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 set sail for Shanghai on the SS President Woodrow Wilson in December 1938.

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 a great Jewish American (right) with another of the 117 new emojis.

“Israelis can finally use an emoji to tell each other to pipe down,” reports the Times of Israel.
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. 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 kehilah 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 Bett Afla and hear about the hardships that they had to over- come 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 Moqbleh, 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 Partnership2Gether, 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.
Rabbi Neil P.G. Hirsch

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 application. 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.

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 to provide a shared narrative. 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.

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

Mayyim Hayyim’s mikvah

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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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 Knesset 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 of history, of inter-national 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 Rums: The Rise and Demise of the Brooklyn Dodgers" was broadcast live on National Public Radio in December 2017 and can currently be heard online.

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 Yoram HaShosh 5780 approached, Dr. Lederman wished to share some of her students’ responses to hearing Velman and Ornstein’s first-hand accounts of struggle, loss, and survival.

Edith Velmans with BCD middle schoolers

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 Velman, 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 Yoram HaShosh 5780 approached, Dr. Lederman wished to share some of her students’ responses to hearing Velman and Ornstein’s first-hand 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 in that. It was made by the Germans with her mother when she was young years old. She worked in a labor camp called Flashlov 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 everyone one of them has a different story to tell.

— Brenna Loret de Mola

"Edith Velman (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."

— Rachino 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. That generation can take over their ‘role,’ and if other people who had 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. Tomorrow’s youth are the ones who have to make the decisions. 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. That generation can take over their ‘role,’ and if other people who had the opportunity like my class did to speak to Holocaust survivors, we can share their stories so they can continue to be recognized."

— April Sutherland
**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, Judith Dansker and 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 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 music can be traced to a lifecycle ritual performed at the synagogue – the 2006 bar mitzvah of Judith Dansker’s daughter, which was influenced by the 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 Loon” and the Jewish tallit ceremony. Impressed, Rabbi Zucker invited the musicians to participate at a Selichot event.

The experiences led to the formation of the Hevreh Ensemble, its four member keyboardist Adam Morrison, who has played with some of the most notable musicians in 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 well as the Hevreh Ensemble, had stopped playing or gotten cynical about music. It was a new journey for them.

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 orchestra 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, balaloo, 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 recent concert at the Spanish Synagogue in Prague at which the audience was at first confused by the intermission clapping, and “by the end, clapping wildly.” The Hebrac 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 2014, 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/tech 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*, 2001/2012 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, Lisa DePola, whose bat mitzvah was where the Hevreh Ensemble was born. She’s a soprano who sings with *MIYRAM*, 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, commemo- rating the observance of Tisha B’Av.

So come join Judith Dansker and Laurie Friedman at the Hevreh of the Berkshires’ Knosh & Knowledge for an entertaining morning of music and story- telling 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.

**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.  
**Advance lunch reservations and prepayment required for this event.**  
**Email:** federation@jewishberkshires.org, or call (413) 442-4360, ext 10.  
**For more information:** Visit jewishberkshires.org and select **Community & Events>Berkshire Jewish Voice** for links to highlights of current and past issues.  

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**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: Embodiment of 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).
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 BCAR, 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, and Knesset Israel. She also visits members of the wider Berkshires. When Merle returned, “After my accident, and is one of the Shabbat and Sunday morning minyan stalls 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. “If you’re Jewish, you’re a Jew. Re proud to be Jewish, and let your Jewish-ness 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 job.”

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 wheelchairs, the lack of ramps in public spaces, the absence of curb cuts at intersections, and so forth. What really piqued her interest was the lack of accessibility in public buildings, particularly the downtown court houses, which included 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 before their accidents. It was who couldn’t speak out,” she says, “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 stalls 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.

