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Elder advocates for environment, good causes

Story and photo by Peter Korchnak

MURRAY KAUFMAN, 94, WANTS PEOPLE TO BECOME ADVOCATES FOR THE ENVIRONMENT. A *NEW YORK TIMES* OP-ED OUTLINING THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF CANADIAN TAR SAND EXPLOITATION SPURRED KAUFMAN TO ENERGIZE HIS FELLOW ROSE SCHNITZER MANOR RESIDENTS TO STAND UP FOR CONSERVATION.

“There are always important issues to support,” said Kaufman, who writes at least one letter every month to the president, a congressional representative or secretary of the interior. Most recently, he told them that “as a member of The Wilderness Society, I stand with its efforts to protect America’s Arctic and all of our nation’s wild places from harmful oil and gas development.”



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A LIFETIME OF ACTIVISM

Kaufman has been an ardent activist for good causes since 1957. A teacher at Roslyn High School on Long Island, he discovered a factory was exploiting a legal loophole to pollute a nearby lake.

“Long after graduation kids would stop me on the street, telling me they went into environment-related careers because of my classes.”

— Murray Kaufman

For the next class project he had students write alternative regulations. A local assemblyman was so impressed with the students' drafts he introduced a bill in the state legislature.

“It took another three or four years to get the law passed,” Kaufman said. But watching legislators discuss their work felt very empowering to the kids in the gallery.

He said, “Long after graduation kids would stop me on the street, telling me they went into environment-related careers because of my classes.”

WE FIGHT FOR OUR VALUES

We believe in Israel's right to exist as a Jewish homeland and a democracy that guarantees equality and justice for all its citizens and that lives in peace, security and prosperity alongside a thriving Palestinian homeland.

WE TAKE ACTION

- We advocate to our elected officials in support of a strong US role in helping Israelis and Palestinians create a peaceful and secure future.
- We educate and inform ourselves and our community.
- We promote open respectful discussions about Israel and the Middle East.

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Darfur

by Murray Kaufman

The outstretched hand, the thin trembling fingers –
O so minuscule! If you touch them, they might break –
Or kiss them, and they burn with desire –

O Darfur! The world is numb and your pain
finds death, and those tiny baby fingers
caress your lips one last time – and desire flees...

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-Rabbi Joshua Stampfer*

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NO REST IN RETIREMENT

Kaufman retired from teaching in 1982. In 1996 he and his wife moved to the San Francisco Bay Area, where he volunteered to submit water samples from area lakes to laboratories. He would then report any pollution to the authorities.


In his retirement, Kaufman also has worked as a political activist. After his wife's passing in 1999, he answered the call of California Democratic Party officials to help candidates in Oregon's close presidential election. In 2000 he moved to Salem.

Kaufman is gearing up to join the re-election campaign. He said, "I'm a good campaigner. I'll support him but I'm not afraid to criticize the president. Right now he needs a push."

Soon after moving to Rose Schnitzer Manor at Cedar Sinai Park in 2006, Kaufman helped form the Social Action Club, which, until its demise in early 2012, fund-raised for good causes. He has now joined 20 other residents in contributing monthly to the Itafari Foundation to help Rwandan children attend school.

NATURE IN POETRY AND JUDAISM

Nature wends its way into Kaufman's poetry. In "If I Were Young Again," for example, he writes, "...for here was one human being who/proudly bonds with nature's throwaways."

Judaism underpins Kaufman's activism. He said, "If I am only for myself, what am I? That's the Jewish principle. We're here to help everyone, not just us." 

Peter Korchnak is the online communications manager for Cedar Sinai Park. He writes about the experience of immigration from Central Europe at AmericanRobotnik.com.



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ROBISON PICNIC – The Aug. 1 Cedar Sinai Park Community Barbeque at Robison Jewish Health Center included live music, cotton candy, a bouncy house, face painting, and hot food and cool drinks. Above right, Robison residents distributed school supplies to grade-school-aged children of staff. Robison residents, seated from left, Edith Levitt and Ruth Omenn, with CSP employee Gospa Saric and two of her three children, Ramo and Ejla. CSP employee Ana Smetana looks on in the background. Above left, Weatherly Ballaris checks her new face painting as her brother William gets his face painted by artist Kim Millen of UB Painted. Photos by Peter Korchnak



TORAH TREK – Congregation Kol Ami members celebrate as they walk their Torah 4.9 miles to their new synagogue home at 7800 NE 119th St. in Vancouver, WA, Aug. 19. Above, Jan Herson (holding the Torah), followed by Rabbi Elizabeth Dunsker, lead the trek to the congregation's new home designed by Richard Brown Architect.



