The Race to Save Sephardi Jewish Heritage in the Middle East and North Africa

MAIMONIDES, continued on page 5

“The Opioid Crisis in the Berkshires”
Maimonides Society of the Berkshires to host addiction specialist and Berkshires DA

LENOX – On Sunday, August 18 from 9:30 a.m. to noon, the Maimonides Society of the Berkshires, organized under the auspices of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, will host a forum exploring the local impact of the opioid addiction crisis. Speaking about the health consequences will be Dr. Jennifer Michaels, assistant professor at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and the medical director of the Brien Center, Berkshire County’s largest community mental health provider. Discussing the effect on law enforcement and incarceration will be Berkshire County District Attorney Andrea Harrington. Both speakers will respond to questions from the audience.

This event is open to the public, and will be held at Lenox Town Hall at 6 Walker Street.Convnet is $15 – a breakfast of bagels and spreads will be served.

To RSVP, please contact the Federation at federation@jewishberkshires.org, or call us at 413-442-4360, ext. 10 by August 14.

Andrea Harrington
(413) 442-4360, ext. 10 by August 14.

For additional information about the Maimonides Society – now in its sixth year – please contact

MAIMONIDES, continued on page 5

Thanks Again for Your Support
Hundreds turn out for Annual Meeting, Women’s Foundation Brunch, and Major Donors Celebration

Thank you to everyone who attended three of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ most important annual events – our Annual Meeting at The Mount, the Jewish Women’s Foundation brunch, and the Major Donors Celebration at Country Club of Pittsfield.

Hundreds of enthusiastic supporters packed these events, showing support for our work building and sustaining Jewish community in this beautiful part of the world. For more on these events, please see pages 13-17.

The Posthumous Landscape
Yiddish Book Center exhibit documents remnants of Jewish life in Eastern Europe

“The Posthumous Landscape: Jewish Historical Sites in Poland and Western Ukraine” is an exhibition of photographs taken by David Kaufman that is on view through September 30 at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst. Kaufman’s large scale, highly-detailed images of Jewish life and architecture remaining in Eastern Europe are a testament to the rich, varied lives led by Jews in cities and towns over centuries and a reminder of the challenges in preserving Jewish material culture in countries that have few Jews today and meager resources. Above: Interior of the Tsori Gilad, the sole functioning synagogue in Lviv, Ukraine. For more, please see page 28.
Rabbi Reflections

Potential Partners for Peace are Close By and Ready to Join In

By Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch

For a while now, our community has been grappling with the implications of the massacre at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, along with other instances of hate and violence. One positive that has come out of such tragedies is a deepened and more meaningful relationship with the Christian community. The evening after the Pittsburgh shooting, we opened our doors at Hevreh to offer sanctuary to those who sought it out. Sixty-five people showed up that evening, including several past-tors from area congregations.

After that evening, the outreach continued – I later received a phone call from the Reverend Erik Olsen of the Church of Christ UCC of Norfolk, Connecticut.

He and I had not yet met. In reaction to the recent shootings, his confirmation students were hoping to do something positive. They were horrified and terrified and, after some conversation and discernment, they decided to reach out to their closest Jewish community to build a new relationship. As the pastor and I spoke about what a meaningful connection would look like, he made an offer: To begin our relationship, his congregation was offering us a Peace Pole as a symbol of solidarity and hope between our communities.

A peace pole is a square pole which has the words “May Peace Prevail On Earth” written in four languages on its sides. These poles are planted all around the world as an essential expression of the great hope and aspiration of Peace. This is fitting, given our traditional focus on the concept of Shalom. In the Midrash, we find the statement that there is nothing greater than peace. In fact, in mystical tradition, “Shalom” is considered one of the many names of God.

This past winter, Hevreh welcomed our friends from Norfolk to a Shabbat while our religious school was in session. Our students learned about the Jewish value of Hachnasat Orchim, of welcoming and hospitality, preparing a meal, songs, and posters for our guests. The congregants from Norfolk came to gift us the peace pole. We held a dedication service, but because of the snow and cold, held off from planting the pole.

This past May, our two communities came together again to place the pole in its permanent home. We each took a turn at digging and, as we placed the pole down, shared blessings.

This moment was made more powerful since we – as an American Jewish community – have continued to encounter hate. Looking at those who had gathered to plant this pole, to make a statement about the hope and promise of peace, I could see that this action meant so much to each person there. I am increasingly concerned about rising white supremacy in the United States, and increased incidents of hate and anti-Semitism here and in Europe. I may be a short-term pessimist, but I am also, unequivocally, a long-term optimist. Experiences like the planting of this peace pole continue to give me hope. And I will continue – and hope we will as a community – continue to seek out partners in our essential pursuit of peace. Those potential partners are close by and ready to join in.

Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch serves Hevreh of Southern Berkshire in Great Barrington.

Volunteers are Vital!

Rosh Hashanah Care Packages For Seniors

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is committed to ensuring the well-being and continuity of the Jewish people both in our community and beyond. Twice a year volunteers bake, pack, and deliver challot (and honey) before Rosh Hashanah and hamantashen (shalach manot) before Purim to Jewish seniors who reside at home and in senior residences, to folks in the hospital, and to those with special needs – reaching 300+ individuals in Berkshire County, Southern Vermont, and New York’s Columbia County.

Known as Joe’s Project in memory of the late Joe Madison, who started this program with a group of hasidic buddies, this is a communitywide program engaging 100+ volunteers of all ages. Many of our local kids help decorate the bags which, once filled, are delivered by numerous volunteers, including some of our PJ Library and Federation families. This program is more than just a gift bag delivery; it is a personal visit to someone who may not get many of them. Three ways you can help:

1) Kids – Pick up bags at the Federation, decorate them, and return them to us by September 19.

2) Adults – Pack the bags with challah, honey, and applesauce on Tuesday, September 24 from 10 a.m. to noon at the Federation office.

3) Kids & Adults – Visit the seniors and deliver the holiday packages from September 25 – 27.

For more information, contact Susan Frisch Lehrer, Coordinator of Volunteers and PJ Library, (413) 442-4360, ext. 14 or slehrer@jewishberkshires.org.

Readers’ Gallery

Rose Tannenbaum, Antique Cottage, oil

Jeff Kramer, Exodus, colored pencil
Punching Above Our Weight

When someone tells me how much they admire this Federation’s work, most of the time that person will add how surprised they are by how much we accomplish given our size. This is especially true if that person lives or has lived in a large Jewish community.

Without a doubt, this Federation punches far above its weight. The annual report published each year in the Berkshire Jewish Voice provides the statistics about what this Federation achieves, but I’ve found that what really motivates our supporters is their proximity to what we do. They see, up close, the difference Federation makes in the lives of our community members by providing essential services to our elders; in funding opportunities for positive Jewish growth for our youth; and in forging connections among the diverse Jewish population of Berkshires, as well as with Jewish groups in other parts of the United States, Israel, and overseas.

What’s more, they recognize Federation’s meaningful outreach beyond the Jewish community, and its effective advocacy for local, national, and international Jewish interests and causes.

The Berkshire Jewish Voice is one of the key tools the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires has to communicate the breadth of its work to our community – which includes full-time residents, seasonal residents, and visitors seeking Jewish connection. Berkshire Jewish Summer is the definitive guide to Jewish programming taking place during the busy tourist season, an essential publicity tool for the Federation, but for local congregations and Jewish groups as well. Copies of the paper are mailed to donors, and are also distributed throughout Berkshire County.

This publication’s revenues do not cover all its costs, and so your financial help as voluntary subscribers is essential in our efforts to bring you meaningful, positive, and entertaining stories both by and about your neighbors, as well as Jews around the world.

Please see the insert in this newspaper for the different funding levels available. An honorary publisher gift of $360 allows us to provide 4 pages of color, while all voluntary subscriptions help defray the cost of printing and mailing the thousands of copies of the newspaper we send out to you nine times each year.

Last year in my appeal for volunteer donors, I highlighted the paper’s visual appeal, original writing, and local focus. Over the past 12 months, we’ve continued to improve.

Visually, we’ve featured work by two fantastic artists we “discovered” – the gifted young Israeli graffiti art-infused muralist Solomon Souza and the late William Papas, one of the most prominent illustrators of his day, whose drawings of a bygone Israel in the late 1960s we were given permission to republish. (It was the first time those images had appeared in print in nearly 50 years.) We were also able to work by Berkshires artists Abe Lipkowitz and Susan Miller, as well as examples of “Tefillin Eizug,” the book of Psalms-inspired artwork created in collaboration by local artists and Israelis from the Alu-D Gilboa region. We also featured Jewish-themed artwork on view at the Turn Park Art Space and the Norman Rockwell Museum, as well as Rabbi Michael Strassfeld’s private collection of signs and memorabilia.

As for original writing, it all starts with regular contributors like Carol Goodman Kaufman, whose “Traveling With Jewish Taste” column never fails to provide offbeat insights into Jewish cuisine (plus recipes that work). In the past year, Avi Dreessen has contributed personal essays and fascinating interviews with bestselling Jewish authors like Tova Mirvis, Angela Himmel, Barry Joseph, and Rabbi Leah Rachel Berkowitz. Additionally, Rabbi Seth Waxman gave us a lively interview about the B’Noto, a brand-new, agunah-focused newsletter.

Clergy and lay leaders of a scholarly bent are able to share their always interesting insights about Jewish faith and culture in Rabbi Reflections columns, with our assistance. Our Jewish Journal column allows anyone to share their experiences and interests – I especially enjoyed Alex Rosenblum’s sukkah-building essay in our Sukkot issue, and Jodie Fishman’s essay about being single, and Jewish in the Berkshires that appeared in our last issue. This month, don’t miss Helene Berger’s moving and insightful story about how she dealt with her husband’s Alzheimer’s Disease diagnosis – it’s excerpted from her memoir and conveys important coping strategies.

As a writer, I especially enjoyed telling the stories of Bob Waldheim’s emotional return to Vietnam, where he had served in the Marine Corps; of Yevgeny Kutik’s recording of new works he commissioned about the experience of family; and of Uri Reyger’s efforts to foster Jewish religious pluralism in the State of Israel. I learned a great deal from all of them – from Bob, about the emotional scars combat veterans still carry with them decades after conflict; from Yevgeny, how a performing artist advances his career in the world of contemporary classical music; and from Uri, many things I didn’t know about the intersection of Israel’s secular and religious values, and why non-Israelis should care.

Also this year, I covered the way Berkshire County’s faith and civic communities came together in displays of unity to memorialize the victims of anti-Semitic shootings in Pittsburgh and Poway. These were melancholy assignments, yet ones I came away from feeling uplifted by the good will of our neighbors and the shared commitment to ensuring that hate and hate speech are unaccepted in our community. As is said, we should meet only at simulac in the future.

As I noted in the first paragraph, people often tell me they are surprised by how much Federation accomplishes given our size. After working for several years as editor of the Berkshire Jewish Voice, I am not surprised. As an editor, I am grateful to have access to so many individuals with interesting stories – authors, scholars, religious leaders, visual artists, dancers and choreographers, entrepreneurs, actors and directors, musicians, philanthropists, and so many more.

And I am especially grateful that the Berkshire Jewish Voice supports the Federation’s efforts to build community and grow Jewish life and identity in this part of the world. Please consider supporting your Jewish community newspaper as a volunteer subscriber.
“Self-Examination and Improvement – Guidance from the Plant Kingdom in Preparing for the High Holidays”

On Thursday, August 15 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosts agronomist Dr. Jon Greenberg, whose topic will be “Self-Examination and Improvement – Guidance From the Plant Kingdom in Preparing for the High Holidays.”

This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

Wrote Dr. Greenberg: “With Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur on the horizon, it is time to begin taking stock of our successes and failures over the last year. Come learn how lessons drawn from Biblical stories and metaphors involving plants can help us to chart a way through this often challenging task. We’ll learn the stories of the revolt of the trees, ‘Jonah and the castor bean, the woman who plucked pomegranates from the Red Sea, and a poisonous pasture weed that replaced the Red Sea, and a poisonous

IF YOU GO
Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, August 15 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 26).

“H.G. Adler: A Life in Many Worlds,” with Biographer Peter Filkins

On Monday, August 12 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosts poet and translator Peter Filkins, who will talk about the life and career of H.G. Adler, who was born in Prague, survived the Holocaust, fled post-war communist Czechoslovakia, became a freelance writer and scholar in the United States and went on to author 26 books on history, sociology, and philosophy, as well as poetry, fiction, and autobiographical works. The author is the subject of Filkins’s just-published biography, H.G. Adler: A Life in Many Worlds.

