, my wonderfully remodeled kitchen, institute an all-out shutdown of the caliber most businesses in this lovely mountain community were ordered to observe, not at all! Actually, I'd be happy with two days each week of you participating in this closure. And that also would be some much needed time off for me. No? Okay, then how about one day a week? Even that would be a welcome break. And, of course, you know I love you, my wonderful remodeled kitchen, but why do I have to work seven days a week in order to prove this to you?

I'll never forget that horrible January flood, two years ago, that made your arrival a reality. After thirty-three years of paying homeowner's insurance our payments helped make your arrival possible, although surely there must be easier ways to remodel a kitchen!

I'm the first to admit it's refreshing to see your gleaming stainless steel appliances every time I walk into you ap-

pliances not yet dented by careless offspring or that clumsy spouse (another matter entirely). I love your sleek, scratch-free, cabinet doors and let's not to underplay your gray veined granite that I admire while pouring my first cup of coffee each morning, no grease stains mar your purity, a joy to behold.



The truth: simply because you're complete and in perfect working order, and just because you look as though you relocated to Sun Valley straight off the Food Network's stage-set doesn't mean I want to spend every waking moment of the current plague and "social-distancing," cooking, cleaning, and admiring you. You must know that it's actually possible for me to continue admiring you even if I make nothing more elaborate than coffee, microwave popcorn and phone calls to the local restaurants offering take-out. You wouldn't be shutdown in the truest sense of the term but this is great time for you, wonderful kitchen, to take that much-needed holiday as well. How about it, Kitchen?

This article was published in the Idaho Mountain Express in May 2020

Uncovering a Jewish Community's Story

By Ari Goldstein

When I arrived at Georgetown University as an undergraduate in August 2014, I felt the heavy weight of history on my shoulders.

I knew that the Catholic Church had a long history of anti-semitism and a contentious record during the Holocaust. I remembered my grandmother, who grew up in 1920s New York, telling stories from her childhood about Catholic kids throwing rocks and calling her “Christ killer.” Attending a Catholic university—one that I later discovered had leveled an admissions quota against Jewish students in the 1930s—felt like an act of courage.

But Georgetown was a great school in a great city, and it satisfied my basic criterion of having a Rabbi on campus. I also understood that much had changed about Catholic-Jewish relations in the last half century. So I enrolled with a mix of trepidation and excitement, and a deep curiosity about the historical meaning of my decision.

Three years later, I found the answers I was looking for by writing a senior thesis on the history of Jews at Georgetown. The process of researching and telling the story of my adopted community took me to the university's archives and to the farthest reaches of Washington, D.C. It revealed fascinating insights about Jewish-Catholic relations and about American history. And it ultimately taught me important truths about the past, the present and myself.

Researching the Story

I began my research in the archives, where I searched for references to Jews and Judaism in university documents dating back to its establishment in 1789. I wondered: When and why did the first Jewish student enroll? What was it like to be a Jewish student at a Catholic school in the 18th and 19th centuries? How and why did the Jewish student population grow over time? No one had set out to research these questions in a systemic way before me, so there was a rich collection of information waiting to be discovered.

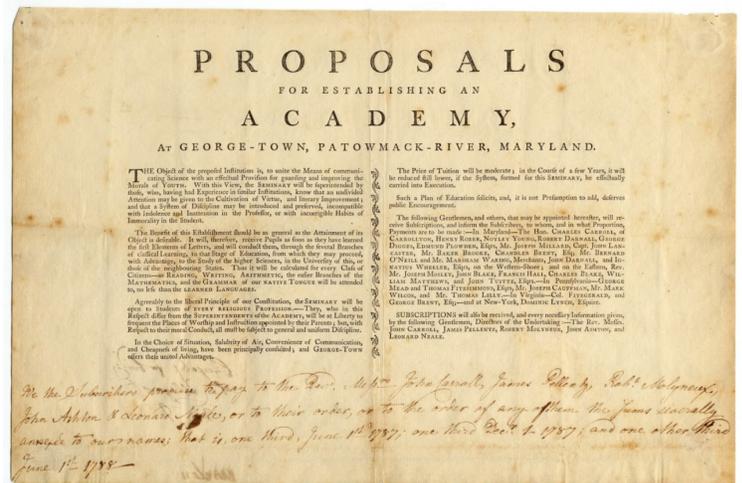
I quickly found evidence of the first Jewish student in early admissions records, on which the religion of each incoming student was noted. The first student who self-identified as Jewish enrolled in 1834. He was a member of the Mordecai family, which was one of the most prominent Jewish families in the American South.

His first cousin enrolled at Georgetown one year earlier, but the records indicate that he converted from Judaism Page 12

to Christianity before arriving on campus. Understanding why the cousins, both born Jewish in North Carolina, arrived at Georgetown in the 1830s with different religions listed in their admissions records became a fascinating starting point to the two-century history of Jewish students at the school.

