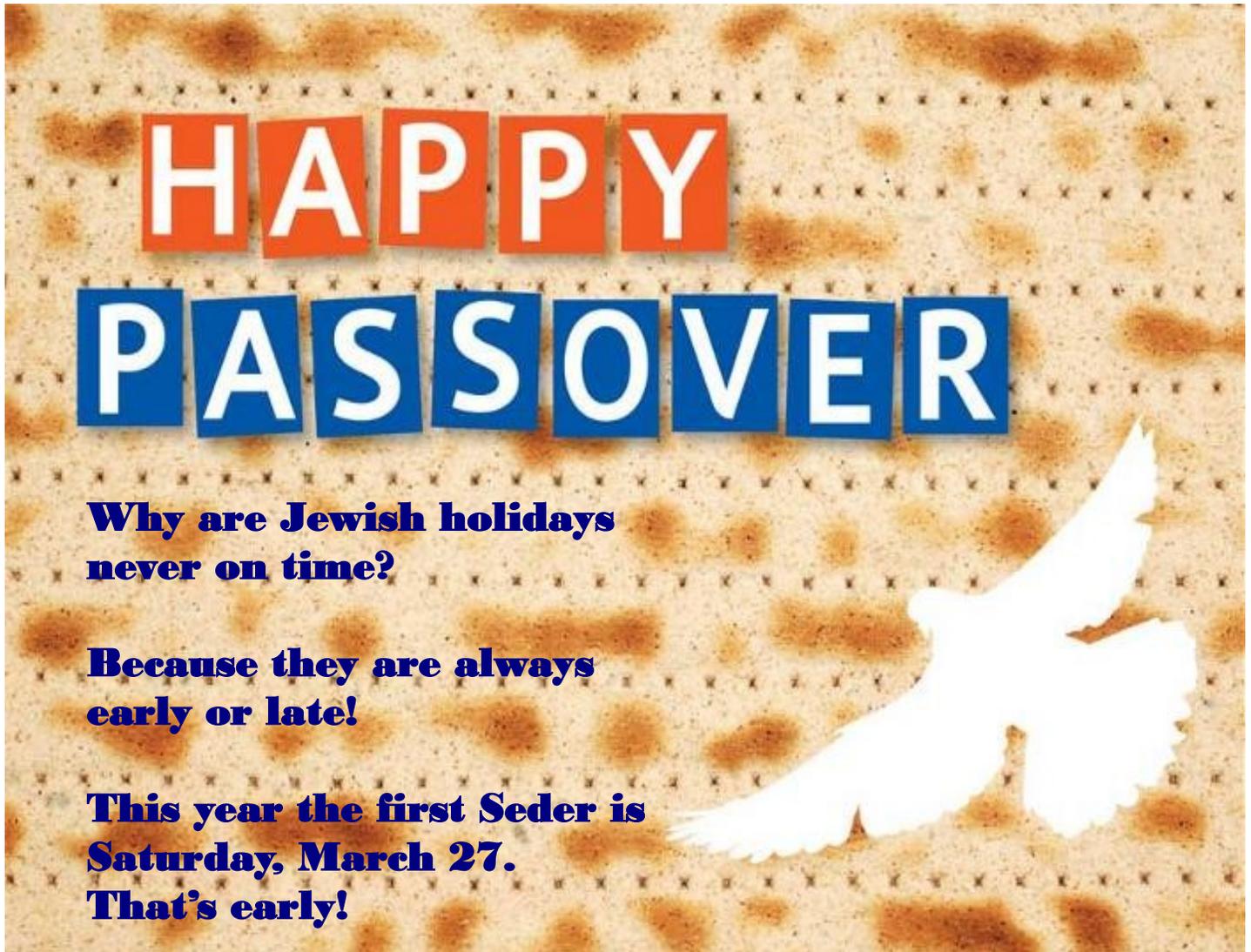


Federation Focus

Spring 2021

Vol.11 Issue 3

Federation Focus is published four times a year by the Jewish Federation of Central California.
“All Jews are responsible for one another.” (Talmud:Shavuot 39a)



Why are Jewish holidays never on time?

