

# 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. 34, No. 3

Nisan / Iyar 5786

March 23 to May 3, 2026

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

## The Grey Zone – Music from Terezín and Holocaust Remembrance

**Community Commemoration**

**Yom HaShoah  
Holocaust Remembrance**

**Sunday, April 12  
2 pm**



LENOX – On Sunday, April 12 at 2 p.m., join us for a moving community commemoration of Yom HaShoah – Holocaust Remembrance Day, focusing on the concept of the “grey zone” developed by Holocaust survivor and writer Primo Levi. Levi explored the morally complex relationships between Nazis and prisoners in Auschwitz, noting that life in

the camps could not be reduced simply to victims and persecutors. In the grey zone, oppressors often compelled prisoners to become unwilling accomplices. Drawing from his book *Our Will to Live*, Terezín Music Foundation Director Mark Ludwig will share stories of how music by Jewish composers – and other artistic expression in the Terezín concentration camp – was co-opted for Nazi propaganda. Through staged performances, a propaganda film, and a Red Cross inspection, creativity and culture were transformed into instruments of deception, illustrating the chilling moral complexities of the grey zone.

The program features Ludwig and members of the Terezín Music Foundation Ensemble: Greg Vitale (violin), Jesse Holstein (viola), and Jing Li (cello). It will conclude with a memorial candle lighting, prayers, and a moment of silence in memory of those murdered in the Holocaust.

Co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and the Tanglewood Learning Institute.

Register on the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

If you are unable to attend, please notify us so your seat can be made available to other community members.

**THE GREY ZONE,**  
continued on page 8

## Shared Living in Israel Through Youth Art at the Mishkan Museum of Art

### Celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut with our friends in Afula-Gilboa

Art has long served as a bridge across difference, offering language, symbolism, and shared space where words sometimes fall short. On Thursday, April 23 at 10:45 a.m., Jewish Federation of the Berkshires invites the community to a special virtual program exploring how art fosters shared living in Israel – particularly among young people.



This timely conversation will feature educator Tanya Fredman for an inside look at the Mishkan Museum of Art in Ein Harod and its groundbreaking work with youth across diverse communities. Register for this free program on the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

In this unique partnership program, participants will explore how contemporary Israeli artists navigate boundaries using the concept of the *parochet* (curtain) as a point of departure. The program will highlight a new exhibition by Nabaa Fawaz, a young Arab Israeli artist whose work reflects themes of identity, visibility, and shared space.

Fredman will also introduce the museum's “Art in Action” initiatives, examining how these works inspire youth engagement. The Mishkan partners with Jewish and Arab schools, secular and religious communities, and Israeli teens – including those connecting with the

**SHARED LIVING,**  
continued on page 6

## Pesach 5786

What makes this Passover different from all other Passovers?



CREDIT: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Perhaps a fifth question to be asked and answered around our Seder tables during this season of our liberation (*z'man heirutenu*). This spirit of inquiry was captured by artist Arthur Szyk in his classic Passover Haggadah, first printed in Lodz, Poland in 1935. (As was the anxiety of that era – note the coiled red and black snake in the right corner and consider the adversary it represented.) *Art of Freedom: The Life & Work of Arthur Szyk* is a career retrospective of this prolific artist and champion of freedom that will be on view at the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City through July 26.



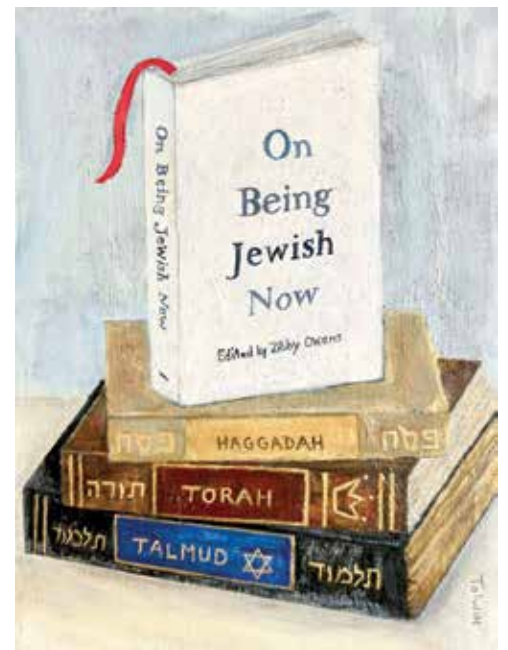
## On Being Jewish Now: Live Theater Presented on Zoom

On Sunday, April 19, at 2 p.m., Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will present *On Being Jewish Now*, a live theater production performed on Zoom by The Braid – the Go-To Jewish Story Company.

This 65-minute virtual performance explores what it feels like to be Jewish today – from fear to pride – through powerful true stories curated from the book *On Being Jewish Now*, edited by Zibby Owens. In a post-October 7 world, these stories offer connection, reflection, and a renewed sense of shared community.

For nearly two decades, The Braid has created a distinctive artform at the intersection of storytelling and theater, bringing Jewish voices to life through dynamic staged readings performed by professional actors. The program will conclude with a moderated Q&A session.

Register on the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org). After registering, participants will receive a confirmation email two days before the program with Zoom login information.



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OP-ED

IN MY VIEW

Federation Convenes Leadership Meeting with Berkshire State Legislators
Plus a look ahead to Jewish Heritage Month in May

By Dara Kaufman / Executive Director, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

As part of our ongoing advocacy to combat antisemitism and build local support for the recommendations of the Massachusetts Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires recently convened a meeting between our Berkshire state legislators and leaders of nearly all our local Jewish organizations to ensure our representatives could hear directly from the community they serve.

substantial investments individual congregations and camps are making to hire trained security personnel and implement additional protective measures. These efforts, while essential, place considerable financial strain on small organizations.

Together, Federation and community leaders expressed strong support for the recommendations of the Massachusetts Special Commission on Combating Antisemitism and advocated for full funding of the Massachusetts Nonprofit Security Grant Program and the Genocide Education Trust, which provides grants to schools to teach about the Holocaust.

We highlighted the unique challenges faced by small nonprofits and schools in rural Western Massachusetts, which must compete for this grant funding against larger, better-resourced institutions in the eastern part of the state that often have professional grant writers and dedicated development staff. Ensuring fair and equitable access to these critical funds is essential.

The meeting was constructive and collaborative, reinforcing the importance of ongoing dialogue and partnership. A number of our legislators reached out after the meeting to continue the conversation and learn more about how they can best support our community.

We are deeply grateful for the continued engagement of our legislative delegation and remain committed to working together to ensure that Jewish life in the Berkshires is vibrant, secure, and supported for generations to come.

May is Jewish Heritage Month

As we continue our advocacy work, we look ahead to Jewish American Heritage Month, observed each May. Jewish American Heritage Month (JAHM) was established to celebrate the inspiring history and vibrant, living culture of Jewish Americans. At a time of rising antisemitism, it serves as a powerful antidote – amplifying the true, joyful, and enduring stories of Jewish life and contribution in America.

On May 7, Federation will host the virtual program "Eminent Jews: Bernstein, Brooks, Friedan, Mailer" with author David Denby. Throughout the month, we will also highlight resources and stories from the official JAHM website, jewishamericanheritage.org, on social media celebrating the rich and lasting contributions of Jewish Americans to our nation's cultural, civic, and intellectual life.

A public press release will be issued in advance of the May 7 program to elevate awareness of Jewish American Heritage Month and to direct community members, educators, and public officials to these national resources. In addition, Federation will share educational materials, including digital posters and companion lesson plans, with libraries and local K-12 educators, encouraging them to use the month of May as an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate the vibrant history and contributions of Jewish Americans.

We invite our community members and neighbors to join us in spreading the word, particularly beyond the Jewish community, so that Jewish American Heritage Month becomes a meaningful and recognized celebration throughout the Berkshires.



The conversation provided an important opportunity to share firsthand what our Jewish community has been experiencing, the needs we are facing, and the ways we can continue to strengthen our relationships – both individually and collectively. We also took time to thank our legislators for consistently standing with our community: for joining us in solidarity at memorial gatherings and holiday celebrations, and for speaking out clearly that "antisemitism and hate have no place in our community, in Massachusetts, or in our world."

I took the opportunity to brief our legislators on the rise of antisemitism locally and nationally and our Community Security Advisor Andrew Hoffman shared details of the Jewish Berkshires LiveSecure Initiative, outlining the significant steps being taken to enhance safety across our institutions. Community leaders spoke candidly about ongoing security concerns and the



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For calendar listings and events

HATE HAS NO HOME HERE
Logo of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires at the bottom.

**OP-ED**

**RABBI REFLECTION**

**Strangers in a Strange Land**

By Rabbi Jennifer Rudin / Congregation Ahavath Sholom



Given the state of the world, we often find ourselves strangers in a strange land. The landscape shifts minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day. Things feel unfamiliar. That sense of uncertainty is not new. It echoes the oldest stories we tell.

Passover reminds us of our journey from slavery to freedom, from being strangers in a strange land, to becoming a community in our homeland. The Hebrew phrase captures it: *בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם* – “when Israel went out from Egypt.” It is a story of departure and possibility, of leaving behind bondage and stepping into an uncertain future.

Why do we retell it every year? Because memory is instruction. The purpose of remembering is to shape how we act. If we were once strangers, then we are called to notice the strangers among us. If we once sought welcome, then we are charged with offering welcome.

Today, we see that struggle in the lives of immigrants who came to this country seeking community and safety. Many have integrated into the fabric of this land, contributing to neighborhoods, workplaces, and congregations. Yet some now face sudden uncertainty – legal status questioned, families separated. The experience of uncertainty is not abstract for them; it is lived.

*To remember liberation is to accept responsibility for the liberation of others. That is at the ethical core of Jewish tradition.*

We see it also in global events. Families in conflict zones in bomb shelters, hoping for a moment of peace. People board airplanes expecting one destination and arrive in another due to circumstances beyond their control. The world feels uncertain. Anxiety is a common companion.

Passover does not deny that reality. It confronts it. Ritual and storytelling anchor us. They remind us that freedom is fragile and requires stewardship. To remember liberation is to accept responsibility for the liberation of others. That is at the ethical core of Jewish tradition.

When we say we were strangers in a strange land, we acknowledge vulnerability. But we also affirm solidarity. The lessons of Passover compel us to build communities where no one is left isolated – where newcomers are embraced, where differences are respected, and where dignity is universal.

This is not an easy task. The world’s challenges can feel overwhelming. Yet the act of remembering gives us direction. It calls us to repair what is broken, to advocate for justice, and to extend kindness. For ourselves, for our children, for future generations of all people.

That is what it means to be Jewish. That is what it means to observe Passover. As you gather at your Seder table, may you bring these themes and stories into your conversations. May they deepen connection and understanding. I wish you a Passover filled with meaning, hope, and renewal.

*Rabbi Jennifer Rudin is the spiritual leader of Congregation Ahavath Sholom in Great Barrington.*



**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  
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**Jewish Federation**  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

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**Letters to the Editor**

**Poets Wanted!**

Dear Berkshire Jewish Community:

I am the poetry editor of the American Jewish World newspaper, published in Minnesota since 1915. I recently relocated to New Lebanon, NY and I would be delighted to receive work by Jewish poets.

Poems can be up to 30 lines, and poets can include a bio of up to 60 words. Please send poems as Word or PDF attachments to:

Trina Porte, AJW Poetry Editor - [t4peace@juno.com](mailto:t4peace@juno.com)

Thank you very much for your work to enliven, support, and protect Jewish life and community.

Regards,  
Trina Porte  
New Lebanon, NY

**So Many Fun Memories**

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires Scholarship Committee,

Thank you so much for helping support my camp experience over the past few years! Because of your generosity, I have been able to attend Eisner Camp and create so many fun memories, build close friendships, and continue learning more about my religion.

Camp has been a really meaningful part of my life, and the experiences I've had there have helped me feel more connected to my Jewish community. I am very grateful for the support that makes this possible and for everything you do for campers like me.

With appreciation,  
Hannah Nhim Ovitsky  
Pittsfield

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**Berkshire  
JEWISH VOICE**

A publication of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, serving the Berkshires and surrounding NY, CT and VT. Published 9 times a year.

**The color photography in this issue is made possible through the generosity of Helene Berger, honorary publisher.**

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

Next issue publication date: **May 4, 2026 – June 14, 2026**

Press deadline: **March 17, 2026**

Advertising deadline: **April 15, 2026**

*Berkshire Jewish Voice* e-mail: [astern@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:astern@jewishberkshires.org)

Phone: (413) 442-4360, ext. 11 Fax (413) 443-6070

OP-ED

# Beyond the Check: Why Volunteering Matters for Jewish Continuity

By Arlene D. Schiff / Board President, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

We are blessed to live in a community where generous donors invest in our future. Some have been doing so for 50 years; others have engaged more recently. Some are full-time members of the community; others spend only a few months in the Berkshires. All understand it takes financial resources for our small, vibrant Jewish community to thrive.

Our community is also blessed to have a strong volunteer base – from those who serve on organizational boards and committees to those who deliver kosher meals to home-bound seniors, work at local food pantries and cultural venues, and mentor students. These volunteers embody a different kind of giving, one that Jewish tradition holds equally sacred.

### The Missing Piece

In her recent article “More Than Money” in the journal *Sapir*, Cindy Greenberg, president and CEO of Repair the World, notes that *tzedakah* – charitable giving – has enabled the continuity and reach of Jewish communal life. “Yet something essential is missing when we define Jewish responsibility primarily through financial contributions,” she writes.

Greenberg points out that “Judaism calls us to a more complete engagement, one that pairs the efficiency of giving money with the transformation that comes from giving time – that is, from service.”

“Whether we devote our time to the Jewish community or more broadly to universal justice,” she continues, “service is the spiritual work of our people and essential to thriving Jewish life. We are commanded 36 times in the Torah to care for the orphan, the widow, and the stranger – more than any other commandment. This is a sacred obligation, and a healthy one. It strengthens Jewish engagement, cultivates a sense of purpose, makes a real social impact, and builds bridges across lines of difference.”

### The Shift Away from Service

Studies indicate Jewish Americans volunteer at significantly higher rates (49-80%) than the general population (28%). Despite this impressive showing, Greenberg makes the case that “as Jewish communities gained economic power after World War II, a new sector of paid professionals emerged.” This professionalization, while valuable in many ways, resulted in fewer Jews seeing volunteering as part of their Jewish identity.



Rebecca Harris, Lindsey Brown, and Claudia Braunstein volunteered on the Purim gift bag project

### Why Volunteering Matters

Volunteering offers us a sense of purpose, a connection to something larger than ourselves. According to Greenberg, “research consistently shows that volunteers experience lower rates of depression, greater life satisfaction, and stronger social connections.”

The impact on Jewish identity is particularly striking. Evaluations conducted by Repair the World found that 71 percent of Jewish participants reported that their volunteer experience deepened their sense of belonging to the Jewish community. When we serve, we don’t just help others – we discover who we are.

### Building Bridges in Difficult Times

Greenberg also noted that service strengthens Jewish relationships with non-Jews. “In a time of rising antisemitism,” she writes, “serving alongside our neighbors fosters solidarity and mutual understanding. Rather than focusing on countering extremists, we have an opportunity – through service – to engage with neighbors who share our commitment to building a better world.”

Close contact and collaborative action – both naturally fostered through service – decrease anti-Jewish attitudes. We become not abstract “others,” but people working side by side toward common goals.

### Living Our Values Out Loud

As Greenberg eloquently states, “It’s not only what Jews give, but also how we show up that matters.” Our financial contributions sustain important programs, services, and institutions, but our presence – sharing our skills, and giving of our time and hearts – transforms both giver and receiver.

Greenberg concludes with this powerful thought: “When we serve, we live our values out loud. That’s how we build a strong Jewish future – not just by giving what we have, but by giving who we are.”

In our Berkshire community, we see this truth lived out every day. Our volunteers don’t just support our community – they are our community. May we continue to give both generously and personally, ensuring that the next generation inherits not just our resources, but our commitment to service.

*The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Tikkun Olam Volunteer Network connects community members of all ages with service opportunities that make a difference in our community. For more information, contact our coordinator of volunteers, Heidi Katz, at Federation@jewishberkshires.org.*

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## OP-ED

## American Jewish Committee's annual *State of Antisemitism in America Report*

**AJC** American Jewish Committee

In February, American Jewish Committee, the global advocacy organization for the Jewish people, released the annual *State of Antisemitism in America Report*, which provides critically important insights into one of the most violent years against American Jews in recent history.

