Forgotten Heroes Remembered at Yom HaShoah Event

My Italian Secret tells a heroic story that was all but lost to history

PITTSFIELD – Discover the fascinating story of the clandestine Italian resistance movement that helped save thousands of Jews during the Holocaust depicted in the documentary film My Italian Secret: The Forgotten Heroes, part of a special program in honor of Yom HaShoah/Holocaust Remembrance Day at the Berkshire Museum on Sunday April 8 at 2 p.m.

This event is free and open to the public and is sponsored jointly by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, the Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts, and the Italian American Club of Pittsfield. After the film, please join us for candle lighting and prayers in memory of those Murdered in the Holocaust.

My Italian Secret tells a heroic story that was all but lost to history. The film recounts how, during World War II, Tour de France bicycling champion Gino Bartali, physician Giovanni Borromeo, and high-ranking officials of the Catholic Church, risking their lives by defying the Nazis to save thousands of Italy's Jews.

Their high-risk methods were ingenious. Bartali, at the behest of the Archbishop of Florence, crisscrossed Northern Italy while transporting fake identification documents in the frame of his bicycle. (In 2013, Bartali was awarded the title “Righteous Among the Nations” by Yad Vashem.) A prominent physician, Dr. Borromeo, invented a fictitious disease to scare the SS away from the hospital where he was hiding Jews. Others disguised Jewish girls and women as nuns and hid them in convents.

In this epic documentary, living characters return to Italy to reveal their stories, and to thank those who were willing to sacrifice their own lives to save strangers without ever seeking recognition or reward for their courage. Through these witnesses’ stories, revisiting a time when an entire continent was in the direst circumstances.

Sympathy on Fire recalls the story of two families, the Bekers and the Durmashkins. Music was central to their lives in Vilna, Lithuania, before it was occupied by the Nazis.

Eighty Century Clay Seal with ‘Signature of Prophet Isaiah’ Found in Jerusalem

(JNS) – A historic archaeological discovery near Jerusalem’s Temple Mount may be proof of the life of the biblical prophet Isaiah, according to an article in the Biblical Archaeology Review. A broken 8th-century BCE clay seal impression, or bulla, appears to be inscribed with the words “Belonging to Isaiah,” as well as a partial word containing letters of the word “prophet.”

“We appear to have discovered a seal impression, which may have belonged to the prophet Isaiah, in a scientific, archaeological excavation,” said Dr. Eilat Mazar, a Hebrew University archeologist, whose team uncovered the find at the Temple Mount’s southern wall excavation.

In addition to the words on the bulla, a grazing doe is impressed on the seal, “a motif of blessing and protection found in Judah, particularly in Jerusalem,” according to the article.

Isaiah ministered to the Jewish people during the reigns of Judahite kings Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah and prophesied that “out of Zion shall come forth Truth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.”

The Isaiah bulla was found just 10 feet from where Mazar’s team found a groundbreaking, intact bulla bearing the inscription “of King Hezekiah of Judah” in 2015. Hezekiah, the 12th king of the Kingdom of Judah, ruled between 727 BCE to 698 BCE.

The names of King Hezekiah and the prophet Isaiah are mentioned in one breath 14 of the 29 times the name of Isaiah is recalled in the Bible [2 Kings 19:20; Isaiah 37:29-30], “said Mazar. “No other figure was closer to King Hezekiah than the prophet Isaiah.”
In My View  
Flood Waters Have Receded, but Challenges Remain

Your generosity. Federation network support ongoing hurricane relief efforts in Jewish Houston

By Dara Kaufman

Imagine yourself in the second floor of your house with two six-month-old twins, trying to decide which baby you will strap to yourself and which one you will hand over to someone else in order to evacuate your home in chest-high waters that are rapidly rising.

This was the unimaginable decision that Anita Boromaster had to make as she and her family found themselves trapped during the August 27 flooding in Houston, TX.

I was recently in Houston with 350 Federation professionals for the 2018 Professional Institute, which included a track specifically for executive directors of small Federations from across the country.

Hurricane Harvey decimated Houston. Hundreds of thousands of people were impacted and the Jewish community was also hit hard. In a matter of hours, the fabric that holds this thriving Jewish community together became waterlogged and shredded to pieces. More than 2,000 families living within a two-mile radius of one another lost everything. Synagogues, day schools, and other Jewish institutions in the area were destroyed. As the flood waters quickly rose, people grabbed what they could and evacuated. Once the water receded, many returned to find there was nothing left to salvage.

I had the opportunity to visit the local JCC to see how they are rebuilding. The first floor was reduced to rubble when 10 feet of water rushed through, knocking out glass window and doors and eventually punching a gaping hole through a cinderblock wall. Walking us through the site, Terri Greenblatt, the assistant executive director, pointed out the outline of what used to be the room where hundreds of meals each day for their kosher meals on wheels program were prepared.

When I think about Federation dollars saving lives, I usually picture crises that are far away - rockets and fires in Israel, an earthquake in Haiti, war in Ukraine. However, the people in Houston are very much like us. They had good jobs, beautiful homes, and a strong, vibrant community. In a matter of hours, all was stripped away; yet they still had their spirit and the support they could provide one another. And they had Federation.

The Berkshires very generously sent more than $18,000 to Houston when the Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) first mobilized its hurricane relief effort. Together with other communities, we provided $20 million of emergency funding to help meet the most critical needs in those early weeks. Those dollars were a vital resource for Miri, a young Israeli woman I met, who was working at a kiosk in the mall adjacent to my hotel.

Upon learning of my Federation connection, Miri emotionally clasped my hands in hers and shared her story. She owned a store where she lived with her husband and 3-year-old son had flooded. They had no renters insurance, and so had no hope of replacing anything. With Federation support, they received an emergency cash grant and were able to speak with a social worker who helped them find additional support. Rental prices were being jacked up as demand began to exceed supply, and they received access to an advocate who helped negotiate temporary housing at a fair rate.

In a presentation by Avital Ingber, president and CEO of the Jewish Federation of Great Houston, I sadly learned that at least another $20 million is still needed. The spotlight on Houston may have diminished as the waters have receded, but many challenges and needs remain in rebuilding this Jewish community.

As I listened to Avital, I was thankful for the generosity of our small Berkshire community. Just a few weeks earlier our board of directors had authorized two additional funding allocations out of our 2017 budget – $5,000 to support Houston’s rebuilding efforts and $8,000 to support the rebuilding efforts of Puerto Rico. In my pocket book was a check, which I later presented to Avital, to be used for educational supplies for one of their local schools.

Visiting Houston, and hearing the experiences of people who had been through so much, really hit home, and reinforced one of the key reasons why I believe that Federation, as an organization and as a collective system, needs to exist. When our community needs us, we are there to help. This is not just a tag line in our campaign – it is the fundamental underpinning of our Jewish values. Whether through tzedakah (righteous giving), tikkun olam (social action), or gemilut chasidim (acts of loving kindness), as Jews and as humans we must be there for one another.

Reflecting on my time in Houston, I can’t help but feel a deep and abiding gratitude for the privilege it is to represent our generous and caring community in the holy work that we do together through Federation. On behalf of the many grateful people I met in Houston, thank you for being there in their time of need!

Support for Houston is still greatly needed. Donate online at: houstonjewish.org or send a payment to us and we will be happy to forward it on your behalf.

Dara Kaufman is executive director of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.
I attended the Rabbis Without Borders fellows gathering earlier this year. On our first morning there, during morning services, we were singing “Mi Chamocha” — the song that our ancestors sang after coming through the sea. We were using a lovely melody by Shir Yaakov — find his music on bandcamp.com. And then the rabbi who was leading that prayer, Rabbi David Markus, stopped and asked us, “Do you really feel it, though?” We were singing words of awe and wonder. Words meant to evoke our quintessential Jewish story of emerging from constriction into freedom. And we were singing them as though they were just a nice melody.

Full disclosure: I was co-leading that service, along with Rabbi Markus and Rabbi Evan Krame (with me, they are among the co-founders of Bayit: Your Jewish Home). And I, too, was singing “Mi Chamocha” with my mind on other things.

My friend and colleague Rabbi David offered a wake-up call: what would it feel like to sing those words with awareness of what they mean? To feel in our bones the miracle of our core story of redemption — both the redemption that happened there-and-then when we came through the Sea of Reeds, and the transformation that’s possible in every day? When we started singing again, the energy in the room felt different. For a moment, we were all more awake. The story of the Exodus from Egypt is referenced in daily Jewish prayer, and in the Friday night kiddush. Our tradition gives us daily and weekly opportunities to remember redemption. And, of course, we have an annual opportunity, too: the nights of Seder, when we remind ourselves of the obligation to see ourselves as if we, too, had been brought forth from constriction into freedom. Because that story isn’t just about “them” back “then”: it’s also about us in the here-and-now.

I learned from the Hasidic master known as the Akiva Meyn that when we inhabit the Pesach Seder fully, we have the opportunity to shed the karmic baggage of generations of missteps (starting with the eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil) and to experience the unity and whole-heartedness of the first human beings known in Eden. Pesach invites us to feel that we ourselves are brought forth from constriction into freedom, that we ourselves can know the primordial unity of the first moments of creation.

Pesach invites us to feel that we ourselves are brought forth from constriction into freedom, that we ourselves can know the primordial unity of the first moments of creation.

That shift requires an effort of will. We have to wake up, the way I had to wake up during that morning service at Rabbis Without Borders. We have to make the leap of opening ourselves to feeling something impossible: real redemption. Real wholeness. Real hope.

This spring we’ll mark Israel’s 70th birthday. The creation of the modern state of Israel was impossible, too, until it wasn’t. It required tremendous will and hope. Israel still invites us into that audacity of hope: that peace and justice can come to pass in our day. That enemies can learn to live together as brothers and sisters. That the construction of conflict will give way to the wide-open expansiveness of peace.

This spring, may we all be blessed to “wake up” to the profound existential wonder of our tradition’s core story. May we be blessed to taste our deepest hopes for a world free from prejudice and injustice of every kind — and then, when we wake up after Seder, to put our hands and hearts to the task of building that world redeemed.

