This fall, the Mishkan Museum of Art in Ein Harod featured work created collaboratively by Israeli and American artists participating in Project Zug (Hebrew for "partnership"). Local Berkshire artists and others from our Southern New England Consortium (SNEC) partners worked together with Israeli artists from the Afula-Gilboa region to respond to passages from the Book of Psalms. Above is “I shout for joy at your handiwork” (92:5), an assemblage of mixed media elements fashioned by the Berkshires’ Heidi Katz and an oil painting by Shay Witelson of Kibbutz Yizre’el. For more on the Federation-supported Project Zug, please see page 24.

Come Together for a Community Havdalah and Concert

A cappella singers of Pizmon headline a festive mid-winter celebration

FITCHFIELD – On Saturday, February 2 at 7:15 p.m., all are invited to a special community-wide Havdalah and concert featuring the a cappella singing group Pizmon at Temple Anshe Amunim, located at 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield.

This free event is co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Congregation Ahavath Sholom, Congregation Beth Israel, Temple Anshe Amunim, Knesset Israel, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, the Berkshire Minyan, and Berkshire Hills Hadassah. Partial funding is also provided by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

Pizmon features students from New York City’s Columbia University, Barnard College, and Jewish Theological Seminary. It was founded in 1987 as the first ever Jewish collegiate a cappella group and has traveled course Charlottesville.

This year, the Mishkan Museum of Art in Ein Harod featured work created collaboratively by Israeli and American artists participating in Project Zug (Hebrew for “partnership”). Local Berkshire artists and others from our Southern New England Consortium (SNEC) partners worked together with Israeli artists from the Afula-Gilboa region to respond to passages from the Book of Psalms. Above is “I shout for joy at your handiwork” (92:5), an assemblage of mixed media elements fashioned by the Berkshires’ Heidi Katz and an oil painting by Shay Witelson of Kibbutz Yizre’el. For more on the Federation-supported Project Zug, please see page 24.

DEVOTED TO BOOKS

Deborah Lipstadt wrote a new book on anti-Semitism. Then Pittsburgh happened.

By Ben Sales / JTA

NEW YORK (JTA) — The advance copies of Deborah Lipstadt’s new book, Antisemitism Here and Now, show a cover photo of a white supremacist carrying a tiki torch.

But that iconic image of the August 2017 white power rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, could now be replaced by another one: Police tape cordoning off the Tree of Life Congregation in Pittsburgh. Or perhaps the row of cut-out stars displaying the names of that massacre’s 11 victims.

Antisemitism, written in 2018 and due out in February, offers a concise and comprehensive overview of the various forms of Jew-hatred that have reappeared or intensified during the past few years. And before Pittsburgh, there already was plenty to write about: anti-Semitic attacks in Europe; the “alt-right” in the US; the persistence of Holocaust revisionism and denial; whether and when criticism of Israel qualifies as anti-Semitic; and of course Charlottesville.

Then the shooting happened. For Lipstadt, the renowned Holocaust historian and Emory University professor, the tragedy in Pittsburgh was both a surprise and a reaffirmation of her warnings.

Lipstadt, 71, spoke with JTA in New York City about what the Pittsburgh
Scholar Reflections
The Story and the Stories
By Louis D. Levine

Allow me to paraphrase the prophet Amos. I am not a rabbi, nor the son of a rabbi. And while Amos protested too much, for he was indeed one of Israel’s great prophets, I can stake my claim with no fear of contradiction. But I am greatly honored by the Berkshire Minyan, who asked that I represent them in the Rabbi Reflections column.

On the last Shabbat of 2018, we began reading the central story in the Torah, the exodus from Egypt. We all know the story. Jacob’s family comes to Egypt, grows into the people Israel, and is enslaved. Baby Moses, miraculously rescued by Pharaoh’s daughter from the reeds, grows to manhood, flees Egypt, but is eventually commanded by God to return and lead the people out of slavery. He does so reluctantly, certain that he is unequal to the task, and equally certain that neither Pharaoh nor the Israelites will pay him heed. He is right.

When Moses and his brother Aaron present themselves to Pharaoh and demand in God’s name that the people Israel be released, Pharaoh dismisses God’s response is, “Now you will see what I shall do to Pharaoh, for through Pharaoh nor the Israelites will pay him heed. He is right.

Seeking Compassionate Volunteers for NEW FRIENDLY VISITORS PROGRAM

Isolation and loneliness among aging adults is an increasing problem for local community members who can no longer get out and miss the companionship of family and friends. We know that regular friendly visits can make all the difference in bringing joy and connection to their lives.

Volunteers will be matched with at home elders. Together they will plan their visiting schedule and choose how to spend their time. Activities might include reading, conversation, listening to music, playing cards, puzzles, arts and crafts, or even a simple walk outside.

Volunteer qualifications:
• Be reliable, compassionate, a good listener and sensitive to the needs of older adults
• Able to commit to a 1 hour weekly visit. Bi-weekly visits are also possible
• At least 18 years of age
• Complete an application and CORI check
• Participate in a short training program

Training and support will be provided in conjunction with Elder Services of Berkshire County and the Federation’s social worker.

SIGN UP TODAY! Contact
Susan Frisch Lehrer at
(413) 442-4360, ext. 14
SLehrer@jewishberkshires.org

The Jewish Transportation Network
Discount Taxi Vouchers

for Jewish residents aged 65 years and older

Purchase $50 worth of taxi coupons for $5

($5 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 Taxi 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

After Seeing Our Good Work in Israel, Mobilizing to Confront a Frightening New Reality at Home

By Dara Kaufman

In November, I had the privilege of traveling to Israel for the Jewish Federation of North America’s annual General Assembly (GA), which was followed by a two-day mission to our Partnership2Gether region, Afula-Gilboa. I was joined by Federation board member Judy Cook and her husband Jeffrey, and by Leslie Koungsky, the Federation’s development officer.

The day the GA ended, our Berkshire delegation traveled with community members from Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, Worcester, Springfield, and New Bedford to learn more about the Afula-Gilboa region and to see, firsthand, some of the projects our federations were funding through our support of the Southern New England Consortium (SNEC) of Partnership2Gether.

That evening, we met up with our friend Yonish, co-founder of the regional grassroots co-existence group Marching Together Towards a Shared Future, and the leader of a group of Israeli Jewish and Muslim photographers who had presented their exhibition, “Dialogue through the Lens,” in the Berkshires last year. He had arranged for the group to be hosted for dinner at the homes of four Israeli Arab families in the Gilboa region.

It was a fascinating evening, and a first for all of us. The Zoabi family welcomed our group with a beautiful dinner and Yossef, the patriarch, was joined by four of his nine sons and three of his daughters-in-law as we sat in deep conversation late into the night. We covered it all, from politics, to the security situation, to discrimination, to cultural differences and raising families. They were not naive, and they firmly believed that they could affect change by Jews and Arabs getting to know one another and articulating their common goals for their families and shared community.

The next day, we stopped at the Valley Rape Crisis Center in Afula, which was founded 12 years ago with the support of our SNEC partners. Prior to the creation of this important center, women who experienced sexual assault had to travel over 90 minutes to Haifa in order to access services and receive counseling and trauma support. The center continues to receive funding from our Federation and other SNEC partners.

We met Outreach and Support Coordinator Sari Bru, who shared how the center is working to prevent sexual violence through educational workshops in local schools and by offering support through crisis intervention and counseling. The center received over 1,500 calls and worked with more than 450 clients last year.

Later that day, we met up with Daniel Benn, the executive director of Afula’s community centers, who shared with us the amazing work the centers are doing to create resiliency in underprivileged neighborhoods. We first met Daniel when he visited the Berkshires in 2016 as the head of the delegation of the Olive Tree Project, a co-existence art exhibition that Federation presented at the Berkshire Museum.

We were quickly put to work making sandwiches for the community center’s Sandwich Club. We were dismayed to learn that the local schools were not equipped to provide lunch during the school day. Kids eat only if they bring something from home. Unfortunately, many families do not have the ability to send their child with a sandwich, which means that many kids must go the entire day trying to learn on an empty stomach.

Daniel and his staff

IN MY VIEW, continued on page 4
Letters to the Editor

Thank You Jewish Berkshires, from the Salzmann Family

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires,

My dearest friend and special companion of 68 years was a collector of precious objects. Among his possessions of most importance were people, those he called friends and who became his extended family. I would like to thank all of our family of friends from the Jewish Federation for the generosity and kindness that they shared in loving memory of Rabbi Harold. Rabbi’s concern and compassion left us better than before. Again, on behalf of myself and my children, Ariel and Josh, we want to thank you, dear friends, for your honor paid in loving memory of Rabbi.

Sincerely,
Audrey Salzmann
Lenox

Camp was Amazing, Special, Very Nice, and Interesting/Fun

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires,

Thank you very much for providing me with the opportunity to attend Crane Lake Camp this summer. Going to camp was an amazing experience! I attended camp for three weeks and I loved it. The atmosphere at camp was incredible and it was really amazing to know that everyone there was also Jewish. All the activities at camp were really interesting/fun. Some of my favorites were hockey, soccer, softball/baseball and football. I loved all the activities at the lake too, whether it be playing on the giant water inflatables, going tubing with one of my friends, or going water skiing for my first time (I stood up until my time was over)!!!

I also really enjoyed color war, even though my team lost. Shabbat was also very nice, particularly Friday’s Shabbat dinner thing. Truly a very vibrant and different sort of prayer service at camp are a fantastic opportunity for me to gain new skills, have fun, and reconnect with my Jewish faith. Nearly all aspects of camp were fantastic, but most of all the Maccabiah games and the services in the beautiful outdoor sanctuary. Services at camp are truly a very vibrant and different sort of prayer than I am used to. The Maccabiah games or Color War was exciting and as an Olim captain, also very stressful in a new leadership role. However, it was one of the most rewarding things I have ever done.

