

# Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

A publication of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, serving the Berkshires and surrounding NY, CT and VT

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Pittsfield, MA  
Permit No. 19

Vol. 30, No. 8

Tishri/Cheshvan/Kislev 5783

October 24 to December 6, 2022

jewishberkshires.org

## Middle East Update with Ambassador Dennis Ross



On Sunday, November 13 at 6:45 p.m., Federation's Middle East Update returns with Ambassador Dennis Ross presenting. This free program will be streamed online – please visit our calendar of events page at Jewishberkshires.org.

Following Israel's most recent parliamentary election (the fifth in the last three years), as well as America's congressional midterms, Ambassador Ross, one of America's most experienced diplomatic and Middle East specialists, will provide an inside assessment of the changing strategies and geopolitics in Israel and the Middle East. A question and answer session will follow.

**Dennis Ross** is an American diplomat and author. He has served as the Director of Policy

Planning in the State Department under President George H.W. Bush, the special Middle East coordinator under President Bill Clinton, and was a special adviser for the Persian Gulf and Southwest Asia to the former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. Ambassador Ross has published extensively on the former Soviet Union, arms control, and the greater Middle East, including most recently *Doomed to Succeed: The U.S-Israel Relationship from Truman to Obama* (Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, October 2015). He has authored many op-eds in *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, and other papers and magazines. In addition, he writes monthly columns for *US News and World Report* and the *New York Daily News*. He lives in Washington, D.C.

## David Sipress on What's So Funny? A Cartoonist's Memoir

The New Yorker cartoonist talks to the BJV about his work and upcoming program

On Thursday, November 17 at 6:45 p.m. "Jewish Literary Voices: A Federation Series in collaboration with The Jewish Book Council" hosts The New Yorker cartoonist David Sipress, whose book *What's So Funny? A Cartoonist's Memoir* recounts his hapless place in his Upper West Side Jewish family in the age of Sputnik and JFK.

This free program will be presented via Zoom. Please visit our calendar of events at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) to register.

Throughout the book, cartoons appear in the narrative with spot-on-precision, adding humor and insight to evocative profiles of his family and musings on creativity and art. Sipress's poignant, compelling story is also a meditation on creativity and the art of cartooning, and the delightful *aha!* moments in answer to the perennial question aimed at cartoonists: Where do you get your ideas?

Sipress was born and raised in New York City. He graduated from Williams College in 1968 and went on to study Russian History in the Department of Soviet Studies at Harvard University. He left Harvard before completing his degree to pursue a career as a cartoonist.

Sipress has been a staff cartoonist at The New Yorker since 1998. He's published nearly seven hundred cartoons in the magazine. His cartoons have also appeared countless other publications and he was the weekly cartoonist of The Boston Phoenix newspaper for 25 years. He was the 2016 winner of the National Cartoonists Society's Reuben Award for Gag Cartooning.

David was the co-creator, writer, and host of "Conversations with Cartoonists," a series of onstage interviews with New Yorker artists, including Roz Chast, Gahan Wilson, George Booth and many others, at Dixon Place Theater in New York City. He has lectured widely on his work and the art of cartooning.

He lives in Brooklyn with his wife, Ginny Shubert, an attorney and activist who works on issues of health and housing.

DAVID SIPRESS,  
continued on page 6

### Inside

A Mensch in Full .....	3
Your Federation Presents .....	4-9, 14-16
Local News .....	16-18
Berkshire Jewish Voices .....	19-21
Culture & Arts .....	23-24



## Change is Going to Come...

...back to Israel, in the form of this quarter-shekel minted in 69 A.D., during the Great Revolt of the Jewish people against Roman occupiers. This rare coin was looted from an archaeological site in 2002 and was recovered in Denver five years ago. It is stamped with palm branches, a wreath, and the number four, which marked the fourth year of the rebellion that would end tragically with the fall of Masada in 73 A.D. For more on the repatriation of this precious artifact, please see page 18.

CREDIT: MANHATTAN DISTRICT ATTORNEYS OFFICE



THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE  
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

## We are almost there, but we need your help!

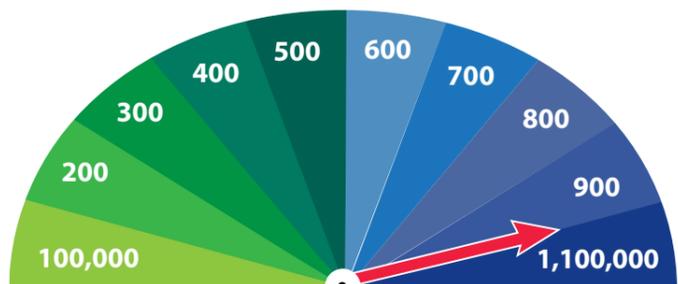
If you have not yet made your gift to the 2022 Annual Campaign there is still time to do so.

Your gift will help us engage the next generation, support the elderly and vulnerable, and sustain Jewish life all year round.

Donate online at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org)

THANK YOU FOR MAKING A DIFFERENCE!

## Jewish Federation of the Berkshires 2022 Annual Campaign GOAL \$1,100,000



DOING  
EXTRAORDINARY  
THINGS

YOUR  
IMPACT  
IS REAL

ANNUAL  
CAMPAIGN  
2022

### Letters to the Editor

#### Helping to Make a Camp Dream a Reality



Lila with Camp Puppy Onyx

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires:

Thank you so very much for the scholarship so that I could go to Crane Lake Camp. Even though the community service was not required, I did a bake sale in May of this year with my friends that raised over \$700 for UNICEF that is going to Ukraine. I had an amazing time at camp and I'm so lucky that I got to go. Again thank you so much - I had so much fun!

At camp, I had an amazing time at the activities (my favorite is lake activities), and I worked up enough courage to do the zipline and the high ropes course, which were both so awesome. I was also in the camp play which was fantastic. Additionally, I got

to make and eat a delicious grilled pizza at *teva* ("camping") along with playing games and roasting and eating marshmallows. My camp unit was Lower Bonim (Builders). At my unit Shabbat, I led the Mourners' Kaddish with two of my friends. Then, at the end of the summer, I won the raffle and got to take home a camp puppy. Her name is Onyx, she's adorable and I love her so much.

My friend Mollye and I wrote each other letters from camp, because she went to Eisner for the first session and I went to Crane Lake for the second session. We

wanted to compare both camps. We both had an amazing time. I really hope I can go back to camp next year, because I loved it so much.

I am very grateful to the Grinspoon Foundation, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, and Hevreh of Southern Berkshire for helping make my camp dream a reality.

Sincerely,  
Lila Flax  
Great Barrington

#### Thank You for Camp - From the Blaugrund Sisters



"I Especially Loved the Swimming," by Dalia

Thank you for my summer at Camp Eisner. It was my favorite camp. I especially loved the swimming!

Love, Dalia (age 6)

Dear Federation,

Thank you for giving me money to come to sleepaway camp. It was my first time going to sleepaway camp and I really enjoyed going. My favorite part was playing games with my friends. Also, my least favorite part was the food. I really did NOT enjoy the food and the first few days were really hard because I was homesick, but other than that it was really awesome. Thank you again.

Best,  
Irit Blaugrund (Age 8)  
Alford

# SAVE THE DATE

## Chanukah Celebration The Mount, Lenox MA December 18, 2022

Stay tuned for more details

**Jewish Federation**  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

# OLLI

AT BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Join over 1,450 of the most creative, engaged, and active adults in the Berkshires for courses, events, and community.

Learn more at [berkshireolli.org](http://berkshireolli.org)

## FREE NYC DAY TRIP FOR JEWISH TEENS

**Museum of Jewish Heritage**  
Sunday, December 4, 2022

### The Holocaust: What Hate Can Do

A Day of Holocaust Education for Teens and Their Parents

7<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup> grade Jewish students from across the Berkshires are invited, with a parent chaperone, to join us for this meaningful day of learning. You will have an age appropriate guided tour exploring life during the Holocaust followed by a survivor speaker who will share his/her personal story.

**FREE for Jewish teens in 7<sup>th</sup>- 10<sup>th</sup> grade**

No affiliation required. Includes bus transportation, admission for teens and parents, guided tour, speaker and lunch.

To register contact your congregation's school administrator or Dara Kaufman at [dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org).

*This trip is made possible thanks to the generosity of the Jewish Women's Foundation and the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.*

## OP-ED

## A Mensch in Full

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor



In September, the Berkshires lost a pillar of the community, Howard Kaufman. He was 96, lived most of his life locally, and kept the Berkshires as his base of operations while creating a hugely successful business. He accomplished remarkable things and gave back to his home and its Jewish community in myriad ways. If you're not familiar with his story, I urge you read his obituary on page 10 for an overview of the life of this large-hearted man.

After Howard passed, people who knew him shared their memories online and in conversation. The picture Federation posted on our Facebook page is the one you see here, one that captures the gist of so many of those reminiscences – specifically that Howard Kaufman was a man who was humbled by his success and freed by it to do the things he felt were important in life. He was not only a meaningful

financial supporter of Federation and all its affiliates, but also someone who rolled up his sleeves and worked “on the ground,” connecting with those who needed support in our community in a direct and personal way. For example, as you see in the picture, Howard used to deliver our hot kosher meals, driving around the county and reporting back about how those receiving the food were faring, in case they needed additional help.

Those who grew up in the Jewish Berkshires say that it seemed like Howard was always a part of things and would always be a part of things around here. As for myself, I've only lived here for a decade and knew Howard primarily from my interactions with him at Chabad of the Berkshires, a synagogue that might not have been established without his support. I often used our encounters to pick Howard's brain about how to be more effective at Federation, first in my early roles as an executive board member and campaign chair, and then as editor of the paper.

More than anything Howard ever said to me, one thing he did for me remains indelible. It was my father's *yahrzeit* and I needed to make a minyan.

Chabad's Rabbi Volovik was out of town, but made some calls on my behalf. That evening, I was at Chabad and members of my minyan began to arrive.

Who should show up but Howard Kaufman? I was astonished to see him because I knew that on the following day, he was moving out of his Berkshires home and

relocating to the Boston area to be closer to family. I could not quite believe that this man, who had lived here for so long and who accomplished so much, would, on the eve of his departure from his beloved Berkshires, show up to help make a minyan for someone he did not know very well. To Howard, I was a Jew who needed a helping hand and that was enough.

*. . . Howard Kaufman was a man who was humbled by his success and freed by it to do the things he felt were important in life . . .*

There are many ways in which most of us cannot be like Howard Kaufman. Showing up for one another is one we can – even if it isn't entirely convenient, even if we don't quite feel like it, even if tomorrow we may be leaving a place we love to embark on a new chapter of life.

I will always remember Howard's kindness on my behalf and still draw on that memory when I need some motivation to just show up. In ways that are both apparent and unseen, Howard's memory will remain a blessing for this community – we are lucky to have known him.

## Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

A publication of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, serving the Berkshires and surrounding NY, CT and VT

The color photography in this issue of the *Berkshire Jewish Voice* is made possible through the generosity of **Richard and Cathy Holland** and **Debra Chudnow and David Wise, honorary publishers**. The staff of the Federation and the BJV are deeply grateful.

**Thank you volunteers Ellen Rosenblatt and the BJV delivery team, Michael Albert and Roman Rozenblyum.**

**Paid advertisements do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires or its members.**

## Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

A publication of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, serving the Berkshires and surrounding NY, CT and VT

**Published nine times a year by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires**

**Dara Kaufman:** Publisher and Managing Editor  
**Richard and Cathy Holland:** Honorary Publishers  
**Debra Chudnow and David Wise:** Honorary Publishers  
**Albert Stern:** Editor  
**RB Design Co.:** Graphic Design and Layout  
**Jenny Greenfeld:** Advertising Sales Representative and Assistant Editor

Editorial opinions expressed in the *Berkshire Jewish Voice* are those of the newspaper and not those of any individual. Signed editorials do not represent the view of the newspaper, but rather express the writer's view.

The *Berkshire Jewish Voice* is under no obligation to accept any advertisement. It does not guarantee the kashrut of any merchandise or service advertised.

To have the *BJV* mailed to your home, please send a minimum donation of \$18.

Next issue publication date: **December 7, 2022 – January 22, 2023**

Press deadline: **October 25, 2022** • Advertising deadline: **November 16, 2022**

*Berkshire Jewish Voice* e-mail: [astern@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:astern@jewishberkshires.org)  
 Phone: (413) 442-4360, ext. 11 Fax (413) 443-6070

**We know why you are here.  
 And we're here for the same reasons.**



### The Berkshires.

**M**ore than a destination. It's a way of life. From one season to the next, we understand.

It's a set of experiences, qualities and values that fulfill.

We believe your financial advisors should embody these same attributes.

It's why we're here. We're here with you. And for you.



Portfolio Management • Financial Planning • Trust & Banking Services\*

103 West Park Street  
 Lee, MA 01238  
 (413) 243-4331

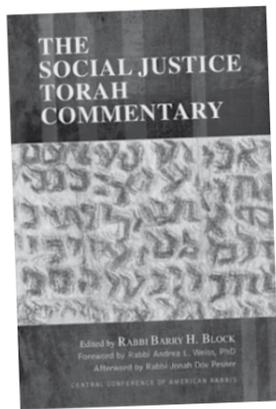
[www.octobermountainfa.com](http://www.octobermountainfa.com)

October Mountain Financial Advisors is a d/b/a of St. Germain Investment Management with an office in Lee, MA.  
 \*Trust and Banking Services provided by Lee Bank.

A SEC Registered Investment Advisor

# Your Federation Presents

## The Social Justice Torah Commentary, with Rabbi Barry Block and Rabbis of the Berkshires



On Thursday, October 27, at 6:45 p.m., “Jewish Literary Voices: A Federation Series in collaboration with The Jewish Book Council” features virtual interactive community study led by Rabbi Barry Block, editor of *The Social Justice Torah Commentary*. Rabbi Block will be in conversation with local Berkshire rabbis on the timely question: What does the Torah have to say about social justice?

Joining Rabbi Block will be Rabbi Rachel Barenblat of Congregation Beth Israel and Rabbi Liz Hirsch of Temple Anshe Amunim.

Register for this online presentation via the Calendar of Events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org). As the contributors to *The Social Justice Torah*

*Commentary* demonstrate, the Torah has a great deal to say about social justice. In this 2021 book, diverse authors delve deeply into each week’s *parashah*, drawing lessons to inspire *tikkun olam*. Chapters address key contemporary issues such as racism, climate change, mass incarceration, immigration, disability, women’s rights, voting rights, and many more. The result is an indispensable resource for weekly Torah study and for anyone committed to repairing the world.

**Rabbi Barry H. Block** serves Congregation B’nai Israel in Little Rock, Arkansas and is the editor of *The Mussar Torah Commentary* (CCAR Press, 2020), a finalist for the National Jewish Book Award. He also contributed to several earlier CCAR anthologies, including *Inscribed: Encounters with the Ten Commandments*, *The Sacred Exchange*, *The Sacred Encounter*, *Navigating the Journey*, and *A Life of Meaning: Embracing Reform Judaism’s Sacred Path*, and he is a regular contributor to the *CCAR Journal*.

## Ticking Clock: Behind the Scenes at 60 Minutes with Ira Rosen



Ira Rosen with legendary broadcaster Mike Wallace

On Thursday, December 8 at 6:45 p.m., two-time Peabody Award-winning writer and producer Ira Rosen reveals the intimate, untold stories of his decades at America’s most iconic news show. It’s a *60 Minutes* story on *60 Minutes* itself, and draws on his book *Ticking Clock: Behind the Scenes at 60 Minutes*.

This virtual program is an installment of “Jewish Literary Voices: A Jewish Federation of the Berkshires Series in collaboration with The Jewish Book Council.” Register for this online presentation via the Calendar of Events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

When producer Ira Rosen walked into the *60 Minutes* offices in June 1980, he knew he was about to enter television history. His career catapulted him to the heights of TV

journalism, breaking some of the most important stories in TV news. But behind the scenes was a war room of clashing producers, anchors, and the most formidable *60 Minutes* figure: legendary correspondent Mike Wallace.

Highly entertaining, dishy, and unforgettable, *Ticking Clock* is a never-before-told account of the most successful news show in American history. Rosen delivered an authoritative account of the unforgettable personalities that battled for prestige, credit, and the desire to scoop everyone else in the game. As one of Mike Wallace’s top producers, Rosen knows the interview secrets that made Wallace’s work legendary, and the flaring temper that made him infamous.

Writing about his time as senior producer of *ABC News Primetime Live* and *20/20*, Rosen exposes the competitive environment among famous colleagues like Diane Sawyer and Barbara Walters, and the power plays between correspondents Chris Wallace, Anderson Cooper, and Chris Cuomo.

A master class in how TV news is made, Rosen shows readers how network news puts together a story when sources are explosive, unreliable, and even dangerous.

**Ira Rosen** has won every major award in broadcast journalism, including 24 national Emmy Awards, placing him in the top ten all-time news Emmy winners in broadcast history. His report on who is responsible for the opioid epidemic won more awards for *60 Minutes* than any segment in the show’s 52-year history. A former Nieman Fellow at Harvard University, Rosen was the senior producer and one of the creators of *Prime Time Live* at ABC, a show hosted by Diane Sawyer and Sam Donaldson.