Rabbi Rachel Barenblat is spiritual leader of Congregation Beth Israel in North Adams. She blogs at velveteenrabbi.com; you can find out more about her poetry and other publications at velveteenrabbi.com. For more on Bayit: Your Jewish Home, visit yourjewishhome.org.
Lecture Series Brings More Pre-Recorded 92Y Talks to Lenox

LENNOX - A program series produced by the 92nd Street Y in New York City, in collaboration with Kimball Farms, will bring three Thought Provoking pre-recorded talks from the renowned 92nd Street Y in New York City. The series is free and open to the public, and each talk lasts approximately one hour. Kimball Farms located at 235 Walker Street in Lenox, Light refreshments will be served. RSVPs are required, as seating is limited. (Call (413) 637-7043).

On Wednesday, March 28 at 2 p.m., Alana Newhouse, editor-in-chief of Tablet Magazine, leads the panel discussion “The End of Europe” with James Kirchick (author of The End of Europe: Dictators, Demagogues and the Coming Dark End of Europe) and National Humanities Medalist, philanthropist, and novelist Rebecca Goldstein, and Julia Ioffe (The Atlantic). Once the world’s bastion of liberal democratic values, Europe is now having to confront demons—anti-Semitism, populism, nationalism and territorial aggression, among others. It is thought that had the panels for an illuminating discussion about challenges to Europe and the ramifications for the US.

On Wednesday, April 11 at 2 p.m., Dr. Ruth K.有趣化 the world where science and technology dictate more and more how we live our lives, religious belief remains widespread in this and most countries. Why do so many people believe? Is there a difference between faith and belief? Can science contribute to this conversation? Or are science and religion fundamentally incompatible, belonging to two non-overlapping magisteria, as the late Stephen Jay Gould liked to say? Is there room for spirituality in science? These questions and more will be addressed by this illustrious panel of thinkers.

On Wednesday, April 25 at 2 p.m., Dr. Ruth Westheimer joins Annette Buber for “Dr. Ruth: The Doctor Is In.” Everyone knows Dr. Ruth as America’s most trusted and best-loved therapist. But few people know she narrowly escaped death by the Holocaust, was raised in an orphanage in Switzerland or that she was a sniper during Israel’s War of Independence. In spite of this, Dr. Ruth has always had an insatiable zest for life, what she calls her “joule de vivre.” Join the jovial, inspiring and profound Dr. Ruth as she celebrates her 87th birthday and shares her secrets for a full life, as revealed in her new book, The Doctor Is In: Dr. Ruth on Love, Life, and Joule de Vivre. She’ll change the way you think about love and life, in all their limitless possibilities.

Yom HaShoah Program

“Global Perspectives and Community Conversations: Beyond Genocide”

On Thursday, April 12 at 10:45 a.m., join genocide scholar, author, and illuminati provocateur Amy Fagin for a visual perspective of global incidents of genocide and mass violence. Fagin has traveled throughout the world in her study of genocides and creates illuminations to interpret the politics of truth and justice. This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community series.

Amy Fagin’s presentation will begin with a brief background of the concepts of genocide and prevention, and then lead into discussion. She will introduce her artistic process and results of individual illuminations that are similar to historical illuminated manuscripts. She will engage in discussion on art, genocide, prevention, and the 21st century, sharing information about current areas of the world where mass scale violence is occurring.

Fagin’s Beyond Genocide is an emerging series of internationally acclaimed works that will engage in discussion on art, genocide, prevention, and the 21st century, sharing information about current areas of the world where mass scale violence is occurring.

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Fagin is an artist specializing in the traditional art form of manuscript illumination embracing modern techniques and applications. Her body of work represents a meta-modernist approach to the medieval techniques, and theoretical principals used in manuscript illumination for the 21st century expression and education. She also conducts scholars’ travel seminars to societies victimized by mass violence to better understand the social processes and psychological memory, truth, and justice.

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, April 12 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 14).

Film Screenings During Kosher Lunch Passover Hiatus

Although the kosher lunch program will be on hiatus for kitchen Passover prep on Monday, March 26 and will resume the March 29, Connecting With Community program on March 29, with the screening of two films at 10:45 a.m. These films will be shown in their entirety.

The March 26 film will be It Runs in the Family, starring Kirk Douglas and Michael Douglas. The story involves a highly successful New York City family, each with its set of problems, and highlights the difficulties of the father-son relationship.

The March 29 film will be Crimes and Misdemeanors, starring Woody Allen, Martin Landau, Susan Sarandon, and Neve Campbell, among others. This film is considered an important entry in filmmaker Woody Allen’s body of work. It is alternately comical and dramatic and follows two plotlines, following the exploits of a philandering optometrist and a depressive documentary filmmaker in love with his producer. Join us! These free programs will be held at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield.

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

Chair Yoga: Easy Yoga for Mobility and Peace of Mind

On Monday, April 2 at 10:45 a.m., join Linda Novick for “Chair Yoga: Easy Yoga for Flexibility, Mobility, and Peace of Mind.” This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires’ Connecting With Community series. Linda Novick says: “Chair Yoga is appropriate for people of all levels of mobility. It is a series of breathing and stretching exercises done in a chair, which increases mobility of the joints, flexibility, strength and stamina. Some of the exercises are performed standing beside the chair, while holding on. Participants will learn breathing techniques to enhance lung capacity, as well as easy stretches and yoga poses. Yoga is good for all bodies. Beginners are Welcome.”

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

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

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

Linda Novick

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Monday, April 2 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 14).
Your Federation Presents

Connecting With Community Programs / Kosher Hot Lunch

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

For further information on all programs, please call Nancy Maurice Rogers, program director, at (413) 442-4360, ext. 15. For lunch menus and a chronological list of all scheduled programs, please see page 14. Note that lunch menus are subject to change.


On Thursday, April 5 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Myrna Hammerling, director of Programming and Adult Education at Knesset Israel, whose topic will be “The What? Why? How? of Prayer.” This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

This program was postponed from January. Hammerling will begin “An Interactive Exploration About Prayer” with those who wish to share their questions about or reactions to praying, and will then explore approaches for the enrichment of one’s personal spiritual receptiveness. Hammerling says this will be both a personal and collective exploration process.

Myrna Hammerling has a master’s degrees in Second Century Education, English, and Speech, and another in Judaic Studies from the Jewish Theological Seminary. She has been president of the Knesset Israel board of directors and was the principal of the Knesset Israel Hebrew School for about 10 years, and engineered the joint after-school Hebrew program with RI and Temple Anshe Amunim.

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, April 5 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 14).

Being selected means a lot to us.

But it means even more to you.

Making this list is no small feat. First, firms must meet specific requirements, not the least being registered investment advisors. Once they are met, the editors of Financial Times ask those firms to be considered for further evaluation. This is neither a “pay-to-play” advertising product, a peer review nor a popular vote campaign. In the simplest of terms it means that all of us work in your best interest. That in and of itself is invaluable to our clients, the industry and our integrity.

Have a conversation with Gary Schiff, Managing Director, at the number listed below. He’ll fill you in on details that helped us make this year’s Financial Times FT300.

Wren Bernstein

“The Spirituality of Aging: A Conversation About Life and Death,” with Wren Bernstein

“The Spirituality of Aging: A Conversation About Life and Death,” led by licensed social worker and spiritual guide Wren Bernstein, concludes on Thursday, April 19 at 10:45 a.m. This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield, part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series.

What does it mean to embrace your elderhood and transform your expectations of aging? According to Wren Bernstein, this course offers an opportunity to explore the unique spiritual and psychological gifts of the third major stage of life in a relaxed group setting. The one-hour session will include a brief mindfulness practice, inspirational readings and questions for introspection, and a facilitated group conversation. Topics include: aging consciously—retiring the inner critic; forgiveness; life review; facing mortality; and the mystery of transcendence.

Wren Bernstein, LICSW, has been a spiritual practitioner for 35 years and a clinical social worker for 25, working with clients both individually and in groups. As a lifelong seeker of truth and transcendence, she brings a spiritual and philosophical perspective to the psychological and social issues that confront us at various stages of life. Though she works with adults of all ages, she is most recently focusing on the unique challenges and opportunities that arise in the “third act” of life, when meaning-of-life questions seem to demand more attention and priorities and goals begin to shift. She believes in the power of contemplation, conversation, and community as essential to mental and spiritual health.

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, April 19 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 14).

“20th Century Jewish Russian Immigration,” with Author Anastasia Goodman

On Monday, April 9 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes mystery novelist Anastasia Goodman, creator of the Sasha Perlov mysteries, who will explore “20th Century Jewish Russian Immigration.” This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series, and is followed by kosher lunch at noon.

Anastasia Goodman writes Jewish-themed mysteries. Her quirky hero, Sasha Perlov, is a Russian-born New York Police Department detective whose mother was a Soviet dissident, and is grandson of the hero of the Battle of Stalingrad. The novels mix history, mystery, and current and historical events, including the Soviet Jewish experience and refusenik movement.

Anastasia Goodman is of Russian descent and was herself involved in the refusenik movement that led to the release of Soviet Jews. She assisted Soviet refugees by helping them find jobs in the US and acclimate to life in America. This led her to writing the Sasha Perlov novels, drawing on these émigré experiences and weaving them into her own experiences. Says Goodman: “I am intrigued by the fact that people pick up their lives, leave their native land, and move to a strange country; possibly not even understanding the language. It takes guts. I don’t think we as Americans understand the courage it takes.”

IF YOU GO

Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Monday, April 9 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 14).

Myrna Hammerling
Your Federation Presents

“Getting Our Hands Dirty: Protecting the Environment”

On Thursday, March 22 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Elizabeth Orenstein, Outreach and Education Coordinator for the Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT), who will lead a presentation and discussion about hands-on ways we can conserve and protect our environment. This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Federation’s Connecting With Community series. BEAT is a regional leader in environmental protection and its work is only possible through the hard work of citizens and volunteers. This workshop will explore how you can be involved in work to restore, protect, and improve the condition of our lands, waters, and air. Elizabeth Orenstein was born and raised in the Berkshires. After traveling around the world, she returned in 2014 to Canada and Europe for study at Goddard College and believes that the more we get to know the plants around us the better stewards of the environment we will be.

