SPARKS A-FLYIN' WINTER 2025/2026 issue #18 January 21, 2026

It's been busy and intense after releasing my new album *NIGHT WILL END* with a national online listening party in late September. Ensuing world events only confirmed the salience of the songs' themes, ranging from how the return of all the living hostages (and all but one of the deceased) from Gaza evoked "Held" to how antisemitic terror (from Australia's Bondi Beach to Mississippi's largest congregation) gives heightened salience to "Who You Are." The **album is available** on the artist-supportive platform Bandcamp via https://larrylesser1.bandcamp.com/album/night-will-end and an easier URL is: https://LarryLesser.com/nightwillend. Bandcamp lets you listen initially for free before inviting you to buy the files or continuing access to help me cover costs of professional musicians, engineering, etc.
A piece on the making the new album was published in the Winter 2025/Kislev 5786 issue of the award-winning statewide periodical *New Mexico Jewish Journal*:
https://www.nmjewishjournal.com/why-release-another-jewish-album-now-a-personal-essay-by-songwriter-larry-lesser/.

For **Chanukah** 2025, I was the sole musician playing holiday-themed music (including some of my originals) at two events: a congregational program at the Anusim Center and Synagogue in Sunland Park, New Mexico and the city-wide Chanukah on the Plaza event hosted by the Jewish Federation of El Paso and Las Cruces at the San Jacinto Plaza in downtown El Paso. This felt like a meaningful, grounding way to reaffirm identity and purpose in the face of the horrific news from Australia at the start of the holiday. https://heyzine.com/flip-book/83c7ad15b4.html#page/14.

More news:

- For the adult education program of Temple Mount Sinai this past October, I enjoyed doing several **song-and-study sessions** in which I facilitated lively discussion of source sheets I compiled for a particular topic and then had each hour culminate in sharing a related song from the new album. It was fun to facilitate deeper connections to the Jewish text *and* the songs, and I feel like this proof-of-concept can be extended to other songs or congregations, in person or online.

- A story about the 2025 Silver City Community Film Festival screening Joel Carrasco's **video** for my *Sparks* song "Lights Lead Home" as an Official Selection appeared in Nov/Dec 2025 *The Jewish Voice* [Jewish Federation of El Paso and Las Cruces]: https://heyzine.com/flip-book/3cbfe6b8c4.html#page/30. The video was also selected (among artists spanning a dozen countries) for episode #21 of the video arts zine *GAS* curated by 2023-2025 Texas Beat Poet Laureate Belinda Subraman

- **Miscellaneous Jewish creativity**: Each issue of *Moment* magazine has a contest to caption a cartoon drawn by *The New Yorker* cartoonist Ben Schwartz and I recently learned that I won the summer 2025 contest and am one of 3 Finalists in the fall 2025 contest! Also, I had poetry in the Sept. 2025 *Desert Exposure* and in a book edited by R. Menachem Creditor: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0GHYD65D3

- In addition to original Jewish folk-rock, I also write **STEM songs** to engage students about math/statistics and was recently interviewed on this by the National Museum of Mathematics (https://momath.org/civicrm/event/info/?reset=1&id=11733) and the American Statistical Association (second half of https://statsandstories.net/methods/enhancing-statistical-literacy).

- Coming up: I'm playing some thematically-related songs from my albums as part of a (free) **Tu Bishvat** program on a fruitful(!) Monday evening, Feb. 2, 7pm at Chabad Lubavitch of El Paso.

Many thanks and blessings,

Larry