

Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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

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Berkshire Jewish Community Represented at Lion of Judah Confab

Nancy Lipoff and Hope Silverstein recognized with Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland Award



Lion of Judah Carrie Schulman and her daughter Stacey, a third-generation Lion of Judah who is also a member of the JFNA National Young Leadership Cabinet

HOLLYWOOD, FL – Nancy Lipoff and Hope Silverstein were honored with the Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland (KWF) Award at the International Lion of Judah Conference that took place in mid-January.

Fourteen hundred women from 87 Jewish Federations and six countries, representing 17,500 Lions of Judah from around the world, gathered in Hollywood, FL, to showcase their impact and discuss the future of women's philanthropy.

The theme was "Women Repair the World," and together they pledged a record-breaking \$35 million to do just that.

The Lion of Judah designation is bestowed upon women who contribute \$5,000 or

more annually to their local Federation campaign. Lipoff and Silverstein, both part-time residents of the Berkshires and major donors to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, were recognized for their contributions to their Federation chapters in Miami and Palm Beach County, Florida. They were among 72 recipients of the KWF Award this year, given to

LION OF JUDAH, continued on page 6

We Should Be Like Dreamers

Israeli artist Yosl Bergner's *Yishuv* fantasia sells at Sotheby's auction



IMAGE: COURTESY OF SOTHEBY'S

Last December, Sotheby's in New York City conducted its annual auction of "Important Judaica and Israeli & International Art." Among the works sold was this large triptych by Yosl Bergner (1920-2017), who was born in Vienna, relocated to Australia before World War II, and lived in Israel from 1957 until his death. As described in Sotheby's pre-auction catalogue: "Inspired by the work of René Magritte, Yosl Bergner's surrealist triptych, *Kushan* (The Deed) is a masterpiece of historical fantasy. Sir Herbert Samuel, High Commissioner of British-occupied Palestine, rides high through the masterwork, waiving a scroll of paper with Turkish text, a *kushan*, a deed to the contested land. Bergner illustrates Samuel, the first Jewish governor of the territory in modern times, as a heroic figure, one of the first benefactors of the Jewish homeland. The artist's characteristic figures, with dark eyes and quiet smiles, look out their windows at the British Zionist arriving on horseback, riding down the coast with land rights in hand. The Ottoman soldiers in the lower left panel may reference the expulsion of Jews from Tel Aviv in 1914, who were only able to return to their homes after the British conquest of Palestine." The triptych, which was acquired from the artist and had been owned by the Firon Collection since the early 1980s, sold for \$162,000.

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The Mountains Together Sing Gladly

Pizmon's spirited concert united our Jewish community in song, spirit, and celebration



For pictures and more about Pizmon's Berkshire visit, please see page 12.

Meditations on Family

Yevgeny Kutik's latest music and memory project a collaboration with contemporary composers



By Albert Stern / BJV Editor

Given that violinist Yevgeny Kutik's musical career has, for years, taken him relentlessly around the globe to perform as a soloist in prestigious concert and recital halls, I found it kind of amusing that his cell phone number still has the "413" area code.

When I reached him at his apartment in Boston, Kutik assured me that he wasn't sentimentally

attached to the number, only that he'd had it for so long, keeping it makes things easier for him. Yet as he talked about his latest musical project, "Meditations on Family," it was clear that his family's experience as immigrants to the Berkshires continues to profoundly inform his life both personally and artistically.

MEDITATIONS ON FAMILY, continued on page 28

Guest Editorial

Outsiders No Longer, Let Us Not Lose Sight of Our Shared Story

Bridging the differences between Israeli and Diaspora Jews

By Danna Azrieli



In November 2018, Danna Azrieli, chair of the Azrieli Foundation in Israel and a director of the Azrieli Foundation in Canada, addressed the General Assembly (GA) of the Jewish Federation of North America (JFNA) in Tel Aviv. She is an owner and the vice chairman of the Azrieli Group, one of Israel's most successful real estate companies, and co-chaired the 2018 GA. She wrote the book *One Step Ahead*, the story of how her father survived and escaped Nazi-occupied Poland and his journey to Palestine in 1942.

Azrieli was born in Montreal in 1967 and made aliyah at age 32 "to fulfill what seemed like the most obvious of my destinies," she says. She characterizes herself as both an "ardent Zionist" and "a product of the liberal Northeast," and in her GA speech, spoke of

how her life experiences have allowed her to understand the concerns and aspirations of both Israeli and Diaspora Jews, "the two worlds represented here at the GA." She offered some thoughts (here edited for length and clarity) on how to breach the existing and perceived divisions that between these Jewish communities.

We as Israelis have our share of extremely complicated issues, but 70 years ago, we were given a mandate to build the country and we did. Within our country, we have developed our own slang, our own fashion, our own version of *Saturday Night Live*, our own pop culture, our own celebrities.

The similarities and differences between our two worlds create disparate worldviews. We have come to this "Let's Talk" [theme of the 2018 GA] conversation about our future together from very different starting points. For example, how do we as North Americans begin to understand what we perceive as backward thinking when women are not allowed to pray at the Wall, and yet the prime minister reneged on the Sharansky compromise due to the pressure exerted by religious extremists?

As a North American, you are probably asking, "How could he have done that?" Some of you might go even further and say, "Why should I support a country that does not support the way I practice my religion?" But as an Israeli, I don't think that this course is actually about the basic rights of women to pray as equal to men or about the way we practice our religious freedoms. I think it is actually about a group of extreme people with political clout who truly believe that they must preserve our history with zeal. They think that if they do not protect our rituals of the past that we are in danger of losing our tradition. Any change, any modern additions, they say, will lead to our demise.

The religious extremists point to intermarriage in the Diaspora and to the lack of Jewish knowledge in young people today; but in the Diaspora in North America, we fight back with Reform and Conservative Judaism. We try to encourage attendance in Jewish schools and Jewish camps. We have built Birthright and MASA, but in secular Israel these pluralistic trends have been very slow to take. The most common response by a secular Israeli is that they're better off with no religion, even though they often do many acts without acknowledging them as religious – for example, almost every secular Israeli will fast on Yom Kippur.

The secular Israelis still consider themselves Jewish. They still speak Hebrew, the language of our Bible, and most truly love our country. But it is not uncommon for a modern secular Israeli to say just being Israeli is enough. Whole generations of Israelis have basically released their hold on our shared library of religious texts and heritage.

My Australian husband Danny and I are raising our children in Israel, but a few years ago my sister asked us to sing [the prayer] "Adon Olam" at her son's bar mitzvah. So I look at my two children, who were in grades one and two at the time and were attending a secular Israeli public school, and I realized they don't know "Adon

Olam." My children learned the "Adon Olam" from a YouTube channel while we were walking on the streets of Toronto two days before the bar mitzvah. On that day, my husband and I made the decision to move from our very secular Israeli environment to a community with a pluralistic TALI school [nominally affiliated with the Conservative stream's Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies, TALI schools are largely modeled on American Conservative Jewish day schools' pluralistic yet religiously traditional makeup]. [It is] similar to how I grew up (but unfortunately not very prevalent in Israel today) where our children would be exposed to Judaism and like-minded families.

Now, in addition, we send our kids back to North America every summer to attend summer camp at Camp Ramah, where there the kids learn "birkat ha'mazon" (the after-meal blessings) and they're exposed to the Yiddishkeit that it takes a village to convey – a village filled with customs and rituals that my Zionist heroes, the ones who built this country, gave up upon in favor of a culture that focused on the importance of building the land, of being strong. Our new culture was no longer tied to being victims of the past. It was no longer tied to the rituals that preserved our identity when we were visitors in another people's land, when we were minorities. So many Israelis grew up feeling that just being Israeli is enough, but as an Israeli, I think just being here is not enough. There needs to be more; and so, what is my message today?

As today's world is becoming more extreme, as people are becoming more closed and protectionist, we the Jewish people of the world do not have the privilege or the luxury of becoming protectionist from each other. Since I come from the real estate world, I'm going to use an image of an arch. An arch is two sides pressing together.

North American Jewry and Israeli Jewry are like two sides of an arch. We need each other. We need to push against each other – to stay strong by leaning into each other. By providing each other with the right amount of resistance and the right amount of support, we will have the strength to withstand the pressure from all sides. But one side of an arch cannot stand without the other.

To take my analogy further, the two sides of our arch are composed of different things. We have different elements on each side – some which give strength and some which create weakness. The art is to find the right amount of resistance, the right amount of pressure, and the right amount of dependence and independence to ensure that our two sides will always remain strong vis-a-vis one another.

...
Israel today is less than 50 percent Ashkenazi. So many of us come from Yemen and Morocco, Iraq and Iran, and Ethiopia recently.

AZRIELI, continued on page 4



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Make a difference by becoming part of our caring community!

- ✦ **Bake Hamantashen** at Knesset Israel on Sundays, 9:30 a.m.–12 p.m. and Thursdays, 5:30–8 p.m. through February 28. Contact Cindy Helitzer at chelitzer2012@gmail.com to volunteer.
- ✦ **Decorate Purim Gift Bags.** All children are invited to pick up and decorate gift bags at home and return to the Federation offices by Friday, March 15.
- ✦ **Pack Purim Care Packages** on Monday, March 18 at 10 a.m. at the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires office.
- ✦ **Deliver Purim Care Packages to Seniors** in assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and homebound at your leisure between March 19–22.
- ✦ **Welcome Shabbat with Seniors** by lighting candles and reciting blessings on a Friday afternoon (once a month) with adults residing at assisted living facilities.
- ✦ **Substitute Drivers Needed** to deliver warm meals to the homebound. Hours are 11:45 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. on selected days
- ✦ **Substitute Drivers Needed** a few times a year to deliver the Berkshire Jewish Voice to pick up locations. Can choose North, Central or South County.

SIGN UP TODAY! Contact
Susan Frisch Lehrer at
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slehrer@jewishberkshires.org



The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Tikkun Olam Volunteer (TOV) Network connects community members of all ages with Mitzvah opportunities to make a difference in our community.

The Jewish Transportation Network

Discount Taxi Vouchers

for Jewish residents aged 65 years and older

Purchase \$50 worth of taxi coupons for \$5

(\$6 if requested via mail)

Coupons are valid for three months and can be used with Tunnel City Taxi of North Adams, Rainbow Taxi of Pittsfield or Taxico of Great Barrington and Lee.

Some restrictions apply. Limit 10 voucher booklets per person/per year.

**Purchase vouchers at the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires
196 South St., Pittsfield, MA 01201. (413) 442-4360, ext. 10**

This program is funded by the Jewish Women's Foundation of Berkshire County and administered by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

In My View

Our Work Made Possible Through Your Commitment and Generosity

By Judy Usow / President, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires



Thank you and Shalom to 2018!

If you are Jewish, Chinese, or Hindu, you might not consider the secular date of January 1 the start of a new year. In the Berkshires, our Jewish community winds down the whirlwind summer months with a slow introspective review as we approach the Jewish new year of Rosh Hashanah each fall. For many, it is always a time of awe and gratitude.

The same can be said for our Federation's approach to finishing out the secular year. That's the time when we close out our 2018 annual campaign and do a thoughtful review of what we have accomplished during the past year, and then contemplate what we hope to achieve in the coming year.

As we closed the books on the 2018 campaign, I couldn't help but feel a similar awe and gratitude for what our Jewish community accomplished this past year.

On behalf of the Board, I want to express our thanks to all of the generous Federation donors and volunteers, listed in this edition, whose collective efforts helped us surpass our campaign goal and raise more than \$854,000!

Special kudos go to Ed Udel, who started us off with a truly "Super" Sunday this past spring, and to Bernie and Elaine Roberts who kept the momentum rolling at our impressive Major Donors Celebration in July. They, together with the many Super Sunday volunteers, host committee members, and board members, reached out to hundreds of people in our community, sharing the critical role of our Federation and asking for support.

I also want to say how grateful I am to the entire Federation staff. They are there every day making sure we are on track every step of the way.

An enormous *todah rabah* – Thank you to all of you!

As I write this column, community members from across the region who participate on Federation's allocations process are busy reviewing grant proposals in order to decide how to make a meaningful impact with these dollars in 2019.

As a small community, we are deeply committed to meeting our local needs while also recognizing the importance of being part of the wider Jewish community's efforts of *tzedakah* and *tikkun olam* that are so desperately needed in our world today.

We are committed to working together to build a strong

Federation continues to work strategically and diligently with community leaders and stakeholders to build broad community support and involvement

Jewish community, to share our values and traditions with our youth and families, to strengthen the Jewish identities of teens, to ensure that older adults can live with dignity, and to support those in need and those facing crisis in Israel and across the globe.

As I think about defining moments in 2018, I cannot help but recall

the shooting at the Tree of Life Or L'Simcha Congregation in Pittsburgh. This horrific and tragic event changed our reality in a heartbeat. I was extremely proud of how our Federation and our congregational partners stepped forward and led the way to bringing the Berkshire community together. Standing together in solidarity and offering healing to the brokenness of that moment at our community-wide vigil brought us all much needed comfort and hope.



Event co-chair Elaine Roberts speaking at our Major Donors Celebration

Just a few days after that event, schools across the Berkshires launched the first trainings for students participating in the ADL's World of Difference anti-bias educational program, spearheaded by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires in partnership with the ADL and the Berkshire County Superintendents' Roundtable.

Today, nearly 300 students have completed a rigorous 18 hours of anti-bias training and are now leading discussions and activities with their peers focused on recognizing and addressing bias in themselves and others, speaking

out and supporting those impacted by bias, and promoting respect for human differences.

With your support, Federation continues to work strategically and diligently with community leaders and stakeholders to build broad community support and involvement to address the issues of anti-Semitism, racism, and bullying in our schools and community.

Your support has enabled us to accomplish so much this past year. Please take a moment to review our annual report, on page 14 of this paper.

Our holy work is only possible through the commitment and generosity of donors and volunteers like you. It is your passion and commitment that fuels our efforts and puts into action this community's shared values of *tikkun olam* (social justice), *tzedakah* (righteous giving) and *gemilut chasidim* (acts of loving kindness)

Thank you for your support, your generosity and your confidence in the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.

Shalom to 2019!



The November 1 vigil for Pittsburgh

PHOTO: MELISSA BISSELL

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The *Berkshire Jewish Voice* welcomes signed letters on subjects of interest to the Jewish community. Letters are printed upon space availability. The BJV reserves the right to edit all letters for content, length, and style. The BJV does not print anonymous letters, insults, libelous or defamatory statements. Published letters do not represent the views of the Federation, its board of directors, or the newspaper, but rather express the views of their authors. For verification purposes, please include full name, home address, and a day and evening telephone number. Send letters to: Berkshire Jewish Voice, 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201, or email: astern@jewishberkshires.org.

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

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

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Letters to the Editor

Your Campaign Dollars Help the Children Finding Safety at Neve Michael Children's Village

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires:

The Board of Trustees, the staff, and the children of Neve Michael Children's Village thank the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires for its support, kindness, and for again considering our grant application for personal arrival packages given to our children when entering our Children's Emergency Crisis Center at Neve Michael Children's Village. The children arrive at the village with literally nothing but the clothing they are wearing.

Your grant will allow us to give the children, who arrived under such traumatic conditions, new clothing from underwear to pants, skirts, shirts and shoes and socks. These personal care packages help the children to understand that they have arrived at a home where they will find loving and caring adults.

Wishing you a happy and peaceful New Year,

Lorelei Ennis, Vice-President
Director of Community Outreach
Neve Michael Children's Village USA

A Beam of Light and Hope for Pittsburgh

Dear Friends:

After the tragic attack at the Tree of Life*Or L'Simcha, Dor Hadash, and New Light congregations, our community is still reeling. Those who lost loved ones or who were injured will never be the same – and neither will our community.

