Middle East Update 2021
“Threats and Opportunities” – with Dennis Ross and David Makovsky

On Sunday, October 31 at 7:30 p.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires welcomes two distinguished guests to our Middle East Update 2021, Dennis Ross and David Makovsky, both fellows at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Much occurred in 2021 to overshadow the historic Abraham Accords brokered by the Trump administration – missile attacks on Israel from Hamas-controlled Gaza; a further destabilization of Hezbollah-controlled Lebanon; a recommitment to the Obama-era nuclear deal with Iran by the Biden administration; the United States’ return to reliance on Middle East oil sources and OPEC; and the catastrophically mismanaged fall of Afghanistan.

Experts Ross and Makovsky will endeavor to identify the causes of what transpired and present a possible path forward in a program called: “Threats and Opportunities.”

This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will be presented via Zoom – please check your emails from Federation to find the necessary links, or visit our calendar of events online at www.jewishberkshires.org.

About Our Speakers

David Makovsky is the Ziegler Distinguished Fellow and Director of the Project on the Middle East Peace Process at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy. He is also an adjunct professor in Middle East studies at Johns Hopkins University’s Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies.

Author of numerous Washington Institute publications on issues related to the Middle East peace process and the Arab-Israeli conflict, he also co-authored the 2009 Washington Post bestseller Myths, Illusions, and Peace: Finding a New Direction for America in the Middle East with Ambassador Dennis Ross. His 2011 maps on alternative territorial solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict were reprinted by The New York Times in the Fall of 2013.

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“White Supremacy in 2021: Putting Violent Extremists on Trial”

On Thursday, October 21 at 7:30 p.m., join the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires for “White Supremacy in 2021: Putting Violent Extremists on Trial.”

This online program, presented via Zoom, will be a critical conversation among three presenters:

Amy Spitalnick, executive director of Integrity First for America, who will describe the group’s groundbreaking suit against the neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and hate groups who organized the attack on Charlottesville, NC in 2017 – the case goes to trial this fall.

Through the Hat

The “Kosher cartoon folk world” of artist Steve Marcus, now on view at the Yiddish Book Center

The edicts of our sages, the world of our fathers, and the iconography of underground art meld in the images, sculpture, and Judaica of Steve Marcus. Inspired by Norman Mailer’s commentary on Martin Buber’s Tales of the Hasidim, Marcus created a series of drawings in which the Jews of his imagination frenetically live their best lives against the idealized cityscape of a bygone Lower East Side of Manhattan. For more on his career and the work now on view through the autumn at the Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, please see page 24.
Thank You, Voluntary Subscribers!

Plus a shoutout to all who volunteer their time and talents for the BJV

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor

I hope all our readers had an enjoyable and meaningful High Holy Day season.

For the second year in a row, voluntary subscribers are coming through for the Berkshire Jewish Voice in a large way, since July directing more than $16,000 to help fund the publication of this newspaper. That amount is already above last year’s 12 month total.

All of us here at Federation thank you for your generosity, which allows us to defray the cost of publishing the BJV. If you haven’t yet sent in a donation and would like to, please see page 7 for the BJV house ad that has information on how to do so.

I would also like to thank all the writers and artists who have contributed work over the past year. Much thanks to our rabbis, who, year in and year out, contribute meaningful commentary from different points of view, showcasing the depth and diversity of Jewish thought and leadership within our small community. These contributions allow us to use fewer wire stories while offering a paper that reflects the spirit of the Berkshires and the character of our Jewish community. We are always looking for new contributors – please get in touch with me at astern@jewishberkshires.org to set up a time to talk about your interests.

Much thanks, as well, to members of our delivery team, who distribute the paper to sites across Berkshire County. Thanks, too, for the shops and businesses that carry the BJV – reports are that this year, the paper has been more popular than ever with visitors from out of town looking for Jewish engagement.

Ellen Rosenblatt – thanks for being my last reviewer before we put the paper to bed. I promise I won’t drive to your house again if it’s snowing.

And thank you, too, to all you kibbitzers who share advice and ideas. You inspire me more than you can imagine. The fun of this job is the opportunity to engage with so many of you.

Here’s to a good year.

TZEDAKAH SUNDAY

Thank you to the hundreds of community members who answered the call and made a gift during our Tzedakah Sunday outreach. Together we raised over $78,000 towards our 2021 campaign and we secured an extra $10,000 challenge grant!

Thank You to These Superhero Volunteers Who Helped Us Make the Calls!


Hunkering Down With PJ Library While Hurricane Henri Howled

Hurricane outside? Not a problem for our PJ Library families! On August 22, while the remnants of Hurricane Henri gave the Berkshires a sound soaking, Roy and Leslie Kozupsky broke out the Jewish-themed books, hunkered down with grandsons Jacob (6 months) and Ari (2 years), and devoutly hoped their power would not go out. Roy and Leslie, Federation’s former development officer, live in Lenox – the boys’ parents are Jordana Kozupsky and Greg Bel.

Currently, 147 children in the Berkshires, ages 6 months to 8 years old, receive PJ Library books and music infused with Jewish content mailed to their homes at no cost. In addition to the books, Federation offers programming for families to build community and put their Jewish values into action – see page 14 for more. Over 482 children have participated since the program launched. A community partnership with the Harold Grinspoon Foundation, PJ Library is funded and administered locally by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires with additional support from the Spitz Tuchman Family Fund, and the Jewish Women’s Foundation of the Berkshires.

The BERKSHIRES FARM TABLE COOKBOOK

125 Home-Grown Recipes from the New England Hills

ELISA SPUNGEN BILDNER & ROBERT BILDNER

with CHEF BRIAN ALBERG

www.berkshiresandbeyond.com
Recommending to Our Values and Our Traditions to Achieve Goals Above and Beyond the Past Year

Welcome to the new year of 5782! We are certain that we all were inscribed for a shana tovah, a good, sweet new year, just as we wished each other.

A look at the Hebrew word “shana” (year) tells us that it shares the same three-letter root as the Hebrew word for “repetition.” And if the yearly cycle is repetitious, what makes it a new year? The answer is that the word shana, with one different vowel, also spells the word for “change.” The personal and positive change that we make in our lives starts us off on a truly new year. It means going a step beyond our comfort zone; breaking an old habit; taking on a new mitzvah; sharing an act of kindness; and recommitment to our values and our traditions to achieve goals above and beyond the past year.

The past month with its High Holidays brought with it a wide range of emotions, carefully packaged in 30 glorious days. Like a ride on the roller coaster, we soared upward and around, reaching greater heights as we went from soul-searching introspection to resolve, from the solemnity and awe-inspiring days of Rosh Hashana to the joyous days of Yom Kippur and the ecstatic dancing of Simchat Torah. We experienced the gamut of expression of body and soul through our prayers, through hearing the stirring sounds of the shofar, and through the joy in fulfilling the mitzvot of Sukkah, etrog, and hadlul, and showing our love for the Torah.

The month of Tishrei is the catalyst for starting with reinforced strength and determination and the change it takes to make the year ahead what it should be: better, brighter, and fresher in every area of our lives. And as we leave the month of Tishrei and enter the new month of Mar-Cheshvan, which has no holidays of its own, we are off on the start of a new and fulfilling year.

Now is the time to “unpack” our bag of inspiration, which includes last month’s feeling of oneness with G-d, of unity with others, and the joy that we garnered during the entire month to infuse any and all spiritual lethargy with renewed energy and positivity.

Reading the recent Torah portions of the week, we were further inspired by our ancestor Abraham, particularly in the portion of “Lech L’cha.” And always, guided by our past, we find our road map for the future. Abraham was faced with one of his many tests, leaving the land and the home he was accustomed to for 75 years of his life and going to the place that G-d would show him. An unknown destination, yet Abraham was quick to respond to G-d’s command. Abraham shared eloquent testimony to the existence of a Creator with all those he encountered, and he was dedicated to his mission of elevating humanity and bringing honor and glory to G-d’s name. Despite the difficulties, Abraham compiled with every request, and he passed every test with flying colors.

Abraham’s directive “to go” continues through us. We are inspired by his faith and motivated by his alacrity in fulfilling the wishes of the One Above. Continuing his mission to uplift the world through loving-kindness, we, too, forge ahead toward a brighter and better world. As we resume daily life that sometimes floods us with problems and challenges, Abraham’s outlook empowers us to not simply swim with the tide. We can lift our eyes to see the ray of hope in every situation and to know that every difficulty leads to a more purposeful, productive, and meaningful life.

The Midrash relates a Rabbinc narrative of when Abraham set out to fulfill the most difficult of his trials, taking his beloved son, Isaac, to the altar. As he approached his destination from afar, accompanied by Isaac and his servants, he turned to his beloved Isaac and said, “My son, what do you see ahead? Do you see what I see?” And Isaac responded, “I see a magnificent, blossoming mountain, reaching the heights in its full glory and majesty.” And then Abraham turned to his servants and asked the same question: “We see nothing ahead.” They answered, “only wasteland, desert, and desolation.” Abraham then proudly walked to his servants and asked the same question. “We see nothing ahead,” they answered. “only wasteland, desert, and desolation.” Abraham then proudly walked ahead with Isaac, who shared his vision of a promising future, leaving his pesshenistic servants behind.

Here at Chabad of the Berkshires, we share Abraham’s mission and his vision, knowing that Torah is eternal, and our existence as a people is eternal – Am Yisrael Chai! We are thankful to our Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, for giving us the opportunity to share our mission with our children and for our children through our commitment to Torah learning and Jewish education.

We see ourselves unified as one people, no matter what our background and affiliation, working together toward higher ideals and goals in life. With change in the right direction on the part of every one of us – and, indeed, everyone has room for improvement – there is no limit to what we can accomplish for our families, our people, our community, and our society at large.

