

# Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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

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## Above the Drowning Sea

In honor of Holocaust Remembrance Day, a film screening and memorial candle lighting



PITTSFIELD – Discover the story of the dramatic escape of European Jews from Nazi-controlled Europe to Shanghai on the eve of World War II in the feature documentary *Above the Drowning Sea*, part of a special program in honor of Yom HaShoah/ Holocaust Remembrance Day at the

Berkshire Museum on Sunday, April 19 from 2 to 4 p.m. This event is free and open to the public, and is sponsored by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires. After the film, please join us for candle lighting and prayers in memory of the victims of the Holocaust.

*Above the Drowning Sea* is a 90-minute documentary that was shot in six countries over four continents that will take you on an inspiring emotional journey across time and across the world.

As Hitler's forces sought to expel the Jews from Europe, no other country would open its doors to the refugees. Their lives at stake, the refugees

**YOM HASHOAH,**  
continued on page 12

### Inside

Letting Go.....	3
Meeting Shoah Survivors.....	4
Your Federation Presents.....	4-8
Super Volunteer Merle Ferber.....	6
Local News.....	7-10
Berkshire Jewish Voices.....	15-17

## שקט בבקשה!

“Israelis can finally use an emoji to tell each other to pipe down,” reports the *Times of Israel*



In February, the Unicode Consortium, the California-based group that sets the standard for encoding characters across languages and computer systems, approved 117 new emojis. Among them was the upturned hand with touching fingers, which to Israelis means “quiet down” or “wait a second.” The Emojipedia website, however, describes the image as a sarcastic ‘Italian Hand Gesture,’ leading the Times of Israel to wonder: “Will this bitter truth – the knowledge that the symbol stands for a sarcastic Italian gesture rather than the equally but nevertheless differently rude Israeli version – diminish Israelis’ excitement?” We’ll find out. In any case, it’s also nice to see that the Unicode Consortium saw fit to honor one of greatest Jewish Americans of the 20th Century (right) with another of the 117 new emojis.



## HAPPY PASSOVER!



**SAVE THE DATE**  
**MAY 17**

**On this day Super Jews across the Berkshires will rise up to make our community and our world a better place!  
(Capes & tights optional)**

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

Due to the evolving response to coronavirus, some programs listed in this paper may have been canceled or postponed after our press deadline.

Please contact the sponsoring organization about the status of its programming.

## World Chamber Music at April 17 Knosh & Knowledge

See story on page 5



# In My View

## Deepening Berkshires Connections with the Afula-Gilboa Region of Israel

By Josh Bloom

In January, I had the opportunity to represent the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires in an inter-Federation mission to our Israeli partnership city of Afula and its neighboring kibbutzim and villages that dot the mountainous countryside of the Gilboa region.

Through the Jewish Agency for Israel's Partnership2Gether program, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires (along with 11 other Federations from Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island) actively invests in strengthening the non-profit sector in Afula and Gilboa, and works with activists on the ground to foster people-to-people connections between our communities.

In recent years, the Berkshires has hosted a range of delegations from Afula-Gilboa, including professional chefs, home cooks, artists, photographers, musicians, and more.



Josh helping the "Sandwich Club" prepare lunches for area teens

Reciprocally, community activists from the Afula-Gilboa region have hosted four delegations from Hevreh of Southern Berkshire over the last three years - three cohorts of post-b'nai mitzvah students and their parents, and one congregational tour group.

While I was in Afula and Gilboa, I reconnected with Israeli Jews, Muslims, and Christians hosted by our Federation in the Berkshires. I got to see projects that our Federation supports. And I heard from beneficiaries about how we are impacting them and generating real change in people's lives.

What was particularly remarkable to me was seeing how certain projects had grown and developed.

For example, when an interethnic photographers'

group visited the Berkshires in 2017, I first met Yonish Yaakov, a retired kibbutznik who told me about how he wanted to create a Reform Jewish *kehillah* in Beit Hashita. It was heartwarming to hear about his successes in integrating a liberal form of religious practice and identity into his predominantly secular kibbutz. Now bolstered by an Israeli Reform rabbi, the kibbutz hosts regular egalitarian Shabbat and holiday services, bar and bat mitzvahs, and other lifecycle events.

It was exciting to meet young artists from the Tarbut Movement who chose to move to what is considered Israel's periphery out of a modern sense of Ahad Ha'am's vision of cultural Zionism. Tarbut has worked with local merchants to revitalize the Afula market through art installations and the introduction of studio and gallery spaces that, in turn, have attracted more food vendors, tradespeople, and foot traffic.

I was moved by hearing how the Haifa Rape Crisis Center would not have been able to open a local branch in Afula-Gilboa or sustain a rape crisis hotline had it not been for the advocacy and financial support of our Federations.

It was uplifting to hear how community activists and government officials worked with the Afula LGBTQ community to launch the city's first-ever Pride event in 2019, thanks to Home in the Valley, a fledgling local LGBTQ organization that is supported by all of our Federations.

We saw how our contributions enabled the growth and expansion of an Afula community center's "Sandwich Club" that feeds 50 teen volunteers each night who work together to assemble 200 free lunches that get distributed the following day to local schools. And it was inspiring to meet new *olim* from Ethiopia at an absorption center in Beit Alfa and hear about the hardships that they had to overcome to resettle in Israel after many years of waiting in limbo.

We found hope in expanded opportunities for shared society between Israeli Arabs and Jews. In the Arab town of Moqebble, for example, we met Muslim and Jewish middle school girls who told us that had it not been for their mixed ethnicity basketball team supported by our Federations, they would not have had the chance to have meaningful interactions, let alone become friends, with peers from each other's communities.

As we redouble our investment in "living bridges" between the Berkshires and Afula-Gilboa in the years to come, we will continue to learn from each and further develop a shared sense of a common peoplehood amongst us.

To learn more about Partnership 2Gether, visit <http://archive.jewishagency.org/partnership2gether/program/468>.

Josh Bloom serves on the Executive Board of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires as a vice president



The Partnership2Gether mission meets with Ethiopian olim

### Life Can Present Challenges

Sometimes, a little help along the way can make things easier

Our community social worker, Jill Goldstein, LICSW, offers case management, information/referral and consultation to help Jewish community members find support and access to services to help with such needs as:

- ♥ Coping with life's transitions
- ♥ Aging and caregiving issues
- ♥ Relationship difficulties
- ♥ Adjustment to new living situation
- ♥ Living with illness
- ♥ Grief and loss
- ♥ Depression or anxiety

If you are struggling with one of these or other issues, Jill can help you find community resources to assist you. Jill has a Master's degree in social work (MSW) and is licensed as an independent clinical social worker (LICSW).



If you or someone you know needs a little help, give us a call:

Jill Goldstein, MSW, LICSW  
(413) 442-4360, Ext 17  
j.goldstein@jfswm.org

All services are free and completely confidential



Thank you volunteers Ellen Rosenblatt and the BJV delivery team, Mitch Greenwald, Roman Rozenblyum, Colin Ovitsky, Pattie Lipman, Amy Cott Filson, and Chris Kelly

### Berkshire JEWISH VOICE

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#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

## Rabbi Reflection

### Spiritualizing the Process of Letting Go and Moving Into a New Chapter

Local students also experienced the transitioning powers of mikvah immersion

By Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch



Watching the 2009 documentary *Race to Nowhere* was a defining moment in my understanding of what life as a child is like today. In one scene, a fourth-grader sits on a swing while he is interviewed. Disturbingly, he innocently describes the stress that he feels in elementary school to perform, because if he does not do well now, then he will not be ready for middle school, which will hurt his opportunities for advanced placement in high school, affecting the ultimate decision of which college he will end up attending. This 10-year-old child was unable to just go play on the playground because he was worried about his college applica-

tion. No doubt his parents had also been worrying about how to pay for college for many years before that.

When *Race to Nowhere* came out, congregants with children at home said the film resonated with their experiences. Kids were more and more stressed at younger and younger ages, because they felt they were already in a race, but uncertain where it would lead, or why they allowed the intensity to enter their homes. Coming to the Berkshires was a blessing. I remember talking with one parent of a high schooler when we first moved here, and we began to discuss this film and what it was critiquing. This parent told me that life here in the Berkshires was different. Many of the parents in our community intentionally chose to move here and to raise their families here, for the very reason that they did not have to try to keep up with the Steins or be in a race to who knows where. I found this refreshing, and affirmed our own family decisions to be full-time Berkshire residents.

Yet, I have since learned that our Berkshire children are not immune to the effects of competition within their own schools. Ours are still ambitious, talented young people. They want to succeed. And, they are also challenged by the things other kids say to them on the playground and in the classroom because they are Jewish. We are aware of the ongoing blight of bias around here. It affects us, it affects people of color, immigrants, the LGBTQ community, and others.

After a difficult anti-Semitic incident in the Monument Valley Middle School, Rabbi Jodie Gordon and I realized that we needed to give space to our teens to explore what they have experienced in their community and in their schools. In partnership with Federation, we created a one-day retreat for the students to better understand hate and bias, and to spiritualize the process of letting go and moving into a new chapter. Thanks to support from Carol and Steve Targum and an anonymous donor, 15 students and parents headed to Boston for the day.



Mayyim Hayyim's mikvah

There, the students first met with Jeremy Burton, the executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater

Boston. Jeremy has spent a good deal of time thinking and writing about hate and anti-Semitism, and offered the students an overarching perspective on the recent manifestations of anti-Semitism. After his presentation, we invited the students to consider their experiences and their community. In the afternoon, we headed to Mayyim Hayyim, the progressive mikvah located in Newton.

The power of the day was held by the mikvah. First, educator Emilia Diamant guided our students through a storytelling circle, in which they supported one another by sharing stories of how they were subject to anti-Semitism and other bias in their schools. The adults in the room sat back and gave the students the space and time they needed. It was one of the most sacred experiences I have shared with young people in quite some time. Together, the students found a shared narrative, and also gave care and support to one another.

*Together, the students found a shared narrative, and also gave care and support to one another*

Following the storytelling, Mayyim Hayyim's mikvah director, Lisa Berman, invited the students who wanted to immerse in the mikvah to do so. The mikvah is our ritual for transition. This was an invitation to take the unfortunate realities with which our young people live and to head into the water with them. In immersing, we hoped that the students would find a spiritual cleanse that would allow them to move into their next chapters and new conversations. To my surprise and delight, most of the students immersed. And as each came out of the mikvah, one by one, each reflected on their sense of calm and clarity, radiating a sense of serenity.

Not forgetting the joys of community, we finished the day with a meal together, complete with egg creams and French fries.

A truism of teenage years is that they are not easy. How many of us say, "I wish I could be 15 again?" Our students live with their own pressures of which we should be aware. They may feel the effects of the race to nowhere, and in our community, we have learned about other pressures that they are forced to confront. What we found in our Boston day is that our community is well-equipped to provide the spiritual support needed to not only endure but to thrive.

*Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch is a spiritual leader at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire in Great Barrington.*

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#### ISRAEL TRAVEL & STUDY GRANTS FOR YOUTH

The Michael Nathaniel Shute Endowment Fund provides grants to Berkshire area youth for educational travel or study in Israel.

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

Download an application at [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) or pick one up at the Federation's office  
196 South Street, Pittsfield, MA



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*Berkshire Jewish Voice* e-mail: [astern@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:astern@jewishberkshires.org)  
Phone: (413) 442-4360, ext. 11 Fax (413) 443-6070

## Your Federation Presents

### Contemporary American and International Politics

On Thursday, April 2 at 10:45 a.m., join Professor Steven J. Rubin for "Current Affairs: Contemporary American and International Politics." This course will meet to discuss and explore current issues that influence our lives and society at large. This free program at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Connecting With Community series.

Please note: *There will be no Kosher lunch following this program.*

Topics will be chosen by Professor Rubin in consultation with the class and in view of the issue's relevance. Members will be encouraged to participate in discussions to express views and opinions in a supportive and informal atmosphere.

Steven J. Rubin is professor emeritus of international studies and former dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Adelphi University, Garden City, NY. He is the



author of numerous books and articles and frequently lectures both here and abroad on such topics as international anti-Semitism, Jewish history, popular culture, and literature. His radio play "Dem Bums: The Rise and Demise of the Brooklyn Dodgers" was broadcast live on National Public Radio in December 2017 and can be currently heard online.

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, April 2 at 10:45 a.m. – There will be no lunch after this program.

### "The Blacklist Dream," with Conrad Bromberg

On Thursday, April 30 at 10:45 a.m., join actor, teacher, and playwright Conrad Bromberg as he shares stories about his father and his family's experiences living under the Hollywood blacklist of the 1940s and 1950s. This free program at Kneset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Connecting With Community series.

When Conrad Bromberg was a child, his father was named as a Communist by his best friend to the House Un-American Activities Committee. Bromberg will share some relevant anecdotes of FBI visits and firsthand gossip about movie stars we'll all recognize, and stories that reflect betrayal and other human activities. Come join us for these insights into when the First Amendment's right



Anti-blacklist protestors in 1950s Hollywood

to privacy, freedom of speech, and freedom of thought were put on the line for many.

Conrad Bromberg, twice nominated for The Writers Guild Award for drama for "Two Brothers" on PBS and "Siege" on CBS, contributed to 13 dramas on the other major networks. He is a founding member of The Ensemble Studio Theater, where his play "Dream of a Blacklisted Actor" premiered. His play "Mayday" was first produced at The Seattle Repertory Company, and "The Defense

of Taipei" found its first audience at The San Francisco Actors' Workshop. He has taught at NYU, University of Delaware, SUNY, and The School Of Visual Arts. He has received grants from The Ford Foundation, The New York State CAPS Program, and The Rockefeller Foundation. He says his major accomplishments

are his two daughters and three grandchildren. He now lives in The Berkshires.

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Kneset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, April 30 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 11).

## Letters to the Editor

### Local Middle School Students Share the Experience of Meeting Shoah Survivors

This winter, Jilly Lederman educated her middle school students at Berkshire Country Day School about the Holocaust by introducing them to two survivors, who shared their harrowing stories with the class. Edith Velmans, who visited the class in Stockbridge, was hidden by a Christian family in Holland after being separated from her family. Anna Ornstein survived Auschwitz and other labor camps, and spoke to the class via Skype. The class also studied the novel *The Book Thief*, and learned about the Holocaust from videos and primary historical sources.

The students not only took away many valuable insights about the historical reality of the Holocaust, but also lessons they feel they can apply to their own lives. As Yom HaShoah 5780 approached, Dr. Lederman wished to share some of her students' responses to hearing Velmans and Ornstein's firsthand accounts of struggle, loss, and survival.

"Edith was swept away from her family in Northern Holland when the Germans invaded. Both her parents died while she was in hiding, but she sent them many letters and kept a journal the entire time. She mentioned that she would always leave her journal open for her children to read but they were never interested. Anna was taken by the Germans with her mother when she was fifteen years old. She worked in a labor camp called Plashlov for ten weeks but was later transferred back to Auschwitz. Both women decided to become doctors working with mental health and revealed it was because of their experiences during the war. It was amazing to hear people tell these stories to us in person instead of just reading a book. It taught me to individualize every survivor because every one of them has a different story to tell."

