Rabbi Judith HaLevy, Keynote Speaker NMJHS Fall Conference

by Estelle Miller

Rabbi Judith HaLevy will deliver the keynote address for our Fall Conference on Saturday, Nov. 9. She returns to Taos, having lived on the periphery of Judaism in an upstream community there, as well as in Santa Fe, and then moved into a large mainstream Jewish community in Los Angeles and then Malibu, which is just north of Los Angeles. She will speak about the influence small, peripheral communities have on Judaism and Jewish traditions, and how larger mainstream Jewish communities affect smaller ones. Her presentation is titled, “Upstream vs. Mainstream: How our Jewish traditions survive and thrive in Northern New Mexico.”

There has been a significant transformation in Jewish life in the last 50 years. It is now much more accepted for women to be rabbis. Female rabbinical students invite collaboration, nurturing qualities, and sharing, embracing cultural diversity. Rabbi Judith was instrumental in founding Sara’s Tent and Meditation Center, a women’s support group in Los Angeles that is still in existence today.

Rabbi Judith was born and grew up in New Jersey. She attended Rutgers University after spending a year in Israel and then returned to Israel after she graduated. Judith married an Israeli when she was just 21 and had very strong Zionist feelings while living in Israel. She went on to obtain an advanced degree in International Relations from Columbia University, in addition to a teaching certificate. In 1971 she moved to Mexico City and was a program director of the Centro Deportivo Israelita, a Jewish Center with 20,000 members that unites the Mexican Jewish community.

In 1976 she moved to Taos and had another career as director of the Taos Art Association for 10 years. Both of her children grew up in Taos. Judith wanted her children to grow up with an identity as Jews. In that small community, that goal became the impetus to establish something that would bring other Jewish members of the community together without a rabbi to serve them. It was an opportunity to motivate them to do whatever was needed on their own.

Two rabbis with far-reaching impact on contemporary Judaism encouraged Judith to study to become ordained as a rabbi. She completed rabbinic studies over a 10-year period and lived in Santa Fe for two years. In 1992, Rabbis Zalman Schachter-Salomi and Jonathan Omer Man ordained Judith at Temple Beth Shalom in Santa Fe. At that time, Rabbi Judith took the surname HaLevy and moved to Los Angeles to work with Rabbi Omer Man at Metivta, a center for contemplative Judaism. She continued studies at the Hartman Institute in Jerusalem for four years in the Rabbinic Leadership program.

Rabbi Judith went on to serve as the senior rabbi at the Malibu Jewish Center and Synagogue, a Reconstructionist congregation for 21 years, retiring in 2017 when she returned to Santa Fe. During her years as rabbi at the Malibu Jewish Center, she served on the Board of Rabbis of Southern California, an organization representing 324 rabbis, and she became president from 2012-2014.

Rabbi Judith is back in New Mexico serving the first community that was her home here. She lives in Santa Fe and travels to Taos to provide rabbinical services to the Taos Jewish Center. She is an animated speaker with extensive experience living within small upstream Jewish communities, as well as large mainstream Jewish communities. The impact of one upon the other is what she will describe at the upcoming NMJHS Fall Conference.

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Greetings! I hope you, your friends and family had a wonderful summer of travel or staying closer to home, but enjoying good weather as well as fun programs and activities. For us, we visited Russia in late June with Viking River Cruises, traveling from St. Petersburg to Moscow. After that we drove our small camper into the Canadian Rockies. It’s nice to be retired!

The NMJHS program year has already gotten underway, and our signature program, the annual Fall Conference, will be in Taos at the Sagebrush Inn, on November 8-10. It promises to be an interesting one, highlighting “Jewish Life in Taos and Northern New Mexico: Past, Present and Future.”

Our keynote speaker, Rabbi Judith HaLevy, will share her life experiences, contrasting living in small Jewish communities such as Taos, and much larger Jewish communities. Other sessions will focus on Jewish artists and residents who will talk about their work, stories, and varied paths taken. An optional visit to the Harwood Museum on Saturday is planned to enjoy the last day of an exhibit entitled, “Judy Chicago: The Birth Project from New Mexico Collections”. An evening of Flamenco dancing program, “The Jewish Roots of Flamenco” will be presented by Lili del Castillo and Luis Campos.

