



THE ILLUMINATOR

Or Emet – The Minnesota Congregation for Humanistic Judaism

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Israeli Democracy in Crisis

by Eva R. Cohen
Ritual Leader and Rabbinic Student

Israeli democracy is in crisis. For months, [protestors have packed the nation's streets](#) to sound the alarm. [Over one in five Israelis](#) — more than 1.8 million people — have joined these demonstrations against a set of proposed judicial reforms. In spite of the outcry, on July 24 the Knesset passed a key reform proposal into law, [stripping Israel's Supreme Court of its power to overrule government administrative decisions on the basis of "unreasonableness."](#) This might sound esoteric, but the consequences are immediate and frightening. [In the past](#), the "reasonableness" standard has empowered the Supreme Court to stop women's exclusion from political office, to protect Palestinian freedom of movement, and to disqualify corrupt politicians from government service. Without this check and balance, elected officials have more freedom than ever to advance partisan majority projects that steamroll minority and marginalized populations. When the governing majority is the [most right-wing and religiously conservative in Israel's history](#) — and its leader is [a prime minister facing corruption charges](#) — many people have reason to fear ongoing restriction of their rights. Who? Women, LGBTQ people, Palestinians (both citizens of Israel and of the occupied territories), secular Jews, and everyone who cares about democratic governance.

In the words of Israeli progressive leader [Shulamit Aloni](#) (1927–2014), "democracy is not only the will of the majority or majority rule." (*Judaism in a Secular Age*, 341) A popular national majority supported the

German Nazi regime — whose undemocratic-ness most Israeli Jews would recognize — yet "the politicians ... of Israel accord legitimacy in the name of 'the will of the majority' to any deviant and anti-democratic law passed by the Knesset." (Ibid.) To challenge this democracy-washing, protestors continue to fill the Tel Aviv streets.

The Or Emet community does not agree about Israel. Our members range from [liberal Zionists who are committed to Israel's founding vision of itself as a Jewish and democratic state](#) to [anti-Zionists who see Israel as an "apartheid state where Jews have more rights than others."](#) Strikingly, the current judicial crisis puts all of us on the same side. Whether we think that 'Israeli democracy' is repairable or an oxymoron, we agree that it's authoritarian to change laws so that election-winners can ["take away people's basic liberties."](#) Our unity on this point mirrors the wider American Jewish scene. See how organizations as politically diverse as the centrist [American Jewish Committee](#) to the center-leftist [J Street](#) to the leftist [Jewish Voice for Peace](#) express a common concern that the Reasonableness Standard Law's passage threatens democratic values and minority rights.

Guided by [our Humanistic Jewish values](#), please contact your legislators and act with lobbying groups to voice American Jewish condemnation of Israeli 'judicial reform.' Maybe the diaspora can help stop Israeli democracy from dying in darkness.

Editor's note: In addition to serving as Or Emet's ritual leader, Eva teaches B Mitzvah prep class, coaches candidates, and officiates at B Mitzvah services.



OR EMET
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President's Message

by Allan Malkis



Greetings everyone from the fading days of summer. It's been nice to enjoy the warm weather – swimming at a lake, outdoor baseball, and bicycle rides with friends. Now I am looking forward to the beginning of our new program year with the Jewish Cultural Sunday School (JCSS), High Holidays and Adult Education on the horizon.

This summer has seen three B Mitzvah celebrations and a well attended Havdalah program at the Swing Bridge Park on August 5. It was great to see so many people. The potluck was a wonderful follow-up to the beautiful ceremony. Thanks to Eva Cohen, Molly Phipps, and everyone who contributed to the festivities.

We're looking forward this fall to repeating our Introduction to Humanistic Judaism presentation aimed at folks who may be wondering about Humanistic Judaism. Eva made this presentation in spring this year and we will repeat it just before the High Holidays to help draw in members of the larger community. If you have friends or family who might be interested, please help spread the word. Or Emet members are welcome to attend, though this is aimed at people new to our movement. The Introduction to Humanistic Judaism program will be on Saturday, September 9, held in person at Rondo Community Library. It will also be available on Zoom (additional details on page 13). Further Adult Ed programs in winter and spring will be Separation of Church and State. Watch for announcements on the spring topic.

Our program year leads off with the first Jewish Cultural Sunday School (JCSS) meeting and concurrent adult program on Sunday, September 10 at Talmud Torah of Saint Paul. The High Holiday celebrations follow later in the month, before our first Shabbat program on October 20. Details about programs are on page 13 and High Holiday events are on the back page.

We are looking forward to the updated congregational directory. This directory will be sent along with membership renewal and JCSS registration forms. Watch your U.S. mail and email inbox for details coming soon.