— Brenna Loret de Mola

"Edith Velmans [and my class] discussed her experience and how she maintained hope, and how she deals with anti-Semitism today. She explained that for most of the Holocaust, she wasn't fully aware of the persecution and brutal murder that was happening in the concentration camps. She also told us that it was hard and hurtful to be excluded from schools and public events just because of her race and religion. For me, it was fascinating to learn that the Nazis tried to keep their camps private and secretive even from their own people. Many Germans didn't even know how brutal their leaders were being and thus didn't understand how important it was to oppose their government and fight back against their horrible actions during the Holocaust."

— Kachino Lucido

"If a Holocaust survivor can come and have a discussion with us, they can share their own story. Soon, the survivors will be dead and there will be no more living proof, but our generation can take over their 'role,' and if other people have the opportunity like my class did to speak to Holocaust survivors, we can share their stories so they can continue to be recognized."

— Sophie Shaw

"It is crucial to remember this tragedy so that we as humans don't make the same mistakes that we made in the past. There are also groups of people who deny the Holocaust's existence. People need to correct these deniers because it is cruel and unjust to contradict such suffering in history. It is also necessary to voice the knowledge that has been obscured to those who do not know or understand what the Holocaust is."

— April Sutherland

"Someday, when all of the survivors have passed, it will be our job to remember the people who were killed as well as the ones who survived. In order to do this successfully, it's important to know about their life during the Holocaust and after. It's important to remember them as people and not just statistics. Another reason why we have to learn about the Holocaust is so that we won't get pulled into the lies of Holocaust deniers. We need to know what is right and what is wrong so that we won't continue the cycle of ignorance by teaching others the wrong facts. I now have real facts and real stories that I can use to spread tolerance and awareness and to educate others."

— Maddie Tillem

"Hearing from survivors directly also allowed me to understand the time period and what people went through in more depth. Learning about the genocide of people enabled me to learn about other dictators, as well. I also learned what led up to the Holocaust. This knowledge will help me recognize the signs if they occur in society in the future."

— Bronly Boyd



Edith Velmans with BCD middle schoolers

## Your Federation Presents

### World Chamber Music at April 17 Knosh & Knowledge

Join Hevreh Ensemble's Judith Dansker and Laurie Friedman for a morning of music and stories

GREAT BARRINGTON – On Friday, April 17 at 10:45 a.m., Knosh & Knowledge welcomes two members of the Hevreh Ensemble, oboist Judith Dansker and clarinetist Laurie Friedman. The longtime friends (they met as music students at the Manhattan School of Music) and colleagues will play original compositions from the group's repertoire and share stories about careers, friendships, travels, projects, and their exploration of musical traditions from around the world.

This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will take place at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, and will be followed by a catered lunch. Prepaid lunch reservations required in advance. Email [federation@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:federation@jewishberkshires.org), or call (413) 442-4360, ext. 10, to RSVP.

Although the New York-based Hevreh Ensemble is not affiliated with Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, the group's genesis can be traced to a lifecycle ritual performed at the synagogue – the 2001 bat mitzvah of Judith Dansker's daughter, which was officiated by then-spiritual leader, the musically attuned Rabbi Deborah Zucker. As a bat mitzvah gift, Laurie Friedman's husband, Jeff Adler, composed a duet for Cherokee flutes titled "Garment of Brightness," which was inspired by both the Native American poem "Song of the Sky Loom" and the Jewish tallit ceremony. Impressed, Rabbi Zecher invited the musicians to participate at a *Selichot* service.

The experiences led to the formation of the Hevreh Ensemble, its fourth member keyboardist Adam Morrison, who has played with some of the leading lights of the jazz world. All accomplished performers with impeccable resumes, Dansker, Friedman, Adler, and Morrison coalesced as the Hevreh Ensemble in mid-career, at a time when many of their colleagues, as Dansker put it, "have stopped playing or gotten cynical about

the music business. It was a new journey for us."

She adds that when it all came together, "it was like trying to find a parking spot in Manhattan at rush hour, driving around and driving around, and suddenly finding an empty spot right in front of your destination."

The Hevreh Ensemble's orchestration is nothing if not eclectic – Cherokee flutes, oboe, English horn, clarinet, bass clarinet, percussion, keyboards, and shofar, augmented in the studio (on their latest recording, 2019's *A Path of Light*) by a string quartet, tabla, double bass, and percussion instruments like the djembe, dumbek, ocean drum, balafon, kalimba, rain stick, and log drum played by a Silk Road Ensemble member.

The music is hard to categorize – the instrumentation suggests the "World Music" genre, but the melodies are inflected with the kind of jazz and contemporary classical ideas that Adler explored in his pre-Hevreh Ensemble composing, and also with Jewish musical themes. "Growing up Jewish," says Adler, "you have that music inside you wanting to come out." If the soundscape evokes "New Age" music, the rhythms underpinning Adler's compositions are more intricate, adventurous, and urgent than "chill-out sounds."

The evolution of Adler's music for the group, according to Dansker, was that it "started out more set, but his compositions became more complex as we started getting used to each other's instruments. The music grabs your thought processes because of the way Jeff writes rhythms. Because the music is so accessible, it affects people quickly." She recalls a concert at the Spanish Synagogue in Prague at which the audience was at first confused, by intermission clapping, and "by the end, clapping wildly." The Hebraic themes, Middle Eastern sounds, and the Native American flutes together evoke

a sense of spirituality, she says.

The Hevreh Ensemble's appeal has allowed them to travel and perform internationally – Dansker and Friedman will be sharing tales of their journeys and outreach at the April 17 Knosh & Knowledge.

In 2018, the group performed in Poland, at the prestigious International Jewish Cultural Festival in Krakow, in Lublin at a museum housed in a Soviet-Era factory/trade school, and in Warsaw at POLIN Jewish Museum, built on the site of the Warsaw Ghetto. There, they collaborated with photographer Loli Kantor, whose 2015 book, *Beyond the Forest: Jewish Presence in Eastern Europe, 2004-2012* captured remnants of the Jewish world lost during World War II. They have also performed in Vienna, Berlin, Bonn, and Amsterdam, and have participated in workshops and residencies at schools and universities.

In the summer of 2020 they will travel to Argentina and perform in historic synagogues in Buenos Aires, Rosario, and Cordoba. The first concert will be at Templo Libertad in Buenos Aires, where the ensemble will be joined by Judith Dansker's daughter, Alicia DePaolo, whose bat mitzvah was where the Hevreh Ensemble was born. She's a soprano who sings with MIRYAM, a Boston-based vocal and instrumental ensemble that performs baroque and renaissance settings of Jewish texts. In Buenos Aires, she'll sing cantillation from the Book of Lamentations, commemorating the observance of Tisha B'Av.

So come join Judith Dansker and Laurie Friedman at the April 17 Knosh & Knowledge for an entertaining morning of music and storytelling that will introduce you to the music and message of the Hevreh Ensemble. For a fine introduction to their work and links to their music, visit their engaging website at [www.hevrehensemble.com](http://www.hevrehensemble.com).

#### IF YOU GO

**Sponsor:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

**Date & Time:** Friday, April 17 at 10:45 a.m.

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

**Cost:** \$11 with fresh buffet lunch. Free admission to program only.

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

**Email:** [federation@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:federation@jewishberkshires.org), or call (413) 442-4360, ext. 10



Laurie Friedman and Judith Dansker

### Easy Chair Yoga for Flexibility, Mobility, and Peace of Mind



On Monday, April 13 at 10:45 a.m., join Linda Novick for "Easy Chair Yoga for Flexibility, Mobility, and Peace of Mind." This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Connecting With Community series.

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

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

the Massachusetts Housing Authority.

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

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

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Knesset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, April 13 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 11).



You can now read and share *Berkshire Jewish Voice* feature stories online! Visit [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) and select **Community & Events>Berkshire Jewish Voice** for links to highlights of current and past issues.

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

## One Story – One Life

### Your Federation Dollars at Work

Simply put, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires could not make your campaign dollars work without the enthusiastic support of our steadfast volunteers. Each year, hundreds of volunteers of all ages give thousands of hours of their time to support this Federation's important work – making fundraising calls on Super Sunday; decorating, packing, and delivering holiday bags on Purim and Rosh Hashanah; delivering kosher meals to the homebound; serving on our boards and committees; and so much more. Merle Ferber is one of our Federation's super volunteers, who – abetted by her beloved service dog, Ziva – is always willing to help.

### Volunteering for a Pat on the Back

A sign near the front door of Merle Ferber's Pittsfield home bears a famous epigraph of Albert Camus: "In the midst of winter, I found there was, within me, an invincible summer."

The words perfectly capture the pugnacious spirit Merle brings to her volunteer work on behalf of Federation and disabled members of the wider Berkshires community. When asked if she considers herself an activist, Merle says, "No – I'm an activist / educator. If you're a true activist, you're an educator. If you're not an educator, you're just a troublemaker."

About volunteering, Merle Ferber says "I always just did it myself. For example, I was the kid on Halloween who went trick or treating for UNICEF." Born in Bronx, NY, she attended the prestigious Bronx High School of Science and earned a college degree in special education. She moved to the Berkshires in the mid-1970s, lured by a job in the Pittsfield school system. "At the time, Massachusetts was the worst state for mainstreaming special needs students," she remembers. "Children with mental and physical handicaps had to go to 'special schools for special kids.'"

After Merle relocated, however, the job fell through, but she had no intention of going back to New York City. "I loved it here instantly," she says, and set out to find ways to make her new circumstances work. She started out by drafting resumes for job seekers – "if you fed me, I'd do your resume," she says, adding that was when she started volunteering "in any cause she found interesting."

She became involved with the Berkshire County-based BC Arc, a non-profit organization for children and adults with developmental disabilities, brain injuries, and autism, and later with Community Outreach Occupational Learning, which provided career training for returning Vietnam veterans, ex-offenders, and women receiving public assistance. "I worked day and night to get them through the program and find them jobs," she remembers.

Eventually, Merle leveraged her skills entrepreneurially and set up shop in Pittsfield as a career counselor, as well as working part-time as the USY counselor at Knesset Israel. She found time to volunteer for the Junior League of Berkshire County, the NAACP, the Red Cross ("If I said hello to you, you were either going to give me your blood or your money"), and what eventually became the Elizabeth Freeman Center, a vital resource for female survivors of domestic abuse and sexual assault.

In 1983, disaster struck. Merle was involved in a car accident that left her disabled. She spent a year in the hospital recovering from her injuries, and then another several months at a facility in Boston for pain management and alternative therapies. When she was released, she worked briefly for IBM in Boston before moving back to the Bronx to be closer to her family.

Merle's return home was destined to be short-lived. "You didn't like the Bronx before your accident," her mother responded when Merle voiced her unhappiness. "What made you think you'd like it now?"

So she went back to the Berkshires. When Merle returned, however, she found that her "energy had changed." Through the lens of her disability, she began to observe all the obstacles ordinary life posed to people with mobility issues – a dearth of doors cut to accommodate wheelchair, the lack of ramps in public spaces, the absence of curb cuts at intersections, and so forth. What really piqued her ire was the lack of accessibility in public buildings, particularly the downtown courthouses, which inhibited participation in civic life for the disabled.

Merle became (and remains) a staple at local government meetings and civic events, forcefully advocating on behalf of the rights of disabled people. "I saw people like myself who couldn't speak out," she says, "who couldn't speak out before their accidents. It was not in their natures." One has only to look around Pittsfield to see the changes Merle's activism has helped to bring about. "It took 20 years," she says. "I never thought I'd live to see it."

As well-known as Merle is for her advocacy, she is equally famous for her service dogs. She remembers first encountering a service dog in the mid-1990s at a conference in Boston, where a wheelchair-bound fellow activist she knew was in attendance with his beautiful dog. At the time, she remembers, only the blind had service dogs, and in any case "I never had a dog. I didn't like them – they were dirty and hairy. In the Bronx, dogs weren't allowed in the apartment



Ziva and Merle

buildings in my neighborhood, so I never knew anyone with a dog."

However, recognizing the utility of a service animal, Merle met with a local veterinarian, the late Dennis Ovitsky, who was involved with NEADS, a Massachusetts-based non-profit that is an innovator in training dogs to assist the handicapped. Merle's first dog was a smooth collie named Radar, "who was hairy and smelly and awesome. Having him was very good for me. I needed something to take care of. Life was too easy."

Radar lived to the ripe old age of twelve, and was followed by Miller, another smooth collie who as a puppy was one of the first dogs trained by inmates partici-

pating in the Prison PUP Program created by NEADS. The program now operates in twelve correctional facilities in New England. Currently Ziva, a 4-year-old collie/golden retriever mix, occupies the sidekick role.

Merle says she reconnected with her Jewishness after her accident, and is one of the Shabbat and Sunday morning minyan stalwarts at Knesset Israel. She and Ziva never miss Federation's Super Sunday phone-a-thon – they'll be there on May 17. And she works hard on the telephone twice each year in advance of the Joe's Project delivery of holiday bags to nursing homes and homebound members of our Jewish community. Merle calls all the local care facilities to identify their Jewish residents, ensuring that each person receives a bag and recognition as valued members of our community. She also visits members of the community who are recuperating from illness.

"Federation really represents all I believe in," says Merle. "Be proud to be Jewish, and let your Jewishness touch your heart in your own way." And she encourages everyone to discover the satisfaction of giving time for others, even if it sometimes feels "hard to volunteer if you feel you don't get that pat on the back."

Stick with those causes you feel are worthy, she says. "Keep working for people. But that is what you're working for, that pat on the back. Same as Ziva. A pat on the back. Good girl."



## BERKSHIRE JEWISH CONGREGATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS

### Welcome to the Jewish Berkshires

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

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

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

**JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG**

#### Berkshire Minyan

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

#### Berkshire Hills Hadassah

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

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

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

#### Congregation Ahavath Sholom

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

#### Congregation Beth Israel

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

#### Hevreh of Southern Berkshire

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

#### Israel Philatelist Society

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

#### Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

196 South St., Pittsfield, MA (413) 442-4360, jewishberkshires.org

#### Jewish War Veterans

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

#### Knesset Israel

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

#### Temple Anshe Amunim

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

## Your Federation Presents

### Forgotten Heroes Remembered in *My Italian Secret*

On Monday, April 27 at 10:45 a.m., 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*, in honor of Yom HaShoah/Holocaust Remembrance Day.

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

*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 other Italians worked with high-ranking officials of the Catholic Church, risking their lives by defying the Nazis to save thousands of Italy's Jews.

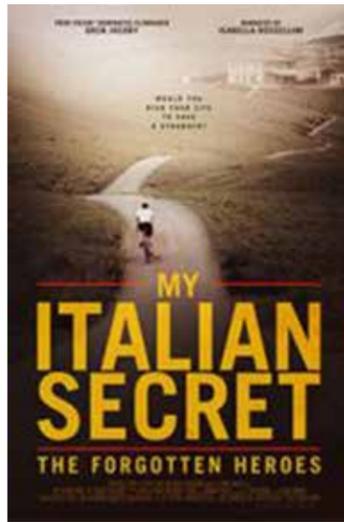
Their high-risk methods were ingenious. Bartali, at the behest of the Archbishop of Florence, crisscrossed Northern Italy while transporting fake identification documents in the frame of his bicycle. (In 2013, Bartali was awarded the title "Righteous Among the Nations" by Yad Vashem.) A prominent physician, 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, revisit a time when an entire continent was engulfed in genocide. However, approximately 80% of Jewish people living in Italy, including foreign Jews, survived the Holocaust. On September 8, 1943 the Nazis invaded Northern Italy and the deportation of thousands of Jewish people and others to Auschwitz began. This film asks: "Why would someone risk his or her own life and put their family in jeopardy to 'do the right thing' and protect the life of another person... a stranger?"