Thank you for a beam of light and hope, in an otherwise dark moment, by making a contribution to the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh's Fund for Victims of Terror.

Your contribution will support victims, their families, first responders who were injured, and

the community. Of the money collected, 100 percent will go directly to help.

Your contribution will help ease many of the burdens the victims and their families are now facing. We are overwhelmed with gratitude for your generosity and for the outpouring of goodwill from around the world.

From the bottom of our hearts, and on behalf of the recipients of your donation, thank you for caring. Thank you for making a difference.

Because of you, we are stronger together.

Meryl K. Ainsman
Chair of the Board

Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh

Jeffrey H. Finkelstein
President and CEO

Your PJ Donations Keeping Berkshires Kids Warm

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires:

The Department of Children and Families Pittsfield Area Office deeply appreciates your generous donation of 150 pajamas through your PJ Library pajama drive program.

With your donation, the Department was able to provide children with new warm pajamas. The Department is excited and looks forward to working with you again. Thank you!

Respectfully yours,

Margie Gilberti, MSW, M.Ed.
Director of Area

Tiffany Bassi, M.S.
Supervisor

Ever wanted to try yoga?

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Contact Ros at (413) 553-5522 or
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AZRIELI, *continued from page 2*

Israeli society is incredibly diverse, similar to North America. Israel is an immigrant society with incredibly ethnically diverse Jewish cultures. This Jewishly diverse Israel is exactly what our Zionist dream intended when we built this country. Our immigrant mentality tried to push us to belong, just like those of you whose grandparents immigrated to America. As immigrants to any country, we learned the language, we changed the way we dressed. But this next generation, the generation that we're here at the GA to talk about, they're native Israelis and native North Americans. They're no longer immigrants.

This next generation has the benefits and the burdens of a people who actually feel like they belong. The benefit is that we're thriving in our respective communities, but the burden is that we've forgotten what it's like to be "other." And so we forget that we need each other. But we are two sides of an arch – two sides that are stronger when placed together. We have layers and layers of success and failure, inclusion and exclusion, protectionism and universalism. Moments of great fairness and moments of terrible closed mindedness.

We love our countries, but we criticize them. We love America but we don't give up when we disagree with our leaders. As I know you love Israel, we must never give up on our commitment to the country when we disagree with its policies or leaders. We must never give up our mutual bond that keeps each other strong.

So to conclude – it's not just the settlements, it's not just religious extremism, it's not just women at the Wall, it's not just the nation state law, it's not just who's serving in the army, it's not just who's paying taxes in Israel, and it's not just about who pays the price of living where you are afraid for your security. Our shared story is so much more complicated than that.

Don't give up on our country. Don't walk away because your liberal sensibilities are insulted. Don't assume that nothing can change. Things do change – just painfully slowly, incrementally, and with all of our help.

Help by continuing the dialogue, but not by oversimplifying it. Help by infusing your children with a love of our heritage that celebrates the good. I am NOT suggesting that we ignore the things we disagree with. I am simply suggesting that we remember it's a marathon, not a sprint and the strength of Israel today is an equal force leaning into the counter-strength of Jews throughout the world.

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires Presents

Kn^osh & Kn^owledge

It's Now or Never with Abby Schroeder

Friday April 12 at 10:45 a.m.

Join Berkshire music and theater impresaria Abby Schroeder as she shares tales and insights from her life with her husband, renowned songwriter Aaron Schroeder, her career in the music industry and her work on the Berkshires cultural scene.

LOCATION: Hevreh of Southern
Berkshire, 270 State Rd, Great Barrington

COST: \$11, includes program and catered lunch.
Program only is free.



Jewish Federation
OF THE BERKSHIRES

Advanced Lunch Reservations Required
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Rabbi Reflections

A Spiritual Fitness Challenge

By Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch



As we enter the springtime months, even if winter has a few more snowstorms in store for us, our thoughts turn to the great outdoors – it's only natural here in the Berkshires. Certainly, many enjoy the many winter sports and activities that our county has to offer, from skiing to snow-shoeing to winter hikes. Soon enough, many of us will be hiking, biking, and running on our beautiful roads and trails. Maybe you swim, boat, or work out at the gym. Or perhaps yoga, walking, or Pilates are more your speed.

I've tried many sports, workouts, and outdoor pursuits. Whether team sports or individual activities, in the end, I'm always competing with myself – trying to make it to the gym a certain number of days per week, or moving from the green trails to the blues on the ski slopes. Many of us are accustomed to physical fitness challenges, through workout programs, fitness tracking apps, and wearable fitness watches.

For me, exercise is threefold in its benefits: physical, mental, and spiritual. The physical benefits are obvious. Mentally, I feel calmer and more clear-eyed about what matters when I exercise. Spiritually, exercise is one way that I connect with myself, connect with my breath, and connect with the world around me.

Exercise can be spiritual, and yet there are some elements of our spiritual life that are not as easily fulfilled on a basketball court or an elliptical machine.

This spring, I'd like to invite you to participate in a Jewish Spiritual Fitness Challenge. Many studies have shown that 30 minutes of exercise a day can make a significant difference in one's health – and many make this a daily priority. What if we dedicated 30 minutes a day to our *spiritual* fitness? What would that look like for you? How would that impact your day-to-day interactions, and your overall well-being?

As is evident from the numerous physical activities that I referenced, there is no one way to approach physical fitness, and the same is true for spiritual fitness. First, we need to understand what we mean by Jewish spirituality in the first place. I'm inspired by this explanation from the Institute for Jewish Spirituality, one of the key organizations working on practices for this area of Jewish life:

We are often asked, "What do you mean by Jewish spirituality?" Spirituality is experienced differently by individual people. These are some words that we associate with spirituality:

meaningful • purposeful • awareness • experience-based • values • healing • soul • love • alive • integrity • God • Divine • energy • depth • interconnected • life • force • clarity • journey • discernment • safety • sacred • mysterious • the unknown • potential • attention • presence • open-hearted • vulnerability • transformation • unfolding • joyful

With these concepts in mind, here are a few suggestions for taking on a Jewish Spiritual Fitness Challenge:

Daily Meditation

Meditation is a simultaneously rich and simple practice that enables us to focus on present-time awareness and equanimity. In other words, meditation helps us to be in the moment and to be calm. Meditation is something one can do anywhere and at any time, although designating a particular time for meditation can often help with the development of a regular habit. Many different religions, cultures, and communities have meditation among their key practices. Jewish meditation can take many forms, including focusing on messages from Jewish text and tradition as guideposts. In particular, the connection between the Hebrew words *nefesh* (soul) and *n'shima* (breath) has always resonated strongly for me. For those new to meditation, Kripalu is an amazing local resource, and there are countless apps and Web pages that enable easy access and introduction to meditation. For those who would like to check out meditation in a Jewish setting, Temple Anshe Amunim offers weekly Jewish meditation on Shabbat mornings at 9 a.m.



ISRAEL TRAVEL & STUDY GRANTS FOR YOUTH

The Michael Nathaniel Shute Endowment Fund

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

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

Download an application at jewishberkshires.org

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



A Walk in the Woods

We are lucky to live in a place with beautiful scenery and easily accessible trails for nature-lovers of all ages and abilities. Time spent in nature, whether alone or in a group, often lends itself to spiritual connection. There are numerous texts and teachings that emphasize the connection between Judaism, God, and nature, helping us tap into the sense that we are part of something larger than ourselves, to the radical amazement, wonder, and awe that we feel when we stand on top of a mountain or catch sight of a delicate spider web.

One of my favorite moments in the Torah is the story of Jacob's dream. Sleeping out in the middle of a desert, Jacob dreams of a ladder to heaven, with angels going up and down. He wakes up with a start and exclaims, "*Achein yesh Adonai bamakom hazeh v'anochi lo yadati*" – Surely, God was in this place and I did not know it! Even a 30-minute walk in the woods can help us connect with the presence of the Divine in our lives.

Study with a Friend

Chevruta study is the Jewish practice of learning with a partner, or literally, with a friend. While we can certainly develop rich spiritual lives through our own internal work, there is something inherently Jewish about coming together to share ideas, to collaborate, to teach each other, and even to respectfully argue over different perspectives. As we learn in *Pirke Avot*, "When two sit together and exchange words of Torah, the Divine Presence dwells with them," (*Mishnah Avot* 3:2). There are numerous opportunities to study with another person or in a group throughout the county, formally or informally.

Shabbat and Beyond

Shabbat, our palace in time, is the temporal and spiritual meeting place of the Jewish people. While we may not all physically gather in the same place, we are united in observing this day of rest, connection, community, and reflection. Shabbat is our weekly spiritual check-in, the extra work-out for our souls that propels us through the more average days of the week. It may just be the extra boost that your Jewish Spiritual Fitness Challenge needs. If you haven't been to Shabbat services recently, it's always a good time to try it out again.

These are only a few components of a Jewish Spiritual Fitness Challenge, and what works for you might not work for me. As we make our way out into the sunshine again this spring, I invite you to consider what it would look like for you to turn inward, both individually and through our Jewish community, as well.

Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch is spiritual leader of Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield.

Why I Give

Helping Neighbors, Preparing Our Youth for Jewish Lives, Communal Involvement

Wendy Robbins on why she joined Federation's Legacy Circle

This year, Wendy Robbins has joined the 99-members (both living and of blessed memory) of our Legacy Circle, which ensures that the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and its good work will thrive long into the future.

Robbins, who lives in Pittsfield, says: "I recognize the good work that the Federation does in fostering unity in the Berkshires, and I want to be involved in a meaningful way not only now, but in the future, as well. Federation is the one organization that represents the entire community, one that plays a huge role in bringing Jews in north, central, and southern Berkshires together." Moreover, Robbins says she supports our Federation's outreach within the larger Berkshires community, the way it embodies Jewish values while aligning itself with the good work of other charitable organizations in the region.

Robbins says that participation in Jewish community has been a big part of her life since growing up in a Jewishly-involved family in Buffalo and raising her own family in Philadelphia. "My late husband, Larry, was very active in Federation in Philadelphia," she says, "giving seminars on board governance and teaching writing and speaking. If he were alive, I am confident he would have continued volunteering his time and knowledge for the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires."

Joining the Legacy Circle, she says, is a continuation of her family's ongoing commitment to Jewish life and very much an expression of her warm feelings about the Berkshires and concern over the challenges its Jewish community faces.

"I've been involved in many large campaigns in other places," she says, "and never felt that my dollars were as meaningful as they are right here. Every dollar I and others donate goes to a good cause. I know all the institutions our Federation supports. I know that my donation is going to benefit my neighbors."

Robbins says she is especially impressed with the good job Federation does for Jewish youth in the Berkshires, supporting their Jewish development through activities and Hebrew school subsidies, as well providing them with Jewish camp scholarships and different opportunities to experience Israel as teenagers and young adults.

"The notion of *l'dor va'dor* (from generation to generation) is important to me," she says, "and so it's essential to help build what will come next, after we are no longer around. It's important to give back, so I give what I can give."



Wendy Robbins

Your Federation Presents

LION OF JUDAH, *continued from page 1*

Lions of Judah who have demonstrated the highest ideals of leadership and involvement.

Attending the conference from the Berkshires was Arlene Schiff, the national director of the LIFE & LEGACY program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Reports Arlene: "It was an honor to attend the ILOJC as an endowed Lion from Berkshire County. I had an opportunity to meet other women from across North America, as well as Lions from Israel, Guatemala, and Mexico who share my passion for Federation's role in caring for those in need and nurturing and sustaining Jewish life.

"The plenaries included inspiring Jewish women from all walks of life who are making a difference in a wide variety of ways, from Aly Raisman who is working to address sexual and child abuse, to Sivan Ya'ari, the founder of Innovation Africa, a New York based non-profit who is bringing Israeli solar, agricultural, and water technologies to rural African villages. It was particularly touching to hear from multi-generational Lion families, like Carrie Schulman and the Zach family from nearby Hartford, CT, who have passed down their commitment to the work of the Federation system from grandmother to mother, to daughter to daughters-in-law. It was a privilege to

attend the Miami Federation's dinner in honor of Nancy Lipoff, who is a role model for effective women's leadership and generosity of spirit, to thank her for all she has done nationally, in Miami, and here in Berkshire County."

Also participating in the conference was Carrie Schulman, an LOJ at both the Berkshire and Broward County Federations and a previous KWF Award honoree. Attending the conference with her mother Harriette Berger and appearing at the January 15 plenary session "Women Who Rise Up" with her daughter, Stacey Schulman, Carrie spoke about how the three generations of Lion of Judah represented in her family have endowed their annual gifts in order to continue to build Jewish community and help those in need well into the future. "Federation is my safe space," said Carrie. "This community allows me to experience things that otherwise might seem impossible."

She added: "I know not everyone is as lucky as I am, and that's why I give – to help support others in need, to lift them up the way that Federation has lifted me up. I want to leave my Jewish community – our Jewish community – bigger and better than it was before. The work is never done, and that's why I endowed my gift."

Connecting With Community Programs/ Kosher Hot Lunch

Programs in the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Connecting With Community series are free and start at 10:45 a.m. most Mondays and Thursdays at Knesset Israel (16 Colt Road, Pittsfield). Programs are followed by a kosher hot lunch. Lunch is a \$2 suggested donation for adults over 60 years of age or \$7 for all others. Advance reservations are required for lunch and can be made by calling (413) 442-2200 before 9 a.m. on the day of the program. Lunch alone is also served Tuesday.

Knosh & Knowledge events take place each month on a Friday at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire (270 State Road, Great Barrington). Programs start at 10:45 a.m. and are now free – the buffet lunch that follows the presentation is \$11 and must be reserved in advance by calling (413) 442-4360, ext. 10.

For further information on all programs, please call Nancy Maurice Rogers, program director, at (413) 442-4360, ext. 15. **For lunch menus and a chronological list of all scheduled programs, please see page 24.** Note that lunch menus are subject to change.

The Process of Aging, with Maggie Bittman

On Monday, March 11 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presents "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, March 11 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).



Therapist Maggie Bittman

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Jewish Family Service of Western Massachusetts is seeking a Master's level Social Worker with experience providing services to older adults. This position is located in Berkshire County and is in collaboration with the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. The position is primarily outreach and care management but also includes collaboration with community providers.

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Final Storytelling Workshop: "A Day in the Life..."

On Monday, February 25, at 10:45 a.m., Program Director Nancy Maurice Rogers of the Federation will curate the last installment of a three-part personal storytelling series titled "A Day in the Life..." This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Connecting With Community series.

Says Nancy: "The third and last session will be an opportunity for people who have participated in the workshop to share their 'Day in the Life...' short story. People may listen to the stories of others and/or share their own – no pressure. These sessions were intended as a way to access our own lives as well as hear from others. This is a one story, one entry approach and is accessible for anyone."

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

Venue: Knesset Israel

Date & Time: Monday, February 25 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

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Meet Berkshire County's New District Attorney, Andrea Harrington

On Thursday, March 28 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Berkshire County District Attorney Andrea Harrington, whose topic will be "Prosecution in the 21st Century." This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

Andrea Harrington is the sixth district attorney of Berkshire County, and the first woman to hold the office. She was elected to the office last November after campaigning on "a progressive and reform-minded platform that called for vigorously prosecuting dangerous offenders, while also enhancing public safety through community involvement and prevention." She'll talk and answer questions about the "smart, evidence-based approach to justice and public safety in Berkshire County" she has worked to implement since taking office on January 2.

Harrington was born in Berkshire County to young working-class parents, and was among the first in her family to attend college. Andrea graduated from the University of Washington and earned a Juris Doctor from American University Washington College of Law in 2003. As a first-year law student, Harrington studied under Professor Angela Davis, whose criminal law scholarship critiqued the use of prosecutorial discretion, mass incarceration, and the devastating effect of bias on communities of color in the criminal justice system. The studies inspired her work representing convicted death row inmates in their post-conviction appeals at the Capital Collateral Regional Council in South Florida. Andrea returned home to Massachusetts to raise her family and build a private law practice representing indigent criminal defendants in appellate and trial matters, family law and plaintiff-side employment litigation.