MOMMY AND ME OUTINGS – Jewish moms have been connecting with each other and enjoying Oregon outdoor parks with their children most Thursdays this summer at gatherings of Mommy and Me with a Jewish Twist. In addition to this gathering at Summer Lake Park, the group has met at the Oregon Zoo, Tanner Creek Park, Raleigh Park, George Rogers Park and The Children's Museum. Summer outings have been organized by Mommy and Me with a Jewish Twist in conjunction with the PJ Library.



COMMUNITY PRE-SHABBAT PICNIC – Callie and Noah Barrish with their infant, at left, were among some 200 people to enjoy a pre-Shabbat celebration at a picnic in Laurelhurst Park Aug. 17 as they listened to music from the Klezmonauts, comedy by Betsy Kaufman, blessings by Rabbi Ariel Stone and a greeting from Marc Blattner, president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, which sponsored the event and provided challot for families. Children's activities were provided by Camp SEED and Rabbi Dov Bialo.

Cedar Sinai Park employees join Bike Commute Challenge

Cedar Sinai Park employees are joining the Bicycle Transportation Alliance Bike Commute Challenge for the first time. According to the BTA website, the Challenge is a “friendly competition—workplace against workplace—to see who can bike to work more during the month of September.”

Spearheading CSP’s participation is Admissions/Social Services Coordinator Ali Hartstein. In her role as Captain of CSP Team Haverim, Hartstein said, “Through the summer I have seen five Cedar Sinai Park employees, including myself, bike to work. Several people have told me they’d love to do it, too, so I’m hoping the Challenge will provide the needed boost.”

The organization supports the effort. According to CSP Chief Program Officer Kimberly Fuson, “Participation in the Bike Commute Challenge promotes the health and wellness of our employees. Biking is a fun, environmentally friendly way to commute. I live a mile and a half away, so I’ll bike whenever I can.”

Hartstein added she would love it if other Jewish organizations got involved in the effort. She said, “I’d love to see how we do in comparison to our sister agencies. I invite all Jewish organizations to join us in the friendly competition.”

Sign up for BTA Bike Commute Challenge at bikecommutechallenge.com. Individuals sign up and join their company’s team; the first person to sign up is the team captain.

Portland Jewish Academy launches drive for new donors

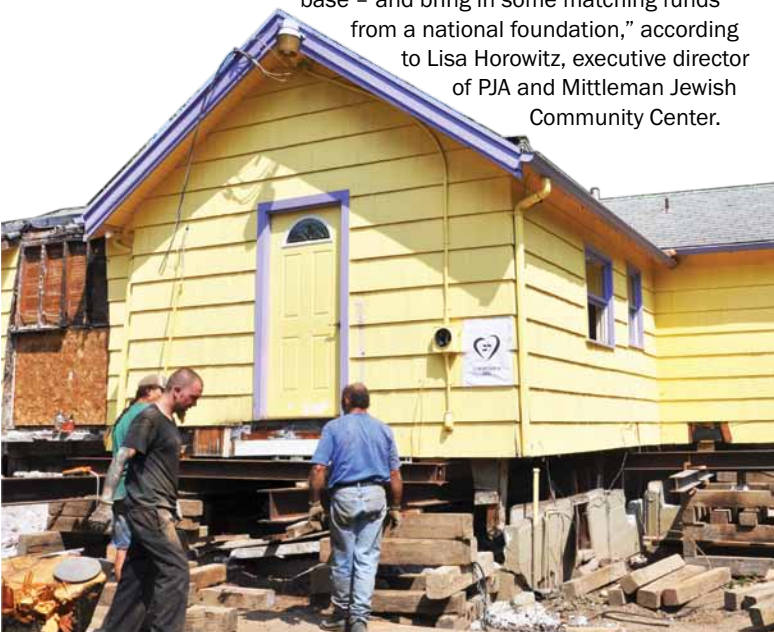
Portland Jewish Academy has launched an all-out search for NEW donors to enable the school to earn up to \$50,000 in matching funds.

