

# Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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

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jewishberkshires.org

## Jewish Music's Leading Lights to Headline the Federation's Summer Concert

Josh Nelson and Neshama Carlebach to perform benefit for Victims of Terror Fund on July 31



LENOX – Two of the hottest stars in the contemporary Jewish music scene, Neshama Carlebach and Josh Nelson, will come together at the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' annual benefit concert in a powerful evening of hope, unity, and spirituality. The concert

will take place at 7 p.m. on Sunday, July 31 at the Duffin Theater at Lenox Memorial High School.

This year, all concert proceeds will again benefit the Jewish Agency's Victims of Terror Fund, which continues to play a vital role in meeting the needs of families and individuals injured by senseless acts of violence in Israel.

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### Melding Two Traditions

"The Prince and Princess of Jewish Music Find New Love" is how *The Forward* in 2014 announced the burgeoning romance between Josh Nelson and Neshama Carlebach – big

**SUMMER CONCERT,**  
continued on page 5

## CBI's Rabbi Barenblat Chosen One of the Most Inspiring Rabbis in US

After one year leading ALEPH, she and co-chair Rabbi David Evan Markus reflect on their experiences

NORTH ADAMS – One year after her appointment to the high-profile post of co-chair of ALEPH: Alliance for Jewish Renewal, Rabbi Rachel Barenblat of Congregation Beth Israel has been recognized by *The Forward* as one of its Inspiring Rabbis of 2016.

The spiritual leaders selected are nominated by individuals whose lives they have touched. Shoshanna Schechter-Shaffin wrote this about Rabbi Barenblat, who is also an accomplished poet and blogs as the Velveteen Rabbi: "Rachel's gifts with words have the ability to reach right into the deepest longings of my soul. Whether it be a reflection on a specific Jewish practice or a poem on the changing of the seasons, Rachel always has the right words to make us all think a bit deeper...She inspires me every day."

"It is humbling," says Rabbi Barenblat, "to join such extraordinary company, not only in terms of the other rabbis on this year's list, but those from previous years. What moves me most though is that no one is trying



Rabbi Rachel Barenblat

to say that these are the best rabbis, or the most famous or most impactful, but rather the most inspiring.

"That means we've been fortunate

**RABBI BARENBLAT HONORED,**  
continued on page 12

## "We are on the map!"

And so is the Berkshire Jewish Film Festival, this summer celebrating its 30th anniversary with a typically compelling lineup of Jewish-themed films from around the world



**"אנחנו על המפה, ואנחנו נשארים על המפה!"**

From the festival film *On the Map: Basketball legend Tal Brody, who upon leading Maccabi Tel Aviv to an upset victory against a Soviet team in 1977 famously exclaimed: "We are on the map! And we are staying on the map – not only in sports, but in everything."* The quote, renowned for both its elated expression of Jewish pride and unconventional locution in American-accented Hebrew, is cherished by Israelis. Please see page 27 for the full Berkshire Jewish Film Festival lineup.

## Music, Modern Dance, Merchant, Motion Pictures, and a Museum

Summertime is culture time in the Berkshires, and this year's busy season brings top-notch Jewish artists to the region.

See our expanded Culture and Arts section for stories on some of the Jewish actors, dancers, writers, filmmakers, curators, and other creative types who will be sharing work in the Berkshires this summer.

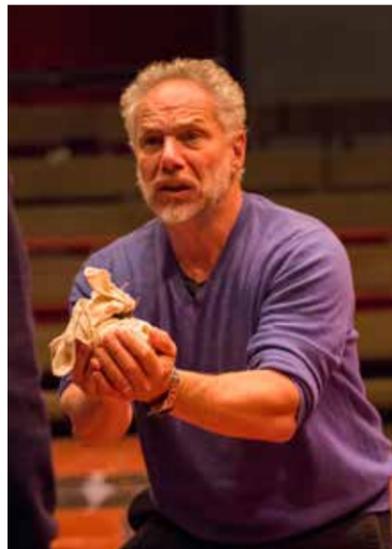


PHOTO: AVA G. LINDENMAIER

Above left, Jonathan Epstein rehearses the role of Shylock for Shakespeare & Company's *The Merchant of Venice*. Trumpeter Frank London, above right, brings his band *The Klezmatiks* to the Yiddish Book Center for *Yidstock* in mid-July. For stories on these performers and much more, please turn to page 24.

## In My View

### Creating the Jewish Community We Want to Live In

#### Incoming Federation President Shares Her Berkshires Jewish Journey

By Judy Usow



When I called my parents to tell them that my husband found a job in the Berkshires and we were thinking of moving from New York City to Massachusetts with our 2 year old daughter, their first question was "Are there any Jews there?" They worried we were leaving a large, vibrant Jewish community to raise our daughter in a small, rural town with little or no Jewish life. Without giving it too much thought, I assured them that some of our Jewish friends' families had homes in the Berkshires. But after I hung up the phone, I realized I really knew nothing about the Berkshire Jewish Community.

Looking back, I should have called the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires to inquire, but instead I called our realtor (who wasn't Jewish), who assured me his kids went to a Jewish preschool and there was a Jewish day school in Pittsfield. I also learned about a few of the synagogues in the area. That seemed enough at the time.

When we came to the Berkshires in July 2000, a few extraordinarily generous people steered us toward Congregation Knesset Israel and its preschool, and then to Sinai Academy. I had never lived in a small town but immediately recognized a difference in this community. In New York, I had to search for the appropriate classes or play groups. There were so many resources to choose from. In the Berkshires, it required a bit more work, but everyone we met was incredibly helpful. We were introduced to families with young children, included in playgroups, and invited to people's homes for the holidays and Shabbat. We felt more a part of this little Jewish community than we had ever felt in New York.

We were busy raising our growing family, and I have to admit it took me some time to recognize the importance of our Jewish Federation. I'm embarrassed to share that when I received my first Super Sunday call inviting me to support the Federation's efforts on behalf of the community, I responded "I'll check with my husband and we'll send in our donation," knowing full well I had the authority to commit a reasonable amount without any consultation.

I knew the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires provided programs and financial support to the community, but my interest and awareness came a few years later when my children were students at Sinai Academy of the Berkshires. I was asked to substitute for the regular representative at the Federation's Allocations Committee. I went to the meeting prepared to defend Sinai Academy's interests within the broader Jewish community, ready to express why a Jewish day school is of vital importance to the Berkshires, and why the Federation should commit community resources to support it.

I sat and listened for most of that meeting, and learned that evening how vital our Jewish Federation is to this community. I listened to congregants speaking on behalf of their religious schools. I heard from people in the community appealing to the committee on behalf of life saving programs in Israel and around the world. I learned that we funded a kosher lunch program, similar to one my grandmother

attended in Cleveland after my grandfather passed away. I learned we gave money to the UMass Hillel. Most of all, I discovered that the Federation placed the highest priority on supporting Jewish youth education and Jewish camping.

I didn't need to defend Sinai's importance in our Jewish community. The people around that table already knew what it took to create a vibrant, caring, and supportive Jewish community for my family and for so many others. That's when I took notice.

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires had been helping and supporting my family's Jewish journey since the day we had arrived. I felt the same openness and generosity we had experienced earlier, but on a much larger scale and I was deeply grateful. Committee members weren't fighting over money or discussing the amount a person contributed to the campaign. Instead, they were focused on working together to find the best way to care for those in need, engage the next generation and inspire a love of Jewish life and culture. They were committed to helping my family and so many others live meaningful Jewish lives.

The next year I joined the Federation's Board of Directors and became a member of the Allocations Committee. I have since served on the Executive Committee as a vice president and as a treasurer, as well as serving on the Scholarship Committee and the Finance Committee.

This past year I attended my first General Assembly, a gathering of 3000 people representing 450 Jewish communities from across North America. The opportunity to see how our small community fit into the larger picture of saving lives and transforming Jewish life in Israel and around the world was truly inspiring and energizing. What we do matters and truly makes a difference in the lives of others.

I am very proud to be part of the Berkshire Jewish community and hope that I can inspire younger community members to step up into leadership roles. We must all take an active role in creating the Jewish community we want to live in, to raise our children in, retire in, and grow old in.

When I look at my two daughters, I see the proud Jewish women that they are becoming. They are giving and caring. Their identity, values, and sense of justice are deeply rooted in their Jewish heritage. I know that the support of this community, through Federation, has helped shape who they are today. We must never forget that we are all impacted by Federation. We should be grateful for the many opportunities provided to us and above all we should support this community effort with our time, our resources, and our hearts.

I appreciate and welcome the responsibility that comes with being president of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. I look forward to hearing from each of you on what makes our community so special to you and how we can continue to work together to create the future we want for ourselves and Jews everywhere. It is a privilege and an honor to serve this community, and I thank you for this opportunity.

*Judy Usow, a resident of Lenox, is the incoming president of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.*

## Letters to the Editor

### Jerusalem Seniors Supported by You

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires:

We at Yad LaKashish gratefully acknowledge receipt of your 2016 grant. We are so grateful the committee decided to fulfill our request.

As you know, this year's grant will go towards our bus pass program and will provide 100 bus passes for our elderly. This program, in addition to providing a way for the elderly to attend Yad LaKashish, also goes a long way towards promoting independence and battling social isolation among the low income elderly we serve.

We value our ongoing relationship with the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and we look forward to continuing our partnership in the future. None of our work would be possible without the continued support of our friends around the world, and we are so grateful for your help.

We look forward to hosting you here at Yad LaKashish and showing you our program in action. Thank you again.

Best wishes,  
Nava Ein-Mor  
Executive Director

*Yad LaKashish is a non-profit organization that empowers and supports nearly 300 elderly Jerusalem residents on a daily basis by providing them with creative work opportunities in artistic workshops.*



*Craft room at Yad LaKashish*

### A Home with a Heart Thanks a Community with a Heart

Dear Wonderful Federation Friends:

On behalf of all of the boys and girls at Neve Michael Children's Village ("A Home with a Heart"), thank you so much for your special donation. I am so happy that you continue to love and care about our children. You must come and visit. You will be so proud of Israel – for the way that this country takes care of the child at risk and makes such an effort to give each and every child the life that they deserve to have.

Before Passover, new children came to us via the courts. Two little sisters had to be taken out of their home because of serious physical abuse. One sweet little boy came to us due to extreme neglect. And we have lovely young girl who is still struggling with what her stepfather did to her mother in front of her.

What do these kids need? A chance. Your gift is enabling us to give them a golden opportunity – many will succeed because of you.

I hope one day to come and visit and thank all of you personally for continually helping the kids at Neve Michael.

With love and lots of appreciation,  
Hava Levene  
Development Director

*Neve Michael Children's Village in Pardes Hanna is the only multidisciplinary children's home in Israel, providing refuge and a loving home for over 250 children and youth at risk.*



**MORE LETTERS** on next page

### DEADLINES

The next *Berkshire Jewish Voice* (Vol. 24, No. 6) will cover the period August 5, 2016 through September 18, 2016. The following edition (Vol. 24, No. 7) covers September 19, 2016 through October 31, 2016. **The deadline for press releases and other written submissions, all of which are subject to being edited, is August 22, 2016. Because of limitations of space and time, please be so kind as to not submit lengthy articles without first contacting the editor. Advertising deadline is August 31, 2016.** For a complete *Berkshire Jewish Voice* schedule, contact (413) 442-4360, ext. 11, or e-mail [jfb.berkshirevoice@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.berkshirevoice@verizon.net).

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

## Rabbi Reflections

### There Ain't No Cure for the Tisha b'Av Blues

By Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch



Each year, as we approach the summertime, I sense a struggle: Observe or don't observe Tisha b'Av? That is the question.

Tisha b'Av, the 9th day of the month of Av, is the traditional commemoration of the destruction of the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. Understood as the saddest day in Jewish history, the tradition instructs us to refrain from the most pleasurable activities from the beginning of the month. The day of Tisha b'Av is a full fast day, as well. As on Yom Kippur, we are to refrain from food, drink, bathing, leather, perfume, and sexual relations. Many of us will gather in our congregations across the Berkshires to hold services, in which we will publicly read the Book of Lamentations, a biblical dirge written after the destruction of the First Temple. Many will observe the custom of

sitting on the floor for the service, as though they were mourners.

Many within the Reform Movement, among the other liberal movements of our people, do not observe the holiday. We have not emphasized the destruction of the Temples as part of our Jewish lives. As Rabbi Mark Washofsky writes in *Jewish Living*, "Reform theology has not generally looked upon the loss of the Temple and the expulsion of the people of Israel from its land as a catastrophe to be lamented by liberal Jews." Rabbi Washofsky cites the 1885 initial platform drafted in by the Central Conference of American Rabbis, in which they announced, "We consider ourselves no longer a nation, but a religious community, and, therefore, expect neither a return to Palestine, nor a sacrificial worship under the sons of Aaron." In fact, it was because of this view that many Reform synagogues were named Temple. It was a statement that these houses of worship would be our permanent spiritual homes. In that way, we moved away from a longing to reestablish the Temple in Jerusalem.

The Reform Movement continues to evolve. Reform is a verb, after all. While we

have returned to educate much of what our tradition has to teach, as a matter of policy, the movement has not actively encouraged an observance of Tisha b'Av for 130 years now. But the Temples and their subsequent destructions were historical realities. Some have noted the positive outcomes of observing the holiday. It allows us the opportunity to give voice to our sadness to other tragedies we have shared that are more recent in memory. To wipe Tisha b'Av from our historic collective consciousness leaves a hole in our understanding of the Jewish narrative. Yet so does an overemphasis of our suffering.

In 1982, Rabbi David Hartman z"l published an article titled "Auschwitz or Sinai?" There he notes the fundamental difference between yearning for our people's future, and maintaining judiciousness because of our history of suffering and tragedy. Instead of focusing on the lachrymose narrative, he looks to the power of renewal, writing, "The belief in the power of renewal is a central motif in Judaism. Such concepts as psychological determinism, historical inevitability and fatalism are alien to our tradition's understanding of human action. Belief in radical freedom, in an open future, in surprise and novelty is crucial element of Judaism's vitality and perseverance."

Tisha b'Av is the saddest day on our calendar, calling us to remember what it means to mourn the loss of our spiritual home in Jerusalem. Yet, we need to be clear about the meaning of our observance of Tisha b'Av. We mourn in order to hope. We are sad so that we can work toward a fuller life for ourselves and our people. If we are to believe in Hartman's power of renewal, we must mourn with the hope that renewal is possible – not renewal embodied in the actual form of the Messiah, but renewal by striving for that ideal world.

Each Reform congregation today determines how it will observe Tisha b'Av. In our remembering our history, I would suggest, it is a call to continue the sacred task of striving for a more perfect future for our people, our broader community, for our world.

*Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch is one of the spiritual leaders at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire. He marks his one year anniversary in the Berkshires this July.*

## Letters to the Editor, continued

### Group Formed to Record Sandisfield's Jewish History

To the Editor:

I'm writing to let you know about a project starting in Sandisfield, namely a proper history of the Jewish community here between the late 1800s and late 1900s. This is something that is long overdue and that I have wanted to tackle for some time. I was not sure how to go about it, but your recent visit and the farming articles in the April/May BJV were just the catalysts and inspiration needed to form a committee to get going.

The group consists mostly of descendants of eastern European Jewish families that settled here, and includes amateur historians, researchers, and writers with an interest in this topic. With a working title of "A Century of Jewish Life in Sandisfield," the book is expected to run about 250 pages and to be published by early 2018. Lorraine German, whose mother-in-law Sylvia (Linder) German lived in Sandisfield and kept diaries about life there, will be the principal author. Members of the committee are myself, Nina Dryansky Carr, Cindy Pinsky-Jennings, Sandy and Flora Parisky, Lorraine and Steve German, Charlotte Westhead, and Joanne Lazarowitz Olson.

The overall story will be covered

in chapters about cultural assimilation, the chicken farms, the summer resorts, religious and social life, and the role of the marvelous synagogue and Rabbi Cohen. There will be individual chapters for as many families as possible, and we are hoping to hear from members of the community with memories, memorabilia, genealogies, photographs, and news stories of Jewish families from Sandisfield.

Please visit [www.sandisfieldtimes.org](http://www.sandisfieldtimes.org) and access the April 2016 issue on the Library tab for a partial list of Jewish surnames of Sandisfield and more information about this undertaking. You can also contact me at [Ronbernard@aol.com](mailto:Ronbernard@aol.com) or at (413) 269-0012.

Sincerely,  
Ronald Bernard  
Sandisfield

*Ronald M. Bernard is the author of Sandisfield Then and Now: 1762-2012, which was published in commemoration of the town's 250th anniversary in 2012.*

### Destined to Go Far in Life, Scholarship Recipients Will Stay in the Berkshires for Now

Dear Jewish Federation Scholarship Committee,

I want to thank you so much for the \$500 college scholarship. I've been fortunate to be raised with a strong Jewish identity through Sinai Academy, Congregation Knesset Israel, the Berkshire Jewish community, and my supportive family. This award will help us with college expenses, and it means a lot to me to be recognized for my hard work and involvement.

Sincerely,  
Emma Lezberg  
Williams College Class of 2020

Dear members of the Jewish Federation Scholarship Committee,

I am very grateful that you chose to award me a college scholarship. I am looking forward to attending Williams College in the fall and this money will help offset the significant cost. I appreciate all of the support I have received from the Jewish community in my life, and I plan on being active in my Hillel and college campus.

Thank you,  
Jacob Lezberg  
Williams College Class of 2020

## Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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

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Some members of the Sandisfield book committee: Ron Bernard, Nina Carr, Cindy Jennings, Sandy and Flora Parisky, and Lorraine and Steve German.

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## Your Federation Presents

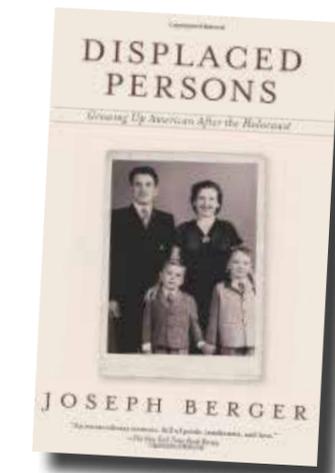
### “Displaced Persons: Holocaust Survivors and the Paradoxical Lives They Built in America”

Author Joseph Berger to talk about the American lives of Holocaust survivors at Knosh & Knowledge, August 12

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, August 12, Knosh & Knowledge will host Joseph Berger, author and veteran New York Times reporter, who will reflect on the little-known story of the new lives 140,000 Holocaust survivors and their children built in America. Berger is the author of *Displaced Persons: Growing Up American After the Holocaust*, which was published by Scribner in April 2001 and is a memoir about his family's experience as refugees in New York in the 1950s and 1960s.

This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will take place at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire at 10:45 a.m., and will be followed by lunch.

Berger was born in Russia in 1945, spent the postwar years in displaced person camps in Germany and, after immigrating to the US, grew up in Manhattan and the Bronx. Writes Berger: “Like many immigrants and children of immigrants, Holocaust survivors’ children lived in two worlds at the same time. On the one hand, there was this thrillingly rich American turf to explore. On the other hand, they could never forget what it was like to feel intractably rooted in another, incompatible world of refugee parents who cannot speak English, a world of people dazed from unimaginable loss, and whose loneliness was unrelenting. Yet the children came to terms with the paradox and ultimately



Joseph Berger

paid homage to their parents’ extraordinary courage, luck, and hard work.”