Oscar-nominated director Oren Jacoby resurrects the dramatic story of this secret underground, giving it the attention it so richly deserves. The film draws from a vast archive of rare documentary images that were recorded by Italians, Germans, Americans and British during the war.

The film, which was released in 2015, is narrated by Isabella Rossellini with



Robert Loggia as the voice of Gino Bartali.

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Knesset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, April 27 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 11).

### The Process of Aging, with Maggie Bittman

On Monday, April 20 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires presents "Intergenerational: The Process of Aging" with therapist Maggie Bittman. This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, is part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

This program will provide an opportunity to be part of a group dialogue, created and facilitated by Bittman, who will explain her outlook and approach, emphasizing that aging begins at birth. She will discuss how all of us are confronted with four existential truths as we age – the search to find meaning and purpose; facing mortality; experiencing aloneness; and engaging free will.

Bittman will highlight how this is a lifelong process, and the ways people return to these existential truths at each stage of life with the added wisdom that comes with aging. Within this context, participants will discuss, share and



offer support, as they explore these existential truths.

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Knesset Israel

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

### Matzo 2020

On Monday, March 30 at 10:45 a.m., join Cathy Zises, local farmer and descendant of the Margareten family behind Horowitz Margareten matzos. She will recount her seed to Seder table matzo story, "Matzo 2020." This free program at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road in Pittsfield is part of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires' Connecting With Community series.

Cathy Zises is the farmer/owner of Zfarm in Chatham, NY, who will share her journey in cultivating biodynamically-grown spelt grain in 2019 to be used in creating matzo this spring. Although not kosher for Passover, her matzos were nevertheless prepared according to *halachic* guidelines, baked within 18 minutes of the grains touching the water to reach the oven to become matzo. All the baking is being done by members of the Chatham Synagogue in the ovens of Our Daily Bread, whose owner Zvi Cohen was profiled in the March 2018 BJV.

Matzo is the family business – Zises is the great-granddaughter of Regina Margareten, who with her family and partners in Brooklyn co-founded Horowitz Brothers and Margareten Company, purveyors of Jewish foods and, most famously, Passover matzo. She is a contemporary farmer and matzo baker accompanied by a genealogical twist of fate.

Zises, a Kripalu Mindful Outdoor Guide and ISHTA



Cathy Zises of Zfarm

yoga instructor, has owned of Zfarm since 2011. The land encompasses 130 acres with planting fields, woods and hiking trails, wetlands, streams and a pond. Improvements have been made to make it a fully-operational farm by building structures such as a livestock barn, greenhouse, cold storage for produce, fencing, wells, underground electric and a fully-operational solar-powered yurt.

Zises will talk about matzo baking and biodynamic farming in this offbeat and entertaining Passover-themed program. Maybe there will even be some matzo to munch on.

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Knesset Israel

**Date & Time:** Monday, March 30 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 11).

### Take a Spiritual Odyssey and Find Out All About Eve, with Professor Michel Richard

On Thursday, March 26 and Thursday, April 23 at 10:45 a.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes Michel Paul Richard, Professor Emeritus, SUNY Geneseo, who will present separate programs on spiritual matters and Biblical interpretation. These free programs at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, in Pittsfield, are part of the Federation's Connecting With Community series.

On March 26, Professor Richard's topic will be "50 Years of a Spiritual Odyssey," in which he will share his journey that reveals some aspects into the human quest for spiritual knowledge and how that may manifest in individual choices that are made along the way. From encounter groups in the 1960s, a pilgrimage to India, an initiation into Transcendental

Meditation by an ex-nun, and volunteer work at Lourdes to attending services at Congregation Ahavath Shalom, the Friends Meeting House, and to Thich Naht Hanh meditation group, Richard will share his explorations and invite audience members to discuss their personal journeys, as well. (Suggested Reading: *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by William James.)

On April 23, Professor Richard's topic will be "The Bible Story Your Rabbi, Priest or Pastor Doesn't Really Want to Talk About: Eve." He says he will "explore what most of us today would agree with, that Eve got a bum rap; but this story in Genesis raises some fascinating questions." He will lead discussion into some elucidating inquiries, such as "Why was the Tree

of Knowledge off limits, but not the Tree of Life?"; "What was the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge?"; "What would have happened if Eve had not disobeyed God?"; "Does this story depict God as an all-too-human father?" and "Did the Bible create misogyny or simply bring it to a new level?" Join us to explore some of these questions and maybe find some answers. (Suggested reading: *Eve: The History of an Idea* by J.A. Phillips.)

#### IF YOU GO

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

**Venue:** Knesset Israel

**Date & Time:** Thursday, March 26 and Thursday, April 23 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 11).

## LOCAL NEWS

### B'Shalom Chorale Seeks Singers for Seventh Season

GREAT BARRINGTON – B'Shalom Chorale, conducted by Jack Brown, begins 10 weekly rehearsals on Wednesday, May 27, from 7-9 p.m.

The Chorale is open to all men and women, Jewish or not Jewish, who have a pleasant singing voice and the ability to stay on pitch. Choral experience is preferred, as is a love of singing four-part music. The ability to read music is helpful, though not mandatory.

There will be two concerts, for this seventh season: Wednesday evening, August 12



at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire in Great Barrington, and a second concert, which will be interfaith, on Thursday evening, August 13, location to be announced.

Dues are \$50. Rehearsals are held at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Road. RSVP to the Chorale (413) 418-1836 or email BShalomChorale@gmail.com.

# Your Federation Presents

## All Shuk Up Over Our Jewish Cookbook Club

A second potluck-style feast is set for May 7

Our first Jewish Cookbook Club meeting was a resounding (and delicious) success – in February, 35 cooks came together at Guido’s Fresh Marketplace in Pittsfield with dozens of dishes from Leah Koenig’s *Modern Jewish Cooking*.

According to event organizer (and Federation president) Judy Usow: “It was great to see so many new faces at the launch of Jewish Federation’s Jewish Cookbook Club. Leah Koenig shared a personal letter sharing how honored she was to have her cookbook chosen for our first meeting.

“Beyond the delicious food, it was really about sitting together and sharing our stories that brought meaning and relevance to the evening.”

So get ready for the next potluck-style dinner, which takes place at Guido’s on May 7 at 7 p.m. Prepare a dish from *Shuk*, a collection of Israeli home-cooking recipes by Einat Admony and Janna Gur. Cookbooks will be on view in advance at the Federation’s office, located at 196 South Street in Pittsfield, or for viewing and purchase at Guido’s,



co-sponsor of this event. Additional club dates are September 10 and November 12. A special mid-summer Jewish Cookbook Club event at Tanglewood is scheduled for July 12.

Guido’s is located at 1020 South Street in Pittsfield.

Space is limited. Advance registration is required by emailing [judyusow@gmail.com](mailto:judyusow@gmail.com).

## Stop the Bleed Training

Free life-saving training for our community

PITTSFIELD – On May 7, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and Berkshire Health Systems will sponsor Stop the Bleed training, a morning session at 9 a.m. and an evening session at 6:30 p.m. Participants choose *one* training session.

The training is free, and will take place at Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield. Registration is required by April 30 – please call Federation at (413) 442-4360, ext. 10 or email [federation@jewishberkshires.com](mailto:federation@jewishberkshires.com) to sign up for the session you wish to attend.

Stop the Bleed is a national awareness campaign to empower individuals to help in an emergency. More than 1 million people have been trained. From the website: “Through our Stop the Bleed course, you’ll gain the ability to recognize life-threatening bleeding and intervene effectively. The person next to a bleeding victim may be the one who’s most likely to save him or her. Take the course and become empowered to make a life or death difference when a bleeding emergency occurs.”

Additionally: “In a Stop the Bleed course, you’ll learn three quick techniques to help save a life before



someone bleeds out: (1) How to use your hands to apply pressure to a wound; (2) How to pack a wound to control bleeding; (3) How to correctly apply a tourniquet. These three techniques will empower you to assist in an emergency and potentially save a life.”

This 1-hour training will be presented by educators from the Trauma Care Program of Berkshire Medical Center.

Participants must be 18 years of age to attend training. Walk-ins cannot be accommodated.

### BERKSHIRE HILLS HADASSAH

Wishes All

## A ZISSEN PESACH!

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Donate ~ Volunteer ~ Make a Difference

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

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



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

Lee & Sydelle Blatt  
Betty Braun\*  
Cipora Brown  
Barbara Cohen  
Mark Cohen\*  
Mimi Cohen  
C. Jeffrey & Judith Cook  
Gerry & Lynn Denmark  
Jonathan & Lara Denmark  
Sheila K. Donath  
Melva Eidelberg  
Monroe England, *in memory of*  
*Monroe B. & Isabel England*  
Dr. Armand V. Feigenbaum\*  
Dr. Donald S. Feigenbaum\*  
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Diana & Stanley Feld  
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Dara Kaufman  
Phil\* and Rhoda Kaminstein  
Howard & Nancy\* Kaufman  
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Sarah Klein  
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Martin Silver  
Sylvia Silverberg, *in memory of*  
*Jerome Silverberg*  
Richard A. Simons & Marcie  
Greenfield Simons

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Harold Sparr\*  
Lisa Fletcher-Udel  
Edward Udel  
Michael & Joan Ury  
Mark & Judy Usow  
Henry\* & Beate\* Voremberg  
Alexandra Warsaw  
Florence Wineberg\*  
Rabbi Deborah Zecher &  
Rabbi Dennis Ross

*\*Of blessed memory*



Jewish Federation  
OF THE BERKSHIRES

**LOCAL NEWS**

**Creative Arts Series at Congregation Ahavath Sholom Continues**

GREAT BARRINGTON – Congregation Ahavath Sholom is pleased to announce the continuation of last year’s successful Creative Arts Series. This spring’s series offers workshops in painting, photography, and writing, plus the premiere performance of the CAS Theatre Group.

The series begins on Sunday, April 19 at 1 p.m. with “Paint Out The Darkness,” a 3-hour abstract and representational workshop for all levels. Directed by Ilene Spiewak, a painter, teacher and art therapist who invites you to “Wield your paintbrush to jazz music. Unleash your intuitive freedom and paint your colorful response beyond the object.” The \$20 fee includes material and refreshments. Space is limited. Early reservations are encouraged.

On Sunday, May 3 at 2 p.m., all are invited to the CAS Theatre Group’s premiere performance. The newly-formed theatre group will present a program of audition monologues from well-known plays, sketches, skits, and vignettes by Julius Feiffer, and scenes from *Signs of Life*, a modern play based on the story of Abraham and Sarah. Directed by Linda Josephs. Featuring, Barbara Janoff, Barry Shapiro, and Ellen Axelrod. Admission is free

Please visit [www.ahavathsholom.com](http://www.ahavathsholom.com) for more information. Congregation Ahavath Sholom is at 15 North Street in Great Barrington.



Last year’s portrait workshop, part of the Creative Arts Series

**“The Unbroken Chain of Jewish Existence” is the theme of Chabad Seder**

PITTSFIELD – Chabad of the Berkshires will host a communal Passover Seder on the first night of Passover, Wednesday, April 8 at 7 p.m., at Chabad of the Berkshires, 450 South Street.

The Seder, its theme “The Unbroken Chain of Jewish Existence,” will take participants through the wondrous liberation of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage, as well as help participants understand the Seder’s relevance to today’s Jews. Included in the Seder will be the traditional, hand-baked *shmura* matzo, the ritual four cups of wine, and a delicious, full-course Passover meal including gefilte fish, an array of unique salads, hot soup, a main dish, and a delectable dessert.

“Passover is a time when family sits together and discusses our rich heritage,”

says Rabbi Levi Volovik, co-director of the Chabad House. “And at Chabad, every Jew is part of our family. No one will be turned away for lack of funds.”

Seating is limited, and reservations are required before April 1. Cost is \$36 per adult and \$20 for children under 12.

For reservations, more information, or to sponsor a family, call Chabad co-director Sara Volovik at (413) 499-9899.

**The Chametz ‘Sale’**

A free online ‘Sale of Chametz’ form is available on the Chabad of the Berkshires website, [www.jewishberkshires.com](http://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) 499-9899.

**Spring Events at Hevreh – Passover and Israel’s Independence Day**

GREAT BARRINGTON – Hevreh of Southern Berkshire’s annual second night Seder, led by Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch and Rabbi Jodie Gordon, will take place this year on Thursday, April 9, beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Seder plates, matzoh, wine, and grape juice will be provided. All are welcome to bring their own table wine. The meal will be catered by Simon’s Catering.

Registration for this Seder can be found at [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org). Reservations are required. Adults: \$40 Children 6-13: \$18 Under 6: Free.

Call the Hevreh office at (413) 528-6378 for more information. Hevreh of Southern Berkshire is at 270 State Road in Great Barrington.

**Yachad Passover: It’s Miriam’s Turn**

On Sunday, April 5 at 10 a.m., Hevreh’s family Passover programming will lift up Miriam’s voice, and the role of women in the Exodus. Through text study, storytelling, and art making, families will experience the connection between freedom and joy. This event is free.

**Also at Hevreh this Spring – Yachad Yom Ha’Atzmaut: Happy Birthday, Israel!**

On Sunday, April 26 at 10 a.m., Hevreh celebrates Israel’s 73rd birthday in style! Visit [hevreh.org](http://hevreh.org) for more details.

**For Families**

*Tiny Talmidim* (pre-school and younger) is on Sunday, April 19 at 10 a.m.

*Tot Shabbat* is on Saturday, April 25 at 9 a.m.

**Welcome Shabbat**

Hevreh means community, and what better way to celebrate Shabbat, than by being with one another? Join Hevreh on Friday, May 1 at 6 p.m. as they welcome and bless new members to the community, and welcome back many members who have been away from the Berkshires for the winter season. All are welcome!

**Passover with Congregation Ahavath Sholom**

LENOX – On Thursday, April 9, Congregation Ahavath Sholom will host a second-night Seder at the Apple Tree Inn in Lenox, led by Rabbi Barbara Cohen. Details were not available at press time, so please visit the CAS website for more information or call (413) 528-4197.

**FREE BOOKS & MUSIC for kids, 6 months – 8 years**



Families in the Berkshires – turn bedtime into a special time for sharing Jewish values and traditions. Sign up to receive free Jewish themed books and CDs sent directly to your home each month.

In addition, enjoy special programs and events with other PJ families throughout the year.