Abraham’s directive “to go” continues through us. We are inspired by his faith and motivated by his alacrity in fulfilling the wishes of the One Above.

In our optimistic vision for the coming year, Chabad of the Berkshires is planning to offer creative events throughout the year that harnesses the incredible potential toward meaningful goals.

At Chabad, membership is not required to take advantage of all our programs. Just give your heart, your mind, and a little of your time, and you will surely find something that you can enjoy. Together, let’s breathe new life into this wonderful year and continue to march forward to our ultimate redemption!

Rabbi Levi Volovik is co-director of Chabad of the Berkshires in Pittsfield.
Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires,

The Afula Branch of Haifa Rape Crisis Center has been supported by Partnership2Gether’s Southern New England Coalition (SNEC) communities, allowing it to exist. Having the center located in Afula made it accessible to hundreds of people in Afula-Gilboa who wouldn’t be able to get help otherwise. The Afula branch works 24/7, raising awareness to the subject of sexual violence and its prevention, and encouraging sexual abuse survivors to contact the center for support and consultation.

In addition, the center facilitates an outreach training program within the region’s educational, health, social services, and criminal justice systems in both Arab and Jewish communities. Unfortunately, the year 2020 was a year of crisis. 6,400 calls reached the center’s hotline, and at least 2,000 of them came from residents of Afula and the region, pointing to a significant increase in applications from teenagers and professionals. At the same time, the Afula branch continued its activity using Zoom and in-person encounters, when possible. A women’s support group for sexual violence victims has been created, new volunteers from the region have been recruited to provide assistance, and meetings with about 2,000 young people in various educational frameworks and presentations were conducted by the center.

The Afula branch also continued, as much as possible, to provide training to professionals from the field. Lately, following the COVID crisis and the increase of need from the field, the center has created a new lecture discussing “10 practical ways to prevent the next abuse,” emphasizing the importance of information related to sexual violence. The lecture, enabling an open intergenerational conversation, aims to strengthen the local community and provide tools for dealing with emergencies and crises of sexual assault, focusing on prevention. By now, this lecture was given to teenagers, parents, and professionals in several settlements and kibbutzim in the Afula-Gilboa region, and received positive feedback. A teenager from one of the kibbutzim says – “We are finally talking about the right things.”

Thank you for the support that enables the center to deliver these important services to the Afula-Gilboa region.

Achiya Ben Ari Buganim
Living Bridge Coordinator
Partnership2Gether
Afula-Gilboa/Southern New England

Dear Jewish Federation of the Berkshires,

Thank you for the support that enables the center to deliver these important services to the Afula-Gilboa region.

Achiya Ben Ari Buganim
Living Bridge Coordinator
Partnership2Gether
Afula-Gilboa/Southern New England

The Sweetest and Most Elegant of Arrangements

Dear BJV Editor:

Having served as editor of the Berkshire Jewish Voice for over a decade, it is with the greatest of sadness, and yet with thoughts of deepest appreciation, that I reflect on the passing of Rose Tannenbaum, the paper’s long-time graphic designer with whom I had the privilege of working hand in glove.

The composing of each issue of the BJV was a great joy and, also, a great deal of painstaking work. If it was up to me and others to find the right words, Rose, unflappable and with professional flair, always supplied the sweetest and most elegant of arrangements.

Of blessed memory indeed.

Sincerely,

David Verzi
Stephentown, NY

Mazel Tov!

Mike Duffy on being chosen as member of the year at Temple Anshe Amunim.

Joan and Paul Gluck on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Federation board member Michael Wasserman on the birth of his third grandchild, Benjamin Simon Erdheim.

Sarah Aroeste, whose album Monostru (see page 21) was named Best Jewish Album by the Jewish culture website Alma, which hailed the record as “so good it’s sacred – literally. Through the music, the Sephardic community of Monastir, decimated by the Holocaust, springs back to life.”

Kudos to the nice writeup by Tablet Magazine.

Ari Weiner on his November 6 bar mitzvah at Kneset Israel. Proud parents are Judith and Rabbi David Weiner.

Stuart and Ellen Masters on their 50th wedding anniversary.

Benjamin (Benji) Dahari on his October 9 bar mitzvah at Knesset Israel. Proud parents are Brandi and David Dahari, and grandparents are Ellen and Tobi Lanciano and Emmanuel Dahari.

Cindy and Ed Heilizar on the marriage of daughter Lindsay to Zak Standel, and the birth of their grandson, Hudson Brady Standel.

Jacob Klein on launching his weather blog, berkshireweather.com

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 Gavin Slaughter

Our little ones deserve their own bedrooms and now they can have them.

$2,500 Bonus*

First-time homebuyers enjoy your first 2 mortgage payments on us.

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*Subject to credit approval. Valid for 2 monthly payments of up to $1,250 each, or a maximum of $2,500. Only valid for First-Time Homebuyers toward adjustable rate mortgages. Offer expires 12/31/21. Insured by NCUA.
Your Federation Presents

Author Talk: Bound by Creativity, with Hannah Wohl

On Wednesday, November 3 at 7:30 p.m., join sociologist and Berkshires native Hannah Wohl for a talk about her recent book, Bound by Creativity. The BJV featured an interview with Professor Wohl in our last issue – here’s your chance to learn more about the contemporary art world and to ask questions of your own.

This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will be presented via Zoom. Please visit our calendar of events at jewishberkshires.org for a link to this program.

About Bound by Creativity:

What is creativity? While our traditional view of creative work might lead us to think of artists as solitary visionaries, the creative process is profoundly influenced by social interactions even when artists work alone. Sociologist Hannah Wohl draws on more than one hundred interviews and two years of ethnographic research in the New York contemporary art market to develop a rich sociological perspective of creativity.

From inside the studio, we see how artists experiment with new ideas and decide which works to abandon, destroy, put into storage, or exhibit. Wohl then transports readers into the art world, where we discover how artists’ understandings of their work are shaped through interactions in studio visits, galleries, international art fairs, and collectors’ homes.

Bound by Creativity reveals how artists develop conceptions of their distinctive creative visions through experimentation and social interactions. Ultimately, we come to appreciate how judgment is integral to the creative process, both resulting in the creation of original works while also limiting an artist’s ability to break new ground. Exploring creativity through the lens of judgment sheds new light on the production of cultural objects, markets, and prestige.

Hannah Wohl is assistant professor of sociology at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She received her Ph.D. in sociology at Northwestern University and was a postdoctoral fellow at Columbia University. Her research examines judgment and decision-making in creative industries, such as art, literature, technology, and academia. Her work has been published in leading sociology journals and has won prizes from the American Sociological Association. Hannah grew up in Lenox and at Temple Anshe Amunim.

Funky Chanukah Mosaic Workshop

On Thursday, November 11 at 6:45 p.m., join mosaic muralist Mia Schon for an online paper mosaic workshop, creatively repurposing magazines to design your beautiful mosaic menorah. Explore this creative technique, Flame by Flame, as we prepare to celebrate the Festival of Lights. So, grab a glue stick, scissors, magazine pages, or another pattern you have chosen to work with, and you will be ready to go! All levels are welcome.

This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will be presented via Zoom. Please visit our calendar of events at jewishtiberkshires.org for a link to this program.

Mia Schon is a mosaic muralist and instructor who works in Boston and Tel Aviv. With a strong affinity for public art, Mia has made it her mission to spread large colorful mosaics throughout Israel while incorporating social, political, and cultural themes into her work. She recently received a Transformative Public Art grant from the City of Boston to respond to COVID-19 and encourage public connectedness piece by piece.

“Space Race: Nazi Scientists, the Cold War, and Cutting Corners”

On Monday, November 15 at 6:45 p.m., join radio journalist and author Evan Weiner for the fascinating (and often troubling) story of the roots of the US space program. This Jewish Federation of the Berkshires program will be presented via Zoom. Please visit our calendar of events at jewishtiberkshires.org for a link to this program.

Evan Weiner is a radio journalist, newspaper columnist, and author who has written and reported extensively about the impact of sports on decision-makers and policy. He was a columnist with the New York Sun and a daily commentator for Westwood One Radio. He has also appeared on numerous television and radio and has been featured on MSNBC, CNS, and ABCNewsNow. He has written extensively for The Daily Beast about the politics of the sports and entertainment business and has a daily video podcast called “The Politics of Sports Business.” He is the author of 11 books, including I Am Not Paul Bunyan and Other Tall Tales (2018) and The Politics of Sports Business (2019).

Tools to Combat Anti-Semitism – A Free 3-Part Webinar

Join the ADL, the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, and community partners from across New England on Thursdays, October 14, 21, and 28 for an informative and action-oriented webinar series dedicated to learning tools to combat anti-Semitism. Each webinar in this series will be 30-minutes long. Participants will learn 5 different tools to combat anti-Semitism in each. Registration is required. This series is free.

Webinar #1: “Holding Elected Officials Accountable: 5 Things You Can Do When Elected Officials Cross the Line” – Thursday, October 14, from noon to 12:30 p.m.

Webinar #2: “Understanding Antisemitism, Anti-Zionism, Anti-Israel: Debunking 5 Examples” – Thursday, October 21, from noon to 12:30 p.m.

Webinar #3: “Interrupting Antisemitism and Hate: 5 Strategies to Implement for Everyday Conversations” – Thursday, October 28 from noon to 12:30 p.m.

Register at: support.adl.org/event/the-good-fight/c157839

Seeking Part-time PJ Library and Volunteers Coordinator

(20 hours/week, flexible days)

The PJ Library and Volunteers Coordinator is responsible for the administration of PJ Library subscriptions and supporting engagement activities for families with young children, as well as the recruitment and coordination of volunteer support for Federation programs and activities. This position reports to the Director of Community Engagement and Programming.