Berger was a reporter, editor, and columnist with the New York Times from 1984 to 2015. Drawing on his own experience as an immigrant, Berger spent three years as a roving correspondent to New York neighborhoods, writing feature articles about the ethnic and cultural richness of the city that became the core of two books, *The World in a City* and *The Pious Ones*. Most recently, he chronicled the building of a new Tappan Zee Bridge, the first major bridge built in the New York area in half a century, in an occasional Times series.

*Displaced Persons: Growing Up American After the Holocaust* was chosen as a notable book of the year by the New

York Times, which called it “an extraordinary memoir,” and was praised by Elie Wiesel as a “powerful and sweetly melancholic memoir, brilliantly written.”

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

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

**Date:** Friday, August 12, at 10:45 a.m. (lunch follows at noon)

**Advance lunch reservations required for this event.**

**Email** [jfb.officemanager@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.officemanager@verizon.net), or call (413) 442-4360, ext. 10

**Cost:** \$11 with fresh buffet lunch. Program only, \$5.

### Proposals Sought for Grant Funds

The Jewish Women's Foundation of Berkshire County, an associate of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, is soliciting grant proposals for projects or programs aimed at “fulfilling unmet needs in the Berkshire community.”

Both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations are encouraged to apply for grants up to \$3,500.

All proposals must be submitted by August 4, 2016 via an online grant application, a link to which can be found at [www.jewishberkshires.org](http://www.jewishberkshires.org). No paper applications will be accepted.

Final decisions will be announced in late September or early October.

Questions should be directed to Phyllis Cohen, Grant Committee chair, at [phyllis111cohen@gmail.com](mailto:phyllis111cohen@gmail.com).

In the spirit of *tikkun olam*, the Jewish Women's Foundation of Berkshire County is dedicated to sharing Jewish values by meeting unmet needs in the community and supporting social action.

Foundation members contribute a minimum of \$500 to the Foundation each year and are offered the opportunity to serve on an advisory committee that decides how the funds are distributed.

### Connecting With Community Series / Kosher Hot Lunch

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

For further information on all programs, please call Nancy Maurice Rogers, program director, at (413) 442-4360, ext. 15. For lunch menus, please see page 20.

### “New Beginnings at Jacob’s Pillow,” August 1

On Monday, August 1, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host Norton Owen, who has been associated with the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival for four decades. He will speak about the festival's history and its future direction in a talk titled “New Beginnings at Jacob's Pillow.” This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

As a Berkshire landmark for more than 80 years, Jacob's Pillow can boast of a historical dance legacy second to none. Longtime Director of Preservation Norton Owen asserts that it also prides itself on a tradition for new beginnings, from its pioneering days as the summer home for Ted Shawn and His Men Dancers to its current status at the forefront of presenting major dance artists from throughout the world. As the Pillow launches its 84th season with a new director at the helm, Owen will trace the Festival's history of innovation and offer a taste of what might be expected in the future, drawing upon some of the rich imagery found in the Jacob's Pillow Archives.

Norton Owen has been



Norton Owen

associated with Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival since 1976 and has been Director of Preservation since 1990, overseeing the PillowTalks series and projects involving documentation, exhibitions, audience engagement, and archival issues. He is the curator of Jacob's Pillow Dance Interactive, an acclaimed online video resource that reaches audiences worldwide. In 2000, Dance/USA selected him for its Ernie Award, honoring “unsung heroes who have led exemplary lives in dance.” He has also received awards from the Dance Films Association and the José Limón Dance Foundation, and he is a past chair of the Dance Heritage Coalition.

In 2015, the new Norton Owen Reading Room in Blake's Barn was dedicated, honoring Owen for his career at Jacob's Pillow.

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, August 1, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 20).

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

You may request that the *Berkshire Jewish Voice* be mailed to your home.

Just email us at [jfb.berkshirevoice@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.berkshirevoice@verizon.net) for information.

## Your Federation Presents

### SUMMER CONCERT, *continued from page 1*



Neshama Carlebach and Josh Nelson

news indeed to fans of Jewish music. Both were ending marriages, and became close while recording music for an album of Debbie Friedman's songs. "Josh and I have similar stories," says Carlebach, "but different backgrounds." Their personal relationship has continued, and their musical partnership continues to deepen. Nelson is a protégé of Debbie Friedman, who released 22 albums of contemporary Jewish music encompassing liturgical and popular melodies and themes. Her influence on Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, and Renewal liturgy was transformative, with her songs now incorporated into many holiday prayer books and services. Her well-known version of "Mi She'berach," the prayer for healing, is used by hundreds of congregations each week.

Carlebach is the daughter of Orthodox rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, the most famous singer-songwriter of Jewish music of the 20th century. She performed with him only once, as a teenager, before his untimely death in 1994, and has developed a formidable career of her own, having released seven albums and received a Grammy nomination. She has dedicated herself to preserving her father's legacy, but also works ecumenically within traditions outside Jewish music – for example, when she last performed in the Berkshires in 2014, she collaborated with Rev. Milton Vann and the Glory to God Singers.

Carlebach and Nelson will perform as a duo at the Federation concert, exploring

styles that she describes as "musically different, but that share a certain 'hamishness' that is infused in both." Both her father and Friedman wrote songs that "when you first hear them, feel like you've heard them before, and that you leave knowing that you will sing them again later."

Given the way that the tunes from both the Carlebach and Friedman songbooks have insinuated themselves into Jewish life and liturgy, most listeners are likely to have first experienced them not in recordings or at concerts, but as songs they learned to sing themselves as part of their Jewish lives within their Jewish communities. Carlebach says that gives her and Nelson, as performers, a unique connection to their audience. "When we do a concert," she explains, "immediately it's like we are all family, sharing music that already binds all of us in the room together. It is in all of our heartbeats, a music that takes us back and also moves us forward to a place of holiness. This is not music simply for the sake of singing – it is music for the sake of healing."

Carlebach says to expect moments of both "stillness and joy" that will leave the audience uplifted.

#### Fund for Victims of Terror

This year, the people of Israel have suffered horrifying random acts of terrorism. People have been murdered by open gun fire; others have been mowed down as they wait for a bus. Men, women, and

children have been randomly stabbed.

Unfortunately, the suffering of the victims of such terror does not end when the details of the attack are no longer in the news. Physical, emotional, economic, and psychological rehabilitation is a long and tedious process. The Fund for Victims of Terror plays a vital role in meeting the needs of families and individuals injured by war and other acts of violence against Israel.

Founded in 2002, the Fund has provided financial assistance to thousands of victims of terror and related disasters. Assistance through the Fund is fully coordinated with the government of Israel to avoid duplication of service.

#### IF YOU GO

Tickets for this concert may be ordered in advance, and are priced at \$25, with \$20 tickets available for young adults under the age of 30. Children under 10 will be admitted free of charge. Please inquire about the variety of underwriting opportunities also being offered.

For more information, please call the Federation at (413) 442-4360, ext. 10.

All tickets will be held at the door. The Duffin Theater is located at Lenox Memorial High School, 197 East Street in Lenox.

## Puzzles and Solutions in Science and Torah, July 18

On Monday, July 18, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will present "Puzzles and Solutions in Science and Torah," a talk by Dr. Jon Greenberg that will explore the relationship between science and scripture. This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

This illustrated lecture will highlight several examples of apparent conflicts between science and Torah that have arisen over the years, and

## The Practical Power of Gratitude ... To Make Life a Little Easier!

On Thursday, July 21, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host "motivational entertainer" Jerry Posner, who will deliver a spirited talk he's calling "The Practical Power of Gratitude." This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, MA, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

"Clearly, life can be difficult and challenging," says Posner. "Modern science suggests that a little extra focus on 'the good stuff' can have significant positive results over time." Attendees will learn how intentional gratitude practices (which Posner has named "grati-tools") can have a multitude of positive results, including increased happiness, decreased stress, improved relationships, and a more positive perspective. According to Posner, "For a very small daily investment of time, the returns in well-being and balance can be almost miraculous. And for many, absolutely miraculous!"

Jerry Posner is a creative, dynamic speaker and training specialist. Since 1993, he has inspired tens of thousands of people who aspire to positive change in the workplace... and in life. In the early 1990s, he



Positive guy Jerry Posner

founded and published "The Positive Times" magazine and hosted a weekly radio show, "Positive Radio." His books include, *Attention Late Bloomers: You're Right On Time!* and *Eternal Cosmic Wisdom at Bargain Basement Prices*. Jerry, his wife Lynne, and their canine companions make their home in the Berkshires.

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, July 21, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 20).

## Wendy Wasserstein and The World Of Her Women (And Some Men), August 4

On Thursday, August 4, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presents Diane G. Steinbrink for a talk/performance titled "Wendy Wasserstein and The World Of Her Women (And Some Men)." This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

In this program, Steinbrink will discuss the uncommon family life, education, and works of Wendy Wasserstein, one of the most influential contemporary Jewish American playwrights. She will read monologues from some of her most famous plays, *The Heidi Chronicles*, *The Sisters Rosensweig*, *American Daughter*, and *Third*, her last play. Her first and only novel, *Elements of Style*, which was published post-

humously, will also be discussed. Audience discussion will be welcomed.

Diane G. Steinbrink is a graduate of Adelphi University with a BA in Speech and Drama. She served as the coordinator of Philadelphia Plays for Living for 17 years. She was the producer/facilitator of the Anne Frank Theater Project for Jewish Family and Children's Service of Philadelphia.

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, August 4, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 20).

show how many of them have been resolved without compromising scientific or religious integrity. Examples include the identity of the Biblical "fruit of a beautiful tree" used on Sukkot; the classification of living things; the structure of the solar system; the tree that Noah used to build his "gopher wood" ark; the source of the huge lumber used to build the Tabernacle; the supposed medical basis of leaning to the left on Passover; and some strange Talmudic food customs and Biblical metaphors related to olive trees. Through these examples, science and Torah emerge as two different, but mutually enriching perspectives on the world.

Dr. Jon Greenberg received his doctorate in agronomy from Cornell University. He has also studied with Rabbi Chaim Brovender at Israel's Yeshivat Hamivtar and conducted research on corn, alfalfa, and soybeans at Cornell, the US Department of Agriculture, and the University of Pennsylvania's Institute for Cancer Research. Since 1989, he has been a science teacher and educational consultant. Dr. Greenberg was senior editor of science textbooks at Prentice Hall Publishing Co. Previously on the faculty of Yeshivas Ohr Yosef, the School of Education at Indiana University, and the University of



Dr. Jon Greenberg

Phoenix, he has taught at the Heschel School since 2008. He is a frequent speaker at synagogues, schools, and botanical gardens.

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, July 18, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 20).

## Your Federation Presents

### “Tales Of a Judaic Artist: Weavings, Wanderings, and Wonder,” July 14

On Thursday, July 14, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosts nationally known and locally based artist, Wendy A. Rabinowitz, who will talk about her work and Jewish journey in “Tales Of a Judaic Artist: Weavings, Wanderings, and Wonder.” This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

Descended from a line of Sephardic rabbis from Cordoba, Spain and weavers from Bielsk, Poland, Rabinowitz was raised on the South Side of Chicago. She works out of her light-filled LIVING THREADS JUDAICA studio in the Berkshires, creating one-of-a-kind multilayered, textured, and colorful artworks for beauty, rituals, celebrations, and the soul. Rabinowitz will share her experiences to becoming a “ba'al teshuvah,” returning to her Judaism through the gateway of creativity and art-making. In addition to Ms. Rabinowitz’s Artist’s Talk, she will be exhibiting and discussing her weaving/mixed-media assemblage artworks based on Jewish themes of peace, healing, the Earth, Jewish women in the Torah, and the Jewish mystical tradition.

Rabinowitz’s very successful one-woman exhibit, “YAH! OHR: Let There Be Light” was on view last summer at The Welles Gallery of the Lenox Library. Her artwork has also been included in numerous individual collections, and in solo and group exhibits throughout the United States and Israel. She is also a workshop leader on the themes of the power of Jewish art and the creative process. She is an active member of Women of Spirit, The Jewish Arts Salon (NYC), Jewish Caucus for Women in the Arts, Temple Anshe Amunim, and RIMON.



Wendy Rabinowitz

She is married to Jeffrey Borak, Arts and Entertainment editor of the Berkshire Eagle. Her website is at [www.LivingThreadsJudaica.com](http://www.LivingThreadsJudaica.com).

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

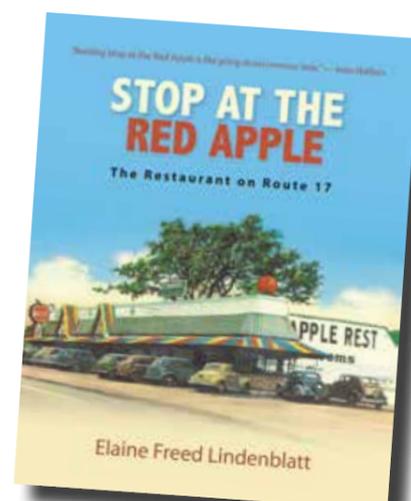
**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, July 14, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 20).

### Remember the Red Apple Rest on Route 17? Memory Lane awaits on July 11

On Monday, July 11, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires takes a trip down memory lane with Elaine Freed Lindenblatt, the youngest daughter of Reuben Freed, a Russian immigrant who turned his remote roadside stop between New York City and the Catskill Mountains into the celebrated Red Apple Rest. She’ll talk about her book *Stop at the Red Apple*. This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

*Stop at the Red Apple* details Ruben Freed’s 50-year run with Red Apple Rest, which annually served over a million patrons on their way to and from the city. The author will talk about the restaurant’s shaky beginnings during the Great Depression, its unlikely proprietor, and the colorful and bumpy trip through the decades. “It is an only-in-America success story of a man, a family, and a business that could be told only by someone who lived it,” says Elaine Freed Lindenblatt. “And I did!” Upon its publication in 2014, the book received extensive press coverage, including the New York Times, Jewish Week, Newsday,



Washington Post, 92 Street Y, Bergen-Rockland Jewish Standard, Tablet Magazine, Museum of Jewish Heritage, Yiddish Book Center (podcast), and many regional outlets.

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, July 11, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 20).

## Major Donors' Breakfast

Sunday, July 10, 2016  
9:30 am

Cranwell Resort, Spa & Golf Club  
55 Lee Road, Lenox, MA

Lauren Spitz, Event Chair

#### Host Committee

Helene Berger, Mimi and Saul Cohen, Terry and Mel Drucker, Lynn and Bill Foggle, Jill and Hal Gaffin, Bonita and Harvey Ganot, Joan and Paul Gluck, Miriam and Ron Hinds, Shirley and Bill Lehman, Nancy and Norman Lipoff, Ellen and Stuart Masters, Joan and Michael Ury



Featuring Vanessa Hidary  
The Hebrew Mamita

Couvert: \$30 per person

Minimum contribution of \$1,000  
to the Federation’s 2016 annual campaign.



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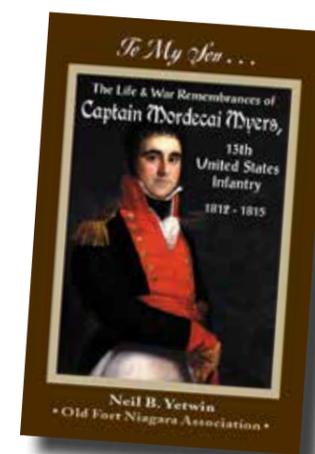
### Jewish American History – “Major Mordecai Myers: An American-Jewish Hero of the War of 1812,” July 28

On Thursday, July 28, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host Neil B. Yetwin, a historian and lecturer who will talk about the life and career of “Major Mordecai Myers: An American-Jewish Hero of the War of 1812.” This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

Major Mordecai Myers (1776-1871) led one of the most unusual, significant, and long (nearly 96 years) lives in American-Jewish history. Born in 1776 to poor Hungarian-Austrian refugees, Myers spent his youth in Newport, New York City, and the wilderness of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, Canada. After winning and losing two fortunes as an auctioneer and broker in New York City, he fought in the War of 1812 as the sole Jewish officer on the Niagara and St. Lawrence frontiers; entered politics and served as the first Jew in the New York State Legislature; and went on to become the first (and to date)

the only Jewish mayor of both Kinderhook and Schenectady. A prominent Freemason who became the Grand Master of the Grand Lodge of the State of New York, Myers was also the great-great-grandfather of the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet, Robert Lowell. Myers’ life was truly an incredible life of historical “firsts” – this presentation will describe how it all happened.

Neil B. Yetwin taught history, English and psychology for 36 years. He has published nearly 100 articles in a variety of journals and newspapers, including Yankee Magazine. Yetwin was the 1989 recipient of the Louis B. Yavner Award of the New York State Regents for Excellence in Teaching the Holocaust and Civil Rights, and in 2005 was named “Outstanding Citizen of Schenectady” by the Schenectady City Council for his research and presentations about local history. He was also the 2011 recipient of the “Preservation of History Award” for his contributions to the African-American Burial Ground Project at



Schenectady Vale Cemetery. In 2013, he published the book, “To My Son...”: *The Life and War Remembrances of Captain Mordecai Myers, 13th United States Infantry, 1812-1815*.

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, July 28, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 20).

# Your Federation Presents

## “Aging: A Lifelong Process” – An Intergenerational Discussion and Support Group, July 25

On Monday, July 25, at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presents “Aging: A Lifelong Process,” with therapist Maggie Bittman. This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

Explaining her outlook and approach, Bittman writes: “From birth, we begin to age with Time. Along the way, we develop strategies to help manage the stressors that come with living life – those ‘existence pains’ or ‘existential stressors.’ Along the way we find meaning and purpose, experience aloneness, confront mortality, and develop self will.

“Within this context, participants will discuss, share, and offer support to one another.”

Topics for discussion change from month to month and are open to suggestion



Maggie Bittman

based on the group’s preferences.

### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, July 25, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 20).

## Victor Borge, by One of the People Who Knew Him Best, July 7

On Thursday, July 7, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Frederikke Borge, daughter of acclaimed pianist and comedian Victor Borge. She’ll reminisce about her famous father, and screen some rare and entertaining footage. This free program at Congregation Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

“I hope to give an insight into the private and public life of my late father, Victor Borge,” says Frederikke. “It is my honor and privilege to share his story with as many people as I can. It is an inspiring tale.” Born Borge Rosenbaum, the entertainer was born in Denmark and came to the United States in 1940 as a refugee from Europe not knowing English and with only \$20 in his pocket. He adapted his routines for American audiences, and became one of the most popular radio, television, and concert performers from the late 1940s onward. He continued to tour until his last days, performing up to 60 times per year when he was 90 years old.

Frederikke Borge is the youngest of the five children of Victor Borge and his wife Sanna. She enjoyed a wonderful childhood, beautiful homes, and no end of people who were glad to see her (father). She spent school vacations traveling on tour, selling programs at Borge shows all over the US and Europe. Apart from being the daughter of a world famous music and comedy icon, she has been an actress, horse trainer, dog rescuer, friend, sister, mother, and grandmother. Rikke lives with her daughter Hanne, and granddaughter Jazmine in Southern Berkshire County, where she has been a resident for over 40 years.



Frederikke Borge and her father Victor in a still from a film made for the Danish Tourist Bureau

### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community

**Venue:** Congregation Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, July 7, at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 20).