This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

Poet, novelist, author of two seminal Holocaust studies, one of the earliest historians of Auschwitz, a last representative of Kafka’s Prague, and expert for the Eichmann trial, H.G. Adler (1910-1988) survived Theresienstadt, Auschwitz, and other camps. With friends Elias Canetti and Heinrich Böll, he forged a deeper understanding of the Shoah, engaging Leo Baerct, Hannah Arendt, and Gershom Scholem in critical questions facing modern societies to this day. Translator Peter Filkins will explore Adler’s life and work on the publication of his authorized biography, H.G. Adler: A Life in Many Worlds, by Oxford University Press.

Peter Filkins is an award-winning poet and translator. He has translated three novels by H.G. Adler, Panorama, The Journey, and The Wall, as well as the collected poems of Ingeborg Bachmann, Darkness Spoken. He is the author of numerous books and scholarly articles. The recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Leon Levy Center for Biography, the DAAD, and the American Academy in Berlin, he is the Richard B. Fisher Professor of Literature at Bard College at Simon’s Rock, and also teaches translation at Bard College.

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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.
Mainonides,

[Paragraph about Mainonides not transcribed]

About the Speakers

Dr. Jennifer Michaels is a frequent guest on WAMC, plus links (on the Mediaportal) to podcast and television interviews where Helene talks about her journey.

Choosing Joy – Alzheimer’s: A Book of Hope

Helene Berger shares her journey as a caregiver at Knosh & Knowledge

GREAT BARRINGTON
On Friday, September 20 at 10:45 a.m., Knosh & Knowledge welcomes Helene Berger, who will talk about her memoir, Choosing Joy – Alzheimer’s: A Book of Hope.

This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will take place at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire at 10:45 a.m., and will be followed by lunch. Please note: If you would like to have lunch, you must RSVP and pay in advance. Email federations@jewishberkshires.org, or call (413) 442-4360, ext. 10, to RSVP or if you would like information about this new policy.

Joan共同作者 Helene Berger as she shares the mistakes and the successes that allowed her and her husband to build the best life possible in the face of a terrible illness. Helene’s personal journey to stay positive in the face of her husband’s diagnosis offers concrete guidance and delivers a message of hope, joy, and support to all who must make the journey as a caregiver for a loved one facing any type of debilitating condition, or the challenges of aging.

For an excerpt of Choosing Joy, please see page 2. Visit www.heleneberger.com for more information on Choosing Joy; plus links (on the Mediaportal) to podcast and television interviews where Helene talks about her journey.

About the Author

Helene Berger has held top leadership positions in local, state, and national organizations devoted to Jewish, educational, and women’s issues. She has served for over forty years on the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation (GMJF), a position she still occupies. She also served for two years as president of the GMJF Women’s Department and two terms as president of the Miami Central Agency for Jewish Education (now renamed the Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education).

On the national level she has served: two years as the National Chair of the Jewish Education Service North America (JESNA); two years on the Council of Jewish Federations Board and Executive Committee (now merged into Jewish Federations of North America, JFNA); and over 25 years on the Board of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, holding various leadership positions. Choosing Joy is her first book.

Helene Berger is a long time resident of the Berkshires and is active in the Jewish community here.

Sephardic Heritage,

[Paragraph about Sephardic Heritage not transcribed]

About the Author

Dr. Jennifer Michaels is a dual board certified in adult and addiction psychiatry. She is a national mentor for the Physician Clinical Support System, a SAMSHA-funded program providing training and education to physicians treating people with addictions. Dr. Michaels is a frequent guest on WAMC Northeast Public Radio, and is a community-minded education on topics related to mental health.

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“Robert Frost: New Light on Old Poems”

On Thursday, August 1 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Phil Holland, author of Robert Frost in Bennington County, who will discuss the great American poet’s work in a talk titled “Robert Frost: New Light on Old Poems.” This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

 Writes Phil Holland: “Most of us, I suspect, have known poems by Robert Frost for as long as we can remember, and a few of us will remember the living poet, too, from President Kennedy’s inaugural in 1960. But perhaps we don’t know the poems – or the poet – as well as we might think. We’ll take a brief look at Frost’s life and a fresh look at a few of the old favorites – as well as at some wonderful poems that are less well known.”

Phil Holland is a writer from Shaftsbury, Vermont. A graduate of Bennington College, he holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of London and is former chair of the English Department at Anatolia College in Greece. His Robert Frost in Bennington County and A Guide to the Battle of Bennington and the Bennington Monument are local best sellers. He writes for the Berkshire Edge and moonlights as a voice actor, Vermont Council on the Humanities speaker, and writer of light verse.

IF YOU GO
Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, August 1 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 26).

“A Jewish Mystic’s Approach to Loving God”

On Thursday, August 8 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosts Rabbi Seth Wax, Jewish chaplain at Williams College. Sponsor subject will be “A Jewish Mystic’s Approach to Loving God.” This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

 Writes Rabbi Wax: “Descriptions of the mystic’s journey often discuss how one becomes absorbed within the divine. But how do we train ourselves to have that experience, and what does it feel like? In this session, we will explore teachings of Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad school of Hasidism, who points the way through the deepest of emotions, love.”

IF YOU GO
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Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, August 8 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 26).

Bullying in the Older Adult Population

On Thursday, September 12 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Torrie Dearborn of Glenmeadow Retirement Community in the Springfield area. She will speak on the serious subject of “Bullying in the Older Adult Population.” This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

 Writes Torrie Dearborn: “Bullying isn’t just for teenagers. It’s a problem older adults grapple with as well—at senior centers, in exercise facilities, clubs for seniors, and places of worship. Bullying is defined as the display of repetitive, negative behaviors toward another person that occur over time. Examples of bullying include verbal intimidation to excluding people from taking part in routine activities to physical violence.”

 Torrie will teach how to use humor to defuse anger, and to support those being bullied with kindness and compassion.

 Torrie Dearborn has been working at Glenmeadow for over 11 years and worked as a funeral director for 13 years prior. She is responsible for helping older adults transition to living at Glenmeadow. She also helps people receive support in their current homes throughout Greater Springfield. Glenmeadow at Home provides personal care and support, pet care, handyman service, housekeeping and meal delivery.

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Volunteers Are Vital!

In April, seven Jewish residents of Devonshire Estates Senior Living and Retirement Community in Lenox welcomed in Shabbat and the last day of Passover with Federation volunteers Avi, Lev, and Sasha Dresner. This was the second of their monthly Shabbat visits together, which began when the Dresners delivered Federation’s Rosh Hashanah packages to the residents in the fall, and which have continued through the summer. As with the first visit, this one began with a good deal of schmoozing – in this case about how everyone spent their Seders, and the Dresners’ recent family trip to Israel, which was for Avi’s wife, Natasha, and sons, Lev and Sasha. The boys proudly showed the residents a video of their first – and last – camel ride at The Dead Sea. They then welcomed in Shabbat with candle lighting, kiddush and a special motor over shmurrah matzah, followed by macaroons and, of course, more schmoozing.

For more volunteer opportunities in our community, please contact Susan Frisch Lehrer at (413) 442-4360, ext. 14.

“Hey, That wasn’t so bad.”

Yeah. We get that a lot.
“Presidents: Their Lives and Sports,” with Evan Weiner

On Monday, August 19 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes radio journalist and newspaper columnist Evan Weiner for “Presidents: Their Lives and Sports.” A look at how sports affected the lives and decision-making of various presidents. This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series. Weiner says Evan Weiner: “Presidents, of course, impact all areas of life including sports. Theodore Roosevelt is credited with saving football. William Howard Taft had a bad morning at the office in 1910 as women demanded the right to vote, and he fled to watch a baseball game which would become the first ever Presidential opener. Roosevelt, Kennedy, and Johnson all had sports impacts. Richard Nixon opened up China because of sports. Jimmy Carter used sports as leverage in dealing with the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. And there are other times when presidential decisions were made with a sports calculus in mind.” A radio journalist from the age of 15, Evan Weiner won two Associated Press Awards in 1978 and 1979. In the 1980s, he started his long association with Westwood One Radio. Evan was a contributing columnist for several newspapers throughout the US. He did a daily commentary called ‘The Business of Sports’ for Westwood One Radio between 1999 and 2006. He has written six books about the business and politics of sports. Evan also lectures at colleges and universities about the business and politics of sports, including the globalization of North American sports and how technology is changing sports. His book, The Business and Politics of Sports has been critically acclaimed by academic journals and is used as part of a number of sports business management courses at schools throughout the United States.

**IF YOU GO**

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community  
**Venue:** Knesset Israel  
**Date & Time:** Monday, August 19 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 26).

Join “Milton’s Gang” for a Passel of Short Plays

On Thursday, August 29 at 10:45 a.m., director Milton Lestz reassembles his “Milton’s Gang” players for what is certain to be a dramatic morning of short play readings. This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community series. “Milton’s Gang” is composed of lubricator Paul Bernstein, Patricia Duckworth, Laura and Tom Gardner, John Gaspard, Richard Fidler, Peter Podol, and Nancy Vale.

**IF YOU GO**

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community  
**Venue:** Knesset Israel  
**Date & Time:** Thursday, August 29 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 26).

Intergenerational: The Process of Aging

On Monday, August 5 and Monday September 9 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presents “Intergenerational: The Process of Aging” with therapist Maggie Bittman. This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series. This program will provide an opportunity to be part of a group dialogue, created and facilitated by Bittman, who will explain her outlook and approach, emphasizing that aging begins at birth. She will discuss how all of us are confronted with four existential truths as we age – the search to find meaning and purpose; facing mortality; experiencing aloneness; and engaging free will. Bittman will highlight how this is a lifelong process, and the ways people return to these existential truths at each stage of life with the added wisdom that comes with aging. Within this context, participants will discuss, share and offer support, as they explore these existential truths.

**IF YOU GO**

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community  
**Venue:** Knesset Israel  
**Date & Time:** Monday, August 5 and Monday September 9 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 26).

Schindler’s List: Film Screening and Book Discussion (led by Hugh Black)

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host two programs related to the film Schindler’s List. On Monday, August 26, join us for a screening of Steven Spielberg’s 1993 film about the German industrialist who saved Jewish lives during World War II. On Thursday, September 5, educator Hugh Black will lead a discussion of the film. This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series. Schindler’s List was directed and co-produced by Steven Spielberg and written by Steven Zaillian. Based on the novel Schindler’s Ark by Australian novelist Thomas Keneally, the film follows Oskar Schindler, a Sudeten German businessman, who saved the lives of more than a thousand mostly Polish Jewish refugees from the Holocaust by employing them in his factories during World War II. It stars Liam Neeson as Schindler, Ralph Fiennes as SS officer Amon Goeth, and Ben Kingsley as Schindler’s Jewish accountant, Itzhak Stern. The film will begin at 10:45 a.m., run until noon, break for lunch and continue at 12:30 through to the end. On September 5, Hugh Black will lead a discussion about the novel Schindler’s Ark, as well as other books that were developed based upon the film. They include Testimony, The Legacy of Oskar Schindler’s grave at Mount Zion Catholic Cemetery in Jerusalem

**Schindler’s List and the USC Schindler Fellowship, The Making of Schindler’s List: Behind the Scenes of an Epic Film, and Schindler’s Legacy. True Stories of the List Survivors**

Join us for this meaningful community discussion.

**IF YOU GO**

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community  
**Venue:** Knesset Israel  
**Date & Time:** Monday, August 26 (film) and Thursday, September 5 (talk), at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 26).

Current Affairs: Contemporary American and International Politics

On Thursday, August 22 at 10:45 a.m., join Professor Steven J. Rubin for “Current Affairs: Contemporary American and International Politics.” This course will meet to discuss and explore current issues that influence our lives and society at large. This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community series. Topics will be chosen by Professor Rubin in consultation with the class and in view of the issue’s relevance. Members will be encouraged to participate in discussions to express views and opinions in a supportive and informal atmosphere.

**IF YOU GO**

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community  
**Venue:** Knesset Israel  
**Date & Time:** Thursday, August 22 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 26).
The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires has a strong commitment to Jewish youth, helping to provide a high-quality Jewish education for more than 145 children and young adults through substantial grants to congregational religious schools across the Berkshires.

Berkshire County is fortunate to have a diverse Jewish community that offers educational opportunities encompassing a wide range of approaches and family preferences.

**Knesset Israel Pittsfield**

The Knesset Israel Hebrew School, a part of this Conservative congregation’s Families Together program, welcomes students from pre-school through 12th grade to dynamic classes where they learn Hebrew, Torah, Jewish studies, history, and culture. The school prides itself on its intimate classes and extraor- dinary faculty. In addition to teaching skills for meaningful Jewish living, the school also incorporates a “hidden curric- ulum” helping students learn to value and prioritize their own involvement in Jewish community life.

