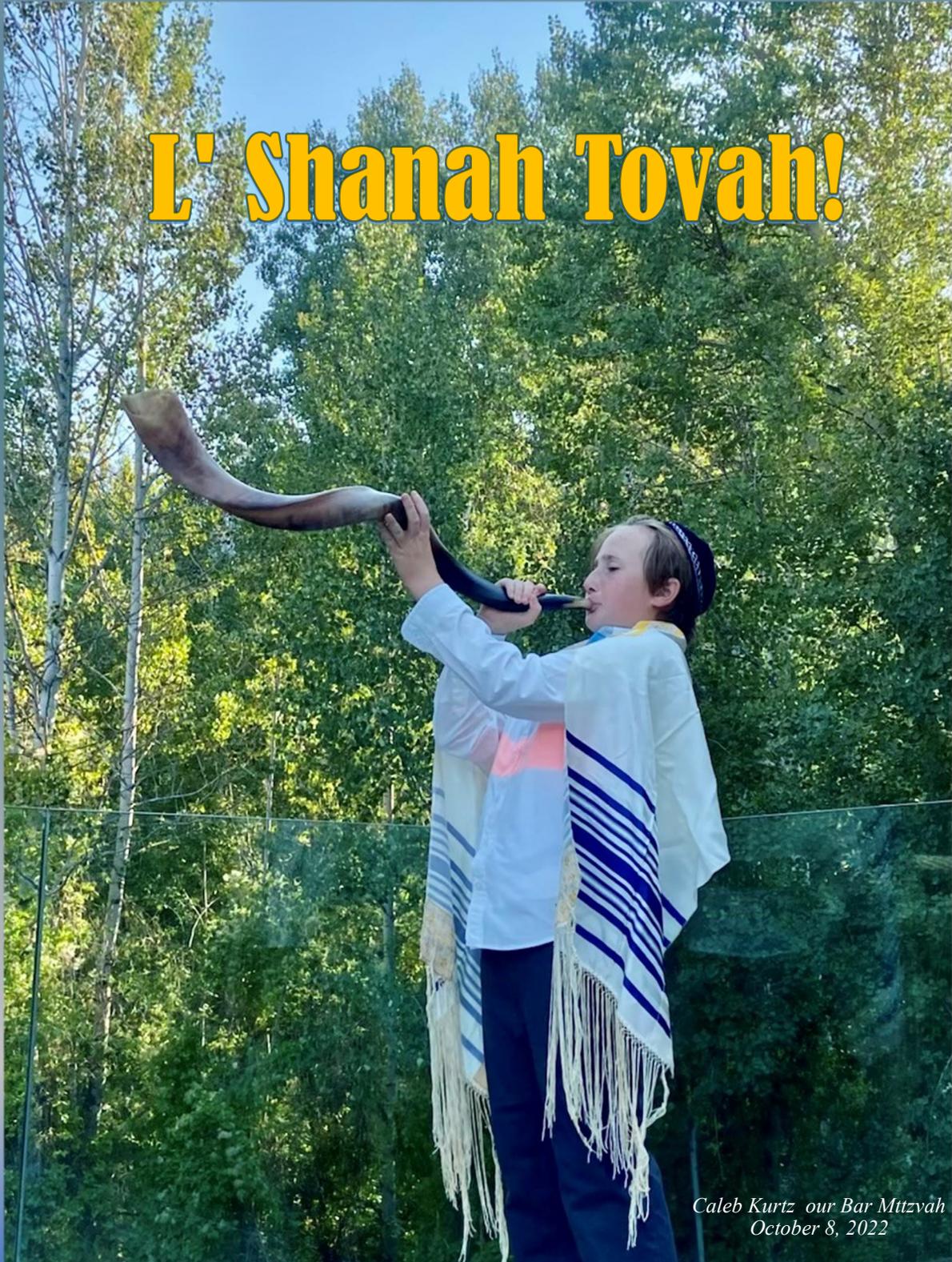


THE SHOFAR

Fall 2022

Wood River Jewish Community

L' Shanah Tovah!



*Caleb Kurtz our Bar Mitzvah
October 8, 2022*

DURING THE DAYS OF AWE OUR COMMUNITY STANDS STRONG

How did we all end up here? Not necessarily America, or the cities and towns where we live when we aren't here, but The Wood River Valley itself. It is the American diaspora that Jews experience all over the country. One of the things that always amazes me when friends come to visit us here is how many members of the WRJC we see daily. It isn't a coincidence that this happens; it is small-town living. And that is one of the reasons that many of us have ended up here. And because there are so many families in the Wood River Valley today, there are more than 200 families in the Wood River Jewish Community, and you are one of them.



Bringing us to the New Year, an opportunity to commit to a new set of behaviors and actions that are ways one can daily remind oneself and others, demonstrating our commitment to the values that make the Jewish people unique. Many other faiths and beliefs give, and we should always recognize those community members, but why are we different? It may be the diaspora. One day, our families packed up in a town, shtetl, or city and decided to move to a new community. Often, as in the case of our parents or grandparents, this decision was not self-created. Outside forces affected this diaspora - often, there was a government or oppressors that made decisions motivating Jews to spread around the world.

In the case of the diaspora, one can see how our Jewish communities have united to help others. We see this in social activism in communities worldwide, across our country, and here in The Wood River Valley. This activism may be because somewhere in the consciousness of Jews, we might say to ourselves the more we give, the stronger we become. And this strength demonstrates the power of the Jewish people.

Looking around our community, we can see how active WRJC members are in sharing time and financial support. One example of this work is The Lee Pesky learning center. Our members Wendy and Alan Pesky created this non-profit and named it in honor of their late son. This organization aids young people here and across the state who are challenged in how they learn. If you haven't read Alan's book "More to Life than More," it is a read that is powerful and moving. This story reminds us that you get what you give, and learning about the Pesky Learning Center's work here in Boise is genuinely inspirational.

Another example of giving is seen in the tireless work of WRJC's Building Committee co-chair Marty Lyon. Marty created the "100 Men Who Care" charity, an organization that inspires our community to share financial assistance to those organizations in need of financial support - a \$100 donation once a quarter.

On another front of child development, our member Mathew Gershater's work with the non-profit he founded, Idaho Basecamp, is remarkable. Their summer camp Mountain Adventure Tours, just finished its 25th summer, bringing outdoor "edutainment" to hundreds of young people in the Wood River Valley - many of our members have children or grandchildren who have spent wonderful summer days in the outdoors through MAT.

To be continued

And these are just a few WRJC members sharing Tikun Olam with the Wood River Valley. Reach out to WRJC's Executive Director, Claudie Goldstein, and learn of opportunities to share either time or financial support on any level. Below are a few ways at the WRJC to share your time:

The WRJC's Adult Education Committee is the first. Washington DC-based member Amy Kroll and her co-chair Harriet Parker Bass and committee member Lenny Cohen - both Harriet and Lenny are former WRJC Presidents. If you're interested in joining this committee, you can help the WRJC bring speakers and continuing Jewish Education to the Valley. We will soon launch the Tikun Olam Committee if you are also interested in "giving back" with your time to support community efforts. This committee is a beautiful way for you and your families to bring the WRJC together with other members of the community and organizations working daily to support causes ranging from hunger to the support of young children and seniors to the environment. Our Treasurer Judy Teller Kaye had this idea, which will be a reality this New Year. It is an opportunity for our members to give back to the community with their time.