In 2025, the American Jewish community witnessed an arson attack during Passover on the Pennsylvania Governor's residence, and the murders of Sarah Milgrim (z"l) and Yaron Lischinsky (z"l) outside the Capital Jewish Museum following an AJC event and Karen Diamond (z"l) in a firebombing of a Boulder, CO, march in support of the hostages held by Hamas in Gaza. The data, from surveys conducted in fall of 2025, assesses and compares Jewish and general population perceptions of, and experiences with, antisemitism in the United States.

As AJC CEO Ted Deutch said, "No one in America should have to change their behavior because of what they believe, but that's how most Jews are living their lives."

### Key Findings

- 91% of American Jews say they feel less safe as a Jewish person in the United States due to violent attacks in the past year including the burning of a Jewish governor's home, the firebombing of Jews in Boulder, CO, and the murders at the Capital Jewish Museum.
- 78% of American Jews say they feel less safe as a Jewish person in the U.S. because of the October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorist attacks.
- More than half (55%) of American Jews say they changed their behavior in the past year out of fear of antisemitism.
- 86% of American Jews say antisemitism has increased in the U.S. since the Hamas terrorist attacks.
- Almost one-third (31%) of American Jews say they have been the personal target of antisemitism – in person or virtually – at least once over the last year.
- The vast majority of U.S. Jews (88%) express that seeing or hearing 'Globalize the Intifada' would make them feel unsafe as a Jewish person in the U.S. to some degree – ranging from "not too unsafe" (19%) to "somewhat unsafe" (42%) to "very unsafe" (27%). By comparison, just 12% of U.S. Jews say the phrase would not make them feel unsafe at all.

### American Jews are Deeply Concerned about Social Media and Artificial Intelligence

- 73% of American Jews, say they have experienced antisemitism online—either by seeing or hearing it or by being personally targeted. For the first time, this number has risen above seven in 10 in the history of AJC's *State of Antisemitism in America Report*.
- 65% of American Jews say they are concerned that generative AI chatbots such as Grok, ChatGPT, or Claude will spread antisemitism.
- 69% of American Jews say they are concerned that information and misinformation shared by generative AI chatbots will lead to antisemitic incidents.

### Young American Jews' Experience with Antisemitism

- Nearly half (47%) of young American Jews say they were the personal target of antisemitism in the last year, compared to 28% for those age 30 and over.
- 42% of American Jewish college students report experiencing antisemitism during their time on campus.
- One in four (25%) American Jewish college students say they have felt or had been excluded from a group or an event on campus because they are Jewish.

### Where the American General Public Stands

- 70% of U.S. adults say antisemitism is a problem in the U.S. today.
- The majority (63%) of U.S. adults say antisemitism in the U.S. has increased since the Hamas terrorist attacks.
- 45% of U.S. adults reported personally seeing or hearing any antisemitic incidents in the last 12 months, of these respondents, 74% have seen or heard antisemitic incidents online or on social media.

Thank you volunteers  
Ellen Rosenblatt and  
the BJV delivery team,  
Dave Halley, Colin Ovitsky,  
Megan Dopson and  
Roman Rozenblyum.

### Fewer US Jews identify as Zionist, but support for Israel remains strong, Jewish Federations survey finds

"The falling identification with the word 'Zionism' does not mean large numbers of Jews are turning against the existence of Israel itself," Mimi Kravetz, of Federations, told JNS.

By Jessica Russak-Hoffman / JNS

Newly released data from Jewish Federations of North America's national survey suggests that declining identification with the term "Zionist" among American Jews should not be interpreted as opposition to Israel's existence.

The findings come from JFNA's "Survey of Jewish Life Since Oct. 7," which was conducted March 5-25, 2025, and has been released in stages. The data, published in February, focuses on attitudes toward Israel, Zionism, and Jewish identity.

While only 37% of respondents said they identify as Zionists, 88% affirmed that Israel has the right to exist as a Jewish and democratic state.

"It's easy to draw incorrect conclusions from the data, so let's be clear: the falling identification with the word 'Zionism' does not mean large numbers of Jews are turning against the existence of Israel itself," Mimi Kravetz, chief impact and growth officer at Jewish Federations, told JNS. "That's even true among younger Jews."

Among respondents between the ages of 18 and 34, 76% said Israel has the right to exist, despite comparatively low levels of Zionist self-identification within that cohort.

The survey also suggests that perceptions of the term "Zionism" beyond its traditional definition play a significant role. Respondents who said that they were not Zionists often associated the word with ideas such as unconditional support for Israeli government actions, the ideology of Israel's ruling class or specific territorial claims, as opposed to its traditional definition as support for Jewish self-determination in Israel.

At the same time, the survey found that overall emotional attachment to Israel remains high, as 71% of Jewish respondents said they feel emotionally attached to Israel, compared to 58% in 2020. Additionally, 60% said that Israel makes them proud to be Jewish.

## COMMUNITY COMMEMORATION YOM HASHOAH-HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE



Artwork from the Theresienstadt ghetto

### The Grey Zone: Stories, Performance and Candle Lighting

Sunday, April 12 at 2 pm

Tanglewood, Studio E, Linde Center for Music and Learning  
3 W. Hawthorne Street, Lenox

Exploring the "Grey Zone" – Holocaust survivor and writer Primo Levi described the complex moral choices in the camps. Drawing from *Our Will to Live*, Terezín Music Foundation Director Mark Ludwig shares how music and art in the Terezín camp were co-opted for Nazi propaganda. Featured performance by members of the Terezín Music Foundation Ensemble. The program concludes with a memorial candle lighting in memory of Holocaust victims.

Space is limited and advance ticket reservation is required.

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[tinyurl.com/2026YomHashoah](https://tinyurl.com/2026YomHashoah)

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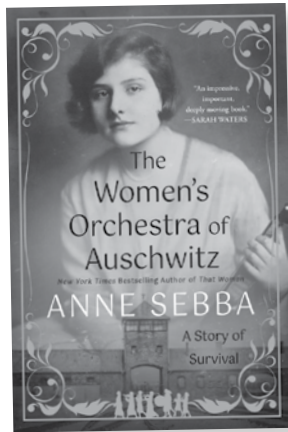
Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES



Tanglewood

## Your Federation Presents

### The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz: A Story of Survival, with Anne Sebba



On Thursday, April 16, at 10:45 a.m., Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will present award-winning historian and biographer Anne Sebba for a virtual talk on her new book, *The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz: A Story of Survival*.

Register via the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org). A Jewish Literary Voices program, presented by Jewish Federation of the Berkshires in collaboration with the Jewish Book Council

In 1943, SS officers at Auschwitz-Birkenau ordered that an orchestra be formed among the camp's female prisoners. Nearly fifty women and girls from eleven nations were drafted into a band forced to play marching music each day as inmates left for forced labor and returned exhausted – and often broken – at day's end. They were also required to perform weekly

concerts for Nazi officers, and individual musicians were sometimes summoned to give solo performances.

For most of the women selected, participation in the orchestra saved their lives. But the circumstances raised harrowing moral questions: What role could music play in a death camp? What did it mean to survive through participation in a Nazi propaganda project? And how did it feel to provide solace to the perpetrators of genocide while family and friends were being murdered?

In her book, Sebba traces these questions with sensitivity and care, drawing on extensive archival research and exclusive first-hand accounts. From the orchestra's conductor Alma Rosé – a celebrated pre-war violinist and niece of Gustav Mahler – to teenage cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, the last surviving member, Sebba tells the full story of the orchestra and its members for the first time.

**Anne Sebba** is a prize-winning biographer, lecturer, and former Reuters foreign correspondent. She is the author of several acclaimed books, including *That Woman* and *Les Parisiennes*, and is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Historical Research in London.

### Menashe Kadishman: Israeli Artist and Sculptor



Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will present a virtual program exploring the life and work of Israeli artist and sculptor Menashe Kadishman on Thursday, April 30, at 7 p.m. via Zoom. This program celebrates Yom Ha'atzmaut, Israel's day of independence.

Led by Dr. Carol Salus, the program will examine Kadishman's influential career as a painter and sculptor known for blending minimalist influences with deeply symbolic themes. Kadishman's early years as a shepherd on a kibbutz profoundly shaped his artistic vision, and his enduring connection to nature and animals became a defining feature of his work.

The talk will also explore Kadishman's powerful contributions to the Jewish Museum in Berlin, where he created works addressing memory, loss, and the victims of war and violence, particularly in relation to the Holocaust. His recurring imagery of sacrifice has often been understood as reflecting the lives of Israeli soldiers who never return – a theme that developed in part from Kadishman's personal experience as a father whose son served in the Israel Defense Forces.

Kadishman's impact on Israeli art was formally recognized in 1995, when he received the prestigious Israel Prize. His legacy continues to resonate internationally, with his sculptures and paintings featured in major museums and exhibitions worldwide. His iconic sheep paintings, in particular, remain widely recognized for their symbolism – evoking sacrifice, innocence, and collective memory.

**Dr. Carol Salus, PhD**, retired after a distinguished career as a professor in Kent State University's School of Art. She has published on numerous artists, including Picasso, Degas, R. B. Kitaj, Andy Warhol, and Roy Lichtenstein, and has taught courses in art history, American art, and architecture.

Register on the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org). Registrants will receive Zoom access information after signing up.

### American Maccabee: Theodore Roosevelt and the Jews

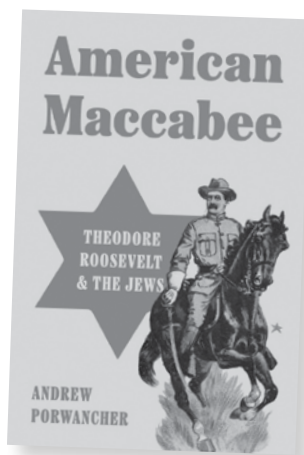
On Thursday, March 26, at 7 p.m., historian Andrew Porwancher will discuss his book, *American Maccabee: Theodore Roosevelt and the Jews*, which explores the complex and often surprising relationship between the 26th US president and the American Jewish community during a pivotal moment in U.S. history.

The program will be presented via Zoom. Register at the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

Porwancher will examine how Roosevelt, a scion of the Protestant elite, became an unexpected ally to Jewish immigrants arriving in large numbers at Ellis Island. From his early political career in New York, Roosevelt forged relationships with Jewish communities that were unprecedented for a future president. He spoke frequently on the Lower East Side, advocated for reform in sweatshops where many Jewish laborers worked under dangerous conditions, and publicly praised the heroism of the Maccabees, holding them up as a model for American Jewish life.

The program will also address the contradictions in Roosevelt's record. During his presidency, he was confronted with the brutal persecution of Jews in Eastern Europe, which sent waves of refugees to the United States, even as antisemitic and xenophobic sentiments were growing at home. Drawing on new archival research, Porwancher will present a nuanced portrait of a leader whose engagement with Jewish issues reflected both moral conviction and the limitations of his time.

**Andrew Porwancher** is professor of history at Arizona State University. He is the author of *The Jewish World of Alexander Hamilton* and *The Devil Himself: A Tale of Honor, Insanity, and the Birth of Modern America*.



### SHARED LIVING, continued from page 1

Berkshires – to create meaningful artistic encounters that build understanding and cultural bridges.



Dedicated to making art accessible to all, the Mishkan engages more than 20,000 children annually from diverse backgrounds: Jewish and Arab, new immigrants and longtime residents. In the wake of October 7, the museum provided a safe and creative refuge for evacuated families and developed programming centered on resilience and healing through art.

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is proud to partner with the Mishkan's work in Israel's Afula-Gilboa region, strengthening ties between our local community and shared living initiatives abroad.

**Tanya Fredman** serves in the Education Department at the Mishkan Museum of Art. Originally from St. Louis, Missouri, and with deep ties to the Berkshires, she made aliyah to Israel in 2011 and has worked at the museum for the past four years. As an educator and guide, Fredman designs meaningful experiences for children and visitors of all ages, creating opportunities to encounter artwork, history, and one another in thoughtful and transformative ways.



SECONd NIGHT  
PASSOVER SEDER

**THURSDAY, APRIL 2 AT 5:00PM**

SEDER LED BY RABBI GORDON  
CATERED BY THE MARKETPLACE

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## Your Federation Presents

### Speaking Across Conflict – Workshop with Resetting the Table



RESETTING  
THE TABLE

PITTSFIELD – In a moment when conversations about Israel, October 7, antisemitism, and political polarization can strain even our closest relationships, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires invites the community to come together for a timely and practical workshop designed to help us speak – and listen – across difference.

On Sunday, May 3 from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Knesset Israel in Pittsfield, participants will engage in a hands-on communication workshop led by Resetting the Table (RTT), a national organization dedicated to strengthening dialogue and trust within Jewish communities.

RTT's celebrated approach offers skill-building for charged conversations and creates a structured forum for dialogue across disagreement. Participants will exchange views and experiences, surface differences and commonalities, and practice engaging directly and constructively with perspectives that may differ from their own. The workshop focuses on building community capacity to explore disagreements while strengthening relationships, trust, learning, and collaboration.

Conversations will center on the real issues facing our community – both at home and abroad – and all viewpoints expressed will come from participants themselves.

Whether you're hoping to connect more thoughtfully with children, parents, coworkers, friends, or fellow congregants around Israel, October 7, antisemitism, or polarization in our country, this workshop is for you.

Registration is required and space is limited. To register, visit the calendar of events page at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org)

#### About the Facilitator

The workshop will be led by **Dani Panitch**, associate facilitator and trainer with Resetting the Table. Since 2018, she has held multiple roles at RTT, most recently serving as senior program manager, where she built systems supporting RTT's national programming. She has previously worked with nonprofit organizations and schools throughout New York City, including UJA-Federation of New York, MDRC, and Quest to Learn. Panitch holds a B.S. in Applied Psychology from New York University Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development and is currently pursuing a Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy at Iona University.

For more information about Resetting the Table and its impact in Jewish communities nationwide, visit [resettingthetable.org](http://resettingthetable.org).

### Federation Invests \$80,000 to Send Local Kids to Jewish Camp

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is proud to announce that it recently awarded more than \$80,000 in Jewish overnight camp scholarships, enabling 40 local children to attend Jewish overnight camp this summer. With the average cost of a month at Jewish overnight camp now exceeding \$9,000, this assistance will help ensure that every child can have this transformative experience.



Jewish overnight camp remains one of the most powerful tools we have to strengthen Jewish identity, build resilience, and instill a joy of being Jewish that lasts a lifetime. Research shows that participation in Jewish overnight camp has a deep and positive impact on young people's connection to Jewish life, with the vast majority of families reporting that camp makes children feel proud to be Jewish and enhances their sense of belonging in the community.

In today's world, where Jewish youth are increasingly navigating experiences of antisemitism and exclusion, this support matters even more. National surveys indicate that a majority of Jewish teens have encountered antisemitic harassment or discrimination, both in person and online, and many report that these experiences have affected how comfortable they feel expressing their Jewish identity at school or in public.

"Jewish overnight camp provides a safe haven where children can be their most authentic selves without feeling the need to hide their Jewish identity," said Dara Kaufman, executive director of Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. "Camp is not only fun, it gives our young people the confidence, friendships, and sense of belonging that strengthen them spiritually and socially. Making camp affordable for every Jewish family remains a core priority for Federation."

Campers will experience a wide spectrum of Jewish experiences through attendance Edén Village Camp, URJ Eisner Camp, Camp Ramah of New England, Camp Ramah in the Berkshires, Camp Chomeish, and URJ Camp Crane Lake.

In addition to its overnight camp scholarships, Federation is also proud to offer financial assistance for families enrolling their children in Eisner Day Camp.

A part of a strategic Federation partnership, eligible families may receive up to \$200 per week, per child in combined assistance. Children enrolled year-round in a Berkshire County school district qualify for a \$100 per week, per child discount from Eisner Day Camp. In addition, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires provides \$100 per week, per child in financial assistance, helping to further reduce the cost for local families.

The application deadline for Federation day camp assistance is April 30, 2026. Families may apply online at: [tinyurl.com/DayCamp2026](http://tinyurl.com/DayCamp2026).

Through both overnight and day camp scholarships, Federation reaffirms its commitment to ensuring that every child in our community has access to meaningful Jewish summer experiences.