Thank you,
Daniel Munch
Lenox

Truly, It is a Many Splendored Thing

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires,

Thank you for helping to enable me to attend UK/Crane Lake Camp this summer. Camp was a fantastic opportunity for me to gain new skills, have fun, and reconnect with my Jewish faith. Nearly all aspects of camp were fantastic, but most of all the Maccabiah games and the services in the beautiful outdoor sanctuary. Services at camp are truly a very vibrant and different sort of prayer than I am used to. The Maccabiah games or Color War was exciting and as an Olim captain, also very stressful in a new leadership role. However, it was one of the most rewarding things I have ever done.

Thank you,
Ezra and Gabriel O’Dell – 5 years old
Great Barrington

You can afford Jewish summer camp. The Jewish Federation can help

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is dedicated to making a Jewish summer camp experience affordable and accessible for every child. Tuition assistance is available through the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires Camp Scholarship Fund. The Federation encourages you to affiliate so that your local Jewish community can thrive.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: JANUARY 16

Download an application at jewishberkshires.org or pick one up at the Federation’s office, 196 South St., Pittsfield, MA

Additional funding is available from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (hgf.org)

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Thank you,
Ezra and Gabriel O’Dell – 5 years old
Great Barrington

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS FOR CAMP SCHOLARSHIPS

Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

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Additional funding is available from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation (hgf.org)
The Process of Aging, with Maggie Bittman

On Monday, January 14 and Monday, February 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, 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 loneliness; 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, January 14 and Monday, February 11 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 17).

Chair Yoga: Easy Yoga for Mobility and Peace of Mind

On Thursday, January 3 at 10:45 a.m., join Linda Novick for "Chair Yoga: Easy Yoga for Flexibility, Mobility, and Peace of Mind." This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community series.

Linda Novick says: "Chair Yoga is appropriate for people of all levels of mobility. It is a series of breathing and stretching exercises done in a chair, which increases mobility of the joints, flexibility, strength and stamina. Some of the exercises are performed standing behind the chair, while holding on. Participants will learn breathing techniques to enhance lung capacity, as well as easy stretches and yoga postures. Yoga is good for all bodies. Beginners are welcome."

Linda Novick, MFA, is an author, teacher, artist, and professional level Kripalu Yoga teacher. She currently teaches yoga at Berkshire West Fitness Center and Kimball Farms, and all over the Commonwealth with the Massachusetts Housing Authority.

She explains that her approach to yoga encourages everyone to listen and love their body. Her yoga classes encourage gentle stretching, proper breathing, strength and balance. She attended Pratt Institute in Brooklyn and has a BFA in art education, and has taught art for 50 years.

She’s been teaching yoga since 1997, and lately has been focusing on easy yoga for elders. She taught on staff at Kripalu Center for 7 years, and is now a regular presenter, offering programs that combine painting and yoga. She’s the author of the book, The Painting Path: Embodying Spiritual Discovery through Yoga, Brush and Color.

IF YOU GO
Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, January 3 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 17).

Social Welfare History – Past to Present

On Thursday, January 17 at 10:45 a.m., join Rosalind Kopfstein (DSW, LCSW, and MSW) for "Social Welfare History – Past to Present," a program on the evolution of public policy on providing aid to those in need. 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 Kopfstein: “Social workers are trained to help people, but social policy determines the limits on how we can provide assistance. From the Poor Laws of England in 1601 to the Social Security Act of 1935 to the current law titled TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families of 1996), we see similarities in how people are judged, assisted, and labeled. The culture of who we help, and why we help some and not others, will be explored.”

Rosalind Kopfstein was director of Jewish Family Services in Danbury, CT for 13 years and is a licensed clinical social worker, practicing since 1973 in the fields of aging and developmental disabilities. She also taught sociology at Western Connecticut State University and social work practice at Rhode Island College. She serves as co-president of Berkshire Hills Hadassah, and is chair of the Human Services Advisory Council for the City of Pittsfield.

IF YOU GO
Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, January 17 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 17).

For further information on all Jewish Federation of the Berkshires programs, please call Nancy Maurice Rogers, Program Director, at (413) 442-4360, ext. 15.
to hundreds of communities in the New York metropolitan area, across the country (including a performance for President Obama in Washington, D.C), and around the world, including stops in Wales, Great Britain, Canada, Israel, South America, and Ukraine. The singers share their music at day schools, nursing homes, synagogues, USY events, and college campuses.

Not only do the members of Pizmon sing in various settings, they have adopted as their motto: “Jewish Outreach Through Music.” About their focus on the younger generation and their parents, one member explains: “We as a group and as individuals can make a connection to the younger generation better than our parents can. We dress like the kids, we talk like them, and sometimes, we act just as immaturity as they do. At the same time as we bond, however, we teach them and they let themselves be taught because we are not ‘teachers.’ Their diverse repertoire includes fun songs, Jewish rock, liturgical works, Yiddish classics, catchy new melodies to prayers, inspiring spiritual harmonies, and other genres. The group is co-ed and pluralistic, with members originating from nearly every Jewish background.

Volunteers Needed

Are you able to help welcome our guests and make them feel at home in the Berkshires? Volunteers are needed to host the fourteen students for meals and overnight. A few students who are Shabbat observant will need to be within walking distance to one of our local synagogues.

Volunteers will also be needed to transport Pizmon members to and from the Metro North Wassaic train station on Friday afternoon and Sunday morning, as well as to their respective lodgings and between services and gatherings.

Please call Myrna Hammerling at (413) 445-4872, ext. 16 if you are able to provide overnight accommodations (North, Central, or South) or are willing to be a driver.

Berkshire Hillsmen Chorus Sings for You

On Thursday, February 7 at 10:45 a.m., enjoy a cappella song stylings of the Berkshire Hillsmen Chorus in a free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community series. The Berkshire Hillsmen is a chorus with the Barbershop Harmony Society. Rehearsing in Richmond, the chorus has members who live in Massachusetts, New York, and Connecticut. Originally based in Pittsfield, the chorus moved to the Congregational Church in Richmond which is more centrally located for the members. After more than 50 years of singing in the Berkshires, they still enjoy lifting their voices in song. “The Hillsmen compete with other choruses in the ‘Northeast District,’ which includes quartets and choruses from eastern New York, New England, and, in Canada, choruses from Quebec to Newfoundland. The Hillsmen have been named the ‘small chorus champion’ numerous times. The repertoire of the Hillsmen includes songs from the 1800s to the Beatles and beyond, Broadway tunes, and patriotic numbers. The members of the Hillsmen have a variety of backgrounds, but only a few have had musical training. While some members can read music, all learn the songs with recordings on CDs that are specific for each individual part.

If you go:
Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, February 7 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 17).

Two Programs on Combating Cognitive Decline

This winter, Connecting With Community will twice host Meghan Lemay, regional manager of The Alzheimer’s Association in Western Massachusetts, for programs relating to cognitive decline. The Alzheimer’s Association works to provide care and support for all of those affected by Alzheimer’s and other dementia, as well as to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health.

On Monday, January 7, “Healthy Living for Your Brain and Body” presents information on the latest research around how nutrition, exercise, social engagement, and cognitive activity can improve the aging process and reduce one’s risk of cognitive decline.

On Monday, February 4, Lemay returns for “Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia,” which will offer an opportunity to learn about the impact of Alzheimer’s, the difference between Alzheimer’s and dementia, the stages and risk factors of Alzheimer’s, current research and treatments, and Alzheimer’s Association resources.

These free programs at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield are part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community series.

The Alzheimer’s Association works to provide care and support for all of those affected by Alzheimer’s and other dementia, as well as to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. The Alzheimer’s Association also runs 24/7 Helpline which is open and available anytime day or night to answer a quick question or provide in-depth care consultation, emotional support, educational information, or resource referral. Alzheimer’s Association 24/7 Helpline: (800) 272-3900.

If you go:
Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Monday, January 7 and Monday, February 4 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 17).

Come in your Pajamas!

PJ YOGA HAVDALAH & DINNER
Saturday, Feb. 2
4:30-6:30 p.m.
Lifeworks Studio
50 Castle St., Great Barrington

Get out of the cold and warm up with this free program for young families. Come ready to relax with some aleph-bet yoga, sing some songs, and prepare for the new week ahead.

Pizza and dessert will be served. Recommended for ages 3-7

RSVP REQUIRED by Jan 30
(413) 442-4360, ext. 10 federation@jewishberkshires.org

Two Programs on Combating Cognitive Decline

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Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Monday, January 7 and Monday, February 4 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 17).
**How to Build a Just, Thriving, and Safe Community**

On Thursday, February 14 at 10:45 a.m., we welcome Alisa Costa, the initiative director for Working Cities Pittsfield, a resident-driven initiative focused on building economic opportunity for all regardless of background. She will speak on the topic, "How to Build a Just, Thriving, and Safe Community." This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Connecting With Community series. Asks Alisa Costa: "What happens when we look at our community through the lens of economic class? How does it change the way we see each other and interact? If we understand these differences, can we change the way our community functions so it benefits everyone? In this interactive program, learn about these differences and how small changes can make a big difference in our community.”

Working Cities Pittsfield celebrates residents as leaders in building their own community and holds a vision for all people in Pittsfield to experience a just, thriving, and safe community that leads to an improved quality of life. Ms. Costa has 20 years of non-profit social justice advocacy experience. She moved to the Berkshires two years ago from New York’s Capital Region, where she worked for several non-profit social justice organizations including Planned Parenthood, the New York AIDS Coalition, and New York Civil Liberties Union.

**Film: King – Man of Peace in a Time of War**

On Monday, January 28 at 10:45 a.m. Connecting With Community will screen the film King – Man of Peace in a Time of War to honor the work of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. This 60-minute documentary features exclusive interviews with such notables as Jesse Jackson, Quincy Jones, and Colin Powell that provide fresh insight into the life and personality of the late civil rights leader.