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



## SAVE THE DATE

### Wednesday, August 24

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Maimonides Society Meeting

Guest Speaker

### Edwin Kolodny, MD

Tales from Gaucher Disease: Lessons in culture, biotechnology and humanitarian assistance

7:30 pm

Location to be announced

Dr. Stuart Masters MD, Chair

Open to all Jewish healthcare professionals

For more information, please contact Margo Golos, [jfb.developmentofficer@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.developmentofficer@verizon.net), (413) 442-4360, ext. 19



**Jewish Federation**  
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## IS PEACE POSSIBLE?

Israelis & Palestinians: A New Paradigm



**DAVID MAKOVSKY**  
Ziegler Distinguished Fellow, Director of the Project on the Middle East Peace Process at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy



**GHAITH AL-OMARI**  
Former executive director of the American Task Force on Palestine. Senior Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy

## SAVE THE DATE

### Sunday, September 18

### 7:30 pm

Tina Packer Playhouse, Shakespeare & Company  
70 Kemble Street, Lenox, MA

**Program is free & open to the public**

# Your Federation Presents

## At its Annual Meeting, Federation Celebrates a Year of Success

Outgoing president and four special Jewish students receive accolades

LENOX – On the bright and temperate evening of June 16, more than 175 community members attended the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' 76th annual meeting at the Seven Hills Inn. Innkeepers Robin Gerson Wong and Denis Wong graciously hosted this event for the third straight year.

Opening the meeting with a *d'var Torah*, Rabbi Joshua Breindel spoke movingly about recent terrorist attack in Orlando, and interfaith vigils in the Berkshires held to mark the shocking event. He summed up with a message of unity reflecting the mission of goodwill and support for those in peril undertaken by the Federation movement and its partners.

### President's Message

Outgoing president Amy Lindner-Lesser reviewed the many successes of her two-and-a-half year stint at the Federation's helm. She cited Federation's efforts to build community among young people and their families through sponsorship of religious school subsidies, camp and Israel scholarships, museum trips, and family outings. She also showed how the organization additionally supported local Jewish youth by addressing incidences of anti-Semitism in the schools, working with the ADL to provide educational programs.

Lindner-Lesser also talked about the many changes that occurred during her stewardship – new staff, enhanced Web and social media platforms, and strengthened commitment from the board of directors, major donors, and affiliate organizations.

Finally, she recounted her role in visiting the Afula-Gilboa region and paving the way for our Federation's connecting with that part of Israel by joining the Southern New England Consortium (SNEC). She also introduced her successor, Judy Usow, as president.

At the meeting, the Federation installed Usow and the new executive committee – vice presidents Jennifer Sacon and Judith Cook, Michael Ury as treasurer, Ellen Heffan as secretary, and Amy Lindner-Lesser as past president. Kathy Fraker joins the board of directors, while Joel Colker, Sheila Donath, Gail Orenstein, and Alba Passarini were renewed for new terms.

### Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Dara Kaufman took the podium to deliver the annual report. "With your support and spurred on by a generous matching grant," she told the gathered, "we achieved a 6% growth in our 2015



Outgoing president Amy Lindner-Lesser and scholarship chair Judy Cook flank scholarship winners Jacob Lezberg, Catherine May, Emma Lezberg, and Shayna Sawyer.

campaign, which exceeded \$787,000 – our highest level ever. Together, we delivered over 100 educational, cultural, and holiday programs bringing thousands of community members together in Jewish learning and celebration.

"This increased funding has allowed us to increase programming, utilize more community-based venues, expand opportunities for our young people, and significantly increase our support of humanitarian and social service programs for the most fragile Jews in need around the world...especially for children and the elderly."

### Guest Speaker

The evening's guest speaker, Rebecca Neuwirth, represented one of Federation's global partners, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC). As the organization's director of Strategic Engagement, Neuwirth has the pulse of the latest developments in Europe, and shared details about the JDC's immediate and long-term development goals for the Jewish communities there. She talked about how the JDC's post-Iron Curtain youth initiatives – instilling "a Judaism based on the ethic of caring" – have paid off with an engaged

generation of young Jewish activists working within their own countries. "They are showing Europe what a caring community is and what it can accomplish. They are not giving up."

### Scholarship Winners

Judith Cook, the Federation's scholarship chair, introduced the recipients of the Henry Simkin and Frances Simkin Schiller and Dr. Stanley and Faye Simkin Scholarship. This year, an unprecedented four high school seniors were deemed worthy, all of whom demonstrated high academic achievement and leadership in the Jewish and broader communities.

Receiving scholarships were:

*Emma Lezberg:* A Pittsfield High honors student at the top of her class who will attend Williams College, Emma works with farm animals at Hancock Shaker Village, as the National Yiddish Book Center's youngest book collector, and as a volunteer for many Jewish community events. Winner of numerous awards for writing, Emma founded and edited Pittsfield High's online student newspaper.

*Jacob Lezberg:* Emma's twin brother Jacob, also a Pittsfield High honors student (2nd in his class) who will attend Williams College,

worked at Hancock Shaker Village as a guide and as a bar mitzvah tutor at Congregation Kneset Israel, in addition to his many academic pursuits and honors. He designed the website for Pittsfield High's online student newspaper, and served as its managing editor, leaving a legacy for future students.

(Both Lezbergs, incidentally, are karate black belts.)

*Catherine May:* Among the accolades Catie accrued during her senior year at Waconah Regional High School were awards for calculus, science, and arts and design. She has led High Holiday services at Congregation Kneset Israel for three years, working with local cantors and singers to master the duties of *shaliach tzibbur*. She'll be attending Williams College in the fall.

*Shayna Sawyer:* A graduate of Mt. Everett Regional High School, Shayna says "Judaism has been the basis of my life for as long as I can remember." Active as president of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire's HoTY youth group, she also joined North American Federation for Temple Youth (NFTY) and connected with a community of young people as passionate about their Judaism as she is. She'll attend University of Rhode Island to study Speech-Language Pathology.



### A lovely evening at the 7 Hills Inn



# Your Federation Presents

## One Story – One Life Your Federation Dollars at Work

This past March, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires allocated over \$150,000 to help strengthen Jewish life and care for Jews in need in Israel and Overseas. The largest portion of those dollars went to support the critical services of the American Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), The Jewish Agency For Israel, and World ORT, but we also support smaller social services agencies throughout Israel, as well. Each month we highlight the story of one individual you have never met, but whose life has been changed forever due to your generosity – this time from one of those smaller scale agencies.

### Federation Dollars Help Victims of Sexual Abuse Find Refuge and Recovery

By Wendy Borodkin, Director, American Friends of ELI (Israel Association for Child Protection)

On behalf of the IDF sexually abused soldiers who are being provided therapeutic intervention by ELI thanks to funding from Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, I am writing to share a couple of success stories of a soldier who is in therapy.

Rona is a 19-year-old soldier. She had been serving in a combat unit in a commanding role. From the outside, she's a powerful young woman – in control and a strong leader. At times, Rona's assertiveness becomes overly aggressive and she uses more authority than what is required for the situation at hand. Rona hid that she was sexually abused by a neighbor from the ages of 12-16. The abuse stopped when her family moved to a different town and no one even knew about her terrible experience. Her psychological wounds were never treated; she dealt with her victimization by repressing it as if it did not exist, since it was not visible.

However, there was a huge price that Rona had to pay for this repression. The power that she had in the army, which she sometimes abused, turned her from a powerless passive victim having bad things being done to her, to a powerful active person who victimizes others. In this way, Rona found balance in her life.

When Rona was sexually assaulted by a superior officer, this equilibrium was disrupted, and the way she had been coping collapsed. Rona fell into a deep depression, spending most of her days in bed, refusing to eat, ignoring friends and colleagues. She was referred to an army mental health officer who thankfully and coincidentally had attended ELI's training session a few weeks earlier. There he learned about the indicators which point to sexual abuse. He referred Rona to ELI, and for the first time in her life, Rona was given the opportunity to deal with her past trauma; to process what she had been through and to work toward healing, instead of continuing to carry her past hurts with her as a constant trigger for a potential emotional breakdown.

Rona has a long way to full recovery. She is currently in therapy with ELI and the army has given her a less demanding assignment. The goal of the therapeutic intervention is to allow Rona to function normally.

At this point, ELI has 29 soldiers in therapy plus about 10 family members. Intensive supervision is given to therapists who are officers in the army. Training regarding the indicators to recognize sexual abuse is being



given to IDF's officers as well.

Thanks to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and other funders Rona and others like her are being given the opportunity to deal with their traumas and to learn the skills and tools they need to cope with challenges and help them return to their normal lives.

We look forward to a continued partnership.

*ELI is the only organization in Israel that deals specifically and exclusively with all of the various aspects of child abuse. The organization works to increase awareness of the problem by educating the public at large, by training professionals, by lobbying policy decision makers, and by providing vital information to potential victims and parents.*

## Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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

### Thank you to our supporters!

The Berkshire Jewish Voice extends a very special "thank you" for the generosity extended thus far by 159 households who have sent in their contributions for voluntary subscriptions to the paper.

Allen and Ellen Rosenblatt • Jill Goldstein

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## Your Federation Presents

# Volunteers are Vital! Our Volunteer Coordinator Shares Locals' Top 10 Reasons for Volunteering

By Susan Frisch Lehrer, Coordinator of Volunteers

We're in the midst of a busy summer and I don't know about you, but I enjoy visiting many of the cultural and educational venues in the Berkshires. I encounter many wonderful volunteers assisting in a variety of ways to help these organizations, and I'm an active volunteer for several organizations myself.

In many instances volunteers receive complimentary tickets to enjoy the venue as a perk for their volunteerism, but it's more than that that entices people to volunteer for any organization. Yes, the perk of getting free tickets is a big one, but other factors also attract volunteers.

I've informally asked a number of people to share their reasons for volunteering in the Berkshires, and here is my list of 10 reasons they give their time, presented in random order.

*Free tickets.* Ushering and working during an event is one way to enjoy a venue

*Meeting new and wonderful people.* This is especially true for those who live alone. Making new friends who share similar interests was voiced by many in my survey.

*Knowing that they are helping the organization.* Volunteers provide needed staff support.

*It feels good to give back.* Some volunteers choose an organization that is near and dear to their hearts and many will also donate funds knowing that those funds will help others in need or offer more services and programs.

*It gives them a schedule.* Volunteering provides a sense of purpose and routine. *It's healthy.* Volunteering is good for everyone and studies show that it relieves stress especially when providing direct service to those in need.

*It's easy to volunteer.* Finding the right organization has never been easier as opportunities may be found through media, libraries and friends.

*Helping others and doing good is important.* *Tikkun olam* and *gemilut chasadim* – literally repairing the world and acts of loving kindness are not only Jewish values, but human values.

*Bored and looking for something to do.* Volunteering looked interesting to some while learning something new.

*Because they were asked.* Some said they never thought about volunteering until a friend asked them to join them.

As most of you know from reading my column, we have several opportunities for volunteers to assist the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. We are pleased that we have trained a dozen folks this year to assist with delivering meals. We use volunteers on a regular basis with our lunch programs, delivering the Berkshire Jewish Voice newspapers, mailings, special events, delivering holiday packages to home bound folks, and, of course, our annual Super Sunday phone-a-thon and follow-up call dates.

We could not operate without the talents of many volunteers who continue to help those in our community and beyond. Consider lending us a hand – you'll be glad you did! Please let me know if you are interested in volunteering with any of our Federation's programs.

Check our website [www.jewishberkshires.org](http://www.jewishberkshires.org) for more ideas.

B'shalom,  
Susan Frisch Lehrer,  
Coordinator of Volunteers  
(413) 442-4360, ext. 10  
[jfb.volunteer@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.volunteer@verizon.net)



Eric Greenberg packing challot



Roman Rozenblyum preparing to deliver shaloch manot packages

## Calling All Kids!

The young Jews in our local community learn about *tzedakah* and helping others from an early age. They "get it" and understand why it's important to help others. I'm asking for kids to contact me and share their volunteer experiences for an upcoming article. So, Berkshire kids – this next one is for you and about you! Contact me at [jfb.volunteer@verizon.net](mailto:jfb.volunteer@verizon.net). I'd love to see pictures, too.

## Learning Collaboratively Through Reflective Dialogue and the Arts, July 29 Knosh

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, July 29, Knosh & Knowledge will host Deb Nathan of Artsbridge and Todd Mack of Music in Common, who will be joined by teens visiting the Berkshires from the Middle East for the month-long Artsbridge Summer Leadership Program. This residential program for up to 30 Israeli, Palestinian, and American teens focuses on various opportunities to engage through a combination of reflective dialogue, artistic expression, and expressive therapy to empower youth.

This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will take place at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire at 10:45 a.m., and will be followed by lunch.

Music in Common (MiC) and Artsbridge, two Massachusetts based non-profits that use the arts to bring people in conflict together, particularly Israelis and Palestinians, will work collaboratively for this year's Artsbridge Summer Leadership Program throughout the month of July in Williamstown.

Their model of dialogue teaches students how to truly listen to each other and to ask questions out of curiosity and interest. Through expressive therapy, Artsbridge works to provide healing and understanding for the difficulties that participants experience in their daily lives. The art component teaches participants how to work together, think

creatively, and communicate constructively. The program will conclude with a banquet and showcase of the participants' projects on July 30-31 at the Buxton School.

Come and learn how two creative non-profit organizations collaborate to further transform young peoples' lives through opportunities that bridge differences and teach compassion.



Participants in the Artsbridge Summer Leadership Program

### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

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

**Date:** Friday, July 29, at 10:45 a.m. (lunch follows at noon)

**Advance lunch reservations required for this event.**

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# Your Federation Presents

## Building Bridges Between the Berkshires and the Afula-Gilboa Region of Israel

This spring, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires hosted our first guests from the Afula-Gilboa region of Israel. Programs in Pittsfield, North Adams, and Great Barrington attracted hundreds of people from both the Jewish community and wider regional civic and arts communities. These events allowed us to share a positive message about Israel, and they were a lot of fun, as well.

### Food, Fun, and New Friends from Israel!

Community members young and old had a wonderful time celebrating Yom Ha'atzmaut with visiting chefs from our new Partnership 2gether program in Israel. Chefs Israel Odels and Tamar Digmi prepared fabulous tastings for the community at the Gateways Inn and cooked with religious school students from around the Berkshires. What a wonderful kickoff to the Berkshires' new partnership with the Afula-Gilboa region of Northern Israel.



### Olive Tree Project Draws a Crowd

We were inspired by the powerful and hopeful messages of tolerance, compassion, and mutual respect brought to us by the Women of the Olive Tree Project. Over 400 people from the Berkshire community had a chance to view the exhibition and meet the courageous women artists Gila, Mashchraz, Lina, and Nava,

as well as Daniel Benn of the Wizo Afula Community Center. Together they are transforming perceptions and bringing social change, one brushstroke at a time, to our partnership region of Afula-Gilboa.



A lovely event that felt like a family gathering, without politics. The artists say, and I believe them, we are all alike and all want the same things in life.  
— Sara Koffman, Great Barrington



Olive trees are like a mother, giving us blessings and everything good. They mean the same thing in both the Bible and the Koran. They are giving and forgiving, and, like us, stuck in the land.  
— Olive Tree artist Mashchraz



## LOCAL NEWS

## RABBI BARENBLAT HONORED,

continued from page 1

enough to be able to share our Torah – our learning, our ritual craft, our passion for the work we do – with someone who needed it, who then took the time to write to The Forward.” She is the second Berkshires spiritual leader to make the list in as many years, joining Rabba Kaya Stern Kaufman of RIMON as an honoree from this region.

## ALEPH Listening Tour

The previous year has been a busy one for Rabbi Barenblat, as she and her ALEPH co-chair Rabbi David Evan Markus have been engaged in a listening tour on behalf of Jewish Renewal that has taken them from coast to coast, and to Canada, as well. Working to carry forward the legacy of Jewish Renewal founder Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi (who passed in 2014), the two have been visiting a diverse cross section of congregations and Jewish groups asking, as Barenblat puts it, “What is the Judaism you most yearn for?”

Rabbi Barenblat and Rabbi Markus acknowledge that this has been an unsettled year for the Jewish community – political issues such as the Iran deal and turmoil in the Middle East have roiled many communities, as did trying to understand and manage the transition American Jewry has made away from its traditional self-identity.

Says Rabbi Markus: “The

deep understanding in Jewish life of what is most important to the heart and soul – the meat and potatoes of Jewish spiritual life – is not what necessarily what gets the most air time in the public sphere.” He cites Reb Zalman, who once opined that it’s okay to view a synagogue as a business, so long as you know what kind of business you are in. Naturally political issues are at the fore, Rabbi Markus says, but “the politics of identity are the politics of yesterday. Not to diminish the importance of these issues, but they’re not the only ones. Jews increasingly report feeling marginalized in their own Jewish lives for lack of sufficient focus on meaning, learning and real service to the world. Far more than tired identity politics, opening the Jewish heart and soul should be the focus of Jewish spiritual life – and that must be our focus going forward.”

Rabbi Barenblat says that what surprised her most about the listening tour was “how our travels brought us into conversations that were more pastoral in nature” than the exchange of ideas and information they expected to engage in. “We found people still grieving over the loss of Reb Zalman, as well as a more complex grief of watching the world changing. People wanted to know why many of the things we have been taught as Jews are not serving them.”

By talking to other Jews, she



Rabbi David Evan Markus

says, “we are trying to learn what might be the change that this historical moment calls us to create.”

Echoing his ALEPH co-chair, Rabbi Markus says that he believes that ALEPH’s role is to ensure that “all the changes have the energy needed to succeed.” The pair will share results of their findings at ALEPH’s Kallah gathering in Fort Collins, CO this July and will deliver a report titled “Renewing Renewal” to ALEPH’s board in the fall, after which a plan of action will be implemented.

Closer to home, Rabbi Barenblat says that The Forward selection has inspired “some people to come daven with us [at CBI], to see what this place all about. What’s best about the honor from the Forward is that it calls attention to the places I serve, both locally and on the bigger stage.”

## Jewish Music For a Summer Sunday Morning, with Singer-Songwriter Bernice Lewis

NORTH ADAMS – Bernice Lewis has “a voice full of light and hope,” says country music star Rosanne Cash. “She is one of the keepers of the flame of Real Songwriting.”

Enjoy her in concert at Congregation Beth Israel on July 17 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. With stunning views of Mount Williams as a backdrop, Lewis will take the audience on a Jewish journey through song and story that is both traditional and contemporary. Summer fruits, iced drinks, and sweet and savory delicacies will be served at this free event. RSVPs are appreciated.

Bernice Lewis has been teaching annual credited courses on songwriting and performing at Williams College and The Colorado College in Colorado Springs for over 15 years. She has a strong Jewish connection, delivering talks nationally about her family’s escape from Nazi Germany in the early 1940s. Other places she has taught include Omega Institute, Esalen, Kripalu, Warren Wilson College, Universe of Song, Star Island Writer’s Retreat, and Lamb’s Retreat.



Songwriter Bernice Lewis

This event is co-sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. CBI is located at 53 Lois Street in North Adams. Please contact CBI at office@cbiweb.org or call (413) 663-5830 to RSVP and for more information.

## Also from CBI – Save the Date for Shabbat Across the Berkshires!

This autumn’s Shabbat Across the Berkshires will be at CBI on September 9 at 7 p.m. A Kabbalat Shabbat service led by Rabbi Rachel Barenblat will be followed by an Oneg Shabbat. More information to come.



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## Planned Parenthood and the Crisis of Reproductive Rights in the 1970s

PITTSFIELD – The culture wars have been heating up in this presidential election year and one organization in particular has come to be identified with its nastier dimensions. The organization, of course, is Planned Parenthood.

On Thursday, July 7 at 7:00 p.m., Temple Anshe Amunim welcomes Dr. Robyn Rosen, who will talk about “Planned Parenthood and the Crisis of Reproductive Rights in the 1970s.”