*Chag Pesach  
Sameach!*

Wishing you a joyous  
and meaningful Passover  
filled with celebration  
and togetherness.



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## Your Federation Presents

### THE GREY ZONE,

continued from page 1

### Music as a Form of Spiritual Resistance: Terezin's Composers and 'The Grey Zone'

By Ruth Lenore Kaplan / Special to the BJV



This image by Bedřich Fritta, "Film and Reality," was made at Terezin in 1942. It allegorically portrays the way the Nazis showcased "Jewish settlement" for propaganda purposes during World War II to deceive the world of their atrocities. The certain death awaiting their Jewish prisoners is depicted behind a curtain. This image is in the Jewish Museum Berlin. Artwork provided by Terezin Music Foundation.

By way of background, Terezin served as the showcase "Jewish settlement" for propaganda purposes during World War II to deceive the world of Nazi atrocities. In 1944, the Nazis invited representatives of the International Red Cross into the camp to showcase the supposedly comfortable condition of the Jews and to refute word of "the Final Solution." Included in this ruse was a concert of classical music composed and performed by Jewish musicians interned at Terezin. In reality, 33,000 Jews died in the camp. Moreover, Terezin served as a transit stop to extermination camps including Auschwitz for 88,000 to 90,000 prisoners.

So how was this surprising story of Jewish musicians composing and performing music in the midst of extreme hardship and deprivation discovered? In 1988, Ludwig happened to read a biography of Holocaust survivor and scholar Leo Baeck. In his writings, Baeck, who survived Terezin, highlighted the remarkable musical life maintained by the prisoners, which he considered a form of spiritual resistance, despite the extreme hardships of their existence. Ludwig was inspired by this discovery and set out on a journey to Prague to uncover and preserve this rare collection of unknown music, which he hoped would also provide new performance opportunities for his string trio. As a Fulbright Scholar, Ludwig searched through the Terezin archives and spoke with survivors to uncover a treasure trove of musical compositions. In 1991, Ludwig founded the Terezin Music Foundation to preserve and perform works by artists imprisoned in the camp. He continues to serve as its executive director.

What motivated these musicians to compose and perform at Terezin? And how did they manage to smuggle their instruments into the camp? It's noteworthy that Terezin was a collection point for Jews from Germany, Czechoslovakia, and Austria, so its prisoners came from major cultural centers. Despite the fact that inmates were restricted in the number of belongings they could bring with them and musical instruments were outlawed, many musicians

*Yom Hashoah* in the Berkshires this spring will be marked by a very special musical performance. Music educator and violist emeritus of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Mark Ludwig, will present a string trio set to perform three musical pieces composed by Jewish prisoners of the Terezin concentration camp located in the Czech Republic. The program is entitled: "The Grey Zone: Music from Terezin and Holocaust Remembrance."

smuggled in instruments, often cutting them up into pieces, hiding them in their possessions and reassembling them upon arrival to the camp. It was indeed an act of courage and resistance just to hold onto their precious instruments. We can only speculate as to what these composers and musicians were thinking about their future when they engaged in musical pursuits in Terezin. We can only assume they were living in the moment. It is also hard to imagine what was going through the minds of the prisoners who made up their audiences. Most of the composers were murdered by the Nazis, fortuitously leaving behind their musical manuscripts to be discovered in Terezin after liberation in 1945. The music was for the most part not performed post-war, as the Communist regime in Czechoslovakia vilified Jewish composers.

The title of this program is "The Grey Zone," a concept introduced by well-known Italian Holocaust survivor and writer Primo Levi. Levi coined this term in an essay he wrote in his final book *The Drowned and the Saved*. Reflecting on relationships between Nazis and his fellow prisoners in Auschwitz, Levi observed that "the network of human relationships inside the *lagers* (concentration camps) was not simple; it could not be reduced to the two blocs of victims and persecutors." In Levi's "grey zone," oppressors compel their victims to become unwilling accomplices. You could say that the musicians of Terezin possessed a specialized skill that afforded them somewhat of a privileged status that allowed them to survive longer. They arguably occupied the "grey zone" of unwilling accomplices in propaganda films intended to deceive the world. But, in the end, their musical talent could not save them.

One of the very special features of the Terezin Foundation is its commitment not just to preservation but to ongoing education about the Holocaust using this precious music as a vehicle. Ludwig created a curriculum called "Finding a Voice: Musicians in Terezin." The Foundation reaches out to roughly 900,000 students a year providing Holocaust education both in middle and high schools. In addition, they train teachers to use the curriculum. Besides the more obvious targets of the United States and Europe, this curriculum has been shared in far-reaching locations such as Mongolia and Namibia. According to Ludwig, "music and social activism go hand in hand."

The *Yom HaShoah* program on April 12 will be far more than a concert: Ludwig will provide meaningful historical context to each of the musical numbers, as well as commentary on the music itself. Contrary to expectations, the music is not solely sad or depressing. Ludwig calls it "a pallet of emotional content." The concert promises to be a bittersweet experience. Two of the composers were murdered in gas chambers in their forties and one died in his twenties. What other musical compositions could these phenomenal talents have composed if their lives had not been cut short under such barbaric circumstances? What other young musicians could they have influenced?

At the end of the day, *Yom HaShoah* is not just a day to remember 6 million Jewish victims of the worst human atrocity ever committed. It is a day to honor the resistance of our people who persevered and chose life in spite of the darkness. Indeed, the full Hebrew name of the day is "*Yom Hashoah Ve-Gevurah*," the Day of Remembrance of the Holocaust and the Heroism. Let the stunning sounds of Terezin's musical compositions bear witness both to the enduring power of music and to the legacy of courage and resistance this day is intended to honor.

**Ruth Lenore Kaplan** is a writer and consultant with a varied career including academic pursuits in Jewish history, social services and governmental work, private practice as an attorney, and public service as an elected and appointed official dealing with public education. For the past 15 years, she has served the Jewish and Israeli communities in a variety of leadership roles, including director of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies Boston-Haifa Connection and Director of Community Relations for the Consulate General of Israel to New England.

## A Joyous First Night Passover Celebration

### A meaningful Seder experience with handcrafted kosher cuisine

PITTSFIELD – Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host a kosher community Passover Seder at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 1, at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road.

Participants will enjoy an engaging kosher Seder featuring meaningful ritual, lively song, and thoughtful insights that illuminate the Passover story.

The evening includes all ritual foods, ceremonial wine, and a festive four-course meal freshly prepared by Hand Crafted Catering & Events. The menu features Matzo Ball Soup; Crispy Meyer Lemon Chicken, Roasted Fingerling Potatoes, Sweet Potato Kugel, Honey-Glazed Tri-Color Carrots and roasted vegetables. Vegetarian and gluten-free options are available upon advance request. Attendees are invited to bring their own kosher-for-Passover table wine.

Rabbi David Weiner of Knesset Israel will serve as Seder leader. Children of all ages, extended family, and community friends are welcome.

#### About Our New Caterers

Hand Crafted Catering & Events is our proud Seder partner. Hand Crafted was started 11 years ago in New York City and is now based in the Berkshires. They thrive on customizing experiences for each client and event with menus that are ingredient-driven, locally sourced, and thoughtfully produced, without the use of premade and frozen products and hot holding.

Owner Justin Carafotes moved to Richmond with his wife, Rachel Renchner-Kelly, and three-year-old daughter Mila in 2020. As members of the Jewish community, they recognized a need for farm-to-table kosher catering in the



region. Since then, Hand Crafted has successfully served kosher events in the Berkshires.

The family are active members of the local Jewish community, a PJ Library family and new congregants at Knesset Israel, where Mila participates in Tot Shabbat. "We moved here to establish roots and start our family," says Justin. "We're excited to share this Seder meal and to continue feeding our community in the years ahead."

#### If You Go

The cost is **\$45 for adults and \$22 for children ages 6-17**. Children 5 and under are free but must be registered. Advance reservations and payment are required by **March 23**.

Financial assistance is available for anyone who may need it. Please contact Dara Kaufman at [dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org) or (413) 442-4360, ext. 12.

Reservations may be made by calling the Federation at (413) 442-4360, ext. 10, or online at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org).

The Seder is sponsored by Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.

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## Your Federation Presents

### Meaningful to be Together in Community – Now More Than Ever

By Sarah Singer



Based on community feedback about wanting more opportunities to gather for Shabbat, the Berkshire Jewish Collective (BJC) recently hosted a Shabbat dinner in the home of Noah Palmer and Hana Askren. Noah and Hana regularly host Shabbaton gatherings and were excited to partner with the BJC to open their table to the broader community. Fourteen people attended, including families, singles, and couples, with a mix of returning participants and new faces. A goal of BJC is to connect folks with the broader Jewish community. As such, we helped ensure a member has a welcoming Passover Seder by sharing the Federation's community Seder; multiple attendees were invited to join family Seders as well.

Especially in light of the news from Israel and the Middle East, folks shared how meaningful it was to be together in community – now more than ever. This upcoming year also presents an open opportunity for community members to get involved. Reach out to me at sarah@lifesyouradventure.com for more information, to help plan an event, or to join our leadership steering committee.

And save the date – we're planning to do something on Sunday, May 3 to celebrate Lag B'Omer. Plans were not final at press time, so contact me and keep your eyes open for Federation e-blasts/email/social media once details are confirmed.

The Berkshire Jewish Collective is a new initiative of Jewish Federation of the Berkshires for young adults in their 20s, 30s, and 40s, funded in part by a grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

### JEWISH LITERARY VOICES



A Federation series in collaboration with the Jewish Book Council

**Thursday, April 16 at 10:45 a.m. (virtual)**  
*The Women's Orchestra of Auschwitz: A Story of Survival*  
 with biographer and correspondent Anne Sebba.

**Thursday, May 7 at 7:00 p.m. (virtual)**  
*Eminent Jews: Bernstein, Brooks, Friedan, Mailer*  
 with author David Denby.

**Friday, June 26 at 10:45 a.m.**  
**In-person at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire**  
*Carole King: She Made the Earth Move*  
 with journalist Jane Eisner.

**REGISTER AT JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG**



**Create a Jewish Legacy Campaign**  
 Please remember the Jewish Community in your will.

## WHY IS THIS NIGHT DIFFERENT FROM ALL OTHER NIGHTS?



### KOSHER PASSOVER COMMUNITY SEDER

**April 1 at 6:30 p.m.**

Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield

Join us for a joyous kosher Passover experience! Enjoy a sumptuous, homemade Passover dinner and traditional ritual foods, freshly prepared by Hand Crafted Catering and Events, of NYC and the Berkshires. Bring your own kosher for Passover table wine. All ages welcome!

Adults \$45. Children ages 6-17, \$22. Kids 5 and under are free  
**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED BY MARCH 23, 2026**



**REGISTER AT TINYURL.COM/2026PASSOVER OR (413) 442-4360, EXT. 10**

No one will be turned away for lack of funds. For assistance, email [dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org).

## LOCAL NEWS

## Joey Weisenberg to Bring “Music is Breath, Song is Life” Concert to Lenox



LENOX – The Berkshires' Jewish community will be treated to an afternoon of soul-stirring song and spirit this spring when Congregation Ahavath Sholom presents Joey Weisenberg in concert: “Music is Breath, Song is Life” on Sunday, May 17 at 3 p.m. The performance will take place at the Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre at Shakespeare & Company, 70 Kemble Street, Lenox.

This marks Weisenberg's first appearance in the Berkshires, and local organizers are anticipating an event that transcends performance – a communal experience of music, prayer, and joy. “We look forward to filling the room with song and spirit,” said Dawn Rosenberg McKay, publicity chair for Congregation Ahavath Sholom. “It's not just a concert – it's a celebration of connection through music.”

### A Visionary Voice in Jewish Music

A celebrated multi-instrumentalist, singer, and composer, Joey Weisenberg has become one of the most influential voices in contemporary Jewish music. As the founder and director of Hadar's Rising Song Institute, based in Philadelphia, Weisenberg has dedicated his career to helping communities rediscover the power of collective song.

Weisenberg's compositions – deeply rooted in Jewish tradition yet remarkably fresh and alive – have inspired congregations and musicians worldwide. His books, *Building Singing Communities* and *The Torah of Music*, explore the spiritual dimensions of music-making and earned him wide acclaim, including a National Jewish Book Award in 2017.

“I really love singing with people,” Weisenberg has said. “There's nothing more joyful than striking a chord, starting a song, and having everyone join in. Music reminds us of our creative spirit and our shared humanity.”

### The Vision Behind the Music

Under Weisenberg's leadership, the Rising Song Institute has become a hub for musicians and prayer leaders seeking to revitalize Jewish communal singing. Through immersive experiences, study, and innovative musical collaborations, the Institute fosters what Weisenberg calls “joyful, vibrant Jewish song.”

Part of the Hadar Institute in Manhattan, Rising Song builds on Hadar's mission to inspire deeper engagement with Jewish life through learning, prayer, and community.

### An Afternoon of Inspiration in Lenox

Hosted in partnership with Shakespeare & Company, one of the nation's leading performing arts organizations, the concert venue promises an intimate yet powerful setting for this gathering of voices.

Join Congregation Ahavath Sholom on May 17 for what promises to be an unforgettable afternoon of song, spirit, and community – a joyful reminder that truly, music is breath, and song is life.

Tickets are available through Eventbrite at \$36 for students, \$72 for adults, and \$180 for supporters.

For more information, visit [www.ahavathsholom.com](http://www.ahavathsholom.com), call 413-528-4197, or contact Dawn Rosenberg McKay at [CASGB.Publicity@gmail.com](mailto:CASGB.Publicity@gmail.com).

## Second Night Passover Seder at Temple Anshe Amunim

PITTSFIELD – On Thursday, April 2 at 5:30 p.m., join the Temple Anshe Amunim community for a joyful, delicious, and thought-provoking Seder.

This second night Seder, led by Rabbi Val Lieber, will be warm, inclusive, accessible, and relevant. The menu will include matzah ball soup, brisket, scrumptious desserts and lots of sides. Vegetarian and gluten free entrees and soup will be served as well.

Please register no later than March 25 at this link: [tinyurl.com/passover26](https://tinyurl.com/passover26), or contact the Temple office by email [templeoffice@ansheamunim.org](mailto:templeoffice@ansheamunim.org), or by phone: (413) 442-5910.

Temple Anshe Amunim is at 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield.

## Congregation Beth Israel Announces Winter – Early Spring Services and Programs

NORTH ADAMS – Congregation Beth Israel of the Berkshires (CBI) continues its rich schedule of Shabbat worship, learning, and community programs through late winter and early spring, with offerings both in person and on Zoom.

### Shabbat Services

Regular Shabbat morning services will be held Saturday, April 25 and May 23 at 9:30 a.m. at CBI. Services will feature words of Torah, prayer, study, and song in the spirit of Shabbat's sweetness, framed by the sanctuary's sweeping views of the natural world.

Kabbalat Shabbat services take place March 27 (via Zoom) and in person at CBI on April 10 and May 15 at 7 p.m. All are welcome to usher in Shabbat with prayer, music, poetry, and Torah teaching. On some weeks, the CBI choir and musicians will join Rabbi Rachel Barenblat in leading services, offering a reflective transition from the week into sacred time.

CBI will also host a First Friday Shabbat Zoom Gathering on May 1 at 7:30 p.m., bringing the community together online to light candles, bless wine and challah, and share conversation around the virtual Shabbat table. The Zoom link will be sent to those who RSVP via the CBI website.

### Jewish Journeys Shabbat

On Saturday, May 9 at 10 a.m., join CBI for a special family Shabbat interweaving the morning service with opportunities for Jewish Journeys students to share what they have learned. Services will be led by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat and Rabbi Jarah Greenfield. Please bring a vegetarian dish to share following the conclusion of services. All are welcome! *This event is a partnership between Congregation Beth Israel & Nefesh, with major financial support from Sally Gottesman & the Harold Grinspoon Foundation as well as funding from other private donors.*

### Soul Spa Torah Study

A weekly Zoom “Soul Spa” Torah Study meets Saturdays at 10 a.m. on March 28, April 4, 11, 18 & 25, and May 2, 16 & 23. Jointly led by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat (CBI) and Rabbi David Markus (Congregation Shir Ami), the group explores the weekly parashah through women's commentaries and midrash. Mourner's Kaddish is included when there is a *yahrzeit*.

RSVPs for all services are requested at [cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events](http://cbiberkshires.com/calendar-of-events). Some dates may be subject to change; congregants are encouraged to check the calendar for updates.