Our annual Silent Auction and Raffle will feature a wide variety of items, goodies, and gift certificates. The Fall Conference, conference session sponsorships and donations, and the Auction and Raffle remain our primary source of income after membership dues. Your attendance and/or sponsorship of the conference is much appreciated!

Future plans for other stand-alone programs are under way which, as of now, include: The PBS docudrama, “The Trials of J. Robert Oppenheimer,” in Santa Fe, co-sponsored with the Santa Fe Jewish Film Festival and Temple Beth Shalom, Date, TBD

A lecture on the “Experiment in Jewish Learning” by Noel Pugach and Shirley Morrison in Albuquerque, Date, TBD

A co-sponsored program with HaMaKom Continuing Education Committee on “Crypto Jews and the Future” will take place April 16, 2020, at 7 p.m. at Congregation Beit Tikva.

Additional program planning is under way and will be announced, so stay tuned! We hope you will join us over the course of the program year through mid-June, as we travel the state providing interesting topics on Jewish New Mexico.

Sharing Your Family History
NMJHS continues to collect New Mexico Jewish family histories through oral interviews to share with the public and preserve in the New Mexico State Archives.
If you are interested in participating, contact the NMJHS office:
5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109
505-348-4471, admin@nmjhs.org

NMJHS is on Facebook and Twitter. Please “like” us at https://www.facebook.com/NewMexicoJewishHistoricalSociety and follow us on Twitter at https://twitter.com/NMJewishHS.

Welcome New Members
Joel and Lori Korngut
Fred Raznick
Janet Shagam
Elizabeth Ungar

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Mission Statement
The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society is a secular organization that promotes greater knowledge and understanding of New Mexico’s diverse Jewish experiences within a broad cultural context.

Legacy is the quarterly newsletter of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society
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Albuquerque, NM 87109
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Administrator: Claudia Bloom
Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday/Thursday 9:30-1:30 PM
Editor: Estelle Miller
Copy Editor: Barbara Ruzinsky
Layout: DT Publishing, Santa Fe
Printing: Minuteman Press, Albuquerque
Mailing: Southwest Mail Center, Albuquerque
NMJHS is a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico.
NMJHS Annual Conference November 9-10 in Taos

by Naomi Sandweiss

Taos is widely known as a cultural and creative crossroads. This fall, Taos and northern New Mexico will be the site—and the subject—of the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society (NMJHS) Conference entitled Jewish Life in Taos and Northern New Mexico: Past, Present and Future.

The conference takes place on Saturday and Sunday, November 9 and 10, at the Taos’ Sagebrush Inn and Suites. Highlights include a presentation about Ernie Blake and the development of the Taos Ski Area, a panel of Jewish visual and cinematic artists, and an interactive performance and talk on the Jewish roots of Flamenco dance. In addition, members of the Taos Jewish community will share their experiences as Jews in Taos. This year’s keynote speaker, Rabbi Judith HaLevy, is the spiritual leader of the Taos Jewish Center. In addition, visual artists including Diana Bryer and Rabbi Chavah Carp will offer their work for sale, and a silent auction and raffle will take place.

Those attending the conference can make a weekend trip to Taos and take in a tour of the Pueblo or visit the Judy Chicago Birth Project exhibit at the Harwood Art Museum (the last day is Saturday, November 9) prior to the conference. Optional Friday night services are scheduled at the Taos Jewish Center on November 8. The annual conference fee of $135 (members) or $145 (non-members) includes the entire program – lunch, dinner and a no-host cocktail hour on Saturday, November 9, and Sunday, November 10, program activities and beverage breaks. There are also pro-rated daily conference fees at nmjhs.org.

The Sagebrush Inn and Suites is offering rooms at a special conference rate of $85 per night, which includes a breakfast buffet. Rooms are limited and should be reserved by contacting the Sagebrush at 575-758-2254 and mentioning the NMJHS conference.

