

## THE RABBI'S TURN

## Rethinking Jewish education

RABBI BERNIE FOX Northwest Yeshiva High School

Jewish education should no longer be marketed as the foundation of Jewish continuity. I have been professionally engaged in Jewish education for over 35 years. Until recently, I believed that we should promote intensive Jewish education as the only proven means of assuring Jewish continuity. My reasoning was simple. It is capsulized in a conversation I had a few years ago with a friend.

My friend is a grandfather. At the time, he was working through a very difficult decision.

One of his grandchildren was about to marry out of faith. My friend had announced to his family that he would not attend the wedding. Predictably, his position had not been well received by his wife and children. He asked me whether I believed he was acting properly or whether he should back down and attend his grandson's wedding.

I am an Orthodox rabbi. So, I assume that my friend expected me to support his courageous stance. But I do not like to give advice. I prefer to facilitate and empower others in their own decision-making process. I pointed out to my friend that he had not provided his own children with much Jewish education. I assume that his children had followed his example and that his grandchildren had received as little or even less Jewish education than their parents.

I wondered out loud to my friend. If his grandchildren know little of the meaning of being Jewish and have only a vague and superficial identification with the Jewish people, then why should his grandchildren seek Jewish spouses? In fact, if his grandchildren did insist on dating and marrying only Jewish people, would that reflect a proud, grounded commitment to our people, faith, and our continuity? Would not such a preference reflect bias and prejudice against those not born Jewish?

My outlook has been that we want to secure Jewish continuity. This means that our children must identify with the Jewish people. We also expect or hope that our children will create their own Jewish families. But for these aspirations to be achieved, our children must find meaning in their Jewishness. Their Jewishness must be so meaningful to them that they will sustain it and nurture it throughout their lives. Their Jewishness must be so important to them that they will want to create Jewish families of their own.

That was my perspective for many years. We need Jewish education if we wish to develop and nurture in our children this meaningful Jewish identity. But our world



has changed and so has the environment in which we raise and educate our children. Now, much more is at stake.

Often, I am asked about the changes I have observed in our teenagers over the past three-plus decades. I have observed some important overall trends. One of these long-term trends concerns me. Our young people increas-

ing struggle to develop a moral perspective. There are a number of forces that undermine their development.

First, what are the values of our contemporary society in which we raise our children? One value enjoys consensus support — personal autonomy. This is an important value. We recognize that we must respect and promote the personal autonomy of every individual in our community. This value underlies our efforts to protect individual rights. To an extent, our commitment to personal autonomy also motivates our efforts to provide opportunities for advancement of the underprivileged among us. But our commitment to personal autonomy is not an adequate moral underpinning for a healthy society. Furthermore, autonomy can easily morph into extreme narcissism.

The conventional values that might complement our commitment to personal autonomy are increasingly questioned or dismissed as old-fashioned or quaint. Honesty and personal integrity, whether in business dealings or in personal relationships, has become a function of convenience. Increasingly, we — as members of a community — are unwilling to intervene when we observe evil or wrongdoing. Sexual ethics are rapidly becoming irrelevant. Sexual intimacy is increasingly a response to desire and physical urge rather than an expression of love and commitment. It is not surprising that in this context, one university after another is struggling to respond to the emerging pattern of student-on-student sexual abuse. Even more alarming is the pervasive reluctance of young people to intervene against or to report the abuse of peers.

A second aspect of our teenagers' environment is damaging to their moral development. What is the most important issue to a serious, ambitious teenager? Virtually each of these young people is focused on college and career. This intense focus is accompanied by — and to an extent, motivated by — an increasingly competitive college admissions process. To gain admission to the universities of their choice, our high schoolers need better scores, grades, and more impressive applications than the applicants who preceded them five or ten

## It's time to act: Vote Yes on I-594

JOEL MAGALNICK Editor, JTNews

Every morning, Seattle mayor Ed Murray wakes up, walks his dog, then gets a report on what happened overnight throughout the city. Invariably, he told a crowd of nearly 200 at Temple De Hirsch Sinai on Oct. 19, there will have been an incident involving gunfire.

His audience, representing synagogues and churches across the Seattle area, took to the streets that sunny afternoon to march downtown from Capitol Hill in support of Initiative 594, which would require that

most transfers of firearms take place with a background check. Passage of the initiative, which our state's legislature ignored during its session earlier this year, will save lives, according to the mayor.

That includes not just police officers, but "the reports I see on domestic violence related to guns will decrease," Murray said. "Fewer women will be shot."

He's right. And it's why you should vote yes on I-594.

The initiative's language spells out exactly who cannot purchase a firearm, should this law be passed: "Felons, persons convicted of domestic violence crimes, and persons dangerously mentally ill as determined by a court should not be eligible to possess guns for public safety reasons."

That seems like common sense, doesn't it? Why at this point do we allow otherwise?

Over the past decade, in our Jewish institutions — around the world and here in Seattle in 2006, and in our schools, in our workplaces, on our streets, we see the pain and trails of blood that gun violence leaves behind. Earlier this year, when day after day

it felt like yet someone else had gone on a shooting rampage, we had to wonder how and when this epidemic might stop.

Rabbi Daniel Weiner, senior rabbi at Temple De Hirsch Sinai, wondered the same thing after 27 people died at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut nearly two years ago. That spurred him into action to speak out on his pulpit, in front of our legislature, and to our entire community to act on I-594.



Cheryl Stumbo, second from left, and Seattle Mayor Ed Murray, third from left, help carry the banner that leads the march of faith groups down Madison St. in support of I-594. Stumbo, I-594's citizen sponsor, was injured in the shooting at the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle offices in 2006.

"If this legislation can save one innocent life from being needlessly and wantonly taken because somebody possessed a powerful firearm when they should not have possessed it, that would be enough," Weiner told me that afternoon as the march to the King County courthouse began. "We're hoping that obviously will result in many, many lives that are saved and aren't unnecessarily cut short."

I've paid attention to the arguments against this initiative, and they fall flat. Clearly I-594's passage will not keep the guns out of the hands of everyone. If a criminal

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years ago. This places enormous pressure upon our young people. Some become so intensely focused upon admission to college that there is little room in their lives to think about moral and ethical issues and to mature into responsible adults.

As a result of these influences and others, we are raising our children in a value-poor environment. Should we not want more for them?

I hope we want our children to identify with the Jewish people. But I know that

every parent wants his or her children to be moral, ethical, and value driven. Our children need intensive Jewish education not just to be Jewishly committed, but also to be individuals of whom we will be proud.

When I consider the past 35 years, I feel very accomplished. So many of the young people with whom I have worked are committed to the Jewish people. Many are leaders in the community. But I am most proud of their commitment to values and living ethical lives.

"The important thing is to reaffirm the moral distinction between Israel with democratic legitimacy and the part of Israel without democratic legitimacy."

— Commentator Peter Beinart, who spoke in Seattle on Oct. 23 about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. See the story on page 6.

## ◀ TARYN HARRIS PAGE 18

Though she clearly has little time for herself, when she does have down time she likes reading, hanging out with friends, and hip-hop dance. All the hard work seems to be worth it, though.

"I'm really honored and humbled by an award like this," Harris said. "I feel

gratified that my passions and the work I have been doing the past few years is making some changes and affecting people in a positive way."

## ◀ VOTE YES ON I-594 PAGE 5

really wants to get his or her hands on a gun, it will likely happen. But this law puts much more of an onus on the seller: Where today there's no penalty on a person who sells or transfers a firearm used in a crime, I-594 will force that seller to think twice before putting that gun into the wrong hands without doing the due diligence first.