Because they are always early or late!

This year the first Seder is Saturday, March 27. That's early!

Amidst the triple turmoil of Covid-19, the economic situation and the election, there is some good news, at least for people of the Jewish faith. The high holidays are early this year!

Wait, you say, don't they always come when they are supposed to? The answer is that the Jewish holidays are usually either early or late. That is because they are reckoned on a lunar Hebrew calendar which has

13 months. This calendar is superimposed on our Gregorian calendar. So even though Passover always falls at the end of the 15th day of Nisan on the Hebrew calendar, on the secular calendar it falls sometime between late March and late April. This year Passover begins on the evening of March 27, which is early, unlike 2019, when it began on April 19. Next year it will begin on April 15.

Chag Sameach!

Winter Donations

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Good health & speedy recovery of Katie Neely

Penny Verin-Shapiro

In memory of Sylvia Silberman

Cookie Fritz

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In memory of Frances Singer

Dorea Harmon and Brian Kossack

In memory of Evie Weil

Lee and Jeri Horwitz

Stan and Fran Ziegler

In appreciation of Sharon and Cliff Anderson and all they have done for us

Stan and Fran Zeigler

For good health of Paul Orloff

Doug Weil and Jeri Buchman Weil



Jewish Family Services

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FRESNO JEWISH FILM SERIES

You and your family can watch a film from the comfort of your own home. Then [register on Zoom](#) and discuss the movie with our film friends. And best of all, it will be totally free! fresnojewishfilm.org

March	Itzak - The Life of Violinist Itzhak Perlman
April	David
May	400 Miles to Freedom
June	Unorthodox - Rebellion and Orthodox Jewish teens

Hope to "see you at the movies!"



Ethan Smith SIOR, CCIM

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Federation Profiles: Jeri Horwitz

A letter from a soldier overseas introduced Jeri Horwitz' mother to her true love.

In the 1940's Rabbi David Greenberg would read letters from servicemen to the congregation at TBI. When her Mom, June, listened to the letter from a soldier named Louis Michner stationed in the Phillipines, she told the rabbi that when he came home she had to meet him. She was already in love before they met; the letter eventually led to their marriage and the birth of their daughter, Jeri Michner Horwitz, now the Community Outreach Coordinator of Jewish Family Services.

A graduate of Bullard High who attended Cal State Northridge, Jeri was a business major who left school with 30 credits unfinished in order to go to work. A native Fresnan, she has always been involved in the Jewish community and helping others, an inheritance from her parents. When her children were young she served on the Jewish Day School and became president of the Board. Later she served on the JFCC board for three years and worked with Jewish Family Services.

She and husband Lee left Fresno to live in New Mexico for five years. There Jeri was involved in the Jewish

Care Program. When they returned to Fresno Jeri was offered her current position.

Although JFS personnel can't make home visits as they used to, previously Jeri enjoyed putting a smile on someone's face because it also produced a smile inside of her. "My mother taught us to empathize with others", Jeri noted. "That is why when my father was in an assisted living facility and I saw there many residents who had few visitors, I decided to be a friendly visitor for those residents myself."

At the Federation Jeri and others prepare holiday baskets for Passover, Hanukkah and Rosh Hashanah. They are always looking for donations to help make purchases for this work. Their current project is CARES. They match people who need friendly phone calls with those who would like to establish contact with them. Calls can be weekly, bi-weekly or more frequent, depending on the agreement between the two parties.

Jeri and Lee are looking forward to celebrating their 40th wedding anniversary in November with their son who is getting married in August, two daughters, and three grandchildren.