## Rabbi Mori Lidar Returns to Hevreh This Spring

GREAT BARRINGTON – Hevreh of Southern Berkshire will welcome back Rabbi Mori Lidar from April 27 through May 10 as part of the prestigious Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion Golden HaNassi Fellows program.



Rabbi Jodie Gordon and Rabbi Mori Lidar

Rabbi Lidar, who lives in Misgav, Israel, and was ordained at HUC in Jerusalem, first joined the Hevreh community last summer for a two-week residency. During that visit, he immersed himself in the rhythms and rituals of Jewish life in the Berkshires, building connections with congregants and experiencing the vibrancy of the local Jewish community.

This spring marks the second of his two fellowship visits. In addition to participating in congregational life, Rabbi Lidar will spend time with Hevreh's Religious School community and experience B'nai Mitzvah celebrations at the synagogue. Community members will have several opportunities to learn with him and engage in conversation.

The public is invited to attend the following programs:

- Two-Part Lunch n' Learn with Rabbi Lidar on Wednesdays, April 29 and May 6 at noon.
- Parent Conversation Circle with Rabbi Lidar on Sunday, May 3 at 11 a.m.

Advance RSVP is requested by emailing [info@hevreh.org](mailto:info@hevreh.org)

The Golden HaNassi Fellowship is an initiative of Hebrew Union College–Jewish Institute of Religion that supports rabbinic leaders through international community residencies and shared learning experiences.

For more information, visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) or contact the Hevreh office at (413) 528-6378 or [info@hevreh.org](mailto:info@hevreh.org)

## Chabad of the Berkshires to Host Joyous and Inspirational Passover Seder Celebration

LENOX – Chabad of the Berkshires is thrilled to announce that it will be hosting a magnificent Passover Seder on Wednesday, April 1 at 7:30 p.m., inviting all members of the community to join in this festive occasion. Regardless of background or affiliation, everyone is warmly welcomed to partake in this special holiday celebration.

Come and experience the exuberance of Passover as we gather together to commemorate our liberation from Egyptian slavery. The Seder will take place at Chabad of the Berkshires' new location in downtown Lenox, where guests will not only enjoy a delicious Seder dinner but also witness the rich Passover traditions.

The Passover Seder will feature a delectable feast that will include brisket, vegetarian options and traditional Passover foods that will delight your taste buds, including the Seder plate which holds symbolic items representing different elements of the Passover story. Indulge in the flavors of the season

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## LOCAL NEWS

while reveling in the company of your family, friends, and fellow community members.

Retelling the story of the Exodus from Egypt, Rabbi Levi Volovik will share insights and reflections to enhance your understanding and appreciation of this significant event. Prepare to be moved by the power of the narrative as we come together in unity and celebration.

"The Passover Seder is a time for us to connect with our roots, express gratitude, and rejoice in our freedom," said Rabbi Volovik. "We invite everyone to be a part of this meaningful experience. We believe that by uniting as a diverse community, we can foster understanding and harmony."

Guests are encouraged to invite their friends, neighbors, and coworkers to join in this momentous occasion. Together, embrace the spirit of Passover and cherish the memories created.

Cost: \$45 per person. To reserve your spot for the Passover Seder, please contact Chabad of the Berkshires at (413) 499-9899, or jewishberkshires.com. Don't miss out on this unique opportunity to commemorate Passover in a joyous and inspiring atmosphere.

## Chabad of Williamstown Opens Its Doors for Jewish Engagement in North County

WILLIAMSTOWN – Co-directors Rabbi Mendel and Tzivia Volovik have been hosting dinners, services, and gatherings at the new Chabad of Williamstown for the last several months and would like to get to know you. They state that their "sole purpose is to create a warm, welcoming environment to explore and experience Judaism's warm and relevant spiritual inspirations in a non-judgmental and inviting atmosphere."

Rabbi Volovik – son of Rabbi Levi and Sara Volovik of Chabad of the Berkshires in Lenox – reports that on some Friday evenings, more than 30 students have attended Shabbat dinners and that he and Tzivia are meeting more people and making more connections through challah bakes, barbecues, holiday events, and their Chicken Soup Express delivering Jewish penicillin to dorm rooms and residences.

A longer article about the Berkshires' new Chabad House will appear in the next issue of the BJV. For now, the Voloviks want the community to know that the new Chabad is open to meet the needs of the Jewish community in North County in any way they can. Students, parents, faculty, alumni, and community members should feel free to reach out.

For more information on Chabad of Williamstown and to contact Rabbi Mendel and Tzivia Volovik, visit [chabadwilliamstown.org](http://chabadwilliamstown.org) or call (413) 770-1185.

## Brunch-and-Learn at Knesset Israel Explores Solutions to Plastic Pollution

PITTSFIELD – Knesset Israel will host a Brunch-and-Learn program, "Beyond Plastics," on Sunday, April 26, beginning with a bagel brunch at 10 a.m.

KI member Jenny Gitlitz, director of Solutions to Plastic Pollution at Beyond Plastics, will discuss where the United States stands today on environmentalism, recycling, and green building – and what steps communities and policymakers can take to address plastic pollution.

Beyond Plastics is a nationwide project based at Bennington College dedicated to ending plastic pollution. In her role, Gitlitz works with activists and lawmakers to draft and advance legislation aimed at reducing plastic production and consumption, eliminating toxic chemicals from plastic packaging, and challenging what she describes as the false promise of "chemical recycling."

An alumna of the Energy and Resources Group at University of California, Berkeley and a recipient of the Switzer Environmental Fellowship, Gitlitz brings more than 30 years of experience in research, program development, and legislative advocacy related to recycling and sustainable building practices.

The cost is \$5, which includes brunch. Advance registration is requested at [knessetisrael.org/rsvp](http://knessetisrael.org/rsvp).

## Second Night Passover Seder with Hevreh

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Thursday, April 2 at 5 p.m., celebrate the second night Seder with Hevreh of Southern Berkshire with a traditional Passover dinner. The Seder will be led by Rabbi Jodie Gordon. Dinner will be catered by The Marketplace. Pre-paid reservations are required. Friends and family are welcome. Financial assistance is available upon request.

Last day to register is March 18. For more information, visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) or contact the Hevreh office at (413) 528-6378 or [info@hevreh.org](mailto:info@hevreh.org)

### Matzah Brei Cook-Off & Breakfast

Calling all matzah brei makers! Whether you prefer sweet or savory, Hevreh invites you to come

down to the Hevreh kitchen on Saturday, April 4 at 9 a.m. to cook up a batch of your matzah brei for the 4th annual Matzah Brei Cook-off! Bring your favorite pan and toppings – Hevreh will provide the matzah, eggs, and oil. Everyone is welcome for the tasting!

For more information, visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) or contact the synagogue office at [info@hevreh.org](mailto:info@hevreh.org).

## Rabbi Pamela Wax Celebrates Publication of New Poetry Collection

PITTSFIELD – Rabbi Pamela Wax will read from her newly-published poetry collection, *Every Single Beast of My Heart*, on Monday, April 20, at 7 p.m. at Knesset Israel. The evening will include a reading, conversation, and Q&A, followed by light refreshments.

Published by Sheila-Na-Gig Editions, *Every Single Beast of My Heart* is framed through the lens of the five Zen remembrances. The collection weaves together poems on aging, mortality, myth, and folklore in a meditation on impermanence. Themes of loss – including the narrator's brother's suicide – along with Wax's role as a rabbi and her deep connection to the natural world, inform the spiritual and feminist voice that grounds her work.

Wax's poetry has appeared in more than 60 literary journals and has received three Best of the Net, nominations as well as several poetry awards. She is the author of two previous collections, *Walking the Labyrinth* (Main Street Rag, 2022) and *Starter Mothers* (Finishing Line Press, 2023).

Wax lives in North Adams with her husband, Chaim Bronstein, and serves as Director of Adult Education and Programming at Knesset Israel.

Copies of *Every Single Beast of My Heart* will be available for purchase and signing. RSVP at [knessetisrael.org/rsvp](http://knessetisrael.org/rsvp).

## Chabad of the Berkshires' Chametz 'Sale'

The holiday of Passover commemorates the Jewish people's exodus from Egypt in the year 1313 BCE. During their hurried exit, they were not given enough time to bake bread for their journey, and were forced to leave with unleavened and unbaked dough. The dough was immediately baked by the scorching desert sun, turning it into matzah.

Every year on Passover (this year beginning on the evening of April 1 through April 9) Jews are obligated to eat matzah. Additionally, it is prohibited to

**CHAMETZ,**

*continued on page 20*



**The Biton family lost three children to an Iranian missile before Purim – Yaakov (17), Avigail (15), and Sarah (13).**

Their only surviving child is Rachel – four years old. The Jewish Agency was with them in their darkest moment.

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## COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS APPLICATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 24

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires offers a number of scholarships for graduating seniors and college students based on merit and/or financial need.

### The Henry Simkin and Frances Simkin Schiller and Dr. Stanley and Faye Simkin Scholarship

Awarded to a graduating senior who has demonstrated high academic achievement, leadership, and participation in our Jewish Community

### Sandra Kronick Smith College Scholarship

Awarded to a graduating female senior or student attending college or vocational/technical school, who demonstrates financial need, is of good character and possesses a good work ethic.

Apply online at:

[jewishberkshires.org/college-scholarships](http://jewishberkshires.org/college-scholarships)

Application information will be available in school guidance offices in February.



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# Your Federation Presents

## Federation Received a Warm Welcome from Berkshire Friends in Florida

Thank you to the many Federation supporters who came out to connect with Executive Director Dara Kaufman, board president Arlene Schiff, Senior Development Officer Rebekah Steinfeld, and other Berkshire friends during our February get-togethers in the Sunshine State. A special thank you to our hosts, Elaine and Danny Katz in Miami/Coral Gables, Carol and Irv Smokler in Boca Raton, Mimi and Ken Heyman in Palm Beach Gardens, Sue Shimelman and Judy and Paul May in Sarasota, and Deborah and Steve Schreier in Naples for their hospitality at these events on behalf of Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.

See you again in the spring and summer!



  
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# Your Federation Presents

## Painting, Potting, Planting – Plus Passover Palooza Preview

By Paige Wright / Coordinator of PJ Library

A HUGE thank you to Solarium Plant Shop for helping us celebrate Tu B'Shevat!

We had so much fun painting, potting, and planting! We ate some yummy Tu B'Shevat snacks, let our creativity flow, got our hands dirty (literally!), learned about plants, and celebrated the promise of spring!

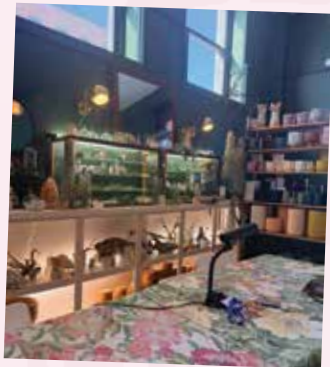
Missed out on the fun? Don't worry, more fun events are coming soon. Our next PJ Library celebration will be a Passover Art Palooza. Join us on Sunday, March 29 at 2 p.m. at The Foundry, 2 Harris Street in West Stockbridge. We will prepare

for Passover with hands-on fun as we create beautiful Miriam's Cups for your Seder table and decorate your very own afikomen bags to take home.

Come ready to celebrate, craft and get excited for the holiday. Special pre-Passover snacks!

Have questions? Email Paige at [pwright@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:pwright@jewishberkshires.org)

*PJ Library is made possible for Berkshire families through a community partnership of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, the Spitz Tuchman Family Fund, the Jewish Women's Foundation, and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.*



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# Jewish Federation of the Berkshires – Distribution of Resources in 2025

## \$1,786,268

*Includes distribution of annual campaign, earned income, Israel crisis funds, and endowments as of Dec. 31, 2025*

### Sustaining Jewish Community

- Hate Has No Home Here
- Combatting Antisemitism
- Jewish Berkshires LiveSecure
- Security Grants & Training
- Berkshire Jewish Voice
- General Programming
- Jewish Community Day
- Shabbat Across the Berkshires
- Chanukah at NightWood at The Mount
- Community Havdalah
- Community Seder
- Middle East Update
- Connecting with Community Programs
- Knosh & Knowledge Programs
- Community Relations & Advocacy
- Holocaust Remembrance Event
- Program Grants for Local Congregations
- Jewish Federations of North America

### Fundraising

- Annual Campaign Development
- Communications & Marketing
- Legacy Circle Program
- Major Donors Program

### Israel & Overseas

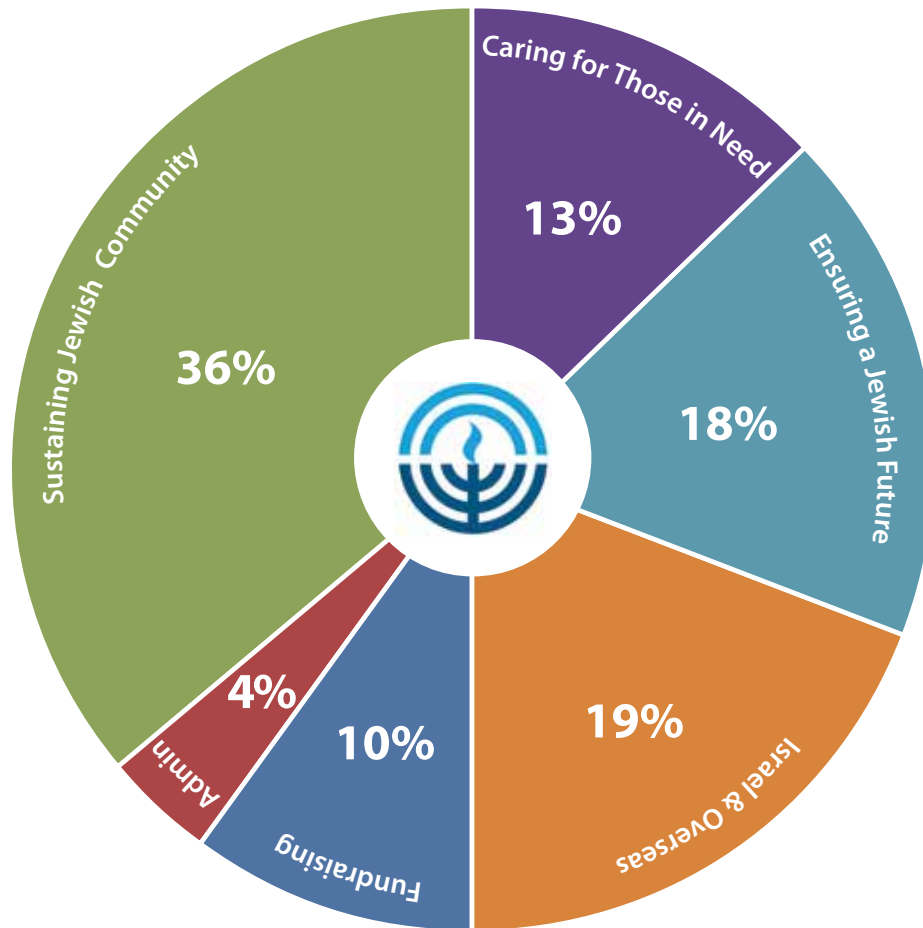
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|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| ISRAEL CRISIS FUND               | Haifa Women’s Crisis Shelter                  |
| Jewish Agency for Israel         | Israel Association for Child Protection (ELI) |
| Joint Distribution Committee     | Meir Panim                                    |
| World ORT                        | Neve Michael Children’s Village               |
| Partnership2Gether- Afula Gilboa | Yad L’Kashish                                 |
| Mishkan Ein Harod Art Museum     | iRep Religious Pluralism Grants               |
| Ethiopian National Project       |                                               |

### Caring for Those in Need

- Food & Emergency Assistance
- Hebrew Free Loans
- Community Social Worker
- Meals on Wheels
- Older Adult Kosher Lunches
- Older Adult Holiday Care Packages
- Tikkun Olam Volunteer Opportunities
- Ahavath Sholem Cemetery
- Food & Fuel Insecurity
- LA Wildfire Relief

### Ensuring a Jewish Future

- PJ Library Books & Resources
- Family Programming
- Family Volunteer Opportunities
- Jewish Education Grants to TAA, KI, CBI, and Hevreh
- Israel Travel/Study Scholarships
- Jewish Camp Scholarships
- Public School Advocacy
- Taglit Birthright
- UMass Hillel
- Williams Jewish Religious Center
- Young Adult Initiative
- Anti-Bias Education in Public Schools



## Building Community | Strengthening Identity | Caring for those in Need

### Across the Berkshires

#### Kosher Hot Meals & Care Visits

Provided more than **3,300 nutritious meals, 500 holiday care packages, and visits** for hundreds of older adults.