And the scare tactics — that the state is trying to take everyone's guns away, just like the Nazis did — is just that: Fear mongering and obfuscation, to borrow a word from the National Rifle Association's testimony against this initiative. And false. The Nazis did not take guns away from anyone but

Jews. In addition, I-594 says nothing about taking people's guns away. Nothing.

This initiative is not about pitting people who like or own guns against people who don't. Plenty of gun owners support this initiative. They realize that a good gun owner is a safe gun owner, and that because of the nature of such an object — that its purpose can and does cause irreparable harm — the act of purchasing a firearm should be different from that of purchasing groceries or a cell phone.

And don't be confused by the competing initiative, 591, which is cynicism at its worst. Suggesting that we shouldn't have any background checks whatsoever until there's a national standard — which its sponsors



MERYL ALCABES PHOTOGRAPHY

Michelle Goldstein Benisti, left, and Yasmin Sikavi were among 200 women and men who came to the 415 Westlake event space on Oct. 23 to prepare challahs to take home and bake for the Shabbat Project, a community-wide — and worldwide — celebration of the Sabbath that weekend.

know full well will not happen in our lifetimes — would open the door to much more violent crime and put far more people in harm's way. It should not even be a consideration.

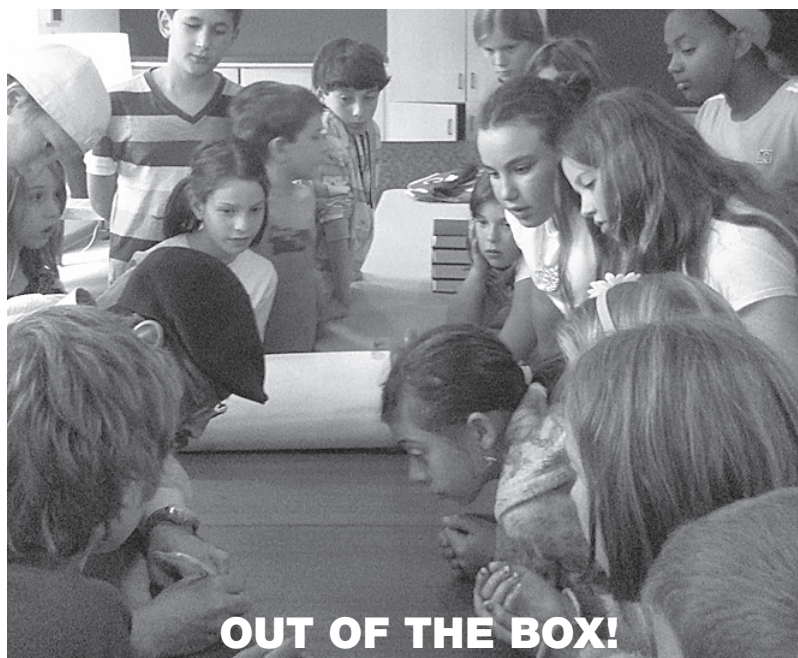
As I write this, a community in our own backyard has been shocked: A 14-year-old kid took the life of two of his fellow students and injured five others before turning his gun on himself. While the information coming out about this latest shooting suggests a background check may not have made a difference in this case — as 594 opponents will be sure to point out — it doesn't matter. We need to make a statement that we as a community will not accept the use of guns to solve our problems.

I-594 is not perfect. It does not completely solve the issue of getting guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them. But up to this point, we've done nothing. Nothing.

As the shootings in Marysville, or Newtown, or Aurora, or Ottawa, or Belltown should make abundantly clear, *we no longer have the luxury of doing nothing*. Too many lives are being lost for no good reason. We have, on our ballots, the opportunity to move the needle just a little bit. Even if you think it's not much more than a feel-good measure, even if you think it's not enough, it's at least something.

Do something. Take this opportunity, and vote yes on Initiative 594.

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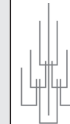
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## With an outstretched arm, vote yes on Prop. 1

**JOEL MAGALNICK** Editor, JTNews

When we've written about Metro buses in recent years, it has been about the controversial ads that appear on them. This time, I'm asking you to save the vehicles that carry those ads, and a plea to vote yes on the proposition King County residents are being asked to vote on by April 22.

As we roll into the Passover holiday, we think about welcoming the stranger into our homes. Proposition 1 asks us to do much of the same thing: To open our hearts (and checkbooks) by spending \$40 more per year on our license plate tabs and approximately \$11 per month on average in sales tax to maintain current bus service throughout the county.

Passage of this proposition is the difference between a job and unemployment for many of the poorer people in our region. It's the transportation for university students who have to live far from campus because housing has become too expensive for them in the city. It's the way a disabled person can make it to a job or a doctor's visit. If you want to think about this selfishly, it's the difference between bad traffic and gridlock, as the county has estimated that as many as 30,000 more cars would appear on the roads each day because of the loss in bus service. And that's not to



JOEL MAGALNICK

mention the additional pollution so many more cars would cause in a region that's just not as clean as we believe it to be.

This proposition has been put before you not as a bailout for Metro, which has been running more or less efficiently for many years, but as a rescue due to the failure of our state's legislature to act on a transportation bill. When members of our

state's Jewish legislative caucus reflected on the just-ended session last month, nearly all of the representatives expressed frustration that the Senate majority leader would not bring the bill, which would provide funding statewide for transit and road maintenance, to a vote.

I've seen arguments against the measure that use a "stick it to Seattle" theme

— in essence, because the majority of bus rides happen in Seattle, it shouldn't fall upon rural riders to subsidize them. But those critics have it backwards. Historically, when Metro has had to make cuts, the first routes to go have been the ones with the lowest ridership — the ones the farthest from the center of the city which are often where the people with the lowest incomes need it the most. Access buses, which provide necessary transportation for the elderly and disabled, would also end up on the chopping block.

Twenty mayors in King County have come out in favor of this measure, because they, as the people who must intimately understand the workings of their municipalities, understand that having less bus service will most harm their citizens with the least.

During Passover, we tell of how we were slaves, and we had nothing. Once Moses, with his outstretched arm, parted the sea and gave us our freedom, we had everything in the world.

For many of our fellow citizens, access to transportation is their ticket to freedom. As we tell the story of the Exodus at our seders next week, outstretch your own arms. Then vote yes on Proposition 1.

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# Survey says! A study launches to understand our Jewish community

**JOEL MAGALNICK** Editor, JTNews

It's almost inevitable when we travel, or have visitors come to town, that they ask the same question: How many Jews are there in Seattle? The answer, we'll find out later this year, is trivial, if not trivia. As both the sponsors and the conductors of a just-launched demographic study of the Puget Sound region's Jewish community will tell you, it's about the who, what, where and how we live our Jewish lives.

"We'll get the numbers, because they're important to have and to know where people are and to understand some trends," said Keith Dvorchik, president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle, which commissioned the study, "but what we really are looking at are: What are the opportunities in the community? What are the needs in the community? What do people like, what do people not like? What are the attitudes about our community, and how can we adjust as a community to provide for these needs and take advantage of these opportunities?"

In late March, a team from the Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies at Brandeis University visited Seattle to explain the methodologies of the study and to begin collecting information from local Jewish agencies to begin formulating its questionnaire.

"There are certain things that every community wants to know about," said Matthew Boxer, a research scientist for the Cohen Center who is overseeing the Seattle study. "As I like to say, there's really only one Jewish community and everything is just a variation on the same in some ways."

That said, "Seattle's an interesting community — different in a lot of ways from a lot of communities we've studied in the past," Boxer added. "We're excited to have the opportunity to examine it more closely and get to know it better."