Finally, we are honored to introduce you to Stav Ohyaton, the WRJC's first-ever Shaliach - a young Israeli woman committed to our community this coming year. She will be living here and bringing her love of Israeli culture and the commitment to Israel to our WRJC members of all ages in numerous ways throughout the year.

The WRJC's Shaliach program has been made possible through the effort of our member and volunteer coordinator Sergio Bicas and those in our community. From his work tirelessly with the Jewish Agency in Israel that is sponsoring Stav's visit to bringing together the financial support of the WRJC - we can thank Sergio for his hard work. Financial support for this program is from our WRJC members, Alli Frank and Scott Pinizzotto, Phil and Cathy Goldstein, Stacey and Dan Levitan, Ken and Vonny Moelkner, Ashley Tobias and her family here and elsewhere, along with Mike and Susie Raskin, and the Bicas-Dolgen family. As well, all have donated to the WRJC Building Campaign.

So in the days of awe ahead, we can be thankful for those who have given their time and financial resources to help make the Wood River Jewish Community strong and a pillar of our valley. Please join us this coming year and find the beauty of the American diaspora of American Jews that has brought us all here to live in the Wood River Valley and enjoy our lives.

With a Wish for a Happy and Healthy New Year,

Jeff Rose
President, Wood River Jewish Community

***On behalf of The Board of Directors
and Claudie Goldstein Executive Director of the WRJC
we join together to wish you and your family
a sweet and prosperous New Year!***

Shofar Fall 5783 Words... Words... Words...

"Sometimes you're the windshield.... Sometimes you're the bug..." (Mark Knopfler). Or, this time of year, in the midst of baseball mania, the next set of lyrics include: "Sometimes you're the Louisville Slugger, sometimes you're the ball..." When I included these lyrics on social media recently, the range of responses I got were astounding! From: "What a downer," and "are you ok, Rabbi?" to: "way to keep your ego in check!" and "right on, Sista!" It was evident: interpretations of words are all over the place. Since no one could feel my emotions when I wrote it, the inflection in my voice was not clear. Was I depressed? Was I hopeful? Angry? Should you worry about me?



Words, words, words... have you heard this parable? A Chasidic tale vividly illustrates the danger of improper speech: A man went about the community telling malicious lies about the rabbi. Later, he realized the wrong he had done, and began to feel remorse. He went to the rabbi and begged his forgiveness, saying he would do anything he could to make amends. The rabbi told the man, "Take a feather pillow, cut it open, and scatter the feathers to the winds." The man thought this was a strange request, but it was a simple enough task, and he did it gladly. When he returned to tell the rabbi that he had done it, the rabbi said, "Now, go and gather the feathers. Because you can no more make amends for the damage your words have done than you can recollect the feathers."

Speech has been compared to an arrow: once the words are released, like an arrow, they cannot be recalled. The harm they do cannot be stopped, and the harm they do cannot always be predicted, for words- like arrows - often go astray.

The words for gossip in Hebrew are "*lashon hara*" or "evil tongue." Spreading or participating in gossip about someone, even listening but not continuing to spread the words, is grave and can cause irreparable harm. When we say our "*Al Chets*" (for the sin/transgression of...) at Yom Kippur, gossip is top among the list of our sins. We are all guilty of *lashon hara* - from face-to-face to Facebook, our words spread and can be misinterpreted, sometimes to the detriment of others.

So, whether you are the windshield or the bug in any given situation, slow down. Or stop. Think and consider for a moment whether your words can hurt or can heal. Make a promise to yourself that you will try not to spread gossip and you will do your best not listen. This is what *tshuvah*, returning, a primary theme of the High Holidays is all about. We return to a better path. When given the opportunity to make the same mistake, we don't. We ask for, and give forgiveness. Sometime the giving is harder than the asking – either way, it's NOT easy and it's a lot of work!

We all have inner, spiritual and emotional work to do this holiday season – and I look forward to being with my WRJC community to welcome 5783 together. If I have offended anyone during the last year, in words or in deeds, I humbly ask for your forgiveness.

Mark joins me in wishing all "L'shana tovah u'metukah" - a sweet new year!

Rabbi Robbi



All services will be held at St. Thomas Episcopal Church
Sun Valley Road

FOR THESE DAYS OF AWE
Join Us with
Rabbi Cantor Robbi Sherwin

Rosh Hashanah

Sunday, September 25
7:00 p.m. Erev Rosh Hashanah

Monday, September 26

10:00 a.m. Morning Rosh Hashanah
4:30 p.m. Tashlich and Shofar Service (Draper Preserve Bow Bridge, Hailey)

Yom Kippur

Tuesday, October 4

7:00 p.m. Kol Nidre Service

Wednesday, October 5

10:00 a.m. Morning Service
4:00 p.m. Children's Service
5:00 p.m. Yizkor (Memorial Service)
5:45 p.m. Neilah/ Havdallah (Final Prayers)
6:45 p.m. Havdallah (Final Prayers)

Upcoming Holidays



SIMCHAT TORAH
Celebration: October 16, 2022
at the WRJC Office

A Message From Your Executive Director

High Holy Days Appeal 2022-5783



This is the time of year when we ask our members and friends to support our Wood River Jewish Community High Holiday Appeal. Reform Judaism has no hierarchy to support it financially, but requires that all community members give to the best of their ability to fund and support the structure, programs and activities that make a community a community.

Our High Holy Day Appeal is one of the most important of our fundraising drives throughout the year. It keeps our community flourishing.

As there is always an upside to a downside, this year we all face the disappointment that our new sanctuary will not be ready for occupancy in time for our services due to structural delays. The upside, however, is one we should all celebrate; following two decades of sharing their sanctuary with our community, Saint Thomas Episcopal Church will once again host our services.

Our appreciation of this special relationship will continue as we move forward with our new building. It should never cease to be acknowledged as it is one of the essential elements that has allowed our community to grow and prosper.

Rabbi Robbi Sherwin has enriched our community spiritually and will once again make our services memorable for all. It is with her dedication that we have continued to maintain the strength in holding onto who we are. This keeps our traditions alive and well. Without these traditions, we would not have survived as a people.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. May we pray together again next year in our new sanctuary at our High Holiday services.

Sincerely,

Claudie Goldstein
Executive Director/ Director of Development

Development committee members: Susan Green, Phil Goldstein, Joanne Mercer, Judy Meyer, Bob Safron, Rhea Schwartz, Gail Stern.



Please Support Our High Holy Days - Season of Giving

HIGH HOLY DAYS SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

SPONSOR ON YOUR OWN, OR JOIN WITH ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY TO CO-SPONSOR!