### Jewish Literary Voices: A Federation Series in Collaboration with The Jewish Book Council – Coming Events

- Thursday, January 12, 2023, 6:45 p.m., Virtual, Debby Applegate, *Madam: The Biography of Polly Adler, Icon of the Jazz Age*
- Thursday, February 9, 2023, 6:45 p.m., Virtual, Maggie Anton, *The Choice: A Novel of Love, Faith and the Talmud*
- Thursday, March 16, 2023, 6:45 p.m., Virtual, Susan Weidman Schneider and Yona Zeldis McDonough, *Frankly Feminist: Short Stories by Jewish Women from Lilit Magazine*
- Thursday, April 20, 2023, 6:45 p.m., Virtual, Daniel Levin, *Violins and Hope: From the Holocaust to Symphony Hall*
- Friday, July 14, 2023, 10:45 a.m., In-person at Hevreh, Letty Cottin Pogrebin, *Shanda: A Memoir of Shame and Secrecy*

# Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

A publication of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, serving the Berkshires and surrounding NY, CT and VT

## Thank you to our supporters!

The *Berkshire Jewish Voice* extends a very special “thank you” for the generosity extended by those who have sent in their contributions for voluntary subscriptions to the paper.

Anonymous - 3  
 Nancy and David Bayer  
 Michael Buckheim  
 Mimi Cohen  
 Bruce and Susan Creditor  
 Marilyn and Robert Derector  
 Terry and Mel Drucker  
 Chip and Cindy Elitzer  
 David and Judy Gilbert  
 Mark Goldfus and Beverly Rubman  
 John and Laurel Graney  
 Paul and Karen Graubard  
 Merle and David Harris  
 Ken and Mimi Heyman  
 Arthur and Louise Hillman  
 Ina Barbara Hoffman  
 Tamara Jasper  
 Rabbi Jan Caryl Kaufman  
 Susan and Michael Leff

Jay Levy and Louise Vargas-Levy  
 Phyllis Rivlin  
 Elizabeth and Eugene Rosenberg  
 Lawrence Rosenthal  
 Deborah Roth  
 Shirley Rubenstein  
 Lewis Schiller  
 Steve Simon and Maud Mandel  
 Richard Simons and Marcie Greenfield  
 Simons  
 Marte and Paul Singerman  
 Mark and Elisa Snowise  
 Linda and David Sotnick  
 Carol and Steven Targum  
 William and Sandra Walley  
 Howard and Debbie Wineberg  
 Bruce Wintman and Jonna Gaberman

**251 households have donated**

**SEED WHAT YOU READ! BECOME A SUBSCRIBER TODAY!**  
 Yes, I support the *Berkshire Jewish Voice*! Please accept my voluntary tax-deductible subscription contribution.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$360 Mensch & Honorary Publisher  
 (Supports color printing in one edition of the Voice)

\_\_\_\_\_ \$180 Sponsor

\_\_\_\_\_ \$72 Patron

\_\_\_\_\_ \$36 Friend

\_\_\_\_\_ \$18 Supporter

**Mail check payable to:**  
 Jewish Federation of the Berkshires  
 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201  
 (Please add *Berkshire Jewish Voice* in the memo)

Name to be listed: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I wish to remain anonymous

**Noble’s Farm Stand and Flower Shop**  
 For ALL Your Floral Needs  
 Kathy Noble, Certified Florist  
 390 East New Lenox Rd  
 Pittsfield, MA 01201  
 413-443-2210  
[tweenbrook@verizon.net](mailto:tweenbrook@verizon.net)  
[noblesfarmstandandflowershop.com](http://noblesfarmstandandflowershop.com)

*Heirlooms* Jewelry  
 Wearable history in Roman glass & silver.  
 Exquisite, affordable jewelry from Israel.  
[heirloomsjewelry.com](http://heirloomsjewelry.com)  
 The Mews, 36 Main St., Stockbridge, MA ■ 413.298.4436

**ALMGREN LAW GROUP**  
 Elder Law, Estate & Life Care Planning  
 Paula Kahn Almgren, Esq.  
 One West Street, Lenox, MA 01240  
 413.637.5075 ~ [www.almgrenlaw.com](http://www.almgrenlaw.com)

## Your Federation Presents

### To Remember is Not Enough: Creating a New Holocaust Memorial in Milan, Italy

#### A program in commemoration of Kristallnacht

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, November 10 at 10:45 a.m., Connecting With Community welcomes Judith Monachina, director of the Housatonic Heritage Oral History Center at Berkshire Community College. Her topic will be “To Remember is Not Enough: Creating a New Holocaust Memorial in Milan, Italy,” about the recent inauguration of the Shoah Memorial at Milan’s Central Station. Hear about the memorial, its architect, historians, and others who play an important role in the research and in preserving memory of the Shoah in Italy.

This free program will be presented in person as part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community Series at Knesset Israel (16 Colt Road in Pittsfield) and will be followed by a kosher hot lunch. Lunch is a \$3 suggested donation for adults over 60 or \$7 for all others. Reservations are required for lunch and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 before 9 a.m. on the day of the program. See page 8 for the lunch menu.

Please note that proof of vaccination for all who are eligible is required. Masks are optional but encouraged.



Judith Monachina

Monachina will talk about the particulars of the Memorial and also about how she watched this site develop over a period of 15 years, interviewing the architect there. She writes:

When you enter the Shoah Memorial at the main train station in Milan, Italy, you soon learn that you are at the very site from which Jews and political enemies were deported. The power of the space was used to encourage reflection, because, architect Guido Morpurgo said, ‘To remember is not enough. We must also think.’

After nearly two decades of work, the construction of the Shoah Memorial at Milan’s Central Station is complete. It was designed by architect Morpurgo at the actual site of deportations in 1943 and 1944. A culmination of much work, the memorial includes a thoughtful approach to the site of deportation, rooms for listening to testimony, a wall of names, and other original features, as well as what the architect considers a memory laboratory, a place for thinking. Those parts of the site include a library and archive, which are the foundation of the Center for the Documentation of Contemporary Jewish History.

Historian of the Shoah in Italy, Liliana Picciotto, in words about this memorial, said she hoped that people who visited might then be ‘inoculated against hate.’

**Judith Monachina** was a community journalist in the Berkshires when she began to interview people about the Italian Holocaust in 2000. In 2007, she was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship in journalism and researched the lives and memories of individuals from the Jewish community in fascist Milan, Italy. She studied at the primary Holocaust archive in Italy: The Center for the Documentation of Contemporary Jewish History. This work prompted her to ask: “What happens when stories disappear? What do we do with memory?” These questions ignited her interest in oral history.

Judith is also the project director for the Paper Town Projects, and is working on a documentary about the 200-year papermaking legacy in Lee, MA.

### Current Events Seminar with Dr. Steven Rubin

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, November 3 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Dr. Steven Rubin for another in his series of current events seminars.

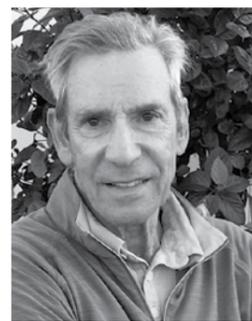
This current events seminar will allow participants to examine and discuss both Israel’s and the United States’ elections. The moderator will suggest readings for each session, introduce topics, and offer discussion questions. The seminar will be collaborative and collegial, with all participants encouraged to voice their opinions.

This free program will be presented in person as part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community Series at Knesset Israel (16 Colt Road in Pittsfield) and will be followed by a kosher hot lunch. Lunch is a \$3 suggested donation for adults over 60 or \$7 for all others. Reservations are required for lunch and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 before 9 a.m. on the day of the program. See page 8 for the lunch menu.

Please note that proof of vaccination for all who are eligible is required. Masks are optional but encouraged.

**Steve Rubin, Ph.D.** (moderator) is professor emeritus and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Adelphi University, Garden City, NY. His op-eds and opinion essays have appeared in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Berkshire Eagle*, *Tampa Bay Times*, *The South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, *Palm Beach Post*, and *The Hartford Courant*, among others. He is the editor of several anthologies, including *Celebrating the Jewish Holidays: Poems, Stories, Essays* (Brandeis University Press), *Telling and Remembering: A Century of American Jewish Poets* (Beacon Press), and *Writing Our Lives: Autobiographies of American Jews* (Jewish Publication Society). He lives in Tyringham and can be reached at [sjr@adelphi.edu](mailto:sjr@adelphi.edu).

For more on this program and other Federation events, visit our calendar of events at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).



Dr. Steven Rubin



## To Your Health



**Excellence  
in Health Care for  
You and Your Family.**

**Right Here  
in the Berkshires.**

**CHP**

[chpberkshires.org](http://chpberkshires.org)

444 Stockbridge Road | Great Barrington, MA 01230

## Live your best life at Kimball Farms

**Enjoy life  
and let us take care  
of the rest**

- 100% Maintenance free retirement living
- Enjoy the beauty, arts, and culture of the Berkshires
- Reignite your passions
- Progressive levels of care as needed

**Call 413-637-7000 to experience Kimball Farms.**

**Kimball Farms**  
Life Care

A Member of Berkshire Healthcare  
Managed by an Affiliate of Berkshire Health Systems

235 Walker Street  
Lenox, MA 01240

**800-283-0061**

[www.kimballfarms.org](http://www.kimballfarms.org)

INDEPENDENT LIVING • ASSISTED LIVING  
SKILLED NURSING • MEMORY CARE



# Your Federation Presents

## DAVID SIPRESS,

continued from page 1

### BJV Interview: David Sipress

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor

Single-panel gag cartooning involves a mastery of imaginative compression – how to evoke a panoply of ideas and associations that can be apprehended by a reader through a single drawing and one or two lines of dialogue. To be effective, the best gags, no matter how outrageous the setup, must deliver punchlines that are broadly relatable to a readers' everyday experience. Sometimes cartoons work by juxtaposing unlikely reactions to impossible scenarios and sometimes by zeroing in on and ever-so-slightly tweaking the ever-present, only slightly-concealed, inanities of everyday life. A great cartoonist is a master of minimalism.

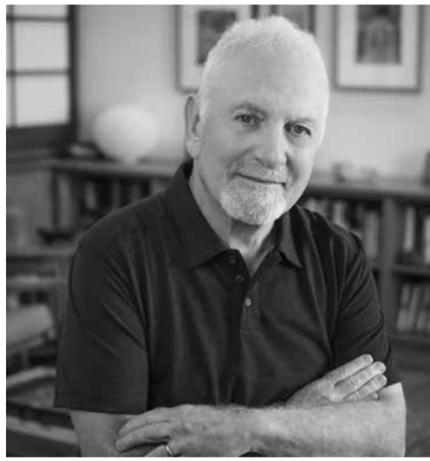
David Sipress is a master. He is a latecomer to the heights of his profession – he didn't sell his first cartoon to *The New Yorker* until he was 50 years old, in 1998, after experiencing decades of rejections. Since then, more than 700 of his cartoons have appeared in the magazine and on its website. As a memoirist, he is a latecomer, as well – his family saga, *What's So Funny?*, was published in 2022, when he was in his seventies. Sipress is a native New Yorker who grew up in a comfortable, secular upper middle class home on the Upper West Side; he perfectly captures the culture and cultural anxieties of the Jewish milieu in which he was raised. He also portrays – sympathetically, but with a mature frustration that is wholly appropriate – his overbearing father (a prosperous, hardworking jeweler), smothering homemaker mother, rebellious sister, and himself, a gifted child with "his head in the clouds" who is consistently brought crashing down to earth by their *mishegoss* and his own.

It is a first-rate and deeply humane account of growing up in a Jewish family in the mid-20th century – plus a story of artistic striving, struggle, and ultimate success, with plenty of cartoons. With *What's So Funny?*, Sipress join the ranks of his New Yorker colleagues, Roz Chast (*Can't We Talk About Something More Pleasant?*) and Bruce Eric Kaplan (*I Was a Child*), as one-panel gag cartoonists who redirected their imaginations to create amazing long-form autobiographical works that are as readable and moving as any memoir produced by writers who work only with words. Plus, all three books are hilarious – by all means, check them out.

And don't miss your chance to hear David Sipress speak at our Federation program this November – he'll talk about his memoir and answer your questions about cartooning (and cartoonists). The BJV caught up with Sipress in September and talked about going to college in the Berkshires, inspiration vs. perspiration, comic timing, and his Jewish identity. Our interview was edited for length and clarity.

**You have a Berkshire's connection, having gone to Williams College. What was your experience of the Berkshires as a young New Yorker leaving town to a different kind of place?**

Well, I had never been any place quite as beautiful as the Berkshires. When



David Sipress

I arrived at college, I instantly had a feeling of peace I'd never had before, just because that environment just created that feeling in me. It was an interesting time. Being in that idyllic environment, both the landscape and the school itself in 1968, one felt very far away from world events that were about to come crashing down on the male college graduate who was eligible for the draft.

#### How did it affect your artistic progress?

At that time, my cartooning and my desire to be an artist was on hold. I seemed headed straight for an academic career studying history, specifically Russian history. So I can't really say there was much in terms of my artistic development, but my intellectual development was enhanced a million times because it was a terrific school. Classes were small. There was a lot of really wonderful teaching that went on, and so that part of it was really great for me. I only really came to appreciate it when I went to graduate school, and I was in lecture halls with 200 students, and I had been used to classes with ten people in them. So I really loved the school, and I'm so grateful for the education I got there.

**But you went back to being an urban person after being in the country, even though you say you found some kind of peace here that you had experienced before.**

Yeah, I mean, I moved to Cambridge after graduation, and then I stayed in Boston for 15 years. Then I moved back to New York. And if we're talking about my artistic development and the inspiration for the ideas for my cartoons, being in the city has been really important for that. There's so much going on. There's so much that happens in the course of a day that has been fodder for my humor and my cartoons. So I can't imagine not living in a city at this point.

**How did you go from working as a cartoonist, in a medium where you have to cram a whole lot of information into a drawing so that the reader will get the caption, to opening things up and working in a long form like memoir?**

Well, that's a complicated and interesting question. My first response is that when I first sat down and decided I was going to write a memoir, I was a little bit flustered because I'd been so addicted to the single panel cartoon creative process. That process is very quick. You get instant gratification, and then you're kind of done. You get a cup of coffee. So how was I

going to write something in long form? I had had a little practice because I had written essays for *The New Yorker* website, but still, the proposition was quite daunting. But what I discovered as I wrote was that on a good day, the ideas started to come just like they do for cartoons, but they came one after another, one building on another, so that the writing became not really all that different from the creative process of doing cartoons. And eventually I developed the same addiction for [prose] writing that I'd had for doing cartoons.

Another thing is that cartoons almost always have a caption. Captions are dialogue. And when I started writing the book, I realized the easy part for me was writing dialogue, which flowed every time I came to a section where it was necessary. I attribute that to the thousands and tens of thousands of cartoon captions I've written in my life. I learned that skill, how to get a lot into a spoken sentence. But I will say that when I sat down and decided I was going to write this book, I did a drawing which kind of encapsulated my anxiety about it. And it's a person sitting in front of their monitor about to write that says, "Nothing Interesting Has Ever Happened to Me. A Memoir." I wasn't sure I had the material in my life, but again, like many writers say, you can't really write until you start writing. And once I started writing stuff, the memories came back and the stories came back and it got easier and easier.

**In the chapter titled "Comedy," you write about comic timing. I know that for a comic writer, or a comic anything, talking about the idea of comic timing is very challenging, but that's what I'm going to ask you to do – share some of your ideas on what makes for good comic timing.**

In my one step into stand-up comedy in high school, I learned very quickly that a lot of it's about patience, about waiting until exactly the right moment to finish the joke. I can't quite explain it. I'm a person who's pretty much a slave to my anxieties in most of my life. But when I get up in front of an audience, for whatever reason, I always feel completely at peace and relaxed. And I think to do comic timing, you have to be relaxed and patient. My wife says it's because finally everybody's paying attention to me, which is what I really want. But as far as comic timing and cartoons, the point I make in the book is that there is a kind of comic timing that's intrinsic to the single panel cartoon and it has to do with the fact that the reader almost always first looks at the picture, takes in the picture and then waits. There's a little beat that you wait trying to figure out what's going to come next, and then you read the caption. And that is the built-in comic timing in the single panel cartoon.

When I begin with a drawing and I don't know what the caption's going to be, sometimes the timing takes a minute, and sometimes it can take many months before I come up with the line that goes with that drawing. When ideas come that way, they take you by surprise and there's an intense pleasure that is difficult to describe. But it's about as happy as I could ever be in that moment when the light bulb goes on. And it really is what keeps me doing

what I do, constantly hoping for those moments.

**When I read about your process, it seemed to me like there is more inspiration than perspiration in your cartooning. Maybe the inspiration is the perspiration for you.**

What you say about the inspiration being the perspiration is the way it is. It's a lot of work, mental work. I'm in my studio right now and squeezing my brain, trying to review my experiences or something that pops into my head and trying to turn it into a cartoon. It's hard work, but it's work that I've been doing since I was six years old. So I'm kind of used to it. And to me, it's perspiration, but also pleasure. I love doing it. And the drawing part, which is part of the process, once the idea comes, that can be labor intensive. I, however, differ from a lot of cartoonists in that the way I draw, I draw in a really direct fashion, spontaneous fashion. I don't labor too much over the drawings because I think that takes away from their impact. So I like the quick, spontaneous drawing that I do, and that may be less perspiration than other cartoonists.