**Another Pajama Drive Success!**

In time for the holidays, our PJ Library and the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires collected over 180 new pairs of pajama sets and blankets to help Berkshire kids keep warm this winter! We thank everyone for their generous donations to this important community program for the Berkshire Office of the Massachusetts Department of Children & Families. A special shout out to Annie Selke and Pine Cone Hill for donating robes, blankets, and tote bags.

To date, we have received 177 Shallot donations for PJ Library. We are looking forward to receiving even more donations in time for the holidays. A special thanks to Annie Selke and Pine Cone Hill for donating robes, blankets, and tote bags.

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New Storytelling Workshop: “A Day in the Life…”

Starting on Monday, December 31 at 10:45 a.m., Program Director Nancy Maurice Rogers of the Federation will present and curate 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. Subsequent sessions will be held on Thursday, January 24 and Monday, February 25, also at 10:45 a.m.

Says Nancy: “A story from the pages of our lives can be drawn from our childhoods or from our lives as adults. These stories are chapters from our lives as adults. These stories will turn into simple writings. We will keep it to a short format, making it easy to approach and accomplish. As we write our ‘Day in the Life…’ story, it becomes part of our legacy and something for posterity.

“The third and last session will be an opportunity for people to share their ‘Day in the Life…’ short story. People may listen to the stories of others and/or share their own story. These sessions are intended as a way to access our own lives as well as hear from others. This is one story, one entry approach and is accessible for anyone interested in participating.”

IF YOU GO
Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Monday, December 31, Thursday, January 24 and Monday, February 25 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 17).

Turkish Kurdistan, with Chris Andersen

On Thursday, January 31 at 10:45 a.m., meet Chris Andersen, who will talk about his childhood adventures in Asia Minor in a program titled “Turkish Kurdistan.” This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community series.

Chris Andersen had the rare and transformative opportunity to live in Turkey as a young teen with his family. It was 1954, and Turkish Kurdistan, which Andersen remembers being embraced by Turkish nationals. Andersen will share his adventures that drove him in this direction.

In this program he shares with us the risks and the adventures that drove him in this direction. Later in life, Chris Andersen served as captain in the US Army. In civilian life, he worked in hospital emergency rooms and operating rooms from Arizona to New Hampshire and with patients at the Northampton State Hospital. In the Berkshires, Chris has opened his home throughout years working with children through specialized foster care, while raising his own family.

IF YOU GO
Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, January 31 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 17).

Scam and Fraud Awareness and Prevention

On Thursday, January 10 at 10:45 a.m., learn about “Scams and Fraud Awareness and Prevention” from two local financial services professionals from MountainOne Bank. This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community series.

MountainOne Bank’s Dick Andersen served, but an RSVP before January 30 is a must. Please RSVP at (413) 442-4360, Ext. 10 or federation@jewishberkshires.org.

IF YOU GO
Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, January 10 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 17).

This Winter, Don’t Kvetch – Stretch at PJ Library Yoga Havdalah and Dinner

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Saturday, February 2 from 4:30-6:30 p.m., get out of the cold with our PJ Library program featuring yoga and Havdalah at Lifeworks Studio, 50 Castle Street.

Dress in your PJ’s and come ready to relax with some aleph-bet yoga, sing some songs, and prepare for the new week ahead.

This event is FREE and recommended for ages 3-7. Pizza and dessert will be served, but an RSVP before January 30 is a must. Please RSVP at (413) 442-4360, ext. 10 or federation@jewishberkshires.org.

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

Hamantaschen By the dozen

$12 a dozen donation
How many dozens of each flavor do you wish to order?

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# of dozens x $12 = ______

Your name: ______
Your email: ______
Phone: ______

Mail this form with check to Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Rd., Pittsfield, MA 01201

Order deadline 2/19 NO PHONE ORDERS

Central County orders may be picked up at KI Mon. Mar. 11 through Fri. Mar. 15, 10:00-12:00 and 2:00-4:00.
North County orders may be picked up at Congregation Beth Israel on Mon. Mar. 18 and Tues. Mar. 19 from 10:00-2:00.
South County orders may be picked up at Hevreh on Mon. Mar. 18 and Tues. Mar. 19 from 12:00-4:00.

Homemade by KI volunteers!
LOCAL NEWS

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

LENOX — By mid-January most of us have had it: the cold, the ice, and the snow. We all need a break!

So why not give Berkshire Hills Hadassah’s “Baby It’s Cold Outside Cabaret” a go? On Sunday, January 20 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.”

Enjoy entertainment and refreshments, with a cash bar. Kindly RSVP by January 16 with payment of $30 per person to: Berkshire Hills Hadassah, P.O. Box 187, Pittsfield, MA 01202.

Calling All Villagers — Hamantaschen Baking Commences at KI

PITTSFIELD — It takes a village to make the thousands of hamantaschen that roll out of Knesset Israel’s kitchen every winter.

This year, the combined forces of Knesset Israel’s bakers, the late Joe Madison’s friends from the Monday Morning Mountain Boys, Federation volunteers (adults and campers), and Knesset Israel Hebrew School students will meet every Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to noon and every Thursday evening 5:30 to 8 p.m. from January 20 until February 28 to fill Knesset Israel with the warmth of volunteering and the wonderful aroma of just-baked cookies.

From the dough makers cracking hundreds of eggs, to the preschoolers decorating bags for senior citizens for Joe’s Project, to baggers putting together mishloach manot bags, this project needs a lot of volunteers.

If you are a baker, want to learn to bake, can help clean up and pack baked cookies, or are just volunteering so you can get first dibs on warm cookies, please contact Cindy Helftier at chelitizer2012@gmail.com or call (413) 499-1202 and leave a message.

If you would like to volunteer to help with the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Joe’s Project — kids decorating the bags (now until March 1), packing mishloach manot bags, and delivering them to homebound Jewish seniors (mid-March), then contact Susan Frisch Lehrer at slehrer@jewishberkshires.org or (413) 442-4360, ext. 14.

New this year is the introduction of locations in north and south counties as pick up points for prepaid orders (now until March 1), packing mishloach manot bags and delivering them to homebound Jewish seniors (mid-March), then contact Susan Frisch Lehrer at slehrer@jewishberkshires.org or (413) 442-4360, ext. 14.

Educational FamilyFun at Hevreh, led by Rabbi Jodie Gordon (top center)

Hevreh welcomes inter-faith families. GLBTQ families, nursing moms, babies and siblings of all ages, grandparents and special people, new members, first timers, neighbors, and friends.

Community Shabbat on February 8

On Friday, February 8 at 6:15 p.m., Hevreh hosts a Community Shabbat served by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. It will feature a delicious Shabbat dinner and special abbreviated Shabbat service with special songs and prayers. Community Shabbat is free and open to the entire community with advance RSVP. This event is appropriate for all ages, and families with children are encouraged to attend.

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire is located at 270 Sate Road in Great Barrington.
Yachad Day of Service

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Sunday, January 20 at 10 a.m., as part of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire Religious School curriculum and to commemorate the service of Martin Luther King, Jr., religious school families will come together for a day of service. During this Yachad Day of Service, participants will be involved in various social justice/social action-related projects around South County. In the past, students have helped Construct with painting, visited residents at Laurel Lake, and helped to clean up local parks. If you are aware of an organization in Berkshire County that might benefit from this Day of Service, please contact Rabbi Jodie Gordon at jgordon@hevreh.org.

This annual program is free and open to community members with social action initiatives. Contact the Hevreh office for more information at (413) 528-6378.

Welcome the Birthday of Trees with a Family-Friendly Tu B’Shevat Shabbat Service and Seder

PITTSFIELD – Temple Anshe Amunim invites the community to celebrate Tu B’Shevat, the new year of the trees, on Friday, January 11, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Tu B’Shevat is the fifteenth day of the Hebrew month of Shevat, and welcomes the emergence of spring. Jews mark the holiday with a traditional Seder, similar to a Passover Seder, and with planting of trees in honor of or in memory of loved ones.

The evening will begin with Shabbat Shira, the Sabbath of Song, and a family-friendly Friday evening service full of music. The evening will continue with a celebration of Tu B’Shevat by exploring the enduring connections between Judaism and nature. A dairy dinner will be served following the service, featuring those fruits that are symbolically linked to Tu B’Shevat. There is an $8 per person charge for the dinner, with a maximum charge of $20 per family.

Reservations are required for dinner by January 4. Please contact the Temple Office for registration details by calling (413) 442-5910 or emailing TempleOffice@AnsheAmunim.org. This event is open to all members of the community. Major funding for the event is provided by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation. Temple Anshe Amunim is located at 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield.
Your Federation Presents

Middle East Update 2018 on the New Rules of the Game
Professor Ralph Nurnberger analyzed the region’s new realities

On November 4, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosted Professor Ralph Nurnberger at its annual Middle East Update, this year titled “The Game of Pawns.” The nearly 200 participants, who attended this event at Shakespeare & Company’s Elaine P. Bernstein Theatre in Lenox heard Professor Nurnberger’s thoughts on how policy toward the Middle East has changed in the era of US President Donald Trump.

The update took place against the backdrop of uncertainty, just one day before the United States reimposed sanctions on Iran in a move that seemed destined to affect US relations with both allies and rivals wishing to do business in that country. Professor Nurnberger also shared that he wasn’t sure of what kind of deal the US would prefer to both Israel and the Palestinians, only that since the Trump administration took the reins of diplomatic policy, the United States has taken bold moves to put pressure on Palestinian leadership and society, among them relocating the US embassy to Jerusalem and suspending hundreds of millions of dollars in payments to Palestinian beneficiaries.

Professor Nurnberger asserted that current discussions among the parties involved continue to focus on four core issues – borders, security, refugees, and Jerusalem. But the new US approach to the problem is to acknowledge that historically, as the professor characterized it, “the peace process has not produced peace...The past approach has not worked, and so try something new to end the conflict.”