Jewish Life is the direc- tor of Knesset Israel Families Together and administrator of the Hebrew School, as well as of family engagement and teen programming. These are her hobbies. Fueled by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Drawing on her many years of teaching and Jewish camp experience, as well as her graduate-level study of educa- tion at Harvard’s Jewish Theological Seminary, Judith brings cre- ativity, professionalism and passion to her 12th grade role.

**Early Childhood and Primary Grades:** Children grades nursery and kinder- garten are invited to attend KI’s new program, which will be offered monthly this year in November. This exciting opportunity will incorporate games, stories, and an introduction to the Jewish worship experi- ence. Preschool and kinder- garten students gather on Shabbat mornings. An hour class with a highly-qualified teacher features song, move- ment, and Shabbat-friendly crafts. Students in first and second grades also meet on Shabbat mornings for a two hour session beginning their study of Hebrew, prayer, mitzvot, and Jewish holi- days. Afterwards classes join together for Purposely Play, a program that gives the young- est pupils a chance to learn, creatively and exponentially.

A team of experienced primary school educators is working together to infuse this program with best practices and joy.

**Elementary Grades:** Grades 2-6 meet on Shabbat mornings and Wednesday afternoons. Over the course of their elementary school years, students study stories from the Torah, lifecycle, holidays, and Jewish values. This year, grades three and four will con- tinue their studies of Jewish values, parshah, and growing they develop a sense of width in their knowledge of the Jewish holidays. Grades five and six will explore the texts from the Mishna as they advance in

**Students at KI’s Hebrew School**

as members, these programs are a great way for families to experience the Knesset Israel community. Upcoming fall events include: Family BbQ at KI, September 2, 3-7 p.m.; Fall Fling, September 22. A short sermon to be deliv- ered to the congregation the Sunday morn- ing after the shabbat blessing.

**Bar/Bat Mitzvah:** The crown jewel of KI’s education programs, the intensive bar/bat mitzvah program engages students deeply in developing the skills and enthusiasm they will need for lifelong participa- tion and leadership in Jewish religious life. Instruction includes prayers of Torah and Haftarah and leadership of all Shabbat services. The program is complemented by a mitzvah project and the preparation of a short sermon to be deliv- ered to the congregation the day of the student’s lifecycle celebration.

**High School:** Students continue on Shabbat morn- ing for a class with KI’s rabbi, David Weiner. Weiner says that while students use the Bible together with com- ments from Rashi. High school students also have the opportunity to serve as teaching assistants in the Hebrew School, especially in Junior Congregation, the bar/ bat mitzvah program and Purposely Play. This year Knesset Israel will be pilot- ing new youth programming, incorporating the arts, social time, leadership development and opportunities for regional conventions. Participation of members and non-members is welcome.

**Family Programming:** Exciting programs for the whole family linking themes of the Jewish calendar with con- temporary social issues take place throughout the year. Open to non-members as well

**This section offers an overview of local Jewish schools.**

Please note that owing to the BJV’s publishing schedule, some key dates and events for local religious schools may not have been finalized at press time.

Please contact the congregations (contact information on page 25) for complete details.

**Congregation Beth Israel North Adams**

The Congregation Beth Israel Community Hebrew School offers a vibrant pre-K through 7th grade Reform Reform congrega- tion’s program supports children’s Jewish development through song and prayer, creative exploration, Jewish literacy, Hebrew learning and acts of caring. Located in the northern Berkshires, classes meet on Mondays from 3:30- 5:15 p.m. Special family and community programs are also held throughout the year.

This year, CBI’s Com- munity Hebrew School begins on Monday, September 9.

The education team is headed by Rabbi Jarah Greenfield, a seasoned and passionate Jewish educator who is in her second year at CBI as director of education.

Students benefit from the presence of four teaching assistants. Rabbi Rachel Barnden, CBI’s spiritual leader, is a poet, rabbi, chaplain, and blogger who works closely with stu- dents as they move through the b’nai mitzvah experience. Jane Shyrah is a school coun- selor, family coach, storyteller and magician with 45 years of working with children and their families. Elyry Skiller, a junior at Bennington College, esp. to learn something new engages students in real-life topics such as Jewish ethics, belief in God, and the contem- porary emergence of non-bi- nary Hebrew.

CBI offers special pro- grammings throughout the year, including community picnics, field trips, concerts, artists-in-residence, holiday celebrations, and more.

To learn more about the CBI Community Hebrew School and staff, please visit the website at www.chibebershe- school.weebly.com. Education Director Rabbi Jarah Greenfield can be reached at rabbir@greenfield.com.

**Hevreh of Southern Berkshire**

Great Barrington

Hevreh Religious School students enjoying a break from their studies

Hevreh, a Reform congrega- tion, looks forward to welcom- ing new and returning stu- dents in kindergarten through 7th grade to its Religious School this fall on Sunday, September 15 at 10 a.m. “Together we’ll learn and grow, play and cook, and sing and create,” says Education Director Rabbi Jodie Gordon, “with a few special surprises along the way. Parents and sibs- lings are invited to join us for our Opening Day blessing and celebration at 11:45 a.m. in the sanctuary.”

Religious School meets weekly on Wednesday from 4 to 5:30 p.m. for grades 1-5.

Hevreh welcomes interfaith families, GLBTQ families, new and returning students, and friends to explore all the education programs have to offer.

To schedule a one-on-one appointment and tour, please contact: rabbi jodie gordon, education director: jgordon@hevreh.org

Jodie Friedman, Program Coordinator: jfiedman@hevreh.org

Go to hevreh.org/school to register!

**Tiny Talmidim**

On Sunday, September 22 from 10-11:30 a.m. Tiny Talmidim begins. It’s a hands-on class that allows parents and their pre-school aged children the opportunity to explore the Jewish calendar together each month through movement, music, cooking, and crafts related to Jewish holidays and Jewish values.

Each month in Tiny Talmidim, students will learn something new, taste, make something new, taste, and experience some- thing new. If you have any questions please be in touch with Rabbi Gordon.

Go to hevreh.org/school to register!
JEWISH EDUCATION IN THE BERKSHIRES 2019/20

Temple Anshe Amunim

Pittsfield

"Join us for a new kind of religious school," says Rabbi Liz Hirsch, who serves as both spiritual leader of this Reform congregation and director of education for a dynamic and innovative learning environment. The cutting-edge, one-day-a-week, experiential program is open to students of all grades.

K 12, meeting on Saturday mornings at Temple Anshe Amunim. TAA's Shabbat Religious School begins on Saturday, September 14 at 10:30 a.m., coinciding with Shabbat morning services. "Our brief, fun, musical service is open to all ages," says Rabbi Hirsch. "We don't have a bar or bat mitzvah service attendance requirement, because coming to services is one of the best parts of the week for our students and families. After Shabbat blessings and snacks, we continue with a program, activity, or field trip appropriate for all ages. This year, we're celebrating the 150th anniversary of Temple Anshe Amunim. Each week, we'll do something new!" Hebrew education is integrated into the Shabbat morning program, with additional tutoring and support available to bar and bat mitzvah students and others on an as-needed basis. From time to time, students meet on a Friday evening for a Shabbat evening service, dinner, and family education experience. If they meet on a Friday, they wouldn't usually meet on that Saturday morning.

According to Rabbi Hirsch, Religious School at TAA is... Experiential. "We often do our learning beyond the walls of the synagogue by getting outside, exploring local Pittsfield cultural sites, volunteering, being active (think skiing, hiking, and sports), and using social media to tell our Jewish stories."

Communal. "We bring together elementary, middle, and high school students to learn and grow together. We forge inter-generational relationships between our students and congregants of all ages. Teens are always welcome to attend, as our oldest students are role models for our youngest. When appropriate, we’ll break into smaller groups based on age."

Flexible. "We take attendance to ensure health and safety, not to reward or guilt those who do or do not attend. We are happy to discuss our flexible options with your family. We tailor our program to you and your children."

Fun. "We have fun together!"

To learn more or register, visit ansheamunim.org, email templeoflic@ansheamunim.org, or call at (413) 442-5910.

Great Barrington

The B'shalom Chorale of the Berkshires Returns!

GREAT BARRINGTON – The B'shalom Chorale of the Berkshires will present a concert of Jewish choral music at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, August 14 at Hevrich of Southern Berkshire.

This is the sixth season concert for this summer chorus of singers who enjoy exploring the great wealth of Jewish music, sacred and secular, as well as classical and contemporary.

The B’shalom Chorale is conducted by Jack Brown, who is also the artistic director of the Berkshire Lyric Chorus and the choral director at Simon’s Rock College and the Hotchkiss School. The accompanist is Joe Rose, also of Berkshire Lyric, and a well-known musician in the region. The music for this concert will include various styles, genres and cultures, for example, Sephardic, Yiddish, Israeli, and others.

Admission to the concert is $15. All are welcome.

For more information call (413) 418-1836, or email BShalomChorale@gmail.com. Hevrich is located at 270 State Road in Great Barrington.

Pittsfield

The Secret Deal To End The Holocaust

PITTSFIELD – On Sunday, August 18 at 3:00 p.m., Chabad of the Berkshires hosts Holocaust historian Max Wallace, who will talk about his new non-fiction book, In the Name of Humanity: The Secret Deal to End the Holocaust.

The book details an audacious scheme by a rescue committee of Swiss ultra-Orthodox Jews led by a remarkable woman named Becha Sterbuch. Wallace, a New York Times best-selling author who worked for Steven Spielberg’s Shoah Foundation, will reveal newly discovered archival documents proving that the Committee deceived SS chief Heinrich Himmler into destroying the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau and terminating the Final Solution in November 1944, a full six months before the end of the war, thus saving tens of thousands of Jews.

The Canadian Jewish Nexus described his book as “an impressive piece of historical scholarship and a very compelling chapter of Holocaust history.” The book was recently awarded the 2018 Canadian Jewish Literary Award for Holocaust History.

Max Wallace is a journalist, filmmaker, and Holocaust historian. Wallace’s previous books include The American Axis: Henry Ford, Charles Lindbergh and the Rise of the Third Reich, about the Nazi collaboration of two American icons; and Muhammad Ali’s Greatest Fight: Cassius Clay vs. the United States of America, about Ali’s battle against the US government over the Vietnam War, for which Ali wrote the foreword. In 2013, the book was adapted into a Hollywood film directed by Oscar-nominated filmmaker Stephen Frears. Wallace has been a guest columnist for the Sunday New York Times, and has also contributed to the BBC.

Please RSVP to jewisberkshires.com and/or call (413) 499-9899. Suggested donation is $18.

A Review Of The Liberator – Eyewitness Accounts of the Liberation of the Concentration Camps

Stuart D. Frigenblatt is a former research scholar on the Holocaust and will be addressing the community on Tisha B’Av, Sunday, August 11 at 11 a.m., at Chabad of the Berkshires. Stuart will share his extensive research on eyewitness accounts of the liberation of the concentration camps.

There is no cost, but an RSVP is required.

Chabad of the Berkshires is located at 450 South Street in Pittsfield.

The Opioid Crisis In The Berkshires

Sunday, August 18
9:30 am
Lenox Town Hall
6 Walker Street Lenox, MA

A panel discussion and Q&A with special guests:

Jennifer Michaels, MD
Medical Director, Brien Center and Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at UMASS Medical School

Andrea Harrington, JD
District Attorney, Berkshire County, MA

Open to the Public

This live activity will receive a maximum of two hours of AMA PRA Category 1 Credit through the Joint Providership of Berkshire Health Systems and the Maimonides Society

Converst $15
Bagels and spread will be served

RSVP BY AUG 14
(413) 442-4360, ext. 30
federation@jewishberkshires.org

NO SOLICITATION OF FUNDS

JEWISH FEDERATION OF THE BERKSHIRE'S 2019 Annual Campaign

GOAL $855,000

DOING EXTRORDINARY THINGS IS REAL 2019

The Maimonides Society of the Berkshires presents

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NO SOLICITATION OF FUNDS

TEMPLE ANSHE AMUNIM:

Rabbi Liz Hirsch (left) leads the religious school program at Temple Anshe Amunim
Deborah Lipstadt to Speak at 52nd Annual Feigenbaum Memorial Foundation Lecture

PITTSFIELD – The 52nd Annual Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Memorial Foundation Lecture will be held on Sunday, August 25 at 7:30 p.m. at Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield. The speaker will be Deborah Lipstadt, a Dorot Professor of Modern Jewish History and a historical consultant to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The topic will be “Assault on Truth and Memory: Lessons from History.” The lecture, sponsored by the Temple Anshe Amunim Feigenbaum Lecture Endowment, is free and open to the public.