The goal of the study, which is expected to be released around Thanksgiving, "is being done in the context of a very simple

<b>THE COMMUNITY STUDY TIMELINE</b>	
Here is the expected timeline for the community demographic study.	
<b>Mid to late March</b>	Collection of organization lists
<b>Late March</b>	List processing Purchase of Ethnic Names Frame lists
<b>Early April</b>	Compiled names list complete Survey programmed into Cohen Center's software
<b>Mid-April</b>	Survey instruments completed and tested Sample populations completed
<b>Late April</b>	Survey letters with online links mailed to households
<b>Early May</b>	Phone survey calls begin
<b>Late July</b>	Survey collection ends
<b>Early August</b>	Data cleaned and analysis begins
<b>Mid-September</b>	Draft report sent to Federation for review
<b>Late November</b>	Final report released

question, which is, 'So what?'" Dvorchik said. "We want to make sure, and this is a Federation goal, that this study provides information that everybody can use for future planning."

As the Federation works to become the agency that every other Jewish organization looks to for building partnerships and taking a high-level view of the community as a whole, Dvorchik said he hopes the survey "will provide information that will allow agencies to say, 'Wow, there's this need here that we didn't know of, or the need here is less than we thought so maybe we'll spend more of our resources somewhere else.'"

Boxer said the study will do just that. "We can compare interfaith families to endogamous families where both partners are Jewish," he said. "We can compare people in different age ranges.... We can compare households with children to households that don't have children."

Getting even deeper, as Boxer's team reaches out to local households with its questions, they want to find out how this

community lives its Jewish lives.

"There's a substantial proportion of the population for whom Judaism is not at all a religion. It's their background, it's their heritage, but they don't practice it as a religion," Boxer said. "They are nevertheless very proud to be Jews and they do all kinds of Jewish religious things."

That aspect of the study excites Judy Neuman, CEO of the Stroum Jewish Community Center.

Given that the demographic data the SJCC and other agencies work from is 14 years old, "getting some of that factual demographic information will set a new baseline," Neuman said. "We really do want to understand all kinds of things, from what would it take to get a Northender to drive across the bridge [to Mercer Island]? What kind of programming will really move them?"

Though Boxer said the survey won't put too much effort into finding the Jews who don't want to be found, Neuman believes it will give a holistic view of what the Jewish community looks like.

"The more we can have some good information, the more we can have that flexibility to serve [our members'] interests," she said. "It will move our programming forward probably in different directions. Not unilaterally, but in a direction we're not even thinking about today."

Will Berkovitz, CEO of Jewish Family Service, said he is curious about how the demographics of the Seattle area's Jewish community are changing.

"For me, I think it helps us define the needs of our population and who our population is, and give clarity on what they want and need," Berkovitz said.

In building the survey's questions, it's a delicate process to balance input from so many organizations that want data specific to their missions with a list that doesn't overwhelm the respondents.

"We try to leave everybody equally disappointed, and try to give them as much as possible of what they really need to be able to do what they want to do," Boxer said.

The methods for finding and surveying the community are far different than they were in 2000, the last time the Federation commissioned such a study. With the proliferation of cell phones, opening a phone book and calling names that look Jewish doesn't work if people don't change their numbers when they move into or out of town — if they even appear in the white pages at all. Instead, the center is using what Boxer said "gets you the vast majority of the Jewish population for the most affordable cost."

That starts with the list. During March, the Cohen Center collected contact lists from every Jewish organization and synagogue in King, Pierce, Snohomish and Kitsap counties, with the promise that these lists would be used solely for the survey, then destroyed.

"It's not just the Federation, it's not just the JCC or the synagogues, it's cultural groups, it's social groups, it's secular

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◀ **DEMOGRAPHICS PAGE 7**

groups, college groups, groups for singles, groups for elderly, groups for people in need, whatever's out there," Boxer said.

Each household, depending upon its source, is then assigned to a layer, such as synagogue member, day school family, or senior citizen. Boxer's team then weights each layer based upon priorities the community has set. That weight then determines the sample size for each layer. In

the final analysis, any under- or over-sampled layers will use those weights to ensure an accurate view of the community as a whole.

The survey questions will be based on the same priorities.

Second, the surveyors will use what's called the ethnic names frame, five lists purchased from data brokers that contain surnames of people who disproportionately identify as Jewish. One of those lists specifically targets Sephardic names,

which Boxer said has been a common concern in Seattle. He said he has also heard that a small Persian Jewish community exists in the area, so he may need to compile a list encompassing that group as well.

"It's worth looking into in the offhand chance that there are a thousand [Persian] Jews," he said. "It's not a lot, but it's a population."

The Federation spent more than a year preparing to launch this community study, the cost of which will not exceed \$149,900 plus expenses, budgeted over five years.

"We will continue to reserve the dollars after that to ensure we have money to refresh the data or update the study at appropriate intervals," according to Dvorchik.

While the Cohen Center is not the only organization that does such work, Dvorchik said the committee overseeing the study felt the center's methods would get the best results given limited funds.

"The Cohen Center made everybody feel the most comfortable that we would get the most results that we wanted, not in terms of specific numbers, [but] that they would be able to answer our questions, that it would be a scientifically valid study," he said.

Citing studies in New York and Portland by other demographers that turned out to be highly skewed, "there's a very comforting feeling using them that we're going to get real data in a form that will allow us to use it," Dvorchik said.



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# Your seder in an hour: Two haggadot go head to head

**JOEL MAGALNICK** Editor, JTNews

When “The Sixty Minute Seder” came across my desk a few weeks back, I didn’t give it much thought. When, not much later, a bigger, prettier “The 60 Minute Seder” landed in roughly the same spot, I thought maybe the publishers had, curiously, printed a larger version. Once I actually gave them a look, I realized these Haggadot are very, very different creatures. Given that two different sets of authors came up with the idea of formalizing a seder in under an hour, how could I not put them head to head?

So here we go: The showdown. Let’s start off with two competing, very different thoughts. First, the idea that someone would actually create a book that basically skips over the discussion, the learning, the richness of the story of the Exodus offends my sensibilities. Who do these people think they are that they can pick and choose for us what gets included in our meal and what doesn’t? Isn’t that our grumpy father’s job? But let’s be honest. From my childhood, at every seder I’ve ever attended, I have thumbed through the Haggadah to find exactly which page the meal is served, then counted the minutes until we got there.

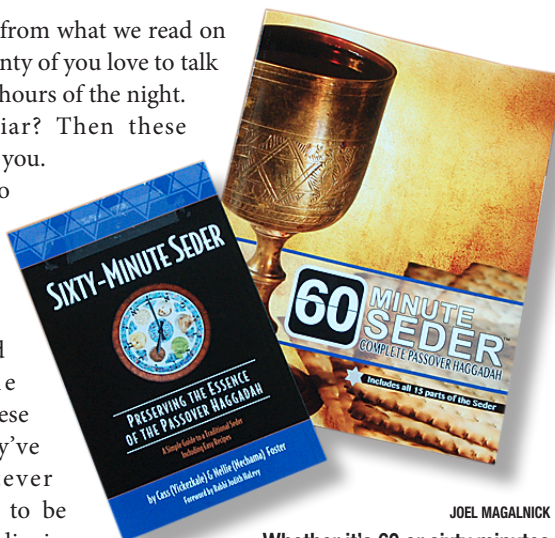
Admittedly, some seder leaders do a great job of keeping us engaged, exercising our minds, asking us to consider the story

in different ways from what we read on the page. And plenty of you love to talk and sing until all hours of the night.

Sound familiar? Then these books are not for you.

So what do they offer aside from the knowledge that whoever actually goes out and purchases one (or many) of these guides that they’ve satisfied whatever obligation needs to be satisfied before digging into the gefilte fish? Not a lot.