He showed how, in the past, Israeli and Palestinian representatives negotiated terms with each other, perhaps facilitated by a moderator – an “inside-out” approach. The Trump approach, however, is “outside-in,” whereby outsiders come up with solutions and use them to structure a deal between the two parties. On each of the four core issues, US diplomats have taken a new tack:

- On borders, US policy is to support Palestinian self-rule, with Israel controlling borders and crossings with the West Bank.
- Security would be under Israeli oversight, without much Palestinian autonomy.
- Refugees entitiled to repatriation would be limited to those people dispossessed in 1948, rather than to their descendants, as well – contra numerous United Nations resolutions.
- Jerusalem as a joint, divided capital for both Jews and Palestinians is an idea that is also off the table.

Professor Nurnberger also shared some insights into how Israel is working with neighboring Sunni Muslim countries to create what he characterizes as “the ultimate deal” to create stability in the region. Overall, Professor Nurnberger seemed neither overly optimistic nor overly pessimistic – as his insightful talk showed, there are still too many intangibles still in play. As he reminded the gathered early in his talk – “Things in the Middle East rarely work out as planned.”

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.

Lee & Sydelle Blatt
Betty Braun*
Cipora Brown
Barbara Cohen
Mark Cohen*
Mimi Cohen
C. Jeffrey & Judith Cook
Gerry & Lynn Denmark
Jonathan & Laura Denmark
Shela K. Donand
Melva Eidelberg
Monroe England,
in memory of
Monroe B. & Isabel England
Dr. Armand V. Feigenbaum*
Dr. Donald S. Feigenbaum*
Steven Feiner
Diana & Stanley Feld
Stuart M. Fischman
Lynn & William Foggie
Elaine Friedman
Eiran Gazit
Jeffrey Goldwasser &
Jonquil Wolfson
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Howard & Nancy* Kaufman
Lawrence Klein
Sarah Klein
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Fred & Brenda Landes
Beth Laster-Nathan
Andrew S. Levine*
Sylvia Silverberg, in memory of
Jerome Silverberg
Richard A. Simons & Marcie
Jerome Silverberg
Sylvia Silverberg
Lisa Fletcher-Udel
Edward Udel
Michael & Joan Ury
Mark & Judy Ushow
Henry & Beate* Voremburg
Alexandra Warshaw
Florence Winberg*
Rabbi Deborah Zecher &
Rabbi Dennis Ross
*Of blessed memory
“Life in Israel – An Inter-Religious Dialogue”
Illuminating Life in the Afula–Gilboa Region

On November 12, four Israeli residents from our partner community of Afula-Gilboa visited Federation’s Connecting With Community program to discuss religion, politics and their personal perspectives on the intersection of secular Jewish, Muslim, and Modern Orthodox life in Israel. With most of the information about Israel coming to us via the media, this forum provided Berkshire residents with the chance to hear firsthand what life is like in Israel.

Moderator Dr. Ravid Pitaro, a former Southern New England Consortium (SNEC) Young Emissary, explained how Afula is a Jewish city with a significant Arab population (nearly 40 percent) who have moved there “to integrate and co-exist.” Ayala Carmi, who was raised on a secular moshav in Gilboa and who started to practice Orthodox Judaism as an adult, reported that “Most of the time, life is good and people do not just want to co-exist side by side, but to live together. Many people [in the Gilboa region] believe in the Earth and that working the land is important.” She added that “Israel is a young country that needs to grow up,” and show more sensitivity not only to her Israeli Arab citizens, but also to its Orthodox population.

“Peace will come from the bottom, not the top” of society, asserted Amani Masalha Zoabi, a Muslim mother of two who is now a resident of the Israeli-Arab village of Tamra. She detailed some of the challenges she and other Israeli Arabs face, some of it racially charged, when trying to live outside predominantly Arab areas. Amir Cahaner, whose family members have a history of serving in the IDF’s elite units, asserted that “Most hate comes from people who know Arabs the least,” adding that political leaders often exploit racial issues to divide the electorate.

“There is work to be done with our citizens – Israeli citizens” both Jewish and Arab, he said. “That is the concern of Israel. In places like the West Bank, there are geopolitical issues to solve. Within our borders, there are no such issues.”

Ravid, Ayala, Amani, and Amir then broke bread with us at the kosher lunch program that followed the forum, a chance for everyone to get to know one another on a more personal level. Overall, another meaningful connection between the Jewish Berkshires and Afula–Gilboa through the Jewish Agency For Israel’s Partnership2Gether program and the Southern New England Consortium (SNEC) program.
Ringing Out Chanukah 5779 with a Dazzling Display of Light and Communal Spirit

On the frigid evening of December 9, hundreds of members of our Jewish community joined holiday revelers enjoying the spectacular inaugural Winterlights festival at the Naumkeag Gilded Age mansion in Stockbridge for a Federation-sponsored celebration of the Festival of Lights. On this last night of Chanukah 5779, Federation Executive Director Dara Kaufman lit the candles of a menorah, while Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch of Temple Anshe Amunim led the crowd in brachot and a selection of favorite Chanukah tunes.

Despite a regional potato pancake shortage this Chanukah, latkes enough were on hand for all who wanted one.

Dara Kaufman (left) with Rabbi Liz Hirsch

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FAOLAN SUGARMAN-LASH

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Not NCUA Insured No Credit Union Guarantee May Lose Value
Entebbe...or Not Entebbe
By Alexandra Warshaw

In 1976 I was an administrator at Temple University in Philadelphia...that year the Hillel program at U of Pennsylvania was sponsoring a “first-timer” trip to Israel for faculty and administrators of local colleges. I was most fortunate to be selected and receive the scholarship which allowed me to participate.

The trip itself consisted of all the standard sites, visiting dignitaries, lectures and home visits. I extended my stay in order to do more exploring on my own. On the day of my departure, I got to the airport with plenty of time to spare and stood on lines for lengthy periods of time. Much to my dismay, and maybe 15-20 other passengers, they closed the gate to our flight while we were on line. We later learned that frequently El Al changed their departure times as a precautionary move.

We were taken to a lounge where El Al staff worked with us to find other flights that could accommodate us. They offered us a flight to Orly airport in France, but could not arrange our connecting flights back to US. I had never been to France and decided that I was better off staying another day in Israel and return to Philadelphia the next day. An elderly couple (probably my age now) who I was sitting with asked if I minded if they stayed along with me...of course I said yes.

Awhile later the staff found room on a Pan Am flight to NYC where I knew I could figure out a flight back to Philadelphia and my mother lived in Long Beach, Long Island so I knew this would work...and we flew off a few hours later.

While in flight the Bursar came to my seat and asked me to join him in a different section of the plane. He then proceeded to tell me that I had made a very good decision as the flight to Orly had been skyjacked to Entebbe. You cannot imagine my feelings of anxiety, fear, sadness, and relief on hearing this news. He asked me to convey the information to the couple who came with me.

Years later I asked Rabbi Arthur Rulnick what one should do when asked to show passports and or raise their hands to admit being Jewish. He quickly stated that our lives are sacred and that of course one should never put their lives in danger even if it meant lying.

There are many stories to be told by survivors of not being in the place of danger for a variety of simple reasons...slept late, missed the train, etc...this is my story!

To Our Community Members
Wintering in Florida –
We Miss You and Are Thinking of You!

Those of us who live year-round in the Berkshires may be shivering through another chilly New England winter, but don’t think that Federation has forgotten our Florida snowbirds. Because we remain committed to providing you with Jewish connection wherever you may be, we’re sharing this photograph recently captured by a friend of the Berkshire Jewish Voice who lives in Miami Beach.

Please note – Our sharing this photo in no way constitutes an endorsement of “needamohel.com,” nor of any services that may be provided by the person representing himself as said “mohel.” In fact, we cannot stress strongly enough that if the term “caveat emptor” should be applied to any type of transaction, it should definitely be considered before enlisting the services of someone (presumably in possession of sharp knives) who rides around town with a sign reading “MOHEL” and “needamohel.com” on his car door. We share it only to show that we are thinking of you and of your Jewish journeys as they may be experienced in the Sunshine State.

And if you need further proof we miss you, snowbirds – this March, Federation’s Executive Director Dara Kaufman will be visiting our donors who are wintering on both the east and west coasts of Florida. Plans for Dara’s visit are still being finalized, but we hope you’ll join her and catch up with friends and news from the Jewish Berkshires. You’ll be hearing from us soon.

(Also, please remember to request that Federation forward your copies of the Berkshire Jewish Voices while you’re away for the winter – the post office doesn’t forward newspapers, but we’ll be glad to do so if we have your address.)
Traveling with Jewish Taste

Trees
By Carol Goodman Kaufman

It may be a cold and snowy January here in New England, but in Israel it’s the month of Shevat, and the country’s almond trees are decked out in fabulous pink and white blossoms heralding the coming of spring. This Tu B’Shevat, the New Year of the Trees, is a perfect time both to plant new trees and to partake of the bounty of the land.

We can only plant trees by proxy at the moment (please remember to call your Hadassah JNF tree lady), but even if you’re not hosting or attending a Tu B’Shevat seder, you can certainly enjoy the wonderful foods associated with the holiday.

It is traditional on Tu B’Shevat to eat every one of the seven biblical species mentioned in the Torah: wheat, barley, olives, grapes, figs, pomegranates, and dates, but I wouldn’t suggest eating either raw wheat or barley. And while olive trees can be seen even on major streets in just about every town, they are not ready for prime time until they’ve been treated with brine or oil. Trust me on that one; I’ve actually made the mistake of trying olives straight from the tree. But the other five species grown in the Land of Milk and Honey are available in markets indoors and out.

A Tu B’Shevat sampler

By the way, that honey referred to in the Torah is much more likely to be date honey than the product of honeybees with which we are familiar here in the States.

The seven species include flavors neutral, sweet, and savory, so a complete meal is easy to imagine. Cook up a big pot of mushroom barley soup (check off one item), then whip up a loaf of whole wheat cinnamon raisin bread (two more items on the list). Serve these with a block of good cheese and a variety of olives on the side (one more). For dessert, put out a plate of chewy Smyrna figs, full and luscious Medjool dates, and sweet and tart pomegranates (these three round out the seven species).