Finally, we are excited to begin planning for the celebration of Eva's rabbinic ordination in May 2024. Some folks will be traveling to Farmington Hills, Michigan for the ceremony, and we will have a congregational celebration at the annual meeting in June, followed by an event open to the larger Twin Cities community in fall 2024. Watch for details.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all at Or Emet's fall events.

In Memoriam



Mari Katz Young, daughter of Jack and Jane Katz, died on June 3.

Harold Fox, "kid brother" of David Fox, died on July 12.

Don Vlasnik, Barbara Cohen's life partner, died on June 30

Lester "Les" Block, long-time Or Emet friend who generously shared his considerable musical talents with Or Emet audiences, died on June 24.

May their Memory Be a Blessing

2023 Or Emet Annual Meeting Update

The 2023 annual meeting was attended by over forty members, including some on Zoom. President Allan Malkis presided and Scott Chazdon took the minutes.

Carrie Dickson and Allan Malkis presented appreciations and small gifts to our Jewish Cultural Sunday School teachers and aides.

Rabbinic candidate and Ritual Leader Eva Cohen described her year as ritual leader and progress toward ordination in May 2024. Eva noted that she worked about 40% of full-time although our budget was to pay her for 28%. She plans to keep her hours lower next year without a salary increase.

President Allan Malkis reviewed the past year, noting the growth in our JCSS enrollment and general membership. He expressed heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who make Or Emet work. The passing of David Barnett, one of our founding members, was noted. Malkis added that Eva Cohen's work has been amazing and extremely valuable. Some administrative changes have been made, including making our rabbinic candidate and school director employees rather than contracted workers.

Most of the Executive Committee members have chosen to return for another year which will help with continuity of effort.

Treasurer Seth Binder presented the financial situation. Or Emet has ample reserves (17 months of expected expenses) and spent a little under budget in 2022-23. The proposed budget for 2023-24 will require a greater effort to raise donations to meet our goals. An amendment to dedicate \$2500 towards celebrations for Eva Cohen's ordination was proposed and passed, and the proposed budget was passed as amended.

A bylaw change was proposed to increase terms in office for our three officers (president and vice president two years each and treasurer, three years). Discussion followed with concerns about deterring people from serving due to longer commitments. Those in favor noted the need for stability in the treasurer position, and the learning curve for officers. After much discussion the amendment was approved.

An election was held to fill the vacant at-large seat on the Executive Committee. Megan Narvey was elected by secret ballot.

A picnic followed the business meeting.

2023-2024 Or Emet Officers

President: Allan Malkis - 1-year term
Vice President: Jeff Pipes - 1-year term
Treasurer: Seth Binder - 1-year term

At-Large 1: Sarah Berman-Young - 2-year term
At-Large 2: Megan Narvey - 1st year of 2-year term



Jewish Cultural Sunday School Update

by Molly Phipps
Director of the Or Emet Jewish Cultural Sunday School



JCSS is looking forward to starting the 2023-2024 school year! Over the summer, three JCSS students - Aayush Dongre, Ari Dickson, and Tal Jurgemeyer had their bar mitzvahs and joined the adult community at Or Emet. We'll miss them at JCSS and look forward to seeing them grow into their new roles.

As we prepare for the 2023-2024 JCSS year, I want to update you on some space-related changes. Talmud Torah closed their day school and has signed a long-term lease with a new charter school for the entire building. Starting in September the building will undergo major renovations to accommodate the needs of the incoming school, impacting our use of the space. We'll be down to fewer classrooms and all adult programming will take place in the gym. This is a new and unexpected development and we are looking for new space for the 2024-2025 season, if not sooner. If you know of a Jewish space that might have room to host us, please let me know.

We've developed a safety plan for when we're at Talmud Torah and will be sharing it with families on our first session September 10. Being explicit about what to do routinely for safety (e.g., keeping the doors closed at all times, etc.), as well as planning for unlikely events, will help things go smoothly if something ever goes wrong.

About our teachers: Colline Roland, Renee Dorman,

and Eva Cohen will return and be joined by Ian Zukor. Ian is a 21 year old senior at the University of Minnesota (graduating in December) studying to be a teacher. He's long been involved in the Or Emet community and was bar mitzvahed through the congregation in 2015. He also worked for Or Emet as a teacher's aide for two years and is looking forward to getting started in a new role with Or Emet this coming year! Ian will be a great addition to our staff!

Colline Roland will continue teaching the Middles. Colline is a classroom teacher and travels to Israel frequently.

Renee Dorman will continue to teach the Juniors class. 2023-24 will be Renee's 12th year teaching for JCSS. In that time she has enjoyed teaching students from kindergarten through fifth grade. Renee lives in St. Paul and is a high school ESL teacher. She loves books, coffee shops, swimming, and traveling.