“The Sixty Minute Seder,” by Cass (Yichezkale) and Nellie (Nechama) Foster (Six Points Press, \$13.95), like most Haggadot, reads from right to left. The book itself runs about 60 pages, half of them devoted to the bare minimum of the 15 items that make the seder complete. There’s a little Hebrew, but most everything’s in transliteration for the non-Hebrew readers. That may make some of you uncomfortable, but if you’re welcoming in the stranger, what’s more welcoming than Hebrew in English?



**JOEL MAGALNICK**  
Whether it’s 60 or sixty minutes you want in your seder, you may as well pick and choose what you want from the Haggadah you’ve got.

Score one for the Fosters. The other half consists of recipes, songs, a glossary, and a book-order form.

The Fosters do offer a page of discussion about the seder — at the back of the book. Don’t blink

▶ **PAGE 30**

	The Sixty Minute Seder	The 60 Minute Seder
Adequately tells the Passover story	X	X
Just the facts, ma’am	X	
Nice illustrations/artwork		X
Facilitates discussion		
Easy to hold	X	
Good for kids to learn		
Good for kids’ patience	X	
Gets almost right to the meal	X	X
Acknowledges women	X	
Lets in Elijah	X	X
Includes songs	X	X
Trademarked name		X
Has an obnoxious ad at the back for other Passover books to purchase	X	X
Mentions Twitter because, you know, it’s short	X	
On its website, calls the other Haggadah an imitator		X
Leaves you wondering what the point is	X	X

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# Chag Pesach Sameach!

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◀ **SARAJEVO HAGGADAH PAGE 21**

owners. Twice during the 20th century it was saved by Muslims there at great risk to their lives — once by Dervis Korkut from the hands of the Nazis, and more

recently in the mid-1990s by Enver Imamovic during the deadly years of the Siege of Sarajevo.

Kljuco grew up in the former Yugoslavia but left her home in 1993 during the Bosnian War. She spent time in refugee

camp, a painful memory to this day, she said in the email.

“The Haggadah...suffered transformations which make it even more special by giving it a richer history that reflects its passage through different cultures,” Kljuco

wrote. “I also travel around the world and with every journey I get a new ‘scar,’ positive or negative. But I keep my dignity and get richer by traveling through different circumstances and sharing culture with others through my music.”

◀ **SIXTY/60 PAGE 22**

or you’ll miss it. Artwork consists of clip art and a handful of photos. The dimensions, similar to the old Maxwell House standby, make it easy to hide this under your plate during mealtime.

“The 60 Minute Seder,” by Robert Kopman and Bill Yanok (self-published,

\$10.95), which, mystifyingly, has been trademarked, is one of the first I’ve come across that reads from left to right. It’s filled with colorful stock photos of deserts and other Passover-related images, drawings, and far more text for participants to read. The imagery is generally nice from page to page, but as a whole feels so different from one another that it doesn’t

appear to have a unifying style or theme. This Haggadah’s dimensions are much larger — 8-1/2 x 11” — so balancing that with a glass of wine or your Hillel sandwich may be a challenge.

If you had to choose between the two, I’d recommend, well, neither. If you do the seder out of obligation and just want to get it out of the way, chances are you’ve

got your grandparents’ Haggadot in a box in the attic somewhere. Dig those out, skip the boring stuff, and get to the meal.

If you feel like you want to learn more about the Exodus, you want to ruminate over the four questions, you want to discuss whether the wicked child was truly wicked or just really smart, you’re not going to find that here. Sorry, folks.

◀ **FROGS PAGE 25**

This was an important mussar lesson for me. As a children’s author, I can get caught up in negotiations and asserting my rights. Sometimes I forget to step back and say, “Oh yeah, I’m in this for the kids.”

Have a happy — and hoppy — Passover. (And don’t worry, Shirley is getting royalties for “Frogs in the Bed,” as she well deserves.)

To hear Shirley’s original recording, visit [www.ou.org/jewish\\_action/02/2014/frogs-everywhere-shirley/](http://www.ou.org/jewish_action/02/2014/frogs-everywhere-shirley/).

Ann D. Koffsky is the author/illustrator of more than 30 books for children. See her work at [www.annkoffsky.com](http://www.annkoffsky.com). This article originally appeared in the Spring 2014 issue of Jewish Action, the quarterly magazine of the Orthodox Union, [www.ou.org](http://www.ou.org).