Villainized by the right and staunchly defended by the left, Planned Parenthood’s fate may hang in the balance. Few know about this organization’s 100-year history and how it evolved out of a radical birth control movement, transformed itself into a respectable provider of family planning, and eventually got wrapped up in the abortion controversy.

Dr. Robyn L. Rosen, professor of History at Marist College, has spent her career studying the history of the reproductive rights movement in the United States. Author of *Reproductive Health, Reproductive Rights: Reformers and the Politics of Maternal Welfare, 1916-1940*, published by the Ohio State University Press, and other articles in academic journals, Dr. Rosen has recently turned her attention to the transformative decade of the 1970s. Her talk is intended to offer insight



Dr. Robyn Rosen

into the critical moment when the birth control movement found itself having to grapple with the abortion rights movement and decide how to incorporate these new rights into its mission.

Rosen’s lecture is free for Temple members, and \$5 for non-members. For more information, contact the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910, email templeoffice@ansheamunim.org or visit [www.ansheamunim.org](http://www.ansheamunim.org). The Temple, located at 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield, is an accessible building.

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## LOCAL NEWS

### Interfaith Outreach – “Becoming Allies with Muslim Americans”

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Saturday, July 23 from 10 a.m. to noon, Congregation Ahavath Sholom hosts a presentation and discussion entitled “Becoming Allies with Muslim Americans” led by Rabbi Nancy Fuchs Kreimer, Ph.D. She is the director of the Department of Multifaith Studies and Initiatives and associate professor of Religious Studies at the Reconstructivist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, PA.

As daily news reports sadly demonstrate, the interfaith atmosphere in this country has become increasingly divisive even though people of faith want the opportunity to learn and discuss ways to improve relationships between religious groups. Rabbi Fuchs Kreimer is a nationally renowned author, scholar, and leader in interfaith work, and will share ways to increase sensitivity and understanding between the Jewish and Muslim communities of faith. She will be



Rabbi Nancy Fuchs Kreimer

answering questions on this important issue.

A short service will precede the presentation. The presentation will be followed by coffee and refreshments.

For more information please contact us at [info@ahavathsholom.com](mailto:info@ahavathsholom.com), by calling (413) 528-4197, or visiting [www.ahavathsholom.com](http://www.ahavathsholom.com).

Congregation Ahavath Sholom is located at 15 North Street in Great Barrington.

### Saks on Sex and the Senior

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Thursday, August 4 at 3:30 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire hosts Dr. Bonnie Saks, who will facilitate a thoughtful and fun discussion of sex and intimacy in the silver and golden years.

Dr. Saks received undergraduate and medical degrees from Brown University. She was a clinical instructor at Yale in both the OB/GYN and Psychiatry departments. She completed a sex therapy fellowship at Yale sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health. Dr. Saks is now a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the University of South Florida in Tampa. She is a Distinguished Fellow of the American Psychiatric Association, a Founding Fellow of the American Board of Sexology, and Past President of the Society for Sex Therapy and Research.

Dr. Saks has her own practice in Tampa, and she and her husband Bradley Minnen are members of Hevreh. All are welcome to join this discussion. Hevreh is located at 270 State Road, Great Barrington.

### Lunch and Learn about Social Action and Zionism

GREAT BARRINGTON – This July, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire is sponsoring two compelling and relevant Lunch and Learns, one a multipart exploration of Zionism and Reform Judaism and the other a stand-alone program about anti-hunger policy in the United States.

#### “Zionism and American Reform Jews from 1885 to the Present”

Led by Rabbi Neal Borovitz, this program meets on Wednesdays at 11:45 a.m. on July 6, 13, 20, and 27. It will examine the evolution of the place of Zionism in American Reform Judaism. The focus will be to simultaneously look at the impact that Zionism has had upon American Reform Judaism, and the impact that Reform Jews have continued to have upon Zionism and the State of Israel. The texts that will be studied are the four “Statements of Principles of Reform Judaism.”

Rabbi Borovitz is the Rabbi Emeritus of Temple Avodat Shalom in River Edge, where he occupied the pulpit for 25 years. He currently serves on the National Board of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the Rabbinic cabinet of the Jewish Federations of North America, and the Foundation Board of Bergen Regional Medical Center, and is a frequent contributor to The Jewish Standard, The Times of Israel, and The Bergen Record. Rabbi Borovitz and his wife



Rabbi Neal Borovitz

Ann Appelbaum are members of Hevreh and are active participants in the Berkshire Minyan. Hevreh is located at 270 State Road in Great Barrington.

#### Anti-Hunger Policy Update from Washington

On Tuesday, July 26, from 11:45 a.m. to 1 p.m., join Josh Protas, the director of Government Affairs for MAZON: A Jewish Response to Hunger. He will offer an update on federal anti-hunger policy issues, the dynamics in Congress, and implications of the upcoming elections. Come join in the discussion and learn about the critical role of advocacy to support and strengthen key federal nutrition safety net programs that provide essential assistance to tens of millions of Americans.

All are welcome to lunch and learn. Please bring a bag lunch. Hevreh is located at 270 State Road, Great Barrington.

Check out our website!

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

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# LOCAL NEWS

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## Chai Tea to Support Young Judea

LEE – Inspiring young teens to connect to Jewish life is the mission of the Young Judea program of Hadassah, awarding scholarships to thousands of American youth so that they can learn about and love a Jewish life, or to travel to Israel, or receive leadership scholarships for study in Israel.

Berkshire Hills Hadassah is sponsoring its Chai Tea to support Young Judea on Tuesday, July 12 at noon in Lee (please call the number below for venue information). Guest speaker will Robin Brickman, an award winning children's book illustrator specializing in natural science, who creates three-dimensional paintings for her books.

Young Judea reports that more than 2,000 campers and staff attend day and overnight summer camps each year and that they have sponsored these camps for 60 years. They offer a variety of national, regional,



3-D illustration by Robin Brinkman

and local programs encouraging youth to learn about Israel and all things Jewish. Hadassah's Young Judea program offers year round activities, summer camps, and Israel programs to promote young leaders to inspire others.

For detailed information about this event, including its location, please contact Pattie Lipman at (518) 281-7340 or plipman@fairpoint.net. A minimum donation of \$18 is requested.

## Also from Hadassah – Trees for Israel

Berkshire Hills Hadassah is the only Berkshires source for Jewish National Fund trees planted in Israel, a meaningful gift for someone who has everything.

Hadassah plants trees in The Centennial Garden near Ein Kerem Hospital to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Hadassah. Date trees, olive trees and fig trees are just a few of the plant species that were added in the last few years. The Hadassah Forest in Be'ersheva River Park has transformed that locale.

Berkshire Hills Hadassah will send a JNF certificate to the recipient with the sender's own personal message. Over the last 100 years, JNF has planted over 250 million trees in the land of Israel.

Just contact Marcia Tuler at: marcia.tuler@gmail.com or call (413) 329-1550 for more information.

## B'Tayavon – Learn Israeli Cooking with Julie Gale

GREAT BARRINGTON – With a cavalcade of new cookbooks and websites devoted to it, Israeli cooking is enjoying a moment in the sun. What better way to learn more about this popular cuisine than by working hands on with a master chef?

On Thursdays, July 21 and August 4, from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., join Hevreh member Julie Gale for a hands-on cooking experience. Owner and chef of At the Kitchen Table Cooking School, Julie has been teaching both adults and students the art of healthy cooking since 2001. She co-authored *I Want to Cook* for children and is currently working on a second

book of memoirs and recipes.

First class recipes will focus on traditional Sephardic cooking in Israel: Swiss Chard Pie, Eggplant Red Pepper Salad, Shakshoukah Eggs with Tomatoes.

Second class recipes will focus on modern Israeli cuisine: Typical Israeli Salad, Turkey Stuffed Zucchini with Apricot Sauce, Tahini Cookies

Classes are limited to 12 people. Each class is \$25. Hevreh members: \$20. Please call the Hevreh office at (413) 528-6378 to make your reservation. All are welcome. Hevreh is located at 270 State Road in Great Barrington.



Julie Gale

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# Superb Super Sunday Showing



More than 50 volunteers, with cell phones in hand and pledge cards in front of them, worked diligently last May 22 to reach out to hundreds of potential donors to ask for their support. By mid-afternoon, callers in Pittsfield and Great Barrington had reached nearly 250 donors and successfully raised more than \$43,000 for the 2016 Annual Campaign to support community programs locally and help Jews in need overseas.

Thank you to everyone who volunteered and everyone who gave! You are supporting Jewish life across the Berkshires and around the world!

If you did not have the opportunity to answer the call on Super Sunday, please contact the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires at (413) 442-4360, ext. 10, or visit [www.jewishberkshires.org](http://www.jewishberkshires.org).

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## LOCAL NEWS

## Wildman Scholar-in-Residence Program hosts Rabbi David Hoffman of JTS

PITTSFIELD – The intellectual legacy of long-time Jewish Berkshire community leaders Carl and Dorothy Wildman, managed by their children, is a gift that endows the annual Wildman Scholar-in-Residence weekend at Congregation Knesset Israel. Each year, members of KI invite the greater Jewish community to deepen their Jewish knowledge, and also break bread together.

After the July 22 Shirei Shabbat service beginning at 5:30 p.m. (followed by dinner at 6:30), Rabbi David Hoffman, vice chancellor and chief advancement officer at the Jewish Theological Seminary, will begin the first of his three scheduled sessions. His topic is: "Google, God and Facebook: Challenges to Jewish Notions of Intimacy in an Internet Age."

During the Shabbat morning service on July 23, he will explore, "Religious Passion and Religious Fundamentalism: The Dangers of the Religious Experience." After lunch, Rabbi Hoffman concludes with a third provocative question for modernity: "Can a Kosher Restaurant Serve Milk and Meat Together? You are not going to guess the correct answer! A Strange but True Battle in Jewish Law."

Rabbi Hoffman earned a BA in political thought at Columbia University while pursuing a BA in Talmud at JTS (List College). He has studied at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Yeshivat Ha-Mivtar in Efrat. He received his rabbinic ordination and PhD in Talmud from JTS. He is also a Wexner Fellow.

In his role as vice chancellor and chief advancement officer at JTS, Rabbi Hoffman works closely with many of JTS's supporters, including the Board of Trustees, and serves as ambassador to the many communities served by JTS. He is an assistant professor in the fields of Talmudic Studies and Jewish Law. Prior to his appointment, he served as strategic advisor, assistant professor, fundraiser and scholar-in-residence for JTS. He was also appointed by Chancellor Arnold Eisen to serve on the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.

To reserve for dinner on the Friday night of the Wildman Scholar-in-Residence weekend, please contact the KI office at (413) 445-4872 or [www.knessetisrael.org](http://www.knessetisrael.org); payment in advance is required for the meal between the Kabbalat Shabbat service and the session with Rabbi Hoffman. The lunch on Shabbat,



Rabbi David Hoffman

catered by David Barile (On a Roll), will be provided by the endowment; attendees must call (413) 445-4872, ext. 10 to reserve by July 20.

Congregation Knesset Israel is at 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.

## Tap in to the Power of Prayer This Summer

PITTSFIELD – Myrna Hammerling, director of Adult Education at Congregation Knesset Israel, poses these questions: "Does attending a Jewish religious service evoke the range of inspiring to frustrating reactions in today's over-stimulated screen-bound world? One common query for adults I hear is, 'What does this mean to me today? How can I better identify with or 'get' the prayers of our people?'"

Hammerling asserts that this summer, the search for understanding the written prayers will become more accessible for those attending the 8-week course KI is offering to introduce adult students to paths of mindfulness and understanding of Jewish prayers. "When the High Holiday season arrives," she says, "dividends

## Drama – "Georgia, Justice and Jews: The Leo Frank Case"

PITTSFIELD – The scene is Atlanta, GA, in 1913. Mary Phagan, 13 years old, is found murdered in the basement of the National Pencil Company, where she had been employed. Suspicion falls on factory superintendent Leo Frank – the boss man, a Yankee, a Jew. In the heat of a Georgia summer, a spectacular trial unfolds, attracting the notice of the entire country. A determined crowd gathers daily outside the courtroom. The newspapers take sides, stirring emotions. Pressure is brought to bear. The careers of several prominent politicians, not to mention the life of the defendant, hang in the balance.

Guilty or not guilty? On July 27 at 11:30 a.m., Temple Anshe Amunim will host a two-hour dramatic presentation by playwright/attorney Jesse Waldinger about the Leo Frank case, which



Leo Frank

inspired the Anti-Defamation League, helped rejuvenate the Ku Klux Klan, and continues to incite violent disagreement to this very day. The account will be illustrated by photographs, diagrams, and readings from Waldinger's play *The Knights of Mary Phagan*.

Guests are invited to bring their own lunch to this program, which is part of Temple Anshe Amunim's Lunch and Learn series. Beverages and dessert will be provided. Admission is \$10.00.

Jesse Waldinger is a prize-winning playwright whose work has been seen locally at Stageworks/Hudson, Made in the Berkshires, and Hudson Opera House. *Mum Bett's Minute* was read at the Ashley House in Sheffield, and at the Whitney Center for the Arts. Temple Anshe Amunim audiences have seen his Jewish-themed plays *Rabbi Franklin's Model T*, *The Finaly Affair*, and most recently *The Trial of Aaron*. He lives in Canaan, New York, with his wife, director/teacher Barbara Waldinger.

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

### The Jewish Transportation Network Discount Taxi Coupons

for Jewish residents aged 65 years and older

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

Coupons are valid for 3 months and can be used with Rainbow Taxi of Pittsfield or Taxico of Great Barrington and Lee.

**Purchase coupons 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

*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.



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Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

## LOCAL NEWS

## Family Fun – Camp at the Ballpark and Have a Ball at Camp

Hevreh of Southern Berkshire is hosting two fun family-friendly events this July.

### Pittsfield Suns vs. the Bristol Blues: Play Ball!

On Sunday, July 10, at 4 p.m., the Kehillah Community Connection of Hevreh of Southern Berkshire is sponsoring a family baseball game. Tickets include the baseball game and all you can eat hot dogs, hamburgers, chicken sandwiches, sides, water, lemonade, and soda. Gates open at 4 p.m. Food starts at the first pitch at 5 p.m., and continues until the 7th inning. Seating is available under the picnic tent along home base to first base side with picnic tables. You can also sit in the general admission/grandstand seats.

Adults are \$20, children under 5 are free, and kids 5 and older are \$10. Please call the Hevreh office to RSVP and purchase tickets at (413) 528-6378. All are welcome to join. This game takes place at Wahconah Park, 105 Wahconah Street in Pittsfield.

### Kabbalat Shabbat at URJ Crane Lake Camp

Even for adults, celebrating Shabbat at Jewish summer camp can evoke great memories. On Friday, July 29 at 6:15 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire celebrates Kabbalat Shabbat along with campers and international counselors



Wahconah Park, home of the Pittsfield Suns



Shabbat at URJ Crane Lake Camp

at URJ Crane Lake Camp. This is a great opportunity to see the lovely campus in West Stockbridge. Please arrive at the camp by 6:15 p.m.; parking is available in the visitor parking lot.

Please note, there will not be a Shabbat service at Hevreh that evening. All are welcome to join this program. URJ Crane Lake Camp is located at 46 State Line Road, West Stockbridge.

## Special Summer Shabbat Events at Hevreh

GREAT BARRINGTON – This July, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire will be welcoming and celebrating Shabbat with several distinctive programs.

### Scholar-in-Residence Shabbaton with Rabbi Yonah Berman

An Orthodox Rabbi walked into a Reform synagogue... sounds like the start of a good story. In fact, it's the story of this year's Scholar-in-Residence Shabbaton, its theme "Denominationalism Today, Denominationalism Tomorrow?" Join Rabbi Yonah Berman, Director of Recruitment and Associate Director of Practical Rabbinics, Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School in Riverdale, NY for insights and lively discussion. Rav Yonah and Rabbi Neil Hirsch founded Siach, a group that meets regularly in Boston to build relationships and support for rabbis in congregations.

The Shabbaton schedule is as follows:

- Friday, July 15, 7:30 p.m.: Rabbi Berman speaks at Kabbalat Shabbat.
- Saturday, July 16, 9 a.m.: Breakfast and early morning study
- 10 a.m.: Shabbat service and Torah study

- Noon: Kiddush lunch and discussion

### Tanglewood Kabbalat Shabbat

On Friday, July 8 at 7 p.m., Hevreh hosts a Tanglewood Shabbat. Come early (gates open at 4 p.m.) and look for the blue and white balloons in the middle of the lawn to set up a picnic dinner, and bring a dessert to share. Kabbalat Shabbat will be held at the back of the lawn at approximately 7 p.m. Please note, there will be no services at Hevreh that evening. Please call the Tanglewood Box Office to purchase lawn tickets at (888) 266-1200.

Featured concert: Opening Night at Tanglewood: Jacques Lacombe conducts Ravel, Saint-Saëns, and Prokofiev, featuring Joshua Bell, violin. This event takes place at the Tanglewood Lawn, 297 West Street, Lenox.

### Visiting Cantors

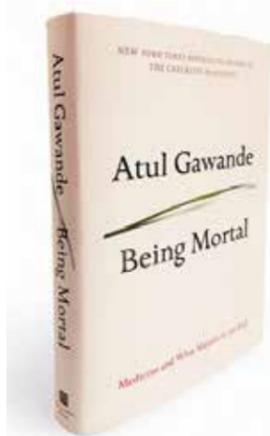
On Friday, July 15 at 7:30 p.m., Cantor Sarah Grabiner takes the Hevreh bima for Shabbat worship, bringing her gift to heighten the prayer service and to bring out voices in sacred song. Cantor Lilah Sugarman will lead services on August 6 at 6 p.m.

## Discussion – “Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End”

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Sunday, July 31 at 10:30 a.m., the People of the Book Club at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire will meet and Rabbi Neil Hirsch will lead a discussion about the ideas in Dr. Atul Gawande's important book, *Being Mortal: Medicine and What Matters in the End*.

Says Hirsch: "In the inevitable condition of aging and death, the goals of medicine seem too frequently to run counter to the interest of the human spirit. Gawande tackles the hardest challenge of his profession: how medicine can not only improve life, but also the process of its ending. He argues that quality of life is the desired goal for patients and families. Dr. Gawande explores the varieties of hospice care to demonstrate that a person's last weeks or months may be rich and dignified."

All are welcome to join this discussion. Hevreh is located at 270 State Road, Great Barrington.



## Do Make a Scene in Public – Acting Workshop Will Show You How

PITTSFIELD – Temple Anshe Amunim will host a four-part scene study class with Barbara Waldinger on consecutive Tuesdays beginning August 2, meeting at 10 a.m.

Students will have the opportunity to prepare and perform scenes from both well-known and new plays in a supportive atmosphere that encourages creativity and individual interpretation. Each week the instructor will assign scenes to the students, working in pairs or individually, to prepare and perform during the subsequent session. The selections will challenge the students to portray a variety of characters, and feedback will be offered. Both new and experienced actors are welcome.

The course will be taught by Dr. Barbara Waldinger, a

director and professor of Theatre. Dr. Waldinger has taught at Hofstra University, Marymount College, Queens College, and is presently an OLLI instructor. She serves as artistic director of HRC Showcase Theatre, an Equity-approved company that performs staged readings of new plays in Hudson, NY. She also directs new plays for the Association of Theatre in Higher Education, the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, and the Hudson-based play development group Plays in Progress.

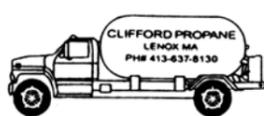
The fee for the four-session course is \$40 for Temple members, \$45 for non-members; or \$15 for any individual session.

