



Yiddishland: Offerings at YAAANA

By Wenxin Cui

Founded by Jana Mazurkiewicz Meisarosh, the Yiddish Arts and Academics Association of North America (YAAANA) and its cultural center, Yiddishland California (www.yiddishland-california.org), are dedicated to keeping Yiddish language and culture alive, relevant, and accessible across generations and communities. Through a dynamic mix of cultural programming, language education, and creative engagement—both in person and online—YAAANA fosters meaningful connections to Jewish heritage in contemporary contexts.

In San Diego, California, YAAANA has cultivated a vibrant and growing cultural presence through events that invite participants to learn, share, and celebrate Yiddish and Jewish culture. A standout initiative is the monthly Yiddishland Movie Club, which pairs curated film screenings with post-screening conversations featuring leading scholars in Jewish cinema, music, and history. These gatherings deepen cultural understanding and foster a warm, welcoming space for dialogue and community building.

As its cultural programming expands, YAAANA looks forward to welcoming new collaborators in San Diego. The organization is actively seeking volunteers, guest speakers, and event hosts to help shape and grow its offerings. It is also eager to build partnerships with local cultural institutions, educators, and community organizations to broaden the scope and accessibility of its programming.

Complementing its cultural events, YAAANA offers year-round language classes designed for learners at every stage. Online courses in Yiddish, Hebrew, and Judeo-Spanish (Ladino) are taught by experienced instructors who integrate language learning with broader cultural exploration. Emphasizing accessibility and inclusivity, the program centers on practical, everyday language use while offering a wide range of engaging formats—from conversation circles and song workshops to innovative yoga sessions that blend language learning with movement and mindfulness—making Jewish languages both relevant and enjoyable.

YAAANA's impact is increasingly international. Following the relocation of its physical cultural center to La Paz, Mexico, the organization has begun cultivating a new hub for year-round programming. Early initiatives—including Chanukkah celebrations, a Purim costume party, and guided visits to the local synagogue—have engaged local Jewish and non-Jewish residents alike, as well as international visitors seeking meaningful cultural experiences. By establishing a dedicated center focused on Yiddish arts, history, and intergenerational exchange, YAAANA



aims to complement existing institutions while broadening access to Jewish cultural life.

Together, these efforts reflect YAAANA's vision of expanding access to Yiddish language and culture through online and in-person initiatives. Now based in La Paz, the organization warmly welcomes collaborators and participants to help sustain and grow its San Diego programming.