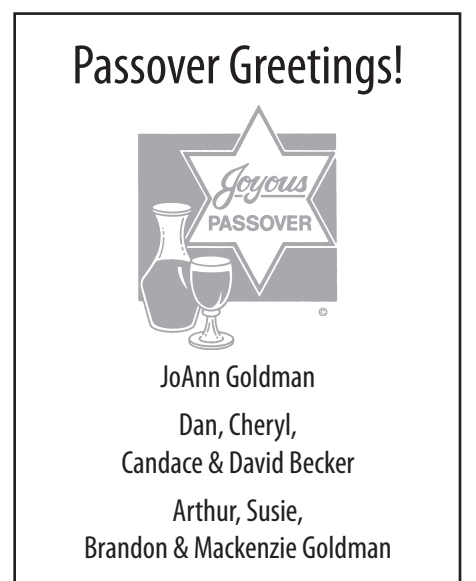
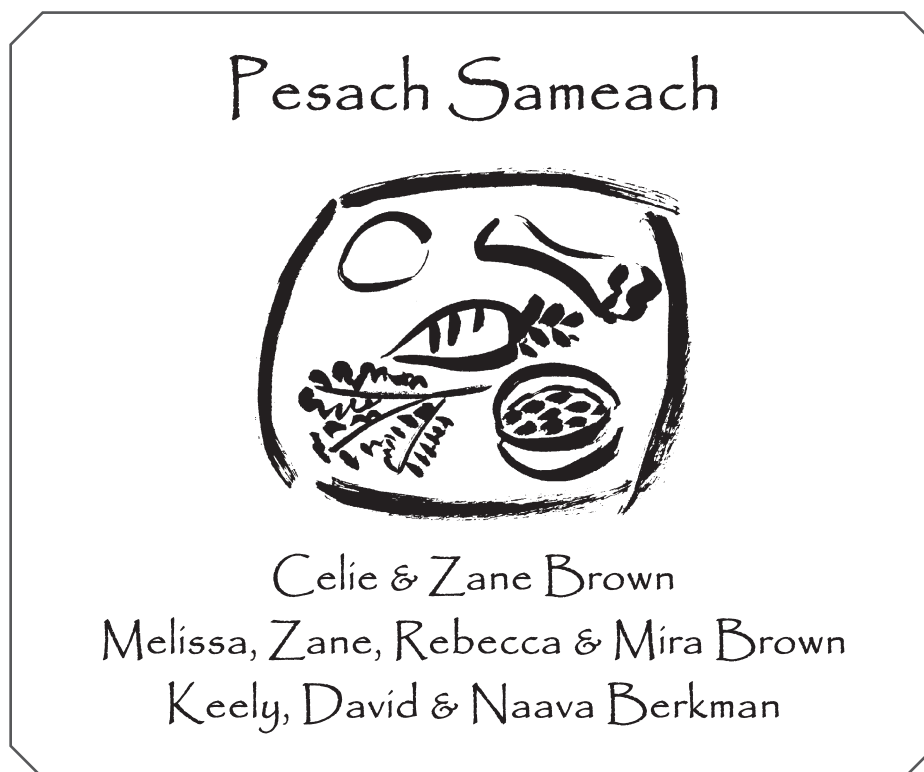
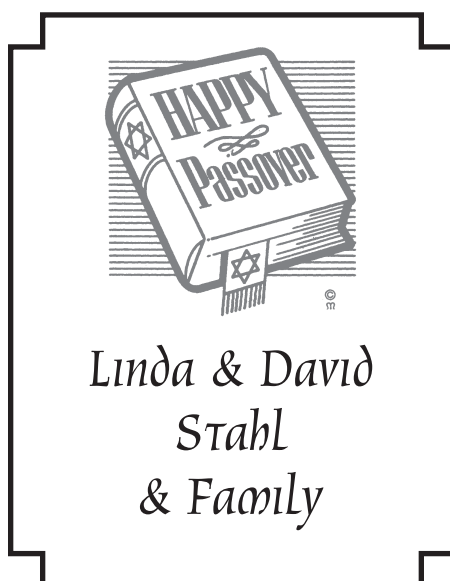
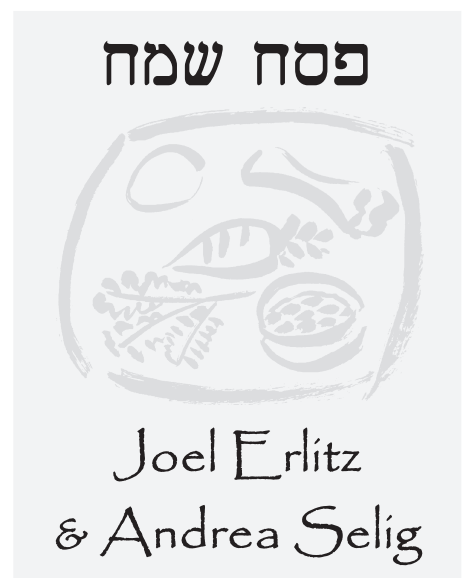
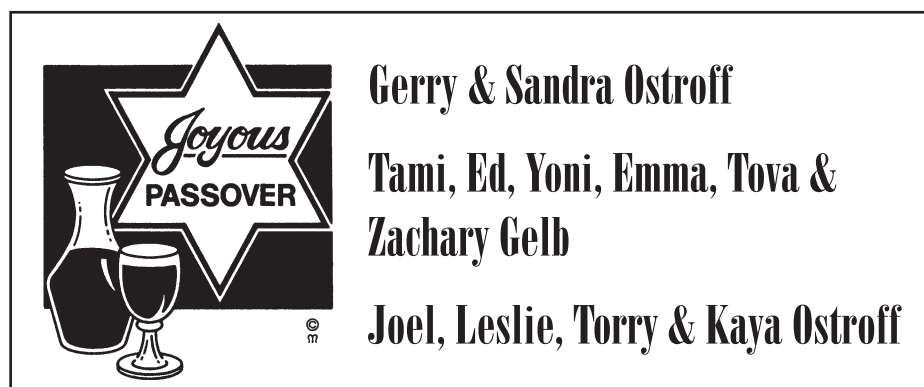
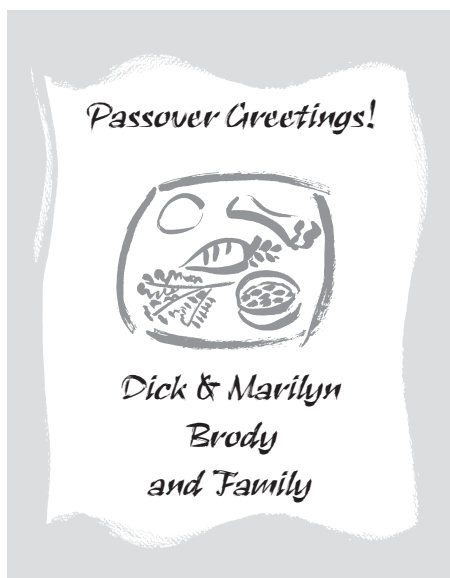
◀ **5TH QUESTION PAGE 29**

always easy or possible.

But struggling with God, and yearning for God, is inherently Jewish. Uncertainty and skepticism is not heresy; it is the foundation upon which the Jewish faith and faith in God is built. Passover is a wonderful opportunity to look at where we are as we wander in our own desert of ideas

about what God may or may not mean to us. Perhaps a Fifth Question at the Seder might be: Why is my God different from your God?

It might be just the right question to ask to help us fulfill the commandment that “in every generation we should regard ourselves as though we personally left Egypt.”



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## What do students learn when a curriculum is based on politics?

**JOEL MAGALNICK** Editor, JTNews

*Editor's note: This is the first in a two-part series on a social studies curriculum offered to the state's social studies teachers that focuses on Palestinians and their side of the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.*

Whether it's seen as a way to teach students about an under-examined side of a conflict or as an irresponsible attempt at indoctrination, the next battleground in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict appears to be coming to high school social studies classrooms.

Three years in the making and first appearing about a year and a half ago, the Palestine Teaching Trunk is the brainchild of Linda Bevis, a former high school social studies teacher and an activist with Seattle's Palestine Solidarity Committee. Bevis, who has lived in the Palestinian territories, wanted to create a curriculum that focuses on the Palestinians because "they're the group less heard from, less publicized in the United States media and curriculums," she told JTNews.

But Rob Jacobs, the director of Israel advocacy organization StandWithUs Northwest, questions why the same people who put ads highly critical of Israel on the sides of Metro buses and local billboards should be offering its teaching materials in our schools.

"No advocacy group should be producing a curriculum...for public school because they're representing a perspective," he said.

Sarah Culpepper Stroup, a professor of classics on the faculties of comparative religion and Jewish studies at the University of Washington, agrees. In her opinion, the curriculum "puts words and political intentions in the teachers' mouths."

While Washington State social studies requirements specify what skills students in 9th and 10th grade — for which this curriculum has been created — should be attaining, the content itself is left to the individual teachers for the areas of history, geography, civics, economics and basic social studies skills.

"I haven't seen any directives from the State of Washington that you can't use such and such material to teach this course," said Jacobs, who has been monitoring the trunk's creation. One example in the state's suggested guidelines for teaching history includes "Examines Palestinians' and Israelis' perspectives on the causes of conflict in the Middle East to develop a position on the primary cause of the conflict."

And therein lies the opportunity. Bevis began to collect materials from social studies teachers she knew who were teaching about the conflict, and from there compiled the trunk that contains videos, activities, and 700 pages of information, which "[provides] multiple perspectives," she said. "There are at least two sides to the story, so we framed it as

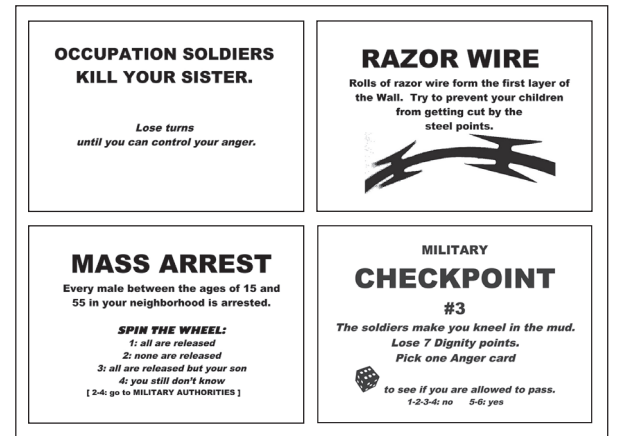
competing narratives, which is one accepted social studies way of teaching the issue."

Whether the trunk accurately portrays the competing narratives is another story.

Stroup said this curriculum is both manipulative and "a general misrepresentation of the history of the area. There were factual problems in the longer history of the area and the origins of the conflict."