IF YOU GO
Sponsor: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community
Venue: Knesset Israel
Date & Time: Thursday, March 22 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 14).

Kosher Community Seder – March 30

PITTSFIELD – The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host a kosher community Passover Seder at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, March 30 at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road. Participants will enjoy a traditional kosher Seder experience with plenty of explanation, insight, and song, while enjoying all the ritual foods, ceremonial wine, and a delicious four-course Passover meal. Catered by Crown Market of West Hartford, the Seder meal will feature a brisket entrée. A vegetarian option is available upon advance request. Attendees are invited to bring their own kosher for Passover table wine.

Rabbi David Weiner of Knesset Israel will serve as Seder leader. Children of all ages, extended family, and community friends are welcome. Children will enjoy the hunt for the afikomen. Prizes will be awarded to all. The cost is $40 for adults and $20 for children ages 5 through 13. Children 4 years and under are free of charge. Advance reservations and payment are required – please do so as soon as possible.

Financial assistance is available through the generosity of the Jewish Women’s Foundation of Berkshire County.

Reservations can be made by calling the Federation at (413) 442-4360, ext. 10 or online at www.jewishberkshires.org.

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Passover Menu Available

NEW YORK STYLE DELI • PASTRAMI
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Save $5 with this ad!

We will offer traditional food in honor of the celebration of Pesach 5778

Gino Bartalli (1914-2000), recognized as a “Righteous Among the Nations” by Yad Vashem.

Beth Israel in Schenectady will share her family history of survival. The Saranos of Milan were saved in the small Italian village of Molbaroccio during the Holocaust.

IF YOU GO
Sponsors: Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, The Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts, and the Italian-American Club of Pittsfield
Venue: Berkshire Museum, 39 South Street in Pittsfield
Date & Time: Sunday, April 8 at 2 p.m.
The Jewish Transportation Network
Discount Taxi Vouchers
for Jewish residents aged 65 years and older

Purchase $50 worth of taxi coupons for $5
($6 if requested via mail)

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

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

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

This program is funded by the Jewish Women’s Foundation of Berkshire County and administered by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires
Meet Marie Tiffany, Our New Social Worker

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires recently welcomed Marie Tiffany, LICSW, to her new position as community social worker. In this role, Marie will support the Jewish community in all areas of social work, including information referrals, outreach, and case management.

Life can present challenges, both expected and unexpected. Sometimes a little help along the way can make things easier. The Federation has identified the most immediate challenges are those faced by older adults, many of whom are aging in place in Berkshire County, with or without other natural supports in the local community. Marie’s extensive experience makes her an advocate and resource for individuals and families trying to navigate and connect to community services related to personal care, housing, mental health needs, transportation, and more.

“I am very impressed by the role that the Federation plays as a significant support to those aging in the Jewish community,” says Marie. “Adult children and loved ones have also expressed their gratitude for our services as a natural support, especially if they are living out of the area. They feel more secure at times, knowing there are local people also caring for those dear to them.”

“I am grateful for the opportunity to work with such a caring, collaborative faith-based community.”

Marie holds a BA in Psychology from the University of Vermont, and graduated with a Masters of Social Work from Springfield College in 2011. While interning in her graduate program, she began working for Clinical and Support Options (CSO), a community based mental health agency that also has several clinics throughout Western Massachusetts. Upon graduation, she was hired as an early education and care clinician, followed by some time spent as a full-time outpatient clinician. In addition to her hours at the Federation, Marie also works as an integrated services manager, conducting many of the intakes for new clients, whom she also manages in addition to her own caseload. She now works almost solely with seniors at CSO, but became most interested in working with elders at Kindred at Home, where she worked for 5 years as a medical social worker.

Marie had also enjoyed working with families as well as individuals and adults, and was once a supervisee of the Federation’s former social worker, Susan Dawdy, LICSW. “Susan brings such a warm, mindful perspective to the field of social work.” Marie said. “I still look to her for guidance at times, especially during major life transitions. I was pleased to know that I would be continuing some of her work at the Federation.”

Marie was also drawn to the Federation by the principles of Judaism and the Jewish Family Services of Western Massachusetts, by whom she is formally employed. Although not raised in the Jewish faith, Marie was able to identify her own core values and beliefs in learning of B’tselem Elohim (in God’s image) and Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), which embody the mission of the National Association of Social Workers, which states: “The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance the human well-being and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty.”

Her shared belief of a higher power and inner sense of responsibility to care for those who are in need are also exemplified in the work she has done with individuals with developmental disabilities. Marie is eager to learn about Jewish faith and culture, as applicable to not only her work in our community, but her life experience as a whole. A Dalton native, she continues to learn about local residents on a daily basis, and is very much looking forward to being an active resource and participant in the Jewish community.
GI JEWS: Jewish Americans in World War II

Documentary explores experiences of the 550,000 Jewish men and women who served

About the Film

GI JEWS: Jewish Americans in World War II tells the profound and unique story of the 550,000 Jewish men and women who served in World War II. Through the eyes of the servicemen and women, the film brings to life the little-known story of the brave men and women who fought for their nation and their people, for America, and for Jews worldwide. Like all Americans, they fought against fascism, but they also had to prove their courage and patriotism. All the while, they observed their religion, far from home. Jewish men and women sought solace in their faith and celebrated holidays overseas, even on the frontlines. Some went without rations for days to keep kosher, and many carried a small prayer book with them on every mission.

An American Story

World War II was a watershed in American history—with 16 million Americans fighting for their country, everyone intermingled. Fighting together in the trenches and in the air, they forged deep friendships across religious lines, and learned to set aside their bigotry for the greater good. Jewish Americans earned their citizenship by shedding blood, leaving behind their outsider status, fighting for their country, and being treated as true Americans.

Liberating the Camps

Jewish servicemen were among the first to reach the concentration camps liberated by American troops. Many spoke Yiddish and so were able to offer the survivors their first words of comfort, and explain to them that after years of suffering, they were finally free. Rabbi chaplains said prayers for the dead, and held services, honoring the survivors as the bravest heroes of the war. Many Jewish servicemen stayed on to help care for the survivors, locating relatives, fighting for their rights and even smuggling thousands of them to Palestine.

Coming Home

In the wake of the Holocaust, America’s Jewish community was now the largest in the world. With their new responsibility as international leaders, many American Jews became full participants in postwar culture and politics, fighting for social change. They would demand equality at home, join the battle for civil rights, and fight for the creation of a Jewish state.

Producer/Director

Lisa Ades is a documentary filmmaker who has produced and directed films for PBS and cable television for the past 25 years. Her acclaimed film, Miss America, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival before it was broadcast on the PBS series American Experience in 2002. Previously, she produced award-winning films with Ric Burns, including the ten-hour series New York (PBS, 1999), The Way West (PBS, 1995), and The Donner Party (PBS, 1992). Other films include Beauty in a Jar (ARE, 2003), and In the Company of Women (IFC, 2004). Most recently, she directed a seven-part documentary series, The Syrian Jewish Community: Our Journey Through History.

Additional Screenings

Wednesday, March 21, at 7:30 p.m. at UMass Amherst. 137 Isenberg School of Management Building, located at 121 Presidents Drive, Amherst, MA. Visit umass.edu/film/mmmf.html for more information. Monday, March 26 at 7 p.m. at the Springfield Jewish Community Center, located at 1160 Dickinson Street, Springfield, MA. Visit www.springfield-jcc.org for more information.

GI JEWS: Jewish Americans in World War II will be broadcast by WGBY on Wednesday, April 11, at 10 p.m.

Your Federation Presents

GI JEWS: Jewish Americans in World War II

PITTSFIELD — On Sunday, March 25 at 2 p.m., local PBS station WGBY, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival, and the MA Multicultural Film Festival of UMASS Amherst are pleased to present free film screenings of GI JEWS: Jewish Americans in World War II. The Berkshire screening will be at the Berkshire Museum’s Little Cinema, located at 39 South Street in Pittsfield, and is presented in partnership with the Berkshire Museum and the Jewish War Veterans Louis Green Post #140 of Pittsfield, MA.

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, located at 39 South Street in Pittsfield, is dedicated to promoting, preserving and advancing the Jewish heritage and values for the benefit of all mankind. For information, call 413.442.7408 or visit berkshirejewishvoice.org.

Berkshire Country Day School

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**Modern Loss Co-Founder to Speak at Hevreh**

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, April 6 at 6:15 p.m., Hevreh of Southern Berkshire welcomes Rebecca Soffer, co-founder and CEO of the website Modern Loss and author of Modern Loss: Candid Conversation About Grief, Bereavement, and Healing. A Rabbinat Shabbat service will precede the program, and an oneg will immediately follow.

In a Q&A moderated by Rabbi Jodie Gordon, Soffer will offer insights from her website Modern Loss and co-founder and CEO of the site that the silence. Inspired by the website Modern Loss and co-founder and CEO of the site, Rebecca Soffer is a former producer for the Peabody Award-winning Colbert Report. She has spoken nationally on the themes of loss and resilience at venues including Chicago Ideas Week, HBO, and Kripalu. She is a Columbia University Graduate School of Journalism alums and contributes regularly to books, magazines, and other media. Rebecca splits her time between the Berkshires and New York City with her husband and two young children.

**Affiliate with a Congregation.**

You, the congregation, and the Jewish community benefit when you do.

- YOU GET the Jewish enrichment and spiritual nourishment you are seeking.
- YOU GET the rabbinical support you need in times of joy and sorrow.
- YOU RECONNECT with your community and your Jewish roots.
- YOU CAN PARTICIPATE in a variety of services, classes, and programs that keep Judaism alive and flourishing in Berkshire County.
- THE CONGREGATION is the INSTITUTION that has sustained the Jewish people for two millennia throughout the world. Orthodox, Conservative, Reconstructionist, or Reform, the Jewish community wins when you join the congregation of your choice.

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires encourages you to affiliate.

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**Create a Jewish Legacy Campaign**

Please remember the Jewish Community in your will.