Eva Cohen teaches the B Mitzvah Prep class. She's also Or Emet's Ritual Leader, and will be ordained as a Humanistic rabbi in May 2024. This will be Eva's fifteenth(!) year teaching Or Emet's awesome, thoughtful 11-to-14-year-olds. She loves doing art and creative activities, critically analyzing texts, and discussing the big questions about truth, justice, and the Humanistic Jewish way with her students.

For more information about Or Emet's Jewish Cultural Sunday School, visit the [School Blog](https://www.oremetschool.org/blog) on the Or Emet website [oremetschool.org](https://www.oremetschool.org). Visitors are welcome to join JCSS classes. To arrange a visit, learn more about JCSS, the Youth Program, and/or for school-related questions and issues, email school-1@oremetschool.org.

Havdalah



Or Emet's annual summer Havdalah and picnic were held at Swing Bridge Park, in Inver Grove Heights, on August 5. Members and friends of all ages gathered for this meaningful annual summer event. Eva Cohen led a beautiful participatory service observing the end of Shabbat and dawning of a new week.





Social Justice/Social Action Committee Update

Howard Schneider and Gwyn Leder
Social Justice/Social Action Co-Chairs



Or Emet's Reverse Tashlich Event is on September 10 An Opportunity to Join Or Emet and the Global Movement

Or Emet has long observed High Holiday *Tashlich* (thanks to hosts Alan and Sharon Miller) with symbolically casting away transgressions of the past year. Our traditional Tashlich will be held on September 16.

Reverse Tashlich switches the process by removing debris and trash from bodies of water. This exemplifies our communal responsibility to "repair the world." Cultural School families are especially invited to join us!

Where: Marydale Park (includes Loeb Lake) in St. Paul. Parking is on Dale St. south of Maryland Ave.

When: Gather at 1 pm and begin clean-up at 1:30 pm. Clean-up followed by a program examining Jewish perspectives on water scarcity, water pollution, and what we can do.

Practical details: Bring gloves, wear sturdy shoes; we'll provide waste bags and grabber tools.

Refreshments: Fruit, bars, and water will be provided.



Tikkun Ha Yam - Repair the Sea is coordinating its 6th annual Reverse Tashlich event in the US and around the globe. Jewish marine biologists started the organization because of damage to oceans caused by humans dumping billions of tons of plastic and debris into oceans. For more information: <https://www.repairthesea.org/>

Ongoing Collections of Food and Personal Care items

High Holidays

The 2022 High Holiday collection of non-perishables totaled *nearly* 300 pounds. Items are donated to the Hallie Q. Brown Food Shelf. Be generous with canned items, dry goods, personal hygiene products, and pet food.

Listening House

Clients of Listening House have received personal care products collected at Or Emet's Shabbat and Sunday programs for many years. Listening House is a "daytime shelter for people experiencing poverty, homelessness, and loneliness." Needed personal care products include small and/or travel-size items, and empty pill bottles. Additionally, dental care packets are especially helpful.

HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) Holiday Calendar

We will have copies of a Jewish holiday calendar provided to us by HIAS at Reverse Tashlich and High Holiday programs. This will be a useful tool for tracking holidays dates.

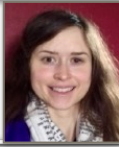
Letters to Senators Amy Klobuchar and Tina Smith for support of *Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act*

In August Social Justice/Social Action committee members sent letters to our Minnesota Senators urging them to co-sponsor Senate bill #255 *Asylum Seeker Work Authorization Act*.

The bill would enable certain asylum seekers to receive work authorization 30 days after filing an asylum application rather than wait 180 days as required under current law. Without the ability to work, people seeking asylum are deprived of the right to earn an income and support themselves and their families.

Introduced in February, SB #255 has languished. This should be a simple, compassionate, and bi-partisan step to fix at least one piece of our broken immigration system. **NOTE:** If you wish to send a letter to the senators and/or your representative, contact Howard for a copy of Or Emet's text (hamptonmeadow@msn.com).

Or Emet members are welcome to join the Social Justice/Social Action Committee and/or offer input on activities and issues. If you wish to be involved, contact Howard Schneider hamptonmeadow@msn.com or 651-278-2286.



My Journey to Becoming a Rabbi by Eva R. Cohen

As I shared in my May article and at the Or Emet annual meeting, my rabbinic journey will be ending on May 3, 2024! I'll be ordained as a Humanistic rabbi on that date in a ceremony at the Congregation for Humanistic Judaism of Metro Detroit. In order to reach this milestone, I still have final papers to finish, rabbinic internship work to document, and a thesis to write. This means dedicating every minute that I can to research and writing, while meeting my responsibilities as Or Emet's ritual leader, as a mom, and in all other aspects of my life. To express this struggle in very millennial terms, adulting is hard!