The Society is also gathering a list from those interested in bus travel to Taos from Albuquerque. To express your preference for travel by bus or for more information on conference registration, please call or contact Claudia at the NMJHS office at admin@nmjhs.org or 505-348-4471 or visit nmjhs.org.

All are welcome to join the Society for a weekend of art, history, friendship and entertainment in beautiful Taos.

Temple Aaron 130th Anniversary Gala Weekend – A Huge Success!!

by David London

Supporters of Temple Aaron in Trinidad, Colorado, marked the building’s 130th birthday with an amazing gala full of events over the June 21st-23rd weekend. NMJHS was very well represented by Bill and Marguerite Feldman, Keith and Bettie Harvie, Sharon Niederman, Leona Rubin, and John Rivers, among other members. Cantor Beth Cohen of Nahalat Shalom in Albuquerque led Friday evening, Saturday morning, and Havdalah services, and she and her friends Ilene Dunn and Barbara Friedman also provided Jewish music all weekend.

On Saturday afternoon, the documentary film “Raise the Roof,” was screened. It told the inspirational story about how a wooden roof, magnificently painted on the interior to reconstruct an 18th century Jewish masterpiece, was built from scratch with hand tools and incorporated into the Polin Museum of Jewish History in Warsaw over a 10-year period. The film was sponsored by the Santa Fe Jewish Film Festival (thanks to Marcia Torobin!) and NMJHS. NMJHS also made a generous additional donation. So all in all, there was a tremendous New Mexico presence at the gala.

The highlight of the weekend was the dedication of a permanent historical marker in front of the Temple on Saturday morning. Nearly 100 people attended. The mayor of Trinidad, the Las Animas (continued on p. 5)
NMJHS New Board Member Profiles

Victoria Baker grew up in Clayton, New Mexico. In 2009 there was an opening at the Herzstein Museum for an Executive Director, and she accepted the position with its challenges. The Museum contents needed someone to tell its story and show its connection to history. Her labor of love has continued for the last 10 years as the Herzstein Museum has become an important part of the community.

Vordon Bronitsky is an anthropologist by training (PhD University of Arizona 1977). For the last 25 years, he has worked with indigenous peoples around the world in the performing arts, traditional and contemporary, and festival development.

He has also facilitated American Indian/Jewish dialogs and programs since 1986 and conducted research on Solomon Bibo, the Jewish governor of Acoma Pueblo.

Jeff Brown earned his Ph.D. in History at the University of Illinois in 1979. He taught at several universities and was a faculty member and administrator at New Mexico State University from 1984-2016. Jeff and his wife Cherri have been members of Temple Beth-El in Las Cruces since 1984. He recently led a Temple committee’s oral history project. Jeff served on the NMJHS board in 1988-92 and was program co-chair for the 2018 Albuquerque conference.
Temple Aaron 130th Anniversary (continued from p. 3)

County Commissioner, the Temple Aaron board, descendants of the founding congregants and local clergy all spoke at the dedication ceremony, as did Jerry Klinger, the president of the Jewish American Society for Historic Preservation, which paid for the marker. Jerry emphasized that Temple Aaron is brick and mortar proof that Jews have played an important role in the West and that its presence is a monument to the American values of tolerance, the freedoms of religion, speech, and assembly, and ecumenicalism. These remarks were very well received and underscored why it is so important to continue our efforts to save Temple Aaron and keep it in use as a place of Jewish gathering and worship.

Please visit our website at templeaaron.org for details and for information about how you can donate and get involved.

HELP GUARANTEE THE FUTURE OF THE NEW MEXICO JEWISH HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Sandra Dietz Chair, Membership Committee

IT’S TIME TO RECRUIT YOUNGER MEMBERS

The future of the NMJHS, as well as remembrance of the past, depend on attracting a new generation of members. A gift of membership to your child, grandchild, or great-grandchild will introduce your family’s next generation to the colorful history of the Jewish people in our state. Consider membership as a wedding or Bat or Bar Mitzvah gift. Invite an old friend or new acquaintance to attend an NMJHS function. Help us grow our membership.
NMJHS announces its Life & Legacy “Pioneer” Society Donors!

