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Local author's story links generations ... Page 10



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Female scribes finish Torah
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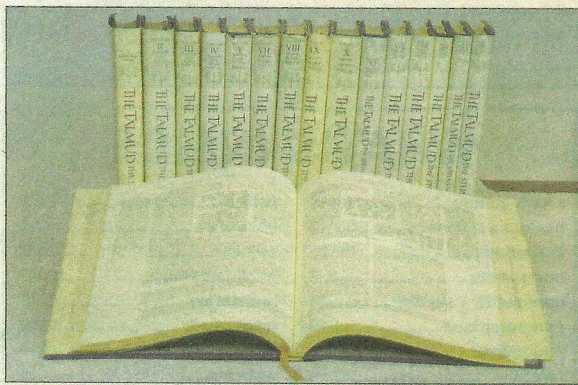
JEWISH NEWS

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Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz is marking the completion of his translation of the Talmud from Aramaic to Hebrew, which took him 45 years, with a Global Day of Jewish Learning on Nov. 7. The local Jewish community will have programming Valleywide.

Image courtesy of 1people1day.org

Valley to partake in day of learning

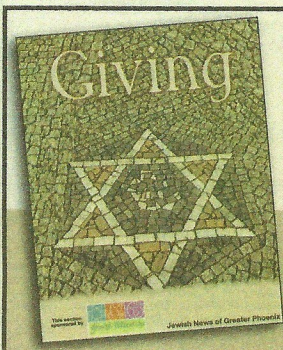
JOSH SAYLES
Staff Writer

The Valley's Jewish community will participate in the Global Day of Jewish Learning on Sunday, Nov. 7, the date when Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz anticipates he will complete his 45-year quest to translate the Talmud from Aramaic into Hebrew.

Rabbi Pinchas Allouche, spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Tefillah in Scottsdale and one of the local organizers of the event, studied under Steinsaltz at Mekor Chaim, a yeshiva high school in Israel, and keeps in touch with him to this day.

Allouche said that Steinsaltz's translation is the most important work done on the Talmud since Rashi wrote his commentary

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Guide to charitable giving

A Jewish News special section

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Culture, comedy, cuisine

VOSJCC book fair starts Nov. 3

MARILYN HAWKES
Staff Writer

From scandal to deli food and Jewish jokes to well-being, the 2010 Valley of the Sun Jewish Community Center Jewish Book & Cultural Arts Fair has a topic of interest for nearly everyone. This year's theme, "Culture, Comedy and Cuisine," showcases the talents of Jewish authors who, through their books, present different aspects of the Jewish experience.

The book fair, in its ninth year, starts Nov. 3 and continues through Nov. 14. Sandy Adler, book fair founder and chair, says the book fair has evolved since its inception. "We added cultural events, like movies, music and visual art a few years ago," Adler wrote in an e-mail to Jewish News.

Adler says books are selected based on recommendations from the Jewish Book Council, the committee and the committee's "book guru," Sylvia Gotlib. Then, they select books that they think will be of interest to the community. "We also talk to other JCCs where these authors have visited to find out how their presentations were received in those communities," Adler says.

What follows is a preview of a book from each category to pique your interest in culture, comedy and cuisine.

'Save the Deli'

Opening night features journalist and author David Sax, discussing his book, "Save the Deli: In Search of Perfect Pastrami, Crusty Rye and the Heart of Jewish Delicatessen." A self-described lifelong, deli-obsessed connoisseur, Sax explores the state of the Jewish deli.



David Sax

Sax takes the reader on a journey across the U.S. and around the world in search of authentic delicatessen food to see if it is possible to save the deli. He interviews deli owners and famous deli lovers, including film director Mel Brooks, former New York City Mayor Ed Koch and Ruth Reichl, former editor-in-

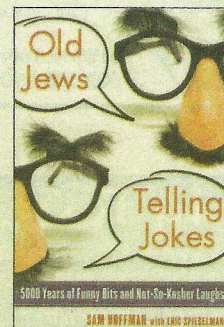
chief of now-shuttered Gourmet Magazine.

Sax says that culture is at the heart of the Jewish deli. "The waiter, the atmosphere, the sense of community and interaction with owners is as important as the food," Sax wrote in an e-mail to Jewish News. "It's what makes Jewish delis so special, and why people have such strong emotional attachments to them. It's a part of the community and your life, Jewish or not, not simply a place to get a sandwich."



He has visited more than 200 Jewish delicatessens in the last four years, tasting countless Jewish delicacies. When asked if he was a pastrami or corned-beef man, he answered, "I love all meats equally." Dill or half-sour pickles? "Definitely a full-sour man. (It's) probably why I have so much hair on my chest."

Comedy night



The fair continues on Thursday, Nov. 4, with Comedy Night, featuring Sam Hoffman co-author of "Old Jews Telling Jokes: 5000 Years of Funny Bits and Not-So-Kosher Laughs." The book, co-authored by Eric Spiegelman, illuminates

Jewish language and culture based on their website, oldjewstellingjokes.com.