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**BERKSHIRE JEWISH CONGREGATIONS & ORGANIZATIONS**

**Welcome to the Jewish Berkshires**

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

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

Learn more about our Jewish community and find great events on the community calendar at: [JEWISHBERKSHIRES.ORG](http://www.jewishberkshires.org)

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**Shalom Berkshires**

**Berkshire Minyan**

Lay-led egalitarian minyan

held at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, 270 State Rd.,

Great Barrington, MA

(413) 229-3618, berkshireminyan.org

**Berkshire Hills Hadassah**

P.O. Box 187, Pittsfield, MA

(413) 443-4386, berkshirehillshadassah@gmail.com

**R’aii Frith Lodge, No. 326**

Chabad of the Berkshires

450 South St., Pittsfield, MA

(413) 499-8989, chabadoftheberkshires.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, selli4@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
**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, to save thousands of Italy’s Jews. Their high-risk methods were ingenious. Bartali, at the behest of the Archbishop of Florence, clandestinely delivered secret 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 gripping 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 insistence stories, we realize that when an entire continent was engulfed in genocide, however, there were countless of 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, 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.

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**Matzo 2020**

On Monday, March 30 at 10:45 a.m., join Cathy Zises, local farmer and descendent of the Magarettan family behind Horowitz Margareten. 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 operator at Zfarm in Chatham, NY, who will share her journey in cultivating biodynamic agriculture. Zfarm, as is a love of singing four-part harmony, is being done by members of Hevreh of the Berkshires / Connecting With Community since 2011. The project is being done by members of Zfarm since 2011. The farm encompasses 130 acres with planting fields, woods and hiking trails, wetlands, streams and a pond. Improvements have been made to make it 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 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 27 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 11).

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**The Process of Aging, with Maggie Bittman**

On Monday, April 27 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 the theory and approach, emphasizing that aging begins at birth. She will share how all of us are confronted with four existential truths as we age – the search for meaning and purpose; facing mortality; experiencing aloneness; and engaging in our work.

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 the third age.

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 27 at 10:45 a.m., followed by lunch (see page 11).

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**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 journeys that led to 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-num, and volunteer work at Lourdes to attending services at Congregation Ahavath Shalom, the Friends Meeting House, and to Thich Nhat Hanh meditation group, Richard will share his exploration 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).

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**B Shalom Chorale Seeks Singers for Seventh Season**

**LOCAL NEWS**

GREAT BARRINGTON — B Shalom Chorale, conducted by Jack Brown, begins 10 weekly rehearsals on Wednesday, May 27, from 7 p.m. at Hevreh of the Berkshires.

The Chorale is open to all men, women and Jewish, or non-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, but 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 announced. These concerts will be held on Thursday, 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.**
Street in Pittsfield, or for viewing and purchase at Guido’s, in advance at the Federation’s office, located at 196 South Einat Admony and Janna Gur. Cookbooks will be on view takes place at Guido’s on May 7 at 7 p.m. Prepare a dish 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 Esmat Armony and Jenna 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.

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 Koening’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 Koening 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 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 relevance to the evening.”

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 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.”

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.”

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.

*Of blessed memory

Anonymous (10)
Barbara Barshishe
Robert Bashevkin
Linda J. L. Becker
Robert Berend
Shelley Berend
Helene Berke
Lawrence Berke
Lee & Sydelle Blatt
Betty Braun*
Cpora Brown
Barbara Cohen
Mark Cohen*
Mimi Cohen
C. Jeffrey & Judith Cook
Gerry & Lynn Denmark
Jonathan & Sara Denmark
Sheila K. Donath
Melva Eidelberg
Monroe England, in memory of
Monoa B. & Isabel England
Dr. Armand V. Feigenbaum*
Dr. Donald S. Feigenbaum*
Steven Feiner
Diana & Stanley Feld
Suan M. Fischman, Esq.
Lynn & William Foggles
Elane Friedman
Eran Gaaz
Jeffrey Goldwasser &
Jonquille Wolfson
Jordan & Laura Green
Harold Grinspoon
Ellen Heffan
Ed Jaffe*
Elhu Karzman
Marylin Kasman
Dara Kaufman
Phil* and Rhoda Kamenstein
Howard & Nancy* Kaufman
Lawrence Klein
Sarah Klein
Arthur Kriger*
Fred & Brenda Landes
Beth Laster-Nathan
Andrew S. Levine*
Toby H. Levine
Era Lindnner-Gilbert*
Amy Lindnner-Leiser
Helen Maiden*
Ellen Masters
Stuart Masters
Eddie Miller
Robert Newman*
Wendy Robbins
Ken & Fran Rubenstein
Stella Schechter*
Arlette D. Schiff
Gary Schiff
Stephen & Deborah Schechter
Martin Silver
Sylvia Silverberg, in memory of
Jerome Silverberg
Richard A. Simons & Marcie
Greenfield Simons
Mark & Elisa Snowize
Harold Spar*
Lisa Fletcher-Udel
Edward Udel
Michael & Joan Ury
Mark & Judy Usw
Henry* & Isaac* Voremberg
Alexandra Warshaw
Florence Winenberg*
Rabbi Deborah Zecher &
Rabbi Dennis Ross