Those inaccuracies ranged from "a general misrepresentation of the history of the area," according to Stroup, to a video featuring Bevis and collaborator Ed Mast "that talks about how Zionist leaders went to England and France and asked them to please expel their Jews so that they could be forced to go to Israel," according to Jacobs.

Because the curriculum focuses so heavily on emotions — a card in "The Occupation Game" states you've been "shot by Occupation soldiers and die instantly," and an exercise asks students to draw out areas in their own neighborhoods that would be cut off by the "building of a concrete wall 25 feet high and 9 feet wide," as the "Dig Deep Classroom Based Assessment (CBA): Palestine-Israel: The Effects of Occupation" lesson presents —



FROM THE PALESTINE TEACHING TRUNK

A selection of cards from the Palestine Teaching Trunk's "Occupation Game."

"the topic is bound to give lies to emotions," Stroup said.

Bevis said the game is "only one small part of the trunk," but it "accurately reflects what it's like to live under occupation."

Bevis is straightforward about the curriculum focusing on the Palestinian perspective, but "with a focus on human rights and equal rights," she said. "The part that isn't the causes of the conflict focuses on Palestinians and Israelis whose perspective is that everyone should have equal rights."

The online videos and DVDs include titles such as "Occupation 101," video study guides on non-violent ways Palestinians have attempted to end the Gaza block-

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ade, and a trailer called "Roadmap to Israeli Apartheid," which "compares South African Apartheid to Israeli Apartheid." To provide what Bevis called balance, that lesson includes a counterpoint video, produced by Maoz Israel, a Tel Aviv-based Messianic Jewish organization.

"I tried to present just the basic study of the story of Israel, and the basic story of the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians," Bevis said.

StandWithUs supports an Israeli-Palestinian curriculum from the Institute for Curricular Studies, which is funded by the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco and the Jewish Center for Public Affairs.

"It provides both narratives and a lot of perspectives on both," with "materials from Israelis and Palestinians and American Jews," Jacobs said.

Stroup also praised the ICM curriculum for its evenhandedness, but questioned whether teachers should be spending nine weeks on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"It's really important to teach, but there's other history that is also very, very important to teach," she said. "As a teacher it does not make sense to me to privilege it so greatly."

Even Bevis doesn't believe that teachers will use the full nine weeks of her curriculum, and has offered suggested two-, three- and four-week units.

Stroup suggested that the only reason so much time and effort would be expended on this particular conflict, especially in a region so fraught with so many conflicts, is political.

"There's not an educational argument to privilege this conflict...over so many conflicts in history," she said.



COURTESY TEMPLE BETH AM

Bill Friedman, right, greets Rabbi Ruth A. Zlotnick, who was installed into her position as Temple Beth Am's senior rabbi at a special Shabbat service on Nov. 14. Behind, at center, is James L. Mirel, rabbi emeritus of Temple B'nai Torah.

### Kol HaNeshamah introduces FRED Talks

On Sun., Nov. 23, West Seattle's Kol HaNeshamah will introduce FRED Talks, in which synagogue members talk about their work lives.

"We seldom take time to really learn about the challenges and the joys we face on a daily basis at work," says Kol HaNeshamah's Rabbi Zari Weiss. "FRED Talks are designed to give us the opportunity to hear more from one another about why we do what we do each day."

Based on the popular TED Talk series, four speakers will take the stage and give short lectures about the work they do. Those speakers will be J. Richard Goss, M.D., medical director at Harborview Medical Center, who will talk about the Ebola scare, Obamacare and other medical issues affecting our community; Scott Schill, producer of "Frank vs. God," a full-length feature comedy currently screening at film festivals around the country; Danielle Eidenberg-Noppe, education ombudsman at the Washington State Office of Education; and Alice Braverman, development director for Navos Mental Health Solutions. The event costs \$18/adults and \$12/seniors and students. At Kol HaNeshamah, 6115 SW Hinds St., Seattle.

### Chabad of Seattle introduces mobile synagogue

Taking prayer on the road, Chabad of Seattle launched a mobile synagogue this month to serve communities in parts of King County and Washington State that are not served by a nearby synagogue. The service launched in Shoreline, where 30 people, mostly Russian-Jewish immigrants, came together in an apartment complex.

"All but one family do not usually attend any shul on a regular basis," said Rabbi Yechezkel Rapoport, who with his wife Ora is taking their RV to a different site each month. "Everyone was very excited about an opportunity to attend Shabbos services in their neighborhood, and volunteered to help find more people and locations for next time."

Visit [www.seattlerussianjews.org/mobileshul](http://www.seattlerussianjews.org/mobileshul) to learn about upcoming locations of the RV.

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**W** Stroum Center for Jewish Studies

**S** Sephardic Studies Program

## A look back at what Kline Galland was, and now is

**JOEL MAGALNICK** Editor, JTNews

When the Caroline Kline Galland home first opened on the shores of Lake Washington in 1914, the ramshackle farmhouse held seven inmates, as they were called, all of them poor, infirm, single Jewish men with no other place to go.

"It is my desire that the home be so constructed and managed that it may bring to the lives of the aged men and women who shall be domiciled therein the greatest degree of contentment and happiness in their declining years," wrote Kline Galland in her will, which, upon her death in 1907, set in motion the wheels that would become the institution that celebrates its 100th anniversary this year.

These men — women would be admitted later — were required to help with the building's upkeep and to adhere to a strict set of rules that included who could visit and set times for when the lights must be turned out in the evening. Should the "inmates" break these rules, they'd be summarily removed. And

where would they go?

"They could care less," said Josh Gortler, the Kline Galland's now-retired CEO, of the matrons who ran the facility.

Gortler, who now manages the Kline Galland's endowment from the 10th floor of the Summit at First Hill, the independent and assisted-living facility that opened in 2001, arrived in Seattle in 1968 to lead the organization and serves as its de facto historian.

While Kline Galland has always strived to live up to the wishes of its first benefactor, it was not always easy. In the late 1920s, a zoning request to expand to 25 residents resulted in a case that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which sided with Kline Galland. By the end of the

1940s, the number of beds had reached 45, but it soon became clear that its original mission of housing the poor and infirm would need to change to suit the community's needs.

"What happened if you had money?" asked Gortler. If "you had a house or you had any possessions, you had to give it to

the trust" that managed all of the finances of the agency.

In the 1950s, a consultant working with the advisory board recommended a new facility and a move in the direction the rest of the nation was going with nursing care: Less custodial, and more social work and psychiatric intervention.

"The recommendation was that there needs to be a new facility to move into from this sheltered home," Gortler said, "into a more progressive approach for caring for the elderly."

The state agreed. In 1960, licensors called Kline Galland "an antiquated, inadequate facility," according to their report, and refused to renew its license. After pushback from the Jewish community, plus the launch of a \$1.1 million capital campaign, the home stayed in place and a new, modern 70-bed facility opened in 1967.

Spearheading that effort was local businessman and philanthropist Sol Esfeld, whose mother had been a long-time resident of Kline Galland.

Any resident of the nursing facility today can recall Esfeld's name — it graces the wing that made up the expansion after the new facility quickly filled to capacity.

"The impact of the home is so wide-

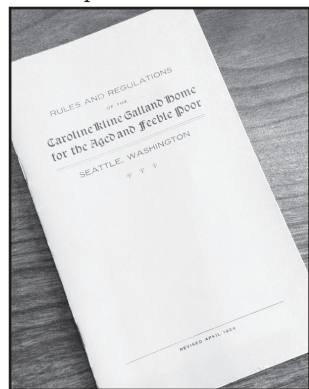
spread that nearly everyone in our community will be touched sooner or later," said Esfeld, who also led the \$3.6 million expansion campaign that brought Kline Galland's capacity to 140 beds.