The following members have made their commitment to ensure our Legacy will be passed down to the next generations by contributing to our new Endowment Fund.

Year 1 Donors:
Dorothy Corner Amsden
Gloria Abella Ballen & Ron Duncan Hart
Lance and Julia Bell
Stuart Feen & Carol Sonnenschein
Bill & Margrethe Feldman
Carla Freeman, z”l
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Cynthia & David London
Steve and Beth Moise
Noel Pugach
Bob Rosenstein
Naomi Sandweiss
Rae Siporin
Anonymous

NMJHS Legacy Team:
Lance Bell
Diane Chodorow
Linda Goff
Naomi Sandweiss

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Why I Am Supporting NMJHS and Life & Legacy
By Lance Bell, NMJHS Past President

Many years ago I attended my first NMJHS meeting, where I was lucky to meet some wonderful people who had similar interests about studying and learning about New Mexico’s Jewish historic fabric. Growing up in Santa Fe and being a part of the Jewish community has always been important to me, as is learning about New Mexico’s history. I often think about my paternal grandparents (Morris & Ethel Bell) who arrived right after New Mexico became a state and wonder what they would think about the vibrant, diverse, unique and most importantly active Jewish community.

The mission of the NMJHS helps to uncover stories from the past and share them with its membership that spans the United States. When I learned about the Life & Legacy program, I was happy to know that a mechanism was made available for those who have a passion to preserve and study New Mexico’s Jewish history and secure it for generations to come. Fortunately, the NMJHS is a strong and vibrant historical society with a growing membership that includes unique and dynamic programming.

Nonprofit organizations only survive year to year with generous contribution, in addition to annual membership dues. I ask those that are considering a Life & Legacy commitment to the NMJHS, if you are unable to give now, will your family consider giving in the near future? If the answer is no, please consider making arrangements for a future gift in your estate planning. The NMJHS needs you so its mission can continue for many years to come.

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The Yiddish Vinkel of Albuquerque
By Harvey Buchalter

In Yiddish, “Vinkel” is a corner, but more commonly a group of people whose frequent get-togethers reflect a common interest.

For the past decade and a half, the Albuquerque Vinkel has been meeting every Thursday afternoon at precisely 3 o’clock to read and discuss the Yiddish classics, not in translation, but in the original Yiddish.

Imagine how many wonderful volumes of short stories, poems, and entire novels have been “kvelled” over by our four, sometimes five, Vinklers (now, we’re down to one reader, me).

The works of Sholem Aleichem, Y.L. Peretz, Isaac Raboy, and our perennial favorite – the “bad boy” of Yiddish letters, Sholem Asch. We are now concluding Asch’s “Onkel Moses,” whose portrayal of the aspirations of immigrant Jews in New York City in the 1930s is an emotional roller coaster ride.

Thanks to the Steven Spielberg Collection at the National Yiddish Book Center, I’m able to download and print copies for free from a vast library of original works from before the Holocaust – thousands of pages of “mameh loshen,” – the “news of the day” and the “book of the week” for the 12 million Yiddish readers, both secular and religious, who spoke and read Yiddish, usually as their first language.

(continued on p. 8)
Samuel Shalit Comes to New Mexico

by Haley Luster, great granddaughter of Samuel Shalit

Samuel Shalit’s journey to New Mexico from Lipetsk, Russia, began on a seemingly average school day in 1907. “Samuel was on his way home from school when his younger sister warned him that soldiers were waiting at the house,” recounts his daughter, Sharon Shalit. On a sunny afternoon in Albuquerque, New Mexico, Sharon recalls the stories her father shared with her when she was a young girl. “He was 15 years old, and the soldiers were waiting to take him to the army.”

Young Samuel never returned to his home. Equipped with just a bag of clothing and a few rubles, he fled Russia to China. He slept in fields and journeyed on foot for two years until a distant cousin sponsored his travel to California. His cousin lived in the Los Angeles area, and it isn’t known how the two were able to get in touch. First, however, Samuel made the vast journey across the Pacific Ocean, stopping in Hawaii. It was rumored the streets there were paved with gold, and although the rumor proved untrue, he kissed the ground when he arrived and celebrated his freedom.

