



CHAI LIGHTS

March 2026

Pacific Community of Cultural Jews

Orange County, CA.
PacifComm@aol.com

714-739-1366
www.pccjews.org



Please Join Us for our “Round the World with Jewish Cooking” Co-op Sampling on March 21, 2026 at 1:00 pm at Debby Penley’s Clubhouse (RSVP to get address)



We are gathering together for an experience where we will savor the culinary skills of our members. You are requested to cook a Jewish dish you are familiar with or have chosen from a recipe. As we know, Jews have lived in many corners of the globe.

Be prepared to talk about the meaning or history of why you chose this dish to share. Bring enough so everyone can sample your special dish.

Also include a card with ingredients for those who have allergies.

Please RSVP no later than March 14th. so we know how many people to expect.

No exceptions!

RSVP to: Suzy Baron at bryonbaron@sbcglobal.net

Pacific Community’s Passover Observance

Sunday, April 4th, 2026 1:00 - 4:00 PM

Debby Penley’s Clubhouse.

(RSVP to get address)



Please join us in the reading of our secular Haggadah, music, candle lighting, followed by a catered traditional Passover meal.



If you are able to attend, please RSVP to Suzy Baron at Bryonbaron@sbcglobal.net or (657) 274-3440 me **NO LATER** than March 29th, **NO EXCEPTIONS** as the caterer needs a final head count by the April 2nd.

Everything for members is provided at no cost. There will be a charge of \$25 for non-members/guests.

Co-Presidents' Message

The month of March brings us one Jewish holiday, Purim. The story features Haman, a minister of King Ahasuerus, who seeks to hang the Jews of Persia onto gallows after Mordechai, a Jewish man, refuses to bow to him. Esther, a relative of Mordechai and one of the King Ahasuerus's wives, intercedes on behalf the Jewish people and saves them from the gallows.



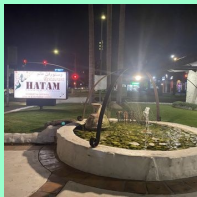
In the world today, there are rulers and their minions who oppress and carry out injustice against their people. Just this week, the Taliban in Afghanistan stripped women of their legal personhood. Husbands are now authorized to punish their wives with "discretionary violence." Absolute obedience to the Supreme Leader by all is mandatory, with dissent or disobedience punishable by flogging and/or imprisonment. In Iran, people are being summarily executed and while others suffer from privation and virtually no rights.

Although Purim is a celebratory holiday, it also reminds us to take a moment to think of the people who face oppression by modern-day "Hamans." If you get a chance, check in with people you know who have family or friends who are affected by such circumstances, and see how they're doing. A kind word goes a long way.

On a happier note, Pacific Community had an early Purim celebration that was enjoyed by all who attended. Our Dine-Out on Valentine's Day had a large turnout. Please join us this month for the Philosopher's Café on Friday, March 6, and the Dine-Out on Saturday, March 14, 2026. Reminder: Daylight Savings Time starts at 2:00 AM on Sunday, March 8, 2026. Please remember to move your clocks one hour ahead.

Jim and Sylvia Rothman
Co-Presidents, Pacific Community of Cultural Jews

DINE OUT

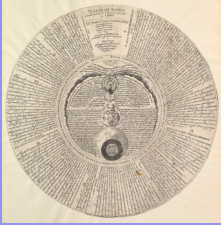


Sat. Mar. 14, 2026 6:00 p.m.
Hatam Restaurant (Persian)
2383 W. Lincoln
Anaheim
714-991-6262



Please RSVP to Knechtfour at Knechtfour@aol.com
or 714-739-1366 (landline) no later than Mar.11,2026.

No Exceptions!



Philosopher's Café

(Our Friendly Discussion Group)



Friday March 6, 2026
7:30 p.m. Via Zoom

The Zoom link will be sent out to those who RSVP to Jim Rothman by Mar. 4, 2026 Look for it in your email. Then on Mar. 6th click on the link and join in the fun. To make sure we have your correct email address, please email Jim at jrbythec@aol.com, so he can include you.

Congratulations March



Happy Birthday!

Leslie Zwick - 3/3

Michael Newman - 3/10

Aviv Avishay - 3/21

Happy Anniversary!