Eve RH ○ RH Morning ○ Kol Nidre ○ YK Morning ○ Yizkor ○

\$5,000 ○ \$2,500 ○ \$1,500 ○ \$1,000 ○ \$500 ○ \$250 ○ OTHER: ○

CHECK CREDIT CARD DONATE ON LINE: wrjc@wrjc.org CALL THE OFFICE: 208-726-1183

CREDIT CARD #: _____ Exp. Date _____ CV _____

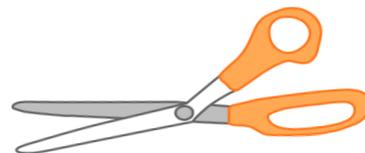
NAME: _____ BILLING ADDRESS: _____

ZIP CODE: _____ PHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Please recognize this donation in honor/memory of: _____

Please keep this gift anonymous.

THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR SUPPORT



The upcoming High Holidays are a rewarding and spiritual time for the families of our congregation and our guests. We look forward to you joining us to worship together and welcome this New Year with The Wood River Jewish Community.

As you know, attendance at the High Holy Day services is a benefit of your membership and there is no fee for your family's tickets. Our holidays are a time of spiritual reflection and renewal.

Our suggested donation for **non-members and guests** is **\$250 for families and \$150 for individuals**.

If you need to pay this year's membership dues you can do so at www.wrjc.org.

With any questions, please contact Claudie Goldstein at claudie@wrjc.org.

Thank you.

Wood River Jewish Community Board of Directors



Our Community Shlichah Stav Ohayon

So, what is it all about?

This journey started 13 years ago, a little after celebrating my Bat Mitzvah. I fell in love with the youth movements in Israel (I will expand later). I fell in love with the idea of Zionism and with one of its most essential features, the preservation of the identity of the Jewish People through fostering of Jewish and Hebrew education and Jewish spiritual and cultural values; the educational and social activities, outdoors trips, the togetherness – for young and old alike.

Youth movements began to arise in Israel even before the establishment of the State. There are many youth movements, and I participated in two of them- "Mashatzim" and the "Beni HaMoshavim." These groups with similar ideologies and ideas promote action, influence, and change together.

The idea in all of our youth movements is very similar - we travel a lot all over our beautiful country and world, we consolidate content to get to know each other better, and go through studies on a variety of topics (society, values, disputes in culture, Israel, religion, holidays, history, etc.). Through these activities, we increase the youth's knowledge of everything related to Israel and society and deepen their affection for it.

At 17, I was responsible for all the educational content delivered at school on important days such as holidays, national days, ceremonies, etc. (grades 7 to 12). I was responsible for the instructors' course for the last two weeks of the summer, and I wrote in the local newspapers about the movement's activities. All this is out of an unquestioning belief that the younger generation must know our wonderful Zionist heritage, Israel's history, and the values upon which our society bases itself.

I trained soldiers in our world's most advanced and unique weapons system, from rookies to officers. I taught them how to develop their physical fitness in the best possible way and explained to them our importance as young soldiers in protecting our country's skies. I continued to do this in the army when I served in "Iron Dome"(the system that intercepts missiles in the air to prevent them from hitting targets in Israel), one of the most significant roles in my life.

I wanted to feel the sense of meaning again in working with teenagers, children, and adults, of impact, the importance of success when you discover, for example, that the boy who was lonely and insecure at the beginning of the year can grow into a boy surrounded by friends.

Then, I found the Jewish Agency and Maccabi World Union. The Jewish Agency promotes connections between the Jewish communities worldwide." Maccabi

Tzair" (Maccabi's Youth) is an educational movement based on Zionism, Judaism, social justice, and sports values. This movement directs and educates its members to be pioneers in ways of personal creative initiative, encourages the connection between Israeli youth and Jewish youth in the Diaspora, and takes a central part in the Maccabiah sports games events once every four years. More importantly, the youth movement maintains continuous contact with youth in the various communities in the Diaspora through meetings, delegations, hosting families, and joint activities.



"Maccabi Tzair" brings Jewish-Zionist education to 100,000 young Jews in more than 300 clubs in more than 90 countries, from Latin America to North America, Australia to Spain. Through weekly activities, camps, raining courses, regional, continental, and international seminars - most of which are the responsibility of the education department and the Israel programs department of Maccabi Global Movement.

The purpose of the Shlichim (emissaries) such as myself is to travel to communities worldwide and be the bridge between them and Israel. Work with the young and adults of the Jewish community in broad areas - to expose them to Israeli culture and Israeli society, talk about history and Zionism and cooperate with neighboring communities, learn Hebrew (for those who want, of course) and unite the community and make strong connections between them. And that's why I have come to Sun Valley.

The Wood River Valley and Idaho, in general, are so beautiful, and the people are so warm, friendly, and welcoming! From a young age, I have loved to dream big, and I hope with all my heart that together we will be able to build something special and unique here. I have many plans for you, big and small experiences that can contribute a lot to members and friends of the community of all ages and areas of interest.

Hope to see you in the upcoming activities and meetings, and I wish everyone a happy and healthy year full of good deeds!

Shanah Tova u'mtukah!

Yours,
Stav

Shlichut, Rosh Hashanah and everything in between... A Message from Stav

Hello Everyone,

How exciting to open the year with you!

So, for those who have already heard about me and for those who haven't,

I am Stav, your community Shlichah (emissary) for the next year (and maybe a little more...). I was sent on behalf of the Jewish Agency and Maccabi World Union to be the bridge between you and the community in Israel, to promote and expose the Jewish Community in the Wood River Valley to various aspects of Israel, Judaism and to create activities for all age groups and many other things, which I look forward to sharing with you in the months to come.

Before I was accepted into the Shlichut program, I studied neuroscience and communication at the Open University in Jerusalem, and before that I also studied a bit of architecture. Since I was 12 years old I have been involved in the development of training and education for teenagers: self-sufficiency, development, the "I" and society (what's my role in and my relationship with society), general knowledge, Judaism and Israeliness (no, these words do not always go together and the truth is that they are completely different subjects), and environmental and world studies.

When do I put myself in the center and when the group becomes the center, our uniqueness as a People, knowing how to be open to opinions of people who are different from you and accepting the other, knowing the difference between patience and tolerance, understanding the Israeli society to its core and above all - Israeli pride, which is evident in science, high-tech, medicine, groundbreaking developments and Israel's enormous contribution to all the nations of the world.

When going on a mission, you take many things with you, and at the same time you leave a lot of them behind, press "pause" for a short time. For me, as a Shlichah, the biggest challenge was leaving my family behind (only physically of course) and enjoying the upcoming holidays in a distant land. The bond between me and my family is very deep and strong. We are a big family and are very connected to each other. We tell everything, share everything (yes, yes, even the most secret things which are usually hidden from mom and dad) and when the holidays come, for us it's a peak period. Each of us has a defined role, and at the head of the division of roles stands the great commander – our mommy Romi.



From the right to left- Asher (my mom's partner) Romi (my mom) Aya (12, sister) Me , Reem (14, brother) Pnina (Asher's sister) Shaked (22, brother) Aviv (19, sister)

About seven days before the holiday, you can feel it everywhere you go - the stores decorate themselves with beautiful "Sale" signs that catch the eye, the long lines at the supermarket checkout (last year I measured a 23-minute wait until my turn came, and it was a calm day). The children who return every day with something extra for Rosh Hashanah from the kindergartens and schools, fragrances of cooking and baking with an intoxicating smell. It even seems that the flowers are more beautiful.