PJ Library supports young families in their Jewish journey by sending free Jewish-content books/music on a monthly basis to children age 6 months to 8 years. In addition, PJ Library of the Berkshires offers opportunities for families to put their Jewish values into action through family-friendly programming to enhance their connections to one another and the broader community.

Duties include:

• Managing PJ Library subscriptions and quarterly reporting.
• Planning and implementation of 6-8 PJ Library programs annually.
• Seeking opportunities and collaborations to engage new and existing families.
• Utilizing social media and e-communications for marketing and engagement.
• Recruiting and overseeing volunteers for existing Federation programs, community outreach, and mitzvah drives.

Applicant should be a creative and organized team player with 2-3 years’ experience in event planning and/or working with children and families. Must have thorough command of social media, email software, and Microsoft Office suite. Includes some evening/weekend attendance at programs, meetings, and events. Hourly pay commensurate with experience. Generous paid holiday and sick time package.

APPLICATION: Submit cover letter and resume to Dara Kaufman at dkaufman@jewishberkshires.org.
Federations Responding to Natural Disasters in Haiti and the US Gulf Coast

ADL and Hillel International Join Forces

NEW YORK – Hillel International, the largest Jewish student organization in the world, and ADL (Anti-Defamation League), a leading anti-hate organization fighting anti-Semitism and all forms of hate, have joined forces to work collaboratively on several initiatives starting in the new academic year. They will proactively address the disturbing rise in anti-Semitic activity on campus through new educational programs and assessments of the climate on campus for Jewish students.

The initiative will harness ADL’s deep expertise in tracking and responding to anti-Semitic incidents and Hillel’s vast network of professionals and programs on campus, reaching more than 400,000 Jewish students in North America and hundreds of thousands of Jewish students overseas. Working together, ADL and Hillel will grow their education and engagement of the full campus community – including students, faculty, university staff, and administrators – with quality curricula, programming, and research. They will collaborate in responding to anti-Semitic incidents when they occur.

“Jewish college students are increasingly subjected to anti-Semitism today, both on campus and on social media, and are urgently seeking support and tools to effectively respond,” said Adam Lehman, president and CEO of Hillel International. “Bringing together ADL’s expertise and Hillel’s deep relationships both on campus and on social media, and are urgently seeking support and tools to effectively respond,” said Adam Lehman, president and CEO of Hillel International. “Bringing together ADL’s expertise and Hillel’s deep relationships on campus through education and engagement can empower Jewish students to speak out against hate and educate the broader campus community to ensure anti-Semitism is not tolerated at colleges and universities.”

Earthquake in Haiti

We are heart-broken by the news of Haiti’s devastating earthquake, which has killed hundreds of people and destroyed thousands of homes. Jewish Federations are collectively supporting relief efforts through the Joint Distribution Committee, which is providing critically-needed medical supplies to local hospitals treating the wounded.

Through our partnership with JDC, Federations provide a Jewish response to international humanitarian emergencies wherever they happen.

Last year alone, Federations provided over $40 million to the JDC that, in addition to other global needs, helped buttress its 11-year efforts in Haiti and allowed it to swing into action immediately when disaster struck again.

You can donate directly to the efforts here jdc.org/HaitiEarthquake2021.

Hurricane Ida Response

Hurricane Ida has torn through much of the Gulf Coast, leaving survivors devastated by its damage. Roofs have blown off buildings, homes and businesses are severely flooded, while power lines are down and phone service and electricity are out for hundreds of thousands of residents. As a collective, Federations are there, delivering emergency relief support to all those who have suffered most from the damage.

You can donate directly to the efforts at jfeds.org/hurricaneida.

Experience luxurious Senior Living with a full continuum of care!

Don’t struggle with aging at home and the isolation and challenges it can bring. Life at The Lodge means less stress on you and your family and more chances to live life with renewed energy and purpose!

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Learn about the benefits of Assisted Living vs. Home Care at www.geercare.org/Luxurious-senior-living or call Deb at 860.824.2625 to schedule your in-person or virtual tour.
MIDDLE EAST UPDATE 2021, continued from page 1

MIDDLE EAST UPDATE 2021, continued from page 1

Ambassador Dennis Ross is a lifetime member of the Council on Foreign Relations and the…

Ambassador Ross has published extensively on the …

The Jerusalem Post

The former Soviet Union, the unification of Germany and its integration into…

Berkshire Jewish Voice extends a very special “thank you” for the generosity extended by those who have sent in their contributions for voluntary subscriptions to the paper.

 Accord, facilitated the 1994 Israel-Jordan peace treaty, and intensively worked to bring Israel and Syria together.

A scholar and diplomat with more than two decades of experience in Soviet and Middle East policy, Ambassador Ross worked closely with Secretaries of State James Baker, Warren Christopher, and Madeleine Albright. Prior to his service as special Middle East coordinator under President Clinton, Ambassador Ross served as director of the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff in the first Bush administration. In that capacity, he played a prominent role in U.S. policy toward the former Soviet Union, the unification of Germany and its integration into NATO, arms control negotiations, and the 1991 Gulf War coalition.

During the Reagan administration, he served as director of Near East and South Asian affairs on the National Security Council staff and deputy director of the Pentagon’s Office of Net Assessment. Ambassador Ross was awarded the…

Before joining The Washington Institute, Makovsky was an award-winning journalist. He also was Executive Editor of The Jerusalem Post, Diplomatic Correspondent for Haaretz, and Contributing Editor and special Jerusalem correspondent to U.S. News and World Report. He received the National Press Club’s 1994 Edwin M. Hood Award for Diplomatic Correspondence for a cover story on PLO finances that he co-wrote.

In its twelfth year, JWF, under the auspices of the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, has granted more than $840,000 to community non-profits. Grants to a broad sector of community organizations are made possible through the generosity of contributors and membership fees of more than 150 women. A large committee of JWF members vets the proposals to ensure that the grants are focused on compelling unmet community needs.

JWF is committed to the Jewish mandate of tikun olam, helping repair the world and making it a better place. JWF carries out its mission by providing funding, volunteers, mentoring and support services to local agencies.

For information about applying for a grant for the 2022/23 grant cycle, please check the JWF website: jewishberkshires.org/jewish-womens-foundation. The next Request for Proposal will be posted May 1, 2022.
About Integrity First for America’s Lawsuit

The group describes its mission and legal action as follows:

Integrity First for America’s Charlottesville case is the only legal effort to take on the broad leadership of the white supremacist movement. At a moment when the crisis of violent extremism is clear, IFAs case provides a tangible way to take action — already having a major financial, legal, and operational impact even before trial, with the potential to bankrupt the leaders and hate groups at the center of this movement and provide a model for accountability.

Taking on violent extremists is all the more critical as we see them spread terror, disinformation, and violence.

IFAs lawsuit will go to trial in October 2021 in federal court in Charlottesville. It alleges a racist, violent conspiracy under the Ku Klux Klan Act of 1871 – detailing how the violence was planned in advance via online chats, down to talk of hitting protesters with cars. The plaintiffs are Charlottesville community members who were injured; the defendants are two dozen neo-Nazis, white supremacists, and hate groups responsible for planning and orchestrating the violence.

IfAs plaintiffs are represented by some of the country’s top litigators, who are donating their time, led by Roberta Kaplan and Karen Dunn.

In many ways, Charlottesville previewed the subsequent cycle of extremist violence in terms of tools, tactics, and key players. The Pittsburgh shooter communicated on Gab with the Charlottesville leaders before killing 11 at Tree of Life. The Christchurch (New Zealand) shooter donated to and was inspired by IFAs Charlottesville defendants. One of the chief cheerleaders of the Capitol attack is a neo-Nazi defendant in IFAs suit for his role in Charlottesville.

By taking on these individuals and groups — and bankrupting and dismantling them through large civil judgments — this case will have a significant impact on this violent movement and provide a model for accountability and justice. It will establish a clear legal precedent that exposes — and holds accountable — this movement for the anti-Semitic, racist, and other bigoted violence it promotes and organizes; create a deterrent for other extremists; and send a clear message that violent hate has no place here.

We’re already seeing the case’s impacts firsthand, even before we go to trial. White nationalist leader Richard Spencer told the court that IFAs case has been “financially crippling.” Other white nationalist and neo-Nazi leaders have faced major financial and legal consequences, including tens of thousands of dollars in sanctions and even jail time. IFAs plaintiffs also recently secured evidentiary sanctions against three defendants, which will have an enormous impact at trial.
Knesset Israel’s Susan Staskin to be Honored by Berkshire Interfaith Organizing

Susan Staskin dedicated her professional life to helping others. She is a board member of Knesset Israel and has been a member of the special committee that adapted synagogue life to the restrictions caused by the pandemic. Berkshire Interfaith Organizing is a grassroots, member-led organization that confronts issues of racial, immigrant, and transportation justice in Berkshire County through community organizing. Since its founding in 2015, BIO has trained leaders from 18 member congregations and individuals throughout the county in community organizing. Its MICAH Award is designed to recognize a selected individual from each member organization who reflects the values expressed by the prophet Micah: “He has told you, O man, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk modestly with your God.” –Micah, 6:8

The award ceremony will take place at The Stationery Factory, 63 Flansburg Avenue in Dalton. Tickets are $40 and include light fare. Details about time and ticketing were not available at press time. Contact office@knessetisrael.org for more information.

The Federation joins the community in wishing Susan a hearty mazel tov on this award.

Shari Shabbat
Sharet Shabbat, the congregation’s monthly musical Friday night service, takes place on October 22, at 5:30 p.m. There may be a delicious kosher community Shabbat dinner following that service. If so, please RSVP (820/adult, free for children) by Monday, October 18 to knessetisrael.org. Dinner is funded, in part, by a Harold Grinspoon Foundation Rekindle Shabbat grant.