After Samuel arrived in Los Angeles he made his way to Albuquerque via train. His journey led him to the remote Jemez pueblo, where he started working as a sheep herder. It is suspected that he went to the pueblo in search of work, but no knowledge is available as to when he got there. His bond with the Native Americans grew, and Samuel learned the Jemez dialect called Towa, which is unique to the Jemez pueblo people. He bought a horse and saddle and eventually acquired his own herd. For a while he slept in the mountains with his horse and his herd, selling meat and wool. Hoping to expand his business, he leased and eventually purchased a warehouse on First and Gold in downtown Albuquerque. He began selling wares created by his friends from the Jemez pueblo and over time brought in more and more merchandise. The Jemez people have been known for arts and crafts including their pottery, such as bowls, wedding vases, holiday ornaments and storytellers. In addition, Jemez artisans created basketry, embroidery, woven cloths, moccasins and jewelry. Samuel added basic pots and pans to the merchandise inventory he offered.

He called his store “La Casa de Samuel,” and put up a help wanted sign in the window. One applicant was Doris Bromberg, a fifteen-year-old Jewish girl from New York. In September of 1931, the two married with the blessing and encouragement of her parents, Joseph and Freda Bromberg. Samuel excelled in business and invested in real estate across Albuquerque. He also assisted his in-laws with a small dry goods store called El Cambio.

Samuel and Doris had four children between the years 1932-1941 and built their family home near Fourth and Montaño. Samuel passed away in 1962, and Doris lived in the family home until the 1970s. She died in 1982 at the age of 68. After the home was sold, the unique building became Powdrell’s BBQ restaurant and is still functioning in that original site.

The story of Samuel Shalit is an example of the resilience and intensely dedicated entrepreneur spirit that characterizes many of the Jewish immigrants who found their way to New Mexico. His legacy lives on through his children, grandchildren, great grandchildren, and even great-great grandchildren who remain in New Mexico, as well as in Florida and California.©
Many Thanks for Your Contributions

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David London
Margrethe and Bill Feldman

Movers and Shakers at the JCC in Albuquerque

The Yiddish Vinkel of Albuquerque (continued from p. 6)

New Mexico, principally Albuquerque, has had its share of Yiddish speakers, beginning with the arrival of a few dozen immigrant or first-generation Eastern European Jews, most of whom became shopkeepers.

In the 1990s a new generation of Jews and other music lovers rediscovered Klezmer music, and some even delved into Yiddish literature. Here in Albuquerque, the University of New Mexico offered Yiddish (in the German Department), and interest grew, and continues to grow strong enough for a Vinkel to spring forth and flourish.♦

IN MEMORIAM

aj Melnick
Born December 25, 1931
Died August 30, 2019

Morrie Blumberg
Michael Sutin
1935 - 2019

Fall Conference Donations

Alan and Diane Chodorow
David and Sandra Dietz
Stuart Feen
Stan and Helen Hordes
Bruce Seligman
Rae Siporin

Audience in attendance.
The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society (NMJHS) Announces the 2020 New Mexico Jewish History Research Fellowship

Call for Applications Opens: August 17, 2019
Deadline for Applications: November 30, 2019

Who may apply?

• For this grant cycle, the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society will fund one grant for a scholar pursuing research on the Jewish history of New Mexico
• Applicants enrolled in an accredited college or university and conducting research toward a graduate degree at that institution; or
• Applicants with a graduate degree in any field or discipline from an accredited college or university; or
• Independent scholars recognized as authorities in any field or discipline that advances an understanding and appreciation of New Mexico Jewish history. Independent scholars would include individuals such as community historians, etc., regardless of academic credentials.

How do I Apply?