**How many iterations of a drawing might you go through before you find the right one?**

[New Yorker cartoonists] hand in rough drawings from which the selections are made by the cartoon editor and then ultimately by David Remnick, the editor. So things always begin with a rough drawing, and sometimes I can work for hours, redrawing and redrawing. Then I look at that rough drawing and I think, well, that's the best drawing I've done. And I'll hand that in. But sometimes it can come quickly and there's one iteration of the thing itself. At other times, it could take me hours to get the drawing just right. But I always try to keep a sense for the reader to feel, "Well, David thought it up and he drew it direct like that." I try to keep a spontaneous effect.

**What has your Jewish identity meant to you over the course of your life?**

Well, growing up, it was always very complicated and confusing, as I say in the book. And the specific example, again, is that we celebrated both Hanukkah and Christmas, so I was never really sure exactly what kind of Jewish we were. My father had a complicated relationship to his own Jewishness, and I think that had a lot to do with his alienation from his original family that lasted a lifetime. I identified on some deep, fundamental level – I knew certain things about myself that I attributed to my being Jewish and one of the most important, I have to say, was my sense of humor. I knew that there was something Jewish about my sense of humor. And also I grew up in New York City. So until I went off to Williams, I was pretty much surrounded mostly by Jewish people. But when I got to Williams, I began to understand that I was different from other people. And I did now and then run into a little of what I can only call antisemitism, but none of it has resulted in my becoming a particularly religious person. My identity has pretty much always been cultural rather than spiritual.

**Finnerty & Stevens**  
Funeral Home, Inc.



426 Main Street  
Great Barrington, MA 01230  
(413) 528-1900 / Fax: (413) 528-5301  
Toll Free 1-877-823-1901  
Web site: www.finnertyandstevens.com

Director  
Meghan L. Finnerty



**Clifford Propane LLC**  
40 Willow Creek Road  
Lenox, Massachusetts 01240

Tel. (413) 637-8130  
Cell (413) 822-2634  
Fax (413) 637-4557

Jeff Clifford



**ALL-WAYS**  
Moving • Storage  
Warehousing

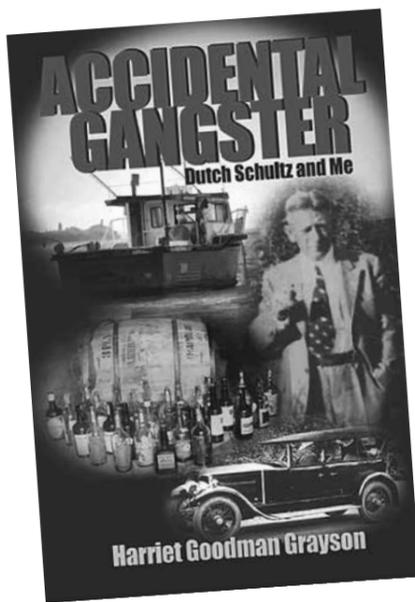
241 W. Housatonic Street  
Pittsfield, Massachusetts 01201  
www.allwaysmovingstorage.com  
Allwaysmoving1977@gmail.com

Since  
1977

PHONE: (413) 499-1577  
FAX: (413) 443-7256

## Your Federation Presents

### Accidental Gangster: Dutch Schultz and Me



On Thursday, December 1 at 6:45 p.m., Federation hosts author Harriet Goodman Grayson, whose book *Accidental Gangster* is based on true events – Harriet’s tales of her grandfather Goldy and her great-grandfather’s days of running booze for Jewish gangster Dutch Schultz through the Rockaways.

This free Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will be presented via Zoom. Please visit our Calendar of Events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) for links to our programs.

Relive the madcap days of Prohibition through the story of a fisherman recruited by Schultz to help him transport booze as he walked a thin tightrope avoiding both the federal police and rival gangs.

Learn how an ordinary man became involved in a criminal network, hired to take his boat up to Canada to bring the “pure Canadian booze” to somewhere in the Rockaways. Familiar names from

the era are part of the story. There’s the East Side contingent of Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel, and Lucky Luciano, as well as the Brownsville Boys, a gang of hired killers.

**Harriet Goodman Grayson** is an accomplished writer of non-fiction and fiction. Under the pen name *Anastasia Goodman*, she writes the *Sasha Perlov Mystery Series*. Harriet has also written a novel called *Rockaway Riptides*, based on true events during the 1960s in the Rockaways of Long Island.

### A Day of Holocaust Education and Remembrance for 7th to 10th Graders



From 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday, December 4, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, in association with the Jewish Women’s Foundation of Berkshire County, will sponsor “A Day of Holocaust Education and Remembrance” at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in Manhattan.

This free program is for b’nai mitzvah and post-b’nai mitzvah students in the 7th to 10th grades. Eligible participants are affiliated

or non-affiliated Jewish students in Berkshire County. We further extend the invitation to one parent or chaperone per family, as well as to one rabbi and one educator from each congregation.

There will be pick-up and drop-off sites in both Lenox (Price Chopper) and Great Barrington (Big Y), exact times to be determined. A kosher lunch will be served after arrival at the museum, and dinner will be en route back to the Berkshires.

There will be a guided tour of the museum and a Holocaust survivor will share a personal story about his or her experiences.

Congregations are responsible for communicating trip details to students, obtaining accurate RSVP numbers for their respective classes, and submitting final reservation lists with names of all attendees by November 15. Students unaffiliated with a congregation wishing to attend should contact Dara Kaufman, executive director of the Federation.

For more information, please call (413) 442-4360.

### Jewish Community Security Trainings in November

PITTSFIELD – This autumn, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will sponsor two security training sessions open to members of our Jewish community. Training will be hosted by Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield.

See the insert in this paper for more information.

On Wednesday, November 9 at 3 p.m. – “Key Security Concepts and Greeter & Usher Training.” How to create a balance between an open and welcoming environment while maintaining safety and security. This training also provides those who welcome people to Jewish institutions with strategies and tools to foster a welcoming atmosphere while maintaining security.

On Wednesday, November 9 at 5 p.m. – “Active Threat Response Training.” Participants will prepare for an active threat event, including learning steps they can take to protect themselves and their institutions.

Separate registration is required for each training session.



Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

Register online at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) or call (413) 442-4360, ext. 10. A light dinner will be provided for those registered for both trainings.

### Hiding in Plain Sight: Women Writers in Yiddish Literature

On Thursday, December 15 at 6:45 p.m., we host Anita Norich, Professor Emerita of English Language and Literature and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan, whose topic will be “Hiding in Plain Sight: Women Writers in Yiddish Literature.”

This free Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will be presented via Zoom. Please visit our Calendar of Events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) for links to our programs.

Yiddish novels written by women have remained largely unknown because they were never translated into English or never published as books. Unlike works translated from the language by such male writers as Sholom Aleichem, Isaac Bashevis Singer, and Chaim Grade, Yiddish fiction by women was long dismissed by publishers as insignificant or unmarketable to a larger audience. But in the past several years, there has been a surge of translations of female writers by Yiddish scholars devoted to keeping the literature alive.

Dr. Norich has discovered works of women writers by scrolling through microfilms of long-extinct Yiddish newspapers and periodicals that serialized novels. Until Norich began translating and publishing these novels and stories, there had been only one book of Yiddish fiction by a female writer translated into English. Learn with Dr. Norich about this amazing “literature that has been hiding in plain sight, but we all assumed wasn’t there.”

**Anita Norich** is Collegiate Professor Emerita of English and Judaic Studies at the University of Michigan. She is the translator of *Two Feelings* by Tsilye Dropkin (forthcoming, 2023); *Fear and Other Stories* by Chana Blankshteyn (2022); and *A Jewish Refugee in New York* by Kadya Molodovsky (2019). She is also the author of *Writing in Tongues: Yiddish Translation in the 20th Century*; *Discovering Exile: Yiddish and Jewish American Literature in America During the Holocaust*; and *The Homeless Imagination in the Fiction of Israel Joshua Singer*.

She translates Yiddish literature and lectures and publishes on a range of topics concerning modern Jewish cultures, Yiddish language and literature, Jewish American literature, and Holocaust literature.



Anita Norich



## Peace of Mind

DURING TURBULENT TIMES

At Renaissance Investment Group, LLC our clients have direct access to senior leaders that are able to answer difficult questions about market movements and volatility. With decades of global financial experience we’re here for you every step of the way, helping you to customize and grow a portfolio that manages risk and maximizes returns. So you can stress less and relax more.

Call today to speak with one of our experienced advisors.

Visit us at our new location at 45 Walker Street in Lenox | 413-445-2481 | [rigllc.com](http://rigllc.com)

\*As SEC-registered investment advisers, Renaissance maintains a Fiduciary relationship with all of our clients, so we are bound legally and ethically to put our clients’ interests first. Not all firms are held to this standard.





# Connecting with Community

## Nourish Your Body, Mind, and Soul!

### Meals-on-Wheels & Meals to Go – Advance Reservation Required

Kosher lunch will be prepared on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays. *Meals to go will be ready by noon for pickup at the Knesset Israel kitchen door, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.* All meals-on-wheels will be delivered by Federation volunteers in the early afternoon.

**Please call (413) 442-2200 no later than 9 a.m. to reserve your meal for pickup and to arrange delivery if standing instructions are not in place.** All are welcome to reserve meals for pick-up, although delivery may be limited in certain circumstances.

The menus listed below are planned, but may be modified depending on availability of ingredients. When making a reservation, please inform us if a person in your party has a food allergy. Adults 60 and over: \$3 suggested donation. Adults under 60: \$7 per person.

**Volunteers are Vital!** Volunteer drivers who can deliver meals-on-wheels are always appreciated. Please call Molly Meador at (413) 442-4360, ext. 14. The Federation's kosher hot lunch program is offered in collaboration with Elder Services of Berkshire County.



Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

## What's for Lunch?

Gluten-Free Main Entrée \*\* and Dairy-Free Main Entrée #

*Kosher lunch will be prepared on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.*

### OCTOBER

**Tuesday, 25** ..... Turkey pot pie (gluten free without pastry), white rice, salad, Italian bread, and grapes.

**Thursday, 27** ..... Cheese pierogi, sautéed onions, roasted root vegetables, pumpernickel bread, and apricots.

**Monday, 31** ..... Pumpkin chili with "sausage" \*\*#, brown rice, salad, corn bread, and Mandarin oranges.

### NOVEMBER

**Tuesday, 1** ..... Roasted chicken \*\*#, vegetable soup, noodles with onions, broccoli, pumpernickel bread, and pears.

**Thursday, 3** ..... Fresh fish \*\*, mushroom soup, sweet potato fries, mixed vegetables, multi-grain bread, and cookies.

**Monday, 7** ..... Meat loaf \*\*#, noodle soup, peas and carrots, mashed potatoes, salad, rye bread, and applesauce.

**Tuesday, 8** ..... Chicken with red curry \*\*#, passion fruit juice, white rice, whole wheat bread, and tropical fruit salad.

**Thursday, 10** ..... Eggplant parmesan with ziti, salad, Italian beans, garlic bread, and fruit cocktail.

**Monday, 14** ..... Chicken with sundried tomatoes and artichokes \*\*#, noodles, salad, rye bread, and grapes.

**Tuesday, 15** ..... Hearty vegan lentil stew \*\*#, brown rice, Farmer's loaf, and baked apple.

**Thursday, 17** ..... Roasted turkey \*\*#, squash soup, mashed potatoes and gravy \*\*, roasted Brussels sprouts, salad, Challah, and apple dumpling.

**Monday, 21** ..... Barbecued meatballs \*\*#, chicken soup, rice, mixed vegetables, whole wheat bread, and brownies.

**Tuesday, 22** ..... Chicken tenders #, French fries, peas, salad, oat bread, and pineapple.

**Thursday, 24** ..... Closed for Thanksgiving

**Monday, 28** ..... Greek pastitsio #, Avgolemono soup (lemon and egg), beans with tomato, pita bread, and apricots.

**Tuesday, 29** ..... Poultry piccata \*\*#, rice pilaf, baby carrots, salad, multi-grain bread, and peaches.

### DECEMBER

**Thursday, 1** ..... Macaroni and cheese, stewed tomatoes, salad, white bread, and grapes.

**Monday, 5** ..... Meat loaf \*\*#, mashed potatoes, peas and carrots, salad, whole wheat bread, and applesauce.

**Tuesday, 6** ..... Roasted chicken \*\*#, salad, rice pilaf, mixed vegetables, pumpernickel bread, and Mandarin oranges.

**Thursday, 8** ..... Hot dogs and beans \*\*#, stuffed pepper soup, salad, hot dog roll, and pears.

**Monday, 12** ..... Spaghetti and meat sauce #, noodle soup, green beans, salad, garlic bread, and grapes.

**Tuesday, 13** ..... Chicken and vegetable skillet \*\*# (dark meat only), California blend vegetables, oven roasted potato, rye bread, and apricots.

**Thursday, 15** ..... Pumpkin lasagna roll-ups, salad, broccoli, Italian bread, and cookies.

**Monday, 19** ..... Red lentil and chick pea stew (vegan) \*\*#, brown rice, salad, oat bread, and tropical fruit salad.

**Tuesday, 20** ..... Puerto Rican chicken and rice \*\*# (dark meat only), salad, Mexican corn, crusty white bread, and tea biscuits.

**Thursday, 22** ..... Brisket \*\*#, latkes with applesauce, baby carrots, salad, Challah, and apple dumplings.

**Monday, 26** ..... Closed in observance of Christmas (falls on Sunday)

**Tuesday, 27** ..... Tuna noodle casserole, tomato soup, beets, whole wheat bread, and peaches.

**Thursday, 29** ..... Fresh fish \*\*, vegetable soup, noodle kugel, spinach, salad, Farmer's loaf, and chocolate chip cookies.

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Elder Services Senior Nutrition Program, under which the Federation operates its kosher lunch program, raised the suggested donation to \$3 a meal. **The suggested donation is completely voluntary.** Seniors who cannot pay a voluntary donation will continue to receive a meal, no questions asked. We appreciate your understanding.

## MAZEL TOV!

**Brad and Lauren Sokol** on the birth of their first granddaughter. Proud parents are **Erica Sokol Carroll and Scot Carroll.**

**Howard Cooper** on birth of two grandchildren.

**Eiran and Michele Gazit** on the marriage of their son, **Adam Gazit to Atar Kishon.**

**Rabbi Kaya Stern Kaufman** on the marriage of her daughter **Sophie Shrum to Joe Tracy.**

**Amy Abramovich** on the birth of her grandson, **Zachary Lee Weilburg.** Proud parents are **Emily and Dave Weilburg,** and his great-grandmother is **Marilyn Simons.**

**Arlene D. Schiff** for contributing a case study of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation's LIFE & LEGACY program to the recently published book *Faithful Giving: The Heart of Planned Gifts*, a new interfaith planned giving guide by James W. Murphy, published by Church Publishing Incorporated.

**Elaine and Bernie Roberts** on the birth of their first great-grandchild, **Naomi Harper,** daughter of **Alex and Molly Stein.**

### Knesset Israel 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield

#### ONGOING MINYANS

Saturday, ..... 9:30 a.m.  
Sunday, ..... 8:45 a.m.  
Tuesday, ..... 7 p.m. Zoom only  
Thursday, ..... 7 p.m., Zoom only  
Friday, ..... 5:45 p.m.



#### CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Friday, October 28 ..... 5:33 p.m.  
Friday, November 4 ..... 5:24 p.m.  
Friday, November 11 ..... 4:16 p.m.  
Friday, November 18 ..... 4:10 p.m.  
Friday, November 25 ..... 4:06 p.m.  
Friday, December 2 ..... 4:02 p.m.



**Carrie Lobovits Wright**  
REALTOR®

CURIOUS ABOUT REAL ESTATE  
IN THE BERKSHIRES?

*Let's get in touch!*

CARRIE@THEBERKSHIRES.COM  
413-212-1865

JAN PERRY REALTY + ASSOCIATES, LLC  
431 North Street Pittsfield MA 01201

### Homebound or recovering from an illness or injury?

Let us help you arrange for a kosher lunch to be delivered through our Kosher Meals on Wheels Program. Call (413) 442-2200.



# Your Federation Presents

## Jewish Women's Foundation of the Berkshires Awards \$63,425 in New Grants To Benefit Berkshire Residents



The Jewish Women's Foundation of the Berkshires (JWF) recently announced grant awards totaling \$63,425 for 16 local organizations.