Dr. Lipstadt has published and taught about the Holocaust and the effects of hatred for almost 40 years. Her most recent book, published in 2019, Antisemitism: Here and Now, is an inquiry into contemporary manifestations of anti-Semitism. Her previous book, Holocaust: An American Understanding, explores how America has processed and interpreted the Holocaust since 1945. The Eichmann Trial, published in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of Adolf Eichmann’s trial, was “a penetrating and authoritative dissection of a landmark case and its after effects.”

Her 2005 book History on Trial: My Day in Court with a Holocaust Denier is the story of her libel trial in London against David Irving who sued her for calling him a Holocaust denier and right-wing extremist. The film Denial, starring Rachel Weisz, Tom Wilkinson, and Timothy Spall, was based on the book. Dr. Lipstadt was an historical consultant to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and helped design the section of the Museum dedicated to the American Response to the Holocaust. On April 11, 2011, the 50th anniversary of the start of the Eichmann Trial, Dr. Lipstadt gave a public address at the State Department on the impact of the trial. Dr. Lipstadt is often called upon by the media to comment on a variety of topics. She has spoken at the Chautauqua Institute and appeared on Good Morning America, NPR’s Fresh Air, and the BBC. She is also a frequent contributor to and is widely quoted in newspapers and journals including the Washington Post and The New York Times.

She has held, and currently holds, a Presidential appointment to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council [from Presidents Clinton and Obama] and was asked by President George W. Bush to represent the White House at the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. At the US Holocaust Museum Lipstadt chairs the Committee on Antisemitism and State Sponsored Holocaust Denial.

About the Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Lecture Series

Andy Hochberg, lecture committee co-chairman, notes that “This is the 52nd year of the Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Memorial Foundation Lecture series and it presents an opportunity to emphasize the civic and spiritual legacy of this outstanding woman. The series would not be possible without her sons Dr. Armand Feigenbaum and Dr. Donald Feigenbaum [both of blessed memory], who established the Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Lecture Series in perpetuity as a living memorial to their mother’s spirit.”

The Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Memorial Foundation continues to enhance the spiritual and intellectual life of Temple Anshe Amunim and the larger community. The Foundation has sponsored lectures by leaders in American government, literature, theology, and journalism including such personalities as Julian Bond, Representative Barney Frank, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Bernard Kalb, Ambassadors Daniel Kurtzer and Martin Indyk, Steven Emerson, Mara Liasson, Howard Dean, Bret Stephens and David Gergen. Refreshments will be served after the lecture.

Seating will be limited and early arrival is recommended. The doors may close before the lecture begins.

For more information, please call the Temple office: (413) 442-5910 or visit the website at www.ansheamunim.org. Temple Anshe Amunim is an accessible building.

Shirei Shabbat at Knesset Israel with Dr. Leon Chameides

PITTSFIELD – On September 20, Knesset Israel presents its monthly family-friendly Kabbalat Shabbat service featuring gifted musicians and musical arrangements leading the interactive prayers.

Shabbat dinner cooked by enthusiastic volunteers will follow. After dessert, Dr. Leon Chameides will speak.

In addition to many medical publications, Dr. Chameides has published two books, Strangers in Many Lands, which traces his family history and his own experiences during and after the Shoah in Poland and England, and On the Edge of the Abyss, a translation of his father’s essays written between 1932 and 1936 as rabbi in Katowice, Poland. He will give a reading and analysis of one of these essays, “A Seder in Bnei Brak,” after dinner.

Dr. Chameides will discuss the Sanhedrin, events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem to the Romans, and some of the rabbis of the Mishna, as well as the events of 1933, the year his father wrote the essay, which provided the seed for the unique interpretation of the well-known Haggadah story.

Dr. Leon Chameides is Emeritus Director of Pediatric Cardiology at Connecticut Children’s Medical Center and Clinical Professor of Pediatrics at the University of Connecticut’s School of Medicine. He is a graduate of Yeshiva College and the Teacher’s Institute of Yeshiva University, as well as the Albert Einstein College of Medicine. He received his medical education at the University of Rochester and Boston Children’s Hospital. Since coming to Hartford in 1967, he has been active in its Jewish community and has delivered numerous lectures on Jewish history, the Shoah, and a variety of Biblical topics.

The service begins at 5:30 p.m. Dinner reservations ($80 adults, $45 teens, free for children) may be called in, mailed, or brought directly to the synagogue office by Tuesday, September 17, to ensure sufficient seating and plentiful serving platters for all attending. Call (413) 445-4872, ext. 10, for more information.

Shirei Shabbat at Knesset Israel
LENNOX – On Saturday, August 24 at noon, Chabad of the Berkshires will host Dr. Efraim Chalamish, an international economic law professor, advisor, and commentator whose topic will be “Jews, Israel, and the United Nations – Behind the Scenes and New Perspectives.” This talk will be held following Shabbat services at the Lenox Community Center (295 Walker Street), Chabad’s summer home. Services begin at 9:30 a.m.

Dr. Chalamish has had an international legal practice in New York, Paris, and Israel, and has performed research and analysis of public and private international law. His work included both international arbitration and cross-border transactions for multinational clients and sovereign governments. He has also served as a Global Fellow at New York University, exploring global governance of corporations and multilateral institutions, the intersection of business and national security, and energy and sovereign wealth funds’ economics and policy, international investment arbitration, and global governance and financial regulation. He has advised the Israeli government and Israel’s Prime Minister’s Office on related matters, such as the oil and natural gas industry in Israel. His articles have been published in leading journals and magazines in the United States and Europe, such as the European Journal of International Law.

He is the founder and president of the Global Center for Economic Development and International Law. His work has been featured by the European Journal of International Law, The Marker, Haaretz, the Jerusalem Post, and other prominent publications and media outlets, including Jewish Week, The Jewish Press, The Marker, The Gulf Times, and The Marker, and has appeared on CNN, FOX News, BBC, Channel 10, Hamas, and other media outlets. Dr. Chalamish has been published in leading journals and magazines in the United States and Europe, such as the European Journal of International Law.

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Berkshire Jewish Musicians Collective Makes A Surprise Tribute to Philanthropist Harold Grinspoon

The Berkshire Jewish Musicians Collective made a surprise appearance at the 2019 Life and Legacy Gathering at the Sheraton Springfield Monarch Place Hotel on May 19. While the event, sponsored by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, was aimed at building skills, sharing best practices, and providing networking opportunities for the participants in order to continue to create sustainable legacy giving programs in their local communities, national director Arlene Schiff extended an invite to the Collective.

Says Schiff, “Harold will be 90 this July and so, in honor of this important occasion, I invited the members of the Berkshire Jewish Musicians Collective to celebrate this milestone in Harold’s life and the fact that we have all journeyed here from near and far to connect with others engaged in the important work of legacy giving. Tonight’s group features the original lineup of the Collective, all friends of mine, and all who have been touched, in some way, by Harold’s philanthropy.”

“I was honored to be asked to play at Harold’s celebration. He has not only supported me in my many years at Camp Seneca Lake, but this summer he is helping me to go to Israel. I am thrilled to be able to bring a little smile to him on his birthday,” added percussionist Colby Lederman.

The ten-song setlist ranged from classics such as “Hine Ma Tov” and “Oseh Shalom” to the klezmer favorite, “Odessa Bulgarisch.” But when the Collective launched into the concluding trio of “Yom Huledet Sameach,” “I Want You Back,” and “Hava Nagila,” the audience broke into a rousing hora in celebration of Harold Grinspoon’s birthday.

A Tanglewood Havdallah with TAA

LEXON – Join Temple Anshe Amunim for a Havdallah service at Tanglewood on Saturday, August 3 at 7 p.m. followed by the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s Asher Fisch conducting Schumann, Dorman, Beethoven and Mendelssohn, with violinist Pinchas Zukerman and cellist Amanda Forsyth. All are warmly invited to attend this beautiful and engaging evening with the Temple Anshe Amunim community! Bring your picnic and look for people with blue-and-white balloons gathered on the lawn near the Visitor’s Center. The service is held overlooking Stockbridge Bowl before the evening’s performance. Feel free to bring a dessert to share!

Tickets can be purchased by contacting the BSO at www.bso.org or by calling (413) 637-1666.

For more information about the event, contact the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910, email templeoffice@ansheamunim.org or visit www.ansheamunim.org.
Jewish Women’s Foundation Brunch

On June 21, more than 100 women gathered to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Jewish Women’s Foundation and honor its founder, Jane Glaser.

JEWISH BLUEGRASS SENSATIONS
NEFESH MOUNTAIN

SUN AUG 4 | 7:30 PM | DUFFIN THEATER, LENOX HIGH SCHOOL

General Admission $25, Under 30, $20, kids under 10 free
Tickets at jewishberkshires.org or (413) 442-4360, ext 10

To benefit the ADL World of Difference Program in Berkshire County Schools
The Jewish Federation is all of us – the members of our Jewish community – working together to repair the world, and keep Jewish life strong and thriving in the Berkshires, in Israel and around the world.

Please answer the call of our community and give generously to the 2019 Campaign – Thank You!

It all adds up. You make the difference.

Your gift to the Jewish Federation touches lives across the Berkshires and across the globe—helping vulnerable people, responding to crises, inspiring Jewish life and learning and assuring our collective Jewish Future.

Your acts of caring join with thousands of others.

Your generosity extends comfort, care, and connection to those who need it most.
Our Major Donors Breakfast at Country Club of Pittsfield on July 14 was an inspiring morning that brought together 200 of our key supporters to celebrate the impact Federation has on the lives of others, as well as its advocacy in local high schools. Honorary co-chairs were David and Lorna Strausler. Super Sunday co-chairs Larry Frankel and Elisa Schindler-Frankel spoke about why they give to Federation. “I believe that tzedakah, in whatever form it takes, creates a sacred space between the giver and the receiver,” said Larry. “It is in that space between that the real work of repairing our world happens. Today as we consider our support of the Federation, we will create a sacred space between our community and ourselves.”

Federation Executive Director Dara Kaufman, Jason McCandless (superintendent of the Pittsfield Public Schools and president of the Berkshire County Superintendents Roundtable) and Robert Trestan, executive director of the Anti-Defamation League’s New England office, talked about the impact our partnership with the ADL’s WORLD OF DIFFERENCE® Institute peer training is having on educating young people in the local middle and high schools throughout the Berkshires about bias behaviors.

Domenica Gomez, a recent graduate of Lenox Memorial High School, shared her experiences as a participant in the program taught leadership skills that will make her an effective advocate for fairness and tolerance among her peers.

Thank you again, major donors and David and Lorna Strassler, for all you do! Your generosity lifts our entire community and transforms the lives of individuals across the Berkshires and around the world.
What are your financial goals?
Are you saving for a long and secure retirement? Hoping to build a legacy for you and your family? Our Greylock Investment Group can help you with your goals by developing an investment plan or fine tuning an existing plan aligned with your needs, goals and level of investment experience.

PJ Library families had the best morning at High Lawn Farm in Lee on June 21. It rained a little, but that didn’t stop us. We saw baby calves – some born yesterday! There were moms ready to deliver – cows sleeping on waterbeds! We learned about caring for animals – tz’ar ba’alei chayim – and read a PJ Library book, The Littlest Pair. And, while Shavuot was earlier in the month we talked about the holiday and why we eat dairy products – all while enjoying delicious chocolate milk produced at the farm! Thank you High Lawn Farm, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Jewish Women’s Foundation of Berkshire County, and the The Spitz-Tuchman Fund for our PJ Library programs.
Federation Annual Meeting Celebrates Youth Outreach with Our Partners in the US and Abroad

On the evening of June 18, more than 175 community members attended the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ 79th annual meeting at The Mount in Lenox.

Opening the meeting with a d’var Torah was Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch. Judy Usow, who will conclude her term as Federation president in 2020, shared a recap of Federation’s accomplishments over the past year, and recognized those who have stepped up to assume leadership positions on the Federation’s executive board and board of directors. Joining the Federation’s board of directors for their first 3-year terms were Elisa Schindler-Frankel, Sandy Rubin, Michael Wasserman, and Stuart Masters.

At the meeting, the Federation installed Kathy Fraker to its executive board as vice president. Continuing their service are Gail Orenstein as vice-president, Jennifer Sacon as secretary, Michael Ury as treasurer, and Amy Lindner-Lesser as immediate past president. Elected to serve an additional two-year term in his current position was Joshua Bloom as vice-president.

Community Engagement

Executive Director Dara Kaufman took the podium to describe another year of community service and achievement for our Federation. “With your loyal support, our 2018 campaign raised over $885,000, our highest level ever,” she said, “This funding has allowed us to increase programming, utilize more community based venues, expand opportunities for our young people, and increase our support of humanitarian and social service programs for the most fragile Jews in need around the world.”