When I'm feeling overwhelmed, reminding myself about the [IISHJ rabbinic course requirements](#) that I've completed since my May update is helpful. To gain the "Interdenominational Experience" that my internship requires, I collaborated with other humanist leaders to help plan and lead the American Humanist Association's 2023 Humanist Collaboratory & Master Class. Held on May 4 in Denver, this master class focused on the foundation and future of the humanist community. A few weeks later I submitted a paper analyzing liturgical reinterpretation of Lamentations at a [2019 Tisha B'Av protest against Amazon's technological support of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency \(ICE\)](#). This paper fulfilled some of my final requirements as did a fascinating Coursera class — [Coexistence in Medieval Spain: Jews, Christians, and Muslims](#) that I did over June and early July for Medieval Jewish History and Literature. Since wrapping up this class, I've been working on two papers in rotation that I hope to finish before the Or Emet fall season begins.

As the fall season approaches, I'm struck by how full this summer has been with Or Emet events.

It was a pleasure to officiate Megan and Grant Brakob Narvey's June wedding — my first time officiating a marriage ceremony for Or Emet-ers (and only my

second time — gulp! — officiating any kind of wedding at all). I also enjoyed helping Aayush Dongre, Ari Dickson, Tal Jurgemeyer, and their families with B Mitzvah preparations. I loved officiating at each of their unique and meaningful ceremonies.

Leading the ritual at our community Havdalah picnic right by the Mississippi River at Swing Bridge Park was a connecting and rejuvenating pause in the midst of life cycle ceremony busyness.

When this article goes to press, two summer Adult B Mitzvah Program meetings and a final 2022-2023 Youth B Mitzvah Program meeting will be in the books; the 2023-2024 Youth B Mitzvah Program cohort will be meeting for the first time in early September.

Preparations for the High Holidays are accelerating, and so another Humanistic Jewish year nears its end.

As summer winds down and 5784 approaches, I wish myself and all of us joy and strength as we keep our individual and collective plates spinning. Here's to confronting challenges, embracing opportunities, and (say it with me) adulting!



Eva Cohen in some of her ritual leader roles.

Editor's note: In addition to serving as Or Emet's ritual leader, Eva teaches the B Mitzvah prep class, coaches candidates, and officiates at the B Mitzvah services.

2023 B Mitzvah Celebrations

At each B Mitzvah, the candidate reports about their special project and reflections on the weekly Torah portion. The highlights of each celebrant's project are featured here.

Aayush Dongre

Being Jewish in Small Town Wisconsin



For my bar mitzvah, I researched a very personal story, my great-grandparents' general store, and their lives as a Jewish family in small town Wisconsin. My maternal great-grandparents owned a general store, Friedman's Grocery, in Stoughton, Wisconsin, for over 30 years. I put together a presentation that combined information I learned from articles, documentaries, family interviews, and a visit to Stoughton.

The day of the bar mitzvah, I presented my project (in spite of technical difficulties) and told a story that was very meaningful for my family. Many guests also related and shared stories with us afterwards about their own family experiences owning general stores, often as immigrants or minority populations in their communities.



Friedman's Grocery store sign

I learned a lot about family, about interviewing, conducting research, and about editing and planning ahead. I was lucky to have the patient guidance of both Eva Cohen, and Or Emet mentor, Susan Weinberg, throughout the process. I am happy to share a [link to the presentation](#), and to the [script](#) that I wrote. You can match up the presentation and the script by using the slide number indicated in the script. Thanks so much to all of the Or Emet community who attended my bar mitzvah and/or sent messages of support and congratulations.

Ari Dickson

A Video Exploration of Ancient Israelites

My research project was about the ancient Israelites: what we know from archaeological evidence around the First Temple period and some myths around them. I wrote a Stargate story to present the research because I like Stargate, and I don't like giving presentations.

In the science fiction movie and tv shows, an ancient and highly advanced people created the Stargates; wormholes that allow for travel between planets and galaxies nearly instantaneously. An alien race, the Goa'uld, kidnapped ancient humans through these Stargates and took them to different planets to enslave them. Using their advanced technology, the Goa'uld pretended to be gods to ensure loyalty. In the original movie, the Goa'uld pretended to be the Egyptian god Ra, and the tv series featured the gods and people from all over the ancient world, bringing those cultures' mythology to life.