Berkshire Hills Hadassah
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AIZENS PESACH!

Keep up the Tradition:
Join & Support Hadassah:
berkshirehillshadassah@gmail.com

Donate ~ Volunteer ~ Make a Difference
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 Iline Spiwak, 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 the CAS Theatre Group’s premiere performance. "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 shmurah 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 $836 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) 458-9888.

The Chametz ‘Sale’

A free online ‘Sale’ of Chametz form is available on the Chabad of the Berkshires website, www.jewishberkshires.com, that will empower Rabbi Levi Volovik to act on one’s behalf in the sale. Sell chametz the old-fashioned way by calling the rabbi at (413) 499-9899.

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, matzah, 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. 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.

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 for more details.

For Families

Tiny Talmidim (preschool 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.
A Passover Journey to Freedom: Pilgrimage for Body, Mind and Spirit

þN plus an Earth Seder with Rabba Kaya Stern-Kaufman

LENNOX – On April 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.

Expects 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 role we as a people have been, are and will continue to be as 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, explore the Earth that we live in, and our relationship and reframe our relationship to Mother Earth based on indigenous wisdom. Participants will experience the beauty of an Earth Seder which 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. You can also book your reservation by calling Kripalu at (866) 200-5203. For specific questions, contact Rabba Kaya Stern-Kaufman at kaya@kripalu.org.

About Rabba Kaya Stern-Kaufman

Rabba Kaya Stern-Kaufman will begin a new position as rabbi for Temple Israel Portland 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.

Kosher Community Seder – April 8

FITTSFIELD – 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 Passover 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 entree. 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 aged 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.

Knesset Israel Welcomes Spring

FITTSFIELD – A musical, raucous-filled Rabbalat 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 or via telephone, (413) 445-4872, ext. 10. Dinners are $30, $15 for teens, and free for children below bar mitzvah age (family maximum, 856).

Also in May, Knesset Israel is getting ready to dive into another summer of significant programming. These include weekly Shabbat luncheons sponsored by KF’s Rishdush 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

FITTSFIELD – 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, $810 for children of members aged 10-18, $854 for adult not-yet-members and $815 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 templeofice@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.

“Hey. That wasn’t so bad.”

Yeah. We get that a lot.
### ONGOING MINYANS
Sunday 8:45 a.m. and 7 p.m.  
Tuesday 8 a.m. and 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 (Eightight 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.

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**Connecting with Community**

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

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

Programs take place 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 if free!

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

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**What’s for Lunch?**

# 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


**Tuesday, 21** ............. Fish sticks, cream of mushroom soup, sweet potato fries, salad, potato bread, pears, 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.

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**Abuse hurts. You are not alone.**

The Shalom Task Force Abuse Hotline is endorsed by leading Rabbis.

Confidential Hotline 1.888.893.2323

Do it for yourself. Do it for your children. Supported in part by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires and the United Jewish Federation of the Berkshires.
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.

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.

You can now read and share Berkshire Jewish Voice feature stories online! Visit jewishberkshires.org and select Community & Events>Berkshire Jewish Voice for links to highlights of current and past issues.