The application is composed of four parts:
1. A cover letter detailing your eligibility, research project, and time frame of project.
2. An abstract, not exceeding 300 words describing the topic of the proposed research and summarizing its purpose and objectives.
3. A research proposal, not exceeding six pages in length. The proposal should describe what you intend to accomplish during the fellowship period and what New Mexico archives and other research materials you plan to use.
4. A current curriculum vitae that does not exceed four pages. The heading should clearly include your full name and residential address, a telephone number and e-mail address where you may be easily reached. Academic and work experience should also be included.

Applications must arrive at the New Mexico Jewish Historical Society no later than 5:00 p.m. MST on November 30, 2019.

Mail to:
NMJHS
5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE
Albuquerque, N.M. 87109

No electronic copies, please!

For more information, please contact:
Dr. Linda A. Goff
President, NMJHS
lagoff@hotmail.com

Post-Award Requirements:
• History scholars should conduct research at a New Mexico archival repository or Library collections containing material relative to the history of Jewish New Mexico.
• Prior to the conclusion of the fellowship period, if the recipient is a New Mexico resident history scholar, then he/she is required to give a public lecture, scheduled in coordination with the Office of the State Historian, based on the research accomplished during the fellowship period.
• History Scholars are requested to submit an article based on their research for consideration for publication in the NMJHS Quarterly Newsletter, Legacy.
Telling the Stories at the Los Alamos Jewish Center

Harvey Buchalter

Lance Bell

Noel Pugach

Noel Pugach, Lucy Silva and Linda Goff

Los Alamos Jewish Center Audience

The New Mexico Jewish Historical Society presents:
“Telling the Stories: The Personal Accounts of New Mexico Jews in Business and Community Life”

Join us for an afternoon of sharing the personal stories of two leading New Mexico families who played major roles in the Albuquerque and Santa Fe communities.

When: September 22, 2019 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Where: The Los Alamos Jewish Center
2400 Canyon Rd.

Who: Lance Bell, Noel Pugach & Harvey Buchalter
Project Directors

Light refreshments will be served!

This program is free and open to the public and has been made possible by generous grants from the New Mexico Humanities Council and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

For more information contact:
Claudia Bloom, Administrator
505-348-4471 or admin@njhs.org

NMJHS is a beneficiary agency of The Jewish Federation of New Mexico.
New Mexico Jewish Historical Society
2019 Fall Conference
November 8–10, 2019 * Sagebrush Inn and Suites, Taos

Jewish Life
in Taos and
Northern New Mexico
Past, Present
and Future

TAOS

Join us for a weekend filled with learning, art, history, and entertainment in beautiful Taos!

For more information, contact NMJHS at nmjhs.org.

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NMJHS is a beneficiary agency of the Jewish Federation of New Mexico
New Mexico Jewish Historical Society
5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE, Suite B
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Membership in NMJHS
For information contact the NMJHS office at 505-348-4471 or admin@nmjhs.org to request a membership brochure. Alternatively, you can download a membership application from the NMJHS website, www.NMJHS.org

Calendar of NMJHS Upcoming Events

Check for future events at www.nmjhs.org

October 20: Kol B’Seder in Concert featuring Cantor Jeff Klepper and Rabbi Dan Freelander. Temple Beth Shalom, 205 East Barcelona Rd. Santa Fe, 4 p.m.

October 22: Ronald Balsom: The Girl from Berlin. Jewish Community Center Book Fest, 5520 Wyoming Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, 7 p.m.

October 27: Santa Fe Jewish Film Festival & Santa Fe Middle East Watch presents Golda’s Balcony. The Screen, 1600 St. Michael’s Dr. Santa Fe, 4 p.m.

November 8 – 10: 2019 NMJHS Fall Conference “Jewish Life in Taos and Northern New Mexico, Past, Present and Future” Sagebrush Inn, 1508 Paseo del Pueblo Sur, Taos, New Mexico

November 17: Brotherhood Brunch – A City Without Jews, Dr. Nikolaus Wostry, CEO Austrian Film Archive, Vienna, Congregation Albert, 3800 Louisiana Blvd. NE, Albuquerque 10 a.m.

December 29: B’nai Israel’s 100-year Anniversary Launch Party. Congregation B’nai Israel, 4401 Indian School Rd. NE, Albuquerque, 6 p.m.