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**FREE FILM SCREENING**

**GI Jews: Jewish Americans in World War II**

Sunday, March 25 at 2 p.m.
Berkshire Museum
39 South Street, Pittsfield, MA

GI JEWS: Jewish Americans in World War II features the little-known story of the more than 550,000 Jewish Americans who served during World War II. Filmmaker Lisa Ades brings the struggles of these brave men and women to life through first-hand experiences that reveal their fight against fascism, as well as their personal war to liberate loved ones in Europe. After years of battle, these pioneering servicemen and women emerged transformed: more profoundly American, more deeply Jewish, and determined to continue the fight for equality and tolerance at home.

**Additional Screenings**

Wednesday, March 21, at 7:30 p.m. UMass Amherst
Visit umass.edu/film/memt.html for more information

Monday, March 26 at 7 p.m., Springfield Jewish Community Center
Visit springfieldjc.org for more information

Berkshire screening sponsored by WGBY, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, the Berkshire Museum and the Jewish War Veterans

This documentary will be broadcast by WGBY on Wed., April 11 at 10 p.m.

Presented by local WGBY, Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Pioneer Valley Jewish Film Festival, & MA Multicultural Film Festival.
Special Shabbat and Holiday Events at Hevreh

GREAT BARRINGTON – Hevreh of Southern Berkshire welcomes families outside the Hevreh community to these events organized through its religious school.

Yachad Passover: Hip Hop Hagadah

Sunday, March 25 from 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Matt Bar, aka the Bible Rapper, is bringing his inter-nationally renowned “Bible Raps” project to Hevreh for this year’s Yachad Passover. The day will start with a family workshop to learn the basic lessons on rap, hip hop and rhyme, and the concept of 4-4 time. Participants will then transform text into rap, all the while making sure all understand the Hagadah text. Then, in groups, attend-ees will work on the elements included in a final rap song and music video. Adults will have the opportunity to learn with Matt during the adult teaching sessions, and the day will conclude with a Passover song session (or, maybe, a rap battle!) and snack.

This program is sponsored by the Grinspoon Foundation Family Education Grant. If you are not currently registered with Hevreh’s religious school but would like to join for this special program, please call the Hevreh office at (413) 528-6378 and let them know you are coming.

Tot Shabbat

Saturdays at 9 a.m.: March 24 and April 21

Traditional songs for families with pre-school children and older siblings.

Join Hevreh rabbis, Cantor Marilyn Simons and great-grandparents of all ages, grandparents and special people, new mem-bers, first timers, neighbors and friends.

Taste of Shabbat

Fridays at 5:30 p.m.: March 16 and April 13

A New Program for Pre-K through 3rd Grade Students & Families

Suggested donation of $5 per family.

Sometimes just ‘a taste’ is exactly what you need! Families with children in pre-K through 3rd grade are invited for this new Shabbat initia-tive designed to give you the chance to celebrate Shabbat together at a time and in a way that works for you! The group will gather at 5:30 p.m. for a pizza dinner, Shabbat blessings, and a special craft or story. Then, when the main Shabbat service begins at 6:15 p.m., all are invited to stay through the end of Kab-olot Shabbat (the beginning part of special services) or for as long as works for you! Please RSVP to Jodie Friedman (jfriedman@hevreh.org) to help them plan accordingly.

All programs will be at Hevreh, 270 State Road, Great Barrington. For more infor-mation, please call the Hevreh office or visit hevreh.org.

Shabbat HaGadol Shabbaton – Prepare Your Heart and Soul for Freedom with CBI

NORTH ADAMS – On Friday, March 23 and Saturday, March 24, Congregation Beth Israel invites you to “Prepare Your Heart and Soul for Freedom,” a special program to celebrate “Shabbat HaGadol” (The Great Sabbath), the special name given to the Shabbat before Passover.

Join CBI for a Shabbat (an immersive Shabbat expe-rience) featuring Rabbi Rachel Barenblat and Rabbi David Markus aimed at helping you prepare your heart and soul for the Festival of Freedom. A schedule of events is as follows:

Friday Night, March 23:

- Shabbat dinner at 7 p.m. (contact CBI for details)
- “Angels in the Outfield: Transcendence and Liberation” 6:00-7:00 p.m. Time of Yearning: niga’ah and story
- 7:09 p.m. Haurishdil at sundown

Saturday, March 24:

- 9:30 a.m. Shabbat morning davening (prayer) – P’rachet Tzau (Eternal Flame)
- 11:30 a.m. Potluck Shab-bat lunch
- 1:00-2:00 p.m. Prelude to Liberation: 2:15-3:15 p.m. Intro to Jewish Angelology
- 3:30-4:30 p.m. Contem-plative practice (Four-Angel Mincha / bedikhat chametah)

“Meet Me at the Intersection of Trans and Jewish Identity,” with Professor Joy Ladin

WILLIAMSTOWN – On Tues-day, April 3, Professor Joy Ladin will explore the intersec-tions and collisions of trans and Jewish identity through her personal experience of be-coming the first and still only openly transgender employee of an Orthodox Jewish institu-tion. She will discuss her work on theorizing trans identities in relation to religious tradi-tions.

At 4:15 p.m., Professor Ladin will be at the Williams College Jewish Religious Cen-ter reading from her memoir, Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey Between Gen-ders, and from two recently published poetry collections, The Future is Trying to Tell Us Something: New and Selected Poems and Fireworks in the Garden.

At 7 p.m. in the Paresky Auditorium, Professor Ladin will deliver a lecture on her forthcoming book, The Soul of the Stranger: Reading God and Torah from a Transgender Perspective (Brandeis Universi-ty Press). Joy Ladin’s work has been recognized with a National Endowment for the Arts Fel-lowship, a Fulbright Scholar-ship, an American Council of Learned Societies Research Fellowship, a Hadasah Brandeis Institute Research Fellowship, among other hon-oars. A nationally recognized speaker on trans and Jewish identity, she was recently named to the LGBTQ Nation’s Top 50 Transgender Amer-icans list. She has held the Gottesman Chair in English at Yeshiva University since 2003, and taught for a year in Sarah Lawrence’s MFA Writing Program.

“Women at the Wall: A Call for Peace,” by Wendy Rabinowitz

“Women at the Wall: A Call for Peace,” by Wendy Rabinowitz, was published in BJV in 2015.

Shabbaton (Eternal Flame)

Friday Night, March 23:

- 7:09 p.m. Haurishdil at sundown

Saturday, March 24:

- 9:30 a.m. Shabbat morning davening (prayer) – P’rachet Tzau (Eternal Flame)

For more information or to schedule a tour, please call one of our facilities or visit a center website.

Kindred Nursing and Rehabilitation – Laurel Lake

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Kindred Assisted Living – Laurel Lake

- Assisted living

Kindred Assisted Living – Laurel Lake

- Apartment living

Kindred Assisted Living – Laurel Lake

- Apartment living

Kindred Assisted Living – Laurel Lake

- Assisted living

Kindred Assisted Living – Laurel Lake

- Apartment living

Local News

Mazel Tov

Mazel Tov to…

Avi Cohen on her March 3 bat mitzvah at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire.

Jacob Shron on his March 17 bar mitzvah at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire.

Andrew LaRochelle on his April 28 bar mitzvah at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire.

Fiber artist Wendy Rabinowitz (featured in the September/October 2015 BJV) on her March 3 bat mitzvah at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire.

“Meet Me at the Intersection of Trans and Jewish Identity,” with Professor Joy Ladin

Professor Joy Ladin

Program. Links to her poems and essays are available at joyladin.wordpress.com.

The 4:15 p.m. reading will take place at the Jewish Religious Center, 24 Stetson Court. The 7 p.m. lecture takes place at Paisely Educa-tortium, 39 Chapin Hall Drive, Lower Level.

Both events are free and open to the public.
SYMPHONY ON FIRE, continued from page 1

Nazis in 1941. Pianist Fania Durmashkin and violinist Max Beker navigated through concentration camps, labor camps, and PW camps until they finally met at a displaced camp in Landsberg, Germa-

ny after World War II. They formed a survivor’s orchestra — the Displaced Persons’ Orchestra of St. Ottilien — which performed for the Amer-

ican troops, the Nuremberg judges, and David Ben Gurion and Golda Meir, and was con-
ducted by Leonard Bernstein. Their inspiring story illumi-

nates how to hold strong to life, Jewish values, family and friendship, and is a testament to the strength of the human spirit.

On Monday, April 16, the Connecting With Community program will screen Creat-
ing Harmony: The Displaced Persons’ Orchestra from St. Ot-\ttilien, a film inspired by events described in Sonia’s book. For more information, see page 7. The film will be followed by a Q&A with the producer Avrom Sutzkever, Shabs Blaksher, and the film’s director, Steven Zucker, recently purchased a home in Lenox. A longtime summer visitor to the Berkshires, she and her hus-

band built and operated the Beker family’s restaurant, the family and friends, and was a community leader. They worked to maintain the culture and social life in a sealed-

off community.”

On May 10, the 70th anniversary of the liquidation of the Vilna Ghetto, the survivors and their director. These efforts infused the people with a way to forget, for a while at least, the horrors of their everyday lives. The first reaction to the proposal was of absolute rejection, in particu-

lar from the cultural elite (many of them from the Bund) and from Orthodox Jews. Still, an initiative developed from a number of creative people, among them poet Avrom Sutzkever, Shabs Blaksher, and the producer Max Viskind. Their first meetings to organize a concert took place in Shabs Blaksher’s tiny room on Strahnauer 7.” [Quoted passage from Rachel Kostanian-Danzig’s Symphony on Fire]

The diarist, Herman Kruk, was initially opposed to the concert, insulted by the apparent frivolity of such a social event in the ghetto and an impetus for the people joy. “The concerts had become a popular social event in the ghetto and an impetus for the development of cultural and social life in a sealed-

off community.”