-Francine Farber

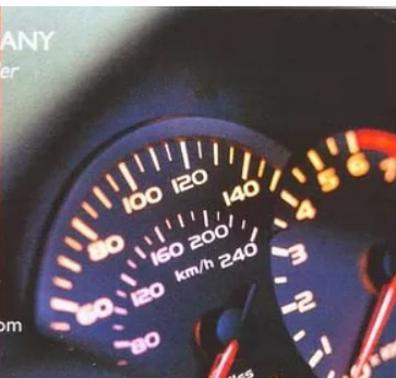


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HAVE YOU MADE YOUR PLEDGE FOR 2021 ?
See page 10





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LETTER FROM ISRAEL by Vic Rosenthal

Comments?

K2vco.vic@gmail.com


I just printed an official-looking certificate for my wife, who got her second shot of the Pfizer Coronavirus vaccine last week. The certificates don't mean anything yet, but at some point they will provide entry to cultural and sporting events, and other crowded venues.

Good news about vaccination

There is some very good news about Israel's vaccination program, as well as some bad news. The good news has several parts. First, we made deals quickly to buy large quantities of vaccine from several companies. We agreed to pay almost double the world price and to provide comprehensive data about the results to the manufacturers.

The four HMOs to which all Israelis belong set up joint immunization centers all over the country, and started vaccinating their members. They did medical personnel first, and then began with the oldest segment of the population, who were at the greatest risk

The process is quick. You don't even need an appointment anymore. You show up, and depending on the time and place, you may not even have to wait. They ask you a few questions, give you the shot, and enter all the information into their computer system. In a few days after the second shot, you can print your certificate.

The vaccine works

The best news is that the vaccine works: there are only a handful of people who have gotten the disease after being vaccinated, and those have almost all been very mild cases.

Recent evidence shows that it is effective against several variants of the virus.

Also bad news

And now the bad news: there are still many new cases of Covid-19 among those who are not vaccinated. The "British variant" is much more contagious than the original version of the virus, and is responsible for most of them. Despite the quick rollout of vaccinations, as of today only 23.2% of the population (2.1 million people) have received the required two doses of the vaccine (38.2% have had at least one shot, which provides some immunity). But yesterday there were some 4700 new cases. There is still a danger of overloading the hospitals with serious cases.

It is a race between the vaccine and the disease. The government has made rules and instituted partial and complete lockdowns, in the hope of giving the vaccine a head start. But here there has been almost complete failure. Political considerations have determined the content and degree of enforcement of the rules. The impact on economic life has been severe for specific segments of the population.

Some Orthodox ignore rules

In particular, some groups of Haredim ("ultra-Orthodox" Jews) have ignored the rules, holding massive weddings and funerals with thousands of participants. Haredi schools and yeshivas have remained open despite orders to close. Israeli Arabs have also had some big weddings, although they have been generally more compliant than the Haredim.

The *really* bad news is that the vaccination campaign has slowed down, vaccinating only half as many people

each day as in the beginning. And this is due to another epidemic, one of abysmal stupidity. There are several active anti-vax groups that are working against the program. In one case, activists were told to sign up for appointments and then not show up, in order to create a situation in which doses of vaccine would not be used and would have to be thrown out.

Some well-known rabbis have told their followers not to get vaccinated. The arguments of these groups are entirely based on theories about possible future damage from the vaccine. There is no evidence to support them, and there is plenty of evidence of long-term damage from Covid-19; but that hasn't stopped the anti-vaxers.

Unfair accusations

I can't discuss this subject without mentioning another ugly aspect: the campaign of accusations of racism because "Israel is withholding the vaccine from Palestinians." The facts are these: first, Arab Israeli citizens and permanent residents are treated in exactly the same way as Jews. They belong to the same HMOs and have the same access to vaccinations. Many doctors, nurses, and pharmacists in Israel are Arabs. So much for "racism."