Each successive document I discovered revealed a new layer of complexity. In a set of Medical School meeting notes from 1934—a century after the first Jewish students enrolled—I found the following sentence: “The quota of Jewish matriculates will not exceed 5.” Sure enough, admissions records from the 1930s and 40s showed a significant decline in Jewish student enrollment after 1934. But it was inconsistent year-to-year, and I could not find evidence of comparable quotas at the Georgetown's other schools.

Understanding why Georgetown implemented a Jewish quota only in its Medical School, and why it did so in 1934 rather than a few years earlier or later, proved to be additional keys to unlocking the larger narrative of Jewish



Georgetown University traces its roots to this document from 1786, which states that the Catholic school would be “open to students of every religious profession.”

life on a Catholic campus.

Filling in the Gaps

Even as I discovered key elements of the story, I was missing significant pieces of information, including about the lived experiences of my predecessors. The archives could teach me how many Jewish students were enrolled and what activities they participated in on campus, or how many Jewish professors were employed and what they taught, but the archives could not teach me what it felt like to be Jewish at Georgetown prior to my arrival in 2014.

Uncovering a Jewish Community's Story



Rabbi Harold White, who served as Georgetown's Jewish Chaplain from 1968 to 2010, was one of the first rabbis in the country to routinely perform interfaith marriages.

I began making phone calls to fill in the gaps. One of my first calls was to Rabbi A. Nathan Abramowitz, who was hired by Georgetown's Theology Department in 1967 just two years after the Vatican absolved Jews for the death of Jesus. Rabbi Abramowitz spoke to me with nostalgia about those heady years, in which his mere existence on a Catholic campus was enough to generate national news coverage. "One more Rabbi on the [Georgetown] faculty," wrote *The New York Times* in January 1968, "and this school could have its own Beth Din (rabbinic court)."

I filled another gap by calling Mark Siskin, a Jewish alumna from Binghamton, New York who arrived on campus the same year as Rabbi Abramowitz. Despite his parents' insistence that a Catholic school was "no place for a nice Jewish boy," Siskin enrolled and became a student leader who helped establish some of the same institutions of Jewish communal life that exist on campus today. He spoke to me with pride about building the first sukkah on a Catholic campus and attracting a large audience of peers and priests eager to learn about the ritual.

Months later, I happened upon Maryla Korn in the lobby of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and asked to interview her. Maryla is a Holocaust survivor from Poland who worked as program coordinator for Georgetown's Jewish Chaplaincy in the 1980s and 90s. Maryla observed hundreds of eager college students explore their Jewish identities during their most formative years.

I ultimately conducted interviews with 32 Jewish alumni, 25 current and former Jewish faculty and staff, and 24 non-Jews in the Georgetown community—including several Jesuit priests—as part of my research. It was a pretty diasporic group, ranging in age from 23 to 94, ranging in Jewish observance from secular to Hasidic, and scattered across all corners of the world, most with no connection to each other.

They expressed a diverse range of experiences and emotions, but almost everyone with whom I spoke said that spending time at a Catholic university had strengthened their Jewish identity in ways they never expected. Getting to know these people and their stories was a deeply rewarding part of the process and an important way to make sense of the facts I had found in the archives.



Georgetown's Jewish Student Association, like similar groups on many other campuses, was involved in activism for Israel and for Soviet Jewry in the 1970s.

Telling the Story

From the documents I found in the archives and the stories I heard over the phone, I pieced together a two hundred year narrative of Georgetown's Jewish community. As an amateur historian, I am sure there are parts of the story I missed and voices I left out. But I was able to graduate in May 2018 with pride at having told a story no one had told before, and with a sense of belonging at an institution that I had not been sure would accept me.

This sense of belonging is one of the most important outcomes of telling communal histories. When we seek to understand the past, we transform discrete historical moments into a narrative in which we can locate ourselves. The realization that we are part of a narrative—in this case, that there were Jews at Georgetown long before me and there will be long after me—then breeds a sense of collective obligation. Once we understand ourselves to be part of a group, we can see how we are called to contribute to that group for the next generation of its members.

Uncovering a Jewish Community's Story

The stories and figures of our past also impart powerful lessons for our present. When we remember the Exodus, we learn the importance and the price of freedom. When we remember the story of Hanukkah, we learn the power of spiritual resistance against those who seek to dampen our Jewish resolve. When we remember the Holocaust, we learn what humans are capable of in our darkest hours. And by holding each of these learned truths close to our hearts, we become more fully Jewish.