The grants range from \$1,500 to \$5,000 and run for one year. Funded programs fall into three of the Foundation's priority areas:

**Increasing Access to Food, Housing, and Other Essentials for Berkshire Residents:**

Berkshire Bounty, Berkshire Community Diaper Project, Berkshire South Community Center, Greenagers, Roots & Dreams and Mustard Seeds, Roots Rising, South Community Food Pantry, and The Guthrie Center

**Promoting Self-Sufficiency:** Arts in Recovery for Youth, Berkshire Center for Justice, Berkshire Immigrant Center, Community Health Programs, 18 Degrees, and Literacy Network

**Empowering Youth and Young Adults:** Gladys Allen Brigham Community Center/Girls Inc. of the Berkshires, Central Berkshires Habitat for Humanity, and Railroad Street Youth Project

In its 13th year, JWF, under the auspices of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, has granted more than \$450,000 to community organizations. JWF is committed to the Jewish mandate of *Tikkun Olam* – helping to repair the world and making it a better place. JWF carries out its mission by providing funding, volunteers, mentoring and support services to local agencies. JWF has over 180 members who are passionate about giving back to the Berkshire community.

For information about the grants program, please contact Esther Messing, Chair of the Grants Committee at [esthermessing@gmail.com](mailto:esthermessing@gmail.com) or visit [JWFB.org](http://JWFB.org).



Photo Credit: Olivier Fitoussi for the The Jewish Agency for Israel

# \$50 MILLION

Raised and Allocated by The Federation System for Ukraine



Updated on: April 5, 2022

## SUMMER CAMP 2023 FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE



### Now more than ever, our kids need Jewish summer camp!

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is dedicated to making a Jewish summer camp experience affordable and accessible for every child by offering financial assistance.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 16**

Download an application at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org)



Jewish Federation<sup>®</sup>  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

Assistance is made possible by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires with support from the Jewish Women's Foundation and the Arthur and Helen Maislen Camp Fund.

### Interested in Volunteering Locally?

Literacy Network of South Berkshire needs volunteer tutors!

*Our tutors love what they do!*

- Work 1:1 with a local immigrant or US-born adults in learning or improving English language and literacy skills.
- Training and support provided.
- Work remotely or in person.
- Only 1 hour per week.

**Join the community!**

Contact Leigh Doherty  
[ldoherty@litnetsb.org](mailto:ldoherty@litnetsb.org) or 413-243-0471

Supporting the Arts, Culture, Environment, and Social Needs in the Berkshires Since 1984

**STONE HOUSE**  
PROPERTIES

[WWW.STONEHOUSEPROPERTIES.COM](http://WWW.STONEHOUSEPROPERTIES.COM)  
WEST STOCKBRIDGE, MA • CHATHAM, NY • GT. BARRINGTON, MA

**Experience Matters. Trusted Brands.**

**Local Business, Local Focus** since 1928.

[carrhardware.com](http://carrhardware.com)

<b>Lee Hardware</b> 221 Main Street 413.243.0786	<b>Pittsfield</b> 547 North Street 413.443.5611	<b>Lenox</b> 489 Pittsfield Road 413.442.0983	<b>North Adams</b> 179 State Road 413.663.6600	<b>Lee</b> 57 Park Street 413.243.2541	<b>Great Barrington</b> 256 Main Street 413.528.4520
--	---	---	--	--	--

*"We like your smile when we're done."*

**Berkshire ROOFING**  
413-298-1029  
[bgrco.net](http://bgrco.net)  
Mike Linde

**RESIDENTIAL ROOFING SPECIALIST**  
Written Estimates • Fully Insured

**(413) 528-9700**

**Berkshire Radon LLC**

[www.berkshireradon.com](http://www.berkshireradon.com)

**Radon Testing and Mitigation**  
NEHA & NRSB CERTIFIED

- ✓ COMPETITIVE PRICING
- ✓ PROMPT SERVICE
- ✓ FIVE-YEAR WARRANTY

## OBITUARIES

### Howard Kaufman, 96, President and CEO of KB Toys, philanthropist, committed leader and volunteer to both Jewish and Berkshire communities

ISRAEL - Howard Kaufman, formerly of Pittsfield and Lenox, died Thursday, September 1, at home in Israel.

Born in 1926 and raised in the Berkshires, Howard was the son of Joseph and Esther (Gitelman) Kaufman. He was the younger brother to Ralph and Elinor, a close-knit family, and they were raised among a large circle of extended family. He graduated from local schools and Williams College. He interrupted his undergraduate studies for Army service during World War II. He served in the Pacific theater for two years managing radar operations, including during active combat in the Battle of Luzon, and for this, he was the recipient of four medals.

While on summer break from a Ph.D. program, Howard met Nancy Rappaport at the Avaloch Inn of Lenox, owned by Nancy's brother, Skip. Nancy took the train from New York on weekends to help at the Inn. Nancy and Howard married in 1954, and the reception was held at Avaloch. After starting a family, Howard left academia and joined the family business, Kaufman Brothers, Inc. Founded in 1922 by his father Joseph and Uncle Harry, the business began as a wholesale confectionery. By 1945 they had also become a toy wholesaler based on securing a line of toys from Louis Marx and Co., helped along as Howard's brother Ralph married Dorothy Borden, a member of the Marx family.

Howard later developed a retail toy business and strategy. The retail store concept was intermittently experimented with and took form in 1959 when Howard ended up running the store of a former customer out of necessity. Thereafter, Kaufman Brothers exited toy and candy wholesaling to focus on toy retailing. The first purpose-built store was developed in 1963. Slowly and eventually, the retail stores thrived in parallel with the build-out of highways, suburbs, and malls.

Howard became president and CEO, and the company name was changed to Kay-Bee Toy and Hobby Shops, and later on, to KB Toys. Along with a team that included his brother-in-law, Harry (Buddy) Baker, and cousins, the company grew to a retail chain of over 1,300 toy stores, supported by 7,000+ employees, the nation's largest. The shareholders sold the business in 1981 to Melville Corporation, a holding company that included CVS, Marshalls, Thom McAn, and other retail businesses. Howard retired in 1986.

Throughout his life, Howard was a philanthropist and committed volunteer and leader to both the Jewish and Berkshire communities, for which he received numerous awards and much recognition. Within the Berkshire Jewish community, Howard was a member and lay leader of all local synagogues, delivered meals for the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, led the capital campaign to relocate and sponsor Jewish refugees of the former Soviet Union, helped purchase two summer camps for Jewish youth, served on the Sinai Academy Board of Directors, and was a leader of Berkshire County's State of Israel Bond Campaign. He and Nancy presented two Founders Gifts to Hadassah Hospital, where they are recognized on the Mount Scopus campus.

Howard served tirelessly in the greater Berkshire community, including as a volunteer or on the boards of Berkshire Bank and Trust Co., Berkshire Life Ins. Co., Berkshire Medical Center, Berkshire Committee of the Massachusetts Council on the Arts and Humanities, Berkshire Museum, Lenox Library, Berkshire Athenaeum,

Boston Symphony Orchestra (BSO) Tanglewood Overseer, Clark Art Institute, MASS MoCA, and Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic. Together with Nancy, he created and funded many scholarships to enhance opportunities for young adults.

More generally, Howard was active in Williams College alumni affairs, an expert bridge, tennis, and golf player, co-founder of the Monday Morning Mountain Boys Hiking Club, and a generous host to all, including BSO musicians, during their summers in residence.

Howard was a devoted husband and father. He adored spending time with his beloved wife Nancy, and together they raised five children in an active and busy household, providing their children with an everlasting love for family, friendship, travel, music and culture, sports and competition, books, games and hobbies, the environment, community involvement, along with charity and responsibility. His top priorities were his commitment to his family, the State of Israel, the Berkshire and Jewish communities, and religious observance.

Howard had a vivid personality and made each interaction memorable. He was approachable and easy to spot with his dapper style and bow tie. He will be deeply mourned and wonderfully remembered. Nancy predeceased Howard. He is survived by his children; Joseph and Elizabeth, Lauren and Mike, Margo and Rick, Daniel and Pasha, David and Jodi; many grandchildren; great-grandchildren; sister-in-law Ann Rappaport; nieces, nephews, cousins, and friends. He leaves a legacy of generosity and kindness.

### Winifred (Wini) Beverly (Mones) Bell, 94, art coordinator of Pittsfield public schools and The Berkshire Eagle art critic

CLEARWATER, FL - Winifred (Wini) Beverly (Mones) Bell, 94, a retired art educator in the Pittsfield Public Schools who also served as art critic for The Berkshire Eagle for 13 years, died quietly in her sleep on Monday, August 15 at her home.

Mrs. Bell was born in Jackson Heights, Queens, NY, on March 7, 1928, to Mae Zuckerman Mones and Samuel Mones. She attended elementary school, high school, and college, all within walking distance of the family home.

She received a BFA from Queens College of the City University of New York (CUNY) in 1948 and an M.Ed. in art education from New York University in 1971.

She worked as a public assistance caseworker in Columbia County, NY, and later taught Elementary School Art in Dalton, MA, and then the Pittsfield public schools. After rising to the position of Art Supervisor K-6, she took a sabbatical to pursue additional education. After much debate, Wini broke the glass ceiling and was promoted to art coordinator of the Pittsfield public schools K-12. She served in that position until retiring in 1981. Her career as an art educator spanned 30 years and influenced a generation of students.

She was the Eagle's art critic in the 1970s and early 80s, meeting many up-and-coming artists and artists of great renown.

Her marriage to Lee Bell lasted for 66 years until Mr. Bell's death in 2015. They loved to travel the world and also to build homes together. She deadheaded thousands of flowers for her husband and his extensive gardens, and she loved to entertain. She also was a strong health care advocate for her husband and others who suffered from kidney failure. She made a point of researching and following the latest diets and ideas on how to prolong a healthy life while awaiting a transplant.

OBITUARIES,  
continued on page 15



## THE MONTESSORI SCHOOL OF THE BERKSHIRES

*Learning  
what matters.*



Toddler through 8th-grade

BerkshireMontessori.org

## Your Federation Presents

### Newish & Jewish – “A Warm Welcome” to Our Community

By Elisa Schindler Frankel / President, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

Federation hosted its first in a series of “Newish and Jewish” events with a cocktail reception on August 23 at the Bernay Gallery, a fabulous art space in Great Barrington. This well-attended event was a unique opportunity for like-minded individuals to unwind and schmooze, in an intimate and social setting, surrounded by beautiful artwork from the exhibit “Colorplay.” It gave area newcomers the chance to make meaningful connections while celebrating all the enriching programs and events happening in our area.

Special thanks to our co-chairs for this event, Alyson and Richard Slutzky and Amy and Mark Blumkin, and to gallery

owners Paula and Lou Friedman. One of the attendees best summed up the evening: *“My husband and I enjoyed meeting and reconnecting with lots of great people. Moving to the Berkshires during the pandemic was not the ideal time to be a newcomer, but I am excited to be here now. I deeply appreciate the warm welcome into your community.”*

“Newish and Jewish” is a Federation initiative that seeks to bring together those who have recently moved to the Berkshires, moved here during the pandemic, or have transitioned from second- to full-time ownership, to create new community.



There’s never been a better time for a *New Home*

**Sweetwood of Williamstown** is an energetic retirement community nestled in the gorgeous Berkshire Mountains. Our spacious apartments give you easy access to all the amenities of our community - including concierge services for every need, wellness care, exciting activities, and exercise facilities.

- Plenty of room for your favorite furnishings
- Full-sized kitchens, modern fixtures
- Ample space for entertaining
- Private patios - your own slice of paradise
- Apartments available for sale or rent

**413.458.8371**

Sweetwood of Williamstown  
Independent Living Community  
1611 Cold Spring Road, Williamstown, MA 01267

400PF03292214

**SWEETWOOD**  
**OF WILLIAMSTOWN**  
INDEPENDENT LIVING COMMUNITY

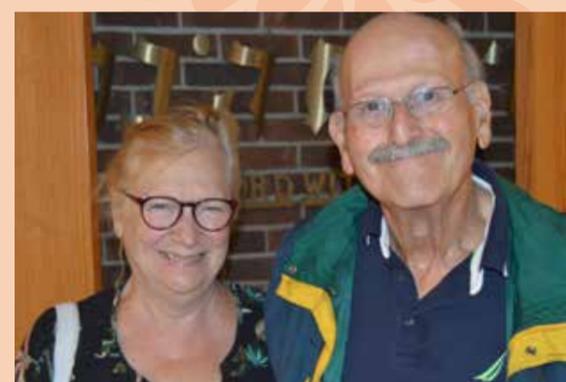


# Your Federation Presents

## Summer Days Drifted Away – But Uh-Oh That Summer Night...

As you read this, it is chilly autumn in the Berkshires – maybe a leaf or two remains on the trees, maybe not. So remember the warmth we generated at Federation’s summer concert, when Rick Recht and The Berkshire Jewish Musicians Collective rocked the house at Kneset Israel and had us all on our feet dancing. It was an uplifting evening of singalongs, testimonials from members of our community, affirmations from our young people, and

positive energy all around. The concert also raised nearly \$6,000 to benefit the ADL’s A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® anti-bias peer training program in Berkshire County schools. Thank you to Kneset Israel for hosting and to everyone who showed up and made this a highlight of summer in the Jewish Berkshires.



# Your Federation Presents



# Your Federation Presents

## Volunteers Are Vital!

***A huge thanks to volunteers who baked, decorated, packed, and delivered this holiday season***

Our community sends a huge thank you to all the volunteers for our very successful Rosh Hashanah gift bag program. Some 250 bags were delivered to seniors at home, in facilities, and in our local hospitals. Kudos to the volunteers who decorated the bags, plus the bakers, name collectors, packers, and delivery folks.

*Yashir Koach* – Thank you to all! You helped us start 5783 on a high note!

*Molly Meador, Coordinator of Volunteers*



PHOTOS BY THEO MEADOR



Jenny (left), with her father, George, and Russhaniya

### A testimonial from Jenny Gitlitz, who helped with the deliveries

*I brought my 92-year old father with me to drop off the challah and apples and honey at Yakov and Russhaniya's place, and it turned out to be the sweetest thing. Russhaniya was beside herself with joy to have an elderly man in the apartment – as both her and Yakov's fathers have passed away – and she kept fussing over him and calling him "dedushka," which means grandfather in Russian. And my dad was equally happy to hear me speaking Russian with them for what he said was the first time in his life. It was a lovely visit.*

## OBITUARIES

### OBITUARIES,

continued from page 10

Mrs. Bell is survived by her daughters, Kathy Bell of Silver Spring, MD, Ivy (Barry) Berman of NYC, and Cindy (David) Bell-Deane of Pittsfield; granddaughters Kendra Bell-Deane of Pittsfield, Maressa Waber of Natick, MA, and Nathalie Berman of NYC. She was blessed with three great-grandchildren with whom she video chatted regularly during these last few years. She is also survived by her dear friend, Diane Carter Lyons, whom she thought of as her fourth daughter, and her children, Rachael Simon Kittle and Elliot Simon.

A brief memorial was held at Knesset Israel on Thursday, August 18. Contributions may be made to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires Older Adults Lunch Program, 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201, or The Center for Arts Education, 299 Broadway, Suite 1300, New York, NY 10007.

### Norman Moskowitz, 94, active volunteer in the community, great pride in family

LENOX - Norman Moskowitz, 94, passed away on Friday, August 5, after a long and productive life. A resident of Pittsfield since 1956, he had resided for the last six years at Kimball Farms in Lenox. He was the son of Sarah and Irving Moskowitz and was predeceased by his wife, Gertrude ("Trudy"), after 67 years of a loving and happy marriage. He was also predeceased by his brothers, Lester and Steven.

Born in Brooklyn, NY in 1928, a proud graduate of Brooklyn Technical High School, Norman earned his bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from City College of New York in 1950 and went on to earn graduate degrees from Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) while working full-time as an engineer. In 1956, Norman began working in the Ordnance Division of General Electric in Pittsfield as a product design manager of weapon systems for the Army and Navy, retiring in 1991. He also taught courses at GE on statistics and engineering and was a volunteer math tutor at Pittsfield High School.

As an active volunteer in the community, he recorded books for the blind and dyslexic for 52 years. He regularly donated blood (over 14 gallons), delivered food for Berkshire Bounty, and staffed the visitor center at Tanglewood. At Knesset Israel, he started the Social Action Committee and a sweat equity housing organization known as MICAH.

Devoted to his hobby of woodworking, he created heirloom furniture that his family cherishes while also contributing his talents to Shakespeare & Company and other organizations. Always eager to learn and with discipline beyond compare, he left behind boxes of "The Great Courses" on every topic imaginable. He learned to play the clarinet in retirement and joined a quartet that hiked before breakfast and practice. He took advantage of the area's arts and performance assets and was an avid skier into his 80s.

Norman took great pride in the family he lovingly raised with his wife Trudy, modeling the values of integrity and social justice through his personal example. He leaves behind his daughter, Linda Noonan and husband Robert of Egremont; son Ira Moskowitz and wife Osnat of Modi'in, Israel; grandchildren Madeline (Benjamin Olson) Noonan; Shira (Roie) Moskowitz Zaifer; Tomer (Adi Bakshi) Moskowitz; Matthew (Elizabeth) Noonan; and Ori Moskowitz. He enjoyed Zooming with and watching videos of his seven great-grandchildren; Hila, Shai and Tamar Zaifer; Tal and Alma Moskowitz; and Max and Jacob Olson.

Norman's family is grateful to the staff at Kimball Farms and especially appreciates the support and companionship of Joseph Voltoline of Home Instead, who Norman truly considered a friend. A private burial was held in Knesset Israel Cemetery in Pittsfield on Sunday, August 7. Donations to honor Norman's memory may be made to Berkshire Bounty, 33 Commonwealth Avenue, Great Barrington, MA 01230, or berkshirebounty.org.

