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APRIL/MAY 2024

THE JEWISH VOICE

Informing and Connecting Jews in El Paso & Las Cruces



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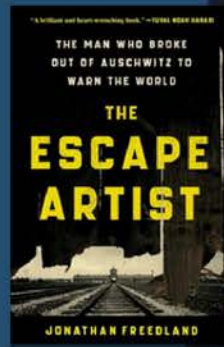


**SUNDAY, APRIL 14
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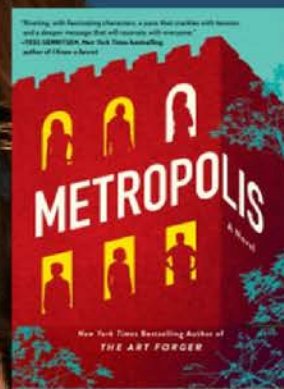


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**WEDNESDAY,
MAY 22, 2024**

7:00 PM

ZOOM:

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PASSWORD: 805



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Jewish Federation
of El Paso & Las Cruces

The Jewish Voice

is a publication of the



Jewish Federation
of El Paso & Las Cruces

The Jewish Voice, published six times a year, is dedicated to informing, educating, and uniting the Jewish community by providing news items of local, national, Israeli and international concern.

The Jewish Voice will consider for publication any materials submitted that support the mission of Jewish Federation of El Paso & Las Cruces and have relevance and appeal our Jewish community.

Articles are subject to editing at the editor's discretion and are subject to space limitations. Letters cannot be longer than 150 words and articles must be kept to a maximum of 400 words.

Opinions are those of individual writers and not necessarily those of Jewish Federation of El Paso & Las Cruces. The Jewish Voice is not responsible for the kashrut of any product or eating establishment advertised herein.

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From The Executive Director, Marla Cohen

It's a busy time for the Federation! Our 2024 campaign goal, led by Susie Schaechner, is to raise \$545,000 in pledges by Memorial Day weekend. A big thank you to Susie for producing the successful Pace Setters event. We are grateful to those who've already pledged and paid (please see our Donor Thank you's). As an incentive, anyone paying \$500+ towards their pledge by April 1 is invited to a VIP meal with Trio Sefardi in Las Cruces on April 7!

Who's Trio Sefardi? See page 6 for details. It is my hope that hearing their music will inspire our community to continue to explore and celebrate the rich history and culture of the Sephardic world. See page 5 for the complete schedule and reserve your tickets. This weekend is in collaboration with Congregation B'nai Zion, Temple Mount Sinai, and Temple Beth El. We thank ADL of the SW for being our firsts sponsor. Thanks to the Anusim Center and Synagogue for helping with musician hospitality.

In other news, we've moved! Our offices are now at 4150 Rio Bravo, Suite 222, El Paso, TX 79902. These new offices will allow us to redistribute funds to support our overall Campaign. Stay tuned for an announcement for our Hanukkah HaBayit - hanging up our mezuzot and celebrating our new home!

You may notice the missing birthday section in this issue. We hope to resume birthday announcements this summer when our new donor database system is fully populated.

Updates about Israel-Since JFNA launched its Emergency Israel Aid, they've raised \$783M and distributed \$385M. Check the Israel page on our website for more info on the agencies benefiting.


Finally, Join us on May 19 at Madeline Park from 12:00-2:30 p.m. for our Israel celebration and picnic. More details coming soon via weekly emails.