STOP THE BLEED

THIS FREE LIFE-SAVING TRAINING IS FOR EVERYONE!

Thursday, May 7

Choose ONE Session

Morning Session
9:00-10:00 am
Temple Anshe Amunim
26 Broad St., Pittsfield

Evening Session
6:30-7:30 p.m.
Temple Anshe Amunim
26 Broad St., Pittsfield

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

Happy Passover

“Leaving Vienna,” a painting by Otto Schnepp, 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.
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!

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.

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!

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.
Happy Passover!

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$5.99/lb.
Empire Boneless Chicken Breast
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SALE

$2.99/lb.
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SALE

$3.99/ea.
Stop & Shop Russet Potatoes
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SALE

$4.99/ea.
Sunsweet Pitted Prunes
16 oz. pkg. 4182318

$5.99

4/$5
Hood Cottage Cheese
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$5

5/$5
Streit’s Matzo Ball or Matzo Ball & Soup Mix
Selected Varieties, 4.5 oz. box 4082705

$7

2/$7
Kedem Grape or Sparkling Juice
Selected Varieties, Grape, 64 fl. oz. or Sparkling, 23.4 fl. oz. 4086997

$2

3/$2
Stop & Shop Seltzer 1 Liter
Selected Varieties, 33.8 fl. oz. btl. Plus Deposit Where Applicable 4120335

$4.99

2/$6
Manischewitz Cake or Brownie Mix
Selected Varieties, 11.4 oz. pkg. (Excludes Gluten Free) 4086122

$6

2/$6
Manischewitz Egg Matzoh
12 oz. box 6002851

$4

2/$4
Goodman’s or Gefen Macaroons
Selected Varieties, 10 oz. cont. 4070273

$6

2/$6
Mrs. Adler’s Gefilte Fish
Selected Varieties, 24 oz. jar 4081392

$6

2/$6
Manischewitz Passover Crackers
Selected Varieties, 9 oz. box 4081087

$1.79

2/$4
Kedem Apple Juice
Selected Varieties, 24 fl. oz. Md. 4126346

$4

2/$4
Absolutely Gluten Free Potato Crisps
Selected Varieties, 1.4 oz. 4082773

$6

2/$6
Gefen Roasted Whole Chestnuts
Selected Varieties, 1.2 oz. pkg. 4130164

$5

2/$5
Tabak-Schnick Passover Broth
Selected Varieties, 32 oz. cont. 4065295

$5

2/$5
Manischewitz Cake Meal or Matzo Meal
Selected Varieties, 10 oz. cont. 4088098

$4.99

2/$4
Holiday Fruit Slices
Selected Varieties, 6 oz. pkg. 4080905

$5

2/$5
Manischewitz Macaroons
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2/$4
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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 also the state of a country 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 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 religious 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 faces issues 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 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 had, and exploring my Jewish identity with 47 other people, 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.

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 Anamun. 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.
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, 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 environmentalists through its Jewish Outdoor Food, Farming, and Environmental Education (JOFE) program. JOFE disseminates 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 some events, or using oseyy Shabbat or meetings.

My wife Alyson and I moved up to the Berkshires in part because of the Buddhist mindfulness that is awarded to Jewish institutions that have undertaken environmentally-sustainable initiatives, including using solar energy to partially power their activities. We were also leaders in our community in the Berkshires. 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 however, the world that we live in now.

We have also become more aware of the importance of tzedakah (repairing the world) and k’lal Yisrael (we are responsible for one another), as well as the critical importance of ta’awudh.

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 nutrients. Michael Pollan, in one of his best-selling books like The Omnivore’s Dilemma, traces many of the challenges that 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 more confidence.

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 global warming are already being felt: hazy skies over parts of the country, increased flooding, rising sea levels, and the potential for future crop failures.

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. We 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 and to recognize how they affect the planet.