Knesset Israel Services in October and November

Knesset Israel continues to welcome participation in its regularly-scheduled services and special events. Services take place every week in the congregation’s sanctuary on Friday evening at 5:45 p.m., Saturday morning at 9:30 a.m., and Sunday morning at 8:45 a.m. Provisions, updated frequently, are made for health and safety; current information is always available through the synagogue office. All sanctuary services are also available on livestream, knessetisrael.org/livestream.

Weekday davening takes place on Zoom on Tuesday and Thursday evening. Kaddish is recited. The link is available from the Knesset Israel office, (413) 445-4872, or at knessetisrael.org/calendar.

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BIO Removes the Hammerlings

Elie and Myrna Hammerling, z’t

Also at this ceremony, BIO will commemorate the contributions of Elie and Myrna Hammerling, both of blessed memory. Writes Rabbi David Weiner: “From the time Knesset Israel helped found BIO, Myrna served as our representative on the executive council that guides the organization. She helped shape BIO’s agenda and serve as a liaison between BIO and Knesset Israel. When I hosted an event or meeting, she would help with logistics like setup and catering. As BIO’s secretary, a position on its board, she also took minutes and managed communication.”
Autumn Programs at Congregation Ahavath Sholom

GREAT BARRINGTON – Congregation Ahavath Sholom is pleased to announce that Shabbat services, plus programming, will continue. Some of the events will take place via Zoom and others may be in person at the synagogue or another location.

Please check the CAS website, ahavathsholom.com, for updated information.

On Sunday, October 17 at 10 a.m., join Rabbi Barbara Cohen for a study session – location and subject to be announced.

On Wednesdays at 10 a.m., it’s “Rabbi Barbara’s Coffee Hour” – join the CAS community online for stimulating discussion. Check the calendar to join.

Family Fun at CBI

NORTH ADAMS – This autumn, Congregation Beth Israel invites families with children ages 2-12 in the northern Berkshire Jewish community and beyond to join free family education programs!

Each program is designed to interest children of varying ages (as well as their parents), provide enjoyable educational experiences tied to Jewish holidays and values, and provide experiences that center families around Jewish culture, cooking, and traditions. Programs are experiential, appealing to many senses, and engage children as full participants.

Coming up are:

“Get Ready for Fall: Tend Our Garden and Our Earth” – Sunday, October 17 at 1 p.m. Join CBI for a hands-on afternoon of learning about the wonders of nature! Families will be able to help take care of the garden and take in the beauty of autumn in the Berkshires.

“PJ Family Havdalah” – Saturday, November 13 at 4 p.m. Come for PJ story-time and stay for snacks and a havdalah service.

Funding to help make these programs free to all families has been provided by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

Congregation Beth Israel is at 59 Lois Street in North Adams. Please contact the congregation for details and COVID-19 protocols. Email chnadam@gmail.com or call (413) 663-5830.

Autumn at Temple Anshe Amunim

PITTSFIELD – Temple Anshe Amunim invites the community to participate in its services and programs

Shabbat Services and Torah Study

TAA will hold in-person Shabbat services on Friday nights at 5:30 p.m. There will also be Torah study on Saturday mornings at 9:30 a.m. If you are interested in joining virtually, please reach out to the Temple office.

Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Memorial Foundation Lecture

Please join TAA for the 54th Annual Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Memorial Foundation Lecture, which will be held on Sunday, October 17 at 7:30 p.m. as a hybrid lecture, both in person at the synagogue and virtually.

The speaker will be Dr. Nicholas Christakis, director of the Human Nature Lab at Yale University and co-director of the Yale Institute for Network Science. The lecture, organized by the Temple Anshe Amunim Hilda Vallin Feigenbaum Memorial Lecture Committee, is free and open to the public.

A limited number of guests will join the lecture in person while it will be available to all virtually. Pre-registration will be required. Registration and sign on details are available at ansheamunim.org.

Tempel Anshe Amunim is at 26 Broad Street in Pittsfield.

LOCAL NEWS

Berkshire Hills Hadassah to Honor Its “Pandemic Mitzvah Menschen”

Berkshire Hills Hadassah’s Donor Zoom Event will be held on Tuesday, November 9 at 7 p.m., and will recognize and thank the 2021 Pandemic Mitzvah Menschess.

Honorees are:

Cindy Bell-Deane
Nancy Cook Dubin
Regina Pink
Marcie Greenfield Simons
Mark Lefenfeld
Ellen Marcus

Funding to help make these programs free to all families has been provided by the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

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Your Federation Presents

A Much-Needed Breath of Fresh Air

*With Federation-led tours of two Berkshire landmarks, we got ourselves back to the garden(s)*

By Susan Frisch Lehrer / Coordinator of Volunteers and PJ Library

Community members joined the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires on two outings this summer – to Chesterwood Museum and the Berkshire Botanical Garden, both in Stockbridge. Susan Frisch Lehrer, former longtime staff member at Chesterwood, led a “behind the scenes” tour of the property, to the delight of all. Everyone enjoyed learning and exploring the beauty, art, and history of both treasured Berkshire sites.

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Volunteers are Vital!

A huge thanks to volunteers who baked, decorated, packed, and delivered this holiday season!

Our community sends a huge thank you to all the volunteers for our very successful Rosh Hashanah gift bag program—or, as we fondly refer to it, Joe’s Project (in memory of the late Joe Madison, who began this program with a few of his hiking buddies many years ago). Some 250 bags were delivered to seniors at home, in facilities, and in our local hospitals. We had over 100 volunteers working on the program, including campers from Crane Lake Camp and Eisner Camp who decorated the bags, plus bakers, name collectors, packers, and delivery folks. Yasher koach—Thank you to all! You helped us start 5782 on a high note!

B’shalom,

Susan Frisch Lehrer, Coordinator of Volunteers

Your Federation Presents

PJ Shabbatot Under the Big Top

Family-friendly events brought kids, parents, and grandparents together for fun throughout the summertime

By Susan Frisch Lehrer / Coordinator of Volunteers and PJ Library

Federation PJ Library families and friends welcomed Shabbat with music, dancing, stories, crafts, yoga, Shabbat blessings, and more over five Fridays during July and August at Hevreh of Southern Berkshire in Great Barrington and Knesset Israel in Pittsfield. Families enjoyed being together outside and had so much fun with Janet Lee, Felicia Sloin, and Shira Rodriguez.
the sun. And in Jewish law, we’re not allowed to create two-dimension- al drawings of the sun, the moon, or the celestial bodies and things of this nature. So that’s a good example of a drawing that’s following the rules. The sculptures – none of them are full figures. None of them really have arms or legs – they’re busts, which we’re not allowed to create – but we’re not allowed to create a full figure. “Why do I do all this? Not only for my own beliefs, but to be inclusive. So if someone’s very religious, let’s say like the Satmars who came [to a show in Florida]. And they said, ‘Who is this artist guy?’ How does he know this?” They could tell right away that the artist that made this art knows these rules. At the same time, if someone isn’t religious and doesn’t know any of this stuff, and they’re Jewish, they look at it and go, ‘Wow, that’s really cool. ‘That brought up these amazing feelings of the Lower East Side of my Jewish upbringing.’ And they feel a connection to it just at a cultural level or at some tribal level. “One of the things that I think is a big issue in the schism among the Jewish people – religious versus secular. It’s like that in Israel: it’s like that here. The thing is that through the artwork, by making it accessible to everybody, I’m pulling people, the Jewish people, a little closer together. “Now, the fact is, if you’re not Jewish at all, you could still look at it and go, ‘Wow, this is cool art’ and that it represents Jewish people and Jewish culture. And in this modern world of cancel culture and all this type of cultural appropriation, the Jewish people need a little bit of a better PR program and a better ambassador. Ambassadors to the world, and for people to look and say, ‘Wow, that’s cool Jewish art.’ And to me, that’s also an important thing – to create artwork that’s accessible to people that aren’t Jewish either, that they enjoy it. So in a way, I’m trying to do it, find that sweet spot that touches everybody.”

The art of Steve Marcus will be on view at the Yiddish Book Center through the fall – visit yiddishbook-center.org for more information. The Yiddish Book Center is located on the campus of Hampshire College in Amherst, MA.

For more on Steve Marcus, visit his website at smarcus.com.
OBITUARIES

Monroe "Moe" B. England, Jr., 90, business leader, philanthropist, dedicated to community

LENOX - Monroe "Moe" B. England, Jr., 90, died Tuesday morning August 3 at his home in Pittsfield. Son of Monroe L. and Gladys (Morris) England, Moe was a graduate of Stockbridge High School and later earned his Bachelor's degree from Columbia University, where he was a member of Delta Upsilon. Mr. England was a US Marine Corps Corporal in the Korean War. His family founded England Brothers Department Store in 1857. After his time in the service and during the Vietnam War, Moe inherited a co-owner-operator stake in Kelly-Dietrich, a Pittsfield beer, wine, and spirit distributor, and then, with his wife Elise V. England, he started the eastern branch of the craft beer business.

An all-sport athlete who never met a person or party that he didn't like, Moe was widely known for his work ethic and personal style. He loved people and could listen for hours to their stories. A true entrepreneur and philanthropist, Moe loved to connect people and help them, and his children remembered how, for the first ten years, he was a board member and/or supporter-member of many iconic Berkshires foundations and organizations including Berkshire Bank, Berkshire Music School, Barrington Stage, Temple Anshe Anshu, Temple Israel, Temple Beth Israel, Stockbridge Country Club, Berkshire Theatre Group, and Tanglewood, among others.

He was also a co-owner of the storied Music Inn.

With his daughter, Moe provided annual gifts to the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, supported scholarships to Berkshire Music School, and established a fund for religious education at the Berkshires, supported scholarships at Temple Rodef Shalom, and a fund for religious education at Temple Beth Israel.