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TRIO SEFARDI

Friday, April 5 | 6:15 PM
Shabbat Services and Sefardic Style Dinner
Temple Mount Sinai
4408 N. Stanton, El Paso, TX 79902

6:15 PM: Shabbat Services with Trio Sefardi
7:30 PM: Kosher Dinner by CBZ Kitchen
\$18/adults, \$13/children under 12

Saturday, April 6 | 8:30 PM
Sunset Parlor
1307 N. Oregon, El Paso, TX 79902
Roots and Branches Concert
\$35/person (General Admission)

Music will highlight new and traditional
music from the Balkans, Turkey, and North Africa
Doors Open at 7:30, Cash Bar

Sunday, April 7 | 3:00 PM
Temple Beth El
3980 Sonoma Springs Ave
Las Cruces, NM 88011

Multimedia Presentation of "La Nona Kanta:
The Remarkable Life of Flory Jagoda" in
collaboration with Temple Beth El

This presentation combines filmed interviews
with Flory (from the documentary "Flory's
Flame"), live music performed by the trio,
animation, maps, still images, and spoken
narration.



SCAN FOR TICKETS

or go to www.jfedepc.org/events/triosefardi



Eddie & Robert
Trevizo

Trio Sefardi in the Borderland for Weekend Concert Series

The Jewish Federation of Las Cruces and El Paso is pleased to announce a special weekend concert series with Trio Sefardi, April 5-7, 2024.

Trio Sefardi (Susan Gaeta, vocals/guitar; Tina Chancey, viola da gamba, Renaissance violin, Pontic lyra, rebec; Howard Bass, lute/guitar) is dedicated to bringing the vibrant past into the living present and to continuing the musical traditions of those who created and sustained Sephardic song traditions over the centuries.

The trio draws on experience in folk music and jazz (Susan), early music (Tina and Howard), and the influence of their mentor, the Bosnian-born Sephardic singer/composer Flory Jagoda, a 2002 National Heritage Fellowship honoree. The trio has performed at the Kennedy Center, at the Center for Jewish History and the Greek Jewish Festival in New

York City, at the National Gallery of Art, annually at the Washington Folk Festival, and at Lisner Auditorium as a featured group in the Washington Revels production, "Andalusian Treasures." In 2019, they appeared at the prestigious Piccolo Spoleto Festival in Charleston, S.C., and in the same year, they presented the premiere of "La Nona Kanta: The Remarkable Life of Flory Jagoda," in South Windsor, Connecticut, with support from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The trio has produced three CDs: Sefardic Celebration (2011), Kaminos (2016), and La Yave d'Espanya (2019), all available for purchase after Saturday and Sunday concerts. Tickets to all shows can be purchased at www.jfedepc.org/events/triosefardi.

Please contact Marla Cohen mcohen@jfedepc.org for sponsorship opportunities or more information.





Americans March for Israel, Jewish Federations, The National Mall, November 14 2023.

Photography by Chris A. Williams

Passover: Walking the Path of Freedom

Written by: Rabbi Ben Zeidman

In the Babylonian Talmud (Megillah 10b, ca. 550 CE), the question is posed: “Does God rejoice over the downfall of the wicked?” In his attempt to answer, Rabbi Yochanan points to the story of the Exodus from Egypt. “The ministering angels wanted to sing, but God said: ‘The work of My hands (the Egyptians) are drowning in the sea, and you wish to sing?!’”

As we welcome the month of April and look forward to the celebration of Passover, the story of the Exodus from Egypt continues to speak with powerful resonance in our own time. As I write, war rages and “good” fights against

“evil” in regions around the globe. At the same time here at home we face concerns as Jews which are unprecedented in living memory (for most). As we wrestle with all of the difficulties we face, the Haggadah inspires us. Re-telling our story of transition, of struggle, from slavery to freedom (and reliving it) inspires us to establish a frame of gratitude.

When we were slaves, slavery defined every moment of our lives. Even in the moments of celebration, however few, we ultimately had the hopelessness of Egypt. The negative defined us. But, when we finally went free, we dedicated

ourselves once again to the sacred Covenantal relationship with the Divine. We re-oriented ourselves. As difficult as life could get, freedom meant hope. The promise of (eventual) goodness so beautifully represented by Elijah's "visit" to our homes on seder night.