A day and a half before Rosh Hashanah the kitchen is full of pots, at least four different types of homemade desserts (and this is 100% my defined role), small gifts packed in the corner of the house and perfect weather. On the Holiday eve, vehicle traffic in Israel reaches almost zero from 19:00, a perfect sunset and our favorite people dressed like angels in white... The delicious smells accompany the guests upon entering the house, everything is festive, colorful, happy and bright. The blessings are done according to the order of sitting at the table and everyone says a blessing in turn (and of course Aya, my 12 years old little sister, will not be able to hold herself back and will almost finish everyone's pomegranate plates). After the blessings and before we approach the food, we make a round of wishes - everyone says something he wishes himself for the new year.

While eating, there is a feeling that everything is complete and it surrounds you from all sides so much, so that the only thing you feel sorry for is watching the news reporter broadcast on TV instead of being with his family.

To be continued....



My dad

You understand how lucky you are, I understand how lucky I am, to have such a big and great family by my side, and we lack nothing when we sit around the holiday table ,tap tap! (It is customary to say against the evil eye and this is the second most popular sentence in

Israel. The first sentence is – "Come on, who taught you how to drive?!")

So this year I'm celebrating the holidays a little far from home and with a hand on my heart, it's not easy for my parents. They both love playing tough, but when it comes to the kids they are more emotional than Oprah.

Rosh Hashanah, according to Jewish religion, is the day when humans crown God as king who oversees and examines each person according to his deeds, therefore this day also opens the ten days of searching for answers (aseret yamey tshuva) period, that eventually comes to an end at Yom Kippur, when we have the mitzvah to fast and atone for our actions in front of God, and hope for a "good signature" – Hatima Tova - that God will sign us to a positive judgment as much as possible. That's why it's important to celebrate these days with a lot of intention, and having our beloveds around us is always better.

As an Israeli living in our country, I don't have to try so hard to preserve my tradition;

Holiday vacations? The Jewish calendar is anchored in law, and the economy does not work on those days. Kosher food? Almost a default. When we return from the holidays to the routine (school, work, army, etc.) we are busy just filling in gaps and getting updated on the friends' experiences from the holidays. The roads are closed on Yom Kippur. Even if you are not fasting, you have nowhere to go. Everyone is always in a frenzy before the holidays like it is the first holiday they have ever experienced, rushing, buying as much as possible – that feeling puts you in the mood of, "Okay, something is happening, stop standing still and start doing something!"

And here? Here you may not feel the Chagim in the streets and Shabbat candles are not on every windowsill. Judaism and tradition do not envelop us, and if we do not make an effort to learn about it at home and in our community, it will fade out.

In Israel we have a synagogue almost every five blocks, and abroad it's a different story. Keeping tradition is a bit more work. Keeping the holidays is fun and heartwarming, and more so in Community – but it takes special effort to do so.

To know Hebrew - not obvious (because come on, between us, Spanish is a cooler, sexier and more beautiful language).

To keep our culture, who we are, and know where we came from, keep the tradition that our ancestors preserved for thousands of years and to know how to appreciate it- it is not obvious, and this issue also applies to Jews in Israel, as there are those who have chosen to distance themselves. Being Jewish for me is special. It's a right. To be part of a people that has survived since the dawn of history, And still present, alive and thriving - this is not obvious.

I will finish with a quote from a song by Shlomo Artzi, one of the most well-known and beloved singers and creators on the Israeli music:

"A person needs to have a word, a little place in the world, an unforgettable love and a true voice for prayer and a perfect moment to give and take and not... to be afraid of fear." I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sergio, Tamar and the three lovely children Rose, Moi and Lilah, who opened their home for me, continue to take care of me to the smallest details and make me feel the most at home in the world. To Claudie, Rabbi Robbi, Jeff Rose, Morah Dana, Josh Kleinman and all whom I've met to date, thank you for the warm welcome and for the willingness to bring me into the community and collaborate with me..

I wish all of us a happy and successful new year, full of light, health, love and joy, success and fulfilling new goals!

I'd love to meet each and every one of you soon – please get in touch with me and share thoughts, ideas, or just meet for coffee or a hike. Stavohayon78@gmail.com IG: Stav_shlich

Shalom y'all!

Stav
stav@wrjc.org



WRJC STANDS WITH ISRAEL



Wear White with Rabbi Robbi!

Over 20 years ago, I decided to embrace the tradition of wearing all white on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. I have found it connects me deeply to the *Yamim Nora'im* – the Days of Awe.

Reasons abound for wearing white: From the Prophet Isaiah: "Come, now, let us reason together, says God. If your sins are like scarlet, they will become as white as snow; if they have become red as crimson, they will become white as wool." (Isaiah 1:18) The color white symbolizes a fresh start: purity and renewal and on Rosh Hashanah. It also symbolizes the ideal of nearness to God, and it enhances the religious solemnities of the day.

On Yom Kippur, we wish to be like the angels – it is said

that they are dressed in white. We wish to return to our better selves and this is one of the primary themes of the High Holidays. Some also believe, as it is a possibility that we could be denied being sealed in the Book of Life on Yom Kippur, we should be prepared if death is to come: White is also the color of the burial shroud. Many men in the Orthodox tradition wear a kittel, or special white robe. Today, Jews of all hues wear white, as it has been adopted by liberal streams of Judaism, as well.

If you are so moved, join me in wearing white this holiday season. Let us raise our voices like the choruses of angels to move towards the new year to come.

Shana Tovah

Rabbi Robbi

High Holy Day Food Drive

As we approach the High Holy days and this time of introspection, it is a good time to consider tikkun olam, to help repair the whole. Our community here in the Wood River Valley has a population that is food insecure. Won't you do your part to help provide food to those in need. In partnership with the Hunger Coalition there will be a food receptacle in the entrance of St. Thomas Episcopal Church where we will celebrate Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. Please help to fill the receptacle with the items that the Coalition says are the most needed. Food can also be dropped at the office during office hours.

Please bring only non-perishables: canned goods, boxed

pasta or rice dishes, cooking oil, nut butters, healthy snack items.

On behalf of the caring committee we thank you in advance.
L'Shana Tova

Coni Foster
Caring Committee Chair



NEW Tikun Olam Committee

The WRJC is excited to announce the launch of its newest committee with the goal to organize social action and community service projects. Through partnerships with local nonprofits, WRJC members will have the opportunity to volunteer in the greater community, learn about local issues, and build connections with each other and

and neighbors in our valley. Stay tuned for our first events.

Contact tamar.dolgen@gmail.com to get involved.

Which First and Why?

c. Marlene B Samuels 2022

Bringing to mind the chicken-egg first or egg-chicken first dilemma, why is it that Rosh Hashanah is first and not Yom Kippur first? Rosh Hashanah is almost upon us. We all know what that means besides those ubiquitous briskets, some of which are *“sehr geschmack”* while others are akin to shoe leather gone astray. Yom Kippur follows on Rosh Hashanah's heels, a traditional time for Jews to practice repentance. Yom Kippur also signals fasting, or maybe not? As with most things Jewish in our modern more secular era, there are great variations in how we observe and vastly less stigmatizing for the less devout among us.