PEJE (Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education) is offering a day school match program to encourage new, non-parent donors to Jewish day schools. Funded by Avi Chai and Kohelet Foundation, PEJE will match donations 1:2 donations that are: \$10,000 or more; five times the highest previous annual giving by that donor (to PJA or other Jewish Day School); non-parent (those eligible include grandparents, alumni, alumni parents and community members); from an individual or married couple (not a group of donors but family foundations are OK); and designated for *operations*.

Gifts must be pledged between Aug. 1 and Jan. 15, 2013. They must be paid in full by May 15, 2013 to be matched. Schools can earn up to \$50,000 from the match if they reach the maximum of \$100,000 in eligible gifts.

If you are interested in participating and/or can identify some potential match donors, please contact either Lisa Katon at lkaton@pjaproud.org, Merrill Hendin at m2hendin@pjaproud.org or Lisa Horowitz at lhowitz@pjaproud.org as soon as possible.

“This is a wonderful opportunity to expand our school’s donor base – and bring in some matching funds from a national foundation,” according to Lisa Horowitz, executive director of PJA and Mittleman Jewish Community Center.



Chagall for Children opens in Portland Sept. 23

Artists come in all sizes at *Chagall for Children*, the new exhibit at the Portland Children’s Museum. The Chagall exhibit will be at the museum from Sept. 23, 2012, to Jan. 21, 2013. Arranged like a miniature art gallery, this one-of-a-kind exhibit features 14 reproductions of famed Jewish artist Marc Chagall’s most famous paintings. Each painting is paired with an audio recording about its history and content, and an interactive component as imaginative as the paintings themselves. *Chagall for Children* is a place where children ages 3-10 can not only play with the art, but the art will play back. The Museum’s Artists’ Paint Studio will encourage children to explore color, composition, light and texture by creating masterpieces of their own. Chagall’s vivid artwork combined with unique, playful, hands-on activities makes for the most fun you’ve ever had at an art gallery.

Portland Children’s Museum is located at 4015 SW Canyon Road. Hours are Tuesday-Sunday 9 am-5 pm, Thursday 9 am-8 pm, closed Mondays except for Portland Public School holidays. For more information, visit www.portlandcm.org.

MJCC hosts *The Dovekeepers* author Alice Hoffman Sept. 6

The Mittleman Jewish Community Center will host author Alice Hoffman on Sept. 6 for a reading and book signing of the recently released paperback version of her *New York Times* bestseller *The Dovekeepers*.

“We jumped at the chance to have her here. This work of fiction is so dramatically driven by strong female characters telling the compelling story of what happened at Masada in Israel. It appeals to many of us on a personal level and it should be fun to hear from Ms Hoffman in person about her research for the book,” says MJCC Operations Manager Jordana Levenick.

Set in ancient Israel, *The Dovekeepers* is based on the Romans’ siege of Masada in 70 CE when 900 Jews held out against the Romans for months. According to the ancient historian Josephus, all but two women and five children perished. Hoffman retells this story from the point of view of four extraordinary women, each of whom comes to Masada with secrets to keep. The book signing and reading will be held on Sept. 6 at 7 pm in the Stern Family Ballroom at the MJCC, located at 6651 SW Capitol Highway in Portland. The MJCC will have books available for sale.

RSVPs are requested, www.oregonjcc.org/rsvp

Maimonides Day School ready to grow up

During the week of Aug. 13 one of the buildings on the campus of Maimonides Jewish Day School was lifted off its foundation to prepare for an expansion that will use a new “daylight lower level” of 1000 square feet, for classrooms, a multi-purpose room, and administrative and library space. When complete the building will be named the Abraham and Toby Lokshin Educational Pavilion. For more information, call Rabbi Moshe Wilhelm at 503-977-9947 or Charles Schiffman at 503-201-4089.

PHOTO BY DEBORAH MOON