While Georgetown's history is less significant than these ones, the lessons it imparts are no less meaningful. It teaches us that real, honest efforts to overcome centuries of antisemitism can be successful. It teaches us that the right kind of experiences can help young, disaffected Jews form new connections to their faith. And it teaches us about the challenges and blessings of sharing space with people different than ourselves.

These lessons, like those gleaned from the events in the Torah, are part of a global Jewish story much larger than ourselves. It is a privilege to have uncovered a small piece of it.



Ari graduated in 2018 and now works at the Museum of Jewish Heritage - A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York

About our Members: The Gershater

Mathew, Whitney, Izun and Sebastian Gershater are happy to join the WRJC.

Mathew moved to the Wood River Valley from Flagstaff, AZ, in 1998 for his love for the mountains and playing hockey for the Sun Valley Suns. Whitney arrived from New Jersey to follow her family to the place where her father grew up.

Over the years Mat and Whitney have had successful video production businesses creating documentaries and sharing non-profit stories.

The Gershater family now is consumed with running Idaho BaseCamp (IBC) - a local 501c3 organization. Mathew started IBC in 1998 as Mountain Adventure Tours (MAT) and in 2014 turned it into IBC, to better serve to community. Many of the WRJC members have had family attend the MAT summer camp and the Gershater's feel excited to connect on a more spiritual level with their roots. Besides running IBC the Gershater's have The Roots Enrichment Center in Bellevue, ID, which is an af-

fordable working and gathering environment for professionals and community members to come together and connect. The facility is also the home of IBC's south valley afterschool program. Izun is 4 years old and she loves Rabbi's songs and Sebastian just turned one and is full of Simchah!



Archaeologists discover 2,000-year-old unique complex by the Western Wall

Article submitted by Josh Kleinman

The structure was sealed later in the Byzantine period under the floors of a large building about 1,400 years ago and was left untouched for centuries.

Two thousand years ago, Jerusalem residents were storing food and water, cooking, maybe even living in a unique subterranean multiple-room structure barely 30 meters from the holy Temple.

This new discovery was unveiled by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) and the Western Wall Heritage Foundation on Tuesday ahead of [Jerusalem Day](#).

Descending into the underground chambers from the Western Wall Plaza – glaring with light and still under the coronavirus regulations and a heat wave – is nothing less than a journey back in time before Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, when the city was still bustling with Jewish life and rituals.

“At the time of the Second Temple, 2,000 years ago, this was a public area, the civic center of ancient Jerusalem,” Dr. Barak Monnickendam-Givon, co-director of the excavation on behalf of the IAA together with Tehila Sadiel, told *The Jerusalem Post*. “We think that the public street passed just a few meters from here, and we are standing next to what we archaeologists call the ‘big bridge’ that connected the upper city to the Temple itself.”



Archaeologists discover 2000-year-old unique complex by the Western Wall

The complex features two rooms connected by a staircase and an open courtyard. The entrance presents clear signs of the presence of door hinges and bolts, while the walls offer several niches for oil lamps as well as carved-in shelves.

The structure was discovered under the white mosaic floor of a monumental Byzantine building from about 1,400 years ago.

The large hollow space where both the building and the more ancient chambers stand has walls erected in the typical Jerusalem stones of different sizes, blackened by the centuries, pieces of Roman columns and floors built in a variety of materials and at different levels. The excavations are ongoing.

In a corner, an IAA conservator was working on preserving the Byzantine mosaic, while a few meters away two archaeologists were sifting through some dirt to make sure it did not contain other artifacts or shards.

Clay cooking vessels, oil lamps and stone containers, useful to store water and minimizing the risk of giving it ritual impurity according to Halacha, are among the objects retrieved by the researchers so far, allowing them to assess that the carved structure was in use in the first century CE. How much earlier it was actually built remains a mystery, one of the many that will be addressed as the studies proceed.



Weights from the Second Temple period (Yaniv Berman/IAA)

Several features make the discovery unique, Monnickendam-Givon said, adding that very few structures from that period survive in the city.

“After the Roman siege and destruction in the year 70 CE, Jerusalem was burned and devastated, and all the Jewish people were exiled,” he said. “A few decades later, the Romans started rebuilding it from scratch.”

Moreover, usually structures in that period were built in stone, while those who hewed the rooms underground chose to carve them out of the hard bedrock, which required a considerable effort.

“Besides from burials, we have rarely found any complete rock-cut rooms from that era,” he said. “Most people in ancient Jerusalem lived in stone-built houses. What was the function of this hewn system just under the street level? Was it a house, a storage unit? Something else?”

Penetrating the secrets of the site will require another 20 or 30 years of excavations, Monnickendam-Givon said. One of the goals is to connect it with the area where the main street passed.

Even the purpose of the Byzantine building whose floor protected the ancient rooms for so many centuries is still shrouded in mystery.

