

Federation Focus



Winter 2021

Vol.11 Issue 2

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)



I hope everyone has a wonderful Hanukkah and a very Happy New Year. 2020 has been the most challenging year our planet has ever seen. I look forward to seeing you all in person.

Thanks to your continued support, the Board of Directors was able to meet all requests at its 2021 Annual Allocation Meeting; See page X

If you would like to make your 2021 Pledge before "Super Sunday" you can; call the office at 559 432-2162 or email me at fedfresno@sbcglobal.net or click on the link from emails you receive from us each Friday. If you are not receiving emails please call the office or email us your information.

As well as pledges, we gratefully accept donations in honor of, or in remembrance, and we notify the associates or family of those being honored or remembered. We also accept advertisements that are included in the Focus. The cost is \$100 annually. We hope you will consider placing an ad and we encourage all of our commu-

nity to support our advertisers. There are two additional ways to help with our fundraising. One is through Amazon Smiles. When you order from Amazon, go to smile.amazon.com and select **Jewish Federation of Central California** under the supporting icon at top of page. The other is through Car Donations. If you have a vehicle to donate please use the information below and select **Jewish Federation of Central California** to register your donation.

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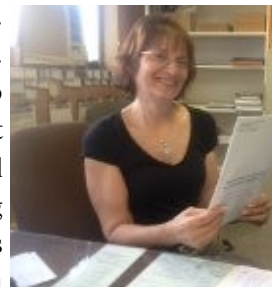
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Just click the link on the bottom of the emails we send you and it will open to our page.

Lehitraot,

Phyllis Farrow, Executive Director





JEWISH CONNECTIONS IN THE NEW WHITE HOUSE

President-elect Joseph R. Biden’s three children all married Jews. And Kamala Harris is married to a Jewish lawyer whom she met on a blind date and married a year later.

Hallie Olivere, the widow of Biden’s late son Beau, became Joe Biden’s first Jewish daughter-in-law in 2002. The president-elect knew Olivere’s mother, Joan, since childhood and once joked that as a child he would have liked to have married her.

In 2015, Beau Biden died of brain cancer and Olivere later began dating his brother, Hunter, who had been separated from his wife, Kathleen.

Hallie and Hunter Biden went their separate ways last year, partly due to the incessant media attention their relationship got from the press. Hunter Biden then met a Jewish South African filmmaker named Melissa Cohen and the pair got married within 10 days at her Los Angeles residence,

Ashley Biden, the only child from Joe Biden’s second marriage to Jill, also has a Jewish spouse — Howard Krein, an ear, nose and throat specialist at a Philadelphia hospital.

Biden’s third child with his first wife was killed in a car crash along with her 30-year-old mother in 1972. Naomi Christina Biden was just 13 months old at the time.

(a much longer version of this article appeared in The New York Post and the Jewish Forward)

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Lori Karsh and Robert Williams
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Anonymous

A special thank you to Bill and Karen Podolsky for the concern and kindness they have extended to us during these hard times

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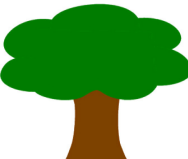
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Federation Profiles: Roger Litman



A retired defense attorney, Roger Litman is the Vice President of the Federation who accepted a job in the Public Defender’s office here when he flew up from San Diego in 1974 and saw cows grazing on Clovis Avenue. “That sight told me I wouldn’t have to face a lot of traffic to get to work every day,” he said in a telephone interview recently.

Roger fell in love with the law as a junior in high school, inspired by his government teacher. He graduated from UCLA and then from the University of San Diego School of Law, meeting his wife, Ivonne, in that city. As a public defender in Fresno, “there never seemed to be a shortage of cases,” he remembered, including a number of murders. A good friend from law school also worked in the public defender’s office and they were together for 20 years. “There was a wonderful esprit de



corps in that office,” he remembered. After more than 13 years as a public defender, he went into private practice, retiring three years ago.

Roger notes that he speaks Spanish fluently, which has helped him in his law practice. Ivonne, a Mexico native, grew up in the Arizona-Mexico border town of Nogales, and has worked as a certified Spanish interpreter in Fresno County Superior Court.

He and Ivonne have three children. Their oldest daughter is a family physician with three daughters; their middle daughter is a licensed clinical social worker in the Oakland schools; and their son is an attorney locally with two sons of his own.

On the Federation Board for the past four years, Roger has had an interest in legal issues, in the social support provided by Jewish Family Services, and in the positions the Federation has taken on significant issues. He remembers that a number of years ago he intervened in situations in Clovis Unified where there appeared to be a lack of recognition and/or respect for observing Jewish holidays. He believes the situation has improved now.