Esfeld is also the man who first invited Gortler to move to Seattle to become the agency's new director. Gortler, a Holocaust survivor, had at the time been working for an organization in New York that served refugees. A staffer at the United Way in Seattle "discovered" Gortler when he presented a paper on "serving elderly people in a new type of a setting, combining housing and recreation and social services," he said.

United Way courted Gortler, but he turned them down. A member of that hiring committee tipped Esfeld to Gortler's ideas and the two met at a hotel in New York. Gortler agreed to a two-year commitment — after being approved by both the Kline Galland advisory committee and Seattle Trust, which still managed the finances — and "apparently things did work out, and I'm here, 45 years later," he said.

The Kline Galland that Josh Gortler came into — 70 residents, a \$250,000 budget, hardly any administrative staff

► PAGE 23



JOEL MAGALNICK

**A copy of the revised rules that governed the "inmates" of the Kline Galland home a century ago.**

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## Kline Galland at 100: Setting the direction for its second century

**JOEL MAGALNICK** Editor, JTNews

The day I walked into the Summit at First Hill to chat with Jeff Cohen, CEO of the Kline Galland and Affiliates Jewish senior service organization, the atmosphere was nothing like the image of the dank, infirm life I had of the Kline Galland's first days in an old farmhouse in Seward Park. The lobby bustled with residents, their visitors, and the occasional caregiver. As I sat with Cohen in the conference room, we could hear in the background two special guests: Members of the Seattle Opera who had come in that afternoon to give a performance.

If that's the reality of the few hundred who live in the Summit's 12-story tower, or a few miles south at the Kline Galland nursing facility in Seward Park, the real expansion over the past decade for the Jewish seniors' organization has been not in physical structures, but in services ranging from home care to pain management to dying with dignity.

It's what Cohen and outgoing board president Mark Kane call the "continuum of care," and it's what will keep Kline Galland relevant in the coming decades.

"Being in a position to provide the level of care to the elderly at all stages, from independent living to hospice, or full-scaled nursing, is wonderful that all of that can happen in a Jewish environment,"

Kane said.

As the Kline Galland celebrates its 100th anniversary, Cohen sees his organization as one that's on the vanguard of helping seniors as they age, whether it's on his turf or theirs.

"We're trying to meet the community's needs in a different way — not so much with bricks and mortar, but with programs that people want and need, and also that the government is guiding providers to provide," Cohen told JTNews. "To survive in this very dynamic health-care environment, you need to change, and luckily we've had a board that's very supportive and open and amenable to providing change that the community wants and needs."

This care for seniors across the spectrum has resulted in an increase of services on multiple fronts in the past eight years:

- A doubling of the number of beds in the transitional care unit, which provides short-term rehabilitation for post-operative seniors, making it the largest in the state.
- Establishment of a palliative care unit, a home-based service that provides pain management care for the chronically ill.
- Creation of the only Jewish hospice service in the Northwest, offered in either of the Kline Galland's facilities or off-site.

- A home-health agency that provides nursing care "to make sure the quality follows the patient home," Cohen said, which applies to about 95 percent of the patients discharged.

- Expansion of the home-care program, where nurse's aides help patients at home with bathing, dressing, medication reminders and more.

All of these programs, Cohen said, grew from the operating budget and are now self-sustaining.

With the arrival of the Affordable Care Act, known more familiarly as Obamacare, Cohen said Kline Galland had already been working to build up what the act embraces: "Giving appropriate care at the appropriate level for the appropriate cost," he said.

In particular, Cohen referred to hospital readmissions, even if the readmission has nothing to do with the original ailment.

"The hospital's going to be penalized," Cohen said. "So the hospitals are really focused on partnering with places that could help prevent those readmissions and give really good care after they discharge the patient."

These programs save hospitals and the state or federal government money, which keeps Kline Galland in the loop to continue to provide its services. But with the

### If you go:

A celebration of Kline Galland's 100th anniversary takes place Wed., Oct. 22 at 5:30 p.m. at Temple De Hirsch Sinai, 1441 16th Ave., Seattle, and will honor longtime benefactor Becky Benaroya. Registration costs \$25. Contact 206-652-4444 or visit [www.klinegalland.org](http://www.klinegalland.org) to RSVP.

creation of these services came a change in mission: Kline Galland no longer serves just the Jewish community.

For one thing, "it's the law," according to Cohen. "If you take Medicaid and Medicare dollars, you have to serve everybody." For another, to be able to scale these services, the Jewish community here is just not big enough to justify the cost structure.

"[It] is wonderful for us to be in the position to provide those services with a Jewish touch to the greater community," Kane said.

The irony, however, is that with people coming in for weeks instead of years, "we're serving significantly more of the Jewish community than we ever have before," Cohen said.

► PAGE 23



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## COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

### Community Campaign grant applications due November 20

Applications are available for Fiscal Year 2016 Community Campaign grants from the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle.

Grant applications are due on Thursday, November 20, 2014. Grants will be awarded for the fiscal year that runs from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

Every year, the Jewish Federation awards approximately \$2.5 million in Community Campaign grants for serving the Jewish

community in Seattle, Israel and worldwide.

Grants are awarded to programs and projects in four Impact Areas: Building Jewish Community: Post Grade 12, Experiencing Judaism: Birth to Grade 12, Helping Our Local Community in Need, and Strengthening Global Jewry.

Each impact area has three or four Priority Areas. On grant applications, organizations are asked to select which Priority Area best

matches their program or project.

The applications review process is driven by careful deliberation to ensure grants fund impactful programs, fulfill the intentions of the Federation's generous donors and help the community achieve its potential. Through Campaign grants, the Jewish Federation fosters engagement, innovation and advocacy for our community.

The Federation's Planning and Allocations Committee works with subcommittees for each Impact Area to evaluate and score grant applications. After review and correspondence with the applying organizations, the subcommittees send recommendations to the full committee. Upon approval by the Federation's Board of Directors, grants will be finalized and announced in the late spring of 2015.

To find out more about the application process, please visit [jewishinseattle.org/campaign-grants](http://jewishinseattle.org/campaign-grants).

### Ukraine Assistance Fund reopened

The Jewish Federations of North America has reopened its Ukraine Assistance Fund in light of the country's volatile situation and the continuing need to assist displaced Jews and Jews who have remained behind in eastern Ukraine's conflict zone.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle supports international partner agencies, including the Jewish Agency for Israel and

the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which are on the ground in Ukraine distributing food, medicine, housing assistance and other essentials, and are helping refugees in the country to maintain connections to Jewish life.

For more information and a link to the Ukraine Assistance Fund donation site, please visit [jewishinseattle.org/ukraineupdate](http://jewishinseattle.org/ukraineupdate).

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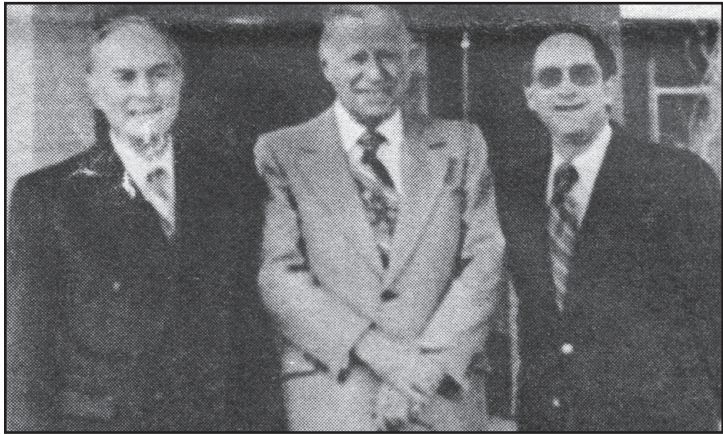


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to speak of — is far different from what exists today.