When the Israelites began the Exodus, they were slaves. Once they crossed the Sea of Reeds, the journey wasn't over. If anything, it was a fresh start in the long march towards true freedom. A march that we continue. In our celebration of Passover, we note the



blessings, even amid the difficulties. Because as we reflect on the biblical story, freedom is not an absence of plagues. It is living and insisting on hope. It is refusing to bow down to evil: The evil around us, and the evil within us.

As we continue to walk the path towards freedom, may we never give in or give up on the ethics of Torah which demand that we live to a standard which often exceeds our own internal inclinations. A standard which often exceeds the standards of others. This and more we relearn as we celebrate Passover.



Photos: Jewish Federation of North America Photo Library, archival images of Passover celebrations.

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ROMEIO Lunch, October 4th, 2021. From left to right: Irwin Kurland, Beth Kurland, Paul Genesen, Ed Oppenheimer z'l, Bob Prenskey, Sam Ellowitz, Guy Hauptman z'l, Bobby Goldfarb.

How bout them ROMEOS?

Written by: Jerry Appel

In 2003, Real Estate Agent Ira Batt (also known as “The Batman”) decided El Paso’s Seniors needed to put together a group of guys. In Ira’s words, this was “a bunch of great guys getting together, telling tales about their lives, and sharing lunch.” The group was soon crowned: The ROMEOS (Retired Old Men Eating Out) of El Paso!

Over the years, the group moved several times across the city. They finally moved into their present home at

the Great American Steakburger at the corner of Cromo and Mesa Hills.

The story is told of a man sitting near the ROMEOS one day. He was so impressed by the group that he paid the tab for all the members. He was later asked to become a regular with the ROMEOS. And Rick Rubio fit in just fine.

A recent addition to the group, Dan Rubinstein, has lived in Chicago, Los Angeles and now El Paso. He talked

some nice talk about the group: He likes the group, he says, “because it’s an enjoyable change of pace and a get-together for pleasant conversation.”

The ROMEOS are an open book. And they’d love to see more members. They meet at 12:30 every Wednesday. So please come on over if you are looking to spend a couple of hours out of the house with a friendly group. I mean, what do you have to lose?

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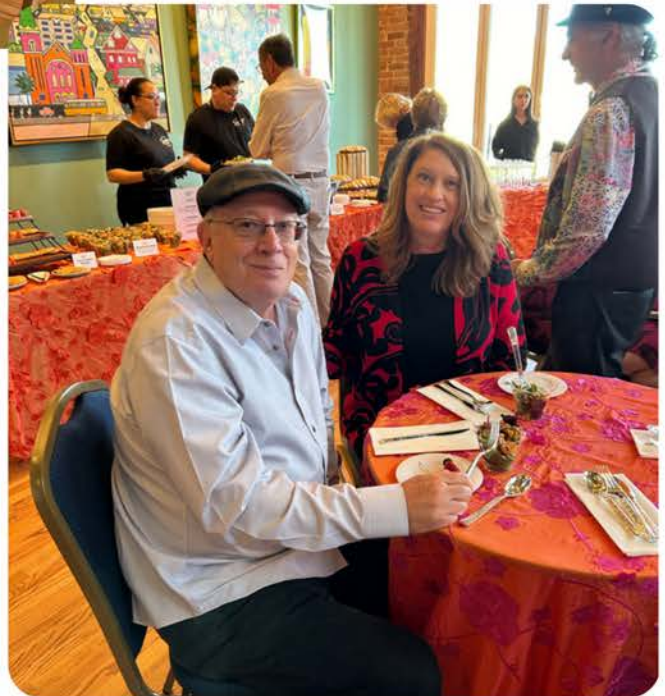
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Faces & Places

Pace Setters 2024



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Thank you to the
Hal Marcus Gallery
and Sunset Parlor
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PJ Library's 18th Birthday Party



On February 25th, our PJ Library families celebrated PJ's 18th Birthday at Charcoaler Drive-In. The lunch commemorated the organization's milestone anniversary and marked the end of its month-long Refer-a-Friend promotion.