For more information, contact the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910,



Barbara Waldinger

email templeoffice@ansheamunim.org or visit www.ansheamunim.org. The Temple, located at 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield, is an accessible building.



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LOCAL NEWS

## Summer Shabbat Experiences at Temple Anshe Amunim

PITTSFIELD – This summer, Temple Anshe Amunim will be reimagining the Kabbalat Shabbat experience at special services and events.

### A Tanglewood Shabbat

Rabbi Josh Breindel will lead a Kabbalat Shabbat service followed by an evening of music at Tanglewood in Lenox on Friday, July 15 at 7 p.m.

All those interested in experiencing a Kabbalat Shabbat service are invited to attend. Bring a picnic and look for people gathered on the lawn with blue and white balloons. A dessert to share is also welcome!

Pinchas Zuckerman conducts and plays in an all-Mozart program featuring Symphony No. 23 in G. Minor, Violin Concerto from Serenade in D, and Symphony No. 39. Tickets can be purchased by

contacting the BSO at [www.bso.org](http://www.bso.org) or by calling (413) 637-1666.

For more information, contact the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910, email [templeoffice@ansheamunim.org](mailto:templeoffice@ansheamunim.org) or visit [www.ansheamunim.org](http://www.ansheamunim.org).

### Sabbath of Study

All are invited to the monthly Sabbath of Study services, which begin on Friday, July 1, at 5:30 p.m. Attendees will engage with the words of the *siddur* (prayer-book) to find modern relevance in ancient texts. Rabbi Breindel will bring historical notes, philosophical insights, contemporary readings and even science facts to enliven the conversation. Additional Sabbaths of Study will be held on August 5 and September 2.



Rabbi Joshua Breindel

### Sabbath of Stories

This summer, the Temple initiates a new tradition of celebrating Shabbat – Sabbath of Stories. An accomplished actor and storyteller, Rabbi Breindel will enrich the Friday evening service with stories ranging from ancient sources to Hasidic tales, from Rabbinic myths to modern literature. Following the story, participants will be encouraged to share their thoughts and use these sources to find new insights into the nature of Shabbat. Sabbath of Stories will take place Fridays at 5:30 p.m. on July 29 and August 26.

All are welcome. For more information, contact the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910, email [templeoffice@ansheamunim.org](mailto:templeoffice@ansheamunim.org) or visit [www.ansheamunim.org](http://www.ansheamunim.org). The Temple, located at 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield is an accessible building.

## Wild West Jewish Cowboy Clowns in Music, Rodeos, and Animation

PITTSFIELD – On August 3 at 11:30 a.m., music historian Aaron Manela will give a multimedia presentation sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires entitled “Khosn Cowboy Mazl Tov: Wild West Jewish Cowboy Clowns in Music, Rodeos and Animation” at Temple Anshe Amunim.

Manela, a Ph.D. candidate in Musicology at Case Western University, will reveal the previously untold story of the comic Jewish cowboy in American popular entertainment. Mr. Manela’s research involves studying sheet music, “magic lantern” novelty song slides, entertainment trade magazines, newspaper advertisements, early animated cartoons, and more to find a forgotten chapter in the history of Jewish life in America.

“While we all know Mel Brooks’ *Blazing Saddles* and some remember Kinky Friedman,” Manela says, “both Jewish and non-Jewish entertainers were experimenting with the idea of Yiddish cowboys at the very beginning of the twentieth century, and vaudeville comedians and rodeo clowns alike took on this identity. But it was not all fun and games. Not all the performers were Jewish, nor was the audience. While characters like the Jewish Cowboy might have been created by



Aaron Manela

Jews and for Jews, they quickly slipped the bounds of our religious and ethnic group and were performed in anti-Semitic ways. This is literally the beginning of self-deprecating Jewish humor in the 20th Century, which remains a double-edged sword for us.”

Manela will show performances of these songs and then discuss how the Cowboy Jew evolved and remained linked to music that represented Jewishness in the public mind.

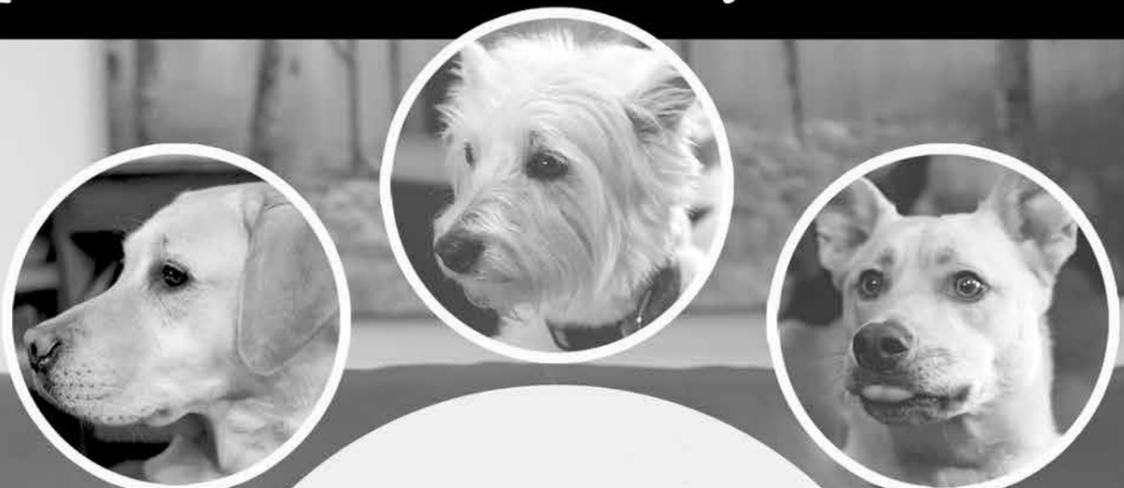
The fee for the lecture is \$10 for Temple members and \$15 for non-members. Bring a lunch – cold beverages/ desserts will be served. For more information, contact the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910, email [templeoffice@ansheamunim.org](mailto:templeoffice@ansheamunim.org) or visit [www.ansheamunim.org](http://www.ansheamunim.org). The Temple, located at 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield, is an accessible building.



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## LOCAL NEWS

# Renewal at Congregation Kneset Israel

## New Sanctuary, New Approaches, New Connections

PITTSFIELD – Congregation Kneset Israel, a Conservative congregation with a 135-year history in the Berkshires, culminated its 9-month, \$1.2 million renovation project on June 5 with the rededication of its sanctuary. The physical changes are of a part with the congregation's overall push to implement new approaches to its spiritual, liturgical, and social practices, led by Rabbi David Weiner.

Hundreds were in attendance to mark the first major refurbishment of the building since its construction in the 1970s, a project that upgraded the lighting, acoustics, and handicapped access in the soaring, canopy-like sanctuary. Seating has been reinstalled in a circular configuration that is both more intimate and more conducive to prayer. The design of the new ark calls to mind the branches of a tree, and incorporates two words: "Aychah" ("Where are you?") and "Hineni" ("I am here").

"The new ark evokes the Tree of Life, the Burning Bush and a person at prayer reaching towards the heavens," explains Rabbi Weiner. "Its imagery aims to help the people in the room hear God's first question of humanity, 'Where are you?' and to respond, 'Hineni. Here I am.' Or to ask, 'Where are you?' and wait for the divine response, 'Hineni.'"

President Leonard Schiller was effusive in his praise the efforts of Pittsfield's EDM Architecture, Tierney Construction Company, and Presentations Gallery, which delivered the ark and pews. "They all worked to understand the culture of this congregation," he said. Schiller singled out Arlene Schiff's exemplary fundraising efforts that enabled most of the funds for the renovation to be pledged within a five-month period.

Drawing on his long family connection to this region and the synagogue, past president Edward Udel spoke movingly in drawing attention to the memorial plaques along the walls. The sanctuary renewal, he said, "embraces the future but honors the past. While the names on the plaques bear

silent witness to the rededication, the example set by those people speaks loudly to us." Udel remembered the economic uncertainty that marked the years when the building was first erected. "Nevertheless, they moved forward," he said, and would be "more than satisfied" with the congregation's current achievement. Udel then thanked Arthur Stein, the president during the original dedication project four decades earlier, who was able to attend the rededication.

"And yet a sanctuary is, on some level, just a room," explains Rabbi Weiner. "Walls, furniture and lighting do not on their own create community or spiritual uplift." So simultaneously with the renovation portion of its renewal project, Kneset Israel has also embarked on a project to renew its Shabbat morning services. Cantor Sarah Levine, a fourth-year student at the H.L. Miller Cantorial School of the Jewish Theological Seminary, has been visiting Pittsfield periodically throughout the year to help the congregation develop a new approach to weaving melodies together and leading services.

Just as Kneset Israel was renewing its space and its worship, the Conservative Movement introduced a new Shabbat prayer book, which Kneset Israel received just days after its publication. *Siddur Lev Shalem* meets 21st century American Jews where they are, offering a context for deepening the role of prayer in the life of individuals and the community. Additionally, Rabbi Weiner, spiritual leader since 2009, has integrated the methods of Soulful Education, a technique pioneered by Rabbi Aryeh Ben-David of Jerusalem, into prayer and study at the congregation.

"Continuing vibrancy requires continuous, thoughtful change and growth," says Weiner, who adds that the congregation will continue its youth educa-

tion initiatives, its outreach to K'rovei Yisrael (non-Jewish relatives of Jews) and its collaboration with other Jewish

organizations in the Berkshires and beyond.

The June 5 ceremony concluded with the singing of

"Tefilat Ha'Derech" (The Wayfarer's Prayer), the fixing of *mezuzot* to the doorways, and the recitation of the Shema.



Rabbi David Weiner at Congregation Kneset Israel's new pulpit



KI's Hebrew school students led the congregation in song

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## IMPORTANT NOTICE

No Tuesday kosher lunch June-August

Beginning in June and through the summer months, Federation-sponsored kosher lunches will not be served at Congregation Knesset Israel on Tuesdays. Lunch will be served on Mondays and Thursdays, in conjunction with the Connecting With Community series. Tuesday lunches will resume in the autumn.



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# Connecting with Community

## Nourish Your Body, Mind, and Soul!

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

Programs take place Mondays and Thursdays at 10:45 a.m. Lunch is served Mondays and Thursdays at noon through the summer months.

Venue: Congregation Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Rd, Pittsfield, MA.

**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!

**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.



Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

## What's for Lunch?

# Dairy Free, \*\* Gluten Free Main Entrée

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

### JULY

**Monday, 4** ..... Closed for Independence Day

**Thursday, 7** ..... 10:45a.m., Frederikke "Rikke" Borge speaks of her father, Victor Borge. **Lunch: Chicken ratatouille\*\*#, rice pilaf, salad, Chef's choice of bread, melon, and tea.**

**Monday, 11** ..... 10:45a.m. "A Stop at The Red Apple Restaurant" with author Elaine Freed Lindenblatt. **Lunch: Meat loaf\*\*#, tomato juice, mashed potatoes, peas & carrots, rye bread, pears, and tea.**

**Thursday, 14** ..... 10:45a.m., "Tales of a Judaic Artist: Weavings, Wanderings and Wonders" with Wendy Rab-inowitz. **Lunch: Fresh fish\*\*, borscht and potato, green beans, rice pilaf, whole wheat bread, peaches, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Monday, 18** ..... 10:45 a.m., "Some Puzzles and Solutions in Science and Torah" with agronomist, Dr. Jon Greenberg. **Lunch: Salisbury steak\*\*#, salad, oven roasted potatoes, broccoli, Challah, mango sorbet, and tea.**

**Thursday, 21** ..... 10:45 a.m., "The Practical Power of Gratitude...To Make Life a Little Easier" with author and motivational speaker, Jerry Posner. **Lunch: Chef's choice of summer frittata, beets, cucumber salad, Farmer's Loaf, ice cream and cookies, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Monday, 25** ..... 10:45 a.m., "The Process of Aging" with therapist, Maggie Bittman. **Lunch: Roasted chicken\*\*#, apple juice, salad, asparagus cuts n tips, noodles and onions, pumpernickel bread, fruit cocktail, and tea.**

**Thursday, 28** ..... 10:45 a.m., "Major Mordecai Myers: An American-Jewish Hero of the War of 1812" presented by author and historian, Neil Yetwin. **Lunch: Black bean burgers#, gazpacho, sweet potato fries, Italian beans, hamburger buns, ice cream and cookies, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

### AUGUST

**Monday, 1** ..... 10:45 a.m., "New Beginnings at Jacob's Pillow" with Director of Preservation, Norton Owen. **Lunch: Meat loaf\*\*#, pineapple juice, mashed potatoes, Italian beans, rye bread, grapes, and tea.**

**Thursday, 4** ..... 10:45 a.m., "Wendy Wasserstein and the World of her Women (and some men)" with Diane G. Steinbrink. **Lunch: Egg salad and cottage cheese platters\*\*, tomato juice, coleslaw, potato bread, strawberry shortcake, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Monday, 8** .....Program to be announced. **Lunch: Oriental tuna salad platters, borscht and potato, rolls, watermelon, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Thursday, 11** .....Program to be announced. **Lunch: Greek salad platters\*\*, chef's choice of juice, Italian bread, tropical fruit salad, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Monday, 15** .....Program to be announced. **Lunch: Turkey tenders chef's way\*\*#, salad, mixed vegetables, rice pilaf, whole wheat bread, applesauce, and tea.**



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## OBITUARIES

### Helen Gallant, most at home in the garden

STOCKBRIDGE – Helen Gallant grew up in Brooklyn, NY where, when she was not doing chores, she spent time with her friends. They called themselves the “Sufolla Girls” (“all of us” backwards).

She always wore her hair in braids, until her mother cut them off when she was 16. It was this new haircut that attracted the attention of her neighbor, Sol Gallant, who she married a few years later. They raised two children, Steven and Esta, in New York, while Helen kept the books for Sol's car shop. As their children grew older, the couple spent more time in the Berkshires and then moved to Stockbridge. In her later years, she spent half the year in Delray Beach, FL.

After a series of medical problems, Mrs. Gallant had to remain in Florida year-round and spent the rest of her life there, but she always missed the Berkshires. Wherever she lived, she always felt most at home in a garden. She was a longtime volunteer “herb associate” at the Berkshire Botanical Garden, as well as tending her own land on Yale Hill. She also volunteered at Tanglewood, and enjoyed walking the country roads and playing bridge.

Never one to hold her tongue, Mrs. Gallant could always be counted on to give honest advice, even if it was not what you wanted to hear. When she was compelled to stay in Florida year-round, she lost touch with most of her good friends in MA. If anyone that knew her would like to share stories, or get more information about her last years, they are welcome to contact her granddaughter Madeleine by email at madkornfield@gmail.com.

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires offers condolences to Linda Halpern, whose mother Edith Gross passed away in early May.

### Sara Liss Penziner, 98, devoted to her family

PITTSFIELD – Sara Liss Penziner, 98, a longtime resident of West Road in Sheffield, more recently of Melbourne Place in Pittsfield, died Thurs-

day, April 28 at Berkshire Medical Center.

Born in Monterey, MA on May 3, 1917, she was the daughter of David and Rebecca Nevins Liss. Mrs. Penziner was educated in Great Barrington. She married Jacob Penziner and raised her family of three, Bernice, Rodney, and Susan, in Sheffield.

Mrs. Penziner was devoted to her family, number one. She enjoyed fashion, gardening, sewing and knitting, and, most of all, exercising. She drove her white Jeep to Simon's Rock and Berkshire South for many years for her exercise classes, until she was 92 years old. Her beauty and strength were admired by all.

She is survived by her daughters: Bernice Bornstein of Boynton Beach, FL and Peabody, MA and Susan Lipton of Pittsfield; her grandchildren, Eric, Toni and Julian Bornstein of Cambridge, MA, Robin Bornstein of Byfield, MA, David, Julie, William and Rachel Bornstein of Peabody, MA, Jeffrey Lipton of Boston, MA, Michael, Christine, Alexandra and Emery Lipton of Pittsfield, Scott Penziner of Portsmouth, NH, Timothy, Suzanne and Seth Penziner of Wakefield, MA and Virginia Penziner of Peabody, MA; and her brother, Joseph Liss of Naples, FL.

Mrs. Penziner was predeceased by her husband Jacob; her sisters, Anna Goldberg of Longmeadow, MA and Milly Nevins of Harrison, NY; and her son Rodney Penziner of Housatonic.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, May 3 at Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home in Great Barrington, conducted by Rabbi David Weiner. Burial followed at Ahavath Shalom Cemetery in Great Barrington. Donations may be made to the Berkshire Humane Society through Finnerty & Stevens Funeral Home, 426 Main Street, Great Barrington, MA 01230.

### Maurice Filler, 94, teacher, director of guidance

WILLIAMSTOWN – Maurice Filler, 94, died peacefully on Wednesday, June 1, at his home, surrounded by his family.

Born in Lowell, MA on July 27, 1921, the son of David Filler and Rebecca Stern Filler, both Russian Jewish immigrants, he was educated

at Lowell High School, Class of 1938, and Northeastern University before volunteering to join the Army in 1942. He served with distinction in the Pacific Theatre in World War II with the Signal Corps in New Guinea, the Philippines and, following the end of the war, as part of the Occupation Forces in Japan, attaining the rank of corporal.

Upon returning to the US and receiving his honorable discharge, he continued his education at Boston University, obtaining both a bachelor's degree and a master's degree in Education and History. During his post-war college days, he was active in social justice movements and led the Boston delegation of area college and university students to Washington, DC to urge Congress to pass an anti-lynching bill.

Mr. Filler married Myril Alpert of Revere, MA in New Hampshire on September 8, 1948. Shortly thereafter, they relocated from Boston to Williamstown, where Mr. Filler accepted a position as a history teacher and guidance director/counselor at Williamstown High School, while Mrs. Filler worked as a substitute teacher there. Their intention was to remain in Williamstown for one or two years, while he pursued a Ph.D. in Anthropology and History from Columbia University during summer vacations. Instead, they remained residents of Williamstown for almost 67 years.

Mr. Filler taught and served as a counselor first at the “old” Williamstown High School until 1961 and thereafter at the “new” Mt. Greylock Regional High School, retiring as Director of Guidance in 1984. He was the last of the “Old Guard” of WHS, attending until recently many reunions of the high school classes of the late forties and fifties.

During these years he taught Driver Education, chaired the History Department, and was Curriculum Coordinator at the high school as well as Guidance Director. He served as the founding Board Member of the Williamstown Community Fund from its inception in 1953

until 2012. He also served for 47 years as a board member, president, and emeritus board member of the Northern Berkshire Center for Mental Health and the Brien Center. He was proud to have been recently named an honorary member of the Gale Hose Company, in recognition of his many years of service to the town and his donation to the Company of two antique pieces of 19th Century fire equipment.

Mr. Filler co-edited a popular two-volume set of readings in world history along with Williams professor Sidney Eisen which was published by Harcourt Brace and World and used extensively in thousands of high schools and colleges around the country in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s.

In 1954, Mr. and Mrs. Filler started Nicholas Books in a barn behind their Glen Street house. This mail-order educational book business sold publishers' overstock to high school and college libraries throughout the US and Canada. In the 1970s, Mr. Filler started Corner House Publishers, reprinting and distributing Americana books of historical significance.