PJ Library, a program of the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, is made possible in the Berkshires through the generous support of



Spitz Tuchman Family Fund

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LOCAL NEWS

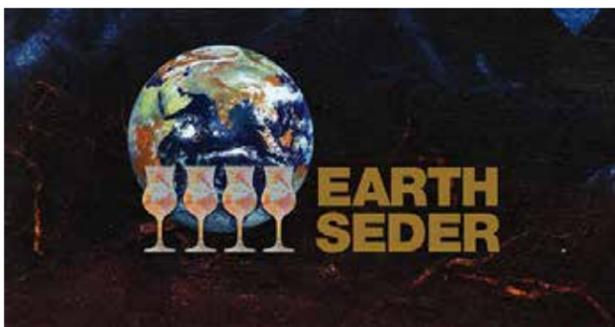
# A Passover Journey to Freedom: Pilgrimage for Body, Mind and Spirit

Plus an Earth Seder with Rabba Kaya Stern-Kaufman

LENOX – On April 7-9, Rabba Kaya Stern-Kaufman will offer a *Pesach* retreat at Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health called “A Passover Journey to Freedom: Pilgrimage for Body, Mind and Spirit.” The retreat will include a unique Earth Seder on the first night of Passover, April 8, focused on healing our relationship with Mother Earth.

Explains Rabba Stern-Kaufman: “As we transition to spring, Jewish tradition offers wisdom and practices to embrace this moment, soften the heart, cleanse the spirit and expand consciousness. This retreat is designed in four parts, moving participants through different levels of awareness and discovery regarding the ways in which we are all enslaved by inner and outer forces. Through Jewish mystical teachings, music and chant, meditation and mindful eating, participants will discover a liberating path forward.”

On the evening of April 8, experience an Earth Seder that, writes Rabba Stern-Kaufman, “honors our interdependence and reframes our relationship to Mother Earth based on indigenous wisdom. Participants will experience the beauty of an embodied, mindful Jewish ritual that draws Torah from



the rhythms of nature and from sacred Jewish texts and traditions.”

She adds: “The retreat will conclude on the morning of April 9 as we journey forth from Freedom to Love. The Song of Songs is traditionally read on the Sabbath after the Passover Seder. We will step into these waters of love through a comparative look at Song of Songs and the poetry of Rumi. Group discussion, music and meditation will seal the experience.”

Sign up for the full workshop or attend the Seder as a single experience.

The cost of the Seder alone is \$25. Seating is limited and will be filled on a first come/first served basis.

The full workshop info and fee are available on the Kripalu website, [www.kripalu.org](http://www.kripalu.org). You can also book your reservation by calling Kripalu at

(866) 200-5203. For specific questions, contact Rabba Kaya at [kayajoyks@gmail.com](mailto:kayajoyks@gmail.com).

### About Rabba Kaya Stern-Kaufman

Rabba Kaya Stern-Kaufman will begin a new position as rabbi for Temple Israel Portsmouth in New Hampshire in July 2020. She recently served as the interim rabbi of the Rutland Jewish Center, an independent synagogue in Vermont where she brought innovation and sparked revitalization of the community. She is the founder of Rimon: Resource Center for Jewish Spirituality, where she served as executive director and spiritual leader from 2012-2016. In 2015, she was recognized by *The Forward* as one of “America’s Most Inspiring Rabbis.”

# Knesset Israel Welcomes Spring

PITTSFIELD – A musical, *ruach*-filled Kabbalat Shabbat service suitable for all ages will be celebrated on May 8 at Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road.

The Sabbath will be welcomed with instrumental music and voices joining in familiar Friday night prayers with new melodies and rhythms. Dinner reservations must be made by May 4 either online, [www.knessetisrael.org](http://www.knessetisrael.org) or via telephone, (413) 445-4872, ext. 10. Dinners are \$20, \$15 for teens, and free for children below bar mitzvah

age (family maximum, \$56). Also in May, Knesset Israel is getting ready to dive into another summer of significant programming. These include weekly Shabbat luncheons sponsored by KI’s Kiddush Matching Fund. Be sure to reserve seats on the previous Monday for the next Shabbat lunch (see website or phone number above). Enjoy delicious meals, meet new people, play “Jewish Geography,” and partake in delightful conversation.

# 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 Thursday, April 9, at 26 Broad Street. The Seder, which will begin at 5:30 p.m., will be led by Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch. “Passover celebrates the emancipation of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt and the hope for all to be free from oppression today,” says Rabbi Hirsch. “Join us as we recount the Exodus in story and song.”

Passover offers many opportunities for families to participate, and Rabbi Hirsch and participants will share traditional and innovative texts, melodies, and a dramatic retelling of the Passover story. Children will be invited to hunt for the *afikomen*, an exciting treasure hunt for hidden matzo. This joyous event is open to all who would like to experience a Passover Seder.

Following the service, participants are invited to share the traditional Seder meal, prepared by Temple members. A vegetarian option will be available. Reservations are required. The cost for the dinner is \$36 for adult members, \$10 for children of members aged 10-18, \$54 for adult not-yet-members and \$15 for children not-yet-members aged 10-18. Children under 10 may attend free of charge.

Reservations may be made through April 1. For more information or to make reservations call (413) 442-5910 or send an email to: [templeoffice@ansheamunim.org](mailto:templeoffice@ansheamunim.org).

**Concluding the Holiday** on Friday, April 17, Rabbi Liz will lead Shabbat services at 5:30 p.m. which will incorporate Yizkor, a memorial ritual, for the conclusion of Passover.



# Kosher Community Seder – April 8

PITTSFIELD – The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires will host a kosher community Passover Seder at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 8 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 be invited to 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 by March 31. 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](http://www.jewishberkshires.org).

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“Hey. That wasn’t so bad.”

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**JON GOTTERER DMD**  
berkshiredentist.com

**Knesset Israel**  
**16 Colt Road**  
**Pittsfield**

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

**CANDLE-LIGHTING**  
 Friday, March 27 ..... 6:56 p.m.  
 Friday, April 3 ..... 7:04 p.m.  
 Wednesday, April 8 (Erev  
 Pesach) ..... 7:09 p.m.  
 Thursday, April 9 (Second night  
 Pesach) ..... 8:11 p.m.  
 Friday, April 10 ..... 7:11 p.m.  
 Tuesday, April 14 (Seventh  
 night Pesach) ..... 7:16 p.m.  
 Wednesday, April 15 (Eighth  
 night Pesach) ..... 8:18 p.m.  
 Friday, April 17 ..... 7:19 p.m.  
 Friday, April 24 ..... 7:27 p.m.  
 Friday, May 3 ..... 7:35 p.m.



# Connecting with Community

## Nourish Your Body, Mind, and Soul!

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

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

**Advanced reservations are required to attend lunch.**

Please call (413) 442-2200 no later than 9 am on the day you would like to attend. Open to the public. All are welcome! Knesset Israel, 16 Colt Road, Pittsfield, MA.

**Adults 60 and over: \$2 suggested donation**  
**Adults under 60: \$7 per person**  
 Program only is free!



Jewish Federation  
 OF THE BERKSHIRES

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

## What's for Lunch?

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

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

**MARCH**

**Monday, 23** ..... 10:45 a.m., "Foster Children and Fostering Families" with Jason Larrier. **Lunch: Sweet & sour beef stew, rice pilaf, green beans, chef's choice of bread, dessert TBA, and tea.**

**Tuesday, 24** ..... **Lunch to be announced**

**Thursday, 26** ..... 10:45 a.m., "50 Years of a Spiritual Odyssey" with Michel Richard. **Lunch: Roasted chicken\*\*#, chicken soup, asparagus cuts n tips, oven roasted vegetables, bread TBA, Osem cakes, and tea.**

**Monday, 30** ..... 10:45 a.m., Matzah 2020 with Cathy Zises, farmer/owner of Z Farm. **Lunch: Dairy delights.**

**Tuesday, 31** ..... **No lunch for Passover preparation**

**APRIL**

**Thursday, 2** ..... 10:45 a.m., Current Affairs with Steven Rubin. **No lunch due to Passover preparation.**

**Monday, 6** ..... **Closed for Passover preparation**

**Tuesday, 7** ..... **Closed for Passover preparation**

**Thursday, 9** ..... **Closed for first day of Passover**

**Monday, 13** ..... 10:45 a.m., "Chair Yoga" with Linda Novick. **Lunch: Passover ziti & meat sauce\*\*#, broccoli, salad, matzah, grapes, and tea.**

**Tuesday, 14** ..... **Passover egg salad & "seafood" salad platters\*\*#, matzah, Passover desserts, and tea.**

**Thursday, 16** ..... **Closed for last day of Passover**

**Monday, 20** ..... 10:45 a.m., "Intergenerational: The Process of Aging" with therapist Maggie Bittman. **Lunch: Macaroni & cheese, stewed tomatoes, salad, bread TBA, raspberry pillow cookies, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Tuesday, 21** ..... **Fish sticks, cream of mushroom soup, sweet potato fries, salad, potato bread, pears, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Thursday, 23** ..... 10:45 a.m., "The Bible Story of Eve" with Michel Richard. **Lunch: Tuna salad and cottage cheese platters\*\*, bean salad, Farmer's loaf, apricots, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Monday, 27** ..... 10:45 a.m., Screening of *My Italian Secret: The Forgotten Heroes*. **Lunch: Meat loaf\*\*#, tomato juice, mashed potatoes, peas & carrots, salad, rye bread, fruit cocktail, and tea.**

**Tuesday, 28** ..... **Stir fried chicken#, mango juice, white rice, mixed vegetables, oat bread, peaches, and tea.**

**Thursday, 30** ..... 10:45 a.m., "The Blacklist Dream" with Conrad Bromberg. **Lunch: Fresh fish\*\*, corn pudding, green beans, salad, Challah, ice cream & cookies, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**MAY**

**Monday, 4** ..... 10:45 a.m., Program to be announced. **Lunch: Chicken with sundried tomatoes & artichokes\*\*#, rice pilaf, salad, mixed vegetables, white bread, pineapple, and tea.**

**Tuesday, 5** ..... **Frito pie, yellow rice & beans, salad, bread cubes, Tre Leche cake, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Thursday, 7** ..... 10:45 a.m., Program to be announced. **Lunch: Black bean burgers with cheese, zucchini-tomato medley, salad, Challah rolls, peanut butter cookies, coffee, tea, and milk for coffee.**

**Monday, 11** ..... 10:45 a.m., Program to be announced. **Lunch: Meat loaf\*\*#, prune juice, baby carrots, mashed potatoes, salad, pumpernickel bread, grapes, and tea.**

**Tuesday, 12** ..... **Hot dogs & beans\*\*#, tomato juice, sauerkraut, salad, hot dog rolls, applesauce, and tea.**



You can now read and share *Berkshire Jewish Voice* feature stories online!

Visit [jewishberkshires.org](http://jewishberkshires.org) and select: **Community & Events>Berkshire Jewish Voice** for links to highlights of current and past issues.



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 and the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires

*Homebound or recovering from an illness or injury?*

Let us help you arrange for a kosher lunch to be delivered through our Kosher Meals on Wheels Program. Call (413) 442-4360, ext 10



# Your Federation Presents

## Yom HaShoah, *continued from page 1*

desperately looked for an escape from the coming Holocaust.

Then, a door opened on the east coast of far-away China, in Shanghai, an "open city" itself in chaos from foreign invasion and civil war. But getting there required a "golden" document to get out of Nazi Europe – a visa from China.

*Above the Drowning Sea* recounts the courageous intervention of Ho Feng Shan, the Chinese Consul in Vienna who defied his own government and braved the Gestapo to issue visas to the refugees.

Jewish refugees and the Chinese residents of Shanghai who helped them survive in China recount their experiences, terrors and deprivations, as well as the remarkable friendships forged across cultures, friendships that survive to this day.

A story that could have been ripped from today's headlines, the film vividly celebrates the heroism and humanity of ordinary people caught in extraordinary circumstances.

For more information, call (413) 442-4360, ext. 10.



*"Leaving Vienna," a painting by Otto Schnepf, who fled Austria with his family and found refuge in Shanghai, where he lived from 1939 to 1948. He went on to earn his B.S. in Chemistry at St. John's University in Shanghai and advanced degrees at the University of California, Berkeley. He had a long association with University of Southern California, and was a noted researcher in the area of optical molecular spectroscopy, the study of light's interaction with matter.*

### IF YOU GO

**Sponsors:** Jewish Federation of the Berkshires  
**Venue:** Berkshire Museum, 39 South Street in Pittsfield  
**Date & Time:** Sunday, April 19 at 2 p.m.



# STOP THE BLEED®

THIS FREE LIFE-SAVING TRAINING IS FOR EVERYONE!

## Thursday, May 7

Choose ONE Session

<p><b>Morning Session</b>  <b>9:00-10:00 am</b>                  Temple Anshe Amunim                  26 Broad St., Pittsfield</p>	<p><b>Evening Session</b>  <b>6:30-7:30 p.m.</b>                  Temple Anshe Amunim                  26 Broad St., Pittsfield</p>
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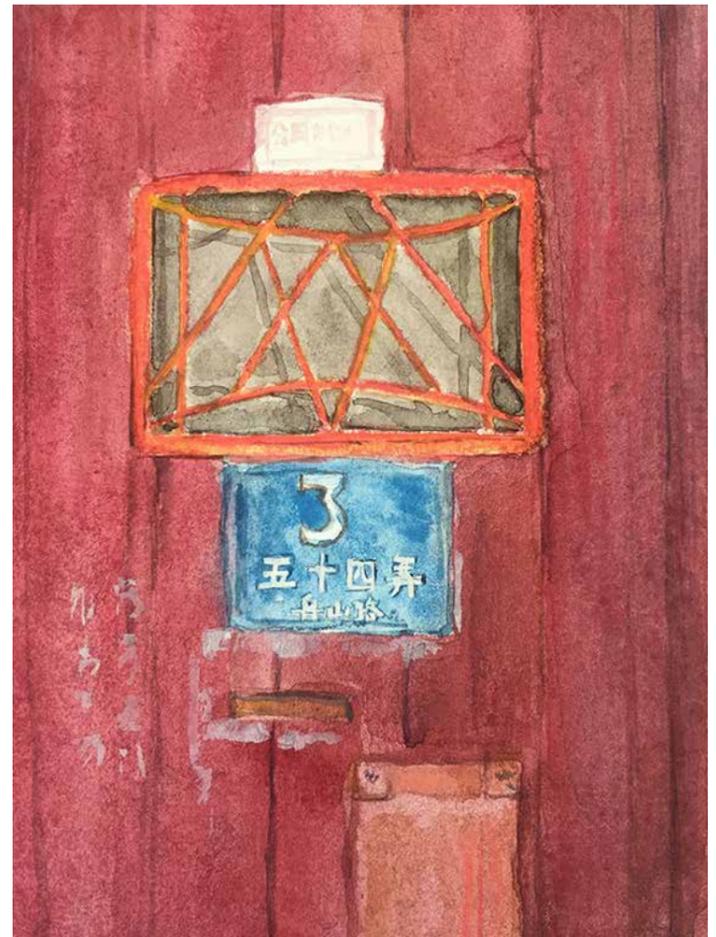
You are the Help Until Help Arrives!