SG-1 was a team of four members and the heroes of our story. The team consisted of an air force pilot and commander Colonel Jack O'Neill, a physicist, and science/technology expert Major Samantha Carter, a civilian archaeologist and social science expert, Dr. Daniel Jackson, and a Jaffa warrior, Teal'c, who turned against the Goa'uld.

In creating the movie, I learned that there isn't a ton of archaeological evidence about the ancient Israelites from around the time of the First Temple. I also learned that editing a movie is hard.

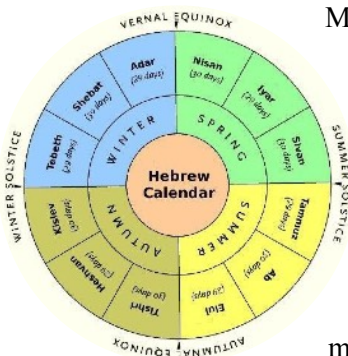
You can watch "Stargate: The Lost Tribes" by going to <https://bit.ly/StargateLostTribes>. I hope you enjoy my movie.



2023 B Mitzvah Celebrant Projects – continued

Tal Jurgemeyer

The Hebrew Calendar: An Essential Part of Jewish Life



My project explores math through the Hebrew calendar. The Hebrew calendar is a lunisolar calendar, which means it combines both the lunar and solar cycles in its dates. The Gregorian calendar, used in the majority of the world, is just a solar calendar. We follow the earth's cycle around the sun for a year and make the months match up with the cycle. The Hebrew calendar uses the same method for the year very loosely, but really focuses on the lunar cycle.

The Torah states that Pesach must fall in the first month of spring, or Chodesh Ha'Aviv. The way people have prevented the first month of spring from coming too early is to just add a month after the month of Adar, called Adar Sheni. This makes the year 13 months instead of 12 in some years, making it a leap year.

This calendar is deeply rooted in Jewish culture and tradition and has been an essential part of Jewish life for thousands of years. Its origin can be traced back to biblical times, making it one of the oldest known calendars still in use today. The culture and tradition of our holidays are embedded into our telling of time. The Hebrew calendar is not merely a system for marking time; it is an integral part of Jewish culture and tradition, guiding religious observances, commemorating historical events, and fostering a sense of community and identity among Jewish people around the world.



Member Article

Preserving Memories

by Susan Weinberg



Do you have a box with old VHS tapes and no device on which to view them? Did you know that magnetic tape degrades after 10-20 years? Recently I learned how to easily turn those VHS tapes into a digital form.

Years ago my parents were going down to Florida to visit my aunts. I listed out questions on family history and sent my mother down with the mission of interviewing her sisters, and my father the task of recording them. The video has languished in a drawer ever since.

Recently I discovered a resource that spurred me to action. The [Hennepin History Museum](https://hennepinhistory.org/) has a [Memory Lab](https://hennepinhistory.org/memory-lab/) which will allow you to digitize audio and VHS tapes. It will also convert 8mm and Super 8 film to .mp4. It allows for scanning photos, negatives, and slides to .jpg or .pdf. The room adjoins the research library at the front of the building located down the street from the Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

The lab is open Thursday through Saturday with the first hour free of charge, then \$5 an hour. I emailed Michele Pollard, the archivist at the museum, and was scheduled for the following week. On the scheduled day, Michele reviewed the equipment and helped me set up my tape.

Nervously, I waited for the image to appear, not sure how much it may have degraded in the intervening years. As it came into view, the date appeared at the bottom, 1992, now over ten years past its maximum shelf life. When the image materialized, it wasn't sharp, but it was indeed my mother and my aunts who appeared, filling the screen with their most welcome presence as none of them are still living. I was jolted to see my mother on video, even more so when I realized that she was younger than I am now.

To reserve time in the lab or the research library email research@hennepinhistory.org

On Emet Book Club

Next Book Club Meeting: Sunday | November 5 | 10:30 a.m. - noon | location TBD

The Last Kings of Shanghai: The Rival Jewish Dynasties That Helped Create Modern China by Jonathan Kaufman

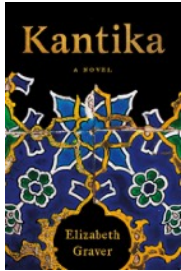
If interested in joining the book club, contact Scott Chazdon at schazdon@umn.edu.

Kantika

A Beautiful Song About an Amazing Woman's Life

by Elizabeth Graver

Reviewed by Arty Dorman



Kantika often reads like a novel, but is the true story of Graver's grandmother, Rebecca Cohen Baruch Levy. *Kantika*, a Ladino word for "song," offers the warmth and sentimentality of a ballad. It is also a tribute to Rebecca, who greatly loved to sing.