Second, health care for Palestinians in Judea/Samaria and Gaza is the responsibility of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, respectively. This is absolutely clear in international law, despite the creative imaginations of anti-Israel groups. Both are corrupt and incompetent regimes, so they have been slower to vaccinate their populations. The PA has recently begun to get shipments of vaccine

(Continued on page 6)



Fairgrounds to feature Fresno's Jewish History

Although considerably slowed by the pandemic, work continues on the exhibit featuring the history of Jews in Fresno. The exhibit will be a section in the two-story Fresno Historical Museum at the County Fairgrounds in southeast Fresno. In 2017 the Community Cultural Center was added to celebrate the cultures that make Fresno unique.

The final structure has been submitted to the builders, the interactive exhibit is in the process of completion, and the research is completed. Graphic designer Andrea Kaye has a vision for the design, and Amy Schmidt, Brenna Barks and Jeanna Francis continue to write the captions for the displays.

We are accepting pictures for the on-screen holiday and life-cycle exhibit. Please submit pictures or videos of holiday celebrations and weddings, Bnai Mitzvah, Confirmation, Brit Milah and namings, etc. **digitally only** to Jeanna at JeannaF@tbifresno.org. Please note that if you do submit an image, it may not be used. If it is

used, then we assume that we have your permission to use the image in any context for the exhibit. Please do NOT submit actual photographs. We cannot guarantee that they will be returned to you.

Historic artifacts should be from Fresno County only. Other items listed above may be from any place. In addition, if you are willing to loan a Fresno historic or Holocaust-related item long-term to the museum, please send a picture of it to the same email address.

The Jewish exhibit will join the Hmong, Italian, African American, Japanese and Mexican cultural showcases.

FRESNO STATE JEWISH STUDIES LISTS PUBLIC EVENTS

Tuesday, March 23, 6 p.m. Joyce Antler, "From Sophie Tucker to Sarah Silverman: The Subversive Tradition of Jewish Women's Comedy." Joyce Antler is Samuel J. Lane Professor Emerita of American Jewish History and Culture and Professor Emerita of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Brandeis University. Register in advance. See events at this site: www.fresnostate.edu/jewishstudies

Who Will Write Our History? Film link available March 25-April 8. Q&A with director Roberta Grossman Thursday, April 8, 12:30 pm. In November 1940, days after the Nazis sealed 450,000 Jews in the Warsaw ghetto, a secret band of journalists, scholars and community leaders decides to fight back. Led by historian Emanuel Ringelblum and known by the code name Oyneg Shabes, this clandestine group vowed to defeat Nazi lies and propaganda, not with guns or fists but with pen and paper. Register in advance. See events at this site: www.fresnostate.edu/jewishstudies

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting. Check back to access the film link when it becomes available.

Our exhibit will be divided into two parts: a general introduction to Judaism and historic Fresno County and the immigration experience of people who came here.

The exhibit is funded largely with private donations and a modest allocation from the JFCC.



MESSAGE from the DIRECTOR

I hope you and your families have a wonderful Pesach and meaningful Seder. This has been such a challenging year and our community has really stepped up to the plate and been there for each other. Whether it was donating to help feed fire victims, making masks or checking in on each other, everyone was very eager to help. Together we were able to meet the needs of our community; with your support we will be able to continue to help this coming year. While we still cannot meet in person it is wonderful to see everyone on Zoom.



We will not be having a formal Super Sunday this year but our 2021 Campaign has begun. The Friday emails that I send out have a link to make your pledge. If you are not receiving these emails please let me know and I will add you to the list. Thanks to everyone who has made a pledge and I encourage those who have not to please consider one.

You can also make your pledge by:

- ◆ calling the JFCC office at 432-2162
- ◆ sending your pledge to JFCC (use form on page 10)
- ◆ sending an email
- ◆ going online to <https://www.jewishfederationcentralcalifornia.org/get-involved>

We also accept donations in honor of, or in remembrance. When we receive these donations, we notify the associates or family of those being honored or remembered. Advertisements that are included in the Focus and on our website cost \$100 annually. We encourage all of our community to support our advertisers.