His son, Daniel Levitt, remembers his father as a generous human being who never stopped learning, whether playing the piano, and learning about people's lives.

He took great pleasure in his long-time relationships with his Pi Lambda Phi fraternity brothers at the University of Florida.

Moe was an avid golfer and card player. He scheduled the time and place, and arranged the food, to his roots. Throughout the years, these friends shared many laughs, both in Florida and in the Berkshires.

Moe was dearly loved by his wife, Rhoda; children, Michele Tuvel (Barry); Allen Levitt (Bina); and Robert Levitt (Elin); grandchildren, Andrea Lieberman (Jeff, Bridget (Benjamin Thalheimer)), Abigail Tuvel, Eli Levitt, Alexandra Levitt, Danielle Levitt, Emily Melamud, Melissa Donohue (Brett), Brian Melamud, great-granddaughter, Blake Lieberman; nieces and nephews, Steven Francus, Stanley (Amy Francus), Elaine (Danny) Katz and Mark (Pat) Levin.

A service was active on several community boards; he received an FJU Foundation Emeritus Award and was selected to Twelve Good Men, Morris in 1958, to support his community, a wide range of philanthropic causes including; Barrington Stage Company, the Jewish Museum, Miami City Ballet, Arts Center, United Way, Toqueville Society and others.

Donations may be made to the FJU Jewish Museum of Florida (www.jmuseum.org), the Barrington Stage Company, the Jewish Museum, Miami City Ballet, Ards Center, United Way, Toqueville Society and others.

Evelyn Patt Zwerner, 98, artist, loved theater

Evelyn Patt Zwerner, 98, passed away on Monday, August 16. Born in Yonkers, NY in 1921 to her late parents Abe and Harry Patt, she was predeceased by her husband David, to whom she was married for 56 years, son, Daniel and daughter, Marilyn.

Evelyn graduated from Berkeley Business School and attended Hunter College. She worked in real estate and as a researcher for Merrill Lynch Relocation Management in White Plains, NY.

Evelyn had a big, bold personality. Her love of the theater led her to performing in community theater groups in Hartsdale, NY. After retiring she pursued her ambition to become an artist and her works received numerous awards and were shown in galleries and art shows in St. Petersburg, FL and in the Berkshires.

Traveling was also a passion for Evelyn. She and David traveled overseas extensively together in retirement. Evelyn also had many memorable trips to Europe with her art class to study and paint. In their later years Evelyn and David split their time between St. Petersburg and Pittsfield. During those years she enjoyed her volunteer work as a docent at the Holocaust Museum in St. Petersburg and had many years of volunteer service at Tanglewood.

She was unwaveringly proud of her three sons and that pride extended to her eight grandchildren and twelve great-grandchildren, who were her greatest source of joy throughout her later years.

Evelyn leaves behind her sons Peter (Megan) and Daniel (Lulee); daughter-in-law Elise (Alan); grand-children Jason, Andrew, Adam, Emily, Anna, Timur, and Hannah Zwerner; twelve great-grand-children; and sister-in-law Ruth Zwerner.

A graveside funeral was held at Knesset Israel Cemetery on Friday, August 20. Donations can be made to Hadassah Brandeis Institute in Waltham, MA.

Jeanne Hirshberg, 86, mother, grandmother, sister, teacher

BOYNTON BEACH, FL - Jeanne Hirshberg, 86, passed away Tuesday, August 2.

Born in Pittsfield, a graduate of Adams High School and Syracuse University, Jeanne was a former high school science teacher in Berkshires.

She was predeceased by her parents, Samuel Kronick and Ruth Kronick, and her husband, Louis Hirshberg.

She is survived by her son Alan and wife Patricia; and their children, Jennifer and Sandra.

Funeral services were held at Beth Israel Memorial Chapel, Boynton Beach, FL on Friday, August 20. Burial followed at Eternal Light Memorial Gardens, Boynton Beach.

Donations in her name may be sent to Temple Sinai of Palm Beach County, P.A. Corp Cancer Charity, and Trust Bridge Hospice.

Minna Zaret, 96, incredible woman

LENOX - Minna Zaret, age 96, died Friday, August 13.

Minna was a teacher, journalist, jeweler, artist, poet, and peace and civil rights activist. She was an incredible woman. Minna was predeceased by her husband Sol and her sisters Bea Rosenbeck and Shirley Gordon.

She is survived by her sons David, Joshua, and Peter; daughters-in-law, Julie Knost, Elizabeth Rabin and Marilyn Zaret; two grandchildren Anna and Max; nephews, grand-niece and nephew, and great-grand niece and nephew. She was deeply loved and we miss her.

A service was held on Monday, August 23 at Finnerty and Stevens Funeral Home, Great Barrington.

She was laid to rest next to Sol at the Knesset Israel Cemetery, Stockbridge, MA, near where they lived for three decades.

Evelyn Patt Zwerner, 98, artist, loved theater

CHARLESTON, SC - Evelyn Patt Zwerner, 98, passed away on Monday, August 16.

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Now more than ever, our kids need Jewish summer camp!

The Jewish Federation of the Berkshires is dedicated to making a Jewish summer camp experience affordable and accessible for every child by offering financial assistance.

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Assistance is made possible by the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires with support from the Jewish Women’s Foundation and the Arthur and Helen Maisen Camp Fund.
Traveling with Jewish Taste

Lost Tribes?
By Carol Goodman Kaufman

Back in 1815, Pittsfield innkeeper Joseph Merrick hired a local boy to clear out some rubbish on his Fort Hill property. Midway through his labors, the boy dug up a set of leather straps that a local pastor identified as tefillin. When word got out of the discovery, clergy and scholars flocked from near and far to see the parchments removed from the little boxes. Because Pittsfield had no Jewish residents at the time, speculation was rampant as to the owner of said tefillin. Whose could they be?

In the early 19th century, many people believed that Native Americans were descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, presumably having traveled across the Bering Strait or by boat across the Atlantic. They were convinced that one of these ancient Israelites/Indians had dropped the tefillin. (How the ancient Israelites managed to reach the Bering Strait from the Land of Israel has never been addressed, but that’s not really the subject here.)

While there is no evidence that the Indians are, in fact, members of our Israelite tribe, Joel and I learned about many parallels between the two peoples on a recent visit to the Mission House in Stockbridge. There, we saw “Mohican Miles,” a special exhibit celebrating the history and culture of the Stockbridge-Munsee Community Band of Mohican Indians.

But first, a little background. The homelands of the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans once spanned the Housatonic and Hudson River Valleys and stretched from Manhattan to northern Vermont. But in 1777, a British royal charter established a township where Stockbridge stands now. They called it Indian Town. Along with the township came Christian missionary John Sergeant, whose goal was to convert the natives. After four days of deliberation, tribal leaders felt that conversion might help to ensure their survival.

At this point, the missionary to the Stockbridge Indians who was still re-acquiring lands originally promised in past treaties. They have also been trying to reclaim their native lands. Already 24,000 acres are held in trust, and the tribe believes that they must “preserve the natural resources in a pristine condition … We must live lightly on the earth, use less, give more, and respect the earth and all that dwell therein with respect.”

As we call on our patriarchs and matriarchs in our daily prayers, tribe members feel that they also draw strength from their ancestors. And even with a population of only 1,500, they, like Jews, have kept their history and culture alive through the transmission of tribal history.

And like our tribe, the Native Americans have their own Ten Commandments, as seen here passed down from White Buffalo Calf Woman:

• Treat the Earth and all that dwell therein with respect
• Remain close to the Great Spirit
• Show great respect for your fellow beings
• Work together for the benefit of all Mankind
• Give assistance and kindness wherever needed
• Do what you know to be right
• Look after the well-being of Mind and Body
• Dedicate a share of your efforts to the greater Good
• Be truthful and honest at all times
• Take full responsibility for your actions

In other parts of the US, Jews and Native Americans interacted in unexpected ways. From the History Nebraska website: Julius Meyer was born in Bromberg, Prussia, March 30, 1839. He emigrated to Omaha, Nebraska, in 1867 and began developing acquaintances with Plains Indians. He was reportedly able to speak six Indian languages. He served as an interpreter for Gen. George Crook and later opened an Indian Curiosity Shop, called the “Indian Wigwam,” on Eleventh and Parnam Streets in Omaha. Meyer is here pictured with Spotted Tail, Iron Bull, and Pawnee Killer in about 1875.

So, even if Native Americans aren’t from the Lost Tribes of Israel, Jews and the Stockbridge-Munsee Band of Mohicans have much in common. From our parallel histories of discrimination, dispossession, and ghettoization, and shared values of acts of living/kindness, and respect for the earth and for humankind, our tiny peoples have made a huge impact in the world.

Now, it’s eat!

The Mission House is located at 19 Main Street in Stockbridge. For more information, visit thetrustees.org/place/the-mission-house.

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

**Sufferin’ Sukkah-Tash**

Serves 6

While succotash has long been a staple of Native American cooking, it is also a perfect addition to the fall and winter menu. And while this article appears a bit late for Sukkot, the pun was just too good to waste.

**Ingredients:**

- 2 cups fresh or frozen baby lima beans
- 1 cup chopped sweet onion
- 1 cup fresh or frozen cut 1/2-inch-thick slices
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup thinly sliced fresh basil
- 3 cups fresh or frozen corn kernels
- 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup cherry tomatoes, halved

**Directions:**

Place lima beans in a medium saucepan and add water to cover. Bring to a boil over medium-high. Reduce to medium-low, and simmer until beans are just tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Drain and set aside.

Add chopped onion, fresh okra, and garlic to skillet over medium, and cook, stirring often, until onion is just tender, about 6 minutes.

Stir in corn kernels, salt, pepper, and drained beans, and cook, stirring often, until corn is tender and bright yellow, 5 to 6 minutes. Add butter and cook, stirring constantly, until it is melted, about 1 minute.