Harrington is a graduate of Emerge Massachusetts, and is a co-founder of the Massachusetts Women's Political Caucus - Berkshire Committee. She and her family reside in Richmond.



Andrea Harrington

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, March 28 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

Current Affairs: Contemporary American and International Politics

On Thursday, February 21 at 10:45 a.m., join Professor Steven J. Rubín for "Current Affairs: Contemporary American and International Politics." This course meets 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.



Professor Steven J. Rubín

Topics will be chosen by Professor Rubín 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.

Steven J. Rubín is professor emeritus of international studies and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Adelphi University, Garden City, NY. He is the author of numerous books and articles and frequently lectures both here and abroad on such topics as international anti-Semitism, Jewish history, popular culture, and literature. His radio play "Dem Bums: The Rise and Demise of

the Brooklyn Dodgers" was broadcast live on National Public Radio in December 2017 and can be currently heard online.

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, February 21 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

Volunteer for Humanitarian Aid and the Refugee Crisis

On Monday, March 18 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Cari Naftali, a craniosacral therapist and lactation counselor who has worked in Greece with refugees fleeing conflict in the Middle East. She will share her experiences in a talk titled "Volunteer for Humanitarian Aid and the Refugee Crisis." This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.



Cari Naftali traveled to Greece three times since 2015 to work firsthand with refugees. According to sources she cites, there are presently 68.5 million people forcibly displaced worldwide, with one person forced to flee his or her home every two seconds (approximately 44,400 people per day). "It was my first direct exposure with this level of suffering in the world," Naftali says. Each day she saw the arrival of thousands of refugees - Syrians as well as Afghans, Iraqis, and Iranians - soaking wet, suffering from hypothermia and other significant wounds. "Rarely did anyone speak English," Naftali

says. "Although we were volunteers from all over the world with different religions, languages, and cultures, we were all volunteers, we came there for the common purpose of wanting to help people."

In Greece, she worked specifically with breastfeeding mothers and babies who escaped from war in the Middle East. She says this work has affected her deeply, in part inspiring her to complete her training and receive certification as a lactation counselor. Cari specializes in craniosacral therapy, and has had a practice in the

Berkshires for many years. The combination of lactation counseling and craniosacral therapy, she explains offers unique avenues for healing.

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Monday, March 18 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

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Your Federation Presents

LGBTQIA+ Issues, with Drew Herzig

On Thursday, February 28 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes the chair of the City of Pittsfield's Human Rights Commission, Drew Herzig, who will speak about LGBTQIA+ issues. This free program at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

LGBTQIA+ issues have very much been in the news of late. The civil rights of the transgender community have been affirmed, including here in Massachusetts, but the backlash continues. What's going on? What does the LGBTQIA+ acronym stand for? All those letters! What do terms such as gender identity and gender expression mean? And what's the big deal about bathrooms? This conversation will be facilitated by Drew Herzig.

Over the past two years, Drew Herzig has served as the chair of the City of Pittsfield's Human Rights Commission. During that time, the Human Rights Commission has presented community forums on anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, LGBTQ issues, Asian-Americans in the Berkshires, the stigma associated with mental illnesses, and 'Being Black In The Berkshires.'

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

Venue: Kneset Israel

Date & Time: Thursday, February 28 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

Moving Towards Health, with Thea Basis

On Monday, March 4 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes back Thea Basis, a certified senior fitness specialist who will present the next installment of "Moving Towards Health," this time focusing on flexibility. This is a drop-in series, with no prior registration necessary. This free program at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

"Tight, shortened muscles can affect our joints," says Thea Basis, a certified senior fitness specialist and orthopedic exercise specialist. "In this class we will learn routines that we can safely practice at home to keep ourselves more limber, and reduce stiffness. I



Thea Basis

will guide the group through this process." The class includes a warm-up, light cardio, strength training, and stretching.

Thea Basis earned an ACE Group Fitness Instructor Certification in 1988. She specializes in the conditions that make exercising more

challenging, including arthritis, fragility, balance and gait issues, respiratory disease, diabetes, and lack of motivation. She is also an orthopedic exercise specialist serving groups and individuals in promoting healthy, independent lifestyles, while addressing the unique challenges of aging.

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

Venue: Kneset Israel

Date & Time: Monday, March 4 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

Construct Inc.: Celebrating 50 Years of Hope in the Berkshires

On Thursday, March 14 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Jane Ralph, executive director of Construct Inc., a Great Barrington non-profit that "provides support services through the Cara Davis Project Home – everything from emergency assistance, transitional housing, workforce development, housing and financial counseling, and adult education," per its website. This free program at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

Through stories and scientific evidence, this program will show how Construct has harnessed community goodwill to provide homes and support to working and vulnerable neighbors. By sharing lessons learned, as well as the needs that still exist, this interactive session will explore ways to build community where all can work and live.

Central to Construct's 50 Years of Hope is its strong connection to faith communities, in particular Jewish communities. Jane Ralph will also explore ways this has occurred and perhaps how it could continue to be strengthened in light of ongoing needs for homes Berkshire neighbors can afford.

Jane Ralph serves as executive director of Construct Inc. Jane has over 25 years of experience in non-profit organizations, most with a connection to housing, homelessness, and community building in rural and urban areas from N Street Village in Washington, DC to rural Vermont. As a former Lutheran minister and active meditation practitioner, Jane strives to be conscious of ways spiritual practices aid, as well as hinder, support for neighbors, especially across lines of economic and cultural difference.



IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

Venue: Kneset Israel

Date & Time: Thursday, March 14 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

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For further information on all Jewish Federation of the Berkshires programs, please call Nancy Maurice Rogers, Program Director, at (413) 442-4360, ext. 15.

Your Federation Presents

Author Jean P. Moore on *Tilda's Promise*, a Novel of Love, Loss, and New Beginnings

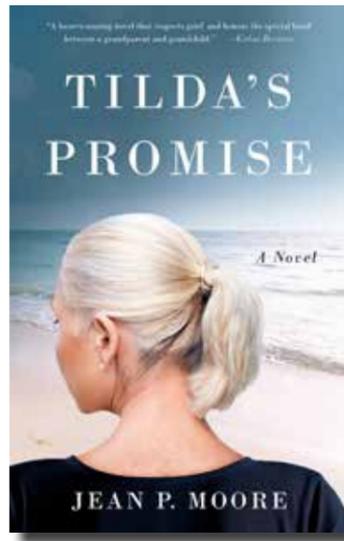
On Thursday, March 7 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes novelist and poet Jean P. Moore, who will read from her latest work, *Tilda's Promise*. This free program at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

Through the prism of her new novel, *Tilda's Promise*, Jean P. Moore will explore the subjects of love, loss, and new beginnings. After the unexpected death of her husband, Harold, after 40 years, Tilda must find her way back to a meaningful life, a task that will involve friends and family, particularly her granddaughter and namesake, Tilly. *Kirkus Reviews* says *Tilda's Promise* is: "A heartwarming novel that respects grief and honors the special bond between a grandparent and grandchild."

Moore will read and discuss excerpts from her novel and engage her audience in discussion.

Jean P. Moore was born in Brooklyn, NY, and grew up in Miami, FL. She received her

PhD in English and began her professional career teaching American literature and writing. She later worked in telecommunications as an executive director of workforce development, a position she held for a number of years. Jean has since returned to her first loves: the study of literature and writing. Her work has appeared in newspapers, magazines, and literary journals such as *upstreet*, *SN Review*, *The Timberline Review*, *Angels Flight Literary West*, *Fiction Southeast*, the *Hartford Courant*, and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Her novel *Water on the Moon*, published in June 2014, won the 2015 Independent Publisher Book Award for contemporary fiction. Her poetry chapbook, *Time's Tyranny*, was published in the fall of 2017 by Finishing Line Press and was nominated for the Massachusetts Book Award, 2018. *Tilda's Promise*, a novel, was published in September 2018. Jean and her husband divide their time between Greenwich, CT and the Berkshires.



IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Kneset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, March 7 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

Purim Shpiel: The Whole Megillah!



On Thursday, March 21 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires invites everyone to join our celebration based on the story of Purim – "Purim Shpiel: The Whole Megillah!" This free program at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

Through song, drama, masks, storytelling, and merriment the story of Esther, Mordecai, Haman, King Ahasuerus comes alive as you, the audience, joins in.

Leslie Elias, 2018 Connecticut Arts Hero and Artistic Director of Grumbling

Gryphons Traveling Children's Theater returns with her original play, the re-enactment of the powerful story of brave Esther. Through this dramatization we will welcome in the spirit of Purim and enjoy the art of improvisation and festivity!

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Kneset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, March 21 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

Together We Create Beauty, with Nancy Katz and Mark Liebowitz

On Monday, April 1 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosts Judaic artist Nancy Katz and master craftsman Mark Liebowitz who, through a combination of stories and visual images, will share a glimpse into their life as an art-making duo. This free program at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

After successful independent careers, just over a decade ago the two joined forces to create contemporary stained glass installations. Nancy Katz has been playing with color and form since she was a young child growing up in Worcester, MA. Today she is a nationally-recognized Judaic artist and arts educator who has traveled throughout the US and Israel sharing her love of Judaism and art making with others. Mark Liebowitz was introduced to great cathedral stained glass windows while studying art history in college. He marveled at the way glass transformed light. Mark is a master craftsman who has been making stained glass windows professionally for over 40 years.

The two began working together shortly after they met in Texas in 2005. They were married in 2009 and currently live and work in Shelburne Falls. Come learn about their journey.

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Kneset Israel
Date & Time: Monday, April 1 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).



Nancy Katz and Mark Liebowitz

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Your Federation Presents

The Passover Exodus: The Ten Plagues and the Parting of the Red Sea – A Contemporary Reconsideration

On Thursday, April 4 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes historian David Rutstein, his topic: “The Passover Exodus: The Ten Plagues and the Parting of the Red Sea – A Contemporary Reconsideration.” This free program at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

Says David Rutstein: “This April 19 is the evening of the Passover Seder. At this time, Jewish people and friends everywhere will once again recount the story of the Exodus as a reminder that we were once slaves in Egypt. With biblical and modern discoveries enhanced by the technology of today’s digital age, we will be able to discuss and question the full significance of this special holiday week. And just maybe to confirm that there was divine guidance to this most remarkable of tales.”

Adds Rutstein: “This Pesach eve of 2019 also marks the 76th anniversary of the 1943 Warsaw Uprising. On this date, the last of these incarcerated Jews rebelled being transported to their final destination: the death camp at Treblinka. Along with the Exodus, this too must be remembered.”

David Rutstein is a graduate of the University of Vermont and holds a master’s degree in American history from the State University of New York at Albany. He was a history teacher in New York and the Berkshires and also taught a course on Berkshire County history through Berkshire Community College’s extension program. He is a past president of the Great Barrington Historical Society, a member of the Great Barrington Historical Commission, and is chairperson of the Great Barrington Council on Aging. He will be an OLLI instructor this June on Berkshire County history, to be held in Great Barrington’s Berkshire Community College.

He also is the author of the recently-published book, *A History of Searles High School, 1898-1967. Great Barrington, Massachusetts.*



Berkshire County House of Correction – An Inside Look, with Al Bianchi



On Monday, March 25 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Al Bianchi, an 18-year veteran of the Berkshire County Sheriff’s Office, who will walk us through a typical scenario from the time when an incarcerated man walks through the door to be “booked” into the Berkshire County Jail and House of Correction in Pittsfield. This free program at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

Says Bianchi: “There are many phases to this process. The House of Correction is run by local people who are vested to work towards the return of those who are incarcerated back into the community.”

Bianchi will share how the mechanisms are in place to do that with many re-entry programs, such as treatment and substance abuse programs, parenting groups, anger management programs, meditation, and art classes and educational opportunities for a high school equivalency degree and welding work through collaboration with Berkshire Community College. “The goal is to reduce recidivism and there are many examples that work at Pittsfield House of

Correction,” he adds. Join us for this insider’s look.

Al Bianchi is the Berkshire County Sheriff’s Office Assistant Deputy Superintendent of Classification/Programs/Education/Reentry/Religious service/Volunteer services. He has been with the Sheriff’s Office for 18 years; prior to that, 8 years with Berkshire Farm Center and Services for Youth for 9 years, and with the Massachusetts State Parole Board for 8 years. He has worked with troubled families and individuals both as youth and adults since graduating from college. He has been a local football and baseball coach for many years at Pittsfield High School and Saint Joseph High School. His family has a local foundation named the Bianchi-Barbarotta Foundation that raises money for youth sports in the area and for scholarships, and helped with the new all-purpose field at Berkshire Community College.

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Kneset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, April 4 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

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IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Kneset Israel
Date & Time: Monday, March 25 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 24).

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Your Federation Presents

“H.G. Adler: A Life in Many Worlds,” at the March 29 Knosh & Knowledge

Biographer Peter Filkins to discuss the life of a preeminent 20th century Jewish man of letters

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, March 29 at 10:45 a.m., Knosh & Knowledge 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



Peter Kien: Portrait of Dr. H.G. Adler, from H.G. Adler: A Life in Many Worlds

just-published biography, *H.G. Adler: A Life in Many Worlds*.

This free 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, available for \$11 (RSVP required).

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 two other camps. With friends Elias Canetti and Heinrich Böll, he forged a deeper understanding of the Shoah, engaging Leo Baeck, 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*,

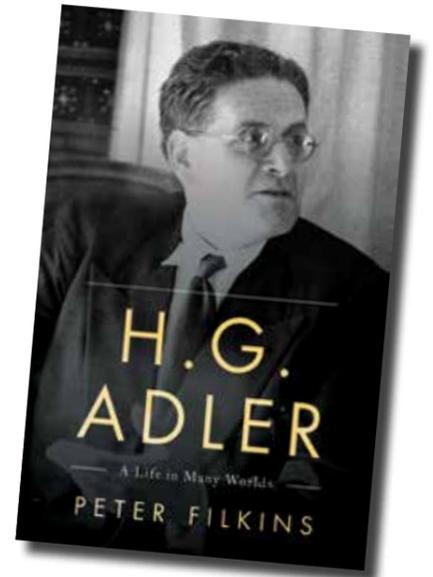
and *The Wall*, as well as the collected poems of Ingeborg Bachmann, *Darkness Spoken*. The recipient of fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Leon Levy Center for Biography, the DAAD, and the American Academy in Berlin, he is the Richard B. Fisher Professor of Literature at Bard College at Simon’s Rock, and also teaches translation at Bard College.

Besides the biography *H.G. Adler: A Life in Many Worlds*, Filkins is the author of four books of poems, *What She Knew* (1998), *After Homer* (2002), *Augustine’s Vision* (2010), and *The View We’re Granted* (2012), co-winner of the Sheila Motton Best Book Award from the New England Poetry Club.

He has been awarded the Stover Prize in Poetry from *Southwest Review*, the New American Press Chapbook Award, as well as fellowships from the Massachusetts Cultural Council, Yaddo, MacDowell, the Millay Colony for the Arts, and the Deutsches Literaturarchiv – Marbach. Previously he was the



Peter Filkins



recipient of a Fulbright grant to Austria, an Outstanding Translation Award from the American Literary Translators Association, a Distinguished Translation Award from the Austrian government, a DAAD Faculty Research Fellowship, a fellowship at the Leon Levy Center for Biography at the CUNY Graduate Center, and a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship. In spring of 2012, he was writer-in-residence at the James Merrill House. His work has appeared in numerous publications, including *The New York Times Book Review*, *Poetry*, *Partisan Review*, *The New Republic*, *The American Scholar*, and the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*.