If you have any questions or suggestions or if you need anything, please feel free to call me at 432-2162 or fedfresno@sbcglobal.net

L'hitraot,
Phyllis Farrow, Executive Director

THE FEDERATION NEEDS YOUR HELP

First and foremost, we hope all is well with you and your loved ones.

As we begin a new fiscal year, we are facing many challenges on various levels. While there is not too much we can do on the national level, we would like to concentrate our efforts and resources on the personal and community aspects of the challenges both our members and community are facing every day.

As most of you know, we have a wonderful, active, and effective Jewish Family Services Committee, dedicated to helping our community. Their services are discrete, with very capable people who will work individually with you.

But these excellent services cost money! Therefore, we ask each of you to do what you can to help us raise the money needed to fund all the programs and services that we offer to our members and the community at large, both here and in Israel. The more funds we raise, the more services and programs we can offer.

On behalf of the Federation, we want to thank you in advance for your generous contributions and wish you and your family health and happiness throughout this year.

Esti Barak, President
Lee Horwitz,
Campaign Vice President

Letter from Israel

(continued from page 4)

that it purchased, and Israel gave them several thousand doses from its stock to vaccinate their health workers.

Hamas, an organization whose charter explicitly calls for killing Jews, receives funds from Qatar and the UN. It spends it on rockets to fire into Israel, million-dollar tunnels to infiltrate ter-

rorists across the border, and elaborate villas, shopping centers, and resorts for its elites. The “blockade” of Gaza by Israel and Egypt does not apply to medical equipment or drugs, including vaccines. Enough said.

Meanwhile, life goes on. The economy in Israel is slowly waking up. Nobody knows when the children will return to school, thanks to political confusion.





We continue to offer our services from Merced to Visalia, whether it is giving out \$50 food cards to those in need, or providing information obtained from our updated referrals and resources lists.

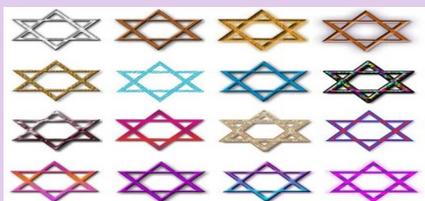
- ◆ On Fridays we deliver a challah as a Shabbat gift to several community members.
- ◆ Recently we assisted the local prisons by providing electric menorahs for Hanukkah.
- ◆ We provided a client's daughter with a used computer monitor that was needed for her remote learning.
- ◆ We received a very generous offer from a couple who wanted to provide a family with a home cooked meal or a box of groceries. Our client was overwhelmed with sincere gratitude that someone cared enough about her to shop for her, and gained a renewed positive attitude and was excited to get cooking,

We have successfully launched our Caring Calls program that provides connection and friendship to those that may be at elevated risk of loneliness or social isolation. Whether it's a quick check-in to say hello or a longer talk about a favorite television show or current event, we have made some successful matches between our volunteer callers and recipients. If you would like to be a caller or know of someone who would benefit from this connection, please contact us at 432-0529 or jfsfederation@gmail.com

Don't forget to check out the JFS TOOL BOX in the weekly Federation e-blasts.

Jeri Horwitz, Community Outreach Coordinator

**THE JEWISH FEDERATION AND
JEWISH FAMILY SERVICES
THANK THE ESTATE OF SHERI STONE
FOR HER GENEROUS DONATION
TO JFS**



Join Caring Calls!



**Have a Conversation
Create a New Friendship
& Change a Life!**

If you're interested and want more information, please send an email to [Jeri Horwitz](mailto:jfsfederation@gmail.com) jfsfederation@gmail.com or call her directly at (559) 281-1104. **You can change a life!**

Just One Degree of Separation !

On a cloudy day in January, I decided that the Jewish Family Services Caring Call Program could be an opportunity for me to make a new friend so I dialed the JFS number. After asking me a few questions about my interests, Jeri Horwitz gave me a gentleman's name and number. I kept wondering what we could possibly have in common since he is a generation older than I am.