At Hazon retreats, I have seen young Jews who are very secularized and uninvolved become turned on by learning how our tradition has interpreted our relationship with the environment. They have also become more 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 catastrophic 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 wish 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 that 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 rifle up more people and make an impact. We must galvanize the Jewish communities across the country, each Jew, each Jewish institution, to recognize their 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. (Earth Day 2020 is on April 22.)
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. Carol Goodman Kaufman 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 offilin** (its stuffing) on April 8, every year? One place only 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 hechten 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 the recipe and present the duly gefilt-ed fish to the 20-odd guests at their Seder table.

The stuffed whole fish eventually found itself on the dinner tables of medieval German Jewish households.

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

Directions:

1. 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.
2. Add the eggs, followed by the sugar, salt, pepper, and matzah meal, using 4 eggs for fluffier fish, 3 for firmer.
3. Cover the mixture and refrigerate for an hour while making the broth.
4. Place all the broth ingredients except the sugar into a large pot and turn flame to high.
5. Remove the cover, add the sugar if desired, and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain and discard the solids.

Remove the cover, add the sugar if desired, and simmer for 30 minutes. Let fish cool in the broth.

Ingredients:

** 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.

“Friedman’s — or 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.”

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

Carole 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 gulpsandkauflman.com and to follow her on Twitter @goodmankaufman.

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

Directions:

1. 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.
Berta S. Cole, 95, warm, good-humored, and beloved by many

PITTSFIELD — Berta S. Cole, 95, of Tewksbury, MA, died Friday, February 21 at her home at the Arvia/Robernik Retirement Community, surrounded by care and comforting of her two sons.

SARASOTA, FL — Arlene Teresa (Bookless) Levine, 89, found great joy in helping others. She passed away Friday February 21 at her home in the Arvia/Robernik Retirement Community. She was born the daughter of Max and Bessee (Browerman) Bookless. She attended Pittsfield schools and graduated from Pittsfield High School.

Arlene was very proud of her skills as a bookkeeper for Comet’s jewelers and later as office manager of the Dalton News Record. Arlene found great joy in helping others. She passed away Friday February 21 at her home in the Arvia/Robernik Retirement Community.
Weston, Massachusetts. Marvin spent many summers at Camp Medin in Maine, and he passed his love of the outdoors onto his children, all of whom also attended Medin. 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, coworkers, and caretakers – were moved by his playful and gentle spirit, kindness, and charity.

Special appreciation for all his caregivers including those at Life at Manor Skilled Nursing in Lees, MD. Funeral services were held on 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.

Ellen Schwaitzberg, 94, passed away Monday, February 24.

Ellen Schwaitzberg, 94, passed away Monday, February 24. She was the daughter of the late Abraham (Abie) and Rebecca (Betty) Schwaitzberg. Originally from Edgewater and Kearny, NJ, she attended K-8 grades in the Edgewater Schools (Evanor 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 Ordinance 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, Robert, in 2009 and her dear aunt, Penny Schwartzberg, in 2018. She is survived by her nephews, Dr. Steven Schwartzberg and Dr. Lisa Jane Jacobson, 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.

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

Ellen Schwartzberg, 94, life member of Hadassah

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“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.

Last year, 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.

It all started with a love for basketball statistics as a teenager at the Charles E. Smith Jewish Day School in Rockville, MD, and caught the attention of leadership in the burgeoning field through impressive statistical analyses that helped the Portland Trail Blazers hire 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 commenta-

tors famously dubbed “The Process” -- a slow rebuilding of the Atlantic Division team's roster that involved years of careful planning (or what critics derided as intentionally fielding a subpar team) in order to draft young top-level prospects.

After several rock-bottom 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 always wanted to coach, and wasn't qualified to do so. 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 2016-17 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 a 1-8 record and the victory over Renaissance Academy Charter School on February 11 in the league championship game.

“NISAN” MADNESS, continued on page 23

You can now read and share Berkshire Jewish Voice feature stories online! Visit jewishberkshires.org and select Community & Events > Berkshire Jewish Voice for links to highlights of current and past issues.

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 Evenchak purchased the Federal House office building at 374 South Street, Pittsfield, which would become the home for his busy dental practice until his retirement in 2010.

