

# JEWISH REVIEW

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## Beery helps youth map Jewish future

By Amy R. Kaufman

The rapid rise of information and communication technology will help Jews address their most difficult challenge in centuries, according to Ariel Beery, founder and editor of New York's Presentense magazine, who spoke to two groups of young people in Portland on Feb. 11.

Jewish community leader Sharon Ungerleider invited Beery to speak in Portland, describing him as a rising star who "has such an affinity for youth and the world they will create for us."

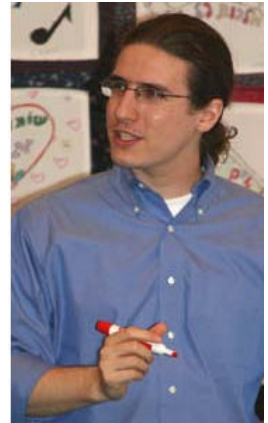
Beery spoke to members of the Oregon Jewish Community Youth Foundation, who are preparing a presentation on the future of the Portland Jewish community for OJCYF's April 17 dinner, said John Moss, executive director.

Beery advised the philanthropic youth of OJCYF to think like "science fiction writers" as they predict what Jewish Portland will be like in 2020 or 2040. Will virtual synagogues replace brick-and-mortar synagogues? What will the Jewish landscape be like when Portland's Jewish youth have graduated from college? Will they choose to settle in Portland?

Moss said such projections could influence how the Portland Jewish community adapts to the generations of the future. "The implications for our community are huge," he said. "Our Jewish organizations are responsive to today, but we're not yet doing community planning for what the next generation will have."

Named one of the "10 Jews to Watch" by World Jewish Digest, 28-year-old Beery is one of five contenders for the prestigious Visiting Professorship in Jewish Communal Innovation created by Brandeis University and Charles Bronfman.

In his proposal for that chair, Beery wrote, "Unless we as Jews can make a case for why being part of the Jewish collective adds value to an individual's life ... the collective identity of the Jews will be lost, and all that will be left are small groups of spiritually committed Jews who act autonomously in following their own individual search for meaning."



Beery is the founder of the Presentense Institute for Creative Zionism in Jerusalem. On the institute's Web site is the succinct statement: "Traditional Jewish structures based on Industrial Age models do not speak to the new generation."

The institute offers six-week training sessions for socially minded Jewish entrepreneurs from around the world, providing project support within a "research and development action tank environment."

Beery said he believes the tools of the information age, including social networking, will enable Jews all over the world to connect with each other, transmit Jewish tradition by new methods and maximize the potential of the Jewish people. Beery also spoke to 21- to 35-year-olds at Moishe House on "Jewish Social Networking in the Post-Digital Age."

Beery is a columnist in a dozen newspapers, including Forward and the Jerusalem Post. He is a graduate student in two programs of Jewish study, at the Jewish Theological Seminary and at New York University.