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

Date & Time: Friday, March 29 at 10:45 a.m.

Venue: Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road, Great Barrington

Cost: *Knosh & Knowledge* programs are now free. Fresh buffet lunch is \$11. Advance lunch reservations required for this event.

Email federation@jewishberkshires.org, or call (413) 442-4360, ext. 10

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Let the Mountains Together Sing Gladly

A community Havdalah and rollicking a cappella concert by Pizmon filled the sanctuary and social hall of Temple Anshe Amunim with spirit and song on February 2. The event capped off a busy mid-winter weekend during which the Pizmon singers visited congregations across the Berkshires (and Williams College, as well), sharing their uplifting arrangements of traditional and modern Jewish melodies during Kabbalat Shabbat and religious school services. Before the Saturday evening concert, Berkshire Jewish teens had the opportunity to mingle and enjoy a Federation-sponsored taco dinner. Thanks to our congregations for their partnership and participation, the Harold Grinspoon Foundation for its support, and all the community members who hosted our new friends from Pizmon.



PJ Library Yoga Havdalah

On February 2, 50 people attended our PJ Library Yoga Havdalah and supper at Lifeworks Studio in Great Barrington. The families enjoyed a craft activity making “pretend” Havdalah candles; reading the PJ Library book about Havdalah, *Lights Out Shabbat* by Sarene Shulimson; participating in Aleph-Bet Yoga; learning about Havdalah with blessings and songs; and enjoying pizza and treats. Todah Rabah to our PJ Library family connector, Sarah Aroeste Blaugrund, and our PJ Library family yoga studio owners, the Siegals, for a fun evening for all.



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



LOCAL NEWS

“Sing It!” A Guest Sermon with Reverend Erik Karas

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, April 5 at 6:15 p.m. Hevreh of Southern Berkshire hosts Reverend Erik Karas, pastor and rector of Christ Trinity Church in Sheffield, a combined Episcopal and Lutheran congregation, for a guest sermon titled “Sing It!”.

In his sermon, Reverend Karas will use Hannah’s Song from 1 Samuel 2: 1-10 as his source text, exploring the idea that the world around us has a “soundtrack” that is all too often a dark, disempowering, and disheartening song. He says: “That song plays in our heads and hearts almost unconsciously but it affects how we live in the world. Hannah, coming out of the Temple, chose to sing a different song! She sang it right out loud into the face of that darkness. And it turns out that her song of life and light is more powerful than the world’s song of darkness for one key reason.”

Reverend Karas has spent many of his 20 years in ministry involved in both ecumenical and interfaith partnerships. Prior to serving in Sheffield, He served a combined church in Augusta, ME, where he worked closely with the neighboring synagogue particularly in the area of refugee welcoming, care, and advocacy as more and more Iraqi and Syrian refugees moved to Augusta.

Prior to the ministry, he was a food scientist and worked for The Coca-Cola Company; there, he was



Reverend Erik Karas, pastor and rector of Christ Trinity Church in Sheffield

known as “Dr. Slurpee” for his product development work in frozen beverages. Reverend Karas lives in Sheffield with his wife Kelly, who is a JetBlue flight attendant. Their oldest daughter is currently teaching English in South Korea and their younger daughter is a junior at the University of Maine, majoring in Social Work.

Reverend Karas will be speaking at Hevreh’s Friday night Shabbat services, which begin each week at 6:15 p.m. Hevreh’s Shabbat services take place weekly on Friday night (an oneg follows) and Saturday morning and are open to the public.

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire is at 270 State Road, Great Barrington.

Purim at Hevreh – A Spiel, DOUGHnations, and Carnivalopoly

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Wednesday, March 20 at 6 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire hosts its annual Purimspiel, which is free and open to all. Hevreh’s Spiel is conceived, written, and performed by Hevreh’s high school students, who promise that after seeing this musical play, you will never again look at the Book of Esther in quite the same way.

Director Joshua Briggs says, “There is nothing better than letting young people take charge of a story and make it their own. They offer amazing insight into the original text and on how it relates to the world we are living in today. And, of course, it ends up being hilarious.”

Briggs is a local theater artist and arts educator and has written and produced educational media for Sesame Street nationally and internationally, created a video series on substance use for the Southern Berkshire Community Health Coalition, and works as a grant writer for Jacob’s Pillow.

With accompanist Amy Renak, this show is sure to get you dancing and moving on your feet. Last year’s 80s themed Purimspiel was absolutely thrilling, featuring Purim themed renditions of popular 80s songs.

The fun will begin with the Megillah reading and there will be graggers and noisemakers for all – but bringing your own is encouraged!



Serious spieling

Hamentaschen DOUGH-nation collection

Hevreh is once again collecting DOUGH-nations for hamentaschen baking!

Each year Hevreh’s Religious School students fold and bake hundreds of hamentaschen to be enjoyed during our celebration of Purim. We ask that dough be made and brought in advance by community members.

Dough can be dropped off any time until March 10 at 10 a.m., when our students will fill and fold the holiday treats. Hamentaschen will be given out at Hevreh on Wednesday, March 20 for Purimspiel, Friday and Saturday March 22 and 23 during Shabbat, and sold as part of the 7th grade class charity fundraiser during Purim Carnival on Sunday, March 24.

Purim Carnival: “Carnivalopoly”

On Sunday, March 24 from noon to 1 p.m., Hevreh’s annual Purim carnival is sure

to be a spectacular event complete with thimbles, irons, and old shoes...but more importantly, games, prizes, facepainting, and more! The Religious School’s 7th and 8th grade classes have figured out if their booths will fit best at Park Place or next to the Reading Railroad, and are excited to pass “GO” to collect \$200! All proceeds collected will be combined with Hevreh’s 7th grade class’ yearlong tzedakah collection and donated to an organization designated at the end of the semester.

Families with children under 5 are invited to join in at 11:45 a.m. and the carnival is open to all at noon. Admission is free, and food and tickets will be available for cash purchase. Prizes will be awarded to raffle winners, costume wearers, and those who put hotels on high value streets.

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire is at 270 State Road, Great Barrington.

You may request that the Berkshire Jewish Voice be mailed to your home. Just email us at federation@jewishberkshires.org for information.

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Jewish Federation of the Berkshires – Distribution of Resources in 2018

\$996,507

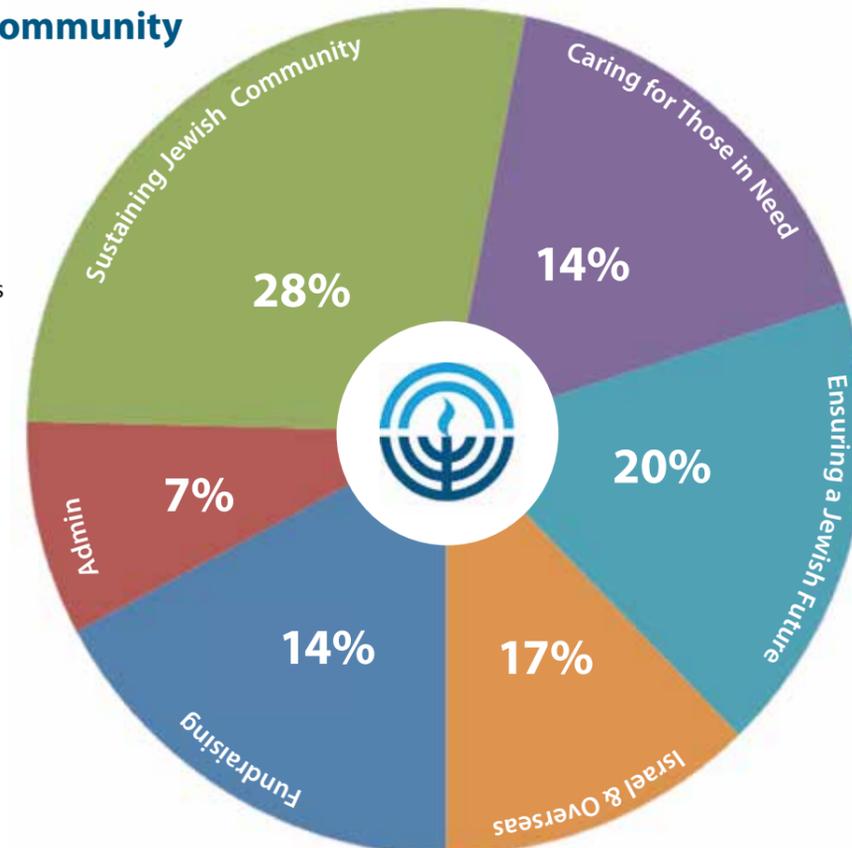
Includes distribution of Annual Campaign funds, earned income and endowments as of December 31, 2018.

Sustaining Jewish Community

- Berkshire Jewish Summer Guide
- Berkshire Jewish Voice
- Community Calendar
- Community Havdalah
- Community Relations & Advocacy
- Community Seder
- Connecting with Community Series
- Holocaust Remembrance
- Jewishberkshires.org and e-news
- Knosh & Knowledge Series
- Program Grants for local congregations
- Senior Programming
- Shabbat Across the Berkshires
- Middle East Update
- 92nd Street Y series

Fundraising

- Campaign Development
- Communications & Marketing
- Legacy Circle Program
- Major Donors Program
- Super Sunday
- Volunteer Coordination



Israel & Overseas

- Jewish Agency for Israel
- Jewish Federations of North America
- Joint Distribution Committee
- World ORT
- Partnership2Gether-Afula-Gilboa
- Ethiopian National Project
- Haifa Women's Crisis Shelter
- Israel Association for Child Protection (ELI)
- Meir Panim
- Neve Michael Children's Village
- Yad L'Kashish

Caring for Those in Need

- Emergency Assistance
- Friendly Visitors Program
- Food Security
- Good Deeds Day
- Hebrew Free Loans
- Jewish Family Service Social Worker
- Meals on Wheels Homebound Delivery
- Older Adult Kosher Meals
- Senior Care Visits & Holiday Packages
- Tikkun Olam Volunteer Network

Ensuring a Jewish Future

- ADL World of Difference Program
- Family Programming
- Israel Travel/Study Scholarships
- Jewish Camp Scholarships
- Jewish Education Grants to Religious Schools
- PJ Library Books and Programming
- Public School Advocacy
- Taglit Birthright
- UMASS Hillel



Building Community | Strengthening Identity | Caring for those in Need

Across the Berkshires

Kosher Hot Meals & Care Visits

Provided nearly **4,000 nutritious meals**, companionship, and care visits for over **350 seniors and homebound**.

Social Services

Provided case management and counseling, through a Jewish lens, by a licensed social worker to more than **35 members of our community**.

Emergency & Specific Assistance

Provided small grants and interest-free loans to provide a **safety net** for community members.

Jewish Education

Provided a high-quality Jewish education for **145 children and young adults** through Jewish education grants to five area religious schools.

Family Programming

Engaged over **200 parents, grandparents, and children** in Jewish programming and *tikkun olam*, strengthening their connections to the Jewish community and helping them build supportive relationships with Jewish peers.

The PJ Library

Distributed more than **1,575 books and CDs** to **131 children**, nurturing their Jewish identity and helping their families embrace Jewish values and traditions.

Camp, Israel and Campus Life

Funded transformative Jewish camp and Israel experiences for **60 local youth** and enhanced Jewish life for over **2,500 college students** at UMASS Amherst.

Community Programming

Engaged more than **6,000 participants** in celebrating Jewish life and connecting as a community through more than **125 cultural, educational, and holiday programs**.

Berkshire Jewish Voice

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

Community Relations & Advocacy

Provided a **proactive voice** against anti-Semitism and other biases in local schools, as well as addressing Israel and the Middle East, justice legislation, and media relations.

Tikkun Olam Volunteer (TOV) Network

Engaged over **300 volunteers** in more than **3,500 hours of service** to the Berkshire Jewish Community.

Jewish Women's Foundation

Contributed **\$59,000 to tikkun olam** through programs such as subsidized taxi vouchers, camp scholarships, food security initiatives and medical transportation.

In Times of Crisis

In partnership with Jewish Federations across North America: the Berkshires provided over **\$21,000 to support recovery efforts** for the communities of Houston and Puerto Rico, devastated by last year's hurricanes.

In Israel & Overseas

Through our partner, The American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), our Federation helped support:

Food card, meals-on-wheels, homecare, winter relief and medicine to more than **120,000 of the world's neediest Jews** in the former Soviet Union, many of them Holocaust survivors.

Food cards, medical treatment and activities for more than **21,000 at risk children** in desperate poverty, living with severe physical and intellectual disabilities.

Through our partner, the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI), our Federation helped support:

Job training and resettlement services for more than **25,000 Jews fleeing anti-Semitism** in Europe, helping them create new lives in Israel.

Jewish education, camp experiences, and Israel experiences for more than **7,500 youths** and young adults from the former Soviet Union.

In addition, we provided direct support in Israel to after school programs for **at risk students**, shelter for **battered women**, a supportive home for **disabled youth**, counseling for sexually **abused women**, and assistance for the **frail and elderly**.

This is just a sampling of how, together, we are making a difference in the lives of others.

The 2018 Community Campaign Raised \$854,000

Thank You for Making a Difference!

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

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires acknowledges the tremendous effort of over 1,230 donors and more than 100 community volunteers who helped make the 2018 campaign a resounding success. On behalf of those whose lives will be saved, touched and changed, we thank you for your generosity and caring.



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Jewish Federation
 OF THE BERKSHIRES

LOCAL NEWS

Saturday Night at the Movies – ARRANGED



Scene from ARRANGED

PITTSFIELD – It may still look and feel like winter to many, but the dedicated Berkshire Jewish Film Festival film selection committee, coordinated by the energetic Judy Seaman, has been immersed in planning for everyone's 2019 summer enjoyment since early fall.

Inadvertently, in their search the committee also discovered a film for late winter/early spring enjoyment! It is not brand new (2007), but its audience appeal, quality and record of winning first place at film festivals could not be ignored.

ARRANGED is a film about friendship and commonality. Two young women teachers at a public school in Brooklyn – one Orthodox, the other Muslim – find they have much in common, not least of which is that they are both going through the process

of arranged marriages. It's a sweet and light film, perfect for a March night in the Berkshires!

Awards achieved in 2007-08 included best feature and best film at the Brooklyn International Film Festival, Grand Prize at the Skip City International D-Cinema Festival, and winner of the audience award at the Washington Jewish, the Berkshire International, and the Palm Beach Film Festivals.

Circle your calendars for Saturday night, March 23 at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield at 8 p.m. (after Havdalah). Light refreshments will be served. If you plan to come, please just leave a message at (413) 445-4872, ext. 16 indicating how many will be in your group, so they can estimate how many chairs and how much food to set up. Entrance fee: \$5.

Hevreh Religious School Students Step Up for Volunteers in Medicine

GREAT BARRINGTON – In December, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire's Religious School 5th and 7th graders, under the direction of Rabbi Jodie Gordon, decorated and delivered holiday bags to families served by Volunteers in Medicine Berkshires, Inc. (VIM Berkshires).

VIM Berkshires provides free primary medical care and restorative dental care, behavioral health services, optometry, nutrition counseling, and massage and acupuncture to income-qualified uninsured or underinsured adults. In 2018, the organization served 919 persons with a total of 5,118 visits for care.



Hevreh volunteers were (almost) all smiles delivering holiday cheer to VIM families.

Deadline for Wassermann-Streit Y'DIYAH Memorial Fund is April 1

SHEFFIELD — The Wassermann-Streit Y'DIYAH Memorial Fund is currently accepting grant applications for projects that include an aspect of the culture, history, or experience of traditional Judaism in material or programming.

Y'DIYAH is Hebrew for "learning," and the goal of the fund is to encourage authentic knowledge of the expression of traditional Judaism, leading to an understanding of the commonalities of all people while acknowledging diversity.