These two holy days, with the exceptions of Passover and Hanukkah, garner great attention including plenty public media acknowledgement without regard to how observant Jews may be but rather a simple acknowledgment of our holiday. Synagogue attendance soars as does the number of holiday services that are broadcast and streamed online.

Yet so much attention to, and awareness of, both our high holidays lead to one of my life-long lingering questions about Judaism: why do we feast first on Rosh Hashanah and then fast on Yom Kippur?

Rosh Hashanah is considered to be the birthday of creation. As such, it's the celebration of God's renewal of the world. We begin each year with great hopes so naturally it follows that on Rosh Hashanah our teachings encourage us to focus on the immediate present because emphasis is upon us taking stock. Simultaneously, we're encouraged to express gratitude, make new promises and identify our goals for the forthcoming year. How is it, then, that a mere ten days after we've feasted with loved one, dipped apples in honey and wished everyone a sweet New Year, Yom Kippur arrives and already we've been judged?

**“Behold, the day of judgment is upon us!
Even the angels are dismayed.”**

The concepts upon which this pronouncement is based come from Jewish apocalyptic literature. Interestingly, they parallel Christian writings. Although based upon similar sources, the Christian interpretation emphasizes the Day of Wrath and can be found in the Requiem Mass. It's a highly graphic description of The Day of Judgment for all humankind.

Unetannah Tokef, translated as, *“Let us speak of the awesomeness”* and is a Jewish liturgical poem that, in



some traditions, is an important part of the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur liturgy. According to the accepted story, Unetannah Tokef is a poem that was composed by an 11th-century sage named Rabbi Amnon of Mainz in Germany. Other than this one bit of information, he remains unknown to history.

The key issue is not a “final judgment” but a more immediate one as in “a yearly judgment”. So it is that on Rosh Hashanah we plan and contemplate the year before us. Logic leads many of us to question whether it would have made more sense to have been judged first and then, after all that judging and fasting, we would then celebrate the renewal of creation with an amazing feast, including the brisket?

Conducting my preliminary research, I reviewed a selection of Jewish scholarly texts about the rationale from a theological perspective. So much pondering of the dilemma generated a subsequent question: is there a different way in which to explain the order of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur that answers the question? Explained philosophically, as well as theologically, Rosh Hashanah can be compared to the secular New Years: a time for introspection, self-assessment and resolutions. As Jews, we're encouraged to reminisce, to evaluate the past year and to plan for the forthcoming one while also assessing our imperfections honestly. This approach is believed to facilitate a productive action-plan. But Yom Kippur arrives a mere ten days after we've identified our goals and prepared ourselves to implement our plans.

Suddenly, there it is! We're about to be judged for any of the ill-conceived goals we established just days before during Rosh Hashanah. Some religious scholars regard the intervening ten-day period between these two holidays as analogous to a “cooling-off period.” Some rabbis even regard the Days of Awe as an essential opportunity given to us so that we may reconsider whether our decisions about the future are both realistic and attainable. Did we identify problems accurately?

Do we understand what's required of us if we're to move forward? But the most critical, as always, is how can we become better human beings: what actions might we take and especially how can we evolve into more compassionate, charitable and all around kinder human beings? For some Jews, God figures prominently while for those who consider themselves agnostics, Yom Kippur offers an ideal time for self-reflection.

With the arrival of Yom Kippur, we decide whether we'll fast. This decision is not necessarily dependent upon how devout we actually are. For some, fasting offers a personal challenge—maybe a time to test their strength of character and will-power. Others may view a twenty-four hour fast as offering a healthful benefit. If we tend toward the religious side, can we assume we'll experience a renewed sense of moral righteousness and well-being by fasting? On the other hand, what if we don't fast? Will we agonize about whether we'll be overwhelmed by guilt and consequently doomed to begin our new year tainted?

When my brother and I were children we believed that fasting on Yom Kippur was synonymous with being mature. Our parents prohibited us from fasting despite the fact that our father, before World War II, had trained in a Warsaw Orthodox Yeshiva for the rabbinate. For her part, our mother grew up in an Orthodox home in Romania. She also prohibited us from fasting. Our annual debates about the topic with Mom and Dad commenced almost immediately after the Rosh Hashanah dinner dishes had been cleared.

What was the basis of their irreverent, somewhat hypocritical, decision anyway, my brother and I wondered? Both our parents had survived Nazi death-camps. Gradually, we came to understand that this fact alone drove their decisions. "My children won't fast, not ever!" announced Dad. "We starved enough so our children, and their children, and even their children after them — God willing, should never fast!"



But won't God be angry with me if I don't fast but more angry with you and Mom for not letting us fast?" I asked. My confusion was greatest immediately following our celebratory Rosh Hashanah feasts, our bellies full and our extended family relaxed.

"God understands this. He never could be angry." Dad reassured us. "I know this." "But how do you know that?" I persisted.

"Simple. I survived Auschwitz when so few others did only because of God! That's how I know. Besides, He wouldn't want for my children to fast after I had endured so much starvation." My father defended his decision with a religious fervor.

Without question, Mom's rational was the antithesis of Dad's. "I don't want my children or any other children to fast. You're too young and in my opinion, it's not good for young growing bodies to fast."

"Why do you fast?" I persisted.

Her explanation was an effort to alleviate the confusion I experienced each year as Yom Kippur loomed on the horizon. "I fast to make sure I'll never forget just how I came to know that for me, God never can understand." "But why not? Dad says God understands." I didn't admit my skepticism to her.

"Simple," she said. "How is it possible for me to tell you about God after I saw and experienced everything I did in Dachau? Besides, does a thing like God actually exist? We each have to make our own decisions about these things. As you grow up, you will too."

In the modern era, whether to fast or not has evolved into a personal and often private decision. Excepting more observant communities, negative stigmas associated with a decision not to fast have diminished greatly. It's a decision as personal as whether we believe in God or not. But the quest to improve our "selves", to live kinder, more moral and ethical lives has, during the course of history, proven to be a human one. That primary goal is independent of religious views and what we decide individually about fasting.

In concluding, following some extensive research — religious, theological, philosophical and historical, I may be coming around to understanding the wisdom behind those rabbis's logic of Yom Kippur following Rosh Hashanah. Indeed, the extra ten days — the Days of Awe, do in fact provide a useful time for us to double-check our resolutions, edit as needed and conceptualize ways in which we can strive for the true goal, entirely independent of how we feel about Judaism. So much of our effort concentrates upon becoming better versions of ourselves. In a sense, aren't we always "works in progress"? Every we are alive affords us yet one more such opportunity.

Note: Making peace with whether we'll fast or not is another matter entirely.

L'Shana Tovah tikatevu,"

Children Education

Morah Dana and Rabbi Robbi are excited about our THREE upcoming Sunday School classes this year - the most learners in WRJC history! We meet late on Sunday afternoons, 2 times a month. If you want to join the fun, or know of someone else who does, please contact MorahDanaLessons@gmail.com.



K'tanim (little) Kids: ages 5-7. 4-4:45pm - Holidays and Traditions

We have a new teacher this year for our youngest group! Cara Frost is the art teacher at Community School and we are so lucky to have her crafts expertise!

Tzofim (scouts) ages 8-10. 4-5pm Torah Stories and Values

Stav Ohayon, our new Shlichah (representative from Israel) will be participating with us and give us a taste of Israel. She has great energy and our kids will love her!