“There was no bank account. On Fridays I would take all the bills for the week, I would take a sheet of paper with all the employees, how many people would work, and how much they should



FILE PHOTO

Herb Schoenfeld, left, associate campaign chair for the Kline Galland's 70-bed expansion, Sol Esfeld, center, the campaign chair, and Robert L. Block, the Kline Galland's board president, in 1978 at the opening of the building's expansion.

get paid,” he said. “The bank paid the check, the bills, and then the next Monday I would pick up the checks for the employees and we would hand them out. It was strictly controlled by the bank.”

In the 1970s, Kline Galland finally freed itself — mostly — from the management of Seattle Trust.

“The bank didn't want to let go,” Gortler said. But the bank also refused to sign on the loan to expand to 140 beds. “They didn't want to sign the contract because they were afraid they were going to get stuck with this project if it was going to be a failure.”

Eventually Esfeld and businessman Robert Block worked out a deal that the trust would continue to own the land, and the agency, as an independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit, would manage the operations. Kline Galland signed a 99-year lease and the expansion was built.

“We said it was going to fill up in two years,” Gortler said. “Within six months the place was full.”

Today, Kline Galland owns the land outright.

Kline Galland expanded programatically during that time as well. In the early 1970s, Gortler presented a grid to his board laying out the community-wide options for Seattle's seniors: Those who lived at home could find activities at the Jewish Community Center's Golden Age Club, those who needed some help could find a group facility such as Council House, and those in need of daily care would find a space at the Kline Galland.

That document served as the blueprint for Kline Galland's future, though it took close to a decade for the plan to begin to bear fruit with the introduction of the Morris Polack Day Center. After its introduction in 1980, local philan-

thropist Polack created a base fund of \$1 million to sustain a program for seniors to live at home while receiving necessary services on-site a few days a week.

Gortler's blueprint also sowed the seeds for the transitional care unit, which opened in 2000 and allows for post-operative patients to spend time in rehabilitation before heading home. And eventually, that plan set in motion the idea of a residential facility for Jewish seniors who can live independently or with some assistance.

That facility, the Summit at First Hill, opened in 2001, with financial commitments from the who's who of Jewish Seattle's donor base: Sam and Althea Stroum, Jack and Becky Benaroya, Sam Israel, Ray Galante, who ultimately chaired the building campaign, and many others.

“We looked all over,” Gortler said. “We looked at Eastside properties, we looked in Renton, then this property becomes available.”

The patch of land, owned by broadcasting magnate Patricia Bullitt Collins, was purchased on very favorable terms with payments taken “as money becomes available,” according to Gortler. But then a strange thing happened.

When Gortler was about to deliver the final check — an \$800,000 payment — Sam Stroum decided they should ask Collins for a \$50,000 donation as well.

“I told her that anybody who moves in here who ever runs out of money will not be moved out, that we will subsidize them, and we're going to do it by creating an endowment,” Gortler said. “She says, ‘Mr. Gortler, tear up the check.’... Sam fell through the floor.”

That \$800,000 started the Kline Galland Foundation, an endowment that Gortler said is doing “exceptionally well” and paid for the recent top-down remodel of the Kline Galland home. In 2006, Gortler handed over the reins to its current CEO, Jeff Cohen, who has been continuing Gortler's expansion of services.

That so many people in Seattle's Jewish community give of their time and money to the Kline Galland is in part a recognition that, as Cohen puts it, “eventually everyone's going to need one of the Kline Galland's services,” but also a tribute to loved ones to make sure they live comfortably in their later years.

“The community is proud of what they're doing,” Gortler said.

## Jews on the ballot: Jon Zimmerman seeks a seat on the bench

JANIS SIEGEL JTNews Correspondent

Born in New York City, raised in Connecticut, and settled in Seattle for the last 13 years, Seattle Municipal Court Position 2 candidate and Judge Pro Tem Jon Zimmerman is a lawyer in private practice who told JTNews that he wants to bring justice and fairness to the court by helping disenfranchised groups, applying stricter enforcement of environmental law, and assuring open access to court proceedings.

Zimmerman is challenging sitting municipal Judge C. Kimi Kondo, who has been the presiding judge since 1998.

“I've represented consumers in federal court, immigrants and tribal members, students, and the elderly, victims of domestic violence and some of the most vulnerable and least advantaged in our community,” Zimmerman said.

“I've worked on Capitol Hill, in the White House for the Coast Guard doing environmental law there,” he said, “but I've had my own practice for about 10 years now and I've represented thousands of clients in 28 counties across the state, mostly in district and municipal courts,



COURTESY JON ZIMMERMAN

Jon Zimmerman, who seeks to become a judge in the Seattle Municipal Court.

including the one I'm running for.”

The Seattle University School of Law graduate is 36, single, lives in Seward Park, and often attends Sephardic Bikur Holim and Minyan Ohr Chadash congregations.

Zimmerman's endorsements include the 46th District Democrats, the Washington Teamsters Joint Council 28, and the Cardozo Society of Washington State, the Bar Association's minority bar for Jewish lawyers, who rated him as “qualified”

within a rating system that includes exceptionally well qualified, well qualified, qualified, and not qualified.

To date, Zimmerman has raised over \$36,000 in campaign funds while Kondo's contributions total just over \$25,000.

If elected, Zimmerman, who served as a pro tem judge in Seattle Municipal Court for three years, said he wants to help immigrants navigate the legal system.

In a press statement, Zimmerman said that many immigrants are “wrongfully mistreated and rightfully distrustful” of the justice system. He's represented

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One person who has helped to provide that Jewish touch for over two decades is Jeanie Alhadeff. She is a board member and former president, as well as the chair of the Kline Galland's centennial celebration that takes place Oct. 22.

“When I first started on the board, we were just talking about a nursing home,” Alhadeff said. Today, “we are an organization that takes care of every single need or want as somebody ages.”

Alhadeff experienced the agency's new services first-hand, when her mother, one of the first residents of the Summit at First Hill, entered hospice.

“From the social worker to the nurse to the chaplain, each one of them honored my mother with respect and dignity and love,” Alhadeff said. “They were an enormous support system for me, because caring for a parent who is failing can be a lonely experience.”

Alhadeff's mother's condition actually improved, so she no longer needs that care, but Alhadeff said it was important to have that service available.

Though the agency is for the most part doing well, with its budget having doubled to nearly \$40 million since Cohen took over in 2006, the road ahead does look bumpy. The state has not adjusted its Medicaid payments for patients who cannot

afford to pay for their care since 2008.

“Our costs continue to rise 3 percent every year. Our staff costs go up, our utility costs go up, Seattle is not exactly a low-cost place to do business,” Cohen said. “It has been extremely challenging to maintain the level of quality while at the same time balancing our budget every year.”

The coming legislative session will likely be a moment of truth for funding on all fronts, not just with how we care for seniors. Kline Galland is hoping at best to even the playing field. Cohen and the board have, by themselves and with other similar agencies, lobbied in Olympia to increase payments.

“It's been more about avoiding diminishing reimbursements than getting significant increases,” Kane said.

As the state struggles to pay for seniors who can't afford their own care, and with the huge wave of Baby Boomers about to come crashing down on the system, it will be up to Cohen to make sure his agency stays abreast of constant change in the healthcare system and stay above water.

“We're watching the health care system change frequently, and he has the pulse on that and is trying to stay ahead of it,” Alhadeff said.

Cohen believes he and his staff are up for the challenge.

“One thing about Kline Galland,” he said. “It's never been static.”