Rebecca's ancestors were Sephardim who fled Spain during the expulsion and settled in Turkey. A large Jewish community in Istanbul lived in relative peace amid many ethnicities — Kurds, Greeks, Armenians, Romanians, and the Turks who ruled the Ottoman Empire. Rebecca's father, Alberto, inherited a textile business, along with wealth and prestige. In 1907 Rebecca is living an idyllic childhood, with her best friend, Rahelika.

During World War I, the Ottomans seize Alberto's business for the war effort. After the war, the newly formed Turkish Republic has a less tolerant attitude towards Turkey's Jews. Unable to reclaim his business, financially ruined and fearing the conscription of two teenage sons into the Turkish army, Alberto is desperate to leave the country. Rahelika's family immigrates to America, a wrenching loss for Rebecca. The Cohen family's best option, a return to Spain. They land in a small apartment behind a decaying synagogue in Barcelona for which Alberto is caretaker, rebuilding a Jewish presence in the country that expelled their ancestors.

Rebecca, now a young adult, and a talented seamstress, starts her own business. Though fiercely independent, she dutifully marries. Her marriage, while disastrous, gives her two precious sons. She faces a difficult path, even as the Spanish prove to be less hospitable to the returning Jews. Through a remarkable connection with her old friend Rahelika, Rebecca finds her way to America and a second marriage to a widower named Sam Levy. Sam, his special needs daughter, and his opinionated mother, Fanny, live above a stationery store he runs in Queens. Here Rebecca and Sam, her two sons, Sam's daughter, and Fanny become a new family. Struggling with differences and meager means, they manage to progress.

Graver writes with great affection for her characters, her ancestors. The first half of *Kantika* reads like a novel because Graver's account of the family's experiences in Turkey and Spain, based on research and stories, lacks first-hand connections. The second half had the benefit of interviewing relatives, leading to a journalistic feel.

Rebecca travels from Spain to Havana to meet Sam, bridging the far-away sense of the Old World, to the modernism of the new. Rebecca evaluates whether she could make a life for herself and her sons with Sam, and for the first time feels empowered to choose her future. Their first encounter is not, as one might expect given the times, chaste and restrained, but lusty and romantic, so that we fully appreciate all that Rebecca takes into account as she decides the future she will inhabit.

Rebecca's story as a Sephardic Jew raised in the Ottoman Empire, is a departure from the more familiar account of Jewish families from eastern Europe. This lends *Kantika* historical and cultural insights, while retaining a familiarity for those whose forbears also journeyed to find their future in the New World. Family photos at the start of each chapter reinforce the awareness of this being a true story and make each of her "characters" utterly real. *Kantika* expands our horizons while drawing us in with its intimacy and warmth, and serves as a lovely tribute from Graver to her grandmother and her heritage.

Member Article

A Rude Awakening

by Alan Miller

We have been casually, foolishly living our lives in the United States under the assumption that our Constitution protects us from demagogues, authoritarians, and those who would change the basic tenets of our democracy. We were wrong.

As we look at some of the recent events and trends in our nation, and needless to say in other countries as well, our eyes are suddenly opened. Freedom of religion, which we have always taken for granted? Not necessarily, unless it is the narrow view of religion espoused by some of the "nationalists" among us. Freedom of choice about our decisions, our bodies? Only if it coincides with theirs, or what they purport represents their religious beliefs.

Freedom from censorship and book banning, which in effect is the same as book burning? Where in the annals of history have we confronted this before?

While we have been comfortably living our lives, unaware of movements around us, legislatures have been compromised, school and library boards as well, by individuals with a specific agenda — an agenda to uproot the quality of life as we know it, much of which we have always taken for granted.

While we have slumbered, these movements have not slept.

We are witnessing attempts to distort history, to infuse intolerance into our lives, to make it more difficult to exercise our franchise to vote, and even attempts to override the results of free and fair elections by appointing panels which can set aside a majority vote and replace it with a bigoted concept of governance.

It is long past time to awaken the sleeping giant — democracy. Voting has never been more important; it has become imperative. As the expression goes, vote as if your life depends on it. It does. This nation was founded by individuals with a vision of equality and freedom, and that is what's threatened today.

We have the message, lest we fail to hear it, much of what we hold sacred and take for granted will not only be threatened, but eradicated.

Your vote has NEVER been more important.



A Reluctant Madonna by Alan Miller — his newest novel

Or Emet member Alan Miller has recently written and published his second novel. Alan celebrated his 88th birthday with publication of his first highly acclaimed novel, *Holding Court* in 2022.

At Or Emet's Shabbat service on Friday, November 17th, Alan will address the congregation about a lifetime of writing in various forums, and will feature his new book *A Reluctant Madonna*. The book was featured on Amazon and is available at Barnes & Noble.