Mr. Filler is survived by his wife of almost 67 years,

Myril A. Filler, 96, and by his son, Nick (Colleen) Filler of Conway, MA, his daughter Joan (Matt) Evangelista Filler of Ithaca, NY and by grandchildren Marielle Evangelista Filler of Portland, OR, Clara Evangelista Filler of Lima, Peru, Caroline Kelly Filler of Conway, MA, Katherine Rose Filler of New York City, and Alexander Teasdale Filler of Vancouver, BC, Canada. He is also survived by his cousin Zelda Stern and her husband Ralph Bradburd of Williamstown, their children, as well as several nieces and nephews who have been a source of great pride and delight.

Mr. Filler requested a simple private burial ceremony at Southlawn Cemetery in South Williamstown not far from where he had lived for the last fifty years of his Williamstown residency.

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**MAZEL TOV**

Dalton residents Troy Middleton and his mom, Miriam, were among the winners of the PJ Library's #pjmatzah contest, receiving a t-shirt, tote bag, insulated lunch bag, note pads, pens, and books. Enjoy your swag, Troy!



Strike a pose!

Mazel tov to bat mitzvah Halle Davies, and to proud parents Justin Davies and Federation board member Mara Goodman-Davies.



Alison Lee

Mazel tov to Alison Lee, junior at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, NY, who was named the recipient of the 2016 Charles Pratt Memorial Scholarship, an annual \$35,000 award conferred to a third-year undergraduate in a given department. She was recognized for outstanding creative achievement in work that reflected her wide range of interests. Alison, who grew up in Great Barrington, was active at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire as a youth leader and religious school teacher.

Mazel tov to Jerry Fischer, executive director at Jewish Federation of Eastern Connecticut, on the release of his film *Harvesting Stones: The Jewish Farmers of Eastern Connecticut*.

Mazel tov to Daniel Munch, son of Joan Goldberg Munch and Robert Munch, who celebrated his bar mitzvah at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire on May 28.



Goldie Belle

Mazel tov to Rabbi Jodie Gordon (of Hevreh) and Federation board member Josh Bloom on the birth of daughter Goldie Belle Gordon-Bloom, who arrived on May 9. Goldie joins big sister, Lola.

Mazel tov to Enid Fuhrman, a first time great-grandmother to Rylan Archer, born March 2. Ryan is the son of Kyla and Drew Archer and grandson of Richard and Dolly Fuhrman.

Mazel tov to Nancy Cook on the birth of her grandson, Ben Cook-Dubin, born March 25 in Sao Paulo, Brazil. Parents are Noah and Kika Cook-Dubin.



Bart Raser (left) and Marshall Raser (third from left) with owners of Brightwood Hardware

Mazel tov to Bart and Marshall Raser on the opening of a new Carr Hardware in Avon, CT, and Carr-Brightwood Hardware in Enfield, CT. Carr is also expanding its maintenance, repair, and operations business into the Pioneer Valley and northern Connecticut.

Congratulations to Jesse Cook-Dubin on being elected president of Downtown Pittsfield, Inc.

Mazel tov to Jackie Browner as she celebrates her 65th birthday and the 40th anniversary of her business, J.K. Browner Associates, which helps small businesses market their key positions, services, and products.

Mazel tov to Koby and Tali Geller on the birth of daughter Annaelle Adira Geller on May 27. Annaelle is the first granddaughter of Nate and Lyn Geller and the first great-granddaughter of Diana Geller. Mazel tov, too, to great uncle Andy Geller. And further congratulations to Koby Geller on his graduation from Yeshivat Chovevei Torah Rabbinical School on June 8, and on assuming the position of director at the Hillel chapter of Drew University in Madison, NJ.

Congratulations to Debora Cole-Duffy who will be the next president at Temple Anshe Amunim. Wendy Rabinowitz, Sharon Rawlings, and Joshua Hochberg are joining the board of directors. Mazel tov and *yasher koach* to all.

Hannah Wohl, daughter of Dr. Charles Wohl and Alba Passerini, has been informed by the Culture Section of the American Sociological Association that she won the Peterson Award for the best graduate student paper for 2016. The award was given for her article "Community Sense: The Cohesive Power of Aesthetic Judgment" which was published in the journal *Sociological Theory*. Hannah will receive the award at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association in Seattle this August.

**BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES**

**Celebrating Pesach in Paris**

In the home of patisseries and baguettes, matzo is truly the bread of affliction

By Avi Dresner

At the risk of getting in trouble for revealing this, my wife, Natasha, turned 40 in April. Since we have a long-standing family tradition of taking birthday trips, it came as no surprise to her when I asked "Where?", nor to me when she immediately answered "Paris."

"Texas?" I replied and, again, no surprise – she punched me in the shoulder. What did come as a surprise, however – and, frankly, a major disappointment – was when I checked the calendar, and discovered her birthday fell during Passover.

Paris seemed like the last place in the world we'd want to spend and observe Pesach. After all, it may be "the City of Light," but it is no less "the city of bread" and baked goods. The thought of being there and not being able to eat any of that stuff recalled the line from "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" – "Water, water, everywhere, nor any drop to drink." Except, in this case, it was "baguette and pastry everywhere, nor any crumb to eat."

After briefly considering writing "The Rime of the Middle-aged Farbissener," it oc-

You see, Natasha, having grown up in the former Soviet Union, tends to avoid anything that smacks of communal observance. For my part, having lived in Israel and served in the IDF during a particularly terrible wave of suicide bombings – including one at a hotel Seder – I try to avoid anywhere large groups of Jews congregate in hostile territory. With the Paris terror attacks occurring less than six months before our departure and the related Brussels attacks less than a month before, I definitely considered Paris hostile territory.

What Natasha and I most wanted was an invitation to a family Seder, but without looking like schnorrers who were trying to avoid paying for a communal one. So, we hinted at our preference in our emails to the various congregations. Apparently – and probably due to the language barrier – we were too subtle because, when we arrived in Paris, four days before the first Seder, we still had no private invitation and no idea where we'd be.

Over the next several days, in addition to all the usual tourist sites, we saw other reminders of terrorism, and even



Avi and Natasha Dresner

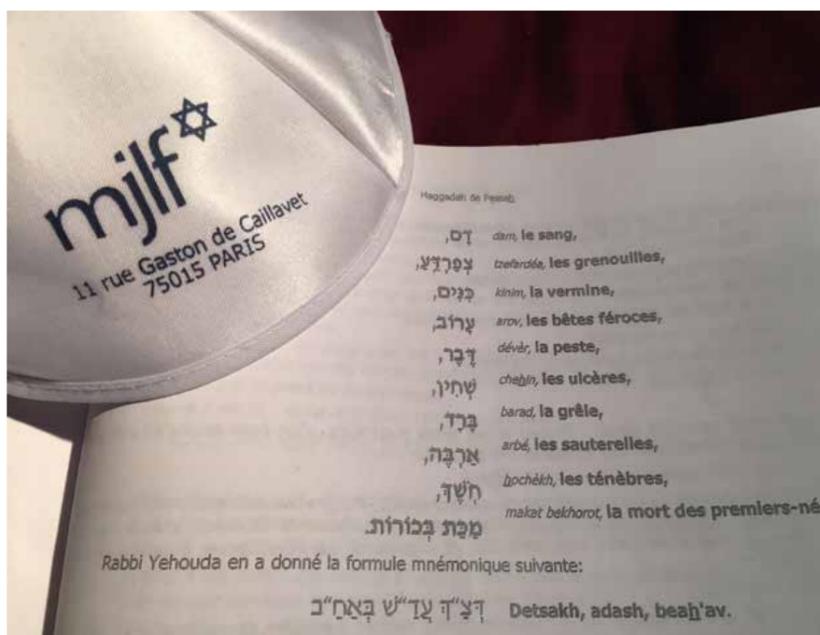
Jewish response to the November attacks.

The main synagogue – there's a smaller MJLF affiliate on the eastern edge of Paris – was located in a rather unattractive commercial district on the Left Bank, and took up four narrow floors of an office building that also housed a bowling alley. The small sanctuary, which reminded me of an art-house movie theater, was on one floor, administrative offices on another, religious school classrooms on a third, and the kitchen and social hall on a fourth, where six long tables of twenty were set for the Seder. MJLF's president, Marc Konczaty, greeted us, saying we'd be sitting with him, his wife, Annie, and several other English speakers.

At this point, I should probably say that Natasha's French is non-existent and mine *n'existe pas*, which is to say I took one summer semester at Alliance Française in New York City nearly twenty-five years ago. However, I didn't let the fact that I only understood about ten percent of MJLF senior Rabbi Yann Boissière's opening remarks stop me from translating them for Natasha.

If you've ever seen the scene in *Life Is Beautiful*, where Roberto Benigni "translates" the "welcome" speech of the German concentration camp kommandant from German – which Benigni doesn't speak a word of – into Italian, then you'll get the idea. Basically, I told Natasha that the entire Seder was an elaborate drinking game at the end of which the winner would receive a tank. And, speaking of tanks, at this point, two French soldiers showed up in combat fatigues brandishing assault rifles. This seemed to make Natasha feel more at ease, but I whispered, "I can't think of a better way for a terrorist to get into a Seder than dressed as a soldier sent there to protect it." Yet another punch in the shoulder.

The Hebrew parts of the



From the MJLF Haggadah

curred to me that, rather than being bitter about it, I could choose to look at Pesach in Paris not as a limitation, but an opportunity – not unlike the laws of kashrut themselves. I mean, how often do you get to celebrate the most communal of Jewish holidays in a community so far and foreign from your own and, yet, fundamentally still your own? And so, after researching airfares and apartment rentals, my next mission became finding us a Seder in Paris.

As the son of a Reform rabbi, I checked out the website of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, which revealed six "Liberal" Parisian synagogues, nearly all of which had English versions of their websites, and at least half of which advertised community Seders. This, however, was precisely what we didn't want.

more of anti-Semitism. Almost every time Natasha and I walked through one of Paris's many beautiful neighborhood parks, we would come across a bronze plaque announcing it had been a deportation site for Parisian Jews under the Nazis. It started to feel like a macabre "Where's Waldo?" exercise – we knew it would be there somewhere; we just didn't know where.

In part, because of these plaques – or, maybe, in spite of them – the day before the first Seder, Natasha and I made the final decision to spend it with the vibrant community of MJLF (Mouvement Juif Libérale de France). We chose them, in part, because we had seen a link to an article on the MJLF website from *The Forward* – a publication I have also written for – by one of MJLF's three rabbis, Delphine Horvilleur, about the French

# Calendar – Ongoing Events Around the Community

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

**New England Holocaust Institute & Museum** – Artifacts from the collection of founder Darrell English are now on view at the Adams Free Library, 92 Park Street, Adams, telephone (413) 743-8345. Mr. English remains available to bring selections from his collection of Holocaust artifacts to presentations for organizations, schools, and private functions. To schedule offsite presentations, call Ed Udel at (413) 446-8409.

**Monthly** – Ruthie’s Lunch Bunch meets at Congregation Beth Israel, or a local restaurant. Call for details. Congregation Beth Israel, 53 Lois Street, North Adams. Information: (413) 663-5830.

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

**Monthly** – One Monday a month (date varies according to length of book), the CBI Book Discussion Group meets at Congregation Beth Israel at 7:00 a.m. Check the CBI Newsletter for current books and schedule. Information: Chaim Bronstein at (917) 609-6732.

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

**Sundays, 10:15 a.m. (Approximately every six weeks)** – Congregation Ahavath Sholom Book Club. Contact Diana Richter at [drpajama1@gmail.com](mailto:drpajama1@gmail.com) for titles, dates, and location. Sunday, July 10, “The Marriage of Opposites,” by Alice Hoffman.

**Sundays, 10:30 a.m. (every seven weeks)** – Congregation Ahavath Sholom’s “Bagels and Brainstorms.” Contact Guy Pancer, [GPancer2@sbcglobal.net](mailto:GPancer2@sbcglobal.net) or (860) 435-2821 for topic and location.

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

**Tuesdays, July 5, 12, 19, & 26, from 10:00-11:30 a.m.** – Temple Anshe Amunim. “Play Analysis with Barbara Waldinger.” The topic is, “The Corrupting Influence of Materialism in Plays by Arthur Miller and David Mamet.” The cost for the four-session course is \$40 for Temple members and \$45 for non-members; or \$15 for any individual session. For more information, contact the Temple Anshe Amunim office at (413) 442-5910, email [templeoffice@ansheamunim.org](mailto:templeoffice@ansheamunim.org) or visit [www.ansheamunim.org](http://www.ansheamunim.org).

**Tuesdays at 1:00 p.m.** – “Beginner Hebrew” Learn to speak Hebrew from a native Israeli with Esther Benari-Altmann at Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield. Open to the community at large. Registration, full information: (413) 442-5910, extension 12, or [eba@ansheamunim.org](mailto:eba@ansheamunim.org).

**Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m., July 5 & 19 and August 2** – “Talmud Study” with Sid Freund at Hevreh. Read Talmud (the Steinsaltz edition) and engage in spirited debate on the merit of cases. Knowledge of Hebrew is not a prerequisite. Free and open to the public. Contact Hinda Bodinger (413) 528-3280 or [hindacbodinger@gmail.com](mailto:hindacbodinger@gmail.com).

**Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4:00 p.m., July 12 & 26** – “Personal Finance,” with Jay Weintraub and Stu Schweitzer. This discussion group will focus on personal financial issues including taxes, investments, and retirement strategies. Free and open to the public. Contact Hinda Bodinger (413) 528-3280 or [hindacbodinger@gmail.com](mailto:hindacbodinger@gmail.com).

**Wednesdays, from 10 to 11:30 a.m.** – optional meditation 11:30 a.m. to noon – “Yoga @ KI” with instructor Jane Rosen at Congregation Knesset Israel social hall, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield. \$5 per class for Knesset Israel members; \$10 for non-members. Open to the public. Information: Jane Rosen at (413) 464-0173 or [janerosen@berkshire.rr.com](mailto:janerosen@berkshire.rr.com).

**Wednesdays, from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.** – Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road, Great Barrington, offers “an hour of morning stillness” with Nina Lipkowitz, a certified Kripalu Yoga Teacher. Donation of \$10 is asked for from non-members. Information: (413) 528-6378.

**Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m.** – “Conversational Hebrew”. Practice speaking Hebrew with native Israeli Esther Benari-Altmann, Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield. Open to the community at large. Information and registration: (413) 442-5910 ext. 12 or [eba@ansheamunim.org](mailto:eba@ansheamunim.org).

**Wednesdays through August, 7-9 p.m.** – The B’Shalom Chorale rehearses at Hevreh for its August 10 concert. Contact Cantor Emily Sleeper Mekler at (413) 531-8706 or email [BShalomChorale@gmail.com](mailto:BShalomChorale@gmail.com). Chorale dues: \$50.

**Thursdays, 10:45-noon.** – Congregation Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Rd, Pittsfield. The Book of Deuteronomy. Rabbi Weiner guides conversations about the book in its historical context. Discussions touch on comparisons to other parts of the Torah and scripture, underlying philosophical issues and spiritual implications. Full information and schedule: (413) 445-4872, ext 10.

**Thursdays (fourth of each month)** – Hadassah Book Club. For times, locations of meetings, and further information about the books: Roz Kolodny at (413) 243-2077 or [rozlk@yahoo.com](mailto:rozlk@yahoo.com).  
**Thursdays at 6:15 p.m.** – “Intermediate Hebrew,” with Esther Benari-Altmann. Teens and adults join together for

lively study of Modern Hebrew with an expert instructor. Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield. Open to the community at large. Information and registration: (413) 442-5910, ext. 12 or [eba@ansheamunim.org](mailto:eba@ansheamunim.org).

**Fridays, last of month, time varies with candle lighting** – Chabad of the Berkshires’ “Friday Night Live,” traditional Kabbalat Shabbat service. Information: (413) 499-9899 or visit [www.jewishberkshires.com](http://www.jewishberkshires.com).

**Fridays, at 9:00 a.m.** – Meditation with Rabbi Rachel Barenblat in the Congregation Beth Israel sanctuary, 53 Lois Street, North Adams, overlooking the Berkshire mountains. Silence, chanting, and meditation designed to help prepare for Shabbat. All welcomed. Information: (413) 663-5830 and [www.cbiweb.org](http://www.cbiweb.org).

**Fridays, last of the month** – The Berkshire Hills Hadassah Summer Book Club discusses books with a Jewish theme. All Hadassah members – and those wishing to become members – are welcome to join. July 29: “The Jerusalem Maiden” by Talia Carner. For more information on time and location, please contact Carol Goodman Kaufman at [ckaufman@hadassah.org](mailto:ckaufman@hadassah.org).

**Fridays, once a month at 5:30 p.m. (followed by a family style Shabbat dinner at 6:30 p.m.)** – Congregation Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield. Shirei Shabbat (“Songs of Shabbat”). Unique service combines melodies from Carlebach, Debbie Friedman, and Camp Ramah to create a “ruach” filled (“spirited”) family

friendly experience. Cost for dinner \$18 per adult, \$15 teens, \$50 family maximum. Dinner reservations are due by the Monday before services. Full information: (413) 445-4872, ext 10.

**Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.** – “Torah Plus: Exploring Jewish Text and Culture.” Join Rabbi Josh Breindel for a conversation based on the texts of the Jewish people and reflection on what it means to be Jewish. All texts are offered in English. Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield. Free. Open to the public. Information (413) 442-5910 or [templeoffice@ansheamunim.org](mailto:templeoffice@ansheamunim.org).

## Congregation Knesset Israel 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield

### ONGOING MINYANS

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

### CANDLE-LIGHTING

Friday, July 1 ..... 8:15 p.m.  
Friday, July 8 ..... 8:13 p.m.  
Friday, July 15 ..... 8:09 p.m.  
Friday, July 22 ..... 8:04 p.m.  
Friday, July 29 ..... 7:57 p.m.

See “Berkshire Jewish Congregations and Organizations” on page 25 for information on all regularly scheduled services in the area. Contact a congregation directly if you wish to arrange an unscheduled minyan.

## PARIS, continued from page 22

Seder that followed were blessedly familiar but, at the end of it, Benigni was again on my mind when Rabbi Horvilleur led us in a gorgeous Ladino version of “Who Knows One?” that any Italian or Spanish speaker would have understood. Rabbi Boissière also led a raucous Hebrew version, complete with pantomime, that made me and – from the looks of it – everyone else there feel like we were reliving our best moments of Jewish summer camp. And, not unlike the camp experience, what Natasha and I will remember most from the Seder are the people we spent it with.

Naturally, we played the *de rigeur* Jewish geography, which seemed even more *de rigeur* in the land that gave us *de rigeur*. It turned out there wasn’t even one degree of separation between me and the woman to my immediate right, Jacqueline, who remembered

seeing my dad, a prominent Freedom Rider, featured in a film about the Civil Rights Movement in the Paris Museum of Jewish Art & History. And when the husband of the couple sitting opposite us, Robert Vitkine, found out we were from Massachusetts, he recounted a story from when he was at Harvard Business School and an older student invited a bunch of the foreign students to dinner at his home. That older student’s name was Mitt Romney.

Robert and his wife, Eveline, were nice enough to drive us back to our apartment, which was only obliquely on their way home. When we said our *au revoirs* to them and then to Paris itself a few days later, we were struck by the simple and beautiful power of breaking bread with brethren even – and especially – when you can’t eat any.



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## CULTURE AND ARTS

## Museum Innovator Brings a New Vision to BEHOLD! New Lebanon

Ruth Abram of New York's Tenement Museum fame illuminates local rural life with new museum concept

NEW LEBANON, NY – Ruth Abram sees things most people don't. For example, about New Lebanon, she says: "This is not a sleepy town where nothing happens. Things are happening at every turn!"

In New Lebanon?