The Litmans began traveling extensively outside of the country in 2004. Their favorite spot of all time is Slovenia because of its beauty and the friendliness of the people. These days Roger is still a bike rider, with an electric booster to help him occasionally on steep terrain. A die-hard LA Dodgers fan, he enjoys football games and other spectator sports. He has been a close observer of politics during the past four years and has a continued interest in decisions of the United States Supreme Court.

Francine M. Farber

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LETTER FROM ISRAEL by Vic RosenthalComments?
K2vco.vic@gmail.com

The American presidential election dominated the news in Israel for the last week, upstaging even the coronavirus. Trump, whatever else can be said about him, did a lot for Israel. In the symbolic realm, he reversed the American policy that had been in effect since the founding of the state of Israel that denied Israel sovereign rights anywhere in Jerusalem – which has been the capital since 1948! In practical terms, he exited the dangerous nuclear deal with Iran and re-imposed tough sanctions on the regime. He closed the PLO office in Washington, stopped sending money to the Palestinian authority that was going directly to pay convicted terrorists, and recognized our sovereignty in the Golan Heights. And by showing the Palestinians that refusing to compromise had consequences, he may have done more to end the conflict than all the pressure on Israel applied by the previous administration.

Joe Biden has said a lot of nice things about Israel and it seems that he is not hostile to her. But he has promised to try to re-open the Iran deal, and he accepts the idea of a “two-state solution” based on pre-1967 lines that has fallen on its face – violently – over and over again. So Israelis are nervous. Much will depend on who Biden will pick for important jobs in his administration, and whether he will be influenced by the extreme left wing of the Democratic party. Certainly he can’t ignore it.

Here, almost daily demonstrations against PM Netanyahu are taking place. There will almost certainly be yet another election sometime next year, and many people think this will be Netanyahu’s last term. Here is a name to remember: Naftali Bennett. At least, I hope he will become

the next Prime Minister and you will have a reason to remember it.

The epidemic hasn’t stopped, although we seem to be in a relatively quiet period. But as restrictions are lifted and the number of new cases per day increases, there is talk of slowing the re-entry to economic life. There are several vaccines on the verge of production, including one in Israel, but today I saw a news item about the arrival in the country of a mutated form of the virus from Denmark which might render some vaccines ineffective. Anyway it will take months before vaccines will be available in



a shuk is an Israeli marketplace

quantity, so we are expecting a difficult winter season. Our shuk is still not open, which is unhappy for Lise, who likes to chat with all of the booth owners when we go shopping. Neither is the mall, which is far less interesting except insofar as it provides a way to get to the supermarket and the shuk without having to walk up and down a steep hill. By the time you read this I will have had my 78th birthday, which I notice is a lot closer to 80 than 70, so things like that matter.

JEWISH DAY SCHOOL AT NEW SITE



Happy Hanukkah from the Fresno Jewish Day School! We are happy to announce we are open and having a fantastic time here at our new location on the Wesley United Methodist Church campus at 1343 E Barstow Ave. We have a beautifully renovated building with a great outdoor play area in the back where we spend as much time as possible. We do have reduced hours and limited spots and are doing everything possible to be safe and healthy during this time, but we still have some openings available for our preschool program. If you would like more information, please contact us by phone at 559-447-1984, through email at director@fresnojewishdayschool.org, or visit our website at www.fresnojewishdayschool.org.

Sarah Page: Teacher/Director

JFS

Jewish Family Services

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 referrals and resources lists

On various Fridays, we deliver a challah for Shabbat as a gift to several community members. This next week we will be delivering Hanukkah bags to our JFS clients, to include potato pancakes, applesauce, chocolate gelt, jelly doughnut, and a box of candles.



We hosted a TOOLS FOR LIFE discussion: Fraud and Scams during COVID-19. Anyone who has a phone or a computer is at risk of a scam. We sincerely thank Ken Jonah for leading this discussion and our very special JFS friend who has provided us with this in-depth report. To receive this invaluable Community Outreach Coordinator report, please

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 jfsfederation@gmail.com or call her directly at (559) 281-1104. **You can change a life!**

contact the office at jfsfederation@gmail.com or call 559-439-0529. Be prepared, be aware, be suspicious, but don't be a victim!

Next month, JFS will be introducing our newest program: **CARING CALLS**. See the flyer on this page. Wishing you peace, good health, and happiness this holiday season and throughout the coming year.