Congratulations, Dr. Gladstein!

Dr. Mimi Gladstein received her 55 Years of Service Award at the annual UTEP Service Awards Ceremony on February 23, 2024. Dr. Heather Wilson, President of the University, made a nice presentation about Dr. Gladstein. Congratulations to Mimi!

Purim and Passover at the J

At The J, we pride ourselves on creating joyful Jewish memories and Passover is no exception. The children learn about the story of Passover and the exodus from Egypt. We'll create things with sand art and every year the children make something they can use

for the Seder like a matzo cover, Seder plate, or Elijah's cup. Our older students learn the four questions because they'll surely be the youngest at their seders - and they'll get to put this to use when we all celebrate together at our model Seder!



Another Meaning of Pesach

Written by: Mike Sackett, *Las Cruces, NM*

Having observed and participated in over one hundred fifty Sederim (Passover Seders), I have devised a means of keeping the evening interesting for guests who, like me, have read the Haggadah many times. Each year, I try to find interesting stories and bits of trivia that relate to the holiday and to the concepts we enshrine in its observance.

We have read Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech, recited Emma Lazarus' poem, the second half of which appears on the base of the Statue of Liberty, James Weldon Johnson's Negro sermon in verse "Let my People Go" from his book, *God's Trombones*, Kahlil Gibran's lines from his *The Prophet*, "for you can only be free when even the desire of seeking freedom becomes a harness to you, and when you cease to speak of freedom as a goal, and a fulfillment," and sung "Hatikvah" while discussing its meaning in English. This is without considering the many discussions of Rabbinic commentaries, discussions, and stories.

Each year, we try to invite at least one or two adults who have never experienced a Seder so that the "required" question which I ask them to put forth (after the Birkat HaMazon) will pique interest and new discussion from inexperienced viewpoints. I am neither a Rabbi nor a scholar, just a Jew who loves my faith and always seeks to learn more about it, our history, and our beliefs. Maybe the following will inspire you to do the same.

Each year we discuss, according to tradition, the three essentials of the Exodus: the Pesach, Matzoh, and Maror (Bitter Herbs). It's required, but most often we only read what's in the Haggadah without really discussing what they mean. The Matzoh is the easiest to explain; it is both the "bread of affliction" and the "bread of freedom" because as we are told, B'nai Israel didn't have time for their dough to rise when Pharaoh finally said, "Get Out!" We gathered what we could carry, including Joseph's "bones", our families, and livestock, and the silver and gold given (lent?) to us by the Egyptians, and away we went. Where we went is uncertain. We do know that we entered the Sea of Reeds and emerged whole, while Pharaoh's army was drowned, although not Pharaoh himself (this alone is worthy of discussion, especially since he himself was a first-born son who did not die in the tenth plague). We also know that we eventually made it to Mount Sinai, though its location is also uncertain. We also know that matzoh is not the tasty food that we would later experience in our travels; the manna and the quail, but it has become the most universal symbol of Passover.

The Maror, or bitter herbs, are eaten because "the Egyptians embittered their lives" in slavery. It also serves as a reminder of both Spring (the reason why our calendar has leap months to keep this holiday at the correct season) and new life, a new beginning, and a joyous one. It's straightforward but worthy of



discussion on its own merit. (Why are there two places on the Seder plate for “bitter herbs”?)

The most interesting of the three, for me, is the Pesach; usually represented on a Seder plate by a lamb shank bone or chicken leg bone, but in vegetarian homes, sometimes by a carrot or parsnip. This is the true symbol of the actual passing over of the Jewish homes during the tenth plague, and the only time (I think) when we utilize blood as an essential part of a ritual, which of course we no longer do because we no longer offer the Pesach sacrifice.



This sacrifice is unique in the Torah in many ways, and we could discuss these alone from dinner to dawn, but what you may not know is that the word Pesach, which the Greeks called “the Paschal sacrifice” comes from an even older word in the Akkadian language which is variously translated as a sacrifice of “Redemption” or “Appeasement” or “Protection”. These are all concepts which relate well to its purpose.