BBMP: B-Mitzvah Prep: ages 11-13. 5-6pm B-Mitzvah Prep Class

Rabbi Robbi and Morah Dana will co-teach this class, with assistance from Stav. We will learn the cultural and historical aspects of becoming a B-Mitzvah, prayers and a cool Hebrew word or phrase of the week.

- ◆ Want to see what becoming a Bar or Bat Mitzvah at the WRJC is all about?
- ◆ What is the process?
- ◆ How much will my child have to study?
- ◆ What is expected of my family from the WRJC?

This is Bar/Bat Mitzvah 101 in our beautiful valley and be a fun and interactive event to learn, ask questions and get excited about their big day.

Please have at least one parent attend and note: this is a required event if you want to become B-Mitzvah with this wonderful community. Spread the word and please sign up: rabbirobbi@wrjc.org.

Adult Education

The Adult Education Committee this year will be chaired by Amy Kroll. Harriet Bass and Lenny Cohen remain active members, and Lee Pollock has joined the Committee.

Adult Education is pleased to announce two interesting book events.

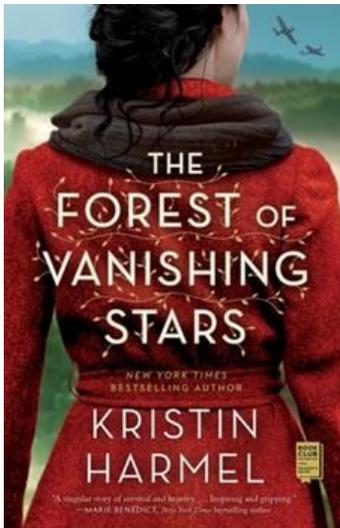
◆ **Never Meant to Meet You, by Alli Frank and Asha Youmans**

On October 12 at 6 pm, our own Alli Frank and her writing partner Asha Youmans will be launching their new book "Never Meant to Meet You" at the Community Library. (Harriet Bass has provided a review following page in this edition of the Shofar.) Please join Alli and Asha for their launch!

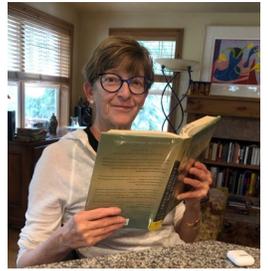
◆ **Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth, by Noa Tishby**

On December 22 at 5 pm, Rabbi Robbi will be leading a book discussion of "Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood Country on Earth" by Noa Tishby. This book is both engaging and informative, and presents a multifaceted perspective on Israel through the eyes of Tishby, an Israeli actress, writer and advocate. (Location TBD)

In addition, we are planning for summer speakers. Please feel free to share ideas for speakers and topics with members of the Adult Education Committee.



A bit mystical, a bit of magic realism, fascinating characters who merge with real life events; this book was mesmerizing, mysterious and thoroughly engaging. Yona, who is born as Inge Juttner, is kidnapped from her crib in the home of her wealthy parents in Berlin in 1922. On first glance, her kidnapper, Jerusza, seems like a witch... a frightening character out of the pages of a fairy tale. In my mind's eye she appears as Baba Yaga, a supernatural being from old Slavic folklore. Initially, the reader cannot fathom the reason for this apparent random kidnapping. But Jerusza is a 'seer' and she sees that Yona is a special child and has a higher purpose to serve. She takes baby Yona to live in the forest, and thus she embarks on an odd kind of education for Yona. Over the years, Yona, who has a faded image of a warm bed and a kindly looking man peering into her crib, learns survival skills. She learns to make potions from berries, to build lean-tos for shelter, to make beds out of twigs and leaves. She learns the medicinal values of various plants and herbs. She learns Polish, German and Russian among other languages. She only knows what Jerusza teaches her....a



mixture of mysticism, alchemy and Jerusza's personal form of Judaism. Jerusza teaches Yona all that she must know for the future that she foresees.

The forest is Yona's home, the only home she knows. Jerusza is the only mother she knows, in fact the only human she knows. In 1942, Jerusza dies. Yona is sad, but she knows how to survive and live in the forest. She is lonely, but she knows how to be alone. One day while foraging in her 'home' forest, she is stunned to see a man by the edge of a stream. They are fearful of one another, but slowly begin to speak. Yona learns that this man is with a small group of Jews who have fled their towns and villages just ahead of the Nazi occupation. Yona, who knew nothing of the world outside the forest, is horrified by what she learns. She sees that these town folk know nothing about surviving in the forest...so she decides that she must teach them...and help them to survive. But Yona is not the only teacher. Through the people she meets and helps, she learns about human connections, about family and about love.

And this is where this ethereal, almost otherworldly tale meets up with the reality of World War II. Yona is hiding her new found friends in the same forest that is housing the huge group of people who are being protect by the real-life Bielski brothers. As life in the forest becomes somewhat routine and Yona's hidden family become attuned to this new life, she is betrayed. The denouement is stunning! Ms.Harmel's portrayal of people and places is outstanding. She is a fantastic storyteller.....telling a story far outside of the dimensions of most WWII fiction.

Don't Miss: **Never Meant to Meet You** - Alli Frank and Asha Youmans
Alli, her husband Scott, daughters Lexi and Lila are members of the WRJC.

I have to admit that this is not likely the type of book to which I would be drawn if I were browsing around a book shop. But WRJC member Alli Frank and her writing partner Asha Youmans have written a book that is charming, funny and romantic yet with an serious underlying theme...We may all look different, worship differently pursue different paths in life, but underneath all these trappings, our basic humanity is the same. Next-door neighbors Marjette Lewis, a mother and a divorced black educator and Noa Abrams, a recently widowed, white Jewish mother of a 5 year old, find ways to help each other through their losses and grief, while building a strong and enduring connection. A meaningful and thoroughly enjoyable read!



Introducing Our B'nai Mitzvah

Hannah Will is a current seventh -grade student at the Bush School in Seattle, WA. Hannah is a fun-loving, liked-by-all, type of person. Hannah started her Jewish education at a young age. She attended the JCC in Mercer Island, WA for pre-school and pre-k. Once she went on to start Kindergarten at the Bush School, Hannah also started attending religious school twice a week at the family's synagogue, Herzl-Ner Tamid, also in Mercer Island, WA. Hannah has been committed to her Jewish studies ever since, even having had to spend nearly two years attending virtually.

Hannah's family have been visiting the Sun Valley area, spending time at Hannah's grandparents' home in Hailey, ID her entire life. Sun Valley is a special place and is near and dear to the Will Family. During the pandemic, Hannah's older sister was supposed to have her Bat Mitzvah in Seattle. This event was canceled and postponed but eventually took place on Bald Mountain. During this process, and in the time that Hannah's older sister and entire family got to know Rabbi Robbi and the WRJC community, their love for the area and its community not only grew, but was strengthened and fortified. Hannah's older sister's bat mitzvah was a truly special event and the way it happened was meant to be.