“We do not know whether it was a religious or a civil building,” IAA archaeologist Michael Chernin told the Post. “We do know it collapsed during an earthquake at the beginning of the 11th century.”

The area was abandoned in the Crusader period and was settled again in the [Mamluk](#) period (13th-16th century), he said.

The researchers uncovered artifacts from these different times, including bone tools, clay vessels, a strainer and a candle holder.

“We want to understand the function of these structures, as well as their connection with the topography of the Roman and Byzantine Jerusalem,” Chernin said. “It is possible that more subterranean rooms will also emerge.”

Western Wall Heritage Foundation director Mordechai “Suli” Eliav said in a press release: “I am excited, on the eve of Jerusalem Day, to reveal to the Jewish nation a new treasure trove of impressive and fascinating findings that shed light on life in Jerusalem throughout the generations in general and on the eve of the destruction in particular.

“This finding epitomizes the deep connection of Jews with Jerusalem, their capital. Even when there were physical limitations, prayer at the foot of the remnant of our Temple never ceased, and this is tangible evidence of this.”

By ROSSELLA TERCATIN

MAY 22, 2020 15:38 Jerusalem Post

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The Continuing Mysteries of the Aleppo Codex Developments in the saga of the missing perfect copy of the Hebrew Bible, whose future is still unknown— By Matti Friedman (Tablet Magazine)

Article submitted by Josh Kleinman



The Aleppo Codex

First, for readers unfamiliar with the story, a brief summary of the background.

The Aleppo Codex, a bound book of approximately 500 parchment pages, was compiled in Tiberias around the year 930 C.E., making it the oldest known copy of the complete Bible. It was moved to Jerusalem, stolen by crusaders in 1099, ransomed by the Jews of Cairo, and studied by the philosopher Maimonides, who declared it the most accurate version of the holy text. It was later taken to Aleppo, Syria, and guarded for six centuries. There it became known as the “Crown of Aleppo.”

In 1947, in a riot that followed the United Nations vote on the partition of Palestine, the codex disappeared, surfacing 10 years later in mysterious circumstances in the new state of Israel. The codex is currently held in the Israel Museum, in the same building as the Dead Sea Scrolls. It is controlled not by the museum, however, but by a prestigious academic body, the Ben-Zvi Institute, founded by Israel’s second president, Yitzhak Ben-Zvi. Somewhere along the way in the mid-20th century, 200 priceless pages—around 40 percent of the total—[went missing](#). These include the most important pages: the Torah, or Five Books of Moses.

There are two mysteries linked to the codex. The first: How did the book move to Israel from a grotto in Aleppo’s Great Synagogue and effectively become the property of the new state? And the second: How did its missing pages vanish, and where might they be now?

The second mystery, that of the missing pages, was long famous among a small number of people—Bible professors, Aleppo exiles, and a few others. The official version of the story, propagated by the academics in Israel who control the manuscript, claimed the pages vanished in Aleppo around the time of the 1947 riot. But we know now that the manuscript was seen whole as late as 1952, five years later. The first description of any significant damage to the codex dates, strikingly, only to 1958—after the manuscript reached the Ben-Zvi Institute in Jerusalem.

Whatever precisely happened at the Ben-Zvi Institute, the long-buried affair of the institute’s vanished books—whether it is connected or not to the disappearance of the codex pages—is arguably the worst corruption scandal in the history of the Israeli academy. Among the figures who have gone on record saying Benayahu was responsible for the institute’s missing books are Zvi Zameret, the institute’s longtime administrative director and subsequently one of the top officials in Israel’s Education Ministry; Joseph Hacker, professor emeritus at Hebrew University and a former deputy director of the institute; and the late Yom-Tov Assis, the professor who headed the Ben-Zvi Institute at the time of my own investigation.

Are the missing codex pages linked to the broader disappearance of books from the Ben-Zvi Institute? The scholars of the Ben-Zvi Institute have resisted any investigation while failing to produce any evidence to dispel the suspicion.

For full text of this article, please check <https://www.tabletmag.com/amp/sections/arts-letters/articles/aleppo>

High Holidays 2020



Rosh Hashanah 2020
begins at sunset on September 18

Yom Kippur 2019
begins at sunset on September 27



Before the High Holidays, Create a Yahrzeit Plaque

Create a *Plaque* to honor and commemorate your loved ones. It has been a hallowed tradition throughout the ages to commemorate the *Yahrzeit* of a loved one by keeping their memory alive in our hearts.

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Second Line

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Enter the first name and last name in English. You may also include a middle name or middle initial.

Third Line

Gregorian Date of Passing

Enter the date of passing. The Hebrew date of passing will be determined and also placed on the plate.

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English Name of Deceased
English Date Hebrew Date

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