Individuals, schools,

libraries and other non-profit organizations in Berkshire, Columbia, north-west Litchfield, and northeast Dutchess counties are invited to apply by April 1 at www.berkshiretaconic.org/YDIYAH.

Temple Anshe Amunim Celebrates Purim with Worship, Study, and a Trivia Night!

PITTSFIELD – Temple Anshe Amunim invites one and all to join in their annual Purim celebrations, two of them – a Purim carnival and *megillah* reading – in conjunction with Knesset Israel. As one of Judaism's most joyous holidays, the Temple community sees this as a highlight of their winter programming.

The activities begin with a Purim Carnival on Wednesday, March 13 at Temple Anshe Amunim from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. The event, which is **co-sponsored by Temple Anshe Amunim and Knesset Israel**, is open to all ages. The carnival includes games, arts & crafts, face painting, costumes and prizes, healthy snacks and refreshments – and the cost is \$8 per child and \$20 per family maximum.

On Friday, March 15 at 5:30 p.m., all are warmly welcomed to join in a musical, family-friendly Shabbat service and Purim experience at Temple Anshe Amunim. Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch will lead an energetic and uplifting musical service with Alan Gold.

On Saturday, March 16, at 7 p.m. in celebration of Purim, come to

Trivia Night, hosted by Steve Rogers and Kevin Pink of "Double Entendre Trivia." The evening will begin with a Havdalah led by Rabbi Liz, followed by trivia. This event is open to all, so gather your team, or join others at the event to form a team. Costumes are encouraged but not required. There will be fun prizes for costumes and winners of trivia. Light refreshments will be served. Cost to attend is \$5 per person. Proceeds from the event will go to the Elizabeth Freeman Center and Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hot lunch program. For more information or to RSVP contact the Temple office at (413) 442-5910 or email templeoffice@ansheamunim.org.

On Wednesday, March 20, at 6:15 p.m., at Knesset Israel, Rabbi Liz will join Rabbi David Weiner of Knesset Israel, along with KI members, to offer a creative and animated reading of the *megillah*. Their dramatic interpretations enliven both the comedic and serious tones drawn from the original text.

New Adult Hebrew Class with Rabbi Liz Hirsch

PITTSFIELD – Looking to brush up on your Hebrew reading skills? Join Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch of Temple Anshe Amunim for an adult Hebrew 101 class on Thursday afternoons beginning February 7 at 4 p.m.

If you are interested in attending, please contact the Temple office at (413) 442-5910 or by email at templeoffice@ansheamunim.org so that enough textbooks can be ordered.

Beginners welcome – no experience necessary.



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LOCAL NEWS

Creative Arts Series at Ahavath Sholom

Engage your mind and involve your senses this winter and spring

GREAT BARRINGTON – This winter and spring, Congregation Ahavath Sholom will present a series of talks, presentations, and workshops by congregation members on a number of Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m.

February 24:

Arthur Hillman, Professor Emeritus of Photography, Printmaking and Design, Bard College at Simon's Rock, will be showing and discussing the art and design work of Jewish graphic artists Ben Shahn, Leonard Baskin, Elaine Lustig Cohen, Milton Glaser, and

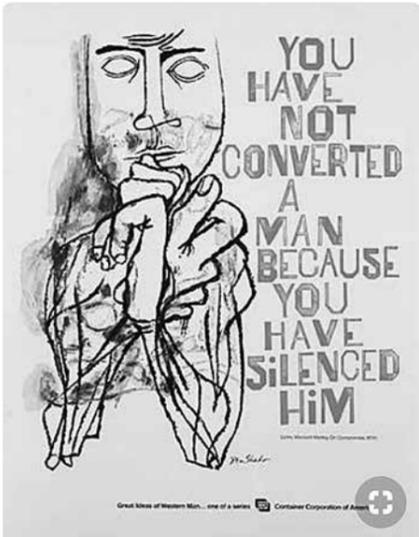
Barbara Kruger, as well as his own work. Admission is free. Donations are welcome.

March 10: Ilene Spiwak, painter, therapist, and educator, will offer "Still-Life Sunday," a studio workshop. Says Ilene: "Things are whatever we imagine them to be. Engage yourself and your colors in an intimate conversation. Enjoy a glass of wine. Sting your senses and charge your paint with energy! Make your own still-life painting." Class size is limited. Reservations required. \$15 fee.

March 24: Barbara Janoff, Associate Professor of Writing and Literature, Fashion Institute of Technology, State University of New York, will conduct a poetry writing workshop. Says Barbara: "Writing poems is a process that begins with a willingness to listen to and observe our surroundings and to pay attention to the musings of our minds. This workshop will offer writing exercises designed to stimulate our imaginations and a variety of poems meant to inspire revisions. No formal writing experience necessary."

Class size limited. Reservations required. \$10 fee.

April 7: Linda Josephs, actor, theatre director and producer, and writer of plays and



Artwork by Ben Shahn (see 2/24 listing)

screenplays, will offer, "I've Always Wanted to Act!" Says Linda: "If you always wondered what it was like being an actor, here is your opportunity and it doesn't have to take years. In this two-hour workshop through stimulating fun and friendly exercises you will experience what it's like to be an actor. No preparation and no memorization required. Comfortable clothes recommended."

Class size limited. Reservations required. \$10 fee.

Congregation Ahavath Sholom is at 15 North Street, Great Barrington. Please call (413) 528-4197 for reservations.

Trying to Beat the Winter Blues? Hadassah has a Great Solution

THIS EVENT WAS RESCHEDULED FROM JANUARY 20

LENOX – By March, most of us have had it: the cold, the ice, the snow, and the mud. We all need a break!

So why not give Berkshire Hills Hadassah's "Baby It's Cold Outside Cabaret" a go? On Sunday, March 17 from 4 to 6 p.m., all are invited to

come and warm up with good food, friends, and music at the Gateways Inn, 50 Walker Street, Lenox.

Cabaret entertainers Laura Rosenthal and Jane Rosen will dazzle everyone with beautiful melodies from "The Great American Songbook."



Chabad-Lubavitch world headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn

Visit Chabad-Lubavitch World Headquarters in Brooklyn with Chabad of the Berkshires

On Sunday, March 24, Chabad of the Berkshires invites community members on an excursion to Crown Heights, Brooklyn, to visit Chabad-Lubavitch world headquarters and other sites.

Participants will visit 770 Eastern Parkway and tour the extensive library of Lubavitch (which includes many rare items and artifacts) and explore other activities of interest, such as a bakery producing hand-made *shmurah* matzoh for Pesach, Judaica shops on Kingston Avenue, a mikvah, and a *sofer* (scribe) at work. The excursion includes a visit to the "Ohel" (tent) in Queens, the resting place of the past Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, and his predecessor and father-in-law, the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Y. Schneerson.

Lunch and dinner will be provided. Transportation will depart from Chabad of the Berkshires, 450 South Street in Pittsfield, at 7:30 a.m. and return by 10:30 p.m.

RSVP is required by Friday, March 1. Please call (413) 499-9899 or email jewishberkshires@gmail.com for cost, which was not available at press time.

"Land and Spirit Israel Experience"

Chabad of the Berkshires to lead trip to Israel in 2020

Chabad of the Berkshires will lead locals on a trip to Israel called the Land and Spirit Israel Experience from March 15 – 24, 2020, and invites people from across the Berkshires and surrounding areas to join on an educational journey to Israel and Judaism's most holy and historical sites.

Says Rabbi Levi Volovik, co-director of Chabad of the Berkshires: "Participants will be treated to a 5-star experience that feeds their heart,

mind, and soul, creating life-long and life-changing memories. This is an opportunity to see Israel as never before. This trip includes many unique features you will not find on any other trip of its kind." Highlights include:

Journey of Learning: The Jewish Learning Institute will bring Judaism's rich history to life as participants discover the origins of our nation and the spiritual secrets of the Land's holy sites.

Israel Today: Hear from

Chief Rabbis, military figures, and top political leaders. The group will be addressed by Israel's leaders and gain an insider's view of modern-day Israel's challenges and triumphs.

Mission of Solidarity: Head to the front lines of Israel's fight for survival. The trip is highlighted by a visit to the beleaguered community of Hebron and an intimate barbecue with Israel Defense Force soldiers and officers.

Amenities: Concierge service, first-class accommodations, gourmet meals, and the very best Israel has to offer in education and entertainment.

Rabbi Volovik predicts that spaces will sell out well ahead of the trip and you are encouraged to make a commitment-free reservation by April 10, 2019.

For more information and to view the trip itinerary online visit: www.landandspirit.org. For more information on costs and funding assistance opportunities that may be available, email jewishberkshires@gmail.com or call (413) 499-9899.

Purim Party People Return to KI

PITTSFIELD – The KI Purim band returns on Saturday, March 9 at 7:30 p.m. at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.

For the band's 11th annual musical costume concert, they will re-tell the Purim story with original lyrics set to music we all know and love. It's a blast from the (somewhat recent) past with a Totally Radical 80s Purim celebration. That's right, the band will be covering 1980's classics from groups including Bon Jovi, Journey, Prince, George Michael, Bruce Springsteen, Talking Heads, and more!

You don't have to be a Gen X'er to remember where you were during this unique musical decade. Come enjoy, celebrate and dance the night away. Leather pants, hairspray, fishnet stockings and neon – optional! Creative costumes of attendees and performers will add to the light-hearted spirit of the evening.

Light refreshments will include the famous



Knesset Israel homemade hamentaschen, baked by loving volunteers since late January. You can order these by the dozen at (413) 445-4872, ext. 10.

Cost is \$15 for adults, \$6 teens.

Weekly Study Sessions at Hevreh, with Rabbi Neil Hirsch

GREAT BARRINGTON – Every Wednesday, Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire leads a free study session from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m.

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 spiritual. And so, we're introducing regular, weekly study (outside of Shabbat) again at Hevreh. To begin, we will study the early books of the Prophets."

Rabbi Hirsch will lead the conversation and participants are encouraged to bring their own lunch. Come to one session, or every week. Contact Rabbi Hirsch at nhirsch@hevreh.org for more information.

If you're not in the Berkshires and would like to take part, technology can help with that. Hevreh has the capability to make these classes available via video conference or conference call.

LOCAL NEWS

Berkshire Second Homeowner Dr. Michael Smith Makes a Difference in Jerusalem with Dental Volunteers for Israel

By Michelle Levine / Director, DVI International Relations & Development

Dr. Michael Smith arrived in Israel on October 4, 2018, to spend a week volunteering at the Trudi Birger Dental Clinic in Jerusalem, through a program called Dental Volunteers for Israel (DVI). DVI provides free dental care and oral health education to thousands of needy children in Jerusalem every year, regardless of race and religion.

Despite ongoing regional tensions, Dr. Smith, his wife Pam, and family friend Linnea Burnette were determined to visit Israel, volunteer at the clinic, and make a difference. Dr. Smith practices in Poughkeepsie, NY, but has a second home in Pittsfield and is active in the communal life of the Jewish Berkshires.

DVI provides critical basic services to the poverty stricken communities of Jerusalem – with a total population of a mere 830,000, Jerusalem has over 200,000 youth living under the poverty line. DVI's Trudi Birger Clinic treats disadvantaged children and at-risk youth (aged 4-26). Volunteer dentists from around the world, together with their Israeli colleagues, perform about 1,000 treatments each month. In 2017, 143 volunteer dentists from

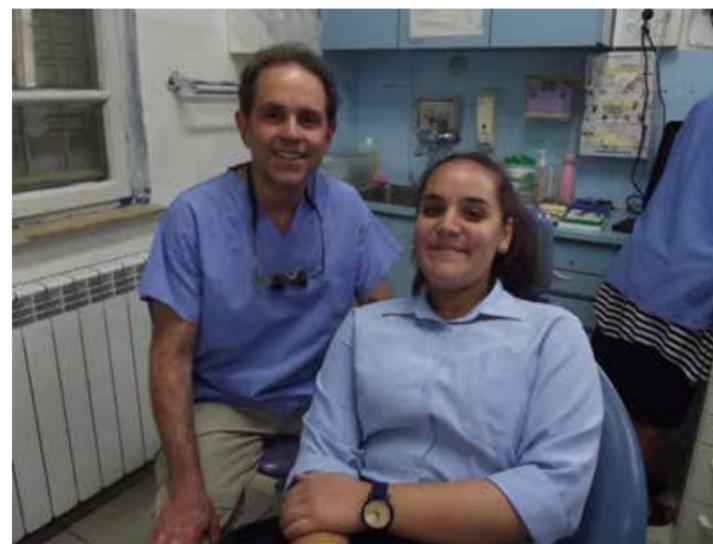
around the world performed 10,798 treatments, helping 2,700 kids in crisis and at-risk youth in Jerusalem. During the past 38 years, over 4,500 dentists have volunteered at DVI.

In addition, in 2016 DVI initiated a new Free Dentures Program for needy elderly and Holocaust survivors. Just recently, we have begun integrating our overseas dental volunteers into the pre-denture dental work for this population, as well. Dr. Smith was among our first volunteers to assist in this area!

This was Dr. Smith's third time volunteering at DVI, and he plans to return to volunteer again next year. Dr. Smith says, "The team who works at the clinic full-time makes it so easy. They are welcoming of all of the volunteers, are expert assistants during treatment, and are so helpful in recommending activities for after-clinic hours. Those who don't speak Hebrew do not have to worry about translating as the team members are fluent in English as well. The full-time dental supervisors are open to different treatment modalities as presented by the international dentists, and the clinic itself offers state of

the art treatment. In addition, as far as traveling through Jerusalem, there is no problem with security and safety."

And each of these patients has a story, a reason why they live under the poverty line – and their problems matter to DVI volunteer dentists. In one photo, Dr. Smith is pictured with Bar, an 18-year-old young woman who was referred to DVI by the social worker from *Kidum L'noar* (the municipal social welfare department working with youth-at-risk). She is the eighth of 11 children and is in contact only with her grandmother. Her mother doesn't even recognize her when she stops by. Bar's father throws her out of the house if he is home when she comes to visit, yelling at her that she needs to work. She lives in a shelter in town. The group apartment is closed during the day so she often wanders the streets of Jerusalem during the daylight hours and begs for money. That is how she put together bus fare to arrive at the DVI clinic for her treatments. Bar is in a difficult situation and the fact that she even managed to make it to the clinic was a major accomplishment. The staff at DVI will continue



Dr. Smith with Rivka Levy

not only to treat her dental problems but to encourage her, as well.

In the other photo, Dr. Smith is pictured with Rivka Levy, one of the six children in the Levy single parent family. They were initially referred to DVI by Zichron Menachem (an organization that supports children with cancer and their families) when the oldest child was diagnosed with leukemia. Difficult times fell on this family more than once. The parents got divorced when the youngest was just two-and-a-half years old. It was a very difficult divorce and the father was arrested and served time in jail for his criminal behavior.

Despite the extreme challenges faced by this single mom, Mrs. Levy was determined to raise happy, well-adjusted caring children and she has succeeded in a big way. Calling her children "presents," she has dedicated her life to instilling in them strong values, appreciation and joy. While waiting for their turn, Mrs. Levy engaged her children in creating a special thank you card for the dentist, assistants and staff to express their appreciation for all that they are receiving at DVI. It's

no wonder then that Sarah, the oldest child, volunteers in her community by accompanying blind children to special activities, assisting in groups with special needs children.

This dedication of DVI's volunteer dentists to Jerusalem goes beyond routine Zionism. But according to Dr. Smith, "I enjoy every opportunity to come to Israel to work for this amazing organization. We treat children and young adults who live in extreme poverty or are exposed to other risks and otherwise would not receive dental treatment whatsoever, totally for free. DVI does not discriminate against anyone; the many children are from different backgrounds, nationalities and religions. Personally, this is a unique opportunity to contribute to Israeli society utilizing my talents as a dentist. This is both an honor and humbling privilege."