Stop the Bleed is a national awareness campaign to empower each one of us to help in an emergency. Training is presented by educators from the Trauma Care Program of Berkshire Medical Center. Must be 18 years of age. Pre-registration required. We cannot accommodate walk-ins

Advance Registration Required by April 30

(413) 442-4360, ext. 10 or [federation@jewishberkshires.org](mailto:federation@jewishberkshires.org)



Watercolor by Yao Xin, from *Above the Drowning Sea*

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## Happy Passover



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SEE the *Berkshire Jewish Voice* in **COLOR** at [www.jewishberkshires.org](http://www.jewishberkshires.org)



# Hamantashen Bags Delivered By Federation on Purim

Thank you to all of the volunteers who baked, packed, decorated bags, and delivered Purim bags to hundreds of local seniors who are homebound, in senior facilities, or in the hospital as part of Joe's Project.

PHOTOS BY ED HELITZER



PHOTO: JENNY GITLITZ

Aviva Skoblow delivered bags to Yacov in Pittsfield

# Challah for Hunger

By Susan Frisch Lehrer / Coordinator of Volunteers

Sunday, March 8, was a special day for our Federation families. They partnered with Williams College Jewish Association students in their Challah for Hunger program. The students made the dough earlier in the week and the families in attendance learned to braid with Pittsfield's own Emma Lezberg and fellow students, Emily Cohen and Alejandro Fuentes. The kids had a grand time adding chocolate chips, cinnamon, and sprinkles. Emma shared a message about food insecurity in the Berkshires, particularly on college campuses. Rabbi Jarah Greenfield read a current PJ Library book, *Mitzvah Pizza* by Sarah Lynn Scheerger, about a pizza shop where people buy slices of pizza and post a note on the wall so that those who are hungry can come and eat. The families discussed this and some said they knew of a place in North Adams that does the same thing. They also learned why it was important to thoroughly wash their hands, and wear hairnets and their PJ Library aprons while braiding, and then putting on vinyl gloves when handling the baked bread. The kids were so pleased to have made 130 loaves to be sold the next day – though they all had a taste, too!

PHOTOS BY BOB LEZBERG



# STOP & SHOP<sup>®</sup>

## Happy Passover!

**SALE \$5.99** /lb.

**Empire Boneless Chicken Breast**  
Fresh, Kosher, Skinless 4187058

**SALE \$2.99** /lb.

**Empire Frozen Turkey**  
Selected Varieties, 10-20 lbs.  
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**SALE \$3.99** /ea.

**Stop & Shop Russet Potatoes**  
U.S. No 1, 8 lb. bag 4183698

**SALE \$4.99** /ea.

**Sunsweet Pitted Prunes**  
16 oz. pkg. 4182318

### PASSOVER ESSENTIALS

**SALE 4/\$5**

**Hood Cottage Cheese**  
Selected Varieties,  
5.3 oz. 4173726

**SALE 5/\$5**

**Streit's Matzo Ball or Matzo Ball & Soup Mix**  
Selected Varieties,  
4.5 oz. box 4082705

**SALE 2/\$7**

**Kedem Grape or Sparkling Juice**  
Selected Varieties,  
Grape, 64 fl. oz. or  
Sparkling, 25.4 fl. oz. btl.  
4080957

**SALE 3/\$2**

**Stop & Shop Seltzer 1 Liter**  
Selected Varieties, 33.8 fl. oz. btl., Plus Deposit Where Applicable 4120235

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**SALE \$4.99**

**Manischewitz Cake or Brownie Mix**  
Selected Varieties,  
11-14 oz. pkg.  
(Excludes Gluten Free)  
4069122

**SALE 2/\$6**

**Manischewitz Egg Matzos**  
12 oz. box 4082851

**SALE 2/\$4**

**Goodman's or Gefen Macaroons**  
Selected Varieties,  
10 oz. cont. 4078379

**SALE 2/\$6**

**Mrs. Adler's Gefilte Fish**  
Selected Varieties,  
24 oz. jar 4081355

**SALE 2/\$6**

**Manischewitz Passover Crackers**  
Selected Varieties,  
8 oz. box 4081097

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**SALE \$1.79**

**Kedem Apple Juice**  
Selected Varieties,  
64 fl. oz. btl. 4128356

**SALE 2/\$4**

**Absolutely Gluten Free Potato Crisps**  
Selected Varieties,  
1.4 oz. can 4082771

**SALE 2/\$6**

**Gefen Roasted Whole Chestnuts**  
Selected Varieties,  
5.2 oz. pkg. 4083064

**SALE 2/\$5**

**Tabatchnick Passover Broth**  
Selected Varieties,  
32 oz. cont. 4083290

**SALE 2/\$5**

**Manischewitz Cake Meal or Matzo Meal**  
Selected Varieties,  
16 oz. cont. 4083098

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**SALE 2/\$4**

**Season Skinless & Boneless Sardines**  
Selected Varieties, 4.37 oz. pkg. 4081980

**SALE 2/\$4**

**Season Flat Anchovies**  
Selected Varieties, 2 oz. pkg. 4081980

**SALE 2/\$5**

**Holiday Fruit Slices**  
Selected Varieties, 6 oz. pkg. 4080985

**SALE \$4.99**

**Manischewitz Macaroons**  
Selected Varieties, 10 oz. cont. 4119757

**SALE 2/\$4**

**Elite Chocolate Bars**  
Selected Varieties, 3.5 oz. bar 4072485

## BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

## Young Judaism

## What I Learned on My Birthright Israel Trip

If you get the chance to go to Israel – Go!

By Ari Drayman / Special to the BJV

When I arrived at John F. Kennedy Airport before my journey began, I had no idea what to expect. All I could see was that I was in a group full of strangers going to a foreign land that is associated with a lot of negative connotations. I felt out of my comfort zone and even thought to myself a couple of times, "What am I doing? Why didn't I just stay home to spend more time with my family before I have to go back to school from winter break?" However, after landing at Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv, what was in store for me was a trip of a lifetime – funded in part by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires – that I will never forget.

Before this trip, one of the main reasons why I wanted to go to Israel was to fully understand what Israel means to me and to put a landscape to all the knowledge I had gained over the years in Hebrew school, NFTY, listening to sermons, and taking classes discussing this land's history. Over the duration of this trip, I began to realize that these questions would not all be answerable given the amount of time I had in Israel. Being there for only ten days, I was challenged by speakers, Israeli soldiers, and my peers to think about Israel not just as a land of the Jewish people but as a place that has induced change within the world.

I learned that Israel, a state the size of New Jersey, has more tech startups than any other place in the world besides Silicon Valley. I learned that Israel is one of the world's leaders in creating and producing skincare/beauty products used by millions of people. I learned about how Israel is one of the few places in the world where people are able to balance religion and modern innovation. Without Israel, the world we live in would be on a different trajectory.

This is not to say though that Israel is a perfect country. Over the duration of this trip, it became clear to me that Israel is facing some grave issues that I would not be able to see without going there directly. For example, Israel is a segregated country. Nearly all of the Jewish and Palestinian populations live in different parts of Israel. Israel also

*I got the opportunity to meet Jewish people my age and experience Israel with them. This trip exceeded all of my wildest dreams.*

faces issues between the ultra-religious Jewish people and its secular population. The best example of this is on the Western Wall. Although many people know that the Western Wall is segregated based on gender, I never realized how much more space and rights the men get at the wall as opposed to women. The women's side of the wall is much more crowded, nobody is there to help them wrap tefillin, and there is no library, while on the men's side of the wall, there is a plethora of text to read from, there is a lot of space to move around, and there are a lot of people offering to help you wrap tefillin.

After talking to the Israeli soldiers on my trip, I also got some more information on other arguments between the ultra-religious Jewish people and its secular population. This mainly revolved around the issue of Shabbat and what you should and should not be allowed to do on this weekly holiday. For example, on Shabbat, there is no public transportation in Jerusalem, yet the Israeli government wants fewer people to buy cars. Another example of this is that on Shabbat, the religious Jewish people want the Jerusalem market closed entirely while the rest of the population wants it open seven days a week.

Although I had learned a lot about Israel's innovations and the myriad issues it faces, I also have had some of the best experiences of my life within Israel. I got to hike Masada with my friends and see the Negev on one side and the Jordan River on the other. I got the chance to put mud on my body and float in the Dead Sea. I got the opportunity to converse with Israeli soldiers and talk about our own lives, and ask each other questions with no bounds. I got the opportunity to meet Jewish people my age and experience Israel with them. This trip exceeded all of my

wildest dreams.

At the beginning of the trip in the airport, the tour guide of our group told us that before we know it, we would be on the plane back home wondering where the time went. During this time, I did not believe him. I thought to myself, "How could a ten-day trip go by so fast?" But when I found myself back at the same airport ten days later, I fully understood what he meant. After making some of the best friends I have ever made, engaging in some of the most intense conversations I have ever been a part of, and exploring my Jewish identity with 47 other people, it all ended within the snap of my fingers.

My biggest takeaway from this trip was if you ever get the chance to go on Birthright, even if you question your decision as I did in the beginning, go anyway. This experience will change your life and help you understand the true importance of Israel in this world despite the problems it faces today. You will meet incredible people and engage in experiences you will never forget.

Before I left for Israel, I seriously thought that I would never want to go back there after this trip. Now, I yearn to go back to Israel sometime soon to see this land again in the near future.



Ari Drayman in Israel

Boy, I could not have been more wrong.

Thank you to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires for supporting my Birthright Israel experience.

*Ari Drayman was raised in the Berkshires; his family are members of Temple Anshe Amunim. He is currently a sophomore at American University in the School of Public Affairs. He writes that one of his passions in life is finding out more about his Jewish identity and how it impacts his life, which led him to go on Birthright Israel.*

## MAZEL TOV

## Mazel Tov to...

Federation executive board member **Gail Altman-Orenstein and Walter Orenstein** on the bat mitzvah of granddaughter **Ella Rachel Altman**.

**Susan Geller**, whose photograph of last summer's Tanglewood in the City at the Pittsfield Common won the Downtown Pittsfield photo challenge. Her photo will be featured in Pittsfield's 2020 Downtown Guide and a Downtown Pittsfield, Inc. social marketing campaign.

Federation board member **Michael Wasserman and Barbara Kravitz Wasserman** on the wedding of their daughter **Rachel** to **Dan Erdheim**.

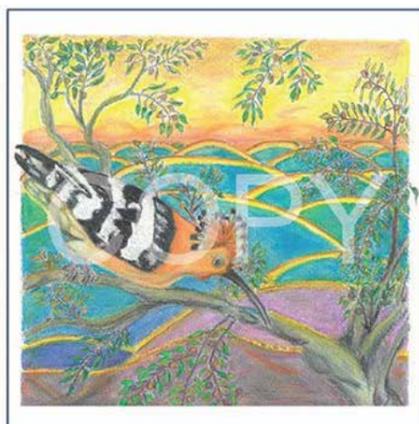
**Audrey Salzmann** on the birth of her great-granddaughter, **Gabrielle** (grandfather **Josh**, mother **Francesca**) born Friday, December 20, 2019 in England.

**Rabba Kaya Stern-Kaufman**, who will begin a new position as rabbi for Temple Israel Portsmouth in New Hampshire in July 2020.

**Josh and Jessica Cutler** on the birth of their son, **James Thomas Cutler**.

**Cameron Miller**, on celebrating his bar mitzvah at Congregation Beth Israel. Proud parents are **Steven and Liz Miller**.

**Phoebe Sugarman**, vice president of fundraising for Berkshire Hills Hadassah, whose design won the Hadassah Youth Aliyah art contest (right). From Hadassah's announcement: "Her colorful painting of a hoopoe, the national bird of Israel, will grace a new certificate that we are sure will generate the funds so important to supporting the child rescue work we do."



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## BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

# How My Life in the Berkshires Will Help Me Chair Hazon, the National Jewish Environmental Nonprofit

By Richard Slutzky / Special to the BJV

This past summer, I was installed as board chair by the board of directors of Hazon, a national Jewish environmental organization.

The primary focus of Hazon, "the Jewish lab for sustainability," is to educate Jews of all ages to take action personally to reduce their carbon footprint, and by doing so, improve the environment for themselves, their families, and the rest of us.

Hazon educates through immersive experiences at various locations, including at Hazon's Isabella Freedman Jewish Retreat Center in Falls Village, CT, as well as by training scores of environmentally-knowledgeable Jews (through a program called JOFEE, an acronym for Jewish Outdoor Food, Farming, and Environmental Education) to disseminate useful information throughout the country through Federations, JCCs, day schools, synagogues, and other institutions. Hazon has also successfully created a Seal of Sustainability that is awarded to Jewish institutions that have undertaken environmentally-sustainable initiatives, including using solar energy to partially power their activities, using recyclable materials instead of plastic plates and utensils for social activities such as an *oneg Shabbat* or meetings.

My wife Alyson and I moved up to Egremont as part-timers in 2011 (and permanently as of June 2019) as a respite from my job in the financial services industry in New York and Alyson's therapy practice in Montclair, NJ. We were initially reluctant to have a second home for all of the obvious reasons, but in our mind, the Berkshires had it all – natural beauty, hiking and biking, great food, wonderful and kind people, great cultural attractions, and relative proximity to New York and Boston.

I grew up in Nebraska (yes, there are Jews there!) and recall when the first Earth Day was announced in April 1970.

Earlier that February, Barry Commoner, the biologist and environmentalist (and future professor of mine at Washington University), was on the front cover of *Time* magazine. In that profile, he called attention to the many ways humans are contributing to the Earth's despoliation.

That year in Hebrew school, my teacher used Al Vorspan's *Jewish Ethics and Social Values* book to help us understand and formulate opinions on current international topics, including civil rights, civil liberties, the environment, and abortion. The issues surrounding the Jewish response to the environment continued to concern me, especially as we celebrated our holidays, many of which had agricultural roots. Back in the 1970s, national Jewish leadership was not focused on the environmental movement, and that perhaps was a missed opportunity to connect with environmentally-concerned Jews. During those same teenage years, U.S.Y. themes and messaging by my local Jewish Federation highlighted the importance of *tikkun olam* (repairing the world) and *k'lal Yisrael* (we are responsible for one another), as well as the critical importance of *tzedakah*.

In Nebraska, agriculture is highly industrialized and now the rivers near my home town are polluted with agricultural wastes, pesticides, herbicides, and high levels of nitrates. Michael Pollan, in bestselling books like *The Omnivore's Dilemma*, traces many of the challenges we Americans must confront as a result of how our food economy has been built and how agriculture as currently structured contributes to global warming on a massive scale. Much can be done politically to legislate change to create more

sustainable agribusiness solutions.

Hazon is a nonpartisan charity and does not lobby for legislative change. That said, part of Hazon's role is to educate its participants on the scientific research regarding the interrelationships between agriculture and climate change so they can take their own actions in the political arena with ample information.

While it is a generalization, it seems as though Jews who reside in the Berkshires stay here in part because they enjoy the sublime beauty of the environment. They do not wish to see this area degraded by the pollution of our air, water, and land. Every day, as I travel through the area, I am still in awe of the power of the landscape and how lucky we are to live here.

