SPARKS A-FLYIN' SUMMER 2025 issue #16 August 24, 2025

Welcome to the new issue of our quarterly newsletter as we near the end of a summer which has been busy on many levels, including this music news:

- The songs of the 2020 album continue making their own ripples. **Joel Carrasco's music video for my *Sparks* song "Lights Lead Home" was chosen as an Official Selection for the 2025 Silver City Community Film Festival**! See the just-released story at https://www.nmjewishjournal.com/carrasco-crypto-judaic-themed-music-video-an-official-selection-for-the-silver-city-film-festival-in-october/.

- My *Sparks* song "Spiritual Not Religious" spawned an essay in a Shavuot book published by the Academy for Jewish Religion. I'm aware of some continuing occasional airplay, such as "Sparks," "Two Pockets," and "One-Way Train" on NPR-station KTEP-FM's *Folk Fury* program. On a sad note, Larry Karol, who added his warm vocals to the album's closer ("Give Thanks") unexpectedly passed away last month – may his memory be for a blessing.

- BIGGEST NEWS: I'm stoked to share that I'm on pace to release **a new 9-song album** this fall – we've started the mixing stage so stay tuned (and anyone moved to support the project by helping cover some of the studio costs can Zelle 915-873-3920 Lawrence M. Lesser and you'll be acknowledged in the liner notes and later get a surprise gift; there's no "I" in my name – I know it takes a team to get very far!). This new post-*Sparks* batch is called *Night Will End* and includes the same top-notch engineer (Ross Ingram, who also adds his talents on drums, bass, and keyboards), me on acoustic and classical guitars (I'm happy to say my guitar playing is at a high level and thanks to all-around brilliantly deep artist Stephen Jackson, my singing is better than ever), and violinist Amalia Zeitlin (so grateful it worked out during her brief visit between her two years abroad!) – see photo courtesy of Lauren Davis. But this album isn't just *Sparks 2* – these songs stake some new musical ground (e.g., my hardest-rocking song yet and my first song in an open tuning) and lyrics are more intimate (several have family inspirations) and timely (one song responds to antisemitism, two songs are set in Israel). And while Ross' recording gear was all set up, I re-sang a half-dozen *Sparks* songs where I've noticeably improved their lyrics (I love how songs can be vehicles for ongoing growth) and I plan to release them as a set I call *Sparks Reignited* this fall as well.

- My muse continues making cameos in my day job, such as winning a prize in a national statistics education contest (https://www.causeweb.org/cause/a-mu-sing/2025/winners) for an original song and a parody, and getting to perform the latter at the banquet of a national conference. Speaking of my day job, the school year starts tomorrow so I need to go back to finishing syllabi, etc., but thanks for the excuse to take a break and write up this update for you!

So grateful for this journey and your interest in it – happy fall and happy 5786!

Larry

OFFICIAL SELECTION

Silver City Community Film Festival

2025