Easy peasy, you have a Tu B’Shevat dinner that will warm you on a frigid winter’s night.

For those of us with less time on our hands, wouldn’t it be really neat to have a recipe that includes every one of the seven species? Dates, raisins, and figs sound like the foundation of a really dense and delicious fruit bread. But olives? Probably not a good fit. That is, that’s what I thought until I happened upon this recipe that uses olive oil. Brilliant, delicious, and pareve to boot.

Seven Species Muffins
Adapted from a recipe by Tori Avey

Ingredients:
- 1 1/2 cups all purpose flour (or half each all purpose and whole wheat)
- 1/2 cup barley flour
- 1/2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tsp. allspice
- 2 cups pomegranate seeds
- 1/4 cup ground walnuts
- 1/4 cup ground almonds
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup light olive oil
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup unsweetened almond milk
- 1/3 cup light olive oil
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. baking soda
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1/2 cup dried figs
- 1 cup dates
- 1/3 cup applesauce
- 1/2 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp. allspice
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1/2 cup chopped pecans
- Paper muffin tin liners
- 2 tbsp. turbinado sugar
- 1/4 tsp. cinnamon

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
Remove stems from figs and discard. Roughly chop dates and figs. Set aside.

In a food processor blend together the following ingredients until very smooth: dates, figs, almond milk, applesauce, cinnamon and allspice. The end result should be similar to the texture of apple butter or smooth fruit preserves. Set mixture aside.

In a large mixing bowl, sift together flour, barley flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Gently mix the pomegranate seeds into the dry mixture, making sure the seeds are well coated with flour.

In a large mixing bowl, sift together flour, barley flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt.

Gently mix the pomegranate seeds into the dry mixture, making sure the seeds are well coated with flour.

Make a well in the middle of the dry ingredients. Pour the fruit mixture from the blender into the well.

Add the egg mixture to the well.

Fold the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until the dry ingredients are just moistened and a lumpy batter forms. Do not over mix – if you do your muffins will turn out heavy and dense.

Fold raisins and chopped pecans into the muffin batter with a light-handed stir.

Line your muffin pan with paper muffin cups.

Using an ice cream scoop, divide batter equally into muffin cups, filling each cup to the top and mounding the surface slightly.

Mix the sugar and cinnamon together in a small bowl using a fork. Sprinkle about a 1/2 tsp of cinnamon sugar mixture evenly across the surface of each muffin.

Place muffins in the oven and immediately turn heat down to 375 degrees F.

Bake for 25-27 minutes until the tops of the muffins are golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Let muffins cool for 10 minutes before removing from the tin and cooling on a rack.

Serve warm.

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.

For Tu B’Shevat, why not build a tree made entirely of seven species mini muffins?
**OBITUARIES**

Loretta Skoletsky, 88, loved cooking and preparing a meal for her family  
West Hartford, CT – Loretta, 88, of 67 Sumberg, died Monday, December 3 at Augustus Health and Robotics, with her family by her side. Loretta was born in West Hartford, CT, where she resided for the past several years. For her entire married life, she lived in Pittsfield and moved to Connecticut in 2016 to be closer to her son Barry. Born in Little Falls, NY on August 1, 1930, a daughter of Louis Mark Skoletsky (died) and Theresa (nee Sumberg, Mrs. Skoletsky was educated in Little Falls schools and she resided in New Jersey with her children while they were younger, eventually working at Jays Clothing and Eaton Paper Company. She was a member of Congregation Kneset Israel and its Sisterhood. She enjoyed cooking, hiking, and going out for dinner with her late husband Edward at their favorite eatery. She was a wonderful cook and prepared many Passover Seder meals and other High Holy Day meals for her family. For almost 60 years, she and her husband Edward did a preparation of the “breaking of the fast” meal after services on Yom Kippur, preparing meals for local out-of-town relatives and friends. In her earlier years, she enjoyed playing mahjong. In addition to her parents, she was pre-deceased by her husband, Edward (September 2015) whom she married on May 3, 1953, her brother, Ira Mark, her sister, Rose Sumberg Schecter and her brother, Lawrence Sumberg.

She leaves her two sons, Louis Mark Skoletsky of Copley, OH and Barry Howard Skoletsky of Hartford; two granddaughters, Jennifer Sarah White of Chillicothe, OH and Michelle Lynn Skoletsky of Monroe, WA; OH; and three great-grandchildren, Brayden and Aspen White and Reed John Skoletsky. She also leaves her sister-in-law, Mrs. Walter Sumberg, nieces, nephews, and great-nieces and great nephews. Loretta was a kind, loving mother, who cared deeply for her children and grand-children. She will be greatly missed.

Graveside services were held Wednesday, December 5 at Kneset Israel Cemetery, Pittsfield. Rabbi David Weiner officiating. Donations may be made to Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

**Sexta Strella, 98, seamstress maven**  
LENOX – Sexta Strella, 98, of Wolfeboro, NH, died Thursday, December 6, in the comfort of her own home. Sexta was born in Vienna, Austria and came to the United States in 1939. She was a seamstress maven, and worked in the garment district of New York City for many years, working on dresses for many, including Monroe Marilyn. She was very active in Hasidass, and a past president of the Cranford, NJ chapter. Sexta was predeceased by her husband-Joseph Seattles, with whom she built a life in New York. She was survived by her son and daughter-in-law, Dr. Gary I. and Dawn Richter of NY; and grandchildren, Reba J. Seattles of Tyngsborough, and granddaughters, Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield  

The family would like to thank Cecilyna, Donna, and Betty for everything they have done over the years to make this transition as comfortable as possible for Stella.

Graveside services were held Wednesday, December 5 at Baron Hirsch Cemetery, Staten Island, NY with Rabbi Dov Cohen officiating. In memory of Mrs. Skoletsky, donations may be sent to Kneset Israel Charitable Causes, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Wendy Rabiniwitz, 72, her art reflects a deep study of Torah  
LENOX – Wendy Rabiniwitz, 72, died Tuesday, December 11 at Berkshire Medical Center.

Wendy grew up on the South Side of Chicago on January 6, 1946 to the late Sam and Geraldine Biekleb Rabiniwitz, she attended North Shore High School, the University of Illinois at Chicago, and the Art Institute of Chicago. Wendy was an artist, specializing in Judaic themes who exhibited her work through her business. Living Torahs Judaica, Tefillin. Through her artwork incorporated mixed media such as pottery tiles, yardage, and the metal in earrings “borrowed” from her husband. She was a part of a deep study of Torah – its lessons were truly alive for her and her inner response of the meaning of the Torah went beyond mere words. She would “immerse” her hands into its inspiring pieces.

Wendy was fearless in a role, but one that fit her sensibilities. She would force her feminism, humanitarianism, and spirituality. She also enjoyed cooking, baking, and creating a loving and maintain -ing deep friendships including hundreds that spanned decades; nourishing profound connections across her family, past and present; colorful, flowing clothing that reflected the arts to those with all abilities; “spice”-colored lipstick; showing up in ways that would make the headstilling Paul Simon, Leonard Bernstein, Nina Simone, the Beatles, and klezmer music on all occasions whether appro- priate or not; witnessing the love between her daughters as sisters and their children as cooks in cooking in the kitchen; Judy Chicago’s “The Dinner Party.” Guys and Dolls the musical, and art museums, even when it was not true to all emotions wherever and whenever; sending thank you notes to recognize small acts of kind- ness; allowing herself to grow and learn throughout her life; astonished by data list mak- ing; celebrating the Jewish holy- days as if they were mine-theater produc- tion designed to help prepare for Shabbat. All welcomed. Information: (413) 763-5300 and www.cbieweb.org.

**Wendy Rabiniwitz, 72**  
**her art reflects a deep study of Torah**  
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**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) 499-8989 or visit www.jewishberkshires.com.

**Monthly, fourth or fifth Sunday**  
Volunteers will be available at Beth Israel, 53 Lois Street, North Adams “Take and Eat” program cook, package, and deliver hot meals for all North Adams residents of “moderate income.” Information: (413) 663-5830 or office@cbieweb.org.

**Sundays (second of each month)**  

**Wendy leaves a family who**  
loves her fiercely, including her children, Sara Munson and her husband Barry David (Richmond, VA) and their children, Addysen and Jasper Sagates and Pablo Rafael Perales, her former husband and his wife, Doug and Teddy Munson (Richmond, MA) and family, her sister, Barbara Wrench (Chicago, IL) her cousins, Dr. Richard and Susan Rabens (Berkley, CA) and Ronnie and Joyce Rabens (San Diego, CA) and their fami- lies. In her memory, they asked for your homes if you would like to be in touch. Bill Zolla (Manchester, NH), Brett Zolla (St. Louis, MO), and Brad Zolla (Cincinnati, OH) and their families; and her cousin Wendy B.’s daughter, Tracy Donisky (Boston, MA) and family.

With her passing, she joins her best friend, Joy Hopkins Hausman; her beloved par- ents, Sam and Geri Rabens; her husband’s parents, Dr. David and Lily Horak; her aunt and uncle, Dave and Bertha Rabens; her cousin, Wendy B. Arbot Hite; and her daughters, Schuyler and Reid O’Conner. Part of her loyalty on her through her tissue donation to New England Donor Services.

Funeral services were held on December 16 at Temple Anshe Amunim, officiated by Rabbi Liz P. G. Hirsch, followed by a graveside service at the Temple Anshe Amunim Cemetery (within Pittsfield Cemetery grounds). Donations may be made to WAM Theatre, the Elizabeth Munson Scholarship Fund in care of the Roche Funeral Home, 120 Main Street, Lenox, MA 01240.

**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 about the Jewish people’s relationship to the text of the Bible and what it means and feels to “be Jewish.” All texts are offered in English. Free and open to the public. Information: (414) 452-9510 or templeoffice@ ansheamunim.org.
# Connecting with Community

**Nourish Your Body, Mind, and Soul!**

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

Programs take place on most Mondays and Thursdays at 10:45 a.m. Lunch is served Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays at noon.