#### Social Services

Provided case management and counseling, through a Jewish lens, by a licensed social worker to more than **92 community members**.

#### Emergency & Specific Assistance

Provided **87 holiday food cards, emergency grants, and interest-free loans** to ensure a **safety net** for community members.

#### Jewish Education

Provided a high-quality Jewish education for **137 children and young adults** through Jewish education grants to TAA, KI, CBI and Hevreh’s religious schools.

#### Family Programming

Supported programming for over **220 children, parents, and grandparents**, strengthening their connections to the Jewish community and helping them build supportive relationships with Jewish peers.

#### PJ Library & PJ Our Way

Distributed more than **1,582 Jewish children’s books** to **131 children**, nurturing their Jewish identity and helping their families embrace Jewish values and traditions.

#### Camp, Israel & Campus Life

Funded transformative Jewish camp and Israel experiences for **42 local youths** and enhanced Jewish life for over **2,500 college students** at UMass Amherst and Williams College.

#### Young Adult Engagement

Engaged over **50 Jewish young adults** (20s-40s) through the **Berkshire Jewish Collective**, including Shabbat dinners, intentional ritual gatherings, and holiday celebrations.

#### Community Programming

Engaged more than **6,400 participants** in celebrating Jewish life and connecting as a community through more than **119 cultural, educational, and holiday programs**.

#### Berkshire Jewish Voice

Primary resource for **over 5,000 readers**, engaging our community in Jewish life and broadening our spiritual, political, and cultural understanding.

#### Community Relations & Advocacy

Provided proactive **advocacy confronting antisemitism** in our schools and community, supporting **anti-bias training for students** and **professional development for educators** in Berkshire County schools.

#### Security & Resilience

Delivered security trainings, provided grants, and implemented an incident alert system, while fostering strong partnerships with local law enforcement to safeguard our community.

### In Israel & Overseas

**Through JFNA’s Israel Emergency Campaign, we have helped provide vital relief for millions of Israelis from every faith and background, focused on these critical areas:**

**Lifeline Services:** Helped provide lifesaving services, including food assistance, clothing, housing for evacuees, financial aid, medical care, spiritual care, classes for evacuated children, and support to the healthcare system.

**Medical & Trauma Relief:** Supported medical equipment, dedicated hotlines, training for thousands of caregivers and responders, and ongoing support to emergency teams. Helped provide direct care to more than a million people, including first responders, lone soldiers, families, and caregivers coping with the loss, injury, or abduction of their relatives and friends.

**Economic Relief & Recovery:** Supported economic relief efforts for Israelis struggling financially, investing in frontline communities, and providing loans to businesses to help ensure a resilient and stable economy.

**In addition, through our Annual Campaign, we provided direct support in Israel** to after-school programs for **at-risk students**, a shelter for **domestic violence survivors**, a supportive home for **abandoned youth**, counseling for **victims of sexual abuse**, food security for **low-income individuals and youth**, and assistance for the **frail and elderly**.

***This is just a sampling of how, together, we made a difference in the lives of others this year.***

# The 2025 Annual Campaign raised \$1,496,995

## Thank you for helping ensure a vibrant and secure Berkshire Jewish community!

*"It is not what one says, but rather what one does that makes all the difference in the world" – Pirkei Avot 1:17*

Thank you to our 1,140 donors and many community volunteers who helped make Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' 2025 campaign a resounding success! Together, we bring dignity and care to the vulnerable, engage the next generation, and create meaningful and vibrant Jewish life across the Berkshires and beyond.



Federation Board at Jewish Community Day

\* denotes Lion of Judah-woman's individual gift of \$5,000 or more

# denotes individual donations

^ denotes of blessed memory

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continued on page 16

Justin Durham, Circus & The Bard, 2025. Photo by Nile Scott Studios.

# SEASON 2026

**Free Event**  
**COMMUNITY DAY**  
SATURDAY, MAY 23  
**FIREFLIES**  
by Matthew Barber  
JUNE 19-JULY 19  
Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre

**TWELFTH NIGHT**  
by William Shakespeare  
JULY 4-26  
Outdoors at the Arthur S. Waldstein Amphitheatre

**CIRCUS & THE BARD: THE NEXT CHAPTER**  
Co-created by Allyn Burrows, Robin Eldridge & Pedro Reis  
JULY 16-26  
Tina Packer Playhouse

**SHAKE IT UP: THE REMIX**  
Co-created by Allyn Burrows & Jacob Ming-Trent  
JULY 29-AUGUST 2  
Tina Packer Playhouse

**FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE**  
by Terrence McNally  
JULY 30-AUGUST 23  
Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre

**HAMLET**  
by William Shakespeare  
AUGUST 13-30  
Tina Packer Playhouse

**MIDSUMMER DREAMERS**  
Created & Performed by Nick Nudler & Kirsten Peacock  
SEPTEMBER 1-3  
Tina Packer Playhouse

**PLAYS IN PROCESS**  
AN INTRODUCTION TO NEW WORKS  
SEPTEMBER 1-3

**THE NORWEGIANS**  
by C. Denby Swanson  
SEPTEMBER 4-OCTOBER 4  
Elayne P. Bernstein Theatre

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- PLUS**
- \$100 per week, per child, financial assistance from the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

**Application Deadline: APRIL 30, 2026**

**Apply Online: [tinyurl.com/DayCamp2026](https://tinyurl.com/DayCamp2026)**

*Funding for this program is made possible by donors to Federation's annual campaign.*

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# Thank You!

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continued from page 15



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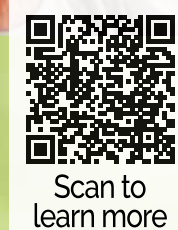
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Please call the organizations directly to confirm service times or to inquire about membership.

Learn more about our Jewish community and find great events on the community calendar at: [JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG](http://JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG)

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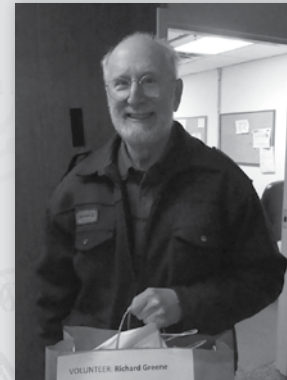
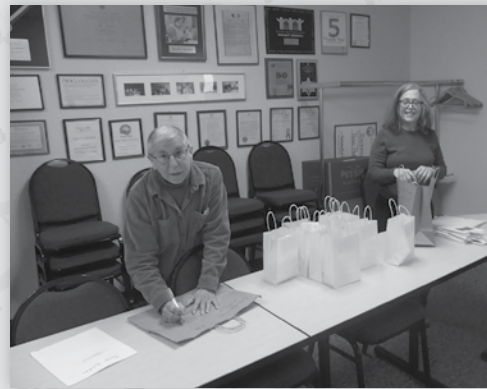
## Baked, Bagged, Delivered – Purim Gift Bags Spread the Joy of the Holiday

*As always, volunteers were vital*

By Heidi Katz / Coordinator of Volunteers

Our Purim gift bag project was another resounding success, bringing the joyous spirit of the holiday to seniors at home, in care facilities, and in hospitals throughout Berkshire County. We had over 40 volunteers (baking, packing, and delivering) and delivered around 1800 hamantaschen to about 300 people.

We can't do it without our greatest resource – our volunteers. To find out how you can help your Jewish community, contact me at [federation@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:federation@jewishberkshires.org).



“Music is Breath, Song is Life”

## JOEY WEISENBERG IN CONCERT

Sunday, May 17, 2026 at 3:00 p.m.

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Order tickets at <https://joeyweisenberginconcert.eventbrite.com>



## LOCAL NEWS

### CHAMETZ,

continued from page 11

eat, possess, or derive any benefit from leavened food items, 'chametz' in Hebrew (pronounced: ha-metz), throughout Passover.

In the weeks preceding Passover, Jewish families around the world spend much time cleaning and scrubbing their homes in order to make it 'chametz free.'

Chametz remaining in a Jew's possession during Passover, may not be used, eaten, bought or sold even after the holiday. Therefore, any chametz left indisposed must be sold to a non-Jew, and may then be 'bought back' following Passover.

All chametz that will not be eaten or disposed of before Passover, and all chametz utensils that will not be thoroughly cleaned by then, should be stored away. The storage area should be locked or taped shut, and leased to the non-Jew at the time of the chametz sale.

Since there are many Halachic (Jewish legal) intricacies in this sale, only a competent rabbi should be entrusted with its execution. The rabbi acts as the agent to both sell the chametz to the non-Jew on the morning before Passover begins, and to buy it back on the evening it ends.

This year, Rabbi Levi Volovik of Chabad of the Berkshires, has created an innovative way for local Jews to sell their chametz conveniently, from the comfort of their own homes. He has posted an online 'Sale of Chametz' form on Chabad's website, jewishberkshires.com to enable visitors to empower him to act on their behalf in the sale.

With this quick and free form, Rabbi Volovik hopes that more Jews will avoid possessing chametz this Passover. Please try to complete the form no later than March 30. Visit jewishberkshires.com

### Musical Shabbat Celebrations at KI

PITTSFIELD – This spring, Knesset Israel will host two special musical Shabbat celebrations.

#### Musical Minyan and Community Dinner

KI will host a Musical Minyan and Community Dinner on Friday, April 17, beginning with an acoustic, family-friendly Shabbat service at 5:45 p.m., followed by a kosher community dinner at 6:45 p.m.

The evening service will feature participatory music and a welcoming atmosphere for all ages. The dinner, held immediately after services, is open to the community; advance registration is required to attend the meal.

The program is sponsored by Knesset Israel and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. The cost for dinner is \$25 for adults, and free for those under 18.

Knesset Israel is located at 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield. To register for the dinner, visit knessetisrael.org/RSVP.

#### Shirei Shabbat Service

Knesset Israel will hold a musical, family-friendly "Shirei Shabbat" service on Friday, May 1, at 5:45 p.m.

The service will feature spirited singing and a warm, welcoming Shabbat experience for congregants and community members of all ages. There will be no dinner following this service.

For more information, visit knessetisrael.org.

### Passover at Congregation Beth Israel

NORTH ADAMS – *Second Night Community Passover Seder on Thursday, April 2 at 6 p.m.*

All are welcome to join CBI for a family-friendly Second Night Community Passover Seder! Relive the Exodus through ritual, poetry, song, and story. Savor familiar melodies, stirring poetry, an impromptu Exodus play put on by community kids, and more.

A full kosher-for-Pesach meal will be provided (with vegetarian option); bring your own kosher for Passover table wine if you would like something other than Manischewitz. Tickets are \$50/adult & \$8/child (ages 5-18); children under age 5 are free. Tickets must be paid for in full prior to the day of the event. If you would like to attend but the cost makes you hesitate, please email Rabbi Rachel Barenblat at rabbi@cbiberkshires.com. Please RSVP via the CBI website at cbiberkshires.com/event/passover-2026 by no later than Monday, March 23.

### CBI Book Club Tackles *Love and Shame and Love*

The Congregation Beth Israel Book Club meets Thursday, April 30 at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom to discuss to discuss *Love and Shame and Love* by Peter Orner. Covering four generations of the Popper family struggling to remain afloat, Orner illuminates the countless ways that love both makes us whole and completely unravels us. A comic and sorrowful tapestry of memory of connection and disconnection, *Love and Shame and Love* explores the universals with stunning originality and wisdom.

On Thursday, May 28 at 7:30 p.m. on Zoom, join the CBI Book Club over Zoom to discuss *This is Not About Us* by Allegra Goodman. Goodman's

newest novel is a kaleidoscopic portrait of a modern American family – steadfast, complicated, begrudging, and loving – centering on the strained relationship between two sisters, with a simple misunderstanding causing a rift that spans generations

Those who plan on joining for either session should RSVP via the CBI website at cbiberkshires.com/series/book-club in order to receive the Zoom information.

### The Return of Ramblin' with the Rav Hikes

Ramblin' with the Rav hikes feature a morning of enjoying the Berkshires – exercise, a beautiful view, good company, a bit of Torah, and fantastic conversation on the trail. This is a wonderful opportunity to build relationships and community while enjoying the outdoors. Rabbi David Weiner, spiritual leader of Knesset Israel, leads the hikes, which typically take place on weekday and Sunday mornings in the warmer months of the year.

Prospective participants must register in advance for each hike at knessetisrael.org/rsvp. Registrants will receive information about where and when to meet, the route, what to wear, what to bring, etc., and be added to an email list for communication before the hike. Poor weather may lead to a postponement to the rain date, usually communicated the day before, and low RSVP numbers may cause a cancellation a day or two in advance. Occasionally there may be itinerary changes because of trail conditions.

Each route is unique, with its own difficulty, distance, total elevation gain and approximate duration. Driving time is not included in the time estimate. Participants must be responsible and realistic regarding their pace, fitness and stamina.

All hikes are potentially family-friendly; most welcome leashed dogs as well. Members and non-members of Knesset Israel are welcome, and there is no charge for the program.

Questions? Please contact Rabbi Weiner by email at rabbiweiner@outlook.com.

#### Berkshire High Road

Moderate, 6+ miles, <1000', 2.5-3 hours one way

On Sunday, April 19, climb a steep hill alongside a cascading brook to the expansive views over Richmond at the Lenox Fire Tower. Another mile brings you to a spectacular overlook of Pittsfield. Walk another mile and a half to Mahanna Cobble, with its unspoiled view of Berkshire County forests and ridges. Descend via the Bousquet ski area. Before the leaves come in, the view from the ridge is extraordinary! Hiking pace ~2mph. No dogs on this hike, please.

Rain date is Sunday, April 26. Register for meeting place (trailhead) and time.



Berkshire High Road



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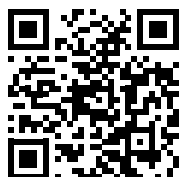


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## BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

### Immersing Oneself in the Blessings of *L'dor V'dor*

By Carol Targum / Special to the BJV

Two decades ago, my husband and I moved to Boston to be closer to our family and our second home in the Berkshires. As we learned about the Jewish community, we repeatedly heard about a new, innovative institution called Mayyim Hayyim.

Mayyim Hayyim's mission is "to reclaim and reinvent one of Judaism's most ancient rituals – immersion in the mikveh – for contemporary spiritual use; to teach about this resource to all who are interested; and to make the mikveh a sacred space that is open and accessible to all Jews and those who are becoming Jews." Mayyim Hayyim is a place that is inclusive, pluralistic, creative, accessible and relevant to 21st century life. We were intrigued.

Several months later, my husband was diagnosed with prostate cancer, had surgery, and made a complete recovery. He noted that for the rest of his life, he would have to check the box... "Cancer." Having recently taken a tour of Mayyim Hayyim, I casually suggested he might want to immerse to mark this moment of being cancer-free. "Yes!" I was shocked by his response. After speaking with our rabbi, he developed a ceremony that met my husband's desire to capture the spirit of surviving cancer.

Following his immersion, my husband's eyes glowed. The stress had drained from his face. He leaned over to me quietly and whispered, "I'm free."

The Jewish tradition has many ceremonies and customs, both formal and informal, to mark meaningful moments: a bris or a baby naming, saying *kaddish* for a loved one, placing a mezuzah on a doorpost, and eating traditional foods on holidays. What about the other moments, transitions, and occasions in our lives that are not prescribed by Jewish law or custom? When can we reflect on major life changes, mark events, or express gratitude with intention (*kavanah*)?

*Immersing allowed me to express everything that was in my heart – this ancient ritual had become my own very personal prayer.*

Since its opening in 2004, Mayyim Hayyim has been a fountain of creativity that has inspired new ceremonies to meet the needs and desires of contemporary life in a Jewish context. Now there are immersion ceremonies surrounding creating a family, B'nai Mitzvah (for both child and parent), blessings for milestone birthdays, for honoring the process of coming out, becoming a grandparent, finalizing a divorce, healing both physically and mentally, completing *Sh'loshim* (30 days of mourning), and many others.