In New Lebanon. In June, Abram embarked on her second season at the helm of BEHOLD! New Lebanon, an innovative living museum of contemporary rural life that showcases the town's farmers, artisans, tradespeople, restaurateurs, naturalists, and entrepreneurs. A "museum without walls," BEHOLD! features a lineup of events at different sites around town throughout the summer months, inviting visitors to experience rural life in the locales in which it transpires. Guides perform demonstrations in their workplaces

*I started going around town and asking people what do you know, or know how to do, that urban and suburban people don't. And their answers filled page after page.*

— Ruth Abram

- in July, for example, visitors can learn about cultivating hops or making sausage, tips for training a dog, renovating historic homes, making kinetic art, glass blowing, or about the ecology of Wyomanoc Creek, which follows the footprint of the once famed Rutland Railroad.

BEHOLD! is Abram's second foray as founder of a museum, the first being the Lower East Side Tenement Museum in New York City. With both projects, Abram drew on her awareness of history and her desire to tell the story of a place and its people. While the Tenement Museum's narrative is complex but straightforward – it conveys the experience of immigrants arriving in America, of outsiders making their way in a difficult city – Abram has had to think outside the box to convey the story of New Lebanon's past and present. BEHOLD! reflects her own desire to understand the nature of the community she moved to in 2007, a place whose workings were mysterious to her and far outside her experiences as an urbanite with a life and career in rarified, cosmopolitan milieus.

#### Jewish Activist Roots

Abram grew up in Atlanta, and has deep roots in the South. Her Romanian grandfather settled in the tiny town of Fitzgerald, GA, operating an "always failing" dry goods store there. Her grandmother was the daughter of a Reform rabbi, although Abram says her father, Morris, had no real Jewish education. Her father, she says, had "one dream – to get out of that small town."

He succeeded admirably, attending the University of Georgia and obtaining a law degree from University of Chicago, as well as being chosen as a Rhodes scholar (which he had to forgo due to World War

II, though he later obtained a master's degree from Oxford University). While serving in the military, Morris Abram became a member of the US staff at the Nuremberg Tribunal, and became a passionate advocate for Jewish causes throughout his life.

While in the army, he married Abram's mother, Jane McGuire, whose family was socially prominent in Orlando, FL. Ruth's parents settled in Atlanta, where Morris worked as a corporate lawyer, but also became active in the Civil Rights movement, traveling the South "at considerable danger to himself" in order to advocate for African Americans. As a result of these efforts, he became acquainted with African American movers and shakers in Atlanta, and had enough of a reputation of someone who

could move in white and black circles that during the 1960 presidential campaign, he was approached by John F. Kennedy's father Joseph to see if he could arrange a call between the candidate and Martin Luther King, Jr., who had just been jailed in Georgia. Abram put Kennedy in touch with King's wife Coretta, a call that some say drew much needed African American support to his campaign. Abram's father went on to lead the National Jewish Council and to serve as president of Brandeis University, and was appointed by Ronald Reagan to serve as the Representative of the United States to the European Office of the United Nations.

#### From Advocacy to History

Ruth Abram recalls her own journey of Jewish consciousness beginning on a jarring note. At age 13, she was enrolled in an evangelical Presbyterian school with a reputation for academic excellence. She recalls being scared, but "armored" with her poodle skirt, saddle shoes, crinolines, Peter Pan collar, and, most importantly, a cadre of good friends, she forged ahead. On the first day of school, however, her friends took her aside and told her that "from this day on, they could no longer invite me to their parties. It wasn't them, it was their parents and it was because I was Jewish. I flew out into the world, and thought this was such a betrayal of friendship."

What made things more confounding, Abram says that given her father's lack of Jewish background and her mother being outside the faith, she had no idea what it even meant to be Jewish. She remembers her parents' reaction was to enroll her in the local temple school. "From that moment on, I understood the hurt caused by differentiating

people for who they are, and I never wanted to be part of it. And I have essentially chosen work that expresses that perspective."

Her family moved to New York when Abram was a high school senior – "free at last" is how she describes the feeling – and she pursued an education and then embarked on a career squarely in the liberal activism continuum. She married husband Herbert Teitelbaum the day after graduating from college – she says that "she didn't want to be unclear about Jewish identity," and that it was important to her to marry a Jewish man. Herbert fit the bill, she says, but it was only after they were married that she recognized that his parents were avowed socialists who cared little about Judaism, and that her husband's Jewish education was no more developed than her own. She says the two of them had to discover a Jewish identity for themselves and their family.

After obtaining a degree in policy planning in social welfare at Brandeis, Abram worked for the NAACP and ACLU, and was hired by feminist icon Gloria Steinem to run the Women's Action Alliance, which was dedicated to providing resources to women working to change their lives by overcoming gender discrimination. During her time there, she came to the conclusion that "advocacy was one way to change the world, but that history was another." She went back to school for an American History degree at New York University, where she started to develop the idea of the Tenement Museum. "Lower East Side is inextricably entwined in the public memory with immigration, and I could build on that and create a museum which would do something that no museum had tried to do – to start a conversation with the public about a contemporary issue using history. That issue would be how we treat a stranger in the land, an outsider."

Located in what was then an extremely rough neighborhood, the Tenement Museum took a bit of time to catch on, but has since enjoyed success as the most visited historical museum in New York. Her idea has served as a template of how a museum might convey a historical narrative, one that has been used as a model for other museums of its type around the world.

#### A New Type of Museum

With BEHOLD! New Lebanon, Abram is once again innovating. She and her husband arrived in the region nine years ago, after he left the world of corporate law to serve as the executive director of New York's State Commission on Public Integrity during the governorships of Eliot Spitzer and David Patterson. New York State, politics, ethics, Eliot Spitzer – while the saga is too involved to get into here,

suffice it to say that "Mr. Teitelbaum Goes to Albany" did not end happily. Nevertheless, it brought Abram to New Lebanon, allowing her to focus her powers of imagination on a town, as many people would tell her, "that used to be extraordinary, but that just fell apart."

As Abram investigated what New Lebanon was all about, she learned about its rich history in the 19th century. Known for its waters, it was a famed spa town where hydrotherapy was pioneered, and was visited by luminaries like Ulysses S. Grant and Charles Dickens. New Lebanon was home to the first free library, the graduation of the thermometer was established there, and the Shakers made New Lebanon their headquarters, advocating for feminism, abolition of slavery, and veganism. New Lebanon was also a center of religious revivalism that attracted thousands of visitors. The Tilden Pharmaceutical Company, which built the first pharmaceutical factory in America, was based in town, and culled botanical medicines from nearby woods and wetlands.

The town's decline started after the Civil War, when Southern families who had summered there could no longer afford to do so. Saratoga, a spa with the added attraction of horse racing, also siphoned off clientele. So by the time the early 21st century arrived, the town's glory days were well behind it, but Abram, following her historical curiosity, recognized that all the elements that had engen-



Ruth Abram

shocked by all the things going on. I started going around town and asking people what do you know, or know how to do, that urban and suburban people don't. And their answers filled page after page, and when I looked at them all together, it seemed to me like we had the makings of a museum – a museum like nobody had ever heard of, but museum nonetheless." She formed a board and piloted the program in 2014 to find out if it would work. BEHOLD! launched its first successful season in 2015, and as it opens its second season, has received a nearly \$90,000 Rural Development Grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

While the idea met with some resistance – the chief objection by the most vociferous critics has been that she's not from New Lebanon, which she admits is true and cannot be helped – the local community has by and large embraced outsider Abram's outsized

vision, in no small part because BEHOLD! has connected many people who might not have otherwise known about what their neighbors were up to. "People have been surprised by each other," says Abram, "and are pleased to meet each other."

She says that at outset, some of the guides were nervous that they would be the objects of ridicule for visitors who did not understand them, but who have found out that the opposite is true, that their guests are interested and respectful of their skills. "A lot of city people passing through here may ask, 'how could anybody live here, what do they do?' BEHOLD! New Lebanon answers that question. What they do

is very interesting, and they've done it to live successfully in this environment, and they are experimenters and explorers. We're living in a place that's full of experimentation and innovation."

For more information on BEHOLD! New Lebanon, visit [beholdnewlebanon.org](http://beholdnewlebanon.org).



BEHOLD! guide Rhonda Leavitt, queen of the reptile rescuers, with a friend. Leavitt will present a family-friendly program on August 6.

dered the town's great success – the waters, the land – were all still in place. She set out to uncover what the contemporary residents of New Lebanon were doing with the resources at hand.

"As I got to know people and saw what they did," she remembers, "some as a living, some as an avocation, I was

## CULTURE AND ARTS

# Yidstock Welcomes the Klezmatics on their 30th Anniversary

World's Premier Yiddish Music Festival to Feature Other Top Performers

By Albert Stern

AMHERST – First, a behind the scenes story – when my wife and I first started dating 13 years ago, she was friendly with the wife of one of the Klezmatics. We were invited to one of their shows, and before the band went on, we chatted with her friend's husband.

He was a bit downcast, telling us how he wasn't sure what direction the band was heading in, or if it would even continue. He said they were starting to work with some of Woody Guthrie's lost lyrics, putting music to words that the folk singer had never recorded. "If this Guthrie stuff doesn't work," I distinctly remember him saying, "then we're probably going to pack it in."

The "Guthrie stuff" became *Wonder Wheel*, which won the Grammy Award for Best Contemporary World Music Album in 2006, and also *Woody Guthrie's Happy Joyous Hanukkah*, which featured holiday tunes composed in the late 1940s. And this July, the Klezmatics will celebrate their 30th anniversary as a band at Yidstock, the Yiddish Book Center's annual festival of Jewish music, with a performance featuring songs from their new album *Apikorsim* ("Heretics").

"How can any family stay together without ups and downs?" asks trumpeter Frank London, the band's founder, responding to the anecdote.

"Success is doing what you do for as long as you can do it. What we're doing now is still vital."

Like so many Jewish stories, that of the Klezmatics starts on the Lower East Side of New York City. In 1986, says London, the musicians who would form the band were frequenting cutting edge venues like the Knitting Factory, whose bookers were amenable to putting on everything from the most far-out experimental sounds to overlooked styles of the past.

London, a Long Island native, was already steeped in traditional klezmer, having played in the early 1980s with the pioneering Klezmer Conservatory Band founded by his teacher at the New England Conservatory, Hankus Netsky. In the days before the internet facilitated access to rare music of all stripes, finding klezmer recordings involved a great deal of digging. "The scarcity made it romantic and fun," remembers London. First wave klezmer revival musicians learned their craft by listening to old 78 rpm records that had been transferred to cassette by Netsky. "We tried to sound like the old records," says London, remembering the nascent scene as "cultish."

As a young artist, London not only had the challenge of learning the conventions of the music, but of absorbing

the attendant Jewish culture in which klezmer is imbedded. There was "nothing culturally specific to Judaism that I grew up with," London says. A "happy fourth generation Reform Jew," he remembers there was no Yiddish spoken in his home, nor did he hear the *niggunim* more connected Jews might have sung around the dinner table. The immersion in Jewish tradition necessary to properly understand and play the music was "a great revelation, finding out about the beautiful world of Eastern European Jewish life."

It was "serendipity," says London, that the band's members, all from places other than New York, recognized each other as "musically Jewish, and came together to figure out where we were at." The Klezmatics, following the approach of their revivalist predecessors, began by trying to replicate the sound and feel of the old records, playing at small clubs, parties, and weddings. Their career veered in a different direction in 1988, when they were invited to play in Europe in festivals that showcased acts from the burgeoning World Music scene. The concerts' promoters also operated a record label and, says London, "encouraged us to put our own voice into the music and not just replicate what had gone before." The relationship between the band



The Klezmatics

and label allowed the Klezmatics to develop their unique approach.

And thus the Klezmatics embarked on what London characterizes as "a long ongoing journey in which we negotiate history, tradition, peoplehood, authenticity, and relevance. Negotiating the niche we found has always been tricky. Of all the klezmer groups, we are the most traditional of the experimental and the most experimental of the traditional." London is much in demand a sideman for artists in a wide variety of styles (he has played on over 300 albums), and also participates in several side projects that delve deeply into other aspects of Jewish music.

It wasn't until *Wonder*

*Wheel*, which came together 15 years into the journey, that London feels the band's sound and identity truly coalesced. "*Wonder Wheel* was not a klezmer record, it was a Klezmatics record." He says it is "typical for the Klezmatics jump around from a religious song praising God to one of fighting for social justice," like the song perhaps most associated with the band, "Ale Brid-er" ("All Brothers"). The lyrics to this century-old Jewish socialist anthem hold "we're all brothers / and we pray from the same prayer book / Religious and leftists, all united." Says London: "That was 100 years ago, but these divisions

**KLEZMATICS,**  
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## BERKSHIRE JEWISH CONGREGATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS



### Welcome to the Jewish Berkshires

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

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

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

**JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG**

### Berkshire Minyan

Lay-led egalitarian minyan held at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Rd., Great Barrington, MA (413) 229-3618, berkshirereminyan.org Services: Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

### Berkshire Hills Hadassah

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

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

### Chabad of the Berkshires

450 South St., Pittsfield, MA (413) 499-9899, jewishberkshires.com Check website for service times and locations.

### Congregation Ahavath Sholom

*Reconstructionist*  
North St., Great Barrington, MA (413) 528-4197, ahavathsholom.com Services: Fridays at 5:30 p.m., Saturdays at 10 a.m. Call to confirm services

### Congregation Beth Israel

*Reform*  
53 Lois St., North Adams, MA (413) 663-5830, cbiweb.org Services: Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

### Congregation Knesset Israel

*Conservative*  
16 Colt Rd., Pittsfield, MA (413) 445-4872, knessetisrael.org Services: Fridays at 5:45 p.m., Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

### Hevreh of Southern Berkshire

*Reform*  
270 State Rd., Great Barrington, MA (413) 528-6378, hevreh.org Services: Fridays 7:30 p.m., except first Friday of month, 6 p.m., Saturdays, Torah Study at 9 a.m., services at 10 a.m. Call to confirm.

### Israel Philatelist Society

c/o Rabbi Harold Salzmann  
24 Ann Dr., Pittsfield, MA (413) 442-4312

### 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

### RIMON – A Collaborative Community for Jewish Spirituality

PO Box 502, Great Barrington, MA (413) 274-1034, rimonberkshires.org

### Temple Anshe Amunim

*Reform*  
26 Broad St., Pittsfield, MA (413) 442-5910, ansheamunim.org Services: Fridays at 5:30 p.m., Saturdays, Torah Study at 9:30 a.m., services at 10:45 a.m.

### BEYOND THE BERKSHIRES

#### Congregation Anshe Emeth

*Conservative*  
240 Joslen Blvd., Hudson, NY (518) 828-6848, congregationanshemeth.net Services: Fridays at 7:30 p.m., Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

#### Congregation Beth El

107 Adams St., Bennington, VT (802) 442-9645, cbevermont.org Services: Saturdays at 10 a.m.

#### Nassau Jewish Community Center & Synagogue

Route 20, Box 670, Nassau, NY (518) 766-9831, nassausynagogue.org Services: Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

#### Temple Israel of Catskill

*Reform*  
220 Spring St., Catskill, NY (518) 943-5758, templeisraelofcatskill.org.

#### The Chatham Synagogue

Route 28, Box 51, Chatham, NY (518) 392-0701, chathamynagogue.org Services: Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

## CULTURE AND ARTS

## Lies, Damn Lies, and ... the Torah?

No one will ever love you  
honestly / No one will ever love  
you for your honesty

— Stephen Merritt of  
*The Magnetic Fields*

“A court witness places a hand on a Bible and promises ‘to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,’” writes Rabbi Dennis Ross in the introduction to his latest book, *When a Lie is Not a Sin: The Hebrew Bible’s Framework for Deciding*. “You have to wonder if the faithful among them ever opened the book they’re swearing on, let alone looked inside.”

Since his days as a yeshiva student, Rabbi Ross has been delving deeply into the Torah and commentary about it, and he distills his erudition into a lively volume about the nature and meaning of prevarication in both the Bible and our daily lives. Early on, Rabbi Ross asserts his belief that “the Hebrew Bible is true – there’s truth in each and every word – as interpreted and taught by our rabbis. Now we ask: What truth does the Hebrew Bible want us to know?”

Said Rabbi Ross to the BJV: “Judaism teaches us to always tell the truth, and the Torah is so truthful, it tells us about all the times when people lie.” In the book, he demonstrates how lies drive a large number of the best known stories, particularly in the Book of Genesis – think, for instance of Adam telling Eve that God forbade even touching the fruit of the tree in the middle of the Garden of Eden (He didn’t); Jacob’s trickery in usurping his brother Esau’s birthright; Jacob’s sons asserting that wild beasts killed their brother Joseph; Rachel’s stealing her father Laban’s idols and telling him she didn’t know where they were;

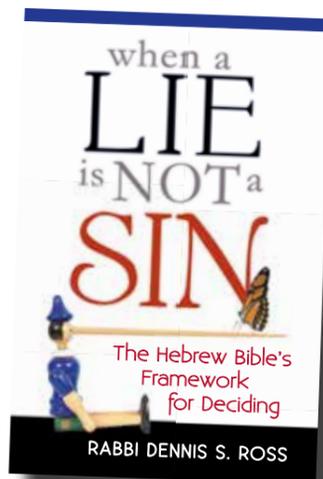
and on and on. Throughout the narrative, people lie to each other, to themselves, and even to God.

But it was the story of Abraham’s ruse while in Egypt fleeing famine – misleading Pharaoh that his wife Sarah was in fact his sister – that has bothered Rabbi Ross since childhood. “What struck me as a kid was being taught that everyone in the Torah was supposed to be so holy and pure.” This story, in particular, alerted young Dennis that “there wasn’t full disclosure” in the way he was being taught.

He says that after his ordination and ongoing study of the texts, he became increasingly sensitive not only to the abundance of lying, but to the distinctive qualities of mis-truths. He identified white lies, embellishments, half-truths, benevolent lies, self-protective lies, lying to get ahead, and hurtful lies. One of the many pleasures of *When a Lie is Not a Sin* is the way Rabbi Ross employs just the right scriptural example to illuminate each different type of lie, and then hones in on the elements of those stories that anyone reading will relate to.

The book’s subtitle, “The Hebrew Bible’s Framework for Deciding,” reveals what Rabbi Ross says is “the driver of this book – the idea that when you read Torah, you should have more of those ‘Aha!’ moments that speak to you in the way you live your life. It’s a handbook for leading an examined Jewish life.” He writes that he wants to “encourage decision making within a Jewish framework in order to arrive at authentic Jewish living.”

Lying, he acknowledges, is an inevitably tricky business. “If someone keeps telling little lies,” says Rabbi Ross, “it will



raise questions about the integrity of the speaker. Eventually, there is a larger moral question when you start convincing yourself that these harmless little lies don’t matter. By then you are telling two lies in one – one to others, and one to yourself.”

Nevertheless, sometimes the best decision to make is to lie, he says, although he asserts the key question to ask oneself first is: “What if I told the truth?”

*When a Lie is Not a Sin* is an accessible blend of serious scholarship and self-help ideas that manages to both illuminate the peculiar nature of the Torah and its protagonists, and also the peculiar nature of our own lives and decisions. You may never love someone for their honesty, but you will enjoy Rabbi Ross’s unflinching look at dynamics of lying, the reasons we mislead, and the elusive nature of the truth.