Star Students

Judith Cook, the Federation’s scholarship chair, introduced the recipients of the Henry Simkin and Frances Simkin Schiller and Dr. Stanley and Faye Simkin Scholarship, given to Jewish high school seniors who have demonstrated high academic achievement and leadership in the Jewish and broader communities.

This year’s recipients are:

Liat Friedman
Secretary of the National Honor Society and a representative on the Northeast regional board of North American Federation, Liat will be attending Simmons University this fall to pursue the study of psychology. She hopes to join Hillel to further her Jewish journey and help others in college understand the culture and community of Judaism.

Jacob Munch
President of the Hevreh of Temple Youth, also known as HOTY, and treasurer of the National Honor Society, Jacob shares his love of Judaism and Jewish community with young students as a “Madrich” or young teacher in the religious school program at Hevreh. He credits his participation in NYFTY New England with helping him become more open minded and learning how to have deeper and more thoughtful conversations around Judaism. Jacob will attend either UMass Amherst or Temple University this fall, and he would like to pursue a degree in sports management.

“Youth Impact 2019: Russia, Israel, and USA”

This year, we welcomed representatives of two of our major partners in engaging youth in the Jewish world.

Misha Libkin, director of ORT Russia, shared his personal story of how his education in ORT schools changed the direction of his life, and how the dollars contributed by our donors are making a difference in the lives of young Jews in Russia today.

Freda Baram, delegation director (Northeast Region) for The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), shared stories about her family’s aliyah from Turkey in the 1980s, and how she built a career as an emissary in Canada and the United States for several Jewish non-profits.
Summer Learning Opportunities at Hevreh

GREAT BARRINGTON – This summer, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire taps its members' expertise for two interesting talks.

Perspectives on US Jewry and the Holocaust (Concluded)
On Sunday, August 1 at 4 p.m., join Stu Schweitzer for a talk that examines the awakening of Jewish community in the United States during the Holocaust. Write Schweitzer America's Jews and the past leadership of the U.S. Jewish community have come under fire in recent decades for failing to do all they could on behalf of Europe's Jews during the Holocaust. What could and should they have done? This topic is fraught with peril, as the luminaries on the US Jewish Commission on the Holocaust discovered to their dismay in the early 1980s.

The Commission, headed by former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg, broke up for a time in an internal clash over criticism of former Jewish leaders.

Schweitzer will provide some background on the controversy and then pose questions for attendees to discuss. Stu is a docent at the Holocaust Museum and Education Center of SW Florida, and has been a speaker at Hevreh on Holocaust issues in recent summers.

An Early Look at the 2020 Race for President
On Thursday, August 8 at 4 p.m., Richard Kirsch will explain the key dynamics that may play out in the primary race for president in 2020 and the dynamics in 2019 that are driving the race. He’ll step back to look at what history can tell us about the race moving forward.

Kirsch is a decades-long Hevreh member who has helped us analyze the 2016 presidential election and the 2018 midterms. He brings a lifetime of work in progressive political organizing at the state and national level.

Theatrical Exploration of Two Episodes of Anti-Semitism in French History
FITTSFIELD – On Sunday, September 15, at 2 p.m., Temple Anshe Amunim, in conjunction with the Berkshire Center for the Arts, will present Restitution: Anti-Semitism in France, a double bill of two historical dramas. Several renowned Jewish professionals have been invited to participate in the staged readings.

The first play, The Esterhazy Draft, depicts a pivotal moment in the infamous Dreyfus Affair, when Colonel Georges Picquart brings to the attention of his superiors in the French military the evidence that Alfred Dreyfus was wrongfully convicted of treason. Instructed not to make waves, Picquart is arrested and sentenced to life in prison, but he maintains his innocence. Picquart and his colleagues then confront the woman, the boys’ uncle and aunt, and a conflicted Cardinal.

The professional actors performing in the staged readings are Andrew Joffe, Carla Lewis, Annette Miller, and James Ochoco. At the discussion following the reading, there will be two very special guests: Suzanne Vromen, Professor Emerita of Women’s Studies at Bard College and founder of their Women’s Studies program, who was herself protected by Belgian nuns during the Nazi regime; and Joyce Block Hammerling, the author of In the Shadow of Vichy: The Finly Affair, which was a resource for Waldinger when researching the story. Dr. Barbara Viniar, for- mer President of Berkshire Community College, recently attended the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism’s “Consultation on Conscience” conference and came away with a renewed understanding of the centrality of anti-Semitism to the contemporary discourse on the importance of civil rights and worldwide. She is eager to join with others in using Lipstadt’s scholarship to better understand what is needed for action.

The Trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg
The professional actors performing in the staged readings are Andrew Joffe, Carla Lewis, Annette Miller, and James Ochoco. At the discussion following the reading, there will be two very special guests: Suzanne Vromen, Professor Emerita of Women’s Studies at Bard College and founder of their Women’s Studies program, who was herself protected by Belgian nuns during the Nazi regime; and Joyce Block Hammerling, the author of In the Shadow of Vichy: The Finly Affair, which was a resource for Waldinger when researching the story. Dr. Barbara Viniar, former President of Berkshire Community College, recently attended the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism’s “Consultation on Conscience” conference and came away with a renewed understanding of the centrality of anti-Semitism to the contemporary discourse on the importance of civil rights and worldwide. She is eager to join with others in using Lipstadt’s scholarship to better understand what is needed for action.

The Rosenberg Case: An Illustrated Lecture
On Tuesday, August 6 at 11:30 a.m., Temple Anshe Amunim will host an illustrated lecture by Jesse Waldinger about Julius and Ethel Rosenberg who were convicted on June 19, 1953, having been convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage, were all shipped into the electric chair and electrocuted. Their execution was and still is controversial: to some the Rosenbergs were traitors and to others martyrs. Were they guilty of spying for the Soviet Union? Did they deserve the death penalty?

Lunch and Learn this Summer with Temple Anshe Amunim
FITTSFIELD – This summer, Temple Anshe Amunim hosts “Lunch and Learn” sessions. Guests are invited to bring their own lunch; beverages and dessert will be provided. Admission is free for Temple members and $5 for non-members.

The Old Is New and the New Is Holy: Preparing for the High Holy Days
On Wednesday, August 7, 14, and 21 at 11:30 a.m. prepare for the High Holy Days with Rabbi Liz Hirsch. This year, T’Shilat will begin using Mishkan Haneferim, the reform movement’s new High Holy Days prayer book. The new book will serve as the guide for the spiritual journey into 5780.

Dr. Barbara Viniar
led by Dr. Barbara Viniar. Dr. Lipstadt will be this year’s speaker at the annual Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Lecture on August 25 (see story on page 10). The discussion will enable participants to explore the issues Lipstadt will discuss and formulate questions they may want to ask.

Dr. Barbara Viniar, former President of Berkshire Community College, recently attended the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism’s “Consultation on Conscience” conference and came away with a renewed understanding of the centrality of anti-Semitism to the contemporary discourse on the importance of civil rights and worldwide. She is eager to join with others in using Lipstadt’s scholarship to better understand what is needed for action.

The Temple, located at 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield, is an accessible building. For more information, contact the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910, email templeoffice@ansheamunim.org or visit www.ansheamunim.org.

Wine & Dine

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George H. Sorter, 91, one of the most-favored business school professors
NORTH ADAMS – Dr. George H. Sorter, 91, died Thursday, May 23 at his home in New York City.

Born in Vienna on December 2, 1927, George and his family moved to New York in 1938. He attended school in Chicago, earned a Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and joined the faculty in 1974. In 1976, he became the Vincent C. Ross Professor of Accounting at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and Chairman of the Accounting Department at NYU’s Stern School of Business and later, University Professor. He joined the NYU Law School faculty in 1990, retired as Professor Emeritus in 2003, but continued to teach there until 2013.

Winner of the American Accounting Association’s Outstanding Educator Award and NYU Law School’s Great Teacher Award, he was also cited in Fortune magazine as one of the eight most-favored business school professors.

George had been a bridge champion, giving that up in the 1950’s, he became a family and academia, authoring a textbook and dozens of articles on his every day work. His contributions to Accounting George was also known for his uncanny wit.

He is survived by his wife, Doritene (Lachman) Sorter; son, Ivan Lagven (Patti); daughters, Jennifer Lipton (Zael), and grandchildren, Samantha, Daniel, Michael, and Rose Hamovit, he spent the summers with his family and the winters with the Hamovit in Sarasota, FL – Jerry M. Hamovit, 77, passed away on Tuesday, June 11, 2019. Born November 23, 1941, Marcia was a psychiatric social worker. She was a loving, kind, and thoughtful person who always thought of others before herself.

Marcia was the beloved wife for 49 years to Dr. Fred Hamovit. They married Elizabeth Hochberg and Ian Hochberg; mother-in-law of Michael and Carl Schloff; dear sister of Barbara Greenblatt and her husband, Phil; loving grandmothers of Samantha, Daniel, and Rose.

Service and interment took place on Thursday, June 13. Tzedek Sinai, 3812 Union Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230.

Melvin Greenberg, 86, passed away and enjoyed working with his children. He got into the Morgan horse world in Vermont, and doing daily chores with horses, Bouviers, Jackie and Cowboy. He also loved singing and listening to folk music, particularly socially conscious troubadours including The Weavers and Peter Paul and Mary. He played the banjo for many years. Running and skiing were his go-to sports and he was an enthusiastic chef.

Mel was married by his wife Ellen; four grandchildren, David, Josh, Toby and Jill; three siblings, Noah, Anna and Rachel. He also leaves several nieces nephews and grandchildren. He was predeceased by his brother Saul.

A memorial service was held on Thursday, July 4 at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire. Mel also worked closely with organizations in the Berkshires.”

The following is a list of his academic and other honors he received during his lifetime:

- He was a life member of the American Dental Association, the Massachusetts and Berkshire District Dental Society, and a member of the honorary Omicron Kappa Rho, the national honorary dental fraternity of these, Berkshire Bounty, was started with help from his dear friend Phil Wasserman. For 25 years, Mel, along with many helpers, would pick up food for these, the People’s Pantry, and Railroad Street Youth Programs. For the past 15 years, he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need.

- He was a member of the Board of the Great Barrington Fairview Commons.

- He was a life member of Kiwanis and later, University Professor.

- He was a member of the American Dental Association, the Massachusetts and Vermont Associations of Orthodontists.

- He was a life member of the American Dental Association, the Massachusetts and Berkshire District Dental Society, and a member of the honorary Omicron Kappa Rho, the national honorary dental fraternity of these, Berkshire Bounty, was started with help from his dear friend Phil Wasserman. For 25 years, Mel, along with many helpers, would pick up food for these, the People’s Pantry, and Railroad Street Youth Programs. For the past 15 years, he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need. Finally, realize that he also worked closely with Berkshire Bounty to provide weekly dinners to those in need.

- He was a member of the Congregation B’rith Israel in North Adams. He leaves two nieces, Joelle Frank of New York City and Wendy Frank Higgins of Newburyport, MA; a great-grandson of his two nephews. He was predeceased by his sister, Ruth D. Frank, in 2013.

- Private graveside services were held on Sunday, June 23 at the Great Barrington Cemetery. Clarksburg. Friends may donate to Congregation Beth Israel, 53 Lois St., North Adams, MA 01247 or to the chan. Hyn and Dagnoli-Montagna Home for Funerals, 74 Main Street, North Adams, MA 01247.

- Melvin Greenberg, 86, was an advocate and was an indispensable volunteer in the education of its youth, but he also worked closely with organizations in the Berkshires.

- He was a member of the Board of the Great Barrington Fairview Commons.

- He was a life member of Kiwanis and later, University Professor.

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Marlayne was born in Queens, NY to George Keosian and Pauline (Weinstein) Keosian. She graduated from Hunter College. In 1962, she married Benjamin Keosian in New York City. Marlayne and Benjamin moved to North Adams in 1976, raised her two children, and eventually ran International Outlet, which sold gourmet cookbook, household items and gifts, and brought quality and style to homes across northern Berkshire County and beyond. When her husband was diagnosed in 1995 with Parkinson’s Disease, she was her primary, loving caretaker until his passing in 2018. Together they moved to Lenox in 2012 for his benefit and to be closer to family.

She was actively involved in the Pittsfield/Lenox community, volunteering at Conte Elementary School and participating in activities at the Pittsfield Senior Center and Lenox Community Center. On March 15, 1959, she was a curious, read library visitor, therapist,faker, and adren- tense seeker. She was always quick with a laugh and a smile. She enjoyed her friends in the area, loving their fun outings. She was also a devoted, fun-loving grandmother to her two grandchildren who will miss her greatly.