The evening of January 18 was opened by the United Partisans Organization (FPO). The opera was created as a children’s musical game at the Vladimir Medem Sanatorium for children in Miedzeszyn, near Warsaw. It was written by Motel Gilinski — The United Partisans Organization (FPO). From the title of the recitation is tak-

en from Nachman Bialik’s verse “The Enchanted Tailor,” the well-known story by Sholem Ace-

ker, an opera for children, with a center figure, the adorable puppet (Puppets), an opera for children, directed by Paye Wapner (1917-1988), the leader of the legendary Abba Kovner — the Displaced Person’s Orchestra from St. Ottilien, in Landsberg, Germany that is developing a youth or-

chestra performed 35 chamber and symphonic concerts. The last one took place on August 29, 1943, three-and-a-half weeks before the ghetto was liquidated.

Children’s Culture in the Vilna Ghetto

A poster (1943) from the Vilna ghetto, one of 280 cultural, educational, and sports posters now stored at the Lithuanian State Archives and the State Vilna Gaon Jewish Museum. By Nikolay Borodulin, via jewishcurrents.org. “[The poster] includes the emblem of the youth club (top middle) — a stylized rendition of the words yungt klibm forming the six-cornered Star of David. The top left says: ‘ghetto theater, January 8, 1943, starts at 20 c’c’pok.’ and the top right says: ‘cultural department, school section.’”

Almost in the middle of the poster, the sign says: “first public performance.” The program listed on the bottom of the poster includes: • yalkhes (Puppets), an opera for children, directed by Paye Wapner (1917-1988), the leader of the legendary Abba Kovner — the Displaced Person’s Orchestra from St. Ottilien, in Landsberg, Germany that is developing a youth or-

chestra performed 35 chamber and symphonic concerts. The last one took place on August 29, 1943, three-and-a-half weeks before the ghetto was liquidated.

The text of the opera was written by Zelig Ginski (1924) and the music by Yankl Trumpansky (1907-1944). Both were ghetto prisoners, and both perished during the Holocaust. Interestingly enough, the second entry of the program is a choral rec-
tation in Hebrew. Moreover, the title of the recitation of “Revolt.” The director of this performance was the legendary Abba Kovner (1917-1988), the leader of the Hashomer Hatzair (“The Young Guard”) underground movement, a founder of FPO, and in later years a famous poet and writer. The third part of the program is a four-part adaptation of a well-known story by Sholem Aleichem, “Das farkshter shneyder” (author’s original, Der farksheter shnayder) — “The Embroidered Tailor,” directed by Eyle Fliint (1912-1943), who joined the partisans in the forest and perished in August, 1943.
Second Night Seder with Hevreh

GREAT BARRINGTON – Join Hevreh of Southern Berkshire for Passover on Saturday, March 31 at 5:30 p.m. The Seder will be led by Rabbi Neil Hirsch and Jodie Gordon. The meal will be catered by Mara Simon Catering and will have chicken and vegetarian options. Cost for adults is $84, children from 6-12 $18, and children 5 and under are free. Reservations are required by Sunday, March 25. Visit the Hevreh.org online for more information. A new Haggadah will be introduced: A Night to Remember by Michael and Noam Zalon. Financial assistance is available. Call Hevreh for more information at (413) 528-6378.

Temple Anshe Amunim Hosts Second Night Passover Seder and Other Passover Events

PITTSFIELD – Temple Anshe Amunim will hold its annual second night Passover Seder on Saturday, March 31. The Seder, which will begin at 5:30 p.m., will be led by Rabbi Josh Breindel.

Passover offers many opportunities for families to participate at TAA, sharing traditional and innovative texts and melodies. During the Seder, children will be invited to hunt for the afikomen, an exciting treasure hunt with hidden matzo, and to experience a fun-filled Passover Seder on Saturday, March 24 at 4:00 p.m. The Seder will be led by Rabbi Neil Hirsch and Jodie Gordon. The meal will be catered by Mara Simon Catering and will have chicken and vegetarian options. Cost for this event is $88 per person with a maximum of $30 per family. All chocolate will be nut-free and dairy-free. Sugar-free and gluten-free options will be available upon request. For more information and to RSVP for this event please contact Esther Benari-Altmann, Director of Education at eba@ansheamunim.org or at (413) 442-5910.

Shir Ha-Shirim and Festival Service: On Friday, April 6 at 9:30 a.m., Rabbi Breindel will lead a reading of Shir Ha-Shirim (The Song of Songs), one of the most evocative and romantic texts of our tradition. A joyous stream-lined festival service will follow at 10:30 a.m.

Yizkor Study and Concluding Festival Service: Friday, April 6 at 1:30 p.m., Rabbi Breindel will read an exploration of the texts and rituals of Yizkor, our memorial service. Participants will examine Eli Milet (our great memorial prayer), Kiddush Yatom (Mourner’s Kiddush), and some contemporary poems. A meditative service of celebration and memory will follow.

More Passover Events

Chocolate Seder: All ages are warmly invited to participate in a fun-filled Passover Chocolate Seder on Saturday, March 24 at 4:00 p.m. The cost for this event is $88 per person with a maximum of $30 per family. All chocolate will be nut-free and dairy-free. Sugar-free and gluten-free options will be available upon request. For more information and to RSVP for this event please contact Esther Benari-Altmann, Director of Education at eba@ansheamunim.org or at (413) 442-5910.

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Chabad of the Berkshires to Host a First Night Seder, Passover Events

PITTSFIELD – Chabad of the Berkshires will host a communal Passover Seder on Friday, March 30 at Chabad of the Berkshires, 450 South St., in Pittsfield, starting at 7:30 p.m. The Seder will take participants through the liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. Included in the Seder will be the traditional hand-baked shmurah matzoh, the ritual four cups of wine, and a delicious full-course Passover dinner that includes homemade salmon gefilte fish, an array of unique salads, chicken soup, a gourmet brisket and kugel entree, and delectable desserts. Seating is limited and reservations are required before Friday, March 23. Cost is $36 per person and $18 per child under the age of ten. There is no charge for children under the age of three. Rabbi Volovik says no one will be turned away for lack of funds. For more information, to make a reservation, or to sponsor a family, call Sara Volovik at (413) 499-9809.

The Chametz ‘Sale’

A free online ‘Sale of Chametz’ form is available on the Chabad of the Berkshires website, www.jewishberkshires.com, that will empower Rabbi Levi Volovik to act on one’s behalf in the sale. Sell chametz the old fashioned way by calling the rabbi at (413) 499-5890.

Matzoh Ball Tasting

“Passover for Foodies: Wine, Desserts, and Matzoh Ball Tasting,” will be hosted by Spirited at 444 Pittsfield Road, Lenox on Friday, March 23, from 1 to 3 p.m. The event is sponsored in part by the Wassermann-Streit Y’DIYAH Memorial Fund and the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, along with Chabad of the Berkshires.

PASSOVER EVENTS

 좌측에 있는 단도는 주요 이벤트들에 대한 정보 제공을 위해 제작되었습니다. 이 부분의 내용은 'Chabad of the Berkshires'가 주관하는 'First Night Seder'로, 3월 30일 밤에 개최될 예정입니다. 가격은 각 인원당 36달러이며 10세 미만은 무료입니다. 참석자들은 이 세력에 포함된 모든 음식품에 대해 무료로 선물이 제공됩니다. 취항 사항은 교통 요금, 음식의 배포 및 소비 등에 있습니다. 또한, 이 이벤트에 대한 자세한 내용은 'www.jewishberkshires.org'를 참조해보세요.
MARCH

Monday, 19...........10:45 a.m., “The Man Who Never Forgot” with editor/author, Ken Markel. Lunch: Leftovers as we prepare for Passover.

Tuesday, 20.......... Leftovers as we prepare for Passover.

Thursday, 22 ........ 10:45 a.m., “Getting our Hands Dirty: What You Can Do to Protect our Environment,” with Elizabeth Orenstein. Lunch: leftovers as we prepare for Passover.

Monday, 26......... 10:45 a.m., film It Runs in the Family. No meal due to Passover preparation.

Tuesday, 27......... Kitchen closed for Passover preparation.

Thursday, 29......... 10:45 a.m., film Crimes and Misdemeanors. No meal due to Passover preparation.

APRIL

Monday, 2 ........... 10:45 a.m., Chair Yoga with Linda Novick. Lunch: meat loaf**, salad and Passover dressing, oven roasted potatoes, broccoli, matzo, grapes, and tea.

Tuesday, 3 .......... Passover beef stew***#, matzo, applesauce, and tea.


Monday, 9 .......... 10:45 a.m., “20th Century Jewish Russian Immigration” with author, Anastasia Goodman. Lunch: Vegetable frittata***, celery rice soup, zucchini and tomatoes, salad, multi-grain bread, cookies, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.

Tuesday, 10 .......... Pasta and chef’s choice of dairy sauce, salad, beans, muffins, apricots, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.

Thursday, 12......... 10:45 a.m., “Global Perspectives and Community Conversations: Beyond Genocide” with artist, Amy Fagen. Lunch: Grilled cheese and tuna, tomato soup, beets, salad, matzo, mandarin oranges, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.

Monday, 16......... 10:45 a.m., film Creating Harmony: The Displaced Persons’ Orchestra from St. Ottilien.” Lunch: Turkey tenders with sundried tomatoes and artichokes***#, salad, mixed vegetables, noodles, potato bread, pears, and tea.

Tuesday, 17......... Lamb meatballs, Greek lemon, egg and chicken soup, rice pilaf, green beans, pita bread, tropical fruit salad, and tea.


Monday, 23......... 10:45 a.m., Program to be Announced. Lunch: Salisbury steak***#, salad, brown rice, broccoli, rye bread, parve cookies, and tea.

Tuesday, 24......... Roasted chicken***#, baked sweet potato, asparagus cuts and tips, noodles & onions, farmer’s loaf, pineapple, and tea.

Thursday, 26......... 10:45 a.m., Program to be Announced. Lunch: Spinach mushroom quiche, salad, mixed vegetables, challah, pudding, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.

Monday, 30......... 10:45 a.m., Program to be Announced. Lunch: Turkey salad platters, celery rice soup, coleslaw, marble rye bread, grapes, and tea.
Seymour Karpen, 92, leaves loving family and friends

SARASOTA, FL – Seymour Karpen died Thursday, February 15, surrounded by loving family and friends. He was a longtime resident of Norwood, NJ, Otis, MA, and Sarasota, FL.