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

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

- **Adults 60 and over:** $2 suggested donation
- **Adults under 60:** $7 per person

Program only is free!

When making a reservation please inform us if a person in your party has a food allergy.

The Federation’s kosher hot lunch program is offered in collaboration with Elder Services of Berkshire County.

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**What’s for Lunch?**

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

### JANUARY

- **Tuesday, 1** ............... Closed for New Year’s Day
- **Thursday, 3** ............. 10:45 a.m., Chair Yoga with Linda Novick. Lunch: Fish chowder**, grilled cheese on multi-grain bread, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.
- **Monday, 7** ............... 10:45 a.m., Healthy Living for your Brain and Body. Lunch: Meat loaf**, salad, peas and carrots, mashed potatoes, eye bread, chocolate chip cookies and tea.
- **Tuesday, 8** ............. Chicken nuggets**, zucchini rice soup, sweet potato fries, green beans, chef's choice of bread, apricots and tea.
- **Thursday, 10** ........... 10:45 a.m., Scam and Fraud Awareness & Prevention. Lunch: Macaroni and cheese, tomato soup, salad, beans, scones, tropical fruit salad, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.
- **Monday, 14** ............ 10:45 a.m., “The Process of Aging” with therapist Maggie Bittman. Lunch: Spaghetti and meatballs (meatballs are gluten free), chicken soup, Italian beans, Italian bread, peas and tea.
- **Tuesday, 15** ............ Roasted chicken**, mushroom barley soup, roasted Brussels sprouts, noodles and onions, Challah, chocolate chunk cookies and tea.
- **Thursday, 17** ............ 10:45 a.m., Social Welfare History from Fast to Present. Lunch: Vegetarian moussaka, salad, rice, pumpkin muffins, baklava and dried fruit and nuts, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.
- **Monday, 21** ............ Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- **Tuesday, 22** ........... Salami and egg frittata**, celery rice soup, salad, green beans, Italian beans, grapes and tea.
- **Tuesday, 29** ........... Beef stew**, noodles, salad, white bread, applesauce and tea.
- **Thursday, 31** ........... 10:45 a.m., Turkish Kurdistan, with Chris Andersen. Lunch: Dairy hodgepodge (pizza, lasagna, chili and other dairy leftovers), mixed vegetables, salad, bread cubes, cookies, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.

### FEBRUARY

- **Monday, 4** ............. 10:45 a.m., Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia, with Meghan Lemay. Lunch: Meat loaf**, zucchini rice soup, peas & carrots, mashed potatoes, rolls, peas and tea.
- **Tuesday, 5** ............ Northern Indian lamb meat sauce**, brown rice, cauliflower salad, sate, pita, peaches and tea.
- **Thursday, 7** ............. 10:45 a.m., The Berkshire Hillsmen Chorus Sings. Lunch: Fresh fish, mushroom soup, Italian beans, rice pilaf, scones, pie, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.
- **Monday, 11** ............ 10:45 a.m., “The Process of Aging” with therapist Maggie Bittman. Lunch: Turkey pot pie, vegetable soup, rice, multigrain bread, tropical fruit salad and tea.
- **Tuesday, 12** ........... Salisbury steak**, noodle soup, potatoes O’Brien, baby carrots, pumpernickel bread, grapes and tea.
- **Thursday, 14** ........... 10:45 a.m., How to Build a Just, Thriving, and Safe Community. Lunch: “Seafood” linguini, salad, Italian beans, rolls, white cake and chocolate frosted coffee, tea and milk for coffee.
- **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., Program to be Announced. Lunch: Grilled cheese and tuna on whole wheat, salad, beans, cookies, coffee, tea and milk for coffee.
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:

JEWSHERKSHIRES.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 Brith 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, chiewb.org

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

Israel Philatelist Society
c/o Dr. Ed Heltzer,
(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 Emunim
Reform
26 Broad St., Pittsfield, MA (413) 442-3910, ansheemunim.org

Mazel Tov to...

Christina Kelly on becoming president of Congregation Beth Israel in North Adams – plus, a hearty yasher koach to Elizabeth Miller on completing her tenure in that role.

Federation board of directors member Anne Schneel, who became a great-grandmother for the first time with the arrival of Eliza Jules Barshay in September. Proud parents are Samantha and Devin Barshay.

Paul and Lisa Green on their 25th anniversary.

Elaine Epstein on her extra-special birthday.

Sandi and Alan Rubin on the occasion of their daughter, Jen Rubin, having her first book, We Are Staying, published.

Bea Selig on her 95th birthday.

Rabbi Yaakov and Nina Rone on their special birthdays.

Howard Cooper on the birth of his fourth grandson, in Jerusalem, to parents Abigail Cooper and Sholom Wolf.

Professor Steven Miller of Williams College for being elected a Fellow of the American Mathematical Society.

Paula Lustbader on being honored by the Jewish Women’s Foundation of the Greater Palm Beaches (JWF) at its Imagine the Possibilities luncheon in December. Paula is a founding trustee of the organization.

Berkshire Hills Hadassah (Rosalind Kopfstein and Sherry Boullt, co-presidents) on receiving the B’Tenuah “In Motion Award” at the Hadassah Connecticut Regional Meeting in December, recognizing all of the activities and efforts our local chapter offers.

Yiddish Book Center

The World’s First Yiddish Museum

EXHIBITS • EVENTS • TOURS • & MORE

ON EXHIBIT THROUGH MARCH 2019:
The Lost Synagogues of Europe

A collection of early twentieth-century postcards on Jewish themes, many of them depicting synagogues in Eastern Europe that were destroyed during World War II.

For more information and a full schedule of events: yiddishbookcenter.org

Trust can provide a sense of security.

Research completed by Dimensional’s 2017 Global Investor Feedback Survey found the most important benefit that investors receive from their relationship with their financial advisor is “peace of mind.” Having that sense of security—and the knowledge that your advisor understands your financial situation—is invaluable.

Have a conversation with Gary Schiff, Managing Director, and discover the qualities that can help provide some certainty in these uncertain times.
When Michael Wex’s agent proposed that he write a book on Jewish food, the author of the classic Born to Roast: Yiddish Language and Culture in All of Its Foods and five other books on Jewish themes wasn’t sure he was the man for the job. “I’m not a foodie,” he confesses, adding that his main concerns about the food he eats have tended to center around its caloric rather than its cultural sophistication. But as this connection Wex makes early in Rhapsody in Schmaltz, the 2016 book that resulted from his agent’s suggestion, clearly was the perfect author to explore, as the book’s subtitle has it, “Yiddish food and why we can’t stop eating it.”

The word “matzoh” comes from a Hebrew root meaning “to squeeze, extract, drain out” — exactly what is done in matzoh preparation (during the kashering process). Much kosher food is thus matzoh, in one form or another, and it’s probably no coincidence that the Yiddish word for “to squeeze, extract, drain out” is “kugel.”

It’s as close to a unified field theory explaining the interaction of Yiddish language, culture, and cuisine as Jews are going to get. While a book like Rhapsody in Schmaltz was no easy task for Wex, as there was no definitive research that examined Ashkenazi food and its role in the traditional Jewish culture of Eastern Europe: “Exile in Jewish terminology means everlasting unassimilability, stagnating a stranger instead of just being one.”

He adds that “every standard Jewish dish is associated with a particular meaning. Ashkenazi food is the one exception, and one that is based on a sense of vibrancy, at that. Wex says when that he was growing up in Canada, “to a degree I was ashamed of it,” he adds, “as my hangouts. They were Ashkenazi. By looking at the dishes in these cookbooks, we can see what the Ashkenazi community was supposed to taste like as my hangouts.”

While ancient and medieval writing about dietary law and norms found that sources about the food closer to contemporary times were harder to come by. “The first cookbook in Yiddish was published in 1896,” he says. “There was a sense that the dishes in these traditional dishes were passed from mother to daughter. The idea of a cookbook on making cholent would be an insult.”

He says that for this reason, books became more prevalent as Jews became more assimilated and the traditions that connected religious practices and dining habits with the cookbooks, he says, featured “foods redolent of home and home fires,” and provided an ethnic identity centered around food, rather than religion. During the course of his research, Wex himself cooked many of these in the dishes in these cookbooks, using the authentic kosher ingredients specified, to find out just what the food was supposed to taste like as originally passed down. Wex also had the opportunity to uncover a fascinating historical convergence that took place in early 20th century, where Proctor & Gamble first manufactured Crisco, the parve “pseudo-schmaltz” that transformed Jewish cooking in America, and where the Manischewitz company grew into a kosher food giant by successfully marketing matzoh as something to be eaten year round, rather than just seasonally during Passover. In Rhapsody in Schmaltz, he recounts how these two very different companies “unwittingly came together to transform kosher food in America from a scattering of local butchers, bakers, and grocery stores into an industry that could turn ethnic particularity into a national brand and religious need into all American product preference.”

Wex says he first made the connection when he noticed a once-unheard-of proximity between the P&G and Manischewitz factories to one another while looking over maps of Cincinnati.

The true pleasure of Rhapsody in Schmaltz — what makes it a classic that belongs on every Jewish bookshelf, alongside I Am a Jew, is its seamless blend of history, halachic, Torah, midrash, and humor. As a sense of scholarly research, it is dense as a chulent, but goes down lightly as... so I'm trying to think of a light Yiddish food, but can't. Michael Wex.

and bands us to our ancestors no matter how different our outward lives are from theirs. About Jews and food, he concludes: Minute. If not obsessive, analysis of the contents of every plate, pot, and bowl as if they were elements of a vast system in urgent need of interpretation is the source of the frequently noted concern with food and digestion so often displayed by even completely unreligious Jews. Although the ritual or religious motivation for such worries might have vanished, the behavioral reflex remains and is passed on from one generation to the next as just that: a reflex, a way of dealing with food that might have vanished, the behavioral reflex remains and is passed on from one generation to the next as just that: a reflex, a way of dealing with food that is universal. You can stop keeping kosher or making blessings, it isn't as easy to stop looking deeply into everything that you eat, even if you no longer know why you're doing so.
Seltzertopia: The Extraordinary Story of an Ordinary Drink

By Avi Dresner / Special to the BJV

The subtitle of Barry Joseph's Seltzertopia is The Extraordinary Story of an Ordinary Drink, and the book definitely lives up to that title. There is nothing two cents plain about this story, which is frequently as effervescent as its subject matter.