Remove from heat.

Stir in halved cherry tomatoes and sliced basil. Serve immediately.

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**Remove from heat.**

**Stir in halved cherry tomatoes and sliced basil.**

**Serve immediately.**

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**BERKSHIRE JEWISH VOICES**

**Cheshvan/Kislev 5782**

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**Page 17**
A Love Letter to Team Israel From Your Lonely, Exhausted, and Loyal Fan

Ruth Kaplan

I’m honestly not sure where and when my love affair with Team Israel began, but it became very intense very quickly. I put the July 14 Hartford, Connecticut, exhibition baseball game on my calendar as soon as it was announced, but it was completely out of my league. However, I managed to live-stream that game, which they lost big-time. But, oh well, it was still a thrill. I asked friends who did attend to send me photos and a video of the game, “Hatikvah,” as well as the throwing of the first pitch by Ambassador Meron Reuveni, consul general of Israel to New England. The following day, the second exhibition game in Hartford could not be live-streamed and it took me ages to ascertain the final score in a game I won? I was already becoming very invested in the team’s success.

Allow me to backtrack a bit. In summer 2007, I visited Israel and watched the Israel Baseball League play in Tel Aviv. My teenage nephew had landed an internship with the team. I still have my ILB baseball hat. I remember hearing “Hatikvah” played at a well-known concert and meeting Dr. Ruth Westheimer, an unlikely fan who was also on the sidelines. She, too, was an enthusiast, and, yes, I did get her autograph. I attended a second game in Beit Shemesh with my late father and his best friend, who had made aliyah earlier years: We cheered in the stands with mostly Israeli fans. It was a very different baseball — an American experience — but it was the struggle for acceptance in the Holy Land. The players were, for the most part, Jewish Americans, imports, both Jewish and non-Jewish, who had signed up for a short-lived adventure. Despite a noble effort by an American entrepreneur from Brookline who established the ILB, it didn’t go particularly well in the end and the league disbanded.

So, I was as amazed as everyone else when I heard the news that Team Israel had qualified for the Olympics. Apparently I completely missed the rebirth of Israeli baseball! I had been following the team’s efforts to join the World Baseball Classic, and, the relative success of Team Israel in the international competition in 2016 in which they defeated Korea, the Netherlands, Great Britain and even powerhouse Cuba. Moreover, at Israel’s Olympic Qualification Tournament in 2019. As they say in Hebrew, “Ma piteni?” Or, how in the world did that happen?

It’s a lot more than just the backstory. The following decade of 2007, base- ball continued to be played in Israel by a small but steady group and some really amazing individuals — in particular American olieh Peter Kurtz, who’s now Team Israel’s general manager, who had the dedication and perseverance to establish both youth and adult leagues that miraculously led to successes in the World Baseball Classic followed by qualifying for the Olympics. The second game against South Korea was the overthrow, for me, of the Olympics, sports announcer was constantly referencing aspects of each player’s connection to his Jewish heritage. Thank Gush was raised with the strong Jewish background and attended a Jewish day school in Chicago for 11 years; third-baseman Danny Valencia has two Jewish parents since his father, a Cuban immigrant, converted to Judaism. He grew up with people being surprised that he was Jewish on account of his name. Pitcher Jeremy Bleich’s grandparents were Holocaust survivors, which left an indelible impression on him. Ty Kelly’s Jewish grandmother in Boca Raton was so excited and proud to hear that he had become an Israel citizen; pitcher Josh Zedd had ‘Take Me Out to the Ballgame’ written in Hebrew on his glove. And on it went.

When would this sort of background information ever be shared in a Major League Baseball game? The answer is simple: never! In the major leagues, Jewish fans lots of people who to identify a single Jewish player. After all, Jews are not generally known for their athletic prowess, especially as baseball players. And when we’re not sure whether or not a player is Jewish, endless speculation ensues. Yet here, on Team Israel, American Jews were presented with endless opportunities for connecting.

Mostly, Israel baseball cannot really understand the American Jewish perspective on Team Israel for this reason. As a Jewish majority in Israel, they cannot relate to the struggle for marginalization and being typecast as a ‘Jewish’ player. If they were the least bit interested in Team Israel — which I’m convinced most were not because baseball is still not valued – they might cynically dismiss the team as not being authentically Israeli. I say this doesn’t make sense, it’s just a reality. But for an American Jewish Zionist like me, nothing could have been sweeter than this team. In fact, what could have been sweeter was that would have been a team that was closer to 50/50 native Israeli and American, with the Israelis representing the diversity of its multi-ethnic society. But one step at a time.

The Summer Olympics have now concluded and there will be no baseball played in the Paris Games of 2024. And who knows if Team Israel will qualify in 2028? This could have been a one-time thing like “Brigadoon.” If that’s the case, I say, ‘Dagenu.’ You played your hearts out and gave us such a thrill, Team Israel. And I do hope baseball grows in Israel for no other reason than it provides a wonderful bridge between diaspora Jews and Israelis. Moreover, baseball is a popular sport globally, which affords Israel additional opportunities to connect with other nations and establish legitimacy in a frequently hostile world.

Hopefully Team Israel’s unlikely Olympics experience will inspire greater investment in the sport, and I must say I’m thrilled to know there will be a state-of-the-art field built in Ramat Gan, with the support of JNF-USA, dedicated to the memory of Elie Schwartz, c.f., “something that would make baseball and Israeli life in a terrorist attack almost six years ago.” JNF’s Project Baseball is generally a critical source of support for the sport itself.

So, surprisingly to me, for an intense five days this mid-summer, I bonded deeply with Team Israel’s quintessential quest for the impossible dream to medal in the truly historic Tokyo 2020 Olympics. It made my world bigger and grander even without a watch party. And I just know there are other fans out there as well who’d love to see a tear with, but also share the heartfelt pride I experienced in rooting for Team Israel early in the morning and late at night — an exhausting but inspiring and unforgettable journey.

Ruth Kaplan is the director of community relations at the Consulate General of Israel to New England.
The Williamstown-based novelist on exploring the mysteries of motherhood, how trauma teaches, and Jewish historical memory

By Rabbi Seth Wax / Special to the BJV

Alexis Schaitkin is the author of Saint X (Celadon, 2020) and has a book scheduled to come out in late spring 2022. She lives in Williamstown with her husband and young children. Rabbi Seth Wax, Jewish Chaplain at Williams College, sat down over the summer to talk about her work, contemporary Jewish life and identity, and living in the Berkshires. This interview has been edited for clarity and length.

Can you talk about your first book, Saint X?

Saint X is set in the mid-1990s. A family from New York takes a vacation to a fictitious tropical island called Saint X. On the last night of their trip, their teenage daughter disappears. Her body is later found, and it becomes a national news story, a tabloid sensation. But it also remains an unsolved mystery. And 20 years later, Charlotte Clarke, the daughter of the family who were the last to see her, is in touch with a man who was a briefly a suspect in her sister's death. Without revealing to him who she is, she insinuates herself into his life to try to uncover the truth. Part of the mystery is, ‘what happened?’ But on a deeper level, it’s the mystery of, ‘who are you really?’ A lot of the characters I’m interested in have always thought of themselves as good people. I think most of us think of ourselves as good people. And yet in the process of looking back at what happened to them and the choices they’ve made, sometimes there is a realization of ways in which they have actually failed, or not been as good as they convince themselves they are.

And what is your next book about?

It’s really different. The first book was premised on a mysterious death, and it was set in the present day. It was sociological and had a contemporary feel. And this next book is set in an isolated mountain town where you don’t know where it is. It’s a town that is in time it is. It’s an enclosed community where periodically mothers just disappear. It has a supernatural element. It’s narrated by a woman in this town as she comes of age and becomes a mother herself, facing the possibility that this could happen to her.

How are your two books connected?

With my first book, Saint X, a lot of it was about trying new challenges, but also staying true to the things I’m interested in. Saint X was very much about getting the little perfect sociological details of different social classes, different worlds, differences. Like, what is the exact perfect drink for somebody to be drinking on a beach vacation? Or what is the exact car somebody would be driving growing up in an affluent suburb or something like that?

And I think this next book was very much about the mystery of, how do you find something that had none of that. This was a world I had to create out of my own mind and build with details that aren’t familiar to us. Part of it was wanting to try and see if I could do that. Because I think I have a lot of fun capturing our world as it is. But I wanted to see if I could do something different.

What do you think are some of the underlying issues in this new book that you’re working on?

I think that there’s kind of two primary questions that I was really interested in exploring in this book. And one is that this is a town where mothers vanish, which is to some extent, an allegory for exploring the experience of motherhood. What I was really interested in about motherhood is the essential mystery of it. Motherhood changes you so much. And this constant question that so many mothers are navigating: how much do you let yourself lose yourself in this experience? How much do you hold back from yourself of your child to maintain some identity as a mother yourself? Like, what is the exact perfect drink for somebody to be drinking on a beach vacation? Or what is the exact car somebody would be driving growing up in an affluent suburb or something like that?

And the other thing is, I’m really interested in the ways that the dark, difficult, traumatic things in our lives, in the community, can become central to that community’s identity.

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The book I’m planning to write next is the first thing I’ve written that centers on Judaism and has explicitly Jewish characters. It is narrated by a woman who is in her 80s living in a retirement community in Florida, but who, as a child on the eve of the Holocaust, was part of the Kindertransport. Now, late in life, she travels back to the UK to revisit the house where she lived, and there resolve a mysterious event that shaped the course of her life forever after.

What got you interested in writing about a particularly Jewish subject?

I think the starting place for me is just how complicated I personally find it to reconcile the scope and timeline of Jewish historical memory at this moment, where World War II and the Holocaust were not so long ago.