Member News *Simchas and Tsuris (Joys and Concerns)*



Weddings and Anniversaries



Megan Narvey and Grant Brakob

Megan and Grant were married on June 18 at Silverwood Park with Eva Cohen officiating. The humanistic wedding ceremony celebrated their intercultural backgrounds, blending culturally Jewish and culturally Catholic traditions with diverse readings from poems, songs, books, and films that are special for the couple. Megan serves on Or Emet's board and both contribute their energy and dedication to congregational activities.

Alyssa and Mike

On June 30 Sarah Berman-Young officiated at a wedding in Wisconsin for a non-member couple.

Or Emet Humanistic Jewish weddings are available for members and non-members

Eva Cohen and Sarah Berman-Young are available to officiate at weddings. They collaborate with couples to create individually designed ceremonies. For additional information contact ceremonies@oremnet.org.

Tina and David Edstam's 50th wedding anniversary is on September 2. They will celebrate with a small family event at the Nicollet Island Inn.

Richard and Carol Logan's 55th wedding anniversary is on September 7. They will celebrate with family and friends.

CONGRATULATIONS!

Or Emet Crop Artists at the Minnesota State Fair

Laura Melnick and Mark Dahlager continue to produce amazing crop art. 2023 is the 24th year their creations have received winning ribbons at the MN State Fair! Laura and Mark's compositions feature timely topics from a humorous perspective. Laura says her goal is to "say something heavy in a light way."

Mark's Entry

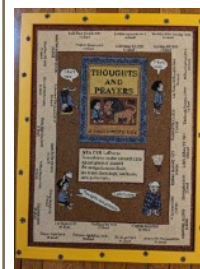


[Click to Enlarge](#)

Laura's crop art entry is titled "Thoughts and Prayers." This phrase is ubiquitous in lieu of action, in the face of yet another episode of gun violence. A list of mass shootings in the US is included in the piece.

Mark's 2023 crop art entry is a retrospective. It displays state fair receipts, uncashed award checks, and ribbons they have received over a previous decade. The piece includes this statement: "crop art keeps us together."

Laura's entry



[Click to Enlarge](#)

Laura's piece says:
*NRA CEO LaPierre;
Is unable to make himself care;
About guns of assault;
As mass shootings, we know;
Are quite rare.*

Dr. Harold Londer 1947 - 2020, Or Emet Co-Founder and Madrikh

On the occasion of Harold's third yahrzeit July 29, we celebrate his memory.



Dr. Harold Londer was committed to guiding Or Emet from its founding in 1983 until his death. Our community would not exist were it not for Harold's efforts and dedication.



The Or Emet Rabbi Fund, in memory of Dr. Harold Londer was created in keeping with Harold's dedication to Or Emet and Humanistic Judaism. This memorial fund is intended to support Or Emet's continuing growth and to help aid the congregation's ritual leadership and future rabbi position.

On this third anniversary of Harold's death, we invite you to honor his memory by reflecting on the quality of dedication, in both Harold's life and in your own. How do you live your values? How do you contribute to the various communities in which you participate? How are you contributing in large and/or small ways to Or Emet's health and longevity? How can we each learn from Harold's example?

Donations



To honor B Mitzvah celebrants — Aayush Dongre, Ari Dickson, Tal Jurgemeyer

Janet Mayer and Paul Petzschke
Arty Dorman
Joan Barnett

To honor Aayush Dongre on his bar mitzvah

Susan Friedman-Hill and Gregory Hill, grandparents

In memory of Don Vlasnik

Janet Mayer and Paul Petzschke
Joan Barnett

To the Or Emet Rabbi Fund, in memory of Dr. Harold Londer

Janet Mayer and Paul Petzschke
Joan Barnett
Richard and Carol Logan
Susan Weinberg

In memory of Mari Katz Young

Janet Mayer and Paul Petzschke
Arty and Coleen Dorman
Scott and Ellen Chazdon
Susan Weinberg
Joan Barnett
Richard and Carol Logan

In memory of Harold Fox

Janet Mayer and Paul Petzschke
Joan Barnett

In memory of Les Block

Janet Mayer and Paul Petzschke
Joan Barnett
Richard and Carol Logan

* Donations may be made through Or Emet's website oremnet.org
or by sending a check to Seth Binder, 3820 Lyndale Ave. S., Mpls 55409

Caring Circle

We're here for you when you need a little extra support



Or Emet's Caring Circle (CC) offers simple, practical, short-term assistance and support to members in times of illness, loss, and crisis. This support supplements and coordinates with other resources (e.g. family, friends, community, professional).