I choose to think of the Pesach as an offering of “Redemption” which relates well to the Hebrew word for “offering”, Korban, meaning to draw close (presumably to God), or to draw Him closer to us. And this is another meaning for Pesach; a holiday which we observe for the purpose of drawing closer to our ancestors and to the Creator and offering each of us the promise of Redemption.

Photos: Jewish Federation of North America Photo Library, archival images of Passover celebrations.

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Ambassador Ettinger Speaks at CBZ

Written by: Jerry Appel



Israeli Ambassador Yoram Ettinger, retired, spoke last month to a gathering of the El Paso Jewish Community at Congregation B'nai Zion.

The crowd of about 40 interested El Pasoans were there to hear from the UTEP graduate and family member about the diplomatic situation in Israel as several Sun City residents have children, family, and friends that live there.

Temple Mt. Sinai Rabbi Ben Zeidman introduced the former ambassador and then he spoke directly to the crowd for about 40 minutes. His positions were quite clear and direct. He called the October 7 attack of Israel by Hamas a "military debacle", and he also said that "only the US State Department thinks a two-state solution is possible." To bolster his position, Ettinger pointed to Israel's history with Palestinians and how Palestinians acted when welcomed in other countries. He pointed to the "reality" that the PLO has tried to take

over every other Arab nation that it has been housed in as the reason that a two-state solution is not realistic.

"What is happening in Gaza is just the tail of the snake; the head of the snake is Iran," said Ettinger. He argued that the USA must focus on deterring Iran, not cooperating. He also argued that the West does not understand the Sunni-Shiite schism as the primary motivating factor. He also praised all the diplomatic successes with other Arab nations and indicated that he wants the treaty with Saudi Arabia to go forward. He was quite optimistic about the future so long as Israel follows the approach of forging alliances through strength and deterrence.

After all that, Ettinger took about six questions from the audience on a variety of topics, but his response to the Israeli political situation was one of exasperation. His position is that Israel has a dysfunctional system, and he much prefers the US system because politicians are held accountable to their constituents.





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MENU

LUNCH SIZE PORTIONS

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| 04/10 Butternut Soup (P) Beef Sloppy Joes with Roll (M) Roasted Vegetables (P) | 05/29 Tomato Basil Soup (P) Pasta, Pesto, & Peas (D) Banana Bread (P) |
| 04/17 Lentil Soup (D) Vegetable Lasagna (D) Garlic Bread (P) | 06/05 Vegetable Soup (P) BBQ Chicken (M) Israeli Salad (P) |
| 04/24 Chicken Soup w/ Matzoh Ball (M) Tuna Croquettes w/ Roasted Red Pepper Sauce (M) Green Salad (P) | 06/12 Tortilla Soup (M) Chicken Flautas (M) Zucchini Bread (P) |
| 05/01 Pumpkin Soup (P) Vegetable Enchiladas (D) Cornbread Muffin (D) | 06/19 Chicken & Lemon Orzo Soup (M) Babaganoush w/ Pita Bread (P) Blueberry Muffin (P) |
| 05/08 Potato Soup (P) Beef Stuffed Bell Pepper (M) Roll (P) | 06/26 Vegetable Soup (P) Chicken Burrito (M) Black Bean and Corn Salad (P) |
| 05/15 Chicken Noodle Soup (P) Turkey & Avocado Sandwich w/ Herby Slaw (M) Pickle Spear (P) | (P) Parve (M) Beef, Poultry (D) Dairy |

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Session 2

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Temple Mount Sinai

Contact Alyssa at agoldman@jfedepbc.org
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at 11:00 AM

for a moment of silence
in observance of Yom HaZikaron,
Israel's Remembrance Day

Look for details in our weekly
email.

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76th Anniversary

Sunday, May 19, 2024

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