And yet, for increasing numbers of people, it also feels so distant. I was interested in the idea of a woman who’s living in a retirement community in Florida and playing bridge with her girlfriends and going to movies. And yet she has this full past, and maybe it isn’t something she talks about much or that anybody in her current life knows about. But it’s within her.

I was interested in the idea of, ‘You had this experience, and now you’ve got grandkids who are secular, and their main relationship to Judaism is having a grandmother who they can say had this experience.’ How do these two timelines sit together, the Holocaust experience and contemporary American Jewish experience?

Could you say a little bit about your own Jewish background?

I grew up in Westchester in New York, and we went to a Reform synagogue, and I had a bat mitzvah. I would say that probably at this point, I’m mostly culturally Jewish.

What do you enjoy about living in the Berkshires?

Everything. I love it here so much. Nature and a sense of place is all over my writing, and that’s very important to me in my own life. I love hiking. I love gardening. So just being in a place where that’s all right here is just dreamy for me. Williamstown is a great community for raising kids.

Author Interview: Alexis Schaitkin

The Williamstown-based novelist on exploring the mysteries of motherhood, how trauma teaches, and Jewish historical memory

By Rabbi Seth Wax / Special to the BJV

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A Conduit to the People’s Voice and the People’s Intimate Wishes and Dreams

Tuvia Tenenbom on The Taming of the Jew, his recent book about the Jewish situation in Great Britain

By Albert Stern / BJV Editor

I was first exposed to the journalism of Tuvia Tenenbom a few years back after a friend in our community passed along a copy of his 2014 book, Catch the Jew, a chronicle of adventures in Israel and the West Bank that was a #1 bestseller in Israel. By large my friend’s political beliefs on topics of Jewish concern – peoplehood, Zionism, and anti-Semitism – hew closely to those of Judah the Machabe. She said that Catch the Jew is one of the most important books about Israel’s situation that she has ever read. When she handed me the book, she told me that I didn’t have to return it to her, but that I did have to promise to pass it along after I finished it. Which I did, making sure the person I gave it to promised to pass it along, as well.

Tenenbom is sometimes compared to the American filmmaker Michael Moore – both are large men who project an ingratiating persona that can put their subjects off their guard, leading them to “say the quiet part out loud” about hot button topics. Both are careerists and, for both men, a bit of deception can come into play when pursuing a story – harder to pull off now that both are well known. Tenenbom thoroughly documents his undercover journalism with audio and video recordings, so while his agenda is often critical, his facts are not. While Moore is a political progressive, Tenenbom’s project is exposing casual, cultural, political, and institutional manifestations of anti-Semitism. He has his critics – “Tenenbom’s readers re-elected Netanyahu and his book clarifies why,” wrote Raphael Magarik of The Forward in 2015.

In Catch the Jew, Tenenbom (often posing as “Tobias,” a German journalist) targeted the “peace industry” funded by foreign nations and NGOs in Israel and the West Bank. What he uncovered disrupts and often elevarizes many of the prevailing narratives about politics, media coverage, and diplomacy in Israel and the Middle East. Tenenbom says that his book shot to number one on Israel’s bestseller list because his reporting was a revelation even to Israelis, who had little idea about their enemies.

Tenenbom’s latest book, The Taming of the Jew, chronicles his travels in the British Isles and the anti-Semitism he encountered in all strata of society, from workingman’s pubs to high levels of government. Begun after Brexit and completed just before the worldwide pandemic lockdowns, the book is not as explosive as his earlier work, in part because Jewish issues are not as central to the British narrative, in part because his reputation seems to have preceded him – many prominent British Jews who could have enriched his story simply would not talk to him.

What Tenenbom found out is that when Jewish issues do emerge from the background in Britain, things get ugly rather quickly. Reporting on Britain’s Jewish community, Tenenbom paints a thoroughly depressing portrait of Diaspora life, one in which Jews feel threatened even in a democratic and pluralistic nation-state like Great Britain.

It’s a story, as well, that publishers in the US and UK don’t want to touch, according to Tovih. “I reached out to the author this summer after reading a story about how major publishing houses in both the United States and the United Kingdom rejected the book despite its record of popularity. Tenenbom was in New York City and about to travel to Germany, France, and Israel when we spoke.

In The Taming of the Jew, Tenenbom – who is also a playwright, director, and founder of the Jewish Theater of New York – writes of his early entrapment with British stagecraft and performers. “They are the masters of theater,” he writes. “No one else can go on the stage and lie, which is what the acting profession is all about, better than the Brits.” He notes the reserve for which the British (excepting their tourists) are known for, but finds it the potlusive necessitates the development of role-playing abilities to get along. “For years I’ve wondered why English theater is so good,” he writes. “If this is a society of actors, it makes sense why their tors are so good on stage.” More and more people during the course of his research, Tenenbom concludes that the British facility with facades is used to mask hypocrisies and a certain quality of what he characterizes as “gatness.”

Tenenbom started his journey in Northern Ireland, where he was struck by Irishman flags painted on outdoor murals and “Free Gaza” and similar goods for sale at the Sinn Fein bookstore in Belfast. He explained: “From the first day in Ireland, I heard how much the Irish people fight each other, sometimes will kill each other. And, there’s one thing they agree on – ‘We don’t like the Jews.’ You can be the most prolific human rights activist, working for an NGO and its motto is to find the common between all of us. And by the end of the day, you come to you and I talk to you, I look at the way I look with the accent I have and I tell you that I am a German journalist – which I actually am – I don’t tell you I’m Jewish. And I ask basic questions like, ‘How do you feel about the work, is there anything you want to change?’ And most often the answer was ‘Free Palestine.’ And it’s not because they know where Palestine is – they cannot even locate it on the map. But they that know that on the other side of Palestine, or the Palestinians, there are Jews. And so they are against the Jews. Because the Jews are this, the Jews are that, the Jews are this and that.”

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Sarah Aroeste to be Honored by The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America

Berkshire-based ambassador of Ladino and Sephardic culture also shares highlights of her recent visit to North Macedonia and Israel to support her album, Monastir

In the June/July issue of the Berkshire Jewish Voice, we reported on the release of Sarah Aroeste’s latest recording, Monastir, the Berkshire-based singer’s loving tribute to the life and culture of her Sephardic family’s ancestral home in North Macedonia. The story chronicled Aroeste’s scramble to complete her recording project overseas in the spring of 2020, just as pandemic lockdowns shuttered the world. It further detailed the resilience and creativity she and her producer, Shai Bachar, showed in finishing the album remotely with the help of some of Israel’s A-list recording artists.

With COVID-19 restrictions eased in the summer of 2021, Aroeste returned to the Balkans and then to Israel to support the album – and she shares her experiences in the story that follows.

But first, the BJV would like to congratulate Sarah on being honored by The Sephardic Jewish Brotherhood of America (La Ermandad Sefaradi) in December for her contributions to Sephardic culture. She will be recognized at a gala at the Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York City, along with fellow honorees Albert Maimon, a community leader and Sephardic educator, and Dr. Albert Bourla, chairman and CEO of biopharmaceutical giant Pfizer, Inc., who was born in Thessaloniki, Greece, to a family with deep roots in the city’s Sephardic Jewish community.

“Albert Bourla is a proud Sephardic Jew, and he often uses the story of his family as the inspiration for how he rose at Pfizer,” she writes. “I may be saving a family as the inspiration for how I rose at Pfizer.”

“My grandfather was born in Monastir, in what is now known as Bitola. His family emigrated during the Balkan Wars in 1912 and settled in Rochester, NY. But much of my family stayed behind and met their fate, along with 98 percent of the Jewish population, in Treblinka in 1943. My grandfather’s first cousin, Mazel tov, Sarah, from your friends at the Federation! And now, without further ado..."

Back on the (Sephardic Music) Road!

By Sarah Aroeste / Special to the BJV

On March 13, 2020, I was busy in North Macedonia recording my newest musical project, Monastir, when the United States (and most of the world) began shutting down in a hurry because of COVID-19. My husband, a fellow musician, and our two young kids in the Berkshires, were worried I would be stuck in Europe and would not be able to return to the Berkshires, but I decided that I would not stop the project.

I couldn’t believe what I was seeing the week before my departure that my passport had less than six months remaining. In my family’s houses, two young kids in the Berkshires, was worried I would be stuck in Europe and the Balkans and then to Israel to support the album – and she shares her experiences in the story that follows.

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Sarah Aroeste performing “Od Bitola Pojdov” with local dancers on the main street of Bitola (aka Monastir)

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In my family’s houses, two young kids in the Berkshires, was worried I would be stuck in Europe and didn’t want my trip to focus on what was lost; I also made sure to celebrate the joy and vibrancy that is our story.

I didn’t want my trip to focus on what was lost; I also made sure to celebrate the joy and vibrancy that is our story. So I performed a song, Od Bitola Pojdoj, which talks about how the stars in the walls speak to me, I was literally standing in my cousin’s balcony where Stars of David can still be seen in the ironwork...and touching! As amazing as that was (truly, I had chills), the highlight of my time was filming parts of my project throughout the old Jewish neighborhoods, and even in my family’s houses.

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For a long weekend in Gloucester. So, this was a big trip – including realizing a week before my departure that my passport had less than six months remaining. In my family’s houses.

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Life Can Present Challenges

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The New Jew – A Screening and Creators’ Talkback

An entertaining TV documentary about the evolution of Jewish identity in the US – created for Israeli television

PITTSFIELD – On Tuesday, October 26 at 7:30 p.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Williams College Jewish Association, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, and Temple Anshe Amunim welcome the creative team behind The New Jew, a funny and insightful new four-episode TV Israeli documentary.

This program is planned as an in-person screening at the Berkshire Museum’s Little Cinema, 99 South Street. Masking is required. The program will be adapted to an online format and registrants notified if necessary. This program is funded in part by a grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

To register, visit our calendar of events at jewisberkshires.org.