So, with no expectations at all, I telephoned him. He was friendly and we shared some basic information...where he lived prior to Fresno, and I spoke a little about me. I also mentioned that my father had a close friend from WWII who lived in Fresno and that we often visited Fresno from the Bay Area when I was growing up. When I mentioned the family friend's name, I could hear the surprise in this man's voice. My father's friend was his wife's first cousin!

That small world coincidence broke any reservations we had about future conversations. We decided this friendship was "meant to be" and plan on connecting often in the days ahead. The Caring Call Program has definitely given me something to look forward to in these times of social distancing and isolation.

Thank you, Jewish Federation / and Jewish Family Services.

— Lynn Lindsay

JFCC ALLOCATIONS 2021

Israel Overseas

Jewish Federation North America	\$15,000
Jewish Distribution Committee	5,000
Magen David Adom	1,000
Akim Israel	2,000
Krembo Wings	1,000

Local

Jewish Family Services	\$20,000
Israel Independence Day	3,000
Interest Free Loans	3,000
CBI Yom Hashoah	1,000
Jewish Community Relations Council	5,000
Camperships	2,500
New Cemetery	5,000
TBI Cemetery	8,000
Jewish Studies Program, Fresno State	5,000

TOTAL **\$76,500**

VISALIA VOICES

Congregation Beit Shalom * 559-308-1333
www.congregationbeitshalomvisalia.com
FBCaliforniaholocausteducation&resourcecenter

The California Holocaust Education & Resource Center has received boxes of buttons from all over the United States in order to build our Holocaust Memorial. Our goal of 6 million buttons is within reach. Beginning eight years ago, our mission is to raise knowledge and awareness of the Holocaust and other genocides through education using the arts. We have brought theater performances, museum exhibits, film series, and Holocaust speakers to Visalia and the Central Valley, including three educational trunks for students of all ages that we loan to schools, religious institutions, and civic organizations, as well as providing speakers.

Each state has a State Button Society that meets to host conventions in order to display, buy, sell, and enjoy buttons for their art and historical significance. The Inland Empire Button Group has taken us under its wing and for the last five years the local and state groups have donated thousands of buttons toward the Holocaust Memorial project. They have promised to continue to donate until we reach our goal of six million buttons for building the memorial.

Please contact us to contribute buttons, financial support, or to request a speaker for your school, religious institution or organization.

-Cynthia Fischer

ALLOCATION DESCRIPTIONS

Jewish Federation of North America Umbrella organization to help support and sustain worldwide Jewry. Our community is focusing on HIAS, which helps refugees from around the world rebuild their lives.

Jewish Distribution Committee The world's leading Jewish humanitarian organization that works to lift lives and strengthen communities, by providing life-saving care to those in desperate need.

Magen David Adom With Israel under attack, MDA provides first responders, vehicles, and training, as well as transportation to hospitals to save lives.

Akim Israel The Israelis national organization to help people with intellectual disabilities and their families, using legal, community, and self-advocacy.

Krembo Wings A youth movement in Israel for children with and without disabilities, providing weekly social activities.

Israel Independence Day Yearly Yom Ha'atzmaut community celebration, marking the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948.

Jewish Family Services Provides services and support for the Central Valley Jewish Community (Visalia to Merced) regardless of age, income, or synagogue affiliation, and to strengthen Jewish identity, build community, and fortify family life.

Interest Free Loans to promote financial assistance to Jewish families in need by offering them a NO interest loan.

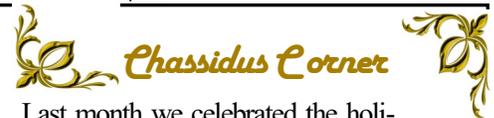
Yom Hashoah /CBJ A day set aside for Jews to remember the Holocaust.