"Old Jews Telling Jokes" features jokes

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Stories resonate across generations

VICKI CABOT

Contributing Writer

It was the stories.

And the photos, boxes and boxes of them, collected over the years, that finally inspired Nancy Kravetz to write a book.

The beautiful result of her efforts, "Remember Me to the Little Ones, A Family History" (P. Chan and Edward, \$25 paperback) was published in August of this year. A keepsake hardcover edition, with a stunning photo of Ellis Island on the cover, was sent to family members, many of whom contributed the stories and photos that fill its pages. A paperback edition is available for sale, with proceeds benefitting local educational programs including Beth El Congregation Talmud Torah and the Jewish Federation of Greater Phoenix's Bureau of Jewish Education. The book is available at both the Beth El gift shop and BJE offices.

The memoir traces the history of both sides of Kravetz's family, the Weins and the Jaffes, taking the reader from Eastern Europe to Ellis Island to Massachusetts where the families settled and where Kravetz grew up. Kravetz's voice echoes through the pages, beginning with her touching open letter to her family, through her careful retelling of the history that provides context for her own family's story. Interspersed are anecdotes shared by family members, some now gone, some now second and third generations, some recounted by Kravetz, others in their own voices. Most compelling is the voice of Kravetz's late father, Elliott Wein, who spent hours reminiscing with his oldest daughter about life in the old country, and the new, during his visits to Phoenix.

Kravetz, who admits to a deep nostalgia for family history, had collected written remembrances of family events, photos and other memorabilia for years. Years ago, a talk at Beth El Congregation by Jewish genealogist Arthur Kurzweil, who wrote the foreword for Kravetz's book, prodded her to begin to focus more seriously on her role as family historian.

"My dad was alive at that time," she recalls, "and on several visits I'd ask questions and record and transcribe the conversations." These mini-interviews later became the core of her book, though at the time Kravetz had no intention of writing one. She simply wanted to know more about her past.

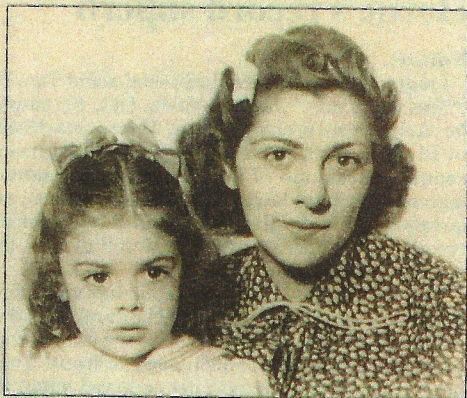
"My dad was willing to talk," she recalls. And there were questions that previously she had "never thought to ask."

Gradually, the desire to preserve those stories for her children and grandchildren took hold. Her husband, Bob, now a retired gastroenterologist, had developed an interest in genealogy and encouraged Kravetz to delve more deeply into her family's past.

At first, says Kravetz of the endeavor, "I was just going to do something simple." Maybe a pamphlet, she thought, or a memory box for each of her six grandchildren. But the wealth of material she had accumulated seemed to call for more.

"What was going to happen to all of this?" she recalls thinking. "Someone else may or may not take up the project, and it all could be lost. It was interesting to me, it was interesting to my family, and I wanted to preserve it."

She approached the project with new resolve, interviewing more than a dozen other family members, scouring the Internet for historical detail, tracking down official documents, searching for art and other images to enliven the text.



Top: Nancy Kravetz and her mother, Lillian Wein, circa 1940.

Photo courtesy of Nancy Kravetz

Bottom: Nancy Kravetz does genealogy research.

Photo by Robert Kravetz

The dining room table of her gracious, art-filled central Phoenix home became her office. Her husband assisted with the research and later with the layout and design. The project was an arduous undertaking — the hardest part, confides Kravetz, was dealing with Yiddish words and expressions and sorting out names and places, each with three or more renditions in different languages. She includes a chapter on names in the book as well as one on holiday repasts and another on synagogue life.

The result is a charming book that not only tells the story of the Weins and the Jaffes and the generations that followed, but as Kurzweil writes in the foreword, of each of us.

"It is the story of Every Person," he writes, noting the common threads that join all Jews together as family. In the pages that follow, he promises, "You will find yourself."

Kravetz has written an intensely personal story, and an engagingly universal one, replete with life's joys and its sorrows and a myriad of experiences that resonate for Jews anywhere.

The poignant title of the book, "Remember Me to the Little Ones," captures not only the words Elliott Wein used to say goodbye to his daughter whenever they spoke, but the inherent value of preserving those precious stories of the past for the generations to come.

And as for Wein — Eloykim Wajn — he surely will be remembered.

Nancy Kravetz will sign copies of her book, with proceeds benefitting Beth El Congregation Talmud Torah, 10-11:30 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 14, at Changing Hands Bookstore, 6428 S. McClintock Drive, Tempe.