### Carol M. Cohen, 80, well respected, devoted wife, mother, grandmother, sister

PITTSFIELD - Carol M. Cohen, 80, passed away early Saturday, September 10, at Berkshire Medical Center, surrounded by her loved ones. She was the beloved wife of Alan Cohen for 60 years, whom she met at Bryant College.

Born in Providence, RI, daughter of the late Louis and Florence (Glantz) Hazen, she lived in Pittsfield for 60 years. She was a well-respected administrative assistant to the president of Berkshire Community College for 20 years, a job she loved and was devoted to. She was a member of Knesset Israel and its sisterhood.

Carol was the devoted mother of Lisa Kaufman and husband, Alex, of Providence, RI, and Amy Bloom and husband, Steven, of Houston, TX; dear sister of Michael Hazen and his wife, Lois, of Long Island, NY; loving grandmother of Samantha, Maxwell, Adam, Dayna, Brandon, and Sydney.

Graveside services were held Tuesday, September 13, in Lincoln Park Cemetery, Warwick, RI. Donations may be made to the Esther and Samuel Cohen Endowment or the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

### Hilda Banks Shapiro, 95, child prodigy pianist, devoted to her children and the community

GREAT BARRINGTON - Hilda Banks Shapiro, 95, the diminutive, red-sneakered pianist who went from a teenage sensation at Carnegie Hall to a hitchhiking mother of twelve known and beloved throughout South County, died of congestive heart failure on Wednesday, August 17, at her home in Great Barrington. She had unbridled enthusiasm and childlike reverence for the world around her.

Born in Boston and raised in Dorchester and Brookline, Hilda was the daughter of Samuel and Tanya Blostein Banks. A child prodigy, she made her professional debut at Jordan Hall in Boston when she was 16 and performed at Carnegie Hall three years later before leaving for a succession of European concerts. With her customary brio, she then devoted the next 75 years to her children and her community.

Hilda is survived by her children; Andre (Deborah), Mark, Serena (Nechama Katz), Jonathan, Jason, Kari, Claudia, David (Katharyn), Miriam (Francesco Serpico), and Stephanie (Claus Theile). She was predeceased by sons Mitchell and Samuel and Samuel's wife, Jennifer. She also leaves 12 grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, 1 great-great-grandchild, and the last in a long line of pets, cat Pretty Yende.

Hilda's family asks that contributions be made to The Hilda Banks Shapiro Fund, Berkshire Community Action Council, 1532 East Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201. A memorial service will be held at a future date and announced in the pages of her beloved Berkshire Eagle. In the meantime, you'll find her beneath her favorite tree and go, Red Sox!

## Create a Jewish Legacy Campaign

Please remember the Jewish Community in your will.



### ISRAEL TRAVEL & STUDY GRANTS FOR YOUTH

#### The Michael Nathaniel Shute Endowment Fund

provides grants to Berkshire area youth for educational travel or study in Israel.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Awards are made within 45 days of receiving the application. Additional funding is available through the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

#### Download an application at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org)

or pick one up at the Federation's office  
196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA



Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE.  
THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

## Is home really the best decision?

There comes a time when many seniors or their loved ones realize that there is a need for additional daily help. With so many questions and considerations it all can seem overwhelming.

### We're here to help!

We've compiled resources from a variety of experts in the field of senior living to help you navigate the best path forward—check out the comparison lists on our website.



Scan code to learn more

 **GEER VILLAGE**  
The Lodge

[geercares.org/resources](http://geercares.org/resources)

77 - 99 South Canaan Road | North Canaan CT 06018 | [www.geercares.org](http://www.geercares.org) | 860.824.2600



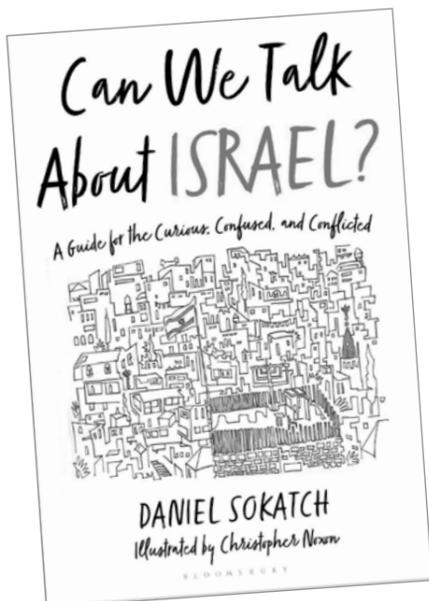
## LOCAL NEWS

### “Can We Talk About Israel?”

**A book discussion sponsored by Hevreh and Temple Anshe Amunim**

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire and Temple Anshe Amunim are sponsoring a lively discussion with author Daniel Sokatch via Zoom on Tuesday, November 15 at 7 p.m.

Sokatch's book, *Can We Talk About Israel?*, dives into why so many people feel so strongly about Israel and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict without actually understanding it very well at all. Why does this issue alone turn some classic Jewish liberals into uber-conservatives? Why do compassionate and judicious intellectuals single Israel out for boycotts, sanc-



tions, and a level of opprobrium they do not apply to the dozens of other state actors out there? Why do Evangelical Christians who have never even met actual Jews, or for whom Jews are basically souls to be saved, feel such fierce loyalty towards Israel? Why does it sometimes seem like Israel is the answer to “what’s wrong with the world” for half of the people in it, and “what’s right with the world” for the other half?

Daniel Sokatch has served as the CEO of the New Israel Fund since 2009. During the past decade of extraordinary challenges, NIF has risen to new heights as the great defender of justice, democracy and equality in Israel.

Rabbi Neil Hirsch said: “It is exciting to be able to welcome Daniel Sokatch to our community. Daniel has proved to be a leading American Jewish voice on Israel, and whose impact on life for Israelis and Palestinians has been substantial.”

Rabbi Liz Hirsch said: “As we prepare for Israel’s 75th birthday, taking the time to read Daniel’s book, to engage in thoughtful study and conversation will deepen our understanding of the Land, People, and State of Israel.”

You can find out more about this event and obtain a link to the program by visiting Hevreh’s blog at [hevreh.org/post/sokatch](http://hevreh.org/post/sokatch).

#### About Daniel Sokatch

Before joining NIF, Daniel served as the executive director of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties. Prior to his tenure at the Federation, he was founding executive director of the Progressive Jewish Alliance (now Bend the Arc). In recognition of his leadership, Daniel has been named four times to The Forward newspaper’s “Forward 50,” an annual list of the fifty leading Jewish decision-makers and opinion-shapers. He has contributed articles to leading newspapers and magazines, including The New York Times, Washington Post, the Forward

and Haaretz. Daniel holds an MA from the Fletcher School at Tufts University, a JD from Boston College Law School, and a BA from Brandeis University.

Sokatch’s book is available for purchase online at [bookshop.org](http://bookshop.org) as well as your local independent bookstore.

For more information please contact Hevreh at (413) 528-6378 or email [info@hevreh.org](mailto:info@hevreh.org) for a link to this program.

### Shabbat with Temple Anshe Amunim

PITTSFIELD – This fall, Temple Anshe Amunim offers different opportunities to celebrate Shabbat.

#### Kabbalat Shabbat

Join Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch at 5:30 p.m. every Friday night for Shabbat services. All are welcome to join in person or via livestream. Please reach out to the Temple office for the link to the livestream.

#### Torah Study

At 9:30 a.m. every Saturday, Rabbi Hirsch leads a Torah study session. All are welcome to join in person or via Zoom. Please reach out to the Temple office for the link to Zoom.

#### TAA Young Families Shabbat

On Friday, November 18 at 5 p.m., TAA invites young families to join them in welcoming Shabbat. Pizza will be served.

Temple Anshe Amunim is a Reform Jewish Congregation that promotes engaging and widespread participation in services, education, and cultural and social action programs. The Temple, located at 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield is an accessible building. For more information, contact the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910, email [templeoffice@ansheamunim.org](mailto:templeoffice@ansheamunim.org) or visit [ansheamunim.org](http://ansheamunim.org).



### Autumn Spirits

**A reading of poems and shorts pieces celebrating the various shades of the season**

In February Congregation Ahavath Sholom presented “Sips and Sonnets,” a reading of poems and sonnets for Valentine’s Day, which raised funds for The People’s Pantry. The evening was warmly received and the congregation was able to donate over \$500 to the Pantry.

On Sunday, October 30 at 4 p.m., CAS will present “Autumn Spirits,” a reading of poems and short pieces celebrating the various shades of the season. Some of the writers featured will be Keats, Oliver, Paley, Poe, Sexton and Shelley.

This event is also planned as a fundraiser for The People’s Pantry. For information please visit Congregation Ahavath Sholom at [ahavathsholom.com](http://ahavathsholom.com). This event will be held via Zoom.

### A New Year in Adult Education at Knesset Israel

**Hebrew, the Psalms, and Project Zug courses on aspects of Jewish thought**

PITTSFIELD – Enriching educational opportunities abound at Knesset Israel this year. In addition to Hebrew language classes, this fall will feature courses for adults on the subjects of “psalmistry,” resilience, and *tzedakah*, offered by gifted educators.

Knesset Israel is at 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.

#### Monday Afternoon Classes with Rabbi Pam Wax

In this transitional year for Knesset Israel, Rabbi Pam Wax has joined the congregation’s professional team to plan summer 2023 and to offer weekly adult education classes on Monday afternoons from 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the KI Library. The first, “Psalmistry: Approaching Psalms with Devotion,” begins on Monday, October 24.

#### Tuesday Hebrew Classes with Rabbi David Weiner

This ongoing class blends Hebrew reading practice, vocabulary, grammar, and deeper discussions of content with the aim of helping participants grow in their understanding of the siddur. These classes will be held on Tuesdays, usually from 10 a.m. to 11:15 a.m., but please check the calendar before attending.

#### Project Zug Classes on Thursdays with Rabbi David Weiner

Traditional Jewish learning combines study in pairs or small groups and larger lecture/discussion. Powered by the Hadar Institute ([hadar.org](http://hadar.org)), Project Zug combines high quality Torah resources, and a guided learning framework that enables Jews to build deep connections to each other and to tradition. This fall, the learning will explore several different themes, with Rabbi Weiner teaching and facilitating classes that draw on the resources available through Project Zug. The classes will be offered using a hybrid model, with the option to join in person or via Zoom. There will be video lectures to watch between classes.

Thursdays in October, November, and December, 10:45 a.m. to noon. In-person at Knesset Israel. Online: Contact KI for registration information. To register for this class, please first sign up for Project Zug by emailing [office@knessetisrael.org](mailto:office@knessetisrael.org).

#### Project Zug First Series, on Resilience –

October 13, 20, 27 & November 3. Educator Rabbi Avi Strausberg, developer of the course, writes: “Throughout the ages, the Jewish People have experienced significant downfalls and periods of great adversity, from the flood that nearly destroyed the world to the destruction of the Temple to the Holocaust, an unprecedented time of darkness and despair. And yet each time, the Jewish People drew on wellsprings of resilience to not only continue on but to continue forward, rebuilding for the next generation. In this four-session course, we’ll look to our own tradition, focusing on narratives from the Torah, as well as the events of Jewish history to mine our texts for wisdom on resilience. What are the different shapes resilience takes and how might we cultivate our own capacity for resilience based on the wisdom of Jewish tradition?”

#### Project Zug Second Series, on Tzedakah: The Jewish Approach to Giving –

November 10 & 17, December 1, 8, 15. Educator Rabbi Elie Kaunfer writes: “Why do you give? How does your Judaism affect your giving habits? This course will explore what Judaism has to say about the need to give charity: Who needs to give? How much should we give, and to whom? We will explore these issues together through traditional sources and modern answers.”

WE'RE LOCAL & they're not

**The Bookloft**

New Location!

63 State Rd. Great Barrington, MA  
(413) 645-3256 [www.thebookloft.com](http://www.thebookloft.com)

**Flynn & Dagnoli Funeral Homes**

Flynn & Dagnoli-Bentivenga 5 Elm St. Pittsfield, MA 01201 (413) 442-1733

Flynn & Dagnoli-Mantagna Central Chapel West Chapel 74 Marshall St. North Adams, MA 01247 (413) 663-6523

Rinaldo Dagnoli Nicholas Flynn Donato Dagnoli

Serving Berkshire County for three generations.

Superior Memorials, dba/

**Ancestry Memorials, Inc.**

234 Wahconah Street  
P.O. Box 1362 • Pittsfield, MA 01202  
**(413) 499-1750**

Monuments, Markers, Plaques, Lettering, Etc

## LOCAL NEWS

### Knesset Israel Pilots Jewish Theological Seminary Initiative in November

#### “Hayyei Sarah: Finding Comfort & Renewal in Jewish Sources,” with Rabbi Naomi Kalish

PITTSFIELD – Knesset Israel welcomes Rabbi Naomi Kalish, director of the Center for Pastoral Education at the Jewish Theological Seminary, to teach the congregation on Friday, November 18 and Saturday, November 19.

This special study opportunity pilots the JTS Pastoral Education Shabbat with “Hayyei Sarah: Finding Comfort and Renewal in Jewish Sources.” Knesset Israel has chosen to build the initiative into a weekend celebrating the ways individuals in our community care for and support each other.

Over the last ten years, Knesset Israel has partnered with the JTS, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation to bring extraordinary Jewish Studies scholars to the Berkshires in July and August. This pilot program with the Center for Pastoral Education represents a broadening of that connection and its extension beyond the summer season.

“Hayyei Sarah: Finding Comfort and Renewal in Jewish Sources” is designed to foster caring connections in communities, using Jewish traditions and texts as sources of consolation and healing. The weekend includes inspiring presentations by Rabbi Kalish on themes related to visiting the sick and building a caring community, musical services, blessings for those who engage in these important mitzvot, and delicious communal meals.

#### About JTS, the Center for Pastoral Education & Rabbi Naomi Kalish



The Jewish Theological Seminary is a preeminent institution of Jewish higher education, training thoughtful, innovative leaders who strengthen communities with a vision of Judaism that is deeply grounded in the Jewish past and thoroughly engaged with contemporary

society. JTS also provides high-caliber lifelong learning and professional development to its alumni, adult learners and Jewish communities throughout North America.

Every day, spiritual leaders are called on to provide comfort, guidance, and support to people in crisis. The Center for Pastoral Education at JTS has set a new standard in preparing them to receive these

calls, through a transformative educational process that is grounded in Jewish tradition, and open and relevant to people of all faiths.

**Rabbi Naomi Kalish** is the Harold and Carole Wolfe Director of the Center for Pastoral Education and assistant professor of Pastoral Education. Prior to coming to JTS, Rabbi Kalish taught clinical pastoral education (CPE) at New York–Presbyterian Hospital (NYP) to students from diverse religious, denominational, national, and cultural backgrounds. Rabbi Kalish has served on the Interprofessional Education Faculty at Columbia University Medical Center, where she has taught a course, “Spirituality and Healthcare,” to students in diverse healthcare educational programs. She has taught chaplaincy and pastoral care courses and programs for the Academy for Jewish Religion, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah, Yeshivat Maharat and JTS.

Rabbi Kalish earned her BA from Tufts University, an MA in Jewish Philosophy and rabbinic ordination from JTS, and a Ph.D. in Education and Jewish Studies at New York University.

#### Schedule and Registration

The schedule for the weekend includes a musical Friday night service, 5:45 p.m., Shabbat dinner (\$20/adult, free/children, reservations required at knesetisrael.org/rsvp by Monday, November 14), and Rabbi Kalish’s presentation; Shabbat morning services at 9:30 a.m. with a D’var Torah by Rabbi Kalish and kiddush lunch to follow.

Community Shabbat dinners at Knesset Israel are supported by a Rekindle Shabbat grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. For more information, contact Knesset Israel at (413) 445-4872 or office@knesetisrael.org. All are welcome.

### Musical Friday Night Services at Knesset Israel

PITTSFIELD – This autumn, join Knesset Israel for musical celebrations of Shabbat.

#### Shirei Shabbat with Community Dinner: Friday, November 4, 5:45 p.m.

Join the Knesset Israel Band for an upbeat musical service including contemporary songs along with traditional Kabbalat Shabbat melodies. Register in advance for the community dinner following the service: knesetisrael.org/rsvp. Dinner is \$20 for adults, Free for under 18.

#### Musical Minyan: Friday, November 18, 5:45 p.m.

The Musical Minyan offers a unique Kabbalat Shabbat experience, with a small acoustic ensemble combining new and traditional melodies to welcome the Sabbath Bride. At times meditative, at times spirited, this musical service is the perfect start to a sweet Shabbat.

Knesset Israel is at 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.

### A Full Moon Hike with CBI

#### Plus ongoing family programs and Shabbat services



NORTH ADAMS / WILLIAMSTOWN - Join Congregation Beth Israel for a guided walk in the woods and trails surrounding the Clark Art Institute as the full moon starts to rise on their “Full Moon Hike,” Sunday, November 6 at 3:30 p.m.