Unfortunately, we are confronted by a looming climate crisis, the effects of

*We now have to figure out what we need to do and what steps, even incremental baby steps, we can take to reduce the overload on the environment*

which could be devastating here and around the world. We now have to figure out what we need to do and what steps, even incremental baby steps, we can take to reduce the overload on the environment. Jonathan Safran Foer, in his latest book, *We Are the Weather*, recommends eliminating the intake of meat during breakfast and lunch to reduce the demand for animal-based food, since animals are a large source of methane-based air pollution and consume huge amounts of farm resources that could be reallocated to grow food for humans. He also recommends reducing air travel where possible, driving less where possible, and in general being more sensitive to our actions



Richard Slutzky on the Hazon IsraelRide 2018 – participants bike from Jerusalem to Eilat in a week

and to recognize how they affect the planet.

At Hazon retreats, I have seen young Jews who are very secularized and uninformed become turned on by learning how our tradition

has interpreted our relationship with the environment. They have also become enthused about their Jewishness by recognizing that there is a growing community of like-minded Jews who care deeply about the environment and are concerned about the potentially cataclysmic damage caused by the climate crisis. As we envision what the Jewish community will look like in twenty years or more, I hope that Hazon can take significant responsibility for building a stronger, environmentally-sensitive Jewish community in the Berkshires and beyond that takes the concept of repairing the world quite literally.

As I arise each morning in the Berkshires, I don't have to think abstractly about the beautiful environment that I want to help preserve – it is all around me. It motivates and compels me to work hard on its behalf. A friend recently said, "Why focus on the Jews regarding global warming?"

We're such a small population! " But we have a legacy that is embedded throughout our texts that require us to act. We are also leaders in our communities and we can have ripple effects and make an impact. We must galvanize the Jewish communities across the country, each Jew, each Jewish institution, to recognize our role literally to repair the world. The future of the Jewish community and all future generations are relying upon us to do so. As Jonathan Safran Foer writes, "Is there anything more narcissistic than believing the choices you make affect everyone? Only one thing: believing the choices you make affect no one."

For more information about Hazon, please visit its website, [www.hazon.org](http://www.hazon.org). (Earth Day 2020 is on April 22.)

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## BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES

### Traveling with Jewish Taste

#### *This Pesach, Carpe Diem and Make Your Own Gefilte Fish\**

By Carol Goodman Kaufman



A few years ago, my daughter and her husband Adam were living in Chicago. Passover was just around the corner and Elana decided that she wanted to make gefilte fish from scratch. Perhaps she was remembering a beloved storybook from her childhood — Ina Friedman's *The Carp in the Bathtub* — or it was my father's telling her true stories about his own mother's fish in her bathtub. Or maybe she was recalling my story of having an actual fish stuffed into its skin while celebrating in my kibbutz's sukkah.

Or just maybe it was that awful gray stuff that comes in a jar, or its slightly better cousin found in the freezer section of the grocery store.

Regardless of her inspiration, Elana had never actually seen how the sausage was made, if you will. If the required preparation became too much for her sensitive soul, she would probably go from being a vegetarian to an out-and-out vegan.

But where were they to find the required fish *onfilin*\*\* (to stuff)? Only one place in the Windy City had live fish for sale. So, off to Chinatown they went.

The proprietors at the first store spoke no English and neither Elana nor Adam spoke any dialect of Chinese. She tried acting out that she wanted to club the fish. They refused and did the job for her.

They met with greater success with the second fishmonger. Elana did the job, and the owner gutted the fish and put it into a plastic bag. The kids left the store, placing the bag-o'-fish into car. But, moments after pulling out of their parking space, they heard a noise coming from the back. The fish was flopping and squirming, and the bag holding it was shimmying across the floor.

Minor panic ensued.

Despite the fright, Elana managed to pull herself together enough to prepare the recipe and present the duly gefilt-ed fish to the 20-odd guests at their Seder table.



Given its presence at Shabbat and holiday meals, one would think that the Jews invented this iconic dish. But one would be wrong. According to the late food historian, Gil Marks, the idea actually began with the Romans, who filled animal skins with chopped meat. The practice migrated to medieval Germany, where upper class cooks took to stuffing large freshwater fish such as pike and perch. The earliest printed recipe for grilled *gefuelten hechden* can, in fact, be found in a 1350 German (non-Jewish) cookbook. The stuffed whole fish eventually found itself on the dinner tables of medieval German Jewish households.

Fast forward to the 17th century, and the dish makes its appearance in Poland, Ukraine,

Hungary, and the Baltic states, where it became popular for very practical reasons. One of the major advantages of gefilte fish was that, due to the addition of onion and matzah meal, one fish could be stretched to feed a large family. And stuffing the skin eliminated the need for expensive eggs as a binder, making the dish even more appealing to Jews in precarious financial straits. Poaching instead of grilling or roasting became common practice around then.

Of course, we Jews love to differ on even the silliest of issues, even — or maybe especially — when it comes to food. According to the late Yiddish language scholar Marvin Herzog, there's something actually called "the gefilte fish line" that describes the border between sweet and savory gefilte fish recipes. A strictly Jewish division, Herzog wrote that the line is roughly drawn between the two main areas of Yiddish dialect speakers: central Poland/Galicia in the south and Lithuania in the north. The sweet tooth must have extended even further south as I recall a sweet "Old Vienna Style" fish sold by Rokeach.



Real do-it-yourselfers may also wish to catch their own carp

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](http://carolgoodmankaufman.com) and to follow her on Twitter @goodmankaufman.



"Passover is on April 8 – EVERYBODY PANIC!!"

Why sweet? According to Marks, upon the introduction of the sugar beet industry in early 19th-century Poland (in which some fellow tribe members were engaged), Jews added sugar to everything, gefilte fish included.

\*\* Thanks to Henny Lewin for the Yiddish consult.

#### DIY Gefilte Fish — really

If you want to try your hand at homemade gefilte fish, you don't have to club the fish. You don't have to clean the fish. You can simply go to your friendly fishmonger and buy what you need. This recipe had to be adapted to use cod because I couldn't find the traditional fishes in the market.

Makes about 24 medium patties



#### Ingredients:

3 lb. cod fillets  
3-5 medium yellow onions  
½ cup to 1 cup ice water  
3 or 4 large eggs, lightly beaten  
4 tablespoons sugar  
1/2 tablespoon kosher salt  
1 teaspoon ground pepper  
¼ cup matzah meal

#### Fish Broth:

3 lb. fish bones, heads, and tails  
3 or 4 medium carrots, sliced  
2 stalks celery, sliced  
2 medium yellow onions, sliced  
2 quarts cold water  
2 bay leaves  
1/2 tablespoon kosher salt  
Dash of ground pepper  
2 tablespoons sugar (optional)

#### Directions:

In a food processor fitted with the metal blade, finely grind the fish fillets and onions, but do not puree.

Gradually mix in the water, using more for a softer consistency, less for a firmer one.

Add the eggs, followed by the sugar, salt, pepper, and matzah meal, using 4 eggs for fluffier fish, 3 for firmer.

Cover the mixture and refrigerate for an hour while making the broth.

Place all the broth ingredients except the sugar into a large pot and turn flame to high.

Once the water comes to a boil, reduce flame and simmer for 20 to 30 minutes. Strain and discard the solids.

For easier handling, wet your hands often while shaping the fish. For each patty, form about 1/3 cup fish mixture into a 3-inch-long oval patty.

Drop the fish patties into the boiling broth and return to a boil.

Reduce the heat, cover partially, and simmer, shaking the pot occasionally, for 1½ hours.

Remove the cover, add the sugar if desired, and simmer for 30 minutes.

Let fish cool in the broth.

\* (If you think of a better fish pun, let minnow. —Ed.)

## OBITUARIES

### **Berta S. Cole, 95, warm, good-humored, and beloved by many**

PITTSFIELD – Berta S. Cole, 95, formerly of Tonawanda, NY, died on Thursday, February 13, at Berkshire Medical Center. As a lifelong resident of the Buffalo area, she hated to leave her home, but, in 2012, her health required that she move to Massachusetts to be closer to her daughter, Debora Cole-Duffy and family.

Born on May 12, 1924 in Buffalo, Berta Sylvia Small was the only daughter to parents Frank and Rose Small, and sister to Carlton S., Norman I., and Richard F. Small, all now of blessed memory. As an honors student, at Fosdick-Masten Park High School, class of 1941, it was always her passion to become a teacher. She was accepted to Buffalo State (Teachers) College; however, just a few days before the start of school, the family coffers did not permit a (formal) college education, which she lamented.

During World War II, she was employed by the Buffalo and Suburban Rationing Boards, the Office of Price Administration, and the War Assets Administration. Following the war, she worked in private industry and was secretary to the president of McDonalds Products Corporation. Berta married Norman M. Cole in 1954. They shared the same May 12, Mother's Day, birthday (she was always careful to say that he was one hour older), which inspired how they met. A devoted wife and mother, they were married for 55 years and had 2 children. While raising her family, Berta was employed for 25 years by the Research Foundation for the State University of New York at Buffalo as a research grant assistant in the departments of Biochemistry and Pathology, and then as executive administrative assistant to the Pathology Department. During that time, she was the "mom" to scores of graduate students, many of whom attributed their doctoral candidacy and success to Berta's research, writing, and hovering skills! In 1970, Norman M. Cole attributed and dedicated his own doctorate to the editing prowess and patience of his wife.

Berta was a lifelong learner. During her active days, she enjoyed entertaining, reading, music, gardening, writing and reciting poetry, and bowling – and she was a 200+ league bowler. After she retired, she became a teacher's aide for a few years until grandchildren beckoned more of her time. In 1993, she won a Florida vacation for a "Name the Baby Rhino" competition, Hugo, at the Buffalo Zoo. She was a frequent contributor of poems and verses to OLAF FUB SEZ, the Buffalo News Reporter's Notebook from 1993 to 2011. She wrote about her grandchildren, old cars, the seasons and holidays, friendship, technology woes, American tragedy, the weather, marriage, a few non-sequiturs, retirement, aging, and more.

With her husband, Norman, she cherished visiting Debora and family in the Berkshires, and the coast of Maine. Berta loved theater and music, and was always delighted to share such events with Deb and her family, and was always proud to attend her grandsons' performances. Berta was a member of Temple Beth Zion, in Buffalo, and also a member of Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield.

Berta cherished her family, the depth of her friendships and diverse relationships, social advocacy, and THE BUFFALO BILLS! Berta Cole was a woman ahead of her time. Warm, good-humored, and beloved by many, she was also a force of nature who believed strongly in justice, respect, equality, women's rights; and personal, political, religious and health freedoms – core values that she passed along to her family.

Berta is survived by her daughter, Debora S. Cole-Duffy and son-in-law, James S. Duffy; son David B. Cole; grandsons Michael C. Duffy and Glenn R. Duffy (Jeannette Benham); a nephew, Allen Small; great-nephews Daniel and Joseph Weymouth; cousin Sherman Davis and family; and dear nephews and nieces. She was predeceased by her beloved husband, Norman; her brothers; a niece, Marsha Small Weymouth; a great nephew, Joshua Weymouth; and many dear family members and friends.

The family appreciated the special care of: Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch of Temple Anshe Amunim; Cara, Tori, and Domonique from Wingate at Melbourne Place; the attention of Hospice Care in the Berkshires and Hospice Care of Western Massachusetts; and the compassionate nurses of 5W at BMC.

The funeral was held on Monday, February 17, at the Amherst (NY) Memorial Chapel. Burial was in the Forest Lawn Cemetery in Buffalo, NY. Memorial donations in Berta's memory may be made to Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield, MA.01201. May Berta's memory always be for a blessing.

### **Martin Perlmutter, 81, guidance counselor and active volunteer**

PITTSFIELD – Martin Leslie Perlmutter, 81, died Sunday, February 16, at Berkshire Medical Center.

Born in Pittsfield on November 2, 1938, a son of Samuel and Frieda (Gandler) Perlmutter, he attended local schools and graduated from Pittsfield High School. Martin received his bachelor's degree from North Adams State College and his master's degree from Springfield College.

Martin was a guidance counselor at Reid Middle School for many years until his retirement. He was a member of Knesset Israel. Martin and his wife were active volunteers at the public library and many area arts organizations.

He is survived by his wife, Shifra (London) Perlmutter,

whom he married on April 7, 1968, two daughters; Lauren Perlmutter Candib and husband, Adam of Latham, NY and Sherry Skott and husband Michael of South Windsor, CT. He also leaves three grandchildren; Benjamin Candib, Jonathan Candib and Danielle Skott.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, February 18, at Knesset Israel, with Rabbi David Weiner officiating. Burial followed in Knesset Israel Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to Knesset Israel, Rabbi's Discretionary Fund, in care of Flynn & Dagnoli-Bencivenga Funeral Home, 5 Elm Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

### **Howard A. Samel, 65, registered nurse**

PITTSFIELD – Howard A. Samel, 65, passed away Wednesday, February 12 at Berkshire Medical Center.

Born in Pittsfield on May 30, 1954, son of the late Ben and Helen Wolfe Samel, Howard was a 1972 graduate of Pittsfield High School. He received his bachelor's degree in Accounting from North Adams State College and his bachelor's of science in Nursing from UMASS Amherst.

He married the former Marilyn A. VanBramer on March 28, 1982.

Mr. Samel worked as a registered nurse, having worked most recently at Springside Nursing Home for two years and previously at Timberlyn Heights in Great Barrington, as well as Sweetbrook and Kimball Farms.

A member of the Elks Club and Mt. Greylock Ski Club, he enjoyed playing the guitar and listening to music, as well as doing graphic arts on the computer.

Howard leaves behind his wife, Marilyn of Pittsfield; sister, Jane S. Samel of Brandon, FL; aunts, Elaine Epstein of Pittsfield and Rosemarie Wolfe of Roswell, GA; sister-in-law, Elizabeth Pomeroy and husband Alan of Pittsfield; numerous cousins and friends, as well as his cats, Cubby and Shadow.

Funeral services and calling hours were held Wednesday, February 19 at Dery Funeral Home in Pittsfield with burial at Pittsfield Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the ALS Association of MA in care of the funeral home, 54 Bradford Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

### **Paul Greene, 94, artist and attorney**

SHEFFIELD – Paul Greene, 94, passed away peacefully on Tuesday, February 11, at the Holyoke Soldier's Home Hospice.

Born in Brooklyn, NY on March 6, 1925, his parents, Anton Greene and Cecelia Cohen Greene, were of Ukrainian and Jewish ancestry. He spent seven years of his childhood in foster care in Rockville Centre, NY, but was returned to his parents and attended Erasmus High School.

He enlisted in the US Army at age 17, and was injured

in Belgium during World War II, receiving a Purple Heart. Paul graduated from Brooklyn College and Columbia Law School, but was denied entry into the legal profession for political reasons. He attended the New York Art Students League, and throughout his life produced a magnificent oeuvre of landscapes and portraits. He resumed his legal career in the 1970s, and opened an office in Great Barrington.

Paul was predeceased by his wife, Martha Lahey Greene, originally of Niagara Falls, NY, and leaves children Arthur, Abigail, Jeremy, and Jessica, and 8 grandchildren. All services and burial will be private at the convenience of his family.

### **Howard Alan Levin, MD, 79, most beloved titles were "Dad" and "Zayde"**

LENOX – Howard Alan Levin, MD died Wednesday, February 5, from complications of Multiple Myeloma.