The book grew out of an article Joseph wrote for The Forward newspaper in 2004 about the home seltzer maker, SodaStream, which turns tap water into seltzer. Not coincidentally, Joseph's most recent article in The Forward also has to do with seltzer, in this case (pun intended) recounting how seltzer helped win Israel's War of Independence.

Joseph's original article is reproduced in its entirety in the book's prologue, and features throughout New York City, and the book – however, it does take on a special bitserret poignancy as many of the Works' customers live in the Jewish community. And for some people the fact that the seltzer man comes, you know, every week or two, and brings something to their door, it's a wonder-ful feeling. Even on the route, it's a small-town atmosphere on wheels. In a world where you're being run around, rammed around like a num-ber, it's good every now and then to know you are a per-son, and that somebody cares about you, knows about you, knows about your life.

And for some people the fact that the seltzer man comes, you know, every week or two, and brings something to their door, it's a wonder-full feeling. Even on the route, it's a small-town atmosphere on wheels. In a world where you're being run around, rammed around like a number, it's good every now and then to know you are a person, and that somebody cares about you, knows about you, knows about your life.

One of the most distinct voices belongs to Walter Backerman, a third generation seltzer man, who is one of the few to still deliver siphon bot-tles throughout New York City, and whom Joseph describes as "...a character escaped from a Quentin Tarantino film: brutally honest, full of chutz-pah, with the charismatic power to spin dramatic stories packed with unexpected life lessons." This is not hyperbole. In describing his calling to Joseph, Walter, who left law school to take over his father's route, shares this:

"I think seltzer, aside from being a drink, is part of, like, an art form. You know, in the changing world that we live in, in a world of disposability, in a world where values are erratic, where the vague areas of society are so precarious that people can't even get a true perspective on life, in a world like that, sometimes you need something that gives you permanence. I mean, there is something reassuring about consistency. Ya follow me?"
Egg Cream Eggstravaganza

GREAT BARRINGTON – The Berkshires’ Jewish Festival of Books and The Berkshire Jewish Film Festival of Knesset Israel are pleased to be collaborating on an Egg Cream Eggstravaganza on Saturday, February 16 at 7 p.m. at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road. The evening will begin with a screening of the short film Egg Cream by Nora Claire Miller, Peter Miller, and Amy Linton. Egg Cream is a bitter-sweet look at memory, history, and the enduring meaning of a beloved chocolate soda drink born on the Jewish Lower East Side. The egg cream contained neither eggs nor cream – it was a product of necessity and hardship, but a source of joy and sweetness. Through a tour of egg cream establishments led by a filmmaker and his young daughter, exhaustively researched archival imagery, and even a song by Lou Reed, the film examines the Jewish experience in America and the Egg Cream, continued on page 22

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84 Alford Road, Great Barrington, MA 01230
played a role in bringing it to America? How about that the founder of Fox’s U-Bet took the famous egg cream and made it part of his business? Why did this happen? I think about it? But there are those 19th century presidents who was how we got to where we end up on Yahweh? How did he appear, he just swept everyone on. How did you ever He shows up. How did you suggest that Yahweh might be an avatar for our worst intentions or darkest side. What do you mean by that? AT: The notion that he’s an avatar is like saying he’s a living metaphor. He’s an idea that walks around. And it may not be clear in the book, but Yahweh’s interactions with Murphy and Eva are simple and stereotypical. This is just how he talks to creatures like this. He won’t compromise with them, and he won’t do anything with them that they want to reveal. But then there’s a sense that he doesn’t exist in any other existence. And some of his arques derives from his own feeling of helplessness in the face of whatever incomprehensible problems he’s facing and what he might think of as his “real life.” SW: This book is about a man and a woman who share the same age as you and your wife and who both lived in Miami. Talking with you, it seems like some other dialogue and inner monologues may have been lifted from your life. Also, the characters talk about whether or not to have kids. Was this book inspired by your life? AT: Oh, for sure, it’s 100% autobiographical. I tell people it’s non-fiction sometimes. We went to South Florida and lived in Miami off-and-on for a period of six years. Which is how SW: In your book, Yahweh is powerful, and He often says that He is compassionate. But Yahweh actually comes across as insecure, moody, capricious, and actually kind of mean. And then I thought, “If I have Huck Finn at first. And then I thought, “I told you why? Why not Yahweh?” And then once Yahweh apop a canvasser in South Florida. When I think about it, became the new book quite naturally. But what I think happened was, since I have the president, maybe I can have some literary characters.” So I added Huck Finn at first. And then I thought, “If I have Huck Finn, why not Yahweh?” And then once Yahweh appeared, he just swept everyone off the table. SW: He does have a way of taking up a lot of space when ever He shows up. How did you end up on Yahweh? How did He evolve as a character? AT: What I was trying to write was how we got to where we are: why does America look the way it looks today? What would those 19th century presidents think about it? But there are deeper questions than that. I started thinking about all the deeper things that you can’t argue with. You spread a veneer of a political system over a chaotic reality of an life, and that was what I wanted to talk about. It started out cartoonish and flip, but by the end it became deadly serious. The Yahweh character is very much a character. I was thinking of the biblical depictions of Him as conceptualized metaphorical representations of what it feels like to be human. In that way, those images are immensely meaningful and have great explanatory power. We also have a two-and-a-half year-old and a three-month-old. SW: Can you talk about your Jewish background? AT: I went to Hebrew school in North Adahm. At first, I had a simple-minded idea that I didn’t believe in God, so I couldn’t engage with any of the rest of it. That went away quickly, I got a sense that the religion is separ ate from the suffering. Skulnik thought of myself as Jewish because I had to, because other kids shouted at me about it. But as I got older and experienced some of the bad things, there was an experience that I couldn’t think my way out of. There was no intellectual component that I could move around; it wasn’t good to think about it. And I needed another way to frame that problem. After college I came back to Williamstown and came to synagogue and started reading the old sto ries, as stories, just because my background is literary. It was very meaningful for me in a lot of different ways. The stories felt like they belonged to me, because I’m Jewish, and my people had written them long ago, and they still seemed to speak to me and served themselves, because I had this rabbi who talked about God in all these clashing ways, it was meaningful because he offered all these different ways of fram ing what I was thinking about. So it was very personal. And that didn’t have that much to do with eternity.

Because I was writing after making peace with what happened in 2016. I was thinking about comfort. The comfort of the long, long, long view. It’s poetry that has meaning I can’t really articulate. Because if I could, I would say it in a different way. But I’m saying it in this way because it has incantatory meaning.

Egg Cream

The title of the book is, The World is a Narrow Bridge. It’s a line that’s attributed to the Hasidic master, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, there’s a popular tune for it, and it has become a somewhat well-known. What’s interesting is that when you introduce the phrase in the book, it’s offered by Satan – who is a really nice guy – and it’s given to the main character, Eve, as something she can say when she is afraid. What does this phrase mean for you? AT: I remember singing the song in Hebrew when I was a little kid. A few days after the 2016 election, I went to my synagogue. There were a lot of people there that day. I was looking for a space outside this con temporary reality where I could connect with myself and my history. And Rabbi Neill Hirsch had everybody chant this phrase in English over and over again. Just as a way of thinking about what does it really mean? I found myself over the next couple of months repeating it to myself. And I don’t know why, but it helped tremendously. It could be that the bridge is directive. You have to keep moving in one direction. You can’t stand still because then you’re just on the bridge. The way Satan talks about it, and the way I thought about it at the time, is that this is poetry that has meaning I can’t really articulate. Because if I could, I would say it in a different way. But I’m saying it in this way because it has incantatory meaning.

SW: What do you hope your reader will take away from your book? AT: I always want to write a book that’s entertaining. Because I believe in the value of entertainment; it’s an important part of being a human being. But because I was writing after making peace with what hap pened in 2016, I was thinking about comfort. The comfort of the long, long, long view. The comfort of that incantation: the world is a narrow bridge. Or as a metaphor that most things, you’re not going to understand, but it might be fun to think about.
shooting means for American Jews and how Jews should fight anti-Semitism. The inter-
view has been edited for length and clarity.

JTA: What are your thoughts about the book following Pittsburgh? I
was shocked. I wasn’t sur-
prised. Of course, I didn’t expect something’s going to happen in our country, and had been happening for years.

It would be easy to say everything changes after Pittsburgh, and I do think everything changed for Jews, for synagogues. Any syna-
gogue board that in the past 10 days hasn’t discussed security operations is crazy. That’s the new normal.

We had one incident, a home invasion; it doesn’t characterize our whole coun-
try — but it is disturbing, I tell you. One of the things we red the book with, of walking into shul with a little friend who’s now 9 years old, and her mother said, “Say thank you to the police officer for keeping us safe.”

She’s going to fit it out soon enough. She’ll look across the street at the church and dead opposite our shul and there are no police officers there. How do you recognize a shul now if you don’t know exactly what the number is or if the street is closed? Look for the police officers. Kids recog-
ize them.

There will be kids who say what do I want to go to Hiller? There will be parents who will say, you know what? Why should I take my kid to a place where there’s danger?

In your book, you focus largely on how to stop Jews from being able to stop or minimize anti-Semitism, as opposed to how Jews and others can stop it by themselves. Why is that?

It’s Jewish [Tiddish, rough translation: lost cause] to try to change those people. I could write about David Duke from here until the cows come — I’m not going to change David Duke’s mind. We all know David Duke. He’s the first dude of the first order, but it’s the people who might be influenced by David Duke who I want to reach.