CBI teacher Jane Shiyah will lead participants as they observe nature and talk about the beauty of G-d’s creations in these beautiful

surroundings. Share in the splendor of the moon rising as the sun begins to set. Bring snacks and water for your family and something portable to sit on.

RSVP at cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events/ for this free event, and CBI will send you instructions about where to meet up.

Rain plan: Meet at Congregation Beth Israel, 53 Lois Street, North Adams and hear stories, make collages from natural objects, and talk about nature and its connection to Judaism.

Celebrate Shabbat on Saturday, November 5 at 9:30 a.m., in a joyful, engaging and participatory family service led by Rabbi Jarah Greenfield. All are welcome, and there will be roles for children of all ages.

Funding to help make CBI’s family programs free to all is made possible by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation and Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires.

**Weekly Shabbat services** continue on Saturdays, October 29, November 12, November 26 and December 3 at 9:30 a.m. On Friday, November 18 at 7 p.m., join CBI for a beautiful, musical Kabbalat Shabbat service led by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat.

RSVP for all services at cbiberkshires.com/calendar-services/.

See CBI’s full schedule of young family programs at cbiberkshires.com/upcoming-family-events/. Masks required.

## Schilling TV

SALES - SERVICE - INSTALLATION

- TV, Audio, WiFi
- Outside Digital Antenna
- Wall Mounted TV's
- Cell Antenna's

**413-443-9235**

215 Fourth Street, Pittsfield, MA • Since 1948

We deliver



## BERKSHIRE JEWISH CONGREGATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

#### Welcome to the Jewish Berkshires

Everyone is welcome to attend services and events at any of the organizations listed here.

Please call the organizations directly to confirm service times or to inquire about membership.

Learn more about our Jewish community and find great events on the community calendar at:

**JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG**

#### Berkshire Minyan

Lay-led, Traditional, Egalitarian Minyan  
South County  
berkshireminyan.org

#### Berkshire Hills Hadassah

P.O. Box 187, Pittsfield, MA  
(413) 443-4386,  
Berkshirehillshadassah@gmail.com

#### B'nai B'rith Lodge, No. 326

Chabad of the Berkshires  
450 South St., Pittsfield, MA  
(413) 499-9899,  
jewishberkshires.com

#### Congregation Ahavath Sholom

Reconstructionist  
North St., Great Barrington, MA  
(413) 528-4197, ahavathsholom.com

#### Congregation Beth Israel

Reform  
53 Lois St., North Adams, MA  
(413) 663-5830, cbiberkshires.com

#### Hevreh of Southern Berkshire

Reform  
270 State Rd., Great Barrington, MA  
(413) 528-6378, hevreh.org

#### Israel Philatelist Society

c/o Dr. Ed Helitzer,  
(413) 447-7622

#### Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

196 South St., Pittsfield, MA  
(413) 442-4360, jewishberkshires.org

#### Jewish War Veterans

Commander Robert Waldheim  
(413) 822-4546, sellit4@aol.com

#### Knesset Israel

Conservative  
16 Colt Rd., Pittsfield, MA  
(413) 445-4872, knesetisrael.org

#### Temple Anshe Amunim

Reform  
26 Broad St., Pittsfield, MA  
(413) 442-5910, ansheamunim.org

## LOCAL NEWS

## Registration Now Open for March of the Living 2023

Jewish Massachusetts teens are invited to apply for a scholarship to travel to Poland and Israel with March of the Living (MOTL) to study the history of the Holocaust and examine the roots of prejudice, intolerance, and hatred. The 2023 MOTL trip for high school juniors and seniors, part of the International MOTL, is scheduled for April 16 – 30, 2023.



March of the Living visits concentration camps in Poland before flying to Israel

Registration is now open at [motlnewengland.org](http://motlnewengland.org). The New England Friends of MOTL will provide a \$2,000 scholarship to every accepted participant, and generous scholarships may be available from a variety of organizations and temples. Space is limited, so those interested should register as soon as possible.

March of the Living is a unique educational heritage trip that annually brings thousands of Jewish high schoolers to Poland and Israel. Participants gain a deeper understanding of history and roots of prejudice, and a stronger Jewish identity and bond with Israel. This year, MOTL marks its 35th anniversary – in that time, over 250,000 Jewish teens have participated.

The 2023 trip will mark these milestones:

- 75th anniversary of the State of Israel
- 80th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
- 35th anniversary of the international March of the Living

Irv Kempner of Sharon, MA, a retired business executive, is the New England Friends of MOTL chairman and son of Holocaust survivors. He says, "This intensive two-week experience inspires participants to lead the Jewish community into the future vowing 'Never again,' and to fight anti-Semitism and all forms of prejudice. Enabling teens to participate in MOTL is a proven investment in our future."

The teen trip will coincide with Holocaust Remembrance Day – with visits to Nazi concentration camps and former shtetls in Poland, followed the next week in Israel where participants mark Israel Memorial Day and Israel Independence Day with trips to ancient Jerusalem, modern Tel Aviv and more. Group Leader Aaron Kischel plan to recruit teens from across New England and to raise significant scholarship funds.



For information about MOTL 2023 applications and scholarships, contact Aaron Kischel at [kischel7241@gmail.com](mailto:kischel7241@gmail.com) or by calling (781) 799-4765. To make a tax-deductible donation for trip scholarships, contact Irv Kempner at [IrvKempner@gmail.com](mailto:IrvKempner@gmail.com) or by calling (617) 285-8620. Donations of \$1,000 will be matched dollar for dollar by the Kempner Family Foundation. Tax-deductible donations may be made online: [motlnewengland.org](http://motlnewengland.org).

*Experience the Berkshires' Premier Wine, Spirits, Craft Beer & Cheese Shop*

**SPIRITED**  
wine • food • spirits  
Jim Nejaime, Wine Merchant  
444 Pittsfield Road  
Lenox, MA 01240  
413.448.2274

Visit [SPIRITED-WINES.COM](http://SPIRITED-WINES.COM) for convenient ordering  
Pickup, Delivery & Shipping or come in to our shop!

## NEWS

## Israel Gets Back Looted Coin Created by Jewish Rebels During Revolt Against Roman Empire

By Asaf Elia-Shalev / JTA

A rare silver coin minted by Jewish rebels in defiance of the Roman empire during the Great Revolt rebellion 2,000 years ago was looted from an archaeological site and traded on the black market. Now, after years of work by American and Israeli investigators, the coin is going back to Israel.

The coin first surfaced in 2017 at an auction in Denver with an estimated sale value of \$500,000 to \$1,000,000, but before it could be sold, American law enforcement officials seized it.

In September, the Manhattan District Attorney's Office announced that after a years-long legal process, the coin was handed over to Israeli authorities during a recent repatriation ceremony.

Dating to the year A.D. 69, the coin is a quarter shekel stamped with palm branches, a wreath, and the number four, marking the fourth year of the Great Revolt.

The coin is considered an extremely rare sample from a currency that was in circulation for only a few years while Jews fought against the rule of Rome. In the year after the coin was minted, Roman forces plundered and burned down the Temple Mount. The Jewish rebellion ended in 73 A.D. with the fall of Masada.

"Coins like this were a very in-your-face declaration of independence by the lands of Israel," Ilan Hadad, a numismatics investigator and archaeologist with the Israeli Antiquities Authority, told The New York Times. "They made them by scratching out the images of emperors on Roman silver coins and re-stamping them."

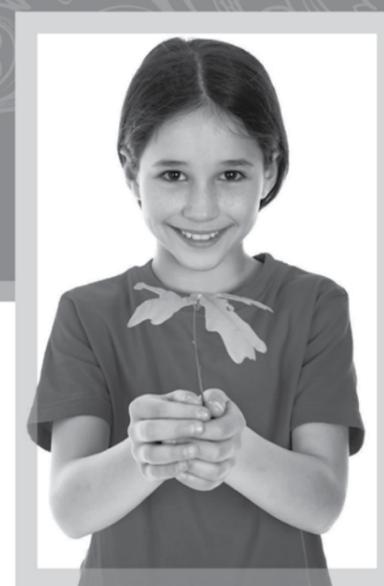
Word of the looting of the coin from a site in the Ella Valley reached the Israel Antiquities Authority in 2002 through informants. Investigators remained on the coin's track for years as it was smuggled abroad. Eventually, it landed with collectors in London who put it up for sale at the auction in Denver, presenting the auction house with false documentation of the item's origin. Officials have not named the collectors.

Thousands of Jewish coins from the Great Revolt are in existence today but there are only three other known quarter shekel pieces, which is what made this case of looting especially significant.

"We are honored to return the Quarter Shekel, an exceedingly rare coin that has immense cultural value," Manhattan District Attorney Alvin Bragg said in a written statement.

You can now read and share *Berkshire Jewish Voice* feature stories online! Visit [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) and select **Community & Events > Berkshire Jewish Voice** for links to highlights of current and past issues.

THE FUTURE OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IS IN YOUR HANDS.



HOW WILL YOU ENSURE THE JEWISH FUTURE?

To create your Jewish legacy contact: Dara Kaufman  
[dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org), (413) 442-4360, ext. 12



**BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES**

**Injustice, Injustice Shall You Pursue**

**A case for making football unfair and entertaining again**

By Albert Stern / Special to the BJV

In the early days of football, H-shaped goalposts were planted at the front of the end zone, fixed two-branched obstacles within the field of play. There they remained until 1927, when overseers of the National Football League had a notion – move the goalposts outside the end zone, where fewer players would slam into them and the field would be opened up for more of those “touchdowns” that the fans seemed to like.

In 1933, however, NFL goalposts were for some mysterious reason moved back to the goal line, once again in the field of play, where they remained until 1974 as hazards to the players and an impediment to scoring. To gauge how much human progress can be made in roughly that amount of time, consider that in 1926, Robert Goddard launched the first liquid-fueled rocket. In 1969 – five years sooner than it took the NFL to realize that it was better for goalposts to be at the back of the end zone – human beings walked on the Moon.



Football as it was, when the really big hits were delivered by the goalposts

“If stupidity got us into this mess,” Will Rogers once wondered, “then why can’t it get us out?” The NFL is perhaps the only human enterprise to which that proposition does not apply. Like their predecessors, the people who run the NFL today aren’t exactly rocket scientists, yet the league has remained a juggernaut of revenues and ratings despite some seriously disconcerting attendant storylines, among them debilitating injuries and thuggish behavior on the field and off. Add national anthem protests to the mix, and television ratings dropped precipitously for several years, although they have rebounded.



Clemenza

this is every single football game, mind you, each one of them lasting as long as *Lawrence of Arabia*.

How to make this feast for the eyes more gripping? In 1999, the NFL’s mandarins implemented instant replay, thereby displaying the same instinct for turgidity their predecessors showed in restoring the goalposts to the front of the end zone in 1933. Ever since replay, anytime something the slightest bit compellingly contestable occurs on the field, the momentum of the game comes to a standstill while the cameras focus on a middle-aged man watching television in a voting booth to ascertain what only the very dimmest among us have not already figured out from the replays we’ve been shown.

Recognizing that stoppages of play occupy the screen so often, Microsoft has seen the advertising value of plastering its Surface product logo on the replay booths to engage the captive audience. All this excitement culminates when the replay ref finally announces his decision to the crowd, eliciting a cheer from the fans that has to be the most joyless sound in sports.

In recent years, I’ve given up watching. I realized that my allegiance to football was merely habitual, that I had stopped caring about who might win or lose while hoping, usually in vain, that the game might be entertaining. Unfortunately, the experience of waiting for something fun to happen during a live NFL football game feels like nothing so much as waiting for your number to be called at the Department of Motor Vehicles, if you were also allowed to drink beer.



Yaaaaaaaaaaaay!

Why wouldn’t it be better to address the excitement deficit by going back to the old ways, getting rid of the replay officials? Let the refs on the field make a call that we all have to live with, right or wrong. Excitement is what football sells. Injustice is exciting – bureaucracy is not.

Look, I know how great football can be – I was in the Orange Bowl for the epic Miami Dolphins/San Diego Chargers playoff game in 1982, which was one of the greatest of all time. Yet my second favorite football memory is of injustice occurring in the days before instant replay, when the ruling on the field always stood. It was the 1978 playoff game between the Oakland Raiders and Denver Broncos, its turning point succinctly described by sportswriter Bill Williamson:

*In the AFC championship game on Jan. 1, 1978, [Rob] Lytle, a tough running back with a nose for the end zone, fumbled at the 2 and Denver scored on the drive, giving Denver a 14-3 lead in the third quarter.*

*The problem was that television replays (these were the days long before NFL challenges) showed that Oakland safety Jack Tatum forced a fumble in a mid-air collision before Lytle scored. Oakland nose tackle Mike McCoy scooped up the ball and was bringing the ball back for an easy score.*

*But it didn’t count. Lytle’s touchdown did and Denver won 20-17, advancing to the Super Bowl against Dallas.*

I was still a teenager, watching the game at my family’s home in Miami Beach. It was winter, and all the neighbors’ windows were open. Behind us lived the Goodmans, whose patriarch, Harold, was a lout – a coarse, contrarian pain in the tuchis and a passionate fan of the Oakland Raiders. Today, Raiders home games seem like nothing so much as Halloween at the state penitentiary, but back in the 70s, the team had more of a Brown Shirt appeal – a thin veneer of discipline, a thick threat of spontaneous thuggery. Furthermore, Goodman was also quite vocal about how little he cared for our beloved hometown Miami Dolphins, whose fortunes had fallen after losing several Super Bowl stars (among them my favorite player of all time, Larry Csonka) to the asinine upstart World Football League. This rankled.

When the football was jarred from Broncos running back Rob Lytle’s grip during that championship game, I remember hearing a mounting cry from over the hedges. Goodman was screaming: “Fumble! Yes! YES! Fummmm-BLE!!, FUMMMMMMBL...wuhhhh? What? What? WHAAAAAAAAAAT!”

A few seconds of silence passed as Goodman took in the momentousness of what had just happened to his team, and then: “F%^&\*#@^ \* &^\*^\$#^%! F@&(&\* #@\$#%!!!! NO! YOU CAN’T! YOU CAN’T DO THIS! You...can’t...mnnn....gmm...fnnf....nnnnnn....

“NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!!!!!!”



Rob Lytle’s %^&\*#@^ \* %ing non-fumble

It was the most satisfying *schadenfreude* I have ever experienced, because Goodman’s anguish added not a droplet of genuine pain to the Seven Seas of human wretchedness. Had Goodman’s goldfish died, I would have been able to summon a modicum of compassion for him, but not in this case. In a manner that did not violate my core humanitarian principles, I was able to enjoy utterly another person’s abject misery, and think: “[Expletive] you, Goodman, you and your [expletive] Oakland Raiders.”

*It was the most satisfying schadenfreude I have ever experienced, because Goodman’s anguish added not a droplet of genuine pain to the Seven Seas of human wretchedness.*

The supreme pleasure of such moments is precisely what is lost in the effort to make football more “fair.” As do films, plays, and literature, sporting events offer an arena in which we can choose a hero and be entertained, at no personal cost, by his successes, defeats, and even the injustices that occur. By trying to make sports fair by eliminating human error – at the price of imposing boredom upon us – the powers that be have acted in the spirit of Nahum Tate, a 17th-century writer whose claim to fame was rewriting Shakespeare’s *King Lear* so that it ends happily. We recognize Tate’s impulse as misguided – why not instant replay?

So, as we find ourselves in the midst of another football season, perhaps consider the entertainment value of meaningless heartfelt outrage – both your own and others’ – as opposed to the egalitarian bureaucratic soul suck of waiting around while doughy men try to get things right. Then, I’m convinced, injustice, injustice shall you pursue.

## BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

## “Excuse me, but are you Albert by any chance?”

### A surprising encounter in ten parts

By Ruth Kaplan / Special to the BJV

#### Part One

In August, my husband Toby and I traveled to Lenox for the glorious experience of hearing conductor Michael Tilson Thomas and the Tanglewood Festival Chorus performing Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Life doesn't get much better than that. Our elder daughter had just gotten married the week before, so we needed a respite after spending much of the summer in semi-hibernation due to pre-wedding Covid concerns. It was a joy to travel with dear friends to the Berkshires, even for a short stay.

A few weeks earlier, I had the opportunity to speak with *Berkshire Jewish Voice* editor Albert Stern to pick his brain about the universe of Jewish publishing. I had come to know Albert in my past role as Director of Community Relations at the Israeli Consulate in Boston. I have also published dozens of personal essays and articles, primarily in the online magazine *JewishBoston*, two of which (stories about Team Israel in the 2021 Summer Olympics and my new grandson's unconventional bris) Albert reprinted in the BJV.

I told Albert I might be in Lenox in August and he kindly invited me to meet for coffee, schedule permitting.

#### Part Two

Although my husband and I only planned a two-day stay in Lenox, I really did want to meet Albert, so I reached out to set up a tentative meeting. As I'm sure you can appreciate, when on vacation – even a short one – stuff happens. Our meeting place was set: Lenox Coffee. But the precise time was a little unsettled. Albert asked me to text him in advance. As it happened I only had one “Albert” in my contacts, which I naturally assumed to be Albert Stern. I texted him my ETA, only to learn subsequently that I had texted the wrong Albert!