Born July 6, 1940 in Baltimore, MD, Howard received a BA in American History from Columbia University in 1962 and an MD from New York University School of Medicine in 1966. Howard's passion for science and technology was always present and after completing his internship, residency, and a fellowship in Immunology at the Beth Israel Hospital in Boston, he was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship. This distinguishing accolade enhanced his education with training in England for Rheumatology and The Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel for Immunology.

Upon returning to the US in 1974, he began a multifaceted career, which included performing bench research at National Institutes of Health in Bethesda, MD; practicing medicine as an internist and rheumatologist in San Jose, CA; working in Philadelphia first as a medical director of US Healthcare and then finally consulting at Milliman USA.

Howard would say his most challenging and rewarding career was as chief medical officer of LymphedIVAS (Lymphedivas.com). The inspirational company was founded by Howard's daughter, Rachel Levin Troxell, who died from breast cancer in 2008.

As a lover of classical music, he spent Sunday afternoons on the lawn of Tanglewood with loved ones by his side. Howard was a physician, a researcher, a sculptor, a teacher, and a violinist. However, his most beloved titles were "Dad" and "Zayde."

He is survived by his wife Judy, son Josh, daughter-in-law Pam, and 2 grandchildren, Sawyer and Raquel.

A graveside service was held at Haym Solomon Memorial Park, Malvern, PA on Monday, February 10. Relatives and friends were invited to Kimball Farms Lifecare Center, Lenox, on Saturday, February 15, to honor the life of Howard Levin. Donation may be made to Living Beyond Breast

Cancer or Hospice Care in the Berkshires.

### **Arline Teresa (Bookless) Levine, 89, strength, wisdom, compassion and integrity**

SARASOTA, FL – Arline Teresa (Bookless) Levine, 89, formerly of Pittsfield, died on Friday February 21 at her home at the Aviva/Kobernick Independent Living campus, surrounded by the care and comforting of her two sons.

Born July 18, 1930 in Pittsfield, the daughter of Max and Bessie (Broverman) Bookless, Arline attended Pittsfield schools and graduated from Pittsfield High School.

Arline was very proud of her skills as a bookkeeper at Comet's Jewelers and later as office manager of the *Dalton News Record*. Arline found her most satisfying work in her last position for over 10 years, employed by Berkshire Community College in the financial aid office, where she was delighted in assisting local young people in pursuing their educational goals and career aspirations.

She was a member of Knesset Israel and was active in its Sisterhood and Hadassah women's organizations. She appreciated the arts and theater throughout her life. She enjoyed many years as a volunteer at Tanglewood and as an usher at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Center and other theatres in the Sarasota area.

Arline was the widow of Samuel Harold Levine who died on June 7, 1988, after 35 years of marriage. A devoted mother and grandmother, survivors include her sons, Mark I. Levine (Sheri) of Miromar Lakes, FL, and Robert G. Levine (Jill) of Swampscott, MA. She adored her four grandchildren, Alison, Matthew (Jennifer), Sydney, and Troy; one great-grandson, Connor; and many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by three sisters, Sylvia Bookless, Esther Schechter, and Rita Betten, and by her brother, Daniel Bookless.

A dedicated supporter of youth sports, Arline could be found at every sports venue in Berkshire County cheering on her sons in the 1960s and 1970s and continued doing so for her grandchildren in the Boston suburbs.

Arline was dedicated to her family and friends and expressed the most pleasure in experiencing all of her grandchildren's milestones. She was unwavering in dedicating her time, love, and support to them in any capacity and this gave her the greatest sense of meaning, as she often conveyed. Her strength, wisdom, compassion, and integrity will live on in those she touched so deeply.

Funeral services were held Tuesday, February 25 at Knesset Israel, Pittsfield, with Rabbi David Weiner, spiritual leader, officiating. Burial followed in Knesset Israel Cemetery. Memorial donations may be made to charitable organizations special to the family: American Cancer Society, 5020 Tamiami Trail

## OBITUARIES

North, Suite 108, Naples, FL 34103; American Diabetes Association at [www.diabetes.org](http://www.diabetes.org); or SAFE Coalition, 206 Dedham Street, Suite E, Norfolk, MA 02056.

### **Marvin Heyman, devoted his life and energy to his family, work, and community**

LEEDS – Marvin Solomon Heyman passed away peacefully on February 23. Loving father and father-in-law to Jon Heyman and Karen Rowe, the late Lisa Heyman and Larry Gauchman, Ben Heyman, and Ruth Heyman and Lisa Mandel; loving grandfather to Jacob, Leah, Roxanne, Ruby, and Maxim; and former husband to Barbara. He was the dear son of the late Harry and Fannie Heyman, and brother of the late David Heyman (Nadine).

Marvin devoted his life and energy to his family, work, and community. He was the second generation at Oscar Heyman & Bros., where he was universally loved. As an integral member of his communities, he was a founding member of Bachuraim Chemed in Long Beach and was an active member, including president, of Temple Beth Israel in Port Washington, NY. A graduate of NYU, he spent his first two years of college at Ohio Wesleyan, an institution always dear to his heart. He also served briefly in the army. He devoted himself to working towards racial equality, fair

housing, and combatting anti-Semitism through his service as chairman of the Community Action Council and in his work on behalf of the UJA Federation of New York.

Marvin spent many summers at Camp Modin in Maine, and he passed his love of the outdoors onto his children, all of whom also attended Modin. Marvin moved to Massachusetts in 2017, allowing his children to tend to him with as much loving care as he had provided to them throughout their lives. Marvin was selfless, modest, and loving; a man of few words, all who knew him – his family, friends, co-workers, and caretakers – were moved by his playful and gentle spirit, kindness, and charity.

Special appreciation for all his caregivers including those at Linda Manor Skilled Nursing in Leeds, MA. Funeral services were held at the Plaza Community Jewish Chapel in Manhattan on February 26. Donations in memory of Marvin can be made to the Amyloidosis Foundation and the UJA Federation of New York.

### **Irwin Browner, 94, fly fisherman, world traveler, and rare book expert**

PITTSFIELD – Irwin Browner, 94, died peacefully at his home in Pittsfield after a brief stay at Berkshire Medical Center. He was born in New York City to Jacob and Pauline Browner. After graduating from the

Bolles Military Academy in 1943, he volunteered for the U.S. Navy and served as an ensign on a CVE 80 aircraft carrier in the Pacific during World War II.

On being discharged from the Navy, he attended the University of Pennsylvania and the Wharton School of Business. After graduating, he entered his father's point-of-purchase display business, Consolidated Mounting & Finishing Company, as an errand boy and retired after 43 years as sales executive and partner. In 1949, he married Ilse Lore Hochhauser, daughter of John and Greta Hochhauser. They lived in Purchase, NY until 1993, when they moved to Lenox and later to Pittsfield to be near their daughters and grandchildren. They celebrated their 70th anniversary in 2019.

A passionate fly fisherman, he traveled the world with his wife, fishing in Britain and Ireland and hiking in their favorite village, Sils Maria, in the Swiss Alps. For thirty summers, he rode into the Teton Wilderness Area in Wyoming with friends to camp and fish the Yellowstone headwaters. He flew to remote fishing camps in Alaska and explored the world with the British Ramblers. In his seventies, he hiked the 55-mile Milford Track in New Zealand. He read extensively, joined his wife as volunteer for the annual Lenox Library book sale, and eventually became its indispensable rare book

expert. He was a member of Temple Anshe Amunim and Trout Unlimited.

His sister, Joan Bartwink, predeceased him. He is survived by his wife, his children Jacqueline Browner and her husband Randy Johnson, John Browner and his wife Lisa Yarger, and Loré Kaplan and her husband Ben Kaplan; his grandchildren, Evan Kenward and his wife Kerry, Sarah Kaplan, Dana Kaplan and his partner Kim Stouffer, and Greta Yarger Browner. The family members wish to thank their helpers for their years of devoted care of Irwin and Hospice Care in the Berkshires for its invaluable help. Contributions in Irwin's memory can be sent to Temple Anshe Amunim, 26 Broad Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201 or to the Hospice Care in the Berkshire, Inc., 877 South Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

Irwin's life will be honored during the Friday night service at Temple Anshe Amunim on March 27.

### **Ellen Schwaizberg, 94, life member of Hadassah**

PITTSFIELD – Ellen Schwaizberg, 94, passed away Monday, February 24. She was the daughter of the late Abraham (Abe) and Rebecca (Betty) Schwaizberg. Originally from Edgewater and Kearny, NJ, she attended K-8 grades in the Edgewater Schools (Eleanor Van Gelder). Ellen graduated from Dwight Morrow High School in

Englewood, NJ in 1943.

A life member of Hadassah, Ellen was a member of Beta Sigma Phi International Sorority for over 50 years.

After graduation, she worked for Book of Knowledge in New York City. She later moved to Pittsfield and became employed with the General Electric Ordnance Systems for nearly 30 years before retiring in 1987.

Ellen enjoyed traveling to visit her friends in other states.

She was predeceased by her brother, Carl, in 1996, her father in 1996, her nephew, Robert, in 2009 and her dear aunt, Penny Schwartzberg, in 2018.

She is survived by her nephew, Dr. Steven Schwaizberg and Dr. Lisa Jane Jacobsen, of Canton, MA and Buffalo, NY. She also leaves her great-nephews, Scott, Andrew, Corey, and Justin, many cousins and a great number of wonderful friends whom she cherished.

Funeral services were held March 1 at the Devanny-Condron Funeral Home, Pittsfield. Burial followed at Ahavath Sholom Cemetery.

Memorial donations may be made to The Berkshire Humane Society or the Older Adult Kosher Lunch Program through the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, in care of Devanny-Condron Funeral Home, 40 Maplewood Avenue, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

OBITUARIES, continued on page 21

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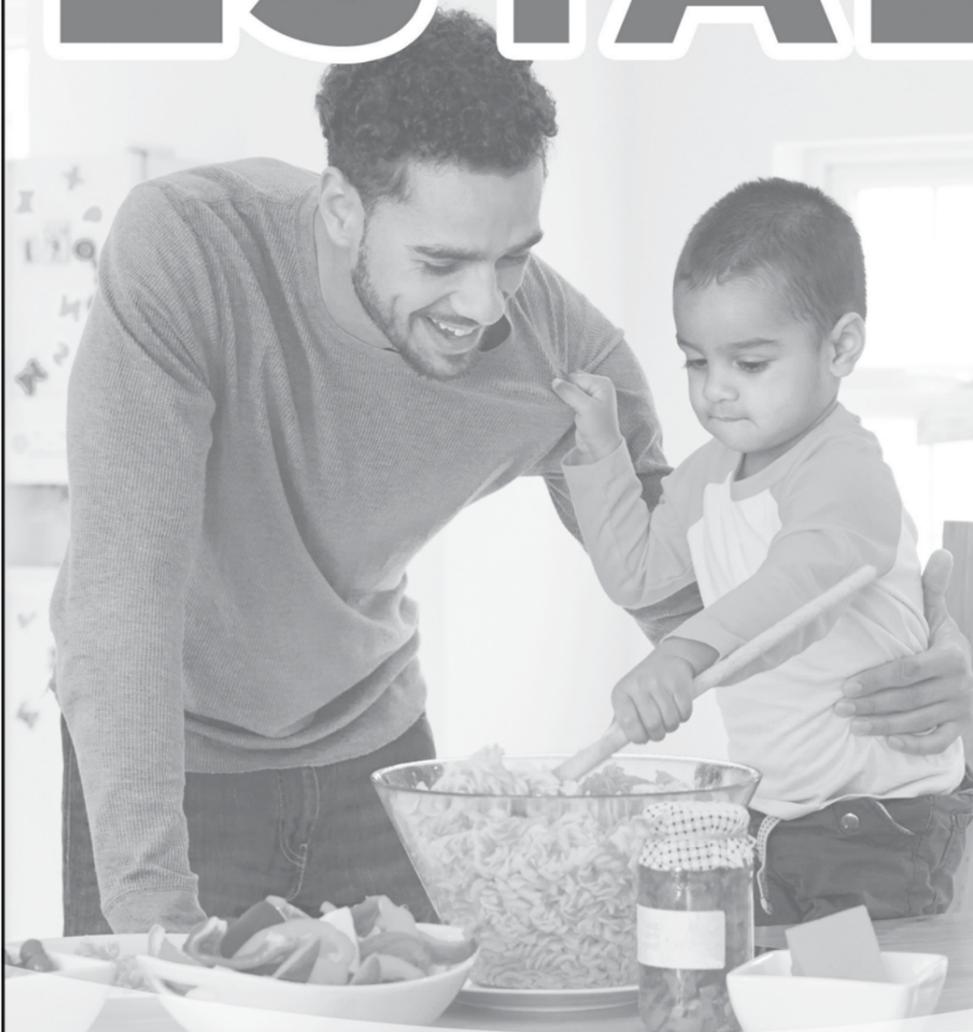
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## NEWS

## “Nisan” Madness

A former NBA analytics guru helps a Jewish high school win its first championship in over 20 years

By Gabe Friedman / JTA

BRYN MAWR, PA – Four years ago, Ben Falk was analyzing professional basketball players for the Philadelphia 76ers.

In February, he celebrated a championship on a slightly lower level — the Tri-County Independent School League — which he won as the coach of the Jack M. Barrack Hebrew Academy in Bryn Mawr, a Philly suburb.

It was the Jewish day school's first championship in its non-Jewish regional league in more than two decades.

How Falk got here — transitioning from the NBA to a high school with about 400 students — is a uniquely Jewish story.

Falk, 31, developed a love for basketball statistics as a teenager at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville, MD, and caught the attention of leaders in the burgeoning field through impressive statistical analyses that he posted online. The Portland Trail Blazers hired him for part-time work while he was still an undergraduate at the University of Maryland,

then made him full time after he graduated.

He spent five years with the Blazers before being hired by the 76ers in 2014. There he became an integral part of what fans and commentators famously dubbed “The Process” — a slow rebuild of the Atlantic Division team's roster that involved years of clearing house (or what critics decried as intentionally fielding a subpar team) in order to draft young top-level prospects.

After several rock-bottom losing seasons, 76ers general manager Sam Hinkie, who hired Falk, left the team in 2016. At the time of Hinkie's departure, Falk was seen as a respected basketball numbers guru. Soon after, The Process began to bear fruit (by 2018, the 76ers made the second round of the playoffs).

But Falk had other ideas. He had always wanted to coach, and wasn't qualified to do so at the NBA level.

He is also an Orthodox Jew, and the demanding NBA schedule often clashed with

his Sabbath observance. The concept of coaching at a Jewish high school became an appealing option.

So he found an opportunity to volunteer as an assistant coach at Barrack during the 2016-17 season. He took over the basketball program in 2018-19 when the previous head coach got too busy with other endeavors.

Until 2007, the pluralistic Barrack school — none of Falk's players wear kippahs — was named Akiba Academy. It boasts many famous alumni, including CNN news host Jake Tapper, best-selling author Mitch Albom and Chaim Bloom, the recently appointed chief baseball officer of the Boston Red Sox, who also

got his start as an analytics expert.

Falk brought his NBA analytics mentality to the team right away, having his teenage players watch film of their games and practices to work on specifics. He trained them in which shots would yield a higher shooting percentage for their style of play. He also

worked to eliminate injuries: Along with the team's trainer, Falk incorporated mobility and strength workouts into daily practices.