Farrakhan, he’s a disgust-
ing excuse for a human being. But it’s the people around him, like Sarsour. [Women’s March co-chair] Tamika Mallory, who have the voice of the movement, who is listened to. They’re enablers. The enablers are much more dangerous to the people we recognize.

On some level, it’s the same kind of anti-Semitism, the one who doesn’t quite present as an anti-Semite, who is much more dangerous because that’s the person who’s going to have access.

How do you view Linda Sarsour’s activism and fundraising on behalf of Jewish causes? Are you working with her and fellow-Jews to do so?

Linda Sarsour and I have been friends for 10 years. She’s a great friend and very thoughtful. She’s going to figure it out. She’s going to do what she wants to do.

I think there are a lot of Jews who feel like I do. I think there are a lot of Jews who will read half the book and remember half the book, who will be appalled when I’m putting down the right and love it when I’m putting down the left and be appalled when I’m putting down the left and love it when I’m putting down the right.

I’m not out to win a popu-
ary war. The war that I have a voice crying out into the dark. I didn’t write the book to convince people who already know what they think. If the book makes people a little bit uncomfortable, and makes them reassess where they are and what they’re doing and where they see things, that’s good, too.

So what should we do to fight anti-Semitism? I
compare anti-Semitism to that of a great power. For most of the time, we’ve had herpes, it couldn’t be cured. And if you were sud-

denly under stress, boom, up would come a herpes infec-
tion. Anti-Semitism is like her-

pes. When a society is under stress, it appears. I would like see the following things: They won’t cure it, but at least it might help alleviate it.

Don’t see anti-Semitism only on the other side of the political, from which you are located. All these Jews on the left who suddenly, when Trump was running, saw anti-Semitism on the right and got all upset about that. And they weren’t wrong. But they had a patch on.

All those people on the right who are now saying Pittsburgh was a one-off, but we really should be worried about BDS. But if you’re on the right you can have a conversation with those people. If you’re only seeing it on the opposite side of the tran-
saction, you’re instrumentalizing this for political purposes.

I call for civil society. It used to be used to take our lead from government and leadership. We can’t. So it becomes incumbent on civil society to take a role.

A healthy democratic society cannot tolerate anti-Semitism and racism. If that is fostering in its midst, it says something is unhealthy about the society. It’s not just Jews for whom this is dangerous-

ous. This should terrify you. Because if this is happening to Jews, this might start with the Jews but it doesn’t end with the Jews.

YOU CRITICIZE ACTIVISTS WHO

LEAD THE BOYCOTT, DIVESTMENT AND SANCTIONS MOVEMENT, OR BDS, AGAINST ISRAEL. BUT COULD YOU EXPLAIN WHY?

Bibi has done a num-

ber of things. First of all, his embrace of [Hungarian prime minister] Viktor Orbán, who has been parading around the world with a "ray of light" [Ja- 

ekyll and Hyde] on the subject of BDS. Then there was the [Victor] Or-

ban’s criticism of the 

ensuing protests in Budapest in a horrible, 

uncomfortable, and makes you a little bit uncomfortable. Why is that? If I’m not skilled in the middle, they don’t want to hear me.

What I want to do is convince people who already disagree with me,

not in the current political climate this is going to happen. But certainly, there are going to be people who disagree with you.

The thing that really galva-

nized me was when I wrote the book, that I would have a red shirt on.

I called it as I see it. If I were on the side of BDS, I would say, “Listen, this is not how I’m going to make America great.” 

I think there are a lot of Jews who feel like I do. I think there are a lot of Jews who will read half the book and remember half the book, who will be appalled when I’m putting down the right and love it when I’m putting down the left and be appalled when I’m putting down the left and love it when I’m putting down the right.

I’m not out to win a popu-

arity war. The war that I have a voice crying out into the dark. I didn’t write the book to convince people who already know what they think. If the book makes people a little bit uncomfortable, and makes them reassess where they are and what they’re doing and where they see things, that’s good, too.

So what should we do to fight anti-Semitism? I
compare anti-Semitism to that of a great power. For most of the time, we’ve had herpes, it couldn’t be cured. And if you were sud-

denly under stress, boom, up would come a herpes infec-
tion. Anti-Semitism is like her-

pes. When a society is under stress, it appears. I would like see the following things: They won’t cure it, but at least it might help alleviate it.

Don’t see anti-Semitism only on the other side of the political, from which you are located. All these Jews on the left who suddenly, when Trump was running, saw anti-Semitism on the right and got all upset about that. And they weren’t wrong. But they had a patch on.

All those people on the right who are now saying Pittsburgh was a one-off, but we really should be worried about BDS. But if you’re on the right you can have a conversation with those people. If you’re only seeing it on the opposite side of the tran-
saction, you’re instrumentalizing this for political purposes.

I call for civil society. It used to be used to take our lead from government and leadership. We can’t. So it becomes incumbent on civil society to take a role.

A healthy democratic society cannot tolerate anti-Semitism and racism. If that is fostering in its midst, it says something is unhealthy about the society. It’s not just Jews for whom this is dangerous-

ous. This should terrify you. Because if this is happening to Jews, this might start with the Jews but it doesn’t end with the Jews.

WE WERE YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE KNOW

ON A KINDERTRANSPORT DURING WWII?

If so, you may be eligible for a newly negotiated one time compensation payment

On Dec 17, 2018, Julius Berman, President of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany (Claims Conference), announced that as a result of ongoing negotiations between the Claims Conference and the German government, an agreement was reached on the 80th anniversary of the Kindertransport, to provide compensation payments for child survivors of the Kindertransport. The Kindertransport Fund will open January 1, 2019 and begin processing eligible applications.
CULTURE AND ARTS

“Tehillim B’Zug”

Federation-supported Project Zug partnered Berkshire and Israeli artists exploring the Book of Psalms

Over the past year, the Jewish Agency for Israel’s Partnership2Gether program brought together artists from Israel’s Afula/Gilboa region and Connecticut and Massachusetts communities participating in the Southern New England Consortium (SNEC). Seven very creative people from the Berkshires took part in Project Zug – Chaim Bronstein, Jennifer Burt, Regina Karas, Heidi Katz, Jeff Kramer, Francine Licata, and Pamela Wax. We’ve reproduced some of their works, along with those of their Israeli counterparts, with edited excerpts from their joint artists’ statements.

Participating artist Tanya Fredman, whose own artwork was recently on view in Lenox during the summer months, curated an exhibition of the finished projects that appeared in Israel’s first art museum, the Mishkan Museum of Art in Ein Harod, which is located in the Afula/Gilboa region. In her introduction to the show’s catalog, “Tehilim Zug,” Fredman explained how Project Zug brought together artists from diverse backgrounds in trans-Atlantic collaboration.

For more on the Mishkan Museum of Art, visit www.museumeinharod.org.il/en.

By Tanya Fredman

Sefer Tehillim, the Book of Psalms, has been read, prayed, recited, studied, sung and cried again and again throughout time and place. Its words comfort us, challenge us, bring us together and express our deepest sorrows and joys.

Over the past year, nine partnerships (“Zug” in Hebrew) were formed among nine Israelis and nine American artists. They connected across the ocean to delve into the Book of Psalms in “Havruta” partner study and to create artworks based on their learning.

Havruta study is a powerful experience. A deep bond was formed between the valleys and hills of the Afula-Gilboa region of Israel and the Southern New England region of the United States. The artists spoke weekly, using texts and questions provided by the Hadar Institute, and revealed new meanings about the text, about one another, and about themselves.

The art that was born from these discussions is multi-faceted, each piece portraying a different aspect of the Havruta experience and of the Book of Psalms.

Look closely and you will find tears and joy, sound and silence, grief and hope.

We were thrilled to host the first public exhibition of Project Zug at The Mishkan Museum of Art, Ein Harod, as the museum celebrates 80 years of collecting and exhibiting art and of creating connections and conversations.

Every “Zug” in the exhibition is an open conversation, and we hope you will join it.

By Jennifer Burt

Jennifer Burt and Erela Koren (Kfar Yehezkel)

Erela says: “I was born and raised in Kibbutz Maoz Hayim, a descendant of the founders of the kibbutz, which was founded in 1937. In the picture [a photo and computer graphic printed on canvas], a group of pioneers join forces in transforming the wilderness and establishing Kibbutz Maoz Hayim in the Beit Shean Valley, on the Jordanian border, between marshes and mosquitoes and with unbearable heat. This wonderful group of people expresses for me, above all, the concept of “Brothers dwelling together” (Psalm 133:1). The courageous connection between them is reflected not only in the building of the Land of Israel, but also in the cooperative and egalitarian form of life that the kibbutz invented.”

Jennifer says: “The concept of connection inspired my piece, which is based on the Ashrei prayer: ’happy are the people who dwell in your house’ (Psalm 84:5), implying that those praying are part of a household. My [sculptural assemblage] is about opening the confines of the heart, something that is at once fully organic yet safely encased, literally and figuratively. Psalms 145:16 is considered most significant and says, “You open your hand…” there is a Yad, or hand, protruding out of the top of the piece pointing at the viewer.”

By Francine Licata and Judy Spigiel (Kibbutz Megido)

The Book of Psalms is akin to a blueprint of G-D’s nature and the vast range of human emotions, relationships, and experiences. They are universally recognized as a foundation or bedrock upon which to stand face to face with G-D and oneself. Together our work suggests that psalms are “The Place” to lay down all hopes, fears, desires and praises, and from within “HaMakom” all prayers are affirmed, held and sustained. Judy offers a mixed media canvas. Her work relates to the entire Book of Psalms. Her elements portray the psalms as the “cornerstone.” Francine’s assemblage of found objects reflects her search for this foundation and her journey to reach “HaMakom.”

By Erela Koren

By Jennifer Burt

By Francine Licata

By Judy Spigiel

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