The DVI clinic is actively looking to recruit more volunteer dentists, so if a working vacation in Israel sounds good, please email international@dental-dvi.org.il and schedule your trip today! Or for more information on DVI, please visit americanfriendsofdvi.org.

Sofer, So Good at Knesset Israel

PITTSFIELD – In January, Knesset Israel enlisted the services of Rabbi Moshe Druin, a *sofer* (a Jewish scribe who can transcribe *sifrei Torah*, *tefillin*, *mezuzot*, and other religious writings). Using a mix of ancient and modern technologies, Rabbi Druin inspected the synagogue's

Torah scrolls and noted necessary corrections.

It's a painstaking task – depending on the layout, today's Torahs contain 345 or 348 columns on 61 or 62 sheets. The *sofer* has to check each of a Torah's 74,000 plus words, made up of 304,508 letters.



Dr. Smith with Bar, a patient at DVI

BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

Traveling with Jewish Taste

Peanut Butter

By Carol Goodman Kaufman



Back in the day, the only way to get peanut butter in Israel was to have friends or family bring it with them on visits – along with Levis and M&Ms. But peanuts themselves were certainly around, from the crunchy coated peanuts called *kabukim* to the ubiquitous Israeli snack food Bamba (think peanut flavored Cheetos).

Israel, in fact, cultivates peanuts. Due to the extended growing season, Israeli farmers last year harvested about 450,000 pounds of the goober, almost three-quarters of which were exported. And they grow both in the Negev, thriving in the sandy soil, and in the northern Hula Valley.

Reminiscent of the story in the Book of Ruth, peanut farmers play the role of a modern day Boaz, as well. Every year, in what has been called “the eighth wonder of the world,” more than 500 million migratory birds, representing 500 species, fly over Israel. While in the country, cranes in particular have had the bad habit of devouring crops growing in the Hula Valley. The Cranes Project, developed in response, involves letting the peanut crop’s leavings remain in the fields for the birds to glean. This strategy accomplishes two goals: it feeds the cranes while at the same time it prevents them destroying other crops growing nearby. Once the birds have eaten their fill, farmers can till the soil and plant new winter crops.

However, for all the love of the groundnut, one never saw it on an Ashkenazi menu at Passover, whether here in the U.S. or in Israel. That’s because peanuts are legumes, and way back in the 13th century the rabbis, using a mind-boggling rationale, determined that legumes, along with rice, corn, and a host of other foods called *kitniyot*, were forbidden (although I clearly remember peanut oil in my mother’s kitchen — yet another one of those head-spinning factoids of the kosher life).

Flash forward to 1989, when the Conservative movement in the U.S. followed its Israeli counterpart in accepting a responsum written by Rabbi David Golinkin. The Law Committee ruled that *kitniyot* — that includes peanuts! — are now considered kosher for Passover. Score one for the concept of one people.

At a recent family event, I actually met Rabbi Golinkin and thanked him from the bottom of my heart. Wryly, he said something to the effect that, of all the responsa he has written over the decades, the *kitniyot* one is probably the one for which he will be remembered.

And then we learned of the amazing news from Start-up Nation: Peanut allergy is almost nonexistent in Israel. A study published in the prestigious *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* reported that, compared to a control group of Jewish children in the UK, Israeli kids showed ten times less incidence of peanut allergy. The authors attribute the finding to the fact that Israeli kids begin munching on Bamba in infancy. So, defying odds as Israelis are wont to do, parents in the Holy Land have been doing the exact opposite of everything being touted in the States to avoid the deadly anaphylactic shock that the legumes can cause here.

Always with its finger on the pulse of American parenthood, Trader Joe’s is now selling Bamba.

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.

Peanut Butter Chocolate Brownies



Ingredients:

1/2 c. peanut butter	1 t. vanilla extract
5 1/2 T. butter, softened	1 c. all-purpose flour
2/3 c. white sugar	1 t. baking powder
1/2 c. packed brown sugar	1/4 t. salt
2 eggs	1/2 cup chocolate chips

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

Grease a 9x9 inch baking pan.

In a medium bowl, cream together peanut butter and butter.

Gradually blend in the brown sugar, white sugar, eggs, and vanilla. Mix until fluffy. Combine flour, baking powder, and salt.

Stir into the peanut butter mixture until well blended.

Spread into pan.

Sprinkle chocolate chips over top.

Bake for 30 to 35 minutes, or until the top springs back when touched.

Cool, and cut into 16 squares.

MAZEL TOV

Mazel Tov to...

Burt and Ellen Downes on the engagement of their son **Will** to **Amy Mandel**.

*

Bob Markowitz on his 95th birthday.

*

Paul and Ellen Silverstein on making the move from the Berkshires to their new home in New York City.

*

Paul Green on the release of his second klezmer/jazz fusion album with his band Two Worlds, *A Bissel Rhythm*.

*

Barbara and Jesse Waldinger on their 50th wedding anniversary.

*

Barbara Chasen and Rafael Rubenstein on their 10th wedding anniversary.

*

Nancy Lipoff and Hope Silverstein on being honored with the Kipnis-Wilson/Friedland (KWF) Award at the International Lion of Judah Conference in December (please see story on page 1)

*

Seth Rogovoy on producing a start-studded evening of Yiddish music and culture, “From Shtetl to Stage,” at the Stern Auditorium of Carnegie Hall on April 15.

*

Carole Siegel on her special birthday.

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

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



Anonymous (10)
Ed Abrahams
Norman Avnet*
Barbara Bashevkin
Robert Bashevkin
Linda J. L. Becker
Robert Berend
Shelley Berend
Helene Berke
Lawrence Berke

Lee & Sydelle Blatt
Betty Braun*
Cipora Brown
Barbara Cohen
Mark Cohen*
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Jonathan & Lara Denmark
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Melva Eidelberg
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Stella Schecter*
Arlene D. Schiff
Gary Schiff
Stephen & Deborah Schreier
Martin Silver
Sylvia Silverberg, *in memory of*
Jerome Silverberg
Richard A. Simons & Marcie
Greenfield Simons
Mark & Elisa Snowise

Harold Sparr*
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Edward Udel
Michael & Joan Ury
Mark & Judy Usow
Henry* & Beate* Voremborg
Alexandra Warsaw
Florence Wineberg*
Rabbi Deborah Zecher &
Rabbi Dennis Ross
**Of blessed memory*



Jewish Federation
OF THE BERKSHIRES

BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

Young Judaism

Palpable Jubilation and Chutzpah on a Federation Co-sponsored Winter Break in Israel

By Hannah Weeks

Sitting on my flight home from Ben Gurion International Airport, I considered all that I had accomplished and contributed to Israel in a mere seven days. I positively impacted and left a mark on the Jewish State.

Through the Jewish National Fund and the generosity of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, I was able to participate in the Alternative Winter Break volunteer trip to the Negev, or Southern Desert of Israel. Previously, I had been on Birthright, but it was not enough. This trip provided me with the opportunity to return to Israel, and more importantly, to give back and do my part as a Jew.

We began in Gvulot, staying at the local kibbutz. Despite the plethora of hummus, Israeli salad, and wandering cats, it had not set in that I was in Israel quite yet. Our first project was at Holutza, a moshav that was developed in 2005. Prior to that, it was simply desert, not a fully functioning civilization as it is today. Our group of 40 college students from across the US planted bushes and small green filler plants along their main street to brighten up the space. At the end, we were given the honor of planting our own trees on their property. Being in Holutza emphasized how dedicated Israelis are to make the most of their land.

For many in Israel, danger is their reality and they need to be prepared at all times. It was eye-opening to look out into the Gaza Strip and learn of the struggles between the two sides. Children are taught how to respond in case of an air attack, and innocence is taken away at a young age. To help give children their life and freedom back, an indoor playground was created in Sderot that has six surrounding bomb shelter rooms, allowing kids to safely be kids. For only 10 shekels, children can play, and parents are given peace of mind.

My favorite moment was going to Wadi Attir, a Bedouin settlement that develops desert farming techniques. There, I removed zatar from a large field to be replanted in an upper garden, along with planting trees to beautify the main walkway. Speaking to one of the Bedouin school's teachers and farmers, it was apparent how grateful he was for all of the work our group was contributing to his land, which he loves dearly. He shared with me how when he goes out to the fields, he is at peace; the land brings tranquility to him. It is his dream that his children grow to have a similar love and appreciation for the land.

When our time was done in the Negev, we traveled into Jerusalem and helped at Latet Food Bank. There, we boxed monthly food packages for Holocaust survivors and, in a few hours, our work would help hundreds of survivors in the



Hannah Weeks (second row, right) with other volunteers at the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies in the South of Israel

months to come. I was so happy to be a part of such a wonderful program for those in Israel.

Going to the Jewish state would not have been complete without a trip to the Shuk, an Israeli hub. The rows of dried herbs, fruits, and nuts filled the scene. Chaos was tangible as people shopped for last minute items before Shabbos began. From there, we went to the Kotel. Friday night brought rain, wind, and cold – just like the Berkshires. None of that mattered though. Once on the women's side, the jubilation and chutzpah were palpable. All of the girls from my group joined mothers, soldiers, grandmothers, little ones, you name it, in song and dance. Praying before the Western Wall, feeling so surrounded by Judaism, is a feeling I can never forget.

Shabbos brought time to reflect and look back on the short, but meaningful trip I had embarked on, for Israel is the place of our people. I am eternally grateful for the opportunity to have gone with the support of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and I look forward to sharing my experience with others and returning to Israel someday soon.

Hannah Weeks is a resident of Pittsfield, a member of Knesset Israel, and the 2017 recipient of a Henry Simkin and Frances Simkin Schiller and Dr. Stanley and Fay Simkin Scholarship. She currently is a sophomore at Union College in Schenectady following a pre-medical track with a major in Spanish and Hispanic Studies and a Psychology minor. Hannah is passionate about serving and helping within her community, whether at Berkshire Medical Center as a Courtesy Cart Volunteer, in her school community, or Jewish community. Outside of her studies, she plays in the Union

College Early Wind Ensemble and is Outreach Chair for MedLife, a club dedicated to assisting those in the local community to improve their medical resources. Hannah loves to travel and Israel is one of her favorite places to visit!



OPEN HOUSES
June 9 & 23
10am-12pm
June 30, 1-3pm

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CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

College Scholarship Opportunity

Awarded annually to a graduating senior who has demonstrated leadership and participation in the Berkshire Jewish community. This scholarship is made possible through the generous support of the

Henry Simkin and Frances Simkin Schiller and Dr. Stanley and Fay Simkin Scholarship Fund

Deadline: April 15, 2019

Download an application on Jewishberkshires.org or pick one up at the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA



Jewish Federation OF THE BERKSHIRES



THE JEWISH FEDERATION FUNDS AND SUPPORTS A COMMUNITY-WIDE NETWORK OF ORGANIZATIONS THAT:

1. Care for people in need here at home, in Israel and around the world.
2. Nurture and sustain Jewish life and learning today and into the future.

OBITUARIES

Shirley Posner, family and love supersede all else

PITTSFIELD – Shirley Posner passed away peacefully at her home on Wednesday, December 12, with loved ones by her side. Shirley is survived by children Lesley Robins (and husband Martin Robins), Amy Salomon, five grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren.

Shirley met her beloved husband, Leonard Posner, at Camp Winadu on Lake Onota in the 1930s. They ultimately bought a house on the lake, and he set up his ophthalmologic practice in the Berkshires. Shirley was an avid golfer, playing regularly in Pittsfield and Williamstown. Her passion for the natural beauty of the Berkshires, the birds, the flowers, the lake, and the fresh air will forever leave its mark on those who knew her.

Shirley will be remembered for many things, but above all Shirley taught us that family and love supersede all else. Her ability to adapt to a new world, staring down fear of the unknown, and utilizing the power of love to embrace change will prove to be one of the most enduring gifts. We will dearly miss her.

In addition to Shirley's family, she was sustained in these last years by a team of wonderful caregivers who became her dear friends. In gratitude for those who supported Shirley, her family, and her caregivers in her last months of life, donations may be made in Shirley's honor to HospiceCare in the Berkshires, 877 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Seymour Baer, 76, veteran of the Vietnam and Beirut Wars

SPRINGFIELD – Seymour Baer of Lenox and Bloomfield, CT passed away peacefully on November 1 at Mercy Hospital in Springfield, MA. Born on June 19, 1942, Seymour was raised by his father, Jacob Baer and grandmother, Rebecca Galper following his mother Irene Baer's death a week after his birth.

Seymour attended Torah Vadat Yeshiva for 10 years and spent his school vacations at home in Chesterfield, CT, where his father and grandmother managed the family Chabad hotel, Galpers' Inn. When Seymour realized his family had been grooming him to become the future rabbi of the rural synagogue located adjacent to Galpers' Inn, he felt it was time to negotiate with his dad his preference for enrolling in New London High School. Unsure of his career path, Seymour joined the US Air Force for four years and subsequently enlisted in the US Navy, where he spent the next 20 years. As an aviation logistician, he arranged aircraft supplies on the carriers the Nimitz, the Independence, and the Guam.

A veteran of the Vietnam and Beirut Wars, he retired as a Chief Petty Officer with a total of 24 years of military service. Seymour loved his country deeply and was very proud of his service. "If they called me up," he would say,

"I'd do it again." Seymour's devotion to Judaism and his practice of keeping kosher while serving in the military was documented in a 4-page article entitled, "Jew on Deck" in the July 3, 2013 issue of *Mishpacha Magazine*.

Mr. Baer's thirst for learning was subsequently fulfilled at St. Leo College, where he completed degrees in Theology and Psychology, and Troy State's master's program in Management. Seymour's quest for expanding his horizons also included a 2-year block of time teaching English, (complete with his Brooklyn accent) to high school students near Seoul, Korea.

Having initially connected with Regina Karas while she was employed as senior adult activities director at the JCC of Tidewater in the 1980s, Seymour decided to contact her 20 years later. After 7 months of emails and phone calls, they felt it was *bashert* and they decided to spend their mature years together.

Following Seymour's move from Virginia Beach, VA to Bloomfield, he transferred his management skills to both Hartford area public school classrooms as a substitute teacher and to Beth El Temple Religious School in West Hartford as a 7th grade teacher of Holocaust studies. His storytelling gift motivated many students to increase their attendance and classroom participation.

Seymour's community activities included becoming a life member associate of Hadassah, joining JWV Post #45 in West Hartford and serving on the Board of Directors of NEHFES (New England Hebrew Farmers of Emanuel Society), the descendants organization representing the historic site where an enclave of Russian Jews founded the "shtetl" of Chesterfield now on the National Registry of Historic Places and designated Connecticut's 24th State Archaeological Preserve. Seymour had the distinction of being the only descendent who actually lived on this site.

Seymour's lively personality and extraordinary gift for sharing his world travels and military experiences were enjoyed by his new family, including Regina's son, Jay Karas, daughter-in-law Dr. Monica Osborne, and grandson Leo; Regina's siblings, Elissa and Mark Weinberg and Al and Maribel Goldin; her nephews and nieces Robert and Alana Weinberg, Drs. David Weinberg and Rachael Beckert, and Jeremy Weinberg have often retold many of Seymour's travel tales.

He leaves many friends and family including his children Marcus, Brian, and Rebecca; daughter-in-law, Renee Baer and Mark Williamson; cousins Allan and Elayne Goodstone, Carol and Allen Wendorf, and beloved grandchildren, Sandra, Kara, Zachary, and Leo.