Mark & Barbara Price - 3/13





Jews to Know

Deni Avdija

Born January 3, 2001

Deni Avdija (DEN-ee av-DEE-ya; Hebrew: דני אַבְדִּיָּה) is an Israeli professional basketball player for the Portland Trail Blazers. He plays the small forward position and is nicknamed "Turbo" for his fast-paced drive and aggressive playing style. The small forward is considered the most versatile of the five main basketball positions as they contribute offensively and defensively. Small is of course relative in basketball player terms as Deni is 6' 8" tall and weighs 228 pounds. Avdija came to prominence in February 2026 as the first Israeli selected for the NBA All-Star games.

Deni Avdija was born in kibbutz Beit Zera on the southern shore of the Sea of Galilee. His mother, Sharon Artzi, an Israeli Jew, is a former track and field and basketball player. His father, Zufer Avdija, now an Israeli citizen, was born in Kosovo in southern Serbia when it was part of Yugoslavia. Zufer is of Muslim heritage, but there is no public information indicating that he is a practicing Muslim. He was also a professional basketball player and in the 1990s Zufer was recruited to Israel where he played for a succession of Israeli teams. He met his wife while living in Israel.

Deni Avdija played soccer until he entered fourth grade, when a friend convinced him to try basketball because of his height. He started focusing more on basketball. In 2013, he joined the youth ranks of Maccabi Tel Aviv. He competed for Israel at the 2017 FIBA (Fédération Internationale de Basketball) U16 European Championship. Although he had also been eligible to represent Serbia internationally, due to his father's background, Avdija chose to play for Israel as he stated "I grew up here. I really love Israel." He played for the adult Maccabi Tel Aviv team from 2017-2020 when he was recruited to the NBA Washington Wizards. Avdija demonstrated his Israeli and Jewish pride in 2022 when following a series of Palestinian attacks in Israel he wrote the Jewish phrase "Am Yisrael Chai" in Hebrew on his shoes. Then after he was traded to the Portland Trail Blazers in 2024 he sat out his first preseason game with the Trail Blazers in 2024 to observe Yom Kippur.

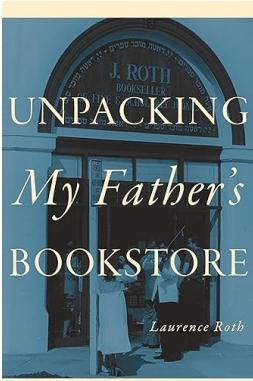
In April 2020, while the basketball season was suspended as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Avdija was drafted into the IDF in a non-combat role called "Exceptional Athlete" status, which allowed him to fulfill his duties to Israel by being a source of national pride on the international stage, furthering Israel's positive image through his athletic skills. "I am happy and proud to join the IDF just like every other citizen of my age," said Avdija. "I will do whatever is asked of me just like I do on the basketball court."

Written by Zena Jacobi
Credits: Wikipedia, Olympics.com



BOOK REVIEW

UNPACKING MY FATHER'S BOOKSTORE BY LAURENCE ROTH



This book is both a memoir of the author and the true story of his father's Jewish books stores. After I started reading this book, I happily discovered that these stores were located in West Los Angeles which is where I grew up and spent my teenaged years.

The author's father, Jack Roth had become a renowned book seller and collector of Judaica. He was known for his vast knowledge of Jewish Literature and all things related to Jewishness -all branches of Judaism. He was also known for treating his customers with respect and courtesy. So, when a customer came to his store, he was more than happy to share his knowledge with them, even if they didn't make a purchase. He also led book discussion groups, which became very popular.

He developed a wide range of clientele- ranging from celebrities, businesspeople, scholars, and anyone interested in Jewish literature. He was extremely well organized, and he had a rigid sense right and wrong. And while his customers loved him, his family had issues with it, even leading to a divorce with his wife. His son, who wrote this book stayed with him and worked in the store.

He emulated a number of his better qualities. But while his father was an expert book seller and collector, he needed help with modern business practices and finances. This is where his son became a help to his father.

The thing that eventually led to the stores' demise was the negative pressures from the ultra-orthodox community. They felt that he was not giving them enough recognition and respect with his merchandise. Furthermore, he could not keep up with the chain book sellers. His efforts to copy them were basically unsuccessful.

I really enjoyed reading this book. It provided an accurate picture of the highs and lows of the independent book business. Especially the Jewish book business, to the extent that we hardly see an independent Jewish book store in our communities today. One would hope that they make a comeback because they can be valuable assets to the communities as a whole.