She was survived by her son Adam Keosian (Amy Brentano) and grandchildren Molly and Joseph Weinberg of Richmond; daughter Leslie Keosian of Santa Barbara, CA; brother Kenneth Keosian of Denver, CO; brother Kenneth Keosian of Richmond; granddaughter Susan of Bar Harbor, CA; and many nieces, nephews and friends.

A celebration of her life was planned for July 14. The family suggests donations to Hospice Berkshire County or Mass Audubon.

Continuous – Chabad of the study groups “Studying on Seniors,” or “S.O.S.,” volunteer program to serve senior citizens in the Berkshires. Classes are for families who can benefit and volunteers. Rabbi Levi Volovik at (431) 499-8989 or visit www.jewishberkshires.org.

Monthly, fourth or fifth Sun-
day – Volunteers from Congregation Beth Israel, 53 Lois Street, North Adams, learn to “Say It Eat!” program cook, package, and deliver hot meals for all North Adams clients of “Meals on Wheels.” Information: (413) 663-5830 or office@cwbew.org.


Tuesdays, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. – Torah Portion of the Week study group at Knesset Israel, 270 State Road, Pittsfield. Facilitator Myrna Hammerling guides the group through the triennial cycle of Jewish law. The session is free, open to the public and in English. Free and open to the public. Information: (413) 445-8472, ext. 16.

Wednesdays at Hevreh – Lunch N Learn with Rabbi Neil Hirsch at 11:45 a.m. is open to anyone who wants to deepen their relationship to Jewish study through discussion. Says Rabbi Hirsch: “Our tradition teaches that when two (or more) sit together, and discuss words of Torah, God dwells with them. Study is one of the many ways we as a Jewish community experience the sacred and the divine.” Classes are available via video conference or conference call. Email Rabbi Hirsch a nirhisch@hevreh.org to find out how to join remotely.

Thursdays (fourth of each month) – Hadasah Book Club. For times, locations of meetings, and further information about the books: Pattie Lipman lpilman@fairpoint.net.

Thursdays at 10 a.m. – Janet Friedman and Camp Ramah to teach a three-lesson Jewish cooking class, “Israel and American Cooking.” Information: (413) 445-8472, ext. 16.

HILDA VALLIN FEIGENBAUM MEMORIAL FOUNDATION LECTURE

SUNDAY – AUGUST 25, 2019 – 7:30 PM

Assault on Truth and Memory: Lessons From History

Lecturer: Deborah Lipstadt

52ND ANNUAL

The lecture is free and open to the public. A reception follows the lecture. Limited seating – arrive early. The doors may close before the lecture begins.

Thursdays August 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29 at 1:15 p.m. – Join Rabbi Liz Hirsch at Temple Anshe Amunim for open meditation and light yoga for all ages and abilities. No prior experience or athletic clothing necessary!

Fridays, at 9 a.m. – Meditation with Rabbi Rachel Barenblat in the Congregational Beth Israel sanctuary, 53 Lois Street, North Adams, overlooking the Berkshire Hills. Meet and mingling, and meditation designed to help prepare for Shabbat. All welcome. Information: (413) 663-5830 and www.cwbew.org.

Fridays, once a month at 5:30 p.m. (followed by a family style Shabbat dinner at 6:30 p.m.) – Knesset Israel, 16 Col Road, Pittsfield. Shirei Shabbat (“Songs of Shabbat”). Unique service combines melodies from Carlebach, Debbie Friedman, and Camp Ramah to create a nuch filled (“spirited”) family friendly experience. Cost for dinner $20 adult, $15 teen, children free. Dinner reservations necessary! Please contact Rabbi Liz P. G. Hirsh leading Spiritual Physical Fitness sessions, Hike (August 3); Learn (August 17), Mindfulness (August 10).

Saturdays at 8:45 a.m. at Hevreh 16 Col Road in Great Barrington. Every Shabbat morning, gather in Rabbi Neil Hirsch’s study and dive into the less-often read books of the Bible. All are welcome to begin the day with coffee while study- ing and relaxing on Shabbat. Sessions will be between 45 and 60 minutes. Please be in touch with Rabbi Hirsch for further information: nhirsch@hevreh.org.

Saturdays at 10:30 a.m. Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield – Rabbi Liz P. G. Hirsh leads Spiritual Physical Fitness sessions, Hike (August 3); Learn (August 17), Mindfulness (August 10).

Saturdays at 9:30 a.m. Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield – Torah Plus: Exploring Jewish Text and Culture.” Join Rabbi Liz P. G. Hirsh for a conversation based on the texts of the Jewish people and reflect on Jewish values and thinking and what it means “to be Jewish.” All texts are offered in English, free and open to the public. Information: (413) 442-5910 or templeoffice@ ansheamunim.org.
Traveling with Jewish Taste

Spice Up Your Summer with “The Head of the Shop” – Ras el Hanout

By Carol Goodman Kaufman

It’s summertime and the livin’ is easy, but we still have to eat. Do we really want to be in the kitchen cooking heavy meals? Experts tell us that we should be eating clean (i.e., unprocessed) foods, and light and healthy meals are just the ticket for the season. The easier they are to prepare, the more likely we are to try something new.

The “something new” in this article is Ras el Hanout, one of the variety of spice blends brought to Israel by immigrants from around the world, in this case from North Africa. The name is Arabic for “head of the shop,” and refers to the best spices available in the spice trader’s store. In Morocco, the spice blend carries the moniker “lazy cook’s spice” as it is used in dishes ranging from broth to tagines to rubs. It is beloved, and for good reason. The aroma alone will make you swoon.

While Ras el Hanout is available in Middle Eastern groceries, you can also make your own. As with other spice blends we’ve discussed, from baharat to hawaij, cooks have their own favorite recipes, and they don’t share them. The mixtures I’ve seen tend to include a combination of cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, coriander, cumin, paprika, mace, nutmeg, peppercorns, and turmeric, but they can include up to fifty different spices.

Ras el Hanout is so much a part of Berber culture that there is even a legend about how the spice blend came to be. As the story goes, there once was a despotic sultan who made unreasonable orders of his servants, and punished them cruelly if they failed to deliver. One day he sent one of his servants to the market for spices. Unfortunately, the sultan’s wife also sent him on an errand, so by the time he reached the spice shop he was frantic and out of breath.

The spice trader asked him what he wanted, but the servant was breathing so hard that he could only croak out the words, “Please, sidi, just give me a little of everything.”

Wanting to accommodate the customer’s wishes, the spice trader put a tiny bit of every spice he had into one large packet. When the servant brought the packet of spices back to the cook, the cook went into a frenzy, worrying about what he could possibly make with the mess of spices, and knowing that both he and the servant would be punished severely if dinner wasn’t delicious and on time. He added a pinch of the mixture to the pot and prayed.

When sultan smelled the aroma coming from his dinner, he was suspicious that the cook had tampered with his recipe. However, on the first bite, he knew he had a winner. He tasted the sauce, pronounced it delicious, and had the cook put out a large plate of Middle Eastern dishes for the entire court to taste. From that day on, the sultan demanded that his food be flavored with Ras el Hanout.

Carol Goodman Kaufman is a psychologist and author with a passion for travel and food. She is currently at work on a food history/cookbook, tracing the paths that some of our favorite foods have taken from their origins to appear on dinner plates and in cultural rites and artifacts around the world. She invites readers to read her blog at carolgoodmankaufman.com and to follow her on Twitter @goodmankaufman.

Ingredients:

- ¼ pound tilapia fillet, ground coarsely
- ¼ pound haddock fillet, ground coarsely
- ¼ cup breadcrumbs
- 1 tablespoon pine nuts
- ¼ teaspoon cumin
- ¼ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon Ras el Hanout
- ¼ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Directions:

Place the ground fish into a medium bowl.

Add the breadcrumbs, pine nuts, cumin, smoked paprika, chili powder, Ras el Hanout, baking soda, salt, pepper, garlic, parsley, cilantro, scallion, and onion. Mix gently.

With gloves or oiled hands, knead the mass until it forms a ball. Shape the mixture into a kebab, and place on a greased grill. Serve 2 kebabs per plate with tehina sauce.

The “something new” in this article is Ras el Hanout, baking soda, salt, pepper, garlic, parsley, cilantro, scallion, and onion. Mix gently.

With gloves or oiled hands, knead the mass until it forms a ball. Shape the mixture into a kebab, and place on a greased grill. Serve 2 kebabs per plate with tehina sauce.

An Israeli Treat for “Afters”

And then there’s dessert. A platter with a selection of melons and berries is just the thing to lend a light ending to a summer meal. But if you need something with a bigger sugar punch, I recommend a treat that I enjoyed while living in Israel: ice café. Not your standard iced coffee, this was a singularly creamy and delicious drink enjoyed with friends at a sidewalk table outside the Strauss Milk Bar on King George Street in Jerusalem.

There’s no formal recipe for ice café that I can find, but who needs one? It takes all of two ingredients: coffee and vanilla ice cream — but be sure that the frozen treat you get is of the best quality. Pour hot coffee into a tall glass (to make it authentic, the glass should have a handle) and place it on a plate.

Drop a large scoop of the ice cream into the glass. Serve and enjoy!
Memoir Excerpt: Choosing Joy – Alzheimer’s: A Book of Hope
Transcending a devastating disease through exploration and discovery, peace and acceptance

By Helene Berger / Special to the BJV

Helene Berger will appear at the Friday, September 20 Knosh & Knowledge to talk about her memoir, Choosing Joy – Alzheimer’s: A Book of Hope, about the loss of her husband, Ady, to Alzheimer’s disease. It has been a journey that has challenged her in every way, but also one that has taught her valuable lessons about life and love.

About her journey, Berger writes: “Books on Alzheimer’s and dementia often describe the caregiver as having debilitating feelings of helplessness. My experience during the early stages was that even though I felt powerless to make the kind of difference that would stop or slow the disease, I was clearly not helpless. It is humbling to understand that one might be able to alter the outcome.”

While Berger cautions that everyone’s experience of Alzheimer’s will be different, she will share insights gained as a devoted wife and caregiver that she hopes will educate and inspire others in a similar situation. Please see page 3 for details about her Knosh & Knowledge talk.

For more about the book, plus podcast and television interviews with Helene, visit her website: www.heleneberger.com

The following excerpts from Choosing Joy are reprinted by permission of the author.

A Friend’s Guidance That Helped to Sustain Me
I remember a conversation that helped to shape our lives going forward. This was in the early years of Ady’s incipient Alzheimer’s, before the official diagnosis, when I had probably expressed my concerns about Ady to none but my closest friends. We were out to dinner with a lovely couple whom we knew quite well. The husband was a widely published author and well known authority in his field. Ady, sitting next to him, turned and said, “So, Sam,” I think he called him, “What do you do?”

I blanched and tried to come to Ady’s rescue, rushing in to remind Ady of Sam’s prestigious accomplishments. His wife, Lynn, took my hand and said, “Helene, everybody loves Ady for Ady. Don’t try to cover for him.”

My eyes filled with tears. Living with the myriad problems that Alzheimer’s was already beginning to inflict upon us was hard enough. Trying to keep secret what had clearly become obvious to others only made it harder. Lynn’s guidance was my first step toward open, public acceptance of our new reality. It was easier after that for me to acknowledge our problem openly, to shed the burden of pretending that everything was normal. Publicly acknowledging what Ady and I were experiencing, rather than treating it as embarrassing and shameful, gave me enormous relief. It opened up new worlds of communication for me, enabling me to learn from others’ experience. Ady himself made it easier, as he began to admit openly that “My memory’s not so good anymore.” In the early years, we are often unwilling to acknowledge to our friends the reality of what we are living through. Though this may be understandable, it burdens us with an unnecessary level of sadness and pain. Just as important, we lose out on the wise counsel and compassion that friends can offer. In two short weeks, Lynn’s honesty and compassion changed my life. I shall always be grateful to her.

“Fight the Disease, Not the Journey”
I read or heard those words when Ady was first diagnosed: “I jotted them down because they sounded interesting,” “Fight the disease, not the journey.” At the time, I did not really understand what they meant but gradually the concept became clearer.

The first part is obvious: we must fight the disease with every weapon we possess or uncover, and share our back seat and watch the unfold unfold. We must fight with full power and intelligence to provide the best physical and mental health possible, whether through new and ever-expanding medications, bringing in new and ever-expanding friends and seeking appropriate help, books, providing daily aerobic activity with a trainer or taking daily walks or a swim, or learning from others’ experiences in many different ways.

The journey is a far different matter. The journey, I came to understand, is the emotional side of the equation. It means drawing on all our resources to make the final years together as beautiful as they can be. It means remembering the love that was always there.