Hannah and her family wanted to evoke the same feeling when it became time for Hannah to become a Bat Mitzvah. To that end, they reached out to Rabbi Robbi to tutor and prepare Hannah and to travel to the Seattle area to perform Hannah's Bat Mitzvah and we are truly

grateful that she said yes. Rabbi Robbi has worked with Hannah to make her feel comfortable, prepared and ready to take on the responsibilities of becoming a **Bat Mitzvah on October 22, 2022.**



In her preparations, at the start of sixth grade, Hannah also began volunteering with Friendship Circle, a national organization dedicated to leveraging the positive impact of friendship, understanding and shared experience to help transform the lives of children and teens with special needs and typically developing teens. Hannah, as a teen volunteer, participates two Sundays every month at Sunday Circle where she is assigned to a special needs buddy and spends two hours with them, having fun and just being friends. This time also allows their often overspent parents a much needed break and the comfort of knowing that their child is in a safe, loving place, having fun. Hannah and her buddy can go to music class, do art projects, take snack breaks, play in the gym, etc.

Hannah makes us proud parents everyday. She is always willing to help and she is a thoughtful, genuine, affectionate and caring human. We see these attributes not only at home but in her strong friendships as well. We look forward to watching Hannah become a Bat Mitzvah this month and carry all of this into her Jewish life.

Caleb Asa Kurtz is a compassionate, curious and loyal young man who doesn't do anything half way. He excels in all he does because he cares about how he spends his time, and the effort he puts in. He constantly tries to improve himself and always goes the extra mile like he just did earning a place on the varsity middle school soccer team. Moving here from Los Angeles before 3rd grade wasn't easy, new place, new school, new friends, but Caleb took it in stride.

From learning to skate or really teaching himself to skate and becoming a goalie for his hockey team, achieving high grades in all all his classes at school, and making long lasting friendships, Caleb embraces new things. What began as a challenge to fit studying for a bar mitzvah into an already jam-packed schedule, blossomed into a special addition to Caleb 's

life. Learning a new language is never easy, but became something he was proud to do with the help of Rabbi Robbi & Morah Dana.

Finding his place within this Jewish community is gift he is beginning to appreciate. This athletic scholar now can add bar mitzvah to his list of wonderful accomplishments. In a year marked with strange times, sad times, and now, celebration, we are so proud of Caleb.



Caleb's Bar Mitzvah: October 8, 2022

Stephanie Bordes and Shai Rotenberg and their daughter Alison

WELCOME to our newest MEMBERS!

Debora and Larry Raike

Debora and Larry look forward to being a part of our Jewish community.

They raised their son Alex and twin daughters Sarah and Dana in Claremont, California, with lots of sweet pugs to love thru the years.

During the pandemic, Debora followed the nostalgia of her childhood memories of family summer trips to Sun Valley and returned with Larry and their pug Mirabella to find a home here to enjoy every season.

Larry golfs and together they enjoy our natural beauty and charming town. Their adult children visit throughout the year and they are excited to welcome their first grandchild in January. Life is very good and they feel very grateful.



Debora Raike

"A bird doesn't sing because it has an answer, it sings because it has a song."

Yizkor Memorial Booklet

The Wood River Jewish Community Book honors the memories of loved ones throughout our community. This year, we will have virtual Yizkor Book that will be shared in advance of Yom Kippur.

Below is a form for the Book of Remembrance to be returned to the office by September 30, 2022. It is common to make a donation in memory of your loved one during this season. A suggested amount is **\$18 (chai) for each name** you are remembering during the High Holy Days. We thank you for your generosity. If you have any questions you can contact Claudie Goldstein at the office (208-726-1183).

YIZKOR BOOK FORM

Loved one(s) who have passed away in
5782, from Sept. 2021 to Present

Remembered By:

Loved one(s) who have passed away in
prior years

Remembered By:

Yizkor Book Donation: \$ _____

'Jewish Sun Valley' talk offers novel view of our area's history Goldstein: 'There is a lot of amazing history...waiting to be discovered'

By our member Andrew Guckes Express Staff Writer

"One of the benefits of few people looking at this story is there is a lot of amazing history that's sort of just waiting to be discovered."

Ari Goldstein

Ari Goldstein knew when he set out to research the history of Jews in South Central Idaho that he was venturing into generally uncharted territories.

"I think that most people don't think of 'Jews' and 'Idaho' in the same sentence, and that probably includes most Idahoans," he

said with a laugh. "But Jews have served as governors, postmasters, school principals and philanthropists, among other things."

Goldstein counts himself as the most recent of a handful of people to research the subject. On Aug. 3, he presented the summation of his work to a crowd of about 150 at The Community Library. This comes at a pivotal time for the Wood River Jewish Community, which is slated to open the doors to its new synagogue in the next calendar year.

"My research coincided with the evolution of our community's building project; we are preparing to open the first synagogue in Central Idaho, which is a really exciting milestone for our community," he said.

Goldstein's interest in this subject is rooted in his own personal history. He spent winters and summers in Sun Valley as a kid, attending Sun Valley Community School camps and working at Perry's.

One afternoon while researching he found an 1884 article on a Yom Kippur service in Hailey, "My eyes popped out of my head," he said.

"I was really excited about that article, because I thought, there's got to be a bigger story here if there were enough Jews for services," he said.

The story, it turned out, is that Jewish merchants and miners came to the area to make their fortune along with hundreds of thousands of other westward-moving Americans. The Friedmans, Leopolds, and Wertheimers, among other families, became cornerstones of the community, serving as business and municipal leaders. Goldstein describes the area at this time as more tolerant than one might expect.

"In Germany, [Jewish] families' economic and social opportunities were limited by their religion," he said.



Ari Goldstein, who spent significant time in the Wood River Valley growing up, is now entering law school at the University of Pennsylvania.

"But they experienced a profound change in status when they emigrated to the United States, and particularly when they showed up in Idaho, a rural frontier where, as long as you were white, identity hardly mattered and men were judged not by their background but by their ability to make money."

The area's Jewish community has thinned in accordance with the population at large and did not reach healthy levels again until the Sun Valley Resort was established and winter sports enthusiasts moved to Blaine County from metropolitan centers across the country. That culminated in 1983 when the Wood River Jewish Community was formalized, creating the first official Jewish organization in the Valley.

While writing this talk, Goldstein worked a full-time job at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City. However, researching the history of Jews in the area became the main focus of his free time. He used skills honed as a student at Georgetown University, where he published a research paper on the history of Jews at the famously Catholic institution.

The generally unexplored subject matter made research difficult at some points.

"One of the benefits of few people looking at this story is there is a lot of amazing history that's sort of just waiting to be discovered. I visited archives in person around the state. I went to the Idaho State Archives in Boise and the Blaine County Historical Museum in Hailey and looked for Jewish history there, and then also went to Jewish archives and looked for Idaho history," he said.

Continued

Jewish History

Goldstein had to employ some clever methods to find what he was looking for. He said that the research process isn't linear—instead, there are dry spells, and periods where he would strike gold and find a heap of useful information.

One particularly notable nugget he found is a personal ad published in "Israelite" in 1873, which reads:

"A young co-religionist, doing a large business in the wilds of Idaho, would like to form the acquaintance of some young lady, and therefore politely requests correspondence."

This excerpt elicited a laugh from the crowd.