Before the birth of my first grandchild, I knew I wanted to mark this wonderful transition of a new and long-awaited role for me. I wanted to express my feelings, all the hopes and dreams within me, and somehow proclaim this special and wondrous transition. I knew that the way for me to do this was by immersing in the mikveh.

I asked my daughter-in-law to witness my immersion at Mayyim Hayyim. Six weeks later, she stood on the pool deck with my infant granddaughter in her



arms. I immersed to acknowledge the blessing of experiencing *l'dor v'dor* – generation to generation – the ongoing cycle of life. I prayed to be fully present for this precious child, to give her what was best and pure in me, to teach her Jewish values, and to open my heart so that I could learn from her. Immersing allowed me to express everything that was in my heart – this ancient ritual had become my own very personal prayer.

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is the glue that binds together this Jewish community. And its mission of sustaining and nurturing Jewish community aligns with the mission of Mayyim Hayyim. Federation partners with local rabbis and synagogues, many of whom choose Mayyim Hayyim as the place to conduct conversions and life cycle events, ritually and spiritually.

Berkshire County has experienced significant antisemitism over the past few years. Incidents include swastika graffiti and antisemitic writing in school bathrooms, bomb threats to synagogues, and harassing emails sent to Jewish leaders. Several years ago, some Jewish middle school students in the southern Berkshires were personally targeted by antisemites. Federation and Hevreh of Southern Berkshire arranged for these students to travel to Boston for a day of healing and education. After a program and an interactive workshop about antisemitism, the students were given a tour of Mayyim Hayyim and offered the opportunity to immerse.

One by one, they emerged from the mikveh looking less stressed. They deemed it a "cool" experience; they felt the soothing waters and spiritual energy that Mayyim Hayyim provides.

Mayyim Hayyim uses the practice and tradition of the mikveh to nurture and sustain Jewish life in a meaningful and relevant ways. Discover the power of Mayyim Hayyim for yourself. Schedule a tour, join an educational program, or come to immerse. Learn more at [mayyimhayyim.org](http://mayyimhayyim.org).

**Carol Targum** is a trustee of Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh in Newton, MA.

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## OBITUARIES

### Dr. Stephen Kaufman, 82, long time physician, deep compassion, gift for language

ELIOT, ME – Dr. Stephen Kaufman passed away on Thursday, February 26, due to pancreatic cancer.

Born November 25, 1943, a native of Brooklyn, NY, as the eldest child of Isidore (a.k.a. Irving) and Esther (Perlman) Kaufman, he was predeceased by his parents and his sister, Judy.

At the time of Steve's birth, his father was in the Army stationed in North Africa. When Irving returned from service, much of his and Esther's time was taken up with running the family-owned grocery store. Steve was cared for by his grandmother, who spoke no English. Yiddish was his first language, and the left-wing Yiddish-speaking community was his extended family. He carried his affection for that world all his life.

Besides Yiddish, Steve is also remembered for his gift for language in general. At Fort Hamilton High School, Steve chose to study Russian instead of Spanish or French because he said that he wanted to read authors like Dostoevsky in the original language.

After Fort Hamilton, Steve attended Brooklyn College and Downstate College of Medicine. After graduating from medical school in 1969, he was awarded a draft-substitute internship with the Coast Guard hospital in Staten Island, a facility operated by the Public Health Service. He took a strong stand against the war in Vietnam and came to feel compromised by his government-sponsored situation. Steve made the difficult choice to leave the country and spent two years in the American exile community in Sweden with his first wife, Susie Kaufman. His son Isaac was born in Stockholm during

this period. Returning to the U.S. in 1972, Steve settled in upstate NY where he began a 28 year-long career in emergency medicine at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Hudson.

Steve married a second time to Cia Elkin which brought him two stepsons, Noah Elkin and Samson Elkin, and a daughter, Rachel Kaufman.

In later years, Steve worked as a primary care physician at the Hawthorne Clinic in Harlemville, NY. His warmth, kindness, and wisdom gained him many devoted patients who "simply loved" him.

During this period, he also began work as a Hospice physician. Rounding out his medical career until retirement, Steve worked full-time as a medical director for Community Hospice in Catskill, NY for 10 years. After retiring in 2014, he devoted himself to flower gardening, continuing Yiddish education, and teaching Yiddish language and Ashkenazi culture.

In 2006, Steve married his beloved soulmate Kaya Stern-Kaufman and gained two loving and devoted stepchildren, Ariel Shrum and Sophie Tracy. Steve's support for his wife Kaya's rabbinical work was multi-dimensional and priceless, strengthening Jewish life throughout New England over the last twenty years.

Steve's beloved grandsons Jonah and Asher were born to Isaac and his wife Kim Ferencik, who wed in 2001. On December 1, 2025, Steve became a grandfather once again with the birth of James Luca Tracy to Sophie and her husband Joe Tracy.

Steve will be remembered for his warmth and kindness, his sharp intelligence and curiosity, his commitment to yiddishkeit and Yiddish language, his wit and sense of humor, his love of music and language, his spiritual searching and the depth of his compassion.

The funeral took place at Dewey Hall in Sheffield on Monday, March 2, followed immediately by interment at Ahavath Sholom Cemetery in Great Barrington.

Donations may be given to either the New Israel Fund, YIVO, or the Temple Israel-Portsmouth Tikkun Olam Fund.

### Anne Florence "Rusti" Roland, 84, artist, loved to read, respect for others

LENOX – Anne Roland, 84, known to most as Rusti, passed away on Wednesday, January 14.

Born in Brooklyn, NY on February 25, 1941, daughter of Betty and Sid Roland, she grew up in Boston. She and her husband, Morris Bennett, moved to Pittsfield in 1964, originally intending to stay for a year or two, but the Berkshires quickly became their home and they never looked back.

Rusti graduated from the Massachusetts College of Art in 1962, where, in her first year, she met Morris. They knew they were kindred spirits when they both recognized the music of *Carmina Burana*. It was an art school romance that lasted for 67 years.

Rusti was an artist who primarily worked in colored pencils. She loved gardening and flowers, and this was reflected in many of her paintings.

She loved to read and could often be found browsing the new arrivals section at the Berkshire Athenaeum. A devoted walker, neighbors will remember seeing Rusti and Morris walking together in the neighborhood and around town even during much of the winter. She loved cats, especially Siamese. Her cat, Leonardo, was a comfort to her these last difficult months.

Very family-oriented, Rusti hosted many family reunions as well as Thanksgiving

gatherings. She had a lasting impact on people and a special way of connecting. She attributed this to her upbringing and to her parents, who taught their children the importance of respect for others. This value, along with her own personal sense of spirituality, guided her throughout life.

Rusti is survived by her beloved husband of 65 years, Morris; children Melissa and husband Jim Mason, Joshua and wife Gayle Bennett, Stephanie Bennett and husband Foster Gilbert; sister Jane; grandchildren Michelle, Ryan, and Noah; special cousin Joan; and other dear cousins, friends, and extended family.

The family thanks Kimball Farms Nursing Care Center where she spent several months under their loving care, going above and beyond, not only to keep her comfortable but when time permitted in their busy schedules, to sit and talk.

There will be no gathering or service. The family asks that donations be made to the Berkshire Athenaeum at [www.pittsfieldlibrary.org/support/donate](http://www.pittsfieldlibrary.org/support/donate)

May her memory be a blessing.

### Lester J. Broverman, 92, a life full of love, family, friendships

MYRTLE BEACH, SC – Lester J. Broverman, 92, formerly of Pittsfield, passed away peacefully on Saturday, January 24.

Born December 5, 1933 in Pittsfield, son of the late Michael Broverman and Bessie Ellins Broverman, Lester graduated from Pittsfield High School in 1951 and attended the University of Massachusetts, receiving both bachelor's and master's degrees in Business Administration. He also attended Youngstown University and received another bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering in 1962.

Lester enlisted in the US Air Force and served as a captain, navigator, and airborne radar director. He then worked as a program engineer, quality control manager, and program manager for over 32 years with General Electric and Lockheed Martin. He worked in the Ordnance Systems Department in Pittsfield managing Navy guidance programs and was the AEGIS director of contracts until his retirement in 1994.

Lester's wife of 61 years in a loving marriage, Erma, passed away on November 12, 2016.

Lester and Erma experienced and contributed to a life full of love, family, friendships, pets, travel, and rewarding careers. They maintained their many friendships in Massachusetts while moving to Myrtle Beach, first as snowbirds in 1995 and as permanent residents in 2006. They enjoyed years of tennis, pickleball, afternoon happy hours, and socializing with their many friends.

He leaves his son Jonathan Broverman and wife, Tatiana of Pittsfield; daughter, Judith Bulfin of Myrtle Beach, SC; grandchildren Andrea, Marissa and Benjamin Broverman; sisters-in-law Judith Stillwell and Judith Brown; and several loving nieces and nephews. In addition to his parents and wife, Lester was predeceased by his three brothers, Alvin, Donald and Howard; son-in-law Thomas Bulfin; Judy's partner and dear friend, Jack Burgoyne; sisters-in-law Ann, Inge, and Rita Broverman; and Erma's brother, Dr. Mark Brown.

A celebration of life will be at a later date in Myrtle Beach. Memorial contributions may be made to the Alzheimer's Association or Tunnel to Towers.

OBITUARIES,  
continued on page 25



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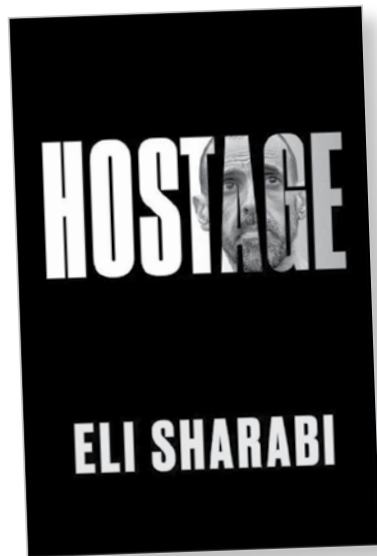
Dr. Steve Recommends...

A column about Jewish books and authors

By Dr. Steve Rubin

Dear Readers,

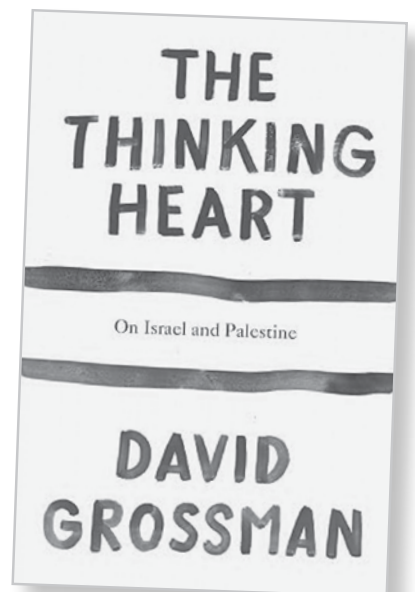
This month I would like to recommend two important works by Israeli writers. The first, *Hostage*, by Eli Sharabi is a searing first-person account of Sharabi's captivity at the hands of Hamas. The second is a book of essays by one of Israel's leading novelists and intellectual figures, David Grossman.



Published in 2025 in Hebrew and in English (translated by Elyon Levy), *Hostage* was an immediate best-seller in Israel, and it's easy to see why. It's a harrowing account of seizure and captivity, told by its author, Eli Sharabi – a 53-year-old husband and father of two young girls – in gripping detail. We learn of Hamas' attack of October 7, 2023 on Sharabi's kibbutz, his family's attempts to hide in their safe room, and his eventual kidnapping. But the bulk of the book describes Sharabi's personal nightmare, his 491 days of captivity: the filth and dirt in the tunnels where he was held, the lack of nourishment or toilet facilities, and the occasional beating by his captors. A few of the Gazans watching over him and his fellow prisoners demonstrate some compassion. But most were uncaring or cruel. All hated the very idea of Israel's existence. *Hostage* is not easy

reading, as Sharabi spares none of the particulars. But it is also the story of how one man manages to maintain his dignity and to emerge, not exactly unscathed, but alive.

David Grossman is one of Israel's best-known and most decorated novelists. (*A Horse Walked in a Bar* was recommended in this column some months back.) He is also a perceptive observer of Israeli politics and does not hesitate to speak out. *The Thinking Heart: Essays on Israel and Palestine* (English translation by Jessica Cohen), published both here and in Israel in 2024, contains a dozen essays and a poem dating from 2017 to 2024. Grossman is critical of Israel's present government, as one can tell from such titles as "Dictatorship Threatens Israel" (March 2023). And he blames Netanyahu's regime for Israel's failure to protect its citizens. But Grossman's last essay, "After the War" (March 1, 2024), originally published in the *New York Times*, is cautiously optimistic. Although he acknowledges that the Israelis and Palestinians are two people "incapable of viewing each other's tragedy," Grossman still believes in the possibility of two-states which, he states, "is still the only feasible" solution. "This is the time to be a nation or not to be," Grossman writes in his poem, "Suddenly a cry flew," which concludes the book, "To be a human or not to be." Amen to that!




**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)	Jeffrey Goldwasser & Jonquil Wolfson	Arlene D. Schiff
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**Jewish Care Services**

**Berkshire Jewish Communal Safety Net**

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires has provided a safety net for our Jewish community for nearly 85 years. During these uncertain times, we would like to remind you of the services available to help if unexpected challenges arise.

- ♥ **Kosher Meals and Meals on Wheels:** Meals are available for delivery (for qualified individuals) or pickup for older adults aged 60 and above.
- ♥ **Community Social Worker:** Jill Goldstein, MSW, LICSW is available to assist community members in navigating local care services, accessing transitional assistance, and providing ongoing case management.
- ♥ **Hebrew Free Loans:** The Federation offers interest-free loans to help with unexpected expenses and other needs.
- ♥ **Specific Assistance Grants:** Federation offers one-time emergency financial assistance for community members struggling with essential needs and can facilitate additional services to get a person back in a more sustainable situation.

To inquire about assistance, please contact  
**Jill Goldstein, MSW, LICSW**  
(413) 442-4360, ext.17 or [j.goldstein@jfswm.org](mailto:j.goldstein@jfswm.org)



**Jewish Federation OF THE BERSKSHIRES**

THE STRENGTH OF A PEOPLE. THE POWER OF COMMUNITY.

CULTURE & ARTS

Who We Are on the Inside Versus Who We Are on the Outside

Talking with novelist Tova Mirvis about her career and new novel

Interview by Carol Goodman Kaufman / Special to the BJV



PHOTO CREDIT: SHARON JACOBS

The Berkshire Jewish Voice had the opportunity to speak with bestselling author Tova Mirvis in advance of her appearance at Hadassah Berkshire Hills "Books in the Berkshires" event on the morning of Sunday, June 14. Mirvis is the author of the memoir The Book of Separation, as well as four novels: We Would Never, Visible City, The Outside World, and The Ladies Auxiliary, which was a national bestseller.

Also appearing will be novelist Marilyn Simon Rothstein, author of Who Loves You Best, Crazy to Leave You, Husbands and Other Sharp Objects, and Lift and Separate.

For more info on this event, email berkshire-hadassah@gmail.com. Register by May 15 to receive a free copy of the authors' most recent books. Location and time of this event will be sent to you after registration.

me was the most interesting and urgent: How do you go from being seemingly ordinary family to being people who are capable of doing such a thing?

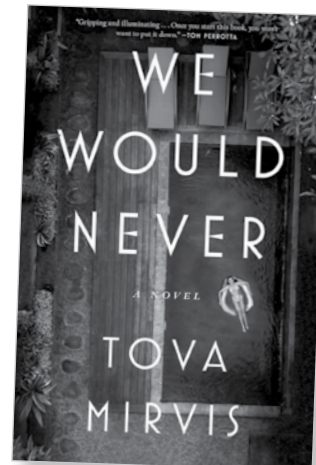
I feel like it's easy to say they're monsters, but that doesn't really tell us anything. That doesn't answer the question of how things escalate out of control, how anger becomes so unbridled. That to me was the really interesting question, and I felt a sense of urgency of having to understand it.

You mentioned your own divorce that helped you understand the anger.

Everything comes undone in a divorce, every relationship, even with friends, family members. I was able to use some of that to understand the story. But first I read the news story. There was all this speculation that maybe an angry student with a bad grade had done it. And there was a line in the news article that they had been in the middle of a terrible divorce. I was able to use some of that. Divorce is like a blow through your life. That emotional grip is unimaginable.

Do you have a word count that you aim for every day, or do you just sit down and start writing?