In the early years, we are often unwilling to acknowledge to our friends the reality of what we are living through. Though this may be understandable, it burdens us with an unnecessary level of sadness and pain.

of past years and not trashing it now with annoyance, frustration, impatience, bitterness, or self-pity. It means being aware every minute that your loved one did not choose this condition – for themselves or for you. It means going deep within yourself to empathize with what your patient is going through. If they start giving you false hope, or telling you, they could be doing the same with a spouse afflicted with Alzheimer’s. Would they give such false hope? How could they make such Pollyannaish statements without living through it themselves? How could this possibly be a happy time? I apologize for my lack of faith. Over the years, this initially terrifying period turned into a tranquil, nurturing time of exploration and discovery. It became a time of peace and acceptance.

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Make a Difference
Retracing a Path of Liberation in the Shadow of Auschwitz

Ride for the Living honors the past, celebrates a contemporary revival of Jewish life in Krakow

By Sandy Ashendorf / Special to the BJV

In 2016, my husband Ron and I embarked on a trip to Eastern Europe that included several days in Krakow. As the trip neared its end and we were putting last minute touches on our itinerary, we were told to make sure to have Shabbat dinner at the JCC Krakow. “There’s no JCC in Krakow,” was our collective first reaction. How was it possible that the city that Hitler sought to make a preeminent Nazi killing field had no JCC. It seemed inconceivable.

By late afternoon, my husband and I were determined to explore this mythical place an hour’s drive from Krakow, this documentary in the works, it shows how Robert has transitioned from almost certain death to an active member, realizing his ride should not have ended in a place of loss, but rather at a place of hope, namely JCC Krakow. Since his first ride, Robert has been joined annually by members of the Jewish community and friends from around the world.

In addition to Marcel and his family, these friends have included: three-time Tour de France winner Greg LeMond; US Ambassador to Poland Paul Jones; US Consul General of Krakow Walter Braunohler; Holocaust scholar Zofia Radzikowska and Bernard Ollens; members of the Israel Cycling Academy; Holocaust scholar Michael Herenbaum; and Chief Rabbi of Poland Michael Schudrich. The ride has grown from 15 participants in the first year to over 200 and, with a document in the works, it shows no sign of slowing down.

At first blush, it might seem disrespectful to the memory of the Six Million including the 1.5 million murdered at Auschwitz-Birkenau to the ride retraces the path that upon liberation was walked by many survivors, including Marcel Zielinski, who has participated in the ride since the second time it was held. We committed to come back to Krakow for the 2017 ride and recently returned again, completing it for the third consecutive time.

Ride for The Living was inspired by Robert Desmond, who rode his bicycle 1,350 miles from London to Auschwitz visiting WWI sites of liberation along his journey. After joining the JCC and becoming an active member, he realized his ride should not have ended in a place of loss, but rather at a place of hope, namely JCC Krakow. Since his first ride, Robert has been joined annually by members of the Jewish community and friends from around the world.

All of us are there to celebrate the revival of Jewish life in Poland in the face of the unimaginable atrocities of the Shoah 70 years ago.

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www.jewishberkshires.org
Thoughts on the problematic Parshat Pinchas

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor

This year: Parshat Pinchas was read on July 27. This essay is adapted from a d’var Torah delivered in 2018 at Knesset Israel.

Pinchas is one of the most problematic figures in our Torah. He is the grandson of Aaron, appointed by God to be the third kohen gadol (high priest) of the Israelites, as well as the progenitor of the hereditary line of future high priests. The first curious thing one notices about this pivotal character is that he is not introduced in the Torah proper but rather in the one that precedes it, Parashat Balak. And he makes an underwhelming entrance.

The episode that closes Parashat Balak is the apocry- tasy of Baal Peor — although on the one hand the Promised Land, Israelite men take up with Midianite women, worshiping their gods and engaging in all manner of licentiousness. Incensed, God sends down a plague and orders Moses to impale all the ungrateful Israelites, and per- haps Moses wanted to plead on their behalf again.

So who, then, is Pinchas? His name translates approx- imately as “bronze colored,” or “dark one.” He is the grandson of Aaron and the son of Eleazar, who took as a wife a daughter of Yiro, who, although also the father-in-law of Moses, was an idolater and priest of Midian. Pinchas is identified as the product of that union in Sefer Shmot (6:23).

According to midrashic explication, this mongrelized lineage makes the Children of Israel to chastise Pinchas for killing the couple at the Tent of Meeting, the logic being that Pinchas, as grandson of an idolater who supposedly mis- treated animals, was unworthy of performing the sacred deed.

A Freudian might analyze his murderous act — piercing an Israelite man like his father and Midianite woman like his mother through their lower bodies as they sin — as the symbolic annihilation of his own parents, and thus a manic manifestation of his own desire for self-abnegation. It is fair to say, however, that both the Children of Israel on the scene and readers of the Torah down through the ages are within their rights to abhor the sheer brutality of Pinchas’s action. The abject murderousness of Pinchas’s deed provides one reason that the Torah cites his connection to Aaron repeatedly, at least according to Rashi.

Nevertheless, in Parshat Pinchas God Himself rewards Pinchas’s zeal — Pinchas and his descendants will be the high priests of Israel for all time.

What is also quite interesting is the connection midrash of Pinchas with the prophet Elijah, the zealot’s zealot. According to the view of Talmudic sages in Baba Metzia 114, Pinchas and Elijah are identical. When Pinchas is last mentioned in the Book of Judges and in Chronicles, there is no record of his death, which has allowed some to conflate him with Elijah, who does not die but is instead borne away in a chariot of fire.

Pinchas himself is a cipher. He says literally nothing to announce his actions or justify his motivations. I’ve always found it vainable to examine the first and last words of each biblical figure, as entrances and exits are inevitably revealing about their inner lives. Pinchas, however, is silent. We finally do, in a way, hear the voice of Pinchas when he reappears in the Book of Joshua…we will get to that.

While Pinchas himself is a dubious character, Parshat Pinchas is one of the most remarkable and consequential portions of the Torah. After the flux and chaos that marked the early history of Sefer Bamidbar (Book of Numbers), Parshat Pinchas establishes a social order that the Hebrews will take with them as they enter the Land of Israel. Consider what it establishes:

We find out, through God’s reward of Pinchas, that the priesthood will be hereditary

A new census of the tribes with all the societal order

In chapter 26, verse 65, we find out that God considers punishment of the generation who left Egypt to be complete — all but Caleb and Joshua are dead.

Moses appoints Joshua as his successor, indicating that leadership will not (for the time being) be hereditary

The anecdote about the daughters of Zelophehad establishes a groundwork for women’s rights in the Land of Israel

And finally, there is the self-sacrificing nature of Pinchas’s zeal that orders time itself — we don’t meanlessly pass through endless seasonal cycles, but rather we move purposefully from one milestone to the next in order to worship our God.

And it is that kind of narrative, with all its sequential ordering of space and time, that is the hallmark to Parshat Pinchas about?

An episode from the life of the zealous prophet Elijah. Certainly, the rabbis who determined the schedule of haftorot in the early Christian era could have found passages in the books of the Prophets to correspond with the reordering of order taking place in Parshat Pinchas. But instead, they made a connection to Elijah, which signals that they wanted us, going forward, to consider the nature of zeal- otry, just as by breaking off the Pinchas episode into two parshyot — one with Pinchas’s deed, the next with his reward — also invites us to reflect on fanatic devotion.

I think that the midrashic connection between Elijah and Pinchas is the first of three messages about the Zealot the Bible has for us — the Zealot is always with us, and is always, PINCHAS, continued on next page.
more or less, a manifestation of the Zealot's role.

The second message comes with Pinchas's reappearance in Pursht Mattot, which follows Pursht Pinchas and continues the story of Israel versus the Midianites. Pinchas's commanding Moses to “avenge the Israelite people on the Midianites; then you shall go down to your kins.” Moses, contra- vening God’s command to him, delegates the job of leading the army to tribal commanders, and also Pinchas, who rallies forth with the army “equipped with the sacred utensils and the trumpets for sounding the blast.” According to midrash (Numbers Rabhah), Pinchas was assigned this role so that he could finish the sacred task that began when he smote the Midianite woman in the affair of Baal-Peor.

The Torah does establish a key role for the priesthood in battle, specifically in the Book of Deuteronomy (20:2-4). Jewish sources have led out to war by a special kohein called the mashuach milchamah (the one anointed for war), who was designated for this task; but his job is not to fight, but rather to encourage the soldiers to battle bravely, telling them that God was surely on their side.

This is not how Pinchas appears in the battle described in Pursht Mattot, which — if not quite a fiasco — is a bloody mess. Moses’ God’s wishes are not completely ful- filled, infuriating Moses. And Pinchas, in some sense, failed too. He’s shaking the holy vessels, he’s blowing trumpets, he is out of his mind. He started in slaying the evildoers — he is whipped up and out for blood.

The image being hit with a kohen gadol, or a mashuach milchamah, for Pinchas' sake seems to be understood as a sacrifice daily. When we next encounter Pinchas, he uses a spear to pierce an Israelite apostate and a bullwhip to whip soldiers engaged in sexual con- gression through their abdomens, an image that would have resonated in a meaningful way with the Torah’s initial upholding of the ban on people living amidst cultures whose cuttie practices included human sacrifice. And while what I’m alluding to might seem to some of you quite a furred inter- pretation of Pinchas’s actions at Baal-Peor, let me share another citation from Numbers Rabhah: “Reading the words of Numbers 25:13 that Pinchas made atonement for the children of Israel,” a midrash taught that although he did not strictly offer a sacrifice to justify the expression ‘atonement, his shedding the blood of the wicked was as though he had offered a sacrifice.”

“This is unpleasant stuff, and you can’t help but wonder why rabbis might have decided to separate Pinchas’s act and Pinchas’s record. This is right into two separate par- shipht. But, along with Moses sending Pinchas to war at the head of an army, it also suggests what I believe is the Torah’s second message about the Zealot, which is this —

Sometimes the Zealot is useful. In other words, he may be a zealot, but he’s our zealot.

And what’s the problem with that, precisely? Well, the Torah has an answer for that, too, and in my view is the third important lesson about the zealot it has to impart. We last encounter Pinchas in the Book of Joshua, Chapter 22, which takes place after the Hebrews have taken possession of the Land of Israel. Hearing that the tribes of Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who reside east of the Jordan River, have erected a great and con- spicious altar, the Israelites living to the west of the Jordan assemble against their brethren over this presumed apostasy. But before they act, however, they send a recon- naissance group — they send a recon- naissance group — to investigate, one that is composed of ten tribal chiefs and led by Pinchas, son of Eleazar. When

the party arrives in Gilgal, for the first time, we hear the voice of Pinchas, and here the Tanach, in all of its brilliant subtlety, provides its third last essential insight into the nature of the Zealot: “When they came to the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, in the land of Gilgal, they said to them, ‘Thus says the whole congregation of the Lord, What is this treachery that you have committed against the God of Israel in turning away today from following the Lord by building yourselves an altar today in rebellion against the Lord? Have we not had enough of the sin at Peor from which even we have not cleansed ourselves, and for which a plague came upon the congregation of the Lord, that you must turn away today from following the Lord?’ It continues: ‘Do not rebel against the Lord, or rebel against us by building yourselves an altar other than the altar of the Lord our God. Did not Aaron son of Zerah break faith in the matter of the devoted things, and wrath fell upon all the congre- gation of Israel? And he did not perish alone for his iniquity!’

In other words —

You got here. It would be a shame if something were to happen to it.” We hear the voice of the Zealot here very clearly. “The WHOLE of the community of the LORD! ‘Treachery you have com- mitted this day’: ‘And in reference to what can only be described as the particular obsession of Pinchas. ‘Have we not had enough of the sin at Peor from which EVEN YET we have not cleansed ourselves.' Are these inqui- ties never over? In the mind of Pinchas, human iniquity is not, and never will be, over or forgiven. The incident at Baal-Peor is the high water mark of his existence, and the subsequent battle to wipe out the Midianites a glory which he hopes to revive.

And here is the sub- ttle genius of our Tanach. It doesn’t relate that Pinchas said these words, but that “that” — the whole recon- naissance party — speaks them. Pinchas has infected their minds with his own hatred and zealotry, to the point that Israelites are ready to go to war with their fellow Israelites before they even ask about the altar. (The east bank Israelites, by the way, are blameless.)

And that is the third lesson the story Pinchas conveys:

The Zealot may be useful when doing our bdding, but the dan- ger is that the rest of us might, with zeal, soon start doing theirs.

When I was a kid, I was embarrassed by the B’nai brith doc- umentary Civilization — I still have Kenneth Clark's

CULTURE AND ARTS

Berkshire Jewish Film Festival continues

LENOX — The Berkshire Jewish Film Festival (BJFF), one of the longest-running film festivals in the United States, continues its 33rd season on Mondays through August 12 in the Duffin Theater, Lenox Memorial High School, 197 East Street.