This year, the efforts culminated in an 18-1 record and the victory over Renaissance Academy Charter School on February 11 in the league championship game.



Coach Ben Falk provides instruction to his Barrack Hebrew Academy basketball team

(JAY GORODETZER PHOTOGRAPHY VIA JTA)

“NISAN” MADNESS, continued on page 23

## OBITUARIES, continued from page 19

## Alan Cutler, 67, lifelong resident and active member of the community

PITTSFIELD - Dr. Alan Cutler, 67, long-time resident of 51 Brookside Drive, died peacefully on Wednesday, March 4 at Berkshire Medical Center, surrounded by his family, following a long illness.

Born in Pittsfield on November 24, 1952 to the late Maurice and Zelda Cohen Cutler, Alan grew up on Livingston Avenue during the midst of the baby boom era and the glory days of Pittsfield in the General Electric era. Alan excelled as a student at Dawes Elementary School, South Junior High School (now Herberg Middle School), and was a 1970 graduate of Pittsfield High School, where he graduated second in his class, earned a National Merit letter of commendation, and received the Jewish War Veterans award and Kelm Scholarship.

Continuing his education, Alan graduated cum laude from Williams College (where he was accepted early decision) in 1974 with a bachelor's degree in Biology, and was a 1979 graduate of the Henry Goldman School of Dental Medicine at Boston University, earning a doctorate in Dental Medicine.

Following a year working as a resident at Berkshire Medical Center, Alan opened his dental practice in July 1980 on Henry Avenue in Pittsfield, where he began his career working with Dr. Arthur Levy. In 1985, Alan and Dr. Bruce Evenchik purchased the Federal House office building at 374 South Street, Pittsfield, which would be the home for his busy dental practice until his retirement in 2011 due to ill health.

In his practice, Alan took great pride in devoting his work to ensuring that the underprivileged of our community received quality dental care.

On July 26, 1987, Alan married his beloved wife, Ellen McKeever Cutler, in Pittsfield. Alan was deeply devoted to Ellen, and together they would raise three children and were tireless in ensuring that each child was raised happy and healthy

with a good education and a passion for music. Alan was a constant fixture at his children's academic events, performances, sports events, and life milestones, always with a video camera in his hand to capture the moment forever.

Outside of work and family, Alan's passions included baseball and the Red Sox, the music of James Taylor, the Eagles, and Linda Ronstadt, trivia, reading, politics, barbecues with family and friends, holiday celebrations with his parents and children, vacations to Cape Cod, his deep interest in the Kennedy Assassination, and his love for spending his free time working on his yard.

Alan was a longtime member of Temple Anshe Amunim in Pittsfield, where he served on the Board of Trustees in the 1990s and was one of the first bar mitzvahs held in the Temple's current building on Broad Street on December 4, 1965, officiated by the late Rabbi Harold I. Salzman.

Besides his wife, Alan leaves one daughter, Julie H. Cutler; two sons, Joshua M. (Jessica) Cutler and Zachary J. Cutler, all of Pittsfield; one newborn grandson, James T. Cutler of Pittsfield; a sister, Roslind (Neil) Kushner of Norwood; six nephews and six nieces; and his beloved cat, Andre. Alan's children and grandchildren will continue to keep his spirit alive by doing their own *g'milut chasadim*, acts of loving kindness.

Alan's family would like to express their sincere gratitude to the wonderful professionals of the Berkshire Medical Center Central County Dialysis Center, where Alan received the most exemplary and compassionate care over the past 7 years.

Funeral services were held Sunday, March 8 at Temple Anshe Amunim, Pittsfield, with Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch, spiritual leader, officiating. Burial followed in Pittsfield Cemetery, Anshe Amunim section. Donations may be made to Temple Anshe Amunim or to Friends of Renal Dialysis in care of the funeral home, Flynn & Dagnoli-Bencivenga Funeral Home, 5 Elm Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.

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NEWS

# Jewish farms are booming. Now the farmers want to grow their community.

By Ben Harris / JTA

REISTERSTOWN, MD — When Sarah Julia Seldin arrived at the main national gathering of Jewish foodies in 2016, she was disappointed to find no programming aimed specifically at people like her.

There were sessions on kosher cooking, Jewish food ethics, and the realities of kosher animal slaughter. But there was little programming at the Hazon Food Conference specifically for those who devote their time and energy to actually growing food.

So Seldin, a farmer who runs Yesod Farm + Kitchen in Fairview, NC, put out the word that she wanted to connect with other Jewish farmers. Some 13 people responded to the invite, including Shani Mink, who was then farming at the Pearlstone Jewish Retreat Center outside Baltimore.

That afternoon, the two women started a Facebook page and invited all the Jewish farmers they knew to join. They called it the Jewish Farmer Network, and within two days 200 people had signed up. Now the number is roughly 800, and another 1,600 follow the group on Instagram.

“The takeaway for people in the room is that they were living their Judaism through stewardship of land,” Seldin said. “For them, their farming

was how they were living Judaism in the world. But they felt alone. Jewish farmers suffer from a double invisibility — Jews don't expect you to be farmers, and farmers don't expect you to be Jews. So there's a deep desire for connection.”

In February, the network offered a real-time opportunity for exactly that when it held its inaugural conference — a sold-out gathering of 160 Jewish farmers at Pearlstone. (Another 30 were left on a waitlist.) Over the course of three days, participants enjoyed locally sourced vegetarian meals and participated in sessions about Jewish agricultural traditions, including

Jewish teachings on food justice, animal ethics and the spiritual significance of trees.

But more than anything else, the participants said they were eager for connection with other Jewish farmers.

“I have felt incredibly isolated as a Jewish person in farming,” said Betsy Samuelson, a seed expert who runs a cannabis consulting business with her husband. “I've reached out to my network of Jews many times to try and find connection and community and was not responded to. And when the Jewish Farmer Network came about, that's when I felt responded to, welcomed and embraced. And ever since I've



Yogev Von Kundra raises animals and medicinal herbs on his farm in Damascus, VA.



David Fried runs a fruit and berry tree nursery outside Montpelier, VT

been here, that's the way I've felt. These are my people. It's home.”

To many in the Jewish food movement, this is hardly a surprise. Jewish farms have been popping up across the country for years now, many of them started by alumni of Jewish farming and environmental programs. Other Jews have come to farming out of mounting alarm over climate change or through activism around food issues. And some just sought a more peaceful way of life than what was on offer in the city.

But farming by its very nature can be an isolating endeavor. And with a new generation of Jewish farmers taking to the land, driven in part by the same factors inspiring growing numbers of young Americans more broadly to embrace a way of life once abandoned by their forebears, some are discovering a hunger for something not easily found in most pockets of rural America: other Jews.

“It's both amazing and in some sense it's like, oh, it's about time,” said Shamu Sadeh, the co-founder and former director of Adamah,

a three-month fellowship combining organic farming with Jewish learning.

The conference program would have looked familiar to any Adamah alum — three days of yoga sessions, spirited prayer and workshops on Jewish agricultural ethics. On Saturday night, the entire program was given over to an extended discussion of *shmittah*, the Jewish sabbatical year, when fields are supposed to lay fallow, debts are forgiven and private lands are opened to the commons.

“We want to help farmers understand that Judaism has something for them,” said Mink, now the network's executive director. “We have this whole expansive body of wisdom that can help us figure out how to build a more just and regenerative food system.”

One of those farmers is Yogev Von Kundra, a Virginia grower who recently purchased land for his own operation in Damascus, a tiny town just north of the Tennessee border. Von Kundra grew up with almost no Jewish education, celebrating Passover at the home of one of his father's co-workers and little else.

JEWISH FARMERS, continued on page 23

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## NEWS

JEWISH FARMERS, *continued from page 22*

But after years of encouragement from a friend, Von Kundra went to Israel on Birthright in 2019 and it changed his life. He took on the name Yogeve (he was named Jason at birth) as a sign of his growing Jewish identification and began hosting Shabbat meals.

"It was a spiritual experience," Von Kundra said. "It felt like almost beyond time. It felt like I am no longer the individual I thought that I was."

Like many young people drawn to farming, Von Kundra came up through the food justice movement. As his Jewish connection deepened, he was amazed to discover how much overlap there is between Jewish agricultural teachings, with their emphasis on social responsibility and ecological restraint, and the work he was already doing.

"I feel like I've always been doing Jewish farming, but I didn't understand it as such because I had a narrow lens of Judaism as a child that I didn't connect with," Von Kundra said.

For Margaret Hathaway, discovering Judaism and farming happened together — and she's fairly certain she wouldn't have embraced the latter without the former.

"Urban Judaism does not resonate with me," Hathaway said. "If I had stayed in New York, I'm not sure I would have converted."

Hathaway met her husband, Karl Schatz, when they were living in New York. In 2005, they bought land in Maine near where Schatz grew up. Today they run Ten Apple Farm, an agritourism business that offers farm stays and goat hikes — two-hour walks accompanied by goats through the forest that culminate with a chance for visitors to try out their milking skills.

Hathaway and Schatz aren't regulars at synagogue and there's nothing overtly Jewish about their farm. But they do prune their apple trees on Tu b'Shevat, the late-winter holiday that is the Jewish answer to Arbor Day. Several weeks later on Passover, they harvest horseradish right from the ground for their Seder.

"As a parent, I look at our kids — they don't really have peers who are Jewish farmers in Maine," Hathaway

said. "But they come here and they're surrounded by [Jews] who have made the decision [to farm]. It gives them a sense of community."

Building Jewish community around food and farming is a central tenet of the Jewish food movement, which has fostered the growth of nonprofit Jewish educational farms across the country over the past decade.

Many are run by alumni of programs like Adamah, which has graduated about 450 people in its 17-year history. But others, like the one started by Micah Chetrit in 2018 on the grounds of a synagogue in Tucson, Arizona, are not.

A descendant of Jews who farmed in a tiny village in Morocco, Chetrit hopes to expose local Jews to ancient Jewish farming practices — particularly those connected to desert agriculture. The farm is named The Midbar Project, Hebrew for desert.

Chetrit began digging beds last year and held the first farm event in May — a celebration of Mimouna, the Moroccan feast held at the conclusion of Passover.

"Being in the desert, I felt very connected, but I could never name why," Chetrit said. "And as I've learned more and more about my family's history working soil in the desert, I can name those feelings. This makes sense. This feels inherent. The connections are starting to piece together."

Few Jewish farmers would make such claims. But many in the Jewish food movement would say that even those who don't give their farms Hebrew names or time their plantings to the Jewish calendar, they are farming Jewishly if they are farming in a manner that respects the earth and the people who work it.

"They're living the Jewish values that they got from their grandparents," said David Fried, who runs Elmore Roots, a fruit tree and berry nursery outside Montpelier, Vermont. "They're taking the love, the way their grandparents loved them, and they're pouring their love into the land. They don't necessarily know it's a Jewish thing, but they're using all the Jewish values that they got."

## Mimouna: A Post-Passover Celebration

An exuberant Sephardic custom whose origins are the subject of debate

By My Jewish Learning / 70 Faces Media

Though originating and celebrated widely in the Sephardic community, a small number of North American Ashkenazi Jews have started celebrating this festival in recent years.

## Theories About Its Origins

The Moroccan Jews are known for Mimouna, the exuberant festival held on the evening and day after Passover, and whose origins are unclear. According to one explanation, it is the *yahrzeit* (anniversary of the death) of Maimon ben Joseph, the father of the great Jewish philosopher Maimonides (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, also known by his acronym Rambam), a scholar in his own right who lived in Fez (Morocco) and wrote on Jewish-Islamic relations. He died around 1170.

Others say Mimouna is derived from the Arabic word for wealth and good fortune (literally "protected by God," *ma'amoun*). Since Passover is the beginning of the new agricultural year, when the world is judged for produce, it is a time to pray for plentiful crops, symbolic of general prosperity.

Still others connect Mimouna with the word *emunah* ("belief"), claiming it celebrates belief in Israel's redemption. Along the same lines, there is also support (said to be traced to Maimonides' explanation) for the word being an Arabic adaptation of the phrase *Ani ma'amin* (I believe), the classic expression of faith in the coming of the messiah (*ana* for *ani*, placed after the verb *ma'amin*, as is common in Arabic, yielding *ma'amin ana*, which became "*maimouna*" in the local Judeo dialect).



A typical Mimouna table

It may have been a greeting exchanged to bolster one another's disappointment that Passover had come and gone without the long-anticipated return to Jerusalem.

## Traditional Foods

The Libyans made a challah-like round loaf with a hard-boiled egg secured in the center with strips of dough. Single men and women received blessings that they would be married in the year ahead. Women wore their fanciest clothes, girls donned white, and children dressed in costumes like the Berbers (native North Africans) and Arabs who shared their celebration and provided flowers, milk, butter, honey, wheat, and other produce for the Jews. Dining tables were decorated with flowers, wheat stalks, and sometimes live fish in bowls (this time symbolizing birth and fertility). Golden rings were hidden in a bowl containing flour, suggesting hoped-for wealth or blessings. A dairy meal of buttermilk, sweets, and special pancakes called *muflita* served with honey was accompanied by

singing, dancing, and visiting with friends.

Numerous legends about acts of salvation that occurred on this date arose, and the festival spread through North Africa and to America, where the Mimouna meal provides closure for Passover, and into Israel, where the community gathers in Jerusalem. The holiday traditionally continues the next day with picnics and outings at beaches, fields, and cemeteries.

For the Sabbath after Passover, when the approaching start of the Hebrew month Iyar was announced, challah was sometimes made in the shape of a key. Sprinkled with sesame seeds representing the *mahn* (manna) that began to fall in Iyar (after the Exodus from Egypt, as related in the Torah), the challah stood for the key to our livelihood, which is in God's hands.

*Excerpted from Celebrate! The Complete Jewish Holiday Handbook and reprinted with permission of the publisher (Jason Aronson Inc) by My Jewish Learning, a subsidiary of 70 Faces Media.*

"NISAN" MADNESS, *continued from page 21*

The job has given Falk an ideal work-life balance: He celebrated the birth of his first child during the past season (he says he wouldn't have had as much time to devote to fatherhood if he still worked in the NBA) and also has been able to work on Cleaning the Glass, a site he created that provides NBA-level analytics on professional players to paid subscribers.

"It's been incredibly gratifying. When I talk to former colleagues ... they say in some ways it might be the best level of basketball, where there's

no media pressure, no one's calling for your job when you have a disappointing season," Falk said about high school sports. "But the kids still really love the game and they're excited to play, and they're competitive and they work hard."

Next year, Barrack will play in a larger, tougher conference — the Tri-County Independent School League is folding. The school's biggest rival, fellow Jewish school Kohelet Yeshiva, is in the league Barrack is joining, so Falk believes their games will get more intense.

He has emphasized to his players that they should not take the championship for granted.

"Sometimes in sports things work that way, where all the pieces fit together," he said. "We had one of those years."

And as for a return someday to the NBA?

"I've learned enough at this point in my life to know to never say never," Falk said. "You never know what's going to happen and how things are going to change."

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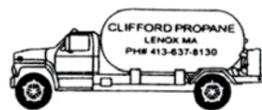
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