A graveside service was held on Tuesday, November 6 at the Knesset Israel Cemetery, Pittsfield. Rabbi David Weiner of Knesset Israel officiated. Jewish War Veterans Commander Robert Waldheim of the Louis Green

Post #140 of Pittsfield, MA presented the American flag to Seymour's granddaughter, Sandra Baer. Memorial donations may be made to the Jewish War Veterans, Knesset Israel, or Youth Aliyah Fund of Hadassah in care of Flynn and Dagnoli-Bencivenga Funeral Home, 5 Elm Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Cheryl Ann Luft, 64, strong sense of community

QUEENS, NY – Cheryl Ann Luft, 64 years young, passed peacefully in the early morning hours of Friday, December 28 at the Jamaica Hospital Medical Center Hospice in Queens, NY, after a long battle with cancer.

Cheryl was a resident of Southfield, MA for over 25 years. She also lived in the West Village in New York City, Portland, OR, Yakima, WA, and Washington, D.C.

Born May 2, 1954 in Bronx, NY, Cheryl attended Westchester Day School in Mamaroneck, graduating in 1968. She attended Valhalla High School in Valhalla, NY and Washington University in St. Louis, MO, where she earned degrees in Art History and Animal Behavior.

Cheryl continued her education at the Laban Institute of Movement Studies, pursuing a certification in Movement Therapy, which led her to start her own practice called Moving Into Well-Being. Cheryl studied with the Church of the Movement of Spiritual Inner Awareness and became a Minister.

Cheryl and John Marinelli were married in the spring of 1993. They remained together until his passing in 1999.

Cheryl was an Israeli folk dance enthusiast, having taught classes for the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and at the Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center's summer camp in Falls Village, CT. She was also an avid photographer, bird watcher, dog lover, and first responder volunteer. She had a small greeting card business that featured her love of nature photography. She loved to travel and made trips to Israel, Central America and Europe over the years. Cheryl had a strong sense of community and wanted to give back to the many causes she supported.

The only daughter and oldest child of Nathan and Dorothy Luft, Cheryl is survived by her mother, and her brothers Brian and Harvey.

Funeral services were held Sunday, December 30 at the Plaza Jewish Community Chapel in New York City with burial in Greenwich, CT, at the KTI Cemetery on Memory Lane, the cemetery where her father was laid to rest.

Moshe "Moe" Gimlan (Gimlakiewicz), 98, Holocaust Survivor, Father, Grandfather, Great-grandfather

FREEHOLD, NJ – Moshe "Moe" Gimlan (Gimlakiewicz) 98, Holocaust survivor, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather passed away on Tuesday, January 8.

Born in 1920, in Poland,

near Krakow, the youngest of 8 children into an Orthodox Jewish family, Moshe's early life was filled with anti-Semitic experiences. During World War II, he was held in 7 different concentration camps and upon his release, learned that he was the only survivor of his family. He eventually moved to Israel, where he signed up to serve in the army for the War of Independence. He married his first wife, Miriam in Israel. They had two children, Gideon and Ada.

Moshe immigrated to Brooklyn, NY in the 1950s. During his life, he worked as an electrician and appliance repair person.

In 1975, Moshe married his second wife Hattie Lucas Binder Gimlan. Together, they first resided in Far Rockaway, NY, then at their lake home in Carmel, NY, before moving to Monroe Township, NJ in 1998. In 2012, Moshe moved to Applewood Estates in Freehold where he lived until his passing.

During their 33 years together, Moshe and Hattie traveled, took classes, went to concerts, operas, elder hostel tours, attended Holocaust memorial programs and participated and hosted many extended family events. Moshe was an expert ping pong player and became a very skillful stain glass creator during retirement.

Moshe Gimlan was committed to sharing his Holocaust story with as many people as possible, especially children. He was interviewed for the United States Holocaust Museum, gave extensive interviews for Stephen Spielberg's Shoah project, and gave many presentations at elementary schools, high schools, colleges, synagogues, and other venues. He taught everyone that we must "Never Forget." He lost his belief during the war, but never lost his learning. He was able to expertly debate any rabbi and enjoyed those opportunities.

Moshe is survived by his beloved children, Gideon Gimlan (Joni) and Ada Gimlan; stepchildren, Judy Binder Kesin Faherty and Alan Binder (Cheryl) of Tolland, MA, who are members of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire; and son-in-law Fred Doery. He is also survived by 12 grandchildren: Jackie Gimlan (Karthik), Jared Gimlan, Michael Doery (Amy), Ric Doery (André), Lynn Doery Ruis (Bob), Erica Kesin Richmond (Burke), Andrew Kesin (Holly), Hayley Binder Apiscopa (Nick), Katy Binder Buderman (Ken), Timothy Faherty (Joanne), Kimberly Faherty Phillips (Richard), Kevin Faherty; 20 great-grandchildren: Israel Seth Gimlan, Rachel Doery Walion (Nick),

Aviva Rose Doery, Michael Sullivan (Amanda), Michelle Sullivan, Nathaniel, Talia and Zachary Richmond, Jasper and Lulu Kesin, Jackson and Makayla Apiscopa, Leah Buderman, Connor, Liam and Kelsie Faherty, Ryan and Alicia Phillips and Olivia and Dylan Faherty; and a myriad of loving extended family members and friends.

In addition to his entire birth family, Moshe was predeceased by his beloved wife of 33 years, Hattie, in 2009; his daughter Nancy Binder Doery in 2003; his grandson, Seth Gimlan in 2009; and his son-in-law, Dave Faherty in 2017.

Funeral service and burial were held on Sunday, January 13 on Long Island. A memorial service will be held at a later date at his residence at Applewood Estates in Freehold, NJ.

Memorial contributions may be made to: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 100 Raoul Wallenberg Place, SW, Washington, DC 20024; or Simon Wiesenthal Center, 1399 South Roxbury Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90035; or a charity of your choice.

Gordon J. Adelson, 93, lifelong Pittsfield resident

PITTSFIELD – Gordon J. Adelson, 93, died Thursday, January 17 at Berkshire Medical Center.

Born in Pittsfield on June 25, 1925, son of Samuel and Sylvia Adelson, he was a graduate of Pittsfield High School. After high school, Mr. Adelson volunteered for the US Army and served in Europe during World War II. After the war, he attended the Wharton School of Business and received a graduate degree in accounting and earned his CPA.

He worked for and was a partner in Adelson and Company and has been retired for many years, spending many winters in Florida.

He married the love of his life, Ida Lubin, on December 28, 1947. They were married for 50 years until her death on February 28, 1998. He was a lifetime member of Knesset Israel.

Mr. Adelson leaves his sons Bruce E. Adelson, Michael R. Adelson and Mark R. Adelson (Deborah); grandchildren Sam, Nate, Sarah, Jessie, Haley and Allie and his great-grandson Parker Forest Hamilton. He also leaves his sister-in-law Molly Novick.

Funeral services took place Monday, January 21 at Knesset Israel, Pittsfield with Rabbi David Weiner, spiritual leader, officiating. Burial followed at Knesset Israel Cemetery.

The family welcomes donations to the charity of the donor's choice.

Flynn & Dagnoli Funeral Homes		
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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! Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, MA.

Adults 60 and over: \$2 suggested donation
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Jewish Federation
OF THE BERKSHIRES

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.

FEBRUARY

Monday, 18 Closed for President's Day

Tuesday, 19 **Tomato goat cheese pasta, broccoli, corn cobettes, cran-orange muffins, fruit cocktail, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.**

Thursday, 21 10:45 a.m., "Current Affairs" with Professor Steven J. Rubin. **Lunch: Grilled cheese and tuna on whole wheat, salad, beets, cookies, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.**

Monday, 25 10:45 a.m., "A Day in the Life." Final session of 3 part series with Nancy Maurice Rogers. **Lunch: Chili lime chicken, black bean soup, yellow rice, broccoli, pineapple and tea.**

Tuesday, 26 **Meat leftover day and tea.**

Thursday, 28 10:45 a.m., "LGBTQIA+" with Drew Herzig. **Lunch: "Pepperoni" pizza, green beans, salad, ice cream and cookies, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.**

MARCH

Monday, 4 10:45 a.m., "Moving Towards Health" with Thea Basis. **Lunch: Meat loaf**, zucchini rice soup, peas & pearl onions, mashed potatoes, rye bread, apple sauce and tea.**

Tuesday, 5 **Roasted chicken**, mango juice, quinoa, asparagus cuts n tips, salad, rolls, grapes and tea.**

Thursday, 7 10:45 a.m., "Tilda's Promise, a novel of Love, Loss, and New Beginnings" with author Jean P. Moore. **Lunch: Fresh fish**, mushroom soup, mixed vegetables, Challah, pudding with dulce de leche, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.**

Monday, 11 10:45 a.m., "The Process of Aging" with therapist, Maggie Bittman. **Lunch: Stir fried chicken**, rice, Italian bread, peaches and tea.**

Tuesday, 12 **Lentil chickpea stew**, brown rice, salad, pita bread, mandarin oranges and tea.**

Thursday, 14 10:45 a.m., "Construct: Celebrating 50 Years of Hope" with executive director, Jane Ralph. **Lunch: Broccoli and cheese calzones, minestrone soup, beets, salad, pears and melba sauce, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.**

Monday, 18 10:45 a.m., "Volunteer for Humanitarian Aid and the Refugee Crisis" with Cari Naftali. **Lunch: Barbecued chicken**, corn cobettes, sweet potato fries, salad, multi-grain bread, peach cobbler and tea.**

Tuesday, 19 **Veal stew**, noodles, Italian bread, fruit cocktail and tea.**

Thursday, 21 10:45 a.m., 'Purim Shpiel: The Whole Megillah!' with Leslie Elias. **Lunch: Fish chowder, grilled cheese sandwiches, stewed tomatoes, whole wheat bread, cake with chocolate frosting, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.**

Monday, 25 10:45 a.m., "Pittsfield House of Correction; An Inside Look" with Al Bianchi. **Lunch: Chicken Almondine#, baby carrots, Brussels sprouts, oat bread, apricots and tea.**

Tuesday, 26 **Meat leftover day and tea.**

Thursday, 28 10:45 a.m., "Prosecution in the 21st Century" with Berkshire County D.A. Andrea Harrington. **Lunch: Macaroni and cheese, green beans, salad, whole wheat bread, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.**

APRIL

Monday, 1 10:45 a.m., "Together We Create Beauty" with Nancy Katz and Mark Liebowitz. **Lunch: Meat loaf**, tomato juice, mashed potatoes, peas & carrots, salad, rye bread, apple dumplings and tea.**

Tuesday, 2 **Meat leftovers, cabbage soup and tea.**

Thursday, 4 10:45 a.m., "The Passover Exodus – A Contemporary Reconsideration" with historian David Rutstein. **Lunch: To Be Announced.**

Monday, 8 10:45 a.m., Program to be Announced. **Lunch: Roasted chicken**, asparagus cuts n tips, oven roasted potatoes, bread and dessert to be announced and tea.**

Tuesday, 9 **Leftovers and tea.**

Thursday, 11 10:45 a.m., Program to be Announced. **Lunch: Leftovers and tea.**



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Calendar – Ongoing Events Around the Community

Continuous – Chabad of the Berkshires “Smile on Seniors,” or “S.O.S.,” volunteer program to serve senior citizens in the Berkshires. Information for families who can benefit and volunteers: Rabbi Levi Volovik at (413) 499-9899 or visit www.jewishberkshires.com.

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

Sundays (second of each month) – Berkshire Hills Society of Israeli Philatelists meet. Discuss Israeli and American stamps. Coffee and donuts. Information: Ed Helitzer, (413) 447-7622, daytime.

Tuesdays, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. – Torah Portion of the Week study group at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield. Facilitator Myrna Hammerling guides the group through the triennial cycle, year-round in the KI Library. Newcomers always welcome to this gathering of students of diverse ages, backgrounds, and perspectives who search together to deepen understanding of our foundational text. Free. Information: (413) 445-4872, ext. 16.

Wednesdays, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. – Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State

Road, Great Barrington, offers an hour of “Shalom Yoga, Gentle Stretch and Meditation” with Nina Lipkowitz a certified Kripalu and Jewish yoga and meditation teacher. Check <https://hevreh.org/calendar/> for updates. All levels welcome. Contact Nina at ninalipkowitz@gmail.com with any questions.

Wednesdays at Knesset Israel – “Enhanced Prayer Class for Adults” 10-11:30 a.m. at 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, KI library. What are we saying when we read prayers at a service? How does the siddur language connect with my life today? How can I build my Hebrew reading fluency and practice my reading skills? How can I be more comfortable with the language and process of prayer? Facilitated by Myrna Hammerling. Newcomers always welcome. Information: (413) 445-4872, ext. 16.

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

Fridays, at 9 a.m. – Meditation with Rabbi Rachel Barenblat in the Congregation Beth Israel sanctuary, 53 Lois Street, North Adams, overlooking the Berkshire mountains. Silence, chanting, and meditation designed to help prepare

for Shabbat. All welcomed. Information: (413) 663-5830 and www.cbiweb.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 Colt Road, Pittsfield. Shirei Shabbat (“Songs of Shabbat”). Unique service combines melodies from Carlebach, Debbie Friedman, and Camp Ramah to create a *ruach* filled (“spirited”) family friendly experience. Cost for dinner \$20 adult; \$15 teen, children free. Dinner reservations are due by the Monday before services. Full information: (413) 445-4872, ext 10.

Saturdays at 8:45 a.m. – at Hevreh, 270 State 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 studying 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 9 a.m. – Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield. Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch leads a meditation and light yoga group.

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. Hirsch 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.

Knesset Israel 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield

ONGOING MINYANS

Sunday	8:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.
Tuesday	7 p.m.
Friday	5:45 p.m.
Saturday	9:30 a.m. and evenings approximately 30 minutes before sunset

CANDLE-LIGHTING

February 225:16 p.m.
March 15:25 p.m.
March 85:33 p.m.
March 156:41 p.m.
March 226:49 p.m.
March 296:57 p.m.
April 57:05 p.m.



Welcome to the Jewish Berkshires

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

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

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

JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG

BERKSHIRE JEWISH CONGREGATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

Berkshire Minyan
Lay-led egalitarian minyan
held at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Rd., Great Barrington, MA (413) 229-3618, berkshireminyan.org

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

B'nai B'rith Lodge, No. 326

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

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

Congregation Beth Israel
Reform
53 Lois St., North Adams, MA (413) 663-5830, cbiweb.org

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

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

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires
196 South St., Pittsfield, MA (413) 442-4360, jewishberkshires.org

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

Knesset Israel
Conservative
16 Colt Rd., Pittsfield, MA (413) 445-4872, knessetisrael.org

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

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- YOU CAN PARTICIPATE in a variety of services, classes, and programs that keep Judaism alive and flourishing in Berkshire County.
- THE CONGREGATION IS THE INSTITUTION that has sustained the Jewish people for two millenia throughout the world. Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Reform, the Jewish community wins when you join the congregation of your choice.

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CULTURE AND ARTS

New Novel Re-Imagines the Book of Esther

An excerpt from Sandra E. Rapoport's *The Queen & The Spymaster*



In her new novel *The Queen & The Spymaster*, Sandra E. Rapoport re-imagines the world and characters of the Book of Esther, coaxing out themes and exploring interpersonal dynamics suggested by the ancient text. Rapoport, an attorney who lives in New York City and has a second home in Lenox, is also the author of the acclaimed *Biblical Seductions*, in which she examined "narratives relating to six women in the Bible who either seduced or were violated, and explores the history, culture, and rabbinic literature to find logical resolutions to readers' questions" (*Publisher's Weekly* review).