#### Part Three

My husband and I approached Lenox Coffee by car and passed a table occupied by a man sitting alone. “That must be Albert,” I said. “Wow, he looks really different from what I imagined!”

“Isn't that always the case?” my husband commented. So we approached the man and I asked if he was Albert. “No, sorry,” he replied. So I was right, after all. He didn't look like the real Albert!

A few minutes went by and a slightly older gentleman got out of his car. He was wearing a t-shirt with the logo: “PBS Nerd.” Obviously, this had to be Albert the journalist.

So I strode up to him and said (with confidence), “Excuse me, but are you, Albert, by any chance?”

To my surprise, he said he was sorry, but he wasn't Albert. At this point, I decided I was through with approaching unidentified men and would just wait patiently. Within a minute or two I received a phone call from the real Albert apologizing that he had to attend to an urgent matter and that, not having received a text from me (remember, I wrote to the wrong Albert?), he was uncertain as to whether our appointment was still happening.

#### Part Four

Naturally, I was disappointed, but *c'est la vie*. These things happen. I asked my husband if he'd get me an iced coffee so we could just hang out for a bit. Just as he went inside the cafe, along came the “PBS Nerd” gentleman holding a cup of coffee and a scone. And this is when my luck changed big time!

He turned to me and inquired, “So did Albert show up yet?” I responded that unfortunately, Albert was not able to make it after all, to which he replied, “*Baruch HaShem*.” Now when you think about it, that expression (which means “praised be God”) didn't exactly make sense under the circumstances, but no matter. Why did he say “*Baruch HaShem*” to me? Am I so obviously Jewish?

I was taken aback – in a good way – and asked him how he knew Hebrew. He introduced himself as Steve Kerner, owner of a home in Stockbridge. He said that he was self-taught in biblical Hebrew and that he could recite the whole first paragraph of Genesis 1:1 in Hebrew, to which I replied: “So can I!” I learned the paragraph in Hebrew school. We proceeded to declaim that paragraph in Hebrew in unison describing the first day of creation!

When Toby emerged with my coffee moments later, I was excited to share with him the amazing fact that Steve and I had just recited the first paragraph of Genesis together in Hebrew, at which point Toby invited him to have a seat and join us.

#### Part Five

Steve shared his amazing life story – or should I say stories. He served in the Peace Corps post-college, traveled extensively in South America, and is fluent in Spanish. In fact, several years ago his late wife encouraged him to polish his underused Spanish and he became proficient as a Spanish writer and teacher. He is adept at languages and also speaks some Hebrew and French. When I inquired as to whether he'd ever been to Israel, he was sorry to report he had not. When I told him “that was not okay,” he agreed and sought my advice on the best way for him to go.

#### Part Six

So if it was the “PBS Nerd” t-shirt that hinted at his possibly being Albert, I had also noticed his baseball cap, which was labeled “Via.” Now those letters could have stood for anything, but I wondered whether it represented the Israeli-founded car sharing service in New York City. It did. Toby and I knew the general manager of Via's New York office, Omer Granot, and, to our astonishment, Steve knew him, too. I first met Omer about eight years ago when he was an MBA candidate at the MIT Sloan School. A friend of mine and I “adopted” him at the request of his Israeli brother, who we met the prior spring as part of an IDF military mission. Omer became our liaison to the whole cohort of MIT Sloan Israelis and thus we began our volunteer hosting program



“PBS Nerd” Steven Kerner and Ruth Kaplan in Lenox (sans Albert)

“Benenu” which continues to this day. The point is, I know Omer (and his wife and family) well. But how had Steve met Omer?

#### Part Seven

Steve had been very devoted to his late wife, a victim of breast cancer who died six years ago. In her final bout with the disease, she spent over three months at Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York. Steve was by her side every day, commuting from his home. He found it to be financially burdensome to take taxis back and forth, but taking the city bus was too slow and tiring. Someone told him about Via, a shared taxi service very similar to the Israeli “*sherut*” concept. The beauty of Via was you never paid more than \$5 per ride. Steve found the service to be totally reliable and pleasant, and he even managed to practice his Spanish with their friendly drivers, who usually lent a sympathetic ear to his challenging 10-hour daily hospital visits. In this very dark period of his life, the Via service helped Steve immensely.

Less than a month after Steve lost his wife, he received an email from Via asking loyal customers to share any engaging stories regarding their Via use. For example, some riders had found soulmates, while others had secured jobs. At the time, Steve was sleeping a lot and barely speaking with anyone, still trying to cope with his profound loss. Because Via occupied such a special place in his heart, he roused himself and replied to the email, submitting his story as to how comforting Via had been to him during his wife's terminal illness.

The next day, Steve received another email from Via thanking him for his story and expressing sincere condolences over the loss of his wife. The company also asked him for his home address, as they said they had something they wanted to ship him to express their sympathy and gratitude. On the following day, his doorbell rang and Steve was met with an immense bouquet of flowers (and a Via hat and two t-shirts), along with a huge condolence card signed by all twenty Via staff members. He was moved to tears.

#### Part Eight

About sixteen months after the flower delivery, Steve found himself in the front seat of a Via car again. In the back seat sat an Israeli couple conversing in Hebrew. Steve chatted and found out that the man worked for Via. Steve recounted the story of the condolence gestures, at which point the Israeli man proclaimed: “I'm Omer. I am the general manager of Via and was the first one to read the email about your wife.” Omer added that each time the company had off-site meetings, he started by reading Steve's email and saying to staff: “This is why we are in business!”

#### Part Nine

This tale should have ended in part eight, but there's just a bit more than the coincidence of Steve's meeting Omer and his wife in a Via ride share. As it happens, Memorial Sloan Kettering Hospital solicits stories each year from loved ones of patients and stages the best ones at an annual gathering of about six hundred people. So Steve wrote up his story and submitted it. Not surprisingly, it was one of the winning entries. As a result, his inspiring narrative was one of several performed by Broadway(!) actors at this annual gathering. You can find it online at [https://youtu.be/\\_9qNflsIUkk](https://youtu.be/_9qNflsIUkk)

#### Part Ten

Following our magical encounter with Steve, I reconnected with Omer Granot, who is now back in Israel. Of course, he remembered Steve, who he only actually met that one time in the Via car! I also wrote Albert to express my disappointment that we were unable to meet. I did also note that as a result, my husband and I met a very special Jewish man from Lenox with a remarkable story. Albert then asked me if I had met Michael. “Who is Michael?” I asked.

So perhaps there's more for another adventure in Lenox. I still hope to meet Albert and am fairly certain it will happen one day.

**Ruth Kaplan** is the past director of community relations at the Consulate General of Israel to New England. She is the former director of the CJP Boston-Haifa Connection and supervisor of the young Israeli ambassadors' program called “Shinshinim.” A nearly lifelong resident of Brookline, Ruth has had careers in law and public education advocacy and is passionate about creating people-to-people connections among Israelis and Americans.

New Home? Second Home?  
Retirement Home?  
Let me show you...  
**The Berkshires**  
Barbara K. Greenfeld  
ABR, C-CRE, CRS, GREEN, RSPS, SRES  
Broker Associate • Lic. in MA  
413-441-5986  
BarbeG333@aol.com  
Roberts & Associates  
Realty, inc.

  
**Concepts of Art**  
65 Church Street  
Lenox, MA 01240  
(413) 637-4845  
[www.conceptsofart.com](http://www.conceptsofart.com)  
**Free Pack Of Shabbat Candles**  
With every purchase of \$100 or more

## BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

### Jewish Taste

#### In A Mess. Of Pottage, That Is.

By Carol Goodman Kaufman



The Torah portion Toldot that we read on the Shabbat of November 26 opens with the fertility struggles of Isaac and Rebecca, and Rebecca's ultimate pregnancy with twins, Esau and Jacob. As the narrative progresses, we read that one day, the now-adult Esau comes home tired and hungry after hunting in the fields. He finds his brother Jacob preparing a lentil stew and pleads with him, "Give me some of that red stew because I am famished." Jacob responds by demanding that Esau sell his birthright. Without blinking, Esau agrees, saying, "Here I am going to die, so why do I need the birthright?" He consumes the stew. But when Jacob later receives the birth-

right blessing from Isaac, Esau becomes furious.

The birthright was of great importance to Jacob because he knew that although both sons would receive some of Isaac's property upon his death, only the firstborn son, possessor of the birthright, would both get a double portion of property and become the leader of the family. Jacob could see the future and he wanted to mold it to his desires, whereas Esau could only see as far as his immediate hunger.

Then we come to the lentil stew itself. Why was it so important to the story that the *parasha* even mentions it? As today, it was customary in biblical times to provide round foods to mourners, in acknowledgement of the circular nature of life. The rabbis explain that Isaac was in mourning over the death of his own father, Abraham. Lentils fit the bill for a bereavement menu.



Esau selling his birthright to Jacob for a mess of lentil pottage – drawing by Rembrandt ca. 1640 (British Museum)

But if Isaac knew that Jacob was already preparing a meal for him, why then did he ask Esau to go out to kill a deer? Did he intend that the venison stew Esau prepared would be a celebratory meal? Perhaps a fitting dish on the occasion of bestowing the birthright onto his favored, first-born son?

Now, the Torah tells us that Isaac was blind, but were his tastebuds also defunct? I ask because those of us who cook know that although we can doctor up ground turkey all we want, it will never taste like ground beef. So, when at his mother Rebecca's direction, Jacob dressed in animal skins and brought goat stew to his father, how could Isaac not know the difference between the venison and goat stews?

I digress. Back to the lentil. First domesticated in the Fertile Crescent, people have enjoyed lentils for thousands of years. In fact, archaeologists have found evidence of the legume as far back as 11,000 BCE in various spots in the Middle East, from Syria to Jordan and beyond. While historians claim that the Greeks looked at lentils as fit only for the poor, Egyptians liked them so much that they even buried some in the tombs with their dead royalty. A fresco in one tomb at Thebes from around 2400 BCE, for example, depicts the cooking of lentil soup.

From the Middle East, lentils spread throughout Europe. They arrived in the Americas in the early 16th century, courtesy of Spanish and Portuguese explorers, but didn't become popular until World War II, when their protein was valued as an alternative to meat.

Lentils come in four major color types, plus other "specialty" types. But whether brown, green, red, yellow, or black, they remain a staple in Middle Eastern and Indian diets today, and because they are high in protein, B vitamins, magnesium, iron and zinc, they are also a popular ingredient in vegetarian cooking.



Lentil soup

#### A Mess of Pottage: Moroccan Harira Soup

Serves 12

Harira is a hearty, protein-rich soup that acts more like a stew. It will warm you up on a chilly day. And because red lentils are a major ingredient in the recipe, it's also a fitting tribute to the week's Torah portion that occurs two days after Thanksgiving, making it a welcome change from turkey leftovers.

By the way, it's so delicious that recent dinner guests asked for seconds.

<b>Ingredients:</b>	1 quart pareve chicken broth (or the real thing if you prefer)
3 tablespoons olive oil	2 cups water
1 large onion, chopped	1 cup red lentils
2 garlic cloves, minced	1 large carrot, peeled and diced
1 tablespoon tomato paste	1½ tablespoons fresh lemon juice, or to taste
1 teaspoon ground cumin	2 teaspoons dried cilantro*
¼ teaspoon kosher salt	
¼ teaspoon ground black pepper	
⅛ teaspoon cayenne, or less if you don't like your food spicy	

#### Directions:

In a large pot, heat 3 tablespoons oil over high heat until hot and shimmering.

Add onion and garlic, and sauté until golden, about 4 minutes.

Stir in tomato paste, cumin, salt, black pepper and cayenne, and sauté for 2 minutes longer.

Add broth, 2 cups water, lentils and carrot. Bring to a simmer, then partially cover pot and turn heat to medium-low. Simmer until lentils are soft, about 30 minutes.

Taste and add salt if necessary.

Stir in lemon juice and cilantro.

Enjoy!

*\*If you like this fresh herb (I'm one of those for whom it tastes like soap), then substitute 3 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro for the dried.*

**Carol Goodman Kaufman** has just published the second picture book in what is planned as a series about nature for young children. Written under the name *Carolinda Goodman*, *Pirate Ships and Shooting Stars* is written in rhyme, and its lively stanzas encourage young children to use their imaginations when looking up at the sky. From rainbows to constellations to pictures in the clouds, Kaufman believes there is much to see if only they lift their eyes.

In addition to her work for children, Kaufman also writes under her "real" name about food history (including for the *Berkshire Jewish Voice*), and her first novel, a murder mystery, will drop in 2023.

DONATE. ✪ VOLUNTEER. ✪ MAKE A DIFFERENCE.



**SHIRA NICHAMAN**  
Daily Money Manager in the Berkshires  
Your Financial Advocate & CFO

Serving Seniors and Busy Professionals  
BILL PAYMENT, EXPENSE TRACKING AND FINANCIAL  
REPORTING, TAX ORGANIZER, INSURANCE CLAIMS  
MANAGEMENT, FRAUD REVIEW

shira@everydaymm.com • 646-872-9842  
www.EverydayMoneyManagement.com



Making Your Personal  
Finances Easy and Secure!

**Berkshires Home Inspections**  
Residential and Commercial Inspections  
**Dan Meyers**

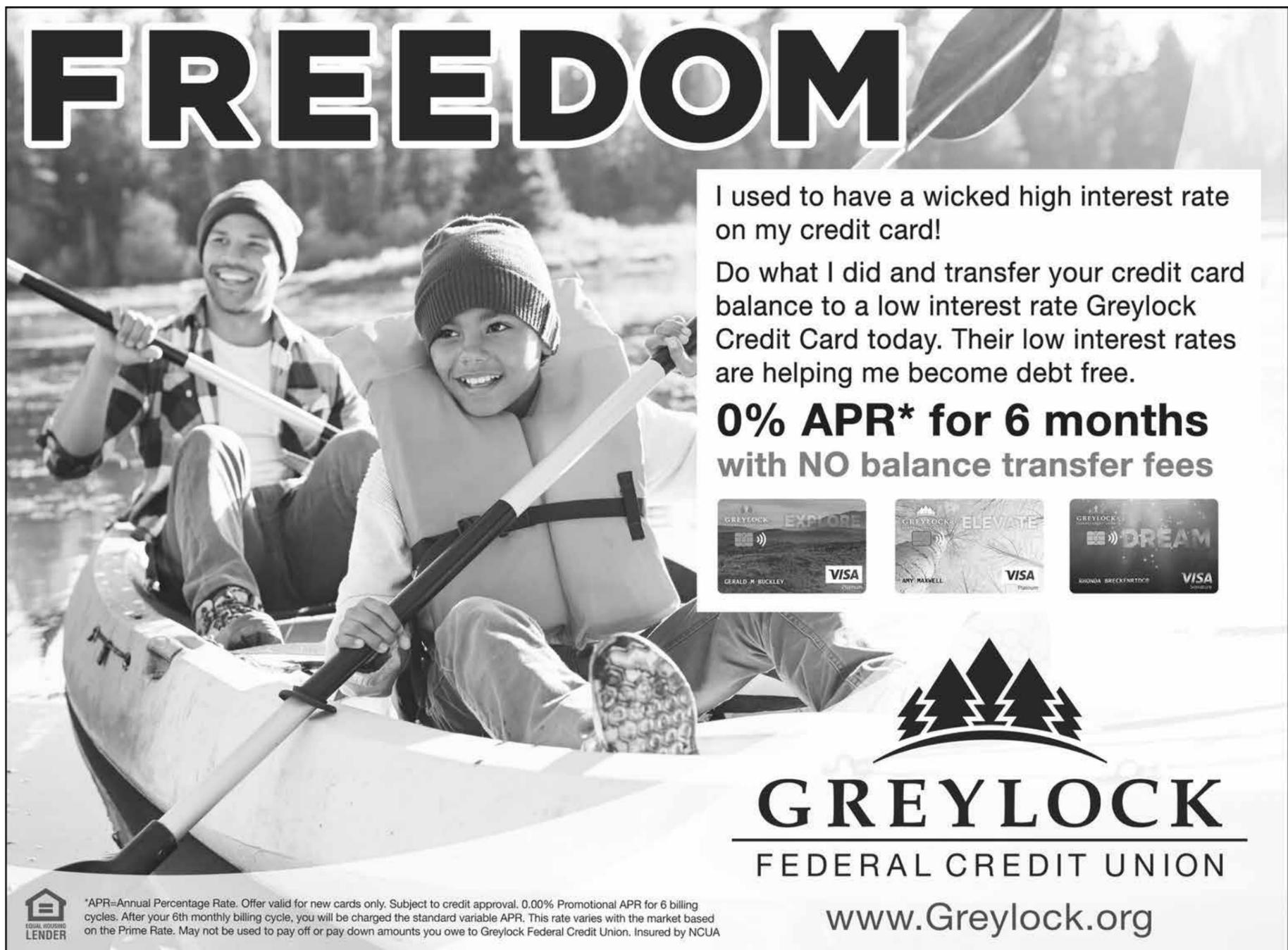
- 20 Years Experience
- Engineering Degree
- Homes of all types and ages
- ASHI Certified
- MA Lic. 1132

Call 413-464-9833

berkshireshomeinspections@gmail.com

www.berkshireshomeinspections.com





# FREEDOM

I used to have a wicked high interest rate on my credit card!