When I'm really working well, I can sit on this couch for five or six hours. The world of the book can do different things every day. I sometimes think of writing, as we used to when I was growing up, "Let's play pretend. Give me permission to do all kinds of fun research." The book has to grab you. It's really an act of endurance - a marathon - to be able to sit for so many years to write this long form. I have just learned to stay, even when I would say maybe 95 percent of writing is frustrating.



BJV Interview: Tova Mirvis

You've been writing books for over a quarter of a century. How does that feel?

Hard to believe. I guess I've spent it pretty much writing fiction. I've wanted to make this piece of art that looks like the way I imagined it in my head. I wanted it to look like that in the world.

How did you find your way to become a writer?

I thought I'd be a journalist, but I took a few creative writing classes as an undergraduate and really started to think about what it would mean to tell a fictional story as opposed to a journalistic, reported piece. I think my initial urge was to write about Memphis and the community I grew up in. Writing fiction for me was a way to understand something in the world that I didn't understand, or a way to make sense of complicated questions. It was the thing that made me see fiction as this avenue for understanding ourselves and our families in the world around us.

When you're in charge, you're controlling the outcomes. You move from that outer space - like, oh my God, how could someone do such a thing - to the inner experience of who are people really, what are their private thoughts.

I feel like fiction is always so based in that kind of empathic urge to understand something that was hard to understand.

Do you think your journalism background informs your fiction?

In graduate school classes you turn in pieces of work and everyone sits around and tells you what is not working about it. That is how I learned to revise, but also how to hold onto my own vision for something. And how to take criticism and not let it be overly discouraging, but let it fuel me to figure out how to make the idea work. I still revise endlessly.

Have you seen your process or your actual style change over time?

I've learned how to tolerate the process and tolerate the feeling that I don't know where this is going to end. I don't know the scene, or I don't know this character nearly enough yet, but I've learned to trust that I will know. It might be a year from now. It might be five years from now.

I think with each book I've learned that I've got to know my own process. I know how I start. I know my own emotional ups and downs with every book, and I think I've learned a little bit more about how to just sit with it. This is the part of writing I hate, where I think I could finish this book in six weeks and then realize no way I could finish this book in three years. I just learned to know myself.

Do you outline?

I go from brainstorming and then move between that file and a file where I make outlines. I try to get a sense of what is the opening scene and what happens next. What is the cause of the relationship between these two things?

Do you see a common theme in your books?

One of the preoccupations I have is who we are on the inside versus who we are on the outside, that urge to understand why people do the things they do. I feel like it's really about how people do things they can't imagine or who people are, not as we see them publicly, but who they are inside the kind of mess of their own mind. That is really the most compelling aspect of fiction, of getting to enter inside people's private space.

I understand that your most recent book, We Would Never, was inspired by a true event.

I was horrified. I went down the rabbit hole and saw this man who was a professor who had been a friend of my ex-husband. The ex-family was implicated in the murder of a Jewish family dentist in South Florida. There was so much information available online. It was a Dateline special and a podcast. There was nowhere that you could really get access to their lives and to the question that to



Carol Goodman Kaufman, has just published her second mystery book, Crak, Bam, Dead: Mah Jong Mayhem (Next Chapter Press). The collection of cozy mystery short stories features food writer/aspiring investigative reporter Kiki Coben and her Mah Jong group as they follow clues from a "Black Widow" murder at sea to a suspicious death at a senior home charity event. Armed with a curious mind and her formidable group of friends, Kiki is ready to prove that the only thing you need to catch a killer is persistence - and maybe just a little bit of luck.

Crak, Bam, Dead is available in stores and online.

Advertisement for Noble's Farm Stand and Flower Shop, featuring floral arrangements and contact information for Kathy Noble.

Advertisement for Concepts of Art, offering a Free Pack of Shabbat Candles with every purchase of \$100 or more.

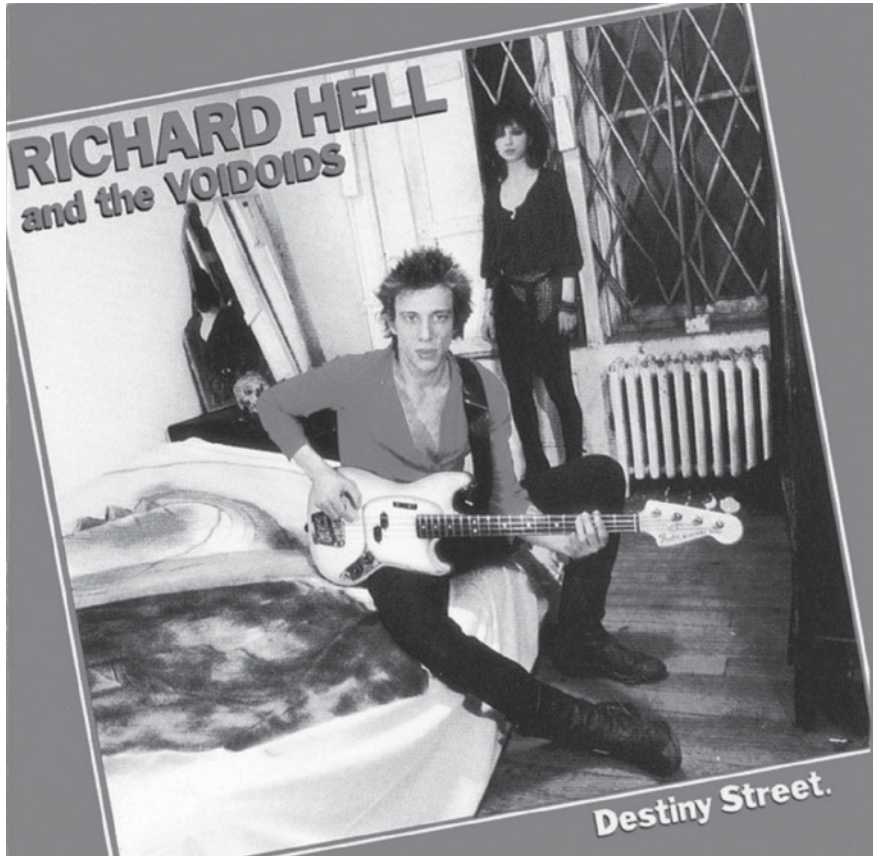
Advertisement for Pamela Sandler Architect, located at 31 Main Street in Stockbridge, MA.

Advertisement for Carr Hardware, a local business with multiple locations in Lee, Pittsfield, Lenox, North Adams, and Great Barrington.

Advertisement for Reliable Yardworks, celebrating 44 years in business and offering landscaping and property maintenance services.

**CULTURE & ARTS**

**From the Internets**



#OTD January 22, 2021: Punk rock pioneer Richard Hell (born Richard Meyers in Lexington, KY) released a remastered version of *Destiny Street*, his 1982 album with his band The Voidoids. Hell was born to a secular Jewish father and a Methodist mother. Famous as the inspiration for much of the early punk rock look and sound, Hell started examining his Jewish identity in his 2015 memoir, where he asks, "Am I a Jew? What is a Jew?"

Hell says his favorite reply came from poet Cliff Fyman: "It's a great question. Why spoil it with an answer?"

**OBITUARIES,**

*continued from page 22*

**Carol Ann Greenberg, teacher, athlete, active in community, adored her family**

PITTSFIELD – Carol Greenberg passed away peacefully at her home, surrounded by her loving family, on Sunday, March 1.

Carol lived her life with the people she loved, in the way she intended. She was kind, loving, smart, loyal, forgiving, and of course, elegant. She loved her children and husband above all else, and they all knew and felt this love.

Born in 1935, she was a true Berkshire County woman, who was born and died in the Berkshires. She attended public schools in Pittsfield through junior high school, and was the oldest of six children. She attended her grandfather's sleepaway camp, Camp Taconic, in the summers with her siblings, and enjoyed all forms of winter sports. She especially loved ice skating as a young girl and excelled at the sport. She was featured on the cover of the 4th Annual Winter Carnival Brochure in 1949, doing an arabesque spiral.

She attended Miss Hall's School during her high school years. Her mom, Molly Selkowitz, fought very hard for her four girls to have the opportunity to achieve the higher education that Molly was not able to attain. Carol received her BA in Political Science, with honors, from Vassar College, in 1956. She moved to New York City to work at The Rockefeller University, meeting Joel S. Greenberg, the love of her life. Married in August, 1957, they were a loving and devoted couple until Joel's death in July, 2023.

Once married, they moved to Pittsfield to start their lives together, having three children, Betsy, Peter, and Susan. Carol was a stay-at-home mom early on, aiding Joel with his political career. Joel, though originally from the Bronx, came to be a well-known politician and attorney in the Berkshires. It is said that behind every successful man is a strong and loyal woman. Carol was certainly this.

She kept the home together while Joel travelled back and forth to Boston, where he was in the MA House of Representatives.

Carol was an active member of the Berkshire and Jewish community. Important to her were Berkshire Art Association, Junior League, Hadassah, summers at the Tanglewood Glasshouse, and Vassar College, for which annually she sold bags and bags of pecans to raise money. She was an avid tennis player year-round, and was on a tennis team well into her mid-70s.

She worked as an ESL teacher at Pittsfield High School, beginning in the early 1980s. The students loved her and stayed in touch with her for years after graduating.

Carol loved sweets, especially ice cream. Her children and grandchildren knew that she would stand in the kitchen after dinner and eat from the container. Always happy to share, coffee and mocha were her favorite flavors. She was always ready to listen and give warm hugs to anyone in need, especially her children.

Carol is survived by her children Betsy Bohrer and husband, Nat Bohrer, Peter Greenberg, and Susan Greenberg-Yarmush; grandchildren Jeremy Bohrer and wife, Amanda, Madeline Bohrer, and Eitan Yarmush; great-grandchildren Miriam and Jonah. She also leaves four siblings, Debbie Aronsohn Neuner, Nan Sisselman, Jan Selkowitz, and Judy Selkowitz. Carol was predeceased by her brother Mark Selkowitz. Carol will live in our hearts forever.

Funeral services were held on Monday, March 2 with burial in the Temple Anshe Amunim section at the Pittsfield Cemetery. Contributions may be made to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

# Passover Center

Find everything you need for a Zissen Pesach, all strictly Kosher for Passover.

**MARKET 32** BY PRICE CHOPPER **Price Chopper**

<p><b>9.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card <b>SAVE \$4 WITH</b> <b>5.99</b> Final Price LIMIT ONE COUPON PER OFFER PER CUSTOMER</p> <p><b>Streit's Passover Matzos</b> 5 Lb.</p>	<p><b>2/\$6</b> with AdvantEdge Card <b>SAVE \$1 WITH</b> <b>2/\$5</b> Final Price WHEN YOU BUY 2 LIMIT ONE COUPON PER OFFER PER CUSTOMER</p> <p><b>Streit's Cake Meal, Matzo Meal or Farfel</b> 16 oz. • Select Varieties</p>	
<p><b>15.79</b> lb.</p> <p><b>Meal Mart 1st Cut Kosher Beef Brisket</b></p>	<p><b>4.49</b> lb.</p> <p><b>Empire Kosher Frozen Turkey</b></p>	
<p><b>2/\$9</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Kedem Concord Grape Juice</b> 64 oz. Other Varieties \$4.99 ea.</p>	<p><b>3.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Kedem Sparkling Juice</b> 25.4 oz. • Select Varieties</p>	
<p><b>2.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Breakstone's Whipped Butter</b> 8 oz. • Salted</p>	<p><b>10.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Ungar's Gefilte Fish</b> 20 oz. • Select Varieties</p>	<p><b>1.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Silver Spring Horseradish</b> 5 oz. • Select Varieties</p>
<p><b>18.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Empire Kosher Boneless Chicken Breasts</b> 2 Lb. • Frozen</p>	<p><b>13.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Meal Mart Frozen Chicken &amp; Turkey Nuggets</b> Passover • 21 oz.</p>	<p><b>9.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Meal Mart Kosher Frozen Ground Beef</b> 16 oz.</p>
<p><b>Manischewitz Matzo Ball &amp; Soup Mix</b> 4.5-5 oz. • Select Varieties <b>2/\$4</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Streit's Matzo Ball &amp; Soup Mix</b> 4.5 oz. • Select Varieties <b>2/\$4</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Terra Chips</b> 5-5.5 oz. • Select Varieties <b>2/\$7</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Osem Consomme</b> 14.1 oz. • Select Varieties <b>8.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Yehuda Gefilte Fish</b> 24 oz. • Select Varieties <b>5.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Mrs. Adler's Gefilte Fish</b> 24 oz. • Select Varieties <b>5.49</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Golds Borscht</b> 32 oz. <b>2.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p>	<p><b>Gefen Pasta or Pizza Sauce</b> 24-26 oz. • Select Varieties <b>3.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Streit's Potato Starch</b> 12 oz. <b>2/\$5</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Manischewitz Chicken Broth</b> 17 oz. or Low Sodium <b>2/\$6</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Streit's Cooking Oil</b> 24 oz. <b>7.49</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Yehuda Cake Meal, Matzo Meal or Farfel</b> 9-16 oz. <b>2/\$5</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Heinz Passover Ketchup</b> 24.7 oz. <b>5.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Granny's Toasted Coconut Marshmallows</b> 10 oz. <b>3.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p>	<p><b>Savion Fruit Slices</b> 6 oz. or Streit's Fruit Slices 8 oz. <b>3.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Streit's Meringue Cookies</b> 2 oz. • Select Varieties <b>6.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Manischewitz or Streit's Macaroons</b> 10 oz. • Select Varieties <b>3.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Manischewitz or Streit's Cake Mix</b> 11.5-15 oz. • Select Varieties <b>6.49</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Joyva Jell Rings</b> 9 oz. • Select Varieties <b>5.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Streit's Chocolate Covered Matzos</b> 7 oz. • Select Varieties <b>4.99</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Granny's Marshmallows</b> 10 oz. • White or Mini <b>2/\$7</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p>
<p><b>2/\$6</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Streit's Egg Matzos 12 oz.</b></p>	<p><b>2/\$7</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Manischewitz Egg Matzos 10.5 oz.</b></p> <p><b>Yehuda Egg Matzos 12.6 oz.</b></p>	<p><b>2/\$6</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Manischewitz Matzos 16 oz.</b></p> <p><b>2/\$6</b> with AdvantEdge Card</p> <p><b>Streit's Passover Matzos 16 oz.</b></p>

Plus, we have all of your fresh produce needs for your Seder!

Offers effective Sunday, February 22 thru Saturday, April 11, 2026 in all Market 32, Price Chopper and Market Bistro stores located in CT, MA, NH, NY, PA & VT. Not all items are available in all stores.



## Kosher Meals to Go—Meals on Wheels

**ALL ARE WELCOME:** Kosher lunch will be prepared on Mondays, Tuesdays (starting October 21), 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. Suggested donation of \$3 for adults over age 60; \$7 for all others

**RESERVATIONS REQUIRED BY 9 A.M. THE DAY BEFORE THE LUNCH:** Call Federation's kitchen at (413) 442-2200 the day before to reserve a meal for pick-up or to arrange delivery.

### What's for Lunch?

(GF) Gluten-Free entree • (DF) Dairy-Free entree

#### MARCH

##### MONDAY, MARCH 23

Closed for Passover cleaning

##### TUESDAY, MARCH 24

Closed for Passover cleaning

##### THURSDAY, MARCH 26

Closed for Passover cleaning

##### MONDAY, MARCH 30

**Noon, Lunch...**Kosher for Passover tuna and egg salad (GF)(DF), vegetable soup, carrot salad, roasted baby potatoes, matza, and coconut macaroon.

##### TUESDAY, MARCH 31

**Noon, lunch...**Kosher for Passover holiday meal: Apricot chicken (GF)(DF), matza ball soup, gefilte fish, charoset, roasted Brussels sprouts, savory mushroom matza kugel, matza, and raspberry roulade.

#### APRIL

##### THURSDAY, APRIL 2

Closed for first day of Passover

##### MONDAY, APRIL 6

**Noon, Lunch...**Kosher for Passover matza arayes (savory meat filling) (DF), Israeli salad, tahini sauce, roasted eggplant, matza, and apricots.

##### TUESDAY, APRIL 7

**Noon, Lunch...**Kosher for Passover sweet matza brei (DF), butternut squash and apple soup, warm fruit compote, sautéed green beans with almonds, matza, and Passover chocolate cake.