Another piece of research that was of particular interest to the audience was the story of Moses Alexander, the first practicing Jewish man to become governor of any U.S. state when he was elected governor of Idaho in 1914.

However, Goldstein was careful not to take the complex history of a community and oversimplify it.

"One of the challenging things about history is that it's often been told as a heroic tale of individual men—and it's always men," he said. "Often, the story of a community is [distilled down to] the story of the four men who led it. There's a virtue to that approach, and individual stories are interesting, but it really obscures the fact that communities have so many people who weren't mentioned or weren't a part of the way the history was written."

Goldstein said he wanted to avoid this in his retelling, instead emphasizing shared community stories.



The results have been rewarding, he said.

"I have had so many people come up to me and say, 'Wow, I didn't know this story, and this made me really proud to be a Jew in Idaho,'" he said.

The value in this research goes beyond fun facts, though, and not just for the Jewish members of the community.

"I hope that this instills curiosity in non-Jews and that it sparks conversations among people of all backgrounds about Idaho's history. There might be an impression that Jews are outsiders, but Jews have been a part of the fabric of this place for a long time," he said. "I hope that the Jewish story can pique interest in the other diverse histories of the region, which really deserved to be told as well."

Andrew Gurkes
agurkes@mtexpress.com



We have many friends, both part-time and full-time residents, that we are happy to see participating in our events, and we invite them to become members of the Wood River Jewish Community.

Contact Claudie at 208-726-1183 claudie@wrjc.org

The Little Nation That Could A train ticket in Israel printed in Hebrew? The father of Zionism thought it was impossible.

By Meir by Meir Soloveichik

During a recent visit to Israel I availed myself of the new high-speed train that connects Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Above all, rail offered a cheaper and quicker trip than road. Yet traveling through tunnels in the sacred soil of the Holy Land, and across bridges spanning mountains, my practical decision also led to an experience unexpectedly filled with wonder.

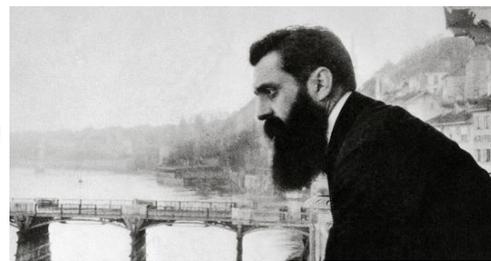
Theodor Herzl, the father of modern Zionism, burst onto the scene with his 1896 pamphlet, “The Jewish State.” He argued that Jews around the world could unite and create a commonwealth. Herzl followed this with “The Old-New Land.” The novel describes a Jewish state restored: its cities connected by wondrous electric trains high in the air, with smaller ones offering transportation around Jerusalem. Today, as many have noted, that vision has been fulfilled, and the novel’s famous epigraph—usually translated as “If you will it, it is no dream”—has been vindicated.

Once I returned to New York, I cleaned out my pockets and found the train ticket from my trip. I was struck by the words stamped on it in Hebrew: *rakevet yisrael*, the train of Israel. Herzl had assumed that Hebrew, which had survived in Jewish learning and liturgy only, could never be resurrected as a spoken language. “Who amongst us has a sufficient acquaintance with Hebrew to ask for a railway ticket in that language?” he wrote in his landmark pamphlet. “Such a thing cannot be done.” That tiny ticket embodied the exceeding of Herzl’s already grand expectations.

Shortly after returning I spoke at the Tikvah Fund’s Jewish Leadership Conference, where Tikvah’s former chairman, Roger Hertog, was honored with its Herzl Prize. Inevitably, my reverie—inspired by a piece of paper bearing Hebrew letters—gave rise to thoughts on the importance of political leadership, as well as the miraculous nature of Jewish history.

Today it is standard political parlance to declare others on “the wrong side of history.” But history isn’t a train track that brings us inevitably to stop after stop. It is a journey influenced by leaders who proclaim a vision and a strategy for achieving it. In Steven Spielberg’s movie “Lincoln,” the 16th president reflects on a lesson he learned while working as a surveyor. A compass, Lincoln says, will “point you true north from where you’re standing, but it’s got no advice about the swamps and deserts and chasms that

you’ll encounter along the way. If in pursuit of your destina



tion you plunge ahead, heedless of obstacles, and achieve nothing more than to sink in a swamp, what’s the use of knowing true north?”

Others had written of Zionism before Herzl. But as Mr. Hertog once explained to me, Herzl understood that seeing “true north”—the goal that was a Jewish state—was not enough. Political institutions had to be built to achieve it. That’s why a Zionist congress in Basel, Switzerland—whose 125th anniversary was just marked—quickly followed the publication of his pamphlet. “At Basel I founded the Jewish State,” he wrote in 1897. “If I were to say this today, I would be greeted by universal laughter. In five years, perhaps, and certainly in 50, everyone will see it.”

If such a prescient man thought a Hebrew train ticket impossible, this is a reminder that the story of the Jews is a miraculous one, one that therefore never ceases to surprise. “The number of Jews in the world is smaller than a small statistical error in the Chinese census. Yet we remain bigger than our numbers,” the essayist Milton Himmelfarb reflected after Israel’s Six Day War. “Big things seem to happen around us and to us.”

The Jewish state’s first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, touched a deep truth when he supposedly quipped that “in Israel, in order to be a realist, you must believe in miracles.” And one can certainly see a miracle in the life of Herzl, who emerged out of Jewish assimilation in Austria, brought the Zionist Congress into being, and died soon after. Sometimes all it takes is a slip of paper to remind one of the wonders of our age. As someone whose relatives were placed on trains to concentration camps, never to return, I know that it is no small thing today to be able to buy a ticket with Hebrew printed on it, board a train, and join my fellow Jews on a journey to Jerusalem.

Rabbi Soloveichik is director of the Straus Center for Torah and Western Thought at Yeshiva University and rabbi of Congregation Shearith Israel in New York. This piece is adapted from a speech he gave on June 12 at the Jewish

WRJC Permanent Home and Synagogue Update



Building for our Future

Looking forward to the year ahead, moving into the permanent home for the WRJC is a monumental event, and it is due to the hard work of so many, bringing us to this point of great accomplishment. While not having occupancy for the holidays, we are working hard with our contractors to accelerate construction. They are moving things forward in this challenging time of supply chain, services in the valley, etc.

If you've driven by 95 Badeyana, the beautiful east-facing windows are fully-installed, and much of the interior construction is finished, with painting and floors being the next step. We're working with the city to finalize the waterlines and will put in the final touches on the building itself.

As so many of you are part of this effort, one of the key ways this campaign has become a reality is to have support from a broad cross-section of our community, as you can see from the list of founding donors below.

Today we are completing the final round of fundraising this year relative to the beautiful \$250,000 unrestricted matching grant from The Annenberg Foundation. Please go to <https://www.wrjc.org/building-campaign> today to donate or increase your donation and support this matching grant opportunity. If you have yet to contribute or as you plan your 2022 charitable giving, we hope that you will establish and continue your financial support.

May it be a good new year for you, your family and friends,

The WRJC Building Committee

**We'd like to thank our WRJC Building Fund donors who have donated .
We look forward to your continued support for this project, and all your support with your 2022 membership dues and High Holiday contributions.**

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