

OAKLAND COUNTY

Jewish Forum to discuss filmmaker's project

By EMILY PRAWDZIK GENOFF
Of The Oakland Press

A former Southfield resident turned filmmaker will have an opportunity to present her film to the community later this month, initiating conversation, learning and debate as part of The Jewish Forum.

The Jewish Forum, an independent, nonprofit organization, allows participants to explore their faith in an open-minded and nontraditional forum.

Irving Goldfein is one of the founding members of The Jewish Forum. Goldfein said he was inspired to create the organization to "meet the needs that were not being met by other organizations or institutions in the Jewish community in metropolitan Detroit."

"Our objective is to provide

opportunities for Jews from all denominations and all parts of the community to engage together in learning and in a frank, open and stimulating

conversation about issues that affect us all," Goldfein said.

"Some may be controversial, but we're optimistic about finding ways to discuss them in a civilized and productive manner."

"Who Knows One," directed by third-year Harvard law student Sarah Yael Goldfein,

Goldfein's daughter, is a summary of a 13-hour educational DVD series focusing on such topics as the Jewish perspective of God, mortality, good and evil.

In the film, theologians, scholars, philosophers and Jews of all ages and denominations talk about how they see

God — or not. Sarah Goldfein, a graduate of the University of Michigan with high distinction and honors in philosophy and Jewish studies, made the film as part of a two-year fellowship awarded by the Jewish Future Foundation.

Since opening in April, Irving Goldfein said a guiding principle of The Jewish Forum has been the programming offered to its supporters. Following "Who Knows One," the forum's next major program will take place in February, during which four Jewish scholars from the United States and Israel will speak with the audience.

"It's around the issue of where our traditional knowledge, based around the Torah,

meets secular knowledge, and how we integrate the two while trying to remain faithful to our tradition, yet open-minded and sophisticated in our thinking," Goldfein explained.

"There's a subtext to that particular program, which is the expression of freedom of expression in Judaism, which is a controversial subject, particularly within the Orthodox movement," he added.

Goldfein said supporters of The Jewish Forum come from various backgrounds but are typically a "more mature population." They are working toward appealing to the younger Jewish community.

"The guiding principle in our programming is that we

realize we won't appeal to a very large audience," Goldfein said.

"What we want to do is provide very high-quality, very stimulating, thought provoking events that will satisfy the smaller part of the audience

that are already motivated to explore these issues and, perhaps, produce some results."

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