Do what I did and transfer your credit card balance to a low interest rate Greylock Credit Card today. Their low interest rates are helping me become debt free.

**0% APR\* for 6 months with NO balance transfer fees**




**GREYLOCK**  
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

[www.Greylock.org](http://www.Greylock.org)

\*APR=Annual Percentage Rate. Offer valid for new cards only. Subject to credit approval. 0.00% Promotional APR for 6 billing cycles. After your 6th monthly billing cycle, you will be charged the standard variable APR. This rate varies with the market based on the Prime Rate. May not be used to pay off or pay down amounts you owe to Greylock Federal Credit Union. Insured by NCUA



## As my parents planted for me before I was born, so do I plant for those who come after me.

– Talmud

Thank you to these individuals who through their gift to the Legacy Circle will ensure that the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires thrives long into the future. May your name be a Blessing, and may the example you set inspire others to create their own Jewish Legacy.

Anonymous (10)	Monroe England,* <i>in memory of Monroe B. &amp; Isabel England</i>	Dara Kaufman	Stella Schechter*	Henry* & Beate* Voremborg
Ed Abrahams	Dr. Armand V. Feigenbaum*	Howard* & Nancy* Kaufman	Arlene D. Schiff	Alexandra Warshaw
Norman Avnet*	Dr. Donald S. Feigenbaum*	Lawrence Klein	Gary Schiff	Florence Wineberg*
Barbara Bashevkin	Steven Feiner	Sarah Klein	Stephen & Deborah Schreier	Rabbi Deborah Zecher & Rabbi Dennis Ross
Robert Bashevkin*	Diana & Stanley Feld	Arthur Kriger*	Ellen Schwaizberg*	<i>*Of blessed memory</i>
Linda J. L. Becker	Lynn & William* Foggle	Fred & Brenda Landes	Martin Silver	
Robert Berend	Elaine Friedman	Beth Laster-Nathan	Sylvia Silverberg, <i>in memory of Jerome Silverberg</i>	
Shelley Berend	Eiran Gazit	Andrew S. Levine*	Richard A. Simons & Marcie Greenfield Simons	
Helene Berke	Jeffrey Goldwasser & Jonquil Wolfson	Toby H. Levine	Mark & Elisa Snowise	
Lawrence Berke	Jordan & Laura Green	Erna Lindner-Gilbert*	Harold Sparr*	
Lee & Sydelle Blatt	Harold Grinspoon	Amy Lindner-Lesser	Rita and Sol Toscher Memorial Fund	
Betty Braun*	Ellen Heffan	Allan and Nan Lipton	Lisa Fletcher-Udel	
Cipora Brown	Ed Jaffe*	Helen Maislen*	Edward Udel	
Barbara Cohen	Phil* and Rhoda* Kaminstein	Ellen Masters	Michael & Joan Ury	
Mark Cohen*	Elihu Katzman	Stuart Masters	Mark & Judy Usow	
Mimi Cohen	Marilyn Katzman	Jeffrey May* & Kara Thornton		
C. Jeffrey & Judith Cook		Estelle Miller		
Gerry & Lynn Denmark		Robert Newman*		
Jonathan & Lara Denmark		Wendy Robbins		
Sheila K. Donath		Ken* & Fran* Rubenstein		
Melva Eidelberg				



Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

## CULTURE &amp; ARTS

## Roberta Silman's New Novel *Summer Lightning* – A Sweeping Saga of a Jewish Family Navigating Turbulent 20th Century America



Roberta Silman

the turbulent history of 20th-century America. Silman incorporates historical events and personalities into her intergenerational narrative, which unfolds in the Manhattan of Jewish immigrant strivers, bourgeois Brooklyn and Long Island, the frenetic mid-century art scene of Greenwich Village, and at a key protest of the 1960s Civil Rights movement in St. Augustine, Florida. Parts of the book are set in the Berkshires, as well.

In September, the BJV caught up with the author, who resides in Great Barrington. She talked about some of the themes of *Summer Lightning* and about writing historical fiction through the lens of family and lived experiences. Our interview has been edited for length and clarity.

### BJV Interview: Roberta Silman

**Summer Lightning is a sweeping narrative that weaves several storylines together over many decades. How long did you work on it?**

Many years. At some point, we all want to write about our childhood, and that's how it started out. Some say that people write for revenge or desperation, but I clearly don't. Some people will recognize my parents in two characters, Belle and Isaac, and I felt that the story of the values that they had given my sisters and me was important. As I got older, I realized that when you're a kid, you think everybody's house is like yours. And then you realize that there were all kinds of things happening in some houses that you had no clue about and that not everybody's house was based on a certain kind of egalitarian values. We had a black maid [like the family in the book] and she was treated with great respect and had a place in our lives. That was part of what I wanted to write about. But I think that there was a part of me, especially in these last seven years (which have not been easy for me), that was sick of reading about all these dysfunctional families that had even greater secrets than I had written about in *Secrets and Shadows* – a lot of sexual aberrations, all kinds of craziness. I thought maybe it would be nice to write about people who are near-normal and have ideals.

**Historical figures have important roles in the book. The first I want to ask you about is Charles Lindbergh – Belle and Isaac meet as he takes off on his historic flight, and then he reappears at various points in the book as his life and career take many dark turns. What does he represent to you within the context of the novel?**

I had a connection to the Lindbergh family because when I worked at *The Saturday Review* in the late 1950s, Anne Lindbergh published a book of poems, which were terrible, and [poetry editor] John Ciardi simply said, "These are terrible poems, and that's that." And he was right. [Editor's Note: Ciardi caused a kerfuffle with his scathing 1957 review of Anne Morrow Lindbergh's volume of verse *The Unicorn and Other Poems*, which included this line: "I am compelled to believe that Mrs. Lindbergh has written an offensively bad book – inept, jingling, slovenly, illiterate even, and puffed up with the foolish afflatus of a stereotyped high-seriousness, that species of aesthetic and human failure that will accept any shriek as a true high-C."] People went crazy and wrote letters defending Anne Lindbergh. All this happened when I was a young secretary and then an assistant to an editor at the magazine. So I had an interest in the Lindbergh family



Charles Lindbergh and the Spirit of St. Louis

*One of the things that have always fascinated me is that miraculous spark that erupts between two people. I think we've all felt it. Sometimes we act on it or even get married or have a love affair, but it's a wonderfully intangible thing that happens between two people.*

from when I was young, and I read her book, *The Wave of the Future*, as a child because my father was so outraged by it. [Editor's Note: The 1940 book was characterized in 2012 by The New York Times as "a provocative apologia for fascism."] I guess Lindbergh represented the American Dream gone wrong. He was a

self-made man who accomplished that transatlantic flight and then became so conservative and so isolationist, so against all the principles that were held dear in my family.

But I think that the first scene of the characters meeting was an interesting way to begin this story. One of the things that have always fascinated me is that miraculous spark that erupts between two people. I think we've all felt it. Sometimes we act on it or even get married or have a love affair, but it's a wonderfully intangible thing that happens between two people. I wanted to start it with that mysterious spark igniting. And it seemed like anyone who went to see Lindbergh take off on his flight – which my dad did, by the way, though he did not meet my mother there – was interested in the future, interested in how the world could change. What we used to call, in kind of a blind way, "progress."

I think it's hard for people now to recognize how important the kidnapping of the Lindberghs' baby was. It hung over anyone who was born in the 1930s. The idea of this famous baby being kidnapped and then found dead was part of that whole 1930s/Great Depression/another world war coming feeling that hung over people's lives. Nobody in their right mind would ever leave a child alone in a backyard after that Lindbergh kidnapping. So the Lindberghs affected people's lives, even in small ways.



Larry Rivers

**Let me ask you a question about another historical figure that you portray in the book, the painter Larry Rivers. He represents a different aspect of the American spirit – the libertine, the artist, the creative force. He's so unfocused – he's a musician, he's a painter, he's a provocateur. He seems like an odd figure to find in this novel, in scenes where the straight-laced mother, Belle, gets caught up with his crowd of wild Greenwich Village bohemians. How did you alight upon the persona of Larry Rivers (born Yitzroch Loiza Grossberg and raised in the Bronx)?**

[I was working with an agent] on this book, and he said that art was hot. Was there any way to put an art thread in this book? And I thought it was kind of an odd suggestion, but I read Larry Rivers's *What Did I Do?: The Unauthorized Autobiography*. I began to realize that Belle was

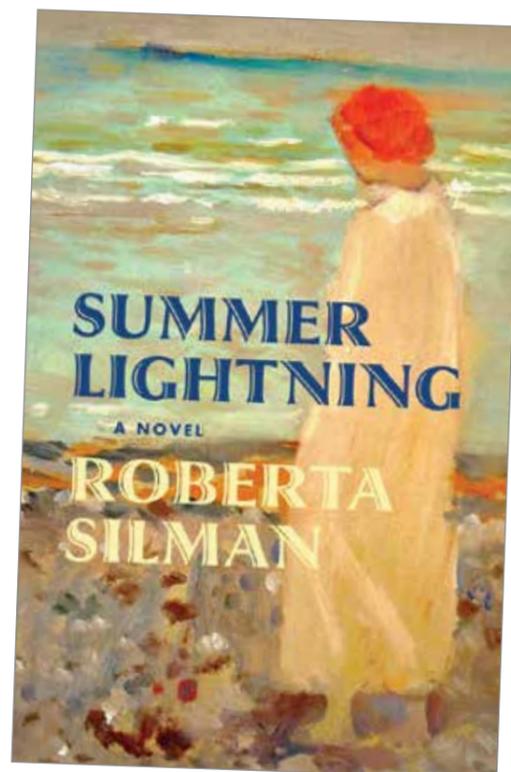
always longing for something more. She was never quite satisfied. And I thought, well, maybe this is a way to introduce her to a world that wasn't Jewish suburbia. I got the idea about Belle collecting art.

What was interesting about Rivers was that he never could get it together to become, quote, a great artist. He did some wonderful paintings, but he's always been kind of a fringe figure in American art because he was just all over the place. But in a way, I thought, well, let her be exposed to those people and let's see what comes of it. And I don't know, it just seems to fall into place because part of the message there, if there is a message, was that be careful what you wish for.

**You take the book's title from Alexander Herzen [a 19th-century Russian writer and thinker known as the 'father of Russian socialism'] – "Art, and the summer lightning of individual happiness: these are the only real goods we have." To me, that seems like a strange way of putting things. What does it mean to you?**

I think for the Russians, "summer lightning" was a code for happiness. I understood it as those sparks of happiness in our lives and those moments of pure joy and rapture that are present in our lives. That's the way I felt about the love stories in the novel. Nothing was perfect but those connections. Summer lightning, I think, is a symbol of that connection between people that nurtures them. The summer lightning in Herzen's quote, and maybe in my book, is also that which is unexpected that comes from the sky. You are not sure about it. It can hurt as well as help. Summer lightning is all the things that surprise and make life worth living and hanging on to so dearly.

**Roberta Silman** has received fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. She has reviewed books for *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe* and writes regularly for *The Arts Fuse* website ([artsfuse.org](http://artsfuse.org)). More about her work can be found at [robertasilman.com](http://robertasilman.com) and she can also be reached at [rsilman@verizon.net](mailto:rsilman@verizon.net).



## CULTURE & ARTS

### Music Undefeated!

**Close Encounters With Music's 31st season lifts off with something old and something new – "Otherworldly Schubert and 'One Earth'"**



Artistic Director Yehuda Hanani

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Sunday, November 6 at 4 p.m., Close Encounters With Music (CEWM) returns to the Mahaiwe Performing Arts Center for its 31st season with an intriguing afternoon of music: "Otherworldly Schubert and 'One Earth.'"

The program will feature works from two very different musical orbits – Franz Schubert's String Quintet in C Minor is a pinnacle of the Classical music canon, while "One Earth," created by Israeli-American composer Tamar Muskal, receives its world premiere. CEWM commissioned "One Earth," an adventurous work for a rapper/beatbox artist, tabla player, string quintet, and a treble chorus comprising more than 20 singers.

Artistic Director Yehuda Hanani relates that the motto that kept CEWM inspired during the COVID-19 pandemic was *Music Undefeated!* "And we followed it with tremendous zeal and did not skip one concert," he says, delivering streamed performances to loyal subscribers from the empty Mahaiwe, at first. Hanani says that the genesis of "One Earth" came at a meeting of CEWM at which "the perennial question came up – 'what do we do to get young people to come to the concert?' The young son of a member of the board was present, and said, 'Well, play some rap.' So, of course, my initial reaction was, 'Sure enough, I'm going to lose my whole audience – we'll just bring a rapper.' Then I started

thinking maybe this idea had something about it that we could build on."

He reached out to Tamar Muskal, an Israeli American composer who studied first at the Jerusalem Academy for Dance and Music, and then at Yale University and City University of New York. Muskal remembers that she tried to temper Hanani's hopes of attracting a younger audience even with a famous rapper – in the end, it will be "a Classical music concert with Classical music," she says, not really what young people will flock to – but she



Israeli-American composer Tamar Muskal

was intrigued by his idea. The first concept Muskal and Hanani arrived at was that she write a piece for a rapper, a cello, and a tabla, the Indian twin drum that is the principal percussion instrument in Hindustani classical music. Hanani says that tabla players "do some scatting with their mouths together with [their drumming], a little bit like Louie Armstrong – very sophisticated counterrhythms." He was impressed by tabla player Avirodh Sharma and wanted to work with him.

As Hanani and Muskal batted ideas back and forth about the piece, their vision for it became more expansive. Muskal wanted to include a second cello and Hanani, knowing "One Earth" would be on the same program as the Schubert composition, suggested that she write a part for a string quintet. (In November, Hanani will join the Borromeo String Quartet for both pieces.) Muskal had the idea to include a chorale – the 22-member Mount Holyoke College Chamber Singers will be on hand for that.

Muskal says: "I've never worked with a rapper before, and I knew that it had to be a collaboration, not a piece I write. The kind of thing I do would not be his kind of thing." She put out a search through Facebook for a rap artist who could read music, and a musician in Washington, DC, put her in contact with Christylez Bacon, self-described on his website as "multi-task[ing] between

various instruments such as the West African djembe drum, acoustic guitar, and the human beat-box (oral percussion)... with a mission towards cultural acceptance and unification through music." Bacon founded a cross-cultural collaborative concert series called Washington Sound Museum, and Muskal says she found him "very interested in all kinds of collaborations."

She traveled to DC to meet him and shared a sample of her work on musical notation software to see whether he'd feel comfortable with the musical setting. "I played the piece for him and he immediately joined in," she remembers. "He was, following the music, saw all the changes right away without any problems."

Muskal says that while she will score the parts for the chorus and strings, "I don't want to say anything for the rapper and the tabla player whenever they have this improvisation between them. I don't want to interfere, because first of all I trust them; but also, that's what they do. I need and I love to respect that and I think that if you tell them exactly what to do, I don't think they will like it – not because of ego, but because it's going against what they are. So if I think I know exactly what I want, I shouldn't take on somebody whose whole life is about improvisation."

She adds: "It's their moment and they will be in a good mood and something beautiful will come out at the end of this improvisation. Then the strings come in and then everybody else." The key, she says, is knowing where everyone is coming from musically. "I want everyone to leave with a positive feeling. The world is so depressing nowadays, and it may sound mad, but that's what I want."

Hanani describes "One Earth" as a kind of crossover music, one that uses today's musical idioms in a way that Classical and Romantic composers may have incorporated folk music into their concert hall pieces "when nationalism was high and every country tried to find its own musical voice."

About what to expect, Hanani sums up: "We have two wonderful pieces. This world premiere reaches out and tries to embrace the entire world and has a utopian vision for all of us. Maybe this is a lesson that Covid, if there was anything positive about Covid, taught us – that we all live on one planet and there's no way to escape it. So this piece reaches out and is very global and very outgoing."

"After intermission, we have a piece that is reaching into the soul of Schubert before he died. He never heard it performed, even. If you asked me to choose one piece out of the entire chamber music repertoire, I would choose this one without hesitation. It's an amazing piece of music. It was not commissioned by anybody. Nobody knows why Schubert wrote it. He was dying. It's a death-defying piece. There's nothing morbid about it. It just goes deep, deep into the soul."

*Maybe this is a lesson that Covid, if there was anything positive about Covid, taught us – that we all live on one planet and there's no way to escape it. So this piece reaches out and is very global and very outgoing.*

– Yehuda Hanani

Just very inspiring. There is anguish in the slow movement, of course, but it's a cathartic piece of music. So we have reaching out first off with Tamar's piece and then going all the way deep in with Schubert. And this is how I see this program. That's what audiences can come to expect when they join us."



The Borromeo String Quartet

**Close Encounters With Music** continues through the spring. Its 2022-2023 season includes "Grand Piano Trios – Beethoven's 'Ghost' and 'Archduke' (December 11); "Town & Country; Mendelssohn and Dvorak" (February 18); "Pictures at an Exhibition [Mussorgsky]" (March 26); "From Bach Brandenburg to Appalachian Spring" (April 23); and The Escher String Quartet (May 21). For a full lineup of concerts and more information and tickets, visit [cewm.org](http://cewm.org).



Christylez Bacon human beat box