The series showcases – originally for an Israeli audience – the cultural and political influence of the Jewish community in the United States, the variety of anti-Semitism and racism it has encountered, and the rifts in relations between American Jewry and the State of Israel. A talkback with series host, Israeli comedic and cultural personality Guri Alfi, and series creators Asaf Nawi and Moshe Samuels will follow the program.

Write the creative team: “The New Jew was created with the aim to encourage public discourse on Israel-North American Jewish relations, and on the evolution of Jewish identity in both of these centers.”

According to The Jewish News of Northern California: “The series is a journey through some of the most unexpected places in North America. From the Backcountry Bayit in Colorado to Rabbi Angela Buchdahl of Manhattan’s Central Synagogue to Rabbi Jamie Korngold (the Adventure Rabbi), the series explores real stories of American Jews who are dismantling old stereotypes of the Diaspora Jew.”

Write The Jerusalem Post: “This series about ‘new’ Jews will likely enlighten, entertain, annoy, and offend viewers in different ways and while at times it may seem superficial, it does present a varied and interesting portrait of the diversity of American Jewish life.”

The series was produced for the Public Broadcasting Corporation and aired on the Kan 11 network in Israel.

Additional screening at Williams College

An additional screening will take place at 4:15 p.m. on October 26 at the Jewish Religious Center at Williams College, located at 24 Stetson Court in Williamstown. Attendance by individuals outside the William College community is subject to change, depending on the status of COVID-19 protocols at that time. Space is limited. Masking and proof of COVID vaccination are required for entry.

Peri Schwartz at Chesterwood

Visitors to Chesterwood in late summer may have seen the exhibition of work by painter Peri Schouwitz, which featured the painting shown here: “Studio 13.” Stockbridge gallerist Jane Rasten of 4OrArt showcased her work for many years, and Schwartz attracted a wide following in the Berkshires. Her cousin, Penny Schwartz, writes: “Sadly, Peri died a few months ago, at an early age of 69. Peri was an acclaimed New York artist whose paintings, prints, and drawings are in museum collections in the US and Europe. Peri grew up in Far Rockaway, NY in a family that cherished Jewish observance and ritual.”

Additional screening at Williams College

For more on Peri and many examples of her work, visit perischwartz.com. For more information on 4OrArt and the memorial exhibit, visit 4OrArt.com.

CULTURE & ARTS

EVENING ARTS SERIES

The New Jew – A Screening and Creators’ Talkback

An entertaining TV documentary about the evolution of Jewish identity in the US – created for Israeli television

PITTSFIELD – On Tuesday, October 26 at 7:30 p.m., the Jewish Federation of the Berkshires, Williams College Jewish Association, Hevreh of Southern Berkshire, and Temple Anshe Amunim welcome the creative team behind The New Jew, a funny and insightful new four-episode TV Israeli documentary.

This program is planned as an in-person screening at the Berkshire Museum’s Little Cinema, 99 South Street. Masking is required. The program will be adapted to an online format and registrants notified if necessary. This program is funded in part by a grant from the Harold Grinspoon Foundation.

To register, visit our calendar of events at jewisberkshires.org.

The series showcases – originally for an Israeli audience – the cultural and political influence of the Jewish community in the United States, the variety of anti-Semitism and racism it has encountered, and the rifts in relations between American Jewry and the State of Israel. A talkback with series host, Israeli comedic and cultural personality Guri Alfi, and series creators Asaf Nawi and Moshe Samuels will follow the program.

Write the creative team: “The New Jew was created with the aim to encourage public discourse on Israel-North American Jewish relations, and on the evolution of Jewish identity in both of these centers.”

According to The Jewish News of Northern California: “The series is a journey through some of the most unexpected places in North America. From the Backcountry Bayit in Colorado to Rabbi Angela Buchdahl of Manhattan’s Central Synagogue to Rabbi Jamie Korngold (the Adventure Rabbi), the series explores real stories of American Jews who are dismantling old stereotypes of the Diaspora Jew.”

Write The Jerusalem Post: “This series about ‘new’ Jews will likely enlighten, entertain, annoy, and offend viewers in different ways and while at times it may seem superficial, it does present a varied and interesting portrait of the diversity of American Jewish life.”

The series was produced for the Public Broadcasting Corporation and aired on the Kan 11 network in Israel.

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TUVIA TENENBOM, continued from page 20

members of the clergy, a gangster, businesspeople [including a successful Palestinian-emigre real estate mogul, Marwan Koukash], Brexit proponent Nigel Farage, academics, and assorted theatre people. His ultimate target, though, is Jeremy Corbyn, the former leader of the Labour Party who was suspended in 2020 after Britain’s Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) identified “serious failings” with how the party dealt with anti-Semitism.

Jeremy Corbyn in person, you can’t deny the good qualities. Yes, he’s engaging. He is warm. He’s friendly. He speaks softly. An anti-Semite, a racist – contrary to some of the biggest killers can be very charming people. I interviewed once in person with Israel, you can’t deny the good qualities. Yes, he’s engaging. He is warm. He’s friendly. He speaks softly. An anti-Semite, a racist – contrary to

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detailed views of society, to seek intellectual specifications of the social
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and lurking in all the specter of the defunct, I might as well say 'that was,' which I
definitely don't want to use such an extreme word, like ghastly, but that is a good way
to describe it. It's like the specter of the past that is looming and lurking in all these places."

"Because of the world we live in now and because of my own personal life," he
wrote in his memoirs. "I follow the Jewish law in creating the art," Marcus explains, and points to his
magazine that appeared in numerous mainstream publications and MTV. Notably, he contributed to High Times, a magazine that has covered cannabis culture since the mid-1970s. He created two posters for the publication's infamous Cannabis Cup, a global championship of the best marijuana products. Through those assignments, he got to know the magazine's then-editor, John Buffalo Mailer, Norman's youngest child. John Buffalo introduced Marcus to his father's reflections on Martin Buber's Tales of the Hasidim, published in 1937. In one of his commentaries, Mailer wrote: "Consider this: every inanimate form in nature is the record of a war – the shape of a stone reflects the obduracy of the material versus the attrition of the elements." When I read that line, I thought of the Lower East Side tenement buildings that housed Jewish immigrants a century ago and still stand today. Over the years, they provided shelter to succeeding waves of ethnic groups who remade the neighborhood to their own needs. While the character of the neighborhood evolves, the buildings, those inanimate forms, endure. My father was one of those Jewish immigrants, having arrived from Romania as a five-year-old in the 1930s. His childhood struggles all played out against a setting I can visit today, and when I do, I can't help but imagine those still-grim tenements through his eyes.

There's not much guesswork in Marcus's vision of the Lower East Side, though – it's a backdrop against which the Jews of his imagination are frenetically living their best lives. The stores are filled with merchandise and customers, food shops overflow with Jewish delicacies, pedestrians seem to be on their way either to or from shul, signage is in Yiddish and English, and no trace of reality outside of a Jewish universe seems to even exist. Things must have once felt like that, particularly in the early 1900s when, as Marcus points out, "the Lower East Side was the most densely populated area on the Planet Earth." Photographer Sid Kaplan, a friend of Marcus's who contributed photographs to the show, perfectly characterized the delirious riot of Jewishness the artist portrays as being a kind of 'Calder's Circus for the Yidden.'

"When I took in the shows in late August, I lingered in the galleries to watch folks laugh with surprise and delight at their first impressions of the artist's folk/borderline circus people. It's all about human nature," says Dr. Joseph Bedar, a professor of psychology at the University of California, Berkeley. "It's all about people's innate desire to laugh and connect with others in a social context. Marcus's art captures those moments and放大s them in his work."

Marcus's exuberant work demonstrates his affinity with the bearded and behatted immigrant Jews who filled Lower Manhattan a century ago, people rooted in an Eastern European sensibility of religious cohesion and cultural distinctiveness, but who are hustling to make it in America, a golden land of freedom, possibility, and abundance. Marcus's bustling Lower East Side streets are the kind of "social machine" that Mailer imagines in his ruminations on Buber, and in the Buber/Mailer project was one of the first projects that I felt excellent about that
was,' which I definitely don't want to use such an extreme word, like ghastly, but that is a good way
to describe it. It's like the specter of the past that is looming and lurking in all these places."

Just because Marcus's drawings and sculptures draw on sources like cartoons and underground art doesn't mean they lack intellectual depth. Marcus takes the title of his "Through the Hat" exhibit from one of Buber's tales.

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Marcus has seen many of the neighborhood's changes firsthand, having visited the neighborhood first as a child, after most of the Jewish residents were already, gone, but when many of the stores that met their needs remained – the pickle and knish shops, restaurants like Ratner's, and religious goods emporia such the neighborhood first as a child, after most of the Jewish residents were already, gone, but when many of the stores that met their needs remained – the pickle and knish shops, restaurants like Ratner's, and religious goods emporia such the neighborhood first as a child, after most of the Jewish residents were already, gone, but when many of the stores that met their needs remained – the pickle and knish shops, restaurants like Ratner's, and religious goods emporia such the neighborhood first as a child, after most of the Jewish residents were already, gone, but when many of the stores that met their needs remained – the pickle and knish shops, restaurants like Ratner's, and religious goods emporia such the neighborhood first as a child, after most of the Jewish residents were already, gone, but when many of the stores that met their needs remained – the pickle and knish shops, restaurants like Ratner's, and religious goods emporia such the neighborhood first as a child, after most of the Jewish residents were already, gone, but when many of the stores that met their needs remained – the pickle and knish shops, restaurants like Ratner's, and religious goods emporia such the neighborhood first as a child, after most of the Jewish residents were already, gone, but when many of the stores that met their needs remained – the pickle and knish shops, restaurants like Ratner's, and religious goods emporia such