Rabbi Dennis Ross will speak about *When a Lie is Not a Sin at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire on Friday, July 22 at 7:30 p.m., during the Kabbalat Shabbat service.*

Shakespeare & Company to Tackle the Problematic *Merchant of Venice*

Jewish Shylock and multi-ethnic cast “will not back off,” says director Tina Packer

Unfortunately, Shakespeare’s intimations do not alleviate the savagery of his portrait of the Jew, nor can we suppose they were meant to, for Shakespeare’s own audience anyway. The Holocaust made and makes *The Merchant of Venice* unplayable, at least in what appear to be its own terms.

— Harold Bloom, *Shakespeare: The Invention of the Human*

LENOX – Whether or not one agrees with this assessment about *The Merchant of Venice*, it is a point of view that anyone staging the play has to grapple with, not only because of the echoes of historical anti-Semitism the work evokes, but also because of the current international climate of hostility toward Jews and the

“The play is all about how human beings can live in complexity,” says Packer, who says she well understands that on any given night given the demographics of Berkshires audiences, half of the 400 people in the theater are likely to be Jewish. Many are likely to be discomfited, particularly because, Packer says, “I’m asking my actors not to back off and to report back on how it feels not to back off.”

Packer says she never wanted to do the play until she visited Venice decades ago. There she saw remnants of the multicultural society fostered during the city’s heyday as a mercantile powerhouse, a place where Christians, Muslims, and Jews lived side by side. She saw that the Vene-



Israeli actor Shahar Isaac (Bassanio) and John Hadden (Antonio)

State of Israel. As old anti-Semitic memes have been revived by contemporary villains who not only voice their hate but act upon it, the 1605 play about literature’s most famous Jewish antagonist feels raw and shockingly provocative. Anyone who dimly remembers *The Merchant of Venice* as a period piece about archaic attitudes – and Shylock’s “If

Shylock is a realistic creature from out of a dream.

Shylock is a realistic creature from out of a dream.

— Jonathan Epstein

you prick us, do we not bleed” speech as a proto-Kumbaya let’s-all-get-along moment – would be advised to either see the play again, or start reading the news more closely.

This July, Shakespeare & Company will present theatergoers with the opportunity to see *Merchant* in all its confounding difficulty. Neither Tina Packer, who is directing the play, nor Jonathan Epstein, who stars as Shylock, agrees in the slightest with Bloom’s dictum about the unplayability of the work. Not only that, both are working to explore the less exposed, but equally challenging, ideas about race, religion, and gender that the play poses beyond its anti-Semitism.

She continues, “There was equality under the law, where a bond was a bond,” a principle Shylock doggedly adheres to in demanding his pound of flesh from the character of Antonio. “But what the play is in part about is how Shylock finds out that idea is a boondoggle. The laws of the land are the laws of the land until they are not.” Shylock is ultimately thwarted and humiliated in court, losing wealth and his daughter Jessica, and is also forced to convert to Christianity.

This production marks the second time Packer has staged *Merchant*. Eighteen years ago, she employed a cast of nearly 50 actors, a total that has been more than halved this time around. Her 19 actors are from “a slew of different races,” she says, and include African-Americans, an Indian-American, and three Israelis, many of whom will play multiple roles. “Sometimes they’ll play to their ethnic backgrounds, and sometimes not, as a way for those actors to make their way through the sexism and

MERCHANT,  
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Chester Theatre Company to Stage Israeli Comedy *OH GOD*

CHESTER, MA – The Chester Theatre Company, in partnership with Israeli Stage, will present Anat Gov’s *OH GOD*, a play about a therapist who has only one session to cure her newest client, God, of a depression so severe, He is contemplating putting an end to his finest and most disappointing creation – humankind.

The production features Maureen Keller as Ella, the therapist, and Norton prize honoree Will Lyman as the Almighty. Directed by Israeli Stage Artistic Director Guy Ben-Aharon, the play received positive notices from the Boston

Globe: “What [playwright] Gov did was find a smart balance that allows both the laughs and ideas to land with roughly equal force. Without undermining the droll tenor of the play, *OH GOD* also makes room for genuine emotion.

The play runs July 14 – 24. For more information on the play and scheduled talkbacks and panel discussions, visit [www.chestertreathouse.org](http://www.chestertreathouse.org), or contact the box office at (413) 354-7771. The theater is located at 15 Middlefield Road in Chester, MA.



## CULTURE AND ARTS

# Berkshire Jewish Film Festival Marks its 30th Anniversary

LENOX – The Berkshire Jewish Film Festival, one of the longest running festivals of its kind in the USA, will host its 30th consecutive season of Jewish themed cinema from around the world. Screenings will be held on Mondays starting July 11 and continue through August 15 in the Duffin Theater, Lenox Memorial High School, 197 East Street. Fourteen films will be featured this year, including shorts and feature films.

The festival opens July 11 at 4 p.m. with two films. *Projections of America* documents the request from the Office of War Information to create short, informative films that would redefine the image of America to the world during the darkest days of World War II. Robert Raskin, Academy Award-winning screenwriter, headed this unique project with the belief that “the power of movies” could reshape the world. Speaking will be Peter Miller, the film’s producer and director. *The Cummington Story*, produced by the United States Information Service, depicts the integration of WWII refugees into the small town of Cummington, MA. Arnold Simmel, Cummington’s historian, will be on hand to share insights. At 8 p.m., *On the Map* relates the incredible true story about a Tel Aviv basketball team that no one thought could win, but who nonetheless toppled the four-time defending European champions and put Israel firmly on the map. This film is presented as a sneak preview screening.

On July 18 at 4 p.m., Academy Award short film nominee *Ave Maria* portrays the disrupt-



*Great Dictator Adenoid Hynkel with his own ideas about being on the map*

tion of the silent routine of five nuns in the West Bank when an Israeli settler’s car breaks down outside the convent just as the Sabbath begins. A second film, *Breakfast at Ina’s*, pays an affectionate homage to a beloved Chicago eatery and its magnetic namesake. The film chronicles the final days of a restaurant as uniquely individual as its founder Ina Pinkney, who will be speaking following the film. At 8 p.m., *Remember* stars Academy Award winner Christopher Plummer as a dementia-stricken Holocaust survivor out for revenge in master director Atom Egoyan’s supremely suspenseful thriller. Themes of mourning and self-denial are braided together in an intensely paced and intricately plotted story. Following the screening, screenwriter Ben August will talk about the film.

The festival continues on July 25 at 4 p.m. with *Zemene*, a feature documentary about an Ethiopian girl who bravely struggles with poverty, poor education, and potentially life threatening illness, and who is saved by Dr. Rick Hodes. Melissa Donovan, the film’s director will answer questions after the film. *Love and Taxes* at 8 p.m. is a comedy of solo performance and scripted scenes which tells the tale of seven years of tax avoidance. Josh Kornbluth, the film’s writer and star, will speak.

Screening on August 1 at 4 p.m.,

the documentary *Brundibar Revisited* is about a Berlin based youth theater group comprising children of various ethnic backgrounds who live on the fringe. They learn powerful lessons as they stage the opera *Brundibar*, which was performed fifty times by Jewish youth in Theresienstadt. *Sabena Hijacking: My Version* is a striking reenactment combined with harrowing testimonies in a true story of a terrorist siege that forever shaped the Jewish State. Nati Dinnar, the film’s creator, will talk about how he told the story.

At 4 p.m. on August 8, *Je Suis Charlie* addresses journalistic freedom, the ongoing threat of Islamic fundamentalism, and the larger ideals of a democratic nation. This

potent tribute to the slaughtered Charlie Hebdo cartoonists chronicles the aftermath of the terrorist attack that galvanized France and much of the free world. *Very Semi-Serious* at 8 p.m. is an offbeat documentary about humor, art and the genius of The New Yorker cartoon. Mort Gerberg, cartoonist, will be on hand to share his experiences.

*Broadway Musicals: A Jewish Legacy* at 4 p.m. on August 15 is a humorous and provocative examination of the unique role of Jewish composers and lyricists had in the creation of the modern American musical.

In the evening of the 15th at 6:30 p.m., the Berkshire Jewish Film Festival will celebrate the anniversary of 30 years of summer film

tor. Charlie Chaplin wrote, directed, and starred in his first talkie, in which Dictator Adenoid Hynkel tried to expand his empire while a poor Jewish barber tries to avoid persecution from Hynkel’s regime.

The Berkshire Jewish Film Festival is presented by Congregation Knesset Israel and supported by the Greylock Federal Credit Union, the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, and the Spitz-Tuchman Charitable Trust.

Tickets are \$7 for matinees and \$10 for evenings. Season tickets are \$90 and can be purchased in advance or the first night of the festival. Seating is general admission. There will be a minyan each Monday evening at 6:45 for anyone who wishes to participate.



From *Projections of America*

presentations with a special reception. This will be followed by the final film at 8 p.m., the cinema classic *The Great Dicta-*

For information call Congregation Knesset Israel at (413) 445-4872, ext. 25 or visit [www.knessetisrael.org](http://www.knessetisrael.org).

## KLEZMATICS, continued from page 25

still exist.”

And the Klezmatics have no thoughts of packing it in any time soon. At this year’s Yidstock, expect the band to play highlights from its 30 years together, but with a focus on the new CD, *Apikorsim*. “It’s always wonderful playing the Yiddish Book Center,” says London. “Through touring, I’ve learned that ‘Jewish’ means a lot of things that are not always connected to Yiddishkeit. But at the Book Center, the connection is real and palpable. We don’t have to explain the basics – like, we don’t have to say ‘matza’ is a kind of bread – which gives us the chance to explain other things about the music in more depth.”

### The Festival

In his fifth year as the program director of Yidstock, Seth Rogovoy says he’s bringing back some of the festival’s greatest hits, but also planning to mix things up in unexpected ways. “What I like to do is pair up two musicians and ask them to do something no one has ever heard before,” he says. He

says he’s particularly excited about the Sunday afternoon concert pairing Frank London and British clarinetist Merlin Shepherd, who “both bring virtuosity, and who will be working out their musical affinities and differences onstage.”

Shepherd will perform with his own band Sklamberg & the Shepherds on Friday. Other performers include the Klezmer Conservatory Orchestra, Yiddish cabaret singer Eleanor Rissa, and first timers Paul Shapiro’s Ribs & Brisket Revue, who play little known music from the 1940s and 1950s when black jazz musicians recorded Yiddish novelty songs. The Klezmatics’ 30th anniversary concert takes place on Saturday, July 16. Numerous workshops and seminars will also be conducted during the festival.

*Yidstock takes place July 14-17 at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst. For more information and tickets, visit [www.yiddishbookcenter.org/yidstock](http://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/yidstock), or call (413) 256-4900.*

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## CULTURE AND ARTS

## Israeli-born Choreographer Zvi Gotheiner Brings ZviDance Back to to Jacob's Pillow

"Escher/Bacon/Rothko" will explore the power of visual art through dance

**BECKETT** – By any stretch of the imagination, an Israeli dancer's journey from Kibbutz Mesilot in the Beit She'an Valley to Jacob's Pillow in the Berkshire Hills is likely to have been a twisty one. As choreographer Zvi Gotheiner tells the story, it was an odyssey made possible through an intense passion for modern dance, a relentless autodidactic focus in learning about dance history, patience over years of experimentation while honing his craft, and obtaining the business acumen to sustain a company that performs on some of the world's most prestigious stages.

It's a journey that started, says Zvi, with a little help from his kibbutz and the State of Israel.

From July 20 through July 24, ZviDance will be at Jacob's Pillow to present a dance triptych titled "Escher/Bacon/Rothko," which explores the choreographer's responses to three giants of modern visual art. The artists all affected him in such meaningful ways, he says "that I wanted to create a process that reflects their artistic processes." The program will be the first time ZviDance has performed at Jacob's Pillow since 2004, although last April the company brought "On the Road," a work in development about the Beat Generation, to North Adams for a joint Pillow/Mass MoCA event.

### Kibbutznik

Born in 1952, Zvi describes his childhood in Kibbutz Mesilot (located below Mount Gilboa) as "amazing and tormented." His parents, member of the Hashomer Hatzair ("Young Guard") Socialist-Zionist secular Jewish youth movement, made aliyah in 1932 and settled in the kibbutz, which is located precariously close to borders with Jordan and Syria. "In that kind of experiment of socialism and nationalism," remembers Zvi, "I was lucky to be singled out as an artistic child." The kibbutz sponsored his earliest artistic endeavors.

He started as a violinist, becoming a soloist with the Young Kibbutzim Orchestra and traveling from Mesilot to Tel Aviv for weekly instruction at a time "when that trip took all day." His life changed when he was 17, and saw the Batsheva Dance Company – then "the only game in town for modern dance in Israel," but a visionary company with a repertoire that included major works by the heavy hitters of the international dance scene. He had danced Israeli folk dance at the kibbutz, but seeing Batsheva he immediately knew he wanted to dance like that. "Dancing was sexy," he says, "suggesting fantasy, a world of the senses. There was the way men were with the women – there was seduction going on onstage.

"It was a world that was different from the one I was

growing up in on the kibbutz."

Zvi started taking dance lessons at the local high school, and had the good fortune to have an early attempt at choreographing seen by Gertrude Kraus, a pioneer of Israeli modern dance, who was visiting Mesilot. Impressed by what she saw, she invited him to audition for a scholarship with the America-Israeli Cultural Foundation, which he received in 1971. During his military service in the IDF at that time, he was stationed in Tel Aviv, which gave him access to dance classes in the city.

"I wanted to dance, and more was more," says Zvi. "I would take three or four classes in a day if I could, and always wanted to rehearse more. Growing up isolated on the kibbutz, I had no knowledge of dance history. I didn't even know how much I didn't know."

### Modern Dancer

His service complete in 1974, Zvi joined Batsheva Dance, which took him out of Israel and into the wider world for the first time. His association with the company initiated a period in which he was "constantly growing" as a dancer, culminating in a 1978 grant from the America-Israeli Cultural Foundation to study in New York City for a year. New York was in the midst of what Zvi describes as the golden age of modern dance, when the city was the epicenter of the international dance scene. He branched out by studying at the Martha Graham School and the Alvin Ailey School, and took every opportunity to see the dances being staged and developed both at large venues and hole-in-the-wall performance spaces.

After a year, he had to return to Israel to work as a precondition of his grant, "but by then I was restless," he says. "I knew I'd go back to New York – it was a magnet." He danced again for Batsheva, then ping-ponged back to New York for two years and then back to Israel in 1983. During that time, he founded the Tamar Ramle Dance Company, considered to be the progenitor of Israel's Fringe dance movement.

"Some of the Batsheva dancers and I dreamed of creating a company in Israel outside the establishment," says Zvi. The dancers hatched the idea in New York and upon returning to Israel, took up residence at a community center in Ramle, a hardscrabble town 30 minutes from Tel Aviv. There, the company enjoyed artistic freedom, creating dances at outdoor sites and with political overtones. "Most of the work in Israel had been modern and

abstract until then," remembers Zvi. "We took dance in another direction, reflecting on current issues." Tamar Ramle Dance survived two years, and though the company tried to reconstitute itself in Jerusalem in 1988, by then "the magic was gone," says Zvi. That year, he was off to New York for good, arriving with \$60 in his pocket.

### Choreographer

At that point, Zvi's efforts to choreograph began in earnest. "I experimented and was not sure I would be a success," he

concerned with fundamentals," the mechanics of how a body moved to achieve a specific effect.

Despite positive notices his dances started to receive in the press, Zvi says, "It was 10 years before I created piece that was not a study anymore, one that came from my own voice." Simultaneously, he worked in "small marginalized theaters learning the business of how to maintain a company." Eventually, his work was noticed by scouts from the Joyce Theater, a dance Mecca in the Chelsea neighborhood of New York, and his company was its way.

"I never looked back," says Zvi.

### ZviDance at the Pillow

In "On the Road" (presented at Mass MoCA last spring) and a work called "Surveillance," Zvi incorporates multi-media elements into the dance performance, which he says give him new creative opportunities. With "Escher/Bacon/Rothko" at the Pillow, however, he'll be sticking with the fundamentals: "dance, space, lighting, and costumes – that's it." The dancers will be accompanied by an original score by composer Scott Killian.

Zvi says he's responding to the visual art of M.C. Escher, Francis Bacon, and Mark Rothko. "It's been a pleasure to tailor a dance lan-



Robert M. Valdez Jr. and Kuan Hui Chew of ZviDance

PHOTO: HEIDI GUTMAN

says. Aware of the gaps that remained in his understanding of dance, he says, "I was not concerned with style. I was

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racism of the play." As regards the play's sexism, Packer cites the way the heroine Portia, who formidably destroys Shylock in court while disguised as a man, still is not allowed by her father to choose her own husband. In his day in court, Shylock lays bare the ugly truth of Venetian society – "it is built on the ownership of slaves," Packer says, "and Shylock is the only person who brings this up."

This production also marks the second time Jonathan Epstein has played Shylock at Shakespeare and Company, and his third time overall. Raised traditionally Jewish ("more ethnic than religious"), the actor says playing Shylock "hurts a lot because of my sense of Jewishness." He remembers that his father refused to see the play when he first portrayed the character 18 years ago because of its anti-Semitism, although, health permitting, he'll attend a performance this time.

As a Jewish actor, Epstein says he "brings an awareness

of the echoes of Jewishness in the text. But I'm also aware that I'm playing the role of a Jew just as Shylock himself is playing the role of the Jew in the society he lives in. He plays along."

While some critics hold that Shylock is a "real person" in a comic play – "Willy Loman wandering about in *Kiss Me Kate*," is how Harold Bloom puts it – Epstein disagrees. "Shylock is the embodiment of fears in our unconsciousness," he says. "He's the nightmare dreamed by an oppressor – namely, that the oppressed would have a weapon. A real Jew wouldn't make that deal. A real Jew wouldn't pursue that deal. It is a deal so inflammatory, it would put his whole community at risk.

"Shylock is a realistic creature," he concludes, "from out of a dream."

Epstein thinks it "would be harder for a non-Jew to play this role with full ferocity. The big risk you take as an actor is that people will think this is a real Jew. See the play and



Zvi Gotheiner

guage for each artist in order to evoke a specific response," he says. The rationalistic Escher "pulled together an awareness of negative space," while Bacon was "complex in a much different way, contrasting British propriety with an animalistic, bestial unconscious. He had the power of using art as a mirror to society to reveal its hypocrisies." In Rothko, Zvi sees "space, color, and serenity. He found the vitality in the edges of things." Finding out how the 10 dancers of ZviDance will transform those qualities into movement on stage is bound to be a compelling experience.

"Dance is the oldest type of artistic expression," Zvi says, "but as an art form, it is the youngest – certainly compared to music, with sublime achievements going back to the 18th century. Dance is young – it still has a lot of room in which to experiment."

ZviDance will be at the Doris Duke Theatre at Jacob's Pillow from July 20 through July 24. Purchase tickets online at [www.jacobspillow.org](http://www.jacobspillow.org), by phone at (413) 243-0745, or at the box office.

you'll realize it's also a Jewish nightmare – although we get to wake up from it."

Tina Packer fully expects this production of *The Merchant of Venice* to stir up passions by exposing the play's inflammatory nature – Shakespeare, after all, was not only a great writer, but also a great anti-Semitic writer, at least in this play. The director says her goal is to "try to find complexity, but also hold it in love. If we don't, then we'll all be lost."

It will be interesting to see how Packer and Epstein cope with a character like Shylock, who might just be resistant to that sentiment.

The Merchant of Venice will run from July 1 through August 21 at the Tina Packer Playhouse on the campus of Shakespeare & Company, 70 Kemble Street in Lenox. For more information, visit [www.shakespeare.org](http://www.shakespeare.org), or call the box office at (413) 637-3353.