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

On July 26, 1987, Alan married his then-girlfriend, 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 Anumin 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’milah 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 Anumin, Pittsfield, with Rabbi Liz P.G. Hirsch, spiritual leader, officiating. Burial followed in Pittsfield Cemetery, Anshe Anumin section. Donations may be made to Temple Anshe Anumin or to Friends of Renal Dialysis in care of the funeral home, Flynn & Dagnoli-Bencivenga Funeral Home, 5 Elm Street, Pittsfield, MA 01201.
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 Yesol 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 vegetable 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 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 shmitah, 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 Minl, 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 Yoge 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
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 Ashkenazim Jews have started celebrating this festival in recent years.

Theories About Its Origins

The Moroccan Jews known for Mimouna, the exuberant festival held on the evening and day after Passover, and whose origins are unclear. According to one explanation, Mimouna is the Hebrew abbreviation for the Hebrew name of the Prophet Maimonides, the 12th-century philosopher Maimonides (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon, also known as Rambam or Ramabam), a scholar in his own right in the Middle East (Morocco) and wrote on Jewish-Islamic relations. He died around 1204.

Others say Mimouna is derived from the Arabic word for wealth and good fortune (literally “protected by God,” maw’um). 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 for “belief” (ma’amin), 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 (or in one, placed after the verb ma’amir, as is common in Arabic, yielding me’aamir) which became “maimouna” in the local Judeo Arabic.

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 chalal-like round loaf with a hard-boiled egg secured in the center with strips of dough. Simple 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 hope for wealth or blessings. A dairy meal of buttermilk, sweets, and special pancakes called ma’amoloun, which is the word for 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 throughout 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 lyran was announced, chalkal was sometimes made in the shape of a key. Sprinkled with sesame seeds representing the mahn (manna) that fell in b5i (after the Exodus from Egypt, as related in the Torah), the chalkal stood for the key to our livelihood, which is in God’s hands.

Excerpted from Celebrate! The Complete Jewish Holiday Handbook

The Moroccan Jews are the only Jews who observe Mimouna, with the word ma’amin (belief) being more prominent in their beliefs.

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SALE EFFECTIVE IN OUR GREAT BARRINGTON AND LEE STORES ONLY
MARCH 19 TO APRIL 15, 2020.

**Happy Passover!**
Passover begins sunset Wed., Apr. 8, 2020

**IN OUR PRODUCE DEPT.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>ROMAINE LETTUCE</td>
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**IN OUR SEAFOOD DEPT.**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>VITA WILD NOVA SALMON</td>
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<td>VITA HERRING</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>IN WINE SAUCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>or Sour Cream or Homestyle, 30 to 32 oz</td>
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**IN OUR GROCERY DEPT.**

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<tr>
<td>GOODMAN'S MACAROONS</td>
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<td>10 oz, All Varieties</td>
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<tr>
<td>KEDEM GRAPE JUICE</td>
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<td>22 oz, All Varieties</td>
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<tr>
<td>YEHUDA MEMORIAL CANDLE</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 FOR $4</td>
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<tr>
<td>JOYOUS BLESSINGS BOUQUET</td>
<td>12.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>A soft, charming floral bouquet which exudes warmth and light in celebration of the season.</td>
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**IN OUR FROZEN AISLE**

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<td>14.5 to 15 oz, All Varieties</td>
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**IN OUR FROZEN AISLE**

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<td>GOLD'S HORSERADISH</td>
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**IN OUR BAKERY DEPT.**

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<tr>
<td>EMPIRE FROZEN TURKEYS</td>
<td>7 LAYER CAKE</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.99 lb</td>
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**IN OUR BAKERY DEPT.**

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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**IN OUR MEAT DEPT.**

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<tr>
<td>7 LAYER CAKE</td>
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**IN OUR FLORAL DEPT.**

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>ACME NOVA SALMON</td>
<td>12.99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Visit bigy.com for more Big Y for more Passover Savings!</td>
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**IN OUR MEAT DEPT.**

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 LAYER CAKE</td>
<td>8.99</td>
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Visit our Floral Dept. for more bouquets & arrangements