He was predeceased by his beloved wife Leah, and is survived by their three children, Dr. Marvin Karpen, and Saul Karpen; daughter-in-law Abby Dern; Judy’s companion, Cliff Eruc; 7 grandchildren, Joshua, Sarah, Emily, Matthew, Benjamin, Ann, and Jason; and his sisters Henny Peters and Elaine Paris.

Seymour G. Gilbert, 103, Distinguished Scientist, Professor Emeritus of Food Science Educator LEE – Seymour G. Gilbert, 103, passed away peacefully on Saturday, February 23, 2017. Born in Orange, NJ in 1914, he received a Ph.D. in Plant Nutrition from Rutgers University in 1941, having supported himself during the Great Depression through work in a fish market, along with a part-time job as a laboratory technician at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

He became a ScтокмаSter, using that position to create bridges between the different religious and cultural communities in New York City. In 1951, he and his growing family moved to Milwaukee, WI, where he was a biochemist in industrial enzyme research at the Pabst Brewing Company laboratories from 1951-58. He later served (1958-65) as technical director of Pabst, a food packaging company. In 1965, Dr. Gilbert was offered a full professorship at his alma mater to develop the Rutgers University Food Science department at Cook College. He and his family returned to his home state, academicia, his first love.

He was instrumental in establishing the Center for Packaging Science and Engineering and the Center for Advanced Food Technology at Rutgers. He became internationally known throughout the food packaging industry, traveling extensively, often with Rita. He published over 150 articles and papers and mentored more than 40 Ph.D. students from all over the world, including many of whom have themselves become experts in the field.

Dr. Gilbert was particularly proud of his role in NASA’s Apollo program, designing packaging for the moon landing life support systems. He designed and built a manufacturing system for the material used in both the food supply and the elimina-

tion system. He received numerous honors, including from the Institute of Food Technologists, the Packaging Hall of Fame, the Food Engineering Hall of Fame, and the New York Academy of Science. Continuation to teach and con duct or lead research into his expertise was Emeritus in 1988. Remaining highly active within the field, in 1991 he was an associate directorship of the Center for Packaging and Engineering at Rutgers University, continuing to teach and con duct or lead research into his expertise.

He received the Lifetime Achievement Award in 2014 by the Rutgers Department of Food Science.

Following his first wife Rita’s death in 1995, Seymour again found love and companion ship with Erna Caplow Freilich. They married in 1996 and were very active in the community, and ran for the office of Connecticut state representative in 1996. He was known for his sense of humor, mischievous behavior, and optimism. Despite serious health challenges in his later years, he met each day with a passion for life and a resilience that was an inspira tion to all around him.

He is survived by three loving daughters, Nancy Salzer of Arlington, MA, Jan Salzer of Naples, Florida, and Syril. He also leaves three grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held at Haz Zion Temple, Penn Valley, PA, and the Western Shafry Tefilo Israel Cemetery, Montclair, NJ. Memorial contributions may be made to the American Technion Society, 55 East 55th Street, New York, NY 10022 or Israel Guide Dog Center, 968 Easton Road-Suite H, Warrington, PA 18976.

Moysey Kirshne y, 87, proud father, great-grandfather PITTSFIELD – Moysey Kirshney passed away on Monday evening, February 19. He was born in Baku, Azerbaijan on December 26, 1930 to mother Pogha and father Mordecai ( inactive of Khorser, Ukraine). He graduated from “Oil and Chemistry Production” University with a degree in engineering. He worked as an engineer doing construction management for a number of years until he joined the Food Production Department. After he achieved the post as the head of the construction department. He received a number of major medals and eventually re-
OBITUARIES

Jeffrey R. Kahn, 55, enjoyed New England sports

PITTSFIELD — Jeffrey R. Kahn, 55, passed away Tuesday, February 20, at Berkshire Medical Center.

Merry married on May 19, 1962, a son of the late Leonard and Marion E. (Friedman) Kahn, Jeffrey attended Dalton School, graduated from Washonah Regional High School in 1980, and attended Berkshire Community College. For the past 14 years, he was employed at Hi-Tech Mold & Tool as a press operator.

Jeffrey enjoyed bowling and all New England sports. He is survived by one brother, Charles D. Kahn and wife, Janice, of West Stockbridge, VA; two sisters, Judith D. Kahn and husband Jack Matarazzo of Dalton, and Carol Greenfield; and one aunt Laurelyn Lynch of Rotterdam, NY.

Funeral services were held Thursday, February 22, at Pittsfield Cemetery (Temple Ahanie Amunim Section) with Rabbi Joshua Breindel officiating.

The family welcomes contributions to Moysie’s memory to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Amunim, officiating.

Rabbi Joshua Breindel, spir-

The last one-and-a-half years he spent happily married to Zema Baghirova.

Graveside funeral services were held on Wednesday, February 21 at Kneseat Israel Cemetery, Pittsfield, with Rabbi Joshua Breindel officiating.

The family welcomes contributions to Moysie’s memory to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, 196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

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Our Former Executive Director Saw Israel through a Federation Lens

By Rhoda Kaminstein

My first visit to Israel took place in August 1983, while I was executive director of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires traveling on the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) Small Cities Executives Seminar.

Since many of my colleagues from across the United States and Canada were also first timers, we were encouraged to bring along our spouses and teenaged children. This meant my husband, Phil, and my soon-to-be college bound son Dan, would be along for a family occasion.

The purpose of our CJF mission was to provide us with “a better understanding of Israel today – the country and its people.” To that end, we were not merely tourists, but students – at every meal and stop along the way, we met with professionals from the various agencies and employees of the facilities we visited during our 9-day stay.

Of course, we enjoyed Kabballat Shabbat at the Western Wall, and then traveled north to spend a night at Kibbutz Kfar Giladi, close enough to touch Lebanon. On the way there, we stopped in Afula and met some of the first children who had arrived from Ethiopia – all of them wearing NFL team t-shirts. I remember them being disappointed that our camera wasn’t a Polaroid that could produce instant pictures.

We also spent a day at Kiryat Ata, our Project Renewal twin community, and met with residents at the senior center that our Federation sponsored along with others in New England. Several of them were pleased to speak Yiddish with Phil, as Hebrew was not easy for them.

Editor’s Note: Project Renewal created a cluster of Massachusetts federations in the early 1980s that sponsored programs in Kiryat Ata, then a town of 32,000 residents who were largely Moroccan and Iraqi. Its goals were similar to the Partnership2Gether program that connects us now to the Afula-Gilboa region of Israel.

At our stop in Yad Vashem, the director of education addressed us about the uniqueness of the Holocaust, sharing with us the fact that Hitler said he planned to eliminate every Jew, including the 204 Jews in Albania. Somehow, that statistic remains in my mind to this day.

Knowing that I would be expected to report back, I took copious notes. Reading them over now brings back many memories, not only of the sites we saw but of the people we met, including Phil’s cousin who had made aliyah with her family several years earlier.

The opportunity given to me and my family by the Federation was certainly one of the high points of my 8 years as executive director.

Rhoda Kaminstein was the second executive director of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, holding that position from 1982 to 1989, and resides in Pittsfield with her husband, Phil, a past president of the Federation.

Send stories about your early Israel experiences to Albert Stern, BJV editor, at astern@jewishberkshires.org
Traveling with Jewish Taste
Mortal Bored? Try a New Haroset This Passover
By Carol Goodman Kaufman

One spring evening several years ago, Joel and I hosted a party at our home. I had a wonderful time cooking up a storm, diving into my favorite hors d'oeuvres recipes. Among the different items I served that night was one particular hors d'oeuvres: Egyptian haroset. Left over from our Passover Seder. The sticky, sweet paste symbolizes the clay and mortar with which our ancestors worked while enslaved in Egypt was a hit on the cocktail party circuit. Our MFT friends were amused. Our gentle ones came away with some new, arcane knowledge of their Jewish neighbors. I had to laugh. Having grown up with apple, walnut, cinnamon, and sweet wine haroset, the standard Ashkenazi recipe was all I knew. That is, until I lived in Israel, where I was exposed to the dazzling diversity of nationalities being absorbed into the Promised Land. I was bored with the same old same old. I wanted more to my mortar!

First of all, why haroset?
The idea of haroset as a symbolic food first appears in the Babylonian Talmud, compiled in the 3rd to 5th century (Pesachim 114a). It is based on this line in Exodus 1:13-14: “The Egyptians enslaved the children of Israel with back-breaking labor, and they embittered their lives with hard labor, with clay and with bricks and with all kinds of labor in the fields – all their work that they worked with them with back-breaking labor."

There are as many recipes for the mortar as there are communities in the Diaspora, and they range from thick pastes, commemorating the clay, to runny syrups that evoke the blood of the plague and the Israelite doorposts. But, before I get to discussing those, it’s important to address an issue I have always had with the stuff. If haroset is indeed supposed to remind us of the bricks we made while symbolic food first appears, is it any wonder it is quite a bit of discussion among the rabbanim about what constitutes a proper haroset.

The dominant rabbinic opinion is that the paste is meant to remind us of the clay used by the Israelites when we were slaves in Egypt. The other position maintains that the haroset is meant to remind the modern Jewish people of the apple trees in Egypt.

Huh? Apple trees? According to these rabbis, the Israelite women quietly (and painlessly, no less!) gave birth beneath apple trees so that the Egyptians would never know that a baby boy was born that they could then murder.

At any rate, the rabbis talked about having something acidic in the mix (not Hasiotic; that would just be weird). The acid serves to balance the bitterness of slavery with the optimism of redemption. Thus the addition of apples, which in ancient times were quite tart, and could explain our Ashkenazi recipe. However (isn’t there always a however?), one modern rabbi, Howard Jachter, not only is satisfied with the apple decision, found in his research on a totally different topic, discussion by the Tosafists that identifies the topaz, or apple, as in fact etrog, or citron. The lemon-like fruit would indeed be a sour addition to the mixture. But this finding brings up yet another question: having been harvested for Sukkot, wouldn’t citron have spoiled by Passover?