The BJV is pleased to publish an excerpt from the book, about which Rapoport writes:

"I have chosen a portion of the 'beauty contest' episode. That is, those verses of chapter 2 of the Megillah that laconically refer to the king's plan for choosing a new queen. The meticulous Hebrew wording in the verses of the Megillah text (*vatilakach Esther*, translated as 'Esther **was taken**,' from Esth.2:8) makes it clear that what really happened 2,500 years ago in ancient Persia at the command of the king was far from the voluntary, state-wide beauty contest that the folk interpretation of the story has popularized. Instead, what the Megillah hints at through the king's use of officers to round up 'all' the beautiful virgins, and through the subtle use of the indirect voice ('Esther **was taken**'), is nothing less than a forced roundup of the Persian Empire's beautiful virgin maidens. I have laid out the applicable verses from the biblical Megillah text, followed by an excerpt from *The Queen & The Spymaster*."

Note: In this excerpt, Esther is referred to as "Hadassah" (from *Megillat Esther* 2:7 "And [Mordechai] had raised Hadassah, she is Esther...").

Megillat Esther, **chapter 2, verses 1-8:**

"After the Vashti incident... the king's advisors said, 'Let young and beautiful virgin girls be sought for the king.

And let the king appoint officers in all the provinces of his kingdom who will gather all the beautiful young virgin girls, and bring them to the capital city of Shushan, to the harem, into the custody of Hegai, the king's officer, the Keeper of the Women... And the girl who best pleases the king will be queen instead of Vashti.' And this pleased the king, and it was done in this way.

"...And it came to pass, when the king's decree and command were proclaimed, and when many girls were gathered in the capital of Shushan, that Esther—very beautiful, orphaned cousin of Mordechai, a Jewish man living in Shushan whose family had been exiled from Jerusalem—also was taken to the king's palace, into the custody of Hegai, Keeper of the Women."

Excerpt from *The Queen & The Spymaster*

The cellar room was full. Twelve members of the Brotherhood who lived in Susa and the nearby towns who were able to come on short notice crowded onto the benches around the stone table. The smokeless candles lined the surrounding stone ledge, so there was light as well as privacy.

"Mordechai," Shimon spoke first, with the ease of a close

friend. "What has happened that required using the urgent meeting code? You've got us good and worried."

Mordechai surveyed the men around the table. Though he didn't see eye to eye with some of them, he trusted them all. There were Shimon and Eliezer, his good-natured brothers in all-but-blood: Shimon, whose father was a skilled tailor, known as a magician with cloth; and Eliezer, who was a third-generation wine-maker.

There was Gidon, a silk merchant like his father and grandfather, who heard all the news of wars and royal marriages from traders who berthed along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. There was Natan, the anxious wine dealer who was on a first-name-basis with the king's cup-bearer. And there was Levi, who translated legal contracts into the dozens of the dialects in the Empire.

There was Pinchas the property agent, who, together with his six enormous brothers, knew every home, field and grotto in Susa and its environs for fifty kilometers in any direction. And there were a half-dozen more: farmer, jewelry maker, teacher and carpenter. Diverse and different-charactered, all were living good lives as Jews in Persia.

"My brothers, I have news. Xerxes is preparing to choose a new queen."

"So why does this merit an emergency meeting? The king's sexual appetites are none of our business," interrupted Natan, who was impatient to be home;

his wife was expecting a child any moment. Mordechai continued speaking.

"It is absolutely our business, Natan, as all of you will see. Beginning in five days the king's men will be fanning out throughout the Empire. They have been ordered by the king to round up all the beautiful virgins in the entire kingdom. No heed will be taken of religion or race; the only criteria are beauty and virginity. Xerxes wishes to have his pick of the Empire's finest maidens. Understand, Brothers, that the king will audition each girl! We around this table know exactly what that means. And at the end of the 'contest,' the girl who pleases Xerxes most will be crowned Queen of Persia."

The men were stunned silent.

"That means our sisters..." said Levi.

"...and our betrothed!" added Shimon.

"Not while I have breath!" said Pinchas, pounding the table to a grumbled assent by his six brothers. Some of the other men nodded their heads and looked fierce.

"We will not be given the choice," said Mordechai. "Think! What will you do, yes, even you, Pinchas, and your brothers and their friends? Will you stand up against the king's armed guards? They will crush you like bugs, and you will leave your wives widows and your children orphans. Your homes will be burned and your shops looted and shut down. No, we haven't the strength

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CULTURE AND ARTS



or the armaments to wage a war against Xerxes' guards. We must think of more clever ways to evade the dragnet. And we do have a little time; we know about the king's plans but they don't know that we know. And they won't be coming for the girls for five days yet. They are busy making their own preparations."

So the men got down to the business of organizing secret, round-the-clock migrations. Market day was in two days' time, which was in their favor. Thousands of people passed in and out of the metropolis of Susa on market day. The Jewish girls would be disguised as old women or boys; some of the girls would be sporting "warts" on their noses or limps in their gait. They would be dressed as Phoenicians or as Indus mountain folk. No one would pay any heed to small groups of two or three people at a time coming into or heading out of Susa. No one would notice that there would be no virgin girls left among the Jews of Susa and the provinces for Xerxes' men to grab for his harem. Mordechai counted on the fact that there would be so many other lovely girls for the taking that the king's wagons would be full. Hopefully the guards would not consult the census scrolls. But even so, it was an innocent possibility that the young girls might be visiting relatives in other lands.

And in truth there would be many Persian mothers, fathers and uncles—not to say girls themselves—who would welcome the chance to be taken to the king's harem. They would think it a grand adventure to be pampered and primed for the chance to charm the king. Many would harbor hopes that their sister or daughter would be the next queen of Persia. And why not? It had to be someone... And perhaps some Jewish girls would even wish to try their luck. Mordechai couldn't save them all; he could only try.

"We must get word to the outer provinces. Lev, you have the horses and riders. We have done this before, for lesser matters. Use the postal roads, it's faster. Take no scrolls with you in case you are stopped and searched. Take coins for bribes, take bolts of cloth so you appear to be merchant messengers. Dress like caravaners. Live the disguise. Pack up tonight and leave before first light. The message must be relayed and it must be precisely the same everywhere. Tell the riders to say this: 'Mordechai says get your virgin girls out of Persia

and do it immediately. In five days the king's soldiers will round up Persia's virgins by force!"

"Pinchas,"

Mordechai looked directly at his fierce, enormous friend. "You and your brothers must swear with all of us here tonight that you will not resist the king's soldiers head-on. Better yet if all of you happen to be out

in the fields or in other villages on the day of the dragnet, to keep you away from temptation. Swear with all of us that you will spirit the girls out of harm's way but will not engage the king's troops. This is for all of our good as well as for your own survival."

Eventually, all the men of the Brotherhood swore to get the Jewish girls out of the reach of Xerxes' men, and not to fight them. "For Yahweh!" They said in unison and with muted intensity. Fire was in the men's eyes; purpose was in the speed of their steps as they left the cellar room one or two at a time and headed out into the night.

When it was just Mordechai, Shimon and Eliezer left, Shimon spoke. "Mordechai, you must tell Hadassah what is coming, and prepare her to leave tonight or tomorrow. She can travel with my eldest niece, Rachel. We have relatives in Syria, and the girls can get a berth on one of Gidon's ships up the Euphrates. They can return home in a few months when all this has blown over."

Mordechai grasped Shimon's shoulder. "Thank you, my friend. Hadassah is not going to like this. She has never left Susa in her life. Mordechai looked bleak.

Shimon and Eliezer climbed the steps and left the cellar, heading home quickly to begin their preparations, leaving Mordechai alone. His handsome face was lined with exhaustion, his shoulders rigid with tension. He placed his palms on the stone table and leaned his weight on them, his head feeling too heavy for his neck.

...
Early the next morning Mordechai paced and thought, and waited for Hadassah to stir from her chamber. With preternatural hearing his head came up a second or two before Esther's soft indoor slippers could be heard on the tile floor. She saw Mordechai standing in the hallway but stopped short as she searched his face.

"What has happened, Mordechai?"

Mordechai led the way into the salon.

"Hadassah, I have spent half my life trying to protect our people by planning for the unexpected; trying to be prepared. But nothing in my thirty-eight years has prepared me for what I must tell you now."

"Mordechai, you are frightening me. Come and sit." Mordechai would not sit; he stood rigidly, bracing himself. "Now tell me what you must tell me." Hadassah sat very still and prepared to listen.

"I will say it straight out,

Hadassah, as you will hear of it in whispers within the hour. Xerxes is searching for a new queen. He has decided he will choose her from among the most beautiful maidens in all of Persia. To do this, he will be sending special armed officers to every city and town in the 127 provinces in the Empire with orders to search out and take the best of these girls back to Susa. The girls will have no choice; they will be taken—forced—to stay in the House of the Women and be prepared to be auditioned by Xerxes."

"How do you know this?" Hadassah whispered.

Mordechai did not respond; he just watched Hadassah as she processed and absorbed what he had said.

"What am I saying? Of course you know, and of course you are sure. When?"

"In four days' time. Only we few know, and this is thanks to our informants on the inside; the scribe who was preparing the edict is one of ours."

When she sat silent

Mordechai continued. "The Brotherhood met last night and already we are moving our girls out of Susa, on foot, in trader caravans, by boat, on horseback. Messengers have been dispatched everywhere, discreetly alerting our people. When the king's men come looking they will not find many maiden Persian Jewesses. Shimon wants you to leave Susa tomorrow with his niece Rachel. He plans to disguise her as a boy and spirit her out in the tumult of market day, with some wine merchant friends of Eliezer's."

"And you expect me to go with her."

"I would like you to go, yes. Hadassah, you are exactly what the king's men will be looking for. You are young, you are very beautiful, and you are a maiden. You will be a prize for them to bring back to the harem. Hadassah, understand that this is serious business. Whoever is taken will never return. She will never be allowed to leave the king's fortress. She will never again see the sunrise except



from the inside of the Women's Compound." Mordechai fervently hoped Hadassah would agree to leave with Rachel. At least then she had the chance to grow to womanhood outside the king's harem.

For if she stayed in Susa it was a certainty that she would be taken by the king's men. Hadassah was a prize.



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The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Tikkun Olam Volunteer (TOV) Network connects community members of all ages with Mitzvah opportunities to make a difference in our community.

CULTURE AND ARTS

MEDITATIONS ON FAMILY, *continued from page 1*

Kutik was four years old in 1989 when members of his family relocated from Belarus (then still part of the USSR) to Pittsfield, beneficiaries of this Jewish community's passionate mobilization on behalf of Soviet Jewry. In the end, the Berkshires resettled more Jews from the Soviet Union than any community its size in the United States, and our dedicated community members followed through to ensure that those families were able to adjust to and thrive in their new home.

Kutik says his "Meditations on Family" project germinated when his family gathered together in 2017 for Thanksgiving. His grandmother, Baba Luba, recounted the uncertainty the family felt when some members left for the West while she and others remained in Belarus, unsure that they would ever be reunited. Fortunately, Kutik's grandparents were able to immigrate to the United States three years later, and as Kutik writes on the project Web page: "As Baba Luba told her story, she brought out a photo that was taken at the [Albany] airport during the first several minutes of their arrival. The camera captured the priceless expressions of my family members, especially that of my grandfather Isaac and Baba Luba, exhausted from their journey and filled with the overwhelming emotion of seeing their family again." [See image above right.]

Says Kutik: "The expressions got me thinking about how a photograph like that might 'sound' if set to music."

As a musician, Kutik explored his family's history and cultural roots in his 2014 release "Music from the Suitcase," on which he performed the mostly Russian compositions from the cherished sheet music that his mother,

different ways than he had in "Music from the Suitcase." Rather than looking to the music of the past for inspiration, Kutik came up with the idea of commissioning new work by contemporary composers.

A photo might evoke "a rush of memory...a rush of emotions," says Kutik. "All composers have lives and family and culture that have led them down paths of exploration." So Kutik searched for collaborators among composers he knows and admires, asking them "to choose their own family photo, a photo that conjures up memories of joy, sadness, unity, and longing, and to translate that photo into a short work for violin," he writes.

In all, eight composers contributed new chamber music pieces to "Meditations on Family," each approximately 3 minutes long, some written for solo violin, some for violin and other instruments. In March, the new work will be issued on CD and through streaming services like Amazon and Spotify, but Kutik has taken the unusual step of debuting one composition a week on the Web page, yevgenykutik.com/meditations-on-family/.

Kutik says he wanted "an easy, user friendly way" for listeners to encounter the new work, and by staggering the release of the eight short pieces, "someone can listen for a few minutes, meditate on the piece, and then come back later for more."

The releases started on January 18 with Chris Cerrone's jarring "Flight to Limbo" – a jagged violin solo that responds to a haunting photo of the composer's grandfather as a toddler in postwar Italy, suffering from severe pneumonia and dressed precipitately by the local priest in ceremonial garments in expectation of his imminent demise. The releases will continue through March 8, concluding with Joseph Schwanter's "Daydreams...", a composition for violin and four vocalists that is a warm rumination on a 1924 snapshot of his grandparents and infant mother.

The compositions are stylistically disparate, but each in its way directly invites the listener to consider the music in relation to the meaningful family photograph selected. Each image appears on the "Meditations" Web page, along with a back story provided by the composer explaining its personal resonance. The compositions form a mosaic of musical approaches underpinned by a shared quality of nostalgic reflection, however differently expressed.



Chris Cerrone's grandfather in infancy, gravely ill and expected to perish – inspiration for his grandson's jarring "Flight to Limbo" for solo violin

music teacher Alla Zernitskaya, brought with her when the family left Belarus. In an interview with the *New York Times*, Kutik said the sheet music "is the physical embodiment of our family and our journey. It reminds me of what we went through and how far we have come."

Kutik wondered how he might be able to bring his idea about using photographs as musical inspiration to life, how he might continue to explore themes of family and memory in



The image that inspired Yevgeny Kutik's "Meditations on Family" project – his family's reunion with his grandparents at the Albany airport in 1992, three years after the then 7-year-old future concert violinist came to the Berkshires from the former Soviet Union

"Each piece is a different sound world," says Kutik. "I was surprised and not surprised how each piece seems like a different food, a different flavor."

Recording these original compositions presented its own challenges. "One studies Mozart for years," says Kutik, whereas with "Meditations," he was working off "sheet music while it was still wet." The composers started sending him their work last summer, "and I had to figure things out fast." Some pieces were ready on arrival, while others required back and forth with the composers over Skype. Kutik says that each composer heard a demo of their work before the recording process started, and understood where he was taking the music.

Kutik recorded the music in Boston over an intense three-day period that involved long hours and many retakes. Each composer "had the luxury of instrumenting their piece however they wanted to," he says, and some

his interpretations will only exist in recorded form, as they are too complex to be performed live.

In April, Kutik will premiere two of the works – Gity Razaz's "Cadenza for the Once Young" (a wistful meditation on her Iranian grandparents' "lasting love and decades of companionship") and Andreia Pinto Corriea's "Litania" (a forceful dialogue between violin and piano that evokes a litany of "prayers organized in short invocations that alternate between soloist and assembly, producing a hypnotic effect") at a recital with pianist Anna Polonsky at the Kennedy Center's Terrace Theatre in the nation's capitol hosted by Washington Performing Arts.

The program will center on works from "Music from the Suitcase," and will mark the first intersection between the earlier album's classical works and the newly-created "Meditations on Family" compositions. It will be the first chance for Kutik to see how the older pieces that shaped his musical

background might cohere with the new compositions he helped bring to life via his ongoing exploration of family and the emotional power of memory and artifact.

"My musical heritage is Russian and Jewish," he says. "Professionally, it affects everything I play."

More information about each piece, and the associated photo, visit: yevgenykutik.com/meditations-on-family/.

iTunes, Apple Music, Spotify, Amazon are the platforms for digital release on March 8. The CD format will be released via Marquis Classics.



This family photo taken by Timo Andres as a child inspired "See Above," his duet for violin and double bass – did the off-kilter framing, he asks, represent "a latent avant-garde impulse, or perhaps just an interest in owls?"

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