##### THURSDAY, APRIL 9

Closed for eighth day of Passover

##### MONDAY, APRIL 13

**Noon, Lunch...**Meatloaf (GF)(DF), chicken noodle soup, mashed potatoes, four blend mixed vegetables, white bread, and apple sauce.

#### TUESDAY, APRIL 14

**Noon, Lunch...**Vegetable lasagna, minestrone soup, cauliflower, stewed tomatoes, Italian bread, and mixed berries with whipped cream.

#### THURSDAY, APRIL 16

**Noon, Lunch...**Honey balsamic chicken (GF)(DF), salad, rice, asparagus, rye bread, and brownie.

#### MONDAY, APRIL 20

**Noon, Lunch...**Cheese bourekas, lentil soup, chick pea salad, zucchini, hearty white bread, and ambrosia.

#### TUESDAY, APRIL 21

**Noon, Lunch...**Chopped brisket over egg noodles, salad, garlic spinach, California blend vegetables, whole wheat bread, and tahini cookie.

#### THURSDAY, APRIL 23

**Noon, Lunch...**Rigatoni turkey Bolognese, salad, roasted Brussels sprouts, Italian green beans, garlic roll, and peaches.

#### MONDAY, APRIL 27

**Noon, Lunch...**Spinach and cheese frittata (GF), green salad, Mediterranean couscous salad, brown sugar glazed carrots, multi-grain bread, and banana pudding.

#### TUESDAY, APRIL 28

**Noon, Lunch...**Mushroom stroganoff (GF), celery and apple salad, kasha varnishkes, roasted broccoli, pumpernickel bread, and sugar cookie.

#### THURSDAY, APRIL 30

**Noon, Lunch...**Turkey noodle casserole (DF), hearty vegetable soup, green beans, sweet potato, whole wheat bread, and fruit cocktail.

### Knesset Israel – 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield



#### ONGOING MINYANS

Saturday, ..... 9:30 a.m.  
Sunday, ..... 8:45 a.m.  
Friday, ..... 5:45 p.m.

#### CANDLE LIGHTING TIMES

Friday, March 27 ..... 6:55 p.m.  
(Passover) Wednesday, April 1 ... 7:00 p.m.  
(Passover) Thursday, April 2 ..... 8:02 p.m.  
(Passover) Tuesday, April 7 ..... 7:07 p.m.  
(Passover) Wednesday, April 8... 8:09 p.m.  
Friday, April 10 ..... 7:10 p.m.  
Friday, April 17 ..... 7:18 p.m.  
Friday, April 24 ..... 7:26 p.m.  
Friday, May 1 ..... 7:34 p.m.

### MAZEL TOV!

**Harold Grinspoon & Diane Troderman** and all those involved in the success of **PJ Library**, which was recently named by Moment Magazine as one of the top 50 Jewish innovations of the last 50 years. Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is so proud to be a longtime partner of PJ Library, a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation that has been meaningful for families in our community and around the world. PJ Library now delivers 250,000 Jewish books each year in North America, and more than 650,000 books in 40 countries and 7 languages.

Federation's board president **Arlene Schiff** on being selected by Global Jewry (an initiative dedicated exclusively to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the worldwide Jewish organizational ecosystem) as a mentor in its Amitim program. Amitim engages seasoned former Federation CEOs to provide guidance to the leadership of nonprofits in Israel in critical skill areas and major issues that they face.

**Merle Ferber** on the birth of her grand-nephew, Davis.

**Elaine Shindler** on her 97th birthday.

Great-grandmother, **Ilse Browner**, and grandparents, **Jackie Browner & Randy Johnson** on the birth of their second grandson **Logan Jackson Kenward**. Parents are **Evan Kenward and Kerry Dyer** and big brother **Lucas West Kenward**, of Berkeley, CA.

**Alan and Margie Metzger** on the birth of their granddaughter, **Sadie**.

**Janie Pellish** on her milestone birthday.

**Mike Duffy** being selected for the '40 Under Forty' Award.

**Sheila Donath** on her special birthday.

**Leonard Lipton** on his 90th birthday.

**Rabbi Pam Wax**, director of adult education and programming at Knesset Israel, on the publishing of her third book of poetry, *Every Single Beast of My Heart*. (Sheila-Na-Gig Editions). A book reading will be held at KI on Monday evening, April 20.

**Dr. Ed Kolodny** on his 90th birthday

**Lauren (Zink) and Alex Diamond** on the birth of their son, **Noah Levi Diamond**, on Tuesday, March 10. Grandparents are **Karen and Rich Zink** of Pittsfield and **Amy and Jeff Diamond**, formerly of Richmond.

### Recovering from an illness or injury? Cooking becoming difficult?



#### KOSHER MEALS ON WHEELS:

Meals are available for delivery to qualified individuals to help extend their home independence and health. There is no income requirement, just a simple assessment through Elder Services will get your meal deliveries started, if you qualify.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Contact Jill Goldstein at (413) 442-4360, Ext 17, j.goldstein@jfswm.org.

#### WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Meals-on-wheels drivers are always appreciated. Contact Heidi Katz, (413) 442-4360, ext. 10, federation@jewishberkshires.org to inquire.

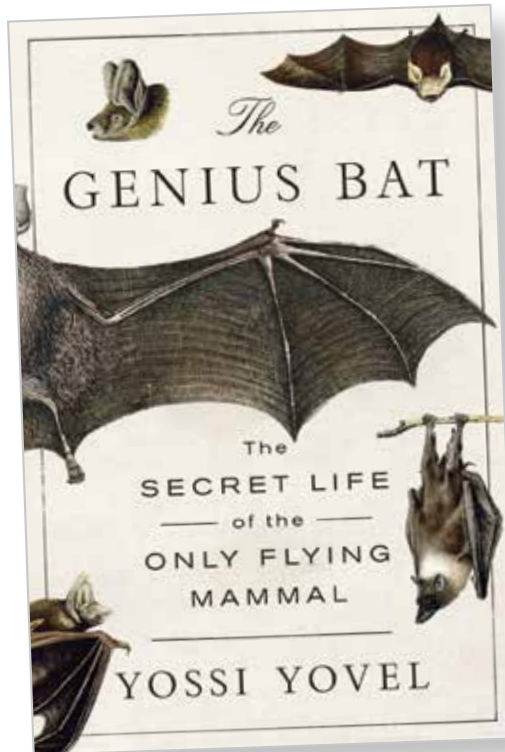
Meals and programs are made possible by the generous support of our community. The kosher lunch and meals on wheels program is in collaboration with Elder Services of Berkshire county.

## CULTURE & ARTS

### The Genius Bat

Yossi Yovel on his study of one of nature's most mysterious and remarkable creatures

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor



With *The Genius Bat: The Secret Life of the Only Flying Mammal*, Israeli ecologist and neurobiologist Yossi Yovel has written an engrossing book about bats for the general reader that focuses exclusively on bat science, without touching on the bat in lore, literature, and the human imagination. The “heroes,” as Yovel characterizes them, of the story are the researchers who, over the decades, painstakingly examined bat behavior to unlock the mysteries of the creatures’ social lives and their extraordinary powers of echolocation, the location of objects by reflected sound.

Yovel’s pioneering contribution to the field of chiropterology, the study of bats, was to use tiny GPS monitors (engineered by an Israeli startup, naturally) to track bat behavior – 1,000 of them on ten species, he writes, “in more than ten countries on every possible continent except Antarctica, all

with one objective – to understand what it’s like to be a bat.”

Through fieldwork and experiments at his lab at Tel Aviv University, Yovel and his research team have uncovered fascinating insights into bat behavior, among them that “the bats pinpoint [a] target via an assessment of time rather than distance...[B]ats don’t care about the metric distance to the target but instead ‘see’ the world as a series of events in time rather than space when using echolocation. In other words, the bat stretches its legs forward and prepares to land when the target is a certain amount of time from it, regardless of its spatial distance. The experiment also showed that the pups are born with this perception. Their brain is wired this way from their first day. It turns out that to be a bat is to live in a world of time and not of space.” Professor Yovel and a team of researchers also demonstrated episodic memory and planning capacity in the wild Egyptian fruit bat, a high-level cognitive ability that had long been thought to be unique to humans. In the case of the fruit bat, the team showed that these fruit bats possess an array of abilities that allow them to plan foraging routes based on spatiotemporal (i.e., having both spatial extension and temporal duration) memories.

Insights like these are arrived at through patience, ingenuity, intrepidity, intestinal fortitude, and the willingness to learn from failure. (Yovel provides examples of cautionary tales showing the pitfalls scientists invite when they become too locked in to a theory to permit contradictory explanations to be explored.) What makes *The Genius Bat* so engaging is the arch sense of humor Yovel displays in describing animal research and the travails experienced by dedicated people who devote their lives to it. For example:

This is a good opportunity to say a few words about bat bites. When handled by a huge human, all bats might bite, but not all bites are equal. Each species does it in its own way. There are bashful bats that bite you and immediately stop, as if shocked by their own behavior. There are some minuscule species that try to bite but their teeth are too small to penetrate the skin, and there are great round leaf bats that simply lock their jaws on your finger and can only be dislodged with pliers. As a bat researcher, you can’t lose your cool when bitten. Briskly shaking your hand, as the brain implores you to do, may cause the bat to flee but it won’t advance your research. You have to remain calm as your finger is crushed between the bat’s sharp fangs and try to patiently extract it. One of the oldest techniques is to blow strongly on the bat’s face, and then pull your hand away quickly when it relaxes its bite for a moment. Unfortunately, this technique doesn’t work with *Hipposideros armiger*, a particularly skillful and relentless biter.

But we didn’t come to Thailand to study bites. We came to answer a question that occupied us in those years – the connection between the bat’s face and its echolocation signals.

The heroes of his book are chiropterology’s pioneers, researchers like Donald Griffin, Alan Grinnell, Ed Gould, and Hans-Ulrich Schnitzler who advanced the understanding of bats with far fewer technological resources than are available to today’s scientists. Yovel displays a genuine writerly flair in structuring his book, alternating episodes from their stories with anecdotes about his own research so that the narrative does not bog the general reader down in either historical or scientific detail. Yovel captures the personalities of these methodological obsessives with the acuity of a novelist, to the point that *The Genius Bat* works as well as an anthropological study of research scientists as it does as a study of bats.

Throughout the book, Yovel shares fascinating details about evolution, not only of bats but of other species, as well. *The Genius Bat* was named a ‘Book of the Year’ by the science journal *Nature* – a well-deserved accolade. In February, Professor Yovel spoke to the BJV about his work. Our conversation was edited for length and clarity.

### The BJV Interview: Yossi Yovel

*Your bio says you’re an ecologist and a neurobiologist, “a rare combination of disciplines.” Can you explain what each of those disciplines entail and how they’ve informed your study of bats?*

I like to say that actually ecology and neuroscience are, in a way, two sides of one coin, and they’re connected through behavior – which is what I actually do, study behavior. Because on the one hand, neuroscience is interested in how the brain drives behavior, and ecology is interested in how behavior interacts with the environment. I think it’s more about how you think and what are the questions that you ask. The language that we speak in the different disciplines is a different language. Neuroscience makes me much more mechanistic. I’m much more than an average ecologist. I’m always thinking about the details – how does the animal perceive the world, for example, or is it possible for the brain to even do this or that. In general, our work, I would say, is more in the ecological side because we do behavior in the field. But we try to ask questions that are of interest to neuroscientists. We do some MRI studies of bats – I would love to also go into the brain, but because I try to study the animal in a very natural context, it’s often very difficult. We don’t want to put electrodes into the brains of animals that are flying outside. So it is a challenge to think of how we look into the brain, but the way we ask the behavioral questions are of much relevance to a neuroscientist.

**THE GENIUS BAT,**  
continued on page 28



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## CULTURE &amp; ARTS

**THE GENIUS BAT,***continued from page 27*

**Let me ask you an Israel question. How does the Israeli educational system encourage a young person interested in making bats his or her career?**

I think it's more than the education system. It's the high tech, which is driven by the military strongly, of course. There's a lot of people coming from technological units, and a lot of them are developing technologies. This also creates a network of connections, and often you can talk to people who know stuff about things. A lot of our work heavily depends on the development of miniature sensors, which are not related to the army directly in any way. But I can say that a lot of the people who've been developing for us came out of technological units, and that's why they're so good with miniaturization of electronics, which is very hard. There's one more thing that I always say: we work very fast in Israel, whether it's developing a company or whether it's doing research. And I think it's a combination of how we're brought up and also our size – Israel is a small country. If I need to speak to somebody who's doing something, I am always within two degrees of separation, at most.

**In the book, you write about how in the past – for example, during the development of radar and sonar – military people were very interested in bat research. Today, it's also the people working on self-driving cars. What technologies will benefit from the kind of the research you're doing?**

Let talk about civil applications for a change and to stay more on a positive side. Think about agriculture, something that we've been recently involved in. There's a lot of need for what's called precision agriculture. We're doing a lot of robotics to improve yield or to detect pathogens or whatever. We've done stuff that has to do with guiding robots in greenhouses, for example. We've worked with sound on echoes of plants to provide information about yield. Crops can often be dense and with a camera, you can't see enough. But sound waves can travel around objects, and they can just bring information from inside the vegetation. So that's one domain that has to do with sonar-related applications.



PHOTO CREDIT: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS: DAVID BROSSARD

Another direction would be learning from how bats behave. We know that bats are very efficient in searching for insects. So maybe we can learn from their social movement, how they move in a group, in order to improve searching algorithms. And of course, there's also a whole other avenue, which I'm not personally involved in, but people are trying to learn about extreme longevity. [Note: Bats are extremely long-lived, particularly for an animal of that size – bats can have a lifespan from 15 to 40 years.] Bats have very unique physiology. They can hibernate. People are looking for the secret, the molecular secret of underlying these abilities.

**One thing that surprised me is your pointing out that “Contrary to the prevailing view, genetics also placed bats in evolutionary proximity to predators and ungulates (hooved animals) and far from rodents. Thus,**



PHOTO CREDIT: TOMER APPELBAUM

Professor Yossi Yovel hanging out with some bats at Tel Aviv University

**bats are not flying mice, and fruit bats are not flying monkeys. If anything, bats are closer to flying cows or wolves. In fact, humans are more closely related to mice than bats are.”**

Yeah, what you see is not what you get. We are very used to thinking if it's small and furry, it has to be a mouse, right? But it's not. There are a lot of small furry creatures that come from many, many different taxa, as we call it in phylogeny or in genetics. It's an interesting anecdote that actually we are more closely related to rodents than bats are, but it's not really a surprise. Again, we're just too much working with our eyes when we're looking at these animals. There's something that we call convergence in evolution, which means that animals that are species that are not related at all look similar or do similar things because they're coping with the same environment or the same problem. Dolphin echolocation and bat echolocation is one of the famous examples. So somebody could say, oh, maybe dolphins and bats are closely related because they both use echolocation, right? But we know that that's a convergent feature, not necessarily an indication for relatedness.

**You write about how researchers studying animal behavior use artificial intelligence and simulations. What technology is the most promising for your field and what is the question about bats that you most would like that new technology help you answer?**

I just listened to a podcast about the newest advancements in large language models, LLMs, which we sometimes call sequence predicting models. Chatbots are based on them. I'm super excited by the power that they give you looking into bat and or animal communication in general. Maybe we can use them to decode animal communication. One of my students is running a project where we try to explain or replicate bat navigation using one of these models. These models learn by observing a lot of sequences. They can be sequences of behavior, which is what we're trying to do. And in the past, I could not program a simple model by myself that replicates animal behavior. And now we can do this.

There's a number of new questions. I'm thinking we can have models interacting with each other, mimicking social behavior, or we could add another model that is in charge of communication. I could have different models, trends based on individual tendencies of different animals, which are things we see in the wild. All of these directions are completely new and super interesting. I can't say, 'okay, this is the problem we want to solve with them,' because I think it's more about exploring now. We have a new toy which is more powerful than anything we've ever thought of. And there's so many things that we need to discover. Another dimension is looking at these models and comparing their activation to how the brain works. There are really so many avenues and I think the researchers are going to take all of these avenues.

*Editor's Note: The Genius Bat also has a nifty Berkshires connection – it was translated from the original Hebrew by Berkshire native and friend of the BJV Ira Moskowitz, who now makes his home in Israel. Mazel tov, Ira – you did a great job of capturing Professor Yovel's voice and literary craft.*



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