Reviewed by Jerry Zwick



MARK YOUR CALENDARS

| | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| Mar. 6, 2026 | Philosopher's Café |
| Mar. 14, 2026 | Dine Out |
| Mar. 21, 2026 | International Food Event |
| Apr. 4, 2026 | Passover Seder |
| Apr. 17, 2026 | Philosopher's Café |
| Apr. 25, 2026 | Yom Ha'atzmaut |
| May 8, 2026 | Philosopher's Café |
| May 9, 2026 | Dine Out |
| May 16, 2026 | Jewish Humor Event |



2024 - 2026 PACIFIC COMMUNITY BOARD ELECTED OFFICERS

| | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Co-President | Jim Rothman | JRbytheC@aol.com |
| Co-President | Sylvia Rothman | Sobaysyl@aol.com |
| Vice President | Nancy Okamoto | 949-386-0400 |
| Secretary | Sylvia Rothman | sobaysyl@aol.com |
| Treasurer | Leslie Zwick | jerlesz@verizon.net |
| Membership Chair | Barbara Price | BarbaraPPrice@aol.com |
| Program Coordinator | Suzy Baron | Bryonbaron@sbcglobal.net |
| Publicity Co-Chairs | Ellen Jacobs Laura Shapiro | ejacobs@socal.rr.com LShapiro501@gmail.com |

COMMUNITY AND BOARD POSITIONS

| | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| SHJ Representative | Sylvia Rothman | Sobaysyl@aol.com |
| Board Member-At-Large | Bryon Baron | Bryonbaron@sbcglobal.net |
| Board Member-At-Large | Di Bunin | DBF331@hotmail.com |
| Board Member-At-Large | Mike Mendelson | Mendelsons5@yahoo.com |
| Newsletter Editor | Karen Knecht | Knechtfour@aol.com |
| Webmaster | Celeste Mendelson | Mendelsons5@yahoo.com |
| Sunshine | Sheila Bass | shekaba@aol.com |

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by the Pacific Community of
Cultural Jews,
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Affiliated with
Society for Humanistic Judaism



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Email: PacifComm@aol.com

PACIFIC COMMUNITY OF CULTURAL JEWS

Calendar of Events 2025 - 2026

EVENTS

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sept. 13, 2025 - | Bowers Museum |
| Sept. 21, 2025 - | Rosh Hashanah Observance |
| Oct. 2, 2025 - | Yom Kippur Observance |
| Oct. 25, 2025 - | Sukkot/Succos & Potluck |
| Nov. 16, 2025 - | Jewish Jeopardy |
| Dec. 20, 2025 - | Chanukah Party |
| Dec. 25, 2025 - | Nature Hike and Lunch Gathering |
| Jan. 17, 2026 - | Hilbert Museum & Lunch |
| Feb. 7, 2026 - | Lee Jacobi Memorial Hike |
| Feb. 28, 2026 - | Jewish Improv & Purim |
| Mar. 21, 2026 - | International Food Event |
| Apr. 4, 2026 - | Passover Seder |
| Apr. 25, 2026 - | Yom Ha'Atzmaut Observance |
| May 16, 2026 - | Humor Event |
| June 6, 2026 - | Book Sharing Event |
| Jun 14, 2026 - | Year-End Party |

For more information,
contact Suzy Baron, or Karen Knecht
bryonbaron@sbcglobal.net / 714-639-4906
Knechtfour@aol.com / 714-739-1366

DINE - OUT

Join us for lunch or dinner at a variety of restaurants once a month. All locations will be decided upon the month before and announced in our newsletter. All lunches are at 1:00 p.m. and dinners are at 6:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

All dates are always tentative.

Oct. 18, 2025 (date change)

Nov. 8, 2025

~~Dec. 13, 2025~~

Jan. 24, 2026 (date change)

Feb. 14, 2026

Mar. 14, 2026

May 9, 2026

June 6, 2026

July 11, 2026

For more information, or for suggestions for restaurants, contact Karen Knecht
714-739-1366 or Knechtfour@aol.com



PHILOSOPHER'S CAFÉ

(via Zoom)

People get together on a monthly basis to discuss a topic - either issues of the day, or any topic of general interest. Where they meet is up to the group. The discussions take anywhere from an hour to . . . ?

Philosopher's Café is being held via Zoom. Please check our monthly newsletters for information on our Philosopher's Café.

Sept. 19, 2025

Nov. 14, 2025

Jan. 16, 2026

Mar. 6, 2026

May 08, 2026

July 17, 2026

Oct. 17, 2025

Dec. 12, 2025

Feb. 6, 2026

Apr. 17, 2026

June 5, 2026

Schedule subject to change.

Pacific Community is an affiliate of the Society for Humanistic Judaism,
an international organization