The origins of the same ingredients commonly used in haroset as we know it to be found in Shul HaShirim (Song of Songs) apples, figs, pomegranates, grapes, walnuts, dates, wine, saffron, and cinnamon. In fact, although we do see some of these items in various recipes from around the Diaspora, others also appear. Egyptian Jews use dates, raisins, walnuts, cinnamon, and sweet wine. Both Greek and Turkish Jews combine apple aps, dates, chopped almonds, and wine. In Italy, chestnuts are part of the mix, while some Spanish and Portuguese communities add coconut. Brazilian Jews use a completely different mixture of avocado, banana, orange, and Granny Smith apples.

In the end, it probably all comes down to ingredients that are locally available. Which apparently now includes dairy products. Just three years ago, Ben & Jerry’s introduced haroset flavored ice cream in Israel – kosher for Passover, of course. If you’re doing a dairy Seder, I guess you’d be good to go.

The most unusual recipe for haroset has to be one mentioned by the 13th century Italian Rabbi Zedekiah ben Avraham HaLevi, who writes about adding finely crushed potsherds into the mix. The rationale behind this truly bizarre recipe is etymological. Remember, the word haroset comes from hebrew, or clay. Supposedly, this recipe is meant to reinforce the idea of ‘the clay’ in which the bricks were made. Lest you think this custom was unique to Italy and in that time only, Greek Rabbi Joseph David from Salonika writes in the 17th century that Jewish communities in Salonika also put a little ground potsherds or crushed stone into their haroset, apparently following both Rashi and his grandson, the Rabbi of Salonika.

At one point in the Passover story, you will recall that the Egyptian taskmasters stopped supplying the Israelite slaves with clay, so they had to use straw. So, a traditional Yemenite recipe calls for whole herbs and spices meant to simulate the straw. While difficult to chew, that recipe bit would be a bit easier on the tummy than those requiring ground-up clay pots.

Not surprisingly, the word haroset is not an universal term. Some Jews of the Middle East instead use the term ‘halegh’ in which the bricks of Persian descent have an impressive tradition of including forty different ingredients in their halegh, meant to symbolize the 40 years of wandering in the desert. No matter which recipe – or several – you use at your Seder, I wish you all a happy and healthy Passover.

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

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Egyptian Haroset: No Potsherds Needed

Makes about 4 cups
As long as we’re celebrating our liberation from slavery in Egypt, why not try an Egyptian recipe for haroset? Super easy to make, and delicious too!

You can use any leftover as a spread on matzah – or even as hors d’oeuvres!

Ingredients:
- 1 pound dark raisins
- 8 oz. pitted dates – Medjool are best
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup chopped almonds

Directions:
Combine raisins and dates in a bowl. Add enough water to cover. Cover with plastic wrap. Let stand overnight. Drain. Place mixture in food processor with sugar. Process until mixture is well chopped. Turn into bowl. Sprinkle chopped almonds over all. Serve.
Calendar – Ongoing Events
Around the Community

**Knesset Israel**

**16 Colt Road, Pittsfield**

**ONGOING MINYANS**

Sunday 8:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.

Thursday 5:45 p.m.

Saturday 9:30 a.m. and evenings approximately 30 minutes before sunset

CANDLE-LIGHTING

Friday, March 23 ....................6:51 p.m.

Friday, March 30 (Erev Pesach) ....................6:59 p.m.

Saturday, March 31 (Pesach 1) ....................8:08 p.m.

Thursday, April 5 (Pesach 2) ....................7:07 p.m.

Friday, April 13 ....................7:14 p.m.

Friday, April 20 ....................7:22 p.m.

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**GREAT BARRINGTON | RUACH WING | GUNITE POOL**

**GREAT BARRINGTON | RUACH WING | GUNITE POOL**

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**GREAT BARRINGTON | RUACH WING | GUNITE POOL**

**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.
ZVI COHEN, continued from page 1

E.B. White famously wrote, “No one should come to New York to live unless he is willing to be lucky” – but it’s an insight that Cohen certainly internalized by anyone living anywhere. Certainly, when Cohen told about his life story, the role of luck is never far from the narrative, nor is the role played by hard work. But the way things all came together remains mysterious in a way that clearly amazes and amuses him.

The good fortune that he has experienced in Chatham has not only transformed his life and his family’s, but also the character of the small village just over the New York border from Berkshire County, where he has lived for the past 30 years. His various enterprises – of which the Our Daily Bread restaurant, market, and bakery is the centerpiece – now provide work for more than 100 people. In addition to Our Daily Bread, he and his sons Gavriel and Yonatan, operate the vegetarian Our Daily Bread Cafè (and adjacent gift shop) he founded and Destino Cocina Mexicana and Margarita Bar, as well as The Gluten Free Bakery that produces kosher, dairy-free loaves and biscotti sold across the Northeast.

Cohen built his businesses from the ground up – literally. His early career working in construction and as a master carpenter gave him the skills to build the efficient work places in Chatham, all of which boast top-of-the-line kitchens behind the scenes. Out from his pleasant dining rooms fill up with diners enjoying meals made with fresh, wholesome ingredients, almost everything on their plates made from scratch on site.

“Do I have experience as a restaurateur? No,” says Cohen. “Do I have experience as a baker? No.” Like Joseph, he adds, “I never had a plan.”

Cohen says the road that took him “from pages to where I am now” began when he was a young adolescent, bristling at the authoritarian approach of his teachers. He ended up immersing himself in the counterculture that flourished in New York City during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Both he and his sister were rebels, and home life turned complicated as they clashed with their father.

He left for an organized program in Israel at age 15, but abandoned its strictures and immersed himself in the subculture there – once again, by his own admission, too fully. By the time he came out the other side of those experiences, he says he had learned how to make his way in the world and talk to anyone. And he also met Beatrice, the woman he ultimately married. Although not Jewish, the Swiss-born Beatrice was impressed and intrigued by the harrowing events of the Yom Kippur War and, via a Rotary International Youth Exchange program, went to Israel to see who these people are,” says Cohen. What she brought back from her experience in Israel met her parents’ worst fears – “me,” says Zvi – yet the two stayed in touch as Cohen returned to New York City, where he turned his life around working as a carpenter.

In the late 1970s, Beatrice secured a scholarship to the University of Michigan to study Special Education, and she and Cohen together moved to Ann Arbor. While she obtained her degree, Cohen apprenticed to two master cabinetmakers, and was one of the creators of in-store designs for the Borders and Staples chain stores.

The couple was also introduced to the Hillel rabbi on campus, and was invited for Shabbos. “We were there every Friday for the next two years,” he said. Around that time, Beatez began two years of Jewish study, which culminated in her Orthodox conversion to Judaism. They had what Cohen describes as a “hippy wedding,” for which Beatrice made his shirt and her dress.

The couple lived a bohemian life. In the years that followed, his cabinetry and carpentry skill in demand, Cohen ping-ponged back and forth between jobs in Ann Arbor and Switzerland. Overseas, he worked on 500-year-old Swiss houses undergoing modernization, learning traditional techniques such as fashioning hidden dovetail joints. Back in the States, however, he determined that he wanted a college education. The problem – “I had no high school diploma,” he says, “but I was a reader and, as a union carpenter, had gone through several challenging classroom experiences,” continued on next page

ZVI COHEN, right, with a worker at The Gluten Free Bakery.
ZVI COHEN, continued from previous page

programs in night school.” Fortunately, the University of Michigan had established a program for unconventional students, and Cohen enrolled. “It was like candy to a baby,” Cohen recalls. “I could study anything I wanted, and it was all I wanted to do.” He obtained a teaching degree with a design and architecture focus, but before he started work as an instructor, he returned to Switzerland “to create a farm for some rich friends of Beatrice’s.” He loved the work – the punishing 4:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. workday was “easy for me” – but living in Switzerland was ultimately too hard and expensive. The farm was conceived on the biodynamic agriculture principles of Rudolf Steiner, whose ideas would hold an enduring interest for the Cohens. Returning to the United States, Cohen worked as a shop teacher in Bennington, VT. It was there that he earned his teaching degree; Beatrice took a teaching position there that she held for many years. Zvi went back to work as a shop teacher at the local high school. However, as an adult, he no more enjoyed dealing with the strictures of an educational institution than he had as a Gemshe cheder in Brooklyn, and he lost the job after a couple of years. And that, says Cohen, is where the story really begins.

Our Daily Bread was a bakery in Chatham operated by “two bickering owners who mismanaged it,” says Cohen. He started working for them part time, driving their brown bread down to the Union Square farmers market in downtown New York. “They made the worst bread,” he remembers. “They were going out of business.” While hawking their loaves, Cohen befriended “a mobster, a young guy” who had an interest in what was going on at the market. The two started eating lunch together, with the younger man showing a particular curiosity about Cohen’s family life. “He was from a mob family,” Cohen says. “He never knew his father, who had been in prison for years. He didn’t know what family was, I would talk to him about kids.” The grateful young man eventually “bought the bakery for me and delivered a great baker to work there.” The baker was somehow... obliged... to Cohen’s underworld-connected friend, and relocated to Chatham to work for several years. This gifted baker created an array of artisanal loaves that transformed Our Daily Bread’s offerings, and got the ball rolling for the bakery. Later on, Cohen had the good fortune to hire a second gifted baker – “a moniksh man, who walked barefoot in the snow, fed poor people, and went about making ‘kreeds’” – who conceived many of the gluten-free offerings the bakery now sells.

The Chatham-to-Union Square pipeline was maintained, and the popularity of Our Daily Bread grew. The small bakery became a bigger bakery, with its products now being trucked by Cohen’s drivers to New York City culinary institutions like Dean & Deluca and the famed restaurant Jean Georges, as well as to the Fresh Direct network that delivers groceries to homes in 200 ZIP codes. Contracts now under negotiation hold the promise of an even greater distribution profile, with the kosher gluten-free baked good representing a particular area of growth. A small house housed in the former Blue Seal Feeds & Needs plant, its signage still in place – produces 1,400 loaves of bread four times each week, as well as bisciotti. Cohen says that with his baked goods and restaurant concepts, he has “followed his heart.” His connection to Steiner principles is manifest in how the food is prepared – organic ingredients, with virtually everything made from scratch. There is also a Jewish flair to his menu – you can get lox that has been smoked on site, house-brined and smoked pastrami, and a variety of classic deli and Middle Eastern dishes, including shakshuka. The market also sells high-quality spices and prepared foods.