Anyone can let the CC know if they, or a person they know, wants/needs Caring Circle attention — from a simple card to a personal phone call, email and/or a one-time visit, or something a little more frequent. To request cards for members in times of illness, loss, and crisis contact Faith Oremland faitho711@aol.com.

Our Meal Train is available for Or Emet members who cannot obtain food any other way.

Contact Caring Circle at CaringCircle@oremnet.org

2023-2024 Caring Circle Committee

Eva Rose Cohen, Megan Narvey, Karen Cohen, Janet Mayer, Daniel Lupton, Faith Oremland, Sonny Taylor

SHABBAT PROGRAMS

Shabbat programs meet at the Minnesota JCC Sabes Center, 4330 S. Cedar Lake Rd., Minneapolis. Programs include a brief Humanistic Shabbat service and are followed by social time.

Friday | October 20 | 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Program: *Empowering Our Youth: A Strong Circle of Support*

Presenter: Tedi Grey Owl, enrolled member of the Seneca Nation and director of Migizi, a Minneapolis organization which prepares Native American youth for education, careers, and community leadership.

Friday | November 17 | 7:30 - 9 p.m.

Program: *A Lifetime of Writing: featuring Alan's new novel: A Reluctant Madonna.*

Presenter: Alan Miller

Saturday | December 16 | 10 - 11:30 a.m.

Program: *Immigration: Laws, Documents, and Stories*

This multi-media talk will examine immigration laws affecting immigrants during the 20th century and the social environment that gave birth to them, including video clips of immigrants' stories.

Presenter: Susan Weinberg, Or Emet Member and president of the MN Jewish Genealogical Society

SUNDAY PROGRAMS

Sunday programs are at the Talmud Torah of St. Paul, 768 Hamline Ave. S., St. Paul.

Adult programs meet concurrently with Jewish Cultural Sunday School classes. Programs conclude with social time.

Sunday | September 10 | 10 a.m. - noon

Program: *Or Emet's Oral History Project: Tell Your Story!*

Facilitators: Scott Chazdon: Or Emet member, sociologist, and Michal Moskowitz: Metropolitan State University professor emerita

Sunday | October 1 | 10 a.m. - noon

Program: *Holocaust Destination: Ecuador*

Presenter: Doris Rubenstein: Author and journalist

Sunday | November 12 | 10 a.m. - noon

Program: *Appetite for Change and Food Justice*

Michelle will share how she went from public defender, to line cook, to social justice advocate; and help us understand food justice through a Jewish lens.

Presenter: Michelle Horowitz, Co-founder of Appetite For Change

Sunday | December 3 | 10 a.m. - noon

Program: *Ocho días de kantar: Eight days of Singing — a Sephardic Chanukah*

Presenter: David Jordan Harris, Artistic Director, Voices of Sepharad

Reminder! We collect empty pill bottles, dental care packets, and personal care items for clients at Listening House, a St. Paul drop-in center. Donations are gratefully accepted at all Shabbat and Sunday programs.

Upcoming Events / September - December 2023

Introduction to Humanistic Judaism | Saturday | September 9 | 10 am | a hybrid program

Rondo Community Library at University Ave. and Dale St., St. Paul | parking under library

Or Emet Book Club | Sunday | November 5 | 10:30 a.m. - noon | location to be announced

The Last Kings of Shanghai: The Rival Jewish Dynasties That Helped Create Modern China by Jonathan Kaufman

If interested in participating, contact Scott Chazdon at schazdon@umn.edu.

Hanukkah Party | Sunday | December 9 or 10 | 5:00 - 7:30



At this time, the Hanukkah party date, location, and other details are TBD.

OR EMET 2023 / 5784 HIGH HOLIDAY EVENTS



High Holiday Services (except Tashlich) will be at Sabes Jewish Community Center
4330 South Cedar Lake Road, St. Louis Park

*Services will be led by Eva Cohen, Or Emet rabbinic candidate
~ offered virtually and in person ~*

Rosh Hashanah Service

Friday | September 15 | 7:00 p.m.
Oneg following the service

Rosh Hashanah Tashlich Service and Potluck

Saturday | September 16 | 10:30 a.m. | location TBA

Reverse Tashlich | September 10 | 1:00 pm

At Marydale Park — details are on page 5

Kol Nidre Service

Sunday | September 24 | 7:00 p.m.

Yom Kippur Service

Monday | September 25 | 4:00 p.m.

Break-the-Fast

At conclusion of the Yom Kippur service

In keeping with tradition, Or Emet will collect nonperishable food and personal hygiene items at High Holiday events. Donations will be shared with the food shelf at Hallie Q. Brown Community Center.