Jewish Community Relations Council Liaison between the Jewish community and our non-Jewish neighbors, engaging in dialogue and clarifying misunderstandings, as well as sponsoring pro-Israel speakers.

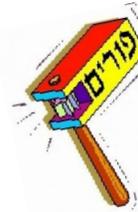
Jewish Studies To endow a Jewish studies scholarship fund for Fresno State students in the Jewish Studies Program who have completed at least two courses toward earning either the Jewish Studies Certificate or the new Jewish Studies Minor.

Learning about another culture

by Tanner O'Brien



Last month we celebrated the holiday of Purim, which commemorates the saving of the Jewish people from Haman, who had threatened to kill all the Jews. We all love Purim...Food, friends, Megillah, gifts and dancing. Haman was Mordechai's slave and he was required to provide Mordechai with a haircut and act as a bathhouse attendant. Haman learned that Mordechai was protected against him because Mordechai's father was a descendant of Benjamin and his mother from the tribe of Judah.



Hashem has at least seven names which represent his attributes. In the story of Purim, we learn that God is not limited by the laws of nature, and his essence is boundless. So that in the time of Purim, we find that there is no name to describe Hashem. That is why Hashem's name is not mentioned in the Megillah. In Purim, the High Priest selects two rams by lottery, one to live and one to die. So those of us who may have fallen spiritually during the year, need to pull ourselves up to lofty spiritual heights by doing charity.

David ben Hirsch HaCohen

PASSOVER 2021

MARCH 27—APRIL 4

As a psychology major at Fresno State I became involved in the Jewish Studies program after taking a class on American Jewish Popular Culture, and I am planning to obtain a minor in Jewish Studies. I learned about racism, religion, linguistics, film, art, music, sociology, history, and other experience and look forward to attending a Shabbat dinner in person when the pandemic ends.

Many students in the Program come from different backgrounds and religions. I find it interesting how everyone wants to learn more about the Jewish experience in the United States and around the world. I am planning to take another class with Dr. Jill Fields next semester.

Currently I am doing an internship with the JFCC as part of my Jewish Studies coursework.-I am having an amazing time, learning more about the Jewish community in the Valley and Jewish culture in general. After my internship ends this semester I intend to continue to volunteer and be a helping hand to the community. I would like to do research for the JFCC by analyzing Jewish politics in Central California in addition to other projects.

If you would like more information about the program or future events, go to www.fresnostate.edu/jewishstudies

VISALIA VOICES

Congregation B'nai David * 559-732-3139
www.congregationbnaidavid.com

As many of us have been stuck at home and not able to be with friends and other congregants for the last 11 months, we have been reaching out with "goodie" bags. At Rosh Hashanah and then at Hannukah, we distributed bags with goodies indicative of the holidays - challah rolls, honey, apples, latkes, apple sauce, gelt and candles. We also had a couple of drive up parking lot services. Purim bags had hamantaschen, groggers, and challah rolls. We received positive feedback and if this way of life continues, we may be doing similar for Passover.

Our Student Rabbi, Aria, Zoomed with us for a Shabbaton/Tu B'Shevat Seder weekend at the end of January.

To everyone in the Central Valley, please stay well, wear masks, safe distancing and we will be together again soon.

If you are interested in learning more about Judaism in your "free" time, please call (559) 732-3139 for more information.

Marsha Brooks-Smith

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YOU
MADE
YOUR
PLEDGE
FOR
2021?
SEE
PAGE
10**

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*“When a person’s good deeds exceed his wisdom,
his wisdom will be enduring.”*

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Jewish Federations of North America protects and enhances the well-being of Jews and Jewish communities in North America, Israel and around the world. We strive to realize our core values of *chesed* (caring and compassion), *Torah* (Jewish Learning), *tikkun olam* (repair of the world) and *tzedakah* (social justice). As the focus of the federations, JFNA acts upon these values through philanthropy, strategic initiatives, and collective leadership—in partnership with local communities, national and international agencies.