Yet, as Cohen observes, “though you may forget about the past, the past won’t forget about you.” Three years ago, Cohen underwent a liver transplant necessitated by damage originating in his early wild years. The process of recovery describes adds poignancy to his description of his current place in the world, and his gratitude for it. His Judaism is central – “I carry myself as a Jew. It’s on my mind 100 percent of the time.” He is closely involved with Chabad of the Berkshires, a connection to Chabad Lubavitch that dates back to his once-rebellious sister’s joining the movement as she straightened her life out decades ago. Cohen’s sister was married at Chabad’s worldwide headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn, and Cohen is proud that he was privileged to have experienced a ge-chudas (one-on-one encounter) with the late Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson.

Dare as his illness was, it brought his sons back to Chatham to work in the business (his daughter lives in Poughkeepsie), and he says it gives him joy to see his grandchildren having “a love of Yidishkeit.” It was a burden for me. Fifty years later, I’ve come back full-circle to Yiddishkeit. It’s how my life came around. It rectified it, and moved it forward. I’ve had such good luck, I’m so blessed. I have to attribute it to something more than good luck.

“I’m still the same failure I always was. I’m still the same despondent person I always was. I really do feel like Joseph. How did I get here?”

...If they be good dreams, confirm and reinforce them like the dreams of Joseph; if they require remedy, heal them, as the waters of Marah were healed by our teacher Moses, as Miriam was healed of her leprosy, Naaman of his leprosy, Hezekiah of his leprosy, Naaman of his leprosy, Hezekiah of his leprosy, and the waters of Jericho by Elija. As You turned the curse of Rachel into a blessing, so turn all my dreams into something good for me.

— Conclusion of the congregational response to Birkut Kohanim

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More Meaning Than Bottom Line Profit
How Sheffield native Nick Friedman introduced medical marijuana to the Berkshires with Theory Wellness

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor

"Dude, am I really high, or is this actually working?" — Harold

"Both." — Kumar

From the film, Harold and Kumar Go to White Castle

Marijuana is having a cultural moment. It is now allowed for medical use in 29 states and for recreational use in nine (including Massachusetts), even as it remains prohibited by federal law. In terms of public perception, marijuana has largely shed its identity as a menacing potential gateway drug to more dangerous substances, and is being redefined as a veritable panacea to treat a wide range of medical and psychological disorders.

Why now? Perhaps because a consensus of American have used cannabis to no ill effect, and have determined that there must be a better way to deal with the reality of a marijuana trade than as a law enforcement problem and/or a cash cow for tax dodging (and possibly violent) black marketers. And while marijuana might seem like a product that sells itself, its growers, scientists, and sellers have assembled a well-oiled public relations apparatus to extol its benefits and normalize its use – it is high time for Israel’s flagship medical cannabis conference to go global (LNNS).

Medical Cannabis Significantly Safer for Elderly With Chronic Pain Than Opiums (Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)

As this small sampling suggests, Israel is at the forefront of cannabis research and development, and has been for a long time. In 1964, Weitzman Institute chemist Raphael Mechoulam discovered the plant’s active substances, the psychoactive tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) and non-psychoactive cannabidiol (CBD); his work also helped researchers identify the brain’s endocannabinoid system, which plays a role in mood, memory, and the sensation of pain. In The Scientist, a fascinating documentary about his life available on YouTube, Mechoulam (since 1972 a Hebrew University professor) speculates that cannabis-derived medicines could replace 10 to 20 percent of the pharmaceuticals currently on the market.

Socially, Israel has, at least for the past 30 years, been tolerant toward marijuana; while the drug is still illegal for recreational use, enforcement is lax and there is a push in the Knesset to decriminalize the substance. A study conducted recently by the Israeli Anti-Drug Authority, found that more than a quarter of Israelis aged 18 to 40 reported having used marijuana within the last month, and that Israel has the highest rates of annual cannabis usage in the world in that age group. In all age groups, Iceland (18 percent) and the United States (16 percent) are the top annual users.

Medical use for the treatment of pain has been permitted in Israel since the 1990s. Research and innovation is supported (8 million shekels a year) by the Ministry of Health, which licenses nine growers cultivating marijuana for medical use. The Tikun Olam Company, Israel’s leader in the field, produces approximately 230 marijuana products, and retails its wares made in this country in Delaware, Washington, and Nevada.

In the United States, marijuana remains a curious and volatile business. As noted earlier, state laws are in conflict with federal law, under which use and possession is illegal for any reason. States where marijuana is sold in pleasant dispensaries are coexistence alongside states where the marijuana trade is controlled by hardcore criminals. When Attorney General Jeff Sessions, a fierce opponent of marijuana, in early 2018 threatened to rescind the Cole Memo (an Obama-era policy memo by and large protecting marijuana-legal states from federal scrutiny), Time magazine reported his statement sent “ripples of unease throughout the burgeoning industry” as investments now in place suddenly seemed less secure.

Jewish entrepreneurs and investors have often been early adopters of business models that emerge before they find widespread social acceptance.

THEORY WELLNESS, continued on next page
or display a proven track record—the motion picture industry is probably the most notable example in US history. In the past, Jews pursued these opportunities because other avenues to success were closed to them, but now there are myriad reasons why Jews are overrepresented in these businesses, and passion often figures as strongly as profits.

For Nick Friedman, 30-year-old president of Theory Wellness in Great Barrington, the marijuana dispensary business is the second entrepreneurial venture he has entered into guided by his values. While still a student at Maeve's Colby College, the Sheffield native (and Berkshire School graduate) founded Blue Reserve Water, a sustainable drinking water company that eliminates the need for plastic bottles, with partner Brandon Pollock, who is now CEO of Theory. Blue Reserve Water grew to become one of the largest businesses of its kind in New England, fulfilling Friedman's goal (as stated in a biography found online) to displace bottled water delivery and consumption, thereby reducing the carbon impact of the drinking water industry.

Its long term mission is to protect our global right to affordable, clean drinking water. “A field has to have more meaning than bottom-line profit,” says Friedman, who dual majored in Philosophy and Economics at Colby, about his entrepreneurial approach. “If you are not passionate about the product and about the mission, interest will flag before it will become a viable firm.” He says his experience starting his first business while still a student allowed him to really appreciate the ways that theoretical ideas he was absorbing in class could intersect with practical real life endeavors. “Having experience as a philosophy major was definitely unusual,” he says.

Friedman’s conviction about cannabis is rooted in his own family’s struggles. In 2010, while he was still a student at Colby, his father, Benno Friedman, was injured in a skiing accident that left him a quadriplegic. A commercial and fine art photographer (with work in the collections of New York’s Museum of Modern Art, Boston’s Fogg Museum and Museum of Fine Arts, and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American Art) and outdoor enthusiast, Benno was also active in the communal life of the Berkshires, founding the Housatonic River Initiative and contributing to the Railroad Street Youth Project. “He has an environmentalist spirit, and his injury took him away from the things he loved to do,” says his son.

It was Benno’s “response in terms of pain management that made me interested in the efficacy of cannabis,” says Friedman, whose first involvement in the cannabis industry came while working for others on the West Coast. He says he knew he wanted to return home and was “at a time of life when I was looking for a new project.”

Friedman reconnected with Brandon Pollock who, after Blue Reserve Water, was involved in opening two of the four marijuana dispensaries in New Hampshire. Having a partner, says Friedman, is one of three essential components of his entrepreneurial philosophy, along with caring about an idea beyond its profitability and leveraging a network of experts. “Having a partner as a sounding board is instrumental,” he says. “Without one, you fall subject to self doubt and lose your propensity to take risks.”

From the start, says Friedman, he and Pollock were determined to “work with the highest caliber of operators, who would come up with new designs to cultivate cannabis in an East Coast environment and pass the lab requirements that Massachusetts has in place.” Massachusetts sets the bar for entry into the medical marijuana business quite high. For example, the firm must be vertically integrated, meaning that all businesses must be monocultivated, that the firm must cultivate its own plants from seed and operate its own stores. Friedman re-ports that the majority of startups that have obtained licenses have not been able to follow through and open. As of January 31, there were 22 dispensaries open for sales, serving 46,294 active patients.

As Friedman and Pollock developed and implemented their business model, “we leveraged our cumulative network of investors. Getting investors on board was much harder five years ago than it is now, a reflection of how public sentiment has changed.” The partners determined that it was more prudent to build their cultivation facility from the ground up in Bridgewater, rather than repurpose an existing warehouse. There they grow the plants and produce the line of products bearing the Theory brand, which includes oils, infusions, edibles, tinctures, vape cartridges, salves, and, of course, flower. “It’s not one size fits all,” says Friedman. “Each product has a different candidate.”

And it is also true that cannabis has different effects on different users, unlike pharmaceutical drugs that undergo clinical trials to determine a measurable (and reproducible) impact of new potential treatments. While such trials are underway and their results constantly being published, patients’ responses to cannabis products remain subjective, to a certain degree. A large part of the training Theory “budtenders” undergo revolves around learning how to talk to patients about their interaction with cannabis, and guiding them to a product that suits.

While marijuana has a long countercultural history, one finds virtually no traces of it at Theory or the other dispensaries I’ve visited in Massachusetts, where the experience of purchasing marijuana as a patient resembles nothing so much as completing a transaction at a bank. The freak flags fly more overtly in the West, where purveyors might be former outlaws who sold marijuana on the grey or black markets. After marijuana starts to be sold for recreational use this summer, Friedman envisions that dispensaries might start to have a less antiseptic identity, morphing into outlets that feel more like apothecaries than banks. Certainly they will be “more inclusive,” he says, and prices are expected to drop, as well. Overall, the trajectory the marijuana business will take is still very much up in the air, with a lessening - but extant - possibility that increased federal pressure will cause the industry to go up in smoke. Did we mention that marijuana is still illegal?“The possible scenarios do not limit the world we want to do,” says Friedman. “We’re beyond the point of no return to the old ways. Polls show that 90 percent of the public approves of cannabis — the toothpaste is out of the tube.”
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