All presentations are open to the public. Tickets to the 4 p.m. screenings are $8, and 8 p.m. screenings are $10. All seating is general admission.

The Berkshire Jewish Film Festival is generously sup- ported by the Greylock Federal Credit Union, Berkshire Bank, the Woldson Family Foundation, and the Spirit-Tuchman Charitable Trust. Information at www.berkshirejewishfilmfestival.org or (413) 485-4782, ext. 10.

August 5

At 4 p.m. — Shoelaces is a tender family drama that portrays the knotty relationship between an aging, irascible mechanic and his reluctant special needs son he abandoned long before.

At 8 p.m. — In The UnOrthodox, a disenfran- chised Orthodox teenager whose daughter is expelled from a prestigious religious school just for her ethnicity, launches the ultra-Or- thodox Shas Party, a nascent challenge to the ruling Ashkenazi establishment in this lively, crowd-pleasing drama.

August 12

At 4 p.m. — 9dimQueen relates the life of Rachel “Ruchie” Freier, a non-nonsense Hasidic lawyer and mother of six who is determined to shake up the boys club in her community. She cre- ates Ezras Nashim, the first all-female ambu- lance corps in NYC.

At 8 p.m. — In The Other Story, two rebel- lious young women, one fleeing the chaos of secular feminism for the comfort of faith, the other seeking to escape her oppressive religious upbringing for sexual and spiritual freedom, cross paths unexpectedly in Jerusalem in this empowering drama.
PINCHAS, continued from page 25

companion book in my library, and periodically dip into it, always with great pleasure. One of the chapters is titled, “The Smile of Reason,” and features a photo of a bust of Voltaire sculpted by Houdon that perfectly embodies that conception of civilization — the great writer’s visage conveys engagement, bemusement, serenity, and resolve.

Today, whenever I engage in public discourse — online and in person — I too often encounter the other kind of face, the one that doesn’t have its own chapter in Kenneth Clark’s Civilization. One with narrowed eyes flashing suspicion and anger. Lips curling into sneers. Faces reddened with rage. Gaping mouths unleashing bitter invective. No civility. No smiles.

Most of these angry people are not zealots. But, like our ancestors in the wilderness, we have been living through a chaotic time, getting on our last legs, our environment, not lose sight that we are a part of the broader culture of which we are a part. I think we all need to tread carefully in this kind of environment, not lose sight that there are no zealots who are

PINCHAS, continued on next page

Connecting with Community
Nourish Your Body, Mind, and Soul!

Enjoy an educational program followed by a delicious kosher hot lunch!

Programs take place on most Mondays and Thursdays at 10:45 a.m. Lunch is served Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays at noon. Beginning on June 3 and continuing through the summer months, the Tuesday kosher lunch will be on hiatus. Tuesday lunches will resume in the fall.

Advanced reservations are required to attend lunch.

Please call (413) 442-2200 no later than 9 am on the day you would like to attend.

Open to the public. All are welcome! Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, MA.

Adults 60 and over: $2 suggested donation

Adults under 60: $7 per person

Program only is free!

When making a reservation please inform us if a person in your party has a food allergy. The Federation’s kosher hot lunch program is offered in collaboration with Elder Services of Berkshire County.

What’s for Lunch?

# Dairy Free, ** Gluten Free Main Entrée

For more information on specific programs please see “Your Federation Presents” section of this paper.

JULY


Tuesday, 10 ..........10:45 a.m., “Stir fried chicken**#, mixed vegetables, gluten free brownies, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.


Thursday, 8 ..........10:45 a.m., “A Jewish Mystic’s Approach to Loving God,” with Rabbi Seth Wax. Lunch: Oriental tuna salad, passion fruit juice, coleslaw, Italian bread, peaches, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.


Tuesday, 13 ...........10:45 a.m., “Guidance from the Plant Kingdom in Preparing for the High Holidays,” with Jon Greenberg, Ph. D. Lunch: Fresh fish**, salad, asparagus cuts n tips, rye bread, Challah, pineapple, and tea.

Monday, 19 ...........10:45 a.m., “Presidents, Life and Sports,” with Evan Weiner. Lunch: Cinnamon honey chicken**#, spinach salad, green beans, rice pilaf, Challah, pineaplle, and tea.


Monday, 26 ...........10:45 a.m., Screening of film Schindler’s List. Film begins at 10:45, breaks for lunch at noon, and continues at 12:30 to end. Lunch: Barbecued chicken**#, corn cobettes, salad, potato salad, corn bread, watermelon, and tea.

Thursday, 29 ..........10:45 a.m., Annual play readings directed by Milton Lestz. Lunch: Hot dogs and beans***, coleslaw, mixed vegetables, grapes, and tea.

SEPTEMBER

Monday, 2 ..........10:45 a.m., Closed for Labor Day

Tuesday, 3 ..........10:45 a.m., “Schindler’s List: Books and Film Talk,” with Hugh Black. Lunch: Fish sticks**, zucchini rice soup, sweet potato fries, salad, multi-grain bread, pudding, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.


Tuesday, 10 ..........10:45 a.m., Closed for Labor Day

Tuesday, 16 .........10:45 a.m., “Schindler’s List: Books and Film Talk,” with Hugh Black. Lunch: Fish sticks**, zucchini rice soup, sweet potato fries, salad, multi-grain bread, pudding, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.


Tuesday, 30 ..........10:45 a.m., Closed for Labor Day

Monday, 16 ..........10:45 a.m., Program to be Announced. Lunch: Spaghetti and sauce, salad, Italian beans, garlic bread, ears, and tea.

Tuesday, 17 ..........10:45 a.m., “Bullying in the Older Adult Population,” with Torrie Dearborn. Lunch: Tex-Mex caserole, refried pinto beans, yellow rice, salsa and sour cream, salad, pumpernickel bread, apricots, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.

Thursday, 19 ..........10:45 a.m., Program to be Announced. Lunch: Fresh fish**, celery rice soup, noodle kugel, broccoli, Challah, ice cream and cookies, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.
While we were preparing for my spring semester at the Alexander Muss High School in Israel, my mom found an article addressing my exact situation – masses of Jewish American teenagers are flying to Israel enrolled in programs like mine, focusing on touring, exploring and reconnecting to their Jewish roots. According to the article, the push to send so many kids to Israel was so that they would bring back the love of Israel to the States.

Over the last couple of decades, Fueled up in the monsoon of social justice advocacy, Jewish American opinion on Israel has fallen to a place of uncomfortable uncertainty. Don’t get me wrong, I am a social justice advocate. Like many, I try to speak up, write, with the aim of bringing the power back to the people. I am eager to find who needs help, and to use my privilege to serve others. This attitude is necessary to create a just world, but we activists have to be aware of what we’re fighting for.

Movements like BDS (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions), a Palestinian-rooted anti-Israel group, are infiltrating American colleges disguised as social justice megaphones. People assume that because a group stands for social justice, they are completely in the right. This automatic attitude encourages people not to think critically, but to jump on the bandwagon, endangering causes that they might actually be more aligned with.

We are all expected to have the back of the underdog, fight oppression and seek justice, but with the media so dangerously skewed to make Israel out to be the big bad wolf, people hear about Palestinians who are struggling, and they decide to side with them, and against Israel. With so many American Jews hopping on this bandwagon, Israel advocacy and the State of Israel itself is in danger. Anti-Semitism is on the rise, and we owe it to our ancestors and to ourselves to take a deeper look and get involved.

We must acknowledge that people in Gaza and certain parts of the West Bank are indeed suffering. As a result of terrorism coming from these places, and for the safety of Israel and surrounding areas, Israel has imposed restrictions on people’s movements and has imposed economic sanctions, making employ- ment scarce and daily tensions high for many living in the West Bank and Gaza. Gazans especially, under the thumb of Hamas, are not allowed proper rights by the occupying power. In addition, Israel is highly committed to prevent Hamas from being able to fuel their constant stream of terror. These struggling civilians, although taught from birth to hate Israel and its Jewish population, are not to be confused with the terrorist organizations, such as Hamas, who are the actual enemies of Israel. This is the attitude that causes Israel to take a defensive, and at times aggressive, approach.

Although the official Israeli policy on Palestinian relations is not as geared towards peace, the people wish for peace. We are extremely interested in meeting with and hearing from Palestinian organizations and individuals focused on aiding Palestinians. When speaking to Jewish Israelis, a common theme I heard was that we must not dwell on guilt, but continue to be socially-conscious and caring, trying to provide aid to Palestinians or vote in leaders who will work for peace. I learned that you can love Israel and disagree with current government’s policies. Yes, Zionists and early Israelis made mistakes in dealing with Palestinians, and I believe there are more forms of action that could be taken to build peaceful relations with them, but we must acknowledge the history of the Palestinian Authority and Hamas of degrading our peace offers. Being uncomfortable with not only Israel’s mistakes, but the whole situation does not mean we have to turn our back on Israel itself. We are better served by supporting Israel and voicing our dissatisfaction with government policies that hurt Palestinians.

Jews need Israel. We take for granted our freedoms in America, but we cannot look into your love of Israel, and I thank the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires for making this educational, complicated, beautiful, and ungettable trip happen for me.

Before my trip, I was unaware of the importance of having a Jewish homeland. Now I understand.

Before my trip, I was unaware of the importance of having a Jewish homeland. Now I understand.
“The Posthumous Landscape: Jewish Historical Sites in Poland and Western Ukraine”

Documenting evidence of centuries of Jewish life in Eastern Europe

American — “The Posthumous Landscape: Jewish Historical Sites in Poland and Western Ukraine” is an exhibition of photographs taken by David Kaufman, that is on view through September 30 at the Yiddish Book Center. Kaufman, a Toronto-based architectural photographer and documentary filmmaker, made nine trips to Poland and western Ukraine to photograph the remains of Jewish life following the destruction of local Jewish communities under the Nazis and in the Soviet era. Kaufman’s large-scale, highly detailed images of synagogues and cemeteries, architecture and streetscapes, are a testament to the rich, varied lives led by Jews in cities and towns over centuries and a reminder of the challenges in preserving Jewish material culture in countries that have few Jews today and meager resources.

Here Kaufman describes his project.

The landscapes of Poland and western Ukraine offer substantial rewards to the Jewish traveler seeking a connection with what existed before the great catastrophe of the Hitler years. Since the late 1970s and especially since the fall of Communism, Jews of the post-war generations in North America and Israel have been “returning” to Eastern Europe in ever-increasing numbers. For most the quest is to set foot in the ancestral home, to visit family burial sites if they exist, and to uncover family records in provincial archives. My interest in what remains of Jewish life in Eastern Europe as a photographic subject was sparked by several trips to Poland to make documentary films concerning the Holocaust. On all those occasions I was unexpectedly surprised and deeply moved by both the quantity and quality of Jewish material culture—remnants of Jewish life—that I saw wherever I went.

Although the great Jewish communities of Eastern Europe were destroyed by the Nazis, and the survivors persecuted and cast out in the Soviet era, evidence of centuries of Jewish life remains in abundance almost everywhere. Since 2007, I have traveled to Poland eight times for still photography, and in 2016, I explored the cities of Lviv and Chernivtsi and their surroundings in western Ukraine. My purpose is to document the physical remains of Jewish communal life: synagogues, cemeteries, memorials, architecture and streetscapes, Holocaust sites, some functioning, some repurposed and some in ruins. But my motivation for engaging in this work goes beyond the aesthetic rewards of creating and exhibiting striking images.

The remains of Jewish life before the Holocaust are the treasures of a lost Jewish civilization. However, the quantity of Jewish material culture is vast, the task of cataloguing, preserving and restoring Jewish artifacts is seemingly limitless, and the resources available are largely inadequate. It is my hope that photographic documentation will raise awareness of these artifacts and promote greater efforts of preservation and restoration. There is no question, if previous experience is any indication, that as time goes on these Jewish historical sites will change, many will deteriorate and be lost, and decades from now photographs will be all that remain to remind us of many of these places in a vanished Jewish world.

The Yiddish Book Center is at 1021 West Street, Amherst, MA. The Center is open Sunday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information see the Center’s website: www.yiddishbookcenter.org.

Crumbling “Beit Tehara” (funeral home), Zelana Street Jewish Cemetery, Chernivtsi (Ukraine), 2016

Menahah Sheykhet, Radical Jewish Activist, Lviv, Ukraine, June, 2016

Historic Yiddish Commercial Signage in Central Lviv, June 2016

The Cultural Centre of Vyzhnytsia (Ukraine), Formerly the Town’s Largest Synagogue, June, 2016

PHOTOGRAPHS AND TEXT BY DAVID KAUFMAN / COURTESY OF THE YIDDISH BOOK CENTER