Stay well. Stay safe. Check on others. Promote peace.

Jeri Horwitz, Executive Director, JFS

VISALIA VOICES

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

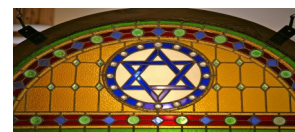
Cong. B'nai David is still conducting services on ZOOM several times a month. We have had two drive in parking lot services with individually wrapped challah rolls and small covered cups of wine. Our outdoor patio movie in November was rained out, but we will try to re-schedule.

Our Hanukkah Bazaar will run from November 29 through December 9 by appointment. We have a lot of new items to sell.

Our ZOOM Lunch 'n Learn and our Sunday School classes with our Student Rabbi Aria have been picking up in attendance.

Happy Hanukkah to all in the Central Valley who celebrate. Anyone needing information on our ZOOM services or learning more about Judaism, please call us.

Marsha Brooks-Smith



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

Beit Shalom continues to gather for Shabbat dinner and words of Torah each week albeit in a smaller home environment. We find the adage, "More than Israel has kept the Sabbath, has the Sabbath kept Israel," to be especially poignant this year.

Hebrew classes continue and it's very exciting to utilize "Bereshit", a learner's newspaper published in Israel, as additional interesting study materials.

Our long-term Holocaust Memorial project has had the good fortune to receive many additional boxes of buttons/donations in the last months. I believe we are over the 5 five million mark and will reach the six million mark goal before too long. We are in need of help not only to count buttons, but to help further this project. If you are interested in bringing Jewish education to the Central Valley via the building of a memorial,

Valley via the building of a memorial, please contact me.



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.

FRESNO JEWISH FILM SERIES 2020/2021 SEASON

We are going hi-tech and you and your family will watch a film from the comfort of your own home. After we have all seen the same movie, we will get together on Zoom and discuss the movie with our film friends. And best of all, it will be totally free!

December	Go for Zucker
January 2021	Over the Rainbow (from The Story of the Jews)
February	Restoration: Boker Tov Adon Fidelman
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!"

Your Film Committee: Elizabeth, Saretta, Judy, Sandy, Wendy, Sylvie, Pat, and David

Scholarship winner thanks JFCC

As the recipient of the Jewish Studies Scholarship of Spring 2020, I am writing today to express my gratitude for your generous donation to my academic career.



Alea Droker

Growing up in Kings County as a Jewish person was an isolating experience, with no synagogue even in the next town over. My town was incredibly anti-Semitic and racist because of ignorance and hatred. I know what it's like to be unheard, and my experiences motivated me to lead underrepresented communities.

Upon entering Fresno State in 2018, I was not aware of the existence of the Jewish Studies Program and its opportunities because of how small and unrecognized the Jewish community ... is in Fresno. Upon my discovery of the JSP, I decided that I would like to involve Jewish studies in my academic pursuits.

The research I conducted gave me opportunities to connect with Jewish figures, primarily women, throughout history that are seldom named or credited. I feel it is my responsibility to speak for these unheard/unnamed voices. At nineteen, I have stepped up to lead my community as a student liaison of the Jewish Leadership Council at Fresno State.

With your generous donation, I hope I have made clear the incredible opportunity you have given to me, as well as the opportunities you have given the people I aim to help here in the Central Valley. I have always looked up to the Jewish Federation as an organization that both stands for Jewish people and engages us in our own communities. Thank you so much!

Alea Droker

an amazing time for recovery and health. Moreover, by performing mitzvahs during the week you continue this process. So, stay Positive and test Negative!

David ben Hirsch HaCohen



Chassidus Corner

Rebbe Schneerson always emphasized the use of positive words. For example, he disliked the word "deadline" because of its connection to *death*, and would change this to "due date" with its connection to *birth*. He preferred the word house of healing "Beit refuah", to *Beit cholim*, which means house of the sick. This process is called "positivity bias".

In fact by emphasizing the positive, your brain and your neuro-genes are activated to be very healthy. The reverse, "negativity bias" is our natural response to remember the negative moments of any experience, as a form of protection. Unfortunately, this results in wearing out our brain circuits, memory loss, premature aging, dysfunctional sleep rhythm etc.

Now when a Jew davens, his brain circuits light up in a healthy way, washing away the pollutants that accumulate in his brain cells, invigorating his personality, hormone production and memory.

So by keeping *Shabbos* and connecting with Hashem for 26 hours, you provide your soul and physical body with

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his wisdom will be enduring.”*

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The publication of the
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